

## Efforts to Reduce Educated Unemployment in ASEAN through the Work and Holiday Visa (WHV) Australia Program



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**ABSTRACT:** Quality education is considered a key factor in addressing the issue of high-educated unemployment in ASEAN countries. The Working Holiday Visa (WHV) Australia program is seen as one of the solutions aimed at reducing this unemployment rate. This research aims to analyze the impact of the WHV Australia program on reducing high-educated unemployment in ASEAN. Data were obtained from ASEAN countries participating in the WHV program, namely Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand, Vietnam, and Singapore. Through an analytical approach with data sourced from interviews, the findings of this research indicate that the WHV Australia program is relatively accessible to the ASEAN community. Furthermore, the program has the potential to enhance the economies of its participants through increased earnings in Australia compared to their home countries. Additionally, the program has a positive impact on reducing high-educated unemployment in ASEAN. These results provide significant implications for improving the implementation of the WHV Australia program and efforts to reduce high-educated unemployment in ASEAN countries.

**KEYWORDS:** Higher Education, Unemployment, WHV Australia, ASEAN.

### INTRODUCTION

Competent education is expected to keep pace with significant changes in the era. The better the level of education possessed by a generation, the better their country will be. Essentially, extensive and competent knowledge can provide many benefits (Kusumandari, 2013). By having a well-educated, competent, and broad-minded younger generation, it is hoped that the economic problems of a country can be addressed.

Educated groups are expected to develop themselves to enhance career maturity, which is also interpreted as the distance an individual can reach in cognitive, emotional, and other psychological development factors that will enhance their ability to make mature and realistic decisions (Maslikhah et al., 2019). High levels of education are expected to reduce unemployment rates in a country because educated individuals have a greater opportunity to find employment, thus avoiding unemployment due to their ample preparation for entering the workforce. The issue of highly-educated unemployment has become a serious problem in several Southeast Asian countries, including Indonesia. Indonesia ranks first in terms of highly-educated unemployment compared to other countries, as shown in Table 1 below.

**Table 1. Number of University Graduates Unemployed in ASEAN 2022**

Country	Number of University Graduates Unemployed	Unemployment Rate of University Graduates
Indonesia	673,485	5.59%
Singapore	9,100	2.80%
Malaysia	181,300	4.20%
Vietnam	215,000	2.90%
Thailand	142,000	2.10%

**Source:** Department of Statistics of the 5 aforementioned Countries, 2024 (processed by the Author)

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Australia is classified as a developed country that has largely solved its economic problems compared to Indonesia, a developing country that faces more economic challenges (Radjamin & Sudana, 2014). Australia has a Government to Government (G to G) program through agreements or mutual understanding, which also regulates reciprocal immigration facilitation agreements to support program implementation. In short, it aims to assist and collaborate with various countries to address economic issues. Through a program called the Work and Holiday Visa (WHV), this program aims to promote cultural exchange and serve as a platform for building relationships among people, particularly for young individuals to get to know and understand each other's cultures or customs, fostering peace (Zaini, 2023).

The WHV program has been implemented by the Australian government with several ASEAN countries gradually since 2009. Some of these ASEAN countries include Indonesia, Thailand, Singapore, Vietnam, and Malaysia. To qualify for the WHV program, there are three main requirements highlighted by the author: being aged between 18-30 years old, having graduated from a Diploma 3 or Bachelor's degree program, and having functional-level English language proficiency. Looking at the available data (Table 1), it is quite distressing to note the significant number of educated work-force in Indonesia. Fortunately, one of the requirements for the WHV program is having completed a certain level of education, equivalent to a Diploma III / Bachelor's degree. The WHV program is expected to be a solution to the issue of educated unemployment in ASEAN countries, including Indonesia. Additionally, if the younger generation can participate in this program, it is hoped that their income levels can be improved.

Based on the information provided, the author is interested in conducting research on "Efforts to Reduce Educated Unemployment in ASEAN through the Work and Holiday Visa Australia Program".

