

# THE IMPORTANCE OF LEADERSHIP COMMUNICATION ON GRADUATE EMPLOYABILITY: EMPLOYERS 'EXCLUSIVE VIEWS

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## Abstract

**Purpose:** The purpose of this study is to gather preliminary data on the impact of leadership communication on graduate employability based on employers' experiences in Malaysia's employment industry.

**Methods:** This study employs qualitative methods, with data gathered through interview techniques with three randomly selected informants. The data was then thematically analysed to provide a clear picture of the importance of leadership communication skills to graduates' employability.

**Findings:** According to the study's findings, one of the criteria considered by employers is the importance of leadership communication, and this has an impact on the employability of graduates involving graduates' competencies, namely knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values.

**Limitations/Implications:** Although various factors are considered to ensure the quality of this study, this study has certain limitations and limitations, such as the limited number of study participants in sharing views on the employability of graduates to actual employers in Malaysia.

**Authenticity:** The study involving graduate employability is required to assist the government in formulating further actions to fulfil the aspirations of the Malaysian Education Development Plan (Higher Education) 2015-2025 effectively and meaningfully to the country. It is hoped that this study will assist the government in formulating the need for highly competent human resources and manpower covering knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values based on student leadership communication mastery in community service programme organised by the university in collaboration with other agencies.

**Keywords:** Leadership Communication, Graduate Employability, Competencies, Employers, Interviews.

## Introduction

The Graduate Employability Strategic Plan 2021-2025 outlines four key strategies to help institutions of higher learning produce graduates who are future-proof, holistic, and balanced. The strategy is to strengthen talent excellence, student career development, teaching and learning, and industrial relations (Mahpar, 2021). Nonetheless, the Ministry of Higher Education (MOHE) conducted a graduate tracking study for 2020, which recorded a graduate employability rate of 84.4 percent, a decrease from 86.2 percent in 2019. (Kamaruddin et al., 2021). However, due to the situation in the country affected by the Covid-19 pandemic, this data exceeded the

MOHE's initial projection of 75%. The difficulty of the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic, particularly in terms of economics and shrinking job opportunities.

This pandemic will undoubtedly have a significant impact on future graduates. Prospective graduates must compete not only with their current peers, but also with those laid off as a result of the pandemic. The effects of Covid-19 are also changing the global employment landscape (Mohamed et al., 2020). Communication skills have become an important aspect that is highly emphasised to be mastered by each individual in light of current globalisation. According to Littlejohn (2002), communication is a process of giving meaning and has the ability to persuade people to believe and do what they want. Communication, whether verbal or nonverbal, entails the transmission of shared knowledge, understanding, or feelings via the messages conveyed (Fenstermacher & Richardson, 2005).

Communication skills are an important component that every student must possess and master in order to meet their needs during the learning process, in preparation for the world of work, or in social interaction. Communication skills, according to Dazali and Awang (2014), are the ability to establish interactions or relationships with others through the medium of intermediaries or vice versa. These communication skills include writing, reading, arguing, listening, ethics in communication, and also the use of technology (Nussabaum, 2007). According to Mohamed et al. (2020), most industry and company management is also shifting to online communication, beginning with management and administrative aspects and progressing to business affairs. As a result, skills such as leadership communication are critical in the job-search process.

The ability to communicate effectively can aid in the development of an individual's social and emotional skills. According to Yassin et al. (2010), communication is a person's mainstay and an unavoidable part of their daily activities. This is due to the fact that this process will inevitably occur when two individuals interact. Communication is extremely important in human life. These abilities can aid sociologists in the creation of social institutions, which in turn can have an impact on culture and social structure (Hassan, 2008). According to Dazali and Awam (2014), communication skills are an important aspect that must be emphasised in order to convey information. Graduates with strong communication skills can dominate the job market.

In terms of graduate employability, Table 1 details previous studies by Yorke (2006), Heijde & Van Der Heijden (2006), Mohd Yusof et al. (2015), Fatima (2016), and Peeters et al. (2019) on the definition of graduate employability. Students must broaden their knowledge and skills in order to be relevant to the needs of employers and competitive in achieving organisational goals. Students who are prepared for the future must apply their knowledge and provide services as part of their own lifelong education. By influencing people, events, and making conditions better, services provided can foster a sense of responsibility to participate in life activities (OECD, 2018). Students with strong knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes will be able to dominate the job market in the future.

