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Strategy for Improving Graduate Quality Through Vocational Programs: A Case Study at MAN 2 Majalengka

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A B S T R A C T

This study aims to examine strategies to improve graduate quality through the vocational program at MAN 2 Majalengka. Using a qualitative approach with a naturalistic inquiry method, the research was conducted at MAN 2 Majalengka, Majalengka Regency, West Java, during the odd semester of the 2024/2025 academic year, from July 2024 to April 2025. Data were collected through observation, interviews, document analysis, and literature review. The findings show the vocational program positively influences students' work readiness and competitiveness. Planning is conducted systematically and collaboratively, involving the school management team, vocational teachers, and industry partners. The curriculum is developed based on labor market demands and student interests. Implementation includes theoretical and practical learning at school, combined with internships in industry, with active support from teachers and instructors. The program's success is strengthened by cooperation among the principal, vice principals, vocational teachers, industry partners, and parents. Evaluation is carried out through classroom monitoring, field practice, and feedback from industry partners. The impact is evident in the rising number of graduates continuing higher education or entering the workforce. Several alumni also succeeded in creating self-employment. These results confirm the vocational program bridges education and the labor market, thereby enhancing graduate quality significantly.

1. Introduction

Education is the process of enlightening, building, and humanizing human beings as a whole. In Islam, education is known by the concept of tarbiyyah, namely the internalization of divine values and messages to shape people of faith and piety. (Departemen Agama RI, 2011). Through education, humans are expected to possess noble character, be beneficial to themselves, their families, society, and the universe. This is in line with (Peraturan Pemerintah No. 4 Tahun 2022) Article 1 Paragraph 1 on the National Education Standards states that education is a conscious and planned effort to create learning conditions that enable students to actively develop

themselves. Its purpose is to shape spiritual strength, self-control, intelligence, good personality, noble character, as well as personal, social, national, and state life skills.

Education does not only emphasize academic skills but also the quality of graduates. The era of Society 5.0 demands readiness to face global challenges. According to data from the Central Statistics Agency (BPS, 2024), the open unemployment rate for ages 15–19 reaches 22.34%, and for ages 20–25 it is 15.34%. The causes are mismatched skills, educational qualifications, and limited experience. This indicates that many graduates are not yet ready to compete, while population growth continues to increase, making job competition even tighter. BPS estimates that Indonesia's population growth rate averages 1.20% per year. This increase has the potential to create economic, educational, social, food, environmental, and employment problems. Bappenas (2019) estimates that the world population in 2045 will reach 9.45 billion, while Indonesia will have 319 million people. That year is predicted to be a demographic bonus, in which the productive-age population is greater than the non-productive. This condition requires the provision of broad employment opportunities. Education is required to be able to prepare a generation that is adaptive to change. The Golden Indonesia 2045 vision emphasizes the development of high-quality, innovative, competitive, and character-driven human resources (Bappenas, 2019).

Education under the Ministry of Education as well as the Ministry of Religious Affairs (Kemenag) plays a strategic role. The focus of this research is on madrasah education. Through Minister of Religious Affairs Decree No. 347 of 2022, madrasahs are designated as formal educational institutions with Islamic characteristics, covering RA, MI, MTs, MA, and Vocational MA. Madrasahs are required to be able to compete, respond to community needs, and improve quality (Kurniati, 2021). Madrasahs not only teach religion but also emphasize the quality of graduates. Minister of Religious Affairs Decree No. 184 of 2019 on the Madrasah Development Master Plan 2010-2030 establishes the vision of excellent and competitive madrasahs. Its mission is to form religious, scientific, skilled, and professional individuals. The quality of education can be measured by its graduates, not merely physical facilities (Efrina & Warisno, 2021). Quality improvement is also a matter of public accountability. According to Soemidiharjo in (Saeful Uyun & Abdul Majid, 2020), accountability rests on policy transparency, measurable performance standards, and public participation.

To strengthen competitiveness, the Ministry of Religious Affairs has developed various types of madrasahs: academic, religious, vocational, plus skills, and excellence (Kemenag RI et al., 2019). One important innovation is the Madrasah Aliyah Plus Skills. Director General of Islamic Education Decree No. 5466 of 2019 explains that this program enhances the linkage between education and the needs of the workforce through vocational education. It is expected that students will possess vocational and entrepreneurial skills relevant to future challenges. By 2020, there were around 340 madrasah aliyah designated as MA Plus Skills. (Keputusan Dirjen Pendis No. 2851 Tahun 2020). The designation takes into account the readiness of teachers, principals, homeroom teachers, facilities and infrastructure, as well as the

support of other components. All elements must be prepared so that the implementation of vocational education is effective and produces quality graduates.

