

# Impact of the Center of Excellence Vocational High School Program on the Interest of New Learners

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## ABSTRACT

The main problem of private schools is the difficulty of finding new learners (NL), exacerbated by the Covid-19 pandemic, making private schools even more slumped, including private Centers of Excellence Vocational High School (VHS CoE). Research objectives is to analyze; (1) promotion strategies for the private VHS CoE, (2) the impact of the VHS CoE on the interest of NL, and (3) the benefits of the VHS CoE. Qualitative descriptive research methods. The research sample was four private VHS CoE. Stages of research; (1) formulate problems, (2) determine the subject, (3) compile interview guidelines, (4) collect data, (5) sort and analyze data, (6) make conclusions. The results: (1) the private VHS CoE conduct direct socialization to pre-VHS, school residents, related institutions, and the community, and form a management team. Direct socialization is the most effective promotion strategy compared to other strategies, (2) the VHS CoE has an impact on NL interest fluctuatingly. The school program is the main consideration for NL to register at VHS CoE, while according to interests and talents is the main reason for NL to choose a flagship expertise program, and (3) the benefits of the VHS CoE, among others; improving the quality of schools, making it easier to get a job, and according to industry needs. The results of the study are expected to be the consideration of relevant agencies in making policies for the VHS CoE and for preparing strategies for capturing NL for private vocational schools.

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## **Introduction**

The quality of VHS graduates is not good, this is evidenced by the open unemployment rate of VHS graduates of 11.45% the highest compared to other levels of education (BPS, 2021). The problems of unemployment, the quality of human resources (HR) competitiveness, and industry's demands on a multi-skilled workforce are challenges in the world of education (Yahya, 2018), thus encouraging the President to issue instructions on the Revitalization of Vocational Schools in order to improve the quality of HR (Inpres, 2016). Education not only improves performance and productivity, but includes the ability of the workforce (Mahmudah, 2020).

The Ministry of Education and Culture followed up the Presidential Instruction by launching the VHS CoE program with the aim of producing quality graduates to be absorbed in industry or become entrepreneurs through the alignment of vocational education (Kemdikbud, 2022). The VHS CoE program is expected to be a lever for VHS so that the quality of learning outcomes is in accordance with industry standards (Faisal, 2021). The VHS CoE needs partnership programs with industry, because partnerships are able to solve problems of financing, management, access, and quality of education (Mgaiwa, 2016). Besides require the active participation of students, teachers, and industry to achieve good learning output (Wheeler, 2018). Industry's role is to encourage local government policies related to the development of vocational schools based on local wisdom, building procurement, opening competencies, providing funds, organizing pre-employment, teacher internships, competency tests, and curriculum development (Indriaturrahmi, 2016). The learning experience factor contributes positively to apprentices and supports competency development in the modern workplace. (Barabasch, 2020).

The quality of learning is influenced by professional competence and the teaching ability of teachers. Professional teachers can adapt and be able to face all changes so as to provide balance and improve the competence of SMK students (Mukti, 2021). Teacher competencies include professional, pedagogic, social, and personality (Kemdikbud, 2007). Teachers who have pedagogical and professional competence can apply learning strategies and methods relevant to the characteristics of learners and integrate the strengthening of character education (Wardoyo, 2020). Character education contributes to increasing academic and non-academic achievement by 62.5% (Susatya, 2021). Principals, teachers, and students should realize the principles of CBE work in a

comprehensive and flexible skills program (Misbah, 2020). Unfortunately, there are still many low-competence vocational school teachers (Matondang, 2010) and many productive teachers have not pursued their fields in depth (Darmi, 2015). For this reason, efforts are still needed to increase teacher competence in understanding and applying learning technology (Maknun, 2022), teacher competency development is part of HR development and must be carried out continuously (Rahimah, 2021), professional competencies are developed through learning materials and the substance of knowledge (Hartiningtyas, 2016), and teachers have the opportunity to deepen the competence of communication and information technology to improve the quality of learning (Suso, 2021).

The success of the VHS CoE program is measured by; inputs, processes, outputs, outcomes, and impacts (Dit. PSMK, 2017). One of the input elements is NL. NL as a raw material is the main element of the learning process, both the poor quality of the output is influenced by inputs. Quality NL simplifies the process of assessment, learning, coaching, and evaluation. Unfortunately, until now, VHS NL has not been of the number one quality, because the number one quality still chooses the other level.

