

## The Effect of Academic Performance and Involvement in the Internship Program toward Life Skills and Work Readiness of University Graduates in East Java Indonesia

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**Abstract:** Recently, the unemployment rate of the university graduates in Indonesia is very high. This shows the gap between what is studied in university and the demands of the job market. As a result, job providers assume that university graduates are not ready to work. Job providers consider that university graduates have less experiences related to new jobs and tasks they follow, even if they have a good academic performance. To prepare graduates for the challenges of the job market, some universities in Indonesia require their students to join the internship program as a precondition for graduation. This study examines whether academic performance and involvement in internship programs influence the life skills of university graduates in East Java, Indonesia. Furthermore, whether academic performance, involvement in internship programs, and the quality of life skills influence the work readiness of recent university graduates in East Java, Indonesia. The study revealed that academic performance and involvement in the internship program have a significant effect on the quality of life skills of the graduates. When it is compared to academic performance, involvement in the internship program has a stronger effect on the quality of life skills of graduates. Besides, this study revealed that involvement in the internship program has a direct effect on the work readiness of recent graduates in East Java, Indonesia. Involvement in the internship program also has a strong effect on the quality of life skills, and ultimately also has a strong effect on the readiness to work. Academic performance has an indirect effect on the readiness to work. Academic performance does not have a strong effect on the quality of life skills and the readiness to work. This study shows that involvement in the internship program becomes the dominant factor influencing the quality of life skills and the readiness to work. For that, every university must have an internship program that must be followed intensively by the students so that after graduation they are more ready to work.

**Keywords:** Academic Performance, Internship Program, Life Skills, Readiness to Work

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### I. INTRODUCTION

Indonesia still has various problems about employment, when the level of competition in the field of employment in the Asean region is competitively high. There are two main issues related the employment field in Indonesia, *first*; low educational qualifications; *second*, skills and competencies is not quite relevant to the demands of the job market. The education qualifications of the employees in Indonesia are mostly from the level of Senior high school and under. Low educational qualifications will certainly make the competitiveness of Indonesian employees becomes weak. Based on data released by CBS (Central Bureau of Statistics) per February 2016, it shows that the total of Indonesia's employees is 127.67 million people. The employees with the level of junior high school education and under are 60.38% (77.087 million people), the employees with the level of senior high school are 17.43% (22.252 million people) and those with the level of diploma and bachelor degree, or higher are 22.19% (28.329 million people). CBS data in August 2015 shows the working population reaches 114.8 million people. When it is seen from the educational background of working population, it can be known the data as follows: employees with elementary school level are 50.8 million people (44.27%), employees with junior high school level are 20.7 million people (18.03%), employees with senior high school level are 30.6 million people (26.7%), and employees with Diploma level are 3.1 million people (2.7%), employees with Bachelor or higher education level are 9.5 million people (8.3%) (<https://www.bps.go.id/Brs/view/id/1196>) [1]. Besides, the level of education is relatively low, skills and competencies of employee candidates in Indonesia are considered less relevant to the demands of the job market. This has an impact on the low readiness of employee candidates to come to the job market (Prianto,

2013) [2]. CBS data also states that the number of employees per February 2016 is 7.02 million people (5.5%). When it is seen from the educational background, and compared with the previous period, it can be presented some data as follows: unemployment rate of elementary school graduates decreases from 3.61 to 3.44%; unemployment rate of junior high school graduates decreases from 7.14% to 5.76%; unemployment rate of high school graduates decreases from 8.17% to 6.95%; unemployment rate of vocational high school graduates decreases from 9.84% to 9.05%. While the unemployment rate of university graduates increases from 5.34% to 6.22% (<https://www.bps.go.id/Brs/view/id/1196>) [3].

Educated unemployment becomes a major problem in Indonesia. Based on Indonesian employment data, as released by CBS in the last 2 years; there are 2 major problems in the field of employment. First, the number of Indonesian employees from senior high school graduates and under is more than 75%. This shows that employment in Indonesia still has to face the problem of low educational qualification and skills, so it can reduce the competitiveness of Indonesian employees in the global market. Second, there is an increase in the unemployment rate of university graduates. This shows the gap between what has been studied in university and the demands of the job market. The skills and competencies required by the job market appear to change more quickly than the theory studied in university. This causes a gap between what has been studied in university and the demands of the job market, so the unemployment rate of university graduates continues to increase from year to year.

The un readiness of recent graduates to enter the job market is not only happening in Indonesia, the same problem also occurs in various abroad universities. Becker, et.al. (2010) conducts an annual survey to graduates of the Journalism and Mass Communication Studies Program [4]. The results of the survey conducted to university graduates in 2009 states that 13.1% of the graduates think that the experience gained in university is insufficient to prepare them entering the job market; 25% of the graduates answer that they do not have adequate skills, and lack the basic skills needed to work; 31.8% of the graduates regret for choosing their field of study and they wish to have a career in other fields. The same survey was repeated by Becker et al. in 2013, and the results shows 26.7% of graduates think that universities are considered not preparing them to compete in the job market, and 27.8% regret for choosing their field of study, and they wish to have a career in other fields. This study shows that universities are considered less maximal in preparing graduates to enter the job market [5].

According to Caballero & Walker (2010), work providers think that university graduates have an advantage, because they are an educated group; they can work as professional and skilled workers [6]. University graduates are also expected to have new ideas and fresh ideas to apply in the workplace. As an educated group, university graduates are also expected to be future leaders in the workplace. According to Bottjen (2001), recent graduates from universities generally have better and up-to-date technological knowledge than those who have worked longer [7]. Recent university graduates are also rated to have a learning spirit and the latest knowledge (Hoopis, 1994) [8]. Despite these advantages, the work users judge university graduates have lack of experiences related to new tasks and jobs that they are going to work in. Therefore, according to Caballero & Walker (2010); Recent graduates should have experience, though it is not directly related to the profession and work [9]. The experience of those who have just graduated will provide an understanding of how to work in an organization.

