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INDUSTRIAL CLASS PARTNERSHIP MANAGEMENT TO ENHANCE VOCATIONAL STUDENTS' COMPETENCE AND EMPLOYABILITY

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Abstract

This study aims to examine the implementation of industrial class partnership management in enhancing students' competence and employability at Muhammadiyah 3 Weleri Vocational School, Kendal Regency, Indonesia. The research focuses on the Motorcycle Engineering and Business program, which collaborates with PT Astra Honda Motor (AHM) through an industrial class scheme. A qualitative phenomenological approach was employed to explore managerial practices based on planning, organizing, implementation, and evaluation functions. Data were collected through in-depth interviews with the principal, vice principal for curriculum, head of expertise competency, and productive teachers, supported by documentation analysis and triangulation techniques to ensure data validity. The findings reveal that the partnership is systematically planned through curriculum synchronization, teacher upskilling, structured industrial internships, and competency-based assessment aligned with industry standards. Organizational management is carried out collaboratively between school leadership and the technical department, with clear role distribution and direct coordination with industry representatives. Implementation of the partnership includes teaching factory activities, industry-standard facilities, continuous professional development for teachers, and active student participation in national skill competitions. Evaluation is conducted regularly through industry supervision, competency testing, and performance reporting systems. The results indicate that effective industrial class partnership management significantly improves students' technical competence, work readiness, and employment absorption, while also strengthening the school's institutional reputation. This study highlights the importance of sustainable school–industry collaboration as a strategic model for improving vocational education quality.

Keywords

Industrial Class Partnership Management, School–Industry Collaboration, Student Competence, Vocational Education, Work Readiness.

INTRODUCTION

Vocational education is increasingly required to ensure that graduates possess competencies aligned with dynamic industry demands, particularly in strengthening work readiness and employability outcomes (Muharam & Afrilia, 2024); (Permatasari et al., 2024); (Rahayu et al., 2025). One strategic approach widely adopted in Indonesia is the implementation of industry-class partnerships, designed to bridge the gap between school-based learning and real industrial practices (Sosial et al., 2025); (Sevara Khamdamovna, 2025). However, empirical evidence indicates that many vocational schools (SMK) continue to face challenges in translating partnership policies into effective managerial practices that genuinely enhance student competence and job readiness (Riyanto et al., 2025); (Luhur Adi Prasetya et al., 2025); (Arik Harianto et al., 2025). These challenges are not merely technical but managerial in nature, encompassing planning, organizing, implementation, and evaluation processes that often lack consistency and industry-oriented standards, resulting in graduates who are insufficiently prepared to meet workplace performance expectations (Pritadrajati, 2022); (Ramadhani et al., 2025); (Putranto et al., 2024); (Jamil et al., 2023).

In the local context of SMK Muhammadiyah 3 Weleri, Kendal Regency, the implementation of an industry-class partnership with PT Astra Honda Motor (PT AHM) represents a strategic institutional effort to address the persistent mismatch between vocational competencies and industry requirements. Empirical data derived from institutional documents and in-depth interviews with the principal, vice principal for curriculum, head of the Motorcycle Engineering and Business (TBSM) expertise program, and productive teachers indicate that the partnership was initiated based on the dominance of Honda technology within the community and the perceived readiness of the Honda industry curriculum compared to other industrial partners. The partnership encompasses curriculum synchronization, teacher upskilling through industry-led training, Teaching Factory (TEFA) development via the establishment of a Pos AHASS, and structured student industrial work placement (PKL). Nevertheless, the implementation process reveals several academic and managerial challenges, particularly in sustaining industry-standard consistency, developing students' industrial work character, ensuring parental support, and maintaining long-term institutional commitment. These findings suggest that the effectiveness of industry-class partnerships is strongly determined by the quality of management practices rather than the mere presence of formal collaboration agreements.

Furthermore, although previous studies have demonstrated the positive contribution of school–industry partnerships to vocational graduate employability, limited empirical research has specifically examined the comprehensive management of industry-class partnerships in vocational schools, particularly private SMKs operating in semi-rural contexts such as Kendal Regency. Existing research tends to emphasize partnership outcomes without sufficiently exploring how managerial functions, planning, organizing, implementation, and evaluation, are operationalized to support competence development and work readiness. Addressing this gap, the present study focuses on analyzing the management of industry-class partnerships at SMK Muhammadiyah 3 Weleri, Kendal Regency, and examining their contribution to improving vocational student competence and work readiness. This study seeks to provide a detailed understanding of how partnership management mechanisms function in practice and how they can serve as a strategic model for strengthening vocational education relevance and effectiveness.

