

Predicting graduate employment: the relationship among social skills, performance and motivation in cosmetology education graduates

Dindy Sinta Megasari*, Arita Puspitorini and Dewi Lutfiati

Cosmetology Education Study Program, Faculty of Engineering, Universitas Negeri Surabaya, Indonesia

*Corresponding Author: dindymegasari@unesa.ac.id

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Abstract: There have been many studies focusing on graduate tracing. However, they were still determining how likely the graduates will work following their interests and the fields of knowledge they have studied. This study aimed at gaining improved awareness of cosmetology education graduates' employment readiness concerning social skills, performance, and work motivation. This explanatory research used the entire research population of the last two years, as many as 70 graduates. Data collection was carried out using a questionnaire on each variable studied. While the analysis method used a structural equation model (Warp-PLS) to confirm the model's accuracy while testing the influence of variables on other variables and verifying that the instruments utilized were valid and dependable. The results proved that social skills, performance and work motivation directly and significantly affect graduate job readiness. Graduates' social skills and performance also affected job readiness in the field. The social skills of graduates were higher in influence than the performance and motivation of graduates in work readiness, with a difference of 0.391. These results implied a need to improve soft communication skills and spiritual provision in addition to the competencies that graduates already have.

Keywords: Graduate Performance; Social Skills; Job Interest and Motivation; Tracer Study

1. Introduction

As job rivalry heats up, stakeholders are becoming increasingly selective in recruiting prospective employees for their businesses (Romadhoni et al., 2023). According to (Ragusa et al., 2022), social skills are divided into four interconnected dimensions: basic relationship skills, capacity for communication, team-building skills, and ability to solve problems. Such as teamwork, communication skills, and building good interpersonal relationships are valued and recognized in the workplace (Dimitriadis & Koning, 2022). Candidates who have stronger social skills tend to adapt more easily to the work environment and can face various work challenges (Lee et al., 2022). These challenges make individuals who want to succeed in work must have balanced, soft and hard skills. If individuals only master their academic fields (hard skills), It will be difficult for them to break into the workforce (Siburian et al., 2022). As a result, individuals must additionally arm themselves with soft skills like respect, accountability, social awareness, and effective communication. For developing social contacts, social skills are essential (Makki et al., 2016).

However, this ability is influenced by several factors, one of which is the motivation inherent in that person (Sofiani & Taman, 2019). The motivation possessed by prospective graduates is important in determining student work readiness (Rochmayanti et al., 2022). In addition, interest and suitability for work can provide strong intrinsic motivation for graduate students to develop

the necessary skills and deepen their knowledge in their fields. This fact is supported by ([Ahmad & Mukhaiyar, 2020](#)), who stated that work motivation is also a relevant factor in work readiness ([Urip & Kuat, 2021](#)). Students who have graduated with high motivation to achieve their career goals tend to be more mentally and emotionally prepared to face challenges in the workplace ([Supriyanto et al., 2022](#)). Strong motivation can also encourage them to continue learning and developing themselves to improve their work readiness ([Ananda, 2021](#)). Meanwhile, social skills also influence motivation ([Prayogo et al., 2022](#)). Although many studies have examined the importance of social skills, performance, and work motivation in students' work readiness, needs to be more research on the importance of social skills in students' work reading to one yet to has specifically investigating gated the relationship between social skills, performance, and work motivation to the job readiness of these graduates in a comprehensive manner.

Many previous studies have highlighted graduate job search ([Afriansyah et al., 2022](#); [Akbar & Mukhtar, 2020](#); [Alfarisi et al., 2022](#); [Cuadra et al., 2019](#)). However, the majority describe the distribution of graduates based on the number of employed or entrepreneurial graduates, the amount of salary received, and other information only intended for institutional purposes. In contrast, a specific study and analysis of prospective workers are needed to explore a graduate's deepest desires ([Hadiyanto et al., 2021](#)). In order to close this knowledge gap and improve students' comprehension of how graduates' social skills, performance, and job motivation can affect students' readiness for the workforce, more research is needed. As defined by ([Catacutan et al., 2020](#)), readiness is a person's total condition that prepares him to respond in a specific way. Work readiness relates to work attitudes, personality traits and psychological defence mechanisms needed to get and maintain the work obtained ([Chigbu & Nekhwevha, 2022](#)).

