



Indonesian Journal of Adult and Community Education

IJACE
Indonesian Journal of Adult and Community Education

Journal homepage: <https://ejournal.upi.edu/index.php/IJACE/index>

An Empirical Analysis of Unemployment, Human Development Index, and Economic Growth as Determinants of Poverty in West Java Province, 2023

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ABSTRACT	ARTICLE INFO
<p>This study aims to analyze the influence of the Open Unemployment Rate (OUR), Human Development Index (HDI), and Economic Growth on the poverty rate in regencies and cities of West Java Province in 2023. The research utilizes secondary data from the Central Bureau of Statistics (BPS) and employs multiple linear regression analysis. The results reveal that HDI has a significant negative effect on poverty, indicating that higher human development contributes to lower poverty rates. Conversely, economic growth shows a significant positive relationship with poverty, suggesting that non-inclusive economic growth can exacerbate poverty. Meanwhile, the open unemployment rate does not significantly affect poverty levels, implying that open unemployment is not always the primary determinant of poverty, particularly in contexts where the informal sector remains active. The coefficient of determination (R^2) is 68.7%, indicating that the three variables collectively explain a substantial portion of the regional variation in poverty across West Java. These findings highlight the importance of investing in education, health, and income generation to improve human development, and the need for inclusive economic policies to ensure that growth benefits are equitably distributed. This research is expected to serve as a strategic input for designing more effective and sustainable poverty alleviation policies.</p>	<p>Article History: <i>Submitted/Received 10 Sept 2024</i> <i>First Revised 12 Nov 2024</i> <i>Accepted 29 Nov 2024</i> <i>First Available online 9 Dec 2024</i> <i>Publication Date 23 Dec 2024</i></p> <hr/> <p>Keyword: <i>Poverty, Open Unemployment Rate, Human Development Index, Economic Growth</i></p>
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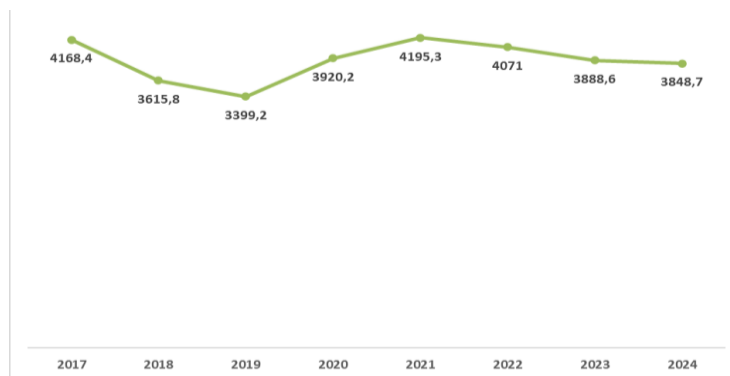
1. INTRODUCTION

Poverty is one of the main problems faced by many countries, including Indonesia. As the province with the largest population in the country, West Java faces significant challenges in reducing its poverty rate. This phenomenon not only affects the quality of life of the poor, but also influences social stability and economic development in the region. Therefore, understanding the factors that influence poverty is a crucial step in formulating effective policies to address it.

Poverty remains a constant focus of research. According to (Todaro and Smith, 2015), poverty is not only related to low income, but also includes deficiencies in access to education, health services, and economic opportunities. In Indonesia, factors such as unemployment, the Human Development Index (HDI), and economic growth are often identified as the main determinants of poverty. High unemployment can reduce people’s purchasing power, ultimately worsening poverty levels. Conversely, HDI—an indicator of quality of life encompassing education, health, and income—has a close relationship with poverty levels. Meanwhile, stable and inclusive economic growth is expected to have a positive impact in reducing poverty by creating more job opportunities and improving public welfare.

As an illustration, the graph below shows the fluctuation in the number of poor residents in West Java Province during the period 2017–2024:

Grafik 1. Number of Poor People in West Java Province (in Thousands) for the Period 2017–2024



Sumber: Key Statistical Highlights of West Java

Based on the graph above, it can be seen that the trend in the number of poor people shows a decline. However, in 2020 and 2021, there was a surge in the number of poor residents, reaching 3,920.2 thousand and 4,195.3 thousand people, respectively. This occurred because those two years marked the peak of the COVID-19 pandemic, which caused many people to lose their jobs or sources of income. Undeniably, the impact of COVID-19 was deeply felt across all income levels—from high-income earners to low-income groups. From 2022 to 2024, economic recovery took place, as reflected in the reduction of the number of poor people. These fluctuations reflect a complex socio-economic dynamic that requires further investigation.

