

Decent Work And Economic Growth: Empirical Evidence From The Industrial Sector In South Sumatra

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze the realization of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 8, which emphasizes inclusive economic growth and decent work creation. The study uses the number of workers in the industrial sector as the dependent variable, and the Gross Regional Domestic Product (GRDP) of the industrial sector at constant prices, the average length of schooling (RLS), and the regional minimum wage (UMR) as independent variables. The analysis was conducted using the Random Effect Model (EGLS Panel) method using panel data from 17 districts/cities during the 2015–2024 period. The results show that simultaneously all independent variables have a significant effect on labor absorption. However, partially only the GRDP of the industrial sector has a positive and significant effect, while the RLS and UMR have no significant effect. The research results show that the achievement of SDGs 8 in South Sumatra is still supported more by economic growth than by improving the quality of jobs, so that policies are needed that integrate the growth of the productive sector, improving the quality of human resources, and strengthening the labor market.

INTRODUCTION

Economic growth and the creation of decent and sustainable jobs are among the primary goals of economic development in developing countries. Within the framework of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 8, every country is encouraged to achieve inclusive, productive economic growth and the ability to create decent work for all. In this context, the industrial sector plays a crucial role as a driving force for economic growth and a major absorber of labor in various regions. In Indonesia, including South Sumatra Province (Sumsel), the development of the industrial sector shows significant dynamics along with the increasing contribution of the sector to Gross Regional Domestic Product (GRDP). However, the increase in industrial output is not always accompanied by a proportional increase in labor absorption. This indicates an indication of a shift in the production structure towards more capital-intensive industries and an imbalance between economic growth and job creation (Awaludin et al., 2024).

Previous studies have shown mixed results regarding the determinants of labor absorption. Hubbansyah (2023) found that GRDP has a positive and significant influence on labor, while education and minimum wage variables showed inconsistent results across regions and time periods. This indicates a research gap in terms of variables, methods, and the context of the research areas, particularly in the industrial sector at the district/city level in South Sumatra. (Hubbansyah et al., 2023).

Research (Nababan & Purba, 2023) shows that industrial sector output growth is a key factor influencing labor absorption. The labor demand theory proposed by (Mankiw et al., 2012) and (Edition & Borjas, 2016) explains that the demand for labor is a derived demand, meaning it depends on the demand for goods and services produced by the company. Empirical findings K uncoro, (2013) showed that increasing manufacturing industry output in Indonesia contributes positively to increasing employment opportunities, while Todaro and Smith (2020) emphasized that economic growth can only create optimal employment if supported by labor-intensive industrialization. (Rahmawati et al., 2023) and (Maksimilianus et al., 2023) also found that the Gross Regional Domestic Product (GRDP) of the industrial sector has a positive and significant effect on labor absorption, although the magnitude of the influence varies between regions due to differences in economic structure, investment, and the level of technology use (Rini & Septriani, 2025).

In addition to economic output, the quality of human resources is an important factor determining the workforce's ability to enter the industrial labor market. (Becker, 2009) Through Human Capital theory, it is stated that education is an investment that increases workers' productivity, skills and income. (Asshidiqi & Muharja, 2025) also explained that increasing education will increase the opportunity to get more productive work. (Y. Yunisvita, 2011).

However, empirical research shows that this relationship is not always consistent. (Hanushek & Wößmann, 2021) emphasized that educational quality is more important than the length of formal education. Meanwhile, the World Bank's (2020) report on the Indonesia Occupational Employment Outlook indicates a persistent skills mismatch between graduates and the needs of the industrial sector in Indonesia. This condition means that an increase in the average length of schooling is not necessarily accompanied by an increase in industrial labor absorption (Pramusinto & Daerobi, 2018).

Another widely studied factor is the regional minimum wage (UMR) policy. According to Borjas (2016), increasing the minimum wage can increase production costs, leading companies to reduce labor demand, especially in labor-intensive sectors. Research (Nurhayani et al. , 2017) found that minimum wage increases tend to reduce industrial labor absorption, while Rahmawati et al. (2019) found that the minimum wage's impact is negative but not always significant. On the other hand, a report by the International Labour Organization (ILO, 2023) (ILO, 2018) explains that wage policies accompanied by increased labor productivity can actually support the creation of decent work and sustainable economic growth in accordance with the targets of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 8. (Rahmawati et al., 2023).

