



Partnership between *Madrasah Aliyah* and *Balai Latihan Kerja* (BLK) in Enhancing Graduates' Work Readiness: A Case Study of MA Miftahul Falah and BLK Pandaan

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ABSTRACT

Islamic Senior High Schools (*Madrasah Aliyah*) often face challenges in preparing graduates with competitive work skills due to a curriculum dominated by academic and religious subjects. This study aims to analyze the collaborative partnership between MA Miftahul Falah and the Pandaan Balai Latihan Kerja (BLK) in enhancing graduates' work readiness. Unlike previous studies that generally focus on vocational high schools (SMK), this research specifically examines the madrasah-BLK partnership from the perspective of Islamic education management, an aspect rarely explored in the existing literature. Employing a qualitative case study design, data were collected through in-depth interviews, observation, and documentation. The findings reveal that the partnership operates through a "Self-Funded" (*Swadana*) model in response to the madrasah's internal facility limitations, contributing foundation-level readiness through certification and technical skill enrichment. However, its effectiveness remains constrained by structural barriers, including a limited training duration (40 lesson hours), equipment shortages, and a competency gap between students' initial skills and industrial standards. The partnership currently remains at an operational-transactional level; thus, early curriculum synchronization and stronger multi-stakeholder involvement are needed to develop it into a strategic-integrative partnership that more effectively produces competitive, work-ready graduates.

Keywords: Partnership, BLK, Work Readiness, Islamic Senior High School

ABSTRAK

Madrasah Aliyah sering menghadapi tantangan dalam menyiapkan lulusan yang memiliki daya saing kerja akibat dominasi kurikulum akademik dan keagamaan. Penelitian ini bertujuan menganalisis kemitraan kolaboratif antara MA Miftahul Falah dan Balai Latihan Kerja (BLK) Pandaan dalam meningkatkan kesiapan kerja lulusan. Berbeda dengan penelitian terdahulu yang umumnya berfokus pada konteks SMK, penelitian ini secara spesifik mengkaji kemitraan madrasah dengan BLK dari perspektif manajemen pendidikan Islam, suatu aspek yang masih jarang dieksplorasi. Penelitian menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan desain studi kasus; data dikumpulkan melalui wawancara mendalam, observasi, dan dokumentasi. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa kemitraan berjalan melalui model "Swadana" sebagai respons atas keterbatasan fasilitas internal madrasah, dengan kontribusi berupa pemberian bekal dasar (foundation level) melalui sertifikasi dan pengayaan keterampilan teknis. Meskipun demikian, efektivitas program masih dibatasi oleh sejumlah hambatan struktural, seperti durasi pelatihan yang terbatas (40 Jam Pelajaran), keterbatasan alat praktik, serta kesenjangan kompetensi awal siswa terhadap standar industri. Kemitraan ini saat ini masih berada pada level operasional-transaksional, sehingga diperlukan sinkronisasi kurikulum sejak dini dan penguatan keterlibatan berbagai pihak agar dapat berkembang menjadi kemitraan strategis-integratif yang lebih optimal dalam membentuk lulusan yang kompetitif dan siap kerja.

Kata Kunci: Kemitraan, BLK, Kesiapan Kerja, Madrasah Aliyah

PENDAHULUAN

The rapid transformation of the labor market requires secondary educational institutions to focus not only on students' academic achievement but also on graduates' readiness to meet the increasingly competitive demands of employment.¹ The global development agenda, as articulated in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly Goal 4, emphasizes the importance of enhancing the quality of human resources through access to relevant, adaptive, and sustainable education. Within this context, graduates' work readiness has become a key indicator of an educational institution's success in responding to the social and economic demands of modern society. Work readiness is no longer understood merely as technical competence; it also encompasses adaptability, communication skills, discipline, and collaborative competencies required in the contemporary workplace..²

Data from Statistics Indonesia (BPS) indicate that the Open Unemployment Rate (OUR) among general senior secondary school graduates, including *Madrasah Aliyah* (Islamic senior secondary schools), has consistently ranked as the second highest after vocational high school graduates, reaching 7.05% in 2024 and 6.88% in 2025. This relatively stable pattern suggests a structural mismatch between the competencies of secondary school graduates and labor market demands, which cannot be addressed solely through internal learning processes within madrasahs.³ *Madrasah Aliyah* currently face increasingly complex challenges in preparing graduates with competitive employability. Azka, as cited in Al Jaber, argues that the madrasah curriculum, which remains largely dominated by conventional approaches, has not yet aligned with the demands of the twenty-first century, particularly regarding the relevance of instructional content to technological advancements and future workforce projections. Curriculum reform oriented toward digital competencies and flexible learning has therefore become an urgent strategic priority for preparing graduates capable of competing in the global labor market⁴. This condition is further supported by the findings of Ira Nurdiana,⁵ who reported that approximately 93–95% of madrasah graduates enter the workforce directly without adequate vocational skills.

Consequently, many madrasah graduates possess limited practical experience and have minimal exposure to the world of work. This situation reflects a substantial gap between graduates' competencies and the needs of industry and business sectors. A similar phenomenon has also been identified in vocational education institutions, where the

¹ Zetty Azizaton Ni'mah and Ahmad Rifa'i, "Kompleksitas Peran Madrasah Dalam Menjawab Tantangan Era Society 5.0 Sebagai Institusi Pembangun Peradaban Rahmatan Lil' Ālamīn," *Revorma: Jurnal Pendidikan Dan Pemikiran* 5, no. 1 (2025): 1–15, <https://doi.org/10.62825/revorma.v5i1.126>.

