
Soft Skills Academy: Preparing The Young Generation People For The Workplace

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Abstract – This community service program aims to improve the work readiness of the younger generation, especially students in grades X and XI of SMK Industri Jababeka, in facing the challenges of an increasingly competitive world of work. This activity is designed to equip participants with essential soft skills, including effective communication, leadership, time management, teamwork, and problem solving, in order to increase their competitiveness and confidence in entering the professional world. The program implementation method includes the preparation stage in the form of a participant needs survey and preparation of training modules; the implementation stage through interactive material delivery, discussions, case study simulations, and teamwork in simulation projects; and the evaluation stage through satisfaction surveys and preparation of activity reports. This activity was attended by 46 participants, with the results showing that 85% of participants experienced a significant increase in understanding and soft skills, reflected in their ability to create a curriculum vitae (CV), carry out job interview simulations, and show improved communication skills, teamwork, and time management. This soft skills training program proved effective in improving participants' work readiness and is expected to become a sustainable model for competent human resource development in other regions.

Keywords: *Soft skills, Job Readiness, HR Development*

Introduction

In facing the era of globalization and the industrial revolution 4.0, the world of work is experiencing rapid and competitive changes. Vocational high school (SMK) graduates as prospective workers are required to not only master technical skills (hard skills), but also have soft skills that include communication, leadership, time management, teamwork, and problem solving. Unfortunately, there are still many SMK graduates who do not have comprehensive work readiness due to the lack of structured and applicable soft skills training (Utomo & Wijayanti, 2022). Based on initial observations at SMK Industri Jababeka, it was found that most students do not understand the importance of soft skills in the professional world, which has an impact on their low self-confidence and adaptability in facing work challenges.

The purpose of this community service activity is to improve the work readiness of students of SMK Industri Jababeka through practice-based soft skills training that is relevant to the needs of the industrial world. The training focused on five key skills: effective communication, leadership, time management, teamwork, and problem solving, which are key components in forming a competent and professional workforce (Prayitno et al., 2021).

The main questions to be answered in this program are: first what is the extent of students' understanding and mastery of soft skills before and after the training? The second what soft skills are the most difficult and most needed by students?. And finally to what extent is this training program able to significantly improve students' work readiness?.

The scope of this activity focused on students in grades X and XI at SMK Industri Jababeka, with a total of 46 participants. The training was designed as an intensive program

consisting of theory sessions, interactive discussions, case studies, and work simulations that enabled participants to learn in a contextual and applicable manner.

This activity has important significance in supporting the development of superior and ready-to-use human resources. For students, this activity increases their confidence and competitiveness in the world of work. For schools, this program strengthens synergies with the industrial world and supports the achievement of the vision of vocational education. Broadly speaking, the Soft Skills Academy program is expected to become a sustainable soft skills development model that can be replicated in various other vocational schools in Indonesia (Fitria & Hidayat, 2023; Utomo & Wijayanti, 2022).

Method

The seminar with the theme "Soft Skills Academy: Preparing The Young Generation People For The Workplace" was held on April 30, 2025 at SMK Industri Jababeka Cikarang. This seminar aims to prepare the younger generation to face competition in the world of work. The series of events were comprehensively organized, to provide theoretical and practical learning experiences. The main purpose of this activity is to equip participants with new insights, skills, and enthusiasm in preparing themselves to be part of an adaptive, competitive workforce, and ready to face global challenges.

The activity began at 09.00 WIB with the preparation of the room, participants, and setting the seminar area, then opened with a prayer together and remarks led by Prof. Dr. Dedi Rianto Rahadi, M.M. as the supervisor and Yohanes Engkos Gunawan as the chairman, followed by the delivery of material by Mr. Sofyan Iskandar HR Manager of Sheraton Soekarno Hatta Airport Hotel related to the material "SSoft Skills Academy: Preparing The Young Generation People For The Workplace"

This seminar consists of four sessions, namely material delivery sessions, simulation sessions, question and answer sessions and evaluation sessions. In the material delivery session, participants will get a theoretical and practical understanding of the topics discussed, which are delivered interactively by experienced facilitators. Furthermore, in the simulation session, participants are invited to apply the knowledge they have gained through case studies or hands-on practice, in order to strengthen their understanding and improve their skills. The question and answer session became a forum for participants to dig deeper, express opinions, and discuss actively in order to broaden their horizons. Finally, the activity ended with an evaluation that aimed to assess the participants' level of understanding, measure the effectiveness of the training, and provide constructive feedback for future improvements.