To provide real experience to students, various universities in Indonesia have various activity programs designed to bring theory and practice closer together, such as internship programs, fieldwork practices, real work lecture, and study excursion. Those are some examples of programs that various universities undertake to equip students' experiences in dealing with the real world. In the program of study excursion, for example; The students are directly deployed to institutions whose activities related to the field of students' knowledge; so students can understand how the knowledge learned in college is applied in the real world. Internship programs, fieldwork practices, and real work lecture are also basically intended to provide experience and equip students to apply the theories taught in university related to the demands of the job market.

Previous researches suggest the importance of internship programs as part of the educational curriculum that students must follow (Rothman, 2007) [10]. The study conducted by Jerrald (2009) states that to prepare graduates to face competition in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the schools must equip their students with a set of 21<sup>st</sup> century skills [11]. This shows that graduates are not enough to have only the academic performance demonstrated by the grade point, but they must also be supported by the practical experience required by the job market. In recent years, various universities in Indonesia have intensified the internship program to prepare their graduates to be ready entering the job market. Some universities in Indonesia require advanced students to attend an internship program, and their participation in the internship program as a precondition for graduation. Their involvement in the internship program is also intended to strengthen their life skills entering the job market. The main purpose of the internship program is generally to equip students with various

experiences on how to think and work interdisciplinary, so they can understand the usefulness of knowledge learned in university to examine, formulate, and solve various problems existing in the workplace. In short, the internship program is used to equip university graduates to be more ready to work.

To evaluate whether the internship program is running effectively, it is necessary to know how the intensity level of student involvement in the internship program that they follow. The internship program has been effectively implemented if it has a positive impact on the development of life skills and improves students' readiness to enter the job market. Thus, it needs to evaluate some things including: the of student involvement in the internship program, the students' readiness to enter the job market after following the internship program.

Thus this study aims to answer some research questions: (1) Does the level of academic performance influence the life skills of university graduates in East Java? (2) Does the intensity of involvement in the internship program influence the life skills of university graduates in East Java? (3) Does the level of academic performance influence the work readiness of university graduates in East Java? (4) Does involvement in the internship program influence the work readiness of university graduates in East Java? (5) Does the quality of life skills influence the work readiness of university graduates in East Java? (6) What variable dominantly influences the work readiness of university graduates in East Java?

## **II. ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE AND INTERNSHIP PROGRAM**

The European Commission (2004) mentions several key competencies showing the academic performance of the graduates, including: the communication skill of the mother tongue, foreign languages skills, mathematical literacy and basic competencies in sciences and technology, digital competency, learning-to-learn, interpersonal and civic competences, and entrepreneurship [12]. Academic performance of university graduates in Indonesia will be visible from the acquisition of GPA and the diploma supplement accompanies a higher education certificate which describes the various competencies of the graduates.

Reading skill is "the capacity to understand, use and reflect on written texts in order to achieve one's goals, to develop one's knowledge and potential, and to participate in society" (OECD, 2003) [13]. While mathematical literacy is as "the capacity to identify, to understand, and to engage in mathematics and make well-founded judgments about the role that mathematics plays, as needed for an individual's current and future private life, occupational life, social life with peers and relatives, and life as a constructive, concerned, and reflective citizen"(OECD 2003) [14].

Lately most universities are requiring their students to follow the internship program as a precondition for graduation. It shows that graduates are not only required to master the theory but also have to have the practical experiences required by the job market. This is not only applied to various universities in Indonesia but also occurs in various universities in developed countries. Huhman (2013) describes the development of internship programs of universities [15]. If in the early 1980s only 3% of the students participating in the internship program before graduation; in 1999, there are more than 80% of advanced students joining at least one internship program. In the period 1980 to 1999, the number of students involving in the internship program is increasing from 200 students to 1000 students. In 2012, the graduates working are those who intensively participate various internship programs. Survey conducted by NACE (2012) reveals 7% of internship students are recruited as permanent employees, and 66% of workers assume that work experience gained from internship becomes the factor determining graduates to be accepted as full-time employees [16]. This proves that internship programs are the factor determining the work readiness of graduates

Student involvement in the internship program will give working experience to enter job markets (Bukaliya, 2012; Becker, Vlad, Simpson, & Kalpen, 2013) [17] [18]. Therefore, Bukaliya (2012) recommends that universities should involve in assisting students in internship programs [19]. The internship program also needs to be carried out intensively for sufficient duration of time, so that the students really get the required work experience.

Previous studies states that an internship program, as part of the learning activities for advanced students, is an effective activity to provide work experience related their scientific fields, so it increases the work readiness after students graduate (Cannon & Arnold, 1998; Hyman -Parker, 1998; Reardon, Lenz, & Folsom, 1998; Swift & Russell, 1999; Gault, Redington, & Schlager; 2000; Getzel, Briel; & Kregel; 2000; Kysor & Pierce, 2000) [20] [21] [22] [23] [24] [25] [26]. The internship program is basically a form of *experiential learning* and implemented in various activities, including: cooperative education, field study, practicum, service learning, externship, and apprenticeship (Flanagan, 2000; Lewis & William, 1994) [27] [28]. There are many researchers in the world examining the importance of internship programs for students. Some previous studies have stated that an internship program plays an important role in preparing students to enter the working world when they finish their study (Alpert, Heaney, and Kuhn, 2009; Chen, Hu, Wang, and Chen, 2011; Batool, Ellahi , and Masood, 2012) [29] [30] [31].

In Indonesia, the Directorate General of Higher Education also encourages universities to undertake internship programs by offering Co-operative Academic Education (Co-op) grants or well known in 2004 as integrated working learning programs for small and medium enterprises (SMEs). The students who join the Co-op program carry out an internship activity in SMEs for 4 months. The Co-op program is intended to make university graduates not only have an opportunity to search a job but also have ability to create employment through experience gained in the internship program in SMEs. Through students involvement in the Co-op program, they are expected to gain experience on how to manage and develop the business. (<http://belmawa.ristekdikti.go.id/dev/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/8.-PEDOMAN-PROGRAM-COOP-SME-2015.docx>) [32].

