


Human Resource Development Management in Creating a New Workforce Through the Internship Program to Japan at the Department of Manpower, East Lombok Regency

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Article Info	ABSTRACT
Keywords: Management, Human Resource Development, Internship to Japan, Workforce, Department of Manpower	The problems of unemployment and the low competitiveness of the workforce remain major challenges in labor development in East Lombok Regency. A strategic effort undertaken to address these issues is the internship program to Japan as a means of developing human resources (HR) to create a new, competent workforce. This study aims to examine the management of HR development in the implementation of the internship program to Japan by the Department of Manpower of East Lombok Regency. The research method employed is descriptive qualitative with a case study approach. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, observations, document analysis, and literature review, and were analyzed using the Miles and Huberman model. The research focuses on two main aspects: the recruitment and selection process of participants, as well as the implementation of HR development, which includes planning, execution, and evaluation. The findings reveal that the internship program to Japan is well-structured and effectively implemented, supported by strong leadership, competent human resources, internal communication, and external support from IM Japan and national regulations. Nevertheless, several challenges persist, including limited budget, training facilities, trainers, and uneven community support. The study recommends institutional strengthening, increased funding and infrastructure, inter-agency collaboration, community involvement, and the development of a digital monitoring system to ensure program sustainability.
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INTRODUCTION

In the practice of human resource management (HRM), various empirical studies in the literature highlight the importance of recruitment, selection, education, training, career development, compensation, and promotion in shaping a qualified and competent workforce (Cen, 2023). Along with the development of the Fourth Industrial Revolution, the demand for competitive human resources has become increasingly urgent, particularly for Indonesia, which is facing the challenge of a demographic bonus, stagnant economic growth, and

relatively high unemployment rates (Prasetyo, 2018). One of the government's strategic measures to address these challenges is through the promotion of apprenticeship programs, including the Japan Internship Program, which has been implemented since the bilateral agreement between Indonesia and Japan in 1993. This program does not only focus on enhancing technical skills but also equips participants with soft skills, work ethic, and direct industrial experience in the Japanese workplace environment (Haryanti et al., 2024). The program is expected to enable returning participants to utilize the acquired skills, financial capital, and professional experience to establish new businesses and contribute to regional economic development. Nevertheless, the implementation of the Japan Internship Program in West Nusa Tenggara (NTB) Province, particularly in East Lombok Regency, faces several challenges. The number of participants who successfully pass the selection process remains limited due to insufficient preparation and training, a mismatch between competencies and industry requirements, and the lack of optimal synergy among training institutions, industries, and local governments. Meanwhile, the unemployment rate in East Lombok remains the highest in NTB, recorded at 2.47% or approximately 17,430 individuals in 2023 (Subiyantoro et al., 2023); (BPS NTB, 2024). This situation indicates the urgent need for a more strategic approach to HR development management through the internship program to effectively reduce unemployment and improve workforce competitiveness.

Findings from previous studies provide valuable insights into the effectiveness of the Japan Internship Program in various regions. For instance, (Azizah et al., 2024) showed that the program in East Java effectively created new job opportunities despite challenges in dissemination due to regional autonomy. (Haryanti et al., 2024) found that the program strengthened entrepreneurial spirit among participants. Similarly, (Nawawi, 2020) highlighted the role of *ganbaru* character in shaping work ethic, while (Solechan, 2018) discussed recruitment mechanisms. Other studies, such as those by (Ningsih et al., 2021), focused more broadly on HR development through training or domestic apprenticeship programs. Although these studies contribute significantly to the body of knowledge, most have not provided an in-depth analysis of how HR development management through the Japan Internship Program is carried out at the local government level, particularly in East Lombok Regency. There is still a lack of comprehensive investigation into the role of the Department of Manpower in managing the program, its effectiveness on returnees, and its contribution to entrepreneurship and unemployment reduction at the regional level. (Saragih, 2023).

Therefore, this study aims to fill this research gap by focusing on HR development management through the Japan Internship Program at the East Lombok Regency Department of Manpower, involving returnee participants as the primary subjects. This research seeks to provide new insights into how locally managed apprenticeship programs contribute to workforce quality improvement and the creation of new, competitive labor forces, while also offering strategic recommendations for strengthening HR management practices at the regional level.