Table 1: Definition of Career Market or Job Employability

Researcher	Definition
Yorke (2006)	Graduate employability is defined as a set of skills and knowledge that increases an individual's chances of being safe and successful in the job they choose, benefiting themselves, the workforce, society, and the economy.
Heijde & Van Der Heijden (2006)	During the hiring process, socially desirable behaviours that explain the chances of success in the job market.
Mohd Yusof et al. (2015)	Employees' needs must be met and equipped, which necessitates the use of certain skills.
Fátima (2016)	The ability of a person to get a job, keep a job, and adapt to the demands of the industry.

Researcher	Definition
Peeters et al. (2019)	Emphasizes work efficiency as a movement capital identified to not only assist a person in successfully changing jobs but also in retaining employment.

The exchange of ideas, plans, desires, dreams, and directions through verbal, nonverbal, or electronic means of communication is referred to as leadership communication (Mayfield & Mayfield, 2017). Leadership is the art of shaping one's interactions with other people or groups in order to achieve specific goals. Communication skills are very important in order to achieve the quality of leadership because they describe the requirements of the vision and mission in order to more clearly the direction to achieve the goal (Akhtar et al., 2017). Effective leadership communication skills will be able to control the discordant atmosphere that will impede the course of an organization's activities. Educational institutions are required to provide graduates with a mastery of leadership communication. As a result, research on the impact of leadership communication on graduate employability from the perspective of employers is critical in order for local public and private institutions of higher learning to understand the industry's current needs. The following is how this paper is organised. The following section goes over the highlights of the literature. The study's methodology is the subject of further discussion. This is followed by a report on the study's findings and a discussion, and the study concludes with its findings.

## Literature Highlights

Communication became a part of human life as soon as they arrived on this planet. Without communication, the purpose and needs of human life cannot be met, and this will have an impact on the caliph's function on Earth. Good and effective communication will be able to motivate the organization's leadership to achieve the goals. Furthermore, communication should employ means that are relevant and appropriate to the person's level of thinking, intellectual, psychological, and social development. Dazali and Awang (2014) define communication as "a process of interaction between the recipient and the informant so that both parties understand each other's meaning to be conveyed." While Ibrahim and Mahbob (2021) argue that communication is about letting others know who you are and reaching an understanding with them.

Leadership communication, on the other hand, can be defined as the style, method, and strategy of communication used while carrying out the formal roles and duties of a leader in an organisation, according to modern interpretation. It is the process of creating and exchanging messages in a network of interdependent relationships in order to resolve problems that arise. Because a leader's job is always related to the proliferation, creation of relationships, and the use of certain mechanisms that involve a lot of communication activities and their components, effective leadership communication is critical. To ensure that all processes run smoothly and have an impact on the organisation, good communication is required. One of the most important factors in organisational success is effective leadership communication.

Graduates who are capable of acting as leaders of employees or organisations can use various forms of strength to influence subordinate employees' behaviour while performing their duties (Kamaruddin et al., 2021). Organizational leaders play three types of leadership communication roles: i) as representatives, leaders, and liaisons; ii) informants as disseminators, monitors, and spokespersons; and iii) decision makers involving entrepreneurship, conflict resolution, distributor resources, and consultants (Mintzberg, 1980). Leaders must build relationships with employees through effective leadership communication in order to collaborate on achieving organisational goals (Hassan & Mohd, 1997).

Lussier and Achua (2007) presented three categories of leader roles carrying out responsibilities using a leadership communication approach in their study. First, the leader serves as the organization's head, instructing, training, and evaluating subordinate employees' performance, as well as representing the organisation in formal and

informal events, chairing meetings, and acting as an intermediary with external parties. Second, the leader's role is to provide information, which includes monitoring and filtering the information received, channelling information to subordinate employees, and acting as a spokesperson for the organisation he leads. Third, leaders make decisions by providing innovative ideas or insights on organisational change, correcting errors and acting as consultants in times of crisis or conflict, and wisely allocating the organization's energy and financial resources.

Leadership communication in organisations is important in terms of the human relations approach because leaders require accurate information to make decisions or resolve conflicts (Kechot, 1998). Researchers classify leadership communication using the Goal Path Theory developed by House and Terence (2003), which includes four components. i) direction to achieve the vision and mission; ii) achievement to increase motivation; iii) problem solving support and; iv) participation to increase confidence.

