



Strengthening School-Stakeholder Partnerships to Enhance Graduate Employability: A Case Study of Vocational High School in East Lombok-Indonesia

Ririn Candra Andriana Untung Waluyo Asrin Mustari; Abdul Kadir Jaelani

Master of Education Administration Study Program, Postgraduate, University of Mataram, Indonesia

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Abstract

This study examines the extensive initiatives made by SMKN 1 Selong to fortify alliances with different stakeholders in order to maximize its graduates' integration into the labor market. The rising unemployment rate among graduates of vocational schools served as the impetus for the study, underscoring the pressing need for improved industry-school cooperation. The study's qualitative methodology and one case study design enabled a thorough analysis of actual procedures and difficulties. In-depth document analysis, participant observation, and interviews with educators, school administrators, and business partners were all used to gather data. The results of the study showed that a number of strategic initiatives, such as the active growth of industry networks and the purposeful alignment of the curriculum with changing labor market demands, were essential to the partnerships' success. These initiatives improved the relevance of students' skills and increased their chances of finding work. The study did, however, reveal several persistent problems as well: a lack of suitable industry partners in the region, insufficient school resources to support partnership projects, and significant student unpreparedness for workplace expectations. The research, meanwhile, shows that enhancing job results for vocational school graduates calls for great dedication from all parties involved, continuous creative work in partnership models, and continuous cooperation. The study provides analysis and guidance for future research meant to investigate and enhance school-industry cooperation practices, as well as useful recommendations for industry partners and educational institutions.

Keywords: *School-Stakeholder; Partnerships; Graduate Employability*

Introduction

The problem of unemployment is one of the national issues that is still difficult to solve to this day. One of the main causes is the mismatch between the quality of human resources and the needs of the world of work. The low relevance of education to industrial demands exacerbates the problem of poverty. According to Asrin (2022), education should develop the cognitive, affective, and psychomotor potential of students so that they are ready to face the world of work. Firdiasih et al. (2023) added that education must be able to lead students to adapt to the development of the times. One of the solutions developed by the government is to build Vocational High Schools (SMK). Vocational schools are projected to produce

graduates who are ready to work and can immediately enter the job market. However, facts on the ground show that the poverty rate of vocational school graduates is still high. National BPS data in 2023 states vocational school graduates contribute 20% of total poverty. This phenomenon indicates a structural problem in the vocational education system in Indonesia. Therefore, strengthening partnerships between vocational schools and the industrial world is very important to increase the relevance of education.

Partnership in education, according to Sudjana (2010), is a collaborative relationship between schools and various external organizations to improve the quality of education. The principles of partnership, as explained by Notoatmodjo (2003), include equality, openness, mutual benefit, and collective responsibility. Anderson in Ibrahim (2006) emphasized the importance of collaboration based on mutual agreement and equality between the parties involved. Effective partnerships can strengthen the relationship between schools and industry, meet criteria, and increase graduate employment opportunities. In the context of vocational schools, partnerships also function as a means of introducing students to the world of work from an early age. Sagala (2007) argues that healthy partnerships will lead to improvements in infrastructure, student skills, and the quality of education. However, building partnerships is not easy, especially in areas with limited industry such as East Lombok. Geographical, economic and social conditions are often obstacles to expanding partnership networks. Therefore, vocational schools are required to develop innovative strategies in building relationships with the business world and industry. This effort is expected to significantly increase the absorption of graduates into the workforce.

SMKN 1 Selong, one of the leading vocational schools in East Lombok, also faces similar challenges. Based on tracer study data, the absorption rate of graduates into the workforce and entrepreneurship is still low. From a total of 557 graduates, just 17.59% were employed and 26.39% were entrepreneurs in 2022. Though the number of entrepreneurs rose in 2023, the number of people working really fell. This indicates that, even with progress, the difficulties in raising graduate employment are still genuine. Therefore, a comprehensive and adaptive partnership strategy is needed. Partnerships are not only administrative, but also functional and oriented towards real results. SMKN 1 Selong has tried to develop partnerships both inside and outside East Lombok, even abroad. However, the effectiveness of these efforts needs to be studied further to determine their strengths and weaknesses. This study tries to answer how SMKN 1 Selong's strategy is in developing partnerships. In addition, this study also reveals the obstacles faced and the solutions implemented. The research results are expected to be a real contribution to the development of vocational schools in other regions.

