

THE INFLUENCE OF PSYCHOLOGICAL CAPITAL AND SOCIAL SKILLS ON WORK READINESS OF VOCATIONAL STUDENTS IN EAST JAVA

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to characterize the role that social skills and psychological capital, which are elements of soft skills, play in helping East Java Province vocational high school students become more prepared for the workforce. The study's demographic and sample consisted of 1000 students from East Java Province's Vocational High Schools. 300 individuals were chosen at random to provide samples. The method of gathering data makes use of a questionnaire. Using Smart PLS version 3.0, partial least squares (PLS) data analysis was employed in this study. The research yielded the following findings. 1) Work preparedness is positively impacted by psychological capital; 2) Social skills have a beneficial impact on work readiness.

Keywords: psychological capital, social skills, work readiness

INTRODUCTION

Kemendikbud (2008) states that since 2008, the Ministry of Education in Indonesia has reduced the proportion of general education to vocational education from 70% to 30%. This change is scheduled to take effect by 2025. This strategy was based on the general assessment of the high secondary school dropout rate conducted by the education ministry. Only 17–20% of high school graduates continue their education each year; the bulk leave to pursue employment. Priyono and Nankervis (2019) claim that recent high school graduates are not as prepared for the workforce due to their lack of skills. It is anticipated that choices for vocational education would replace general education as a result of this ratio change. As a developing nation, this strategy is quite effective. In addition to lowering school dropout rates, it also improves long-term workforce preparedness (Finlay et al., 1999). Additionally, this policy has a big influence. There is an excessive expansion of new school units in vocational fields. Vocational students will make up 49.1% of the student body in 2021 as the school community's interest in the field has grown significantly. The learning process solely concentrates on hard skills because the school is new and has numerous constraints; soft skills have not been developed (I M et al., 2018). Employers are therefore unhappy with the low soft skills capability of graduates of vocational education (Wahyudi, Suharno, and N. A. Pambudi, 2023).

Market demand and the economic situation create uncertain job opportunities. The demands for workforce competency are evolving due to technology advancements and changes in industry (Kipper et al., 2021). Donald et al. (2018) and Succi & Canovi (2020) assert that in order to improve their career prospects, recent graduates must have competencies in addition

to knowledge and academic credentials. Hard skills and soft skills are two more types of competences that are required for work. According to Tripathy (2020), soft skills are consequently essential for success in the workplace. Preparedness for the workforce is the aim of vocational education. Lack of absorption, not working in the necessary area, and continuing education have all been blamed for this goal's poor achievement (Jackson & Collings, 2018; Priyono & Nankervis, 2019; Soelistiyono & Feijuan, 2022). Having the appropriate skills after graduation is essential to landing a successful job (Suleman, 2018). Businesses are worried that schools aren't doing enough to get kids ready for the workforce (Hurrell, 2016). Job preparedness is adapted to the unique requirements of different businesses in order to speed up the integration of recent graduates into the workforce. According to Rahmat et al. (2016), the primary reason of unemployment is job seekers' incapacity to prove appropriate experience and knowledge.

Developing sophisticated skills is the main goal of occupational training and education. Research from a number of nations demonstrates that work ability has fallen short of expectations (Azmi et al., 2018; Eldeen et al., 2018; Lisá et al., 2019; Low et al., 2019). According to Nuryanto and Eryandi (2020), the soft skills component is the primary source of vocational school graduates' weakness as new workers. Due to a lack of understanding among its stakeholders, many nations are unable to successfully execute this education (Suharno et al., 2020). According to Mahmud et al. (2019), soft skills positively influence students' confidence in their job choices. According to Reis and Bernath (2017), soft skills are necessary to obtain employment and perform well in work. Decision-making, employee engagement, productivity, safety, and character are all impacted by a lack of soft skill expertise (Dean, 2017). If a person meets the requirements for a position, he might be considered ready to work.

Based on these perspectives, studies on the impact of social skills and psychological capital on the employability of students attending vocational schools in the province of East Java were carried out.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The following explains the theoretical basis used as a frame of reference and analysis tool for the findings in this research, as follows.

