



Social Marketing as a Strategic Mechanism for Strengthening Educational Social Capital in Indigenous Communities: Evidence from the Dayak Meratus of Indonesia

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Abstract:

Educational social capital within families plays a pivotal role in shaping children's academic trajectories, particularly in marginalized indigenous communities; however, limited parental education and constrained interaction patterns have hindered the development of educational support among the Dayak Meratus community in South Kalimantan, Indonesia. This study examines social marketing as a strategic mechanism for strengthening educational social capital in indigenous contexts using a participatory action research design integrated with social marketing strategies, involving eighteen Dayak Meratus parents through focus group discussions, poster-based interventions, and structured home visits. Data were collected using validated pretest and posttest questionnaires measuring parental intentions, attitudes, and subjective norms, complemented by teacher observations of student engagement and academic performance, while program effectiveness was analyzed using nonparametric statistical techniques and effect size interpretation. The findings indicate meaningful improvements in parental intention, attitude, and subjective norms toward supporting children's education, demonstrating the effectiveness of social marketing in enhancing parental engagement and strengthening educational social capital within indigenous families; although student engagement and academic performance showed positive trends, the changes were not yet substantial, suggesting that academic outcomes require longer-term intervention and sustained parental involvement. This study contributes to the literature by integrating social marketing with participatory action research and offers practical insights for promoting educational equity and inclusion in indigenous contexts.

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Introduction

Family social capital plays a pivotal role in shaping children's educational trajectories, influencing academic achievement, aspirations, and long term socioeconomic mobility.

Within the educational context, social capital is reflected in parental involvement, trust, communication, and expectations that foster supportive learning environments. Empirical studies have consistently demonstrated that family and community social capital significantly contribute to students' academic success and social development (Bubolz, 2001; Foley & Edwards, 1999; Hart, 2012; Israel et al., 2001; Sandefur et al., 2006). Consequently, strengthening educational social capital within families has become an essential strategy for promoting equitable and sustainable educational outcomes.

This issue is particularly significant in indigenous communities, where structural inequalities, geographical isolation, and limited access to formal education often hinder educational advancement. Among the Dayak Meratus community in South Kalimantan, Indonesia, the development of educational social capital remains constrained by low levels of parental educational attainment and limited educational interaction within families. Previous studies reveal that educational success among Dayak Meratus students is strongly influenced by family, community, and institutional support (Juhaidi et al., 2022). However, access to higher education remains limited, reflecting persistent disparities in educational opportunities. The distribution of higher education attainment among the Dayak Meratus community is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Number of Dayak Meratus Graduates

No.	Village	F	M	Total	P (%)
1	Loksado	11	14	25	2,4
2	Lok Lahung	4	6	10	2,36
3	Ulang	16	7	23	3,1
4	Kamawakan	3	6	9	2,15
5	Tumingki	2	2	4	0,6
6	Haratai	3	4	7	0,85
		39	39	78	1,9

Source: Juhaidi et al. (2024)

These conditions highlight the urgent need for culturally responsive interventions that strengthen family engagement and promote educational continuity. Parental encouragement, trust, and everyday interactions play a more decisive role in shaping children's educational aspirations than financial resources alone (Bubolz, 2001; Foley & Edwards, 1999; Hart, 2012). Therefore, enhancing educational social capital within indigenous families is fundamental to addressing educational inequality and fostering sustainable development.

One promising approach to addressing these challenges is social marketing. Introduced by Kotler and Zaltman (1971), social marketing applies commercial marketing principles to promote voluntary behavioral change for societal benefit. Andreasen (1994) further conceptualized social marketing as a strategic process that utilizes marketing tools to influence attitudes and behaviors that enhance individual and collective well-being. Extensive empirical evidence demonstrates its effectiveness across diverse sectors, including public health, environmental sustainability, and social development (Gordon et al., 2006; Stead et al., 2007). Social marketing has also been successfully employed to influence parental engagement and community participation through targeted communication strategies (Cates et al., 2014).

Despite its widespread application, the integration of social marketing into

educational contexts, particularly to strengthen educational social capital within indigenous communities, remains underexplored. Existing studies predominantly focus on health promotion and urban populations, leaving a significant theoretical and empirical gap in the literature. Furthermore, participatory action research has proven effective in empowering communities and fostering sustainable change, yet it has rarely been combined with social marketing to construct relational social capital within families (Savin Baden & Wimpenny, 2007; Erziaty et al., 2021; Mahpur, 2013; Muslimin, 2020; Sani & Suwanto, 2018; Suryahadikusumah & Yustiana, 2016). This gap underscores the need for integrative and culturally grounded approaches to educational development in marginalized communities.

