

Job Fair: A Vehicle to Build Networks and Bring Workers Together to Reduce Unemployment

Daniar Nurul Fadilah¹, Esti Nuryani², Mukarto Siswoyo³, Nursahidin^{4*}

^{1,2,3,4}Universitas Swadaya Gunung Jati, Cirebon, West Java, Indonesia

E-mail: daniarnurulf@gmail.com¹, estinur02@gmail.com², mukarto.siswoyo@ugj.ac.id³,
nursahidin.sirod@ugj.ac.id^{4*}

ABSTRACT

The Cirebon Regency Manpower Office has held a job fair program as a step to overcome the problem of unemployment. This study aims to evaluate the job fair program and find out the impact of the implementation of the job fair organized by the Cirebon Regency Manpower Office and whether it has gone well in accordance with the goals that have been set. The evaluation of this program uses criteria developed by William N. Dunn. This study uses a qualitative approach by utilizing primary and secondary data. The data analysis process involves the stages of data reduction, data presentation, and conclusions drawn. The results of the study show that the job fair program can be said to be quite successful. This program showed positive results of the six evaluation indicators used: effectiveness, efficiency, adequacy, alignment, responsiveness, and accuracy. Although some aspects still need to be improved, the implementation of this program can be considered successful. Overall, it can be concluded that the job market program in Cirebon Regency is an effective step in overcoming the problem of unemployment. By making several improvements, this program has the potential to be more optimal in providing support to the community in finding a job.

Keywords: Unemployment, Job Exchange, Program Evaluation.

INTRODUCTION

The role of human resources has a significant impact on achieving development goals and is a key factor in the implementation of national development (Bali Swain & Yang-Wallentin, 2020). The Opinion of Utomo (2014) quoted by (Khumayah et al., 2020), the development of the country not only involves infrastructure, economy, and technology, but must also ensure that its people have a good quality of life. Thus, improving the community's quality of life must be a top priority in every development policy and program designed and implemented by the

government, as this will ensure the achievement of sustainable and inclusive development goals. Therefore, the development of the employment sector as part of efforts to improve human resources aims to improve the quality and contribution of individuals in the development process while still ensuring the protection of their rights and interests by paying attention to human dignity. This is in accordance with Article 27, paragraph (2) of the 1945 Constitution, which states that "Every citizen has the right to work and a decent livelihood for humanity". That is, giving everyone the right to a decent job and life is important.

Law of the Republic of Indonesia Number 13 of 2003 outlines labour law in Indonesia concerning Manpower. In Article 4 of Law of the Republic of Indonesia, Number 13 of 2003 concerning Manpower, employment development aims to: (a) empower and utilize the workforce optimally and humanely, (b) realize equal distribution of employment opportunities and the provision of labour in accordance with the needs of national and regional development, (c) provide protection to workers in realizing welfare, and (d) improve the welfare of workers and their families.

A job can be described as a source of a person's livelihood that allows him to be able to meet the needs of himself and his family (Pin et al., 2023). The definition of labor based on Law Number 13 of 2003 concerning Manpower is every person who can do work to produce goods and/or services to meet their own needs and for the community (Perdana, 2021). However, the reality is that a large number of job seekers are still struggling to get a job, which is why there is a lot of unemployment (Hall & Kudlyak, 2022; Triatmanto & Bawono, 2023). One of the problems faced to date in Indonesia is unemployment. Unemployment occurs when a person desires to work but has difficulty getting a job that matches their needs and skills (Zevita & Hamsal, 2024). The need for motivation that can be the reason and underlie the actions taken is an internal or external impulse that influences a person to act, achieve certain goals, and strive diligently despite facing various challenges and obstacles (Nursahidin et al., 2020).

According to Akadun (2021), Unemployment can be defined as a workforce that is not yet employed or not working effectively. From this perspective, unemployment can be classified into three types: open unemployment, half-unemployment, and covert unemployment. Open unemployment refers to workers who are not officially employed despite their efforts to find jobs, sometimes due to laziness in looking for or performing work. Half-unemployment describes workers who do not work optimally, often because there is not enough work to fill a standard workweek of 35 hours or seven hours per day, such as a construction worker who is temporarily unemployed between projects. Covert unemployment occurs when there are too many workers for one unit of work, meaning that reducing the workforce would not affect productivity, leading to suboptimal performance as the job does not match the workers' talents and skills (Lima et al., 2021).

According to Suryono et al. (2022) in Juventia & Rahmawati (2022), unemployment is one of the problems that developing countries continue to face and cannot overcome. The factor that makes it difficult to achieve the goal of productive and comprehensive job opportunities is the mismatch between the few job vacancies and the large number of job seekers.

