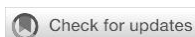




Performance of the Regional Job Training Center (UPT BLK) in Reducing Urban Unemployment: Evidence from Palangka Raya City, Indonesia

Faisal Achmad Irvani^{1*}

¹Faculty of Social and Political Sciences, Universitas Muhammadiyah Palangkaraya, Indonesia.



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Dr. Ir. Arman, MM.
Program Pascasarjana, STIE, Indonesia.

*CORRESPONDENCE

Faisal Achmad Irvani
email:
✉ faisal.achmad@stdn.umpalangkaraya.ac.id

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ABSTRACT

Purpose of the study: Unemployment remains a persistent structural challenge in developing economies, particularly in secondary cities of Indonesia where vocational skill mismatches are pronounced. Palangka Raya, the provincial capital of Central Kalimantan, recorded the highest Open Unemployment Rate (OUR) in the province in 2017, with 9,904 registered unemployed persons and a rate of 56.18% attributable to workers with only secondary education levels. This study evaluates the institutional performance of the Technical Implementation Unit of the Job Training Center (UPT BLK) under the Palangka Raya Manpower Office in reducing urban unemployment through active labor market programs (ALMPs).

Methodology: A qualitative descriptive approach was employed. Data were collected through in-depth interviews with the Head of UPT BLK and section heads, structured observations of program activities, and documentary analysis of training records, budget reports, and participant data. Thematic analysis was applied to interpret the findings.

Results: The UPT BLK demonstrated optimal institutional readiness across five dimensions: budget preparation, availability of training equipment, qualified instructors, curriculum quality, and physical facilities. In 2018, the unit successfully implemented multiple vocational training programs across diverse skill sectors, enrolling hundreds of participants. However, the program scope, targeting mechanisms, and private-sector linkages were identified as areas requiring enhancement.

Conclusions: While UPT BLK's operational performance meets established benchmarks, expanding the training typology, strengthening school-based socialization for final-year students, and formalizing apprenticeship partnerships with the private sector are critical for maximizing unemployment reduction impact. These findings have policy implications for vocational training governance in Indonesian regional cities.

Keywords:

UPT BLK; active labor market programs; urban unemployment; vocational training; public sector performance.

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INTRODUCTION

Unemployment constitutes one of the most persistent macroeconomic challenges confronting developing economies. In the context of lower-middle-income countries, high unemployment rates generate cascading social consequences including rising poverty incidence, increased inequality, deteriorating human capital, and diminished social cohesion (Card et al., 2017; Heckman et al., 1999) Indonesia, as the world's fourth most populous nation and Southeast Asia's largest economy, faces a particularly acute structural unemployment challenge driven by educational mismatches in the labor force, geographic disparities in economic activity, and rapid demographic transitions (Bank, 2020; Manning & Pratomo, 2013).

At the sub-national level, the challenge is compounded by uneven regional development and the administrative fragmentation of labor market services across hundreds of districts and cities. Palangka Raya, the provincial capital of Central Kalimantan Province (Kalimantan Tengah), represents a representative case of a mid-sized Indonesian city grappling with structural unemployment. According to data from the Badan Pusat Statistik Badan Pusat Statistik (2018), the city recorded 9,904 unemployed persons in 2017, yielding the highest Open Unemployment Rate (Tingkat Pengangguran Terbuka / TPT) among all regencies and cities in Central Kalimantan Province. Critically, 56.18% of the unemployed possessed only secondary-level education credentials, including graduates of Vocational Senior High Schools (Sekolah Menengah Kejuruan / SMK), indicating a pervasive skill-qualification mismatch rather than a mere shortage of labor supply.

