

EMPOWERING MARGINALIZED INDIGENOUS MUSLIM COMMUNITIES THROUGH ISLAMIC EDUCATION

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ABSTRACT

Educational marginalization remains a pressing issue affecting indigenous Muslim communities in Indonesia, particularly in remote and socioeconomically disadvantaged areas. This study investigates the contributions and challenges of the Emeyodere Islamic Educational Institution in supporting the Kokoda Victory Muslim community in Sorong City, West Papua. Using a qualitative research design, the study draws on field observations and in-depth interviews to examine how the institution fosters educational inclusion among the marginalized Kokoda Tribe. Findings reveal that the institution plays a pivotal role in transforming educational outcomes through a core ethos grounded in mutual encouragement, care, respect, and motivation. Emeyodere has significantly expanded access to education for Kokoda children, enabling some to pursue higher education and secure professional careers, including civil service. The institution also serves as a cultural and religious hub, reinforcing Islamic identity in the midst of social exclusion. Despite its success, the institution grapples with numerous challenges, such as limited parental awareness of Islamic education, inadequate infrastructure, and a shortage of trained educators. The study implies that community-based Islamic education, when rooted in strong local leadership and social capital, can serve as a powerful tool for empowering marginalized groups and advancing educational equity in Indonesia's eastern peripheries.

Keywords: Community-Based Schooling, Educational Marginalization, Indigenous Muslim Communities, Muslim Kokoda Victory, Social Capital

INTRODUCTION

Educational marginalization is a persistent global issue that continues to affect underrepresented communities across various regions. From the Global South to developed nations, disparities in access to quality education are often shaped by socio-political exclusion, economic hardship, and systemic neglect. In Latin America, for example, indigenous children in Peru struggle with limited access to inclusive education due to linguistic barriers and the lack of effective bilingual education policies (Cueto et al., 2023; Amiri, 2023). In Afghanistan, minority groups such as the Hazaras, along with women, experience long-standing discrimination rooted in cultural exclusion and conflict, restricting their educational opportunities (Gharji, 2023; Fontana, 2018). Similarly, in the United States, students from underrepresented minority (URM) backgrounds in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) fields often face academic disparities, high dropout rates, and insufficient institutional support (Whitcomb & Singh, 2020; Jehangir et al., 2023). These cases reveal that educational marginalization is a symptom of broader systemic inequalities that require context-sensitive, community-driven responses.

In the Indonesian context, these patterns are also evident among indigenous groups, particularly in remote and borderland regions such as Southwest Papua. The Kokoda Tribe, an

indigenous Muslim community residing in South Sorong and Sorong City, is among the groups most affected by exclusion from formal education systems. Historically, Islam entered the Kokoda region through two primary routes in the 16th century: political expansion by the Tidore Sultanate under Sultan Syekh Alam Syah and sustained maritime trade with Muslim merchants from Maluku and Sulawesi (Wekke & Sari, 2012). These interactions laid the groundwork for religious and cultural transformation among the Kokoda, who gradually adopted Islam. Despite this historical integration, contemporary Kokoda communities—especially those living in urban peripheries like Kokoda Victory—continue to face marginalization in the form of economic insecurity, limited access to public services, and cultural stigmatization.

The challenges facing Kokoda Muslims are multifaceted. Many members of the community work in informal, low-paying sectors such as stone breaking, mangrove harvesting, fishing, and day labour (Ahriani et al., 2023; Sappe, 2022; Wahid, 2023). These occupations are not only precarious but are often subject to environmental and social criticism, further reinforcing stereotypes and structural discrimination. This cycle of exclusion perpetuates educational disadvantage, as many Kokoda children are unable to access or remain in public schools due to financial constraints, geographic isolation, and social barriers. Educational marginalization, in this case, intersects with broader issues of cultural invisibility and systemic neglect, compounding the vulnerability of this indigenous Muslim population.