The Job Exchange Program refers to the regulations stipulated in the Regulation of the Minister of Manpower Number 39 of 2016 concerning Labor Placement. Article 1 of the Regulation of the Minister of Manpower of the Republic of Indonesia Number 39 of 2016 defines a job market as a place for service for labour placement activities. Labor placement, according to the Regulation of the Minister of Manpower of the Republic of Indonesia Number 39 of 2016, is a placement service process provided to job seekers to obtain a job.

One of the Cirebon Regency Manpower Office's efforts is to carry out a job exchange. The Job Fair is a place where employers and job seekers can connect directly. It is one of the media that can function as a channel of job information between employers and job seekers. Of course, the job fair aims to attract workers and lower the unemployment rate (Acikgoz, 2019; Mauliddah et al., 2022).

The Cirebon Regency Manpower Office organizes an annual job fair that is well utilized by applicants. Employers and job seekers are interdependent, and the number of applicants absorbed will affect the unemployment rate. Although job fair programs help job seekers get jobs, there is still a disturbing phenomenon, such as the discrepancy between the criteria of job seekers and the qualifications desired by the job search agency.

Siswoyo et al. (2020), public policy evaluation is the last step in the public policy process. This stage is carried out to evaluate the effectiveness of a policy that has been determined. Evaluation is very important because it is to find out whether a policy has achieved its goals and provide suggestions for future changes. Evaluation is an important step in the public policy analysis process that is carried out throughout the policy-making process and not only at the end. The evaluation is carried out because not all public policy programs achieve the desired results. According to William N Dunn in (Juventia & Rahmawati, 2022) Evaluation produces information about the value and opportunities that can be achieved or benefits from the results of an existing policy.

The latest research on the job market in 2024 conducted Zevita & Hamzal (2024) shows that the job market program in Riau Province is fairly successful with the government's role in reducing unemployment so as to allow the workforce to compete in the job market. Research conducted last year by Hanifah & Suhartini (2023) shows the very effective recruitment carried out by PT Usaha Saudara Mandiri through the job market. This study found four main aspects of the effectiveness of recruitment at PT Usaha Saudara Mandiri: the aspect of interest, the aspect of convenience, and the aspect of speed.

According to research Juventia & Rahmawati (2022) In 2022, the implementation of the job market is still ineffective due to three factors, namely the imbalance between job seekers and available vacancies, inefficient use of time, and failure to meet targets. Research by Novitasari & Hertati (2022) shows that the implementation of the job market program in Sidoarjo Regency has proven to be very successful. Based on the research results, the job market implementation in Cirebon Regency is quite successful. This is shown by the high number of labor placements that range from hundreds to thousands of people.

This research uniquely focuses on evaluating the job exchange program in Cirebon Regency to identify specific issues and areas for improvement. Unlike previous studies, it will provide a detailed analysis of the program's effectiveness in this particular region, offering new insights and practical recommendations for enhancing job placement success.

This research aims to connect the public with job vacancy providers. Therefore, it is very important to evaluate its implementation to determine how successful it is in achieving its goals so that improvements can be made to make it better in the future. Against this background, the researcher is interested in conducting a study on the evaluation of the implementation of the job exchange in tackling the unemployment rate in Cirebon Regency.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study uses a qualitative method with a descriptive approach. By describing social events and phenomena in detail, it aims to understand a problem comprehensively. According to Erickson (1968), as quoted by Anggito & Setiawan (2016), qualitative research aims to identify and explain in a narrative the activities carried out and the influence of those actions on their lives. This research relies on two types of data sources: primary and secondary. Primary data sources refer to information collected directly from primary informants who will provide information related to the research topic. The information obtained from primary data sources includes thoughts, views, and assumptions that are directly related to the scope of the research. In this context, primary data was obtained from Mr Leman, who serves as the head of the labour placement division at the Cirebon Regency Manpower and Transmigration Office. The second type of data is secondary data obtained from various sources such as books, scientific journals, and from previous research reports. This data is useful for complementing and strengthening the primary data obtained from direct research.

In qualitative research methods, data analysis is a stage that takes place throughout the research process, starting from collection to finally after the data is collected within a certain time frame. The researcher is actively involved in evaluating the responses and answers given by the respondents during the interview process. This process involves asking questions continuously until the researcher feels confident that the collected data has sufficient credibility.

Miles and Huberman (1984) in (Sugiyono 2016) emphasized that qualitative data analysis involves several important activities, namely data reduction to reduce complexity, data presentation to visualize findings, and drawing conclusions or verification to validate the results of the analysis.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Effectiveness

The success of the job market program will depend on the extent to which the program is implemented in accordance with its main goal, which is to reduce the unemployment rate in Cirebon Regency. Overall, implementing the job fair has shown positive results, although some shortcomings still need to be considered. One of them is the difficulty in synchronizing the qualifications of participants with the needs of the company, which results in a limited number of participants being accepted. However, in terms of information dissemination and socialization, the job fair has achieved the desired target. The Manpower Office has succeeded in disseminating information widely through social media, making it easier for the public to access information, especially the unemployed in Cirebon Regency.

