

Bursa Kerja Khusus's Strategic Role in Curriculum-Industry Synchronization for Graduate Competence

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	<p>competency skill examinations, curriculum synchronization, and the ability to collaborate and communicate across cultures. The identified skill gaps include deficiencies in the abilities of teachers or educators, inadequate facilities and infrastructure, and a lack of industry partner. The implication is that improving the global competitiveness of vocational graduates necessitates continuous efforts to revitalize and develop educational programs through deeper integration with the realities and needs of the global industry. Thus, graduates of vocational education can be optimized as human capital who are not only technically competent but also adaptive and competitive in facing the complexities of the global labor market.</p>
	<p>Keywords: <i>Bursa Kerja Khusus; Industry; Graduates Competencies, Synchronize.</i></p>

INTRODUCTION

The unemployment rate in Indonesia remains a serious problem, particularly among vocational high school (*SMK*) graduates. According to data from the Central Statistics Agency (*BPS*), as of February 2025, the national Open Unemployment Rate was around 4.76% of the total workforce, or approximately 7.28 million people. Meanwhile, vocational high school graduates recorded an *TPT* of 8.00%, the highest among secondary and tertiary education levels. This condition indicates a significant gap between the competencies of vocational high school graduates and the needs of the modern job market (Listiana, 2019). Vocational education plays a crucial role in fostering the holistic development of students by equipping them with essential work skills, encouraging entrepreneurship, promoting lifelong learning, increasing socio-economic mobility, and empowering individuals to achieve their potential (Sugiyono, 2010).

The high unemployment rate among vocational school graduates indicates that the orientation of vocational education is not fully aligned with industry needs. The industrial world requires a workforce that possesses not only technical skills but also soft skills, discipline, and adaptability to technological developments (Widiyarso & Sutarna, 2021). The misalignment between vocational school curricula and industry standards widens the competency gap, making it difficult for graduates to penetrate the job market (Rusliyanto & Kusmuriyanto, 2019). Therefore, a specific strategy is needed to bridge vocational school graduates with the industrial world to optimally achieve competency relevance.

The Industrial Revolution 4.0 has transformed the employment landscape by introducing new technologies such as artificial intelligence, big data, and automation (Listiana, 2019). These developments require rapid adaptation of the vocational education system to ensure graduates possess relevant skills. However, vocational high school (*SMK*) curricula often lag behind in integrating the latest technological developments, creating a widening competency gap. A 2022 survey conducted by the Ministry of Manpower revealed that 65% of companies in Indonesia reported a lack of technical and soft skills among new graduates.

Vocational High Schools (*SMK*) not only provide skills competency education that prepares students to work in the business and industrial world (*IDUKA*), but also ensure alignment between *SMK* and *IDUKA* to produce high-quality graduates who meet *IDUKA*'s demands. This is in line with government policies regarding linking and matching *IDUKA* allows both parties to have a clear understanding of *IDUKA*'s requirements. Therefore, it is very

effective for Vocational Schools to establish partnerships with *IDUKA*, with the aim of improving the quality of their graduates (Gadling & Bhosale, 2025).

The Special Job Exchange (*BKK*) serves as a strategic intermediary institution between education and industry. The *BKK*'s presence within vocational high schools (*SMK*) is designed to facilitate the placement of graduates into the workforce through training programs, internships, and collaborations with industry (Suprap, 2024). However, the effectiveness of the *BKK* still faces various challenges, such as disparities in resources between regions and a lack of policy synchronization between the central and regional governments. Therefore, a more integrated and responsive strategy is needed. The *BKK* plays a strategic role in connecting students with companies and assisting in the competency synchronization process through various programs such as job training, open recruitment, and collaboration with industry partners (Gea et al., 2022). The *BKK*'s presence is expected to serve as an active liaison that extends beyond administrative functions to designing graduate development strategies tailored to labor market needs (Pambayun & Wagiran, 2014).

However, the effectiveness of the *BKK* in carrying out these functions is not always optimal. Many *BKK*'s still face obstacles, both institutionally and through collaborative networks with industry, as well as a lack of competency-building programs for graduates (Khoiriyani et al., 2023). This raises fundamental questions about the extent to which *BKK* strategies are able to align graduate competencies with industry standards. Qualitative research is needed to explore the concrete strategies implemented, the obstacles encountered, and the innovations undertaken by *BKK*'s in various vocational high schools (Baitullah et al., 2019).

