PREVENTING SCHOOL DROPOUT IN MALUKU: SYNERGY BETWEEN FAMILY, SCHOOL, AND CUSTOMARY VALUES

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ABSTRACT

This article aims to examine the collaboration between family, school, and customary values in efforts to prevent school dropouts in Maluku. This research uses a qualitative approach with a case study method on several schools in the Maluku region. Data were obtained through in-depth interviews, observation, and documentation related to the interaction between families, schools, and indigenous communities. The results of the study show that families play a crucial role in addressing the issue of school dropouts through effective communication and motivation for children to continue their education to higher levels. On the other hand, schools contribute by building strong relationships with parents, providing counseling guidance, identifying at-risk students, and offering remedial programs and scholarships. Maluku's customary values, such as masohi, pela, *and the philosophy of* Potong di Kuku, Rasa di Daging, *make significant contributions in emphasizing solidarity and togetherness, which function as social mechanisms to maintain the continuity of education. These findings affirm the importance of synergy between family, school, and customary values in creating an inclusive and sustainable educational ecosystem. The novelty of this research lies in revealing how local customary values can be effectively integrated into educational policies to prevent school dropouts. The recommendation of this study is the importance of strengthening the role of families, schools, and indigenous communities in shaping educational policies based on local wisdom to support social and humanitarian development.*

***Keywords**: Customary Values, Educational Ecosystem, Family Involvement, Inclusive Education, Indigenous Wisdom*

INTRODUCTION

The issue of school dropout in Indonesia, particularly in Maluku, remains a pressing concern. Despite various programs and policies implemented to reduce dropout rates, many children in Maluku are unable to continue their education to higher levels. This is influenced by various factors, such as the family's economic conditions, low learning motivation, and the lack of social support, all of which play a role in shaping a supportive educational environment (Djazilan & Darmawan, 2022). The low school participation rate has long-term impacts, especially on an individual's ability to participate in the modern economy and achieve prosperity. In a culturally rich society like Maluku, it is important to consider the social and cultural factors that

can contribute to preventing school dropout (Permatasari et al., 2021).

Previous studies have extensively highlighted the role of the family in ensuring the continuity of children's education. For example, research by Lareau (2021) shows that good communication between parents and children, as well as providing motivation, can foster determination in children to complete their education. Furthermore, families that maintain close relationships with schools and actively engage in their children's education process are more likely to succeed in preventing school dropouts. Moreover, a family environment that provides strong emotional support has also been proven to play a significant role in increasing children's involvement in school. More broadly, family involvement in the educational process is not only about economic issues but also about how they build a parenting style that supports children in facing educational challenges.

In addition to the family, schools play a significant role in efforts to prevent school dropout. Studies by Monday (2020) and Santos-Villalba et al., (2023) suggest that schools that successfully identify students at risk of dropping out and provide guidance and remedial programs can help these children stay on track with their education. Mentoring programs in schools, involving teachers and senior students, have been proven effective in providing personal support to students facing academic or social difficulties (Cooper et al., 2023). Positive relationships between teachers and students also help create a more inclusive learning environment, where students feel more valued and motivated to complete their education (Carmen et al., 2022).

Beyond the roles of family and school, communities and cultural values also make a significant contribution to building a more resilient educational system (Hairon et al., 2020). In communities with strong traditional customs, such as in Maluku, local wisdom often serves as one of the main forces in maintaining social bonds that support education. For instance, customary values such as masohi and pela, which emphasize cooperation and brotherhood, can create a social environment that encourages children to keep learning. This local wisdom, integrated into the daily lives of the community, not only promotes solidarity in addressing social issues but can also be adapted as a mechanism to prevent school dropouts (Parker et al., 2021). In several studies, this type of social capital is considered one of the most effective ways to strengthen community support for education.

However, research exploring how the integration of family, school, and local customary values can synergistically prevent school dropout is still very limited. Most existing studies focus more on economic aspects and formal policies, such as scholarship programs or educational subsidies, which, while important, do not fully accommodate the potential of local wisdom in preventing school dropout. At this point, research on the role of customary values in education, particularly in Maluku, is still in its early stages. Most studies have highlighted how government policies can help prevent dropouts but have not explored in depth how indigenous communities can be integrated into the formal education system.

