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## ISLAMIC GENDER EDUCATION AND WOMEN'S ROLES IN RELIGIOUS TRADITIONS: A CASE STUDY OF THE BAYAN COMMUNITY IN NORTH LOMBOK

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### **ABSTRAK**

Penelitian ini mengkaji pendidikan gender Islam di Desa Adat Bayan, Lombok Utara, sebuah masyarakat yang ditandai oleh kuatnya tradisi keagamaan dan adat. Meskipun ajaran Islam menekankan keadilan dan kesetaraan, kesenjangan gender masih ditemukan dalam berbagai ranah sosial dan keagamaan. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis bagaimana pendidikan gender Islam diimplementasikan serta bagaimana interaksi antara nilai-nilai Islam dan adat lokal membentuk peran perempuan dalam masyarakat Muslim adat. Dengan menggunakan pendekatan studi kasus kualitatif, data dikumpulkan melalui wawancara mendalam, observasi partisipatif, dan analisis dokumen, kemudian dianalisis secara tematik. Temuan penelitian menunjukkan adanya transformasi bertahap dalam peran perempuan, dari partisipasi yang relatif pasif menuju keterlibatan yang lebih aktif dalam pengajian, pendidikan keagamaan informal, dan kegiatan adat. Meskipun lembaga informal menyediakan akses yang lebih setara bagi anak perempuan, kepemimpinan keagamaan formal masih didominasi oleh laki-laki. Dukungan keluarga, tokoh agama, dan pemangku adat memperkuat posisi perempuan, meskipun beberapa praktik tradisional masih memerlukan reinterpretasi kontekstual. Penelitian ini berkontribusi pada keterbatasan kajian mengenai pendidikan gender Islam dalam konteks masyarakat adat dengan menunjukkan bagaimana prinsip-prinsip keagamaan dan tradisi lokal dapat dinegosiasikan secara konstruktif untuk mendorong kesetaraan gender serta mendukung tujuan pembangunan berkelanjutan.

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**Keywords:**

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Islamic Gender Education; Bayan Traditional Community; Women's Roles; Religious Traditions; Gender Equality

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**ABSTRACT**

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This study examines Islamic gender education in the traditional village of Bayan, North Lombok, a community characterized by strong religious and customary traditions. Despite Islamic teachings that emphasize justice and equality, gender disparities persist in various social and religious domains. This research aims to analyze how Islamic gender education is implemented and how the interaction between Islamic values and local customs shapes women's roles within an indigenous Muslim community. Using a qualitative case study approach, data were collected through in-depth interviews, participant observation, and document analysis, and analyzed thematically. The findings reveal a gradual transformation in women's roles from relatively passive participation to more active engagement in religious lectures, informal religious education, and customary activities. While informal institutions provide more equitable access for girls, formal religious leadership remains predominantly male-dominated. Support from families, religious leaders, and customary authorities strengthens women's positions, although certain traditional practices continue to require contextual reinterpretation. This study contributes to the limited scholarship on Islamic gender education in indigenous contexts by demonstrating how religious principles and local traditions can be constructively negotiated to promote gender equality and support sustainable development goals.

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## A. INTRODUCTION

Gender equality issues within Indonesian society have attracted considerable scholarly attention across multiple domains, including education and religious life (Agustin Wulandari, 2023; Nisarohmah & Darmawan, 2022). In this context, gender education aims to cultivate equitable relationships between men and women, particularly in terms of rights, roles, and social responsibilities (Senevirathne, 2024; Susmawati et al., 2023). Conceptually, gender refers to socially and culturally constructed roles that shape the distribution of positions and responsibilities between men and women within society (Iftitah et al., 2023; Nishan Chingiz, 2025). Gender inequality arises when these constructions lead to injustice, particularly toward women, resulting in unequal access to opportunities, participation, and decision-making processes (Leovani et al., 2023; Sidik et al., 2023)

Terminologically, gender is distinct from biological sex, as it is shaped by socio-cultural processes. In the Islamic context, gender education can be understood as a process of instilling values of justice and equality while recognizing the roles and rights of both men and women in various aspects of life (Bado et al., 2018; Baisuni & Malik Najamuddin, 2025)

Islamic teachings fundamentally emphasize principles of justice and equality between men and women, although their implementation in society often encounters structural and cultural constraints. (Sidiq & Erihadiana, 2022). Islam upholds the dignity of women and, in its ideal framework, does not discriminate between men and women (Nisarohmah & Darmawan, 2022). According to Husein Muhammad, achieving gender equality requires re-examining interpretations of religious texts that tend to privilege one gender over another (Eka Prasasti & Dwi Mayasari, 2024). These principles are also supported by various national and international legal frameworks that affirm equal rights and access for women (Amelia, 2024; Khanafi Asnan et al., 2022).

