

The Effect of Soft Skills to Student's Work Readiness Through Learning Achievements and on the Job Training as Intervening Variable (Empirical Studies on Accounting Major of Vocational High School Students in Tegal Regency)

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to examine whether Soft Skill influences or not on Work Readiness both directly and indirectly. As in this study, Learning Achievement and On The Job Training as Intervening Variables. A total of 131 students were taken as samples by using Stratified random sampling. The statistical method used to test intervening variables uses the Path Test. The results showed that soft skills affect work readiness. And soft skills affect work readiness through learning achievement and On The Job Training as an intervening variable. Soft skills indirectly have a greater effect than directly on work readiness.

INTRODUCTION

Vocational High School (SMK) is substantially one of the vocational education institutions that is held to prepare middle-class workforce candidates in entering the work world and developing professional attitudes. Republic of Indonesia Government Regulation No. 17 of 2010 article 76 concerning Management and Implementation of Education states that the purpose of vocational secondary education is to equip students with the knowledge of science and technology, as well as the vocational skills of the professions in accordance with the needs of the community. Therefore, SMKs are required to be able to produce graduates with standard competencies expected by the world of work. The needed workforce is human resources who have competencies in accordance with their field of work, have adaptability, and high competitiveness, with the possessed skills, this will increase work readiness (Caballero, 2010).

In accordance with the SMK's objectives, SMK students are prepared to be able to work after they complete their education. Work ready is very important for students. Work ready for students is obtained through training and guidance during their education at SMK. This is in accordance with the SMK curriculum (2008) guidelines on counseling guidance, that schools also provide guidance in job preference. Therefore, during the education period, students' knowledge, skills, attitudes, and behavior in the world of work need to be prepared.

Student's work Readiness is influenced by internal and external factors. Internal factors include interest, motivation, talent, creativity, learning achievement, intelligence abilities, skills, perceptions, knowledge about the world of work, and work experience. While external factors include the family environment, social status and educational environment. Both of these factors contribute greatly to student readiness. Student achievement is essentially a reflection of learning efforts. According to Mustamin and Sulasteri, (2013) in general, the better the learning efforts, the better the achievements. Obviously this is inseparable from the influencing factors, such as, interest, motivation, parental education level, parental income level, and so forth.

Student learning achievement can be a factor that influences student's work readiness. Learning achievement in academics is everything that can be achieved by individuals in the academic field. One of the goals of the teaching and learning process is a change in behavior in both knowledge (cognitive), attitude (affective), and psychomotor aspects. Change in the cognitive aspects of students can be seen from the student's report card grades. Report card grades serve as benchmarks for student academic mastery. The better the student's academic mastery, the better the achievement obtained. The importance of understanding learning achievement for future career development is a basic consideration in deciding career. In theory, the achievements of students are a reflection of skills in a particular field. According to Mustamin and Sulasteri, (2013), students who have skills and expertise in a particular field will have readiness to enter the work world after graduating from SMK.

Work experience is also an important aspect of personality. Work experience directly influences student behavior in understanding and applying knowledge. Students who have good work experience will greatly influence the behavior and attitudes of students in preparing themselves to enter the real work world. Industrial work internship provide direct work experience for SMK students. By implementing industrial work internship, students can find out and obtain the skills needed by the world of work. Thus, students will be better prepared to enter the work world.

From observations and interviews with the Head of the Vocational High School Internship Committee at one of the Tegal Vocational High Schools, Mr. Abdulatip, S.Pd, Ek, various problems occur in the implementation of Vocational High Schools industrial work internship. Towards the implementation of industrial work internship, many students felt they were not ready to carry out industrial work internship. Students feel afraid when someday when they do the internship they cannot do the work given by DU/DI. Students prefer intership in common industry. The timing of the implementation of industrial work internship is also far from optimal. The implementation of industrial work internship is only 2 months. In addition, the monitoring by supervising teacher in

evaluating student practice during the internship is not optimal. Supervising teachers only check their students once a month. The teacher does not know in detail what students do during the internship. It opens the possibility if there are students who do work not in their area of expertise and there are students who do not do work in the practice place or even do not come to the place of practice during the period of industrial work internship. The grades given by the supervisor in the industrial venue is just to provide grades to pass the passing grade for industrial work internship. It is possible that the grades may not represent the true grades based on the results of work done by students in the industry.

