

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE JOB TRAINING PROGRAM IN ENHANCING WORKFORCE QUALITY IN MEDAN CITY: A CASE STUDY AT THE CENTER FOR VOCATIONAL AND PRODUCTIVITY TRAINING MEDAN CITY

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ABSTRACT

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This study examines the implementation of the job training program in improving the quality of the workforce in Medan City, conducted by the Center for Vocational and Productivity Training Medan under the Ministry of Manpower of the Republic of Indonesia. The purpose of this research is to analyze how the competency-based training program contributes to enhancing human resource capacity and reducing unemployment through effective policy implementation. A qualitative descriptive method was applied, supported by in-depth interviews, direct observation, and document analysis. Data were analyzed using an interactive model based on data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing to obtain an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon. The findings indicate that the implementation of the training program has been effective and aligned with national labor development policies. Success was primarily influenced by four interrelated factors: clear communication, adequate institutional resources, positive disposition of implementers, and a well-structured bureaucracy. The study also found that the adaptability of the training program to industrial and regional development priorities particularly in the tourism and construction sectors has enhanced its relevance and impact. However, the absence of a systematic alumni tracking mechanism limits the evaluation of long-term outcomes. Overall, the program demonstrates that competency-based training can serve as a strategic approach to improving workforce competitiveness and promoting inclusive and sustainable economic growth in Indonesia.

1. INTRODUCTION

Indonesia, as one of the most populous nations in the world, is currently facing a demographic dynamic that holds both opportunities and challenges for sustainable national development. According to the Central Bureau of Statistics (BPS, 2020), Indonesia's population reached 270.20 million in 2020, an increase of more than 32 million people compared to 2010. This growth has expanded the working-age population individuals between 15 and 64 years old by approximately 31.9 million within a decade. Such demographic growth should ideally translate into a productive workforce capable of accelerating economic growth, improving national income, and contributing to the prosperity of society.

Legally, this productive population is defined in the Manpower Act No. 13 of 2003, which states that labor refers to every person capable of performing work to produce goods or services for personal or societal needs. As interpreted by Adianto and Fedryansyah (2022), the term "labor force" thus encompasses the working-age population capable of engaging in productive economic activities. From a macroeconomic perspective, this expansion should support Indonesia's development trajectory, as suggested by the neoclassical theory of economic growth (Sukirno, 2001 in Lubis, 2014), which emphasizes that growth depends on the

accumulation and productivity of key factors namely labor, capital, and technology.

However, the increase in the quantity of labor has not been accompanied by proportional improvements in its quality. Based on the Expert Body of the House of Representatives (2020), Indonesia's labor force remains largely dominated by individuals with low educational backgrounds—elementary school and below resulting in a relatively weak industrial value. In February 2020, the open unemployment rate reached 6.88 million people, with the largest portion coming from vocational high school graduates (8.49%), followed by senior high school (6.77%), diploma (6.76%), university graduates (5.73%), junior high school (5.02%), and elementary school (2.98%). These statistics reveal a structural gap between the skills provided by the education system and those demanded by the labor market.

This skill mismatch and limited access to technical education have significant implications for Indonesia's productivity and competitiveness. According to Adianto and Fedryansyah (2022), the country's relatively low mastery and application of science and technology compared to neighboring countries contribute to limited innovation capacity and low labor productivity. Consequently, product quality, efficiency, and service standards often lag behind global expectations. It becomes evident that the success of national development relies heavily on the improvement of

human resource quality as the primary driver of sustainable economic growth.

To overcome these challenges, the Government of Indonesia, through the Ministry of Manpower, has implemented various strategic programs aimed at increasing workforce competence. One of the key instruments in this effort is the establishment of Job Training Centers, designed to provide practical, competency-based training for workers and job seekers. These centers are expected to equip participants with the technical and entrepreneurial skills needed to enter the labor market or create self-employment opportunities (Darma et al., 2017). Through these programs, the government seeks to nurture a competitive, productive, and self-reliant workforce that can adapt to industrial demands and support national economic progress.

