

## **THE INFLUENCE OF INNOVATIVE LEARNING, SCHOOL-INDUSTRIAL/BUSINESS PARTNERSHIP AND A FAMILY'S SOCIAL STATUS ON THE STUDENT'S READINESS TO WORK**

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In Indonesia today, vocational schools, that aim to produce work-ready graduates, face great challenges in terms of students' readiness to perform in the market. Considering this phenomenon, this study is conducted to discover the factors influencing students' readiness to work. The studied factors include innovative learning, school-business partnership, and parents' social status. This study is an explanatory research which uses cross sectional survey approach and structural equation model (SEM) for sampling. The object of this study were Government Business and Management Vocational Schools in South Sulawesi; and the population of study were all third-year students of Business Administration, Accounting, and Commerce Programs who have undergone an Internship training program in the 2010/2011 Academic Year. The findings of the study indicate that innovative learning, schools' partnership with the industry or business, and parents' socio-economic status are of significant impact on students' readiness to work.

**Key Words:** innovative learning, schools' partnership with enterprises, parents' socio-economic status, students' readiness to work.

### **INTRODUCTION**

In the effort to develop a nation, the quality of education is one of the keys to success. Education is a medium to develop character and knowledge of the students so that they can be individuals with strong character and sound knowledge. In the case of Indonesia, however, the quality of education is still low. This is evident in the data of Balitbang (Indonesia's National Research and Development Department, 2003) that of the 146,052 primary schools in Indonesia, only eight schools managed to get international recognition under the category of the Primary Years Program (PYP). The same data also reveals that of the 20,918 elementary schools in the country, only eight get international recognition of the Middle Years Program (MYP); and only seven of the 8,036 senior high schools are recognized internationally under the category of the Diploma Program (DP).

This fact contributes to the increase in unemployment in the country and the low work productivity of Indonesia's human resources. In Indonesia, there are around 950,000 unemployed vocational school graduates (Indonesia's Center of Statistics, 2006). In 2006, the population of South Sulawesi Province is 7,629,123 people; 3,005,723 of them are of productive age (working age). Of that number, 370,308 people are unemployed. The unemployment in South Sulawesi is

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dominated by the Senior High School/Vocational School graduates (Sulawesi Selatan Dalam Angka, 2007). This indicates that the vocations available in the area are unable to absorb all potential workers.

Concerning the absorption of Vocational School graduates in the industry or labor market, Samsudi (2008) notes that, ideally, there are around 80 to 85 percent of vocational school graduates who is able to directly enter a workplace; however, only 61% of them are actually absorbed in the market. In 2006, vocational school graduates in Indonesia reach the number of 628,285; while the 2007 projection of workforce absorption or demand for vocational school graduates is only 385,986 or 61.43%. This is a pity, considering that vocational schools aim to produce graduates or workforce who is ready to enter the market and industry with the skills they learn at school. This data indicates that the quality of vocational school graduates is low; their readiness to work is unsatisfactory. The increase in unemployment is influenced not only by the low absorption or recruitment of workplaces, but also by the weak entrepreneurship of the vocational schools graduates.

Theoretical review and previous empirical findings indicates that there is functional relationship between the factors and instruments of educational input. These factors may affect the level of vocational school students' readiness to work. The factors can be categorized into the internal and external factors. The internal factors are related with schools' responsibilities that need to be well-prepared in order to achieve the institutional goals of vocational schools. Among the internal factors is the quality of learning that facilitates students' achieving of required competencies. Teachers have to be able to create innovative learning so that students' motivation can be developed and their expectation can be satisfied.

Meanwhile, the external factors include the partnership between the schools and the enterprises or industry, as out-of-school learning place, and students' parents' social and economy status. The determination of vocational school students' readiness to work will be interrelated with the economic and non-economic factors. The economic factor, in turn, is related with the support of students' parents, in terms of funding the education of their children.

Based on the background outlined above, this study examines the impact of innovative learning, schools' partnership with enterprises/industry, and parents' socio-economic status on students' readiness to work. The target or object of this study was limited to the State Vocational Schools of Business and Management in the South Sulawesi Province. The study aimed: 1) to describe the impact of innovative learning implemented by teachers on students' readiness to work; 2) to describe the impact of schools' partnership with enterprises/industry on students' readiness to work; 3) to describe the impact of students' parents' socio-economic status on students' readiness to work; and 4) to describe the simultaneous impact

of innovative learning, schools' partnership with enterprises/industry, and socio-economic status on students' readiness to work.

### LITERARY REVIEW

According to Wena (1997), readiness is an ability to accept a situation and respond to it quickly. Cronbach, in Zamtinah *et al.* (2004), describes readiness as all characters or forces that enable one to react in a certain way. Chaplin, in Kartono (2004) defines readiness as the level of growth and maturity that is beneficial in practicing things. From the definitions above, it can be summarized that readiness is all characters or skills and the level of maturity that enables one to act and react in a certain way.

