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Implementation of Innovation and Curriculum Evaluation in Adapting Learning to Demands The World of Work (Research at SMK Plus Al Hasanah Tasikmalaya Regency)

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to describe the implementation of innovation and curriculum evaluation at SMK Plus Al Hasanah Tasikmalaya as an effort to adapt learning to the demands of the world of work. Vocational education plays a strategic role in preparing competent and job-ready human resources, but in practice there is still a gap between the competencies of SMK graduates and the needs of the industrial world. This study employs a qualitative approach with a descriptive method, focusing on the forms of curriculum innovation, the evaluation process, as well as the supporting and hindering factors faced by the school. The research findings are expected to contribute theoretically to the development of competency-based curricula and the "link and match" model between vocational schools and industry. Practically, these findings are beneficial for schools, teachers, the business world, the government, and other researchers in formulating adaptive and relevant policies and learning strategies aligned with the dynamics of the industry in the era of the Fourth Industrial Revolution. Thus, curriculum innovation and evaluation are essential in producing SMK graduates who not only possess hard skills but also soft skills and high competitiveness in the job market.

Keyword: Vocational Education, Curriculum Innovation, Curriculum Evaluation, Vocational High Schools, The World of Work, Competence.

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I. INTRODUCTION

Vocational education plays a strategic role in preparing human resources who are competent, skilled, and ready to enter the workforce. Ideally, this is achieved through a curriculum that is well aligned with industry dynamics and labor market needs. In the era of globalization and the Industrial Revolution 4.0, the workplace demands graduates who not only possess hard skills, but also soft skills, critical thinking abilities, collaborative competence, and adaptability to change. However, in practice, many vocational schools still face a significant gap between these expectations and actual outcomes. The competencies of graduates often do not fully match industry requirements, as learning processes tend to lag behind technological developments and evolving business needs. This misalignment underscores the urgency for continuous innovation and curriculum evaluation to ensure that vocational high school (SMK) education remains relevant, applicable, and responsive to the demands of the job market. Based on this context, this study examines how innovation and curriculum evaluation are implemented at SMK Plus Al Hasanah Tasikmalaya as a strategic effort to bridge the gap between the ideals of vocational education and the realities of industry needs.

Several previous studies have emphasized the importance of the relevance of the curriculum to the world of work. For example, research by Mulyasa states that the success of vocational education is largely determined by the flexibility and innovation of the curriculum that is able to adapt to changing times and the needs of industry stakeholders (Fitria, 2016). Meanwhile, a study by Fitria shows that industry involvement in the development of vocational curriculum is still low, causing a mismatch between graduates and employment (Mulyasa, 2009).

The practical reality in the field shows that the curriculum used in many vocational schools, including SMK Plus Al Hasanah Tasikmalaya, is still normative and not fully based on the needs of the world of work. The main cause of this problem can be traced through the directive theory of competency-based curricula, which emphasizes that learning must be systematically designed to produce outputs that match the expected profile of graduates. In practice, teachers and managers of vocational schools often lack training in designing an adaptive curriculum, and have not been maximized in evaluating the curriculum on an ongoing basis.

In addition, the limitations of studies examining the implementation of innovation and curriculum evaluation specifically at SMK Plus Al Hasanah Tasikmalaya indicate a gap in research, which actually strengthens the urgency of this study. This study is important to fill the void of local literature that explains how private schools in the region make innovative adjustments to the curriculum to meet the demands of work.

The results of this study are expected to provide practical benefits for various parties. For the school, this study can be the basis for policy making in curriculum updates. For teachers, the results of research can be a guideline in developing learning methods that are appropriate to the world of work. For students, they will acquire a more contextual learning and ready to face the challenges of work after graduation. Meanwhile, for the industrial world, this research is expected to bridge collaboration with educational institutions in developing a more relevant and applicable curriculum.