Despite these efforts, the effectiveness of job training programs remains an open question. Data from BPS indicates a decline in the labor force participation rate between 2015 and 2016, even as training initiatives expanded (Darma et al., 2017). This discrepancy raises concerns about whether the training programs have been implemented effectively enough to achieve their intended objectives. In Medan City, the Regional Autonomy Watch (2016) reported a decline in labor participation between 2013 and 2015, accompanied by an increase in unemployment from 10% to 11%. Similarly, the Central Bureau of Statistics of North Sumatra (BPS, 2022) noted that 29.21% of the regional workforce had only completed elementary education, and only 12.53% held diploma or university degrees, illustrating the persistence of low labor quality and limited employability.

In response, the Ministry of Manpower launched a competency-based training framework through Ministerial Regulation No. 8 of 2014 and Ministerial Decree No. 23 of 2017, which provides standards and operational guidance for implementing training programs focused on measurable competencies. However, various studies have shown that these programs still face numerous implementation challenges. Simangunsong (2022), for example, found that although the *Balai Besar Pelatihan Vokasi dan Produktivitas* (BBPVP) Medan or The Center for Vocational and Productivity Training has improved its training facilities and accessibility, several weaknesses persist in terms of post-training evaluation, alumni follow-up, and coordination with industry partners. These shortcomings limit the long-term impact of training on employment outcomes and workforce productivity.

Supporting studies by Winanda and Mubarak (2020) and Ponamon (2021) also reveal that while job training centers across Indonesia generally operate according to formal standards and procedures, issues such as limited instructor capacity, inadequate resources, and insufficient inter-agency communication often hinder effective implementation. These findings underscore the importance of investigating how training programs are executed at the institutional level and why some fail to produce the desired quality improvements among participants.

Given this situation, there is a clear research gap concerning the implementation of job training policies in the context of vocational and productivity training centers, particularly in Medan City. Many existing studies have focused on training outcomes but have paid less attention to the implementation process itself including the factors that determine its success or failure. To address this gap, this research adopts George C. Edward III's policy

implementation model, which emphasizes four key variables like communication, resources, disposition, and bureaucratic structure as crucial determinants of effective policy realization.

Thus, this study explores the implementation of the Job Training Program in enhancing workforce quality in Medan City, taking the Center for Vocational and Productivity Training Medan as a case study. The research seeks to answer two main questions: first, how the job training program has been implemented to improve workforce quality, and second, what obstacles hinder its effectiveness. The central assumption (hypothesis) is that program success depends on clear communication among stakeholders, adequate human and material resources, a positive attitude and commitment among implementers, and an efficient organizational structure that supports program delivery.

The purpose of this study is to analyze in detail the implementation of the job training program carried out by BBPVP Medan and to identify the obstacles that influence its performance in improving workforce quality in Medan City. The novelty of this research lies in its integrative approach, combining public policy implementation theory with human resource development practices at the institutional level. It offers a comprehensive analysis linking government policy frameworks with the practical realities of training delivery and outcomes, thereby contributing to the broader discourse on labor policy and administrative reform in Indonesia. In the post-pandemic era when digital transformation and global competition demand higher adaptability and innovation the findings of this study are expected to provide valuable insights for policymakers, practitioners, and scholars in designing more effective labor training systems that align with the goals of inclusive and sustainable national development.

2. METHODS

This study employed a qualitative descriptive research design aimed at providing a thorough and detailed understanding of the implementation of the Job Training Program at the Center for Vocational and Productivity Training Medan. The qualitative approach was chosen because it allows the researcher to describe and interpret empirical realities as they naturally occur, focusing on meaning, context, and process rather than numerical generalization. According to Bodgan and Taylor, as cited in Moleong (2001:3), the qualitative method is a research procedure that produces descriptive data in the form of written or spoken words from people and observable behavior. Therefore, this approach was suitable for exploring how the training program was implemented, its dynamics, and its implications for workforce quality improvement.

The research was conducted at The Center for Vocational and Productivity Training Medan, located on Gatot Subroto Street Km. 7.8, Medan, North Sumatra. The site was selected purposively because BBPVP Medan is a key technical implementation unit under the Ministry of Manpower of the Republic of Indonesia that focuses on organizing competency-based job training and productivity improvement programs. Its strategic location and central role in workforce development across North Sumatra make it a relevant setting for studying how government-led training initiatives are translated into practice. Moreover, despite its

significant public function, there remains limited public understanding of how these training activities are carried out and evaluated, making the site contextually appropriate for qualitative inquiry.