As a form of appreciation for the school's partnership and support for the implementation of this activity, the committee symbolically presented certificates and award plaques to SMK Binamitra Cikarang and to the speakers. This is an appreciative moment that emphasizes the importance of collaboration between educational institutions in fostering the work readiness of the younger generation.

Results

Human resource training through soft skills development has been successfully implemented through the Soft Skills Academy program at SMK Industri Jababeka on April 30, 2025. This program has proven to be an effective strategy in improving the work readiness of

the younger generation, especially SMK students. The training materials cover a variety of non-technical skills that are highly needed in the world of work, such as effective communication, teamwork, leadership, time management, and problem solving.

During the training, students were introduced to the stages of the job recruitment process, from preparing a resume/CV, understanding job descriptions, to simulating interviews and receiving offer letters. One of the main sessions that attracted students' interest was the job interview simulation. In this session, students were trained to answer common questions such as "Tell me about yourself" with the STAR (Situation, Task, Action, Result) approach that helped them convey their experience systematically and professionally. The simulation was also hands-on and interactive, where students were asked to come forward voluntarily to practice interviewing, and were given immediate feedback as a form of corrective learning.

In addition to interviewing skills, the training also emphasized the importance of interpersonal communication, leadership, and time management. The materials were delivered in an applicative manner through presentations, group discussions, and hands-on practice, which encouraged active involvement of participants.

Based on the results of the post-training evaluation survey, 85% of participants stated that this training provided new insights that are relevant and can be directly applied in school activities and preparation for the world of work. Most participants also felt more confident and understood the importance of personal branding and thorough preparation before participating in the job selection process.

Overall, this training shows that soft skills development conducted in a structured and collaborative manner has a positive impact on students' work readiness. Therefore, similar activities are highly recommended to be carried out on an ongoing basis, involving synergies between schools, industry, and professional practitioners in order to create graduates who are competent, adaptive, and ready to compete in the world of work.

This was also reflected in the practice during the role-play interview session, where most students were able to demonstrate good leadership and collaboration roles. The Soft Skills Academy program has had a real impact on the work readiness of Jababeka Industrial Vocational School students. Through a practical and interactive approach, students not only gain technical knowledge, but also experience attitude change, increased confidence, and awareness of the importance of overall self-development. This program has proven to be effective as one of the strategies to strengthen human resources at the student level and is worth replicating in other schools.

As part of the evaluation of the program, the committee distributed questionnaires to all participants at the end of the training session to determine their level of understanding of the material presented. The questionnaire covered various aspects, such as the participants' understanding of the training topics, the relevance of the material to the needs of the world of work, the effectiveness of the delivery method, and the overall level of satisfaction. The following are the results of the questionnaires distributed to participants after the event ended:

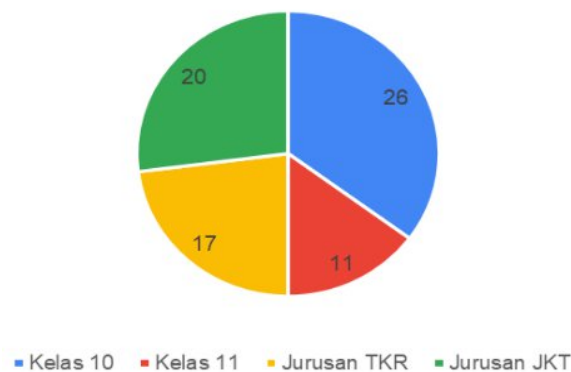


Figure 1: Graph of Attendee

This diagram shows the number of participants who attended the Soft Skills Academy seminar: Preparing the Young Generation for the World of Work, categorized by class and department. Participants came from Grade 10, Grade 11, as well as TKR (Light Vehicle Engineering) and JKT (Other majors). This data reflects the active participation of students from different levels and fields of study in the event.

