Enhancing career readiness through webinar-based interventions: Bridging academic learning and workforce demands

Renita Kawuryan[1*], Yulius Gessong Sampeallo[1], Anton Nurcahyo[1], Fauziah Lily Anggraeni[1], Christie Stephanie Piar[1], Tiara Amalliah[1]

[1] Politeknik Negeri Samarinda, Jl. Cipto Mangun Kusumo, Sungai Keledang, Kec. Samarinda Seberang, Kota Samarinda, Kalimantan Timur 75242
[*] Corresponding author email: renitakawuryan@polnes.ac.id

Abstract

This study investigates the effectiveness of webinar-based interventions in enhancing students' career readiness, specifically in resume development and interview preparation. The community service initiative, titled "Kickstart Your Career: A Graduate's Guide to Resumes and Interviews," was conducted online by Politeknik Negeri Samarinda and engaged 58 participants, including industry professionals, educators, students, and the public. The webinar employed interactive methods, such as real-time resume evaluations, pre-webinar assignments, post-webinar revisions, and expert-led discussions on interview strategies. Results from a post-event survey indicated significant improvements in participants' ability to craft tailored resumes and confidently approach interviews, with an average satisfaction score of 4.7 out of 5. The iterative learning approach reinforced skill development and career preparedness, bridging theoretical knowledge with practical application. Implications highlight the importance of integrating academic programs with practical career training. Recommendations for future initiatives include extending Q&A sessions and incorporating advanced topics such as personal branding and digital career advancement tools.

Keywords

Career readiness, Career planning, Resume building, Interview preparation, Career goal alignment

Introduction

Developing a strong CV and mastering interview techniques are critical elements of employability and preparedness for the job market for students. These aspects distinguish students in a competitive job market and augment their capacity to obtain preferred positions. Diverse tactics and instruments have been recognized to assist

students in these categories, encompassing tailored learning platforms and rigorous training programs.

Curriculum vitae development

Training on Proficient Curriculum Vitae Composition: Comprehensive training programs focused on effective CV composition have demonstrated a marked enhancement in students' capacity to produce exceptional resumes. These programs underscore the significance of demonstrating skills, knowledge, and business acumen pertinent to prospective employers [1-2]

Interview techniques

Comprehensive Interview Preparation: Training programs encompassing public speaking and job adaptation enhance interview preparation. These programs provide students with the competencies to navigate diverse interview formats, encompassing in-person and virtual environments [1-2].

Development of employability skills

Active and Intermediate Strategies: Students who actively cultivate employability skills, including communication and teamwork, are generally more equipped for the job market. These competencies are essential for securing employment and achieving career success [3]. Work Readiness and Lifelong Employment: Higher education institutions are critical in cultivating long-term employment skills. This entails providing students with pertinent abilities that are flexible to evolving job market requirements [4]. Although emphasis is frequently placed on CV and interview preparation, it is as crucial to contemplate the wider context of employability skills enhancement. Students who proactively upgrade their skills and utilize available resources are more likely to succeed in the job market. Moreover, combining technology with individualized learning might enhance students' attainment of their professional objectives.

This community service aims to improve students' comprehension of resume fundamentals by highlighting the significance of creating customized resumes corresponding to positions and sectors. Participants acquire the skills to construct professional resumes while overcoming common errors to improve their applications' distinctiveness. The program offers tactics for efficient interview preparation, emphasizing active listening, a professional look, and confident communication. Students are instructed on utilizing academic projects, internships, and volunteer experiences to construct a persuasive career narrative, enhancing workforce preparedness and networking prospects. The objective is to integrate academic education with professional demands, enabling students to approach the job market with assurance and skill.

Method

The community service event "Kickstart Your Career: A Graduate's Guide to Resumes and Interviews" was a segment of the Career Planning Design course at Politeknik

Negeri Samarinda. The initiative aimed to equip students and participants with essential career skills to navigate the job market successfully. The research highlights that it provides students access to real-world interview experiences and advanced resume screening, delivering tailored recommendations and valuable insights into company cultures and expectations [5]. The webinar held online via Zoom on November 2, 2024, concentrated on two essential components of workforce readiness: resume construction and interview preparation.