This article seeks to fill the research gap by revealing how the synergy between family, school, and Maluku's customary values can serve as a strategy for preventing school dropout. This new approach offers a more holistic perspective, where customary values such as masohi, pela, and the philosophy of *Potong di Kuku, Rasa di Daging* are not only seen as part of the culture but also as social instruments that can be used to support educational continuity. In this regard, this research brings novelty by emphasizing the importance of integrating social and cultural capital into educational policies, which can be adapted in various regions of Indonesia with similar cultural richness. The findings of this study are expected to contribute to the development of social sciences, particularly in the fields of education and culture, while also offering a more adaptive approach to formulating dropout prevention policies based on local wisdom.

RESEARCH METHOD

This research employs a qualitative approach aimed at gaining an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon of school dropout in Adaut Village, Selaru District, Tanimbar Islands Regency (Foreman-Murray et al., 2022). The qualitative approach was chosen because it allows the researcher to explore the natural and deep social reality, particularly regarding various factors that contribute to children's decisions not to continue their education. With this approach, the researcher can focus on the context and meaning of the phenomena that occur, providing a more comprehensive understanding of the school dropout issue. The study also uses a phenomenological approach, which allows the researcher to capture and understand the subjective experiences of the informants in depth.

The research location was purposively selected in Adaut Village due to the high dropout rates in the area, especially among children aged 7-15 years who chose not to continue their education at the elementary and junior high school levels. This phenomenon is influenced by various factors, such as the family's economic conditions, social environment dynamics, and cultural values prevalent in the community. Adaut Village is predominantly inhabited by people working as farmers, where this economic background greatly affects families' ability to support their children's education. This situation is exacerbated by low educational awareness in some community groups, as well as internal factors in children who lack motivation to continue their education.

This research involved 10 informants selected based on their direct involvement with the school dropout issue. The informants consisted of three elementary school dropouts, three junior high school dropouts, two teachers from both levels, and two parents of the children who dropped out. In-depth interviews were used as the main data collection method, where the researcher explored the views, experiences, and motivations of the informants regarding their decisions to drop out. With a semi-structured format, these interviews allowed the informants to freely express their experiences, enabling the researcher to obtain rich and in-depth data (Lowder et al., 2022).

This study employed a combination of interviews, observations, and documentation to comprehensively explore the phenomenon of school dropouts in Adaut Village. Observations enabled the researcher to directly examine the physical and social environments that may influence children's decisions to leave school, particularly the role of community dynamics and customary values such as mutual cooperation and solidarity in shaping educational experiences (Manca & Delfino, 2021). Supplementary data were gathered through documentation, including school records, local policies, and dropout statistics, which helped contextualize the findings. Thematic analysis was used to process the data, beginning with interview transcription and coding to identify key themes (Santos et al., 2020), followed by an in-depth examination of how familial, educational, and cultural factors interact to influence dropout risks. To ensure the validity of the findings, triangulation was applied by cross-referencing interviews, observations, and documents (Reyes et al., 2024), and a member check was conducted with informants to confirm the accuracy of interpretations. This methodological approach not only ensured the credibility of the results but also offered nuanced insights into the synergistic relationship between family, school, and customary values in addressing school dropout in the village context.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Role of Family in Preventing School Dropout

The family is a key social unit in a child's development, including their educational continuity. In Adaut Village, the role of the family as the main actor in preventing school dropout is evident, particularly through emotional support, motivation, and effective communication. Based on interviews with informants, it was observed that families who actively support their children are more likely to keep them in school, despite various economic and social challenges.

One clear example emerged from an interview with a mother whose child continued schooling despite financial difficulties. "Whenever he wanted to drop out because he was embarrassed about not having a new uniform, I told him that what matters is knowledge, not the clothes. I talked to him constantly, encouraging him," said the mother. This statement illustrates that while families may not always be able to provide material support, the moral encouragement and motivation from parents can empower children to remain in school. In this case, emotional support plays a significant role in overcoming the feelings of despair or shame that children might experience.

According to sociologist Talcott Parsons, the family is the primary agent of child socialization, where key values, including education, are instilled. Families bear a large responsibility in shaping a child's attitude toward school (Darmon, 2023). From Parsons' perspective, formal education serves as a means through which children learn to adapt to broader societal values, such as discipline, hard work, and independence. In the context of Adaut Village, families that instill the importance of education early on in their children enable those children to have a stronger commitment to schooling, even in the face of challenges.