Work, according to Anoraga (2001) is the objectives to be achieved or satisfied. Meanwhile, Chaplin (in Kartono, 2004) defines work as the completion of certain tasks. Therefore, work can be defined as completion of tasks to satisfy and achieve one's objectives.

Based on the aforementioned definitions of readiness and work, the concept of readiness to work can be formulated as conditions that reflect one's ability and maturity to accept and act in better ways to achieve his goals. In this study, the definition of readiness to work is viewed from the approach of competency-based curriculum in vocational schools; i.e. the competencies expected to be acquired and mastered by the students after finishing their education. The competencies consist of knowledge, skills, values, mindset, and behaviors that reflect students' understanding and comprehension of what they have learned at school.

Vocational school students' readiness to work is a part of the quality of education output. It is based on the students' productive competencies. In other words, students' readiness to work is shaped and developed through their achievement in learning (Gagne, 1995; Mardjohan, 1966; Mardikanto, 1999). From industry or business point of view, readiness to work is related with students' preparedness to satisfy the demands of workplace and market (Vede, 1994; Gani, 1996; Kertajaya, 1996). Thus, students' level of performance when undergoing internship in enterprises/industry indicates their readiness to enter the industry. The better their performance, the more ready they are to work.

To prepare vocational school students to enter workplaces and industry, a deep understanding concerning the factors influencing students' readiness to work is needed. Such understanding will ensure that students' or graduates' skills and competencies are sufficient to enter professional world of work. Besides the competencies required by school curriculum, developing students' readiness to work also involves the development of skills needed in professional world; including the academic skill (IQ), emotional skill (EQ), spiritual skill (SQ), and determination to work (adversity quotient).

Academic skill is the cognitive skills that individuals possess to effectively adjust and adapt themselves to the complex and ever-changing environment (Galton, in Joseph, 1978). Intellectual competencies can be measured using the Intelligence Quotient. One's intellectual competencies play important role in his work. Those with high IQ tend to be more readily and easily to absorb knowledge, which will make their ability to solve work-related problems better (Eysenck, 1981).

Goleman's emotional intelligence theory (1999) defines emotional intelligence as one's ability to recognize his own and others' feelings, to motivate himself, and to manage his emotion in his relationship with others. Purba (1999) argues that emotional intelligence is an emotional ability, consisting of the ability to deal with frustration, ability to control emotion and optimistic spirit, and ability to build relationship with others. This is in line with Patton (1998) who notes that the effective use of emotion facilitates the achievement of goals in a productive relationship.

Spiritual intelligence is indicated by one's recognition of his existence as a creation of God, of this faith and religious practices (Zohar and Marshal, 2002). Berman (2001) suggests that spiritual intelligence (SQ) can facilitate the dialogue between mind and emotion, between body and soul. Mitroff and Denton (1999) notes that religiosity has to do with one's relation with God, while spiritual intelligence focuses on a close and tight relationship between individual and his surroundings.

Besides IQ, EQ, and SQ, another factor determines students' readiness to work, i.e. adversity quotient. Adversity quotient (AQ) is one's ability and competence in handling challenges and difficulties of life, or in other word, determination (Stoltz, 2000). Stoltz (2000) notes that one's readiness to pursue success is determined by his ability/intelligence to hold his ground when facing and solving difficult situations.

In classroom learning activity, the learning method used is one of the factors that determine the completion and achievement of learning indicators; which means that it also affects students' readiness to work. Therefore, creative activities in learning are necessary. Learning is defined as an effort to educate the learners (Degeng, 1989). Gagne (2005) defines learning as a series of activities to facilitate the learning or education process. Smith and Ragan (2003) adds that learning is the development and dissemination of information as well as activities designed to facilitate the realization of specific objectives. Gagne (2005) further suggests that the effective, efficient, interesting, and student-centered learning perspective is an innovative learning. Innovative learning provides more opportunities for students to construct their own knowledge (self-directed learning), mediated by the teacher and their peers (peer-mediated instruction). Innovative learning is based on the constructivist paradigm.

Innovative learning is reflected on the product of education, i.e. communicative and collaborative students who are able to clearly and effectively articulate their

thoughts and ideas, both in utterances and in writing (Hamied, 2009). Another perspective of successful learning is proposed by Heinich et. al (in Pribadi, 2009), consisting of 1) active participation, 2) practice, 3) individual differences, 4) feedback, 5) realistic context, and 6) social interaction.

