

UTILIZING TOURISM AND CULTURAL HERITAGE TO ADDRESS YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT IN NORTH SUMATRA

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Abstract:

Youth unemployment is a growing concern in North Sumatra, exacerbated by a skills mismatch between the workforce and industry needs. Despite the region's rich cultural heritage and abundant natural resources, especially in tourism, these sectors remain underdeveloped. The purpose of this study is to explore how cultural and tourism industries can help alleviate youth unemployment in North Sumatra. Data was collected through surveys and a review of literature, highlighting a lack of vocational training in relevant areas, particularly in hospitality and cultural preservation. Results indicate that the tourism and cultural sectors have untapped potential for job creation. However, without targeted vocational training and collaboration between the government and private sector, this potential will remain unrealized. The discussion focuses on addressing the skills gap and integrating cultural heritage into tourism to create sustainable employment opportunities. In conclusion, strategic investment in vocational education, alongside the promotion of cultural tourism, can significantly reduce unemployment while preserving North Sumatra's unique cultural identity.

Keywords: *Youth unemployment, skills mismatch, tourism development, cultural heritage, North Sumatra, vocational training*

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Introduction

Unemployment has become a major challenge for many regions worldwide, and North Sumatra is no exception. This province, with its growing population and youth workforce, faces significant hurdles in creating jobs for its people. While several sectors, such as agriculture and small-scale industries, contribute to the economy, the potential of tourism and cultural industries remains underdeveloped. These sectors could be key in addressing unemployment, particularly among the youth, if harnessed effectively.

Tourism is a vital economic engine that can create numerous jobs directly and indirectly. In North Sumatra, with its breathtaking landscapes like Lake Toba and rich cultural heritage, tourism could provide a solution to the unemployment crisis. However, there is a clear mismatch between the skills of the workforce and the demands of the tourism industry. Most young job seekers in the region do not have the necessary training in hospitality, tourism management, or cultural preservation, which are crucial in these sectors.

Furthermore, North Sumatra has a rich and diverse culture, especially among the Batak people, known for their music, dance, and traditional crafts. The cultural heritage of North Sumatra is a unique asset that, if integrated with tourism, can attract visitors and create employment opportunities for locals. Unfortunately, the connection between culture and tourism is not yet fully exploited, leaving many young people unemployed despite the potential of these industries.

Addressing unemployment in North Sumatra requires a comprehensive strategy that includes education reform, skill development, and the promotion of cultural tourism. By equipping the youth with the skills required by the tourism sector and by promoting the region's cultural heritage, it is possible to significantly reduce unemployment while preserving North Sumatra's unique cultural identity.

This paper seeks to explore how the development of tourism and cultural sectors in North Sumatra could help reduce unemployment. It also examines the factors contributing to unemployment in the region, particularly the skills mismatch, and proposes solutions to bridge the gap between job seekers and industry needs.

Literature Review

1. Skills Mismatch and Youth Unemployment

The concept of skills mismatch refers to the gap between the skills that job seekers possess and the skills demanded by employers. In North Sumatra, many young people complete their education without acquiring the practical skills necessary for industries such as tourism. According to the Skills Mismatch Theory, this disconnect between education and labor market needs is one of the primary reasons for high unemployment rates among youth. For example, while North Sumatra's tourism industry requires proficiency in languages, hospitality management, and customer service, these areas are often neglected in local education systems. Addressing this mismatch is essential to reducing unemployment in the region.

2. The Role of Tourism in Job Creation

Tourism has long been recognized as a powerful tool for economic development and job creation. In regions like North Sumatra, which boast natural wonders and cultural attractions, tourism can provide significant employment opportunities. Studies show that tourism not only creates direct jobs in hotels, restaurants, and travel services but also supports indirect employment in areas like transportation, retail, and crafts. By promoting tourism, North Sumatra could tap into a new job market for young people. However, for this to be successful, the region needs to focus on training its workforce to meet the demands of the tourism industry.

3. Cultural Heritage as an Economic Asset

Cultural heritage plays a crucial role in tourism, especially in regions with unique traditions and histories. North Sumatra's cultural wealth, particularly the traditions of the Batak people, is an underutilized asset. The preservation and promotion of this heritage could not only attract tourists but also create jobs for local artisans, performers, and cultural guides. The Cultural Economy Theory suggests that promoting local culture in tourism can drive sustainable development by creating a market for traditional crafts, performances, and cultural experiences. Integrating culture with tourism, therefore, has the potential to boost employment and preserve the region's identity.

