

Doctoral Dissertation

**Revisiting Career Decision Making Process of Indonesian Polytechnic Graduates
amidst COVID-19 - Drawing out the Pandemic Interactive Agency System (PIAS)
Model**

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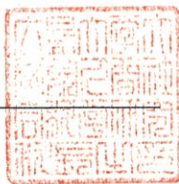
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ABSTRACT

The COVID-19 has had a profound impact on society as a whole, including health, education, jobs, and all spheres of society. The objective of this study is to revisit the career decision-making (CDM) process of polytechnic graduates amidst COVID-19 and ultimately to draw out a new model of their CDM process. Four research questions are utilized: (1) What are the typical characteristics of the extraordinary setting under COVID-19 compared to those before COVID-19?; (2) In the typical characteristics of the context, how can the various capitals be activated/functioned and how do the capitals differ from before?; (3) In the typical characteristics of the labor market setting and by using their activated capitals, how do the graduates' CDM behaviors change amidst COVID-19?; (4) Ultimately, based on the results of the study, what is a new form of CDM process reflected by the polytechnic graduates amidst COVID-19?

To achieve the objectives above, a qualitative research design is deemed suitable, specifically using phenomenological design method. The semi-structured interviews were used, focusing on the graduates' self-reflection on their experiences nearing graduation, transition from polytechnics to workplaces, career choices and current career trajectories. These semi-structured interviews were also conducted with representatives from polytechnic, including the director, heads of study programs, and staffs of career centers, as well as representatives from the user sides (employers). In total there were 98 participants in this study.

This study presents 22 themes as findings in which those themes were interpreted to answer each research questions. **For research question 1**, before COVID-19, there were no typical characteristics at the national level. However, in the labor market setting, limited job opportunities and backdoor hiring practices were already prevalent characteristics. In the polytechnic setting, there were no specific typical characteristics identified. At the family setting, economic problems were observed as typical characteristics within the informants' families.

Amidst COVID-19, there have been changes in the typical characteristics. At the national level, social and mobility restrictions have become the prominent characteristic of the field. In the labor market setting, three typical characteristics have emerged: limited job opportunities, backdoor hiring practices, and digital transformation. The labor market has experienced a decrease in job availability, an increase in the prevalence of backdoor hiring practices, and a significant shift towards digitalization. In the polytechnic setting, online learning, adapted work placement delivery methods, and adapted career guidance have become the typical characteristics. Polytechnics have transitioned to virtual learning environments, modified the way work placements are conducted, and provided adjusted career guidance to cater to the challenges posed by the pandemic. In the family and surroundings setting, parental job loss or experiences of bankruptcy have become the typical characteristics, reflecting the economic hardships faced by families during the COVID-19 crisis. These changes in typical characteristics across different levels and contexts highlight the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on various aspects of society and individuals' lives, particularly in the realms of employment, education, and family dynamics.

For research question 2, amidst COVID-19, the typical characteristics of the context have led to changes in the activation and functioning of various capitals, which differ from the pre-COVID-19 period.

1. Online (digital) social capital activation

Amidst COVID-19, the typical characteristics of the context have led to changes in the activation and functioning of various capitals, particularly social capital. The social and mobility restrictions imposed during the pandemic have indeed hindered the functioning of offline social capital, which heavily relies on in-person interactions and physical networks. The limitations on face-to-face contact and gatherings have disrupted the ability to maintain and strengthen social relationships through traditional means.

However, as a response to these restrictions, there has been an activation of online (digital) social capital. With the increased reliance on digital platforms and virtual connections, individuals have adapted to maintaining and fostering social relationships through online channels. This activation of online (digital) social capital allows individuals to continue engaging with their networks, seek support, and access information despite the physical limitations imposed by the pandemic.

Through various digital platforms such as social media, video conferencing tools, and online communities, individuals have found alternative ways to stay connected, collaborate, and interact virtually. These online interactions have facilitated the exchange of knowledge, emotional support, and resources, thereby maintaining and activating social capital in a digital context.

It is important to note that the activation of online (digital) social capital may differ from the dynamics of offline social capital experienced before COVID-19. The shift to virtual interactions and reliance on digital platforms introduces new modes of communication and engagement, which can impact the nature and quality of social connections. However, the activation of online (digital) social capital demonstrates the adaptability and resilience of individuals in utilizing digital tools and platforms to sustain their social networks and access social resources in an extraordinary setting characterized by social and mobility restrictions.

2. Solidarity capital activation

Amidst COVID-19, the limited job opportunities have indeed negatively impacted the functioning of cultural capital in the labor market setting. Individuals may face challenges in effectively leveraging their educational qualifications, skills, and credentials to secure employment due to the scarcity of available positions. The traditional mechanisms through which cultural capital, such as educational attainment and relevant experience, would typically contribute to job prospects may be less influential during this period.

However, it is important to note that the limited job opportunities have also led to the activation of social capital, particularly through backdoor hiring practices. In an environment where formal job vacancies are scarce, connections, referrals, and personal networks have become increasingly crucial in accessing employment opportunities. This activation of social capital allows individuals to bypass or circumvent traditional recruitment processes and tap into hidden job markets. By leveraging their social networks and relationships, individuals can gain access to job openings that may not be publicly advertised, thus increasing their chances of securing employment.

Additionally, the activation of social capital in this context also highlights the role of solidarity capital. Solidarity capital refers to the support and assistance provided by individuals within social networks during times of need. The activation of social capital, particularly through backdoor hiring practices, relies on the goodwill and solidarity of individuals who share information, recommend candidates, and facilitate job opportunities for others. In this way, the activation of solidarity capital contributes to addressing the challenges posed by limited job opportunities, providing alternative avenues for individuals to find employment.

Overall, amidst COVID-19, the limited job opportunities have impacted the functioning of cultural capital in the labor market setting. However, this has also led to the activation of social capital and the emergence of solidarity capital, emphasizing the importance of connections, referrals, and personal networks in accessing employment opportunities and navigating the challenges of the job market during the extraordinary circumstances brought about by the pandemic.

3. Digital cultural capital activation

Amidst COVID-19, the digital transformation accelerated by the pandemic has indeed activated digital cultural capital, which refers to the possession of digital skills, technological literacy, and the ability to navigate digital platforms. Individuals who possess digital cultural capital have an advantage in the evolving job market, as the pandemic has necessitated a shift towards remote

work, virtual communication, and online collaboration. Those who already had digital skills and familiarity with technology were better equipped to adapt to the new work environment and utilize digital tools effectively.

The activation of digital cultural capital is reflected in the resilience demonstrated by individuals in adapting to digital tools and remote work environments. They are able to leverage their technological competence to stay productive, communicate efficiently, and collaborate remotely. Their ability to navigate digital platforms, utilize online resources, and quickly adapt to new technologies reflects the activation of digital cultural capital in response to the extraordinary circumstances brought about by the pandemic.

However, it is important to acknowledge that the digital transformation has also widened the existing digital divide. Individuals who lack access to technology or digital skills face additional challenges in utilizing their digital cultural capital effectively. The digital divide refers to the disparity in access to technology, internet connectivity, and digital literacy skills among different individuals or groups. Those who are unable to access or effectively use digital resources may experience barriers in education, employment, and accessing critical services during the pandemic.

The activation of digital cultural capital highlights the increasing importance of digital skills and technological literacy in the current job market. While it offers opportunities for those who possess digital cultural capital, it is crucial to address the digital divide and ensure equitable access to technology and digital skills training to minimize the disparities faced by individuals who are marginalized or lack the necessary resources to fully participate in the digital transformation.

Overall, the digital transformation during the pandemic has activated digital cultural capital, providing advantages to individuals with digital skills and technological literacy. However, efforts are needed to bridge the digital divide and ensure that everyone has equal opportunities to develop and utilize their digital cultural capital effectively.

These shifts in the activation and functioning of capitals highlight the changing dynamics and opportunities in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. Adapting to online social interactions, leveraging social connections for employment opportunities, and possessing digital skills have become increasingly important in navigating the extraordinary setting brought about by the pandemic.

For research question 3, amidst COVID-19 and the typical characteristics of the setting, the graduates' career decision-making (CDM) behaviors have undergone changes, resulting from the activation of various capitals and shifts in the horizons for action. There are two scenarios that highlight the changes in the graduates' CDM behaviors amidst COVID-19. Despite the differences, both scenarios reflect changes in the horizons for action and ultimately influence the graduates' pragmatically driven CDM behaviors.

Scenario 1: In this scenario, the graduates' CDM behaviors are driven by the need to survive during the crisis. The typical characteristics of the setting, such as social mobility restrictions, limited job opportunities and economic challenges, influence their decision-making. As a result, their CDM behaviors include taking any available job (horizontal, vertical, underemployment), being self-employed, working as freelancers/gig workers, being part-time workers, or even considering overseas employment (boundaryless careers). These behaviors are adopted as a pragmatic response to the difficult circumstances, allowing them to secure income and meet their immediate needs. However, it is important to note that these decisions may be temporary in nature, as the graduates may continue to seek better job opportunities in the long run.

Scenario 2: In this scenario, the graduates actively explore digital job opportunities, even if they do not have an IT background. The activation of digital cultural capital, along with the typical characteristics of the digital transformation during COVID-19, influences their CDM behaviors. The graduates recognize the growing demand for digital skills and adapt their career

choices accordingly. They may acquire new digital skills or leverage existing ones to pursue job opportunities in the digital sector. This strategic adaptation allows them to enhance their employability and increase their chances of finding stable employment in a changing job market.

Both scenarios highlight the shift in the graduates' CDM behaviors compared to the pre-COVID-19 period. Before the pandemic, their CDM goals might have focused on security, work interest, and enjoyment. However, amidst COVID-19, the typical characteristics of the setting, along with the activation of capitals, influence their pragmatically driven CDM behaviors. They may temporarily accept any available job or choose self-employment as a survival strategy, while also actively seeking better job opportunities in the long term. Additionally, they may recognize the value of digital skills and pursue digital job opportunities, even if their educational background is not directly related to the IT sector.

Overall, the changes in the graduates' CDM behaviors amidst COVID-19 reflect the adaptation to the extraordinary setting and the utilization of their activated capitals. The shifts in their career choices and strategies are influenced by the context-specific challenges and opportunities, emphasizing the pragmatic nature of their decision-making in response to the crisis.

For research question 4, based on the information provided in the previous research questions, the study can indeed suggest a new form of career decision-making (CDM) process reflected by polytechnic graduates amidst COVID-19, termed **the Pandemic Interactive Agency System (PIAS) Model**. It is a framework for simulating the actions, behaviors, and interactions of autonomous agents, including individuals, organizations, and groups, within the context of graduates' career decision-making (CDM) processes in Indonesia during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The PIAS Model reflects the adaptive strategies and decision-making processes employed by polytechnic graduates in response to the challenges posed by the pandemic. It recognizes the importance of various capitals, including online (digital) social capital, digital cultural capital, and solidarity capital, in shaping the graduates' CDM behaviors during the crisis.

Notably, the PIAS Model introduces the concept of "**solidarity capital**". It refers to the inherent social capital that is naturally activated within Indonesian society during times of crisis, such as the COVID-19 pandemic. In this study it represents the collective support, collaboration, and interconnectedness among individuals, communities, and institutions in addressing challenges for the graduates' CDM process. It encompasses the networks, connections, and mutual aid that are crucial for navigating the challenges of the pandemic and accessing employment opportunities through mechanisms such as backdoor hiring practices.

By incorporating the PIAS Model and highlighting the concept of solidarity capital, the study offers insights into the unique CDM process adopted by polytechnic graduates amidst COVID-19 in the Indonesian context. It provides a comprehensive understanding of how these graduates adapt, make decisions, and leverage their resources in an ever-changing job market shaped by the pandemic.

Overall, the PIAS Model represents a significant contribution to the field of career decision-making research, particularly in the context of an unprecedented crisis like COVID-19. It offers a fresh perspective on how individuals in Indonesia navigate their career paths, emphasizing the importance of adaptive decision-making and the activation of solidarity capital as they face the challenges and uncertainties brought about by the pandemic.

Keywords: Career decision making, COVID-19, polytechnic, PIAS Model, solidarity capital

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ABBREVIATIONS

AEC	: ASEAN Economic Community
AGCAS	: Association of Graduate Careers Advisory Services
Agtech	: Agricultural Technology
AMS	: ASEAN Member States
ASEAN	: Association of Southeast Asian Nations
BI	: Bank Indonesia
CAD	: Computer-Aided-Design
CDC	: Career Development Centers
CDM	: Career Decision-making
COVID-19	: Corona Virus Disease of 2019
CV	: Curriculum Vitae
DCC	: Digital Cultural Capital
EdTech	: Education Technology
FE	: Further Education
FINTECH	: Financial Technology
GDP	: Gross Domestic Product
HEI	: Higher Education Institution
HRD	: Human Resource Development
ICT	: Information and Communication Technology
IDR	: Indonesia Rupiah
IT	: Information Technology
KKN	: Corruption, Collusion and Nepotism)
LIPI	: Indonesian Institute of Science
MoEC	: Ministry of Education and Culture
MoI	: Ministry of Industry
MSME	: Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises
OTA	: Online Travel Agencies
PEN	: National Economic Recovery
PIAS	: Pandemic Interactive Agency System
PPKM	: Community Activities Restrictions Enforcement
PSBB	: Social and Mobility Limitations
SUSENAS	: National Socio-Economic Survey

TOEFL	: Test of English as a Foreign Language
TVET	: Technical and Vocational Education Training
UK	: United Kingdom
WHO	: World Health Organization
WP	: Work Placement
YoY	: Year-on-year

CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION OF THE STUDY

The COVID-19 has had a profound impact on society as a whole, including health, education, jobs, and all spheres of society. Even in the early stages of the pandemic, it was already evident that groups who would be disproportionately affected by the economic consequences were those aged 18 to 24, members of racial or ethnic minorities, women, young workers, and individuals with disabilities (House of Commons Library, 2021). The economic and job-related obstacles brought about by the pandemic, coupled with the physical, personal, and societal challenges, are already having a negative impact on graduates, many of whom belong to multiple intersecting identities (The Association of Graduate Careers Advisory Services (ACGAS), 2021).

This study aims to: (a) comprehend how the COVID-19 pandemic affects the career decision-making (CDM) of recent graduates from Indonesian polytechnic institutions; (b) to identify the new type of CDM process that has emerged in the context of the pandemic. In order to advocate for increased support for recent graduates and current students, as captured through interviews, this study intends to provide valuable insights for policy makers and polytechnic careers specialists. In the event of future crisis with similar characteristics to COVID-19, this study can serve as a useful reference for planning.

This chapter begins by providing readers with an overview of the current situation in Indonesia amidst the COVID-19 pandemic, with a focus on economic context that forms the rationale for this study. Then, the discussion proceeds to articulate the statement of problem and the justifications for selecting polytechnic institutions as the research context. Finally, the chapter concludes with an explanation of the significances of the study, followed by the definitions of key terms, definitions of new concepts developed and/or found, and an outline of the thesis organization.

1.1 Background and the rationale of the study

The labor market is highly dynamic, and the COVID-19 has made it even more unprecedentedly challenging. The pandemic and subsequent containment measures have had a significant negative impact on labor markets worldwide, with unequal consequences for different workers (IMF, 2021). Indonesia is no exception. On March 2nd, 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic hit Indonesia, causing multifaceted issues for all social actors, including the Indonesian government, industries, families, education sectors, and individuals. Furthermore, the pandemic has resulted in Indonesia's reclassification as a lower middle-income country, after being ranked as an upper middle-income country by the World Bank in 2020 (Kacaribu & Crystallin, 2022). Even before the pandemic, the Indonesian workforce faced many challenges, such as high unemployment rate,

low productivity, and a large number of workers in the informal sector. However, the unemployment trend significantly increased in 2020, becoming one of the worst in the past decade (Farida, 2022).

In August 2019, the unemployment rate in Indonesia reached 5.23%, which increased into 7.07% in August 2020 with the onset of COVID-19 pandemic in the country. The rate then slightly decreased to 6.26% in February 2021, but increased again to 6.49% in August 2021 (see Figure 1) (National Labour Force Survey of Statistics Indonesia, 2022).

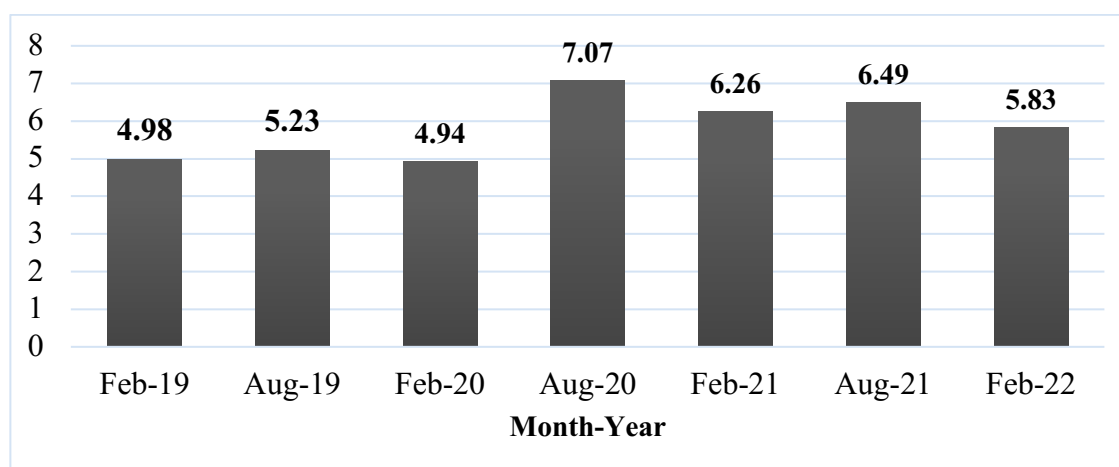


Figure 1. Unemployment rate (in %) (source: National Labour Force Survey, Statistics Indonesia, 2022)

Table 1 below presents data on the impact of COVID-19 pandemic on unemployment in Indonesia in August 2020. According to the National Labour Force Survey by Statistics Indonesia (2020), out of a total of 29.12 million unemployed people, 2.56 million were jobless due to COVID-19, 0.76 million were working-age individuals who were not part of the labour force but became unemployed between February and August 2020 due to COVID-19, 1.77 million were temporarily unemployed due to COVID-19, and 24.03 million were employed individuals experiencing reduced working hours as a result of the pandemic. Although the number of affected individuals slightly decreased in 2021 and 2022, it remains significant in 2022. Based on provincial data, the highest percentage of affected workers were in West Java (15.97%), followed by DKI Jakarta (14.91%), Central Java (12.30%), East Java (7.51%) and Riau (7.27%) (Indonesia Ministry of Manpower, 2020).

Table 1. Unemployment situation in Indonesia due to COVID-19

Components	August 2020	Feb 2021	Feb 2022
	Million people	Million people	Million people
Unemployment due to COVID-19	2.56	1.62	0.96
The non-labour force working-age population, due to COVID-19	0.76	0.65	0.55
Temporarily unemployed people due to COVID-19	1.77	1.11	0.58
Working residents experiencing reduced work hours due to COVID-19	24.03	15.72	9.44
Total	29.12	19.10	11.53
Percentage of working age population affected by COVID-19 to total working age population	14.28%	9.30 %	5.53 %

Source: National Labour Force Survey, Statistics Indonesia (2020 & 2022).

A survey conducted by the Indonesian Institute of Science (LIPI) Population Research Center, et.al., (2020) found that companies' response to the pandemic situation took various measures where 35.6% of companies reduced the number of employees, while 62.29% maintained their current workforce without reducing or increasing it; and only 2.15% of companies chose to increase their number of employees. These results indicate that companies tended to retain the existing employees rather than recruiting new ones, which limited employment opportunities for fresh graduates during COVID-19 pandemic.

The previous illustrations provide a clear picture of the work environment in Indonesia. However, the voices of workers and individuals who have experienced the situation directly, as well as those of graduates seeking employment, have not been clearly heard. A research conducted in the UK suggests that COVID-19 may significantly impact people entering the workforce, especially fresh graduates who seek to recoup their investment in Higher Education Institution (hereinafter, HEI) (Tomlinson, et al., 2022a). The impact of an insecure and uncertain labor market environment is greater for recent graduates and those who are just entering the

workforce with immediate and possibly longer-term effects (Tomlinson et al., 2022b). Scholars worldwide have also claimed that young adults are one of the groups whose employability has been impacted by COVID-19 (Barnett-Howell et al., 2021; ILO, 2020b; ILO & OECD, 2020; Kollo & Reizer, 2021; LIPI Population Research Center, 2020; Watcher, 2020) This group of young adults is also considered the most at-risk (ILO, 2020b).

In the educational context, recent studies have confirmed that during COVID-19 pandemic, the majority of HEI students' concerns have revolved around their future professional careers, as employment has become more uncertain (Achdut & Refaeli, 2020; Aristovnik et al., 2020; Chen & Zeng, 2021; Liu et al., 2021; Panina et al., 2020; Parola, 2020; Timonen et al., 2021; Zhuang et al., 2021). They are particularly affected by the current COVID-19 crisis, as their long-term goals are shaped by their life objectives (Borisova & Vasilieva, 2020). Specifically, their concerns are about Career Decision-Making (CDM) process (AGCAS, 2021; Buathong et al., 2021; Dos Santos, 2020; Lin et al., 2021; Muda & Fook, 2020; Panina et al., 2020; Presti et al., 2021). It leads this study to explore the voices of HEI graduates related to their transition from education to work, specifically their CDM process, amidst the unprecedented crisis of COVID-19.

Given the relatively short duration of the COVID-19 outbreak covered by this study, it is understandable why there is no extensive literature to consult on this area of concern. On the other hand, it is surprising that several studies on COVID-19 and CDM have already been published globally from 2020 to 2022. All agreeing that young people are facing specific problems and difficulties in their CDM processes as impacted by COVID-19 (ACGAS, 2021; Akkermans et al., 2020; Aristovnik et al., 2020; Chen et al., 2022; Curaj et al., 2020; Dewi, 2022a; Di Pietro et al., 2020; Dos Santos, 2020; Georgievska & Uragichi, 2020; Hanaba et al., 2020; Hite & McDonald, 2020; Lin et al., 2021; McAleavy et al., 2020; Mediawati et al., 2020; Mubarok, 2020; Park & Kang, 2022; Panina et al., 2020; Raaper & Brown, 2020; Reimers & Schleicher, 2020; Rinandiyana et al., 2021; Saavedra, 2020; Schleicher, 2020; Schwartz & Cymrot, 2020; Sonnemann & Goss, 2020; Zhang, 2020).

A study conducted by Georgievska & Uragichi (2020), which was participated by 40,000 youths from more than 150 nations to examine their decision-making process, found that the current educational system falls short of adequately preparing students to choose their careers. Thus, the COVID-19 pandemic has increased young people's confusion about their employment options at a time when they must make one of their most crucial life decisions (Georgievska & Uragichi, 2020). Graduates struggle to choose the right career based on their interests and potential (Chen et al., 2022). The lack of experiential learning activities, including adjustments

of Work Placement (hereinafter referred to as WP) or apprenticeship programs in the COVID-19 situation, such as shortening the duration and changing the WP host (Dewi, 2022a), directing students to conduct it online (Mediawati et al., 2020; Mubarok, 2020; Rinandiyana et al., 2021) even cancelling or postponing the program (Mediawati et al., 2020) as well as the lack of career socialization (Lam & Santos, 2018), leads to uncertainty and indecision regarding their career choices and ultimately, unemployment.

While there is extensive literature on the effects of COVID-19 pandemic on the CDM process in developed countries, with studies by Dos Santos (2020); Panina, et.al. (2020); Lin, et.al. (2021); Park & Kang (2022); Gashi & Kadriu (2022); Shiyuan, et.al. (2022); Zhang, et.al. (2022); AGCAS (2021); and Tomlinson, Burg, & Reedy (2022), there is little research on its impact on graduates' CDM process in emerging countries. This study was conducted in Indonesia, a country that represents the challenges faced by developing nations.

Indonesia has its own unique context with regards to COVID-19 that may differ from other countries. However, the CDM process of college graduates in Indonesia remains understudied. The only existing study on CDM amidst COVID-19 in Indonesia was conducted by Sutiman, et al. (2022), which quantitatively examined the role of self-efficacy and mediating factors such as digital literacy, social environment, and counselling guidance in influencing CDM. However, that study focused on vocational high school students and did not specifically address college graduates. Therefore, the current study serves as a stepping stone for future research and practical implications for HEI's graduates in Indonesia, with a focus on the CDM process of polytechnic graduates under the COVID-19 context.

In the context of Indonesia, career decision making college students has always been challenging for university graduates due to various factors, such as boundaryless careers (Abdullah, 2017). The establishment of the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) in 2015 was aimed to facilitate boundaryless career by allowing free flow of goods, services, investments, capital and skills. However, this made job-seeking more competitive, as Indonesian graduates not only had to compete with their fellow citizens but also with people from other countries. Unfortunately, support for the CDM process from Indonesian HEIs has been limited. For example, Indonesia does not have a national job-hunting system to connect graduates with potential employers, similar to those in other countries such as Japan. The COVID-19 pandemic further exacerbated the difficulties in the CDM process due to movement restrictions, leading to three major changes: online learning, adaptation of Work Placement (WP) delivery system, and adjustments to career counselling. However, most HEIs only focused on transitioning from

offline to online learning. This highlights the pressing need for more attention and support for the CDM process in Indonesia, particularly in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Indonesian context highlights the need to recognize the context-specific feature of the pandemic. Therefore, it is important to examine specific case. This study acknowledges that graduates' CDM is not a simple process carried out independently by individuals that consists of identifying career options, collecting information, weighing alternatives, selecting a choice, and implementing the chosen alternative. Rather, it is a complex and multidimensional process (Gadassi et al., 2012). This study believes that it is not context-free (free will) of the decision makers, and that the interactions between individuals and their context influence their career choices. Consequently, this study adopts a sociological approach, which examines the social, economic, cultural, political, and environmental factors that impact young people's lives and career decisions (Hodkinson, 2009), specifically in the case of CDM during the COVID-19 pandemic in Indonesia.

Generally, sociological approaches to CDM studies are relatively uncommon (Lovšin, 2014) compared to psychological approaches, which is another reason why this current study can contribute to addressing the gap in the literature. The sociological theory chosen for this study is the "Careership theory," developed by Hodkinson & Sparkes (1997), based on Bourdieu's Theory of Practice (Bourdieu, 1977), specifically on the concepts of capital, field, and habitus. This theory was selected because the study's target population, young individuals, matches that used for developing the theory. This Careership theory was created based on findings about how young adults make career decisions (Hodkinson, 1998). According to this theory, young adults decide on their careers based on their fields and resources. These choices are influenced by the social actors' habitus (Lundahl et al., 2017). Career decisions are pragmatically rational and made during routines and turning points that affected the CDMs. However, the context in which this theory was developed in 1997 did not include a crisis. Therefore, the author recognized the need to investigate the applicability of this theory during the COVID-19 crisis, where social actors experience a significant shock in the field.

As this is the first study of HEI graduates' CDM process under COVID-19 in Indonesia, the author still faces limitations in references. Therefore, this study aims to investigate the general nature of graduates' CDM processes under COVID-19. Moreover, given the massive social and economic changes caused by COVID-19, which may affect graduates differently, direct generalization of CDM processes seems impossible. The nature of capital used in CDM processes and their outcomes may have been considerably altered. Therefore, this study tries to revisit graduates' CDM processes by utilizing Careership theory, focusing on four aspects: (1)

the distinctive characteristics of the extraordinary context under COVID-19 compared to before the pandemic; (2) the various capitals that can be activated/functioned in those typical characteristics and how they differ from before; (3) the graduates' CDM behavior; and (4) the new form of CDM process reflected by graduates. This study assumes that COVID-19 has changed the field characteristics, applicability of capitals for the education-to-work transition, graduates' CDM behavior, and ultimately resulting in a new form of CDM process. Investigating these four foci can provide precise information that can serve as the foundation for education and career advice services, supporting young people throughout the planning process and CDM, particularly under pandemic situations and/or other crises with similar characteristics as COVID-19.

1.2 Problem statements

The labor market is a dynamic environment that is influenced by various economic, social, and technological factors (Sidiropoulou–Dimakakou, 2016, Dewi, 2022b). It constantly evolves and adapts to changing circumstances, presenting both opportunities and challenges for individuals seeking employment. HEIs' graduates, in particular, face a shifting landscape where the question of "what" career path to choose is replaced by the question of "how" to navigate and succeed in the job market (Argyropoulou, 2017).

Traditionally, individuals would focus on identifying specific career paths based on their skills, interests, and market demand. However, the contemporary labor market requires a more nuanced approach. Graduates need to develop a set of adaptable skills, embrace lifelong learning, and be prepared to navigate through various employment opportunities and uncertainties.

The outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic has further intensified the need for adaptability and resilience in the labor market. The pandemic has disrupted industries, accelerated digital transformations, and introduced new ways of working. As a result, graduates must not only possess technical expertise but also demonstrate flexibility, problem-solving abilities, and a willingness to embrace change.

The unique and extraordinary nature of the pandemic has had profound effects on the labor market. Traditional employment patterns have been disrupted, with many industries experiencing significant changes in demand and operations. This has created a highly uncertain environment for Indonesian polytechnic graduates who are navigating their career paths amidst the COVID-19 crisis.

In order to effectively support and guide these graduates in making informed career decisions during this challenging time, it is crucial to understand the intricate interplay between

the dynamic nature of the labor market and the exceptional circumstances imposed by the pandemic. By revisiting the career decision-making process of Indonesian polytechnic graduates, this research aims to delve deeper into the factors that influence their career choices, adaptability strategies, and resilience-building approaches.

The study seeks to uncover the nuanced factors that impact career decision-making in the context of the rapidly changing labor market structure during the pandemic. It aims to identify the specific challenges and opportunities faced by polytechnic graduates, as well as the strategies they employ to navigate through these uncertainties. By exploring these dynamics, the research aims to provide valuable insights that can inform policy and practice in supporting the career development of Indonesian polytechnic graduates.

Ultimately, the goal of this research is to enhance the career outcomes and prospects of Indonesian polytechnic graduates amidst the ongoing pandemic and future uncertainties. By shedding light on the complex interplay between the labor market dynamics and the exceptional circumstances of the COVID-19 crisis, the study aims to contribute to the development of effective policies and practices that can empower graduates to make informed career decisions and thrive in their chosen paths.

1.3 Justification of choosing polytechnics

Polytechnic is the leading formal TVET institution at the tertiary level, with the goal of producing competent graduates who can compete in various professions (Arifin et al., 2020; Clark & Winch, 2007; Pavlova, 2009), specifically to fill the demand for skilled workers in business and administration (Bacon, et al., 1979). Polytechnic students received training in a limited number of specialties, and compared to universities, it is commonly believed that polytechnics cater to students with a stronger vocational orientation. Polytechnic students tend to seek jobs in line with their background major after graduation. So far, polytechnic institution has focused more on making technically/instrumentally logical decisions. The decision-making process of the polytechnic graduates has been viewed as an externally planned, controlled process, aimed at acquiring a job-specific training credit that can only be provided once the training is complete. From this perspective, it is believed that the primary goal of career counselling in polytechnic is to improve the quality of the career decision-making process, resulting in wise decisions, a decrease in educational waste, and unemployment.

Some studies have confirmed that career guidance is crucial in helping students choose their career paths and future development (Kirchknopf, 2020; Rizwan et al., 2021). This is consistent with Indonesia's national Ministry of Education policy, which requires that vocational

education effectively promote career development (Kurniawati et al., 2021). The objective is to assist students in making decisions about their identities, careers, and future education so that they can succeed in the learning and development process (Prasetyo et al., 2021; Wang et al., 2020). On the other hand, the fundamental issue in vocational education in developing nations, such as Indonesia, is also related to the graduates' career decision-making (Kelly & Lee, 2002; Sampson & Toh, 2021). Researchers have found that it can be challenging for graduates to choose the appropriate career path in the related industry (Afandi & Wijanarka, 2019; Kurniawan et al., 2021), and one of the causes of this issue is students' doubts (Xu & Bhang, 2019). Moreover, to the best of author's knowledge, polytechnics, especially private ones, do not provide clear guidance for students' transition from education-to-work.

There were many problems in Indonesian polytechnics before COVID-19, such as limited industry involvement in program administration, a significant mismatch between supply and demand for skills, and a lack of facilities and infrastructures. The pandemic, which hit Indonesia in March 2020, worsened this issue, prompting polytechnics to switch from face-to-face to online instruction (Hamid et al., 2022; Kholifah et al., 2020; Syauqi et al., 2020; Zapata-Cuervo et al., 2021). This change left polytechnic students disappointed since most of the learning content in polytechnics is focused on practical training rather than theory (Dewi, 2022a). COVID-19 presented a new environment for polytechnic education, as students commonly received practical training before the pandemic. As a result of this shift, the optimism and quality of vocational students' career decisions decreased significantly (Abdullah, 2019; Edy et al., 2020). Graduates struggled to choose the right career based on their interests and potential (Chen et al., 2022).

The adjustment of WP program delivery methods in Indonesia's HEIs during the COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in a lack of working experience for students. This adjustment has included changes in the form of activities (Sumantyo, 2020), a work-from-home directive (Mediawati et al., 2020), administering online WP (Mubarok, 2020; Rinandiyana et al., 2021), shortening the duration and changing WP hosts (Dewi, 2022a), and even cancelling or postponing programs (Mediawati et al., 2020). This has led to uncertainty and indecision about career paths. Additionally, the lack of career socialization amidst COVID-19 (Lam & Santos, 2018) has further exacerbated this condition.

As mentioned earlier, polytechnic students received specialized training and gain specific skill as the cultural capital. However, these narrow skills may not be enough to navigate the challenges of the COVID-19 era, making this group more vulnerable than university graduates who receive more varied professional training and skills sets.

The preceding explanation provide the basis for why polytechnic was chosen as the context of the study. In short, this study posits that, amidst COVID-19, the CDM process in practice was not rational as envisioned by the polytechnic system. Career growth was frequently non-linear and heavily influenced by events and situations outside of the graduates' control.

1.4 Objectives and research questions of the study

The objective of this study is to revisit the CDM process of polytechnic graduates amidst COVID-19 and ultimately to draw out a new model of their CDM process. Four research questions are utilized to reach those objectives:

1. What are the typical characteristics of the extraordinary setting under COVID-19 compared to those before COVID-19?
2. In the typical characteristics of the context, how can the various capitals be activated/functioned and how do the capitals differ from before?
3. In the typical characteristics of the setting and by using their activated capitals, how do the graduates' CDM behaviors change amidst COVID-19?
4. Ultimately, based on the results of the study, what is a new form of CDM process reflected by the polytechnic graduates amidst COVID-19?

1.5 The relationship between research questions and objectives

The four research questions directly relate to the main objective of the study, which is to revisit the career decision-making (CDM) process of polytechnic graduates amidst the COVID-19 pandemic and develop a new model of their CDM process. Here is how each research question contributes to the main objective:

1. What are the typical characteristics of the extraordinary setting under COVID-19 compared to those before COVID-19?

Research question 1 helps provide an understanding of the unique features and challenges of the COVID-19 setting compared to the pre-pandemic period. By identifying and comparing the characteristics of the extraordinary setting, the study can contextualize the CDM process and explore how the pandemic has influenced career decision-making for polytechnic graduates.

2. In the typical characteristics of the context, how can the various capitals be activated/functioned, and how do the capitals differ from before?

Research question 2 investigates the activation and functioning of different capitals (such as social, cultural, and economic capital) within the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. By

exploring how these capitals are utilized and understanding the differences from the pre-pandemic period, the study examines the resources and strategies available to polytechnic graduates for their career decision-making during the pandemic.

3. In the typical characteristics of the setting and by using their activated capitals, how do the graduates' CDM behaviors change amidst COVID-19?

Research question 3 focuses on the changes in the CDM behaviors of polytechnic graduates as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. By considering the unique characteristics of the pandemic setting and the utilization of activated capitals, the study examines the adaptations, strategies, and decision-making processes employed by graduates during the pandemic.

4. Ultimately, based on the results of the study, what is a new form of CDM process reflected by the polytechnic graduates amidst COVID-19?

Research question 4 directly addresses the main objective of the study by synthesizing the findings from the previous research questions. It aims to propose a new model or framework that reflects the CDM process of polytechnic graduates amidst the COVID-19 pandemic. By drawing on the results of the study, this research question contributes to the development of a comprehensive understanding of the changes and dynamics in the CDM process of polytechnic graduates in the extraordinary context of the pandemic.

Overall, these four research questions work together to explore the characteristics of the pandemic setting, the activation of various capitals, the changes in CDM behaviors, and ultimately, to develop a new model that captures the unique CDM process of polytechnic graduates amidst the COVID-19 pandemic.

1.6 Significances of the study

After revisiting the CDM process of polytechnic graduates under COVID-19, finding the differences between the pre- and post-COVID-19 periods, and drawing out a new model of the CDM process, this study can contribute to both practical and theoretical fields in the following ways:

1. Practical contributions

- a. **Enhanced Understanding:** By revisiting the CDM process, researchers, policymakers, and educators can gain a deeper understanding of the unique challenges and opportunities that graduates face during the COVID-19 pandemic. This includes factors such as limited job opportunities, digital transformation, changes in industries, and the impact of social and economic conditions. This enhanced understanding enables the development of targeted

interventions and support mechanisms.

- b. **Informed Policy and Practice:** The insights generated from revisiting the CDM process can inform the development of evidence-based policies and practices. Policymakers can use the findings to design programs and initiatives that better align with the needs and aspirations of graduates, ensuring their successful transition into the workforce. Educational institutions and career service providers can also adapt their strategies to better support students in making informed career choices and developing relevant skills.
- c. **Tailored Support Services:** Revisiting the CDM process helps identify specific areas where graduates may require additional support. It enables the design of tailored career guidance, counseling, and job placement services that address the challenges arising from the COVID-19 context. This can include providing resources for remote learning, fostering digital literacy, facilitating virtual networking opportunities, and offering career development workshops focused on the current labor market trends.
- d. **Strengthened Resilience and Adaptability:** Understanding the impact of COVID-19 on the CDM process can empower graduates to develop resilience and adaptability in navigating their career paths. By recognizing the constraints and opportunities presented by the pandemic, graduates can make more informed decisions, explore alternative career pathways, and adapt their skills to align with the changing job market demands. This promotes their long-term employability and career success.
- e. **Contribution to Knowledge and Research:** Revisiting the CDM process in the context of Indonesian Polytechnic Graduates during COVID-19 adds to the body of knowledge and research in the field of career development. It contributes to a better understanding of the impact of global crises on career decision-making and provides valuable insights for future studies and comparative analyses. This knowledge can benefit researchers, practitioners, and policymakers in other countries facing similar challenges.

Overall, revisiting the CDM process of Indonesian Polytechnic Graduates amidst COVID-19 brings numerous benefits, including enhanced understanding, informed policy and practice, tailored support services, strengthened resilience, and contribution to knowledge. These benefits contribute to the holistic development and successful transition of graduates into the post-pandemic workforce.

2. Theoretical contributions

The findings of this study could contribute to discussions within the Careership theory framework by integrating the new form of CDM process in the form of PIAS Model identified in this research. Overall, the PIAS Model complements and enhances Careership theory by

addressing its limitations. It provides a process-oriented perspective, incorporates crisis situations, and offers practical guidance, thereby offering a more comprehensive and applicable framework for understanding and supporting individuals in their career decision-making journeys.

1. Providing process-oriented perspective: Careership theory primarily focuses on the dimensions and factors influencing career decisions, but it may not explicitly outline the sequential steps and processes involved in the decision-making journey. The PIAS Model, on the other hand, introduces a process-oriented framework that delineates the specific steps, interactions, and dynamics within the career decision-making process. This fills the gap by providing a clearer understanding of how individuals progress through their decision-making journey.

2. Incorporating crisis situations: Careership theory may not explicitly address the unique challenges and opportunities that arise during crisis situations, such as the COVID-19 pandemic. The PIAS Model, applied in the context of a crisis, expands the applicability of the framework and provides insights into how individuals navigate career decisions during times of uncertainty and disruption. By considering the specific challenges and adaptations required in crisis situations, the PIAS Model fills the gap in Careership theory by providing a more comprehensive understanding of career decision-making in such contexts.

3. Investigating the developing or emerging countries: Careership theory was originally developed in a high-income country context, specifically the UK, and has been widely utilized and studied within similar contexts. However, the application of this theory in developing or emerging countries, such as Indonesia, has been limited. By conducting this study in the Indonesian context, the research fills the gap in understanding how the Careership theory can be applied and adapted in a different socioeconomic and cultural setting. This is particularly important because developing countries often face unique challenges and dynamics that differ from high-income countries.

Through the investigation of career decision-making amidst COVID-19 in Indonesian polytechnic graduates, the study provides insights into the contextual factors that influence career pathways and decision-making processes in a developing country context. It explores the experiences, challenges, and strategies employed by Indonesian graduates during a crisis, offering a more comprehensive understanding of the complexities of career development within this specific context.

4. Offering practical guidance for decision-making: Careership theory may provide a conceptual understanding of career decision-making, but it may not offer practical guidance or

actionable steps for individuals facing career choices. The PIAS Model, with its emphasis on interactive agency, information flow, and utilization of capitals, offers a more actionable framework for individuals to navigate their decision-making process. It provides guidance on how individuals can effectively engage with their social networks, access resources, and make informed choices. This fills the gap by offering practical recommendations and strategies for career decision-making.

5. Contributing to Pragmatically rational CDM gaps: The significance of this study for the theory also lies in its contribution to filling the gap in understanding pragmatically rational career decision-making (CDM) and clarifying the continuum of rationality. The continuum of rationality has been recognized as unclear, and this study sheds light on this aspect by providing insights and findings that contribute to a clearer understanding of pragmatically rational CDM.

One specific aspect that this study addresses is also the concept of serendipity within the context of CDM. Serendipity, defined as the occurrence of unexpected and fortunate events, plays a significant role in decision-making processes but has been relatively underexplored. This study recognizes the importance of serendipity in CDM and introduces the concept of "boundedness serendipity," which highlights the boundaries and conditions under which serendipitous events can occur and influence career decision-making.

By introducing and amplifying the concept of boundedness serendipity, the study adds depth and nuance to our understanding of how unexpected and fortunate events can shape career decisions. It acknowledges that decision-making processes are not solely based on rational and deliberate choices but are also influenced by fortuitous encounters, chance events, and unforeseen circumstances.

Furthermore, the study highlights the need for further exploration and amplification of serendipity within the context of CDM. It recognizes that serendipity can have a significant impact on career trajectories and outcomes, and further research in this area can provide valuable insights into the role of chance and unexpected events in career development.

By addressing the gap in understanding the continuum of rationality and introducing the concept of boundedness serendipity, this study contributes to the theory of pragmatically rational CDM. It expands our knowledge of decision-making processes and factors that influence career decisions, providing a more comprehensive and nuanced understanding of how individuals navigate their career pathways.

Overall, the significance of this study for the theory lies in its efforts to fill the gap in understanding pragmatically rational CDM by clarifying the continuum of rationality and

introducing the concept of boundedness serendipity. It opens new avenues for future research and encourages a deeper exploration of the role of serendipity in career decision-making processes.

1.7 Definitions of terms

1. Career Decision Making (CDM) is complex and multidimensional process (Gadassi, Gati, & Dayan, 2012) that is not context-free (free will). Social, economic, cultural, political and other environmental factors influence career choices (Hodkinson & Sparkes, 1997) and this study focuses on the impact of COVID-19 on the CDM process.
2. Pragmatically rational career decision making involves the physical, practical emotional and the affective, as well as the cognitive (Hodkinson, 2008). The term notes that the extent to which a person can influence his/her own career is strongly affected by their position in the field and the resources at their disposal (Hodkinson, 2008).
3. Horizons for action refers to the boundaries and limitations that shape an individual's perception, options, and possibilities within their specific context (Bourdieu, 2019).

1.8 Definitions of new concepts developed and/or found

1. The Pandemic Interactive Agency System (PIAS) Model is a framework for simulating the actions, behaviors, and interactions of autonomous agents, including individuals, organizations, and groups, within the context of graduates' career decision-making (CDM) processes in Indonesia during the COVID-19 pandemic.
2. Solidarity capital refers to the inherent social capital that is naturally activated within Indonesian society during times of crisis, such as the COVID-19 pandemic. In this study it represents the collective support, collaboration, and interconnectedness among individuals, communities, and institutions in addressing challenges for the graduates' CDM process.
3. Boundedness serendipity emphasizes that serendipitous events are not purely random but are influenced by social factors and an individual's position within the social field. It recognizes that access to serendipitous opportunities is shaped by the social capital one possesses and the social context in which they operate.

1.9 Organization of the thesis

This thesis is organized into seven comprehensive chapters, each contributing a unique perspective and valuable insights to the overall research.

Chapter 1 presents the introduction which consists of background of the study, problem statements, justification of choosing polytechnics, objectives, research questions, the relationship between research questions and objectives, significances, definitions of terms, definitions of new concepts developed and/or found, and organization of the thesis.

Chapter 2 engages in an extensive and in-depth review of related literature, meticulously examining prior studies and theoretical research that are directly relevant to the subject matter of the thesis. By presenting this detailed literature review, the chapter effectively situates the current research within the broader context of existing knowledge, identifying gaps and opportunities for further exploration.

Chapter 3 constitutes an essential part of the thesis, as it intricately discusses the research methodology employed to acquire valuable data and insights. It provides a comprehensive overview of the research design, offering a clear and well-justified rationale for the chosen approach.

Chapter 4 constitutes the heart of the thesis, as it extensively describes the study findings that emerged from the data analysis process. Through a presentation of 21 themes, this chapter provides a comprehensive and nuanced response to the research questions posed.

Chapter 5 expounds upon the discussions, engaging in thoughtful analyses of the study findings. It contextualizes the research results within the broader framework of the existing literature and theoretical concepts, offering insightful interpretations and explanations.

Chapter 6 assumes a pivotal role in the thesis, as it specifically focuses on the presentation and discussion of the PIAS Model and the concept of solidarity capital. This chapter provides a comprehensive and in-depth understanding of the new form of career decision-making process reflected by polytechnic graduates amidst the COVID-19 pandemic. By elucidating the adaptive strategies and decision-making processes employed in response to the pandemic challenges, this chapter sheds light on the importance of various capitals in shaping the graduates' career decisions during the crisis.

Lastly, Chapter 7 serves as the conclusion of the thesis, offering a comprehensive summary of the key findings and insights derived from the research journey. It acknowledges the limitations of the study and offers valuable recommendations for practice and policy, guiding practitioners and policymakers in developing effective strategies to support and empower graduates during extraordinary circumstances.

CHAPTER 2 LITERATURE REVIEW

The previous chapter explained the current situation of the labor market landscape and the polytechnic situation under COVID-19. It provided the rationale for this study's focus on revisiting the CDM process of polytechnic graduates under the significant crisis of COVID-19. The previous chapter also discussed how the study's findings would contribute to both practical and theoretical fields.

This chapter provides a deeper perspective on the study by discussing the literature review, which identified theoretical and knowledge gaps as the study's standpoint. It begins with a discussion of COVID-19 as the chosen context to understand the differences between it and other significant crises experienced by Indonesia. Then, the typical characteristics of the labor market context in Indonesia before and during COVID-19 were presented. Finally, the chapter explains how the conceptual framework of this study was built, which consists of the theoretical gap, the chosen theory (Careership theory), previous CDM studies utilizing the Careership theory, the limitations of the Careership theory, knowledge gaps, and the conceptual framework itself.

2.1 Understanding COVID-19 as the chosen context

2.1.1 Comparing COVID-19 and other pre-COVID 19 significant crises experienced by Indonesia

Since the pandemic began, Indonesia has experienced three waves of COVID-19 outbreaks. The first wave, which occurred in 2020, was caused by the Alpha variant and was handled under very tight restrictions, resulting in a declining economy. In mid-2021, the outbreak of the Delta variant hit the medical sector hardest, as hospitals were flooded with COVID-19 patients. Nevertheless, with regulations not as stringent as in 2020 and most people already adjusting to the situation, the economy was able to grow slightly by 3.69% year-on-year (YoY) in 2021. In early 2022, a new Omicron variant emerged. However, with a better response to the pandemic, more vaccinations across the country, and a better-positioned economy, the impact was less severe.

Overall, there are significant differences between the impact of the COVID-19 crisis and some previous crises. The unprecedented COVID-19 pandemic crisis and its effect on people's health problems have become the leading cause of global crises. It affected more countries than the 1998 Asian crisis or the 2008 global financial crisis (see Figure 2). During the 1998 and 2008 crises, large and medium-sized companies suffered from external fluctuations in capital markets, currencies, and debt mismatches, while Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) were relatively resilient due to their limited exposure to these factors. However, this year, travel and

trade restrictions (due to lockdowns and the 'new normal') have had a greater impact on the cash flow of MSMEs than that of large corporations. MSMEs to a great extent, ultimately affecting the Indonesian economy significantly. Moreover, since more than 200 countries were hit by this crisis, the global economy also experienced a recession, with global growth contracting by -3.3% in 2020 (Adityaswara et al., 2022).

	COVID-19 CRISIS 2020	GLOBAL FINANCIAL CRISIS 2008	ASIA FINANCIAL CRISIS 1998
Scope of Crisis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The COVID-19 Pandemic happens in 200 countries. Global economy is in recession. Global growth contracted by -3.3% in 2020. Indonesia economy significantly affected. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The center of the crisis was in the US and other advanced countries (esp. Europe) Developing countries still managed to record high growth, i.e. China grew by 9.4% Indonesia economy grew moderately at 4,6%. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The center of the crisis was in Asia, more specifically Thailand, South Korea and Indonesia. Indonesia economy contracted sharply by -13%.
Indonesia External Position	CAD : -2.7% of GDP(2019) Forex Reserve: USD 130.5bn (May 2020)	CAD : 0.02% to GDP Forex Reserve: USD 51.6bn	CAD : -2.27% to GDP Forex Reserve: USD 17.5bn
Crisis Impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All sectors and lines of business were impacted, including retail, consumer, MSME (including MSME value chain), and had also impacted corporate Impacted sectors: Tourism, Hotel, Trade, Manufacture and Finance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Crisis only impacted large corporates Most impacted sectors are financial sectors, especially banking and capital market. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Crisis impacted large companies, specifically the ones with large foreign liabilities. Most impacted sector are the banking sector, as many corporates defaulted.

Figure 2. Comparison of the impacts of several crises in Indonesia (Adityaswara et al., 2022, p.115)

2.1.2 The typical characteristics of the labor market context in Indonesia before and during COVID-19 through literature review

Before COVID-19

Labor landscapes (characteristics) of Indonesia

There are three main characteristics of Indonesia labor landscapes that are explained here: the dominance of low-skill workers, dominance of the informal sectors, and precariat trends. For the first characteristic, it can be seen from the data from the National Labor Force Survey, Statistics Indonesia (2022) that the workers graduated from Elementary School are the highest as shown in the Figure 3. It means that for those who continue their education to higher levels do not necessarily get a guarantee of success in achieving work as expected.

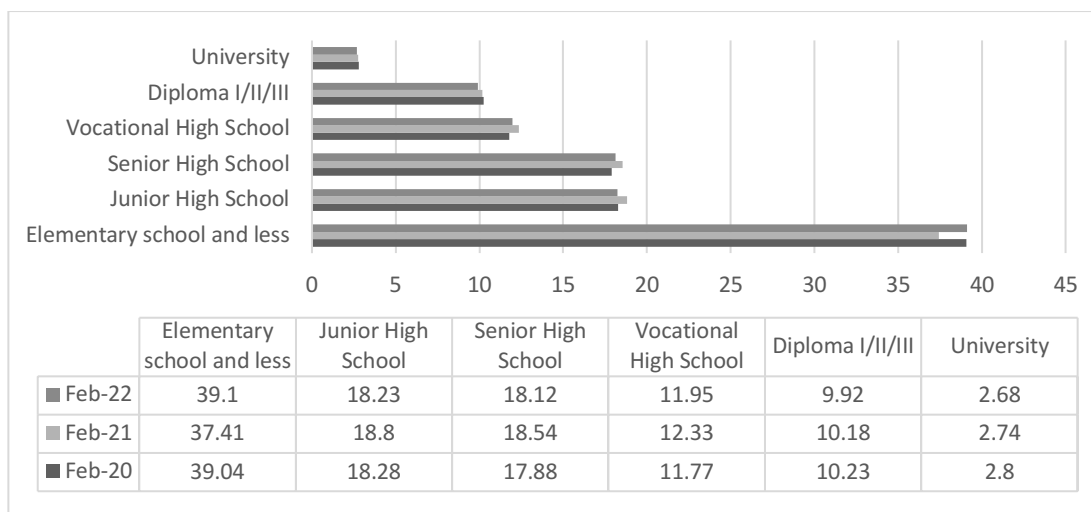


Figure 3. Employed people group by the highest education completed (in %), Feb 2020 - Feb 2022 (National Labour Force Survey of Statistics Indonesia, 2022)

The second characteristic is the significant number of Indonesian workers are employed in the informal sector. This characteristic aligns with the previously mentioned data indicating that the top sector is "agriculture, forestry, and fishing," which is predominantly informal. Table 2 provides further details on the percentages of workers in different informal sectors during the COVID-19 pandemic. While the informal sector may act as a safeguard, disguising the true level of employment, closer examination of working conditions reveals that many workers in this sector are financially insecure due to low salaries.

Table 2. Formal and informal sectors in Indonesia

	Formal	Informal
Feb-2020	43.36	56.64
Feb-2021	40.38	59.62
Feb-2022	40.03	59.97

Source: (National Labour Force Survey of Statistics Indonesia, 2022)

The last characteristic is precariat trends. Precariat is the combination between precarious and proletariat. Precarious means unstable or inconstant while proletariat means working class. Therefore, precariat can be defined as people who are on the working class whose jobs and incomes are insecure. Members of the precariat rely solely on money wages, without additional benefits such as pensions and medical coverage (Standing, 2011) i.e., gig/

workers/freelancers/part-time workers. This trend has been happening in Indonesia for a long time and it continues today for some jobs such as bricklayers and farm workers who have no rice field. And currently as the effect of mushrooming ride-hailing digital start-up like GO-JEK as one of the biggest digital start-up company in Indonesia, many people massively work as GO-JEK drivers.

Not only do those three characteristics apply, but Indonesia also faces other challenges in employment behavior that can be categorized as cultural factors in society. For example, families, especially parents, are a shaping and constraining factor for career decisions, and casual work is still uncommon for high school or university students, which means they lack work experience (Abdullah, 2018). While there is a trend towards freelancing, some young people and their parents still aspire to formal employment.

The employment condition in Indonesia is also closely related to another issue like the demographic dividend that has been forecasted it will be experienced by Indonesia in 2030-2040. It is predicted that Indonesia as the fourth most populous country in the world, will experience this phenomenon in which the population of productive age will exceed the population of unproductive age. In the concept of population economics, the demographic dividend is also interpreted as an economic advantage because the larger the population of productive age, the greater the number of available workers. So that this condition is an opportunity for a country to accelerate the economy by encouraging various economic sectors due to the availability of a large workforce. Yet, this demographic dividend is also predicted to increase the level of unemployment due to a gap between job availability and population. If the opposite happens, where a large number of the productive age population is not absorbed by the available jobs in an economy, then it will become an economic burden. This is because the productive age population who has no income will still be a burden for the working population and will trigger occurrence of high unemployment. Therefore, Indonesia government has a huge task to manage Indonesia young people well.

Economic Condition

Before the hit of COVID-19 pandemic in Indonesia in March 2020, the country had already set a strategic plan for its industrial sector through the Indonesian Industrial Strategic Plan (2015-2035). This draft outlined the vision and mission for Indonesia's industrial development. To achieve this vision, the government identified the main and supporting industries, as well as the necessary resources and infrastructure development (Center of Public Communication of Indonesia Ministry of Industry, 2015). Even prior to the pandemic, Indonesia's national economy

was performing well, with a stable economic outlook and growth rate of 5-5.02% from 2014 to 2019 (Statistics Indonesia, 2020). In addition, the country has favorable government regulations, a generally stable rupiah, and strong foreign exchange reserves that make it attractive for investors to invest in Indonesia. Furthermore, Indonesia has set a goal to become a high-income country by 2045 through its vision 2045, which aims to celebrate 100 years of independence. The country has already achieved middle-income status through its strong economic growth and significant reduction in extreme poverty. However, to unlock its development potential and achieve high-income status in 2045, Indonesia needs to continue expanding its middle-class population (Purbasari et al., 2022).

Development was that, before COVID-19, the Indonesian government invested heavily in the digital economy. Indonesia's digital economy is currently the largest among the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) member states (AMS) (Sapulette & Muchtar, 2023). As of 2021, the size of Indonesia's digital economy accounted for about 42% of ASEAN's digital economy, measured by total revenue from eight segments: e-commerce, digital health, apps, digital media, digital advertising, e-services, smart home, and fintech. Meanwhile, Indonesia's gross domestic product (GDP) makes up around 36% of the total GDP of all AMS. Indonesia is also one of the most attractive destinations for digital investment, with total investment inflows of \$4.5 billion in 2020 and \$9.1 billion in 2021 (Google et al., 2022).

A report on startup companies has confirmed that Indonesia is becoming very productive in developing digital startups in e-commerce, ride-hailing, financial technology (fintech), online travel agencies (OTA), digital media platforms, education technology (EdTech) startups, agricultural technology (Agtech) startups, health technology, and insurance technology (Eka, 2020). Based on data recorded on startupranking.com accessed on January 15th, 2023, Indonesia has the sixth largest number of startups in the world, as shown in the following Table 3. Currently, there are 2,190 startups in Indonesia, and one startup, namely Go-Jek, a ride-hailing application mainly for motorbikes, has become a "decacorn" (a company valued at over \$10 billion).

Table 3. The top six start-up ranking

Country	Start-up
United States	75.947
India	16.069
United Kingdom	6.820
Canada	3.775

Australia	2.728
Indonesia	2.460

Source: startupranking.com (accessed on January 15th, 2023)

The Indonesian government has introduced programs such as ‘Go Digital Vision 2020’ and the ‘Indonesia E-Commerce Roadmap’ to foster the growth of digital start-ups (Edamadaka & Seike, 2019). This has resulted in an increasing number of IT specialists in Indonesia (Dewi, 2022b). Before COVID-19, in 2018, 998,000 workers were hired by the ICT sector, and 500,000 of them worked as IT specialists and technicians (ILO, 2019). The need for IT specialists in Indonesia is not only in the IT sector and digital start-ups but also in other industries and services, especially in MSMEs, to support and prepare for the Industry 4.0 era (ILO, 2019). The government of Indonesia also launched a roadmap, ‘Making Indonesia 4.0’ in 2018 to address this era; it focuses on, among other things, the implementation of technologies in many sectors. There are 10 national priorities in this initiative, one of which is to empower 3.7 million MSMEs through technology – for example, building e-commerce platforms and technology centers to increase MSMEs' access to technology (Indonesia Ministry of Industry, 2018). In the Indonesian context, MSMEs accounted for about 61% of the GDP and employed 97% of Indonesian workers in 2018 (Indonesian Ministry of Co-op and MSMEs, 2020). The number of MSMEs in 2019 was also relatively large, having reached 65 million with an increase of 1,271,528 over 2018 (Indonesian Ministry of Co-op and MSMEs, 2021).

The strength of Indonesia's digital economy lies in its high internet penetration and large youth population, which will become increasingly dominant in the coming years (Alisjahbana et al., 2020). With a population of 268 million, Indonesia ranks fourth in the world with approximately 185 million internet users. In particular, millennials and Generation Z consumers, young digital natives who have come of age or are about to come of age in today's technological age, make up a significant portion of Indonesia's population and will be major growth drivers of the digital economy. Millennials and Generation Z are estimated to make up about 34% and 29% of the total population, respectively, according to the National Socio-Economic Survey (SUSENAS). At the same time, Indonesian consumers also appear to be avid internet users. For example, one study found that about 58% of users spend between 2 hours and 8 hours, and about 1/5 of them, or about 20%, spend more than 8 hours on the internet each day (APJII, 2020). Digital trading is also growing rapidly in Indonesia. According to Bank Indonesia (BI) records (2019), the value of electronic trade transactions (e-commerce) reached IDR 42.2 trillion in 2017 and increased by 148% to reach IDR 104.6 trillion in 2018. This increased again by 96% to IDR

205.5 trillion in 2019. According to the results of the BI study (2020), the value of digital economy transactions via e-commerce in Indonesia is estimated to reach IDR 253 trillion in 2024.

During COVID-19

On March 2, 2020, COVID-19 unexpectedly struck Indonesia, causing not only health problems but also social and economic crises. This occurred in the middle of the development of the country's digital economy. Due to COVID-19, Indonesia was downgraded to lower middle-income status, despite the fact that the World Bank had given Indonesia an upper-middle-income status in 2020 (Kacaribu & Crystallin, 2022). Indonesia was in for quite a shock at that moment.

In 2020, right when COVID-19 began, it was the highest of Indonesia's unemployment rate trend. It was one of the worst in the previous ten years (Farida, 2022). Even so, the government had predicted that the rate would rise starting in 2021. Specifically, the unemployment rate was 5.23% in August 2019 and rose to 7.07% in August 2020 when COVID-19 began in Indonesia (details, please see Figure 1) (National Labor Force Survey of Statistics Indonesia, 2022). It subsequently slightly declined in February 2021 when it reached 6.26% (National Labor Force Survey of Statistics Indonesia, 2022). The reduction can be attributed to the mass vaccination program, which was positively received by the public.

Regarding information by age group, from February 2020 until February 2022, the age group of 15 up to 24 years old (young ages) became the dominant age group in the unemployment rate. The data showed that in February 2020, the number reached 16.31% and increased to 18.03% in February 2021 and slightly decreased but not so much to 17.08% in February 2022 (National Labor Force Survey of Statistics Indonesia, 2022). When noticing sectors that mostly absorb the labor force, the agriculture, forestry, and fishing sector is always being the top rank as usual (Table 4). This sector group can be included as an informal sector in the labor market. This sector is dominated by people aged 60 years old or over (National Labor Force Survey of Statistics Indonesia, 2022).

Table 4. The three sectors that absorb the most labor

Sector	Feb-2020	Feb-2021	Feb-2022
Agriculture, forestry, and fishing	29.23	29.59	29.96
Wholesale and retail trades, repair of cars and	18.58	19.20	19.03

motorcycle

Manufacturing	14.04	19.20	19.03
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Source: (National Labor Force Survey of Statistics Indonesia, 2022)

The National Labor Force Survey conducted by Statistics Indonesia (2020) at the beginning of COVID-19 in Indonesia indicated that the condition of the workforce during the COVID-19 period not only faced the problem of increasing the number of unemployed but also decreasing the number of formal sector workers. Based on the data, the workforce in the formal sector decreased quite significantly, from 44.12% in August 2019 to 39.53% in August 2020. This indicates a reduction in the number of workers employed by the formal sector, either because companies stopped operating or because companies laid off some of the workforce due to decreased production as a result of reduced demand due to the COVID-19 pandemic (National Labour Force Survey of Statistics Indonesia, 2020).

The crises mainly include the termination of employment (layoffs), limited job vacancies, mobility and migration limitations, etc. In Indonesia, social and mobility limitations include large-scale social restrictions (PSBB) and community activity restrictions enforcement (PPKM), which were derived from the World Health Organization's (WHO) social restriction policy. These restrictions limit economic activities. Private consumption has slowed due to mobility restrictions and consumer behavior that is reluctant to leave the house, thereby limiting consumption. In addition, workplace closures have a direct impact on the activities of companies, and self-employed workers are at high risk of bankruptcy. There was also a decrease in the income level of workers in all regions. The following Figure 4 shows Indonesia's trajectory during COVID-19 from 2020 until 2022.

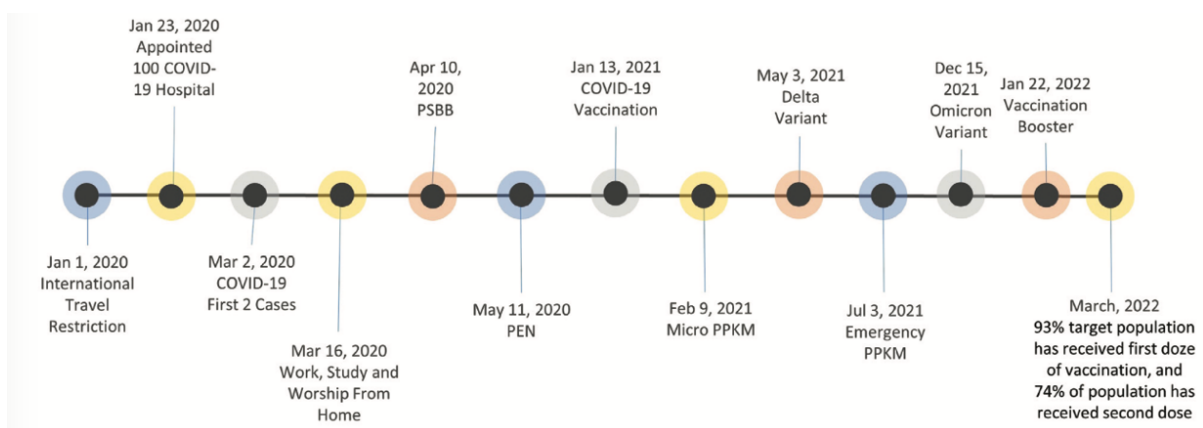


Figure 4. Indonesia's trajectory amidst COVID-19 in 2020 until 2022 (Arifin et al., 2022, p.31)

The impact of the social and mobility restrictions can also be seen from the decline in Indonesia's economic growth in the second quarter of 2020. Indonesia's economic growth in the second quarter of 2020 experienced a contraction of -5.32% (YoY) (Statistics Indonesia, 2020). By sector, the transportation and warehousing sector experienced the deepest contraction at -30.84% (YoY), followed by the accommodation and food and beverage sector at -22.02% (YoY). The processing industry, which has a dominant role, also experienced a growth contraction of -6.19% (Statistics Indonesia, 2020). However, there are several sectors that are still growing positively, including the information and communication sector at 10.88% (YoY), and water supply at 4.56% (YoY). Meanwhile, Agriculture, Forestry and Fishery also grew by 2.19% (Statistics Indonesia, 2020).

Negative economic growth did not stop until the second quarter of 2020. In the third quarter of 2020, Indonesia's economic growth was still negative but relatively slightly improved. In quarter III-2020, compared to quarter III-2019, it experienced a growth contraction of 3.49 percent (YoY) (Statistics Indonesia, 2020). The improvement in Indonesia's economic growth in the third quarter of 2020 was driven by an increase in the realization of government stimulus as well as improvements in public mobility and global demand. Details about Indonesia's economic growth from quarter I-2019 up to quarter III-2022 are presented in Figure 5.

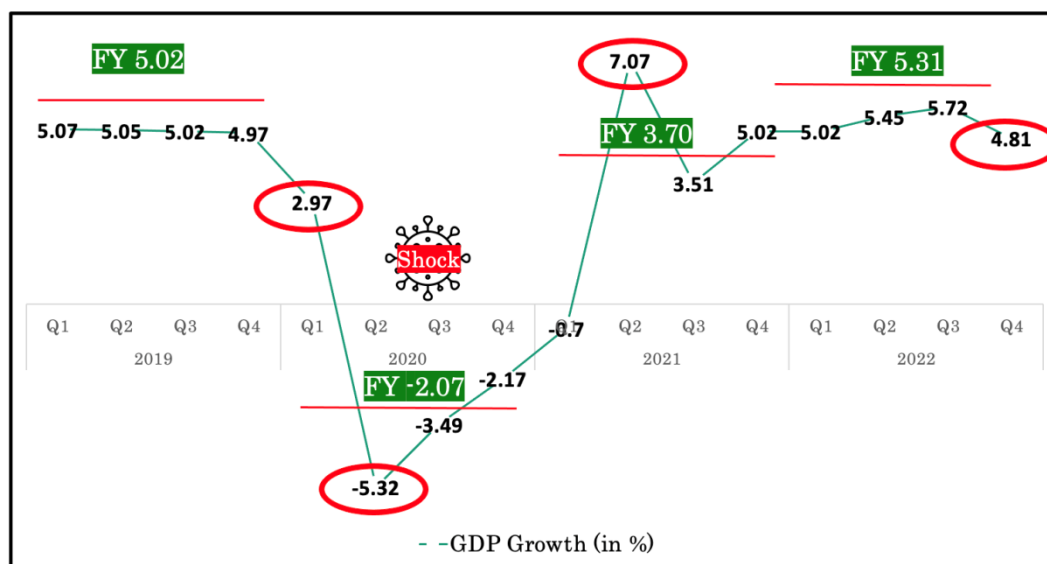


Figure 5. Indonesia economic growth from quarter I-2019 up to quarter III-2022 (Sources: Statistics Indonesia, 2019 up to 2022)

One workplace adjustment made in response to COVID-19 is the implementation of remote working. However, not all companies in Indonesia were able to equally adopt and follow

this new trend due to the variety of occupations. Some had to lay off employees to cut operational costs, resulting in a rise in unemployment caused by the pandemic, as shown in Table 1 in Chapter I: Introduction.

It was observed that the most significant reductions in the number of employees amid the pandemic occurred in the manufacturing industry (52.23%), construction (51.37%), and accommodation, food, and beverage sectors (50.52%). Among business scales, medium and large businesses experienced more layoffs (46.64%) than MSMEs (33.23%). Regarding age groups, the 15-19 age group was the most affected, with 62.7% layoffs, followed by the 20-24 age group (27.7%), and the 45-49 age group (20.1%). This condition highlights that young people are the primary victims of the pandemic's social and economic consequences (LIPI Population Research Center, et.al., 2020).

Different countries worldwide have implemented varying responses to COVID-19, grouped into four primary areas: saving lives, protecting the purchasing power of the poor and vulnerable, saving jobs and businesses, and restoring countries to become more resilient (World Bank, 2020). The Indonesian government created two programs to directly reduce the pandemic's impact on employment: the pre-employment card program (Kartu Pra-kerja) and salary subsidies. These two programs belong to the National Economic Recovery (PEN) policy in the social protection cluster, with a total budget of IDR 29.85 trillion and IDR 20 trillion, respectively. Other programs indirectly reducing COVID-19's effects on the employment sector include the MSME program, sectoral ministries/institutions and regional governments, and corporate financing programs (Kacaribu & Crystallin, 2022). The existence of these programs will strengthen the business world and prevent mass layoffs that contribute to high unemployment rates. Figure 6 provides more details on all programs under the Indonesia National Economic Recovery (PEN) policy.

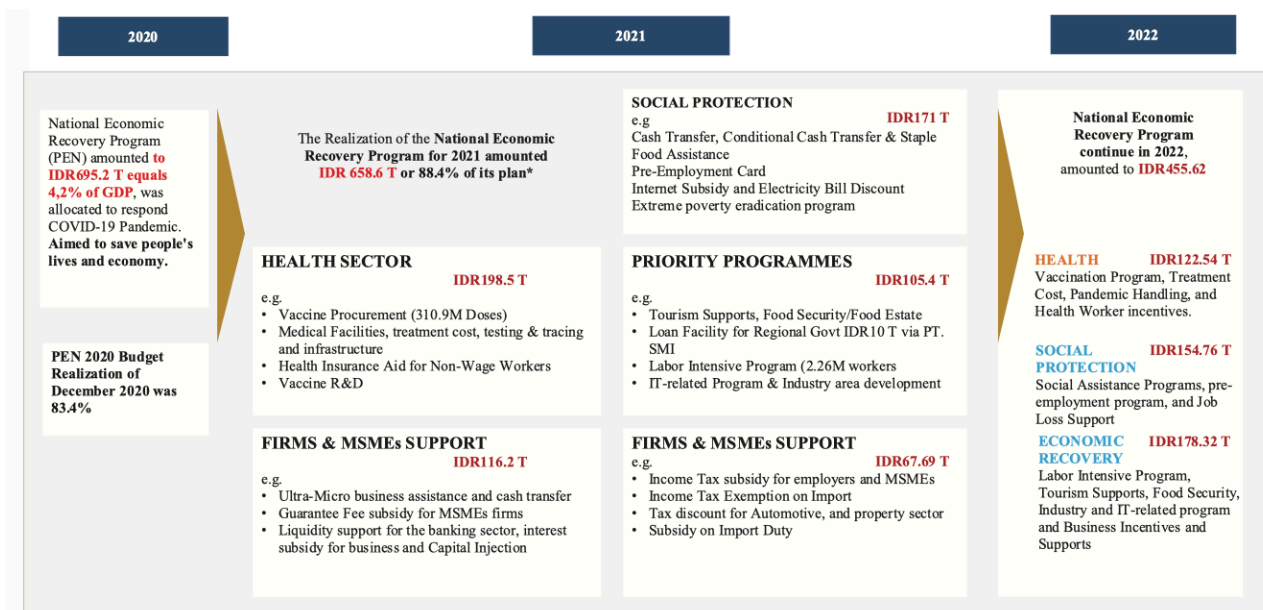


Figure 6. Indonesia's economic recovery program, 2020-2022 (Kacaribu & Crystallin, 2022, p.74)

2.2 Building the conceptual framework

To build the conceptual framework and better understand the concept of CDM, this study reviews previous theoretical models and studies on the CDM process, especially amidst COVID-19.

2.2.1 Theoretical gap: CDM theories or model development

Theories provide a more comprehensive understanding of professional processes than merely synthesizing unique experiences or collecting practitioner experience. Since 1908, there have been many CDM theories or models, and Table 5 summarizes them. The author grouped them based on agency focus. It can be seen that there has been a move from a psychological field to a sociological one, although the psychological approach is still dominantly used for studying or even as the approach for career guidance practices, including in Indonesia nowadays. There is also a development from individual-focused models to individual-context focused models.

Looking at Table 5, the trait matching model built by Parsons (1909), Roger (1952), and Holland (1985) became the leading theories in the individual-focused group, in which they matched a person to a particular job. However, this approach was criticized because it is oversimplified (Law, 1981). Other experts such as Ginsberg et al. (1951) with their developmental model and Super (1953, 1957, 1980) with his life-span (the life-career rainbow) framework also focused only on individual performance perspective.

Although it has been criticized since 1981, the individual-focused model still has followers. Arthur and Rousseau (1996) introduced the boundaryless career model and the

protean career concept by Hall (2004). The boundaryless concept refers to people who make their careers more self-determined and flexible in response to societal changes in work arrangements. People with boundaryless careers have career aspirations, expertise, and networks beyond their current employer, so their careers are a continuum of opportunity that transcends the boundaries of their individual employment environment (Arthur & Rousseau, 1996). In addition, the protean career has a similar sense with the boundaryless concept in which it represents a new type of career engagement, where careers are flexible, dynamic, and managed by individuals rather than organizations (Hall, 2004). It means that a person is striving for developmental progress and self-actualization (Hall, 2004).

The development of the CDM models focused on individual and context-oriented groups, where the social learning theory and social cognitive learning theory by Bandura (1986) and Lent, Brown, & Hackett (1994) were the leading theories. They addressed the interaction of social and cultural factors on the CDM. However, the social actors and experiences were seen as external influences on decisions that were not embedded in the individual itself. Therefore, although they tried to bring contextual factors, the individual-focused part was still dominant. Until that time, all presented models were classified as individual performance perspectives and considered the traditional theoretical perspective. Many scholars have criticized the literature for continuing to emphasize these traditional theoretical formulations (Patton & McMahon, 2014) because that perspective ignores the social part as one of the embedded factors in the CDM. These individual perspective models only emphasize that (i) decision-making is fundamentally an individual process, (ii) it should and can include significant technical reason, and (iii) the key determinants of choice continue to be under the influence, if not control, of individuals (Hodkinson & Sparkes, 1997).

Continuing the development of CDM theory and model, in the only explicitly sociological analysis of CDM in the literature in that decade, Roberts (1968, 1975) contended that opportunity structures in the youth labor market, which are significantly influenced by the nature of industrial organization and employment, government regulation, and social class, determine decisions rather than individuals themselves. It means that this model only focuses on the context itself and even excludes the individual as the actor. After that, Law (1981) tried to contribute to the CDM theory development. He stated that what is required is a new theory that attempts to link Roberts' external model with more complex psychological theories, such as the developmental or social learning models (Law, 1981). He proposed the concept of community engagement, in which it is described how the community where an individual lives and works can motivate him/her to a particular career goal. This theory became the leading model in the

individual-context model perspective, yet again, it received criticism because it was merely a rough outline.

In the development of the individual-context interaction model for CDM, a lifespan development approach invented by Vondracek et al. (1986) was introduced. This perspective assumes that the aging process is complex and the product of many causes that occur in different dimensions throughout the working life and interact within and outside the worker. As a result, even two employees of the same age can be very different in terms of performance, health, job performance, and work motivation. Perhaps most importantly, changes that occur with age are often manageable, especially if intervention efforts are initiated early in working life (Baltes et al., 2006). Then, in this interaction model, another scholar, Amundson (1995), highlighted the interaction between contextual factors, decision triggers, problem frame and reframe of the decision-makers, and action planning. He named it the interactive CDM. He claimed that in order to fully understand the CDM process, scholars not only need to investigate the rational CDM techniques but also investigate how individuals form perceptions like determining the context, what the triggers are, how they frame and reframe, and ultimately how they make the action (Amundson, 1995).

In 1997, Hodkinson and Sparkes presented a concept called Careership theory, which added missing elements to previous theories. Several current theories of career choice use two separate approaches, outlining how decisions should be made and describing how decisions are made. This may be because many people make suboptimal professional decisions. Knowing what a wise job choice looks like can be helpful if we want to assist them in improving decision-making procedures. Therefore, finding utopian decision-making processes that are so disconnected from reality as to constitute an impractical standard to aim for is pointless. This frequently occurs when we treat choosing a career as an abstract, rational procedure instead of looking at the intricate, messy processes by which such decisions are actually made (Hodkinson & Sparkes, 2008).

The Careership theory tried to blend social and cultural elements with personal decisions, add a more sophisticated learning model, and combine individual preferences with opportunity structures in a way that embraces serendipity (Hodkinson & Sparkes, 1997). The theory was built based on the concept of Bourdieu's Theory of Practice (Bourdieu, 1977), specifically on the ideas of capital, field, and habitus. They believed that an individual is not a free agent, and the context is embedded in the individual.

