# The Characteristics of Young Employment in Indonesia: The Challenges of the Demographic Bonus Era

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**ABSTRACT:** *The percentage of the productive age population (15-64 years) showed an increase, in the 1971 Population Census the proportion of the productive age population was 53.39 percent of the total population, and the results of the 2020 Population Census were 70.72 percent of the total population. The difference between the percentage of the population of productive and non-productive age (0-14 years and 65 years and over) looks sharper in 2020. With such a population structure, Indonesia should already be in the demographic bonus period, if it can be utilized optimally, it will be able to accelerate economic growth and improve the welfare of the Indonesian people.However, the results of the National Manpower Survey (Sakernas) in February 2021 found the Open Unemployment Rate of the young population reached 18.03%. This figure has increased by 1.72% compared to February 2020. This number is almost half of the total national Open Unemployment Rate which reached 8.75 million or 6.26% in February 2021, the youth open unemployment rate reached 43.7% of the total of open unemployment in Indonesia (BPS, 2021).*
*This study uses secondary data from 2000-2021 to identify the determinants of youth unemployment in Indonesia and finds that youth unemployment in Indonesia is negatively and significantly affected by GDP and the average minimum wage and population dependency rates, while HDI has no effect on unemployment rates. young age.*
**KEYWORDS:** *Youth Employment, Youth Unemployment, GDP, Minimum Wage, Dependency Ratio, HDI and Demographic Bonus.*
**JEL: J11.J13, and J64**

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## I. INTRODUCTION

Young people entering the labor market in Indonesia face various challenges, both in urban and rural areas. One of the obstacles faced is the low quality. This condition can be seen from the large percentage of workers with junior high school education and below who enter the labor market. Meanwhile, according to the ILO, the productivity of Indonesian workers is still relatively low, where according to ILO data, the annual output growth rate of Indonesian workers is still low, even below the average for low-middle income countries. (Primary, 2020). This is one of the triggering factors for unemployment in Indonesia, especially in the young age group; population in the age group 15-24 years.

The Indonesian population census in 2020 shows that Indonesia's population has increased by 32.05 million in the 2010-2020 period. The results of the Indonesian Population Census in 2020 show that the total population of Indonesia has reached 270.02 million people with an average population growth rate of 1.25 percent per year throughout the 2010-2020 period. (BPS, 2021). The majority of Indonesia's population is dominated by Generation Z (born in the period 1997-2012) and the millennial generation (born in the period 1981-1996). The proportion of generation Z is 27.94 percent of the total population and the millennial generation is 25.87 percent. Most of these two generations fall into the category of productive age which can be an opportunity to boost economic growth. The percentage of the productive age population (15–64 years) of the total population in 2020 is 70.72 percent. Meanwhile, the percentage of the non-productive age population (0–14 years and 65 years and over) was recorded at 29.28% in 2020. The larger percentage of the productive age population indicates that Indonesia is entering the dividend or demographic bonus era.

However, the results of the National Manpower Survey (SAKERNAS) in February 2021 found the Open Unemployment Ratefor young people reached 18.03%. This figure has increased by 1.72% compared to February 2020, the young age in question is the workforce aged between 15-24 years. This amount is almost half of the total national Open Unemployment Rate which reached 8.75 million or 6.26% in February 2021. If

expressed as a percentage, the youth open unemployment rate reached 43.7% of the total national TPT. ((BPS, 2021)

The high number of people of productive age, especially those aged 15-24 years who are unemployed, is certainly a big problem for the life of the nation and state, besides being able to cause a decline in people's purchasing power which results in a decrease in aggregate demand and supply, it also has an impact on socio-political conditions such as increasing numbers of people living in poverty. crime, drug abuse, and other illegal economic activities. The next consequence is the increasing economic costs that must be incurred by the government to overcome these socio-economic problems, where these costs are very difficult to calculate and measure the level of efficiency and effectiveness.