Recent empirical studies consistently demonstrate that the effectiveness of vocational education outcomes is strongly influenced by how school–industry partnerships are managed, rather than merely established. A study by (Kasanah et al., 2025), examining partnership implementation at SMK Negeri 1 Windusari revealed that although collaboration with industry had been formally initiated, the partnership management was not fully effective, particularly in the input and process dimensions. The study found misalignment between planned collaboration activities and their actual execution, resulting in limited improvement in students' vocational competencies. This indicates that weak managerial integration can reduce the potential impact of industry partnerships on competency development.

Similarly, Mariah et al., (2025) investigated the role of partnership management in vocational automotive programs and found that structured planning and coordination with industry significantly affected students' technical competence mastery. However, their findings also highlighted persistent challenges in curriculum synchronization and teacher readiness, suggesting that partnership effectiveness depends on continuous managerial control and evaluation rather than one-time agreements. This study emphasized competence improvement but did not explicitly examine its linkage to students' work readiness.

Further evidence is provided by Ramadhani et al. (2025), who analyzed vocational school partnerships with DUDI and reported that managerial weaknesses in organizing and monitoring partnership programs often resulted in suboptimal learning outcomes. Their study demonstrated

that ineffective coordination between schools and industry partners limited students' exposure to authentic industrial practices, thereby affecting both competence acquisition and professional work habits. Nevertheless, the study focused primarily on institutional effectiveness and did not explore the holistic management cycle of industry-class partnerships.

In addition, Fitrianti et al., 2025) examined the influence of school–industry collaboration on vocational student competence and found that partnership governance played a decisive role in ensuring competency relevance to labor market demands. Their research confirmed that managerial clarity, role distribution, and evaluation mechanisms were critical determinants of partnership success. However, the study was conducted in public vocational schools and did not consider the contextual challenges faced by private vocational institutions in semi-rural areas. Finally, (Bagus et al., 2025) highlighted that while vocational partnerships generally contribute to improved employability indicators, many studies overlook the managerial processes underlying industry-class implementation. Their findings stressed the need for empirical investigations that examine how planning, organizing, implementation, and evaluation of partnerships collectively contribute to both competency development and work readiness outcomes.

Based on the synthesis of these five studies, it can be concluded that existing research predominantly emphasizes partnership outcomes or partial management components, while limited attention is given to comprehensive partnership management within industry-class programs, particularly in private vocational schools. Moreover, the relationship between partnership management, student competence, and work readiness has not been examined integratively within a single institutional context. Therefore, this study addresses this research gap by analyzing the management of industry-class partnerships at SMK Muhammadiyah 3 Weleri, Kendal Regency, and examining how such management contributes to improving vocational student competencies and work readiness. The novelty of this study lies in its integrated managerial perspective, contextual focus on a private vocational school, and its use of empirical data derived from institutional documents and in-depth interviews to provide a comprehensive understanding of industry-class partnership management.

From a theoretical perspective, partnership management in vocational education is closely aligned with classical and contemporary management theories that emphasize the integration of planning, organizing, implementation, and evaluation as a unified managerial cycle (Yulianti & Raharja, 2025). In the context of vocational schools, effective partnership management serves as a

strategic mechanism to operationalize the link-and-match principle between education and industry, ensuring that learning processes reflect real workplace standards and practices (Fitriani & Jaelani, 2026). Drawing on these perspectives, this study aims to analyze the management of industry-class partnerships at SMK Muhammadiyah 3 Weleri, Kendal Regency, by examining how managerial functions, planning, organizing, implementation, and evaluation, are enacted in collaboration with industry partners. Furthermore, this study seeks to explore how such partnership management contributes to improving vocational student competencies and strengthening their work readiness, particularly within the automotive expertise program, as evidenced through institutional documents and in-depth interviews with key stakeholders.

