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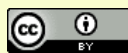
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license**BUILDING GENDER-RESPONSIVE EDUCATION
THROUGH HYBRID INDIGENOUS INSTITUTIONS:
LESSONS FROM AN ISLAND COMMUNITY IN
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Indonesia*Correspondence E-Mail: monalitaay@gmail.comDOI: <https://doi.org/10.30598/baileofisipvol4iss1pp20-45>**ABSTRACT**

Gender-responsive education has predominantly been examined through the lens of state policies and formal educational institutions, while limited attention has been given to the role of indigenous community governance in shaping educational equity. This study develops a conceptual understanding of how hybrid indigenous institutions foster gender-responsive education within an island community in Eastern Indonesia. Adopting a theory-building qualitative case study, the research was conducted in Negeri Mamala, where the Three-Stone Indigenous Institutions continue to organize community life. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, participant observation, focus group discussions, and document analysis involving local government officials, customary and religious leaders, school principals, teachers, parents, youth, and young women. The findings reveal that gender-responsive education emerges not primarily through formal policy implementation but through continuous social negotiation among interconnected local institutions. The Three-Stone Indigenous Institutions function as a collaborative governance mechanism that strengthens social legitimacy for girls' education, while the cultural value of badraheng has been reinterpreted from a traditional norm into a collective resource supporting educational participation and women's economic empowerment. Nevertheless, patriarchal gender norms, unequal access to entrepreneurship education, and limited family engagement remain significant constraints. This study proposes the Hybrid Indigenous Educational Governance model, demonstrating that gender-responsive education is produced through dynamic interactions among customary institutions, local government, religious organizations, families, schools, and indigenous cultural values, thereby extending existing theories of gender-responsive education beyond formal institutional frameworks toward community-based educational governance.

Keywords: Community Governance, Gender-Responsive Education, Hybrid Indigenous Educational Governance, Indigenous Institutions, Institutional Interaction

INTRODUCTION

The global commitment to gender equality in education has gained unprecedented momentum over the past two decades, crystallized most visibly through the Sustainable Development Goals. SDG 4 explicitly demands inclusive and equitable quality education, while SDG 5 positions gender equality as both a standalone objective and a cross-cutting imperative for all development outcomes (Resti Ayu, 2025; Surni et al., 2025). This dual mandate reflects a

growing recognition that education systems cannot claim success when half of their participants face systemic barriers to participation, achievement, and empowerment. Yet despite considerable policy attention and resource allocation, the realization of gender-responsive education remains profoundly uneven across different cultural and geographical contexts. The global discourse has produced sophisticated policy frameworks, monitoring mechanisms, and institutional reform agendas, but these instruments frequently assume a universal institutional landscape where states, ministries, and formal schools operate as the primary vehicles of educational change. For millions of learners in indigenous and island communities, however, the institutional architecture governing their educational experiences extends far beyond the formal boundaries of the school gate.

The problem becomes particularly acute when we examine the educational realities of island communities in the Global South, where geographical isolation, limited state capacity, and the enduring strength of customary institutions create a distinctly different governance environment. In these settings, education is not solely, or even primarily, shaped by government policy or school leadership. Rather, it emerges through complex negotiations among multiple institutional actors: village governments exercising decentralized authority, customary leaders safeguarding ancestral knowledge systems, religious institutions providing moral frameworks and supplementary schooling, extended families making strategic decisions about children's futures, and formal schools attempting to implement national curricula in locally meaningful ways. These actors do not operate in isolation but form what we might understand as hybrid institutional configurations where formal and informal rules, modern and traditional authority, secular and sacred knowledge constantly interact and reshape one another (Agustina et al., 2023; Ssebagala, 2025). The consequence is that gender-responsive education in such communities cannot be understood, let alone achieved, through analytical frameworks that privilege formal institutional interventions while neglecting the dense web of community governance that surrounds and permeates educational processes.

The Indonesian archipelago provides a compelling context for examining these dynamics. With over seventeen thousand islands, hundreds of distinct ethnic groups, and a state policy that simultaneously promotes national education standards and recognizes customary governance structures, Indonesia embodies the tensions and possibilities inherent in hybrid educational governance (Ariyan & Mardiah, 2025; Mehwish et al., 2026). In the eastern islands particularly, customary institutions maintain considerable authority over land tenure, marriage practices, inheritance rights, and the transmission of cultural knowledge, all domains that profoundly shape gendered educational outcomes. The Three-Stone Indigenous Institutions system found across many Maluku communities exemplifies this configuration, positioning village government, customary leadership, and religious authority as three interconnected pillars of community governance. What makes this configuration theoretically significant is not merely its existence as a cultural artifact, but its ongoing function as a coordination mechanism through which community decisions about education, including gendered access and participation, are

negotiated and legitimized. Yet remarkably little scholarship has examined how such indigenous institutional configurations operate to produce, reproduce, or transform gender relations within educational processes. The dominant tendency has been to study customary institutions, religious organizations, and government bodies separately, thereby missing the crucial dynamics that emerge precisely through their interaction.

The existing literature on gender-responsive education, while rich and extensive, reveals several characteristic limitations when applied to indigenous and island community contexts. The first and most influential body of work concentrates on national education policies and school-level institutional reforms as the primary levers for achieving gender equality. Scholars in this tradition have produced sophisticated analyses of curriculum transformation, teacher training programs, school leadership practices, and policy implementation mechanisms (Buabeng & Amo-Darko, 2024; Putra, 2023; Wango et al., 2024). This literature has been instrumental in establishing gender equality as a legitimate and urgent concern within education systems worldwide, and its analytical tools have proven valuable for evaluating policy effectiveness and institutional performance. However, the implicit assumption underlying much of this work is that the state and its formal educational apparatus constitute the natural and primary site of intervention. When applied to communities where the state's reach is limited, contested, or mediated through customary institutions, such frameworks risk misidentifying the relevant institutional landscape and, consequently, the strategic entry points for transformative action.

A second substantial body of scholarship addresses gender and education through the lens of development studies, emphasizing access, enrollment, retention, and completion as key indicators of progress (Alhassan et al., 2025; Pahlwani, 2026). This approach has generated valuable empirical evidence demonstrating persistent gender disparities in educational participation across developing countries and has successfully mobilized international attention and resources toward closing these gaps. Yet the access-focused paradigm tends to treat education as a commodity to be delivered and consumed, obscuring the ways in which educational processes themselves are embedded within and shaped by local institutional ecologies. The question of whether girls attend school becomes separated from the question of how community institutions collectively construct the meaning and value of that attendance. Moreover, the normative assumption that increased access automatically translates into empowerment has been increasingly challenged by feminist scholars who point to the persistence of patriarchal norms within educational institutions themselves (Fithriyyah et al., 2024; Rakgwata & Thsifhumulo, 2026).