The strengthening of internship programs involving entrepreneurs, private institutions and public institutions is believed to prepare university graduates to compete in the job market more seriously (Ross and Elechi, 2002; Radigan, 2009; Gault, Leach, and Duey, 2010; Jackel, 2011) [33] [34] [35] [36]. The study by Giles & Riyan (2002) explains that the ultimate goal of all internships is to provide students with the opportunity to apply learning and gain hands-on experience [37]. The study conducted by Verney, Holoviak, and Winter's (2009) states that the evaluation of the students success in the internship program should involve entrepreneurs [38]. The involvement of entrepreneurs in evaluating the internship program is useful to evaluate whether the internship program implemented by the university is well targeted.

The study conducted by Phoebe (2010) states that the internship program is useful to equip students about new knowledge and skills needed by the company [39]. While the study conducted by Verney, Holoviak, and Winter's (2009) also states that the presence of an internship program allows students to get a job just after they graduate [40]. Thus, universities should develop various programs linking universities and the real world. The linking between university and the real world will make students more ready to enter the job market (Katyal and Arora, 2013) [41].

Strengthening internship programs for universities students and similar programs, such as the Co-op Program and fieldwork practices will allow students to quickly determine what their career choices will be after they graduate (Getzel, Briel, & Kregel, 2000; Verney, Holoviak, & Winter, 2009) [42] [43]. A study conducted by Reardon, Lenz, & Folosom (1998) states that the experience of students acquired in internship programs is a factor that employers highly consider to accept graduates with applications enclosing academic knowledge, intellectual skills and practical work experience (Reardon, Lenz, and Folsom, 1998) [44] [45].

The internship program can also be used to evaluate how the developed curriculum is relevant with the working world. If entrepreneurs are satisfied with the performance of the students during the internship program, it also shows that the students have the provision of life skills and competencies required by the working world. A positive assessment of entrepreneurs on the internship program also indicates that the developed curriculum of education has a strong relevance to the needs of the real world. Referring to study conducted by Verney, Holoviak, and Winter's (2009), the university needs to know how the level of expansion of entrepreneurs to internship activities implemented by the students [46]. Assessment of entrepreneurs on the existence of an internship program can be used to evaluate how the role of internship program in strengthening life skills and strengthening students' readiness to enter the employability.

Gile and Ryan (2002) states that students gain some benefits through internship programs, such as: engaging the intern in the discipline or major, causing interaction with a variety of individuals, systems, and organizations, improving self confidence, using a variety of learning styles and frequently challenging participants to use new ways of learning and thinking, improving skills in research, communication in groups, interpersonal communication, and observation, improving critical thinking and problem-solving skills, personalizing learning, giving it relevance and meaning, putting learning into context to improve understanding and retention of concepts, providing networking and mentoring opportunities, conditioning the participant to adapt to change, frequently challenging attitudes and beliefs, which often change, helping a participant grow emotionally and learn from failure and success, and helping an intern become a more motivated life-long learner [47]. Giles & Riyan (2002) explains that the ultimate goal of all internships is to provide students with the opportunity to apply learning and gain hands-on experience [48].

According to Giles & Riyan (2002), internships can be part-time or full-time which can impact students' real-world learning significantly [49]. Many experts agree that an internship is a valuable part of career development (Spradlin, 2009) [50]. Considering the importance of the internship program, since the early 1900s, American higher education has provided internships or other forms of practical learning opportunities for college students to apply classroom learning of academic theories and practical skills to real-world settings (Dube & Miller, 1988; Howard, 2004; Radigan, 2009) [51] [52] [53].

In this study, the academic performance of graduates will be analyzed from: obtaining grade point and various advantages of the graduates and the basic skills that must be mastered by recent graduates, including: communication skills with mother tongue, foreign language skills, mathematical literacy and basic competencies

in sciences and technology, digital competency, learning-to-learn, interpersonal and civic competences, and entrepreneurship. While involving in the internship program is measured from the perception of graduates about their involvement in the internship program they have followed during their study in university.

### **III. LIFE SKILLS**

A study conducted by WHO (1994) defines life skills are abilities for adaptive and positive behavior that enable individuals to deal effectively with the demands and challenges of everyday life [54]. Meanwhile, according to Psychosocial Center International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (2013) explain life skills are a group of empowering skills that enable people to cope with life and its challenges and changes. Life skills support psychosocial well-being, promoting good communication, positive thinking, analytical skills and goal setting, cooperation and coping. Strengthening life skills helps individuals and communities to manage challenges and risks, maximize opportunities and solve problems [55].

The study conducted by WHO (1994) describes some of the key skills showing that an individual has a life skills, such as: decision making, problem solving, creative thinking, critical thinking, effective communication, interpersonal relationship skills, self-awareness, empathy, coping with emotion, and coping with stress. These life skills should be owned by students to be ready for competition in the job market [56].

In this intense competition era, students must learn to make decisions quickly and accurately. One's skill to make decisions quickly and accurately indicates that they are very masterful with their field of duty. It means someone who is capable of making decisions shows that they have a much-needed skill in the job market.

The students with problem-solving skills will enable them to overcome various problems occurring constructively. Various problems will always come in the work environment. The students who are able to solve problems will give them the opportunity to solve arising problems, so that new ways of working can be generated more efficiently and the level of work productivity can be increasingly improved.

Creative thinking skill is needed when students have to solve problems and make decisions. Creative thinking skill allows students to offer a variety of alternative actions along with the various impacts of those alternative actions proposed. Creative thinking skill allows students to analyze problems based on various solutions to problems. Creative thinking skill also allows students to anticipate future problems, so that they will be more ready to face various challenges.

Critical thinking skill is demonstrated by students skills to analyze the various information and knowledge objectively. Critical thinking skill is very useful to analyze the various trends and challenges occurring in the workplace. Various factors affecting the occurrence of any event can be better understood by students with their critical thinking skill.