The unemployment rate of vocational high schools in NTB, according to BPS 2023, reached 2.3% of the total poverty of 2.80%. In East Lombok, the highest decline was recorded at 17,430 people, indicating the great burden that educational institutions in this region must bear. Vocational high schools as vocational educational institutions should be the solution, not increase poverty rates. However, the facts show that there is a mismatch between graduate competencies and the needs of the local industrial world. This condition demands the development of vocational education based on job market needs. Vocational education is not enough to rely only on classroom learning, but needs to be strengthened with real experience in the industrial world. Therefore, the existence of partnerships between vocational schools and the business world and the industrial world is becoming increasingly relevant. With a strong partnership, students can obtain competency certification and work experience before graduating. This will certainly increase the trust of the industrial world in vocational school graduates. Therefore, an analysis of how this partnership is built, developed, and strengthened is very important to do. This study raises this problem with a focus on SMKN 1 Selong.

The literature on educational partnerships suggests that mutually beneficial relationships between schools and industry can enhance the relevance of education (Tilaar, 2004). Munthe & Mataputun's (2021) research confirms that good collaboration can improve the quality of vocational school graduates. Meanwhile, Ixtiarto & Sutrisno (2016) found that the success of a partnership depends on systematic

planning, implementation, and control. Lestari & Pardimin (2019) highlight the importance of management partnerships to overcome obstacles and optimize collaboration opportunities. These studies show that partnership strategy is not just about increasing the number of partners, but also about building quality relationships. Unfortunately, most of these studies were conducted in areas with great industrial potential, so they are not necessarily relevant to the context of East Lombok. Therefore, this research is important to fill the analysis related to vocational school partnerships in areas with industrial limitations. Focusing on SMKN 1 Selong, this study attempts to understand the local dynamics in building partnerships. This study also aims to uncover innovative strategies that can be applied in other areas with similar conditions. Thus, this study offers theoretical and practical contributions.

There are still many aspects that need to be explored further regarding partnership strategies in the vocational high school environment. One of them is the importance of utilizing Social Capital theory in building a strong and mutually beneficial network of cooperation. Social capital in the form of trust, collaboration, and shared values are the main foundations of a successful partnership. Widjanarko (2016) stated that high trust between parties will accelerate the process of collaboration and resource transfer. In the case of SMKN 1 Selong, building trust with the local industrial world is one of the main challenges. Therefore, social capital strengthening strategies need to be prioritized in every partnership program. In addition, school development organizations also play a major role in encouraging partnerships. Sahadi et al. (2022) stated that a well-structured organization will be more adaptive in building external relationships. In this context, SMKN 1 Selong needs to carry out institutional transformation to be more responsive to industry needs. The school's ability to manage change is also key to the success of the partnership program. Therefore, change management based on Kotter's model (in Fauzan, 2023) is very relevant to implement.

In strengthening partnerships, school resources and capabilities are also important factors that must be considered. Kuncoro (2006) claims that resources include human resources, financial, and organizational skills in addition to physical assets. Insufficient resources make it challenging for schools to create fruitful and sustainable alliances. Limited resources at SMKN 1 Selong present a difficulty that must be addressed creatively, such by using alumni networks and local communities as supplementary resources. Increasing teacher capacity through ongoing training is also part of efforts to strengthen internal resources. In addition, it is also important to optimize existing facilities and infrastructure to better suit industry needs. The use of digital technology to expand partnership access is one innovation that can be implemented. Thus, the internal strength of the school can be a solid foundation in building external partnerships. The organization's capability in integrating various resources will determine the success of partnership development. Therefore, strategic resource management is something that cannot be ignored in this context.

In addition to internal factors, external factors such as job market dynamics and industry needs also greatly influence the success of vocational school partnerships. The business world and industrial world continue to experience changes due to technological developments, globalization, and changes in consumer preferences. Therefore, vocational schools must be able to adapt quickly to these changes. Vocational education must be oriented towards future needs, not just current conditions. Pavlova in Tobing et al. (2021) emphasizes the importance of flexible technology education that is oriented towards the future world of work. SMKN 1 Selong must continue to integrate industry trends and adjust its curriculum periodically. Through regular dialogue with industry partners, schools can obtain the latest information on skills needs. In addition, involving the business world in curriculum development and student training is an effective strategy. This not only increases the relevance of education, but also strengthens the commitment of industry partners. Adaptive and real-needs-based collaboration will increase employment opportunities for graduates. Thus, responsiveness to external changes is key to the success of long-term partnerships.