A third strand of literature has made significant contributions by examining the relationship between local culture and education, but has predominantly framed culture as an obstacle to be overcome in the pursuit of gender equality. Studies in this tradition document how traditional norms, religious interpretations, and customary practices restrict girls' educational opportunities and reinforce subordinate gender roles (Immanuel & Gontes, 2026; Pratichi, 2025). While such analyses have been valuable in identifying specific mechanisms of gender exclusion,

their tendency to position culture primarily as a barrier obscures the possibility that cultural institutions might also serve as resources for transformation. This deficit framing of indigenous culture has been powerfully critiqued by scholars working within indigenous knowledge paradigms who argue for recognizing the adaptive, dynamic, and potentially liberatory dimensions of customary institutions (Agbolosoo et al., 2026; Celino & De Vera, 2026). The challenge, then, is not simply to document how culture constrains gender equality, but to understand the conditions under which cultural institutions may actively contribute to reimagining and reconstructing gender relations in more equitable directions.

A fourth and growing body of work addresses indigenous education, but its primary analytical focus has been on cultural preservation, language revitalization, and the incorporation of indigenous knowledge into school curricula (Ojong, 2026; ZM et al., 2025). This scholarship has been foundational in challenging the epistemic violence of colonial education systems and in asserting the validity and value of indigenous ways of knowing and being. However, the emphasis on cultural and linguistic dimensions has left the institutional and governance aspects of indigenous education relatively underexplored. The question of how indigenous governance structures themselves might be mobilized to advance gender-responsive education remains largely unasked, let alone answered. This represents a significant lacuna, for it is precisely through governance arrangements, the rules, norms, and decision-making processes that allocate resources, authority, and opportunity, that the gendered effects of education are ultimately determined.

What becomes apparent from this review is that the existing literature, despite its considerable achievements, has not yet adequately theorized the relationship between indigenous institutional configurations and gender-responsive educational outcomes. The dominant approaches either focus on formal state institutions while neglecting community governance, or examine cultural dimensions while overlooking institutional dynamics, or study indigenous education without centering gender transformation. The consequence is a persistent analytical gap: we lack conceptual models that can explain how hybrid indigenous institutions, configurations where customary, religious, governmental, and educational actors interact as an integrated governance system, produce particular gender outcomes in education. This gap is not merely academic; it has practical implications for the millions of learners whose educational experiences are shaped by such institutional configurations and for the policymakers and practitioners seeking to advance gender equality in indigenous and island communities.

This study addresses this gap by developing the concept of Hybrid Indigenous Educational Governance as an alternative framework for understanding and advancing gender-responsive education in indigenous island communities. The novelty of this work lies not in the discovery of indigenous institutions, which have existed for centuries, nor in documenting gender disparities in education, but rather in demonstrating how the interaction among multiple institutional actors generates a distinctive governance mechanism through which gender relations in education are continuously negotiated and potentially transformed. Where previous scholarship has tended to

study government policy, customary institutions, religious organizations, families, and schools as separate domains, this research reveals the analytical and practical significance of examining their interaction as an integrated system. The framework further introduces the concept of cultural reinterpretation, showing how traditional values are not static constraints but dynamic resources that communities actively rework to support girls' education and women's empowerment. This represents a departure from deficit-based approaches to culture in gender and education scholarship, offering instead an understanding of cultural institutions as potential sites of gender-transformative practice.

The empirical foundation for this analysis comes from an in-depth case study of Negeri Mamala, an indigenous island community in eastern Indonesia where the Three-Stone Indigenous Institutions system continues to function as a living governance mechanism. Through extended fieldwork employing qualitative methods including in-depth interviews, participant observation, focus group discussions, and document analysis, the study traces how village government, customary leaders, religious authorities, schools, and families collectively negotiate the meaning and practice of gender-responsive education. The institutional interaction analysis developed for this study provides methodological tools for mapping the relationships among these actors and identifying the mechanisms through which their collaboration produces particular educational outcomes. Building on this empirical foundation, the study aims to develop a conceptual model of Hybrid Indigenous Educational Governance that can inform both scholarly understanding and practical intervention in comparable contexts across the Global South.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study adopted a qualitative approach using an intrinsic case study design with a theory-building orientation to examine how hybrid indigenous institutions shape gender-responsive education. A qualitative design was considered appropriate because the research sought to understand the meanings, institutional interactions, and sociocultural negotiations through which educational practices and gender norms are constructed within their natural context (Kazanskaia, 2025; Maina et al., 2025). Drawing on Saha's (2026) constructivist grounded theory, the study aimed to generate theoretical insights inductively from empirical evidence rather than test predefined propositions, thereby enabling the development of the Hybrid Indigenous Educational Governance concept.

Negeri Mamala, a small island community in Maluku Province, Indonesia, was selected through purposive critical case sampling (Ulfa et al., 2026; Ullah & Shah, 2026). The community retains an active Three-Stone Indigenous Institutions system, in which local government, customary authorities, and religious leaders collaboratively govern community affairs, including educational decision-making. This institutional configuration provided a suitable setting for examining how hybrid governance influences gender-responsive education within an indigenous context.

Thirty-two informants were recruited through purposive and snowball sampling until theoretical saturation was achieved (Chrispo, 2026; Kritika & Pandey, 2026; Luthuli & Reddy, 2026). Participants represented key institutional and community stakeholders, including the village head, village council members, customary leaders, religious leaders, school principal, teachers, school committee members, parents, and young women enrolled in or recently completing secondary education. This diversity enabled the study to capture multiple perspectives on institutional collaboration, gender relations, and educational governance.

Data were collected over six months through semi-structured in-depth interviews, participant observation, focus group discussions, and document analysis. Interviews explored perceptions of gender roles, educational decision-making, institutional collaboration, and the influence of customary and religious values. Participant observation was conducted during village meetings, school activities, religious gatherings, and customary ceremonies to capture everyday institutional practices and informal power relations (Noer et al., 2025; Singh et al., 2019). Focus group discussions with parents, young women, and youth leaders provided insight into collective negotiation processes, while policy documents, village regulations, school records, and customary deliberation documents contextualized contemporary practices within broader institutional developments.