1. Bagaimana pendapatmu tentang seminar ini secara keseluruhan?
46 jawaban

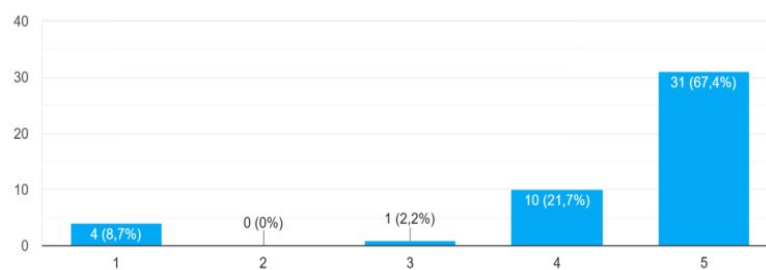


Figure 2: Graph of seminar participants' responses

A total of 46 participants provided feedback on the seminar. The majority of participants (67.4%) gave the highest rating (score 5), indicating excellent satisfaction. Meanwhile, 21.7% gave a score of 4, and only a few participants gave lower scores (8.7% score 1, 2.2% score 3). None of the participants gave a score of 2. This data reflects that the seminar was received very positively by almost all participants.

2. Apakah topik seminar ini sesuai dengan kebutuhan atau minatmu?
46 jawaban

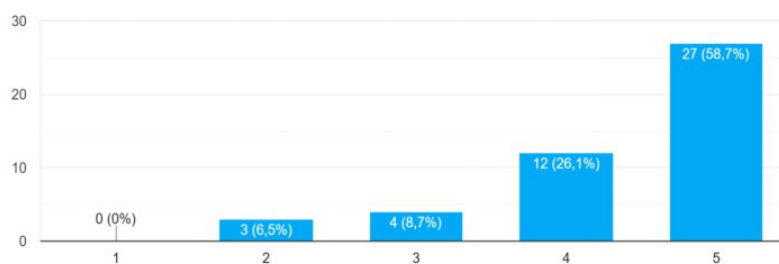


Figure 3: Seminar topic response graph

Based on data from 46 respondents, 68.7% stated that the seminar topics were very suitable for their needs or interests (score 5). A total of 26.1% gave a score of 4, and the rest

(6.7% score 3, 6.5% score 1, and 8.7% score 2) showed a slight discrepancy. Overall, the seminar topics were rated as relevant by the majority of participants

3. Bagaimana kualitas penyampaian materi oleh narasumber?

46 jawaban

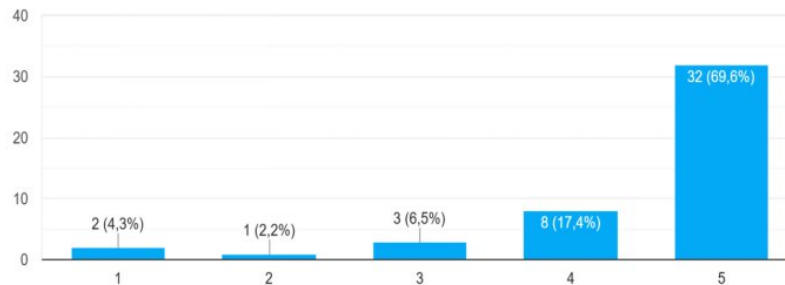


Figure 4: Material delivery chart

The quality of material delivery was highly appreciated, with 69.6% of participants giving a score of 5. 17.4% chose a score of 4, and a small proportion (6.5% score 3, 4.3% score 2, and 2.2% score 1) gave lower ratings. This shows that the resource person managed to deliver the material clearly and effectively.