One of these madrasahs is MAN 2 Majalengka. This madrasah is under the Ministry of Religious Affairs and is known as a vocational madrasah. Its goal is in line with other madrasahs, namely to produce graduates with academic and skills quality. MAN 2 Majalengka implements the independent curriculum that encourages students to be more active in observing, reasoning, questioning, and communicating knowledge. However, its implementation faces challenges. The vocational program at MAN 2 Majalengka was developed by involving teachers, students, and parents. Positive responses show full support for skills education. Through this program, students not only receive academic and religious education but also skills that are usually found in vocational schools (SMK). The program is included in the local content intraculicular with an allocation of 6×45 minutes per week. There are four skills: Motorcycle Engineering and Business, Audio Visual Engineering, Computer Network Engineering, and Fashion Design. Thus, graduates have practical provisions according to their interests.

The reality in the field shows that many high school (SMA/MA) graduates are unemployed because it is difficult to find jobs and they are reluctant to help with family businesses in agriculture or trade. Many also do not continue to college. Therefore, vocational programs at the SMA/MA level serve as an alternative for students to acquire skills even if they do not pursue higher education. With this model, students are expected to have minimum competencies in accordance with labor market standards. MAN 2 Majalengka carries out innovations not only in the academic aspect but also by developing programs for students' interests, talents, and skills. The skills program is followed by all students so that they are prepared to enter the workforce or become entrepreneurs. Through vocational education, students are equipped with both technical skills and soft skills that are relevant to the needs of society. Thus, after graduation, students can contribute in the world of work or open business opportunities.

The quality of education is often measured by academic achievement, continuation of studies, and graduate absorption in the workforce. This becomes a challenge for schools. Therefore, every madrasah needs strategies to improve the quality of its graduates. Strategies may differ between schools, adjusted to their conditions. MAN 2 Majalengka has specific strategies to improve graduate quality through vocational programs. This research focuses on exploring these strategies, including planning, implementation, collaboration, and evaluation of the skills program. The problem formulation stems from the study's focus on strategies to improve graduate quality through the Vocational Program at MAN 2 Majalengka. The issues examined include how vocational program planning is designed, how implementation is applied in the learning process, how stakeholders such as the principal, teachers, parents, and industry partners provide support, how evaluation and monitoring are carried out, as well as how the impact is generated on graduates' job readiness and competitiveness. In line with this, the objective of this research is to provide a comprehensive overview of strategies to improve graduate quality through the vocational program.

2. Methodology

Research Location and Time

The location of this research is MAN 2 Majalengka, located at Jln. Raya Barat Cipinang No.228 Rajagaluh, Majalengka Regency, West Java. This research was conducted in the odd semester of the 2024/2025 academic year for 2 months, from July 2024 – April 2025. The reason the researcher chose MAN 2 Majalengka as the research location is because MAN 2 Majalengka has already been accredited with an A grade. In addition, MAN 2 Majalengka has also implemented the Independent Curriculum in its learning process, and it is one of the madrasahs in Majalengka Regency that implements the Vocational Program by becoming MA Plus Skills in accordance with the Decree of the Director General of Islamic Education No. 2851 of 2020.

Research Approach and Type

The method used in this research is the descriptive naturalistic inquiry method with a qualitative approach. According to (Sugiyono, 2019), this research method is based on the philosophy of post-positivism, used to study natural conditions of the object (as opposed to experiments) in which the researcher is the key instrument, data source sampling is carried out purposively and through snowballing, data collection techniques are conducted with triangulation (combined), data analysis is inductive/qualitative, and qualitative research results emphasize meaning rather than generalization.

Data Collection Techniques

Data collection is an important stage to obtain information relevant to the research objectives. In qualitative research, this process is carried out so that the experiences and perspectives of the subjects can be recorded as data in accordance with the problem formulation and objectives (Inayati et al., 2023). The data collection techniques used by the researcher as a qualitative researcher are observation, interviews, document study, and literature study. These data collection techniques are supported by Research Instruments. In this study, the main instrument is the researcher himself.

