ENGLISH COMMUNICATION AND EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS OF UNIVERSITY GRADUATES IN START-UP COMPANIES IN THE POST COVID-19 PANDEMIC

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Abstract: The world's 21st century workforce needs not only young, skilled human capital capable of technical skills, but also academic skills in English as a priority. The aim of this study is to investigate the importance of university graduates' English communication and Employability skills in the workplace in the post covid-19. A quantitative approach was applied in this study with the survey design. The questionnaire with total of 20 items was sent to 101 Human Resource and Senior Managers in Start-up companies in Jakarta, Indonesia. The data showed that the communication skills were perceived as important for graduates. Moreover, questionnaire with total of 40 items was sent to 203 graduates who graduated in the last five years and work in start-up companies in Jakarta, Indonesia. The highest selected answers from graduates were Strongly Agree and Agree with total mean score 7.01. This data showed that graduates agreed that English communication have big impact for their employability skills. Based on the results, communication in English is important for graduates of Start-up companies in Jakarta. Human resources and graduates working at Start-up, who have already completed surveys, agree that English communication affects their ability in the workplace.

Keywords: English Communication Skills, Employability Skills, Start-up Company, Covid-19, Graduates, E-Commerce

INTRODUCTION

English has the power to change the world. It provides information in every conceivable branch of knowledge. The global workforce of the 21st century needs not only young and skilled human capital capable of technical skills, but also academic skills in English as a priority (Di Gropello, E., Kruse, A., & Tandon, 2011). Good communication skills support employees to coordinate well in their tasks, especially when employees come from different parts of society, have different cultures and backgrounds. Poor communication skills can affect productivity and may even lead to misunderstandings within employees. According to Karim (2016), resolving interpersonal issues consisting of accept as true with problems and poor communique accounted for more than half of managers' running time, in order that they believe that effective communique will assist reduce the time managers spent on resolving employee conflicts. Effective workplace communication guarantees that each one organizational goals are achieved (Ergen, 2010).

Employability develops in specific jobs, and it deals with the ability to switch to new sustainable employment when needed. This involves having specific knowledge, skills and attitudes, and the ability to deploy them and sell them to employers (Lowden,K., Hall, S., Elliot, D., & Lewin, 2011). Most employers and recent graduates consider that more attention must be paid to the development of students' abilities and qualities, consisting of communication, teamwork, problem-solving skills, critical thinking and leadership, additionally referred to as employability (Lowden,K., Hall, S., Elliot, D., & Lewin, 2011). To investigate how important English communication skills and Employability skills of Jakarta graduates in the post covid-19 in the workplace is, particularly in the Start-up company, this study addressed the following two research questions: 1) Are English Communication skills perceived as important for post

covid-19 graduates working in a start-up company? 2) Do English communication skills have a big impact on graduates' employability skills in start-up company in the post covid-19?

METHOD

This study employed a quantitative approach with the survey design in order to investigate the importance of English communication and Employability skills of Jakarta graduates in the workplace in the post covid-19. Quantitative approach can be used to answer questions about variables in research (Marvasti, 2018). This study necessitated the two phases of the survey. First, a survey was sent to Human Resource or Senior Managers to seek their perception on the importance of English Communication skills for graduates in their companies. Second, a survey was sent to university graduates who graduated in the last five years from different universities in Jakarta to seek their perceptions on the use of English communication skills of graduates for their Employability skills in start-up companies.

The participants of this study included 101 Human Resource and Senior Manager and 203 graduates in Jakarta. The demography of the Human Resource and graduates was presented below:

Table 2: Demography of Human Resource

Demography	Category	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Sex	Male	28	27.7	27.7	27.7
	Female	73	72.3	72.3	100.0
Total		101	100.0	100.0	
Position	General Manager	1	1.0	1.0	1.0
	HRD	75	74.3	74.3	75.2
	Senior Manager	25	24.8	24.8	100.0
Total		101	100.0	100.0	

Table 3: Demography of Graduates

Demography	Category	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Age	<22 years old	65	32.0	32.0	32.0
	22-25 years old	119	58.6	58.6	90.6
	>25 years old	19	9.4	9.4	100.0
Total		203	100.0	100.0	
Sex	Male	66	32.5	32.5	32.5
	Female	137	67.5	67.5	100.0
Total		203	100.0	100.0	

The researcher sent the Google Form with close-ended questionnaire instruments randomly to Human Resource and university graduates in Jakarta, Indonesia from 26 November until 5 December 2021. After the data was obtained from respondents, the researcher transferred data into Microsoft Excel to be tabulated and reliability checked through Cronbach's Analysis. Then, the researcher calculated and recapitulated quantitatively from the

options in the close-ended questionnaire responded by 101 Human Resource and 203 graduates. After the data have been tabulated and recapitulated, the researcher did analysis to get result of the study. Last, the researcher did the interpretation and discussion of the data results found in this study.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION
Before analyzing the data, the researcher checked the reliability of the close-ended questionnaire for Human Resource through Cronbach's Alpha analysis. The results are as follows:

