

Conference Paper

Why Do Vocational High School Girls Drop Out? Unraveling the Correlation between Business Development in Rural Areas and Adolescents' School Interest in the Blitar Regency, East Java

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Abstract

This paper explores the reasons for students to consider dropping out of school and choosing to work. It also assesses the benefits of marketing study programmes with regards to the store clerk profession. This study employs qualitative design using phenomenology approach. The key subjects of this research were four vocational high school students in Blitar who had opted to leave school early. Data was extracted and explored using in-depth interviews, observation, and documentation. Triangulation of sources and methods was carried out to obtain accurate information, the analysis was carried out with the simultaneous stages of Approach, Excavation, Deepening, Matching, Interpretation and Presentation (6P). The results of this study demonstrate that the main reasons contributing to leaving school early are family background, environment, society, and the student's experience during school. In addition, the vocational marketing study program gives students the requisite experience and skill sets to work as store clerks, further facilitating their decision to leave school early and start their professional careers.

Keywords: vocational high school students drop out, marketing expertise competence, rural area business development

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1. Introduction

Most of vocational high school (SMK) students belong to adolescent stage. Commonly, individual reaching this life stage encounters an inner turmoil during the process of identity discoveries. As a matter of fact. According to Steinmetz (2002), adolescent constitutes a bizarre and uncommon life process between childhood and adulthood. This stage is highly correlated with *stress and storm* or what-so-called an *awkward age*. During this life phase, confusion is commonly occurred. Adolescence phase is divided into two: early phase between 13 and 16 year-old and late phase between 16 and 18

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year-old. Santroct (2009) further defines that late adolescence should be between 18 and 21 year-old.

Students of vocational high school are commonly a 15-18 year-old individual; they are in the transitional process. During this phase, the individual begins to consider to live independently from the parents, yet he/she needs a friend to accompany, to understand, and to help them. In search of identity, adolescent individual tries to look for a role model to imitate; in terms of values and lifestyle. When searching for role model, it strongly influences individual's perspective, including the perspective of attending school.

Regardless the age factor, adolescence always correlates with the golden age of pursuing education. It is in line with the Decree of Ministry of Education and Culture of Republic of Indonesia No. 19 of 2016 concerning on Indonesian Smart Program which states that the program aims at improving educational access for children 6 year-old until teenager 21 year-old or in other words, government grants the education starting from early childhood education up to high school education (12-years education program). Unfortunately, most students decided to dropout due to varied factors.

A research conducted by Oktaviani (2012) reports that a number of junior high school graduates did not manage to continue their education to senior high school. Several reasons were confirmed as follows: (1) most of them had a traumatic events in school such as an abusive teacher who discouraged them, (2) most of them were influenced by some of their friend who did not attend to school; having a perception in which school does not important and they can survive anyway, (3) most of the parents gave less encouragement about the importance of school and education. Slightly different from the findings of Winarno (2017), a numerous cases of school dropout among vocational high school students were caused by the growing of economical activity in the rural areas—some productive resources in the rural areas were began to develop. Moreover, some of them considered that the distance between the school and their house is far away. It is further supported by parents who considered that earning money is more important than pursuing education..

Another factors found were due to the economic condition of the family. They are forced to work instead of attending school since they need to help their parents in earning money. Sadly, even some of them take a role as the breadwinner of family. As has been discovered by Nastalia (2007), the reasons why teenager choose to dropout from school to work, even migrating to other city, is due to the family support, inappropriate parenting styles, family issues, the absence of parents, and the influence of step parents. On the other hand, according to the educational context, teacher may contribute to the

number of dropout. The inability of teacher in guiding student may influence the number of school dropout, particularly vocational high school students (Houtte, Demanet. 2016).

Hence, this research seeks to explore and discover further the factors which may influence students to dropout from school and go to work instead of attending school, particularly the students of vocational high school in the Marketing study program. In addition, it aims at unraveling how important the study program in supporting them to be storeclerk and it aims at revealing the impact of working instead of attending school.