### Problem Statement

This research aims to analyze the impact of the WHV Australia program on reducing high-educated unemployment in ASEAN. This study will only compare the impact of the WHV Australia program on reducing high-educated unemployment (Diploma/Academy/University) from ASEAN countries that collaborate with Australia in the WHV (Working and Holiday Visa) program, namely Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand, Vietnam, and Singapore.

**Table 2. Comparison of Unemployment Rates in ASEAN with Several Other Countries in Asia in 2022**

ASEAN Countries	High-Educated Unemployment Rate	Others Asian Countries	High-Educated Unemployment Rate
Myanmar	0.78%	Qatar	0.30%
Cambodia	0.98%	Republic Uzbekistan	1.50%
Thailand	2.12%	Timor-Leste	2.00%
Laos	2.80%	Republic Kazakhstan	2.10%
Vietnam	2.97%	Israel	2.40%
Singapore	3.38%	Japan	2.50%
Malaysia	3.47%	Maldives	2.60%
Philippines	3.70%	South Korea	2.90%
Indonesia	4.10%	China	3.30%
Brunei Darussalam	6.63%	United Arab Emirates	4.10%
<b>Minimum</b>	<b>0.78%</b>	<b>Minimum</b>	<b>0.30%</b>
<b>Maximum</b>	<b>6.63%</b>	<b>Maximum</b>	<b>4.10%</b>
<b>Average</b>	<b>3.09%</b>	<b>Average</b>	<b>2.37%</b>

Source: Worl Bank, 2024 (processed by the author)

As known, until now, ASEAN countries are still classified as developing countries except Singapore. ASEAN is the designation for a combination of several countries in Southeast Asia, consisting of Indonesia, Thailand, the Philippines, Malaysia, Singapore, Brunei Darussalam, Vietnam, Laos, Myanmar, and Cambodia (Purwandoko & Sasmini, 2012). A nation's development status is often gauged by the welfare of its population, which manifests through several key indicators: health status, education level, and income level (Rahmat, 2021) (Barrot, 2023). Income, in particular, is intricately linked with unemployment rates. As the unemployment rate increases, so does the denominator in the income calculation, resulting in a comparatively lower income level.

Looking at the unemployment situation in ASEAN, especially for highly-educated unemployment with an average value of 3.09 percent, it is still considered relatively high compared to some other countries in Asia (2.37 percent), as presented in Table 2.

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## Concept of educated unemployment

In understanding the concept of unemployment, it transcends beyond being a mere economic indicator, shedding light on the intricate dynamics of the labor market. Different types of unemployment, each stemming from unique causal factors, warrant careful examination (Sukirno, 2008).

For instance, frictional unemployment arises from spatial and temporal disparities between labor supply and demand, highlighting the transitional nature of job searches. Conversely, structural unemployment underscores the transformative essence of economic progress, necessitating adaptation amidst shifts in industry roles. Seasonal unemployment mirrors economic cycles, with fluctuations in job availability tethered to prevailing economic conditions. Cyclical unemployment, extending this pattern over longer periods, reflects shifts in economic sentiment influencing labor demand. Technological unemployment, a consequence of rapid advancements, reshapes job landscapes, occasionally displacing workers. Furthermore, unemployment due to lack of aggregate demand accentuates the importance of educational initiatives amid economic downturns (Budiarty, 2019).

Within this intricate ecosystem of labor market dynamics lies the phenomenon of educated unemployment, wherein individuals with advanced education levels face joblessness despite their qualifications (Anjarwati & Juliprijanto, 2021). Rooted in a myriad of factors, including labor market imbalances, closed recruitment networks, perceived deficiencies in university education, and mismatched employment expectations, educated unemployment poses a significant challenge. Yet, its prevalence varies across nations, with stronger economies typically exhibiting lower rates due to enhanced job prospects for educated individuals (Setiawan, 2010).

