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The Effect of MSME Growth and Economic Growth on The Unemployment Rate in South Sulawesi

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A B S T R A C T

This study aims to analyze the influence of Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) growth and economic growth on the unemployment rate in South Sulawesi Prov-ince for the 2013–2023 period. The method used is a quanti-tative approach with multiple linear regression analysis, us-ing secondary data obtained from the Central Statistics Agency, DISKOPUKM, and related agencies. The results of the study show that both partially and simultaneously, the growth of MSMEs and economic growth do not have a sig-nificant effect on the unemployment rate. Although both in-dicate a negative relationship direction, the effect is not sta-tistically significant. This shows that unemployment in South Sulawesi is more influenced by other factors such as labor quality, technology adoption, and labor policies. This re-search shows the need to strengthen the capacity of human resources and policies that support the productivity of MSMEs in order to contribute more to labor absorption.

Keywords: *MSMEs, Economic Growth, Unemployment Rate*
JEL Classification Code: *E24, O47*

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INTRODUCTION

Unemployment is one of the structural challenges faced by developing countries, including Indonesia (Ardian et al., 2022). The high unemployment rate not only negatively impacts individual welfare, but also hinders macroe-conomic growth and exacerbates social inequality (Ardian et al., 2022). Ac-cording to Ikridah & Ramli, (2024) although South Sulawesi Province has great economic potential in the agriculture, fisheries, and creative industries sectors, it still faces a fairly high and fluctuating unemployment rate. This phenomenon shows an imbalance between economic growth and job availa-bility, raising questions about the effectiveness of regional development in creating inclusive job opportunities.

Theoretically, positive economic growth is expected to be able to in-crease labor demand and reduce unemployment (Widia & Samsuddin, 2025). However, not all economic growth has a significant labor absorption effect, especially if it is driven by capital-intensive sectors that contribute minimally to job creation (Efrianti et al., 2021). Therefore, it is important to review the eco-nomic sectors that can contribute directly to the reduction of unemployment, such as micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs).

The theory put forward by Raja Kiswandi et al., (2023), MSMEs in gen-eral are the main actors of economic activities, the main source of employ-ment, drivers of local economic growth and innovation, and contribute to na-tional economic growth. Its development in trade, agriculture, and creative in-dustries shows a great capacity in opening up job opportunities and empower-ing local communities (Vera Maria et al., 2024). In addition, MSMEs also play a role in improving skills through training, technological innovation, and coop-eration with educational institutions so that they can improve the quality of human resources and business competitiveness (Indah Monalisa et al., 2025). However, the contribution of MSMEs to reducing unemployment has not been optimal due to structural constraints such as limited access to financing, low managerial literacy, and lack of sustainable policy support (Nugraha & Sofiati, 2025).

In addition, there is a gap between the qualifications of workers and the demands of companies, which leads to many higher education graduates be-ing unemployed because their skills do not meet market demand. In this con-text, MSMEs can provide a more adaptive platform for job training, allowing them to hire people with diverse educational backgrounds and skills.

In addition, the development of digitalization has opened up new opportunities for Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) to expand market reach and create jobs in the context of the digital economy. Various e-commerce platforms, digital financial services, and social media marketing strategies contribute to the ability of MSMEs to survive and thrive, especially amid challenges such as the COVID-19 pandemic. Therefore, digital transformation can act as a catalyst for MSMEs to play a more active role in ef-forts to reduce the unemployment rate.

Social and demographic factors, such as urbanization and the rapid growth of the working-age population, also play a role in influencing the un-employment rate. The migration of people from rural areas to cities in search of better work often leads to overemployment in the informal sector, thus in-creasing vulnerability to undetected unemployment.

Policies implemented by local governments to support Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) play an important role in reducing the unem-ployment rate. Business incubation programs, the provision of microcredit, and training in management and digitalization can increase the competitive-ness of MSMEs,

allowing them to better absorb the local workforce. Without sustained policy support, MSMEs are at risk of stagnation and may fail to con-tribute optimally to reducing the unemployment rate.

In addition, advances in automation technology in the industrial sector present new challenges for the world of employment. While economic growth may increase thanks to efficiency in production, the impact on employment is potentially negative, given that many jobs are being replaced by machines and digital systems. This situation highlights the importance of transforming workers' skills so that they can adapt to the technological changes that are taking place.