Interpersonal relationship skills are very useful for students to establish positive communication with their colleagues and the wider social environment. The students who have interpersonal communication skills will be useful to create a harmonious working relationship so that they will contribute to a conducive working atmosphere. The ability to communicate with the wider social environment is also useful for strengthening business activities in the midst of social life.

Self-awareness is a skill to understand oneself, character, strengths and weakness, and individual expectations in a wider social environment. Students with strong self-awareness will make them easier to place themselves when they have to interact with their new social environment. Thus, students with strong self-awareness will enable their existence to be more easier accepted by their social environment.

Empathy skill enables students to understand other people with different characters and views with themselves. The students with empathy skill will more easily accept the existence of others, so that social interaction activities can increase more capacity and quality. The empathy will foster a tolerant and caring attitude strengthening social interaction. The empathy is an important factor strengthening team work.

The rapid technology development of information and communication demands everyone to keep updating their knowledge and skills (Armenakis et al., 1993; Cole, 2001; Jabnoun, 2001; Barkema et al. 2002; Lehman, et.al, 2002; Kasali, 2005, Winardi & Prianto, 2016) [57] [58] [59] [60] [61] [62] [63]. The International Youth Foundation (2014) details the life skills expected by global business entrepreneurs, including self confidence, respecting self and others, interpersonal skills (empathy, compassion), managing emotions, personal responsibility (including dependability, integrity, and work ethics), positive attitude and self motivation, conflict management, team work, communicating (listening, verbal, and written), cooperation and team work, creative thinking, critical thinking and problem solving, and decision making [64]. International Youth Foundation (2014) also specify various life skills that job seekers, employed youth, and potential entrepreneurs must have. Workplace preparedness lifeskills for job seekers include: planning and organization skills (including time and financial management), career assessment skills, job-searching skills, CV and cover letter writing skills, interview skills, and image/appearance. Life skills for employed youth include: workplace behavior and protocols, planning and organization skills (including time and financial management), costumer-relation skills,

research skills, financial literacy, personal leadership, workplace rights and responsibilities. Life skills for potential entrepreneurs include: business plan management, personal leadership, planning and organization skills (including time and financial management), risk-taking, coping with failure, market research skills, and financial management [65].

According to the International Youth Foundation (2014); There are at least 2 life skills that must be mastered by youth, including university students. They are professional competencies and personal traits [66]. Professional competencies include: communication skills (listening, verbal, and written), planning and organizational skills, teamwork, interpersonal skills, critical thinking and problem solving, investigation and research skills, creative thinking, decision-making skills, and multicultural sensitivity and awareness. While personal traits include: professionalism (grooming and self-respect), honesty and integrity, positive attitude, motivation, ability to learn, dependability and responsibility, adaptability and flexibility, ability to take constructive feedback, hard work, and ethics.

In this study, the life skill qualities of recent graduates are analyzed through, *first*; professional competencies include: communication skills (listening, verbal and written), planning and organizational skills, teamwork, interpersonal skills, critical thinking and problem solving, investigation and research skills, Creative thinking, decision-making skills, and multicultural sensitivity and awareness; *second*, personal traits include: professionalism (grooming and self-respect), honesty and integrity, positive attitude, motivation, ability to learn, dependability and responsibility, adaptability and flexibility, ability to take constructive feedback, hard work, and ethics; and *third*, the skills possessed by job seekers include: planning and organization skills (including time and financial management), career skills assessment, job-searching skills, CV and cover letter writing skills, interview skills, and image/appearance.

#### **IV. READINESS TO WORK OF UNIVERSITY GRADUATES**

Indonesia's employment data in 2016 shows that unemployment rates from university graduates are very high (<https://www.bps.go.id/brs/view/id/1231>) [67]. The study conducted by Prianto (2013) states that the skills of recent graduated job seekers, especially for those who graduate from university; rate that they do not quite meet the specifications as expected by the work providers [68]. This causes graduates can not be directly applied into the job market, so the number of educated unemployment is increasing more and more.

A high unemployment rate among educated people raises assumption that educational institutions can not quite provide the knowledge, skills and experience which graduates will need to enter the working world later. The Annual Survey of Journalism and Mass Communication Graduates (Becker et al., 2010) conducted of bachelor's degree recipients in 2009 showed that 13.1% felt their college experience did not adequately prepare them for the real world experience of which 25% responded that they had not been given skills to help find a job and lacked basic skills of the field needed for a job and 31.8% regretted their choice of this major and wished they had selected another career [69]. The same survey by Becker et al. (2013) showed that 26.7% graduates felt the college did not prepare them for today's job market and 27.8% regretted their choice of this major and wished they had selected another career [70].

To prepare graduates possessing early readiness to enter job market, some universities in Indonesia obligate their student to follow internship program. Trough internship program, students will gain real knowledge about various skills needed by job market (NACE, 2012) [71]. Thus, more work providers require participation of internship program as main requirement to be accepted as an employee. According to a NACE (2012) survey, 70% of interns are more likely to be hired as full-time employees at a company and 66% of employers think work-relevant experience is the most critical factor in their hiring decisions [72].

Various studies have been conducted to identify the various indicators used to assess the work readiness. Brady (2010) has reviewed some of the personality attributes used to assess the level of readiness for work [73]. The study was then extended and deepened by Caballero, Walker, Tyszkiewicz (2011) [74]. Referring to the study conducted by Brady (2010), there are six indicators as a mark of individual readiness to work, they are (a) responsible attitude, (b) thinking skill and act flexibly, (c) having various life skills, (d) communication skills both oral and written, (e) ability to perform self-evaluation, and (f) an awareness of their own health and safety [75].

