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Open High School (SMA) as an Alternative Education to Reduce Dropout Rates (Aps) in East Lombok Regency

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A B S T R A C T

The high dropout rate (APS) at the senior secondary level in East Lombok Regency reflects the limited effectiveness of the nine-year compulsory education program, driven by early marriage, economic constraints, and limited access. This study analyzes the role of the Open Senior High School (SMA Terbuka) in reducing dropout rates and explores strategies for strengthening its implementation. Using a descriptive qualitative case study at SMA Terbuka 1 Sakra Timur, data were obtained through interviews, observations, and documentation, and analyzed with Miles and Huberman's interactive model. Findings indicate that SMA Terbuka offers an inclusive alternative through decentralized Learning Activity Centers (TKB) supported by tutor teachers, with a flexible curriculum adapted to students' needs. Since 2021/2022, the program has reduced dropout rates and produced hundreds of graduates. Community and government support, flexible scheduling, and home-visit mentoring are critical factors. SMA Terbuka significantly expands educational access, and its optimization requires strengthened facilities, digital resources, and teacher capacity to support SDG 4 on quality education.

1. Introduction

Education is an important foundation in human resource development and nation building. Law Number 20 of 2003 concerning the National Education System emphasizes that the objectives of national education include intellectual development, character building, and improving the nation's civilization (Adha et al., 2019). Although Indonesia has implemented a 12-year compulsory education policy, many regions still experience high dropout rates at the senior high school level (Aulia Anjani Nurdin, 2024; Llamasares & Bausa, 2024; Widiasanti et al., 2023). East Lombok Regency, West Nusa Tenggara Province, is one of the regions facing significant challenges: BPS data shows that the Net Enrollment Rate (NER) for senior high school/equivalent level was only ~67.16% in 2023, meaning

that nearly one-third of children aged 16-18 did not continue to formal senior high school.

Previous studies have mapped the factors causing APS: family economic conditions, parents' education levels, geographical access and school infrastructure, and the phenomenon of early marriage. For example, a survival analysis study in West Sumatra Province using 2019 Susenas data identified socioeconomic factors as significant predictors of APS (Alifa, 2023; Rahmani, 2024). Research in Malang analyzed the effect of economic conditions on school dropout rates at the high school level, finding that parental income, children's economic activities (working), and government assistance status were influential variables. Other studies also show that distance to school affects participation and dropout rates at the junior high school level in Indonesia nationally (Alifa, 2023).

However, previous studies still have several limitations. First, most studies focus on primary and lower secondary levels, not specifically on upper secondary level (high school), especially in remote areas with specific issues such as East Lombok (Muchlisin et al., 2020). Second, the relationship between flexible education alternatives (such as open schools) and their impact on APS has not been thoroughly tested using a qualitative approach that captures the local context—student needs, community support, local regulations, and infrastructure readiness. Third, there is little research that empirically measures the implementation strategies of Open High School in terms of effectiveness, obstacles, and supporting factors using current data in East Lombok. The novelty of this research lies in its focus on Open High Schools as an alternative solution in East Lombok Regency, using an in-depth case study approach to reveal how flexible and adaptive learning models can reduce APS. In addition, this study will explore optimization strategies for Open High Schools that are specific to the local context (e.g., TKB distribution, the role of supervising teachers, schedule adaptation, local government and community support), which have not been widely discussed in previous literature.

Against this backdrop, this research is important to fill the gap regarding the effectiveness of open schools in reducing APS at the high school level in areas with geographical and socioeconomic characteristics such as East Lombok. The results of this study are expected to not only provide empirical understanding and policy recommendations for local policymakers, but also serve as a model for other regions in Indonesia that face similar issues in their efforts to achieve SDG 4 on quality, equitable, and inclusive education.

2. Methodology

This study uses a descriptive qualitative approach with an intrinsic case study design, which was chosen because the main focus of the study is to deeply understand the phenomenon of the existence and effectiveness of Open High Schools in reducing dropout rates in East Lombok Regency. The qualitative approach allows researchers to explore the meanings, experiences, and strategies developed by various education stakeholders, while the intrinsic case study design

according to Assyakurrohim et al. (2022) is relevant because the phenomenon of Open High School is a unique case that developed in the specific social, economic, and cultural context of the research area. The research subjects included the principal, vice principal, supervising teacher, and Open High School students. Informants were selected using purposive sampling to determine key participants who had direct experience in the implementation of Open High School, followed by snowball sampling to recruit additional informants recommended by the initial participants. Thus, the data collected was rich, layered, and representative of the social reality in the field.