Responding to these challenges, this study proposes an innovative framework that integrates social marketing with participatory action research to strengthen educational social capital among the Dayak Meratus community. By positioning interaction between parents and children as a central mechanism of educational support, this approach seeks to enhance parental intentions, attitudes, and social norms toward education. Such an initiative is expected to foster sustainable family support systems that contribute to children's academic success and long term educational attainment.

Accordingly, this study aims to investigate social marketing as a strategic mechanism for strengthening educational social capital in indigenous communities. Specifically, it examines how social marketing interventions influence parental engagement, trust, and supportive educational practices among Dayak Meratus families. The findings are expected to contribute theoretically to the advancement of social marketing and educational social capital literature, methodologically to the application of participatory action research in indigenous contexts, and practically to the development of culturally responsive policies that promote educational equity and inclusion.

Methods

This study employed a participatory action research approach to examine the effectiveness of social marketing in strengthening educational social capital among indigenous families. Participatory action research was selected because it promotes collaborative problem solving, empowers participants, and facilitates sustainable social change through iterative cycles of planning, action, observation, and reflection. This approach is particularly suitable for research conducted within indigenous communities, where cultural sensitivity, community engagement, and contextual understanding are essential (Savin Baden & Wimpenny, 2007).

The research was conducted in Malinau Village, Loksado District, South Hulu Sungai Regency, South Kalimantan, Indonesia. The study involved parents from the Dayak Meratus indigenous community. A purposive sampling technique was employed to select participants based on specific criteria. Participants were fathers or mothers whose highest level of education was senior secondary school, had children enrolled at SDN Malinau Elementary School, and resided permanently in the research area. Initially, twenty parents participated in the social marketing intervention. However, only eighteen participants completed both the pretest and posttest questionnaires and were therefore included in the final analysis. These participants shared similar socioeconomic and educational backgrounds, ensuring the

relevance of the intervention to the community's needs.

The participatory action research process began with collaborative problem identification through observations, interviews, focus group discussions, and questionnaires. Researchers and participants jointly explored the underlying causes of limited parental involvement in children's education. Insights from this stage informed the formulation of an action plan outlining objectives, strategies, resources, ethical considerations, and indicators of success. The intervention was subsequently implemented through social marketing strategies designed to enhance parental awareness, attitudes, and engagement in supporting their children's education. Continuous monitoring and collective reflection were conducted to evaluate program effectiveness and guide iterative improvements. The overall research process is presented in Figure 1.

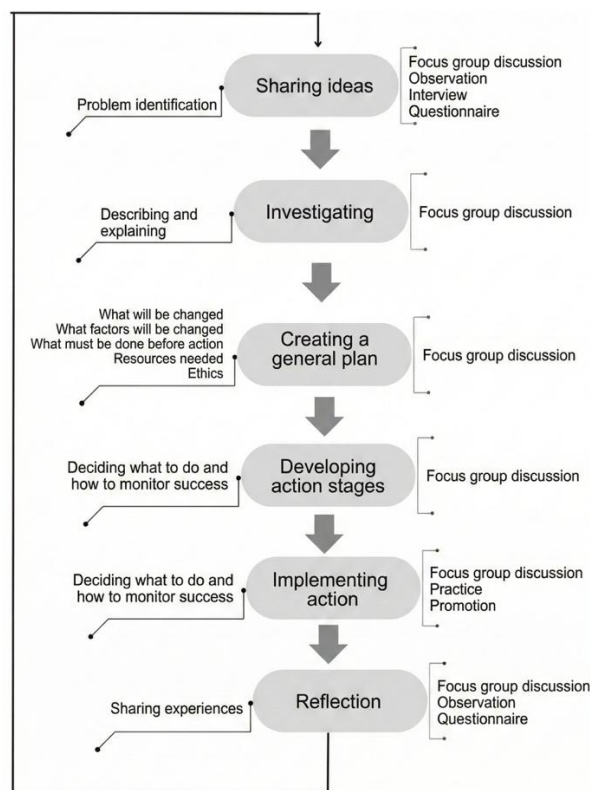


Figure 1. Research Process (Savin-Baden & Wimpenny, 2007)

The intervention adopted social marketing principles aimed at encouraging voluntary behavioral change for societal benefit (Kotler & Zaltman, 1971; Andreasen, 1994). The program was implemented through several integrated activities. Researchers conducted initial home visits to establish rapport with participants, observe family conditions, and administer pretest questionnaires. This was followed by focus group discussions that provided a platform for identifying challenges and collaboratively developing solutions to enhance educational support within families. Educational posters and flyers were distributed as persuasive communication media to reinforce key messages and encourage consistent parental engagement. To ensure sustained implementation, researchers conducted structured weekly home visits to monitor progress, provide feedback, and support behavioral change.

