

Determinants of Underemployment and Its Implications for Household Poverty: Evidence from a Poverty-Prone Region in Indonesia

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Abstract

Underemployment and poverty represent significant challenges for regional economies. This study aims to examine the determinants of underemployment and its impact on household poverty in Bengkulu Province. The research employs multinomial logistic regression and logistic regression methods. The findings indicate that poverty status, age, and employment position, such as self-employment and unpaid family work, positively influence the likelihood of underemployment. Conversely, economic status, area of residence (urban or rural), productive age, gender, marital status, and household size negatively affect the risk of underemployment. On the other hand, poverty is significantly influenced by employment status, area of residence (particularly in rural areas), non-productive age, marital status, household size, and education level. Individuals or households with lower levels of education face a higher probability of experiencing poverty. The study further reveals that individuals working fewer than or equal to 34 hours per week are 1.6% more likely to fall into poverty. These results underscore the need for policies that expand access to basic services, improve access to formal employment, enhance the quality of life for informal workers, and provide special attention to micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) as strategies to reduce both underemployment and poverty.

Keywords: Underemployment, Poverty, Household, Determinant, SUSENAS



INTRODUCTION

The phenomenon of underemployment is one of the persistent challenges in Indonesia's labor market, particularly in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic. Underemployment is defined as a condition in which individuals work fewer hours than the standard working time or are compelled to work in positions that do not match their level of education (Pratomo, 2015), and/or continue to seek or remain willing to accept additional employment (BPS, 2024). This makes underemployment a significant challenge for the economy of any country, including Indonesia. Approximately 20 percent of workers in Indonesia experience underemployment (BPS, 2024). Most of these workers are forced to accept jobs that are inadequate to meet their daily living needs (Zulfikar, 2019). Moreover, the phenomenon of "jobless growth" in Indonesia, where economic growth is not accompanied by sufficient job creation, has further exacerbated the underemployment situation (Nilan et al., 2011).

According to data from Statistics Indonesia (BPS), the percentage of underemployment in 2021 decreased by 1.48 percent compared to the previous year. However, by 2024, underemployment in Indonesia had shown an upward trend, increasing by 1.32 percent compared to the preceding year (BPS, 2024). Furthermore, the informal sector remains the primary contributor to the problem of underemployment, with approximately 60 percent of Indonesia's total workforce employed in this sector (Tjitrajaya, 2024). Individuals working below standard hours in the informal sector often lack adequate social protection and are highly vulnerable to precarious working conditions (Tjitrajaya, 2024; Pratomo, 2015). In Bengkulu Province, the percentage of workers experiencing time-related underemployment rose by 0.65 percent in 2023 compared to the previous year, and continued to increase by an additional 0.80 percent as of February 2024 (BPS, 2024). This indicates a rising trend of underemployment in Bengkulu, suggesting persistent problems in job quality that may negatively affect societal welfare. Given that Bengkulu's poverty rate remains relatively high compared to other provinces in Sumatra, this situation is likely to be further aggravated by the increasing prevalence of underemployment.

The occurrence of underemployment is influenced by multiple factors, including economic, social, individual, and job-related characteristics. The main determinants of underemployment in Indonesia include education, work experience, and unstable labor market conditions (Pratomo, 2015). Labor market instability and slow economic growth are often identified as key drivers of underemployment. Economic uncertainty may lead firms to reduce working hours or offer jobs that do not align with workers' skills (Davenport



et al., 2022). In addition, economic crises also contribute to rising underemployment, as many workers are forced to accept jobs below their qualifications to meet daily needs (Westover, 2024; Allan et al., 2018). The problem of underemployment has been further aggravated by the adverse effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, which increased both unemployment and underemployment rates, while simultaneously reducing income across various sectors (Widiastuti et al., 2022; Rela et al., 2022).

Government policies aimed at addressing unemployment and underemployment, such as vocational training programs and the promotion of micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs), are often considered ineffective, particularly when confronted with broader economic uncertainties affecting multiple sectors (Rela et al., 2022; Sugiyanti et al., 2020). This limitation reflects the persistence of structural challenges in Indonesia's labor market, which calls for a more holistic approach to tackling underemployment (Mahmud & Tohopi, 2023). Although the number of training programs has increased, participation rates among workers remain low, highlighting a significant gap between policy design and implementation on the ground (Tjitrajaya, 2024).

