Retooling For Terminated Contract Workers Of Vocational School Alumni (Back) To Work

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Abstract. Unemployment of vocational high school graduates consists of two categories, the graduates who never been in work and who had been in work as a contract workers and then terminated. More than 63 percent of the graduates who have ever been as a contract workers did not work match with their competence, as a result when the contract agreement expired the workers did not been assigned as permanent workers. In order to get other jobs after termination, the workers need to upgrade their competence or to retool with skills other than the skills the workers acquired from vocational school, in order to fit well with the need of workers in industry. Besides the functional skill needed for handling operational works, the terminated contract workers need to upgrade their soft skill suitable for the future working environment, that is learning to work in a group consisting of many communities to solve very complex problem as the characteristic of jobs in the industry 4.0, besides other component of soft skills such as honesty, discipline, attitude, commitment to work, communication skill, and open for change.

Keywords: up skilling, retooling, contract workers, vocational school

Introduction

Investment in education can be one of individual strategies to achieve better future in living. The individual can gain quality education to get jobs that can give good payment and other benefits. The higher the level of education of individual, the higher the private rate of returns (RR) the person will have. Private rate of returns of education is the increase in the earning from an additional year of education for an individual who make the investment decision on education, while social rate of returns measures the increase in national income resulting from the same years of education (Encyclopedia, 2019). The civil effects of gaining high level of education will return to individual, besides to community, and the recipients of the highest private rate of returns will be the graduates of higher education compare to other levels of education. Education can be a medium of transformation for individuals toward better condition, and also as a media for self actualization. Education plays a key role in the perpetuation of the capital relation. Education functioning as the skeleton in capitalist education's dank basement. It is just one of the many reasons why, in contemporary capitalist society, education, and might be added vocational education and training (VET), assumes a grotesque and perverted form. It links the chains that bind our souls to capital [1].

The reality in the community shows that some of graduates school doing jobs that do not require any skill that the graduates have as the result of training in educational institutions. As a result the graduates cannot get good payment commensurate to the level of education the graduates had reached. This condition is partly influenced by the unbalance between the
number of graduates from educational institution as job seekers and the job opportunities provided in industries. On one side the number of graduates is increasing significantly every year, while on the other side the capability in creating job vacancies is very limited. And because of this condition, there is a situation of oversupply of graduates and consequently some of the graduates decide to take job vacancies that in fact do not require the skills what so ever. This situation is also happening in some other countries, the number of graduates in the labor force has begun, especially in recent years, to outpace the number of graduate jobs. This is why, increasingly, some graduates are ending themselves in lower-ranking job. . . by the middle of the 2000s it became evident that there was an increasing dispersion in the graduate pay premium [1].

One of the problems on workforce faced by the government of Indonesia and being the concern of community is the high level of unemployment of vocational high school graduates (SMK). The data from the authority, the Centre of Statistic Board, shows that during the period of 2016-2019, the percentage of vocational high school graduates unemployment is the highest among other levels of education graduates. In August 2016 the unemployment of vocational school graduates was 11.11 percent, increased to 11.14 percent in August 2017. In February 2018 the percentage decreased to 8.92 percent, and in February 2019 decreased to 8.93 percent, though the percentages were still the highest among other levels of educational graduate unemployments [2].

The high level of unemployment of vocational school graduates is an irony in the world of education because as mandated by the regulation, the National Education System Act [3], the goal of vocational high school is to prepare students to enter world of work soon after graduation. By this mandate (goal), the level of unemployment of vocational school should be lower than other levels of school graduates, and even there should be no unemployment of vocational school graduates. If the high level of unemployment is for basic school, elementary and junior high school, or senior high school graduates, it is not an irony because basic school graduates are not trained to work, and senior high school graduates are prepared to continue learning in academic tract in higher education.

The realization of the goal as formulated in UU no 20 tahun 2003, requires the vocational school to facilitate the transition of learners from school climates to work place by the integration of industry’s requirements into school curriculum, included the standard for appearance. The standard for appearance is internalized by the learners through self socialization and maturation, in which the students learn social expectation for their behavior [4]. With the specific goal of vocational school for preparing the graduates to enter the world of work, the gap between the skill the graduates accuse and the skill needed by industries, either the level of the skills or the kind of the skills, can be bridged by apprenticeship of vocational school students in industry, and/or industry visits of students of vocational school. Harmony collaboration between industries and vocational schools management can prepare the graduates to be ready to work soon after their graduation. The best practice model of apprenticeship for vocational school students in industry, most stakeholders concerning the problem in vocational school, will refer to the model conducted in Germany, which is known as ‘dual system’ model for preparing vocational school graduates to enter the work place soon after graduation [4].