Reflective discussions were subsequently carried out to evaluate outcomes and strengthen community commitment.

Data were collected using both quantitative and qualitative methods to ensure a comprehensive analysis. Quantitative data were obtained through structured pretest and posttest questionnaires designed to measure family educational social capital. The instrument assessed parental intentions, attitudes, and subjective norms based on the Theory of Planned Behavior (David & Rundle-Thiele, 2018). In addition, teachers at SDN Malinau conducted classroom observations to evaluate student engagement and academic performance, thereby assessing the indirect impact of the intervention. Qualitative data were gathered through observations, interviews, and documentation to provide contextual insights into participants' experiences and behavioral changes.

The validity of the research instruments was examined using Pearson product-moment correlation, with significance values below 0.05 indicating acceptable validity. Reliability was assessed using Cronbach's alpha coefficients, all of which exceeded the acceptable threshold of 0.70, demonstrating strong internal consistency. These procedures ensured the accuracy and credibility of the collected data.

Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistical techniques. Descriptive statistics were used to summarize baseline conditions and identify trends in participants' responses. To evaluate the effectiveness of the intervention, the Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test was employed to compare pretest and posttest scores. This nonparametric test was selected because the data did not meet the assumptions of normal distribution and the sample size was relatively small. To assess the magnitude of the intervention's impact, effect sizes were calculated using the formula $r = Z / \sqrt{N}$, where Z represents the Wilcoxon test statistic and N denotes the number of observations. The interpretation of effect sizes followed Cohen's criteria, with values of 0.10 indicating a small effect, 0.30 a medium effect, and 0.50 a large effect. Qualitative data were analyzed thematically to complement and enrich the quantitative findings. The integration of both data sources enabled methodological triangulation and enhanced the validity of the study.

This research adhered to established ethical standards. Informed consent was obtained from all participants prior to data collection. Participants were provided with clear explanations regarding the objectives, procedures, and voluntary nature of the study. Confidentiality and anonymity were strictly maintained throughout the research process. Ethical principles of respect, beneficence, and non-maleficence guided all stages of the investigation.

Results

1. Demographic Characteristic

The community engagement was implemented in Malinau Village, Loksado District, South Hulu Sungai Regency. The Dayak Meratus community originates from the Balai Bidukun and Balai Padang groups. Malinau Village spans 536.5 hectares and borders several neighboring villages in South Kalimantan. Despite cultural shifts from communal longhouses, residents retain identification with both balai communities. Demographic characteristics of Malinau Village are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Population of Malinau Village

Neighborhood Unit/Hamlet	Households Heads	Family Members		Total
		Male	Female	
01/Malinau	114	174	170	344
02/Malinau	65	108	84	192
03/Bidukun	57	100	86	186
04/Padang/Liang Sanga	160	255	251	506
	396	637	591	1229

Source: Malinau Village Administrative Records

Most residents rely on agriculture, including rubber farming, vegetable cultivation, and bamboo processing. Rubber plantations constitute the source of income, making livelihoods highly sensitive to price fluctuations. Declining rubber prices intensify household economic vulnerability, whereas rising prices generate substantial income gains. Rice and vegetables mainly support subsistence, with limited surplus sold to supplement household needs.

Bamboo processing into strips also provides household income in Malinau Village. Bamboo harvested in Loksado is widely recognized for its superior material quality. Workers split cut bamboo using machetes into strips measuring five centimeters wide. Each bundle contains twenty cleaned strips, sold for eighteen thousand rupiah. Strips from lower bamboo sections command higher prices due to greater thickness.

The population of Malinau Village demonstrates considerable religious diversity across its residential areas. Non-Moslem residents primarily inhabit neighborhood units 03 and 04. These groups include Dayak Meratus families practicing Kaharingan, Islam, and Christianity. Historically, they lived in Bidukun and Padang communal halls before establishing nearby settlements. Consequently, contemporary social relations reflect an extended-family structure rooted in shared origins.