Change management is a crucial aspect in managing internal and external dynamics at SMKN 1 Selong. Fauzan et al (2023) stated that organizational change must be managed systematically in order to produce sustainable transformation. Kotter's 8-step change model offers a framework that can be applied in schools. The first step is to create a sense of urgency for change by making the entire school community aware of the importance of partnerships. Then a change is formed consisting of school leaders, teachers, and industry partners. Then, create a transparent, quantifiable vision and plan for building alliances. All stakeholders have to hear and see this vision consistently. Internal obstacles have to be found and dealt with aggressively. Small wins in partnership implementation need to be celebrated to build positive momentum. Next, changes are reinforced through consolidation and expansion of initiatives. Ultimately, change must be institutionalized into the school's organizational culture. With this approach, SMKN 1 Selong can create a conducive environment for the development of sustainable partnerships.

In addition, the theory of educational quality is also an important foundation in building effective partnerships. According to Suryadi and Tilaar (1995), the quality of education is determined by the extent to which educational institutions are able to empower their resources to improve learning outcomes. In the context of vocational schools, the quality of education is reflected in the ability of graduates to enter the world of work effectively. Therefore, all partnership programs must be directed to improve student competencies in real terms. Cooperation with the business world and industry must be focused on strengthening technical aspects, work attitudes, and soft skills of students. Periodic evaluation of partnership results also needs to be done to ensure its contribution to improving the quality of education. At SMKN 1 Selong, improving the quality of education should be the main goal of every partnership initiative. The school needs to set clear indicators of success, such as increasing the number of students who do internships, competency certification, and the level of graduate absorption. Thus, the partnership is not just a formality, but really has an impact on improving the quality of education. This strategy will strengthen the position of SMKN 1 Selong as a competitive vocational institution at the regional level.

Graduate absorption capacity is a key indicator in assessing the success of vocational education programs. Kawet et al. (2019) define absorption capacity as the number of graduates who successfully enter the workforce within a certain period of time. The high absorption rate of graduates shows that the education provided is relevant to the needs of the job market. In this study, the focus is directed at SMKN 1 Selong's strategy to increase graduate absorption through partnerships. The strategy includes internship development programs, competency certification, and adjustments to industry needs. In addition, the school also seeks to expand its partnership network outside the region. By increasing partners, job opportunities for graduates become wider and more diverse. Strengthening entrepreneurial competencies is also part of the strategy to increase independence. Through this approach, it is expected that graduates will not only depend on formal employment, but will also be able to create their own jobs. Analysis of the absorption capacity of graduates will provide an overview of the effectiveness of the partnership strategy implemented. Therefore, the absorption capacity indicator is the main focus in evaluating the success of the partnership program at SMKN 1 Selong.

Method

Focusing on SMKN 1 Selong as the object of study, this paper employed a qualitative method comprising a single case study. Researchers may investigate the partnership phenomenon in depth and contextually using the qualitative method, thus choosing it. Creswell (2016) claims that a qualitative method allows room for investigating the meaning underlying the experiences of the participants. Because this study emphasizes one institution that reflects the dynamics of partnerships in East Lombok, a single case study was selected. The main goal of a case study is to grasp the strategies, limitations, and solutions in building vocational education partnerships. In-depth interviews, participant observation, and document studies provided the data for this study. Among the study participants were business and

industry partners, vocational teachers, vice principals, and principals. Informants thought to have pertinent knowledge connected to the partnership were identified using the purposive sampling approach. Triangulation of sources, methods, and time helped to validate data by increasing the credibility of the results. The interactive model of Miles and Huberman (2014) was used to conduct thematic data analysis. The process of analysis comprises data presentation, data reduction, and conclusion drawing. This work intends to offer a thorough overview of initiatives to strengthen alliances in boosting graduate absorption.

SMKN 1 Selong, a vocational education institution with program knowledge in construction engineering and manufacturing technology, was chosen as the study site. The choice of this site was influenced by SMKN 1 Selong's execution of several partnership initiatives with the industrial and commercial sectors. Furthermore, this institution possesses tracer study data enabling examination of graduate absorption. The study ran from September 2024 to February 2025. The researcher did preliminary observations and informal communication with the school in the pre-field stage to grasp the background of the study. Data gathering by means of interviews, observations, and documentation constitutes the implementation stage. Although the last stage is data analysis, report writing, and research findings validation. The researcher guarantees that every research process follows the guidelines of educational research ethics. Choosing SMKN 1 Selong will help this study to reflect the reality of partnership dynamics in regions with industrial constraints. Furthermore, the findings of this study are meant to help shape partnership models in other vocational schools in comparable regions.

