Preparing Competitive Graduates of Vocational School through Revitalization Program

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Abstract

The aim of vocational education is to prepare future generations who have high capability and competitiveness in facing the challenges of global labor competition in the 21st century and the 4.0 industrial revolution. This study aimed to find out: 1) profile of SMK Negeri 1 Buduran, 2) coverage of revitalization programs of SMK Negeri 1 Buduran, and 3) School Conditions of Before and After Revitalization. It was a qualitative descriptive study. The study was conducted in August-December 2017. The subjects of the research included the teachers, educational assistants, and students of SMK 1 Buduran, Sidoarjo. The data collection techniques used observation, interviews, and documentation. The data collection instruments utilized observation guidelines and interview guidelines. The data was then analyzed descriptively. Based on the results of the study, it can be stated that the vocational education revitalization program can enhance the collaboration among schools and industries and universities. The program also increases the alignment of the curriculum among schools. Other fields such as learning innovation, student competency certification /graduates, fulfillment /strengthening of productive teachers, fulfillment of school facilities and infrastructure, improvement of governance and work culture, and results of teaching factory (student goods/services innovation work), also increased significantly.

Keywords: Competitive Graduates, Revitalization of Vocational Schools

Introduction

The government is committed to becoming the seventh largest economy in the world in 2030 and requires a competent workforce of 113 million at all levels, starting from the level of executors, technicians/analysts and experts. To prepare for this, the role of vocational education and training institutions became strategic. The government and all relevant stakeholders must have strong commitments and work together to take concrete measures in preparing competent workforce. Balancing supply of skills with demand in the labour market constitutes one of the fundamental issues in skills development policy (Teachers and trainers for the future – Technical and vocational education and training in a changing world, 2010).

A research finding shows that only a small percentage of adults with vocational education have problem solving skills (Hämäläinen, et al, 2014). This study involved 11 European countries as samples (50.369). The ability to work and solve problems in a technology-rich environment is currently playing an important role that continues to increase (Frey and Osborne, 2013; Goos, 2013). With regard to these changes, the adults' problem solving skills have a short-term effect on how well these workers can manage their tasks, and the long-term influence of European welfare and competitiveness.

In the Vocational Revitalization Roadmap, several aspects of the program will be established to improve the quality of Vocational Schools in order that they play a role in improving the quality of competent and productive human resources. The focus of revitalization is aimed at the field of

agricultural expertise (agribusiness and agro-industry for food security), maritime affairs, tourism, and the creative industry. The strategic issue of revitalization includes aligning the curriculum (including learning innovations), providing and improving the quality of productive teachers and education personnel, standardizing facilities and infrastructure, strengthening and expanding cooperation with the business/industrial world, and institutional management and structuring (Directorate of Vocational Development, 2017).

The Vocational Education Roadmap 2017-2019 stipulates that year of 2017 is a consolidation phase covering three main aspects: improving access to quality services, aligning the curriculum (including learning innovations), and institutional innovation. The 2017 consolidation phase in question is a phase for aligning attitudes and perceptions for all components involved in the SMK Revitalization program. Vocational High Schools as the main actors in implementing the revitalization program have their own characteristics in accordance with their fields of expertise. They need assistance to be able to implement the revitalization program in accordance with the established roadmap. Alongside this unit, should be the development of TVET policy which sets out the government's vision for development of skills. The policy should make provision for the establishment of a leading body to oversee the implementation of the policy (Onderi, Ajowi, & Malala, 2014).

Method

This study aimed to find out: 1) profile of SMK Negeri 1 Buduran, 2) coverage of revitalization programs of SMK Negeri 1 Buduran, and 3) School Conditions of Before and After Revitalization. It was a qualitative descriptive study. The study was conducted in August-December 2017. The subjects of the research included the teachers, educational assistants, and students of SMK 1 Buduran, Sidoarjo. The data collection techniques used observation, interviews, and documentation. The data collection instruments utilized observation guidelines and interview guidelines. The data was then analyzed descriptively.

