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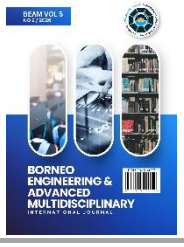

Employer Perceived Factors Associated with Candidate Rejection: An Exploratory Study at a Malaysian Polytechnic Career Event

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Abstract

Graduate employability remains a concern because academic qualifications alone do not ensure alignment with employers' requirements. Previous research identifies job fit and interview-stage competency signaling as important recruitment considerations, but employer perceptions after polytechnic career events remain underexplored. This exploratory study examined candidate-related rejection factors reported by employers at a Malaysian polytechnic career event. A descriptive cross-sectional, employer-level survey involved 19 representatives from 19 organizations conducting face-to-face interviews. Eight candidate-focused Likert items were summarized descriptively, and substantive open-ended feedback from 15 respondents was examined thematically. Another candidate being viewed as a better fit (M = 4.16, SD = 0.76) and mismatch between skills or experience and job requirements (M = 3.95, SD = 0.78) received the highest mean ratings. Five themes described qualifications and experience mismatch, candidate-vacancy matching, interview preparation and employer knowledge, communication and professionalism, and attendance and punctuality, including interview no-shows. The findings suggest targeted vacancy matching, company research, mock interviews, and technical-communication activities as possible career-readiness interventions. Since ratings were not linked to individual candidates or actual decisions, the results describe employer perceptions only; intervention effectiveness also remains untested. The study offers context-specific exploratory evidence rather than generalizable predictors of candidate rejection.

Keywords: - Candidate rejection, graduate employability, person-job fit

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1. Introduction

Graduate employability remains a major concern because securing employment depends on more than candidates' academic qualifications. Employers expect graduates to demonstrate technical knowledge, communication, problem-solving, teamwork, adaptability, and professional conduct (Basir et al., 2022; Fadhil et al., 2021; Tushar & Sooraksa, 2023 & Wafi et al., 2022). In Malaysia, internship experience, relevant work exposure, and the ability to apply academic knowledge also influence graduates' transition into employment (Basir et al., 2022 & Zainudin et al., 2024).

When it comes to recruitment judgments, they assume the comparative character. While considering applications on merit, employers compare them to other candidates too in the process of selection to the same position. Results from research on graduate hiring point to the fact that

having relevant experience and the matching of the study subject with the job define employers' preferences, especially when there are particular requirements for the position (Humburg & van der Velden, 2015). Looking at the fitting aspect, personal-job fit relates to how well the person meets the requirements of the job while personal-organizational fit relates to the matching of the person with the values of the organization (Kristof, 1996 & Kristof-Brown et al., 2005).

Interviews provide an opportunity for employers to evaluate the credibility and relevance of candidates' experience and skills. Candidates may possess appropriate qualifications but fail to demonstrate their suitability if they cannot explain their projects, technical abilities, or problem-solving experiences. Malaysian interview research highlights the role of appropriate language and explicit competency descriptions in communicating employability (Krishnan et al., 2021 & Krishnan et al., 2024). Signaling Theory offers a complementary explanation: under information asymmetry, interviewers infer less visible qualities from observable evidence such as resumes, answers, communication, preparation, and professional behaviour (Spence, 1973).

Organizational Justice Theory (Gilliland, 1993 & Colquitt, 2001) informed the original event questionnaire by highlighting fairness in selection procedures and outcomes. It is retained as background context, not as a construct tested in this paper. The eight candidate-focused items concern perceived job fit, organizational compatibility, interview performance, signaling, and preparation; they do not directly operationalize procedural, distributive, interpersonal, or informational justice. Person-job fit, person-organization fit, and Signaling Theory are therefore the principal interpretive lenses for these items.

