

Empowerment Of Human Resources As A Strategy To Increase Regional Economic Competitiveness

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Abstract: *This research examines human resource empowerment as a strategy to enhance regional economic competitiveness in Indonesia. Human resource empowerment has become a crucial factor in driving local economic growth and creating regional competitive advantages. Using a qualitative method with a descriptive approach, this research analyzes human resource empowerment programs and their impact on regional economic development. The results indicate that successful human resource empowerment is supported by the integration of training programs, education, and skills development aligned with local labor market needs. Improved human resource quality positively impacts work productivity, innovation, and adaptability to economic changes. This study concludes that human resource empowerment needs to be conducted in a structured and integrated manner involving various stakeholders to create an effective human resource development ecosystem that supports regional economic competitiveness.*

Keywords: *human resource empowerment, regional economy, competitiveness, skills development, work productivity*

Abstrak: Penelitian ini mengkaji tentang pemberdayaan sumber daya manusia sebagai salah satu strategi untuk meningkatkan daya saing ekonomi daerah di Indonesia. Pemberdayaan sumber daya manusia telah menjadi faktor penting dalam mendorong pertumbuhan ekonomi daerah dan menciptakan keunggulan kompetitif daerah. Dengan menggunakan metode kualitatif dengan pendekatan deskriptif, penelitian ini menganalisis program pemberdayaan sumber daya manusia dan dampaknya terhadap pembangunan ekonomi daerah. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa keberhasilan pemberdayaan sumber daya manusia didukung oleh integrasi program pelatihan, pendidikan, dan pengembangan keterampilan yang selaras dengan kebutuhan pasar tenaga kerja daerah. Peningkatan kualitas sumber daya manusia berdampak positif pada produktivitas kerja, inovasi, dan kemampuan beradaptasi terhadap perubahan ekonomi. Penelitian ini menyimpulkan bahwa pemberdayaan sumber daya manusia perlu dilakukan secara terstruktur dan terintegrasi dengan melibatkan berbagai pemangku kepentingan untuk menciptakan ekosistem pengembangan sumber daya manusia yang efektif yang mendukung daya saing ekonomi daerah.

Kata kunci: pemberdayaan sumber daya manusia, ekonomi daerah, daya saing, pengembangan keterampilan, produktivitas kerja

INTRODUCTIONS

The empowerment of human resources has become a strategic issue in regional economic development in the era of globalization. As regions strive to enhance their economic competitiveness, the quality of human resources becomes a decisive factor that cannot be ignored. According to Siagian (2018), human resources empowerment is a systematic effort to develop individuals' capacity, knowledge, and skills in order to optimize their contribution to economic development. In the era of regional autonomy in Indonesia, local governments have broader authority to develop human resources empowerment programs in accordance with their respective characteristics and needs. The enhancement of regional economic competitiveness

Received Juni 06, 2024; Accepted Juni 24 2025; Published Juni 30, 2025

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cannot be separated from the capacity of human resources as the main driving force of economic activities. As stated by Todaro and Smith (2020), human capital is a factor of production that plays an important role in long-term economic growth.

Human resources empowerment at the regional level encompasses various aspects such as education, training, skills development, and the creation of job opportunities that align with regional potential. Through this approach, regions can develop specific advantages that distinguish them from others. This study aims to analyze how human resources empowerment strategies can be implemented to improve the economic competitiveness of regions in Indonesia. The focus of the research is directed toward identifying effective models of human resources empowerment, the factors influencing the success of empowerment programs, and their impact on regional economies. The findings of this study are expected to provide input for the formulation of targeted human resources development policies that can effectively promote regional economic growth.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study employs a qualitative method with a descriptive-analytical approach to obtain an overview of human resources empowerment and its impact on regional economic competitiveness. The qualitative approach was chosen because it allows for an in-depth understanding of complex socio-economic phenomena, including the interactions among various stakeholders in the human resources empowerment process. Data collection was carried out through three main techniques. First, document study involving policies, programs, and reports related to human resources empowerment at the regional level. The analyzed documents include the Regional Medium-Term Development Plan (RPJMD), sectoral planning documents, and reports on the implementation of human resources empowerment programs. Second, semi-structured interviews with key informants consisting of local government officials, business actors, educational and training institutions, and representatives of program beneficiaries from the community. These interviews aimed to gather perspectives from various stakeholders regarding the implementation and impact of human resources empowerment programs. Third, field observations of the implementation of human resources empowerment programs to obtain empirical data on the processes and outcomes of the programs.