In response to these systemic challenges, the Emeyodere Islamic Education Institution was established by local leader Ismail Agia. The term Emeyodere, meaning “Come Soon” in the Kokoda language, reflects the institution’s call to progress through education. Emeyodere offers a full spectrum of Islamic and formal education—from Madrasah Ibtidaiyah to Madrasah Aliyah, vocational schools, and orphanage services—targeting children who are excluded from public education. The institution combines Indonesia’s national curriculum with Islamic teachings and contextual learning methods. The Emeyodere institution also serves as a site for strengthening social capital within the Kokoda community. However, the institution continues to face major obstacles in the form of insufficient funding, limited infrastructure, and difficulties obtaining government accreditation. These structural barriers are compounded by negative stereotypes surrounding indigenous Muslims in Papua, which hinder broader recognition and support (Wekke, 2013). The lack of trust and collaboration from external actors, including government agencies and donor organizations, limits the scalability and sustainability of this grassroots educational initiative.

Several studies have acknowledged Emeyodere’s impact on student motivation, community empowerment, and identity formation. Wekke, Ruaidah, and Wardi (2018) highlight how the institution’s family-like environment, teacher involvement, and resource-sharing model contribute to student success. Sukman et al. (2022) emphasize the visionary leadership of Ismail Agia, who has managed to integrate Islamic values with indigenous cultural wisdom while advocating for community independence and social recognition. Wekke (2023) further situates Emeyodere as a space for reinforcing Islamic identity and social solidarity in a politically marginalized region. However, much of the existing literature remains localized and descriptive. There is a notable gap in examining Emeyodere through broader theoretical frameworks—such as Pierre Bourdieu’s (1986) concept of social capital and expanded by Field’s (2011) theory—that connect this grassroots initiative to global discourses on educational justice. This study fills that gap by exploring how indigenous social capital, faith-based values, and localized leadership converge to challenge educational exclusion among marginalized Muslim communities in Eastern Indonesia. It contributes to international debates on equity and inclusion by offering a grounded example of how culturally embedded Islamic education can serve as a vehicle for social transformation.

METHOD

This study employed a qualitative ethnographic approach to explore the lived experiences of the Kokoda Tribe and the role of the Emeyodere Islamic Education institution in promoting educational inclusion. Ethnographic research, particularly participant observation and in-depth interviews conducted within natural contexts, was chosen to capture the social and cultural dynamics of marginalized communities (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007; Fetterman, 2010). The researcher engaged in prolonged fieldwork to observe daily activities, document community interactions, and understand the social values underpinning the Kokoda community's educational practices. Data were collected through immersive engagement in both formal and informal settings, allowing the researcher to identify key actors, including local leaders and educators, and to gain insights into the processes of community-driven educational change (Emerson et al., 2011; DeWalt & DeWalt, 2010).

The analysis was guided by Pierre Bourdieu's theory of social capital, which conceptualizes social capital as a resource embedded in durable networks of mutual recognition and trust (Bourdieu, 1986). This theoretical lens enabled the study to examine how reciprocal relationships, collective norms, and solidarity within the Kokoda community serve as mechanisms for social resilience and educational transformation. Drawing from Field's (2011) elaboration, the research focused on how trust-based cooperation among community members—manifested through the Emeyodere Institute—facilitates access to education and support services otherwise inaccessible to Kokoda children. The study also explored the leadership of Ismail Agia, whose ability to mobilize community solidarity through the local value of emeyodere (“let's go soon”) exemplifies the strategic use of social capital. Despite the strong internal networks, the limited connection to external institutions, particularly governmental bodies, highlights the challenges of sustaining educational development without broader systemic integration.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Historical Context of Islam in Sorong

The interviews with religious teachers in Sorong and West Papua reveal that the spread of Islam in the region occurred through two primary channels: political authority and maritime trade. One teacher stated, “Islam came to this land not by war, but by the arrival of the Tidore Sultanate. The king appointed local chiefs who became Muslims. They helped spread the teachings” (Irawati, Personal Communication, January 2024). This statement aligns with oral traditions and historical narratives that identify Sultan Ibnu Mansur of Tidore as a pivotal figure who expanded Islamic governance by assigning indigenous Muslim leaders to administer newly integrated regions. In addition to political expansion, maritime commerce played a significant role. As one teacher shared, “My grandfather told me that Bugis and Buton traders would dock here, trade, and talk about Islam. People were not forced—they learned slowly and saw the benefits” (Irawati, Personal Communication, January 2024). This account is corroborated by field observations in port areas such as Fakfak and Sorong, where remnants of early Muslim settlements, community mosques, and cultural practices still reflect the historical influence of peaceful Islamic diffusion through trade networks. These observational findings reinforce the interviews by demonstrating how Islamic values were organically integrated into everyday social and economic life, long before formal religious institutions were established.