Poverty is often viewed as a problem directly related to low income, where individuals with high income are not considered poor, while those with low income are seen as impoverished. However, in reality, poverty is more complex and is influenced not only by income but also by other factors such as housing quality and asset ownership. According to the [\(World Bank, 2001\)](#), poverty is defined as a living condition below the poverty line, calculated based on daily income. The international poverty line is often measured at \$1.90 per day based on purchasing power parity. Furthermore, according to Statistics Indonesia (BPS), poverty is defined as the inability of individuals to meet basic needs, such as food with a minimum intake of 2,100 kilocalories per capita per day, as well as other needs including clothing and shelter. Therefore, poverty is more than just an income issue; it is also related to access to essential basic needs necessary for survival.

One of the main causes of poverty is the high unemployment rate. Unemployment occurs when individuals who are part of the labor force are unable to find work despite actively seeking it. High unemployment is often directly linked to low household income, which in turn worsens poverty levels. In West Java Province, the open unemployment rate was recorded at 6.75 percent in 2024, indicating the potential for improved welfare if unemployment issues can be effectively addressed. A high unemployment rate affects family economic stability, as individuals without a steady income become more vulnerable to poverty. Although various efforts have been made to reduce unemployment, it remains a major challenge in many regions, including West Java.

In addition to unemployment, the low quality of education also contributes to the high unemployment rate. Quality education is essential in creating opportunities for individuals to obtain decent employment. The higher a person's level of education, the greater their chances of securing more stable jobs with better pay, which in turn helps reduce poverty. However, in West Java, there remains an inequality in access to quality education, especially in rural areas, leading to low skill levels and weak competitiveness among the workforce. This has become one of the root causes of the high unemployment and poverty rates in the region.

According to research by [\(Suryanto, 2020\)](#), low educational attainment is indeed a major factor contributing to high unemployment rates across several provinces in Indonesia, including West Java. Suryanto highlights that individuals with lower levels of education tend to lack the skills required by the labor market, making it difficult for them to secure decent jobs. The impact of unemployment is not only felt by the individuals themselves but also affects their families and the wider community. [\(Riani et al, 2019\)](#) further emphasize that in West Java, families with unemployed members tend to remain in poverty for longer periods compared to families where members are employed. Therefore, improving the quality of education is a crucial step in addressing poverty.

A higher level of education opens up opportunities for individuals to secure better jobs with decent income, which ultimately helps reduce poverty. However, in West Java, a significant portion of the population is employed in the agricultural sector and informal industries, largely due to limited access to quality formal education. Research by [\(Fauzi et al, 2021\)](#) indicates that individuals with low educational attainment in West Java are more vulnerable to falling into poverty. Their findings reveal that approximately 70 percent of the poor population in the province have only completed junior secondary school (SMP) or lower, highlighting a strong correlation between educational level and poverty status.

Improving access to and the quality of education can be one of the key solutions to reducing poverty. Although the West Java Provincial Government has launched various programs aimed at enhancing the quality of education, the disparity in educational distribution between urban and rural areas remains a major obstacle. (Rahmawati, 2022) notes that the uneven distribution of education between urban and rural regions in West Java hampers efforts to alleviate poverty. This gap creates unequal opportunities in accessing education, which in turn exacerbates economic conditions, particularly in rural areas.

In addition to unemployment and education, the Human Development Index (HDI) also plays a crucial role in reducing poverty. HDI is an indicator used to measure the quality of human life through three main dimensions: health, education, and standard of living. An increase in HDI reflects an improvement in the overall well-being of society, which is expected to help alleviate poverty. According to (Amartya Sen, 1999), poverty is not solely influenced by low income but also by the lack of an individual's capability to achieve a decent standard of living, which includes access to education, healthcare, and other basic services. Therefore, improving HDI can reduce poverty by enhancing people's capacity to participate in economic activities, obtain decent employment, and improve their quality of life. Research by (Santosa et al, 2018) found that a one-point increase in HDI can reduce poverty by 0.7 percent in Indonesia, emphasizing the importance of education and health dimensions in addressing poverty.

