

Exploring the Career Self-Efficacy among Graduate Students

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Abstract

This study aims to examine the level of career self-efficacy among graduate students. The aspects studied are (i) exploring career self-efficacy among graduate students, (ii) exploring career readiness among graduate students, and (iii) exploring the process of career exploration among graduate students. This research uses a qualitative method that focuses on understanding experiences and perspectives through observation and discussion. The respondents of this study respondents consisted of five students of Institutions of Higher Education (HEIs) who were in their final year of study. Two graduates are students in the field of 'aviation management', one graduate in the field of business, one in the field of law, and another in the field of creative technology. The findings show that graduate students have a high level of career efficiency, graduate students also have a high level of career readiness, and the career exploration process of graduate students is at a mature level. The implications of this study guide the development of appropriate educational and career training strategies to improve graduate students' self-development and career readiness. This is an important step in preparing future generations to achieve success and satisfaction in their field of work.

Keywords: Career Self-Efficacy, Career Exploration, Career Readiness

Introduction

Background Research

The field of work is important in a person's life, whether they choose to open their own business or get a job in an organization. For those who choose to get a job in the organization, they must go through the employee acceptance process which this process is always changing according to the current of the country's economic development and technological progress (Halim & Sahid, 2020). The career development of university students in the 21st century emphasizes technological skills and abilities of graduates to meet the needs of the job market (Mahmud et al., 2020). In addition, the job market requires competent gin their respective fields to determine graduates who can meet the needs of the job market. This is because the graduate's competence will be measured by how far they will get a job after graduation.

Based on the current situation, it can be confirmed that graduates lack the knowledge and skills required by the job market (Mahmud et al., 2020). This shows that the problem of graduate unemployment is an important issue for universities and industry to find a solution.

According to Mahmud et al (2020), career counseling in the 21st century focuses on the importance of individual competence that determines the career that will be carried out in the future. This is due to the increasingly challenging world of work where career opportunities are decreasing, and specific skills are required by employers. In the World Economic Forum, the 10 skills suggested as necessary to obtain career opportunities in the 21st century are complex problem solving, critical thinking, creativity, human management, emotional intelligence, human coordination, decision making, service orientation, negotiation, and thinking flexible (Mahmud et al., 2017). Therefore, the specific skills needed in the 21st century need to be instilled in individuals to help students apply for career opportunities. Apart from these skills, every individual needs to be creative and competitive so that they can get a job and a salary to achieve competence in their lives.

Previous studies have shown that graduate students at universities have low self-confidence about careers (Mahmud et al., 2017). Career-related self-confidence plays an important role in influencing a person's ability to make decisions about appropriate career choices, considering factors such as family, organization, social aspects, and economic factors that affect their career development (Mahmud et al., 2017). This shows that self-confidence in a career is considered as the ability of university graduates in planning and carrying out a detailed study process related to their career choice. The concept of self-confidence in a career or known as career self-efficacy can be defined as the ability of individuals to assess their level of ability in planning and implementing the necessary steps to achieve the desired career goals (Sahabuddin, 2018). This not only involves the mastery of skills and knowledge related to a career, but also the ability to make assessments based on the knowledge and skills they have.

Based on previous studies, researchers focus more on the self-efficacy of students' careers and there are limitations in the career readiness and career exploration process among graduate students. Therefore, this study will focus on the exploration of career self-efficacy among graduate students. In the same effort, this study will also explore career readiness and career exploration among graduate students to achieve the overall goal of the study.

Research Objective

There are three study objectives, namely

1. Exploring Career Self-Efficacy among graduate students
2. Exploring Career Readiness among graduate students
3. Exploring the Career Exploration process among graduate students

Literature Review

Career Self-Efficacy

According to Mahmud et al (2020), self-efficacy plays a major role in individuals through confidence to function, motivation, level of effectiveness, and act based on what they believe objectively and, by correcting their initial perceptions supported by existing knowledge and skills. Therefore, self-efficacy plays a major role in an individual's life because it refers to a person's confidence in their ability to overcome challenges, achieve goals, and perform tasks with excellence. When individuals have high self-efficacy, they tend to have strong

enthusiasm and motivation to achieve success. These beliefs form an individual's objective view of the world, guiding their actions based on reality and available knowledge. With supported knowledge and skills, self-efficacy becomes an important foundation that helps individuals function more effectively.

