



Integration of Industry Work Culture and Teachers' Internship in Improving the Quality of Learning at Vocational High Schools

Lilik Hanifah^{1*}; Yovitha Yuliejantiningih²; Supriyono Purwosaputro³

^{1,2,3}Educational Management, Universitas PGRI Semarang, Indonesia

^{1*}Corresponding Email: liely.244@gmail.com

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Abstract: This study aims to analyse the influence of industrial work culture and productive teacher internship programs on the quality of education in public vocational high schools (SMK) in Kendal Regency. A quantitative approach, employing a survey method, was used to involve productive teachers from several selected schools through stratified random sampling. Data were collected using a validated and reliable questionnaire. Data analysis employed multiple linear regression and the F-test to assess the significance of the independent variables' impact on educational quality. The results showed that industrial work culture had a significant effect, contributing 37.72% to educational quality, with innovation as the dominant dimension. The productive teacher internship program also had a significant impact, contributing 20.10%, mainly through supervision and industry support dimensions. Simultaneously, both variables accounted for 57.8% of the variation in educational quality, with the remainder influenced by other factors outside the model. These findings underscore the importance of integrating industrial work culture into the learning process and implementing well-structured teacher internship programs that align with industry needs. The results serve as a reference for formulating strategic policies to enhance the relevance of vocational education in meeting labour market demands.

Abstrak: Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis pengaruh budaya kerja industri dan program magang guru produktif terhadap mutu pendidikan di SMK Negeri Kabupaten Kendal. Penelitian menggunakan pendekatan kuantitatif dengan metode survei, melibatkan guru produktif dari beberapa SMK yang dipilih secara stratified random sampling. Instrumen pengumpulan data berupa angket yang telah diuji validitas dan reliabilitasnya. Analisis data dilakukan melalui regresi linier berganda dan uji F untuk mengetahui pengaruh variabel bebas terhadap mutu pendidikan. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa budaya kerja industri memberikan pengaruh signifikan terhadap mutu pendidikan sebesar 37,72%, terutama melalui dimensi inovasi. Program magang guru produktif juga berpengaruh signifikan dengan kontribusi 20,10%, yang didominasi oleh dimensi supervisi dan dukungan industri. Secara simultan, kedua variabel menyumbang 57,8% terhadap mutu pendidikan, sedangkan sisanya dipengaruhi faktor lain di luar model penelitian. Temuan ini menegaskan pentingnya internalisasi budaya kerja industri serta pelaksanaan magang guru yang terstruktur dan sesuai kebutuhan industri sebagai strategi peningkatan kualitas pendidikan vokasi. Hasil ini juga dapat dijadikan acuan dalam menyusun kebijakan pendidikan vokasi yang lebih relevan dengan tuntutan dunia kerja.

A. Introduction

Vocational High Schools (SMK) play a strategic role in preparing graduates who are competent and ready to enter the workforce. This function is by Law Number 20 of 2003 concerning the National Education System and Presidential Regulation Number 8 of 2012 concerning the Indonesian National Qualifications Framework (KKNI), which emphasises the importance of vocational graduates possessing skills relevant to industry standards (Fadhli, 2017). However, in practice, SMK graduates continue to face challenges in entering the labour market, as indicated by the consistently high Open Unemployment Rate (TPT) among vocational school graduates. In August 2024, the TPT for SMK graduates reached 9.01%, significantly higher than the national average of 4.91% (BPS, 2024). This discrepancy reflects a gap between the competencies taught in schools and the demands of the workforce.

One of the main contributing factors to this mismatch is the limited implementation of industry work culture within school environments, as well as the lack of direct experience among productive teachers in real industrial settings. Industry work culture includes soft skills such as discipline, responsibility, teamwork, innovation, and results orientation – competencies that are essential in today's competitive and dynamic job market. Meanwhile, internship programs for productive teachers are essential in updating their knowledge and ensuring that the learning process remains aligned with the latest industrial developments. Unfortunately, in Kendal Regency, the implementation of both industry work culture and teacher internships has not been optimal (Dewi et al., 2019).