Furthermore, Pierre Bourdieu's concept of *habitus* highlights how a family's social structure shapes the habits and dispositions of children toward education (Radogna, 2022). The *habitus* within a family determines how children view education—whether they see it as important or not. In the case of children in Adaut Village who dropped out of school, many came from families with a *habitus* that did not strongly support formal education, where children were more focused on household chores or farming. One child who dropped out of elementary school said, "It's better to help my parents in the fields than go to school, so I can earn money quickly." This demonstrates that in such families, the prevailing *habitus* prioritizes the child's economic contribution over long-term investment in education.

Although economic hardship is frequently a significant barrier to education, this study finds that some families in Adaut Village are still able to support their children's schooling through the strength of social capital. Drawing on James Coleman's theory, social capital—defined as the relationships, trust, and shared norms within a family—can offset material disadvantages by fostering emotional support, effective communication, and active parental involvement in education (Marsden, 2021). In households where two-way communication is present, children often exhibit a stronger commitment to stay in school, as they feel listened to and emotionally secure. One student recounted, "Mama always says, if you want to succeed, you have to go to school. Even when I'm lazy, Mama keeps encouraging me," underscoring how sustained emotional encouragement serves as a key motivator in preventing dropout. Furthermore, Maluku's customary values such as masohi (mutual cooperation) and pela (inter-village brotherhood) reinforce the communal nature of social capital by extending familial support networks to include relatives and neighbors. In line with Bourdieu's perspective, such community-based social capital can provide additional resilience for economically vulnerable families, offering collective moral support that strengthens children's educational continuity and reduces dropout risks.

From a sociological perspective, family support influences not only the continuity of a child's education but also their overall character formation. John Dewey emphasized that education is a holistic process of personal development, where the family serves as a foundational agent shaping children's understanding of their role in society (Woenardi et al., 2022). In this study, families that uphold educational values contribute not only to academic achievement but also to the cultivation of responsible social behavior. The findings also reveal that families practicing open, two-way communication with their children are more successful in preventing school dropout. Such dialogues allow children to express concerns and feel emotionally acknowledged, fostering a deeper internalization of educational values. While this communication model is often less present in economically constrained households, when applied, it has a demonstrably positive effect. Children who are actively engaged in conversations about their education exhibit greater motivation to remain in school, despite structural limitations. Thus, a communicative and emotionally supportive family environment emerges as a key factor in reducing dropout rates. In this light, the family functions not merely as a caregiver

but as a primary actor in shaping children's resilience and educational aspirations amidst external pressures.

The Role of Schools in Preventing School Dropout

Schools play a significant role in preventing school dropout, especially in rural areas like Adaut Village, Selaru District, Tanimbar Islands Regency. Based on interviews with teachers in Adaut Village, one of the most effective efforts to keep children in school is building a strong relationship between schools and parents. This close relationship allows both parties to exchange information regarding the students' academic and non-academic development. "We always try to communicate with the parents, especially for children who are often absent. Sometimes, the problem isn't solely at school, but at home," said one elementary school teacher in Adaut. Good communication between the school and parents has proven very effective in preventing at-risk children from dropping out.

Through this relationship, schools can directly identify factors contributing to potential dropout, such as economic issues, social pressure, or lack of support at home. With open interaction, schools and parents can work together to find solutions to keep children in school. This approach aligns with Bronfenbrenner's sociological perspective, which emphasizes the importance of ecological systems in a child's development. According to Bronfenbrenner, the micro (family) and meso (school) environments must interact to create optimal support for children. In addition to communication with parents, schools in Adaut Village also implement counseling programs. These programs provide psychological support for students experiencing pressure or difficulties at school. Based on an interview with a school counselor, students who show signs of declining motivation or academic performance receive intensive guidance. "We often hold counseling sessions for students at risk of dropping out. Sometimes, they feel burdened by issues outside of school, such as family finances or social pressures," said the counselor. Through counseling, schools can identify deeper problems and provide solutions tailored to the students' needs.