Data Collection Process

In this research, the data collection process was carried out in three stages: the preparation stage, the implementation stage, and the reporting stage. In the initial stage, the researcher read and reviewed various literature relevant to the research problem. Before starting data collection, the researcher first conveyed the purpose and objectives of the research to the informants involved so that the research process would proceed in accordance with academic ethics. The final stage of the research was carried out by compiling a report on the results of data analysis. The preparation of this report was conducted gradually through guidance and consultation with the supervising lecturer.

Data Analysis

In this research, data collection was carried out through three main stages, namely starting with the preparation stage, then the implementation stage, and ending with the reporting stage. The steps of data analysis in this qualitative research are in line with what was explained by Miles and Huberman (in Hardani et al., 2019, pp. 163–173), who stated that data analysis consists of three main activity flows: (1) data reduction; (2) data display; and (3) conclusion drawing (verification). Data analysis aims to ensure that the process of analyzing research data is accurate and able to answer the problem formulation.

3. Results and Discussion

Field Findings

Field data indicate that many high school (SMA) and madrasah aliyah (MA) graduates, especially in rural areas, struggle to find jobs due to limited opportunities and their reluctance to work in farming or trading. Many also do not continue to higher education, leaving them unprepared for the increasingly competitive job market. A vocational curriculum at the SMA/MA level offers a practical solution by equipping students with technical and entrepreneurial skills to meet essential workforce standards and community needs effectively, while also strengthening adaptability and independence.

MAN 2 Majalengka has implemented such innovations through a mandatory vocational program tailored to students' interests and talents, making it the only state madrasah aliyah in the region with vocational education also known as MAN Vocational. The program provides four skill areas: Motorcycle Engineering and Business, Audio Visual Engineering, Computer Network Engineering, and Fashion Design. Through this, students gain relevant competencies alongside religious and general studies. For this research, the selected informants included the Principal, Head of Administration, Vice Principals, vocational subject teachers, and students. The interview guidelines are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Interview Guidelines

Observed Aspect	Informant	Questions
Strategy for Improving Graduate Quality through the Vocational Program: A Case Study at MAN 2 Majalengka	Principal	1. Since when has the vocational program been implemented at MAN 2 Majalengka? 2. How is the vocational program planning process carried out before the new academic year? 3. What is the role of the Principal in supporting the vocational program at MAN 2 Majalengka? 4. What is the role of external competency tests in vocational assessment? 5. How is evaluation used for program improvement? 6. Why is monitoring important for industry partnerships? 7. How does the vocational program affect graduates' competitiveness?

	8.	What strategies does the school use to ensure the vocational program aligns with industry needs?
	9.	What is the biggest challenge faced in implementing the vocational program?
	10.	How does the principal assess the overall success of the vocational program?
Head of Administration	1.	What is the role of administration in supporting the vocational program?
	2.	How does the Head of Administration support the smooth running of the vocational program?
	3.	How does the administration assist in managing competency tests and student certification?
	4.	How does the administration ensure vocational program documents are well managed?
	5.	How does the administration support coordination among teachers, students, and industry partners?
	6.	How does the administration prepare vocational program evaluation reports?
	7.	How does the administration handle logistical challenges of the vocational program?
	8.	How does the administration assist with scheduling internships (PKL)?
	9.	How does the administration manage the inventory of vocational facilities and infrastructure?
	10.	What administrative challenges often arise in the vocational program?
Vice Principal for Curriculum	1.	How is the vocational program curriculum structured and the learning time organized?
	2.	What is the role of the Vice Principal for Curriculum in the implementation of the vocational program?
	3.	How does the assessment system ensure students' job readiness?
	4.	How does evaluation help adjust internship (PKL) schedules?
	5.	Are students' skills aligned with industry needs?
	6.	How is the curriculum developed to adjust to changes in industry trends?
	7.	How is it ensured that teachers follow vocational learning standards?
	8.	How does the Vice Principal for Curriculum assess the effectiveness of vocational learning methods?
	9.	How does the Vice Principal for Curriculum identify gaps in students' competencies?
	10.	How does the Vice Principal for Curriculum facilitate collaboration between schools and industries?
Vice Principal for Student Affairs	1.	How does student affairs arrange schedules so students are not exhausted and remain productive?
	2.	What is the role of the Vice Principal for Student Affairs in supporting vocational students?
	3.	How does student affairs prepare guidance and coaching for vocational students?
	4.	How does student affairs assess students' activeness and discipline in the vocational program?
	5.	How does student affairs follow up on student problems during internships (PKL)?
	6.	How does the Vice Principal for Student Affairs facilitate extracurricular activities related to vocational learning?