The data collection technique used a combination of several instruments, namely: (1) in-depth interviews with semi-structured guidelines to explore the views and experiences of the research subjects; (2) participatory observation of the learning process at the Learning Activity Center (TKB) and the interactions between supervising teachers and students; (3) documentation in the form of school administrative data, activity reports, and archives of policies related to Open High Schools; and (4) questionnaires as supporting instruments to reinforce findings from interviews and observations (Fadli, 2021; Firmansyah & Dede, 2022).

Data validity was maintained by using source, method, and theory triangulation techniques. Source triangulation was conducted by comparing data from school principals, teachers, and students; method triangulation was conducted by comparing the results of interviews, observations, and documentation; while theory triangulation was conducted by interpreting the data through the perspective of educational literature on dropouts, access to education, and open school models (Widodo, 2019). Data analysis included three main stages: data reduction (selecting, focusing, and simplifying important information), data presentation (creating matrices, tables, and thematic narratives to display findings), and conclusion/verification (interpreting data to find patterns, relationships between factors, and formulate research implications). The analysis is conducted simultaneously from the beginning of data collection to the final stage of the research, so that the interpretation process is dynamic and contextual (Kaharuddin, 2020).

With this design, the study is expected to produce valid, in-depth, and applicable findings, not only describing the existence of Open High Schools in East Lombok, but also revealing the mechanisms, supporting factors, and challenges of their implementation in reducing dropout rates. These findings are expected to form the basis for the development of more inclusive and sustainable education policies, while also contributing theoretically to the literature on alternative education in Indonesia.

3. Results and Discussion

Result

The Existence and Operation of Open High Schools in East Lombok Regency
Background of the Establishment of Open High Schools

Before analyzing the findings, it is essential to describe how the research data were collected. The data collection process was conducted through interviews, observation, documentation, and questionnaires to obtain comprehensive and valid information related to the implementation of the SMA Terbuka program in East Lombok Regency. Interviews were conducted with principals, vice principals (curriculum and student affairs), and guru pamong to explore their experiences, perceptions, and challenges in implementing the program. Observations were carried out at learning centers (Tempat Kegiatan Belajar or TKB) to record students' learning activities, teacher-student interactions, and school facilities. Documentation included collecting official school records, attendance lists, and program reports to strengthen data validity. In addition, questionnaires were distributed to students to capture their opinions, motivation, and experiences regarding the SMA Terbuka learning process. The combination of these techniques allowed the researcher to triangulate data and ensure the accuracy and depth of the findings.In Table 1. Below can be seen interview/questionnaire items related to strategy implementation

Table 1. Interview/Questionnaire Items Related to Strategy Implementation

No	Area of Inquiry	Example Questions
1	Learning Process	How do teachers implement DOMON and DOMTAMU in daily teaching?
2	Mentoring	What challenges are faced during home visits or home-to-home socialization?
3	Facilities & Infrastructure	What facilities are still lacking to support effective learning in SMA Terbuka?
4	Life Skills Training	How do students respond to vocational training based on local wisdom?
5	Multi-Stakeholder Collaboration	What kind of support is received from local government or CSR programs?
6	Monitoring & Evaluation	How is student progress and satisfaction assessed regularly?

Open high schools in East Lombok Regency are an alternative educational solution aimed at accommodating children who are at risk of dropping out of school due to economic constraints, early marriage, work obligations, or geographical distance from regular schools. One of the schools actively implementing this program is SMAN 1 Sakra Timur. Based on the data obtained, the Open High School at this school was established to address the problem of a lack of study groups (rombel) at the main school and the high dropout rate. With regulatory support from the NTB Education and Culture Office, this program has been officially running since the 2021/2022 school year.

The background to the establishment of the Open High School at SMAN 1 Sakra Timur is also inseparable from the real needs in the field. The principal explained

that many students were forced to drop out of school due to family, economic, and early marriage factors. On the other hand, teachers at the main school experienced a shortage of teaching hours, which led to the idea of establishing an Open High School. The legality of this program was obtained through a decree from the NTB Education and Culture Office, which strengthened its existence as a strategy to complete 12 years of compulsory education while improving the welfare of teachers. Thus, in terms of background and history, the existence of the Open High School was built on the basis of need, regulation, and support from the main school.

