Research Article

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The Impact of Economics, Unemployment, and Minimum Wages on Poverty in Rembang

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Abstract

Poverty remains a complex development challenge in many regions in Indonesia, including Rembang Regency. This study aims to analyze the influence of economic growth, the open unemployment rate (TPT), and the minimum wage on the poverty rate in Rembang Regency during the 2011–2020 period. Using secondary data from the Central Statistics Agency (BPS), this study applies a multiple linear regression method supported by classical assumption tests and statistical tests (t-test and F-test) using Eviews 10 software. The analysis results indicate that economic growth and the open unemployment rate do not significantly influence the poverty rate. On the other hand, the minimum wage is proven to have a negative and significant effect, indicating that minimum wage increases contribute to poverty reduction. These findings highlight the importance of equitable wage policies as a strategic instrument in poverty alleviation, while also suggesting that economic growth alone is not inclusive enough to reach the most vulnerable groups. The implications of this research can be used as considerations for local governments in designing more targeted and effective policy interventions.

Keyword: Economic growth, open unemployment, minimum wage, poverty, Rembang Regency.

1. Introduction

Previous research showed that economic growth had no significant impact on poverty reduction in Rembang Regency from 2011 to 2020 (Farentina & Yuhan, 2022; Yusuf & Hayati, 2024). This finding indicates that the trickle-down effect mechanism, expected to spread the benefits of economic growth to the lowest levels of society, has not been functioning optimally in the region (Jaya, 2012). Economic growth during the study period tended to be concentrated in certain sectors and was not accompanied by an inclusive income distribution. This is supported by data showing that although economic growth reached 6.98% in 2017, the poverty rate remained relatively high, at around 18.35%. Therefore, high economic growth does not necessarily contribute to poverty reduction if it is not accompanied by effective equity policies (Goudie & Ladd, 1999).

Meanwhile, the open unemployment rate (TPT) also showed no significant impact on poverty (Pertiwi & Purnomo, 2022). This phenomenon can be explained by the employment structure in Rembang Regency, where the majority of the young workforce (aged 15 and above) still relies on family economic support, so unemployment does not directly lead to absolute poverty. Furthermore, the high proportion of informal workers and subsistence economic activities allows individuals statistically categorized as unemployed to maintain a livelihood. Statistics Indonesia (BPS) data shows that the highest unemployment rate occurred in 2016 at 6.1%, but this was not accompanied by a significant increase in poverty, thus strengthening the assumption that open unemployment in this region does not directly trigger an increase in poverty (Gozali et al., 2025, Habibi et al., 2024).

Conversely, the minimum wage has been shown to have a negative and significant impact on the poverty rate. Every Rp1,000 increase in the minimum wage has the potential to reduce the poverty rate by 0.0075 percentage points. This finding aligns with the theory that an adequate minimum wage can improve the purchasing power and welfare of low-income workers, particularly in the formal sector. The increase in the

minimum wage in Rembang Regency from Rp1,300,000 in 2016 to Rp1,802,000 in 2020 appears to have played a role in reducing economic pressure on poor households. These results align with previous research in East Java, which also confirmed that a progressive minimum wage can be an effective policy instrument in reducing structural poverty.

Overall, this study underscores that the poverty alleviation approach in Rembang Regency needs to strengthen wage policy and economic equity. Inclusive economic growth must be encouraged through programs that directly reach vulnerable groups, such as MSME development, skills training, and expanding market access. Meanwhile, the insignificant impact of the unemployment rate on poverty suggests the importance of a more holistic approach to measuring and addressing unemployment, including considering the presence of informal workers and non-standard employment conditions. These policy implications are expected to not only reduce poverty but also build long-term household economic resilience.