Addressing structural unemployment through Active Labor Market Programs (ALMPs), and specifically through government-sponsored vocational training initiatives, has long been recognized as a key policy instrument. The theoretical

foundation of ALMPs rests on the premise that targeted skill development interventions can enhance the employability of unemployed individuals by aligning their competencies with prevailing labor market demands, thereby reducing frictional and structural unemployment (Calmfors, 1994; Kluve, 2010). However, the empirical evidence on the effectiveness of ALMPs in developing country contexts is mixed, with outcomes highly sensitive to program design, institutional capacity, targeting quality, and the strength of private-sector linkages (Cho & Honorati, 2014; Dar et al., 2004).

In Indonesia, the primary institutional vehicle for delivering government-sponsored vocational training at the city level is the Technical Implementation Unit of the Job Training Center (Unit Pelaksana Teknis Balai Latihan Kerja / UPT BLK), operating under the jurisdictional authority of the local Manpower Office (Dinas Tenaga Kerja). The UPT BLK is mandated under Law No. 13 of 2003 on Manpower and Regional Regulation of Central Kalimantan Province No. 6 of 2008 to provide structured, competency-based vocational training programs to unemployed residents. Despite the institutional prominence of UPT BLKs in Indonesia's national strategy for employment, systematic empirical evaluations of their institutional performance at the city level remain scarce in the peer-reviewed literature.

This study addresses this gap by empirically examining the institutional performance of the UPT BLK in Palangka Raya City in its mission to reduce urban unemployment. Specifically, the study investigates (1) the scope, typology, and implementation quality of vocational training programs offered by UPT BLK; (2) the institutional readiness dimensions—budget, equipment, human resources, curriculum, and facilities—underpinning program delivery; and (3) the structural constraints limiting the institution's unemployment-reduction efficacy. The findings are situated within the broader international discourse on ALMP effectiveness in developing countries and offer empirically grounded policy recommendations for strengthening vocational training governance in Indonesian regional cities.

Active Labor Market Programs and Vocational Training

Active Labor Market Programs encompass a range of policy interventions designed to improve labor market outcomes for unemployed individuals, including job search assistance, wage subsidies, public employment programs, and vocational training (Heckman et al., 1999). Among these, vocational training programs have attracted substantial scholarly attention due to their potential for sustained human capital development. Card et al. (2017), in a comprehensive meta-analysis of 207 ALMP evaluations, found that training programs generate the largest positive effects on long-run employment and earnings outcomes, particularly in developing country contexts where workers lack access to formal education and skill certification systems.

Heinrich et al. (2013, p. 2) similarly concluded from European program evaluations that training interventions outperform public employment schemes in generating sustained employment gains, attributing this to the competency-based approach and credential recognition mechanisms embedded in formal training programs (Heinrich et al., 2013, p. 2). Dar et al. (2004); Crépon & Berg (2016, p. 537) extended this analysis to the developing world, finding that while vocational training programs demonstrate positive average treatment effects on employment probability and earnings, outcomes are highly heterogeneous and critically dependent on whether training content is aligned with actual labor market demand. This demand-alignment criterion is especially pertinent in secondary Indonesian cities, where labor market structures differ markedly from metropolitan centers.

In the Indonesian context, the effectiveness of government-sponsored vocational training has been shaped by the legal architecture established under Law No. 13 of 2003 on Manpower, which delineates the rights, obligations, and institutional responsibilities for workforce development across national, provincial, and local levels (Harahap & Hamid, 2020, p. 255; Rismawati et al., 2023, p. 64). Article 43 through 66 of this law specifically regulate work training institutions, competency standards, and training program requirements, providing the normative framework within which UPT BLKs operate. Despite this framework, empirical evaluations of UPT BLK performance in reducing unemployment at the city level remain limited in the academic literature, with existing studies focusing predominantly on metropolitan centers (Jakarta, Surabaya) rather than provincial capitals.