Table 4: Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Itemns
0.943	20

From the data above, it can be seen that The Cronbach's Alpha score from 20 items responded by 101 Human Resource and Senior Manager was 0.943. According to Taber (2018), it means that the items of close-ended questionnaire was on excellent reliability level. And for the reliability analysis of close-ended questionnaire for graduates, it can be seen on the table 5 below:

Table 5: Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Itemns
0.949	40

From the data above, it can be seen that The Cronbach's Alpha score from 40 items responded by 203 Graduates was 0.949. According to (Taber, 2018), it means that the items of close-ended questionnaire was on excellent reliability level. With the need of answering the questions of this research, table 6 below were the results of closed-ended questionnaire of Human Resource. Then, the recapitulation was inserted afterwards.

Table 6: The Close-Ended Questionnaire of Human Resource

Statement	X	SD	D	N	A	SA
1. Employees' English communication skills are important for recruitment	4.31	0.00	2.97	11.88	36.63	48.51
2. Employees' English communication skills are important for promotion	4.45	0.00	1.98	8.91	31.68	57.43
3. Employees' English communication skills are important for daily tasks	4.12	0.00	1.98	22.77	36.63	38.61
4. Speaking skill is important in your company	4.60	0.00	0.00	3.96	31.68	64.36
5. Fluency in speaking is important in your company	4.38	0.00	0.00	10.89	40.59	48.51
6. Accuracy in writing is important in your company	4.22	0.00	0.99	25.74	23.76	49.50

	Mean					
7. Writing assessment is part of your employment selection	4.16	0.00	6.93	16.83	29.70	46.53
8. Faster response is part of your employment selection	4.43	0.00	0.99	14.85	24.75	59.41
9. The ability of employees to send an accurate email communication is part of your employment selection.	4.40	0.00	0.00	13.86	32.67	53.47
10. Your employees must write in English for business proposals	3.97	0.99	7.92	26.73	27.72	39.60
11. Your company always use English for discussions and meeting	4.01	0.00	5.94	26.73	27.72	39.60
12. Your company often use English for communication during a videoconference	4.05	0.00	5.94	26.73	23.76	43.56
13. English is frequently being used among employees in your company	3.99	0.00	5.94	25.74	31.68	36.63
14. Oral communication skills are always used in your company	4.19	0.00	1.98	20.79	33.66	43.56
15. The employees often use English when communicating with customers	3.91	0.00	10.89	25.74	24.75	38.61
16. English communication skills are dominant in your company	4.07	0.00	5.94	19.80	35.64	38.61
17. One of the important skills in your company is ability to communicate in English	4.15	0.00	3.96	19.80	33.66	42.57
18. Face to Face Conversation is always done in English	4.02	0.00	6.93	25.74	25.74	41.58
19. All meetings in your company are conducted in English	4.02	0.00	6.93	21.78	33.66	37.62
20. Most employee terms are in English	4.00	0.99	6.93	24.75	25.74	41.58
Total Percentage	4.17	0.10	4.26	19.55	30.59	45.50
		4.36			76.09	

According to data above, the questionnaire with total of 20 items was sent to 101 Human Resource and Senior Manager in Jakarta, Indonesia. It can be known that overall mean score calculated from Human Resource and Senior Manager responses were around 3.91 to 4.60 ranges with total average of mean score = 4.17. The highest selected options Human Resource and Senior Manager chose was very important (5) or 45.50 and important (4) or 30.59 with total mean score = 76.09. Neutral (3) was selected with mean score = 19.55, meanwhile low importance (2) and not at all important (1) were chosen 4.26 and 0.10 with total mean score = 4.36. This data showed that the Human Resource and Senior Manager stated that the communication skills perceived as important for graduates. For the data responses of graduates, the researchers put in Table 7 below.

