



The Role of Education in Increasing Social Awareness and Community Participation: A Case Study in Teluk Bintuni, West Papua

Alim Jaizul^{1*}, Dhika Surya²

^{1,2}*Research Collaboration Community, Bandung, Indonesia*

**Corresponding author email: alimjaizul47@gmail.com*

Abstract

This study examines the role of education in increasing social awareness and community participation in Teluk Bintuni, West Papua, an area rich in natural resources but still lagging behind in terms of education and welfare. Using a qualitative approach with a case study method, this study explores in depth how education contributes to social change and the factors that influence its effectiveness. Data collection was conducted through in-depth interviews, participant observation, document analysis, and Focus Group Discussions (FGD) involving local communities, educators, community leaders, local governments, and civil society organizations. The results of the study showed a positive correlation between education levels and levels of social awareness and community participation in development. Statistical data shows that the community's education profile is still low with 18.4% not attending school, 35.6% having elementary school education, 25.3% having junior high school education, 15.2% having high school education, and only 5.5% having higher education. The study identified four main inhibiting factors: limited access to education, lack of qualified educators, low community awareness of the importance of education, and local cultural aspects that limit educational participation. To address these challenges, five strategies are recommended: improving educational infrastructure, training educators, developing non-formal education programs, utilizing technology, and collaborating with civil society organizations and the private sector. This study makes an important contribution to understanding the linkages between education, social awareness, and community participation in remote areas, and provides practical recommendations for developing more effective and sustainable education policies.

Keywords: Education, social awareness, community participation, remote areas, regional development

1. Introduction

Education plays a very important role in shaping social awareness and increasing community participation in development. Through education, individuals can understand their rights and obligations as part of a community, and acquire the skills needed to actively contribute to social and economic life. Education is not just about transferring knowledge, but also a tool to create better social change (Ausat, 2023; Edwards-Fapohunda, 2024).

In various regions in Indonesia, especially in remote and underdeveloped areas such as Teluk Bintuni, West Papua, education often faces various complex challenges. Limited infrastructure, lack of educators, and minimal access to quality teaching materials are the main obstacles in improving the quality of education. Nevertheless, education remains the key to increasing community social awareness and encouraging them to actively participate in regional development (Ntorukiri et al., 2022).

Teluk Bintuni is one of the regions in West Papua that is rich in natural resources, especially gas and oil. However, the level of community welfare in this area is still relatively low. The low level of education and social awareness of the community is one of the factors that hinders them in optimizing the potential of existing natural resources. Many people do not yet understand the importance of education in improving their standard of living and welfare (Koval et al., 2021; Hariram et al., 2023).

Community participation in regional development also depends heavily on the extent to which they have a good understanding and social awareness. Without sufficient understanding, communities tend to be passive and less involved in decision-making related to the development of their region (Kiss et al., 2022). Therefore, proper education can help them understand their role in development and provide the skills needed to contribute actively.

Formal education, such as elementary school to college, is the main means of increasing social awareness. However, in areas such as Teluk Bintuni, non-formal and informal education also have an equally important role.

Skills training programs, community outreach, and local culture-based education can be solutions to increase community awareness and participation in development (Fajriah et al., 2024).

In addition, education based on local culture can provide greater benefits to local communities. With this approach, communities can learn through methods that are more relevant to their daily lives (Harefa and Hulu, 2024). For example, environmental-based education can help communities understand the importance of natural resource conservation, while entrepreneurship training can equip them with the skills to develop independent businesses.

Increasing social awareness through education also requires the involvement of various parties, including the government, educational institutions, and civil society organizations (Morawska-Jancelewicz, 2022). The government has an important role in providing adequate policies and financial support to improve access to education. Meanwhile, educational institutions must be able to develop a curriculum that is in accordance with local needs and is able to provide quality education (Salmi and D'Addio, 2021; Chan, 2023).

In addition to the government and educational institutions, the role of civil society organizations is also very important in supporting education in remote areas such as Teluk Bintuni. These organizations can play a role in providing training for educators, organizing literacy programs for the community, and encouraging social awareness through various community activities (Fawait et al., 2024). Collaboration between various parties is very necessary to create inclusive education that has a positive impact on society.

