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A STUDY OF MAJOR PROBLEM IN INDONESIAN ANIMATION VOCATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL

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Abstract

When the government opens an animation competency on vocational high school (VHS), it is expected to be able to meet the animation industry needs. However, the facts show that graduated students from VHS contribute to the highest unemployment amongst other school educations. This paper tries to identify the existing problems faced by the graduates of the animation program before they enter the real world and analyze the underlying reasons. We conducted an in-depth interview with several teachers, principals, and students, also study literature reviews to collects data. The major problem shows that first, there are still many teachers who lack competencies to teach animation. Second, parents want their children to go to higher-level education in order to get a better life. Thirdly, each VHS that has an animation program must have specialization so that students can master a specific animation area. Fourth, students need to emphasize entrepreneurial skills through social media. This study also presented some recommendations for government as the central role of the education system,

and for animation VHS as an education institution in regarding the major problem faced by graduated students.

Keywords

Animation Vocational School, Vocational School, Animation Education

1. Introduction

The rapid development of the animation industry is in line with the growth of internet technology, mobile devices, and social media. With total value reached US$ 259 billion and expected to reach US$ 270 billion by 2020, the animation industry is attracting development countries like Indonesia (Research and Markets, 2019). The industry itself relies on labor-intensive tasks with special requirements as artists or animators. Considering the high value of the animation industry and the need for a significant amount of creative labor, the Indonesian government quickly grasped the opportunity, one of which was by increasing the number of animation VHS program. Currently, there are more than 14 thousands of vocational school and only 77 with animation program competencies in Indonesia (*Data Pokok SMK*, n.d.).With a large number of vocational education is expected to produce a quality and better trained workforce of animation.
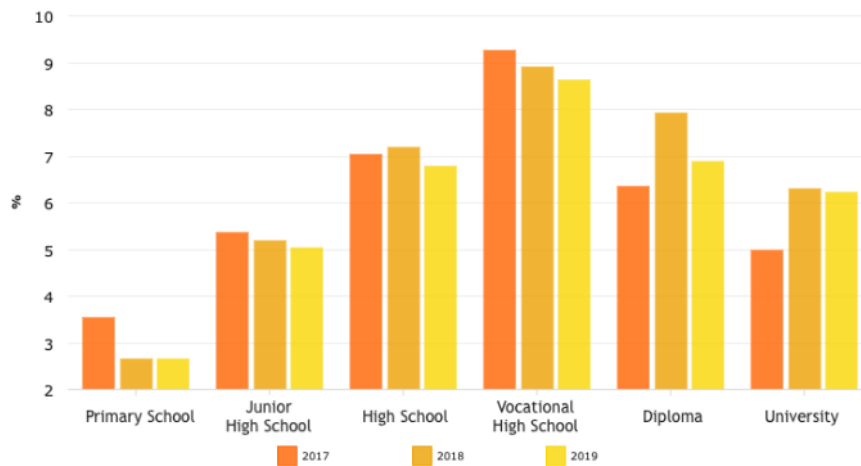
Figure 1: *Open Unemployment Rate According to the Highest Level of Education (February 2017-february 2019)*
Source: *Badan Pusat Statistik.*

A large number of vocational schools have not made the youth unemployment problem resolved. Graduated students from VHS are still the highest contributor to open unemployment among other schools (*Badan Pusat Statistik*, 2018). According to Figure 1, VHS has the highest open unemployment rate between other higher educational schools more than eight percent. The contrary result to the

primary purpose of the vocational school development program. High school graduates are prepared as workers who can be directly absorbed by the industry. The gap between the skills learned in school, and the skills needed by industry is a become general major problem since the first development of VHS. In the case of animation education, it takes more than just the ability to master a piece of software to be able to work in the industry. Education in this field differs from other fine art subjects or other technical programs in various ways. The combination of creativity, artistic talent, and technical skill is the first proposition to be able to compete in the industry.

The purpose of this research is to identify the existing problems faced by the graduates of the animation program before they enter the real world and analyze the underlying reasons. We conducted an in-depth interview with several teachers, principals, and students, also study literature reviews to collects data. The main data from in-depth interviews are collected from VHS teachers and students in big cities like Cimahi, Surabaya, Yogyakarta, Solo, and Malang as sampling because they are close to the industry.

2. Literature Review

Based on the Decree of the Director-General of Secondary Education Ministry of Education and Culture Number 7013/D/KP/2013, Animation major is under the area expertise of fine arts and crafts in the fine arts program of VHS. The duration of the study minimum is three years for all VHS students. The standards competency of graduated animation students in VHS is to be an excellent animator, be able to manage and apply their obtained skills independently or relevant with industry and have responsibilities as part of the national animation industry and as part of the community (*Peraturan Pemerintah Republik Indonesia Tentang Standar Nasional Pendidikan*, 2005). To form a qualified animator, the government also sets standards for qualifying human resource requirements that are manifest in national competency standards (*Keputusan Menteri Ketenagakerjaan Republik Indonesia*, 2014). Based on this decree, competencies of the animation industry are divides into two categories: 2D animation and 3D animation, and both of which generally divided into three main work sectors: pre-production, production, and post-production. Based on these main work, the competencies are defined to meet the industry qualifications.