## II.    METHODOLOGY

This research is a quantitative descriptive study with a deductive approach, by observing the behavior of youth unemployment data in the labor market through variables of economic and social characteristics. The data used for the analysis of this research is secondary data which is mainly sourced from the publications of the Central Bureau of Statistics (BPS). Supporting data are obtained from related institutions that will support the analysis in this study. The determinants of youth unemployment analyzed in this study are the Economic Variables of GDP and the average minimum wage, while the Social variables are HDI and population dependency rates. The analysis tool applied is econometrics using multiple regression, with the following research equation:

$$PUM = \alpha + \beta_1\, Y + \beta_2\, UMP + \beta_3\, IPM + \beta_4\, ADR + e$$

**Where:**

| | |
|---|---|
| PUM | = Number of Youth Unemployed (persons) |
| Y | = GDP constant price (Rp billion) |
| UMP | = Average Minimum Wage( Rp) |
| HDI | = HDI value (index value) |
| ADR | = Population Dependency Rate (%) |

## III.    DISCUSSION

The demographic transition from an age structure that is dominated by children to an age structure that is concentrated in the productive age has various economic consequences in different countries. Among other things, to get to the demographic bonus, you have to go through the "youth explosion", with an increase in the proportion of young workers that has the potential to increase youth unemployment and social unrest. A study (Lam & Leibbrandt, 2014) by analyzing data from 154 developing countries shows that there is a relationship between the explosion in the number of young people and youth unemployment throughout the country and especially in countries experiencing economic downturn. This study found a strong positive relationship between the share of youth of the working age population and youth unemployment. This shows that the explosion in the number of young people is an important factor that drives youth unemployment.

A study conducted by Majumder & Mukherjee (2018) shows that the problem of education, skill formation is the cause of unemployment among youth in India, especially in educated unemployment. The situation of skills/training of youth in India is not sufficient, resulting in an oversupply of labor which leads to a decline in the quality of life.Furthermore,Kumar, 2020 conducted a study of the causes of youth unemployment in the Southern states of India, recommending that adequate job opportunities should be created for youth in an effort to achieve inclusive growth and poverty eradication for the utilization of the demographic bonus phase, as this will be the determinant for achieving sustainable growth .

Suhaeri (2021) uses 2014 data from the National Labor Force Survey (SAKERNAS) to analyze the factors that affect the unemployed young age workforce in Indonesia, finding the causal factors are Education, training, location of existence (village/city), and type of employment. gender, but which has a significant effect partially only training and gender. In contrast to research (Putra & Iskandar, 2018) which found that the education variable had a significant positive effect, another variable that had a positive and significant effect was GDP while the wage level had a negative effect, while inflation had no significant effect. (Sari & Ahmad, 2021) conducted an analysis of the causes of NEET (Not in Employment, Education or Training); are young people belonging to the group not working, not in school or training by analyzing the 2018 SAKERNAS data; found that social and demographic characteristics influence young people to become NEETs in Indonesia.

Abrar, Nuelda Amalia, & Handoyo (2019) examined the Characteristics and Opportunities of Youth Unemployment in Aceh Province in Facing the Industrial Revolution Era 4.0, by analyzing SAKERNAS 2017 data, found that a higher chance of becoming unemployed at a young age in Aceh occurred among women, not yet married, have low education, have never attended training, have no work experience, as a member of the

household and live in urban areas. A study using the same data for the West Java region found that age, marital status, household status, education and household size had a significant impact on the probability of youth unemployment in West Java. (Wardhana, Kharisma, & Ibrahim, 2019)

In contrast to previous studies, this study focuses on analyzing the characteristics of youth unemployment by considering the population dependency ratio as a proxy for the potential demographic bonus window in Indonesia, in addition to social and economic variables. This is the contribution of this research in the study of youth unemployment, where the potential aspect of the demographic bonus has not been analyzed much in assessing youth unemployment.

