



THE IMPACT OF ECONOMIC CONSTRAINTS ON YOUTH IN WEST KALUKKU VILLAGE IN PURSUING HIGHER EDUCATION

Nurul Amalia², Muh. Ali Jum'ah Bin Nur³, Firdha Adelia Ilyas⁴, Reski Ananda⁵, Luthfiyatul Fuadah⁶, Fitra Nurdin⁷, Afif Afdhal⁸

¹²³⁴⁵⁶⁷⁸Intitut Agama Islam Darud Dakwah Wal Irsyad Mangkoso (IAI DDI)

¹²³⁴⁵⁶⁷⁸Jln. AG. H. Abdurrahman Ambo Dalle No. 28 Mangkoso Kab. Barru, Sulawesi Selatan, 90752

nurulamalia.mima@gmail.com², alijumahmnuro9@gmail.com³, firdhaadeliahilyas@gmail.com⁴,
reskiananda110@gmail.com⁵, Lutfiyatulfuadah1109@gmail.com⁶, fitraittanurdino8@gmail.com⁷,
naughtyscloud@gmail.com⁸

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ABSTRACT

This study discusses the impact of economic limitations on the decisions of young people in Kalukku Barat Village, Kalukku District, Mamuju Regency, to continue their education to college. The study uses a qualitative approach with a case study type. Data was collected through in-depth interviews, observations, and documentation involving young people, parents, and community leaders. The results of the study show that limited family economic conditions, economic instability in the village, and the demand to start working immediately are the main factors that prevent young people from continuing their higher education. In addition, low motivation to study and the influence of the social environment were also found to be factors that support the decision not to continue education even though the family's economic conditions are considered sufficient. Possible solutions include strengthening the role of schools in providing scholarship information, increasing parents' understanding of the importance of higher education, and making efforts to increase youth motivation to study.

A. INTRODUCTION

Education is an important means of shaping the quality of human resources and serves as a determining factor in an individual's success in facing the demands of life in the modern era. Through education, individuals are able to develop their potential intellectually, emotionally, socially, and spiritually. Education also plays a role in creating



an intelligent, productive society capable of contributing to national development. At the senior secondary education level (SMA/SMK), students are prepared either to pursue higher education or to enter the workforce according to their competencies. However, in reality, not all senior high school graduates have equal opportunities to continue their education to a higher level (Yuliatin et al., 2025).

Education is also a conscious and systematically designed effort to create a learning environment that enables students to actively participate in developing their abilities. Through the educational process, each student is expected to possess spiritual strength, self-control, intellectual and emotional development, noble character, and useful skills for themselves and society (BP, 2022).

During childhood, education becomes the primary foundation that determines the direction of individual development in later stages of life. Guidance provided from an early age is highly important, as the cultivation of faith, morals, and ethical values will be more effective when introduced as early as possible. The process of nurturing knowledgeable children requires the fulfillment of various educational needs, most of which become the responsibility of parents as family leaders. Therefore, the home environment must be maintained in a conducive manner to support children's development (Sifi KHOBIAH RKT, 2015).

At the next level, basic education aims to equip students with fundamental abilities that enable them to fulfill their roles as individuals, members of society, citizens, and complete human beings, while also preparing them for higher levels of education. Meanwhile, senior secondary education (SMA) is directed toward preparing students either to pursue higher education or to enter the workforce (SYAFE'I, 2015). However, in reality, not all senior high school graduates are able to continue to higher education due to social and family economic factors. Considering these conditions, education at every level requires flexibility in order to adapt to students' needs and social realities. An adaptive educational system is highly necessary to achieve the national goal of educating the nation and developing students' potential so that they are able to live independently and with dignity (Ratnasari et al., 2013).

One of the factors that greatly influences such opportunities is family economic conditions. Higher education often requires considerable expenses, including registration fees, tuition fees, transportation costs, and supporting needs such as accommodation, learning devices, and daily consumption. For low-income families, the primary priority is generally directed toward fulfilling basic needs rather than financing children's education. This situation causes youth from economically disadvantaged families to postpone or even



abandon their intention to pursue higher education despite having the ability and motivation to learn (Eka Nurdin et al., 2025). Economic limitations are one of the main factors causing youth to be unable to continue to higher education. Weak family economic conditions make it difficult for parents to fulfill basic household needs, resulting in educational expenses often not becoming a primary priority (Raharjo et al., 2015).