This is reinforced by the results of other studies that define the concept of self-efficacy as a situation where individuals can assess their ability to plan and carry out the necessary action steps to achieve the desired target (Mahmud et al., 2017). In addition to having competence and knowledge in the field of work, this individual is also able to analyze the actions that should be taken based on the knowledge and abilities possessed. This shows that self-efficacy involves cognitive processes, motivational drives, emotional responses, and physical reactions. Individuals with self-efficacy always strive to find opportunities to improve their personal achievements by building confidence and trust in the steps taken. Next, this factor motivates individuals to act according to the level of confidence and self-belief they have toward certain tasks or activities.

According to Mahmud et al (2017), the concept of career self-efficacy initially originated from the application of SCT Theory (Social Cognitive Theory) in the context of career aspects that began in early 1994 by Lent and friends. This theory involves the development and application of a broader concept that originated from the social cognitive theory founded by Bandura. This theory was later developed by Lent, Brown, and Hackett in 1996 in the context of academic and career fields. The main concept of this theory is how individuals make decisions related to their career development, which depends on various factors such as personality characteristics, life experiences, and the context of the environment around them. This theory includes important elements such as self-efficacy and expectation factors that emphasize the understanding of academic achievement as well as a person's career choice.

According to Mahmud et al (2020), some students experience a lack of self-confidence to make career decisions and have weak self-efficacy. These factors contribute to the inability of graduates to make career decisions due to negative career thoughts. This shows that students who lack career self-efficacy do not feel confident enough in their own abilities. As a result, they have difficulty seeing clearly what they should do in the career field they are interested in. This will prevent them from taking action to get the career they want.

This fact is reinforced through research done by Mahmud et al (2020), who asserted that self-efficacy in a career context among university students has a close relationship with their confidence and trust in formulating a career plan. This includes choosing a career field, making career-related decisions, and being responsible for all decisions made. The results of reading-related studies also give significance to the findings that self-confidence in a career context plays a large role in shaping a person's career personality. Individuals who have strong self-confidence in their career field tend to exhibit significant characteristics. Those who have high confidence in their abilities in the career field tend to make effective career decisions based on accurate information. Furthermore, they also accept their responsibility wisely through the actions taken based on the decisions taken. In addition, they also demonstrate high efficiency in performing their career duties by engaging in appropriate training and programs to improve the knowledge and skills required. All of this shows that self-efficacy in a career context has a profound impact on how individuals shape and manage their career development.

Career Readiness

According to Mahmud et al (2017), the concept of career readiness refers to an individual's sensitivity to the importance of good achievement while studying at the university level. This idea serves as a platform for them to explore their identity and identify the various opportunities available in the job market by engaging in appropriate career programs. In addition to this, Mahmud et al (2017) explained that career readiness symbolizes a psychological dimension that involves elements of thinking, feeling, and action that affect the process of individual career development. This dimension includes aspects of planning a career, exploring career opportunities, choosing a career path, the level of maturity in a career, as well as making decisions about a career. This career advancement is also influenced by elements from the external environment such as family, economic factors, social interaction, and organizational structure. Therefore, a career thinking approach that tends to be negative will affect the level of competence in making career-related decisions. This individual will have low self-confidence in making career-related decisions.

In another study by Mahmud et al (2020), they found that there are six career readiness skills which include social competence, various skills, positive attitude towards work, personality and emotions, and entrepreneurship. Apart from that, Mahmud et. al (2020) stated that career readiness is readiness in terms of knowledge, skills, and learning methods possessed when starting training in the field of work. This includes the readiness to work, learning basic workplace attitudes, and specialized knowledge. However, career readiness also involves ways of thinking such as the ability to understand, solve problems, and make decisions. According to Mahmud et al (2020), career readiness is also influenced by external factors such as family, friends, money, and the workplace. Some students take courses not because of their own choice, but because of parents, friends, and school decisions.