The unemployment of vocational school graduates consists of two groups, the first group is the graduates who never in work and still looking for jobs, and the second group is graduates who had ever been in work as contract workers and then terminated because the contract expired. The appointment of labor in contract system refers to article no 59. UU
No 13 tahun 2003 tentang Ketenagakerjaan, in which after the first contract agreement finished, workers (employees) and employers (owners of industry/company) can sign the second contract agreement for two years maximum time [5]. When the second contract expired, if the employer still needs the employee, and the employee agree, the employer should appoint the worker as permanent worker, or on the other situation when the employer does not need the employee anymore, and also the employee does not need the job, the worker should be terminated.

Vocational school graduates who got jobs facilitated by special jobs recruitment (BKK) of the school mostly did not get permanent appointment after the second contract agreement expired. Just very little number of the contract workers can get permanent appointment, and the rest return back to their family to help their parents doing work in field, some workers doing self enterprise, some other working uncertainty jobs, and still some of the others being totally unemployed and are looking for jobs. In one side the willingness of the contract workers to be appointed as permanent workers did not in realization, while on the other side, the employers recruited new vocational school graduates as the substitute of the terminated contract workers [6].

To fulfill the need of employees of companies/industries and to market of school graduates has long been the problems that have not been resolved yet. In one side, there are many jobs vacancy still not fulfilled, while on the other side many school graduates still unemployed or underemployed because of no matching between the skills of the graduates mastering and the required skills to do jobs in industries. There had been many endeavors done to resolve this problem, such as industrial visit for students of vocational school, apprenticeship, completing and modernizing of school lab equipments, etc. but the output still not yet overcome the problem. Two kinds of skills that job seekers should mastery, the skills that so called as hard skill, the skill that functionally used to handle jobs in industry, and soft skills, the skills that very important for employers when recruit new employees. From the employers side, soft skills which also called ‘employability skills’, or ‘work readiness’ [4]. [B], is possession of skills, knowledge, attitudes, and commercial understanding that make a new graduates to make productive contributions to organization objectives soon after commencing, employment. Employability skills are those basics skills necessary for getting, keeping, and doing well on a job [7].

The possession of hard skills by the graduates of vocational school as job seekers shows the readiness of the graduates to do a job effectively, and these skills very important in recruitment of workforce to do jobs in industry. Skillful workers is an important component of effective production process in industry, so that the workers have powerful position in determining wage, facility and fringe benefits in the company. As mentioned by [7] that workers need to become skilled partisan or let the worker through a combination of cooperation gain control of the supply of the product that the worker has to sell, then he becomes a potent factor in determining hours, wages and working conditions. As soon as the workers become skilled workers, their power and importance as a citizen are enhanced and the workers begin to tamper with the machinery at the source of their master’s political strength [7].

Research Methods

This study is a research using quantitative approach. The subjects of the research were vocational school graduates as terminated contract workers from companies/industries, amounted to 90 people. The data of the research was collected by using questionnaire and completed by interview. The interview was conducted to collect deep meaning data in the connection to the research problems. The data was analyzed quantitatively by applying simple formula, while the qualitative data collected by
Result and Discussion

The research found that 94 percent of the respondents got their first job as private company workers. This finding is nothing odd because in fact companies doing recruitment of employees before high schools graduation, and even before national examination of high school students held by the government by doing job fair.

The research found that 86 percent of vocational school graduates got their first job as contract workers. According to the UU No. 13 of 2003 that contract between employee and employer can be signed for maximum of 2 years time period, and if the employer still needs the worker, a second contract agreement can be signed for a maximum of 2 years appointment. After the second contract agreement expired, if the employer still needs the employee, the employer should assign the employee as permanent worker, conversely if after the second contract agreement the employee did not be appointed as permanent employee, then there is a termination of the contract worker.

The appointment of vocational school graduates as contract workers is a factor that in the future being the cause of the contract workers losing their jobs. By the end of the contract agreement, a worker without specific skills tends not to be appointed as permanent workers. The position of contract workers without any skill can be easily substituted by other employee of without skill at all, and as this situation exists the employer make a new contract agreement with fresh graduates of vocational school. As long as the worker is poorly trained, as long as the worker is an inefficient factor in production and the worker place is easily filled, he can be dominated through fear of losing a poor job [8]. The poorly trained worker is one of the inefficient factor in production, and the inefficient worker is the worker that doing jobs without skill, or with skill but cannot exercising the skills in doing the jobs. The workers have weak position in negotiating their wage, job facilities, and the involvement in decision making in the production management of the company.

The research also found that 66 percent of the respondents who were the terminated contract workers expressed their first job after graduation from vocational school did not match the skills they had ever been trained in vocational school. This finding shows the skills the terminated contract workers acquired from vocational school for 3-4 years as useless, wasting time and money, while spending for managing vocational school relatively higher than general/ academic school [9]; Word Bank [10]; Psacaropoulos [11]. This is also the irony that vocational school with high spending for operational, in fact the skills did not be executed in the work place.

