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Economic Development and Poverty Levels in South Sulawesi: A Descriptive Statistical Approach

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A R T I C L E I N F O

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A B S T R A C T

Regional economic development is measured not only through increased economic growth, but also through the ability of such development to improve community welfare and reduce poverty levels. This study aims to analyze economic development and poverty levels in South Sulawesi Province during the 2016–2025 period using a descriptive statistical approach. This research employs a quantitative descriptive method with secondary data in the form of Gross Regional Domestic Product (GRDP) at Constant Prices (ADHK) and the percentage of the poor population sourced from the Central Statistics Agency (BPS) of South Sulawesi Province. The analysis is conducted through the calculation of economic growth, descriptive statistics including mean, minimum, maximum, standard deviation, as well as the presentation of data developments in tables and graphs. The results show that the economy of South Sulawesi has experienced positive long-term development, marked by an increase in GRDP at constant prices from 2016 to 2025. Economic growth during the 2017–2025 period averaged 5.02 percent, although it contracted by -0.71 percent in 2020. Meanwhile, the poverty rate shows a downward trend from 9.40 percent in 2016 to 7.60 percent in 2025. Based on the descriptive analysis results, South Sulawesi's economic development has progressed alongside a decline in poverty levels; however, changes in these two indicators do not always occur directly in the same period.

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INTRODUCTION

Economic development is a multidimensional process that is related not only to increasing the production capacity and income of a region, but also encompasses changes in social structure, poverty reduction, improvement in quality of life, and the equitable distribution of development outcomes. According to Todaro and Smith (2020), economic development must be understood as a process of enhancing the ability of society to meet basic needs, expanding economic opportunities, and improving the quality of life in a sustainable manner. Therefore, the success of development cannot be adequately measured solely through economic growth, but must also be viewed through changes in community welfare indicators.

Economic growth is one of the main indicators in measuring the development of a regional economy. Economic growth describes the increase in a region's capacity to produce goods and services within a certain period. In the regional context, the commonly used indicator for observing economic development is Gross Regional Domestic Product (GRDP). GRDP at constant prices (ADHK) is used to observe changes in real production value because it has eliminated the influence of price changes, thus better reflecting the growth of economic activity (Badan Pusat Statistik, 2025).

According to Solow (1956), long-term economic growth is influenced by capital accumulation, labor force growth, and technological development. This theory explains that the increase in a region's production capacity is highly dependent on the economy's ability to improve the productivity of production factors. Furthermore, the endogenous growth theory developed by Romer (1990) emphasizes that knowledge, innovation, and the quality of human resources are important factors in driving sustainable economic growth.

Economic growth can provide benefits to society if the results of that growth can create employment opportunities, increase people's income, and achieve a more equitable distribution of economic benefits. Dollar and Kraay (2002) explain that economic growth generally has a positive relationship with increasing the income of the poor, but its impact is highly dependent on the economic characteristics and policies of a region.

The problem of poverty is one of the main challenges in economic development because it is related to the limited capacity of society to meet basic needs. According to Sen (1999), poverty is not only viewed as a person's low income, but also as the limitation of an individual's capability to attain a decent life.

Ravallion (1997) states that economic growth can contribute to poverty reduction, but that relationship is influenced by the level of income inequality within a society. Regions with high levels of inequality may experience conditions where economic growth increases but poverty reduction proceeds more slowly. Kakwani and Pernia (2000) introduced the concept of pro-poor growth, which explains that economic growth can be considered pro-poor if low-income groups obtain greater benefits from the growth process.

Apart from economic growth factors, poverty is also influenced by various structural factors such as education levels, employment opportunities, labor

productivity, and the quality of human resources. According to Becker (1993), investment in human capital through education and skills enhancement plays an important role in increasing individual productivity and expanding opportunities to earn higher incomes.

In the context of regional development, differences in economic characteristics across regions cause the impact of economic growth on poverty to vary. Kuznets (1955) explains that the process of economic development can cause changes in income distribution patterns, which at certain stages may increase or decrease inequality. Therefore, regional development analysis needs to consider the specific conditions of each region.

