

AN EMPLOYMENT-FOCUSED CURRICULUM FRAMEWORK TO CLOSE SKILLS GAPS AMONG SUPPLY CHAIN PROFESSIONALS

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ABSTRACT

In recent decades, the higher education sector has been heavily criticised for its inability to provide a high-skilled, work-ready labour force to meet industry needs. Many companies provide training for new employees and estimate that it takes these workers between 3 months and 2 years to learn the necessary skills to do their job. This training is costly for employers, especially as these workers often leave the company for a new position once they have acquired skills that make them more employable. This paper describes the development of an employment-focused curriculum that will enable business and education leaders to leverage their combined knowledge of labour markets, skills, and pedagogy to produce job-ready graduates and to close current skills gaps among higher education graduates. Incorporating input and feedback from employers into curriculum development helps to ensure that learners develop the work readiness and technical, specialist, and foundational (thinking, analytical, and digital) skills that employers seek. By developing a clearer understanding of what employees need to be able to do, educational institutions can refine their curricula and link training to the reality learners face on entering the labour market. This three-stage study investigates industry needs and employee skills. Based on a review of the literature on skills and training, the second stage involved the construction of instruments used in focus groups with industry participants in Jakarta and Surabaya. In the third stage, respondents completed a survey based on closed questions. The findings suggest that employees lack a range of skills, principally soft (thinking and learning, interpersonal, customer service, and business) skills. On that basis, a new approach is proposed for developing programme curricula that focus on these soft skills.

Keywords: Skills, Supply Chain, Indonesia, Training, Education, Soft Skills