Data analysis followed the constructivist grounded theory procedures of open, focused, axial, and theoretical coding (Hariri & Wahyuni, 2025). These analytical stages were integrated with Institutional Interaction Analysis, a mapping strategy developed to examine relationships, power dynamics, institutional roles, and collaborative mechanisms among local actors. This approach facilitated the emergence of the Hybrid Indigenous Educational Governance model as a theoretically grounded explanation of how indigenous institutions collectively foster gender-responsive education.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Hybrid Institutional Configuration and the Governance of Gender-Responsive Education

The findings of this study reveal that gender-responsive education in Negeri Mamala does not materialize through the straightforward implementation of government policies or the isolated efforts of individual schools. Rather, it emerges through a distinctive institutional configuration wherein the village government, customary council, and religious leadership, the three pillars of what the community calls the *Tiga Batu Tungku* or Three-Stone Indigenous Institutions, interact as an interdependent governance system. This configuration is not a cultural artifact preserved for ceremonial purposes but a living mechanism that actively shapes how educational decisions are made, how resources are allocated, and how gender norms are negotiated in relation to schooling. During a village council meeting observed in October 2023, the three institutional heads sat together at the front of the balai desa, each flanked by their respective advisors, deliberating on scholarship allocations for the upcoming academic year. The

village head, R.L., opened the session by presenting the available funds from the village budget, but immediately turned to the customary chief, M.S., seeking guidance on which families most deserved support based on their contributions to community life. The customary chief in turn consulted with the imam, A.K., about the religious merit of investing in girls' secondary education. What unfolded was not a competition for institutional dominance but a carefully orchestrated negotiation in which each pillar contributed something distinct: the village government offered administrative capacity and fiscal resources, the customary council provided social mapping and cultural legitimacy, and the religious leadership contributed moral authority and community trust. As one teacher, S.T., reflected during an in-depth interview, "When the kepala desa, the kepala adat, and the imam all stand together and say that girls must finish school, no family in this negeri dares to disagree. It becomes something bigger than a government rule; it becomes our own commitment as a community." This observation captures the essence of what Perea & Miranda (2025) have recently theorized as collaborative governance dynamics in complex institutional environments, wherein effective outcomes depend less on the formal authority of any single actor than on the quality of interaction among multiple actors who bring complementary resources and distinct forms of legitimacy to collective decision-making processes.

The interdependence among these three institutions becomes particularly visible when examining how each pillar exercises what community members recognize as distinct but complementary jurisdictions over educational matters. The village government, operating under Indonesia's decentralization framework, holds formal authority over village budget allocations, including the Dana Desa that can be directed toward educational scholarships and infrastructure. Yet during fieldwork, R.L. repeatedly emphasized that he would never make decisions about scholarship recipients without consulting the customary council, explaining with evident conviction that "the adat knows every family in this negeri, knows who is struggling, knows who has contributed, knows the history of each clan, without this knowledge, my decisions would be blind." The customary council, for its part, derives its authority not from statutory law but from ancestral legitimacy accumulated over generations of community governance. During a focus group discussion with members of the customary council, the kepala adat M.S. articulated a nuanced understanding of his institution's role in education, explaining that adat is not a fixed set of prohibitions but a living framework for interpreting what is appropriate and beneficial for the community. "Our ancestors valued wisdom and capability in both men and women," he noted. "When we support girls' education, we are not breaking tradition; we are fulfilling it in a new form." The religious leadership, represented primarily by the imam and religious teachers, contributes a dimension of moral discourse that can either constrain or enable girls' educational aspirations. During an interview conducted in the mosque courtyard after Friday prayers, A.K. explained that his sermons increasingly emphasize the Islamic obligation to seek knowledge as binding on both men and women, deliberately using religious texts to construct theological arguments for gender equality in education. "I remind our congregation that the first word

revealed was iqra, read, and it was addressed to all humanity, not only to men,” he stated, demonstrating how religious authority can be mobilized in service of gender-responsive outcomes when interpreted through inclusive theological frameworks.

The school occupies a particularly intriguing position within this institutional configuration, functioning simultaneously as an insider and an outsider to the community governance system. Formally, the school is accountable to the district education office and the national Ministry of Education, operating within bureaucratic hierarchies that extend far beyond the village boundaries. Yet operationally, the school’s effectiveness depends entirely on its integration into the local institutional fabric. The school principal, N.T., described during an extended interview in her office how she learned shortly after arriving in Mamala that issuing instructions from above would accomplish nothing without the support of the three pillars. “I can make all the policies I want about retaining girls in school, but if a family decides to marry off their daughter at sixteen, I have no power to stop them. Only the combined voice of the village head, the customary chief, and the imam can change that decision.” This dependence became strikingly apparent when the school faced a situation in early 2023 involving a female student, identified here by the initials A.M., whose family had arranged an early marriage that would have terminated her education. The principal did not attempt to resolve the situation through administrative measures alone but instead convened an informal meeting with the three institutional heads, presenting the case not as a policy violation but as a community concern requiring collective deliberation. The customary chief spoke with the family’s clan elders about the long-term consequences of early marriage for the entire clan’s standing and prosperity. The imam visited the family to discuss Islamic teachings regarding the importance of education and the permissibility of delaying marriage for the sake of knowledge. The village head offered to include the family in the next round of scholarship allocations. After two weeks of sustained engagement across multiple institutional channels, the family agreed to postpone the marriage and allow their daughter to complete her secondary education. When A.M. herself was interviewed as part of this study, she reflected quietly on the experience, saying, “I felt like the whole negeri was holding me up. It was not just my own effort; it was everyone’s effort together.”

What makes this institutional configuration effective is not simply the existence of multiple institutions but the specific qualities of their interaction as observed throughout the fieldwork period. First, there is a clearly established mutual recognition of jurisdiction, wherein each institutional head acknowledges the others’ domains of authority and refrains from unilateral intervention in matters properly belonging to another pillar. During a village meeting about school infrastructure improvements, the imam deferred to the village head on budgetary matters while the customary chief deferred to the imam on questions involving religious education curricula, each recognizing the boundaries of their institutional competence. Second, regular communication channels sustain these relationships beyond episodic crises, with informal coordination occurring almost daily through chance encounters at the mosque, the village office, and community gatherings. Third, the three institutions share foundational

normative commitments, to community welfare, to the continuity of tradition, to religious piety, that provide common ground even when specific interpretations diverge. Yet these commitments are sufficiently flexible to allow for institutional differentiation, meaning that each pillar can approach gender-responsive education through its own distinct normative language without threatening the overall collaborative framework. Fourth, and perhaps most importantly, mechanisms exist for resolving tensions when institutional logics conflict. Not every interaction proceeds smoothly; the fieldwork documented moments when the customary council's emphasis on traditional gender roles clashed with the school's promotion of girls' leadership, or when religious conservatism regarding female modesty conflicted with the practical requirements of girls' participation in sports and extracurricular activities. Yet these tensions did not fracture the institutional configuration because all parties recognized their mutual dependence and the impossibility of achieving their individual institutional objectives without the cooperation of the others. The kepala adat M.S. expressed this interdependence with characteristic directness during a focus group discussion: "We are like the three stones that hold up the cooking pot. Remove one, and the pot falls. The government cannot govern without adat legitimacy, adat cannot function without religious blessing, and religion cannot reach the people without government structure and adat wisdom. We know this, so we find ways to work together even when we disagree." This metaphor, deeply embedded in community consciousness, captures the operational logic of a governance configuration in which gender-responsive education is produced not by policy mandate or cultural tradition alone but through the ongoing, sometimes difficult, always relational work of institutional coordination that must be continuously accomplished and can never be taken for granted.