4. The Need for Vocational Training and Policy Support

Another key factor contributing to unemployment in North Sumatra is the lack of vocational training tailored to the tourism and cultural industries. While general education is widely available, few programs focus specifically on equipping young people with the skills needed for careers in tourism or cultural preservation. Governments in other regions have successfully reduced unemployment by investing in vocational training that aligns with industry needs. For North Sumatra to capitalize on its tourism potential, it must implement similar programs, supported by policies that encourage investment in tourism infrastructure and cultural promotion.

Methodology

This study employs a qualitative research method to examine the factors influencing youth unemployment in Sumatera Utara. Questionnaires were distributed to unemployed youth in both urban and rural areas of the region, seeking to gather information on their educational background, work experience, and the challenges they face in finding employment. Additionally, a literature review was conducted to analyze existing reports and studies on unemployment, providing a broader context for understanding the issue.

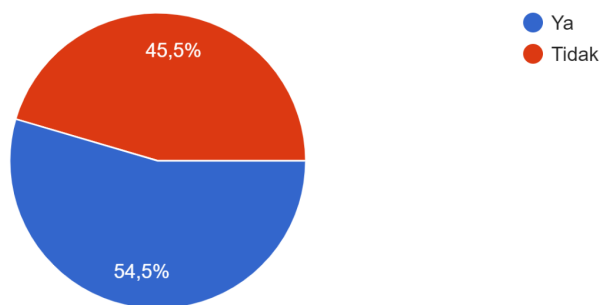
The data collected from these sources were used to identify common patterns and propose tailored solutions to address the unique challenges faced by the region's young population. This approach highlights the importance of localized, context-sensitive strategies in combating youth unemployment.

Result

Here are the data:

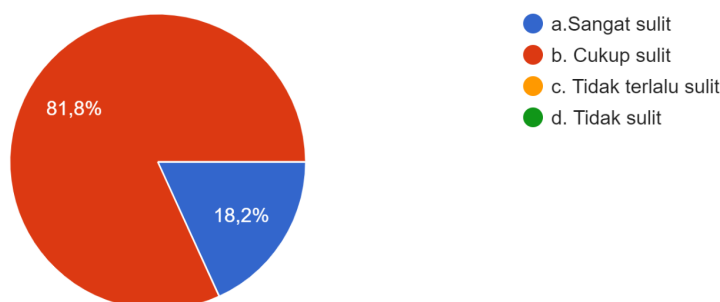
Apakah Anda saat ini sedang mencari pekerjaan?

11 jawaban



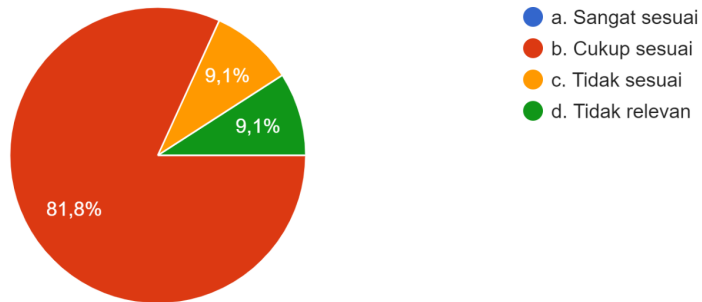
Seberapa sulit menurut Anda untuk mendapatkan pekerjaan di Sumatera Utara?

11 jawaban



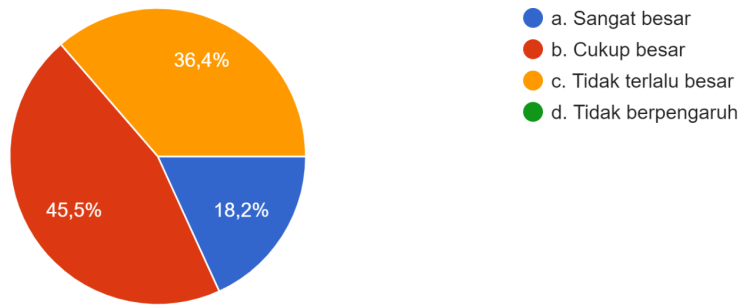
Apakah latar belakang pendidikan Anda sesuai dengan pekerjaan yang Anda cari?