A responsible attitude will be shown on the behavior of the workers to come to work on time and will continue to run until the completion of work activities in accordance with the work schedule. They mainly concern with a variety of tools and equipment used for work, they have work quality standards, and understand the advantages and disadvantages of various work behaviors which they are about to take. They have a full awareness that the success and career in the workplace will be influenced by their own achievement (Reynolds and Ceranic, 2007) [76]. Responsible employees are always marked by personal integrity, honesty and trustworthy (Gardner, Csikszentmihalyi, & Damon, 2001) [77].

The study conducted by Gardner, Csikszentmihalyi, & Damon (2001) state that more than 2/3 of the employees consider responsibility in the workplace as a very important personality attributes [78]. It is not only

being responsible for them, but also responsible for other employees and the organization. Finally, a responsibility is also dedicated to the advancement of the organization where they work (Gardner & Liu, 1997) [79]. Therefore, Parker (2008) state that a responsible attitude is one of the main personality attributes that must be owned by the employees and employee candidates in the 21<sup>st</sup> century [80].

The thinking skill and act flexibly are shown on the worker skill to keep adapting to the various changes occurring in the workplace (Moorhouse & Caltabiano, 2007) [81]. They realize that the new tendencies will come very quickly. This situation requires skills to quickly customize themselves with work patterns and new job skills related to the growing demands in the society. In the world changing rapidly, the skill to adapt in line with the demands of new skills and competencies is a part of the life skills owned by the employees and employee candidates in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Excellent communication skill, both verbal and written; really supports the employees for the creation of a conducive working atmosphere. Various job problems often occur because of communication problems, either good communication between co-workers, communication with the organization, or communication with the public. Thus the communication skill of employees will be assessed by work providers as factors determining work readiness and performance (Caballero, Walker, Tyszkiewicz, 2011; Porath & Bateman, 2006; Brady, 2010) [82] [83].

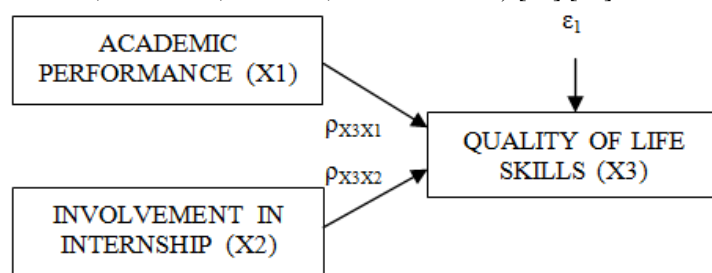
The individual readiness to work can also be identified by their ability to perform self-evaluation. This is demonstrated by the workers skill to be aware of how to position themselves in the life of the organization where they work, so they understand what to do to improve their performance. Self assessment skill enables employees easy to receive feedback, encouraging them to continue learning, and broaden the impact of self-confidence performance. Workers with a strong sense of confidence will affect their performance (Betz, 2004) [84]. Thus, the worker readiness to do a self-assessment also reflects the personal maturity, and it affects the readiness to work (Caballero, Walker, Tyszkiewicz, 2011) [85].

The study, conducted by Wagner (2006) as cited by Prianto (2013) states there are 14 factors making the job seekers are not accepted as an employee. The first two factors associated with hard skills, while the remaining 12 factors are related to soft skills. those 14 factors include: the mismatch of competencies and skills, low academic achievement, the weakness of a personality, lack of confidence, lack of motivation, low encouragement and enthusiasm, weak leadership, unprepared for the presentation of interviews, prioritize a moment advantage, unrealistic salary demand, less preparation for work, few extra-curricular activities during the study, less basic skills and lack of work readiness [86].

In this study, work readiness of graduates is determined by the knowledge mastery and practical skills. Graduates knowledge mastery determining the work readiness covers a range of indicators, such as: information and communication technology mastery, computer applications, literacy skills, and understanding of the field of interest-work. While the graduates practical skills cover a wide range of indicators, such as: work motivation, personal maturity, interaction skills, work attitude, problem-solving skills, and responsibility.

## V. RESEARCH METHOD

This study describes the effect of various exogenous variables on various endogenous variables, as shown in Figure 1. There are two exogenous variables in this study. They are level of academic performance and students involvement in the internship program. Meanwhile, there are two endogenous variables in this study. They are quality of life skills and work readiness. To analyze the relationship between exogenous variables with endogenous variables, the study uses the path trimming model analysis to determine the effect of academic performance (X1), students involvement in the internship program (X2), and quality of life skills (X3), relating to the work readiness (Y). Through this analysis, it can be used to determine the direct and indirect effects of one variable to other ones (Sugiyono, 2008) [87]. The trimming model analysis is done by removing variables from the exogenous variables when they do not have a significant effect on endogenous variables (Riduwan & Kuncoro, A.E. 2011; Sarwono, Jonathan. 2007) [88] [89].



**Figure 1:** Theoretical Model of Various Variables Influencing Quality of Life Skills For College Graduate in East Java

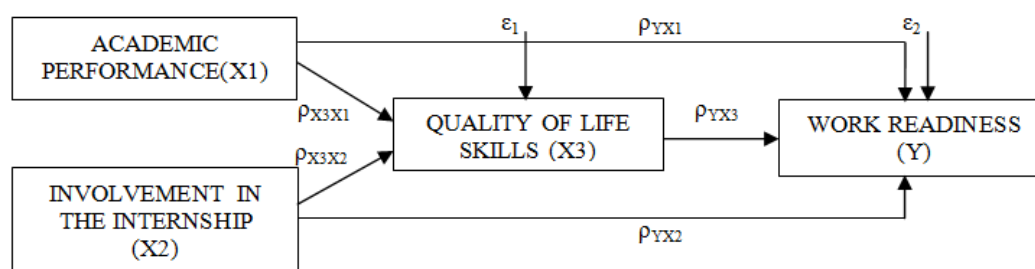
Based on the first theoretical model, it can be proposed structural equation as follows:

$$X_3 = \rho_{X_3X_1}X_1 + \rho_{X_3X_2}X_2 + \varepsilon_1$$

Based on the first theoretical model, it can propose two research hypotheses as follows:

1. There is a direct influence between academic performance and quality of life skills for university graduates in East Java.
2. There is a direct influence between the intensity of involvement in the internship program and quality of life skills for university graduates in East Java.

