

HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY IN NORTH PADANG LAWAS REGENCY TO SUPPORT REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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Abstract

Human resource development is an important factor in supporting regional development because the quality of people determines the success of development programs, public services, and local economic growth. This study discusses the strategy of human resource development in North Padang Lawas Regency in supporting regional development. The main focus of this study includes education, health, skills training, employment opportunities, community empowerment, digital literacy, and local government capacity. This study uses a qualitative descriptive method with secondary data obtained from official publications, statistical reports, books, journals, and relevant institutional sources. The results show that human resource development in North Padang Lawas Regency has shown positive progress, as reflected in the increase of the Human Development Index from 71.69 in 2020 to 74.16 in 2024. However, continuous efforts are still needed to improve the quality of education, strengthen health services, expand vocational training, create employment opportunities, and increase community participation. Human resource development strategies must be implemented in an integrated and sustainable manner by involving the local government, educational institutions, training centers, health institutions, private sectors, and community organizations. By improving the quality of human resources, North Padang Lawas Regency is expected to increase regional competitiveness, improve public welfare, and achieve sustainable regional development.

Keywords: human resource development, regional development, Human Development Index, North Padang Lawas Regency, community empowerment

INTRODUCTION

Human resource development is one of the most important foundations for regional development. A region cannot rely only on natural resources, infrastructure, or government programs without improving the quality of its people. Human resources determine how development plans are implemented, how public services are delivered, how local economic activities grow, and how communities participate in the development process. Therefore, the development of human resources is a strategic requirement for every region, including North Padang Lawas Regency. North Padang Lawas Regency, located in North Sumatra Province, has development potential in various sectors such as agriculture, plantation, trade, education, public services, and local entrepreneurship. However, this potential can only be optimized when the community has adequate knowledge, skills, health, discipline, creativity, and productivity. In this context, human resource development is not only related to formal education, but also includes vocational training, health improvement, employment skills, digital literacy, leadership capacity, and community empowerment.

The concept of human development emphasizes that development should expand people's choices and improve their quality of life. According to the United Nations Development Programme, human development is commonly measured through three main dimensions: a long and healthy life, access to knowledge, and a decent standard of living (UNDP, 2025). These dimensions show that regional development should not be measured only by economic growth, but also by improvements in education, health, and people's welfare. In Indonesia, the Human Development Index is also used as an important indicator to evaluate the progress of human development at the regional level. The publication of the Human Development Index of North Padang Lawas Regency explains that HDI is used to measure development performance and to understand the position, achievement, and disparity of human development among regions (BPS Padang Lawas Utara, 2025). This indicates that human resource development is closely connected with regional competitiveness and the success of local development policies.

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The human development condition in North Padang Lawas Regency has shown positive progress. Based on BPS data, the HDI of North Padang Lawas Regency increased from 71.69 in 2020 to 74.16 in 2024, with an average growth of 0.84 percent per year. In 2024, the HDI increased by 0.96 percent compared with 2023, when it reached 73.45 (BPS Padang Lawas Utara, 2024). This improvement shows that there has been progress in the dimensions of health, knowledge, and decent living standards. However, continuous strategies are still needed so that this progress can support broader and more sustainable regional development. Human resource development in North Padang Lawas Regency is important because local development faces increasingly complex challenges. Globalization, technological change, employment competition, public service demands, and economic transformation require people who are more adaptive and competent. Communities need to be prepared not only to work in traditional sectors, but also to participate in modern economic activities, digital-based services, entrepreneurship, and innovation. Without strong human resources, regional development programs may not achieve maximum results.

Education is one of the main strategies in improving human resources. Better access to quality education can increase literacy, knowledge, critical thinking, and the ability of the younger generation to compete in the labor market. In addition, vocational education and skills training are needed to prepare workers who are suitable for local economic needs. For North Padang Lawas Regency, training programs related to agriculture, plantation management, small and medium enterprises, digital skills, and public administration can become important instruments to increase productivity and employment opportunities. Health is another essential aspect of human resource development. A healthy population is more productive, more active in economic activities, and more capable of participating in social and community development. Therefore, improving health services, nutrition, sanitation, maternal and child health, and disease prevention should become part of the human resource development strategy. The improvement of health indicators will directly support the quality of life and indirectly contribute to economic growth and poverty reduction.

