

## The Influence of MSMEs and Halal Tourism on Economic Growth in Central Java Province (2019–2023): The Moderating Role of Labor

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### ABSTRACT

This study aimed to examine the effects of Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) and halal tourism on economic growth in Central Java Province during the period 2019–2023, with labor as a moderating variable. A quantitative approach was employed using secondary panel data obtained from the Central Statistics Agency (BPS) and the Regional Tourism Office. The data were analyzed using multiple linear regression and Moderated Regression Analysis (MRA) with EViews 12 software. The results indicated that the number of MSMEs had a significant positive effect on economic growth, and halal tourism also contributed positively to economic growth. Furthermore, the MRA results revealed that labor significantly moderated the relationship between MSMEs and economic growth, as well as between halal tourism and economic growth. These findings highlight the strategic role of labor in strengthening the contribution of MSMEs and halal tourism to regional economic growth.

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## INTRODUCTION

Economic growth is a primary indicator used to assess the success of a government in addressing economic challenges and achieving national development goals (Marcal et al., 2024). Stable economic growth reflects the ability of an economy to create employment opportunities, increase income levels, and improve overall social welfare. Conversely, fluctuations in economic growth may indicate structural weaknesses that affect both macroeconomic stability and household-level economic conditions (Ramadhani et al., 2024).

In the last five years, economic growth in Central Java Province has shown an unstable pattern caused by economic slowdown and increasing inflation, resulting in more and more people having difficulty finding a livelihood that has an impact on the microeconomic system in the household to meet household needs, with the existence of MSMEs it can help absorb labor to reduce the unemployment rate in Central Java Province (Hidayat et al., 2017).

In this context, Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) play a strategic role in supporting regional economic resilience. MSMEs are widely recognized as a key driver of employment creation due to their labor-intensive nature and broad distribution across

economic sectors (Kurniadi et al., 2024). By absorbing a significant portion of the workforce, MSMEs contribute to reducing unemployment and mitigating the negative effects of economic instability in Central Java Province.

Furthermore, the expansion of MSMEs not only supports labor absorption but also strengthens local economic activities by enhancing productivity, innovation, and income distribution (Basit et al., 2024). As such, MSMEs are expected to act as an important engine of economic growth, particularly during periods of economic uncertainty. Understanding their contribution within the broader framework of regional economic development is therefore essential for formulating effective and inclusive economic policies (Khumairo' et al., 2025).

Gross Regional Domestic Product (GRDP) is one of the main elements that plays an important role in measuring the level of economic growth of a region. Positive GRDP growth indicates that a region's economy is developing, while negative economic growth indicates that a region's economy is experiencing a recession (Marcal et al., 2024).

**Tabel 1.** GRDP data in Central Java Province based on BPS data for the 2019-2023 period

| No | Year | PDRB  |
|----|------|-------|
| 1  | 2019 | 5,36  |
| 2  | 2020 | -2,65 |
| 3  | 2021 | 3,33  |
| 4  | 2022 | 5,31  |
| 5  | 2023 | 4,98  |

Based on the data above, it shows that in 2021, the economic recovery process took place in most parts of Indonesia, including Central Java. However, the highest economic growth rate in Central Java was recorded in 2019 at 5.79 percent and the smallest in 2020 at -2.65 percent. Economic recovery in 2022 has almost matched the pre-pandemic period, which was 5.33 percent. However, in 2023, there was an economic slowdown with economic growth recorded at 4.98 percent, lower than in 2022 (Pramudyastuti, 2024).

Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) have a strategic advantage in driving the economy of Indonesia or Central Java Province. This development certainly provides a very positive contribution to the economic growth of Central Java Province, this contribution can be seen from the GRDP (Nasrullah, 2022).

**Tabel 2.** MSMES Data in Central Java Province for the Period 2019-2023.

| No | Year | MSMES   |
|----|------|---------|
| 1  | 2019 | 912.421 |
| 2  | 2020 | 898.162 |
| 3  | 2021 | 855.488 |
| 4  | 2022 | 892.108 |
| 5  | 2023 | 862.926 |

Based on the table of data on the number of MSMEs, we can see that MSMEs in Central Java Province show an increase and decrease from year to year. In 2020 and 2021, MSMES in Central Java Province experienced a decline at 898,162 in 2020 and in 2021 it was at 855,488 compared to 2019 at 912,421 and in 2022 MSMES experienced an increase although it could not exceed 2019 before Covid-19, which was at 892,108. This increase phenomenon did not continue until 2023 because in 2023 MSMES in Central Java Province experienced a decline at 862,926 due to slowing economic growth conditions which could affect people's purchasing power and have an impact on MSMEs sales.

