

Aspirations of Fishermen's Families on the North Coast of Java for Children's Education

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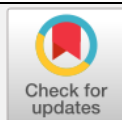
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ABSTRACT

So far, fishermen are associated with the poor with low education. This is due to the livelihood of fishermen who depend on the sea, which is very dynamic and uncertain. However, during the last 20 years, there has been a change in the perspective and aspirations of fishermen's families towards their children's education. The factors of fishermen's livelihood, which are increasingly difficult and increasing accessibility, are expected to change the perspective on education. This research aims to explore the factors that change the aspirations of fishermen's families towards education, both formal and informal education in Purworejo Village - Demak. The qualitative research method with ten informants conducted in-depth interviews, three focused discussions, and field observations to understand the existing phenomena. Focused discussions were conducted online and offline due to the COVID-19 pandemic situation in the research area. Data collection was carried out in July-August 2020 and March 2021. The results showed that the fishermen had seen the importance of their children getting a higher education. The increasing aspirations of fishermen's parents towards education cannot be separated from the Family Hope Program (Program Keluarga Harapan or PKH), which can at least increase the school participation level of fishermen's children. Parents expect their children to have a wider choice of jobs than those who live by profession as a fisherman, namely employee of the last resort.

Keywords: Children's Education; Family; Family Hope Program; Fishermen; North Coast of Java

1. Introduction

The problem of poverty and human resources has always been an inherent feature of people living in coastal areas and small islands who generally work as fishermen. Some indications show the poverty of fishing communities is usually seen in the slum settlement conditions, uncertain income, and minimal educational status. The fishermen are also vulnerable and powerless to face the social, political, and economic changes that hit, and very difficult to deal with investors' intervention. Jobs as fishermen in Indonesia are mostly obtained from generation to generation from ancestors with low educational backgrounds and limited skills. With these limited conditions, fishermen are looking for a source of livelihood depending on the dynamic and uncertain marine resources (Hidayati et al., 2021).

Traditional fishing communities in coastal areas are groups from social strata that most need government intervention and other external parties (Helmi & Satria, 2012). Various studies indicate that people living in coastal areas, especially fishermen, are generally a structurally poor group (Campbell et al., 2006; Noveria et al., 2011; Natalia & Alie, 2014; Rahim et al., 2014; Rachmawati et al., 2014; Triyanti & Firdaus, 2016). The community is a poor structural group because they cannot use and utilize the sources of livelihood that are available to them (Khomsan et al., 2013). Structural poverty in coastal communities is usually experienced by fishermen, especially laborers and crew members who are always in debt to survive. Therefore, the empowerment of fishing communities related to economic and educational issues must be a priority for the government. In other words, every policy taken must impact these two aspects. In addition, as a developing country, Indonesia is obliged to improve the quality of life of its people through the development of human resources.

The condition of human resources in fishing communities is generally still low, and children of fishermen do not have the culture to continue their education in college. The limited level of education makes it difficult for fishermen to compete with other community groups for employment outside the fisheries sector. Meanwhile, job opportunities as fishermen are often used as alternative jobs for non-fishing communities when facing pressure on "land". In coastal communities, the sea is a natural resource that is open and can be utilized by anyone. This is different from an agrarian society that recognizes a system of ownership or control over land. As a result, competition is between old fishermen and "new players" who often have more capital, so competition is increasingly open and tough.

In some areas of Indonesia, low motivation to complete formal education is found among children and parents who think that formal education does not guarantee their children get jobs outside fishing. The research results from Pinem et al. (2019) in Bengkulu stated that the highest education of fishermen was only junior high school. Hence, the opportunity to work in other sectors was very small. As for the education of fishermen's children, they have reached high school because of the compulsory education program from the government. But the fact is that only a few fishing families can afford or even encourage their children to continue their education to college for high costs.

This condition is also mentioned by Salmiah (2016) states that the low awareness of the fishing community towards children's education is influenced by the education they have. This encourages fishermen to invite their children who are still of school age to go to sea. The uncertainty of fishermen's income is also an obstacle to fishermen's motivation to send their children to school. The lifestyle of fishing communities that tend to be consumptive and not future-oriented also affects their aspirations for education, especially for their children (Purwanti & Wulandari, 2013).

