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Contribution of Career Guidance, Internship Experience and Emotional Intelligence to the Work Readiness of Students at SMK N 1 SUTERA

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Keywords: Career guidance; internship experience; emotional intelligence; work readiness; vocational high school

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Abstract

This study aims to analyze the contribution of career guidance, industrial work experience (internship), and emotional intelligence to the work readiness of students at SMK N 1 Sutera. The background of this research is the high unemployment rate among vocational school graduates and the gap between their competencies and the needs of the industrial sector. Using a quantitative approach and survey method, the study involved 68 students who had participated in the internship program. Data were collected through questionnaires that had been tested for validity and reliability. The data were then analyzed using multiple linear regression. The results showed that career guidance significantly contributed to students' work readiness with a correlation coefficient of $r = 0.535$ ($R^2 = 28.6\%$, $p = 0.000$). This indicates that better career guidance helps improve students' preparedness for the workforce. Internship experience also had a positive impact, with $r = 0.351$ ($R^2 = 12.3\%$, $p = 0.015$), suggesting that hands-on industry experience increases students' readiness for real work environments. Emotional intelligence had the most dominant influence with $r = 0.606$ ($R^2 = 36.8\%$, $p = 0.000$), showing that the ability to manage emotions and adapt socially plays a key role in preparing students for the workplace. Simultaneously, these three variables contributed 57.8% to students' work readiness ($R^2 = 0.578$, $F = 29.193$, $p = 0.000$), meaning the research model is statistically significant. Therefore, schools and industries should enhance career guidance quality, improve the relevance of internship programs, and offer training to strengthen students' emotional intelligence, to better prepare them for the labor market and increase their competitiveness.

How to cite: Putra, B., Maksum, H., Purwanto, W., & Waskito, W. (2025). Contribution of Career Guidance, Internship Experience and Emotional Intelligence to the Work Readiness of Students at SMK N 1 SUTERA. *JETL (Journal of Education, Teaching and Learning)*, 10(1). doi:<http://dx.doi.org/10.26737/jetl.v10i1.6908>

INTRODUCTION

In the modern era, the transition from school to the workforce has become increasingly complex, particularly for vocational school graduates. At SMK N 1 Sutera, this challenge is evident as students strive to meet the demands of a rapidly evolving labor market. Vocational schools are expected to produce graduates who are not only technically competent but also ready to contribute effectively in professional environments (Nuraini & Yuwono, 2023). However, the persistently high unemployment rate among vocational graduates highlights a critical gap between education and employment that needs urgent attention.

Vocational education is designed to bridge the divide between academic learning and practical industry needs (Nurul, 2023). Despite its practical focus, many graduates still find it difficult to secure employment due to inadequate preparation for the workplace. This situation suggests that technical training alone is not enough. There is a need for a more holistic approach that includes effective career guidance, meaningful internship experiences, and the development of emotional intelligence to enhance students' overall work readiness (Noviyanti & Dwarawati, 2023; Rahmawati, 2023).

Career guidance plays a pivotal role in helping students understand their strengths, set career goals, and make informed decisions about their future (Damayanti et al., 2024). Quality career counseling ensures that students are aware of labor market trends and industry expectations, enabling them to align their education with career aspirations. By equipping students with the knowledge and confidence to plan their careers, career guidance serves as a foundational pillar for improving employability.

Internship experiences provide students with direct exposure to real work environments, allowing them to apply classroom knowledge in practical settings. These experiences help students develop professional skills, improve their understanding of workplace culture, and increase their adaptability. Internships also build valuable networks and provide insights into specific career paths, making them a critical component of vocational education (Widyawati, 2024; Yasa et al., 2021).

Equally important is emotional intelligence the ability to recognize, understand, and manage one's own emotions and those of others (Jafri et al., 2024). In the workplace, emotional intelligence facilitates collaboration, effective communication, and resilience under pressure. As industries increasingly value soft skills alongside technical abilities, nurturing students' emotional intelligence becomes essential in preparing them for the complexities of modern work environments.