Different from Careership theory, other scholars, Forrier et al. (2009), tried to fill the gap in the concept of the boundaryless and the protean career by introducing the career mobility

framework. They extended those two concepts by paying attention to the subtle interplay between individual (agency) and the context (structure). That framework explains how individual and structural factors may concurrently influence opportunities for individuals to mobilize and make transitions of work roles (Forrier et al., 2009).

The development of individual-context interaction was then complemented by the latest two models, namely the work-family model by Powell & Greenhaus (2012) and Schooreel et al. (2017), and flexible career by Tomlinson et al. (2018). The work-family model provides a wealth of evidence that different family factors are related to different work decisions, suggesting that the "family-relatedness" of work decisions is a widespread phenomenon (Greenhaus & Powell, 2012). This model was then extended by Schooreel et al. (2017), in which they investigated the idea of "home-to-career inference" further. This is the extent to which people perceive that their personal lives have limited their career choices so far. Schooreel et al. (2017) claimed that career interference from family members is expected to negatively impact employees' subsequent career satisfaction through self-efficacy of career goals and perceptions of organizational career support.

Finally, Tomlinson et al. (2018) introduced a model called the flexible career. They focus on conditions such as institutional arrangements and organizational policies and practices that can support individuals in building flexible and sustainable careers throughout their life course (Tomlinson et al., 2018). They begin the review with a critique of career theory, particularly the boundaryless and protean career model in which they tend to focus only on the agency or individual and forget the structure or context. By contrast, Tomlinson et al. (2018) emphasize the importance of institutions, especially education and training systems, welfare systems, worker participation, working hours and leave systems, pension systems, and individual institutions. They also emphasize the importance of different organizational actors in determining flexible careers, especially in relation to flexible work policies, organizational practices, culture, and management. Ultimately, they discuss the importance of a life course framework that considers important transition points and life stages that differ in order and importance when analyzing flexible careers.

As this study focuses on COVID-19 as a characteristic of the context, the authors searched the literature for a career theory that could explain the interaction between the dramatic condition of the context and the individual's behavior. Most of the theories the authors encountered proved to be inadequate, and only Careership theory almost fits with this study. It is the only one that is closely related to the study's purpose and participants' characteristics. This Careership theory resonates with this study data and with the ways the authors are thinking about the CDM process.

The current research focus in this case is on young adults, which is the same as that used to develop the Careership theory. This theory was developed based on research into how young people make career decisions after experiencing the training credits scheme (Hodkinson, 1998). According to this theory, young people make career decisions based on the field in which they work and the resources available, and these decisions are based on the habitus of social actors (Lundahl et al., 2017). But the situation in which this theory was deployed in 1997 was not a time of crisis. Therefore, the authors thought it necessary to study the applicability of this theory in the COVID-19 crisis, where social actors in this field are experiencing great shocks.

Table 5. CDM theories or models development

Focus	Theorist(s)	Tendency	Limitation(s)	Field
Individual	Trait matching theory: Parsons (1909), Roger (1952), Holland (1985) The developmental model: Ginsberg et.al (1951) A life-span (the life-career rainbow): Super (1953, 1957, 1980) The boundaryless career: Arthur & Rousseau (1996) Protean career: Hall (2004)	Treating each individual as a discrete entity and minimizing the impact of social and contextual factors	Oversimplified because it only attempts to find congruence between a person & a particular job or specialty	Psychology
Individual-context	Social learning theory & social cognitive learning theory: Bandura (1986), Lent, Brown, & Hackett (1994)	Addressing the interaction of social and cultural factors on decision-making	Social actors/experiences are seen as external influences on decisions not being embedded on the individual.	Psychology
Context (social context)	Structural theory: Roberts (1968, 1975)	The only explicitly sociological analysis of career decision-making in the literature at that period	It excludes the individual factor.	Sociology
Individual-context (context is also as the actor/agent)	Community Interaction: Law (1981) A Life-Span Developmental Approach: Vondracek et al. (1986)	An individual is not a free will and the context is embedded on the individual.	Understating the proactive participation of both individual and institutional stakeholders	Sociology

	<p>Interactive CDM: Amundson (1995) Careership theory: (Hodkinson & Sparkes, 1997)</p> <p>Career mobility framework: Forrier et al. (2009)</p> <p>The work-family model: Powell & Greenhaus, (2012), Schooreel et al. (2017)</p> <p>Flexible career: Tomlinson et al. (2018)</p>			
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Source: author's compilation

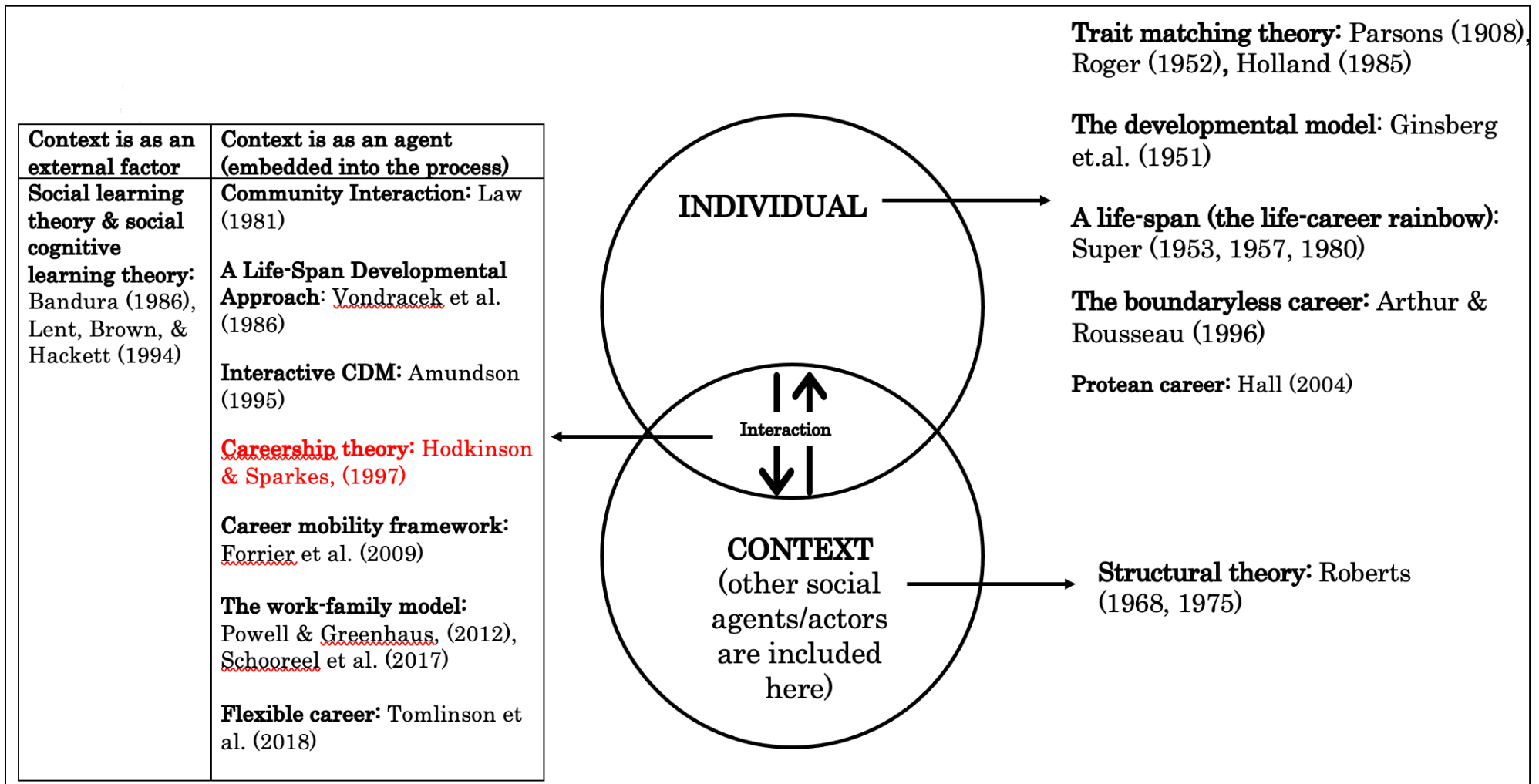


Figure 7. Theoretical gap (source: author's compilation)

2.2.2 The chosen theory: Careership theory

The basic idea of Careership theory is that young people make career decisions based on the resources (capitals) they own or have access to and the field in which they live (Lundahl et al., 2017). This theory is based on Bourdieu's theory of practice, which includes the concepts of habitus, capital, and field (Bourdieu, 1977). The explanation of each concept is as follows:

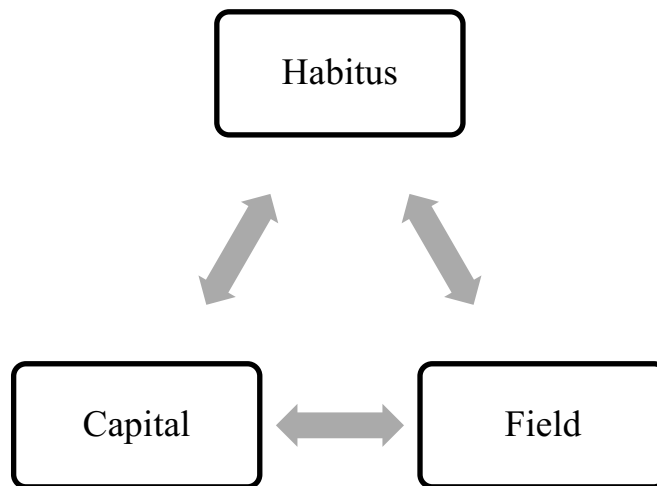


Figure 8. Bourdieu's theory of practice (Bourdieu, 1977)

a) Habitus

Bourdieu conceptualizes habitus as a collection of perceptual, thinking, feeling, evaluating, speaking, and acting schemata that perform all of an actor's expressive, verbal, and practical expressions and utterances (Krais, 1993). This concept has a physical dimension as embodied history, the active presence of the entire past, which is its product (Bourdieu, 1990). Habitus describes regular patterns of behavior over time that are neither the product of external structures nor merely subjective intentions. Habitus is continuously adapting to the current situation. Although primary socialization is very important, habit development cannot be confined to this period. Habitus is constantly reinforced or modified throughout life through further experiences, i.e. through positive and negative sanctions. Habitus and fields are linked in a cyclical relationship. Engagement with the field forms habitus, which in turn shapes behavior that reproduces the field (Crossley, 2001). To understand and explain a player's behavior on the field, we need information about their temperament and abilities (i.e., habitus and capital), as well as information about game status and the player's individual location on the field. An actor's logic is shaped by both its habitus and the requirements and logic of the game it unfolds (Bourdieu, 1977).

b) Field

For Bourdieu, a social field is a patterned set of practices within a wider social space that suggests competent behavior according to rules and roles. It is also the playing field or battlefield where actors with specific field-related capitals try to advance their positions. Playing by the rules of a game defined by a particular set of capitals most valuable to maintain or expand power within the field contributes to the reproduction of the field (Bourdieu, 1977, 1986). The field is therefore seen as dynamic and shaped by the social conventions of the actors. As with habitus, the field provides a historical context that explains its existence, records its changes, and explains its development or absence. The arena of action is the arena of struggle, in which social actors strive for the various forms of capital that give them status and a place in the social fabric.

c) Capital

In this research, the exploration of the four capitals identified by Bourdieu, namely economic, cultural, social, and symbolic capital, plays a pivotal role in understanding the complex dynamics of career decision-making (CDM) amidst the COVID-19 pandemic. Bourdieu's theoretical framework provides valuable insights into the distinct characteristics and roles of these capitals in shaping individuals' social and economic lives (Bourdieu, 1986). By examining these capitals, the study aims to gain a deeper understanding of how they influence the career decision-making processes of polytechnic graduates during the pandemic.

However, it is essential to clarify that while the study draws inspiration from Bourdieu's theory of capital, it does not strictly adhere to it. Instead, the research adopts a more pragmatic approach, focusing on the identification and comparison of the levels of activation of different capitals during the COVID-19 pandemic compared to the pre-pandemic period. The primary objective is to shed light on how the unique and challenging circumstances of the pandemic impact the utilization and activation of various capitals in the career decision-making processes of the graduates.

The study acknowledges that the pandemic context has brought about unprecedented disruptions and constraints, leading to shifts in the activation and significance of different capitals. By examining these changes, the research aims to provide valuable insights into the adaptive strategies and decision-making behaviors adopted by the graduates to navigate the challenges and opportunities presented by the crisis.

While the research investigates the levels of activation of different capitals, it does not extensively delve into the underlying processes that drive this activation or the intricate connections between these capitals. Instead, the study focuses on the observable outcomes and

patterns, offering a broader perspective on the graduates' career decision-making behaviors during the pandemic. The explanation of each capital is as follows:

Economic capital refers to the resources and wealth possessed by individuals or groups. It primarily takes the form of monetary assets that can be used to acquire other forms of capital. Economic capital can be easily converted into cultural, social, and symbolic capital, providing individuals with opportunities and advantages in various social fields (Postone et al., 1993).

Social capital encompasses the networks, relationships, and social connections that individuals have. It includes the resources and benefits derived from social interactions, such as trust, cooperation, and access to information and opportunities. Social capital is built on mutual awareness, acquaintanceship, and membership in social groups or classes.

Cultural capital exists in three forms, as described by Bourdieu (2005). Firstly, it is embodied in the long-lasting dispositions of individuals' minds and bodies, such as knowledge, skills, and attitudes acquired through education and socialization. Secondly, cultural capital can be objectified in cultural products like books, art, technology, or other artifacts that embody cultural value. Lastly, cultural capital can be institutionalized through formal qualifications, degrees, and certifications that are recognized and valued in society.

Symbolic capital is closely tied to specific social fields. It refers to the recognition, prestige, and status that individuals or groups possess within a given field. Symbolic capital is shaped by the rules and criteria of a particular social context, which determine the acceptable combinations of basic forms of capital and the social value attached to them. Bourdieu argues that symbolic capital is the most valuable form of capital, as it confers social recognition and influence (Gander, 2022).

In general, the justification for focusing on those four capitals can be outlined as follows:

1. **Comprehensive Understanding:** By examining these four capitals, we can gain a comprehensive understanding of the factors that influence the CDM process of polytechnic graduates. Each capital represents a different aspect of individuals' resources, opportunities, and social positioning, which collectively shape their career choices and outcomes.
2. **Addressing Multiple Dimensions:** Focusing on the four capitals allows this study to address multiple dimensions of individuals' experiences and resources. Economic capital captures the financial resources available to graduates, while cultural capital encompasses their knowledge, skills, and educational background. Social capital explores their social networks and connections, and symbolic capital reflects the social recognition and prestige they may possess.
3. **Relevance to the COVID-19 Context:** The COVID-19 pandemic has brought unique

challenges to the labor market and career pathways. By examining the four capitals in the context of the pandemic, we can understand how economic disruptions, changes in cultural norms and practices, shifts in social interactions, and alterations in symbolic values have influenced the CDM process for polytechnic graduates.

Overall, the justification for focusing on the four capitals in this study lies in their theoretical significance, the comprehensive understanding they provide, and their relevance to the COVID-19 context. By examining these capitals, we can uncover valuable insights into the career decision-making process and inform policies and practices that promote more equitable and effective support for polytechnic graduates in Indonesia amidst the challenges posed by the pandemic.

Building on those three constructs of Bourdieu's theory of practice (Bourdieu, 1977), the Careership model has three fully integrated and interrelated dimensions: "(i) pragmatically rational decision-making, located in the habitus of the person making the decision; (ii) the interactions with others in the (youth training) field, related to the unequal resources different 'players' possess; and (iii) the location of decisions within the partly unpredictable pattern of turning-points and routines that make up the life course" (Hodkinson & Sparkes, 1997). To make them clearer, the author made a figure as shown in Figure 9 followed by the explanation for each construct.

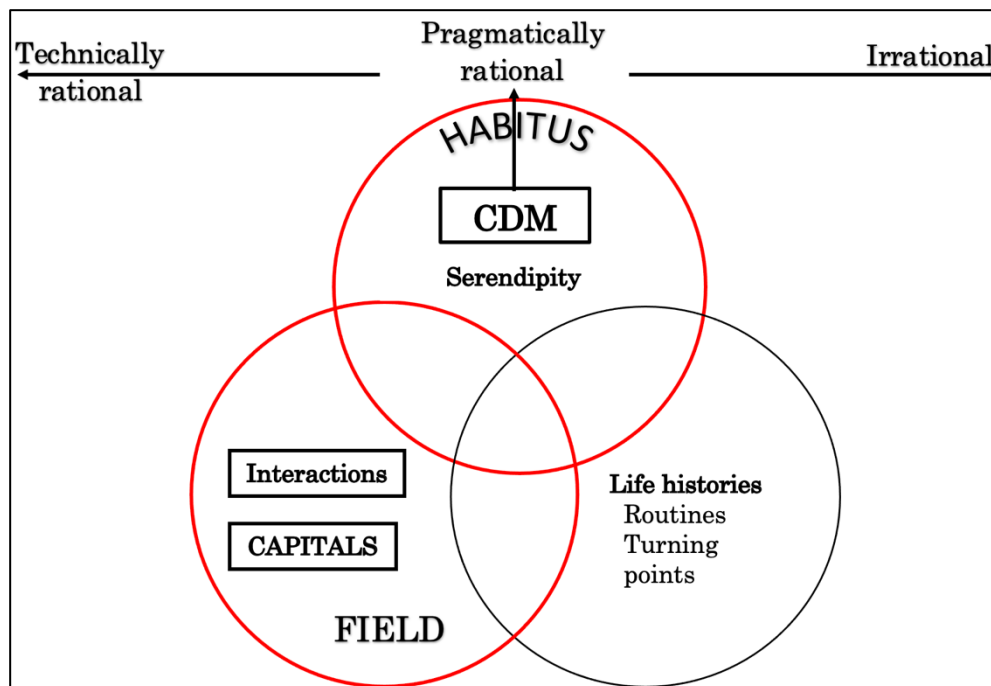


Figure 9. Careership Theory's constructs (created by the author based on the (Hodkinson & Sparkes, 1997)).

a) Pragmatically rational decision-making

The term "pragmatically rational" combines the concepts of "pragmatic" and "rational." Hodkinson et al. (1996) showed that career choices are not made in a vacuum. For example, studies on career choices in outdoor sports (Allin & Humberstone, 2006; Humberstone, 2004) and soccer (Andersson & Barker-Ruchti, 2019) have shown that agents make choices based on some level of rationality, but this rationality cannot be divorced from the context. In the context of this study, it means that during the COVID-19 pandemic, an individual's career choice is undoubtedly influenced by their circumstances.

Furthermore, Hodkinson (2009); Hodkinson et al. (1996); Hodkinson & Sparkes (1997) argue that individuals' rationality is more pragmatic than instrumental because decision-making is located in their habitus. Social actors act and make choices based on where they are, what they know, and what they have, or "a horizon of action" (Hodkinson & Sparkes, 1997). In other words, decisions are made based on localized information, shaped by the individual's family background, culture, and life history.

People make career decisions within horizons of action that limit and enable their worldview and the decisions they can make. The horizon is related to vision, the extent to which a person can see (Hodkinson et al., 1996) or aspire (Zipin et al., 2015). Therefore, one reason some young people may reject career suggestions is that the suggestions are outside their horizon. The suggestions do not fit their existing self-image or perception of suitable career opportunities (Hodkinson & Sparkes, 1997). People are more likely to consider the likelihood of success before making a decision and choose what they see as a possibility based on their knowledge and resources (Hodkinson & Sparkes, 1997). This creates a discrepancy between what individuals do and how the guidance process is designed and the system works (Hodkinson & Sparkes, 1993).

b) Interactions in the field and the resources (capitals) different 'players' possess

CDM can only be seen as part of such interactions on the field (Hodkinson & Sparkes, 1997) in this study, when the graduates made the interaction in the polytechnic as the training field. Hodkinson (1998) explained that for young people, career choice was part of their activities on the training field in which they have contact with parents, friends, neighbors, employers, training providers, teachers, career advisors, government, and others. Within such contexts, it is helpful to see all the players making pragmatically rational decisions, from their own differing standpoints, within their own differing horizons and with their own differing objectives. For example, young people may be primarily concerned with getting a job and/or training program which they want, employers may be concerned primarily with the labour requirements of running

a business profitably, and training providers (i.e., schools/HEIs) may be most concerned with creating viable teaching groups. The result is a fluid mixture of alliances, negotiations, agreements, and conflicts (Hodkinson & Sparkes, 1997).

These interactions that happen in the field result in more than just the need to change decisions. Rather, the decision itself and the habitus in which it is made are formulated and modified through such ongoing interactions in the field. Choices may also be considered as they become available within the field, or opportunities can also arise through such interactions when an individual is placed in a job by the parent with an employer that the parent knows. In other words, Hodkinson (1998) claimed that activities in the training field were facilitated by the resources available to all participants in that field. Sometimes young people have resources, but others might have more. Therefore, sometimes it makes no sense to imagine that young people control their career decisions or that they are puppets of others' decisions (Hodkinson, 1998).

The first thing that is established is that decisions regarding job advancement and positioning are always made, and that position always matters. It is now obvious that there are various significant positions of different types. In our initial thought, we concentrated on an individual's position within social structures like class, gender, and ethnicity as well as their position within the fields they were engaged in. Although they are not the same, both are always important. This is due to the possibility that important elements of a person's status within a profession may not be immediately tied to social structures (Hodkinson, 2008).

c) Turning-points and routines that make up the life course

The Careership theory attempts to explain the uneven coverage of everyday experiences combined with turning points in an individual's life (Hodkinson, 2009). Hodkinson and Sparkes stated that, At a turning-point a person goes through a significant transformation of identity. Careership can be seen as an uneven pattern of routine experience interspersed with such turning points. Within each turning-point, career decisions are pragmatically rational and embedded in the complex struggles and negotiations of the relevant field (Hodkinson & Sparkes, 1997)

Hodkinson & Sparkes (1997) identified three types of turning points: self-initiated, structural, and forced turning points, which are tied to the period of a routine. A self-initiated turning point refers to a change or transformation in life in which the affected person actively initiates a new life path. Structural turning points differ from self-initiating turning points in that events are determined by external structures. The last type, a forced turning point, is where a life-changing phenomenon is imposed on an individual. The COVID-19 pandemic can be identified as a forced turning point for people worldwide, as it forced them to make significant

transformations in their lives. As Hodkinson & Sparkes (1997) claimed, routines and turning-points are related to each other and make up the individual's life course.

Hodkinson & Sparkes (1997) also explained five types of routines: confirmatory, contradictory, socializing, dislocating, and evolutionary. Confirmatory routines are experiences that reinforce career decisions already made. Contradictory routines represent experiences that undermine or contradict the decisions made initially, leading to dissatisfaction with the initial decisions. Socializing routines represent experiences that affirm professional identities that were previously absent. Dislocating routines represent living with undesirable career choices or identities, especially when social actors are unable to change their initial choices. Evolutionary routines describe the experience of a person gradually growing out of their original career or identity without pain or contradiction. These turning points and routine concepts can help identify, recognize, and explain the complex nature of change in life (Hodkinson, 2009). However, since this study was not a longitudinal study and mainly only interviewed the participants once, it does not make sense to explain such turning points and intervening routines of the respondents occurring within a short timescale. The author took the data of the respondents' experiences from conducting WP programs until getting the jobs, and often a turning point itself is longer than that. Therefore, this study will only focus on two dimensions of this theory: pragmatically rational decision-making and the interactions in the field and the resources (capitals) different 'players' possess (as presented in Figure 9).

2.2.3 Previous CDM studies utilizing Careership theory

Careership has influenced a number of research initiatives that examine careers. Two studies by Stephen Ball, one of which specifically examined Careership theories in relation to young people's career growth after graduating from school in London (Ball et al., 2000). The other, also headquartered in London, looked at how people decide which university degrees to take. Despite not focusing on careers, this second experiment nevertheless yielded results that shed light on the theory's applicability (Reay et al., 2001; Ball et al., 2002).

In Birmingham, Hancock (2006) evaluated 12 male adult returners to education with a specific focus on careers. As the creator of the Careership theory, Hodkinson himself carried out three more research studies that influenced the Careership work. In the first, 50 young people were followed in Plymouth, Exeter, and Manchester as they entered, progressed through, and left further education (Bloomer & Hodkinson, 2000, 2002). Bowman et al. (2005) then tracked 24 full-time Master's degree students throughout their coursework and for an additional 18 months later.

Most recently, Hodkinson (2008) worked with a sizable research team to examine the value of education in people's lives. In this Learning Lives research, he carefully analyzed the lives of 120 adults and followed their progression for an additional two to three years. Despite the fact that career was not the main emphasis, this gave the opportunity to examine Careership over a far wider time period than he could in any other study. It also enabled him to think about the value of career development for senior citizens, such as in light of retirement.

These projects provide a thorough assessment of the Careership theory taken as a whole, with a total sample size of over 300 people from all social classes, various ethnic backgrounds, various ages, and various points over the course of the past 40 years. They depict individuals moving through a variety of career transitions, including those from school to training, employment, further education (FE), and higher education (HE); from HE or work to a Master's degree; from FE and HE into the workforce; from one job to another; and from work to retirement or part-time employment. On the other hand, none of the studies examined the context of crisis, and this current study fills the gap.

2.2.4 The limitations of Careership theory

The study aims to address a limitation of the Careership theory by emphasizing the importance of investigating the processes involved in career decision-making, in addition to exploring the dimensions provided by the theory. While the Careership theory focuses on dimensions such as pragmatically rational decision making, interactions in the field, resources (capitals), turning-points, and routines, it may not fully capture the dynamic processes that individuals go through when making career decisions.

By recognizing the need to study processes, the study aims to delve deeper into understanding how individuals navigate and make decisions within their career trajectories. It seeks to explore the cognitive, emotional, and behavioral processes that shape individuals' career decision-making behaviors, beyond just the static dimensions provided by the theory.

Investigating the processes involved in career decision-making can provide valuable insights into the internal thought processes, decision-making strategies, and factors that influence individuals' choices and actions. It allows for a more comprehensive understanding of the complexities and dynamics involved in career decision-making, considering both individual and contextual factors.

By addressing this limitation of the Careership theory and incorporating the study of processes, the research aims to contribute to a more nuanced and holistic understanding of how

individuals navigate their career paths, make decisions, and respond to various challenges and opportunities that arise along the way.

The second limitation is related to the concept of pragmatically rational CDM. Hodkinson (2008) discussed that the continuum of rationality is still unclear. The work of Hodkinson and Sparkes (1997) on pragmatic rationality is often seen as a decision-making style that can be contrasted with other decision-making styles. By discussing restricted and improved pragmatic rationality, Hodkinson and Sparkes (1997) may have unintentionally contributed to the reinforcement of this viewpoint. In doing so, they gave more weight to levels of rationality than to the more fundamental characteristics of pragmatic rationality. Hancock (2006), who adopted a continuum of rationality types similar to Hodkinson and Sparkes (1997), argued that the individuals in his sample adopted one of four different decision-making philosophies: systematic, enhanced, restricted, and no logic. In contrast to the other two, he considered enhanced and restricted as variations on pragmatic reason.

After reading Hancock's (2006) findings, Hodkinson (2008) explained that he realized that many of the prerequisites for pure technical cognitive rationality, as well as within his single no logic, are not satisfied, even within his systematic group. Hodkinson (2008) provided an example taken from Hancock's (2006) study about Liam's decisions, which contained some reasonable components as he was "spontaneous, impulsive and more susceptible to panic" (p. 207). Hodkinson (2008) stated that although Liam's decision-making was not entirely reasonable, his procedures were not methodical. Liam hopped from training program to training program and job to job, applying for positions that he learned about and that would let him make money. He made the wise decision to remain employed, though. Hodkinson (2008) stated that according to his definition, all four of Hancock's (2006) approaches are variations on pragmatic rationality.

However, there are discrepancies across decision-making styles, and this was not taken into account in the early theorizing of Careership (Hodkinson, 2008). Hodkinson (2008) confirmed that he views pragmatic rationality as an important means of revealing how career decisions are always made, rather than as a method of decision-making. Without it, CDM is too readily considered as a solely cognitive and individualized process, bracketing off the positioned person and the field. This is why it is important to maintain a perspective of pragmatic rationality as universal. This does not imply that everyone makes career decisions in the same way, and Hodkinson (2008) stated that researchers must now emphasize that there are several notable pragmatically logical decision-making approaches. Therefore, this study discusses some types of pragmatically rational CDM in Chapter 6 in the discussion part.

The third limitation is about the concept of serendipity inside the pragmatically rational CDM. Hodkinson (2008) stated that this concept requires further amplification. Chance or serendipity occurs when someone is in the right place at the right moment. This could be during a routine or turning point, and it may also coincide with the time when action is likely to be taken (Maluleke, 2022). This serendipity concept is still underexplained in the Careership theory. As consequently, this study looked at this concept in its data in order to fill the limitation.

The fourth limitation is about the routines and turning points dimension in which it is problematic in which it is partly a matter of scale and unclear divisions between the routines and turning points. Hodkinson (2008) confirmed that he and his colleagues debated the relationship between routines and turning points before classifying both, which he believed was erroneous. Hodkinson (2008) said that his argument was that routines may be confirmatory, evolutionary, dislocating, etc., whereas turning points could be structural, imposed, or self-induced. He then was aware of two challenges even as he was writing (Hodkinson, 2008). First off, there is no obvious distinction between routines and turning points, as Strauss (1962) made apparent. Second, scale played a role in how routines and turning moments were perceived (Hodkinson, 2008).

Hodkinson and his colleagues examined lives that spanned 18 months. However, if a forty-year life span is considered, what appears to be a significant turning point during this period may only appear as a lengthier routine (Hodkinson, 2008). Conversely, if a longer-term perspective is used, what first appeared to be periods of monotony may turn out to be significant turning points (Hodkinson, 2008). However, claiming that such turning points and intervening routines of the respondents occurred over a short period of time is illogical since this study was not longitudinal and mostly only questioned the individuals once. The author collected information on the respondents' experiences from beginning the WP program through landing jobs, and frequently, a turning point lasts longer than that. Therefore, this study is unable to address this gap. At last limitations are related to the context in which the theory was developed. The Careership theory was developed in the high-income country of the UK and not during a time of crisis. Therefore, this study attempted to examine the applicability of this theory in lower-middle-income countries like Indonesia and during the COVID-19 crisis.

2.2.5 Knowledge gap: studies on the CDM process amidst COVID-19

Given the relatively short period of time since the COVID-19 outbreak, it is understandable that there is not an extensive literature to consult on this area of interest. However, it is amazing that scholars have already published research on this topic in the last three years (2020-2022). The

analysis of the knowledge gap is shown in Figures 11 and 12. Figure 11 shows the knowledge gap specifically related to the participant's gap, whereas Figure 12 presents the knowledge gap on the content of the studies (discussions gap). The explanations are as follows:

Most scholars have generally studied the influence of COVID-19 on students' views of their CDM, as shown in studies by Dos Santos (2020), Panina et al. (2020), Buathong et al. (2021), Lin et al. (2021), Park & Kang (2022), Sutiman et al. (2022), Gashi and Kadriu (2022), Dewi (2022a), Shiyuan et al. (2022), and Zhang et al. (2022). The studies that directly focused on the graduates' CDM process are conducted by AGCAS (2021), Tomlinson, Burg, & Reedy (2022), Purcell et al. (2021), and Mao et al. (2022). This means that there is a paucity of information related to the CDM process experienced by graduates. Focusing only on students' views about the impact of COVID-19 on their career outlook or attitudes seems meaningless since they have not yet experienced the transition. The significance for policy makers may not be strong enough. Therefore, this study focuses directly on the graduates' CDM process under the COVID-19 crisis.

While the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on the CDM process in developed states have been extensively studied in the literature (such as Dos Santos (2020) in South Korea; Panina, et.al. (2020) in Russia; Lin, et.al. (2021) in Taiwan; Park and Kang (2022) in South Korea; Gashi and Kadriu (2022) in Kosovo; Shiyuan, et.al. (2022) in China; Zhang, et.al. (2022) in China; AGCAS (2021) in the UK; Tomlinson, Burg, and Reedy (2022) in the UK; and Buathong, et.al. (2021) in Thailand), little is known about how it has affected graduates' CDM process in emerging countries. Indonesia, a nation that exemplifies the difficulties experienced by developing nations, was chosen as the location for this study. Although there are two studies focused on the Indonesian context conducted by Sutiman, et.al. (2022) and Dewi (2022b), their participants were students, not college graduates.

As stated previously in the second paragraph, most studies focused on students' views towards their career outlook, and studies about graduates' CDM process were still limited. This becomes the knowledge gap that this study aims to fill. Studies conducted by Dos Santos (2020); Panina, et.al. (2020); Lin, et.al. (2021); Dewi (2022b); Gashi & Kadriu (2022); and Zhang, et.al. (2022) are the ones that investigated students' views towards their career outlook. For example, Dos Santos (2020) specifically investigated how COVID-19 influences nursing students' experiences, sense of belonging, and career outlook. He found that students' experiences, sense of belonging, and their CDM outlook changed slightly due to the insignificant salary and unattractive benefits in the nursing profession and the nature of the profession.

Other scholars, still focusing on the students as the respondents, such as Buathong, et.al. (2021); Park and Kang (2022); Sutiman, et.al. (2022); and Shiyuan, et.al. (2022), utilized a quantitative method in the form of self-rated questionnaires. For example, Buathong, et.al. (2021) investigated job-seeking anxiety, resilience, and family influence on CDM among senior undergraduate students in Southern Thailand amidst COVID-19. They found that the majority of participants had a moderate level of resilience quotient, family influence scale, job-seeking self-perceptions, and job-seeking anxiety status.

The only study on graduates' CDM process amidst COVID-19 was the longitudinal study conducted by The Association of Graduate Careers Advisory Services (AGCAS) (2021) in the UK, followed by a follow-up study conducted by Tomlinson, Burg, and Reedy (2022) under the same institution and funding. The findings from the first half of a 12-month longitudinal research are presented in the first report by AGCAS (2021). The first phase consisted of graduate interviews and a survey. Following that phase, Tomlinson, Burg, and Reedy (2022) conducted a second survey and interview of the same graduating class.

The previous studies explained above showed that there are still gaps in three parts of CDM studies. First, the study which focuses on graduates is still limited. Second, the context of lower-middle income countries is still underexplored. The last one is the graduates' CDM process is also still underexplored. This study focused on Indonesia as the representative of lower-middle income countries as well as on graduates' CDM process under COVID-19 to fill these gaps.

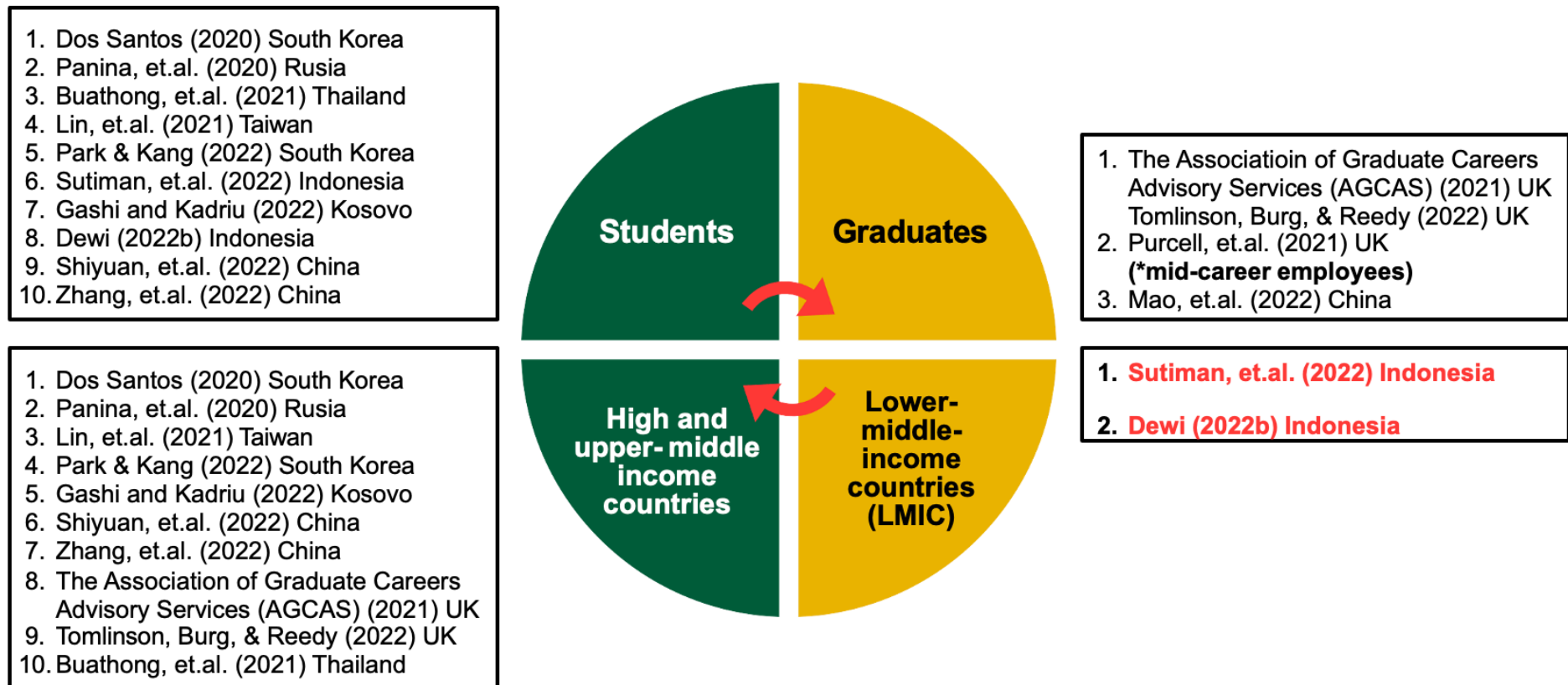


Figure 10. Knowledge gap: participants gap

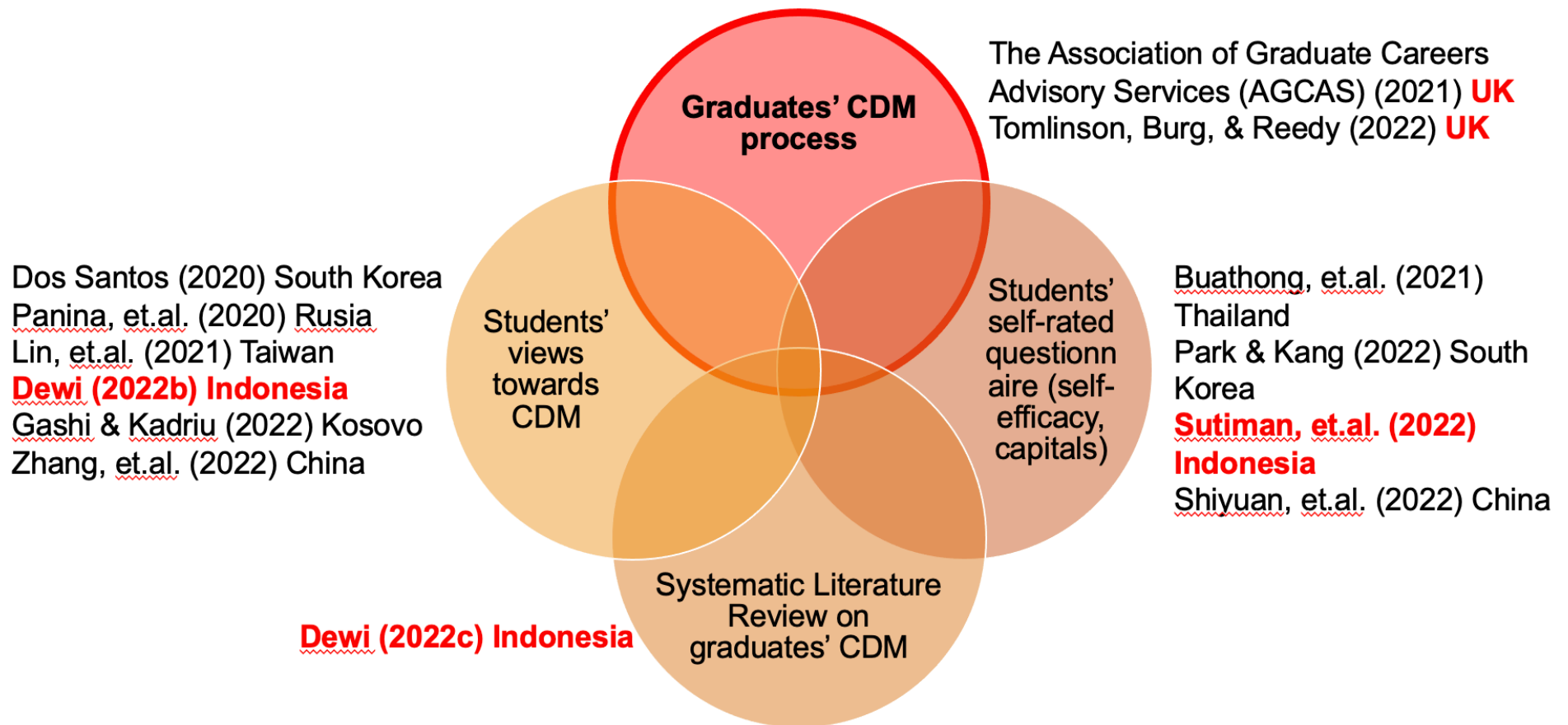


Figure 11. Knowledge gap: discussions gap

2.3 Conceptual framework

After reviewing the development of career-decision making (CDM) theories and studies on CDM amidst COVID-19, this study identified theoretical and knowledge gaps, which were used to build the conceptual framework presented in Figure 13 below. The conceptual framework is built to investigate the characteristics of different agents' settings (government, employer, polytechnic, and, family and surroundings) under COVID-19, and how these characteristics influence the CDM process of graduates from polytechnics.

The study aims to answer several research questions. Research question 1 focuses on understanding the typical characteristics of each agent's setting/field under COVID-19. This analysis will provide insights into the context in which the CDM process takes place.

Research question 2 aims to identify the capitals (economic, social, and cultural capital) that are activated in each typical characteristic of the field and determine which capital is the most useful for graduates' transition from education to work. This analysis will shed light on the resources and assets that graduates can leverage in their career decision-making process.

Research question 3 investigates the graduates' CDM behaviors amidst COVID-19 within the labor market setting. It explores their horizons for action, pragmatically rational CDM, and the concept of serendipity. This analysis will provide a deeper understanding of how graduates navigate their career choices and adapt to the changing circumstances during the pandemic.

Based on the findings from research questions 1 to 3, the study aims to develop a new model of the CDM process amidst COVID-19. This model will integrate the understanding of agent characteristics, activated capitals, and CDM behaviors to provide a comprehensive framework for supporting graduates' career decision-making in the context of the pandemic or other crises.

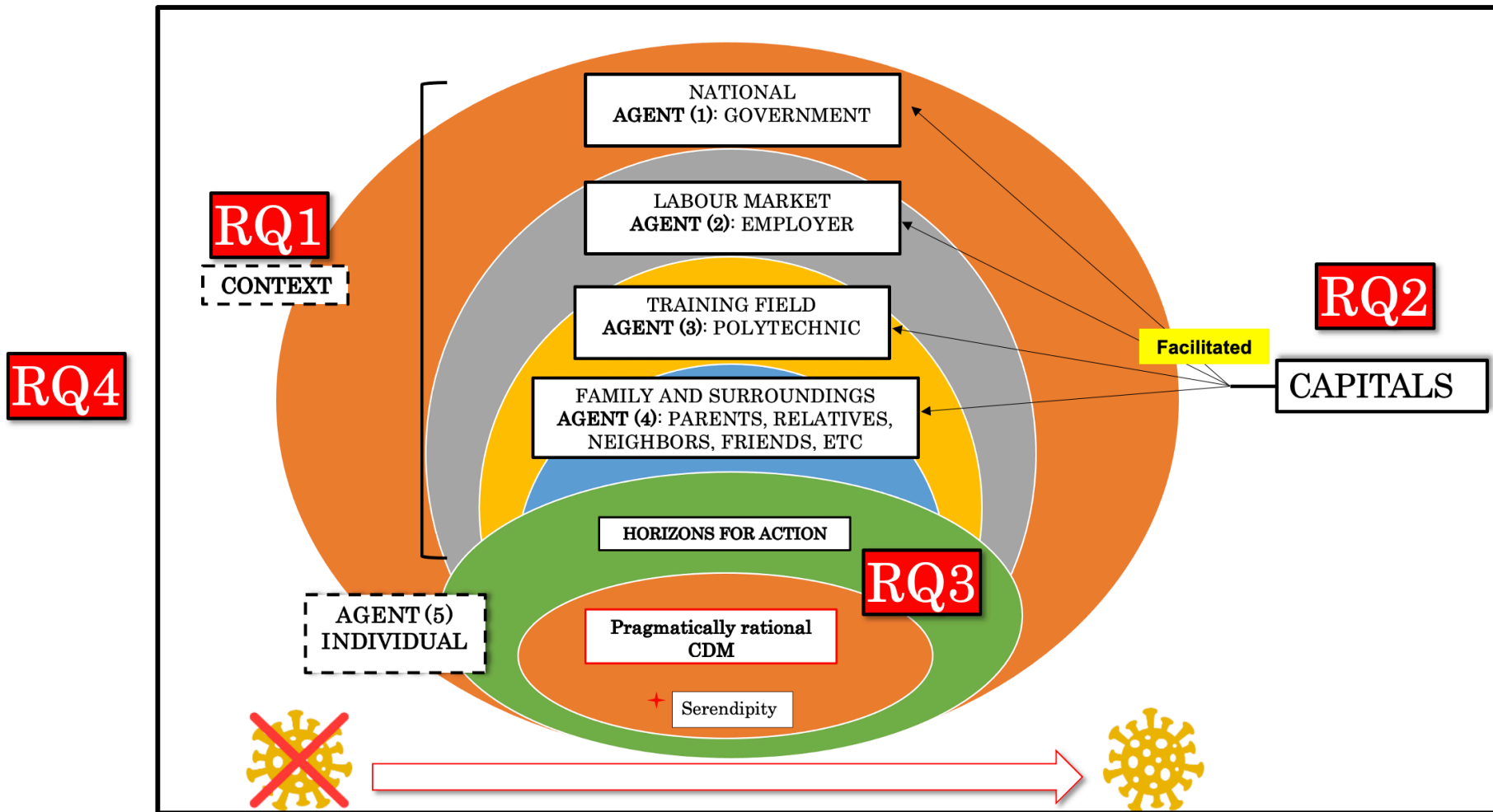


Figure 12. Conceptual framework

CHAPTER 3 METHODOLOGY

This chapter discusses the research design and its selection rationale, research context, research participants, data collection procedure, data analysis procedure, and ethical considerations. The study aims to achieve two objectives: to revisit the CDM process of polytechnic graduates in the time of COVID-19 and ultimately to draw out a new model of polytechnic graduates' CDM process. To achieve these objectives, a qualitative research design is employed because it is deemed suitable, specifically using phenomenological design method.

3.1 Research design

Phenomenological research is a qualitative research methodology that aids in portraying the lived experiences of an individual. The phenomenological approach concentrates on examining the phenomena that have affected a person. This method emphasizes the details and identifies a phenomenon as it is viewed by a person in a given circumstance. It can also be used to research the behaviors that a group of people have in common (Creswell, 2013). By utilizing a phenomenological design, the researcher can directly hear each respondent's lived experiences of a concept or phenomenon. In this case the, the concept is CDM process before and during COVID-19, and the purpose is to analyze the common meaning of that concept for the respondents (Creswell, 2013). This phenomenological approach disregarded in the researcher's biases and preconceived notions. It reflects on the lived experiences using current theory after describing them objectively (Creswell, 2013). The semi-structured interviews were used, focusing on the graduates' self-reflection on their experiences nearing graduation, transition from polytechnics to workplaces, career choices and current career trajectories. These semi-structured interviews were also conducted with representatives from polytechnic, including the director, heads of study programs, and staffs of career centers, as well as representatives from the user sides (employers).

3.2 Research context

Central Java is a province in Indonesia that was selected as the focus of this study. The selection was based on the number of workers affected by COVID-19, as Central Java is the third most affected province in the country. The province has a relatively good infrastructure and shows positive GDP/economic growth.

Central Java is known for having a significant number of industrial clusters. In 2020, it had the most industrial centers in Indonesia, totaling 3,400. The big industrial clusters in Central Java are such as in Semarang, Demak, Kendal, Tegal, brebes, and Cilacap city. This indicates a

strong presence of industries and economic activities in the province. Despite the presence of industrial clusters and economic growth, Central Java faces challenges in terms of unemployment. The number of unemployed individuals continues to increase each year, indicating a mismatch between the demand for labor and the available job opportunities. Additionally, the province has a relatively low college-level enrollment, and associate degree (polytechnic) graduates represent a small proportion of the working population.

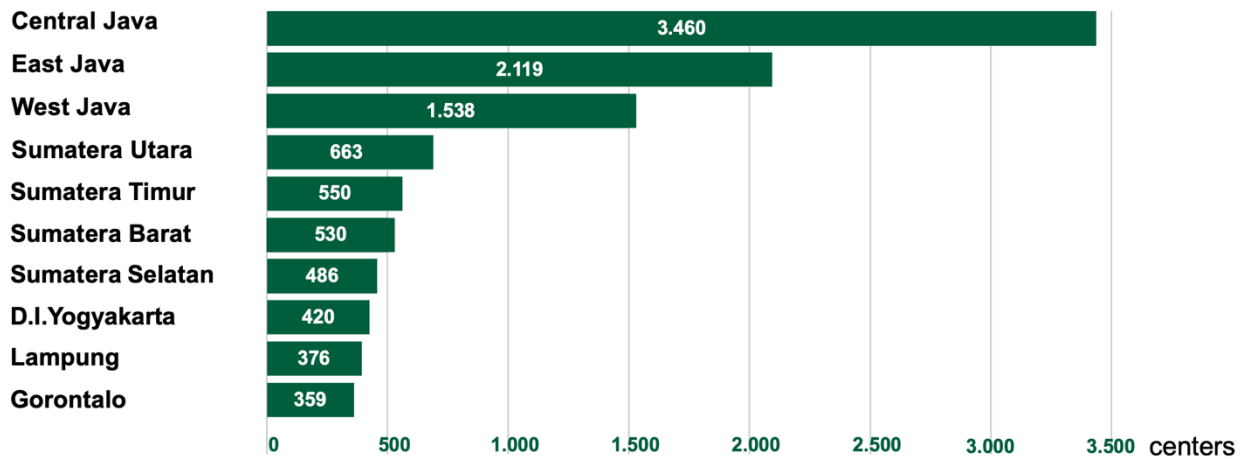


Figure 13. 10 Provinces with the most industrial centers (2020) (Source: analysis of Economic and Social Indicators Quarter II-2022, Central Bureau of Statistics Report, 2022).

The overview of Central Java presented in the study provides context for understanding the selected province and the challenges faced by graduates from the polytechnics located there. By focusing on Central Java, the study aims to gain insights into the CDM process of polytechnic graduates in a region with significant industrial clusters and economic activities but also a high unemployment rate.

3.2.1 Central Java province

Central Java (Indonesian: *Jawa Tengah*) is a province located in the middle of the island of Java, Indonesia. Its administrative capital is Semarang, and it is bordered by West Java to the west, the Indian Ocean and the Special Region of Yogyakarta to the south, East Java to the east, and the Java Sea to the north. The province has a total area of 32,800.69 km² and a population of 36,516,035 according to the 2020 census, making it the third-most populous province in both Java and Indonesia after West Java and East Java. It is divided into 29 regencies and 6 cities (Central Bureau of Statistics of Central Java, 2021).

Central Java's economic has shown relatively good growth, even surpassing the national economic growth rate twice in Q1 2021 and Q1 2022 (see Figure 14) (Central Bureau of Statistics, 2022). In terms of the sources of growth by business field, transportation and warehouse were the highest in the Q2 2022, followed by the processing industry and agriculture, forestry, and fisheries (Central Bureau of Statistics, 2022).

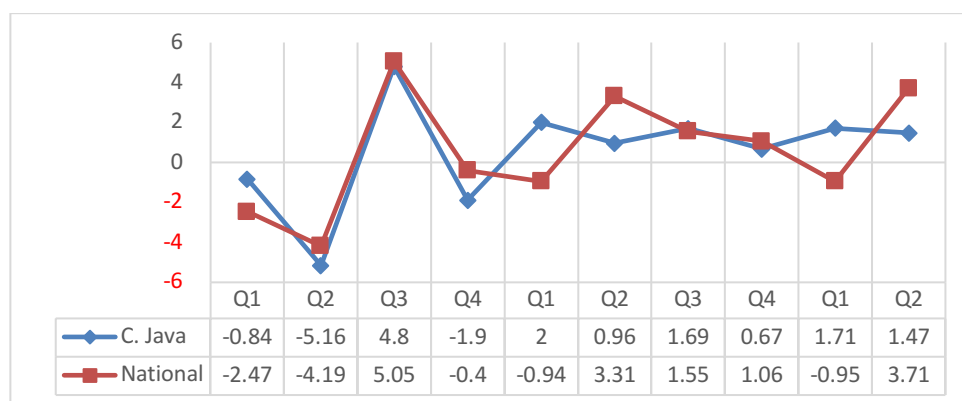


Figure 14. Central Java and National Economic Growth (Y on Y), 2020-2022 (%) (Analysis of Economic and Social Indicators Quarter II-2022, Central Bureau of Statistics Report, 2022)

According to the population by age group, the 15-64 age range appears to dominate over the 0-14 years and 65 and above groups. Further information can be found in Table 6. Examining the population aged 15 years and above based on their main activity from February 2020 to February 2022, it is observed that the number of unemployed individuals has increased from 0.80 million people in February 2020 to 1.19 million people in February 2022 (see Table 7).

Table 6. Population based on the age group

Population (%)	2019	2020	2021
0-14 years old	23.48	22.43	22.18
15-64 years old	67.73	69.85	69.73
65 and above	8.79	7.72	8.10

Source: Analysis of Economic and Social Indicators Quarter II-2022, Central Bureau of Statistics 2022 Report

Table 7. Population aged 15 years and over by type of main activity from Feb 2020-Feb 2022

Main activity	Feb-2020	Feb-2021	Feb-2022
	Million ppl	Million ppl	Million ppl
≥ 15 years old (working age)	26.88	27.13	28.82
Labor force	18.94	18.82	20.76
○ Employment	18.14	17.70	19.57
○ Unemployment	0.80	1.12	1.19
Not in the labor force	7.94	8.31	8.06

Source: Analysis of Economic and Social Indicators Quarter II-2022, Central Bureau of Statistics 2022 Report

Table 8 shows that the highest percentage of individuals not attending school is in the 19-24 age group, who are expected to pursue higher education in the HEIs. This suggests that the enrollment rate for HEI degree is lower than for other degrees (e.g., elementary and secondary degree). This situation may affect the percentage of working people, as evidenced by the highest level of education attained. Figure 15 clearly shows that the percentage of the population graduating from HEIs, especially from DI/II/III (polytechnics), is the lowest. This is as another reason why polytechnic institution was selected as the context for this study.

Table 8. Percentage of population aged 7-24 by age group and school enrollment 2021

	No/never attended school	Still in school	Not going for schooling
7-12	0.32%	99.66%	0.02%
13 – 15	0.32%	96.84%	2.84%
16 – 18	0,28%	70,80%	28,92%
19 – 24	0,37%	23,55%	76,08%

Source: Regional Statistics Central Java Province, 2021

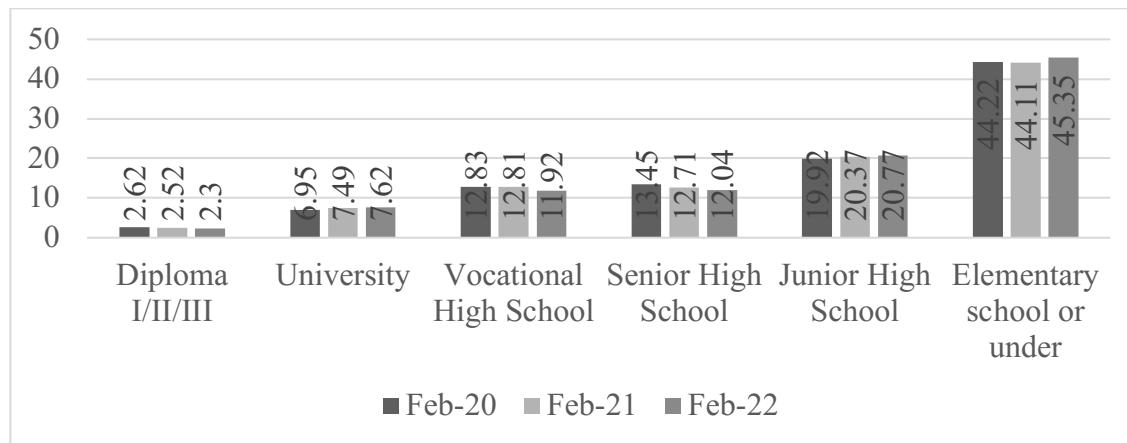


Figure 15. Percentage of population aged ≥ 15 years who are working based on education completed (Source: Employment Profile of Central Java Province, 2022).

3.2.2 The chosen polytechnics

This study chose three polytechnics in Central Java, Indonesia: one private polytechnic under the Ministry of Education and Culture (MoEC), and two public polytechnics, one of which is under MoEC and the other is under the Ministry of Industry (MoI). More details are presented in Table 9.

Table 9. Research context: Tegal, Kendal and Cilacap city

Polytechnic	City	Year of establishment	Number of major	Characteristics of the campus	Type of the city	Location	Characteristics of the city	Number of graduates from 2017-2021
A	Tegal	2002	10 majors	Private under MoEC	Semi-urban	Northern region	The trade and service sectors are the main drivers of Tegal City's economy, with small and medium-sized enterprises making significant progress in the home metal industry and Tegalan batik handicrafts. To support the economic growth, the Tegal City government has established the Center for Promotion and Business Information (PPIB).	4581

B	Cilacap	2008	9 majors	Public MoEC	under	Semi- urban	Southwestern	Many industrial plants are located in the area, including a geothermal power plant, a cement plant (HOLCIM Indonesia), and processing units of PERTAMINA (Indonesia's national petroleum company).	849
C	Kendal	2018	3 majors	Public MoI	under	Semi- urban	Northeastern region	The Indonesian government has recently established an industrial area called Kendal Industrial Estate, which hosts several large domestic and foreign industries. This polytechnic is located within that industrial area as well.	87

3.3 Research participants: participant sampling method and criteria

As Creswell (2016) explained, the purposeful sampling method is the process of selecting participants by recruiting individuals who could inform the central phenomenon of the research. It is a non-random sampling technique commonly used in qualitative research. It involves deliberately selecting participants or cases that possess specific characteristics or qualities relevant to the research objectives. The purpose of purposeful sampling is to gather in-depth and meaningful information from individuals who can provide rich insights or represent particular perspectives or experiences.

Here are the steps involved in purposive sampling in this research:

1. Define the Research Objectives: The researcher firstly clearly articulated the specific objectives of the study in which the objective is to revisit the career decision-making (CDM) process of polytechnic graduates amidst COVID-19 and ultimately to draw out a new model of their CDM process.

2. Identify the Target Population:

- Graduate participants

This study involved the selection of participants from two different time periods: before COVID-19 (students graduated in 2018 and 2019) and during COVID-19 (students graduated in 2020 and 2021). The pre-COVID group consisted of 2512 graduates from Polytechnics A and B, while Polytechnic C in Kendal city, which was established in 2018, did not have any graduates during the years 2018 and 2019. The amidst COVID-19 group included 3005 graduates from Polytechnics A, B, and C. Therefore, the total population for this study was 5517 graduates, combining the 2512 graduates from the pre-COVID period and the 3005 graduates from the amidst COVID-19 period.

- Polytechnic representative participants

The population of polytechnics in Central Java consists of a total of 43 institutions. Among them, there are 10 state polytechnics and 33 private polytechnics. These polytechnics play a significant role in providing technical and vocational education to students in the region. The presence of both state and private polytechnics offers a diverse range of educational opportunities and contributes to the development of skilled professionals in various fields.

In addition to the graduates, the population of the study encompassed a diverse group of representatives from the three polytechnics involved. This group included not only the

esteemed directors of the polytechnics but also the accomplished heads of the study programs who play a crucial role in shaping the educational experiences and career trajectories of the students. Furthermore, the dedicated staff members from the career centers, who possess valuable insights into the career development support provided to the students, were also included in the population.

To provide a better perspective, it is worth noting that the total population in this group of representatives consisted of three directors who held significant leadership roles within the polytechnics. Additionally, there were 22 heads of study programs who possessed in-depth knowledge and expertise in their respective fields, contributing to the overall academic direction and curriculum development within the polytechnics. Furthermore, six career center staff members, who were specifically dedicated to supporting students' career development and job placement, were included in the population. Their collective insights and experiences enriched the study's exploration of career decision-making processes within the polytechnics, providing a well-rounded perspective on the subject matter.

- Employer participants

The target population for this study comprised employers from the companies or offices where the graduates work. The study aimed to gather insights and perspectives specifically from employers who have experience in hiring and working with graduates.

These employers were selected to represent a diverse range of industries and organizations. The target population included employers from various sectors, such as manufacturing, finance, healthcare, technology, services, and more. The goal was to ensure a comprehensive understanding of the perspectives and experiences of employers across different industries.

The study focused on employers who have direct involvement in the hiring process or have managerial roles overseeing graduates' work. By targeting employers within the graduates' workplaces, the study aimed to gain valuable insights into the employers' perspectives on graduate skills, competencies, and career readiness.

Overall, the target population for this study consisted of employers specifically from the companies or offices where the graduates work. By focusing on this target population, the study aimed to gather first-hand perspectives on the employers' experiences and expectations regarding graduates in the workforce.

3. Determine the Sampling Criteria:

○ Graduate participants

As stated on the part of “Identify the Target Population”, in order to gather information on the CDM process before and during the COVID-19 pandemic, the researcher selected two groups of graduates as the main participants. The first group consisted of graduates who completed their education before COVID-19, while the second group comprised graduates who completed their education amidst the COVID-19 pandemic. No specific criteria were set for selecting the participants. The researcher included graduates who had already secured a job as well as those who were still unemployed from both. Detailed information about the graduate participants can be found in Table 10. The inclusion of graduates who completed their education before COVID-19 was essential to fulfill the aim of the study to see the differences between pre- and amidst COVID-19 CDM behavior.

○ Polytechnic representative participants

To determine the sampling criteria from the total of 43 polytechnic institutions in Central Java, several factors were considered:

1. Representation: Ensure that both state and private polytechnics are included in the sample to capture a comprehensive understanding of the polytechnic system in the region.
2. Geographic distribution: Select polytechnics from different areas within Central Java to represent a diverse range of locations and regional characteristics.
3. Size and enrollment: Include polytechnics of various sizes and enrollment capacities to reflect the different scales of institutions and student populations.
4. Disciplinary diversity: Take into account the range of disciplines offered by polytechnics, such as engineering, business, healthcare, arts, and others, to capture a broad representation of educational programs.
5. Relevance to the research topic: Consider the alignment of the polytechnics' programs with the focus of the study to ensure that the selected institutions can provide valuable insights and information related to the research objectives.

By considering these criteria, a representative sample of polytechnics can be selected from the total population of 43 institutions in Central Java, allowing for a comprehensive and diverse perspective in the study.

Then, in selecting the polytechnic representative participants, no specific criteria were set. The researcher aimed to include a diverse range of representatives from the polytechnics

involved to gain comprehensive insights into the career decision-making (CDM) process. The selection of participants was based on their roles and positions within the polytechnics.

The population of the study comprised various representatives from the three polytechnics, including the directors of the polytechnics, the heads of the study programs, and the dedicated staff members from the career centers. These individuals were chosen to ensure representation from different levels and departments within the polytechnics.

The inclusion of the directors provided valuable perspectives on the overall management and strategic aspects of career services within the polytechnics. The heads of the study programs were selected to provide insights into the specific academic disciplines and the related career pathways available to the graduates. The career center staff members were included to contribute their expertise in supporting the career development of the students and graduates.

By including these different representatives, the study aimed to capture a holistic view of the polytechnic environment and its impact on the CDM process. The selection of participants was based on their roles and responsibilities related to career services and guidance within the polytechnics, ensuring a comprehensive representation of the various stakeholders involved in supporting the career development of the graduates.

○ Employer participants

To determine the sampling criteria for employer participants, several factors were considered:

1. Industry representation: Ensure that employers from different industries are included in the sample to capture a diverse range of sectors. This can include private companies, government organizations, non-profit organizations, healthcare institutions, manufacturing firms, financial institutions, and others.
2. Company size: Include employers of different sizes, such as small, medium, and large enterprises, to account for variations in organizational structure, resources, and hiring practices.
3. Geographic location: Consider employers from different geographic areas or regions to capture regional differences in employment practices, economic conditions, and industry clusters.
4. Job positions: Include a variety of job positions within the organizations, such as executives, managers, supervisors, and HR professionals from different functional areas.

This can provide insights into different levels of decision-making and perspectives within the organizations.

5. Relevance to the research topic: Select employers whose experiences and practices align with the research topic or have a direct impact on the career decision-making processes of graduates. This can ensure that the insights obtained from the employer participants are relevant and valuable for the study.

By considering these criteria, a representative sample of employers can be selected, allowing for a comprehensive understanding of the employer perspective and its influence on career decision-making.

4. Contact and Recruit Participants: To gather a diverse pool of participants, several sources were utilized, including alumni databases and professional networks. The researcher reached out to the identified potential participants and explained the purpose of the study and seek their willingness to participate and obtain their informed consent.

- Graduate participants

The following is the process by which the researcher gathered participants for the research study using various methods:

1. Alumni Databases: The researcher obtained access to the databases containing information about the graduates of the polytechnics. These databases likely include contact details such as phone numbers or email addresses.
2. WhatsApp Messages: The career center staff assisted the researcher in reaching out to the graduates using WhatsApp messages. The purpose of these messages was to inquire about the graduates' interest in participating in the research study.
3. Initial Contact: The researcher via the career center staff received responses from graduates who expressed their willingness to participate. The researcher compiled a list of these interested individuals.
4. Follow-up Communication: The researcher then contacted the graduates again to provide them with more information about the research study. This step likely involved explaining the purpose, objectives, and procedures of the research.
5. Social Media Groups: The researcher also joined social media groups created by the polytechnic specifically for alumni. Within these groups, the researcher asked if any graduates were interested in participating in the research study.

6. Previous Study Participants: The researcher reached out to participants who had previously taken part in the researcher's earlier studies while they were still students. These participants were asked if they were willing to participate again in the current research.

Overall, the researcher utilized alumni databases, WhatsApp messages, social media groups, and contacted previous study participants to gather a pool of potential participants for their research study.

The study consisted of a total of 65 graduates who agreed to participate. Among them, 24 graduates had completed their education prior to the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic (graduated in 2018 and 2019). These individuals were selected from a larger group of 2512 graduates, representing two polytechnics (polytechnic A and B). Notably, Polytechnic C, situated in Kendal city, did not have any graduates during the years 2018 and 2019 due to its recent establishment in 2018.

Furthermore, the study included 41 graduates who had completed their education amidst the COVID-19 pandemic. These individuals were chosen from a pool of 3005 graduates, representing three polytechnics (polytechnic A, B, and C). Consequently, the total number of graduate participants in the study amounted to 65.

It is worth mentioning that while a larger population of 5517 graduates (comprising 2512 graduates and 3005 graduates) met the established criteria, only 65 individuals agreed to take part in the study. Despite the limited number of participants, the researcher aimed to ensure diversity and representation within the sample, contributing to a comprehensive understanding of the research objectives.

- Polytechnic representative participants

The researcher initiated contact with all 43 polytechnic institutions by sending emails, aiming to secure their participation in the research study. However, despite reaching out to all institutions, only three of them expressed agreement to take part. These three polytechnics, each with unique affiliations and departments, demonstrated their interest in being involved in the study.

The first polytechnic that agreed to participate is located in Tegal city and operates as a private institution under the Ministry of Education and Culture. This polytechnic recognized the value of the research and willingly committed to contributing to the study's objectives.

The second polytechnic, situated in Kendal city, falls under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Industry. Despite its specific focus on industrial-related education, the institution recognized the importance of research and decided to participate in the study.

Lastly, the third polytechnic that agreed to take part is a public institution under the Ministry of Education and Culture. Being a publicly-funded polytechnic, its decision to participate demonstrates its commitment to research collaboration and advancement within the academic community.

Once the researcher received permission from these three polytechnics, they proceeded to approach key individuals within the institutions. This included reaching out to the directors, heads of study programs, and career center staff. The purpose of these interactions was to seek their willingness to be interviewed or otherwise contribute to the research study. These individuals possess valuable insights and expertise that can greatly enhance the study's outcomes. By engaging with them, the researcher aimed to foster collaboration and establish a strong foundation for their research endeavor.

Within the broader population of representatives from the polytechnics, which included three directors, 22 heads of study programs, and six career center staff members, only a limited number of individuals showed willingness to participate in the research study. Specifically, the participants who agreed to take part in the study were as follows: one director, one assistant director of the division of student affairs and cooperation, one head of institutional internal supervision, nine heads of study programs, one secretary of a study program, and five staff members from the career center, including two heads and one secretary.

The representatives (heads and/or secretary) of study programs represented a diverse range of disciplines, including accounting, mechanical engineering, electrical engineering, informatics engineering, computer engineering, pharmacy, furniture design, furniture production engineering, and furniture business management. This diversity in disciplines ensured that the research study would benefit from a broad spectrum of perspectives and expertise.

While the participation rate varied among the different roles, with only a subset of the total population agreeing to take part, the engagement of these individuals was highly valuable to the research objectives. Their involvement provided unique insights and perspectives that are directly relevant to the research study, enhancing the depth and breadth of the findings. Despite the limited number of participants, their contributions were

instrumental in achieving a comprehensive understanding of the subject matter and fulfilling the research objectives.

- Employer participants

In order to gather data from potential employer participants, the researcher initially obtained their contact information through the polytechnics, likely leveraging existing collaborations or partnerships. Subsequently, the researcher took the initiative to contact these potential participants, following up on any prior communication that had been made by the polytechnics. During these initial interactions, the researcher carefully and transparently explained the purpose of the study, ensuring that the potential employer participants had a clear understanding of what the research aimed to investigate and achieve. This step was crucial in establishing mutual understanding and trust between the researcher and the employers, laying the groundwork for their active participation in the study.

However, due to the inherent challenges in securing employer participants solely through polytechnic recommendations, the researcher took additional steps to diversify the pool of participants. Recognizing the importance of obtaining perspectives from employers outside the polytechnic network, the researcher tapped into her personal network and actively sought potential employer participants independently. By leveraging her own connections and contacts, the researcher expanded the scope of potential participants beyond the initial pool suggested by the polytechnics.

As a result of these two concerted efforts, a total of 17 individuals from the employer population expressed their agreement to participate in the study. This group of participants represented a diverse array of industries, including private companies, health clinics, factories, and banks. The inclusion of participants from various industries ensured a comprehensive representation of different sectors, contributing to the richness and depth of the research findings.

Within their respective organizations, the participating employers held a variety of positions and roles. These positions included founders (owners), HRD (Human Resources Development) staff, production supervisors, administrators, heads of micro business divisions, heads of PPIC (Production Planning and Inventory Control) departments, heads of management divisions, HRD managers, quality control personnel, general affairs staff, and general affairs managers.

The willingness of these individuals to participate in the study is highly valuable, as it provides insights into the experiences, perspectives, and challenges faced by employees

across different sectors and roles. Their diverse backgrounds and positions contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of the research topic, allowing for a nuanced analysis of the research findings.

5. **Sample Data Collection:** Once the participants agreed to take part in the study, the researcher initiated the sample data collection process. Prior to collecting any data, participants were required to sign a consent letter. This consent letter serves as a formal agreement between the researcher and the participants, ensuring that the participants are aware of the purpose of the study, their rights as participants, and the confidentiality of their responses.

After obtaining signed consent from the participants, the researcher proceeded with the data collection activities, which primarily involved conducting interviews. Interviews are a valuable qualitative research method that allows for in-depth exploration of participants' experiences, perspectives, and insights related to the research topic.

By following these purposive sampling steps, this study selected participants who meet specific criteria relevant to the research objectives and obtain valuable insights into the Career Decision Making Process of Indonesian Polytechnic Graduates amidst COVID-19. The graduates participants' details are as follows:

Table 10. Graduate participants' details

	Respondent (pseudonym)	Graduation year	Polytechnic
1.	Ayu	2018	A
2.	Anas	2018	A
3.	Ani	2018	A
4.	Aminah	2018	A
5.	Aulia	2018	A
6.	Amir	2018	A
7.	Azhar	2018	A
8.	Anita	2018	A
9.	Bella	2018	A
10.	Wina	2018	B
11.	Fikri	2018	B

Before COVID-19	12. Binar	2018	B	
	13. Risna	2019	A	
	14. Adam	2019	A	
	15. Ahmad	2019	A	
	16. Akbar	2019	A	
	17. Marisa	2019	A	
	18. Aisyah	2019	A	
	19. Alim	2019	A	
	20. Amelia	2019	A	
	21. Adinda	2019	A	
	22. Santi	2019	B	
	23. Hendri	2019	B	
	24. Amna	2019	B	
	Amidst COVID-19	1. Valdi	2020	A
		2. Bani	2020	A
		3. Mawar	2020	A
		4. Umam	2020	A
		5. Imran	2020	A
		6. Rian	2021	A
		7. Viana	2021	A
		8. Radit	2021	A
		9. Tia	2021	A
		10. Toro	2021	A
		11. Hana	2021	A
12. Nela		2021	A	
13. Budi		2021	A	
14. Dania		2021	A	
15. Malik		2021	A	
16. Tiana		2021	A	
17. Rizal		2021	A	
18. Joko		2021	A	
19. Hisyam		2021	A	
20. Diki		2021	A	

21. Lia	2021	A
22. Indah	2021	A
23. Dian	2021	A
24. Rianti	2021	A
25. Rahman	2021	A
26. Tono	2021	A
27. Zami	2021	B
28. Beni	2021	B
29. Dita	2021	B
30. Yusuf	2021	B
31. Via	2021	B
32. Zaki	2021	C
33. Guntur	2021	C
34. Mira	2021	C
35. Bumi	2021	C
36. Mia	2021	C
37. Jamal	2021	C
38. Susi	2021	C
39. Desi	2021	C
40. Sari	2021	C
41. Roy	2021	C

The selected graduates have graduated from various departments, including accounting, mechanical engineering, electrical engineering, informatics engineering, computer engineering, pharmacy, furniture design, furniture production engineering, and furniture business management. This was done to ensure that various perspectives were investigated and balanced. To triangulate the study, the researcher also selected representatives from polytechnics as the training field and employers as the user sides. The distribution and total number of respondents are presented in Table 11 below (for details about the characteristics of all respondents, please refer to Appendix 1):

Table 11. The distribution and total respondents

Respondents	Polytechnic A (Tegal city)	Polytechnic B (Cilacap city)	Polytechnic C (Kendal city)	Total
Graduates	44 *Before COVID-19: 18 *Amidst COVID-19: 26	11 *Before COVID-19: 6 *Amidst COVID-19: 5	10	65
Representatives from departments in polytechnics	5	3	2	10
Director of the polytechnic	-	-	1	1
Career center staffs	2	2	1	5
Employers	9	2	6	17
				N= 98

Source: author

3.4 Data collection procedure

This study chose the interview method because the aim is to directly hear from the participants regarding the central phenomenon discussed in this study, which is the CDM process before and during COVID-19. Prior to conducting the semi-structured interviews, participants were informed that their participation was entirely voluntary and that anonymity and confidentiality would be guaranteed. Pseudonyms were used instead of participants' actual names, and the names of institutions including the polytechnic and workplaces were not disclosed to protect privacy.

The conducted interviews were in the form of semi-structured interviews and used open-ended questions as a guide for the interviewer to ensure a common coverage of topics. The interviewer was free to ask the questions in their own way and in any order to sustain a conversational flow with the interviewees, including following up on areas of importance beyond the basic questions. The interviews were tape-recorded. They were conducted with graduates, representatives from polytechnic including the directors, heads/secretaries of departments, and staffs of career centers, and employers (details of the interview questions are in Appendix 2).

All of the interview processes were conducted in Indonesian since the participants were more comfortable expressing themselves in that language. The mode and location of the

interviews were based on interviewees' preferences. Some were interviewed offline (face-to-face) at their home, in cafés, or offices, while others were conducted by phone (which could be a video or phone call) to accommodate distance. Several participants were interviewed twice as follow-up interviews to clarify specific answers by asking additional questions. On average, each interview session lasted from 30 minutes to more than 1 hour (see Table 12 for details). Data gathered from graduates, polytechnics, and employers were used for triangulation (Creswell, 2014).