Through several ministries/agencies, the Indonesian government has created programs to alleviate fishermen from economic and educational problems. Some of the assistance provided by the Ministry of Marine Affairs and Fisheries for fishermen is the National Marine and Fisheries Independent Community Empowerment Program (Program Nasional Pemberdayaan Masyarakat Mandiri Kelautan dan Perikanan or PNPM-MKP), the distribution program for Direct Community Assistance for Rural Mina Business Development (Bantuan Langsung Masyarakat Pengembangan Usaha Mina Pedesaan or BLM-PUMP), and also the fishermen alert program which was intensified during the COVID-19 pandemic. One of the program's successes from the Ministry of Marine Affairs and Fisheries is shown by the research findings of [Eriyanti et al. \(2020\)](#), which state that the BLM-PUMP program has succeeded in improving the economy of Minangkabau fishermen, including increasing awareness of the education of fishermen's children.

Apart from the Ministry of Marine Affairs and Fisheries, the Ministry of Social Affairs also has the Family Hope Program (PKH), which positively impacts the living standards of the poor, including in terms of education. PKH has been rolled out since 2007 for all Indonesian people who are included in the criteria for receiving assistance. PKH functions to open access to various services for the poor, including educational service facilities. Through PKH, all children must be registered at the primary and secondary school levels. PKH social assistance was obtained in 2021 for assistance worth Rp900,000 to Rp2,000,000 for the elementary to high school education category for each child in a family with a maximum number of four children ([Kementerian Sosial Republik Indonesia, 2021](#)). Through PKH, the school participation rate of children has increased, including the children of fishermen.

The fishing communities are used to going to the sea for a long time, so they are used to leaving activities other than "going to the sea", such as not paying attention to educational and socio-religious activities. This causes the thinking of most fishermen to be conservative, so they invite their children to go to sea, even though their children are school-aged. This causes the educational rights of fishermen's children to be forcibly taken away, and less attention is paid to them ([Syatori, 2014](#)). Therefore, the aspirations and understanding of fishermen as parents towards the progress of children's education and their community becomes an important factor. But in reality, sometimes making education a value of self-efficacy as a family protection measure is never that easy.

Based on the background and problems above, this research aims to understand the changing aspirations of fishermen's families towards their children's education, especially for small-scale fishing fishermen in coastal areas. Educational aspirations provide information about building beliefs about the importance of education and its decision-making process ([Jaeger et al., 2007](#); [Manski, 2004](#)). The condition of the community structure coupled with the program from the government will intervene in the aspirations of the fishermen's families towards children's education. The fishermen's increasingly difficult livelihood factors and the increased accessibility of the area where they live are expected to change the perspective on education. Before, those who did not consider education important became concerned. This research will also explore the changing aspirations of fishermen's families towards education, both formal and informal education.

2. Literature Review

The potential of fishery resources in Indonesia is very large for the continuity of future economic growth. [FAO \(2020\)](#) reports that Indonesia's marine catches occupy the 2nd position globally after China, increasing from 4 million tonnes in the early 2000s to more than 6.7 million

tonnes in 2018. The very large size does not necessarily make the socio-economic conditions of capture fisheries fishermen in Indonesia free from dire conditions. Small-scale fishermen never have an idea of the income they will earn. Whether today will get a big catch or lose by bringing no results, fishing business results for fishermen are difficult to predict, never certain, fluctuate, and highly speculative (Acheson 1981; Nadjib & Masyhuri, 2016). This condition causes small-scale fishermen in coastal areas to always raise the issue of poverty, with inadequate housing conditions, uncertain income, and of course, difficult access to education and are included in the category of marginalized communities (Syatori, 2014).

Many factors cause small-scale fishing communities to be trapped in a vortex of poverty and educational backwardness. Generally, small fishing communities cannot compete in terms of capital and technology. In addition, the development of modern fishing gear, such as Tossa and Gardan, has had a negative impact on the environment, which has direct implications for small fishermen who are even poorer because they cannot compete with large ships using modern ships tools (Usman, 2013). In addition, the fishing community's livelihood system, which requires them to be in the middle of the sea for long periods, makes them less concerned with educational and socio-religious activities (Syatori, 2014).