This study's data gathering methods comprise documentation studies, participant observation, and in-depth interviews. Key informants were interviewed using semi-structured interview guidelines. To directly grasp the interaction process between schools and industry partners, participant observation was carried out. Study documentation consists of document analyses including MoUs, tracer study reports, partnership activity agendas, and student internship placement data. These several approaches' data gathered were then combined to create a whole image of the dynamics and strategy of the partnership. The researcher used triangulation of methods and sources to guarantee the validity of the data. This method makes the data acquired more accountable and stronger. The researcher also applied the member check method to guarantee that the data interpretation matched the actual experiences of the informants. Qualitative research methods guided the whole data collecting process, which was methodical and organized. Furthermore, the study keeps objectivity and openness to the field's results. This seeks to produce trustworthy and valid research outcomes.

The data sources in this work are secondary and primary. Interviews with the principal, vice principal, vocational teachers, and industry partners' representatives yielded direct access to primary data. Informants were chosen depending on their active participation in the administration and execution of the partnership program. Official papers connected to the partnership program at SMKN 1 Selong provided secondary data in the interim. Among the papers are those from other cooperative projects, graduate tracer study data, internship activity reports, and memorandums of understanding (MoU). Secondary data complements and enhances the information acquired from primary data. Researchers can triangulate data to validate the findings of their study by means of primary and secondary data combined. A thematic approach was used to manage and analyze all gathered data. Based on agreement with the emphasis of the study, categories and key themes were created. Producing in-depth and accurate analysis depends on systematic management of data sources. Thus, in this research process, first concern is given to the validity and completeness of data.

The data analysis method in this paper draws on Miles and Huberman's (2014) interactive model comprising three primary stages: data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. Selecting, concentrating, and guiding data relevant to the study goals helps one to reduce data. Moreover, the smaller data set is shown as a matrix, table, or thematic narrative to enable analysis. Data presentation seeks to arrange information such that significant patterns may be identified. The last phase is the conclusion, when researchers analyze the significance of the discovered patterns. This process is done

iteratively; the initial analysis is always reviewed depending on new data acquired. Data triangulation and member checks help to strengthen the validity of the analytical findings. Researchers also apply audit trail methods to guarantee openness in the analytical process. Maintaining the values of scientific honesty and openness to many possible readings guides the whole analysis process. Therefore, the findings of the study should offer a thorough knowledge of the partnership development plan at SMKN 1 Selong.

This study used four validity criteria suggested by Lincoln and Guba (1985), namely credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability, to preserve the validity of the data. Source triangulation, technique triangulation, and member check help to establish credibility. Transferability is attempted by offering a rich contextual description so that readers can evaluate the relevance of the research findings in other settings. Maintaining dependability is the audit trail, a thorough documentation of the whole research process. Documenting the whole data analysis process openly helps one to verify, say, confirmability. As a kind of external validation, researchers also include colleagues in peer debriefing. Research findings are anticipated to be quite valid using this method. Furthermore, by steering clear of prejudice in data gathering and analysis, researchers seek to preserve objectivity. Maintaining the validity of this data helps to guarantee that the findings of the study really reflect the reality on the ground. Every phase of this research was thus conducted methodically and rigorously.

As is usual in qualitative research, the researcher himself is the primary instrument in this study. The researcher is both the tool and the executor of the data collecting and analysis process. The researcher employs document analysis formats, observation formats, and interview guidelines to guarantee data collecting. Based on the study emphasis, interview guidelines are created and refined via restricted testing. The observation format aims to methodically capture partnership dynamics, cooperation patterns, and interactions. The document analysis format, on the other hand, allows one to interview the material of papers with the emphasis of the study. These tools are all used flexibly to fit the field situation. The researcher also notes self-reflection throughout the study to spot possible prejudice. Combining these tools should help to make the data collecting more valid and richer. The active involvement of the researcher in the field enables a better knowledge of the social and cultural setting at SMKN 1 Selong. In this single case study qualitative research, this is its main strength.