The government, through SMK revitalisation programs, has sought to enhance the relevance of vocational education by adopting a link-and-match approach that aligns with industry needs (Adilah & Suryana, 202; Andayani, 2021; Disas, 2018). Although some progress has been made – evidenced by improvements in numeracy and digital literacy as indicated in the SMK State Education Quality Report Cards from 2022 to 2024 – the indicators related to industry work culture and graduate employment outcomes remain inconsistent. This condition underscores the need for more integrated efforts to enhance the quality of learning and foster partnerships with the business and industrial sectors (DUDI) (Husein, 2019).

Several specific problems can be identified from this background: (1) the persistently low quality of vocational school graduates entering the workforce; (2) skill mismatches between graduates and industry needs, with BPS data (BPS, 2024) showing that 55% of companies in Indonesia struggle to find appropriately skilled workers; (3) the lack of integration of industry work culture within vocational school environments (Yoto et al., 2024); (4) the suboptimal implementation of productive teacher internship programs due to budget limitations and poor coordination (Sariwulan et al., 2020); and (5) a disconnect between vocational education policies and actual conditions in the field (Herliana et al., 2024).

Based on these problems, this research aims to examine the influence of two critical factors – industry work culture and productive teacher internship programs – on the

quality of education in state vocational high schools (SMK) in Kendal Regency. These two variables are considered pivotal in bridging the gap between education and the labour market, particularly in the context of revitalising vocational education through adaptive and collaborative learning approaches (Aini & Purba, 2022).

The formulation of research questions is as follows: 1) Does industry work culture influence the quality of education at SMK in Kendal Regency? 2) Do productive teacher internship programs influence the quality of education at SMK in Kendal Regency? 3) Is there a simultaneous influence of both variables on the quality of vocational education?

Accordingly, the objectives of this research are: 1) To analyse the influence of industry work culture on the quality of education at SMK in Kendal Regency. 2) To analyse the influence of productive teacher internship programs on the quality of education at SMK in Kendal Regency. 3) To analyse the simultaneous influence of both variables on the quality of vocational education in Kendal Regency.

Prior studies emphasise the importance of school–industry integration in improving graduate employability (Arfandi, 2020; Cahyadi, 2019; Akbar et al., 2025). Work-based learning models and teacher internship schemes have been shown to enhance instructional relevance and bridge the gap between academic content and industrial practice (Komara & Iskandar, 2025). However, most existing research focuses on either the student or institutional side, with limited attention to the dual role of teachers as both facilitators and carriers of industrial value. Therefore, this study adopts an integrative perspective by placing teacher internship and industry work culture as dual predictors of vocational education quality to formulate practical insights aligned with contemporary industry needs.

The novelty of this research lies in its integrative approach, examining two variables that are rarely studied together: industry work culture and teacher internship programs. This study also highlights the role of teachers not merely as facilitators but as agents of change in embedding industry values into school practices. Unlike most previous research, which focuses solely on student outcomes, this study views the teacher as a central figure in educational transformation. With its focus on SMK in Kendal Regency, a semi-urban region with significant industrial potential, this research provides new insights into strengthening vocational education through deeper school–industry collaboration.

B. Method

This research uses a quantitative approach with a correlational survey design. This approach was chosen because it is suitable for analysing the relationships and influences between two independent variables – namely, industrial work culture and productive teacher internships – on the dependent variable, which is the quality of education at State Vocational High Schools (SMK Negeri) in Kendal Regency.

The study was conducted at seven State Vocational High Schools located across Kendal Regency, from October 2024 to February 2025. The population of this study comprises all productive teachers at these schools, totalling 238 individuals. To determine the sample size, the Slovin formula was used with a 95% trust level. The calculation results

indicated that a minimum of 238 respondents was needed. Sampling was carried out proportionally using stratified random sampling to ensure a balanced representation from each school.