RESEARCH METHODS

The research method used in this journal uses panel data regression , an analysis was conducted using the Random Effect Model (Panel EGLS) method, cross -section of 17

districts / cities in South Sumatra, research period 2015 - 2024. From the results equations, appear regression as following:

$$JTKI = \beta JTKI_{it} + \beta PDRB_{it} + \beta UMP_{it} + \beta RLS_{it} + \varepsilon_{it}$$

Where: β is a constant; JTKS I is the number of workers in the sector Industry, Agricultural Sector GRDP, RLS is the average length of schooling, i is the cross section ; t is the time series; and e is the error term. Because there are differences in the units and magnitudes of the independent variables in the regression equation, it must be constructed using a natural logarithm model.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Before analyze results regression that has been done in study this , especially formerly delivered that condition amount power working in the industrial sector in Suatera south as stated on picture.

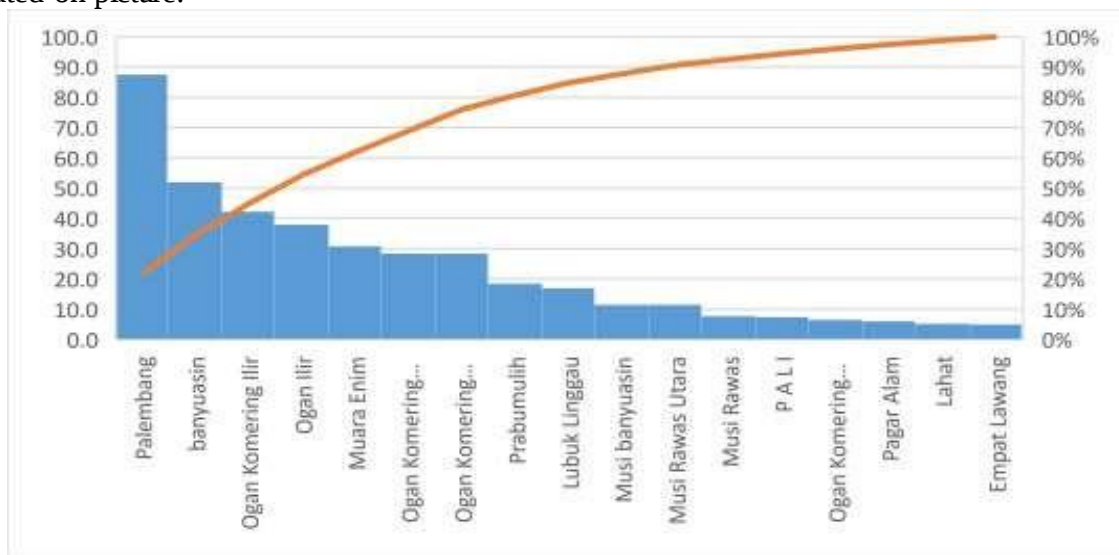


Figure 1. Condition of the Number of Workers in the Industrial Sector of South Sumatra in 2015-2024

Source: BPS, (Processed, 2026)

The condition of the industrial sector workforce in 17 districts/cities in South Sumatra Province during the 2015–2024 period is shown in Figure 4.2, there is an increasing trend of industrial sector workforce absorption in almost all regions. Palembang City is the area with the highest number of industrial sector workers throughout the observation period, increasing from 87.5 thousand people in 2015 to 110.2 thousand people in 2024, or an increase of around 22.7 thousand people (25.9%). A significant increase also occurred in Banyuasin, from 52.0 thousand people to 70.5 thousand people, OKI from 42.3 thousand to 57.9 thousand, and Ogan Ilir from 38.0 thousand to 55.0 thousand people.

Conversely, the area with the lowest industrial workforce was Empat Lawang, which increased from 5,000 to 7.5,000, followed by Lahat, which increased from 5.2,000 to 7.8,000, and Pagar Alam, which increased from 6,000 to 8.7,000. This indicates that industrial activity in South Sumatra remains concentrated in areas with a more developed economic base and infrastructure.