Other factors, such as education, also play a crucial role in determining the level of underemployment. Individuals with higher levels of education often experience underemployment when they are unable to secure jobs that match their qualifications (Ayis & Sugiharti, 2021; Li & Dan, 2022). This phenomenon is also associated with overeducation, in which workers possess higher educational attainment than required for their positions, leading to dissatisfaction and reduced well-being (Palma & Gonzalez, 2022). In this regard, both the quality of education and the alignment between education and labor market demands are critical factors influencing underemployment (Yirga, 2021).

On the other hand, job characteristics and individual demographic attributes also affect the incidence of underemployment. Jobs that fail to provide sufficient working hours or do not fully utilize workers' skills and knowledge contribute directly to underemployment (Heyes & Tomlinson, 2020). Informal sector workers are particularly vulnerable, as they often lack adequate social protection and face limited access to training and skill development (Tjitrajaya, 2024; Pratomo, 2015; More & Rosenbloom, 2020). Many workers in this sector are trapped in unstable, low-income employment that does not reflect their actual skills or educational background (Santoso & Sriyana, 2020).

Demographic factors such as age, gender, and family status also influence underemployment. Gender, in particular, plays a significant role, with women tending to experience higher levels of underemployment compared to men (Renaldo, 2023), especially among women with children (Kler et al., 2021). This is largely due to factors



such as limited access to education and vocational training, as well as family responsibilities that restrict women's ability to pursue employment opportunities (Renaldo, 2023; Kler et al., 2021). More broadly, underemployment in Indonesia is closely linked to issues of gender inequality and labor migration (Disney et al., 2021). Many women, particularly in rural areas, are compelled to seek employment abroad to support their families, often resulting in unfavorable working conditions (Warner et al., 2016). This demonstrates that underemployment is not merely an economic issue but also a social one, with far-reaching implications for family and community dynamics.

In light of these challenges, underemployment can be understood as a condition that extends beyond economic concerns, encompassing broader social issues that affect households and society as a whole. Studying underemployment is therefore crucial, as the phenomenon not only impacts individuals but also the economy at large. Underemployment reflects the suboptimal utilization of human resources, which can hinder productivity and economic growth. By understanding the determinants of underemployment, labor market policies can be more effectively designed to improve job quality and worker well-being (Guney & Sicrar, 2023; Han & Chung, 2021). Moreover, this study remains particularly relevant in the context of post-pandemic labor market transformations, which have reshaped employment dynamics and created additional challenges for many workers (Sekela et al., 2023; Allan et al., 2018).

The novelty of this study lies in its use of micro-level data, namely the National Socio-Economic Survey (SUSENAS) for Bengkulu Province, which enables an in-depth and specific analysis of individual and household characteristics influencing underemployment. The use of microdata allows for capturing individual-level variations in the experience of underemployment (Rosca & Teposu, 2018; Hadiyanto & Armelly, 2023; Aysis & Sugiharti, 2021; Gong et al., 2021). This study is expected to provide a significant contribution to the existing literature on underemployment, particularly in the context of Bengkulu Province.

METHODOLOGY

This study employs a quantitative descriptive and explanatory research design. The data source is secondary data obtained indirectly (from a third party), published by Statistics Indonesia (BPS) of Bengkulu Province. The dataset used consists of micro-level statistical data from the National Socio-Economic Survey (SUSENAS), specifically the 2024 cross-sectional survey wave. The data include both individual-level and household-level information in Bengkulu Province. The units of analysis in this study are individuals

376

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and households in Bengkulu Province, restricted to those aged 15 years and above who are currently employed. The age threshold of 15 years is based on the assumption that the analysis should focus on the productive age group and comply with legal provisions permitting labor force participation. Individuals under the age of 15 are excluded from the analysis to avoid selection bias. The operational definitions of the research variables are outlined as follows.

Table 1. Operational Definition of Research Variables

Variables	Operational Definition	Type of Data	Categories
Dependent Variables			
Underemployment status	The main job performed by the individual during the past week	Categorical	1: If working under 35 hours/week 0: If working at least 35 hours/week (full-time worker)
Poverty status	Total household expenditure in the last month divided by the poverty line of Bengkulu Province	Categorical	1 : Poverty 0 : Not Poverty
Variabel Independen			
Welfare status	Total expenditure made by households in the last month (natural logarithm)	Continue	
Domicile	Classification of residential areas (urban and rural)	Categorical	1 : Urban 0 : Rural
Age	Divided into 2 group: • Individual age • Productive age classification	Continue Categorical	0 : Age 15-64 y.o 1: Age >64 y.o
Gender	Gender classification	Categorical	0 : Women 1: Men
Marital status	Marital Status	Categorical	0: Not married/ divorced 1: Married