The main instrument used was a closed questionnaire based on a five-point Likert scale. The questionnaire was developed based on operational indicators of the three variables studied: industrial work culture, productive teacher internships, and education quality. Before deployment, the questionnaire's validity and reliability were tested using SPSS software (Ghozali, 2018). The validity test results showed that all items had correlation values greater than the critical value (r table = 0.1484). In contrast, the reliability test indicated that all variables had Cronbach's Alpha values above 0.90, demonstrating high reliability.

Data collection was conducted through direct and online distribution of questionnaires to respondents, complemented by document studies and literature review to enrich the analytical context. The collected data were analysed using multiple linear regression techniques to examine the simultaneous and partial effects of the variables. Prior to the primary analysis, prerequisite tests—including normality, multicollinearity, autocorrelation, and heteroskedasticity—were performed to ensure that the analysis model met the statistical assumptions.

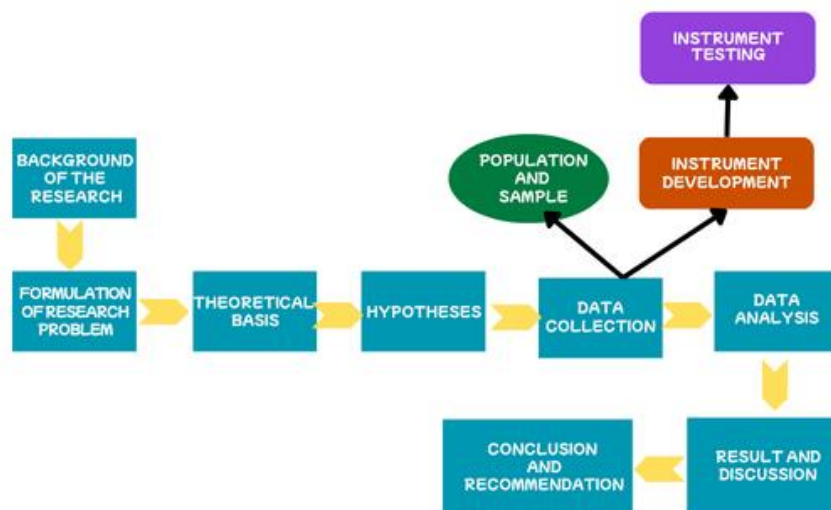


Figure 1. Research Flow

Hypothesis testing in this study was conducted to determine the extent to which independent variables, namely industry work culture (X_1) and the internship program for productive teachers (X_2), influence the dependent variable, which is the quality of education (Y). The analysis method used is multiple linear regression, with partial tests (t-test), simultaneous tests (F-test), and a significance level (α) of 0.05.

The t-test results show that the industry work culture variable (X_1) has a regression coefficient of 0.518 with a significance value of 0.000 (< 0.05). This indicates that the null hypothesis (H_0), which states that there is no effect of industry work culture on the quality

of education, is rejected, and the alternative hypothesis (H_1) is accepted. Therefore, it can be concluded that industry work culture has a positive and significant effect on the quality of education at State Vocational Schools throughout Kendal Regency.

Furthermore, the t-test results for the productive teacher internship program variable (X_2) show a regression coefficient of 0.304 with a significance value of 0.000 (< 0.05). These results also reject the null hypothesis and support the alternative hypothesis, indicating that the productive teacher internship program has a positive and significant impact on the quality of education.

The simultaneous hypothesis test using the F-test yields an F calculated value of 81.533 with a significance level of 0.000 (< 0.05). This suggests that, collectively, industry work culture and the productive teacher internship program have a significant impact on the quality of education. With a coefficient of determination (R^2) of 0.578, it can be explained that 57.8% of the variation in the quality of education can be attributed to these two variables. In comparison, the remaining 42.2% is influenced by other variables not included in this research model.

