

## EFFORTS TO IMPROVE STUDENTS' SOFT SKILLS ACCORDING TO THE CHALLENGES OF THE XXI CENTURY AT THE STATE VOCATIONAL SCHOOL OF AGRICULTURE IN SERANG CITY

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### Abstract

Vocational Schools also aim to produce human resources who are intellectual and ready to use in the world of work. Therefore, to prepare students who are able to compete in the 21st century is the responsibility of Indonesian educational institutions by implementing or equipping them with 4C competencies through superior programs. This research method uses a qualitative approach with a narrative study method. The purpose of this research is to find out the efforts made by schools to improve students' soft skills in the challenges of the 21st century. The findings of this research are regarding efforts to improve students' soft skills with several programs created by schools, including the existence of extracurriculars, literacy Fridays, P5 program (project to strengthen the profile of Pancasila students). apart from that, it is also to improve soft skills through entrepreneurship learning which is included in the Creative Products and Entrepreneurship (PKK) subjects.).

**Keywords :** 21<sup>st</sup> Century, Vocational Education, Soft Skills.

### Abstrak

Sekolah Kejuruan juga bertujuan untuk menghasilkan sumber daya manusia yang intelektual dan siap pakai dalam dunia kerja. Oleh karena itu untuk menyiapkan peserta didik yang mampu bersaing di abad ke-21 menjadi tanggung jawab lembaga pendidikan Indonesia dengan menerapkan atau membekali mereka dengan kompetensi 4C melalui program-program unggulan. Metode penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan metode studi naratif. Tujuan dari penelitian kali ini untuk mengetahui upaya-upaya yang dilakukan oleh sekolah dalam meningkatkan soft skill peserta didik di tantangan abad 21. Hasil temuan dari penelitian ini mengenai upaya untuk meningkatkan soft skill peserta didik dengan adanya beberapa program yang dibuat oleh sekolah, diantaranya adalah adanya ekstrakurikuler, jumat literasi, program P5 (projek penguatan profil pelajar pancasila). selain itu juga untuk meningkatkan soft skill adanya pembelajaran kewirausahaan yang masuk dalam mata pelajaran Produk Kreatif dan kewirausahaan (PKK).

**Katakunci:** Abad 21, Pendidikan Kejuruan, Soft Skill.

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## Introduction

Humanizing humans is a humanistic educational process. Therefore, we must be able to uphold the human rights of everyone. In other words, students are not robotic humans who can be manipulated at will but they represent a generation that needs our support and attention as they transition from childhood to adulthood so that they can develop into morally upright, independent, and critical thinkers. . Therefore, the education unit must be able to help them to grow and develop. One of them is a vocational high school that seeks to prepare students, especially in certain fields of work, the purpose of vocational schools is to train capable individuals. Enter the world of work easily and be ready to work (Pristiwanti et al., 2022) (Lisdayanti et al., 2021) .

Vocational Schools also aim to produce intellectual and ready-to-use human resources in the world of work. In detail, according to the 2013 Curriculum, it is stated that Vocational High Schools aim to prepare Indonesian people to have the ability to live as individuals and citizens who are faithful, productive, creative, innovative and effective and able to contribute to life. society, nation, state, and civilized life. One of the benefits of vocational education is that graduates study with practical skills that enhance their readiness for the workforce in addition to cognitive competence (Wibowo, 2016) (Mariah & Sugandi, 2010) (Risk of Friani & Rediana Setiyani, 2015)

Everyone who masters the 4Cs is the key to success in social interaction in the 21st century, meaning that having the ability of the 21st century is the most important thing in improving soft skills, the 4Cs are communication, collaboration, creativity, innovation, as well as critical thinking and solving skills must be applied in a structured manner (Puji Hastuti et al., 2023) . 4Cs are soft skills that are much more useful than learning hard talent (Ida Bagus Putu Arnyana, 2019) . The task of producing quality students who are able to compete in the 21st century is the responsibility of educational institutions in Indonesia by implementing or equipping them with 4C competencies through superior programs. This educational responsibility does not only apply to education in Indonesia. But also in Indonesian educational institutions abroad such as the Indonesian Den Haag School (SIDH) (Mohammad Agus. P, Sri. H, Nanik. W, 2023) (Partono et al., 2021).