Reinterpretation of Cultural Values as Collective Resources for Girls' Education

One of the most striking findings to emerge from the fieldwork in Negeri Mamala concerns the transformation of badraheng, a traditional cultural value deeply woven into the fabric of community life, into a powerful collective resource for supporting girls' educational participation. Badraheng, in its most fundamental sense, embodies the ethos of mutual assistance, collective responsibility, and shared endeavor that has historically organized cooperation in agricultural labor, the preparation of ceremonial feasts, the construction of community infrastructure, and the mobilization of resources during times of family crisis. It is a value that community members invoke frequently in daily conversation, not as an abstract philosophical principle but as a practical expectation that one's neighbors, clan members, and fellow villagers will contribute their labor, resources, and moral support when needed, just as one has contributed to them. What the research documented over the course of extended fieldwork is a remarkable process whereby this cultural logic has been deliberately extended and reworked into the educational domain, producing practices of collective sponsorship for girls' schooling that could not have been predicted by theoretical frameworks that position indigenous culture primarily as an obstacle to gender equality. During a focus group discussion with parents

held in the home of M.T., a mother of three daughters who had successfully completed secondary education, she articulated this transformation with a clarity that resonated deeply with other participants. “In the old days,” she explained, stirring her tea thoughtfully, “badraheng meant helping your neighbor harvest cloves or build a house. Now it also means making sure no girl in this negeri stops school because her family cannot afford the fees. If my daughter graduates and gets a good job, it is not just my family’s success; it is the success of everyone who contributed. And if another family’s daughter must stop schooling, that is not just their failure; it is our collective shame.” This reframing of educational participation as a matter of collective rather than individual responsibility represents a profound shift in how the community understands both the purpose and the mechanism of girls’ education.

The empirical material reveals that this reinterpretation of badraheng did not occur spontaneously but emerged through deliberate community deliberation and sustained institutional effort over approximately the past decade. The kepala adat M.S., during an extended interview conducted on the veranda of his home as the afternoon rain fell heavily outside, traced the genealogy of this transformation with the care of someone who had both witnessed and shaped the process. He recalled a series of community meetings beginning around 2014, convened initially to address the problem of declining school enrollment as families struggled with the costs of transportation, supplies, and the opportunity costs of losing daughters’ domestic labor. “At first we discussed it as an economic problem requiring government solutions,” he recounted, “but gradually we began to see it as a cultural matter, as something that concerned our identity as a community. Someone said, and I remember this moment clearly, ‘If badraheng means we help each other, why do we not apply it to education? Why do we leave families alone to struggle with school costs?’ This question changed the direction of our discussions.” From these deliberations emerged concrete institutional innovations that gave practical expression to the reinterpreted value. The community established an education fund, known locally as dana pendidikan adat, managed through customary structures but drawing contributions from all three institutional pillars and from families themselves, with allocation decisions made collectively during village meetings. The imam A.K. described how the mosque incorporated the education fund into its zakat and sadaqah distribution framework, channeling religious charitable giving toward scholarships for girls whose families could not afford school costs, thereby providing Islamic legitimacy for what might otherwise have been seen as a purely customary initiative. “When we distribute zakat for education, we remind the congregation that seeking knowledge is an act of worship, and supporting others to seek knowledge is an act of charity that brings blessings to the entire community,” he explained, demonstrating how religious discourse was seamlessly integrated with customary values to produce a hybrid cultural framework for educational support.

Perhaps the most visible manifestation of the reinterpreted badraheng takes the form of public recognition ceremonies that celebrate girls’ academic achievements as collective community accomplishments rather than merely individual or family successes. During the

fieldwork period, the researcher attended one such ceremony held at the balai desa to honor three young women who had been accepted into higher education programs. The village head R.L. opened the ceremony by reading each student's name and the program they would enter, after which the customary chief presented them with traditional cloth symbolizing the community's blessing, and the imam offered prayers for their future success. What was particularly noteworthy was the presence of community members who had no direct family relationship with the honored students, elderly women who had contributed small amounts to the education fund, neighbors who had provided meals during examination periods, clan members who had offered encouragement and moral support. An elderly woman, S.P., who had contributed regularly to the education fund despite having no school-age children of her own, explained her presence with evident emotion: "These girls are my daughters too. When they succeed, I feel proud as if they were my own blood. This is what badraheng means, their success is my success, and my small contribution is part of their achievement." This sentiment, echoed by numerous informants throughout the research, reveals how the reinterpretation of cultural values has produced not only material resources for girls' education but also a dense network of emotional investment and moral expectation that makes educational participation a matter of community identity and collective pride.

Engaging with Anitha et al. (2025) and Jolly (2025) recent theoretical work on re-mediating cultural practices provides analytical leverage for understanding the significance of what has occurred in Mamala. These scholars argue that marginalized communities do not simply preserve or abandon traditional cultural practices when confronting contemporary challenges but actively reconfigure them, re-mediating cultural resources to serve new purposes while maintaining continuity with ancestral ways of knowing and being. The concept of re-mediation captures the dual movement observed in Mamala: badraheng remains recognizable as the same cultural value that has organized community cooperation for generations, yet its application to girls' education represents a genuine transformation in both its meaning and its practical expression. This theoretical framing challenges the deficit-based understanding of indigenous culture that has pervaded much gender and education scholarship, wherein traditional values are predominantly analyzed as barriers to be overcome in the pursuit of gender equality. The Mamala case demonstrates instead that cultural values can serve as flexible resources that communities actively reshape to address contemporary challenges, including the challenge of ensuring that girls complete their education. Yet the analysis must not romanticize this process, and the research documented important limitations and tensions that accompany the reinterpretation of badraheng. A young woman, S.R., who had completed secondary education and was working in the village while hoping to pursue further studies, articulated these tensions during an interview with striking honesty. "Sometimes the same people who contributed to my school fees also expect me to prioritize the community's needs over my own ambitions. They supported my education, yes, but they also have expectations about how I should use it, to serve the negeri, to work here, to marry someone they approve of. The support comes with obligations,

and sometimes I feel that my life is not entirely my own.” This perspective reveals that the reinterpretation of cultural values, while genuinely enabling girls’ educational participation, simultaneously embeds that participation within continuing structures of communal expectation that may constrain individual autonomy. The gender dimension of these constraints is particularly significant, as young men in the community did not report experiencing the same density of expectation regarding how their education should serve collective ends, suggesting that the re-mediated badraheng, for all its progressive potential, still operates within a broader patriarchal framework that subjects young women’s choices to greater communal scrutiny than those of their male counterparts. Nevertheless, the transformation documented in Mamala represents a significant departure from static understandings of indigenous culture and opens analytical space for recognizing how communities can mobilize their own cultural resources in service of gender-responsive educational outcomes.