This program was a joint initiative with Youth Network Kaltim (YNK), a regional youth organization, and effectively drew a varied assembly of 58 participants. The participants comprised two expert speakers from Industrial Organizational Psychologists and People and Culture Officer at DT Global offering professional insights, one lecturer overseeing the initiative, four YNK members assisting with organization and logistics, and 51 students, mainly from the fifth semester of the Digital Business Department, along with members of the public seeking to improve their career development skills.

The activity aimed to deliver an interactive and practical educational experience for students, concentrating on career preparation with a focus on resume development and interview preparedness. The process commenced with students being instructed to develop and submit their preliminary resumes as a pre-webinar assignment. This stage will facilitate students' reflection on their competencies, experiences, and professional presentation. Before the webinar, the submitted resumes were evaluated, and a selection was made for live discussion during the session. The selected resumes were anonymized as required and assessed by professional experts during the webinar. The specialists offered comprehensive input, emphasizing strengths, identifying areas for enhancement, and addressing frequent shortcomings. Principal subjects encompassed resume structuring, customization for certain career roles and sectors, and avoiding prevalent formatting or content mistakes.

The webinar featured a specific part on interview preparation and resume-focused conversations. This session offered students pragmatic strategies to succeed in interviews, addressing critical elements such as active listening, professional attitude, assertive communication, and formulating compelling answers to frequently asked interview questions. In the live event, students were prompted to pose inquiries and actively interact with professionals to enhance their comprehension of resume-building procedures and interview techniques. Following the webinar, students were assigned to amend their resumes by the expert criticism and recommendations given during the event. This iterative process enabled students to implement their acquired knowledge, enhance their resumes, and substantially improve their interview preparedness.

A survey was administered via Google Forms to evaluate the overall effectiveness of the activity, utilizing a Likert scale ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree). The use of Likert scales in surveys, including those conducted through Google Forms, has been widely discussed in academic research due to their effectiveness in assessing attitudes and perceptions by providing a spectrum of response options [6-7]. Moreover,

open-ended questions allowed participants to provide comprehensive feedback about their experiences, suggest improvements, and offer recommendations for future activities. The development of large language models (LLMs) has further automated the analysis of such feedback, enabling rapid and personalized responses. This approach helps participants quickly identify areas for improvement while enhancing outcomes through insightful, criterion-based comments guided by instructors [8]. This integrated strategy not only equipped students with practical skills for crafting professional resumes and preparing for interviews but also offered a platform for reflective learning and skill development, cultivating a greater preparedness for employment requirements. The flowchart of methodology presented in Figure 1.
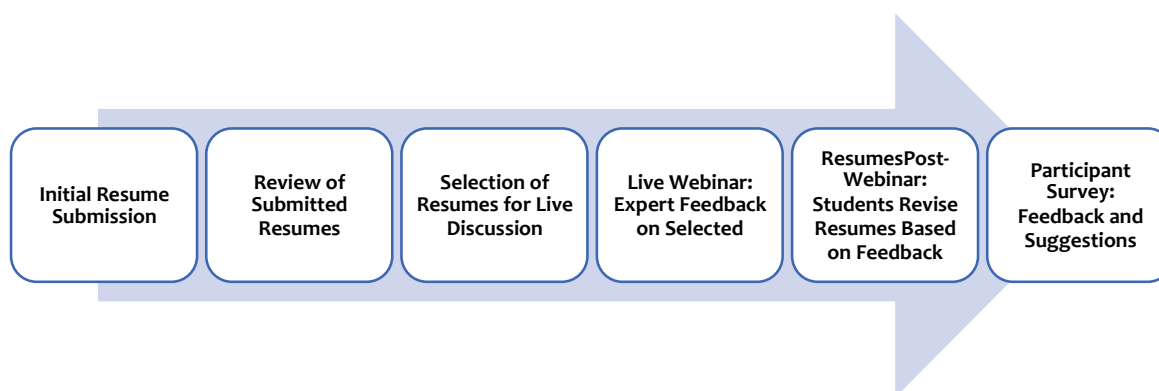

