



The Strategy Of The Bengkalis District Government In Reducing Unemployment Through Local Workforce Empowerment

Septa Juliana*¹ Sadriah Lahamid²

Government Science, Universitas Islam Riau

*) Corresponding Author

septajuliana@soc.uir.ac.id

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Abstract

Unemployment is one of the most crucial structural challenges for developing regions, impacting not only economic indicators but also having broad implications for social welfare and bureaucratic effectiveness. This study aims to examine the strategic role of the Bengkalis Regency Government, particularly the Manpower and Transmigration Office, in addressing the dynamics of unemployment, which continues to plague the local community. This phenomenon is analyzed not merely as a number, but as a welfare issue that requires serious attention through concrete policies and bureaucratic performance that is responsive to labor market needs. This study uses a qualitative approach with descriptive methods to explore the phenomenon in depth. Data were collected through participant observation, documentation, and in-depth interviews with informants selected purposively to accurately answer the research questions. Data analysis employed an interactive model encompassing data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. This study concludes that the key to success in reducing unemployment lies in the synergy between local labor protection policies and the improvement of relevant skills, so that local communities become not mere spectators but key actors in sustainable regional economic development.

Keywords : Unemployment, Policy, Local Workforce,
Human Resource Empowerment, Bengkalis Regency.

Pendahuluan

Indonesia as a developing country certainly has its own challenges in dealing with unemployment issues (Lestari, 2023) Unemployment is one of the main short-term problems that every country always faces. Conceptually, unemployment refers to the situation where someone who is part of the labor force wants to get a job but hasn't been able to, while individuals who are not working but are not actively looking for a job are not categorized as unemployed. (Fitri, 2021) including the existence of natural unemployment that cannot be avoided (Blanchard & Katz, 1997) Conceptually, unemployment refers to a situation where someone in the labor force wants to get a job but hasn't been able to, while individuals who are not working but not actively looking for a job are not categorized as unemployed (Fitri, 2021). On a macro level, unemployment happens because of an imbalance in the labor market, where the amount of labor offered exceeds the amount of labor demanded. This situation not only slows down economic growth but also creates tougher competition in the labor market, which affects wages and job quality.(Hafiz & Kurniadi, 2024) Furthermore, the current unemployment phenomenon is not only dominated by people with low education levels, but it also affects those with higher education.(Kesumadewi & Aprilyani, 2024) Therefore, unemployment is a crucial problem that requires immediate attention, because failing to manage it wisely will trigger various other social issues. (Driehuis*, 1978) The issue of unemployment is a complex structural challenge and requires serious intervention and handling from the local government (Bureau, 2018) . In Bengkalis Regency, this phenomenon isn't just a statistical number, but rather a welfare issue that's closely related to the effectiveness of bureaucratic performance and regional governance.

According to data from the Central Statistics Agency, the number of unemployed people in Bengkalis Regency was recorded at 18,227 in 2022 and increased to 18,620 in 2023. This increase in absolute numbers needs to be looked at comprehensively by considering the open unemployment rate , the size of the labor force, demographic profile, and its comparison with provincial and national trends in order to fully understand the dimensions of the problem. In various regions, unemployment often starts from the lack of improvement in workforce skills through training relevant to market needs, as well as the lack of support for the local sector in encouraging investment and creating new job opportunities. Nevertheless, previous studies have generally been limited to the level of macro statistical descriptions and have not deeply examined the actual effectiveness of local government strategies.

This manuscript discusses relevant regional governance issues by looking into how the Bengkalis Regency Government is working to reduce unemployment through local workforce empowerment. The research focuses on aspects such as competency-based training, workforce placement, local hiring priorities, industrial relations, as well as cooperation with companies and educational institutions, all of which are highly relevant within the scope of public administration. However, until now, there have not been many studies that empirically test whether these strategies truly have a significant impact on reducing unemployment or merely improve job prospects for local workers. Based on the background, research gap identification, and these issues, this study aims to take a closer look at how the Regency Government carries out its main duties and functions in reducing unemployment through concrete policies.

Research Method

This research uses a qualitative method, which is a type of descriptive study. (John et al., 2019) namely a type of research that aims to analyze a phenomenon in depth (Hagger, 2022). This research uses purposive sampling, which is a non-random sampling method where the researcher sets specific criteria or characteristics that match the research objectives so that the problem can be addressed. (Klar & Leeper, 2019) The data in this study was collected through three methods: interviews, observations, and documentation. The researcher conducted interviews with employees of the Bengkalis Regency Department of Manpower and Transmigration, as well as direct observations in the field. The data analysis technique used was the interactive model from Miles and Huberman, which includes data reduction, data display, and drawing conclusions or verification. This study took place in Bengkalis Regency with the aim of evaluating the performance of the Department of Manpower and Transmigration in managing the workforce each year.