In reality, in the field, there are still several educational institutions that have not produced students who are ready to compete in the 21st century. Because it is due to the context of the implementation of education in Indonesia which still does not refer to the 4C debriefing. Therefore, there needs to be an effort made by all educational institutions in equipping students with soft skills. Therefore, this writing discusses the school's efforts to improve the 4C competencies (Critical Thinking, Communication, Collaborative, Creativity) of students. This research aims to find out what efforts schools make to improve students' soft skills in this 21st century era. (Afwan et al., 2022).

## Methods

This study uses a narrative study method with a qualitative approach. Narrative research is used by researchers, to tell a person's experience and report on the experience. The data collection technique of this research is through interviews and observations (Dinar Maulani, 2022). The steps of the research process are carried out according to the following (1) Identifying a phenomenon to be researched. (2) Select participants where the researcher can learn things related to the phenomenon being studied. (3) Collecting stories (experiences) from the individuals concerned. (4) Retelling the participants' experiences. (5) Collaborate with participants. The researcher and the participants interacted actively during the study (6) Writing a narrative about the story of the participant's experience. Creswell (2008).

## Results and Discussion

In this study, data collection was carried out by means of interviews, observations and documentation. The interviews conducted by the researcher took 1 week from July 21, 2022 to July 27, 2022. This research took place at SDN Keramat Pela 09, Central Gandaria, South Jakarta with several main questions and several spontaneous questions to get information from informants about game modifications that have an impact on improving the basic movement of hitting the ball.

Based on the results of the research conducted at SMKN Pertanian Kota Serang, the results obtained after conducting observations and also interviews with resource persons to obtain data on what efforts the school has made to improve students' soft skills, the explanation is as follows:

### Soft skill

Students who have soft skills are able to communicate effectively with others. In connection with the fourth industrial revolution, students in vocational schools really need to have soft skills in order to succeed in today's world of work. In addition to problem-solving and social skills, students also need to have emotional intelligence, speaking skills, and critical and creative thinking processes. In the context of 21st century education, teachers and the environment need to be considered before instilling soft skills in students (Walenta et al., 2023).

Based on the results of observations and also interviews with resource persons regarding the improvement of soft skills at the State Agricultural Vocational School in Serang City. That there are several programs that exist as a form of school efforts to improve students, including: extracurriculars, literacy Fridays, the P5 program (Pancasila student profile strengthening project). Apart from the programs at the Agricultural State Vocational School. The efforts made to improve students' soft skills are included in the context of entrepreneurship learning or the so-called Creative Products and entrepreneurship subjects.

The extracurriculars developed at SMK Negeri Pertanian are basketball, volleyball, futsal, rampak bedug, L-kiss and also scouts. For literacy Friday itself, it is a program that is carried out regularly on Fridays such as religious tausiah, congregational prayers, joint gymnastics, breakfast together as well as acoustic performances from students and students. In addition, there is also the P5 program where this program is one of the implementations of the independent curriculum, where students are required to be able to utilize the waste around the school to be used as a valuable and useful product.