This study identifies three variables influencing the work readiness of university graduates in East Java, as shown in Figure 2.



**Figure 2:** Theoretical Model of Various Variables Influencing the Work Readiness for University Graduates in East Java

Based on the theoretical model, it can propose structural equation as follows:

$$Y = \rho_{YX_1}X_1 + \rho_{YX_2}X_2 + \rho_{X_3X_1}X_3 + \varepsilon_2$$

Based on the second theoretical model, then the research can propose hypotheses as follows:

1. There is a direct influence between academic performance and work readiness for university graduates in East Java.
2. There is a direct influence between the intensity of students involvement in the internship program and work readiness for university graduates in East Java.
3. There is an indirect influence between academic performance with work readiness through quality of life skills for university graduates in East Java.
4. There is an indirect influence between the intensity of involvement in the internship program with the work readiness through quality of life skills for university graduates in East Java.

The population is recent graduates from six universities in East Java, the recent graduates of the even semester of 2016/2017: Airlangga University, Surabaya Institute of Technology, State University of Surabaya, State University of Malang, University of Brawijaya, and the State University of Jember. The recent graduates from these six major universities in East Java are scattered in various parts of Indonesia. Therefore, in this study the sample was determined by using accidental sampling technique (Sugiono, 2008; Margono, 2004) [90] [91]. The study takes 20 recent graduates from Each university as the sample, so the total sample is 120 recent graduates. Data on several variables in this study were obtained through a 5-scale questionnaire. The following is a summary of the results of the questionnaire validity and reliability of the various variables in this study.

**Table 1** Summary of Research Questionnaire Validity and Reliability

No	Variable	No	Indicator	P-Value	Validity	Reliability
1	Academic competence	1	Communication skill with the mother tongue	.000	Valid	.776
		2	Foreign language skills	.002	Valid	
		3	Mathematical literacy and basic competencies in sciences and technology	.000	Valid	
		4	Digital competency	.012	Valid	
		5	Learning-to-learn	.004	Valid	
		6	Interpersonal and civic competences	.000	Valid	
		7	Entrepreneurship	.035	Valid	
		8	Grade point	.021	Valid	
2	Involvement in internship	1	Cooperative education	.002	Valid	.897
		2	Field study	.007	Valid	
		3	Practicum	.013	Valid	
		4	Service learning	.000	Valid	
		5	Externship	.000	Valid	



	6	Apprenticeship	.011	Valid		
	1	Communication skills (listening, verbal and written)	.004	Valid		
	2	Planning and organizational skills	.005	Valid		
	3	Teamwork	.010	Valid		
	4	Interpersonal skills	.008	Valid		
	5	Critical thinking and problem solving	.011	Valid		
	6	Investigation and research skills	.005	Valid		
	7	Creative thinking	.006	Valid		
	8	Decision-making skills	.011	Valid		
	9	Multicultural sensitivity and awareness	.023	Valid		
	10	Professionalism (grooming and self-respect)	.011	Valid		
	11	Honesty and integrity	.004	Valid		
	12	Positive attitude	.005	Valid		
3	Life skills	13	Motivation	.005	Valid	.667
		14	Ability to learn	.000	Valid	
		15	Dependability and responsibility	.038	Valid	
		16	Adaptability and flexibility	.000	Valid	
		17	Ability to take constructive feedback	.041	Valid	
		18	Hard work	.000	Valid	
		19	Ethics	.000	Valid	
		20	Time management	.011	Valid	
		21	Career assessment skills	.015	Valid	
		22	Job-searching skills	.000	Valid	
		23	CV and cover letter writing skills	.011	Valid	
		24	Interview skills	.008	Valid	
		25	Image/appearance.	.000	Valid	
	1	Mastery of information and communication technology	.022	Valid		
	2	Computer applications	.012	Valid		
	3	Literacy	.031	Valid		
	4	Understanding of the fieldwork	.007	Valid		
4	Work readiness	5	Work motivation	.011	Valid	.777
		6	Personal maturity	.022	Valid	
		7	Interaction skills	.015	Valid	
		8	Work attitude	.007	Valid	
		9	Problem-solving skills	.022	Valid	
		10	Responsibility	.044	Valid	

Various variables in this study are academic performance, involvement in the internship program, the quality of life skills, and work readiness of university graduates. They are grouped into 5 categories. The level of academic performance, intensity of involvement in the internship program, and the quality of life skills of graduates are categorized in grade: very low (1), low (2), moderate (3), high (4), and very high (5). While the work readiness of graduates is categorized in grade: not very ready (1), not ready (2), moderate (3), ready (4), and very ready (5). Determining grades of the various variables in the study is carried out by dividing range coefficient on each variable in 5 categories. Table 2 describes the grade of academic performance, intensity of involvement in the internship program, and the quality of life skills of graduates consisting of 5 categories, ranging from very low (1) to very high (5); while work readiness of graduates, ranging from not very ready (1) to very ready (5).

**Table 2** Graduates Score Based on Research Variables

Variable	Min-Max	Range	Score based on category									
			1	F	2	F	3	F	4	F	5	F
Academic performance	3:00 - 3:48	1.80	<3:35	6	3:36 - 3:71	9	3:72 - 4:07	36	4:08 - 4:43	40	> 4:44	29
Internship	3:00 - 4:72	1.72	<3:33	9	3:34 - 3:67	9	3:68 - 4:02	33	4:03 - 4:36	48	> 4:37	21
life skills	3:11 - 4:80	1.69	<3:43	5	3:44 - 3:82	11	3:83 - 4:21	37	4:22 - 4:59	50	> 4:60	17
Readiness to Work	3:50 - 4:93	1.43	<3:77	4	3:78 - 4:06	29	4:07 - 4:34	29	4:35 - 4:63	24	> 4:64	34

Source: The results of the analysis are summarized by the researcher

Graduates Scores based on the research variables used as a fundamental to analyze grades of academic performance, the intensity of involvement in internships, quality of life skills, and readiness to work on university graduates in East Java.