11 jawaban



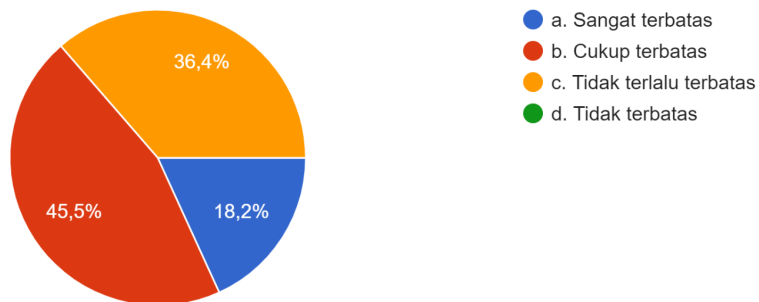
Seberapa besar peran pengalaman kerja dalam mendapatkan pekerjaan di wilayah ini?

11 jawaban



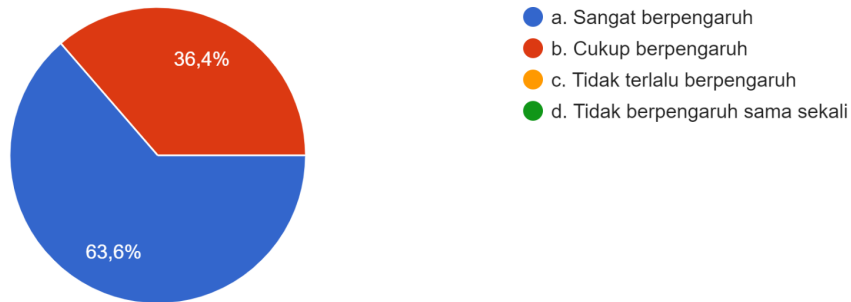
Apakah Anda merasa peluang kerja di sektor yang Anda minati cukup terbatas?

11 jawaban



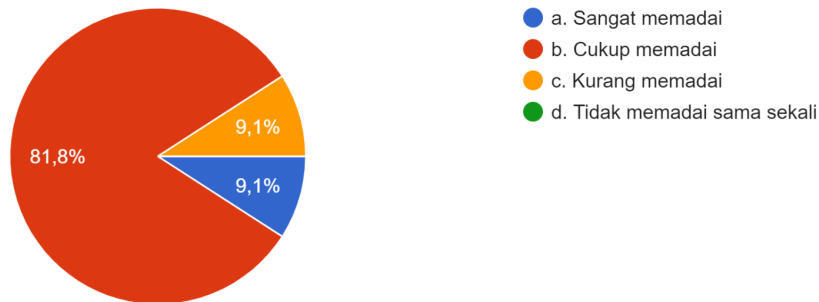
Seberapa besar pengaruh jaringan atau koneksi sosial dalam mendapatkan pekerjaan?

11 jawaban



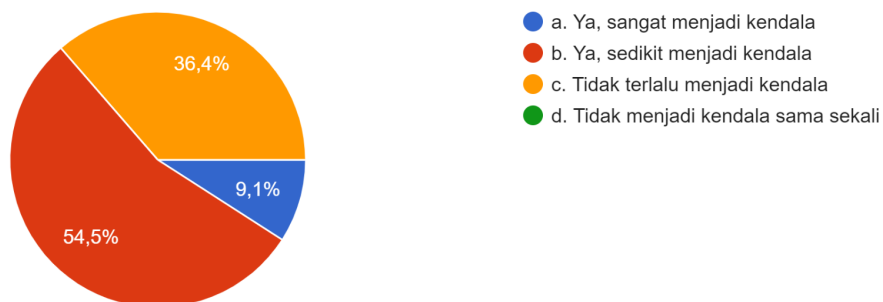
Bagaimana Anda menilai keterampilan yang Anda miliki dibandingkan dengan persyaratan kerja yang ada?