In the digital era like today, the use of technology in education can also be a solution in improving access and quality of learning in remote areas. Online learning platforms, the use of social media to disseminate educational information, and the application of community-based technology can be effective tools in increasing social awareness and community participation. However, the challenge in providing technological infrastructure in remote areas is still an obstacle that needs to be overcome.

Based on these problems, this study aims to analyze the role of education in increasing social awareness and community participation in Teluk Bintuni. Specifically, this study will identify factors that influence the effectiveness of education in building social awareness, explore various challenges faced in implementing education in this area, and propose strategies that can be applied to increase the positive impact of education on community involvement in development. With the results of this study, it is expected to provide insight for the government, educational institutions, and community organizations in designing more effective and sustainable education policies and programs.

2. Methods

This study uses a qualitative approach with a case study method to analyze the role of education in increasing social awareness and community participation in Teluk Bintuni, West Papua. This approach was chosen because it allows researchers to explore in depth how education contributes to social change and how various factors, both supporting and inhibiting, influence the effectiveness of education in the area. The steps in this study can be seen in Figure 1.

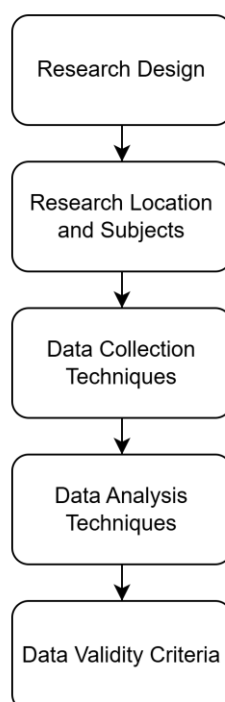


Figure 1: research flow

2.1. Research design

This study uses a descriptive-qualitative design with a focus on a case study in Teluk Bintuni. This design allows researchers to obtain a detailed picture of the role of education in shaping social awareness and community participation. Case studies were chosen because they provide the flexibility to explore phenomena in real contexts, including how communities receive, understand, and utilize education in their daily lives.

2.2. Research location and subjects

The research location was conducted in several districts in Teluk Bintuni which have different characteristics in terms of access to formal and non-formal education. The selection of this location aims to provide variation in the data collected and allow for a more comprehensive analysis. The research subjects include local communities, both those who have received formal education and those who only access non-formal education, in order to understand the differences in levels of social awareness between them. In addition, this study also involved educators, such as school teachers and facilitators of non-formal education programs, to gain insight into the challenges and successes in implementing education. Community leaders and policy makers, such as village heads, traditional leaders, and representatives of local governments, were also used as research subjects to gain perspectives on the education policies implemented. In addition, civil society organizations (CSOs) that are active in education and community empowerment programs were also involved to determine their contribution to increasing social awareness through education.

2.3. Data collection techniques

This study used several data collection techniques to ensure in-depth and comprehensive results. The first technique was in-depth interviews conducted in a semi-structured manner with the community, educators, community leaders, and government representatives. These interviews aimed to explore their understanding of the role of education in increasing social awareness and community participation. In addition, participatory observation was also applied by conducting direct observations of education activities in schools, community training centers, and community social activities to obtain more contextual data on how education is implemented and received by the community.

In addition to interviews and observations, document analysis was also used to support the data obtained. The documents analyzed included regional education policies, school curricula, non-formal education program reports, and statistical data on education and social issues in Teluk Bintuni. This technique helps in understanding the policies and effectiveness of education implementation in the area. Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) were also conducted with community groups to identify challenges and opportunities in improving the role of education in social awareness. These FGDs involved various community groups, both those with access to education and those with less exposure to formal education, to gain a broader understanding of their perceptions of education and its impact on their social lives.