Previous research has examined graduate work readiness and skills, recruitment preferences, interview communication, and applicant reactions (Barattucci et al., 2025; Humburg & van der Velden, 2015; Krishnan et al., 2021, 2024 & McCarthy et al., 2017). These strands differ in unit of analysis and outcome: graduate surveys describe perceived competencies, hiring-preference studies examine choices under specified conditions, and interview studies examine communication. None of these cited studies directly establishes the distribution of employer-perceived candidate-rejection factors reported after one Malaysian polytechnic career event. The present study addresses that narrower descriptive question, without claiming to measure actual rejection decisions or their causes.

This exploratory study addresses three questions: (1) Which candidate-related factors do participating employers associate with rejection during the career event? (2) Which of these factors receive the highest descriptive agreement ratings? (3) What candidate-related themes emerge from employers' open-ended feedback? Ratings were submitted once per employer after the event, not for individual applicants; consequently, findings describe employer perceptions rather than predictors or causes of candidate-level rejection.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Graduate Employability and Employer Expectations

Graduate employability indicates the skills and knowledge such as behavior and preparedness that make graduates able to work well. Evidence from the Malaysian graduates shows that communication skills, analytical skills, teamwork, positive values, internships, work experience, and relevance of the field of study are essential elements of employability of the graduates (Basir et al., 2022 & Zainudin et al., 2024). Research in TVET also emphasizes that communication, critical thinking, teamwork, leadership, ethical conduct, and professionalism are the key qualities of the employees (Wafi et al., 2022).

Prior literature indicates that employability involves more than academic credentials. Applicants must communicate convincing evidence of their abilities and their relevance to the vacancy. In event-based recruitment, where employers may compare several applicants over a limited period, demonstrating this fit and preparedness becomes particularly important.

2.2 Organizational Justice and Selection Fairness

Organizational Justice Theory provides a useful contextual perspective for understanding fairness in recruitment and selection. Gilliland (1993) applied organizational justice principles to employee-selection systems, distinguishing fairness in selection processes from fairness in selection results. Colquitt (2001) later demonstrated procedural, distributive, interpersonal, and informational justice.

Organizational Justice Theory provides context for designing and evaluating fair recruitment procedures, but the current survey does not assess applicants' fairness perceptions or validated justice dimensions. For interpretation, skills/experience mismatch and comparative candidate suitability map conceptually to person-job fit; company-culture compatibility relates to person-organization fit; and interview performance, communication, resume consistency, professionalism, and preparation relate to observable signals of readiness. These are conceptual interpretations of event-specific items, not statistically validated subscales or evidence that the theories were empirically tested.

2.3 Person-Job Fit, Person-Organization Fit and Candidate Matching

The theory of Person-job fit offers a more direct theoretical framework for some aspects related to job candidates discussed in this study. Fit theory emphasizes the congruence of individual characteristics to the requirements of the job while meta-analytical evidence connects the person-job fit as well as the person-organization fit to the positive outcomes in terms of selection outcomes such as intention to hire and offers

(Kristof-Brown et al., 2005). Job experience and the match between the field of study and the nature of work also have an impact on employers' preferences during recruitment (Humburg & van der Velden, 2015).

Person-organization fit refers to how well the individual fits with the characteristics of the firm or the organization, including values, culture, and expectations (Kristof, 1996). Interviewers' perceptions of person-organization fit can influence selection recommendations (Cable & Judge, 1997). In the present study, the company-culture item is therefore interpreted as an organizational-compatibility factor, whereas skills and experience mismatch and the availability of a better-fitting candidate are interpreted primarily through a person-job fit lens.

2.4 Signaling, Interview Performance, and Professional Presentation

Recruitment involves information asymmetry because employers cannot directly observe every relevant quality of a candidate. Signaling Theory proposes that decision makers infer underlying characteristics from observable signals (Spence, 1973). During interviews, resumes, technical explanations, communication style, preparation, and professional behaviour can therefore influence how employers interpret competence and suitability.

Malaysian interview studies suggest that candidates' language choices and capacity to articulate relevant skills affect how their employability is presented (Krishnan et al., 2021 & Krishnan et al., 2024). Effective communication is therefore both an employability competency and a means of demonstrating underlying technical, interpersonal, and problem-solving capabilities. Professional behaviour and preparation may likewise provide observable signals, but the present questionnaire does not establish which signals caused any individual selection decision.