Theoretical Review Management

Management is a process consisting of a series of activities such as planning, organizing, directing, and controlling resources to achieve specific goals effectively and efficiently (Terry, 2014); (GhofaR et al., 2018). According to George R. Terry, management is “a distinct process consisting of planning, organizing, actuating, and controlling performed to determine and accomplish stated objectives” (Terry, 2014). Meanwhile, Harold Koontz and Heinz Weihrich define management as the process of designing and maintaining an environment in which individuals work together in groups to accomplish predetermined goals ((Koontz et al., 2012) explained that management encompasses the fundamental functions of planning, organizing, leading, and controlling organizational work. (Robbins et al., 2021) add that management also includes decision-making processes and resource allocation aimed at achieving organizational effectiveness. Furthermore, (Gupta et al., 2024) emphasized that the essence of management lies in achieving results through others.

The purpose of management is to create harmonious coordination among people, capital, methods, machines, and materials so that work processes run optimally (Siagian, 2014). Stoner and Freeman (1992) further state that management is the process of planning, organizing, leading, and controlling the efforts of organizational members as well as utilizing all other organizational resources to achieve established goals. Thus, management is not only about technical effectiveness but also about the ability to manage human dynamics and other resources within a complex and constantly changing environment (Hoek, 2024); (Ghofar et al., 2022).

Functions of Management

The general management functions include:

- a. Planning – setting objectives and strategies for achieving them.
- b. Organizing – structuring the organization and assigning tasks.
- c. Actuating (Directing) – motivating and guiding employees in task execution.
- d. Controlling – monitoring and evaluating activities to ensure alignment with plans. (Ghofar, 2023).

The Role of Management in Organizations

Management plays a strategic role in setting organizational direction, managing change, and enhancing workforce productivity (Robbins et al., 2021). In the context of human resource development (HRD), management serves as the primary driver in designing and implementing sustainable training and development systems (Ghofar et al., 2024). HRM functions include workforce planning, recruitment, training, career development, and performance evaluation, all of which aim to improve organizational competitiveness (Dessler, 2020).

The Concept of Human Resource Development (HRD)

Definition of HRD

Human Resource Development (HRD) is a systematic process aimed at enhancing individuals' competencies, abilities, and work quality within organizations (Dessler, 2020). According to (Kadarmanta, 2021), HRD encompasses all activities designed to improve individual performance in alignment with organizational needs and goals. This is also affirmed by (Hasibuan, 2016) and (Werner et al., 2012). Furthermore, (Armstrong et al., 2020) highlight HRD as a long-term investment that has a direct impact on organizational performance. Organizations that establish sustainable HRD systems will have advantages in employee retention, job satisfaction, and the achievement of strategic objectives (Ghofar, 2021).

Objectives and Benefits of HRD

The objectives of HRD include improving technical skills, fostering adaptability, enhancing motivation, and creating a conducive work climate. These benefits also contribute to organizational efficiency (Ghofar et al., 2022).

HRD Strategies

HRD strategies include internal/external training, job rotation, advanced education, coaching, mentoring, and competency-based performance appraisal (Ghofar et al., 2022).

Approaches and Processes of HRD

HRD is implemented through formal means (training, courses, workshops) and informal means (discussions, on-the-job training), beginning with needs analysis and ending with impact evaluation (Hasibuan, 2016)(Ghofar et al., 2024).

Internship Program as an HRD Strategy

Internships are a form of job training that provides participants with practical experience to enhance their skills. Legally, internships are regulated under the Ministerial Regulation of Manpower and Transmigration No. PER.08/MEN/V/2008. For participants, internships enhance skills, discipline, and networking; for institutions, they provide skilled labor tailored to organizational needs (Cahyadi et al., 2023)

Internship Program in Japan

The internship cooperation program with Japan has been implemented since 1993 through IM Japan. Participants are selected by regional Manpower Offices, including East Lombok, through administrative stages, basic training, language training, and work ethics preparation. The program aims to produce skilled, disciplined, and entrepreneurial workers upon returning to Indonesia. Regional Manpower Offices act as facilitators, training providers, and supervisors (Ghofar, 2023).

