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Determinants of Employment Opportunities in Kotawaringin Barat Regency: An OLS Approach

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Abstract: *Employment opportunities are an important indicator of regional economic development because they reflect the ability of an economy to absorb labor and improve community welfare. This study aims to analyze the effects of economic growth, labor force, inflation, and investment on employment opportunities in Kotawaringin Barat Regency during the period 2011–2025. The study employs a quantitative approach using secondary time-series data obtained from Statistics Indonesia (BPS), the Regional Development Planning Agency (Bappeda), and other relevant institutions. Multiple linear regression analysis based on the Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) method was applied using EViews software. Prior to hypothesis testing, classical assumption tests consisting of normality, multicollinearity, heteroscedasticity, and autocorrelation tests were conducted to ensure the validity of the model. The results indicate that economic growth, labor force, and investment have positive and statistically significant effects on employment opportunities. Economic growth exhibits the strongest influence, indicating that regional economic expansion substantially contributes to labor absorption. Meanwhile, inflation has a negative and significant effect on employment opportunities, suggesting that rising prices may reduce firms' capacity to create jobs. Simultaneously, economic growth, labor force, inflation, and investment significantly affect employment opportunities, with an R^2 value of 0.9274, indicating that 92.74% of the variation in employment opportunities is explained by the variables included in the model. The findings imply that policies aimed at sustaining economic growth, improving labor quality, maintaining price stability, and encouraging investment are essential for expanding employment opportunities and reducing unemployment in Kotawaringin Barat Regency.*

Keywords: *Employment Opportunities, Economic Growth, Labor Force, Inflation, Investment, Regional Development*

1. Introduction

Economic development aims to improve community welfare through higher income, equitable development, and expanded employment opportunities. One important indicator of successful economic development is the ability of a region to generate employment for its labor force. According to Tambunan (2000), sustained economic growth increases the production of goods and services, thereby creating greater employment opportunities and improving living standards.

Regional economic development plays a strategic role in supporting national development because each region possesses different economic characteristics and resource potentials. Arsyad (2016) argues that regional development involves collaboration between local governments and communities in utilizing available resources to stimulate economic growth and job creation. Consequently, creating employment opportunities remains a major objective of regional development policies.

Kotawaringin Barat Regency, Central Kalimantan, has experienced considerable economic growth driven by the plantation, trade, manufacturing, and service sectors. Despite this progress, the continuous increase in the labor force has not been fully accompanied by sufficient job creation. According to Statistics Indonesia (BPS) of Kotawaringin Barat Regency (2025), labor force participation has continued to rise, while unemployment has fluctuated over time, indicating that employment opportunities remain an important regional development issue.

Theoretically, employment opportunities are influenced by several macroeconomic factors, including economic growth, labor force, inflation, and investment. Higher economic growth is expected to increase labor demand through expanding production activities (Jhingan, 2016). Conversely, rapid labor force growth without adequate job creation may increase unemployment (Tjiptoherijanto, 2001). Inflation can negatively affect employment by reducing purchasing power and increasing production costs (Mankiw, 2021), while investment contributes positively by expanding productive capacity and creating new jobs (Todaro & Smith, 2020).

Previous empirical studies generally indicate that economic growth and investment positively affect employment opportunities, whereas inflation tends to have a negative effect. However, findings regarding the impact of labor force growth remain inconsistent across regions, suggesting the need for further investigation at the regional level, particularly in Kotawaringin Barat Regency.

Therefore, this study examines the effects of economic growth, labor force, inflation, and investment on employment opportunities in Kotawaringin Barat Regency during the period 2011–2025 using the Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) method. The findings are expected to provide empirical evidence for the development of labor economics literature and serve as a reference for policymakers in designing strategies to expand employment opportunities and promote sustainable regional economic development.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Employment

Employment is one of the important aspects of economic development because it is directly related to community productivity and public welfare. According to Law of the Republic of Indonesia Number 13 of 2003 concerning Employment, labor refers to every individual who is capable of performing work in order to produce goods and/or services to fulfill personal as well as societal needs.