Institutional Mechanisms Enabling Gender-Responsive Educational Governance

The capacity of Negeri Mamala’s hybrid institutional configuration to produce conditions supportive of gender-responsive education rests not on a single factor but on a set of interconnected mechanisms that emerged systematically from the empirical data. Through careful analysis of interview transcripts, observation notes, and documentary records, five distinct yet mutually reinforcing mechanisms became analytically visible, each contributing a specific dimension to the governance of gender and education in the community. The first of these mechanisms, legitimacy building, operates through the involvement of customary and religious authorities in educational decision-making, conferring a weight of social approval upon girls’ schooling that individual families acting alone could scarcely achieve. During a Friday sermon observed in the village mosque, the imam A.K. devoted a significant portion of his khutbah to the importance of educating daughters, citing Quranic verses and hadith that emphasize the equal obligation of seeking knowledge for men and women. After the prayer concluded and worshippers streamed into the sunny courtyard, several fathers could be heard discussing the sermon’s implications for their own families. One man, identified here as H.T., remarked to his neighbor, “When the imam speaks like this, how can I keep my daughter at home? It would be like refusing a religious duty.” This moment captured the mechanism of legitimacy building in action: religious authority transformed what might have been a private family calculation about resource allocation into a publicly endorsed community norm carrying moral weight. Similarly, during a customary council session where scholarship recipients were being selected, the kepala adat M.S. publicly praised a family that had supported three daughters through secondary education despite limited means, describing them as embodying the highest values of the community. “When the adat honors you,” explained one female teacher, R.N., in a subsequent interview, “every family in the negeri takes notice. It creates a standard that others want to meet, not because they fear punishment but because they desire the respect that comes with doing what the community considers praiseworthy.” This mechanism works precisely

because it does not rely on coercion or formal regulation but on the social production of legitimacy through institutional channels that carry deep historical and cultural resonance.

The second mechanism, resource pooling, addresses the material dimensions of educational participation that no single institution could adequately provide on its own. The empirical data revealed a complex web of resource flows that traversed institutional boundaries, creating an educational infrastructure that exceeded the sum of its individual contributions. The village government, through its Dana Desa allocation, provided funds for school transportation subsidies that particularly benefited female students whose families worried about their safety traveling long distances on foot. The customary council allocated communal land, held under adat tenure, for the construction of a girls' dormitory near the secondary school, reducing both the costs and the perceived risks associated with daughters living away from home to pursue education. Religious charitable funds, channeled through the mosque's zakat and infaq mechanisms, provided scholarships that covered school supplies, uniforms, and examination fees for girls from the most economically vulnerable households. Families themselves contributed labor for school maintenance and prepared meals for students during examination periods, contributions organized through the badraheng system described earlier. The school principal, N.T., reflected on this resource ecology during an interview in her office surrounded by stacks of administrative paperwork: "I have worked in four different schools across this district, and nowhere else have I seen resources come together like this. In other places, the school is alone, struggling to meet every need from a budget that is never enough. Here, when we need something for our female students, transportation, safe accommodation, extra tutoring, I know I can approach the three pillars and somehow, through their combined efforts, the resources will be found." This pooling mechanism does not operate through formal inter-institutional agreements or contractual arrangements but through the dense relational networks and mutual expectations that characterize the hybrid governance configuration.

Normative negotiation, the third mechanism, captures the dynamic processes through which institutional actors holding different and sometimes conflicting normative commitments engage in dialogue and mutual adjustment regarding gender norms in education. The fieldwork documented a particularly illuminating instance of this mechanism during discussions about female students' participation in sports activities. Some religious teachers had expressed concern that the physical education uniform, consisting of shorts and a t-shirt, compromised Islamic standards of female modesty and had discouraged their daughters from participating. Rather than escalating into an institutional standoff, this concern became the subject of negotiation among the school, the mosque, and a group of mothers. The physical education teacher, Y.L., described the process during a focus group discussion: "We sat together, the imam, some parents, and us teachers, and we talked honestly about what was important to each side. The imam explained the religious principles, we explained the pedagogical requirements for physical movement, and the mothers shared their practical concerns about their daughters being left out of activities. After several meetings, we found a solution: a modified uniform that was both

modest and practical, designed with input from everyone.” The resulting compromise, loose-fitting track pants and a long-sleeved athletic top in school colors, enabled girls’ full participation while respecting religious norms, a solution that no single institution could have designed alone because no single institution possessed all the relevant knowledge and legitimacy. Munyaka et al. (2025) and Stephen et al. (2026), in their influential work on collaborative governance regimes, identify this capacity for principled engagement across difference as a defining feature of effective collaborative arrangements, and the Mamala case demonstrates its operation in the culturally specific domain of gender and education.

Accountability distribution constitutes the fourth mechanism, wherein responsibility for gender-responsive educational outcomes is spread across multiple institutions rather than concentrated in the school alone. This distribution creates a system of mutual observation and expectation that transforms institutional commitment to girls’ education into a matter of public standing. During a village meeting where annual educational outcomes were being reviewed, the researcher observed how each institutional head was expected to report on their contributions to girls’ educational participation and to account for any shortcomings. The village head reported on budget allocations and infrastructure improvements, the customary chief reported on the number of families counseled against early marriage and the cultural recognition given to families supporting daughters’ education, and the imam reported on religious education programs and scholarship distributions. A parent attending the meeting, F.R., commented afterward that this public accounting created pressure on each institution to demonstrate its commitment tangibly: “If the adat council did nothing for girls’ education this year, everyone would see it and ask questions. If the mosque distributed scholarships only to boys, the community would notice. The three pillars must each show that they are contributing, or they lose face before the whole negeri.” This mechanism of distributed accountability ensures that gender-responsive education remains a visible priority across the institutional landscape rather than being siloed within the education sector, where it might be marginalized by competing demands and limited capacity.

The fifth mechanism, adaptive learning, captures the capacity of this institutional configuration to learn from experience, adjust practices in response to changing circumstances, and incorporate new ideas without abandoning traditional authority structures. The research documented how the community had gradually integrated gender equality discourse from external sources, including government programs, non-governmental organization initiatives, and returning migrants, into its indigenous governance framework through a process of selective adaptation rather than wholesale adoption. The kepala adat M.S. described this learning process with characteristic pragmatism: “We do not reject new ideas simply because they come from outside, but we also do not accept them without testing them against our own experience and values. When we first heard about gender equality from government trainers, some elders were suspicious. But over time, as we saw that supporting girls’ education brought concrete benefits to our community, our daughters becoming teachers, nurses, civil servants who contribute to the negeri, we adapted our understanding. Now we speak about equality in our own language, using

our own concepts, and it has become part of how we think about education.” This adaptive learning mechanism operates through the regular communication channels and deliberative forums that characterize the hybrid governance configuration, enabling the community to process external influences through internal cultural frameworks and to adjust institutional practices incrementally in response to observed outcomes. Al-Worafi (2024) and Gupta (2025) identify adaptive capacity as a crucial feature of collaborative governance in turbulent environments, and the Mamala case demonstrates how indigenous institutions can maintain such capacity precisely because their authority is embedded in living relationships rather than frozen in formal procedures. Together, these five mechanisms, legitimacy building, resource pooling, normative negotiation, accountability distribution, and adaptive learning, constitute the operational core of the Hybrid Indigenous Educational Governance model, explaining how institutional interaction translates into concrete conditions that support girls’ educational participation and achievement.