4. Apakah kamu mendapatkan wawasan atau pengetahuan baru dari seminar ini?

46 jawaban

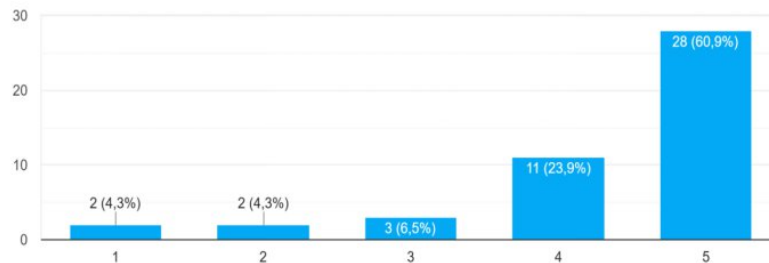


Figure 5: Insight Questionnaire Graph

A total of 60.9% of participants claimed to have gained new insights (score 5), and 23.9% gave a score of 4. Only a few participants (6.5% score 3, 4.3% score 1 and 2) felt less useful. This data confirms that the seminar succeeded in providing new insights for most participants.

Discussions

The soft skills training program at SMK Industri Jababeka has been designed in response to the demands of the modern world of work which no longer only focuses on technical skills, but also emphasizes non-technical abilities that are crucial in a dynamic work environment. The training materials cover important aspects such as interpersonal communication, teamwork, leadership, emotional management, and professional ethics. The composition of this material reflects the real needs in the field, as confirmed by Susanti and Ramadhan (2021), that mastery of soft skills contributes significantly to increasing the employability of vocational students, especially in facing the disruption of the industrial era 4.0 and digitalization.

The training approach used is participatory and based on direct experience, not just theoretical. Students do not only listen to lectures, but are actively involved in discussions, case studies, and practical exercises designed to resemble real workplace situations. This kind of learning model is proven to increase students' emotional and cognitive engagement, and deepen their understanding of the material taught. As explained by Azizah and Purwanto (2023), practice-based learning is able to encourage the development of critical thinking patterns, increase learner absorption, and make the learning process more contextual and relevant to the world of vocational work.

One of the most enthusiastic training sessions from the participants was the job interview simulation. In this session, students not only practiced answering questions, but were also taught answering techniques using the STAR (Situation, Task, Action, Result) method, an approach widely used in the professional recruitment process. This exercise helps students compose a coherent and convincing narrative of their experience, as well as build reflective skills in conveying their strengths and potentials. Kartika et al. (2022) mentioned that STAR-based training can improve the quality of students' self-presentation and reduce their anxiety level when dealing with interviewers, an important aspect that is often overlooked in formal learning in schools.

In addition, the training also pays great attention to other essential skills such as compiling an effective and attractive CV, carefully recognizing job descriptions, and personal and professional presentation skills. All of these materials are delivered using experiential learning methods such as role plays and small group discussions, which allow students to learn through hands-on practice. According to the study results from Wulandari and Nuraini (2021), this method not only strengthens concept mastery, but also provides opportunities for students to build confidence and self-awareness in a sustainable manner.

The program evaluation results showed a clear positive impact. As many as 88% of participants felt better prepared for the recruitment process after attending the training, which included interview simulations, preparation of job application documents, and interpersonal communication training. Not only that, 71% of students also claimed to have gained a new perspective on the importance of soft skills in building personal branding and a good professional reputation. This finding is reinforced by Kurniawan and Sari's (2024) research, which shows that soft skills training designed based on the needs of the industrial world can significantly improve students' work readiness, learning motivation, and career aspirations.

Furthermore, the success of this training cannot be separated from the close collaboration between schools and industry players, both in terms of preparing the training curriculum and in presenting facilitators who have direct experience in the world of work. Such collaboration is essential to bridge the gap between formal education and the reality of the job market. As explained by Ernawati et al. (2025), school-industry partnerships in the context of vocational training have a strategic role in overcoming competency mismatches, as well as being a means of transferring knowledge and experience directly to students.

In addition, this training also instills values of professionalism and work ethics that are starting to erode in the digital era, such as responsibility, integrity, and conflict management skills. This is in line with the views of Nugroho and Setyawan (2022), who stated that early work character building through soft skills training can create a generation of workers who are not only capable, but also have high integrity. Furthermore, the role of teachers and educators in accompanying students during training cannot be ignored. According to research by Putri

and Lestari (2023), the involvement of teachers in the process of strengthening students' soft skills can increase the overall effectiveness of the training, especially in terms of personal assistance and learning reflection.

