

The Importance of Interpersonal Communication Competence for Fresh Graduates in Facing the Industrial World

Rahadi Pratomo Singgih¹, Mira Permata Sari^{2*}, Ayu Pratiwi³, Yusyanah⁴
^{1,2,3,4}Master's of Administration Sciences, STIAM I - Institute of Social Sciences and Management
mirapermata83@gmail.com*



e-ISSN: 2964-0962

SEIKAT: Jurnal Ilmu Sosial, Politik dan Hukum

<https://ejournal.45mataram.ac.id/index.php/seikat>

Vol. 3 No. 1 Februari 2024

Page: 35-42

Available at:

<https://ejournal.45mataram.ac.id/index.php/seikat/article/view/1143>

DOI:

<https://doi.org/10.55681/seikat.v3i1.1143>

Article History:

Received: 13-01-2024

Revised: 15-01-2024

Accepted: 15-01-2024

Abstract : People who have social skills and can communicate well tend to be more successful than those who do not have these abilities, and one of the factors that determines success in communicating with other people is interpersonal competence. This research is aimed at answering the question about the interpersonal communication competence of fresh graduates, what should be done to prepare fresh graduates to have interpersonal communication competence. Data collection was carried out through semi-structured interviews with 10 Human Resources Managers who had experience in recruiting fresh graduates for more than 5 years. The research results show that fresh graduates still have to improve their quality in interpersonal communication, especially the ability to initiate, conflict management, empathy, equality, listening skills, effective communication, self-awareness, and teamwork.

Keywords : Interpersonal Communication Competence; Fresh Graduates; The Industrial World

Abstrak : Orang yang memiliki kemampuan sosial dan dapat berkomunikasi dengan baik cenderung lebih berhasil dibandingkan dengan mereka yang tidak memiliki kemampuan tersebut, dan salah satu faktor yang banyak menentukan keberhasilan dalam menjalin komunikasi dengan orang lain adalah kompetensi interpersonal. Penelitian ini ditujukan untuk menjawab pertanyaan bagaimana kompetensi komunikasi interpersonal fresh graduates apa yang harus dilakukan untuk mempersiapkan fresh graduate agar memiliki kompetensi komunikasi interpersonal. Pengumpulan data dilakukan melalui wawancara semi terstruktur kepada 10 Human Resources Manager yang telah memiliki pengalaman dalam merekrut fresh graduate selama lebih dari 5 tahun. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa para fresh graduates masih harus meningkatkan kualitasnya dalam komunikasi interpersonal khususnya kemampuan berinisiasi, manajemen konflik, empati, kesetaraan, kemampuan mendengarkan, komunikasi efektif, kesadaran diri, dan Kerjasama tim.

Kata Kunci : Kompetensi Komunikasi Antarpribadi; Lulusan Baru; Dunia Industri

INTRODUCTION

Fresh graduates are graduates from tertiary institutions who have completed their studies and someone gets this nickname in less than 6 months since someone graduated (Monica, 2018). A student's transition process into the world of work requires the ability to adapt to the next challenge. One of the challenges that never escapes a person's efforts to get a job is job competition. Unfortunately, according to the Indonesian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (Kadin), the quality of undergraduate or D3 university graduates in Indonesia is considered to have minimal work ability (Sutianto, 2015). According to Mashigo (2014), fresh graduates who have not had the opportunity to gain work experience after graduating from college, need work readiness from within themselves so they can broaden their horizons to compete and increase their chances of getting a job.

Data from the Central Statistics Agency (BPS, 2023) shows that as of February 2022, Indonesia's unemployment rate was recorded at 5.83 percent of the total working age population of 208.54 million people. Of the unemployed figures, 14 percent of them are university graduates with a diploma or bachelor's degree. The number of fresh graduates who graduated in the August 2019-August 2020 period was 6.25 million people, but only 2.47 million people entered the workforce. Some of them continue higher education, get married and become housewives, or for other reasons. In 2019 and 2020, the percentage of fresh graduates who work is dominated by junior high school graduates. The percentage has increased by 4.9% points from 2019. The percentage of fresh graduates from tertiary institutions, high schools and vocational schools who are working has actually decreased compared to 2019, as can be seen in the graph below.