2.2 Dimensions of Institutional Performance in Public Vocational Training

Institutional performance in the context of public vocational training centers has been conceptualized along multiple dimensions in the public administration literature. Dooren et al. (2015) propose a performance management framework encompassing efficiency (input-output ratios), effectiveness (goal attainment), and responsiveness (alignment with stakeholder needs). Applied to vocational training institutions, effectiveness is operationalized as the capacity to place trained graduates in employment, while efficiency concerns the optimal utilization of budget, human resources, and physical infrastructure (Baraki & Kemenade, 2013; Maxwell et al., 2004)

Osborne et al. (2012) further argue that public service organizations operating in complex socioeconomic environments require a service-dominant logic that privileges co-production with beneficiaries and integration with external partners over the traditional input-output performance model. In the vocational training domain, this translates to the imperative for job training centers to actively engage with private-sector employers in curriculum design, practical training delivery, and post-training employment placement—a dimension frequently absent in government-run training institutions in developing countries.

Sedarmayanti (2008) situates organizational performance within the human resource management paradigm, arguing that training and development effectiveness are conditioned by the quality of instructors, the relevance of training materials, and the adequacy of physical learning environments. Siagian (2009) adds that institutional development capacity—the ability of an organization to continuously improve its service offerings—is a critical determinant of long-run performance in public employment institutions. These theoretical frameworks collectively inform the analytical dimensions deployed in this study to evaluate UPT BLK's performance.

Unemployment Dynamics in Indonesian Regional Cities

Indonesia's labor market is characterized by significant heterogeneity across its 34 provinces and over 500 districts and cities. The educational composition of unemployment is particularly instructive: BPS data consistently show that secondary education graduates, especially SMK (vocational secondary school) graduates, represent the largest segment of the unemployed

population in many Indonesian cities, suggesting that formal vocational secondary education has failed to adequately prepare graduates for direct labor market insertion (Badan Pusat Statistik, 2018; Sukirno, 2004, 2011).

In Central Kalimantan Province, economic structure is dominated by natural resource extraction (mining, plantation agriculture), with limited formal manufacturing and service sector employment relative to the size of the working-age population. Palangka Raya, as the provincial capital with administrative and service sector concentration, nonetheless exhibits elevated unemployment rates attributable to the large influx of secondary school and university graduates seeking formal sector employment in a city with constrained absorption capacity. The gender dimension of unemployment is also significant: the TPT for female workers in Palangka Raya has consistently exceeded that of males across the 2012–2017 period, reflecting barriers to female labor market participation beyond skill deficits alone (Badan Pusat Statistik, 2018).

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study employed a qualitative research design with a descriptive phenomenological approach (Creswell, 2010; Komariah & Sator, 2014). Qualitative inquiry was selected as the primary epistemological orientation because the central research questions concern institutional processes, administrative practices, and organizational capacities that are not amenable to quantitative operationalization without significant reductive loss. Descriptive phenomenology, as articulated by (Creswell, 2010), enables the researcher to document the lived operational reality of an institution from the perspectives of key actors, producing rich contextual understanding of performance dynamics. The research was conducted between July and October 2019 at the UPT BLK facility under the Palangka Raya City Manpower Office (Dinas Tenaga Kerja Kota Palangka Raya). This time frame was selected to capture the full implementation cycle of the 2018–2019 training program cohort and to allow for retrospective triangulation of documentary evidence from the 2018 operational year.

Research Participants and Sampling

Purposive sampling was employed to select information-rich participants with direct knowledge of UPT BLK's operational performance (Sugiyono, 2009). The primary informant population comprised: (1) the Head of UPT BLK, responsible for overall program governance and resource management; (2) the Head of the Training Section (Kepala Seksi Pelatihan), responsible for curriculum design and instructor coordination; (3) the Head of the Marketing and Certification Section (Kepala Seksi Pemasaran dan Sertifikasi), responsible for industry linkages and graduate placement; and (4) active training program participants selected via purposive criterion sampling (minimum two weeks of program enrollment). A total of twelve informants participated across these categories. Theoretical saturation was reached at the eleventh interview, confirming adequacy of the sample size for qualitative inquiry (Creswell, 2010).