		7. How does student affairs assist students struggling with vocational learning modules? 8. How does student affairs monitor students' physical and mental well-being? 9. How does the Vice Principal for Student Affairs collaborate with teachers and industries to support students? 10. What are the strategies of student affairs to increase student motivation in joining the vocational program?
	Vice Principal for Facilities and Infrastructure	1. How are facilities and infrastructure prepared to support the vocational program? 2. What is the role of the Vice Principal for Facilities in supporting vocational practice facilities? 3. How is daily student assessment in the vocational program conducted? 4. How are facilities and infrastructure evaluated and improved? 5. How does the Vice Principal for Facilities collaborate with teachers for students' practical needs? 6. What are the strategies for providing practical tools in accordance with industry standards? 7. How does the Vice Principal for Facilities ensure the safety and feasibility of facilities? 8. How does the Vice Principal for Facilities respond to feedback from students and teachers regarding facilities? 9. How is coordination with external parties (training centers/industries) carried out in facility use? 10. What is the biggest challenge in managing facilities and infrastructure for the vocational program?
	Vice Principal for Public Relations	1. How does public relations build communication with industries for the link and match of the vocational program? 2. What is the role of public relations in supporting the vocational program? 3. How is evaluation used for coordination with industry partners? 4. How is internship (PKL) monitoring conducted? 5. How does public relations build relationships with alumni to support the vocational program? 6. How does public relations deliver information on vocational activities to the public and industry partners? 7. How does public relations respond to complaints or feedback from industries regarding internship students? 8. How does public relations support the promotion of vocational students' achievements? 9. What strategies does public relations use to ensure long-term relationships with industry partners? 10. How does public relations assess the success of communication between the school and industries in the vocational program?
	Vocational Subject Teachers	1. How is the learning plan for Automotive Engineering skills at MAN 2 Majalengka designed? 2. How is the implementation of Automotive Engineering practice conducted in class and workshops? 3. How do teachers assess students' technical skills in Automotive Engineering?

	4. How is the assessment of students' work attitudes, such as discipline, creativity, and independence, conducted in Automotive Engineering? 5. How is remedial or additional learning carried out for students struggling with practice? 6. How is the relationship between school practice and internship (PKL) practice in the field of Automotive Engineering? 7. How does the use of facilities and infrastructure support Automotive Engineering learning? 8. How do teachers adjust teaching methods to be relevant to automotive industry standards? 9. How do teachers involve students in projects or real tasks that enhance competence? 10. How is the evaluation of the Automotive Engineering program used for curriculum and learning improvement?
Students	1. How does hands-on practice at school and internships (PKL) affect your ability and readiness to face the workforce? 2. Does practice make you more confident when facing real jobs? 3. How does practice help you understand industry rhythm and work ethic? 4. How do internships affect your mental readiness to enter the workforce? 5. Are the skills acquired at school aligned with industry needs? 6. How does practice help prepare for entrepreneurial opportunities? 7. How do students assess the support from teachers and facilities during practice? 8. How do students utilize internship (PKL) experiences for self-development? 9. Does practice improve teamwork and communication skills in the workplace? 10. How does practice motivate you to continue education or pursue a career?

Strategy for Improving Graduate Quality Through the Vocational Program at MAN 2 Majalengka

MAN 2 Majalengka began implementing its vocational program in 2019 to address student numbers, school competition, and workforce demands for SMA/MA graduates. The program not only ensures institutional relevance but also equips students with practical skills for added value in employment. Vocational education, as Winangun (2017) notes, must focus on "work education" and "technology education," emphasizing learning for, about, and the nature of work. Graduate quality is measured not only cognitively but also by adaptability, critical thinking, and contributions to social, cultural, and industrial contexts (Sukirman et al., 2023). In line with national education policy, the program follows guidelines from Peraturan Menteri Agama (PMA) Nomor 60 Tahun 2015 regarding madrasah vocational education (PMA, 2015). Initially, the program offered three skills electronics, automotive, and fashion design later expanded with computer engineering to meet local industry needs. Its legitimacy was reinforced by KMA

No. 184/2019 and SK Dirjen Pendis No. 2851/2020, designating MAN 2 Majalengka as an official provider. This aligns with Surat Keputusan Direktur Jenderal Pendidikan Islam Nomor 1023 Tahun 2016 on implementing skills programs in Madrasah Aliyah Negeri (SK Dirjen, 2016). The madrasah continues to develop this program to strengthen graduate competitiveness in the job market.