This research is different from previous studies. The state-of-the-art research is an analysis of the impact of the VHS CoE program on the interest of NL receipts in private vocational schools. The decline in NL interest in private vocational schools is a problem that has not been answered by research. This is a new topic and has never been studied because the VHS CoE program was launched in 2020. It is hoped that the results of the research will be material for solving problems and become material for policy making. It is believed that the results of the analysis of the application of a suitable and effective promotion strategy in capturing quality NL in private vocational schools to be able to improve the quality of graduates.

## **Method**

Research Design: Research design is descriptive qualitative. Subjects of study were school administrators and learners. Object of study was the impact of the VHS CoE on NL interest in four private schools. Data Collection: Data collection using instruments and document studies. Instruments in the form of interview guidelines as a reference in collecting research data. The study of documents is carried out by means of inventorying administrative data related to NL. Documents serve as complementary data as well as material for cross-checking other data. Data collection techniques, instruments, and research data sources are presented in table 1.

Table 1. Data Collection Techniques

Problem Research	Data Collection Techniques	Instruments	Data Sources
Socialization and strategy, NL, and benefits of the VHS CoE program.	Interviews and document studies.	Interview guidelines, checklist.	Principal/vice principal/head of administration and learners.

Table 2. Instrument Grid (Interview Guidelines)

Component	Sub-Component	Aspects Asked	Subject
Program VHS CoE	Socialization and promotion of the VHS CoE program.	a. Formation of an implementing team, b. Socialization to the community and school residents, c. Promotion strategy, d. Impact on schools, e. Impact on excellent expertise programs, f. Benefits and expectations.	Principal/vice principal.
	NL	a.The number of classes, b.The number of teachers, c. Number of expertise programs, d. Number of school learners, e. The number of learners of the excellent expertise program.	Head of adminis-tration
	Student responses to the VHS CoE program	a.Learners' knowledge about the VHS CoE Program, b.Information media, c. Motivation to register, d. Reasons for choosing a program of expertise, e.Opinions of learners about the VHS CoE Program, f. Benefits and expectations.	Learners.

Research Procedure: Research procedures; (1) formulate problems, (2) determine the subject of research, (3) make field observations, (4) compile research guidelines, (5) collect data, (6) process and present data, (7) analyze and interpret data, and (8) make conclusions.

### Result and Discussion

The research data consists of; (1) the results of socialization and promotion interviews, (2) NL data, and (3) the results of the benefits and expectations interview. Data from interviews on socialization and promotion were collected through seven questions or statements. After the data is sorted, it is displayed in table 3.

Table 3. Socialization and Promotion Data.

No.	Question or Statement	Answer
1.	Socialization to schools and communities.	Schools organizing the VHS CoE Program conduct socialization to schools and communities, including through; organizing IHT, workshops, meetings or meetings of student guardians, community recitations, and through zoom meets comes with a job description.
2.	Management Team of VHS CoE	The school organizing the VHS CoE Program forms a team and the main task of the team.
3.	Socialization to school residents.	The school organizing the VHS CoE Program socializes the VHS CoE Program to all school residents.
4.	Promotion strategy.	The school organizing the VHS CoE Program conducts promotions with direct socialization and through print and electronic media.
5.	The impact of the VHS CoE on the interest of school NL.	The VHS CoE program has an impact on school NL, but not all schools.
6.	The impact of the VHS CoE on the interest of the flagship expertise program.	The VHS CoE program has an impact on the NL flagship expertise program, but not all schools.
7.	Benefits and expectations of the VHS CoE.	The VHS CoE program has a good impact on schools and hopes are continued.

Data on NL admissions in four schools, as follows.

Table 4. Data on School NL and Flagship Programs

No.	School	Sum Learners	Year			Class 1 Year		
			2020	2021	2022	2020	2021	2022
1.	VHS S1	School	731	676	702	167	235	311
		Flagship	115	91	137	26	46	69
2.	VHS S2	School	934	861	865	250	322	249
		Flagship	242	235	211	61	89	50
3.	VHS S3	School	639	593	559	197	169	202
		Flagship	262	257	298	72	84	84
4.	VHS S4	School	1078	1095	1017	350	356	326
		Flagship	152	157	146	41	54	53

Data from interviews about NL responses to the VHS CoE were explored through seven questions or statements. After the data is sorted, it is displayed as follows.