Table 1. Table of Hypothesis Tests

Hypothesis	Hypothesis Statement	Regression Coefficient (β)	Sig. (p-value)	Decision	Conclusion
H1	Industrial work culture influences the quality of education	0,518	0,000	H_0 rejected	Berpengaruh positif dan signifikan
H2	Productive teacher internship programs have an impact on the quality of education	0,304	0,000	H_0 rejected	Positive and significant impact
H3	Industrial work culture and teacher internships have a simultaneous influence on the quality of education.	Fcount = 81,533 $R^2 = 0,578$	0,000	H_0 rejected	Have a significant effect simultaneously

These findings affirm that both industry work culture and the internship program for productive teachers play a crucial and statistically significant role in improving the quality of vocational education. The strong regression coefficients and high level of significance indicate not only the validity of the research model but also the practical relevance of aligning educational strategies with industrial standards. The combined contribution of both variables, accounting for 57.8% of the variation in educational quality, highlights the need for policy interventions that emphasise industry-based learning environments and structured teacher development programs. Therefore, the integration of industrial culture and systematic internship experiences should be prioritised to strengthen

the responsiveness and competitiveness of vocational education in meeting labour market demands.

C. Result

The validity test was conducted using Pearson's product-moment correlation. The calculated *r*-values for all items on the variables of industry work culture (X_1), productive teacher internship program (X_2), and education quality (Y) exceeded the *r*-table value (0.191; $N = 106$, $\alpha = 0.05$). Therefore, all instrument items were declared valid and appropriate for measuring each construct.

The instrument reliability was assessed using Cronbach's Alpha. All variables had alpha values greater than 0.7, indicating strong internal consistency.

Table 2. Cronbach's Alpha

Variable	Cronbach's Alpha	Category
Industry Work Culture (X_1)	0.927	High Reliability
Productive Teacher Internship (X_2)	0.938	High Reliability
Education Quality (Y)	0.949	Very High Reliability

The normality test, conducted using the Kolmogorov-Smirnov method, yielded a significance value of 0.067 (> 0.05), indicating that the residuals are normally distributed."

The homoscedasticity test, using the Glejser method, yielded significance values of 0.084 for X_1 and 0.205 for X_2 , both of which are greater than 0.05. Thus, the model satisfies the assumption of homoscedasticity.

The autocorrelation test, using the Durbin-Watson statistic, produced a value of 1.831, which falls between the lower bound ($dL = 1.62$) and the upper bound ($dU = 1.72$), indicating the absence of autocorrelation.

The multicollinearity test showed that the Tolerance and VIF values for both independent variables were within acceptable limits (Tolerance > 0.1 ; VIF < 10), thereby confirming the absence of multicollinearity in the model.

Table 3. The Multicollinearity

Variable	Tolerance	VIF
Industry Work Culture	0.483	2.071
Productive Teacher Internship	0.483	2.071

The multiple linear regression model resulted in the following equation:

$Y = 11.891 + 0.518X_1 + 0.304X_2$, which indicates that a one-unit increase in industry work culture (X_1) leads to a 0.518-unit increase in education quality (Y), and a one-unit increase in the teacher internship program (X_2) increases education quality by 0.304 units.

This research aims to determine the influence of industrial work culture and internship programs on the quality of education for productive teachers at State Vocational

High Schools (SMK Negeri) in Kendal Regency. The analysis was conducted using multiple linear regression, along with partial significance testing (t-test), simultaneous (F-test), and the coefficient of determination (R^2).

Table 4 below presents a summary of the regression test results for the independent variables (X1 and X2) against the dependent variable (Y):

Table 4. Results of Multiple Linear Regression Analysis

Independent Variable	Regression Coefficient	Sig. (p-value)
Industrial Work Culture (X1)	0,614	0,000
Productive Teacher Internships (X2)	0,472	0,001
Constant	21,158	-
R (Correlation)	0,760	-
R^2 (Determination)	0,578	-
F-Statistic	55,218	0,000

From the results, an R^2 value of 0.578 was obtained, indicating that 57.8% of the variability in education quality is influenced by both industrial work culture and productive teacher internships simultaneously. In comparison, the remaining 42.2% is influenced by other variables that have not been studied. The significance value of F (0.000) also shows that both variables together have a significant effect on education quality.