Knowing the factors that affect students' preparedness for the workforce can help educational institutions and policymakers create more effective initiatives to raise students' readiness ([Cooper et al., 2016](#)). However, when they determine their future occupation, specific information from the perspective of graduates still needs to be made available. Previous research has empirically proven that motivation is influenced by graduates' interests ([Hyseni et al., 2021](#)). However, another study ([Grant & Shandell, 2022](#)) found that social skills play a greater role in graduates' work readiness. Nonetheless, there is no evidence that work readiness is influenced by graduates' social skills, performance and motivation. More detailed information is required to establish the elements influencing graduate absorption in the industry, particularly internal determinants of graduates and their interest and motivation after graduation ([Maryani et al., 2021](#)).

This research is important because it will assist institutions, instructors, and students in researching the relationship between social skill development and job motivation depending on desired employment characteristics. On the other hand, maintaining high performance in preparing for the competitive world of work must still be maintained and improved. The following are the primary objectives of this study: (1) to analyze the impact of social skills on graduate work readiness; (2) to explore the impact of graduate student performance on work readiness; and (3) to assess the impact of graduate student motivation on job preparedness.

2. Methods

Research Design

This research is explanatory research, in which researchers try to explain a problem at the research location, test hypotheses, and analyze the data obtained ([Muhammad Yousaf, 2019](#)). The research was conducted at the Cosmetology Education Undergraduate Study Program, Faculty of Engineering, Universitas Negeri Surabaya, for three months, from April to June 2023.

Population and Sample

Purposive sampling was used in this work, a sample methodology with specific considerations (Ariva & Puspitadewi, 2022). The justification for employing the purposive sampling technique is that it is appropriate for non-generalizable research. The research sample comprised 70 graduate students from the cosmetology education study program who had registered for graduation within the last two years. The entire sample is female.

Research Instruments

The data collection tool refers to research (Romadhoni et al., 2023) which has been modified according to the characteristics of graduates. The instrument lattice, as in Table 1, has been adjusted to the components of the research variable indicators, including social skills (SOS), performance (SKL), work motivation (MOT) and work readiness (RED).

Table 1. Lattice of Research Instruments

No	Variable Name	Question/Description	Measurement
1.	Social Skills (SOS)	Respondents like to discuss important things with friends.	Wholeheartedly agree to do not agree.
		Respondent always communicates with others for team goals.	Wholeheartedly agree to do not agree.
		Respondent listening to the teacher's explanation during learning.	Wholeheartedly agree to do not agree.
		Respondents used to obey the rules wherever they were.	Wholeheartedly agree to do not agree.
2.	Performance (SKL)	Respondents feel happy to participate in practice learning.	Always to never.
		Respondent prepares the makeup props vigorously.	Always to never.
		Respondent keeps their work environment clean with full responsibility.	Always to never.
		The respondent believes in herself; and can create any creation in the field of makeup.	Always to never.
3.	Work Motivation (MOT)	Respondents think with their ability, they can do difficult tasks.	Wholeheartedly agree to do not agree.
		Respondents think they need help to do a difficult task.	Wholeheartedly agree to do not agree.
		Respondents believe they can do the task even if it is difficult.	Wholeheartedly agree to do not agree.
		In carrying out our work, and always try to achieve the targets set by the company.	Wholeheartedly agree to do not agree.
4.	Work Readiness (RED)	Respondents feel confident that they do all work assigned to complete it well.	Wholeheartedly agree to do not agree.
		Respondent used to work under pressure.	Wholeheartedly agree to do not agree.
		They feel confident they can work in the industry or open a business.	Wholeheartedly agree to do not agree.
		Respondent ready to be assigned outside the city.	Wholeheartedly agree to do not agree.