Findings and Discussion

The findings of the study show that SMKN 1 Selong's main strategy for creating partnerships is a proactive one aimed at expanding industrial networks. The principal and management team actively seek and build communication with different business and industrial worlds (DUDI). This approach corresponds to Notoatmodjo's (2003) partnership theory, which underlines the need of cooperation founded on equality and mutual advantages. The drafting of an MoU binding both sides in the same work commitment is one kind of actual execution. Data from documents indicates that over the past two years, the number of industrial partners of SMKN 1 Selong has grown by thirty percent. The student internship program also includes several new industries outside the domains of construction and automotive engineering, apart from those. This reflects the school's attempts to evolve with the evolution of contemporary industrial demands. Students are more eager to join internship programs, according to observations, since they acquire actual knowledge in the world of labor. This method supports Tilaar's (2004) theory on the need of genuine relationships between the world of education and the world of work. This plan helps SMKN 1 Selong to provide more chances for graduate absorption into the world of work.

The second approach set is the inclusion of industry-based curriculum. In the process of developing learning materials, SMKN 1 Selong included industry partners, therefore periodically evaluating the curriculum. This follows Anderson's concept of cooperation in partnership as stated in Ibrahim (2006). Schools and business partners find competencies required in the world of work by means of joint discussion forums. Consequently, some useful courses were modified to fit current industry

criteria. For instance, in the automotive engineering program, changes with materials connected to electric vehicle technology. Interviews with educators revealed that these developments made students more prepared to meet the difficulties of the modern world of work. Students also participate in industry-based projects throughout the learning period. This method backs the concept of work-based education (Pavlova in Tobing et al., 2021). Graduates with this integration not only have technical knowledge but also grasp the work culture of the sector. One of the main drivers of the relevance of vocational education is this curriculum adaptation.

Developing this alliance, however, presents SMKN 1 Selong several difficulties and challenges. The small number of industrial worlds in the East Lombok area is one of the key challenges. Interview findings with the principal indicate that small and medium businesses dominate the industry in this area. This limits the ability to take in graduates and interns. This difficulty fits the results of Prasetyo et al. (2021) on the disparity between the number of graduates and open positions. SMKN 1 Selong created a partner diversification plan by means of cross-district cooperation to address this. The school also created an entrepreneurship course for students to get ready for other career routes as well. This strategy fits Sahadi et al.'s (2022) organizational development theory. Though not simple to overcome, SMKN 1 Selong demonstrates resilience in adapting to these outside obstacles. These challenges have only spurred creativity in creating more varied and larger alliances.

One further challenge was some teachers' internal opposition to changes in industry-based learning patterns. Some teachers struggled to fit open resources to the evolving demands of the sector. Kotter's change management theory (Fauzan et al., 2023) helps to clarify this occurrence. Resistance will continue without a shared knowledge of the need of transformation. The school holds frequent teacher workshops and training courses to help them to overcome this. These seminars emphasize enhancing technical knowledge and awareness of industrial work culture. Furthermore, comparative research was done to top vocational schools to enhance teacher knowledge. This work intends to create internal transformation in the school setting. Data from interviews indicates that after attending training, teachers' readiness to assist partnership initiatives rises. An efficient change management strategy therefore helped to reduce this internal difficulty. The success of putting partnerships at SMKN 1 Selong depends on the transformation of teacher work culture.

From the point of view of outside stakeholders, one difficulty is the low long-term commitment of certain industrial partners. Some partners only took part in the first stage according to interviews with the vice principal for industrial relations, but were less sustainable. Anderson in Ibrahim (2006) claims this goes against the idea of shared responsibility in partnership. SMKN 1 Selong created a system for assessing and regularly updating the MoU to solve this issue. The school also used a value-added strategy whereby industrial partners actually benefit from their participation. Outstanding interns, for instance, can be hired straight by the business following graduation. This mutual benefit strategy follows Notoatmodjo's (2003) shared benefit in partnership concept. Consequently, industrial partners' degree of involvement in school programs has much grown in the last two years. SMKN 1 Selong has managed to create a more sustainable and efficient partnership by using this approach.

SMKN 1 Selong not only aims to raise the number of partners but also to enhance the quality of ties with industrial partners. This strategy calls for planning joint events including technical training, industry seminars, and consistent industry visits. While enhancing student competence, observation data indicates these events strengthen the connection between schools and the business world. Widjanarko's (2016) social capital theory holds that high intensity of interaction can enhance trust between parties. Thus, these combined efforts not only offer useful advantages but also create great social capital. One of the genuine outcomes of this strategy is the rise in the number of students industrial partners recruit following internships. Furthermore, the presence of a co-teaching initiative between educators and business professionals enhances the learning opportunities for students. This strategy fits the concept of work-based education. Partnerships grow more stable by closer relationships. This strategy demonstrates

that in building partnerships the quality of relationships is as crucial as the number of partners. SMKN 1 Selong has demonstrated that the competitiveness of graduates can be enhanced by close cooperation.