Table 7: The Close-Ended Questionnaire of Graduates

Statement	X	SD	D	N	A	SA
1. English communication skills are essential at work	4.65	0.00	0.00	2.46	29.56	67.98
2. English communication skills affect my career development	4.34	0.00	1.97	12.81	34.98	50.24
3. When communicating with people in the workplace, I have to use an English	3.83	1.48	12.32	24.14	25.62	36.45
4. I prepare a guideline to communicate with others	3.82	4.93	8.87	22.17	29.06	34.98
5. Conversation skills generally affect my daily work	4.09	0.49	4.43	23.65	29.06	42.36
6. I feel good about my language when I speak to others in English	3.90	1.48	7.39	23.65	35.47	32.02
7. I have to write in English when I send an email to customer	3.87	0.49	12.32	23.65	27.59	35.96
8. I get nervous when I have to doing a daily report in front of a team in English	3.86	3.94	8.37	21.67	29.06	36.95
9. Many projects require speaking in English	4.00	0.49	3.94	30.05	27.59	37.93
10. Many projects require writing in English	3.94	0.49	9.85	24.63	26.60	38.42
11. Grammar correction is not important in my job	3.64	5.91	13.30	24.63	23.15	33.00
12. I always listen to people speaking in English during presentations	4.02	1.48	6.40	17.73	37.44	36.95
13. I usually do in English when developing contacts for advice and information	3.97	0.00	9.85	23.15	28.57	38.42
14. Most of the instructions in this job are in English	4.07	0.49	6.90	20.69	29.56	42.36
15. Although in social conversation, I am used to using English	3.79	0.49	15.76	21.18	30.05	32.51
16. English communication skills affect my success in this job	4.29	0.00	3.45	12.32	35.47	48.77
17. My ability to communicate in English is important in landing this job	4.51	0.00	2.46	6.90	27.09	63.55
18. Conversation skills generally affect my success in this job interviews	4.30	0.00	2.46	13.79	35.47	48.28

19. The nature of the organisation influences the language skills needed in this company	4.17	0.00	2.96	18.72	36.95	41.38
20. I am able to speak a language other than English	3.98	2.96	6.40	19.70	33.00	37.93
21. There are many job opportunities if I am fluent in English	4.36	0.00	1.48	14.78	29.56	54.19
22. I am able to work as a team for software development projects	3.88	1.97	9.36	22.66	31.53	34.48
23. I am able to communicate through writing effectively	4.08	0.00	2.46	23.65	37.44	36.45
24. I am able to communicate through speaking effectively	4.11	0.00	3.94	19.70	37.93	38.42
25. I am easy to learn new knowledge	4.31	0.00	1.48	14.78	34.98	48.77
26. My English speaking skills are better than my reading skills.	3.95	0.99	7.39	21.67	36.45	33.50
27. My English speaking skills are better than my writing skills.	3.93	0.99	7.39	26.11	29.56	35.96
28. I build relationships based on participation and cooperation with other people	4.03	0.00	7.88	20.20	33.50	38.42
29. My teamwork skills helped me to get this job	4.30	0.00	2.96	14.29	32.02	50.74
30. Oral communication is imperative in my job	4.29	0.00	1.48	19.21	29.06	50.25
31. The use of English while communicating with different personnel is a must	3.87	4.93	11.33	16.75	26.60	40.39
32. Interpersonal skills	4.49	0.00	4.43	5.91	25.62	64.04
33. Oral communication	4.42	0.49	5.42	7.39	25.12	61.58
34. Initiative	4.25	0.00	3.45	13.79	36.95	45.81
35. Self-management	4.41	0.49	3.45	7.88	31.03	57.14
36. Written communication	3.96	0.99	12.32	18.72	26.11	41.87
37. Teamwork	4.44	0.00	3.45	8.87	27.59	60.10
38. Problem solving	4.39	0.00	3.45	9.36	32.02	55.17
39. Flexibility	4.17	0.00	5.91	16.26	32.02	45.81
40. Aptitude with technology	4.19	0.00	5.91	14.78	33.99	45.32
Total Percentage	4.12	0.90	6.11	17.61	31.01	44.37
		7.01			75.38	

The questionnaire with total 40 items was sent to 203 graduates who have graduated in the last five years and works in Start-up company in Jakarta, Indonesia. It can be known that overall mean score calculated from graduates responses were around 3.64 to 4.65 ranges with total average of mean score = 4.12. The highest selected answers from graduates was Strongly Agree (SA) or 44.37 and Agree (A) or 31.01 with total mean score = 75.38. Neutral (N) was selected with mean score = 17.61, meanwhile Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD) were chosen 6.11 and 0.90 with total mean score = 7.01. This data showed that graduates agreed that English communication have big impact for their employability. The findings of this study involving university graduates in Jakarta are in line with another research on the same subject,

showing that employers do look for communication competence when recruiting new graduates (Bennett, 2006).

CONCLUSION
This research revealed that English communication is important for Graduates at the start-up companies in Jakarta. Human Resources and the graduates who are working in start-up companies, who already filled out surveys agreed that the English communication has an influence on their ability in the workplace. There are many tasks in the work place that should be done in English such as social conversation in the workplace, and writing an email to customers.

The researcher suggest that further research may expand the research sample, not only on graduates in Jakarta but also on other contexts. It is also expected that the next research can examine more deeply, not only to discuss about English communication in the start-up company. This research is believed to be able to expand knowledge and insight about English communication and employability skills at the workplace. It will also be expected to provide information for graduates who want to work in the start-up company, especially in e-commerce.

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