

Education Quality Management in Overcoming the Mismatch of Skills of University Graduates with the Needs of the Job Market

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze the factors that affect the work readiness of university graduates from the perspective of education quality management. The method used is a literature review by analyzing various relevant previous studies regarding graduate competencies, soft skills, digital literacy, and industrial cooperation. The research process is carried out through the collection, study, and analysis of literature sources related to student work readiness. The results of the study show that the quality of the curriculum, practical experience, communication skills, and mastery of technology affect the work readiness of graduates. This research provides the implication that universities need to improve the quality of learning and adapt the curriculum to the needs of the world of work so that graduates are more competitive and adaptive to technological developments.

INTRODUCTION

The development of technology, digitalization and globalization have brought major changes to the needs in the world of work. Today's industry needs a lot of human resources who not only have academic abilities but also have practical skills, critical thinking skills, communication, creativity and adaptability to the times. This condition requires universities to be able to produce qualified graduates and in accordance with the needs of the job market.

However, there is still a discrepancy between the competencies of university graduates and the needs of the world of work. The Minister of Manpower of the Republic of Indonesia stated that *Skill* college graduates are still not in accordance with the needs of the job market. The statement shows that there is still a gap between the competence of university graduates and the demands of the industry that continues to grow so that some graduates experience difficulties in competing in the world of work because their skills are not yet relevant to the needs of the industry. This is also in line with Ardhana's research which states that the mismatch between the world of education and the needs of the labor market in Indonesia is one of the main factors in the high unemployment rate. Although the number of college graduates continues to increase, there are still many college graduates who are not prepared to face the challenges and demands of the world of work. (Redaksi KabarAkutal.id, 2025)(2025)

These problems are caused by a curriculum that is not fully relevant to the needs of the industry, a lack of mastery of practical skills and *soft skills*, as well as the development of digital technology and transformational which is taking place very quickly. This phenomenon is closely related to education quality management. According to Sallis, in Sihotang, the quality of education is defined as the level of excellence of educational services that are able to meet the needs and expectations of students, the community and stakeholders. This statement is also in line with the concept of the National Standards for Higher Education (SN-Dikti) which aims to ensure the implementation of effective, adaptive and sustainable higher education in the face of the development of science, technology and the needs of society so that universities are able to produce superior and quality human resources. This shows that the quality of graduates is one of the important indicators in the quality of higher education. Therefore, the implementation of education quality management in higher education needs to receive more attention in order to create the quality of graduates who are able to adapt to the development of the world of work and the changing needs of the industry. (Haris & Irawan, 2025)(2026)(Permendiktisaintek No. 39 Tahun 2025)

Based on this description, this article discusses the relationship between education quality management and the mismatch of *the skills* of university graduates with the needs of the job market.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Education Quality Management

Education quality management is an effort to manage education that is carried out systematically and continuously to improve the quality of education. According to Sallis in Sihotang, the quality of education is defined as the level of

excellence of education services that are able to meet the needs of students, the community and stakeholders. In the context of higher education, the quality of education is not only determined from the academic aspect but also from the ability of universities to produce graduates who are competent and in accordance with the needs of the world. The implementation of education quality management aims to improve the effectiveness of the learning process, the quality of the curriculum and the competence of graduates so that they can compete in the era of technological and industrial developments. (2026)

National Higher Education Standards (SN Dikti)

The national standard of higher education (SN Dikti) is a standard that is a reference in the implementation of higher education in Indonesia. SN Dikti regulates national standards for education, research and community service to ensure the quality of education in a sustainable manner. (Permendikisaintek No. 39 Tahun 2025)

The Mismatch of Graduate Skills with the Job Market

Incompatibility *Skill* Graduates with job market needs show that there is a gap between the competencies possessed by graduates and the skills needed by the industrial world. This condition is influenced by the lack of relevance of the curriculum, low mastery of practical skills and the ever-changing development of technology. (Haris & Irawan, 2025)

METHODOLOGY

This article uses a literature study method with a qualitative descriptive approach. Data was obtained through the study of various library sources such as journals, books, news and regulations related to education quality management and job market needs.

RESEARCH RESULTS

Based on the results of literature reviews and previous research, it can be seen that the mismatch of the competencies of university graduates with the needs of the job market is still a problem that is quite often found. Several studies show that a curriculum that is too theory-oriented, lack of experience in industrial practice, and lack of optimal cooperation between universities and the industrial world are the main factors causing skill mismatch in college graduates.

