

Children Who Drop Out Of School In Poor Families: A Study In The Sociology Of Education In Enu Village, Donggala Regency

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Abstract: *This study aims to analyze school dropout children in poor families in Enu Village, Sindue District, Donggala Regency. By using a descriptive qualitative research method to obtain a general overview of the research object through in-depth interview methods. The research results indicate that the causes of children dropping out of school in Enu Village are due to several factors, namely: weak family economy which forces children to leave school and prefer to help their parents work in the fields, parents' lack of understanding of education leading them to consider their children's education as not very important, inadequate geographical conditions of the village, such as the long distance from the village to school and difficult terrain that limits children's access to education, and limited transportation facilities, such as private and public vehicles, which are also among the reasons causing children to drop out of school.*

Keywords: dropout; family; poverty.

1. Introduction

Education is regulated and structured under the Education Law No. 20 of 2003, which sets forth the national education framework as outlined in Article 34, paragraphs 1–3, which state as follows: First, all Indonesian citizens who have reached school age—that is, 6 years old—are legally obligated to receive and fulfill their educational obligations. Second, local governments are obligated to facilitate and ensure that educational rights are fulfilled at a minimum at the elementary level without charging any fees whatsoever. Third, compulsory education must be properly implemented and guaranteed by the relevant authorized institutions (Fatimah et al., 2023).

According to Law No. 20 of 2003, children's education is a conscious and planned effort to create a learning environment and teaching process that enables students to actively develop their potential to possess spiritual strength, diversity, self-control, a well-rounded personality, noble moral character, and the skills necessary for themselves, society, the nation, and the state (Aditya Nugraha, 2011).

Education is an individual need of every citizen that must be fulfilled (Fatimah et al., 2023). Education is a strategic instrument in creating a future generation that is intelligent, independent, and highly competitive. Education plays a fundamental role in shaping human

quality, competitiveness, and productivity. In other words, the state of education in society as a whole reflects the quality of human resources that support development (Wassahua, 2016). However, in reality, education has not yet been equally accessible to all segments of society in Indonesia, particularly those living in rural areas and classified as poor. One area facing this challenge is Enu Village, specifically in Hamlet 4 Jono, Sindue Subdistrict, Donggala Regency. In this area, there are still many children who do not continue their schooling or even drop out at a very young age.

Several factors contribute to children dropping out of school. According to McMillen, Kaufman, and Whitener, internal factors are those originating from within the child who drops out, such as laziness, a preference for play, or a lack of interest. Meanwhile, external factors are those originating from outside the child, such as family economic conditions, parental attention, strained parental relationships, or parents' educational backgrounds—all of which can reduce the child's motivation to attend school—or an unsupportive environment, such as a long distance between home and school (Putri, 2018).

The indigenous residents of Enu Village have lived in the area for many generations. Most of the residents work as farmers, fishermen, laborers, and merchants to support their daily lives. Access to formal education, particularly primary and secondary education, is often limited due to inadequate infrastructure. Many parents in Enu Village have not had the opportunity to pursue higher education, whether due to financial constraints, limited access, or a lack of awareness regarding the importance of education. These factors can influence their decisions regarding their children's formal education. Many families prioritize practical skills and cultural traditions over formal education. This can result in children not receiving adequate education or, in some cases, not continuing their education to higher levels due to a limited understanding of the benefits of education for their future. This phenomenon is not only related to economic constraints but also involves the social and cultural perceptions that have developed within the community. Parents with little or no formal education tend not to fully appreciate the importance of education for their children's future. They prioritize meeting the family's basic needs and often view sending their children to school as merely an additional burden that offers no immediate benefit. This is exacerbated by limited infrastructure and transportation to schools, which further diminishes children's interest in attending school. In this context, education is seen not as a means of empowerment, but as an activity that consumes time and money. Children living in such conditions are often directed to help with household chores, farm work, or even employment, to support the family's economy. Consequently, a cycle of poverty persists because the younger generation lacks the education needed to improve their standard of living.

This study examines the factors contributing to school dropout rates in Indonesia using a literature review methodology. School dropout remains a challenge for all segments of society, particularly the government. The government continues to strive to reduce the dropout rate, as it remains relatively high due to both internal and external factors. Internal factors stem from within the child. For example, laziness and a lack of cognitive ability. In addition to internal factors, there are also external factors, such as low family income, parents' indifference toward their children's education, flawed mindsets, divorce, bullying at school, the educational background of peers, and backward societal attitudes. This study serves as a means to examine cultural aspects within the community of Enu Village.

Nurdin (2024) explains that communication plays a vital role in development, serving as a key pillar of support for children's education, as communication patterns can be understood as the interactions between two or more people in the transmission and reception of messages in an effective manner, ensuring that the intended message is understood. Based on the SDG

Implementation Strategy to improve the quality of education in Indonesia, which is already evident in several regions, to achieve the SDG strategy in improving the quality of education under point 4, several targets have been established, such as ensuring access to care for children not yet of primary school age, as well as primary, secondary, and vocational education—including affordable and high-quality universities; gender equality and the elimination of gender disparities; implementing and improving facilities for safe education and for children; improving the quality and accessibility of education; enhancing teacher quality and various resources supporting the education and learning process; improving specialized services for education; and prioritizing and strengthening character education (Nurdin et al., 2024). This study explains that facilities are one of the aspects that must be considered in the world of education.

Ayub (2024) investigated the importance of the parental role in children's education through a literature review, analyzing articles and other sources of information related to the importance of the parental role in children's education. The results of the study indicate that parents play a very important role in children's education. Parents are the first school that teaches children valuable values for living their lives and interacting socially with others (Ayub et al., 2024). This study highlights the importance of the parental role in children's education, particularly in providing motivation and encouragement to ensure children are willing to attend school.