The significance of this research lies in both its theoretical and pragmatic contributions. Theoretically, this study enriches vocational education literature by providing an integrated managerial analysis of industry-class partnership implementation, an area that remains underexplored in previous studies that often focus on outcomes or isolated management components. By positioning partnership management as a comprehensive system influencing both competence development and work readiness, this research offers a more holistic conceptual understanding of school–industry collaboration. Pragmatically, the findings of this study provide practical insights for vocational school leaders, teachers, and policymakers, particularly in private vocational schools, on how industry-class partnerships can be managed more effectively to enhance student competencies and employability. The results are expected to serve as a reference model for strengthening partnership governance, improving curriculum–industry alignment, and supporting sustainable vocational education practices aligned with labor market needs.

METHOD

This study employed a qualitative research approach with a phenomenological design, as the primary purpose was to explore, understand, and interpret the lived experiences of school stakeholders in managing industrial class partnerships. The qualitative approach was considered appropriate because the research sought to reveal processes, meanings, and managerial practices that cannot be adequately captured through numerical measurement (Hardani MSi et al., 2020; Sitasari, 2022; Hadi & Rusman, 2021). The phenomenological perspective enabled the researcher to examine how partnership management between the vocational school and industry was perceived, implemented, and evaluated by key actors within its real context (Hutagalung et al., 2021). This

approach aligns with the objective of the study, which aims to describe and analyze the effectiveness of partnership management in enhancing students' competence and employability (Jamil et al., 2023).

This study was conducted at Muhammadiyah 3 Weleri Vocational School, Kendal Regency, focusing on the Motorcycle Engineering and Business (TBSM) expertise program in collaboration with PT Astra Honda Motor (AHM). The research was carried out from June 2025 to February 2026, encompassing preliminary observation, in-depth interviews, documentation analysis, and field verification stages.

Participants were selected purposively based on their institutional roles and direct involvement in the industrial class partnership program. They consisted of the school principal, the vice principal for curriculum, the vice principal for public relations, the head of the TBSM expertise program, productive vocational subject teachers who had received industry training at PT AHM, an industry representative from PT AHM Semarang, and students enrolled in the industrial class program. The inclusion of these participants ensured comprehensive perspectives at policy, managerial, technical, industry, and student levels ((Nurrisa & Hermina, 2025; Lenaini & Artikel, 2021).

Data were collected through in-depth semi-structured interviews, documentation analysis, and direct field observations conducted throughout the research period. Interviews explored planning, organizing, implementation, and evaluation of the partnership program. Documentation, including curriculum synchronization records, cooperation agreements, training reports, and competency test results, was analyzed to validate interview findings (Ilhami et al., 2024) and (Pahrudin et al., 2026). Observations focused on teaching factory (TEFA) activities, industrial-class learning processes, curriculum synchronization practices, and partnership evaluation mechanisms. To ensure credibility, source and technique triangulation were applied by cross-checking interview data with documentation and observational findings.

Data analysis followed an interactive qualitative analysis model, involving data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. The process began with transcribing interview results and organizing documentation data, followed by coding and categorization based on management functions. Data were then displayed in narrative and visual forms to facilitate interpretation. To ensure the trustworthiness of findings, triangulation of sources and techniques was applied by comparing interview data with documentation and observational findings. This analytical

procedure enabled the researcher to identify patterns, relationships, and implications of partnership management practices in improving students' technical competence and work readiness.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Findings

This section presents the research findings concerning the management of industry-class partnerships in improving vocational student competence and work readiness at SMK Muhammadiyah 3 Weleri, Kendal Regency. The findings are derived from document analysis, in-depth interviews with school leaders, curriculum coordinators, heads of expertise programs, and productive teachers, as well as field observations of partnership implementation with PT Astra Honda Motor (AHM). The presentation of findings follows the classical management functions (planning, organizing, implementation, and evaluation) to provide a systematic and comprehensive description of how industry-class partnerships are managed and how they contribute to strengthening student competencies and readiness for work.

