

Career Coaching 5.0: A Strategic Career Guidance Model for Enhancing University Students' Employability Skills in the Era of Disruption

Rahmatullah¹, St. Hajrah Syam²

Islamic Education Study Program, Postgraduate Program,

Universitas Islam Ahmad Dahlan, Indonesia¹

Department of Islamic Guidance and Counseling, Faculty of Ushuluddin and Islamic

Communication, Universitas Islam Ahmad Dahlan, Indonesia²

E-mail: rahmatbugis1983@gmail.com¹, syamhajra12bpi@gmail.com²

Correspondent Author: Rahmatullah, rahmatbugis1983@gmail.com

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Abstract

Rapid transformations in the global labor market driven by digitalization, automation, and artificial intelligence require higher education graduates to possess adaptive employability skills that extend beyond technical competencies alone. However, conventional career guidance services in higher education have not yet been fully effective in developing these competencies holistically. This study aims to examine the implementation of Career Coaching 5.0 as an innovative career guidance model that integrates humanistic approaches with digital technology to enhance students' employability skills. This research adopted a qualitative exploratory case study design conducted over six months at Universitas Islam Ahmad Dahlan, Indonesia. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, participatory observations, and document analysis involving undergraduate students, academic advisors, and professional career coaches. Data were analyzed using thematic analysis through open, axial, and selective coding stages. The findings reveal four main themes: increased students' career self-awareness, strengthened core soft skills, the transformation of coaches' roles into reflective facilitators, and the integration of digital approaches through online learning platforms, digital career assessment applications, and virtual communication media, which enhanced service flexibility and accessibility. This study contributes by proposing and empirically examining a Career Coaching 5.0 strategic model that effectively develops students' adaptive career competencies. These findings imply the need for higher education policies that support the development of coaching-based, human-centered, and digitally integrated career services.

Keywords: career coaching 5.0, career guidance, digital transformation, employability skills, higher education

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INTRODUCTION

Rapid changes in the world of work, driven by advances in digital technology, automation, and globalization, have ushered in a new phase commonly referred to as the era of disruption. In this context, the demands placed on the quality of human resources, particularly university graduates, have become increasingly complex. Students are no longer sufficiently prepared by academic knowledge alone; rather, they must possess adaptive employability skills that are relevant and responsive to the evolving needs of industry (Suleman & Laranjeiro, 2018).

Employability skills encompass communication, collaboration, problem-solving, critical thinking, self-management, and advanced digital literacy competencies that are not easily replaceable by machines or automated technologies. This phenomenon is frequently conceptualized within the VUCA (Volatility, Uncertainty, Complexity, and Ambiguity) framework, originally introduced by the U.S. Army War College to describe highly unstable and unpredictable environments. In the contemporary labor market context, VUCA reflects the instability, uncertainty, complexity, and ambiguity that characterize today's world of work. It is not merely a conceptual term, but a structural reality that compels organizations and the workforce to respond swiftly and strategically to rapid and dynamic changes (Prayesti, 2022). A survey conducted by Deloitte indicates that the majority of young workers acknowledge the growing influence of artificial intelligence (AI) on their work practices. However, only a limited proportion have received formal training related to AI, revealing a significant readiness gap between labor market demands and the competencies possessed by prospective workers, including university students and recent graduates (Budikusuma et al., 2025).

Furthermore, the World Economic Forum's (WEF) Future of Jobs Report 2025 estimates that approximately 39% of core workforce skills will change by 2030 due to the expansion of AI and automation. This projected skills shift represents a fundamental transformation in the nature of work, in which competencies considered relevant today may become obsolete within a decade, creating an urgent need for systematic reskilling and upskilling initiatives. The WEF further projects that while technological advancement may generate up to 170 million new jobs globally by 2030, automation is expected to displace approximately 92 million existing jobs. These disruptions are likely to occur primarily in administrative and routine occupations that are highly susceptible to automation by machines or AI systems (Di Battista et al., 2023). These structural changes in job composition and skill requirements have generated a significant skills gap between higher education graduates and industry expectations. This gap has been identified as a major constraint on organizational growth and on workers' capacity to participate productively in the digital economy.

At the national level, similar patterns are evident in Indonesia's labor market, which exhibits persistent structural challenges. Data from Badan Pusat Statistik (BPS) show that the open unemployment rate (TPT) in February and August 2025 ranged from 4.76% to 4.85%, with the total number of unemployed individuals exceeding several million, including higher-education graduates. Although the aggregate unemployment rate appears relatively stable or slightly declining, the absolute number of unemployed individuals has increased due to the expansion of the labor force that has not been fully absorbed by the market (Putri Ayu, 2025; RAHAYU, 2025). Additional BPS data indicate that the youth age group (15–24 years), consisting largely of recent graduates and early-career entrants, experiences substantially higher unemployment rates than other age



groups. This disparity underscores the heightened vulnerability of graduates to structural transformations in the labor market (Safitri & Rezza, 2025).

Another pressing issue is educated unemployment. Media reports citing BPS data reveal that more than one million university graduates were unemployed in Indonesia in 2025. This figure reflects a persistent mismatch between competencies acquired in higher education institutions and the rapidly evolving demands of industry (Safitri & Rezza, 2025). Overall, both global and national data demonstrate that contemporary graduates face a dual challenge: (1) a fundamental transformation in the structure and nature of work driven by automation and AI, and (2) a widening skills gap between higher education outputs and actual labor market needs. These conditions affirm that graduate employability can no longer rely solely on traditional academic knowledge. Instead, it must encompass adaptive, digital, critical, and creative competencies aligned with the demands of the era of disruption (Safitri & Rezza, 2025).