Beyond the historical narrative of Islam's arrival, respondents consistently identified the Jami Mosque on Doom Island as a vital symbol of early Islamic heritage in Sorong. Built in 1911, the mosque is regarded as the first and most significant Islamic structure in the region. The teacher explained, “*This mosque was built by our ancestors in 1911. It was destroyed during the war,*

but we rebuilt it together. That is our pride” (Wugaje, Personal Communication, December 2023). The teachers emphasized that the mosque continues to serve not only as a place of worship but also as a hub for cultural practices, including the *beduk* drum ritual and sacrificial animal processions during *Eid al-Adha*. These traditions are viewed by the community as expressions of both faith and resilience. The teacher added, *“Even today, this mosque gathers the young and old, from many tribes. It brings us together”* (Wugaje, Personal Communication, December 2023). The mosque’s enduring presence and function underscore its role as a cornerstone of religious unity and collective identity among Papuan Muslims.

The Konoda Victory Muslim Community

Interviews with members of the Kokoda Victory Muslim community reveal a layered narrative of religious transformation, cultural retention, and identity continuity. Community leaders described how their conversion from animist and dynamistic traditions to Islam was a gradual and voluntary process, deeply influenced by historical ties to Islamic networks in Papua (Agia, personal communication, November 2023). This transition did not replace indigenous traditions but instead incorporated them into Islamic practices. One enduring example is *Syawat Tale*, an oral tradition that blends Qur’anic teachings with Kokoda storytelling techniques, passed down by tribal leaders and parents to educate children on religious and moral values (Wugaje, personal communication, December 2023). The community is spatially distributed across several neighbourhoods in Sorong, including Km 7, Km 8, Rufe Km 3, Victory Km 10, and Makbusun SP 3, with Km 8 identified as the tribal and religious heart of the group.

Economically, the community continues to rely on traditional occupations rooted in natural resources, such as fishing and the crafting of *noken*, a culturally symbolic handmade bag. While local empowerment programs have encouraged greater economic independence and civic participation, respondents noted persistent marginalization in the form of unequal access to education, underdeveloped infrastructure, and latent social discrimination (Agia, personal communication, November 2023). Despite these constraints, interviewees described relatively harmonious relations with surrounding communities, particularly during major Islamic celebrations such as *Eid al-Fitr* and *Eid al-Adha*, and during collective civic efforts like *gotong royong* (communal work). These accounts were supported by field observations, which documented active community participation in joint religious festivals and neighbourhood clean-up campaigns, involving both Muslim and non-Muslim residents. However, both interviews and observations revealed that mutual understanding and tolerance across ethnic and religious lines remain fragile and uneven. This highlights the ongoing need for interfaith dialogue and intercultural engagement to promote lasting social cohesion and peaceful coexistence in the pluralistic context of Sorong.

The Emeyodere Islamic Educational Institution

Interviews with Emeyodere stakeholders reveal that the institution was founded in response to the Kokoda Tribe’s limited access to formal education in Sorong City, Southwest Papua. According to Agia (personal communication, November 2023), the name *Emeyodere*—meaning “Come on Soon” in the Kokoda language—symbolizes a call to progress through education and social transformation. The institution began as a small *Madrasah Ibtidaiyah* and gradually expanded to include *Madrasah Tsanawiyah*, *Madrasah Aliyah*, vocational education (*SMK*), an Islamic boarding school (*pesantren*), and an orphanage for underserved children (Rahakbauw, personal communication, February 2024). Emeyodere integrates the national education curriculum with in-depth Islamic studies, including *fiqh*, *aqidah*, and Qur’anic studies,

while also emphasizing moral development through extracurricular activities in arts, sports, and community outreach.