## The Importance of Achieving Vision and Mission

When given clear and simple instructions, a job can be completed successfully. The form of direction in leadership communication is viewed as very important in ensuring that organisational goals are met as well as the ability to create positive change in an organisation (Helmi & Azmi, 2017). Furthermore, leadership communication is a hub of ideas that connects understanding between individuals in order to ensure the organization's delivery system is met and enables leaders to play their best roles (Ibrahim & Mahbob, 2021). As a result, leadership communication serves as a guide for achieving organisational goals.

## The Importance of Increasing Motivation

Fairhurst and Connaughton (2014) categorise leadership communication as follows: i) always communicate and appreciate it; ii) communicate orally; iii) give good response and interest while listening; and iv) ask rather than instruct employees to do work by giving praise when it is done well, showing good morals when communicating, and paying attention when communicating informally.

## The Importance of Problem Solving

When it comes to problems or conflicts, no organisation is immune. The leadership communication approach appears to be capable of addressing the issues and conflicts encountered. As a result, good leadership communication skills can help to avoid the failure to establish cooperation in a task (Dong et. Al., 2018). According to Hung and Lin's (2013) study, when the level of leadership communication effectiveness increased, satisfaction conflict decreased, and communication was not always able to improve the situation. Leaders are unable to solve the problems of their support staff in the organisation without effective leadership communication, and the leader is not an authoritative leader. Thus, Zulch's (2014) study emphasises that effective leaders are able to cultivate and create the understanding and trust required to encourage others to follow the leader. Good collaboration can lead to organisational efficiency, and organisational efficiency is unquestionably dependent on the effectiveness of leadership communication, which influences the smooth operation of the organisation (Kechot, 2015). As a result, Helmi and Azmi (2017) believe that in order to avoid conflicts among subordinates and reduce inefficiencies in the organisation, a leader should master effective leadership communication techniques.

## The Importance of Increasing Confidence

Previous research has also found that leadership communication approaches include aspects of understanding and caring for employees' interests in order to meet employees' non-material needs and improve organisational performance (Conrad, 1985; Farace et Al., 1977; Goldhaber, 1992). As a result, leadership communication is

regarded as an effective metric for assessing organisational performance (Goldhaber, 1992). According to Francis (1987)'s book *Unblocking Organizational Communication*, there are five ways of effective leadership communication flow process in increasing confidence, namely: i) guidance and control that can assist a person in acting in accordance with organisational discipline; ii) information or evidence that can assist leaders in making decisions; iii) involvement or participation to motivate a person to feel valued in the organisation; iv) provide meaning to members of the organisation by making them realise that the tasks entrusted are part of the collective effort; and v) tolerate to provide opportunities for joint preparation for organisational change.

## Leadership Communication and Graduate Employability

Yorke (2006) and Zainuddin (2019) define graduate employability as "a set of achievements - skills, understanding, and personal traits - that make graduates more likely to get a job and succeed in their choice of job, benefiting themselves, labour, society, and the economy." The most important skill possessed by a leader is the ability to transfer information, data, and knowledge in order to influence colleagues or teams towards achieving organisational goals. According to Koontz and Wiehrich (1992) and Pace and Faules (1994), leadership communication plays an important role in connecting an organization's management functions by: i) setting and disseminating organisational goals; ii) developing a plan to achieve that goal; iii) efficiently and effectively organising human and other resources; iv) selecting, forming, and evaluating members of the organisation; v) leading, directing, encouraging, and creating a conducive climate; vi) someone to contribute; and vii) controlling performance.

Leadership communication is critical in order to increase employee motivation to complete tasks efficiently and enthusiastically. According to Shukri's (2004) research, collaborative leadership communication is more important than authoritative leadership communication because it is based on intrinsic motivation, which is the emergence of feelings of responsibility, value of belonging, and ugliness among citizens towards the organisation, and extrinsic motivation (attitude of involvement), which is the physical environment and relationships that determine the level of participation in among citizens of the organisation.

Furthermore, organisational leaders use leadership communication as a problem-solving strategy. According to Abd. Rahman et al. (2011), leaders must use problem-solving and decision-making strategies wisely in order to improve organisational staff motivation and psychology. With this in mind, the significance of leadership communication training strategies for all upper management and lower-level employees in the organisation must be emphasised.

Leadership communication can instil a high level of trust in the positive relationship that exists between leaders and employees as a team in order to achieve mutual success. This high level of confidence enables the leader to take the following actions: i) professionally control employees; ii) communicate effectively; iii) act maturely in problem solving; and iv) have a pleasant personality, such as being respectful, friendly, productive, and dynamic. Increased trust in leaders' abilities is critical for increasing employee commitment and loyalty to the organisation (Martiko & Garder, 1987). Previous researchers' perspectives on the importance of leadership communication are formulated as a component that plays an important role in enlivening an organization's journey (Kechot, 2015).