Vocational Program Planning at MAN 2 Majalengka

Planning in learning is a crucial stage that directs the educational process. At MAN 2 Majalengka, vocational planning is designed to link and match with local industries through curriculum development, additional practice hours, industry-standard facilities, and stakeholder coordination. Effective planning is supported by administrative guidelines for school supervision (Kementerian Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan & Dirjen Pendidikan Dasar dan Menengah, 2017). Its uniqueness lies in integrating general, religious, and practical education to give graduates competitive value. Planning begins before the academic year with coordination meetings, preparation of skill rooms (automotive, fashion, electronics, computer), and scheduling to balance theory and practice. Materials are aligned with SKKNI and labor market demands, ensuring students gain directly applicable skills. Facilities are arranged to meet national standards while maintaining safety and effectiveness. This corresponds with Peraturan Pemerintah No. 32 Tahun 2013 on the National Education Standards (PP 32/2013).

Administrative support ensures orderly implementation, while public relations maintains industry partnerships such as the Cirebon BLK's recommendation to add computer engineering. Transparent administrative management contributes to vocational program effectiveness, as noted in Margareta & Saputra (2025). The biggest challenge is balancing student schedules to avoid fatigue, addressed through student affairs' support for soft skills and character building.Teachers play a central role in module development, integrating discipline and technology use while aligning practice with industry conditions. Each skill area has targeted planning: automotive (engine, electrical, braking), fashion design (patterns, sewing, finishing), electronics (assembly, testing, repair), and computer engineering (assembly, OS installation, networking, cybersecurity). Modules are product- and competency-based, supported by industry collaboration to keep standards current. Module development should follow the standards outlined in Simbolon et al. (2025).

Implementation of the Vocational Program at MAN 2 Majalengka

In automotive engineering skills, implementation combines brief theory in the classroom with direct practice in the school's workshop. Students learn core competencies such as engine, electrical, and brake system maintenance under teacher supervision. Learning involves simulations and servicing real vehicles from teachers, students, and partners. Students become accustomed to dealing directly with problems like professional mechanics. To strengthen experience, students also carry out internships (PKL) in official workshops to adapt to industrial work culture

while improving technical skills, speed, and accuracy. The PKL program follows Keputusan Dirjen Pendis 5466/2019 (Kepdirjen, 2019).

In fashion design skills, learning progresses from pattern making, sewing, to finishing products in a fully equipped room. Each semester, students are targeted to produce works like kebaya, skirts, or shirts, exhibited in school activities to increase motivation. Assessment is product-based, preparing students for quality standards. Internships in garment factories or boutiques enable understanding of large-scale production and competitive industry demands. This reflects recommendations in Qur'ani et al. (2024) regarding vocational education in Era 5.0.

In electronics engineering skills, learning emphasizes practical aspects. Students begin with basic circuits, progressing to assembling, testing, and repairing devices in the school laboratory. Projects include assembling audio circuits, repairing appliances, and testing simple electronics. Students participate in internships in electronic shops or partner companies, directly handling real customer issues to improve problem-solving skills. This aligns with PMA 60/2015 and Kepdirjen 5466/2019 (PMA, 2015; Kepdirjen, 2019).

Implementation of computer engineering skills integrates theory and practice. Students learn computer assembly, OS installation, network configuration, and maintenance in a well-equipped lab. Teachers emphasize systematic, thorough, and professional work. Projects involve real cases, such as assembling computers for school or installing inter-room networks. Advanced internships in IT companies expose students to network troubleshooting, system updates, and client device repairs. This provides comprehensive IT industry understanding while improving competence, in line with Model Kompetensi Guru (Perdirjen 2626/2023) (Perdirjen, 2023).

The Role of Stakeholders in the Implementation of the Vocational Program at MAN 2 Majalengka

a. The Role of the Principal

The principal is the main actor who holds full responsibility for all learning activities. From an educational management perspective, the leadership of the principal plays a central role in directing, controlling, and supervising the course of the vocational program. The principal does not merely perform administrative functions but also acts as a visionary leader capable of building networks with the industrial world. Efforts to establish partnerships with work partners become an important step to ensure that the vocational curriculum is aligned with industry needs, so that graduates of the madrasah not only master academic aspects but also possess practical skills according to work standards.