Relevance of Internship Programs to HRD

The Japan internship program contributes to the transfer of competencies, work ethics, character building, and soft skills (Robbins, S. P., & Coulter, 2021). Moreover, it significantly supports regional and national development by fostering new entrepreneurs, generating employment, and enhancing local productivity (Ghofar et al., 2024).

In summary, the background and theoretical review demonstrate that effective human resource development management, particularly through apprenticeship programs such as the Japan Internship Program, plays a strategic role in preparing a competitive workforce in the face of demographic and economic challenges. The role of the East Lombok Regency Department of Manpower is therefore crucial in optimizing planning, implementation, and evaluation so that the program can not only reduce unemployment but also enhance entrepreneurial capacity and support regional development.

METHODS

This study employs a descriptive qualitative approach (Creswell, 2018); (Sugiyono, 2019); (Moleong, 2017) to gain an in-depth understanding of human resource development (HRD) management in creating a new labor force through the internship program to Japan at the Department of Manpower of East Lombok Regency. Conducted from November 2024 to August 2025, the research focuses on three main aspects: the recruitment and selection process; the implementation of HRD, including planning, execution, and evaluation; and the supporting and inhibiting factors influencing program implementation. Data were gathered from primary sources—such as interviews with the head of the department, program staff, internship participants, participants' families, and academics—and secondary sources including documents and relevant literature (Enzin et al., 2018). Data collection methods involved in-depth interviews, direct observation, and documentation ((Moleong, 2017); (Sugiyono, 2019). Informants were classified into three categories: main informants (those with the most comprehensive understanding of the issue), key informants (those familiar with the social context and willing to participate), and additional informants (individuals with indirect experience related to the topic). The researcher served as the primary instrument, supported by interview guides, observation notes, and documentation tools (Creswell, 2018). To ensure data validity, triangulation of sources, techniques, and theories was applied (Enzin, N. K., & Lincoln, 2018). Data analysis followed the interactive model of Miles and Huberman, which includes data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification, carried out systematically to produce scientifically valid and accountable findings (Miles, M. B., Huberman, A. M., & Saldaña, 2014).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Human resource development management plays a vital role in preparing a competitive workforce capable of meeting labor market demands at both the national and international levels. In the context of East Lombok Regency, the internship program to Japan, facilitated by the Department of Manpower, represents a strategic effort to create a new workforce equipped with skills, discipline, and global competitiveness. This program not only serves as a pathway for young people to gain valuable work experience abroad but also contributes to regional economic growth through the provision of highly qualified human resources. The following section systematically presents the research findings within the framework of this program:

Human Resource Development Management in Creating a New Workforce through the Internship Program in Japan at the Department of Manpower, East Lombok Regency

1. Recruitment and Selection

Qualifications of Participants in the Internship Program in Japan

Based on research findings, the qualifications for participants in the internship program in Japan are strictly structured and hierarchical to ensure the readiness of prospective workers. The selection process consists of eight stages, namely registration, administrative selection, physical fitness test, basic mathematics test, physical endurance test, interview, medical examination, and Japanese language test. Each stage has clear standards and applies an elimination system, meaning that only candidates who fully meet the requirements can proceed to the next stage.

The established administrative qualifications include a minimum educational background of vocational high school (SMK) or diploma, productive age (20–26 years), work training certificates for non-technical graduates, and the completeness of official documents. Furthermore, physical and health aspects are also of significant importance, with standards covering height, weight, and a body condition free from physical disabilities, tattoos, piercings, and certain diseases. This demonstrates that the selection process emphasizes not only academic competence but also physical and mental readiness in accordance with the demands of Japan’s industrial sector. The complete sequence of the selection stages is presented in Figure 1 below:

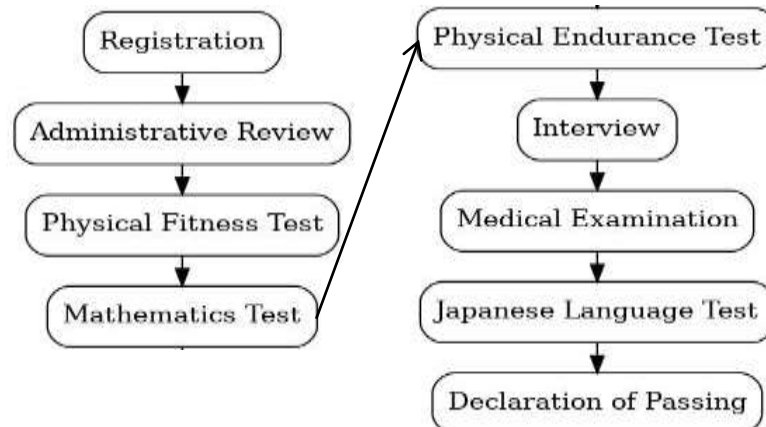


Figure 1. Stages of Recruitment and Selection for the Internship Program in Japan
Recruitment and Selection Stages of Participants for the Internship Program in Japan

The recruitment and selection process conducted by the Department of Manpower of East Lombok Regency adopts systematic management principles, encompassing planning, organizing, directing, and controlling.

Planning

Planning is carried out routinely by aligning with the national education calendar and the recruitment quota determined by the central government and IM Japan. The department prepares activities through internal meetings, committee formation, and the arrangement of

selection mechanisms. In addition, program dissemination is conducted openly to the public through various information channels. This indicates a proactive strategy to attract qualified participants while ensuring a transparent process.

Organizing

Organizing in the participant selection process is carried out by assigning tasks according to the competence of each committee member. The organizational structure of the committee includes the preparation of technical guidelines, program dissemination, monitoring of the selection process, and the preparation of accountability reports. A clear division of tasks contributes to the effectiveness of the implementation, ensuring that each stage runs in an orderly, efficient, and procedural manner.

Directing

The directing stage functions to provide comprehensive understanding to prospective participants regarding selection procedures, administrative requirements, physical readiness, and mental preparedness. With systematic guidance, participants are better prepared to face the selection process both technically and psychologically. This has implications for improving the passing rate while reducing the likelihood of failure due to lack of information or readiness.

Controlling

Controlling is conducted through a comprehensive evaluation of the selection stages, both administratively and technically. The Department of Manpower of East Lombok Regency collaborates with training institutions to ensure that the quality and readiness of participants meet Japanese industry standards. This evaluation also serves as the basis for continuous improvement in subsequent recruitment periods.

Recruitment and Selection Stages of Participants Internship to Japan



Figure 2. Recruitment and Selection Process of the Internship Program in Japan

In general, the implementation of recruitment and selection of internship participants to Japan in East Lombok Regency has been carried out in accordance with established procedures and standards. This structured process contributes to enhancing the quality of local human resources, particularly in preparing a new workforce that is competitive, skilled, and ready to compete at the international level. Thus, the internship program in Japan serves as a strategic instrument for expanding employment opportunities while supporting local economic development through the preparation of a high-quality workforce.

2. Implementation of Human Resource Development

Planning

Planning is a crucial initial stage in the implementation of human resource development, particularly in creating a new workforce through the internship program in Japan. Based on research findings, planning is carried out systematically and continuously, aligned with the national education calendar as well as the recruitment schedule from the central government and IM Japan. Planning activities are generally conducted at the end of the academic year or after the graduation period of secondary schools, with the primary target being high school/vocational school graduates and alumni who are not yet employed.

This stage includes the identification of potential workforce needs, preparation of socialization schedules, collection of candidate data, quota mapping, and coordination with partner Vocational Training Institutions (LPK). The focus of planning is not only on achieving quantitative targets but also on ensuring the quality of participants who will undergo the selection and training process. Therefore, aspects of administrative, technical, physical, mental, and psychological readiness are given primary attention from the outset. Planning is also participatory, involving various stakeholders such as the training division, placement division, partner schools, village governments, and LPKs. In addition, the evaluation results from the previous year's implementation are used as input for the following planning process. This includes adjustments to the pre-departure training curriculum, mapping of Japanese industry needs, and alumni data tracking. Thus, planning functions as a vital foundation in human resource management as well as a strategy to ensure the sustainability of the program.