## IV.    FINDINGS

**The Characteristics of Youth Employment (Population Age 15-24 years)**

The productive age population belonging to the labor force based on data from the National Labor Force Survey in August 2020 shows that in the 100 working age population of the productive age, there are 93 people of whom the status of workers is. Furthermore, the absorption of labor for the productive age population in 2020 decreased compared to the previous year. This decline occurred in all age groups. One of the causes is the spread of COVID-19 which began to spread at the end of Quarter I, 2020
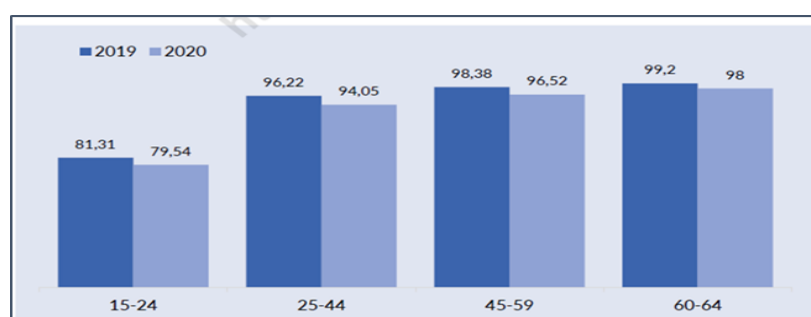


***Figure 1. Employment Opportunity Rate (Percent) and Productive Age Population (15-64 Years) by Age Group in 2019 and 2020***

*Source: Central Bureau of Statistics, 2022. (Processed)*

In Figure 1, it can be seen that the Employment Opportunity Level tends to increase with age. The lowest level of job opportunity is in the adolescent age group in the age group 15-24 years (young people) and the highest level of employment opportunity is in the elderly age group (60-64 years). The low level of employment opportunities for the young age group is because some of them are still in school. In general, the condition of the Employment Opportunity Rate by age group in 2020 is lower than 2019, but with almost the same pattern. If we look more closely during the last decade (2010-2021 period) there has been an increase in the number of young age workers with a growth of 3.19%, but the working workforce has increased with a growth of 5.68%, where the population growth in the this age is 7.32%.

Based on main employment status; It appears that the majority of the working age population in Indonesia work as Laborers/Employees/Employees, but if we look at the rate of growth for two decades (2000-2021); there is a significant increase in the status of business work assisted by permanent workers/paid workers. This indicates that self-employment is starting to develop in Indonesia. Where the growth rate in this decade shows the highest value of 99.4% or an average of 4.73% per year.

Furthermore, based on BPS data in 2018-2021; The young population entering the informal business sector shows a fluctuating movement. However, it tends to increase with an average/year growth rate of 2.36%. While the elderly population (old) is the majority of workers who are in the informal business field; This is because this business field does not have the qualifications and standards of education and age for its workers. So that this business field becomes the foundation for the elderly population to keep working and earn income to meet their needs.

The existence of the informal sector in the Indonesian labor market is still quite significant, this can be seen from the percentage of the population working in this business field, which reaches more than 50% annually, with an average growth rate of 1.38% throughout 2018-2021.
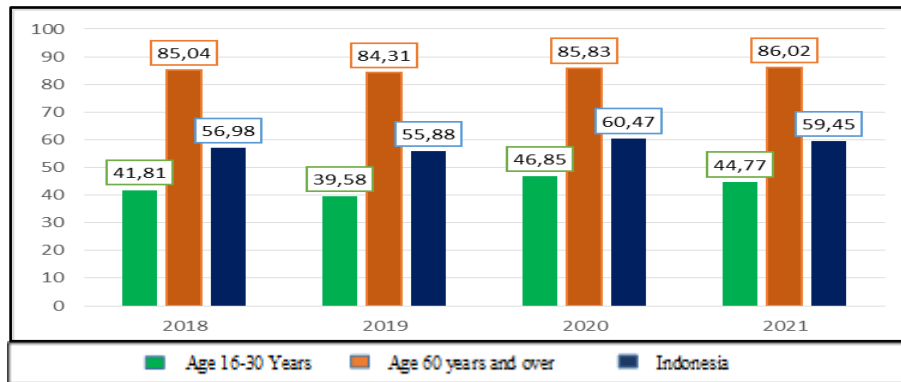
*Figure 1. Informal Sector Workers by Age Group 2018-2021*

The proportion of the workforce of young people who are in informal employment in the non-agricultural sector shows an increase throughout 2015-2021, where the labor force aged 15-19 years has increased by 8.45% on average per year, while the labor force aged 20-24 year showed an average annual increase of 4.06%. These two age groups experienced the greatest increase compared to other age groups. In other words, the young labor force tends to choose work in the non-agricultural sector, this also indicates that young people have begun to be less interested in working in the agricultural sector.

