**STUDENTS’ EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS IN THE FIELD OF CULINARY AT YOGYAKARTA**

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**Abstract.** The highest Open Unemployment Rate (TPT) is dominated by Vocational High School graduates. The obstacle most commonly found by companies in employing vocational graduates is related to employability skills. The objective of this study is to investigate the employability skills of Yogyakarta Tourism Vocational High School students in the Culinary Program. This was survey research involving Tourism State Vocational High School students in the Culinary Class XII in the academic year of 2017/2018 in Yogyakarta Special Region; the students had carried out an internship. Dealing with the data collection technique, the researchers conducted a survey using a questionnaire. The data were analyzed using a descriptive analysis and the research was carried out from November 2017 to March 2018. The results show that the employability skills of the students are good in general. The employability skills practiced by Tourism Vocational High School students in Yogyakarta include communication, teamwork, problem solving, initiative and effort, program planning and organization, self-management, learning, and technology use.

Keywords: employability skills, Tourism Vocational High Schools, Yogyakarta Special Region

1. **Introduction**

Globalization influences the labor sector, because the workforce issue is one of the serious problems closely related to the progress and prosperity of a country. The availability of skilled labor in Indonesia in terms of quantity and quality is a problem that must be immediately addressed, because the free competition requires skilled and professional human resources.

Based on the data from the Statistics Indonesia, the number of workforces in August 2017 increased from 2.62 to 128.06 million, which was higher than that in August 2016. Meanwhile, the number of unemployed increased from 10 thousand to 7.04 million people or 5.5 percent from the total workforce. Based on the highest level of the education completed, Open Unemployment Rate is dominated by the Vocational High School graduates. In August 2017, unemployment contributed by the Vocational High School graduates was 11.41 percent (BPS, 2017) [1]. This growing unemployment number shows that the growth of the workforce is far greater than that of the employment opportunities.

Based on the data, the Vocational High School graduates are one of the most educated candidates with the highest unemployment; the fact indicates that graduates of the education unit cannot completely meet the needs of the job market in accordance with the expertise. The number of job vacancies relevant to the vocational programs is not proportional with the number of their graduates. The graduates are expected to have competitiveness, so they have wide opportunities to enter the business and industrial world and become ready-to-work workforce.

Currently, world of work still considers that Vocational High School graduates have not met the standards or requirements for being employees. The problem commonly found by companies in employing them is related to employability skills. A survey conducted by Jobstreet.com (a job search site) states that companies still find difficulties in hiring prospective employees who meet the qualifications. The competition of the Vocational High School graduates to get a job is also getting tougher, because companies are also increasingly selective in hiring prospective employees. The research findings by Kavita (2011) [2] show that there is a significant difference between the employability skills required by the hospitality industry and those possessed by students. Even though they have mastered the technical skills, this often becomes an obstacle due to the immaturity of the Vocational High School graduates who are not ready to work.

World of work is looking for prospective employees who have qualifications and work experience generated from technical skills, employability skills, and personal attributes. Employability skills integrate someone's skills to work in a work environment. Employability skills are abilities to find and keep a job. Employability is general and crosses all types of industries, business sizes, and levels of work from the entry-level workers to the high-position employees (Robinson, 2000) [3].

High employability skills can widen one's chances of getting a job. Employability skills are a set of non-technical transferable skills consisting of nine indicators, namely: (1) communication; (2) teamwork; (3) problem solving; (4) initiative and effort; (5) program planning and organization; (6) self-management; (7) learning; (8) technology use; and (9) Occupational Health and Safety (BCA/ACCI, 2002; SCANS, 1991; CBC, 2000; Robinson, 2006) [4,5,6,7].

Education is one of the factors shaping the employability skills. Educational institutions will facilitate the students to prepare, search, and find a job. Workers' competencies will also be obtained through vocational schools and education. Preparing students to have technical and generic skills (employability skills) should be based on the quality of the learning programs. Some research results indicate factors that interact each other in the learning process including the learning system (Shyi-Huey, 2005; Ogbeide, 2006) [8,9]. Supporting the learning environment and scheme becomes very important for the education system in Vocational High Schools.

Vocational education in the culinary program is a professional education program where its graduates are directed to master the ability in the culinary work sector that is routine or not familiar with the nature and context, to work independently and responsibly, and to supervise or guide based on their management skills. Graduates will work in the service sector as service workers who reflect the character not only mastering key competencies but also showing progress in developing profession and professional attitudes and behaviors.

The results of a preliminary study in ten catering and patisserie industries in Yogyakarta as the internship places state that although employability skills are highly needed by the industry, only 30% of the industries agree that students in the Culinary Program meet industry needs, while 40% say that they are fairly good, and the rest (30%) state that they still do not meet the requirements in the industry.