Table 1. Management of Industry-Class Partnerships to Improve Vocational Student Competencies and Work Readiness at SMK Muhammadiyah 3 Weleri, Kendal Regency

Planning	Organizing	Implementation	Monitoring and Evaluation
Establishment of partnerships with PT AHM based on link-and-match principles and industry competency needs	Partnership organizational structure involving the principal, vice principal, head of the TBSM program, workshop head, and productive teachers	Curriculum synchronization between the national curriculum and the Honda Industry Curriculum	Periodic evaluation by PT AHM through supervision, performance reports, and industry partner assessment
Curriculum synchronization through focus group discussions between the school and PT AHM	Division of technical responsibilities at the program level and strategic decision-making at the school management level	Teaching Factory-based learning through the establishment of a Pos AHASS within the school	Student competency evaluation through industry-based competency certification (LSP P2)
Planning of industrial work practice (PKL), assessment centers (TUK), and graduate recruitment	Involvement of public relations and the Special Job Placement Unit (BKK) in external relations and graduate placement	Regular teacher training and upskilling at Astra training centers	Assessment of student achievement through participation in national Skill Contests
Infrastructure planning aligned with industry-	Integration of partnership data and programs within the	Structured PKL implementation across the AHASS network	Identification of implementation constraints and formulation of follow-up

grade (A/A+)	standards	Astra Education Portal (Satu Hati Education Portal)	improvement strategies

Source: Processed from Field Data (2026)

Planning of Industrial Class Partnership Management

The findings indicate that the planning of the industrial class partnership between Muhammadiyah 3 Weleri Vocational School and PT Astra Honda Motor (AHM) was conducted systematically, strategically, and incrementally. Planning was not treated as a one-time administrative activity but as a continuous managerial process aimed at aligning vocational education outcomes with industrial competency demands. The school principal emphasized that the initial planning phase began when the school was appointed as a Competency Test Center (TUK) for Motorcycle Engineering and Business students, which later evolved into a broader industrial class partnership model.

From the interviews, it was evident that planning encompassed several interconnected components: formulation of partnership objectives, determination of partnership scope, curriculum synchronization, infrastructure standardization, human resource development, and identification of potential obstacles and mitigation strategies. The principal explicitly stated that the core objective of the partnership was to prepare graduates who meet industry competency standards and can be absorbed directly into the workforce, particularly within the Honda industrial ecosystem. This objective reflects a strong orientation toward employability and relevance, which is a critical issue in vocational education contexts.

Curriculum planning emerged as a central element of the partnership. The vice principal for curriculum explained that the School-Based Curriculum (KSP) for the Motorcycle Engineering and Business program was developed by analyzing the national curriculum and integrating it with AHM's competency framework. All technical competencies required by AHM were systematically embedded into the school curriculum, ensuring that instructional content remained aligned with current industrial practices and technological developments. This process demonstrates an applied form of curriculum synchronization, moving beyond symbolic cooperation to substantive instructional alignment.

Another important aspect of planning involved the development of teachers' competencies. According to the vice principal for curriculum, planning explicitly included continuous professional development programs, such as industry-led training and instructor certification. Teachers were

regularly updated on new technologies introduced by AHM, enabling them to transfer current industrial knowledge to students. This finding underscores that planning was not limited to student learning but also addressed teacher capacity building as a prerequisite for effective industrial class implementation.

Infrastructure planning also played a strategic role. The school, in collaboration with AHM, planned workshops and learning facilities that met Honda industry standards. This included workshop layout, equipment specifications, learning modules, and safety procedures. The establishment of a Honda-authorized service point (POS AHASS) within the school was identified as a long-term planning outcome, aimed at transforming learning spaces into real production-based environments.

Overall, the planning process reflects a proactive and future-oriented management approach. Rather than reacting to labor market demands, the school anticipated industrial trends and embedded them into institutional planning. This aligns with vocational education management theories that emphasize anticipatory planning and stakeholder collaboration as essential for sustainable school–industry partnerships.

Organizing of Industrial Class Partnership Management

The organization of the industrial class partnership was characterized by a clear division of roles, structured coordination mechanisms, and collaborative governance between the school and industry partner. The findings show that organizing activities were designed to ensure that planning outcomes could be operationalized effectively through institutional structures and human resources.

At the school level, the principal served as the main policy decision-maker, while operational responsibilities were delegated to the vice principal for curriculum, vice principal for public relations, head of the Motorcycle Engineering and Business competency program, and productive subject teachers. This delegation of authority reflects a decentralized management model, allowing each unit to focus on specific partnership functions. The head of the competency program played a crucial role in coordinating instructional activities, managing workshop operations, and liaising directly with AHM representatives.