The implementation of instruction at Emeyodere prioritizes participatory and contextualized learning methods tailored to students' lived experiences. As reported by a teacher, *fiqh* lessons are often taught through demonstration-based approaches to help students better internalize Islamic principles (Agia, personal communication, November 2023). Observations at the school confirmed that hands-on and interactive strategies are commonly used in religious and moral education, with students actively participating in role-play and peer-based learning activities. To support student engagement and retention, the institution also provides basic educational resources—including books, uniforms, stationery, and food assistance—ensuring that financial constraints do not hinder attendance. Teachers and religious instructors (*ustaz/ustazah*) serve dual roles as educators and spiritual mentors, reinforcing ethical values alongside academic content. This is complemented by the involvement of volunteers from various professional and educational backgrounds, whose participation in teaching and extracurricular activities fosters a strong culture of shared responsibility and community ownership.

The Emeyodere Foundation plays a vital role in mobilizing resources and sustaining the school's operations (Sriwana, personal communication, December 2023). Observations revealed that Emeyodere is not only a site of formal instruction but also functions as a dynamic community hub. The institution routinely hosts religious gatherings (*pengajian*), commemorative celebrations such as *Maulid Nabi*, *Eid al-Fitr*, and *Eid al-Adha*, as well as neighbourhood service projects that involve parents, students, and local leaders. These programs serve to cultivate both religious identity and communal solidarity, reinforcing Emeyodere's role as a space of social cohesion and cultural continuity (Musdalifah, personal communication, March 2022).

Challenges Faced by Emeyodere Institution

Both interview data and field observations indicate that the Emeyodere Islamic Education Institution continues to face significant challenges in sustaining its educational mission among the indigenous Kokoda Muslim community in Sorong. Observational findings reveal visible limitations in infrastructure, including aging classroom buildings, insufficient learning spaces, and minimal technological facilities. These observations align with the account provided by Agia (personal communication, November 2023), who noted that the institution depends heavily on donations from private individuals and charitable organizations to fund daily operations and basic maintenance. While Emeyodere consistently strives to support students by providing essential materials such as books, uniforms, stationery, and meal assistance, the lack of stable funding continues to hinder efforts to upgrade facilities and meet national education standards. Despite these constraints, the institution remains committed to providing inclusive and values-based education, though its growth is clearly constrained by resource scarcity and limited external support.

Another persistent obstacle involves the deep structural inequality in educational access faced by the Kokoda community. Agia (personal communication, November 2023) noted that many Kokoda children, especially those from geographically remote and economically disadvantaged households, have historically been excluded from formal education. While Emeyodere seeks to bridge this gap, the school faces acute shortages of qualified teachers, inadequate classroom facilities, and minimal support from local and national education authorities. Irawati (personal communication, January 2024) further highlighted that the institution encounters bureaucratic hurdles, such as accreditation delays and a lack of recognition for its culturally adapted curriculum. These institutional barriers are compounded

by lingering stereotypes and social discrimination against indigenous Muslim communities in Papua, which undermine efforts to gain broader legitimacy and sustainable state support.

Emeyodere Islamic Education Institution: A Model of Indigenous Muslim Empowerment through Education

The Emeyodere Islamic Education Institution emerged as a grassroots response to the educational needs of the indigenous Kokoda Muslim community in Sorong City. According to Agia (personal communication, November 2023), the name *Emeyodere*, which means “Come Soon” in the Kokoda language, reflects a communal call toward progress through education. Initially operating as a modest *Madrasah Ibtidaiyah*, the institution has expanded into a comprehensive educational complex that now includes *Madrasah Tsanawiyah* (junior high), *Madrasah Aliyah* (senior high), vocational training (*SMK*), an Islamic boarding school, and an orphanage for disadvantaged children. As Wugaje (personal communication, December 2023) noted, this growth represents a strategic attempt to provide a holistic education model that integrates national curricula with Islamic teachings while preserving the cultural identity of the Kokoda community.