## Exploring the WHV Program's

The Work and Holiday Visa (WHV) program, initiated by the Australian government in collaboration with various nations, serves as a platform for fostering cross-cultural exchanges, particularly targeting the youth demographic. Commencing in 1975, the program's scope has steadily expanded over the years, with initial partnerships with countries like the United Kingdom, Ireland, and Canada evolving into collaborations with 44 nations by June 2023 (figure 1), including ASEAN members such as Indonesia, Singapore, Vietnam, Thailand, and Malaysia. This expansion reflects both growing awareness within the Australian community and evolving labor market needs, leading to annual adjustments in quotas allocated to participating countries.

Accessing information about the WHV Program typically relies on several key sources, each offering unique insights and assistance. Official government websites stand as primary repositories of program details, providing comprehensive information on eligibility criteria, application procedures, and visa requirements. Additionally, consular offices or embassies of host countries offer valuable support and guidance to prospective applicants. Online forums and social media platforms further supplement information sharing, allowing past participants to offer advice and share experiences. Furthermore, independent websites offer detailed guides and tips to navigate the application process effectively.

The WHV program enables visa holders to reside and work in the host country for a predetermined duration, significantly impacting their income prospects. Key factors influencing participants' earnings include minimum wage standards, job availability, cost of living, working hours, and the chosen field of work. Notably, Australia boasts one of the world's highest minimum wage rates, with variations based on industry and skill levels. Coupled with its relatively high GDP per capita, this underscores the potential for favorable income prospects for WHV participants compared to their home countries.

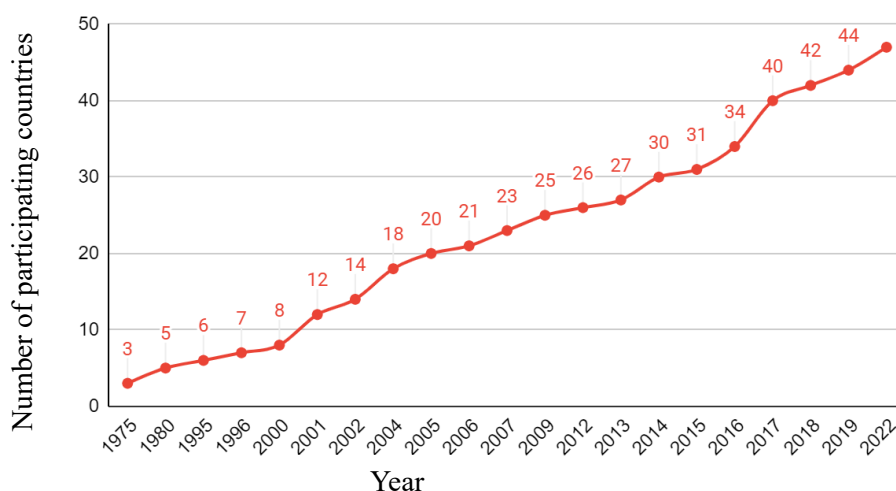


Figure 1. Accumulation of the number of participating countries in the WHV Australia program each year (1975-2022)

Source: Australian Immigration Working and Holiday visa (processed by the Author)

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The relationship between the WHV program and educated unemployment presents a nuanced interplay influenced by contextual factors and policy frameworks. While the program offers avenues for skilled individuals to gain valuable international work experience and potentially secure better-paying jobs, its impact on addressing educated unemployment varies across different national contexts. Nevertheless, the WHV Australia program is widely regarded as a valuable opportunity for educated unemployed individuals to enhance their skills, broaden their professional networks, and potentially secure employment opportunities commensurate with their qualifications, thereby contributing to the reduction of overall unemployment rates.

### ASEAN Participation in the WHV Australia Program: Collaboration and Nuances

The ASEAN bloc plays a significant role in the WHV Australia program, showcasing the collaboration between Australia and Southeast Asian nations. Comprising 10 member countries, ASEAN fosters cooperation to address regional challenges and promote mutual growth. Australia's partnerships with ASEAN nations extend to the WHV program, facilitating cultural exchange and workforce participation.