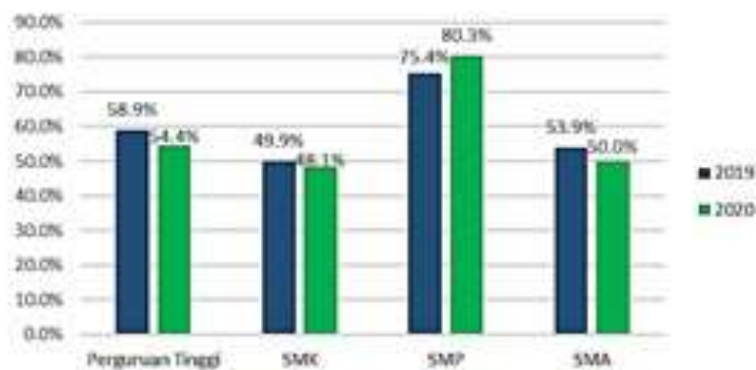


Figure 1. Percentage of Fresh Graduates Working From the Total Work Force According to Education Level

Source: Sakernas (2021)

Fitriyanto (in Muspawi & Lestari, 2020) stated that work readiness is a person's overall condition which includes harmony between physical, mental maturity and experience so that they are able to carry out an activity in relation to a task or job. A fresh graduate who is ready to work is an individual who not only has knowledge about what he will do, knows the requirements or criteria that must be met as a job applicant for a job, but also knows how to act or behave as a competent worker. and have the ability to understand and overcome problems in a task or job (Kuswana in Muspawi & Lestari, 2020). The latter is known as interpersonal communication competence.

According to Devito (2014, p. 56), interpersonal communication is the delivery of messages conveyed by someone and received by another person or group of people, with various responses and with opportunities to provide feedback. Miller (in Hasanah, 2015: 52) explains that interpersonal communication is a type of communication that takes place in harmony, where each communicator can act as a communicant or communicator alternately and is surrounded by very deep psychological dynamics face to face. In more detail, Hovland (in Hasanah, 2015: 56) defines interpersonal communication as a state of interaction when someone sends feedback to make changes to another person's behavior during a face-to-face meeting.

Interpersonal communication is not only limited to communication with co-workers but has a very broad meaning. Interpersonal communication is closely related to ethics, how we behave. Currently, many fresh graduates have a perfect GPA, but often have several individual characteristics that are considered detrimental to the company, such as being too rigid when faced with a problem, having difficulty working together in a team, not having the ability to manage emotions well, and even being unable to resolve conflicts, which will ultimately lead to stress conditions.

Based on the problems above, this research is aimed at answering the question of what fresh graduates' interpersonal communication competence should be. What should be done to prepare fresh graduates to have interpersonal communication competence.

RESEARCH METHODS

This research is a qualitative study. Bogdan and Tailor, as quoted by Moleong, define qualitative methodology as a research procedure that produces descriptive data in the form of written or spoken words or in the form of policy actions (Moleong, Lexy J. 2002:112). According to Sugiyono (2011: 56) qualitative research is research used to examine the condition of natural objects, where the researcher is the key instrument. Qualitative research is a research process to understand human or social problems by creating a comprehensive and complex picture presented in words, reporting detailed views obtained from information sources, and carried out in a natural setting (Creswell, 2009: 25). According to Mason (2006), qualitative research will run well if it focuses on formulating research questions, carefully chooses data sources, and chooses the right data generation techniques. Strategically selecting data generation methods is related to efforts to answer research questions. Figure 1 shows the data generation method selection scheme.

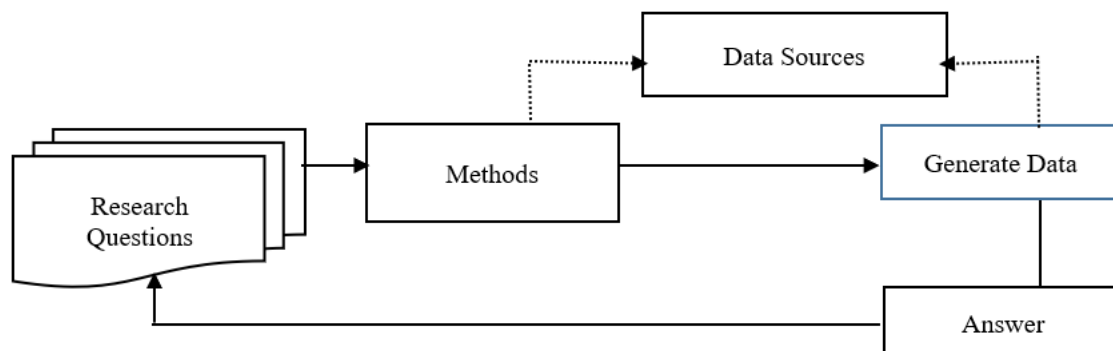


Figure 2. Data Generation Method Scheme
Source: Mason (2006)