II. METHOD

This study uses a qualitative approach with the type of case study research focused on the implementation of innovation and curriculum evaluation at SMK Plus Al Hasanah Tasikmalaya. Qualitative approach was chosen because it is considered able to describe in depth the social reality and educational practices that take place in the school environment in an effort to adapt learning to the needs of the world of work. This research is descriptive explorative, which aims to reveal in detail the process of innovation and curriculum evaluation carried out, as well as exploring various supporting and inhibiting factors in its implementation. The main focus of this study is not on quantitative data, but on the interpretation of meaning, understanding of context, as well as the actions of the educational actors involved in the process.

The research location was chosen purposively, namely at SMK Plus Al Hasanah Tasikmalaya, a private vocational high school that is developing a curriculum to be more relevant to the industrial world. The study was conducted on May 12-13, 2025. The subjects of the study included principals, vice principals for curriculum, productive teachers, and representatives from the business and industry (DU/DI) who have established partnerships with schools. The selection of subjects is carried out purposively, namely those who are considered to have a deep understanding and direct experience of the innovation process and curriculum evaluation that is the focus of this study.

Data collection was carried out through three main techniques, namely in-depth interviews, participatory observation, and documentation studies. Interviews were conducted in a semi-structured manner to gather information from principals, teachers, and industry partners regarding curriculum innovation strategies, learning evaluations, and challenges they face. Participatory observation is carried out by directly observing learning activities, internal evaluation processes, and other activities related to the implementation of the curriculum. Meanwhile, documentation studies were conducted by reviewing documents such as school curriculum, work programs, evaluation reports, MoUs with the industry, and graduate profile data.

Data analysis in this study uses an interactive model from Miles and Huberman which consists of three stages, namely data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion or verification. Data from various sources are analyzed thematically, categorized according to research focus, and interpreted by referring to a pre-established theoretical framework. To maintain the validity of the data, triangulation of sources and methods is used, and reconfirmation is carried out to the research subject (member check) to ensure the accuracy and validity of the findings.

In the conduct of research, researchers uphold scientific ethics. Each informant was given an explanation of the purpose of the study and asked for consent before the interview. The identity of the informant is kept confidential, and the entire data collection process is carried out transparently and responsibly. The final results of this research will be presented to the school as a form of academic contribution that is expected to support the development of a curriculum that is more adaptive and relevant to the world of work.

III. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Implementation of curriculum innovation at SMK Plus Al Hasanah Tasikmalaya

Based on the results of interviews and observations with Ayi Dini Purwandi (interview with Bpk. Ayi Dini Purwandi (head of SMK Plus Al hasanah, May 12, 2025), the implementation of curriculum innovation at SMK Plus Al Hasanah Tasikmalaya is carried out through several strategic approaches. One of them is the adjustment of curriculum content to the needs of the industrial world, which is realized in the form of development of local industry-based content, the addition of practicum materials according to industry standards, and the application of project-based learning methods. The school also cooperates with business and industry (DU/DI) in the curriculum planning process. This activity is in line with the principle of link and match, which emphasizes the importance of integration between the world of education and the world of work. This form of cooperation includes internship programs (PKL), teacher training in the industry, as well as the preparation of training materials with business partners.

The implementation of innovation is also seen in the use of digital technology in the learning process. Teachers are beginning to utilize digital platforms, technical software simulations, and interactive media to increase the effectiveness and appeal of learning. This innovation is aimed at answering the challenges of the digital era and the needs of students ' soft skills such as digital literacy and online collaboration.

However, this curriculum innovation still faces challenges, such as limited infrastructure, uneven competence of teachers in managing learning innovations, and limited time in preparing a comprehensive adaptive curriculum. Some teachers said that the national curriculum is still too rigid and not fully flexible to be integrated with the local needs of the industry.

