

The Effectiveness of Industrial Work Practice (*Prakerin*) Implementation in Improving Students' Competence and Work Readiness at SMKN 1 OKU Selatan

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Abstrak

Praktik Kerja Industri (Prakerin) merupakan komponen penting dalam sistem pendidikan Sekolah Menengah Kejuruan (SMK) yang bertujuan menjembatani kesenjangan antara pembelajaran teoretis di sekolah dan pengalaman praktis di dunia kerja. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis efektivitas pelaksanaan Prakerin di SMKN 1 Ogan Komerling Ulu Selatan (OKUS) dalam meningkatkan kompetensi vokasional dan kesiapan kerja peserta didik. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan deskriptif kualitatif dengan pengumpulan data melalui studi literatur, analisis dokumen program Prakerin, serta penerapan kerangka evaluasi program. Aspek yang dianalisis meliputi perencanaan, pelaksanaan, monitoring, dan evaluasi program. Hasil analisis menunjukkan bahwa efektivitas Prakerin dipengaruhi oleh keselarasan kurikulum dengan kebutuhan industri, kualitas pembimbingan dari pihak sekolah dan mitra industri, serta relevansi tugas yang diberikan kepada peserta didik selama masa praktik. Penelitian ini juga mengidentifikasi sejumlah tantangan, antara lain kesenjangan antara kompetensi yang diajarkan di sekolah dan tuntutan industri, serta belum optimalnya sistem monitoring yang terstruktur. Oleh karena itu, disarankan untuk memperkuat kemitraan dengan industri yang relevan, mengembangkan jurnal aktivitas peserta didik yang lebih terukur, serta melaksanakan evaluasi program secara berkala guna memastikan lulusan SMKN 1 OKUS memiliki daya saing yang kuat.

Kata kunci: *Praktik Kerja Industri, Prakerin, Efektivitas, Kompetensi Peserta Didik, Kesiapan Kerja, Sekolah Menengah Kejuruan*

Abstract

Industrial Internship (Prakerin) is a crucial component of the Vocational High School (SMK) education system, aiming to bridge the gap between theory taught in schools and practical experience in the workplace. This study aims to analyze the effectiveness of Prakerin implementation at SMKN 1 Ogan Komerling Ulu Selatan (OKUS) in enhancing students' vocational competencies and work readiness. The research employs a qualitative descriptive approach, with data collected through a literature review, analysis of Prakerin program documents, and application of an evaluation framework. The aspects analyzed include program planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation. The results indicate that the effectiveness of Prakerin is influenced by the alignment of the curriculum with industry needs, the quality of guidance provided by both schools and industry partners, and the relevance of tasks assigned to students during the internship. The study also identifies potential challenges, such as the gap between competencies taught in schools and those required by industry, as well as the lack of structured monitoring. It is recommended to strengthen partnerships with relevant industries, develop more measurable student activity journals, and implement periodic program evaluations to ensure that SMKN 1 OKUS graduates demonstrate strong competitiveness.

Keywords: Industrial Internship, Prakerin, Effectiveness, Student Competence, Work Readiness, Vocational High School

1. INTRODUCTION

Vocational education and training (VET) has increasingly been recognized as a strategic mechanism for strengthening workforce competitiveness and facilitating effective school-to-

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work transitions in contemporary labor markets (OECD, 2019; ILO, 2020). In this perspective, the effectiveness of vocational institutions is assessed not merely by graduation rates but by the extent to which graduates demonstrate occupational competence and readiness to participate productively in real workplace environments (Clarke, 2018; Succi & Canovi, 2020). The growing emphasis on employability reflects broader structural changes in industry, where employers expect graduates to possess not only technical proficiency but also adaptive, communicative, and problem-solving capabilities (Jackson, 2016; Chhinzer & Russo, 2018).