Based on this background, this article focuses on the Special Job Fair's strategy in synchronizing the competencies of vocational high school graduates with industry standards. This study is expected to provide an in-depth understanding of the *BKK*'s partnership patterns with industry, the effectiveness of its programs, and the *BKK*'s contribution to reducing the unemployment rate among vocational high school graduates. Furthermore, the results of this study are also expected to provide recommendations for developing vocational education policies that are more relevant to the needs of the Indonesian labor market.

METHOD

This research uses a descriptive qualitative approach with a systematic literature review model. This approach was chosen to gain a comprehensive understanding of the Special Job Exchange (*BKK*)'s strategy in synchronizing vocational school graduate competencies with industry standards by mapping the results of research conducted during the 2020–2025 period.

Data were collected through the Web of Science (WoS) and Google Scholar databases using the keywords “Special Job Fair,” “Synchronization of Vocational High School Graduate Competencies,” and “Industrial World Standards.” The search process followed the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) guidelines to ensure systematic selection of relevant and accountable literature.

In the article selection process, inclusion criteria were established in the form of scientific journal articles published from 2020–2025, in English or Indonesian, and discussing the role of *BKK* or the synchronization of vocational high school graduates' competencies with the industry, while exclusion criteria included articles in the form of opinions, conference abstracts without data, or those without full text available. Each article that passed was subsequently assessed for quality using the CASP and JBI approaches with categories of high,

medium, or low; low-quality articles were excluded from the analysis. The synthesis method used was narrative thematic synthesis, through stages of data extraction into a matrix, initial coding, development of descriptive themes, analytical synthesis, and visualization with a PRISMA diagram.

Inclusion criteria included articles focusing on (1) the role and strategy of the *BKK*, and (2) developing the competencies of vocational school graduates in line with job market needs. Articles that did not explicitly discuss competency synchronization or were published before 2020 were excluded from the analysis. Data were analyzed using the Publish or Perish (PoP) application to identify publication trends, citation rates, and dominant keywords.

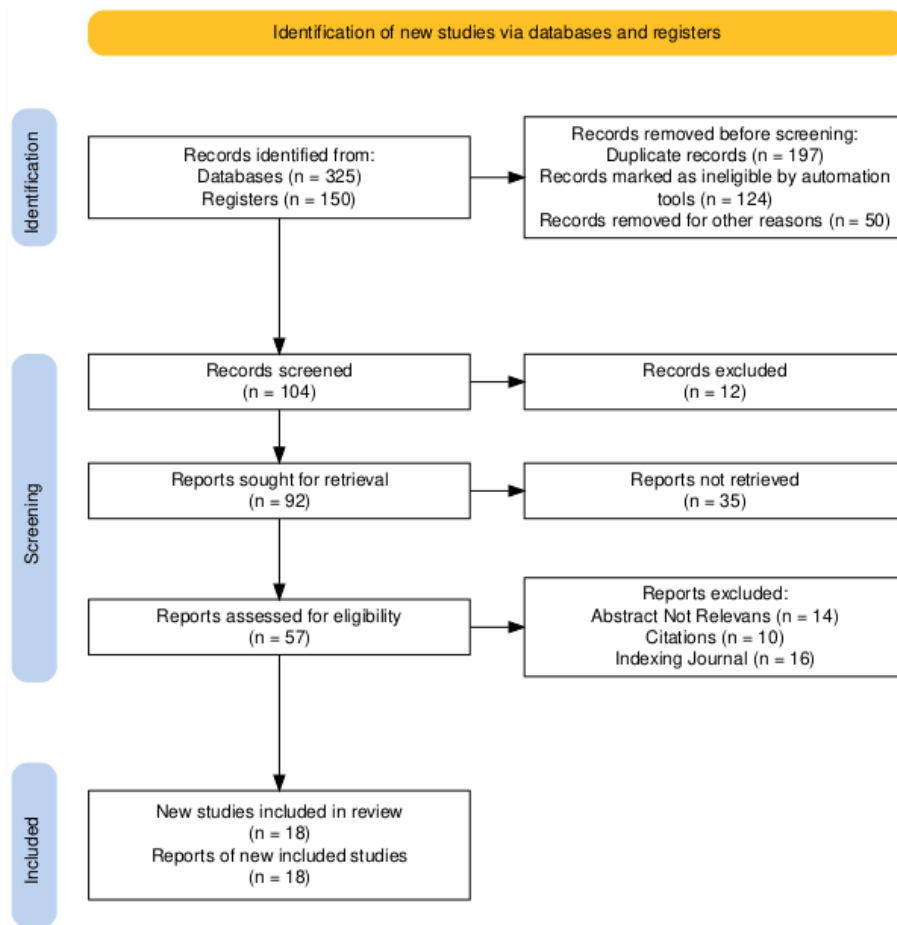


Figure 1. PRISMA 2020 Flow Diagram

RESULTS

The data filtering process, conducted using the PRISMA method and assisted by Publish Or Perish, yielded 475 raw articles published between 2019 and 2025. These articles were selected based on specific job market topics, industry synchronization, and vocational high school graduates. To narrow down the topics, the researchers conducted a further selection process based on relevant abstracts, resulting in 105 articles.