Total of member of household	The total number of people living and eating in a household	Continue	Ratio
Education level	Years of education completed by individual/household	Continue	Ratio
Job position	Job position at the respondent's workplace	Categorical	1: Worker/Employee /Staff 2: Self-Employed 3: Unpaid Freelance/Family Worker

Source: SUSENAS is processed by authors, 2025

This study employs pooled cross-sectional data, which consist of multiple respondents within a specific region and survey period. The analytical method applied in this study is multinomial logistic regression and binary logistic regression. The multinomial logit model is used to examine the effect of explanatory factors on the dependent variable—underemployment—which is categorical in nature. In contrast, the binary logistic regression model is applied to analyze the influence of independent variables on the dependent variable—poverty—which is binary in nature (Stock & Watson, 2019; Wooldridge et al., 2016). The analytical models can be expressed as follows:

Logit and Probit Models

$$P(Y = 1|X) = 1 / (1 + e^{(-\beta'X)}) \dots \dots \dots (1)$$

Where: $P(Y = 1|X)$ represents the probability of the event $Y=1$ given the values of X . The symbol β' denotes the vector of regression coefficients, and X is the vector of independent variables. In addition to the logit model, logistic regression also encompasses the probit model. The probit model can be expressed as follows:

$$P(Y = 1|X) = \Phi(\beta'X) \dots \dots \dots (2)$$

Where: $P(Y = 1|X)$ is the probability of the event $Y=1$ given the values of X . Symbol of Φ represents the cumulative normal distribution function, and β' is the vector of regression coefficients; and X is the vector of independent variables. The interpretation of coefficients in both logit and probit models is typically based on marginal effects, which indicate the change in the probability of the event occurring given a change in the independent variable (Stock & Watson, 2020). Essentially, the results provided by the two

378



models are nearly equivalent, making it relevant to present both logit and probit specifications in the analysis (Wooldridge et al., 2016).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The research findings are presented in three stages. First, descriptive statistics are provided. Second, the results of the logistic regression analysis are discussed, focusing on the factors influencing underemployment, defined as working fewer than 35 hours per week. Third, the results of the logistic regression analysis examining the effect of underemployment on poverty in Bengkulu Province are presented, based on the 2024 SUSENAS data.

Table 2 shows that in 2024, 33.16%, equivalent to approximately 31,441 working-age individuals who were employed in Bengkulu Province, were categorized as underemployed, defined as working fewer than 35 hours per week. Furthermore, 7.14%, or around 6,771 individuals, were classified as poor, with the average monthly household expenditure recorded at IDR 1,315,858. The majority of the population resides in rural areas, and 93.60% of individuals are within the productive age group. Most are married and predominantly male.

Table 2. Descriptive Statistic Data

Variables	Obs	Mean	Std. Deviasi	Min	Max
Working status (1 = Work < 35 hours/week)	94796	0.33	0.47	0	1
Poverty status (1:poverty)	94796	0.07	0.25	0	1
Economic status (ln household expenditure)	94796	14.09	0.52	12.42	18.70
Domicile (1: Urban)	94796	0.37	0.48	0	1
Age	94796	44.43	12.70	15	97
Productive age (1:age >64 years old)	94796	0.94	0.24	0	1
Gender (1: Men)	94796	0.65	0.47	0	1
Marital status (1: Married)	94796	0.79	0.41	0	1



Total of members of household	94796	3.91	1.54	0	14
Education level	94796	9.75	4.12	0	23
Job position					
Worker/Employee /Staff	94796	0.36	0.48	0	1
Self-employed	94796	0.47	0.49	0	1
Unpaid Freelance/Family Worker	94796	0.17	0.38	0	1

Source: data SUSENAS was processed by author, 2025

In addition, the average household size consists of three to four members. Educational attainment varies widely, ranging from no schooling to doctoral-level education (Ph.D.), with the average years of schooling being 9 years and 7 months, equivalent to senior secondary education (SMA/SMU). Regarding employment status, the distribution indicates that 17.49% (16,577 individuals) are categorized as unpaid family workers or casual workers, 35.58% (33,726 individuals) as employees or wage workers, and the largest share, 46.94% (44,493 individuals), are self-employed.