Table 5. Data on Motivations, Benefits, and Expectations for the VHS CoE

No.	Question or Statement	Answer (frequency of choice)
1.	You know the VHS CoE;	Yes, knowing = 31. Not knowing = 4.
2.	Knowing the information of the VHS CoE from;	Direct socialization to school = 25, teacher information = 23, brochures = 18, internet = 15, friends = 13, and parents = 4.
3.	Motivation to enroll in the VHS CoE school, because;	Good school programs = 26, good buildings and facilities = 23, VHS CoE programs = 20, complete equipment = 17, qualified teachers = 8, not accepted at other schools = 17, and friends' invitations = 10.
4.	Choosing the flagship expertise program of VHS CoE on the grounds that;	According to interests and talents = 28, quick work = 25, parental directions = 20, VHS CoE program = 18, friend invitation = 12, not accepted in other majors = 3, and unable to enter high school = 1.
5.	Your opinion about the VHS CoE;	Improving the quality of the school = 30, according to the needs of the school / region = 24, making it easier to get a job = 24, according to the needs of industry = 22.
6.	What are the benefits of the VHS CoE;	(a) improve the quality of schooling, education, and performance, (b) add insight, practice media, and competencies, and (c) make it easier to find industry and get a job.
7.	Expectations for the VHS CoE;	The VHS CoE program continues, so that schools are of higher quality, learning improves, and private schools are not inferior to public schools. In addition, some students expect socialization to be carried out more broadly.

The discussion was carried out by grouping the research data into three parts, namely; (1) socialization and promotion strategies, (2) NL data, (3) impact of the VHS CoE. The interview data is used to answer the first and third research objectives, while the NL data is used to answer the second research objectives.

Discussion of socialization and promotion strategies. Based on the data from the interview results, it shows that all schools organizing the VHS CoE conduct socialization to pre-VHS schools, related educational institutions, and the community. Socialization is carried out through; organizing in-house training (IHT), workshops, meetings of student guardians, community recitations, and zoom meetings. As explained by the head of VHS S1;

... the school socializes the VHS CoE to junior high schools and related institutions by organizing IHT, workshops, and guardian meetings of students...

Schools organizing the VHS CoE carry out internal coordination and socialization to school residents, through; workshops, school work meetings, IHT, meetings of teachers, employees, and social media. This was explained by the head of VHS S3;

... The school socializes the VHS CoE to all school residents with IHT activities, meetings of teachers, employees, and meetings of parents...

The school formed a team managing the VHS CoE equipped with a job description and responsibility as a guideline for the implementation of activities to facilitate coordination, planning, implementation, and evaluation of activities. The team leader is the vice principal for curriculum with members of the excellent expertise program teachers and staff. The managing team is responsible for all activities. This is corroborated by the explanation of the principal of VHS S2;

... The school formed a management team of VHS CoE in charge of socializing the VHS CoE to junior high schools as equals, related institutions, and the community...

... the task of the team according to the tupoksi there is a procurement team, there is a learning team, and there is a development team... if there is physical development...

Promotion is carried out by all schools organizing the VHS CoE with a strategy; socialization, promotion through the media, product marketing, banner installation, and conducting training. As outlined by the principals of VHS S2 and VHS S1;

... promotion strategy of the VHS CoE, through; socialization to junior high schools/MTs, promotion through print media, promotion through online media, installation of banners or banners, and coming to the homes of prospective new students by the busser team...

In conclusion, the discussion of socialization and promotion strategies was used to answer the purpose of the first research. The four schools organizing the VHS CoE conducted direct socialization to pre-VHS schools, related institutions, and the community. In addition, the school carries out internal socialization to all school residents. Direct socialization is the most effective promotion strategy (71.43%) compared to other strategies. For the smooth implementation of the VHS CoE, the school formed an activity management team equipped with duties and responsibilities. The strategy is carried out by forming a promotion team, cost planning, collaboration between institutions, partnerships between schools and industry, the relevance of majors, and clarity of information from schools (Al-Amin, 2022). Promotion strategy is carried out by advertising, personal selling, publications, and word of mouth. The strategy simultaneously had a significant effect on student increase by 65.6% while the remaining 34.4% was influenced by other variables (Renata, 2017). There is a positive and significant influence between school promotion and school interest (Munarsih, 2020).