Some of the teachers' responses regarding the results of industrial work internship is that, students who really carry out industrial work internship can be seen by an improvement in discipline, work mentality, work ethic, work attitude and skills and new knowledge. Knowledge and skills gained during internship can improve student learning achievement in supporting education in schools.

For a vocational student who is ready to enter the work world, On the Job Training and student achievement are important factors in entering the work world. Because the theoretical and practical knowledge provided in schools and practical experience in the world of work through industrial work internship learning are the basic principal of students to be work ready. Moreover, a SMK graduate is educated so that graduates are "ready to use" in entering the work world.

However, viewed from the Central Bureau of Statistics (2016) concerning open Unemployment Rate (TPT) of the population aged 15 years and over by highest level of education in the year 2014-2016, it can be seen that the percentage of unemployed SMK graduates on February 2014 through February 2016, namely:

1. February 2014 was at 5.71%,
2. February 2015 was at 7.22% and
3. February 2016 was at 7.69%.

These data suggest that the the numbers of unemployment levels of SMK in Indonesia increase from year to year. It means that more and more SMK graduates are not absorbed in the work world.

This phenomenon shows that SMKs have not met the work world expectations. The high unemployment rate of SMK graduates shows that the quality of education in SMK is less relevant to the demands of DU / DI. On the other hand, the SMK graduates state of unemployment is due to most SMK graduates in Indonesia are not only less able to adapt to the development of science and technology but also less able to develop themselves and their careers (Depdiknas, 2004). Melisa (2013) stated that the symptoms of this gap are caused by various things, including vocational education which is fully organized by schools, less able to adjust to changes and developments in the world of work, thus students' readiness becomes less. Work readiness is the overall condition of the individual which includes physical, mental, and experience maturity, as well as the willingness and ability to carry out a job or activity (Sulistiyarini, 2012). Work readiness is very important to be possessed by a SMK student, because SMK students are the hope of the community for graduates who have competencies according to their expertise.

Sailah (2008) explains that the fulfillment of soft skills needs of SMK graduates is an important part of the world of education, in order to overcome the gap between the skills possessed by graduates and the increasingly complex needs of the work world. In addition to vocational skills, students do not yet fully possess a series of competencies to enter the work world, due to various demands of the business and industry sectors for increasingly diverse skills. Workers are not only required in vocational skills alone, but interpersonal and intrapersonal skills also become an important part in the workers selections in the company.

The relevance demand between the world of education and the world of work in the broadest sense implies the need to master a number of competencies that can be demonstrated at work. Vocational education is education that prepares graduates to master knowledge and competencies according to their fields. SMK graduates are not enough to only master hard skills, but also required to master soft skills to support hard skills in order to work more productively and with quality.

Purwanto (2008) suggested that the ability of soft skills is needed in the industrial world and is crucial in order to be accepted in the world of work. These abilities include leadership, creativity, managerial. Thus SMK graduates must master soft skills due to work requirements and work challenges.

METHOD

This research uses quantitative research type, namely the type of research that emphasizes theories testing through the research variables measurement with numbers and requires statistical procedures data analysis. This research measuring instrument is in the form of a questionnaire, the data obtained is in the form of answers from students to the questions asked. Based on the research objectives, this type of research is explanatory. Explanatory research is to test among hypothesized variables. This research has a hypothesis that will be tested. This hypothesis describes the relationship between two variables, to find out whether or not a variable is associated with another variable, or whether the variable is caused or influenced by other variables. This study uses a path analysis model (path analysis) because between soft skill variables, and learning achievement with work readiness there is a influencing mediation that is on the job training.