Persistent Constraints: Patriarchal Norms, Unequal Access, and Limited Family Engagement

While the hybrid institutional configuration of Negeri Mamala has demonstrably produced conditions that support girls’ educational participation, a complete analysis demands honest engagement with the constraints that persist despite these achievements. To present only the enabling dimensions of the governance model would be to produce what critical feminist scholars have termed a sanitized narrative that obscures the ongoing struggles and structural inequalities that continue to shape young women’s educational experiences. The research identified patriarchal gender norms as a persistent structural constraint operating simultaneously at multiple levels of community life, creating what can be understood as a layered system of limitation that no single institutional intervention can fully address. At the household level, the division of domestic labor continues to assign daughters primary responsibility for cooking, cleaning, caring for younger siblings, and assisting with household economic activities. During a focus group discussion with young women held in the school library after classes had concluded for the day, a secondary student identified as D.R. described her daily routine with a mixture of resignation and frustration that resonated visibly with her peers. “I wake at four in the morning to help my mother prepare breakfast and clean the house before school,” she explained, her voice quiet but steady. “After school, I cannot stay for extra lessons or activities because I must return home to help with the afternoon meal and look after my younger siblings while my parents work in the garden. By the time I can open my books to study, I am already tired, and sometimes I fall asleep before finishing my homework. My brother does not have these responsibilities; he can stay at school as long as he wants and study whenever he wishes.” This unequal distribution of domestic labor, reported by nearly all female student informants, means that even when institutional mechanisms succeed in getting girls into classrooms, their capacity to fully engage with and benefit from educational opportunities remains constrained by demands that operate beyond the reach of school policies or village regulations. Stephen et al. (2026) and

Vida Sapabil (2026), in her recent feminist institutionalist analysis of how patriarchal norms persist within and through governance arrangements, argues that formal institutional changes often coexist with informal norms that continue to structure daily life in gendered ways, creating what she terms “layered inequalities” that require sustained attention to informal as well as formal institutional domains.

At the community level, patriarchal norms manifest in persistent expectations that position marriage and motherhood as the ultimate markers of female achievement, casting extended education for young women as potentially threatening to the established gender order. The kepala adat M.S., despite his genuine commitment to supporting girls’ schooling, acknowledged during an interview the tension between educational aspirations and traditional expectations regarding women’s life trajectories. “We support our daughters to finish school, yes, but the community still expects that they will marry, have children, and maintain their households. A woman who pursues higher education for too long, who delays marriage past a certain age, begins to attract comment. People wonder what is wrong, why she has not found a husband, whether she is placing her own ambitions above her duty to form a family. These attitudes do not change quickly, even when leaders speak in favor of education.” This tension was poignantly illustrated in the case of a young woman, M.L., who had completed a university degree in Ambon and hoped to pursue a career in public health. During her interview, conducted in her family home as her mother served tea and fried bananas, she described the pressure she faced to marry and the sense that her educational achievements, while celebrated publicly, were privately considered secondary to her reproductive role. “My parents are proud that I graduated, but my mother asks me every week whether I have met someone, whether I am thinking about settling down. It is as if my degree is a nice decoration, but my real purpose is still to become a wife and mother. Sometimes I feel guilty for wanting more, for wanting to use my education before I become someone’s wife.” This testimony reveals how patriarchal norms operate not only through overt prohibition but through the subtle shaping of aspirations, the production of guilt and anxiety, and the construction of educational achievement as supplementary rather than central to female identity. Even within an institutional configuration that has made genuine strides in supporting girls’ access to schooling, these deeper normative structures remain largely intact, limiting the transformative potential of educational participation.

The third domain in which patriarchal norms operate is within the school itself, where institutional practices reproduce gendered assumptions about appropriate subjects, behaviors, and aspirations for female students. Classroom observations conducted during the fieldwork revealed patterns that were subtle enough to escape formal policy attention yet significant enough to shape girls’ educational trajectories. Teachers, both male and female, more frequently directed challenging questions in mathematics and science to male students while offering female students encouragement in language and arts subjects. Career guidance sessions emphasized teaching and nursing as suitable professions for young women while presenting engineering, technology, and business leadership as paths more appropriate for their male peers.

The school principal N.T., when these patterns were discussed during a reflective interview, acknowledged them with evident discomfort. “I had not noticed this consciously before you mentioned it,” she said, pausing to collect her thoughts, “but now that I reflect, I can see it. We reproduce what we have learned ourselves, what our society has taught us about what girls and boys can do and should do. Changing the formal curriculum is one thing; changing the hidden curriculum, the daily messages we send without even realizing it, is something else entirely.” This observation aligns with Hariri & Wahyuni (2025) and Urbee et al. (2025) argument that patriarchal norms are embedded not only in formal rules but in the informal practices and unspoken assumptions that constitute institutional culture, making them particularly resistant to change through policy reform alone.

A second major constraint concerns unequal access to entrepreneurship education and the economic opportunities that would translate educational attainment into genuine empowerment. While the reinterpretation of badraheng has successfully mobilized community resources to support girls’ school attendance, the content of that education has not undergone parallel transformation. Female students who participated in focus group discussions consistently reported limited exposure to entrepreneurship training, financial literacy education, or market-relevant skills development. A graduating student, S.W., expressed this concern during her interview with a clarity that suggested long reflection on the subject. “I have studied mathematics and science and Indonesian and English, and I am grateful for all of this knowledge. But when I look at my community, I see that the women who are economically independent are those who understand business, who know how to access markets, who can manage money and make it grow. My schooling has given me very little of this. I can pass exams, but can I start a business? Can I understand a contract? Can I compete in the economy that exists outside this negeri? Honestly, I do not feel prepared.” This gap between educational access and educational relevance has particular significance for gender-responsive outcomes because economic dependence has been consistently identified in the literature as a key factor constraining women’s agency and decision-making power within households and communities (Kazanskaia, 2025; Ulfa et al., 2026). The hybrid governance configuration, for all its strengths in mobilizing resources and building legitimacy for girls’ education, has limited capacity to influence curriculum content, which remains determined by national education authorities far removed from the community context. This finding points to an important structural limitation of community-based governance models: they can shape the conditions under which education occurs but have considerably less influence over what education actually consists of once students enter the classroom.

