

Management Partnership of Vocational High Schools with the Business World: Multi-site Study at SMKN 1 Driyorejo and SMKN 1 Duduksampeyan

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to describe and analyze the management of partnership programs between Vocational High Schools (SMK) and the Business and Industrial World (DUDI) through a multi-site study at SMKN 1 Driyorejo and SMKN 1 Duduksampeyan. The focus of the study includes planning, organizing, implementing, and evaluating partnerships to improve student competency. Using a qualitative approach, data were collected through in-depth interviews, participant observation, and documentation. The results show that SMKN 1 Driyorejo excels in implementing *Teaching Factory*, while SMKN 1 Duduksampeyan relies on field work practices, industrial visits, and guest teachers. Although both schools have established productive partnerships, challenges are still found such as partner disparities between competencies, limited facilities, and suboptimal standards-based evaluation. Cross-site analysis confirms that the success of the partnership is influenced by strategic planning, collaboration, real production-based practices, and evaluations involving industry. These findings provide recommendations for schools, DUDI, government, and universities to strengthen the vocational partnership system in a sustainable manner.

Keywords: *Partnership Management, SMK, DUDI, Multi-site Study, Vocational Education.*

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INTRODUCTION

Education is a fundamental aspect in the formation of individuals and the progress of a nation (Hwang, 2022). Education plays an important role not only in developing knowledge and skills, but also in shaping the character, spirituality, self-control, personality, intelligence, noble morals, and social responsibility of students (Sharma & Ankit, 2023). This is in line with the Law of the Republic of Indonesia Number 20 of 2003 concerning the National Education System in 2003) which states that education is a conscious and planned effort to create a learning atmosphere and learning process so that students actively develop their potential (Secretary of State of the Republic of Indonesia, 2003). Good and planned education is expected to be able to produce a generation with good character, productive, and able to face global competition. Therefore, all stakeholders in education have a responsibility to create a learning environment that supports the holistic development of students.

Vocational High Schools (SMK) play a strategic role in preparing quality and ready-to-use human resources (HR) (Maulana Syahputra et al., 2023). By focusing on developing practical competencies, SMK is expected to be able to produce graduates who are ready to work and contribute to the nation's economic growth. This important role encourages the government to continue to improve the quality of vocational education through strategic policies, including increasing the number of SMK in various regions of Indonesia. Data from the Central Statistics Agency (BPS) as of February 2024 shows that there are 14,252 active SMK

in Indonesia with a total of 5,059,603 students. In East Java, there are 2,147 SMK with 774,568 students (BPS East Java Province, 2024). However, ironically, the open unemployment rate (TPT) among vocational school graduates still occupies the highest position compared to other levels of education, namely 6.42%, followed by high school graduates at 4.64% (BPS East Java Province, 2024).

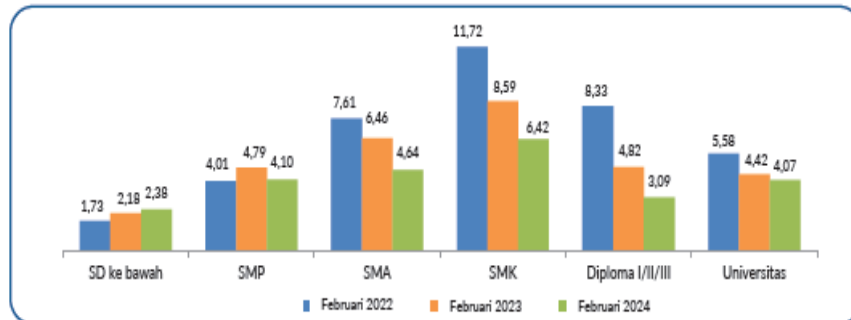


Figure 1. Open Unemployment Rate (TPT) by highest level of education completed (percent), February 2022-February 2024 (BPS East Java Province, 2024)

One of the factors causing the high unemployment rate is the imbalance between the *supply* and *demand* of workers in several vocational high school expertise programs, such as management and accounting, as well as the less than optimal implementation of the Link and Match program which aims to align education with the needs of the world of work (Noor et al., 2019; Sugiharto, 2024).

Responding to this challenge, the government through (Presidential Instruction of the Republic of Indonesia, 2016) revitalized vocational schools that focused on improving teacher competency, developing relevant curriculum, and improving educational facilities and infrastructure. However, this revitalization also needs to consider local wisdom and specific regional conditions, considering that the need for workers is not the same in every region. Uniform treatment of all students and schools, without considering the local context, can actually widen the gap between education and the labor market.

