


Poverty is Caused by Low Human Resources

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Article Info	ABSTRACT
<p>Keywords: Improving the quality of human resources; improving education, training, and skills and poverty</p>	<p>Lack of access to quality education, especially primary and secondary education, leads to a lack of skills and knowledge needed to get good jobs. Poor health, caused by lack of access to adequate health services, leads to decreased productivity and the ability to work optimally. Lack of training and opportunities to improve skills, makes it difficult for people to compete in the job market and get better jobs. The low quality of human resources has an impact on economic productivity, so that people's incomes are low and it is difficult to meet their living needs. Poverty can also create an "environment of poverty" that worsens the quality of human resources, because poor children often have difficulty getting proper education and access to adequate health services. Improving the quality of human resources through investment in education, health, and training is the key to overcoming poverty and improving people's welfare. By improving the quality of human resources, people will have more opportunities to get decent jobs, increase their incomes, and meet their living needs.</p>
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INTRODUCTION

One of the biggest problems faced by many developing countries, including Indonesia, is poverty (Fitriana, 2014; Achmad & Sidiq, 2025). Although many social assistance programs and infrastructure development have been carried out, this problem still exists and has even increased in some areas. Low human resources are one of the main causes of poverty that is often overlooked (Syahri & Gustiara, 2020). When people do not have adequate skills, education, and health, they tend to be trapped in a cycle of poverty that is difficult to break (Julia et al., 2020).

High-quality human resources (HR) are those who are healthy, educated, skilled, and able to adapt to the progress of the times (Septiana et al., 2023). They can also contribute to economic and social development through labor, creativity, and knowledge. On the other hand, poverty not only does not have the ability to meet basic needs but also does not have the opportunity to improve the standard of living (Setiawan, 2017). This is where the role of human resources becomes very important. If someone does not have adequate education or skills that match market needs, it is difficult to get a decent job, which will ultimately lead to lower incomes and an inability to escape poverty (Jabodetabek, 2024).

Some of the main factors that cause low labor quality include:

1. Unequal Education: Access to education is still limited in many areas in Indonesia. This includes issues of cost, facilities, and teaching staff. Because they have to help their parents work, children from poor families often drop out of school at an early age.
2. Poor Health: People who are sick cannot work productively. The health conditions of the poor are exacerbated by low access to health services, poor nutrition, and an unhealthy environment.
3. Lack of Training and Skills: Many Indonesian employees do not have the skills needed by contemporary industries. Job training and vocational education have not yet fully reached all levels of society.
4. Lack of Access to Technology and Information: Technological skills are essential in the digital age, but many poor people are still not tech-savvy and do not have access to technological devices or the training needed to become proficient in using them.
5. Low Income: Unskilled and uneducated workers tend to only be able to access informal jobs with low incomes, without social security or stability.
6. Social Inequality: Low labor force numbers widen the gap between rich and poor, as only certain groups can enjoy the fruits of economic growth.
7. Intergenerational Poverty Reproduction: Children raised in poor families tend to lack access to adequate education and health services, so they will also grow up to be members of the next generation who are poor.
8. Declining National Productivity: The number of unproductive people hampers the country's economic growth.

Indonesia's poverty rate slowed and even increased during the COVID-19 pandemic, according to data from the Central Statistics Agency (BPS) (Saputri & Rahmawati, 2022). However, this figure tends to decline in the long term. One of the causes is the large number of informal workers with low education who have lost their jobs and do not have savings or social protection (Noveria & Romdiati, 2022).

A World Bank report states that education in Indonesia has not yet reached ideal standards. The quality of learning outcomes remains low even though student participation has increased. Many school graduates are not ready to work or do not have the skills needed for their jobs. This results in a mismatch between the needs of the labor market and the quality of graduates (Susianita & Riani, 2024).

To stop the chain of poverty caused by poor quality human resources, various parties (government, private sector, and civil society) must work together to do the same. (10) Some strategic actions include:

1. Education System Reform: Education must focus on character development and the needs of the world of work.
2. Improving Access to Health Services: Free or subsidized health programs such as BPJS Kesehatan must be expanded and optimized. In order for children to grow up healthy and smart, their nutrition must be a top priority.
3. Job Training and Entrepreneurship Programs: To help the poor become economically independent, the government and private sector must work together to provide skills training and access to business capital.

4. Utilization of Digital Technology: Villages must receive technology-based education and training. Digitalization can help develop human resources more quickly, such as through e-learning and online training platforms.
5. Empowering Local Communities: Human resource development must directly involve the community. Empowering local communities through farmer groups, cooperatives, or religious institutions can be a driving force for progress.