Results and Discussion

Unemployment is not just an individual problem, but also a burden for society and the government. To tackle unemployment, the government implements several strategies. Strategy is "an art of using the skills and resources of an organization to achieve its goals through effective relationships with the environment under the most favorable conditions. (Kabupaten et al., 2021) " Strategy comes from the Greek word *Strategoia* (*stratos* = military, and *ag* = to lead), which means the art or science of being a general. Strategy can also be understood as a plan for the allocation and use of military and material forces in certain areas to achieve specific goals. (Pengangguran, 2013) Strategy as the setting of a company's long-term targets and goals, and the direction of actions as well as the allocation of resources needed to achieve the goals and objectives (Toda, 2016) From the explanations above, the Bengkalis Regency Government and various parties have tried to address the unemployment problem through the Manpower and Transmigration Office (Disnakertrans) programs. To discuss this issue, there are several strategies. (Toda, 2016) strategy aspect (Zahra & Yulyana, 2025) among them:

1. Purpose

Purpose emphasizes a reason why an action should be taken in the first place: this opinion defines that a purpose arises out of the compulsion created by the gap between needs, aspirations, and current reality or situation. (Jovanovic & Rousseau, 2005) The main goal of reducing job losses in Bengkalis Regency is by empowering the workforce to create human resources that are competent, independent, and highly competitive through the synergy of five strategic pillars, namely by equipping job seekers through:

a. Competency-based training

Training is a method used to develop human resources related to the abilities or skills of employees or staff who have held a certain position or job within a company or organization. (Apriliana & Nawangsari, 2021) Competency-based training that is relevant to market needs is being carried out. One effort to develop the use of competencies is starting to be used as part of competence-based HR management, carried out gradually, starting from the recruitment process, selection, and finally used in management. (Apriliana & Nawangsari, 2021) competency-based training program. Before the program is run, the department first identifies workforce needs through coordination with businesses and industries, as well as looking at the region's

developing potential. The training materials are prepared based on work competency standards so that participants not only gain theoretical knowledge but also practical skills that meet job market demands. In this case, there are several specific vocational types that are regularly carried out, such as Industrial Engineering and Oil & Gas, with activities carried out including welder training focused on industrial welding skills and heavy lifting, which are highly needed in the oil & gas and shipping sectors. This training is conducted in collaboration with alumni of Caltex Riau Polytechnic and took place on December 17, 2024.

b. Proper placement of the workforce,

Workforce placement is the follow-up to the selection process by putting new employees in positions or work environments that suit them after they successfully pass the recruitment and selection stages (Kerja & Daya, 2025) According to the informant's explanation, the placement of workers is carried out in a targeted manner by considering the match between job seekers' competencies and the company's needs. This process starts with recording and verifying the administrative data of job seekers through a job seeker card, then mapping their skills, education, and work experience. Next, the agency coordinates with businesses and industries to get valid job vacancy information that fits the real needs of the job market. Through this mechanism, we try to make sure that the workers we recommend truly meet the qualifications needed by the company, so their chances of being hired are higher. With targeted placement, it is hoped that unemployment rates can be reduced and the productivity and welfare of the people in Bengkalis Regency can be improved.

c. Priority policy for local workers

Based on the main legal foundation in Bengkalis Regency, which is Bengkalis Regency Regulation Number 3 of 2022 concerning the Service, Placement, and Protection of Local Workers, as well as the technical implementation carried out by the Bengkalis Regency Department of Manpower and Transmigration, here are the details of the policies and priorities for placing local workers that are applied: First, the Bengkalis Regency Government specifically defines local workers through regulations to ensure targeted protection. Local workers are job seekers who have a Family Card or Identity Card from Bengkalis Regency and have been residing in the Bengkalis Regency area for at least 1 (one) year.

The second is the Company's Obligation in Placement Planning and Program Plan Preparation: Every large and medium-sized company operating in the Bengkalis Regency area is required to make a program plan for placing local workers as well as developing human resources around the company's operational area.

The goal of the local workforce priority policy is for locals to become masters in their own land. According to informants, the local workforce priority policy is an effort by the local government to ensure that the local community can be the masters of their own land. (Al-Asfour & Khan, 2014). In practice, workforce placement is a follow-up to the selection process by putting new employees in the right position or work environment after they have successfully passed the recruitment and selection stages. (Nurchaya & Majapahit, 2018) The agency encourages companies operating in the Bengkalis Regency area to prioritize hiring local workers according to the qualifications and skills needed. It also collects data on and provides guidance to local job seekers so they have relevant skills and can compete fairly. Through coordination and oversight

of the recruitment process, it's hoped that job opportunities will be more accessible for the local community, which can improve welfare, reduce unemployment, and strengthen the role of local human resources in regional development.