2. Method

This paper employed qualitative design using phenomenology approach. This design was used to discover deeply the reasons of vocational high school students in dropping out from school and choosing to work. The key informants of this research were four droppedout students from SMKN 1 Kademangan in the range of 2017 to 2018 aged between 15-18 years and currently working in the formal sector as storeclerk. This paper also took their parents as the informants. This paper took the subjects who live in the southern part of Blitar regency. Data was extracted and explored using in-depth interviews, observation, and documentation. Triangulation of sources and methods was carried out to obtain accurate information, the analysis was carried out with the simultaneous stages of Approach, Excavation, Deepening, Matching, Interpretation and Presentation (6P).

3. Results and Discussion

3.1. The reason of students to choose work instead of attending school

This research results indicates that students tend to choose to work instead of attending school and finishing the education. It is primarily influenced by several factors, they are: (1) internal motivation; they think that they need to live independently and need to earn money, (2) the surrounding environment; it is common for teenagers in the surrounding community to work and earn money, (3) the distance between school and residence; to reach the formal school the surrounding community, students need to take a far route, (4) the availability of job vacancy, (5) student's experience in formal school.

If it is observed, the results of this research regarding the issues of vocational high school student's option in choosing to work instead of attending school around southern

Blitar affirm that it was not caused by new factors. This results are identical with the initial research done by Winarno (2017) which reports that most of junior high school students in the same region with this research tend to choose to work instead of attending school due to the influence of family. Primarily, student's family has an economics issues to begin with. In addition, the growth and development of rural areas economic contributes the decision of students to not attend the school. Most of students work as the store clerk or work in the sand mining companies. Moreover, most students also consider that the distance between school and the residence is far. Last but not least, around the community, it is normal and common for teenagers not to attend school and work to earn money. The above-mentioned issues highly influence students to dropout rather than go to school.

The research conducted by Sulistyawati, et al., (2016) which discover junior high school student's dropout rate also confirms that the internal motivation comes from the individual significantly influences student's decision to whether attending school or dropping out. Individual's decision in working to earn money comes from the internal motivation of the individual. Not to mention, external motivation also takes a role as a driving force in deciding to work among students. The results also confirm that surrounding environment contributes to student's decision. According to the research conducted by Rahmat (2014) which performed a survey to college students regarding the choice of career, the results report that the career of college students is highly influenced by the surrounding environment including the availability of job vacancy and the parents' value. In addition, the economic issues of family are the one of the external factor related to the surrounding environment. Students think that if they work they could help their parents to earn money for the family. This findings are in line with the findings by Wijianto and Ulfa (2016) which report that there is a significant correlation between family's economic condition and early adolescence work motivation.

This research discovered an interesting finding. It obtained a fact that the activity of student's internship of vocational high school on the industry/companies contributes to the student's learning experience in the real-life context. Students will obtain an exposure about working in real-life context. During the internship as a store clerk, student's will obtain a direct experience and knowledge about marketing. It is beneficial for students since it enhances student's readiness before they directly go to the real world as an employee. This condition also contributes the decision of student's in dropping out and choosing to work. They feel sufficiently confident to apply for a store clerk position in the store near their house. Regarding this findings, it was also reported in the initial research which reports that the experience of students during the

Eight grade and during the internship that the productive subject and social and family support simultaneously influence the readiness of students. The experience obtained by students during the internship and the ability in completing the assignment in the company encourage student to apply for a job. Lestari & Siswanto (2014) and Baiti & Munadi (2014) report that the experience of industrial internship obtained by students gives both positive and negative influences. As for the positive influence, the internship will equip the students numerous real-life knowledge before directly working as real employee. Meanwhile, it also gives them negative influence. During the internship, students interact with all the employees in the company. This interaction will influence student's perspective regarding school and working, particularly if the employee has no sufficient educational background. As stated by the subject 2 and 3, even though they do not have a school certificate (at least vocational high school or senior high school) and/or degree, they still can work. This shows that without having a school certificate (vocational high school), they could work and earn money as much as the other employee. Therefore, it is important to improve the internship process as well as considering the partner of the internship. The companies/industries as school partner of internship should have a minimum educational background vocational high school. It is important to be taken into account as an attempt to correct student's perspective.