(MSMEs) on unemployment does not occur instantly but rather takes time to adapt. The increase in the number of MSMEs after the pandemic re-flects the economic resilience of the community, but it is not fully in line with the improvement in the quality of economic growth in the region. Therefore, more in-depth research is needed on the effectiveness of MSMEs' contribu-tion to job creation compared to other formal sectors.

Economic growth itself, according to Simon Kuznets, is a continuous increase in a country's ability to offer various economic facilities to its people (Sari et al., 2025). This indicator reflects the development of economic activi-ties that are able to

Table 1.
MSME Growth, Economic Growth, and Unemployment Rate in 2014 – 2023 South Sulawesi

Year	Growth MSMEs (%)	Economic Growth (%)	Unemployment Rate (%)
2014	13,70	7,53	5,10
2015	6,82	7,19	5,95
2016	13,73	7,42	4,80
2017	6,82	7,21	5,61
2018	6,82	7,04	4,94
2019	6,85	6,91	4,62
2020	14,04	0,71	6,31
2021	14,26	4,64	5,72
2022	14,42	5,10	4,51
2023	14,43	4,51	4,33

Based on data from 2014–2023, the growth of MSMEs in South Sula-wesi has increased significantly, especially after the pandemic, reaching 14.43% in 2023. However, regional economic growth actually showed a downward trend, especially in 2020 when the pandemic hit, although it began to recover in the following years. Meanwhile, the unemployment rate soared in 2020 (6.31%) but declined again to 4.33% in 2023. This condition shows that there is a dynamic relationship between the three variables that is not fully understood.

This trend shows that the impact of Micro, Small, and Medium Enter-prises

encourage an increase in income, improve people's living standards, and reduce the unemployment rate (Miftaqhul Adhilla et al., 2025). However, the findings of previous studies show mixed results: several studies have found a positive influence of economic growth on declining unemployment (Raja Kiswandi et al., 2023). While other studies found the opposite rela-tionship (Nasrun et al., 2022).

The difference in research results can be explained through differences in economic structures in each region. In regions with a labor-intensive eco-nomic base, economic growth tends to contribute to a decline in the unem-ployment rate.

In contrast, in capital-intensive industry-oriented regions, eco-nomic growth does not always go hand in hand with increased job opportuni-ties. Therefore, it is relevant for further analysis in the context of South Sula-wesi, which has a diverse economic structure.

In terms of unemployment, the classic theory put forward by Adam Smith and David Ricardo states that population growth can increase the un-employment rate if it is not balanced with employment growth (Efendi & Ahmad Wira, 2024). Unemployment is open as a working-age population who is not working, but has the ability, willingness, and active search for work in a certain period (Husniyah et al., 2022). Other forms such as partial, frictional, and structural unemployment show the complexity of employment issues that require an appropriate policy approach (Nasution, 2024).

Therefore, efforts to reduce unemployment cannot rely only on econom-ic growth, but must be supported by development policies that focus on job creation, improving the quality of the workforce, and strengthening micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) as a community-oriented economic pillar. Without such integrated measures, the risk of rising structural unem-ployment will remain a threat, although regional economic growth is showing a positive trend.

This study aims to analyze the influence of MSME growth and economic growth on the unemployment rate in South Sulawesi. This research is ex-pected to contribute to formulating more targeted development policies, by encouraging inclusive economic growth based on sectors that are able to ab-sorb labor optimally.

Based on the above frame of thought scheme, the following hypothesis is formulated:

H1: There is a significant influence between MSME Growth (X1) on the Unemployment Rate in South Sulawesi Province.

H2: There is a significant influence between Economic Growth (X2) on the Unemployment Rate in South Sulawesi Province.

(H3): There is a simultaneous significant influence between MSME Growth (X1) and Economic Growth (X2) on the Unemployment Rate in South Sulawesi Province.

METHODOLOGY

Types of Research

This study uses a quantitative approach with a type of analytical descrip-tive research. This study aims to analyze the influence of independent varia-bles, namely MSME Growth and Economic Growth on dependent variables, namely Unemployment Rate, in South Sulawesi Province.