Technically the making of animation is divided into three: traditional 2D animation, digital 2D, and CGI (Winder et al., 2011). Blazer (2016) also divided the animation techniques into five groups, including hand-drawn, 2D stop motion, 3D stop motion, 2D CGI, and 3D CGI. Every method has a different approach to creating animation from start to finish. Although the production phase of making animation is the same (from pre to post), the development process is different. There is an essential core

skill that every animator must learn before they do animation (2D or 3D); this skill is a drawing ability. Drawing is the easiest way to express ideas or concepts and, sometimes, the fastest way to explain something only with pen and paper (Roberts & Roberts, 2007; Subotnick, 2003; Wells et al., 2009). Because of the extensive range of animation expertise, animation can be categories as the vast field world, and VHS must cautiously apply the curriculum for students. Vocational training must focus on specialty areas in the animation industry and give more students exercise on mastering specific skills than on creating whole animation projects because the animation industry is a dynamic industry with many workers from several disciplines (Subotnick, 2003). Making an animation film requires a lot of talented people with special abilities to create. Inside there are good story writer, storyboard artist, actor/actress, character designer, prop designer, animator, background designer, lighting systems, render system, sound engineer, sound director, IT manager, with each of these roles are very different skill-sets. Besides, it requires years to study and to become good at also we need passion to be able to learn.

The gap between school knowledge and industry need is the general issues of VHS education (Sukmana, 2019). There are several approaches suggested by many researchers to reduce the gap between school knowledge and industry. One of the most recommended is a partnership program with industry so students can learn industry practices to develop their skills, styles, and integration knowledge (Kadir & Bachrul, 2016; Majid & Sudira, 2017; Schaap et al., 2012). In the case of animation VHS, every industry has its way and technique in making animation. The decision to collaborate with the industry depends on school vision for their students' competencies. It must also align with the school staff's ability to give the knowledge needed before students enter the industry. Each animation studio has its way of working, technical specialization, and software that is different from other studios. The animation industry that produces 3D projects will be different from animation studios that work on 2D projects. While the Indonesian animation industry is spread only in big cities, its number not more than 25 studios. Besides, there are only a few large animation studios in Indonesia that employs more than 100 people. Mostly only small studios have employ between 10-25 employees. Graduated students do not have many choices to work on industry and often compete with graduates from diploma degree.

3. Methodology

The study aims to identify and gain an understanding of the existing problems faced by a newly graduated student of the animation VHS and analyzed the underlying reasons. We employed qualitative research with conducted in-depth interviews and with several teachers, principals, and students also study literature reviews to collects data. We choose VHS in big cities like Cimahi, Surabaya,

Yogyakarta, Solo, and Malang as sampling because they are close to the industry. Each interview lasted more than two hours. We use paper, syllabus, websites, or books that related to study as literature. All data were analyzed, and finally, we can identify the emergent theme.

4. Findings and Discussion

Our study found that there are four major problems faced by the graduate students of animation VHS. First, there are still many teachers who lack competencies to teach animation. Second, parents want their children to go to higher-level education in order to get a better life. Thirdly, each VHS that has an animation program must have specialization so that students can master a specific animation area. Fourth, students need to emphasize entrepreneurial skills through social media.

4.1 Teachers Lack Competencies to Teach Animation

Overall, Indonesia still faced a problem with the shortage of teachers' qualifications, remuneration, instructional hours, and education infrastructure. Also, the lack number of animation VHS teachers creates an obstacle. The quality of knowledge given depends on the teacher's understanding of knowledge. Many assumptions from teachers that learning animation only requires mastering software and drawing characters. Some teachers always pursue their lack by mastering animation software. Some of them give up because animation software has many tools and complicated. Teachers are required to not only be able to operate animation software, but teachers must also understand about animation. Modern software makes creating animation easy. However, to create a good animation requires a lot of acquired skills.

Many teachers of animation VHS are from fine art universities degree or information technology degrees because there is no animation bachelor's degree in all universities in Indonesia. From this point, we knew that teachers are lack of animation skill or knowledge. They get animation knowledge only from courses or training, which on average, only 2-3 months. After getting a certificate, they begin to teach their knowledge to students.

Problems also come from frequent curriculum changes causing some subjects to omitted. The changes result in some teachers not being able to teach their subjects to be deleted and lacking other competencies. To solve the problem, the government made a dual expertise program (PKG) for a teacher to train them to other competencies than they had before. Instead of looking as opportunities to get new competencies, some teachers consider the program as a chance to get more teaching hours. The results are far from the standard sets, miss-match competencies unavoidable, especially in teaching animation. Director of coaching in VHS, acknowledges that the main obstacle of developing VHS is the teachers competencies (Indriani & Tarmizi, 2020).