2. The Art of Research

Poverty is a multidimensional phenomenon that is not only seen in terms of income but also encompasses the inability to meet basic needs (Alkire & Santos, 2013; Zulkifli & Abidin, 2023), limited access to health and education services (Peters et al., 2008), and limited social participation (Damelang & Kloß, 2013). Theoretically, poverty is often described as a vicious circle of poverty, where low-income results in low savings and investment, which in turn limits productivity and income growth (Mosley & Verschoor, 2005; Sarmah, 2022). This theory emphasizes that poverty is structural and can be trapped without appropriate policy intervention. In addition to absolute poverty, measured by the inability to meet basic needs, relative poverty arises from unequal income distribution, while cultural and structural poverty are influenced by socio-cultural factors and unfavorable institutional arrangements (Moore, 2001; Walton, 2010). This understanding provides an important foundation for analyzing the factors influencing poverty at the regional level, such as in Rembang Regency.

In the context of the relationship between economic growth and poverty, the trickle-down effect theory (Škare & Družeta, 2016) assumes that the benefits of economic growth enjoyed by high-income groups will trickle down to lower-income groups through job creation and increased economic activity. However, the effectiveness of this theory is often questioned, especially in developing countries, where economic growth is not always inclusive. Previous studies have shown mixed results: some found a significant negative effect of economic growth on poverty (Garza-Rodriguez, 2018; Stephen & Simoen, 2013), while others reported an insignificant effect (Astuti & Lestari, 2018). This diversity indicates that the impact of economic growth on poverty is strongly influenced by contextual factors such as income distribution, economic structure, and the effectiveness of government policies.

The Open Unemployment Rate (TPT) is theoretically positively related to poverty, as unemployment results in the loss of a household's primary source of income (Utomo & Prajanti, 2022). However, this relationship is not always linear in empirical studies. Research in Indonesia, such as that conducted by Prima (2023), found that the TPT had a positive but insignificant effect on poverty in several districts in Yogyakarta. This is likely due to the presence of other economic factors, such as family support, informal employment, or social assistance programs. Thus, open unemployment may not directly reflect economic vulnerability if people have adequate survival strategies.

The minimum wage is a policy instrument aimed at ensuring a decent standard of living for workers. Theoretically, increasing the minimum wage is expected to reduce poverty by increasing the household income of low-wage workers (Burkhauser & Sabia, 2007). However, its impact on labor absorption is also a concern, as minimum wage increases could potentially reduce labor demand if not accompanied by increased productivity. Previous studies, such as those by Siti Balahmar (2024) in Sidoarjo Regency, found that the minimum wage significantly reduced poverty. These findings reinforce the role of the minimum wage as a fiscal policy tool that can directly impact the well-being of workers and their families, provided it is implemented in a manner that takes into account the productivity and capacity of the business sector.

3. Method

This study uses a quantitative approach with multiple linear regression analysis to examine the effect of independent variables on the dependent variable. The research design is explanatory, with secondary time series data from 2011 to 2020. Data were obtained from the Central Statistics Agency (BPS) of Rembang

Regency, covering four main variables: poverty rate (Y) as the dependent variable, and economic growth (X1), open unemployment rate (X2), and minimum wage (X3) as independent variables. The operational definitions and measurements of the variables are as follows: poverty rate is measured by the percentage of the poor population to the total population; economic growth is measured by the GRDP growth rate at constant prices in percent; the open unemployment rate (TPT) is the percentage of the workforce actively seeking work but not yet finding it; while the minimum wage is measured in nominal rupiah as determined by the local government. All data use annual units to maintain consistency in the analysis. The data analysis technique was carried out using Eviews 10 software. The analysis stage began with classical assumption tests, including the normality test (Jarque-Bera), linearity test (Ramsey RESET Test), multicollinearity test (Variance Inflation Factor), heteroscedasticity test (Breusch-Pagan-Godfrey), and autocorrelation test (Breusch-Godfrey). After the classical assumptions were met, the multiple linear regression model was estimated using the following equation:

$$Y=\alpha+\beta1X1+\beta2X2+\beta3X3+e \quad Y=\alpha+\beta1X1+\beta2X2+\beta3X3+e$$