Location and Time of Research

This research was carried out in South Sulawesi Province, with an observation

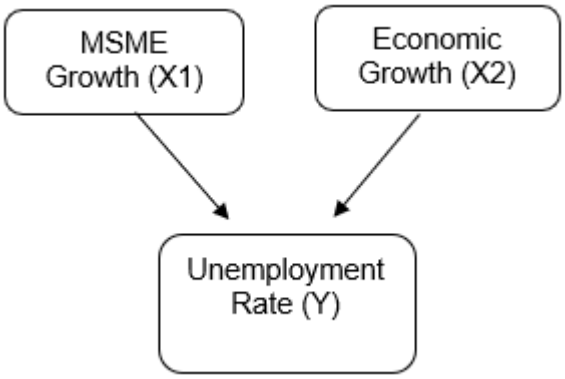


Figure 1.
Conceptual Framework

period from 2014 to 2023. The selection of the period was based on the available data related to the variables studied.

Population and sample

The population in this study is all districts/cities in South Sulawesi Prov-ince. This study uses panel data (cross-sectional time series), where the data used covers 24 districts/cities in South Sulawesi with a time period of 2014 to 2023.

Types and data sources

The data used in this study consisted of secondary data obtained from various official sources. The main sources included the Central Statistics Agency (BPS) of South Sulawesi Province, the South Sulawesi Office of Cooperatives and SMEs (DISKOPUKM), as well as other related government institutions that provide information on MSME growth, economic growth, and unemployment rates. The data were collected from BPS annual reports, provincial government publications, and other relevant agency databases to ensure the accuracy and reliability of the information used in the analysis.

Data Analysis Methods

This study uses multiple linear regression analysis methods, to show the extent of the influence of MSME Growth and Economic Growth on the Un-employment Rate in South Sulawesi. Multiple linear regression analysis was used in this study to determine the state of the dependent variable (Unem-ployment Rate) when independent variables (Growth n MSMEs and Econom-ic Growth) function as indicators.

$$Y_t = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X1_t + \beta_2 X2_t + e_t$$

where Y represents the unemployment rate, $X1$ denotes MSME growth, and $X2$ refers to economic growth. The term β_0 stands for the constant, while β_1 and β_2 are the regression coefficients that measure the influence of MSME growth and economic growth on the unemployment rate. The variable t indicates the time period, which in this study covers the years 2014 to 2023, representing a time series of ten years. Lastly, e_t refers to the error term, which captures the influence of other factors not included in the model.

Several data analysis techniques were used in this study, including clas-sical assumption tests such as autocorrelation, heteroscedasticity, multicollin-earity, and normality tests. To find the correlation of variable ar ant, multiple linear regression analysis is also used. Hypothesis tests, which include deter-mination coefficient tests as well as t-tests and F-tests, are used to test the significance of the research model. The data analysis process is carried out with the help of IBM SPSS 25 software.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Classic Assumption Test

Based on the results shown in Table 2 using the Kolmogorov-Smirnov method, the Asymp. Significance (Sig. 2-tailed) value for all variables is 0.200, which is greater than 0.05. Therefore, it can be concluded that the data are normally distributed.

Furthermore, based on the output of the Coefficients table (Table 3), the VIF values for MSME Growth and Economic Growth are both 1.387. Since these VIF values are less than 10, it can be concluded that all variables do not experience symptoms of multicollinearity.

In addition, Table 4 shows that the significance value between MSME Growth and the Unstandardized Residual is 0.359, while the significance value between Economic Growth and the Unstandardized Residual is 0.446. Because both significance values are greater than 0.05, it can be concluded that this regression model is free from heteroscedasticity problems.