During the observation period, a temporary decline was also observed in 2020 in almost all regencies/cities. For example, the industrial workforce in Palembang fell from 101.2 thousand in 2019 to 95.6 thousand in 2020, while in Banyuasin it fell from 63.4 thousand to 59.2 thousand, in OKI it fell from 51.2 thousand to 47.8 thousand, and in Muara Enim it fell from 37.2 thousand to 34.5 thousand. These declines were likely influenced by the economic slowdown caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, which reduced industrial production and limited business activity.

However, from 2021 to 2024, almost all regions again showed an increase in the number of workers in the industrial sector, indicating a process of economic recovery and a resurgence in industrial production and investment activities. This phenomenon aligns with Marshall's (1890) *Derived Demand Theory*, which states that labor demand is derived from the demand for output. As industrial production and investment activities increase, the need for labor will also increase. Furthermore, Lewis' (1954) structural transformation theory explains that industrial sector development tends to be concentrated in areas with higher infrastructure, capital, and urbanization rates, such as Palembang and Banyuasin.

In the industrial sector, Palembang is the largest labor absorption center, followed by Banyuasin and OKI, reflecting the concentration of industrial activity and investment in these regions. Although nearly all regions experienced an increase in the industrial workforce, there was a temporary decline in 2020 due to the economic slowdown caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, before rebounding in the following period.

The results of this study are also consistent with the research of Todaro and Smith (2021) which states that industrialization plays an important role in creating job opportunities through increased investment and economic growth. (Sari & Setyowati, 2022). The increase in the number of industrial sector workers in most districts/cities in South Sumatra shows that the industrial sector remains one of the main drivers of job creation, while also supporting the achievement of SDGs Goal 8, namely encouraging inclusive economic growth and providing decent work for the community. (EP Yunisvita, 2026).

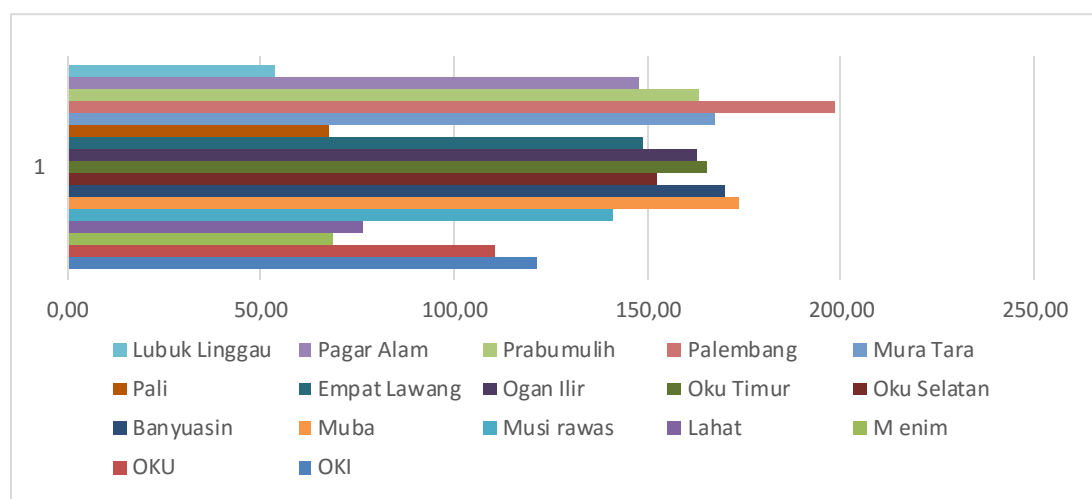


Figure 2 Average GRDP of the Industrial Sector of South Sumatra in 2015-2024
Source: BPS (Processed, 2026)

GRDP of the industrial sector of districts/cities in South Sumatra Province in 2015–2024, as shown in Figure 2, shows that the industrial sector in districts/cities in South Sumatra Province continues to experience positive development. (Nur et al., 2018) . Most regions show an increase in industrial GRDP from year to year, indicating the increasing added value generated by processing industry activities. This increase reflects the development of secondary sector economic activities supported by investment growth, increased production capacity, and the processing of natural resource products that are a leading feature in South Sumatra. (Central Statistics Agency, 2024).