A re-screening process was conducted by reviewing articles indexed by reputable and accredited journals, resulting in 57 articles. During this process, researchers re-confirmed several criteria, including whether the articles were merely conference summaries and whether the topics were more relevant to the topic of interest. Eighteen articles were found to be suitable for review. Topics discussed included gaps in the field, strategies implemented by schools and job markets, specifically for vocational schools, to address the needs of the

global industrial world, which is experiencing increasingly massive changes and is influenced by globalization.

Causes of the Skill Gap among Vocational School Graduates

A rigorous screening process identified seven articles that focused on and relevantly discussed the causes of competency gaps among vocational school graduates. The review, comprising a table containing a rigorous selection of abstracts, content, and conclusions, was thoroughly read to obtain the desired findings.

Table 1. Causes of the Skills Gap among Vocational High School Graduates

No	Article	Findings on the Causes of the Skills Gap
1	Ali et al. (2020)	This study identified eight key gaps: policy and strategy, curriculum, learning processes, partnerships, accreditation, teacher competency, work culture, and facilities and infrastructure. For example, partnerships between TVET and industry are often merely formalities in the form of Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) without concrete implementation, while the curriculum used does not reflect the competencies needed in the field, such as understanding international standards, reading technical drawings, and using measuring tools. To address these challenges, the study recommends the establishment of a coordinating body involving representatives of TVET and industry stakeholders to align policies, curricula, and learning processes, and to strengthen partnerships through collaborative activities such as internships, teacher training, and knowledge transfer. These findings underscore the importance of a systematic and integrated approach to improving the relevance and quality of vocational education in Indonesia.
2	Oviawe et al. (2017)	This study highlights the existence of problems that cause a gap in graduate competency with industrial needs that narrate that Vocational High Schools and <i>IDUKA</i> are not free from various problems, especially in the implementation of school industrial class programs and <i>IDUKA</i> , teachers who have high competence are needed to improve student competency but the problem currently faced is the lack of teacher competence. Vocational High School teachers are required to have the ability to produce graduates who are ready to use but most of the vocational high school teachers are not people who have vocational skills but more normative skills, teachers are still very lacking because teachers do not come from <i>IDUKA</i> .
3	Desvira & Zulkifli (2025)	The findings of this study highlight differences in mindset and character that can lead to a skills gap among vocational high school graduates. Differences in talents and interests, which should be mapped before selecting an industry, must also be addressed to anticipate a significant gap between skills and industry needs. This study concludes that student psychological and cognitive mapping is crucial for competitiveness in the industrial world.
4	Ramadhina et al. (2025)	Based on research findings, the determining factors driving the high competency gap are the quality of the education system, which is not yet fully adaptive to the dynamics of industry needs, which further exacerbates the situation. The implications of this research emphasize the importance of strategic synergy between educational institutions, the government, and industry players in formulating curricula and vocational training programs that are more relevant and oriented to labor market demands.
5	Ma'rufiati et al. (2024)	In this article, it has been examined that the prominent competency gap of vocational school graduates lies in soft skills that are not obtained while studying at school, especially regarding communication ethics, public speaking and customer service.
6	Utama et al. (2025)	This article examines strategic challenges that require in-depth attention. First, the issue of low linearity, particularly in engineering and multimedia, indicates a deficit in the interdisciplinary approach, where boundaries between disciplines actually limit the development of comprehensive student competencies. Second, there is a significant mismatch between curriculum content and the dynamics and trends of the contemporary labor market, potentially creating a skills gap among graduates.

		Furthermore, the third challenge is the inequality in the implementation of internship programs across various departments, resulting in uneven student practical experience and affecting their career readiness.
7	Nida et al. (2023)	This article found mismanagement in internships caused by assignments not aligning with students' areas of expertise. Operationally, the program often faces low workloads and limited facilities from the Business and Industry (<i>DUDI</i>) sector. In terms of mentoring, the role of mentors from <i>DUDI</i> has not been fully and optimally implemented, accompanied by a lack of trust and meaningful responsibility given to interns. Furthermore, monitoring and evaluation by educational institutions are also considered insufficient.