Discussion of NL. School documents show that the interest in NL changed fluctuating, in the first year there was an increase but in the third year it decreased. In VHS CoE S1 and VHS S3 there is an increase every year, while in VHS S2 and VHS S4 there is an increase and decrease. This proves that the VHS CoE has not guaranteed a maximum increase in NL interest. The first year of the VHS CoE launched (2020-2021) there was an increase in four private schools organizing the VHS CoE, but in the second year there was a decrease in two schools.

The NL of the flagship expertise program of VHS S1 is increasing every year. The first year of the total NL is 26, the second year is 46, and the third year is 69. The data shows a very good increase in NL. The increase in NL in the first year to the second year was 76.69% and the increase in the second year to the third year was 50%. When compared to the first year with the third year, there was an increase of 165.38%.

The NL of the flagship expertise program of VHS S2 increased in the first year but fell in the third year. The first year the total NL is 61, the second year is 89, and the third year is 50. The data showed an increase in NL fluctuating. The increase in NL for the first year to the second year was 45.90% and the second year-to-third year decrease was 78%. When compared to the first year with the third year, there was a decrease of 18.03%.

The NL of the flagship expertise program of VHS S3 increased. The first year of the total NL is 72, the second year is 84, and the third year is 84. The data shows an increase in NL. The increase in NL in the first year to the second year by 16.22% and the second year to the third year was unchanged. When compared to the first year with the third year, there was an increase of 16.22%.

The NL of the flagship expertise program of VHS S4 increased in the first year but fell in the third year. The first year of the total NL is 41, the second year is 54, and the third year is 53. The data shows an increase in NL fluctuating. The increase in NL for the first year to the second year was 31.71% and the decrease in the second year to the third year was 1.85%. When compared to the first year with the third year, there was an increase of 29.27%. The results of the above analysis if a diagram is made, look as follows Figure 1.

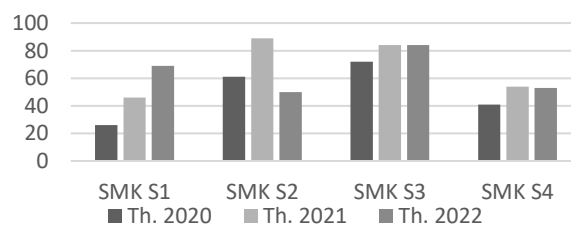


Fig 1: NL Data of the VHS CoE



The next discussion is the knowledge of the VHS CoE. NL knowing the VHS CoE amounted to 88.57% and unknown amounted to 11.43%. However, this knowledge is still preliminary information and sometimes limited to stands for VHS CoE. The VHS CoE is known to NL through; direct socialization to pre-VHS schools 71.43%, teacher information 65.71%, brochures 51.43%, internet 42.86%, friends 37.14%, and parents 11.43%. The percentage figure is obtained from the frequency of gdp selection divided by the number of respondents, for example; direct socialization of selected NL of 25 divided by the number of respondents 35 = 71.43%. Based on these data, direct socialization holds the highest percentage, this shows that direct socialization is very important, very effective, and most suitable for promotional strategies. The data if visualized is listed in diagram 2 on Figure 2.

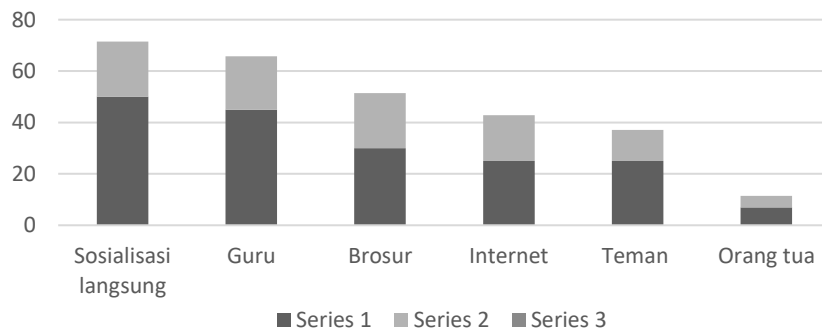


Fig 2: Origin of Information on the VHS CoE

The reasons or motivations for NL enrolling in the VHS CoE program schools, are; good school program 74.29%, good buildings and facilities 65.71%, VHS CoE program 57.14%, complete equipment 48.57%, qualified teachers 22.86%, not accepted into other schools 48.57%, and solicitation of friends 28.57%. This data shows that NL is attracted to schools at VHS CoE because schools have good programs, beating the availability of quality facilities, equipment, and teachers. Unfortunately, there are 48.57% of NL choosing VHS because it is not accepted in public schools, a very large number and this shows that vocational schools are still the second choice. The above data if visualized is listed in diagram 3 on Figure 3.