**Table 3. WHV Quota for Each ASEAN Country in 2023**

Origin Country	WHV Quota	Start Dates
Indonesia	4,612	2009
Malaysia	1,100	2014
Singapore	2,500	2017
Thailand	2,000	2005
Vietnam	1,500	2018

**Source:** Australian Immigration Working and Holiday visa

Among the ASEAN participants in the program are Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam, each with varying quotas and start dates (Table 3). For instance, Indonesia commenced its collaboration in 2019 with a quota of 4,612, while Malaysia initiated its program in 2014 with 1,100 slots allocated. The nuances of the WHV program differ among ASEAN countries and other participants, encompassing eligibility criteria, visa duration, and program specifics. While some ASEAN nations extend WHV opportunities to specific countries beyond the region, external countries like Australia, New Zealand, Canada, and Japan also maintain their tailored WHV initiatives, reflecting diverse engagement frameworks.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study employs a qualitative research design, which prioritizes a naturalistic and objective approach, reflecting the conditions observed in the field. By avoiding manipulation, this methodology facilitates a thorough analysis and inductive thinking processes, allowing for an exploration of the nuanced relationship between scientifically observed phenomena (Arifin, 2012).

The subjects of inquiry in this research are the participants of the WHV Australia program originating from ASEAN countries, including Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam. The primary objective is to investigate the program's efficacy in mitigating educated unemployment within these nations.

Data collection is achieved through interviews with key informants, specifically WHV holders from the aforementioned ASEAN countries who have collaborated with the Australian government. Each country is represented by two informants, offering diverse perspectives and comprehensive insights into their respective nations' experiences with the program.

Qualitative data, comprised of words and sentences, form the foundation for analysis, focusing on various aspects such as preferences, behaviors, motivations, and attitudes. The analysis employs a data reduction method, involving the simplification, categorization, and elimination of unnecessary data to distill meaningful insights and facilitate conclusive conclusions (Rezki, 2020). The process flow of data analysis is depicted in Figure 2. This approach ensures a systematic examination of the collected data, facilitating a comprehensive understanding of the WHV Australia program's impact on educated unemployment in ASEAN countries.

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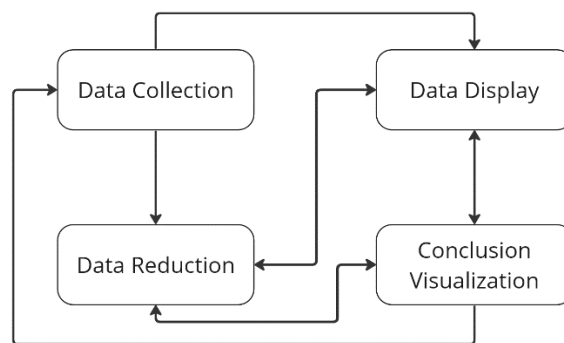


Figure 2. Flow of Interview Data Analysis

### RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This study provides an in-depth analysis of various aspects related to the Working and Holiday Visa (WHV) program from ASEAN countries to Australia.

Firstly, it describes the informants' profiles, including their educational backgrounds, previous employment status, and sources of living costs. Additionally, it outlines their goals and motivations for participating in the WHV program, categorized by country, along with the ease of access to information about the program. Furthermore, the section analyzes the impact of the WHV program on the economies of participants' home countries, emphasizing the significance of income earned during the program and its potential long-term effects.

Lastly, it investigates the program's influence on reducing educated unemployment in ASEAN countries, examining agreement and disagreement among informants and providing statistical data to support the analysis. Through a comprehensive exploration of these key areas, this section aims to shed light on the multifaceted implications of the WHV program in the ASEAN region.

#### Description of informants

In this study, we engage with key informants who are participants of the Working and Holiday Visa (WHV) program from ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) countries, including Indonesia, Singapore, Malaysia, Vietnam, and Thailand. The data collection method primarily involves interviews with these key informants. The total number of informants in this study is 13, with 2 individuals per country, except for Indonesia, which has 5 informants (Table 4).

Table 4. Number of Key Informants

Country	Numbers of Informants
Indonesia	5
Malaysia	2
Vietnam	2
Thailand	2
Singapore	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>13</b>

Source: Research Findings, processed by the author

Reviewed from an educational perspective, the informants come from diverse backgrounds, as mandated by the WHV Australia program requirements. They are required to hold a minimum equivalent education of Diploma, Bachelor's, or Master's degree, alongside functional English language proficiency. This educational prerequisite ensures that participants possess the necessary skills and qualifications to engage in the Australian workforce during their WHV program.