Strategy for Synchronizing Graduates with Industry Needs

A rigorous screening process identified 11 articles that focused on and relevantly discussed strategies for synchronizing vocational school graduates with industrial market needs. The review, comprising a table containing a rigorous selection of abstracts, content, and conclusions, was thoroughly read to obtain the researchers' desired findings.

Table 2. Synchronization Strategy Vocational School

No	Article	Synchronization Strategy
1	Irwanto (2021)	<i>link and match</i> program between <i>SMKN 4</i> Serang City and the Business and Industry World (<i>DUDI</i>) has been running smoothly, but not optimally. Activities include industrial work experience (<i>prakerin</i>), training, industry visits, and recruitment of high-achieving alumni. Although these activities reflect a partnership, the planning and evaluation processes have not been systematically implemented. This indicates that the relationship between the school and industry remains functional, not strategic, and not sustainable.
2	Khomsah et al. (2025)	The main finding of this study is the collaborative model between the Student Guidance and Counseling Group (<i>BKK</i>) at <i>SMKN 1</i> Nguling. This collaboration encompasses an integrative process, from mapping student potential to job placement. The guidance and counseling teacher assesses students' interests and talents, while the <i>BKK</i> follows up on the results for appropriate job placement. This integrated work pattern allows for continuity between students' psychological preparation and career suitability, thereby minimizing the risk of mismatch between education and employment. This synergistic model also stands out because it is systematically structured in a semi-urban school, a context rarely explored in previous research.
3	Ningsih et al. (2025)	the link and match program at <i>SMK Negeri 1</i> Pengasih has been carried out systematically and structured through five main aspects. First, the alignment of the curriculum with industry needs is carried out collaboratively by involving stakeholders from the business and industrial world (<i>DUDI</i>), including through the preparation of a Memorandum of Understanding (<i>MoU</i>), mapping internship locations, and developing a competency-based assessment system. Second, productive teacher training—both internally and externally—is carried out to ensure that teaching methods remain relevant to industrial developments. Third, the Industrial Work Practice (<i>Prakerin</i>) program is implemented with the involvement of more than 250 students and 100 industrial partners annually, which not only provides real work experience but also improves students' mental readiness and professionalism. Fourth, the formation of <i>MoUs</i> with industrial partners strengthens collaboration in the implementation of internships, training, and curriculum alignment. Fifth, the implementation of the Skills Competency Test (<i>UKK</i>) serves as a benchmark for student work readiness and provides industry-recognized certification.
4	Suparyati & Habsya (2024)	The findings in this research article indicate that there are two strategies implemented. First, the implementation of an internship program for students. This internship program is a practical learning that aims to provide students with real experience in the world of work in their field of interest. In addition, this article shows the existence of a cross-cultural communication skills program. Developing cross-cultural

		communication skills will facilitate students in growing in the world of work with 5 main functions: first, cross-cultural communication skills enable students to communicate competently with colleagues, customers and business partners from cultural backgrounds or across countries. Second, being able to adapt to inclusive policies that support diversity. Third, being able to work together with a global team. Fourth, being able to understand misperceptions in the event of work conflicts. Fifth, being trained in global marketing and sales comprehensively and skillfully.
5	Mumtazati et al. (2025)	As an implementation of an adaptive curriculum development strategy, the vocational institutions in this study implemented a competency-based curriculum framework. This framework is comprehensively designed to equip graduates with three main competency pillars: mastery of technical expertise (hard skills), non-technical capacity (soft skills), and adaptability in facing the dynamics of the world of work. The foundation of its development rests on an industrial needs analysis that is integrated with core competency standards at both the national and international levels. A key characteristic of this approach is the specification of competency units that are explicitly formulated, measurable, and objectively verifiable through various evaluation instruments, such as practicum projects and portfolio-based assessments. To ensure relevance and sustainability, this curriculum undergoes a periodic revitalization process through collaborative forums involving industry representatives and education experts.
6	Hikmah et al. (2024)	In this study, the strategy used to link and match with <i>IDUKA</i> at vocational schools involved a social approach aimed at exploring job market needs and demands. The results of this social approach will serve as a reference for signing a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with <i>IDUKA</i> , conducting industrial work experience, and conducting student competency tests.
7	Riswanto et al. (2022)	The findings of this study focused on the development of students' communication and collaboration skills. Communication and collaboration are essential skills for facing the drastic transformations of the 21st century. Proficiency in communication has been shown to significantly support students' performance in facing challenges in the industrial world, especially when dealing with foreign cultures.
8	Suherman et al., (2022)	This research demonstrates that synchronizing student competencies with <i>IDUKA</i> 's needs must begin with the most fundamental and vital principles. This synchronization begins with the development of the school's vision and mission. The school's vision and mission must be aligned with global needs. Based on this vision and mission, a curriculum is developed that enhances student competency. The final result of this curriculum formulation is expected to shape the character and competencies of students who are able to compete in the industrial world.
9	Salvador et al. (2023)	The findings of the synchronization strategy in this article indicate that there are stages that must be designed with strategic management. Strategic management in the industrial class includes formulating, implementing, and evaluating strategic decisions across functions to ensure that the industrial class runs as expected.
10	Misbahudin & Asmaul (2022)	This research provides recommendations for improving the curriculum by paying attention to demand-based industry, then establishing a national vocational committee with a DUDI orientation and creating a sustainable career guidance program.
11	Hendro et al. (2024)	The strategic findings in this article recommend the integration of continuous learning regarding industrial work practices, in addition to student management training. Project-based learning that can analogize the industrial world to students, with full support from the DUDI (industrial industry), is needed to provide students with real-world practical experience.