Participants in this study were selected using a purposive sampling technique, which determines participants based on criteria aligned with the research focus. As noted by Polit and Beck (2012), qualitative sampling is not determined by numbers but by the adequacy of information until data saturation or redundancy is reached. Informants were those directly involved in the Competency-Based Job Training Program, including the head of administrative affairs, the heads of the program, implementation, and evaluation divisions, instructors, and training participants. The selection followed Spradley's criteria (in Faisal, cited by Sugiyono, 2009:221), emphasizing informants who understand the studied phenomenon, are actively involved in it, have sufficient time to provide information, are open to authentic discussion, and are initially unfamiliar with the researcher to maintain neutrality.

The data collection process employed three primary techniques: in-depth interviews, observation, and documentation study. In-depth interviews were conducted to explore participants' experiences, perceptions, and evaluations of the training program's implementation. Following Bungin (2009), interviews were conducted as face-to-face conversations between the researcher and the informant with a structured yet flexible guide to ensure depth of information. Esterberg (in Sugiyono, 2009:72) defines interviews as meetings between two people to exchange ideas through questions and answers, resulting in joint construction of meaning. In this study, the researcher prepared interview guides, explained the purpose of the research to each participant, and conducted each session in a way that fostered openness and trust. Observation complemented interviews by allowing the researcher to examine real-time training activities and interactions, while documentation involved analyzing written records, archives, and other relevant materials (Sutopo, 2002).

The data analysis process adopted the Colaizzi method, which provides systematic and detailed steps for analyzing qualitative data (Polit & Beck, 2012). The researcher began by carefully reading all interview transcripts and field notes to capture the essence of participants' experiences. Key statements related to the research questions were then identified, coded, and grouped into categories and themes. Repetitive or similar statements were excluded to focus on significant meanings. The themes were then organized into a coherent narrative that reflected the participants' perspectives, ensuring that their voices were authentically represented. This analytical process was also complemented by the general stages of qualitative analysis like data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing allowing the researcher to identify major findings supported by credible evidence.

To ensure the trustworthiness of data, the researcher applied four criteria proposed by Lincoln and Guba credibility, confirmability, dependability, and transferability (Polit & Beck, 2012). Credibility was ensured through prolonged engagement with participants, peer debriefing with academic supervisors, and member checking by returning summarized findings to participants for validation. Confirmability was established through an audit trail that documented all research activities and analytical decisions.

Dependability was maintained by keeping detailed records of interview transcripts, coding processes, and analytical notes to demonstrate consistency. Transferability was ensured by providing rich, thick descriptions of the research context, enabling others to determine the applicability of the findings to similar settings.

Ethical considerations were strictly observed throughout the study. The researcher first built mutual trust with participants by clearly explaining the purpose, procedures, and confidentiality of the research. Informed consent was obtained prior to each interview, and participation was entirely voluntary. The researcher respected the rights of participants who declined to take part, ensuring that no coercion occurred at any stage. Participants' identities were kept confidential using initials instead of real names (anonymity), and data were stored securely to preserve confidentiality. Throughout the process, the principles of respect, beneficence, and non-maleficence guided the researcher's conduct, ensuring that participants were treated ethically and that the findings reflected their genuine experiences.

Overall, this qualitative methodological framework provided a holistic understanding of how the Job Training Program was implemented at BBPVP Medan, the institutional and human factors influencing its effectiveness, and the challenges faced in realizing its objectives. By combining in-depth engagement with participants, systematic data analysis, and rigorous ethical and validity procedures, this research offers a credible and contextually grounded portrayal of vocational policy implementation within Indonesia's labor development system.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This study analyzes the implementation of the job training program conducted by the Center for Vocational and Productivity Training Medan, a government institution under the Ministry of Manpower of the Republic of Indonesia. The research aimed to explore how the program was executed to improve the quality and competitiveness of the workforce in Medan City and its surrounding regions. The findings were interpreted through the theoretical framework proposed by George C. Edwards III, which emphasizes four interrelated factors that determine the effectiveness of public policy implementation namely communication, resources, disposition of implementers, and bureaucratic structure. Through this analytical lens, the research presents a comprehensive understanding of how the Center for Vocational and Productivity Training Medan translated government policy into practical training activities that supported human resource development and employment expansion.