Table 5. Percentage of informants based on employment status before participating in the WHV Australia program

Country	Has been Employed Before Joining the WHV Australia Program		
	Employed	Unemployed	Employment Rasio
Malaysia	2	0	100%
Singapore	2	0	100%

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Vietnam	2	0	100%
Thailand	2	0	100%
Indonesia	3	2	60%
<b>Total</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>85%</b>

**Source:** Research Results, processed by the author

Considering their previous work experience, the majority of informants were already employed before joining the WHV Australia program. Specifically, 85 percent of the informants were previously employed, indicating a strong labor market attachment among participants (Table 5). However, it's notable that a portion of informants from Indonesia (2 out of 5) were previously unemployed before participating in the WHV Australia program, suggesting diverse employment backgrounds among participants.

Analyzing the types of occupations held by informants before joining the WHV Australia program reveals a varied spectrum of roles, including private sector employees, accountants, teachers, and even unemployed individuals. This diversity underscores the heterogeneous nature of the participant pool and highlights the broad range of skills and experiences they bring to the program.

Moreover, the initial financial requirement of AUD 5,000 serves as a crucial aspect of the WHV Australia program. This prerequisite ensures that participants have the financial means to support themselves upon arrival in Australia. The majority of informants met this requirement through personal savings (76.9 percent), while others received financial support from their parents (7.7 percent) or resorted to bank loans (7.7 percent). Understanding the diverse sources of funding sheds light on the participants' financial backgrounds and underscores their commitment to participating in the WHV program.

Furthermore, in terms of age, the informants as holders of WHV Australia visas can be classified as young individuals, typically ranging from 18 to 30 years old. This aligns with the eligibility criteria outlined on the website of the Department of Home Affairs Australia's Immigration and Citizenship ([www.immi.homeaffairs.gov.au](http://www.immi.homeaffairs.gov.au)).

Additionally, examining the goals and motivations of the informants provides insights into their aspirations for joining the WHV Australia program. Participants express diverse motivations, including self-development, income enhancement, gaining new experiences abroad, improving English language proficiency, exploring Australian culture, and meeting new people. The majority aim to enhance their work experience, with some expressing interest in exploring different work environments and industries. Others seek opportunities for personal growth and adventure, viewing the WHV program as a means to broaden their horizons and expand their professional networks.

Overall, the informants represent a diverse group of individuals from ASEAN countries, bringing a wealth of educational backgrounds, work experiences, financial resources, and personal aspirations to the WHV Australia program. Their participation enriches the cultural exchange between Australia and their home countries while providing them with valuable opportunities for personal and professional development.

### Information access for WHV Australia Program

Based on the research findings, it was found that access to and dissemination of information about the WHV Australia program varied across different ASEAN countries. Analysis of the research findings, as illustrated in Table 6, indicates that 92 percent of informants found access to information about the WHV Australia program highly accessible within their respective countries.

**Table 6. Access to Information about the WHV Australia Program**

Country	Access to information		Score
	Easy	Difficult	
Indonesia	5	0	100%
Malaysia	2	0	100%
Vietnam	1	1	50%
Thailand	2	0	100%
Singapore	2	0	100%
<b>Total</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>92%</b>

**Source:** Research Results, processed by the author

Specifically, countries such as Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand, and Singapore reported ease in accessing such information, with informants citing social media platforms and government websites as primary sources. Conversely, informants from Vietnam



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encountered challenges in accessing information due to limited dissemination through traditional media channels. This disparity in access is underscored by classifying countries into two categories: those with easy access (Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand) and those with difficult access (Vietnam).