A. Work Readiness

Six markers of well-developed soft skills are found in research on work preparedness, whereas the other three have not been at their best. Wahyudi, Suharno, and N. A. Pambudi (2024) assert that employers' participation in the educational process fosters the development of soft skills for job readiness. Previous researchers have examined the relationship between self-efficacy and work preparedness in the vocational school sector in the period of Building Information Modeling (BIM) technology (Rosidah and Sutirman, 2023). According to the results (A. Y. Permana, Fitriani, and T. Aulia, 2023), presentation anxiety decreases with increasing self-efficacy. This framework is conceptual, according to A. Shore and T. Dinning (2023), and further study is required to investigate its applicability when staff members create these sorts of modules to comprehend the interplay of components throughout the student learning experience. Another study on the readiness of recently graduated nurses discovered that they had trouble adjusting to their new roles and managing stress throughout their first

year of practice. Determining nurses' practice readiness may help develop strategies to support their work readiness during the first two years of their nursing employment. The study found that when they entered clinical practice, more over half (57.5%) identified three challenging abilities and procedures: (i) reacting to emergencies; (ii) caring for a tracheostomy; and (iii) maintaining a chest tube. Nurses in their second year after graduation were more confident in their abilities to prioritize perawatan needs ($p = 0.04$), care for the dying ($p = 0.004$), and solve difficulties ($p = 0.003$) than those in their first year. S. H. Lim, S. Y. Ang, F. Aloweni, K. C. E. Siow, S. B. L. Koh, and T. C. Ayre (2024) reported that they also considered themselves to be good problem solvers ($p = 0.03$) and concluded that it is critical to support nurses' practice readiness in terms of their confidence and development of more complex skills after their first year of practice. Additional studies on the Work Readiness Scale and the Youth Teamwork Scale. The study's findings indicate that students' preparedness for the workforce is partially and concurrently influenced by their communication and teamwork abilities. Aside from that, this ability is closely correlated with vocational school students' degree of preparedness for the workforce. According to M. K. Y. Hidayatulloh and H. Ashoumi (2022), teachers play a part in helping kids develop their communication and teamwork abilities in the classroom, with the help of close parental monitoring while they are not in class.

B. Psychological Capital

Research on psychological traits that concentrate on personality and values (Baay et al. 2014; Vuolo et al. 2014), motivation and self-efficacy (Heckhausen et al. 2013), and perceptions of job opportunities (Reeskens and Oorschot 2012) demonstrates the importance of psychological capital in a career. According to Goldsmith et al. (1997) and Luthans et al. (2004), students can utilize psychological capital as a strategy to prepare for the workforce. According to Baluku et al. (2018), psychological capital is a resource feature that describes the optimistic outlook required for professional achievement. In the meantime, experience and mastery during the educational process can strengthen psychological capital (Luthans et al. 2004; Luthans and Youssef-Morgan 2017); people with high psychological capital will have an effect on motivation and career attitudes (M. M. Baluku, E. N. Mugabi, J. Nansamba, L. Matagi, P. Onderi, and K. Otto, 2021). Previous studies have examined the primary bibliometric indicators of productivity, cooperation, and the influence of scientific literature on students' psychological capital in order to examine the significance of psychological capital. Based on 31 studies, 2020 was determined to have produced the most information on the topic. With 61 articles on students' psychological capital, China has the most. With six documents, Curtin University has the most texts on this topic. The most prominent journal, "Revista Argentina de Clínica Psicol?ogica," has ten publications. Yes. The Zhang. Bissessar, C. possess three papers each, making them the most productive authors. Joe. M. Guerrero-Alcedo, J. P. Palacios Garay, L. C. Espina-Romero, and F. In June 2021, this bibliometric analysis will be the first "Review" of its sort, according to R. (2022) Jaimes Álvarez. The importance of psychological capital on important facets of entrepreneurial sustainability, not merely the success of launching a new business, has been shown by research on psychological capital and employment. The objective is to explain the potential for future theoretical and practical design developments (J. J. Tang, 2020). Students' self-perception of their future work can motivate them to take initiative,

according to other studies. Through individual resources like academic interest and resilience, future work may result in proactive professional behavior. Examining the mediating relationships between future work, academic passion, and resilience can help anticipate this. 802 undergraduate students ($M = 23.2$, $SD = 2.7$) between the ages of 18 and 27 were recruited for this study (M. Bernabé, R. Merhi, A. Lisboa, and F. Palaña, 2023). Additionally, Lee and Kim looked into psychological factors. This study looked at the factors influencing young Korean job seekers' employment in small and medium-sized firms (SMEs). This study concentrates on social and psychological elements based on the concept of planned behavior, whereas earlier research concentrated on elements such as individual characteristics, abilities, and the surroundings of job seekers. 700 jobless or job-seeking individuals between the ages of 19 and 29 were recruited using stratified random sampling. They filled up an online survey with questions regarding their demographics and opinions on SMEs. The findings demonstrated that attitudes (0.233) and perceived behavioral control (0.078) had less of an impact on SME work intentions than subjective norms (0.434). Furthermore, negative societal perceptions of SMEs lower SME work intentions among young Korean job seekers with higher education (J. Lee and D. Kim, 2024). The impact of subjective norms on SME work intentions differs according to education level and place of residence. Another study used a two-sequence (field and panel) research approach to find knowledge gaps in the antecedents of employee resilience motivation. The findings demonstrated that resilience was enhanced by employment and business assistance, as well as by having a stronger learning culture and organizational adaptability. According to R. N. S. Robinson, H. Yan, and Y. Jiang (2024), one important factor for employee resilience is the motivational state of self-efficacy.