The population of this research is the third year students of Accounting major of SMK in Tegal Regency, totaling 1343 students spread in 31 SMK of Accounting major in Tegal Regency. Then in calculating the number of samples, Slovin Umar's formula used is as follows:

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N \cdot e^2}$$

From this study there were 131 respondents. The variables of this study consisted of variables of learning achievement through internships, work competencies and self-efficacy towards work readiness. The data collection method uses documents, or questionnaires. The validity and reliability tests of the questions is conducted in order to get valid and reliable questions to be used in research. This study uses descriptive analysis and inferential analysis which consists of the Classical Assumption Test, Path Analysis Test and Hypothesis Test with the help of SPSS 23 for Windows.

RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

Based on the conducted research, the data obtained as shown in Table 1, can be stated that the respondents who were students of SMK who are the Accounting major in the Tegal regency consisting of 131 respondents consisting of 100 respondents (77%) are female and 31 people (23%) male. This indicates that the majority of the respondents in this study were female.

Path analysis is a further part of regression analysis. Regression analysis is usually used to test whether there is a direct influence given by the independent variable on the dependent variable. While path analysis not only tests the direct effect, but also explains the indirect effect given by the independent variable through intervening variables on the dependent variable.

Path Analysis Test Results

Coefficients Model I Results

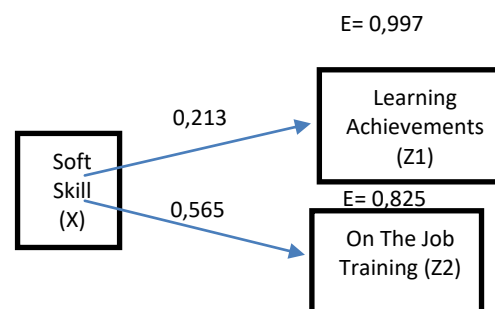


Figure 1. Standardized Coefficients Model I,

Calculation Based On Of The Path Coefficient Model I

Referring to the Regression I output in the "Coefficients" table, it can be seen that the significance value of the variable X = 0.015 is smaller than 0.05. These results provide the conclusion that Regression Model I, namely the variable X (Soft Skill) has a significant effect on Z1 (Learning Achievement).

The amount of R Square in the "Model Summary" table is 0.045, this shows that the contribution of the influence of X to Z1 is 4.5% while the remaining 95.5% is the contribution of other variables not included in the study. Meanwhile, the value of e1 can be found using the formula $e1 = \sqrt{1 - 0.045} = 0.977$.

Referring to the Regression I output in the "Coefficients" table, it can be seen that the significance value of the variable X = 0,000 is

smaller than 0.05. These results provide the conclusion that Regression Model I, namely the variable X (Soft Skill) has a significant effect on Z2 (On The Job Training).

R Square value indicates the feasibility of the model that is equal to 0.319, this shows that the feasibility of the model in this study is on 31.9% or work readiness can be explained by soft skills, learning achievement, on the job training by 31.9%, while the remaining 68, 1% is a contribution from other variables not included in the study. Meanwhile, the value of $e2 = \sqrt{1-0.319} = 0.825$

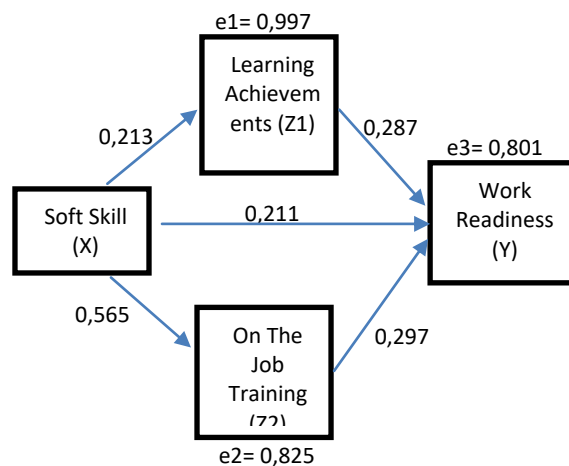


Figure 2. Standardized Coefficients Model II,

Table 1. Magnitude of Direct and Indirect Effects

Substruktur	Variables	Path	Effect Magnitude		Gloss
			Direct	Indirect	
1	X ke Z1	-	0,213	-	L
	X ke Z2	-	0,565	-	L
	Z1 ke Y	-	0,287	-	L
	Z2 ke Y	-	0,297	-	L
2	X ke Y	X - Z1 - Y	0,211	0,272	TD > L
	X ke Y	X - Z2 - Y	0,211	0,378	TD > L
Gloss =			L : Direct		TD : Indirect