**Table 7. WHV Australia Program Quotas in ASEAN 2020-2023**

Country	2020	2021	2022	2023
Indonesia	1,000	4,100	4,100	4,612
Malaysia	600	1,100	1,100	1,100
Vietnam	850	1,500	1,500	1,500
Thailand	1,250	2,000	2,000	2,000
Singapore	1,500	2,500	2,500	2,500
<b>Total</b>	<b>5,200</b>	<b>11,200</b>	<b>11,200</b>	<b>11,712</b>

**Source:** Australian Department of Home Affairs, processed by the author

The difference in access is further elucidated by examining the quotas of the WHV Australia program across ASEAN countries from 2020 to 2023 (Table 7), where countries with larger quotas generally exhibit greater accessibility to information. Despite facing obstacles such as incomplete or non-informative content, the majority of participants were able to overcome these challenges by seeking additional information from various sources or consulting individuals with prior experience in the WHV program.

### The impact of the WHV Program on participants' economies

The interview results indicate that the WHV Australia program has a significant impact on the participants' economies. Participants from Malaysia, Indonesia, Vietnam, and Thailand reported that the income earned during the WHV Australia program can improve their purchasing power and economic conditions because the wages earned in Australia tend to be higher compared to those received in their home countries, as shown in Table 8.

**Table 8. Participants' Responses Regarding the Impact of the WHV Australia Program on Economic Improvement**

Country	Improving Economy		Higher Salary	
	YES	SUFFICIENT	YES	SUFFICIENT
Indonesia	5	0	5	0
Malaysia	2	0	2	0
Vietnam	2	0	2	0
Thailand	2	0	2	0
Singapore	1	1	0	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>2</b>

**Source:** Research Results, processed by the author

The participants of the WHV program reported that they were able to accumulate significant savings during their stay in Australia, which they could then use for various purposes after the end of the WHV program. These purposes include investments, funding further education both in their home country and in Australia, and some even expressed intentions to use their savings to start a new business venture.

Based on the data presented in Table 8, it can be observed that only Singapore has a different response compared to other countries regarding the impact of the WHV program on increasing participants' economy through high wages. The informants from Singapore reported that the income they earned did not significantly impact their economic improvement. However, with the wages they received, they felt it was sufficient to meet their daily needs, especially since wages in Australia are paid once a week.

This sentiment from Singaporean informants, expressing that the WHV program does not significantly impact their economy through income earned, is understandable when considering the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per capita of the participating ASEAN countries in the WHV program, as shown in Table 9.

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**Table 9. GDP Per Capita of Participating Countries in the WHV Program from ASEAN 2020-2022 (USD)**

Country	2020	2021	2022	Rata-rata
Singapore	61,274	77,710	82,808	73,931
Malaysia	10,164	11,135	11,993	11,097
Thailand	7,002	7,061	6,910	6,991
Indonesia	3,896	4,334	4,788	4,339
Vietnam	3,586	3,756	4,164	3,835
Australia	51,868	60,697	65,100	59,222

Source: World Bank, 2024

Based on the GDP per capita of ASEAN countries in Table 9, it's evident that Singapore is the country with the highest per capita income during 2020-2022 compared to other ASEAN countries. Even when compared to Australia itself, the destination country of the WHV program, Singapore's per capita income is still higher. The average per capita income of Singapore from 2020-2022 reached USD 73,931, while Australia's was only USD 59,222. Based on this fact, it is not surprising that informants from Singapore reported that the WHV program did not significantly impact their economic improvement through income earned in Australia.

In addition to the income earned during their stay in Australia, the impact of the WHV program on participants' economies also extends to their long-term plans. Some participants plan to use the experience and savings they gained during the WHV program in Australia to pursue further studies in Australia or in their home country. They view investing in education as an important step to enhance their career prospects and social mobility in the future. Informants from Singapore also plan to use the experience and skills they acquired to seek better employment opportunities or start their own businesses upon returning to Singapore. This means that the WHV Australia program provides participants with opportunities to improve their economic conditions and enhance their social mobility through access to higher income, better education, and career prospects.

### The impact of WHV Program on educated unemployment

Based on the interviews conducted, it was found that 85 percent of informants reported that the WHV Australia program could help reduce the level of educated unemployment in their respective countries, as presented in Table 10.

