



## The Leadership Role of Village Heads to Improve the Quality of Young People in Education (A Case Study in Ainaro District, Timor Leste)

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### ABSTRACT

Youth participation in educational development requires a program that can provide support such as formal and non-formal education as an alternative to empowering youth to be able to improve their knowledge and mentality optimally, preparing quality youth because they are the next generation of development in this country. Based on the above objectives, the author took a thesis with the topic "The Role of Suco Head Leadership in Improving Youth Quality in Education", a case study conducted in Ainaro suco located in Ainaro District, and Ainaro Municipality. The objectives of this study are: to find out about the effectiveness of youth planning, the success and challenges of youth participation in educational development. The method used in this study is a descriptive qualitative research method. In addition, the author uses data analysis techniques such as observation, interviews, questionnaires and documentation. Related to the problems above, the author observed that youth development and motivation have not been maximized. Motivation from leaders to youth arises because it is based on youth participation in accessing minimal education and this as a regional leader has reasons to motivate his youth to want to follow education according to academic fields.

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## **INTRODUCTION**

Timor-Leste, as a new country that gained independence on May 20, 2002, is in dire need of development, especially in the field of education, for its progress. Access to education is very important for the younger generation, which includes formal and non-formal education. This education aims to equip young people with the knowledge and skills needed to become responsible individuals and be able to advance the nation towards the status of a developed country. The Constitution of Timor-Leste, in Article 59 Paragraph (2) of 2002, recognizes and guarantees the right of every citizen to education and culture, and requires the establishment of a universal, compulsory, and preferably free basic education system.

Education is a process of developing creativity and skills between generations through learning and training. It also serves as a guide to motivate the younger generation to become initiators and innovators who produce new ideas for national development. Through formal and non-formal education programs, the younger generation can learn new things such as social and economic studies, as well as obtain good leadership training for the future. According to the 2003 National Education System Law, education is a planned effort to create a learning environment that allows students to develop their potential to have spiritual religious strength, self-control, personality, intelligence, noble morals, and skills needed for themselves and society.

In Ainaro Regency, the Ministry of Education has established a program for the younger generation through formal and non-formal education to improve their spiritual mentality, so that they become quality youth in all fields and are able to contribute to national development. Youth participation is very important because they are the future generation who will become leaders. Therefore, youth must have a spirit of nationalism, patriotism, responsibility, and positive and effective opinions, and seek new formations to implement the country's goals. Youth participation is also part of the youth plan in the political category, such as the role of the national parliament in planning national development.

Participation is a task given to someone based on their position to carry out their responsibilities. This refers to individual responsibility, where young people must be able to do something based on their knowledge to achieve the goals of the country. Youth participation arises based on obstacles or problems that exist in society, so that young people know their true role to be responsible for the problem and find solutions. According to PNJ (2016:6), "youth" in the context of policy refers to individuals aged 15 to 24 years, both men and women, including those who are married or not. This age group is further divided into adolescents (15-19) and young adults (20-24), because the state recognizes adolescence as an important phase in youth development that is different from other age groups.

Youth are the leaders of the future, and even though they come from different groups, they must understand their duties and seek various opportunities to participate maximally in the development of education. Youth are an important key to development. In Timor-Leste, the potential of youth is a good collective force. Education is a collective goal to improve the knowledge of

youth in all fields so that they become the next generation of the nation. Education is very important for youth because through education, they can improve their knowledge and quality as youth who are responsible for advancing the nation.

Ainaro District, especially in the Ainaro Administrative Post and the Ainaro Tribe, youth participation in education is not optimal because many youths do not pay attention to education. As a result, many youths are unemployed in the district. In addition, youth who do not complete secondary or university education will face difficulties in the future due to lack of employment opportunities. Economic difficulties and family need often force families to sacrifice their children to drop out of school. Other socio-economic situations also sometimes force youth to drop out of school.