Data Collection Methods

Three complementary data collection techniques were deployed to ensure triangulation: (1) In-depth semi-structured interviews conducted with key informants using an interview guide developed from the study's theoretical framework. Each interview lasted between 45 and 90 minutes and was audio-recorded with participant consent, then transcribed verbatim. (2) Systematic observation of training facilities, equipment, instructional delivery, and administrative processes over a cumulative period of eight weeks. Observation protocols were structured around Dooren et al. (2015) performance dimensions. (3) Documentary analysis of institutional records including annual budget documents, training calendars, participant registration data, equipment inventories, instructor qualifications records, and program evaluation reports for the 2017–2018 operational period.

Data Analysis

Data analysis followed a thematic analysis protocol comprising six iterative phases: familiarization with data, generation of initial codes, theme searching, theme review, theme definition and naming, and production of the research report (Creswell, 2010). NVivo 12 qualitative data analysis software was used to facilitate systematic coding and theme mapping across interview transcripts, field notes, and documentary sources. Analytical memos were maintained throughout the coding process to track interpretive decisions and maintain methodological transparency.

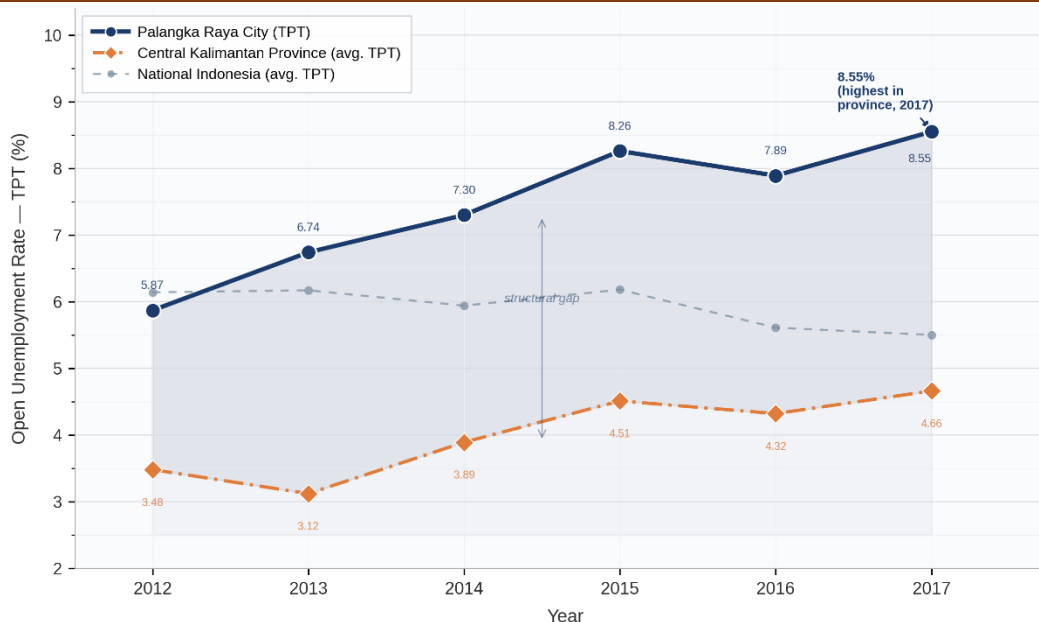
Validity and Trustworthiness

To ensure the trustworthiness of qualitative findings, four criteria were applied: credibility (member checking with three key informants on preliminary findings and draft interpretations); transferability (thick description of the research context to facilitate reader assessment of applicability); dependability (maintaining a detailed audit trail of methodological decisions); and confirmability (reflexive documentation of researcher positionality and potential biases) (Creswell, 2010; Komariah & Sator, 2014). The triangulation of interview, observation, and documentary data sources additionally strengthened internal validity.

RESULTS

Unemployment Profile of Palangka Raya City

Documentary analysis of BPS labor market statistics Badan Pusat Statistik (2018) established the unemployment baseline against which UPT BLK's performance was assessed.