2.4. Data analysis techniques

The data obtained were analyzed using thematic analysis techniques. The first stage in this analysis is data reduction, where the information collected is filtered to select the data that is most relevant to the research objectives. After that, the data is categorized based on the main themes that emerge, such as supporting and inhibiting factors for the role of education in social awareness and community participation. The next stage is data interpretation, where in-depth analysis is conducted to understand the relationship between education and social change that occurs in the Teluk Bintuni community.

To ensure the accuracy of the research results, data triangulation was carried out, namely comparing and verifying data from various sources, such as interview results, observations, and document analysis. With this technique, research can ensure that the results obtained are more valid and not influenced by bias from just one data source.

2.5. Data validity criteria

In this study, several strategies were used to ensure data validity. Data credibility was maintained by applying triangulation techniques, where information from various sources was reconfirmed to make the results more valid. In addition, interviews and observations were conducted in several stages to ensure consistency of answers and observations.

Transferability in this study was realized by providing a clear contextual description of Teluk Bintuni and the characteristics of its people. Thus, the results of the study can be applied to other areas with similar social and educational conditions. The dependability of this study was guaranteed through systematic documentation of all stages of the study, from data collection to analysis, so that the methods used could be repeated by other researchers with similar results.

To ensure confirmability, this study avoided subjective bias by providing raw data and analysis notes that could be traced back. All interpretations made in this study were based on the data obtained and not from the researcher's personal opinion. With this method, the study can provide objective and accountable results.

With this research method approach, it is hoped that the results of the study can provide in-depth insight into the role of education in building social awareness and increasing community participation in Teluk Bintuni. In addition, this research can also provide recommendations for the government, educational institutions, and community organizations in designing more effective and sustainable education policies and programs in the region.

3. Results and Discussion

This study identified various findings related to the role of education in increasing social awareness and community participation in Teluk Bintuni, West Papua. Data obtained from interviews, observations, document analysis, and Focus Group Discussions (FGD) showed a positive correlation between education levels and social awareness and community participation levels in regional development.

3.1. Profile of education and social awareness of the community in Teluk Bintuni

The results of the analysis show that the level of education of the community in Teluk Bintuni is still relatively low, especially in the interior. Educational statistics data obtained from the Teluk Bintuni Education Office show that the majority of the population only has a basic education. The distribution of community education levels based on the survey results can be seen in Table 1.

Table 1: Distribution of education levels of the Teluk Bintuni community

Education Level	Percentage (%)
No School	18.4%
Elementary School/Equivalent	35.6%
Junior High School/Equivalent	25.3%
Senior High School/Equivalent	15.2%
College	5.5%

In Table 1, it can be seen that only 5.5% of the community has achieved higher education, while the majority of the community is still at elementary and junior high school levels.

In addition, observations and interviews show that low levels of education contribute to minimal social awareness, especially related to issues of development, health, and the environment. In focus group discussions (FGD), many communities expressed that they did not understand their rights in development and were less involved in decision-making at the village level.

3.2. Relationship between education and community participation

To further understand the relationship between education level and community participation in development, this study collected data on community involvement in various social activities and village development. The results are presented in Figure 2.

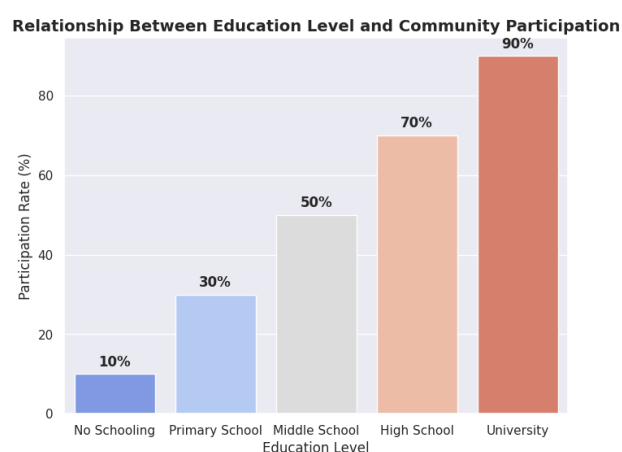


Figure 2: graph of community participation level based on education

From Figure 2, it can be seen that the higher a person's education level, the greater their level of participation in social activities and community development. People with higher education are more active in participating in village deliberations, social activities, and are involved in economic empowerment programs. Conversely, groups with low education tend to be passive and play less of a role in decision-making.

