

Modeling Community Participation Transformation In Educational Service Implementation in the Ha-Anim Ecological Region, Asmat Regency, South Papua Province

Yohannes Rahail

Universitas Cenderawasih, Indonesia

Email: johnrahail19@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

The provision of educational services in the Ha-Anim ecological region in Asmat Regency, South Papua Province, faces complex challenges, including limited resources, difficult geography, and low community participation. Participation has been passive and symbolic, failing to improve education quality and sustainability. This study examines a relevant community participation transformation model—Modeling Community Participation Transformation In Educational Service Implementation in the Ha-Anim Ecological Region, Asmat Regency, South Papua Province—to strengthen governance based on local wisdom, inclusiveness, and sustainability. Using a descriptive qualitative approach and purposive sampling, informants were selected from Agats District (urban) and Ayam District (rural) in Asmat Regency. They represented 3-Tungku elements (traditional, religious, and village leaders) and 2-Peran elements (female and youth leaders). Data were collected via in-depth interviews and Focus Group Discussions (FGDs), analyzed in three stages: (1) identifying primary/secondary data, (2) categorizing by themes, and (3) interpreting results per qualitative principles. Findings indicate a need for paradigm shift from formal to substantive participation. Revitalizing school committees by integrating traditional leaders, religious leaders, women, and youth creates collaborative forums rooted in Ha-Anim values like mutual cooperation, solidarity, and deliberation. This fosters participatory, adaptive management, shifting education from bureaucratic domain to community responsibility. Integrating local elements enhances school ownership, meaningful participation, and inclusive, sustainable systems in the Ha-Anim region.

KEYWORDS

Transformation, Community Participation, Education Service Delivery



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INTRODUCTION

The development of education in the *Ha-Anim* ecological area, especially in Asmat Regency, South Papua Province, faces complex challenges from structural and cultural perspectives. Limited access to education in rural areas, weak governance of education implementation and services, and a lack of professional educators represent the main problems. This situation is exacerbated by inadequate educational infrastructure, which directly impacts the low quality of services and students' learning outcomes. Beyond structural constraints, cultural factors play an equally significant role in shaping educational outcomes. Local wisdom and indigenous cultural values—which should form the main foundation of learning—have not been integrated into the curriculum or educational practices. Empirical evidence from various contexts demonstrates that culturally responsive education strengthens both the relevance and sustainability of learning for indigenous communities (UNESCO, 2015). However, research specifically examining indigenous participation in education governance within the Papua context remains limited, creating a critical knowledge gap that this study addresses (Eldridge, Larry, Baird, & Kavanamur, 2018; Iswandi, 2023; Sawir, 2025; Tiu, 2016).

From the perspective of public governance, the implementation of education in Asmat Regency shows weak application of the New Public Service (*NPS*) principle, which positions Modeling Community Participation Transformation In Educational Service Implementation in the Ha-Anim Ecological Region, Asmat Regency, South Papua Province

the community as active partners rather than mere service recipients (Hardianto & Adiwidjaja, 2015; Hidayat, 2017; Sinurat, Hamdi, Syafri, Achmad, & Sinurat, 2023; Utomo, Haryono, & Noor, 2021). In practice, community participation remains low, so education services do not fully reflect local needs, values, and cultural contexts. As a result, education is often considered irrelevant to the lives of indigenous peoples and fails to contribute meaningfully to the sustainability of community life (Datta, 2018; Magni, 2017).

This condition is reflected in various indicators of low educational attainment. Data from the Central Statistics Agency (BPS, 2025) show that the average length of schooling (*RLS*) for the Asmat community is only 5.84 years—far below the South Papua provincial average of 7.93 years. In addition, 21,933 school-age children do not attend school, comprising 48.41% at the elementary level, 32.11% at the junior high school level, and 19.48% at the high school/vocational school level. The Community Literacy Development Index (*IPLM*) reached only 9.30, far behind the provincial average of 18.87. Low educational attainment contributes to the high poverty rate of 24.5%, reflecting weak competitiveness and quality of human resources (*HR*). Consequently, the people of Asmat have not been able to capitalize optimally on demographic bonus opportunities. The dependency ratio of 98.53% indicates that every 100 people of productive age support nearly 99 unproductive individuals.