Musi Banyuasin Regency and Palembang City are the regions with the largest industrial GRDP contributions during the research period. In 2015, Musi Banyuasin's industrial GRDP was recorded at IDR 14.26 billion and increased to IDR 23.68 billion in 2024. Meanwhile, Palembang City as the center of economic and industrial activities in South Sumatra experienced an increase from IDR 39,864 billion in 2015 to IDR 65,950 billion in 2024. The large value of the industrial GRDP of the two regions shows their strategic role as the main drivers of the industrial sector in South Sumatra.

The increase in industrial GRDP over the past 10 years reflects the growth of manufacturing activity in South Sumatra, driven by increased investment, industrial estate development, and the processing of leading commodities such as palm oil, rubber, coal, and their derivatives. However, around 2020, a slowdown in several regions was observed, attributed to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on industrial production and distribution, before recovering in 2021–2024. The average length of schooling in South Sumatra varies, the highest figure, 10.93, is shown for Palembang. (Collins et al., 2021), while the lowest, at 7.19, was in Muara Enim Regency. Average years of schooling is a key indicator of the quality of human resources (HR) in a region. The higher the average years of schooling, the higher the education level of the population (De la Fuente, 2011) .

Then condition level education in South Sumatra, From Figure 3. it can be seen that all districts/cities experienced an increase in RLS from 2015 to 2024. The RLS value increased gradually from 8 years in 2015 to 9.7 years in 2024, which shows that the average population aged 25 years and above has completed formal education up to junior high school level to senior high school. (Siswati & Hermawati, 2018).

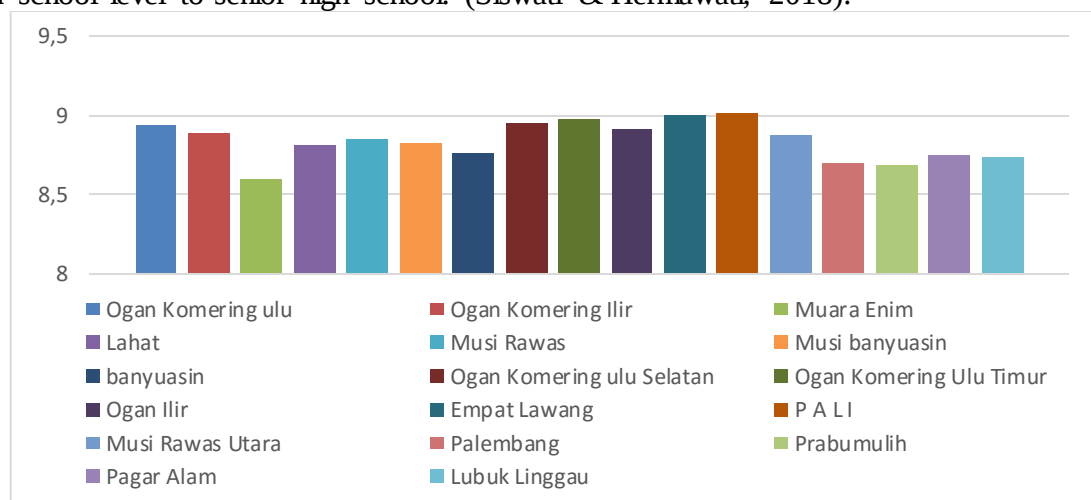


Figure 3. Development of average length of schooling in South Sumatra

Source: BPS, (Processed, 2026)

The region with the highest RLS value in 2024 is PALI Regency (9.69 years), followed by Empat Lawang (9.67 years), South OKU (9.65 years), and OKU and East OKU (9.63 years each). Meanwhile, Banyuasin had the lowest RLS value in 2024, namely 9.30 years, although it still experienced an increase compared to 2015. This situation indicates an improvement in the quality of education throughout South Sumatra as a result of increased access to education and various government programs in the education sector.

Discussion

To see which model is the best from this research, using the number of workers in the industrial sector As a dependent variable , data testing was conducted using eviews 12 through panel data regression. The following are the results of the regression performed. Based on the results of the Chow test in table 4.6, the Cross-section F value was obtained at 2.450353 with a probability of 0.8641 (> 0.05), while the Cross-section Chi-square value was 22.478461 with a probability of 0.0075 (< 0.05) .