Furthermore, human resource development must also focus on strengthening the capacity of local government institutions. Regional development requires professional, accountable, and innovative public servants. Local government officials need to have strong planning skills, digital competence, data-based decision-making ability, and commitment to public service. Good governance and competent bureaucracy will improve the effectiveness of development programs and ensure that public policies respond to the real needs of society. Community empowerment is also a key element in the human resource development strategy. Development will be more successful when local communities are not only treated as beneficiaries, but also as active actors. Empowerment programs can encourage people to participate in planning, implementing, and evaluating development activities. Through community empowerment, local people can develop entrepreneurship, improve household income, strengthen social cooperation, and contribute to village and regional development.

In addition, the use of technology and digital literacy has become increasingly important in supporting human resource development. Digital skills can help communities access information, market local products, improve learning opportunities, and increase administrative efficiency. Local government, educational institutions, and training centers should work together to improve digital competence among students, workers, entrepreneurs, and public servants. This is important so that North Padang Lawas Regency can adapt to technological change and improve its regional competitiveness. Based on this background, the strategy for human resource development in North Padang Lawas Regency should be carried out through an integrated approach. The strategy should include improving education quality, expanding skills training, strengthening health services, increasing employment opportunities, empowering communities, improving bureaucratic capacity, and promoting digital literacy. These efforts are expected to support sustainable regional development, improve public welfare, and strengthen the competitiveness of North Padang Lawas Regency in the future. Therefore, this paper discusses the strategies for human resource development in North Padang Lawas Regency in supporting regional development. The discussion focuses on the importance of human resource quality, the role of local government, the relationship between human development and regional progress, and the efforts needed to create a productive, healthy, educated, and competitive society.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Human resource development has become an important concept in development studies because the success of development is strongly influenced by the quality of people who participate in it. Human resources are not only viewed as labor, but also as individuals who possess knowledge, skills, health, creativity, values, and the ability to adapt to social and economic change. In regional development, human resources play a strategic role because they determine the effectiveness of government programs, the productivity of local economic sectors, and the capacity of communities to improve their welfare.

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The concept of human development is closely related to the idea that development should improve people's quality of life. The United Nations Development Programme explains that the Human Development Index measures three main dimensions of human development: a long and healthy life, access to knowledge, and a decent standard of living. These dimensions show that development is not only about economic growth, but also about improving education, health, and welfare. Therefore, human resource development must be understood as a comprehensive process that includes education, health improvement, skills development, employment opportunities, and social empowerment. Human capital theory also provides an important foundation for understanding the relationship between human resource development and regional progress. According to the OECD, human capital refers to the stock of knowledge, skills, and personal characteristics embodied in people that help them become productive. Investment in human capital can be carried out through formal education, adult training, informal learning, work experience, and on-the-job learning. This means that improving human resources requires continuous learning and capacity building, not only through schools but also through training institutions, workplaces, and community-based programs.

In the context of development, human capital is closely related to productivity and income. The World Bank emphasizes that health, education, employment, and workplace learning shape future productivity and earnings. This perspective shows that regions with better human capital tend to have stronger economic potential because their people are more capable of working productively, innovating, and responding to labor market needs. For this reason, regional governments need to invest in education, health, job training, and employment programs as part of long-term development strategies. Regional development itself is a process of improving the economic, social, institutional, and environmental conditions of a region. Regional development aims to reduce inequality, increase public welfare, improve infrastructure, expand economic opportunities, and strengthen local governance. In Indonesia, regional development is also connected with national development planning. The National Medium-Term Development Plan 2025–2029 emphasizes poverty reduction, economic growth, human resource development, infrastructure development, regional progress, and environmental sustainability as important development priorities. This shows that human resource development is not a separate agenda, but an integral part of national and regional development.

Human resource development is especially important for local governments because regional autonomy gives local administrations greater responsibility in managing development according to local needs and potential. Local governments must be able to identify the main challenges faced by their communities, such as low education quality, limited skills, unemployment, poverty, weak public service performance, and limited access to technology. Therefore, human resource development strategies should be designed based on local conditions, available resources, and regional economic potential. Education is one of the most widely discussed aspects of human resource development. Education improves knowledge, literacy, critical thinking, and the ability of people to participate in economic and social activities. In regional development, education also supports the creation of a skilled workforce and increases the ability of communities to adopt new technologies. However, education should not only focus on formal schooling. Vocational training, technical education, entrepreneurship training, and digital literacy programs are also necessary to prepare people for the changing labor market.