Table 3. Logistic Regression Result

Logistic regression		Number of Obs	=	94796
Log pseudolikelihood		Prob > chi2	=	0.0000
Variables	Coefficient	Robust std. err	z	P> z
Poverty status (1: Poverty)	0.1288	0.0305	4.22	0.000***
Economic status (ln household expenditure)	-0.2473	0.0872	-13.21	0.000***
Domicile (1: Urban)	-0.6984	0.1662	-42.01	0.000***
Age	0.0097	0.0007	12.74	0.000***
Productive_age (1:Age >64 y.o)	-0.5196	0.0338	-15.33	0.000***



Gender (1: Men)	-0.2923	0.0155	-18.77	0.000***
Marital status (1: Married)	-0.23296	0.0193	-12.02	0.000***
Household Size	-0.0678	0.0056	-12.05	0.000***
Years of education	-0.00009	0.0021	-0.04	0.966
Job position (base outcome : Worker/Employee /Staff)				
Self-employed	0.5770	0.0180	32.02	0.000***
Unpaid Freelance/Family Worker	0.7235	0.0222	32.49	0.000***
_cons	3.258	0.2711	12.02	0.000***

Note: Significance level $p < 0.01$ (1%) ***; 0.05 (5%) **; 0.1 (10%) *. Assumption test using robustness test.

Source: 2024 SUSENAS data processed by the author, 2025.

Table 3 presents the results of the logistic regression showing the factors that influence underemployment. The data indicate that the variables of poverty status, age, and employment status such as self-employment and unpaid family workers have a positive effect on underemployment, or working less than 35 hours per week. Meanwhile, other variables such as economic status, area of residence, productive age, gender, marital status, and household size have a negative effect on underemployment, or working less than 35 hours per week in Bengkulu Province.

Table 4 shows that poverty status has a positive and statistically significant effect on underemployment. Specifically, a one-unit increase in poverty status raises the probability of an individual working fewer than 35 hours per week (underemployment) by approximately 2.62%. This result reflects the fact that poverty limits access to essential resources such as health services, education and training, and a decent standard of living (Banerjee et al., 2021; Li & Zhang, 2020). Such constraints reduce the quality of human capital, thereby limiting individuals' ability to compete in the formal labor market and increasing the likelihood of unemployment or underemployment. In line with Martha Nussbaum's capability approach, this phenomenon is not solely a matter of individual ability but is also shaped by broader social factors and patterns of community interaction (Saigaran et al., 2015). Supporting evidence from previous studies also highlights that



poverty increases the risk of social exclusion and psychological stress, both of which represent significant barriers to effective labor market participation (Beech et al., 2021; De França et al., 2020).

The variable of area of residence is proven to be significant for underemployment. The data show that the probability of individuals/households living in urban areas to work less than 35 hours per week is lower by 1.42% compared to those in rural areas. This is consistent with the study (Chen et al., 2023) covering 163 countries from 1991 to 2019, which indicates that underemployment is more prevalent in rural areas. This is due to the dominance of the informal sector in rural areas, as well as the lack of industries and services, and the seasonal nature of agriculture, which results in uncertain job availability (Cappellen & De Weerd, 2023). Therefore, efforts are needed to increase investment for rural development. The variable of productive age has a 10.57% lower probability compared to non-productive age. This occurs because individuals in productive age have higher competitiveness (Gong et al., 2022; Ningsih, 2018) and better health conditions (Churchill et al., 2025). This is further emphasized by the study of Ngwenya et al. (2020), which revealed that, in addition to age, the lack of formal employment history and experience as casual laborers also increases the risk of underemployment.

Table 4. Marginal Effect of Logistic Regression Result

Average marginal effects		Number of Obs	=	94796
Model VCE: Robust				
Independent variable : underemployment status				
Variables	dy/dx	Delta-method std. err.	z	P> z
Poverty status (1: Poverty)	0.0262	0.0062	4.22	0.000***
Economic status (ln household expenditure)	- 0.0503	0.0037	-13.24	0.000***
Domicile (1: Urban)	- 0.1420	0.0032889	-43.31	0.000***
Age	0.0019	0.0001	12.77	0.000***
Productive_age (1:Age >64 y.o)	- 0.1057	0.0068	-15.41	0.000***



Gender (1: Men)	- 0.0594	0.0031	-18.87	0.000***
Marital status (1: Married)	- 0.0473	0.0039	-12.06	0.000***
Household Size	- 0.0137	0.0011	-12.09	0.000***
Years of education	-0.00001	0.0004	-0.04	0.966
Job position (base outcome : Worker/Employee /Staff)				
Self-employed	0.1154	0.0035	32.65	0.000***
Unpaid Freelance/Family Worker	0.1481	0.0046	31.70	0.000***

Note: Significance level $p < 0.01$ (1%) ***; 0.05 (5%) **; 0.1 (10%) *. Assumption test using robustness test.