In this critical context, education must function as the primary catalyst for enhancing community welfare and quality of life. The situation in Asmat Regency also affects achievement of the Golden Indonesia Vision 2045. Increasing the proportion of the productive-age population should represent a golden opportunity for developing superior human resources. However, without an inclusive, participatory, and local wisdom-based transformation of education, the demographic bonus could turn into a demographic burden. Therefore, education in the *Ha-Anim* ecological area of South Papua must be positioned as a strategic priority for human development.

This aligns with national policies that affirm the direction of education development through various regulations, including Law Number 20 of 2003 concerning the National Education System, Law Number 2 of 2021 concerning Papua's Special Autonomy, and Presidential Regulation Number 24 of 2023 concerning the Papua Development Acceleration Master Plan (*RIP3*) 2022–2041, which positions "Smart Papua" as one of the main pillars. This policy direction also aligns with Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4 on quality education, as well as the theme of HARDIKNAS 2025: "Universal Participation to Realize Quality Education for All."

In this framework, the transformation of community participation in education implementation is an urgent need. A participatory, inclusive, collaborative, and local wisdom-based education model must be developed, positioning indigenous communities, local leaders, women, and youth as active subjects in educational development. A relevant community-based education approach can strengthen the community's sense of ownership and responsibility for education implementation (Levin, 2001; ACDP, 2014; Bryson, Crosby, & Bloomberg, 2015; UNESCO, 2015). The New Public Service paradigm emphasizes that government should act as a facilitator of multi-stakeholder collaboration rather than merely a service provider. In the context of education in Asmat, this role is realized through partnerships among local governments, customary institutions, religious leaders, and community groups in planning,

implementation, and evaluation. Such collaboration is believed to create adaptive and sustainable education governance.

Academically, the transformation of community participation in education implementation represents a paradigm renewal that is structural, epistemological, and axiological. Structurally, education problems must be addressed through institutional and policy reforms attuned to the local context. Epistemologically, education policy approaches must recognize local knowledge as a legitimate source. Axiologically, education must deliver direct and sustainable benefits to indigenous peoples' lives. However, a critical review of existing literature reveals that academic studies examining the intersection of community collaboration and education governance in South Papua remain scarce. Most previous research has focused only on classic issues such as access, quality, and curriculum (Arswimba et al., 2023; Wabiser, 2025). Notably absent are comprehensive studies investigating community participation and collaborative governance as transformative mechanisms for context-based educational service delivery.

Thus, this study addresses a significant research gap by developing conceptual and empirical frameworks that explain how indigenous community collaboration can strengthen education governance in the *Ha-Anim* ecological area. The unique contribution of this research lies in integrating indigenous social structures (*3-Tungku* and *2-Peran*) into formal education governance mechanisms, offering a culturally grounded model not previously documented in Papua contexts. Asmat Regency serves as a strategic locus due to its distinctive characteristics: geographical isolation in the watershed area, low education indicators, untapped potential for local wisdom, and demands for implementing Papuan Special Autonomy, which emphasizes innovation and community participation in education management. These factors position Asmat Regency as a potential social laboratory for developing an educational service model based on community participation. This research is expected to contribute conceptually and empirically to advancing contextual, inclusive, and sustainable educational governance in the *Ha-Anim* ecological area, while providing a replicable model for other indigenous contexts in South Papua and beyond.

Based on the above background, the main problem studied in this research is formulated in the following research question: How is the appropriate model of community participation transformation to strengthen the governance of education implementation based on local wisdom, inclusive and sustainable in the *Ha-Anim* ecological area in Asmat Regency, South Papua Province?

