

Coastal Family Communication Culture in the Case of Low Educational Quality Among Fishermen's Children (A Case Study of Fishermen Families in Bagan Kuala Village, Serdang Bedagai Regency)

Abdurrahman Zuhdi^{1,*}, Abrar Adhani², Faizal Hamzah Lubis³

^{1,2,3} Universitas Muhammadiyah Sumatera Utara, Medan, North Sumatera, Indonesia

*Correspondence Author: abdurrahmanzuhdi@umsu.ac.id

ABSTRACT

This study looks at how family communication in fishermen households in Bagan Kuala Village affects the low quality of education among their children. Many fishing families focus more on work and income than on school, which impacts children's motivation to learn. The main issue is that communication about education is limited and often one-sided, with parents making decisions without much discussion. This topic is important because not many studies have explored how family communication, not just poverty, plays a role in children's education in coastal communities. The research uses a qualitative case study approach. Data were collected from five fishermen families through purposive sampling. In-depth interviews, direct observation, and documentation were used to explore communication patterns, and the data were analyzed thematically to identify meaningful insights. Findings show that educational discussions are rarely prioritized in family communication, which tends to be one-directional from parents to children. Economic survival dominates decision-making, leading to weak motivation among children to pursue formal education. Only one family reported active dialogue about higher education. The study concludes that limited, economically driven communication within fishermen families contributes significantly to the low educational outcomes of children. This highlights the need for family-level communication interventions that emphasize the long-term value of education and empower both parents and children. The main takeaway is that improving educational quality in coastal communities requires addressing not only access and funding but also internal family dynamics and cultural values.

Keywords: Educational Quality; Family Communication; Fishermen Households

Introduction

Education is one of the fundamental pillars in developing high-quality human resources and plays a crucial role in social and economic mobility. In many parts of the world, including Indonesia, children's access to quality education is strongly influenced by socioeconomic factors. Among the communities most affected are fishing families, especially those living in coastal

regions. Indonesia, as a maritime nation with an extensive coastline and a vital reliance on marine livelihoods, places fishing communities at the heart of local economic activity. However, these communities often face significant barriers in providing proper education to their children. In Bagan Kuala Village, located in Serdang Bedagai Regency, the fishing industry forms a central component of the local economy and social identity. Yet,

children from these households often experience neglect in their educational development due to several factors, such as economic limitations, a lack of adequate educational infrastructure, and ineffective family communication patterns. Data from the Central Statistics Agency (BPS) in 2021 highlights the severity of the issue, revealing that 36.9% of Bagan Kuala residents had never attended school and only 0.2% pursued higher education—far below neighboring villages where rates surpass 0.9%.

Preliminary observations suggest that local residents do not prioritize education as a critical aspect of life. Instead, their focus is on achieving immediate financial stability, often seeing education as an unnecessary luxury. Many view their identity as descendants of fishermen as a justification for this outlook, believing that the skills learned from the sea are sufficient for survival (Alokamai, 2023). This mindset creates a cultural environment where the long-term, incremental benefits of education are undervalued in favor of the short-term gains offered by traditional fishing activities. Furthermore, family communication in these communities plays a crucial role in shaping children's perspectives toward education. Parents' limited education levels, economic stress, and deeply rooted cultural norms

contribute to ineffective communication, especially regarding the importance of schooling (Zuhdi & Arif, 2023). Gender-based stereotypes within the family further compound this issue, with many households giving less priority to girls' education, which in turn diminishes their motivation and opportunity for academic success (Nurcahyani et al., 2022). As Fatimah, (2016) asserts, open, supportive, and equitable family communication can counter such stereotypes and empower children particularly girls to pursue education and improve their quality of life.

This study is motivated by the need to understand and address these challenges by examining how family culture and communication affect educational outcomes in fishing communities. The central research question guiding this study is: How do family culture and communication patterns contribute to the low quality of education among children in fishing families in Bagan Kuala Village, and what communication strategies can be implemented to improve their motivation to learn? Accordingly, the study has two main objectives: first, to identify and describe the communication culture within fishing families in Bagan Kuala; and second, to develop effective family-based communication strategies that can foster greater educational motivation among children. By addressing both empirical and

theoretical dimensions of the issue, this study aims to contribute to the broader literature on educational inequality, rural development, and family communication (Béné et al., 2016). The findings are expected to inform practical interventions and policy measures that support improved education in Indonesia's coastal and marginalized communities

Research methods

This study employed a qualitative case study approach to examine family communication culture in coastal communities and its relationship with the low quality of education among fishermen's children. A case study design was selected because it enables an in-depth understanding of social phenomena within their real-life context, particularly when cultural, economic, and social factors are closely intertwined (Yin, 2018; Khatimah et al., 2023).

The research was conducted in Bagan Kuala Village, Serdang Bedagai Regency, North Sumatra, Indonesia, a coastal area where most households depend on fishing as their primary livelihood. Coastal fishing communities often face educational challenges such as limited access to schools, economic constraints, and cultural norms that place low priority on formal education, especially for girls (Head et al., 2023).