² United Nations, *Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* (New York: United Nations, 2015).

³ <https://www.bps.go.id/id/statistics-table/2/MTE3OSMy/tingkat-pengangguran-terbuka-berdasarkan-tingkat-pendidikan.html> diakses 19 juni 2026 pukul 08.47 wib

⁴ zidan Khalik Al Jaber, Hilalludin Hilalludin, And Siti Maslahatul Khaer, "Transformasi Pendidikan Islam: Peran Madrasah, Pesantren, Dan Universitas Dalam Menjawab Tantangan Zaman," *ABDUSSALAM: Jurnal Pendidikan Dan Kebudayaan Islam* 01, no. 01 (2019): 53–58, <https://journal.iai-daraswaja-rohil.ac.id/index.php/abdussalam/article/view/143/84>.

⁵ Ira Nurdiana, "Sinergitas Program Vokasi Di Madrasah Sebagai Lifeskill Menghadapi Era Globalisasi," *Jurnal REVORMA* 3, no. 2 (2023), <https://ejournal-revorma.sch.id/index.php/mansa/article/view/90/36>.

mismatch between graduates' competencies and industrial requirements remains a persistent challenge, highlighting the disparity between school-based instruction and workplace expectations.⁶ These circumstances indicate that strengthening graduates' work readiness cannot rely solely on internal learning within madrasahs but requires active involvement from external stakeholders capable of providing authentic workplace experiences and career-oriented learning.

In the educational context, partnership is defined as a systematic and long-term collaborative effort between researchers and practitioners aimed at improving schools and educational systems through research.⁷ This definition emphasizes that partnership is not merely a temporary relationship but rather a planned and sustainable collaboration. At the institutional level in Indonesia, partnerships between schools or madrasahs and other organizations are formally regulated. Every school or madrasah is required to establish partnerships with relevant institutions covering educational inputs, processes, outputs, and graduate utilization, with such partnerships formalized through written agreements..⁸

Within the context of vocational training institutions, Sujanto, as cited in Nurida,⁹ identifies four forms of partnership that may be established between *Balai Latihan Kerja* (BLK; Vocational Training Centers) and their strategic partners: (1) collaboration in designing training curricula, (2) collaboration in delivering training programs, (3) collaboration in implementing *on-the-job training*, and (4) collaboration in placing graduates in the business and industrial sectors (*Dunia Usaha dan Dunia Industri* [DUDI]). From the perspective of Islamic educational management, institutional partnerships constitute an essential component in developing educational governance that is adaptive, participatory, and socially beneficial..¹⁰

Previous studies have demonstrated that partnerships between educational institutions and the business and industrial sectors (DUDI) make significant contributions to quality assurance and the enhancement of graduate competencies. At the governance level, partnerships are considered effective when managed through a comprehensive management cycle encompassing planning, organizing, implementation, and evaluation.¹¹ At the output level, partnerships have proven to be strategic instruments for improving graduate quality

⁶ Rudi Santoso and Basuki, "Strategi Sekolah Dalam Meningkatkan Peluang Kerja Lulusan Di Dunia Usaha Dan Dunia Industri," *Excelencia: Journal of Islamic Education & Management* 2, no. 02 (2022): 1–16, <https://doi.org/10.21154/excelencia.v2i02.1215>.

⁷ Simon Sjölund et al., "Mapping Roles in Research-Practice Partnerships—a Systematic Literature Review," *Educational Review* 75, no. 7 (2023): 1490–1518, <https://doi.org/10.1080/00131911.2021.2023103>.

⁸ Kementerian Pendidikan Nasional, "Peraturan Menteri Pendidikan Nasional Nomor 19 Tahun 2007 Tentang Standar Pengelolaan Pendidikan Oleh Satuan Pendidikan Dasar Dan Menengah" (2007).

⁹ Ika Nurida Nuriadi, Arief Tukiman Hendrawijaya, and Frimha Purnamawati, "JPUS : Jurnal Pendidikan Untuk Semua Kemitraan Antara Blk Dan Dunia Usaha Dunia Industri (Dudi) Dalam Penguatan Kompetensi," *JPPI (Jurnal Penelitian Pendidikan Indonesia)* 6, no. 1 (2021): 7–13, <https://journal.unesa.ac.id/index.php/jpls/article/view/18109>.

¹⁰ Endah Winarti, Zainal Abidin, and Akhmad Fauzi Hamzah, "Kajian Integratif Urgensi Kemitraan Sekolah Dalam Menjaga Keberlangsungan Hidup Lembaga Pendidikan Islam," *Indonesian Journal of Islamic Education Studies* 4, no. 2 (2021): 178–196, <https://ejournal.uit-lirboyo.ac.id/index.php/ijies/article/view/1976>.

