

## STRATEGY OF DISPERINDAG IN IMPROVING COMPETENCE-BASED LOCAL INDUSTRY WORKFORCE COMPETITIVENESS

Yeyen Bestari Siregar<sup>1</sup>, Abdurrozzaq Hasibuan<sup>2</sup>  
Islamic University of North Sumatra, Indonesia  
Email: [Siregaryeyen84@gmail.com](mailto:Siregaryeyen84@gmail.com), [rozzaq@uisu.ac.id](mailto:rozzaq@uisu.ac.id)

### Abstrak

#### Keywords:

Department of Industry and Trade, Competence, Competitiveness.

*This study aims to examine the strategy implemented by the Department of Industry and Trade (Disperindag) in improving the competitiveness of local industrial workers through a competency-based approach. In facing the challenges of globalization and industrial transformation, workers who have relevant and formally recognized skills are the main requirement for the sustainability of the regional industrial sector. Through a descriptive qualitative approach, this study explores three main components of the Disperindag strategy, namely competency strengthening planning, implementation of training programs, and facilitation of competency certification. The results of the study indicate that Disperindag plays a strategic role in bridging the needs of the industrial world with the potential of local human resources. Competency-based training programs carried out in collaboration with training institutions and industry are able to improve the work readiness of local workers, while the certification scheme becomes a tool for legitimizing the skills they have. However, the implementation of this strategy faces a number of challenges such as limited budget, training infrastructure, and low public awareness of the importance of certification. Therefore, strengthening multi-party collaboration and continuous innovation is needed so that this strategy can have a broader and more sustainable impact on the development of regional industry*

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### INTRODUCTION

In the era of increasingly intensive globalization and economic integration, the competitiveness of local industries is a determining factor in the sustainability and economic growth of a region. In the midst of the flow of trade liberalization, local industrial workers are required to be able to compete not only in terms of quantity, but also in terms of quality and competence. The gap between industrial needs and the



capabilities of available human resources is still a crucial challenge in various regions in Indonesia. This condition is exacerbated by the rapid development of technology and industrial digitalization (industry 4.0) which requires workers to have specific, adaptive, and innovation-oriented skills. Therefore, the strategic role of government agencies such as the Department of Industry and Trade (Disperindag) is very vital in formulating and implementing strategies to improve the quality of industrial workers based on relevant and highly competitive competencies (Purbasari et al., 2021).

The Department of Industry and Trade, as an institution that has the authority in developing the industrial sector at the regional level, is not only responsible for fostering business actors and strengthening local industrial structures, but also in preparing human resources that are able to answer the challenges of a dynamic labor market. One of the main approaches that is increasingly receiving attention is strengthening workforce competencies through various training programs, certification, cooperation with educational institutions and industry, and facilitating access to technology and market information. This strategy emphasizes improving hard skills and soft skills, which aims to form a workforce that is not only skilled, but also has a good work ethic, communication skills, and leadership.

In the local context, the Disperindag strategy cannot be separated from the socio-economic conditions of the region, the characteristics of the developing industrial sector, and the potential resources owned. Therefore, a competency-based approach needs to be developed contextually and sustainably, through mapping the needs of specific industrial workers, identifying competency gaps, and developing training curricula that are in line with the needs of the business world and the industrial world (DUDI). Disperindag also has an important role in building a conducive ecosystem for the growth of inclusive local creative and manufacturing industries, where local workers are the main actors in the production and innovation process.

Furthermore, the success of the strategy to increase the competitiveness of the local industrial workforce also depends heavily on the synergy between stakeholders—including local governments, educational and training institutions, the industrial world, and civil society. This collaborative approach is crucial in ensuring that every intervention carried out truly provides added value and is not partial. Through programs such as market-based vocational training, industrial internships, skills certification, and industrial entrepreneurship incubation, Disperindag is expected to be able to create human resources who are ready to work, productive, and have high bargaining value in the labor market, both nationally and internationally. These initiatives are also part of long-term efforts to build sustainable local industrial independence that is resilient to global shocks (Muhammad Syahbudi, 2021).