This context makes the village a relevant setting for exploring the role of family communication in shaping children's educational experiences.

Participants were selected using purposive sampling, focusing on five fishermen families with school-age children. This technique allows researchers to select information-rich cases that provide deep and relevant insights into the phenomenon under study (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Data were collected through semi-structured in-depth interviews, direct observation, and documentation. These complementary techniques enable the researcher to capture participants' perspectives, observe family interactions, and obtain contextual support for the findings, thereby enhancing data credibility through triangulation (Head et al., 2023).

Data analysis followed the interactive model proposed by Miles and Huberman, which includes data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing conducted iteratively throughout the research process. This analytical approach allows researchers to identify patterns, interpret meanings, and develop grounded conclusions regarding the influence of family communication culture on children's motivation and access to education (Miles et al., 2014).

Research Findings and Discussion

The discussion section interprets the findings of this study within the context of existing research, explores their practical implications, evaluates the strengths and limitations, and provides recommendations for future research.

Interpretation of Key Findings

The research conducted in Bagan Kuala Village provides a deep understanding of the socio-cultural realities that affect the quality of education for fishermen's children. Through field observations and in-depth interviews with five fishermen families, it was found that family communication regarding education is very limited and is not part of their routine or long-term planning. Discussions about children's futures are often focused on economic aspects and involvement in family work rather than academic development or formal careers (Beebe et al., 2011).

Furthermore, interpersonal communication patterns within families show a tendency for one-way communication, where parents assume the role of sole decision-makers, while children remain passive. This finding aligns with previous studies that suggest that family communication plays a crucial role in shaping children's perceptions of themselves and their future (Bahfiarti, 2016). In this context, the role of fishermen

parents is primarily focused on meeting economic needs, which leads to neglecting long-term educational planning. This situation is also influenced by the parents' low education levels, which results in a lack of constructive discussions about the importance of education (Santosa & Naryoso, 2019).

In the coastal cultural context, children are more directed towards helping with work at sea than continuing their education to higher levels. This is reinforced by a collective culture that normalizes the decision to stop schooling after junior or senior high school. One informant even stated, "There's no point in going to higher school if in the end, you're still going to be a fisherman." This attitude reflects a strong cognitive schema passed down through generations, as described in family communication theory (Solomon & Theiss, 2022).

Comparison with Previous Studies

The findings from this study are consistent with previous research that suggests that low parental education, limited family communication, and economic pressures in coastal communities contribute significantly to the underperformance in education among children (Fatimah, 2016). Studies in other coastal regions have also shown that traditional roles and a focus on immediate economic survival often overshadow the

importance of long-term educational planning for children (DeVito, 2018). However, this study highlights a unique aspect in that communication within the family is largely one-directional, with a lack of active discussions about children's futures, which was not as prominently discussed in earlier studies (Khatimah et al., 2023).

Limitations and Cautions

While the study provides valuable insights into the family dynamics and educational challenges in Bagan Kuala Village, it is important to note that the findings are based on a limited sample of only five families. This small sample size may not fully represent the diversity of experiences within the broader community. Furthermore, the study is confined to a specific cultural and geographical context, and thus the findings may not be easily generalized to other coastal communities or regions. There is also the possibility of bias in the data collected through interviews, as participants may have been influenced by social desirability or the researcher's presence (Santosa & Naryoso, 2019).

Recommendations for Future Research

Future research should explore a larger and more diverse sample of families across different coastal villages to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the

factors affecting education in these communities. It would also be beneficial to conduct longitudinal studies to track the long-term impacts of family communication strategies and interventions on children's educational outcomes. Additionally, future studies could investigate the role of community-based programs or external interventions that aim to improve family communication and support education in coastal areas. Research focused on gender-specific challenges in these families could also provide valuable insights into how to address educational disparities, particularly for girls.

Closing

This study investigated the communication culture within fishermen's families and its impact on the quality of education for their children. The research aimed to explore how family communication patterns influence the educational aspirations and outcomes of children in Bagan Kuala Village. The findings demonstrated that family communication related to education is limited and often overshadowed by economic concerns, with parents focusing more on their children's involvement in family work rather than academic development. The study highlighted that one-way communication, where parents

are the sole decision-makers, is prevalent in these families. Notably, the cultural norm of prioritizing work over education contributes to the low educational expectations and a lack of support for children's academic progression. These results underscore the importance of improving family communication strategies, suggesting that interventions targeting parental involvement and creating awareness about the long-term benefits of education could be crucial in breaking the cycle of limited educational opportunities.

While this study provides valuable insights into the dynamics of family communication and education in coastal communities, certain limitations should be noted, such as the small sample size of five families and the focus on a single village. Future research should focus on exploring a larger sample across multiple coastal areas to better understand the broader patterns and factors influencing education in such communities. Additionally, further studies could investigate the role of community support and gender-specific educational challenges, potentially enhancing our understanding of educational disparities and informing policy and practice aimed at improving the quality of education for children in fishermen families.

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