In this study, the implementation of school partnerships with the Business World and Industry (DUDI) plays an important role. Partnership programs allow schools to develop curricula that are relevant to industry needs, provide students with real-world practical experience, and improve technical and non-technical skills needed in the workplace. The role of school public relations is also vital in building effective communication, both asymmetrically and symmetrically, to establish harmonious relationships with partner industries (Rahmat, 2016).

Real examples of the implementation of this partnership are seen in SMKN 1 Driyorejo which collaborates with PT Maxtron Persada Indonesia through the Teaching Factory program, and in SMKN 1 Duduksampeyan which partners with PT Bumi Persada Karya, PT Adi Jaya Nusantara Perkasa, and several other companies. This collaboration involves curriculum synchronization, MoU, implementation of field work practices, industrial visits, and technology transfer. Programs such as Teaching Factory not only increase the relevance of the curriculum, but also strengthen student competencies according to industry needs.

The management of this partnership program includes four important stages: planning, organizing, implementing, and evaluating. Careful planning allows the achievement of expected goals, such as increasing the competitiveness of graduates and the suitability of competencies to the needs of the world of work (Center for Educational Personnel Development, 2015). Good organization ensures a clear division of tasks and roles, while program implementation includes various forms of cooperation, ranging from work practices, internships, to competency tests. Finally, evaluation plays an important role in measuring the effectiveness of the partnership, identifying obstacles, and developing improvement strategies for the sustainability of the program.

Based on the phenomena and challenges described above, this study was conducted to explore the management of school partnership programs with the business world at SMKN 1 Driyorejo and SMKN 1 Duduksampeyan. The objectives of this study are to analyze the

planning of school partnership programs with the business world and industry in improving student competencies; to describe the organization of these partnership programs; to explain the implementation process; and to evaluate the effectiveness of the partnership programs in enhancing student competency at both SMKN 1 Driyorejo and SMKN 1 Duduksampeyan.

METHODS

This study uses a qualitative approach with a multi-site study design focused on SMKN 1 Driyorejo and SMKN 1 Duduksampeyan to deeply understand the management of school partnership programs with the business and industry world (DUDI). The researcher acts as the main instrument with direct presence in the field to build relationships with informants, gain contextual understanding, and ensure data validity. The research location was chosen because it represents the diversity of partnership programs, where SMKN 1 Driyorejo has five expertise competencies and SMKN 1 Duduksampeyan has three expertise competencies (Riyanto & Oktariyanda, 2023).

The research data sources include primary informants such as the principal, vice principal for industrial relations, productive teachers, and students, as well as supporting informants such as the head of HRD of partner industries and instructors, with additional documents in the form of MoUs, activity reports, and curriculum documents. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, participant observation, and documentation which were then analyzed using two stages, namely individual site data analysis *to* explore findings in depth in each school, and cross-site data analysis *to* compare, identify patterns, and find common themes between the two schools (Yin, 1987). The individual site data analysis stage of the Miles and Huberman model was carried out through the stages of data reduction, data display, and drawing conclusions/verification. Data validity was maintained through triangulation of sources, techniques, time, increased diligence, member checking, and audit trails. The research was carried out in several stages, namely the preparation stage (instrument preparation and licensing), implementation (field data collection), analysis (data processing and analysis), and reporting of research results to related parties.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Partnership Program Planning

Partnership planning at SMKN 1 Driyorejo is carried out through a structured and integrated approach. The school systematically develops its partnership plans, beginning with curriculum synchronization between the school and industry partners, particularly PT. Maxtron Persada Indonesia. This process continues with the preparation of training plans based on industry needs, which are then formalized in the form of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU). This plan is not merely administrative in nature but reflects a long-term, mutually beneficial orientation, as outlined in the partnership principles by Hafsah (1999). With clear legal documentation, the partnership program at SMKN 1 Driyorejo is built on a strong legal foundation and offers opportunities for sustainability.

In contrast to Driyorejo, the planning at SMKN 1 Duduksampeyan focuses more on utilizing the potential of the western part of Gresik, which hosts many large industries such as PT. Petrokimia Gresik and PT. Indoprima Brilliant. The school prepares a partnership roadmap oriented toward meeting the local workforce demands. Curriculum adjustments are made through communication forums with industry, although partner involvement is not yet as extensive as in the Teaching Factory model implemented in Driyorejo. The planning in Duduksampeyan demonstrates efforts to build adaptive partnerships but still requires strengthening in program integration within the learning system.