DISCUSSION

The persistently high Open Unemployment Rate (*TPT*) among Vocational High School (*SMK*) graduates, reaching 8.00% as of February 2025, should not merely be interpreted as a statistical anomaly, but rather as a structural failure of the vocational education ecosystem in

aligning with labor market dynamics. This phenomenon reflects a systemic misalignment between the supply of competencies produced by *SMKs* and the demand structure of the Business and Industrial World (*IDUKA*), indicating that the issue extends beyond individual graduate readiness toward institutional and governance dimensions. The findings of this study reinforce that the skill gap is multidimensional, encompassing policy fragmentation, curriculum irrelevance, weak industry engagement, and inadequate human resource capacity, particularly among productive teachers .

From a structural perspective, the identified gaps—ranging from curriculum design to institutional partnerships—demonstrate that vocational education in Indonesia is still operating within a supply-driven paradigm, rather than a demand-driven or market-responsive system. Curriculum development, for instance, is often conducted administratively without deep industrial co-creation, resulting in competency outputs that lack practical relevance. Similarly, partnerships with *IDUKA* tend to be symbolic (MoU-based) rather than operational, limiting knowledge transfer and authentic workplace exposure. This indicates that the “link and match” concept has not yet evolved into a strategic co-production model, where industry actively participates in curriculum design, learning processes, and assessment systems.

The role of teachers emerges as a critical leverage point within this ecosystem. The lack of vocational and industrial experience among teachers does not only affect instructional quality but also disrupts the authenticity of competency formation. In this context, the issue is not merely about teacher training, but about the epistemological gap between school-based knowledge and industry-based practices. Without bridging this gap through industry immersion, certification, or dual professional systems, vocational education risks reproducing theoretical knowledge that is detached from real-world applications. Therefore, improving teacher competency should be repositioned as a strategic intervention for system transformation, not just capacity building.

Within this fragmented ecosystem, the *Bursa Kerja Khusus (BKK)* theoretically holds a strategic position as a boundary-spanning institution that connects education and industry. However, this study reveals that the effectiveness of *BKK* is still constrained by institutional limitations, including uneven resources, weak digital infrastructure, and lack of policy integration between central and local levels . This suggests that *BKK* has not fully transitioned from an administrative placement unit into a strategic labor market intermediary. Ideally, *BKK* should function as an intelligence hub that not only distributes graduates but also continuously maps labor market trends, informs curriculum adjustments, and facilitates adaptive training programs.

The synchronization strategies identified—such as link and match programs, curriculum alignment through MoU, industrial internships (*Prakerin*), teacher training, and competency tests (*UKK*)—can be interpreted as fragmented interventions that have not yet been integrated into a coherent systemic framework. While each strategy contributes to reducing the skill gap, their impact remains limited when implemented in isolation. For instance, internships without proper supervision and competency mapping risk becoming procedural activities rather than transformative learning experiences. Similarly, competency tests (*UKK*) may validate skills but do not necessarily guarantee alignment with evolving industry standards. This indicates the need for a systems thinking approach, where synchronization is designed as an interconnected cycle involving planning, implementation, evaluation, and continuous improvement.