The educational approach at Emeyodere is deeply contextual and participatory, designed to align with the everyday realities of Kokoda students. Instruction in *fiqh*, as observed in classroom settings, is conducted through hands-on demonstrations and interactive learning, allowing students to internalize Islamic principles through practical application. These observations are consistent with interview insights, which emphasize the importance of experiential methods in fostering comprehension and engagement. In addition to academic instruction, students actively participate in Qur’an memorization, religious discussions, and community service activities, such as neighbourhood clean-ups and assisting during religious events, contributing to their moral development and social responsibility. However, both interviews and field observations reveal that the institution faces ongoing challenges, including limited operational funding, a shortage of qualified educators, and inadequate infrastructure. Emeyodere remains dependent on donations from individuals and charitable organizations, as formal government support is minimal. Respondents also noted bureaucratic hurdles, such as delays in curriculum accreditation and a lack of institutional recognition for culturally grounded content (Agia, personal communication, November 2023; Wugaje, personal communication, December 2023).

Community Impact and Social Transformation

Despite ongoing operational and infrastructural challenges, the Emeyodere Islamic Education Institution has become a catalyst for social transformation within the Kokoda Muslim community. Stakeholders report that Emeyodere’s culturally attuned curriculum—combining national academic standards with faith-based values—has markedly increased student engagement and motivation. “Our children now wake up eager to learn,” noted one community leader (Agia, personal communication, November 2023). Vocational training, Qur’an memorization, and community service are delivered in a family-style environment where moral and spiritual development is integrated into every lesson (Sriwana, personal communication, December 2023).

Emeyodere’s impact extends well beyond classroom walls. Interviewees highlight significant growth in youth and women’s participation in religious activities, vocational programs, and local governance forums. “Women who were once silent are now teaching Qur’an classes and leading social projects,” shared another informant (Agia, personal communication, November 2023). The institution also regularly hosts interfaith dialogues and communal celebrations—bringing together Muslim, Christian, and indigenous faith leaders—

which participants credit with building mutual understanding and social cohesion (Wugaje, personal communication, December 2023).

Policy Implications and Recommendations

Field observations and interview data reveal that the Emeyodere Islamic Education Institution continues to function through the strong support of civil society networks and community leadership, particularly in its mission to serve the educational needs of marginalized indigenous Muslims in Sorong, West Papua. Observational evidence shows that community figures, including local religious leaders and parent volunteers, are actively involved in both the administration and daily operations of the institution, from organizing learning activities to mobilizing resources. This aligns with interview responses from community members who emphasized that while Emeyodere has made significant strides in reaching underserved children—especially from the Kokoda Tribe—its sustainability remains fragile due to limited government funding. Agia (personal communication, November 2023) noted that external partnerships, particularly with NGOs, have been instrumental in supporting the school's development. Programs such as KOMPAK were mentioned as successful models that could be adapted to assist institutions like Emeyodere, particularly in strengthening infrastructure, enhancing culturally responsive curricula, and expanding access to educational materials.

Based on a historical and cultural standpoint, interviewees emphasized the continuity between early peaceful Islamic dissemination and current religious education models. Islam entered the Sorong region not through coercion, but through the influence of the Tidore Sultanate and Muslim trade networks that fostered gradual cultural and religious assimilation. The Jami Mosque on Doom Island, first built in 1911, was frequently referenced by respondents as a symbol of Islamic resilience and social cohesion (Wugaje, personal communication, December 2023). Similarly, traditions such as *Syawat Tale*, where religious knowledge is passed orally by parents and tribal elders, reflect how education in the Konoda Victory community is both spiritually and culturally embedded (Agia, personal communication, November 2023).