### Challenges of the 21st Century

Critical thinking, creativity, communication, and collaboration or the so-called 4Cs are considered 21st century skills. As the 21st century brings many unexpected changes in many aspects of life as well as the rapidly changing high demands, education must be able to provide the skills to help students face these challenges and prepare them for life in the 21st century. This 4C is an important point that must be applied in the world of education, especially in vocational high schools. The programs at SMKN Pertanian Kota Serang in improving students' soft skills include: (Mu'minah, 2021) (Sartini & Mulyono, 2022)

#### 1. Creative and entrepreneurial product lessons

Creative product lessons and entrepreneurship are one of the existing subjects. With this lesson, students form critical, creative, communication, and collaborative thinking, namely with the existence of this creative product and entrepreneurship subject, students are divided into groups to discuss in class related to learning, where students are given the task of planning the business that will be undertaken and seeing the potential of the school environment

#### 2. Extracurricular

Extracurricular activities are activities that are carried out outside of class hours, which are provided by schools for the development and improvement of soft skills. There are

extracurricular programs that exist, namely, scouts, lciium, rampak bedug. The existence of several extracurriculars can form students to think critically, creatively, communicate and collaborate. Because all students are members of several majors to participate in these extracurricular activities

### **3. Friday Literacy**

This literacy Friday is held every Friday in the morning. With the routine program every Friday, there are several agendas, namely shuha prayer together, morning tausiah, gymnastics, and breakfast. It is the school's effort to improve collaboration and communication for all students of SMKN Pertanian Kota Serang, by scheduling each class to become an event officer every Friday.

### **4. P5 Program (Pancasila Student Profile Strengthening Project)**

The project program strengthens the profile of Pancasila students (P5) by emphasizing a sustainable lifestyle. Where students make products from used or no longer used items to be reprocessed into a valuable and useful product. This is one of the school's strengths in improving the way students think critically, creatively, communicate and collaborate. Because in this activity they are combined from grades X, XI and XII who then identify the school environment and determine what products will be made from the waste around the school.

Entrepreneurship is an ideal element that must be possessed by every nation, so that the nation can progress in building the quality of its resources. Creative products and entrepreneurship (PKK) is one of the subjects regarding entrepreneurship where students must be given Project-Based Learning-based learning, which focuses on basic skills in analyzing business possibilities and planning business opportunities that are around. It trains students in critical thinking skills, communication, creativity and collaboration with their peers. (Haq et al., 2021) (Lestyoningsih & Hidayati, 2020)

Students can develop attitudes outside the classroom that are aligned with norms, values, and facilitators of soft skill development at their school by participating in extracurricular activities. This is because extracurricular activities are very influential in improving soft skills, soft skills are positive, the majority of students who participate in extracurricular activities well are students who have good soft skills as well. This means that there is an influence of extracurricular activities on improving students' soft skills (Arminsyah, 2023).

Literacy Friday is an activity that is carried out every Friday, the purpose of this school literacy program is to build superior human resources by developing and improving their soft skills. It is also used in education and learning. Students should also be accustomed to reading outside of class hours. This activity was attended by all SMKN students, teacher councils, administrative staff to the principal. This program is an effort by the school to improve Critical Thinking, Communication, Collaborative, Creativity in facing the challenges of the 21st century. (Muthoharoh, 2021)

The potential and abilities of students in various sectors will be developed through this project. The Pancasila Student Profile Strengthening Project (P5), which is one of the aspects of the implementation of the independent curriculum. The P5 program activity at SMKN Pertanian is to process waste around the school into valuable and useful products, and is carried out in groups and it requires 4C skills. This is one of the programs that can improve students' soft skills in the challenges of the 21st century. (Abdul & Fatah, 2023)

### **Conclusion**

Based on the results of research obtained from the school's efforts in improving students' soft skills. This extracurricular program is a program that exists outside of class hours which is carried out as an effort to improve soft skills as for the existing extracurriculars, namely scouts,

licium, rampak bedug. Friday literacy activities that are carried out every Friday as a routine activity carried out, this is the school's effort to improve collaboration and communication for all students of SMKN Pertanian Serang City. The P5 program (Pancasila Student Profile Strengthening Project) is one of the programs of the independent curriculum and is one of the school's strengths in improving the way students think critically, creatively, communicate and collaborate. Apart from several programs, efforts are made to improve students' soft skills in the context of entrepreneurship learning or what is called creative product and entrepreneurship subjects. With this lesson, students are formed to think critically, creatively, communicate and collaborate.

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