## Methodology of research

This study employs qualitative methods, with data gathered through interview techniques. An interview is a situation in which the interviewer asks one or more respondents a question face to face (Merriam, 2001). The interview was designed to provide an overview of the importance of leadership communication on graduate employability from the perspective of the employer. The goal of qualitative research methodology is to investigate why or how phenomena occur, to develop a theory, or to describe the nature of an individual's experience, whereas quantitative methodology addresses the question of cause and effect, generalisation, or magnitude of effect (Fetters et al., 2013). Qualitative survey research collects rich data from personal experience to provide a more in-depth understanding from the employer's perspective. This statement from highly credible employers is also

used as a strong foundation to support the findings regarding graduate employability. Researchers use rich data from employer experience as a backup to identify research needs involving graduate employability and leadership communication skills.

## Techniques of Analysis

Qualitative data about human behavior that can be observed in the form of descriptive, oral or written words (Jasmi, 2012). The researcher recorded each conversation with the consent of the informants involved, which was then transcribed in text form (transcribed) for data analysis and subsequent reference. During the interview, the researchers also took notes. Researchers also compared the notes to the transcripts to ensure that the information obtained through oral interviews and those recorded was consistent with what was found in the transcripts. If the information gathered during the interview is insufficient or needs to be clarified, the researcher will contact the informants involved by phone or email to obtain the information. The data was then subjected to thematic analysis. The analysis in this study is deductively thematic, with the themes and categories required for the research determining the study's results.

## Informant Details

A total of three employers participated in this study as respondents. Using this method, the researcher does not rely solely on information provided by the employer from the same sector or agency, but instead consults with experts from other fields to ensure that the data obtained is accurate and consistent.

Table 2: Informant Profile

Informant Code	Position	Gender	Age	Type of Service Company
M1	Group Executive Director	Men	50	Professional and high-quality services in the trade industry, as well as a variety of support services on a national and international scale.
M2	Director	Men	49	The foundation is a youth programme development institution as well as a placement centre for international non-governmental organisation youth offices.
M3	Manager	Women	55	Government bodies whose role it is to increase the economic wealth of the bumiputera through various investment activities and programme forms in order to improve the living standards of the bumiputera and the community.

Table 2 provides information about the informants who participated in this study's interviews. The first employer is the Group Executive Director, whose company provides professional and high-quality services in the trading industry, as well as various support services on a national and international scale. The second employer is a Director who works for a company that functions as a foundation and is a youth programme development institution as well as a placement centre for the International NGO youth office. The third type of employer is a

Manager who works for a government-owned institution. This institution is a government body whose role it is to increase the economic wealth of the bumiputera through various investment activities and forms of programmes in order to improve the living standards of the bumiputera and the community.

## Outcomes and discussions

Based on the findings of this study, which were obtained through face-to-face interviews, it can be concluded that all study participants, who were employers, believed that the importance of leadership communication elements on the employability of graduates was formulated based on competency requirements, namely knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values. The following are the study interviews' findings:

### a. Knowledge

Leadership communication skills should be taught to graduates on a regular basis. Clear leadership communication will be able to aid in the enhancement of personality traits and the confidence of graduates (Ibrahim & Mahbob, 2021). According to M1 informants, graduates will be able to persuade others of their thoughts and opinions in order to raise the level of potential excellence of themselves, employees, and the company or organization. The command style in leadership communication will be able to determine whether or not an organization's vision and mission are met.

*"...bagaimana pengarahan tersebut berasaskan akhirnya, tidak akan berlaku pasif resistance ataupun lebih kritikal kepada aktif resistance dan akhirnya syarikat tersebut tidak mendapat mencapai visi dan misi untuk menentukan masa depan dan sebagainya..."*. (M1)

Leadership communication skills have been identified as a factor that can help graduates improve their personality traits. Humans communicate in order to influence other people's understanding, attitudes, and even actions, whether they agree or disagree on an issue. According to Informant M2, a high level of knowledge enables graduates to make decisions that have a positive impact on the production of the assignments undertaken.

*"Lagi tinggi dia dapat pencapaian, cara dia membuat keputusan, cara dia membuat penaaakulan, cara dia menyelesaikan masalah, harus juga berkadar lebih tinggi..macam tu. Jadi penguasaan aras berfikir juga kena tinggi...cara wisdom dia juga lebih tinggi"*. (M2).