METHOD

This study used a qualitative approach that is descriptive with the resource persons determined by purposive sampling. The qualitative design was selected to capture the nuanced perspectives and lived experiences of indigenous community members regarding educational governance and participation. The data sources as resource persons were inventoried to reside in two districts in Asmat Regency, namely Agats District (urban area) and Ayam District (rural area) as research locations, coming from local stakeholders as key figures representing the *3-Tungku* element (customary leaders, religion, village government) and the *2-Peran* element (women and youth leaders). These two districts were purposively selected to represent contrasting socio-geographical contexts: Agats as the regency capital with relatively better

infrastructure, and Ayam as a remote inland area reflecting typical challenges faced by most communities in the Ha-Anim region.

The data collection method was carried out through in-depth interviews of the resource persons and Focus Group Discussions with representatives from the 3-Tungku element and the 2-Peran element. In-depth interviews lasted 60-90 minutes per informant and followed a semi-structured protocol allowing for probing and clarification. FGD sessions were conducted separately for each district, with 8-12 participants per session, facilitating open dialogue about community participation experiences and aspirations for educational governance. All interviews and FGDs were audio-recorded with participants' consent and subsequently transcribed verbatim for analysis.

Data analysis employed a thematic analysis approach following Braun and Clarke's (2006) framework, consisting of six phases: 1) Familiarization with data through repeated reading of transcripts and field notes; 2) Initial coding of meaningful segments related to community participation, governance structures, and cultural integration; 3) Searching for themes by collating codes into potential patterns; 4) Reviewing themes to ensure internal coherence and distinctiveness; 5) Defining and naming themes to capture their essence; and 6) Producing the final analysis through interpretation aligned with theoretical frameworks. The analysis specifically examined how the 3-Tungku and 2-Peran elements could be integrated into school committee structures, identifying barriers and enablers for such transformation. Data triangulation was achieved by comparing findings from interviews, FGDs, and secondary documents, while member checking with selected informants ensured the credibility and trustworthiness of interpretations.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The Urgency of Transforming Community Participation

The transformation of community participation (PSM) is a very urgent and strategic need in the implementation of educational services in Asmat Regency. The success of education in this region depends not only on the capacity of the government or schools, but also on the extent to which local communities play an active role in supporting the sustainability and equitable distribution of the quality of educational services. Hard-to-reach geographical conditions, limited educators, and distinctive socio-cultural diversity demand a more participatory, contextual and community-based model of education governance.

So far, community participation in education in Asmat still tends to be passive and symbolic, where people are more often policy recipients than empowered actors. In fact, in the social structure of the Asmat community, it is known that the 3-Furnace (government, customs, and religion) and 2-Role (women and youth) social systems are known which have important social functions in maintaining harmony, solidarity and community sustainability. These elements actually have great potential to support the implementation of education that is relevant to the local social and cultural context. However, this potential has not been utilized optimally because it has not been integrated in the formal structure of education implementation such as school committees.

For this reason, the transformation of PSM in Asmat Regency must be directed at the integration of the social structure and function of the community into educational institutions, especially through the revitalization of school committees. The school committee does not only Modeling Community Participation Transformation In Educational Service Implementation in the Ha-Anim Ecological Region, Asmat Regency, South Papua Province

function administratively, but also becomes a collaborative forum that accommodates the active involvement of the 3-Furnace and 2-Role elements in a balanced manner. Through this model, schools do not stand alone, but become part of the social system of society that fosters a sense of collective ownership, shared responsibility, and commitment to the quality of education.

In the context of the current Special Autonomy of Papua through Law No. 2 of 2021, it provides broad legal and political opportunities for the Asmat people to play a role in planning, supervision and decision-making in the field of education. This policy allows the involvement of indigenous institutions, religious leaders, women and youth in the management of education services at the local (school) level as a manifestation of indigenous peoples' rights to development. Thus, the transformation of PSM in Asmat is not just an administrative demand, but a strategic step to build inclusive educational governance, contextual and rooted in the local culture of the Asmat community.