In addition, the direct involvement of the principal in supervising practical activities and semester evaluations emphasizes the institution's seriousness in safeguarding the quality of education. The presence of the leader in practice rooms conveys a motivational message to teachers and students that vocational education is not a

secondary program but a priority agenda that must be carried out with full responsibility. Thus, the principal serves as a leader, manager, supervisor, and motivator who drives the success of vocational implementation. The principal's leadership role aligns with recommendations in Kementerian Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan & Dirjen Pendidikan Dasar dan Menengah (2017) regarding school supervision.

b. The Role of the Head of Administration (TU)

The Head of Administration functions as the manager of administration and finance supporting the smooth implementation of the vocational program. They ensure that all documents, permits, and administrative relations with external parties are well organized. Moreover, the success of vocational implementation is also determined by transparent and accountable financial management. The Head of Administration ensures that budget planning is properly arranged so that every expenditure is directed to support the actual needs of skills learning. In this context, coordination with the curriculum and facilities divisions is very important to avoid overlapping needs. With well-structured administration, vocational learning activities can run smoothly without bureaucratic obstacles. The Head of Administration functions as a bridge between academic vision and technical realization, making their role vital in maintaining administrative stability and the legitimacy of the vocational program in the eyes of both internal and external stakeholders. Efficient administration and transparent financial management are key, as discussed in Margareta & Saputra (2025).

c. The Role of the Vice Principal for Curriculum

The Vice Principal for Curriculum has the responsibility to design, compile, and oversee the implementation of the vocational curriculum, This task follows standards outlined in Simbolon et al. (2025). so that it is aligned with national regulations and industry competency standards. They are tasked with mapping subjects, preparing schedules, and adjusting skill materials to the demands of the labor market. The main challenge in this role is balancing general subjects with vocational skills. Therefore, a flexible curriculum strategy is key to ensuring that students gain relevant as well as comprehensive learning experiences. The emphasis on the allocation of practice hours demonstrates awareness that the mastery of vocational skills cannot be achieved solely through theory but requires direct field experience. Thus, the Vice Principal for Curriculum does not only carry out technical-administrative duties but also plays a substantive academic role in ensuring that vocational graduates possess both academic competitiveness and practical skills.

d. The Role of the Vice Principal for Student Affairs

The Vice Principal for Student Affairs focuses on character building, discipline, and student motivation to enable them to follow the vocational program optimally. Their duties align with PMA 60/2015 on holistic student development (PMA, 2015). They are responsible for organizing student activities, both academic and

non-academic, to ensure a conducive learning climate. Vocational programs that demand practical skills often exert psychological pressure on students. Therefore, guidance from the student affairs division is not only related to discipline but also encompasses emotional and motivational aspects. The Vice Principal for Student Affairs helps students maintain learning enthusiasm, develop a positive work attitude, and internalize values of responsibility, cooperation, and strong work ethics. Moreover, they also support extracurricular activities relevant to the development of vocational skills so that students can hone their interests and talents beyond formal learning. Thus, the role of the Vice Principal for Student Affairs is crucial in supporting vocational success through character development and student motivation.

e. The Role of the Vice Principal for Facilities and Infrastructure (Sarpras)

The success of vocational learning is highly influenced by the availability of adequate facilities and infrastructure. Facility standards reference Peraturan Menteri Pendidikan, Kebudayaan, Riset, dan Teknologi Nomor 22 Tahun 2023 (Permendikbudristek, 2023). The Vice Principal for Facilities is responsible for the procurement, maintenance, and management of practice facilities at school. Adequate facilities enable students to learn according to industry standards so that the skills acquired are truly relevant to labor market needs. In addition, the Vice Principal for Facilities must ensure that every procurement is on target, in accordance with the actual needs in practice rooms. Coordination with vocational teachers is an important part of adjusting procurement to the latest technological developments. The role of Facilities is not only to provide facilities but also to maintain their sustainability and usability for the long term. Thus, the Vice Principal for Facilities serves as the main support guaranteeing the quality of vocational practice.

f. The Role of the Vice Principal for Public Relations (Humas)

The Vice Principal for Public Relations serves as the main bridge between the school and the industrial world. Their role includes establishing communication, arranging collaborations, and ensuring the availability of internship opportunities for students. The involvement of Public Relations is important to open wider access to the world of work so that students gain real experiences that cannot be fully provided at school. In addition, the role of Public Relations is also strategic in building the madrasah's positive image in the eyes of society. Good socialization and publicity can increase the trust of parents and the community in the vocational program. Thus, Public Relations is not only an information liaison but also a branding agent that strengthens social legitimacy and ensures the sustainability of external collaborations. PR supports industry partnerships as recommended by Kepdirjen 5466/2019.