Figure 1. Methodology flowchart: Resume and interview preparation webinar

Result and Discussion

CV Preparation

A strong CV is essential for academic and professional growth, serving as a comprehensive record of skills, experiences, and achievements tailored to specific roles. Key components include up-to-date and professional contact details, such as a current phone number, email address, and LinkedIn profile [9]. A concise summary profile should provide an overview of key qualifications and goals, as a snapshot of the candidate's professional identity [10]. The education section should highlight the academic history, relevant certifications, and ongoing development to demonstrate continuous learning [11]. Experience and projects should be detailed using bullet points to emphasize responsibilities, results, and alignment with the desired role [9][11]. Additional sections like publications, presentations, and service activities may be necessary for academic CVs to capture one's contributions fully [10]. As CV analysis evolves, integrating personality traits and technological insights, such as machine learning, can further enhance effectiveness [12].

Interview preparation

Interview preparation is essential for successfully navigating the recruitment process, which typically includes application, shortlisting, assessments, interviews, offers, and hiring. Effective preparation involves researching the company and its role, understanding its mission, and tailoring responses to align with its values [13]. Practising

answers to common interview questions, such as personal introductions and discussing strengths and weaknesses, enhances performance, particularly for novice job-seekers [14]. The STAR method is a widely used strategy for structuring responses to behavioural questions, focusing on Situation, Task, Action, and Result [15]. Common mistakes, such as poor dress, lack of preparation, over-explaining, and negative comments about previous employers, can hinder success [16]. While the focus is often on the interviewee, the interviewer's role and the interaction dynamics also significantly influence outcomes, highlighting the shared responsibility for a successful interview process [15].

The implementation of community service

The webinar, "Kickstart Your Career: A Graduate's Guide to Resumes and Interviews," effectively improved students' job readiness. The event attracted 58 attendees, comprising two professional speakers, one lecturer, four members of the Youth Network Kaltim (YNK), and 51 fifth-semester students from the Digital Business Department, together with members of the public.

Table 1. Webinar Feedback and Key Insights Summary

Aspect	Details	Key Findings
Usefulness Ratings	Ratings on a scale of 1-5 for how beneficial the webinar was	Majority rated 5/5 (Highly beneficial) Few gave 4/5, suggesting minor areas for improvement.
Strengths	Positive feedback themes	Effective content delivery. Practical insights into resumes and career planning. Clear materials.
Areas for Improvement	Suggestions and criticisms provided by participants	Adjust the pacing of the presentation. Include more training sessions on new, advanced topics.
Participant Engagement	Level of engagement through interactive elements and feedback	Participants appreciated the clarity and relevance of topics and actively engaged during discussions.
Practical Application	Connection of webinar content to real-world job preparation	Helped students in resume creation. Enhanced confidence in interview preparation and career alignment.
Recommendations by Participants	Suggestions for future webinars	Organize more sessions on broader career skills. Maintain or improve current content quality.

Based on the Table 1, a Likert scale survey revealed high participant satisfaction with the webinar, which achieved an average score of 4.7 out of 5. Attendees reported significant improvements in understanding resume construction and interview preparation strategies, highlighting the value of personalized resume evaluations and practical interview advice. Before the webinar, students submitted preliminary resumes, which revealed common weaknesses such as insufficient customization, unclear formatting, and a lack of emphasis on key accomplishments. After the webinar, revised resumes demonstrated marked improvements in organization, clarity, and alignment with specific job roles.