Result and Discussion

1. Profile of SMK Negeri 1 Buduran

SMK Negeri 1 Buduran was selected as one of the Vocational Schools that received the 2017 revitalization grants, among 125 other Vocational Schools throughout Indonesia. This school is a Tourism Vocational School which has seven competency skills, including Tourism Travel Business (UPW), Hospitality (APH), Catering, Skin and Hair Beauty, Fashion, Spa and Beauty Therapy, and Fashion Design. The last two are 4-year education programs. It has 1,238 students divided into 13 study groups. There are 93 teachers and 28 education assistants. Most of the teachers have certified competencies in accordance with their fields, and some also have experience doing activities abroad. In addition, there are also teachers from professional sources of the industry partners.

Furthermore, the cooperation that has been established by schools and other parties includes the cooperation with: domestic and foreign star hotels, leading restaurants, hospitals, boutiques and garments, beauty salons, labor supply companies, and other related agencies such as offices of education, of agriculture, cleaning and gardening services, environmental services, and universities.

The school business unit is very helpful for teachers and students to develop their competencies, as well as becoming a place to obtain additional income. The school also has a job market that helps graduates to work both at home and abroad, foreign language courses, and various extracurricular activities. The teachers had been found they have had frequent use of the internet and social media mostly through the use of their cellphones and a few of them used their personal computers (Ramadan, Chen, & Hudson, 2018).

The facilities and infrastructure of SMK Negeri 1 Buduran are classified as complete. Employability of competencies such as ability, aptitude and qualities developed in context that can be applied to an occupation or career can be identified as employability skills (Anindo, Mugambi, & Matula, 2016).

As a relatively advanced school, SMK Negeri 1 Buduran has several teaching factories. The teaching factories owned by the school consist of: edotel, laudry, catering and bakery, edosalon, edocollection, convection, and edocafe. The school also has cooperatives and halls that can be used as meeting halls. Also, there are sports fields and radio broadcast rooms that are enlivened by student activities. Since November 24, 2015, SMK 1 Buduran has served as the LSP-P1 Professional Certification Institute. The training activities of some public providers were also being diversified in imaginative ways, achieving synergy between formal and non-formal vocational education (Wallace, 2007).

The preparation of the youths to adapt to the knowledge and skills that will be needed in the future is very necessary. Technical and vocational education therefore, merges the traditional need for learning core knowledge and skills with the modern emphasis on adaptability, knowledge construction and self-regulatory (Prof, Ogbondah, Ph, & Ph, 2014). The school implements a dual system in which the learning is carried out in schools and in industry.

The application of dual education system is a necessity in the implementation of Vocational Schools. The place of apprenticeship is not only for students, but also for teachers. A number of studies have demonstrated how apprentices struggle for making the school knowledge relevant to their practice (Finch et al., 2007) and vice versa - making their work-based knowledge an asset in educational contexts (Akkerman and Bakker, 2012). There are growing recognition among scholars and policy makers that mutual transfer needs to be supported by institutions and/or technological systems that mediate the relationship between school and work, and that generate boundary crossing (Tuomi-Gröhn and Engeström, 2003). The findings of Nore & Lahn (2014) showed that the training apprenticeship offices were able to bridge learning environments, and support the development of higher-order skills such as understanding and learning to work in their contexts among the apprentices. The students must master basic competencies to help them solve cases they face in the real industrial field. Those basic competencies have been taught at school based on the curriculum structure set by the Government (Hasanah, Haryadi, Nur, & Putra, 2017).

2. Revitalization Program Coverage in SMK 1 Buduran

The revitalization activities at SMK Negeri 1 Buduran were done from July to December 2017. In doing the activities, the school was accompanied by a companion assigned by the Directorate of Vocational High School Education, Ministry of Education and Culture. The purpose of assistance was to ensure that the revitalization program went well and attained the predetermined indicators. The coverage of the Revitalization and the details are: 1) development and alighment of curriculum, 2) standardization of facilities and infrastructure, 3) fulfillment and Increased professionalism of teachers and education assistants;, 4) learning innovation, 5) school collaboration with the business/ industrial world, and 6) institutional structuring and management.