Health is another important component of human resource development. A healthy population is more productive and more capable of contributing to development. Poor health conditions can reduce productivity, increase economic burden, and limit people's ability to participate in education and employment. The UNDP's inclusion of life expectancy as one of the dimensions of the Human Development Index indicates that health is a key element in measuring the quality of human development. Therefore, health services, nutrition programs, sanitation, maternal and child health, and disease prevention are important parts of human resource development strategies.

Skills development is also essential in strengthening regional competitiveness. In many regions, one of the main challenges is the gap between the skills possessed by the workforce and the skills needed by the labor market. This skills gap can limit employment opportunities and reduce productivity. Therefore, local governments need to support training programs that are relevant to local economic sectors, such as agriculture, plantation, trade, small and medium enterprises, public services, and digital-based economic activities. Skills development should be connected with the real needs of local industries and communities. Community empowerment is another key concept in human resource development. Development will be more effective when communities are actively involved in planning, implementing, and evaluating development programs. Empowerment allows people to develop their capacity, improve their income, strengthen social cooperation, and solve local problems independently. In this sense, human resource development is not only a top-down government program, but also a participatory process that encourages people to become active actors in development.

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The role of local government is very important in implementing human resource development strategies. Local government is responsible for designing policies, allocating budgets, coordinating institutions, and providing public services. In addition, local government must strengthen the capacity of civil servants so that they can provide professional, transparent, and responsive services. Good governance and competent bureaucracy are needed to ensure that human resource development programs are implemented effectively and reach the target groups. In the case of North Padang Lawas Regency, human resource development is relevant because the region needs qualified people to support its development potential. North Padang Lawas has potential in agriculture, plantation, trade, public services, and local entrepreneurship. However, these sectors require people with sufficient education, technical skills, health, discipline, and innovation capacity. Without strong human resources, local economic potential may not be fully developed.

The Human Development Index of North Padang Lawas Regency shows positive progress. According to BPS Padang Lawas Utara, the HDI of North Padang Lawas Regency increased from 71.69 in 2020 to 74.16 in 2024, with an average increase of 0.84 percent per year. In 2024, the HDI increased by 0.96 percent compared with 2023, when it reached 73.45. The improvement occurred in all dimensions of human development, including health, knowledge, and decent living standards. This progress indicates that human development in the regency has improved, but continuous efforts are still needed to ensure that the improvement contributes directly to regional development. The improvement of HDI in North Padang Lawas Regency can be interpreted as a positive signal for regional development. However, HDI improvement alone is not enough. The local government must ensure that improvements in education, health, and living standards are followed by increased employment opportunities, better public services, stronger local economic productivity, and reduced inequality. Therefore, human resource development strategies should be integrated with regional economic planning, poverty reduction programs, infrastructure development, and institutional reform.

Based on the literature, several important strategies can be identified for human resource development in North Padang Lawas Regency. First, improving the quality and accessibility of education is necessary to strengthen the knowledge base of the community. Second, expanding vocational and technical training can help prepare workers according to local economic needs. Third, improving health services can increase productivity and quality of life. Fourth, strengthening digital literacy can help communities adapt to technological change. Fifth, empowering communities and supporting entrepreneurship can create new economic opportunities. Sixth, improving the capacity of local government institutions can increase the effectiveness of development programs. Overall, the literature shows that human resource development is a central factor in supporting regional development. The quality of human resources determines the ability of a region to use its potential, improve public welfare, and compete with other regions. In North Padang Lawas Regency, human resource development should be carried out through an integrated and sustainable strategy involving education, health, skills training, employment, community empowerment, digital literacy, and good governance. These efforts are expected to support regional development and improve the welfare of the people in the long term.

METHOD

This study uses a qualitative descriptive method to analyze human resource development strategies in North Padang Lawas Regency in supporting regional development. A qualitative descriptive approach is considered appropriate because this study focuses on understanding, explaining, and describing the condition of human resources, development challenges, and strategic efforts that can be implemented by the local government. Through this approach, the study does not only present numerical data, but also explains the meaning, relationship, and importance of human resource development in the regional development process. The object of this study is the strategy of human resource development in North Padang Lawas Regency. The main focus includes education improvement, skills training, health development, employment opportunities, community empowerment, digital literacy, and the capacity of local government institutions. These aspects are analyzed because they are closely related to the quality of human resources and the success of regional development.