In addition to the government, the younger generation and civil society also have an important role in improving the quality of human resources. The younger generation must be aware of the importance of education and skills and become agents of change in their communities (Suhadi & Arifianto, 2020; Achmad, 2023). In addition, non-governmental organizations can help through scholarships, informal education programs, and advocacy for public policies.

Economic factors and low human resources are two causes of poverty, which make it difficult for individuals or groups to escape poverty (Anwar et al., 2019). People cannot participate effectively in economic development if they lack adequate education, health, and skills. Therefore, human development must be a top priority in government policy (Widodo et al., 2012). To produce a more prosperous and equitable country, it will be essential to improve education, health, job training, and access to technology (Dwi et al., 2024). Improving the quality of human resources is the only way Indonesia can end the chain of poverty and create a brighter future for all its citizens (Kodrat & April, 2025).

METHOD

To investigate the relationship between poverty and low human resources (HR), the most appropriate research methods are qualitative and quantitative (Meriyanti, 2015). Qualitative methods can be used to comprehensively understand the reasons why low HR causes poverty, while quantitative methods can be used to measure the quantitative impact of low HR on poverty levels (Sari, 2021; Yulianah, 2022). Qualitative Research Methods:

1. In-depth Interviews:
Collecting data from people living in poverty and having low human resources to gain an understanding of their experiences and their understanding of the factors that cause poverty.
2. Focus Group Discussion (FGD):
Conducting group discussions to gather information and perspectives from various parties involved in the problem of poverty and human resources.
3. Observation:
Observing the living conditions of people who are poor and have low human resources to get a better picture of their situation.

Quantitative Research Methods:

1. Survey:
Collecting quantitative data from a large sample of the population to find out how income, skills, and education levels relate to each other.
2. Statistical Data Analysis:

Analyzing data collected from surveys or other data sources to find important patterns and relationships between human resources and poverty.

3. Regression Model:

Test the effect of human resources on poverty levels statistically using a regression model.

4. Example of Investigation:

Research can be conducted by combining qualitative and quantitative methods. For example, qualitative research can be used to find out how job choices are affected by low education levels, while quantitative research can be used to find out how living conditions are affected by low incomes.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Research plays an important role in identifying the root causes of poverty, including both structural and non-structural factors that affect people's welfare. One of the main factors often revealed in various studies is the low quality of human resources (HR), which includes levels of education, job skills, and public health. Through a scientific approach, research can delve deeper into how deficiencies in these aspects contribute to low individual productivity and limited access to decent employment. For example, individuals with low levels of education often find it difficult to compete in a modern labor market that demands technical and digital skills, thereby increasing their risk of living in poverty.

Through quantitative methods, research can more accurately measure the extent to which low-quality human resources influence poverty rates. By utilizing statistical data such as education levels, labor force participation, unemployment rates, and income levels, researchers can identify correlations and even causal relationships between these variables. For instance, regression analysis may show that an increase in average education level can significantly reduce poverty levels. Such information is valuable in shaping human resource development policies to break the cycle of poverty sustainably.

Research does not stop at identifying problems; it also plays a key role in formulating solutions. Empirical findings can be used to provide targeted policy recommendations, such as improving access to quality education, offering vocational training that aligns with industry needs, and expanding affordable public health programs. Additionally, research can highlight best practices from other regions or countries that have successfully enhanced human resource quality and reduced poverty, which can then be adapted to local contexts. In this way, research serves as a scientific foundation for designing more effective and efficient intervention programs.

Well-executed research can demonstrate a strong relationship between poverty and the low quality of human resources. With such scientific evidence, governments and non-governmental organizations (NGOs, international agencies, and the private sector) can develop more targeted policies that directly impact communities. Programs such as scholarships for low-income families, youth job training, and improved basic healthcare services can form part of a long-term strategy for poverty alleviation. Without solid data and analysis, implemented policies risk being ineffective or misdirected.

In summary, research plays a strategic role in addressing poverty by providing a comprehensive understanding of its causes, especially those related to human resource quality. With a scientific and measurable approach, research helps identify the real needs of communities and guides the development of fairer and more sustainable policies. Therefore, investment in social research and human capital development should be a priority for governments and relevant institutions to create a more prosperous and self-reliant society. Low Human Resources (HR), often caused by low levels of education, lowers productivity and limits access to better jobs and wages.

Low Quality of HR

One of the main causes of poverty identified in various studies is the low quality of human resources, particularly in terms of education. Education serves as a crucial foundation that shapes a person's ability to access information, acquire skills, and adapt to changes in the labor market. When individuals have low levels of education, their chances of obtaining decent jobs with appropriate salaries are significantly reduced. As a result, they are more likely to be trapped in informal or low-wage jobs that do not meet their basic living needs.