The industry still believes that Vocational High School graduates have not met the standards or requirements for being employees. The obstacle most commonly found by companies deals with the work readiness (employability skills) of the Vocational High School graduates as the workforce. Even though they have mastered the technical skills, due to the immaturity of vocational graduates who are not ready to work, this often emerges barriers. The industry is looking for prospective employees who have qualifications and work experience through technical skills, employability skills, and personal attributes. Employability skills integrate someone' skills to work in a certain work environment. Work skills are important for those who will enter the workplace, one of which is communication skills.

Culinary Study Program as part of vocational education has a role in preparing workers in the food service, restaurant, and pastry sectors. Types of work in the catering business, such as hotels and restaurants produce tangible products, including food and beverages, and intangible products such as services, security, friendliness, and comfort. There are many types of jobs related to catering, including: Chefs, Bakers, Head Cooks, Food Service Managers, Cooks, and so on. The field is in dire need of the quality improvement of education and training to support the graduates to meet the needs of the job market. As with other vocational fields, although there are so many opportunities in this field, the position filled with the relevant education qualification is only 30 percent.

The needs for workers in the culinary sector are currently increasing. Therefore, the opportunity for the workforce and jobs in this field is also greater. To anticipate this, the ability to reconstruct and adapt knowledge, attitudes, and skills in accordance with the experience and context needs to be improved. However, the skills required by the industry are not completely accommodated by Vocational High School students or graduates in the Culinary Program. The Vocational High School graduates still need technical training before entering the world of work because of the limited knowledge and low technology mastery.

Some weaknesses and problems faced by Vocational High School students related to employability skills are as follows: (1) inadequate work skills due to dominant theoretical learning, (2) communication particularly with foreign customers, (3) low initiative; students tend to wait for orders to work, (4) low enthusiasm to learn something new; students tend to be passive, (5) low problem-solving skills, (6) work attitudes and discipline particularly in work management, for example less efficient work, a lot of wasted time, and bad work planning; those can be caused by the monotonous learning which is full of theories (7) less collaboration in completing a task, (8) limited use of technology for the industrial equipment because of the incompatibility of the equipment provided at schools.

This study aims to describe the employability skills of the Yogyakarta Vocational High School students in the Culinary Program. The results of this study are expected to be a valuable input for the policy making in improving the quality of Vocational High School graduates in the Culinary Program.

1. **Method**

This was survey research which aims to describe the employability skills of Yogyakarta Tourism Vocational High Students in the Culinary Program. This study was conducted at Yogyakarta Tourism Vocational High Schools. The study population was all 640 students of Class XII in the academic year 2017/2018 in the Culinary Program, who had taken the industrial practice (internship). The determination of the sample size referred to the error level of 5% stated by Isaac and Michael (1984) [10]; it obtained a sample size of 227 respondents. To anticipate the unprocessed questionnaire and data, the sample was added by 5%. Thus, the minimum sample used in this study was 239. To obtain this, the researchers employed a proportional random sampling technique (Lohr, 2008) [11] where the research sample was allocated evenly in each school.

The data were collected through observation and survey with a questionnaire (De Leeuw, 2008) [12]. The verification of the questionnaire data was done by checking the completeness of the questionnaire. There were 231 questionnaires filled out correctly and completely, and feasible for the further analysis. Thus, the response rate in this study reached 96.6%.

The validity of the research instrument was tested using the Pearson Product Moment correlation coefficient with α = 5. The results of the validity test on the employability skill questionnaire showed that three questions did not meet the valid criteria. Thus, there were 55 valid and reliable questions with the Pearson product moment correlation coefficient from 0.376 (lowest) to 0.826 (highest), and the reliability value (Cronbach’s Alpha) was 0.958. The data were analyzed using a quantitative descriptive analysis.

1. **Results**

The employability skills are elaborated into 9 indicators and then developed into 63 questions. The frequency distribution of the skills is in Table 1 below.

**Table 1.** Frequency Distribution of the Employability Skills

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| No | Interval | Classification | Frequency | Percentage |
| 1. | 220-179 | Very Good | 58 | 25.11% |
| 2. | 178-137 | Good | 168 | 72.73% |
| 3. | 136-95 | Poor | 5 | 2.16% |
| 4. | 94-53 | Very Poor | 0 | 0 |
| Total | 231 | 100% |

Based on Table 1, it is known that 58 students (25.11%) perform very good employability skills, while 168 students (72.73%) are in the good category, and 2 students (2.16%) are in the poor category. Thus, it can be concluded that in general, the students have good employability skills. The eight aspects of employability skills include communication, teamwork, problem solving, initiative and effort, program planning and organization, self-management, learning, technology use, and Occupational Health and Safety. The frequency distribution of the nine employability skill aspects is presented in Table 2 below.