g. The Role of Vocational Teachers

Vocational teachers are the main technical implementers in the implementation of vocational learning. Their roles are guided by Perdirjen 2626/2023 (Perdirjen,

2023) and PMA 60/2015 (PMA, 2015). They are responsible for designing teaching strategies, assisting students in practice, and evaluating the skills acquired. Teachers not only act as instructors but also as mentors guiding students to be ready to face the world of work with professional skills and attitudes. Under limited facilities, teachers are required to be more creative in developing teaching methods. Their involvement in accompanying students during internships strengthens their role as a bridge between theory and practice. Vocational teachers serve as agents of skills transformation, building adaptive learning cultures, and shaping students' work readiness.

h. The Role of Students

Students are the main subjects in the vocational program as well as those who experience its direct impact. They are required to be active in following theory and practice, maintain discipline, and take advantage of every learning opportunity to hone their skills. Students also bear the responsibility of maintaining a positive work attitude in order to adapt to industrial demands. Through interviews, it appears that students gain different learning experiences compared to purely academic learning. Direct practice and internship experiences provide significant added value in terms of technical skills and mental readiness. Despite facing challenges such as limited facilities, real-world work experiences foster self-confidence and a deep understanding of work ethics. Thus, students are not only beneficiaries of the program but also actors who determine the success of vocational implementation through their active participation.

Evaluation and Monitoring of the Vocational Program at MAN 2 Majalengka

a. Vocational Program Assessment

Evaluation and monitoring follow SKKNI guidelines and Kepdirjen 5466/2019. Assessment in the vocational program aims to measure the achievement of student competencies comprehensively, covering aspects of technical skills, knowledge, and work attitude. The assessment system refers to SKKNI and the guidelines of Kepdirjen Pendis 5466/2019, as well as involving external institutions such as the Cirebon Job Training Center (BLK) for competency tests. The assessment is carried out in stages, starting with a psychotest at the beginning of the program to map interests and talents, followed by formative assessments during the learning process, and ending with a competency test at the end of the program.

Practical exams are conducted in each respective skills room with internal examiners from subject teachers, while external exams at BLK Cirebon use industry-standard equipment. This approach ensures continuity between internal and external assessments, while also ensuring that students' skills are recognized by the industry. Assessment does not only focus on final results, but also on the learning process through direct observation, work portfolios, and attitude assessments such as discipline, creativity, and responsibility. Students who pass the external competency test receive an official certificate, which serves as proof of professionalism as well as an added value when applying for jobs.

b. Vocational Program Evaluation

Program evaluation is carried out at the end of each semester involving teachers, principals, and relevant stakeholders. The evaluation agenda includes discussions on student learning outcomes, the effectiveness of teaching methods, the availability of practice facilities, and the quality of cooperation with industry. Teachers present class progress reports, which are then discussed together to find solutions to emerging obstacles. In this way, the school fosters a culture of reflection and continuous improvement. Evaluation also serves as the basis for strategic decision-making. For example, learning modules deemed less relevant are immediately revised, inadequate practice facilities are proposed for procurement, and the PKL scheme is adjusted to the evolving needs of the industry. Evaluation is not only administrative in nature but also supports vocational education innovation to remain adaptive to changes.

In addition, evaluation plays a role in identifying the individual needs of students. Teachers can detect students who are experiencing difficulties and then provide follow-up in the form of additional training or special guidance. This approach demonstrates differentiated learning that ensures all students have the same opportunity to master vocational competencies. Evaluation also becomes the basis for improving PKL, including adjustments to industry partners, schedules, and the types of work assigned. This guarantees that internship experiences are more relevant to the latest industry standards. Furthermore, evaluation results are used to build communication with partners. Schools convey both challenges and student achievements, while industry partners provide feedback regarding the suitability of student competencies with company needs. This discussion produces collaborative solutions, strengthens cooperation, and ensures that the vocational program always runs according to the expectations of all parties.

c. Vocational Program Monitoring

Monitoring is carried out to ensure that the program is implemented according to plan. The principal, relevant vice principals, madrasah supervisors, and industry partners are involved in this activity. Monitoring is conducted through direct visits to practice rooms, brief interviews with students, checking project progress, and monitoring PKL activities in the field. PKL monitoring holds an important position as it becomes a means of evaluating student performance in the industrial world. The aspects monitored include discipline, technical skills, teamwork ability, and work ethic. Industry partners also provide written feedback, which is then used as material for improving learning. In this way, monitoring does not only function as control but also as a reflective instrument that contributes to curriculum development.