Table 12. Duration and mode of interviews

Number	Respondent (pseudonym)	Interview I	Interview II
Graduates			
1	Ayu	01:00:59 (video call)	
2	Anas	00:38:55 (video call)	
3	Ani	00:45:50 (video call)	
4	Aminah	00:33:07 (video call)	
5	Aulia	00:44:12 (video call)	
6	Amir	00:37:31 (video call)	
7	Azhar	00:39:17 (video call)	
8	Anita	00:53:47 (video call)	
9	Bella	00:38:45 (video call)	
10	Wina	00:42:43 (video call)	
11	Fikri	00:37:09 (video call)	
12	Binar	00:37:02 (video call)	
13	Risna	00:48:52 (video call)	
14	Adam	00:58:45 (video call)	
15	Ahmad	00:39:06 (video call)	
16	Akbar	00:53:57 (video call)	
17	Marisa	00:33:36 (video call)	
18	Aisyah	00:35:50 (video call)	
19	Alim	00:37:01 (phone call)	
20	Amelia	00:45:32 (phone call)	

21	Adinda	00:58:20 (phone call)	
22	Santi	01:07:40 (phone call)	
23	Hendri	01:15:10 (phone call)	
24	Amna	00:38:29 (phone call)	
25	Valdi	00:47:54 (face to face)	
26	Bani	00:56:52 (face to face)	
27	Mawar	01:38:30 (face to face)	
28	Umam	00:52:44 (face to face)	
29	Imran	01:02:19 (face to face)	
30	Rian	00:31:26 (phone call)	00: 39:34 (face to face)
31	Viana	01:11:05 (face to face)	
32	Radit	00:49:03 (face to face)	
33	Tia	00:30:22 face to face)	
34	Toro	01:08:11 (face to face)	
35	Hana	01:13:36 (phone call)	00:54:30 (face to face)
36	Nela	00:35:22 (face to face)	
37	Budi	01:04:45 (phone call)	
38	Dania	01:00:37 (face to face)	
39	Malik	00:42:47 (face to face)	
40	Tiana	00:33:54 (face to face)	
41	Rizal	00:51:00 (face to face)	
42	Joko	01:24:27 (face to face)	
43	Hisyam	00:37:01 (face to face)	
44	Diki	00:33:44 (phone call)	00:35:36 (face to face)
45	Lia	00:51:36 (phone call)	00:48:27 (face to face)
46	Indah	00:34:30 (phone call)	00:39:15 (face to face)
47	Dian	00:53:35 (phone call)	00:31:46 (face to face)
48	Rianti	00:33:37 (face to face)	
49	Rahman	00:44:30 (face to face)	
50	Tono	00:49:36 (face to face)	
51	Zami	00:36:10 (face to face)	
52	Beni	00:51:43 (phone call)	
53	Dita	00:47:51 (face to face)	

54	Yusuf	00:40:39 (face to face)	
55	Via	00:39:00 (face to face)	
56	Zaki	00:35:54 (face to face)	
57	Guntur	00:37:35 (face to face)	
58	Mira	00:55:17 (face to face)	
59	Bumi	00:33:37 (face to face)	
60	Mia	00:46:13 (face to face)	
61	Jamal	01:00:34 (face to face)	
62	Susi	00:42:51 (face to face)	
63	Desi	01:11:09 (face to face)	
64	Sari	00:44:50 (face to face)	
65	Roy	00:42:52 (face to face)	
Representatives from polytechnics			
66	Yuli	00:40:58 (phone call)	00:28:07 (face to face)
67	Imam	00:38:17 (face to face)	
68	Bahrul	00:40:41 (face to face)	
69	Slamet	00:38:45 (face to face)	
70	Tama	00:39:10 (face to face)	
71	Berliani	00:32:46 (face to face)	
72	Vino	00:43:06 (face to face)	00:12:16 (face to face)
73	Tari	00:55:36 (face to face)	
74	Farhan	00:49:59 (face to face)	
75	Danu	00:38:39 (face to face)	
76	Galih	00:30:41 (face to face)	
77	Aziz	00:39:02 (face to face)	
78	Ganjar	00:35:55 (face to face)	
79	Ilham	00:30:12 (face to face)	
80	Nono	00:34:32 (face to face)	
81	Ana	00:36:40 (face to face)	
Employers			
82	Dewi	00:32:51 (face to face)	
83	Gilang	00:47:34 (face to face)	
84	Zia	00:36:50 (face to face)	

85	Nisa	00:36:22 (face to face)
86	Wahid	00:33:42 (face to face)
87	Zahra	00:30:02 (face to face)
88	Indro	00:33:19 (face to face)
89	Zein	00:37:30 (face to face)
90	Danang	00:34:38 (face to face)
91	Marwa	00:55:15 (phone call)
92	Silvi	00:30:34 (face to face)
93	Tina	00:36:30 (face to face)
94	Handoko	00:32:24 (face to face)
95	Ita	00:34:51 (phone call)
96	Tio	00:38:26 (face to face)
97	Zakaria	00:37:11 (face to face)
98	Uvi	00:58:52 (face to face)

3.5 Data analysis procedure

In analyzing the data, this study followed the five steps suggested by Creswell (2012): preparing and organizing the data, exploring and coding the data, forming themes, representing findings, interpreting the meaning of the findings, and validating the accuracy of the findings. The detailed processes are as follows:

1. Preparing and organizing the data

After gathering the data using semi-structured interviews, the audio recordings of the interviews were transcribed verbatim in the original Indonesian language. The transcriptionist typed out each and every word heard in the audio recordings, and the transcriptions were then translated into English. Ultimately, around 3000 pages of written transcripts were created based on the interviews. For ease of reference, the appendix features a collection of evidence-based resumes (refer to Appendix 3), providing a condensed overview of the documented insights.

2. Exploring and coding the data

After preparing the data, the researcher explored them by reading through the entire transcriptions several times in order to get a general sense. Creswell (2012) suggested that this step was important for researchers to understand the entire interview before making codes.

After exploring the data, the researcher began to code them using a tool called Atlas.ti 9. The transcription files were uploaded into the tool and the researcher coded them there. This study utilized both predetermined and emerging (unexpected) codes (Creswell, 2014). Creswell

(2014) explains that predetermined codes are those that are determined before data analysis, while emerging codes are those that the researchers unexpectedly find during data analysis. Therefore, for this study, a codebook was created before the data was coded, consisting of codes the study aimed to find, as shown in the following Table 13. The predetermined codes were mainly built based on the constructs of Careership theory.

Table 13. Predetermined codes

No	Predetermined codes
1	COVID-19 countermeasures by the government
2	Social and mobility restrictions
3	Job-seeking experiences
4	Online learning experiences
5	Work placement (apprenticeship) experiences
6	Career Center Development's (CDC) programs in polytechnic
7	Family conditions during COVID-19
8	Driving force degree of each agent in the context
9	Cultural capital
10	Social capital
11	Economic capital
12	Symbolic capital
13	Pragmatically rational CDM
14	Horizons for action
15	Serendipity
16	Goal of the work
17	Career value
18	<i>Kartu pra-kerja</i> (pre-working) program amidst COVID-19

Source: author

In addition, emerging codes were found in the data as presented in the Table 14 below. These emerging codes provided additional information that was used to generate themes and to carry out the analysis.

Table 14. Emerging codes

No	Emerging codes
1	Limited job opportunities
2	Backdoor hiring (nepotism practice)
3	Economic problems
4	Offline social capital
5	Online (digital) social capital
6	Digital cultural capital
7	Digital divide
8	Solidarity capital
9	Career constraints
10	Adapted work placement delivery methods
11	Disappointment towards the adapted work placement
12	Adapted career guidance
13	Insufficient polytechnic assistance
14	Parental job loss or experienced bankruptcy
15	Self-doubt
16	Desperation
17	Applying to many job vacancies
18	Rejection experiences
19	Insecurity
20	Future anxiety
21	Learning losses
22	Social capital is the most activated capital
23	Decreasing value of offline social capital
24	Activation of online (digital) social capital
25	Decreasing value of cultural capital
26	Decreasing value of economic capital
27	Self-efficacy
28	Family especially parents as shaping and constraining factor
29	Distance as a major issue

30	Refusal of job offers
31	Reasons for refusing job offers
32	Underemployment
33	Horizontal mismatch
34	Semi-horizontal mismatch
35	Vertical mismatch
36	Religious beliefs
37	Career aspirations
38	Family background
39	Major background
40	Gender bias
41	Emotional CDM
42	Balancing between emotional and rational CDM
43	Positive effects of COVID-19 for IT graduates
44	Nature of IT-related jobs
45	Securing employment before graduation
46	Freelancer (gig work)
47	Self-employment (entrepreneurship) interest
48	Digital transformation
49	Remote working

Source: author

3. Forming themes

Themes were generated for analysis from the interview data (Creswell, 2012) and as the major findings. Themes are groups of similar codes that represent the main ideas and core elements in qualitative data analysis (Creswell, 2012). This study combined codes that had related value or meaning into major themes (see Table 15). The meaning of the themes was interpreted and analyzed using Careerism theory and previous studies in the literature to confirm or refute the previous theory and findings (Creswell, 2014).

Table 15. Forming themes

Research questions	Codes	Themes (CDM)	Themes (CDM)
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		process pre-COVID-19)	process during COVID-19)
What are the typical characteristics of the extraordinary setting under COVID-19 compared to those before COVID-19?	Limited job opportunities	Theme 1: limited job opportunities in pre-COVID 19 leading to horizontal and/or vertical job mismatch, even underemployment	
	Backdoor hiring (nepotism practice)	Theme 2: backdoor hiring (nepotism practices/the power of “orang dalam” or connections)	
	Economic problems	Theme 3: economic problems	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ COVID-19 countermeasures by the government ○ Social and mobility restrictions 		Theme 4: social and mobility restrictions
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Limited job opportunities ○ Career constraints 		Theme 5: limited job opportunities amidst COVID-19
	Backdoor hiring (nepotism practice)		Theme 6: backdoor hiring (nepotism practices/the power of “orang dalam” or connections)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Digital transformation ○ Remote working 		Theme 7: digital transformation
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Online learning experiences 		Theme 8: online

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Learning losses 	learning and its outcomes
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Work placement (apprenticeship) experiences ○ Adapted work placement delivery method ○ Disappointment towards the adapted work placement 	Theme 9: adapted WP delivery method amidst COVID-19 and its outcomes
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Career Center Development's (CDC) programs in polytechnic ○ Adapted career guidance ○ Insufficient polytechnic assistance 	Theme 10: adapted career guidance
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Family condition during COVID-19 ○ Parental job loss or experienced bankruptcy 	Theme 11: economic problems especially because of the parental job loss or parents experienced bankruptcy
In the typical characteristics of the context, how can the various capitals be activated/functioned and how do the capitals differ from before?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Social capital ○ Symbolic capital 	Theme 12: social capital was the most dominant capital
	Online social capital	Theme 13: online social capital was only as an alternative
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Social capital ○ Symbolic capital ○ Social capital is the most activated capital 	Theme 14: social capital as the most activated capital amidst COVID-19
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Social and mobility restrictions 	Theme 15: social and mobility

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Social capital ○ Offline social capital ○ Decreasing value of offline social capital ○ Online social capital ○ Activation of online (digital) social capital 	<p>restrictions cause offline social capital less functioned resulted on the activation of online (digital) social capital</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Online social capital ○ Solidarity capital 	<p>Theme 16: Limited job opportunities amidst COVID-19 negatively influenced the cultural capital function and ultimately the social capitals were activated in the form of “solidarity capital” including through backdoor hiring practices.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Digital transformation ○ Digital cultural capital ○ Remote working ○ Digital divide 	<p>Theme 17: Digital transformation activated the digital cultural capital as the resiliency yet created digital divide</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Family condition during COVID-19 ○ Economic capital 	<p>Theme 18: economic capital cannot be activated as a symbolic capital</p>

In the typical characteristics of the setting and by using their activated capitals, how do the graduates' CDM behaviors change amidst COVID-19?

- Horizons for action
- Refusal of job offers
- Reasons for refusing job offers
- Religious beliefs
- Career aspirations
- Family background
- Economic problem
- Family especially parents as shaping and constraining factor
- Major background
- Securing employment before graduation
- Driving force degree of each agent in the context
- Distance as a major issue
- Pragmatically rational CDM
- Serendipity
- Goal of the work
- Career value
- Underemployment
- Horizontal mismatch
- Semi-horizontal mismatch
- Vertical mismatch
- Balancing between emotional and rational CDM
- Self-employment (entrepreneurship) interest

Theme 19: horizons for action and pragmatically rational CDM pre-COVID 19

Serendipity

Theme 20: serendipity pre-COVID 19

-
- | | |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Horizons for action○ Applying to many job vacancies○ Refusal of job offers○ Reasons for refusing job offers○ Religious beliefs○ Job aspiration○ Family background○ Family especially parents as shaping and constraining factor○ COVID-19 countermeasures by the government○ Social and mobility restrictions○ Limited job opportunities○ Getting a job before graduation○ <i>Kartu pra-kerja</i> (pre-working) program amidst COVID-19○ Driving force degree of each agent in the context○ Distance as a major issue○ Pragmatically rational CDM○ Serendipity○ Goal of the work○ Career value | <p>Theme 21: horizons for action and pragmatically rational CDM amidst COVID 19</p> |
|--|---|

-
- Rejection experiences
 - Self-doubt
 - Desperation
 - Insecurity
 - Future anxiety
 - Self-efficacy
 - Underemployment
 - Horizontal mismatch
 - Semi-horizontal mismatch
 - Vertical mismatch
 - Emotional CDM
 - Positive effects of COVID-19 for IT graduates
 - Nature of IT-related jobs
 - Freelancer (gig work)
 - Self-employment (entrepreneurship) interest

	Serendipity	Theme 22: serendipity amidst COVID-19
Ultimately, based on the results of the study, what is a new form of CDM process reflected by the polytechnic graduates amidst COVID-19?	Based on the codes for CDM process pre- COVID 19 themes	
	Based on the codes for CDM process during COVID 19 themes	

4. Interpreting the meaning of themes

Interpretation of qualitative studies can take various forms, such as the researcher’s understanding that may be influenced by their personal culture, history, or experiences. It can also involve comparing the findings with existing theories to determine whether they confirm or differ from them (Creswell, 2012). In this study, findings were primarily interpreted by utilizing the Careership theory and previous studies.

5. Validating the accuracy of the findings

Creswell (2014) explains that there are many procedures to validate the accuracy of qualitative findings, including triangulating different data sources of information by examining evidence from the sources and using it to build a coherent justification for themes; using member review to return final reports or specific clarifications or topics to participants to determine if they are correct; using rich and descriptive language to communicate results; clarifying the biases that researchers bring to their research; presenting negative or contradictory information that is off-topic; spending significant time in the field; using peer debriefing to improve account accuracy; and having the entire project checked by an external auditor. This study employed triangulation by collecting the data from graduates before and during the COVID-19 pandemic, and from three sources: the graduates, who directly experienced the topic under discussion; polytechnics, as the training institutions; and employers, as the demand party.

3.6 Ethical considerations

This study was conducted with approval from the Research Ethics Review Board of Graduate School of Humanities and Social Sciences, Hiroshima University (number HR-ES-000394, see Appendix 4). All participants in the interview voluntarily joined this study. Before deciding to participate in this study, potential participants were asked to read the informed consent form (see Appendix 5) to understand why the research was being conducted and what it would involve. They were also free to ask the researcher questions if any information was unclear or if they needed more information. If they decided to take part in the study, they were asked to sign a consent form (see Appendix 6). After signing the consent form, participants were still free to withdraw at any time and without giving a reason. Withdrawing from the study did not affect the relationship they have, if any, with the researcher. If they withdrew from the study before data collection was completed, their data would be returned to them or destroyed. The information gained, especially from the interviews, was kept confidential and would only be used for this specific study. The researcher made every effort to preserve the confidentiality, including assigning pseudonym for participant institutions and interviewees that were used on all research notes and documents, as well as keeping notes, interview transcriptions, and any other identifying participant information in a locked folder on the researcher's personal laptop

CHAPTER 4 FINDINGS

In this chapter, this study presents 20 themes in that are utilized to answer each research question and reach the study’s aim: to revisit the CDM process of polytechnic graduates during COVID-19 and draw out a new model of polytechnic graduates’ CDM process. Table 16 below shows the distribution of each theme.

Table 16. The distribution of each theme

Research questions	Themes (CDM process before COVID-19)	Themes (CDM process amidst COVID-19)
<p>What are the typical characteristics of the extraordinary setting under COVID-19 compared to those before COVID-19?</p>	<p>Theme 1: limited job opportunities in pre-COVID 19 leading to horizontal and/or vertical job mismatch, even underemployment</p> <p>Theme 2: backdoor hiring (nepotism practices/the power of “orang dalam” or connections)</p> <p>Theme 3: economic problems</p>	<p>Theme 4: social and mobility restrictions</p> <p>Theme 5: limited job opportunities amidst COVID-19</p> <p>Theme 6: backdoor hiring (nepotism practices/the power of “orang dalam” or connections)</p> <p>Theme 7: digital transformation</p> <p>Theme 8: online learning and its outcomes</p> <p>Theme 9: adapted WP delivery method amidst COVID-19 and its outcomes</p> <p>Theme 10: adapted career guidance</p> <p>Theme 11: economic problems especially because of the parental job loss or parents experienced bankruptcy</p>

<p>In the typical characteristics of the context, how can the various capitals be activated/functioned and how do the capitals differ from before?</p>	<p>Theme 12: social capital was the most dominant capital</p>	<p>Theme 14: social capital as the most activated capital amidst COVID-19</p>
	<p>Theme 13: online social capital was only as an alternative</p>	<p>Theme 15: social and mobility restrictions cause offline social capital less functioned resulted on the activation of online (digital) social capital</p>
		<p>Theme 16: Limited job opportunities amidst COVID-19 negatively influenced the cultural capital function and ultimately the social capital was activated in the form of “solidarity capital” including through backdoor hiring practices.</p>
		<p>Theme 17: Digital transformation activated the digital cultural capital as the resiliency yet created digital divide</p>
		<p>Theme 18: economic capital cannot be activated as a symbolic capital</p>
<p>In the typical characteristics of the setting and by using their activated capitals, how do the graduates’ CDM behaviors change amidst COVID-19?</p>	<p>Theme 19: horizons for action and pragmatically rational CDM pre-COVID 19</p>	<p>Theme 21: horizons for action and pragmatically rational CDM amidst COVID 19</p>

	Theme 20: serendipity pre-COVID 19	Theme 22: serendipity amidst COVID-19
Ultimately, based on the results of the study, what is a new form of CDM process reflected by the polytechnic graduates amidst COVID-19?	Based on all themes on CDM process before COVID-19	Based on all themes on CDM process amidst COVID-19

4.1 Research question 1: what are the typical characteristics of the extraordinary setting under COVID-19 compared to those before COVID-19?

In the findings section of the study, four different settings or levels are discussed in relation to the career decision-making (CDM) process. These settings represent different agents involved in the CDM process and their typical characteristics, both before and amidst the COVID-19 pandemic (see Figure 16).

1. National Level:

- Main Agent: Government
- Characteristics: This level involves government policies, regulations, and initiatives related to employment, education, and economic development at the national level. It encompasses macro-level factors that impact the overall labor market and career opportunities.

2. Labor Market Setting:

- Main Agent: Industries or Employers
- Characteristics: This level focuses on the labor market, where industries and employers play a central role. It includes factors such as job availability, demand for specific skills, and the overall economic conditions that influence career opportunities.

3. Training Field:

- Main Agent: Polytechnics
- Characteristics: This level pertains to the field of training, specifically polytechnics in this study. It involves the educational institutions that provide vocational training and education to students. The typical characteristics of this setting include the curriculum, teaching methods, practical training opportunities, and the support services provided by

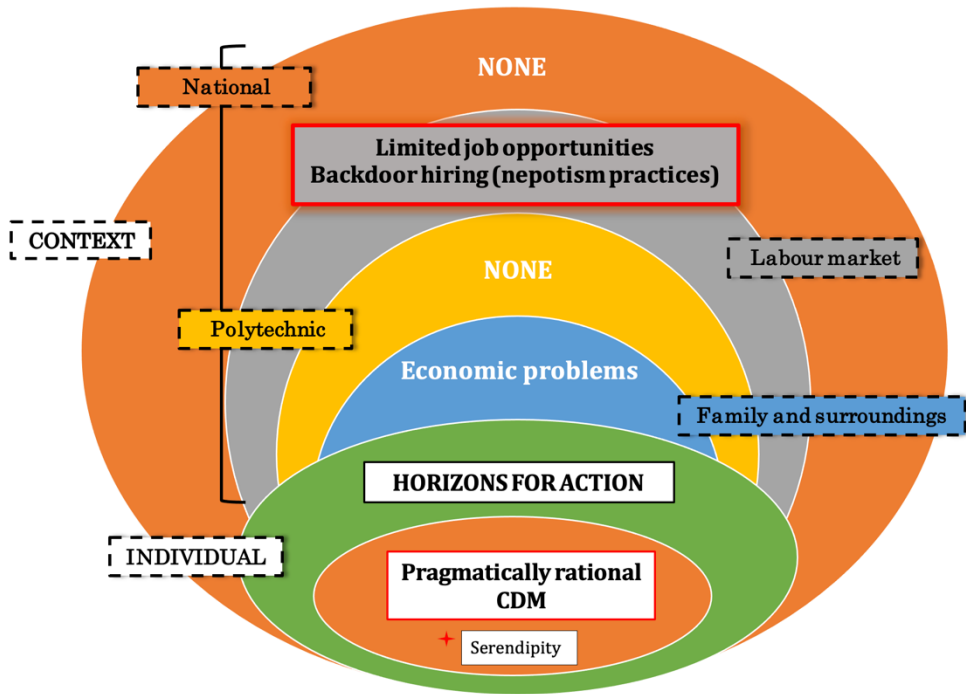
polytechnics.

4. Family and Surroundings:

- Main Agents: Family, Relatives, Neighbors, Friends, Acquaintances
- Typical Characteristics: This level involves the immediate social environment of individuals, including their family, relatives, neighbors, friends, and acquaintances. These social networks can influence career decisions through their support, advice, and connections. They provide a personal and social context for individuals' career choices.

The study examines the typical characteristics of each setting both before and amidst the COVID-19 pandemic to understand how the pandemic has affected the CDM process and the role of different agents in supporting or hindering career decisions. The explanations of each typical characteristics to answer research question 1 are presented in the theme 1 up to theme 10 as follows.

A



B

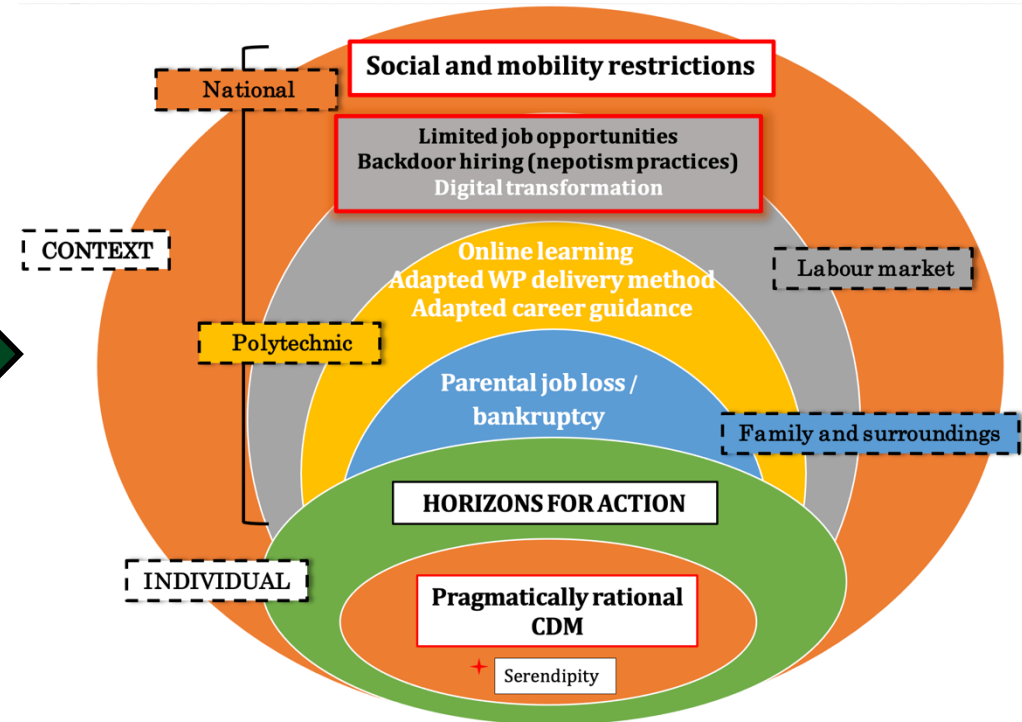


Figure 16. The typical characteristics of the extraordinary setting under COVID-19 compared with those before COVID-19

Theme 1: Limited job opportunities in pre-COVID 19 leading to horizontal and/or vertical job mismatch, even underemployment

All the graduates (24 individuals) who completed their studies before the onset of COVID-19, specifically those who graduated in 2018 and 2019, agreed that finding jobs at that time was challenging. Most of them stated that the limited job opportunities for their major and academic degree (diploma degree) were the primary cause of the difficulties. Consequently, this difficulty led them to accept any job, even if it was not related to their major background, resulting in underemployment. The followings are examples of some respondents' cases.

Amir (25) and Azhar (26), who both graduated from Polytechnic A in Tegal city, shared somewhat similar views. Amir completed his studies in computer engineering department in 2018, prior to the outbreak of COVID-19 in Indonesia. He confirmed that finding a job in Indonesia was already difficult even before COVID-19. He added that many of his friends work in sectors that are not in line with their major (horizontal mismatch). He believed that finding a job is as a matter of good fortune from God (Allah). He said,

“Yes, ma'am, some of my friends entered the banking sector as tellers. Some of them have worked in offices. Yes, maybe it is back to each other's sustenance, ma'am. It is not necessarily correlated with where we attended college. I am not sure if that is how it works.”

Like Amir, Azhar, who graduated from accounting department in 2018, also faced difficulty in finding a job that aligned with his major. He was unemployed for seven months after graduating from the polytechnic. He said,

“So, after graduating, I tried to find work at several companies in Brebes district, starting from shoe factories, healthcare and others. However, they did not accept fresh graduates from diploma degree (D3), especially those majoring in accounting.”

Not only graduates from polytechnic A, but also Fikri (26) who graduated in 2018 from polytechnic B with a major in mechanical experienced similar difficulties. He said that it was challenging to find a job that matched his background major, although he eventually found one. Binar (25), who also graduated from polytechnic B with a major in electrical engineering, shared

a similar experience as Fikri's. She shared her working experience as a cashier in a drugstore after graduation. She agreed that finding a job at that time was difficult, so she took any job, even if it was a horizontal or a vertical mismatch with her background major.

Ani (28), who graduated in 2018 from the computer engineering department at polytechnic A, echoed this surprising condition. She lived in the Brebes district where Industrial clusters were just being built. Recently, the Indonesian government expanded some big companies to her town. After graduation, she was looking for opportunities to work there using her diploma from thr polytechnic. Unfortunately, it was challenging for her to find a job, and she felt hopeless. She said the opportunities for upper secondary education graduates were more than for college graduates. Most job openings were for machine operators, the lowest level in the factory. Because she had no other choice and she really needed to get a job soon to solve her economic problem, she decided to use her senior high school diploma and work as an operator in a shoe factory. This chosen job can be explained as a vertical and a horizontal mismatch, yet she was okay with it.

Not only did those who graduated in 2018 face difficulties finding jobs, but also graduates in 2019 experienced similar challenges. Ahmad (25), who graduated in 2019 from the computer engineering department at Polytechnic A, confirmed that finding a job was difficult for him. He mentioned that even his seniors who graduated in 2018 also found it difficult to secure employment. Aisyah (25), who graduated from the visual communication design department, decided to work in a factory as a machine operator, similar to Ani's case. Her job was entirely different from her major, and it could be described as a horizontal mismatch, vertical mismatch, as well as underemployment. She stated that at that time, she decided to take any job because finding a job, especially one that was in line with her major, was very challenging. Furthermore, her parents prohibited from searching for work outside of her town, making it even more difficult to find a job.

Amelia (24) graduated from the accounting department in 2019 and currently works as a staff in a government-owned company in her city. She also shared the same opinion as Ahmad and Aisyah, saying that in Indonesia, many employers prefer to hire individuals with job experiences, which limits opportunities for fresh graduates.

Theme 2: backdoor hiring (nepotism practices/the power of “orang dalam” or connections)

In the characteristic of backdoor hiring, the study findings reveal that all the participants who graduated before COVID-19 agreed that this practice culturally occurs in Indonesia. They observed that having more social capital, such as strong networks and connections, translates to better career support, job search assistance, and an easier path to gaining a competitive edge in the job market. This phenomenon is closely related to nepotism practices. Here are some examples of cases.

Fikri (26) who graduated from mechanical engineering department polytechnic B in 2018 is now working as a foreman in a factory. For Fikri, when searching for employment, the primary consideration should be the job opening itself, including the specific position available. It can be tough to find job openings that are basic and related to his field, especially as a mechanical engineering graduate. Most job vacancies are often not aligned with his program of study, creating difficulties in the application process. Luckily, there were three companies that opened job vacancies on his campus seeking specifically for mechanical engineering graduates, which was highly beneficial. There might be official adjustments made to the program of study to suit the available job vacancies.

Fikri also shared about his past experience when his brother offered him a job at a steam power plant in Karangrandi village where his brother working there. However, he was already employed at X company (his current company), so he couldn't take the offer at the power plant. During a gap in his employment at X company, his brother offered the job at the power plant again. Fikri will attempt to locate any job vacancies that he could apply for, or his brother could assist in the search. Fortunately, his brother learned about a job opening at X company through a coworker, and they were eventually hired for the position. Now, he works at X company.

Risna, who is currently unemployed at the age of 29, has also experienced the power of connections when searching for a job. After getting married, Risna and her family moved to Bengkulu. As an accounting graduate, she tried to find a job in Bengkulu after giving birth. However, she faced difficulties because she did not have any connections to people working in the companies she applied to. When her child turned 1 year old, she tried to apply again during the COVID-19 pandemic. However, she still faced challenges, especially during the pandemic. It was very difficult to be accepted for a job if she relied solely on her own efforts without any connections.

Unlike Risna's experience, Amir (25), who works as a document controller in a factory, was able to get his current job because he happened to have a friend who works as an HRD staff in the same factory. At that time, Amir was waiting for a working visa to go to Malaysia, but he received an offer to work at the factory where his friend worked. Eventually, he decided to take the job at the factory in Tegal which is closer to his house. And he did not take any test to be accepted there.

Azhar (26) also experienced the backdoor hiring practice in his job search. As an accounting student, he was required to complete a 3-month internship program, which led to his employment at the office X. After finishing their internship, Azhar and two of his friends were offered positions as employees there. However, at that time, Azhar was thinking of gaining work experience elsewhere. When he tried to apply to the other places after graduation, he was not successful in finding a suitable position. Eventually, he received a job offer again from the office where he had completed his internship. Azhar accepted the offer and was employed there now as a contract worker. Despite receiving a direct offer, Azhar still had to follow the standard job application procedures.

Wina (26) believes that the power of "orang dalam" is more prevalent in smaller towns. She thinks that when applying for jobs in big cities, having connections may not be as influential, especially if one has taken a D3 program that emphasizes practical experience over theory. According to her, sometimes job vacancies are not transparent and only open to those who have relatives or connections with people inside the company, in this case, her father.

Wina has been helped by her father to get a job in a co-op office as an honorary staff. She also was offered by her father to be promoted to a higher position. However, she wanted to become a civil servant. Her father objected her decision by saying that he would be embarrassed in front of the office's director if his daughter resigned. However, with the encouragement of her friends and mother, Wina was given the opportunity to take the civil service exam. An now she works in a hospital as a civil servant.

Adinda (25) who graduated from computer engineering polytechnic A also managed to enter a government office as a staff with the help of "orang dalam", it's her uncle. She even started working in her fourth semester of college. She said that this practice commonly happened in her office. Amelia (24), a graduate of the accounting department, found herself in a complicated situation at work. She experienced difficulties upon initially joining the company,

possibly because of many employees with connections/recommendations. As a result, she was suspended for several weeks, but finally, she got called in to work again. Upon her return to work, she was surprised to discover the presence of a new colleague. Feeling frustrated and overwhelmed, the person expressed their emotions and contemplated searching for alternative job opportunities. She discussed the prevalence of favoritism and nepotism in her workplace, where many positions were filled based on personal connections rather than merit.

Santi (24) expressed her strong dissatisfaction with a system that heavily relies on connections or recommendations for job opportunities. She mentioned an example of the Adipala power plant, where job vacancies are not publicly advertised but rather filled through existing connections. She dislikes this system as it gave an unfair advantage to those with connections from the very beginning, even before the competition for the position began. She then shared her encounters with similar situations, such as within Pertamina, where projects were also awarded based on connections. She wished to secure a job in line with their field of study which is electrical engineering and mentioned attempting to explore project opportunities. However, when she asked about the recruitment process, everyone was silent or had evasive responses regarding the source of information. Santi emphasized the importance of skills and competence, expressing her willingness to compete based on their abilities, but lamented how connections seemed to play a crucial role, making it difficult to rely solely on skills and qualifications.

These examples highlight how personal connections and recommendations play a significant role in job placement in Indonesia, leading to a perception of backdoor hiring and nepotism practices. Participants identified instances where having connections facilitated job opportunities, while a lack of connections created obstacles in the job search process.

Theme 3: economic problems

In the family setting, economic problems often influence the career decision-making (CDM) process of graduates. The following examples shed light on how economic factors impact graduates' choices and responsibilities:

Ayu (26), an accounting graduate, desires to work at a large company but currently lacks the opportunity. However, she hesitates to resign from her current job as she needs to continue supporting her family financially. Ayu's mother works as an elementary school teacher, and her father has passed away. The family's financial situation, including loans and possible debts from

her father's illness, necessitates Ayu's contribution. Her consideration for taking another job or pursuing a different career is primarily driven by her family's needs. Ayu's older sibling postpones marriage until their younger siblings graduate, further emphasizing the family's financial challenges.

Alim (26) had prior work experience as an office boy before attending polytechnic A. He mentioned being an orphan and the impact it had on his career progression. Despite being the best graduate in vocational school, Alim chose the job of an office boy for the financial opportunity it provided. During his computer engineering studies at university, Alim excelled and leveraged his skills to secure a supervisory position in a café owned by a hotel. As the father figure in his family, Alim took on the responsibility of financially supporting his family and his siblings' education.

Amelia (24) also faces the financial responsibility of helping her family with expenses after her father's passing. The loss of her father likely intensified the need for her and her mother to contribute financially. These examples highlight the economic challenges faced by graduates and their families, influencing their career decisions and responsibilities. The graduates, such as Ayu, Alim, and Amelia, prioritize supporting their families and contributing to their household's financial well-being over pursuing their own aspirations. Their experiences demonstrate the complex interplay between personal ambitions, family dynamics, and economic realities in shaping graduates' career choices and decision-making processes.

Theme 4: social and mobility restrictions

Evidences from the graduates

The COVID-19 pandemic has imposed social and mobility restrictions, which have had a significant impact on the field and the experiences of participants. Here are some instances that highlight the effects of these restrictions:

Mira (23), an HR staff, had to continue working in the office during the pandemic while adhering to social distancing measures and wearing masks. This situation made her feel uncomfortable while performing her duties. Desi (23) faced frequent internet connection problems, which significantly impacted her ability to attend online classes and even prevented her from going home due to lockdown restrictions in her area. The lack of internet signal in

certain locations, like Kendal and Temanggung, made it difficult for her to stay connected and carry out her tasks effectively.

Roy (29), a staff member in the research and development department, also continued working in the office during the pandemic. However, he followed the necessary health protocols to ensure his safety and that of his colleagues. Viana (23) went through the job application process amid the social restrictions. While she sent most of her job application letters online, she personally delivered some to nearby companies. Despite receiving interview calls from four companies, she did not accept any of those offers. She currently works as a secretary in a government office, considering factors like location and living expenses when choosing a job.

Valdi (23) faced the challenges of job searching during the pandemic. He applied to more than 100 companies, both online and in-person, while working as a part-timer. His job search is still ongoing. Indah (21), an accounting graduate, successfully obtained a job by applying online and sending an email to the company.

These examples illustrate how the social and mobility restrictions imposed during the COVID-19 pandemic have impacted various aspects of the participants' professional lives. From working in uncomfortable conditions to facing internet connectivity issues and adapting job search strategies, the pandemic has introduced new challenges and considerations in the field.

Evidences from employers

Mr. Indro, the head of the micro business division of a bank in Jepara, shared that the recruitment process during the COVID-19 pandemic was still necessary to fulfill the need for employees. However, the majority of the selection process was conducted online, including psychological tests. To address the worker shortage, Indro mentioned that he delegated the responsibility to the regional office. The recruitment process would be managed by the HR department at the regional office, in coordination with the branch office. In this way, the regional office would handle the recruitment process.

On the other hand, Ms. Nisa, the owner of a beauty product company in Tegal, also opted for online recruitment during the pandemic. However, she expressed her belief that this approach was less effective. Despite conducting online recruitment, all the employees in her company still

worked in the office. However, they adhered to social distancing measures, maintained physical distance from each other, and followed the applicable health protocols.

These insights from employers highlight their experiences and perspectives on recruitment during the COVID-19 pandemic. Both Mr. Indro and Ms. Nisa recognized the importance of adapting their recruitment processes to the current circumstances, with a greater reliance on online methods. While the effectiveness of online recruitment may vary, employers like Ms. Nisa continued to maintain office operations by implementing necessary precautions to ensure the safety and well-being of their employees.

Theme 5: limited job opportunities amidst COVID-19

Evidences from the graduates

As this is in line with previous studies discussed in the introduction and literature review sections, many graduates felt that COVID-19 limited their job opportunities. Valdi (23), who graduated in 2020 from the mechanical engineering program at Polytechnic A, noted that job hunting was already challenging before COVID-19, and it had become even more difficult since then. For example, in the interview process, Rian (23) shared his struggles with finding a job, citing the impact of COVID-19. He said,

“Okay, so far, I have not be able to secure a job. Finding a job has been quite challenging due to the COVID-19 pandemic. When a company opens a job vacancy, there are usually only one position available, but the number of applicants could be as many as 20 to 30 people, which makes it very competitive. When I applied for jobs, I passed the initial administrative step, but then, I had to take the psychological test 5 times, and unfortunately, I failed. I tried again and took the test 10 more times, and this time, I passed. However, during the interview stage, they rejected me. So far, I have applied for 25 job vacancies.”

Similar with Rian, Bani (22), who also graduated from the same polytechnic as Valdi with a major in electrical engineering, claimed that it was difficult to find a job amidst the

COVID-19 pandemic as many companies were downsizing and not recruiting new employees. He had applied for over 50 job vacancies but was rejected from all of them. Eventually, he worked as a designer in a copy center, which can be considered as a case of horizontal mismatch and underemployment. Similarly, Rizal (23), Joko (21), Lia (23), Malik (21), Dita (21) and Rahman (22) agreed that the limited job openings were due to many employers laying off their employees and not hiring new ones.

As confirmed by Viana (23), a graduate of the accounting department, finding a job during COVID-19 was difficult due to changes in the recruitment process. For example, the switch from offline to online interviews made the process more difficult, especially for those who lacked the necessary tools. Similarly, Rizal (23), who also graduated from the same department as Viana, shared his experience of working in a job that partially matches his educational background, leading to a vertical mismatch with his degree. He stated that the job requirements were originally intended for senior high school graduates, but he was okay with it due to the difficulties of finding a job during the pandemic.

“It's really been difficult during the COVID-19 era. There have been significant reductions in the number of job openings available, and unfortunately, most of the openings that were available did not match my major qualifications.”

Similar to Rizal, Joko (21) from the mechanical engineering department also mentioned that he is currently working as a sales engineer, a job that is not directly related to his major. However, he is content with his current position. Joko added that he did not limit himself during the job search, especially since finding employment during the COVID-19 pandemic was challenging. He said,

“Instead of being at home and unemployed, I chose to work here. I believe it's important to gain experience first before moving on to another opportunities, right? Once I am settled in my field, I know that more job offers will come. I don't want to limit myself to being just an engineer. If I do that, I will limit myself to competing only with those who have greater potential than me.”

He reclaimed that finding job amidst COVID-19 was difficult by saying,

“Wow, it's really difficult from my perspective, ma'am. It's very challenging to find a job during the pandemic. While others may have a different view, this is how I personally feel. Those who are already employed are sometimes affected, with some being laid off. As a result, it becomes even more challenging for fresh graduates to secure employment.”

Lia (23), who graduated from the accounting department, shared a slightly different experience in which she had already been working since she was a student at Polytechnic A in 2017. She recounted a story about being laid off in October 2020 due to her company's financial difficulties caused by the onset of COVID-19. Her experience confirms the previous perceptions and thoughts shared by other respondents. Fortunately, Lia was able to rejoin the company in January 2021 as a freelance administrator. She acknowledged that finding a job during COVID-19 was very difficult, and she was grateful to have been offered a position.

Malik (21), from the same department as Lia, also agreed that COVID-19 had made it difficult for fresh graduates to find a job. He said,

“Yes, it is clear that because of COVID-19, a lot of people have been laid off, resulting in fewer job openings. Companies are not hiring new employees, particularly fresh graduates, and may prefer those who have more work experience. Of course, it is becoming more difficult for new graduates to find jobs.”

He added that most companies are reluctant to provide training to new graduates because it requires additional costs.

Similar to the previous respondents, Dita (21) from the informatics engineering department also confirmed that finding a job during the COVID-19 pandemic was challenging. She said,

“In the first few months of COVID-19, I felt like "Oh God, why aren't there any replies [from the companies I applied for the job to]". It seemed like during the pandemic, many companies did not offer job opportunities for fresh graduates.”

Rahman (22), who graduated from the electrical engineering department, shared his experience in looking for a job during COVID-19. He confirmed that he had applied to many jobs during that time, but all of them were rejected. The main reasons for rejection was that due to COVID-19, many industries had reduced their workforce. Fortunately, his relative asked him to work as a technician, albeit not as a full-time staff. He accepted the offer because he thought that finding a job during COVID-19 was difficult and he did not want to miss the opportunity. However, in January, he had to stop working as a part-time staff and become unemployed again. He then tried to apply for other jobs and eventually landed a job as a mechanic in an industry, where he heard about the job opening from his friend. Rahman also noted that he did not limit himself to get jobs in his major only. He believed that any job was acceptable during the pandemic era in order to survive. He even experienced a sudden cancellation of job interview because the company had just laid off many employees.

Nela (22), another electrical engineering graduate, also shared her experience of looking for a job amidst COVID-19. She found it extremely challenging as many companies had reduced production and consequently laid off many employees, making it difficult for new graduates to find jobs. She said,

Interviewer: “In your opinion, to what extent did the COVID-19 pandemic contribute to the difficulty of finding a job?”

Nela: “I would say it’s been nearly 80%, ma’am. Even now, many of my classmates are still jobless.”

Indah (21) also confirmed that finding a job during the pandemic was difficult.

Interviewer: “Do you think it was challenging to find a job during the COVID-19 pandemic?”

Indah: “Yes, ma’am. It's been difficult.”

Interviewer: “Difficult?”

Indah: “Yes. There are many people who are still unemployed. Some are working in fields unrelated to their major. For instance, one of my acquaintances works in a gold

shop, while another works in a clothing store. They thought it would be better than being unemployed, ma'am.”

Graduating from the computer engineering department, Hisyam (29) also confirmed that it was hard for him to find a job,

“It was really difficult. I left [my previous job] for exactly one year. I sent job applications everywhere, and I was really frustrated.”

Susi (23), who graduated from the furniture production engineering department at Polytechnic C, said,

“Maybe the opportunity to get a job is a big aspect. COVID-19 has had a huge impact on the world of work, many companies have laid off their employees, and automatically the chances for fresh graduates to get a job are also small. Because many have been laid off, the competition has become much worse. So, from a personal point of view, I have to be really competitive. I have to be as competitive as possible because there are more and more competitors because of the impact of COVID-19.”

Same as Susi, Tia (21) from the accounting department had started looking for a job before graduation and experienced many rejections. She said,

“Yes, I thought finding a job was difficult. I applied, but no one called me back. At home, my mom always asked, "Have you applied for a job yet?"”

In contrast, Hana (23) from the accounting department confirmed that she did not really experience a significant negative influence from COVID-19 since she had already been working before the pandemic hit. She said,

“From my experience, I can say that the effect was not too significant. But when I hear other people's stories, I know that COVID-19 has been quite influential, especially for people who have built their own businesses.”

Hana's view is also similar to Tiana's (22), who graduated from the same department as Hana. Tiana claimed that finding a job amidst COVID-19 was not so difficult for her because she had already started looking for a job before the pandemic hit Indonesia. Her previous work experience could be her capital for her current work. Beni (22) from the electrical engineering department was also optimistic during the COVID-19 pandemic, saying,

“Maybe I could say that there are still opportunities to find a job, even though there are many requirements to meet, such as having vaccines or taking a swab, and so on. So, in my opinion, there is still a chance, because companies still need new employees, right?”

Same as Hana, Tiana, and Beni, Yusuf (22) from electrical engineering department said that he had already signed a work contract before graduating from Polytechnic B. However, the job's requirement was for senior high school graduates, which meant that there was a vertical mismatch with his educational level. However, it was not a big problem for him since it was a big company in Indonesia, and the important thing was that he got a job as soon as possible because getting a job amidst COVID-19 was difficult for him.

Unexpectedly, the findings revealed that some respondents, especially who graduated from IT department, confirmed that COVID-19 had increased their job opportunities. Radit (23) confirmed that finding a job amidst COVID-19 was not so difficult for IT graduates. He even stated that some IT jobs had accelerated during the COVID-19 pandemic. He added,

“Yes, the marketplace has experienced significant growth. It's remarkable considering the pandemic situation, so there must be a large number of IT personnel developing the applications.”

He claimed that the change was only on the mode of working, where many IT staffs were directed to work from home. However, he also stated that this type of mode had already been implemented even before COVID-19. So, it is not something new for them.

Mawar also shared the same opinion as Radit regarding the impact of COVID-19 on IT jobs. She said,

“Yes, that's right. I feel that IT job didn't have a direct impact at that time. So, finding a job was also relatively easy, because I always pay attention to IT job vacancies every day, and there are always new vacancies. So, the IT workplace was not [negatively] affected actually. The most significant impact is only on how we work. What used to be WFO, now IT staffs can work fully remotely, WFH. That's how the work culture changes.”

She added that due to COVID-19, everything was done online, which is why IT specialists were much more needed during the pandemic.

Like Radit and Mawar, Imran (24) also agreed that the IT sector was not negatively affected by the COVID-19 condition,

“Personally, I believe that the IT-related sector has not been negatively affected by COVID-19. It's the same when I was looking for a job. Many of my friends are working in Malaysia even in the COVID-19 era. Our focus is on our abilities. We studied at the polytechnic, which is more practical than theoretical. So, if we have good abilities, why be afraid to compete? If our abilities are good, we should just go ahead and apply for the job. We will definitely get the job.”

Another respondent, Zami (22), who graduated from Mechanical Engineering, has a slightly different view. He claimed that for job seekers who graduated from college degree (HEIs), it tends to be easier to find a job than for high school graduates, who are often relegated to becoming production operators in industries rather than office staffs. Yusuf (22) from the electrical engineering department also shares a similar thought with Zami. He said that employee reductions tend to happen more frequently at the operator level of industries. He added if there is a reduction, it is not as significant as at the operator level. Jamal (23) from furniture production engineering Polytechnic C also agreed, saying,

“So, at that time, many furniture industry were closed, and there was a reduction in the number of employees. Fortunately, because we have Diploma 3 degree, the work at that level was not too disrupted. During COVID-19, the part that was most affected in terms of employee reduction was the production section, such as cutting and finishing.”

A unique experience was shared by Tono (23), who graduated from the computer engineering department. He confirmed that he decided to start a small business at home because finding a job during the COVID-19 pandemic was difficult. Despite applying for several jobs, he was rejected. Thus, he utilized his entrepreneurial skill to become self-employed. Tono also noted that many companies require applicants to have one or two years of experience, which make it more difficult for fresh graduates to get a job. The COVID-19 situation has decreased their chances further.

Evidences from the employers

The evidence from employers gathered during the study provided insights into their hiring and workforce management practices amidst the COVID-19 pandemic. The majority of employers mentioned that they did not actively recruit new employees during this period but also did not lay off existing employees, opting to maintain their current workforce. This sentiment was shared by Dewi (31) from an IT consultant company, Wahid (60) from a crackers factory, and Danang (40) from a shoe manufacturing company.

However, there were exceptions to this trend. Silvi (38) reported that her company had to lay off some employees without offering any job openings. The reduction in workforce was attributed to the impact of COVID-19 on production and orders, which necessitated downsizing. Nonetheless, the company experienced a recovery in early 2021 and resumed employee recruitment due to stable orders. In another industry, Handoko (60) from a furniture company mentioned that they had to lay off a significant number of employees, around 30% of the workforce. However, the company still provided compensation or wages to the affected employees, albeit not in full.

These accounts from employers provide a diverse perspective on the impact of COVID-19 on their hiring and workforce management strategies. While some companies were able to maintain their workforce, others experienced layoffs or reductions due to the challenging

business environment caused by the pandemic. The variations in responses reflect the unique circumstances faced by different industries and companies during this period.

Theme 6: backdoor hiring (nepotism practices/the power of “orang dalam” or connections)

During the COVID-19 pandemic, backdoor hiring practices, which rely on social capital and personal connections, became more prevalent in Indonesia. Graduates like Valdi (23) from the mechanical engineering department found job opportunities through family ties and personal networks. He secured a part-time job at a restaurant through his cousin's recommendation, demonstrating the significance of social connections in navigating a challenging job market. He said,

“Coincidentally, my cousin works there, so when I was confused, my brother said, "Valdi, there's a part-time job opportunity at a restaurant. Are you interested?" So, I decided to fill my spare time with that job.”

Valdi's experience also involved utilizing his university's collaboration with a company to secure a job as a quality control. Despite facing challenges with the delayed issuance of his official diploma, Valdi received timely information from his lecturer about job vacancies at X Company, providing him an alternative path to apply for a position.

Interviewer: "Oh, so the job opportunity there was from your relative or did you search for it yourself?"

Valdi: "It was actually through the university. At that time, the university had a collaboration with the company."

Interviewer: "Oh, from the university?"

Valdi: "Yes, alhamdulillah, it was through the university."

However, some graduates acknowledged the presence of nepotism and backdoor hiring practices. Santi (25) and Aisyah (25) shared instances where they were offered bribes to secure job positions, but they chose not to participate in such practices. Santi said,

“That's really the connection there, that's why I really hate a system like that. It means that we are not losing competitiveness but have lost from the beginning, yes, connection.

Again, I have met many people like that, for example at X company. In the past, I also asked how to get there. I also wanted to work according to my major, so I started to do projects and other things. Yes, that's a connection, for example, in terms of skills, God willing, I will dare to fight until I'm ready no matter what, even though I don't know the result, I will lose or what, at least I tried. But this can't be done without the connection.”

The use of "orang dalam" or backdoor employment practices became widespread during COVID-19, especially among those who graduated in 2020 and 2021. Many graduates found it extremely challenging to secure jobs and resorted to nepotism practices as an alternative. Aisyah refused such an offer, learning a life lesson not to trust others easily.

On the other hand, Nela (22) experienced the negative consequences of nepotism when she was transferred to a lower-level department due to her cousin's desire to work in the administrative position she held. Despite hoping for a return to her original department, no changes occurred, leading her to quit her job.

These examples highlight how social capital and personal connections played a significant role in job-seeking during the pandemic. While such practices are common in Indonesia, they raise concerns about fairness and meritocracy in the job market. Graduates face challenges in navigating these dynamics, and the prevalence of backdoor hiring practices sheds light on the complexities graduates encounter in the transition from education to work during uncertain times.

Theme 7: digital transformation

Digital transformation is also as the typical characteristic of the labor market during COVID-19. Adam (26) who now works in the accounting department in the administration section expresses that he finds his job more comfortable because the job description is clear, and he specifically works on design for social media/digital marketing. When asked about the impact of COVID-19 on his work, Adam mentions that it didn't affect him much, neither in his job nor in other aspects of his life at the polytechnic. Regarding any changes in the work system, Adam mentions that the main change was the implementation of a work-from-home policy, where he would alternate between working from home and going to the office. However, he clarifies that he could only

work on design projects for interior work at home, while office tasks had to be done in the workplace. Additionally, he mentions taking on freelance projects outside of campus.

Adinda (25) expresses her concerns about the work-from-home (WFH) schedule, mentioning that although there was a schedule in place, it didn't last long because most people still went to the office. She suggests that the WFH policy is not strictly enforced and lacks strict monitoring, unlike private companies that usually adhere to set schedules. Adinda also mentions the absence of proper supervision or monitoring.

Ahmad (25) mentioned that during the COVID-19 period, everything was closed. The only thing that was open was the road next to the Tegal City Health Department. Even to enter the city, a work assignment letter was required, stating a valid reason. It had to be a genuine and essential reason. If someone didn't have a valid reason, including for recruitment purposes, they were directed to go back home. The recruitment process for companies was done online. Furthermore, he shared his experiences working for Sinar Mas and PT. Aman. PT Aman was established during the pandemic, so all work was conducted online through a system. Ahmad mentioned he worked on a tablet and was unable to work if the battery was off.

Ahmad also explains that X company was established during the COVID-19 period in 2021. The company operates entirely online, without a physical office. Attendance, meetings, and data input are all done online. Financial transactions also occur through online transfers. Ahmad initially found it challenging because there was no office environment where he could easily ask for help from colleagues. Instead, he had to refer to module materials for guidance. The online system is still in place, including the financing process and fund disbursements, which are handled online. Ahmad mentions that they assist customers in setting up a "Jago" account, where the funds are transferred. Customer input is done face-to-face, but payments are made online. Meetings and coordination take place through Zoom, and user profiles include the geographical area, allowing them to identify where others are located.

Ahmad highlights the positive aspect of not having a physical office, which allows for more efficient use of time. However, he acknowledges that reporting can be challenging since everything is done online, and sometimes information can be missed. Nonetheless, the flexibility of remote work is advantageous, even though it may be less monitored. The key is to take responsibility for one's work. When asked about individuals who may struggle with technology,

Ahmad shares an example of a friend who has five years of marketing experience but still struggles with correctly inputting customer data.

Akbar (26) stated that the work dynamics during the COVID-19 pandemic were different and more challenging. The pressure to increase sales was greater as the business experienced a significant decline in revenue, nearly halving its usual turnover. Consequently, all employees were pushed to their limits in finding ways to boost sales. Prior to the pandemic, the seller had already posted their products for sale on the Shopee platform. However, due to the timing coinciding with the COVID-19 outbreak, many customers were unable to visit the physical stores or clinics, possibly leading them to search for alternatives. During this time, sales saw an increase. However, the stores or clinics did not yet have a specific service or feature (referred to as "XXX") because the head office did not permit transactions through this platform. Regarding communication and reporting, Akbar said that Zoom was primarily used for meetings and discussions. Additionally, during the pandemic, various government agencies developed applications that continue to be utilized, as they proved helpful during the COVID-19 situation. These applications are still in use, potentially also contributing to cost savings.

Aisyah (25) shared about the difficulties in finding a job and struggled with the process of searching and sending job applications via email. Eventually, realizing that it was challenging to secure a job, she decided to venture into selling plants online, which turned out to be successful due to the high demand during the COVID-19 pandemic. After approximately six to seven months of running the online plant business, she joined her sister to give tutoring, but that only lasted for a month. Soon after, she received an interview offer at a printing company in Pematang. She worked at the printing company for one year and four months before deciding to resign. Following the resignation, Aisyah was unemployed for a month until she obtained her current job, which means she has been working there for a year now.

Amelia (24) explained that her work responsibilities became more computer-oriented starting in July. This change occurred around the middle of the month, and she had to spend a significant amount of time focusing on her tasks using a computer. However, she faced difficulties during the middle of the month because she had to cross-check information using her laptop. This became a source of frustration for Amelia. The Wi-Fi connection at home was not as reliable as the one at the office, making it more convenient for her to work in the office. The faster internet connection at the office allowed her to work more efficiently. Amelia mentioned

that working from home provided some flexibility, as she could take breaks or work at night if needed. On the other hand, when working at the office, she had to complete her tasks from morning till evening, especially in the afternoons. Despite the long hours at the office, the advantage of a faster internet connection made her work progress more quickly.

These accounts collectively illustrate the diverse experiences individuals had with digital transformation in their work settings. The adoption of remote work, online communication tools, and reliance on digital platforms became more prevalent during the pandemic. While there were advantages and flexibilities, challenges such as monitoring work-from-home schedules, internet connectivity issues, and adapting to new work systems were also mentioned.

Theme 8: online learning and its outcomes

Evidences from graduates

Rian (23), a graduate of the accounting department in 2021, feels insecure about the knowledge he gained during online learning. He said,

"The Corona generation who learned accounting online has limited knowledge. When tested in a company to test their accounting skills, I was a little unsure of how to do it accurately."

According to Rian, this is due to several reasons, one of which is internet signal issues. Thus, the knowledge absorbed is only a little. Rian shared his experience when taking an accounting test,

"I was tested at a health center in the Kramat area, and all of the accounting students from my polytechnic registered for the accounting test. However, none of the accounting students could do the accounting work. When given accounting questions, no one could answer them."

Rian wonders where the fault lies, whether it is him who did not learn accounting correctly or someone else. But he was told to learn accounting on his own by watching YouTube.

Bani (22) is an electrical engineering student who graduated in 2020, still experienced online classes even though it was only for half a semester. Tia (21) currently works as a finance staff at an online beauty shop and also experienced a similar thing as Bani. Tia graduated in 2021 and had online classes in the middle of her college years, but it did not surprise her. Even when working, she was able to adapt to the online work system.

Malik (21) also experienced online classes in the middle of his college years. However, unlike Tia, Malik felt that what he got from online classes was unclear. He felt that it would be clearer if the lectures were conducted in-person. Although it did not reduce his self-confidence or make him afraid when he had to enter the workforce. But for Malik, online classes were very boring.

Indah (21), a graduate in 2021, began to experience online classes in the fourth semester of her college years. There was a concern when almost graduating during the pandemic, coupled with the loss of her mother when she was about to graduate. She felt scared, confused, and increasingly worried when her friends began to look for jobs, but it was difficult to get one. The same thing as Malik was also felt by Indah regarding the knowledge she gained during online classes.

"It is so different between online and offline classes. It's easier to understand the material when it is offline. With online classes, sometimes the lecturers just share videos from YouTube. When that happens, I usually do not pay too much attention and just wait until the lecturer gives assignments. Not to mention, many students turn off their cameras during online learning, so they can do other things and not pay too much attention to the material given by the lecturer. It is very ineffective in my opinion."

Regarding the use of the internet during online classes, Indah did it at home, and there was assistance from the government. But because the amount of assistance was only 5GB, she still had to buy additional data quota herself. However, there was a policy from the campus during exams, in the form of an IDR 50,000 reduction in exam fees.

Different from the others, Rianti (23), who is now working as a customer service in a retail company, feels happy when attending online classes. She started attending online classes in the fourth semester and during the online lectures. She felt happy because she can work at the same time. Rahman (22), a graduate of electrical engineering in 2021, felt a significant impact

from online classes. As a major that requires a lot of practical work, he was unable to obtain it. Rahman attended online classes starting from the fifth semester, while practical classes were essential during that time. This is because the practical classes he had received in the previous semester were only basic practice. He felt that his skills when working were not as good as those who attended offline classes. This had a significant impact when he entered the workforce. Rahman said,

"The knowledge that I should have gained in semester 5, especially in terms of practical work, was missed. Since all explanations were done online, there were many challenges, especially with the signal. When there were signal problems, a lot of material was missed."

Zami (22), a graduate of the electrical engineering program in 2021, experienced online classes for 3 semesters starting from the 4th semester, as he was pursuing a D3 degree. During more than 3 months of attending online classes, Zami did not have any practical learning, only theoretical learning, since all the equipment for practical learning was available only on campus. Only after Eid al-Fitr, the university allowed limited access to practical classes.

Beni (21), a graduate from Polytechnic B, said that his campus still held practical classes with limited capacity. The practical classes were divided into 2 groups and conducted on different weeks. According to Beni, the major he took required them to continue conducting practical classes. There were some practical classes that could be done at home online, such as coding programs. However, for practical classes that required equipment, students had to go to the campus. For Beni, although he graduated during the pandemic, he still had confidence in entering the workforce.

For Dita (21), there are positive and negative aspects of online learning that she has experienced since the third semester. One of the negative aspects that she feels as a student majoring in information technology is not being able to study with her classmates. According to her, there are some courses that need to be done together, in order to exchange ideas, especially related to system development. While the positive aspect that she feels is that she can participate in many training or seminars. Dita said,

"During online learning, she can still attend seminars using another phone or laptop. So it can increase her knowledge."

Online learning does not affect her performance when entering the workforce. According to her, she can still match the skills of workers who are not graduates during the pandemic.

Yusuf (22) only experienced online classes for about 2 semesters. In his last year of college, he was already able to attend offline classes by following health protocols. Like most COVID-19 graduates, Yusuf also feels the difference from other graduates, such as missing out on practical classes that could only be done in person. However, he took the initiative to learn practical materials by studying from YouTube, which gave him some insights.

Via (21) also experienced the less effective learning system during the online classes in her 5th and 6th semester. However, it did not have a significant impact on her as there were no practical classes during those semesters. In her 5th semester, Via started working on her final project and did an internship in her 6th semester. The difficulty she faced was when she had to discuss her work via Zoom. For her, discussing through Zoom was not effective because many students, including herself, were multitasking during online classes, such as watching YouTube using another gadget. As a result, many lessons were missed.

For Guntur (21), there are some practices that can be done online and some that require offline practice. For example, if the practice requirements can be fulfilled based on the theories that have been presented, then it will be immediately practiced in the next schedule of the offline practice. Roy (29) used to be a furniture design student at polytechnic C, and now works as an HRD staff. He said,

"There are 3 majors, Design, Management, and Production. During COVID-19, we had online classes. Perhaps for the Design and Management majors, it is still okay. For Management, it is also still okay. The difficult part is Production, which requires practical skills and cannot be learned at home, so in terms of skills, it has a greater impact on why he has not found a job until now. So in my opinion, the impact is greater on Production major because production workers have to handle machines every day."

For Roy, who studied in the design field, online learning was not a big problem, as he could still do it at home.

For Susi (23) there are some limitations to online learning. She is concerned that the image may not align with the explanations provided, so she tries to overcome this by asking questions to the lecturer if necessary. She makes sure to actively ask questions if she has

difficulty understanding the material. In cases where the material is entirely online, practical exams are still held on campus, so it is an improvement, but there are still limitations.

Evidences from the polytechnic

The evidences about online learning also were echoed by the polytechnic sides. Bahrul, a head of mechanical engineering department in polytechnic A, talked about the learning situation during COVID-19. He said there was a policy in place that requires practical sessions to be carried out separately. This has resulted in the classes being split and the duration of each session being extended, which is causing a strain on the lecturers' time. Despite this, efforts are being made to minimize the impact, and the solution is to continue with the split sessions.

Slamet, the dean of the electrical engineering department polytechnic A, stated that due to the smaller number of students, he has implemented a policy allowing some practical work to be done on campus to meet the minimum requirement. An alternative made when students cannot attend offline classes is by creating similar projects. According to him, the important thing is that students can still receive practical classes, even if they have to be done alternately.

Tama as a head of informatics engineering department, stated that there will be differences between online and offline classes, but online classes in the field of informatics engineering do not diminish the essence of the material provided. This is because most classes in informatics engineering are in the form of projects that involve creating software applications, and these projects can be done remotely and sent online, as well as tasks that can be submitted online.

According to Nono, the dean of the informatics engineering department at polytechnic B, there were around 25 or 26 students who were transferred, and the solution from the campus was to provide projects related to the practices that should have been done, emphasizing health protocols. Nono said,

"We split them into two teams, we can't control those who should be training them to be disciplined. Monitoring attendance every day like a worker. Because during the pandemic, we must comply with the rules, so we make a schedule. The schedule is divided into two groups that enter in two waves."

This has become a major challenge for the campus. In addition, the situation that requires students to use their internet data quota, while the assistance provided is somewhat limited, is also a constraint. At the end, these challenges or obstacles are not only from the institution, but also from the students.

Theme 9: adapted WP delivery method amidst COVID-19 and its outcomes

Evidences from graduates

Rian (23), a graduate of polytechnic A who now works as a freelancer, said that he actually wanted to do a work placement (internship) at a company rather than at the village hall, but due to the impact of COVID-19, his parents suggested that he look for an internship place closer to his home. Rian had the expectation that he would gain a lot of insights, but it turned out that he could not get that due to COVID-19. His contribution at the village hall where he did his internship also became limited, in addition to having to propose a thesis title, the pandemic situation greatly affected his internship process.

Viana (23), who currently works as a secretary in a government office, said that before doing her internship, she consulted with a counsellor. It turned out that the internship application system at the company she was targeting was very troublesome. She had to submit proposals and other requirements. Finally, Viana was advised to do her internship at the sub-district office, which had easier requirements. The pandemic also affected her internship period. If the normal internship period was supposed to be around 2 months, Viana was only given 2 weeks. For her, 2 weeks was too short because there were many processes to go through during the internship. One of them was approaching the company, as the data collection process had to be able to attract the attention of the internship place. So she had to sacrifice a lot there. When it came to writing her final project, the COVID-19 situation had improved, but it still affected the time it took to collect data.

Tia (21), who graduated in 2021 from the accounting department, chose to look for an internship around her place of residence due to COVID-19. She did her internship at a children's toy and accessory store owned by her neighbor. She taught the store owner how to create financial reports using an application, even though she had imagined doing her internship at a larger company like a bank. The duration of her internship was very short, only one month, as

given by her college. Also, due to COVID-19, she had to rely more on secondary data for her internship.

Unlike others, Mawar (23) did not experience the impact of COVID-19 on her internship period. She did her internship in 2018 when the situation was still normal. Mawar did her internship at a software house in Semarang city and stated that she did it for 2 months. She had already gained work experience, so when she entered the real working world after COVID-19, she did not face too many difficulties.

Nela (22), a graduate of electrical engineering from polytechnic A in 2021, did not experience an internship at all. Due to strict health protocols at the time, the internship program was replaced by condensed courses. Each student was asked to choose their focus, either in welding, design, or machine maintenance. Nela said that if there was an internship program at that time, she would have had a better understanding of the real working world. Internship is also an opportunity for students to have a chance of being hired as an employee after graduation if their performance during the internship is excellent. Unfortunately, that opportunity could not be obtained due to the absence of an internship program at the time.

Umam is one of the lucky ones who had the opportunity to experience an internship. Umam, a graduate of electrical engineering in 2020, completed his internship at his father's company which specializes in maintaining train engines. As it was still in 2019, Umam was able to benefit from the internship experience when he entered the actual workforce. For him, the internship period was very beneficial in adding to his knowledge to be applied in the real world of work.

Like Umam, Dania (21) who graduated from computer engineering in 2021, was also able to fully participate in her university's internship program. She completed her internship at the beginning of 2019, when Indonesia had not yet experienced the pandemic. The program in her major required students to complete an internship in their third semester. Although her internship at a government office in Tegal city did not involve much computer work like her major, being able to experience the working world was a good thing for her.

Imran (24), who graduated in 2020 from the informatics engineering department, also experienced the same thing as Dania and Umam, who were able to fully participate in the internship activities. Although his internship experience was less pleasant. For a month, Imran underwent an internship at an IT company in Yogyakarta, and he and three of his friends were

able to learn from the internship activities. They felt they could develop even though there was no one teaching them at the internship site.

Malik (21), a 2021 graduate of accounting, felt the negative impact of his internship during the COVID-19 period. He only had a short internship period of two weeks, which he found to be very ineffective. Malik could only carry out his internship at the village hall in his area because there were not many options available. In addition, he could not apply his accounting knowledge because during his internship at the village hall, he was only asked to assist in administrative activities at the office. Despite this, he was still benefited from the internship, one of which was learning communication skills with many people.

According to Tiana (22), the most effective duration for an internship is for 2 or 3 months. Like Malik, Tiana only participated in an internship for 2 weeks, which was very ineffective. Furthermore, due to the COVID-19 situation, she could not choose the internship location that she wanted.

Rizal (23), an accounting major from polytechnic A, experienced the same thing as Malik when he participated in an internship at his village hall. He could not apply his accounting knowledge and was only able to assist with administrative tasks. Although the two weeks internship period was too short, he was able to gain knowledge about Excel programs.

Diki (22) participated in an internship program at a home-based exhaust manufacturer near his place of residence, but only for two weeks. He chose the location for his internship because it was close to his home. According to Diki,

"Actually, if it was not in the COVID-19 time, the polytechnic had already referred us to banks for the internship program. But because of COVID-19, the university referred us to companies around our area."

He felt that the time was too short because he only came in about three times a week during those two weeks. It was indeed a very short time.

Lia (23) also felt the short duration of her internship during the COVID pandemic. Out of the two weeks given, she only used a total of 10 days to intern at the MSME she was placed in. Indah (21) even experienced a shorter internship duration. The polytechnic policy allowed for a two-week internship, but Indah only went to the placement site a total of six times. Similarly

with Lia (23) who graduated in 2021, her internship place only gave her one week plus for the internship, due to employee reduction caused by COVID-19. The total time she participated in the internship at X was only one week plus two days.

Rahman (22) did an internship at X Tegal in the public street lighting department for one month. Actually, the company did not open an internship for students, but because his father had a connection with the company, Rahman was able to do an internship there. He believes that the internship period should have been 3 months, but due to COVID-19, the university gave a policy of one month for the internship. Rahman said that although the internship was only one month long, he could feel the impact of the internship, especially in developing his skills. This has had an impact on his current job as a mechanic at a healthcare equipment company.

Tono (23) is also one of those who participated in an internship program before COVID-19. He did an internship in his 5th semester for about one and a half months in a large-scale housing construction project. Unlike the previous examples, Zami (22), a purchasing staff in a private company in Jakarta, participated in an internship program at X company for a considerable length of time. He did an internship at the company for 5 months. The internship program was carried out at the beginning of 2021.

Like Zami, Beni (21) also participated in an internship program at a company for 5 months, even though it was during the COVID-19 pandemic. Unlike other places, the company where he did his internship did not have any staff reductions, so the interns could still do their internship for a long time. His polytechnic had a policy that when there were students who did not have a place to do their internship, the university would help by providing an internship place on campus. Yusuf (22), a mechanic in a mining company who graduated in 2021, was able to participate in a 5-month internship program at a company that inspects traffic lights, traffic cables, and maintains traffic signs. However, Yusuf also felt that his internship was not optimal due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. According to him,

"I did not get a very specific area, only about 20% of my internship was focused on electrical work, while the rest was focused on mechanical maintenance and other tasks."

Yusuf believes that if it were not because of the pandemic, he might have been able to choose a company with more opportunities to work in the electrical field.

Via (21), a graduate of information technology in 2021, said that her university policy was to exchange the internship period that was supposed to be in semester 5 to semester 6. According to Via,

"Yes, so we did the final project first before the internship. Then during the internship, I received information from seniors that there was a vacancy. So I contacted the company which is located in Yogyakarta. Because the polytechnic requires that 70% of the internship must be outside the city and 30% inside the city."

Zaki (21) still participated in the internship program but it was postponed from its original schedule. He said,

"We were supposed to do the internship in December but it was postponed until June. It was a 7-month internship until January."

According to Zaki, some campuses cancelled their internship programs, but his campus still held the program, only the timing was adjusted to the COVID-19 situation at the time. Guntur (21) said that he participated in an internship program for 8 months in 2020, after there was no internship the year before. However, due to COVID-19, the schedule was changed. The internship program was supposed to be conducted in the 7th semester for 4 months, but it was eventually extended to 8 months, followed by the completion of his final project

Just like Guntur, Via (21) who currently works as a designer at a furniture company also experienced a change in internship schedule due to COVID-19. Two internships that were supposed to be done in 2 semesters had to be combined into one semester. As a result, in the middle of the internship period, Via had to keep working on her final project in between her internship time.

Desi (23) was a Furniture Business Management student, said there was an internship program every year. In her first year, she did her internship in Jepara city, then the second internship was in Gresik at a company, and she continued with the third internship. But, because she was in her 3rd semester during the pandemic, it was postponed until her 5th semester, so she did the second internship for 3 months and directly continued with the third internship.

Just like some of the previous graduates, Susi (23) also experienced a delay in the internship program. Susi still followed the internship for 8 months, 4 months in the beginning after the first semester and the next 4 months were postponed until 2021. Jamal (23), a graduate of polytechnic C, participated in a 12-month internship program that was divided by semester. However, due to COVID-19, his second and third internship had to be combined. He completed his internship in two different places, spending 3 months in Jepara and 9 months in Bali.

Evidences from the polytechnic

The evidences of the adapted WP (internship) delivery program were also confirmed by the representative from the polytechnics. Mrs. Yuli, the head of the accounting department of polytechnic A, explains the duration and adaptation of the work placement system during the COVID-19 pandemic. Before the pandemic, work placements or internships lasted for two months, but during the pandemic, they were reduced to two weeks, which only involved observation. The students worked on their assignments from home and only came back to report their work. Due to the pandemic, practical activities were limited, and some of the work had to be taken home. The adaptation to the pandemic had been ongoing for two years, but in 2022, there are plans to introduce a new WP mechanism that will last for one month. There are currently no costs associated with the internship program, and students are not required to pay for their internships. Some companies even may offer incentives, but it is not formally declared. The university provides souvenirs for each company where students complete their internships, but some students may choose to add additional tokens of appreciation to their host companies.

Asked about the implementation during the pandemic in general, Mr. Bahrul, the head of the mechanical engineering department, also from polytechnic A, explained the general implementation of programs during the pandemic. He noted that there were differences compared to pre-pandemic times. In 2020, they had to switch from internship to only having practice in the campus' small workshop. And the focus was only on improving competencies in Computer-Aided-Design (CAD) drawing and practical class sessions. In 2021, as the situation improved, they were able to return to their normal program implementation.

“It is back to normal now, so by the end of last year, it was already distributed to some institutions, and about 70 institutions accepted around 130 of our students. All are in a motorcycle workshop.”

In the electrical engineering department, Mr. Slamet, the head of the department, shared about the procedures and the duration for WP (internship), particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic. He explained the students have time around two months to find an industrial place as a host. While considering the COVID-19 restrictions, He also mentioned that some students were given leeway, as some industries were implementing work-from-home policies. In response to this situation, the polytechnic allowed the students to conduct their internship in their respective villages or at the village hall. The focus was to work on a project related to their academic curriculum. This way, the internship remained essential in applying their theoretical knowledge in practical situations.

According to Mr. Slamet, there were some students who chose to do their community service in the village, while others find it difficult and opt to do it at school. For certain schools, they will ask the students or the applicants about their goals and plans for the community service project, whether it is related to their courses or not. If there is no connection to their coursework, they will help to come up with ideas that are relevant. The projects should still be related to their courses, such as creating an attendance system, a control system, or, during the COVID-19 pandemic, students created automatic hand sanitizer dispensers or automatic hand washing systems. However, the projects must be related to the micro course. When asked if they could do a project that is not related to their courses at all, Mr. Slamet answered that it is not allowed due to the time constraint of three months, which is the standard duration of projects for their old curriculum. Regardless of whether there is a pandemic or not, the duration of the program remains the same. “Yes, the pandemic does not affect the internship’s duration, it affected the place”, Mr. Slamet said. For example, if the program is implemented in a school, where even if a student does not show up at school, the teachers and staff still go to work. The students can work to create an automatic hand washing or hand sanitizer device that does not need to be touched, and Mr. Slamet mentioned that it will be needed in the future.

Explained by Mr. Tama, the head of the informatics engineering department polytechnic A, the duration during COVID-19 was one month. As the curriculum in the department was changed in 2020, the current internship took place for a minimum of three months. The head of the furniture production engineering department of polytechnic C, Mr. Farhan, shared a similar story about how COVID-19 pandemic affected the internship program. It was the internship schedule time when COVID19 reached its peak. Therefore, the companies are also affected by it.

They were anxious to accept people to their company because of the social distancing. So, the internship was postponed. He said,

"We will postpone its implementation to the 4th semester, and we will move the courses from the 4th semester to the 2nd semester. So, the program can be implemented when the condition is better, and all parties involved are ready since we need to get the parent's approval too".

Mr. Aziz, the assistant director of the division of student affairs and cooperation of polytechnic C, said that the internship program went ahead as planned, but they left it up to the industry and company to decide how to handle it. The industry had a policy of 50% capacity for employees, so the interns followed the same rules. Even if the industry had to shut down for a month, the interns still did their internship for the full duration. The credit hours were not reduced, and if the interns were required to work from home, they still counted as doing their internship. He added that some interns only did their internship for a short period, such as one month or even two weeks, but their program did not change. The furniture production industry had its own regulations that allowed them to continue their operations during the pandemic.

Mr. Ganjar, the head of the electrical engineering department, said basically, no major changes were made to the plan, only the execution was adjusted. Before the COVID-19 pandemic, the plan was usually scheduled so that everyone would leave together in the same month and return in the same month as well. However, during the pandemic, they faced difficulties in executing the plan. His colleague, Mr. Saeful added that the department head had previously tried to arrange offline activities, but there were limitations due to the policies set by higher authorities. Additionally, the implementation of PPKM (Community Activity Restrictions) also limited traveling outside of the city. There were opportunities in the Banyumas area for offline internship activities, but it was difficult to afford many students. The school then provided options for them such as internships on campus. The on-campus activities are research, community service, and helping to develop the department's website. There are 4-5 students doing these programs.

"We are still trying to create an internship for student experience. Although the internship will start at the same time. But in different host industries, we must adjust accordingly."

Said Mr. Ganjar.

Mr. Saeful added that the durations are the same. 5 months was the scheme for those who started the internship during the early stages of the pandemic. On the other hand, some had to do it with 2 or 3 different companies, because some companies only allowed internships for 2 months. For example, the student who was accepted in August needs to find a new company in October or November. With this condition, Mr. Ganjar said the quality has decreased significantly. To anticipate the effect on the quality of the graduates, Mr. Ganjar, as the head of the department, explained they try to ensure that the internship cannot be taken place in Banyumacan (Banyumas, Purbalingga, Banjarnegara, Cilacap, Kebumen). The consideration was that most industries here do not want to participate in an internship program. Even if there are large industries, they cannot allow interns to touch the equipment as the internship duration is only 5 months. Mr. Ganjar added that the duration and location of internships before the COVID-19 were located in the Jabodetabek area. The internships were arranged in partnership with companies, or students found the internships on their own.

From polytechnic B, the head of the mechanical engineering department, Mr. Ilham, explained in the early days of COVID-19, the policy was initiated by Mr. Joko as the head of the department to adjust the internship program. The policy aimed to make the internship program in the 6th semester a part of the 5th semester, while the 5th semester's internship would be incorporated into the 6th semester's curriculum. This happened during the early days of COVID-19, but as the internship program continued, it was eventually returned to its previous state in the second period, with the internship program taking place in the 5th semester. Before COVID-19, the department's policy required all students to leave the city for their internships. But due to COVID-19, the department allowed the students to have the internship in the city. And the students still need to find the host by themselves.

Similar to polytechnic C, the duration was 5 months, but because it's inside the city can do the internship in 2 companies, 2 and 3 months for each. Regarding the technical aspects of their internships, the school leaves everything to the industry, as it is their policy. So, when students are doing internships or studying in the industry, whatever the industry policy is, they are welcome to follow it. Some internships may be done online, while others may be in person. For the result, he said,

“Thank God, everyone was able to secure an internship position, although it was a bit rushed. Some may not have the full 5 months, but we set the minimum limit of 4 months so that they don't fall short. If one month is done online, it will still be considered towards the total internship period.”