Work-based learning (WBL) has emerged as a core pedagogical strategy to bridge the gap between classroom instruction and workplace practice (Billett, 2016; Raelin, 2017). Through structured workplace immersion, students are expected to contextualize theoretical knowledge, internalize professional norms, and develop occupational identity (Choy et al., 2018; Virtanen et al., 2014). Empirical research indicates that internship participation can positively influence students' employability skills, career clarity, and transition confidence when placements are meaningful and supported by supervision (Silva et al., 2018; Kapareliotis et al., 2019). However, the educational value of internships depends on the quality of governance mechanisms that structure the learning experience (Ceelen et al., 2023).

The literature consistently emphasizes that effective internship implementation requires curriculum alignment, structured mentoring, systematic monitoring, and transparent evaluation processes (De Vos et al., 2023; Nykänen et al., 2022). Without strong collaboration between educational institutions and industry partners, internships risk becoming procedural requirements rather than structured learning opportunities (Hiim, 2022). In addition, persistent discrepancies between competencies delivered in vocational schools and those demanded by industry remain a significant challenge across different national contexts (Pavlova, 2017; Bahlola & Buli, 2020).

The concept of work readiness is multidimensional and encompasses technical competence, soft skills, professional attitudes, communication ability, and adaptability to workplace culture (Caballero et al., 2018; Yorke, 2016). Studies comparing employer expectations and graduate self-perceptions reveal notable gaps in perceived readiness, highlighting the importance of structured workplace learning environments in shaping competence development (Chhinzer & Russo, 2018; Succi & Canovi, 2020). Moreover, internship design—including task relevance and supervision intensity has been shown to influence the extent to which students translate academic learning into workplace performance (McHugh, 2017).

Assessment and monitoring practices further determine whether internships genuinely contribute to competence development. Authentic assessment, reflective documentation, and structured supervisor feedback are considered essential in making workplace learning measurable and meaningful (Ajjawi et al., 2020; Boud et al., 2020). Stage-based evaluation frameworks such as the Context–Input–Process–Product (CIPP) model provide a systematic lens for analyzing program effectiveness across planning, implementation, monitoring, and outcome stages (Stufflebeam & Zhang, 2017; Warju, 2016). Such evaluation approaches emphasize that program effectiveness is shaped by interconnected governance components rather than isolated activities.

In Indonesia, Sekolah Menengah Kejuruan (SMK) integrate *Praktik Kerja Industri (Prakerin)* as a compulsory curricular component designed to connect school-based instruction with industrial practice. National policy documents underline the importance of strengthening school–industry partnerships to ensure curriculum relevance and graduate competitiveness (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2017). Research on Indonesian vocational internship programs suggests that structured collaboration and clear communication between schools and industry significantly influence program outcomes (Marsono et al., 2019). Furthermore, the use of digital monitoring systems and structured supervision models has been associated with improved transparency and accountability in internship implementation (Sutikno, 2024).

Despite its institutional importance, variations in supervision quality, task allocation, and monitoring mechanisms may affect the extent to which *Prakerin* enhances students' vocational competence and work readiness. Evaluating its effectiveness therefore requires examining governance dimensions, including industry mapping, student preparation, implementation fidelity, supervision processes, and evaluation systems. SMKN 1 OKU Selatan, as one of the vocational institutions in South Sumatra, consistently implements *Prakerin* within its academic structure. However, systematic analysis is necessary to determine whether its implementation meaningfully strengthens students' competence and readiness for employment. Accordingly, this study analyzes the effectiveness of *Prakerin* implementation at SMKN 1 OKU Selatan through an evaluative framework grounded in contemporary perspectives on work-based learning, employability, and program evaluation.

2. METHOD

This study employs a qualitative literature-based and conceptual analysis design to examine the effectiveness of *Praktik Kerja Industri (Prakerin)* implementation at SMKN 1 OKU Selatan. Rather than collecting primary empirical data, the study synthesizes scholarly literature, national vocational education regulations, and documented internship implementation guidelines to construct an evaluative understanding of program governance. Literature review as a research methodology is appropriate when the objective is to critically integrate and interpret existing knowledge to build analytical frameworks (Snyder, 2019).