B. RESEARCH METHOD

Qualitative research is a scientific approach used to explore and understand various social and cultural phenomena in greater depth. Unlike quantitative approaches that emphasize numerical data and statistical analysis, qualitative research focuses more on understanding the meanings and experiences underlying a particular event or phenomenon (Suprayitno, 2024). This study employed a descriptive qualitative approach because its focus was to gain an in-depth understanding of the experiences, perspectives, and social dynamics (Safarudin et al., 2023) experienced by youth in West Kalukku Village when facing economic constraints in pursuing higher education. This approach was selected to enable the researcher to capture the meanings constructed by informants regarding the situations they experienced.

The research informants were determined through purposive sampling, namely youth who did not continue to higher education, youth who were currently pursuing higher education, parents, and community leaders considered knowledgeable about educational issues in the village (Ritoma, 2025). Data were collected through in-depth interviews and field observations combined with documentation studies concerning the village's socio-economic conditions. Data analysis was conducted in stages through the processes of data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing (Wekke, Ismail Suardi, 2019).

The research method employed in this study was a qualitative approach with a case study design. This study was conducted in West Kalukku Village not only because the researchers' field post was located in the village but also because the area possesses socio-economic characteristics relevant to the focus of the study, particularly concerning the economic constraints faced by youth in pursuing higher education. The research informants were determined through purposive sampling techniques, including senior high school graduates, parents, and village leaders who understood the local educational conditions.

Data were collected through in-depth interviews, field observations, and document reviews related to available educational assistance programs. All data was analyzed



through the stages of data reduction, data presentation, and inductive conclusion drawing. To ensure data validity, source and technique triangulation as well as member checking with informants were conducted so that the findings accurately reflected factual conditions. This study also considered research ethics principles by maintaining the confidentiality of informants' identities and obtaining consent prior to the interview process.

This study is important for providing a comprehensive description of the educational problems faced by rural youth while also serving as a basis for governments, educational institutions, and communities in designing more targeted educational policies or assistance programs. Therefore, the findings of this study are expected to contribute to efforts to improve access to higher education for youth, particularly those from economically disadvantaged families.

C. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. Economic Constraints of Youth in Pursuing Higher Education

Education plays a very important role in shaping the quality of human resources and is regarded as a long-term investment for the advancement of a nation. Higher education institutions serve a strategic function in producing graduates who are capable of competing at the global level, which ultimately contributes to improving the quality of human resources and their readiness to occupy various important positions in both the public and private sectors (Rositasari, 2025). One of the internal factors influencing an individual's interest in pursuing higher education is motivation, namely the internal drive that encourages individuals to act and achieve predetermined goals (Julyia Fani, 2022). Limited family economic conditions, minimal environmental support, and lack of information regarding educational opportunities are factors that frequently hinder youth from continuing their studies to higher education.

Based on the interviews conducted with informants, economic constraints emerged as the dominant factor influencing youths' decisions to pursue higher education. As one informant stated: *"Economic factors greatly influence the situation, resulting in many students not continuing their education. In reality, students who have graduated from senior high school tend to want to earn money immediately by working, such as guarding shops, working in food stalls, becoming couriers, working in malls, and similar jobs that provide direct income"* (Nirwana, personal communication, December 17, 2025). This condition illustrates that economic pressure encourages youth to prioritize the fulfillment of short-



term needs rather than long-term educational investment. After completing secondary education, the desire to work is influenced not only by limited educational costs but also by demands from families and the social environment that expect economic contributions from youth.

The economic condition in West Kalukku Village is currently relatively unstable, as stated by the head of West Kalukku Village: *“The economic condition of the West Kalukku community is currently still relatively unstable”* (Arman Hafid, personal communication, December 17, 2025). This situation has led many young people to choose occupations that provide immediate income despite the limited long-term career prospects and opportunities for self-development associated with such work.