For an overview during the past 2 years of the pandemic, the internship program at B Polytechnic, especially in X for the D3 Information Technology program, they had students who did internships at businesses in the industrial area, and some ended up doing their internships on-campus. There were indeed some industries or businesses that allowed internships to take place, but most of them refused. The refusal was because the company's policy did not allow outsiders for the time being due to the pandemic. The solution to helping the students is by providing on-campus internships, as explained by Mr. Nono, the Head of the Informatics Engineering Department. The duration is for 5 months. He added,

“Some did their internships on campus, while others did theirs at their assigned places. Some of the businesses or industries we visited only had work-from-home arrangements, where students were given tasks and were only required to report periodically via text messages. However, at the end of it all, there was still monitoring from their assigned places regarding the results of their work. So, they still gave the students the opportunity to do their internships, but some places had regulations that did not allow them to enter at the initial stage. They were given details of their tasks, and only after that did, they provide their reports regularly. We couldn't dispute this since it was the company's or the place's policy.”

Theme 10: adapted career guidance

Virtual career fairs – pre-COVID 19

Graduating from polytechnic A, Rian and Valdi explained that the career center provides information about job vacancies. But different from Rian in the accounting department where there are no training and workshop given, Valdi from mechanical engineering and Bani from electrical engineering, got workshops. Valdi got a workshop at a small industry environment, and an AutoCAD and welding certification workshop, while Bani also got an interview and curriculum vitae-making training.

Asked about the role of the campus in helping her to find a job, Mawar, a graduate from the informatics engineering department expressed that she feels there was no involvement from the campus except for providing portfolio support. She also mentioned that there were no offers from the campus or any connection with companies. Regarding the services that career center should provide during the COVID-19 era, such as training or guidance, she suggested that the campus should socialize more about the existence of the Career Development Center (CDC) and provide more basic guidance, especially for fresh graduates. This guidance includes making a proper Curriculum Vitae (CV) with a focus on experiences, such as an internship or organizational experience.

Budi, an electrical engineering graduate, also asked about the role of the polytechnic in helping students who want to graduate, particularly in finding employment. He mentioned that his polytechnic only shared information about job vacancies, which he can also do too, and that what students really need are direct connections to companies. He mentioned that in Japan, students prepare for job hunting before graduating and companies hold interviews in one location. However, Budi said that in his experience, polytechnics in Indonesia only provide information sharing and do not have the same level of support as in Japan. He said,

"In Japan, before graduating with a Bachelor's degree, especially for those who have not graduated yet, there is a thing called job hunting. All companies gather in one location, for example, in Tokyo, and conduct interviews in formal attire. They conduct real job interviews and before graduating, students already have job offers."

Another graduate from informatics engineering, Imran, explained about the role of the polytechnic in helping him to find a job. Imran said that he has not received any help from the polytechnic itself, but there is a Telegram group for alumni, where Mr. Tama often shared job openings. However, not many people responded, maybe because they were already employed or were shy. He said most IT graduates already have jobs. He also added about career services offered by the polytechnic before graduation, such as training for interviews and making resumes, but Imran could not remember if he participated in them.

Malik and Tiana, both graduating from the accounting department of polytechnic A mentioned that there were online career guidance programs available for creating CVs and

preparing for interviews, while Malik did not participate because of his busy schedule, Tiana said that the guidance was helpful. He also mentioned that he found certifications offered by the campus very useful and attached them to his job applications. Some of these certifications include the national standard technician certification in accounting, private tax certification, a certification for office automation, and Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) certification. Malik notes that these certifications were valuable and valid, especially the technician certification as it is nationally standardized. The certifications were paid for, with fees ranging from around IDR 100,000 or more. Finally, Malik noted that job information was regularly updated in the group.

Asked if the career center offered any training on creating CVs or interview skills, Rizal said that they have not done so yet. However, they did share job openings in their Telegram and WhatsApp groups, and Rizal said that he frequently receives information about job opportunities through those channels. Although he has not applied for any of the job openings shared in the groups, it was not because he was not interested, but because he was already employed and found it tiring to apply for more jobs.

Joko feels that the role of the polytechnic in preparing diploma graduates for the workforce is insufficient. He observes that some of his friends who have graduated are still unemployed, and there seems to be a lack of direction from the polytechnic regarding job opportunities or how to find them. Joko thinks that the university should provide more guidance and not just share information about job vacancies. He believes that other polytechnics may have better approaches, such as collaborating with companies. Although there are many services provided by the polytechnic, Joko thinks that there is a lack of critical information, such as how to continue to a higher degree or which companies have collaborated with the polytechnic. The polytechnic only provides material for the next course, without offering guidance on where to go next. While information about job vacancies is shared, there is no clear direction given about what to do after graduation or any guarantee of a job based on partnerships with specific companies. The campus provides various services, but Joko believes that critical information about post-graduation plans is lacking. Joko suggests that this feedback be shared with the appropriate person for consideration.

Another perspective from Diki, he shared his experience of how difficult it is to find a job after graduation. He discussed the role of polytechnics in assisting their students or alumni in

finding employment. Diki suggested that the institution should go beyond just providing job vacancies and actively search for job opportunities for their graduates. He mentioned a friend from another university who was assisted by their institution until they were able to secure a job. This assistance included direct meetings with potential employers.

Two graduates, Lia, and Dian asked if there was any career guidance or counseling service available from their polytechnic when she was approaching graduation. Lia recalled that there was a virtual seminar held by the campus before her graduation via Zoom, discussing professional work attitudes, how to run a business and problem-solving skills. It seemed that Lia found the seminar helpful, but she could not recall if it happened before or after her thesis defense. On the other hand, when it comes to Dian's experience, there was no specific career guidance or counseling service available from the polytechnic. There was a seminar provided, but Dian did not attend it due to work commitments. Dian, who had been working since her college years, suggested that the polytechnic's career center should work with companies to provide information on the competencies required in the industry. This way, the alumni could be better prioritized when job openings become available. Overall, Lia found the virtual seminar helpful, while Dian did not receive much career guidance from the polytechnic as she had already been working during her college years.

Rahman mentioned that the center has been helpful for some graduates in finding jobs, but it ultimately depends on the initiative of the students themselves. He notes that the academic advisor has been particularly helpful in connecting students with job opportunities. While Rahman could not recall the name of the company, he confirmed that it is in the field of marketing and that his friend is involved. Asked if the supervisor only provides job postings or if he also assists with the application process, Rahman confirmed that his supervisor helped with the entire process, from job postings to job applications and connections. When asked if there are any training programs available for graduates, Rahman mentioned that there were some offered by the electronics department, but he did not participate as he already had a certification in the field.

Risna believes that having a specific program at the accounting department polytechnic A has been helpful for its alumni in finding jobs. She explained that the instructors who teach the program are not just professors, but also practitioners who work in the field. They shared their experiences, making the lectures more interesting and informative. Risna also mentioned that the

polytechnic has a group for alumni where job postings are shared. Aside from bringing practitioners to share their experiences and supporting alumni in job hunting, her department also has other programs. One of them is the entrepreneurship course where students are taught how to start and run their own business. The course includes practical work where students create a product and sell it in the market. The profit earned is then divided among the team members. She believes that this course helps students learn the value of teamwork and business skills. She wishes that when she has children, they will be taught these skills at a young age, so they can have an entrepreneurial mindset.

Zami, a Mechanical Engineering graduate, asked about the support he received from his campus when he was looking for a job. He mentioned that there might have been some support from the campus in terms of sharing information about job openings, but he wasn't directly connected to any company. When asked for suggestions for his alma mater, XXX, Zami suggested that the school could better direct its graduates toward what to do after graduation, perhaps by providing courses or guidance on finding work. He noted that there is currently a lack of cooperation between the university and employers and that while job postings are shared, there isn't much support or guidance for graduates in finding employment.

Beni explained the role of the campus for students approaching graduation, specifically if it plays a large role in helping them to find jobs. According to Beni, the campus does play a big role, as there are many job vacancies posted in WhatsApp groups. Beni himself applied for some of these jobs, but he wasn't accepted. He mentioned that many of his friends have been successful in finding jobs through these groups, and a lot of the companies are based in Jakarta.

Like Beni, Via, mentioned the campus has done a good job of sharing information, such as job vacancies and advice from alumni who are already working. However, she thinks that the campus could improve by offering more training on how to transition into the workforce and what to expect in a professional environment. She noted that there is not much information available about the work environment and what it is like to work in certain fields. The campus mainly shares job vacancies with minimal details, such as the required qualifications and gender. Finally, asked if the companies come to the campus to meet with students, but she replied that during her time at the Cilacap campus, she did not experience any such events.

From polytechnic C, Zaki mentioned that the polytechnic had organized a career preparation session that included tips on resume writing and interview techniques. According to

Zaki, the polytechnic plays a significant role in helping its students find jobs. He also mentioned that the polytechnic not only shares job openings but also assists students in applying for them. He believes that the career guidance programs are very helpful, and that the campus even helps students communicate with potential employers.

A business management graduate, Mira, confirmed that the campus does provide such programs and mentioned a recent workshop where they were given certification in HRD and received guidance from a motivational speaker. She also mentioned a job fair where students and alumni were directed to select and interview for available positions. Mira believes that the polytechnic's career preparation programs are helpful in supplementing their internship experiences and improving their interview skills.

Bumi, a graduate from polytechnic C explained that there is a career center at his campus that offers training in job interviews, CV writing, and competency tests to obtain certification, but it is not mandatory. Bumi himself did not attend the training as he had already secured a job. Desi, on the other hand, stated that their program at the campus does not directly help students obtain jobs, but rather acts as a facilitator to connect students with potential employers. The campus has partnerships with various industries, and they organize job fairs where students can walk in for interviews. However, it ultimately depends on the company's qualifications and requirements whether the students get hired or not. Desi added that the campus has expanded its network of industries, and more students have secured jobs through their program.

Susi, a recent graduate of polytechnic C program, shared that her campus provided assistance for students to follow up on job opportunities before graduation. The campus organized a seminar featuring HR representatives who gave tips on interviews and creating a good CV. There was also a job fair held after the seminar. However, Susi mentioned that priority was given to students who had not yet secured employment, which meant that those who were already working were not prioritized. When asked about her thoughts on why the campus was able to help its students in finding employment, Susi attributed it to the determination of the polytechnic program's staff and their continuous effort to collaborate with companies. Through these collaborations, there were more opportunities for graduates to be absorbed into the companies. Additionally, the campus provided training that helped students match their qualifications to company needs, making it easier for them to be accepted. This resulted in a

better match between the students' qualifications and the company's needs, ultimately leading to a higher rate of successful employment.

Theme 11: economic problems especially because of the parental job loss or experienced bankruptcy

Rian (23), a graduate of the accounting department of A Polytechnic explains that his parents did not fully support his decision. His parents want him to work at school or university or open a business in front of the house. However, he convinced them to allow him to work in Bekasi, as he believed that it would provide better economic opportunities and because he stays with their family there. Rian wants to work to improve his family's financial situation, which is currently only sufficient but not prosperous. He also desires to start a side business while maintaining his job. When asked if he has ever been in a position where he needed to ask for financial help, Rian admits that he experienced a financial crisis in January, where he had no income and felt embarrassed to ask his parents for assistance.

Tiana (22), also a graduate from the accounting department of A Polytechnic, shared that she had worked full-time at a clinic for about seven months from June to January, as her father had been laid off from work. She was also studying at the time and was in her sixth semester, working on her final project. Tiana had to balance work and studies, as her family was going through a difficult financial situation, and she needed to continue paying her tuition fees. She referred to this conon as being pushed by difficult circumstances to make ends meet.

Similar to Tiana, Rizal (23), also needs to find a job while studying. He said,

"It's because I also wanted to help my parents with the tuition fees, and while working on the TA, there were many revisions that required a lot of expenses, so I faced some difficulties. That's why I tried to find a job first. I started looking for a job in December."

Asked about the motivations and mindset of young individuals when it comes to career choices, Joko acknowledged that some young people may not consider long-term consequences and may tend to opt for jobs like sales without much thought, ultimately deciding to step back temporarily. He attributed this behavior to the youthful ego and a lack of moral obligations or

specific goals to achieve. However, compared to his own experience, he explained that his circumstances were different. Joko mentioned that his father was no longer present, and he had the responsibility to ensure their siblings' education and future prospects. This sense of moral duty and responsibility became a significant motivator for him. He acknowledged that other factors can also play a role in shaping career choices and decisions. He added,

“So, maybe I turned to my family because I am the only son and considered the backbone of the family who has to support my sibling and mother. Whether I like it or not, I had to take on a certain position, but it didn't lower my standards. In fact, being in this position has provided me with benefits and other opportunities. Eventually, I realized that I shouldn't confine myself to just that. I stepped out and quite enjoyed it, being in a situation like this.”

Indah (21) mentioned that in the past, after completing their studies, their mother used to sell breakfast meals. However, her mother passed away three months ago. Asked about her father's average monthly income, which is a sensitive topic, she shared that before the COVID-19 pandemic, her father's monthly income could reach around IDR 2,000,000. But since the pandemic, their father's income has been fluctuating, sometimes as low as IDR 70,000 or IDR 100,000 per day, making it uncertain and insufficient. Rianti (23), a pharmacy graduate shared she once took a one-year break after graduating from school. During that time, she worked in the garment industry in Tegal area. She deliberately worked there to save money for her college education. Afterward, I resigned from that job and enrolled in college. Just one week after that, I started working here.

Zaki (21), explained as he graduated from vocational school. He majored in electrical engineering, and from the start, he had intentions of going to college. But considering the family's financial situation, it seemed unlikely. So, he shifted to work, prioritizing employment first. He said,

“No, I didn't. Because based on my intentions and considering my family's circumstances, I decided to start working right away instead of participating in the National Selection of State Universities (SNMPTN).”

4.2 Research question 2: In that typical characteristics of the context, how can the various capitals be activated/functioned and how do the capitals differ in before?

There are six themes as the findings for answering research question 2 about the activated capitals in the typical characteristics of the context under COVID-19. The explanations are as follows.

Theme 12: social capital was the most dominant capital

The first theme that emerged from the findings is the importance of social capital in finding a job before COVID-19 pandemic. The participants emphasized that having connections and relationships played a significant role in securing employment opportunities. Binar (25) was graduated from polytechnic B majoring electrical engineering argues that social capital was important in finding for the job. She got the first job information from her polytechnic before the pandemic. She thought, in finding for job, the most important thing is connection. For example, she got job information from polytechnic because she ever had internship there. Risna (29) is an employment female that was graduated from polytechnic A majoring accounting. She graduated in 2019 before covid-19. At that time, she worked as an accounting admin in an office. She mentioned that she got the job from her father's relation in that office. Now, she has no job, she argues that without relation in the company or office, it will be hard to find a job especially amidst COVID-19.

Ahmad is a 25 year-old male graduated from polytechnic A in 2019. Now he works as a staff in a financial office. He argues that social capital was the main thing in seeking for job. His previous job was from social media, he could seek for many information regarding job hunting. Another way in seeking for job is the information from relation such as friends and relatives. He proves it by getting in in one of financial office because of the information that his friend gave. Akbar (26) graduated from polytechnic A majoring computer engineering is now working in a health center as a staff. He ever worked in a beauty clinic, even though he worked in the different field with his major. It was because he has a friend that worked there, and his friend informed him about the job recruitment. At that time, Akbar had two freelance jobs and he decided to take the job in that beauty clinic too.

Aisyah (25) was from polytechnic A, her major was visual communication design and now she is working as a social media administrator in a beauty clinic. She said,

“I was graduated 9th October 2019, right before COVID-19. Right after I graduated, I sent many emails to companies as job hunting. But, finding the job is not instant. While waiting for the suitable job I want, I join my friend to work in the factory. I only stayed in the factory for 3 weeks then I was sick and quitted the job. When I resigned, it was COVID-19. And it was harder to find the job, many people worked from home. But still, I tried my best to send many emails, and in the end, I joined my friend to sell plants online, and it works.”

Alim is a 26 year-old male who is working as a marketing communicator in a hotel. He graduated in 2019 from computer engineering. He ever worked as an office boy and waitress before his current job. He was recommended by one of his relative to work in his current job, his relative told him to work in the hotel because the place is closer to his house even his first salary was only 550.000 IDR/month. After applying to the hotel, he was invited for interview and finally accepted to work there.

Amelia (24) was graduated from polytechnic A, her major was same as Risna, accounting. For her first job, she joined her friend to work in one of law company for only one month because she just wanted to know how working place life was. She realizes that social capital was important in finding job, even though she did not continue her job in that place because she was hired in another place that is suitable with her major.

Adinda (25) was a computer engineering student in polytechnic A. Now, she is working as a staff in government office. She said,

“At that time, one of my relative told me that there was an office that needed, if I am not mistaken, 6 people. And those people were asked to do the test. If I am accepted, I need to move my study schedule into night”

Santi (26) who graduated from polytechnic B in 2019, she was electrical engineering student. She is currently working as an administrative staff at Elementary School. She finally decided to quit her job in the restaurant and applied the new job as an administrative staff at school after getting the information from her friend’s mother who is a teacher. She quitted her job because

she often finishes her work around 00.00 and she struggled to get back home due to raining and flood. She argues the important of social capital, she said

“Connection is really important. Take for example, PLTU needs one employer, the information will not be spread unless there is someone we know work in PLTU. Another example, I asked my friend who works in Pertamina how is the system of applying to Pertamina? Because my major is suitable if I work in Pertamina too, but, no one answered, no one said something about how to apply, how to get the information. So, without relation or connection, we will be lost from the beginning. I am confident enough about my skills, but, regarding the connection, I don't have much”

Amna is a 26 years old female graduated from polytechnic B majoring informatic engineering. Currently she is working at a factory as business developer staff. She mentioned her friend that gave her information about the open recruitment in the factory, and my friend asked me to apply. After applying, she was invited to interview, and do the presentation. Finally, she was accepted from 2020 until now.

Overall, these accounts highlight the crucial role of social connections and relationships in job seeking, with participants emphasizing that without such connections, it can be challenging to find employment.

Theme 13: online (digital) social capital was only as an alternative

The next theme that emerged from the findings is that online social capital, particularly through social media platforms, was considered as an alternative means of job searching. Participants acknowledged the potential of online platforms but did not view them as the primary source for securing employment.

Ayu, for instance, recognized the importance of online social capital and actively followed job hiring accounts on social media. She utilized this channel to find suitable job opportunities in her field of accounting and applied by sending her CV through email. Ayu's experience demonstrated that online platforms provided her with numerous opportunities to progress to the next step in the hiring process.

Akbar also mentioned using Instagram to gather information about job openings. After applying for a position at a health center, he was invited for a test and ultimately secured the job. It is worth noting that Akbar's case stood out as he specifically mentioned that most applicants for the position learned about it through Instagram.

Marisa, on the other hand, shared her experience of finding a distribution job through the internet. Despite lacking the necessary skills and not feeling comfortable in that work environment, she took the job initially but decided to quit after a month and search for a more flexible opportunity.

These accounts highlight that while online social capital, particularly through social media, can provide job information and opportunities, it was not the primary or preferred avenue for participants in their job search before the COVID-19 pandemic. Instead, it served as an alternative means of finding employment when traditional methods were not yielding satisfactory results or when specific opportunities aligned with their interests.

Theme 14: social capital as the most activated capital amidst COVID-19

The findings of the study reveal that social capital was the most dominant and activated form of capital utilized by graduates during the COVID-19 pandemic. Participants relied heavily on their social networks, both offline and online, to navigate the job market and make professional decisions. They sought information, job opportunities, and recommendations from various sources within their social circles.

Social capital played a significant role, with participants relying on acquaintances, relatives, friends, lecturers/staff in their polytechnics, neighbors, seniors, or individuals associated with work placement (WP) programs. These individuals were considered "hot sources" or trusted connections from whom participants felt comfortable seeking advice and information. The emphasis on personal relationships and informal networks highlights the importance of social capital in the decision-making process.

Interestingly, the study suggests that participants were willing to base their professional decisions on incomplete information obtained through their social networks rather than relying solely on official written materials. This finding indicates that the graduates prioritized the trust and familiarity associated with their social connections over obtaining comprehensive knowledge or information.

Overall, the activation of social capital among the respondents suggests that during the challenging circumstances of the COVID-19 pandemic, graduates heavily relied on their social networks to navigate the job market. Social capital served as a valuable resource for accessing job opportunities and making informed decisions, even if it meant relying on incomplete information.

Valdi (23), who graduated from the mechanical engineering department, is currently working part-time in a restaurant helping a chef while also searching for another job. He does not believe he can rely on his current job. He received information about a job opening from his relative and decided to apply for it. He thought that working at the restaurant would be better than staying at home and would help fill his spare time. He had previously worked as a quality control employee in a company, but had to leave the job due to a physical condition. He learned about the job opening at the restaurant from his polytechnic lecturer.

Toro (21), who is studying the same major as Valdi, is currently attending a Japanese training course as preparation for working in Japan. He decided to work in Japan because his uncle asked him to. Some of his relatives have also worked there. He confirmed that the level of job he applied there is actually meant for those who graduated from senior high school, meaning that there may be vertical and horizontal mismatch. However, he is okay with it. He said that his uncle is responsible for the costs of the course training, and he is grateful for it since his parents do not have enough money to pay for it.

Toro added that he was working since he was a student in the polytechnic due to economic problems. He works from morning to afternoon and studies in the evening. As a freelancer, he has worked as a bricklayer and driver, and he got those jobs through a friend's recommendation.

“Actually, I started working from my first semester of college because I took evening classes and worked in the morning. During my first semester, I worked as a construction worker. In semesters 3 and 4, I had intended to open my own workshop, which I eventually did and ran until I graduate. However, when I was almost finished with my thesis, I switched to being a driver after a friend invited me to do. I made this decision because the workshop was not doing well and I needed more income.”

Nela (22), a graduate from electrical engineering department, previously worked in an industry and had just quitted her job in the day of the interview. She received information about the job opening here from her friend. She mentioned that she initially joined the industry to work as an administrator but was later transferred to another division, production operation, which required a lower level of education than hers. Nela shared that the reason for her transfer was due to the HRD staff's relative who wanted to work in the administrator position. It was a case of nepotism practices. Although Nela had hoped to move back to her previous division, there were no changes in the work environment for months. Therefore, she decided to resign. Additionally, due to COVID-19, there was no WP program in her department, which made it more challenging to be recognized by industries. Nela mentioned that previous students were hired by their former WP hosts, but this was not the case for her generation. Her parents were only paddlers and had no knowledge of the industrial world, so they could not do much help.

Malik (21), a graduate of the accounting department, currently works as a finance officer, which align with his major. He previously worked as an administrator before graduating from college. Due to the stress of online learning during COVID-19, Malik decided to work while completing his thesis. He received information about the job opening from his lecturer in Polytechnic A. He said,

“Yes, at that time, my lecturer offered me a job [as an administrator in an office], and I started working there in January. I was bored at that time [due to online learning], so I decided to accept the job offer and began working.”

Tiana (22), from the same major as Malik, first talked about why she worked before graduation. She explained that in the beginning of 2021, at the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, her father was laid off and became unemployed. This created a financial problem for her family. Her mother could not help to earn money since she was only a housewife. Therefore, Tiana decided to find a job while also working on her final project as a requirement for graduation. She then learned about a job opening as an administrator in a health clinic from a relative and decided to apply. She was accepted and worked there for seven months. After graduation, Tiana decided to resign and look for another job using her diploma. She found a job as a finance officer and accountant in an office in her town. She was grateful because this job is more relevant to her major and the wage is also relatively high.

Rizal (23), who graduated from the same major as Malik and Tiana, confirmed that he currently works as an administrator in the same place where he worked before graduation, which is in Tegal district. He learned about the job opening there from his friend, which made it easier for him to be accepted. He only had to take one test, which was an interview. He explained that at that time, he was in the process of writing his thesis as a requirement for graduation, and the supervision process was done online due to COVID-19. He said that the online supervision made it easier for him to manage his time. He added that at that time, he had to work because of economic problems. He needed more money to finish his studies, write his thesis, and graduate.

Joko (21), who graduated from the mechanical engineering department, currently works as a sales engineer in Jakarta. He found out about this job opportunity from his former lecturer. Joko explained that he had financial problems while studying at the polytechnic, so he took evening classes while working in the morning to afternoon. Although he received information about his current job from his lecturer, he claimed that the campus' role as a vocational college was insufficient for him and his friends. He noted that the transition from education to work was not well-guided, and the lack of collaboration between the college and industries made it difficult for graduates to find jobs. The college only shared job vacancies that he believed he could find on his own through social media.

Rahman (22), who graduated from electrical engineering department, initially talked about his experience looking for a job during COVID-19. He mentioned that he applied to many jobs at that time, but most of them were rejected because many industries had to reduce their employees due to COVID-19. Fortunately, he was asked by his relative to work as a technician, but not as a full-time staff. He accepted the offer because he thought that finding a job amidst COVID-19 was difficult, so he did not want to miss the opportunity. As he was only a part-time staff, he stopped working in January and was unemployed again. Then, he tried to apply for other jobs, and luckily, he got a job as a mechanic in an industry after receiving information about the job from his friend.

Zami (22), a mechanical engineering graduate, shared that he currently works in Jakarta as a sales engineer for his former host company during the WP program. He mentioned that he received the job offer from his polytechnic after facing several rejections from other companies due to the challenging job market during the COVID-19 pandemic. Zami emphasized the difficulty of securing a job during the COVID-19 pandemic, and he considered it fortunate to

receive the offer. He also mentioned that he completed his WP for one semester at the same company in 2020, during the pandemic. He worked as an employee, eight hours a day, from morning to afternoon. This experience provide him with valuable social capital that helped him secure his current job. Additionally, he stated that he received information about job vacancies from his friends, highlighting the importance of social capital for job seekers. However, he also noted that his family was unable to provide him with any substantial support, as they were not familiar with the industrial world. Zami's parents are farmer with only elementary education. Therefore, they did not have enough capital to help Zami in looking for jobs.

Rian (23), an accounting graduate who completed his studies in December 2021, faced multiple rejections before deciding to volunteer for a humanitarian organization during his spare time. He considered this volunteering experience as an opportunity to build his resilience during the pandemic. In January 2022, he resumed his job search and was successful in securing a job as a receptionist in an apartment in Bekasi, near Jakarta, with the help of a friend. In this case, Rian is considered using his social capital for getting his first job. Unfortunately, he had to quit his job in February 2022 due to his parents' wishes as they did not allow him to work outside the city. Subsequently, Rian resumed his job search. He said, "I applied all of job vacancies available because my friend told me that a will surely come by". However, he was still unemployed until April 2022 and he decided to rejoin the humanitarian organization as a volunteer. As of his May 2022 interview, Rian was still unemployed. When asked about his polytechnic's role in job placement, he remarked that the institution's assistance was limited to sharing job vacancies only.

The last case example is from Imran (24), who graduated from the informatics engineering department. He currently works as an IT staff member in a digital newspaper company. He confirmed that he received information about the job opening from his senior, stating that:

"I have a friend named Zaka who works at X, and his boss's name is Mr. Dido. When Mr. Dido established his own company, he needed to hire employees. Zaka told me to apply for the job, "here's a job vacancy, just try it" and I answered "I don't have a diploma yet, is it fine?". "Just register first" Zaka said. As a result, I went ahead and registered, and I was fortunate enough to be accepted."

Theme 15: social and mobility restrictions cause offline social capital less functioned resulted on the activation of online (digital) social capital

Mawar (23), who graduated from the informatics engineering department, shared her experience of how she landed her current job as a data scientist in a company located in Jakarta. According to her, she found out about this job opening on Jobstreet.com, an online job search platform, which it is considered as a part of her online (digital) social capital. She confirmed,

“I got the job from the jobstreet I applied on the jobstreet there were many that I applied there continues to be one of them who contacted me this one. Continue by chance here I'm looking for data scientists who focus on text processing , at that time my final project happened to be text analysis as well as analysis the core processing is just right That's how I was recruited like that.”

Mawar mentioned that she applied to numerous jobs through the platform and the current company approached her. She stated that her final project, which was related to text and core processing analysis, was in line with the job requirements of her current position. This indicates that Mawar used her cultural capital to land her job. She clarified during the application process, she did not use her diploma as she had not received it yet. Instead, she submitted her CV along with a tentative transcript.

In the recruitment process, applicants must pass several tests. Mawar emphasized that IT workplaces are skill-oriented, which means that recruiters evaluate candidates based on their skills, and they usually conduct skill-based tests during the recruitment process. Therefore, nepotism practices are rare in the IT industry. Mawar also mentioned her family's role in her job search process. She stated that her parents provided her with emotional support and did not intervene in her decision-making process. This may be because her parents had a limited educational background and were not well-versed in the IT field. Therefore, they believed in Mawar's decision.

When asked about the role of polytechnic in assisting her in finding a job, Mawar gave different response compared to Radit. She stated,

“I don't think there was any intervention from the campus either, except for the previous one related to my final project for graduation. It seems like for the rest, I really looked for the job by myself and no insider helped either [no collusion practice]. So, it was purely from the Jobstreet platform.”

Hana (23), who graduated from the accounting department, had worked as an accountant before graduation in a marketplace (digital-based company). She later resigned from that position and is currently working as an accounting analyst in an e-commerce company (online retail) which has an international scope in with branches in Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, and Thailand. The Indonesian branch is located in Jakarta. Hana found out about her current job through LinkedIn platform, which she frequently uses to apply for jobs. She said,

“Yes, I found this job opportunity on LinkedIn. I tried my luck and applied to several companies, and one of them responded, and it was Mama's Choice. The next day after applying, I had an interview. I thought there would be a long process because usually, in this company, there are multiple stages of interviews. However, to my surprise, the interview was directly with the head of the department and the accounting team. Interestingly, there was no interview with the user or the CEO. So, after the interview, the next day, they announced that I got the job, and alhamdulillah, I was really happy about it.”

In addition to LinkedIn, she also looks for job vacancies on other online platforms such as Jobstreet and Instagram. She believes that through social media, she can reach further information about job openings than if she only relied on people close to her. Hana attributes her acceptance into her current job to her prior experience working in a digital-based company (a start-up). She noted,

“In the interview, I was asked to explain my previous job responsibilities and duties. I explained them and he [the interviewer] seemed interested. It was because what I did in my previous job was very similar to what I would be doing in this job. He even said that there was no need for me to start from scratch and learn everything from the beginning.”

Tia (21), who graduated from the same major as Hana, mentioned that she found out about her current job opening through social media platform Telegram. She feels fortunate to be working near her house as her parents do not want her to work out of town. Tia noted that she secured her job relatively quickly compared to her peers. She started looking for a job before graduation and faced multiple rejections before getting this job.

Malik (21), from the same department as Hana and Tia, currently works as a finance officer, which is in line with his major. He found out about his job opening through Instagram and sent an email to the company. Although Malik is satisfied with his current job, he still explores other job opportunities through online platforms such as LinkedIn, which he believes provides reliable job vacancy information. Similarly, Hisyam (29), who graduated from the computer engineering department, currently works as a field inspector for a telecommunication provider company in his city, Tegal. He also confirmed that he found out about his job opening through social media. Susi (23), who graduated from Polytechnic C majoring in furniture production engineering department, also mostly found out about job vacancies through social media. She added that,

“Perhaps due to technological developments, many companies are now advertising job vacancies on social media without requiring applicants to come in person. Also, the interview process is now conducted online due to COVID-19, which has made it impossible to conduct interviews in person.”

Theme 16: Limited job opportunities amidst COVID-19 negatively influenced the cultural capital function and ultimately they activate social capitals in the form of “solidarity capital” including through backdoor hiring practices

Before COVID-19, the Indonesian labor market already faced limited job opportunities due to the country's large population and relatively low industrial development. As a result, many graduates struggled to find suitable employment despite their educational backgrounds. The cultural capital of graduates, which includes their educational qualifications, was not effectively activated in this situation.

The interviews conducted with graduates revealed that most successful job transitions were facilitated through social capital, particularly in the form of solidarity capital. One of the

participants, Valdi (23), who graduated from the mechanical engineering department of Polytechnic A, shared his experience. He mentioned that he was fortunate to have a cousin working in a company that had a part-time job opportunity. When he was unsure about his career path, his brother informed him about this opportunity.

“Coincidentally, my cousin works there, so when I was confused, my brother said, "Valdi, there's a part-time job opportunity at a restaurant. Are you interested?" So, I decided to fill my spare time with that job.”

It can be inferred that social connections, like family ties, played a crucial role in helping graduates like Valdi find employment opportunities in a challenging job market. This reliance on social networks highlights the importance of social capital in navigating the transition from education to work in Indonesia.

Before working as a part-time worker, Valdi had a job as a quality control in a company, and he also obtained this position through solidarity capital. When asked about how he got the job, Valdi shared the following during an interview:

Interviewer: "Oh, so the job opportunity there was from your relative or did you search for it yourself?"

Valdi: "It was actually through the university. At that time, the university had a collaboration with the company."

Interviewer: "Oh, from the university?"

Valdi: "Yes, alhamdulillah, it was through the university."

In this case, Valdi's connection with the company was established through the university's collaboration with that specific company. The university played a role in creating opportunities for its students by forming partnerships with various companies, providing them with access to potential job openings. This demonstrates how educational institutions can leverage their networks and social capital to facilitate the transition of their graduates into the job market. By having such collaborations, universities can enhance the employability of their students and help them secure relevant job opportunities in their fields of study.

Valdi explained further, saying, “Mmmm, at that time I didn't apply because my diploma hadn't been issued yet. So, I only applied to a few big companies like Hitachi and Usasi. However, they didn't want to accept applications without the official diploma at that time. Then, when Mr. Vino, one of my lecturers, informed me that X Company had job vacancies, I went there directly and applied there.”

Here, Valdi faced some challenges in the job application process due to the delay in receiving his official diploma. Some big companies had strict policies requiring applicants to submit their official diplomas, which he didn't have at the time. However, thanks to the timely information provided by his lecturer, Mr. Vino, about job openings at X Company, Valdi found another opportunity to apply for a position.

This anecdote highlights the significance of networking and personal connections in the job search process. In Valdi's case, the information from his lecturer played a crucial role in helping him discover job vacancies, providing him with an alternative avenue to apply for a job despite the diploma delay. It also underscores the importance of staying informed about job opportunities and seeking advice from mentors or individuals with relevant industry knowledge to navigate the job market effectively.

Some whistleblowers who graduated before COVID-19 have admitted to using the power of "orang dalam" or backdoor employment (also known as nepotism). Some informants paid bribes to get jobs.

All whistleblowers who graduated before COVID-19 know that this behavior is common in Indonesia, but could do nothing about it. Santi, 25, who graduated from the Department of Electrical Engineering at Polytechnic B in Cilacap, said,

“That's really the connection there, that's why I really hate a system like that. It means that we are not losing competitiveness but have lost from the beginning, yes, connection. Again, I have met many people like that, for example at X company. In the past, I also asked how to get there. I also wanted to work according to my major, so I started to do projects and other things. Yes, that's a connection, for example, in terms of skills, God willing, I will dare to fight until I'm ready no matter what, even though I don't know the result, I will lose or what, at least I tried. But this can't be done without the connection.”

These nepotism practices were massively mushrooming amidst COVID-19. The majority of informants from the years amidst COVID-19, in this case those who graduated in 2020 and 2021, concurred that it was very difficult to find work at the time and ultimately people tended to do nepotism practices to get jobs. Aisyah (25) who graduated from visual communication design department echoed that she ever got an offer to pay bribes for entering a job position in a government office. It was amidst COVID-19. Yet she refused the offer. A same experience was also told by Santi (25) who graduated from electrical engineering department. She narrated a story when she got an offer to do a backdoor hiring practice. She even ever experienced a fraud. At that time she was asked to pay bribes for getting a job but finally she did not get the job. She said it was a life lesson for her not to trust others so easily.

Nela, 22, from the electrical engineering department at polytechnic A, tells a different story. Nella used to work in an industry, but quit her job on the day of the interview. She claimed that she first entered the field as an administrative clerk, but after some time she was transferred to another department and worked in a lower-level manufacturing plant. She explained why she was transferred to another department, citing her cousin, an HRD employee, who wanted to work there as a clerk. It resembled a nepotism scheme. Even at that point she eventually hoped to return to the department, but months later nothing changed. So she decided to quit her job.

Theme 17: Digital transformation activated the digital cultural capital as the resiliency yet created digital divide

This study uncovers the activation of digital cultural capital in the context of work during the COVID-19 pandemic. Ahmad (25) shared his experiences of working for two companies, both of which had significant digital elements in their operations due to the closure of physical establishments amid the pandemic.

Ahmad's current company, a financial firm, was established during the pandemic and operates entirely online through a system. He described working on a tablet and depending on its battery for his tasks, as the company does not have a physical office. All attendance, meetings, and data input are conducted online. He said,

“Certainly, in the past, our work was not office-based; we worked directly in the field. I experienced this at companies X and Y. Since company Y was established during the

COVID-19 pandemic, all our work was conducted online through a system. So, when I was "on duty," I worked using a tablet, and if the battery ran out, I couldn't continue working."

Initially, Ahmad found this setup challenging as he lacked the traditional office environment where he could easily seek assistance from colleagues. Instead, he had to rely on module materials for guidance. Despite the challenges, the flexibility of remote work proved advantageous, enabling more efficient time utilization. However, Ahmad acknowledged that reporting can be challenging as everything is done online, and there is a potential for missing information. Personal responsibility for one's work becomes crucial in such a setup. Ahmad also highlighted the difficulty faced by some individuals, like a friend with marketing experience, who struggle with accurately inputting customer data due to technological issues. He said,

"My friend, even though he has 5 years of marketing experience, still makes mistakes when inputting customer data. There are some like that."

"Yes, there's one person like that. Whether we like it or not, we have to help, so we ended up teaching until he understand."

Akbar (26) experienced a different work dynamic during the COVID-19 pandemic. With a significant decline in revenue, the pressure to increase sales became greater, pushing all employees to find ways to boost sales. The COVID-19 outbreak led to increased online sales on platforms like Shopee due to restrictions on physical store visits. However, the head office did not permit transactions through this platform, resulting in challenges for the stores or clinics. Communication and reporting were primarily done through Zoom, and various government applications proved helpful in navigating the pandemic situation and contributed to cost saving.

Amelia (24) also experienced changes in her work responsibilities during the pandemic. Starting in July, her tasks became more computer-oriented, requiring significant time on her laptop. She faced difficulties due to the less reliable Wi-Fi connection at home compared to the office. While working from home provided some flexibility, the faster internet connection at the office allowed for quicker progress with her work.

These examples illustrate the vast potential of digital transformation in work settings during the pandemic. However, it is essential to acknowledge that the pandemic has also exposed existing digital divides. While certain gaps have narrowed rapidly, others have not progressed at the same pace, leaving some individuals and communities behind in the accelerated digitalization brought on by COVID-19. Addressing these disparities becomes crucial to ensure equitable access and participation in the digital era.

Theme 18: economic capital cannot be activated as a symbolic capital

Most of the respondents confirmed that their families, especially parents, were not be able to provide them with significant help in transitioning from education to workforce and finding a job. One of the factors is that they do not have extensive networks or experience in the working world. The following examples illustrate these findings.

Viana (23), who graduated from the accounting department, currently works as a secretary in a government office. Before she started working in her current job, Viana ran a small business from her home after being rejected by many companies. Her parents suggested that she run a small shop instead of being unemployed. Viana retold what her parents said to the interviewer,

“[Viana’s parents said] “if you want to start a small business, I’ll give you the capital,” and the suggested that I open a bank agency. They gave me a capital of 3 million and I had to manage my own small business with that budget.”

Viana stated that her parents were unable to provide her with significant help in finding a job due to their self-employment status, and their lack of resources and connections. As a result, she had to search for a job on her own.

Bani (22), who graduated from the electrical engineering department, currently works as an estimator, a role that align with his major. When he first joined his current workplace, he worked as a drafter, but was eventually moved to the estimator division. Prior to obtaining his current job, he worked as a designer in a copy center, which can be classified as underemployment. Despite applying for over 50 job vacancies and facing multiple rejections, he persevered and worked in the copy center to survive during the COVID-19 pandemic. His

parents could not assist him in finding a job, but they provided him with emotional support and prayers.

Umam (22), who graduated from the same department as Bani, currently works as a technician in a company in Tegal while also running an online shop that sells lamps in his spare time. He obtained funding for his business through the government's COVID-19 relief program, the pre-employment card program (*program kartu Pra-kerja*). As his shop operates online, he opens it in the evening after his working hours. Umam said that his parents were unable to provide significant assistance in his job search, but they provided him with mental support.

Dania (21), a graduate from the computer engineering department, said that she was able to secure her first job relatively quickly. A month after graduation, she became a store leader. Dania took any job that came her way, but eventually quit her job due to salary issues. She thought that her educational level warranted a higher salary. Dania added that her parents did not allow her to work out of town, which meant that she only applied for jobs in her town. Although she received a job offer outside of her hometown of Tegal, she refused it due to her parents's wishes. Being the only child, Dania was okay with their decision. Dania credited her polytechnic for helping her find job vacancies on social media. She also learned about her current job through them, which was very helpful. Dania's family, especially her parents, could not provide much help, but they did offer mental support and suggestions. Same as Dania, Rizal (23), a graduate from the accounting department, who currently works as an administrator in his previous job before graduation, confirmed that his parents could not help him find a job either. They could only offer him mental support and believed in his career decision.

Lastly, Diki (22), who also graduated from the same major as Dania and Rizal. He shared his story of conflict with his parents. Diki's parents did not allow him to work outside of Tegal, which prevented him from taking a job in Jogjakarta after graduation. As a result, he quitted the job since his parents said that working far from family is dangerous. At that time, Diki was disappointed because for a long time he had desired to work outside of his hometown. He felt like a puppet under the control of his parents, which created a conflict between them. Currently, Diki is only applying to job vacancies in Tegal or nearby cities. He explained that his parents cannot assist him in finding a job because they do not have professional backgrounds as officers. His father is self-employed as a furniture maker and his mother is a fishmonger.

4.3 Research question 3: In the typical characteristics of the setting and by using their activated capitals, how do the graduates' CDM behaviors change amidst COVID-19?

Amidst the COVID-19 pandemic, the graduates' career decision-making behaviors (CDM) underwent changes influenced by various factors related to their activated capitals and the characteristics of the setting. In these themes, several graduates' CDM behaviors pre-COVID-19 are explored, highlighting their aspirations, preferences, limitations, and pragmatically rational choices.

Theme 19: horizons for action and pragmatically rational CDM pre-COVID 19

Ayu shared her thoughts on pursuing a career in the government as a civil servant, mentioning the requirement to have a bachelor's degree as a D3 graduate. Asked if she was interested in pursuing further studies, she mentioned that she had applied to college with a friend before but decided to withdraw due to financial concerns. Ayu also shared that while she used to aspire to work in a different city, she now preferred staying in Tegal, where she can enjoy the comfort of being close to her family and save on expenses. She added that her house is just a few minutes away from the main road, which connects her to the city easily.

Ayu didn't take a job opportunity because she got the notice during the early days of fasting. She was called for a test but didn't take it as it was the start of Ramadan. She becomes a teaching assistant for additional income. Ayu's family expects her to be independent, and she has been able to pay for her own college tuition with the help of her sister. She was grateful that she was able to find work quickly after graduation. Ayu's decisions are influenced by her consideration for her family, and she doesn't want to burden them.

Anas (27) has been selling since his high school days and continued during his college years. He sold shirts and shoes, and his family is mostly made up of entrepreneurs. After finishing high school, Anas helped in his family's business and took a two-year break before going to college. He decided to come back home after finding work in an office uncomfortable. He then learned photography at his relative's studio. Anas prefers entrepreneurship and has been trying to find ways to sustain his business during the pandemic. He even sold masks during that time. Anas lives in a village, which gives him the opportunity to sell goods like iced drinks by the roadside. He has rejected job offers in Jakarta and seems to prefer being an entrepreneur.

Anas had previously worked as a graphic designer in Jakarta and had attempted to continue his studies there as well. However, due to some issues, he had to return to his hometown where he established a photo vendor business. He and his family had decided to venture into entrepreneurship, and during the COVID-19 pandemic, he looked for opportunities to start new businesses. He had also attempted to open a coffee shop with the help of an investor, but it did not work out due to the pandemic. Despite this, he remained optimistic about finding opportunities and adapting to the situation. However, his coffee shop was raided during a pandemic-related curfew, which led him to start selling iced drinks instead.

Ani (28), a graduate of the Computer Engineering Department shared the limitations faced by women when it comes to finding work outside their local area. She mentioned that this might be due to religious constraints. When asked about potential job opportunities, Ani stated that her parents did not allow her to work in the banking industry. She also revealed that she only searched for work in schools and not in companies or government offices. But her older brother was allowed to work outside Java Island. Ani was able to secure a job in the same company where she did her internship, so she did not have to look for a job after graduation. However, she can't take it because of the working hours. Her parents were not happy with her going home late at night.

Aulia mentioned that she had previously worked as a freelance intern with someone named Mr. X from the fifth to the sixth semester. After graduating in 2018, she also joined a tutoring service as a teacher for two months, but it wasn't a good fit. In December, when students were on break for their final exams, she found work at a goat milk distributor in Tegal. In February, she heard about a job opening at X and submitted her application, and within two weeks, she was called in for an interview and got the job. Aulia has been working there since 2019

During a job interview at some companies, Aminah (24) asked about salary, work system, and welfare, but none of the offers matched her expectations, causing her to withdraw. When asked about working in Jakarta, Aminah mentioned that although it is far, she has friends there. Aulia (25), also a graduate of the Computer Engineering Department, expressed that she prefers not to work in a company and would rather not go far from Tegal, her hometown, due to her parents' health condition. She does not have any strict limitations on her choices, but she would

rather avoid working in a bank because of religious concerns related to usury (*riba*). While Amir (25) said that all of his jobs are not in line with his study, in a computer engineering department.

Azhar (26) explained that his parents have a rule that none of their children can work far from home. Azhar's parents did not want to be far from their children. Azhar's reason for wanting to work in a company is that he finds it unchallenging to work in a government office. His parents advised him to work in a government office as a government official. Anita's parents prefer her to find a comfortable job rather than a high-paying one, and they do not allow her to work outside of the Brebes-Tegal area. Anita chooses not to move away so she can take care of her mother. Anita's job choices are not restricted by her family, but they do not allow her to move away. Her siblings also have restrictions on moving away, mostly for safety reasons, but some of them are allowed to move. However, women in her family are not allowed to move away, while men are.

Bella (29), said that her parents approved of her job as long as it was halal, but they also asked her to try to apply for civil service jobs since she was in college. Bella was not ready to do so at that time because she wanted to gain more knowledge. However, in 2020, her parents asked her to apply for civil service jobs again. Bella thinks that her parents wanted her to become a civil servant because it would provide a comfortable retirement and because there are relatives who are civil servants. She is now working as a civil servant. Regarding looking for a job in social media, Bella mentioned that she was already employed and comfortable, so she did not actively seek other opportunities. She learned about a job opportunity in the garment industry through a friend's recommendation. Wina (26), from B Polytechnic, shared her job search criteria and her past experiences. She prefers to look for jobs in the Cilacap area, as her family does not allow her to search for jobs in other cities. The reason is that she is a girl, and her elder sisters are married and following their husbands. She mentions that she wants to apply for a job at a large company but was afraid of her institution being blacklisted if she got accepted but need to withdraw because her parents wouldn't allow her.

Different from the others, Fikri's (26) parents advised him to work outside of his hometown before settling down and starting a business before marriage. His parents believed that working in a different environment would provide valuable experiences and survival skills. Akbar (26) mentioned that he had always searched for jobs in Tegal and never considered working outside the city. He was fortunate to get accepted in his first job application at Larisa.

But he was not allowed to pursue a job at a bank. He later applied for a position at a clinic and got hired. He acknowledged that many of his fellow graduates were still struggling to find work. Regarding his decision to work at the Clinic, Akbar's parents were supportive because it was nearby and within the same district. The job offered shift work, which allowed him to have flexible hours and work from 7 am to 2 pm.

Adinda (25), a graduate of the computer engineering department, feels more comfortable working related to the computer and not directly with people. Her parents are supportive of her working there, and they do not impose any specific requirements on her work. Although the workplace is quite far away from her home, Adinda is not constrained by her parents to work more closely. Her parents prefer her to work somewhere where she can still stay at home. During her college years, Adinda chose a college that was close to her home. Although her parents allow her to work outside the city, they prefer her to stay close to home.

Santi (25) had a winding career path that started with studying accounting in vocational school, then majoring in electrical engineering in college, and now pursuing a career as a teacher. Santi believes in serving the country and is open to exploring different career paths. However, she faces difficulty due to limited job opportunities and her concern for her asthmatic father. Santi does not have any relatives in Jakarta and finds it challenging to leave her parents behind. The COVID-19 pandemic has further complicated the situation, making it difficult for her to move around freely. Santi shares her experience, saying that although policies have changed over time, she knows that her position may still be replaced by someone else. She mentions the concept of "ikigai" from Japan, which is about finding happiness and pursuing one's passion. Santi explains that she enjoys teaching and expressing her creativity, and being a teacher is her calling. She shares that she started teaching freelance and took it as a challenge to see if she could handle it. Besides as a school administration staff, she also became a tutor from 2 pm until 5 pm for the year 4-6 students. Santi found that she enjoyed teaching, and the children were enthusiastic about her lessons. She hopes that teaching will be her path in life.

Amir shared that when he got the job as a warehouse admin in a sugar factory, it was not exactly what he wanted. However, he still took the opportunity as he needed a job. He had to adjust to the situation. When asked about his computer skills, he said that they were lacking, especially since Tegal is an industrial city where administrative work often involves using computers.

Anita had a previous attempt to work at a company but failed. She had the thought that if she had income, it didn't matter where she worked. Eventually, she was accepted to work at a company, even though the HR department informed her that there were no vacancies available. They offered her a position as an operator and said that she might have a chance for promotion in the future. Anita accepted the offer as she didn't want to remain unemployed.

Wina explained that after graduating, she was unsure about what career to pursue and came across a job announcement in a different field. She decided to give it a try as the job even though it does not require IT skills. Although she was offered a permanent position as a civil servant, she initially hesitated due to personal reasons due to her plan to get married, and her now husband is working in a different place. However, after considering the potential opportunities, she eventually accepted the position and resigned from her previous job. She acknowledged that it was a bold decision, but she felt it was worth taking the risk for the chance to advance her career. Wina also mentioned that she was uncertain about the long-term prospects of the job as there were cases where employees had to wait for up to six years before being officially appointed as civil servants. Despite this uncertainty, she was grateful for the opportunity and remained optimistic about her prospects.

Binar (25) who graduated in Electrical Engineering expressed her hope to have her own business before getting married, but due to the difficult job market during the COVID-19 pandemic, she decided to start a business instead. Alim (26), recounts his experience of changing places after he graduated. He later received an unexpected offer from the head of the XXX program, which prompted him to switch to that program. He mentions that the offer was unexpected and that he was still working on his final project when he met the department head who offered him the job. The head mentioned that he believed Alim was capable based on his performance when they worked together at a hotel, despite not having his diploma yet. Alim then decided to resign from the hotel. He expresses his gratitude for the unexpected opportunity and considers it a blessing.

These examples illustrate how the graduates' CDM behaviors were influenced by various factors, including family expectations, financial concerns, geographic limitations, religious constraints, and personal aspirations. The graduates made pragmatic and rational choices based on their activated capitals and the specific characteristics of their settings. They considered

factors such as proximity to family, financial stability, entrepreneurial opportunities, and individual preferences while navigating the job market amidst the pandemic.

Theme 20: serendipity pre-COVID 19

Many respondents experienced serendipity in getting their job. Ayu (26) who currently works as a tax administrator shared her experience in getting her job. She said that she got a job offer from her friend without looking for it. She said,

“So I was accepted there right after my final exam was over. At that time, my friend, Ms. X was working at a tax consultant. One of her clients was looking for a tax staff for his company. Then, Ms. X offered me that job. And I accepted it.”

Same as Ayu, Ani (28) also got her first job in a serendipitous moment. One day, she got a call from her friend who offered her a job as a Qur’anic teacher in a school. At that time she was still a student majoring on the computer engineering department at the polytechnic A. Although she will graduate as an engineer, she accepted the job offer since her job aspiration is being a teacher. After graduation, she continued working there. Aminah’s (24) first job was also from serendipitous moment. She said that she got a job offer as an office administrator from her friend. But then she worked there only a month and resigned because of the salary problem. Then, she got her second job unpredictably too. After going back to her town, two weeks after that her friend told her about a job opening in a hospital. Finally she applied for it and works there until now.

Aulia’s (25) case also reflects the serendipity phenomenon. She even got a job since she was a student because of serendipity. She worked in her polytechnic as a student staff. She got an offer from her lecturer without applying for it. She works there to assist the accreditation process for her department. After finishing her work, unexpectedly she also was asked to be an assistant for her lecturer until she graduates. After that, she works in a course as a part-time teacher. But then, she got an offer again to work in her former campus as a full-time staff. She accepted the offer and currently she works there.

Amir (25) also got a serendipity from his neighbor when he was almost upset in looking for a job. He confirmed that he already applied for a job overseas but then he accepted the job

offer from his neighbor. The consideration on his CDM was because of his parents. He wanted to work in a place that is near his parents' house. But after that, she resigned and got his second job, the current job, from the serendipitous moment too. He was called by his old friend telling that there was a job opening in the contractor company. Then, he accepted the job offer and works there until now.

Azhar (26) also experienced a serendipity in getting his current job. He was called by his former host WP to work as an officer in a government office. Initially he refused the job offer due to his job aspiration was being an employee in a company. But then he decided to take the job after he was called in the second time. He accepted the job offer since he experienced many rejections from companies.

Adam (26) who graduated from electrical engineering department got an unexpected job offer from his neighbor before entering the polytechnic to work as a staff in his department. He said that he was asked to work there while studying. Then he accepted the job offer and worked there until his graduation. Even currently he still works there as a full-time staff. Alim (26), recounts his experience of changing places after he graduated. He later received an unexpected offer from the head of the XXX program, which prompted him to switch to that program. He mentions that the offer was unexpected and that he was still working on his final project when he met the department head who offered him the job. The head mentioned that he believed Alim was capable based on his performance when they worked together at a hotel, despite not having his diploma yet. Alim then decided to resign from the hotel. He expresses his gratitude for the unexpected opportunity and considers it a blessing.

Theme 21: horizons for action and pragmatically rational CDM amidst COVID-19

In the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, Rian, Viana, Valdi, Bani, Radit, and Mawar shared their experiences and perspectives on finding employment and pursuing their career goals. These individuals faced various challenges and made pragmatic decisions to navigate the job market during these uncertain times.

Rian (23) explained that there were several factors that motivated him to work. One of the reasons was the influence of their older siblings and parents who were self-employed, but the family's economic situation was not significantly higher, just enough to get by without much excess. This led him to have a desire to work and also have a side business. They wanted to have

a job while also pursuing their own business. He mentioned feeling a bit pressured and insecure when comparing themselves to friends who had already started working in various companies.

Viana (23) mentioned that she didn't anticipate how difficult it would be to find a job before graduating, and she didn't think it would be challenging because she believed in her abilities. However, she faced obstacles from her parents, who would always discourage her from pursuing certain opportunities. She saw it as a challenge to find a job that her parents would approve of. Viana acknowledged that she needed their support. She also mentioned that she considered applying for a state-owned enterprise (BUMN) job but faced resistance from her parents. They advised her not to bother applying and to stay in the local area instead. Viana expressed disappointment because the positions she wanted were no longer available when she finally decided to apply. She also shared that she had previously worked in Bekasi, but she had to return to Tegal due to her parents' restrictions on working outside the area.

Valdi (23, currently working part-time, expressed his desire to start his own business, but he acknowledged the need for capital to do so. He mentioned wanting to be an entrepreneur, specifically as a producer. He emphasized that he believed that attending college was not a prerequisite for finding employment. Bani (22), initially worked at a printing company before his current job. Due to the pandemic, he applied for jobs online but didn't receive any responses. However, he received a job offer from his mentor, who was also his teacher and decided to accept the offer to work at the printing company while waiting for other opportunities. He worked there for 7 months before receiving a call from Mr. Ali, who worked at PT Samiko. Mr. Ali asked Bani to come to Jakarta for a job interview, and Bani resigned from the printing company. The decision to pursue the job in Jakarta was influenced by the recommendation of one of his professors, as Mr. Ali's connection provided a more certain chance of being accepted.

Radit (23) shared that he had applied to several places and went through multiple interviews, some even reaching the final stages, but none of them resulted in a job offer. However, he received a recommendation from one of his professors for a position at IHM. IHM was looking for the best graduates from the computer engineering program to fill their IT staff positions, and Radit was one of the candidates. It seemed that this opportunity was more supported and approved by his parents. When asked why this job was more acceptable, He mentioned that it was in the banking industry, which may have been a factor that his parents considered, possibly because it was closer to home for other reasons.

Mawar (23) had set a personal goal to secure a job immediately after graduation, aiming to avoid any unemployment gap. Although her parents were understanding and didn't mind if she took a few months to rest after finishing her studies, Mawar felt uneasy about it and wanted to be independent. She was determined to avoid any employment gap, so she started applying for jobs soon after completing her final exams, around August or September. It wasn't until November that she found a company that matched her requirements, and she was thrilled to start working in December. Mawar felt a sense of joy and surprise as she had been eager to find employment. Mawar also mentioned that she didn't feel the direct impact of IT during that time. She found it relatively easy to search for job opportunities because she actively kept track of IT-related job groups where new openings were frequently posted. She observed that IT positions were not significantly affected, and there were always new job listings available. The main impact was seen in the work culture, as the shift from working from the office (WFO) to full remote work (WFH) became more common. This change in culture had the most noticeable effect on the IT industry.

Overall, these individuals demonstrated resilience and adaptability in their job search amidst the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic. They made pragmatic decisions based on their circumstances and pursued opportunities that aligned with their goals and support systems.

Theme 22: serendipity amidst COVID-19

This study found that job information was frequently obtained without conducting a job search. Even when job seekers were actively looking for jobs, they frequently acquired their information from unanticipated sources and people they had known for a long time. The following paragraphs describe some respondents' experiences.

Viana (23) currently works as a secretary in a government office. She experienced serendipity because she got this job suddenly and never expected before. Before working in the current workplace, previously Viana run a small business in her home after being rejected by many companies. Then, she got a job in Jakarta as a tutor but then she quitted from her job because her parents asked her to do. She did not allow to work out of town. So, she was unemployed again from December 2021 and started to re-run her small shop. But then, she was called by the lady that she met in a government office some months ago. She was asked whether

or not she wants to work on that government office. Directly Viana accepted the offer and came to that office the day after. Without any test she was accepted to work there directly the next day. She said that it was like a fortune from Allah. She thought that it was because her parents are pleased her to do. She added that she needs to obey her parents' wish so that she could get the job.

Bani (22) currently works as an estimator in which it is in line with her previous major. Previously in the first time entering this current workplace he worked as a drafter but then he was moved to another division as the estimator. He got the information about his current job from his former lecturer in polytechnic. At that time when he worked in a copy center as a designer suddenly he was called by his lecturer offering him a job. He was so surprised with the offer since some months ago when he was still a student he ever asked about a job vacancy in this company. But his lecturer said that during COVID-19 this company did not hire new employees. Then after the call, he accepted the offer and the day after he went to Jakarta for the recruitment test. He also still has a side job as a freelancer designing videos. He confirmed that his parents also could not help him to find the job. They only gave mental support and prayed for him.

Radit (23) confirmed that he is currently work in an NGO as an IT specialist. He said that his lecturer recommended him to work there because he was the best graduate meaning that his cultural capital worked in this situation. He said,

“I have applied in quite a number of places. There are some until the interview step and some have reached the final stage, but I failed. Then, I was recommended by my lecturer to work in this NGO. This NGO was looking for the best graduates from information technology department to fill the IT staff position and I am one of the candidates.”

These experiences have a connection to the theory of serendipitous job matching, which takes into account instances where ordinary social interaction unintentionally results in career chances. For a number of reasons, it is important to distinguish between accidental and purposeful or instrumental job matching. First off, it shows a distinct subjective interpretation just by the fact that people attributed these results to luck, chance, or happenstance (Lieblich et al., 2008).

CHAPTER 5 DISCUSSIONS

This study aims to revisit the career decision-making (CDM) process of polytechnic graduates during the COVID-19 and ultimately develop a new model of polytechnic graduates' CDM process. This study addresses four research questions to achieve its objectives: (1) What are the typical characteristics of the extraordinary setting under COVID-19 compared to those before COVID-19?; (2) In the typical characteristics of the context, how can the various capitals be activated/functioned and how do the capitals differ from before?; (3) In the typical characteristics of the setting and by using their activated capitals, how do the graduates' CDM behaviors change amidst COVID-19?; (4) Ultimately, based on the results of the study, what is a new form of CDM process reflected by the polytechnic graduates amidst COVID-19? The answers to the first three research questions are discussed in this chapter, while the fourth question is addressed separately in Chapter 6.

5.1 Research question 1: what are the typical characteristics of the extraordinary setting under COVID-19 compared to those before COVID-19?

Understanding that social contexts are dynamic, complex, and made up of interacting and unequal forces is essential to Bourdieu's (1977) field notion. As a result, the labor market within a specific region involves intricate interactions among various agents, including employers, educational institutions, and the national government. Additionally, the labor market is influenced by broader social structures (class, gender, ethnicity, and age) (Brown et al., 2003; Fejes, 2010; Moreau & Leathwood, 2006), government policies (Berglund & Wallinder, 2015), national and international economic and globalization environments (Reeskens & Van Oorschot, 2012). Moreover, the COVID-19 has further accentuated the exceptional nature of these influences.

These forces are interconnected, meaning that changes in one aspect can impact other forces within the system. Therefore, it is important to recognize their interrelatedness. Within the field, individuals who make career decisions or shape their careers play a significant role. Their roles within the field, along with their behaviors and attitudes, contribute to the ongoing formation and reformation of the field itself. For instance, the underrepresentation of young women choosing engineering careers perpetuates the industry's gender bias in hiring practices (Hodkinson, 2009).

This study acknowledges that individuals exist within multiple setting or context. Specifically, this study focused on the transition from education to work for graduates or individuals residing within different level of settings: the national setting level, labor market level, the training field (in this case polytechnic), and the family and immediate surroundings. Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, each of these settings has exhibited distinct characteristics, which are elaborated in Chapter 4, Part 4.1. The following sections provide a discussion of the unique features only for the national level (agent: government) and industry level (agent: employer) since those two levels directly influence the change of the labor market context.

5.1.1 National level: social and mobility restrictions

At the national level, the agent that owns the highest power is the government. During the COVID-19 crisis, the Indonesian government as an agent implemented various policies and measures to address the situation. On March 16, 2020, they introduced strict work-from-home, study-from-home, and worship-from-home policies. Subsequently, in April 2020, large-scale social restrictions (PSBB) were imposed. These restrictions were further adjusted and intensified in response to the number of cases, leading to the implementation of measures such as micro community activities restriction enforcement (micro PPKM) in February 9, 2021, and followed by the implementation of emergency PPKM in July 2021 due to the surge of the Delta variant (Arifin et al., 2022).

Prior to the COVID-19, such restrictions were non-existent at the national level. People had the freedom to move without constraints. However, the implications of social and mobility restrictions, particularly social distancing, in developing countries like Indonesia are multifaceted. From an economic perspective, social distancing measures have had adverse effects on revenue and employment (Lewnard & Lo, 2020; Semuels, 2020). The manufacturing sector has been hindered staff shortages and border closures, while travel restrictions have resulted in postponement of trips and significant challenges for the hotel, transportation, and aviation industries (Nicola et al., 2020). Additionally, the service sector (such as restaurants, theaters, and hair salons) has experience a decline in output due to COVID-19 containment efforts, leading to temporary closures and substantial decrease in productivity (OECD, 2020).

According to Abel & McQueen (2020), the practice of social distancing can present challenges in countries with a strong collectivist culture like Indonesia. This is particularly

relevant because individuals in such societies tend to naturally seek social support during difficult times. Consequently, the presence of online social capital, particularly in the form of web-based communities, becomes crucial in a society where social segregation measures are widely implemented. One significant advantage of social media platforms during a pandemic is their ability to alleviate feelings of loneliness and anxiety by fostering connections between individuals outside of physical settings (Wiederhold, 2000). Social media enable users to build online communities that facilitate interaction and offer support and assistance to those in need, as exemplified by the online communities in Australia during the COVID-19 pandemic (Cunningham, 2020).

In the context of social and mobility restrictions imposed during the COVID-19 pandemic, the typical characteristic is a limitation on physical interactions and movements. This has resulted in changes in the job search methods employed by graduates. Instead of directly approaching employers or industries, many respondents in the study have shifted towards utilizing online applications.

For example, Viana, a respondent in the study, primarily submitted her job applications online. However, for companies located nearby, she would also deliver her application in person. She said,

"I went through the job application process amid the social restrictions. While I sent most of my job application letters online, I personally delivered some to nearby companies. Despite receiving interview calls from four companies, I did not accept any of those offers. Currently, I work as a secretary in a government office, considering factors like location and living expenses when choosing a job."

Valdi, another respondent, has applied to over 100 companies predominantly through online channels. He has also taken on part-time employment while continuing his job search. Indah, a graduate of Polytechnic A, secured a job by applying online through email correspondence with the company.

These examples highlight a shift in job search behavior, where offline personal connections and face-to-face interactions, is less utilized due to the limitations imposed by social

and mobility restrictions. Instead, graduates are relying more on online platforms and channels to connect with potential employers and submit their applications.

Mawar (23), a graduate of the informatics engineering department, shared her experience of securing a job as a data scientist in a Jakarta-based company amid the challenges posed by COVID-19. She discovered the job opening through Jobstreet.com, an online job search platform, which played a significant role as part of her digital social capital.

"I found the job on Jobstreet. I applied to several positions, and one of the companies contacted me for this data scientist role. It was a great match since they were looking for someone with expertise in text processing, which aligned perfectly with my final project focusing on text analysis. That's how I got recruited for the position."

Similarly, Hana (23), who graduated from the accounting department, navigated the job market amidst the pandemic and landed a position as an accounting analyst in an international e-commerce company with branches in Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, and Thailand. She utilized LinkedIn as a primary platform for job applications and came across her current job opportunity there.

"I found this job opportunity on LinkedIn. I applied to various companies, and this company responded to my application. Surprisingly, the interview process was swift, with direct interviews conducted by the head of the department and the accounting team. There was no interview with the user or CEO, which was intriguing. The next day after the interview, they announced that I got the job, and I was overjoyed with the news."

Hana also utilized other social media platforms such as Jobstreet and Instagram to explore job vacancies, acknowledging the value of social media in accessing diverse job information beyond her immediate circle.

Both Mawar and Hana's experiences showcase how digital social capital and online platforms played a vital role in job hunting during the COVID-19 pandemic. These digital resources allowed them to explore various opportunities and connect with potential employers, leading to successful career placements.

This phenomenon reflects the adaptation of individuals to the changing circumstances and the utilization of online (digital) social capital as a means to navigate the job market amidst the restrictions. The activation of online (digital) social capital allows graduates to expand their networks, explore a wider range of job opportunities, and maintain connections with employers despite the limitations on physical interactions.

The shift towards the activation of online (digital) social capital demonstrates the resilience and resourcefulness of graduates in adapting to the challenges imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic. It also emphasizes the importance of digital platforms and technologies in facilitating career development and job search processes in a context where offline interactions are restricted. Further discussion on this topic is presented in Part 5.2.

5.1.2 Labor market level: limited job opportunities, backdoor hiring practices, and digital transformation

In the labor market level setting, three typical characteristics were observed and reflected in the data. Two of these characteristics were not new and had also present before the COVID-19 pandemic. These characteristics include limited job opportunities and the prevalence of backdoor hiring practices (nepotism practices/the power of “orang dalam”). Another characteristic that emerged amidst COVID-19 was digital transformation. The following discussion elaborates on these three characteristics.

Limited job opportunities

As presented in the findings section (Theme 5), the availability of job opportunities for new graduates were more restricted during the COVID-19 period compared to before. This phenomenon had a significant impact on the prospects of fresh graduates securing employment. Similar findings were reported in studies conducted in other countries. For instance, AGCAS (2021) investigated the work experiences of graduates from UK higher education institutions during the COVID-19 pandemic, revealing that 75% of graduates reported a decline in job openings since March 2020, and 83% believed that the pandemic had negatively affected their chances of finding employment. Shiyuan et al. (2022), who explored the impact of human capital and social capital on the employability of Chinese college students during COVID-19, also agreed that the outbreak of COVID-19 has resulted in a decrease in employment opportunities

and an increase in employment pressure. Even prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, a noticeable decline in employment prospects already influenced employability as an external environmental factor (Mcquaid and Lindsay, 2005).

Specifically, this finding aligns with a survey conducted by the LIPI Population Research Center et al. (2020) in Indonesia. The survey revealed that companies responding to the pandemic had taken measures to reduce their workforce by up to 35.6%, while some chose to maintain their current employee numbers (neither reducing or increasing) at 62.29%, and a small percentage (2.15%) opted to increase their workforce. These responses indicate that companies were inclined to retain existing employees rather than hiring new ones. As a result, there were fewer employment opportunities for recent graduates during the COVID-19 period.

The limited job opportunities observed during the COVID-19 period were not unique to that time alone but had already been a typical characteristic of the labor market in Indonesia prior to the pandemic. This discrepancy between job availability and the population had been confirmed by informants who graduated before COVID-19. Consequently, these limited opportunities often resulted in horizontal and/or vertical job mismatch, and even underemployment. In short, it can be concluded that the limited job opportunities amidst COVID-19 had a negative impact on the functioning of cultural capital, ultimately leading individuals to rely more on their social capital. Further discussion regarding this phenomenon can be found in Part 5.2.

Backdoor hiring (nepotism practices/the power of “orang dalam” or connections)

The phenomenon of limited job opportunities is also closely intertwined with the practice of backdoor hiring (nepotism) or commonly referred to by the informants as “the power of *orang dalam* (connections)”. Amidst the limited job opportunities during COVID-19, the prevalence of nepotism practices in Indonesia increased. Faced with the difficulty of securing a job based solely on their educational credentials, graduates turned to alternative methods by using their social networks.

These graduates were already aware of this common practice even before the COVID-19 pandemic. They were not particularly surprised by it, as corruption and nepotism were not unfamiliar concepts to them. They may have encountered instances of cheating on exams or tests during their junior high school, for example. However, as they transitioned into the post-

educational world, the issue of corruption, collusion, and nepotism (KKN) became more pronounced and specific. Consequently, they believed that they needed to combine their cultural capital and social capital to secure employment. It is not surprising that many young individuals firmly believe that the labor market functions primarily through personal networking and negotiations, rather than adhering strictly to merit-based principles.

Whether they like it or not, graduates may find themselves in situations where they need to decide whether to engage in KKN to achieve their goals. If they choose to do so, they must learn how to navigate this system effectively. The lack of documented procedures in this process can be confusing and frustrating, particularly for those with limited networks or who lack guidance. For first-time job seekers, information about utilizing the KKN practices often relies on hearsay and word-of-mouth. The challenge they face is finding the appropriate strategies and resources to navigate the labor market successfully. In Bourdieu's words, they have to acquire a "feel of the game."

These findings present a contrast to the assumptions of human capital theory, which assumes that an individual's employability determine their opportunities, choices, and job status (Brown, 2001). The prevalence of backdoor hiring practices indicates that personal and informal networks continue to play a significant role in the job searches of young individuals. Furthermore, human capital theory faces another limitation in its treatment of education as a mere investment and its reduction of young people to agents of economic development. By focusing solely on individual agency and competence, this theory disregards the power dynamics and inequalities inherent in young people's access to business, education, and job opportunities (Ansell, 2005). In other words, the highly individualistic approach to education espoused by the human capital paradigm is ineffective in more collectivist cultures or in contexts such as Indonesia, where the labor market does strictly adhere to pure market models.

The observation that many graduates in Indonesia have developed a sense of weariness and resignation towards nepotism practices reflects their recognition of the prevailing reality. Despite their personal aspirations for a meritocratic system, they have come to accept that nepotism is deeply ingrained in the Indonesian context. This recognition of the existing situation can lead to a loss of faith in the existence of a meritocracy ideology.

The presence of nepotism, where personal connections and family relationships play a significant role in job opportunities and career advancement, can create a perception of

unfairness and inequality among graduates. They may feel that their qualifications and abilities are overshadowed by the influence of nepotism, making it difficult for them to compete on an equal footing.

As a result, some graduates may adopt an attitude of resignation, acknowledging that nepotism is a pervasive reality in Indonesia. They understand that connections and personal relationships often hold more weight than merit or qualifications in certain professional settings. This resignation can be a coping mechanism or a strategy to navigate the job market and career progression within the existing system.

However, it is important to note that not all graduates share the same attitude or response towards nepotism. While some may become resigned, others may choose to actively challenge and work towards changing the system. They may seek alternative pathways, create their own opportunities, or advocate for a more merit-based and transparent approach to employment.

The existence of weariness and resignation among graduates regarding nepotism practices raises important questions about the broader social and institutional dynamics in Indonesia. It highlights the need for efforts to address systemic issues, promote transparency, and create a level playing field for all individuals in the job market. By fostering a culture of meritocracy and equal opportunity, it is possible to restore faith and confidence among graduates in the fairness and integrity of the career development process.

Digital transformation

This study reveals that digital transformation has emerged as a typical characteristic of the labor market amidst the COVID-19 pandemic. This phenomenon can be attributed to the social and mobility restrictions imposed by the government. This finding aligns with what the observations made by scholars at the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, wherein policymakers and academics acknowledged the potential for the pandemic and subsequent containment measures to accelerate digitization, thereby significantly impacting labor markets and productivity (Jaumotte, 2023).

The process of digital transformation has brought positive and negative effects for different groups of graduates. Those who graduated from the IT department, for instance, expressed that digital transformation did not negatively affect their education-to-work transition. On the contrary, they displayed optimism and perceived themselves as winners during this crisis period. They firmly believed that digital employment offered a reliable source of income.

Radit (23), who currently employed as an IT specialist in an NGO, confirmed that IT graduates did not encounter significant difficulties in securing employment amidst the COVID-19 pandemic. In fact, he highlighted that certain IT-related job opportunities had even experienced growth during this period. He added,

“Yes, the marketplace is experiencing a good increase. It’s quite remarkable considering the pandemic situation. This growth must be contributed to the efforts of numerous IT professionals who have been developing various applications.”

He stated that the only change was in the mode of working, with many IT staffs being required to work from home. However, he also mentioned that this working arrangement had already been in place prior to COVID-19. Therefore, it is not a novel concept for them.

Mawar also shared similar opinion as Radit regarding the impact of COVID-19 on IT jobs. She said,

“Yes, that's right. I personally did not feel a direct [negative] impact on IT jobs during that time. Finding employment was relatively easy for me because I also always pay attention to IT job vacancies every day. There were always new vacancies available. So, the IT industry was not so [negatively] affected. The main change was in the way we work. Previously, we had the conventional office setup or WFO, but now IT staff can be fully remote staff, WFH. That's how the work culture has evolved.”

She added that due to COVID-19, all activities were conducted online, leading to an increased demand for IT specialists during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Within those labor market’s typical characteristics under COVID-19, graduates' resources or capital could not be effectively activated or utilized as they were before. Consequently, this influenced the graduates' CDM process, especially their horizons for action. According to the Careership theory, the interaction between the field or context and personal dispositions establishes the horizons for action. These horizons for action can shift when circumstances, the person’s position, or dispositions change (Hodkinson, 2009). In other words, each field operates according to its own logic, influencing how individuals understand meanings, make choices, and

occupy positions of dominance or subordination (Bourdieu, 2019). These roles are determined by the amount of resources a person possesses in comparison to other social agents within the same area. Such resources are referred to as "capitals" by Bourdieu (1986).

In summary, to understand and explain a player's CDM process in the labor market field, it is necessary to consider information about their capital, the game's status, and the player's position on the field. The player's logic is shaped by their habitus and the requirements and logic of the game they are involved in (Bourdieu, 1977). Therefore, the next question pertains to how the various capitals can be activated and function under the context's typical characteristics of the labor market amidst COVID-19 and how those capitals differ from before COVID-19. The following part will discuss that matter.

5.2 Research Question 2: in the typical characteristics of the context, how can the various capitals be activated/functioned and how do the capitals differ from before?

According to Pierre Bourdieu, "capital" represents power within a given field. He identified various types of capital that determined the prospects for success in a particular field (Bourdieu, 1985). Capital is a generalized resource that might be tangible or intangible, monetary or non-monetary (Bourdieu, 1985). Bourdieu classifies capital into four basic types: economic, social, cultural, and symbolic capital (Bourdieu, 1986). Economic capital primarily exist as a universally recognized currency that can be passed down across generations. This type of capital can be more easily and efficiently converted into cultural, social, and symbolic capital, rather than the other way around (Postone et al., 1993). For instance, economic capital can be used to acquire cultural capital, such as obtaining a degree from a prominent institution, while educational credentials can be transformed into a well-paid position (Harvey & Maclean, 2008).

Social capital includes mutual awareness and acquaintances, resources based on social connections, and group or class membership. Cultural or information capital has three forms (see also Bourdieu, 2005). 1) Incorporated or embodied, which refers to enduring dispositions of habitus, such as competence and skills; 2) objectified, represented by cultural products like books, paintings, and machines; 3) institutionalized, acquired through degrees and certifications that are relatively independent of the actual assimilated cultural capital; 4) Symbolic capital, as the fourth form of capital, is closely intertwined with each field. The rules within a specific social field determine which combinations of capital forms are permissible as symbolic capital

and thus socially justified (Bourdieu, 1977). It is argued that symbolic capital holds the most valuable form of capital (Gander, 2022).

This study discovered an unusual impact of the typical characteristics of the labor market during the COVID-19 pandemic on the quantity and quality of capital in the transition from education to work. This shock leads to a decrease in the overall quantity (amount) of resources in general and changes the quality of those resources as well. During COVID-19, capital remains accessible, but in different form. For instance, its use may be severely constrained by travel restrictions and social segregation rules.

Overall, this study reveals that social capital was the most utilized capital by graduates' amidst COVID-19. Many of them relied on offline social capital in the form of solidarity capital, leveraging connections with acquaintances, relatives, friends, lecturers/staff in their polytechnics, neighbors, seniors, or their host of WP program. Additionally, some of them utilized online social capital such as social media platforms like LinkedIn, Jobstreet, Instagram, and Telegram.