Clarity of Communication and Policy Objectives

Effective communication serves as a fundamental element in translating public policy into concrete action. The findings indicate that communication at The Center for Vocational and Productivity Training Medan was carried out systematically and vertically, ensuring that the objectives and directions from the Ministry of Manpower were clearly conveyed to all implementing units and stakeholders. Information related to the purpose, structure, and benefits of

the Competency-Based Training program was disseminated through internal meetings, digital announcements, and public outreach efforts. The clarity of communication enabled every actor—from the head of administration to instructors and trainees—to share a unified understanding of the program’s purpose, which is to enhance the competency of the labor force and support employment opportunities both domestically and abroad.

Externally, The Center for Vocational and Productivity Training Medan also performed active socialization to ensure that the public understood the opportunities offered by the government. The institution used various channels, including online registration systems and direct outreach, to attract potential participants from diverse educational and socioeconomic backgrounds. The target audience mainly consisted of undereducated or unemployed individuals, including junior and senior high school graduates, reflecting the institution’s responsiveness to social realities. The researchers observed that clear, consistent, and transparent communication not only fostered the successful dissemination of information but also helped build trust among participants and the public. This aligns with Edwards III’s argument that policy success is strongly determined by the accuracy and clarity of communication between policymakers and implementers.

Institutional Resources and Infrastructure Capacity

The adequacy of resources constitutes another pillar of effective policy implementation. Findings reveal that The Center for Vocational and Productivity Training Medan was equipped with competent human resources, sufficient facilities, and relevant training equipment that supported the realization of program goals. The center had well-prepared training rooms, practice workshops, and simulation tools in various fields such as tourism, construction, and hospitality. These facilities allowed participants to experience hands-on learning that closely resembled real working environments. Instructors played a critical role as facilitators who not only transferred knowledge but also motivated participants to apply practical skills effectively.

Nevertheless, the study also discovered a few infrastructural challenges, especially within newly established training departments such as tourism and hospitality. Some workshops still required additional tools and physical space to optimize learning outcomes. Despite these minor constraints, participants expressed satisfaction with the facilities and learning environment, which were considered adequate and conducive to skill development. The continuous upgrading of training resources and the integration of modern learning technologies demonstrated the center’s commitment to meeting evolving industry demands. In accordance with Edwards III, these findings emphasize that institutional resources both material and human are the operational backbone that determines the effectiveness and sustainability of policy implementation.

Disposition and Commitment of Implementers

The success of a policy implementation process is heavily dependent on the attitudes, motivations, and commitment of the implementers. At The Center for Vocational and Productivity Training Medan, the leadership team, administrative staff, and instructors displayed a high level of

dedication and alignment with the institution’s mission. The management of training programs, from planning to evaluation, was characterized by discipline, collaboration, and continuous supervision. The selection of participants was conducted transparently through online and offline systems that included both written and oral examinations. This rigorous process ensured that only motivated and eligible candidates were selected to participate in the training.

During the implementation phase, instructors were observed to adopt interactive teaching methods, emphasizing practical experience over theoretical learning. They provided guidance that not only improved technical skills but also encouraged participants to develop self-confidence and entrepreneurial mindsets. However, the research also identified challenges related to participant discipline and attendance. Some trainees struggled with time management due to external economic pressures or lack of motivation, which sometimes hindered their full engagement. To mitigate this, The Center for Vocational and Productivity Training Medan implemented mentoring and counseling initiatives, designed to maintain participant focus and enthusiasm throughout the training period. The findings affirm that a positive disposition and strong commitment among implementers foster higher program credibility and participant satisfaction, reinforcing Edwards III’s concept that implementers’ willingness and motivation are pivotal for achieving policy goals.

