



# Beliefs on the Purpose of Schooling and their Parenting Practices: The Case of Parents with Out of School Children

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**Abstract.** This study addresses concerns about dropout rates of school-aged children by exploring parents' beliefs on the purpose of schooling and their parenting practices through case study design. Twenty-one (21) parents from Kibawe, Bukidnon, Philippines were chosen as participants of the study. These parents have at least one school-aged child at home who stopped schooling and were considered low-income earners. The researcher-made interview questions were content-validated and utilized to reveal the beliefs of the parents on the purpose of schooling and their parenting practices. The instance when parents justified or explained their practices using their beliefs was considered the unit of analysis. Results of the qualitative data analysis revealed that parents considered the main purpose of schooling as a "means to an end". This implies that for the parents, the main purpose of schooling is for future employment and economic well-being. Parents also believed that people who did not finish schooling would certainly have difficulty looking for jobs with better salaries. Moreover, parenting practices were rooted in parents' beliefs about the purpose of schooling. Parents' parental practices may be modified capturing the beliefs that schooling is also an "end in itself".

**Keywords:** Beliefs, schooling, parenting practices, the purpose of schooling

## 1 Introduction

The dropout rate among students in schools is one of the pressing concerns that requires appropriate actions from all school stakeholders. As reported by the Borgen Project Report in 2019, the Philippines has the highest dropout rates compared to all other ASEAN nations [1]. In the same report, the organization identified hunger, work, and conflict as the main reasons for the very high dropout rate among the students. The Philippine government had already formulated policies that would address hunger and early exposure to work among school-aged children. For example, the Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program (4Ps) was established. The 4Ps were created not just to address hunger among Filipino school-aged children but also to address early exposure to work

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by providing conditional financial assistance to families who are considered the poorest of the poor. Despite these efforts, it is still observed that a few children are still hesitant to go to school.

Lack of interest and motivation is the second main reason for dropout among school-aged children [2] and accordingly "Parents are their children's number one role models, whatever their situation. The mother is viewed as the youth's confidant and teacher" (p. 12). Thus, parents play the most significant role in children's education, especially in arousing the interest of children in schooling. Using the Academic Socialization model [3] as the lens, the ways parents motivate or encourage their children to go to school are rooted in their beliefs and conceptions about schooling. They stated: "Parents, through their individual experiences, social and cultural characteristics, and behaviors, set the stage for their children's early academic experiences...the intergenerational influences are represented by how parents' own school experiences and cognitions about school shape their parenting behaviors". Parents' beliefs about the purposes of schooling are likely to influence children's beliefs and attitudes to learning and subsequently affect children's behavior and motivation toward school. Hence, parents' actions towards their children's education may be rooted in their beliefs about schooling. Beliefs about the purpose of schooling vary across different groups of people. Thus, the researchers explored parents' beliefs about the purpose of schooling and how these beliefs relate to their parenting practices. The results of the study can serve as a basis for the kind of educational initiatives and interventions that can be implemented in the household. Although there are researches which examined the connections of beliefs and other variables such as beliefs and goals [4], beliefs and teaching practices [5, 6, 7], and parents beliefs and their parental investments [8], there has been very limited empirical research conducted to explore parental beliefs on the purpose of schooling and their parenting practices. This sentiment was also shared by [9]. Very recently, community leaders' beliefs on the purpose of schooling and their educational initiatives in the Philippines was explored [10]. The study found personal, social, and economic development, and better quality of life are the main purpose of schooling.

## 2 Methods

A list of out-of-school youth was secured at the Office of the Municipal Social Welfare and Development in Kibawe, Bukidnon, Philippines. The parents of these children were the participants in the study. The list was brought to the Office of the Barangay Chairpersons/Captains for assistance in locating one of the participants. Snowball sampling was then implemented to determine all the other participants.

Interview questions were developed by the researchers. It was content validated by three (3) experts in the fields of sociology, linguistics, and education. It was pilot-tested on three parents before it was used in the actual data gathering.

Using the interview questions, the data on beliefs about the purpose of schooling and parenting practices were generated. Probing questions were also asked to establish possible connections between beliefs and practices. The interview lasted about 18 to 22 minutes and was audio-recorded with the consent of the participants.

The audio-recorded data were transcribed and analyzed. Parents' beliefs on the purpose of schooling were coded using the categories identified in [9]. We identified parents' beliefs using the definition of [11] as "propositions to which a person attributes at least a minimum degree of confidence". Parenting practices were coded using descriptive codes as described in [12]. In the analysis, beliefs about the purpose of schooling are statements that are personal convictions of the parents about the purpose of schooling. The episodes where the parents justified/explained their practices using their held beliefs about the purpose of schooling were highlighted and considered as the unit of analysis. These method of defining a unit of analysis is consistent with [7], [13], and [5].

### 3 Results and Discussions

Twenty-one (21) parents from the different Barangays in Kibawe were interviewed. Of these, 20 are mothers and only 1 is a father. Their ages ranged from 42 to 48 years old and have 5 to 10 children. All these parent-participants have at least one child who stopped schooling. Two of these mothers are working while the rest are household wives. The only father participant is a laborer in various construction and farming industries.