Numerous studies indicate a persistent and significant gap between graduates' competencies and labor market expectations. This phenomenon highlights the urgency of strengthening the role of career guidance within higher education institutions. However, conventional career guidance approaches are widely regarded as insufficiently responsive to the dynamics of contemporary change. In response to this challenge, Career Coaching 5.0 emerges as an innovative solution that integrates digital technology, humanistic approaches, and lifelong learning principles to foster holistic individual development (Wylleman et al., 2020).

Career Coaching 5.0 focuses on empowering students as autonomous individuals who are capable of proactively and flexibly designing their career pathways. This model aligns with the principles of student-centered learning and experiential learning, which emphasize self-reflection, continuous feedback, and personalized support. Such an approach is considered more effective in fostering career adaptability, defined as the capacity to navigate uncertainty and ongoing change in the world of work (Savickas, 2019).

The urgency of this study lies in the need to design career guidance strategies that not only address the challenges of the era of disruption but also tangibly enhance graduates' competitiveness in the labor market. Drawing on the Career Coaching 5.0 framework, this article explores innovative career guidance strategies aimed at strengthening students' employability skills, while providing both conceptual and practical foundations for higher education institutions to develop transformative, future-oriented career guidance services.

The evolving nature of the world of work, characterized by technological disruption, automation, artificial intelligence, and digital transformation, has significantly reshaped industry expectations of university graduates. Within this context, employability is no longer understood merely as job readiness but rather as an individual's capacity to obtain, sustain, and further develop a career in a dynamic, continuously changing work environment (Jackson, 2016). Unfortunately, both global and national data indicate that a significant proportion of higher education graduates are not yet fully prepared to face contemporary challenges.

Various reports and studies highlight that graduates continue to encounter substantial obstacles in entering the labor market. In particular, the World Economic Forum emphasizes that many graduates lack the skills that align with industry demands, especially the ability to adapt to increasingly flexible and technology-driven work environments (Stefán, 2024). A national survey conducted by BAPPENAS also indicates



that the rate of educated unemployment in Indonesia remains relatively high, particularly among recent graduates (Djati & Sutjipto, 2018). This indicates a gap between the education system's output and the demands of the labor market.

The rationale for this study is grounded in the pressing need to reformulate career guidance services in higher education institutions. Conventional approaches, which are largely informative and delivered at scale, have proven insufficient to addressing the challenges of the contemporary era. The Career Coaching 5.0 model emerges as an alternative approach that is more responsive to the complexities of career development in the disruption era. Unlike traditional methods, coaching not only provides students with information but also fosters their potential, self-awareness, intrinsic motivation, and the capacity for autonomous and sustainable career decision-making (Greif et al., 2018).

Career Coaching 5.0 represents an integration of humanistic-based coaching with the utilization of digital technology, alongside approaches rooted in learning agility and lifelong learning. This model emphasizes active collaboration between the coach and the coachee (students), ensuring that the guidance process is not unidirectional but rather transformational (Cox et al., 2023). This is particularly relevant for Generation Z students, who are characterized by their independence, openness to technology, and need for personalized learning experiences (Turner, 2015a).

The urgency of this study is further reinforced by the need for higher education institutions to enhance the competitiveness of their graduates at both national and global levels. In the VUCA era (Volatility, Uncertainty, Complexity, and Ambiguity), adaptability, critical thinking, and innovative capabilities have become more crucial than mere mastery of technical knowledge (Sekapuri et al., 2024). Therefore, the Career Coaching 5.0 strategy is considered to have strategic potential in filling the gap for a more relevant, flexible, and employability skills-oriented career guidance model.

Thus, this study is essential to explore both conceptually and practically how Career Coaching 5.0 can be designed and implemented as an effective career guidance strategy to enhance students' employability skills in the disruption era. The study is also expected to contribute to the development of career service policies in higher education institutions and serve as a foundation for building a higher education ecosystem that is adaptive to the future world of work.

Several previous studies have highlighted the importance of enhancing employability skills through structured educational and training interventions. For instance, Jackson revealed that a low level of professional identity among graduates contributes to their limited work readiness (Jackson, 2016). Suarta's research emphasizes the importance of strengthening soft skills and digital literacy from the early stages of higher education (Suarta et al., 2017). Meanwhile, Tran's study demonstrates that students' engagement in career guidance activities grounded in reflective learning can enhance their career adaptability and future planning skills (Tran et al., 2022).

Nevertheless, dominant career guidance approaches remain largely conventional, often one-directional, administrative, and lacking personalization. This undermines the effectiveness of career guidance programs in fostering students' career readiness (Pita Loka, 2022). In this context, the urgency of the study lies in the need for a career guidance strategy that is more transformative, empowering, and aligned with the characteristics of Generation Z students, who prefer two-way, technology-based, and exploratory interactions (Turner, 2015a).

The main issue is how to design and implement a career guidance strategy that addresses the challenges of the disruption era while remaining relevant to today's



students' needs. If career guidance services are not adapted, students' potential may fail to develop optimally, and the gap between education and the labor market will continue to widen (Stefán, 2024).