According to Badan Pusat Statistik (BPS), the working-age population refers to individuals aged 15 years and above, which are categorized into the labor force and non-labor force groups. The labor force consists of employed individuals and openly unemployed individuals, while the non-labor force includes students, housewives, and other groups outside economic activities.

2.2 Economic Growth

Economic growth refers to an increase in a region’s ability to produce goods and services within a certain period. According to (Sadono Sukirno, 2016), economic growth reflects the development of economic activities that lead to increased production of goods and services.

Economic growth is commonly measured using Gross Regional Domestic Product (GRDP). The higher the economic growth of a region, the greater the opportunity for creating employment opportunities.

2.3 Gross Regional Domestic Product (GRDP)

Gross Regional Domestic Product (GRDP) refers to the total added value of goods and services produced by all economic activities within a region during a certain period. According to (Mudrajad Kuncoro, 2018), GRDP is used as the primary indicator to measure regional economic performance.

An increase in GRDP indicates growing economic activities, which may encourage higher labor demand and employment absorption.

2.4 Inflation

Inflation is the tendency of prices of goods and services to increase generally and continuously within a certain period. According to (Boediono 2014), inflation refers to a continuous general increase in prices.

Meanwhile, (Sadono Sukirno, 2016) stated that inflation is a process of rising prices within the economy that results in declining public purchasing power.

2.5 Investment

Investment refers to expenditures on capital goods purchases aimed at increasing future production capacity. According to Michael P. Todaro and Stephen C. Smith (2020), investment is an important factor in promoting economic growth and employment opportunities because investment creates new production activities.

2.6 Previous Studies

A study conducted by (Dewi Frisca, 2016) revealed that economic growth and investment positively affect employment opportunities. Meanwhile, research by Indra Nainggolan (2009) found that an increase in the labor force without sufficient job availability may increase unemployment rates.

3. Research Methods

This study employed a quantitative approach with an explanatory research design to analyze the effects of economic growth, labor force, inflation, and investment on employment opportunities in Kotawaringin Barat Regency during the period 2011–2025. The explanatory research design was selected because the study aims to examine the causal relationships between macroeconomic variables and employment opportunities through econometric analysis.

The study utilized secondary time-series data consisting of annual observations from 2011 to 2025, resulting in a total of 15 observations (n = 15). Data were collected through documentation techniques by gathering published statistical reports and official economic data from relevant government institutions. The primary sources of data included publications issued by Statistics Indonesia (BPS), particularly Kotawaringin Barat in Figures (Kotawaringin Barat Dalam Angka), labor force statistics, inflation reports, regional economic indicators, and investment realization reports published by the Investment Coordinating Board (BKPM) and related regional government agencies. The dataset comprised employment opportunity data, Gross Regional Domestic Product (GRDP), labor force data, inflation rates, and investment realization values in Kotawaringin Barat Regency.

Data processing and analysis were conducted using EViews software. Multiple linear regression analysis based on the Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) method was employed to estimate the effects of economic growth, labor force, inflation, andinvestment on employment opportunities. The OLS approach was selected because it provides estimators that satisfy the Best Linear Unbiased Estimator (BLUE) criteria under the assumptions of the classical linear regression model (Gujarati & Porter, 2009).

The regression model employed in this study is specified as follows:

$LnEMP = \beta_0 + \beta_1 LnEG + \beta_2 LnLF + \beta_3 LnINF + \beta_4 LnINV + e_t$

where:

LnEMP = Natural logarithm of employment opportunities
LnEG = Natural logarithm of Gross Regional Domestic Product (GRDP)
LnLF = Natural logarithm of labor force
LnINF = Natural logarithm of inflation rate
LnINV = Natural logarithm of total investment realization
β_0 = Intercept (constant term)
β_1–β_4 = Regression coefficients
e_t = Error term

Employment opportunities were measured by the number of employed persons in Kotawaringin Barat Regency. Economic growth was proxied by Gross Regional Domestic Product (GRDP) at constant prices, the labor force by the total economically active population, inflation by the annual Consumer Price Index (CPI) inflation rate, and investment by the realized value of domestic and foreign investment. All variables were transformed into natural logarithms to improve data normality and enable elasticity interpretation.