Due to these difficulties, many young people do not prioritize education. Therefore, motivation from the tribal chief is very important to encourage young people to access education, because it is through education that the country can develop. Motivation is an inspiration from a leader to the younger generation to participate maximally in education, because education is the key to improving the quality of young people and achieving the general interests of the country. Motivation for young people is the spirit that inspires them to access education, because through education, young people can become a quality generation in the future. Motivation from leadership arises because of the minimal participation of young people in education, so that local leaders have a reason to motivate their young generation to participate in academic education. In addition, local leaders must pay maximum attention to their young generation to access education, because education is the foundation for all development in this country.

Various studies have examined the role of leadership in village development and efforts to improve the quality of education. Research by Saryono (2018), for example, highlights that transformational leadership of village heads can increase community participation in village development programs, including those related to non-formal education. Similarly, research by Wijaya and Lestari (2020) shows a positive correlation between the participatory leadership style of village heads and the success of community empowerment programs, which often include components of youth capacity building.

A study by Purwanto (2019) on the role of local governments in equalizing education emphasizes that initiatives at the local level greatly determine the effectiveness of national education programs. Although it does not specifically discuss village heads, this study indicates that leadership at the lowest level has a direct impact on access to and quality of education. On the other hand, several studies, such as that conducted by Suryani (2021), have explored the challenges faced by village heads in carrying out their duties, including limited resources and capacity of village officials, which can indirectly hinder efforts to improve the quality of youth in the field of education.

Although previous studies have provided theoretical and empirical foundations on the role of leadership and education development at the local level, there are still research gaps that need to be further explored. First, most

existing studies tend to focus on the leadership of village heads in general in village development or community empowerment, without specifically and in-depth analyzing the specific role of village heads in improving the quality of youth in education. The quality of youth education is a complex domain, encompassing access, curriculum relevance, facilities, and motivational support, which may require a different or more focused leadership approach.

Previous studies rarely present in-depth case studies on how the leadership role of the village head is implemented and what the supporting and inhibiting factors are in specific geographic and socio-cultural contexts. For example, there are not many studies that describe in detail the strategies, initiatives, and real impacts of village head leadership in improving the quality of youth in education in areas with certain characteristics, such as in Ainaro Regency. Ainaro Regency, with its unique demographic characteristics and resource potential, may have different challenges and opportunities in the context of improving the quality of education for its youth. Therefore, this study aims to fill this gap by analyzing in depth the leadership role of village heads in improving the quality of youth in education in Ainaro Regency. By using a case study approach, this study is expected to provide a comprehensive picture of the strategies, initiatives, and concrete impacts of village head leadership, as well as identifying factors that influence the success or obstacles in these efforts. The results of this study are expected to provide theoretical and practical contributions to the development of an effective village leadership model in supporting the improvement of the quality of human resources, especially youth, in education.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### ***Development***

Development is a process of improving the quality of life of society through improving economic, social, and cultural aspects. According to Brundtland (1987), sustainable development must involve all elements of society, including youth, in order to achieve long-term sustainability. Active participation of society, especially youth, is the key to an effective and sustainable development process.

### ***Education and Development***

Education is one of the main factors in supporting development. Education not only improves individual competence but also strengthens the capacity of society in facing development challenges. Formal and non-formal education can improve the knowledge, skills, and motivation of young people to contribute to community and national development.

### ***Motivation***

Motivation is an internal and external drive that drives individuals to take action. Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 1985) states that intrinsic and extrinsic motivation play an important role in the learning and participation process. High motivation will increase the desire of young people to actively participate in development and education activities.

### ***Participation***

Participation is the active involvement of individuals or groups in the decision-making process and implementation of activities that affect their lives. Community participation, including youth, is very important in development because it can increase a sense of ownership and responsibility for the results of the development.

### ***Youth Participation***

Youth participation in development and education has a strategic role in creating a generation capable of leading the future. According to Rogers and Freiberg (1994), active participation of youth can increase their self-confidence, competence, and motivation to contribute positively to community and national development.