Statistical tests were then conducted, including a t-test to test the significance of the partial effect of each independent variable, an F-test to test the significance of the simultaneous effect, and a coefficient of determination analysis (R^2 and Adjusted R^2) to measure the proportion of the dependent variable that can be explained by the independent variables. The validity and reliability of the study were maintained through the use of official data from the Central Statistics Agency (BPS) and the application of standard econometric procedures. However, this study has limitations in terms of the relatively small number of observations (10 years) and the limited scope of variables limited to macroeconomic factors, without including other specific social, demographic, or policy aspects that may also influence poverty in Rembang Regency.

4. Result

A. Multiple Linear Regression

Multiple linear regression analysis was conducted with the aim of measuring the strength between two or more variables and showing the relationship between the dependent variable (poverty level) and independent variables (economic growth, TPT, and minimum wage).

The results shown in table 1 show that the economic growth variable has a negative relationship, meaning that for every 1% increase in economic growth, the poverty rate will decrease by 0.083356%. And the results of the t-statistic test indicate that the variable X1 (Economic Growth) has no effect on the variable Y (Poverty Level). It can be concluded that the high economic growth in Rembang Regency has not been able to be distributed evenly to the poor, so that the poor have not felt the benefits as a whole to be able to change their standard of living for the better. This is certainly in line with the theory of Arthur Lewis's (1954) trickle-down effect theory which implies that economic growth will be followed in a vertical direction from the rich to the poor. The benefits of this economic growth will certainly be felt by the rich first and then later will be felt by the poor if these rich people can spend the results of the economic growth they feel, so that the effect of economic growth on the poverty level is an indirect effect, so that the poverty level will change on a small or slow scale and only get a little benefit from economic growth.

Table 1. Multiple Linear Regression Results

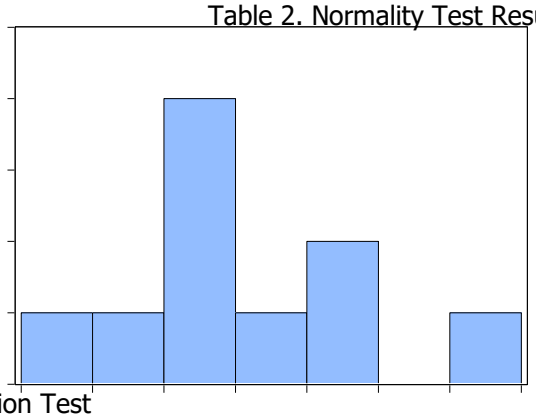
Dependent variable: Y				
Variable	Coefficient	Standard Error	T- Statistics	Probability
C	27,73828	6,955133	3,988174	0,0072
X1	-0,08336	0,283224	-0,294309	0,7784
X2	0,153002	0,637569	0,239977	0,8183
X3	-0,00753	0,002385	-3,158706	0,0196
Coefficient of Determination	0,897645	Average of Dependent Variable		17,61232
Adjusted Determination Coefficient	0,846468	S.D Dependent Variable		3,774055

Standard Error of Regression Model	1,060778	Akaike Information Criteria	3,245056
Mean of X and Y Based on Sample	6,751499	Criteria Schwarz	3,366091
Likelihood Ratio	-12,2253	Criteria Hannan Quinn	3,112282
F Statistic	17,53991	Durbin Watson Test	2,145834
F-Statistic Probability	0,002254	Average Weighting of Dep	17,78811