Other studies reveal that creating alliances depends much on alumni participation. Those SMKN 1 Selong graduates who have excelled in their careers serve as a link between the school and the industrial sector. Interviews with the alumni leader revealed that several alumni assisted the school in opening access to fresh alliances. Social capital theory emphasizes the need of alumni networks as a strategic source of social capital. Alumni participation in training, seminars, and mentoring programs also offers students more value. Alumni enable students seize possibilities and obstacles in the workplace by means of genuine experiences. Data from documentation indicates that in the last two years alumni actively participating in school programs have grown by 40%. By means of this strategy, SMKN 1 Selong has been able to grow its partnership network naturally. Alumni also grow to be agents of change who promote the industry-based work culture in the school setting. This method adds a community-based aspect to the strategy for developing partnerships, therefore enhancing it. Therefore, alumni's function is a strategic tool to help graduates integrate into the labor.

SMKN 1 Selong also uses digital innovation to assist partnership initiatives in addition to internal and external fortification. Amongst them is the management of tracer study data, internship possibilities, and job vacancies via a digital platform. This system lets industry partners, alumni, and students engage more actively. The concept of educational innovation advocates using technology to increase the reach of vocational education programs. Observational data indicates that digital platforms make information more accessible for all stakeholders. Furthermore, this system enables real-time monitoring of partnership program performance. This development enables schools to rapidly change plans depending on real data. The administration of partnership programs under this digital strategy becomes more open and responsible as well. Students and teachers are educated to make good use of this tool. Therefore, the program for strengthening partnerships at SMKN 1 Selong is significantly supported by technical innovation. This strategy shows how technology might help to improve the link between the world of labor and schools.

The study also revealed that a significant issue in the partnership program is the need to improve students' soft skills abilities. The industrial sector calls for not just technical knowledge but also communication abilities, teamwork, discipline, and work ethic. Industry partners helped to create the soft skills training program by means of workshops and work simulations. This strategy corresponds to the theory of holistic education stressing the growth of all facets of students' personalities. Data from interviews revealed that those who took part in the soft skills training program had more job prospects. Students also demonstrated more self-assurance and flexibility in the workplace. Teachers said that including soft skills training into the course helped to motivate student learning. Industry partners also complimented efforts to raise the quality of students' soft skills. This strategy helps SMKN 1 Selong to graduate students who are more equipped to compete in the world of employment. Improving the absorption of graduates depends much on strengthening soft skills. This approach shows that vocational education has to evolve holistic skills rather than only technical ones.

Regarding management of partnership programs, SMKN 1 Selong created a dedicated unit in charge of organizing all industrial world cooperative efforts. Productive teachers, heads of expertise programs, and industrial relations coordinators make up this unit. The creation of this unit follows Lestari & Pardimin's (2019) definition of efficient partnership management. Designing programs, tracking their execution, and sending partnership outcomes regularly falls to this unit. Partnership management gets more concentrated and professional with a particular organizational structure. Data documentation indicates that after the establishment of this unit, internship and tracer study program execution efficiency rises. Furthermore, industrial partners and schools have coordinated more smoothly and responsively. This unit also acts as a service and information hub for students looking for work and internship possibilities. Strengthening the internal organizational structure therefore helps to support the success of

the partnership program. This approach shows that enhancing the quality and welfare of partnerships results from good governance. The success of the partnership program is shown by SMKN 1 Selong to be dependent on good management.

SMKN 1 Selong's approach includes constant assessment of the partnership program. Every year, an assessment of the internship program, tracer study, and industry partner satisfaction is done. Respondents in this assessment include students, teachers, and business partners. The outcomes of the evaluation serve to enhance the program for the next year. This strategy corresponds to the concept of ongoing development in educational management. Evaluation data indicates a 20% rise in industry partners' satisfaction with intern students over the last two years. Furthermore, students believe they are more ready to confront the world of work following participation in a consistently assessed internship program. This assessment is also a means of spotting ongoing industry need trends evolving. SMKN 1 Selong can change its partnership strategy dynamically using this evaluative method. Maintaining the relevance and efficacy of program partnerships depends on a continuous evaluation mechanism. This approach indicates that effective partnerships have to be data-driven and responsive to evolving demands. This method increases graduates' competitiveness in the employment market.