The second most utilized capital was cultural capital, predominantly by graduates from the IT department. They relied on incorporated cultural capital through digital skills, objectified cultural capital through their products of knowledge, and institutionalized cultural capital through their academic titles or degree. Interestingly, this study found no graduates utilizing their economic capital. Most graduates reported unfavourable economic condition within their families. This condition made it challenging for them to convert economic capital into symbolic capital.

These findings align with a study conducted by Shiyuan et al. (2022) in the Chinese context, which concluded that both human capital (which includes cultural capital) and social capital have a significant and positive impact on college students' employability, with social capital exerting a stronger influence than human capital. College graduates actively adapt to changes in the external work environment and employment opportunities, and the labor market values their social capital and personal aptitude (Shiyuan et.al., 2022). On the other hand, Shiyuan et al.'s (2022) study did not explain more about the form of social capital utilized by the graduates. And this study fills that gap by drawing out the solidarity capital as the typical social capital that was activated amidst COVID-19 in Indonesia context. For further regarding the influence of the context on activated graduates' capitals, please refer to the following section.

5.2.1 Social and mobility restrictions amidst COVID-19 caused offline social capital to less functioned resulting in the activation of online (digital) social capital

The idea of social capital was initially introduced by Bourdieu (1986), who defined it as a grouping of real or potential resources connected to a persistent network of interactions that are either tacitly or consciously understood by both parties. In addition, Coleman (1988) discussed the role of social capital, emphasizing its intricate nature as a system that comprises certain elements of the social structure, encourages social conduct in both individuals and others, and aids in the achievement of goals.

Prior research, including this study, has consistently demonstrated that college students' social capital has a positive impact on employment quality even before the onset of COVID-19 pandemic. For instance, in a survey conducted by Chen and Tan (2004), among graduates from 14 colleges and universities, it was revealed that 92.8% of the respondents obtained employment information through their social capital, and 90.1% acknowledged the significant influence of social relationships on employment. Similarly, this present study confirms that social capital played a crucial role in guiding graduates' education-to-work transition, especially amidst the challenges posed by COVID-19.

Examining the impact of social capital on college students' employment quality, Wang (2020) found that both prior and subsequent social capital exert a substantial positive influence. Notably, social capital aids in the acquisition and evaluation of employment-related information. Individuals with access to social capital can build extensive networks for information sharing. Additionally, social capital has a significant positive impact on the cost of interpersonal interactions, the level of trust between the parties, and the likelihood of successful employment (Xu, 2002).

During the COVID-19 pandemic, various social and mobility restrictions were widely implemented, leading to a significant decrease in face-to-face interactions among individuals from different households. These social exclusionary measures unavoidably compromised social capital and individual freedom (Reluga, 2010). As discussed earlier (see part 5.1.1), the changes induced by COVID-19 raised questions about the continued relevance of social capital in the education-to-work transition.

Amidst the pandemic's environment characterized by reduced social constraints and heightened uncertainty, this study re-evaluated the concept of social capital and its utilization. For instance, Hana, a 23-year-old accounting graduate, found her current job through the LinkedIn platform, which she regularly used for job applications. Additionally, she explored job vacancies on other online platforms like Jobstreet and Instagram during the COVID-19 pandemic. Hana believed that utilizing social media allowed her to access a broader range of job information compared to relying solely on people close to her.

The findings shed light on how graduates adapted their strategies to cope with the challenges posed by the pandemic's restrictions. With face-to-face interactions limited, graduates like Hana turned to online platforms and social media to stay connected with potential job opportunities and expand their network. This re-assessment of social capital's role demonstrates how graduates in this unique context leveraged digital tools to navigate the education-to-work transition effectively.

This study reveals that social capital does not necessarily deteriorate during periods of social distance, thanks to the potential of the internet and other cutting-edge communication tools to maintain Putnam's bridging and bonding social capital. Norris (2002) cites a Pew poll that suggest online engagement can strengthen pre-existing social bonds and expand one's sense of community by connecting with people who are different from oneself. The poll demonstrates how online groups can enhance both bridging and bonding social capital. Numerous scholars have documented the maintenance of users' bridging and bonding social capital through their actions on various online social networking sites. For instance, among Twitter users, bridging social capital is fostered by the number of users they follow, while bonding social capital is cultivated by the number of followers they have (Hofer and Aubert, 2013). On Facebook, regular use of the site's features like likes and comments is associated with bonded social capital, whereas frequent engagement with the wall, preference for status updates, and participation in groups are linked to bridged social capital (Lee et al., 2014).

Pitas & Ehmer (2020) argue that given the profound social changes, it is challenging to generalize how social capital directly functions directly; the fundamental nature of social capital, as well as its causes and effects, may have undergone significant changes. While COVID-19 has dramatically reshaped the social landscape, there is insufficient evidence to suggest that it has resulted in a decline of social capital. In fact, it may have even increased the value of social

interaction. Interventions targeting social capital have been proposed as a preventive measure to mitigate the impact of pandemic.

Technology is playing an increasingly crucial role as an intermediary in maintaining our social connections. Using digital devices to communicate with distant family and relatives is not a new phenomenon. Migrants, for example, have long relied on these technologies to stay in touch with their loves one back home. However, the COVID-19 pandemic has transformed the use of digital gadgets from an alternative form of interactions to a prevalent mode of communication. This shift in technology usage is expected to have implications for social capital, as discussed by Quan-Haase & Wellman (2004). They delve into the debate on whether social capital is transformed, diminished, and/or supplemented through new communication methods. Their conclusions highlight the need for new measurement strategies to assess emerging form of social capital and account for changes in social network compositions.

5.2.2 Limited job opportunities amidst COVID-19 negatively influenced the cultural capital function and ultimately social capital was activated in the form of “solidarity capital” including through backdoor hiring practices

The limited job opportunities caused by the COVID-19 pandemic have had a negative impact on the function of cultural capital among graduates. Cultural capital refers to the knowledge, skills, and cultural resources that individuals acquire through their upbringing, education, and socialization (Bourdieu, 2005). It plays a crucial role in the job market, as certain industries and employers value specific cultural attributes and competencies.

In the context of limited job opportunities, graduates may find that their cultural capital, such as their educational qualifications or specialized skills, does not provide them with a significant advantage in securing employment. The pandemic has disrupted various industries, leading to layoffs, hiring freezes, and reduced demand for certain skill sets. As a result, graduates may struggle to find jobs that align with their qualifications and aspirations.

For example, Ahmad, who graduated from computer engineering at Polytechnic A, faced challenges in the job market during 2019. As a fresh graduate without much work experience, he had to introduce himself and highlight his educational background and the job descriptions he had during his internship when applying to various companies. Understanding the companies he was applying to was crucial to make a strong impression.

The situation became even more challenging in 2020 when the COVID-19 pandemic hit. Many companies were cautious about hiring new employees, and only a few HR departments were willing to consider applications from fresh graduates. The uncertainties caused by the pandemic made it harder for graduates like Ahmad to secure job opportunities, despite their cultural capital and qualifications. He said,

“In the past, during the time when I graduated in 2019, we were only provided with a certificate of completion from the university, not the official diploma. It was a bit challenging back then because as fresh graduates, we lacked work experience, so when we applied to various companies, we had to introduce ourselves, mention our graduation background, and explain the job descriptions we had during our internship. We needed to get familiar with the companies we were applying to, such as their field of business, whether they were in finance, services, or other sectors. Understanding the company we were joining was crucial. Then, in 2020, things became more challenging as the COVID-19 pandemic hit. Only the HR departments of certain companies were willing to trust us and consider our applications during that time. It became harder to secure job opportunities due to the uncertainties caused by the pandemic.”

In response to these challenges, some individuals may resort to activating their social capital that this study named it "solidarity capital." Solidarity capital refers to the support and connections that individuals have within their social networks, including family, friends, relatives, and neighbors. It involves relying on personal relationships and leveraging networks to access job opportunities, particularly through backdoor hiring practices.

An example of solidarity capital at work is seen in Bani's experience. When he was facing difficulties finding a job amidst the pandemic, he decided to take any available job and ended up working as a designer in a printing service. He applied for jobs through email and online platforms but received no callbacks. In this situation, his teacher, who also acted as his mentor, offered him a job at the printing shop, and Bani accepted it rather than staying idle at home. He echoed,

Interviewer: “Why did you work at a printing shop back then?”

Bani: “Well, at that time, it was because of the pandemic, ma'am. I applied for jobs through email and online platforms, but there were no callbacks yet. Then, I received a job offer from my teacher, who also happened to be my mentor. Instead of staying at home, I decided to accept the job at the printing shop.”

Even in his current job, Bani's solidarity capital played a crucial role. Unexpectedly, he received a phone call from his former lecturer, who offered him a job as an estimator in a company. The opportunity arose because Mr. X, his lecturer, asked another colleague, Mr. K, who then mentioned Bani's name. As a result, Mr. X directly contacted Bani, leading to his acceptance of the job.

Interviewer: “So, how did you manage to apply there and eventually get accepted? Where did you get the information?”

Bani: “Well, it all started with my lecturer, Mr. X.”

Interviewer: “Mr. Y?”

Bani: “Mr. X.”

Interviewer: “Oh, Mr. X, I see. He teaches at campus A, right?”

Bani: “I'm not sure, actually. He teaches CAD. It was Mr. X who asked Mr. K, and then Mr. K mentioned my name, so Mr. X directly contacted me.”

The reliance on solidarity capital highlights the significance of personal connections and networks in navigating the job market during challenging times. Through the support of individuals within their social circles, graduates like Bani were able to secure job opportunities that might have been difficult to access through formal application processes.

Toro's case provides another example of how solidarity capital can play a role in shaping career decisions and opportunities. After graduating from the mechanical engineering department, Toro expressed his intention to work in Japan. This decision was influenced by his

uncle, who suggested the idea to him when he noticed that Toro was in a difficult financial situation.

Toro's relatives who have previously worked in Japan may have also contributed to his interest in pursuing employment there. Having family members who have experience working in a particular country or industry can provide valuable insights and support when considering such career paths.

Although the job Toro applied for in Japan may not directly align with his engineering background and academic qualifications, he remains positive and content with the opportunity. The position he applied for might typically be intended for individuals who graduated from senior high school, suggesting a potential vertical and horizontal mismatch in terms of qualifications. However, Toro is willing to accept this situation and make the most of the opportunity.

Solidarity capital comes into play when Toro's uncle takes responsibility for covering the costs of the Japanese training course. This support is crucial, as Toro's parents may not have sufficient financial means to pay for the training. The financial assistance from his uncle enables Toro to pursue the training and prepare for his career in Japan.

Toro's experience exemplifies how the assistance and support from family members and relatives can significantly impact an individual's career choices and opportunities. Solidarity capital, in this case, involves the emotional and financial support provided by Toro's uncle and other relatives, which allows him to explore and pursue career prospects that may not have been feasible without such assistance. He echoed,

"I am currently attending a Japanese training course as preparation for working in Japan. I decided to work in Japan because my uncle asked me to. When he saw me in a poor condition, he suggested that I work there. Some of my relatives have also worked in Japan. The level of job I applied for there is actually meant for those who graduated from senior high school, so there may be a vertical and horizontal mismatch. However, I am okay with it. My uncle is responsible for the costs of the course training, and I am grateful for it since my parents do not have enough money to pay for it."

These study findings challenge the conventional human capital theory, which holds that one's ability to acquire employment is a source of opportunities, freedom of choice, and occupational standing (Brown, 2001). The aforementioned example illustrates that informal network still hold significant in young people's job searches. Therefore, a human capital framework may not fully apply in collectivist societies or in contexts where labor markets do not operate on a free-market model, due to the highly individualized approach to education. In conclusion, the data indicate that the graduates do not genuinely feel that a meritocratic system exists in Indonesia.

Nepotism practices especially with paying bribes also have proliferated significantly amidst the COVID-19 pandemic. The majority of informants who graduated in 2020 and 2021, amid the pandemic, shared the difficulties they faced in finding employment, leading many to resort to nepotism practices. Aisyah (25), a graduate from the visual communication design department, recounted that she received offers to pay bribes for job positions in government offices during the pandemic. However, she refused these offers.

Nela (22), a graduate from the electrical engineering department at Polytechnic A, has a different experience to share. Nela previously worked in an industrial setting, but recently made the decisions to resign on the day of the interview. She explained that she initially joined the company with the intention of working as an administrator. However, after some time, she was transferred to a lower level role in production operation, which was not her desired position. She revealed that the behind her transfer was the preference of a cousin of an HRD staff member to work as an administrator, suggesting a nepotism arrangement. At the time, she held onto hope that she would eventually be able to return to her prior division, but several months passed without any changes. Consequently, she made the decision to resign from her job.

Overall, these experiences reflect the pervasiveness of nepotism practices in the job market during the COVID-19 pandemic. The participants' accounts provide valuable insights into the challenges and dilemmas faced by individuals who navigate a system where personal connections often outweigh merit and qualifications.

5.2.3 Digital transformation activated the digital cultural capital as the resiliency yet created digital divide

The COVID-19 pandemic accelerated the digital transformation that was already taking place worldwide. The shift to online platforms and remote work became essential during the pandemic, affecting various aspects of people's lives, including education, work, and business operations. This rapid transition to the digital environment had a significant impact on individuals, including graduates, as they navigated their transition from education to work.

The study highlights the activation of graduates' digital cultural capital during this period. Digital capital, which falls under the broader category of cultural capital, refers to the knowledge, skills, and proficiency required to effectively navigate and utilize technology. Ollier-Malaterre et al. (2019) introduced the concept of "digital cultural capital," aligning it with the Bourdieusian perspective on cultural capital. Similar to Bourdieu's notion of cultural capital, digital cultural capital is seen as unequally distributed within society, potentially contributing to social stratification.

The digital cultural capital possessed by graduates played a crucial role in adapting to the digital environment brought about by the pandemic. It encompassed their knowledge, motivation, and aptitude to effectively use technology for various purposes, such as online learning, job searching, and digital communication. The study suggests that graduates who were well-equipped with digital cultural capital had an advantage in navigating the digital landscape and capitalizing on the opportunities it presented.

However, it is important to note that the distribution of digital cultural capital is not uniform, and some individuals and social groups may have more access and proficiency in using technology than others. This can contribute to social inequalities and reinforce existing social stratification. The study emphasizes the unequal distribution of digital cultural capital and its potential implications for individuals and society.

Overall, the digital transformation triggered by the COVID-19 pandemic highlighted the importance of digital cultural capital for graduates during their transition from education to work. Understanding the distribution and impact of digital cultural capital is crucial for addressing inequalities and ensuring equal opportunities in the digital age.

In this study, we found that digital cultural capital played a crucial role in Ahmad's (25) job experiences amidst COVID-19. Ahmad (25) mentioned that due to the closure of physical

establishments amid the COVID-19 pandemic, companies conducted their recruitment processes online. Ahmad shared his experiences working for two companies. His current company, a financial company, was established during the pandemic, operating entirely online through a system. He explained that he worked on a tablet and is dependent on its battery for his tasks. The company does not have a physical office, and all attendance, meetings, and data input are conducted online. Ahmad initially found this setup challenging as he lacked the office environment where he could easily seek assistance from colleagues. Instead, he had to rely on module materials for guidance. The online system remains in place, encompassing financing process and fund disbursements, which are all handled online. Ahmad echoed,

“Certainly, in the past, our work was not office-based; we worked directly in the field. I experienced this at companies X and Y. Since company Y was established during the COVID-19 pandemic, all our work was conducted online through a system. So, when I was "on duty," I worked using a tablet, and if the battery ran out, I couldn't continue working.”

Ahmad emphasized the positive aspect of not having a physical office, as it allows for more efficient time utilization. However, he acknowledges that reporting can be challenging since everything is done online, and there is a potential for missing information. Nonetheless, the flexibility of remote work proves advantageous, even though it may involve less monitoring. The key lies in taking personal responsibility for one's work. When asked about individuals who may struggle with technology, Ahmad provides an example of a friend with five years of marketing experience who still faces difficulties in accurately inputting customer data.

“My friend, even though he has 5 years of marketing experience, still makes mistakes when inputting customer data. There are some like that.”

“Yes, there's one person like that. Whether we like it or not, we have to help, so we ended up teaching until he understand.”

In the case of Akbar (26), he noted that the work dynamics during the COVID-19 pandemic were notably different and more challenging. The pressure to increase sales became

greater as the business faced a significant decline in revenue, nearly halving its usual turnover. Consequently, all employees were pushed to their limits in finding ways to boost sales. Prior to the pandemic, the seller had already listed their products for sale on the Shopee platform. However, with the COVID-19 outbreak restricting physical store visits, customers sought alternatives, leading to increased sales. However, the stores or clinics did not have a specific service or feature as the head office did not permit transactions through this platform. Regarding communication and reporting, Akbar mentioned that Zoom was primarily used for meetings and discussions. Additionally, various government agencies developed applications that continue to be utilized, proving helpful in navigating during the COVID-19 situation. These applications are still in use and may contribute to cost savings.

Amelia (24) explained that her work responsibilities became more computer-oriented starting in July. This shift occurred around the middle of the month, requiring her to devote a significant amount of time to tasks on her computer. However, she encountered difficulties during this period as she had to cross-check information using her laptop, which became a source of frustration. The Wi-Fi connection at home was not as reliable as the one at the office, making it more convenient for her to work from the office. The faster internet connection at the office allowed for more efficiency. Amelia mentioned that working from home provided some flexibility, as she could take breaks or work at night if necessary. On the other hand, working at the office meant completing tasks from morning till evening, especially in the afternoons. Despite the long hours at the office, the advantage of a faster internet connection enabled her to progress more quickly with her work

The digital transformation accelerated by the COVID-19 pandemic has indeed showcased the immense potential of technology in various aspects of work and daily life. The adoption of digital tools and platforms has facilitated remote work, online meetings, virtual collaborations, and streamlined processes, leading to increased efficiency and productivity for many individuals and organizations.

However, it is essential to recognize that not everyone has benefited equally from this digital shift. While some individuals and industries quickly adapted to the digital landscape, others faced significant challenges and barriers. This situation has exacerbated existing digital divides, highlighting the inequalities in access to technology, digital skills, and internet connectivity.

Certain segments of the population, particularly those from lower-income backgrounds or remote areas, have struggled to keep up with the rapid digitalization. They may lack access to reliable internet services, appropriate devices, or the necessary digital literacy to fully participate in the digital world. As a result, they may face limited job opportunities, reduced access to educational resources, and limited social connectivity.

Moreover, certain industries and businesses that heavily relied on physical interactions and operations faced severe disruptions during the pandemic. Small businesses and traditional service providers often struggled to transition to the digital realm, further widening the gap between digitally advanced and digitally disadvantaged sectors.

Addressing these remaining gaps is crucial for building a more inclusive and equitable digital society. It requires efforts to bridge the digital divide by expanding internet infrastructure, providing digital skills training and education, and ensuring affordable access to technology. Governments, businesses, and communities must collaborate to ensure that no one is left behind in the ongoing digital transformation.

By acknowledging and actively working to overcome these challenges, we can harness the potential of digital technology to create a more inclusive and sustainable future for all. This involves not only embracing digital innovation but also ensuring that the benefits of such transformation are accessible to everyone, regardless of their background or location.

5.3 Research question 3: in the typical characteristics of the setting and by using their activated capitals, how do the graduates' CDM behaviors change amidst COVID-19?

In the context of the COVID-19 crisis, the horizons for action in career decision-making have undergone significant changes. The horizons for action refer to the boundaries and limitations that shape an individual's perception, options, and possibilities within their specific context. These horizons are formed by three key constructs: the nature or type of the field(s) in which a person is positioned, their position within those fields, and their embodied dispositions. The nature or type of the field refers to the specific industry, training field or another domain in which an individual operates. Different fields have their own unique characteristics, demands, and opportunities, which affect the horizons for action within that particular field.

The position of the individual within the fields refers to their social and occupational status, their roles, and their level of influence or power within the field. Different positions

within the same field may have varying horizons for action, as individuals with higher positions may have access to different opportunities and resources compared to those in lower positions. The individual's embodied dispositions encompass their skills, knowledge, experiences, values, and attitudes that shape their decision-making and actions. These dispositions are influenced by socialization, education, upbringing, and personal attributes. They play a significant role in determining the boundaries and possibilities within the horizons for action.

During the COVID-19 crisis, the characteristics of the setting and the capital have changed, leading to shifts in the horizons for action. The pandemic has disrupted industries, job markets, and social dynamics, altering the available opportunities and constraining individuals' decision-making processes. The changes in circumstances, positions, and dispositions have resulted in the movement and reconfiguration of the horizons for action. According to Bourdieu, different fields follow their own logic, which shapes the meanings, decisions, and power dynamics within them. The distinct characteristics and rules of each field influence the horizons for action and determine what is visible and possible within that field (Bourdieu, 2019). Therefore, understanding the changes in horizons for action during the COVID-19 crisis is essential in comprehending how individuals navigate and make decisions within their specific contexts. Recognizing the influence of field-specific logics and the interplay of circumstances, positions, and dispositions can provide valuable insights into the dynamics of career decision-making amidst the pandemic.

There is an aspect that has been changed in the time of COVID-19 crisis as the characteristics of the setting and the capital were also changed. That aspect is the horizons for action. The change in the horizons for action influence the pragmatically rational CDM behavior. Horizon is a metaphor derived from eyesight. The horizons that are visible from where we are standing and the angle at which we are standing restrict what we can view. These horizons provide us the ability to see whatever within them but block our view of what is beyond them (Hodkinson, 2009). The human eye and brain have an impact on the visual horizons. Humans can see significantly less than some animals and birds, while some people can see more than others (Hodkinson, 2009). Similar to this, career development and decision-making are made possible inside horizons of action and restricted or prevented outside of them.

In short, the horizons for action is influenced by three constructs: (1) the nature or type of the field or fields in which a person is positioned; (2) the position of that person within those

fields; and (3) the individual's embodied dispositions (Hodkinson, 2009). More explanations of each construct are as follows:

Nature of the field

The nature of the field, as explained by Bourdieu, refers to the characteristics and dynamics of a specific social domain or context in which individuals operate. Bourdieu conceptualizes the social field as a structured space where various actors interact and compete for positions and resources (Bourdieu, 1977, 1986). This field can be seen as a metaphorical battlefield or playing area where individuals with different forms of capital (economic, social, cultural, etc.) strive to advance their positions and gain power.

Within a social field, there are established norms, rules, and expectations that define what is considered capable behavior. These norms and rules are shaped by the dominant capitals valued within the field, which can vary depending on the specific context. Adhering to these norms and playing by the established rules is essential for individuals to navigate and succeed within the field.

Bourdieu emphasizes that the social field is not static but rather dynamic, constantly evolving as actors within the field engage in social interactions and contestation. The actions and strategies of individuals within the field contribute to the reproduction and transformation of the field itself. The field is shaped by the social mores and practices of the actors involved, and it offers a historical backdrop that helps explain its existence, traces its evolution over time, and justifies its presence or absence.

In summary, the nature of the field refers to the characteristics and dynamics of a specific social domain or context in which individuals operate (Bourdieu, 1977, 1986). It is a dynamic space shaped by the interactions and strategies of the actors involved, and it plays a crucial role in defining the possibilities and constraints for action within that field.

This study explores how the natures of different fields have been shaped by various factors, both pre-COVID-19 and amidst the pandemic. Before the COVID-19 outbreak, the limited job opportunities in certain industries and the prevalent backdoor hiring practices, often driven by nepotism or the influence of "orang dalam" (connections within an organization), have had a significant impact on the nature of these fields.

Amidst the COVID-19 pandemic, the limited job opportunities became even more pronounced, as many industries faced disruptions and economic uncertainties. As a result, the reliance on solidarity capital and backdoor hiring practices was accentuated. The pandemic-induced digital transformation also played a crucial role in shaping the natures of various fields.

Digital transformation, triggered by the COVID-19 pandemic, compelled many businesses and organizations to adapt to remote work, online operations, and virtual communication. The shift to digital platforms altered the way work was conducted and influenced the skills and competencies required in the job market. Graduates who possessed digital cultural capital, including proficiency in utilizing digital tools and navigating online environments, had a competitive edge in adapting to the changing nature of work. On the other hand, those lacking digital cultural capital faced challenges in keeping up with the digital demands of their fields.

In summary, the natures of fields in pre-COVID-19 and amidst COVID-19 have been shaped by factors such as limited job opportunities, backdoor hiring practices driven by social capital, and the digital transformation brought about by the pandemic. Understanding these dynamics is essential for addressing inequalities and ensuring equal opportunities in education-to-work transitions during and beyond the COVID-19 era. It highlights the importance of cultivating relevant skills and competencies, both in traditional and digital realms, to succeed in an ever-evolving job market.

Position

Position refers to the specific placement or status of an individual within a field (Hodkinson, 2008). It encompasses various factors such as social class, gender, ethnicity, and the person's role or rank within their profession or industry. Position is crucial because it influences the opportunities and resources or capital available to individuals, as well as the constraints and limitations they may face

In terms of social structures, an individual's position can be influenced by broader societal factors such as social class. For example, someone from a privileged background may have easier access to education, networking opportunities, and influential connections, which can enhance their position within a particular field. On the other hand, individuals from marginalized

or disadvantaged backgrounds may face barriers and discrimination that limit their access to resources and opportunities, affecting their position within the field.

However, it is important to note that position within a field is not solely determined by social structures. Other factors, such as individual skills, experience, and personal qualities, also play a role. For instance, someone with exceptional talent or expertise in their field may be able to overcome certain structural barriers and advance their position through their exceptional abilities and achievements. Therefore, while social structures and societal factors shape an individual's position within a field to some extent, it is a complex interplay between structural factors and individual agency that determines one's position and opportunities for action within a particular field.

This study found some constructs within the position dimension that influence the graduates' horizon for actions and finally their CDM. Those are as follows:

1. Economic position of family

The economic position of a family can have a profound influence on the horizons for action available to graduates. Family economic problems, such as financial difficulties, can limit the resources and opportunities accessible to individuals, thereby impacting their career choices and prospects. When faced with economic constraints, graduates may be compelled to prioritize immediate financial stability over long-term career aspirations.

For instance, if a family is experiencing financial hardship, a graduate may feel the need to secure any job available, even if it is low-paying or unrelated to their desired career path. Limited financial resources may also restrict access to further education or training opportunities that could enhance their skills and open up new possibilities. In some cases, financial limitations may even prevent graduates from pursuing certain career paths that require additional investment or resources.

Indah's case exemplifies the influence of family circumstances on career decisions. The recent passing of her mother and her father's occupation as a peddler selling snacks significantly affected her life. The economic challenges faced by her family, exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, added further complexity to her decision-making process. She said,

Indah: "It used to be around 2 million per month before the corona situation."

Interviewer: "Oh, that's quite good, right?"

Indah: “Yes, but lately it's been a bit less consistent. Sometimes, it's only around 70 or 100 thousand per day, so it's uncertain.”

With her father's income significantly reduced, Indah felt a strong responsibility to support him financially. Due to these circumstances, Indah made the decision to leave her initial job as a customer service representative in order to assist her father with his sales. She prioritized finding a job that would allow her to contribute to the family income and fulfill her obligations as the only child. Fortunately, she discovered an opportunity to work as an administrator in a notary office through her neighbor, and she decided to apply for the position.

Indah's story highlights the significant impact of family conditions on career decisions. The responsibility to support family members, especially during challenging economic times, can shape the choices individuals make regarding their careers. It emphasizes the importance of considering familial obligations and responsibilities when making career decisions, as they can strongly influence the trajectory of one's professional life.

Understanding the role of family economic problems in shaping graduates' horizons for action provides valuable insights into the broader social context of career decision-making. It underscores the need for supportive policies, interventions, and resources to assist individuals from economically disadvantaged backgrounds in overcoming barriers and pursuing fulfilling career paths.

2. Family occupational background

Family job background is an aspect of the position dimension that can influence the horizons for action of individuals, which in turn can impact their career decision-making (CDM) processes. The position dimension refers to the social context and factors that shape an individual's career options, opportunities, and constraints. Family job background is one such factor within this dimension. It encompasses the occupational background of parents or other family members, their professional experiences, and the cultural values and expectations associated with those occupations.

Family job background can influence the horizons for action by providing or limiting access to resources, networks, and opportunities that can activate solidarity capital. For example, individuals from families with a strong professional background may have greater exposure to different career paths, connections in relevant industries, and access to valuable information and

guidance. This exposure can expand their horizons and options when making career decisions. A case example that illustrates the influence of family job background is Risna (29), who completed her studies in the accounting department at Polytechnic A. Risna shared her experience of finding a job, stating that she received a referral from her father's friend who worked at a specific company.

“I am an administrator at X office, which stands for the Public Appraisal Office. But, coincidentally, I graduated in 2019, which was before the COVID-19 pandemic. If I'm not mistaken, I worked there for about three months before the pandemic hit. After graduating from college, I searched for job opportunities, and eventually, I found a referral from a friend of my father who works at the public appraisal office.”

In Risna's case, her father's connection and referral played a pivotal role in her job search. The network established through her family background provided her with an opportunity to secure a position at the Public Appraisal Office. This access to the job market through a family connection showcases how solidarity capital can be activated in the education-to-work transition.

Conversely, individuals from families with limited professional backgrounds may face constraints in terms of access to resources, networks, and opportunities. They may have fewer role models or mentors in their desired fields, limited access to internships or industry connections, and potentially reduced knowledge about diverse career paths. These limitations can narrow their horizons for action and impact their decision-making process

The influence of family job background on horizons for action and CDM processes can be both explicit and implicit. Explicitly, family members may directly influence an individual's career choices through their advice, guidance, or expectations based on their own job experiences. Implicitly, individuals may be influenced by observing the successes or struggles of family members in particular occupations and developing perceptions and aspirations based on those observations.

It is important to note that while family job background can be a significant influence, individuals also have agency and the ability to challenge or transcend the limitations or expectations associated with their family backgrounds. They can seek out alternative sources of

information, explore diverse career options, and make choices that align with their own interests, values, and aspirations.

In summary, family job background is a key aspect of the position dimension that influences the horizons for action of individuals. It can shape their access to resources, networks, and opportunities, thereby impacting their CDM processes. However, individuals have the capacity to navigate and transcend these influences through agency and informed decision-making.

Anas' experience highlights how family occupational background, particularly the job roles of parents or relatives, can significantly influence the horizons for action of graduates. In Anas' case, he pursued entrepreneurship after graduating from the visual communication design department. Inspired by his parents and brother, who are also entrepreneurs, Anas developed an interest in starting his own businesses.

Anas initially attempted to find a job in Jakarta but faced challenges in securing employment. As a result, he decided to return to his hometown and establish his wedding organizer, photography, and digital marketing businesses. Anas' parents played a crucial role in supporting his entrepreneurial aspirations, encouraging him to pursue his own ventures.

The influence of family background on career decisions is a well-documented phenomenon. Growing up in an entrepreneurial environment, with parents and relatives who have successfully established their own businesses, can shape an individual's perceptions and aspirations regarding self-employment. In Anas' case, his exposure to his parents' and brother's entrepreneurial ventures likely influenced his interest in becoming an entrepreneur himself.

The support and encouragement provided by Anas' parents further facilitated his decision to pursue entrepreneurship. Family support can have a significant impact on an individual's confidence, motivation, and ability to take risks in entrepreneurial endeavors. In Anas' case, the alignment of his personal interest, family background, and support system contributed to his decision to start his own businesses in his hometown.

Overall, Anas' story exemplifies how family background, particularly the influence of parents and relatives who are entrepreneurs, can shape the horizons for action of graduates and impact their career choices. Family support, coupled with personal interest and exposure to entrepreneurial environments, can foster an entrepreneurial mindset and empower individuals to pursue their own ventures.

3. Parental pressure

Parental pressure is an aspect of graduates' position that can influence their horizons for action. Parents play a significant role in shaping their children's career aspirations and decisions. They often have their own expectations and desires for their children's career paths, which can exert pressure on the graduates to conform to those expectations.

Parental pressure can manifest in various ways, such as specific career preferences, insistence on pursuing certain professional fields, or expectations regarding prestigious or financially stable occupations. This pressure can influence the horizons for action of graduates by narrowing their perceived range of options or influencing their decision-making process.

For example, if a graduate's parents strongly advocate for a career in medicine, the graduate may feel compelled to pursue a medical profession even if their personal interests lie elsewhere. This pressure can limit the graduate's exploration of alternative career paths and may impact their overall career satisfaction and fulfillment.

However, it's important to note that parental pressure can also stem from genuine concern for their child's well-being and future success. Parents may believe that certain career paths offer greater stability, financial security, or social status, and they may encourage their children to pursue those paths out of a desire to provide them with the best opportunities.

The influence of parental pressure on horizons for action varies among individuals and is shaped by various factors, including cultural norms, family dynamics, and the individual's own assertiveness and autonomy. Some graduates may succumb to parental pressure and choose career paths based on their parents' expectations, while others may assert their independence and follow their own aspirations.

Overall, parental pressure is an important aspect to consider when examining the influence of position on graduates' horizons for action. It highlights the impact that parental expectations and desires can have on the career decision-making process and the potential implications for graduates' choices and outcomes.

Rian's case indeed exemplifies how parental pressure can shape and influence the decision-making process of graduates. Rian said,

“It was so tiring, even my parents were concerned when, just the other day, at supermarket, they said, "You've applied to so many job openings, but why haven't you been accepted anywhere? What's going on?"”

The conflict between Rian and his parents regarding his career choices highlights the differing perspectives and expectations that can arise within families when it comes to career decisions. Rian said,

“Parents prefer something closer to home, so it's tough for me to find a job far from home. If it's far from home, they have concerns about it.”

The concept of multiple agents, including parents, playing a role in shaping individuals' horizons for action during the decision-making process aligns with the idea that decision-making is a socially constructed and influenced process. Parents, as important social actors, can have a significant impact on graduates' career choices through their expectations, suggestions, and pressures.

The human capital framework provides a relevant lens to understand the goals and motivations of parents and graduates in pursuing education. Parents often view education as a means to secure higher-status and more financially stable jobs for their children, with the aim of improving their standard of living and future prospects. This perspective aligns with the idea that investing in education can lead to individual and societal economic growth.

However, the COVID-19 pandemic has introduced new challenges and uncertainties, affecting not only the job market but also the financial situations of individuals and families. Rian's parents' declining businesses and difficult financial circumstances due to the pandemic illustrate the impact of external factors on career aspirations and decision-making. The tension between parents' aspirations and the reality of the pandemic highlights the complexities and constraints that individuals and families face in navigating their career paths.

Overall, Rian's case highlights the interplay between parental expectations, financial realities, and external factors such as the COVID-19 pandemic in influencing graduates' decision-making processes. It underscores the importance of considering various factors and

actors involved in shaping horizons for action and the challenges that arise when aspirations and circumstances collide.

4. Gender bias (confining to job opportunities)

Gender bias is indeed an important aspect of the position construct that can significantly influence the horizons for action of graduates. Examples below illustrate how gender bias restricts the job opportunities and choices available to female graduates, often limiting them to working within their town or neighboring areas.

Tia, a graduate from the accounting department, preferred to work in her town, despite having an office located just 20 minutes away from her home. She made this choice because her parents specifically asked her not to work outside the town. The gender bias she faced limited her options and influenced her decision to prioritize her parents' wishes over seeking job opportunities elsewhere.

Dania, on the other hand, faced similar restrictions due to her parents' preferences. Despite relatively quickly finding her first job as a store leader after graduation, she eventually quit due to salary issues. She mentioned that her parents did not allow her to work outside of her town, leading her to only apply for jobs within the town. Dania even received a job offer from outside her town (Tegal), but she declined it because of her parents' wishes. She accepted the limitations imposed on her due to being the only child and adhered to her parents' expectations.

Viana's story further exemplifies the impact of gender bias on job opportunities. She currently works as a secretary in a government office, but her journey to that position was filled with challenges. Initially, she ran a small business at home after facing rejections from many companies. Although she managed to secure a job in Jakarta as a tutor, she ultimately quit because her parents did not allow her to work outside the town. She said,

“I applied job at the bank but it was rejected and my application to the company was also rejected, ma'am. I was hopeless, "Oh God, finding a job is really hard" like that. While there are people who really want to work but must be like "you have to have money to come in" like that. I don't want to, ma'am, I work, I want to make money, why I have to spend money. Finally, the parents said, "Just be patient, if you obey us, you will get the best". In the end, when I wanted to go out of city, I wasn't allowed by my parents. So, I went home.”

Viana expressed frustration over the limited movement imposed on her due to her gender and the lack of trust from her parents. She highlighted that her biggest challenge was obtaining permission from her parents to explore job opportunities beyond their town.

Dania faced similar restrictions due to her parents' preferences. Despite relatively quickly finding her first job as a store leader after graduation, she eventually quit due to salary issues. She mentioned that her parents did not allow her to work outside of her town, leading her to only apply for jobs within the town. Dania even received a job offer from outside her town (Tegal), but she declined it because of her parents' wishes. She accepted the limitations imposed on her due to being the only child and adhered to her parents' expectations. She echoed,

“...because I'm a bit picky when it comes to job openings. You see, my parents don't allow me to work far from home, so I prefer job opportunities in Tegal, but ones that offer decent prospects.”

These examples demonstrate how gender bias can restrict the horizons for action of female graduates, confining them to job opportunities within their immediate vicinity. The expectations and limitations imposed by parents or societal norms can influence their career choices and limit their ability to explore and pursue opportunities outside their hometown. Overcoming gender bias and creating more inclusive environments is essential to empower women to freely pursue their career aspirations without unnecessary restrictions.

The academic literature on gender and work in Indonesia highlights the complex and often contradictory attitudes of various societal actors towards young women's participation in dynamic and migratory labor markets. Scholars such as Mather (1985), Wolf (1992), and Ford & Parker (2008) have examined the role of the state, religious leaders, parents, and local communities in shaping young women's entry into the workforce.

On one hand, the increasing mobility and educational opportunities for young women offer them greater autonomy and the chance to engage with urban and middle-class lifestyles. These changes provide them with new avenues for personal and professional growth. However, these opportunities are also constrained by patriarchal values and a gender ideology that sets boundaries specifically for Muslim daughters, differentiating their experiences from those of their male peers. This gendered ideology influences the extent to which young women are

supported or discouraged from leaving their families to pursue work in factories or become overseas labor migrants, with regional variations playing a significant role (Manning, 1998: 255).

The literature sheds light on the complex interplay between societal expectations, religious norms, and economic factors that shape young women's decisions and experiences in the labor market. It underscores the need to consider gender dynamics and cultural contexts when examining women's participation in work, as well as the ways in which traditional patriarchal values intersect with shifting opportunities and aspirations.

5. Societal judgement

Societal judgment is an important aspect of graduates' position that can influence their horizons for action in career decision-making (CDM). Societal judgment refers to the opinions, perceptions, and expectations of the broader society regarding career choices and success. Graduates often face societal pressures and expectations when making career decisions. The fear of being judged by society can significantly impact their choices and limit their horizons for action. Society may have certain preconceived notions about what constitutes a successful or prestigious career, and individuals may feel compelled to conform to these standards in order to gain social approval and avoid negative judgments.

For example, certain professions or industries may be perceived as more prestigious or desirable in society, while others may be stigmatized or undervalued. Graduates may feel pressured to choose careers that align with societal expectations, even if those choices may not align with their own interests or aspirations.

Societal judgment can also influence the perceived value and status attached to different career paths. Some careers may be considered more socially acceptable or respected, while others may be seen as less desirable or lacking in prestige. These perceptions can influence graduates' decisions and shape their horizons for action, as they may prioritize careers that are seen as socially prestigious or prestigious within their communities.

It is important to recognize the influence of societal judgment on graduates' horizons for action and CDM. By understanding and challenging societal norms and expectations, individuals can gain the freedom to explore diverse career options and make decisions that align with their own passions, values, and goals. Creating a supportive and inclusive environment that values individual choices and celebrates diverse career paths can help graduates expand their horizons for action and make decisions that are truly fulfilling and meaningful to them.

Viana's horizons for action and career decision-making (CDM) process are indeed significantly influenced by societal judgment and the fear of being perceived as unemployed or unsuccessful. Viana's concern about how she would be viewed by her neighbors and relatives if she were unemployed reflects the pressure to maintain a certain social status and avoid negative judgments from society.

The societal significance placed on having a respectable job is particularly evident during special occasions like Lebaran, where questions about employment status often arise. Viana's expression of relief and confidence in having obtained a job in a government office before Lebaran indicates the importance society places on having a job and the desire to avoid the stigma associated with unemployment. She said,

“I am concerned, yes, because I don't want to end up unemployed. Moreover, I always feel inferior, even though people say, "Why do you care about what others think?" Yes, everyone feels insecure at times. And secondly, because the year is changing and approaching Eid, I want to have a new story to share.”

Furthermore, Viana's positive feelings about wearing a formal dress called "keki" to work, as it gives her a sense of pride and contributes to the perception of her job as amazing and cool, demonstrate the influence of societal judgments and appearances on her horizons for action and self-esteem. These external factors play a role in shaping her perception of her job and its validation in the eyes of society.

Viana's experience highlights the significant social pressures and expectations that individuals face in their career decision-making processes. The fear of judgment and the desire for social approval and validation through employment can greatly impact graduates' choices. These influences can limit their horizons for action and push them towards careers that are deemed socially acceptable or prestigious, rather than aligning with their true passions and aspirations.

Understanding these societal influences is crucial for creating a supportive and inclusive environment that allows individuals to make career decisions based on their own aspirations and values, rather than solely seeking societal acceptance. By challenging societal prejudices and promoting a culture that values diverse career paths and individual fulfillment, individuals can be

empowered to pursue careers that align with their personal goals and passions. Ultimately, it is important to foster an environment where individuals can make authentic career choices without the fear of judgment, enabling them to find fulfillment and success in their chosen paths.

Disposition

According to Bourdieu's theory of fields, dispositions refer to an individual's innate or acquired characteristics, skills, and preferences that shape their behaviors and positions within a field. Dispositions are not strictly determined or fixed, but rather they provide individuals with a certain propensity or inclination to occupy particular positions within a given field (Bourdieu, 1977). Bourdieu emphasizes that while dispositions may influence individuals' actions and choices, they are not deterministic in nature. Dispositions interact with the social structures and dynamics of a specific field, and individuals' dispositions can be influenced and shaped by their experiences, socialization, and interactions within that field.

In Bourdieu's theory, fields are social spaces characterized by specific rules, hierarchies, and systems of power. The positions and relationships within a field are shaped by various forms of capital, including economic, cultural, and social capital. Dispositions, along with individuals' capital and strategies, contribute to their positioning and engagement within a field (Bourdieu, 1977). However, Bourdieu also acknowledges that individuals have some agency and can exercise their dispositions strategically to navigate and position themselves within a field. While dispositions provide a certain inclination or predisposition, individuals can also develop new dispositions or reshape existing ones through their interactions and experiences within the field. Overall, Bourdieu's theory of fields recognizes the complex interplay between individual dispositions and the social structures of a field. Dispositions are not deterministic, but they do shape individuals' choices and actions within the opportunities and constraints of a specific field (Bourdieu, 1977).

There are some factors within the disposition dimension that influence the horizons for action and finally the graduates' CDM behavior. Those are as follows:

1. Personal job aspirations

Job aspiration is an important disposition that can significantly influence the horizons for action of graduates and their career decision-making (CDM) process. Job aspiration refers to the desires, ambitions, and career goals that individuals hold regarding their future employment.

The aspirations individuals have for their careers can shape their horizons for action by influencing the choices they make and the paths they pursue. When individuals have strong job aspirations, they are more likely to explore opportunities, acquire relevant skills and knowledge, and take actions aligned with their desired career paths. Their aspirations provide a sense of direction and motivation, guiding their decision-making process.

Job aspiration plays a crucial role in graduates' CDM by influencing the types of jobs they consider, the industries they explore, and the steps they take to achieve their career goals. It can shape their educational choices, such as selecting specific majors or pursuing further education or training that aligns with their aspirations. Job aspiration can also influence their willingness to take risks, pursue entrepreneurial ventures, or seek employment in specific sectors or organizations.

Moreover, job aspiration can impact graduates' overall satisfaction and engagement in their careers. When individuals have aspirations that align with their interests, values, and skills, they are more likely to experience fulfillment and motivation in their chosen professions.

It is important for individuals to reflect on and clarify their job aspirations during their CDM process. By understanding their own career goals and aspirations, graduates can make more informed decisions, set realistic targets, and actively pursue opportunities that align with their desired paths.

Overall, job aspiration is a significant disposition that can shape graduates' horizons for action and impact their CDM process. Recognizing and nurturing their aspirations can help individuals make meaningful career choices and increase the likelihood of achieving personal and professional fulfillment in their chosen careers.

Hana's job aspirations significantly influenced her horizons for action and career decision-making process. Despite having previously worked as an accountant in a marketplace (a digital-based company), she decided to resign and pursue a new opportunity in an e-commerce company as an accounting analyst. Her decision to leave her previous workplace was driven by her desire to develop her skills and gain new experiences in a different company. She shared,

“The story goes like this... So, at X company, I officially left in May, which means in June, around the mid of the month, I completely left that company. But, I started working at my current company on January 20th, for a short period, January, February, March,

April, May... It was around May 22nd or 23rd, I think, on a Monday, when I started working here. The reason for the switch was because after graduating, I wanted to explore and develop myself further. X company had more of a local scope, with only 3 or 4 branches established recently, around March. On the other hand, my current company is a multinational company, and I wanted to challenge myself in a more advanced company. So, I applied and searched for job opportunities, and I found this one on LinkedIn.”

Hana explained that her former company had a local scope, while her current company operates on an international scale with branches in multiple countries. This global aspect of her current job aligns well with her aspirations and interests. Despite her lower position in the new company compared to her previous role, she found the multinational scope and the opportunity to engage in coordination with employees from different countries to be more challenging and appealing.

During the interview process for her current job, Hana emphasized her previous experience in a digital-based company. This experience likely played a significant role in her successful application, as her interviewer recognized the similarities between her previous role and the responsibilities of the new position. Her familiarity with digital-based work and her ability to explain her previous job duties effectively contributed to her being viewed as a suitable candidate.

Overall, Hana's job aspirations, and interest in international scope were instrumental in shaping her horizons for action and guiding her career decision-making process. Her willingness to seek new challenges and build upon her previous experience highlights the importance of aligning one's career choices with personal aspirations and the desire for growth and development.

2. Religious belief or values

Religious belief or values can be an aspect of disposition that influences graduates' horizons for action and their pragmatically rational career decision-making (CDM). Disposition refers to an individual's inherent qualities, inclinations, and attitudes that shape their behavior and choices. Religious beliefs and values can have a profound impact on a person's worldview, ethical framework, and priorities in life, including their career decisions. For many individuals, their religious beliefs form an integral part of their identity and guide their decision-making process.

When it comes to career choices, religious beliefs can shape the perceived compatibility or incompatibility of certain industries, job roles, or practices with one's religious values. Certain professions or sectors may be seen as aligned with the principles and teachings of a particular religion, while others may be considered conflicting or contrary to those beliefs.

As a result, graduates who hold strong religious beliefs may be more inclined to pursue career paths that are in harmony with their religious values, even if it means deviating from more conventional or financially lucrative options. Their horizons for action, or the range of possibilities they consider and pursue, can be influenced by their religious disposition, leading them to prioritize career paths that are compatible with their faith.

Ultimately, religious belief and value systems can significantly shape graduates' pragmatically rational CDM, as they weigh their career options, make choices, and navigate their professional journeys in accordance with their religious convictions.

The examples provided illustrate cases where informants were not allowed to work in the banking sector due to religious beliefs held by their parents, who are Muslims. The perception that the banking sector is closely associated with usury or “riba”, which is prohibited in Islam, influenced their parents' decision to restrict their career choices. As a result, these individuals sought employment opportunities in other fields that were deemed more acceptable from a religious perspective.

Radit, for instance, had initially been offered a job as a mobile programmer in a bank but had to decline the opportunity because his parents believed that working in the banking sector was against their religious principles. Instead, he opted to work in an NGO. Similarly, Ani and Aulia also faced limitations imposed by their parents, as they were not allowed to pursue careers in the banking sector due to religious considerations. This is the evidence taken from Radit's case.

Interviewer: “So, this one was more approved by your parents, right?”

Radit: “Yes.”

Interviewer: “Was it because the previous place wasn't allowed by your parents, maybe because it was too far or for some other reasons?”

Radit: “It was banking.”

These cases highlight the influence of religious beliefs and parental guidance on the career decisions of individuals. While their personal religious convictions may vary, the common theme is the perception that working in the banking sector, particularly in roles associated with interest-based transactions, goes against their understanding of Islamic teachings.

It is important to note that individual interpretations of religious principles may differ, and not all Muslims hold the same views regarding employment in the banking industry. The examples provided reflect specific individuals' experiences and the influence of their parents' perspectives on their career choices.

3. Personal interest (hobbies)

Hobbies often reflect an individual's personal interests and passions. Engaging in activities they enjoy outside of their academic or professional pursuits can provide graduates with a sense of fulfillment and satisfaction. These hobbies can influence their horizons for action by directing their attention towards career paths or industries that align with their interests. Graduates may be more motivated to pursue careers related to their hobbies, as they find joy and fulfillment in these areas.

Hobbies often involve the development of specific skills and expertise. Graduates who engage in hobbies that require specialized knowledge or technical abilities may develop transferable skills that can be relevant in the professional realm. These skills can broaden their horizons for action, opening up opportunities in fields or industries related to their hobbies. Graduates may consider turning their hobbies into careers or seek employment that allows them to utilize the skills they have acquired through their hobbies.

Hobbies often encourage exploration and self-discovery. Graduates who engage in various hobbies may have more diverse experiences and exposure to different domains, which can expand their horizons for action. Through their hobbies, graduates may discover new interests, develop new skills, or find unexpected career paths they had not considered before. Hobbies can inspire graduates to think outside the box, explore unconventional options, and make career decisions that align with their evolving passions and interests.

By recognizing the influence of hobbies, graduates can incorporate their personal interests and passions into their career decision-making process. They can seek opportunities that allow them to integrate their hobbies into their professional lives, fostering a sense of purpose and fulfillment. Additionally, educational institutions and career advisors can encourage

graduates to reflect on their hobbies and explore how they can translate their passion into meaningful career paths.

The case example highlights the influence of personal interests or hobbies on the participants' perspectives and choices. Santi, a 25-year-old graduate from the electrical engineering department at Polytechnic B, shares her journey of pursuing her passion for teaching while also aspiring to be a YouTuber creating educational content.

Santi reflects on her previous mindset, mentioning that she used to believe she was free to choose any job as long as she had the intention and the freedom to do so. However, she acknowledges that societal perceptions play a role, particularly in how people view traditional employment versus freelancing in the digital world, such as on YouTube. She contemplates how her parents might perceive her career choices and whether they would prefer her to pursue a more conventional job.

However, Santi emphasizes the importance of personal fulfillment and comfort. She mentions that if being an employee does not align with her aspirations and desires, she wouldn't feel comfortable pursuing that path. Her inner calling and conscience lead her to explore new interests and consider becoming a teacher again.

Santi describes the excitement she experiences when interacting with children and the positive response she receives from them. This reinforces her belief that she has a natural affinity for teaching. Moreover, her exposure to educational content and teacher-related materials fuels her desire to study and pursue a teaching career. She also expresses an interest in becoming a content creator, using platforms like YouTube to share educational content and creative ideas.

“In my opinion, I believe that we should have the freedom to choose any job as long as we have the intention and passion for it. However, we cannot ignore the societal views on certain professions. It's true that society tends to value traditional employment more, such as being an employee, rather than working as a freelancer in the digital world, like on YouTube and others. But if my parents still hold those traditional views and want me to be an employee, I might not feel comfortable if the job doesn't align with my desires. As time went by during my years in elementary school, which was almost three years, I developed a new interest. I often watched educational content and teacher videos, which sparked a desire in me to pursue a career in that field. It felt like a calling, something that

resonated with my soul, but I lacked the platform to express it. When I entered the classroom and started speaking, the children were enthusiastic about what I had to say. It made me realize that they enjoyed my way of communicating. So, it seems that being a content creator who delivers informative and creative content is something I cannot separate myself from.”

Overall, Santi's account highlights the significance of personal interests and passions in shaping individuals' career choices and aspirations. It showcases her exploration of different paths, the fulfillment she derives from teaching, and her aspiration to combine her passion for education with content creation on digital platforms like YouTube.

4. CDM attitude: pessimistic

Hodkinson (2008) suggests that narratives characterized by hopelessness and passivity tend to narrow an individual's horizons for action, thereby reducing their agency. Conversely, narratives infused with realistic hope and proactivity can have the opposite effect, expanding one's horizons for action and increasing agency.

When individuals view their circumstances as hopeless and believe they have little control over their situation, they are less likely to take initiative or seek opportunities for change. This narrative of helplessness can limit their belief in their ability to influence their own lives. In contrast, narratives that embrace a sense of realistic hope acknowledge challenges but maintain a belief in the possibility of improvement. Such narratives can motivate individuals to take proactive steps and explore different avenues to bring about change.

The study highlights that many of the informants had a pessimistic attitude towards their career decision-making (CDM) amidst the COVID-19 pandemic. Rian's experience serves as an example of this pessimism. He encountered significant challenges in finding a job, with a high number of applicants competing for limited positions. Despite having various experiences, such as organizational involvement, freelancing, and internships during his time in polytechnic, he consistently faced rejection in the interview process.

Rian's struggles indicate that the cultural capital he acquired through his experiences did not necessarily translate into symbolic capital, as proposed in Bourdieu's theory of practice. Not all forms of capital can be effectively utilized within a specific field or context. The difficulty he faced in converting his cultural capital into symbolic capital suggests a mismatch between the

skills and experiences he possessed and the demands of the job market. Additionally, Rian expressed a lack of confidence, associating himself with the "Corona generation" that experienced online learning and perceived learning loss. These factors contributed to his pessimistic outlook on his future prospects. He said,

“Yes, I'm little bit afraid of it because it's been a month, but I still do not get any replies for the companies I apply for. Finding a job is very difficult now.”

Overall, Rian's story exemplifies the prevailing pessimism among some individuals in their CDM amidst the COVID-19 pandemic. The challenges they face in securing employment and the perceived limitations in converting their acquired capital into desired outcomes contribute to this sense of pessimism about their future.

This research reveals that the experiences of graduates have had a significant impact on their career confidence, morale, motivation, and overall perception of the job market. Many participants openly discussed how the pandemic has affected their self-esteem, self-perception, and their identity as graduates. They expressed concerns about being "left behind" and feeling like a potentially "forgotten generation" due to the challenges they faced in securing employment.

The study suggests that these experiences have led to the formation of emotional scars that are already influencing how graduates perceive their employability and future career prospects. The negative impact on their employment experiences may have long-term implications if positive outcomes and opportunities for growth are not realized. The scarring effect, if not addressed and mitigated, could potentially hinder graduates' career trajectories and limit their future opportunities.

It is important to acknowledge the psychological and emotional toll that these experiences have had on graduates and to provide support systems and resources that can help rebuild their confidence, motivation, and optimism about their careers. By addressing the scarring effect and promoting positive outcomes, it is possible to alleviate the long-term implications and help graduates navigate a more favorable career path.

5. CDM attitude: optimistic

An optimistic career decision-making (CDM) attitude can significantly influence graduates' horizons for action and their CDM behavior. An optimistic CDM attitude encourages graduates to have an open mind and explore a wide range of possibilities. They are more likely to consider diverse career options and be willing to step outside their comfort zones. This broadens their horizons for action by expanding the range of opportunities they are willing to explore.

Optimistic individuals tend to view challenges as opportunities for growth and development. They are more likely to take risks and pursue ambitious career goals. This attitude allows graduates to push beyond their perceived limitations and consider career paths that may require effort, persistence, and resilience. It expands their horizons for action by encouraging them to aim higher and pursue challenging opportunities.

An optimistic CDM attitude helps graduates bounce back from setbacks and rejections. They view setbacks as temporary obstacles rather than permanent failures. This resilience allows them to maintain a positive outlook and continue exploring alternative options, even in the face of adversity. It enables them to learn from setbacks, adapt their strategies, and make more informed career decisions.

Overall, an optimistic CDM attitude empowers graduates to approach their career decisions with positivity, resilience, and a sense of possibility. It expands their horizons for action by encouraging exploration, embracing challenges, and maintaining a long-term perspective. Graduates with an optimistic attitude are more likely to make decisions that align with their passions, values, and goals, leading to greater satisfaction and fulfillment in their careers.

The example provided here illustrates how the optimistic CDM attitude can influence graduates' horizons for action and their decision-making behavior in the context of the digital transformation. IT graduates perceive themselves as winners during the crisis period because digital employment offers a reliable source of income. They see opportunities in the increasing demand for IT specialists, which has grown even more during the COVID-19 pandemic. Their optimistic CDM attitude aligns with the nature of the field and the digital work environment.

These IT graduates pragmatically activate their cultural capital in the form of digital cultural capital, which refers to their digital skills and knowledge, to secure employment and succeed in the digital work environment. Their optimistic outlook is reflected in their proactive

approach to leveraging their skills and adapting to remote work, which was already part of their work culture before the pandemic.

Non-IT graduates face challenges in the labor market due to the digital transformation. However, they recognize the importance of gaining or improving their digital skills to increase their employability. Their pragmatic CDM behavior involves adapting to the changing landscape by investing in developing their digital skills and effectively utilizing their existing cultural capital.

Both IT and non-IT graduates demonstrate an understanding of the nature of the field and the need to align with the requirements of the digital transformation. IT graduates embrace the opportunities, while non-IT graduates recognize the necessity of digital skills to navigate the labor market successfully.

The optimistic CDM attitude displayed by both IT and non-IT graduates contributes to their resiliency and ability to survive and thrive amidst the challenges posed by the digital transformation. They actively invest in their skills, adapt to changes, and leverage their cultural capital to enhance their competitiveness in the digital work environment.

These examples highlight how an optimistic CDM attitude enables graduates to embrace opportunities, adapt to changing circumstances, and leverage their skills and knowledge effectively. It underscores the importance of aligning with the requirements of the field and taking proactive steps to navigate the digital transformation successfully.

6. Social comparison and the fear of missing out (FOMO)

Graduates often engage in social comparison, where they compare themselves to their peers, friends, or individuals in similar career paths. This comparison can influence their horizons for action by shaping their perceptions of what is considered successful or desirable in their chosen field. If graduates perceive that their peers are achieving certain milestones or pursuing specific career paths, they may feel compelled to follow a similar trajectory, even if it does not align with their own interests or aspirations.

Comparing oneself to others can also stem from the desire for external validation. Graduates may seek approval or recognition from their social circle or society at large. They may base their career decisions on what is perceived as prestigious or socially esteemed, rather than considering their own individual passions or goals. This external validation-seeking behavior can limit their horizons for action and prevent them from exploring unconventional or less popular

career paths. If graduates have prominent figures in their field of interest whom they look up to, they may strive to emulate their career paths or achievements. This can influence their CDM behavior by guiding their choices towards careers that align with their role models' trajectories, values, or perceived success.

Comparisons with peers also can create a sense of peer pressure, where graduates may feel the need to conform to certain expectations or norms within their social group. Peer pressure can influence their horizons for action by limiting their exploration of alternative career paths or causing them to prioritize the opinions and choices of others over their own preferences. Graduates may feel compelled to make decisions that align with what their peers are doing, even if it does not align with their true aspirations.

The fear of missing out (FOMO) can also impact graduates' CDM behavior. If graduates perceive that their peers are pursuing certain opportunities or career paths that they have not considered, they may experience FOMO and feel pressured to follow suit. This fear can limit their horizons for action by creating a sense of urgency or anxiety to make decisions based on external comparisons rather than their own authentic desires.

It is important for graduates to recognize the influence of comparing to others in their decision-making process and strive to prioritize their own values, interests, and aspirations. Career exploration should be based on self-reflection and an understanding of one's own strengths, passions, and long-term goals. By focusing on their individual journey rather than comparing themselves to others, graduates can make career decisions that are truly aligned with their own aspirations and sense of fulfillment. Career guidance and mentorship can play a crucial role in helping graduates navigate this aspect and make informed decisions based on self-awareness and authenticity.

The case example features Rian, a 23-year-old graduate from the accounting department of Polytechnic A, who faced challenges in finding employment during the COVID-19 pandemic. Rian's experience reflects how the achievements of his peers affected his own perceptions and decisions.

Rian acknowledges that he observed several friends who had already secured jobs at various companies. This observation created a sense of social comparison and triggered feelings of insecurity. Seeing his friends' accomplishments, Rian felt pressured and uncertain about his own situation.

The fear of missing out (FOMO) plays a role in Rian's decision to accept any job that comes his way. This fear stems from the fear of falling behind or being left out compared to his peers. Rian's desire to avoid missing out on opportunities and the achievements of others influenced his decision to take up any available job, even if it may not align with his initial aspirations or preferences.

Rian's case exemplifies how social comparison and the fear of missing out can impact individuals' horizons for action. The desire to keep up with peers' achievements and avoid feeling left behind can lead individuals to make choices that may not necessarily reflect their true desires or goals. In Rian's case, the pressure to conform and the fear of missing out influenced his decision to prioritize securing any job, even if it meant compromising on his initial career aspirations. He said,

“Yeah, I've also been thinking about it. Some of my friends have already started working in various companies. So, there's a bit of pressure and insecurity when comparing myself to them.”

Overall, the nature of the field, the position of individuals within that field, and their embodied dispositions collectively shape the horizons for action—the range of possibilities and constraints—influencing how individuals navigate and succeed within their chosen domains. The discussions about the change in the horizons for action and the CDM behaviour change are divided into the scenarios in pre-COVID 19 time and amidst COVID-19 time as follows.

5.3.1 Pre-COVID 19 CDM behavior

In the pre-COVID-19 scenario (see Figure 17), the CDM behavior of graduates was influenced by limited employment opportunities and backdoor hiring practices within the nature of the field. Graduates tended to adopt a pragmatically rational approach to their CDM, considering the constraints and opportunities present in their field. The horizons for action, which represent the range of possibilities and options available to individuals, were shaped by the nature of the field, the graduates' positions within the social structure, and their dispositions. Each graduate had a unique combination of these constructs (see Table 17), influencing their decision-making processes.

Table 17. Combinations of constructs influencing horizons for action: the case of pre-COVID 19 graduates

Ayu ABEGK	Anas ACGM	Ani AEHK	Aminah AEGHL	Aulia AEHL	Amir AFJL	Azhar AFHK	Anita AEJL
Bella AEGK	Wina AEGK	Fikri AGK	Binar ABGM	Risna ACGO	Adam ACGL	Ahmad ABJL	Akbar ABGK
Marisa ACGIL	Aisyah AEGMK	Alim ABGL	Amelia ABEGK	Adinda ACGK	Santi AFGILN	Hendri ABJKN	Amna AEGK

Notes:

Nature of the field

limited job opportunities and backdoor hiring practices (nepotism or the power of “orang dalam” or connections) (A)

Position

- Economic position of family (B)
- Family occupational background (C)
- Parental pressure (D)
- Gender bias (confining to job opportunities) (E)
- Societal judgment (F)

Disposition

- Personal job aspirations (G)
- Religious belief or values (H)
- Personal interest (hobbies) (I)
- Social comparison and the fear of missing out (FOMO) (J)

Pragmatically rational CDM

- Getting a job in line with the major (K)
- Taking any job (horizontal, vertical, underemployment) (L)
- Being self-employed (M)

- Continuing study (N)
- Unemployed (O)

The table showcases the different combinations of the nature of the field, the graduates' positions within the social structure, and their dispositions. These combinations contribute to shaping the horizons for action, which in turn influence the graduates' decision-making processes in their career paths. It is important to note that this scenario reflects the pre-COVID-19 context, where the employment landscape and job market conditions were different compared to the circumstances during the pandemic. In general, the scenario of the graduates' behavior before COVID-19 is as the following Figure 17.

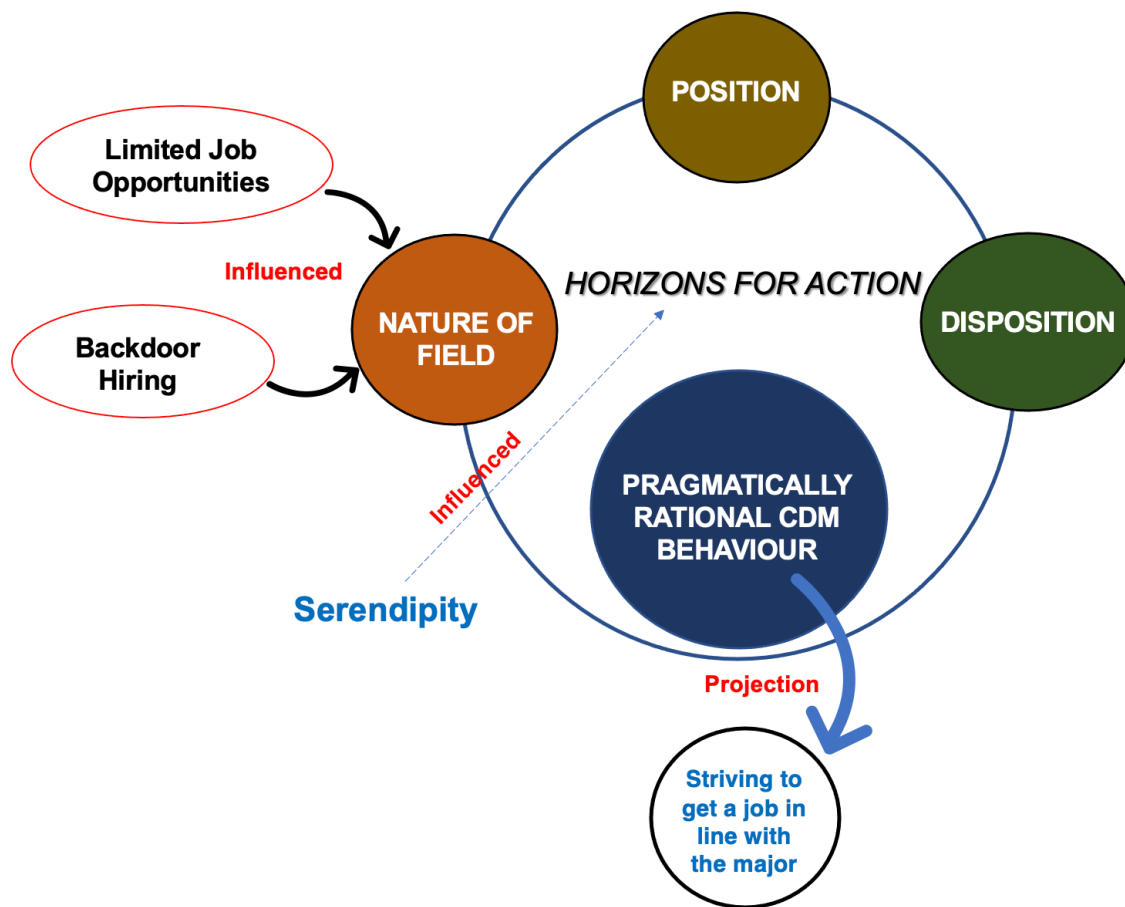


Figure 17. General scenario of pre-COVID19 CDM behavior

Ayu's case exemplifies the interplay of various factors that influenced her career decision-making (CDM) behavior. These factors include limited job opportunities, backdoor hiring practices, her family's economic situation, and her job aspirations. The limited job

opportunities and prevalence of backdoor hiring practices in the labor market affected Ayu's CDM behavior. These conditions made it challenging for her to secure suitable employment. The combination of limited job prospects and the use of informal networks for hiring influenced her decision-making, leading her to consider alternative options and navigate the labor market accordingly.

Ayu family's economic situation played a significant role in shaping her CDM behavior. The passing of her father placed additional financial responsibilities on her shoulders, particularly regarding her younger sisters' education. This family obligation compelled her to seek employment to support her family financially, influencing her job choices and priorities. Additionally, Ayu's job aspirations influenced her CDM behavior. She had a preference for working as a tax administrator in an office setting, considering factors such as the type of company and the salary offered. However, she remained open to exploring other opportunities, especially if they provided better job stability or a stronger reputation, such as working for state-owned enterprises or becoming a civil servant. This highlights that Ayu's decision-making process incorporated a balance between her interests and the practical considerations of job stability and financial support.

Aisyah, a 26-year-old graduate from the Visual Communication Design department at Polytechnic A, provides a compelling case example of the complexities involved in making career decisions. Aisyah faced challenges in securing a job immediately after her graduation in October 2019, even before the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. Expressing her frustration, she shared her experience:

"OK, so I graduated on October 9th, before the COVID situation, but it wasn't possible to find a job right away, ma'am. Since I graduated, I immediately sent out job applications via email, but I received no response. Consequently, I decided to join my friend and work at a factory as a production operator."

Aisyah attributed the difficulty in finding a job in her field to the limited job opportunities available. She also highlighted the prevalence of backdoor hiring practices in Indonesia, which added to the challenges she faced. Interestingly, she mentioned encountering offers that required bribes, which she adamantly refused:

"I have even been offered opportunities that required me to pay bribes, but I declined."

In addition to the labor market dynamics, Aisyah's career decision-making process was influenced by factors such as gender bias, parental restrictions, and her own career aspirations. Her parents did not permit her to work outside of her hometown or far from home. Aisyah explained:

"Yesterday, I received a job offer from an office in Jakarta. I really wanted to work outside of my town, to gain more experience in a big city. However, my parents did not allow me to work outside of Pematang. Perhaps it's because I'm a daughter, a girl. Moreover, I am still unmarried, and my parents are getting older. So, I think it's difficult for my parents, right?"

Despite these challenges, Aisyah expressed a strong desire to find a job aligned with her educational background:

"Yes, I still want to work in a field related to my major."

As a result of these various factors, Aisyah briefly ventured into self-employment during the COVID-19 pandemic, saying:

"It was difficult to find a job during the pandemic. Really challenging. But I kept searching. I couldn't secure a job, so I decided to sell plants. Due to COVID-19, people were staying at home, and the demand for plants was high."

Currently, Aisyah has managed to secure a formal job as a social media administrator and designer for social media in Pematang city, fulfilling her aspirations and those of her parents:

"I am currently working as a social media administrator and designer for social media in Pematang city."

Aisyah's career decision-making journey exemplifies the multifaceted nature of navigating the job market, facing limited opportunities, societal biases, familial expectations, and personal aspirations. Her experiences shed light on the complexities that Indonesian graduates encounter in making career choices, especially amidst challenging circumstances like the COVID-19 pandemic.

Additionally, the study revealed that a majority of the participants who graduated before the COVID-19 pandemic initially aspired to secure a job that matched their educational background. However, it was not uncommon for some of them to end up accepting positions that were not directly related to their majors. Nonetheless, many of these graduates eventually sought out other job opportunities that aligned with their educational qualifications.

As a result, these graduates reported having different jobs compared to the ones they initially obtained during their first transition from education to the workforce. The decision to change jobs was influenced by various factors, including the desire for greater job security, the pursuit of job satisfaction, and a closer alignment with their professional interests and educational backgrounds.

Furthermore, the COVID-19 pandemic also had an impact on the job experiences of some graduates in Indonesia. The uncertain economic climate and job market during the pandemic led some individuals to reconsider their career choices and make job changes.

Overall, these findings indicate that the graduates who completed their education before the COVID-19 pandemic exhibited a pragmatically rational approach to their career decisions. While many initially sought jobs in line with their majors, they remained flexible and adaptive, eventually aligning themselves with career paths that suited their interests and qualifications. This behavior falls within the rational continuum, as depicted in Figure 17 of the study.

5.3.2 Amidst COVID-19 CDM behavior

During the COVID-19 pandemic, graduates exhibited a similar CDM behavior as they did before the pandemic, adopting a pragmatically rational approach that took into account the limitations and possibilities within their respective fields. The COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on individuals entering the workforce, especially recent graduates who have invested in higher education with the expectation of reaping its benefits (Tomlinson et al., 2022a). The labor market has become more unstable and uncertain, disproportionately affecting recent graduates

and those at the beginning stages of their careers. This situation has immediate consequences and potential long-term implications for individuals entering a weakened labor market (Tomlinson et al., 2022b).

The scope of their actions, which encompassed the available choices and possibilities, was influenced by the characteristics of their field, their social positions, and their personal tendencies (dispositions). Each graduate had a unique combination of these factors during this crisis, which influenced their decision-making processes (refer to Table 18).

Table 18. Combinations of constructs influencing horizons for action: the case of amidst-COVID 19 graduates

Valdi ABIQ	Bani ABIKN	Mawar ABGJLS	Umam ACGL	Imran ABGJLS	Rian ACDIPST
Viana ABEFGN	Radit ABGJLS	Tia AEGLS	Toro ABINR	Hana AGJLST	Nela ABINM
Budi ABGL	Dania AEGNS	Malik ABGLT	Tiana ABEGL	Rizal ABGN	Joko ABGN
Hisyam ABINS	Diki ADINPM	Lia A EGL	Indah ACEGN	Dian AEGLS	Rianti ABEJNS
Rahman AGL	Tono ACGO	Zami ABGL	Beni ABGL	Dita AGNL	Yusuf ABGL
Via ABGL	Zaki ABGL	Guntur ABGL	Mira ABGL	Bumi ABGL	Mia ABGL
Jamal ABCGL	Susi ABGL	Desi ABGL	Sari ABGLO	Roy ABGL	

Notes:

Nature of the field

Social and mobility restrictions, limited job opportunities, backdoor hiring practices, and digital transformation (A)

Position

- Economic position of family (B)
- Family occupational background (C)
- Parental pressure (D)
- Gender bias (confining to job opportunities) (E)
- Societal judgment (F)

Disposition

- Personal job aspirations (G)
- Religious belief or values (H)
- CDM attitude: pessimistic (I)
- CDM attitude: optimistic (J)
- Social comparison and the fear of missing out (FOMO) (K)

Pragmatically rational CDM

- Getting a job in line with the major (L)
- Unemployed (M)
- Taking any job (horizontal, vertical, underemployment) (N)
- Being self-employed (O)
- Being freelancers/gig workers (P)
- Being part-time workers (Q)
- Working overseas (boundaryless) (R)
- Taking IT-related jobs (S)
- Taking remote working job practices (T)

Taking the example of Viana (23), who exhibits a combination of ABEFGN constructs. Viana's career decision-making (CDM) process was influenced by the challenging nature of the field during the COVID-19 pandemic, characterized by limited job opportunities, backdoor hiring practices, and digital transformation (A). Viana expressed her concerns, stating:

"I applied for a job at a bank, but it was rejected, and my applications to other companies were also rejected. I felt hopeless, thinking, 'Finding a job is really hard.' Some places require you to have connections or pay money to get in, and I don't want that. I want to work and earn money, not spend money."

Viana's horizons for CDM action were shaped by her family's economic position (B). When asked if she received any assistance from her family in finding a job, Viana responded:

"My parents don't have high-status careers. I wanted to find a job on my own without relying on their connections. Although some of my relatives work in companies, I didn't want to use their influence."

Additionally, Viana experienced gender bias in terms of job opportunities (E). Her parents did not allow her to work outside the town. She said: "My parents have a significant influence on my choices. If I express interest in something, they often discourage me from pursuing it."

Societal judgment (F) also influenced Viana's horizons for action and ultimately her CDM behavior. She expressed her worries and desire for a new story to tell during Eid:

"I worry about ending up unemployed. Sometimes, despite my achievements, I still feel inferior. Everyone experiences moments of insecurity, right? As the new year approaches and Eid is coming, I want to have an interesting story to share with my parents."

Viana also had personal job aspirations, particularly related to salary:

"When I see job vacancies on Instagram, I often don't filter them. I think about the salary and how it covers my living expenses. I also prioritize saving money."

Despite considering various factors, Viana ultimately accepted a job as a secretary, which may be a horizontal mismatch but brings her happiness. Previously, she worked as a teacher in a course and was self-employed before taking the secretary position.

In general, for the CDM behavior amidst COVID-19, this research identified two scenarios. These scenarios not only captured the main experiences of graduates in relation to their CDM processes since graduation but also shed light on how they perceive their current situation and evaluate their future prospects.

By examining the CDM behaviors of graduates during the pandemic, the study provides insights into the challenges they face and the strategies they employ to navigate the uncertain job market. The two identified scenarios reflect the diverse approaches graduates have taken in response to the pandemic's impact on their career trajectories.

Understanding these scenarios can help policymakers, educators, and career advisors develop targeted interventions and support mechanisms to assist recent graduates in making informed career decisions. By acknowledging the unique circumstances and perspectives of individuals entering the workforce during the pandemic, stakeholders can better address their immediate needs and facilitate their long-term career development.