On a macro scale, this program shows that if implemented consistently and supported by various parties, soft skills training in vocational schools can be a catalyst for the transformation of vocational education that is more adaptive to changing times. This is also supported by a statement from Pratama and Yuliana (2020), which emphasizes the importance of reforming the learning approach in SMK to prioritize character development and complete work readiness, not just technical competence.

Therefore, this program not only provides short-term benefits for students who will graduate and look for work, but also has long-term potential in shaping a young generation that is adaptive, communicative, and has superior work character. In the context of an industrial area like Jababeka, this kind of training model is very relevant and worthy of replication in other vocational schools, as part of the strategy to strengthen Indonesia's human resources at the student level.

Docummentations



Figure 6. Host of Program



Figure 7. Welcome Speech from the supervisor



Figure 8. Providing material Work motivation



Figure 9. Q&A Session



Figure 10. Interview simulation session



Figure 11. Closing ceremony involving the school, participants and organizers



Figure 12. Digital Certificate

Conclusions

The Soft Skills Academy program held at SMK Industri Jababeka has proven to be effective in improving students' work readiness through applicative and contextual non-technical skills training. Training materials covering effective communication, teamwork, leadership, time management, and problem solving have had a positive impact on students' confidence, self-presentation skills, and understanding of the world of work. Experiential training methods such as interview simulations and case study discussions encouraged active participation and reinforced relevant practical skills.

The program evaluation showed that the majority of participants felt a significant improvement in their understanding and mastery of soft skills, and felt more prepared for the job recruitment process. The success of the program is also supported by the collaboration between educational institutions and industry, bridging the gap between formal education and the needs of the job market. With these positive results, the Soft Skills Academy deserves to be a sustainable training model that can be replicated in other vocational schools as a strategy to strengthen competent and competitive human resources in the global era.

Recommendations

In order for the impact of the Soft Skills Academy training at SMK Industri Jababeka to be sustained and expanded, a number of strategic steps are needed that are systemic and integrated. First, soft skills development needs to be thoroughly integrated into the vocational education curriculum. This approach is not only through occasional training, but should be part of daily learning activities, including in project assignments, extracurricular activities, and industrial work practices. This implementation can optimize the formation of students' professional characters and attitudes from an early age (Wijaya et al., 2023; Hidayat & Rahayu, 2021). Second, it is important to build sustainable partnerships between schools, business and industry (DUDI), and higher education institutions so that the training design is truly in line with the dynamic needs of the workforce. This multi-stakeholder collaboration can also enrich training resources and ensure program sustainability (Prasetyo et al., 2022; Wibowo & Sutanto, 2020).

Third, training methods need to use contextual and participatory approaches, such as simulations, case studies, group discussions, and role plays so that students can apply skills in an applicative manner. In addition, learning evaluations must also be designed systematically and measurably to objectively assess students' soft skills development (Putri et al., 2021). Fourth, support from the school and government, both in the form of policies and provision of resources, is needed. This includes training for teachers to have competence in fostering students' soft skills and providing adequate supporting facilities (Rahmawati & Hidayat, 2022). In facing the challenges of the industrial revolution 4.0 and digital disruption, students' work readiness is no longer enough to be armed with technical skills, but also requires strong soft skills such as communication, leadership, problem solving, and collaboration (World Economic Forum, 2023; Astuti et al., 2023). Therefore, soft skills training is not just a complement, but must be positioned as the main foundation in the formation of vocational graduates who are work-ready, competitive, and adaptive to the increasingly complex changes in the world of work.

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We also greatly appreciate the cooperation and support from the leaders, teachers, and staff of SMK Industri Jababeka, who have facilitated the running of the activity well. The friendliness and coordination provided created a conducive and enthusiastic training atmosphere. Our sincere gratitude also goes to all students of grades X and XI who participated, for their enthusiasm and active participation in every training session. Their commitment to learning and developing is proof that this activity truly has a positive impact.

Finally, we express our deepest appreciation to the implementing team from President University for their dedication, cooperation, and extraordinary enthusiasm in making this program a success from the planning stage to the final reporting. Hopefully this activity will be the first step in further collaborations in creating a young generation that is ready to work, resilient, and highly competitive

Acknowledgements heading should be justified, bold, Times New Roman point 12, with the first letter capitalized but have no numbers. Text below continues as normal.

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