Based on the results of multiple linear regression calculations, it shows that the TPT (Open Unemployment Rate) variable has a positive relationship, meaning that every 1% increase in the TPT, the poverty rate will increase by 0.153002%. And the results of the t-statistic test calculation state that the X2 variable (Open Unemployment Rate) has no effect on the Y variable (Poverty Rate). It can be concluded that the high level of open unemployment in Rembang Regency has not been able to reduce the percentage of the poverty rate, this is because the increasing number of the workforce aged 15 years and over is still able to meet their living needs supported and still financed by their parents and does not yet have the skills or abilities from various experiences gained. For the workforce aged 40 years and over, they can meet their needs from assets and investments that they have collected and worked on when they were young and are smaller in number compared to unemployed people aged 15 years because they already have families and already have experience so that unemployment at this age has very little influence on poverty, so it is not detected by the t test. This supports the results of previous research conducted by Meti Astusi and Indri Lestari in 2018 entitled "Analysis of the Influence of Economic Growth Rate and Open Unemployment Rate on Poverty Levels in Kulonpogo, Bantul, Gunung Kidul, and Sleman Yogyakarta Regencies/Cities" in 2018 which stated that the open unemployment rate variable had a positive and insignificant effect on poverty levels.

Based on the results of multiple linear regression calculations, it shows that the minimum wage variable has a negative relationship, meaning that for every 1 rupiah increase in the minimum wage, the poverty rate will decrease by 0.007534 in rupiah units. And the results of the t-statistic test calculation state that the variable X3 (Minimum Wage) has a negative and significant effect on the variable Y (Poverty Level). It can be concluded that the higher the minimum wage can reduce the poverty level. This is in line with research conducted by Rizki Dita A. in 2016 entitled "The Effect of Economic Growth, Minimum Wages, Education, and Unemployment Rates on Poverty Levels (Case Study of Districts/Cities in East Java in 2008-2013) which states that the minimum wage variable has a negative and significant effect on the poverty level.

Table 2. Normality Test Results



Series: Standardized Residuals
Sample 2011 2020
Observations 10

Mean	1.45e-15
Median	-0.178502
Maximum	1.779816
Minimum	-1.072929
Std. Dev.	0.866122
Skewness	0.738235
Kurtosis	2.858242
Jarque-Bera	0.916691
Probability	0.632329

B. Classical Assumption Test

- Normality Test

  The normality test was conducted to determine whether the data were normally distributed. If the JB probability value was above 0.05 or > 0.05, the residuals were normally distributed, and vice versa. The results shown in Table 2 indicate that the JB probability value was above 0.05, namely 0.632329, indicating a normal distribution of the data.

Table 3. Linearity Test Results

	Value	Df	Probability
T Statistics	0,081635	5	0,9381
F Statistics	0,006664	(1, 5)	0,9381
Likelihood Ratio	0,01332	1	0,9081

- Linearity Test
  The Ramsey Reset Test can be used to test linearity. If the f-statistic is greater than 0.05 (the alpha value), then there is no linearity problem, and vice versa. The results shown in Table 3 show a f-statistic of 0.9381, meaning 0.9381 > 0.05, thus meeting the linearity assumption.

Table 4. Multicollinearity Test Results

	Coefficient	Center
Variable	Variant	VIF
C	48,37387	NA
X1	0,080216	3,058109
X2	0,406494	4,998175
X3	5,69E-12	4,925986

- Multicollinearity Test
  The multicollinearity test was conducted to determine whether the regression model found a correlation between the independent variables. If the VIF value is below 10 or <10, then there is no multicollinearity problem. The results shown in Table 4 indicate that the multicollinearity test for the VIF values of the three variables: economic growth of 3.058109, the unemployment rate of 4.998175, and the minimum wage of 4.925986. Therefore, all variables do not have multicollinearity problems because the VIF values are below 10.
- Heteroscedasticity Test
  The heteroscedasticity test in this study uses the Breusch-Pagan-Godfrey test. The presence or absence of heteroscedasticity problems can be seen through the Obs*R-squared probability value which will be compared with the significance level. If the Obs*R-squared probability value is above 0.05 or > 0.05, then there is no heteroscedasticity problem. The results shown in Table 5 show that the heteroscedasticity test for the chi-square (2) probability value is 0.1138, which means it is above 0.05, so there is no heteroscedasticity problem.