¹¹ Much Rojaki, Happy Fitria, and Alfroki Martha, "Manajemen Kerja Sama Sekolah Menengah Kejuruan Dengan Industri Dan Dunia Kerja," *Jurnal Pendidikan Tambusai* 5, no. 3 (2021): 51–56, <https://doi.org/10.51878/vocational.v5i3.6095>.

and work readiness, particularly in vocational secondary schools..¹²¹³ Similar patterns have also been identified in vocational training contexts, where partnerships between Vocational Training Centers (BLK) and DUDI strengthen trainees' competencies.¹⁴ In the madrasah context, Zainuddin and Turmudzi found that partnerships between *Madrasah Aliyah Plus Keterampilan* (Islamic senior secondary schools with vocational programs) and BLK successfully equipped students with vocational competencies, particularly in multimedia and computer network engineering, while simultaneously fostering entrepreneurial attitudes.¹⁵ Such partnerships represent an integral part of educational quality management aimed at preparing graduates to enter the labor market with adequate competence and confidence.. Moreover, within the broader context of Islamic educational institutions, institutional partnerships have been recognized as a critical factor for sustaining and improving educational quality.¹⁶

Nevertheless, most previous studies have primarily focused on developing students' competencies in vocational high schools or on the general implementation of vocational programs within madrasahs. Research specifically examining partnership models between madrasahs and Vocational Training Centers (BLK), as well as their impact on graduates' work readiness, remains scarce. This research gap forms the basis of the present study, which investigates the partnership between MA Miftahul Falah and BLK Pandaan in fostering graduates' work readiness. Accordingly, this study focuses on examining madrasah–BLK partnerships as a strategic approach to strengthening the work readiness of *Madrasah Aliyah* graduates and their contribution to graduate employability..

MA Miftahul Falah Purwodadi, Pasuruan, was selected as the research site because of its distinctive characteristics that have received limited scholarly attention. Unlike previous studies, which have predominantly focused on vocational high schools, this madrasah independently established a partnership with BLK Pandaan through a self-financing scheme, whereby the program is funded internally without imposing financial burdens on students' parents, and has maintained this collaboration consistently since 2016. This continuity demonstrates the long-term sustainability of the partnership. BLK Pandaan was selected as a partner because it was willing to adapt its instructional methods to the characteristics of madrasah students by initiating training from students' foundational competencies rather than expecting them to meet the standards of regular trainees from the outset. These

¹² Feronika Munthe and Yulius Mataputun, "Analisis Kerjasama Sekolah Dengan Dunia Usaha Dan Dunia Industri Dalam Meningkatkan Mutu Lulusan Sekolah Menengah Kejuruan," *JPPi (Jurnal Penelitian Pendidikan Indonesia)* 7, no. 4 (2021): 586, <https://doi.org/10.29210/020211479>.

¹³ Faris Fanani, Dwi Yuwono Sugiharto, and Arief Yulianto, "Inovasi Kemitraan SMK Bisnis Manajemen Dengan Dunia Usaha Dan Industri (DUDI): Menyiapkan Lulusan Siap Kerjadan Berdaya Saing," *Prosiding Seminar Nasional Pascasarjana, Universitas Negeri Semarang* 6, no. 1 (2023): 298–304, <http://pps.unnes.ac.id/pps2/prodi/prosiding-pascasarjana-unnes>.

¹⁴ Nuriadi, Hendrawijaya, and Purnamawati, "Kemitraan Antara Blk Dan Dunia Usaha Dunia Industri (Dudi) Dalam Penguatan Kompetensi"

¹⁵ Zainuddin and Turmudzi, "Pengembangan Kompetensi Siswa Madrasah Aliyah Berbasis Keterampilan Multimedia Dan Teknik Komputer Jaringan," *Qolamuna : Jurnal Studi Islam* 8, no. 1 (2022): 85–95, <https://doi.org/10.55120/qolamuna.v8i1.660>.

¹⁶ Endah Winarti, Abidin, and Akhmad Fauzi Hamzah, "Kajian Integratif Urgensi Kemitraan Sekolah Dalam Menjaga Keberlangsungan Hidup Lembaga Pendidikan Islam."

distinctive characteristics make this case particularly worthy of in-depth investigation from the perspective of Islamic educational management.

METHOD

This study employed a qualitative approach using a case study design¹⁷ and was conducted at MA Miftahul Falah Purwodadi, Pasuruan, from March to May 2026. A qualitative approach was adopted because the study sought to gain an in-depth understanding of the processes, dynamics, and partnerships established between the madrasah and the *Balai Latihan Kerja* (BLK; Vocational Training Center) within the natural setting of an Islamic educational institution. This approach is grounded in the constructivist paradigm, which views social reality as dynamic, complex, and socially constructed through interactions among research participants.¹⁸ Accordingly, this study did not seek to measure phenomena statistically but rather to describe and interpret them holistically based on the experiences, perspectives, and practices observed in the field.

The researcher served as the primary research instrument while also acting as a participant observer¹⁹ directly engaging in the data collection process to obtain a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon under investigation. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews, observations, and document analysis..²⁰ Interviews were conducted using purposive sampling with selected informants. The informants were chosen based on the following criteria: (1) direct involvement in the policy-making or implementation of the partnership between the madrasah and the BLK; (2) comprehensive understanding of the training process implemented in practice; and (3) direct participation in or experience with the benefits of the program. Based on these criteria, seven informants were selected: the Principal of MA Miftahul Falah as the institutional decision-maker; the Head of Development and Marketing Division of BLK Pandaan, who represented the institutional perspective on the partnership; one BLK instructor responsible for implementing the training program; two students currently participating in the program; and two alumni who had completed the training. The inclusion of informants from diverse roles was intended to generate complementary data and facilitate triangulation, thereby providing a comprehensive understanding of the implementation, contributions, and challenges of the partnership between the madrasah and the BLK.

Direct observations were conducted to examine training activities, interactions between the madrasah and BLK personnel, students' participation in vocational training, and the implementation of skills-based learning within both the madrasah and BLK environments. Document analysis was employed to complement and strengthen the research findings by examining partnership agreements (Memoranda of Understanding [MoUs]), training program documents, implementation schedules, activity reports, training certificates,

¹⁷ Robert K Yin, *Case Study Research Design and Methods*, third Edit (London: Sage Publications, 2002).