Economic growth also holds significant potential for reducing poverty, especially when the growth is inclusive and involves all segments of society. Uneven economic growth can exacerbate income inequality, preventing the benefits of growth from being equitably distributed among the population. (Kuznets, 1955), in his theory of economic growth, stated that in the early stages of economic development, income inequality tends to rise because the gains from growth are concentrated among certain groups. However, over time, sustained and equitable economic growth can help reduce both income inequality and poverty, as investments in education, healthcare, and infrastructure provide opportunities for the poor to participate more fully in the economy. Research by (Tambunan, 2019) found that every 1 percent increase in GDP could reduce poverty by 0.6 percent in Indonesia, provided that income distribution remains relatively

Thus, it can be concluded that unemployment, education, the Human Development Index (HDI), and economic growth are interrelated and have a significant influence on poverty. Reducing unemployment, improving the quality of education, and fostering inclusive economic growth are essential steps toward sustainable poverty alleviation. An integrated approach one that includes policies to address unemployment, enhance HDI, and promote inclusive growth is crucial for achieving effective and long-term poverty reduction.

This study aims to analyze the influence of unemployment, HDI, and economic growth on poverty in West Java Province in 2023. By examining the relationship among these variables, the research seeks to provide a deeper understanding of the key factors that contribute to poverty in the region. The findings are expected to offer valuable empirical insights to inform more targeted and strategic policymaking efforts aimed at reducing poverty levels in West Java. A

comprehensive understanding of the interactions between unemployment, educational quality, and economic growth will serve as a strong foundation for decision-making that can more effectively and sustainably improve societal well-being.

2. METHODS

This study utilizes secondary data obtained from the Central Bureau of Statistics (BPS) of West Java Province. The data include key variables related to poverty, namely the percentage of the poor population, the open unemployment rate (percent), the Human Development Index (HDI), and the economic growth rate (percent) for the year 2023. All data used in this research are sourced from publicly available BPS publications and are representative of all regencies and cities within West Java Province.

This analysis aims to provide a general overview of the distribution of the variables used across the regencies and cities in West Java Province. The process involves visualizing the data in the form of tables, graphs, and maps to illustrate the distribution of poverty rates, open unemployment rates, Human Development Index (HDI), and economic growth in each region (Rimal,2019). Thus, this descriptive analysis serves as an initial step in identifying patterns and disparities in poverty conditions among the different regencies and cities.

Following the descriptive analysis, this study proceeds with a multiple linear regression analysis to examine the influence of the independent variables—open unemployment rate, Human Development Index (HDI), and economic growth—on the percentage of the poor population. Multiple linear regression is employed to assess the simultaneous relationships among these variables, with the aim of determining the extent to which each factor contributes to changes in poverty levels in West Java Province.

Prior to conducting the regression analysis, classical assumption tests are performed to ensure that the data meet the necessary requirements for valid regression analysis (Flatt, 2019). These diagnostic tests include checks for multicollinearity, heteroscedasticity, autocorrelation, and the normality of residuals. Once the classical assumptions are confirmed, the multiple linear regression analysis is conducted to obtain regression coefficients that indicate the strength and direction of the relationships among the variables. The results of this analysis are expected to provide a deeper understanding of how unemployment, HDI, and economic growth influence poverty levels in West Java. Ultimately, the findings can serve as a valuable basis for policymakers and stakeholders in formulating more effective and efficient strategies to reduce poverty in the region (Singh, 2020).

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This study explores the relationship between the Open Unemployment Rate (OUR), Human Development Index (HDI), and economic growth on poverty levels in West Java Province in 2023. The results of the descriptive analysis indicate that these three factors have a significant influence in explaining the variation in poverty levels across different regions within the province.

West Java Province is one of the key contributors to Indonesia's national economy, yet it still faces significant challenges in addressing poverty. According to data from the Central Bureau of Statistics (BPS) in 2023, the average poverty rate in West Java was around 6.35%, with substantial regional disparities. Districts such as Cianjur and Garut reported poverty rates above the provincial average, while urban centers like Bandung City and Bekasi City recorded

significantly lower levels. These variations reflect underlying structural and socio-economic inequalities, where differences in employment opportunities, access to quality education and healthcare, and infrastructure development contribute to unequal outcomes. Factors such as the Open Unemployment Rate (OUR), Human Development Index (HDI), and economic growth are suspected to have a significant impact on the regional distribution of poverty. Regions with high unemployment and low HDI typically experience deeper and more persistent poverty, whereas areas with stronger economic performance and higher human development tend to demonstrate greater resilience. Understanding the influence of these factors is essential for designing targeted, data-driven policies that promote inclusive development and effectively reduce poverty across the province.