Women's participation in public life is closely linked to development efforts, particularly in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), where gender equality is a key objective (Aura & Mun, 2025; Khairunnisa et al., 2022). Islamic teachings also emphasize the importance of recognizing women as valuable contributors to society, as reflected in the Qur'an:

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِنَّا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ مِنْ ذَكَرٍ وَأُنْثَىٰ وَجَعَلْنَاكُمْ شُعُوبًا وَقَبَائِلَ لِتَعَارَفُوا إِنَّ أَكْرَمَكُمْ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ أَتْقَىٰ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلِيمٌ خَبِيرٌ ﴿١٣﴾

*"O humankind, indeed We have created you from a male and a female, and made you into nations and tribes so that you may know one another. Indeed, the most noble of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous among you. Indeed, Allah is All-Knowing and All-Aware." QS Al-Hujarat:13.*

Despite these normative principles, empirical conditions indicate that gender disparities persist, particularly in leadership and decision-making roles within Muslim communities (Herdianto, 2025; Zahidi, 2023). In many contexts, women continue to face limitations in accessing education, leadership, and religious participation. These disparities are often reinforced by the interaction between religious interpretations and local customary practices, particularly within indigenous communities where tradition strongly shapes social structures.

In this regard, the Indigenous Bayan community in North Lombok presents a significant case for examining how Islamic gender education is understood, negotiated, and practiced within a socio-cultural framework that integrates religion and adat. The community is known for preserving distinctive religious traditions and customary practices that regulate social life, including gender relations. Islamic gender education in this context is closely linked to local institutions such as pesantren, mosques, and family structures, which play a crucial role in shaping community perspectives on gender. (Irham et al., 2024)

From a cultural anthropology perspective, women's roles in customary rituals are essential in preserving and transmitting cultural values across generations (Sri et al., 2024). However, differing perspectives remain regarding women's roles in religious traditions, with some viewing them as forms of subordination, while others interpret them as expressions of cultural strength. These differences indicate that gender roles are not natural, but socially constructed through cultural processes.

Although previous studies have discussed women's roles in Islamic and cultural contexts, they tend to emphasize symbolic roles or structural limitations. However, limited research has explored how Islamic gender education operates dynamically within indigenous communities as a process that shapes women's participation in both religious and social spheres. This gap highlights the need for a context-sensitive analysis that integrates Islamic teachings, local traditions, and gender perspectives.

Based on this background, this study addresses the following research questions:

- (1) How is Islamic gender education implemented in the Indigenous Bayan community?
- (2) How does Islamic gender education influence women's roles in religious traditions?
- (3) How do Islamic teachings and local customary values interact in shaping gender roles?

This study aims to comprehensively examine the dynamics of Islamic gender education within the Indigenous Bayan community, focusing on women's roles in religious traditions and the interaction between Islamic teachings and local customs. By employing a qualitative case study approach, this research is expected to contribute to the development of an inclusive and context-based model of gender education grounded in Islamic values and local wisdom, while strengthening women's roles in social and religious life.

## **B. METHOD**

This study employs a qualitative approach with a case study design, as it is appropriate for achieving the research objective of examining in depth the dynamics of gender education within Islam and women's roles in the religious traditions of the Indigenous Bayan community. Qualitative research is employed to explore the meanings constructed by individuals or groups within a specific cultural context (Abdussamad, 2021). Meanwhile, a case study approach is particularly relevant when research focuses on contemporary phenomena that are embedded in real-life contexts and require an in-depth understanding of the social processes involved (Assyakurrohim et al., 2022; Ilhami et al., 2024)

Koentjaraningrat, as cited in (Arianti et al., 2025) Indigenous communities possess value systems and cultural practices that are inseparable from their religious life; therefore, the study of religious practices must be understood as an integral part of a comprehensive socio-cultural system. This research was conducted in the Indigenous Bayan Village, located in North Lombok Regency, West Nusa Tenggara Province, as it aligns with the objective of gaining an in-depth understanding of Islamic gender education and women's roles within a socio-cultural and religious context.