3.3. Inhibitors of education in increasing social awareness

Although education plays an important role in increasing social awareness and community participation, there are several factors that inhibit its effectiveness in Teluk Bintuni. One of the main obstacles is limited access to education, especially in remote areas with limited infrastructure. The long distance between settlements and schools and inadequate road conditions make it difficult for many children to attend school regularly. In addition, educational facilities such as school buildings, books, and learning tools are still minimal, so that the quality of learning is less than optimal.

In addition to infrastructure problems, the lack of qualified educators is also a major obstacle. Many schools in remote areas lack teachers, and in some cases, teachers assigned there do not have adequate qualifications or only serve for a short time before moving to other areas. This has an impact on the low quality of education received by the community, making it difficult to form a strong understanding of the importance of social awareness and participation in development.

Another factor is the lack of community awareness of the importance of education. Many families in Teluk Bintuni still prioritize work or economic activities over their children's education. Children are often asked to help with family chores such as gardening or fishing, so they cannot fully participate in education. In addition, some parents still hold the view that schools do not provide direct benefits to their daily lives, so they do not encourage their children to continue their education to a higher level.

Local cultural and traditional aspects also play a role in shaping people's mindsets about education. In some communities, there is still a belief that women do not need to get higher education because their roles are considered more focused on domestic work. This view results in low participation rates for women in formal education, which ultimately has an impact on low levels of social awareness and women's participation in community development.

3.4. Strategies to improve the role of education in social awareness

To overcome the challenges that have been identified, several strategies can be implemented to improve the role of education in building social awareness in the community in Teluk Bintuni. One of the main strategies is improving educational infrastructure, especially in remote areas. The government needs to build more schools and improve transportation access to educational institutions so that children can attend school more easily. In addition, providing learning facilities such as books, laboratories, and internet access is also important to improve the quality of education in the area.

Training and development of educators is also a crucial step. Teacher capacity building programs must be implemented so that they can provide better learning that is relevant to the social conditions of the local community. Local governments can collaborate with universities or educational institutions to provide special training for teachers who work in remote areas so that they are better prepared to face existing challenges. In addition, providing incentives for teachers who are willing to teach in remote areas can also be a solution to overcome the problem of a shortage of educators.

Non-formal education programs also need to be developed to reach communities that cannot access formal education. Programs such as community schools, skills training, and local culture-based education can help improve community understanding of the importance of social awareness and participation in development. In addition, counseling on citizen rights, health, and the environment can also be included in the non-formal education curriculum so that people are more aware of their role in social development.

The use of technology in education is also an effective solution, especially in dealing with geographical challenges in Teluk Bintuni. The government and educational institutions can develop online learning systems or distance learning classes to provide wider access to education. With the help of technology, students in remote areas can still receive learning materials without having to face transportation constraints. In addition, technology can also be used to provide digital learning resources that can be accessed by the wider community.

Finally, collaboration with civil society organizations (CSOs) and the private sector can help support efforts to improve education. Many CSOs have community-based education programs that can be synergized with government policies. In addition, the private sector can also play a role in providing scholarships, internship programs, and supporting facilities for people who want to develop their skills. With this collaboration, education can be more effective in building social awareness and increasing community participation in regional development.

Through the implementation of these strategies, it is hoped that the role of education in increasing social awareness and community participation in Teluk Bintuni can be more optimal. With better access to education, more qualified educators, and support from various parties, communities can better understand their role in development and become more active in various social activities that have a positive impact on their area.

4. Conclusion

This study shows that education plays a very important role in increasing social awareness and community participation in Teluk Bintuni, West Papua. Based on the results of data analysis obtained through in-depth interviews, participatory observation, document analysis, and Focus Group Discussion (FGD), it can be concluded that there is a positive correlation between education level and social awareness and community participation in regional development.

