



# **Soft Skill and Entrepreneurial Career Guidance Model for Enhancing Technical Vocational Education and Training's Graduates Competitiveness**

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## ARTICLE INFO

### *Article history:*

Received 02 December 2015

Received in revised form 12

January 2016

Accepted 28 January 2016

Available online 01 February 2016

### *Keywords:*

Career guidance

Competitiveness

Vocational education.

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## ABSTRACT

The globalization and free trade era have implications for the high competition for vocational institutions. Problems faced by vocational education are (1) lack of relevance of the graduates competence with the industrial need, (2) low absorption of the graduates by industry, (3) discrepancy of skill competencies program that developed with the needs of industry, (4) there is lack understanding of the vision mission and objectives of vocational education among practitioners in the industry, (5) learning infrastructure gaps with industrial need, (6) absence of career standardization structure development on industry, and (7) unfavorable the academic climate in vocational education. Facing these challenges is necessary required soft skills and entrepreneurial career guidance model as solutions to enhance the graduate competitiveness.

## 1. Introduction

The globalization era and advances of information technology led to an employment competition between countries. Free trade agreements between countries such as AFTA, CAFTA, and ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) ultimately lead to labor competition in all sectors of work. Technological Vocational Education and Training (TVET) has an important role in preparing high quality of labor to improve national productivity. Vocational High School (SMK) in charge of preparing and competitive intelligent beings (intelligent spiritual, emotional, intellectual, and aesthetic kinesthetic) which has competitiveness. However, the competitiveness of SMKs graduates are still low. Many find facts relevance of TVETs graduates did not meet with industry requirements.

The implications of the information age coloring people's lives by virtual communication very quickly. Everyone expected have ability to adapt to changes in the complex, lateral, and conformed quickly to the character of advances in information technology. Globalization also foster the changing demands of labor

competencies from rigid to flexible competence. The workforce who have ability to adapt to changes easily, independent, collaborative in a team work, able to solve problems, be able to communicate, and have high initiative (Deseco, 2005; Wagner 2008).

Central Statistics Agency in Table 1 shows that the open unemployment of the vocational school graduates nationwide as February 2011 was 13.87%, February 2012 9.50%, February 2013 amounted to 7.67%, and 2014 at 7.21%. It illustrates that the industry has not been able to absorb the graduates of vocational and even more absorbing a high school graduate. In other words, the competitiveness of vocational graduates is still low.

**Table 1.** Unemployment Rate Population Age 15 and Over by Educational Attainment 2011-2014 (percent)

Education Attainment	2011		2012		2013		2014
	February	August	February	August	February	August	February
Elementary	3.37	3.81	3.59	3.55	3.51	3.44	3.69
Junior High School	7.55	7.45	7.76	7.75	8.13	7.59	7.44
Senior High School	11.90	11.90	10.41	9.63	9.39	9.72	9.1
Vocational High School	13.81	11.87	9.50	9.92	7.67	11.61	7.21
Diploma I, II, III	15.71	12.78	7.45	6.19	5.67	5.95	5.87
Univesitas	14.24	11.92	6.90	5.88	4.96	5.39	4.31
Σ	7.41	7.14	6.24	6.07	5.82	6.16	5.70

Source: BPS, 2014 (No. 38/05/Th. XVII, 5 Mei 2014)

Thus SMK was require to prepare graduates who have readiness to face these changes. In anticipation of the necessary character, intelligence, and health. Growing health consciousness that comes from education. Career guidance has an important role in enhancing the academic ability, personal, and career choice of graduates of vocational education (Rashid and Bakar, 2011). The Indonesian labor competitiveness compared with 84 countries in the world is still low. World Economic Forum (2010) in the Table 2 illustrates the competitiveness of labor in terms of basic needs Indonesia occupy 60 rankings, in terms of increasing the efficiency of Indonesia was ranked 51, while in terms of innovation and sophistication of human resources 37. Job readiness of Indonesia workforce in the industry at a low level in terms of aspects of talent and training eye productive learning process. Young age, minimal stock of knowledge and inadequate skills often become the main obstacle vocational school graduates to get a decent job and can support her career.

