



## THE EFFECT OF SOFT SKILLS AND HARD SKILLS ON THE WORK READINESS OF GRADE XII STUDENTS

### PENGARUH KETERAMPILAN LUNAK (SOFT SKILLS) DAN KETERAMPILAN KASAR (HARD SKILLS) TERHADAP KESIAPAN KERJA SISWA KELAS XII

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#### Abstract

This study aims to determine the effect of soft skills and hard skills on the work readiness of 12th-grade students at SMK Mahardika Batujajar. This study used a quantitative approach with a survey method. The population in this study was all 467 12th-grade students at SMK Mahardika Batujajar. The sample size was determined using the Chocran formula with a 10% error rate, resulting in a sample size of 86 respondents. The sampling technique used was simple random sampling. Data were collected through a Likert-scale questionnaire and analyzed using multiple linear regression analysis with the help of SPSS version 24. The results showed that soft skills partially had a positive and significant effect on students' work readiness, with a calculated t-value of 2.493, which is greater than the t-table of 1.989, and a significance level of 0.015, which is less than 0.05. Hard skills also have a positive and significant effect on students' work readiness, with a calculated t value of 6.597 which is greater than the t table of 1.989 and a significance level of 0.000 which is smaller than 0.05. Simultaneously, soft skills and hard skills have a significant effect on students' work readiness, with a calculated F value of 144.949 which is greater than the F table of 3.11 and a significance level of 0.000 which is smaller than 0.05. The coefficient of determination value of 0.772 indicates that 77.2% of the variation in students' work readiness can be explained by soft skills and hard skills, while the remaining 22.8% is influenced by other factors outside this study.

**Keywords :** Soft Skills, Hard Skills, Job Readiness.

#### Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui pengaruh soft skill dan hard skill terhadap kesiapan kerja siswa kelas XII SMK Mahardika Batujajar. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kuantitatif dengan metode survei. Populasi dalam penelitian ini adalah seluruh siswa kelas XII SMK Mahardika Batujajar yang berjumlah 467 siswa. Penentuan jumlah sampel dilakukan menggunakan rumus Chocran dengan



tingkat kesalahan sebesar 10%, sehingga diperoleh sampel sebanyak 86 responden. Teknik pengambilan sampel yang digunakan adalah simple random sampling. Data dikumpulkan melalui penyebaran kuesioner dengan skala Likert dan dianalisis menggunakan analisis regresi linier berganda dengan bantuan program SPSS versi 24. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa secara parsial soft skill berpengaruh positif dan signifikan terhadap kesiapan kerja siswa, dengan nilai  $t$  hitung sebesar 2,493 yang lebih besar dari  $t$  tabel sebesar 1,989 dan tingkat signifikansi sebesar 0,015 yang lebih kecil dari 0,05. Hard skill juga berpengaruh positif dan signifikan terhadap kesiapan kerja siswa, dengan nilai  $t$  hitung sebesar 6,597 yang lebih besar dari  $t$  tabel sebesar 1,989 dan tingkat signifikansi sebesar 0,000 yang lebih kecil dari 0,05. Secara simultan, soft skill dan hard skill berpengaruh signifikan terhadap kesiapan kerja siswa, dengan nilai  $F$  hitung sebesar 144,949 yang lebih besar dari  $F$  tabel sebesar 3,11 dan tingkat signifikansi sebesar 0,000 yang lebih kecil dari 0,05. Nilai koefisien determinasi sebesar 0,772 menunjukkan bahwa sebesar 77,2% variasi kesiapan kerja siswa dapat dijelaskan oleh soft skill dan hard skill, sedangkan sisanya sebesar 22,8% dipengaruhi oleh faktor lain di luar penelitian ini.

**Kata Kunci :** soft skill, hard skill, kesiapan kerja.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The increasingly competitive development of the labor market demands that educational graduates, particularly those from vocational education, possess optimal job readiness. Vocational High Schools (Sekolah Menengah Kejuruan/SMK) are designed to produce graduates who are ready to enter the workforce in accordance with their areas of expertise. However, in practice, SMK graduates still face various challenges in entering the labor market, as reflected in the relatively high unemployment rate among vocational secondary education graduates.

Based on data from the Central Bureau of Statistics (Badan Pusat Statistik/BPS), the open unemployment rate among SMK graduates remains relatively higher compared to other levels of education. This condition indicates that although SMK graduates are equipped with vocational skills, they have not been fully absorbed into the labor market. The BPS data suggest the existence of a gap between the competencies of SMK graduates and the needs of industry, indicating that job readiness among SMK graduates remains an issue that requires serious attention.

