

EFFECTIVENESS OF APPRENTICESHIP ACTIVITIES IN THE EMPOWERMENT OF THE JOB SEEKER COMMUNITY IN NGAWI REGENCY, EAST JAVA PROVINCE

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Abstract

This study aims to analyze the effectiveness of apprenticeship programs in empowering job seekers in Ngawi Regency through collaboration between the Department of Trade, Industry, and Manpower of Ngawi Regency and PT Dwi Prima Sentosa. This research employed a qualitative approach with a descriptive method. Research data were collected through interviews, observations, and documentation involving informants who were directly involved in the apprenticeship program implementation. The analysis of program effectiveness was based on the program evaluation framework proposed by Marvin C. Alkin, which includes four main dimensions: implementation effectiveness, output effectiveness, outcome effectiveness, and program sustainability. The findings indicate that the apprenticeship program has been effective in improving the skills and work readiness of job seekers. In terms of implementation, the program was conducted according to the planned procedures through participant selection, practice-based training, and direct supervision within the industrial work environment. In terms of output, the program successfully enhanced participants' technical skills and work attitudes. Regarding outcomes, the apprenticeship program increased participants' opportunities to obtain employment after completing the training. Furthermore, the sustainability of the program is supported by ongoing collaboration between the local government and industrial companies in providing apprenticeship opportunities. Therefore, apprenticeship programs can serve as an effective strategy to improve workforce quality and reduce the gap between labor competencies and industry needs.

Keywords : apprenticeship program, community empowerment, job seekers, program effectiveness, workforce training

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1. Introduction

The problem of unemployment is one of the strategic issues in economic and social development in various developing countries, including Indonesia. Unemployment not only reflects an imbalance between the number of labor force and the availability of jobs, but also indicates a gap between labor competencies and labor market needs. These conditions can have an impact on declining community welfare, increasing poverty rates, and inhibiting regional economic growth. Therefore, the government has an important role in creating policies and programs that are able to improve the quality of human resources and expand employment opportunities for the community.

One of the indicators that is often used to describe the employment conditions of a region is the open unemployment rate. The open unemployment rate describes the number of working-age people who have not found a job even though they are actively looking for work. This condition is one of the government's main concerns because it is directly related to the level of community welfare. The problem of unemployment is also often influenced by various factors, such as low levels of education, lack of labor skills, and limited public access to information about job opportunities.

The problem of unemployment is still an important issue in various regions in Indonesia, including in Ngawi Regency, East Java Province. The open unemployment rate in Ngawi Regency is still quite high when compared to several other areas in East Java Province. This condition is caused by several factors, including the lack of readiness of the workforce to enter the world of work and the lack of information about the means of finding job opportunities for the job seeker. In addition, there is still a gap between the competence of the workforce and the growing industrial needs in the area. This problem is a challenge for the local government in an effort to improve the quality of human resources while reducing the unemployment rate in Ngawi Regency.

Based on these conditions, the local government through the Trade, Industry, and Manpower Office of Ngawi Regency has a responsibility to empower the job seeker community through various job training and skill development programs. Empowering the job seeker community is one of the strategic efforts to improve the ability of the workforce so that they have competencies that are in accordance with the needs of the industrial world. One form of empowerment activities carried out by the local government is through job training and apprenticeship activities in companies. Apprenticeship is a job training activity that provides opportunities for participants to acquire skills directly in the work environment so that they can understand the actual work process in the industrial world.

The apprenticeship program is one of the important strategies in an effort to improve the quality of the workforce because the activity not only provides theoretical knowledge, but also provides direct work experience to participants. In the apprenticeship activities, participants will gain various technical skills needed by the industry as well as experience working in a company environment. Thus, apprenticeship activities are expected to increase the readiness of the workforce to enter the world of work while increasing their chances of getting a job after completing the training program.

In the implementation of the apprenticeship program in Ngawi Regency, the local government collaborates with the private sector, one of which is with PT Dwi Prima Sentosa. This company is one of the largest footwear manufacturers and has an important role in providing jobs for the people in Ngawi Regency. PT Dwi Prima Sentosa was established in 2002 and has grown into one of the shoe manufacturers that produces various international brands and markets its products to various countries. The company has several branches in various regions in East Java, including in Ngawi Regency which has been operating since 2016.