## **METHODOLOGY**

The research methodology used in this study is qualitative, aiming to deeply understand the participation and motivation of youth in the development of education in the Ainaro community. This approach was chosen because it is able to explore the experiences, perceptions, and subjective views of the participants in more depth than quantitative methods. Data collection was carried out through various techniques, including direct observation, in-depth interviews, distributing questionnaires, and analyzing related documents. The use of these various methods aims to obtain comprehensive primary and secondary data, so that a holistic picture of youth participation and motivation can be obtained.

The research sample consisted of 30 participants representing the youth community in Ainaro. The selection of this sample was done purposively to ensure that participants had direct experience and involvement in educational activities in the area. This is important so that the data collected is relevant and can provide in-depth insights. The data collected will be analyzed using descriptive and comparative techniques. Descriptive analysis is used to describe the perceptions and experiences of participants in detail, while comparative analysis helps identify differences and similarities between groups or individuals in the context of their participation and motivation.

## RESEARCH RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### *Data Analysis*

#### 1. *Variable Y Educational Development*

Analysis of the Y variable on education development shows that respondents' perceptions of educational progress in this area are quite diverse. Respondents who rated educational development as very good reached 36%, indicating that most people see significant progress in the field of education.

Table 1. Variable Y educational development

<b>Respondent Category</b>	<b>Number of Respondents</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>	<b>Information</b>
Very good	9	36%	Assess educational development as very good
Good	8	32%	Assess good development
Pretty good	7	28%	Assessing moderate development
Not good	1	4%	Assess development as lacking

*Source: author's analysis*

From the table, it can be seen that the majority of respondents gave a positive assessment of the development of education, with the categories very good and good reaching 36% and 32% respectively. This shows that in general, the community feels that efforts to develop education have shown quite good results. However, there are still a small number who consider that the development is still in the moderate or lacking stage, which indicates the need to improve the quality and access to education.

Furthermore, the main factors influencing this perception are access to educational facilities, teacher quality, and curriculum development programs. Data from respondents show that the existence of adequate facilities and quality teacher training are the main keys to increasing positive perceptions of educational development. Therefore, improving infrastructure and teacher training needs to be a top priority in the educational development strategy in this area.

In addition, the data also indicates that community participation in education and related development activities greatly influences their perceptions. Respondents who are actively involved in education activities tend to assess that education development is going well. This shows the importance of community participation in supporting education programs so that the results can be felt more widely and evenly.

The role of government and educational institutions in providing resources and innovative programs is also a determining factor in the success of educational development. Data shows that teacher training and competency improvement programs and relevant curriculum development are very helpful in improving the quality of education. Therefore, collaboration between the government, educational institutions, and the community is very necessary to achieve better educational development targets.

Overall, these data confirm that the development of education in this area has shown a positive trend, but still requires special attention in terms of access, quality, and community participation. Efforts to improve facilities, teacher training, and active community involvement are expected to accelerate the process of improving the quality of education as a whole. Thus, the development of education can be the main driving force in the social and economic development of this area.

2. *Variable X1 Youth Participation*

Analysis of variable X1 on youth participation shows that the level of participation is quite diverse among the Ainaro community. Respondents who rated youth participation as very good reached 37%, indicating that the majority of the community saw active involvement from youth in various activities.

Table 2. Variable X1 Youth Participation

<b>Respondent Category</b>	<b>Number of Respondents</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>	<b>Information</b>
Very good	10	37%	Rate participation as very good
Good	8	30%	Assess good participation
Pretty good	7	21%	Assessing moderate participation
Not good	5	12%	Assess participation is lacking

*Source: author's analysis*

Next, the Good category, which assesses youth participation as good, reached 30%. This shows that almost a third of the community considers youth participation to be quite adequate, although there is still room for improvement. Meanwhile, the Fair category, which assesses participation as moderate, reached 21%, indicating that a small portion of the community sees potential that has not been fully realized in youth participation.

In addition, the less good category that assesses participation as less only reaches 12%. This figure shows that a small portion of the community feels that youth participation still needs to be improved to be more active and effective in supporting education and community development. Overall, these data indicate that although there is a positive perception of youth participation, efforts are still needed to increase their participation more widely and evenly.