,Pragmatically, vocational education in the 21st century is required to build people who have the character of work culture, learning culture, service culture, mentality and morality as learning persons who are able to develop learning intelligence as a central to develop emotional-spiritual, social-ecological, intellectual, kinesthetic, economic, political, technological, and art-cultural intelligences (Sudira, 2011). The vocational education will be successful if it is able to develop the human existence of vocational education community, cultural competence in the life order of local, national, regional and global dimensions. Theoretically, the finding was felicitous since the learning materials are exist in the middle of the community and natural environment of the students (Suardika, Mursidin, Suleiman, & Syukur, 2018). As a community product, the vocational education cannot be separated from the community where the vocational education is developed. The vocational education grows from the community, develops with the culture of the local community, pays attention to local excellence, regional potential, community support, community participation and collaboration. There is a strong consensus among communities and vocational education institutions. The vision of vocational education should be congruent with the vision of the community where the vocational education is developed (Tilaar, 1999).

3. School Conditions of Before and After Revitalization

Since the revitalization program has been rolled out and mentoring from universities, the school is increasingly active in making efforts to realize the revitalization programs in various fields. A significant increase in terms of cooperation, for example, has increased the number of MoUs which were originally from 106 to 226. This constitutes an increase of more than 100 percent. Of course, the increase in the number of MoUs is not sufficient. The most important thing is the follow-up of the MoU. It is well recognized by the schools and the industry, and therefore the MoU is expanded to include the job training cooperation for students, but also for the teacher apprenticeship. In addition, the guest teachers from the industry are also realized for the school. Another is the formation of industry class skills in hospitality and catering skills, and so forth.

In connection with the teaching factory development, the proposals have been made for the establishment of PPK BLUD (Financial Management Pattern of Regional Board of General Service) This is important, because the management of the factory teaching must be in accordance with the government regulations, as well as guaranteeing transparency and accountability. If the school succeeds in becoming a BLUD school, then the school development will be more optimal, as well as the welfare of teachers and students.

Based on data, it indicates that there is a significant increase in various fields of revitalization. The increase in the amount of cooperation (MoU) from two to 106 to 226 is certainly not only in terms of quantity, but also the quality of cooperation itself. In the past, cooperation covered merely the holding of job training for the students, currently its scope has increased in the implementation of student and teacher competency tests, opening of industrial classes, development of factory teaching, and even absorption of graduates. The teacher who has no knowledge of the revitalization of vocational education is unable to develop himself in classroom learning and tends to teach only his field of knowledge without ever developing another potential it has (Widayana et al., 2019).

The cooperation between SMK and the business and industrial world is absolutely necessary. According to Prosser's theory known as Prosser's Sixteen Theorems (Sudira, 2016), "vocational education will be efficient in the proportion of the environment in which the learner is trained is a replica of the environment in which he must subsequently work (work environment)". The learning environment, which is a replica, is certainly not easy to obtain at school. Therefore, the cooperation with the business and industrial world will greatly help strive for the required work environment.

The increase is also very prominent because the implementation of the revitalization program was the preparation of the implementation of the PPK BLUD in the school. As a school that has quite a lot of teaching factories, the demand to become a school business unit is inevitable. By establishing a BLUD school, the school is expected to no longer need to ask for capital from the state and report its income to the state treasury. This programs should be revitalized to engage Indonesian youths irrespective of differences in their capabilities and capacities. It is therefore imperative that demand-driven TVE programs which must be flexible and respond to the needs of the community and the local industry be established so that youths could choose one or more specialized area(s) and make their living (Obidile & Uzoekwe, 2018).

Conclusions

Based on the results of the study, it can be concluded that the vocational education revitalization program can enhance the collaboration among schools and industries and universities. The program also increases the alignment of the curriculum among schools. Other fields such as learning innovation, student competency certification/graduates, fulfillment/strengthening of productive teachers, fulfillment of school facilities and infrastructure, improvement of governance and work culture, and results of tefa (student goods/services innovation work), also increased significantly.

Suggestions that can be put forward are that the revitalization program is really used as the initial motivation for schools to continue to improve their quality, both in the input, process, and school output. It is hoped that this program will not only be active at the beginning, but will be able to

encourage the creation of a learning culture and a sustainable work culture. Thus the school will be able to produce graduates who are competitive, and ready to face the industrial era 4.0.

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