The strategic position of South Sulawesi as a center of trade, services, agriculture, and industry makes its economic development influential on regional economic activity. Based on data from the Central Bureau of Statistics of South Sulawesi Province, the economic development and poverty level of South Sulawesi underwent changes during the 2016–2025 period. This period encompasses various economic conditions, ranging from relatively stable economic growth before the pandemic, economic contraction in 2020, to the subsequent economic recovery period (Central Bureau of Statistics of South Sulawesi Province, 2025). These changes provide an important picture of the dynamics of the relationship between regional economic development and the poverty conditions of the community.

The descriptive statistical approach is one of the suitable methods for describing data characteristics through trend analysis, averages, minimum values, maximum values, and inter-period changes. According to Sugiyono (2022), descriptive statistics are used to describe or analyze data that have been collected without making broader generalizations.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Economic Growth

Economic growth is an increase in a region's capacity to produce goods and services within a certain period. In a regional context, economic growth is generally measured through changes in GRDP at constant prices.

The Concept of Economic Growth

Economic growth indicates an increase in a country's or region's capacity to produce goods and services during a certain period. This increase is generally measured through changes in the value of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) at the national level or Gross Regional Domestic Product (GRDP) at the regional level. According to Sukirno (2016), economic growth is the development of economic activity that leads to an increase in the production of goods and services and an increase in public prosperity.

In the context of regional development, economic growth plays an important role because it demonstrates a region's ability to optimize its economic resources. Todaro and Smith (2020) explain that economic growth is one of the main components of development, but it is not the only measure of development

success because aspects of equity and community welfare must also be considered.

Regional economic growth is generally measured using changes in Gross Regional Domestic Product (GRDP) at constant prices. According to Statistics Indonesia (2025), GRDP at constant prices is used to observe real economic growth because it has removed the influence of price changes.

$$Pertumbuhan\ Ekonomi\ (PE) = \frac{PDRBt - PDRBt - 1}{PDRBt - 1}\ x\ 100\%$$

Note:

- PE = Economic growth (%)
- GRDPt = GRDP in the current year
- GRDPt-1 = GRDP in the previous year

Economic Growth Theories

a. Classical Growth Theory

Adam Smith explained that increased productivity and division of labor are important factors in increasing an economy's production capacity (Smith, 1776). According to classical theory, increased production will increase community income, thereby promoting improved economic welfare.

b. Solow Neoclassical Growth Theory

Solow (1956) developed the neoclassical growth theory, which explains that economic growth is influenced by capital accumulation, labor force growth, and technological progress.

In the Solow model, increased capital and technology enable an economy to increase its production capacity. However, capital growth has limitations due to the concept of diminishing returns, so technological progress becomes an important factor in long-term growth.

c. Endogenous Growth Theory

Romer (1990) developed the endogenous growth theory, which emphasizes that innovation, knowledge, and the quality of human resources are internal factors that determine economic growth. Thus, economic development depends not only on physical capital but also on human capability in creating innovation.

Poverty

The Concept of Poverty

According to Sen (1999), poverty is a condition of capability deprivation in which a person is limited in performing life functions considered important. This approach broadens the understanding of poverty, which previously focused only on the income aspect. The World Bank (2001) defines poverty as a condition in which individuals lack the ability to meet basic needs such as food, shelter, health, and education.

Theories of Poverty

a. Absolute Poverty

Absolute poverty refers to a condition in which a person is unable to meet minimum basic needs. This approach typically uses the poverty line as the threshold to determine whether a person falls into the category of poor or not.
According to Ravallion (1997), measuring absolute poverty is important, especially in developing countries, because it shows the number of people who have not yet been able to meet basic needs standards.

b. Relative Poverty

Relative poverty views poverty based on a comparison of an individual's economic condition with other groups in society. This approach is closely related to income distribution and economic inequality.
Kuznets (1955) explains that economic development can cause changes in income distribution which at certain stages can increase or decrease inequality.