There is an acknowledgement that schooling in vocational school not just train the students for hard skills as needed for executing the works in production, but also cultivating good habits which also as an important requirement for jobs handling in the work place. Competence-based education (CBE) is a kind of innovation in vocational education with the goal of being better transition of the students from school environment into the work environment that will be faced by vocational school students after graduation. The need of CBE exists because the vocational school graduates have enough knowledge, but less in attitude and skills needed in work place [12]. Workers should have good characteristics and good habits, such as discipline, positive attitude toward works, high commitment toward jobs, honesty, the skill of collaboration to work in groups to overcome complex job problems, good communication skills, and open mind for change. Competence based education is one of the way to make better transition of the graduates of vocational school to work place by focusing on the integration of knowledge, skill, attitude and pressing on creating real learning environment [12] If the technical skills of the vocational school graduates does not be used in
the work place, employer needs the soft skills that the graduates have as the outcome of training in vocational school, to involved actively in production process.

The finding also confirm the indication of weaknesses the decision making by the graduates in taking the jobs with no requirement of skills acquired from vocational school. Taking jobs without requirements skills meaning the graduates degrades their selves as to put aside their educational achievement. When the jobs do not need any functional skill of the graduates, meaning the job can be done by any other worker without specific skill. For this reason the decision of the respondents learning in vocational school and choosing specific area of jobs can be a wrong strategy for the sake of career development in the future of life. Besides cognitive ability and personality, the conscientiousness in choosing vocational interest is very important predictor for the individuals person-job-fit and the success of career development [13].

The willingness of vocational school the graduates and their parents to get jobs soon after graduation caused the graduates take the jobs in a contract bases with no consideration of the sustainability of the jobs, and the satisfaction of civil effects of the jobs. In one side, most of workers appointed on a contract agreement cannot sustain for long period, and mostly just after 3 to 4 years, or even just one to two years, the contract workers lose their jobs. On the other hand, most of important criteria for jobs satisfaction can be acquired in the long term, such as ‘good payment, interesting task, good social surrounding, enough leisure time, low achievement pressure, and ‘enough freedom of choice’ [13]. Generally good payment will be earned when a worker has a long time in jobs, interesting task will be given to workers who show good achievement in the job done, and usually need long time to acquire this achievement.

The terminated contract workers should compete against fresh graduates to find jobs after the termination. Most of the workers in the age of 24 years and up to find new jobs, but generally employers prefer to hire fresh graduates rather than the terminated workers. For the employers, hiring a worker having hard skills and paired with soft skills is their aspiration, but when there is no candidate fulfilling the two requirements, the employers prefer to choose candidates having soft skills than having hard skills. The reason is that hard skills can be trained during the probation in job, and it does not need a long time for acquiring the skills, while soft skill cannot be cultivated in a short time (Luglo, Jon and Lillis, 1988: 52). Some soft skills needed in the future work place including general skills such as discipline, honesty, attitude and commitment to jobs, and also the skill to work in group in solving complex jobs. Works place in the future require collaboration skills in which members of different communities use technologies to solve complex problems. Vocational education and training (VET) programs need to meet the challenge to prepare students to be part of a competent workforce [14].

In order to have new jobs having good payment, terminated contract workers need to upgrade their skills, and even need to acquire new hard skills, because it is confirmed that their hard skills as the product of training in vocational school had not been exercised in the work place. The terminated workers need to acquire different new hard skills that in the future will be useful and needed in 4.0 industry. The group of terminated contract workers that need retooling covers of 43 percent of the respondents, and the workers need to join a retooling program in skills other than the group had acquired in vocational school. The skills that really new, suitable for the need of industry in the future, or even for doing independent jobs, and it should be suitable to the interest of the terminated workers for the development of career in the long term. It should be taken into consideration that some jobs will disappear in the 4.0 industry, while some other new jobs will be created by the industry.

For the group of terminated workers with the first jobs after graduation did not fit the skills level that had been acquired from
vocational school, needs up skilling their acquired skills. This group cover 23 percent of the respondents, that the skills level acquired from vocational school could not match the level of skills needed in handling jobs in the work place. Up grading the skills is needed to better fit the skills level and to catch up with the skills needed in industrial world in the future, or otherwise the workers would face very difficult time to find new jobs in 4.0 industry era.

Conclusion
Working jobs not match with the skills acquired from vocational school caused the graduates of the school took jobs on a contract bases that did not need hard skills that were acquired from the school. The skills acquired by learning in vocational school confirmed did not been used in the work place. In order to find jobs that have good payment, work environment, and good job facilities, the terminated contract workers need to up skill and retool the skills they acquired from vocational school. Up skilling is needed to catch the level of skills needed in the work place of 4.0 industry, while for the group who need retooling should be in new skills that match with the skills needed in 4.0 industry. Besides the functional skill needed in the future work place, the terminated workers also need to broaden their soft skills covering collaboration skill for working with different communities in using technologies to solve complex job problems as the characteristics of jobs in industry in the future.

References