This study seeks to analyze the contribution of career guidance, internship experience, and emotional intelligence to the work readiness of students at SMK N 1 Sutera. Through a quantitative approach, the research aims to identify which factors most significantly influence students' preparedness for the workforce and offer recommendations for enhancing vocational education programs.

The background of this study stems from the ongoing issue of high unemployment rates among vocational high school graduates in Indonesia, including those from SMK N 1 Sutera. Despite efforts to enhance vocational education through curriculum revisions and partnerships with industries, many graduates still face difficulties in securing employment due to a mismatch between their competencies and the demands of the labor market. Employers often report that graduates lack not only technical skills but also the soft skills and emotional maturity required to thrive in professional environments (Pratiwi et al., 2024; Tambunan, 2020). This gap indicates the need to

strengthen supporting factors such as career guidance, internship experiences, and emotional intelligence development within vocational schools. Addressing these aspects is essential to ensure that graduates are not only skilled but also confident, adaptive, and work-ready when entering the competitive job market.

METHODS

This study employed a quantitative research approach using a survey method to examine the contribution of career guidance, internship experience, and emotional intelligence to the work readiness of vocational high school students. The research was conducted at SMK N 1 Sutera, targeting students who had completed their internship programs. A total of 68 students were selected as respondents using a purposive sampling technique, ensuring that only those with relevant internship experience were included in the study.

Data were collected through a structured questionnaire consisting of four main sections: career guidance, internship experience, emotional intelligence, and work readiness. Each section was developed based on relevant theoretical frameworks and previous research. The questionnaire items were measured using a Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Prior to the actual data collection, the instrument underwent a validity and reliability test involving a pilot study with a small group of students. Items with low validity or reliability were revised or removed to ensure the accuracy and consistency of the data collected.

The collected data were analyzed using multiple linear regression analysis to determine the individual and simultaneous contributions of the independent variables (career guidance, internship experience, and emotional intelligence) to the dependent variable (work readiness). The statistical analysis included calculating correlation coefficients (r), coefficients of determination (R^2), and significance values (p -values). The analysis was conducted using SPSS software, and results were interpreted to identify which variables had the most significant impact on students' readiness to enter the workforce.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Hypothesis Testing

The hypothesis testing for this study was tested with simple correlation and regression techniques. Hypothesis testing was carried out with the help of the IBM SPSS 27 application.

1. The First Hypothesis

Table 1. Results of Simple Correction Analysis of Variables X1 with Y Using Coefficient Table

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	119.280	3.804		31.353	0.000
	Career guidance (X1)	0.255	0.050	0.535	5.144	0.000

Based on Table 1, a T test can be carried out to test the degree of difference between one coefficient of a certain independent variable and another, if there is more than one independent variable resulting from the regression equation in determining the change in the value of the

dependent variable assessed with an alpha level of 5% which is an error in rejecting the data. Through this study, a significance value of 0.000 was obtained, the constant formed was 119,280, while the standard regression coefficient formed was 0.255. The form of the simple regression equation produced is: $Y = 119.280 + 0.255X_1$

The form of the regression equation above explains that every increase in career guidance by 1 scale will be related to an increase in student job readiness by 0.255 scale. Meanwhile, the score for job readiness already exists at 119,280 on a scale without career guidance. Based on Table 17, a t-value was obtained for the career guidance variable with a value of $t_{cal} = 5.114$ with a significance value of 0.000. To be able to find out how much of a relationship there is between the two variables above, the following assessment can be made.

If the value of $t_{cal} > t_{table}$ then there is a significant relationship, if $t_{cal} < t_{table}$ then there is no significant relationship. The value of the table at alpha 5% is $dk = N - k - 1$ or $dk = 68 - 3 - 1 = 64$, $t_{table} 2,000$. When comparing the $t_{cal} 5,114$ with the $t_{table} 2,000$, it can be seen that the value of the $t_{cal} > t_{table}$. Therefore, it can be concluded that there is a relationship between career guidance and the work readiness of students in SMK N 1 Sutera.