Poverty Measurement

The Central Bureau of Statistics uses the basic needs approach in measuring poverty. Based on this approach, the poor are people whose average per capita monthly expenditure falls below the poverty line.
The poverty indicator used in this study is the percentage of the poor population (P0), namely:

$$P(0) = \frac{Jumlah\ Penduduk\ Miskin}{Penduduk\ Miskin}\ x\ 100\%$$

This indicator shows the proportion of the population living below the poverty line in a region.

Conceptual Relationship between Economic Growth and Poverty

Economic growth and poverty have a close relationship in economic development. Theoretically, increased economic growth can create jobs, increase people's incomes, and reduce the number of poor people.

Dollar and Kraay (2002) found that economic growth has a positive relationship with increased incomes of the poor. However, this effect depends heavily on the condition of income distribution and the economic structure of a region.

Kakwani and Pernia (2000) explain the concept of pro-poor growth, namely economic growth that provides greater benefits to the poor, thereby accelerating poverty reduction.

However, economic growth does not always automatically result in poverty reduction. Bourguignon (2004) explains that the relationship between economic growth, inequality, and poverty is a complex relationship influenced by the structure of income distribution.

In this study, the relationship between economic growth and poverty is not analyzed through causality testing, but rather through a descriptive statistical approach to illustrate the development patterns of both indicators during the 2016–2025 period.

RESEARCH METHOD

Type of Research

This study uses a descriptive quantitative method. The descriptive quantitative method is a research approach that aims to describe, explain, and analyze a phenomenon based on numerical data without testing causal relationships between variables.

According to Sugiyono (2022), descriptive research is a research method used to provide an overview of an object or phenomenon based on data that has been collected and analyzed systematically. In descriptive quantitative research, numerical data are used to explain the characteristics of a phenomenon through the presentation of tables, graphs, and statistical measures such as the mean, minimum value, maximum value, and changes between periods.

This study aims to provide an overview of economic development and the poverty rate in South Sulawesi Province during the 2016–2025 period. The analysis is conducted by examining the development of Gross Regional Domestic Product (GRDP) at Constant Prices (ADHK) as an indicator of economic growth and the percentage of the poor population as an indicator of the poverty rate.

Type and Source of Data

Type of Data

The type of data used in this study is secondary data in the form of annual time series data for the 2016–2025 period. Secondary data are data obtained through sources that are already available and collected by institutions or other parties that have the authority to provide data.

According to Sugiyono (2022), secondary data are research data sources obtained indirectly through documents, reports, publications, or other official sources related to the research object.

In this study, the data used are regional economic statistics of South Sulawesi Province covering indicators of economic development and the poverty rate over the past ten years.

Source of Data

The data sources in this study come from official publications of Statistics Indonesia (BPS), specifically:

1. Statistics Indonesia of South Sulawesi Province, through the following publications:
    - *South Sulawesi Province in Figures;*
    - Gross Regional Domestic Product (GRDP) tables by regency/city by industry;
    - Tables of the percentage of the poor population by regency/city.
2. Statistics Indonesia of the Republic of Indonesia as a supporting source of national and regional economic statistics.

Table 1. Operational Definition of Variables

Variable	Indicator	Unit	Data Source
Economic development	Gross Regional Domestic Product (GRDP) at Constant Prices (ADHK)	Billion Rupiah	BPS South Sulawesi Province
Economic growth	GRDP ADHK growth rate	Percent (%)	Researcher's calculation based on BPS GRDP data
Poverty	Percentage of poor population (P0)	Percent (%)	BPS South Sulawesi Province

Data Analysis Technique

The analysis is conducted using descriptive statistics:

1. Annual development trend analysis.
2. Statistical calculations:
    - Mean value,
    - Highest value,
    - Lowest value,
    - Annual changes.
3. Presentation of development graphs.

Analysis of Economic Development and Poverty

Several important patterns are visible:

a. Pre-pandemic period (2016–2019)

- The economy grew steadily above 6 percent.
- Poverty decreased from 9.40 percent to 8.69 percent.

This shows a period of economic growth running in tandem with a decline in the poverty rate.

b. Pandemic period (2020)

- Economic growth contracted to -0.71 percent.
- Poverty increased slightly from 8.69 percent to 8.72 percent.