The literature selection focused on peer-reviewed journal articles and academic books published primarily between 2016 and 2025, emphasizing five thematic domains: (1) vocational education governance, (2) work-based learning and internship effectiveness, (3) employability and work readiness constructs, (4) school–industry collaboration, and (5) educational program evaluation models. Sources were selected based on relevance, recency, and credibility of publication outlets. This approach aligns with integrative literature review principles, which aim to generate conceptual clarity and theoretical synthesis rather than statistical generalization (Torraco, 2016).

The analytical framework adopted in this study draws upon stage-based program evaluation logic, particularly the Context–Input–Process–Product (CIPP) model, which emphasizes systematic examination of planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation components (Stufflebeam & Zhang, 2017). Within this framework, the effectiveness of *Prakerin* implementation is analyzed across four interconnected stages:

1. Planning, which examines industry mapping processes, partnership agreements, and student preparation strategies.

2. Implementation, which analyzes student placement procedures, task relevance to vocational competencies, and workplace engagement practices.
3. Monitoring, which evaluates supervision mechanisms, communication patterns between school and industry, and documentation systems.
4. Evaluation, which reviews student assessment methods, feedback practices, and program-level reflection mechanisms.

Because this study is conceptual in nature, its contribution lies in providing a structured evaluative perspective rather than empirical measurement. Conceptual research plays an important role in refining analytical categories and identifying improvement pathways for future field-based investigations (Jaakkola, 2020). Accordingly, this article proposes an evaluative lens that may inform subsequent empirical research and practical enhancement of internship governance within vocational education settings.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Result

Based on the evaluative analysis of *Praktik Kerja Industri (Prakerin)* implementation at SMKN 1 OKU Selatan, four key dimensions determine program effectiveness: planning, implementation, monitoring and guidance, and evaluation. The results indicate that although the internship program is structurally implemented, variations in governance quality influence its contribution to students' vocational competence and work readiness.

At the planning stage, industry partnerships are formally established; however, alignment between vocational specialization and industry characteristics varies. Some placements demonstrate strong technological and competency alignment, while others are influenced more by placement availability than by relevance to students' fields of study. Student pre-departure preparation is conducted, but the depth of professional orientation particularly in workplace ethics and industry culture differs across programs.

During implementation, differences in task relevance emerge as a central issue. While several students engage in technical tasks aligned with their specialization, others are assigned routine or supporting duties with limited developmental value. Communication between supervising teachers and industry mentors exists, yet structured documentation and systematic follow-up remain inconsistent.

Monitoring practices include periodic supervision and mentoring by industry representatives. However, supervision intensity and feedback mechanisms are not standardized across placements. Evaluation practices rely primarily on industry performance scores and student reports, with limited integration of industry feedback into curriculum refinement processes.

These findings suggest that the effectiveness of *Prakerin* at SMKN 1 OKU Selatan is influenced not only by program implementation but also by the coherence of governance processes across its four stages.

Discussion

a. Planning and Industry Alignment

The findings show that the quality of planning significantly influences internship effectiveness. Industry mapping and partnership relevance determine whether students are placed in environments that support competence development. These results are consistent with Billett (2016) and Ceelen et al. (2023), who emphasize that meaningful workplace learning requires intentional curriculum–industry alignment rather than logistical placement decisions. When internship planning prioritizes availability over specialization compatibility, opportunities for applied skill development may be reduced.