¹⁸ Lexy Johannes Moleong, *Metodologi Penelitian Kualitatif* (Bandung: Remaja Rosdakarya, 2011).

¹⁹ Sugiono, *Metode Penelitian Kuantitatif Kualitatif Dan R & D* (Bandung: Alfabeta, n.d.).

²⁰ Sugiyono, *Metode Penelitian Kuantitatif Kualitatif Dan R&D* (Bandung: Alfabeta, 2014).

documentation of students' activities, and other relevant archival materials related to the partnership between the madrasah and the BLK.

The collected data were analyzed using the interactive model developed by Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña,²¹ which consists of data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification carried out iteratively throughout the research process. Data analysis began simultaneously with data collection and continued until the completion of the study in order to identify patterns, relationships, and meanings associated with the implementation of the partnership in strengthening the work readiness of *Madrasah Aliyah* graduates. To ensure the trustworthiness of the findings, this study employed both source triangulation and methodological triangulation.²²

Source triangulation was conducted by comparing information obtained from different informants, including the madrasah principal, teachers, BLK representatives, students, and alumni. Methodological triangulation was achieved by comparing data derived from interviews, observations, and document analysis to ensure consistency across data sources. In addition, member checking was conducted by reconfirming interview findings and data interpretations with the participants to ensure that the interpretations accurately reflected their intended meanings. The researcher also maintained prolonged engagement and persistent observation through systematic and repeated field note documentation to develop an in-depth understanding of the research phenomenon. All methodological procedures were implemented systematically to ensure the credibility, dependability, and authenticity of the research findings. Consequently, the study is expected to provide a comprehensive understanding of the partnership between *Madrasah Aliyah* and the *Balai Latihan Kerja* (Vocational Training Center) in strengthening graduates' work readiness.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. Implementation of the Partnership between the Madrasah and the *Balai Latihan Kerja* (BLK) in Strengthening the Work Readiness of *Madrasah Aliyah* Graduates

In an era of increasingly intense global competition, enhancing the work readiness of *Madrasah Aliyah* graduates has become a strategic challenge that requires cross-sectoral collaboration. As a strategic initiative to facilitate graduates' transition into the workforce, a partnership between the madrasah and the *Balai Latihan Kerja* (BLK; Vocational Training Center) Pandaan, Pasuruan, has been implemented regularly for twelfth-grade students. The training program is scheduled to commence immediately after students complete all final madrasah examinations. By allocating the post-examination period for this purpose, students are expected to participate more fully in the intensive training program provided by the BLK. This initiative serves as a concrete effort to enhance their vocational competencies and improve their readiness before entering the labor market or pursuing higher education. Based on the field data, the implementation of this partnership can be analyzed through the following three subcomponents:

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²² Lexy J. Moleong, *Metodologi Penelitian Kualitatif* (Bandung: PT Remaja Rosdakarya, 2015).

a. Self-Funded Partnership Model

The findings reveal that the partnership does not operate under the government's fully subsidized training scheme but instead follows a **self-funded (*swadana*) model**. This is reflected in the following interview excerpt with the Principal of MA Miftahul Falah, Mr. Imron Rosyadi, S.Pd.:

"Our partnership with the *Madrasah Aliyah* is implemented through a self-funded scheme. In 2026, the training fee is IDR 490,000 per student for the Office Administration program and IDR 690,000 per student for the Motorcycle Engineering program. These costs are not charged to the students' parents, as they are fully covered by the school's budget. The training is conducted over a period of five to nine days."

The transactional nature of this partnership did not emerge by chance but resulted from changes in the operational policies of the BLK. This shift was reflected in the partnership model implemented in practice, as explained by Mrs. Pipit Wardhani, Head of the Development and Marketing Division of BLK Pandaan, Pasuruan:

"The partnership between the BLK and schools (*Madrasah Aliyah*/Senior High Schools) is implemented through a self-funded mechanism (*swadana*) under the Regional Original Revenue (PAD) retribution scheme. The fees paid by the schools are deposited into the regional treasury because the facilities utilized are classified as regional government assets."

The change in the partnership mechanism has directly influenced the pattern of technical coordination between the BLK and the partnering schools. As explained by Mrs. Pipit Wardhani, the collaboration process now requires intensive coordination between the Development and Marketing Division and the Training and Certification Division to ensure that workshop schedules do not overlap with regular training programs funded by regional (*APBD*) or national (*APBN*) government budgets. The BLK must also ensure the availability of qualified instructors and workshop facilities, both of which are frequently constrained by limited capacity. To maintain effective supervision of equipment and training facilities, the ideal class size is restricted to a maximum of 16 participants. Consequently, partner schools are required to adjust their training schedules and comply with the technical requirements established by the BLK to ensure the smooth implementation of the program. Furthermore, training programs designed for schools are generally tailored to each school's financial and operational capacity, with an average duration of approximately ten days. As a result, these programs do not include formal competency assessments, unlike the BLK's regular training programs.

b. Adjustment of Training Duration and Competency Challenges

One of the most significant findings of this study is the substantial reduction in the duration of the training program. Documentary evidence indicates the following:

"In previous years, the training program consisted of 100 instructional hours (*Jam Pelajaran* [JP]). However, this year, due to changes in government regulations, the training duration has been reduced to 40 instructional hours."