Various alternative solutions have been explored, ranging from strengthening competency-based curricula and integrating more practical internship programs to utilizing digital platforms for career services. However, each of these strategies has limitations, including insufficient personalization, minimal reflective interaction, and a lack of an approach that fosters long-term career awareness.(Cox et al., 2023)

As a strategic alternative, the Career Coaching 5.0 approach is selected because it combines the strengths of humanistic-based coaching with technological approaches and the principles of lifelong learning. This model offers a guidance process grounded in an equitable relationship between the coach and the coachee (students), focuses on achieving students' personal and professional goals, and promotes deep reflection in career decision-making. In other words, Career Coaching 5.0 not only delivers information about the world of work but also cultivates students' mental preparedness, clarity of direction, and resilience, enabling them to enter the workforce with confidence and competence. On this basis, this study is essential to identify how the Career Coaching 5.0 approach can be systematically designed and implemented within the higher education context, aiming to significantly and sustainably enhance students' employability skills.

METHOD

This study employed a descriptive qualitative approach with an exploratory case study design. A qualitative approach was selected because the research aims to gain an in-depth understanding of the dynamics underlying the implementation of Career Coaching 5.0 within the real context of university career services, including the subjective experiences of students and practitioners involved. This approach enables the exploration of meanings, perceptions, interactions, and processes that cannot be reduced to statistical figures (Creswell & Poth, 2016).

An exploratory case study design was adopted because the research focuses on a specific phenomenon within a particular institutional context: the implementation of Career Coaching 5.0 at Universitas Islam Ahmad Dahlan. Case studies allow for an in-depth examination of practices, strategies, challenges, and program impacts within their natural setting (Yin, 2018). Methodologically, this design was chosen not for statistical generalization, but for theory-driven analytic generalization (Yin, 2018). Research participants were selected through purposive sampling, in which informants were deliberately chosen for their knowledge, experience, and direct involvement in the career coaching program (C. Patton et al., 2015).

The study involved 15 students who had completed at least four Career Coaching 5.0 sessions and were in their final semesters (semester 6-8), representing the transition phase to the labor market. Student participants were selected using maximum-variation criteria, including gender, study program, and career readiness levels (low, moderate, and high), to ensure diverse perspectives on the program's effectiveness. Demographically, the student sample consisted of 9 females and 6 males, with career readiness levels distributed as 3 low, 7 moderate, and 5 high. In addition, the study involved three academic advisors with at least five years of experience, and two professional coaches actively engaged in the program. The academic advisors were selected for their direct involvement in mentoring and monitoring students participating in the program, enabling



them to provide contextual insights into students' behavioral changes, career readiness, and soft-skill development before and after participation.

Meanwhile, the two professional coaches were included as key informants because they served as the primary facilitators of Career Coaching 5.0. They were directly responsible for designing coaching modules, conducting coaching sessions, administering assessments, providing reflective feedback, and evaluating students' development. The inclusion of these participants was based on their role relevance and depth of involvement, ensuring the generation of rich, credible, and contextually grounded data. Data collection from student participants was concluded after the 15th interview, as no new significant information emerged, indicating that data saturation had been achieved. Thus, the composition of participants was determined based on the principle of data saturation, where data collection is terminated when no new meaningful insights are obtained.

Table 1.
 Characteristics of Participants in the Career Coaching 5.0 Program

No.	Participant Code	Gender	Study Program	Semester	Career Readiness Level	Description of Career Readiness
1.	P1	Female	Islamic Guidance and Counseling	6	Moderate	Has career interest but lacks clear direction
2.	P2	Male	Islamic Guidance and Counseling	6	Low	Has not yet developed a career plan
3.	P3	Female	Islamic Guidance and Counseling	8	Moderate	Beginning to explore career options
4.	P4	Female	Islamic Guidance and Counseling	8	High	Has clear career goals
5.	P5	Male	Islamic Guidance and Counseling	6	Moderate	Has initial plans but not yet well-developed
6.	P6	Female	Islamic Guidance and Counseling	8	High	Actively engaged in career development activities
7.	P7	Male	Islamic Guidance and Counseling	6	Low	Limited career awareness



8.	P8	Female	Islamic Guidance and Counseling	6	Moderate	Beginning to understand personal potential
9.	P9	Female	Islamic Guidance and Counseling	8	High	Has organizational and internship experience
10.	P10	Male	Islamic Guidance and Counseling	6	Moderate	Has career interest but lacks confidence
11.	P11	Female	Islamic Guidance and Counseling	6	Low	Has no clear career orientation
12.	P12	Male	Islamic Guidance and Counseling	8	High	Ready to enter the workforce
13.	P13	Female	Islamic Guidance and Counseling	6	Moderate	Currently exploring career pathways
14.	P14	Male	Islamic Guidance and Counseling	8	High	Has specific career goals
15.	P15	Female	Islamic Guidance and Counseling	6	Moderate	Has initial self-awareness of career

The study was conducted at Universitas Islam Ahmad Dahlan, specifically within the university's career services unit, which serves as the central hub for implementing Career Coaching 5.0. The selection of this site was based on academic, contextual, and strategic considerations aligned with the research objectives. The university's student population is representative of Generation Z characteristics in the era of disruption: students with high exposure to digital technology who nevertheless face challenges with career mapping, work readiness, and professional identity development. Geographically and structurally, the university is situated in a region experiencing growth in the industrial and service sectors, while facing issues of educated unemployment and skills mismatch. Thus, the site was selected not merely for accessibility but for its relevance in examining the applicability and effectiveness of a career guidance model in responding to local and national labor market demands. The case study is therefore expected to offer meaningful analytical contributions with potential conceptual transferability to other higher education institutions with similar characteristics.