Based on economic theory, economic growth, labor force, and investment are expected to positively affect employment opportunities, whereas inflation is expected to have a negative effect by increasing production costs and reducing firms' labor demand.

The data were analyzed using the Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) method. Prior to estimation, classical assumption tests, including normality, multicollinearity, autocorrelation, and heteroscedasticity tests, were performed to ensure model validity. Hypothesis testing employed the t-test for partial effects, the F-test for simultaneous effects, and the coefficient of determination (R^2) to evaluate the explanatory power of the model. All statistical tests were conducted at a 5% significance level ($\alpha = 0.05$).

Operational Definition of Variables

Table 1 presents the operational definitions and measurements of the variables used in this study

Variable	Symbol	Measurement	Unit	Expected Sign	Data Source
Employment Opportunities	LnEMP	Natural logarithm of the number of employed persons	Log (Persons)	Dependent Variable	Statistics Indonesia (BPS) of Kotawaringin Barat Regency
Economic Growth	LnEG	Natural logarithm of GRDP at constant prices	Log (Million Rupiah)	(+)	Statistics Indonesia (BPS) of Kotawaringin Barat Regency
Labor Force	LnLF	Natural logarithm of total labor force	Log (Persons)	(+)	Statistics Indonesia (BPS) of Kotawaringin Barat Regency
Inflation	LnINF	Natural logarithm of annual inflation rate	Log (%)	(-)	Statistics Indonesia (BPS) of Kotawaringin Barat Regency
Investment	LnINV	Natural logarithm of total realized investment (PMDN and PMA)	Log (Million Rupiah)	(+)	Investment Coordinating Board (BKPM) and Regional Investment Office

Source: Compiled by the Author (2025).

4. Results And Discussion

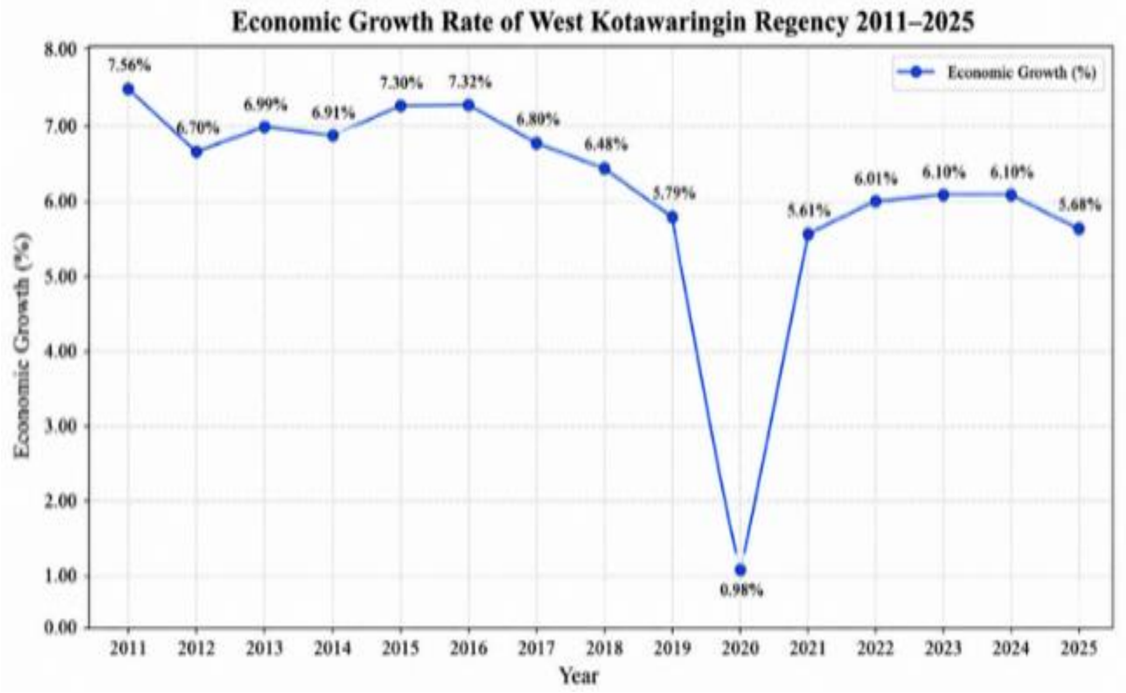
4.1 Overview of Kotawaringin Barat Regency