The third constraint concerns family engagement, which the research found to be unevenly distributed and persistently gendered in ways that reproduce rather than challenge existing inequalities. While some families have become active participants in the educational governance configuration, attending meetings, contributing to the education fund, monitoring their daughters’ progress, others remain peripheral, their limited engagement rooted in

economic pressures, time constraints, and educational backgrounds that leave them feeling ill-equipped to participate meaningfully in school-related discussions. Fathers, in particular, were notably absent from educational activities observed during the fieldwork. Parent-teacher meetings were attended almost exclusively by mothers, a pattern that the teachers confirmed was consistent and long-standing. A father, L.M., who was one of the few male parents to participate in a focus group discussion, explained his peers' absence with unusual candor. "Many men here still believe that children's education is the mother's responsibility. We work, we provide money, and we think that is enough. The details of what children learn, how they are doing, what support they need, these are considered women's matters. I only began attending school meetings because my wife insisted, and I can see now how wrong our traditional thinking has been, but changing the mindset of the whole community is difficult." Mothers, for their part, described their engagement as constrained by time poverty resulting from their dual responsibilities for household labor and income-generating activities, as well as by limited decision-making authority within households where major educational decisions, including whether a daughter would continue to higher levels of schooling, ultimately required male approval. These findings suggest that the hybrid governance model's effectiveness in producing gender-responsive outcomes is fundamentally limited by the persistence of patriarchal family structures that it can influence but not unilaterally transform. The constraints described in this section are not external obstacles that can be removed through institutional refinement; they are internal tensions woven into the fabric of the community governance configuration itself, reflecting the broader patriarchal structures within which even the most progressive indigenous institutions necessarily operate. Acknowledging these constraints is not to diminish the genuine achievements documented in earlier sections but to insist that the Hybrid Indigenous Educational Governance model must be understood as a site of ongoing struggle rather than a achieved solution, a framework within which gender-responsive outcomes are continuously negotiated against the persistent resistance of patriarchal norms.

The Hybrid Indigenous Educational Governance Model: Theoretical Contribution and Extension

The empirical findings presented in the preceding sections converge to support the formal articulation of what this study terms the Hybrid Indigenous Educational Governance model, a conceptual framework that explains how gender-responsive education emerges through the dynamic interaction of customary institutions, local government, religious organizations, families, schools, and indigenous cultural values operating as an integrated governance system. This model is not merely a descriptive summary of practices observed in Negeri Mamala but represents a theoretical contribution that extends and challenges existing scholarship across multiple domains. At its core, the model comprises three interdependent dimensions that must be understood in relation to one another rather than as separate components. The first dimension, institutional configuration, maps the specific constellation of actors involved in educational governance and the relational dynamics through which they interact. What

distinguishes this from conventional accounts of educational governance is the recognition that effective configurations include not only formal state institutions but also customary and religious authorities whose legitimacy derives from sources other than statutory law. The Three-Stone system documented in Mamala exemplifies a particular configuration, but the analytical point is broader: gender-responsive outcomes depend on the qualities of interaction among institutional actors, mutual recognition, regular communication, shared yet differentiated commitments, rather than simply on the presence or absence of any particular institutional type. The second dimension, cultural re-mediation, captures the processes through which traditional values are actively reworked as resources for gender-transformative practice. Drawing on and extending Chrispo's (2026) conceptualization, the model shows that cultural values like badraheng are not static constraints that communities must overcome but dynamic resources that can be deliberately reconfigured to address contemporary challenges including girls' educational participation. This dimension challenges the deficit framing of indigenous culture that has characterized much gender and education scholarship while avoiding the equally problematic romanticization of tradition as inherently egalitarian. The third dimension, governance mechanisms, specifies the concrete processes, legitimacy building, resource pooling, normative negotiation, accountability distribution, and adaptive learning, through which institutional interaction translates into conditions that support gender-responsive educational outcomes. These mechanisms provide analytical traction for understanding not merely that hybrid governance can work but how it works, offering conceptual tools that can be applied and tested in other contexts.

Positioning this model within broader theoretical conversations reveals its contributions to at least three distinct bodies of scholarship. First, and most centrally, the model extends existing gender-responsive education theory, which has predominantly focused on state policy frameworks, school leadership practices, and formal curricular reform as the primary levers of change. Seminal work in this tradition, from Noer et al. (2025) analysis of globalization and gender in education to Luthuli & Reddy (2026) sophisticated theorization of global justice and educational capability, has generated invaluable insights into how formal educational systems can be reformed to advance gender equality. Yet this body of work operates with an implicit institutional imaginary in which the state, the ministry, and the school constitute the natural and primary sites of intervention. What the Hybrid Indigenous Educational Governance model demonstrates is that gender-responsive outcomes are also produced, and in some contexts may be primarily produced, through community-based institutional configurations that operate according to logics distinct from formal educational governance. This is not to suggest that state institutions are irrelevant but to argue that they must be understood as embedded within broader institutional ecologies that include customary, religious, and community-based authorities whose influence on gendered educational processes may equal or exceed that of formal state actors. The kepala adat M.S. captured this reality during a reflective moment in his interview when he observed, "The government can build schools and send teachers and make

policies, but whether our daughters actually attend those schools and succeed in them depends on decisions made in this negeri, through our own institutions and according to our own values. The state provides the hardware of education; the community provides the software that makes it run.” This insight, grounded in the lived experience of educational governance in an indigenous island community, challenges the state-centrism of much existing gender and education theory and opens analytical space for recognizing the multiplicity of institutional sites through which gender-responsive outcomes are negotiated and produced.

Second, the model contributes to the broader hybrid governance literature by demonstrating the applicability and distinctive features of hybrid institutional analysis in the educational domain. Hybrid governance, as theorized by scholars working primarily in natural resource management, public administration, and health governance, refers to situations where state and non-state authorities coexist, interact, and produce governance outcomes that neither could achieve independently (Agbolosoo et al., 2026; Kritika & Pandey, 2026). The educational domain, however, has remained relatively marginal within this literature, perhaps because education has been so thoroughly associated with state provision in the modern institutional imagination. The Mamala case demonstrates that education represents a particularly rich site for hybrid governance analysis precisely because it sits at the intersection of formal state authority, customary knowledge systems, religious values, and family aspirations. The institutional interactions documented in this study, the village head consulting the customary chief about scholarship allocations, the imam incorporating educational messages into Friday sermons, the school principal convening the three pillars to address early marriage cases, reveal hybrid governance dynamics that are both consistent with theoretical expectations developed in other domains and distinctive to the educational context. The cultural re-mediation dimension of the model, in particular, represents an extension of hybrid governance theory by showing how cultural values function not merely as background context but as active resources that communities deliberately reshape to support governance objectives. This finding suggests that hybrid governance in education may be characterized by more intensive cultural dynamics than in domains like natural resource management, where technical considerations often dominate, and points toward a research agenda that takes culture seriously as a constitutive element of institutional interaction rather than an external variable.