During this period, a shift in the direction of economic and social indicators was evident.

c. Recovery period (2021–2025)

- Economic growth returned to positive territory.
- The poverty rate declined again, reaching 7.60 percent in 2025.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Overview of South Sulawesi Economic Development

The economic development of South Sulawesi Province during the 2016–2025 period shows an increasing trend based on the Gross Regional Domestic Product (GRDP) at Constant Prices (ADHK). The GRDP value increased from Rp269,401.31 billion in 2016 to Rp417,633.94 billion in 2025.

The increase in GRDP value indicates an increase in regional economic activity in producing goods and services. However, economic development during the research period did not proceed at a constant rate because of changes in economic conditions in certain years.

In the 2017–2019 period, South Sulawesi's economic growth was at a relatively high level, namely above 6 percent per year. The highest growth occurred in 2017 at 7.21 percent. This condition indicates that regional economic activity experienced a fairly strong expansion before the economic disruption in the following year.

Table 2. Data on Economic Development and Poverty Rate of South Sulawesi, 2016–2025

Year	GRDP at Constant Prices (Billion Rp)	Economic Growth (%)	Poverty Rate (%)	Change in Poverty (percentage points)
2016	269401.31	-	9.40	-
2017	288814.17	7.21	9.38	-0.02
2018	309156.19	7.04	9.06	-0.32
2019	330506.38	6.91	8.69	-0.37
2020	328154.57	-0.71	8.72	0.03
2021	343395.41	4.64	8.78	0.06
2022	360912.82	5.10	8.63	-0.15
2023	377207.78	4.51	8.70	0.07
2024	396141.74	5.02	8.06	-0.64
2025	417633.94	5.43	7.60	-0.46

Based on Table 2, the GRDP at Constant Prices (ADHK) of South Sulawesi Province shows an increasing trend during the 2016–2025 period. The GRDP at Constant Prices was recorded at Rp269,401.31 billion in 2016 and increased to Rp417,633.94 billion in 2025. This indicates an expansion of regional economic activity in the long term.

In terms of its economic growth rate, South Sulawesi experienced growth that tended to fluctuate. In the 2017–2019 period, economic growth was at a high

level, namely 7.21 percent in 2017, 7.04 percent in 2018, and 6.91 percent in 2019. However, in 2020 economic growth contracted by -0.71 percent. After that, economic growth recovered to 4.64 percent in 2021, 5.10 percent in 2022, 4.51 percent in 2023, 5.02 percent in 2024, and 5.43 percent in 2025.