## VI. RESULT

This study reveals an overview of academic performance, intensity of involvement in internships, quality life skills, and readiness to work on university graduates in East Java, as shown in Table 3.

**Table 3** Grade Proportion of Graduates Based on Research Variables

Variable	Grade proportion of university graduates Per Variable					Total
	1	2	3	4	5	
Academic performance	.05	.075	.30	.333	.242	100
The intensity of involvement in internships	.075	.075	.275	.40	.175	100
Quality of life skills	.042	.092	.308	.416	.142	100
Readiness to work	.033	.242	.242	.20	.28	100

**Source:** Data processed by the researcher

Based on data from Table 3, it can be described: (a) the academic qualifications of university graduates in East Java, as follows: very low category of 5%, very low of 7.5%, moderate of 30%, high of 33.3%; and very high of 24.2%. Thus, it can be shown that 57.5% of college graduates with high academic performance is very high. When the moderate group is included as a category of appropriate academic qualifications, so 87.5% of university graduates have adequate academic qualifications to compete in the job market. (b) The intensity of the graduates involvement in the internship program as follows: very low of 7.5%, low of 7.5%, moderate of 27.5%, high of 40%; and very high of 17.5%. Thus it can be seen that 57.5% of university graduates involving intensively is very intensive in the internship program, 27.5% of graduates involve quite intensively, and 15% of graduates do not involve intensively in the internship program. (c) Quality of life skills of graduates as follows: very low of 4.2%, low of 9.2%, moderate of 30.8%, high of 41.6%; and very high of 14.2%. In general, it can be said that 55.8% of graduates with high-qualified life skills are very high, 30.8% of graduates have enough qualified life skills, and 13.4% of graduates with low qualified life skills. (D) Graduates readiness to work as follows: not very ready of 3.3%, not ready of 24.2%, moderate of 24.2%, ready of 20%; and very ready of 28%. In general, it can be said that 48% of university graduates in the category of ready to work, 24.2% of graduates are quite ready to work, and 27.5% of graduates are not ready to work. When the work readiness of graduates is based on the criteria of moderate to very ready, 72.2% of graduates are in the readiness to work category.

The study states that university graduates with academic performance more than enough is 87.5% of total graduates. The study also shows that university graduates in the category of ready to work more than ready enough is 72.2%. Thus, there is 13.3% of university graduates with academic performance more than enough but they do not include in the category of ready to work. When they are combined with 12.5% of university graduates with low academic performance, so overall there are 25.8% of university graduates in the category of not ready to work. Empirical facts found in the study cause of high unemployment rate of university graduates in Indonesia. Employment data released by Central Bureau of Statistics (2016) states that the unemployment rate of university graduates is increasing every year.

Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS) reports that the number of un employees per February 2016 is 7.02 million people (5.5%). When it is seen from an educational background, and compared with the previous period, it can be stated some data as follows: The unemployment rate of primary school graduates decreases from 3.61 to 3.44%; The unemployment rate of junior high school graduates decreases from 7.14% to 5.76%; The unemployment rate of high school graduates decreases from 8.17% to 6.95%; The unemployment rate of vocational school graduates decreases from 9.84% to 9.05%. while the unemployment rate of university graduates tends to increase from 5.34% to 6.22% (<http://www.harnas.co/2016/11/17/kemenaker-jumlah-pengangguran-sarjana-meningkat>).

The unemployment rate of university graduates continues to increase every year. It is a challenge for Indonesia, due within the next 2-3 years, Indonesia is predicted to be a country with the fifth highest number of young scholars in the world. In 2020, the OECD predicts that Indonesia will be the largest contributors to the young scholar, well above the UK, Germany, and Spain. Even at that time, the number of scholars in Indonesia is most likely three times more than France. The challenge facing Indonesia is how high number of university graduates employment accompanied by readiness to work. The un readiness of university graduates to work will only increase the number of unemployment.

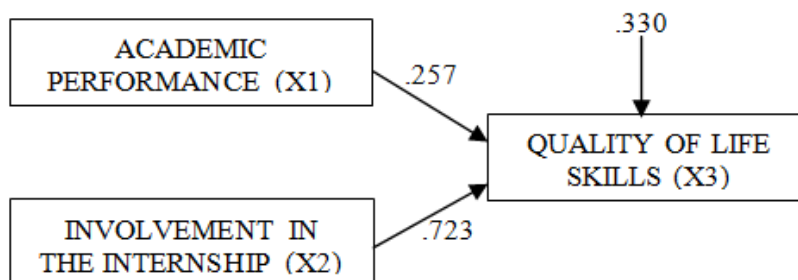
(<https://www.merdeka.com/dunia/sarjana-indonesia-terbanyak-kelima-di-dunia.html>).

This study proves that the academic performance and intensity of involvement in the internship program significantly influence the quality of life skills of university graduates in East Java.

**Table 4** Statistic Test Results of First Structural Model

Model	Standardized Coefficients Beta	Sig.	Alpha	Note
Academic performance	.257	.000	.05	Significant
Involvement in internship	.723	.000	.05	Significant
F = 480 359		.000	.05	Significant
R <sup>2</sup> = .891				

**Source:** The results of the data analysis are summarized by the researcher. The study produces empirical models corroborating theoretical models, as shown in figure 3.