In addition to economic factors, the interview results also revealed that some youth had no interest in pursuing higher education even though their family economic conditions were relatively adequate. One informant stated: *“Actually, if I had the intention to attend college, my family’s economic condition would be sufficient, but I personally was unmotivated. My parents were separated, so I had no desire to continue my education. Environmental factors also made me reluctant to continue school, and I preferred to work instead”* (Morgan Saputra, personal communication, December 12, 2025). In addition to economic factors, the interview findings indicate that there are youth who lack interest in continuing to higher education despite having relatively sufficient family economic conditions.

One informant explained that financially, the family was capable of supporting higher education; however, low personal motivation, disharmonious family conditions, and the influence of the social environment became the primary reasons for the absence of interest in continuing education. The informant also revealed that the surrounding environment encouraged young people to work immediately rather than pursue further studies.

Another informant stated that economic limitations were the main reason for not continuing to higher education, as expressed in the following statement: *“The desire to attend college actually existed, but my family’s economic condition did not allow it because my family was in severe financial difficulty, so I decided to migrate and follow my friends”* (Ardiansyah, personal communication, December 12, 2025). This statement indicates that economic constraints not only affect the ability to finance education but also shape the life orientation of youth, who tend to prioritize the fulfillment of short-term economic needs.



This finding is consistent with the theory of inequality in educational access, which states that family socioeconomic background plays a major role in determining individuals' opportunities to access higher education (Marini, 2024). Thus, economic limitations remain a structural factor that significantly restricts youth opportunities to pursue higher education.

2. Proposed Solutions to Overcome Economic Barriers

Based on the research findings regarding the various economic barriers experienced by youth in pursuing higher education, strategic and sustainable efforts are required to address these issues. The proposed solutions focus not only on the financing of education but also on strengthening social support, increasing motivation, and expanding access to educational information for youth and their families.

The interview findings indicate that the availability of scholarship information is one of the important solutions for overcoming economic barriers. One informant stated: *"Regarding scholarship information, the school is very supportive in providing information, especially since many students who receive KIP scholarships are greatly assisted in pursuing higher education"* (Nirwana, personal communication, December 17, 2025). This statement demonstrates that the role of schools as sources of information and facilitators of scholarship access has a significant contribution to increasing youths' opportunities to pursue higher education, particularly for those from economically disadvantaged families.

In addition to school support, informants also emphasized the importance of parents' understanding of the value of higher education. One informant stated: *"Parents who have a good understanding of the importance of education for every child believe that education today should ideally reach the bachelor's degree level, not merely senior high school graduation"* (Arman Hafid, personal communication, December 17, 2025). This finding indicates that parental support and perspectives on education greatly influence children's decisions to pursue higher education.

However, informants also revealed obstacles originating from the students themselves. One informant stated: *"Furthermore, students themselves are often unconcerned about education and tend to avoid making serious efforts in studying"* (Nirwana, personal communication, December 17, 2025). This condition indicates that economic assistance and environmental support need to be balanced with efforts to improve learning motivation so that youth possess the mental readiness required to pursue higher education.



This condition indicates that economic assistance and environmental support need to be balanced with efforts to enhance learning motivation so that youth possess the mental readiness required to pursue higher education. This finding is consistent with the view of (Subrata, 2023), which states that learning motivation is a major internal factor influencing individuals' success and persistence in pursuing education.

D. CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of this study, it can be concluded that economic constraints remain the primary issue influencing the decisions of youth in West Kalukku Village to pursue higher education. Unstable family financial conditions often cause higher education to be perceived as a burden, leading young people to prefer working in order to fulfill short-term needs rather than investing in long-term education. In addition to economic factors, low learning motivation, lack of family support, disharmonious household conditions, and the influence of the social environment also reinforce the tendency of youth not to continue their education, even among families that are relatively economically sufficient.

Furthermore, the solutions that may be offered to address these issues include strengthening access to and dissemination of scholarship information, enhancing the role of schools as mentors and facilitators of continuing education, and fostering parents' understanding of the importance of higher education for their children's future. In addition, efforts to improve youths' motivation and awareness regarding the value of education need to be carried out continuously through the support of families, communities, and village governments. Through the synergy of various stakeholders, the economic and social barriers faced by youth are expected to be minimized so that opportunities to access higher education become more open and equitable.

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