2. Second Hypothesis

Table 2. Results of Simple Correction Analysis of Variables X1 with Y Using Coefficient Table

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	113.708	4.588		24.783	0.000
	Prakerin's Experience	0.160	0.052	0.351	3.046	0.003

Based on Table 2, a T test can be carried out to test the degree of difference between one coefficient of a certain independent variable and another, if there is more than one independent variable resulting from the regression equation in determining the change in the value of the dependent variable assessed with an alpha level of 5% which is an error in rejecting the data. Through this study, a significance value of 0.000 was obtained, the constant formed was 113.708, while the standard regression coefficient formed was 0.160. The form of the simple regression equation produced is: $Y = 113.708 + 0.160X_1$

The form of regression equation above explains that every increase in Prakerin Experience by 1 scale will be related to an increase in student work readiness by 0.160 scale. Meanwhile, the score for job readiness already exists at 113,708 on a scale without Prakerin Experience. Based on Table 19, a t value was obtained for the Prakerin Experience variable with a value of $t_{cal} = 3.046$ with a significance value obtained of 0.003. To be able to find out how much of a relationship there is between the two variables above, the following assessment can be made.

If the value of $t_{cal} > t_{table}$ then there is a significant relationship, if $t_{cal} < t_{table}$ then there is no significant relationship. The value of the table at alpha 5% is $dk = N - k - 1$ or $dk = 68 - 3 - 1 = 64$, $t_{table} 2,000$. When comparing the $t_{cal} 3,046$ with the $t_{table} 2,000$, it can be found that the value of the $t_{cal} > t_{table}$. Therefore, it can be concluded that there is a relationship between the Prakerin Experience and the work readiness of students at SMK N 1 Sutera.

3. The Third Hypothesis

Table 21. Results of Simple Correction Analysis of Variables X1 with Y Using Coefficient Table

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	126.288	4.290		29.438	0.000
	Emotional Intelligence	0.291	0.047	0.606	6.195	0.000

Based on Table 3, a T test can be carried out to test the degree of difference between one coefficient of a certain independent variable and another, if there is more than one independent variable resulting from the regression equation in determining the change in the value of the dependent variable assessed with an alpha level of 5% which is an error in rejecting the data. Through this study, a significance value of 0.000 was obtained, the constant formed was 126,288, while the standard regression coefficient was 0.291. The form of the simple regression equation produced is: $Y = 126.288 + 0.291X_1$

The form of regression equation above explains that every increase in Emotional Intelligence by 1 scale will be related to an increase in student work readiness by 0.291 scale. Meanwhile, the score for job readiness already exists at 126,288 on a scale without Emotional Intelligence. Based on Table 21, a t value was obtained for the Emotional Intelligence variable with a tcal value = 6.195 with a significance value of 0.000. To be able to find out how much of a relationship there is between the two variables above, the following assessment can be made. If the value of tcal > ttable is there, then there is a significant relationship, if tcal < ttable then there is no significant relationship. The value of the table at alpha 5% is dk = N-k-1 or dk = 68-3-1 = 64, ttable 2,000. When comparing the tcal of 6,195 with the ttable of 2,000, it can be found that the value of tcal > ttable. Therefore, it can be concluded that there is a relationship between Emotional Intelligence and the work readiness of students at SMK N 1 Sutera.