**Table 10. Participants' responses to the impact of the WHV Australia Program in reducing educated unemployment in ASEAN**

Country	Reduce educated unemployment		
	AGREE	DISAGREE	AGREE RATIO
Indonesia	5	0	100%
Malaysia	2	0	100%
Vietnam	1	1	50%
Thailand	1	1	50%
Singapore	2	0	100%
<b>Total</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>85%</b>

Source: Research Results, processed by the author

If the research results presented in Table 10 are simplified into 2 categories based on countries that agree and disagree with the author's hypothesis stating that the WHV program can reduce educated unemployment in participant countries, the results can be seen in Table 11.

**Table 11. Category of participant responses to the impact of the WHV Australia Program in reducing educated unemployment in ASEAN**

Response Category	Country	Score
Agree	Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore	100%
Disagree	Thailand, Vietnam	50%
<b>Total</b>		<b>85%</b>

Source: Research Results, processed by the author



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The first category is the category that indicates agreement regarding the impact of the WHV Australia program on reducing the number of educated unemployed in their respective countries, comprising Indonesia, Malaysia, and Singapore. The informants believe that with higher wages, public interest in the WHV Australia program will also be high. Consequently, those who eventually become WHV Australia visa holders will reduce the number of educated unemployed in their country due to reduced competition in the job market in their home country. Furthermore, with the WHV Australia program, they are confident that it will impact skill enhancement, making it easier for them to find employment upon returning to their home country. Similarly, for those planning to save from their earnings through the WHV Australia program, some intend to use their savings to start a business in their home country, which allows them to avoid unemployment upon returning to their respective home countries.

The next category is the category that indicates disagreement regarding the impact of the WHV Australia program on reducing the number of educated unemployed in their respective countries, consisting of Thailand and Vietnam. While countries in the first group argue that the work experience gained from the WHV Australia program can help them find suitable jobs upon returning to their home country, those in the second category hold a different view. Specifically, informants from Thailand state that when the WHV Australia program ends, it is highly possible that participants will become unemployed upon returning to their home country. This is based on the high level of educated unemployment in their home country. Thus, completing the WHV program does not guarantee that they will immediately find suitable employment upon returning to their home country. The same sentiment is echoed by informants from Vietnam, stating that due to the quota limitations, they are not confident that there will be a significant impact from the WHV Australia program on reducing educated unemployment in their country.

**Table 12. WHV Australia Program Quota and Number of Educated Unemployed (Academic/Diploma/University) in ASEAN**

Country	Quota of WHV Australia Program*	Number of Educated Unemployed**	Quota Ratio
Indonesia	4,612	832,975	0.55%
Malaysia	1,100	137,000	0.80%
Vietnam	1,500	279,000	0.54%
Thailand	2,000	164,159	1.22%
Singapore	2,500	21,800	11.47%
Total	11,371	1,434,934	0.79%

\* Quota for the year 2023

\*\* 2022 (Indonesia, Malaysia), 2021 (Vietnam, Singapura, Thailand)

**Source:** Australian Department of Home Affairs and World Bank, processed by the author

Discussing of the relationship between the WHV Australia program quota and the number of educated unemployed in the home countries of WHV Australia program participants from ASEAN, we can observe the contribution of this program to the number of educated unemployed through the ratio between the total annual quota and the number of educated unemployed.

Based on the ratio of the WHV Australia program quota to the number of educated unemployed (Table 12), it is found that there is a very high difference between Singapore, which has a ratio of up to 11.47 percent, and other countries with ratios ranging from 0.54 percent to 1.22 percent. Considering this fact, it is reasonable that informants from Singapore stated that although the WHV Australia program does not significantly affect the economic conditions of its participants, the program can influence the reduction of the number of educated unemployed in their country. This is because the WHV Australia program quota can contribute to reducing the number of educated unemployed by up to 11.47 percent annually, assuming other factors remain constant (*ceteris paribus*). This condition is certainly different from other countries with low ratios between the WHV program quota and the number of educated unemployed.