Table 1. literature reviews and previous research

No.	Researcher	Method	Findings
1.	(Kamal, 2025)	Qualitative	The implementation of a quality management system and an industry-based curriculum can increase graduates and strengthen graduates' readiness to face the world of work.
2.	(Yusvan, Sabara, & Yasir, 2026)	Qualitative	The implementation of the Internal Quality Assurance System (SPMI) which is carried out in a structured, participatory and sustainable manner is able to support the improvement of the quality of education and the development of the quality of higher education institutions.
3.	(Adrevi, Sujarwo, & Safitri, 2025)	Literature Studies	Improving students' competence and work readiness can be supported through practice-based learning experiences that are relevant to the needs of the industrial world in the implementation of the MBKM program.
4.	(Azhar, Basir, & Data, 2025)	Quantitative	Internship experience, mastery of <i>soft skills</i> and work motivation have a positive effect on students' work readiness.
5.	(Liana, Silaban, & Siregar, 2025)	Quantitative	<i>Self-efficacy</i> , <i>locus of control</i> , and internship experience have a positive and significant effect on students' job readiness.
6.	(Octhaviana & Rahmaningtyas, 2025)	Quantitative	Mastery of technology, <i>self-efficacy</i> and interpersonal communication skills affect students' work readiness.

7.	(Halim, 2025)	Qualitative	The <i>deep learning</i> curriculum not only contributes to the development of high-level cognitive skills such as critical thinking and problem-solving, but also strengthens job readiness through contextual learning, authentic assessment, and technology integration.
8.	(Pramesti, Meisya, & Amrillah, 2024)	Qualitative	There is still a gap between the competencies possessed by university graduates and the needs of the world of work.
9.	(Hidayati, 2026)	Qualitative	The incompatibility of graduate competencies with the industrial world is influenced by the curriculum that is still too academic, the lack of experience in industrial practice and the lack of optimal cooperation between universities and the world of work.
10.	(Nikmah & Iskandar, 2025)	Literature Review	Digital literacy includes the dimensions of information management skills, digital collaboration, content creation, digital security, and technology-based problem-solving. These five aspects have been proven to contribute to increasing individual readiness to face the challenges of the technology-based world of work.

Based on table 1, it can be seen that most studies show a relationship between education quality management and improving the competence and work readiness of university graduates. The quality of education that is well managed is able to help universities produce graduates who are more relevant to the needs of the world of work and industrial development.

Kamal (2025) stated that the implementation of a quality management system and an industry-based curriculum can improve the quality of graduates and strengthen readiness to face the world of work. In line with that, Yusvan's research (2026) states that the implementation of the Internal Quality Assurance

System (SPMI) in a structured, participatory, and sustainable manner is able to support the improvement of the quality of higher education. The findings show that good quality management is one of the important factors in improving the quality of university graduates.

In addition to the quality management aspect, several studies also highlight the importance of practical experience and student competency development. Adrevi's research (2025) states that improving students' competence and work readiness can be supported through practice-based learning in the implementation of the MBKM program through strengthening *hard and soft skills*. Azhar's (2025) research also states that internship experience, mastery of *soft skills*, and work motivation have a positive effect on students' work readiness, this is in line with Liana (2025's) research which proves that *self-efficacy, locus of control*, and internship experience have a significant influence on students' work readiness in facing the world of work and Othaviana's (2025) research which states that mastery technology, *self-efficacy*, and interpersonal communication skills affect students' work readiness. These findings show that mastery of technical and non-technical skills is an important need for graduates in the current era of technological and industrial development.

On the other hand, some studies still find a mismatch between the competencies of graduates and the needs of the job market. Pramesti research (2024) states that there is still a gap between the competence of university graduates and the needs of the world of work. Hidayati's research (2026) also states that the incompatibility of graduate competencies with the industrial world is influenced by a curriculum that is still too academic, lack of experience in industrial practice, and not optimal cooperation between universities and the world of work. Therefore, learning innovations and strengthening technology-based competencies are needed so that graduates are better prepared to face the demands of the modern world of work. In this case, Halim's research (2025) states that *the deep learning* curriculum is able to improve critical thinking skills, problem-solving, and student work readiness through contextual learning and technology integration. This is strengthened by research by Nikmah and Iskandar (2025) which states that digital literacy has an important contribution in increasing individual readiness to face the challenges of the technology-based world of work.