Student Recruitment

The implementation of Open High School is evident in the flexible student recruitment process through community outreach, counseling in remote areas, and coordination with junior high schools/MTs. Selection is only administrative without academic tests, focusing on the students' socioeconomic conditions. Once accepted, students are placed in Learning Activity Centers (TKB) close to their homes, such as village halls or coordinators' homes. As of April 2024, the number of Open High School students at SMAN 1 Sakra Timur reached 698, spread across grades X, XI, and XII. The data shows that the majority of students come from backgrounds of early marriage, poor families, work to help their parents, or experience other obstacles that prevent them from attending regular school. This fact further emphasizes the existence of Open High School as an inclusive platform for children who are vulnerable to dropping out of school.

Curriculum and Learning Process

The Open High School curriculum is basically the same as that of regular schools, but its implementation is more flexible to suit the students' circumstances. Learning generally takes place in the afternoon starting at 2:00 p.m. WITA to accommodate the schedules of students who work. Various learning models are used, including DOMON (Dominant *Online*), DOMTAMU (Dominant Face-to-Face), and a combination of the two. Evaluation is carried out as in regular schools, namely through daily tests, STS, SAT, and school exams, most of which are conducted using online platforms such as Google *Form*. In addition, assessment is also carried out through individual and group assignments that are collected online, allowing teachers to assess the cognitive, affective, and psychomotor aspects of students. Thus, this evaluation mechanism not only aims to measure academic achievement but is also designed to be relevant to the context of distance learning and to maintain the objectivity of learning outcomes.

Observations at TKB Menceh and Surabaya show that learning takes place six days a week with an average student attendance rate of 80%. Teachers are present according to schedule, guiding students through lectures, discussions, and question and answer sessions, both face-to-face and *online.* Learning technology is also utilized through YouTube, Google *Classroom,* and WhatsApp *Group.* This shows that the implementation of Open High School is systematic despite limited resources.

Mentoring Strategies and Challenges

The existence of Open High School is also supported by the mentoring strategies carried out by supervising teachers. One of these strategies is conducting home visits to the homes of students who are rarely present, dialoguing with parents, and providing flexibility in learning time for students who work, especially during the tobacco or rice harvest season. This strategy helps maintain student motivation to continue attending school despite facing many obstacles. However, in practice, the implementation of Open High School faces a number of challenges. Limited facilities at TKB, long distances traveled by students, inadequate availability of printed modules, and weak internet connections are common obstacles. Nevertheless, the consistency of teachers in providing guidance and flexible learning schedules are important factors that ensure the continuity of this program.

Community Support and Perceptions

The community has been very supportive of the Open High School. Community leaders consider this program effective in reducing the dropout rate ( ). Open High School graduates not only obtain a diploma equivalent to that of regular schools, but many also succeed in continuing to college or finding employment. Community support is manifested through encouraging their children to attend Open High School and helping to socialize this program to the surrounding community. This community support strengthens the existence of Open High School, while also ensuring the continuity of the program. Collaboration between schools, the government, teachers, and the community makes Open High School not only an alternative educational institution, but also part of a social movement to reduce the dropout rate in East Lombok.

The Existence and Contribution of Open High School

Based on the research findings, it can be confirmed that the existence of Open High School in East Lombok Regency is not only limited to its formal existence, but its benefits are also truly felt by the community. Meanwhile, its implementation takes place through flexible recruitment mechanisms, an adaptive curriculum, humanistic mentoring strategies, and full support from the community. Thus, Open High School at SMAN 1 Sakra Timur has proven to contribute significantly to expanding access to secondary education, reducing dropout rates, and strengthening the role of schools as centers of social empowerment.

The Effectiveness of Open High School in Reducing Dropout Rates in East Lombok Regency

Impact on Dropout Rates

The existence of Open High School in East Lombok Regency has had a positive impact in reducing dropout rates. Based on data obtained from the school, since its establishment in the 2021/2022 academic year until the 2024/2025 academic year, the Open High School at SMAN 1 Sakra Timur has graduated 541 students with

official diplomas that are equivalent to those of regular high schools. This number shows that students who were previously at risk of dropping out of school or had already stopped attending school can now have the opportunity to complete their secondary education. This condition is also confirmed by community leaders who consider this program effective because it accommodates students from poor families, child laborers, and victims of early marriage. Open high school graduates not only obtain diplomas, but some also continue on to college and are accepted for work in the formal sector. This fact shows that this program not only reduces dropout rates, but also contributes to the socioeconomic mobility of the community.