Urban areas such as Bandung City and Bekasi City have achieved relatively low poverty rates compared to other regions in West Java, largely due to their more advanced infrastructure, diverse economic activities, and better access to education and healthcare services (Srinivasu, 2023). These cities benefit from higher levels of investment, both public and private, which foster job creation in the formal sector and improve residents' income levels. Additionally, higher Human Development Index (HDI) scores in these cities indicate better education and health outcomes, enabling individuals to be more competitive in the labor market. The presence of higher education institutions, industrial zones, and service sectors in these urban centers also contributes to greater economic dynamism and lower unemployment rates, ultimately helping to reduce poverty levels more effectively.

In contrast, districts like Cianjur and Garut continue to face higher poverty rates due to limited economic diversification, lower levels of educational attainment, and weaker infrastructure. These areas are more reliant on the agricultural sector and informal employment, which often offer lower wages and less job security. The disparity in access to quality public services, particularly education and healthcare, hinders human capital development and reduces the ability of residents to participate in more productive economic activities. Moreover, high open unemployment rates in these regions reflect structural challenges in the local labor market, exacerbating the persistence of poverty. Bridging these gaps requires targeted interventions that not only stimulate local economic growth but also invest in education, vocational training, and rural infrastructure to empower communities and promote more equitable development across West Java.

The significant variation in the Open Unemployment Rate (OUR) across regions in West Java in 2023 can be attributed to differences in the structure and resilience of local economies. In the case of Cimahi City, the high OUR of 10.52% is largely driven by its dependence on the manufacturing sector, which is highly susceptible to global and national economic fluctuations. When manufacturing output declines or factories downsize, many workers—especially those with limited skills or temporary contracts—are laid off, leading to a spike in unemployment. Additionally, urban areas like Cimahi may experience a mismatch between the skills of job seekers and the labor market's demands, further contributing to persistent unemployment. The

influx of job seekers from surrounding areas looking for urban employment opportunities can also saturate the job market, putting additional pressure on limited available jobs (Holzer, 1996).

In contrast, regions like Pangandaran Regency with the lowest OUR at 1.52% benefit from a more diverse economic base that includes tourism, services, trade, and small-scale agriculture (Lyons, 2019). This economic diversity provides more flexible and resilient employment opportunities, especially in informal sectors that are less sensitive to external shocks. The presence of micro-enterprises, local markets, and self-employment in tourism-related services allows residents to generate income more independently of large-scale industrial cycles. Moreover, lower urban migration pressure in rural areas like Pangandaran means less competition for jobs, which helps maintain lower unemployment rates. These structural differences illustrate how economic composition and labor market dynamics shape regional disparities in unemployment and, consequently, poverty levels.

The implications of such disparities extend beyond labor statistics they directly influence the Human Development Index (HDI), which reflects the broader quality of life in a region. The Open Unemployment Rate (OUR) directly affects HDI because prolonged joblessness limits individuals' access to income, thereby restricting their ability to fulfill essential needs such as education, healthcare, and an adequate standard of living—the three core dimensions of HDI. High unemployment diminishes household purchasing power, reduces access to nutritious food and medical services, and impairs opportunities for educational advancement. In turn, this leads to a decline in both individual and community well-being. Furthermore, long-term unemployment often results in psychological stress, loss of motivation, and stagnation in skill development, ultimately weakening human capital (Muhhalipi, 2018). Over time, regions with persistent high unemployment are likely to experience stagnation or even deterioration in HDI scores, underscoring the critical need for employment-focused development strategies that not only reduce poverty but also improve overall human development outcomes.

The Human Development Index (HDI) has a significant and negative impact on poverty levels. This indicates that the higher the HDI which reflects improvements in education, health, and income—the lower the poverty rate tends to be. This finding aligns with studies conducted by (Zahra, Y. S., et al, 2024) and (Sagala, Indah, F., et al. (2024), which found that a one-point increase in HDI can reduce the poverty rate by approximately 0.523 percent. This highlights the need for focused government attention, as effective poverty alleviation efforts must begin with improvements in the quality of education, healthcare, and household income. Higher levels of education and health, coupled with increased income, result in a more capable and productive workforce. This, in turn, enhances individuals' ability to earn a sustainable income, thereby contributing to a significant reduction in poverty across regions.