The implementation of career guidance in the vocational schools has not handling seriously. Awareness of the importance of handling has not been done in a professional career. Career guidance in vocational schools is still limited on labor market information. Many schools focus on improving the technical competence and lack of attention to soft skills in the sphere of formal or as the foundation of development. Winstead et.al. (2009) stated most business school curricula, however, focus only on technical skills, and do not address on the soft skills in a formal setting or on a consistent basis. As graduates compete for fewer jobs, business schools must develop creative and innovative ways to give Reviews their graduates a competitive edge. Most adults do not understand that in the contemporary world of work it is important to develop the skills to be able to manage one's own career and life pathways.

Career guidance is a services provided to students and community at all ages and all aspects of life through education, training, employment, and managing his/her career (OECD, 2004:19). Career guidance services is recommended to include five elements: (1) professional guidance to personnel guidance, (2) anticipatory risk of limited resources, (3) impartiality / avoid bias institutions, (4) labor market information that is relevant, and (5) evaluation the impact of the service.

**Table 2.** Competitiveness Ranking of Indonesian's Workers

Indicator	Competitiveness of Indonesian Workers				
	Ind	Mly	Bru	Sin	Tha
Efficiency	51	24	67	1	39
Basic need	60	33	20	2	48
Inovasi and sophistications	37	25	72	10	49

Source: WEF, 2010

Career guidance refers to services intended to assist people, of any age and at any point throughout their lives to make educational, training and occupational choices and to manage their careers. Career guidance helps people to reflect on their ambitions, interests, qualifications and abilities. It helps them to understand the labor market and education systems, and to relate this to what they know about themselves. Comprehensive career guidance tries to teach people to plan and make decisions about work and learning. Career guidance makes information about the labor market and about educational opportunities more accessible by organizing, systemizing, and making available when and where people need it.

Career development includes a range of practices designed to help people think about, planning and managing reviews their careers. Career development is related to vocational education, but is applicable to all students in vocational or academic whether programs. Career development provides a mechanism for linking the curriculum with the learning that students do in extracurricular activities and their wider life. A strong culture of career development needs to be built in TVET, one which has a focus on all age groups and which encourage older adults to consider career and learning options. In the AEC era, the industry needs graduates who have the soft skills competencies include (1) the ability of critical thinking and problem solving; (2) ability to work and learn in teams with different individuals across the nation; (3) the ability to make plans based on accurate information; (4) ability to adapt to rapid changes; (5) international communication skills both oral and written; and (6) have an insight into the future and want to expand (Dardiri & Hajji, 2011). Ana, Gaffar, and Hakim (2012) state, students not only learn technical skill, but also develop their communication skill and project management. Based on this background formulated the problem as follows: (1) how the concept of soft skill and entrepreneur career guidance?, (2) how the implementation of soft skill and entrepreneurial career guidance?, and (3) is soft skill and entrepreneurial career guidance can improve competitiveness of vocational graduates.

## 2. Discussion

### 2.1 Industrial Development and Labor Competence

The development of science, information technology, and modern economic growth resulted in a cultural change society. It also resulted in changes in labor competencies essential. Work force of the 21st century is not enough just to have basic knowledge related to the three "R's" (reading, writing, and arithmetic) as the capital's ability to work, but also need to be mastered skills applicable. Furthermore, it is stated that soft skills are very important for the competence of the workforce to be ready to work ([Http://www.dol.gov/odep](http://www.dol.gov/odep)). Besides soft skills competencies is seen as crucial to the ease of someone adapting the work situation. (<http://www.sdf.gov.sg/>). Thus it can be stated that the face of the competitive era, soft skills is the key to success for labor.

According to the forum Continuous Progress Development, soft skill is a personal advantage related to non-technical matters, including the ability to communicate, socialize, and the ability to control himself. Soft skills is an ability that is affective one has, besides its ability on technical mastery of formal intellectual one field, which allows a person to be accepted in the work environment (Tripathy, 2006); (Mirza, 2005); (Dev 2006), (Kaipa and Milus 2005); (Alsop, 2006).

Wagner (2008) states that entered the "New World" of Work in the 21st century survival skill needed seven, namely: (1) critical thinking and problem solving; (2) collaboration across networks and leading by influence; (3) agility and adaptability; (4) initiative and entrepreneurialism; (5) The effective oral and written communication; (6) Accessing and analyzing information; and (7) curiosity and imagination. In the new world era, the economy evolved from traditional pattern to the industry, and now to the knowledge based economy (KBE). KBE is characterized by a pattern of trade that promotes the use of modern technology and science as a driver of growth, development and job creation to prosper (Zuhal, 2008). In KBE the workforce must have the ability to solving problems, to work planning, and ability as teamwork.