Thus, it can be concluded that the impact of Open High School in reducing dropout rates is not only short-term in the form of increased graduation rates, but also has a long-term impact through improved quality of life for students after graduation. This program is a real solution for areas with high dropout rates such as East Lombok, while also supporting the government's agenda of completing 12 years of compulsory education.

Effectiveness of the Learning Process

The effectiveness of Open High School is also evident in the flexibility of the learning process, which adapts to the students' circumstances. Most students come from low-income families and have work obligations, so the school implements the DOMON (Dominant *Online*) and DOMTAMU (Dominant Face-to-Face) learning systems. With this pattern, students can continue to study without having to abandon their obligations to earn a living or help their parents. Learning is carried out six days a week, usually in the afternoon until evening, with an average attendance rate of 80% (Ramdhani & Wulandari, 2021).

Mentor teachers play an important role in maintaining the effectiveness of learning. They are present according to schedule, guiding students both face-to-face and online, and using methods such as lectures, discussions, and question and answer sessions. In addition, the use of technology such as YouTube, Google *Classroom,* and WhatsApp *Groups* has expanded students' access to learning materials. With this strategy, physical limitations such as tables, chairs, or blackboards can be overcome by maximizing the use of digital media (Anggraini et al., 2021). Findings in the field show that despite the simple learning facilities, student enthusiasm is relatively high. Some students actively ask questions and engage in discussions, although there are also those who remain passive. Overall, the flexibility of learning offered by Open High School is a major factor in maintaining student continuity so that they are not forced to drop out of school.

Strategies for Maintaining Student Continuity

The effectiveness of Open High School in reducing dropout rates is also reflected in the mentoring strategies implemented. Teachers not only act as educators but also as active mentors who maintain student motivation. They conduct home visits to the homes of students who rarely attend, engage in dialogue with parents, and provide flexible learning schedules for students who work. This personalized

approach has proven effective in reducing the likelihood of students dropping out.

In addition, Open High School provides support through BOS/BOP funding assistance, independent learning modules, and transportation subsidies. Some students also have access to *life skills* programs such as sewing, computers, culinary arts, and entrepreneurship. This support is designed not only to ease the economic burden on students but also to equip them with practical skills that can increase their motivation to stay in school. With this strategy, students feel more cared for and motivated to complete their education. This shows that the effectiveness of Open High School lies not only in academic aspects, but also in the socio-emotional aspects that support the continuity of education for children from vulnerable groups.

The Role of the Community in Reducing School Dropouts

The community plays an important role in supporting the effectiveness of Open High School. This support is reflected in the positive views of community leaders who believe that this program greatly helps children who drop out of school due to economic factors or early marriage. This support is manifested by encouraging their children to attend Open High School, as well as promoting this program to the surrounding community. In addition, community legitimacy for the program is strengthened when they see many Open High School graduates who successfully continue to college or are accepted for work. This is concrete evidence that reinforces the community's belief that Open High School is not a second-class education, but an alternative path that is equivalent to regular high school. With community support, Open High School has become more effective in reducing dropout rates because negative stigma can be dispelled. Collaboration between schools, parents, and community leaders creates a more conducive learning environment for children at risk of dropping out.

Indicators of Effectiveness

The effectiveness of Open High School can be measured through several indicators. First, the number of graduates, which reached 541 students in the last three years, is clear evidence of the program's success. Second, the stable student attendance rate of 80% shows that students remain committed to their studies despite facing economic and employment challenges. Third, the flexibility of learning through the hybrid learning system (DOMON & DOMTAMU) allows students to continue their education without neglecting their work obligations.

In addition, personal assistance from teachers who conduct *home visits* and provide motivation plays a major role in preventing students from dropping out of school. Consistent support from the community in encouraging their children to attend school is another indicator of the program's effectiveness. With these indicators fulfilled, it can be confirmed that SMA Terbuka not only exists as an alternative educational institution, but is also effective in reducing the dropout rate in East Lombok Regency.

Strategies to Maximize the Role of Open High Schools in Reducing Dropout Rates

Open high schools in East Lombok Regency have demonstrated their significant presence and proven effectiveness in reducing school dropout rates through various achievements, both in terms of the number of graduates and student participation. However, this effectiveness still faces various challenges that need to be anticipated in order to ensure the sustainability of the program. Therefore, a strategy is needed that not only maintains existing successes but also maximizes the role of Open High Schools as alternative educational institutions capable of addressing the social, economic, and cultural needs of the local community. This strategy basically includes strengthening learning aspects, improving facilities, providing personal assistance to students, developing life skills, and cross-sector collaboration. With the right strategy, Open High School will not only serve as a short-term solution for students who are vulnerable to dropping out of school, but also as an instrument for long-term community empowerment. The following elaboration outlines various strategies that can maximize the role of Open High School in reducing dropout rates in East Lombok Regency (Difa'ul Husna et al., 2024).