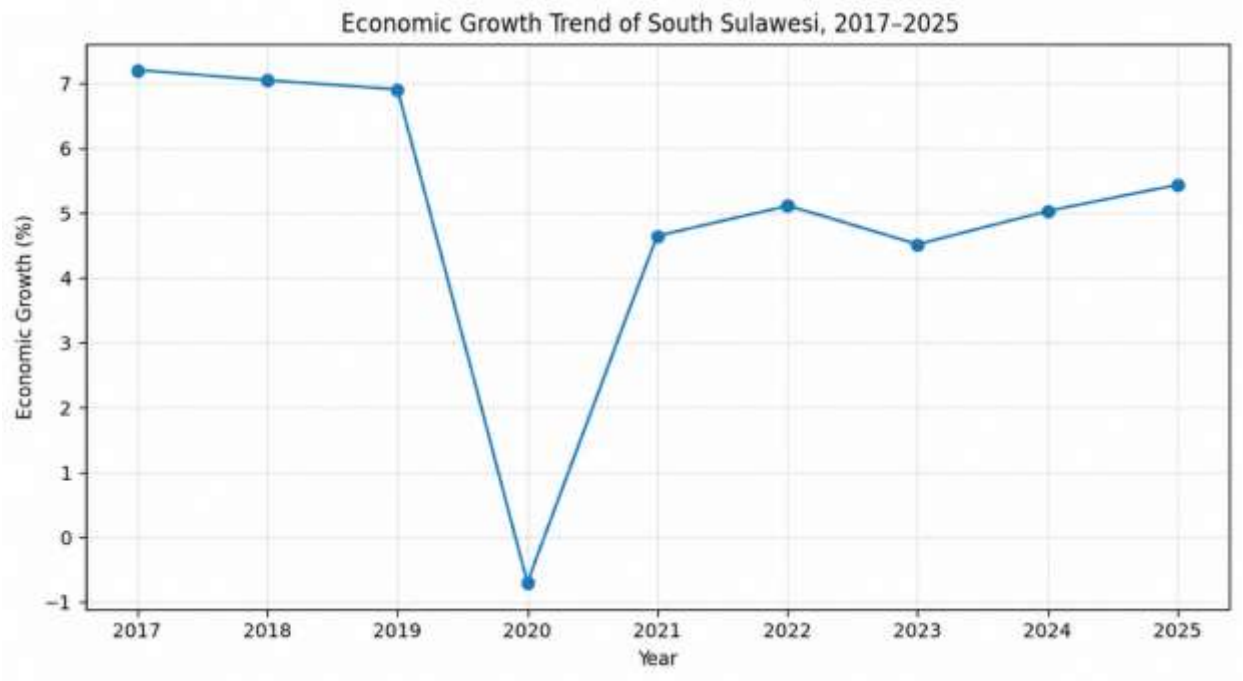


Figure 1. South Sulawesi Economic Growth Trend, 2017–2025

Based on Figure 4.1, South Sulawesi's economic growth shows a fluctuating pattern. Economic growth was relatively high in the 2017–2019 period, then contracted in 2020, and recovered again in the 2021–2025 period.

Development of the Poverty Rate in South Sulawesi

In 2020, the poverty rate increased to 8.72 percent and rose again to 8.78 percent in 2021. After that, the poverty rate declined again to 8.63 percent in 2022, rose slightly to 8.70 percent in 2023, then fell quite sharply to 8.06 percent in 2024 and 7.60 percent in 2025.

Based on Table 4.2, the average poverty rate in South Sulawesi during the 2016–2025 period was 8.70 percent. The highest value recorded was 9.40 percent, while the lowest value was 7.60 percent. A standard deviation of 0.55 indicates that the variation in the poverty rate is relatively small compared with the variation in economic growth.

Table 3. Descriptive Statistics Formal

Statistic	Economic Growth (%)	Poverty Rate (%)
N	9	10
Mean	5.02	8.70
Median	5.10	8.71
Minimum	-0.71	7.60
Maximum	7.21	9.40
Standard Deviation	2.39	0.55
Range	7.92	1.80