The concept of teamwork is very different today compared to 20 years ago. Technology has been providing virtual model teams. Virtual teams to work with people around the world by solving problems using software. They do not work in the same space, do not go to the same office, each week doing conference calls, working with web-net meeting. The challenge of virtual and global collaboration is a cooperation network. Skillfulness of individually working with networks of people across boundaries and from different culture is an essential requirement/underlying a number of multinational companies. Her core competencies are strategic thinking.

Understanding and appreciating on the different cultures are core competencies of the vocational graduates. Wagner (2008: 25) states that concern for global change refers to the needs of the student's ability to (1) use the ability of critical thinking and problem solving to understand global issues; (2) learn from and work collaboratively with individuals of different cultures, religions, and lifestyles in the spirit of mutual needs and open dialogue in the context of work and communicate; (3) understand the culture of the countries, including the use of English. To survive, the necessary capabilities are flexible and can adapt as a lifelong learner. The key competence is the ability to handlers ambiguously, ability studying the parts of the core and fundamental, strategic intelligence. Based on the above analysis it can be said that the graduates of vocational excellence requires soft skills in order to have the high competitiveness. Thus career guidance conducted at TVET should be based on the development of soft skills.

## 2.2 Entrepreneurial Career Guidance

The Intense of the competition and the lack of jobs is a reality challenges faced by the vocational educational. The number of educated significantly (BPS, 2014). Unemployment in Indonesia is increased Darmaningtyas (2008) stated that there is a tendency the persons who have the higher level of education they have the lower desire for entrepreneurship. The college graduates prefer desire to get a job securely. They did not dare take the risk occupations such as entrepreneurship. The main choice of the college graduates are as employer or laborers. Being self-employment is often viewed as a career option which is not favored because faced with everyday situations that are uncertain, full of obstacles, and frustration associated with the establishment of new businesses.

Various studies show that education and training affects one's perception of entrepreneurial career. On the other hand the entrepreneurial spirit is significant effect on the job readiness vocational students (Indriani, 2014). Therefore, entrepreneurship education should be designed in such a way in order to give effect in boosting interest in the graduates for entrepreneurship.

The entrepreneurial learning pattern contains five elements minimally. There are: thinking, feeling, skill, mental readiness, and direct experience. The empirical studies also indicate that the need for achievement (n Ach) is a key factor in the success of entrepreneurship. For the school to be able to create an atmosphere that encourages the development needs within the student achievement through career guidance. Vocational career guidance demanded to prepare graduates for entrepreneurship. The TVET graduate's readiness as entrepreneurship is the fulfillment of the minimum standard of competence that have been established which includes managerial skills, planning of production and marketing, and financial management indicators: (1) the ability of entrepreneurship; (2) the prediction business fields; and (3) potential graduates sought.

Career guidance is basically an orientation with services, information services, and job placement. Career Guidance is services to prepare the students to choose a future career. Proper and sufficient information about an individual is an asset that is essential for the individual to develop his career. Individual understanding of the weaknesses and strengths. Student since grade one guided his career that he has the readiness to enter the workforce. Based on above analysis concluded that to improve graduates competitiveness can be done through the spirit of entrepreneurship. Career guidance was developed based on the effort to improve the ability of students to entrepreneurship.

The challenges of the global era led to the demand that graduates have the ability to develop his/her mental attitude of entrepreneurship. In the global competition era required the guidance career development pattern that different with traditional career development (Herr, 1997). Development of new career is career development based on soft skill and entrepreneurial focus development. This is in line with the dynamics of career guidance system framework that emphasizes more complex aspects include motivation, competence, experience, and interaction with the environment. Career guidance is conducted continuously so that students can make choice independently.

### 2.3 The Principals Role

The school principal is one of the keys to success in achieving the vocational educational institutions goals. The principals has role to set the vision, to build values, norms and culture of schools, to develop commitment and encourage motivation of organization, so that he can give their best performance until the school reached a quality results (dam & Gamage, 2008).