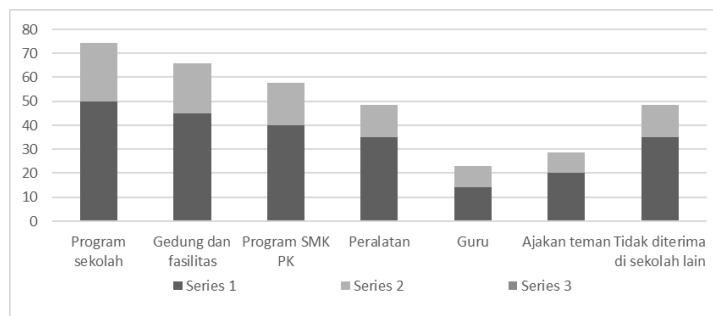


Fig 3: Reasons for School NL at VHS CoE

The reasons or motivations for NL to choose the flagship expertise program of VHS CoE, are; according to interests and talents 80%, quick to work 71.43%, parental direction 57.14%, VHS CoE program 51.43%, friend invitation 34.29%, not accepted in other majors 8.57%, and unable to enter high school 2.86%. NL selects excellent skill programs according to interests and talents ranked first. This is very proud, because NL can already plan for the future by adjusting its talents. Unfortunately, there are 8.57% of NL that are reasoned that they are not accepted in other majors and 2.86% cannot enter high school. The above data if visualized is listed in diagram 4 on Figure 4.

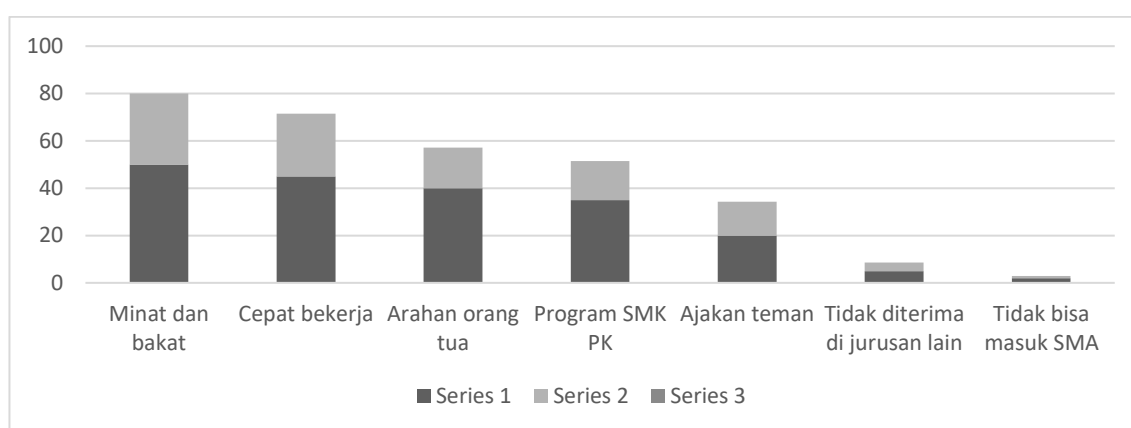


Fig 4: Reasons to Choose a Flagship Program

The conclusion of the analysis of NL data was used to answer the purpose of the second study. The VHS CoE program has an impact on NL interest in a fluctuating manner. The first year the NL interest in the four schools increased, but in the second year two schools experienced a decline. Promotion programs have been carried out well in some parts but it is not very effective in increasing the interest of new students (Daryanto, 2014). Good school programs (74.29%) are the main considerations for NL enrolling in VHS CoE, while according to interests and talents (80%) are the main reasons NL chooses flagship expertise programs.

Discussion of the benefits and expectations of the VHS CoE program. The school administrator explained that the VHS CoE program is very useful. The VHS CoE program has an impact on increasing school NL and flagship expertise programs. This can be seen from the NL data, but not all schools have felt the impact. As said by the principals of VHS S1 and VHS S2;

... the VHS CoE program has an impact on school NL... The VHS CoE program has an impact on the NL of the flagship expertise program, as evidenced by the increase in the number of new students in the flagship expertise program...