Source: 2024 SUSENAS data processed by the author, 2025.

The gender variable is significant for underemployment. The study shows that men have a 5.94% lower probability compared to women. This finding is consistent with the study of Acosta-Ballesteros et al. (2021), which attributes this to differences in characteristics, where women tend to prefer specific types of jobs with more flexible working hours. In addition, the vulnerability of underemployment among women occurs due to the persistence of gender segregation stigma in society (Kamerāde & Richardson, 2018), unequal access between men and women that creates difficulties in competition, and as revealed by Churchill et al. (2025), the vulnerability of underemployment among women is also a result of frequent labor market exits and re-entries due to family responsibilities and multiple roles. Marital status and household size significantly affect underemployment. Individuals or households that are married have a 4.73% lower probability of underemployment, and households with a larger number of members have a 1.37% lower probability of underemployment. This occurs because of the economic responsibility to meet greater needs, which provides motivation to seek stable jobs with full working hours.

Employment status as self-employed and as unpaid family workers has a significant effect on underemployment. The study reveals that self-employment has a higher probability of underemployment by 11.54%. This is particularly vulnerable in small-scale businesses due to unstable income and high failure rates, which increase the risk



of underemployment (Galindo da Fonseca, 2022). Furthermore, the study highlights that changes in the local labor market without long-term planning can increase failure rates and the risk of underemployment (Houston et al., 2025). Meanwhile, unpaid family workers tend to experience underemployment because their contributions are often seasonal or fall under casual employment status.

Bengkulu Province is the second poorest province in Sumatra, which is certainly an important issue that needs to be addressed by both the government and society. Table 5 illustrates that the variable of underemployment, defined as working less than 35 hours per week, has a positive effect on poverty. This means that an increase in underemployment, or individuals working less than 35 hours per week, raises the probability of being poor by 1.6% compared to those working more than 35 hours per week. This finding is supported by previous studies which reveal that underemployment can create persistent poverty due to the high contribution of individuals/households in the informal sector without specific skills, coupled with low wages, high job insecurity (Ngwenya et al., 2020; Petreski et al., 2021), psychological harm caused by the prevalence of discouraged workers, particularly among the youth (Caceres & Caceres, 2015), and the underutilization of skills and capabilities (Heyes & Tomlinson, 2021). Previous research (Kim & Golden, 2022) conducted in the United States also emphasizes the need for preventive public policies related to underemployment, or working less than 35 hours per week, to mitigate the risks of severe financial problems.

This study also reveals that individuals/households residing in urban areas have a 3.11% lower probability of being poor compared to those living in rural areas. This condition is known as “area effects,” where the surrounding environment influences life opportunities, social status, and economic well-being, even after accounting for individual factors (Prattley et al., 2020). This may occur due to disparities between rural and urban areas in various aspects, such as access to employment/economic opportunities (Ningsih, 2018), public services (Leandro-Reguillo & Stuart, 2021), differences in access to and quality of education and healthcare (Liddle, 2017; Rahayu et al., 2020), and infrastructure (Sutikno et al., 2024). Several studies also show that poverty alleviation efforts can be pursued through decentralization strategies of urbanization to medium-sized cities, with populations ranging between 1 and 5 million (Sekkat, 2017).

The age variable has a significant negative effect on poverty, where individuals in the productive age group (15 to 64 years) have a 3.07% lower probability of being poor compared to the non-productive group. This finding is consistent with previous studies showing that the productive age group still has higher economic potential (Gong et al.,



2022; Ningsih, 2018). Research by Hwang & Nam (2022) further emphasizes that individuals in the productive age group tend to have a lower risk of poverty when poverty is analyzed multidimensionally, including monetary aspects, health, housing, social relations, and social security. Conversely, individuals aged over 64 are more vulnerable to poverty due to declining income, physical limitations, and dependence on pensions or social assistance (Kwan & Walsh, 2018; P. Lu et al., 2021; Parvaei et al., 2023). Therefore, policies such as financial education and retirement planning become crucial in reducing such vulnerability.