The education profile of the Teluk Bintuni community is still relatively low with the majority of people only having basic education. The data shows that 18.4% did not attend school, 35.6% had elementary school education, 25.3% junior high school, 15.2% high school, and only 5.5% had higher education. This low level of education contributes to the lack of social awareness of the community, especially regarding issues of development, health, and the environment.

The results of the study also show that the higher a person's education level, the greater their level of participation in social and development activities. People with higher education are more active in participating in village deliberations, social activities, and are involved in economic empowerment programs. Conversely, groups with low education tend to be passive and play less of a role in decision-making. There are several factors inhibiting the effectiveness of education in increasing social awareness in Teluk Bintuni, namely: (1) limited access to education, especially in remote areas with limited infrastructure, (2) lack of qualified educators, (3) low public awareness of the importance of education, and (4) aspects of local culture and traditions that still limit women's participation in formal education.

To overcome these challenges, several strategies that can be implemented include: (1) improving educational infrastructure, especially in remote areas, (2) training and development of educators, (3) developing non-formal education programs to reach people who cannot access formal education, (4) utilizing technology in education to overcome geographical challenges, and (5) collaborating with civil society organizations (CSOs) and the private sector in supporting efforts to improve education.

This research provides an important contribution in understanding the relationship between education, social awareness, and community participation in remote and disadvantaged areas such as Teluk Bintuni. The results of the research can be input for the government, educational institutions, and community organizations in designing more effective and sustainable education policies and programs to increase social awareness and community participation in regional development.

References

- Ausat, A. M. A. (2023). The role of social media in shaping public opinion and its influence on economic decisions. *Technology and Society Perspectives (TACIT)*, 1(1), 35-44.
- Chan, C. K. Y. (2023). A comprehensive AI policy education framework for university teaching and learning. *International journal of educational technology in higher education*, 20(1), 38.
- Edwards-Fapohunda, D. M. O. (2024). The role of adult learning and education in community development: A case study of New York. *Iconic Research And Engineering Journals*, 8(1), 437-454.
- Fajriah, L., Manao, A. S. M., Giantari, N. G. N., & Ningsih, R. (2024, April). Strengthening Art-Based Community through Community Service Activity in Supporting Youth Culturally Awareness. In *Proceedings of the 2nd Annual International Conference: Reimagining Guidance and Counselling in the VUCA Era (AICGC 2023)* (p. 182). Springer Nature.
- Fawait, A., Siyeh, W. F., & Aslan, A. (2024). Islamic Education Management Strategies In Improving The Quality Of Learning In Madrasas. *Indonesian Journal of Education (INJOE)*, 4(2), 657-665.
- Harefa, D., & Hulu, F. (2024). Mathematics learning strategies that support Pancasila moral education: Practical approaches for teachers. *Afore: Jurnal Pendidikan Matematika*, 3(2), 51-60.
- Hariram, N. P., Mekha, K. B., Suganthan, V., & Sudhakar, K. (2023). Sustainalism: An integrated socio-economic-environmental model to address sustainable development and sustainability. *Sustainability*, 15(13), 10682.
- Kiss, B., Sekulova, F., Hörschelmann, K., Salk, C. F., Takahashi, W., & Wamsler, C. (2022). Citizen participation in the governance of nature-based solutions. *Environmental Policy and Governance*, 32(3), 247-272.
- Koval, V., Mikhno, I., Udovychenko, I., Gordiichuk, Y., & Kalina, I. (2021). Sustainable natural resource management to ensure strategic environmental development.
- Morawska-Jancelewicz, J. (2022). The role of universities in social innovation within quadruple/quintuple helix model: Practical implications from polish experience. *Journal of the Knowledge Economy*, 13(3), 2230-2271.
- Ntorukiri, T. B., Kirugua, J. M., & Kirimi, F. (2022). Policy and infrastructure challenges influencing ICT implementation in universities: a literature review. *Discover Education*, 1(1), 19.
- Salmi, J., & D'Addio, A. (2021). Policies for achieving inclusion in higher education. *Policy Reviews in Higher Education*, 5(1), 47-72.