The success of the partnership program at SMKN 1 Selong depends on the active participation of the whole school community. The principal is a motivating factor who encourages everyone to participate. Teachers are industry-based learning enablers. Students are the key players who actively pursue genuine experience in the world of employment. The socializing of the partnership program and the planning of student internships also involve parents. This community strategy reflects the theory of participatory education, which stresses the need of cooperation among all stakeholders. Data from observations indicates that the active participation of the school community improves the effectiveness of the partnership program. Community support helps programs like student work exhibitions, industry seminars, and internships to be more successful. Involving the whole community helps the school to create ownership of the partnership program. This strategy builds a dynamic, work-oriented educational system. Thus, the evolution of sustainable partnerships depends on community participation as a key pillar.

Conclusion

The findings of the study suggest that attempts to increase cooperation at SMKN 1 Selong are carried out using several creative and adaptive techniques. Increasing job possibilities for graduates calls for a proactive approach of creating industrial networks as a vital first step. Curriculum integration depending on the requirements of the industrial sector increases the relevance of vocational education to changes in the job market. Furthermore, the welfare of partnerships is greatly influenced by the strengthening of social capital via alumni and business partner participation. Digital innovation used in tracer study and internship management hastens the management of partnership information. Preparing people to confront the world of work also depends on improving students' soft skills via industry-based training. The principal's transformational leadership can drive change across the whole school community. The seamless running of the program is supported by efficient partnership governance via the creation of special units. Partnership programs under constant evaluation become more relevant and of higher quality over time. Every component of the school community actively participates to build a dynamic and responsive vocational education system. These results support the need of a cooperative and needs-based strategy in creating vocational education alliances. All things considered, SMKN 1 Selong's initiatives have significantly helped to raise the absorption of graduates into the world of employment.

The study also showed that creative ideas and strong leadership could help to overcome difficulties in developing partnerships including local industry constraints and internal opposition. Diversification of industrial partners outside the area helps to offset the constraints of local job

possibilities. Minimizing opposition to industry-based learning has been achieved by strengthening teacher capacity and transforming organizational culture. A value-added strategy for industrial partners increases long-term cooperative dedication. Digital technology inclusion in partnership management hastens adaptation to evolving sector demands. These results highlight the need of organizational creativity and resilience in building sustainable alliances. Furthermore, a key basis for the success of the program is the need of ongoing assessment and participation of all stakeholders. Therefore, the success of a partnership is not only dependent on the quantity of partners but also on the quality of the relationship and the appropriateness of the program to the requirements of the world of labor. This study adds to the knowledge of partnership development strategy in regions with industrial constraints. Other vocational schools confronting comparable difficulties may use the model created by SMKN 1 Selong as a guide. The findings of this study thus have notable theoretical and practical implications in the evolution of vocational education.

This study shows that a key tactic to raise the absorption of graduates in the job market is to strengthen alliances between vocational schools and the industrial world. From curriculum development, building social capital, technological innovation, to visionary leadership, a successful strategy is one that combines many elements. These results make a significant contribution to the evolution of vocational education partnership theory in Indonesia. Furthermore, the findings of this study offer useful advice for local governments, vocational school administrators, the industrial sector, and more efficient partnership program design. Vocational education is likely to be more responsive to the changing global job market by using a cooperative, flexible, and needs-based strategy. This study also paves the way for more thorough, additional research on the elements promoting the success of partnerships in many local settings. In the end, this study intends to assist initiatives to increase the relevance and quality of vocational education, which is the main pillar of national economic development. The findings of this study are therefore anticipated to offer genuine contributions to the evolution of vocational education in Indonesia going forward.

Recommendation

The findings of the study suggest that attempts to increase cooperation at SMKN 1 Selong are carried out using several creative and adaptive techniques. Increasing job possibilities for graduates calls for a proactive approach of creating industrial networks as a vital first step. Curriculum integration depending on the requirements of the industrial sector increases the relevance of vocational education to changes in the job market. Furthermore, the welfare of partnerships is greatly influenced by the strengthening of social capital via alumni and business partner participation. Digital innovation used in tracer study and internship management hastens the management of partnership information. Preparing people to confront the world of work also depends on improving students' soft skills via industry-based training. The principal's transformational leadership can drive change across the whole school community. The seamless running of the program is supported by efficient partnership governance via the creation of special units. Partnership programs under constant evaluation become more relevant and of higher quality over time. Every component of the school community actively participates to build a dynamic and responsive vocational education system. These results support the need of a cooperative and needs-based strategy in creating vocational education alliances. All things considered, SMKN 1 Selong's initiatives have significantly helped to raise the absorption of graduates into the world of employment.