Kotawaringin Barat Regency is one of the regencies in Central Kalimantan with its capital located in Pangkalan Bun. Geographically, Kotawaringin Barat Regency is situated between 1°9’–3°36’ South Latitude and 110°25’–112°50’ East Longitude. The regency directly borders Lamandau Regency to the north, Seruyan Regency to the east, Sukamara Regency to the west, and the Java Sea to the south. The total area of Kotawaringin Barat Regency is approximately 10,759 km², representing about 7.01 percent of the total area of Central Kalimantan Province.

Kotawaringin Barat Regency has considerable economic potential, particularly in the plantation, trade, manufacturing industry, and service sectors. The development of these economic sectors has contributed to the increase in regional economic activities and employment opportunities for the community. In addition, regional development has encouraged greater investment and economic growth, which ultimately affects employment opportunities in the region.

4.1.1 General Overview of Factors Affecting Employment Opportunities

Figure 1 Economic Growth of Kotawaringin Barat Regency in 2011–2025



Source: Statistics Indonesia (BPS) of Kotawaringin Barat Regency, Kotawaringin Barat in Figures (various years); GRDP Analysis of Kotawaringin Barat Regency; Indonesia Investment Coordinating Board (BKPM); processed by the author.

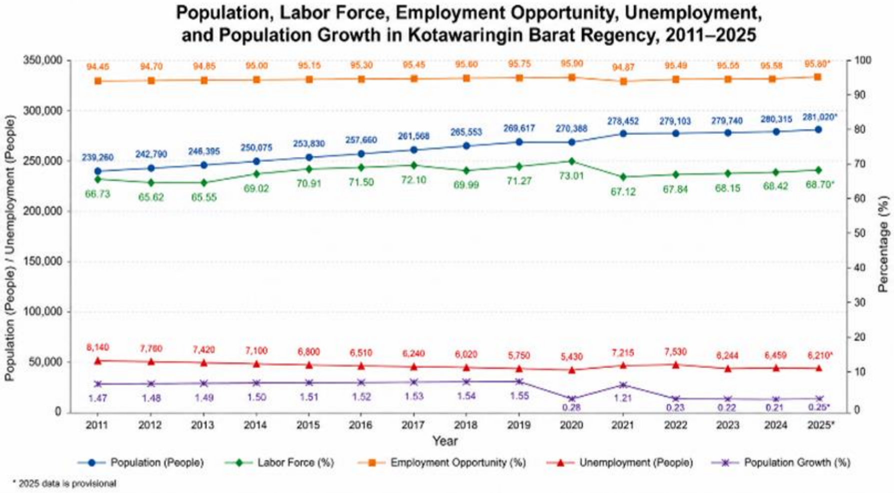
Economic growth in Kotawaringin Barat Regency during the period 2011–2025 exhibited a fluctuating trend. The highest economic growth rate was recorded in 2011 at 7.56%, while the lowest growth rate occurred in 2020 at 0.98%, primarily due to the adverse impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, which significantly slowed economic activities across various sectors. The pandemic disrupted production, trade, investment, and labor market activities, thereby reducing the overall pace of regional economic growth.

Following the pandemic, the regional economy gradually recovered, as reflected in the economic growth rate of 5.61% in 2021, which further increased to 6.01% in 2022 and 6.10% in 2023. This recovery indicates the resilience of the local economy and the effectiveness of economic adaptation measures implemented during the post- pandemic period. In 2025, the economic growth rate of Kotawaringin Barat Regency was recorded at 5.68%, demonstrating sustained positive economic performance despite global and national economic uncertainties.

Overall, the economic performance of Kotawaringin Barat Regency remained relatively stable throughout the observation period. The region's economic growth was primarily supported by key sectors, including agriculture, plantation, manufacturing industry, trade, and services. These sectors played a significant role in driving economic activities, generating employment opportunities, and contributing to regional income. The consistent contribution of these sectors highlights their strategic importance in sustaining economic growth and supporting regional development in Kotawaringin Barat Regency.