Findings of various studies (Epstein, 2011; Sukardi, 2013; OECD, 2019; Sukinawan et al., 2025) show that partnerships between schools, families and communities have a positive correlation with the quality of educational services and students' academic achievement. This principle is in line with the spirit of The New Public Service (Denhardt & Denhardt, 2015) which emphasizes that the government should play a role as a facilitator that strengthens the capacity of citizens to be actively involved in public services. In the context of Asmat, the transformation of PSM is the foundation to build sustainable, community-based education and reflects the values of solidarity, mutual cooperation and deliberation that are the identity of the local community.

Collaboration of Local Social Structures

The tangible manifestation of the transformation of community participation (PSM) in supporting educational services in Asmat Regency lies in the ability to build a collaboration of local social structures that include elements of customs, religion, women, youth and parents of students in the educational institutional system. This collaboration is a strategic step to change the position of the community from just spectators outside the system to active subjects directly involved in the planning, implementation and evaluation of educational services in schools.

So far, community participation in Asmat has often been limited to the group of students' parents, most of whom do not represent a complete social structure at the community level. Even among parents, participation is often restricted to those with higher socio-economic status or formal education, inadvertently excluding the majority of community members. Even though not all parents of students have social legitimacy or a strong leadership role as traditional leaders, religious leaders, influential women or youth movers. As a result, school committees often function administratively, rather than as a living, representative social forum. This condition makes people still in a marginal position who look from the outside of the education system without meaningful space to contribute substantively.

This transformation can be carried out by revitalizing the school committee structure as a collaborative forum that represents the local social structure of Asmat: elements of 3-Tungku (government, customs, and religion) and 2-Role (women and youth). Through this integration, the school committee no longer functions solely as an administrative representative of parents, but becomes a deliberative and reflective forum where every social element has an equal space

to convey ideas, determine the direction of school policies and oversee the quality of educational services. Thus schools can grow into social institutions rooted in local values such as mutual cooperation, solidarity and collective responsibility.

Inclusive collaboration also has a significant impact on improving the quality of education services. Research by Sheldon (2003) demonstrates that cross-sectoral partnerships significantly enhance program effectiveness through mechanisms of social trust and shared accountability. Arswimba et al. (2023); Enus et al. (2025); Vice President (2025) emphasized that cross-actor synergy between the government, civil society and indigenous communities can increase the effectiveness of education programs through social trust and shared ownership. This principle is consistent with UNESCO's (2021) policy which places community engagement as the main pillar of Education for Sustainable Development (ESD), as well as the policy direction of Bappenas and the Ministry of Education and Culture (2018) which affirm the importance of governance transformation based on community participation as a sustainable education development strategy in Indonesia.

Furthermore, the revitalization of the school committee as mandated in Permendikbud Number 75 of 2016 concerning School Committees needs to be adjusted to the socio-cultural context of Asmat. This adjustment can be made by adding elements of 3-Furnace and 2-Role representation to the school committee structure so that all levels of local society have a balanced role. Thus, the Asmat community is no longer a passive observer of the implementation of educational services, but an active partner in decision-making, policy implementation and quality supervision of educational services, especially in schools. A collaborative model of this nature not only strengthens the sustainability and social legitimacy of education implementation but also creates culturally-congruent pathways for community empowerment in the Ha-Anim ecological area of South Papua.

Integration of Local Social Functions of Communities

The transformation of community participation (PSM) in supporting educational services in Asmat Regency needs to be realized through the integration of the social functions of local communities (customs, religions, women and youth) into the function of school committees as stipulated in Permendikbud Number 75 of 2016 concerning School Committees. This integration is important so that the school committee is not only an administrative institution, but also an interactive forum that represents the socio-cultural structure of the Asmat community. This is intended so that the school does not only belong to teachers and parents, but also belongs to the collective of the local community so as to foster a strong sense of belonging and strengthen social relations between the school and its community.