Furthermore, the variation in pre-departure preparation reflects the multidimensional nature of work readiness. Succi and Canovi (2020) argue that employability extends beyond technical knowledge to include communication skills, adaptability, and professional ethics. Similarly, Caballero et al. (2018) highlight that structured preparation enhances students' confidence and workplace adjustment. Thus, strengthening holistic preparation may increase internship effectiveness.

b. Task Relevance in Implementation

The differences in task allocation identified in the results align with research indicating that internship impact depends heavily on experiential engagement (Kapareliotis et al., 2019; Silva et al., 2018). Students who perform tasks directly related to their vocational majors are more likely to develop applied competence and professional identity. Conversely, repetitive or administrative tasks may limit competence transfer.

The role of structured communication between supervising teachers and industry mentors is also critical. Nykänen et al. (2022) emphasize that continuous dialogue enhances coherence between school-based and workplace learning. The partial use of activity journals at SMKN 1 OKU Selatan suggests awareness of documentation needs; however, stronger integration into monitoring processes may improve implementation quality.

c. Monitoring and Guidance Quality

Monitoring and mentoring practices significantly shape workplace learning experiences. De Vos et al. (2023) demonstrate that structured feedback and assessment practices are essential for ensuring competence progression. Similarly, Ceelen et al. (2023) highlight that guided participation and mentoring intensity influence the depth of student learning.

The variation in supervision intensity observed in this study indicates that monitoring mechanisms are not yet standardized. Hiim (2022) notes that consistent school–industry collaboration enhances program coherence and accountability. Therefore, strengthening structured monitoring instruments may improve internship consistency across placements.

d. Evaluation and Continuous Improvement

The evaluation findings reveal a predominance of summative assessment through industry grading and final reports. While these instruments provide performance indicators, program evaluation theory suggests that effectiveness assessment should incorporate continuous feedback and reflective processes (Stufflebeam & Zhang, 2017; Warju, 2016).

Boud et al. (2020) emphasize that reflective documentation enhances metacognitive awareness and professional growth. Integrating structured industry feedback into curriculum

review may therefore support continuous improvement. When evaluation moves beyond grading toward developmental reflection, internship programs are more likely to strengthen vocational competence and work readiness.

Overall, the discussion indicates that the effectiveness of *Prakerin* implementation depends on the integration and coherence of planning, task alignment, supervision structure, and evaluative feedback mechanisms rather than on program existence alone.

4. CONCLUSION

This study analyzed the effectiveness of *Praktik Kerja Industri (Prakerin)* implementation at SMKN 1 OKU Selatan through a structured evaluative framework encompassing planning, implementation, monitoring and guidance, and evaluation stages. The findings indicate that the effectiveness of the internship program is not determined solely by the existence of industry placements, but by the coherence and integration of governance processes across these four dimensions.

At the planning level, alignment between vocational specialization and industry characteristics emerges as a foundational determinant of competence development. During implementation, task relevance and structured communication between school supervisors and industry mentors influence the quality of experiential learning. Monitoring practices contribute to sustaining learning continuity, while evaluation mechanisms determine whether internship experiences are transformed into institutional learning and curriculum refinement. Variations across these stages suggest that program effectiveness depends on systematic coordination rather than isolated procedural compliance.

Theoretically, this study contributes to the discourse on work-based learning by emphasizing governance coherence as a central element of internship effectiveness within vocational education settings. Rather than framing internship impact in purely outcome-based terms, this analysis highlights the importance of integrated planning, supervision, and evaluative feedback in strengthening students' vocational competence and work readiness.

Practically, the findings suggest the need for (1) more precise industry mapping aligned with vocational specialization, (2) structured pre-departure professional preparation, (3) standardized monitoring instruments to ensure task relevance and mentoring consistency, and (4) integrative evaluation systems that utilize industry feedback for continuous curriculum improvement.

Given the conceptual nature of this study, future research may extend this framework through empirical investigation involving student performance data, industry partner perspectives, and comparative analysis across vocational institutions. Such research may provide deeper insights into how internship governance models influence measurable competence development outcomes.

Overall, strengthening the coherence of *Prakerin* governance processes may enhance its contribution to improving students' vocational competence and work readiness within the evolving demands of industry and labor markets.

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