The direct effect of soft skills on work readiness is known to be 0.211. This study is in line with Lisdiantini's research (2019) which states that soft skills have a significant influence on work readiness. The effect is positive which means that the higher the soft skill possessed, the higher the level of readiness. While the indirect effect of Soft Skill through Learning Achievement on Work Readiness is the multiplication between the beta value of soft skills on learning achievement and learning achievement on work readiness, that is $0.213 \times 0.287 = 0.061$. Then the total effect of soft

Calculation Based On Of The Path Coefficient Of Model II

Referring to Regression II output in the "Coefficients" table, it can be seen that the significance values of the three variables are $X = 0.001$, $Z1 = 0.004$, and $Z2 = 0.001$. Variable X, Variables Z1 and Z2 are smaller than 0.05. This conclude that the variable X (Soft Skill), Variable Z1 (Learning Achievement) and Variable Z2 (On The Job Training) significantly influence Variable Y (Work Readiness).

Students need to prepare themselves before entering the work world with attending on job training and improving their learning achievement with the support of good soft skills, which supports Emi's research, (2012) which states that work readiness is supported by training and decent learning achievement.

The amount of R Square in the "Model Summary" table is 0.358, this shows that the contribution of Variables X, Z1 and Z2 to Y Variables is 35.8% while the remaining 64.2% is the contribution of other not researched variables. While $e3$ values can be found using the formula $e3 = \sqrt{1-0,358} = 0.801$.

skills (X) on work readiness (Y) is the direct effect plus the indirect effect of $0.211 + 0.061 = 0.272$. Based on the calculation above, it is known that the value of direct influence is 0.211 and the indirect effect is 0.272, which means that the indirect effect value is greater than the direct effect value.

From Table 1. it is known that the direct effect given by Soft Skill on Work Readiness is 0.211. While the indirect effect of Soft Skill through On The Job Training on Work Readiness is the multiplication between the value of soft skill

beta on On The Job Training and On The Job Training on work readiness, $0.565 \times 0.297 = 0.167$. Then the total effect given by X on Y is the direct effect plus the indirect effect of $0.211 + 0.167 = 0.378$. Based on the calculation above, it is known that the value of direct effect is 0.211 and the indirect effect is 0.378, which means that the indirect effect value is greater than the direct effect value.

The results of this study are supported by the opinion stated by Afriani (2015: 454), "A person's success in work is not only determined by hard skills, but also determined by soft skills that determine a person can be well received in his work environment or not". Students need to have good attitude control, ethics, and communication skills in order to be accepted in their social environment. So that if students have good mastery of soft skills, it can improve student work readiness. The results of this study are also supported by research conducted by Yulianti (2015: 401) stating that the ability of soft skills has a positive effect on student work readiness. The results of research also conducted by Maspuatin (2017: 10) show that there is a positive and significant influence between mastery of soft skills and job readiness.

The results of data analysis in this study also showed that the Learning Achievement Variable and On The Job Training as Intervening Variables can make effective contributions to strengthen the effect of soft skills on work readiness.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the study it can be concluded that soft skills affect work readiness through learning achievement and on the job training as an intervening variable (Empirical Study of Accounting major students at SMK Tegal Regency). Therefore, the suggestions given are: (1) the DU / DI provides work types that are in accordance with students' competency expertise, (2) the Vice Principal in the Public Relations department should strengthen the Internship program, (3) the counselor teacher should play an active role in motivating students in entering the world of work, (4) Subject teachers can optimize soft skill -based learning to students

in teaching and learning processes that are suited to the curriculum. (5) For further researchers should pay attention to other variables that can affect Work Readiness, because indirectly for Learning Achievement Variables in mediating between Soft Skills and Work Readiness is only 27.2%, while the On the job training variable in mediating the Effect of Soft Skills on Work Readiness is only 37.8%, so that the remaining 35% are other variables that can affect student work readiness.

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