A significant finding of this study is the emergence of collaborative patterns between *BKK* and Guidance and Counseling (*BK*) teachers, which reflects a shift toward a more holistic approach in graduate preparation. This integration enables not only competency alignment but also psychological readiness and career suitability, reducing the risk of job mismatch. Conceptually, this model aligns with the idea of career ecosystem integration, where technical skills, personal interests, and labor market demands are synchronized. This approach highlights that employability is not solely determined by hard skills, but also by career awareness, adaptability, and decision-making capacity.

Furthermore, the emphasis on soft skills—particularly communication, collaboration, and cross-cultural competence—indicates a paradigmatic shift in vocational education toward global workforce readiness. In the context of Industry 4.0 and globalization, technical skills alone are insufficient; graduates must possess the ability to operate within diverse, digital, and dynamic work environments. The integration of cross-cultural communication programs, as identified in the findings, represents a strategic response to this demand. However, its implementation still requires institutional strengthening to ensure that such competencies are systematically embedded in the curriculum rather than treated as supplementary programs.

Synthesizing these findings, it can be argued that the core issue is not the absence of strategies, but rather the lack of systemic integration and governance coherence. The vocational education system, including *BKK*, operates in a partially connected structure where policies, curriculum, human resources, and industry engagement are not fully aligned. Therefore, optimizing the role of *BKK* requires a paradigm shift toward adaptive governance, where *BKK* acts as a central node in a dynamic ecosystem that integrates education, industry, and labor market intelligence. Without such transformation, efforts to reduce the unemployment rate among *SMK* graduates will remain incremental rather than transformative.

Practical Implications

Based on the analysis of *Bursa Kerja Khusus (BKK)* strategy in synchronizing the competencies of vocational school graduates with the needs of industry, there are several practical implications that can be implemented by stakeholders. First, schools and *BKK* need to strengthen collaboration with the business and industrial world through systematic and sustainable planning. This can be achieved through the development of an adaptive curriculum, the implementation of structured internship programs, and productive teacher training that directly involves industry practitioners. This way, the gap between graduate competencies and industry demands can be significantly minimized.

Second, developing the capacity of teachers and education personnel must be a top priority. Study findings indicate that low levels of productive teacher competency are a major obstacle to producing work-ready graduates. Therefore, ongoing training programs, competency certification, and teacher internships in industry need to be improved. Furthermore, recruiting teachers from industry backgrounds can also be a long-term solution to ensure that the learning process is not only theoretical but also relevant to practical applications.

Third, the *BKK* needs to optimize its role as an active and responsive mediator through the use of technology and data. A *BKK* information system integrated with industry recruitment platforms can streamline graduate placement and provide real-time data on competency needs. Furthermore, the *BKK* can develop additional training programs, such as cross-cultural communication skills, digital literacy, and collaboration skills, which are

increasingly needed in the era of globalization. With this step, the *BKK* will function not only as a labor supplier but also as a strategic partner in preparing globally competitive graduates.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the literature analysis that has been conducted, it can be concluded that the Special Job Exchange (*BKK*) plays a strategic role as a crucial bridge between the world of vocational high school education and the industrial world. The effectiveness of *BKK* in synchronizing graduate competencies is highly dependent on the implementation of integrative and sustainable strategies, such as link and match programs, industrial work practices (*prakerin*), curriculum alignment, and strengthening partnerships that are not only formalistic. These strategies have been proven to be able to increase the relevance of graduate competencies, both in terms of mastery of technical skills (hard skills) and the development of non-technical abilities (soft skills) such as communication and cross-cultural collaboration.

However, these synchronization efforts still face significant challenges, particularly related to resource gaps. Limited competence of productive teachers, a lack of adequate facilities and infrastructure, and a limited depth of partnership with *IDUKA* are key inhibiting factors. These findings indicate that the success of *BKK* is determined not only by its workforce placement activities, but more so by its capacity to facilitate a learning process aligned with evolving industry dynamics and standards.

Therefore, increasing the competitiveness of vocational high school graduates in the global job market necessitates revitalizing the role of the Vocational Education and Training Agency (*BKK*) to be more proactive and transformative. Going forward, the *BKK* needs to be strengthened through the development of an employment information system, sustainable teacher capacity building programs, and a project-based partnership approach and knowledge transfer. In this way, the *BKK* can optimize its function not only as a channel for graduates but also as a catalyst in creating a responsive, adaptive, and vocational education ecosystem oriented toward future industry needs.

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