The data used in this study are secondary data obtained from official documents, government publications, statistical reports, books, journals, and relevant online sources. The main sources include publications from Statistics Indonesia (BPS), especially data related to the Human Development Index of North Padang Lawas Regency, as well as reports and documents related to human development, regional development, education, health, employment, and public welfare. Supporting sources are also taken from national and international institutions such as UNDP, OECD, and the World Bank to strengthen the theoretical foundation of human resource development.

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Data collection was conducted through documentation study. This technique was used by collecting, reviewing, and analyzing written documents related to human resource development and regional development. The documents were selected based on their relevance, credibility, and connection to the research topic. Official government data and institutional reports were prioritized because they provide reliable information about human development indicators and regional development conditions. The data analysis technique used in this study is descriptive analysis. The analysis was carried out by organizing the collected data, identifying important issues, interpreting the relationship between human resource development and regional development, and formulating strategic recommendations. The data were analyzed based on several main themes, namely education, health, skills development, employment, community empowerment, digital literacy, and government capacity.

In the analysis process, the study first identifies the general condition of human development in North Padang Lawas Regency by referring to indicators such as the Human Development Index, education indicators, health indicators, and welfare indicators. Second, the study examines the challenges that may affect human resource development, such as limited skills, employment issues, education quality, health services, and technological adaptation. Third, the study formulates strategies that can be used to strengthen human resources in order to support sustainable regional development. This method allows the study to provide a comprehensive explanation of how human resource development can contribute to regional development. By using secondary data and descriptive analysis, the study is expected to present a clear understanding of the importance of improving human resource quality in North Padang Lawas Regency. The results of this study are also expected to provide useful recommendations for local government, educational institutions, communities, and other stakeholders in designing effective human resource development strategies.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Human resource development in North Padang Lawas Regency is an important factor in supporting regional development. Based on the literature review and secondary data, the development of human resources in this region is closely related to education, health, employment, skills development, community empowerment, and institutional capacity. These aspects influence the ability of the local community to participate in development and determine the effectiveness of government programs. The Human Development Index of North Padang Lawas Regency shows positive progress. According to BPS Padang Lawas Utara, the HDI increased from 71.69 in 2020 to 74.16 in 2024. In 2024, the HDI rose by 0.96 percent compared with 2023, when it reached 73.45. This increase indicates improvement in the main dimensions of human development, namely health, knowledge, and decent living standards. The improvement also shows that the quality of human resources in North Padang Lawas Regency is gradually increasing.

The increase in HDI can be interpreted as a positive result of development efforts carried out by the local government and other stakeholders. Improvement in life expectancy reflects better health conditions and access to health services. Improvement in education indicators reflects better access to knowledge and learning opportunities. Meanwhile, improvement in expenditure per capita indicates an increase in the economic capacity of the community. These achievements are important because they show that human resource development contributes directly to regional development. However, the improvement of HDI does not mean that all human resource problems have been solved. North Padang Lawas Regency still needs continuous efforts to strengthen the quality of education, expand skills training, improve health services, increase employment opportunities, and strengthen community participation. Human resource development must be carried out consistently because regional development requires people who are educated, healthy, productive, and adaptive to change.

In the education sector, improving the quality of human resources requires better access to formal education and non-formal education. Education plays an important role in increasing knowledge, literacy, discipline, and critical thinking. A more educated society will be better prepared to support local development programs and participate in economic activities. Therefore, the local government needs to improve school facilities, teacher quality, learning support, and educational access for communities in rural areas. Skills development is also an important issue. Regional development requires workers who have practical abilities that match local economic potential. North Padang Lawas Regency has potential in agriculture, plantation, trade, and small businesses. Therefore, vocational training should be directed toward these sectors. Training in agricultural technology, plantation management, entrepreneurship, financial management, product marketing, and digital literacy can help improve community productivity and income.

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In the employment sector, human resource development should be connected with job creation. Training programs will be more effective if they are linked to real employment opportunities. The local government can cooperate with private sectors, vocational schools, training centers, and community organizations to prepare workers based on labor market needs. This cooperation can reduce unemployment, improve work readiness, and strengthen local economic growth. Health development is another important factor in improving human resource quality. A healthy community will be more productive and more capable of contributing to regional development. Therefore, health services should be improved through better access to public health centers, maternal and child health services, nutrition programs, sanitation, and health education. Preventive health programs are also important to reduce disease risk and improve the quality of life of the community.