In this research, researchers used a phenomenological approach. Campbell (1994) explains that Husserl's phenomenological method is to examine and analyze an individual's inner life, namely the individual's experiences regarding a phenomenon or event as it occurs in the individual's stream of consciousness. The process of meaning begins with the process of sensing, a process of experience that continues continuously. In terms of phenomenology, the experience or awareness in question is awareness of something, seeing is seeing something, remembering is remembering something, judging is judging something. The thing in question is an object of consciousness that has been stimulated by the perception of a real object through the act of remembering or creativity (Smith, Paul, and Larkin, 2009:12). Data collection was carried out using in-depth interviews, namely semi-structured interviews. Semi-structured interviews are an interview process that uses an interview guide that comes from developing topics and asking questions and is used more flexibly than interviews (Sugiyono, 2018). Interviews were conducted with 10 HRD managers who had worked for more than 5 years and had experience in recruiting fresh graduates.

The data analysis technique in this research which refers to the research problem is as follows:

1. Data reduction. Reducing data means summarizing data available from various sources, namely interviews, observations, personal documents, official documents, images, photos, media news and so on. Data reduction is carried out by sorting information obtained through interviews, observation and documentation of research subjects and objects.
2. Data Presentation. In qualitative research, data presentation can be done in the form of brief descriptions, charts, relationships between categories, diagrams, and the like. Miles and Huberman (in Sugiyono, 2018), stated that the most frequently used way to present data in qualitative research is narrative text.
3. Drawing conclusions. Drawing a conclusion is carried out by the researcher through the data collected and then the conclusion is verified or tested for its truth and validity.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In this study, researchers confirmed 8 aspects of interpersonal communication that are of concern to Human Resources Managers, as shown in the table below.

Table 1. Aspects of Interpersonal Competence Focused in This Research

No	Aspect	Researchers' Opinion
1.	Ability to initiate	Buhrmester,et,al., (1988)
2.	Conflict Management	
3.	Empathy	De Vito (2011)
4.	Equality	
5.	Listening Skills	Chickering & Reisser (1993) & Stephenmark (2006)
6.	Effective Communication	
7.	Self Awareness	Stephenmarks (2006)
8.	Team Work	

Source : Buhrmester,et.al. (1998), DeVito (2011), Chickering & Reissen (1993) and Stephenmark (2006)

1. Ability to Initiate

The initiation ability of fresh graduates is still very lacking. In general, they only focus on their work but cannot interact with their surroundings well. Many of them don't even feel the need to introduce themselves to other staff who are likely to be on a team for a particular project.

"Many fresh graduates with above average GPA apply to our company, but unfortunately when they are accepted and enter the trial period, they do not have the ability to interact with their environment. We once accepted a fresh graduate with a GPA of 4, but unfortunately, he didn't have the ability to build good friendships, so it wasn't surprising that he was ostracized. "I called him and explained this, but unfortunately we didn't see any significant changes until finally we had to decide not to appoint him to permanent staff." (AK – PT Good Year Indonesia)

2. Conflict Management

Moore (2004: 176) says that conflict management or what is commonly called managing conflict is a person's tendency to organize or regulate conflict in the form of attitudes and behavior. Many fresh graduates do not have the ability to manage conflict well, so it can be said that they generally do not have leadership skills. Many of them cannot manage their emotions well, as a result they tend to blame others rather than evaluating themselves. People who cannot manage conflict can also be interpreted as people who cannot solve problems.

"On average, fresh graduates are not able to manage their emotions well. Without realizing it, conditions like this often cause them to get into trouble at work. If a conflict occurs, they tend to blame others without evaluating themselves. As a result, they cannot resolve any conflicts well. "The university should provide Interpersonal Communication material not only for students at the Faculty of Communication Sciences but for all faculties, because this is a provision for every fresh graduate to enter the world of work." (RE-Coca Cola Amatil)

3. Empathy

According to Siti Aisyah Boediarja (2009), empathy, as first stated in 1909, comes from the Latin *em* and *pathos*, which means feeling into. Fifty years later this was discussed in psychosocial and psychoanalytic science, how a person can feel himself as someone else while remaining objective without including his own emotions. Fresh graduates are also unable to show empathy at the start of their work period. This can be seen from their attitudes both when speaking and behaving. They look less helpful and don't want to offer help if they see someone needs help. In general, they do not want to accept input from others and do not care about others.