The interactive format of the live webinar, featuring real-time resume analysis, encouraged active participation and meaningful question-and-answer sessions. The section on interview preparation received positive feedback for addressing common challenges and providing actionable advice. The webinar bridged the gap between academic education and workforce demands by equipping students with essential career preparation skills. Key factors contributing to its success included:

1. **Focused Feedback:** Real-time resume evaluations helped students identify specific areas for improvement, making the session highly practical.
2. **Comprehensive Strategy:** Combining resume development with interview preparation offered a holistic understanding of career readiness.
3. **Active Engagement:** The interactive structure enhanced participant involvement and subject comprehension.
4. **Iterative Learning:** Revising resumes post-webinar allowed students to apply new insights, reinforcing their learning.

Recommendations

Despite its success, the webinar could be improved by adjusting the pacing of the presentation and extending Q&A sessions, including advanced topics such as personal branding and networking. Engaging with industry specialists and tracking participant results can enhance effectiveness while ensuring inclusivity. Employing AI-driven solutions for customized feedback will augment learning. Integrating soft skills training, such as adaptability and leadership, will improve participants' readiness for sustained professional success and align the curriculum with labor market demands. Documentation of the community service presented on Figure 2.
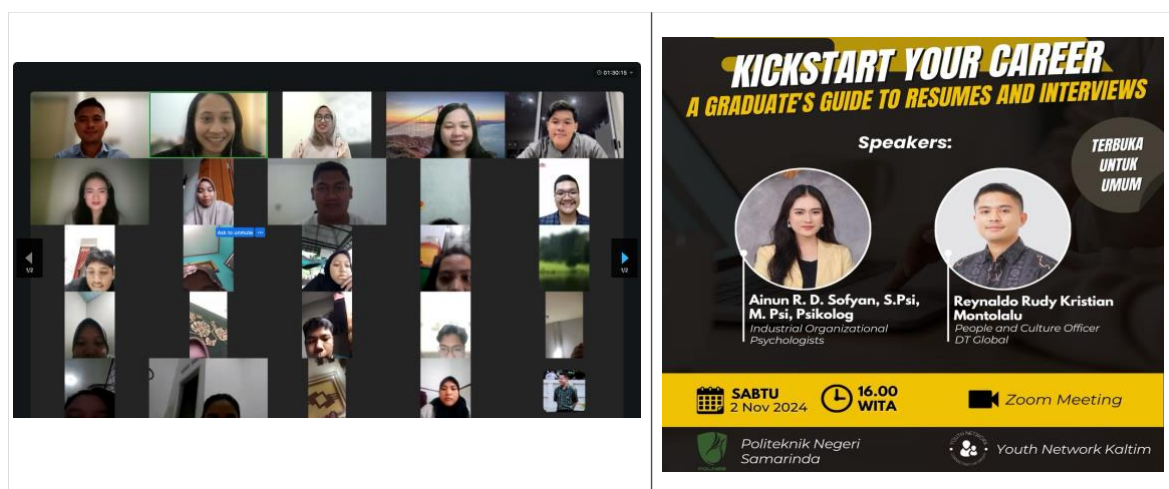

Figure 2. Documentation of the community service initiative: advancing career preparedness via a webinar on resumes and interviews

Conclusion

The webinar, "Kickstart Your Career: A Graduate's Guide to Resumes and Interviews," successfully enhanced participants' career readiness by addressing critical aspects of employability, including resume development and interview preparation. The program's

practical approach, featuring real-time resume evaluations and expert feedback, enabled students to identify and rectify common mistakes, resulting in improved resume quality and job market preparedness. Participants reported significant gains in understanding effective resume customization and interview strategies, as reflected in a high satisfaction score of 4.7 out of 5. The event bridged the gap between academic learning and workforce demands by integrating tailored feedback, interactive engagement, and iterative learning processes. The initiative was highly impactful; future iterations could benefit from extended Q&A sessions and the inclusion of advanced topics like personal branding, networking strategies, and leveraging digital tools for career advancement. These enhancements would ensure a more comprehensive and adaptable approach to workforce readiness, equipping participants with the skills necessary for sustained career success.

Acknowledgement

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