Analysis Technique

The analysis technique uses the SEM structural equation model with Partial Least Square (PLS) using the Warp-PLS program. This method enables researchers to examine the validity and reliability of research instruments, check the accuracy of an instrument used for research, and evaluate its effectiveness. The structural equations serve as the study's conceptual model (Figure 1).

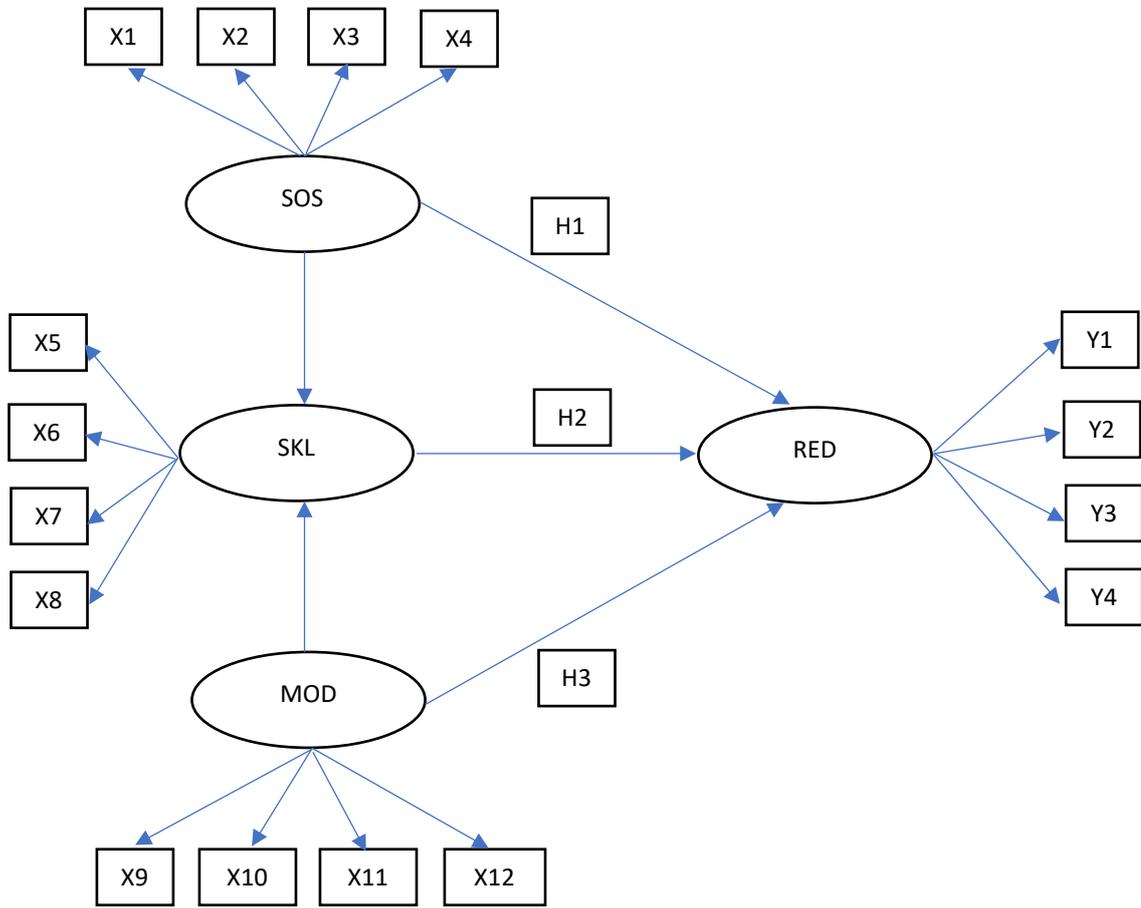


Figure 1. Path Analysis Model

Figure caption:

1. Social skills as the first independent variable (SOS) of the study. The following indicators: relationships (X1); self-management (X2); academic ability (X3); and compliance (X4).
2. In graduate performance is the second independent variable (SKL) with the following indicators: Knowledge, abilities, and skills in work (X5), Work attitude (X6), Quality of work (X7), and Interaction (X8).
3. Graduate motivation is the third independent variable (MOT) with the following indicators: Having high personal responsibility for their work (X9), Doing something/work as well as possible (X10), Desire to get a fair wage following work (X11), and Desire to learn to master their work in their field. (X12).

Job readiness of graduates as the dependent variable (RED) with the following indicators: the courage to accept responsibility (Y1), ambition to advance by trying to keep up with the progress or development of the field of expertise (Y2), having logical and objective considerations (Y3), having the ability to coordinate or cooperate with others (Y4).

3. Results

The results and discussion of this research can be known by analyzing the data obtained using SEM-PLS analysts of hypothesis analysis, and model results estimation can be explained in (Figure 2).

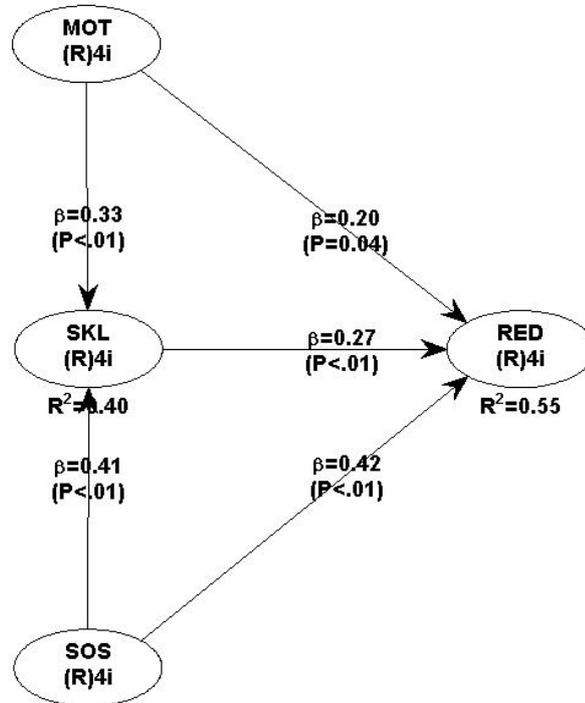


Figure 2. SEM Analysis General Model

Graduates' social skills have a more significant effect than motivation and performance on graduates' work readiness. This finding indicates that companies need the social skills of graduate students to increase work productivity, so it is hoped that alums will have higher empowerment than before. The social skills needed by graduate students from the cosmetology education undergraduate study program can communicate effectively with team members, coworkers and superiors. Social skills are one of the keys to leading a happy and successful life (Y. Zheng et al., 2020). Other research findings show that social skills are developed through acquiring knowledge from families, classmates, and the surrounding environment rather than being born with them (López Peláez et al., 2020). Analysis of the coefficient of determination (R²) based on Figure 2 substructure 1 obtained a total coefficient of determination (R²) of 0.40. Thus, the amount of contribution to social skills together with the variable performance of graduate students is 40%. In contrast, the rest is influenced by other variables besides motivation and graduate performance that are not included in this study.

■ Entrepreneurship ■ Work in Industry ■ Continuing Studies

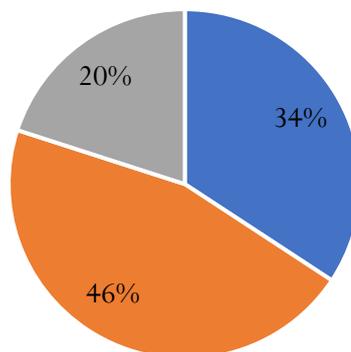


Figure 3: Distribution of alums' field of work

Meanwhile, the social skills variable contributes positively to the work readiness variable, indicated by the total determination coefficient (R^2) of 0.55. Thus, the contribution of motivation, performance and social skills to the work readiness variable is 55%. In contrast, the rest is influenced by other variables besides motivation, performance and skills that are not included in this study.