Data were collected through three primary techniques to ensure methodological and source triangulation: in-depth interviews, observation, and document analysis. Semi-structured, in-depth interviews were conducted using an interview guide developed from the Career Coaching 5.0 framework and employability skills indicators. Each interview lasted approximately 45-90 minutes and was audio-recorded with participants' consent. The interviews focused on participants' experiences in the coaching process, changes in career perceptions and readiness, impacts on communication skills, problem-solving abilities, self-reflection and adaptability, as well as evaluations of digital approaches (e-coaching and online assessments). Observations were conducted during selected coaching sessions to examine coach-student interaction patterns, reflective processes, the use of digital technology, and student participation dynamics. Observational data were documented in structured field notes. In addition, several documents were analyzed, including coaching modules, evaluation reports, assessment instruments, and students' development records.

This study employed thematic analysis due to its flexibility, systematic structure, and capacity to identify, analyze, and report patterns (themes) within qualitative data in a rigorous manner (Clarke & Braun, 2017). The analysis was conducted using an inductive-deductive approach, integrating empirical findings with the conceptual framework of Career Coaching 5.0 and employability skills indicators. Systematically, the analysis proceeded through the following stages: 1) Data transcription: All interviews were audio-recorded (with consent) and transcribed verbatim to preserve the integrity of meaning. 2) Initial coding: The researcher read the transcripts thoroughly to gain an overall understanding of the data, followed by open coding to identify meaningful units related to personal approaches, digital technology integration, time constraints, and shifts in career mindset. 3) Searching for themes: Codes with conceptual similarities were grouped into broader categories. 4) Reviewing themes: Themes were reviewed at two levels: (a) ensuring that data extracts within each theme were internally coherent and consistent, and (b) ensuring that the overall thematic structure formed a coherent narrative aligned with the research focus. 5) Defining and naming themes: Each finalized theme was clearly named, conceptually defined, and bounded to avoid ambiguity. 6) Producing the report: The final stage involved constructing a systematic and argumentative narrative of the findings. This stage included not only descriptive reporting but also in-depth interpretation of meanings and implications.

The study adhered to ethical principles in social and educational research, namely respect for persons, beneficence, and justice. Ethical implementation included obtaining informed consent, ensuring confidentiality and data anonymity, guaranteeing participants' right to withdraw at any time, applying the principle of non-maleficence, maintaining transparency and academic integrity, and securing institutional approval prior to conducting the research. This study employed multiple researchers in the data coding process to enhance the rigor and reliability of the analysis. The primary researcher conducted open coding on all interview transcripts, while a second researcher independently coded approximately 30-40% of the data to ensure coding consistency. The coding results were then compared, and discrepancies were resolved through peer debriefing to reach a shared consensus.

To ensure credibility, member checking was conducted by involving selected participants to verify the accuracy of the interpretations. In addition, an audit trail was maintained to document the entire analytical process, and reflexivity was applied alongside regular peer discussions to minimize researcher bias. The combination of these



strategies strengthens the trustworthiness of the thematic analysis with respect to credibility, dependability, and confirmability.

Although this study makes a significant contribution to understanding the effectiveness of the Career Coaching 5.0 approach in enhancing students' employability skills, several limitations should be acknowledged. The use of a single case study design at Universitas Islam Ahmad Dahlan limits the generalizability of the findings to other institutional contexts. In addition, the reliance on in-depth interviews and participatory observation primarily focuses on students' subjective experiences, which may introduce bias. The relatively short research timeframe also limits the ability to capture the program's long-term impact on graduates' career development. Furthermore, the study emphasizes students' perspectives, while insights from other stakeholders such as coaches, lecturers, and industry partners remain underexplored. Despite these limitations, the study provides valuable contributions to the literature on innovative career guidance in higher education, particularly in integrating coaching approaches and digital technologies to enhance students' employability and career readiness in the era of disruption.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

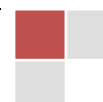
Results

Based on the analysis of data obtained from in-depth interviews, participatory observations, and document studies on the Career Coaching 5.0 program at Universitas Islam Ahmad Dahlan, four main themes were identified reflecting the effectiveness of this strategy in enhancing students' employability skills: (1) increased career self-awareness, (2) strengthening of core soft skills, (3) transformation of the coach's role into a reflective facilitator, and (4) integration of digital approaches in the coaching process.

Table 2.

Thematic of Career Coaching 5.0 Outcomes in Enhancing Students' Employability Skills

Theme	Subtheme	Codes	Evidence (Representative Quote)	Interpretation
Enhancement of Career Self-Awareness	Self-reflection on personal potential	self-awareness, personal values, career interests	"I began to understand my strengths and interests after participating in the career reflection session."	Coaching activities encourage reflective exploration of students' internal potential, which strengthens career awareness and personal identity in career planning.