Scenario 1-CDM behavior amidst COVID-19

In scenario 1 (see Figure 18), the researcher found that recent graduates faced limited job opportunities due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

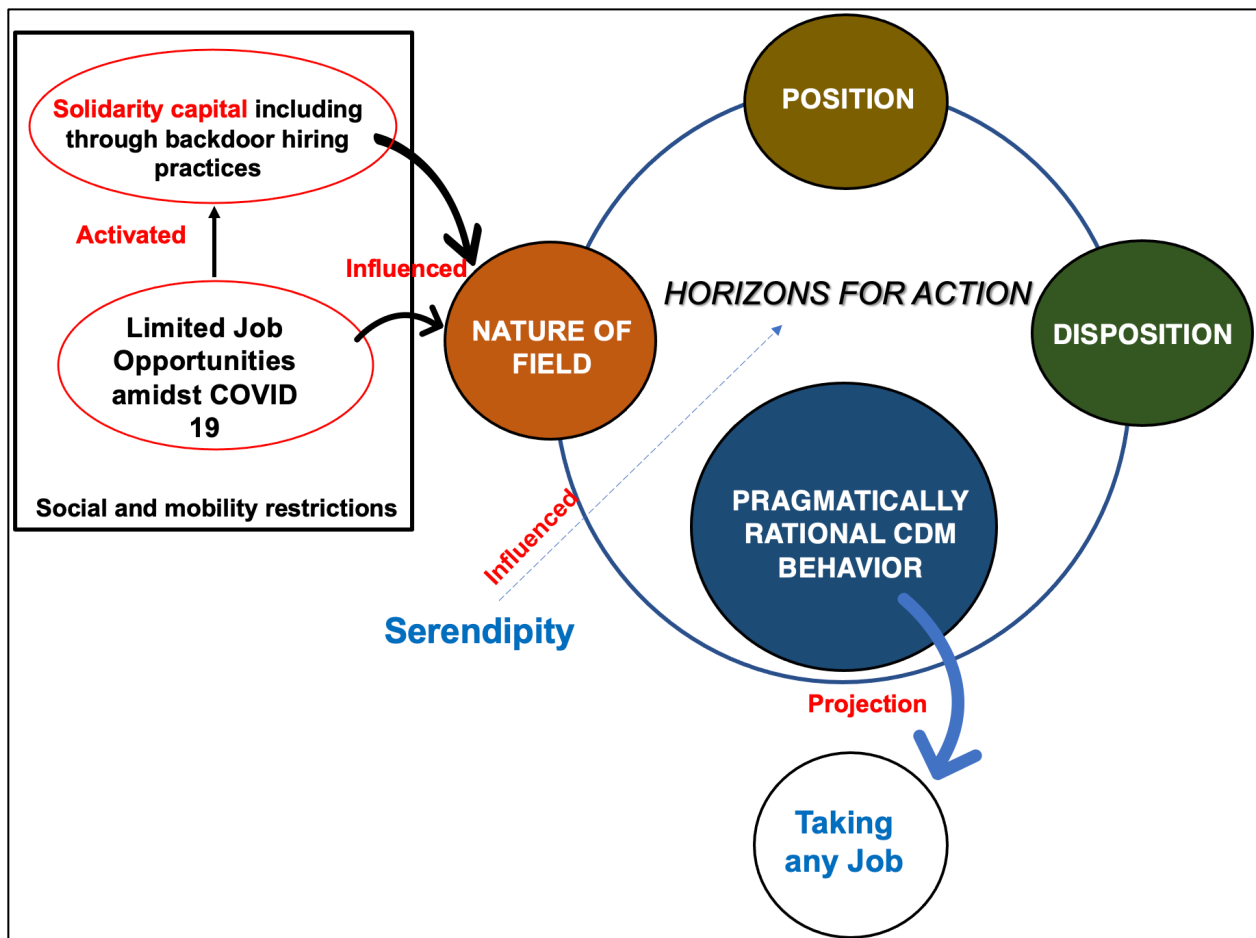


Figure 18. Scenario 1-CDM behavior amidst COVID-19

Several factors contributed to the limited job opportunities situation, including:

- 1) **Decreased production and/or bankruptcies:** Many industries and companies experienced a decline in production or even bankruptcy as a result of the pandemic. This led to a decrease in job openings and a reduced demand for new employees. An example of this can be seen in Mr. Wahid's crackers factory, where the production declined, resulting in a halt in hiring new employees.

During an interview, Mr. Wahid, the factory owner, confirmed the decrease in production and its effects on employment. He mentioned that currently, there are only around 15 male and 25 female employees in the factory, a reduction from before the COVID-19 impact. When asked about any additions to the workforce, he clarified that no new employees were hired. Instead, some employees, facing financial difficulties due to

the pandemic's effects, chose to resign and search for other job opportunities to support their families.

This situation of employees leaving voluntarily due to financial constraints highlights the challenging circumstances faced by both employers and workers amidst the pandemic's economic repercussions. As a result of reduced production and financial pressures, the job market experienced a significant downturn, leading to limited job opportunities and employees seeking alternative options to sustain themselves and their families. The interview illustration is as follows,

Interviewer: “One place, right? X and Y products, how many employees are there, sir?”

Mr. Wahid: “Currently, there are only a few, after the COVID-19 impact, there are around 15 male employees and about 25 female employees.”

Interviewer: “So, there hasn't been any addition of employees at all?”

Mr. Wahid: “Yes, there hasn't.”

Interviewer: “In fact, why are there many who are temporarily laid off? I mean, the operations stopped there.”

Mr. Wahid: “Well, they are not laid off, but some of them, due to financial difficulties, decided to leave on their own and look for other jobs. I didn't lay them off, they left on their own because they needed to support their families at home.”

- 2) **Employee layoffs:** To cope with the challenging circumstances, some companies had to downsize their workforce and lay off employees. This further reduced the number of job opportunities available for recent graduates.

For instance, Ms. Silvi, the HRD manager of a private furniture company, shared that they had to downsize their workforce in 2020 due to the significant impact of Covid on their production and orders. The decline in orders led to a decrease in their workforce as they had to navigate through the difficult period. However, as the situation started to improve and orders became stable again in the beginning of 2021, they were able to resume their recruitment efforts. She echoed,

“The reduction was certainly there, in 2020 if I'm not mistaken. There was a reduction because Covid affected our production, and orders decreased, so we had to reduce our workforce. But at the beginning of 2021, we started to recover a bit, and we began recruiting again. We recruited again because after things reopened, the orders became stable again, and it has been like that until now.”

Similarly, Ms. Tina, another HRD manager in a private furniture company, had a similar experience. In March of 2020, the COVID impact began to be felt, but the situation worsened in May when the factory had to undergo a complete lockdown. The closure of international stores due to the pandemic led to a halt in shipments and a decrease in orders. As a result, many employees were furloughed during this period. However, starting from June, the situation started to show signs of improvement, and orders began to increase gradually, allowing the company to stabilize its operations. She said,

“So, last year in 2020, in March, the impact of Covid started, but it wasn't really felt until May when we had a complete lockdown in the factory. We stopped working because there were no international orders. Stores in countries like the USA, Germany, and others were closed, so there were no shipments. In essence, the stores were closed. During May, around the time of Eid, we were all at home without any work. For the employees, some were furloughed, but they still received a certain percentage of their salaries, and so on. Then in June, orders started to decrease, but fortunately, we began to see an improvement, and it has been relatively stable until now.”

Both companies faced a challenging period during the pandemic, leading to temporary factory shutdowns, furloughed employees, and workforce reductions. However, as the situation began to improve, they were able to recover gradually, leading to a resumption of recruitment efforts and a more stable business environment.

These examples highlight the severe impact of the pandemic on various industries and companies, causing disruptions in production, supply chains, and overall economic activities. Graduates looking for job opportunities in such industries faced significant challenges due to the limited job openings and increased competition, making their transition from education to work even more difficult.

- 3) **Recruitment freeze:** In response to the economic uncertainty, some companies implemented a freeze on new hiring. They focused on maintaining their existing employees rather than recruiting new ones, which resulted in fewer entry-level positions for graduates.

For instance, Mr. Zein, the owner of a school products supplier, confirmed that his company did not engage in any new hiring during this period. Instead, they decided to continue operating with their existing team and did not add any new staff. He said,

“That's correct, there was none. We continued to operate with the same team and did not hire any additional staff during that time.”

Similarly, Mr. Danang, the head of the PPOC department in a shoes manufacturing company, shared a similar experience during an interview. He stated that his company made a conscious effort to avoid reductions in their workforce during the COVID-19 period. He believed that their employees were their most valuable asset and aimed to maintain their stability throughout the challenging times. As a result, the company refrained from recruiting new employees during the pandemic, focusing on retaining their current workforce.

Interviewer: Oh, I see. So, there were no layoffs or reductions, right? How was it during the COVID period, from 2020 until 2021? Were the employees stable or were there any furloughs?

Mr. Danang: “Alhamdulillah, in our company, there were no reductions. We maintained our workforce because employees are our number one asset.”

Interviewer: “But there were no new hirings during the COVID period?”

Mr. Danang: “No.”

Interviewer: “I see, no new hirings...”

Mr. Danang: “That's right, we had no new hirings during COVID. We focused on retaining the existing employees.”

The recruitment freeze had significant implications for graduates seeking employment opportunities. With fewer new positions available in the job market, graduates faced increased competition for limited openings, making it more challenging for them to secure their desired entry-level roles. As companies prioritized stability and cost-efficiency during uncertain times, the availability of new job opportunities for fresh graduates diminished, further exacerbating the difficulties in their transition from education to work.

The combination of these factors created a difficult situation for recent graduates, as they faced a highly competitive job market with limited openings. This scenario has presented challenges in terms of finding employment and starting their careers on the expected trajectory. It is important to note that Scenario 1 reflects the specific circumstances during the COVID-19 pandemic. These challenges have not been uniform across all industries or regions, and some sectors have experienced growth and increased demand for specific skills. Nonetheless, the study highlights the impact of the pandemic on limited job opportunities for recent graduates in certain industries and companies.

Limited job opportunities is as the nature of the field that influences the graduates' horizons for action. But as explained before that there are two other constructs that also could influence the horizons for action. Those are the graduates' position in the field and their dispositions. And each graduate has her/his own combination between these constructs. The unique combination of limited job opportunities, position in the field, and dispositions for each graduate can influence their horizons for action—the range of choices and possibilities they perceive within their career paths. Graduates with favorable combinations, such as strong positions in the field and aligned dispositions, may have broader horizons for action and a higher likelihood of finding suitable employment despite limited job opportunities. Conversely, those

with less advantageous combinations may face more constrained horizons and need to strategize and adapt to the circumstances to pursue their desired career paths. It is important to note that these factors interact in complex ways, and individual circumstances can vary widely. Understanding and navigating these dynamics can help graduates make informed decisions, leverage available opportunities, and adapt their career paths in response to the evolving job market conditions.

The example of Rian's case illustrates how various factors and components influence his CDM behavior. Rian expresses his struggle in finding a job, mentioning that it has been challenging and he has not received any replies from the companies he applied to. The impact of the pandemic on the job market creates a difficult environment for job seekers, limiting the available opportunities. Rian said,

“Yes, I'm little bit afraid of it because it's been a month, but I still do not get any replies for the companies I apply for. Finding a job is very difficult now.”

In addition, Rian's parents have an entrepreneurial background, which means they have limited connections and knowledge about formal or professional jobs. This lack of network and assistance from his family in finding a job adds an additional challenge for Rian in his CDM process. He said,

Interviewer: “He’em, do you ever got a help from your family or parents to find a job?”

Rian: “No never.”

Interviewer: “No?”

Rian: “They don’t have any acquaintances who can help.”

I: “What does your parents do?”

Rian: “Entrepreneurs. All my siblings are also self-employed.”

Rian experiences pressure from his father, who suggests that he should focus on continuing the family business instead of actively pursuing a job. This parental pressure influences Rian's horizons for action and may lead him to prioritize his family's expectations over his own career aspirations.

“It’s so tired that even my father said like this last time, "You've applied a lot of applications but how come no one has been accepted?“. Then he said, "you don't have to apply for a job now , just continue my business" like that.”

Rian's past experiences of failing interviews and tests have led to a sense of pessimism in his CDM attitude. He mentions considering giving up during the application process and focuses on his involvement in organizations and volunteering activities instead. This pessimistic outlook may impact his motivation and confidence in pursuing job opportunities.

“Erm, it means that from the month I applied, from October to November, I wanted to give up because I failed the interview test, the psychological test and the interview until I met Mrs X [his department head], but I was afraid of what to do, finally I focused on my organization and joined the caring organization volunteer.”

Due to the difficulties he faced in finding a job, Rian eventually takes a freelancing opportunity in the IT-related field. The offer allows him to work remotely and provides him with an opportunity to gain work experience and income. This decision reflects his willingness to accept the available opportunity and adapt to the circumstances.

“So, I often get a job offer as a freelancer at the Tegal Film Festival publication. I am trusted to handle social media applications. So, I was asked to "do you want to hold this [social media] account?". So, the work doesn't have to be in my office space, it can be wherever. It can be at home. I accepted it as it was the only opportunity.”

In summary, Rian's CDM behavior is influenced by the difficulty of the job market during COVID-19, his family's occupational background limiting his network, parental pressure, his own pessimistic attitude stemming from past rejections, and the opportunity he receives as a freelancer. These factors interact and shape Rian's decision-making process, ultimately leading him to pursue a freelance job in the IT field as a solution to his circumstances.

Pragmatically rational CDM

In this scenario 1 the decisions made by the subjects in the study were not solely based on cognitive and discursive processes but involved various aspects of embodiment. These decisions encompassed the physical, practical, emotional, and affective dimensions in addition to cognitive considerations. This implies that the decision-making process was influenced by not only rational thinking but also by bodily experiences, practical knowledge, emotions, and personal preferences.

The notion of decisions being partly tacit implies that some of the subjects' likes, dislikes, and preferences were difficult to fully articulate or express in words. This could be due to the intuitive or unconscious nature of these preferences, making them challenging to articulate explicitly. The embodied nature of decision-making suggests that there are aspects of preferences and choices that go beyond conscious awareness and are shaped by bodily experiences and emotional responses.

Overall, this findings show the multifaceted nature of decision-making, encompassing cognitive, emotional, practical, and embodied dimensions. It suggests that decisions are influenced not only by conscious reasoning and discourse but also by tacit knowledge, practical consciousness, and the interplay between our cognitive and embodied experiences.

Based on the study findings, it is observed that graduates' career decision-making (CDM) processes tend to lean towards being more pragmatically rational in response to changing labor market conditions with limited job opportunities. Graduates may adopt a pragmatic approach in their CDM by being open to taking any available job, regardless of its nature (horizontal, vertical, or underemployment) or pursuing alternative work arrangements such as freelancing, gig work, part-time employment, or seeking job opportunities overseas.

The limited job opportunities in the labor market may influence graduates to prioritize immediate employment and financial stability over long-term career goals or ideal job positions. As a result, they may be more willing to accept jobs that may not align with their desired career path or fall below their qualifications and expectations.

Some graduates may opt to work as freelancers or gig workers, taking on short-term or project-based assignments. This allows them to generate income and gain professional experience while actively seeking more permanent employment. Others may choose part-time work to secure a source of income while keeping their options open for other opportunities.

Additionally, some graduates may explore job opportunities overseas, where they perceive a higher chance of finding suitable employment or better career prospects.

The pragmatic approach observed in graduates' CDM in this study can be attributed to the challenging job market conditions, where limited job opportunities prompt them to be more flexible and adaptable in their career choices. They prioritize securing employment and meeting immediate financial needs, even if it means deviating from their ideal career path or accepting non-traditional work arrangements.

It is important to consider that the findings of the study reflect the specific context and circumstances of the participants involved. Graduates' CDM processes and behaviors can vary depending on individual preferences, personal circumstances, and available opportunities within the labor market. The study highlights the pragmatic responses of graduates to limited job opportunities and sheds light on the dynamic nature of career decision-making in changing labor market conditions.

Bani's experience highlights the challenges faced by many graduates during the COVID-19 pandemic, where job opportunities were limited due to companies downsizing and reducing recruitment. Despite facing numerous rejections in his job search, Bani demonstrated resilience by actively seeking alternative options to secure employment. He eventually found a job as a designer in a copy center, which may be considered a horizontal mismatch and underemployment compared to his educational background in electrical engineering. However, Bani recognized the importance of survival during the crisis and took the opportunity to work in the copy center.

Bani's resiliency is evident in his proactive approach to job searching and his ability to adapt to the circumstances. He sought information about job openings from his lecturer, demonstrating his resourcefulness and willingness to explore unconventional channels for employment opportunities. By accepting the job in the copy center, Bani displayed his determination to overcome the challenges posed by the limited job market during the pandemic.

During times of crisis, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, graduates may need to be resilient and flexible in their career decisions. The priority for many becomes securing a job to meet immediate financial needs and maintain a foothold in the workforce, even if it means taking on roles that do not align perfectly with their educational background or aspirations. This

resiliency enables graduates to adapt to the changing labor market conditions and survive during challenging times.

It is important to acknowledge that the resiliency exhibited by graduates in their CDM during a crisis is a reflection of the unique circumstances they face. While horizontal mismatch and underemployment may not align with their long-term career goals, these decisions can provide necessary income, professional experience, and a platform for further career development. Graduates' resiliency allows them to navigate through uncertain times and position themselves for future opportunities once the labor market stabilizes.

Rahman's experience provides another example of the pragmatic decision-making behavior adopted by graduates during the COVID-19 pandemic. Despite facing numerous rejections in his job applications due to the economic impact of the pandemic, Rahman demonstrated resilience and pragmatism in accepting an opportunity that was offered to him.

When faced with limited job prospects and the challenges posed by the pandemic, Rahman made the decision to accept a technician role, albeit not as a full-time staff. This decision reflects his understanding of the difficult job market conditions during the COVID-19 crisis. He recognized the importance of not missing out on any job opportunities that came his way, even if it meant taking on a position that may not align with his long-term career goals or provide full-time employment.

Rahman's pragmatic approach to his career decision-making highlights the need for adaptability and seizing available opportunities during times of crisis. He understood the value of gaining practical experience and building his professional network, even if it meant accepting a temporary or part-time position. By accepting the technician role, Rahman demonstrated his willingness to take proactive steps towards securing employment and maintaining financial stability.

It is important to recognize that graduates like Rahman may find themselves making decisions that deviate from their initial career aspirations in order to navigate the challenging circumstances imposed by the pandemic. While the technician role may not be Rahman's ideal job, it represents a pragmatic and resilient response to the limited job market conditions during the crisis.

These examples of Bani and Rahman illustrate how graduates adapt their career decision-making behavior in response to the changing labor market conditions during a crisis. Their

resiliency and pragmatism enable them to seize available opportunities, even if they entail horizontal mismatch, underemployment, or temporary positions. By demonstrating flexibility and a willingness to make the most of the circumstances, graduates can enhance their chances of survival and pave the way for future career growth when the labor market stabilizes. On the other hand, some graduates also still can get jobs that are in line with their major background in this typical characteristics of the setting.

Scenario 2- CDM behavior amidst COVID-19

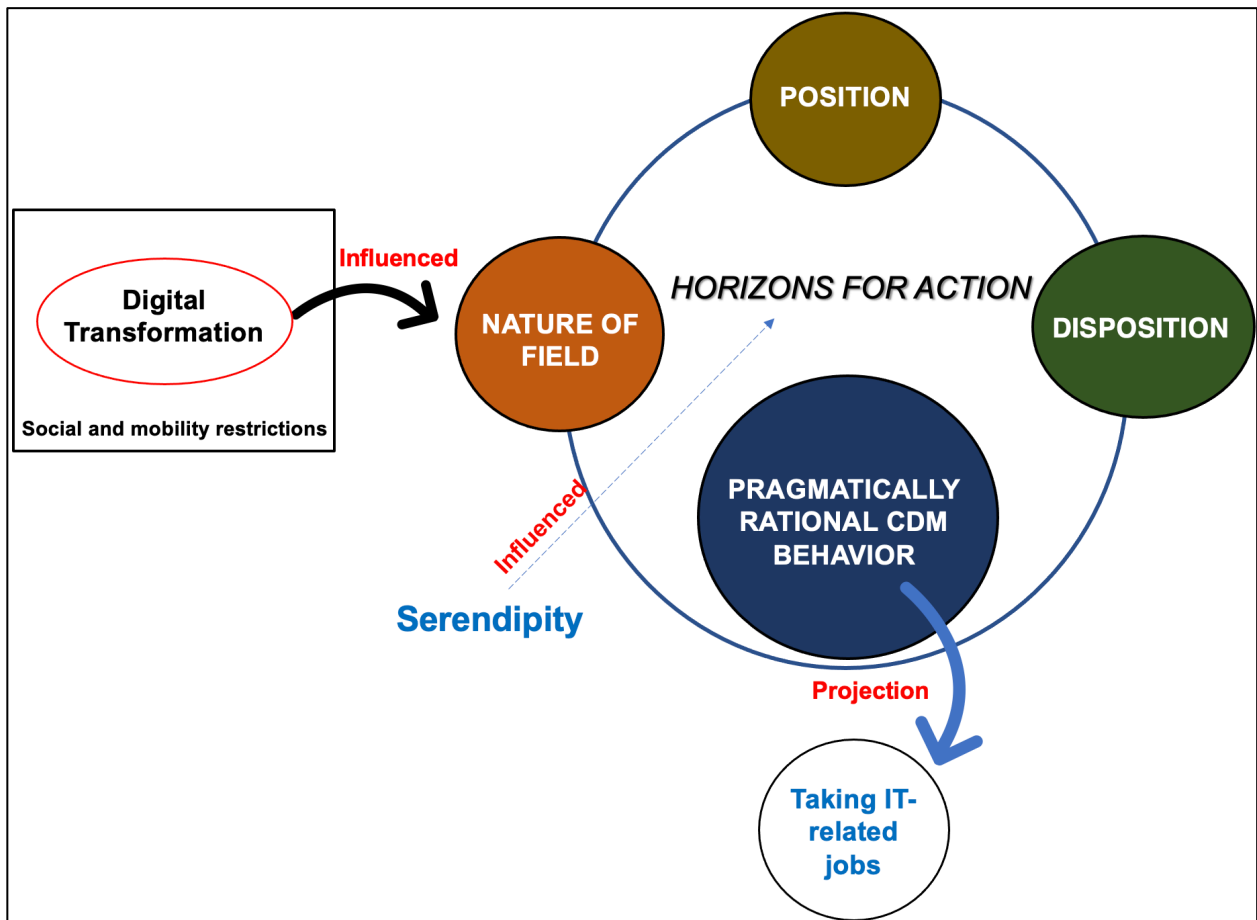


Figure 19. Scenario 2-CDM behavior amidst COVID-19

Within the scenario 2 (see Figure 19), the aspects of position and disposition are relatively same with the scenario 1. Only the CDM attitude under the disposition aspect which tended to be optimistic. Therefore, the following discussion only talks about the nature of the field, the optimistic CDM attitude, and the pragmatically rational CDM behaviour.

Nature of the field (digital transformation)

Digital transformation has emerged as a significant characteristic of the labor market change amidst the COVID-19 pandemic. The implementation of social distancing measures and mobility restrictions imposed by governments has compelled companies, industries, and institutions/offices to undergo a rapid shift towards digitalization in order to adapt and survive during the crisis. This transformation has fundamentally altered the nature of the field and, in turn, has influenced the horizons for action of graduates.

The digital transformation of the labor market has created new opportunities and challenges for individuals seeking employment. Those who possess digital skills, particularly graduates from IT departments or individuals proficient in digital technologies, may have a more optimistic outlook regarding their employment prospects. They recognize the value of digital skills in the current job market and perceive digital employment as a reliable source of income amidst the uncertainties caused by the pandemic.

Furthermore, the position of individuals within the field, as well as their dispositions, play a crucial role in shaping their horizons for action. Graduates who have relevant digital skills and can effectively leverage them are likely to have a wider range of opportunities available to them. Their ability to adapt to the digital landscape and participate in remote work or online platforms enhances their employability and expands their potential career paths.

However, it is important to note that not all graduates may have equal access to digital opportunities or possess the necessary digital skills. Disparities in access to technology, educational resources, and training can create barriers for some individuals, limiting their potential for digital employment and affecting their horizons for action. Addressing these inequalities and promoting digital inclusivity are essential to ensure that all graduates can benefit from the digital transformation of the labor market.

Overall, the digital transformation has both influenced and reflected the nature of the field, shaping the horizons for action of graduates amidst the COVID-19 pandemic. Graduates' positions within the digital landscape and their dispositions, particularly their digital skills and optimism towards digital employment, play crucial roles in determining their opportunities and trajectories in the labor market during this transformative period.

Radit and Mawar, both graduates from the informatics engineering department, shared their perspectives on the impact of COVID-19 on their job prospects. They believe that COVID-

19 did not have a negative effect on their ability to find employment because they possess cultural capital that can be transformed into symbolic capital, as described by Bourdieu (1977).

According to Radit, finding IT jobs during the pandemic was not particularly challenging. In fact, he noticed an acceleration in the demand for IT jobs due to the increased reliance on digital platforms and applications. He attributed this growth to the efforts of IT professionals developing new applications. Although the mode of work shifted to remote work during the pandemic, Radit stated that remote work was already a familiar concept in the IT field. Therefore, the change in work culture was not entirely new to them.

Mawar echoed Radit's views regarding the impact of COVID-19 on IT jobs. She agreed that the IT job market was not directly affected by the pandemic and that finding job opportunities in the IT field remained relatively easy. Mawar mentioned that she actively monitored IT job vacancies and found that new opportunities consistently arose. The primary change she noticed was the shift to remote work, where IT staff members transitioned from working in the office (WFO) to working from home (WFH). She attributed the increased demand for IT specialists during COVID-19 to the fact that most activities shifted to online platforms.

Both Radit and Mawar's experiences suggest that the IT field was resilient during the pandemic, with job opportunities remaining available and even experiencing growth. Their cultural capital, which encompasses their skills, knowledge, and ability to adapt to digital environments, played a significant role in their successful employment outcomes during this challenging time.

The experiences of Rian and Ahmad highlight the importance of digital skills for graduates from non-IT departments in adapting to the conditions during COVID-19. Rian, who graduated from the accounting department, faced challenges in finding a job and eventually accepted a freelance position as a social media assistant for a film festival event. Despite his non-IT background, Rian recognized the value of digital skills and embraced the opportunity to work in a digital role. He managed the festival's social media accounts and appreciated the flexibility of being able to work from anywhere. Rian remained optimistic that having digital skills would enable him to secure job opportunities, as many industries had shifted to online modes of operation during the crisis.

Ahmad, a graduate in computer engineering, shared his experience of working in an office that was established during the COVID-19 crisis. Due to mobility and social restrictions,

all activities were conducted online, and there was no physical office building. Ahmad's work revolved around his iPad and internet connection, highlighting the reliance on digital tools and platforms. He mentioned a colleague who struggled with operating the online systems and occasionally assisted them in completing their tasks. Ahmad emphasized the need for continuous learning to navigate the systems used by his office, as he lacked the convenience of easily seeking assistance from colleagues in a physical office setting.

These accounts demonstrate the significance of digital skills for graduates in non-IT fields. The ability to adapt to online work environments and effectively utilize digital tools has become crucial in the current labor market. Rian's experience as a social media assistant and Ahmad's involvement in an office without a physical location underscore the transformation brought about by the pandemic. Graduates who can acquire and apply digital skills have better prospects for employment and resilience amidst challenging circumstances.

The optimistic CDM attitude

The nature of the field, characterized by digital transformation, has influenced the career decision-making (CDM) behavior of both IT and non-IT graduates in distinct ways. For IT graduates, the digital transformation has created opportunities and a positive outlook regarding their education-to-work transition. They perceive themselves as winners during the crisis period because digital employment offers a reliable source of income. The demand for IT specialists has increased, and certain IT-related job opportunities have even grown during the COVID-19 pandemic. Working remotely or from home is not a novel concept for them, as it was already part of their work culture before the pandemic. Their pragmatically rational CDM behavior aligns with the nature of the field, and they actively activate their cultural capital (digital skills and knowledge) to secure employment and succeed in the digital work environment.

On the other hand, non-IT graduates have faced challenges in the labor market due to the digital transformation. However, they have recognized the importance of gaining or polishing their digital skills to increase their chances of obtaining employment. They understand that in the current labor market, digital skills are highly valued, and possessing them can enhance their competitiveness. Their pragmatic CDM behavior involves adapting to the changing landscape by investing in developing their digital skills and utilizing their cultural capital effectively.

In both cases, the optimistic CDM behavior stems from an understanding of the nature of the field and the need to align with the requirements of the digital transformation. IT graduates embrace the opportunities presented by the digital transformation, while non-IT graduates recognize the necessity of digital skills to navigate the labor market successfully. This optimistic outlook and proactive approach in leveraging their cultural capital contribute to their resiliency and ability to survive and thrive amidst the challenges posed by the digital transformation during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Pragmatically rational CDM

In the context of the digital transformation amidst COVID-19, graduates have demonstrated a pragmatically rational career decision-making (CDM) approach. This means that they are making practical and rational choices based on the circumstances they face. This approach is influenced by their horizons for action, which are shaped by the opportunities and constraints present in the labor market.

Graduates from the IT department have an advantage in this digital transformation setting due to their cultural capital, which includes their skills, knowledge, and expertise in digital technologies. They can leverage their cultural capital to secure job opportunities that are in line with their major background. By activating their cultural capital, IT graduates can demonstrate their proficiency in digital skills and adaptability to the changing job market, increasing their chances of finding suitable employment.

On the other hand, non-IT graduates recognize the importance of digital skills in the current labor market and understand that acquiring or polishing their digital capital is necessary to enhance their employability. They may engage in various activities such as upskilling, online courses, or gaining practical experience in digital-related tasks. By investing in their digital capital, non-IT graduates can broaden their horizons for action and increase their chances of securing jobs that require digital skills.

Through this pragmatically rational CDM approach, both IT and non-IT graduates are adapting to the changing demands of the labor market during the digital transformation caused by the pandemic. They recognize the need to align their skills with the prevailing job market conditions and are willing to invest in their cultural and digital capital to enhance their employability.

Overall, the digital transformation amidst COVID-19 has influenced the pragmatically rational CDM of graduates. IT graduates activate their cultural capital, while non-IT graduates focus on acquiring or improving their digital capital. By adapting their skills and choices to the demands of the labor market, graduates can increase their chances of securing employment and surviving in this transformative setting.

The study highlights the activation of digital cultural capital during the job recruitment process amidst the COVID-19 pandemic. Ahmad, for example, shared his experiences working for a financial company that operates entirely online. He emphasized the challenges of not having a physical office and relying on online systems for attendance, meetings, and data input. Ahmad acknowledged the positive aspect of efficient time utilization but also recognized the potential for missing information and the need for personal responsibility in remote work.

Akbar mentioned the notable differences and challenges in work dynamics during the pandemic. As the business faced a decline in revenue, employees were under pressure to increase sales. Akbar discussed the use of online platforms like Shopee to meet customer demands and the reliance on Zoom for meetings and discussions. Additionally, government-developed applications proved helpful in navigating the COVID-19 situation and may contribute to cost savings.

Amelia described a shift in her work responsibilities towards computer-oriented tasks and the difficulties she faced when working from home. She mentioned the challenges of cross-checking information using her laptop and the reliability of the Wi-Fi connection at home compared to the faster internet connection at the office. Despite the flexibility of working from home, the advantage of a faster internet connection at the office allowed for quicker progress with work.

These examples highlight the activation of digital cultural capital, which involves leveraging digital skills and technologies in the workplace. Graduates have had to adapt to the online work environment and rely on digital tools and platforms for various work-related tasks. The digital transformation brought about by the pandemic has required individuals to possess and develop digital skills to effectively navigate and succeed in the new work landscape.

On the other hand, this digital transformation brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated the digital divide, which refers to the gap between those who have access to

digital technologies and skills and those who do not. The shift towards remote work, online learning, and digital platforms has highlighted the disparities in digital access and literacy.

The digital divide can manifest in various ways. Firstly, there is an access divide, where individuals and communities lack reliable internet connectivity, devices, or infrastructure to participate fully in the digital economy. This can be particularly challenging for individuals in rural or underserved areas with limited access to broadband internet. Secondly, there is a skills divide, where individuals lack the necessary digital skills and literacy to effectively navigate and utilize digital technologies. This can hinder their ability to compete in the job market and take advantage of opportunities presented by the digital transformation.

Furthermore, there is a socioeconomic divide, where individuals from lower-income backgrounds or marginalized communities face additional barriers to access and acquire digital resources and skills. This can perpetuate existing inequalities and further marginalize certain groups in the digital age.

The consequences of the digital divide are significant. Those who lack access to digital technologies and skills may struggle to find employment, access educational resources, participate in online services, or engage in digital civic and social activities. This can exacerbate socioeconomic inequalities and hinder social mobility.

Addressing the digital divide is crucial to ensure inclusivity and equal opportunities in the digital era. Efforts are needed to bridge the access gap by expanding broadband infrastructure, providing affordable internet access, and making digital devices more accessible. Additionally, promoting digital literacy and skills training programs can empower individuals to navigate and leverage digital technologies effectively.

Governments, educational institutions, and private organizations have a role to play in implementing policies and initiatives that promote digital inclusion and bridge the digital divide. By narrowing this divide, we can create a more equitable society and enable individuals from all backgrounds to fully participate in the digital transformation.

5.3.3 The continuum of rationality in pragmatically rational CDM based on the study findings

Based on the study findings, the continuums of rationality in pragmatically rational career decision-making (CDM) amidst COVID-19 can be identified as follows:

1. Information-seeking Continuum: This continuum reflects the range of approaches individuals employ when gathering information related to their career decisions during the COVID-19 pandemic. At one end, individuals may extensively research and gather information from various sources, such as online platforms, industry reports, and professional networks. At the other end, individuals may rely more on limited information or personal networks for their decision-making process.
2. Risk Assessment Continuum: This continuum pertains to the extent to which individuals consider and evaluate the risks associated with different career options in light of the COVID-19 pandemic. Some individuals may adopt a more cautious and risk-averse approach, prioritizing stability and security in their career decisions. On the contrary, others may embrace risk-taking and view the pandemic as an opportunity for innovation and growth, leading them to pursue more challenging and uncertain career paths.
3. Adaptability Continuum: This continuum reflects individuals' willingness and ability to adapt and adjust their career decisions in response to the changing circumstances and challenges brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic. Some individuals may demonstrate high adaptability, being open to new opportunities, acquiring new skills, and exploring alternative career paths. On the other hand, some individuals may display a lower level of adaptability, preferring to stick to familiar career trajectories or being resistant to change.
4. Collaboration Continuum: This continuum represents the degree to which individuals engage in collaborative decision-making processes amidst the COVID-19 pandemic. On one end, individuals may actively seek input and perspectives from others, such as mentors, colleagues, or industry professionals, to make informed career decisions. On the other end, individuals may rely more on their own judgment and prefer making independent decisions without significant external input.
5. Future Orientation Continuum: This continuum reflects individuals' orientation towards future planning and goal setting in their career decision-making during the COVID-19 pandemic. Some individuals may focus more on immediate concerns and short-term goals, prioritizing stability and immediate financial security. Conversely, others may adopt a more long-term and future-oriented perspective, considering the potential impact of their decisions on their long-term career prospects and aspirations.

These continuums highlight the multidimensional nature of rationality in pragmatically rational CDM amidst COVID-19. They showcase the diverse approaches individuals take in seeking information, assessing risks, adapting to changing circumstances, collaborating with others, and considering future implications. Understanding these continuums can provide insights into the complex decision-making processes individuals engage in during times of crisis, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, and inform career support interventions and strategies to facilitate informed and adaptive career decision-making.

5.3.4 Serendipity: the informal job hiring process

Definition of serendipity

In the context of this study, "serendipity" refers to the occurrence of unexpected and valuable discoveries or opportunities that arise by chance or accident. It is the concept of finding something valuable or beneficial while actively searching for something else or in situations where it was not anticipated. Serendipity often involves making fortunate and valuable connections, recognizing and capitalizing on unexpected events, or stumbling upon valuable information or resources.

Serendipity is important because it has the potential to significantly influence individuals' career decision-making and outcomes. It introduces new and unforeseen possibilities that may not have been initially considered, leading to unique and potentially rewarding paths. Serendipitous events or encounters can open doors to new opportunities, provide novel insights, spark creative ideas, and lead to personal and professional growth.

The implication of the concept of serendipity is that it challenges the traditional linear and planned approaches to career decision-making. It suggests that individuals should remain open to unexpected opportunities and be adaptable in their career journeys. Embracing serendipity allows individuals to be more receptive to unplanned events, interactions, and experiences that may have positive impacts on their career trajectories.

Serendipity also highlights the importance of creating an environment conducive to serendipitous encounters and discoveries. This can involve fostering diverse networks, engaging in continuous learning and exploration, and maintaining a curious and open mindset. By embracing serendipity and recognizing its potential value, individuals can enhance their capacity

to navigate uncertain and dynamic labor markets, capitalize on unexpected opportunities, and achieve greater career satisfaction and success.

In summary, the concept of serendipity emphasizes the role of chance, unexpected discoveries, and fortuitous events in career decision-making. By recognizing and embracing serendipity, individuals can broaden their horizons, seize unforeseen opportunities, and potentially achieve outcomes that they may not have envisioned through traditional planning alone.

Religious belief as the reason in taking into account “serendipity” concept

The exploration of the concept of serendipity in this research is closely tied to the religious beliefs and cultural context of the predominantly Muslim respondents. The study uncovered a significant trend among these respondents, who held a strong belief in divine intervention and the idea that events in their lives, including job-related outcomes, are influenced by Allah's will. This particular perspective prompted the researcher to delve deeper into the concept of serendipity for several reasons:

1. **Understanding Cultural and Religious Influences:** The study recognized that the predominantly Muslim respondents' reliance on serendipity and divine intervention in their job search reflects a broader cultural and religious context. In Islam, there is a deeply ingrained belief in destiny and fate as orchestrated by a higher power. By exploring the concept of serendipity, the research seeks to capture the unique interplay between cultural and religious beliefs and the career decision-making processes of these individuals.
2. **Uncovering Nuances in Decision-Making Strategies:** The study goes beyond conventional career decision-making theories by shedding light on the nuanced strategies employed by the respondents. Their application to multiple job opportunities with the belief that a fortunate event will occur exemplifies a distinct approach shaped by serendipitous thinking. This unconventional decision-making strategy may be rooted in their religious faith and the anticipation of divine blessings, showcasing how external factors like faith can shape career choices.
3. **Examining Faith-Based Attitudes towards Job Searching:** The exploration of serendipity allows the researcher to probe into how the respondents' religious beliefs influence their attitudes and perceptions regarding job searching. It provides insights into how these

individuals reconcile the active pursuit of opportunities with a strong conviction in a predetermined destiny. This interplay between agency and divine will adds depth to the understanding of their decision-making processes.

4. **Highlighting Complexity in Decision-Making:** The concept of serendipity introduces complexity into the decision-making landscape. The respondents' reliance on serendipitous events reveals a layer of decision-making that is less rational and more influenced by factors beyond their direct control. This complexity underscores the multidimensional nature of career decision-making and how it can be influenced by a combination of internal, external, and cultural factors.

Taking specific informants as examples further illustrates the integration of serendipity and faith into the decision-making process. For instance, Rian's (23) approach of working harder, praying, and seeking the blessing of his parents demonstrates his determination and belief in personal effort and divine support. By applying to more than 50 job vacancies, he is actively increasing his chances of finding employment. His friend's advice also highlights the idea that the more job applications he submits, the higher the probability of receiving a positive response.

Rian's perspective on luck not being interchangeable suggests that he focuses on factors within his control, such as his own actions and efforts, rather than relying solely on luck. By putting in his best effort and taking proactive steps to pursue job opportunities, Rian is maximizing his chances of success. It's important to maintain a positive mindset and remain persistent during the job search process. Rian's approach reflects his determination and willingness to take initiative, which can greatly contribute to his prospects of finding suitable employment.

Another example is from Valdi (23). His belief in serendipity aligns with the idea that unexpected and fortunate events can occur in one's life. By applying to almost all job vacancies in his field, he is embracing the notion that opportunities may arise unexpectedly and that his efforts can increase the likelihood of encountering such fortunate circumstances. Valdi's perspective reflects a hopeful and open-minded approach to his job search. By being proactive and casting a wide net in his applications, he remains open to the possibility of serendipitous moments that may lead to job opportunities he may not have initially anticipated.

It's important to note that while serendipity can play a role in one's career journey, it is not solely reliant on luck. Valdi's active engagement in the job search process by applying to various positions demonstrates his proactive approach and determination to find suitable employment. Overall, Valdi's belief in serendipity serves as an additional motivating factor for him to persist in his job search and remain open to unexpected opportunities that may arise along the way.

The last example of belief in serendipity comes from Amelia (24). Amelia's belief in serendipity is reflected in her approach to job applications. By not limiting herself to specific job openings and applying to as many job vacancies as possible, she demonstrates her trust in the possibility of serendipitous events leading to job opportunities. Amelia's perspective suggests that she believes in the power of being open to unexpected possibilities. Instead of solely relying on conventional methods or waiting for specific job openings, she embraces the idea that serendipity may come into play. By actively seeking out opportunities and applying to various positions, even if they don't currently have job openings, she remains hopeful that serendipitous moments will arise, leading her to suitable employment.

It is important to note that while Amelia's approach may involve an element of chance, it is coupled with her active engagement in the job search process. By taking initiative and being proactive in her applications, she increases her chances of encountering serendipitous events that may align with her career goals. Amelia's belief in serendipity serves as a motivating factor for her to cast a wide net in her job search and maintain an open mindset. By staying receptive to unexpected opportunities, she embraces the potential for positive and unforeseen outcomes in her career journey.

The believe of serendipity not only happened in the beginning of job searching. After getting the jobs almost all the informants also still believe that they got that job because of serendipity. Specifically respondents who are Muslims said that the fortune from Allah. For example, Malik's belief in serendipity is exemplified by his perception that despite going through tests and evaluations to secure a job, he attributes his success to luck or fortune. In his case, he specifically relates this luck to a belief in the blessings and guidance of Allah.

For Malik, the notion of serendipity goes beyond the initial job search phase and continues even after obtaining employment. He sees the circumstances aligning in his favor as more than just the result of his efforts or qualifications. Instead, he attributes his job opportunity

to a higher power, perceiving it as a fortunate outcome bestowed upon him. This belief in serendipity and divine intervention reflects Malik's faith and worldview. It demonstrates how he interprets his career trajectory as being influenced by factors beyond his control, such as the will of Allah. By acknowledging the role of serendipity in his job acquisition, Malik embraces a sense of humility and gratitude for the opportunities that come his way.

While Malik recognizes the importance of his efforts in preparing for and participating in job tests, he attributes the final outcome to a stroke of luck or blessings from Allah. This belief system helps him find solace and meaning in the ups and downs of his career journey, instilling a sense of trust in a greater plan and the guiding forces at play. It is important to note that individuals' beliefs in serendipity can vary based on their personal and cultural backgrounds. Malik's perspective exemplifies the influence of religious beliefs on his interpretation of career outcomes and the role of luck in his professional journey.

Joko's perspective aligns with Malik's in terms of attributing his job success to both his personal skills, such as good communication, and a sense of luck or blessings from a higher power. While Joko acknowledges the importance of his communication skills in securing his current position as a sales engineer, he also recognizes that there are external factors beyond his control that played a role in his achievement. By acknowledging the element of luck or divine intervention, Joko humbly acknowledges that there may have been other qualified candidates or circumstances that could have affected the outcome of the job selection process. This perspective highlights his belief in a larger plan or guiding force at play.

Joko's viewpoint reflects a nuanced understanding that personal abilities and effort alone may not guarantee success. He recognizes that while his communication skills may have contributed to his candidacy, he attributes the final outcome, in part, to factors beyond his control. This recognition allows him to maintain a sense of humility and gratitude for the opportunities that come his way. It is important to note that individuals like Joko and Malik may interpret their career successes differently. While Joko emphasizes his communication skills as a contributing factor, he also acknowledges the role of luck or divine intervention in his job acquisition. This belief in serendipity provides them with a broader perspective on their professional journeys and may help them find meaning and purpose in their career paths.

The last example is from Hisyam. Hisyam's belief in luck from Allah aligns with the previous examples, where individuals attribute their job opportunities and successes to a higher

power. Hisyam's experience of being unemployed for a year likely created a sense of uncertainty and frustration during his job search. Therefore, when he finally secured his current position as a field inspector, he interpreted it as a stroke of luck or a blessing from Allah.

For individuals like Hisyam, who have experienced a prolonged period of unemployment, obtaining a job may be seen as a fortunate turn of events. They may attribute their success to divine intervention, expressing gratitude for the opportunity that came their way after a period of difficulty. Believing in luck from a higher power can provide individuals with a sense of comfort, hope, and purpose. It allows them to view their job attainment as part of a larger plan and reaffirms their faith in the support and guidance they receive from Allah. This belief can also serve as a source of motivation and resilience during challenging times, providing individuals with the confidence to keep pursuing opportunities and putting their trust in a greater power. It is important to acknowledge that personal efforts, skills, and qualifications also play a role in job attainment. However, for individuals like Hisyam, attributing their job success to luck from Allah serves as a way to find meaning, solace, and gratitude in their career journey.

Those all illustrations of believing in serendipity is as the reason why this concept is discussed more in this study although both economic and social theories have largely ignored the potential impact that chance may play in collecting job knowledge in favor of focusing almost completely on the function of intentional activity (Stigler, 1962; Lin, 2001). On the other hand, this study's findings demonstrate that job information was frequently obtained without conducting a job search. Even when graduates were actively looking for jobs, they frequently acquired their information from unanticipated sources and people they had known for a long time. These experiences have a connection to the theory of serendipitous job matching, which takes into account instances where ordinary social interaction unintentionally results in career chances. This study finding is in line with some previous studies. More than half of survey respondents in previous diverse samples noted that chance events or serendipity played a role in determining their careers, demonstrating the prevalence of serendipity in professional processes (Betsworth & Hansen, 1996; Bright et al., 2005).

Theorists and academics have studied the idea of serendipity and how it affects career pathways using a variety of terminology with a variety of meanings, such as non-predictable, chance, unplanned, happenstance, which may have subtle definitional distinctions (Betsworth & Hansen, 1996). In another word, unexpected discoveries are referred to as serendipity (Merton &

Barber, 2004). Briefly stated, the stories indicate that getting a job is a highly unpredictable process fraught with multiple uncertainties, one that defies categorization as merely instrumental or logical/rational as it was also stated by McDonald (2010). McDonald (2010) also confirmed that serendipity is a fundamentally social phenomenon that, in the context of job matching, is made possible by close relationships that can be relied upon to offer aid when it is needed. There are various benefits to distinguishing between accidental or serendipitous and purposeful job matching. First off, it shows a distinct subjective knowledge that people merely attributed these results to luck, chance, or coincidence (Lieblich et al., 2008). Too frequently, researchers have disregarded respondents' judgments of luck and chance as misinformed or ignorant (see Nowicki & Rosse, 2002).

The findings of this study align with the perspective that serendipity is not a random occurrence but is influenced by social forces that this study called it as “boundedness serendipity”. More details about “boundedness serendipity” are as follows:

Boundedness serendipity

Boundedness serendipity, as described in this study, emphasizes that serendipitous events are not purely random but are influenced by social factors and an individual's position within the social field. It recognizes that access to serendipitous opportunities is shaped by the social capital one possesses and the social context in which they operate.

The example of Radit and his job offer highlights the role of boundedness serendipity. His social capital, which includes his educational background and his relationship with his former lecturer, played a crucial role in the serendipitous event of receiving the job offer. If Radit had not attended that particular polytechnic or did not have a strong connection with his lecturer, he may not have had the opportunity. Therefore, the serendipitous event was bounded by his social capital and his position as the best student in that specific context.

The concept of boundedness serendipity underscores the significance of social capital and the social context in shaping and influencing serendipitous events in career development. It highlights that serendipity is not solely a matter of chance but is influenced by the resources, relationships, and positions individuals possess within their social networks and fields.

Understanding boundedness serendipity has important implications for individuals in their career decision-making process. It suggests that cultivating and leveraging social capital, such as

building strong relationships, engaging in networking activities, and seeking diverse experiences, can increase the likelihood of encountering serendipitous opportunities. It also emphasizes the importance of understanding the social dynamics and structures within specific fields or industries to effectively navigate and capitalize on serendipitous events.

Overall, boundedness serendipity provides a framework for recognizing the interplay between chance and social factors in career development. By acknowledging the influence of social capital and the social context, individuals can be more proactive in creating conditions that foster serendipitous events and maximize the benefits they can derive from them.

Merton and Barber (2004) suggested that many events categorized as luck or coincidence are, in fact, shaped by social factors. This study builds upon that understanding by demonstrating that various occurrences, interactions, and outcomes that individuals perceive as serendipitous are influenced by social characteristics and structures. Bandura (1982) argued that individuals' social environments are shaped by the skills and interests they possess and cultivate, which, in turn, structure their opportunities for chance encounters. Additionally, McDonald (2010) highlighted that social structural characteristics play a role in the likelihood of chance meetings, beyond individual abilities and interests. This means that the social advantages individuals possess can contribute to the likelihood of experiencing serendipitous job matching.

The current study's findings indicate a strong association between social characteristics and the unintentional acquisition of job-related information. This suggests that individuals with social advantages are more likely to encounter serendipitous opportunities. It underscores the significance of social benefits that contribute to the occurrence of serendipitous events, even if they may appear unexpected. By recognizing the influence of social factors on serendipitous job matching, this study sheds light on the hidden mechanisms and structural dynamics that shape individuals' chances for encountering career opportunities. It highlights the role of social advantages and structural characteristics in facilitating or hindering the occurrence of serendipitous events in the realm of job knowledge and openings.

This study then divided the type of the boundedness serendipity into three types (see Figure 20).

1. Type 1: Non-Purposive or Passive Serendipity

- Graduates who did not actively search for job opportunities, but job openings unexpectedly appear.

- In this type, job opportunities arise without any intentional effort on the part of the graduates.
 - They may come across job openings through chance encounters or unexpected referrals.
2. Type 2: Purposive or Active Serendipity - Job Mismatch
- Graduates who applied for Job A, but unexpectedly encounter Job B.
 - In this type, the graduates initially intended to apply for a specific job (Job A), but through serendipitous events or information, they come across a different job opportunity (Job B) that they had not considered initially.
 - This could happen through unexpected referrals, networking, or chance encounters.
3. Type 3: Purposive or Active Serendipity - Rejection Turnaround
- Graduates who initially applied for Job A and were rejected, but later received a sudden acceptance.
 - In this type, the graduates face initial rejection for a job they applied for (Job A), but through serendipity, they receive a sudden acceptance or alternative job offer.
 - This could occur due to unforeseen circumstances, changes in the job market, or unexpected referrals.

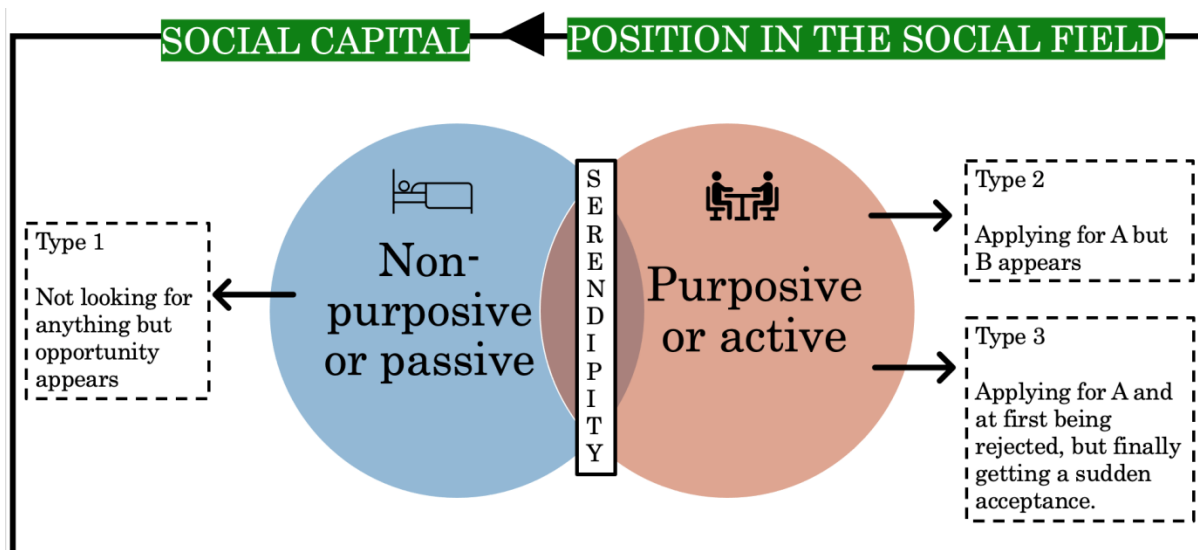


Figure 20. Boundedness serendipity

These three types of serendipity in job matching represent different scenarios where unexpected opportunities and outcomes can arise during the job search process. They highlight the interplay between individuals' intentions and the role of chance events, unplanned encounters, and unforeseen circumstances in shaping career pathways and job outcomes. Categorizing serendipitous events into these types helps provide a clearer understanding of the various ways in which serendipity can manifest in the context of job matching. The Table 19 below shows the list of respondents and their experience in serendipity

Table 19. The list of respondents and their experience in serendipity

<i>Graduates pre COVID-19 (pseudonyms)</i>		
	Type	Evidence
Ayu	1	<i>"I was accepted there right after I had my final project test by the end of 2018. Ms. X was working there at a tax consultant. She had a client from her superior. It happened that she had a client from my company. Her client's company needed someone, so she offered me that position."</i>
Ani	1	<i>"Yes, so there was a friend who was teaching there, and then I was called, they phoned me because they needed a Quran memorization (tahfidz) teacher there. Eventually, they offered the position to me, and I agreed to it. That's how I joined."</i>
Aulia	1	<i>"Well, at that time, umm, it was actually accidental, if I'm not mistaken, I had experience with computer accreditation. Oh yes, yes, yes, the computer accreditation from the program required quite a number of students. I was called and... after the accreditation was completed, Mr. X contacted me asking for assistance with his work."</i>
Azhar	1	<i>"Currently, I work at X. Initially, I didn't start as a general applicant there. During my college days, I and three of my friends did an internship at the office. It lasted for three months, from January to March 2018. After completing the internship, the three of us were offered to continue working as employees there."</i>

Adam	1	<i>“Yes, for one year I worked. After graduating, I was actually unemployed for a while. Fortunately, my neighbor owned a video shooting studio for weddings and graduations [asked me to work] and I worked there as a freelancer.”</i>
Alim	1	<i>“....After graduating in 2019, coinciding with the opening of a new hospitality program at my campus, the program director happened to be my former manager at the hotel. I was surprised to see my former manager at my campus when I was in my final semester, semester 6. He informed me that a hospitality program would be launched at my campus. I was invited by him to work there because we used to work together at the hotel. Therefore, after graduating in 2019, I worked as an academic staff at that program, specifically in the academic department.”</i>
Adinda	1	<i>“Coincidentally, my relative was working there, and there was information that they needed 6 employees, if I'm not mistaken. I was willing to take the test, and if accepted, I would have to switch to evening classes.”</i>
Aminah	1	<i>"It took about two weeks, I think, from receiving my diploma. Coincidentally, before receiving my diploma, I knew someone there, a friend who also worked there, so I was offered a job. After the interview, I got accepted and started working there.”</i>
Bella	1	<i>“It was recommended, Ma'am. While I was working at the Tax Consultant while studying, in December 2018, I had the intention to find another job. Eventually, a friend recommended me for a position at X company. I worked there from 2019 to 2020.”</i>
<i>Graduates amidst COVID-19 (pseudonyms)</i>		
	Type	Evidence
Viana	1	<i>“Yes, that's right. And then, by chance, I prayed, and after finishing my prayer, two ladies approached me for a conversation. They asked, "Are you working in taxes?" I replied, "No, ma'am, I'm still a student. I'm actually graduating tomorrow." They said, "Oh, in that case, you should apply here. Let's meet on Monday." That's how it went.”</i>

Valdi	2	<i>“Coincidentally, my cousin works there, so when I was confused, my brother said, “Valdi, there's a part-time job opportunity at a restaurant. Are you interested?” So, I decided to fill my spare time with that job.”</i>
Bani	2	<i>“Well, at that time, it was because of the pandemic, ma'am. I applied for jobs through email and online platforms, but there were no callbacks yet. Then, I received a job offer from my teacher, who also happened to be my mentor. Instead of staying at home, I decided to accept the job at the printing shop.”</i>
Imran	1	<i>“I have a friend named A who works at X company, and coincidentally, he has a boss named Mr. A. At that time, Mr. B was starting his own company, called Y company. Mr. A's company was also looking for employees, so B offered, “Hey, there's a job opening, you can give it a try.” Then I asked, “But what about my degree? I haven't received it yet.” Mr. B responded, “Just apply first”. So, I applied, went through an interview, and got accepted even before taking the [diploma] exam.”</i>
Lia	1	<i>“No, actually, back then, during my vocational high school, I did my internship there for only 3 months, and then I received a call saying, “Would you be interested in a job as a contract worker?” That's how it started, and well, I thought, “Why not? Maybe it's meant to be, working there.” Alhamdulillah, I'm still there until now.”</i>
Via	3	<i>“Yes, actually I didn't pass, so maybe it was a coincidence because I was tired from going back and forth from Cilacap-Cikarang because the information from the company was not clear, so I failed the psychological test, after knowing the information that the psychological test failed, I returned to Cilacap. A few days after that there was information from the personnel department or the HRD department of the company, contact me via WA, he said with all the considerations I was told to proceed to the MCU stage with the reason that the company did not want to recruit other people who had to go through a lot of processes.”</i>
Mira	1	<i>“I received a phone call from the campus informing me about an available HR staff position. I immediately contacted the company, which is the one I</i>

		<i>currently work for, X company. I had an interview on Monday, and by Tuesday, I started working here.”</i>
Malik	2	<i>“Yes, at that time, it was offered by the lecturer, and maybe in January, I was feeling bored, you know, like, "Oh God, it's the same thing over and over again." So I started looking for something, and then the lecturer offered it, so I thought, "Okay, let's give it a try.””</i>
Radit	2	<i>“When it comes to applying, I did apply to several places. Some even reached the interview stage, and there were a few that reached the final stages but didn't work out. That's why my professor recommended me for this position at my current company. This company is looking for the best graduates from the computer science program to fill their IT staff positions, and I am one of the candidates.”</i>
Mia	3	<i>“Yeah, they didn't have any job openings because my friends were already working in the design department. They didn't actually need more employees, but I don't know why suddenly they opened new job vacancies. They had one or two openings in the design department.”</i>
Jamal	1	<i>"Well, it started when I was introduced to lecturer in X school. The lecturer also taught at the Polytechnic. At that time, the lecturer needed an assistant, and coincidentally, I had graduated and was asked to assist there. So, I became an assistant there for AutoCAD and technical drawing.”</i>
Desi	1	<i>“So, after completing the second three-month internship, I immediately continued with the third internship. Then, just one month into the third internship, I was called by my Manager and Supervisor, and they offered me a job. They advised me not to see it as a burden and said that I should accept it, but they gave me some time to think. So, I didn't give an immediate answer.”</i>

To illustrate each type. Some informants' cases are described here:

Case illustrations for serendipity type 1

Indeed, the experiences of respondents from polytechnic C, who received job offers from their former hosts of work placements or internships, exemplify the concept of serendipitous job

matching and the influence of boundedness serendipity. These individuals did not actively pursue these job offers but were fortunate to have them arise from their previous connections and interactions. This emphasizes the significance of building and maintaining relationships during work placements or internships.

The findings suggest that the relationships formed during these experiences can have a lasting impact and create opportunities for future career advancements. The serendipitous nature of these job offers adds an element of unexpectedness to the decision-making process. These respondents recognized the fortunate chance presented to them and made the decision to accept the offers, recognizing the potential benefits they could bring to their career paths.

The concept of boundedness serendipity becomes evident in these cases, as the serendipitous events were influenced by the respondents' social capital and their position within the social field. If they had not studied at polytechnic C or had not participated in work placements at those specific companies, the serendipitous job matching may not have occurred. The boundedness of their serendipitous experiences highlights the role of social connections and the context in which they occur. Overall, these findings underscore the importance of being open to unexpected opportunities and cultivating meaningful relationships during educational experiences like work placements or internships. By doing so, individuals increase their chances of experiencing serendipitous job matching and enhancing their career prospects.

Adinda's case is indeed another example of serendipity and how personal connections can play a significant role in job opportunities. Her situation aligns with the concept of boundedness serendipity, where the occurrence of serendipitous events is influenced by an individual's social capital and network. In Adinda's case, her uncle's office had job openings, and her uncle personally asked her to apply for one of those positions. This connection provided her with insider information and a direct recommendation, giving her an advantage in the job application process. Without this serendipitous connection, Adinda may not have been aware of the job openings or considered applying for them.

This scenario underscores the importance of maintaining strong relationships and leveraging personal connections in the job search process. By cultivating and nurturing networks, individuals increase their chances of encountering serendipitous opportunities like job offers through familiar connections. These serendipitous events can have a significant impact on one's career trajectory and open doors to unexpected employment possibilities. The concept of

boundedness serendipity highlights that serendipity is not entirely random but occurs within the boundaries of an individual's social capital and network. Adinda's case exemplifies this concept, as her job offer was influenced by her relationship with her uncle and the information and recommendation he provided. Overall, this example emphasizes the value of networking and the potential impact of serendipitous events on career outcomes. It highlights the role of personal connections in accessing job opportunities and underscores the importance of maintaining strong relationships throughout one's professional journey.

Malik's case further illustrates the occurrence of serendipity, specifically serendipity type 1, where job opportunities appear without actively seeking them. In Malik's situation, he did not apply for any job, but he received a job offer from his former lecturer, which brought him joy and excitement. This example highlights the power of personal connections and the role they can play in serendipitous job matching. Malik's relationship with his former lecturer proved beneficial as it led to a job offer without him actively searching for employment. The serendipitous nature of this event, where a job opportunity unexpectedly presents itself, can bring a sense of delight and gratitude.

Malik's experience demonstrates how maintaining connections and nurturing relationships can lead to unforeseen career opportunities. It emphasizes the importance of building strong relationships with mentors, professors, and other individuals in one's professional network. These connections can serve as valuable resources, providing insights, recommendations, and potential job offers that may not have been accessible through traditional job-seeking methods. Overall, Malik's case serves as another illustration of serendipity at work and reinforces the significance of personal connections in navigating the job market. By recognizing and embracing these serendipitous events, individuals like Malik can seize unexpected opportunities that align with their career aspirations and bring them fulfillment in their professional journey.

Case illustrations for serendipity type 2

The example you provided illustrates serendipity type 2, where a person applies for one job but unexpectedly receives an offer for a different job. In this case, Radit, a graduate from the IT department at polytechnic A, initially faced challenges in finding employment after applying for multiple jobs without success.

However, serendipity came into play when Radit received a job offer from his former lecturer. His lecturer recommended him to work in an NGO as an IT specialist. The unexpected job offer arose because Radit was recognized as the best graduate in his department, which led to the recommendation from his lecturer. This serendipitous event resulted in Radit securing a job that he did not initially apply for but turned out to be a positive opportunity. It demonstrates how unexpected connections and recommendations can lead to new and potentially fulfilling career paths.

Serendipity type 2 highlights the role of chance encounters, fortuitous recommendations, or unforeseen opportunities in shaping one's career trajectory. It shows that sometimes the path to finding the right job may deviate from the initial plan, leading individuals to discover new and rewarding opportunities they might not have considered otherwise.

Case illustrations for serendipity type 3

Serendipity type 3 involves individuals who initially receive a rejection after applying for a job but later experience a sudden acceptance when the employer reconsiders their application. This can be seen as a serendipitous turn of events, where the individual's circumstances and the employer's reconsideration align to create a positive outcome. In these cases, the individual may have demonstrated persistence or showcased additional qualifications or skills that caught the employer's attention upon reconsideration. It could also be influenced by external factors such as changes in the job market, internal company needs, or the employer gaining new insights into the applicant's suitability for the position.

This type of serendipity highlights the unpredictability and dynamic nature of the job application process. Even after receiving an initial rejection, individuals can experience a sudden reversal of fortune and receive a job offer. It emphasizes the importance of perseverance and keeping an open mind during the job search process, as opportunities can arise unexpectedly. It is worth noting that while serendipitous events like this can happen, they are not guaranteed, and job seekers should continue to actively pursue opportunities and explore alternative paths to increase their chances of success.

Via's story highlights a serendipitous turn of events in her job search journey, specifically falling into serendipity type 3. After not passing the psychological test for a job she applied to, she returned to her hometown of Cilacap feeling tired and disappointed due to unclear

information from the company. However, a few days later, she received unexpected contact from the personnel or HR department of the company via WhatsApp (WA).

The department informed her that, considering all the circumstances, she was requested to proceed to the medical checkup stage. The reason provided was that the company did not want to go through the entire recruitment process again for new candidates. They were concerned about time constraints and other factors. Viewing this as a chance worth considering, Via discussed the opportunity with her parents, and they supported her decision to accept the offer. She underwent the medical checkup and thankfully passed. The very next day, she started working and signed the employment contract.

Via attributed this fortunate turn of events to Allah or, in other words, to divine intervention and luck. She recognized the element of serendipity at play in her job search journey. This unexpected opportunity provided her with a second chance and ultimately led to her securing the job. Via's case demonstrates how serendipity can play a significant role in job searching. Even after encountering setbacks, such as not passing a test, unexpected circumstances can arise that open up new possibilities. It also emphasizes the importance of being open-minded, adaptable, and willing to consider alternative paths when navigating the job market.

It is important to acknowledge that serendipitous events like this are not within an individual's control and may not occur for everyone. However, remaining resilient, maintaining a positive mindset, and actively pursuing opportunities can increase the likelihood of encountering serendipity in one's job search.

5.4 Research question 4: ultimately, based on the results of the study what is a new form of CDM process reflected by the polytechnic graduates amidst COVID-19?

In a separate chapter, Chapter 6, the answer of research question 4 is provided.

CHAPTER 6 PIAS MODEL AND SOLIDARITY CAPITAL

Chapter 6 of the study focuses on addressing research question 4, which aims to understand the new form of career decision-making (CDM) process observed among polytechnic graduates during the COVID-19 pandemic. The study identified a novel CDM process called the **"Pandemic Interactive Agency System" (PIAS) Model**. The development of the PIAS model stems from the recognition that existing analytical approaches are not specifically designed to address the unique challenges posed by the pandemic and its aftermath. Responding to this, this study conducted a thorough review and modification of the existing analytical model, resulting in the formulation of the PIAS model. With confidence the PIAS model is proposed as a suitable framework for analyzing the dynamics of a pandemic situation. By incorporating typical elements from the pandemic context, the PIAS model offers a comprehensive and customized approach to understanding and interpreting the complexity of this unprecedented period.

The PIAS Model recognizes the presence of **"solidarity capital,"** which refers to the inherent social capital that is naturally activated within Indonesian society during times of crisis, such as the COVID-19 pandemic. Solidarity capital represents the collective support, collaboration, and interconnectedness among individuals, communities, and/or institutions in addressing challenges and making career decisions.

Overall, the PIAS Model represents a new framework that captures the distinctive features of the CDM process during the COVID-19 pandemic in Indonesia. It underscores the significance of solidarity capital and the need for adaptable and context-specific career guidance approaches in challenging times. Details about PIAS Model and solidarity capital are as follows.

6.1 PIAS Model

The PIAS Model is a framework that simulates the actions, behaviors, and interactions of autonomous agents, such as individuals, organizations, and/or groups or communities, within the context of graduates' career decision-making processes during the COVID-19 pandemic. The model aims to understand the dynamics and factors that influence the outcomes of these processes.

The PIAS Model takes into account the information agents receive and perceive from the field, as well as the goals they pursue. The agents in the model may have rules or behaviors that guide their decision-making processes. Their interactions with other agents can shape their

behavior and decision-making, allowing for a holistic understanding of the system.

By using the PIAS Model, researchers can simulate and analyze various scenarios related to career decision-making in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. The model enables a deeper exploration of the factors that impact graduates' decision-making processes, such as limited job opportunities, digital transformation, social and mobility restrictions, and the activation of different forms of capital.

Overall, the PIAS Model provides a framework for studying and gaining insights into how individuals, communities, and/or organizations navigate the challenges and changes brought about by the pandemic, particularly in relation to career decision-making processes.

6.1.1 Drawing out PIAS Model from the current study case

The PIAS Model is a framework that was developed based on the analysis of data collected in the current study. It provides a conceptual understanding of the processes observed in the specific case being investigated. The model emerged organically in relation to the following case:

- 1. COVID-19 outbreak:** The pandemic begins in Indonesia in March 2020, leading to significant disruptions in various aspects of society, including the labor market and graduates' career decision-making processes.
- 2. The typical characteristics of the field:** The COVID-19 crisis creates a new set of circumstances and challenges that impact the behavior and decision-making of individuals, organizations, and groups in the system.
- 3. Field characteristic 1: Social and mobility restrictions:** To mitigate the spread of the virus, the government imposes social and mobility restrictions, which prompt changes in people's behavior, such as a shift towards using digital tools (digital transformation). These restrictions also affect the operations of industries and companies, leading to bankruptcies due to reduced consumption and limited workforce mobility, and ultimately unable to hire new employees.
- 4. Field characteristic 2: Limited job opportunities and backdoor hiring practices:** The economic impact of the pandemic results in limited job opportunities, leading to a higher prevalence of backdoor hiring practices. Many companies facing financial difficulties or collapse are unable to hire new employees.

5. **Activation of digital social capital:** Activation of digital social capital: In response to the changing circumstances and increased reliance on digital platforms, individuals activated their digital social capital. This involves utilizing online social networks and connections to access job opportunities, gather information, and navigate the job market.
6. **Activation of social capital in the form of solidarity capital:** Due to limited job opportunities and the challenges associated with traditional career paths, graduates rely more on their social capital, including personal networks and relationships, to secure employment. Backdoor hiring practices become more prevalent. In this phenomenon, the concept of solidarity capital emerges, which refers to the support and opportunities obtained through social networks.
7. **Activation of digital cultural capital:** As a result of the digital transformation prompted by the pandemic, the general cultural capital, which encompasses traditional knowledge and skills, may not be as effective in the changing context. Instead, the activation of digital cultural capital becomes essential, as individuals need to adapt to and effectively utilize technology in their job search and career decision-making processes.
8. **Adapted career decision-making (CDM) behavior:** The interplay of these field characteristics and the activation of different forms of capital shape graduates' CDM behavior. They adapt their strategies and decision-making processes to navigate the limited job opportunities and strive for survival in the labor market.
9. **Outcomes in the Field:** Several features that emerged during the COVID-19 pandemic are expected to persist even after the pandemic subsides. For instance, the increased use of digital social networking has become ingrained in our daily behavior, and this trend has been further accelerated by the pandemic. In particular, digital platforms have become valuable tools for disseminating and receiving information, especially in situations where information is scarce or inaccessible. However, it is essential for researchers to further investigate the long-term effects of these developments to gain a deeper understanding of their implications. By studying these effects, researchers can assess the lasting impact of digital social networking and its influence on communication and information sharing in the post-pandemic era.

The PIAS Model provides a framework for understanding the dynamics of these processes, simulating the actions, behaviors, and interactions of agents within the system. By considering the field characteristics and activation of different capitals, the model aims to gain insights into the behavior of the system and the factors that influence outcomes, particularly in the context of graduates' career decision-making amidst the COVID-19 pandemic in Indonesia.

6.1.2 The components of PIAS Model

After fully understanding the PIAS Model from the analysis of the study case, the researcher made an effort to explore the detailed components of the model. The PIAS Model, also known as the Pandemic Interactive Agency System, is an innovative model that relies on several important elements (shown in Figure 22). These elements work together seamlessly to simulate the actions, behaviors, and interactions of agents in their career decision-making process during the COVID-19 pandemic. The precise interweaving of these essential components forms the core of the PIAS Model:

1. **Agents:** The model includes autonomous agents, such as individuals, organizations, and/or groups or communities, that represent the various stakeholders involved in career decision-making. These agents have their own characteristics, goals, and decision-making processes.
2. **Field:** The model incorporates the context/field in which the agents operate. This can include the labor market conditions, job opportunities, economic factors, government policies, social and mobility restrictions, and other contextual factors that influence career decision-making during the pandemic.
3. **Information Flow:** The model considers the flow of information among the agents. Agents receive and perceive information from the field, including job market trends, industry developments, and/or social networks. This information shapes their decision-making processes.
4. **Interactions:** The model captures the interactions between agents. Agents can communicate, collaborate, compete, or cooperate with one another, and these interactions can influence their behavior and decision-making. For example, agents may seek advice from mentors, rely on social networks for job referrals, or engage in backdoor hiring practices.

5. **Capital Utilization/Activation:** The model incorporates the concept of capital, including solidarity capital. Agents utilize these forms of capital in their decision-making processes and interactions.
6. **Adapted CDM Behavior:** The model aims to understand the outcomes of the agents' decision-making processes. This includes the career paths chosen by graduates, their employment outcomes, the utilization of different forms of capital, and the overall impact on the labor market during the pandemic.
7. **Outcomes in the Field:** The agents' collective career decision-making behaviors and actions may have an impact on the field, which represents the labor market and the broader socio-economic context. The outcomes can include changes in the labor market dynamics, industry trends, economic conditions, and other factors influenced by agents' decisions.

By considering these components and their interactions, the PIAS Model provides a framework for simulating and analyzing the complex dynamics of career decision-making in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. It helps researchers gain insights into the factors that govern agents' behaviors and the outcomes of their decisions, contributing to a better understanding of the system as a whole.

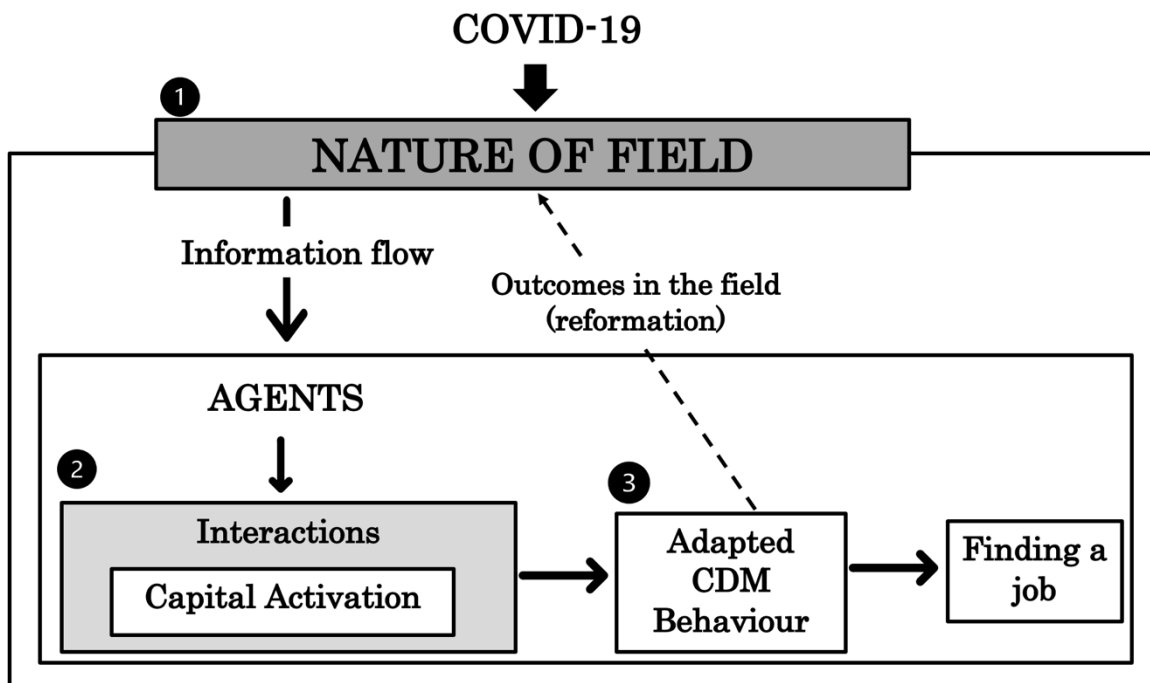


Figure 21. PIAS Model

6.2 The PIAS Model as a complementary framework

The development of the PIAS Model builds upon an existing analytical model of Career Decision Making (CDM), the Careership theory, by incorporating revisions and additions that are specific to the pandemic context. While the majority of the model (approximately 80%) draws from the existing framework, the remaining 20% has been modified to address the unique challenges presented by the pandemic. As a result, certain findings are expected to be applicable primarily within the context of the pandemic, while others retain relevance to more typical situations. This approach ensures that the PIAS Model captures the distinct dynamics of the pandemic while also retaining broader applicability beyond this exceptional period.

Based on the components of the PIAS Model, their relevance to the pandemic context and ordinary situations can be understood as follows:

Relevant to the pandemic context:

1. **Nature of Field amidst COVID-19:** Factors related to the pandemic, such as social restrictions and mobility, limited job opportunities, and digital transformations are particularly relevant to the COVID-19 crisis.
2. **Activation of Solidarity Capital:** The aspect of solidarity capital in the PIAS Model becomes very relevant in the context of a pandemic. Solidarity capital refers to collective support, cooperation and mutual assistance among individuals, organizations and groups/communities involved in career decision making. During a crisis such as a pandemic, activating and leveraging solidarity capital becomes essential to overcome challenges, share resources and support each other in overcoming adversity.
3. **Adapted Pragmatically Rational CDM:** Amidst the pandemic, individuals adapt their Career Decision Making behavior pragmatically, considering the limitations and opportunities presented by the crisis.

Relevant to ordinary situations too:

1. **Field:** The general nature of the field remains applicable in both pandemic and non-pandemic contexts, providing a broader understanding of the environment within which career decisions are made.
2. **Information Flow:** The flow of information about the labor market and industrial developments, remains significant in both pandemic and non-pandemic situations.
3. **Agents:** The characteristics, objectives and decision-making processes of individuals, organizations and groups/communities involved in career decision-making can be applied in both pandemic and non-pandemic situations.

4. **Interactions:** Interaction between agencies, such as seeking advice, networking, or engaging in backdoor recruiting practices, can occur in a variety of contexts, not just limited to pandemics.
5. **Utilization of Capital:** Utilization of social capital, cultural capital, and digital cultural capital by agents is relevant in pandemic and non-pandemic contexts, because these forms of capital play a role in career decision-making regardless of the situation.
6. **CDM Behavior:** The results of the agency's decision-making process, including career paths, employment outcomes, and utilization of various forms of capital, are applicable in both pandemic and non-pandemic situations.
7. **Results on the Field:** The impact of agency collective decision-making behavior on the labor market and socio-economic conditions can be observed in both pandemic and non-pandemic contexts, although with different specific dynamics.

In summary, while certain aspects of the PIAS Model are highly relevant to the pandemic context, such as nature of the field, the activation of solidarity capital, and adapted pragmatically CDM behaviour, most of the model's components are applicable to both extraordinary and ordinary situations. This highlights the versatility and wider applicability of the PIAS Model beyond the specific circumstances of a pandemic.

6.3 The applicability of PIAS Model

The PIAS Model, although initially developed in response to the unique challenges posed by a pandemic, is not limited to pandemic situations alone. The model has broader applicability and can be used to address various types of crises beyond pandemics.

While pandemics have their own specific characteristics, it is important to recognize that other crises can also exhibit similar categories of uniqueness. These categories of uniqueness refer to common patterns and features that can be observed across different types of crises.

For example, crises such as natural disasters, economic recessions, political conflicts, or environmental emergencies can share certain characteristics with a pandemic. These may include aspects like uncertainty, disruption of normal routines, social and economic consequences, and the need for adaptive responses.

By understanding the categorization of uniqueness, we can identify the commonalities and interconnectedness between different types of crises. This enables us to leverage the insights and strategies developed within the PIAS Model to address a wider range of crisis situations.