Meanwhile, regarding the distribution of work fields according to alum interests (Figure 3), out of 70 respondents, the majority wanted to work in companies (46%). Meanwhile, 34% wanted to open a business (beauty salon, EO, WO), and the rest (20%).

4. Discussion

Effect Between Variables (Direct Effect)

The direct effect obtained from the calculation results shows that the greater direct effect on work readiness is the innovation of extension workers, which is 0.42. The results of these findings follow the opinion of (Ferguson et al., 2022), revealing that social skills are one the important things in helping job seekers to be able to have partners and interact with others, and help solve problems at work. The more social skills the alums have, the greater their level of empowerment in the company in increasing their potential and developing it so prospective workers can be more creative and independent (Palma-García et al., 2018).

In addition, social skills directly affect graduate students' performance, which is 0.41. According to (Tanaka & Nakamura, 2022), social skills are a social environment that creates comfort for others to build togetherness in making friends. The ability in question is that individuals can communicate effectively with others both verbally and nonverbally, following the situations and conditions encountered at work.

Inter-variable Influence (Indirect Influence)

The indirect effect that can be seen in Table 3 is that the variable, namely the social skills variable, shows the most dominant indirect effect on the work readiness variable, namely the indirect effect

path coefficient value of 0.125, so in addition to the motivation and performance variables, the innovation variable indirectly determines the work readiness of alums.

Table 2. Indirect Effect on Job Readiness Variable

Indirect effect	Motivation	Performance	Social skills
Motivation	-	-	-
Work readiness	0.105	-	0.125

Indirectly, social skills affect work readiness, which is 0.125 higher than motivation, which is 0.105. Each graduate student has different ability levels to improve soft skills, so training and experience are needed before entering work (Portela-Pino et al., 2021). According to Maryani et al. (2021), social skills are gained through a learning process from families, classmates, and the community rather than being born with them.

Total Influence

Table 4 demonstrates that the social skills variable on work preparedness has the most prominent overall influence of external latent factors on endogenous latent variables, with a path coefficient of 0.429. These data indicate that social skills are crucial in developing employment preparedness. At the same time, with a path coefficient value of 0.205, the motivation variable has the smallest total influence on work readiness. These findings demonstrated that humans constantly want nice things. Therefore, the driving force or activator that inspires their job excitement depends on future expectations. If the wish comes true, someone's motivation at work will grow (B. Zheng et al., 2021). Work motivation is a driving force that arouses and leads behaviour in action or works on real attempts to attain predefined goals (Tanti et al., 2020). The findings of this study's analysis suggest that the effects of motivation, performance, and social skills on graduate student's job readiness and the effects of performance and motivation on work readiness produce contradictory outcomes.

Table 3. Exogenous Variables' Total Effect on Endogenous Variables

Indirect effect	Motivation	Performance	Social skills
Performance	0.331	-	0.417
Work readiness	0.042	0.009	0.001

The first hypothesis, which theoretically assumes that motivation affects alum work readiness, empirically proves significant. As seen in the table above, the sig number is 0.042, which means it is smaller than 0.05, so H_1 is accepted. So the greater the motivation of alums to work, the higher the perceived work readiness. This condition is supported by (Trautner & Schwinger, 2020), which states that someone with adequate Education and training will tend to feel more prepared and confident in carrying out work tasks. This work readiness can be a strong motivation to do a good job (Rochmayanti et al., 2022).