Bureaucratic Structure and Administrative Coordination

The bureaucratic structure at The Center for Vocational and Productivity Training Medan was formally established according to Minister of Manpower Regulation No. 21 of 2015, which outlines the organizational framework and duties of technical training units. The structure comprised multiple sections including program design, implementation, evaluation, and administration and each responsible for specific operational functions. This structured hierarchy ensured efficiency, accountability, and coherence in program execution. Coordination among divisions was conducted through periodic meetings, cross-departmental reporting, and the use of digital management systems.

While the organizational design promoted clarity in authority and responsibility, occasional administrative overlaps were observed, particularly during simultaneous training sessions across multiple departments. Nonetheless, these challenges were effectively addressed through proactive leadership, interdepartmental cooperation, and strong communication lines. The adoption of digital systems for trainee registration, attendance tracking, and performance assessment significantly enhanced transparency and administrative control. Overall, the bureaucratic arrangement at The Center for Vocational and Productivity Training Medan exemplified how a well-structured and adaptive bureaucracy can facilitate smooth policy implementation, ensuring that all activities align with national labor development objectives. This supports Edwards III’s notion that bureaucratic clarity and coordination serve as structural enablers for effective policy outcomes.

Socioeconomic Context and Policy Relevance

The study also found that the effectiveness of the training programs was influenced by broader socioeconomic and policy contexts. The Center for Vocational and Productivity Training Medan aligned its training focus with the government's strategic development priorities, particularly the Special Economic Zone of Sei Mangkei and the Lake Toba National Tourism Strategic Area. These national projects created substantial demand for skilled workers in the construction and tourism industries. Responding to this, The Center for Vocational and Productivity Training Medan concentrated its training on fields that directly supported these regional priorities, ensuring that graduates possessed the skills required by local industries.

Furthermore, the center collaborated with private sector partners and international institutions to expand employment opportunities for its graduates. Several high-performing trainees were even selected for overseas placements, such as in Japan, as part of labor exchange and internship programs. This international linkage demonstrates the institution's success in not only producing competent workers but also integrating them into the global labor market. These efforts reveal that The Center for Vocational and Productivity Training Medan effectively functions as a bridge between government labor policy and real economic development needs, strengthening the synergy between education, industry, and workforce empowerment. In alignment with Edwards III's theoretical view, this context demonstrates how the adaptability of policy implementers to socio-economic changes enhances the sustainability and relevance of program outcomes.

Evaluation of Program Effectiveness

Evaluation of the training programs at The Center for Vocational and Productivity Training Medan shows that approximately 75 percent of the program's objectives have been achieved, particularly in terms of participant completion rates and certification outcomes. The institution successfully produced a considerable number of graduates who obtained national competency certificates, validating their readiness for employment. Many graduates entered formal industries, while others pursued self-employment in fields related to their training, such as culinary businesses, carpentry, or tourism services.

However, the evaluation process also revealed a limitation in post-training monitoring. The absence of a comprehensive alumni database made it difficult to track the employment status and long-term career progress of graduates. Despite this, anecdotal evidence suggested that the majority of alumni successfully transitioned into productive employment. The study highlights that the quantitative success of training programs must be complemented by qualitative follow-up mechanisms to ensure that skills acquired are utilized effectively in the job market. Continuous evaluation, feedback systems, and alumni engagement are therefore essential components in maintaining program relevance and measuring real socio-economic impact.

Discussion

In summary, the findings demonstrate that the implementation of the job training program at the Center for Vocational and Productivity Training Medan has been

effective in achieving its primary goals of improving workforce skills, enhancing employability, and supporting the broader national agenda of labor development. The four dimensions of Edwards III's model—communication, resources, disposition, and bureaucratic structure—were all found to be interdependent and mutually reinforcing. Clear communication ensured shared understanding and direction; sufficient resources facilitated efficient operations; committed implementers sustained program quality; and a structured bureaucracy maintained order and accountability.

At the same time, the institution's responsiveness to socio-economic developments, such as regional economic zones and tourism growth, underscored its strategic adaptability. Nevertheless, challenges remain, particularly in post-program evaluation, data management, and participant discipline. These issues highlight the need for continuous improvement in the feedback loop between policy design, implementation, and assessment.