Although the fishing community is considered a society that does not care about education, the awareness of the importance of education, especially by coastal fishing communities, continues to increase yearly. The assumption that fishermen find it difficult to access education began to change along with the existence of Regional Autonomy No. 22 of 1999 concerning the management of natural resources managed by local governments according to the potential of each region. Since then, people's lives have begun to change, especially after the 2000s. Research conducted by Purwati et al. (2017) states that the coastal residents of Kedungrejo Village before the 2000s still did not understand the importance of education. This is because most of the population are fishermen who have a low level of education. But then it changed for the better in understanding education after the 2000s, likewise with research conducted by Reksawan et al. (2020), who believe that there are socio-economic changes towards the modernization of fishing communities in Pembusuang Village from 2002 to 2017, which has implications for awareness of the importance of education for children.

Purworejo village, a coastal village where the majority of the population works as fishermen, has also begun to show increasing aspirations for education for children. Aspirations and enthusiasm for education for fishermen's children in the coastal area of Purworejo village also cannot be separated from the historical trajectory of the founding of the Demak Kingdom, whose first king was Raden Fatah, who was a student from the Islamic school in Ampel Denta (Nursyarief, 2014). The process of Islamic education in the Demak Kingdom has been embedded by the people of the village of Purworejo due to the missionary activities of the *Wali* (pious (holy) people; spreader of religion). In addition, the Central Bureau of Statistics noted that from 2011 to 2020, Expectations for the Length of School in Demak Regency grew by an average of 1.95 percent per year (Badan Pusat Statistik, 2020c). In 2020 Expectations for the Length of School reached 13.31 years, which means that children aged seven years have the opportunity to complete their education until they pass Diploma 1 (Badan Pusat Statistik, 2020c). The increase in Expectations for the Length of School is a positive signal for Purworejo Village as part of the Demak Regency, with the educational attainment of its population continuing to increase.

Parents in Purworejo Village are interested in providing the best education for their children, especially in religion-based schools such as Islamic boarding schools or madrasas. Islamic religious education is considered important for parents because they believe that

children and parents can avoid the dangers of the world and the threat of the hereafter (Sofanudin, 2012). Another common perception is that the presence of madrasas is indeed more touching in rural locations because it is associated with affordable costs (Asadullah & Maliki, 2018). Islamic Boarding School (*Pesantren*) also has a mission to support the poor's socio-economic empowerment (Widayanti, 2020). So that the people of Purworejo Village, little by little, have changed their perception of sending their children to school, especially in religious-based schools. This is quite reasonable considering that religion-based schools guarantee low fees (even free). In addition, parents will tend to feel calm because their children can master religious knowledge in religion-based schools.

3. Research Methodology

3.1. Research Location and Time

This research uses a qualitative approach with a descriptive method to understand the problems associated with developing the aspirations of fishermen's families towards education. A descriptive method is a research method that seeks to find the proper explanation for activities, objects, and people. The descriptive nature of the qualitative approach allows researchers to construct a complex and holistic picture in social situation settings (Creswell & Poth, 2017) and explore beliefs, values, and motives that explain why certain behaviors occur (Castleberry & Nolen, 2018). Descriptive research methods are concerned with gathering facts and identifying and predicting relationships within and between variables. With qualitative research methods, this research can connect ideas, aspirations, opinions, and beliefs of the research object to be studied, and all of them cannot be measured by numbers.

The knowledge and life experiences of fishermen's families are not easily understood by those who do not have the same activities in the ocean to catch fish from season to season. This research, therefore, also uses an ethnographic mindset approach that plays an important role in designing and understanding human complexity (Denzin & Lincoln, 2017, p. 1150). In this case, an ethnographic approach is used to understand the life experiences and knowledge of fishing communities that have complexities.