“There are many fresh graduates we recruit who do not show empathy. They don't even care about their team members who have been absent for several days. They are just busy with their own work. If left to continue, this will reduce company productivity. We need a solid team, which has a high sense of empathy so that it can work optimally.”
(KK- Angkasa Pura)

4. Equality

Interpersonal communication will be more effective if the atmosphere is equal, with implicit recognition that both parties appreciate, are useful, and have something important to give (Novianti, 2021). Many fresh graduates without realizing it have shown their arrogance in the workplace. They feel they are graduates of well-known universities, and some don't even want to greet staff in lower positions.

“It's a shame, many fresh graduates nowadays are arrogant. They think they graduated from a well-known university with a high GPA too. When they were given the position of manager, they made various new rules without considering many things. They also spoke to staff arrogantly without considering that these senior staff had been working at the company for a long time.” (AN- Indofood)

5. Listening Skills

What is meant by listening skills in this case is active listening. To be able to listen actively and be directly involved in the interpersonal communication process, Devito (2013) points out the following things that can be done: (a) listen participatively, (b) listen empathetically, (c) listen without judging but critically, (d) listen deeply. Listening skills should accompany questioning skills in effective communication. Because no matter how good communication is with someone without the ability to hear, communication will not be effective. The ability to listen actively is defined as an active understanding process to obtain information and the attitude of the speaker whose aim is to understand the conversation objectively.

“Many fresh graduates behave impolitely. When communicating, he does not show his seriousness in listening. Even during meetings, they are busy moving their fingers on their cellphones. When there was time for Q and A they were silent, but after the meeting was over they asked about things that had been explained in the meeting. This shows they are not listening well.” (TA- L'Oreal)

6. Effective Communication Skills

According to Walter Lippman in Effendy (2013), effective communication is communication that tries to choose the right method so that the image in the mind and the content of the communicator's consciousness can be understood, accepted and even carried out by the communicant. In order for communication to produce effective communication, a person must understand the principles of communication. There are five principles of effective communication that must be understood. The five principles are abbreviated as Respect, Empathy, Audible, Care, and Humble (REACH).

“In general, fresh graduates are not able to communicate effectively. Many of them when communicating do not show respect for the person they are talking to. Many of them don't care about other people, are arrogant because they think they graduated from a famous university and have a high GPA. We once held soft skills training specifically for interpersonal communication, and the results were quite good. They can change their attitude.” (RE - Unilever)

7. Self Awareness

According to Listyowati (2008), self-awareness is a state where individuals can understand themselves accurately, namely awareness of thoughts, feelings and self-evaluation. Individuals who have good self-awareness have the ability to control themselves, namely being able to read social situations to understand other people and understand other people's expectations of themselves.

"Many fresh graduates who have been accepted for work show that they do not have good self-awareness. They cannot control themselves and do not have the ability to adapt to the social environment around them. Only a few of the fresh graduates we recruit have good self-awareness. One of the efforts we make is by holding training for fresh graduates so that they can improve their behavior." (BA-Pertamina)

8. Team Work

Johnson and Johnson (1991), teamwork is the collaboration of individuals to work together to achieve specified goals, a multidimensional approach characterized by a series of adaptive behaviors, cognitions and attitudes that interact to achieve common goals. The success of a team is largely determined by the good cooperation of its members (Hughes, et.al., 2012).

"Fresh graduates generally still show high egos. The sense of respect and care for other people is very lacking. This is why they are still unable to interact well within their team. They often give the impression that they want to win on their own, feel that their ideas are the best, want their opinions to be recognized, consider themselves to be the most correct. Universities should be able to shape the character of graduates into good individuals who are competent in interpersonal communication." (SI – Hotel Indonesia)

The results of interviews with HRD managers show that many fresh graduates still do not have the ability to initiate. In fact, initiation is an effort to seek new, wider experiences about the outside world, as well as about oneself with the aim of matching something or information that is already known in order to understand it better, such as introducing oneself in language that is easy to understand and polite, giving a good impression to the first time in front of other people (Buhrmester et al.: 1988). This may seem trivial, but this is where the assessment of a person's personality and character begins. Many fresh graduates today also do not have the ability to manage conflict. Conflict can be caused by misunderstandings or misunderstandings due to communication failures, such as competition in unlimited matters, different interpretations of things, and lack of cooperation (Hardjana, 1994). If a conflict occurs, they tend to blame others without evaluating themselves. As a result, they cannot solve every problem well.