Strengthening the Flexible Learning System

The main strategy that needs to be maximized is the implementation of a learning system that is more adaptive to the socio-economic conditions of students. Open High School has developed the DOMON (Dominant *Online*) and DOMTAMU (Dominant Face-to-Face) models, but these strategies need to be continuously improved to be more inclusive. For example, the use of simple digital platforms such as WhatsApp *Group,* Google *Classroom,* or YouTube has been helpful, but providing free data access and improving TKB facilities will strengthen the sustainability of this strategy (Istiningsih & Hasbullah, 2015). In addition, there needs to be innovation in context-based learning methods, such as linking lessons to the daily lives of students who work in the agricultural or marine sectors. That way, learning is not only academically relevant, but also practically useful for students' lives.

Personal Guidance and Continuous Motivation

The next strategy is to strengthen personal mentoring through *home visits* and door-to-door socialization, which have been carried out for some time. Teachers need to be given special training in educational counseling so that they can understand the psychology of students who work, marry early, or face economic pressures**.** In addition to teachers, the role of parents and community leaders must also be maximized in providing moral support and motivation. Family and community support has proven to be a determining factor in whether students stay in school or choose to drop out ( ). By involving the community, Open High School can foster a culture of continuous learning together.

Improvement of Facilities and Infrastructure Support

Observations show that facilities at TKB are still very limited, as most only utilize the living room or terrace of the coordinator's house. Therefore, an important strategy that needs to be implemented is the improvement of learning facilities such as tables, chairs, blackboards, and bookshelves. In addition, the provision of stable internet access is an urgent need so that online learning can run optimally. Local governments, parent schools, and communities can work together to provide these facilities. For example, CSR (*Corporate Social Responsibility*) programs from local companies can be directed to support TKB facilities, or BOS/BOP funds can be utilized more optimally for students' learning needs.

Life Skills Development

Another strategy that needs to be maximized is the provision of practical skills based on local wisdom. Several supervising teachers have proposed training in entrepreneurship, culinary arts, and sewing skills. This is important because most Open High School students come from weak economic backgrounds and need skills to become more independent (Elvanisi et al., 2018). With the implementation of life skills programs, Open High Schools not only play a role in reducing dropout rates but also enhance the competitiveness of graduates in the job market. This strategy also serves as a form of community empowerment, as schools not only produce graduates with diplomas but also productive young workers.

Multi-Stakeholder Collaboration

The strategy to maximize the role of Open High Schools cannot run independently without the support of various parties. Collaboration with local governments is already underway through regulations and monitoring, but in the future, it needs to be strengthened with greater financial support. In addition, the role of the community also needs to be more intensive. Community leaders who have been supporting the program can be involved as socialization agents to reach more out-of-school students. On the other hand, social institutions and non-governmental organizations can contribute through scholarships or mentoring programs. This collaborative strategy will maximize the role of Open High Schools in reducing dropout rates.

Strengthening Monitoring and Evaluation

The final strategy that needs to be maximized is a system of regular monitoring and evaluation. Until now, success has been measured by the number of graduates and student attendance. However, future evaluations need to be expanded to measure the quality of learning, student satisfaction, and graduate sustainability (whether they continue to college, work, or become entrepreneurs). With a more comprehensive evaluation, Open High Schools can continue to improve their strategies. This will ensure that their role is not limited to maintaining student continuity during their studies, but also preparing them to face the future better. A

summary of the strategy to maximize the role of Open High Schools can be seen in Table 2 below.