d. Healthy industrial relations

Based on the research results, the government has established a healthy industrial relationship by building communication and harmonious cooperation between workers, employers, and government agencies.(Hebdon & Hyatt, 1998) playing the role of a mediator and facilitator in resolving workplace disputes through deliberation and mediation mechanisms, so that every problem can be resolved fairly and in accordance with the provisions of laws and regulations, but the obstacles often faced in maintaining an ideal industrial relationship include a limited number of active mediators, lack of effective communication at the company's internal level, and the suboptimal implementation of Cooperation Institutions that involve only two parties in some private companies

e. Transmigration

Transmigration aims to even out the distribution of productive labor, which collectively leads to improved economic welfare and lower rates according to research results. The transmigration program is implemented as an effort to balance the spread of productive labor while also promoting equitable development across regions. Through this program, communities with limited access to land and job opportunities are facilitated to settle in prepared transmigration areas with basic infrastructure support and guidance for productive businesses. The agency also provides assistance and empowerment so that transmigrants can independently and sustainably manage the local economic potential.(Arndt, 1983) With a more even distribution of labor and optimization of regional resources, the transmigration program is expected to improve the economic welfare of communities and gradually reduce poverty across Bengkalis Regency. Regarding the transmigration program, the Bengkalis Regency government focuses on development, regional planning, and improving community welfare. The government, through coordination at the provincial and regency levels, has prepared and re-evaluated the transmigration development areas in Bengkalis Regency, centered on Rupert Island in Sungai Cingam village. Rupert Island had been a transmigration site before, but in practice it was considered not to have run optimally. Therefore, the Department of Manpower and Transmigration (Disnakertrans) carried out improvements with a main focus on business facilities readiness and the sustainability of residents' lives.

2. Direction in efforts to tackle unemployment in Bengkalis Regency is carried out through measured instructions and continuous guidance to all relevant agencies to ensure job expansion programs align with the regional vision. This process includes syncing the training curriculum at the Workforce Training Center (BLK) with the real needs of the oil, gas, and plantation sectors, which are the backbone of the local economy.(Reichenbach, 1991) By providing clear guidance on the implementation of apprenticeship policies and the placement of local workers, this briefing aims to minimize the skills gap (Radermacher et al., 2014) so that every policy carried out can effectively reach the target of reducing unemployment accurately across all districts. The guidance is given through programs like Competency-Based Unit Training and BNSP Certification, tailored to the needs of the local oil and gas, plantation, and manufacturing industries, such as Welder or welding training,

General K3 Expert, Rigger, Security Guard, up to Housekeeping. Each participant is trained until completion to receive a Competency Certificate from the National Professional Certification Agency (BNSP), so that graduates have high competitiveness and are ready to be immediately employed by companies.

3. Action Aspect refers to the concrete steps taken to achieve a goal or implement a program (Cornish et al., 2023). In this aspect, actions include a series of decisions and activities that must be carried out by the government, organizations, or relevant parties to address issues or achieve predetermined goals. To tackle unemployment, the Bengkalis Regency Office of Manpower and Transmigration conducted training based on the Competency Unit for Welder, Rigger, Digital Marketing, and Sewing majors, held on October 6, 2023, at the Surya Duri Hotel Hall. During the training, participants will gain knowledge to help them compete in the job market. Meanwhile, for employers and companies, this training is expected to produce skilled workers who meet the qualifications and positions they need.
4. Learning, Learning is a system to understand the benchmark of success from the actions of strategies carried out. When it comes to learning, the main focus is on improving the quality of local Human Resources (HR) to meet labor market needs, especially in the industrial and service sectors. (Reichenbach, 1991) In this program, there are various types of training offered, covering technical fields like welding, pipe fitting, rigging, electrical work, as well as office administration and computer skills. Participants are not only trained, but also encouraged to obtain certificates from the National Professional Certification Agency (BNSP) so that they are recognized nationally. Furthermore, this collaboration works together with big companies like PT Pertamina Hulu Rokan (PHR) and educational institutions like Politeknik Caltex Riau (PCR).

Conclusion

This study concludes that unemployment in Bengkalis Regency is a complex structural challenge, marked by an increase in the number of unemployed from 18,227 people in 2022 to 18,620 people in 2023. To address this phenomenon, the Bengkalis Regency Government, through the Department of Manpower and Transmigration (Disnakertrans), has implemented a comprehensive strategy covering four main aspects: objectives, guidance, actions, and learning. This strategy focuses on empowering the local workforce to be highly competitive through competency-based training aligned with the needs of the oil, gas, and plantation industries. In addition to providing technical training such as BNSP-certified welding and pipefitting, the government is also actively involved in targeted job placement, strengthening policies prioritizing local workers, and maintaining harmonious industrial relations. The success of these efforts is driven by a strategic collaboration with major employers like PT Pertamina Hulu Rokan and educational institutions like Politeknik Caltex Riau, aimed at reducing the skills gap and ensuring the local community can be hosts in their own area through sustainable economic welfare improvements..

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