In a study conducted by Halim & Sahid (2020), it was found that elements such as student achievement, knowledge, and skills possessed by individuals play an important role in shaping their work readiness skills. Key aspects of these job readiness skills include a graduate's ability to adapt to a new work culture, deep expertise in a specific job field, and the ability to work together in a group. In addition, the ability to learn and master new skills quickly is also an important characteristic. A strong work ethic, the ability to take good care of one's health, and the passion to meet the standards set in the workplace are also key factors in forming quality work readiness skills. The results of this study prove that the combination of these elements is important for the development of individuals who are ready and able to face work challenges and participate effectively in the job market.

Career Exploration

According to Halim & Sahid (2020), career exploration is a process where individuals gather and strengthen knowledge about certain career fields to prepare themselves to achieve career goals. This reflects an active process where individuals try to find and expand knowledge about the desired job field to advance steps towards the desired career goal. In going through this process, individuals will undergo exploration or gather information, while interacting with experts in the career field that is the focus. Through career exploration, individuals are given a unique opportunity to understand the characteristics required of them and the opportunities available in the career field they are interested in. This in turn will help them make more informed and holistic career decisions. By conducting career exploration carefully, individuals can build a solid foundation for their career steps and plan forward steps more effectively.

A low level of career exploration can hurt graduates in finding a suitable job (Halim & Sahid, 2020). This is because when a graduate is not actively involved in the exploration of the desired career field, they will not understand the job requirements and their opportunities in the career better. Therefore, they will face difficulties in matching the desired job opportunities with their abilities. This will cause graduates to be stuck in jobs that do not meet their expectations and this may result in career dissatisfaction. Therefore, the study of Halim & Sahid (2020), stated that it is important for graduates to do an active career exploration process in the field that interests them. By engaging in this exploration, graduates can understand their strengths and weaknesses to find jobs that align with their aspirations, and this will increase their chances of achieving career satisfaction. In addition, when graduates take the initiative to find information about careers they like, they will obtain a lot of career information and reduce the level of stress in the process of finding a job, the process of gathering information to obtain the knowledge and skills needed for a career. This is supported by a study conducted by Halim & Sahid (2020), where graduates agree that career management programs such as career exploration and action plans to get a job can reduce the probability of graduates being unemployed and reduce their anxiety.

Research Methodology

Research Design

This study uses the qualitative method that focuses on understanding experiences and perspectives through observation and discussion. The aim is to explore the level of career self-efficacy, career readiness, and career exploration of graduate students.

Study Sampling

This sample was selected using a purposive sampling method. The sample in this study is five students of a Higher Education Institution (IPT) who are in their final year of study. Two graduates are students in the field of 'aviation management', one graduate in the field of business, one in the field of law, and another in the field of creative technology. Group counseling sessions in the form of modules are used by the researcher to obtain information from the graduate students being studied.

Study Procedures

This module consists of five activities named 'Know Yourself', 'Magic Bulb', 'Prickly Fence', 'Career Genogram', and 'My Way'. Each activity is designed based on research objectives, with the first objective being to explore Career Self-Efficacy among graduate students through the 'Magic Bulb' activity. The next objective is to study career readiness through the 'My Way' activity, while the final objective is to research the Career Exploration process through the 'Barbed Fence' and 'Career Genogram' activities. This module will be delivered by holding group discussions after participants have completed individual assignments.

In the first session, the activities carried out were 'Get to Know Yourself' and 'Magic Bulbs'. The 'Kenali Diri' activity is a get-to-know-you session for students. They will start by writing their name and three career aspirations on the career aspirations tag. Then, they stick these tags on their shirts and then introduce themselves in group sessions.

The second activity is the 'Magic Bulb' which uses SWOT analysis as a tool. Graduate students list personal strengths, list personal weaknesses, list opportunities related to career planning, and list threats related to career planning in the SWOT analysis box.

The third activity is the 'Barbed Fence' which uses the 'Career Decision Making Analysis' tool. Graduate students list the influencing factors in making a career decision, arrange the influencing factors in making a career decision according to their preferences, choose one factor that is the most disturbing in making a career decision, and explain the self-assessment of the disturbing factors in making a career decision.