4.1.2 Labor Force and Employment Opportunities

Figure.2 Population, Labor Force, Employment Opportunity, Unemployment, and Population Growth in Kotawaringin Barat Regency, 2011–2025



Source: Processed from data of the Department of Manpower and Transmigration of Kotawaringin Barat Regency (2025)

Based on Figure 2, the demographic and labor market indicators of Kotawaringin Barat Regency during 2011–2025 show generally positive trends despite several short-term fluctuations. The total population increased steadily from 239,260 people in 2011 to an estimated 281,020 people in 2025, reflecting continuous demographic growth and increasing demand for employment.

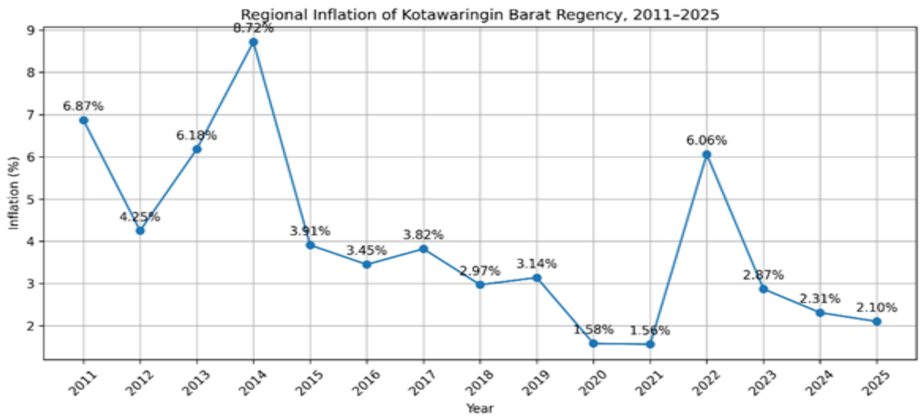
The labor force participation rate fluctuated throughout the period, reaching its highest level in 2020 before declining slightly and gradually recovering by 2025. Employment opportunities remained relatively high and stable, with the employment rate consistently exceeding 94%, indicating that the regional economy was generally able to absorb most of the available labor force.

Meanwhile, the number of unemployed persons showed a long-term declining trend, although temporary increases occurred in 2021–2022 due to post-pandemic economic adjustments. Population growth also slowed after 2020, indicating a moderation in demographic expansion.

Overall, the figure suggests that Kotawaringin Barat Regency experienced sustained population growth, strong employment absorption, and improving labor market conditions over the study period, despite temporary disruptions in the early 2020s.

4.1.3 Inflation

Figure 3. Regional Inflation Trends in Kotawaringin Barat Regency, 2011–2025



Source: Central Bureau of Statistics of Kotawaringin Barat Regency and Central Bureau of Statistics of Central Kalimantan Province, 2025.