Community empowerment is also needed to support human resource development. Development will be more successful when the community is actively involved in planning and implementing programs. Community empowerment can be carried out through entrepreneurship programs, village economic activities, women's empowerment, youth training, farmer groups, and small business development. Through empowerment, people are encouraged to become active development actors, not only recipients of government assistance. Digital literacy has become increasingly important in the modern development process. Communities need digital skills to access information, market products, improve education, and participate in economic activities. For North Padang Lawas Regency, digital literacy can help local entrepreneurs promote products through online platforms, support students in learning activities, and improve the efficiency of public services. Therefore, digital training should become part of the human resource development strategy.

The capacity of local government institutions also affects the success of human resource development. Government officials must have the ability to plan, implement, monitor, and evaluate development programs effectively. Good governance is needed so that programs are well targeted and public services are delivered efficiently. Therefore, training for civil servants, digital administration, data-based planning, and public service innovation should be strengthened. The discussion shows that human resource development in North Padang Lawas Regency must be implemented through an integrated strategy. Education, health, employment, skills training, community empowerment, digital literacy, and institutional capacity should not be managed separately. These aspects are interconnected and support each other. For example, education improves knowledge, skills training increases work ability, health improves productivity, and community empowerment creates economic independence.

The role of local government is central in coordinating these strategies. The government must ensure that human resource development programs are aligned with regional development priorities. Budget allocation, policy planning, institutional coordination, and cooperation with stakeholders are necessary to achieve effective results. Stakeholders such as schools, universities, training institutions, health centers, village governments, private sectors, and community organizations should be involved in the implementation process. Based on the analysis, several strategic efforts can be proposed. First, the local government should improve the quality and accessibility of education, especially in rural areas. Second, vocational training should be expanded according to local economic potential. Third, health services should be strengthened to improve community productivity. Fourth, entrepreneurship and small business development should be supported to increase local income. Fifth, digital literacy programs should be developed for students, workers, entrepreneurs, and public servants. Sixth, the capacity of local government institutions should be improved to ensure better public service and development planning.

Overall, the results and discussion indicate that human resource development is a key factor in supporting regional development in North Padang Lawas Regency. Although the HDI has shown positive progress, sustainable efforts are still needed to improve the quality of human resources. By implementing integrated and continuous strategies, North Padang Lawas Regency can strengthen its regional competitiveness, improve public welfare, and achieve more sustainable development.

CONCLUSION

Human resource development is a key factor in supporting regional development in North Padang Lawas Regency. The quality of human resources determines the ability of the region to improve public services, increase economic productivity, reduce social problems, and strengthen regional competitiveness. Therefore, regional development cannot be separated from efforts to improve education, health, skills, employment opportunities, community empowerment, and institutional capacity. The development of human resources in North Padang Lawas Regency has shown positive progress, as reflected in the improvement of the Human Development Index. This progress indicates that there have been improvements in the dimensions of health, education, and decent living standards. However, this achievement must continue to be strengthened through sustainable and integrated

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development strategies so that the benefits can be felt more widely by the community. The main strategies for human resource development in North Padang Lawas Regency include improving the quality and accessibility of education, expanding vocational and skills training, strengthening health services, creating employment opportunities, supporting entrepreneurship, improving digital literacy, and increasing the capacity of local government institutions. These strategies need to be implemented according to local needs and regional potential, especially in sectors such as agriculture, plantation, trade, small businesses, and public services.

The role of the local government is very important in planning, coordinating, and implementing human resource development programs. Cooperation between government, educational institutions, training centers, health institutions, private sectors, village governments, and community organizations is also needed to ensure that development programs are effective and sustainable. Through collaboration, human resource development can become more targeted and relevant to the needs of society. In conclusion, human resource development in North Padang Lawas Regency must be carried out continuously and comprehensively. By improving the quality of human resources, the regency will be better prepared to face development challenges, increase community welfare, and achieve sustainable regional development. Strong, educated, healthy, skilled, and productive human resources will become the main foundation for the future progress of North Padang Lawas Regency.

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