From the industry side, AHM appointed technical supervisors and instructors who were responsible for providing curriculum input, conducting teacher training, supervising student internships, and evaluating competency standards. The presence of industry representatives in

organizational processes ensured that partnership activities remained aligned with industrial expectations.

Coordination mechanisms were implemented through regular meetings, both formal and informal, between school management and industry partners. These meetings served as platforms for discussing curriculum updates, evaluating program performance, addressing challenges, and planning future developments. Documentation analysis revealed that partnership agreements, standard operating procedures, and implementation guidelines were clearly outlined, contributing to organizational clarity and accountability.

Importantly, organizing also involved aligning internal school units to support partnership activities. Administrative staff, workshop technicians, and guidance counselors were integrated into the organizational framework to support student placement, certification processes, and graduate recruitment. This holistic organizational structure indicates that the partnership was not isolated within the vocational department but embedded across the school system.

The effectiveness of organizing was reflected in the smooth coordination of complex activities such as student internships (PKL), competency testing, skill competitions, and recruitment processes. These findings suggest that clear organizational structures and role distribution are critical enablers of successful industrial class partnerships.

Implementation of Industrial Class Partnership Management

The implementation phase represents the most visible and impactful dimension of the partnership. Findings indicate that implementation was conducted consistently with planning objectives and organizational arrangements, resulting in tangible improvements in student competence and institutional performance.

Learning implementation was based on an industry-aligned curriculum delivered through a combination of classroom instruction, workshop practice, and production-based learning. Teachers applied instructional strategies that emphasized hands-on practice, problem-solving, and industry-standard procedures. Students were trained using Honda-standard tools, equipment, and modules, enabling them to experience authentic industrial work processes within the school environment.

One of the most significant implementation components was the execution of student internships (PKL) at AHM-affiliated workshops and main dealers across Central Java. These internships allowed students to apply their competencies in real workplace settings, develop professional attitudes, and adapt to industrial work cultures. Interview data indicated that

internship placements were carefully selected to match students' competency levels and learning needs, reflecting a student-centered implementation approach.

Teacher internships and industry training also formed a critical part of implementation. Teachers participated in industry-led training programs to update their technical skills and instructional methods. This reciprocal learning process strengthened the relevance of classroom instruction and reinforced the integration of theory and practice.

Another notable implementation outcome was students' participation and achievement in national-level skill competitions organized by AHM. The data showed that students from the Motorcycle Engineering and Business program achieved first and second positions at the national Honda Skill Contest, while teachers also received national-level recognition. These achievements serve as empirical evidence of the effectiveness of partnership implementation in enhancing competence and performance.

Furthermore, the establishment of a POS AHASS service unit within the school represented an advanced stage of implementation, where learning activities were directly connected to service provision for the public. This initiative not only enhanced students' technical skills but also fostered entrepreneurial competencies and customer service awareness.

Collectively, the implementation findings demonstrate that industrial class partnerships can transform vocational education from a school-based training model into a hybrid learning ecosystem that integrates education, industry practice, and production activities.

Supervision and Evaluation of Industrial Class Partnership Management

Supervision and evaluation were conducted through systematic monitoring, performance assessment, and continuous feedback mechanisms involving both school and industry stakeholders. The findings indicate that the evaluation focused on both learning outcomes and program implementation processes.

Student competency evaluation was conducted through industry-standard competency tests, resulting in certification recognized by AHM. These certifications provided objective evidence of students' technical competence and enhanced their employability prospects. In addition to formal testing, supervisors monitored students' performance during internships, assessing technical skills, work discipline, and professional attitudes.

Program evaluation was carried out through internal school meetings, industry visits, and joint evaluations with AHM representatives. These evaluations addressed curriculum relevance,

instructional effectiveness, infrastructure adequacy, and partnership sustainability. Feedback from industry supervisors was used to refine curriculum content, improve instructional strategies, and update equipment standards.

Supervision also extended to teacher performance, particularly in implementing industry-aligned instruction. Teachers' participation in training programs and skill competitions was used as an indicator of professional development outcomes. The continuous supervision process ensured that implementation remained aligned with evolving industrial standards.

