

## 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:** Preventing School Dropout; Family Synergy; School; Customary Values; Inclusive Education

### 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).

In addition to interviews, observations were conducted to directly observe the physical and social environment in Adaut Village, which might influence the children's decisions to drop out of school. These observations helped the researcher gain a deeper understanding of social interactions, community dynamics, and how local customary values, such as mutual cooperation

and solidarity, play a role in the education process (Manca & Delfino, 2021). The researcher also used documentation methods to collect secondary data, including school records, local policies, and statistical data on dropout rates. This documentation provided additional context that supported the findings from the interviews and observations.

The data collected were analyzed using a thematic approach. The analysis process began with transcribing the interviews, followed by coding to identify the main themes that emerged from the data (Santos et al., 2020). Each theme was analyzed in depth to examine patterns and relationships between variables, such as how family, school, and Maluku's customary values play a role in either preventing or facilitating school dropouts. This analysis allowed the researcher to gain a holistic picture of the issue being studied. To ensure data validity, the researcher used triangulation by comparing the results of interviews, observations, and documentation (Reyes et al., 2024). Additionally, a member check was conducted by presenting the initial analysis to the informants to ensure that the researcher's interpretation aligned with their experiences and views. Thus, this research produced valid findings that accurately depict the school dropout phenomenon in Adaut Village and provided new insights into the synergy between family, school, and customary values in preventing school dropout.

## **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.

Nevertheless, although economic factors often pose major obstacles, some families can still facilitate their children's education through strong social capital. James Coleman (1988) explains that social capital—the bonds, relationships, and norms within a family—can help children overcome material limitations (Marsden, 2021). This social capital involves the support families provide through good communication, encouragement, and participation in their children's schooling. In the context of Adaut Village, families that foster two-way communication with their children show that these children tend to have a stronger commitment to stay in school, as they feel heard and emotionally supported.

For example, a child who almost dropped out but eventually continued his education said, "Mama always says, if you want to succeed, you have to go to school. Even when I'm lazy, Mama keeps encouraging me." This quote shows how crucial emotional support from parents is in maintaining a child's motivation. Although external factors like economic conditions can be challenging, the social capital in the form of emotional encouragement and moral support from the family plays a significant role in ensuring that children remain on their educational path. Moreover, in the context of Maluku society, the role of the family is also supported by local customary values. Values such as *masohi* (mutual cooperation) and *pela* (inter-village brotherhood) help shape more collective and communal family relationships, where extended family or the community can also contribute to supporting a child's education. According to Bourdieu, the social capital within the community can provide additional advantages to economically disadvantaged families, as solidarity and moral support can help children stay in school.

Sociologically, family support not only impacts the continuity of a child's education but also their character development. Sociologist John Dewey emphasized that education is a process of holistic personal development, and the family plays a fundamental role in this process (Woenardi et al., 2022). Dewey viewed education as a means for children to understand their role in society. Thus, families that emphasize the importance of education not only help children achieve academic success but also shape them into more responsible members of society.

This study also found that families who maintain open communication with their children are more effective at preventing school dropout. Through open discussions, children feel heard

and have space to express their feelings about education. This approach, often less practiced in families with lower economic habitus, has proven to have a very positive impact. Children involved in discussions about the importance of education tend to be more motivated to stay in school, even amid limitations. In this context, a family approach that prioritizes two-way communication and emotional support has proven effective in keeping children from dropping out of school. As the primary actor in preventing school dropout, the family bears a significant responsibility in shaping a child's attitude toward education. Through emotional support, good communication, and the instilling of educational values, families can help their children overcome challenges they face outside the home, including economic pressures and environmental influences.

### **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

This research shows that preventing school dropouts in Adaut Village, Tanimbar Islands, requires a strong synergy between family, school, and the traditional values of Maluku. The family serves as the primary foundation, providing emotional support and motivation for children through good communication and a loving approach. Despite economic limitations often being a barrier, families that actively motivate their children tend to keep them in school. Schools support this effort with various programs focused on academic guidance and counseling. Identifying students at risk of dropping out, offering remedial programs, scholarships, and mentoring have proven effective in helping students overcome both academic and non-academic challenges. The involvement of schools in maintaining communication with parents also strengthens efforts to prevent dropouts. Maluku's traditional values, such as *masohi* (mutual cooperation) and *pela* (brotherhood), play an important role in providing social support to struggling families. Philosophical values like "*Potong di Kuku, Rasa di Daging*" (cutting the nail is felt in the flesh) highlight the importance of solidarity within the community. This local wisdom encourages the community to actively support children in staying in school, making education a collective responsibility. The collaboration between family, school, and tradition forms a holistic approach that covers various dimensions of a child's life. This synergy successfully addresses the challenges threatening educational continuity, whether emotional, social, academic, or financial. Through this comprehensive approach, children who were initially at risk of dropping out are re-motivated to continue their education, with the entire community supporting their success. The findings of this research highlight the importance of integrating family, school, and traditional approaches in preventing school dropouts. This model can be applied to other regions with similar socio-cultural contexts. The approach not only strengthens efforts to prevent dropouts but also increases the active role of the community in ensuring the continuity of children's education.

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