C. Social Skills

Social skills are a fundamental element in 21st century professional standards because they allow building positive interpersonal relationships and functioning in different contexts, especially in workforce dynamics (M. Hernández, P. María, G. Sánchez, and E. José, 2023). Since middle childhood is the ideal period to develop social skills, the subject of whether peer social skills regulate the link between interpersonal perfectionism traits and psychological consequences has been researched (Y. A. Lee, H. G. Park, J. E. Cheon, K. G. Rice, and Y. H. Kim, 2024). Similar studies have also been carried out to support individuals with autism through training programs that emphasize social and cognitive skills training to enhance participants' professional abilities. The project uses an individual placement and support strategy to involve a variety of partners in mentoring, skill and interest identification, and cognitive and psychological assistance for individuals with autism. The findings demonstrate the effectiveness of neuropsychological training, particularly with regard to inhibitory control and high employment status at project completion. These results reinforce and emphasize the value of a multidisciplinary strategy that considers the needs, expectations, and tendencies of individuals with autism in their professional lives (P. Program, 2023). In order to determine if these factors may lessen the association between stress and academic adaptation, another study comparing first-year and third-year students' levels of stress, self-efficacy, social skills, and academic adaptation was carried out. It was found that social skills and self-efficacy controlled the association between academic flexibility and stress (M. Eduarda and D. M. Jardim, 2023).

A comparable study conducted in India found a correlation between social intelligence and employee engagement and concluded that effective engagement requires a high level of social intelligence. The particular objective of this study is to determine the social intelligence notion using a sample of 150 male and 50 female professional employees. Employees having strong social intelligence scores fared highly on engagement indicators, according to a 2023 study by T. Sanwal and P. Sareen that showed social skills to be the most significant predictor of engagement. According to additional studies, intellect is one of the characteristics that affect a person's success at work. This study examined the causal association between excellent behavior, social skills, and personality using a questionnaire created especially for small and medium-sized business owners (M. Irfan and M. S. Malik, 2023). S. Gasparro, S. Bennett, K. Wyka, A. Temkin-Yu, A. Damianides, and R. Beaumont (2023) state that solutions usually need a mutual knowledge of children's social-emotional needs and the use of regular support measures in both the home and school setting. This is due to the fact that job preparedness is also influenced by variations in the caliber of social skills. Improving social-emotional skills would have an impact on the quality of relationships with peers as well as improving classroom climate and happiness, according to research on new school-based social-emotional learning for the first year of high school that evaluated the effects on social-emotional skills, peer connectedness, and classroom climate of students and teachers (I. Pollak et al., 2024).

RESEARCH METHOD

The purpose of this quantitative study, which employs a correlative descriptive research design, is to examine the relationship between social skills and psychological capital characteristics and vocational school students' preparedness for the workforce. The study's population consisted of 1000 students from East Java Province's Vocational High School. 300 individuals were chosen at random to provide samples. The method of gathering data makes use of a questionnaire. Partial Least Square (PLS) using Smart PLS version 3.0, which has two components the outer model and the inner model was the data analysis method employed in this study. The loading factor and Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values, followed by the values from Fornell Larcker and Cross-Loadings, are used to quantify discriminant validity in the outer model stage of validity analysis. Reliability analysis using Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability is used to test the outer model. Meanwhile, at the inner model stage, we use Determination Coefficient Analysis (R²), Predictive Relevance Analysis (Q²), Effect Size Test (f²), Model Suitability Test (Goodness of Fit/GoF), and Path Coefficients Test.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The findings from the data analysis of this research include the variables of psychological capital, social skills, and work readiness are presented in the following table 1.

AVE value is >0.5 , indicating that all variables have test feasibility, and each indicator's outer loadings value is greater than 0.7, indicating good validity. In the meanwhile, Fornell Larcker's results of the discriminant validity analysis show that all variables have an AVE root value larger than the correlation between constructs in a model, indicating that testing is feasible. The cross loadings value indicates that every variable indicator effectively reflects the variables. Table 2 displays the reliability analysis test results for this study. Each variable's

Cronbach's alpha value is more than 0.6, indicating that the research data is dependable. Each variable's composite reliability score is more than 0.7, indicating the reliability of the research findings.