Thus, the Disperindag strategy in increasing the competitiveness of local industrial workforce based on competency is a strategic and transformative step that requires careful planning, consistent implementation, and continuous evaluation. This approach is not just a response to current economic challenges, but also a strategic investment in building the foundation of a more competitive, inclusive, and highly resilient regional industry future. A competent workforce is not only a reflection of the quality of education and training, but also of the success of policies that support increasing human capacity as the main capital for sustainable industrial development.

## RESEARCH METHODS

This study uses a descriptive qualitative approach with the aim of understanding in depth the strategies implemented by the Department of Industry and Trade (Disperindag) in improving the competitiveness of local industrial workers based on competency. Data collection was conducted through in-depth interviews with related parties, such as Disperindag officials, local industrial actors, and workers involved in training programs, as well as direct observation of program implementation and policy documentation. The data analysis technique used the Miles and Huberman interactive model which includes data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions/verification. This approach was chosen to contextually explore the process of strategy formulation, program implementation, and challenges and opportunities faced in efforts to improve the competence and competitiveness of industrial workers at the local level.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### A. Overview of the Department of Industry and Trade

The Industry and Trade Agency (Disperindag) is a regional apparatus that has a strategic function in designing and implementing policies for the development of the industrial and trade sectors at the local level. As an extension of the regional government, Disperindag is tasked with developing the potential of local industries so that they are able to compete in domestic and international markets, while maintaining a balance between economic growth and equal employment opportunities. In the era of digital transformation and increasingly tight global competition, the role of Disperindag is no longer limited to monitoring and facilitating trade in goods and services, but also extends to the realm of increasing human resource capacity, especially industrial workers who are the main driving force of regional productivity (Issn, 2017).

Structurally, Disperindag is divided into several fields or sections that handle industrial affairs, domestic trade, foreign trade, development of small and medium enterprises (SMEs), and strategic planning and cooperation. In the context of developing the competitiveness of local industrial workers, Disperindag through the Industrial Sector or Industrial Human Resource Development Sector (depending on the nomenclature in each region), runs various programs that focus on improving the technical, managerial, and digital competencies of the workforce. These strategies are designed based on the real needs of the industrial world and are based on mapping local potential and challenges, such as minimal access to training, lack of work competency standards, and low connectivity between education graduates and the job market.

One of the main approaches taken by the Department of Industry and Trade in improving the competitiveness of local industrial workers is through competency-based training programs, both implemented independently by the department and through collaboration with job training institutions (LPK), polytechnics, and local companies. This program aims to bridge the gap between the needs of industry skills and the abilities possessed by prospective workers. These trainings are usually focused on leading sectors in the region, such as the food and beverage industry, crafts, garments, agricultural processing, and manufacturing technology. In addition to training, the Department of Industry and Trade also facilitates competency

certification for workers who have met certain standards, as a form of formal recognition of their expertise and as important capital to compete in the open job market.

Furthermore, Disperindag also acts as a collaborative bridge between the world of education, the world of industry, and local government. In this ecosystem, Disperindag encourages the active involvement of the private sector in the development of training curricula, internship programs, and incubation of new workers. On the other hand, Disperindag also advocates to the business world to invest in increasing the capacity of their employees, while opening up space for participation in sustainable development. In several regions, Disperindag has begun to apply the principles of inclusive and sustainable industrialization, where human resource development is an integral part of industrial growth planning. This strategy strengthens the position of local workers not only as implementing workers, but also as innovators and key players in the industrial value chain.

With the complexity of the role and challenges, Disperindag continues to strive to transform into an institution that is adaptive, data-based, and responsive to the dynamics of the labor market and technological developments. Increasing the competitiveness of local industrial workers based on competency is not only a sectoral agenda, but also part of the overall regional development vision that places humans as the center of growth. In this context, Disperindag's strategy is not only assessed from the output of training or the number of certifications issued, but also from the extent to which local workers are truly able to increase productivity, get decent jobs, and contribute to the growth of regional industry in a sustainable manner (Moh. Kurdi et al., 2024).