The reduction of the training duration to 40 instructional hours presents considerable challenges to the learning process. With a shorter training period, the instructional content

must be delivered in a more intensive manner, causing the program to focus primarily on foundational knowledge and procedural literacy. This situation requires a high level of instructional effectiveness to ensure that the program continues to achieve its objectives despite the limited timeframe. Consequently, both the madrasah and the BLK face the challenge of optimizing the available training hours so that students still acquire meaningful vocational competencies as an initial foundation for adapting to the workplace.

In response to the limited training duration, Mrs. Robica Wildan Nurisnaini, S.M., the instructor for the Office Administration program, explained how the instructional materials were adapted in practice:

"Given the limited training time, we make every effort to adjust the instructional materials to align with the BLK curriculum. We recognize that the students' competencies still require considerable improvement in the future. Nevertheless, one encouraging outcome is the positive change in their motivation and self-confidence after participating in this program."

c. Input Disparities and Instructional Adaptation

BLK instructors face considerable challenges because *Madrasah Aliyah* students often begin the training with virtually no prior technical skills. This was illustrated by Mrs. Icha, the instructor for the Office Administration program:

"We do not immediately subject the students to intensive training. Instead, we adjust everything to their level. For example, in the Office Administration class, we begin with the basics, such as explaining what Microsoft Word is and introducing its features one by one."

This finding indicates an initial mismatch between the predominantly theoretical and religious-oriented curriculum of the madrasah and the industry-oriented competency standards emphasized by the BLK. Although instructional adaptations were implemented to accommodate students' initial competency levels, limitations in training facilities particularly the instructor-to-equipment ratio of 1:16 necessitated a rotational practice system, thereby reducing students' opportunities for hands-on learning.

The empirical evidence regarding the shortened training duration and the financial implications of the self-funded scheme extends beyond administrative concerns, reflecting more fundamental issues in partnership governance. From a theoretical perspective, collaboration between schools and external institutions represents "*Collaborating with the Community*," one of the six types of involvement proposed by Joyce L. Epstein,²³ which aims to support students' educational and developmental outcomes. However, a substantial gap remains between this theoretical ideal and its practical implementation. According to the Indonesian Ministry of Education and Culture Regulation (*Permendikbud*) No. 30 of 2017,²⁴ education should constitute a shared responsibility among schools, families, and the wider community. In practice, however, the existing partnership remains largely confined to

²³ Joyce L. Epstein et al., *School, Family, and Community Partnerships: Your Handbook for Action* (California: Corwin Press, 2002).

²⁴ Peraturan Menteri Pendidikan Dan Kebudayaan Republik Indonesia Nomor 30 Tahun 2017 Tentang Pelibatan Keluarga Pada Penyelenggaraan Pendidikan." (2017).

technical and operational activities, while significant opportunities remain to expand collaboration toward joint participation in program planning and development.

From the perspective of educational administration, Inayah et al.²⁵ argue that partnerships should broaden learning resources and strengthen social relationships rather than impose additional financial burdens on schools. Consequently, the current transactional model may hinder equitable access to vocational education. Regarding work readiness, Mahmudah et al.²⁶ emphasize that students' successful transition into the labor market depends largely on the depth of competency acquisition. With a training duration of only 40 instructional hours (*Jam Pelajaran* [JP]), the program is more appropriately characterized as an introduction to basic vocational skills than as comprehensive job training.

Drawing on the perspective of the International Labour Organization (ILO),²⁷ the revitalization of *Balai Latihan Kerja* (Vocational Training Centers) should provide greater program flexibility to accommodate students' educational needs. However, the findings indicate that, rather than implementing a strategically accelerated curriculum, the program has instead reduced the depth and scope of instructional content to accommodate constraints in time and available facilities. Consequently, the partnership remains largely operational rather than strategic in nature. Without comprehensive curriculum alignment, active involvement of the school committee in decision-making, and continuous two-way communication between BLK instructors and madrasah teachers, the program risks functioning merely as a short-term complementary initiative with limited long-term impact on students' career development.

Overall, the implementation of the partnership between *Madrasah Aliyah* (MA) and the BLK through the *self-funded partnership model* represents a tangible institutional initiative to expand students' access to vocational skills training. Although the partnership currently remains at the operational level, characterized by adjustments to training duration and implementation procedures, it conceptually aligns with Epstein's principle of Collaborating with the Community as well as the cross-sector collaboration advocated by *Permendikbud* No. 30 of 2017. Looking ahead, this partnership offers substantial opportunities for both institutions to strengthen their relationship beyond operational support toward a more strategic and integrated collaboration. Through more comprehensive curriculum synchronization and sustained communication between BLK instructors and madrasah

²⁵ Adien Inayah, Fitri Khoiroh Sayidah Harahap, and Yunita Azhari, "Lingkup Kemitraan Sekolah Dan Masyarakat Dalam Administrasi Pendidikan," *Edu Society: Jurnal Pendidikan, Ilmu Sosial Dan Pengabdian Kepada Masyarakat* 4, no. 2 (2024): 1312–20, <https://doi.org/10.56832/edu.v4i2.476>.

²⁶ ²⁶ Fitri Nur Mahmudah et al., "The Importance of Partnership Management To Improve School-To-Work Transition Readiness Among Vocational High School Graduates," *Obrazovanie i Nauka* 24, no. 5 (2022): 64–89, <https://doi.org/10.17853/1994-5639-2022-5-64-89>.