In terms of socialization, the use of social media to disseminate information about the job fair has been well done by the Cirebon Regency Manpower Office in providing a broad understanding to the surrounding community about the program so that most of them already have adequate knowledge about the procedures and mechanisms involved in participating in the job fair. In addition, the implementation of the job market program is also in accordance with the provisions stipulated in the Regulation of the Minister of Manpower Number 39 of 2016 concerning Labor Placement. Thus, it can be concluded that the evaluation of the implementation of the Job Exchange program shows adequate effectiveness.

Efficiency

Efficiency criteria refer to efforts to achieve desired results by using resources to a minimum, be it time or human labour. In the context of implementing the job fair, efficiency is reflected in how much effort is needed to achieve the program's success by paying attention to the use of human resources and the efforts deployed by related parties (Al-Qudah et al., 2020; Gerhart & Feng, 2021). The government, especially the Cirebon Regency Manpower Office, has supported the implementation of the job fair program by providing information and regulations that must be complied with, simplifying the licensing process with the parties involved, and acting as an intermediary between vocational schools that have a Special Job Exchange (BKK) and private parties (companies) involved in the implementation of the job fair. In addition, the management of this activity has been regulated in the Budget Use List (DPA) by the Cirebon Regency Manpower Office. They have run a job exchange program by collaborating with schools that have a Special Job Exchange (BKK) program. The following is a list of vocational schools in Cirebon Regency that hold job fairs in 2023, including the following.

Table 1. Vocational Schools in Cirebon Regency that carry out the 2023 Job Exchange

It	Name of Special Job Exchange (BKK)	Implementation	Company	Placement
1.	SMK M Lemahabang	August	16	1.230
2.	SMKN 1 Gunungjati	August	10	313
3.	SMKS Bina Warga	Sepetember	10	17
4.	SMKS As Salam	Sepetember	8	54
5.	SMKS Abu Manshur	Sepetember	8	36
6.	SMKN 1 Jamblang	October	10	144
7.	SMKN 1 Mundu	October	12	178
8.	SMKS Fatahilah	October	8	80
9.	SMKS Bina Cendekia	October	12	927
10.	SMKS Dwi Bhakti	October	9	157
11.	SMKS Nusantara	October	5	3
12.	SMKS Budi Tresna M	November	12	86
13.	SMKS Manbaul Ulum	November	12	24
14.	SMK Samudra Nusantara	December	8	260
Sum				3.509

Source: Cirebon Regency Manpower Office

The efficiency of the implementation of the job fair can be measured from the time used. Based on the results of the interview, it is known that the focus is on estimating the time when the job fair program is held very well. So based on this, from the efficiency standard, it can be said that in terms of human resources, especially the Cirebon Regency Manpower Office, has been efficient in facilitating all parties involved in the job market program. The implementation of the job market has succeeded in meeting the target of labour placement. Although it is still not optimal, it does not mean that the implementation of the job market program has not reached the target of labour placement. For example, based on Table 1, in August 2023, as many as 1,230 labour placements were absorbed. However, this decline became more noticeable in October 2023, as only 3 people managed to get a job through the job exchange program. Although the average number of job placements can reach hundreds of people every month, this is a pretty drastic decrease. Providing an estimate of the implementation time of 1 to 2 days makes it easier for participants to find more information about job vacancies available at the job fair, while the estimated reporting of participant admissions takes about 1 month. Thus, it can be concluded that the evaluation of the job exchange program in terms of efficiency shows that its implementation takes place quite efficiently.

Adequacy

Adequacy relates to the extent of effectiveness in meeting needs, values, or opportunities that give rise to problems (Szromek & Wolniak, 2020). In the context of the job fair program, adequacy refers to the achievement of expected results in dealing with the problem of unemployment. However, based on the evaluation carried out, it was concluded that the Job Exchange program had not reached the expected level of adequacy. This is due to the limited number of vacancies available, causing an imbalance between labor providers and job seekers and a mismatch between the job seeker's criteria and the qualifications desired by the job seeker agency. Although the job market provides benefits for some individuals who have managed to be absorbed into the job market, its impact is still limited in reducing the unemployment rate in Cirebon Regency. Therefore, it can be concluded that the job market has not met the standards needed to solve the unemployment problem effectively.