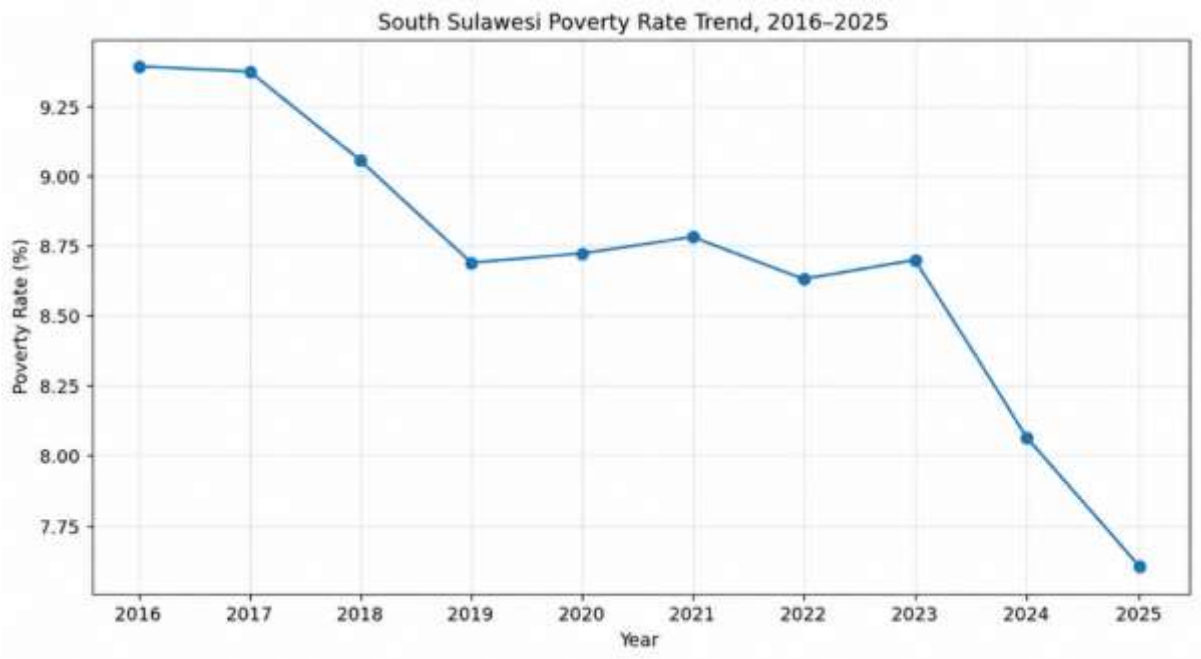


Figure 2. Trend of Poverty Rate in South Sulawesi, 2016–2025

Based on Figure 2, the poverty rate in South Sulawesi tended to decline during the observation period. Although it increased in 2020, 2021, and 2023, the general trend continued to show a decline, reaching 7.60 percent in 2025.

Table 4.3 Annual Changes

Year	Economic Growth (%)	Change in Poverty (percentage points)
2016	-	-
2017	7.21	-0.02
2018	7.04	-0.32
2019	6.91	-0.37
2020	-0.71	0.03
2021	4.64	0.06
2022	5.10	-0.15
2023	4.51	0.07
2024	5.02	-0.64
2025	5.43	-0.46

Descriptive Analysis of Annual Changes

Based on Table 4.3, annual changes show that the largest reduction in poverty occurred in 2024, namely 0.64 percentage points, followed by 2025 at 0.46 percentage points. Conversely, increases in poverty occurred in 2020, 2021, and 2023.

When compared with economic growth, it appears that when economic growth contracted in 2020, the poverty rate actually increased. The same pattern was also seen in 2021, when economic growth began to recover but the poverty rate still increased. This condition indicates that changes in poverty do not always immediately follow changes in economic growth in the same year.

In general, in the long term there is a tendency for increased regional economic activity to be followed by a decline in the poverty rate. However, this relationship is descriptive in nature and does not yet demonstrate a statistical

cause-and-effect relationship because this study uses a descriptive statistical approach.

DISCUSSION

The analysis results show that South Sulawesi's economic development during the 2016–2025 period generally improved, although there were year-to-year fluctuations in economic growth. The increase in GRDP at constant prices indicates that regional economic activity has developed. However, changes in economic growth are not always immediately followed by changes in the poverty rate in the same year.

In the 2017–2019 period, increased economic growth occurred alongside a decline in the poverty rate. This condition illustrates that increased economic activity can proceed together with improvements in public welfare. Conversely, in 2020, when economic growth contracted, the poverty rate increased. This shows that an economic slowdown can put pressure on the socio-economic conditions of the community.

In the 2021–2025 period, South Sulawesi's economy again experienced positive growth and the poverty rate generally declined. Nevertheless, this study only uses a descriptive statistical approach, so the research results depict data development patterns and are not intended to prove a causal relationship between economic growth and poverty.

Summary of Research Findings

The results of this study indicate that increased economic activity in South Sulawesi tends to proceed together with a decline in the poverty rate, especially in the 2017–2019 period when high economic growth was followed by a decline in poverty (). This finding is consistent with the literature stating that average income growth is the main driver of poverty reduction, although the magnitude of the effect varies across countries and regions (Kraay, 2006; Fosu, 2017).

However, this relationship is not automatic, because in 2020–2021 poverty increased even though growth returned to positive in 2021 (). This condition is consistent with the view that the impact of growth on poverty is strongly influenced by inequality, institutional quality, employment opportunities, and the level of growth inclusiveness (Ochi et al., 2024; Adeleye et al., 2020).