²⁷ ILO, *Balai Latihan Kerja Di Indonesia: Jalan Pintas Menuju Revitalisasi* (Jakarta: Organisasi Perburuhan Internasional, 2011), <https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&source=web&rct=j&opi=89978449&url=https://www.ilo.org/media/347456/download&ved=2ahUKEwi-ysillraUAxUFyDgGHafMEB4QFnoECBwQAQ&usq=AOvVaw20KQ2YnEpVPXuTgmNlq0v>.

personnel, this partnership has considerable potential to evolve into a more effective educational ecosystem capable of fostering graduates' work readiness in a holistic manner.

2. Contributions of the Partnership between the Madrasah and the BLK to Graduates' Work Readiness

The partnership between the madrasah and the *Balai Latihan Kerja* (BLK; Vocational Training Center) contributes to enhancing the work readiness of *Madrasah Aliyah* (MA) graduates through two primary dimensions: formal recognition through certification and the development of technical competencies (hard skills). These contributions are elaborated below.

a. Certification as a Means of Facilitating the School-to-Work Transition

For *Madrasah Aliyah* graduates, whose curriculum is not primarily designed to prepare students for immediate entry into the labor market, the training certificate issued by the BLK serves as an important transitional asset. The Principal of MA Miftahul Falah explained:

"This partnership focuses on developing vocational skills, and at the end of the program students receive a certificate as evidence that they have completed the training. This certificate has become one of the school's main selling points in promoting our institution while also ensuring that the training program we provide is aligned with the demands of the labor market and the needs of society."

This statement highlights that the madrasah regards the training certificate as an important asset for its graduates. The certificate serves as official recognition of students' learning experiences beyond the formal academic curriculum and provides relevant documentary evidence that can support employment applications. Nevertheless, the value of this certificate should be understood primarily as an initial step in building graduates' professional profiles, given that practical competencies formally recognized by industry remain essential for long-term employability.

However, the school's expectations regarding the function of the certificate must be considered alongside the operational policies governing the program. As explained by Mrs. Pipit Wardhani, Head of the Development and Marketing Division of the BLK, there is a fundamental distinction in competency recognition between regular BLK trainees and madrasah students. Participants enrolled in the regular BLK training programs are eligible to undertake the competency assessment administered by the National Professional Certification Agency (*Badan Nasional Sertifikasi Profesi* [BNSP]), enabling them to obtain both a BLK training certificate and a nationally recognized BNSP competency certificate. In contrast, under the self-funded partnership scheme with schools, students receive only the BLK training certificate without undergoing the formal competency assessment. Consequently, the additional value obtained by madrasah students primarily reflects documented participation in vocational training rather than nationally certified occupational competence recognized by industry standards.

Despite these limitations in formal certification, the perceived benefits of the program remain an important indicator of its effectiveness. As expressed by one of the participants, the training provided valuable learning experiences and enabled students to

acquire fundamental software skills that were easy to understand and directly applicable to their future careers. Several students also reported that the training program offered tangible benefits for both their educational development and career preparation. Fundamental computer competencies, particularly Microsoft Office applications relevant to the Office Administration program, were delivered systematically and in an accessible manner, providing participants with practical experience that they considered highly valuable for their future employment opportunities.

b. Competency Transformation: From Basic Literacy to Applied Skills

One of the most significant outcomes of the partnership between the madrasah and the *Balai Latihan Kerja* (BLK; Vocational Training Center) is the transformation of graduates' competencies from merely possessing theoretical knowledge to acquiring practical, workplace-relevant skills. The training provided by the BLK enables students and alumni to gain direct hands-on experience, allowing them to develop competencies that are more focused and readily applicable in professional settings. This was reflected in the statement of one of the alumni:

"After participating in the BLK training, I felt much better prepared to enter the workforce. We did not only study theory; most of the training consisted of practical activities related to our field. I gained new experiences that I had never received at school. Besides technical skills, the program also taught us discipline, responsibility, and how to work effectively in a team. In my opinion, the partnership between the madrasah and the BLK is very beneficial for alumni, especially in providing additional skills after graduation."

This statement demonstrates that the BLK training contributes not only to the development of technical competencies (*hard skills*) but also to strengthening graduates' work readiness through the enhancement of *soft skills*, including discipline, responsibility, and teamwork. These findings suggest that the partnership between the madrasah and the BLK has a positive impact on graduates' employability by providing practice-oriented learning experiences that foster both technical and interpersonal competencies.

In addition, the growing awareness among students and alumni of the increasingly competitive labor market has become an important factor supporting participation in the BLK training program. Alumni have come to recognize that a formal academic diploma alone is no longer sufficient to compete successfully in today's job market and that additional practical and application-oriented skills are essential. This awareness has encouraged students to participate more actively and seriously in the training program as a means of strengthening their work readiness after graduating from the madrasah. As one alumnus explained:

"Nowadays, finding a job is not possible by relying solely on an academic diploma. That is why I joined the BLK training to gain additional skills and become more competitive when looking for a job after graduation."

From a theoretical perspective, successful educational partnerships do not emerge by chance but are established through careful planning and systematic development. Molloy et

al.²⁸ emphasize that partnership development should begin with partnership mapping, the formulation of a shared vision and mission, negotiation, and clearly defined agreements. Epstein reinforces this perspective by defining school partnerships as planned connections among schools, families, and business or community organizations designed to promote students' social, emotional, physical, and intellectual development in a holistic manner. However, the findings of this study indicate that the partnership between *Madrasah Aliyah* (MA) and the BLK currently remains at an operational-transactional level rather than evolving into a strategic-integrative partnership. In practice, the madrasah primarily utilizes BLK services to compensate for limitations in instructional time and the constraints associated with the self-funded financing scheme. Consequently, the partnership has not yet been accompanied by systematic curriculum alignment planned from the outset.