Job readiness is not only related to the ability to obtain employment but also reflects an individual's preparedness to carry out job duties and responsibilities effectively. According to Auliya (2020), job readiness is a condition that encompasses mental readiness, knowledge, skills, and attitudes in facing the world of work. Therefore, the job readiness of SMK graduates cannot be separated from the quality of the educational process they receive during their schooling.

One factor influencing job readiness is soft skills. Soft skills are related to personal and interpersonal abilities, such as communication, teamwork, discipline, and responsibility. Saptoto, Asri, and Palupi (2024) state that soft skills play an important role in shaping professional attitudes in the workplace. This is supported by Rosi (2023), who explains that vocational education graduates with strong soft skills tend to be better able to adapt to the demands of the labor market.



In addition to soft skills, hard skills are also a primary factor in the job readiness of SMK graduates. Hard skills are associated with the mastery of technical skills and professional competencies relevant to specific fields of work. Rahmadhani, Ahyuardi, and Suryati (2022) state that hard skills serve as the main foundation for SMK graduates to meet industry demands. Adequate mastery of hard skills increases the likelihood of SMK graduates being absorbed into the workforce.

This condition is in line with Tyson's (2020) view, which states that low job readiness is often caused by weak soft skills, even when individuals already possess adequate technical skills. Therefore, a balance between soft skills and hard skills is a crucial factor in shaping the job readiness of graduates.

## 2. RESEARCH METHOD

The objects of this study include the variables of soft skills ( $X_1$ ), hard skills ( $X_2$ ), and job readiness ( $Y$ ). The research subjects are twelfth-grade students of SMK Mahardika Batujajar. The selection of these subjects is based on the consideration that final-year students have received both theoretical and practical learning, making them relevant for measuring job readiness (Sugiyono).

The population of this study consists of all twelfth-grade students of SMK Mahardika Batujajar, totaling 467 students. The sample size was determined using the Cochran formula with a 10% margin of error, resulting in 86 respondents. The sampling technique used was simple random sampling, in which each member of the population has an equal opportunity to be selected as a sample (Sugiyono).

Research data were collected using a questionnaire arranged in the form of written statements. Each statement was measured using a Likert scale to determine the level of respondents' agreement with the variables under study (Sugiyono).

The research instrument was a questionnaire developed based on the indicators of each variable. Prior to its use, the instrument was tested through validity and reliability tests to ensure its feasibility as a data collection tool (Sugiyono).

Data analysis techniques included descriptive analysis and multiple linear regression analysis. Before conducting regression analysis, the data were tested using classical assumption tests, which included normality, multicollinearity, and heteroscedasticity tests. Hypothesis testing was carried out using the t-test and F-test with the assistance of SPSS software version 24 (Sugiyono).

## 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results of the descriptive analysis indicate that the soft skills of twelfth-grade students at SMK Mahardika Batujajar are in the good category. This finding suggests that, in general, students possess adequate communication skills, teamwork, discipline, and responsibility as provisions for entering the workforce. This result is consistent with Auliya's



view, which states that job readiness is influenced by an individual's mental preparedness and attitudes in facing job demands.

The hard skill variable is also classified in the good to very good category. This condition indicates that students have mastered technical skills in accordance with the competencies learned at school. These findings support the view of Rahmadhani, Ahyanuardi, and Suryati, who state that mastery of technical skills is a fundamental foundation for SMK graduates in meeting industry needs.

Job readiness among students is categorized as good. This indicates that students generally possess sufficient mental readiness, knowledge, skills, and work attitudes to enter the workforce. However, variations in respondents' answers indicate that the level of job readiness among students is not yet evenly distributed.

Validity testing was conducted to determine the extent to which the research instrument was able to measure the variables under study, namely soft skills, hard skills, and job readiness. The validity test was performed by comparing the calculated r-value with the r-table value. Based on the results, all statement items for the soft skill, hard skill, and job readiness variables have calculated r-values greater than the r-table value. This indicates that all questionnaire items are valid and suitable for use as data collection instruments in this study.

These results indicate that each indicator used is able to represent the constructs of the variables being studied, so the data obtained can be used for further analysis.

Reliability testing was conducted to determine the level of consistency of the research instrument in measuring the variables. Reliability testing was performed using Cronbach's Alpha values. The results show that the Cronbach's Alpha values for the soft skill, hard skill, and job readiness variables are above the minimum threshold of 0.60. Therefore, the research instrument is declared reliable, meaning that the questionnaire has good consistency and can provide stable measurement results.

A reliable instrument indicates that respondents' answers to each statement item are relatively consistent and can be trusted to reflect actual conditions.