2.5 Career Readiness and Interview Preparation

Being career ready means more than just learning about how to put a resume together and how to answer common interview questions. Job seekers must know not only what they bring to the table but also what the job and the employer are offering. Research into companies, job postings and the presentation of technical or experience-based evidence may allow job seekers to provide a more convincing argument in support of their candidacy.

Career fairs and employment-related events help potential employees meet with employers, but recent studies conducted in Malaysia show that even when job openings are available, candidates may lack practical experience or interpersonal skills (Bikar et al., 2023 & Vijayakumaran et al., 2026). The above findings emphasize the importance of identifying the gaps in candidate training and employer expectations during recruitment activities.

2.6 Research Gap and Study Positioning

Existing Malaysian employability research establishes recurring concerns about soft skills, industry alignment, and career support (Basir et al., 2022; Wafi et al., 2022 & Zainudin et al., 2024). In contrast, preference and fit research considers selection judgments, and interview research examines how competence is conveyed (Humburg & van der Velden, 2015; Krishnan et al., 2021 & Krishnan et al., 2024). These designs cannot be treated as equivalent evidence of why individual applicants were rejected. The specific contribution here is an employer-level, post-event description of eight candidate-focused factors alongside open-ended feedback from 19 organizations at one polytechnic event. This modest, context-bound contribution offers practical hypotheses for future candidate-linked research rather than a generalizable rejection model.

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Design and Scope

A descriptive cross-sectional survey design was adopted, which included a qualitative method. Quantitative measures were applied for rating and ranking the factors related to rejection of candidates, while open-ended comments gave further insight into how the employers interpreted the candidates' readiness for employment as well as the recruiting background. The design was exploratory and did not try to establish any causal relationship or hypothesis.

3.2 Participants and Recruitment Context

The dataset comprises 19 employer representatives, each reporting for a different participating organization at a Malaysian polytechnic career event. Responses were collected from 8 to 14 September 2025 after face-to-face interviews. All 19 respondents reported using face-to-face interviews. Event participation and completion of the employer questionnaire defined the analyzed group; the available study record does not establish the number of all eligible employers, whether every eligible representative was invited, the number declining participation, or a response rate. Accordingly, no census or representative-sampling claim is made. Table 1 summarizes the documented characteristics.

Table 1: Employer and recruitment characteristics (N = 19)

Characteristic	Category	n	%
Company size	Small (1-50)	5	26.3
	Medium (51-200)	6	31.6
	Large (201+)	8	42.1
Position level	Entry-level	10	52.6
	Mid-level	7	36.8
	Senior-level	2	10.5
Industry sector	Manufacturing and industrial	6	31.6
	Engineering, construction and infrastructure	5	26.3

	Services and professional	4	21.1
	Other/custom sector labels	4	21.1
Interview mode	Face-to-face	19	100.0

The four custom/other sector labels included trading and general business, oil and gas, transportation/warehousing, and land surveying. Respondents were selected through event-based non-probability sampling because they were directly involved in the recruitment activity.

3.3 Unit of Analysis and Scope of the Outcome

Each participating employer submitted one questionnaire after the career event. The unit of analysis was therefore the employer response, not an individual candidate. The ratings reflected employers' overall evaluations based on candidates encountered during the event and were not linked to individual candidate records, interview scores, job offers, or rejection decisions. Accordingly, the study examines employer-perceived factors associated with candidate rejection rather than candidate-level predictors or causes of rejection.

3.4 Research Instrument and Conceptual Basis

Data acquisition was obtained through a structured bilingual questionnaire consisting of two languages including English and Bahasa Melayu. The first section of the questionnaire focused on the data about recruitment processes and organizations involved. The second section had 11 items implying questions on a scale of five-way Likert type scale. The final section provided space for the comments on the candidates and the process of interview.