According to Table 3 above, the work readiness variable's R Square value is 0.752, or 75.2%, which may be explained by other study factors. However, additional variables outside of this study can account for 24.8% of the work readiness variable that cannot be explained by other variables in this study. The R Square results in this research can be said to be in the strong group.

Based on Table 4 above, the results of the predictive relevance test (Q2) through the blindfolding stage have a value of 0.428 for the work readiness variable. Thus, the relationship between constructs in the variables in this research is considered relevant in measuring the research model that has been formed previously.

Based on Table 5, it can be explained that the magnitude of the influence of the collaboration variable on work readiness is 0.126, meaning that this variable has a small changing effect on work readiness. Then the magnitude of the influence of social skills on work readiness is 0.843, meaning this variable has a large changing effect on work readiness.

Based on the AVE results shown in table 1, the Goodness of Fit calculation results are 0.687, which means that this research model has a relatively good fit.

The psychological capital variable displays an original sample value of 0.237, a t-statistic of 2.019 or greater than 1.96, and a P value of 0.044 or less than 0.05, according to Table 6 above. The initial sample value for the social skills variable is 0.552, the t-statistic is 5.545 or higher than 1.96, and the P values are 0.000 or less than 0.05.

Based on the results of hypothesis testing using the bootstrapping method by looking at the t-statistic values and P-Values, the discussion of this research hypothesis is as follows.

H1: There is a positive influence of psychological capital on work readiness

Work preparedness and psychological capital have a favorable and significant relationship, according to the results of hypothesis testing. Psychological capital is becoming more widely acknowledged as an essential part of contemporary professionalism and education. In order to shape work preparedness in the workplace, psychological capital becomes crucial. This supports the findings of Baay et al. (2014) that psychological capital is a crucial aspect of a career. The findings of this study corroborate those of research by Baluku et al. (2018), which claims that psychological capital is a valuable resource that characterizes the optimistic outlook required for professional success.

H2: There is a positive influence of social skills on work readiness.

The test's findings demonstrate a strong and positive correlation between social skills and preparedness for the workforce. The results of this research are in line with research conducted by M. Hernández, P. María, G. Sánchez, and E. José (2023) stating that Social skills are a fundamental element in 21st century professional standards because they allow building positive interpersonal relationships and functioning in different contexts, especially in workforce dynamics. According to research done in India by T. Sanwal and P. Sareen in 2023, there is a connection between social intelligence and employee engagement, and effective engagement requires a high level of social intelligence. The particular objective of this study

is to determine the social intelligence notion using a sample of 150 male and 50 female professional employees. The study's conclusions showed that social skills were the most important predictor of engagement and that workers with high social intelligence scores did well on engagement tests. This research is also in line with research conducted by M. Irfan and M. S. Malik (2023) which states that the factors that contribute to a person's success at work include good intelligence, social skills and personality as a causal relationship. The findings of this study also support research by S. Gasparro, S. Bennett, K. Wyka, A. Temkin-Yu, A. Damianides, and R. Beaumont (2023), which claims that variations in social skill quality also affect a child's readiness to work. Therefore, for interventions to be as effective as possible, parents and teachers must have a common understanding of the child's social-emotional needs and employ consistent support techniques in both the home and school settings.

Figures and Tables

Table 1. Average Analysis Results *Variance Extracted (AVE)*

Variable	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)	Information
Psychological capital	0,674	Valid
Social skills	0,616	Valid
Work readiness	0,611	Valid

* Source: SmartPLS data processing version 3.0

Table 2. Reliability Analysis Results

Variable	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability	Information
Psychological capital	0,835	0,891	Reliable
Social skills	0,789	0,864	Reliable
Work readiness	0,872	0,904	Reliable

* Source: SmartPLS data processing version 3.0

Table 3. Coefficient Analysis Results Determination (R2)

Variable	R Square
Work readiness	0,752

* Source: SmartPLS data processing version 3.0

Table 4. Predictive Test Results Relevance (Q2)

Variable	R Square
Work readiness	0,428

*Source: SmartPLS data processing version 3.0

Table 5. Effect Size Test Results (f2)

Variable	Work readiness
Psychological capital	0,126
Social skills	0,843

*Source: SmartPLS data processing version 3.0

Table 6. Path Coefficients Results

	Original Sample	t-statistik	P Values	Results
MP → KK	0,237	2,019	0,044	Supported
KS → KK	0,552	5,545	0,000	Supported

*Source: SmartPLS data processing version 3.0

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of data analysis and hypothesis testing in this research, it can be concluded that psychological capital and good social skills have a very important role in shaping vocational school students' work readiness.

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