This discussion applies social capital theory as articulated by Bourdieu (1986) and Field (2011) to interpret how Emeyodere Islamic Education Institution mobilizes internal networks, religious identity, and cultural values to promote resilience and educational access among marginalized indigenous Muslims. The institution demonstrates how localized Islamic education can foster empowerment while still facing structural barriers requiring broader institutional support. Historical findings align with those of Handoko and Mansyur (2018), who confirm that Islam in Sorong spread via political influence from the Tidore Sultanate and peaceful maritime trade rather than coercion. Oral histories about Sultan Ibnu Mansur and the integration of Islam through appointed local leaders reflect a culturally adaptive process (Mahmud, 2012). The enduring role of the Jami Mosque as both a religious and cultural site reinforces Wekke's (2015) view of Islamic spaces as centres of resilience and heritage preservation. These findings, supported by Miranti et al. (2018) and Sarrazin et al. (2022), emphasize how community-led education and faith institutions sustain Islamic identity through bonding capital and indigenous agency in a historically plural and often marginalized context.

The findings of the Konoda Victory Muslim community reinforce the view that Islamization among indigenous Papuan communities is both a spiritual journey and a cultural adaptation process, as previously noted by Saleh (2017). The continued use of *Syawat Tale* exemplifies how Islamic education is locally contextualized, blending doctrinal instruction with traditional knowledge systems. The Kokoda community's reliance on cultural livelihoods such

as noken production mirrors broader trends in indigenous resilience through economic self-sufficiency. However, the persistence of marginalization—despite participation in public religious and civic life—indicates that formal inclusion remains limited by structural inequalities. These insights support the argument that community empowerment through Islamic education must be accompanied by inclusive state policies and sustained intercultural engagement to promote both equity and social cohesion in plural urban contexts like Sorong (Widiyanto et al., 2024).

The findings on Emeyodere Islamic Educational institution reflect the central role of social capital in sustaining Emeyodere as a grassroots educational institution. In Bourdieu's (1986) terms, Emeyodere exemplifies the mobilization of “bonding capital,” where dense social ties within the Kokoda community are leveraged to build educational capacity in the absence of formal state support. Trust-based networks between families, educators, and volunteers create a shared space for religious and educational development, while collective norms and values, such as mutual aid and religious duty, strengthen the institution's internal cohesion. This social embeddedness fosters not only access to education but also a broader sense of cultural pride and collective agency among marginalized indigenous Muslims (Qosyim & Zarkasyi, 2024).

Field (2011) further emphasizes that social capital enables communities to achieve goals that might otherwise be unattainable through individual effort alone. Emeyodere embodies this principle by functioning as both an educational provider and a community development engine. It not only delivers Islamic and secular education but also fosters civic engagement through intergenerational participation in social and religious life. However, while bonding capital has enabled the institution to thrive internally, the limited presence of “bridging capital”—connections to governmental or external institutional networks—remains a constraint to long-term scalability and systemic integration. Strengthening these external links could help legitimize locally-rooted educational models like Emeyodere within national policy frameworks and ensure more sustainable support for indigenous Muslim communities in Papua (Amalia et al., 2025).

Using Bourdieu's (1986) concept of social capital, the challenges faced by Emeyodere can be seen as a result of limited *bridging capital*—the external networks that connect marginalized communities to institutional power structures and formal systems of recognition. While the school benefits from strong internal *bonding capital*—seen in community cohesion, volunteerism, and mutual support—its limited ties to the state and accredited educational bodies restrict its capacity for expansion and institutional legitimacy. As Field (2011) elaborates, social capital is not just about internal solidarity but also about the ability to access external resources and navigate institutional frameworks. Emeyodere's struggle to secure accreditation and infrastructure funding exemplifies how marginalized communities often operate in social silos, without sufficient access to the formal mechanisms that could enable long-term sustainability (Osborne et al., 2025). Thus, while the school exemplifies local resilience and innovation, its continued success will depend on the ability to build stronger alliances with government bodies, donors, and policy-makers who can help translate grassroots potential into systemic inclusion.

The findings highlight Emeyodere as a strong example of bonding social capital, where close internal networks among teachers, religious leaders, students, and the community foster solidarity and shared commitment to education and spirituality (Bourdieu, 1986). This cohesion sustains the institution despite minimal formal support, echoing Field's (2011) argument that community trust and reciprocity strengthen educational resilience in marginalized settings (Alami et al., 2022). However, the institution's limited bridging capital—external connections to state resources, accreditation, and systemic legitimacy—poses

challenges for long-term sustainability. Issues such as infrastructure gaps and curriculum recognition reflect the broader struggle of indigenous-led education to integrate within centralized systems. As Wekke and Ibrahim (2019) observe, leadership figures like Ismail Agia play a vital role in mobilizing community capital, but without state-backed policies responsive to indigenous contexts, these grassroots efforts risk remaining isolated in scope (León-Pérez & Bakhtiari, 2025).