The bilingual event questionnaire was developed with reference to employee-selection fairness literature (Gilliland, 1993 & Colquitt, 2001), but it was not designed or validated as a measure of organizational justice. The eight candidate-focused items were mapped for interpretation to job fit (skills/experience mismatch; comparative suitability), organizational fit (company culture), and interview-related signals (performance, communication, attitude/professionalism, preparation, and resume/portfolio consistency). This classification provides theoretical context only, and no latent construct scores are calculated.

As formal psychometric validation and bilingual equivalence testing do not exist in the current study record, there could be no claims made regarding construct validity, measurement invariance and reliability of the composite scale. The items must be evaluated separately and the limitation taken into account when interpreting the results.

3.5 Candidate-Rejection Factors

Of the total of 11 closed-ended items, eight were related to factors associated with applicants and included discrepancies between candidates' skills and experience, compatibility with company culture, inconsistencies between the CV and interviews, unsatisfactory interview performance, better suitability of the competitors, communication skills, attitude, professionalism, and lack of preparation. Three items concerned the effectiveness or justness of the recruitment process and thus were not included in candidates' score determination. The eight issues were examined separately rather than combined into general justice score.

3.6 Data Collection Procedure

The questionnaires were filled out by employer representatives after the interviews. The format of the questionnaire was representative of the whole process of filling in the organizational profile and responding to the close-ended questions and comments. The analysis mentioned here was based on anonymous employers' responses as the names of companies and email addresses are removed from the data, as well as the quotations that are used to describe the employers' reactions to the interviews.

3.7 Quantitative Data Analysis

The quantitative information was analyzed descriptively. Concerning candidate-related factors, for each of the eight factors, mean and standard deviation statistics, as well as the number and percentage of respondents selecting Agree or Strongly Agree, were derived. In this study, higher means indicate stronger agreement. Given that this study included 19 employers giving their replies, and no information was provided on outcomes for candidates linked to the scores, inferential statistics were not used.

3.8 Qualitative Data Analysis

Fifteen of the 19 respondents supplied substantive open-ended feedback; the remaining four did not supply analyzable comments. The written comments were reviewed using a descriptive thematic approach informed by Braun & Clarke (2006). Candidate-related statements were identified, assigned initial semantic codes (e.g., mismatched qualifications, unsuitable vacancies, interview preparation, communication, non-attendance), compared for overlap, and organized into five descriptive themes: (1) qualifications and experience mismatch, (2) candidate-vacancy matching, (3) interview preparation and employer knowledge, (4) communication and professionalism, and (5) attendance and punctuality, including non-attendance. Comments on venue, noise, scheduling, food, and other event logistics were coded separately as process feedback. The available records do not document a formal codebook, independent coders, disagreement-resolution procedure, or systematic quotation-selection protocol; therefore, the themes are descriptive and no intercoder reliability is claimed. Short anonymous excerpts shown below illustrate themes rather than indicate their prevalence.

3.9 Integration of Quantitative and Qualitative Findings

In interpretation, quantitative findings and qualitative findings were combined. Descriptive rankings indicated the factors related to the candidates that were more agreed upon by the employers, while the open-ended comments helped in explaining the findings and finding the aspects

that were not represented as separate quantitative items. The integrated findings were utilized for developing exploratory implications and not for the testing of mixed-method model in a formal sense.

4. Results

4.1 Employer and Recruitment Profile

According to the data presented in Table 1, there were five small, six medium, and eight large including companies in the population. Ten companies were hiring predominantly for entry-level jobs, seven for mid-level jobs, and two for senior-level jobs. Manufacturers and industrial firms made the largest single sector group of companies, followed by engineering / construction / infrastructure and service / professional sector companies.

All the surveyed subjects conducted face-to-face interviews for the selection of the applicants. These data demonstrate that this is a rather diverse sample of employers involved in recruitment but rather small in size, so the findings can be regarded as descriptive for the surveyed organizations, rather than generalizable regarding the Malaysian employers.