The fourth activity is the 'Career Genogram' which uses the 'Career Genogram Guide' equipment, paper, and pen. In this activity, graduate students list the occupations of each family member for three generations, identify the career patterns of family members for the three generations, and list the occupations of family members according to career aspirations.

The last activity is 'My Way' which uses Individual Action Plan (PTI) equipment. For this activity, graduates produce an Individual Action Plan (PTI) in writing by listing the appropriate Individual Action Plan (PTI) for the final year of study, the first three months after graduation, and the second three months after graduation.

Findings

Table 1 is the demographic profile of the respondents for this study. Based on Table 1, three respondents are women followed by two men. There are two graduates in Aviation Management, one in law, one in business, and one in creative technology. In terms of education level, they are all bachelor's graduates.

Table 1
Profile of Respondents

Respondent Code	Gender	Graduate Field	Level of Education
R1	Female	Aviation Management	Undergraduate
R2	Female	Aviation Management	Undergraduate
R3	Male	Legislation (Law)	Undergraduate
R4	Female	Business	Undergraduate
R5	Male	Creative Technology	Undergraduate

Table 2 shows the career aspirations of the respondents for this study. Career aspirations for R1 are logisticians, businesswoman, and flight attendants. Career aspirations for R2 are pilots, stewardess, and loadmaster. R3's career aspirations are lawyer, doctor, and Chartered Accountant. R4's career aspirations are content creator, businesswoman, and marketing. R5's career aspirations are e-sports, animation editor, and soldier.

Table 2

Career Aspiration of Respondents

Respondent Code	Career Aspiration
R1	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Logistician 2. Businesswoman 3. Flight attendant
R2	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Pilots 2. Stewardess 3. Loadmaster
R3	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Lawyer 2. Doctor 3. Chartered Accountant.
R4	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Content creator 2. Businesswoman 3. Marketing
R5	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. E-sports 2. Animation editor 3. Soldier

Objective 1: Exploring Career Self-Efficacy among graduate students.

Theme 1: High career self-efficacy

Subtheme 1: High self-confidence

R2: "I dare to take on challenges... not that I'm not afraid at all, but I'm the type who tries. Especially in the field of aviation, I will try to take on that challenge."

R4: "My unique way of thinking... is my advantage in content creation because people are more interested in seeing different content. I also have a growth mindset. Without a growth mindset, we cannot accept criticism and grow."

Through the first subtheme, R2 and R4 have self-confidence in their ability to overcome opposition in the field they want to venture into. For R2, self-confidence is to try something new and adapt themselves with changes in career demands. R2 is confident that he can learn new things quickly. For R4, his confidence is to see criticism as something constructive to develop yourself in the career you want.

Subtheme 2: Ability to identify own skills.

R2: "Since I am already in the aviation stream, so we already have that branch, we are already comfortable. For example, as a pilot, maybe I can take the cadet under the airline... like that... so if it's a flight attendant, we already have the basics... for flight attendants, logistics, and loadmasters, we already have the basics."

R3: "I am sensitive to certain matters and can work under pressure, so it is in line with my career aspirations. My communication skills are also high, and I have empathy to solve problems."

R4: "My strength is being able to detect opportunities or problems... because in business, we need to detect and solve problems. So my strength is being able to detect these things in business, and of course, the goal is to help our customers. Secondly, I can understand people because I can help customers. This is related to content creation that can help people with things that bother them, like depression or similar things like that."

R5: "I like to design what is dreamed of, and when I want to do that thing, I will do it immediately and can do two things at the same time. I also like to find solutions... for example, I don't like to socialize, but because I don't like to stand out, my solution is to make people know me even in public or when playing games, I will make people know me so that I don't have to stand out too much."

In the second subtheme R2, R3, R4, and R5 can identify y own skills. R2 stated that he already had the knowledge to enter the career he wanted. For R3, he identified will personal soft skills to work in the desired field. Next, R4 identifies his skills which are empathy and can solve problems. The last is R5 who has the skills to solve problems, and this can help he achieved his career aspirations.