	Career clarity and direction	career goals, career planning, decision confidence	“Now I have a clearer direction about the kind of career that suits my values and abilities.”	Career coaching facilitates structured goal setting, enabling students to formulate clearer and more realistic career plans.
	Career decision confidence	career adaptability, decision-making confidence	“I used to feel unsure about my future career path, but coaching helped me become more confident.”	Increased self-awareness supports career adaptability and enhances students’ confidence in making career decisions.
Strengthening Core Soft Skills	Interpersonal communication skills	communication ability, idea articulation, self-presentation	“The interview simulation helped me learn how to present my ideas and strengths confidently.”	Experiential coaching activities provide opportunities for students to practice and develop professional communication skills.
	Critical thinking and problem solving	analytical thinking, reflective discussion, problem solving	“We were trained to analyze real problems and discuss possible solutions during the coaching sessions.”	Dialogic learning processes stimulate analytical thinking and enhance students’ ability to respond to complex workplace challenges.
	Self-management and emotional regulation	emotional control, time management, resilience	“Through coaching I learned how to manage pressure	Coaching contributes to the development of



			and stay focused during recruitment simulations.”	personal resilience and emotional maturity necessary for workplace adaptation.
Coach as Reflective and Empowering Facilitator	Reflective facilitation	guided reflection, active listening, questioning techniques	“The coach didn’t give direct answers but asked questions that helped me think more deeply.”	The coach acts as a facilitator who stimulates students’ reflective thinking rather than providing direct instructions.
	Student empowerment	autonomy, self-directed planning, ownership	“I feel more responsible for designing my own career plan.”	Coaching empowers students to become active agents in shaping their own career development.
	Dialogic interaction	open dialogue, supportive feedback, collaborative learning	“The discussion sessions made me more open to sharing my career concerns.”	Interactive dialogue between coach and students fosters trust, engagement, and collaborative learning.
Integration of Technology in Coaching	E-coaching sessions	online coaching, video meeting, remote interaction	“We could conduct coaching sessions through video calls when face-to-face meetings were not possible.”	Digital platforms expand access to coaching services and enable flexible interaction between coaches and students.
	Digital career assessment	online assessment tools, AI career exploration	“The digital assessment helped me identify my interests and	Technology-based assessment tools enhance reflective



		strengths more clearly.”	learning and provide personalized career insights.
Digital progress monitoring	digital dashboard, progress tracking, feedback system	“The dashboard allowed me to monitor my skill development over time.”	Digital monitoring tools support continuous evaluation of employability skill development.



Figure 1. Career Coaching 5.0 Process

Enhancement of Career Self-Awareness

Enhancement of career self-awareness refers to the process through which students learn to understand their personal potential, career interests, long-term goals, and realistic career options. The Career Coaching 5.0 strategy emphasizes personal reflection as a central activity, encouraging students to evaluate their strengths, weaknesses, values, and preferences regarding their future careers. This aligns with findings indicating that reflective and exploratory career tools assist students in achieving career clarity and confidence in their career decisions (Sudjani & Putra, 2025).

The coaching approach provides students with space to explore their life experiences and connect them with the realities of the workplace and industry demands, thereby enhancing career clarity and enabling more deliberate career planning. Literature also indicates that the use of digital career exploration tools, such as AI-based



applications, can strengthen students' reflective experiences and foster higher engagement in setting career goals.

Most students reported that career coaching sessions helped them understand personal interests, values, and career objectives that had previously been unexplored. They expressed increased confidence and the ability to develop realistic and flexible career plans. As one participant stated:

"Previously, I was confused about whether to follow my passion or pursue a stable job. After participating in the coaching sessions, I gained a clearer understanding of what truly aligns with my personal character and life vision."

These findings are consistent with the concept of career adaptability, which emphasizes the importance of self-reflection and career awareness as the foundation for making informed career decisions (Savickas, 2019).

Strengthening Core Soft Skills

Career Coaching 5.0 demonstrably enhances students' non-technical skills, particularly in interpersonal communication, critical thinking, and emotional management. Observations indicate that students increasingly demonstrate the ability to articulate ideas effectively, develop personal portfolios, and perform self-pitching during simulated job interviews. These findings are consistent with Suarta's research, which highlights that developing soft skills is crucial to enhancing graduates' competitiveness (Suartha et al., 2017).

Soft skills encompass a range of competencies, including communication, teamwork, critical thinking, time management, and creativity, non-technical capabilities that have become essential prerequisites for achieving employability in the era of disruption. The analysis of the coaching program indicates that students experienced significant development in these competencies through structured simulation exercises, systematic feedback, and continuous reflective practices. This is supported by recent research emphasizing that soft skills play a central role in facilitating the transition from university to the workplace and often determine career success more than technical competencies alone.

This finding is further supported by recent studies highlighting that soft skills play a central role in facilitating the transition from higher education to the workplace, often serving as a determining factor in career success and potentially outweighing purely technical competencies. Moreover, the coaching program provides an experiential and dialogical learning environment, enabling students not only to understand the conceptual importance of soft skills but also to practice and internalize them directly in situations that closely resemble professional contexts.

The Coach's Role as a Reflective and Empowering Facilitator

One of the key strengths of Career Coaching 5.0 lies in the transformation of the coach's role from merely providing information to acting as a facilitator who encourages reflective processes and student empowerment. Within this model, the coach serves as a guide who helps students articulate their ideas, set meaningful goals, and evaluate career plans based on both personal realities and external conditions.