## **B. Competency Strengthening Strategy Planning**

The planning of competency strengthening strategies by the Industry and Trade Agency (Disperindag) is a very crucial initial step in creating an adaptive, productive, and competitive local industrial workforce. This planning process is not only carried out based on bureaucratic assumptions, but also through a data-based approach and real field needs. Disperindag begins this process by mapping potential industrial sectors in the region, accompanied by identification of the types of skills and competencies needed by each sector. For example, in the food and beverage processing industry sector, competencies are needed in food safety, packaging, and supply chain management. Meanwhile, in the craft sector, expertise in product design, modern production techniques, and digital marketing are needed. This mapping is the basis for Disperindag in compiling annual work programs and medium-term strategic plans (Renstra), with an orientation towards human resource development that is in line with local industrial potential (Fitriati, 2015).

In its strategic planning, Disperindag also pays attention to macro dynamics such as the direction of national policies in the fields of employment and industry, the Indonesian national work competency standards (SKKNI), as well as developments in manufacturing technology and industrial digitalization. Disperindag must be able to translate major agendas such as “Making Indonesia 4.0” into concrete steps at the local level, including integrating digitalization aspects into skills training. Therefore, strategic planning for strengthening competency also includes the preparation of a training curriculum based on a competency-based

training approach, development of training modules, and adjustments to relevant and applicable training outcome evaluation instruments. Not only that, Disperindag is also preparing a plan to establish partnerships with professional training institutions, BLK, polytechnics, and local companies to support the implementation of standardized and sustainable training.

This competency strengthening strategy planning also includes socio-economic and geographical dimensions. The Trade and Industry Office is aware that access to training and competency improvement is uneven, especially in remote areas or areas with low levels of education and infrastructure. Therefore, the strategy is designed inclusively, taking into account vulnerable groups such as unemployed high school/vocational school graduates, women, people with disabilities, and former migrant workers who have returned to their home areas. The Trade and Industry Office has begun initiating community-based training programs, mobile training, and digital learning to reach more groups, while maintaining the quality of training. This shows that strategic planning is not only technocratic, but also contains values of social justice and community economic empowerment.

Furthermore, the planning of competency strengthening strategies by the Department of Industry and Trade cannot be separated from the monitoring and evaluation mechanism. In the planning stage, the Department of Industry and Trade also determines key performance indicators (IKU) such as the number of training participants absorbed in the workforce, the level of industry satisfaction with training graduates, and the contribution of training to increasing business productivity. These indicators are tools to ensure that each strategy designed can be measured objectively and used as material for periodic evaluation. Thus, the process of planning competency strengthening strategies is not only administrative, but is an integral part of the process of developing local industrial human resources that is systematic, participatory, and results-oriented (result-based planning) (Khourouh et al., 2019).

### C. Implementation of Training and Certification Programs

The implementation of training and certification programs is a crucial stage in realizing the Disperindag strategy to improve the competitiveness of local industrial workers. After a thorough strategic planning process, Disperindag moves to the operational phase by organizing various competency-based vocational training programs. These programs are designed to address real challenges in the field, such as low technical skills, lack of understanding of industry standards, and the absence of formal recognition of the competencies possessed by the workforce. Training is carried out using a *competency-based training approach* that prioritizes mastery of work skills according to industry standards, not just theoretical understanding. The focus of training generally covers strategic areas such as food processing, textiles and garments, manufacturing techniques, craft product design, and digital marketing for small and medium enterprises (SMEs). (Wuryantoro & Candra Ayu & IProgram, 2024)

In its implementation, Disperindag collaborates with various partners, both from the education and industry sectors. Collaboration with the Job Training Center (BLK), Professional Certification Institute (LSP), vocational colleges, and private companies are important pillars in ensuring the quality and relevance of training.



Training participants are usually selected based on the needs of the industry in the local area and their skills background. During the training, participants not only receive technical materials, but are also equipped with soft skills such as work ethics, industrial communication, and work safety. This aspect is important because the world of work not only demands expertise, but also discipline and the ability to adapt to a dynamic work environment.