11 jawaban



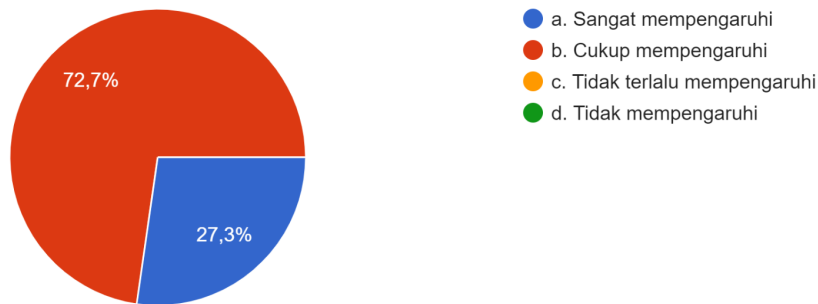
Apakah lokasi geografis menjadi kendala bagi Anda dalam mencari pekerjaan?

11 jawaban



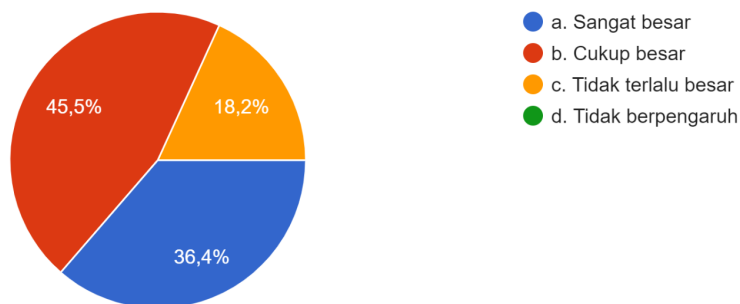
Bagaimana kondisi ekonomi daerah menurut Anda mempengaruhi ketersediaan lapangan pekerjaan?

11 jawaban



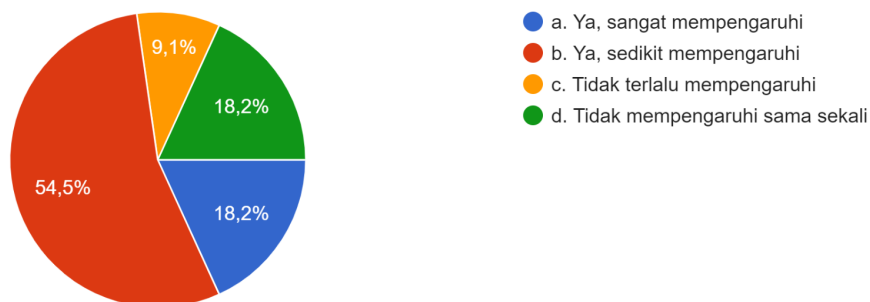
Seberapa besar pengaruh kebijakan pemerintah daerah dalam menciptakan lapangan pekerjaan di Sumatera Utara?

11 jawaban



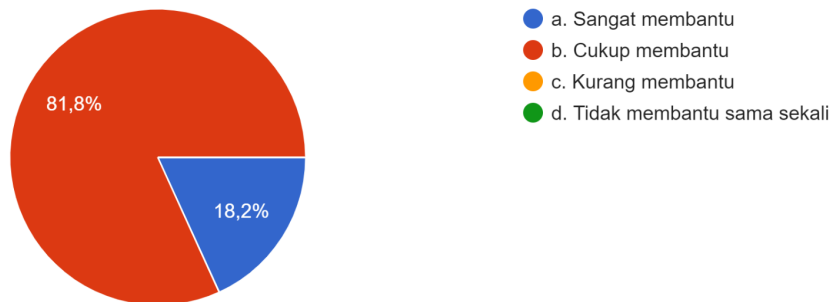
Apakah Anda merasa usia Anda mempengaruhi kesulitan dalam mendapatkan pekerjaan?

11 jawaban



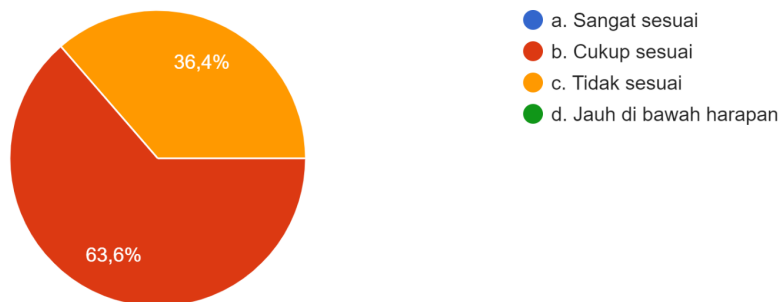
Bagaimana peran pelatihan atau kursus keterampilan dalam mempersiapkan Anda menghadapi pasar kerja?