Halal tourism is tourism that provides services and facilities that are friendly to Muslim tourists, but can still be enjoyed by non-Muslim tourists. The increasing population

of young, educated, and high-income Muslims has made the halal tourism industry start targeting Muslim tourists (Putra & Tucunan, 2021).

**Table 3.** Number of tourist attractions in Central Java Province for the period 2019-2023.

| No | Year | DTW   |
|----|------|-------|
| 1  | 2019 | 834   |
| 2  | 2020 | 982   |
| 3  | 2021 | 1.130 |
| 4  | 2022 | 1.245 |
| 5  | 2023 | 1.218 |

Based on the table data above, the number of DTW locations in Central Java Province shows fluctuations from year to year. This can be seen in 2019 to 2021 from 834 DTW in 2019 to 1,130 DTW in 2021. However, in 2022, DTW increased to 1,245 DTW, then in 2023 DTW decreased to 1,218 DTW.

In the economic sector, labor and capital are important components as machines and equipment to produce greater output in the production process of goods and services (Prameswari et al., 2021).

**Table 4.** Number of Workers Working in Central Java Province for the period 2019-2023.

| No | Year | Workers    |
|----|------|------------|
| 1  | 2019 | 17.602.917 |
| 2  | 2020 | 17.536.935 |
| 3  | 2021 | 18.963.993 |
| 4  | 2022 | 18.390.459 |
| 5  | 2023 | 19.988.875 |

Data shows that the number of workers in Central Java decreased in 2020. This decrease was due to the weakening of economic potential in terms of job availability, which resulted in an increase in the number of unemployed that year. In 2020, there were 17,536,935 workers, less than the previous year, namely in 2019 there were 17,602,917 workers, then in 2021 there was an increase in workers, there were 18,963,993 workers and in 2022 workers decreased to 18,390,459, and in 2023 workers began to increase, there were 19,988,875 workers. The process of economic activity that depends on the expertise and skills of the workforce in managing production, distribution, and various other economic activities (Hikmawati & Yasa, 2024).

The fluctuation in labor absorption indicates that economic growth in Central Java is closely linked to the quality and capacity of its workforce. Labor is not merely a quantitative factor measured by the number of employed individuals, but also a qualitative factor reflected in skills, productivity, and adaptability to economic changes (Ayudita & Purnomo, 2024). An increase in the workforce without adequate skill development may not necessarily lead to higher economic output, particularly in labor-intensive sectors such as Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) and tourism (Rizqi, 2025).

In the context of MSMEs, labor plays a critical role in determining business productivity, innovation, and sustainability. MSMEs rely heavily on human capital to manage production processes, marketing strategies, and service quality (Riawan et al., 2024). When labor availability and skill levels improve, MSMEs are better positioned to expand their operations, increase output, and contribute more significantly to regional economic growth. Conversely, limited labor skills and productivity may weaken the contribution of MSMEs to economic performance, even when the number of enterprises continues to grow (Rizqi, 2025).

Similarly, the development of halal tourism requires a workforce that is not only sufficient in number but also equipped with competencies related to hospitality services, halal standards, and cultural sensitivity (Joeliaty et al., 2021). The effectiveness of halal tourism in stimulating economic growth depends on the ability of the labor force to deliver high-quality services that meet the expectations of Muslim tourists while remaining inclusive to non-Muslim visitors. Without adequate labor support, the expansion of tourist destinations may not translate into optimal economic benefits for the region (Hanina, 2025).

Therefore, labor can be positioned as a moderating variable that strengthens or weakens the relationship between MSMEs and economic growth, as well as between halal tourism and economic growth. Variations in labor absorption and quality may explain why the impact of MSMEs and halal tourism on economic growth is not uniform across time. This condition underscores the importance of incorporating labor as a moderating factor in empirical analysis to capture the dynamic interaction between human capital, sectoral development, and regional economic growth in Central Java Province.

## METHODS

This study employed a quantitative research approach using panel data analysis. The panel data consisted of a combination of time series data covering the period from 2019 to 2023 and cross-sectional data from 35 districts and cities in Central Java Province. The use of panel data enabled a more comprehensive analysis by capturing both temporal dynamics and regional variations in economic growth.

The data used in this study were secondary data obtained from the Central Statistics Agency (BPS) of Indonesia. Economic growth, measured by Gross Regional Domestic Product (GRDP) growth, served as the dependent variable. The independent variables included the number of Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) and halal tourism, while labor was incorporated as a moderating variable to examine its role in strengthening or weakening the relationship between the independent variables and economic growth.