HRD managers also explained that there are many fresh graduates who do not have empathy and equality. This is very visible when they communicate. They tend to give the impression of being arrogant, not caring about other people. Even though they are highly educated people, they do not have a sense of empathy, namely respecting other people and considering everyone to be equal (DeVito, 2011). Many of today's fresh graduates also do not have the skills to communicate effectively. They do not understand the principles of effective communication, namely REACH (respect, empathy, audible, care and humble). As a result they also never listen to other people's opinions. They are also less able to listen when someone is talking. Even though listening skills are part of interpersonal communication (DeVito, 2013). This increasingly shows that they are highly educated but have poor character. It is a shame that fresh graduates do not have the ability to evaluate themselves. They don't realize whether what they are doing is right or wrong, good or bad. They do not have self-awareness and this is very dangerous because with their selfishness they cannot work in a team effectively. If an employee does not have the ability to collaborate, it will hamper work productivity (DeVito, 2013).

CONCLUSION

The results of this research show that the interpersonal skills of fresh graduates are currently still lacking. In general, they think that studying at a well-known university and a high GPA guarantees that they can be accepted for work easily. However, in reality this is not the case. Of the eight aspects studied, namely the ability to initiate, conflict management, empathy, equality,

listening skills, effective communication, listening skills and teamwork, it shows that the quality of fresh graduates in interpersonal communication is still low and must be improved. This causes many companies to have to organize training related to interpersonal communication for newly recruited fresh graduates. Therefore, to produce quality human resources, universities should also prepare their students well. Interpersonal communication courses should not only be given to students from the Faculty of Communication Sciences, but students from all study programs should also study, because this is a provision for them before entering the world of work. For further research, the researcher suggests that research be carried out regarding how universities prepare the quality of their students so that they have interpersonal communication skills that are in line with the demands of the industrial world.

REFERENCES

- Boediardja, Siti Aisyah. (2009). *Sumber komunikasi dengan empati, informasi dan edukasi*. Citra Profesionalisme Kedokteran.
- BPS (2023). *Statistik Indonesia. Tingkat Pengangguran Terbuka*. Jakarta: BPS
- Buhrmester, Furman, Wittenberg & Reis. (1988). Five domains of interpersonal competence in peer relationships. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 55(6), 991-1008.
- Campbell, Tom. (1994). *Tujuh Teori Sosial*. Yogyakarta: Kanisius.
- Chickering, A. W., & L. Reisser, L. (1993). *Education and identity* (2nd ed.). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Creswell, John W. (2009). *Research Design* (Pendekatan Kualitatif, Kuantitatif, dan Mixed). Yogyakarta : Pustaka Pelajar.
- DeVito, J. A. (2013). *The Interpersonal Communication Book* (13th ed.). New York: Pearson.
- DeVito, J. A. (2014). *Interpersonal Message*. United States of America: Pearson
- Effendy, Uchjana, Onong. (2013). *Ilmu Komunikasi Teori dan Praktek*. Bandung: PT Remaja Rosdakarya.
- Griffin, R. W., & Ebert, R. J. (2006). *Bisnis*. Jakarta: Erlangga.
- Handfield (2006) Handfield, R. (2006). Faith in the Moral Integrity of Others. http://www.careersuperstar.com/interpersonal_competence/
- Hasanah, H. (2015). Pengaruh Komunikasi Interpersonal dalam Menurunkan Problem Tekanan Emosi Berbasis Gender. *Jurnal Sawwa*, 11 (1), 54-55.
- Hughes, R. L., Ginnet, R. C., and Curphy, G. J. (2012). *Leadership: Memperkaya Pelajaran dari Pengalaman*. Edisi Ketujuh. Jakarta: Salemba Humanika
- Jerving, J. 2001. *Managing Through Motivation. e-book: a summary of M35*. Managing . Condensed from Management Enrichment Training Program (MERIT) module M35 Managing Through Motivation, published by CUNA's Center for Professional. www.cuna.org.
- Johnson dan Johnson (1991), Johnson DW & Johnson, R, T (1991) Learning Together and Alone. Allin and Bacon: Massa Chussetts
- Lange, A.J., & Jakubowski, P. (1978). *Responsible Assertive Behavior : Cognitif. Behavior Procedures for Trainers*. USA : Research Press.
- Listyowati, Gani. (2008). Pengaruh Persepsi Siswa Mengenai Pengelolaan Kelas Dan Partisipasi Siswa Dalam Pembelajaran Kontekstual Terhadap Kemandirian Belajar Pada Mata Pelajaran Pendidikan Kewarganegaraan Bagi Siswa Kelas VIII SMP Negeri 9 Surakarta Tahun Pelajaran 2008/2009. *Skripsi FKIP UMS Surakarta* : Tidak diterbitkan.
- Lunandi. A.G. (1997). *Komunikasi Mengena : Meningkatkan Efektivitas Komunikasi. Antar Pribadi*. Yogyakarta : Kanisius.
- Mashigo, A.C.L. (2014). Factors Influencing Work Readiness Of Graduates: An Exploratory Study. (Tesis, Stellenbosch University) Diunduh dari <http://hdl.handle.net/10019.1/95884>
- Mason, J. (2006). Mixing Methods in a Qualitative Driven Way. *Qualitative Research*, 6, 9- 25. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/1468794106058866>
- McGaha, V. & Fitzpatrick, J. (2005). Personal and social contributors to dropout risk for undergraduate students. *College Student Journal*.
- Moleong, Lexy J. (2002). *Metode Penelitian Kualitatif*, Bandung : CV. Remaja Rosdakarya. h.112.