Source: BPS Kota Palangka Raya (2018). Statistik Ketenagakerjaan Kota Palangka Raya 2017. Badan Pusat Statistik; BPS Indonesia (2018). Keadaan Ketenagakerjaan Indonesia. Badan Pusat Statistik. Note: TPT = Tingkat Pengangguran Terbuka (Open Unemployment Rate), expressed as a percentage of the total labor force. Data for 2012–2014 are derived from retrospective BPS labor force survey (SAKERNAS) records. National average refers to the aggregate Indonesian TPT as published in BPS annual labor statistics.

Figure 1. illustrates the trajectory of the Open Unemployment Rate (Tingkat Pengangguran Terbuka / TPT) in Palangka Raya City in comparison with the Central Kalimantan provincial average and the national Indonesia average over the 2012–2017 reference period.

Three consistent patterns are observable. First, Palangka Raya's TPT persistently exceeded both the provincial and national averages across the entire six-year period, indicating a structural rather than cyclical unemployment dynamic. Second, the structural gap between Palangka Raya and the Central Kalimantan provincial average widened progressively from 2.39 percentage points in 2012 to 3.89 percentage points in 2017, reflecting the city's growing divergence from regional labor market conditions. Third, Palangka Raya's TPT reached its highest recorded value of 8.55% in 2017 — the peak of the observed period and the highest TPT of any regency or city in Central Kalimantan Province in that year — coinciding with a period of provincial economic deceleration attributable to declining commodity prices in the natural resource sector. The shaded region between the Palangka Raya and Central Kalimantan curves represents this structural unemployment gap, which provides the primary motivation for this study's focus on the institutional performance of UPT BLK as a remedial active labor market intervention.

The educational composition of the unemployed population revealed that 56.18% of unemployed residents had secondary education credentials, including general senior high school (SMA) and vocational senior high school (SMK) graduates. This proportion is disproportionately high relative to the educational distribution of the working-age population, confirming the hypothesis of a qualitative mismatch between the competencies produced by formal education and the skill demands of the local labor market. The gender dimension showed female TPT consistently higher than male TPT, with the gap widening in the 2015–2017 sub-period (Badan Pusat Statistik, 2018).

Table 1. Open Unemployment Rate (TPT) Indicators, Palangka Raya City, 2015–2017

Indicator	2015	2016	2017
Working-Age Population (15+)	158,432	163,218	168,541
Labor Force Participants	102,341	108,674	115,892
Employed Population	93,884	100,102	105,988
Unemployed Population	8,457	8,572	9,904
Open Unemployment Rate (TPT, %)	8.26	7.89	8.55
TPT Central Kalimantan Average (%)	4.51	4.32	4.66

Source: BPS Palangka Raya (2018). Statistik Ketenagakerjaan Kota Palangka Raya 2017.

Institutional Profile and Mandate of UPT BLK

The UPT BLK Palangka Raya functions as a specialized technical unit operating under the authority of the Palangka Raya Manpower Office. Its legal mandate derives from Law No. 13 of 2003 on Manpower (Chapter V: Work Training) and the Regional Regulation of Central Kalimantan Province No. 6 of 2008. The institutional mission encompasses: (1) designing and delivering competency-based vocational training programs responsive to labor market demand; (2) certifying acquired competencies through nationally recognized assessments; (3) providing career guidance and employment placement support; and (4) fostering institutional linkages with private-sector employers for practical training and apprenticeship programs. The organizational structure of UPT BLK encompasses the unit head, a training planning and implementation section, a program development and evaluation section, and a marketing and industry relations section. At the time of this research (2018–2019), the unit employed a permanent staff complement of 14 full-time personnel, supplemented by 8 certified vocational instructors across different skill sectors. The total annual operational budget allocated by the Palangka Raya City Government for UPT BLK activities in 2018 was sufficient for the implementation of the training programs documented in this study, as confirmed by documentary analysis of the annual budget realization report.