4.2 Candidate-Rejection Factor Rankings

The eight candidate-related factors are summarized in Table 2. Mean scores fall between 3.21 and 4.16. The highest descriptive evaluation pertains to the belief that another candidate is more suitable for the job (M = 4.16, SD = 0.76), with 15 out of 19 employers (78.9%) either agreeing or strongly agreeing. Skills and experience mismatch is ranked second (M = 3.95, SD = 0.78), having also been agreed to or strongly agreed on by 15 out of 19 employers (78.9%).

These means are descriptive summaries of agreement among the 19 participating employers, not tests of differences between factors. Ratings do not correspond to observed rejection decisions. A lower sample mean for company-culture fit or resume consistency does not demonstrate that either factor is unimportant to employers beyond this event.

Table 2: Ranking of candidate-focused rejection factors (N = 19)

Rank	Candidate-focused factor	M	SD	Agree/Strongly agree, n (%)	Interpretive domain
1	Another candidate was a better fit for the role	4.16	0.76	15 (78.9)	Comparative/person-job fit
2	Skills and experience did not match job requirements	3.95	0.78	15 (78.9)	Person-job fit
3	Performance was not strong enough to merit a job offer	3.89	0.81	14 (73.7)	Interview performance
4	Attitude and professionalism were concerns	3.84	1.01	15 (78.9)	Professional signals
5	Communication skills were a major factor	3.79	0.79	13 (68.4)	Communication/signaling
6	Lack of preparation was evident	3.47	1.12	12 (63.2)	Preparation/readiness
7	Candidate did not fit company culture	3.42	0.96	10 (52.6)	Person-organization fit
8	Resume/portfolio did not align with interview performance	3.21	1.03	8 (42.1)	Signal consistency

4.3 Qualitative Findings

Fifteen employer responses contained analyzable comments. The five candidate-focused themes were: qualifications and experience mismatch; candidate-vacancy matching; interview preparation and employer knowledge; communication and professionalism; and attendance and punctuality (including missed interviews). Illustrative comments described applications unrelated to qualifications or experience (Employer E2), limited experience for a vacancy (E3), the need to improve preparation and communication (E15), and the importance of learning about the employer (E18). Some respondents also discussed candidates failing to attend scheduled interviews. Separately, seven employers mentioned noisy, hot, distracting, or unsuitable interview conditions. These counts and excerpts are descriptive; the underlying data do not support estimates of theme prevalence or attribution of individual rejection outcomes.

5. Discussion

5.1 Candidate-Job Matching and Comparative Fit

The two aspects that received the highest grades concern the specific position suitability. This trend is in line with person-job fit studies which point to the right match of the ability of candidates and the demands of the position and research linking fit to the outcomes before participating such as the intention to hire (Kristof-Brown et al., 2005). Data also indicate that relevant work experience as well as the alignment of the major and the position play important role in recruitment of graduates (Humburg & van der Velden, 2015).

The descriptive pattern is consistent with a person-job fit interpretation: employers rated comparative candidate suitability and job-requirement mismatch most highly. Prior research links fit to hiring-related outcomes (Kristof-Brown et al., 2005 & Humburg & van der Velden, 2015), but the present study did not link ratings to applicants or hiring decisions. For example, Employer E2 described applicants seeking jobs unrelated to qualifications or experience, while E3 referred to inadequate experience for a particular vacancy. These excerpts illustrate perceived

mismatch; they do not establish that mismatch caused any recorded rejection.

5.2 Interview Performance and Competency Signaling

Substandard interview results placed third (M = 3.89, SD = 0.81) with 14 employers of 19 (73.7%) either agreeing or strongly approving. As explained by the theory of signal transmission conceived by Spence in 1973, the interview is considered a situation where the candidates convey signals regarding their competence, motivations, and suitability in an atmosphere of information asymmetry. Research in Malaysia also came to the conclusion that candidates differ in their ability to demonstrate such employability skills. Fresh graduates may be able to cite industrial internships, final projects, laboratory work, certificates, competitions, or problem-solving tasks rather than long records of employment. Thus, the question is not whether these experiences exist but if the candidates are able to articulate their relevance for the open position effectively.

