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VOCATIONAL SCHOOL-INDUSTRY PARTNERSHIP IN IMPROVING GRADUATE COMPETENCY

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Abstract

A wide variety of educational reform on vocational education in accordance with the policy of link and match requires the schools to do the partnership to encourage the improvement of graduate competency and the demands of the relevance of education to the job needs. The purpose of this research is to illustrate and analyze the partnership strategy of vocational schools with the business world in its efforts to improve the graduate competency. This research has been held at SMK 3 Banda Aceh using qualitative descriptive approach. The instrument in this research is a researcher itself. This is because in qualitative approach, the researchers are essential instruments. As key instruments, researchers have to create their own set of the guidelines, observation, interview and documentary of appraisal guidelines that is used as a general guide in the process of recording. The results of the study show that the strategies adopted by SMK in forge cooperation with the world of business and industry are through the establishment of the cooperation program, working mechanism and analysis of factors that affect the holding of cooperation between the two parties.

Keywords: *Vocational Education, Partnership Strategy, Graduate Student Competency*

A. Introduction

Vocational education is "part of the education system that prepares a person to be more able to work in a group or in one field of work from the fields of other overload" (Murniati and Usman (2009: 1). Vocational school as one of the vocational education institutions has a mission and purpose to prepare labor that are able to fill the jobs and are able to work professionally in the world of business and industry in Indonesia and in global competition. Djohar (2008: 50) defines vocational education as follows. "Vocational education organized the educational programs directly related to the preparation of individuals for paid or unpaid wages of employment, or for additional preparation for career requirements other than a baccalaureate of advanced degree". As the school that educate students on a specific area, Vocational School (SMK) has a role in producing graduates who have the skills in accordance with the relevance of education, the demands of the labor market and is expected to be able to influence the growth and development of the economy of a nation. To improve competency of graduates, Vocational School needed the right and reliable strategy. One of them is a partnership with the community (the World of Business and Industry) through practical work (Prakerin) activities (Nasution, 2010: 56).

Prakerin is part of the learning program that must be implemented by each of the learners on the World of Business and Industry, as the real form of the educational system implementation namely Dual System of Education "*Link and Match*" aimed at improving the quality of SMK graduates.

Community-based education is "process whereby the community members pertaining to identify their problems and needs, seek solutions among themselves, mobilize the necessary resources, and execute a plan of action or learning or both" (Fuad, N, 2014: 86). In addition, Purwanto (2009: 194) holds that "cooperation between schools and communities can be classified into three types of relationship, namely (1) educational relationship, (2) cultural relations, and (3) institutional relationship". However, a thread can occur if the principal works active and build a mutually beneficial relationship (mutualism). The role of the community within school's educational system will be optimal if there is a mutually

beneficial relationship (win-win solution). Sutisna (Mulyasa, 2013: 115) presents the aims of school relationships with communities are: (1) to develop the understanding of the meaning and suggestions from schools; (2) to assess the school program; (3) to reunite the parents and teachers in the needs of students; (4) to develop awareness about the importance of school's development; (5) to build and maintain the trust of the community toward the school's system; (6) to notify the public about the work of the school; and (7) to mobilize support and assistance to the maintenance and improvement of the school program.

The mutualism relationship with the community has great benefits and means for the construction of moral support, materials and utilization of the community as a learning resource. Schools and communities have a strong relationship to achieve the school or education in an effective and efficient way. Rohiat (2010: 67) presents "essence of school and community relations is to increase the involvement, concern, ownership and support from the community to school, especially the moral and financial support. In the real sense, the relationship between the school and the community has been decentralized since long time". The government has set and support the programs for vocational school so that later are able to achieve the goal to produce output learners that actually has expertise in subspecialty interests of each. The model of partnership is adopted, adapted or combined by each education institution in order to enhance the quality of: 1) goal and specification model, 2) resource of input model; 3) process model; 4) satisfaction model; 5) legitimacy; 6) absence model of problems and 7) organizational learning model. Prakerin is expected to be a vehicle to prepare SMK graduates who meet the qualification in accordance with the needs of the labor market. It means that vocational education is part of a comprehensive and an inseparable part of the life of the community.

The role of the education sector and the community in preparing quality resources is very important. But, many graduate students of SMK 3 Banda Aceh that is not absorbed in the working world, because it is not in accordance with the needs of local companies. This agrees with Sukmadinata (Murniati and Usman, 2009: 23) that stated "one of the things that are still a concern in the field

of vocational education is the ability of vocational school to produce graduates who are ready to work". Industrial world feel no benefit which means that the relationship with the cooperation. The school has not been creatively build relationships with business and industry world and meets the needs of the market. The obstacles in producing the quality of graduates are influenced by the difference in the needs and point of view between SMK 3 Banda Aceh and industry that is oriented to the training and the formation of human resources with the parties of business-oriented to pursue profit so that there is a difference between the value system and the needs of SMK and industry.