Thus, the discussion of these research results needs to emphasize that the success of regional development is determined not only by increases in GRDP, but also by the ability of that growth to expand benefits to low-income groups through job creation, improvement of human resource quality, and equalization of economic access (Ramli et al., 2025; Falah & Rahmawati, 2024; Prasetyo & Thomas, 2021).

Based on the results of descriptive statistical analysis, this study obtained several key findings:

1. South Sulawesi's GRDP at constant prices increased from 2016 to 2025, indicating the development of regional economic activity.
2. South Sulawesi's economic growth fluctuated with an average growth rate of 5.02 percent during the 2017–2025 period.

3. South Sulawesi's poverty rate declined from 9.40 percent in 2016 to 7.60 percent in 2025.
4. The period of economic contraction in 2020 was followed by an increase in the poverty rate, while the subsequent economic recovery period was followed by a decline in the poverty rate.
5. Based on the descriptive statistical approach, there is an indication that regional economic development coincides with changes in the poverty rate, but further analysis is needed to statistically test the relationship between variables.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusions

Based on the results of the research on "Economic Development and Poverty Rate in South Sulawesi: A Descriptive Statistical Approach" using economic growth and poverty rate data for the 2016–2025 period, the following conclusions can be drawn:

1. Economic Development of South Sulawesi

The economic development of South Sulawesi Province during the 2016–2025 period shows an increasing trend in the long term. This is indicated by the increase in the Gross Regional Domestic Product (GRDP) at Constant Prices (ADHK) from Rp269,401.31 billion in 2016 to Rp417,633.94 billion in 2025.

Based on the descriptive statistical analysis, South Sulawesi's economic growth during the 2017–2025 period averaged 5.02 percent per year. Economic growth experienced fluctuations, with the highest growth occurring in 2017 at 7.21 percent and the lowest growth occurring in 2020 at -0.71 percent.

The decline in economic growth in 2020 indicates a period of pressure on regional economic activity. However, after that period, South Sulawesi's economy recovered with positive growth through 2025.

2. Development of the Poverty Rate in South Sulawesi

The poverty rate of South Sulawesi Province during the 2016–2025 period shows a declining trend. In 2016, the percentage of the poor population was recorded at 9.40 percent and decreased to 7.60 percent in 2025.

Based on the descriptive statistical analysis, the average poverty rate during the research period was 8.70 percent. The highest poverty rate occurred in 2016 at 9.40 percent, while the lowest poverty rate occurred in 2025 at 7.60 percent.

Although showing a long-term downward trend, the poverty rate increased in 2020 and 2021. This indicates changes in the socio-economic conditions of the community during the period of economic slowdown.

3. Overview of the Relationship between Economic Development and Poverty

Based on the descriptive statistical approach, South Sulawesi's economic development and poverty rate show interrelated patterns of change in several periods.

In the 2017–2019 period, the increase in economic growth coincided with a decline in the poverty rate. Conversely, in 2020 when economic growth contracted, the poverty rate increased.

In the economic recovery period of 2021–2025, economic growth increased again and poverty levels generally declined. However, the results of this study only illustrate development patterns based on available data and cannot yet explain the causal relationship between economic growth and poverty.

Recommendations

Based on the results of the research conducted, several recommendations that can be given are as follows:

1. For Regional Governments

The South Sulawesi Provincial Government needs to maintain sustainable economic growth by ensuring that increased economic activity can provide broader benefits to the community.

Regional economic improvement needs to be accompanied by development strategies that pay attention to income distribution, expansion of employment opportunities, improvement of human resource quality, and strengthening of economic sectors capable of absorbing labor.

2. For Poverty Alleviation Policies

Poverty reduction efforts need to be carried out continuously through policies that not only focus on increasing economic growth but also pay attention to the socio-economic factors of the community.

Poverty reduction programs can be directed toward increasing community productivity, improving workforce skills, developing productive enterprises, and increasing community access to various basic services.

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