From a sociological perspective, this counseling program aligns with Emile Durkheim's view that schools function as agents of socialization and social control (Guhin, 2021). Schools are not just places for academic learning but also institutions where children learn to adapt to the norms and values of broader society. When schools provide counseling, they help students address personal issues that may interfere with their education. In the case of Adaut Village, counseling serves as a "safety net" that helps students stay engaged in their education, despite facing external challenges. Remedial programs are also an important part of the school's efforts to prevent dropout. These programs are designed to help students struggling in certain subjects, particularly in academics such as math or language. By offering students the opportunity to catch up through remedial classes, schools ensure that they do not lose interest or confidence in learning. "We provide remedial lessons for students whose grades are below average. This is important because many of them feel insecure. With remedial, they get motivated again,"

explained a junior high school teacher in Adaut.

In addition to remedial classes, schools in Adaut Village also provide educational scholarships for students from underprivileged families. These scholarships are designed to alleviate the financial burden that often becomes the primary reason for dropping out. In an interview with one scholarship recipient, a junior high school student said, "If it weren't for the scholarship, I might have already dropped out. My parents can no longer afford to pay for school." These scholarships demonstrate how financial interventions from schools can help students continue their education.

James Coleman, in his theory of social capital, explains that schools play a role as institutions that create bridges between students and the resources they need, such as scholarships (Astutik, 2023). By providing this support, schools do not merely serve as places of learning but also as institutions that provide crucial resources for students to achieve educational success. The social capital created through relationships between students, teachers, and parents enables mutual support to achieve the common goal of continued education. In addition to scholarships, schools in Adaut Village have developed mentoring programs, where senior students or teachers provide guidance to younger students or those at risk of dropping out. Through this program, students who may lose interest in learning can feel direct support from peers or more experienced teachers. A junior high school student involved in the program said, "Mentoring helps me, especially when I feel lazy. Senior students or teachers are always there to remind and encourage me." This mentoring program reflects the importance of social support in keeping students engaged in school.

Sociologist Robert Merton emphasizes that the role of mentors in providing social and academic guidance to younger individuals is crucial in the process of social adaptation and personal development (Chrzanowski, 2022). With a mentor, students feel they have a role model they can rely on and emulate, which motivates them to stay in school. This mentoring program also serves as the school's effort to create a more inclusive learning community, where all students support each other in facing educational challenges.

Additionally, schools in Adaut Village play a significant role in preventing dropout through various programs and initiatives designed to provide academic, emotional, and financial support to students. This holistic approach shows that schools are not only focused on formal education but also on the overall well-being of students. Through close interaction with parents, counseling, remedial programs, scholarships, and mentoring, schools can create a supportive environment for students to remain in school, even in the face of the challenges they encounter. With continuous support from the schools, students in Adaut Village have a greater chance of continuing their education and avoiding dropping out. The programs implemented by the schools show how crucial the role of educational institutions is in ensuring that every child has equal access to education, unhindered by economic, social, or psychological issues. As part of the larger social system, schools also act as agents of change, striving to keep all students engaged in their educational process.

Embedded and Technological Communication: Communication Patterns of Migrant Students

In Adaut Village, the collaboration between family, school, and the traditional values of Maluku forms a strong foundation in efforts to prevent school dropout. These three elements play a crucial role in creating comprehensive support that covers emotional, academic, social, and financial aspects for children vulnerable to dropping out. Interviews with teachers, parents, and community leaders demonstrate how this synergy minimizes dropout risks by creating a collectively supportive environment.

The family plays a role as a provider of strong motivation and communication. In an interview with one parent, it was mentioned that two-way communication between parents and children is essential in keeping the children motivated to stay in school. "We often sit with our children, listen to their complaints about school, and motivate them to stay encouraged. We always emphasize the importance of education for their future," said a father. The family serves as the first foundation that strengthens the child's mentality, especially amid difficult economic conditions or unsupportive social environments. On the other hand, schools provide support in the form of academic programs and counseling. Teachers in Adaut Village actively identify students at risk of dropping out, provide intensive guidance, and establish strong communication channels with parents. A teacher in Adaut explained, "We try to build good relationships with parents because we know that children who struggle in school often face issues at home too. By working together, we can find the right solutions for these children." Schools also provide remedial programs for students struggling academically, ensuring they have the opportunity to improve their grades and stay motivated to learn.