B. Method

This Research used descriptive method with qualitative approach to examine the problems and gain a deeper meaning about school cooperation strategy with business and industry world to improve graduate competency at SMK Negeri 3 Banda Aceh. The instrument in this research is researchers themselves. This is because the researchers are essential instruments. As "key instrument", researchers should create their own set of the guidelines, observation, and interview and appraisal guidelines of documentation that is used as a general guide in the process of recording.

Data collection technique is the most strategic steps in research, because the main purpose of this research is to obtain data. Data collection can be done in various settings, situations and sources. Sugiyono (2009: 225) stated that "In qualitative research, data collection done in natural settings (natural conditions), the primary data source and data collection techniques through observation, in-depth interviews and documentation".

C. Research Finding and Discussion

1. The Partnership Program of SMK 3 Banda Aceh and Business and Industry World

Based on the research findings, there are some programs declared by SMK 3 Banda Aceh to increase the industry participation in education, they are: 1) set human relation department and build practical curriculum, 2) involve the parents' participations in connecting the school to industry world, and 3) build the cooperation with Trade Bureaucracy (Kadin), local

government, national and international non government organization in raising fund for *Prakerin*, training and other supported programs.

In running of this effort, the school's human relation department has an important role to support the actualization of a partnership by building good communication and a harmonious relationship to the public. Nasution (2010: 30) proposed that the human relation role in education institutions are: 1) to build a harmonious relationship with the internal public relations and to external components; 2) build two-way communication to internal and external public with spreading the message, information and the publication of research results and various policies that is assigned by the principal; 3) identify and analyze an opinion or various questions in rating education and in society; 4) enabling the desire or public aspirations; and 5) skilled attitude in interpreting the policies with good leadership.

Furthermore, the previous studies work on school-industry partnership has explored the joint efforts of industry personnel and educators to formulate innovative strategy for curriculum development, teaching and learning practice through industry-school partnership (Kapitzke & Hay, 2008; Pillay, Watters & Hoff, 2013) has been an important strategy for optimizing and sharing knowledge. Knowledge sharing is two-way educational process where school and industry create and adapt knowledge for the workplace including the content and skills (Cappasso, Dagnino & Lanza, 2005).

Next, Wahjosumidjo (2011: 334) stated that "effective programs on the partnership between school and community encourage parents involved in the education process of the school through a partnership with the teachers in the individual education program planning for their children". Based on the findings, the relationship with the parents of the students is still weak in the case of the construction of the students and funding. The size of the community participation, according to Fattah (Sagala, 2011: 238) "measured through the participation of society who bears the costs of school that popular with the term of Donated Funds of Education (DSP) or monthly fee of the learners". Conceptually, the community participation in the implementation of the practical study places the community as a partner in the implementation of national education.

The partnership with the local government and related institutions have done well, this is evidenced through the cooperation in several school's activities such as giving recommendation, performing activities with the support of funds for the provision of support in response to the formation of various training schools, refocus intensive to teachers and provide the salaries of contract teachers. The relationship of cooperation with Kadin (trade bureaucracy) appears through the access to the world of business and industry, perform and provide certification competency test to the students and the promotion of existence of SMK in national activities. From the above opinions, it can be explained that the role in building a positive impression and keep the trust of the community of school, human relation staff also should be able to develop the understanding of the community about the purpose and objectives of the school. To create qualified empowerment, all related parties; government, community and administrators of all level should be involved in all aspects of development and implementation of program (Allen, 2007: 301).

2. The mechanism of the strategies implementation of SMK Negeri 3 Banda Aceh in an effort to increase partnership with Business and Industry World to improve graduate competency

The efforts in increasing cooperation with Business and Industry World basically positive enough for large-scale industry in both moral and material support. Based on the result of the study, the relationship of cooperation with external members is done through a partnership in *prakerin* activities, the mechanism of information and through task, current proposals, audience and promotions with the involvement of Local Government and UNICEF. The partnership with business and industry world positively impact on the industry supports in various activities such as *prakerin*, mutual giving and receiving, exchange information about the needs of business and industry world and schools, willing to become resource persons, and so on. But, it is still found that industry and business world has low commitment toward *prakerin* activities. This evident proved through the period of time and the position given by industry is not

relevant to the needs of the practical students, no MoU between two parties and adapted curriculum for students.