The existence of PT Dwi Prima Sentosa in Ngawi Regency provides considerable opportunities for job seekers to get jobs in the industrial sector. The company has thousands of employees and even has plans to increase the number of employees in the next few years. This condition shows that the need for labor in the company is large enough to open up opportunities for local communities to fill the needs of these workers. However, one of the obstacles faced by the job seeker community is the lack of skills that suit the needs of the industry in the company. Therefore, apprenticeship activities are one of the solutions that are expected to be able to bridge the gap between industrial needs and the competencies of the available workforce.

Through the cooperation between the local government and PT Dwi Prima Sentosa, apprenticeship activities are carried out as one of the efforts to improve the skills of the workforce while reducing the unemployment rate in Ngawi Regency. This apprenticeship program provides opportunities for job seekers to obtain skills training directly at the company. In addition to gaining work experience, apprentices also have a greater chance of being recruited as a permanent workforce after completing the program. Thus, apprenticeship activities not only function as a means of skills training, but also as a means of empowering the job seeker community through increasing job opportunities.

Although apprenticeship activities have been carried out as one of the workforce empowerment programs, the effectiveness of the implementation of the program still needs to be studied in more depth. Evaluation of the effectiveness of the apprenticeship program is important to find out the extent to which these activities are able to improve participants' skills, increase job opportunities, and have a real impact on the absorption of labor in Ngawi Regency. In addition, an analysis of the effectiveness of the program is also needed to find out the factors that support or hinder the implementation of apprenticeship activities so that the program can continue to be developed and improved in the future.

Based on this background, this study was conducted to analyze the effectiveness of apprenticeship activities in empowering the job seeker community in Ngawi Regency, especially through cooperation between the local government and PT Dwi Prima Sentosa. This study aims to find out and describe the extent of the effectiveness of the apprenticeship program in improving workforce skills and increasing labor absorption in Ngawi Regency. The results of this study are expected to contribute to the development of science in the field of economic development and community empowerment and become a consideration for local governments in formulating more effective employment policies in reducing unemployment rates in the regions, academic contributions in the development of studies on community empowerment and employment policies, as well as providing practical recommendations for local governments in designing job training programs that are more effective in reducing the unemployment rate in the regions.

2. Method

This study uses a qualitative approach with a descriptive type of research. The qualitative approach was chosen because this study aims to deeply understand the phenomenon of the effectiveness of apprenticeship programs in the absorption of labor in Ngawi Regency through direct observation of the conditions that occur in the field. The qualitative method allows researchers to gain a comprehensive understanding of the process, experience,

and perception of informants related to the implementation of the apprenticeship program. The descriptive approach is used to describe factually and systematically the implementation of the apprenticeship program and its impact on the empowerment of the job seeker community in Ngawi Regency without using statistical analysis or data quantification. The qualitative research method is based on the philosophy of postpositivism and emphasizes more on the interpretation of data obtained in the field (Sugiyono, 2017).

This research was carried out at PT Dwi Prima Sentosa which is located in Ngawi Regency, East Java. The location was chosen because the company is a partner of the local government in the implementation of apprenticeship programs for job seekers in Ngawi Regency. The apprenticeship program that is the object of the research is a job training activity in the field of sewing shoe uppers organized by the Ngawi Regency Trade, Industry, and Manpower Office in collaboration with PT Dwi Prima Sentosa. This apprenticeship program was carried out in the period from October 29, 2024 to November 25, 2024 with a total of 50 participants.

The research subjects in this study are parties directly involved in the implementation of the apprenticeship program. The research informants were selected using the purposive sampling technique, which is a technique for determining informants based on certain considerations in accordance with the research objectives (Yusuf, 2014). This technique is used so that researchers can obtain relevant information from parties who have knowledge and experience related to the apprenticeship program being researched. The research informants consisted of eight people including the Head of the Ngawi Regency Trade, Industry, and Manpower Office, the Head of Manpower, HRD PT Dwi Prima Sentosa, four apprenticeship participants, and one general public. The informant was chosen because they were considered to have relevant information about the implementation of the apprenticeship program and its impact on labor absorption.