Curriculum evaluation as an effort to adjust to the world of work

The curriculum evaluation process at SMK Plus Al Hasanah Tasikmalaya is carried out periodically, at least once in a school year, and involves elements of school leaders, productive teachers, and representatives of DU/DI. This evaluation was conducted through the teacher work forum (MGMP internal), monitoring the results of the implementation of field work practices (PKL), as well as through feedback from alumni and graduate users. The evaluation Model used approaches the CIPP (Context, Input, Process, Product) approach. For example, context evaluation is carried out by analyzing trends in the world of work and industry competence needs; input evaluation is carried out through assessments of the readiness of facilities and teachers; the learning process is evaluated through supervision and reflection; and evaluation of results is carried out by tracing the track record of alumni in the world of work. (Interview with Bpk. Anwar Sanusi (vice president of SMK Plus Al hasanah, May 13, 2025)

This evaluation provides an objective picture of curriculum achievement and becomes the basis for formulating innovations in the following year. However, the obstacle faced is the absence of an adequate alumni database system, so that the graduate search process has not run optimally. In addition, industry involvement in the evaluation is still limited to certain companies that have established Intensive Partnerships with schools.

Supporting and inhibiting factors

The implementation of innovation and curriculum evaluation at SMK Plus Al Hasanah Tasikmalaya is supported by several key factors that directly influence its effectiveness. One of the most significant is the strong commitment of school leaders to regularly update the curriculum in line with industry trends and competency standards. This leadership commitment not only sets the strategic direction but also creates a conducive environment for change. Another important supporting factor is the enthusiasm of young teachers in experimenting with new learning approaches. Their openness to innovation fosters a dynamic teaching atmosphere and encourages the adoption of methods that are more engaging and relevant to students. In addition, the school's strategic partnerships with the business and industrial world (DU/DI) provide students with direct exposure to real workplace settings, thereby strengthening the link between school-based learning and industry practices.

However, several inhibiting factors present challenges to achieving optimal results. The most pressing is the limitation of practical facilities and supporting technology, which hampers the delivery of industry-standard training and restricts students' opportunities for hands-on learning. Furthermore, there is considerable variation in teacher competence, particularly in the ability to design and implement innovative learning tools, leading to inconsistencies in the quality of instruction. Lastly, the relatively rigid nature of national curriculum policies, which offer limited flexibility to accommodate local industry needs, constrains the school's ability to fully adapt its curriculum to the specific demands of the regional job market. These constraints, if not addressed, could undermine the potential impact of

curriculum innovation and evaluation efforts, making it more difficult for the school to produce graduates who are fully aligned with the evolving requirements of the labor market.

Relevance of Findings To theory

This finding reinforces the concept of Competency-Based Curriculum (KBK) which emphasizes that the main purpose of education is to produce graduates who have competencies in accordance with the needs of the world of work. KBK requires an adjustment between the inputs, processes, and outputs of education with the demands of competence needed by the market, both from the aspect of knowledge (knowledge), skills (skills), and attitude (attitude). In the vocational school environment, this is reflected in the curriculum structure that emphasizes vocational practice training, link and match with the industry, as well as the direct involvement of experts from outside the school in the learning process (Mulyasa, 2004).

Implementation of curriculum innovation at SMK Plus Al Hasanah Tasikmalaya shows the real form of these principles. The school adjusts the curriculum not only on administrative aspects, but also targets project-based learning strategies, student internship programs to industry, and the integration of soft skills and entrepreneurship into productive subjects. This shows that the institution has sought to internalize the basic philosophy of the CBC, which is result-oriented learning and relevance to real work needs (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2022).

Furthermore, the practice of curriculum innovation at SMK Plus Al Hasanah can be examined through the lens of Everett M. Rogers' Diffusion of Innovation theory, which emphasizes four key elements: innovation, communication channels, time, and social system (Rogers, 2003). In terms of innovation, the school has introduced curriculum adjustments that integrate industry-based competencies, digital literacy, and project-based learning. These changes represent clear departures from the previous, more theory-oriented curriculum, offering students practical skills aligned with current labor market demands. For communication channels, the school utilizes multiple pathways to disseminate innovation ideas, including regular coordination meetings between school leaders and teachers, WhatsApp groups for rapid updates, and formal workshops involving industry representatives. These channels ensure that the rationale, objectives, and methods of curriculum changes are clearly understood by all stakeholders, reducing resistance and misunderstandings.