Theme 2: Low career self-efficacy

Subtheme 1: Low self esteem

R3: "I am a perfectionist because I worry too much about the future situation... this causes me to have self-doubt."

R4: "I am a perfectionist... so it has stopped me a lot of times from creating content because it's not perfect enough or it's not good enough... also, I feel judged because I feel too different... even though the uniqueness I have is an advantage, it is also a weakness."

In the first subtheme, R3 and R4 lack self-confidence. As for R3, he stated that he was always unsure of the decisions he made because of anxiety about the future situation. R3 also says this is due to nature which always wants perfection in every situation for the decision that has been made. R4 also stated the same thing, which is wanting perfection for the results which he has done. In addition, R4 also added that he felt punished by society because he has a difference of opinion, and this causes him to feel a lack of confidence in himself in the field he wants to pursue.

Subtheme 2: Weak in the subjects for the related career path

R2: "I am somewhat weak in numbers... because if you are a pilot, you have to deal with radars and that's where I am somewhat weak... I can manage, but it's somewhat slow (in mathematics), so it takes time."

In the second subtheme, R2 has a weakness in the important subject of the field he wants to pursue, which is mathematics. R2 stated that this made him feel hesitant to become a pilot.

Objective 2: Exploring Career Readiness among graduate students.

Theme 1: Planning to follow the program organized by the university.

Subtheme 1: Have plans to follow a university program.

R1: "I will join the UniKL MIAT event because they organize many events... for example, they organize events that are more work-oriented... because through these events, we can practice while working. When we join events, we will meet people, people we don't know, so we can learn from them, and we will be able to communicate with them... programs like a flea market. Then, we will join career programs. Some companies will come... to let us know about the companies we can learn about..."

Here you can see R1 who has plans to follow the university to achieve his career readiness. In addition, R1 also stated the purpose of following the organization of the university program. This shows that he has an early goal and have a high career readiness.

Theme 2: Planning to enter a club at university.

Subtheme 1: Planning to enter the law club

R3: "In my final year of study, I have joined the law club... so I can increase my skills in debate and communication."

Subtheme one shows that R3 has a goal that focuses on a career field desired. Because he placed the lawyer as the first career aspiration, the club law is an option for his extra curriculum to improve his skills soft ie communication and arguing.

Subtheme 2: Planning to enter the volunteer club.

R4: "Through the volunteering club, I can meet a lot more people, and when I meet more people, I understand their problems even better. So, for me, understanding human problems is very important in content creation and also in business. Not only in general life, but people like me can build better content and also build better businesses because the main thing about business is to understand the needs of society, and the importance of others... so that we can understand the economic gap. So, when we see it with our own eyes, only then do we realize the reality."

In the second subtheme, R4 has a specific goal of improving his empathy skills by joining a volunteer club. R4 has a very clear purpose which is to understand the needs of the public and find gaps to fill. This in turn gives an idea for the opening of his business in the future.

Theme 3: Planning to follow programs organized by external organizations.

Subtheme 1: Planning to follow the video editing program at KPIM Animation

R5: "So, I will take the video animation editing program organized by KPIM... this program has classes and competitions. During the activity week organized by KPIM, there is also an e-sports event, so I will join there to enhance my skills."

Here it shows that R5 will follow the recommendations of external organizations such as KPIM to improve video editing skills. Furthermore, R5 will improve skills in e-sports also in the same program. This can be concluded that R5 focuses on improving two different skills for different career aspirations in the same program.

Theme 4: Planning to build a network.

Subtheme 1: Have a plan to build a network with relevant people in the industry.

Certainly, here are the English translations for the provided text:

R2: "I also want to join big events... events from the outside, for example, LIM... where there are more prominent people... then I will present myself more to important people at UniKL MIAT, for example, like the dean... like getting closer to people who are already familiar in the industry... so it's easier for us to approach work in aviation."

R5: "I will participate in inter-college sports competitions, so I can meet more people like me... increase connections with people who think like me..."