The normality test was conducted to determine whether the research data were normally distributed. The normality test was carried out using the Kolmogorov–Smirnov method. Based on the test results, the significance value is greater than 0.05, indicating that the data in this study are normally distributed.

Normally distributed data indicate that the regression model meets one of the classical assumptions, allowing the regression analysis results to be interpreted validly.

The multicollinearity test was conducted to determine whether there was a strong relationship among the independent variables in the regression model. This test was carried out by examining the Tolerance and Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) values. The results show that the Tolerance values for the soft skill and hard skill variables are greater than 0.10 and the VIF values are less than 10.



Thus, it can be concluded that there is no multicollinearity among the independent variables. This indicates that the soft skill and hard skill variables operate independently and each contributes to students' job readiness.

The heteroscedasticity test was conducted to determine whether there was unequal variance of residuals in the regression model. Based on the test results, the significance values for each variable are greater than 0.05, indicating that heteroscedasticity does not occur.

These results indicate that the regression model has constant residual variance, meets the classical assumptions, and is suitable for multiple linear regression analysis.

Correlation analysis was conducted to determine the strength of the relationship between soft skills and hard skills with job readiness. The correlation test results show that there is a positive relationship between soft skills and job readiness, as well as between hard skills and job readiness. The strength of these relationships falls into the strong category, indicating that increases in soft skills and hard skills tend to be followed by increases in students' job readiness.

This positive relationship indicates that both independent variables play an important role in shaping the job readiness of SMK students.

The coefficient of determination test results show an  $R^2$  value of 0.772. This value indicates that 77.2% of the variation in students' job readiness can be explained by soft skills and hard skills. Meanwhile, the remaining 22.8% is influenced by other factors outside this study, such as work experience, motivation, family environment, and other external factors.

The high  $R^2$  value indicates that the research model has strong explanatory power for the dependent variable.

Multiple linear regression analysis was conducted to examine the effect of soft skills and hard skills on students' job readiness. The analysis results show that the regression coefficients for both soft skills and hard skills are positive. This indicates that improvements in soft skills and hard skills are followed by increases in students' job readiness.

The resulting regression model indicates that both independent variables make a significant contribution to the dependent variable.

#### **a. The Effect of Soft Skills on Job Readiness**

The results of the t-test indicate that the calculated t-value for the soft skill variable is 2.493, which is greater than the t-table value of 1.989, with a significance value of  $0.015 < 0.05$ . This indicates that soft skills have a positive and significant effect on students' job readiness.

These findings confirm that non-technical skills such as communication, discipline, and teamwork play an important role in shaping the job readiness of vocational high school students.

#### **b. The Effect of Hard Skills on Job Readiness**

The results of the t-test show that the calculated t-value for the hard skill variable is 6.597, which is greater than the t-table value of 1.989, with a significance value of  $0.000 < 0.05$ . This indicates that hard skills have a positive and significant effect on students' job readiness.



These results demonstrate that mastery of technical skills in accordance with specific areas of expertise is a dominant factor in enhancing students' job readiness.

### c. The Effect of Soft Skills and Hard Skills on Job Readiness

The results of the F-test indicate that the calculated F-value is 144.949, which is greater than the F-table value of 3.11, with a significance value of  $0.000 < 0.05$ . This indicates that, simultaneously, soft skills and hard skills have a significant effect on students' job readiness. These findings reinforce the results of the partial tests, confirming that students' job readiness is influenced by a combination of technical and non-technical skills working together.

## 4. CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the study and the discussion conducted, it can be concluded that soft skills and hard skills play an important role in shaping the job readiness of twelfth-grade students at SMK Mahardika Batujajar. The analysis results indicate that soft skills have a positive and significant effect on students' job readiness, meaning that non-technical abilities such as communication, teamwork, discipline, and professional attitudes contribute to determining students' level of readiness to enter the workforce.

In addition, hard skills are also proven to have a positive and significant effect on students' job readiness. These findings indicate that mastery of technical skills in accordance with specific areas of expertise is a dominant factor in improving the job readiness of vocational high school students. Thus, students who possess strong hard skills tend to demonstrate higher levels of job readiness.

Simultaneously, soft skills and hard skills have a significant effect on students' job readiness. This indicates that job readiness cannot be developed solely through the mastery of technical or non-technical skills separately, but rather through a balanced integration of both. The substantial contribution of these two variables to job readiness suggests that strengthening both soft skills and hard skills should be a primary focus of the learning process in vocational high schools.

Based on these conclusions, it can be emphasized that improving the job readiness of students at SMK Mahardika Batujajar should be carried out through learning strategies that continuously integrate the development of soft skills and hard skills, so that graduates possess greater competitiveness and better preparedness to face the world of work.

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