Program Implementation

The implementation of the internship program in Japan is carried out in stages and systematically, including: socialization, administrative registration, physical and academic selection, pre-departure training, and placement in Japan. This process is conducted through intensive coordination between various divisions within the Department of Manpower, partner LPKs, and the central government through IM Japan. Socialization is conducted openly through official announcements, social media, and collaboration with schools. Once registration is opened, participants are required to complete administrative documents in accordance with the regulations. The selection process is then carried out in stages using an elimination method, covering administrative selection, physical fitness tests, basic mathematics, interviews, physical endurance tests, medical examinations, and Japanese language tests. Participants who pass the initial selection then undergo intensive pre-departure training for approximately three months. This training is facilitated by partner LPKs and includes materials such as discipline, Japanese work culture, basic technical skills, physical training, and Japanese language preparation. The purpose of this training is not only to provide technical competence but also to build mental readiness, work ethic, and cultural adaptation. The final stage of the program implementation is the placement of participants in Japan. At this phase, administrative documents (passport, visa, employment contract) are processed, along with coordination with IM Japan to ensure the departure schedule. The entire process is strictly supervised through internal monitoring mechanisms to ensure that implementation runs according to the established procedures and standards. In general, the program implementation has been effective and well-coordinated, although technical challenges still exist, such as limited quotas, inadequate training facilities, and mismatched schedules between the central and regional levels. Nevertheless, the implementation is still considered successful in preparing young workers who are competent, disciplined, and ready to compete in the international labor market.

Evaluation

Evaluation is an important stage in human resource development management, as it serves to assess program effectiveness as well as a foundation for continuous improvement. Evaluation of the internship program in Japan is routinely conducted by the Department of Manpower of East Lombok Regency after each recruitment and training period has been completed. Evaluation covers various aspects, including the effectiveness of socialization, smoothness of selection, participant readiness, training quality, graduation rates, and technical obstacles in the field. Furthermore, monitoring is also conducted on participants who successfully depart as well as those who fail the selection process. This evaluation is not only oriented toward administrative results but also toward long-term success in preparing a professional and competitive workforce. The Department also carries out direct monitoring of the training process at partner LPKs, particularly regarding discipline, Japanese language proficiency, and the physical and mental readiness of participants. The evaluation of training results is then used to improve the curriculum in the future to make it more relevant to the needs of Japanese industries. In addition to the training aspect, evaluation is also carried out at the placement stage. Supervision of administrative document completion, coordination with IM Japan, and alumni tracking are essential components of continuous evaluation. Reports from participants who have worked in Japan are also used as feedback to improve future recruitment and training processes. Overall, the evaluation of the internship program in Japan in East Lombok is considered effective in improving the quality of program implementation while ensuring the achievement of its primary objective: to create a young workforce that is professional, disciplined, and globally competitive. Evaluation also strengthens the position of this program as a strategic instrument in regional human resource development.

Supporting and Inhibiting Factors of Human Resource Development Management in Creating a New Workforce through the Internship Program to Japan at the Department of Manpower, East Lombok Regency

1. Supporting Factors

Internal Factors

Internal factors refer to components originating within the institution, in this case the Department of Manpower of East Lombok Regency, which contribute significantly to the success of the internship program to Japan. Based on research findings, several internal aspects serve as the main strengths. First, strong managerial commitment and leadership constitute a critical foundation. The institutional leadership possesses a clear vision that the program is not merely a routine activity, but rather a strategic investment in regional human resource development. This is reflected in the consistent supervision across all stages, from selection and training to placement. Second, the capacity of internal human resources demonstrates adequate preparedness. Staff and functional officials in the training and placement divisions have extensive experience in managing overseas employment programs, including Japan. They are accustomed to handling technical administration, participant preparation, and coordination with partner institutions such as IM Japan and

training institutions (LPK), thereby minimizing technical obstacles during implementation. Third, cross-divisional coordination within the department operates effectively. Each division understands its respective role, and regular coordination meetings ensure that all processes run in sync. With strong synergy, competent human resources, and committed leadership, these internal factors become the primary pillars supporting the program's success.