The second hypothesis, theoretically suspects that alum performance affects job readiness, is proven to be accepted and significant. The sig number is 0.009 in the table above, which means it is less than 0.05; hence hypothesis 2 is approved. This result means that the higher performance of graduate students will also impact the higher job readiness of alums. Job seekers can be more confident in carrying out their work with frequent practice and practice developing skills in cosmetology education. According to Berestova et al. (2022), previous work experience can

provide confidence and readiness. Through work experience, a person is familiar with the work environment, the tasks that must be carried out, and the challenges that may arise.

Further, work experience can build confidence and motivation to continue developing workplace skills. In addition, practical experience in applying makeup is essential for job readiness. Makeup professionals often work in various contexts, such as beauty salons, photo studios, cosmetic companies, film/theatre productions and special events. Through these experiences, they learn to deal with challenges that may arise, hone their skills, and learn to adapt to client needs ([Grant & Shandell, 2022](#)).

The third hypothesis, which says that social skills are thought to affect work readiness, is proven to be accepted and significant. As seen in Table 3, the acquisition of a *big* number of 0.001 is smaller than 0.05, so H_3 is accepted and significant. This number means that the higher the social skills alums possess, the higher the alums' work readiness. [Sofiani and Taman \(2019\)](#) found that a cosmetologist's communication skills are very important. They must be able to listen carefully to the client's needs and desires and provide appropriate advice according to the client's style, personality, and special occasion. Strong interpersonal skills are also necessary to establish good relationships with clients and coworkers.

Research Implications

The study's findings demonstrate that social abilities variables have the most effect compared to performance and motivation variables. Alums will interact with coworkers from a variety of cultural backgrounds, races, and experience levels in the job. They can speak effectively, form strong relationships, and work in groups if they have good social skills. This ability will boost productivity, improve work quality, and foster a positive workplace environment.

The capacity to communicate effectively is one of the characteristics of good social skills. Alums who can communicate their views clearly and convincingly, both vocally and in writing, will be able to connect more effectively with superiors, coworkers, and consumers. Good communication reduces misconceptions, boosts collaboration, and fortifies professional relationships.

Conflict is an unavoidable component of the workplace. Alums with strong social skills can effectively manage disagreements. They can identify the basis of the dispute, apply empathy, and seek solutions that satisfy all people involved. The capacity to deal with conflict promotes harmony in the workplace and contributes to the alums' personal and professional development.

Meanwhile, the practical implication is that motivation is the key to achieving career success. A highly motivated alum will have a strong spirit and passion to achieve their goals. Strong motivation will encourage them to work harder, overcome challenges, and remain committed to their chosen occupation. Conversely, a lack of motivation can hinder one's productivity and career progress. As a result, alums must discover the basis of their motivation, regardless of their goals, job fulfilment, or desire to contribute to society.

5. Conclusion

Alum abilities can be predicted according to motivation, performance and social skills. Social skills affect the work readiness of alums empirically proven significant. The better the social skills mastered by alums will affect their work readiness in industry, entrepreneurship and provision for further study. This finding can also be seen from the performance of alums, which also affects job

readiness empirically and is proven significant. The better performance of alums will affect their work readiness. Likewise, motivation affects work readiness empirically and is proven significant. The higher motivation will affect work readiness. The results of this study imply that in addition to motivation, good performance is also very necessary for success in the workplace. The ability to produce high performance will help alums demonstrate the skills and value they bring. Good performance includes various aspects, such as technical ability, adaptability, critical thinking ability, teamwork, and leadership. Alums who perform well are more likely to receive greater responsibility, promotion opportunities, and recognition from their peers and superiors.

Author contribution

Dindy Sinta Megasari: Conceptualization, Visualization, Investigation and Supervision. Arita Puspitorini: Writing – Original Draft, Writing-Review & Editing, Conceptualization, Visualization, investigation and Resources. Dewi Lutfiati: Visualization, Formal analysis, Investigation and Supervision.

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Competing interest

The authors declare that we have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

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