5.3 Communication and Professionalism

Attitude and professionalism ranked fourth (M = 3.84, SD = 1.01; 15/19, 78.9% agreement), while communication ranked fifth (M = 3.79, SD = 0.79; 13/19, 68.4% agreement). Results of the study corroborate findings of Malaysian and TVET employability studies that rank communication, professionalism, ethics, teamwork and other soft skills among the key aspects of workplace readiness (Basir et al., 2022; Fadhil et al., 2021; Wafi et al., 2022 & Zainudin et al., 2024).

Besides, employer comments connected communication with preparation. "The candidate needs to work on preparation and communication," marked one of the employers (Employer E15). As such, communication proves to function not only as competences in itself, but as the means through which the employers acknowledge technical knowledge, project experience and skills in solving problems.

5.4 Interview Preparation and Company Knowledge

With 3.47 means score (SD = 1.12), item preparation has shown 63.2% of employers either agreeing or strongly agreeing with the statement. A notably higher standard deviation indicates that there were wider variations in opinions regarding preparation being a moderating factor in rejection approach. The observed fact was backed up with comment sections which highlighted company information as an important aspect to take into consideration, as well. One employer made a recommendation to candidates to "study company background, and their core business before going for interview" (Employer E18).

The results obtained may support the identification of three areas for interview preparation: self-understanding, understanding the vacancy, and understanding the employer, as demonstrated in Fig. 1, which shows the summarizing schematics based on the exploratory findings.

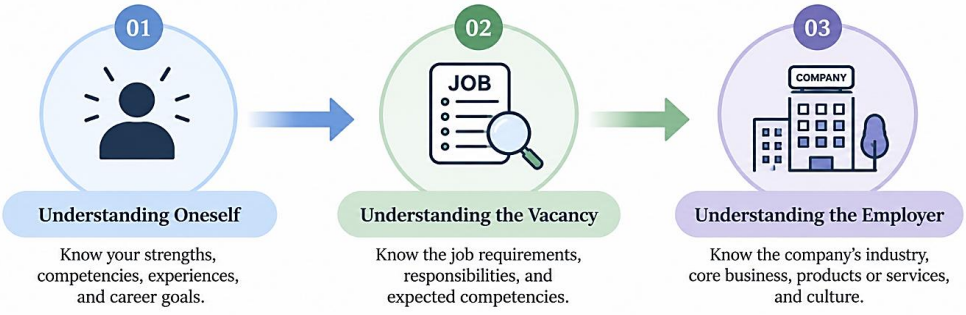

Fig. 1. Integrated framework of effective interview preparation based on study findings

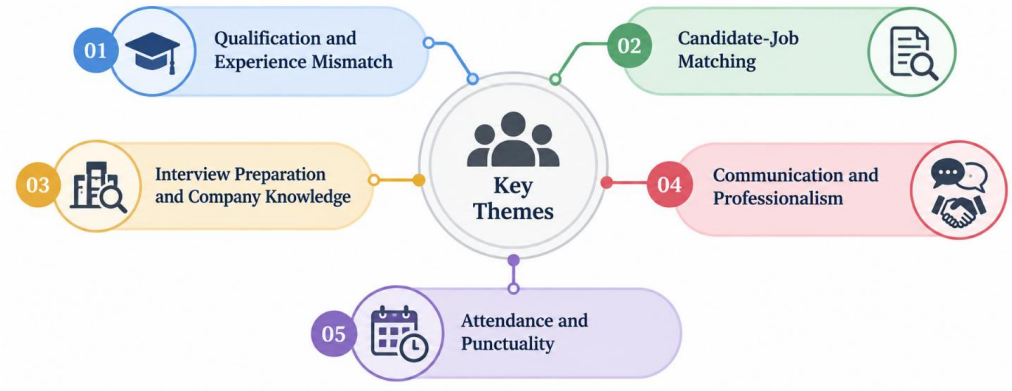

Fig. 2. Candidate-focused themes identified from employer feedback

5.5 Attendance, Punctuality, and Recruitment-Process Context

Attendance and punctuality emerged from the open-ended comments in the survey even if they did not form distinct quantitative items in it. Several employers reported that the expected candidates did not turn up for the interviews, with one respondent merely advising candidates to come on time. The observations indicate that some elementary professional behaviors prevent candidates from demonstrating their competence.