... the VHS CoE program has not had an impact on the school's NL revenue and the NL of the flagship expertise program...

School administrators expect the VHS CoE program to be continued and improved, because this program is proven to be able to improve facilities, infrastructure, teacher competencies, and partnerships. As explained by the principals of VHS S1 and S3;

... the benefits of the VHS CoE program, among others; increasing the quality of human resources, both teachers and graduates, increasing industry trust, increasing school facilities...

The benefits of the VHS CoE program according to NL are; improving the quality of schools 85.71%, according to the needs of schools/regions 68.57%, making it easier to get a job 68.57%, and according to the needs of industry 62.86%. This indicates that the VHS CoE program has an impact on improving the quality and development of vocational schools. NL also argues that the VHS CoE program; (a) improve learning facilities, school quality, and performance, (b) add insight, practice media, and competencies, and (c) make it easier to find industry and get a job. This proves that the VHS CoE program is beneficial for schools, students, the community, and industry. The above data if visualized is listed in diagram 5 on Figure 5.

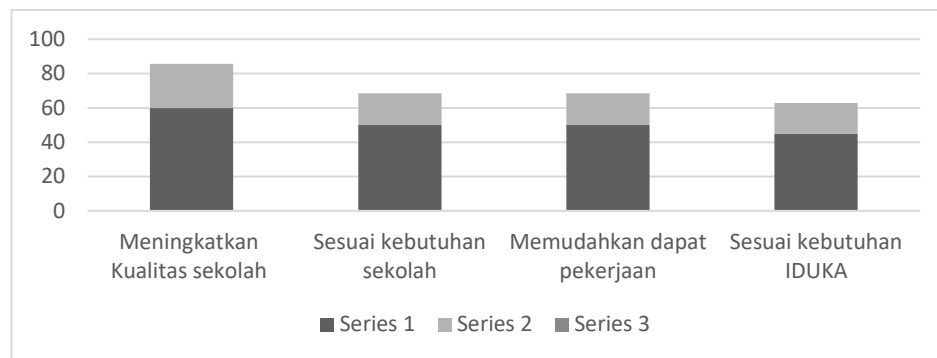


Fig 5: Benefits of the VHS CoE Program

NL expectations for the VHS CoE program are; the CoE program continues, so that schools are of higher quality, learning improves, and private schools are not inferior to public schools. In addition, some NL expects socialization to be carried out more broadly so that the understanding of the VHS CoE program is deeper.

The conclusion of the analysis of the benefits and expectations of the VHS CoE program was used to answer the third research objective. The benefits of the VHS CoE program according to school administrators and NL include; improving the quality of schools (85.71%), according to the needs of schools/regions (68.57%), making it easier to get a job (68.57%), and according to the needs of industry (62.86%). School administrators' expectations and NL; The VHS CoE program is continued and improved, because it is proven to be able to improve learning facilities, infrastructure, teacher competencies, and partnerships. The effect of learning facilities on student learning achievement was 25.45% (Febriani, 2017).

## Conclusion

The four schools organizing the VHS CoE program conducted direct socialization to pre-VHS schools, related institutions, and the community. In addition, the school carries out internal

socialization to all school residents. Direct socialization is the most effective promotion strategy (71.43%) compared to other strategies. For the smooth implementation of the VHS CoE program, the school formed a management team equipped with a job description.

The VHS CoE program has an impact on NL interest in a fluctuating manner. The first year the NL interest in the four schools increased, but in the second year two schools experienced a decline. Good school programs are the main consideration for NL to enroll in VHS CoE, while according to interests and talents, it is the main reason for NL to choose flagship expertise programs.

The benefits of the VHS CoE program include; improving the quality of schools, according to the needs of the school/region, making it easier to get a job, and according to the needs of industry. School expectations and NL; The VHS CoE program is continued and improved, because it is proven to be able to improve facilities, infrastructure, teacher competencies, and partnerships.

The implication of this study is that the impact of the VHS CoE program on NL interest is not necessarily accurate, because there are still other factors that can influence, such as; the reasons for the COVID-19 pandemic, data on pre-vocational school graduations, and the number of vocational schools around. However, at least with the results of this impact analysis, it can be used as material for theoretical studies and further research footings. The results of the research are recommended as material for consideration by relevant agencies in formulating policies for the VHS CoE program, as a research reference, and as a discussion material for the VHS CoE program.

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