Related to technological developments, the type of work carried out in economic activities has also experienced a shift. This can be seen from the data which shows that the younger the generation, the percentage of workers in the primary sector tends to decrease. The opposite condition occurs in the tertiary sector. Workers in the Baby Boomer generation still predominantly work in the primary sector, which is 46.35 percent of the total workforce. Meanwhile, Generation X and younger are more involved in service-related jobs.
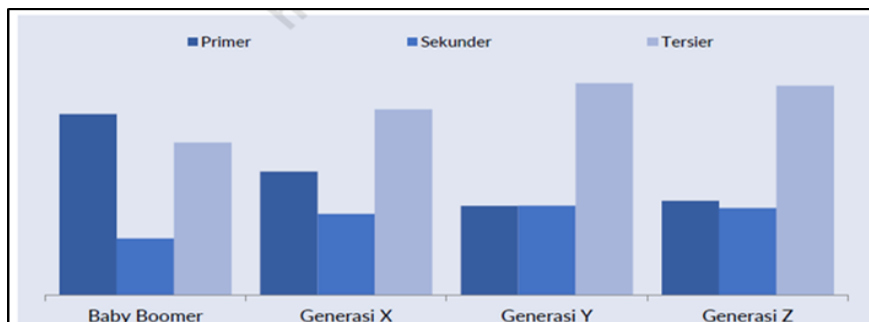


*Figure 3 Labor according to Classification of Business Fields and Generations, 2020*
*Source: Central Bureau of Statistics. (2022)*

Seen from the data on the open unemployment rate, youth unemployment occupies the top rank of open unemployment in Indonesia. When this large number of young people turns out to be unemployed, this will also reduce the opportunity to enjoy the demographic bonus. On the other hand, this condition can actually lead to other social problems such as poverty and crime.

One of the causes of the increase in the unemployment rate of young and highly educated people in Indonesia is because the number of graduates from high school, both general and vocational, to higher education graduates is increasing. This large number cannot be absorbed because the skills or qualities they have do not match the needs of the industry. In other words, there is a "gap" between the expectations of business needs on the skills of the workforce and the skills and abilities of the young workforce. Another factor is the limited availability of employment in the formal sector which can absorb these highly educated graduates. Young and highly educated graduates tend to look for established and formal jobs. They choose to wait until they get a job that at least meets their minimum standards. In contrast to those who graduated from elementary school who did not have high expectations for office work and could work in the informal sector.

Like the open unemployment rate, the young population also dominates the problem of underemployment in Indonesia. Underemployment is workers under normal working hours, which is less than 35 hours a week. The Central Statistics Agency reported that the underemployment rate in Indonesia was 8.71% in August 2021. This figure was 1.48 points lower than the same period in 2020 which was 10.19%. However, the underemployment rate in August 2021 still cannot return to what it was before the Covid-19 pandemic. These workers are generally still trying to find a job or are willing to accept a job that is better than the one they have.

The unabsorbed or unutilized youth workforce encourages the emergence of unemployment and NEET; where these young workers do not work or go to school. This condition is one of the problems in youth employment in Indonesia in particular and the world in general.NEET is used in economic development as a measure of youth marginalization and exclusion, and can be used to analyze problems in the youth labor market. A study conducted by (Zoraya & Wulandari, 2021) found that young workers in the 20-14 year age group have a greater tendency to become a NEET than the 15-19 year age group. In terms of education completed, young people who graduated from high school/equivalent have a greater tendency to become a NEET.

**The Determinants of Youth Unemployment (Population Aged 15-24 years)**
The results of a study conducted by (Nur, et al., 2016; Aprianto and Khairunissa, 2013) found that unemployment in developing countries was dominated by youth unemployment and educated unemployment. Even the ILO (International Labor Organization) predicts that young people (15-24 years old) make up almost half of the world's unemployment, even though the number of youth workforce is only 25% of the world's working age population. The ILO estimates halving global youth unemployment will increase global GDP by US$2.2 trillion, or 4% of global GDP. These statistics give reasons that youth unemployment is a problem that should receive serious attention. (Suhaeri, 2021)

The problem of youth unemployment is a serious employment problem in Indonesia. Unemployment is dominated by young people (aged 15-24 years). Even when other age groups show a decline in 2021, the younger age group actually shows an increasing trend. This condition certainly cannot be considered as a phenomenon that usually appears in developing countries, because of its impact on the socio-economic conditions of the community and obstacles in efforts to achieve national development goals.