Informants from Indonesia mentioned that the program is actually welcomed by Indonesian youth, especially those with a minimum Diploma education as a requirement to participate in the WHV Australia program. They are very confident that the program can reduce the number of educated unemployed (Academic/Diploma/University) in Indonesia, but they are aware that its impact is not significant. This lack of significant influence is based on the high number of educated unemployed in Indonesia, which is not proportional to the WHV Australia program quota each year.

Based on the data presented in Table 11, it is found that the number of educated unemployed in Indonesia in August 2022 reached 832 thousand people, while the highest quota (2023) for the WHV program provided by Australia to Indonesia was only 4,612. This means that the WHV Australia program only contributes 0.55 percent to the reduction of the number of educated unemployed in Indonesia each year, assuming other factors are held constant (*ceteris paribus*).

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### CONCLUSION

This study sheds light on the accessibility and impact of the Working Holiday Visa (WHV) Australia Program on participants from ASEAN countries. Through interviews and analysis, several key conclusions have emerged.

- a) Information about the WHV Australia program is relatively easily accessible to the people in ASEAN, especially in Malaysia, Indonesia, Thailand, and Singapore, through social media and government websites. However, in Vietnam, information access is still suboptimal, and there is a need to improve the dissemination of information about the WHV Australia program.
- b) The WHV Australia program has a positive impact on the economy of participants from the five ASEAN countries studied. Participants in this program can increase their purchasing power and make a significant contribution to their economy through high earnings during the program.
- c) The WHV Australia program is able to have a positive impact on reducing the number of educated unemployed in Indonesia and ASEAN.

### Policy Implications and Recommendations

Based on the findings from the interviews as explained in the preceding sub-section, there are several policy implications that can be drawn to enhance the benefits of the WHV Australia Program for participants from ASEAN countries as follows.

- a) Enhanced dissemination of information  
There is a need for greater efforts from the government and related agencies to enhance the dissemination of information about the WHV Australia Program in various ASEAN countries. This can be achieved through more active information campaigns and collaboration with media and civil society organizations to raise awareness about the benefits of this program.
- b) Provision of additional support  
The Australian government and related agencies need to provide additional support to WHV program participants, especially in terms of providing information and support services during their stay in Australia. This may include providing more detailed guidelines on the application process and visa requirements, as well as access to social and healthcare support services during their stay in Australia.
- c) Enhanced regional cooperation  
Cooperation between ASEAN countries can also enhance the benefits of the WHV Australia Program for participants in this region. This can be achieved through the exchange of information and experiences among ASEAN member countries, as well as collaboration in identifying and addressing barriers that may hinder participant participation in this program.
- d) Development of support programs  
The Australian government can also develop additional support programs for WHV program participants, such as training and skill development programs designed specifically to strengthen their job skills and enhance the marketability of participants in the global job market.

By implementing these recommendations, it is hoped that the WHV Australia Program can provide greater benefits to participants in ASEAN and help reduce the level of educated unemployment in this region. This will support the economic and social development goals in ASEAN and strengthen the relationship between Australia and countries in this region through cooperation in the fields of education, culture, and economy.

### Future Research Directions

While this study offers valuable insights, there remain areas for further research to deepen our understanding of the impact and potential of the WHV Australia Program.

- a) Long-term Economic Impact  
Future research could explore the long-term economic effects of the WHV Australia Program on participants and their respective countries. This could involve analyzing post-program employment trajectories, entrepreneurial endeavors, and overall economic integration upon participants' return.
- b) Policy Evaluation  
Evaluation studies could assess the effectiveness of policy interventions aimed at enhancing the WHV Australia Program's accessibility and impact in ASEAN countries. By evaluating current policies and practices, policymakers can identify areas for improvement and refine program strategies accordingly.
- c) Cultural Exchange and Social Integration  
Investigating the cultural exchange aspects and social integration experiences of WHV program participants could offer valuable insights into the program's broader societal impacts. Understanding how participants engage with local communities and navigate cross-cultural interactions can enrich our understanding of the program's significance beyond economic factors.

## Efforts to Reduce Educated Unemployment in ASEAN through the Work and Holiday Visa (WHV) Australia Program

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