The analytical method applied was panel data regression, followed by Moderated Regression Analysis (MRA) to test the moderating effect of labor. Model selection was conducted through appropriate specification tests to determine the most suitable panel data model. The estimation and data analysis were performed using EViews 12 software. This quantitative approach aimed to provide empirical evidence through statistical procedures to explain the relationship between MSMEs, halal tourism, labor, and economic growth in Central Java Province.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The results and discussion section of this study is structured to provide a comprehensive overview of the relationship between the number of Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs), halal tourism, labor, and economic growth in Central Java Province. The empirical analysis is conducted using a quantitative approach with time-series data and regression methods, supported by classical assumption tests and Moderated Regression Analysis (MRA) to ensure valid and reliable results.

In this section, the study presents the results of data stationarity tests, classical assumption tests, the coefficient of determination, simultaneous tests (F-test), partial tests (t-test), and labor moderation analysis. Each stage of the analysis is systematically presented to ensure that the research model meets statistical requirements and is able to accurately explain the relationships among variables. The findings are then analyzed and interpreted by linking them to development economics theory, the role of MSMEs, and the concept of halal tourism in promoting regional economic growth.

### Result

#### Stationarity Test

**Tabel 5.** Result of Stationarity Test

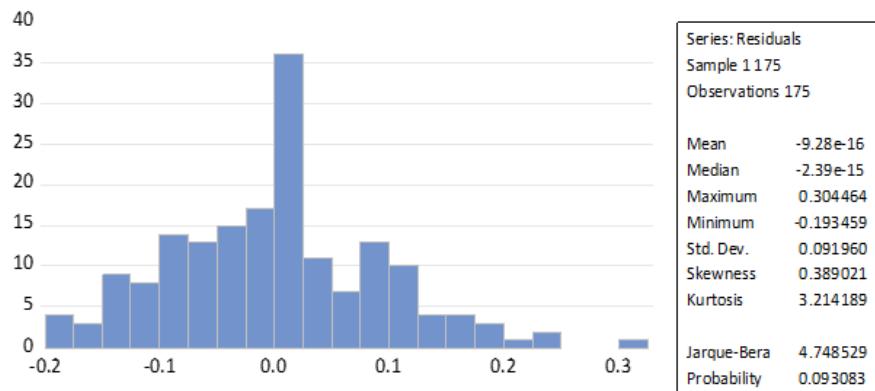
| No | Variable        | Probability | Result                |
|----|-----------------|-------------|-----------------------|
| 1  | GRDP            | 0,0000      | Stationary level data |
| 2  | Number of MSMES | 0,0000      | Stationary level data |
| 3  | Halal Tourism   | 0,0000      | Stationary level data |
| 4  | Labor Force     | 0,0000      | Stationary level data |

From the table above, it can be seen that the variables of economic growth, number of SMEs, halal tourism, and workforce each have a probability value of  $0.0000 < 0.05$ . This shows that all of these variables have reached stationarity at the level.

#### Classical Assumption Test

##### Normality Test

The Jarque-Bera value is 4.748529 and the probability is  $0.093083 > 0.05$  which indicates that the residuals in this study are normally distributed. So it can be concluded that the data is normally distributed or the data normality test has been met.

**Figure 1.** Results of the Residual Normality Test Using the Jarque-Bera Method

The Jarque-Bera value is 4.748529 and the probability is  $0.093083 > 0.05$  which indicates that the residuals in this study are normally distributed. So it can be concluded that the data is normally distributed or the data normality test has been met.

##### Multicollinearity Test

Variance Inflation Factors  
 Date: 05/25/25 Time: 01:37  
 Sample: 1 175  
 Included observations: 175

| Variable | Coefficient Variance | Uncentered VIF | Centered VIF |
|----------|----------------------|----------------|--------------|
| C        | 0.003471             | 155.3430       | NA           |
| LOGX1    | 0.000239             | 198.5365       | 1.308625     |
| LOGX2    | 0.000304             | 25.46660       | 1.308625     |

**Figure 2.** Results of the Multicollinearity Test Using Variance Inflation Factor (VIF)

From the multicollinearity test output above, it can be seen that the VIF value results for the independent variable  $<10.00$ , so it can be concluded that there is no multicollinearity problem in this study.