In qualitative research, the main research instrument is the researcher himself as a human instrument. Researchers play a role in determining the focus of research, choosing informants as data sources, collecting data, assessing data quality, analyzing data, and drawing conclusions from research results. The researcher also used interview guidelines compiled based on program effectiveness indicators proposed by Alkin (2011), which included the dimensions of program planning, program implementation, program output, and program outcomes. These indicators are used as a guideline in digging up information about the effectiveness of apprenticeship activities in empowering the job seeker community.

Data collection is carried out through several techniques, namely interviews, observations, and documentation. The interview was conducted in a structured manner using pre-prepared question guidelines to obtain information from informants regarding the implementation of the apprenticeship program. Interviews were conducted directly with the informants to obtain in-depth data on their experiences and views on the program. According to Sugiyono (2017), interviews are a data collection technique used to find problems in more depth through direct interaction with informants.

In addition to interviews, this study also uses observation techniques to obtain data on real conditions in the field. Observation was carried out directly by observing activities related to the implementation of the apprenticeship program at PT Dwi Prima Sentosa. Through observation, the researcher can see firsthand the process of implementing the apprenticeship program, the involvement of participants, and the interaction between participants and the company. This observation technique allows researchers to obtain more objective data on the implementation of the apprenticeship program.

Another data collection technique is documentation. Documentation is used to obtain data in the form of written documents, photos of activities, archives, activity records, and various other documents related to the implementation of the apprenticeship program. Documentation data is used as a support and reinforcement for the data obtained through interviews and observations so that the results of the research can be more reliable. The data analysis in this study was carried out qualitatively by following the stages of data analysis proposed by Sugiyono (2017). The data analysis process is carried out through three main stages, namely data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawn. Data reduction is carried out by summarizing, selecting, and focusing data that is relevant to the research objectives. Furthermore, the data that has been reduced is presented in the form of a narrative description so that it is easier for researchers to understand the relationship between the data. The last stage is the drawing of conclusions, namely the data interpretation process to obtain research findings regarding the effectiveness of the apprenticeship program in empowering the job seeker community in Ngawi Regency.

3. Results and Discussion

This study aims to analyze the effectiveness of apprenticeship activities in empowering the job seeker community in Ngawi Regency through the collaboration between the Ngawi Regency Trade, Industry, and

Manpower Office and PT Dwi Prima Sentosa. The analysis of program effectiveness in this study uses the framework of program effectiveness theory proposed by Marvin C. Alkin which emphasizes four main dimensions, namely implementation effectiveness, output effectiveness, outcome effectiveness, and sustainability effectiveness (Alkin, 2011). This framework is used to assess the extent to which the apprenticeship program is able to achieve the goals that have been set, especially in increasing capacity and job opportunities for the job seeker community. The research data was obtained through in-depth interviews with informants involved in the implementation of the program, observations of apprenticeship activities, and documentation related to job training programs organized by local governments. The findings of the study were then analyzed qualitatively to identify various aspects that show the level of effectiveness of the apprenticeship program in the context of empowering the job-seeking community.

1. Empowerment of the Job Seeker Community through the Empowerment Program

Empowering the job seeker community is one of the important strategies in an effort to improve the quality of human resources and reduce the unemployment rate in the region. In Ngawi Regency, the empowerment efforts are carried out through various work skill improvement programs organized by the Trade, Industry, and Manpower Office. One of the programs that is the focus of this study is apprenticeship activities in industrial companies that aim to provide direct work experience to the job seeker community.

The apprenticeship program is designed as a means of practice-based training that allows participants to acquire job skills relevant to the needs of the industry. In contrast to theoretical training, apprenticeship activities provide opportunities for participants to learn directly in the actual work environment. Thus, participants not only gain knowledge about the work process, but also understand the operational standards, work patterns, and work culture that apply in the company.

The implementation of the apprenticeship program in this study was carried out at PT Dwi Prima Sentosa, an industrial company engaged in footwear production in Ngawi Regency. Through this activity, apprentices received skills training in the shoe production department, especially in the process of sewing shoe uppers. The training process is carried out directly in the company's production area with the guidance of an experienced workforce who acts as instructors.

This apprenticeship activity provides an opportunity for participants to directly understand the production process in the manufacturing industry. Participants not only learn work techniques, but also get to know the various stages of production, product quality standards, and the use of production tools in accordance with work procedures in the company. With this work experience, participants are expected to have better readiness to enter the world of work after the apprenticeship program is completed. Apprenticeship activities also play a role in increasing individual capacity through a practical and applicable learning process. Participants can develop technical skills as well as adaptability to a dynamic work environment. This shows that apprenticeship programs not only function as a means of job training, but also as an instrument of community empowerment that allows individuals to improve their competencies and employment opportunities.