R5: "I also want to gain public attention before publishing the story... my way is to expose my animation and then people will be interested, and when I reach that

target, I will publish a story so that fans can read it, then they will share it with their friends. I will publish on Instagram, TikTok, YouTube, or a blog."

In the first subtheme, R2 and R5 have plans to build a network with related people in the industry. R2 stated that he wanted to follow a program where many influential people were. This is because he aims to get a job easily in the field he wants to pursue. For R5, he wants to stand out in the field of his career aspirations by entering sports matches between colleges and social media. R5 thinks that building a network is to get friends and fans for his work.

Theme 5: Gaining new qualifications and skills.

Subtheme 1: Planning to improve scriptwriting skills

R5: "In my final year of study, I plan to take a scriptwriting course. So I will hone my talent to become a scriptwriter... so I will try to create a script... so when I have created the script, I will try to develop the story, like sketching out how the story will be."

The first subtheme shows that R5 wants to hone his talent in scriptwriting and further improve this skill by making animated drawings.

Subtheme 2: Planning to obtain a Chartered qualification after completing studies

R1: "After completing my studies, I want to take the CILT (Chartered Institute of Logistics and Transport) examination... because to obtain the CILT, I need to pass the examination first... And to obtain the CILT, I also need to have two years of work experience in the logistics department... I have worked before continuing my studies."

The second subtheme shows that R1 wants to obtain the CILT qualification and knows the methods and conditions for obtaining this qualification.

Subtheme 3: Planning for digital content and dropship

R4: "Make my own content in three months after graduating... I want to see if there are any ideas or if certain ideas I want to use for my content are feasible. So, I can know... at least, the introduction is okay, this idea is okay, or this idea is not okay... so I can try to create the content I want as a content creator."

R4: "Then, in the following three months, I will do drop shipping, learn marketing for each company... each company has different marketing methods, so I will relate what I have learned... because what I have learned is different from real life. So, I will join drop shipping with a company."

The third subtheme shows that R4 has plans to create digital content to see if the production of his ideas is accepted by the community. This will help him to understand the suitability of the idea and also the acceptance of the target audience. Next, R4 wants to make a dropship to apply the marketing knowledge he has learned during university. Therefore, he will better understand the process of this field practically.

Objective 3: Exploring the Process of Career Exploration among Graduate Students

Theme 1: Teachers are the inspiration for career exploration.

Subtheme 1: Teacher as the main inspiration

R1: "I chose to teach because it sparked my interest. There was one subject, airfreight management, and that's where I learned that aviation has logistics. Before this, during my diploma, I took sea transportation, and he shared his

experience working in logistics. So, from there, I started to develop an interest." Here it is clear that the main career inspiration for R1 is from a lecturer because he stated that he did not know what logistics was, but the knowledge came from a lecturer who had experience in the industry and told his work experience. The job process itself attracted R1's interest to focus on the field of logistics and then make a deep exploration of this career.

Theme 2: Family is the inspiration for career exploration.

Subtheme 1: Family as the main inspiration

R2: "I don't know what my ambition is... but when I see an airplane, I want to become a pilot. My mother likes to hear that I want to become a pilot, so she asked people... how to continue studying to become a pilot. I was also confused about which degree to pursue because before this was vocational, so after reconsidering and praying, I just continued at UniKL... my parents also supported me, saying to continue at UniKL because aviation can take you anywhere."

The first subtheme is family as the main inspiration, and this can be seen by R2 who stated that his mother is a strong person who supports his interests. This is because, R2 does not have clear ambitions, but has a desire to be in a field related to aviation. Therefore, his mother asked the contact to enter R2 in this field. Both his parents also supported him to enter aviation management. So, from here R2 decided to continue in this field.

Subtheme 2: Family as an Indirect Inspiration

R3: "Actually, my mother is in the legal field, working as a legal secretary. So, I can see a pattern here... she always tells me about her work and gossips about her colleagues, so that's how I know a little bit about a law firm. She has also been supporting me."

R1: "On my mother's side, it's more about education... on my father's side, even though the education is not as high as my father's side, they are more into business... So, my mother, even though she doesn't work, they do business like cosmetics, food, and so on."