Table 1 Results Chow Test

Effects Test	Statistics	df	Prob.
Cross-section F	2.450353	(9,156)	0.8641
Cross-section Chi-square	22.478461	9	0.0075

Source: eViews12 output, processed 2026

In selecting a panel data model, the decision is generally based on the Cross-section F probability value. Therefore, because the Cross-section F probability value is greater than the 5% significance level, H_0 is not rejected, which means that CEM is more appropriate than FEM. Further testing is continued using the Lagrange Multiplier (LM) to determine whether the more appropriate model is CEM or REM.

Table 2. Results of Lagrange Multiplier Tests for Random Effects

	Ceoss -Section	Hypothesis Test Time	Both
Breuch -pagan	2.635485 (0.1045)	137.5013 (0.0000)	140.1368 (0.0000)

Source: Output eviews 16, (Processed 2026)

Since the previous Chow Test results selected CEM (Prob. Cross-section F = 0.8641 > 0.05), the next step is indeed the Lagrange Multiplier (LM) Test , Breusch Pagan to determine whether the more appropriate model is CEM or REM. Based on the results of the Breusch–Pagan LM Test seen in table 4.7, the Breusch–Pagan value obtained in the Cross-section is 2.635485 with a probability value of 0.1045, which is greater than the significance level of 0.05, so it can be concluded that CEM is more appropriate than REM. Thus, the panel data regression model selected and used in this study is CEM, so that the analysis can be continued with classical assumption testing.

Table 3. Results test Multicollinearity

JTKSP	GDP	RLS	Minimum Wage
GDP	1	0.04042822541509 45	0.05559477296102 277
RLS	0.0404282254150 945	1	0.16495361596485 58
Minimum Wage	0.0555947729610 2277	0.16495361596485 58	1

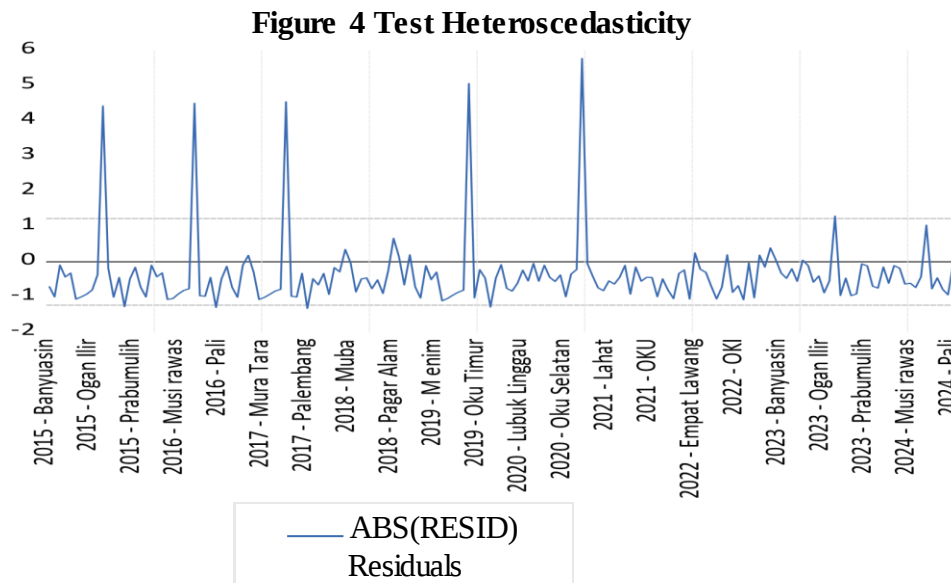
Source : eViews12 Output, (*Processed* 2026)

Table 3 shows the results of the correlation test between independent variables. It can be seen that all correlation coefficient values are in the range of -0.0499 to 0.1650, thus indicating a very low level of relationship. The correlation between the GRDP of the RLS industrial sector is 0.0404, with the UMP of 0.0556, and the DR of 0.0069. Meanwhile, the correlation between RLS and UMR is 0.1650, between RLS and DR is -0.0157, and between UMR and DR is -0.0499.

All correlation values are well below the general limit of 0.80, which according to Gujarati and Porter (2009) indicates the absence of a strong linear relationship between the independent variables. Thus, it can be concluded that this research model does not experience symptoms of multicollinearity, so that each independent variable can be used together in the regression model without causing significant multicollinearity problems.