11 jawaban



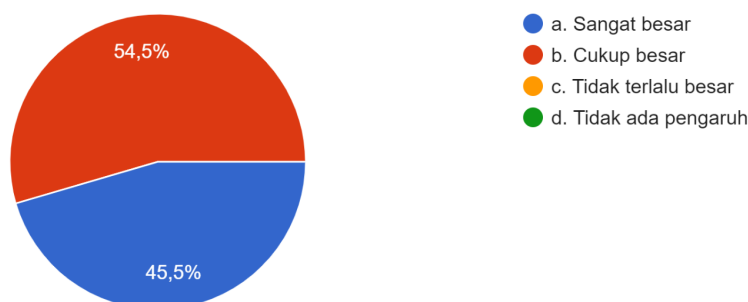
Apakah gaji yang ditawarkan oleh perusahaan di daerah ini sesuai dengan harapan Anda?

11 jawaban



Seberapa besar pengaruh persaingan dengan pencari kerja lain dalam mendapatkan pekerjaan?

11 jawaban



Discussion

1. Addressing the Skills Mismatch in Tourism

The findings from this study highlight the urgent need to address the skills mismatch between job seekers and the demands of North Sumatra's tourism industry. While the region has abundant natural and cultural resources that can attract tourists, the workforce is often unprepared to meet industry needs. Many youths lack basic hospitality skills, such as customer service or foreign language proficiency, which are essential in tourism-related jobs. To solve this, educational

institutions should introduce more vocational training that focuses on these areas. In doing so, they can equip the younger generation with the practical skills necessary to thrive in the tourism sector.

2. Unlocking the Potential of Cultural Heritage

North Sumatra's cultural heritage offers a unique opportunity for tourism development and job creation. Traditional arts, crafts, and performances can be integrated into tourism packages to provide visitors with authentic cultural experiences. The promotion of Batak cultural festivals, traditional music, and crafts would not only attract more tourists but also provide local artisans and performers with stable employment. This approach would allow North Sumatra to differentiate itself from other tourist destinations while ensuring that its cultural identity is preserved and celebrated.

3. Government and Private Sector Collaboration

For North Sumatra to fully harness the potential of tourism and cultural industries, collaboration between the government and private sector is essential. The government needs to implement policies that support tourism development, such as improving infrastructure and providing incentives for businesses to invest in tourism. Meanwhile, private companies, particularly in the hospitality and travel sectors, can play a key role in creating job opportunities for local workers. By working together, these stakeholders can develop a sustainable tourism industry that provides employment for youth and promotes the region's cultural heritage.

4. Recommendations for Future Development

To reduce unemployment in North Sumatra, a comprehensive approach is required. First, educational institutions must offer specialized vocational training that equips young people with the skills needed for careers in tourism and culture. Second, the government should focus on promoting the region's cultural heritage through marketing campaigns and infrastructure development. Lastly, the private sector must be encouraged to invest in tourism-related businesses that prioritize local employment. These steps will ensure that North Sumatra's tourism and cultural sectors become key drivers of economic growth and job creation.

Conclusion

In conclusion, addressing unemployment in North Sumatra requires a multifaceted approach that focuses on developing the tourism and cultural sectors. The region's abundant natural beauty and rich cultural heritage, particularly from the Batak community, present significant opportunities for job creation. However, the current skills mismatch, especially in the tourism industry, prevents many young people from finding suitable employment. By providing targeted vocational training and aligning education with the needs of these sectors, North Sumatra can equip its workforce with the practical skills necessary for success in tourism and cultural preservation.

Moreover, collaboration between the government, educational institutions, and the private sector is crucial for unlocking the full potential of tourism and culture. Government policies should focus on improving infrastructure and promoting local culture, while the private sector must invest in tourism-related businesses that create local jobs. By implementing these strategies, North Sumatra can reduce unemployment, boost economic growth, and preserve its cultural identity for future generations.

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