The selection of informants was conducted through purposive sampling to obtain participants who possess relevant knowledge and experience related to the research focus. In qualitative research, purposive sampling prioritizes information-rich cases rather than the number of participants (Andriani et al., 2025). The criteria for selecting informants included active involvement in religious practices, participation in traditional educational activities, recognized roles within the community, and direct experience in gender-related dynamics within the Bayan indigenous context. The study involved four participants, comprising a female indigenous leader, a local religious figure, an administrator of an informal religious educational institution within the Bayan indigenous community, and the head of a hamlet in the Bayan customary village. The limited number of participants was determined in accordance with the characteristics of qualitative case study research, which emphasizes depth of information rather than the quantity of respondents.

Data were collected through several techniques, namely semi-structured interviews conducted with female community figures, local religious leaders, and practitioners of informal education within the Bayan indigenous setting; observations of religious and customary activities involving women's roles; and documentation in the form of customary records, local religious archives, and documents related to religious activities relevant to the research focus. The combination of these three techniques enabled the researcher to obtain comprehensive data encompassing individual experiences, observed behaviors, and written documents. Employing multiple data collection methods allowed the researcher to capture social phenomena from diverse

perspectives, thereby producing a more holistic and in-depth understanding (Luthfi Virgiawan et al., 2025).

The research instruments consisted of an interview guide and an observation checklist, both of which were developed based on theories of gender justice in Islamic education, drawing on the perspectives of Husein Muhammad and Quraish Shihab. The instruments were designed to elicit information regarding community understandings of gender education, forms of women's participation in religious traditions, and the interaction between Islamic values and customary norms in shaping gender relations. The instruments were validated through expert judgment to ensure content relevance and accuracy and were aligned with indicators derived from the theories of gender justice proposed by Husein Muhammad and Quraish Shihab. Furthermore, the instruments were designed to remain flexible, allowing adaptation to the local customary context without compromising the substantive focus of the research.

The data obtained from the field were analyzed using thematic analysis techniques. The stages of analysis involved data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing (sulung & Muspawi, 2024). following the model proposed by Miles and Huberman (1994), which consists of three main stages: (1) data reduction, referring to the process of selecting, focusing, simplifying, and transforming field data; (2) data display, presented in the form of narratives or matrices to facilitate understanding and interpretation; and (3) conclusion drawing and verification, which involves identifying meanings, patterns, and propositions from the displayed data. In addition, the thematic analysis process was carried out through several stages, including open coding to identify initial concepts from interview transcripts, observation notes, and documentation; axial coding to categorize and relate codes into broader themes; and selective coding to refine and construct core themes related to Islamic gender education and women's roles. The identified themes were continuously reviewed and compared across data sources to ensure consistency and analytical rigor.

To ensure the trustworthiness of the data, triangulation techniques were applied through both source triangulation and methodological triangulation. Source triangulation was conducted by comparing information obtained from different informants, including community leaders, religious figures, and women participants, to identify convergences and divergences in perspectives. Methodological triangulation was carried out by comparing data obtained from interviews, observations, and documentation to validate the findings. Through this process, the researcher was able to cross-check and confirm the consistency of the data, thereby strengthening the validity and reliability of the research findings.

This study adhered to ethical research standards throughout the research process. Prior to data collection, informed consent was obtained from all participants, ensuring their voluntary participation and their right to withdraw at any stage. The confidentiality of participants was maintained by anonymizing their identities in the presentation of findings. Furthermore, the research was conducted with respect for local cultural values and customary norms, in coordination with community leaders to ensure ethical appropriateness within the Indigenous Bayan context.