There were also important process comments in the free text replies that were analyzed separately from candidate-centered themes. Seven employers explicitly mentioned noise, inconvenient interview space, heat, or distractions related to other event-related activities. The comments do not explain why candidates are rejected by employers, but they imply that hiring conditions may affect the quality of interviews. One employer also suggested introducing some technical or skill testing prior to interviewing candidates.

5.6 Secondary Rejection Factors and Organizational Compatibility

Company-culture fit (M = 3.42, SD = 0.96) and resume/portfolio–interview inconsistency (M = 3.21, SD = 1.03) had the lowest descriptive means among the eight items. Because each item reflects a different judgment and no candidate-level outcomes or inferential comparisons are available, these rankings do not establish relative causal importance or imply that organizational fit is unimportant in other contexts.

At a theoretical level, company culture fit is closer to person-organization fit than it is to organizational justice. Person-organization fit deals with individuals' compatibility with organizational values (Kristof, 1996), with the interviewers' assessments of person-organization fit being able to influence their selection decisions (Cable & Judge, 1997).

5.7 Proposed Graduate Recruitment Preparation Framework

The results suggest a possible sequence of graduate career preparation: candidates review their qualifications, identify vacancies aligned with their skills, research employers, prepare for interviews, and demonstrate competency. Fig. 3 illustrates this proposed sequence. It is an interpretation and practical organizing framework, not an observed sequence of individual applicant decisions or a tested predictor of recruitment success.

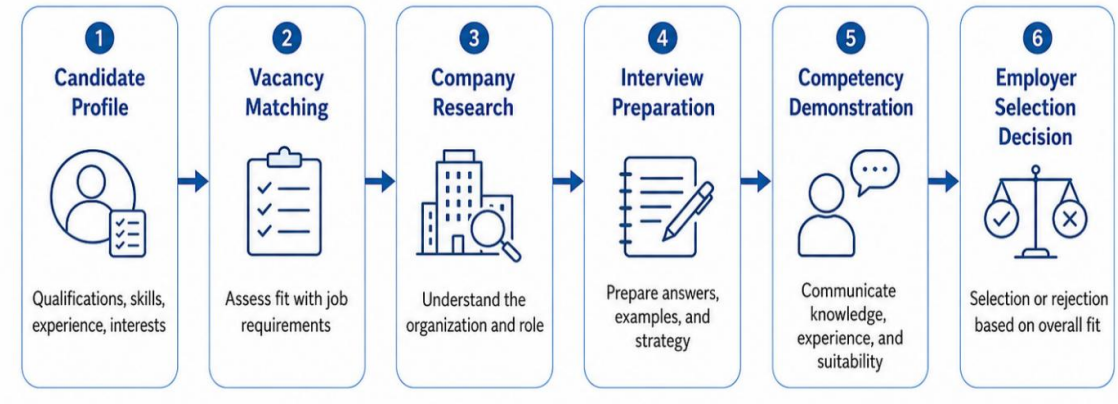

Fig. 3. Proposed Graduate Recruitment Preparation Framework derived from the exploratory findings

The framework is meant to represent a practical understanding of this research instead of a verified theory or a predictive model. Further investigations should examine its components with bigger sample sizes, measures of candidate outcomes, as well as valid measures of matching, interview success, and recruitment fairness.

5.8 Implications for Graduate Career Preparation

As per the results, several areas can be noted regarding career readiness assistance. Candidate-vacancy matching, research about companies, organized interviews, learning technical and communication skills, and understanding the business etiquette are among them. It is interesting to note that although there are career opportunities and students enroll in career programs, evidence shows that young people still face challenges in obtaining jobs (Bikar et al., 2023 & Vijayakumaran et al., 2026).