2. Effectiveness of the Implementation of Apprenticeship Program

Based on the results of the research, the implementation of the apprenticeship program in Ngawi Regency has generally been carried out in accordance with the planning that has been set by the Ngawi Regency Trade, Industry, and Manpower Office. The program implementation process starts from the activity planning stage, participant selection, implementation of training in the company, to the program evaluation stage after the activity is completed.

The participant selection stage is carried out by considering certain criteria, such as job seeker status, age of the participant, and readiness to participate in full training activities during the internship period. This selection process aims to ensure that participants who participate in the program are individuals who really need job training and have the motivation to improve their skills.

During the implementation of apprenticeship activities, participants received direct guidance from experienced workers in the company. This assistance allows participants to systematically learn the work process and understand the applicable work standards in the industry. In addition, participants also get the opportunity to practice skills that have been learned directly in production activities.

The implementation of apprenticeship activities carried out in a real work environment provides a different experience compared to training that is only carried out in the classroom. Participants can interact directly with workers in the company, understand the rhythm of industrial work, and learn various skills needed in the production process. This direct work experience is one of the factors that contribute to the effectiveness of the apprenticeship program in increasing the work readiness of participants.

The findings of this study show that the apprenticeship program has applied the principle of practice-based learning (*experiential learning*) which is the main characteristic in job training in the industrial sector. Through this approach, participants not only gain theoretical knowledge, but also practical experience that is crucial in building work competencies. Thus, the implementation of the apprenticeship program can be said to have fulfilled its main purpose as a means of improving workforce skills.

3. Effectiveness of Program Outputs

The UT of the apprenticeship program in this study can be seen from the change in the abilities and skills of the participants after participating in training activities. Based on the results of interviews with the apprentices, this activity provides significant benefits in improving their technical skills, especially in the shoe production process. Participants who previously had no work experience in the industrial sector gained knowledge about the use of production machines, shoe uppers sewing techniques, and product quality standards applied by the company. Through apprenticeship activities, participants can understand firsthand how the production process is carried out efficiently and in accordance with industry standards.

In addition to improving technical skills, apprenticeship activities also provide benefits in forming participants' work attitudes. Participants learn about the importance of work discipline, responsibility for work, and the ability to work together in a team. These aspects are an important part of the work competencies needed in the industrial world.

The results of the study show that the apprenticeship program is able to produce direct changes in the participants' abilities, both in terms of technical skills and work attitudes. This shows that the apprenticeship program has succeeded in achieving the expected output, namely the capacity building of individuals who participate in the training activities. This finding is in line with the concept of program effectiveness put forward by Marvin C. Alkin who emphasizes that program outputs must be able to produce real changes in the program's target group (Alkin, 2011). In the context of this study, these changes are reflected in the improvement of participants' work skills after participating in apprenticeship activities.

4. Effectiveness of Program Outcomes

The outcome of the apprenticeship program can be seen from the impact produced after participants complete the training activities, especially in relation to job opportunities. Based on the results of the study, some apprentices have a greater chance of getting a job at the company where they participated in the apprenticeship.

The existence of work experience gained during the apprenticeship program is one of the important factors that increase participants' job opportunities. Companies tend to consider prospective workers who already have work experience and skills that are in accordance with production needs. Thus, apprenticeship programs can be an effective means to increase the competitiveness of the workforce in the job market. In addition to increasing job opportunities, apprenticeship activities also have a positive impact on increasing participants' confidence in finding a job. Participants feel better prepared to apply for jobs because they already have practical skills as well as work experience that can be a plus in the recruitment process.

The findings of this study show that apprenticeship programs have a significant contribution in improving workforce readiness. The program not only provides skills training, but also helps participants to build work experience that is relevant to the needs of the industry. Thus, apprenticeship programs can act as a mechanism that bridges the gap between labor competencies and labor market needs.

5. Program Sustainability Effectiveness

Program sustainability is one of the important indicators in assessing the effectiveness of a community empowerment program. In the context of the apprenticeship program in Ngawi Regency, the sustainability of the program can be seen from the local government's commitment to continue to carry out apprenticeship activities through cooperation with various industrial companies.