## C. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### 1. Changes in Women's Roles within Religious Traditions

The findings indicate a significant shift in women's roles within the Bayan indigenous community, particularly in religious participation and educational activities. A female customary leader explained that women previously occupied predominantly passive roles but are now increasingly involved in religious forums. As she stated, "in the past, women were mostly involved only in supporting activities, but now we are also invited to attend religious gatherings and sometimes contribute to discussions."

This development is corroborated by a local religious figure, who noted that "women are now more active in attending religious gatherings and social religious activities, although their role in delivering religious knowledge is still limited compared to men." These accounts indicate expanded access to participation, albeit still constrained within certain boundaries of religious authority.



Figure 1. The Pantok Gerantung Tradition (gong beating) during the Adat Maulid Ceremony

Observationally, women's involvement is also visible in communal religious events, including their participation in preparatory and supporting roles during traditional ceremonies.

Furthermore, the head of Bayan hamlet emphasized that traditional role structures remain influential. He stated that "men are still usually appointed as leaders in customary meetings and religious ceremonies, while women take care of preparation and ritual needs." This suggests that although participation has increased, leadership roles continue to be male-dominated, and women's involvement remains largely supportive and not yet proportional.

These findings reflect a gradual transformation rather than a structural shift in gender relations. The increased participation of women can be understood as a process of internalizing Islamic gender justice values within existing customary frameworks. This aligns with Eka Prasasti & Dwi Mayasari, (2024) who argue that Islamic gender education promotes equality in rights and responsibilities, as articulated in the thought of Quraish Shihab and Husein Muhammad.

However, the persistence of male dominance in leadership roles indicates that this transformation operates within negotiated cultural boundaries. Unlike the findings of (Susmawati et al., 2023), which highlight strong patriarchal constraints in Sasak culture through the hegemony of nyeseq, the Bayan community demonstrates a more adaptive pattern.

This condition reflects a dynamic interaction between customary norms and Islamic values, where traditional structures are not entirely replaced but gradually

reinterpreted. As noted by (Irham et al., 2024). Islamic perspectives can provide a normative basis for expanding women’s roles, yet their implementation remains context dependent.

Thus, the Bayan case illustrates a hybrid model of gender relations, in which inclusivity develops incrementally through socio-religious negotiation rather than through immediate transformation. In this context, the Bayan case illustrates a hybrid model of gender relations, in which transformation occurs incrementally through the reinterpretation of both religious teachings and local customs.

## 2. Women and Access to Education in Bayan

Positive developments are evident in the educational sector, particularly in women’s access to religious learning. Interviews with female community leaders and administrators of informal Islamic educational institutions indicate that girls now have access to religious education comparable to that of boys, including Qur’anic study circles, Qur’an courses, and tradition-based religious activities. This suggests that Islamic gender education in Bayan has moved beyond discourse into practice.

A female customary figure stated that “religious education is provided equally to both men and women through Qur’anic study circles, courses, recitation practices, and activities integrated with local traditions and culture.” She further emphasized that “women’s access to religious learning resources is now relatively equal and continues to improve, although challenges remain in accessing higher levels of education.”

However, disparities persist at more advanced levels. A local religious leader noted that “religious education has not yet been fully equitable, particularly in terms of deeper understanding and equal opportunities in certain customary activities.” These findings indicate that while access at the foundational level has improved, structural and cultural constraints continue to shape and limit women’s educational trajectories.



*Figure 2. The Process of Preparing Penimbang (glutinous rice cooked in bamboo with coconut milk) during the Ngaji Makem Ritual.*

These findings contrast with (Sopian, 2023), which highlights persistent gender bias in formal Islamic education in Lombok. In contrast, the Bayan case demonstrates that adat-based informal education provides more flexible and inclusive spaces for

women's participation. This suggests that community-based educational models are more adaptive in accommodating gender-equitable practices.

The integration of local traditions into educational processes further strengthens this model, as it enables learners to engage with Islamic teachings while preserving cultural identity, supporting the argument of Alawiyah et al., (2023).

From a theoretical perspective, this condition reflects a negotiated form of gender equality, where access, participation, and recognition are emphasized rather than uniformity of roles. This aligns with (Eka Prasasti & Dwi Mayasari, 2024) who argue that Islamic gender education promotes equitable opportunities within contextual socio-cultural frameworks. Therefore, the Bayan community represents an adaptive and culturally embedded model of Islamic gender education that is progressively inclusive despite remaining structural limitations.