According to Kaufman (Widiasanti et al., n.d.), school dropout refers to a student who is unable to complete their educational program before the scheduled completion date or a student who fails to complete their educational program. School dropout is the process by which a student is forced to leave the educational institution where they are studying. This means that a child is left behind by a formal educational institution, caused by various factors, one of which is the family's inadequate economic conditions or leaving school for one reason or another, failing to complete the prescribed level of schooling (Aldi, 2021). A school dropout is a child who does not complete their education at a certain level within the formal education system.

Every child who does not complete their formal education faces a variety of issues that lead them to drop out of school. These may include economic difficulties, a lack of parental motivation, long commutes to school, limited access to education, or the influence of their social environment. The factors contributing to school dropout can be categorized into internal and external factors. Internal factors stem from the child themselves, such as low interest and motivation in learning. Additionally, there are several external factors that influence school dropout, including family, economic, and social environments (Fatimah et al., 2023).

Poverty is a social reality shaped by social construction processes within society. Understandings of the concept of poverty vary widely and reflect how communities interpret and respond to this phenomenon based on their social and cultural contexts (Nurwati et al., 2024).

Human capital is one of the causes of poverty. High-quality human capital can improve people's quality of life, whereas those with insufficient human capital will face difficulties in improving their quality of life. According to Wei (Sholeh, 2022), in efforts to combat poverty, the first step is to improve the quality of human capital and increase investment in human capital.

Educational attainment is one of the factors contributing to poverty; through education, individuals can compete in the job market or create their own jobs. A person's level of education plays a crucial role in improving their quality of life. In addition to education, where a person lives also affects their income level, especially if they live in impoverished rural areas or in places far from the city.

Poverty can also be influenced by family size; the more family members there are, the higher the expenses will be. With so many family members to support, a modest income will not be

enough to cover daily needs. In addition to expenses for daily necessities, additional costs such as children's education will also add to the burden of meeting basic living expenses.

2. Method

The researcher employed a descriptive qualitative research method to obtain a general overview of the research subject through in-depth interviews supplemented by research documentation (Hadi, 2014).

This study stems from concerns regarding these conditions, with the aim of gaining a deep understanding of the causes of school dropout among children in poor families in Enu Village and to further explore parents' perspectives on their children's education in Enu Village. Using a qualitative approach and symbolic interactionism theory, this study seeks to explore the subjective meanings shaped by social interaction, as well as the realities constructed by poor families regarding their children's education. Based on this understanding, it is hoped that relevant steps or recommendations can be identified to address educational challenges in marginalized areas such as Enu Village.

3. Main Heading of the First Analysis or Discussion

Research findings indicate that poverty is the most significant factor contributing to school dropout rates in Dusun 4 Jono, Enu Village. Poor families in this area struggle to meet their basic daily needs, so their children's education is not viewed as a top priority. However, school tuition is free thanks to government assistance. Children attending school still impose an additional burden due to other needs that parents must meet, such as transportation, uniforms, and pocket money.

In addition to economic factors, parents' lack of understanding regarding the importance of education is also a major cause of school dropout. Most parents from poor families did not complete formal education themselves, so they lack a full understanding of the long-term benefits of education. As a result, education is viewed as irrelevant or unproductive. Children in these families lack the motivation or encouragement to attend school. In some cases, even when a child expresses a desire to continue their education, parents respond with passivity or outright refusal, driven by concerns about the increased financial burden that comes with schooling.

Geographical conditions are also a factor in school dropout rates, as transportation infrastructure in these areas remains inadequate. This poses a major obstacle for children trying to get to school. Many children must travel considerable distances to reach school and do not have access to private transportation. Consequently, they must walk to school. This leads to fatigue and a decline in their motivation to learn.

According to data from the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology, the number of school dropouts in Indonesia in 2024 was 4.6 million, with 0.19% of elementary school students dropping out and 0.18% of junior high school students while the number of school dropouts in Central Sulawesi in 2024 was 4,900 students, and the number of school dropouts in Donggala Regency in 2023 was 3,699 children who dropped out of school; in Sindue Subdistrict, specifically in Enu Village, there are two elementary schools (SD) and one junior high school (SMP).

Data from initial interviews with teachers at SDN 10 Sindue indicate that 8 students dropped out of SDN 10 Sindue, while at SDN 23 Sindue, 26 students dropped out between 2021 and

2023. At the junior high school level, 38 students dropped out between 2020 and 2023 . The children who chose not to continue their education did so due to pressing economic factors, a lack of parental interest in their children’s education, their environment, and a lack of interest on the children’s part, even though schooling is now provided free of charge by the government.

4. Conclusion

The reasons why children drop out of school in Enu Village, Hamlet 4, Jono, are due to several factors, namely poor family finances, which force children to drop out of school and choose instead to help their parents work in the fields. Additionally, a lack of parental understanding regarding children’s education leads many parents to view education as unimportant. This stems from a culture and tradition of not attending school that is deeply ingrained in the local community. This is evident in the fact that many parents themselves never received an education, resulting in their children also not being enrolled in school. The extremely limited transportation options are also a major reason why children drop out of school, as they make it difficult for children to travel to school, particularly for junior high and high school students. Some residents of Enu Village, specifically in Dusun 4 Jono, do not own private vehicles to take their children to school, and there is a lack of supporting infrastructure—such as public transportation—that could help children attend school comfortably and regularly.

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