- Moore, H. Frazier. (2004). *Humas (Membangun Citra dengan Komunikasi)*. Bandung: PT. Remaja Rosdakarya. h. 176.
- Muspawi, M., & Lestari, A. (2020). Membangun Kesiapan Kerja Calon Tenaga Kerja. *Jurnal Literasiologi Universitas Jambi*. Diunduh dari <https://jurnal.literasikitaindonesia.com/index.php/literasiologi/article/view/138>
- Novianti, E. (2021). *Teori Komunikasi Umum dan Aplikasinya*. Yogyakarta: Penerbit. ANDI.
- Sadarjoen, S.S. (2005). *Konflik Marital : Pemahaman Konseptual, Aktual, dan Alternatif Solusinya*. Bandung : PT. Refika Aditama.
- Siregar, Angela Monica (2018) *Proses Komunikasi Interpersonal Orangtua Dan Anak Autism Spectrum Disorder (Asd) (Studi Deskriptif Kualitatif Proses Komunikasi Interpersonal Antara Orangtua dan Anak ASD di Sekolah Khusus Autisme Bina Anggita Yogyakarta)*. S1 thesis, UAJY.
- Smith, J. A., Flowers, P., & Larkin, M. (2009). *Interpretative phenomenological analysis: Theory, method and research*. London: Sage. Pp. 12.
- Stephenmarks (2006). *Interpersonal Competence*. <http://www.stephenmarks.com/interpersonal-competence.htm>
- Sugiyono, 2018. *Metode Penelitian Kuantitatif, Kualitatif, dan R&D*, penerbit. Alfabeta, Bandung.
- Sugiyono. (2011). *Metode Penelitian Kuantitatif, Kualitatif dan R&D*. Bandung: Alfabeta. h. 56.
- Sugiyono. (2011). *Metode Penelitian Kuantitatif, Kualitatif dan R&D*. Bandung: Alfabeta. h. 249.
- Survey Angkatan Kerja Nasional (Sakernas). (2021). *Badan Pusat Statistik*. Jakarta: BPS.
- Sutianto. (2015). *Pengusaha Sendir Kualitas Lulusan Sarjana Minim Kemampuan*. Jakarta: Detik Finance. Diakses pada 23 November 2023, dari <https://finance.detik.com/berita-ekonomi-bisnis/d-2933334/pengusahasingdir-kualitas-lulusan-sarjana-ri-minim-kemampuan>
- West, Richard. Lynn H. Turner. (2007). *“Pengantar Teori Komunikasi”*. Jakarta. Salemba Humanika.