The traditional values of Maluku, such as masohi (mutual cooperation) and pela (brotherhood between villages), provide invaluable social support. These values foster solidarity within the community, where every individual feels responsible for the well-being of others, including in matters of education. When a child faces the risk of dropping out, the entire community feels obligated to help. A traditional leader explained, "We are one big family. If a child struggles with school, the whole village will try to help, whether financially or by offering motivation." These collective values strengthen the social commitment to education, where education is not only seen as the family's responsibility but also as a shared interest for the community's progress. This collaboration creates a powerful synergy. When families, schools, and traditional communities work together, the approach becomes holistic and encompasses all aspects of a child's life. On one side, the family provides emotional support and motivation, while the school offers academic support, and traditional values provide a social foundation that strengthens the child's engagement with education. This combination is crucial in overcoming obstacles that may arise, whether economic, social, or psychological.

Sociologically, this collaboration can be analyzed through the functionalist approach introduced by Talcott Parsons, which emphasizes the importance of social institutions such as family, school, and community in maintaining social stability. According to Parsons, each institution has a specific role in maintaining social balance. In the context of Adaut Village, the

family is responsible for primary socialization, the school is tasked with providing formal education, and traditional values serve as moral and social regulators. These three elements work synergistically to prevent dropout, with each complementing the others in meeting children's educational needs. James Coleman, known for his concept of social capital, also provides a relevant framework for understanding how strong social networks contribute to educational success. Coleman argues that positive social relationships within a community can enhance educational outcomes (Astutik, 2023). In the context of Adaut Village, the social capital possessed by families, schools, and traditional communities provides vital support for children to stay in school. The interaction between these three elements creates a supportive environment where children receive the encouragement they need to overcome the challenges they face.

One informant, a mother whose child nearly dropped out, shared how the traditional community helped them. "We really didn't know what to do when our child didn't want to go to school anymore. But, our neighbors and community leaders came to our home, offering advice and help. My child eventually decided to go back to school," she said. This support highlights the significant role traditional communities play in maintaining the continuity of children's education in the village. The collaboration between family, school, and traditional values results in a holistic approach that focuses not only on one aspect but covers various dimensions of a child's life. The synergy between these three elements provides comprehensive support capable of overcoming barriers that threaten the continuity of children's education. Through this collaboration, children who were previously at high risk of dropping out regained their motivation to continue their education, and the community as a whole actively participated in ensuring educational goals were met. The combination of emotional, academic, and social support is key in keeping children on the right educational path.

CONCLUSION

The conclusion of this study affirms that preventing school dropout in Maluku is most effectively achieved through the integrated synergy of family support, school engagement, and the revitalization of customary values rooted in local wisdom. Families provide the emotional and motivational foundation that encourages children to remain in school, while schools serve as institutional partners that offer structured academic and social support through counseling, scholarship, and mentorship programs. Crucially, the customary values of Maluku—such as *masohi, pela*, and the deeply communal philosophy of *Potong di Kuku, Rasa di Daging*—reinforce a collective responsibility for children's education, transforming it from an individual concern into a community-wide mandate. This triadic collaboration not only addresses the multidimensional factors that lead to school dropout—economic hardship, lack of motivation, or social exclusion— but also cultivates an inclusive and sustainable educational environment. The novelty of this research lies in demonstrating that traditional cultural frameworks, when aligned with institutional practices and familial efforts, can serve as powerful agents in educational policy

design. This integrated model offers a replicable framework for other regions facing similar challenges, underlining that enduring solutions to school dropout must be culturally grounded, socially inclusive, and collaboratively driven.

ETHICAL STATEMENT AND DISCLOSURE

This study was conducted in accordance with established ethical principles, including informed consent, protection of informants' confidentiality, and respect for local cultural values. Special consideration was given to participants from vulnerable groups to ensure their safety, comfort, and equal rights to participate. No external funding was received, and the authors declare no conflict of interest. All data and information presented were collected through valid research methods and have been verified to ensure their accuracy and reliability. The use of artificial intelligence (AI) was limited to technical assistance for writing and language editing, without influencing the scientific substance of the work. The authors express their gratitude to the informants for their valuable insights, and to the anonymous reviewers for their constructive feedback on an earlier version of this manuscript. The authors take full responsibility for the content and conclusions of this article.

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