Finally, based on the results of the Runs Test output, the Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed) value is 1.000, which exceeds the threshold of 0.05. This indicates that the data

Table 2.
Normality Test

One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test		
		Unstandardized Residual
N		10
Normal Parameters[a,b]	Mean	0.0000
	Std. Deviation	0.5487
Most Extreme Differences	Absolute	0.184
	Positive	0.151
	Negative	-0.184
Test Statistic		0.184
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)		0.200[c,d]

Table 3.
Multicollinearity Test

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
	B	Std. Error	Beta			Tolerance	VIF
1 (Constant)	7.404	1.229		6.026	0.001		
MSME Growth	-0.095	0.065	-0.536	-1.461	0.187	0.721	1.387
Economic Growth	-0.191	0.113	-0.619	-1.685	0.136	0.721	1.387

Table 4.
Heteroscedasticity Test

			Unstandardized Residual	MSME Growth	Economic Growth
Spearman's rho	Unstandardized Residual	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	-.325	0.273
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	0.359	0.446
		N	10	10	10
	MSME Growth	Correlation Coefficient	-0.325	1.000	-0.607
		Sig. (2-tailed)	0.359	.	0.063
		N	10	10	10
	Economic Growth	Correlation Coefficient	0.273	-0.607	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	0.446	0.063	.
		N	10	10	10

used are quite random, showing no auto-correlation problems in the analyzed data.

Multiple Linear Regression Test

The results of the multiple linear regression analysis presented in Table 3 show the characteristics of each variable as follows.

The constant value of 7.404 indicates that if the MSME Growth variable ($X1$) and Economic Growth variable ($X2$) are both equal to zero (X = 0), the Unemployment Rate is estimated to be 740.4%. This represents the baseline level of unemployment when no influence from the independent variables is present.

The β_1 coefficient of 0.095 indicates that for every 1% increase in MSME Growth, the Unemployment Rate decreases by 9.5%. This suggests that the development of MSMEs contributes significantly to reducing unemployment levels.

Meanwhile, the β_2 coefficient of 0.191 shows that for every 1% increase in Economic Growth, the Unemployment Rate decreases by 19.1%. This means that overall economic growth has a stronger negative effect on unemployment, highlighting its crucial role in improving labor market conditions.

Correlation Test (R) and Coefficient Determination (R2)

The results of the analysis showed that the R value was 0.566, which indicates a fairly strong relationship between the variables of MSME Growth (X1) and Economic Growth (X2) and the Unemployment Rate (Y), because the correlation value was in the range of 0.50-1.

In addition, the Adjusted R Square value obtained was 0.126, which shows that 12.6% variation in the dependent variable (Unemployment Rate) can be ex-plained by independent variables, namely MSME Growth and Economic Growth. Thus, the influence of independent variables on dependent variables reached 12.6%, while the remaining 87.4% was influenced by other factors outside of this study model.

Partial Test (t-test)

The impact of MSME Growth (X1) can be seen from a smaller t-count value compared to the t-table (1.461 < 1.894) and a significance value of 0.187 which exceeds 0.05. Therefore, H0 is accepted and H1 is rejected, which indi-cates that the growth of MSMEs does not have a significant effect on the Unem-ployment Rate (Y).

Table 6.
Multiple Correlation (R) and Coefficient Determination Test (R2)

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	0.566[a]	0.320	0.126	0.62213

Table 7.
T-Test Result

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
MSME Growth	-0.095	0.065	-0.536	-1.461	0.187
Economic Growth	-0.191	0.113	-0.619	-1.685	0.136

Meanwhile, the influence of Economic Pert (X2) is shown by the t-calculated value that is smaller than the t-table (1.685 < 1.894) with a significance value of 0.136 which is greater than 0.05. This means that H0 is accepted and H2 is rejected, so that Economic Growth does not have a significant impact on the Unemployment Rate (Y).

Simultaneous Test (F Test)

With an F-count value that is smaller than the F-table (1.646 < 4.347) and a signif-icant level of 0.259 greater than 0.05, H1 is rejected. This indicates that simultaneously, independent variables, namely MSME Growth and Economic Growth, do not have a sig-nificant effect on the dependent variable, namely the Unemployment Rate. This regres-sion model is considered less robust in explaining the relationship between independent and dependent variables at a 95% confidence level.