4. The Fourth Hypothesis

Table 4. Results of Double Correlation Analysis of Variables X1,X2,X3 to Y

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics				
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.760 ^a	0.578	0.558	1.861	0.578	29.193	3	64	0.000

Based on the simple correlation analysis in Table 4, it can be seen that the price of the calculation correlation coefficient for N=68 and the error level of 5% is rtable=0.239. With the provision that if (rcalcul < rtable), there is no relationship between Career Guidance, Prekerin Experience and Emotional Intelligence together on the work readiness of students (H0). Furthermore, if (rcalcul > rtable), then there is a relationship between Career Guidance, Prekerin Experience and Emotional Intelligence together on the work readiness of students (Ha). Based on the results of the analysis carried out, a r > table value (0.760 > 0.239) was obtained, which showed that career guidance, pre-operative experience and emotional intelligence had a positive relationship with job readiness, which was 0.760. So it can be concluded that Career Guidance and Student Job Readiness have a significant correlation on the level of errors 5%.

DISCUSSION

The findings of this study indicate that career guidance significantly contributes to students' work readiness at SMK N 1 Sutera. With a correlation coefficient of $r = 0.535$ and a determination coefficient of $R^2 = 28.6\%$, it is evident that career guidance plays a vital role in shaping students' understanding of the world of work and helping them prepare for future careers. This result aligns with previous research that emphasizes the importance of structured career counseling in improving students' ability to plan, make informed decisions, and develop career-related competencies. When students receive proper guidance regarding job opportunities, industry expectations, and personal goal setting, they are more confident and prepared to face real workplace demands (Anwar, 2022).

Internship experience also showed a positive and significant effect on students' work readiness, with $r = 0.351$ and $R^2 = 12.3\%$. Although the contribution is lower compared to other variables, it still highlights the importance of hands-on experience in bridging the gap between theory and practice. Internships allow students to experience real work environments, understand job responsibilities, and practice technical as well as interpersonal skills. However, the relatively lower contribution could indicate that some internship programs may not yet fully align with students' educational backgrounds or may lack sufficient mentoring, thus limiting their overall impact. This suggests the need for schools and industry partners to enhance the structure and relevance of internship placements (Rohmani, 2023).

Interestingly, emotional intelligence emerged as the most dominant factor influencing work readiness, with the highest correlation value of $r = 0.606$ and $R^2 = 36.8\%$. This finding confirms that students' ability to manage their emotions, communicate effectively, and adapt socially is crucial for workplace success. In today's work environment, soft skills such as empathy, self-regulation, teamwork, and stress management are highly valued by employers. Emotional intelligence helps students remain composed under pressure, navigate social situations, and respond constructively to feedback, all of which are essential attributes in any professional setting. Therefore, integrating emotional intelligence development into vocational curricula could significantly enhance graduates' employability (Lasinta, 2024; Riyanti & Kasyadi, 2021).

the simultaneous analysis showed that the combination of career guidance, internship experience, and emotional intelligence contributes 57.8% to students' work readiness ($R^2 = 0.578$), indicating that these three factors collectively form a strong foundation for preparing students for the labor market. The statistical significance of the model ($F = 29.193$, $p = 0.000$) reinforces the importance of a multi-dimensional approach to vocational education. This implies that schools must not only provide technical training but also support students with career planning services, practical work experience, and emotional skill development to increase their competitiveness in the workforce (Herbert et al., 2020; Prikshat et al., 2020).

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of this study, it can be concluded that career guidance, internship experience, and emotional intelligence each contribute significantly to the work readiness of students at SMK N 1 Sutera. Among the three, emotional intelligence has the most dominant influence, followed by career guidance and internship experience. Together, these factors account for 57.8% of the variance in students' work readiness, indicating that a comprehensive approach

involving both technical and non-technical preparation is essential. Therefore, to enhance students' readiness to enter the workforce, vocational schools should prioritize the quality of career guidance services, ensure that internship programs are relevant and well-structured, and integrate emotional intelligence training into the educational process.

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST STATEMENT

Regarding this study, the author declares that there is no conflict of interest.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

Study concept and design: Benny Adeka Putra. Acquisition of data: Hasan Maksum. Analysis and interpretation of data: Wawan Purwanto. Drafting the manuscript: Benny Adeka Putra. Critical revision of the manuscript for important intellectual content: Waskito Waskito. Statistical analysis: Benny Adeka Putra.

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