The Ngawi Regency Trade, Industry, and Manpower Office actively establishes partnerships with companies to provide apprenticeship opportunities for the job seeker community. This collaboration is an important strategy in expanding public access to industry-based job training. The sustainability of the apprenticeship program is also supported by the company's need for a workforce that has technical skills in accordance with industry standards. Through the apprenticeship program, companies can get prospective workers who already have basic work experience so that the work adaptation process can take place faster.

With the existence of a mutually beneficial relationship between local governments and companies, apprenticeship programs have the potential to continue to be developed as one of the policies to improve the quality of labor in the regions. The sustainability of this program is an important factor in ensuring that the benefits of the apprenticeship program can be felt in a sustainable manner by the job seeker community.

Overall, the results of the study show that the apprenticeship program implemented by the Ngawi Regency Trade, Industry, and Manpower Office in collaboration with PT Dwi Prima Sentosa has been effective in improving the skills of the workforce and expanding job opportunities for the job seeker community. The effectiveness of the program can be seen from the successful implementation of apprenticeship activities, the improvement of technical and non-technical skills of participants, and the positive impact on participants' job opportunities after participating in the training program. The findings of this study strengthen the concept of program effectiveness put forward by Marvin C. Alkin who states that the effectiveness of a program can be assessed from the success of program implementation, the results produced by the program, the impact of the program on the target group, and the long-term sustainability of the program (Alkin, 2011). The results of this study also show that collaboration between local governments and the industrial sector has a very important role in overcoming employment problems. The collaboration allows the creation of training programs that are in accordance with the needs of the industry so that the skills gained by participants become more relevant to the needs of the job market.

Practically, apprenticeship programs can be one of the effective strategies in improving the quality of the workforce and reducing the unemployment rate in the regions. Therefore, the development of apprenticeship programs needs to continue to be carried out through improving the quality of training, expanding cooperation with companies, and increasing the number of program participants so that the benefits of the program can be felt by more job seekers.

4. Conclusions and Suggestions

This study aims to analyze the effectiveness of apprenticeship activities in empowering the job seeker community in Ngawi Regency through cooperation between the local government and the industrial sector. Based on the results of the research, it can be concluded that the apprenticeship program organized by the Ngawi Regency Trade, Industry, and Manpower Office in collaboration with PT Dwi Prima Sentosa in general has been running effectively in improving the skills and work readiness of the job seeker community.

The effectiveness of the program can be seen from several main aspects. First, from the aspect of program implementation, apprenticeship activities have been carried out in accordance with the planned that has been set, starting from the participant selection process, the implementation of training, to program evaluation. Participants gain hands-on learning in an industrial work environment so that they can understand the work process in a practical and systematic manner. Second, from the aspect of program output, apprenticeship activities are able to improve participants' technical skills, especially in the field of shoe production, as well as

form work attitudes such as discipline, responsibility, and the ability to work together in a team. Third, from the aspect of program outcomes, apprenticeship activities provide greater opportunities for participants to get a job because they already have work experience and skills that suit the needs of the industry.

In addition to providing benefits for participants, the apprenticeship program also provides benefits for companies because companies can get prospective workers who already have basic skills and understand the industrial work culture. Thus, the apprenticeship program is one of the effective strategies in bridging the gap between labor competencies and the needs of the industrial world. The findings of this study strengthen the concept of program effectiveness put forward by Marvin C. Alkin who emphasizes that the success of a program can be judged from the success of the program implementation, the results achieved by participants, the impact of the program on individual capacity building, and the sustainability of the program (Alkin, 2011).

Theoretically, this research contributes to the development of studies on the effectiveness of job training programs and workforce empowerment, especially in the context of apprenticeship programs as a form of policy to improve the quality of human resources. This research shows that apprenticeship programs can be an important instrument in improving the skills of the workforce and strengthening the linkages between government agencies and the industrial sector in workforce development.

Practically, the results of this study have implications for local governments to continue to develop apprenticeship programs through expanding cooperation with various industrial companies. In addition, improving the quality of training, monitoring program implementation, and continuous evaluation need to be carried out so that apprenticeship programs can provide more optimal benefits to the job seeker community. With better program management, apprenticeship activities are expected to be one of the effective strategies in improving the quality of the workforce and reducing the unemployment rate in the regions.

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