The PIAS Model, with its emphasis on interactive agency and the involvement of various stakeholders, provides a framework that can be adapted and applied to different crisis contexts. It

offers a systematic approach to crisis management, focusing on effective decision-making, resource allocation, communication, and collaboration among key actors.

By recognizing that special characteristics found in a pandemic and the categorization of uniqueness can also be observed in other crises, the PIAS Model becomes a valuable tool for understanding and responding to a variety of challenging situations. It highlights the importance of a comprehensive and adaptable approach to crisis management, fostering resilience, and enabling effective decision-making in the face of uncertainty and complexity.

6.4 Considering the uniqueness of each crisis before utilizing the PIAS Model

When utilizing the PIAS Model for understanding and managing different crises, it is important to consider the categorization and uniqueness of each crisis. While the model provides a general framework for analyzing information flow, interactions, and capital utilization, specific crises may have distinct characteristics that require tailored approaches. Here are some considerations for categorizing the uniqueness of other crises within the context of the PIAS Model:

1. **Nature of the Crisis:** Different crises, such as natural disasters, economic crises, political unrest, or public health emergencies, have unique features and implications. Understanding the specific nature of the crisis is crucial for identifying the relevant components of the PIAS Model and adapting them accordingly. For example, the information flow and response mechanisms in a natural disaster may differ from those in a financial crisis.
2. **Impact on the Field:** Each crisis affects the field (the broader social context) in distinct ways. Assessing the magnitude, scope, and duration of the crisis's impact is essential for understanding the challenges and opportunities it presents. This evaluation helps determine the necessary adjustments in the model's components, such as the type of information agents receive, the availability of resources, or the urgency of response strategies.
3. **Stakeholder Analysis:** Identifying the key stakeholders involved in the crisis is vital for effectively applying the PIAS Model. Stakeholders can include government agencies, community organizations, businesses, healthcare providers, and individuals directly affected by the crisis. Analyzing their roles, resources, and interactions helps determine the flow of information, the distribution of capitals, and the collaborative efforts needed to address the crisis.
4. **Cultural and Contextual Considerations:** Cultural and contextual factors significantly influence how crises are perceived, managed, and responded to. It is crucial to consider the cultural norms, values, and social structures that shape individuals' behavior and decision-making processes during a crisis. Adapting the PIAS Model to specific cultural contexts enhances its relevance and effectiveness in addressing the unique challenges and

opportunities presented by different crises.

By categorizing the uniqueness of other crises and considering these factors, researchers and practitioners can tailor the application of the PIAS Model to effectively understand, respond to, and manage crises beyond the scope of pandemics. This approach allows for a more nuanced analysis of information flow, interactions, and capital utilization, leading to contextually relevant and effective strategies for crisis management and decision-making.

6.5 The applicability of PIAS Model as a theoretical concept

The applicability of the PIAS Model as a theoretical concept is wide-ranging and extends beyond its original context. Here are some key aspects of its applicability:

1. **Crisis Management:** The PIAS Model can be applied as a theoretical framework for understanding and managing crises beyond the realm of pandemics. Its core concepts of information flow, interactions among agents, utilization of capitals, and response to the field can be adapted to various crisis situations, such as natural disasters, economic downturns, or social upheavals. By analyzing the dynamics between the field and agents, the model can inform strategies for effective crisis response, resource allocation, and collaboration among stakeholders.
2. **Career Development:** While the PIAS Model was initially developed to examine career decision-making processes during a crisis, its theoretical concepts can be extended to broader career development contexts. The model highlights the role of social factors, information exchange, and capital utilization in shaping individuals' career choices and outcomes. It can be applied to study career transitions, exploration of career paths, and the influence of social networks on career development. By considering the interactions between agents and the field, the model can inform interventions and policies that support individuals' career growth and satisfaction.
3. **Social Systems Analysis:** The PIAS Model offers a lens for analyzing social systems and their functioning. It emphasizes the interplay between individuals, their social positions, and the broader social context. This theoretical framework can be utilized to study social phenomena beyond career development, such as community development, organizational dynamics, or social movements. By examining the flow of information, interactions, and utilization of capitals within a system, the model can shed light on the mechanisms that shape social outcomes and inform strategies for social change.
4. **Cross-Cultural Research:** The PIAS Model's focus on social factors and their impact on decision-making processes makes it applicable to cross-cultural research. By comparing

how different cultures or societies navigate crises, make career decisions, and utilize social capital, researchers can gain insights into cultural variations and identify culturally specific factors that influence behavior. The model can facilitate cross-cultural comparisons and contribute to a deeper understanding of the role of culture in shaping individual and collective responses to challenges.

Overall, the applicability of the PIAS Model as a theoretical concept extends beyond its initial context and can be adapted to various domains of research and practice. Its focus on social dynamics, information flow, and capital utilization provides a valuable framework for understanding complex systems and informing strategies for effective decision-making, crisis management, career development, and social change.

6. 6 The applicability of PIAS Model for practice/society

6.6.1 The difference between the applicability of PIAS Model in the time of crisis, new normal, and normal situation

The applicability of the PIAS Model can vary depending on the specific context and circumstances. Here are some key differences in its applicability in different situations:

1. **Time of Crisis:** During times of crisis, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, the PIAS Model can be particularly relevant. It can help in understanding and simulating the actions, behaviors, and interactions of agents in response to the crisis. The model can assist in analyzing the impact of the crisis on career decision-making processes, job opportunities, and the overall employment landscape. It can provide insights into how individuals and organizations adapt and navigate through the crisis, and inform strategies for resilience and recovery.
2. **New Normal:** The new normal refers to the post-crisis period when society and the economy undergo significant changes and adjustments. In this phase, the PIAS Model can be used to study the evolving dynamics of career decision-making in the transformed work environment. It can assist in understanding the implications of remote work, digital transformation, and changing job market conditions on individuals' career choices and opportunities. The model can help in identifying new skill requirements, emerging job sectors, and strategies for successful career transitions in the new normal.
3. **Normal Situation:** In a normal situation, without any major crisis or disruptive event, the applicability of the PIAS Model may be more focused on studying the general dynamics of career decision-making processes and workforce dynamics. It can be used to explore factors such as educational attainment, industry trends, and individual preferences that shape career choices. The model can assist in analyzing the impact of social, economic,

and technological factors on career outcomes and provide insights for career planning, skill development, and organizational workforce strategies.

Overall, the applicability of the PIAS Model varies based on the context and situation. It is particularly useful during times of crisis and in understanding the implications of significant changes in the work environment, such as the new normal. However, it can also be applied to study career decision-making processes and workforce dynamics in normal situations to inform individual, organizational, and policy-related decisions.

6.6.2 The applicability of PIAS Model for other crises

The PIAS (Pandemic Interactive Agency System) Model has a broad applicability beyond the COVID-19 pandemic. While the model was initially developed to understand and simulate the career decision-making processes of individuals amidst the specific challenges of the pandemic, its principles and framework can be adapted and applied to various other contexts and crises. Here are some examples of the model's potential applicability:

- a) Natural Disasters:** The PIAS Model can be used to study how individuals, communities, and organizations make decisions and respond during natural disasters such as hurricanes, earthquakes, floods, or wildfires. It can explore the activation of different capitals, such as social capital, cultural capital, and community networks, and examine how they influence decision-making and resilience in the face of such crises.
- b) Economic Crises:** The model can be adapted to analyze the decision-making processes of individuals and organizations during economic downturns, recessions, or financial crises. It can explore how limited job opportunities, changes in market conditions, and the activation of different forms of capital impact career choices, employment strategies, and economic recovery.
- c) Political Unrest:** In contexts of political instability, the PIAS Model can be used to examine the decision-making processes of individuals, groups, and organizations. It can explore how political events, social movements, and changes in the political landscape affect individuals' career choices, social interactions, and opportunities for development.
- d) Public Health Emergencies:** While the PIAS Model originated from the COVID-19 pandemic, it can be applied to other public health emergencies, such as outbreaks of infectious diseases or global health crises. The model can analyze how individuals and communities make decisions related to healthcare, prevention measures, employment, and social interactions during such emergencies.
- e) Environmental Crises:** The PIAS Model can be utilized to understand decision-making

processes in the context of environmental crises, such as climate change, pollution, or resource depletion. It can explore how individuals and organizations navigate sustainability issues, adapt their behaviors, and make decisions that consider environmental impact and resilience.

By adapting the parameters, rules, and variables of the PIAS Model to fit specific crisis contexts, researchers can gain insights into decision-making processes, the activation of various capitals, and the dynamics of interactions among agents. This can help inform policy-making, crisis management strategies, and individual decision-making in diverse crisis scenarios

6.6.3 The applicability of PIAS Model for other countries

The applicability of the PIAS Model is not limited to a specific type of country but rather depends on the research question and the specific context being studied. The model can be adapted to suit different types of countries, including developed, developing, or emerging economies.

In developed countries, the PIAS Model can be used to examine the career decision-making processes of individuals in well-established industries and sectors. It can help understand how economic crises or other disruptive events impact the labor market, job opportunities, and individuals' career trajectories.

In developing or emerging economies, the PIAS Model can be applied to study the career decision-making processes of individuals facing unique challenges, such as limited job opportunities, informal labor markets, and a higher reliance on social networks and connections. It can shed light on the strategies individuals adopt to navigate these challenges and the role of social capital in their career decisions.

In short, the applicability of the PIAS Model extends beyond its original context in Indonesia and can be adapted for use in other countries. While the model was initially developed to understand the career decision-making processes of polytechnic graduates in Indonesia during the COVID-19 pandemic, its principles and framework can be adjusted to suit different cultural, social, and economic contexts. Here are some considerations for applying the PIAS Model in other countries:

a) Cultural Context: Different countries have unique cultural norms, values, and social structures that influence decision-making processes. When applying the PIAS Model, it is important to consider these cultural nuances and adapt the model's variables, rules, and parameters accordingly. This may involve incorporating cultural-specific factors that impact career decision-making and modifying the activation of capitals to align with the cultural

context of the country.

- b) Economic Factors:** The labor market dynamics, job opportunities, and economic conditions vary across countries. Researchers can tailor the PIAS Model to reflect the specific economic factors and challenges faced by individuals in different countries. This may involve adjusting the variables related to limited job opportunities, backdoor hiring practices, and digital transformation to align with the country's economic landscape.
- c) Educational System:** The PIAS Model can be adapted to different educational systems and institutions in other countries. The interactions and support provided by educational agents, such as schools, universities, vocational training centers, or other relevant entities, can be incorporated into the model to reflect the specific educational context of the country.
- d) Policy Environment:** The policy landscape and government interventions differ across countries. Researchers can incorporate the relevant policy factors into the PIAS Model to understand how policy decisions impact individuals' career decision-making processes during crises. This may involve considering factors such as government support programs, regulations, or initiatives aimed at addressing the challenges faced by individuals in the labor market.
- e) Social Capital Activation:** The concept of social capital, including solidarity capital, can be applied in various countries to capture the support networks and social relationships that individuals rely on during crises. However, it is essential to recognize that the specific nature and dynamics of social capital may vary across cultures and societies. Researchers can adapt the model to incorporate country-specific social capital activation mechanisms and explore how they influence career decision-making.

By considering the unique characteristics of each country, researchers can tailor the PIAS Model to fit the specific cultural, economic, educational, and policy contexts. This will enhance the applicability and relevance of the model in studying career decision-making processes amidst crises in different countries, leading to valuable insights and informed decision-making.

6.7 Solidarity capital

Solidarity capital within the PIAS Model refers to a specific form of social capital that emerges and is utilized by agents in response to limited job opportunities and challenging circumstances, such as the COVID-19 pandemic. It represents the support, cooperation, and collective action among individuals or groups facing common challenges or goals.

In the context of career decision-making, solidarity capital can manifest through various forms of mutual aid, networking, and collaboration among individuals who share similar

experiences, aspirations, or struggles. It can involve sharing job leads, providing emotional support, offering advice or mentorship, and collectively navigating the labor market.

Within the PIAS Model, agents may tap into solidarity capital to overcome the limitations imposed by the crisis situation, such as reduced job opportunities or increased competition. By leveraging their networks and connections, agents can access hidden job markets, learn about potential opportunities, and receive support from others who are facing similar challenges. Solidarity capital enables individuals to strengthen their position in the labor market and improve their career outcomes by leveraging collective resources, knowledge, and support.

By recognizing the role of solidarity capital within the PIAS Model, researchers and practitioners can better understand the dynamics of career decision-making during times of crisis and devise strategies to enhance collective action, foster supportive networks, and empower individuals in navigating challenging labor market conditions.

In the context of Indonesia during the COVID-19 pandemic, despite the ongoing structural challenges that require attention from the government, there has been a significant growth of community initiatives driven by solidarity. The Indonesian people have demonstrated a strong sense of mutual cooperation and have actively worked together to combat the effects of the pandemic. The community's response and solidarity can be attributed to the character and values held by Indonesian people, which emphasize modalities of mutual cooperation. This observation aligns with the notion that social solidarity in Indonesian society plays a crucial role in responding to challenges collectively (Faedlulloh, 2015).

Furthermore, the study indicates that when making professional decisions, the majority of respondents relied on incomplete information obtained from trusted individuals, rather than official written materials. This finding suggests that personal networks and the support of family, friends, and community members played a significant role in assisting graduates during their transition from polytechnic education to the workforce. By relying on "hot sources" or trusted individuals, graduates prioritized the support and guidance they received from their immediate social circles, indicating a reliance on interpersonal connections and social capital for decision-making. Overall, these findings highlight the importance of community solidarity, trust, and social capital in navigating professional decisions and addressing challenges faced by graduates during the COVID-19 pandemic in Indonesia.

These examples provide further insight into the experiences of graduates amidst the COVID-19 pandemic in Indonesia. They highlight the challenges faced by these individuals and the support they received from their relatives and friends. Despite the difficult circumstances, the graduates made decisions based on the available opportunities and their personal situations. In

the context of the PIAS Model, the activation of solidarity capital and the practice of gotong-royong among agents in the social structure can be seen as a means of mutual support, cooperation, and collective problem-solving amidst the challenges posed by limited job opportunities and the COVID-19 pandemic.

Valdi, a mechanical engineering graduate, found part-time work in a restaurant with the help of a relative. Although the job may be categorized as underemployment, Valdi considered it better than being unemployed. His relative's aid was crucial in securing the job during these challenging times. Toro, studying the same major as Valdi, decided to attend a Japanese training course for job preparation after his uncle offered to cover the costs. Toro acknowledged that the job he aspired to in Japan might not match his educational background, but he was grateful for the opportunity and the support provided by his uncle. Toro had been working since his time as a student, taking up various jobs such as a bricklayer and driver through recommendations from friends.

Tiana, an accounting graduate, started working before graduation due to financial difficulties faced by her family after her father lost his job. She received assistance from a relative and found employment in a health clinic while also working on her final project. Similarly, Rahman, an electrical engineering graduate, faced challenges in finding a job during the pandemic. However, he received support from a relative who offered him a part-time technician position. Although the job was not full-time, Rahman took the opportunity considering the difficult job market conditions.

These examples demonstrate the resourcefulness and adaptability of graduates in seeking employment opportunities amidst the limitations imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic. They relied on their personal networks, such as relatives and friends, to find jobs and navigate through challenging circumstances. The support and aid they received from their social connections played a crucial role in their career transition.

6.8 Solidarity capital as a typical form of social capital among Indonesian citizens

Solidarity capital is often considered as a typical form of social capital among Indonesian citizens due to several reasons:

1. **Collectivist Culture:** Indonesia is known for its collectivist culture, where people prioritize group harmony, cooperation, and social relationships. Solidarity capital reflects the strong social bonds and mutual support within communities, where individuals come together to help one another in times of need.
2. **Strong Community Networks:** Indonesian society is characterized by strong community

networks, such as extended families, neighborhood associations, and religious groups. These networks foster a sense of solidarity and provide a platform for individuals to connect, collaborate, and rely on each other for support.

3. **Mutual Aid and Assistance:** Solidarity capital in Indonesia is often manifested through practices of mutual aid and assistance, where individuals willingly help each other through various means, such as sharing resources, providing financial support, offering guidance, and facilitating job opportunities.
4. **Cultural Values:** Indonesian cultural values, such as gotong royong (community cooperation) and tolong-menolong (mutual assistance), reinforce the importance of solidarity and collective well-being. These values contribute to the formation and utilization of solidarity capital as a means of addressing social and economic challenges.
5. **Resilience in Adversity:** Indonesians have historically faced various natural disasters, economic crises, and social challenges. In such times, solidarity capital becomes essential for individuals to overcome adversity collectively and rebuild their lives.

Overall, the combination of a collectivist culture, strong community networks, cultural values, and the need for resilience in challenging circumstances has made solidarity capital a typical form of social capital among Indonesian citizens. It plays a crucial role in fostering social cohesion, providing support systems, and addressing individual and collective needs in the Indonesian context.

5.8 The components of solidarity capital

Solidarity capital refers to a form of social capital that emerges from mutual support, cooperation, and collective action within a community or social network. It encompasses the resources, relationships, and shared values that individuals and groups leverage to address common challenges and pursue common goals. Based on the study findings, the components of solidarity capital can include:

1. **Social Networks:** Solidarity capital is built upon the strength and diversity of social networks. These networks can be formal or informal and may include family, friends, colleagues, community organizations, or professional associations. The connections within these networks provide access to information, resources, and opportunities.
2. **Trust and Reciprocity:** Trust and reciprocity are fundamental elements of solidarity capital. Individuals within a community or network trust and rely on each other, fostering cooperation and collaboration. They engage in reciprocal relationships where support and

assistance are exchanged, creating a sense of solidarity and mutual benefit.

3. **Collective Identity and Shared Values:** Solidarity capital is grounded in a collective identity and shared values among its members. This sense of belonging and shared purpose strengthens social cohesion and collective action. It allows individuals to come together, advocate for common interests, and work towards common goals.
4. **Collective Action and Mobilization:** Solidarity capital is manifested through collective action and mobilization. When faced with challenges or opportunities, individuals and groups with solidarity capital can organize, collaborate, and pool their resources to address shared needs or advance common objectives. This collective action is driven by a sense of solidarity and a commitment to the well-being of the community or network.
5. **Social Support and Empowerment:** Solidarity capital provides a supportive environment where individuals feel empowered and encouraged. It offers emotional support, practical assistance, and guidance in navigating challenges and pursuing opportunities. This support system enhances individuals' resilience, self-confidence, and ability to overcome obstacles.

By leveraging the components of solidarity capital, individuals and groups can navigate difficult circumstances, overcome barriers, and achieve their goals collectively. It plays a crucial role in fostering resilience, social cohesion, and community development.

6.9 Types of social support in solidarity capital

In the context of CDM amidst COVID-19, there can be different types of solidarity capital that individuals may draw upon. Solidarity capital refers to the resources, support, and connections that individuals can leverage from their social networks. Here are some types of social support in solidarity capital that can be relevant in the CDM process during the pandemic in this study findings:

1. **Emotional Support:** This type of solidarity capital involves receiving empathy, encouragement, and understanding from family, friends, mentors, or support groups. Emotional support can help individuals cope with the challenges and uncertainties they face during their career decision-making process.
2. **Informational Support:** Informational solidarity capital includes access to relevant and timely information about job opportunities, industry trends, skill development, and other resources. Having access to accurate and up-to-date information can empower individuals to make informed decisions about their careers amidst the changing landscape.

3. **Networking Support:** Networking support encompasses the connections and relationships individuals have with professionals, alumni, industry contacts, and other influential individuals. These connections can provide access to hidden job opportunities, mentorship, career advice, and professional development opportunities.
4. **Instrumental Support:** Instrumental solidarity capital refers to practical assistance that individuals receive from their social networks. It can include help with job search activities, resume writing, interview preparation, referrals, or even financial support. Such support can play a crucial role in facilitating career transitions and overcoming barriers.

It's important to note that the types of solidarity capital may vary depending on cultural, social, and economic contexts. The COVID-19 pandemic has introduced unique challenges, and individuals may need to rely on different forms of solidarity capital to navigate the changing career landscape.

CHAPTER 7 CONCLUSIONS

7.1 Conclusions

This conclusion part will clearly answer the four research questions:

1. What are the typical characteristics of the extraordinary setting under COVID-19 compared to those before COVID-19?

Before COVID-19, there were no typical characteristics at the national or macro level. However, in the macro level or labor market setting, limited job opportunities and backdoor hiring practices were already prevalent characteristics. In the meso level or polytechnic setting, there were no specific typical characteristics identified. At the micro level or family setting, economic problems were observed as typical characteristics within the informants' families.

Amidst COVID-19, there have been changes in the typical characteristics. At the national level, social and mobility restrictions have become the prominent characteristic of the field. In the macro level or labor market setting, three typical characteristics have emerged: limited job opportunities, backdoor hiring practices, and digital transformation. The labor market has experienced a decrease in job availability, an increase in the prevalence of backdoor hiring practices, and a significant shift towards digitalization. In the meso level or polytechnic setting, online learning, adapted work placement delivery methods, and adapted career guidance have become the typical characteristics. Polytechnics have transitioned to virtual learning environments, modified the way work placements are conducted, and provided adjusted career guidance to cater to the challenges posed by the pandemic. In the micro level or family and surroundings setting, parental job loss or experiences of bankruptcy have become the typical characteristics, reflecting the economic hardships faced by families during the COVID-19 crisis.

These changes in typical characteristics across different levels and contexts highlight the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on various aspects of society and individuals' lives, particularly in the realms of employment, education, and family dynamics.

2. In the typical characteristics of the context, how can the various capitals be activated/functioned and how do the capitals differ from before?

Amidst COVID-19, the typical characteristics of the context have led to changes in the activation and functioning of various capitals, which differ from the pre-COVID-19 period.

1. Online social capital activation

Amidst COVID-19, the typical characteristics of the context have led to changes in the activation and functioning of various capitals, particularly social capital. The social and mobility restrictions imposed during the pandemic have indeed hindered the functioning of offline social

capital, which heavily relies on in-person interactions and physical networks. The limitations on face-to-face contact and gatherings have disrupted the ability to maintain and strengthen social relationships through traditional means.

However, as a response to these restrictions, there has been an activation of online social capital. With the increased reliance on digital platforms and virtual connections, individuals have adapted to maintaining and fostering social relationships through online channels. This activation of online social capital allows individuals to continue engaging with their networks, seek support, and access information despite the physical limitations imposed by the pandemic.

Through various digital platforms such as social media, video conferencing tools, and online communities, individuals have found alternative ways to stay connected, collaborate, and interact virtually. These online interactions have facilitated the exchange of knowledge, emotional support, and resources, thereby maintaining and activating social capital in a digital context.

It is important to note that the activation of online social capital may differ from the dynamics of offline social capital experienced before COVID-19. The shift to virtual interactions and reliance on digital platforms introduces new modes of communication and engagement, which can impact the nature and quality of social connections. However, the activation of online social capital demonstrates the adaptability and resilience of individuals in utilizing digital tools and platforms to sustain their social networks and access social resources in an extraordinary setting characterized by social and mobility restrictions.

2. Solidarity capital activation

Amidst COVID-19, the limited job opportunities have indeed negatively impacted the functioning of cultural capital in the labor market setting. Individuals may face challenges in effectively leveraging their educational qualifications, skills, and credentials to secure employment due to the scarcity of available positions. The traditional mechanisms through which cultural capital, such as educational attainment and relevant experience, would typically contribute to job prospects may be less influential during this period.

However, it is important to note that the limited job opportunities have also led to the activation of social capital, particularly through backdoor hiring practices. In an environment where formal job vacancies are scarce, connections, referrals, and personal networks have become increasingly crucial in accessing employment opportunities. This activation of social capital allows individuals to bypass or circumvent traditional recruitment processes and tap into hidden job markets. By leveraging their social networks and relationships, individuals can gain

access to job openings that may not be publicly advertised, thus increasing their chances of securing employment.

Additionally, the activation of social capital in this context also highlights the role of solidarity capital. Solidarity capital refers to the support and assistance provided by individuals within social networks during times of need. The activation of social capital, particularly through backdoor hiring practices, relies on the goodwill and solidarity of individuals who share information, recommend candidates, and facilitate job opportunities for others. In this way, the activation of solidarity capital contributes to addressing the challenges posed by limited job opportunities, providing alternative avenues for individuals to find employment.

Overall, amidst COVID-19, the limited job opportunities have impacted the functioning of cultural capital in the labor market setting. However, this has also led to the activation of social capital and the emergence of solidarity capital, emphasizing the importance of connections, referrals, and personal networks in accessing employment opportunities and navigating the challenges of the job market during the extraordinary circumstances brought about by the pandemic.

3. Digital cultural capital activation

Amidst COVID-19, the digital transformation accelerated by the pandemic has indeed activated digital cultural capital, which refers to the possession of digital skills, technological literacy, and the ability to navigate digital platforms. Individuals who possess digital cultural capital have an advantage in the evolving job market, as the pandemic has necessitated a shift towards remote work, virtual communication, and online collaboration. Those who already had digital skills and familiarity with technology were better equipped to adapt to the new work environment and utilize digital tools effectively.

The activation of digital cultural capital is reflected in the resilience demonstrated by individuals in adapting to digital tools and remote work environments. They are able to leverage their technological competence to stay productive, communicate efficiently, and collaborate remotely. Their ability to navigate digital platforms, utilize online resources, and quickly adapt to new technologies reflects the activation of digital cultural capital in response to the extraordinary circumstances brought about by the pandemic.

However, it is important to acknowledge that the digital transformation has also widened the existing digital divide. Individuals who lack access to technology or digital skills face additional challenges in utilizing their digital cultural capital effectively. The digital divide refers to the disparity in access to technology, internet connectivity, and digital literacy skills among different individuals or groups. Those who are unable to access or effectively use digital

resources may experience barriers in education, employment, and accessing critical services during the pandemic.

The activation of digital cultural capital highlights the increasing importance of digital skills and technological literacy in the current job market. While it offers opportunities for those who possess digital cultural capital, it is crucial to address the digital divide and ensure equitable access to technology and digital skills training to minimize the disparities faced by individuals who are marginalized or lack the necessary resources to fully participate in the digital transformation.

Overall, the digital transformation during the pandemic has activated digital cultural capital, providing advantages to individuals with digital skills and technological literacy. However, efforts are needed to bridge the digital divide and ensure that everyone has equal opportunities to develop and utilize their digital cultural capital effectively.

These shifts in the activation and functioning of capitals highlight the changing dynamics and opportunities in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. Adapting to online social interactions, leveraging social connections for employment opportunities, and possessing digital skills have become increasingly important in navigating the extraordinary setting brought about by the pandemic.

3. In the typical characteristics of the setting and by using their activated capitals, how do the graduates' CDM behaviors change amidst COVID-19?

Amidst COVID-19 and the typical characteristics of the setting, the graduates' career decision-making (CDM) behaviors have undergone changes, resulting from the activation of various capitals and shifts in the horizons for action. There are two scenarios that highlight the changes in the graduates' CDM behaviors amidst COVID-19. Despite the differences, both scenarios reflect changes in the horizons for action and ultimately influence the graduates' pragmatically driven CDM behaviors.

Scenario 1: In this scenario, the graduates' CDM behaviors are driven by the need to survive during the crisis. The typical characteristics of the setting, such as limited job opportunities and economic challenges, influence their decision-making. As a result, their CDM behaviors include taking any available job (horizontal, vertical, underemployment), being self-employed, working as freelancers/gig workers, being part-time workers, or even considering overseas employment (boundaryless careers). These behaviors are adopted as a pragmatic response to the difficult circumstances, allowing them to secure income and meet their immediate needs. However, it is important to note that these decisions may be temporary in nature, as the graduates may continue to seek better job opportunities in the long run.

Scenario 2: In this scenario, the graduates actively explore digital job opportunities, even if they do not have an IT background. The activation of digital cultural capital, along with the typical characteristics of the digital transformation during COVID-19, influences their CDM behaviors. The graduates recognize the growing demand for digital skills and adapt their career choices accordingly. They may acquire new digital skills or leverage existing ones to pursue job opportunities in the digital sector. This strategic adaptation allows them to enhance their employability and increase their chances of finding stable employment in a changing job market.

Both scenarios highlight the shift in the graduates' CDM behaviors compared to the pre-COVID-19 period. Before the pandemic, their CDM goals might have focused on security, work interest, and enjoyment. However, amidst COVID-19, the typical characteristics of the setting, along with the activation of capitals, influence their pragmatically driven CDM behaviors. They may temporarily accept any available job or choose self-employment as a survival strategy, while also actively seeking better job opportunities in the long term. Additionally, they may recognize the value of digital skills and pursue digital job opportunities, even if their educational background is not directly related to the IT sector.

Overall, the changes in the graduates' CDM behaviors amidst COVID-19 reflect the adaptation to the extraordinary setting and the utilization of their activated capitals. The shifts in their career choices and strategies are influenced by the context-specific challenges and opportunities, emphasizing the pragmatic nature of their decision-making in response to the crisis.

4. Ultimately, based on the results of the study, what is a new form of CDM process reflected by the polytechnic graduates amidst COVID-19?

Based on the information provided in the previous research questions, the study can indeed suggest a new form of career decision-making (CDM) process reflected by polytechnic graduates amidst COVID-19, termed the Pandemic Interactive Agency System (PIAS) Model.

The PIAS Model reflects the adaptive strategies and decision-making processes employed by polytechnic graduates in response to the challenges posed by the pandemic. It recognizes the importance of various capitals, including cultural capital, social capital, online social capital, digital cultural capital, and solidarity capital, in shaping the graduates' CDM behaviors during the crisis.

Notably, the PIAS Model introduces the concept of "solidarity capital" as a new capital that emerges as a typical capital under crisis conditions in the Indonesian context. Solidarity capital refers to the support and assistance provided by individuals within social networks during

times of need. It encompasses the networks, connections, and mutual aid that are crucial for navigating the challenges of the pandemic and accessing employment opportunities through mechanisms such as backdoor hiring practices.

The PIAS Model recognizes the interconnectedness of various capitals and emphasizes the importance of adaptive decision-making processes in the face of an extraordinary setting. It provides a framework for understanding how polytechnic graduates in Indonesia navigate their career paths during the pandemic, taking into account the changes in the context, the activation of capitals, and the emergence of solidarity capital.

By incorporating the PIAS Model and highlighting the concept of solidarity capital, the study offers insights into the unique CDM process adopted by polytechnic graduates amidst COVID-19 in the Indonesian context. It provides a comprehensive understanding of how these graduates adapt, make decisions, and leverage their resources in an ever-changing job market shaped by the pandemic.

7.2 Limitations and future directions

Related to the limitations and recommendation for future work, this study so far has five main points as follows:

- 1) The study's limitation lies in its specific research context, which is confined to three cities in Central Java, Indonesia. While this focus allowed for an in-depth exploration of career decision-making dynamics within this geographical area, it also constrains the broader applicability of the findings. The findings, particularly those related to the concept of solidarity capital, are likely influenced by the unique socio-cultural, economic, and institutional characteristics of this specific region. As such, the study's conclusions about the significance and role of solidarity capital may not be readily transferable to other contexts with distinct characteristics.

To address this limitation and enhance the study's external validity, future research could consider expanding the research context to encompass a broader range of cities, regions, or even countries. Conducting similar studies in diverse settings would allow for a more comprehensive understanding of how solidarity capital operates across various cultural, economic, and societal landscapes. By examining whether and how the concept of solidarity capital manifests differently in different regions, researchers can ascertain its cross-context applicability and identify any region-specific nuances.

A productive avenue for future research could involve conducting comparative studies between the current research context and other regions. By systematically comparing the

findings across diverse contexts, researchers can pinpoint the extent to which the concept of solidarity capital remains consistent or varies. Such comparative analyses can shed light on the core elements of solidarity capital that transcend regional boundaries and those that are specific to particular contexts.

- 2) The study acknowledges certain limitations in relation to the ongoing nature of the COVID-19 crisis at the time of the research. As the crisis was still unfolding, it was not possible to capture the complete scope of the crisis and its impact on career decisions. The study focuses on short-term outcomes and does not explore the long-term consequences of COVID-19 on career paths. Future research could delve into the post-COVID-19 situation and examine the longer-term effects on graduates' careers.

The interviews with participants were conducted from April to July 2022 when COVID-19 was still prevalent in Indonesia. The study recognizes that the effects of a pandemic on early career paths can be far-reaching and have enduring consequences. Understanding the cumulative benefits or drawbacks resulting from disruptions caused by the pandemic requires a longer observation period. Therefore, it is suggested that future research should revisit the respondents' conditions to gain a better understanding of the evolving impact of the crisis on their careers.

The study also raises an important question regarding the mindset and resilience of the youth generation. It poses the question of whether the COVID-19 crisis is leading to increased disillusionment or if it is cultivating a resilient new generation ready to confront future challenges. Addressing this question necessitates ongoing research and longitudinal studies that can provide insights into the long-term effects and trajectories of the pandemic on the careers of individuals

- 3) The study recognizes that family, including parents, and the broader social surroundings, such as friends, relatives, neighbors, and acquaintances, play a significant role in shaping the career decisions of the graduates. However, it notes that these individuals were not directly interviewed as part of the research process.

Acknowledging this limitation, the study suggests that future research could include family members and the broader social network as respondents to obtain their direct views and perspectives. By doing so, a more comprehensive understanding of the influences and dynamics within the social environment can be gained, providing deeper insights into the factors that shape career decisions during times of limited job opportunities and crisis situations like the COVID-19 pandemic.

Including family members and the wider social network as respondents in future studies would allow for a more comprehensive examination of their role in the career decision-making process. Their direct views and experiences can provide valuable insights into the support, constraints, and influences exerted by these individuals on the graduates' career choices.

- 4) The study findings introduced the concept of "solidarity capital" as a relevant construct in the context of revisiting career decision-making amidst COVID-19 among Indonesian polytechnic graduates. However, the specific mechanisms and functioning of solidarity capital were not extensively explored within the scope of this study. Therefore, further research is needed to delve deeper into understanding the dynamics and mechanisms through which solidarity capital operates.

To address this limitation, future studies could investigate and examine the various dimensions of solidarity capital and how it influences career decision-making processes during times of crisis, such as the COVID-19 pandemic. This could involve exploring the sources of solidarity capital, such as social networks, support systems, community engagement, and collective action, and how they contribute to individuals' decision-making strategies, resilience, and adaptability.

Additionally, further research could explore the role of solidarity capital in shaping individuals' access to resources, opportunities, and information relevant to their career decision-making. Understanding how solidarity capital influences individuals' career trajectories, choices, and outcomes can provide valuable insights into the social and contextual factors that impact career decision-making in challenging circumstances.

Moreover, future studies could also investigate the interplay between solidarity capital and other individual and contextual factors, such as personal values, socio-economic backgrounds, organizational support, and government policies, to gain a comprehensive understanding of the complex dynamics involved.

By filling the gap in knowledge regarding the mechanisms and functioning of solidarity capital, future research can contribute to a more nuanced understanding of how social capital operates in the context of career decision-making during times of crisis. This knowledge can inform the development of interventions, policies, and support systems that promote and enhance solidarity capital among individuals and communities, ultimately facilitating more informed, adaptive, and resilient career decision-making processes.

5) The fifth limitation of the study, which focuses only on vulnerable higher education institution graduates who graduated during the COVID-19 crisis and specifically targets polytechnic graduates, suggests an opportunity for future research to address this gap. It is important to acknowledge that Indonesia is a diverse country with various vulnerable groups facing unique challenges in their education and career trajectories.

Expanding the study to include other vulnerable groups in Indonesia would provide a more comprehensive understanding of the functions of the PIAS Model and solidarity capital in supporting career development. This could involve exploring the experiences and needs of vulnerable groups such as women, individuals from low-income backgrounds, rural communities, ethnic minorities, individuals with disabilities, and other marginalized populations.

By including a broader range of vulnerable groups, researchers can uncover the specific factors that influence their career decision-making processes and identify how the PIAS Model and solidarity capital can be applied to address their unique needs and challenges. This would contribute to a more inclusive and nuanced understanding of career development within the context of vulnerability in Indonesia.

Additionally, studying other vulnerable groups would allow for the identification of potential variations in the functions and effectiveness of the PIAS Model and solidarity capital across different contexts. Different groups may have distinct social networks, resources, and support systems, which could impact how they engage with and benefit from these concepts.

Overall, including other vulnerable groups in future research would enrich the understanding of the functions of the PIAS Model and solidarity capital in supporting career development in Indonesia. It would provide valuable insights into the diverse experiences and needs of different vulnerable groups, informing the development of more targeted interventions and policies to support their career aspirations and outcomes.

7.3 Recommendation for practice or policy

The study's findings especially on the PIAS Model and solidarity capital have significant implications for both practice and policy. These recommendations can be applied not only during crises but also in normal and new normal situations.

For practice:

1. Guiding Graduates with the PIAS Model: Career practitioners and counselors can use the PIAS Model as a practical framework to understand polytechnic graduates' adaptive strategies

and decision-making processes during the pandemic. By incorporating the model in counseling sessions, they can better support graduates in navigating uncertainties, identifying suitable career paths, and effectively leveraging their resources.

2. Tailoring Guidance Based on Capitals: The interconnectedness of various capitals in the PIAS Model, such as social, cultural, and digital cultural capital, underscores their importance in graduates' decision-making. Career practitioners can customize their guidance based on the activation of specific capitals, providing more targeted support to graduates during the crisis.

3. Promoting Solidarity Capital: Recognizing the significance of solidarity capital, practitioners can encourage graduates to foster social connections, which play a crucial role in accessing job opportunities, including through backdoor hiring practices. Emphasizing solidarity capital fosters a sense of community and shared responsibility, empowering graduates to collectively address job market challenges.

For Policy:

1. Considering Capitals in Labor Market Policies: Policymakers should take into account the interplay of different capitals highlighted by the PIAS Model when shaping labor market policies. Besides addressing economic factors, policies should focus on enhancing graduates' access to educational resources, skill development opportunities, and digital literacy training to strengthen their cultural and digital cultural capital.

2. Creating an Inclusive Job Market: Policymakers can foster a supportive job market by encouraging collaboration among employers, educational institutions, and the government. Such collaboration activates solidarity capital, leading to increased opportunities for graduates during the pandemic.

3. Tailored Initiatives for Graduates: Policies need to address the unique challenges faced by graduates during the pandemic, including limited job opportunities, underemployment, and boundaryless careers. Tailored initiatives for polytechnic graduates can help them navigate these challenges effectively.

In conclusion, the study's findings on the PIAS Model and solidarity capital hold significant practical and policy implications for supporting polytechnic graduates amidst the COVID-19 pandemic. By considering the adaptive strategies and capitals emphasized in the model, both career practitioners and policymakers can empower graduates to make informed decisions and thrive in an ever-changing job market.

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APPENDIX 1- RESPONDENTS' CHARACTERISTICS (N=98)

Graduates (n=65)

	Pseudonym	Gender	Age	Grad year	Major	Polytechnic	Current job	Workplace	Father's education	Mother's education	Father's occupation	Mother's occupation	Parent's income	Family home status
1	Ayu	F	26	2018	Accounting	A	Tax administrator	Distributor company	-	Bachelor	Passed away (was an army)	Teacher (civil servant)	± IDR 1M	Owned
2	Anas	M	27	2018	Visual Communication Design	A	Entrepreneur (wedding organizer)	Home	Senior High School	Senior High School	Entrepreneur	Entrepreneur	± IDR 6M	Owned
3	Ani	F	28	2018	Computer engineering	A	Multimedia teacher	Vocational High School	Senior High School	Junior High School	Entrepreneur (seller)	Entrepreneur (seller)	± IDR 5M	Owned
4	Aminah	F	24	2018	Accounting	A	Administrator	Hospital	Elementary School	Elementary School	Entrepreneur (seller)	Entrepreneur (seller)	± IDR 1,9M	Owned
5	Aulia	F	25	2018	Computer engineering	A	Administrator	College	Elementary School	Senior High School	Employee in an factory	Entrepreneur (seller)	± IDR 3M	Owned
6	Amir	M	25	2018	Computer engineering	A	Document controller	Factory	Elementary School	Junior High School	Entrepreneur (seller)	Housewife	± IDR10 M	Owned
7	Azhar	M	26	2018	Accounting	A	Officer	Government office	Elementary School	Elementary School	Entrepreneur	Unemployed	± IDR 2,5M	Owned
8	Anita	F	26	2018	Computer engineering	A	Administrator	Factory	Elementary School	Elementary School	Passed away	Housewife	No income	Owned
9	Bella	F	29	2018	Accounting	A	Civil servant	Health center	Senior High School	Senior High School	Laborer	Housewife	± IDR 1,4M	Owned
10	Wina	F	26	2018	Informatics engineering	B	Officer	Hospital	Diploma degree	Senior High School	Retired	Housewife	± IDR 3M	Owned
11	Fikri	M	26	2018	Mechanical engineering	B	Foreman	Factory	Senior High School	Junior High School	Entrepreneur	Entrepreneur	± IDR 5M	Owned
12	Binar	F	25	2018	Electrical engineering	B	Entrepreneur	Home	Junior High School	Junior High School	Farmer	Farmer	Under IDR 1M	Owned
13	Risna	F	29	2019	Accounting	A	Unemployed	-	Senior High School	Senior High School	Entrepreneur (seller)	Entrepreneur (seller)	± IDR 1M	Owned
14	Adam	M	26	2019	Electrical engineering	A	Administrator	Campus	Elementary School	Elementary School	Unemployed	Unemployed	No income	Owned
15	Ahmad	M	25	2019	Computer engineering	A	Staff	Financial office	Senior High School	Junior High School	Head of station	Housewife	IDR 17-19M	Owned
16	Akbar	M	26	2019	Computer engineering	A	Staff	Health center	Junior High School	Junior High School	Farmer	Housewife	Under IDR 1M	Owned
17	Marisa	F	27	2019	Accounting	A	Freelancer	Travel Agency	Bachelor	Bachelor	Civil servant	Civil servant	± IDR 6M	Owned

18	Aisyah	F	25	2019	Visual Communication Design	A	Social media administrator	Beauty clinic	Elementary School	Elementary School	Entrepreneur (seller)	Entrepreneur (seller)	± IDR 4M	Owned
19	Alim	M	26	2019	Computer engineering	A	Marketing communicator	Hotel	Elementary School	Elementary School	Entrepreneur (seller)	Housewife	± IDR 1M	Owned
20	Amelia	F	24	2019	Accounting	A	Staff	Government-owned company	Bachelor	Senior High School	Passed away	Entrepreneur	± IDR 600	Owned
21	Adinda	F	25	2019	Computer engineering	A	Staff	Government office	Senior High School	Elementary School	Entrepreneur	Entrepreneur	± IDR 3M	Owned
22	Santi	F	25	2019	Electrical engineering	B	Administrative staff	Elementary School	Elementary School	Elementary School	Entrepreneur (seller)	Housewife	± IDR 1,8M	Owned
23	Hendri	M	25	2019	Mechanical engineering	B	Maintenance staff	Factory	High School Equivalency Program (Equivalent with Senior High School)	High School Equivalency Program (Equivalent with Senior High School)	Village secretary	Entrepreneur (seller)	Under IDR 5M	Owned
24	Amna	F	26	2019	Informatics engineering	B	Business developer staff	Factory	Passed away	Senior High School	Passed away	Administrative staff	Under IDR 2,3M	Owned
25	Valdi	M	23	2020	Mechanical engineering	A	Part-time worker (still looking for a job)	-	Senior High School	Junior High School	Entrepreneur in a small business (a workshop)	Seller	± IDR 2M	Owned
26	Bani	M	22	2020	Electrical engineering	A	Estimator	Private company	Junior High School	Junior High School	Private employee	Housewife	± IDR 2M	Owned
27	Mawar	F	23	2020	Informatics engineering	A	Data scientist	Private education institution	Elementary School	Junior High School	Entrepreneur	Housewife	IDR 1M-4M	Owned
28	Umam	M	22	2020	Electrical engineering	A	Electronics technician	Private company (vendor for road lights)	Senior High School	Junior High School	Staff at State-Owned Enterprise	Housewife	IDR 4M-5M	Owned
29	Imran	M	24	2020	Informatics engineering	A	IT specialist	Private company (digital news media company)	Elementary School	Elementary School	Farmer	Seller	± IDR 3M	Owned
30	Rian	M	23	2021	Accounting	A	Freelancer (still looking for	-	Elementary School	Elementary School	Entrepreneur in a small business (a	Housewife	Under IDR 1M	Owned

							a job)				workshop)			
31	Viana	F	23	2021	Accounting	A	Secretary of government office	Government office (city office)	Diploma degree	Senior High School	Entrepreneur in a small business (a small shop)	entrepreneur in a small business (a small shop)	IDR 1M - 4M	Owned
32	Radit	M	23	2021	Informatics engineering	A	IT staff	NGO	Senior High School	Elementary School	Entrepreneur (TV repairer)	Housewife	IDR 3M-5M	Owned
33	Tia	F	21	2021	Accounting	A	Finance staff	MSME (skincare online shop)	Senior High School	Junior High School	Village officer and freelancer (motorbike taxi driver (GoJek))	Housewife	± IDR 2.5M	Owned
34	Toro	M	21	2021	Mechanical engineering	A	Going to a training course for preparing to work in Japan as a <i>Kenshusei</i>	-	Senior High School	Senior High School	Construction worker	Entrepreneur (Seller)	IDR 3.5M-4M	Owned
35	Hana	F	23	2021	Accounting	A	Accounting analyst	E-Commerce (multinational company)	Junior High School	Junior High School	Construction worker	Housewife	IDR 1.5M	Owned
36	Nela	F	22	2021	Electrical engineering	A	Production operator (just resign in the time of interview)	-	Diploma	Senior High School	Street vendor (peddler)	Street vendor (peddler)	IDR 1M-4M	Owned
37	Budi	M	22	2021	Electrical engineering	A	Maintenance staff	Private company	Senior High School	Junior High School	Employee in an industry	Housewife	± IDR 1M	Owned
38	Dania	F	21	2021	Computer engineering	A	System auditor	Supermarket	Junior High School	Senior High School	Entrepreneur (furniture maker)	Staff (administrator) at the office	± IDR 2M	Owned
39	Malik	M	21	2021	Accounting	A	Finance staff	Private company (internet provider)	Bachelor	Diploma	Teacher	Housewife	IDR 7M	Owned
40	Tiana	F	22	2021	Accounting	A	Finance and accounting staff	Private company (expedition company)	Elementary school	Elementary school	Freelancer (just laid off as the technician because of COVID-19)	Housewife	IDR 3.5M	Owned

41	Rizal	M	23	2021	Accounting	A	Administrator	Private company	Elementary school	Elementary school	Seller	Housewife	IDR 1M-4M	Owned
42	Joko	M	24	2021	Mechanical engineering	A	Sales engineer	Factory	Elementary School	Not completed Elementary School	Passed away	Entrepreneur (Seller)	IDR 1M	Owned
43	Hisyam	M	29	2021	Computer engineering	A	Field inspector	Private company	Senior High School	Senior High School	Retired	Housewife	No income	Owned
44	Diki	M	22	2021	Accounting	A	Looking for a job	-	Elementary School	Elementary School	Entrepreneur (furniture maker)	Seller (selling fish)	± IDR 3M	Owned
45	Lia	F	23	2021	Accounting	A	Collector	Private company (leasing)	Senior High School	Senior High School	Employee of an industry	Housewife	IDR 1M-4M	Owned
46	Indah	F	21	2021	Accounting	A	Just resign in the time of interview and looking for a job	-	Elementary school	Elementary school	Seller (peddler)	Passed away	± IDR 1M	Owned
47	Dian	F	23	2021	Accounting	A	Customer service	Retail	Senior High School	Senior High School	Entrepreneur (home industry)	Staff in health center	IDR 1M-4M	Owned
48	Rianti	F	23	2021	Pharmacy	A	Customer service	MSME (skincare online shop)	Senior High School	Senior High School	Employee in an MSME	Housewife	IDR Rp. 7M	Owned
49	Rahman	M	22	2021	Electrical engineering	A	Mechanic	Private company (health equipment)	Diploma	Senior High School	Employee in an industry	Housewife	± IDR 1M-4M	Owned
50	Tono	M	23	2021	Computer engineering	A	Entrepreneur	Home	Senior High School	Senior High School	Entrepreneur	Entrepreneur	± IDR 1M-3M	Owned
51	Zami	M	22	2021	Mechanical engineering	B	Purchasing staff	Private company	Elementary School	Elementary School	Farmer	Farmer	IDR 2.4M	Owned
52	Beni	M	21	2021	Electrical engineering	B	Maintenance staff	Factory	Elementary School	Elementary School	Laborer	Housewife	± IDR 1M	Owned
53	Dita	F	21	2021	Informatics engineering	B	PPIC staff	Private company	Bachelor	Bachelor	Employee in an industry	Teacher	± IDR 5M	Owned
54	Yusuf	M	22	2021	Electrical engineering	B	Mechanic	State-owned enterprises (mining & earthmoving contractor)	Elementary School	Junior High School	Tailor	Tailor	± IDR 1M	Owned

55	Via	F	21	2021	Informatics engineering	B	System engineer	Private company	Senior High School	Elementary school	Employee in an industry	Housewife	IDR 4M-7M	Owned
56	Zaki	M	21	2021	Furniture design	C	Drafter	Private company (furniture company)	Elementary school	Elementary school	Construction worker	Housewife	Under IDR 1M	Owned
57	Guntur	M	21	2021	Furniture Production Engineering	C	Production leader	Private company (furniture company)	Bachelor	Bachelor	Employee in an industry	Housewife	± IDR 5M	Owned
58	Mira	F	23	2021	Business management	C	HRD staff	Private company (furniture company)	Bachelor	Senior High School	Employee in an industry	Housewife	± IDR 5M	Owned
59	Bumi	M	23	2021	Furniture Business management	C	PPIC deputy head	Private company (furniture company)	Bachelor	Bachelor	Entrepreneur	Entrepreneur	Above Rp.10M	Owned
60	Mia	F	22	2021	Furniture design	C	Designer	Private company (furniture company)	Senior High School	Senior High School	Not working	Unemployed	Under Rp.1M	Owned
61	Jamal	M	23	2021	Furniture Production Engineering	C	Lecturer (assistant)	College	Diploma	Diploma	Entrepreneur	Employee	± IDR 2M	Owned
62	Susi	F	23	2021	Furniture Production Engineering	C	PPIC Assistant manager	Factory	Bachelor	Senior High School	Civil servant	Housewife	IDR 5-6M	Owned
63	Desi	F	23	2021	Furniture Business management	C	Marketing development	Factory	Senior High School	Senior High School	Entrepreneur	Employee	IDR 7-15M	Owned
64	Sari	F	23	2021	Furniture Production Engineering	C	Coasting staaf dan admin BOM (bill of material)	Factory	Senior High School	Bachelor	Retired	Teacher	± IDR 7M	Owned
65	Roy	M	29	2021	Furniture design	C	Research and development staff	Industry	Senior High School	Senior High School	Entrepreneur (electrician)	Entrepreneur	± IDR 4M	Owned

Polytechnics' representatives (from departments, director, and career center staffs) (n=16)

	Pseudonym	Gender	Polytechnic	Position
66	Yuli	F	A	Head of accounting department
67	Imam	M	A	Secretary of mechanical engineering department
68	Bahrul	M	A	Head of mechanical engineering department
69	Slamet	M	A	Head of electrical engineering department
70	Tama	M	A	Head of informatics engineering department
71	Berliani	F	A	Secretary of career center department
72	Vino	M	A	Head of career center department
73	Ganjar	M	B	Head of electrical engineering department
74	Ilham	M	B	Head of mechanical engineering department
75	Nono	M	B	Head of informatics engineering department
76	Ana	F	B	Head of career center department
77	Tari	F	C	Director of the polytechnic
78	Farhan	M	C	Head of furniture production engineering department
79	Danu	M	C	Head of institution internal supervision
80	Galih	M	C	Head of furniture industry business management department
81	Aziz	M	C	Assistant director of the division of student affairs and cooperation.

Employers (n=17)

	Name	Gender	Location of the Company/Office	Company/Office Type	Occupation
82	Dewi	F	Jakarta	Private company (IT consultant)	HRD staff
83	Gilang	M	Cikarang, West Java	Private company (automotive company)	Production supervisor
84	Zia	F	Brebes, Central Java	Health clinic	Administrator
85	Nisa	F	Tegal, Central Java	Private company (beauty products company)	Founder (owner)
86	Zahra	F	Brebes, Central Java	Crackers factory	Founder (owner)
87	Wahid	M	Brebes, Central Java	Private company (crackers factory)	Founder (owner)
88	Indro	M	Jepara, Central Java	Bank	Head of micro business division
89	Zein	M	Brebes, Central Java	Private company (school products supplier)	Founder (owner)
90	Danang	M	Jepara, Central Java	Private company (shoes manufacture company)	Head of PPIC department
91	Marwa	F	Bali	Private company (furniture company)	Head of management division
92	Silvi	F	Semarang, Central Java	Private company (furniture company)	HRD manager
93	Tina	F	Semarang, Central Java	Private company (furniture company)	HRD manager
94	Handoko	M	Semarang, Central Java	Private company (furniture company)	Quality control dan PPIC manager
95	Ita	F	Banyuwangi, East Java	Private company (furniture company)	HRD manager
96	Tio	M	Semarang, Central Java	Private company (furniture company)	HRD manager
97	Zakaria	M	Cilacap, Central Java	Private company (water company)	General affair staff
98	Uvi	F	Depok, West Java	Private company (Japan company)	General affair manager

APPENDIX 2- INTERVIEW GUIDES

GRADUATES

Nearing graduation

- **Apprenticeship (Work Placement (WP) program)**
 - (1) Can you tell me about your experiences during WP?
 - (2) What is your opinion related to the adapted WP delivery method during the pandemic? What was your feeling?*
 - (3) What did you learn during WP?
 - (4) What changes did you feel after conducting WP?
 - (5) What was your image related to WP before you did it?
 - (6) How do you see yourself before and after WP?
 - (7) What preparations were you making for your career after experiencing WP?
 - (8) How can WP affect your career plans?
 - (9) Do you think WP provides the answer for your future career? If so, how?

- **Career planning and guidance**
 - (10) Did this pandemic affect your decision to graduate earlier or later than you already planned? If so, how?*
 - (11) How did this COVID-19 pandemic affect your career plan and decision? And how was your feeling at that time?*
 - (12) Nearing graduation, what job or jobs are you most likely to pursue? Why?
 - (13) Did you change your career plan considering this current COVID-19 pandemic? If so, why?*
 - (14) What was your feeling and belief about your career choice at that time?
 - (15) How did the career centers provide services for you before your graduation?
 - (16) Did your campus career center provide services or programs specifically focus on preparing students' career or job searching during this pandemic? If so, what and how?*
 - (17) In your opinion, how helpful have your campus' career centers been helping you to navigate your career planning amidst COVID-19 pandemic?*
 - (18) Were the services or support from the career centers sufficient for you to search for jobs in this COVID-19 pandemic? Explain your opinion or feeling whether you were happy or not with the services.*
 - (19) How worried were you in finding a job after graduation?
 - (20) How confident were you in your skills for your future job or career?
 - (21) What is your suggestion or advice for your college in giving services for the students nearing graduation?

Looking for job

- (22) How was your experience in looking for a job?
- (23) How was your experience in looking for a job during this COVID-19 pandemic?*

- (24) How did you apply for job? Online or in person? *
- (25) How long could you get a job from the time you graduated?
- (26) How was your feeling when you were in the job-hunting time?
- (27) Who supports you in finding the job?
- (28) How did your family especially parents support you in finding a job? How was your feeling related to their support?
- (29) Did your college still support you in looking for a job? How was it conducted?
- (30) Was there any government program for the graduates amidst COVID-19 pandemic? If so, how was it?

On the workplace

- (31) What job are you engage in now?
- (32) Are you happy with your job now? Give your reason.
- (33) Did (do) you ever conduct a telework? How was (is) it?
- (34) What are challenges in conducting the telework? How do you face and solve it?
- (35) How is (was) your feeling when conducting the telework?
- (36) How does COVID-19 affect your job now? How is your feeling and belief? *
- (37) How does your employer treat or support you when you firstly entered the workplace? Did he/she provide specific programs for you? If so, what is it?
- (38) In your view, what are skills needed or required by your company/office in this COVID-19 pandemic? Could you accomplish the skills demand?*
- (39) How confident are you with your skills or ability now?

Note: the questions with the asterisk symbol (*) were only delivered to the graduates amidst COVID-19 (graduates in 2020 and 2021) not for graduates before COVID-19 (graduates in 2018 and 2019)

POLYTECHNICS

HEAD OF DEPARTMENTS AND DIRECTOR

- (1) What services does this study program provide for the graduates amidst COVID-19 pandemic?
- (2) How was the work placement (internship) being conducted during COVID-19 pandemic? Was the scheme different with the ones conducted before COVID-19?
- (3) What do you think about the acceleration of digitalization in this COVID-19 pandemic?
- (4) What do you think about the phenomenon of telework? Did (do) you think that your students can make it? Why?
- (5) What is your opinion about the future of work for the graduates in this pandemic era?
- (6) Did you worry about their career? Please describe your feeling.

HEAD OF CAREER CENTER STAFFS

- (1) What services does (did) you provide for students nearing graduation in this COVID-19 pandemic?

- (2) How do you provide services for the students? In person or virtually? How is it conducted?
- (3) What is your opinion about the future of work for the graduates in this pandemic era?
- (4) Did you worry about their career? Please describe your feeling.
- (5) In your experience and opinion, how helpful have this career centers' services been to helping students' post-college planning during COVID-19 pandemic?

EMPLOYERS

1. Please introduce yourself (name, age, and current job position in this company/office)?
2. Please explain things related to this company/office including the name of the company/office/industry, address, description of what sector or field this office operates in, and the history of its establishment such as the year it was founded and if possible, the story of its establishment.
3. How many total employees are there in your current office/company? Where do they work?
4. During COVID-19 in 2020 and 2021 were there additional employees in your office/company?
5. During COVID-19 in 2020 and 2021 were there any reductions in staff, for example, some employees are laid off?
6. Are you having trouble recruiting employees during COVID-19?
7. How do you share job vacancies? Is there a difference before and during COVID-19?
8. Do you have specific criteria in recruiting employees for example based on age, gender, marital status, and education level? If so, please explain.
9. Are you having difficulty managing the way employees work during COVID-19? If so, what are the difficulties?
10. What are the rules that apply to employees during COVID-19?
11. Did your office/company get significant effects due to COVID-19? If so, please explain.
12. In your opinion, what are the motives underlying job applicants in your place? Some things I will mention, if there is something that you think is in accordance with your opinion, please answer "yes" and explain.
 - Interested in the work to be done
 - The job being applied for is seen as a “cool” job
 - The job being applied for is seen as a promising job for the future
 - Make a lot of money
 - In accordance with the skills possessed
 - In accordance with the diploma held
 - The work is stable or safe/guaranteed, for example not being disrupted by digitization.
 - Have a lot of free time to do it
 - Easy to work on
 - Can be done while taking care of household matters
 - Have the opportunity to travel
 - (Others, if any, please state)
14. What are the tests given to job applicants in your company/office? Please explain.
15. Based on your experience while recruiting employees or even interviewing applicants, give an average rating so far on these applicants.
 - Communication skills
 - Skills in the field
 - Ability to convey ideas or opinions
16. What are the main skills (both hard and soft skills) that employees in your office must possess?
17. In the time of COVID-19, do you think there are skills that are really needed for your employees?

18. Is there a training period in your office/company? How is the process carried out and how long does it take?
19. Does your company/office accept interns? How it's done.

APPENDIX 3- RESUME OF EVIDENCES

CULTURAL CAPITAL

	Voices
Employers	NONE
Polytechnics	<p><u>Yuli</u> “Weaknesses of adapted WP delivery method. When the student did the work placement in companies and their performance was good, they were recruited directly. Therefore, this pandemic has positive and negative impacts, on the positive side they can help MSMEs, so they did the actual field work. However, on the negative side, their chance of being recognized by the company was less, which previously they could be directly recruited by the company.”</p> <p><u>Berliani</u> “Yes, that's correct. As someone working in the career center, from my observations, I have some concerns. The first one is about their learning experience during the pandemic, which might not have been optimal. You see, as a vocational institution, people tend to look at their skills, and their practical skills are crucial. While theoretical knowledge can be learned and accessed from anywhere, thanks to digital advancements, competencies are honed and improved through practice and experience. If they haven't had enough opportunities to practice and develop their skills, they might not perform as well as they could. This pandemic has had an impact on vocational graduates, and there might be concerns about their level of satisfaction among employers.”</p> <p><u>Ilham</u> “Yes, of course, there are, but after COVID and in the post-COVID period, as I mentioned earlier, they haven't been willing to expand. So far, since COVID until now, there haven't been any companies coming here for recruitment like before.”</p> <p><u>Ana</u> “Yes, it's true that the number of alumni being absorbed into the workforce has decreased because many companies have been reducing their workforce due to the economic impact of the pandemic. It's like when our production depends on demand, and if the demand decreases, our production will naturally decrease too, which affects the number of employees being hired.”</p> <p style="text-align: center;">-----</p> <p>Interviewer: “Hmm, I see. So, in the past, many companies came here and established partnerships even before the students graduated, right?”</p>

	<p>Ana: “Yes, yes. And it could be because we have industrial internships here, which last for about 6 months.”</p> <p>Interviewer: “Oh, 6 months?”</p> <p>Ana: “Yes, 6 months. So, maybe the companies observed the students during their internships and saw their potential, and that's why they decided to come here for recruitment.”</p>
Graduates	<p><u>Valdi</u> “Mmmm, at that time I didn't apply because my diploma hadn't been issued yet. So, I only applied to a few big companies like Hitachi and Usasi. However, they didn't want to accept applications without the official diploma at that time. Then, when Mr. Vino, one of my lecturers, informed me that X Company had job vacancies, I went there directly and applied there.”</p> <p><u>Imran</u> “I have a friend named A who works at X company, and coincidentally, he has a boss named Mr. A. At that time, Mr. B was starting his own company, called Y company. Mr. A's company was also looking for employees, so B offered, "Hey, there's a job opening, you can give it a try." Then I asked, "But what about my degree? I haven't received it yet." Mr. B responded, "Just apply first." So I applied, went through an interview, and got accepted even before taking the [diploma] exam.”</p> <p><u>Radit</u> “When it comes to applying, I did apply to several places. Some even reached the interview stage, and there were a few that reached the final stages but didn't work out. That's why my professor recommended me for this position at my current company. This company is looking for the best graduates from the computer science program to fill their IT staff positions, and I am one of the candidates.”</p> <p><u>Rizal</u> Rizal: “I was able to enter there because initially a friend informed me about the vacancy. At that time, I was still studying, around May 2021.”</p> <p>Interviewer: “Oh, so you were already working before graduating?”</p> <p>Rizal: “Yes, I worked before graduating.”</p> <p>Interviewer: “Oh, so you started working in May 2021?”</p> <p>Rizal: “Yes, I started working then.”</p> <p>Interviewer: “So, what did you use to apply? Your high school diploma?”</p>

Rizal: **“Yes, I still used my high school diploma.”**

Interviewer: “But it's okay, right?”

Rizal: **“Yes, it's okay because coincidentally, my lecturer's wife works there.”**

Interviewer: “Who is his wife?”

Rizal: “Mr. X's wife.”

Interviewer: “Oh, I don't know him. So, the information came from her?”

Rizal: “Yes, it came from her. Initially, my friend got in, and then my friend informed me about the vacancy. It happened that we were classmates.”

Rahman

“Yes, initially I applied for jobs in Cikarang, Jakarta, but I wasn't accepted anywhere. Then, I also applied for jobs in Tegal, but again, I wasn't accepted due to reasons such as the impact of COVID-19 or downsizing of employees. Then, in the middle of 2021 and 2022, I received information from a friend who was already working in Jepara that there was a large-scale job opening there. That's why I came here.”

Zami

“Well, the story is that after graduating, there was a long process of guidance and I was unsure of what to do. **It was also challenging to find a job at that time.** So, I was declared as a graduate in early October, even though I hadn't had the graduation ceremony yet. I started looking for jobs and inquired with friends through various media platforms, but I didn't have any luck. Then, there was an opportunity because I had previously interned at X company, and they were recruiting. I decided to apply there, and fortunately, I was accepted.”

Rian

“The Corona generation who learned accounting online has limited knowledge. **When tested in a company to test their accounting skills, I was a little unsure of how to do it accurately.**”

“I was tested at a health center in the Kramat area, and all of the accounting students from my polytechnic registered for the accounting test. **However, none of the accounting students could do the accounting work. When given accounting questions, no one could answer them.**”

ECONOMIC CAPITAL

	Voices
Employers	NONE
Polytechnics	NONE
Graduates	<p><u>Toro</u> “Yes, I needed to have some capital, because at that time, my parents didn't have a lot of money, but it wasn't a significant amount. So, I called my uncle and spoke to him while stopping in my tracks, sort of challenging him a bit. I asked him seriously, "Is this for real?" I was a bit unsure. He said, "Yes, there's a job opportunity at Daihatsu or Isuzu, if you're interested. It's in Japan, but you'll need to study the language for three months at the language school." So, I decided to follow his advice. At that moment, I had some doubts. Why? Because I didn't have that much money. But I approached my uncle again and visited him at his house. He actually wanted to sponsor my trip to Japan. I told him, "Uncle, I don't have that much money." However, he took full responsibility and said, "It's okay, if you don't have that much money, I'll cover it for you."</p> <p><u>Viana</u> “...I was hopeless, "Oh God, finding a job is really hard" like that. While there are people who really want to work but must be like "you have to have money to come in" like that. I don't want to, ma'am, I work, I want to make money, why I have to spend money. Finally, the parents said, "Just be patient, if you obey us, you will get the best". In the end, when I wanted to go out of city, I wasn't allowed by my parents. So, I went home.”</p> <p style="text-align: center;">-----</p> <p>“My parents couldn't offer much assistance in finding a job because they are self-employed and lack the necessary resources and connections. Consequently, I had to conduct my job search independently.”</p> <p><u>Bani</u> "...I worked in a copy center while persevering in my job search. My parents couldn't provide much help in finding a job because they also struggled with their financial condition, but they always offered me emotional support and prayers."</p> <p><u>Diki</u> "I'm only applying to job vacancies in Tegal or nearby cities. It's been a bit challenging because my parents don't have professional backgrounds as officers, so they can't really assist me in finding a job. My father is a self-employed furniture maker, and my mother is a fishmonger. So, I've been navigating this job search mostly on my own."</p> <p><u>Tiana</u> "A challenging period from June to January, I had to work full-time at a clinic</p>

	<p>because my father had lost his job. It was a tough time as I was also studying, in my sixth semester, and juggling my final project. My family was going through a tough financial situation, and I had to find a balance between work and studies to continue paying my tuition fees. It felt like I was being pushed by difficult circumstances to make ends meet."</p> <p><u>Joko</u> "So, maybe I turned to my family because I am the only son and considered the backbone of the family who has to support my sibling and mother. Whether I like it or not, I had to take on a certain position, but it didn't lower my standards. In fact, being in this position has provided me with benefits and other opportunities. Eventually, I realized that I shouldn't confine myself to just that. I stepped out and quite enjoyed it, being in a situation like this."</p>
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DIGITAL SOCIAL CAPITAL

	Voices
<p>Employers</p> <p>Polytechnics</p>	<p><u>Ana</u> "Before the pandemic, and even after the pandemic, the number of offline or in-person events has decreased. Most of the events are now conducted online or virtually. Recently, there have been a few offline events, but the frequency is not as high as it was before the pandemic."</p> <p style="text-align: center;">-----</p> <p>Interviewer: Yes, those who are about to graduate must contact...</p> <p>Ana: Yes, that's right. We even utilize Instagram and create videos on YouTube...</p> <p>Interviewer: Oh, I see. You have a YouTube channel too...</p> <p>Ana: Yes, and sometimes we do live sessions on Instagram, like that. We also have groups for prospective alumni and alumni...</p> <p>Interviewer: Oh, so sharing job vacancies is also done in those groups, right?</p> <p>Ana: Yes, in those groups.</p>
<p>Graduates</p>	<p><u>Viana</u> "I went through the job application process amid the social restrictions. While I sent most of my job application letters online, I personally delivered some to nearby companies. Despite receiving interview calls from four companies, I did not accept any of those offers. Currently, I work as a secretary in a government office, considering factors like location and living expenses when choosing a</p>

job.”

Bani

Interviewer: “Why did you work at a printing shop back then?”

Bani: “Well, at that time, it was because of the pandemic, ma'am. **I applied for jobs through email and online platforms**, but there were no callbacks yet. Then, I received a job offer from my teacher, who also happened to be my mentor. Instead of staying at home, I decided to accept the job at the printing shop.”

Mawar

“**I got the job from the jobstreet I applied on the jobstreet** there were many that I applied there continues to be one of them who contacted me this one. Continue by chance here I'm looking for data scientists who focus on text processing , at that time my final project happened to be text analysis as well as analysis the core processing is just right That's how I was recruited like that.”

Hana

“**Yes, I found this job opportunity on LinkedIn.** I tried my luck and applied to several companies, and one of them responded, and it was Mama's Choice. The next day after applying, I had an interview. I thought there would be a long process because usually, in this company, there are multiple stages of interviews. However, to my surprise, the interview was directly with the head of the department and the accounting team. Interestingly, there was no interview with the user or the CEO. So, after the interview, the next day, they announced that I got the job, and alhamdulillah, I was really happy about it.”

Zami

“Well, the story is that after graduating, there was a long process of guidance and I was unsure of what to do. It was also challenging to find a job at that time. So, I was declared as a graduate in early October, even though I hadn't had the graduation ceremony yet. **I started looking for jobs and inquired with friends through various media platforms, but I didn't have any luck.** Then, there was an opportunity because I had previously interned at X company, and they were recruiting. I decided to apply there, and fortunately, I was accepted.”

Tia

“**I actually found out about my current job opening through the social media platform Telegram.** I feel really lucky because the job is near my house, and my parents wanted me to work close to home. Unlike some of my peers, I was able to secure a job relatively quickly. I started looking for opportunities even before graduation, but I faced multiple rejections before finally landing this job.”

Malik

“Right now, I work as a finance officer, which aligns perfectly with my major. **I actually discovered this job opening through Instagram,** and I decided to

	reach out to the company by sending them an email."
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SOLIDARITY CAPITAL

	Voices
Employers	<p><u>Limited job opportunities</u></p> <p><u>Dewi</u> Interviewer: “Now in this time of Covid, Ma'am, is there a reduction in employees in your own company or is it even stable? How is it?”</p> <p>Dewi: “From the beginning, there were none, but recently there have been some who have been reduced. Even though IT is actually flexible, it can be done at home, but what I handle doesn't have to be at work.”</p> <p>Interviewer: “So basically there was no reduction in employees, when Covid was high, there wasn't any but they were working from home, right?”</p> <p>Dewi: “That's right. Work from home is still effective.”</p> <p>Interviewer: “And in practice, there is no reduction in employees, but in terms of recruitment, is there any?”</p> <p>Dewi: “There is no recruitment either. We make the best of what we have.”</p> <p style="text-align: center;">-----</p> <p>“Actually, in the IT field, it can be considered more stable because we don't produce physical products that require people to be present at the location. During the early days of COVID, there was a lot of social distancing, and many companies shifted to work from home for physical product manufacturing. However, in the IT field, it's not a problem whether there's COVID or not, as long as the work can be done from home or remotely.”</p> <p style="text-align: center;">-----</p> <p>Interviewer: “Okay so even though Covid is also the vendors who ask for services from Mrs. Dewi's office are also stable?”</p> <p>Dewi: “Yes, that's right, it's still running.”</p> <p><u>Gilang</u> Mr. Gilang: “In 2020, starting in April, only permanent employees. Yes, a lot of temporary contract workers... to save the company so that we can continue to</p>

survive. **Finally, all contract workers were laid off, emmm, all workers...**"

Interviewer: "Oh God. All contract workers?"

Mr. Gilang: "Yes, that's right, and in the end, those who held positions like leader or sub-leader stepped down to become executors. The supervisor stepped down to become the leader, in terms of their job roles."

Wahid

Interviewer: "One place, right? X and Y products, how many employees are there, sir?"

Mr. Wahid: "**Currently, there are only a few, after the COVID-19 impact, there are around 15 male employees and about 25 female employees.**"

Interviewer: "**So, there hasn't been any addition of employees at all?**"

Mr. Wahid: "**Yes, there hasn't.**"

Interviewer: "In fact, why are there many who are temporarily laid off? I mean, the operations stopped there."

Mr. Wahid: "Well, they are not laid off, but some of them, due to financial difficulties, decided to leave on their own and look for other jobs. I didn't lay them off, they left on their own because they needed to support their families at home."

Interviewer: "But the employees are mostly from around here, right? Around Brebes?"

Mr. Wahid: "Yes, around here. Some of them are not originally from here, but they got married to locals, so they are considered locals too." (Page 1190)

"Typically, we ask for help from existing employees or employees may approach and say, "Do you still need more workers?" "Why?" "I have someone looking for work," something like that. It could be initiated by employees or sometimes, my wife as the employer might ask, "Perhaps your neighbors are looking for work?" It can come from the employees or from you as the employer requesting assistance in finding new workers." (SOLIDARITY CAPITAL-NETWORKING SUPPORT)

Zein

"In the past, I had 6 employees, but most of them were family members or extended family members. So, there were still some less fortunate family

members who wished to continue their studies, and they ended up working while pursuing their education.” (SOLIDARITY CAPITAL-NETWORKING SUPPORT)

Interviewer: “Yes, that's right. It seems like during the COVID period, there was hardly any employee recruitment, right? I mean, there was no hiring during that time?”

Mr. Zein: “That's correct, there was none. We continued to operate with the same team and **did not hire any additional staff during that time.**”

Danang

Interviewer: Oh, I see. So, there were no layoffs or reductions, right? How was it during the COVID period, from 2020 until 2021? Were the employees stable or were there any furloughs?

Mr. Danang: Alhamdulillah, in our company, there were no reductions. We maintained our workforce because employees are our number one asset.

Interviewer: But there were no new hirings during the COVID period?

Mr. Danang: No.

Interviewer: I see, no new hirings...

Mr. Danang: **That's right, we had no new hirings during COVID. We focused on retaining the existing employees.**

“Hmm, it's quite significant. We were affected because many countries implemented lockdowns, which led to hindrances in our exports. Consequently, with reduced exports, we accumulated excess stock in our warehouses. As a result, we had to decrease the production working hours to adjust the production levels accordingly.”

Interviewer: “Still can be stored. Regarding the dissemination of job vacancy information, how do you usually do it?”

Mr. Danang: “We usually use social media and also spread the word through employees. For example, we encourage our current employees to inform their relatives who might be interested in working here. Additionally, we create brochures to be placed in front of the company.” (SOLIDARITY CAPITAL-

INFORMATIONAL SUPPORT)

Marwa

Mrs. Marwa: We are actually very happy that every graduate is offered to work with us here.

Interviewer: Oh, I see.

Mrs. Marwa: They are offered to work with us after graduation. (SOLIDARITY CAPITAL-NETWORKING SUPPORT)

Silvi

“...Because there are already 2 employees who originally came from polytechnic C, **the recruitment process for employees is such that those we recruit are usually those who have done their internship at our company.** During the internship, we assess their credibility, the results of their work, their performance, and their attitude. If there is a need for new employees in the company, we select certain individuals from that interns who we believe meet the qualifications for the position. However, even those selected from the internship program still go through the same regular hiring process as other employees who are not from that polytechnic.” (SOLIDARITY CAPITAL-NETWORKING SUPPORT)

“Yes, that's right. Usually, we recruit them before they graduate, and we have already employed them. But I also inform the university that "these students have already started working," and from the higher-ups and their respective users, I convey that these students haven't graduated yet, but they have been given dispensation to attend online classes, so they can work while also completing their final projects. So, on average, we recruit them before they graduate, just like that.” (SOLIDARITY CAPITAL-NETWORKING SUPPORT)

“The reduction was certainly there, in 2020 if I'm not mistaken. **There was a reduction because Covid affected our production, and orders decreased, so we had to reduce our workforce.** But at the beginning of 2021, we started to recover a bit, and we began recruiting again. We recruited again because after things reopened, the orders became stable again, and it has been like that until now.”

Tina

“So, last year in 2020, in March, the impact of Covid started, but it wasn't really felt until May when we had a complete lockdown in the factory. We stopped working because there were no international orders. Stores in countries like the

USA, Germany, and others were closed, so there were no shipments. In essence, the stores were closed. During May, around the time of Eid, we were all at home without any work. **For the employees, some were furloughed, but they still received a certain percentage of their salaries, and so on.** Then in June, orders started to decrease, but fortunately, we began to see an improvement, and it has been relatively stable until now.”

“For now, we have only hired 2 recent graduates. They graduated last year. So, when did they graduate? They were the ones who did their internship here. We already knew about them, and we offered them the job here. They accepted it, and after graduating, they started working here.” (SOLIDARITY CAPITAL-NETWORKING SUPPORT)

Handoko

“Yes, we had a term called "dirumahkan" which means we had to put some employees on temporary leave, and it affected around 30% of our workforce. However, we still provided compensation or wages even though it wasn't full, so we continued to support them during that time.”

“At the moment, things have returned to normal, but there is currently a slight lull in job opportunities. **Some employees have also been temporarily laid off again due to the current work situation.**”

“Actually, in this job, we cover everything from payroll to product shipment, including packing and loading containers because the company exports its products. Due to the COVID situation, there have been challenges in marketing as people are not traveling or going to stores, resulting in decreased sales in the destination countries. Consequently, the overall capacity dropped significantly, around 60-70%. **As a result, we had to reduce our workforce, and about 70% of employees were either laid off or put on furlough.** Almost all departments were affected, except for security, which remained unchanged. The most significant reduction was seen in the production department, especially in cleaning staff.”

“Yes, that's right. Our company is one of the partners of polytechnic C, and we have a link with them. We are given the opportunity to send our employees if they want to continue their studies at that polytechnic, but there are specific criteria for eligibility. Additionally, we are requested to provide internship

opportunities for students at certain levels or semesters, starting from semester 3 if I'm not mistaken. We have also been involved several times in the development of the curriculum at that polytechnic, where they ask for our input and collaboration.” (SOLIDARITY CAPITAL-NETWORKING SUPPORT)

Interviewer: “Does that include those who used to work here or those who were previously interns here, sir?”