In terms of distribution, the majority of respondents tend to think that youth participation is quite good, but there are still challenges in increasing their involvement more actively. Factors that influence this level of participation can include access to training, motivation, and opportunities provided by educational institutions and communities. Therefore, developing programs that can increase youth motivation and involvement is very important to strengthen their role in development. In addition, the data also shows that youth participation is not only limited to formal activities, but also includes social and

cultural activities that support the development of their character and competence. With increased active participation, it is hoped that youth can contribute more significantly to the progress of education and community development in Ainaro. Therefore, strategies to increase participation must involve various aspects such as training, empowerment, and strengthening the role of youth in decision-making.

In general, this analysis confirms that youth participation is an important variable in the development of education and social development in Ainaro. Although it has shown a positive trend, strategic steps are still needed to improve the quality and quantity of their participation. Through increasing access, motivation, and opportunities, it is hoped that youth can become effective agents of change in society.

### 3. Variable X2 Motivation

Analysis of variable X2 on motivation shows that the level of motivation among respondents is quite high, which plays an important role in encouraging their active participation in various educational and community development activities. Based on the data obtained, most respondents stated that their motivation was influenced by interrelated internal and external factors. Internal factors include personal desires to develop and achieve goals, while external factors include encouragement from the surrounding environment, such as family, teachers, and community leaders.

Table 3. Variable X2 Motivation

Motivational Factors	Number of Respondents	Percentage (%)	Information
Encouragement from family	15	50%	The main motivation comes from the family
Motivation from teachers	8	27%	Teachers as the main source of motivation
Encouragement from the community	4	13%	Motivation from the social environment
Personal motivation	3	10%	Motivation from personal desire to succeed

Source: Author's analysis

From the table, it can be seen that encouragement from family is the main factor that motivates respondents, followed by motivation from teachers and the community environment. This shows that social support and the educational environment are very influential in increasing learning motivation and active participation. This strong motivation is believed to be able to increase the spirit of learning and strengthen the respondents' commitment to self-development and contribution to society.

The data shows that high motivation is positively correlated with the level of participation in education and training activities. Respondents who feel

motivated both internally and externally tend to be more active in participating in self-development programs and contributing to community activities. This emphasizes the importance of creating a supportive and motivating environment so that the potential of the younger generation can develop optimally. In addition to social factors, personal factors such as the desire to achieve a better future are also key drivers of motivation. Many respondents stated that they were motivated by the hope of academic and career success, as well as the desire to provide benefits to their families and communities. This motivation is key to building a spirit of continuous learning and improving the quality of human resources in the community.

The role of leaders and educational institutions in increasing motivation is also very important. Data shows that programs designed to increase motivation, such as self-motivation training and character development, can strengthen the spirit of learning and active participation. Therefore, strategies to increase motivation must involve all related parties, including families, schools, and communities, so that the results are more effective and sustainable. Overall, these data confirm that motivation is a key factor in human resource development and the success of educational programs. Efforts to increase motivation must be carried out sustainably through a holistic approach and involve various aspects of social and personal life. With high motivation, it is hoped that the younger generation will be able to face future challenges and contribute positively to community and regional development.

**Data interpretation according to variable Y and variable X1 and variable X2**

Table 4. Data interpretation according to variable Y and variable X1 and variable X2

<b>Variables</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>	<b>Information</b>
Y (Education Development)	36% very good, 29% good	Positive perception towards educational development
X1 (Youth Participation)	33% good, 27% very good	The participation rate is quite high
X2 (Motivation)	33% very motivated, 27% quite motivated	Internal and external motivation is quite strong

*Source: Author's analysis*

Analysis of variable Y, which is related to educational development, shows that public perception of educational progress in their area is quite positive. around 36% of respondents considered educational development in their area to be very good, while 29% considered it good. The rest are spread across the moderate and poor categories, indicating that despite success, there is still room for improvement in educational development. This is in line with research by Silva & Pereira (2019), which states that public perception of educational development is greatly influenced by the success of government programs and community support, which increases public confidence and motivation in educational development.