### **3. Tensions between Islamic Values and Customary Traditions**

Challenges remain evident in balancing Islamic teachings with customary traditions related to women's roles in the Bayan indigenous community. A local religious leader noted that certain practices are not yet fully aligned with Islamic principles, stating that "there are still some traditional practices, especially in handling female deceased individuals, that need to be adjusted to Islamic law." This indicates that discrepancies persist in specific ritual domains despite ongoing harmonization efforts.

Findings from interviews and observations further show that alignment between adat and Islamic teachings occurs through gradual and dialogical processes. A customary leader explained, "we often discuss with religious leaders to find a middle ground so that our traditions can still be maintained but not contradict Islamic teachings." These forums demonstrate that change is negotiated rather than imposed.

Social perceptions toward women's participation have also shifted. A female customary leader stated that "women's involvement today is seen as something that strengthens both religious life and community solidarity." However, this shift remains partial, as another informant noted that "some community members still feel that women should not be too involved in certain religious roles."

Changes are also evident in the domain of rights, particularly inheritance. Field data indicate that women, who were previously excluded, are now beginning to receive shares, although not yet equal. As one informant stated, "now women are given inheritance, although the portion is still different from men." This reflects a gradual transformation within deeply rooted customary systems.

These findings reflect a dynamic interaction between Islamic norms and local cultural structures, where religious values are negotiated within existing socio-cultural frameworks rather than rigidly imposed. The dialogical process between religious and customary authorities illustrates a model of adaptive integration, in which tradition is reinterpreted to align with Islamic principles.

This condition aligns with perspectives on Islamic gender education that emphasize contextual interpretation and the incorporation of local wisdom in promoting gender justice. The coexistence of inclusive and conservative views within the community indicates that transformation is ongoing and contested, rather than linear.

Furthermore, the gradual recognition of women's roles in both participation and inheritance reflects a hybrid model of gender relations. This supports the argument of (Pola Anto et al., 2023), that gender roles remain a site of continuous negotiation, particularly between equality and cultural continuity. In the context of Bayan, this negotiation manifests in efforts to balance the preservation of tradition with evolving interpretations of Islamic teachings.

From an Islamic legal perspective, the inclusion of women in inheritance distribution represents a significant advancement, as Islam explicitly acknowledges women's rights in this domain (Hasanah, 2025). Thus, the Bayan case illustrates that gender equality in indigenous contexts is achieved not through uniformity, but through gradual recognition and culturally embedded transformation.

#### **4. The Role of Family and Institutional Support in Promoting Gender Equality**

Family support emerges as a key factor in strengthening women's positions within the Bayan indigenous community (Dorrance Hall et al., 2025; Yovita et al., 2022). Field data indicate that parents play a central role not only in providing access to education but also in legitimizing girls' participation in religious and customary activities. As stated by a female religious educator, "parents here now encourage their daughters to attend religious learning and also take part in adat activities, because they believe it is important for their future."

In addition, collaboration between religious leaders and customary authorities contributes significantly to creating a more inclusive environment. The head of the hamlet explained that "there have been ongoing discussions between religious and customary leaders to adjust certain traditions so they do not contradict Islamic teachings." This reflects an active process of negotiation between religious norms and customary practices.

However, challenges persist, particularly in leadership structures. A local religious leader noted that "women are active in attending religious gatherings and social activities, but when it comes to delivering religious teachings, it is still mostly done by men." This indicates that women's participation has increased, but their authority remains limited in formal religious domains.



*Figure 3: Socialization activities on the Law on Sexual Violence Crimes (UU TPKS) and the Establishment of KBK Learning Groups (Violence-Free Zones)*

These findings demonstrate that the family functions as a foundational institution in internalizing gender-equitable values, reflecting a shift in gender norms where daughters are increasingly positioned as active socio-religious agents. This supports the view that micro-level support systems are critical in enabling broader gender transformation.