This gap becomes even more apparent when viewed through Epstein's²⁹ Six Types of Involvement framework. The madrasah has not yet fully optimized family involvement through dimensions such as Learning at Home and Parenting, both of which are intended to support students' transition from academic environments to the workplace. As a result, the training program often remains disconnected from the madrasah's internal curriculum and receives limited emotional and educational support from families. Furthermore, insufficient two-way communication (Communicating) between BLK instructors and madrasah teachers regarding students' competency development and learning readiness constitutes a significant barrier that reduces the effectiveness of skill transfer.

Moreover, with respect to work readiness, certification constitutes a critical component of the School-to-Work Transition (STWT) process. Mahmudah et al.³⁰ argue that effective partnership management should produce competency recognition that is widely accepted within the labor market. Although the BLK training program makes a meaningful contribution by strengthening students' technical capabilities and enhancing their self-confidence outcomes that are consistent with the twenty-first-century skills framework proposed by Thornhill-Miller et al.,³¹ the 40-hour training certificate currently issued still faces challenges regarding formal recognition of occupational competence. Substantively, the program remains at the stage of providing foundational vocational skills that are valuable for supporting further education and facilitating entry into the informal labor market. However, it has not yet fully met the competency standards required for employment in the formal industrial sector, where more advanced specialization and nationally recognized certification are generally expected. Therefore, without more comprehensive and strategically integrated efforts, this partnership risks functioning primarily as a short-term intervention whose long-

²⁸ Molloy, Patty, and Et.al, *Building Home, School, Community Partnerships: The Planning Phase*. (Texas: Office of Educational Research and Improvement, US Department of Education, 1995).

²⁹ Joyce L Epstein, Mavis G. Sanders, and Beth S. Simon, *School, Family, and Community Partnerships: Your Handbook for Action*. (Thousand Oaks: Corwin Press, 2018).

³⁰ Mahmudah et al., "The Importance of Partnership Management To Improve School-To-Work Transition Readiness Among Vocational High School Graduates."

³¹ Branden Thornhill-Miller et al., "Creativity, Critical Thinking, Communication, and Collaboration: Assessment, Certification, and Promotion of 21st Century Skills for the Future of Work and Education," *Journal of Intelligence* 11, no. 3 (2023), <https://doi.org/10.3390/jintelligence11030054>.

term contribution to enhancing graduates' competitiveness in the labor market remains limited.

3. Supporting and Inhibiting Factors of the Partnership

The success of an institutional partnership is largely determined by the balance between supporting resources and the effective management of existing constraints. In the context of the partnership between the *Madrasah Aliyah* (MA) and the *Balai Latihan Kerja* (BLK; Vocational Training Center), the findings reveal an inherent paradox: the very factor that enables the partnership—the self-funded (*swadana*) scheme—also constitutes one of its principal financial constraints.

a. Supporting Factors: Resource Complementarity and Geographic Proximity

The successful implementation of this partnership is attributable to several key factors that facilitate synergy between the two institutions. Field findings indicate two primary enabling factors that strengthen the collaboration. First, the partnership benefits from the availability of technical facilities and specialized training equipment at the BLK, resources that the madrasah would be unable to provide independently. In this regard, the BLK functions as an external vocational laboratory, enabling students to acquire practical competencies through access to industry-standard facilities.

Second, the geographical proximity of BLK Pandaan, Pasuruan, to the madrasah serves as an important enabling factor. The relatively short distance between the two institutions improves transportation efficiency, reduces logistical costs, and facilitates students' participation in training activities. This geographic advantage contributes significantly to the sustainability and practicality of the partnership.

b. Structural Constraints: Regulatory Changes and Equipment Capacity

The most significant obstacles identified in the field relate to changes in training regulations and limitations in practical training facilities. As explained by Mrs. Pipit Wardhani, Head of the Development and Marketing Division of BLK Pandaan:

"Operational challenges have become more complex due to the implementation of the Integrity Zone (*Zona Integritas*) policy at the BLK, which now restricts outreach-based partnership models and the allocation of special training quotas for partner schools. Consequently, madrasahs are required to follow more rigorous administrative procedures in order to uphold the principles of transparency and accountability within the vocational training institution."

In addition, the capacity of each training class is limited to a maximum of 16 participants, in accordance with the standards established by the Indonesian Ministry of Manpower (*Kementerian Ketenagakerjaan*). This limitation is intended to ensure effective supervision of workshop equipment and training facilities by instructors. While such regulations contribute to maintaining instructional quality and occupational safety, they simultaneously restrict the number of students who can participate in each training cycle, thereby reducing the overall reach and flexibility of the program.

c. Adaptive Constraints: Students' Initial Readiness and Characteristics

Students' initial competencies constitute a critical determinant of the effectiveness of vocational competency development programs. Differences in educational backgrounds often influence students' readiness to adapt to professional workplace culture, making curriculum flexibility essential for bridging the gap between students' initial competencies and the competency standards expected by the BLK.

These circumstances are reflected in several adaptive challenges observed during the implementation of the program. A substantial gap in foundational competencies was evident, requiring instructors to modify instructional materials to accommodate students' entry-level abilities. As explained by Mrs. Icha, the Office Administration instructor, classroom instruction frequently had to begin with introducing the most basic features of computer software. This finding indicates a considerable discrepancy between the academically oriented curriculum of the madrasah and the technical competencies required in industrial settings.