The results of the Population Census conducted by the Central Statistics Agency in 2020 show that the Indonesian population is dominated by young people; 27.90 percent are Generation Z (born 1997-2021). However, as many as 22.40 percent of Indonesian youth in 2021 are actually unproductive. This means that more than one-fifth of Indonesia's population aged 15-24 years do nothing. In fact, the population in this age range should be in education, or already in employment or training. They are categorized as NEET (Not in Employment, Education, or Training), they do not entering the labor market, not attending school, or not participating in training. Although it decreased compared to the previous year, this figure has not changed much in the last six years

According to the theory of human capital (Schultz, 1961; Becker, 1962; Schumacher, 1975; Kuznet, 1955), human resources are the basic capital in achieving national development. In this case, the large number of young people in Indonesia is basically a potential as capital to achieve national development. However, it is unfortunate that the largest contributor to unemployment is youth (aged 15-24 years). Therefore, according to Okun's law, reducing youth unemployment is a strategic policy that must be pursued because reducing youth unemployment is expected to increase economic growth in Indonesia.

To overcome the problem of youth unemployment in particular and unemployment in general, it is necessary to identify the factors causing the unemployment problem. There are differences between countries and regions, so policies to address this problem will also vary according to the conditions of the region or country concerned.There are many factors that influence the occurrence of youth unemployment, a study conducted by Ahmad and Azim (2010) shows that individual characteristics affect the unemployment status of the young workforce in Pakistan; factors of age, gender, marital status, migration status, training, family head status, and education level have a significant effect on youth unemployment. In addition, socio-economic factors such as work experience, skill match, social network, family welfare also affect youth unemployment (Shita and Dereje 2018). The results of the research by Ashshiddiq and Nooraeni (2019) found that the place of residence also had a significant effect on the working status of the young population. (Saragih & Usman, 2021)

In this study, the data analyzed are secondary data for the period 2000-2021, the research variables studied as determinants of youth unemployment in Indonesia are economic and social variables. Economic variables are measured from GDP based on 2010 constant prices and the average minimum wage level, while the social variables are HDI and population dependency levels which are used as proxies to identify the presence of a demographic bonus in Indonesia. The estimation results are shown in the following table;

| Model | Unstandardized Coefficients | | Standardized Coefficients | t | Sig. | Correlations | | | Collinearity Statistics | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | B | Std. Error | Beta | | | Zero-order | Partial | Part | Tolerance | VIF |
| (Constant) | 82855845,783 | 10418842,186 | | 7,953 | 0,000 | | | | | |
| Y | -0,455 | 0,084 | -1,568 | -5,439 | 0,000 | -0,674 | -0,797 | -0,386 | 0,061 | 6,490 |
| UMP | -1,642 | 0,392 | -1,370 | -4,184 | 0,001 | -0,610 | -0,712 | -0,297 | 0,047 | 1,282 |
| IPM | -56680,861 | 64171,174 | -0,095 | -0,883 | 0,389 | -0,088 | -0,209 | -0,063 | 0,039 | 2,279 |
| ADR | -1369988,605 | 150338,939 | -2,411 | -9,113 | 0,000 | 0,409 | -0,911 | -0,647 | 0,072 | 3,888 |

a. Dependent Variable: PUM

***Table 1 Estimation Results of Youth Unemployment Determinants in Indonesia***

The estimation results show that youth unemployment in Indonesia is significantly influenced by the variables of GDP, UMP and ADK, while the HDI variable has no significant effect. Where the influence of the variables GDP, UMP and ADK `are negative; so that if these three variables increase it will be able to reduce the youth unemployment rate in Indonesia.

