

Abstract

Vocational Schools and the Unemployment Rate in Indonesia: What Can Be Learned From Japan

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Graduates from vocational schools (*SMKs*) are expected to be able and ready to work as experts in their field from day one of employment. However, in reality the absorption rate of graduates in the work place is still far from the expected level despite the Indonesian government efforts to strengthen *SMKs* over the last 20 years. In addition to employment availability that is not yet in line with the number of those graduates, the quality factor (match between what is needed and what has been gained) by the graduates is still the main cause of the many graduates not being promptly employed. Obviously, a stronger connection between the education sector and industry sectors and stakeholders at the local community level is needed. The goal of education is to empower people, both in terms of knowledge and settlement of contextual problems they face daily.

Using the data from Statistics Indonesia and Ministry of Education and Culture (MOEC) of 34 provinces in Indonesia for the year 2017, this empirical study presents the cross-section regression by Ordinary Least Square (OLS) method. The research on national data using several education variables was used in order to check the relationship between vocational school coursework and the unemployment rate in Indonesia. From the estimated results, the author concludes that the quality of students and school curriculum matching industrial needs-- for tourism expertise, is proven to have a positive and significant effect on the unemployment rate. On the other hand, as for quality of teachers and school curriculum matching industrial needs-- in the construction field, a negative and significant effect on the unemployment rate is witnessed.

Based on the results and a few other studies regarding vocational education in Japan, the author made some suggestion for Indonesian national policies: 1) cooperate with local industry; 2) provide greater attention to the local potential of each province; 3) prioritize professionals in the industry for recruitment of teachers; and 4) extend the formal education period of vocational schools for additional one or two years.

Keywords: vocational schools, unemployment rate, quality of students, quality of teachers, school skill match industry needs.



Intisari

Sekolah Menengah Kejuruan (SMK) dan Tingkat Pengangguran di Indonesia: Apa Yang Dapat Dipelajari dari Jepang

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Lulusan dari Sekolah Kejuruan Menengah (SMK) diharapkan mampu dan siap bekerja sebagai ahli di bidangnya. Namun, dalam kenyataannya tingkat penyerapan lulusan di dunia kerja masih jauh dari yang diharapkan. Selain ketersediaan lapangan kerja yang belum sesuai dengan jumlah lulusan tersebut, faktor kualitas lulusan masih menjadi penyebab utama banyak lulusan yang tidak segera dipekerjakan. Tujuan pendidikan adalah untuk memberdayakan masyarakat, baik dalam hal pengetahuan maupun penyelesaian masalah kontekstual yang mereka hadapi sehari-hari.

Menggunakan data dari Badan Pusat Statistik (BPS) dan Kementerian Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan untuk 34 provinsi di Indonesia pada tahun 2017, studi empiris ini menyajikan regresi *cross-section* dengan metode OLS. Dari hasil estimasi, penulis menyimpulkan bahwa kualitas siswa dan kurikulum sekolah yang sesuai dengan kebutuhan industri - untuk keahlian pariwisata, terbukti memiliki efek positif dan signifikan terhadap tingkat pengangguran. Di sisi lain, kualitas guru dan kurikulum sekolah yang sesuai dengan kebutuhan industri - di bidang konstruksi, memiliki efek negatif dan signifikan terhadap tingkat pengangguran.

Berdasarkan hasil dan beberapa penelitian lain tentang pendidikan kejuruan di Jepang, penulis membuat beberapa saran untuk kebijakan nasional Indonesia: 1) bekerja sama dengan industri lokal; 2) memberikan perhatian yang lebih besar pada potensi lokal masing-masing provinsi; 3) memprioritaskan profesional di industri untuk perekrutan guru; dan 4) memperpanjang periode pendidikan formal SMK selama satu atau dua tahun tambahan.

Kata kunci: sekolah menengah kejuruan, tingkat pengangguran, kualitas murid, kualitas guru, kecocokan industri dengan ketrampilan.