The evaluation findings suggest that effective supervision contributes to partnership sustainability by enabling adaptive improvements and strengthening mutual trust between school and industry. Rather than functioning as a control mechanism alone, supervision served as a learning-oriented process that supported continuous quality improvement.

Discussion

This discussion section critically interprets the findings of the study by situating them within the broader discourse of vocational education and school–industry partnerships. The discussion is structured to explain how the research findings respond to the research objectives, demonstrate their impact on vocational education practices, and confirm or extend previous empirical studies. The central thesis emerging from this research is that effective management of industrial class partnerships, when implemented holistically through planning, organizing, implementation, and evaluation, plays a decisive role in improving students' technical competence, employability, and institutional performance of vocational schools.

First, the findings confirm that strategic planning is the foundational determinant of successful industrial class partnerships. The systematic curriculum synchronization between Muhammadiyah 3 Weleri Vocational School and PT Astra Honda Motor illustrates how planning can transform abstract cooperation agreements into concrete learning structures. The integration of industry competency standards into the school curriculum reduced the long-standing gap between educational ideality and workplace reality, a challenge widely reported in vocational education literature. This result supports the work of (Lukitasari et al., 2025) and (Arthur & Maulana, 2025), who argue that vocational relevance can only be achieved when learning objectives are directly derived from authentic workplace practices. Similarly, (Ranu et al., 2025) and (Edwiyan Pradana et al., 2024) emphasize that vocational curriculum planning must be industry-driven rather than school-centered to ensure graduate employability. The present study strengthens these arguments

by demonstrating that curriculum alignment is not merely a technical task but a strategic management decision that shapes all subsequent partnership activities.

Beyond curriculum planning, the research findings highlight that human resource development, particularly teacher upskilling, constitutes a critical planning outcome with long-term impact. Teachers' participation in industry-led training and certification programs ensured that instructional delivery remained aligned with technological developments in the motorcycle industry. This finding aligns with research by (Mutzie Revalina et al., 2025), which emphasizes that teacher competence is a decisive factor in the success of vocational education reforms. However, this study extends prior research by showing that teacher development is most effective when embedded within a structured partnership management framework rather than treated as an isolated professional development initiative.

The organizing function further amplified the effectiveness of planning outcomes. The clear distribution of roles among school leaders, curriculum coordinators, competency heads, and industry representatives enabled the partnership to operate as an integrated system. This organizational clarity minimized role ambiguity and strengthened accountability across institutional boundaries. Previous studies by (Hermanto et al., 2019) and (Tinno et al., 2017) highlight that collaborative partnerships often fail due to weak governance and unclear authority structures. In contrast, the findings of this study demonstrate that organizational coherence is achievable when partnership governance is explicitly designed and continuously coordinated. The presence of designated industry supervisors and school-based coordinators created a shared operational language between education and industry, which is often missing in less structured partnerships.

The implementation findings provide the strongest empirical evidence of the partnership's impact. The industrial class model transformed conventional school-based instruction into a hybrid learning ecosystem that integrates classroom learning, workshop practice, industrial internships, and production-based activities. Students' direct exposure to industry-standard tools, workflows, and performance expectations significantly enhanced their technical competence and professional attitudes. These findings corroborate the work of (Panjaitan et al., 2024) and (Fatinah et al., 2025), who argue that dual-system and work-based learning models outperform purely school-based vocational training in developing job-ready skills. However, unlike traditional dual systems, the industrial class model observed in this study operates within the school while maintaining strong

industrial supervision, offering a flexible alternative for contexts where full dual systems may not be feasible.

The study also demonstrates that student internships (PKL) functioned as a critical bridge between learning and employment, reinforcing both technical and soft skills. Industry supervisors' assessments revealed improvements not only in students' technical abilities but also in discipline, communication, and work ethics. This finding is consistent with the results of (Darmanto et al., 2025) and (Dwi Iwijayanti et al., 2019), who found that workplace learning significantly enhances employability skills. Nevertheless, this study adds nuance by showing that internship effectiveness depends heavily on prior curriculum alignment and teacher preparation. Without these prerequisites, internships risk becoming routine placements rather than meaningful learning experiences.