Graduates, according to M3 informants, must be able to confidently express rational and meaningful ideas or views while interacting with various parties.

*" bercakap kosong pun, no point juga so for you to be able to speak to become... I mean do good...effective communication ..you need must have facts and figure."* (M3)

A good level of leadership communication is required to ensure that all processes run smoothly and have an impact on the organisation. Graduates, according to M1 informants, must have leadership skills in the following areas:

*"kalau kita nak menganjurkan sesuatu program komuniti, if there is no leadership, how you're going to do...at the end of it when you deal kita berhadapan dengan manusia, leadership is the key, apabila kita berhadapan dengan teknologi leadership is not the key tapi dalam konteks syarikat saya sertai, leadership is the key"*. (M1)

In addition to improving leadership communication skills, graduates must be exposed to a variety of activities and programmes that are critical and confident in problem solving and decision making in order for an organisation to run smoothly. Informants M1, M2, and M3 stated the following:

*"Kita kena perbanyakkan exposure, exposure bermaksud bukan hanya dari segi aktiviti kesukarelawan semata-mata tetapi dalam bentuk perbincangan kritis, penghasilan idea-idea baru, bagaimana the problem solver committee sebagai contohnya, project base contohnya, jadi perkara-perkara ini akan memberikan keyakinan untuk dia terlibat khususnya dari segi untuk meningkatkan kemahiran komunikasi kepimpinan"*. (M1)

*“paling penting kemahiran membuat keputusan...apabila kita menempatkan seseorang di sesuatu tempat..kita nak dia fikir, menyelesaikan kerja tu..”.* (M2)

*“Dia taklah macam ...obviously it’s because if you cannot convince ..you don’t have that apa ni ...if you want to sell yourself...kalau you tak ada leadership communication to actually convince...”.* (M3)

## **b. Skills**

Today, prospective employers place a high value on leadership communication skills. Leadership communication refers to a leader's ability to inspire, motivate, and encourage others, as well as use power responsibly. Graduates who are proficient in these skills will undoubtedly be able to market themselves later in their careers. Employers prefer graduates with leadership and communication skills, according to an M1 informant:

*“...dia ada pakej dia ada substance, dia ada soft skill, sudah tentu saya akan ambil walaupun dia tidak ada pengalaman kerana pengalaman itu datang mungkin daripada pengalaman-pengalaman sebelum itu dalam pertubuhan belia atau dalam mahasiswa.”* (M1)

Graduates who master leadership communication skills will be able to influence individuals toward achieving desired goals by acting as leaders of companies or organisations, as well as persuade outsiders to accept the company as an option and the products or services to be marketed or provided. The statements of the three informants on this subject are as follows.

*“..if you don’t have leadership in term of communication leadership, macam mana you nak sell your product, bagaimana nak tunjuk your talent, bagaimana nak tunjuk your values untuk work with you.”* (M1)

*“ That’s why, apa yang saya nak tambah, you need to be reliable, you need to be valueble, you need to be visible, that’s komunikasi kepimpinan yang boleh saya nyatakan.”* (M1)

*“...dia punya hala tuju yang dia hendak kan sampai sekarang dia menjadi staff yang sangat cemerlang.”* (M2)

*“...because some of them, don’t have that kind of training... how to implement..bila you kena buat presentation, how do you work meet with the group or how you convince the panel.”* (M3)

Graduates with strong leadership communication skills can establish a network of relationships with various parties in order to improve the company's or organization's reputation and productivity. This will instil confidence and motivation in others, allowing them to accept the points of view or ideas they wish to convey and fostering teamwork. An organisation places a high value on teamwork skills. Informants M1, M2, and M3 provided the following explanation:

*“Sebagai contoh kita buat sebagai project, kalau organisasi is tu too big, project base seperti program khidmat komuniti, kita bagi dia tasking, kemudian dia terpaksa datang dan terpaksa up date, what’s next ...what’s next merupakan fokus yang paling mudah untuk menyelesaikan dan meningkatkan kemahiran komunikasi kepimpinan. Kerana bagi saya, untuk meningkatkan kemahiran komunikasi kepimpinan, project base is the best solution”.* (M1)