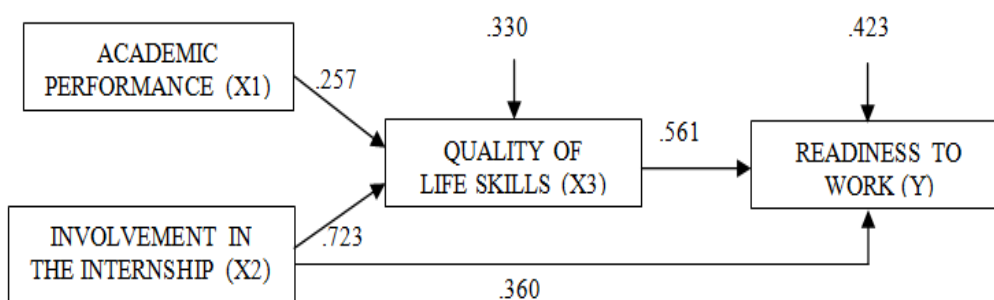
**Figure 3:** Empirical Model of Various Variables influencing Quality of Life Skills For University Graduate in East Java

This study therefore accepts the first hypothesis which states that the academic performance influences significantly to the quality of life skills of university graduates in East Java. The contribution of the academic performance to the quality of life skills of university graduates is 6.6%. This study also receives a second hypothesis which states that the involvement in internships influences significantly to the quality of life skills of university graduates in East Java. The contribution of students involvement in internship programs to quality of life skills of university graduates is 52.2%. This study therefore proves that the internship program is essential to strengthen graduates life skills. It gives a message to all students and universities to make internship programs as a major program to strengthen life skills of their graduates. This study proves that the intensity of involvement in the internship program and the quality of life skills influences significantly to the work readiness of university graduates in East Java. While academic performance does not significantly influence the work readiness of university graduates in East Java

**Table 5** Statistic Test Results of Second Structural Model

Model	Standardized Coefficients Beta	Sig.	Alpha	Note
Academic performance	-.017	.817	.05	Non Significant
Involvement in internship	.364	.001	.05	Significant
life skills	.572	.000	.05	Significant
<b>Structural models (Trimming model)</b>				
Involvement in internship	.360	.001	.05	Significant
life skills	.561	.000	.05	Significant
F = 268 597		.000	.05	Significant
R <sup>2</sup> = .821				

**Source:** The results of the data analysis are summarized by the researcher. This study therefore generates empirical model correcting the theoretical model, as shown in Figure 4.



**Figure 4:** Empirical Model of Various Variables influencing the Work Readiness of University Graduate in East Java

This study rejects the third hypothesis which states that the academic performance directly influences the work readiness of university graduates in East Java. This study states that the academic performance is not the factor determining the graduates readiness to work.

The intensity of involvement in an internship program significantly influences the graduates readiness to work. This study therefore accepts the fourth hypothesis which states that there is a direct influence on the intensity of involvement in the internship program with the work readiness of university graduates in East Java. This study proves that the internship program plays a key role determining the graduates readiness to work. The contribution of internships on the graduates readiness to work is 12.9%.

This study proves that academic performance indirectly influences work readiness through the quality of life skills. The effect of academic performance and the quality of life skills on the graduates readiness to work is 14.4%. This study therefore accepts the fifth hypothesis which states that there is no direct influence between academic performance, through quality of life skills; and the work readiness of university graduates in East Java. This shows that university graduates are not enough to rely only on academic performance to be ready to enter the job market. The graduates are required to have an adequate quality of life skills to reach the stage of work readiness.

The study proves that the intensity of students involvement in the internship program, through quality life skills; indirectly influences the graduates readiness to work, with a contribution of 40.5%. The total effects of the intensity of involvement in the internship program and the quality of life skills on the work readiness of university graduates is 53.4%. This study therefore accepts the sixth hypotheses which states that there is no direct influence between the intensity of involvement in the internship program, through quality of life skills; and the work readiness of university graduates in East Java. This shows that university graduates should follow an intensive internships to be more ready to enter the job market. The universities are also required to develop curriculum requiring students to join an internship program with a high level of intensity before they graduate. The study's findings support previous research studies which state that the important role of internships to provide supplies of work experience and to be a preparation to improve a career.

## **VII. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

This study proves that the academic performance significantly influences in forming the quality of life skills on university graduates in East Java. The graduates involvement in the internship program significantly influences in forming the quality of life skills on university graduates in East Java. To strengthen life skills, graduates involvement in the internship program have a much larger contribution than academic performance. This shows that the internships becomes a very dominant factor to determine the quality of life skills for university graduates in East Java.

The study proves that academic performance has no direct effect on the readiness to work for university graduates in East Java. This proves that the graduates can not only rely on academic performance to enter the job market. Besides having sufficient academic performance to be ready to enter the job market, the university graduates are required to have an adequate life skills. In other words, academic performance indirectly influences on the work readiness of university graduates in East Java. The graduates with high academic performance do not guarantee they will be ready to enter the job market. The intensity of involvement in the internship program directly influences the work readiness of university graduates in East Java. This is an important message to the students and universities to join a very intensive internship program. Students who join very intensive internship program will gain much needed work experience in preparation for entering the job market later after they graduate. The study also proves that the intensity of involvement in the internship program and the quality of life skills indirectly influence on the work readiness of university graduates in East Java. This proves that the quality of life skills becomes an intervening variable between academic performance and the intensity of involvement in the internship program with the work readiness of university graduates in East Java. In other words, universities should be as early as possible to encourage the students to develop life skills, because the quality of their life skills directly influences the work readiness of university graduates in East Java. Based on the conclusions of this study, it can be submitted the following recommendations: (1) Every university should develop educational curriculum, in which there is an internship program as a compulsory subject for all students; (2) The students success in the internship program should be a precondition of graduation. It is intended that the students are encouraged to follow seriously an internship program to gain the experience needed to enter the job market; (3) Every university should develop a learning system combining theoretical studies and practice, because it proves that the theoretical skills does not guarantee that graduates are ready to work; (4) Every university and students as early as possible should strengthen life skills including 25 items of life skills as shown in Table 1, because it proves that the quality of life skills can make graduates more ready to work; (5) to the other writers should research further how to implement an effective internship program, including the possibility to establish partnerships with the working world; in order to create the link and match between what is studied in college with the challenges faced by graduates in the job market.

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