The historical trajectory of Islam in West Papua—marked by peaceful integration through trade and alliances—highlights the enduring value of culturally embedded education. Institutions like Emeyodere continue this legacy by aligning Islamic teachings with indigenous traditions, demonstrating how faith-based education can be both inclusive and empowering (Nicolaidou et al., 2006). Viewed through Bourdieu's concept of social capital, Emeyodere harnesses substantial internal bonding capital through close-knit community relationships that foster trust, shared values, and local leadership. However, as Field (2011) argues, sustainable impact also requires bridging capital—external linkages to formal institutions and networks. While Emeyodere's efforts in interfaith collaboration and vocational training signal steps in this direction, its long-term resilience depends on deeper engagement with policy-makers, accreditation bodies, and broader civil society to support inclusive, community-rooted educational governance in Papua.

The findings on policy implications highlight the relevance of Bourdieu's (1986) concept of social capital in understanding how Islamic education institutions like Emeyodere operate in marginalized settings. The reliance on trust-based relationships within the community, including local leaders, parents, and religious mentors, exemplifies “bonding capital,” which strengthens internal solidarity and moral responsibility (Baek et al., 2014). This internal cohesion has been key to maintaining operations in the absence of consistent governmental support. Field (2011) emphasizes that such shared norms and trust networks are vital for social efficiency, especially in settings where formal infrastructure is limited. Emeyodere's ability to build a value-based education system grounded in indigenous culture reflects this internal capital in action (Huang et al., 2024).

While the Emeyodere Islamic Education Institution demonstrates the transformative potential of community-driven, culturally rooted Islamic education, bridging this internal strength to broader institutional systems remains a challenge. Despite decentralization policies supporting NGO engagement (Jackson, 2018), institutions like Emeyodere face bureaucratic constraints, limited funding, and a lack of accreditation for culturally specific curricula. Successful models such as the Indonesian–Australian KOMPAK program (Satianingsih et al., 2024) illustrate the potential of collaborative governance, while studies by Wendra, Ariani, and Yasmarni (2022) affirm that integrating local culture with Islamic teaching enhances educational outcomes. Policy efforts that recognize customary territories, community leadership, and informal pedagogy—such as those seen in the Konoda Victory community—can serve as models for inclusive education and social integration (Kusumaningrum, 2022; Saleh, 2017; Muhammadiyah, 2019). This study contributes to global discourse on educational equity by showing how social capital, as theorized by Bourdieu and Field, supports educational empowerment for marginalized Muslim groups (Liu, 2024; Berry et al., 2024). Future research should conduct comparative analyses across similar contexts, evaluate long-term impacts on socio-economic mobility, and explore how bridging capital can be expanded through partnerships with state institutions and global education networks.

CONCLUSION

The Emeyodere Islamic Education Institution exemplifies how community-based education rooted in Islamic values and local wisdom can empower marginalized indigenous Muslim communities, such as the Kokoda Tribe in Sorong, West Papua. Through ethnographic research and a social capital framework, this study highlights Emeyodere's vital role in expanding educational access, nurturing cultural identity, and fostering social transformation despite persistent challenges related to funding, infrastructure, and systemic recognition. The institution's integrative curriculum, contextual teaching methods, and community involvement have significantly enhanced student motivation, literacy, and religious awareness. However, limited external support and bureaucratic barriers underline the need for inclusive educational policies and strengthened partnerships with governmental and non-governmental actors. Ultimately, Emeyodere's model illustrates that localized, faith-based education can serve as a powerful vehicle for both individual development and collective resilience, reaffirming the importance of culturally responsive approaches in achieving educational equity for indigenous Muslim populations.

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