Third, the model contributes to indigenous education scholarship by shifting analytical attention from cultural preservation to institutional transformation. Foundational work in indigenous education, from Mehwish et al. (2026) decolonizing methodologies to Immanuel & Gontes's (2026) articulation of indigenous knowledge systems, has focused predominantly on the epistemic dimensions of education, whose knowledge counts, how it is transmitted, and how colonial education systems have suppressed indigenous ways of knowing. This scholarship has been politically vital and intellectually generative, but its emphasis on knowledge and culture has left the institutional and governance dimensions of indigenous education relatively underexplored. The Hybrid Indigenous Educational Governance model demonstrates that

indigenous institutions are not only repositories of cultural knowledge that deserve preservation but also active governance mechanisms capable of adapting and transforming to address contemporary challenges including gender inequality. The kepala adat M.S. expressed this perspective with characteristic clarity when he stated, “Some outsiders think adat is only about the past, about ceremonies and old stories. But adat is also about how we organize our collective life today, how we make decisions, how we solve problems. Supporting girls’ education is not a departure from adat; it is adat doing what it has always done, helping the community adapt and survive in changing times.” This reframing of indigenous institutions as dynamic governance actors rather than static cultural repositories opens new possibilities for both scholarship and practice, suggesting that strengthening indigenous education may require attention to institutional capacity and governance processes alongside the more commonly emphasized dimensions of curriculum content and language of instruction.

The question of transferability must be addressed with appropriate caution and precision. The specific institutional configuration of the Three-Stone system, involving village government, customary council, and religious leadership as distinct yet interdependent pillars, is particular to certain Indonesian communities, particularly in Maluku and parts of Nusa Tenggara, and cannot be mechanically replicated elsewhere. To claim universal applicability for this specific arrangement would be to commit the error of naïve generalization against which case study methodologists have long warned. However, the underlying dynamics that the model identifies, the importance of institutional interaction qualities, the capacity for cultural re-mediation, and the operation of specific governance mechanisms, may well be relevant to other contexts where formal state institutions coexist and interact with customary, religious, and community-based authorities in shaping educational processes and outcomes. Communities across the Global South, from the Andes to the Sahel to the Pacific Islands, feature similar configurations of institutional hybridity in education, even where the specific institutional actors and cultural resources differ. The model’s analytical dimensions provide conceptual tools that can be applied and adapted in such contexts, not as a template to be imposed but as a framework to guide context-sensitive inquiry into how local institutional configurations produce particular gender outcomes in education. The boundary conditions of the model are equally important to specify: it is most likely to be relevant in contexts where indigenous or customary institutions retain meaningful authority alongside state structures, where community governance mechanisms function with some degree of effectiveness, and where gender norms are contested rather than uniformly oppressive or uniformly egalitarian. In contexts where state institutions are overwhelmingly dominant, where indigenous governance has been thoroughly disrupted by colonialism and modernization, or where gender norms are so rigidly patriarchal that no institutional space exists for negotiation, the model’s applicability would be limited. These boundary conditions are not weaknesses of the model but specifications that enhance its analytical precision and practical utility.

Ultimately, the Hybrid Indigenous Educational Governance model represents an invitation to reimagine what gender-responsive education can look like and where it can be found. For too long, the search for gender equality in education has been conducted primarily within the corridors of ministries, the offices of international organizations, and the classrooms of formal schools. Without diminishing the importance of these sites, this study suggests that equally significant processes of gender transformation may be unfolding in the village councils, customary deliberations, religious gatherings, and community ceremonies where indigenous institutions continue to shape collective life. The young women of Negeri Mamala, supported by a governance configuration that their ancestors could not have imagined yet that draws on cultural resources their ancestors bequeathed, are living testimony to the possibility that gender-responsive education can be built not only through the implementation of external policy frameworks but through the creative reworking of internal cultural and institutional resources. The theoretical model offered here is an attempt to honor that possibility and to render it analytically visible for scholars and practitioners concerned with the unfinished project of educational justice.

CONCLUSION

This study set out to develop a conceptual understanding of how hybrid indigenous institutions shape gender-responsive education in island communities, moving beyond the dominant analytical frameworks that have centered state policies and formal educational institutions as the primary sites of gender transformation. The findings from Negeri Mamala demonstrate that gender-responsive education in this indigenous island community emerges not through the linear implementation of external policy mandates but through a distinctive configuration of institutional actors, village government, customary council, and religious leadership, whose ongoing interaction generates the legitimacy, resources, and normative frameworks necessary for supporting girls' educational participation. The Three-Stone Indigenous Institutions function as a collaborative governance mechanism that transforms educational decision-making from a private family matter into a community-sanctioned endeavor, while the cultural value of badraheng has been actively re-mediated from a general norm of mutual assistance into a specific resource for collective sponsorship of girls' schooling. These processes operate through five identifiable mechanisms, legitimacy building, resource pooling, normative negotiation, accountability distribution, and adaptive learning, that together constitute the operational core of what this study terms the Hybrid Indigenous Educational Governance model. At the same time, the research has shown that this model operates within and against persistent patriarchal constraints, including unequal domestic labor distributions, continuing expectations that position marriage as women's primary achievement, gendered practices within schools, and uneven family engagement that limit the transformative potential of educational participation. The novelty of this work lies in its demonstration that gender-

responsive education can be produced through community-based institutional configurations operating according to logics distinct from formal educational governance, thereby extending gender-responsive education theory beyond its implicit state-centrism while contributing to hybrid governance scholarship by revealing the distinctive cultural dynamics that characterize institutional interaction in the educational domain. Rather than positioning indigenous institutions as either obstacles to be overcome or relics to be preserved, the Hybrid Indigenous Educational Governance model recognizes them as living governance mechanisms capable of adaptation and transformation, offering conceptual tools that may prove relevant for understanding and advancing gender-responsive education in other contexts where state and community authorities coexist in shaping educational processes and outcomes.

ETHICAL STATEMENT AND DISCLOSURE

This study was conducted in accordance with established ethical principles, including informed consent, protection of informants' confidentiality, and respect for local cultural values. Special consideration was given to participants from vulnerable groups to ensure their safety, comfort, and equal rights to participate. No external funding was received, and the authors declare no conflict of interest. All data and information presented were collected through valid research methods and have been verified to ensure their accuracy and reliability. The use of artificial intelligence (AI) was limited to technical assistance for writing and language editing, without influencing the scientific substance of the work. The authors express their gratitude to the informants for their valuable insights, and to the anonymous reviewers for their constructive feedback on an earlier version of this manuscript. The authors take full responsibility for the content and conclusions of this article.

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