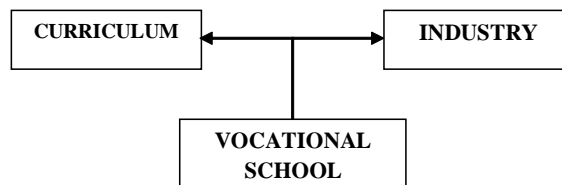
Learning models that are based on constructivist learning theory include 1) cooperative learning, 2) reasoning and problem solving, 3) inquiry training, 4) problem-based instruction, 5) conceptual changes learning, 6) group investigation, and 7) problem-based learning.

Partnership between vocational schools and industry/enterprises plays an important role in implementing the vocational school curriculum. The partnership is set in the joint decree of the Ministry of Education and Culture and the Head of Commerce and Industry Department No 0267a/U/1994 concerning Partnership Program between Schools and Their Partner Institution (industry) as well as in the Decree of the Minister of National Education no. 323/U/1997 concerning the Implementation of Multiple-System Education.

The 2006 School-Based Curriculum for Vocational School, currently implemented, uses a dual-system learning; i.e. the combination between learning in school and in industry (business enterprises). Djojonegoro (1999) states that the dual-system education is systematic and synchronize vocational education and training, combining the education program of schools with the skills acquired through working (internship) in the field, aiming to achieve a certain level of professional skill. According to Wena (1997), the dual-system education is realized in the utilization of two educational environments (school and industry) to educate students.

Nasir (1998) also proposes similar concept, that dual-system education is a form of vocational education implementation that integrates the education program in schools with the training program in business enterprises, aiming to realize the objectives of vocational education. Another definition of dual-system education describes that it combine part-time vocational training with part-time learning (The Educational System in Germany, 1999). The relationship between schools and industry/enterprises is displayed in the following diagram.

Education nowadays is inseparable from the economic capability of the individual's. Education assigns specific levels for various socio-economic statuses of people. Good education can only be experienced by certain socio-economic group, while other groups can only have meagre level of education. Therefore, in



*Scope of Education in Vocational School (Source: Depdikbud, 1994)*

this study, socio-economic status of the society is assumed to be one of the factors influencing the output of education.

Each individual has his own position in the society. Every individual member of a society has his own tasks and functions. Individuals are directly and morally required to fulfill their responsibilities. Sukamto (1990) argues that every society has certain values which create layers of social stratification. Social stratification may include the stratification of education based on social classes (Maftuh and Riyadi, 1994).

The phenomena of social classification or stratification in a society, according to Persell (1990) and Sanderson (1993), is a fixed and general characteristic of a cultured society. Sanderson (1993) further notes that social stratification must not be confused with social inequity. Social stratification is related with two or more stratified groups whose members have different power, privilege, and prestige than members of other groups. The criteria to define social classes include education, job, amount of income, source of income, residence, and behavior (Hamalik, 2003).

Based on those statements, parents' socio-economic status can be defined as a socio-economic position of parents that affects students' education based on the parents' education, job, and income. Socio-economic factors of parents determine their ability to satisfy the family needs, including their children's educational need.

## RESEARCH METHOD

This study belongs to the category of explanatory research (Singarimbun and Effendi, 1995) or correlational research (Gall & Borg, 2003) of non-experimental nature (Kerlinger, 1990) using cross sectional survey approach. The object of this study is the State Business and Management Vocational Schools in South Sulawesi; and the population is all third-year students of Business Administration (AP), Accounting (AKT), and Commerce (Sales) Programs who have undergone the Internship Program in business enterprises and are registered in State Business and Management Vocational Schools in South Sulawesi, in the 2010/2011 Academic Year. The study is conducted on the sample group of the population. The sampling method used in this study is the structural equation model (SEM). The distribution of the sample is as follows:

TABLE OF SAMPLE DISTRIBUTION

<i>No.</i>	<i>Regency/City</i>	<i>Vocational School</i>	<i>Population</i>	<i>Sample</i>
1.	Makassar	SMKN 4 Makassar	333	59
2.	Sidrap	SMKN Pancarijang	231	41
3.	Palopo	SMKN 1 Palopo	320	56
4.	Bone	SMKN 1 Watampone	376	66
5.	Gowa	SMKN Bajeng Limbung Gowa	288	51
6.	Bantaeng	SMKN 1 Bantaeng	249	44
		Total	2797	317

*Source:* Primary Data, processed 2011.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The overview of the findings of this study is displayed in the following table.