4.2 Parents Want their Children to Continue to Higher-Level Education

Before entering the animation VHS, students are required to have a set of PC or laptops at home to help them study while not in school. From this perspective, we all know that students from animation VHS are basically from middle-class parents who afford to buy a computer. Middle-class parents in Indonesia usually encourage their children to achieve higher education levels to have a better life (Sharpe, 2014). The general opinion about VHS in Indonesia is negative; students that often fight, graduates have low salaries and low academic ability. The decision of parents to permit their children having an animation program is because they think animation is non profitable area with a good salary. According to Career One stop (www.acinet.org), to become a professional animator, one's level of education, in general, must reach a bachelor's degree. Because in animation bachelor's degree program, students are capable to utilize creative, technical and digital animation technique combine both art and computer courses (*How to Become an Animator | Education and Career Roadmap*, 2019). Unfortunately, there are no animation bachelor's degree in Indonesia yet.

4.3 Each Animation VHS must have Specialization

The curriculum requires VHS students to acquire all skills in both 2D and 3D animation over three years. The apparent result saw that students would not get a better understanding of specific subjects of animation. Because of too many subjects to learn, graduated students tend to be the generalist rather than a specialist. Industry always complains that graduated students from VHS are not ready to work; they have to be trained for several months before they can work in a specific area. Training task is bear by the industry that is costly and time-consuming too.

VHS curriculum created by the government that cannot be changed. However, every school can make an emphasis on specific animation skill. Teacher's competencies are also a concern when applying specialization. Schools can determine these specialized skills to align with industry needs and national labor competency standards (SKKNI), such as character designers, 3D animators, in-betweener, key animator, background artist, coloring artist, and others. The specialization in VHS also makes it easier for the industry to look for talents in specific skills by contacting the school concerned.

The core skill in the animation industry is the teamwork ability to deliver animation movies scheduled. Every industry employs talented people with a specific skill according to what the animation movies produce. Mastering all animation skills in school will wasting students' time. For this reason, the school needs to emphasize particular specializations for its students.

4.4 Entrepreneurial Skill through Social Media is Essential for Students

Rapid developing internet technology opens up many new opportunities for creative people. The internet allows us to earn money more than the industry gives. The disruption era because of industrial

revolution 4.0 is beginning to erode the primary role of universities and schools as a source of educated people. These phenomena began when Google and Ernst & Young announced that they would hire anyone without having to have a degree from a college. One of the jobs that we can see now and loved by young people is becoming a vlogger. We do not need any degree to become a vlogger or content creator on youtube. Furthermore, we can affiliate with Google to get revenue from our content. The phenomenon of youtube now is becoming popular all over the world. The good example ofusing the internet to develop animation capabilities can be seen from the youtube channel "Dalang Pelo". Nur Alif Ramadhan created this series when he was a student of VHS. This animation series relying on the story and the slight movement of characters. With a focus on things that are funny and only aimed at entertaining, Dalang Pelo gets positive feedback from netizens. Created from 2016, the channel already has 2.23 million subscribers with an average duration of 2 minutes per video, and each video has an average of one million viewers. In addition, his Instagram account already has followers of 3.8 million. The main income from Dalang Pelo is fromYoutube advertising affiliation (adsense). Also, Nur Alif made derivative products from Dalang Pelo in the form of T-shirts, hats, mugs, and others.

Figure 2: *One of the Videos from the Dalang Pelo's Channel which has more than 5 Million Viewers*
Source: *Youtube*

VHS can take this role by preparing its students with the knowledge needed for internet base opportunities. Students can be taught to create animation content and sell it on the internet or by making videos about the process of making a part of animation. At least now, the internet makes it easier for students to display their portfolios or sampling of students' best work. The portfolio will show someone's ability in a certain kind of skill in animation. Today, many people depend their life on the internet by creating content or making videos about animation and share it online.

5. Conclusion

Teachers need to upgrade their animation industry knowledge and skills to deliver professional graduates. The role of government is crucial to associate teachers to be able to upgrade their capabilities through related industries. The success of vocational school delivers graduates to the workforce makes a benchmark of academic success for the school. If there are 77 vocational high schools with animation majors, on average yearly, there will be more than 3000 graduated students if there are 44 students per class. The proportion of a large number of graduates is not balanced with industry need because the number of the animation industry is not much. Besides, they have to compete with graduates from diplomas or bachelor's degrees. For this reason, many parents doubt that VHS graduates will be able to work according to industry.

Each school must determine its specialization in the field of animation, in order to produce more professional graduates in specific fields. The progress of the internet and technology world has also become an excellent opportunity for VHS to equip their students in the 4.0 industrial revolution.Based on this paper's findings; future research could pick up on one finding to investigate further development for more comprehensive results. One interesting topic to study in further detail would be the implementation of teaching method for entrepreneurial skill through social media in today digital online age. The urge for applying a curriculum that able to adapt in the industrial era 4.0 is a must for VHS animation.

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