Table 5. Marginal Effect – The impact of underemployment to poverty

Average marginal effects		Number of Obs	=	94796
Model VCE: Robust				
Independent variable : poverty status				
Variables	dy/dx	Delta-method std. err.	z	P> z
Working status (1: Underemployment)	0.0167	0.0016	9.99	0.000***
Control Variables				
Domicile (1: Urban)	- 0.311	0.0020	-15.58	0.000***
Age	-0.0016	0.00008	-18.56	0.000***
Productive_age (1:Age >64 y.o)	- 0.0307	0.0043	-7.05	0.000***
Gender (1: Men)	- 0.0016	0.0016	-1.00	0.316
Marital status (1: Married)	0.0128	0.0024	5.31	0.000***
Household Size	0.0311	0.0005	61.29	0.000***
Years of education	-0.0077	0.0002	-35.39	0.000***
Job position (base outcome : Worker/Employee /Staff)				
Self-employed	0.0180	0.0018	9.60	0.000***



Unpaid Freelance/Family Worker	0.0318	0.0024	13.01	0.000***
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Note: Significance level $p < 0.01$ (1%) ***; 0.05 (5%) **; 0.1 (10%) *. Assumption test using robustness test.

Source: 2024 SUSENAS data processed by the author, 2025.

The education variable has a significant effect on poverty, where individuals/households with higher education have a 0.16% lower probability of being poor compared to those with lower education, consistent with Ngepah et al. (2023). This condition arises because the opportunities and types of jobs accessible are limited (Hofmarcher, 2021), and the skills possessed are not competitive (Wanka & Rena, 2019), which tends to push individuals into the informal sector with low wages, making them more vulnerable to poverty. Beyond income, studies also show that those with lower education tend to have poorer health, which increases economic vulnerability (Inoue et al., 2023). From a social perspective, individuals with lower education also tend to have limited social networks, reducing access to information and economic support.

In the context of marital status, this study reveals that married individuals have a 1.28% higher probability of being poor compared to those who are unmarried. The impact of marriage on poverty is a controversial issue. Baker (2015) states that marriage has the potential to reduce poverty through an increase in the number of adult earners who can contribute to household income. In addition, marriage provides the advantage of economies of scale, where shared expenses allow couples to save, improve living standards, and invest for the future. However, Y. C. Lu et al. (2020) argue that marriage can increase poverty, particularly for single-income households, as limited earnings are burdened with higher economic responsibilities.

Furthermore, early marriage, gender inequality, low education, and domestic violence also serve as contributing factors that exacerbate poverty (Adekoya & Sokunbi, 2021; Khairina & Tridharma Putra, 2023). Potential efforts to address this issue include regulating the age of marriage and closer oversight by local governments, as well as expanding access to free education to reduce gender inequality. Munoz Boudet et al. (2018) and Tavares & Betti (2024) further highlight that married women are more vulnerable to poverty because they are often placed in a disadvantaged position regarding job quality and time allocation, particularly after taking on motherhood roles.



Households with a larger number of members have a 3.11% higher probability of being poor. This finding is consistent with Ningsih (2018), with the main causes being an increase in dependency burden and limited resources (Heitzmann & Pennerstorfer, 2025; Soseco et al., 2022). Policy recommendations include strengthening cash transfer programs for large families, promoting awareness campaigns such as the "two children are enough" program, and simultaneously enhancing the capacity and work intensity of parents, which could reduce the risk of income poverty.

Employment status as self-employed and unpaid family workers increases the probability of poverty by 1.80% and 3.18%, respectively. This occurs because small-scale self-employment (survival business) tends to have low profit margins, lack of product differentiation, weak bargaining power, as well as limited capital and technology. Such businesses are highly vulnerable to economic shocks and face difficulties in expanding, resulting in income that is often insufficient to escape poverty (Morris, 2020). In addition, unpaid family workers increase poverty risk because they rely on other family members who may also have low income, or in other words, their contributions are not economically recognized (Singh & Pattanaik, 2019).

CONCLUSION

This study finds that underemployment, defined as working less than 35 hours per week, significantly increases the probability of poverty in Bengkulu Province. Key determinants of underemployment include poverty status, age, and employment type, while poverty itself is strongly associated with employment status, rural residence, non-productive age, marital status, larger household size, and low education levels. These results underscore the structural inequalities between urban and rural areas in terms of employment opportunities, education, and infrastructure.

Based on these findings, policymakers are advised to prioritize reducing underemployment and poverty through three main strategies: (1) expanding access to basic services and skills training, (2) improving protection and productivity of informal workers, and (3) strengthening support for self-employed individuals and MSMEs to enhance resilience and income stability.

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