Alignment

Alignment refers to the distribution of efforts or benefits generated by programs or policies that must be even and on target. In this study, the leveling of the job exchange program can be seen from the distribution process carried out by the Cirebon Regency Manpower Office to the target groups of the job exchange program and the convenience of the community in participating in the job exchange program. The job fair is carried out by the Cirebon Regency Manpower Office in collaboration with vocational schools in Cirebon Regency, which have a special job market (BKK). The socialization carried out was with announcement posters distributed through social media Instagram of the Cirebon Regency Manpower Office and the opening of booths at each job fair implementation. With this, it will be easier for the public to get information about the upcoming job fair program.

This job fair program is free for job seekers, thus opening up wide access for those who want to increase their chances of getting a job. This is important because many job seekers may not have enough money to attend paid training programs or seminars. The job fair program is carried out in an easy-to-reach location, so that this job fair program can be accessed by job seekers from various regions in Cirebon Regency. This is important because easy accessibility can increase community participation in the program. The job fair program also receives support and participation from the government and the private sector, which comes from various companies that open job vacancies in this program. Collaboration between these various parties is very important to ensure the success of the job fair program.

Based on the above statement, the equalization criteria in the job exchange program are evenly distributed because of the implementation of job fairs carried out in several areas in Cirebon Regency. However, the number of labour placements has decreased in a few months.

Responsiveness

Responsiveness determines how well the policy or program can meet the needs of the community and respond to changes or challenges that occur over time. Responsiveness involves observing the impact that occurs when policies or programs are implemented and the extent to which they meet the expectations or needs of the community. The public's enthusiasm for this job fair activity is evident from the large number of visitors who always exceed the estimate and quota at each event. This is clear evidence that the community urgently needs this job fair activity as a solution to get a decent job. The Cirebon Regency Manpower Office and the vocational schools involved in the job fair are committed to holding a job fair which is not just a ceremonial event but an activity that focuses on job placement and contributes to efforts to reduce the number of unemployed in Cirebon Regency. So, in the responsiveness criteria, it can be said that it has been achieved, considering the high responsiveness of the job exchange program because this program has provided significant benefits and satisfaction for job seekers and optimal job placement. However, referring to Table 1, even though the implementation of job fairs is routine, the number of workers distributed does not always show optimal results. This can be seen in August 2023, when the number of labour placements amounted to 1,230 people who managed to get jobs. However, in the following month, this decline was even more noticeable in October 2023, when only 3 people managed to get a job through the job market. This is a drastic decrease where the average number of labour placements can reach hundreds of people per month. This condition is certainly a serious concern for all parties involved, especially in an effort to increase job opportunities for the community.

Accuracy

Accuracy focuses on the extent to which the desired goals have been achieved and the extent to which the policy or program actually provides the expected benefits. The Job Exchange program has proven to provide benefits to the community, both for job seekers and companies. For job seekers, this program provides easy access to job vacancy information and opens up opportunities to get jobs that match their qualifications and interests. For companies, this program helps in finding the right candidates to fill available job vacancies with an efficient process.

In terms of accuracy, the job market program in Cirebon Regency has been implemented well. A job market program that is on target and well implemented is one of the government's strategic steps in overcoming the problem of unemployment in Cirebon Regency. This program provides solutions for job seekers in getting jobs that match their qualifications, as well as helping companies meet the needs of the workforce. Although the job exchange program in Cirebon Regency has not solved the problem of unemployment fully, this program can be one of the solutions that can be applied gradually to help overcome the unemployment problem in Cirebon Regency.

CONCLUSION

Based on the research conducted and the previous explanation, it can be concluded that the evaluation of the Job Exchange program in Cirebon Regency is quite optimal in its implementation. Although several evaluation aspects have not reached an optimal level, this does not mean the program's implementation is unsuccessful. This assessment is based on six evaluation criteria: (1) Effectiveness, where the program has been well-implemented despite obstacles in achieving goals due to the mismatch between participants' job selections and the qualifications required by companies, resulting in a small number of accepted participants; (2) Efficiency, showing that the program has been efficiently implemented, although it has not always reached the maximum target, such as in August 2023, when 1,230 people got jobs through this program, but only 3 people in October 2023; (3) Adequacy, where the program has not achieved adequacy due to limited vacancies causing an imbalance between job providers and seekers, as well as a mismatch in desired criteria and qualifications; (4) Leveling, where the program has been evenly distributed as it is carried out in several areas in Cirebon Regency, although there has been a decrease in labor placements in some months; (5) Responsiveness, showing that the program has successfully provided benefits to job seekers even though labor placements are not always optimal; and (6) Accuracy, where the program has successfully helped address unemployment by routinely providing solutions for job seekers to find jobs according to their qualifications and supporting companies in meeting labor needs.

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