The study also showed that creative ideas and strong leadership could help to overcome difficulties in developing partnerships including local industry constraints and internal opposition. Diversification of industrial partners outside the area helps to offset the constraints of local job possibilities. Minimizing opposition to industry-based learning has been achieved by strengthening teacher capacity and transforming organizational culture. A value-added strategy for industrial partners increases long-term cooperative dedication. Digital technology inclusion in partnership management

hastens adaptation to evolving sector demands. These results highlight the need of organizational creativity and resilience in building sustainable alliances. Furthermore, a key basis for the success of the program is the need of ongoing assessment and participation of all stakeholders. Therefore, the success of a partnership is not only dependent on the quantity of partners but also on the quality of the relationship and the appropriateness of the program to the requirements of the world of labor. This study adds to the knowledge of partnership development strategy in regions with industrial constraints. Other vocational schools confronting comparable difficulties may use the model created by SMKN 1 Selong as a guide. The findings of this study thus have notable theoretical and practical implications in the evolution of vocational education.

This study shows that a key tactic to raise the absorption of graduates in the job market is to strengthen alliances between vocational schools and the industrial world. From curriculum development, building social capital, technological innovation, to visionary leadership, a successful strategy is one that combines many elements. These results make a significant contribution to the evolution of vocational education partnership theory in Indonesia. Furthermore, the findings of this study offer useful advice for local governments, vocational school administrators, the industrial sector, and more efficient partnership program design. Vocational education is likely to be more responsive to the changing global job market by using a cooperative, flexible, and needs-based strategy. This study also paves the way for more thorough, additional research on the elements promoting the success of partnerships in many local settings. In the end, this study intends to assist initiatives to increase the relevance and quality of vocational education, which is the main pillar of national economic development. The findings of this study are therefore anticipated to offer genuine contributions to the evolution of vocational education in Indonesia going forward.

Recommendation

The study findings suggest that SMKN 1 Selong should keep growing its partnership network with the business and industrial sector, including beyond the East Lombok area. Building mutually beneficial relationships will help to strengthen a proactive approach to attaining cooperation. Furthermore, the participation of industry partners in developing the curriculum has to be met to guarantee that graduate competencies match the requirements of the employment market. Internship programs, competency certification, training and industry-based training have to be given top priority as well. Other vocational schools in comparable regions can follow this approach to boost the relevance and absorption of their graduates. Schools must regularly assess partnership initiatives if they are to help survival. All stakeholders—students, teachers, and business partners—should be included in this assessment. Results of evaluations can be used to develop programs and create more flexible new plans. Digital platforms to handle tracer study data and job opportunities must also be developed further. This strategy enables schools to better meet evolving workplace demands and enhance the quality of service to graduates and students.

The following suggestion is to enhance students' soft skills development initiatives as a vital component of vocational education. Soft skills including communication, teamwork, leadership, and work ethic mostly determine graduates' success in the profession. The curriculum and outside activities should include soft skills training courses. Soft skills training may also include industry partners who can offer students pragmatic viewpoints. Schools also have to create an alumni mentoring program to help students acquire job skills. This community-based strategy can enhance students' preparedness to meet the difficulties of the world of work. Teachers must give continuous training to increase their ability to include soft skill development. Therefore, vocational education not only creates technically qualified graduates but also those who shine in interpersonal skills. Graduates of this approach will be more competitive in the local, national, and worldwide employment markets. Strengthening soft skills will help SMKN 1 Selong and other vocational schools better fulfill the needs of the 21st century world of work.

This study suggests that the growth of vocational education in Indonesia, particularly in regions with little industry, is quite vital. The theoretical implication is the need to include partnership theory, social capital, management change, and transformational leadership in the vocational education partnership development model. Building strong partnerships depends on cooperative, creative, and needs-based approaches, which has practical consequences. It is advised for future researchers to carry out comparative studies in several vocational schools with varied traits to deepen knowledge of elements influencing partnership success. Longitudinal studies are also required to investigate the long-term effects of partnership programs on graduate careers. The policy consequence is the requirement for local governments' assistance in enhancing school capacity in developing alliances. Regulation, financing, training, and industrial world access facilitation can all help to support this. Vocational education may become a main pillar in regional and national economic development by means of enhanced cooperation between vocational schools and the industrial world. This meaning underlines the need of cooperation among all stakeholders in achieving appropriate, high-quality, and globally competitive vocational education.

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