According to the working practice guidelines, SMK 3 Banda Aceh (2013: 6) implements the mechanism as follows:

- a. The relationship of development between SMK and business and industry world carried out through the coordination of tasks and responsibilities of the school committee.
- b. Partnership develops with the principle of mutual benefit, especially in human resource development and improvement of each party.
- c. Cooperation must be started from SMK, especially in building mutual understanding of each party.
- d. SMK must have a complete and accurate data about the business world map/ Industry/ Work vicinity.
- e. SMK together with the school committee should be able to set the means, activities, and schedule of relationship.
- f. Interwoven cooperation between SMK and the World of Business/ Industry should be made on a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) formally in the form of a script of the agreement of cooperation.

Furthermore, school partnership requires a cohesive set of policy that are revisited to reduce redundancy and redeploy school and community resources that are use ineffectively: 1) Policy must move the existing governance toward shared decision making and appropriate degrees of local control and private sector involvement; 2) create change teams and change agents to carry out the daily activities of systemic change related to building essential support and redesigning process to initiate, establish, and maintain changes over time; 3) delineate high level leadership assignment and underwrite the management training; 4) establish institutionalized mechanisms to manage and enhance resource for school community partnership and related system (focusing on analyzing, planning, coordinating, integrating, monitoring, evaluating, and strengthening ongoing efforts; 5) provide adequate funds for capacity building related to both accomplishing desired system changes and enhancing intervention over time; and 6) use a sophisticated approach to accountability that initially

emphasized data that can help develop effective approaches for collaboration in providing interventions and a results –oriented focus on short-term benchmark and that evolves into evaluation of long range indicators of impact (Adelman & Taylor, L, 2015: 7).

Based on the above opinions, it can be concluded that the implementation of the cooperation of SMK with industry and business world is conducted through the coordination of tasks and responsibilities of the school committee and developed with the principle of mutual benefit, especially in human resource development and improvement of each party; started from SMK, especially in building mutual understanding; have complete and accurate data about the business world map/ industry/work; can set means, personal and activity schedule development of cooperation relationship; and interwoven cooperation between SMK and the World of Business/ Industry World, should be made based on the MoU.

3. Factors that affect the forge cooperation between SMK 3 Banda Aceh with business and industry world

There are some factors that influence the partnership between SMK 3 Banda Aceh and business and industry world from internal and external of organization as follows:

- a. Educators of SMK; includes educators and were adjusted at SMK must really have both theory and practical skills and always be able to follow the development of education and technology. Sagala (2011) stated that “teachers as educators is the most many associate and interact with the students compared with other personnel in schools”. Teachers on the duty of planning and implementing the learning process assess the results; do guidance and training, doing research and studies and open communication with the community;
- b. Competencies of SMK’s educator; the competencies defined all forms of the motif, attitudes skills, knowledge the other important personal behavior. According to Spencer and Spencer (Directorate of construction of SMK, 2013: 47), especially working competency consists of 5 components, are:

- 1) Knowledge, namely science that belongs to the individual in the field of work or a specific area;
 - 2) Skill, is the ability to demonstration of physical work or mental;
 - 3) Self concept, namely the attitude of the individual's values as well as the image of himself;
 - 4) Traits, namely physical character and consistent response on the situation or specific information; and
 - 5) Motives, namely thinking or a constant basic intention that encourage individuals to act or behave in particular.
- c. Means and infrastructures of SMK; infrastructure that developed not only in school but also outside the school as a place of practice work for students and teachers who held a residency training.
- d. Technology mastery; technology can be a tool that supports and speeds the need of product marketing through the internet marketing, advertising design, and bookkeeping, accounting of firms trade in detail, and many more. David (2013: 13) stated that "reform vocational education should refer to the changes in the form, the situation, quality and essence of vocational education itself. All it covers the system changes the rules, the role or the relationship of science and technology (Science) used in empower vocational education".
- e. Government Policy; is the direction that must be considered in the implementation of the activities of the organization. In the administration perspective, policies defined as political action to influence the behavior of other people. This is emphasized by Wahab (Irianto, 2011: 34) proposed that "the policy can also mean as political action, or a set of principles, actions someone, groups or the government or the actors against a problem".

D. Conclusion

The partnership between SMKN 3 Banda Aceh and business and industry world conducted to be built and developed is illustrated from the existence of partnership in drawing up the curriculum together for the

implementation of industrial work practice training (Prakerin). The program is planned to respond the needs of the system purposes, time and prakerin assessment. The mechanism of partnership between SMKN 3 Banda Aceh and business and industry world is made through the MOU to be always ready to receive students who will carry out an internship in business and industry world. In conducting the partnership, there are some factors that influence the partnership such as teachers' competencies, means and infrastructure, lack of commitment from the internal party in implementing the school partnership.

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