Unlike academic lecturers, who are typically instructional, coaches in this program place greater emphasis on reflective and empowering processes for students. Students are trained to evaluate their personal strengths and weaknesses, set goals, and



develop concrete action plans. This approach reflects the principles of humanistic coaching as articulated by Whitmore, in which the coach does not provide direct solutions but instead facilitates the discovery of potential and solutions from within the client (coachee) (Whitmore, 1996). This role contrasts with traditional, more directive career guidance approaches, as coaching positions students effectively as active participants in the learning process, with the coach facilitating the exploration of answers from within the students themselves.

Furthermore, the facilitator role aligns with global trends in career guidance and learning services, which increasingly incorporate digital technologies to enrich interactions. Such integration reduces reliance on purely face-to-face meetings while enabling hybrid support systems and more personalized engagement through digital platforms.

Integration of Technology in the Coaching Process

Career Coaching 5.0 is not limited to face-to-face interactions; it also integrates digital technology at every stage of the coaching process. This includes the use of digital platforms for self-assessment, progress tracking, and remote coaching sessions (e-coaching), as well as interactive media to simulate real-world work situations (Sudjani & Putra, 2025). Digital transformation in university career services has increasingly been recognized as a best practice, as it enhances accessibility, service personalization, and student engagement. Systematic literature on digital-oriented career guidance indicates that technologies such as cloud-based platforms, hybrid support systems, and Artificial Intelligence can significantly improve service effectiveness by accommodating the diverse and flexible needs of students.

Furthermore, digital integration expands the reach of career services and enables coaching activities to become more responsive to the learning patterns of contemporary students, who are highly familiar with digital technologies. This approach ensures that the development of employability skills can be monitored and evaluated more systematically while remaining aligned with the evolving dynamics of the labor market.

The Career Coaching 5.0 program also utilizes a variety of digital tools, including e-coaching platforms, online career assessment applications, and coaching sessions conducted via video conferencing. These technologies allow greater flexibility in time and location while broadening students' access to coaching services. In addition, the use of digital dashboards to monitor the development of employability skills has proven effective in helping students independently track their progress. Such practices support the concept of technology-based coaching and blended support, as recommended in the career development literature associated with James & Sampson (Aunguroch et al., 2022).



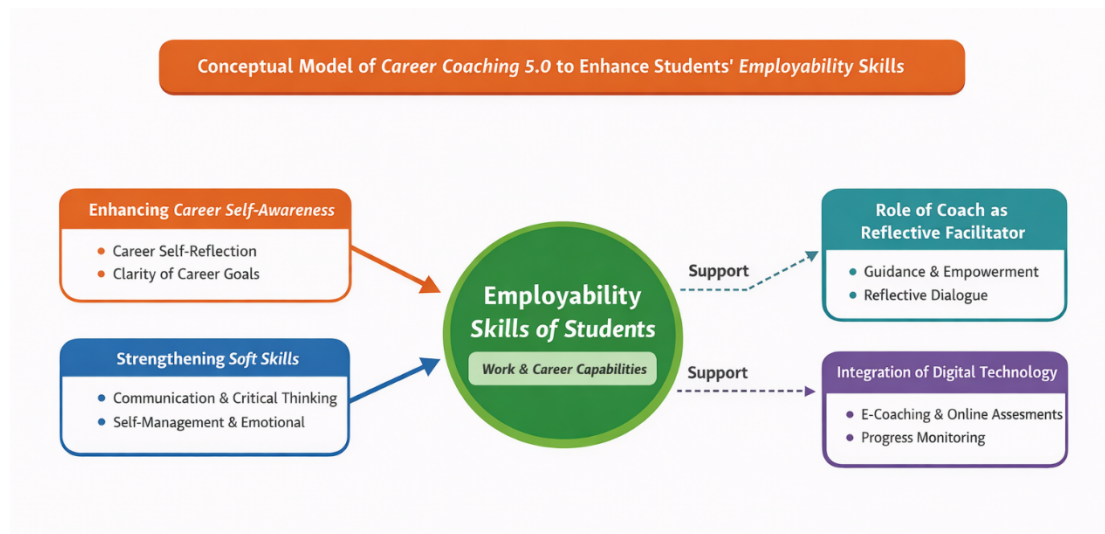


Figure 2. Conceptual Model of Career Coaching 5.0 to Enhance Students Employability Skills

The model highlights the interaction between career self-awareness, soft skills development, reflective coaching practices, and digital technology integration in supporting students' employability

Discussion

The findings of this study indicate that the Career Coaching 5.0 approach has a significant impact on students' employability skills, particularly in career self-awareness, soft-skill strengthening, and adaptive readiness to navigate the evolving challenges of the contemporary labor market. These results further reinforce the coaching-based approach as a relevant and innovative alternative for reformulating career guidance services in the era of disruption.

The Relevance of Career Coaching 5.0 in the Disruption Era

The findings of this study indicate that Career Coaching 5.0 effectively enhances students' career self-awareness through processes of personal reflection and exploration of self-potential. Students not only gain information about the world of work but also develop a deeper understanding of their personal values, career interests, and directions for self-development. These findings are consistent with the concept of life design career counseling proposed by Savickas (2019), which emphasizes that career development is a process of meaning-making constructed through reflection on individuals' life experiences and personal narratives.