The second subtheme is family as an indirect inspiration. R3 is a graduate in the field of law and puts the main factor in choosing a career from his interest. However, after making a genogram and exploring deeply, R3 realized that he also had revelations from his family regarding his career aspirations. Likewise, R1 who stated that the family on his father's side is more inclined towards a business career.

Subtheme 3: Family is not a factor that inspires career exploration

R5: "Because there is a high risk for e-sports... my parents somewhat do not believe in that career... then for all three of my career aspirations, they have nothing to do with my family."

The third subtheme is that family is not a factor that inspires career exploration. R5 stated that the three careers he wanted to pursue had nothing in common with his family members after making the genogram. In addition, there is also the disapproval of R5's parents to enter the field of e-sports because of the high-risk career.

Theme 3: Self-interest is the main inspiration

R3: "...because of my own interest. So, if you ask why I want to become a lawyer, the reason is because I want to. This interest sparked during my study of business

law because during that time, whenever they wanted to research articles or review cases, they would refer to me, so I felt happy. I am also very competitive... I want something unique."

R4: "In my life, I always think about what I want to do in my life. So if that thing is not enjoyable, I don't want to do it. So my way of thinking is different from others... so I like to do things on my own. So when it comes to content creation or the things I want to do in my future career, I want to do what I like. So that's why I approach content creation in the first place because of my own interest."

R5: "The influencing factor is indeed my own interest... I really like playing games and reading manga... so this is what makes me interested in pursuing it as a career... then I also have friends who share the same interest..."

Based on the stated themes, R3, R4, and R5 put their own interests as the main inspiration. For R3, this interest resulted from his experience while studying business law during his diploma because his classmates would ask his opinion. In addition, R5 also wanted something unique from his friends during his diploma, so he chose to pursue other fields from his friends. For R4, this interest results from his creativity and hobby in the process of producing content on social media. This can also be seen in R5 who expressed interest in playing games and reading manga. R5's free time activities became the trigger of interest in venturing into the field of e-sports and animation.

Discussion and Conclusion

The findings of the study show that graduate students have a high level of career efficiency. They have self-confidence in venturing into the desired career field and have the skills to identify their abilities. There is one respondent who faces challenges in self-confidence. However, the respondent knows the solution to the problem. This shows that almost all the participants have a high level of career readiness. They have made plans to join career-related curricular clubs at the university, enter career programs, improve relevant skills, and build networks with people related to their career aspirations. According to Alexander et. al (2020), the ability to handle uncertainty in life and work, which is called "ambiguity tolerance" is linked to having a strong belief in your abilities to succeed in your career. This means the better an individual deals with unclear or uncertain situations, the more confident they will feel about the chosen career path. On the other hand, having high career self-efficacy, or confidence in own abilities, was connected to having fewer difficulties in making career-related choices. This means that the more an individual believes in their own skills, the easier it is to make decisions about career path.

Furthermore, the career exploration process of graduate students is at a mature stage. There are three graduate students who decided to enter a career field based on their own interests. They are guided by values such as favourite leisure activities, creativity, and wanting something new. Therefore, their family members are not the first people they will look for information and do career exploration. They will look for friends, teachers, or other sources of information. This is supported by Bakar & Amat (2022), that the presence of a strong support system significantly contributes to an individual's perception of their own abilities to perform tasks and succeed in their career. This implies that when individuals feel supported and encouraged by their social networks, they are more likely to develop a sense of belief in their own capabilities to accomplish professional tasks and navigate challenges effectively.

This study provides guidance for the development of appropriate educational and

career training strategies to improve graduate students' self-development and career readiness. This is an important step in preparing future generations to achieve success and satisfaction in their chosen field of work.

Limitations

The limitation of the study is that the respondents are limited to undergraduate graduates only. The level of career self-efficacy in this study was evaluated based on career exploration and graduate career readiness in the final year of university studies. Since this study only examines career self-efficacy for five graduates, the results of this study cannot be generalized to all graduates throughout Malaysia. Therefore, it is suggested that a longitudinal study be conducted using a mixed-method approach to examine more deeply the level of career self-efficacy among graduates in Malaysia.

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