3.2. Types and Methods of Data Collection

Field data collection was carried out in July-August 2020 and March 2021 in Purworejo Village, Bonang Sub-district, Demak Regency. This research is part of the 2021 National Priority Program at the Research Center for Population, Indonesian Institute of Sciences (LIPI), titled "Strengthening Family and Community Resilience in Facing Environmental Changes". Purworejo village was determined as the research locus after reviewing the literature and seeing firsthand the geographical description of the village located on the north coast of Java. Central Bureau of Statistics data states that almost 79.4 per cent of the Purworejo village community are people who work as fishermen (Badan Pusat Statistik, 2019). Fishermen around Coastal Fishing Port of Morodemak are small-scale fishermen characterized by a boat size of less than 30 GT and operate in one-day fishing. The fishing fleet at the Morodemak Coastal Fishing Port is 5-10 GT motorboats totalling 672 units, while motorboats measured 10-30 GT totalling 677 units (Monita et al., 2019).

The people of Purworejo Village depend on the small-scale fisheries sector. In addition to the characteristics of its people who work as small-scale fishermen, Purworejo Village has a low level of education, as evidenced by the elementary school graduation rate of almost 58 per cent of the total village residents (Badan Pusat Statistik, 2019). In general, the small-scale fisheries sector is still at a low standard of the living subsystem that only meets basic survival needs and

is considered a speculative business with income below the average for other community groups (Nurzaman et al., 2020).

Considering the condition of fishermen's characteristics and geography that support the research plan, Purworejo Village is considered worthy of being designated as one of the portraits of the education picture of children from small-scale fishing families who have low economic status. Households with low economic status tend to find it difficult to meet their basic daily needs, especially in terms of meeting the needs of children for their physical and intellectual growth (Berliana et al., 2019).

The data used in this research are primary and secondary data used to answer the research objectives. Primary data is data from in-depth interviews with ten informants, two focused discussions, and field observations. Concerning the COVID-19 pandemic situation from 2020 until now, the research was modified to continue obtaining data from informants interviewed in-depth or through focused discussions while maintaining strict health protocols. Meanwhile, secondary data used is published data from Central Bureau of Statistics and literature from previous studies to support research analysis.

There are ten fisherman informants consisting of 5 fishermen with more than ten years of experience as fishermen, three fishermen's wives, and the remaining two are local government stakeholders consisting of the Purworejo Village Head and one village government employee. This research interviewed fishermen because they are always analogized as people who find it difficult to access education and health, so their standard of living is low (Anna et al., 2019). In addition, the gender perspective of fishermen's wives is also important because not only men are fishermen in Purworejo Village. Economic limitations have made about 50 per cent of women in Purworejo Village go to the sea to catch fish, crabs, and several other marine products for years to help the men in their families (Sigit, 2018).

This research also held focused group discussions twice, which consisted of focused discussions with the fishing community (5 people) and focused discussions on fishermen's wives (5 people). Focused discussion is important to build group dynamics to explore problems in context, depth, and detail, freely without imposing a conceptual framework compared to structured individual interviews. From the results of focused discussions with fishermen in Purworejo Village, it was found that the family's economic inadequacy due to low incomes and the long distance to continue to higher education were the main obstacles to improving the quality of human resources.

This research also uses a digital ethnographic approach through online interviews using Zoom platforms and offline in the field. The collection of digital ethnographic data poses a unique challenge for social researchers because social interactions are mediated by computer technology. However, researchers are still trying to adapt to the current situation to get maximum data. In a social world increasingly mediated by internet-based digital communications, researchers struggle to find or adapt terminology to label technologies that affect social and cultural life and cultural processes and formations themselves (Denzin & Lincoln, 2017). In-depth interviews and research FGDs were conducted in July-August 2020 online and in March 2021 offline in Purworejo Village, Bonang Sub-district, Demak Regency.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1. Educational Conditions on the North Coast of Java

Formal educational institutions are educational systems that are organized regularly, systematically, in stages, and within a certain period. The stereotype of formal education in coastal areas is low, especially for fishing communities. The source of livelihood in the ocean

makes fishermen and their children unable to attend formal education institutions. The condition of formal education in Indonesia has improved over the last decade.

Formal education in the coastal area of Demak, which the government manages, is generally affiliated with the Ministry of Religion, such as Madrasah Ibtidaiyah (MI), which is equivalent to Elementary School, Madrasah Tsanawiyah (MTs) equivalent to Junior High School, and Madrasah Aliyah (MA), equivalent to Senior High School. Madrasahs are an important choice of policy implications, considering that Indonesia, Bangladesh, and Pakistan are Muslim countries that host more than half a billion people, most of whom live in rural areas and earn less than two dollars a day (Asadullah & Maliki, 2018).