Moreover, the collaboration between religious and customary leaders illustrates a model of adaptive integration, where Islamic teachings and local traditions are harmonized rather than opposed. This aligns with the framework of contextual Islamic gender education proposed by (Asrulla et al., 2025) which emphasizes the integration of local wisdom with principles of gender justice.

Nevertheless, the persistence of male dominance in religious authority indicates that transformation remains partial. Inclusion at the participation level has not yet translated into equal access to leadership and knowledge production. Therefore, the Bayan case reflects an incremental model of gender change driven by negotiation, supported by institutions, yet still constrained by enduring structural hierarchies.

##### **5. Social Implications and Sustainable Development**

Findings indicate that the Bayan indigenous community reflects a dynamic interaction among tradition, Islam, and gender. Customary practices continue to maintain differentiated gender roles, while Islamic teachings provide normative foundations for justice and equality. At the same time, contemporary social developments encourage broader acceptance of women's participation. This interaction is evident across family settings, informal Islamic education, and customary institutions, forming a contextual model of gender education that is both adaptive and culturally grounded.

Empirical data further show a shift in women's roles from symbolic to more substantive participation. Unlike previous findings (Sri et al., 2024) which emphasize symbolic roles in traditional rituals, women in Bayan are increasingly involved in religious learning, informal education, and customary practices. This indicates a transition toward more active agency within both religious and socio-cultural domains.



Figure 4: *Bisoq Menik Tradition (Rice Washing) during the Gawe Baleq Celebration.*

Additionally, women's participation contributes to strengthening social cohesion, intergenerational knowledge transmission, and cultural preservation. These findings align with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly gender equality and quality education (Khairunnisa et al., 2022). The study also confirms the research objective, showing that Islamic gender education has contributed to a gradual shift from passive to active participation among women in religious and educational activities.

These findings demonstrate that gender transformation in indigenous contexts occurs through negotiation and reinterpretation rather than the elimination of tradition. The Bayan case illustrates a mutually constitutive relationship between Islamic teachings and local customs, producing a form of gender education that is dialogical and adaptive.

From a theoretical perspective, this study extends existing literature by showing that Islamic gender education functions as a transformative mechanism within a living socio-cultural system. Unlike prior studies that focus primarily on inequality or symbolic roles, this research highlights how gender education reshapes participation and agency in concrete ways, particularly within culturally embedded contexts (Amin & Girard, 2024).

Furthermore, the findings imply that gender-responsive Islamic education can serve as an effective medium for mediating the relationship between religion, tradition, and gender roles. The role of families, religious leaders, and customary authorities is crucial in sustaining this transformation, as multi-level support enables broader acceptance and continuity.

Nevertheless, several limitations remain, particularly regarding the limited number of participants and the focus on a single indigenous community, which may affect the generalizability of the findings. Therefore, future research is recommended to explore men's perspectives on gender education, conduct comparative studies across different indigenous Muslim communities, and examine how curriculum development

in informal Islamic education can further institutionalize gender-inclusive values. Through such efforts, the Bayan community may serve as a contextual model for developing Islamic gender education that is inclusive, culturally grounded, and sustainable.

## CONCLUSION

This study concludes that Islamic gender education in the Indigenous Bayan community has contributed to a gradual transformation in women's roles within religious and social life. Women, who were previously more passive in customary and religious activities, are now increasingly involved in Qur'anic learning, informal religious education, and participation in customary traditions. This shift reflects the growing influence of Islamic teachings that emphasize justice and equality, alongside increasing societal recognition of women's contributions. However, traditional role divisions persist, particularly in formal leadership and ritual decision making, which remain largely dominated by men.

Furthermore, informal Islamic educational institutions play a significant role in integrating Islamic values with local traditions and in providing relatively equal access to religious education for girls. Support from families, as well as collaboration between religious and customary leaders, has strengthened women's positions, although certain customary practices still require continuous dialogue to align with Islamic principles.

These findings suggest that Islamic gender education, when contextualized within local cultural frameworks, can serve as an inclusive and sustainable model for promoting gender equality in indigenous communities. However, this study is limited by the small number of participants and its focus on a single indigenous setting, which may affect the generalizability of the findings. Therefore, future research is recommended to involve broader participant groups and comparative studies across different indigenous communities to better understand the diverse dynamics of gender education in Islamic contexts.

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