In the context of the Asmat community, the social structure is known by the principles of 3-Furnace and 2-Role, namely the synergy between customs, religion and government as well as the role of women and youth in maintaining social balance. Therefore, the transformation of PSM can be carried out by integrating these social functions into the role of the school committee as follows:

- 1) Indigenous leaders play a role in maintaining cultural values and mediating between schools and indigenous communities, ensuring that curricula and educational activities are aligned with local values.
- 2) Religious figures function as moral and social ethical guides in education.

Modeling Community Participation Transformation In Educational Service Implementation in the Ha-Anim Ecological Region, Asmat Regency, South Papua Province

3) Women and youth leaders are agents of social innovation and drivers of community participation towards a productive generation in the era of demographic bonuses.

The addition of the function of social guardianship as an integration of social functions in the school committee that reflects the social responsibility of the 3-furnace and 2-role elements in maintaining values, solidarity and harmony will strengthen the social legitimacy of educational institutions at the village level. This is in line with the findings of Tanka (2008), Faozanudin & Sulistiani (2023), and Enus et al. (2025) who show that collaboration between government agencies, local communities and civil society increases the effectiveness of school committees in realizing transparency, accountability and public trust in schools.

Globally, UNESCO (2021) and Epstein (2018) emphasized the importance of community engagement in education governance to build an inclusive and sustainable education system. This approach places the community not only as beneficiaries, but as social actors who help determine the direction of education policy. Thus, the transformation of PSM in Asmat Regency transcends administrative restructuring, representing instead a strategic intervention to construct participatory, contextually-grounded, and culturally-embedded educational governance deeply rooted in the indigenous traditions and social fabric of the Ha-Anim community.

Despite the promising potential of this model, several implementation challenges must be acknowledged and addressed. First, capacity building is essential—many traditional and religious leaders, while possessing social legitimacy, may lack familiarity with formal education governance mechanisms and require training in collaborative decision-making, budget oversight, and quality assurance. Second, power dynamics within school committees must be carefully managed to ensure that the integration of 3-Tungku and 2-Peran elements enhances rather than fragments decision-making processes. Third, logistical challenges such as geographical distance, limited transportation infrastructure, and scheduling conflicts may hinder regular participation, particularly for representatives from remote inland communities like Ayam District. To overcome these barriers, several strategies are recommended: (a) establishing regular capacity-building workshops facilitated by education offices and civil society organizations; (b) developing clear protocols and bylaws that define roles, responsibilities, and decision-making procedures within revitalized committees; (c) leveraging appropriate technology (such as mobile communication platforms) to facilitate remote participation when physical meetings are not feasible; and (d) securing dedicated budget allocations from local government to support committee operations, including transportation allowances and meeting facilities. Furthermore, sustained political will and regulatory support from the Asmat Regency government are crucial to institutionalize this transformation beyond pilot initiatives, ensuring that the model becomes a permanent feature of educational governance across all schools in the Ha-Anim region.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the transformation of community participation from a passive, symbolic role to a substantive, collaborative partnership is essential for strengthening education governance in the Ha-Anim ecological region of Asmat Regency, South Papua. The integration of the local social structure—specifically the "3-Tungku" (customary, religious, and government leaders) and "2-Peran" (women and youth leaders)—into revitalized school

committees provides a culturally grounded model for inclusive and sustainable education management. This approach fosters a strong sense of collective ownership, enhances social legitimacy, and aligns educational services with local values and needs. Future research should expand this inquiry by conducting longitudinal, mixed-methods studies to quantitatively measure the impact of such integrated governance models on specific educational outcomes (e.g., student attendance, literacy rates, and community satisfaction). Additionally, research should explore the scalability and adaptability of this model across diverse indigenous and remote contexts in Papua and beyond, while also investigating the role of digital tools and targeted capacity-building programs in overcoming geographical and logistical barriers to sustained community engagement.

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Modeling Community Participation Transformation In Educational Service Implementation in the Ha-Anim Ecological Region, Asmat Regency, South Papua Province

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