In addition to the management of madrasah schools, one of the factors driving the acceleration of the number of people completing education is the PKH program from the Ministry of Social Affairs launched in 2007. PKH funds finance the educational needs of school-age children in every poor household in Indonesia. Since 2010, the development of formal education has been steadily increasing. PKH in Demak Regency has reached 16.87 percent of households receiving social protection programs (Badan Pusat Statistik, 2020b). In its journey, PKH is considered to be able to answer the challenges of this coastal district to help financially underprivileged families. The condition of the level of education in Purworejo Village has also experienced significant development. Mainly it can be seen in the condition before and after the 2000s or before and after the intervention of the PKH program.

Central Bureau of Statistics data in **Table 1** shows the number of residents of Purworejo Village who have completed high school and college has always increased from 2010 to 2019. Meanwhile, the population who did not go to school and did not finish elementary school was relatively stable because those in that category were fishermen aged over 30 years. Compared to conditions in Bonang Sub-district, the number of people aged ten years and over who are not in school is relatively small, only under 10 percent. **Table 1** also shows that more than half of the population aged ten years and over who have a tertiary education in Bonang Sub-district are residents of Purworejo Village.

Table 1. Population Age 10 and Over by Education Graduated

| | 2010 | 2011 | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 | 2016 | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 |
|---------------------------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| Purworejo Village | | | | | | | | | | |
| Uneducated | 429 | 403 | 441 | 441 | 450 | 455 | 460 | 466 | 471 | 475 |
| Did not graduate Primary School | 764 | 767 | 786 | 786 | 689 | 811 | 820 | 829 | 839 | 846 |
| Primary School | 4,172 | 4,185 | 4,292 | 4,292 | 4,379 | 4,429 | 4,477 | 4,528 | 4,578 | 4,624 |
| Junior High School | 1,284 | 1,288 | 1,297 | 1,297 | 1,323 | 1,338 | 1,353 | 1,368 | 1,383 | 1,397 |
| Senior High School | 515 | 517 | 520 | 520 | 531 | 537 | 542 | 549 | 555 | 560 |
| Higher Education | 106 | 106 | 107 | 107 | 109 | 110 | 112 | 113 | 114 | 115 |
| Bonang Sub-district | | | | | | | | | | |
| Uneducated | 4,931 | 4,947 | 5,070 | 5,070 | 5,197 | 5,249 | 5,305 | 5,360 | 5,413 | 5,465 |
| Did not graduate Primary School | 10,501 | 10,534 | 10,809 | 10,809 | 11,134 | 11,257 | 11,383 | 11,549 | 11,632 | 11,752 |
| Primary School | 42,003 | 42,138 | 43,179 | 43,179 | 44,341 | 44,823 | 45,319 | 45,814 | 46,296 | 46,768 |
| Junior High School | 15,370 | 15,419 | 15,523 | 15,523 | 15,957 | 16,142 | 16,331 | 16,520 | 16,705 | 16,887 |
| Senior High School | 4,602 | 4,617 | 4,647 | 4,647 | 4,764 | 4,818 | 4,873 | 4,928 | 4,982 | 5,034 |
| Higher Education | 950 | 953 | 959 | 959 | 988 | 999 | 1,011 | 1,023 | 1,035 | 1,046 |

Source: Badan Pusat Statistik (2011; 2012; 2013; 2014; 2015; 2016; 2017; 2018; 2019; 2020a)

Improving the quality of education for fishing communities in Purworejo Village was also mentioned by a participant who is a fisherman born in that village. The fisherman, who is male and aged 50 years, said that the fishermen's living conditions at this time are very different from the conditions when they were children. Mr St said that his peers' education was the best, only graduating from primary school. Only a handful of fishermen's children have finished junior high school. Most of the local fishermen did not graduate primary school because they have started fishing with their parents at the age of 8-10. In contrast to the current condition, almost all fishermen's children have graduated from senior high school and even university.