*“Lagi tinggi dia dapat pencapaian, cara dia membuat keputusan, cara dia membuat penaaakulan, cara dia menyelesaikan masalah, harus juga berkadar lebih tinggi..macam tu. Jadi penguasaan aras berfikir juga kena tinggi...cara wisdom dia juga lebih tinggi.”* (M2)

*“Jadi the way, dia buat keputusan, the way dia memproses sesuatu perkara, kemudian persuasiveness, cara dia membuat pemujukan, negosiasi itu semuanya akan nampak berbeza berbanding dengan yang lain dan tidak pernah melaluinya”.* (M2)

*“...kalau dia punya peers tu very helpful, friendly, willing to make the... make them assist then the way... dia buat.. dia punya komunikasi ...they are more confident.”* (M3)

*“dia orang takkan berani lah untuk nak solve the problem but they do but some of them they are good”.* (M3)

Communication is also a two-way street, with both parties required to respond to the information presented (Ibrahim & Mahbob, 2021). Resolving an issue or solving a problem in a team, according to the M1 informant, is required. As a result, leadership communication is critical in ensuring that an issue or problem can be resolved within a team. The following are the results of M1 informant interviews:

*“Kita selesaikan secara berpasukan dan tidak boleh hanya menjurus diletakkan di atas bahu individu semata-mata dan yang paling penting kita perlu dapatkan sokongan semua untuk mereka memahami bagaimana kaedah untuk menyelesaikan satu masalah syarikat secara berpasukan”.* (M1)

Informant M2 also stated that problem solving skills can help improve a company's or organization's delivery system as well as its production profits while avoiding dissatisfaction with decisions made by presenting rational arguments.

*“ kemahiran pekerjaan..yang paling penting kemahiran membuat keputusan...apabila kita menempatkan seseorang di sesuatu tempat..kita nak dia fikir, menyelesaikan kerja tu...”* (M2)

*“...jadi yang paling penting ialah staff yang boleh buat decision kan which is the decision that she or he made is our decision too.”* (M2)

Graduates who master leadership communication are able to persuade others of the company's or organization's positive position and image as the primary option for dealing and collaborating. The leadership communication approach entails mastery of various adaptable languages and communication scopes, such as corporate communication, employee communication, and so on, allowing graduates to respect a person in the organisation with appropriate calling according to one's position and position. Indirectly, this situation can benefit the company's or organization's systematic operation, as well as its ability to improve employee services and the production of high-quality products.

*“...komunikasi kepimpinan sangat penting kerana akhirnya akan memberikan satu the whole view, tassawur ataupun pemikiran bahawa keyakinan itu akan wujud kepada sesuatu organisasi ataupun sesuatu syarikat.”* (M1)

*“...kerana hari ini everybody has to be a leader dan komunikasi ini sangat penting untuk memberikan keyakinan kepada individu di luar sana untuk memilih.”* (M1)

*“..kita boleh meningkatkan keyakinan bahawa apabila mereka juga terlibat, penglibatan, engagement, empowerment, participation sudah tentu akan memberikan penyertaan secara menyeluruh terutama sekali dalam konteks yang begitu mencabar ketika ini.”* (M1)

*“...kemahiran pekerjaan yang diperlukan graduan is communication, bukan sahaja dari segi kemahiran berbahasa Melayu semata-mata, bahasa Inggeris juga tetapi the key word ialah komunikasi dan komunikasi kalau kita besarkan skop komunikasi... komunikasi dari segi korporat, komunikasi sebagai seorang pekerja tetapi key word adalah communication.”* (M1)

*“ tiga orang yang incharge kat office... so they don't address you accordingly... that's why I said, values is very important. ...yang kita ada sekarang... some of them macam ya lah maybe sekarang kita going towards IT dan sebagainya...of course semakin hari semakin kurang ...how to address people accordingly...how do you convince people.”* (M3).

### **c. Attitude**

By implementing an effective leadership communication approach, an organisation can help to shape the nature and attitudes of the people who work for it (Ching & Nor, 2021). An organization's management leadership should also be a positive role model for its employees. Employees will look up to and respect top management as a result, and noble values will be formed, as well as directly contributing to the stability and achievement of an organization's goals (Sze & Amin, 2019). As a result, according to the M1 informant:

*“...dalam konteks untuk mengupaya penyertaan dan meningkatkan keyakinan perlu ada sesuatu blue print dan hala tuju yang mana hala tuju ini harus dikongsikan kepada seluruh warga syarikat supaya akhirnya nanti career path mereka nampak dan mereka akan nampak keyakinan bahawa syarikat ini akan terus maju dan ke hadapan dan syarikat ini terus survive walaupun dalam era pandemik yang saya fikir sangat mencabar ketika ini”.* (M1)