Low levels of education also lead to a lack of technical and professional skills that are increasingly required in today's competitive and digital job market. Many sectors now demand proficiency in technology, communication skills, and the ability to solve complex problems. Without adequate education, people living in poverty struggle to develop their potential and are unable to compete with more skilled workers. This results in lower productivity and limited income opportunities, reinforcing the cycle of poverty.

Furthermore, poor human resource quality has long-term implications for a region's economic development. When a large portion of the population lacks proper education and skills, national productivity decreases, competitiveness declines, and unemployment rates rise. Therefore, investing in education and skill development is essential as a key strategy to sustainably reduce poverty. Governments and relevant institutions must work together to improve access to quality education, especially for vulnerable groups, to ensure equal opportunities for escaping poverty.

Impact on Employment

The low quality of human resources has a direct and significant impact on employment opportunities. In a competitive labor market, employers tend to prioritize candidates with higher education levels, technical skills, and relevant work experience. Individuals who lack these qualifications often struggle to meet job requirements, making it difficult for them to secure stable and decent employment. This mismatch between job seekers' capabilities and labor market demands creates barriers to entry, particularly for those from disadvantaged backgrounds.

As a result, people with limited skills or inadequate education are often forced into low-paying, informal, or unstable jobs that offer little to no job security, benefits, or career progression. These types of employment do not provide sufficient income to cover basic living expenses, let alone support long-term financial stability or personal development. Consequently, many remain trapped in a cycle of working just to survive, without the opportunity to improve their socioeconomic status.

Moreover, low-skilled workers are highly vulnerable to job displacement, especially in today's rapidly changing economy. The rise of automation, digitalization, and the shift toward a knowledge-based economy have increased the demand for skilled labor while reducing opportunities for unskilled workers. Without access to education or training programs that help them adapt, individuals with poor human capital are at greater risk of long-term unemployment or underemployment, further exacerbating poverty and social inequality.

To address these challenges, strategic investment in education, vocational training, and lifelong learning is essential. Governments, private sectors, and educational institutions need to collaborate to bridge the skills gap and prepare the workforce for future job demands. By enhancing the quality of human resources, especially among vulnerable populations, societies can create more inclusive labor markets where individuals have better chances of securing decent jobs and achieving economic self-sufficiency.

Impact on Productivity

The low quality of human resources has a direct and significant impact on employment opportunities. In today's competitive labor market, employers are increasingly seeking candidates with strong educational backgrounds, technical expertise, and relevant work experience. Individuals lacking these qualifications often face difficulties in meeting job requirements, making it harder to access stable, formal employment. This skills mismatch results in a significant barrier to entry for many, particularly those from marginalized or economically disadvantaged communities.

Consequently, individuals with limited skills or insufficient education are frequently pushed into the informal labor sector. These jobs are typically low-paying, lack job security, and offer little to no benefits such as health insurance or pensions. In addition, there is minimal opportunity for career growth or professional development. As a result, these workers are often stuck in a cycle of economic vulnerability, where their income is only enough for daily survival and not for long-term improvement or investment in their future.

The vulnerability of low-skilled workers is further compounded by the rapid transformation of the global economy. Technological advancements such as automation, artificial intelligence, and digitalization are reshaping industries and increasing demand for a highly skilled workforce. In contrast, jobs that require minimal skills are declining. Without access to relevant education or training to keep pace with these changes, low-skilled individuals face a heightened risk of job displacement, chronic unemployment, or underemployment, widening the gap between them and the rest of the workforce.

This growing disparity contributes to a broader issue of social inequality and hinders efforts to reduce poverty. When a large segment of the population is unable to access decent employment due to low human capital, it places a strain on national productivity, increases dependence on government support programs, and limits the country's overall economic growth potential. Furthermore, generational poverty is perpetuated when children from low-income families lack access to quality education and opportunities to build better lives.

Addressing these challenges requires a coordinated, long-term approach. Strategic investment in human capital development—particularly in education, vocational training, and lifelong learning—is essential. Governments must prioritize inclusive education policies, while the private sector can play a role in providing on-the-job training and apprenticeships.

Educational institutions, in turn, should align their curricula with current labor market demands. By collectively working to improve the quality of human resources, societies can foster a more inclusive and resilient economy where individuals are empowered to escape poverty and build sustainable livelihoods.

Cycle of Poverty

Low quality of the workforce is both a consequence and a cause of poverty, creating a self-perpetuating cycle that can span generations. Individuals who grow up in impoverished families often lack access to quality education, healthcare, and development opportunities. These limitations hinder their ability to acquire the knowledge and skills necessary to compete in the labor market, making it difficult for them to secure stable, well-paying jobs. As a result, they remain trapped in low-income conditions similar to those experienced by their parents.