The results of in-depth interviews with participants in Purworejo Village further emphasized the benefits of PKH for the education of fishermen's children. Most of the fishermen's children in this village go to public schools so that parents are no longer burdened with education assistance donations. Participants stated that the nominal received could help their children's school needs, especially supporting school activities such as pocket money, transportation, telephone credit, and practicum. The nominal obtained is considered sufficient to help meet the educational needs of children, as stated by one of the following participants.

"I have received PKH assistance of 470 thousand rupiahs for children. Thank God, from the first, there was PKH assistance.. I got PKH assistance from time to time. Get it every three months" (Mrs Ut, in-depth interview).

The increased formal education of fishermen's children in Purworejo Village impacts increasing the age at first marriage for their daughters. About 30 years ago, girls were married at the age of teens. Now, 18 is still considered a child and have not been allowed to marry by their parents, especially mothers. The participation of girls studying in high school and college delays the age of marriage until over 18 years. Improving education in fishing communities also increases the number of girls who work before getting married and having children. The perspective and aspirations of mothers are also starting to open up to the importance of education, even though most of them did not graduate from elementary school. The following is an excerpt of the results of a focused discussion with a group of fishermen's wives.

"On average, the children here are high school graduates, and children shouldn't get married before graduating from high school. They should not get married because they are still teenagers. After graduating from high school, they looked for work. Let them find work and get paid. I hope she has work experience before getting married" (Mrs Sr., FGD).

In addition to formal education, informal pesantren education institutions have an important role in increasing human resources. Informal educational institutions generally take place in the middle of the family. Even if carried out outside the family, the activities are carried out without a strict organization, and there is no binding time limit or evaluation (Mahdi, 2013). Islamic Boarding School (*Pesantren*) is an Islamic education-based institution with a cottage or dormitory system with the concept of a central figure carried by the *Kyai* (Mahdi, 2013).

Islamic boarding schools have a good environment, especially in shaping the personality of children and adolescents. However, the criticism is that there is not much free time and little privacy for students (Nilan, 2009). Islamic boarding schools students or so-called *santri* carry out religious education within 24 hours with the supervision and guidance of *Kyai*. In general, *pesantren* is an education system based on local wisdom based on religion. One of its goals is to

provide education for ordinary people at a relatively affordable cost (Patriadi *et al.*, 2015). This certainly fits the profile of the north coast of the Java community, most of which are fishermen who do not have a steady income. Fishermen are categorized as poor because their income is below the urban minimum wage standard, especially for small-scale fisheries.

The fishing communities on Java's north coast are generally very close to the *pesantren* culture even though they do not receive formal education. Most of the fishermen are usually graduates of Islamic boarding schools. The closeness of the communities on Java's north coast with *pesantren* can be seen from its history because Demak and its surroundings were once the areas where Wali Sanga spread Islam. In its journey, the development of Islam in Java was not only focused on building places of worship but also on an education system that could accommodate local cultures such as *pesantren*. Raden Fatah first established the Islamic boarding school in Demak as the first Sultan of the Demak kingdom. Raden Patah, together with his spiritual advisor Sunan Kudus, founded a *pesantren* together with his kingdom in the Glagah Wangi area on the advice of his teacher Sunan Ampel and the blessing of his father, the king of Majapahit (Marwoto, 2016).

Although it had faded during the Old Order and the New Order until now, the culture of the Islamic community on the north coast of Java cannot be separated from the role of *pesantren*. Children of fishermen in Demak, including Purworejo Village, generally ask to be sent to Islamic boarding schools after completing elementary school. The *pesantren* is very attractive in the eyes of the children of Purworejo village is generally due to the uniquely constructed social concept. *Pesantrens* have easily shown empirical evidence of various social missions in creative ways, such as maximizing their land assets to grow rice or poor *santri* who get free education fees in return for helping to "work" taking care of the boarding school (Patriadi *et al.*, 2015).

Even though their parents work as fishermen and have low education, they still think that religion is the most important thing before other sciences. This is what makes parents on the coast of Demak accustomed to sending their children to *pesantren* or at least to recite the Koran in madrasas in their villages. Empirical results show that Islamic boarding schools can answer the community's needs by following religious values aligned with the majority of the surrounding environment (Permani, 2011).