The highest and lowest dimensions for each variable can be detailed as follows:

- Industrial work culture (X1) contributes 37.72%, with the Innovation dimension having the highest score (0.869) and Results Orientation as the lowest (0.704).
- Productive teacher internships (X2) contribute 20.10%, with the Supervision and Industry Support dimension being the highest (0.924) and Industry Relevance the lowest (0.817).

The research instrument has been declared valid based on validity tests, with calculated r values > the critical r table value (0.1484) for all items across the three variables. Furthermore, the reliability tests showed that all variables have Cronbach's Alpha values > 0.90, indicating they are highly reliable.

D. Discussion

The results of this study indicate that both the industrial work culture and the productive teacher internship program have a positive and significant influence on the quality of education at State Vocational High Schools (SMK Negeri) throughout Kendal Regency. Partially, the industrial work culture shows a more dominant contribution compared to the productive teacher internship program, collectively accounting for 57.8% of the improvement in educational quality.

Theoretically, these findings support the hypothesis that integrating industrial work culture values and teachers' involvement in practical internship experiences can enhance the quality of input, process, and output in vocational education. The industrial work culture,

which encompasses discipline, innovation, teamwork, and result-orientation, has proven capable of shaping teachers' character and work ethic into a more professional one (Asbari et al., 2019). This is evidenced by a regression coefficient of 0.518 and a practical contribution of 37.72%. The highest score in the innovation dimension (0.869) also suggests that the school environment is becoming increasingly receptive to renewal and adaptation. However, the result-oriented aspect remains relatively low (0.704), which needs to be improved through a performance-based evaluation system.

Although the productive teacher internship program contributes less (20.10%), it still proves to be significant for educational quality. A regression coefficient of 0.304 indicates that teachers' industry experiences have a significant impact on the renewal of competencies, teaching approaches, and the alignment of instructional materials. Industry support during the internship process emerges as the strongest dimension (0.924). However, challenges remain regarding industry relevance (0.817), indicating that internship content needs to be more specifically tailored to the labour market's needs.

These findings align with the study by Sholeh et al (2023), which demonstrates that integrating industrial work culture into schools can shape students' character and enhance their readiness for employment. Wahyudi et al (2024) also confirmed that the implementation of the 5R concept and training based on industrial work culture increases teachers' understanding of the industrial world. Furthermore, Herawati (2021) and Sudiarta (2023) emphasise the importance of internships as a means of enhancing teachers' competencies and aligning learning with industry needs. Therefore, this research reinforces both the theoretical and empirical arguments that the link-and-match strategy between education and the workforce is not only important but also practical when implemented systematically (Endarto et al., 2023).

The theoretical implications of this research suggest that the quality model of education, based on the CIPP (Context, Input, Process, Product) approach, can be strengthened by incorporating variables related to industry work culture and teacher internship programs. This means that an evaluative approach to vocational education no longer solely emphasises the internal aspects of the school, but also its connection to the industrial ecosystem.

Practically, the findings provide a foundation for policymakers at the school and education office levels to: Enhance the integration of industry work culture values into the curriculum and school management; Develop teacher internship programs based on specific industry needs (needs assessment); Establish strategic partnerships between vocational high schools (SMK) and the industrial sector in the long term; Improve teacher training through teaching factory models, soft skills development, and result-oriented work culture (Fitrihana, 2018).

E. Implication

In practice, these findings encourage schools not only to adopt industry work culture as part of the curriculum but also to implement it throughout the school governance system.

Internship programs for productive teachers should be viewed as a strategic and sustainable step to ensure alignment between the learning process at school and the dynamics of the industrial world. From a theoretical perspective, these results affirm that the quality of vocational education cannot be separated from its connection to the real work ecosystem, which is the primary focus of this education.

F. Limitations and Suggestions for Further Research

This study has limitations regarding its scope of respondents, as it only involved productive teachers at public vocational high schools (SMK Negeri) in a single district. Therefore, generalisations of the findings to private vocational high schools (SMK Swasta) or other regions should be made with caution. Additionally, this study focused solely on two main variables. At the same time, the quality of education is likely also influenced by other factors such as school leadership, industry involvement levels, and support policies from local government (Asri et al., 2021).