### Heteroskedasticity Test

| Heteroskedasticity Test: Glejser  |          |                      |        |  |
|-----------------------------------|----------|----------------------|--------|--|
| Null hypothesis: Homoskedasticity |          |                      |        |  |
| F-statistic                       | 1.067207 | Prob. F(93.81)       | 0.3834 |  |
| Obs*R-squared                     | 96.35933 | Prob. Chi-Square(93) | 0.3851 |  |
| Scaled explained SS               | 81.39893 | Prob. Chi-Square(93) | 0.7994 |  |

| Test Equation:             |             |  |  |  |
|----------------------------|-------------|--|--|--|
| Dependent Variable: ARESID |             |  |  |  |
| Method: Least Squares      |             |  |  |  |
| Date: 05/25/25             | Time: 01:34 |  |  |  |
| Sample: 1 175              |             |  |  |  |
| Included observations: 175 |             |  |  |  |

| Variable | Coefficient | Std. Error | t-Statistic | Prob.  |
|----------|-------------|------------|-------------|--------|
| C        | 0.016210    | 0.019712   | 0.822370    | 0.4133 |
| LOGX1    | 0.000359    | 0.004955   | 0.072509    | 0.9424 |
| LOGX2    | 0.000985    | 0.004694   | 0.209917    | 0.8343 |

**Figure 3.** Results of the Heteroskedasticity Test Using the Glejser Method

From the table above, it is known that this study uses the Glesjer Test which is selected to detect heteroscedasticity. From the table above, it shows that the results of the heteroscedasticity test, the probability value of each independent variable is  $>0.05$ , so it can be concluded that in this study there is no heteroscedasticity problem.

### Autocorrelation Test

|                    |          |                       |           |
|--------------------|----------|-----------------------|-----------|
| R-squared          | 0.681294 | Mean dependent var    | 7.528772  |
| Adjusted R-squared | 0.673795 | S.D. dependent var    | 0.267945  |
| S.E. of regression | 0.153035 | Akaike info criterion | -0.882068 |
| Sum squared resid  | 3.981353 | Schwarz criterion     | -0.791646 |
| Log likelihood     | 82.18096 | Hannan-Quinn criter.  | -0.845390 |
| F-statistic        | 90.85171 | Durbin-Watson stat    | 1.822489  |
| Prob(F-statistic)  | 0.000000 |                       |           |

**Figure 4.** Summary of Regression Model Goodness-of-Fit Statistics

Durbin-Watson autocorrelation test results =  $du < dw < 4 - du = 1.7758 < 1.822489 < 2.2242$ . So it can be concluded that the data does not experience autocorrelation or passes the autocorrelation test results because the Durbin-Watson statistic value is between the  $du$  and  $4 - du$  values.

### Coefficient of Determination and Explanatory Power of the Model

Based on the results of the coefficient of determination test, the Adjusted R-square value is 0.673795, or 67.3795%. This indicates that the independent variables, namely the number of MSMEs and halal tourism, are able to explain 67.3795% of the variation in Gross Regional Domestic Product (GRDP) in Central Java Province. In other words, changes in GRDP can be largely attributed to variations in the number of MSMEs and the development of halal tourism.

### Unexplained Variation in GRDP and the Role of External Factors

Meanwhile, the remaining 32.6205% of the variation in GRDP is influenced by other factors not included in this study. These factors may include variables such as investment, technological progress, infrastructure development, government spending, and other macroeconomic or structural conditions. This finding suggests that although MSMEs and halal tourism play a substantial role in explaining regional economic growth, a

comprehensive analysis of GRDP should also consider additional determinants beyond the scope of this research.

### **Simultaneous Effect of MSMEs and Halal Tourism on GRDP (F-Test Results)**

Based on the results of the simultaneous test (F-test), the probability value of the *f-statistic* is 0.000000, which is lower than the significance level of 0.05. This indicates that the number of MSMEs and halal tourism simultaneously have a significant effect on Gross Regional Domestic Product (GRDP) in Central Java Province. Therefore, it can be concluded that the development of MSMEs and halal tourism plays an important role in promoting regional economic growth.

### **Partial Effect of MSMEs on Regional Economic Growth (t-Test Results)**

Furthermore, the results of the partial test (t-test) show that the number of MSMEs has a positive and significant effect on GRDP in Central Java Province. The MSME variable produces a coefficient of 0.213270 with a probability value of 0.0000, which is below the 0.05 significance level. This finding indicates that an increase in the number of MSMEs contributes to economic growth through higher production activities, job creation, and the strengthening of the regional economic structure. Thus, the hypothesis stating that the number of MSMEs influences economic growth is accepted.