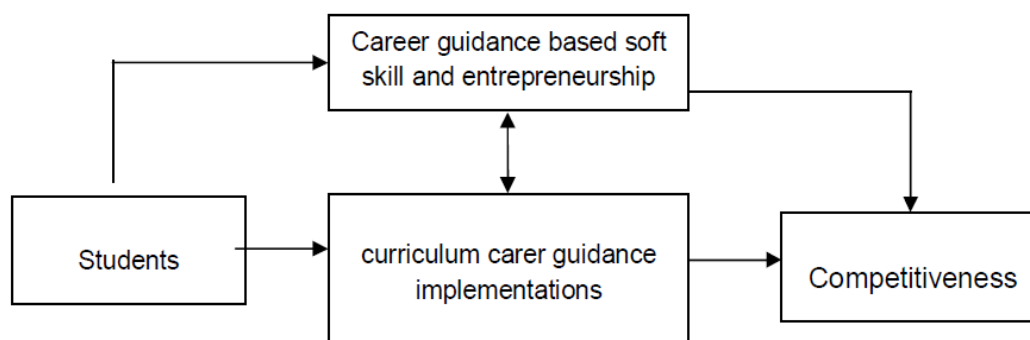
Dardiri (2011) confirmed that to achieve success school takes principal who have entrepreneurial souls. The principal also serves to empowering SMK's stakeholders for able and willing to give support in capacity building, institutional, systems, resources, culture and the direction so that the trust of stakeholders towards vocational education has increased. Usman (2010) state of seven role of the principal there are (1) educator, (2) manager, (3) administrator, (4) supervisor, (5) leader, (6) climate creator, and (7) entrepreneurial. In the context changes era, school principal plays the vital role in building orientation of the learning-based competence to constructivist learning, change of the curriculum that emphasizes hard skills into the curriculum oriented hard skills and soft skills. It is required principals reliable to give strong directions, provide motivation and facilitate all stakeholders to achieve the goal of competitiveness of graduates.

### 2.4 The Relevant Research Roadmap

Research and studies on the implementation of career guidance, soft skills, and efforts improving the graduate's competitiveness carried out as follows. Principals have an important role to play, in association with other stakeholders, in exercising strategic leadership so that career guidance services can be better planned and better coordinated. In many schools this role has not been exercised well, although some recent examples exist of more effective planning and co-ordination mechanisms that can encompass at least the key schools portfolio. Principals should also strengthen the voice of consumers in the ways that services are delivered. Instruments include need and satisfaction surveys and community consultations.

OECD (2004) stated that career guidance policy has strong impact on Career developmental level: individual, organizational, and societal; OECD (2011) Learning for Job Review of Vocational Education and Training; Rashid (2011) reveal that career development interventions are important regardless of students with good academic performance or students at-risk. If schools counsellors are continued to hold the thinking that career development intervention only for good academic performance students to plan for getting into college only, this will not benefit the at-risk students.; Dardiri, (2011) Soft Skill and Entrepreneurship can improve graduate's competitiveness; Dardiri (2012) showed that the vocational schools that has high soft skills and entrepreneurial gain the trust of the industry. SMK requires principals whose have able to develop a vision, direction, become role in preparing graduates character. Principals who has able to foster entrepreneurial spirit and attitude for graduates.

Recognized the rapid growth of jobs and careers expand employment opportunities, but it is becoming more difficult choice, career guidance is needed to avoid mistakes career for the young generation. Providing career guidance resources reliable and impartial guidance so that young people do not have to rely on informal sources of guidance, like family and friends who have the power, but may only offer choices. Thus, TVET institution must being encourage to implementing soft skill and entrepreneurial career guidance model. Its linked to wider competency-oriented school reforms. Personal and career planning is defined as one of five “broad areas of learning” throughout schooling. The aim is to provide support for students’ identity development in secondary school and guidance in career planning throughout school. This linked to ensuring that students understand the usefulness of their studies (in languages, mathematics, sciences and so on) and why they are studying them illustrated on Figure 1.



**Figure 1.** Soft Skill and entrepreneurial career guidance model

### 3. Conclusion

Conclusion can be drawn from the above discussion are: (1) Soft skills and entrepreneurial career guidance model is the system of career guidance in vocational education oriented on entrepreneurial spirit and soft skill development. (2) implementation of soft skill and entrepreneurial career guidance model encompass: (a) strengthening input (students) against potential self-awareness, (b) preparation of guidance materials that focus on strengthening entrepreneurship and soft skills student, (c) provision of information and type of working competency required of industry/world of work; (d) teaching learning implementation based on teaching factory; and (d) teaching learning evaluations based on authentic assessment; (3) soft skills and entrepreneurial career guidance model can improve the TVETs graduates competitiveness.

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