Further research is recommended to consider other variables that may also impact the quality of vocational education, such as school leadership, the alignment of curriculum with industry needs, and student internship programs in the business and industrial sectors. Moreover, the use of mixed methods approaches should be considered to enrich and strengthen the quantitative findings with qualitative insights from stakeholders involved in vocational education.

G. Conclusion

Based on the analysis and discussion, the industrial work culture and the internship program for productive teachers have a significant influence on the quality of education at State Vocational High Schools (SMK Negeri) in Kendal Regency.

The industrial work culture contributes significantly to educational quality, valued at 37.72%. The innovation dimension emerges as the most prominent aspect, indicating the importance of creativity and adaptive abilities within vocational education environments. The t-test results show a regression coefficient of 0.518 with a significance level of 0.000 ($p < 0.05$), indicating that the internalisation of industrial work culture values has a tangible, positive impact on improving the quality of learning at SMK.

The productive teachers' internship program also has a significant influence, contributing 20.10%. The dimensions of supervision and support from industry play a significant role, suggesting that active industry involvement in guiding teachers is crucial for improving teaching quality. The t-test results indicate a regression coefficient of 0.304 with a significance of 0.000 ($p < 0.05$), strengthening the finding that teacher internships are strategic instruments for updating educators' professional competencies.

Simultaneously, both variables together account for 57.8% of the influence on educational quality, as indicated by the coefficient of determination ($R^2 = 0.578$). Among the two variables analysed, industrial work culture provides a larger contribution compared to

the teacher internship program. The F-test results show a significance level of 0.000 with an F-value of 81.533, which exceeds the F-table value (3.92), indicating that the regression model used in this study is statistically significant overall.

However, this research has limitations, including its scope, which is limited to the region and subjects involving only State Vocational High Schools in a single regency, as well as the scope of variables confined to industrial work culture and productive teacher internships. Therefore, the generalisation of these findings should be approached with caution, especially when applied to private vocational schools or other regions with different characteristics.

Scientifically, these findings significantly contribute to strengthening the empirical evidence that systemic linkages between educational institutions and the labour market heavily influence the quality of vocational education. The results also contribute to the literature on the importance of updating teachers' competencies and reinforcing industrial work culture as foundational steps toward achieving an adaptive, relevant, and industry-aligned vocational education system.

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Author's Biography

	<p>Lilik Hanifah, S.Kom, S.Pd,    born in Kendal city, April 24, 1988. Student at Universitas Pendidikan Republik Indonesia Semarang (UPGRIS). I studied S1 Informatics Engineering (UDINUS) at Semarang and graduated in 2010, studied S1 Primary School Teacher Education (Universitas Terbuka), and am now still studying Magister Pendidikan (UPGRIS). Email: liely.244@gmail.com</p>
	<p>Dr. Yovitha Yuliejantiningasih, M.Pd,    born in Blitar in 1959, he completed his early education at Cor Jesu School in Malang and earned a Bachelor's degree in Guidance and Counselling from IKIP Negeri Malang in 1982, later working as a school counsellor in Mojokerto. He obtained a Master's degree in Educational Management in 1994 and became Head of the Education Division at Taruna Nusa Harapan Foundation, then completed his Ph.D. in Educational Management at Universitas Negeri Malang in 2005. Since 2008, he has been a lecturer in Guidance and Counselling at Universitas PGRI Semarang and, since 2010, also teaches in the Educational Management Graduate Program. Email: yovithayuliejantiningasih@upgris.ac.id</p>



Dr. Supriyono Purwosaputro, M.Hum.    born in Wonosobo city, 2 Mei 1960. Senior lecturer at Universitas PGRI Semarang, Indonesia. Born in Wonosobo in 1960, he holds a Bachelor's degree in Psychology, a Master's in Humanities, and a Doctorate in Education. He has served as an academic since 1988 and currently holds the position of Vice Rector III. His expertise lies in psychology, education, and student development.
Email: supriyonops@upgris.ac.id