### **Partial Effect of Halal Tourism on Regional Economic Growth (t-Test Results)**

The partial test results also reveal that halal tourism has a positive and significant effect on GRDP in Central Java Province. The halal tourism variable yields a coefficient of 0.449547 with a probability value of 0.0000, which is lower than 0.05. This suggests that the development of halal tourism can stimulate regional economic growth through increased tourist arrivals, higher consumption of tourism-related services, and broader economic circulation across supporting sectors. Accordingly, the hypothesis proposing that halal tourism influences economic growth is accepted.

### **The Moderating Role of Labor in the Relationship between MSMEs and Economic Growth**

Moreover, the results of the Moderated Regression Analysis (MRA) indicate that labor moderates the relationship between the number of MSMEs and economic growth. The interaction term shows a probability value of 0.0103, which is below the 0.05 significance level. Statistically, this implies that labor strengthens the effect of MSMEs on GRDP, meaning that the positive impact of MSME growth on the regional economy becomes more substantial when supported by an adequate and productive workforce.

### **The Moderating Role of Labor in the Relationship between Halal Tourism and Economic Growth**

In addition, labor is found to moderate the relationship between halal tourism and economic growth. The MRA results show a probability value of 0.0108, which is also lower than 0.05. This indicates that labor plays a significant role in enhancing the contribution of halal tourism to GRDP. In other words, the effectiveness of halal tourism in driving economic growth depends heavily on the availability and quality of labor capable of delivering high-quality services and supporting sustainable tourism development.

### **Dicussion**

These empirical findings indicate that MSMEs and halal tourism play a significant role in driving economic growth in Central Java Province. The positive and significant coefficient of MSMEs confirms that the expansion of MSMEs contributes to increased regional economic output through employment creation, income generation, and stimulation of local economic activities. This result supports the view that MSMEs function as the



backbone of regional economies, particularly in developing regions where large-scale industries are limited (Aprieni et al., 2024).

Similarly, the positive effect of halal tourism on GRDP suggests that the development of halal-oriented tourist destinations contributes substantially to economic growth. The tourism sector generates multiplier effects by increasing demand for accommodation, transportation, food services, and other supporting industries. In regions such as Central Java, which possess strong cultural and religious attributes, halal tourism provides an inclusive development strategy that attracts both domestic and international Muslim tourists, thereby enhancing regional economic performance (Kurniawati & Fathoni, 2023).

More importantly, the Moderated Regression Analysis reveals that labor plays a significant moderating role in the relationship between MSMEs and economic growth, as well as between halal tourism and economic growth. This finding implies that the economic contribution of MSMEs and halal tourism is not solely determined by their quantitative expansion, but also by the availability and capacity of the labor force. A larger and more productive workforce strengthens the ability of MSMEs to scale up production and improves service quality in the tourism sector (Harahap et al., 2024).

The moderating role of labor highlights the importance of human capital in regional economic development. When labor absorption increases and workforce quality improves, MSMEs can operate more efficiently and halal tourism services can meet higher standards, thereby amplifying their impact on economic growth. Conversely, limited labor capacity may weaken the effectiveness of these sectors, even when the number of MSMEs and tourist destinations increases (Anggraeni et al., 2025).

Overall, these results indicate that policies aimed at accelerating economic growth in Central Java Province should adopt an integrated approach by simultaneously promoting MSME development, strengthening halal tourism, and enhancing labor capacity through skill development and workforce training. Such a strategy is expected to create a more resilient and sustainable regional economy by maximizing the synergistic effects between sectoral growth and labor absorption.

## CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the study examining the influence of the number of MSMEs and halal tourism on economic growth with labor as a moderating variable in Central Java Province during the period 2019–2023, several conclusions can be drawn. The findings indicate that the number of MSMEs has a positive and significant effect on economic growth, suggesting that the expansion of MSMEs plays a crucial role as a driver of the local economy. In addition, halal tourism is found to have a positive and significant impact on economic growth, demonstrating its substantial contribution to the service and trade sectors. Furthermore, labor is proven to moderate the relationship between MSMEs and economic growth, indicating that MSMEs are highly dependent on the availability of competent, skilled, and productive workers to increase production capacity, expand business operations, and enhance service competitiveness. Likewise, labor also moderates the relationship between halal tourism and economic growth, implying that the economic impact of halal tourism is strengthened when supported by a workforce that possesses adequate competencies in tourism services and an understanding of Islamic values, thereby improving the overall quality of the tourist experience.

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