"Religious education is important here. There are still many children who attend madrasas here. All children must attend madrasa from a young age. Starting from grade 6 after graduating from elementary school, they will stay in a boarding school. On average, here, they stay in boarding schools. Usually, children ask their parents to stay in boarding schools. It's been like that from the start. I wanted to stay in a boarding school when I was little, but there was no money, so I cried. I graduated from Madrasah Ibtidaiyah and got the best grades in the sub-district and wanted to stay at a boarding school in Mranggen, but there was no fee. It isn't easy to meet daily needs. I decided to cancel it. Finally, I went to the sea and became a fisherman. Read the Koran following the madrasa here" (Mr St, in-depth interview).

Following Islamic religious education in *pesantren* has become a necessity for the children of fishermen in Purworejo Village. Some informants even mentioned that their children were more comfortable living in the *pesantren* than their parents' house. The children of Purworejo Village generally have their desire to start studying at the *pesantren*. Cooperation and togetherness that are always intertwined in the *pesantren* environment is the spirit of the

pesantren education itself (Sumardi, 2012). This causes every *santri* to feel at home in a *pesantren* environment with strong social relationships.

The culture of “*pesantren*” when entering the age of junior high school level has been deeply rooted in the aspirations of the children of Purworejo Village. Even if they are in junior high school, a child has not yet studied in a boarding school, making the child feel different from his peers. The strong roots (indigenous) in the Indonesian Muslim community have been manifested in the concept of Islamic boarding school education as the face of Islam in this country (Usman, 2013). So it is not surprising that every Purworejo village child has the desire to enter the *pesantren*.

4.2. Aspirations of Fisherman Families for Children's Education

In the general context, fishermen who have irregular incomes and tend to live within the poverty line usually do not attach much importance to education in their families due to the perceived high cost of education. The number of education costs will follow the level of education taken. The higher the level of education, the greater the cost. Therefore, the income of fishermen's families is one factor that affects the level of children's education (Almu, 2018). However, from the interviews and observations, fishermen in Purworejo Village have aspirations to see their children complete high school education.

“Yes, I think it's important (education) because I was uneducated. The mother too. If the child can (graduate from high school), the parents will be happy. I can't do it myself either. How come my life is like this (fisherman). I continue to emphasize to my children that if they graduate school, they have to do this, no. So it doesn't mean that if my children graduate, what will I make of them later? What do I want them to do. Anyway, if they want to work at sea, working on the land is also welcome. The important thing is that you have to graduate from high school” (Mr St., in-depth interview).

The skills of fishermen are generally still very simple and almost completely learned and taught from generation to generation. If a fishing family can provide a proper education for their children, then the hope that the next generation will not become fishermen is very open (Syatori, 2014). Therefore, it is not surprising that the fishing families of Purworejo Village hope for their children to be able to help escape the abyss of poverty through education. The level of education is closely related to a person's quality of life. Low education levels, poor nutrition, and others cause low productivity that affects income (Wekke & Cahaya, 2015).

In Indonesia, education is the right of everyone. It has been guaranteed in the Law of the Republic of Indonesia Number 20 of 2003 concerning the National Education System in article 5 paragraph 1, which reads, “Every citizen has the same right to obtain quality education”. The law emphasizes that all citizens, including children of fishermen, have the right to have the opportunity to obtain an education. It was further emphasized that citizens aged seven to fifteen years are entitled to basic education up to junior high school. Then in the 2014 National Medium Term Development Plan (*Rencana Pembangunan Jangka Menengah Nasional* or RPJMN), it is implied that compulsory education activities that the state increase to twelve years must carry out. Therefore, the government must provide basic education without discrimination, including ensuring the availability of funds.

Having a good formal education and sufficient local knowledge are some of the attributes needed to adapt to become a strong family. Parents always instill confidence to grow their

children's confidence that they should not be like their parents, who are difficult because they are fishermen. Parents act to reduce the impact of risk on the family by strengthening children's self-esteem by instilling confidence in being able to overcome problems. In this case, they can encourage and convince their children to complete their education.