Recent international studies further support these findings. For instance, research by Hirschi (Haenggli & Hirschi, 2023) highlights that career adaptability and self-awareness are significantly strengthened through guided reflective interventions that encourage individuals to actively construct their career paths. Similarly, Lent and Brown (Lent, 2020) emphasize that career self-regulation and identity formation are closely linked to reflective learning processes and environmental supports, such as coaching. In addition, Akkermans et al (2013) demonstrate that career competencies, including reflective capacity, networking, and self-profiling, are critical predictors of employability in dynamic labor markets.



However, the results of this study extend this perspective by demonstrating that reflective processes become more effective when facilitated through a dialogical, student-centered coaching approach. In this context, reflection does not occur solely at the individual level but is guided through interactions with a coach who encourages students to critically and systematically evaluate their experiences. This finding aligns with recent studies showing that reflection-based career guidance interventions significantly improve career self-awareness and clarity of career goals among Generation Z students, particularly when reflection is facilitated through guided dialogue and structured career exploration activities.

Several empirical studies also highlight that Generation Z students tend to respond more positively to learning approaches that are reflective and personalized. Research has Körner et al (2021) found that reflective career interventions, such as reflection journals, coaching discussions, and personal value exploration, significantly enhance students' career self-awareness and career adaptability. Similarly, research by Hooley and Dodd (Rice et al., 2022) demonstrates that career guidance approaches that emphasize reflection on personal experiences and the construction of career identity can help students more meaningfully connect their academic experiences to career aspirations.

Furthermore, recent work Jackson & Tomlinson (2022) suggests that Generation Z students often experience career uncertainty due to the rapidly evolving dynamics of the labor market. Under such conditions, structured reflective interventions can help students develop a clearer understanding of their career identities, thereby increasing their confidence in making career decisions. The findings of the present study reinforce this argument by showing that coaching sessions facilitating self-reflection help students clarify their career interests and formulate more realistic and flexible career plans.

Within the broader context of workplace transformation driven by automation, digitalization, and globalization, expectations of university graduates extend beyond technical competencies to include psychological and social adaptability. This observation is consistent with the findings of Stefán (2024), who emphasizes that career success in the era of disruption is largely determined by individuals' ability to adapt, engage in lifelong learning, and manage change effectively. In this regard, Career Coaching 5.0 can be understood as a relevant approach for bridging the gap between students' academic competencies and the real demands of the contemporary labor market.

Overall, the findings of this study not only confirm the theoretical framework of life design career counseling but also strengthen empirical evidence that reflection-based career interventions constitute an effective strategy for enhancing career self-awareness among Generation Z students. Within the context of Career Coaching 5.0, this reflective process is further reinforced through dialogical coaching interactions and the support of digital technologies, enabling students to engage in deeper and more sustained career exploration.

Transformation of the Coach's Role and Student Autonomy

The findings of this study indicate that within the Career Coaching 5.0 model, the role of the coach has transformed from merely delivering career information to serving as a reflective facilitator who encourages students to explore their potential and independently design their career plans. This approach aligns with the concept of humanistic coaching proposed by Whitmore (1996), which emphasizes that the primary role of a coach is not to provide direct solutions but to facilitate individuals in discovering solutions within themselves through reflective processes and empowering questions. This



perspective is further reinforced by Cox et al (2023) those who argue that modern coaching positions the facilitator as a dialogical partner who helps individuals enhance self-awareness, personal responsibility, and decision-making capacity.

This finding is further supported by prior research, Grant (2017) which argues that coaching interventions significantly enhance goal attainment, self-efficacy, and psychological well-being when individuals are actively engaged in reflective processes. Furthermore, Clutterbuck (Garvey et al., 2010) emphasizes that effective coaching promotes self-directed learning and long-term personal development through facilitative dialogue rather than directive instruction.

Nevertheless, implementing the reflective facilitator role in Indonesian higher education is not without structural and cultural challenges. One major challenge lies in the persistence of teacher-centered learning paradigms, where lecturers or academic advisors are typically positioned as the primary sources of knowledge. In such environments, students are often accustomed to receiving direct instructions rather than being encouraged to explore solutions independently. This condition may pose a barrier to implementing coaching approaches that require active student participation and deep self-reflection.

Another important challenge relates to the limited coaching competencies among academic staff. Most university lecturers possess strong pedagogical or disciplinary expertise but may not necessarily have received specialized training in professional coaching practices. According to contemporary coaching literature, the effectiveness of the coaching process is strongly influenced by the coach's ability to employ reflective questioning, active listening, and supportive, dialogical engagement with the coachee (Cox et al., 2023). Without mastery of these competencies, coaching interactions risk reverting to conventional, directive forms of guidance.

Additional challenges are associated with institutional structures and systemic support. In many universities in Indonesia, career guidance services are often positioned as supplementary support services rather than being fully integrated into the curriculum or broader student development strategies. As a result, the implementation of coaching programs frequently depends on the initiatives of individual lecturers or specific institutional units, which may limit the sustainability and institutionalization of such programs.

Despite these challenges, the findings of this study demonstrate that when the reflective facilitator role is effectively implemented, students show notable improvements in self-awareness, autonomy, and career readiness. This suggests that although various implementation barriers exist, the coaching approach still holds significant potential to enhance the quality of career guidance services within Indonesian higher education institutions.