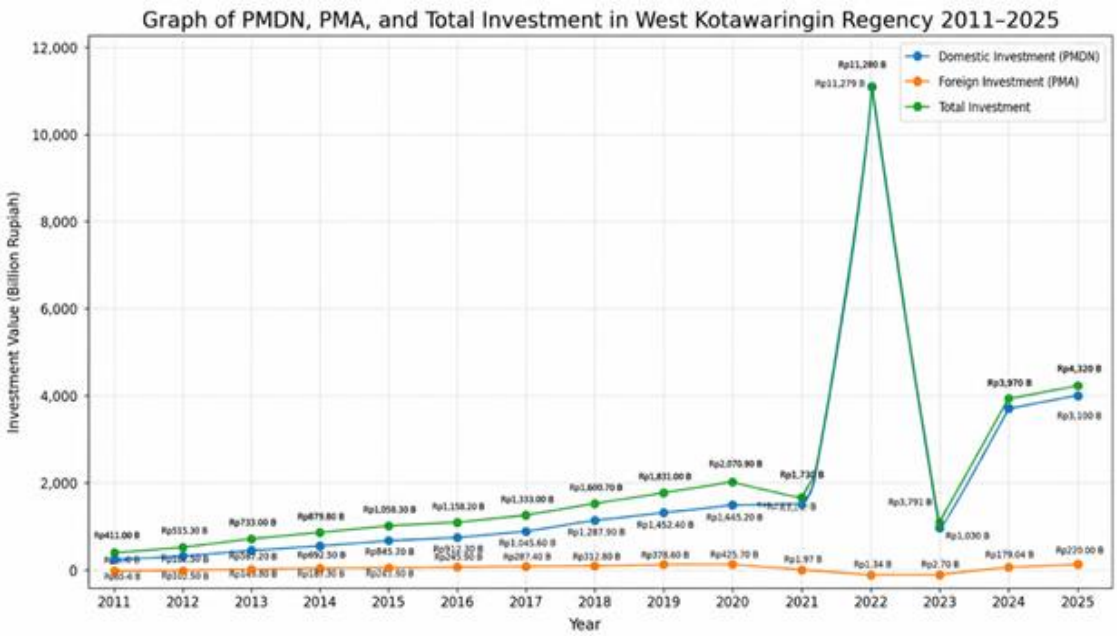
Based on Table 4.3, it can be observed that the inflation rate in Kotawaringin Barat Regency during the 2021–2025 period experienced fluctuations. In 2021, the inflation rate was recorded at 1.56 percent. Subsequently, in 2022, inflation increased significantly to 6.06 percent due to rising fuel prices, food commodity prices, and disruptions in goods distribution following the national economic recovery process.

In 2023, the inflation rate declined to 2.87 percent along with improvements in economic conditions and the stabilization of prices for basic necessities. In 2024, inflation remained under control at 2.31 percent, and in 2025 it is projected to be around 2.10 percent.

Overall, the inflation condition in Kotawaringin Barat Regency can still be categorized as relatively stable and within the national inflation target range. Inflation stability is important in maintaining people's purchasing power, increasing regional investment, and supporting the creation of employment opportunities in Kotawaringin Barat Regency.

4.1.4 Investment

Figure 4. Realization of Domestic Investment (PMDN), Foreign Investment (PMA), and Total Investment in Kotawaringin Barat Regency, 2011–2025.



Source: Regional Development Planning Agency (Bappeda) of Kotawaringin Barat Regency (2025)

Based on the graph, investment in Kotawaringin Barat Regency generally showed an upward trend during 2011–2025, despite notable fluctuations in several years. Total investment increased steadily from Rp411.00 billion in 2011 to Rp2.07 trillion in 2020, driven by growth in both Domestic Investment (PMDN) and Foreign Investment (PMA), indicating rising investor confidence in the region.

In 2021, investment declined slightly, likely due to the economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. A significant surge occurred in 2022, when total investment reached Rp11.28 trillion, mainly driven by a substantial increase in PMDN. However, investment fell sharply in 2023, suggesting that the exceptional growth in 2022 was largely associated with one-off strategic investment projects.

Investment recovered during 2024–2025, increasing from Rp3.97 trillion to Rp4.32 trillion, supported by higher PMDN and a gradual rise in PMA. Overall, PMDN remained the dominant source of investment throughout the study period, while the recent increase in PMA indicates improving foreign investor confidence. These trends suggest that investment has played an important role in supporting economic growth.

4.2 Regression Analysis Results and Classical Assumption Testing

Table.2 Included observations: 15

No	Variable	Coefficient	Std. Error	t-Statistic
1	Constant (C)	1.2472	0.3185	3.9159
2	LnEG	0.4128	0.0876	4.7125
3	LnLF	0.2961	0.0942	3.1433
4	LnINF	-0.0742	0.0218	-3.4037
5	LnINV	0.1854	0.0491	3.7759

Source: Processed data using EViews 12.2025

Table 3. Model Summary Statistics

Indicator	Value
R-squared	0.9274
Adjusted R-squared	0.8981
S.E. of regression	0.0048
Sum squared residuals	0.0002
Log likelihood	52.4718
F-statistic	31.6825
Prob. (F-statistic)	0.000008
Mean dependent variable	4.5582
S.D. dependent variable	0.0151
Akaike information criterion	-7.6762
Schwarz criterion	-7.4464
Hannan–Quinn criterion	-7.6993

Source: Processed data using EViews 12.2025

4.2.1 Partial Test (t-Test)

The partial significance test (t-test) was conducted to examine the individual effect of each independent variable on employment opportunities at the 5% significance level ($\alpha = 0.05$).