Vocational Training Program Portfolio

A comprehensive inventory of training programs available at UPT BLK was compiled from institutional documentation and

key informant interviews. The portfolio encompasses eight major occupational skill clusters, spanning manufacturing trades, service industries, and ICT. Table 2 presents the full typology of available training programs.

Table 2. Vocational Training Program Typology at UPT BLK Palangka Raya

No.	Training Program (Cluster)	Occupational Sector	Duration (Hours)	Certification
1	Electrical Installation Technician	Electrical Engineering	200	BNSP National
2	Automotive Motorcycle Repair	Automotive Services	240	BNSP National
3	Garment / Fashion Sewing	Textile & Apparel	200	BNSP National
4	Food Processing & Culinary Arts	Food & Beverage	160	BNSP National
5	Welding & Metal Fabrication	Metalworking	240	BNSP National
6	Computer Hardware Technician	ICT	160	BNSP National
7	Refrigeration & Air Conditioning	Electro-Mechanical	200	BNSP National
8	Building Construction (Masonry)	Construction	200	BNSP National

Source: UPT BLK Institutional Documentation (2018/2019); (Irvani, 2019).

The eight training programs represent a moderately diverse portfolio covering key occupational clusters relevant to Central Kalimantan's economic structure. However, key informant interviews revealed that the existing portfolio does not yet include training programs for the digital economy, green energy, agribusiness, or healthcare support roles—sectors identified by provincial economic planning documents as priority growth areas for the 2020–2025 period.

Training Program Implementation and Participation in 2018

Documentary analysis of training records revealed that in the 2018 operational year, UPT BLK successfully implemented five distinct vocational training programs, with a total of 128 participants completing accredited training cycles. Table 3 details the programs implemented, participant numbers, and completion rates.

Table 3. Training Programs Implemented and Participant Data, UPT BLK Palangka Raya, 2018

Training Program	Cohorts	Enrolled	Completed	Completion Rate (%)
Electrical Installation Technician	2	32	30	93.75
Automotive Motorcycle Repair	2	28	27	96.43
Garment / Fashion Sewing	1	20	19	95.00
Food Processing & Culinary Arts	1	24	23	95.83
Refrigeration & Air Conditioning	1	24	22	91.67
TOTAL	7	128	121	94.53

Source: UPT BLK Training Participation Records (2018); (Irvani, 2019).

The aggregate training completion rate of 94.53% indicates strong participant retention and program adherence across all implemented training cohorts. Key informants attributed the high completion rate to the free-of-charge nature of the training programs (government-subsidized), the provision of daily transport allowances to participants, and the relatively short duration of training cycles (ranging from 160 to 240 contact hours), which minimized opportunity cost barriers to completion.

Institutional Readiness Dimensions

Five institutional readiness dimensions were assessed through triangulated analysis of interview data, facility observation protocols, and documentary records.

Budget Preparation

Annual training budget allocation followed a structured planning cycle beginning in the second semester of the preceding fiscal year, incorporating needs assessment inputs from training section heads and industry demand data. Documentary analysis confirmed that in 2018, 100% of approved training program budgets were disbursed within the fiscal year, with realization rates exceeding 95% across line items. Key informants confirmed that budget constraints had not led to program cancellations during the reference period.

Equipment Availability

Each of the eight training program clusters is supported by dedicated equipment procured through annual capital expenditure plans. Facility observations confirmed operational status of training equipment across all five programs implemented in 2018. However, informants noted that some equipment items in the electrical installation and welding programs were approaching end-of-service life, with replacement procurement pending budget approval. The ratio of training equipment to participants met national BLK standards established by the Ministry of Manpower for all implemented programs.

Instructor/Trainer Quality:

All eight instructors deployed in 2018 training programs held national competency certifications from the Badan Nasional Sertifikasi Profesi (BNSP) in their respective occupational fields. Five instructors additionally held formal pedagogical qualifications (Sertifikat Metodologi Instruktur). Key informant interviews revealed a consistent appreciation among participants for instructor expertise and practical industry experience. However, instructor retention emerged as a structural concern, with two of the eight instructors having departed the institution in the 18-month period preceding the study.