Therefore, higher education institutions need to strengthen human resource capacity through professional coaching training, integrate career services into the curriculum, and cultivate a more reflective and participatory learning culture. With adequate institutional support, the transformation of the coach's role as a reflective facilitator will not only improve the effectiveness of career guidance services but also contribute to the development of graduates who are more autonomous, adaptable, and prepared to navigate the evolving dynamics of the labor market



Technology Integration as an Effectiveness Enhancer

The findings of this study indicate that integrating digital technologies is a key component of implementing Career Coaching 5.0, particularly through online platforms, digital career assessment applications, and virtual e-coaching sessions. At the initial stage, the use of such technologies has been shown to enhance access to career guidance services, enabling students to participate in coaching sessions without spatial or temporal constraints. This observation aligns with the work of Patton & McMahon (2014), who argue that integrating information technology into career guidance services enables more flexible, inclusive, and scalable service delivery.

However, the role of technology in Career Coaching 5.0 extends beyond improving accessibility; it also helps transform the quality of interaction within the coaching process itself. For example, the use of online career assessment platforms enables students to receive faster, more personalized feedback on their interests, values, and career potential. Some systems powered by Artificial Intelligence can analyze users' career preference patterns and recommend relevant career development pathways. Such technological capabilities strengthen students' self-reflection, as the insights generated by these tools can be discussed and explored directly in subsequent coaching sessions.

In addition, the practice of e-coaching through video conferencing platforms or digital coaching applications has reshaped the dynamics of interaction between coaches and students. In some cases, students report feeling more comfortable expressing their career-related thoughts and concerns in an online environment perceived as more flexible and less formal. Recent studies on digital career guidance suggest that technology-supported coaching interactions can increase the frequency of self-reflection, participant engagement, and continuity of the coaching process, since communication is no longer limited to scheduled face-to-face meetings (Hooley, 2022).

Despite these advantages, the integration of technology in coaching services also raises several ethical and practical challenges that must be carefully addressed. One critical issue concerns the protection of personal data and the confidentiality of students' career information. Digital assessment platforms and AI-based applications often collect sensitive personal data, such as career preferences, personal values, and individual experience histories. Consequently, higher education institutions must ensure that the use of such technologies adheres to appropriate ethical standards and data security protocols in order to prevent potential misuse of information.

Another challenge relates to the potential reduction in the depth of interpersonal relationships within the coaching process. Although digital technologies facilitate remote communication, virtual interaction cannot always fully replicate the quality of reflective relationships developed through face-to-face engagement. In coaching practice, the coaching relationship, characterized by trust and psychological safety, is a crucial factor influencing the effectiveness of reflection and personal empowerment. For this reason, several studies recommend a blended coaching approach, combining direct face-to-face interaction with digital support to balance technological efficiency with the quality of interpersonal engagement (Hooley, 2022).

Furthermore, digital literacy gaps may pose barriers to implementing technology-based coaching in higher education institutions. Not all students or academic staff possess the same level of digital competence in utilizing coaching platforms or technology-based assessment tools. Therefore, the successful integration of technology within Career Coaching 5.0 largely depends on the institution's readiness to provide adequate training,



robust digital infrastructure, and supportive policies that encourage innovation in technology-based career services.

Considering these opportunities and challenges, digital technology in Career Coaching 5.0 should not be viewed merely as an administrative support tool but as a transformational element that reshapes how students reflect on their career identities, interact with coaches, and design their professional futures in a more adaptive manner in the digital era.

Implications for Higher Education Career Guidance Services

The findings of this study provide strategic implications for the development of career guidance services in higher education institutions. Career Coaching 5.0 offers a service model that is more adaptive to the characteristics of Generation Z students, who generally prefer services that are fast, personalized, and integrated with digital technologies. This observation is consistent with the perspective of Turner (2015b), who argues that contemporary university students require more flexible, experiential career guidance approaches.

Furthermore, the study demonstrates that integrating coaching approaches into career services can strengthen the synergy between students' academic development and professional competency development. Through this approach, higher education institutions are not only positioned as providers of academic instruction but also as facilitators of sustainable career development for their students.

Moreover, when implemented systematically, Career Coaching 5.0 has the potential to become an integral component of higher education systems. This perspective aligns with the concept of employability development proposed by Mantz Yorke (Knight & Yorke, 2003), which emphasizes that graduates' work readiness is determined not solely by academic curricula but also by learning experiences that promote self-reflection, social competence, and preparedness for the professional environment. Therefore, Career Coaching 5.0 can be viewed as a strategic innovation in career guidance services that not only enhances students' employability but also contributes to the broader goal of improving the quality of human resources and graduates' competitiveness in the global labor market.

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CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that the Career Coaching 5.0 approach is effective in enhancing students' employability skills in the era of disruption. The findings highlight four key themes: increased career self-awareness, strengthening core soft skills, transformation of the coach's role as a reflective facilitator, and integration of digital



technologies into the coaching process. This approach fosters students' career awareness, adaptability, and soft skills through a structured, reflective, and technology-based process, while shifting career guidance from a one-directional model toward a more participatory, personalized, and empowering framework.

Theoretically, this study contributes by positioning Career Coaching 5.0 as an integrative framework that combines humanistic coaching, soft-skills development, and digital technology in higher education, particularly in the Indonesian context. In practice, the findings suggest the need for universities to strengthen career services by providing coaching training for educators, integrating digital platforms for assessment and progress tracking, and incorporating coaching into the curriculum. Future research is recommended to conduct comparative studies across institutions, longitudinal analyses of long-term career outcomes, and quantitative or mixed-method approaches to further validate and expand the model's effectiveness.

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