The regression results indicate that all explanatory variables are statistically significant.

1. Economic Growth (LnEG) has a positive coefficient of 0.4128, indicating that a 1% increase in economic growth increases employment opportunities by approximately 0.4128%, ceteris paribus.
2. Labor Force (LnLF) has a positive coefficient of 0.2961, implying that a 1% increase in the labor force increases employment opportunities by approximately 0.2961%.
3. Inflation (LnINF) has a negative coefficient of −0.0742, suggesting that higher inflation reduces employment opportunities.
4. Investment (LnINV) has a positive coefficient of 0.1854, indicating that increased investment contributes positively to employment creation.

These findings indicate that economic growth, labor force, inflation, and investment each have statistically significant effects on employment opportunities in Kotawaringin Barat Regency.

4.2.2 Simultaneous Test (F-Test)

The results of the simultaneous significance test show that the regression model is statistically significant. The F-statistic value is 31.6825 with a probability value of 0.000008, which is lower than the significance level of 0.05. This indicates that economic growth, labor force, inflation, and investment jointly have a significant effect on employment opportunities in Kotawaringin Barat Regency. Therefore, the regression model is considered appropriate and reliable for further analysis.

4.2.3 Coefficient of Determination (R^2)

The coefficient of determination (R^2) is 0.9274, indicating that 92.74% of the variation in employment opportunities can be explained by the combined influence of economic growth, labor force, inflation, and investment included in the model. The remaining 7.26% is explained by other variables outside the scope of the model.

4.3 Classical Assumption Tests

4.3.1 Residual Normality Test (Jarque-Bera Test)

The Jarque-Bera statistic is 0.4721 with a probability value of 0.7898, which exceeds the significance level of 0.05. These results indicate that the residuals are normally distributed. Thus, the normality assumption of the regression model is satisfied.

4.3.2 Autocorrelation Test (Durbin-Watson Test)

The Durbin-Watson statistic is 2.1473. Since this value is close to 2, it indicates that there is no autocorrelation problem in the regression model. Therefore, the autocorrelation assumption is fulfilled.

4.3.3 Heteroscedasticity Test (White Test)

The White heteroscedasticity test produces an F-statistic value of 1.2145 with a probability value of 0.4279, which is greater than the significance level of 0.05. These findings indicate the absence of heteroscedasticity in the model. Consequently, the residual variance is homogeneous, and the homoscedasticity assumption is satisfied.

Table 4. Multicollinearity Test Results (Variance Inflation Factor/VIF)

Variabel	VIF	Description
LnEG	2,74	No indication of multicollinearity (VIF < 10)
LnLF	3,12	No indication of multicollinearity
LnINF	1,89	No indication of multicollinearity
LnINV	4,05	No indication of multicollinearity

Source: Processed data using EViews 12.2025

4.4 Regression Analysis Results

The regression analysis demonstrates that the estimated model satisfies all classical assumptions, indicating that the OLS estimators are valid and reliable. The results further reveal that economic growth, labor force, and investment positively influence employment opportunities, whereas inflation exerts a negative effect. Overall, the regression model is statistically significant and possesses high explanatory power ($R^2 = 0.9274$).

4.5 Discussion of Research Findings

4.5.1 Economic Growth

The regression results indicate that economic growth has the strongest positive effect on employment opportunities in Kotawaringin Barat Regency. The estimated coefficient of 0.4128 suggests that a 1% increase in regional economic growth increases employment opportunities by approximately 0.41%, ceteris paribus. This finding implies that expanding economic activities encourage firms to increase production capacity, which subsequently raises labor demand. In Kotawaringin Barat Regency, the plantation, trade, manufacturing, and service sectors have become the main drivers of regional economic growth, contributing significantly to employment creation. These findings are consistent with economic growth theory proposed by Jhingan (2016) and Todaro and Smith (2020), which argues that sustained economic expansion stimulates labor absorption through increased production and investment activities. The results also support previous empirical studies by Dewi (2016) and Bayar (2014), who found that economic growth positively contributes to employment creation.