Table 2. Summary of Strategies to Maximize the Role of Open High Schools

	Strategy	Objective
Learning	Strengthening DOMON & DOMTAMU, utilization of digital media, context-based learning	Improving the flexibility and relevance of learning
Mentoring	*Home visits*, *home-to-home* socialization, counseling training for teachers	Maintaining student motivation to prevent them from dropping out of school
Facilities & Infrastructure	Provision of desks, chairs, blackboards, internet access, CSR & BOS support	Reducing learning barriers due to limited facilities
Life Skills	Entrepreneurship training, culinary arts, sewing, computer skills based on local wisdom	Equipping students with practical and independent skills
Multi-stakeholder collaboration	Collaboration with local governments, community leaders, social institutions, and CSR	Strengthening external support and expanding student reach
Monitoring & Evaluation	Routine evaluations cover learning quality, student satisfaction, and graduate sustainability	Improving the quality and sustainability of the role of Open High Schools

Discussion

This study found that Open High School in East Lombok has succeeded in expanding access to education for students who are vulnerable to dropping out of school, whether due to economic factors, early marriage, or work demands. Many students still have the opportunity to complete their secondary education through a flexible learning system. These findings are in line with the research Widiasanti et al.(2023) which shows that Open High School is able to accommodate students from underprivileged families and provide scholarship facilities. Similarly, the research Aulia Anjani Nurdin (2024) found that Open High School helps working children to continue their education.

Theoretically, these findings are reinforced by Carl Rogers' (1969) humanistic theory, which emphasizes the importance of learner-centered learning, where students are given the freedom and flexibility to learn according to their circumstances (Muhajirah, 2020) . This is also in line with Maslow's hierarchy of needs (1954), where Open High School allows students to fulfill their basic educational needs to self-actualization (Maslow, 1954, in Khairatunni'mah. Sm (2024)). Thus, the existence of Open High School is a tangible manifestation of educational equity that supports national education goals and SDGs. On the other hand, this study also found several weaknesses. Limited infrastructure, a lack of modules, and poor internet access at the Learning Activity Center (TKB) are significant obstacles. In addition, the intensity of interaction between teachers and students is limited due to the teachers' double workload, resulting in suboptimal learning assistance. These findings are in line with the results of the study Llamasares & Bausa (2024) , which states that limited facilities are the main

obstacle for Open High Schools, and Ressa & Andrews (2022) , which found low student discipline due to weak teacher supervision.

This condition can be explained through Skinner's behaviorist learning theory. This theory emphasizes that learning behavior is formed through stimulus-response relationships that are reinforced by reinforcement. Behavior will become stronger when reinforced, and conversely, it will weaken when punished (Venkatesan & Mappillairaju, 2023). In the context of Open High Schools, the limited interaction between teachers and students means that students receive less consistent positive stimuli and reinforcement. As a result, student discipline and motivation to learn tend to decline. Thus, although Open High Schools have succeeded in providing access to education, the quality of learning is still not on par with regular schools.

Meanwhile, according to the researchers' observations based on field findings, Open High Schools still play a strategic role in reducing dropout rates, but their effectiveness is highly dependent on environmental support and student motivation. In East Lombok, despite limited infrastructure, students' intrinsic motivation to continue attending school appears to be quite high. This is in line with the research Shiao et al. (2023) which found that intrinsic motivation has a positive and significant relationship with learning achievement, with a contribution of 52.7%, which is more dominant than other factors. Intrinsic motivation includes several aspects, namely the desire and will to succeed, drive and need to learn, as well as hopes and aspirations. This context is relevant to the conditions of Open High School students in East Lombok Regency. Based on the results of interviews and field observations, many students have economic limitations and come from families with low educational backgrounds. However, most of them still show strong intrinsic motivation, such as the desire to complete secondary education, the drive to improve their future, and the aspiration to continue to college or get a more decent job.

Within the framework of social constructivism theory Habsy et al.(2023) , student learning success is greatly influenced by the social environment and support provided through scaffolding. Scaffolding is understood as providing assistance to students in the early stages of learning, which is then gradually reduced so that students are able to take over their learning responsibilities independently (Venkatesan & Mappillairaju, 2023) . In the context of Open High School, the support of teachers, peers, and the community plays an important role in helping students overcome individual limitations. Social interaction in the Learning Activity Center (TKB) not only supports academic success but also contributes to the formation of character and independent learning in students.

4. Conclusion

Based on the research results, it can be concluded that Open High School in East Lombok Regency plays a significant role as an effective alternative education model in reducing dropout rates. Through a flexible recruitment system, adaptive curriculum, and support from teachers and Learning Activity Centers (TKB) close

to students' residences, Open High School is able to reach students from vulnerable backgrounds, including those who marry early, work, or come from families with economic limitations. This program has been proven to increase student participation and graduation rates equivalent to regular high schools. Optimization strategies through strengthening the role of teachers, utilizing technology, and collaborating with parents and the community make Open High School not only a practical solution to reduce APS, but also an inclusive, humanistic, and contextual education model in line with local needs, in accordance with the goals of sustainable education development (SDG 4).

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