Overall, the results of previous research show that improving the quality of higher education needs to be done through the development of relevant curriculum, practice-based learning, strengthening soft skills and digital literacy, and closer cooperation with the industrial world. Thus, universities can produce graduates who are more competent, adaptive, and in accordance with the needs of the job market.

DISCUSSION

Based on the results of the research, it can be seen that education quality management has a close relationship with the suitability of university graduates to the needs of the job market. The quality of education that is well managed can help universities produce graduates who have academic competence, practical skills, and adaptability in accordance with the development of the industrial and

technological world. On the other hand, suboptimal education management can cause a mismatch in the skills of graduates with the needs of the world of work. The results of this study are in line with the theory of education quality management according to Sallis in Sihotang (2026) which states that the quality of education is an effort to improve the quality of education in a sustainable manner to meet the needs of stakeholders, including the world of work.

The results of the study show that one of the main factors causing the occurrence of Skill mismatch is a curriculum that is still too theory-oriented and has not fully adapted to the needs of the industry. This condition causes graduates to have quite good academic abilities, but lack practical experience and work skills needed in the professional world. These findings are in line with the concept link and match developed by Department of Education and Culture (1993) Namely the importance of compatibility between the world of education and the needs of the world of work so that graduates can more easily adapt and be absorbed in the job market. Therefore, universities need to develop curricula regularly so that learning materials are more relevant to technological developments and industrial needs.

In addition to the curriculum, practical experiences such as internships, MBKM programs, and project-based learning have also been proven to be able to increase students' work readiness. Through practical experience, students not only gain theoretical knowledge, but also understand real conditions in the world of work, improve communication skills, teamwork, problem-solving, and adaptability. These results support the theory experiential learning stated by Colb in Haryati explained that direct experience in the learning process can help individuals understand and develop skills more effectively. Thus, the integration between academic learning and practical experience is one of the important efforts in improving the quality of university graduates.(2025)

Research also shows that mastery of soft skills and digital literacy has an important role in increasing the work readiness of graduates. In the era of technological development and digitalization, the world of work not only requires academic skills, but also communication skills, critical thinking, creativity, interpersonal skills, and mastery of digital technology. In addition, cooperation between universities and the industrial world is also an important factor in increasing the relevance of graduates to the needs of the job market. This collaboration can be carried out through the preparation of a joint curriculum, internship programs, training, industrial seminars, and the provision of job opportunities for graduates. With good cooperation, universities can better understand the competencies needed by the industry so that the educational process can be adjusted to the needs of the world of work. This shows that improving the quality of higher education requires the involvement of various parties so that the graduates produced have relevant competencies and are able to compete in the world of work.

Overall, the results of the study show that the improvement in the quality of university graduates is influenced by curriculum suitability, strengthening soft skills, practical experience, and the use of technology in the learning process. Universities that are able to apply contextual learning and establish cooperation with the industrial world tend to produce graduates who are better prepared to

face the demands of the world of work. In addition, the development of digital literacy, communication skills, and critical thinking skills is also an important factor in increasing students' work readiness in an era of increasingly dynamic technological and industrial developments. Thus, improving the quality of higher education needs to be carried out in a sustainable manner through the management of relevant curriculum, strengthening practice-based learning, developing soft skills and digital literacy, and increasing cooperation with the industrial world. These efforts are expected to be able to produce graduates who are more competent, adaptive, and ready to compete in the world of work.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the results of the literature review, it can be concluded that the work readiness of university graduates is influenced by the quality of the curriculum, practical experience, mastery of soft skills, digital literacy, and cooperation between universities and the industrial world. The mismatch between the competencies of graduates and the needs of the job market still occurs due to learning that is too theory-oriented and lack of practical experience in the industrial world. Therefore, universities need to improve the quality of learning through the development of relevant curriculum, practice-based learning, and strengthening cooperation with the industrial world so that graduates have competencies that are in accordance with the needs of the world of work and are able to compete in the era of technological development.

FURTHER STUDY

The next research is expected to develop a study on education quality management by directly researching the application of industry-based curriculum, internship programs, strengthening Soft Skill, and digital literacy for student work readiness. In addition, subsequent research can also use quantitative methods as well as mixed method so that the results of the research are more in-depth and able to describe the real conditions in higher education. It is also important to carry out follow-up studies to see how cooperation between universities and the industrial world can improve the competence of graduates to better suit the needs of the job market.

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