This was also agreed upon by the M2 and M3 informants, who stated:

*“...saya nampak perubahan keyakinan ..dia berani untuk ambil tugas untuk present di kementerian, dia berani untuk..bila kata orang, bila saya kata okay, boleh tak wakikan saya untuk hadir bengkel-bengkel ni”.* (M2)

*“...dia orang those yang get good training dalam masa tiga bulan, 6 bulan tu dia dah boleh... dah boleh dah ...work independently and then they can actually convince people lah”.* (M3)

Appropriate and effective graduate leadership communication can strengthen good relations among citizens by integrating citizens into the organisation and instilling respect for others' positions and roles in the organisation (Nowalid et al., 2017). This is related to the M3 informant's statement, which is as follows:

*“...values play an important role so as individual ...values maksudnya polite because most of the generation now days macam I cakap they are just straight forward.”* (M3)

*“...you have to be polite for you to start the conversation to your bosses, your supervisor or your interviewers...some of them, ok..some of them yang ..because they play the role juga.”* (M3)

Graduates who use effective leadership communication will be able to accept different points of view and be open-minded regardless of position, rank, or degree, depending on the situation (Nor et al., 2020). When individuals are able to accept reasons as a result of clear explanations such as M1 and M2 informant statements, a win-win situation can be created.

*“...saya fikir sentiasa harus bertemu, berbincang samada by department, by person secara terbuka untuk mendengar dan juga memberikan keyakinan bahawa dalam suasana sukar pun ya pekerja harus memainkan peranan untuk mereka boleh digerakkan.”* (M1)

*“ ...saya lihat bagaimana kita boleh meningkatkan keyakinan bahawa apabila mereka juga terlibat, penglibatan, engagement, empowerment, participation sudah tentu akan memberikan penyertaan secara menyeluruh terutama sekali dalam konteks yang begitu mencabar ketika ini.”* (M1)

*“...mesti ada trait menjadi pendengar yang baik kemudian dari segi decision ...membuat keputusan ..seorang yang pernah bergraduate, komunikasinya tidak lagi sehalu, dia mesti pelbagai hala dia akan bertanya kepada kita, dia akan pandai mentaakul...dia buat pentaakulan dan proses dan kadang-kadang dia cuba mencabar fikiran-fikiran kita.”* (M2)

*“Jadi the way, dia buat keputusan, the way dia memproses sesuatu perkara, kemudian persuasiveness, cara dia membuat pemujukan, negosiasi itu semuanya akan nampak berbeza berbanding dengan yang lain dan tidak pernah melaluinya.”* (M2)

Effective leadership communication allows issues or problems to be discussed thoroughly and action taken as a result of the emergence of new ideas by making the right decisions for more meaningful output. The statements of M1 and M2 informants on this subject are as follows.

*“...bukan hanya dari segi kepimpinan, komunikasi, pakej tetapi juga budaya research, contohnya akan jadi problem solver, memberikan idea-idea baru tanpa perlu saya menunggu dan ini sangat penting, elemen of activisme itu dari belia kita sentiasa bergerak untuk menyelesaikan begitu juga dalam syarikat atau sektor korporat, dia tidak boleh tunggu dan lihat, harus move forward barulah ada value kalau tidak dia akan dilihat hanya sebagai penumpang dalam sesuatu syarikat.”* (M1)

*“ so graduan dah mula kena fikir bagaimana anggap dirinya sebagai seorang yang bernilai dan boleh menyumbang kepada pembangunan manusia dan dia dapat manfaat dari situ..itulah dia dipanggil social entrepreneur...keusahawanan sosial.”*(M2)

#### d. Value

The consistent philosophy, skills, traits, and attitudes that underpin one's behaviour are referred to as leadership communication (Ramakrishnan & Nor, 2018). Leadership communication skills have been identified as a factor that can help graduates improve their personality traits. According to informants M1, M2, and M3, an organization's needs to assess the performance of employees assigned to achieve maximum results for an organisation are M1, M2, and M3. This was stated during an interview where:

*“When we talk about values ni tentang sikaplah maksudnya, tidak berasa negative, always positive itu penting di samping itu juga bagaimana yang dinyatakan, leadership itu penting kerana walaupun ada education, skills, sikap dan nilai, values tapi kalau tak ada leadership pun macam mana nak lead the organisation...kena ada heirarki, kita kena sedar one day kita kena lead the organisation, departmen dan sebagainya”. (M1)*