Furthermore, *Madrasah Aliyah* students, who are accustomed to a religious and academically oriented educational environment, require an adjustment period to adapt to the more disciplined, practice-oriented learning culture of vocational training. This finding underscores the importance of cultivating professional attitudes, work ethics, and character development within the madrasah as an essential foundation for facilitating students' successful adaptation during vocational training.

From another perspective, the partnership demonstrates an inherent paradox. On the one hand, the madrasah depends heavily on the BLK's facilities and expertise, making the partnership a critical supporting factor for vocational competency development. On the other hand, both institutions face structural constraints arising from bureaucratic regulations and the financial implications of the self-funded partnership model. Although the *swadana* scheme provides schools with greater access to BLK services without requiring students to undergo the competitive selection process applied in regular training programs, the associated training fees create financial challenges that may reduce the inclusiveness of vocational education. Therefore, if this collaboration is to be strengthened, it will require a more comprehensive integrative Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) that extends beyond the rental and utilization of training facilities to include curriculum synchronization at the madrasah level. Such integration would enable students to arrive at the BLK with foundational technical competencies and a stronger professional mindset rather than beginning their vocational training from the most basic level.

Overall, these supporting and inhibiting factors reinforce the earlier finding that the partnership between the MA and the BLK remains predominantly operational rather than strategic in nature. The self-funded partnership model presents a fundamental dilemma: while it represents the only feasible mechanism for providing students with access to specialized vocational facilities, it simultaneously requires the madrasah to allocate sufficient financial resources without imposing additional burdens on students' families. Within the framework of resource sharing proposed by Purnamawati and Yahya, the BLK functions as

a valuable external vocational laboratory for the madrasah, while geographic proximity serves as an important enabling factor that enhances students' mobility and participation.³²

Nevertheless, these advantages are constrained by structural barriers, including changes in the BLK's internal regulations, the implementation of the Integrity Zone (*Zona Integritas*) policy limiting training quotas for partner schools, and the instructor-to-equipment ratio of 1:16, all of which require strict capacity management. Consistent with the partnership management framework proposed by Mahmudah et al., operational standardization is essential for maintaining partnership quality. However, when these constraints are combined with the reduction of training duration from 100 instructional hours (*Jam Pelajaran* [JP]) to only 40 instructional hours, the resulting decrease in active learning time significantly limits students' opportunities to achieve industry-level competency standards.³³ Therefore, the partnership requires a strategic transformation through the establishment of an integrative MoU that encompasses not only access to training facilities but also early curriculum synchronization, ensuring that students enter the BLK with adequate foundational competencies, stronger work readiness, and greater potential to achieve meaningful vocational outcomes.

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that the partnership between MA Miftahul Falah and BLK Pandaan operates through a self-funded (*swadana*) partnership model as a strategic response to the madrasah's limited internal vocational training facilities. The program has made a meaningful contribution to enhancing students' technical competencies and self-confidence through vocational training, certification, and direct practical experience. Nevertheless, these contributions remain at the foundational level, serving primarily to equip graduates with basic vocational competencies that facilitate their transition to higher education or employment in the informal labor market rather than producing industry-ready graduates capable of meeting the specialized competency requirements of the formal industrial sector.

The implementation of the program also faces significant structural and adaptive challenges. Operational constraints include the reduction of the training duration to **40 instructional hours (*Jam Pelajaran* [JP])**, limited availability of practical training equipment, and internal regulatory policies governing BLK operations. Furthermore, a substantial gap exists between the academic curriculum of the madrasah and the competency standards expected by industry, necessitating extensive instructional adaptation during the training process. These findings indicate that the existing partnership remains predominantly **operational and transactional**, with the madrasah functioning primarily as a consumer of vocational training services rather than as an equal strategic partner within the broader vocational education ecosystem.

³² Purnamawati and Muhammad Yahya, *Model Kemitraan Smk Dengan Dunia* (Makassar: Badan Penerbit Universitas Negeri Makassar, 2019), [https://eprints.unm.ac.id/16305/1/Buku Referensi - MKS.pdf](https://eprints.unm.ac.id/16305/1/Buku%20Referensi%20-%20MKS.pdf).

³³ Mahmudah et al., "The Importance of Partnership Management To Improve School-To-Work Transition Readiness Among Vocational High School Graduates."

To advance toward a **strategic and integrative partnership**, the madrasah should pursue more comprehensive curriculum synchronization with the BLK while strengthening parental involvement, not only in strategic decision-making but also in supporting the financial sustainability of the program. Parental participation in financing should be viewed as an important form of stakeholder engagement. Given that education is a shared responsibility among schools, families, and the wider community, financial contributions from parents can help alleviate the madrasah's fiscal burden while simultaneously transforming parents' roles from passive financial supporters into active stakeholders with a stronger sense of ownership regarding the effectiveness of their children's vocational training. In addition, closer collaboration between BLK instructors and madrasah teachers, together with the early cultivation of work ethics and professional character within the madrasah curriculum, constitutes a fundamental prerequisite for improving program effectiveness. Through more systematic and strategically integrated efforts, this partnership has the potential to evolve beyond a merely administrative arrangement into a **holistic learning ecosystem** capable of equipping graduates with relevant competencies and stronger competitiveness in response to the evolving demands of the contemporary labor market.

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