TABLE OF COEFFICIENT OF REGRESSION TEST RESULT ON THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE VARIABLES OF THE FINAL MODEL

Relationship		Coef.Reg	SE	CR	p-value	Coef. Standard
From	To					
Innovative learning	Students' Readiness to Work	0.230	0.113	2.047 *	0.041	0.132
School Partnership with Enterprises	Students' Readiness to Work	0.250	0.075	3.348**	0.001	0.398
Socio-economic Status	Students' Readiness to Work	0.184	0.072	2.549 *	0.011	0.232

Remarks: ns = *not significant* (p-value > 0,05); \* = p-value < 0,05; \*\* = p-value < 0,01; SE = Standard Error; CR = Critical Ratio (= Coef. Reg / SE)

The coefficient of regression from innovative learning construct to students' readiness to work is 0.230, with C. R. of 2.047 (higher than 2) and p-value of 0.041 (higher than 0.05). In the standardized form, this coefficient scores 0.132. This indicates that there is **significant** impact of innovative learning construct on the readiness to work construct.

Since students' readiness to work is mainly a reflection of academic achievements, the finding of this study is confirmed by previous relevant studies. These studies are conducted in different background and with different objects. Johnson and Johnson (1994) who find great empirical evidence that cooperative learning can improve academic achievement, higher than the improvement from individual learning and competitive learning. Cohn (1979), World Bank (1999), and William (2003) suggest that the internal factor of schools, particularly the student-centered learning, directly affect students' academic achievement. Empirical study conducted by Slavin (1997) indicates that the STAD-type cooperative learning model results in higher achievement in social sciences than other learning models.

The second variable affecting students' readiness to work is schools' partnership with industry/enterprises. The coefficient of regression for the construct of schools' partnership with industry to students' readiness to work is 0.250; with C. R. of 3.348 (higher than 2) and p-value of 0.001 (lower than 0.05). In the standardized format, the coefficient scores 0.398. This indicates that there is **positive and significant** correlation between the school partnership with industry and the readiness to work.

Lee's finding (2001) is in line with the finding of this study. Lee states that when the government concentrates on developing industry; it should at the same

time develop the skills of semi-professional workers (students) in the vocational schools and diploma levels. Berman and McLaughlin's observation (in Ellers, 2002) proves that the collaborative process of school and public organizations is necessary to improve the quality of life of the parties involved in the partnership. Suparlan (2008), in his study on the impact of PSG on vocational school students' adaptive work in Malang Raya, find a positive and significant impact.

The next variable in this study is the impact of socio-economic status on students' readiness to work. The coefficient of regression from socio-economic status construct to students' readiness to work is 0.184; with C. R. of 2.549 (higher than 2) and p-value of 0.001 (lower than 0.05). In the standardized form, the coefficient is 0.232. This indicates that there is **positive and significant** impact from socio-economic status on students' readiness to work.

This finding is confirmed by previous studies. Seginer (1986) finds that there is positive and significant correlation between socio-economic status of the society and the academic achievements of the students. Schooler (in Flanagan, 1993) describes that parents' education, experience, and position affect the way they raise and treat their children. Parents with high socio-economic status have more autonomy and highlight the intellectual freedom in educating and treating their children. The finding of this study is also in line with Hanuchek (2005) who finds that there is a correlation between students' cognitive ability with individual income and economic growth.

The simultaneous impact of innovative learning, schools' partnership with industry, and socio-economic status on students' readiness to work is illustrated in the following table.

TABLE OF R<sup>2</sup> CALCULATION

<i>Independent</i>	<i>Dependent</i>	<i>Coef. Path</i>	<i>R<sup>2</sup></i>
Innovative learning	Students' Readiness to Work	0.132	0.709
School Partnership with Enterprises	Students' Readiness to Work	0.398	
Socio-economic Status	Students' Readiness to Work	0.232	

Based on the measurement of R<sup>2</sup>, the statement that innovative learning, schools' partnership with industry/enterprises, and socio-economic status simultaneously have significant impact on students' readiness to work **is accepted**. The descriptive analysis also provides an overview of how the three independent variables contribute to students' readiness to work; i.e. the students' readiness to work belong to the category of quite ready (68.5%), based on their academic skill (IQ), emotional skill (EQ), spiritual skill (SQ), and adversity quotient (AQ).



## CONCLUSION

From the implemented stages and the findings of this study, the following conclusions are formulated: 1) innovative learning has significant impact on students' readiness to work. It means that students' readiness to work, as a result of learning, can be effectively improved if the teachers' pay close attention on the aspects of innovative learning; 2) schools' partnership with enterprises/industry has direct and significant impact on students' readiness to work. It indicates that students' readiness to work can be improved if the learning occurs in industry (e.g. internships) is effectively implemented; 3) parents' socio-economic status has positive and significant impact on students' readiness to work. Students' readiness to work, as a result of learning, is inseparable from parents' support, particularly in terms of the funding of their education, both in school and in workplace (internship); 4) innovative learning, schools' partnership with industry, and socio-economic status contribute, simultaneously, significant impact on students' readiness to work. This suggests that students' readiness to work can be improved if the teachers can develop innovative learning process effectively, if schools' partnership with industry is built on mutual commitment and effectively executed, and if parents provide supports as allowed by their socio-economic status.

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