In addition, monitoring helps maintain the trust of industry partners. With the active involvement of schools, industry parties feel that the internship process is truly monitored and directed. This strengthens long-term cooperation, so the opportunity for student PKL placements in the following year remains open. Monitoring also functions as a strategy to maintain the sustainability of educational partnerships

based on trust and responsibility. The results of monitoring are not only conveyed to the school or partners but also given directly to students. Concrete feedback makes students aware of their strengths and weaknesses so they can make self-improvements. This practice accustoms students to reflect on work experiences and better prepare themselves for the industrial world. Thus, monitoring does not stop as a supervisory tool but becomes a process of guidance that fosters student independence and work readiness.

The Impact of the Vocational Program on the Competitiveness and Work Readiness of Graduates

The vocational program at MAN 2 Majalengka for the 2022–2025 period has proven to provide a significant impact on improving the competitiveness and work readiness of graduates. In terms of technical skills, vocational students have better mastery compared to regular students. For example, in the automotive field, they are able to perform engine maintenance up to electrical systems according to industry standards. In the fashion design department, graduates are accustomed to producing products such as kebaya, uniforms, and Muslim clothing. Similarly, in the fields of electronics and computer engineering, students not only understand theory but are also able to assemble, test, and repair devices.

In addition to technical skills, real practical experience makes students more confident when entering the workforce (Table 2). They are accustomed to the rhythm of work, service standards, and work ethics in the industry. This affirms the function of vocational education as a bridge between school learning and labor market needs. Graduates are not only ready to work but also possess a professional attitude and adaptability to the work environment.

Table 2. Data of Graduates Continuing Education/Working

Data of Graduates Continuing Education/Working				
Year	**Graduates F/M**	**Continuing Education**	**Working**	**Total**
2023/2024	209 (F)	31	51	94
	134(M)	19	43	
2024/2025	154 (F)	33	54	104
	168 (M)	21	50	
2025/2026	164 (F)	36	65	128
	164 (M)	29	63	

Tracer study data show that vocational graduates are more competitive compared to non-vocational SMA/MA. Around 35% continue higher education in relevant majors, 40% work in the industrial or service sector, and 25% choose entrepreneurship. Some fashion design alumni have opened tailoring businesses and online clothing stores, while computer engineering graduates are widely absorbed in IT repair and network installation fields. In the last three years, the number of graduates who continue their studies or directly enter the workforce has continued to increase. In 2023/2024, 50 students were recorded as continuing to university and 94 working; in 2024/2025, the numbers rose to 54 continuing to university and 104 working; and in 2025/2026, it further increased to 65 continuing to university and 128 working. This trend shows that the vocational program is

effective in equipping students with skills while expanding their future opportunities.

4. Conclusion

Based on the results of research regarding the Strategy for Improving the Quality of Graduates through the Vocational Program at MAN 2 Majalengka, it can be concluded that the strategy for improving the quality of graduates through the vocational program has provided a significant positive impact on the work readiness and competitiveness of students. The planning process begins with identifying the needs of the local labor market as well as evaluating previous programs. As a result, the vocational curriculum is designed by considering the alignment between learning materials and labor market demands, while also taking into account the potential and interests of students. The implementation of the vocational program is carried out through two main pathways, namely theoretical and practical learning at school as well as fieldwork practice (PKL) in the industrial world. Learning is focused on mastering technical skills according to each major such as computer engineering, electronics, automotive, and fashion design.

The success of the vocational program is supported by synergy between various internal and external stakeholders. The principal acts as the policymaker and strategic director. The vice principals for curriculum and student affairs also ensure that the implementation of learning and student development runs according to the objectives. Vocational teachers, as the spearhead of practical learning implementation, play an important role in transferring skills. In addition, external support comes from industry partners who provide places for PKL as well as open job opportunities for students. Parents are also involved in providing moral and financial support while students participate in the vocational program. This collaboration creates a strong and sustainable vocational education ecosystem.

Program evaluation is carried out regularly through monitoring of classroom learning as well as field practices. Skills teachers provide continuous assessment of student competencies, while the school management team monitors the effectiveness of program implementation. The evaluation results not only serve as a measurement tool for student achievement but also as a basis for future program improvements. Graduates demonstrate good mastery of technical skills, increased self-confidence, and mental readiness to face the world of work. Hands-on practice and PKL activities have proven to foster a strong work ethic and high adaptability in industrial environments.

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