External Factors

In addition to internal support, external factors also play a significant role in strengthening program implementation. First, there exists a long-standing strategic partnership with IM Japan and affiliated training institutions, built on mutual trust. This collaboration facilitates the selection, training, and placement of interns according to Japanese standards. Second, regulatory support from the central government further reinforces program execution. National policies that proactively expand employment opportunities in Japan provide legitimacy and streamline administrative and departure processes. Third, community support has continued to grow, particularly following positive testimonials from alumni and their families who have benefited from the program. Alumni serve as informal agents in promoting the program, thereby increasing public participation year by year. Thus, the combination of strong internal leadership, experienced human resources, effective cross-divisional coordination, and external support through partnerships, regulations, and community participation has become a key factor in the success of human resource development management through the internship program to Japan.

2. Inhibiting Factors

The implementation of the internship program to Japan also faces several obstacles that affect its effectiveness. These obstacles can be categorized into internal and external factors.

Internal Inhibiting Factors

Internal obstacles are mainly related to institutional capacity limitations. First, limited operational budget constitutes a major constraint. Funds allocated from the regional budget remain insufficient to cover the needs of additional training, including psychological coaching for participants, which is essential for ensuring both mental and technical readiness. Second, the lack of adequate training facilities and infrastructure poses a serious challenge. The Department of Manpower does not yet have a representative vocational training center (BLK), resulting in dependence on partner institutions. This condition limits the department's direct control over the training process. Third, there is a shortage of permanent instructors in pre-internship training. Certain technical modules still require external trainers from other regions, who are often difficult to schedule in alignment with local needs. These three challenges indicate that strengthening internal institutional capacity particularly in budget, facilities, and training personnel is a crucial prerequisite for program sustainability.

External Inhibiting Factors

Beyond internal constraints, external factors beyond the institution's direct control also hinder the program. First, community support is not yet evenly distributed. Some families remain hesitant to allow their children to work abroad, perceiving the program merely as a form of migration rather than a structured initiative based on international standards. Second, regulatory dynamics from both the central government and IM Japan create challenges. Changes in age, health, or administrative requirements are often announced suddenly, thereby delaying the selection process at the local level. Third, technical communication barriers with international partners occasionally disrupt training activities. Updates on training standards are not always delivered in a timely manner, causing local curricula to risk lagging behind the actual requirements of Japanese industries.

Therefore, both internal and external barriers interact in influencing program effectiveness. To address these challenges, a comprehensive strategy is required, encompassing increased regional budget allocations, the establishment of representative training facilities, the recruitment of additional instructors, as well as strengthened coordination with local communities, the central government, and international partners.

CONCLUSION

Based on the research findings, it can be concluded that the management of human resource development (HRD) through the internship program to Japan in creating a new workforce by the Department of Manpower of East Lombok Regency has been implemented effectively, structurally, and systematically in an effort to produce a competent labor force ready to compete at the global level. The managerial process was carried out from the planning stage to the final evaluation, involving eight rigorous selection stages, comprehensive pre-departure training, and solid cross-sectoral coordination in both the implementation and supervision of the program. The program implementation was supported by internal factors such as strong leadership commitment, adequate human resource capacity, and structured communication, as well as external support in the form of strategic partnerships with IM Japan and the Ministry of Manpower of the Republic of Indonesia, clear national regulations, and growing public participation. However, the effectiveness of the program is also faced with various challenges, including budget constraints, suboptimal training facilities, a lack of permanent trainers, uneven community support, and occasionally misaligned policies between central authorities and international partners. Therefore, the sustainability and success of this program require strategies for strengthening internal institutional capacity, improving training facilities and infrastructure, and reinforcing cross-sector collaboration in an adaptive and sustainable manner.

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