One of the important innovations in the implementation of training programs by the Department of Industry and Trade is integration with the competency certification scheme. This certification is not just an administrative formality, but is a form of official recognition that the individual has certain competencies that are recognized nationally and even internationally. The certificate is issued by the Professional Certification Institute (LSP) which is accredited by the National Professional Certification Agency (BNSP), thereby increasing the credibility of the workforce in the eyes of the industry. Certification is also an important tool for the business world in assessing the work readiness of the workforce, as well as an instrument to encourage job mobility and career advancement. In other words, certification strengthens the bargaining position of local workers in the competitive labor market.

However, the implementation process does not always run smoothly. There are various challenges such as budget constraints, the number of certified instructors is still minimal, training facilities are not yet fully modern, and low public awareness of the importance of training and certification. To overcome these obstacles, several regions have developed adaptive strategies, for example by using digital-based training schemes (*e-learning*), implementing training through *blended learning*, and mobile *training units* to reach people in remote areas. These initiatives show that the Department of Industry and Trade continues to innovate in expanding access to training without sacrificing quality.

Thus, the implementation of training and certification programs by Disperindag is not only a technical implementation of the strategic plan, but also a reflection of the local government's commitment to preparing an industrial workforce that is superior, productive, and adaptive to changing times. Training and certification are two sides of the same coin: training provides skills, certification provides recognition. The combination of the two is the main foundation in creating a local workforce that is able to make a real contribution to the development of the regional industry in a sustainable manner (Sandriana et al., 2015).

## CONCLUSION

Based on the description and analysis of various aspects of the strategy implemented by the Department of Industry and Trade (Disperindag), it can be concluded that increasing the competitiveness of local industrial workers based on competency is an integral part of efforts to develop sustainable and resilient regional industries. Disperindag not only functions as a regulator and facilitator of trade and industry, but also as a strategic actor in the development of industrial human resources (HR). This role is realized through a series of strategies that are systematically designed, starting from the data-based planning stage and industry needs, the implementation of standardized training programs, to the facilitation of nationally recognized competency certification.

Careful strategic planning is the main key to ensuring that every step taken by the Trade and Industry Agency truly answers the needs of the industrial sector in the region. Through mapping the potential of leading sectors and analyzing skills gaps, the Trade and Industry Agency is able to design relevant and targeted training programs. Not only that, an inclusive approach also shows that the Trade and Industry Agency does not ignore vulnerable community groups, but instead makes competency strengthening an instrument for equalizing employment opportunities and empowering the local economy. In this context, the competency strengthening strategy is not just technical, but also social-transformational.

Meanwhile, the implementation of training and certification programs is a concrete manifestation of the strategy that has been designed. Disperindag consistently encourages competency-based vocational training through multi-party cooperation with training institutions, industry, and vocational education. This step not only ensures the quality and relevance of training, but also creates a mutually reinforcing ecosystem between the business world and the world of education. Competency certification given to training graduates is a form of professional legitimacy for the skills they have, while increasing the trust of the labor market in the local workforce. This directly contributes to increasing the competitiveness of the workforce at the regional and national levels.

However, Disperindag also faces various challenges in implementing its strategy, such as limited resources, gaps in training infrastructure, and low public awareness of the importance of certification. Nevertheless, a number of innovations and adaptive approaches have begun to be implemented, such as digital-based training, industry partnerships, and community-based training. These steps show that Disperindag is willing to continue to transform and learn, in line with the times and the needs of the industry.

Overall, the Disperindag strategy in increasing the competitiveness of local industrial workers based on competency is a strategic step that is not only oriented towards improving individual skills, but also towards creating a resilient, inclusive, and sustainable industrial ecosystem. By continuing to strengthen the synergy between the government, business world, and society, as well as maintaining flexibility in facing global changes, Disperindag can play a key role in driving regional economic growth that relies on the quality of superior and highly competitive industrial human resources.

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