The study results by [Suryani et al. \(2004\)](#) also stated that fishermen had realized the importance of education for themselves and their children. The parents' educational background is very low, not making them ignore their children's education. Fishermen began to believe that sending their children to school could be a provision for their children's lives in the future. Some fishermen on Java's north coast expect their children to have a better life than their parents and make various efforts to meet their children's educational needs. One of the informants mentioned that the cost of schooling for their children should take precedence over other needs.

Apart from not wanting their children to experience difficulties in life by becoming fishermen, another factor influencing aspirations and changes in views on education is the migration experience of parents. Migrants generally transfer knowledge to their immediate environment, both in new experiences and certain perspectives as part of social remittances ([Hidayati, 2020](#)). The findings in the field show that parents who have left their village to work outside the city generally have a different perspective. His experience living in a big city opened up the horizon that there are many better livelihood options than fishermen. Therefore, parents with migration experience emphasize the importance of education for their children to access jobs outside of fishing in the future.

Through the provision of a good education, the children of fishermen are expected to have a variety of job choices and are better than fishermen. The results of an interview with one of the fishermen's children stated that she was educated up to college because her mother had worked outside the city before marrying her husband, a fisherman. Her experience living in a big city made the mother of the fisherman's family invest in her children's education.

Besides the migration experience of parents, the migration experience of children will also affect their aspirations for education. As previously explained, coastal children in Demak have been accustomed to living in Islamic boarding schools since junior high school. A child informant said that it would not be a problem for them to attend high school outside a city like Semarang. The experience of living in Islamic boarding schools and meeting friends from various regions and backgrounds has opened their perspective regarding the diversity of choices in their lives, including those related to education and work in the future.

"When I was in grade 3 elementary school, I stayed in the city (the capital city of Demak). When I entered junior high school, my father told me to go to Jepara to stay in a boarding school. I wasn't scared, but my mother was worried at first. But every holiday I go home. Like this.." (Ris, in-depth interview).

Along with the development, the aspirations of fishermen's families towards education began to change. The fishermen no longer want their children to work as their parents do. The harsh life of fishermen at sea and the opening of access to the outside world have made parents realize education's importance. External factors of fishermen's families, such as government policies, are also a major driving factor in changing aspirations for education.

The increase in fishermen's aspirations is also supported by the condition of the coastal area of Java's Pantura, which is relatively affordable and has high accessibility. The existence of factories around Demak and the demand for labor make fishing communities have choices to

work in sectors other than fishermen. The ease and low risk of working in a factory are fishermen's best choices. The assumption of parents to provide the best life for their children is evidenced by their efforts to send fishermen's children to higher education levels.

"Every year at Sriti, there is employee recruitment and need a high school diploma. Yes, many people here work there. Some are boarding, and some are commuting too. Most ride motorbikes leave early in the morning" (Hiy, in-depth interview).

The success of the compulsory education program cannot be separated from the role of the three main pillars, namely the responsibility of parents, teachers, and the community. Parents, including fishermen, are the main determining factors that determine the success of their children's education. Every parent in a fishing family who understands that his profession cannot guarantee a family's future will always emphasize to their children that education is very important. This is the meaning of protection that is believed by all fishing families who understand their efforts to reduce the impact of risks that threaten the resilience of their families.

5. Conclusion

The assumption that fishermen generally do not attach importance to their children's education can be refuted based on the results of this research, especially in Purworejo Village, where the majority of the population are fishermen. These parents who work in the fisheries sector see the importance of their children getting a higher education. Although not many go to college, at least they are trying to get their children to graduate from high school. Every parent desires that their children have a wide choice of jobs compared to those who work as fishermen, namely employees of the last resort.

Formal education combined with informal education, namely Islamic boarding school (*pesantren*), is parents' choice. Starting from the age equivalent of junior high school to high school, parents hope that their children will also receive religious education, which will shape them into good individuals according to religious teachings.

The rising aspirations of fishermen's parents towards education cannot be separated from the existence of the PKH program, which can at least increase the school participation level of fishermen's children. However, there is not much information for fishermen's children regarding assistance and scholarships for universities. To improve human resources, especially for children of fishermen, it is widely necessary to collaborate with the government and universities to provide scholarships and children of fishermen who excel and provide information through Islamic boarding schools or directly to the village government.

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The authors have declared no potential conflicts of interest concerning this article's research, authorship, and/or publication.

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