

Development of Employability Skills of Vocational School Students in Bogor, Indonesia

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Abstract

Career development is one of the important things that need to be done at every level of education so that students gain career maturity. One of the components in developing career maturity is Employability skills. Employability skills are a set of skills that are important for individuals to have to survive in a job. Vocational Schools in Indonesia, commonly called SMK, aim to graduate individuals ready to work. Therefore, SMK graduate needs to master employability skills. This study aimed to determine the effect of the employability skills program on vocational school students. The research was conducted at a state vocational school at Bogor with a weak experimental method and involved six students as samples. The research results indicate that the employability skills program can improve the employability skills of vocational students. This research implies that employability skills training can be applied in schools to help students master employability skills.

Keywords: Career development, Employability skills, Vocational School.

INTRODUCTION

Planning for career development is one of the activities that must be carried out in individualized planning services. Career development planning aims to help learners to master competencies that can be used to deal with situations or issues surrounding learners' career development (Gysbers & Henderson, 2006). Career development planning should be done at every level of education because every period of life or every age range has career development characteristics (Sharf, 1992). One of these levels of education is vocational secondary education or SMK. SMK is one form of formal education unit that organizes vocational education at the secondary education level that prepares students primarily to work in certain fields. However, this vocational education is not without problems; the results of research conducted by Prasetyo, Herlambang, and Wijoyo (2020) show that the employability skills of SMK graduates still need to meet the expectations of the industrial world. The Director General of Vocational Education at the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research and Technology, Wikan Sakarinto, also stated that the reason why vocational school graduates contribute to the highest number of unemployed

people in Indonesia is because soft skills are not given enough attention in learning (Sakarinto, 2022). Employability skills are abilities that must be possessed by someone who will enter and is currently in the world of work (Kwok, 2003). The Conference Board of Canada (2000) suggests three main skill elements in employability skills, namely (1) Fundamentals Skills, which include: communication skills, information management skills, and problem solving skills; (2) Personal Management Skills, which include skills in positive attitude and behavior, responsibility skills, adaptability skills, continuous learning skills, and safe working skills; (3) Teamwork Skills, which include skills in working with others in a team and skills in participating in a project or task.

METHOD

The research was conducted at a state vocational school in Bogor, Indonesia, with a sample of 6 (six) class XII students with low employability skills based on measurements using the employability skills instrument. The research was conducted with a weak experimental method. The weak experimental design used is an uninterpretable nonequivalent group design. This design will compare pretest and posttest results in the same group without involving a control group. The measurement in this study was carried out using the Employability skills inventory developed by Hidayat and Prabowo (2017). This instrument has a reliability coefficient of 0.760, which means that this instrument is suitable for use. The data analysis technique used in testing the hypothesis in this study is the Wilcoxon Match Pairs Test to compare the pretest and posttest results.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Employability skills consist of several skill components that need to be mastered by vocational graduates to be proficient in working. The skill components trained to students in this study can be seen at Table 1.

Table 1. List of Employability skills

No	Competence/ Chapter	Activities	Times
1	Communications	a) Effective speaking skills b) Idea presentation skills	3 lesson hours (180 Minutes)
2	Thinking and Solving Problem	a) Problem Management 1	2 lesson hours (120 Minutes)
3	Demonstrate positive attitude and behaviors	a) The skills to build a good self-image in the work environment	2 lesson hours (120 Minutes)
4	Work with others	a) <i>Team work</i>	3 lesson hours

No	Competence/ Chapter	Activities	Times
			(180 Minutes)

Based on the results of the pretest and posttest that have been carried out in the group given employability skills training, there are changes in the participants' achievement scores before and after the intervention. The results of the respondents' achievements can be seen in the Table 2.

Table 2. Result of Research Data

No.	Name	Pre-Intervention	Categories	After Intervention	Categories	Gain Score
1	DAS	25	Low	36	Medium	11
2	AP	30	Medium	40	High	10
3	NDS	26	Low	38	High	12
4	TN	23	Low	35	Meidum	12
5	RF	28	Low	41	High	13
6	AM	27	Low	40	High	13
Mean		26.5		38.33		11.83

Based on the Table 2, the employability skills achievement scores of all research respondents experienced a significant increase. There were 3 respondents who moved from the low category to the high category, 2 respondents changed from the medium to high category and 1 respondent from the medium to the high category. The following figure 1 shows the movement of employability skills achievement scores of research respondents:

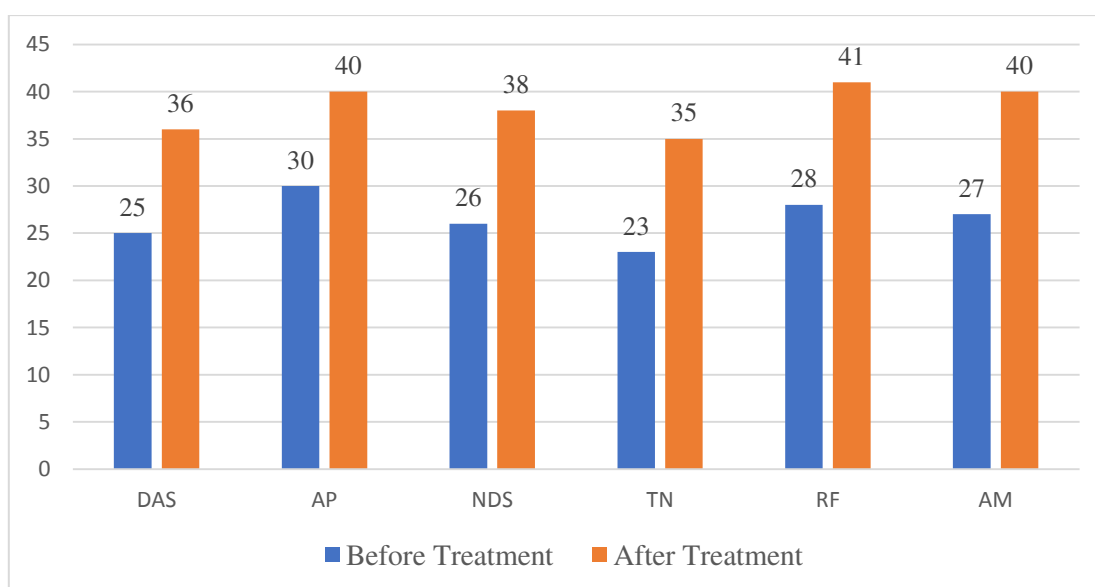


Figure 1. Result of Research Data

To emphasize that there is a difference between the employability skills of the respondents before and after the implementation of the program, the pretest and posttest scores achieved by the students are also tested using statistical test techniques. The test has been conducted using the Wilcoxon match pairs test technique. Wilcoxon match pairs test is commonly used to compare two paired samples if the data form is ordinal. The statistical test is available in Table 3 and Table 4.

Table 3. Rank Wilcoxon Match Pair Test Results

		N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks
posttest - pretest	Negative Ranks	0 ^a	.00	.00
	Positive Ranks	6 ^b	3.50	21.00
	Ties	0 ^c		
	Total	6		

a. posttest < pretest

b. posttest > pretest

c. posttest = pretest

Table 4. Statistical Test Results

	posttest - pretest
Z	-2.214 ^a
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.027

a. Based on negative ranks.

b. Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test

Based on the statistical test results above, there were six positive changes after the intervention was carried out. This indicates that the respondents' employability skills score increased after the intervention. This is indicated by the posttest score, which is greater than the pretest score. The statistical test results in table 4 also show that the significance value obtained from this comparative test is 0.027, below the significance threshold α 0.05. This value indicates a significant change in the respondents' employability skills before and after the treatment. Therefore, it can be concluded that the employability skills improvement program improves vocational students' employability skills.

The series of tests above show that employability skills is a skill teacher can train in schools (especially vocational schools) to help students improve their work skills. Mastery of

employability skills in students will certainly help them in working, surviving in work and getting a better career than individuals who do not master employability skills (Shyamalee, Wickramasinghe, & Dissanayake, 2013; Adi & Ni'am, 2013; Omar, Bakar, & Rashid, 2012; Yusoff, Omar, Zaharim, Mohamed, & Muhamad, 2012; Zaharim, et al., 2010). The results of other studies also show that employability skills can determine a person's success in carrying out their work (Burgaz, 2008; Kwok, 2003). An institution must train employability skills because these skills can help the job performance of school graduates and young people. Without these skills, school graduates can be said to be handicapped in job competition (Omar, Bakar, & Rashid, 2012). This research shows that vocational students can acquire employability skills by being trained in small groups and separate from the learning curriculum (Stand-alone model).

CONCLUSION

One form of career advancement that needs to be possessed by vocational students is mastering various skills or work skills commonly called Employability skills. Based on this study, the employability skills of vocational students are scientifically proven to increase after the training, and this indicates that the training conducted by teachers at school can help students acquire employability skills that can help them in their career life or the world of work after they graduate from school. By mastering employability skills, SMK graduates will be better able to compete in the industrial world and get a brighter career in the future.

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