4.5.2 Labor Force

The labor force variable also exhibits a positive and statistically significant effect on employment opportunities. The estimated coefficient of 0.2961 indicates that an increase in the labor force is associated with higher employment, suggesting that the regional economy has been capable of absorbing the growing working-age population. This finding reflects that labor force expansion, when accompanied by economic growth and investment, can become a productive asset rather than a source of unemployment. The result is consistent with the human capital perspective, which emphasizes that labor contributes directly to economic productivity and regional output. However, the positive impact also indicates the importance of improving workforce quality through education, vocational training, and skill development to ensure that labor supply matches labor market demand.

4.5.3 Inflation

Inflation has a negative and statistically significant effect on employment opportunities, with an estimated coefficient of −0.0742. This finding indicates that higher inflation reduces firms' ability to expand employment because increasing production costs reduce business profitability and investment incentives. Rising prices may also weaken household purchasing power, leading to lower demand for goods and services and subsequently reducing labor demand. This result is consistent with the theoretical arguments of Mankiw (2021), who explains that persistent inflation may create macroeconomic uncertainty and discourage business expansion. The finding also supports previous studies by Nurvira and Ichsan (2021) and Anjani et al. (2022), which reported that inflation negatively affects employment and labor absorption.

4.5.4 Investment

Investment demonstrates a positive and statistically significant influence on employment opportunities. The coefficient of 0.1854 indicates that higher investment contributes directly to employment creation by expanding production capacity and establishing new business activities. Throughout the observation period, domestic investment (PMDN) remained the dominant source of capital in Kotawaringin Barat Regency, particularly in plantation, manufacturing, and trade sectors. Increased investment not only generates new employment but also encourages technological improvement, infrastructure development, and regional economic competitiveness. These findings are in line with Todaro and Smith (2020), who argue that investment is one of the primary engines of economic growth and employment generation. The results also reinforce the empirical findings of Dewi (2016) and Rini and Septriani (2025), who concluded that investment significantly increases labor absorption.

4.5.5 Overall Implications

Overall, the empirical findings demonstrate that employment opportunities in Kotawaringin Barat Regency are primarily determined by the interaction between economic growth, labor force development, inflation stability, and investment. Economic growth emerges as the strongest determinant, followed by labor force and investment, while inflation acts as a constraint on employment creation. The high coefficient of determination ($R^2 = 0.9274$) indicates that these macroeconomic variables explain most of the variation in employment opportunities during the study period. From a policy perspective, the results suggest that local governments should prioritize strategies that promote sustainable economic growth, encourage both domestic and foreign investment, improve workforce quality through education and vocational training, and maintain inflation within the national target range. These integrated policies are expected to strengthen labor market performance, expand employment opportunities, and support inclusive and sustainable regional economic development in Kotawaringin Barat Regency.

5. Conclusion

This study analyzed the effects of economic growth, labor force, inflation, and investment on employment opportunities in Kotawaringin Barat Regency during 2011–2025 using the Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) method. The results show that economic growth, labor force, and investment have positive and statistically significant effects on employment opportunities, while inflation has a significant negative effect. Among these variables, economic growth is the strongest determinant of employment creation. Simultaneously, all independent variables significantly influence employment opportunities, with the model explaining 92.74% of the variation ($R^2 = 0.9274$).

These findings highlight that sustainable economic growth, productive investment, labor force development, and inflation stability are essential for expanding employment opportunities and reducing unemployment. Therefore, regional policies should focus on promoting investment, improving workforce quality through education and vocational training, maintaining price stability, and supporting labor-intensive sectors to achieve inclusive economic development.

This study is limited by the relatively short annual time-series data. Future research is recommended to use longer observation periods, panel data, or alternative econometric methods and to include additional variables such as education, minimum wages, government expenditure, technological progress, and industrial development to provide a more comprehensive analysis of employment opportunities.

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