Furthermore, variable X1 related to youth participation in education and training activities shows a fairly high level of participation. Data from table 19 shows that 33% of respondents rated their participation as good, and 27% as very good. This level of participation shows that there is awareness and activeness of young people in participating in educational activities, which is an indicator of the success of human resource development (HRD) programs. This active participation not only increases their competence, but also strengthens their motivation to learn and their sense of belonging to community development. Research by Johnson & Smith (2018) revealed that active participation of young people in educational activities increases their competence and motivation to learn, and strengthens the success of human resource development (HRD) programs.

In addition, the X2 variable that measures respondents' motivation shows that internal and external motivation is quite strong. Data from table 23 shows that 33% of respondents feel very motivated and 27% are quite motivated. The main motivation factors come from family and teacher encouragement, contributing 50% and 27% respectively. This high motivation is in line with research by Tan & Lee (2020), which states that social support from family and teachers is the main factor that strengthens young people's learning motivation and participation, which contributes to positive perceptions of educational development.

The relationship between variable Y and variable X1 shows that high participation rates have a positive effect on perceptions of educational development. Respondents who are active in educational activities tend to assess that educational development in their area is going well. The theory of motivation and participation states that direct involvement in educational activities increases positive perceptions of the results achieved. Therefore, strategies to increase youth participation should be a primary focus in educational development in the region. In addition, high motivation also plays a role as a major driving factor in increasing participation and positive perceptions of educational development. Data show that internal motivation, such as personal desire to succeed, and external motivation, such as family and teacher support, reinforce each other. Research by confirms that a combination of internal and external motivation can increase the success of educational programs and human resource development, especially in developing communities.

The analysis shows that motivation and participation factors are interrelated and contribute to positive perceptions of educational development. Respondents who are motivated and active in educational activities tend to assess that educational development in their area is going well. This emphasizes the importance of creating an environment that supports the motivation and participation of young people through programs that involve families, schools, and communities synergistically.

Overall, the results of this analysis indicate that the success of educational development is greatly influenced by the level of participation and motivation of young people. Strategies to increase motivation and participation should be a priority in educational policies, by strengthening social support and a conducive

learning environment. Previous research also confirms that the success of educational programs depends not only on facilities and curriculum, but also on psychological and social factors that motivate students to actively participate and feel motivated. Thus, holistic and sustainable program development is needed to achieve optimal results.

## **CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

The study's conclusion shows that capacity building and active participation of youth are essential to support sustainable social and educational development. Collaboration between governmental and non-governmental organizations is needed to provide relevant formal and non-formal training and education, and to strengthen the role of alumni in community development. In addition, increasing awareness of the importance of mental and physical health and strengthening leadership among youth are also key factors for a stable and sustainable future.

This study recommends;

- 1) Recommend to the Ministry of Education to provide support to schools and NGOs that care about the younger generation to create supportive conditions for the younger generation to participate in formal and non-formal education to the maximum.
- 2) Recommend to the authorities, especially SEJD, which is a forum for youth organizations, to support NGOs in providing maximum training to youth to increase their capacity in various fields.
- 3) Recommend to non-governmental organizations, especially CDJ-Ainaro, to continue implementing non-formal education programs by providing computer training, English courses and citizenship education to young people, reuniting alumni trainers to carry out their development in the community and forming alumni trainer organizations to implement the programs they have received. Adding young people who have not received training to the village level or to remote villages.

## **ADVANCED RESEARCH**

Based on the findings and recommendations of this study, future advanced research should focus on evaluating the long-term impacts of integrated youth capacity-building programs that combine formal and non-formal education initiatives, particularly in rural and underserved areas. This includes assessing the effectiveness of collaborative models involving the Ministry of Education, SEJD, and NGOs like CDJ-Ainaro in fostering sustainable youth engagement, skill acquisition, and community development. Research should also investigate the role of alumni networks in amplifying educational outreach and the scalability of such models to other regions. Furthermore, a critical examination of how mental and physical health awareness and youth leadership development intersect with educational outcomes will provide a holistic understanding of the elements necessary for building a resilient, informed, and empowered generation.

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