Ultimately, the study concludes that The Center for Vocational and Productivity Training Medan represents an exemplary model of public policy implementation in vocational education, successfully integrating government policy with community needs. The program's contribution extends beyond training outcomes—it plays a vital role in supporting inclusive economic development and reducing unemployment through skill-based empowerment. Future improvements in monitoring systems, digital data integration, and stakeholder collaboration will further strengthen its impact as a leading center for human capital development in Indonesia.

4. CONCLUSION

This research analyzed the implementation of the job training program in improving the quality of the workforce in Medan City, specifically at the Center for Vocational and Productivity Training Medan, a key technical institution under the Ministry of Manpower of the Republic of Indonesia. The study concludes that the implementation of the competency-based training program has been largely effective and strategically aligned with the broader objectives of enhancing human resource quality, reducing unemployment, and supporting sustainable economic development. By applying the theoretical framework of George C. Edwards III, which highlights four key variables namely communication, resources, disposition, and bureaucratic structure this research found that the success of the training program is a result of effective policy translation, institutional commitment, and adaptive management practices.

The results demonstrate that clear and consistent communication among policymakers, administrators, and participants contributed significantly to the achievement of the program's objectives. The information flow from the Ministry of Manpower to the implementation unit was well-structured, ensuring that each level of authority understood its duties, goals, and expected outcomes. In addition, the availability of adequate human and material resources provided a strong foundation for the implementation process. Well-trained instructors, sufficient facilities, and standardized training modules supported the participants in mastering relevant technical and practical skills. These findings confirm that a strong institutional framework,

coupled with professional human resources, is critical to ensuring the continuity and effectiveness of vocational training programs.

Furthermore, the disposition and commitment of implementers played a decisive role in sustaining program quality. The administrative and instructional staff demonstrated high motivation, integrity, and alignment with the program's vision to create competent, skilled, and independent workers. The study also observed that the bureaucratic structure of the training center, guided by the Ministerial Regulation No. 21 of 2015, enabled efficient coordination and accountability. The division of roles among departments ranging from program planning to evaluation helped maintain operational discipline and fostered transparency in the decision-making process. These structural arrangements created an environment conducive to achieving the intended policy outcomes, reflecting Edwards III's assertion that a well-organized administrative system is indispensable to policy effectiveness.

However, despite its notable accomplishments, the study acknowledges several limitations. First, the research employed a qualitative descriptive approach, which, while rich in contextual depth, limits the generalizability of its findings beyond the specific institutional and geographic scope of Medan City. Second, there remains a lack of longitudinal data to measure the long-term impact of the training program, particularly regarding the employability and career progression of its graduates. The absence of an integrated alumni tracking system has hindered a comprehensive evaluation of post-training success, especially in assessing the sustainability of skills acquired. Third, certain infrastructural and logistical constraints particularly in newly established departments such as tourism and hospitality indicate that additional resources are still needed to ensure optimal training outcomes.

Given these findings, several recommendations are proposed for future improvements and policy refinement. The first recommendation is for the Ministry of Manpower and the Center for Vocational and Productivity Training Medan to develop an integrated digital alumni database that enables continuous monitoring of graduates' employment status, entrepreneurial endeavors, and skill application in the labor market. This system will strengthen evidence-based evaluation and provide valuable feedback for curriculum improvement. Second, the center should further align its training programs with industry demands and technological advancements, particularly by integrating modules on digital literacy, innovation, and green skills to meet the evolving needs of the global workforce. Third, establishing stronger partnerships with private industries, local governments, and academic institutions will enhance program relevance and create more robust pathways for job placement and entrepreneurship development. Finally, future research should consider adopting a mixed-method approach, combining quantitative labor data and qualitative insights, to capture both measurable outcomes and the lived experiences of participants in greater detail.

In conclusion, this research affirms that the implementation of the job training program in improving

workforce quality in Medan City at the Center for Vocational and Productivity Training Medan represents a successful model of policy execution in Indonesia's labor development sector. The program has effectively linked government policy objectives with local socio-economic needs, producing tangible benefits in skill formation, employment generation, and human capital enhancement. Nevertheless, sustaining this success will require continuous institutional innovation, improved data systems, and stronger inter-sectoral collaboration. Through these efforts, vocational training can further evolve as a strategic pillar in advancing inclusive growth, productivity, and competitiveness within Indonesia's labor landscape.

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