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The influence of professional teachers on Padang vocational school students' achievement

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ABSTRACT

This study determined: (1) the competency of professional teachers teaching in the classroom, (2) students' achievement in vocational schools in Padang, and (3) the influence of professional teachers on vocational school students' achievement in Padang. The population was 2,647 students in vocational schools. The sample, consisting of 160 students, was selected using a multistage, random sampling technique. Data were collected using questionnaires and documentation, and then analyzed and presented using the SPSS software. The results showed: (1) overall, the professional teachers of vocational schools in Padang had good qualifications in pedagogical competence, professional competence, social competence, and personal competence, (2) the learning process of vocational schools in Padang was going well and in general, student achievement was at a good level of performance, and (3) there was a significant influence of professional teachers on vocational school students' achievement in Padang.

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Introduction

Student achievement is an interesting study for much research, especially in the field of educational research because student achievement is one of the benchmarks of success for a person's education. Student achievement, both at a basic and advanced level, is an issue that has always been considered important in the world of education. Therefore, vocational schools as one of the types of educational institution that prepares graduates to enter the world of work, provide improved quality of learning, which in turn can improve student achievement. The learning process should be able to equip students with the knowledge, skills, and values that can be changed into competence for students. The learning process will take place if it is supported by a professional teacher, able to master and implement the skills taught in the learning process. As

stated by Sudjana (2002), student achievement depends on the mastery of the subject teachers and their teaching skills.

The level of achievement of learning-controlled students can be seen and measured through a skills competency test. Skills competency tests held at vocational high school accord with the theory of vocational practices in accordance with the performance criteria. A skills competency test at a vocational high school is also part of the National Examination that acts as an indicator of achievement of the competency standards, while the stakeholders use the information to evaluate the competency of the person (Direktorat Pendidikan Menengah Kejuruan, 2012). Graduate competencies include attitudes, knowledge, and skills. This means that the learning achievement of students should develop competencies related to the affective, cognitive, and psychomotor skills (PP No. 19 of 2005 on Standar Nasional Pendidikan of Article 25, paragraph 4).

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Research Objectives

The purpose of this study was to determine: (1) the extent of professionalism of vocational teachers teaching in the classroom, (2) how the level of vocational schools students' achievement in Padang, and (3) whether or not professional teachers have a significant influence on improving vocational high school students' achievement in Padang.

Literature Review

Student achievement is the result of learning in the academic field that reflects the capability and performance of students in mastering the multidimensional subject matter that includes cognitive, affective, and psychomotor skills (Syah, 2001). The cognitive realm associated with thinking skills, knowledge, recognition, understanding, conceptualization, determination, and affective reasoning deals with feelings, emotions, attitudes, the degree of acceptance or rejection of an object, and psychomotor skills related to the competence to do the job in involving the limbs and competencies related to physical movement. Student achievement is a target measured by the competence of the learner in learning which is indicated by a score as an indicator, though the score is not the final expectation. Learning achievement is the level of student success in learning the subject matter in schools that is expressed in the form of scores obtained from the results of tests on a particular subject matter (Feng, Fan, & Yang, 2013).

In implementing learning, vocational teachers now are basically academically educated as vocational teachers with limited industry experience. This limited experience makes vocational teachers more text-book oriented and more academic, and thus they tend to enjoy a more theoretical learning pattern. Vocational teachers are required to have capability not only to teach the theory in class, but they are also required to be able to educate, teach, train, and guide learners in the workplace, whether it is in the workshop or the laboratory, and to guide students to be able to work in business or industry in their prospective careers. Reforms in the field of vocational teacher education demands changes in teachers' character who have to date got used to the pattern of leadership instruction, so that teachers lose creativity. Yet to be able to compete in the global era a sophisticated era that demands a high level of adaptation to changes teachers are required to have high competency.

Undang-Undang Nomor 14 Tahun 2005 on teachers and lecturers in Article 1 (1) forcefully argues that teachers are professional educators with the primary task of educating, teaching, guiding, directing, training, assessing, and evaluating students who may be of school-age in formal education, primary education and secondary education. Article 10 paragraph (1) states that teachers are required to master the four main competencies—pedagogical, professional, social, and personal. Furthermore, Article 20 (a) states that the standard of work performance in carrying out their professional duties obliges teachers to plan learning, implement a quality learning process, and assess and evaluate learning outcomes. The key task of a teacher is embodied in the learning activity which is a form of teacher competence.

A professional teacher is required to master the four previously listed main competencies. Pedagogical competence includes mastering material, managing learning programs, managing the classroom, using the media/source, mastering the students, getting to know the functions and services of guidance and counseling, and organizing school administration (Sardiman, 2007). Professional competence consists of mastery of knowledge, mastery of the curriculum and the school syllabus, and learning special methods of study, ethical insight, and professional development. Personal competence includes personal steadiness and noble character, maturity and wisdom, exemplary behavior and to be recognized as a source of authority. Sagala (2007) stated that personal competence is associated with the appearance of a teacher as an individual who has discipline and looks good, who is responsible and committed, and who can be an example. Social competence includes the ability to communicate with various stakeholders of education, mastering information technology, and the capability to interact with the community and the environment.

Uno and Nurdin (2012), wrote that effective teaching could be identified using seven indicators, namely: (1) good organization of material, (2) effective communication, (3) mastery of and enthusiasm for the subject matter, (4) positive attitude toward learners, (5) provision of fair value, (6) flexibility in approaches to learning, and (7) can produce good learners. These seven indicators are identified by reviewing the process and the achievement of learning outcomes of students. These instruments were further developed by Cheffers, Gilfillan, and Sullivan (2000) through the adjustment to enrich points of vocational teacher professional instruments with vocational tasks in teaching in the workshop, laboratory, and studio, when students carry out an internship or industrial practices in studio work or in the workplace.

Methods

This study used a quantitative descriptive correlation approach, which is a technique designed to determine the influence of the independent variables on the dependent variable. The independent variable was professional teacher (X) measured in terms of pedagogical competence, professional competence, social competence, and personal competence, while the independent variables were student achievement (Y) measured by the ability of their cognitive, affective, and psychomotor skills. The conceptual frame work of the study is shown in Figure 1.

The study population was all class XII students from 10 vocational high schools in Padang (2,647 students). Sampling was done using a multistage, random sampling technique. The first step was the selection of four vocational high schools in the cluster, based on the subject areas of expertise: subject area of Engineering Technology, vocational school 1 Padang; subject area of Communication and Information Technology Vocational School 8 Padang, subject area Business and Management, Vocational School 2 Padang; and subject area Arts, Crafts and Tourism, Vocational High School 9 Padang. The second step was selecting a sample of 160 students who were randomly chosen from all four vocational schools.

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