One of the most significant impacts of the partnership was reflected in students' and teachers' achievements in national-level skill competitions organized by PT Astra Honda Motor. These achievements serve as tangible indicators of competency mastery and institutional excellence. From an academic perspective, such outcomes validate the argument that well-managed partnerships can elevate vocational schools from training institutions to centers of excellence. This finding resonates with the work of (Wijayanti et al., 2025) on competitive advantage, suggesting that institutional performance is closely linked to strategic partnerships and capability development. In practical terms, competition achievements enhanced the school's reputation, increased stakeholder trust, and strengthened the sustainability of the partnership.

The establishment of the POS AHASS service unit within the school represents an advanced form of partnership implementation with significant (Royyani & Gozali, 2021) educational and economic implications. This initiative blurred the boundaries between learning and production, enabling students to engage in real service delivery while still in school. Previous research by (Zhou et al., 2022) emphasizes that vocational education is most effective when learning environments closely resemble real workplaces. The findings of this study provide contemporary empirical support for this principle, demonstrating that production-based learning can simultaneously enhance competence, entrepreneurship, and customer service skills.

Evaluation and supervision mechanisms further reinforced the partnership's effectiveness. Continuous monitoring by both school leaders and industry supervisors ensured that implementation remained aligned with evolving industrial standards. Certification processes

conducted under industry supervision provided objective validation of student competence, strengthening graduates' labor market credibility. This aligns with competency-based education frameworks discussed by Wijayanti et al. (2025), which emphasize assessment validity and industry recognition as key elements of vocational quality assurance. Importantly, this study shows that evaluation was not used merely as a control mechanism but as a reflective process that informed continuous improvement.

When compared with previous studies on school–industry partnerships in vocational education, this research confirms many established findings while also contributing new insights. Studies by (Rosina et al., 2021) and (Muharam et al., 2025) emphasize the importance of industry involvement in vocational education; however, they often focus on participation rather than management. The present study advances the literature by demonstrating that the quality of partnership management is as important as the existence of the partnership itself. Without structured planning, organization, implementation, and evaluation, industry involvement risks becoming symbolic rather than transformative.

Furthermore, while many previous studies examine partnerships from either the school or industry perspective, this research adopts a holistic institutional view that integrates leadership, curriculum, instruction, assessment, and external collaboration. This integrative perspective enables a more comprehensive understanding of how vocational education systems can respond to labor market demands while maintaining educational integrity.

In terms of impact, the findings suggest that industrial class partnership management has multi-level implications. At the student level, it enhances competence, employability, and professional identity. At the teacher level, it promotes continuous professional development and instructional relevance. At the institutional level, it strengthens school reputation, stakeholder trust, and program sustainability. At the system level, it offers a scalable model for aligning vocational education with industry needs, particularly in developing country contexts where unemployment among vocational graduates remains a pressing issue.

In conclusion, the discussion confirms that the success of industrial class partnerships depends not on isolated activities but on integrated and strategic management practices. By empirically demonstrating how management functions translate into measurable educational outcomes, this study contributes both theoretically and practically to the field of vocational education. The findings reinforce the argument that vocational education reform must prioritize

partnership governance and management capacity to achieve sustainable improvements in graduate competence and employability.

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that the effectiveness of industrial class partnerships in vocational education is fundamentally determined by the quality of partnership management rather than the mere existence of collaboration with industry. Through an integrated management approach encompassing strategic planning, structured organization, consistent implementation, and reflective evaluation, vocational schools are able to translate industrial collaboration into meaningful learning experiences that align educational objectives with labor market demands. The evidence presented in this article confirms that well-managed partnerships serve as a strategic mechanism to bridge the persistent gap between vocational education ideals and workplace realities, thereby strengthening the relevance and credibility of vocational institutions.

Overall, this article contributes to the broader discourse on vocational education by offering an empirically grounded model of industrial class partnership management that is both theoretically informed and practically applicable. The findings underscore the importance of sustainable governance, shared responsibility, and continuous quality improvement in school–industry collaboration. As a concluding remark, this study affirms that vocational education systems seeking to enhance graduate competence and employability must prioritize partnership management as a core institutional strategy, ensuring that collaboration with industry evolves from symbolic cooperation into a transformative educational practice.

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