The significant effect of wages and the level of national income on the unemployment rate has been found by many previous researchers such as (Latifah, Rotinsulu, & Tumilaar, 2017); (Saragih & Usman, 2021) (Putra & Iskandar, 2018) and (Wardhana, Kharisma, & Ibrahim, 2019). As for the Human Development Index, which has no effect on the youth unemployment rate. This is because unemployment is not only caused by the quality of human resources, the number of university graduates who are still unemployed due to limited employment opportunities or maybe the existing jobs are not in accordance with the level of education and desires of young people so that youth and educated unemployment increase even though the HDI value increases. (Latifah, Rotinsulu, & Tumilaar, 2017) and (Yuniarti & Imaningsih, 2022).

The dependency rate variable is a proxy for the emergence of the demographic bonus era, the population dependency rate shows the comparison between the population with unproductive age and the productive age population. The increase in this productive age group will be a blessing and a demographic bonus if they are ready to work productively. Provided, they have proper health, education and adequate skills. Another important thing is the availability of jobs that are able to take advantage of their potential.

If the young population does not work or does not get a job so that they become unemployed, then the demographic bonus will not be able to be used properly, it can even cause problems in society such as causing social costs due to increased crime rates, dependence on family (burden for the family), self-esteem low, low social adaptation and trigger the occurrence of domestic violence. (Rizaty, 2021); (Rochmi, 2017); (Rochmi, 2017) (Zoraya & Wulandari, 2021) and (Suhaeri, 2021)

Based on the 2020 census data, Indonesia's dependency ratio is 41, this figure shows that Indonesia is in the best condition to achieve the demographic bonus. However, the fact is that the youth not in education, employment, and training (NEET) population in 2021 is 22.40 percent. This means that from 100 young people (15-24 years old) there are 22-23 people who are not working, not attending school, and not currently attending training. These young people do not carry out productive activities. The high number of young people without activities who are categorized as NEET, indicates a decrease in young age entrants as potential workers. There must be a policy to encourage school-age children to return to school and encourage other young people to take part in training so that their skills can be improved in preparation for entering the work world.

Data from the Central Statistics Agency shows that the open unemployment rate for young people in Indonesia is four times higher than the unemployment rate for adults. Youth unemployment in February 2022 was 17.08 percent, which means that out of 100 workers aged 15-24 years, 17 people are unemployed. The youth open unemployment rate in urban areas is higher than in rural areas. (Tasmilah, 2022). From these data and facts, it can be said that although the value of the population dependency ratio has indicated the coming of the demographic bonus era in Indonesia, this bonus has not been achieved properly. This is inseparable from the condition of Indonesia's young population who are still facing unemployment problems and their low quality and skills.

Unemployment is a serious problem that must be overcome. Various studies have found that young people are often perceived as having low experience and skills so that employers tend to prefer to hire high-skilled workers over young workers. Therefore, one way to prevent and reduce unemployment in the young age group is to increase the participation of the young age group in education (Dietrich, 2012), so that they have adequate skills to compete in the labor market.

## V. CONCLUSION

The contribution of the productive age population in development can be seen through their involvement in the labor market, with the high youth unemployment rate indicating that the productive age population in Indonesia has not been able to make an optimal contribution to achieving development goals; the realization of a prosperous, advanced, independent, just and prosperous Indonesian society as stated in the 2005-2025 RPJPN. The role of the productive age population in development in Indonesia is still constrained by the low quality of labor for the productive age population.

Policies are needed so that the young population can play a maximum role as a driving force for the economy and development of the nation. Several policy options that can be made by the government in collaboration with the private sector, non-governmental organizations and other related parties are:1) Increasing employment and business opportunities through increasing ease of doing business; 2) Increasing Business Capital Circulation by providing convenience in obtaining business capital so as to encourage young people's business interest. 3) Train and equip job seekers to be independent; 4) Provide certification training to job seekers according to the skill qualifications required by the world of work. 5) Improving the quality of education, especially vocational education needed by the job market. 6) Development of the Pre-Employment Card program, so that it is designed not only for skilling for the new workforce, but also for upskilling and reskilling for the old workforce so as to improve the quality of workers and encourage productivity in the economy which in the end will encourage the creation of new jobs and businesses in the economy.

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