Mr. Handoko: “Yes, that's correct. It is directed in a way that when they choose their internship place, it's like applying for a job. Although there's no obligation that those who interned at company A must be hired by company A, the idea is that the company may need workers who are D3 graduates, so they hope to absorb them into the company. Since they have already done their practical training there, the aim is for them to be absorbed into the company. However, it depends on the company's needs because we don't always need new workers. Unless, of course, the company is growing and constantly requires additional workforce.” (SOLIDARITY CAPITAL-NETWORKING SUPPORT)

Ita

“**No, our employees last time survived with skipping, and with the existing number of employees,** productivity declined significantly because we had no orders, especially big orders. However, for small orders, there were still a few. But no, we didn't cut operational costs, so we didn't want to reduce the number of employees because, especially during difficult times like last time, laying off employees would make things even more challenging. So, during that time, ordinary employees sometimes let their egos get in the way when facing economic issues. There were some permanent employees who asked for a reduction in the number of contract workers so that we could still survive. However, we took a middle path and decided to keep them while reducing their working hours, as it was necessary.”

“Not even a year, because last time it happened during the pandemic. So, when the internship period was completed, we immediately recruited them. I kind of forgot, but in the end, they didn't need to go back; we finished the internship and continued with the arrangement. Their college was almost finished, and since it was online, they could manage their time. We observed that they performed well here, so we asked if they would like to continue, and since their classes were still online at that time, they were allowed to continue.” (SOLIDARITY CAPITAL-NETWORKING SUPPORT)

Tio

“Yes, that's correct. It's not just about placement because based on the experience from the first batch of interns, I recruited around 13 students. However, only about 5 of them joined our company directly, while the rest found work

elsewhere, perhaps closer to their hometowns.” (SOLIDARITY CAPITAL-NETWORKING SUPPORT)

“**Alhamdulillah, our company was not affected by COVID, so it's still stable.** As I mentioned earlier, we sell our products in various continents, including America, Europe, Asia, and locally as well. Interestingly, during the COVID period, our orders actually increased significantly. This was because in Europe, for example, there were lockdowns, and people spent more time at home, so they took the opportunity to make their homes more comfortable. Some created gardens, others improved their interiors, which required furniture, and fortunately, we produce furniture to cater to those needs.”

“Emmm, so far, we don't have specific criteria for graduates from the polytechnic C. If they are ready for work, they are welcome to join us.” (SOLIDARITY CAPITAL-NETWORKING SUPPORT)

Zakaria

Interviewer: “So, there was no effect of Covid, right?”

Mas Rizal: “**That's right, everything remained normal as usual.**”

“Fortunately, there were no layoffs here. Only a few employees who had issues were let go. In 2021, I issued a letter to the employees who had problems, but during the pandemic, we didn't lay off any employees unless the employees themselves had issues.”

Uvi

“During the COVID period, we didn't have any layoffs. However, for contract employees, there was a certain period for their contracts. **When their contracts expired, we didn't renew them or hire new ones because the market was down.** We are in the TOA sound system business, and our products are primarily used in factories and companies, not at home. Due to the pandemic, many projects were canceled, which led to a stop in the use of our sound systems as the projects were halted and the orders were affected. We experienced a significant decline of about 60% in local sales. **So, for contract employees whose contracts ended, we didn't extend their contracts or recruit new ones.** This was the situation during the early stages of the pandemic.”

“Yes, it's true. Our sales decreased by 80%, and for local sales, it was around

60%. We were not able to make many sales during that time. However, I'm grateful that TOA didn't lay off employees or reduce the workforce. Despite the decline in sales, we continued with our production.”

Mrs. Uvi: “Because generally, I look for candidates who are still single. However, for leadership positions, we can consider candidates who are married. But initially, we try to find suitable candidates from within the company. If there are no suitable candidates internally for a leadership position, then we look for candidates externally, even if they are married. In this case, relevant experience in marketing or procurement is crucial for leadership roles.”

I: “I see. Are there any employees from polytechnic B who joined your company?”

Mrs. Uvi: “Yes, there are many. I recently recruited two people, and they joined us, but unfortunately, they decided to resign, probably because I was not quick enough in the hiring process compared to other companies.”

Interviewer: “So, you have been working together with polytechnic B for a long time, right? Your company has a long-standing relationship with them?”

Mrs. Uvi: “Yes, it's been a long time. I don't remember exactly when it started, but it began with industry visits from the campus. Over time, they asked me if I would be interested in recruiting employees from polytechnic B. I inquired with my colleagues in other departments, and it turned out there was an interest. Initially, I went to their campus to recruit, but now, due to the circumstances, we conduct the process online. However, if there's an opportunity, it's better to visit in person so that we can assess the candidate's performance thoroughly. Because usually, I observe the candidate from the beginning of the assessment until the end, and it helps me gauge their seriousness and dedication.” (SOLIDARITY CAPITAL-NETWORKING SUPPORT)

Recruiting new employees

Zia

Interviewer: “Well, are there any additional medical personnel during covid-19 in 2020 and 2021?”

Mrs. Zia: “**Yes, there are. Usually, if there are fresh graduates who apply to work here they will attend training for 3 months.**”

“That’s right. During Covid-19, the patients in Brebes were also handled by midwives and the number of medical personnel was also reduced. Moreover, the regional public hospital (RSUD) has a lot of patients.”

Interviewer: “COVID-19 doesn't affect the health sector, right? Because the product is a service. It's different with the manufacturing industry that produces food, many employees are laid off because their production declines...”

Mrs. “Zia: **Yes. We are service providers, so we automatically need more employees.**”

Interviewer: “I see.”

Mrs. Zia: “Of course. Because the pandemic has caused many people to get sick, so have medical personnel.”

Nisa

“I'll discuss this first, about the revenue, **the income development during COVID actually increased significantly. Because our sales are online, not face to face, so during the COVID pandemic, online businesses became very popular.** Food, cosmetics, everything became popular, unlike other businesses, maybe those with physical stores that faced limitations due to social distancing measures. But for us online businesses, it was the opposite, we saw an increase, and I don't think there was any decrease, I believe we are still in the process of growing. That's what I mean, especially for the cosmetic industry, the revenue has been continuously increasing every year.”

“No, for me, actually during COVID, I even launched a new product, and dared to establish a new business entity as a PT (limited liability company).”

“In a winning condition, it turned out that in that condition we were winning. First I was already stressed because one of our network is distributors, there are main stores and open stores, not all of my networks are online. But with that kind of challenge, I finally made a formula, how do all my networks sell online? After selling online, it turned out to be winning, so I directed everything to sell online. If you open a store, most of the turnover goes down because people are social distancing, right?”

Interviewer: “Oh, during Covid, did you not lay off employees? Many companies did that, right?”

	<p>Nisa: “Actually, I even hired more employees.”</p> <p>“We actually increased the number of employees because we had to come up with innovations. Innovations that would help expand our network. For example, in content copywriting, we needed a section to package sales ammunition, a thin layer of knowledge to expand our network, you know.”</p> <p><u>Indro</u> “If there is still recruitment, yes, we will continue to run it according to our needs. As you know, we have a ratio of workforce requirements, and if there are shortages, we will recruit again through the regional office.”</p> <p>-----</p> <p>“In our case, the impact is significant because we provide financing for micro and small businesses, including various types of trade businesses, whether big or small. For instance, small food vendors like "warteg" experienced a drastic decline in customers during the early days of the pandemic. Similarly, the food industry was affected as people were staying at home and working from home, which also had a noticeable effect on the banking sector.”</p>
Polytechnics	<p><u>Yuli</u> “In our accounting study program, we have an alumni group. This group aims to share job vacancies and update news about everything they can access. Later, after they graduate, we will still have information about some channels that they can use to apply directly, or maybe we can channel it for them. For example, there are companies that say to us "we need accounting D3 graduates". We will select our students then we share the information in the group.” (SOLIDARITY CAPITAL-INFORMATIONAL SUPPORT & NETWORKING SUPPORT)</p> <p>-----</p> <p>“Yes, there are quite a few, but there are some users who specifically request graduates from the polytechnic directly as they need employees with that background.” (SOLIDARITY CAPITAL- NETWORKING SUPPORT)</p> <p><u>Imam</u> “Yes, their interest is low, but we still need to offer them the opportunity like, "Hey, you can register here," but sometimes they respond with, "I'm afraid of students." It's like that sometimes.” (SOLIDARITY CAPITAL- NETWORKING SUPPORT)</p> <p>-----</p> <p>Interviewer: “Actually, there are many job vacancies for teachers, I just found out.”</p>

Mr. Imam: “Yes, there are plenty. Last time, we visited several vocational schools in Brebes to promote new student admissions. Schools like Larangan and SMK X are in need as well. We have shared this with alumni, and even Assalafiyah School needs 3 teachers. Especially for the automotive program, there's a lot of demand, and some schools have already selected candidates for the P3K program.” (SOLIDARITY CAPITAL-INFORMATIONAL SUPPORT)

Interviewer: “Is it rare for students to become entrepreneurs after graduating?”

Pak Imam: “Yes, maybe it's not very common. They might continue the family business, like what happened with the alumni who started a spare parts and exhaust business. We see such cases from our alumni. However, when we share job vacancies, there are many opportunities, like for D3 graduates in various fields, both male and female. But sometimes they ask, "Where will I be placed, and what will be the salary?"” (SOLIDARITY CAPITAL-INFORMATIONAL SUPPORT)

Bahrul

I: Usually, for those who do their internship in a company or industry like that, are there any who end up being hired as permanent employees there?

Pak Taufik: Yes, there are. For example, like Firdaus in X, he was hired after graduating, just like that. (SOLIDARITY CAPITAL- NETWORKING SUPPORT)

“Yes, there are Firdaus and Rizal, and in other companies, some of them might have connections through family members, so they were directly accepted. When they choose their internship placement, they need to have a link, especially in larger companies. For example, one of them had a family member who worked there, and that's how they got in. But there are also those who are genuinely competent, like the one who interned at Robotika Jogja yesterday, they were selected based on their competence. So, it's not the case for everyone, but there are instances like that.” (SOLIDARITY CAPITAL- NETWORKING SUPPORT)

“Clearly, it has a significant impact. I think COVID has affected all aspects, including mechanical engineering itself. When COVID hit, many people lost their jobs, and I observed that big companies also had to downsize due to reduced product demand. **Consequently, many employees were furloughed. With**

companies already reducing their workforce, the chances of hiring new employees were slim. This situation had a widespread impact, including on mechanical engineering, without a doubt.”

Slamet

“We usually share information about vacancies or trainings held by government agencies. For example, we have several links that sometimes open training vacancies or job vacancies, because we may also have a slightly different perspective with the career center. If it's a career center, sometimes he doesn't master the technical field.” (SOLIDARITY CAPITAL- INFORMATIONAL SUPPORT)

“So, sometimes we share all vacancies, but whether it is in accordance with our competence or not. Usually if this vacancy is in accordance with the student's competence, we will share it immediately. If not, we will not share it. Although sometimes the career center asks why there are no graduates who register themselves. That's because the job vacancies do not match the competencies.” (SOLIDARITY CAPITAL- INFORMATIONAL SUPPORT)

“So we share it with alumni like that. Especially for those who have not worked, but there are also those who call us because they need graduates to work there. The company that regularly contacts us until now is X company Jakarta.” (SOLIDARITY CAPITAL- INFORMATIONAL SUPPORT)

Berliani

If it's from the career center itself, even though we can't meet face-to-face, everything is conducted online, like that. We still provide preparation, guidance for prospective fresh graduates, starting from preparing for the working world, such as writing job applications, how to create a good and proper application, and then how to handle interviews and such. The focus is mainly on preparing for the job market, with a strong emphasis on crafting CVs and interview strategies. (SOLIDARITY CAPITAL- INSTRUMENTAL SUPPORT)

Berliani: “Because our mobility is really limited, ideally, we would like to interact directly with the prospective alumni candidates. But we can't, and for two years, it's been fully online. Even though the effectiveness level might be significantly different compared to offline, there's nothing we can do about it.”

I: “We can't do anything about it.”

Berliani: “**Right, we can't do anything about it, but what's important is that we can still facilitate them like this.**” (SOLIDARITY CAPITAL- INSTRUMENTAL SUPPORT)

I: "During the pandemic, many people pour out their feelings to you?"

Berliani: "Yes, there are many."

I: "Yes, right?"

Berliani: "Yes, that's true. For those in the year 2022, our career guidance sessions have mostly been offline, so it's face-to-face. **They come to us when they haven't found a job or are uncertain about their job choices.** Some of them have two job offers and they're like, "Where should I go? Which one is better?" It's like that, more or less. However, the challenge here is that we don't have a private counseling room, a space that ensures complete privacy. Unfortunately, we don't have that yet." (SOLIDARITY CAPITAL-EMOTIONAL SUPPORT)

Interviewer: "...Can you give me a general overview of the issues they shared during the pandemic?"

Berliani: "They are facing significant difficulties in finding jobs. Although we provide some platforms for them to access job information, the opportunities are generally limited, and some are more national rather than local. So, most of their concerns revolve around not finding suitable job opportunities. Another common issue is their strong attachment to their hometown or birthplace."

Interviewer: "Oh, like Tegal?"

Berliani: "Exactly, they have a strong attachment to Tegal, and they prefer to find work in their hometown first. There might be various factors influencing this decision. For example, if they are the youngest child or if certain responsibilities or circumstances tie them to their hometown." (SOLIDARITY CAPITAL-EMOTIONAL SUPPORT)

Vino

"In that "Ruang Guru" (Teacher's Room), it's like a kind of soft skills training, like English language, job preparation, but it's online for 3 months. The participants are required to attend online lectures twice a week, if I'm not mistaken, it's either Tuesday to Friday or Wednesday to Saturday, I forgot the exact days. So, it's twice a week. After the 3-month period, they will receive a certificate." (SOLIDARITY CAPITAL- INSTRUMENTAL SUPPORT)

“Not yet, but alhamdulillah (thank God), they are enthusiastic about participating. When some of the alumni came here, I asked them, "How was it?" They said, "It's good, we learned English, got prepared for the job market, how to write cover letters, make CVs," things like that. So, they were equipped with those skills. There were online classes provided to them, regularly, you know.”
(SOLIDARITY CAPITAL- INSTRUMENTAL SUPPORT)

“Then, there are webinars that they can access online, and they also receive job vacancy information and counseling services.” (SOLIDARITY CAPITAL- INSTRUMENTAL SUPPORT)

“Yes, webinars, workshops, and alhamdulillah, we have already conducted some, and insha'Allah, we will continue to do so regularly. One of the webinars was about how to create a job application letter and CV.” (SOLIDARITY CAPITAL- INSTRUMENTAL SUPPORT)

Vino: “Yes, we routinely share job openings, alhamdulillah.”

Interviewer: “Routinely?”

Vino: “Yes, for example, earlier I shared three job openings. So, alhamdulillah, now it's not just us sharing, but we've also created a Telegram alumni group. So, we share job openings from alumni who are already working, and it's like a program called "from alumni to alumni." (SOLIDARITY CAPITAL- INFORMATIONAL SUPPORT)

“Because sometimes companies or stakeholders specifically request candidates with certain criteria. So, in those cases, we don't share the job opening publicly, but we ask the study programs to help find suitable candidates. Then, the study programs would say, "Yes, we have someone, and we'll send their information to you.” (SOLIDARITY CAPITAL- NETWORKING SUPPORT)

“Yes, the criteria are specific, so it's not just random. Like, for example, when PT Dhong Chai needed an IT admin, I immediately contacted the IT department through Ms. Fina and asked her to find a candidate. She responded, "Okay, I got

it," and provided the candidate right away. So, we didn't share it with all the alumni. Similarly, for the next position, Mr. Ganjar Pranowo's IT staff, we asked for candidates through the IT department, and they selected someone. Then, for the next position, IT staff at IHN..." (SOLIDARITY CAPITAL- NETWORKING SUPPORT)

"Yes, for the working interview with X company, alhamdulillah, we also gained their trust to conduct employee selection. So, the candidates submitted their applications and then brought them directly to the hall at our campus. After that, we proceeded with the selection process." (SOLIDARITY CAPITAL- NETWORKING SUPPORT)

"Yes, we have already conducted career counseling sessions, alhamdulillah. However, I apologize, it seems that the students who have come to meet us for counseling are mostly from the mechanical engineering program, perhaps because they are more familiar with me." (SOLIDARITY CAPITAL- EMOTIONAL SUPPORT)

Ganjar

"For example, if they have done an internship at a certain company in Yogyakarta, that company may prefer to hire those who have previously interned there. Then, those who are already working there can recommend their junior colleagues to do an internship there as well, making it easier for them to apply." (SOLIDARITY CAPITAL- NETWORKING SUPPORT)

Interviewer: ...oh, so it means that even during the COVID pandemic, some companies still hired their former interns as permanent employees?

Ganjar: Yes, if they need to hire again, they prefer those who have already interned there and have become familiar with the company. (SOLIDARITY CAPITAL- NETWORKING SUPPORT)

Interviewer: Besides the internship program, especially during COVID, were there any additional programs to prepare the graduates? Were there any?

Ganjar: Well, mostly webinars. (SOLIDARITY CAPITAL- INSTRUMENTAL SUPPORT)

Ilham

“Yes, there is an alumni group, and alhamdulillah, even though some of them faced challenges transitioning during the COVID period and not all of them immediately secured jobs, it means that internally, we have made efforts to equip them with skills. We conducted online activities continuously, and every year we provide students with competency certifications. So, it's up to the students themselves. As a campus, we have been trying our best.” (SOLIDARITY CAPITAL- INSTRUMENTAL SUPPORT)

Nono

“Yes, so if the students convey their preferences, we also try to facilitate them. Here, we have the Career Development Center (CDC), and besides that, the lecturers also share job vacancy information with the students. It depends on the students, sometimes they tend to be selective in their choices (laughs).” (SOLIDARITY CAPITAL- INFORMATIONAL SUPPORT)

“Yes, that's right. Usually, when the alumni have information about job vacancies or opportunities, they inform the campus and share it with their juniors, which we call "kating" (seniors).” (SOLIDARITY CAPITAL- INFORMATIONAL SUPPORT)

“If there is information about job openings or such, we have some connections in the industry, and if there is any information, we also share it with the students. However, sometimes, as you mentioned earlier, the students are selective, and one of the first criteria they consider is the salary standard.” (SOLIDARITY CAPITAL- INFORMATIONAL SUPPORT)

Yes, there are such opportunities. For example, in the last three years, we had a scheme in collaboration with the Ministry of Communication and Information Technology (Kominfo), which was the Digital Talent Scholarship. We organized it for current students, and we tried to encourage them to apply for it. However, as I mentioned earlier, students tend to be selective in choosing such opportunities. (SOLIDARITY CAPITAL- INSTRUMENTAL SUPPORT)

Even though we informed them that the training was free and that there would be a competency test at the end, and if they pass, they would receive a BNSP certificate, it still didn't motivate many students to participate. We even tried to assist by converting the certificate into academic credits, but the response was not very enthusiastic. (SOLIDARITY CAPITAL- INSTRUMENTAL SUPPORT)

Yes, that's right. That's why we tried our best, and we appreciated the fact that we provided various facilities, including free training up to the competency test level. But even then, there were issues related to the certification process. We also provided CDC facilities for job vacancy information, but ultimately, it depends on the students' response. It could be because this generation is different, maybe due to the millennial generation. (SOLIDARITY CAPITAL- INSTRUMENTAL & INFORMATIONAL SUPPORT)

Ana

"Well, we have already sent the information about the training programs, and these programs are now running. They provide training to prospective alumni. The training is about preparing for entering the workforce, including detailed guidance on how to create a CV and how to prepare for job interviews, among other things." (SOLIDARITY CAPITAL- INSTRUMENTAL SUPPORT)

"Yes, yes, for general counseling, we mostly rely on academic advisors. But for counseling related to career preparation, we also have the Career Development Center (CDC). Previously, we used to schedule counseling sessions, maybe on Thursdays or some other day, where we provide guidance on entering the job market..." (SOLIDARITY CAPITAL- EMOTIONAL SUPPORT)

"Yes, but besides that, we also don't rule out the possibility that if a student needs guidance outside those scheduled days, they can directly come to Ms. Kiki or Mr. Erik. In fact, recently, many students have been consulting about internships as well." (SOLIDARITY CAPITAL- EMOTIONAL SUPPORT)

Tari

"Yes, even though we are not worried, we still prioritize maintaining our main focus, which is building relationships and collaborations with industries. Because everything is interconnected with the industry, our curriculum is developed based on industry needs since they are the ones who will require our graduates. We must avoid a situation where our curriculum doesn't align with the industry's demands. That's why we involve the industry in curriculum development, and during internships, students engage directly with industries. Especially in job placements, industries must have complete trust that our graduates possess the required competencies. Therefore, we must handle this matter seriously, including character education, which has also been previously discussed, right?" (SOLIDARITY CAPITAL- NETWORKING SUPPORT SUPPORT)

Danu

So, in essence, at the Career Development Center (CDC), we provide

preparations and equipping for our graduates, both technical and non-technical. For example, we prepare them for entering the workforce and other related matters. During the absorption of graduates, we also arrange activities like job fairs and industrial work placements, which are scheduled in the second and fifth semesters. **This way, students not only gain theoretical and practical knowledge at the campus but also get to experience the real industry environment.** These approaches are designed to ensure that they are fully prepared for the industry when they graduate. (SOLIDARITY CAPITAL-INFORMATIONAL, INSTRUMENTAL, & NETWORKING SUPPORT)

Galih

“The internship process, the second internship in the sixth semester, takes place after all the courses are completed. The company is not asked to wait until graduation; as soon as the internship is completed on the 30th, the employment contract starts on the 1st. At this point, the campus and the HRD of the local company need to have a coordination, making sure the student has finished all the requirements. Some tasks cannot be done online, such as the final thesis examination, taking a photo, etc. Once all these processes are completed, the company agrees, as the student is ready, and the contract is signed.” (SOLIDARITY CAPITAL- NETWORKING SUPPORT)

Aziz

“Yes, actually from the beginning of this process, we have events where students meet with industries. Although it may not always go as smoothly as planned, there are sometimes unexpected challenges along the way. However, in general, from the start, we connect students to choose industries. For example, for the interviews tomorrow, let's say on the 18th, we invite the industries and they present their profiles through soft files. We provide these soft files to the students for them to study and then they can choose which industry they want to interview with. During the interviews, the industries have the opportunity to select several candidates. Each industry has its own quota for internships. For example, they may want one student from the production department, two from the design department, and one from the business management department. We have three programs, you know...” (SOLIDARITY CAPITAL- NETWORKING SUPPORT)

There are several cases like that, 20% of them are because our partners are growing. Our partners are growing because every year we have a target to establish new partnerships with new industries. Maybe in the past, some places didn't have partnerships with us, but now we have industrial partners there, so we allocate 20% of the graduates to those locations. For example, last year, there was a place in the Tangerang area that wasn't our partner before, but last year they became our partner, so we placed 20% of the graduates there. (SOLIDARITY CAPITAL- NETWORKING SUPPORT)

<p>Graduates</p>	<p><u>Valdi</u> “Coincidentally, my cousin works there, so when I was confused, my brother said, "Valdi, there's a part-time job opportunity at a restaurant. Are you interested?" So, I decided to fill my spare time with that job.” (SOLIDARITY CAPITAL- INFORMATIONAL SUPPORT)</p> <p style="text-align: center;">-----</p> <p>Interviewer: “Oh, so the job opportunity there was from your relative or did you search for it yourself?”</p> <p>Valdi: “It was actually through the university. At that time, the university had a collaboration with the company.”</p> <p>Interviewer: “Oh, from the university?”</p> <p>Valdi: “Yes, alhamdulillah, it was through the university.” (SOLIDARITY CAPITAL- NETWORKING SUPPORT)</p> <p style="text-align: center;">-----</p> <p>“Mmmm, at that time I didn't apply because my diploma hadn't been issued yet. So, I only applied to a few big companies like Hitachi and Usasi. However, they didn't want to accept applications without the official diploma at that time. Then, when Mr. Vino, one of my lecturers, informed me that X Company had job vacancies, I went there directly and applied there.” (SOLIDARITY CAPITAL- NETWORKING SUPPORT)</p> <p style="text-align: center;">-----</p> <p>“Yes, there are. Oh, there are indeed some relatives, for example, my cousin's sibling who works in Kalimantan sometimes suggests, "Why not try working in the coal industry?". In Japan, there are opportunities too.” (SOLIDARITY CAPITAL- INFORMATIONAL SUPPORT)</p> <p><u>Bani</u> Interviewer: “Why did you work at a printing shop back then?”</p> <p>Bani: “Well, at that time, it was because of the pandemic, ma'am. I applied for jobs through email and online platforms, but there were no callbacks yet. Then, I received a job offer from my teacher, who also happened to be my mentor. Instead of staying at home, I decided to accept the job at the printing shop.” (SOLIDARITY CAPITAL- NETWORKING SUPPORT)</p> <p style="text-align: center;">-----</p>
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Interviewer: "So, how did you manage to apply there and eventually get accepted? Where did you get the information?"

Bani: "Well, it all started with my lecturer, Mr. X."

Interviewer: "Mr. Y?"

Bani: "Mr. X."

Interviewer: "Oh, Mr. X, I see. He teaches at campus A, right?"

Bani: "I'm not sure, actually. He teaches CAD. It was Mr. X who asked Mr. K, and then Mr. K mentioned my name, so Mr. X directly contacted me." (SOLIDARITY CAPITAL- NETWORKING SUPPORT)

Umam

I: "How did you apply at the perfect timing? Can you explain the application process?"

Umam: "At that time, there was my senior invited me to join a company, so I decided to create an application letter and submit it there."

I: "Oh, so there were seniors from the same field, electrical engineering, right?"

Umam: "Yes, they were from electrical engineering, but now one of them has resigned due to issues with the superiors, but I'm not sure about the details."

I: "So, the senior informed you about the job opening, and how many times did you have to go through the selection process?"

Umam: "When I applied, there were two rounds of interviews. The first one was with the manager and my senior, and the second one was with the company owner. The process mainly involved interviews." (SOLIDARITY CAPITAL- INFORMATIONAL SUPPORT)

Imran

"I have a friend named A who works at X company, and coincidentally, he has a boss named Mr. A. At that time, Mr. B was starting his own company, called Y company. Mr. A's company was also looking for employees, so B offered, "Hey, there's a job opening, you can give it a try." Then I asked, "But what about my degree? I haven't received it yet." Mr. B responded, "Just apply first." So I applied, went through an interview, and got accepted even before taking the [diploma] exam." (SOLIDARITY CAPITAL- INFORMATIONAL SUPPORT)

Rian

“So, I often get a job offer from my friend as a freelancer at the Tegal Film Festival publication. I am trusted to handle social media applications. So, I was asked to "do you want to hold this [social media] account?". So, the work doesn't have to be in my office space, it can be wherever. It can be at home. I accepted it as it was the only opportunity.” (SOLIDARITY CAPITAL- NETWORKING SUPPORT)

Viana

“So, initially, it was because I often attended tax awareness sessions, the latest one at the BPKAD (Regional Financial and Asset Management Board), and I had a conversation with one of the civil servants there. They allowed me to register at the BPKAD, but it turned out that it didn't work out from there. However, the person said, **"Just register, you never know where your fortune lies. Maybe you register here, but your fortune lies elsewhere."** So, I registered there, but for three months, there was no response. I applied job at the bank but it was rejected and my application to the company was also rejected, ma'am. I was hopeless, "Oh God, finding a job is really hard" like that. While there are people who really want to work but must be like "you have to have money to come in" like that. I don't want to, ma'am, I work, I want to make money, why I have to spend money. **Finally, the parents said, "Just be patient, if you obey us, you will get the best"**. In the end, when I wanted to go out of city, I wasn't allowed by my parents. So, I went home.” (SOLIDARITY CAPITAL- INFORMATIONAL & EMOTIONAL SUPPORT)

Interviewer: “What were you doing there?”

Viana: “I was doing some socialization.”

Interviewer: “Oh, related to taxes, right?”

Viana: “Yes, that's right. And then, by chance, I prayed, and after finishing my prayer, two ladies approached me for a conversation. They asked, "Are you working in taxes?" I replied, "No, ma'am, I'm still a student. I'm actually graduating tomorrow." They said, "Oh, in that case, you should apply here. Let's meet on Monday." That's how it went.” (SOLIDARITY CAPITAL- INFORMATIONAL SUPPORT)

“So, I actually applied at the BPKAD (Regional Financial and Asset Management Board), and back then, I met a woman named Mrs. X. She used to be the

secretary for Mr. Y. The story begins with Mr. Y contacting Mrs. X and saying, "I want a new secretary, please find one for me." And coincidentally, Mrs. Y remembered me, even though she received many applications for the position."
(SOLIDARITY CAPITAL- NETWORKING SUPPORT)

"Yes, on Thursday, I met her at 10 o'clock, and she said, "There is a vacancy for a secretary to the secretary-general, are you ready for it? If you're not ready, I can recommend someone else." I immediately replied, "I am ready, ma'am," like that."
(SOLIDARITY CAPITAL- NETWORKING SUPPORT)

Radit

"When it comes to applying, I did apply to several places. Some even reached the interview stage, and there were a few that reached the final stages but didn't work out. That's why my professor recommended me for this position at my current company. This company is looking for the best graduates from the computer science program to fill their IT staff positions, and I am one of the candidates."
(SOLIDARITY CAPITAL- NETWORKING SUPPORT)

Toro

"I am currently attending a Japanese training course as preparation for working in Japan. I decided to work in Japan because my uncle asked me to. **When he saw me in a poor condition, he suggested that I work there.** Some of my relatives have also worked in Japan. The level of job I applied for there is actually meant for those who graduated from senior high school, so there may be a vertical and horizontal mismatch. However, I am okay with it. **My uncle is responsible for the costs of the course training, and I am grateful for it since my parents do not have enough money to pay for it.**"
(SOLIDARITY CAPITAL-EMOTIONAL & INSTRUMENTAL SUPPORT)

"Oh, no. The information I received was actually from a relative of mine, my uncle, who encouraged me to pursue this path."
(SOLIDARITY CAPITAL-INFORMATIONAL SUPPORT)

"So, here's the thing. When my uncle offered me this job or education opportunity, I was in the midst of my previous job as a driver, delivering goods to suppliers and contacts. At that time, my uncle called me and asked, "Where are you now?" and I replied, "I'm delivering oxygen." It was then that he offered me a job, not a language education opportunity. He said, "There's a job opening, the

first one is to work at Daihatsu." I thought he meant Daihatsu Indonesia, but when I asked again, "Which Daihatsu?" my uncle said, "Daihatsu in Japan." The education program was a three-month language course at LPK. At that point, I already knew the plan that when we go to Japan, we would need a significant amount of money, not necessarily a large amount, but enough." (SOLIDARITY CAPITAL- INFORMATIONAL SUPPORT)

"Yes, I need to have money because at that time my parents didn't have much money. It was a large amount. That's why I called my uncle and while stopping, I asked him, "Is this serious?" in a slightly challenging tone. He replied, "There's a job at Daihatsu or Isuzu, it's up to you." I asked, "Where, uncle?" He said, "In Japan, but you have to study the language for three months at LPK." I followed his suggestion. At that time, I was a bit hesitant. Why? Because I didn't have that much money. But I asked my uncle again and went to his house. He actually wanted to send me to Japan. I told him, "Uncle, I don't have that much money." But he took full responsibility and said, "Well, if you don't have that much money, let me cover it." (SOLIDARITY CAPITAL- INSTRUMENTAL SUPPORT)

Nela

"Initially, it was from a coworker, a coworker who worked there as a production operator. But they also had an opening for an administrative position, so I applied there." (SOLIDARITY CAPITAL- NETWORKING SUPPORT)

"In my view, the pandemic did play a role, but even before the pandemic, there were other factors that hindered other candidates from getting into certain companies. The influence of internal connections was significant in such cases." (SOLIDARITY CAPITAL- NETWORKING SUPPORT)

Budi

"Because at that time, I had connections in the campus institution. I was the chairman of the Student Council in the polytechnic, and then one of my senior alumni opened a job vacancy. So, I decided to apply there, and luckily, I was accepted for the job." (SOLIDARITY CAPITAL- NETWORKING SUPPORT)

Dania

Interviewer: "So, you got it from the department, from the department lecturer, right?"

Dania: "Yes, from the department lecturer."

Interviewer: “Okay, okay. And then you applied and got accepted, right?”

Dania: “Yes, there were several tests involved.”

(SOLIDARITY CAPITAL- INFORMATIONAL SUPPORT)

Malik

“Yes, at that time, it was offered by the lecturer, and maybe in January, I was feeling bored, you know, like, "Oh God, it's the same thing over and over again." So I started looking for something, and then the lecturer offered it, so I thought, "Okay, let's give it a try."” (SOLIDARITY CAPITAL- NETWORKING SUPPORT)

Tiana

“The information came from my relative, as my relative also works there.” (SOLIDARITY CAPITAL- NETWORKING SUPPORT)

Rizal

Rizal: “I was able to enter there because initially a friend informed me about the vacancy. At that time, I was still studying, around May 2021.”

Interviewer: “Oh, so you were already working before graduating?”

Rizal: “Yes, I worked before graduating.”

Interviewer: “Oh, so you started working in May 2021?”

Rizal: “Yes, I started working then.”

Interviewer: “So, what did you use to apply? Your high school diploma?”

Rizal: “Yes, I still used my high school diploma.”

Interviewer: “But it's okay, right?”

Rizal: “Yes, it's okay because coincidentally, my lecturer's wife works there.”

Interviewer: “Who is his wife?”

Rizal: “Mr. X's wife.”

Interviewer: “Oh, I don't know him. So, the information came from her?”

Rizal: “Yes, it came from her. Initially, my friend got in, and then my friend informed me about the vacancy. It happened that we were classmates.”

(SOLIDARITY CAPITAL- NETWORKING SUPPORT)

I: Okay, so that means you got the information from your friend, not from the lecturer, right?

Rizal: Yes, it was from my friend who got in first, and then I entered through my friend's recommendation.

I: Oh, I forgot. But your friend got the information from the lecturer, right?

Rizal: Yes, it was from the lecturer. The lecturer also knows me.

I: Were there any tests when you entered there?

Rizal: No, there were no tests, only an interview, no psychological tests.

I: Wasn't it difficult?

Rizal: No, it wasn't difficult because I had that advantage.

I: Yes, because you had a referral from your friend, right?

Rizal: Yes, it was a referral from my friend. (SOLIDARITY CAPITAL- NETWORKING SUPPORT)

Joko

“Okay, I graduated from polytechnic A in 2021, and we had our graduation ceremony in October, last year, 2021. **Then, my lecturer, Mr. X, happened to share a job vacancy.** He shared it on his WhatsApp status, and since we have each other's contact, I could see his story. So, I sent him a message, "Sir, can I apply?" like that. Mr. X replied, "Sure, go ahead, it might be your fortune," something like that. Then, I tried applying, and after one or two days, the HR representative contacted me. The vacancy was for a sales engineer. Well, I didn't have a clear understanding of what a sales engineer does because I come from a mechanical engineering background, working as a technician, dealing with machines and equipment. So, it was a bit of a shift from being a technician to becoming a sales engineer. But why not? I wanted to try something new and challenge myself, so I applied for the position.” (SOLIDARITY CAPITAL- INFORMATIONAL SUPPORT)

Hisyam

Hisyam: “It's the connections outside that matter, that's why we need to expand our network.”

Interviewer: "Connections, right?"

Hisyam: "Connections are the most important thing." (SOLIDARITY CAPITAL-NETWORKING SUPPORT)

Diki

Interviewer: "Oh, have you worked before?"

Diki: "I worked in screen printing to avoid being idle at home."

Interviewer: "Oh, as an entrepreneur?"

Diki: "No, I just followed my friend in screen printing."

Interviewer: "Did you apply for the job?"

Diki: "No, I was recommended by my friend."

Interviewer: "Were there any tests involved?"

Diki: "No, there weren't." (SOLIDARITY CAPITAL- NETWORKING SUPPORT)

Diki: "That one was called first because there was an internal connection."

Interviewer: "I see."

Diki: "For that position, all four of us were called, including people from Brebes and Cirebon. I asked, "Why were we called?" It was because there was an internal connection."

Interviewer: "Did you have an internal connection at that time?"

Diki: "There was a friend of mine there." (SOLIDARITY CAPITAL-NETWORKING SUPPORT)

"Because I once applied for a job at X company. At that time, a friend of mine recommended me and I had an interview with the manager. The manager said, "Please give me your experience, I want to help you here." (SOLIDARITY CAPITAL- NETWORKING SUPPORT)

Interviewer: "It's interesting, isn't it? So, people in the Tegal area still have that influence? I thought it would be more prevalent in big cities, but it seems like it's the same in small towns."

Diki: "But it's also the same outside Tegal, like in other companies. When you enter a company, you have to pay upfront." (SOLIDARITY CAPITAL-NETWORKING SUPPORT)

Lia

"No, actually, back then, during my vocational high school, I did my internship there for only 3 months, and then I received a call saying, "Would you be interested in a job as a contract worker?" That's how it started, and well, I thought, "Why not? Maybe it's meant to be, working there." Alhamdulillah, I'm still there until now." (SOLIDARITY CAPITAL- NETWORKING SUPPORT)

Indah

"There was a neighbor who worked as a notary, but in a different office, and she offered me a job saying, "There's an opening at this notary office."" (SOLIDARITY CAPITAL- NETWORKING SUPPORT)

Interviewer: "So, how was the selection process? What tests or interviews did you have?"

Indah: "I'm not sure, there were no tests involved. They just looked at my educational background and then called me directly." (SOLIDARITY CAPITAL-NETWORKING SUPPORT)

Dian

"Yes, so the manager told the staff that there's a job vacancy and asked for their help to share it with the alumni. It's the same in hospitals, if there's a job opening, it's not widely shared. So it's up to the people who are already inside to bring in candidates or not, and that's how the job applications pile up there." (SOLIDARITY CAPITAL- INFORMATIONAL & NETWORKING SUPPORT)

Rianti

"I used to be a customer here. Back then, there was only X skincare product available, and I used to buy products from here. Then, I got information from my sibling that there was a job opening here. I was encouraged to give it a try while pursuing my studies. So, I applied for a job here and was immediately accepted." (SOLIDARITY CAPITAL- INFORMATIONAL SUPPORT)

Rahman

"Yes, initially I applied for jobs in Cikarang, Jakarta, but I wasn't accepted anywhere. Then, I also applied for jobs in Tegal, but again, I wasn't accepted due to reasons such as the impact of COVID-19 or downsizing of employees. Then, in

the middle of 2021 and 2022, I received information from a friend who was already working in Jepara that there was a large-scale job opening there. That's why I came here.” (SOLIDARITY CAPITAL- INFORMATIONAL SUPPORT)

Zami

“Well, the story is that after graduating, there was a long process of guidance and I was unsure of what to do. It was also challenging to find a job at that time. So, I was declared as a graduate in early October, even though I hadn't had the graduation ceremony yet. I started looking for jobs and inquired with friends through various media platforms, but I didn't have any luck. Then, there was an opportunity because I had previously interned at X company, and they were recruiting. I decided to apply there, and fortunately, I was accepted.” (SOLIDARITY CAPITAL- NETWORKING SUPPORT)

Beni

“As for the company in Tangerang, it was recommended by one of the lecturers named Mr. X, who is from Brebes. He suggested that I apply there. As for the company in Banyumas, a friend recommended me to apply there as they were in need of electrical personnel.” (SOLIDARITY CAPITAL- NETWORKING SUPPORT)

Dita

Dita: “And besides that, I never stopped getting to know many people. In my place of study, I joined organizations.”

Interviewer: “Yes.”

Dita: “In the organization, I got to know many seniors.”

Interviewer: “Yes.”

Dita: “One day, we communicated through social media.”

Interviewer: “Yes.”

Dita: “Then I asked one of my senior colleagues, "Do you have any job vacancies?" But at that time, I hadn't graduated yet.”

Interviewer: “Yes.”

Dita: “...the diploma, and they replied, "Not at the moment." Then, a few months later, they contacted me again and said, "Dita, there's a job opening for this position." So, initially, I didn't apply directly through job portals, but through connections.” (SOLIDARITY CAPITAL- INFORMATIONAL SUPPORT)

“I tried working for a government agency once, but I didn't get it because the person who brought me in didn't hold a high position.” (SOLIDARITY CAPITAL- NETWORKING SUPPORT)

Yusuf

Yusuf: “Well, it's difficult, ma'am, because going here and there is challenging, and there is a lack of job information. If there are online job postings, I didn't register because I wasn't fully convinced, even though some of them might be genuine.”

Interviewer: “So, where did you get the information from?”

Yusuf: “It's from a friend, ma'am. We went to the same vocational high school.” (SOLIDARITY CAPITAL- INFORMATIONAL SUPPORT)

Via

“If it's about the story, **it was when Ms. X shared a job vacancy in the alumni group.** I thought I'd give it a try, so I applied by sending my CV, cover letter, and other personal information to the company. Alhamdulillah, I received an email from the company inviting me for an interview. I attended the interview and afterwards received an email stating that I had passed to the next stage, which was a practical test. For the practical test, I went directly to that office in the Cikarang area. Four of us were selected, but only three, including me and my friends, showed up for the test. After the test, I received an email inviting me to the next stage, which included a psychometric test and a written test. Unfortunately, I didn't pass the psychometric and written tests.” (SOLIDARITY CAPITAL- INFORMATIONAL SUPPORT)

“Yes, so the HR department of the A company sent a message via WhatsApp to Ms. X regarding the vacancy for a system engineer. Ms. X immediately shared the message in the alumni group. According to Ms. X, before sharing it on other platforms, she shared it first with the polytechnic department.” (SOLIDARITY CAPITAL- INFORMATIONAL SUPPORT)

Zaki

Interviewer: “In your opinion, how significant is the role of the polytechnic in helping students find employment? Does the polytechnic truly play a significant role in helping students secure jobs, or is it different in your case? Perhaps some students feel that they are greatly assisted. What is your perspective on this? Does the polytechnic provide substantial assistance?”

Zaki: "From my own perspective, based on the implemented work programs, it is very helpful."

Interviewer: "Because it's not just about sharing job vacancies, but also actively assisting in finding them, right? That's what I heard..."

Zaki: "Yes, they actively assist in finding and facilitating the process"

Interviewer: "Including your own experience, right?"

Zaki: "Yes, they helped with the documentation and communication with the company." (SOLIDARITY CAPITAL- NETWORKING SUPPORT)

Guntur

Interviewer: So, after completing your internship there, were you directly offered a job there or was it up to the students?

Guntur: I was directly offered a job.

Interviewer: Oh, I see, you were offered...

Guntur: I was offered, but they didn't force me or anything like that. (SOLIDARITY CAPITAL- NETWORKING SUPPORT)

Interviewer: Okay, so after you were offered the job there, you declined it, right?

Guntur: Yes.

Interviewer: After that, did you search for jobs on your own or did you receive information about this current job from the campus?

Guntur: The information came from the campus, ma'am.

Interviewer: Oh, I see. So, the campus still informs students who are not yet employed about job vacancies like this?

Guntur: Yes, ma'am. In the process, after the defense and completion of the final project, the campus organized a job fair for students who had completed their defense. Each company had a quota for positions such as TPF, design, or management, and the campus informed us about these opportunities and guided us to apply. After that, some students may not have been accepted, but the campus continued to provide information and follow-ups on job applications and vacancies.

Interviewer: Okay, so all the graduating students were able to find jobs, right?

Guntur: Yes. (SOLIDARITY CAPITAL- INFORMATIONAL & NETWORKING SUPPORT)

Mira

“I received a phone call from the campus informing me about an available HR staff position. I immediately contacted the company, which is the one I currently work for, X company. I had an interview on Monday, and by Tuesday, I started working here.” (SOLIDARITY CAPITAL- INFORMATIONAL SUPPORT)

“Yes, it was truly provided. Last time, when we were dealing with the industry job absorption, it was facilitated by Mr. X and Mr. Y, coincidentally. **They genuinely reached out to the alumni to offer job opportunities available here. They really listened to our needs.** At that time, we already had the first and second phases of the job fair, where most of the students had secured employment. Only 10 students remained without a job. **These 10 students were personally asked and a special group was created for them to discuss their situation and preferences.** Some of the 10 students had actually been accepted by companies but didn't finalize the contract due to compatibility issues, similar to my situation. So, Mr. X and Mr. Y individually contacted them through messages, asking questions like "Which area are you interested in?" or "What kind of position are you looking for?" They genuinely ensured that their students would secure suitable job opportunities.” (SOLIDARITY CAPITAL- EMOTIONAL & INFORMATIONAL SUPPORT)

Bumi

Bumi: “Um.. I happened to intern at X company in Gresik for 8 months. But after about 3 to 4 months of my internship, I was offered a job. I was assigned to the PPIC department for a permanent position. That's how it went.” (SOLIDARITY CAPITAL- NETWORKING SUPPORT)

Interviewer: “Wow, that's amazing. You were only interning for 3 months, right?”

Bumi: “Yes, just 3 months and then I was immediately offered a job.” (SOLIDARITY CAPITAL- NETWORKING SUPPORT)

Bumi: “Yes, because at that time I was still studying, so I couldn't start working yet. But it was like I was already reserved for a position, so after the internship, the factory manager mentioned that I could work here. They told me to study first

until I graduated, and then I would be asked to work here as a PPIC.”
(SOLIDARITY CAPITAL- NETWORKING SUPPORT)

“The campus is very helpful indeed, we just need to follow along, no need to worry because everything is taken care of, so we are very comfortable.”
(SOLIDARITY CAPITAL- NETWORKING SUPPORT)

Mia

Interviewer: “Job fair or something like that?”

Mia: “Yeah, something like that. It's like a job fair where friends who haven't found jobs yet gather together. We form a group and share information. The campus also helps by providing information about job vacancies that we might be interested in. Actually, the company owned by Mr. X didn't have any job openings at that time.” (SOLIDARITY CAPITAL- INFORMATIONAL SUPPORT)

Interviewer: “I see.”

Mia: “Yeah, they didn't have any job openings because my friends were already working in the design department. They didn't actually need more employees, but I don't know why suddenly they opened new job vacancies. They had one or two openings in the design department.”

Interviewer: “Design, right?”

Mia: “Yes, in Mr. X's workplace. So, I contacted my friend who worked there and asked, "How's it going there?" They said, "Just come and try." So, I went there and had an interview. The first person I met was Mr. X.”

Interviewer: “I see, because he is the HRD, right?”

Mia: “No, he's not the HRD.”

Interviewer: “Oh, I see.”

Mia: “Mr. X is the Head of Engineering.”

Interviewer: “Oh, right. The Head of Engineering. I remember now.”

Mia: “Yeah, I directly communicated with Mr. X.” (SOLIDARITY CAPITAL- NETWORKING SUPPORT)

Interviewer: “Well, according to your personal opinion, does the campus provide significant help to its graduates in finding jobs? Has it been helpful so far from the campus's side?”

Mia: “Personally, I think the campus has been quite helpful because they have a target to ensure that all graduates are absorbed into the industry. The establishment of the campus is aimed at preparing students to directly enter the industry. So, the campus has a target to have as many graduates as possible employed by companies.”

Interviewer: “I see.”

Mia: “That's how it is.”

Interviewer: “They really shape and connect everything.” (SOLIDARITY CAPITAL- NETWORKING SUPPORT)

Jamal

Jamal: Yes, so there is an internship, after our internship we are placed back to work there.

Interviewer: Isn't that mandatory, for example, do you have to graduate there or what?

Jamal: In my previous case, for example, the company asked us to work there, but if the company didn't ask, we weren't obliged to return to work there. (SOLIDARITY CAPITAL- NETWORKING SUPPORT)

Jamal: “No, because during the internship, which lasted for 9 months in Bali, the company felt that we were a good fit and they needed our skills. After that, the company requested the Polytechnic to have their students work there.”

Interviewer: “Oh, I see. So, you entered the company directly without any selection process?”

Jamal: “Yes, that's correct. Because they already knew how we worked during the internship.” (SOLIDARITY CAPITAL- NETWORKING SUPPORT)

Interviewer: “But personally, why did you accept the offer?”

Jamal: “Because there was a request from Bali, they requested students from the Polytechnic. So, for me, it was to establish a good working relationship between the company and the industry.” (SOLIDARITY CAPITAL- NETWORKING SUPPORT)

Interviewer: "Oh, I see. How did you manage to enter the Polytechnic [as an assistant professor]?"

Jamal: "Well, it started when I was introduced to lecturer in X school. The lecturer also taught at the Polytechnic. At that time, the lecturer needed an assistant, and coincidentally, I had graduated and was asked to assist there. So, I became an assistant there for AutoCAD and technical drawing."

Interviewer: "Oh, so you knew a lecturer in X school back then. Is this school a vocational school?"

Jamal: "It has both a vocational and a D3 degree."

Interviewer: "I see. So, it means you didn't directly assist the lecturers from the Polytechnic?"

Jamal: "Yes, initially, I assisted the lecturer of X school who taught at the Polytechnic. Then, starting this month, I started assisting the original lecturer from the Polytechnic." (SOLIDARITY CAPITAL- NETWORKING SUPPORT)

I: "Is he your relative, or how are you related?"

Jamal: "He was my father's friend at school". (SOLIDARITY CAPITAL- NETWORKING SUPPORT)

Susi

"From my perspective, it's due to the perseverance of the Polytechnic and their continuous efforts in establishing Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) with companies. These MOUs increase the chances for graduates to enter those companies. Additionally, the preparation provided to students enables them to match the requirements of the company during the application process, making it easier for them to be accepted. Therefore, there is alignment between the students and the company's needs." (SOLIDARITY CAPITAL- NETWORKING SUPPORT)

Desi

"So, after completing the second three-month internship, I immediately continued with the third internship. Then, just one month into the third internship, I was called by my Manager and Supervisor, and they offered me a job. They advised me not to see it as a burden and said that I should accept it, but they gave me some time to think. So, I didn't give an immediate answer." (SOLIDARITY CAPITAL- NETWORKING SUPPORT)

Interviewer: "So, it means that you are not actively looking for a job?"

Desi: “Yes, thankfully I have still been offered job opportunities elsewhere.”

Interviewer: “So, you haven't applied for any jobs at all?”

Desi: “That's correct, I haven't applied for any jobs yet.” (SOLIDARITY CAPITAL- NETWORKING SUPPORT)

Sari

“At the internship location, there was an offer, but the available position was only for production administration. While considering the role of a production administrator, I thought that it mainly involves recording the ongoing production items. Since I had already gained experience in that aspect during my internship, I decided to choose X company, where I could learn about cost calculation (HPP).”

“So, in X company, I applied on my own and obtained the information from one of the supervisors who works at X company. So, I received the information personally.” (SOLIDARITY CAPITAL- INFORMATIONAL SUPPORT)

Amir

“Oh, that's near my house, Ma'am. So, a friend of mine, possibly the HRD at the factory, told me that they were looking for two admin staffs. At that time, I was in the process of applying for a job in Malaysia, waiting for the visa to be issued, Ma'am. In the end, I decided to just work in Tegal, close to home.” (SOLIDARITY CAPITAL- NETWORKING SUPPORT)

Interviewer: And then, after that, you entered the sugar factory. Was it through a friend? A neighbor or a friend?

Amir: Oh, it was through a friend who lived nearby. (SOLIDARITY CAPITAL- NETWORKING SUPPORT)

“So, she initially worked as a technician in a electronics store, but she started as a mechanic. After nearly two years, she was promoted and became a security manager. Her field of expertise is in electronics, like working on CCTV and alarm systems, things like that. Coincidentally, she joined X Company, and she got to know the project manager. Eventually, I was offered a job there. Now, I can work for the contractor, because it would be quite difficult to find a job in this field without someone bringing me in.” (SOLIDARITY CAPITAL- NETWORKING SUPPORT)

Anas

“Before entering a company, I was looking for a job in Cikarang but I also gave up. Thank God it turned out that my aunt in the Bogor area was there, so I entered there through my aunt who brought

me in.” (SOLIDARITY CAPITAL- NETWORKING SUPPORT)

Azhar

“Currently, I work at X. Initially, I didn't start as a general applicant there. During my college days, I and three of my friends did an internship at the office. It lasted for three months, from January to March 2018. After completing the internship, the three of us were offered to continue working as employees there. However, at that time, I wanted to gain different experiences, so I was looking for other opportunities. I was hoping to find something related to my previous experience. Gradually, after graduation, I started looking for jobs at different companies, but perhaps there weren't suitable positions available at the time. Then, I received an offer again here. They were specifically looking for someone from the accounting field, and they preferred a male candidate. So, I applied and became an employee here with a contract as a daily worker or honorary worker.” (SOLIDARITY CAPITAL- NETWORKING SUPPORT)

Interviewer: “When Azhar entered there, were there any tests? What kind of tests were there?”

Azhar: “At that time, I was directly involved. I was involved in collecting data on land status in schools.”

Interviewer: “So, there were no tests? You started working right away?”

Azhar: “No, there were no tests. I started working immediately.” (SOLIDARITY CAPITAL- NETWORKING SUPPORT)

“Yes, because at that time, I also received a recommendation. It so happened that the supervisor asked a friend who had previously joined there about how I was as a person.” (SOLIDARITY CAPITAL- NETWORKING SUPPORT)

Interviewer: Oh, so they recommended Azhar to the supervisor?

Azhar: Yes. (SOLIDARITY CAPITAL- NETWORKING SUPPORT)

Risna

“Yes, I got married, and my child is one year old now. I wanted to try applying for a job during this COVID-19 period, but it's challenging, unless there is an internal connection. It seems very difficult for us to personally visit and apply on our own without any personal connections.” (SOLIDARITY CAPITAL- NETWORKING SUPPORT)

Ahmad

“In the past, during the time when I graduated in 2019, we were only provided with a certificate of completion from the university, not the official diploma. It was a bit challenging back then because as fresh graduates, we lacked work experience, so when we applied to various companies, we had to introduce ourselves, mention our graduation background, and explain the job descriptions we had during our internship. We needed to get familiar with the companies we were applying to, such as their field of business, whether they were in finance, services, or other sectors. Understanding the company we were joining was crucial. Then, in 2020, things became more challenging as the COVID-19 pandemic hit. Only the HR departments of certain companies were willing to trust us and consider our applications during that time. It became harder to secure job opportunities due to the uncertainties caused by the pandemic.” (SOLIDARITY CAPITAL- NETWORKING SUPPORT)

Aisyah

Aisyah: “I was once offered such a position through connections, but it didn't work out in the end.”

Interviewer: “Why, Syah?”

Aisyah: “I'm not sure, maybe it was because I lacked financial resources (laughs). It seemed like I didn't bribe with pure money.” (SOLIDARITY CAPITAL- NETWORKING SUPPORT)

Interviewer: “So, during COVID, people who had connections or someone on the inside had an easier time, right? What about you, Syah? What do you think?”

Aisyah: “Yes, someone offered me an opportunity to come during that time.” (SOLIDARITY CAPITAL- NETWORKING SUPPORT)

Amelia

“Sure, there was a friend who offered me the opportunity to work here as a stepping stone or to get an idea of how the working world is, so I decided to give it a try.” (SOLIDARITY CAPITAL- NETWORKING SUPPORT)

“There were many things happening at that time, and I felt overwhelmed. When I first entered, I encountered some difficulties, although I can't recall exactly what they were. Perhaps due to the high number of recruits, I was temporarily laid off for a few weeks. I returned after being called back, but then there were new recruits. I felt disappointed and started searching for other opportunities. It was an emotional time for me, Miss...” (SOLIDARITY CAPITAL- NETWORKING SUPPORT)

“Yes, indeed. I was quite upset at that time, thinking about what I should do if I wasn't called back. I was considering where else to apply, but unexpectedly, after about two weeks, I received another call, although by that time, there were already new recruits.” (SOLIDARITY CAPITAL- NETWORKING SUPPORT)

“No, the thing is, Miss, when it comes to state-owned enterprises (BUMD) here in Indonesia, nepotism is still prevalent. So, even if they claim to have a transparent selection process, it's actually not that transparent. There are always cases where someone suddenly gets selected without clear reasons.” (SOLIDARITY CAPITAL- NETWORKING SUPPORT)

Santi

“Well, it's a mix of sad and funny stories, but it's all in the past now. So, my cat went missing because it was raining and I took shelter somewhere without bringing an umbrella. I found this man there, and the key to his motorcycle was still in it. I was worried that it might get lost or stolen, so I handed it to him and said, "Here, sir, I'm afraid the key might get wet or someone might take it." We started talking from there, asking about our jobs, and I was so naive back then, always trusting people and believing everything they said. So, I shared with him about just graduating and all, and because of the rain, I had to wait until it stopped since my house was far away. That man was grateful and said, "Thank you for returning the key, let me give you a ride." I wanted to decline, but it's hard to refuse someone. I was strong-willed against bad people and such, but when it came to refusing people, it was difficult for me. So, I ended up accepting the ride to avoid offending him or making him uncomfortable. He dropped me off at home, and the next morning, he came again, claiming to be a police officer. I had a bad feeling about it, but he said he wanted to help me find a job. Maybe my parents saw him as a trustworthy person since he claimed to be a police officer. So, he even came to my house and talked to my younger sister. On the third day, he came again, this time in a car, and said, "There's a job at the power plant, and I'll arrange it for you." My parents were thrilled because I had been unemployed for a few months without any job offers, so they were happy about it. But there was a condition, he asked for 500,000 rupiahs. At that moment, I declined and told my parents, "No, let it be. I've already applied to several companies, and hopefully, I'll get called for an interview." That happened during the COVID times. Since he directly contacted my parents, I didn't know about his demand for 500,000 rupiahs or his promise to get me a job at the power plant in Adipala. From that point on, I started having dreams about something bad happening to me. I dreamed about a snake crawling into my parents' bed. Dreaming about a snake is not a good sign, and I mentioned it, thinking that this person might not be good. However, my mother, especially, was so excited about him being a police officer and all, so she was blinded by it. Eventually, they still gave him the 500,000 rupiahs, but he said he would return it after Eid. After Eid, he promised to start working there. I also had hopes, thinking, "Alhamdulillah, if I can get a job there." But after a month or two, there was no communication. So, I called the

person who had contacted me, and they said, "Oh, not yet, but how about working at the popsicle factory for now?" That's what they said. So, I thought, instead of being unemployed, I might as well go to the popsicle factory nearby. When I arrived, they just told me, "Here, this is the job you'll be doing." I confidently entered, thinking it was the job I was promised, but the people there had no idea about any new employees. Eventually, the man left, and I asked for the boss's number to inquire when I could start working there. I messaged the lady, asking, "How is it, ma'am?" And it turned out she said, "No, the boss never mentioned hiring new employees. I don't even know that man you're talking about." It became a funny and sad situation. It's like, wow, it was a wild goose chase, going there without knowing anything. It was a learning process for me to not trust others too much. I used to be very friendly to people I met on the street, asking them questions and being kind, but now I've learned my lesson. Sometimes, when someone asks me something or if I know them, I try to confuse them or give vague answers so they won't know much about me, like asking where my house is, I would say it's somewhere far away, just creating some confusion."
 (SOLIDARITY CAPITAL- NETWORKING SUPPORT)

Hendri

“Yes, but why do I say that connections are important? Well, if we have connections, it automatically makes things easier for us. Let's take an example, X was interviewed for a position, and I am a student from the same campus as X who works in the same company. I mention his name, and then there are some junior students whom I recommend to the HR department. I have junior students who are credible and suitable to work here. Automatically, I become a connection for my junior students, and it helps to promote my campus, at least in terms of gaining recognition, even if I am not directly involved in the team or anything like that.” (SOLIDARITY CAPITAL- NETWORKING SUPPORT)

“Yes, back then when X was being interviewed, I was in the room too, so I knew that X was being interviewed by my assistant manager. I must have known how it went. They asked me what I thought about X, and I replied, "Well, sir, he can be given a try, maybe a trial here." Automatically, I gained their trust and opened the opportunity for my assistant manager to hire polytechnic students.”
 ((SOLIDARITY CAPITAL- NETWORKING SUPPORT)

DIGITAL CULTURAL CAPITAL

	Voices
Employers	<p><u>Nisa</u> “I'll discuss this first, about the revenue, the income development during COVID actually increased significantly. Because our sales are online, not face to face, so during the COVID pandemic, online businesses became very popular. Food, cosmetics, everything became popular, unlike other businesses, maybe those with physical stores that faced limitations due to social distancing</p>

	<p>measures. But for us online businesses, it was the opposite, we saw an increase, and I don't think there was any decrease, I believe we are still in the process of growing. That's what I mean, especially for the cosmetic industry, the revenue has been continuously increasing every year.”</p> <p>“In a winning condition, it turned out that in that condition we were winning. First I was already stressed because one of our network is distributors, there are main stores and open stores, not all of my networks are online. But with that kind of challenge, I finally made a formula, how do all my networks sell online? After selling online, it turned out to be winning, so I directed everything to sell online. If you open a store, most of the turnover goes down because people are social distancing, right?”</p>
Polytechnics	<p><u>Yuli</u> Interviewer: “Earlier, you said that in the past, there were many students who did the work placement in the company who were eventually recruited to become employees at the company, right, ma'am?”</p> <p>Mrs. Yuli: “Yes.”</p> <p>Interviewer: “Now, in the last 2 years, conducting work placement in MSMEs, are the students end up with a tendency to become entrepreneurs or not, ma'am?”</p> <p>Mrs. Yuli: “Oh yes, they are. With the pandemic conditions and millennial generation, there are two things that were included as one of the outputs from the accounting study program. They are being an accounting worker or an entrepreneur. We have digital marketing and entrepreneurship courses. Well, millennials today tend to look for entrepreneurial opportunities. Many students who sell cosmetics have an extraordinary turnover. If it's not cosmetics, it's a hijab store. At first, they may work as resellers, then they can develop into entrepreneur.”</p>
Graduates	<p><u>Radit</u> “Yes, the marketplace is experiencing a good increase. It’s quite remarkable considering the pandemic situation. This growth must be contributed to the efforts of numerous IT professionals who have been developing various applications.”</p> <p><u>Ahmad</u> "I have had experiences working for two companies. My current company, a financial company, was established during the pandemic and operates entirely online through a system. I work on a tablet and depend on its battery for my tasks. We don't have a physical office, and all attendance, meetings, and data input are conducted online.....The positive aspect of not having a physical office is that it allows for more efficient use of time. However, reporting can be challenging since everything is done online, and sometimes information can be missed. Regarding individuals who may struggle with technology, I have a friend</p>

	<p>who has five years of marketing experience but still struggles with correctly inputting customer data.”</p> <p><u>Akbar</u> “During the COVID-19 pandemic, our work dynamic went through some significant changes. With a sharp decline in revenue, the pressure to increase sales became intense, and it affected all of us employees. We had to find creative ways to boost sales. The pandemic led to a surge in online sales through platforms like Shopee, as people couldn't visit physical stores due to restrictions. However, the head office didn't allow transactions through this platform, which presented challenges for our stores or clinics.”</p> <p><u>Amelia</u> "The pandemic brought about some changes in my work responsibilities. Around July, my tasks shifted more towards computer-oriented work, and I had to spend a lot of time on my laptop. However, I faced some difficulties due to the less reliable Wi-Fi connection at home compared to the office. Working from home offered some flexibility, but the faster internet connection at the office allowed me to make quicker progress with my tasks."</p> <p><u>Rian</u> “So, I often get a job offer from my friend as a freelancer at the Tegal Film Festival publication. I am trusted to handle social media applications. So, I was asked to "do you want to hold this [social media] account?". So, the work doesn't have to be in my office space, it can be wherever. It can be at home. I accepted it as it was the only opportunity.”</p>
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POSITION

	Voices
Economic position of family	<p><u>Toro</u> “Yes, I needed to have some capital, because at that time, my parents didn't have a lot of money, but it wasn't a significant amount. So, I called my uncle and spoke to him while stopping in my tracks, sort of challenging him a bit. I asked him seriously, "Is this for real?" I was a bit unsure. He said, "Yes, there's a job opportunity at Daihatsu or Isuzu, if you're interested. It's in Japan, but you'll need to study the language for three months at the language school." So, I decided to follow his advice. At that moment, I had some doubts. Why? Because I didn't have that much money. But I approached my uncle again and visited him at his house. He actually wanted to sponsor my trip to Japan. I told him, "Uncle, I don't have that much money." However, he took full responsibility and said, "It's okay, if you don't have that much money, I'll cover it for you."</p> <p><u>Rian</u></p>

	<p>Interviewer: He'em Do you ever got a help from your family or parents to find a job? Rian: No never. Interviewer: No? Rian: They don't have any acquaintances who can help. Interviewer: What does your parents do? Rian: Entrepreneurs. All my siblings self-employed.</p> <p><u>Indah</u> Indah: "It used to be around 2 million per month before the corona situation." Interviewer: "Oh, that's quite good, right?" Indah: "Yes, but lately it's been a bit less consistent. Sometimes, it's only around 70 or 100 thousand per day, so it's uncertain."</p> <p>"My father's income significantly reduced, I felt a strong responsibility to support him financially. So, I made the difficult decision to leave my initial job as a customer service representative and help my father with his sales. Finding a job that would allow me to contribute to the family income and fulfill my obligations as the only child became a priority for me. Luckily, my neighbor informed me about an opportunity to work as an administrator in a notary office, and I decided to apply for the position."</p>
<p>Family occupational background</p>	<p><u>Anas</u> Anas: During my college days, I sold shirts, and then, Hem Hem, I started selling shoes there, because, you know, my family's background is mostly business-oriented, both my parents and others in the family are traders.</p> <p>I: Okay, I see.</p> <p>Anas: Yes, maybe that's where it all started.</p> <p>I: So, your parents are also entrepreneurs?</p> <p>Anas: Yes, that's correct.</p>
<p>Parental pressure</p>	<p><u>Rian</u> "It's so tired that even my father said like this last time, "You've applied a lot of applications but how come no one has been accepted?". Then he said, "you don't have to apply for a job now , just continue my business" like that."</p> <p><u>Tia</u> Yes, the feeling of "I've graduated, but finding a job is tough. I've applied to many places, but no one calls me back." At home, they also ask, "Have you applied to various places?" My mom asks me like that.</p>

<p>Gender bias (confining to job opportunities)</p>	<p><u>Aisyah</u> “I got a job call yesterday from an office in Jakarta. I really want to work out of my town. I want to be able to get more experiences in a big city, but not with my parents. They did not allow me to work out of Pematang. Maybe it's because I'm a daughter, a girl. And lastly, what's left is that I'm the one who has not married yet and my parents are already old. So, I think it's hard for my parents, right?”</p> <p><u>Tia</u> "I had a job opportunity just 20 minutes away from my home. However, I decided to work in my town because my parents asked me not to work outside the town. It's true that I faced gender bias, which limited my options and played a role in my decision. Ultimately, I prioritized my parents' wishes over seeking job opportunities elsewhere."</p> <p><u>Dania</u> "I quickly found a job as a store leader. However, I eventually had to quit because of salary issues. My parents had a strong preference for me to work within our town, which limited my job options. Even when I received a job offer from outside our town in Tegal, I had to decline it because of my parents' wishes. Being the only child, I felt a strong sense of responsibility to adhere to their expectations and accepted the limitations imposed on me."</p> <p><u>Viana</u> “I applied job at the bank but it was rejected and my application to the company was also rejected, ma'am. I was hopeless, "Oh God, finding a job is really hard" like that. While there are people who really want to work but must be like "you have to have money to come in" like that. I don't want to, ma'am, I work, I want to make money, why I have to spend money. Finally, the parents said, "Just be patient, if you obey us, you will get the best". In the end, when I wanted to go out of city, I wasn't allowed by my parents. So, I went home.”</p>
<p>Societal judgment</p>	<p><u>Viana</u> “I am concerned, yes, because I don't want to end up unemployed. Moreover, I always feel inferior, even though people say, "Why do you care about what others think?" Yes, everyone feels insecure at times. And secondly, because the year is changing and approaching Eid, I want to have a new story to share.”</p> <p><u>Rahman</u> “Yes, no, ma'am. It's just that she used to hang out with her friends, like a Corona graduate.”</p>

DISPOSITION

<p>Personal job aspirations</p>	<p><u>Hana</u> “The story goes like this... So, at X company, I officially left in May, which means in June, around the mid of the month, I completely left that company. But, I started working at my current company on January 20th, for a short period, January, February, March, April, May... It was around May 22nd or 23rd, I think, on a Monday, when I started working here. The reason for the switch was because after graduating, I wanted to explore and develop myself further. X company had more of a local scope, with only 3 or 4 branches established recently, around March. On the other hand, my current company is a multinational company, and I wanted to challenge myself in a more advanced company. So, I applied and searched for job opportunities, and I found this one on LinkedIn.”</p> <p><u>Aisyah</u> “Yes, I still want to work based on my major background.”</p>
<p>Religious belief or values</p>	<p><u>Radit</u> Interviewer: “So, this one was more approved by your parents, right?” Radit: “Yes.” Interviewer: “Was it because the previous place wasn't allowed by your parents, maybe because it was too far or for some other reasons?” Radit: “It was banking.”</p>
<p>Personal interest (hobbies)</p>	<p><u>Santi</u> “In my opinion, I believe that we should have the freedom to choose any job as long as we have the intention and passion for it. However, we cannot ignore the societal views on certain professions. It's true that society tends to value traditional employment more, such as being an employee, rather than working as a freelancer in the digital world, like on YouTube and others. But if my parents still hold those traditional views and want me to be an employee, I might not feel comfortable if the job doesn't align with my desires. As time went by during my years in elementary school, which was almost three years, I developed a new interest. I often watched educational content and teacher videos, which sparked a desire in me to pursue a career in that field. It felt like a calling, something that resonated with my soul, but I lacked the platform to express it. When I entered the classroom and started speaking, the children were enthusiastic about what I had to say. It made me realize that they enjoyed my way of communicating. So, it seems that being a content creator who delivers informative and creative content is something I cannot separate myself from.”</p>
<p>CDM attitude: pessimistic</p>	<p><u>Rian</u> “Yes, I'm little bit afraid of it because it's been a month, but I still do not get any replies for the companies I apply for. Finding a job is very difficult</p>

	<p>now.”</p> <p><u>Viana</u> “I applied job at the bank but it was rejected and my application to the company was also rejected, ma'am. I was hopeless, "Oh God, finding a job is really hard" like that. While there are people who really want to work but must be like "you have to have money to come in" like that. I don't want to, ma'am, I work, I want to make money, why I have to spend money. Finally, the parents said, "Just be patient, if you obey us, you will get the best". In the end, when I wanted to go out of city, I wasn't allowed by my parents. So, I went home.”</p> <p><u>Tia</u> “Yes, the feeling of "I've graduated, but finding a job is tough. I've applied to many places, but no one calls me back." At home, they also ask, "Have you applied to various places?" My mom asks me like that.”</p> <p><u>Tian</u> “Yes, because I'm most afraid of the language barrier and not being able to communicate effectively, also the difference in culture, especially the discipline aspect. I'm afraid that I won't be able to adjust well since our culture here is more laid-back and lacks discipline.”</p>
<p>CDM attitude: optimistic</p>	<p><u>Bani</u> Yes, I'm trying to believe in myself.</p> <p><u>Hana</u> Hana: We directly practice the ISPT (Information System Project and Training) by handling the applications, and the lack of practical experience before made it feel like starting from scratch when we entered the workforce. The impact is evident for subjects that should have been more practical, but due to the pandemic, we couldn't practice. However, for other subjects that are mostly theoretical, like digital accounting, and with proper online resources, we can still absorb the knowledge. It's just that for subjects that require hands-on practice, it reduces our ability to fully understand them.</p> <p>Interviewer: That makes sense. So, do you still feel confident despite the challenges?</p> <p>Hana: How do you mean, ma'am?</p> <p>Interviewer: Do you still feel confident in yourself and your abilities?</p> <p>Hana: Yes, I feel confident because, as you said earlier, once we dive into it, we have to adapt and find a way to succeed.</p>

	<p><u>Imran</u> “Personally, in my opinion, the IT department is not affected by the sector, so it's like me to look for work. There are many of my friends who work in Malaysia , there are also those in the Covid era . Because actually what we think about is how much we have the ability, so we study at the diploma, it's more practical than theory, so if we have the ability, why are we afraid to compete like that. Actually, if our abilities are okay, we're ready, just go ahead, we 'll definitely get it like that.”</p> <p><u>Beni</u> Exactly, the important thing is to be brave, just apply to all the job openings and don't be afraid of thinking, "What if I don't get a job? What if I end up unemployed?" Just go for it, if you get a job, the beginning might not meet your expectations, but just go with it. That's what I did, I thought of applying to all the jobs as long as it matched my qualifications, and if there was a call, I would go for it.</p>
<p>Social comparison and the fear of missing out (FOMO)</p>	<p><u>Rian</u> “Yeah, I've also been thinking about it. Some of my friends have already started working in various companies. So, there's a bit of pressure and insecurity when comparing myself to them.”</p>

APPENDIX 4- APPROVAL FROM THE RESEARCH ETHICS REVIEW BOARD

Application Number: HR-ES-000394	
審査結果通知書	
通知年月日	
2022年8月22日	
Rahmatika Dewi 殿	
広島大学大学院人間社会科学研究科長	
小林 信一	
研究タイトル	
The school-to-work transition amidst COVID-19: issues on polytechnic graduate pandemics	
申請年月日	
2022年7月24日	
判定結果	
承認	
判定理由又は勧告	
別紙参照	

APPENDIX 5- INFORMED CONSENT

You are being asked to take part in a research study. Before you decide to participate in this study, it is important that you understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please read the following information carefully. Please ask the researcher if there is anything that is not clear or if you need more information.

TITLE OF THE RESEARCH

The school-to-work transition amidst COVID-19: issues on polytechnic graduate pandemics

INVESTIGATOR

Name : Rahmatika Dewi
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PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

In light of the recent COVID-19 shock, as well as the potential disruption created by digitalization, this study intends to analyze the nature of such transitions from education to work for pandemics. Pandemics are the generation Z that is currently experiencing the COVID-19 pandemic. The term was firstly defined by WHO. The contents will mainly focus on the life courses of pandemics who graduates from polytechnics in Central Java, Indonesia, including their experiences nearing graduation to their current position in their career trajectories amidst the COVID-19 and digitalization era. In addition, the roles of some parties in assisting the workforce transformation including the polytechnics, parents (guardians), employers, and government will also be included. Four research questions are utilized to reach that objective, (1) how has the life course of pandemics from university life (polytechnics) to work life been impacted by the digitalization era and COVID-19 crisis?; (2) what are pandemics' feelings and beliefs about their career choice, trajectories, and job security under digitalization and COVID-19 crisis?; (3) how do universities '(polytechnics), the Indonesian government offer services and how do parents give supports for pandemics?; (4) what skills are needed for pandemics in the age of digitalization and the COVID-19 crisis?

METHOD

Related to the methodology, the convergent mixed method will be used in which qualitative and quantitative methods will be conducted at roughly the same time and the data results will be integrated and complement each other. In the qualitative method, the researcher will conduct free-flowing and semi-structured Interviews, observation, and documents analysis. In the quantitative side, a questionnaire will be shared to pandemics (graduates from polytechnics). The free-flowing interview is the initial interview before conducting semi-structured interview with pandemics. This type of interview will be utilized in order to focus on the pandemics' self-reflection on their experiences nearing graduation, transition from polytechnics to workplaces,

their career choices and current career trajectories by asking them to describe in their own words. There will be probe questions yet those will be designed to be as open as possible. The interviewer will follow the interviewees' story frame and will be open to new thought. This free-flowing interview will be only conducted with pandemials. After conducting this type of interview, the researcher will do a second step of interview as confirmation by using a semi-structured interview that will be directed to be able to answer the research questions. This semi-structured interview also will be conducted with parents (or their guardians if they do not have parent (s)), selected employers, directors (or their representatives) of polytechnics in Central Java, Indonesia, and head of study programs as well as head of career centers in those polytechnics. The researcher will also observe some workplaces and the polytechnics' environment including the career center offices. Documents of internships (work-placement program), polytechnics' career services, and governments' programmes for pandemials amidst COVID-19 pandemic also will be analyzed. To follow up the qualitative data and test the generalizability, the online questionnaire by using Google form will be distributed to the pandemials in those polytechnics.

BENEFITS

As a benefit, your participation will inform the education sector in this case polytechnics and Indonesian government for developing policies, resources, and services for graduates especially in the current COVID-19 prevalent.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Your responses to this interview will be anonymous. Every effort will be made by the researcher to preserve your confidentiality including the following:

- Assigning pseudonym for the interviewed participants that will be used on all research notes and documents.
- Keeping notes, interview transcriptions, and any other identifying participant information in a locked file cabinet in the personal possession of the researcher.

COMPENASTION

The participants will receive souvenirs for their participation in this study. The participants will be eligible for the compensation if they withdraw from the study prior to its completion.

INTERVIEW PROCEDURE

Time	: Based on interviewee's available time
Place	: Based on interviewee's convenient place
Duration	: 30 minutes (minimum) – 120 minutes (maximum)
Mode	: Based on interviewee's convenience (in person, video call, or phone call)
Language Used	: Indonesian

CONTACT INFORMATION

If you have questions at any time about this study, or you experience adverse effects as the result of participating in this study, you may contact the researcher whose contact information is provided on the first page.

Your participation in this study is voluntary. It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part in this study. If you decide to take part in this study, you will be asked to sign a consent form. After you sign the consent form, you are still free to withdraw at any time and without giving a reason. Withdrawing from this study will not affect the relationship you have, if any, with the

researcher. If you withdraw from the study before data collection is completed, your data will be returned to you or destroyed

APPENDIX 6-CONSENT LETTER

Research title: **The school-to-work transition amidst COVID-19: issues on polytechnic graduate pandemials**

Investigator: Rahmatika Dewi, Doctoral Student of Graduate School of Humanities and Social Sciences, Hiroshima University, Japan.

I have read the informed consent and I understand the provided information and have had the opportunity to ask questions. I understand the information gained from the interview will be kept in the utmost confidentiality and will only be used for this specific study. I also understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time, without giving a reason and without cost and I will be given a copy of this consent form.

Respondent's Signature: _____ Date: _____

Investigator's Signature: _____ Date: _____

*Note: the title listed on the research ethic approval, informed consent, and the consent letter above was the original title before it was changed. Following the revision, the title is now: **Revisiting Career Decision Making Process of Indonesian Polytechnic Graduates amidst COVID-19 - Drawing out the Pandemic Interactive Agency System (PIAS) Model**