*“Jadi...tentunya saya nak kan juga seorang ketua yang tidak menjadi mesin, tentu ada value yang di blend dalam hidup dia, yang akhirnya dia ada perasaan empathy, dia boleh ada perasaan apa tu...motivasi”. (M2)*

*“Values maksudnya polite because most of the generation now days macam I cakap they are just straight forward”. (M3)*

Humans communicate in order to influence other people's understanding, attitudes, and even actions, whether they agree or disagree on an issue. This statement is supported by M2 informants, who believe that clear leadership communication can help shape graduates' personalities in the following ways:

*“.....dia punya hala tuju yang dia hendak kan sampai sekarang dia menjadi staff yang sangat cemerlang.....” (M2)*

Graduates learn skills through involvement and participation in the social environment around them, and a leader should have a high level of motivation in improving leadership communication skills (Jusoh et al., 2019). Informants M2 and M3 emphasised the importance of leadership communication in terms of increased motivation, stating:

*“Lagi tinggi dia dapat pencapaian, cara dia membuat keputusan, cara dia membuat penaaakulan, cara dia menyelesaikan masalah, harus juga berkadar lebih tinggi..macam tu. Jadi penguasaan aras berfikir juga kena tinggi...cara wisdom dia juga lebih tinggi”. (M2).*

*“...kalau dia punya peers tu very helpful, friendly, willing to make the.. make them assist then the way... dia buat.. dia punya komunikasi ...they are more confident”. (M3)*

According to the M1 informant, the act of praising can also increase motivation and job satisfaction in order to maintain the stability and success of a company's or organization's operation by stating:

*“...kita memberi pujian dalam media sosial.....memberikan motivasi dan begitu juga menjaga kebajikan dan begitu juga menunjukkan harapan ..hopes, bahawa ada career path dalam syarikat tersebut”. (M1)*

## Conclusion

Studies on graduate employability are required to assist the government in developing future actions to help the country achieve the goals of the Malaysian Education Development Plan (Higher Education) 2015-2025 in an effective and meaningful manner. It is hoped that this study will assist the government in formulating the need for highly competent human resources and manpower covering knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes based on student leadership communication mastery in community service programme organized by the university in collaboration with other agencies. The results of the study can be used by the university and the Department of Higher Education, Ministry of Higher Education Malaysia to improve the implementation of community service programme through Service-Learning Malaysia (SULAM) and assessment involving iCGPA. This research is expected to meet the government's aspirations and targets based on Leap 1 of the Education Development Plan

(Higher Education) 2015-2025 in an effort to produce graduates who are holistic, entrepreneurial, and balanced (KPT, 2019).

Community service programme were used as a platform in the study to determine the effectiveness of student leadership communication and its relationship with graduate employability. The study's findings from graduates and employer feedback will give rise to new perceptions that various stakeholders can adopt. It is hoped that this study will help to improve the communication approach of student leadership through community service programme or similar programme so that they are more relevant, interesting, and effective to the community as a whole.

Other stakeholders, such as students, researchers, and academics, can contribute scholarly references and research practice. This study will fill existing knowledge and research gaps. It is hoped that this study will provide a dynamic reference space for issues related to graduate employability and even provide stakeholders and researchers with a broad understanding and current situation to conduct follow-up studies in the future. Furthermore, knowledge sharing related to the effectiveness of student leadership communication through community service programme toward graduate employability can be implemented on a continuous basis to encourage knowledge improvement as an important skill exposure toward filling job needs.

According to the findings of this study, leadership communication has a significant impact on graduate employability. Based on the findings of this study, which were obtained through face-to-face interviews, it can be concluded that all study participants, who were comprised of employers, saw the importance of leadership communication related to the improvement of competencies, namely knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values, as a requirement for employability among graduates. Overall, the researchers discovered the significance of leadership communication elements among graduates by investigating difficult situations and the need for leadership communication skills to meet employability based on employer perspectives. Furthermore, using the conceptual framework, researchers identified themes and sub-themes based on employer statements to form a questionnaire item for alumni students at three research universities in reviewing aspects of leadership communication, community service programme, and job satisfaction involving aspects of graduate employability. Researchers gathered qualitative data first through interviews, then quantitative data through questionnaires. The next stage of the research will be to create a questionnaire based on the findings of the qualitative study, followed by a pilot study to test the validity of the items used.

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