Organizing Partnership

Organizing partnership programs at SMKN 1 Driyorejo shows a professional and structured work system. The school formed a partnership management team consisting of the principal, skills program coordinator, productive teachers, and a liaison officer from the

industry. This structure allows efficient coordination and smooth two-way communication between the school and industry partners. Each team member has clearly defined roles and responsibilities, supported by internal standard operating procedures (SOPs) for various activities such as internships, technology transfer, and joint training. This model reflects a symmetrical and modern management approach (Rahmat, 2016).

Meanwhile, SMKN 1 Dudusampeyan manages its partnerships through a Partnership Team led by the Deputy Head of School for Public Relations. This team also involves administrative staff, vocational teachers, and the school committee. This approach is participatory and flexible, allowing various parties within the school environment to be involved in the implementation of the collaboration. However, the structure is not yet as complex or formal as the one in Driyorejo, so coordination with industry partners remains situational and lacks established standard operating procedures (SOPs).

Implementation of Partnership Program

In implementing the program, SMKN 1 Driyorejo implements the Teaching Factory as a form of actualization of productive partnership. Through this model, the industry not only becomes a place for internships but is also directly involved in the learning process at school. Instructors from the industry are present in the classroom, providing technical training to students as well as guiding the production of items that meet market standards. Educated participants are trained to produce real products, and the production process uses equipment granted by industry partners. Practical Work Field (PKL) and internship activities are scheduled in an integrated manner within the academic calendar, so they do not interfere with formal learning activities.

Different from Driyorejo, the implementation of the partnership at SMKN 1 Dudusampeyan is still more conventional. The school runs the street vendor program, holds industry visits, invites guest teachers from the business world, and sends teachers to participate in On-the-Job Training (OJT). These activities provide students and teachers with industry insights and create a work-like atmosphere in the learning environment. However, not all majors receive a balanced portion of engagement in the partnership program. This shows there is still inequality in the distribution of programs between expertise areas that need attention.

Partnership Program Evaluation

Evaluation of the partnership program at SMKN 1 Driyorejo is implemented collaboratively, involving industry partners in the assessment process. Evaluation is conducted periodically and uses success indicators that include improvements in student competence, the quality of training results, as well as feedback from industry partners regarding graduates. This evaluation is participatory in nature and not merely an administrative obligation. Such evaluation reflects the implementation of a continuous quality management cycle in education.

On the other hand, the evaluation at SMKN 1 Dudusampeyan still focuses on achieving learning outcomes and partner satisfaction with PKL activities. However, the school does not yet have a standardized and measurable evaluation system to assess the effectiveness of the curriculum based on industry needs. Therefore, the development of objective and comprehensive evaluation instruments is needed so that the partnership program can be monitored and improved systematically.

Findings Additional: Similarities, Differences, Challenges, and Innovative Strategies

The second school also shows a strong commitment to developing partnerships with the industrial world through various steps such as signing MoUs, synchronizing curricula, and implementing PKL. Both schools have also established internship programs as a link-and-match mechanism between graduate competencies and job market needs.

However, there are significant differences in the partnership models implemented. SMKN 1 Driyorejo has progressed further with the Teaching Factory model, while SMKN 1 Dudusampeyan is still in the stage of developing conventional partnership work. From the

evaluation perspective, Driyorejo has a collaborative system, whereas Duduksampeyan still needs to build a standardized system.

Both schools face common challenges, including dependence on industry partner management, limitations in equipment that meets industry standards, and imbalances between departments in accessing partnerships.

Innovative strategies being implemented include the establishment of an independent Teaching Factory unit at SMKN 1 Driyorejo, as well as the development of a thematic curriculum in collaboration with industry at SMKN 1 Duduksampeyan. These strategies align with the Directorate of PSMK's directives regarding the importance of forming area-based school-industry networks.

Implications Study

The research results confirm that successful management of partnerships between SMK and DUDI is largely determined by thorough quality planning, a collaborative organizational structure, implementation of learning based on real production, and participatory evaluation. The multisite model used in this study provides a holistic and comprehensive picture that can serve as a reference for designing similar partnership models in other vocational schools with comparable characteristics.

CONCLUSION

This multi-site study shows that the effectiveness of partnerships between SMK and DUDI is greatly influenced by the alignment of school vision, industry commitment, and professionalism of partnership management. The Teaching Factory model and collaborative evaluation implemented at SMKN 1 Driyorejo can be used as good practices for other SMK. Meanwhile, the experience of SMKN 1 Duduksampeyan emphasizes the importance of strengthening partner networks and partnership management systems to create sustainable and productive relationships.

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