Children from poor families are especially vulnerable to this cycle. Economic hardship can force them to drop out of school early to support their families, or they may attend under-resourced schools that fail to equip them with the competencies needed for upward mobility. Poor nutrition, inadequate living conditions, and limited exposure to enriching experiences further restrict their cognitive and emotional development. These disadvantages accumulate over time, placing them at a continued disadvantage throughout their lives.

This cycle of poverty is often reinforced by systemic inequalities in access to education and employment. Wealthier families can afford to invest in private schooling, tutoring, extracurricular activities, and technology—advantages that help their children excel and secure better opportunities. In contrast, children from low-income households face a much narrower path, often limited to survival rather than personal and professional growth. This unequal starting point makes it extremely difficult to break out of poverty without targeted interventions.

The consequences of this generational poverty are far-reaching. It not only affects individuals and families but also slows down social and economic development at the national level. When a significant portion of the population lacks access to opportunities and remains economically stagnant, it reduces overall productivity, increases dependency on social welfare, and can lead to higher crime rates and social unrest. The cycle, if left unaddressed, becomes deeply entrenched in the fabric of society.

To break this cycle, strategic investments in education, social protection, and child development programs are essential. Governments and civil society must work together to ensure that every child—regardless of socioeconomic status—has access to quality education, proper nutrition, healthcare, and a safe environment to grow and learn. Empowering future generations with the tools to succeed not only benefits individuals but also strengthens the economy and promotes long-term social equity.

Research that Provides Support

Research has consistently shown that investment in human resources—particularly in education, health, and skill development—has a significant impact on economic growth and poverty reduction. One such study by Chang and Shi (2016) highlights the positive correlation between human capital investment and economic development. Their findings suggest that when governments and institutions prioritize the development of their workforce, it leads to higher productivity, innovation, and long-term economic expansion. This evidence supports

the view that improving the quality of human resources is not just a social obligation, but also a strategic economic choice.

Chang and Shi (2016) argue that human capital acts as a catalyst for growth by enhancing labor efficiency and enabling individuals to contribute more effectively to the economy. For example, workers with higher education and specialized skills are more adaptable, capable of using advanced technology, and better equipped to solve complex problems. This, in turn, leads to increased industrial output, higher income levels, and stronger national competitiveness in global markets. Their research reinforces the idea that poverty can be reduced when individuals are empowered through education and skill-building.

Such studies are valuable because they provide empirical support for policymaking. Governments can use this kind of research to justify greater public spending on education, health, and workforce training programs. It helps shift policy priorities from short-term relief efforts to long-term development strategies that tackle the root causes of poverty. When supported by data and academic findings, these investments are more likely to gain public and political backing, ensuring sustainable implementation.

Furthermore, research findings offer insight into which strategies are most effective in different economic and social contexts. For example, in developing countries, focusing on primary and secondary education may yield the greatest returns in terms of poverty reduction. In more advanced economies, investing in higher education and continuous professional development may be more impactful. Chang and Shi's (2016) study and similar works help tailor policies to specific national needs, making interventions more targeted and cost-effective.

In conclusion, academic research such as that conducted by Chang and Shi (2016) plays a critical role in demonstrating the importance of human capital development in fostering economic growth and combating poverty. It provides a strong evidence base for governments, NGOs, and international agencies to design and implement policies that empower individuals through education and skills training. By aligning practice with research, nations can create more inclusive economies where opportunities are accessible to all, ultimately breaking the cycle of poverty.

CONCLUSION

Not only economic factors cause poverty in Indonesia, but also the low quality of the workforce. Improving the quality of the workforce, especially through improving education, is important to overcome poverty and improve people's welfare. Human resources (HR) are indeed closely related to poverty. If HR is low, it will be difficult for someone to get a decent job and increase income, making it difficult to escape poverty. Conversely, good quality HR can increase productivity and income, which helps reduce poverty. Low quality of human resources, including education, skills, and health, causes low productivity, which has an impact on income and the ability to meet basic needs, which triggers poverty. Some factors that cause low quality HR include low education, discrimination, lack of opportunities, and heredity. All of these factors can lead someone into a cycle of poverty, from which it is difficult to escape. Socio-economic instability, unemployment, and more severe health problems can be caused by a decline in human resources. To overcome poverty and increase economic

development, improving the quality of human resources through education, training, and health is very important. That poverty can be a cycle that is difficult to stop. Underdevelopment of human resources is one of the main factors in the cycle of poverty, so it is important to improve the quality of human resources to stop the cycle.

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