#### 3.1 Beliefs on the purpose of schooling

All parents believed that the purpose of schooling is a "means to an end". This means that schooling means future employment and economic well-being [9]. Specifically, they believed that those who finished schooling (college) would be able to get jobs with better salaries and would have a better life. One of the participants believes that schooling prepares her child to do business. Twelve (12) of 21 parents believed that a person who cannot finish schooling will surely have difficulty in life as they have experienced it themselves. One of these twelve participants even believes that the community has very low regard for people who did not finish their schooling. When asked about "para aha man diyang pag eskwela sir?" one participant said:

Maayo...maayo...pasalamat man gani ta kay arun makaeskwela gyud ug tarong ang mga anak. Ang ilang pag eskwela dili man jud na supak sa ato kay para man gyud sa ila. Makakita sila ug maayong trabaho puhon. Pero ang depersensya man gud kay ato silang ipaeskwela pero dili man gyud sila moeskwela. Mao nang akong ingnun nga basin magmahay ramo puhon, mapareha ramo sa amo nga... ingun ani oh inyong amahan way grado. Daw bi kay di man sila mopatoo, aw di pud ko mopogos ko sa inyo nga mao ni mao na kay inyo manang gusto. [Good...good...we are thankful that our children learn well. Their schooling is not for us but for them. They will find better jobs in the future. But the problem is even if we want them to go to school, they don't. That is why I told them maybe you will regret, you will just be like me, did not finish any grade. But they did not heed, and I don't force you because that is what you want.]

Parents believed that the difference between a person who finished schooling from those who didn't is their job. Individuals who finished schooling usually have work

which is lighter but have higher salaries while those who did not will have heavy work but with lower salaries. For them, it is in school that children learn basic skills [14] that they can use when they are employed in these white-collar jobs. Parents also believed that discipline and good conduct should be taught at home and not in school.

The overall result obtained in the study conforms to the result observed in [10]. However, this is contrary to the findings obtained in [9]. In their findings, the parents regardless of economic status viewed schooling as an “end in itself”. This means that for them sending their children to school is to make them happy and fulfilled.

### 3.2 Parenting Practices

Parenting practices were coded and categorized into parental aspirations, monitoring school progress, parental supervision, and talking with the children [15]. Assigning household chores, helping parents' work, attending school activities, giving rewards, and imposing punishments are the practices being imposed and implemented by the parents at home. Household chores include cooking, washing dishes, laundering, babysitting, and preparing meals. Being an apprentice in farm or construction was also mentioned. School activities attended by parents include PTA meetings, recognition, or even calls by the school for some important reasons. Giving rewards includes buying new clothes and giving compliments. However, a few parents also practice corporal punishment as a form of discipline.

### 3.3 Connecting beliefs on the purpose of schooling and parenting practices

Some of the practices of the parents were rooted in their beliefs about the purpose of schooling. For the six (6) parents, the practice of assigning children to household chores and helping their father's work is rooted in their belief that if the child cannot finish schooling means he/she cannot find decent jobs so at least the child knows these works very well. This connection is illustrated by the following transcript:

Kinahanglan gyud sila makabalo ana sir kay unsaon man lang kung di makahuman pag eskwela unya di pagyud kabalo sa mga buluhatonon sa balay...sama sa pagpanglimpyo sa balay...kana gyud pagluto kay importante kayo, maayog naay ikabayad sa maid. Unya ug mapareha sa amoa nga wa gyud ultimo buwad maglisod ug palit. [They should know these (household chores) because if they cannot finish their schooling and do not know household chores...like cleaning...most importantly cooking, good if they have money to pay house helper. But if they are like our situations now, that we even have difficulty buying dried fish.]

The parents already admitted that their child had already decided not to continue anymore their schooling. Even how much the encouragement they give to their child, the child insists that they will not continue their studies. The parent who believed that schooling is preparing their child for business made sure to check the report cards of her child. When asked why? She answered: “Dapat gyud echeck sir kay kung gag may ug grado labi na ang math, unsaon naman lang ug kwenta, maalkanse unya kung mag Negosyo” [“I see to it that I checked the cards because if the grades are low, especially math, how will he compute, he might even be deficit when he will do business”]. These

results are explained by the conceptual model of academic socialization by Taylor, Clayton, and Rowley (2004). Indeed individual's action is rooted in his/her held beliefs. Thus, parents' practices at home are rooted in their conceptions and beliefs about the importance and purpose of schooling.

## **4 Conclusion**

For the parents schooling is generally a "means to an end". Economic and personal development are the main purposes for sending children to school. Parents also implements various parental practices at home. These practices were rooted on their beliefs about the purpose of schooling. Doing household chores and making the child an apprentice of the father is rooted in the belief that those who cannot finish schooling will have difficulty looking for better jobs. Thus, preparing the child for these possible circumstances. Checking of student's progress in school are the result of the belief that schooling is preparing the child to do business in the future.

## **Recommendation**

The belief that the purpose of schooling is a "means to an end" was not an effective way of motivating the children to go to school. Making the purpose of schooling an "end in itself" may offer a promising approach to engender children's interest in schooling. Using the academic socialization model as a lens, parents who have these beliefs may impose parenting practices at home with more emphasis on making the child happy and fulfilled than making the child think of money or wealth in return for their schooling.

The connections between beliefs and practices as explored in the study may just be an initial exploration of the relationships of these constructs. Other practices of the parents may be connected to their beliefs and can be explored better if the sample size was larger. A quantitative study may also be conducted to explore the relationships between the beliefs and practices of the parents.

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