Table 7.
F-Test Result

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	1.274	2	0.637	1.646	0.259[b]
	Residual	2.709	7	0.387		
	Total	3.984	9			

The Effect of MSME Growth on the Unemployment Rate

Based on the results of the partial test, it is shown that the growth of MSMEs has a negative and insignificant effect on the Unemployment Rate. Lestari et al., (2020) said that strengthening MSMEs in various economic sectors is crucial by providing more business opportunities for MSMEs themselves. In ad-dition, the existence of MSMEs needs to be taken seriously in order to contribute optimally to building and strengthening the economic structure in Indonesia. In a study conducted by Husniyah et al., (2022) it is shown that the impact of MSME Growth has a positive and significant effect on the unemployment rate, this is not in line with this study. Despite still facing various challenges, MSMEs remain the main pillar in Indonesia's economic growth. With the right policies and support from various parties, MSMEs are expected to continue to develop and play a ma-jor role in reducing social inequality and encouraging national economic progress (Prihatiningsih & Susanti, 2023). The growth of MSMEs that has a negative and insignificant effect on the reduction of the unemployment rate can be caused by several factors, namely, weak competitiveness, limited capital, limited market ac-cess, and less supportive regulations and policies.

The Effect of Economic Growth on the Unemployment Rate

Based on the results of the partial test, it is shown that Economic Growth has a negative and insignificant effect on the Unemployment Rate. Economic growth that has a negative and insignificant effect is caused by several factors, namely, inclusive economic growth, automation and digitalization, and labor skills mismatch. According to Putri Safa Aulia Lubis & Sefianza Suhana Sinaga, (2023) economic growth is influenced by innovation, investment in human resource de-velopment, and technological advancements. However, in some situations, tech-nology-focused economic growth can drive automation and digitalization, which in turn reduces the demand for conventional labor, As a result the impact of eco-nomic growth on the unemployment rate becomes insignificant, especially in in-dustrial sectors that rely on advanced technology. This is in

line with research conducted by Rahman et al., (2024) that the impact of Economic Growth has a negative and insignificant effect on the Unemployment Rate. According to Safrina & Ratna, (2023) The increase in the production of goods and services compared to the previous year is an indicator that the economy is growing, which in turn shows the extent to which economic activity has evolved to generate more in-come or improve people's welfare and reduce the unemployment rate.

The Simultaneous Effect of MSME Growth and Economic Growth on the Unemployment Rate

Simultaneously, MSME Growth and Economic Growth had no significant effect on the Unemployment Rate, with the F-calculated value being smaller than the F-table (1,646 < 4,347). These results show that these factors only explain 12.6% of the variation in the Unemployment Rate in South Sulawesi, while the rest (87.4%) is influenced by other factors outside the model such as labor quality factors, labor policy, technology, and capital. The increase in the number of MSMEs and economic growth is not always directly proportional to a significant decrease in the unemployment rate. Factors such as labor quality, labor policies, and the level of technology adoption in the MSME sector also affect the effec-tiveness of economic growth in absorbing labor. MSMEs that do not have access to adequate technology and capital tend to have low productivity, so they are un-able to create a large number of jobs. In addition, inflexible labor policies and mismatches between labor skills and industrial needs can also be obstacles to re-ducing the unemployment rate despite economic growth (Nataliani br sitepu & Samri Juliati Nasution, 2023).

CONCLUSIONS

The results of the analysis of the discussion in this study show that, both partially and simultaneously, the influence of the growth of Micro, Small and Medium En-terprises (MSMEs) and economic growth have a negative and insignificant effect on the unemployment rate in South Sulawesi. Based on these findings, several recommendations can be made. First, the government and stakeholders need to improve the quality of the workforce through skills-based training and education to better suit the needs of industries and MSMEs, so as to effectively reduce the un-employment rate. In addition, policies are needed that support the development of MSMEs, not only in terms of quantity but also in increasing productivity, access to capital, and technology adoption, so that MSMEs can absorb more workforce. Further research is also needed, taking into account other dominant factors that affect the unemployment rate, such as labor policy, investment rates, and the role of the industrial sector in job creation. Local governments can strengthen business incubation programs and access to capital for MSMEs so that they can develop more competitively and create more jobs. In addition, labor policies need to be more flexible and in line with labor market dynamics to increase labor absorption and reduce the unemployment rate. With the implementation of more appropriate and strategic policies, both in the development of MSMEs and quality economic growth, it is hoped that the unemployment rate can be effectively and sustainably reduced in the future.

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