Fig. 4 summarizes practical interventions proposed from the employer-perception findings: vacancy matching, company research, mock interviews, technical communication training, and professional-behaviour preparation. These interventions were not implemented or evaluated in this study; their effectiveness remains to be tested.

Candidate-vacancy matching allows students to measure their credentials, skills, experience, certificates, and interests against job requirements before applying for a job. In addition to that, research jobs could provide students with an understanding of how employers work and what kind of expectations they have for candidates for the special position. Finally, mock interviews and technical communication activities may involve students in presenting their work in a professional manner.

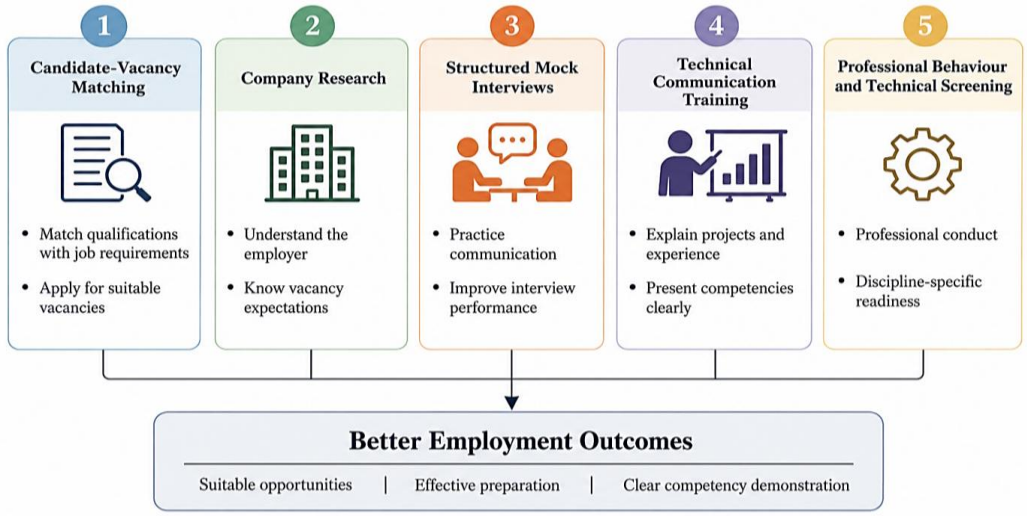

Fig. 4. Proposed implications for graduate career preparation

5.9 Study Limitations

Interpretation has some limits. To begin with, the sample included just 19 employers from a single polytechnic career event and was selected through a non-random event-based method. Secondly, the analysis unit was employer response, meaning that the ratings were not connected to particular candidates, scores from interviews, job offers, or rejection outcomes recorded. Another thing to note is that the questionnaire used was specific for the study and not a validated scale of Organizational Justice, person-job fit, or person-organization fit. Moreover, the information available in this study does not confirm that the questionnaire underwent appropriate psychometric validation, equality of translation testing, or independent coding of qualitative comments. Lastly, the open-ended responses were quite numerous and also included feedback on both candidates and the event itself. Because of this set of limitations, it is important to regard these findings as the first exploration of employer perception.

6. Conclusion and Future Research

Person-job fit, person-organization fit, and Signaling Theory help interpret different groups of employer perceptions: job alignment, cultural compatibility, and interview-stage presentation of competence. This study applies these established perspectives to one polytechnic recruitment event but does not extend or statistically test the theories. The employer-level design prevents causal interpretation of individual rejection decisions.

For polytechnic career services, the findings suggest piloting vacancy matching, company research, mock interviews, and opportunities to demonstrate technical competence. These are proposed responses to the concerns expressed by this particular group of employers. Their impact on interview quality, selection decisions, or employment outcomes was not empirically tested here.

Further research has to have a larger sample of employers from different educational institutions, connect the ratings of employers with outcomes of particular candidates, and also utilize proven methods for assessing job fit, organizational fit, organizational justice, and interview performance. Future work should also formally validate bilingual questionnaire items and evaluate whether targeted career-readiness interventions improve interview performance and employment outcomes over time.

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