The study was conducted in three regions with different economic characteristics: one industrial-based region, one agriculture-based region, and one tourism-based region. The locations were selected purposively to obtain data variations that could reflect the dynamics of human resources empowerment in different regional economic contexts. The data collection period lasted six months, from January to June 2023. Data analysis was carried out using thematic analysis techniques. The collected data were classified based on themes relevant to the research focus, such as human resources empowerment models, supporting and inhibiting factors, and impacts on the regional economy. The analysis process included data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions. To ensure the validity of the results, this study applied data source triangulation and data collection method triangulation.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results of the study indicate that the empowerment of human resources in the three study regions displayed varying patterns in accordance with the economic characteristics of each region. In the industrial-based region, human resources empowerment programs were directed more toward the development of technical and managerial skills aligned with the needs of the manufacturing sector. Industrial apprenticeship programs and vocational education partnerships with the business sector were the main models developed. According to Prasetyo

(2022), collaboration between educational institutions and industry is key to successfully preparing a ready-to-work labor force. This is reflected in the absorption rate of apprenticeship program graduates, which reached 78% in the study area. In the agriculture-based region, human resources empowerment focused on agricultural modernization and agroindustry development. Training programs on modern agriculture, the application of agricultural technology, and agribusiness entrepreneurship development were prioritized. As noted by Arifin (2023), the transformation of traditional agriculture into high-value agriculture requires increasing farmers' capacity in mastering technology and business management. The farmer empowerment program through field schools succeeded in increasing agricultural productivity by up to 35% and opened up diversification opportunities for local farmers.

Meanwhile, in the tourism-based region, human resources empowerment emphasized the development of hospitality skills, cross-cultural understanding, and foreign language proficiency. Training in tour guiding, homestay management, and local culinary practices became the main focus. The findings show that the tourism competency certification program has improved service quality and tourist satisfaction, as reflected in the increase in the average length of stay from 2 days to 3.5 days (Regional Tourism Office, 2023). The factors influencing the success of human resources empowerment programs in the three regions show a relatively consistent pattern. First, the alignment of empowerment programs with the needs of the local labor market. As stated by Hermawan (2021), human resources empowerment programs that are not aligned with labor market demand tend to result in skill mismatches. Second, active involvement of the private sector in the design and implementation of programs. Third, the use of a participatory and sustainable empowerment approach, rather than short-term training alone.

The impact of human resources empowerment on regional economic competitiveness is evident in several indicators. At the micro level, there was an increase in labor productivity, indicated by an average rise of 27% in output per worker after the empowerment programs. At the meso level, more innovative business clusters were formed and were able to compete in wider markets. At the macro level, there was an increase in GRDP per capita, which was higher compared to surrounding regions that had not optimized their human resources empowerment. Nevertheless, the study also identified several obstacles in the implementation of human resources empowerment programs. Suboptimal inter-agency coordination, limited budget allocations, and infrastructure gaps between urban and rural areas were inhibiting factors that need to be addressed. As stated by Widodo (2020), human resources empowerment requires a multi-sector and multi-stakeholder approach to achieve optimal results.

CONCLUSION

The empowerment of human resources is a key strategy in enhancing regional economic competitiveness in the era of a knowledge-based economy. This study found that the success of human resources empowerment is determined by the alignment of programs with the characteristics and economic needs of the region, active involvement of various stakeholders, and an integrative and sustainable empowerment approach. The positive impacts of human resources empowerment are reflected in increased labor productivity, strengthened local innovation and entrepreneurship, and more inclusive regional economic growth. Several recommendations can be made based on the research findings. First, the need to strengthen human resources empowerment institutions at the regional level through synergy between the government, the business sector, and educational institutions. Second, the development of an

accurate regional labor market information system to bridge the gap between industry needs and empowerment programs.

Third, adequate budget allocation for human resources empowerment programs by considering the potential for long-term return on investment. Fourth, strengthening program monitoring and evaluation to ensure the effectiveness and sustainability of empowerment impacts. This study contributes to the understanding of the strategic role of human resources empowerment in regional economic development. However, further research is needed that focuses more specifically on aspects such as the development of entrepreneurship based on local wisdom, the utilization of digital technology in human resources empowerment, and alternative financing models for empowerment programs in regions with limited budgets.

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