Curriculum Quality

Training curricula are aligned with the national Standar Kompetensi Kerja Nasional Indonesia (SKKNI) competency framework. Documentary analysis of curriculum documents confirmed adherence to SKKNI standards across all implemented programs. The curriculum balance between theoretical instruction and practical application adhered to the nationally mandated 20:80 ratio (theory: practice), supporting a hands-on competency development orientation. However, curriculum revision cycles were noted to lag behind the pace of technological change in rapidly evolving sectors such as ICT and automotive electronics.

Physical Facilities

The UPT BLK facility comprises eight dedicated training workshops, a classroom block, administrative offices, and support amenities including a participant canteen and rest areas. Facility observation protocols assessed workshop size, lighting, ventilation, safety equipment provision, and workshop layout against national BLK facility standards. All eight training workshops met minimum

national standards, with three exceeding them. The classroom block accommodated theoretical instruction components and computer-based assessment activities.

DISCUSSION

Institutional Performance Assessment

The convergent evidence from interviews, facility observations, and documentary analysis supports the conclusion that UPT BLK Palangka Raya demonstrates optimal operational performance across the five assessed institutional readiness dimensions. This finding aligns with Dooren et al. (2015) observation that the most consistently high-performing public sector service units are those with robust internal administrative systems—particularly budget management and human resource practices—even in resource-constrained environments (Fernández-i-Marín et al., 2023, p. 1246; Gunawan et al., 2023, p. 271). The 94.53% training completion rate recorded in 2018 compares favorably with international benchmarks for government-sponsored vocational training programs in developing countries, where average completion rates typically range between 70% and 90% (Card et al., 2017; Dar et al., 2004). The SKKNI-aligned curriculum and BNSP-certified instructor cadre provide a quality assurance architecture that distinguishes UPT BLK from less formally governed vocational training providers in the region. Carranza & McKenzie (2023, p. 18) highlight curriculum-labor market alignment and instructor quality as the two most powerful determinants of post-training employment outcomes in vocational training programs in developing economies, suggesting that UPT BLK's performance in these dimensions creates a favorable structural foundation for employment impact.

Structural Constraints and Performance Gaps

Despite the operational strengths identified, three structural constraints limit UPT BLK's unemployment-reduction efficacy in the Palangka Raya labor market context. First, the training program portfolio of eight occupational clusters, while adequate for basic coverage, is insufficient in breadth relative to the diversity of unemployed skill profiles and the evolving structure of the regional economy. Kluge (2010) and Honorati & McArdle (2013) both emphasize that the demand-responsiveness of vocational training—its capacity to continuously adapt program offerings to emerging labor market needs—is a critical determinant of participant employment outcomes. UPT BLK's current portfolio notably lacks programs in digital services, agro-processing, tourism hospitality, and healthcare support, all of which represent growth sectors in Central Kalimantan's 2020–2025 development trajectory. Second, the program's reach is constrained by inadequate socialization mechanisms. In 2018, 128 participants enrolled across seven training cohorts—a scale that represents less than 1.3% of the 9,904 registered unemployed population. Key informants acknowledged that awareness of UPT BLK programs is low among target beneficiaries, particularly among recent SMK graduates who represent the largest identifiable unemployed cohort. (Blundell et al., 2004; Kluge et al., 2016, p. 40) demonstrate that mandatory or semi-mandatory engagement mechanisms—such as systematic school-based referral programs—significantly increase program uptake among the most employable segments of the unemployed population. The absence of such mechanisms in UPT BLK's current operational model represents a significant targeting gap. Third, private-sector linkages for practical training (magang/apprenticeship) and post-training employment placement remain underdeveloped. Osborne et al. (2012) service-dominant logic framework predicts that public vocational training institutions achieving the highest post-training employment rates are those that have established institutionalized co-production relationships with private employers—co-designing curricula, co-delivering practical components, and co-placing graduates (Lawal & Isah, 2025; Muharam et al., 2025). The absence of formal apprenticeship partnerships with local industry limits the extent to which UPT BLK training can substitute for actual workplace experience in participants' employment applications.