Table 5. Heteroscedasticity Test

F Statistic	2,69137	Prob. F(2,7)	0,1358
Obs*R-Kuadrat	4,34697	Chi Square Test Prob. (2)	0,1138
Explained in the SS Scale	1,45399	Chi-Square Test Prob. (2)	0,4634

- Autocorrelation Test
  In this autocorrelation test study, the Breusch-Godfrey test was used. It can be seen from the probability value of Obs*R-squared which must be greater than 0.05 (significance level) or can be seen from the Durbin Watson stat value above 2. The results shown in table 6 of the autocorrelation test calculation, the probability value of the chi square test (2) is 0.4790 and the Durbin Watson stat value is 1.707475 so it can be concluded that there is no autocorrelation problem.

Table 6. Autocorrelation Test Results

F Statistic	0,345237	Probability f(2,4)	0,7273
Obs*R Squared	1,472076	Prob. Uji Chi Kuadrat(2)	0,479

		Average of Dependent Variable	1,45E-15
		S.D Variable Dependent	0,866122
		Akaike Information Criteria	1,485817
		Criteria Schwarz	3,667368
		Criterian Hannan Quinn	3,286656
		Durbin Watson Test	1,707475
		Average Weighting of Dep	3,55E-16

C. Data Analysis and Hypothesis Testing

- T-Test

  T-test testing is carried out by looking at the probability value. If the probability ≤ α (0.05), the research hypothesis is accepted. The results of the t-statistic test as shown in table 7 can be seen that the variable X1 (Economic Growth) obtained a coefficient value of -0.083356 and a probability of 0.7784> 0.05, so it can be concluded that the variable X1 (Economic Growth) has no effect on the variable Y (Poverty Level). Meanwhile, for the variable X2 (Open Unemployment Rate), the coefficient value is 0.153002 and a probability of 0.8183>

  0.05, so it can be concluded that the variable X2 (Open Unemployment Rate) has no effect on the variable Y (Poverty Level). And finally, for variable X3 (Minimum Wage), the coefficient value is -0.007534 and the probability is 0.0196 < 0.05, so it can be concluded that variable X3 (Minimum Wage) has a negative and significant effect on variable Y (Poverty Level).

Table 7. Results of the T-Test for Research Data Analysis

Variable	Coefficient	Standard Error	T-Statistic	Probability
C	27,73828	6,955133	3,988174	0,0072
X1	-0,08336	0,283224	-0,294309	0,7784
X2	0,153002	0,637569	0,239977	0,8183
X3	-0,00753	0,002385	-3,158706	0,0196

- F-Test

  The F test was conducted to determine how much influence economic growth, TPT, and minimum wages simultaneously or jointly have on the poverty level. The results shown in table 8 for the F-Statistic probability value of 0.002254 < 0.05, it can be concluded that simultaneously or simultaneously variables X1 (Economic Growth), X2 (TPT) and X3 (Minimum Wage) have a significant effect on variable Y (Poverty Level).

Table 8. Results of the F-Test of Research Data Analysis

Coefficient of Determination	0,897645
Adjusted Determination Coefficient	0,846468
Standard Error of Regression Model	1,060778
Mean of X and Y Based on Sample	6,751499
Likelihood Ratio	-12,2253
F-Statistic	17,53991
F-Statistic Probability	0,002254

5. Discussion

The finding that economic growth had no significant impact on poverty reduction in Rembang Regency aligns with criticisms of the trickle-down effect theory, which is often considered irrelevant in the context of regional economic inequality. Economic growth in the region, despite showing increases in some periods, has not

been accompanied by an inclusive distribution of benefits. This indicates that Rembang's economic structure may remain elitist, with growth concentrated in certain sectors that absorb less local labor or are less connected to the livelihoods of the poor. Furthermore, there may be a missing link between macroeconomic growth and increased income for poor households, possibly caused by weak intersectoral linkages and limited access by the poor to productive resources.