Figure 4 shows the results of the heteroscedasticity test using the residual graph (ABS(RESID)), where it can be seen that the residual values are randomly distributed around the zero line without forming a specific pattern, although there are several spikes at certain points. This random distribution indicates that the error variance tends to be constant (homoscedasticity), so the regression model does not experience heteroscedasticity problems.

This aligns with Ghozali's (2016) opinion, which states that a good regression model is one that does not exhibit heteroscedasticity. This is further supported by Juliandi et al.'s (2014) assertion that if the residuals are randomly distributed and do not form a specific pattern, then the homoscedasticity assumption is met. Therefore, the model in this study can be considered suitable for use because it meets one of the classic assumptions in regression analysis.



Source: eViews12 Output, (*Processed* 2026)

Results Equality Regression Sector Industry

Based on the regression estimation results, the equation obtained is $(JTKSI = 4.1408 + 0.1121PDRBI - 0.2706RLS - 0.0940UMR)$. The positive value of the industrial sector GRDP coefficient indicates that increased economic activity in the industrial sector is able to increase labor absorption in that sector. This indicates that industrial growth has an important role in creating jobs.

Meanwhile, the RLS variable and the Provincial Minimum Wage (UMP) have negative coefficients. This indicates that increases in these three variables tend to be accompanied by a decrease in the number of workers in the industrial sector. Theoretically, increased education can encourage workers to seek jobs that better match their competencies, while an increase in the minimum wage can increase company production costs, thereby reducing labor demand. Furthermore, a high dependency ratio can reduce productivity and labor force participation in economic activities.

Table 4. Results t -test

Variable	Coefficient	Std. Error	t-Statistic	Prob.
GDP	0.112135	0.032613	3.438381	0.0007
RLS	-0.270649	0.354365	-0.763758	0.4461
Minimum Wage	-0.094018	0.706643	-0.133049	0.8943
DR	-0.142387	0.480047	-0.296611	0.7671
C	4.140809	10.65151	0.388753	0.6980

Source: eviews12, (Processed, 2026)

The data in Table 4 are the results of a partial test (t-test) on the panel data regression model of the industrial sector. It is known that the industrial sector GRDP variable (PDRBI) has a regression coefficient of 0.112135 with a t-statistic value of 3.438381 and a probability value of 0.0007, smaller than the 5% significance level (0.05). These results indicate that the

industrial sector GRDP has a positive and significant effect on the number of industrial sector workers in the Province. South Sumatra.

The hypothesis stating that the GRDP of the industrial sector influences the absorption of industrial labor is accepted. The coefficient value of 0.112135 indicates that every 1 percent increase in the GRDP of the industrial sector will increase the number of industrial workers by 0.112 percent, assuming other variables remain constant (*ceteris paribus*). The RLS variable has a coefficient of -0.2706 with a probability value of 0.4461, so it does not significantly influence the number of industrial workers. This indicates that the increase in the average length of schooling during the study period has not been able to significantly increase the absorption of industrial labor. Furthermore, the UMP variable has a coefficient of -0.094018 with a probability value of 0.8943, so it also has no significant partial effect on the number of industrial workers.

Based on the results of the t-test, it was concluded that of the four independent variables used in this study, only the industrial sector GRDP had a positive and significant effect on the number of industrial sector workers in South Sumatra Province, while RLS, UMR, and Dependency Ratio did not show a significant effect at the 5% significance level.

Table 5. Results F test (simultaneous)

F-statistic	Prob (F-statistic)
3.080158	0.017699

Source: eViews12 output, processed 2026

The F-statistic value based on table 5. regarding the results of the F-test or simultaneous test, there is a value of 3.0801 with a Prob value (F-statistic) of 0.0176. Because the probability value is smaller than the 5% significance level (0.05), then H_0 is rejected and H_1 is accepted. This shows that simultaneously the GRDP variables of the industrial sector, RLS And The Provincial Minimum Wage (UMP) significantly influenced the number of workers in the industrial sector in South Sumatra Province during the 2015–2024 study period. These results conclude that the regression model used is appropriate for explaining the relationship between the independent variables and the number of workers in the industrial sector. Changes in the industrial sector workforce are not influenced by a single variable, but by a combination of economic and demographic factors included in the research model.