The time dimension is evident in the staged adoption process. Initially, pilot projects are conducted in selected classes to test the effectiveness of new teaching strategies. Based on evaluation results, these innovations are gradually scaled up to other classes, allowing the school to refine approaches while building teacher readiness. This phased approach aligns with Rogers' notion that innovation adoption is a process rather than a one-time event. Finally, the social system at SMK Plus Al Hasanah comprising the principal, management team, teachers, students, and industry partners—plays a critical role in supporting the diffusion process. The principal and management team act as key change agents by initiating teacher training, fostering a culture of continuous improvement, and maintaining partnerships with the business and industrial world (DU/DI). Industry partners, in turn, validate the relevance of the curriculum and provide real-world contexts for learning. This alignment between theory and practice highlights that without strong leadership, clear communication, a gradual adoption timeline, and a supportive social environment, curriculum innovation efforts would likely face greater resistance and lower sustainability (H.A.R. Tilaar, 2002).

On the other hand, the evaluation process of the implementation of the innovative curriculum at SMK Plus Al Hasanah can be studied using the CIPP (Context, Input, Process, Product) evaluation model developed by Stufflebeam. This Model emphasizes that educational evaluation focuses not only on the final result (product), but also on the analysis of the initial context, the readiness of resources, and the implementation of the learning process (Daniel L. Stufflebeam & Anthony J. Shinkfield, 2007). Based on field data, it appears that context and input aspects such as industry needs analysis and curriculum planning have done quite well. However, process and product aspects still need to be improved, especially in terms of monitoring student learning outcomes and utilizing evaluation results for continuous improvement. This shows that although the evaluative approach has led to the systematization of ALA CIPP, its implementation still has not touched all elements optimally (Tjeerd Plomp & Nienke Nieveen 2010).

Thus, it can be concluded that the implementation of curriculum innovation in SMK Plus Al Hasanah Tasikmalaya has shown significant progress in adapting learning to the demands of the world of work. This effort confirms the importance of synergy between curriculum theory, educational innovation, and sustainable evaluation systems so that the transformation of vocational education truly impacts graduate job readiness.

IV. CONCLUSION

Based on the results of research on the implementation of innovation and curriculum evaluation in adjusting learning to the demands of the world of work at SMK Plus Al Hasanah Tasikmalaya, it can be concluded that the implementation of curriculum innovation at SMK Plus Al Hasanah Tasikmalaya is carried out through various strategic approaches, such as the adjustment of learning content to industry needs, the development of local content based on the world of work, the application of project-based learning methods, and the use of digital technology in the teaching and learning process. The school has also established a partnership with DU/DI as a concrete form of link and match efforts. However, the implementation of innovation is still faced with obstacles such as limited infrastructure and teacher competence in designing adaptive curricula.

Curriculum evaluation in this school is carried out regularly and involves internal elements of the school and industry partners. Evaluation includes the context of the needs of the world of work, the learning process, and student achievement. The approach used tends to lead to the CIPP model (Context, Input, Process, Product), although its implementation is not yet fully systematic and thorough. This evaluation is an important basis in determining innovative steps in the next learning period.

Factors that support the success of innovation and curriculum evaluation include the commitment of school leaders, the spirit of teachers in innovating, and partnership support from the industrial world. Meanwhile, the main inhibiting factors are limited facilities, variation in teacher abilities, and not optimal policies that allow curriculum flexibility at the education unit level.

In general, this study shows that efforts to implement innovation and curriculum evaluation at SMK Plus Al Hasanah Tasikmalaya have shown a positive direction towards a curriculum that is responsive to the needs of the world of work. However, it is necessary to strengthen policy aspects, increase teacher capacity, and closer collaboration with industry to achieve optimal and sustainable results

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