3.2. The Benefit of Marketing Study Program

Based on the research findings, students in the marketing study program admit that they have enough knowledge and skills related to the fields needed to fill the sales clerk formation. This finding is in line with learning content in this study program of Vocational School where during learning, students are given basic competencies include: simulation and digital communication, business economics, general administration, marketing, business planning, business communication, retail business management, online business, product structuring, transaction administration, and creative and entrepreneurial products (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2017). After learning, students state that the knowledge taught in the marketing study program can improve their skills and abilities when becoming a salesperson. This makes students skillful in operating the cash register, skilled in serving customers, skilled in arranging goods, and brave in dealing with consumers.

The Decree of the Minister of Education and Culture of Indonesia No. 323 / U / 1997 regarding "Dual system education, hereinafter referred to as PSG (Internship), is a form of organizing vocational education which systematically and synchronously

integrates educational programs in vocational high schools with skills of the study programs obtained through working directly at work. Students need to work at the partner institution during the internship, it is directed to achieve a certain level of professional expertise. The regulation shows that there is a combination of the organization of learning in schools (vocational high school) and the implementation of industrial work practices (internship) in work institutions (companies; services, trade, industry), synchronously and systematic, aiming at delivering students to the mastery of certain work abilities, so that they become graduates with relevant abilities as expected.

The marketing study program prepares students for a career in marketing. Industrial work practices provide benefits to students in the form of industrial work certificates. The certificate is preferred when applying for a job as a sales person. In addition, industrial work practice programs make students familiar with the professional aspects of the sales person, it can increase students' confidence in the workplace, because students already know how sales do their when studying all the courses in the marketing study program.

3.3. The Impact of Student's Decision in Working

Based on the research findings, the decision taken by students to work can have a bad influence on friends in the surrounding environment. There are some of their friends who had gone to school and then decided to quit and come to work, this finding is in line with the results of Haidar (2016) research of adolescents who work in the *batik* production sector in Pekalongan City shows that peers are very influential in the formation of adolescent behavior patterns. So, it is natural that a student's decision not to finish school can be imitated by other teenager in the surrounding environment.

Another impact of the choice of informants after dropping out school is a bad stigma to children who drop out of school. They worry if the public will demean those who are only junior high school graduates. They also feel inferior to their friends who have graduated from school. An interesting finding in this study was their discomfort when their decision was followed by their friends. The fear related to the possibility of being imitated was quite reasonable considering that they had once decided to quit because they were imitating other friends. An interesting reason why they are afraid of being followed by their peers is that they have felt that working is more difficult and needs to refrain from the habit of having fun than when they were still in school. According to Jahja (2011) this is natural, considering the development phase of adolescents aged 15 to 18 years included in middle adolescents who have developmental characteristics,

one of which is that teenagers need friends to understand and help them, as well as figures that can be invited to share joy and sorrow. In this phase, adolescents begin to look for something or someone who can be a role model that is seen as valuable and worthy of high regard. The search for this role determines how adolescence build their personality. On the other hand, even though they have experienced work experience, the experience of the difficulty of earning money, they are also proud of their decision to work because they think they can contribute to their parents' lives. This is also a driving force why there are still many teenagers choosing to work, which is driven by the desire to help their family life Wijianto & Ulfa (2016)

4. Conclusion and Suggestion

4.1. Conclusion

According to the findings and discussion in this research, primarily students decided to drop out of school and chose to work because they want to independently live and help the economical condition of their family. In addition, the availability of job vacancy on their surrounding environment is expanded. Mainly, the job vacancy is the sector of trading (department store). Also, students feel confidence to apply for the job since they think that they have sufficient experience and knowledge to work. Most students considered that school is less important than going to work; the family and environment also supports this perspective. Moreover, most students also consider that the distance between school and the residence is far. However, they still worry about the stigma of droppedout student. They worry if the public will demean those who are only junior high school graduates. They also feel inferior to their friends who have graduated from school.

4.2. Suggestions

The management of educational institution, in this case vocational high school must pay attention the option of the place for students to do internship in order to avoid a negative influence comes from the employee. In addition, it is important to establish a non-formal educational institution around the region to accomodate a non-formal education for droppedout student. Additional education is needed considering that those who actually drop out of school still want a higher level of education.

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