The results of the panel data regression estimation show that GRDP has a significant positive effect, while UMP has a significant positive effect. and Average Years of Schooling have a significant negative effect on labor demand. The significant positive effect of GRDP growth in the industrial sector indicates that the development of processing industries in South Sumatra, such as rubber, palm oil, fertilizer, and cement in the Palembang and Tanjung Api-Api Industrial Estates, remains a major driver of labor absorption. This aligns with the theory that increased output will drive increased demand for production factors, including labor.

These results indicate that the growth of the manufacturing industry in South Sumatra is capable of creating new jobs through increased production capacity and investment. This finding aligns with research by Indarti (2016), which concluded that real GRDP is a key factor driving increased labor demand in the industrial sector.

The greater the industrial output produced, the greater the need for labor to support the production process. This finding aligns with several previous studies. Dewi Laura's (2017) study on industrial labor absorption in Sumatra found that industrial labor absorption was more influenced by investment and wage levels than by industrial output growth alone. Novalia et al.'s (2023) study on large and medium-sized manufacturing industries in South Sumatra also showed that industrial sector development is not always accompanied by a significant increase in the workforce due to technological changes and increased industrial productivity (Novalia *et al.*, 2023).

These results are also consistent with research by Auliadina and Sinaga (2023) which states that industrial labor absorption is influenced by wages, output, and the number of business units, so that the increase in the workforce is not only determined by economic growth alone. The observation results are supported by research by Sholihah, Syaparuddin, and Nurhayani (2017) which found that investment in the manufacturing industry sector is able to increase economic growth while expanding employment absorption by increasing production capacity.

Putri and Woyanti's (2025) research also shows that developments in the industrial sector, along with labor and wages, have a positive impact on regional economic growth. Furthermore, Putri's (2025) research explains that investment, labor, and capital expenditure positively influence the growth of the manufacturing sector in Indonesia. These findings reinforce the belief that the increase in GRDP in the industrial sector in South Sumatra during 2015–2024 reflects a growing industrialization process and is a driving force behind regional economic growth.

However, the significant negative impact of the Provincial Minimum Wage (UMP) indicates that industry in South Sumatra remains capital-intensive. The increase in the UMP encourages companies to increase efficiency by replacing labor with machines or automation. This characteristic is evident in large industries in South Sumatra, which absorb a larger workforce with limited education. An interesting finding is the significant negative impact of Average Years of Schooling. The industrial sector should be employing human resources with higher education. This condition indicates a mismatch between vocational high school (SMK)/university (PT) graduates in South Sumatra and industry needs. Industry in South Sumatra is still dominated by basic industries that do not require high skills, so graduates with high RLS tend not to be absorbed and choose to work outside the region.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

Results study conclude that Sectoral GRDP is the most consistent factor influencing labor demand in the industrial sector in South Sumatra Province during the 2015–2024 period. This indicates that increased economic activity in this sector results in higher labor absorption . This finding confirms that the industrial sector plays a significant role as the primary sector in absorbing labor in South Sumatra Province. Meanwhile, the RLS variable and the Provincial Minimum Wage (UMP) did not show a significant influence on sectoral labor absorption. The research results also indicate that the dynamics of sectoral labor demand in South Sumatra Province are still more influenced by the economic growth of each sector than by education. and wage policies . Therefore, to support the achievement of absorption energy In this sector , policies are needed that not only encourage sectoral economic growth, but also improve the quality of human resources, strengthen the link between education and labor market needs, and expand productive employment opportunities in order to provide maximum economic benefits for regional development.

Suggestions

The South Sumatra Provincial Government is expected to strengthen policies that encourage inclusive sectoral economic growth through increased investment, development of leading sectors, and expansion of quality job opportunities, particularly in the industrial sector . Furthermore, it is necessary to improve the quality of human resources through strengthening vocational education, training based on the needs of the workforce, and synergy between the government, the business world, and educational institutions for optimal utilization. These efforts are expected to increase the absorption of a productive workforce and reduce the gap between workforce competencies and job market needs. For realizing sustainable economic growth and providing decent and productive jobs for all people in South Sumatra Province.

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