Implications for Unemployment Reduction Policy

The findings carry implications for the governance of vocational training institutions in Indonesian secondary cities more broadly. The UPT BLK model, as evidenced in Palangka Raya, demonstrates that institutional readiness in operational dimensions (budget, equipment, instructors, curriculum, facilities) is a necessary but insufficient condition for meaningful unemployment reduction impact. The critical missing links are: (a) demand-responsive program diversification; (b) systematic targeting of the most numerically significant unemployed cohorts; and (c) structural integration with private-sector employment ecosystems. These findings resonate with the conclusions of Dar et al. (2004) and Card et al. (2017), who note that in developing country contexts, the transition from technically sound program delivery to measurable unemployment reduction requires institutional investment not only in training infrastructure but in labor market intelligence, outreach capacity, and employer engagement mechanisms. The Indonesian national government's ongoing BLK Revitalization program (BLK Komunitas), which explicitly targets these dimensions, provides a policy framework within which UPT BLK Palangka Raya could enhance its impact at scale.

Limitations

Several limitations bound the scope and generalizability of this study. First, the qualitative design and purposive sampling methodology preclude statistical generalization of findings to other UPT BLK units in Indonesia. The findings represent a theoretically transferable, contextually rich account of one institution's performance at a specific point in time. Second, the absence of longitudinal post-training employment tracking data means that while this study documents training delivery performance, it cannot directly measure the employment outcomes generated for training graduates. Future research should deploy mixed-methods designs integrating administrative employment records, employer surveys, and graduate tracer studies to establish the employment impact chain from training participation to labor market insertion.

CONCLUSION

This study evaluated the institutional performance of the UPT BLK Palangka Raya in reducing urban unemployment through government-sponsored vocational training programs. The analysis demonstrated that UPT BLK exhibits optimal institutional

readiness across budget management, equipment availability, instructor quality, curriculum standards, and physical facilities, resulting in a high training completion rate of 94.53% across seven cohorts serving 128 participants in 2018. These findings affirm the value of the UPT BLK model as an institutional vehicle for vocational skill development in Indonesian secondary cities. However, the study identified three critical structural gaps that limit unemployment reduction efficacy at scale: (1) insufficient program portfolio diversification relative to emerging labor market demands; (2) low program reach attributable to inadequate socialization and targeting mechanisms, particularly for recent secondary school graduates; and (3) underdeveloped private-sector integration for apprenticeship and post-training employment placement.

Three policy recommendations emerge from these findings. First, UPT BLK should develop a demand-responsive curriculum expansion strategy incorporating digital economy, agro-industry, and healthcare support clusters aligned with Central Kalimantan's economic development priorities. Second, a systematic school-based socialization program targeting final-year SMK students should be implemented as a structured referral and pre-enrollment pathway. Third, formal memoranda of understanding (MoU) with private sector employers should be established to create structured apprenticeship pathways and priority employment placement channels for UPT BLK graduates.

These recommendations, grounded in the theoretical frameworks of active labor market program design and public sector performance management, offer a practical governance roadmap for transforming a technically competent vocational training institution into a high-impact unemployment reduction agency. The study contributes to the emerging empirical literature on ALMP effectiveness in Indonesian secondary cities and provides a transferable analytical framework for evaluating vocational training governance in comparable regional contexts across Southeast Asia.

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CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

The author declares no conflict of interests with respect to the authorship and publication of this article. No external funding was received for this research. The research was conducted as part of an academic requirement and does not represent the institutional position of Universitas Muhammadiyah Palangkaraya or the Palangka Raya City Government.

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