In this study, economic growth was found to have a significant positive effect on poverty. Positive economic growth generally contributes to increased employment opportunities and higher income levels, which can help reduce poverty. However, this finding also highlights the critical need to ensure that economic growth is inclusive capable of reaching all segments of society. This is consistent with findings by (Muslim, Caesar, et al. 2024) and (Ginting, 2010), who also observed that economic growth has a statistically significant positive relationship with poverty levels. Based on the regression results, it can be concluded that a 1 percent increase in economic growth is associated with a 0.578 percent increase in poverty. This counterintuitive outcome can be explained by the structural characteristics of West Java's economy, where large-scale enterprises—many of which are foreign-affiliated—dominate the formal sector and

contribute significantly to the Gross Regional Domestic Product (GRDP). Meanwhile, small enterprises, though high in number, contribute only marginally to the regional economy. Moreover, many industrial companies in West Java are foreign-owned, meaning that while production is recorded domestically, much of the real economic benefit flows out of the region, resulting in what is known as economic leakage. This anomaly in economic growth indicates a disconnect between macroeconomic expansion and actual improvements in local welfare. It reflects a pattern of growth that is neither inclusive nor pro-poor, and therefore fails to contribute meaningfully to poverty alleviation.

The coefficient of determination (R^2) in the regression model indicates that approximately 68.7% of the variation in poverty levels across West Java's regencies and cities can be explained by the three independent variables: the open unemployment rate, Human Development Index (HDI), and economic growth. The remaining 31.3% is influenced by other factors not included in the model, such as social policies, the informal sector, and geographical conditions. This relatively high R^2 value signifies a strong explanatory power of the model, but also underscores the multifaceted nature of poverty, which cannot be fully captured by economic and demographic indicators alone. Among the key findings, the role of the Human Development Index (HDI) emerges as particularly critical. Since HDI encompasses dimensions of education, health, and income, its strong influence on poverty reduction suggests that human capital development is foundational for sustainable improvements in welfare. Education, as one of the pillars of HDI, directly enhances individual capacity to secure stable employment and participate meaningfully in the economy (Neamtu, 2015). A well-educated population is more adaptable, resilient, and innovative—qualities that are essential in an increasingly competitive and technology-driven labor market. Therefore, investing in quality education, including early childhood education, basic and secondary schooling, and vocational training, is crucial for regions seeking to reduce poverty in a structural and long-term manner.

Moreover, the findings imply a pressing need to promote lifelong learning as part of a broader poverty alleviation strategy. Lifelong learning refers to the continuous development of skills and knowledge throughout an individual's life, and it plays a key role in maintaining employability, especially in the context of rapid technological change and evolving job requirements. For many adults in rural or marginalized areas, access to formal education may have been limited, making non-formal and informal learning opportunities essential for bridging skill gaps. Government initiatives that support adult education, digital literacy, vocational upskilling, and community-based training programs can enable more people to re-enter the labor market or improve their economic standing, thereby contributing to poverty reduction.

Finally, regional governments should view education not just as a social good but as a strategic economic investment. The linkage between education and economic empowerment is clear: higher levels of education correlate with lower poverty rates and better health outcomes, which in turn improve productivity and regional competitiveness. By strengthening the education system—especially in underdeveloped areas—and integrating lifelong learning principles into public policy, West Java can address the root causes of poverty more effectively.

Ensuring equitable access to quality education at all life stages will not only enhance HDI outcomes but also foster inclusive economic growth that benefits all layers of society.

4. CONCLUSION

This study highlights the complex and interrelated dynamics between the Open Unemployment Rate (OUR), the Human Development Index (HDI), and economic growth in shaping poverty levels across regions in West Java Province. The findings reveal that regional disparities in poverty are closely linked to variations in local economic structure, access to education and healthcare, and the capacity of labor markets to absorb and empower the workforce. Urban centers with diversified economies, strong infrastructure, and higher HDI—such as Bandung and Bekasi—exhibit lower poverty rates. In contrast, rural or structurally limited regions like Cianjur and Garut continue to struggle due to lower educational attainment, higher unemployment, and underdeveloped service systems. Notably, a high OUR not only reduces income levels but also erodes long-term human development outcomes by limiting access to essential services and diminishing human capital.

Furthermore, while economic growth is generally expected to reduce poverty, this study reveals a critical anomaly: in West Java, economic expansion has a statistically significant *positive* effect on poverty levels. This contradiction stems from the nature of the region's growth, which is heavily concentrated in capital-intensive and foreign-owned industries that do not translate into widespread income gains or job creation for the local population. This form of non-inclusive growth, coupled with economic leakage and structural inequalities, emphasizes the urgent need for more targeted and equitable development policies. Central to these strategies is the enhancement of human capital through investments in education, healthcare, and lifelong learning. Ultimately, fostering inclusive economic systems and ensuring equitable access to quality education and employment opportunities are essential for sustainable poverty reduction and balanced regional development in West Java.

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