Meanwhile, the insignificant open unemployment rate (TPT) in influencing poverty provides an interesting perspective on local employment dynamics. This phenomenon can be explained by several factors: first, the existence of underemployment or underemployment not recorded in the TPT data, where individuals work below standard hours or productivity levels; Second, the role of the informal economy and subsistence activities that support livelihoods even if a person is statistically unemployed in the labor force; and third, the existence of social and family support systems that prevent a household from falling directly into poverty even if one member is unemployed. These findings remind us that employment policies cannot solely focus on reducing open unemployment but must also consider job quality and social safety nets.

On the other hand, the negative and significant effect of the minimum wage on poverty strengthens the argument that labor price policy interventions can be an effective instrument for alleviating structural poverty. Minimum wage increases directly increase the real income of formal workers, which in turn increases purchasing power and reduces household economic vulnerability. However, these findings should be interpreted with caution, given that minimum wage coverage generally only applies to the formal sector. This implies that this policy may under-represent informal workers and the poor who are not tied to formal employment relationships. Therefore, the effectiveness of minimum wage policies needs to be supported by efforts to expand the coverage of protected workers and by supporting policies such as skills training and implementation monitoring.

Overall, the results of this study confirm the complex relationship between macroeconomic indicators and poverty at the regional level. High economic growth does not automatically solve poverty without redistributive policies and increased access for the poor to sources of growth. Similarly, a reduction in open unemployment does not necessarily alleviate poverty unless accompanied by improvements in job quality. Therefore, this study emphasizes the importance of an integrated policy approach, combining macroeconomic instruments (such as wages) with micro-interventions that directly address the roots of poverty, such as training programs, expanding access to capital, and strengthening community-based economic sectors. The limitations of this study, particularly in terms of the number of observations and variables analyzed, open up opportunities for further research that incorporates non-economic factors such as education, health, and institutional variables.

6. Conclusion

Based on the analysis, this study concludes that of the three variables tested, only the minimum wage had a negative and significant effect on the poverty rate in Rembang Regency during the 2011–2020 period. This indicates that minimum wage adjustment policies can be an effective tool in increasing the income of working households and reducing poverty. Meanwhile, economic growth and the open unemployment rate (TPT) did not show a significant effect, suggesting that the benefits of economic growth have not been distributed inclusively, and that unemployment in this region may not directly impact poverty due to other economic factors such as family support or informal employment.

This study has several limitations that should be acknowledged. First, the relatively small number of observations (10 years of annual data) may affect the statistical power and generalizability of the findings. Second, the variables used are limited to macroeconomic aspects, omitting non-economic factors such as education level, health access, infrastructure, or institutional variables that may also significantly influence poverty. Third, this study uses aggregate district data, thus failing to capture the diversity and dynamics of poverty at the village or community level. These limitations open up opportunities for further research with longer time periods, more comprehensive variables, and more in-depth analytical approaches, such as panel data regression with broader regional coverage.

The findings of this study offer several important implications, particularly for the formulation of development policies in Rembang Regency. First, the local government needs to periodically review and adjust the minimum wage, taking into account the need for a decent living, while strengthening oversight of its implementation to ensure it is truly felt by workers, especially in the formal sector. Second, for economic

growth to contribute to poverty reduction, policies are needed that promote equity through strengthening labor-intensive sectors, supporting MSMEs, and programs that ensure the integration of the poor into the economic value chain. Third, although the unemployment rate (TPT) is not statistically significant, efforts to create quality and sustainable jobs remain crucial, accompanied by skills training for the younger workforce and the development of a protected informal economy. Academically, this study strengthens the evidence that poverty is a multidimensional problem that requires an integrated policy approach that combines macroeconomic aspects with targeted micro-interventions.

Acknowledgments

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