**Table 2.** Frequency Distributionof the Nine Employability Skills

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| No. | Indicator | Very Good | Good | Poor | Very Poor |
| 1 | Communication | 12% | 72% | 14% | 2% |
| 2 | Teamwork | 19% | 63% | 17% | 1% |
| 3 | Problem Solving | 19% | 69% | 11% | 1% |
| 4 | Initiative and effort | 3% | 11% | 86% | 0 |
| 5 | Program Planning and Organization  | 14% | 75% | 11% | 0 |
| 6 | Self-Management | 18% | 81% | 1% | 0 |
| 7 | Learning | 11% | 78% | 9% | 2% |
| 8 | Technology Use | 16% | 78% | 5% | 1% |
| 9 | Occupational Health and Safety | 43% | 53% | 3% | 1% |

1. **Discussion**

Employability skill are the individual characteristics related to one's work ability and the desire to survive in the world of work. Based on the research conducted, it is known that the employability skills of Class XII students in the academic year 2017/2018 in Yogyakarta Tourism Vocational High Schools are in the good category. The research data also show that there are a small number of students who have poor employability skills; this is possibly caused by low communication skills in using foreign languages, making decision, and limited initiative and effort. Low abilities in some aspects of employability skills become a disadvantage that can be detrimental to students. Therefore, teachers should provide more relevant knowledge, so each student is ready to work after graduation. The development of the employability skills for the Vocational High School students in the culinary field will achieve optimal results, if the students’ employability skills are handled seriously.

The mastery of communication aspects of the students on the six indicators shows a good average. Communication is a process to receive and convey correct information both verbal and non-verbal effectively to avoid misunderstanding (BCA/ACCI, 2002) [4]. Based on the data obtained on the communication aspect, the students have weaknesses dealing with verbal communication and writing ability in English. Therefore, it is necessary to improve English communication skills both verbally and in writing.

The other employability skill is teamwork, the skills and attributes to enhance productivity. This skill consists of the ability to collaborate with others and participate in completing tasks. Unlike the technical ability, employability skill is more general. Through the teamwork, students can achieve the highest work standards. Employability skills can be categorized in personal qualities. Those observed through the classroom activities and internship program are how to collaborate with the team, how to help friends, how to cope with the partner’s shortcomings to get the best results, and how to contribute to the team.

Solving problems is one of the employability skills to think at a high level which must be mastered and practiced by all employees and prospective workers. The definition of problem solving is the ability to make decisions by evaluating information and various options, and risk analysis in order to select appropriate alternatives needed in certain situations (BCA/ACCI, 2002 [4]). Understanding the system behaviors and performance is also related to the problem solving and analytical skills.

Since food industry develops rapidly, new ideas and a strong will are needed to enhance it. The initiative and effort are compulsory to cope with the fast development of the culinary world. By taking initiative, people can foster the impact on the business activities (BCA / ACCI, 2002) [4].

The ability to plan and organize activities or a program is significant in the food industry. Mastery of the program planning and organization by the students in average is in the good category. Self-regulation includes employability skills that must be possessed by everyone in order to work and to keep their jobs. Next, self-management is to have self-confidence and commitment to allocate time, energy, and thoughts for the prioritized things (BCA / ACCI, 2002) [4].

Learning skill copes with how to achieve new knowledge and expertise effectively and efficiently (BCA/ACCI, 2002) [4]. The attributes of learning skills identified include: a) actively participating in learning activities to get the maximum learning experience; b) receiving and understanding new information quickly; c) applying things learned and practicing new skills and knowledge practically, calmly, and easily, and d) being open to achieve new knowledge and skills.

The graduates of Tourism Vocational High Schools are oriented to work in accordance with their competency. The orientation suggests that graduates of the Tourism Vocational High School in the culinary field may be expected to be skillful to operate the technological devices in their expertise. The skills cover abilities in utilizing the appropriate technology and media, applying technology based on the needs, and conducting industrial troubleshooting.

The application of Occupational Safety and Health that can prevent potential hazards or risks optimally is prominent. This requires human resources who have capacity and competence in the relevant field. In addition, Tourism Vocational High School students should master these competencies; this is in line with the demands of National Work Competency Standards. The practices of Occupational Safety and Health at vocational schools are very important. Accidents may occur as a result of unsafe student behavior during laboratory work practices. Those can be caused by students who do not perform seriousness and concentrate well; they play with coworkers or practical tools, make haste in doing work, and carry dangerous goods at work.

Based on the discussion of the above data it can be concluded that in general the employability skills of the students are in the good category. The results of this study are in line with the research by Tri Kuat (2017) [13]. It shows that the employability skills in the Accounting Program of the Business Management Department at State Vocational High School 6 Surakarta are very good, because most of the seven core skill competencies are mastered at the highest level. Meanwhile, the students’ employability skills in State Vocational High School 1 Sukoharjo are included in the good category, because most of them are in the intermediate level. This study is also in line with the results of Ega Putriatama's research (2016) which shows that 61 students (29%) are in the excellent employability skill category, while 129 students (61.4%) are in the good category, and 20 students (9. 6%) are in the poor category. In conclusion, the overall employability skills are good.

1. **Conclusions**

The results of this study indicate that the students' employability skills in the Tourism Vocational High Schools in Yogyakarta is good in average. Employability skills mastered by the students in the schools include communication, teamwork, problem solving, initiative and effort, program planning and organization, self-management, learning, technology use, and Occupational Safety and Health.

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