2. Pretest

Family social capital was measured before the community intervention through a structured pretest. This assessment established baseline conditions to evaluate the effectiveness of the implemented program. Instrument validity was tested using Pearson product-moment correlations with significance thresholds below 0.05. Reliability analysis confirmed Cronbach's alpha coefficients exceeding 0.70, indicating robust internal consistency. The pretest results are presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Family social capital pretest

Code	Item	Sig.	α	\bar{x}
	Intention			
INT_1	I intend to increase the duration of discussions about school with my child next week.	0.000	0.776	2.375

INT_2	I will increase the time spent discussing school with my child next week.	0.003		2.313
INT_3	I plan to increase the time allocated to discussing school with my child next week.	0.000		2.313
Total				2.333
Attitude				
z	In my opinion, discussing school with my child is meaningful.	0.031	0.807	2.938
ATT_2	In my opinion, discussing school with my child is important.	0.001		2.750
ATT_3	Discussing school with my child is boring.	0.011		2.125
ATT_4	I feel comfortable discussing school matters with my child.	0.001		2.750
ATT_5	Discussing school with my child is enjoyable.	0.005		2.813
ATT_6	Discussing school with my child will be beneficial.	0.002		2.250
ATT_7	Discussing school with my child is a good activity.	0.001		2.313
Total				2.563
Norm				
NOR_1	Discussing school with my child is valuable.	0.000	0.800	2.625
NOR_2	My friends should discuss school matters with their children.	0.000		2.625
NOR_3	I support my friends who discuss school with their children.	0.026		2.625
NOR_4	I am willing to engage if my friends want to discuss our children's schooling.	0.000		2.563
Total				2.610

We also involved teachers to observe student engagement and academic achievement. These observations aimed to document baseline engagement and achievement before the community intervention. This approach allowed for a systematic assessment of children's progress after the intervention. The pretest results are presented in Table 4.

Table 4. Pretest Results of Engagement and Academic Performance

Code	Item	Sig.	α	\bar{x}
Engagement				
ENG_1	Students participate in learning activities.	0.009	0.838	2.250
ENG_2	Students pay attention when the teacher explains.	0.000		2.310
ENG_3	Students' involvement in school activities.	0.000		2.440
ENG_4	Students talk with teachers about learning.	0.000		2.440
Total				2.360
Academic Performance				
ACP_1	Students' achievement in learning meets established standards.	0.000	0.908	2.250
ACP_2	Students complete learning tasks.	0.000		2.310
ACP_3	Students fulfill their responsibilities in learning.	0.000		2.440
ACP_4	Students can complete tasks properly as expected.	0.000		2.440
Total				2.360

Pretest results show family social capital, engagement, and academic performance scored below 3.00. These scores indicate social capital within Dayak Meratus families remains

insufficiently developed. Therefore, this program is critically important and empirically justified.

3. Implementation of Social Marketing

The social marketing session involved direct explanations delivered with teachers from SDN Malinau. Twenty parents from the Dayak Meratus community from Bidukun Hamlet attended, representing sixteen enrolled children. The activity occurred on August 26, 2024, at Malinau Village Hall, supported by authorities.

The discussion outlined practical guidance for strengthening educational social capital within families. Parents expressed strong concern for education, yet limited time constrained daily interactions. Agricultural labor demands reduced parental presence, particularly during mornings before school. Despite challenges, mothers demonstrated consistent efforts supporting children’s schooling and basic needs.



Figure 2. Focus Group Discussion

Social marketing was also implemented through poster distribution to community service participants. Each participant received three full color A3 posters displayed in visible household spaces. The posters provided daily practical guidance fostering trust, hope, and parent–child closeness. One poster detailed nineteen practices enabling parents to cultivate trust within families (Figure 3). Another poster promoted emotional closeness and outlined seven strategies for building educational hope (Figure 4). These materials functioned as social marketing media supporting sustained behavioral change.



Figure 3. Sowing Children’s Trust Poster



Figure 4. Maintaining Closeness and Building Hope Poster

Social marketing was also conducted through regular weekly home visits to participants. Visits were scheduled during afternoons to match participants' agricultural working routines. Most participants returned from fields near sunset, making this timing socially appropriate. Researchers and field assistants conducted eight structured home visits. During visits, participants were reminded to practice guidance presented in posters. Guidelines were generally applied when parents spent time at home with their children.

4. Effectiveness of Program

Program effectiveness was evaluated using pretest and posttest measurements. The posttest involved research assistants and field facilitators assessing target participants. Student assessments followed the pretest procedure, involving teachers from SDN Malinau. Descriptive comparisons between pretest and posttest scores are presented in Table 5.

Table 5. Descriptive Comparison of Pretest and Post-test Statistics of Family Social Capital, Engagement, and Academic Performance

Code	Item	Pretest	Post-test
Intention			
INT_1	I intend to increase the duration of discussions about school with my child next week.	2.375	2.810
INT_2	I will increase the time spent discussing school with my child next week.	2.313	3.560
INT_3	I plan to increase the time allocated to discussing school with my child next week.	2.313	3.810
Total		2.333	3.400
Attitude			
ATT_1	In my opinion, discussing school with my child is meaningful.	2.938	3.000

Code	Item	Pretest	Post-test
ATT_2	In my opinion, discussing school with my child is important.	2.750	3.060
ATT_3	Discussing school with my child is boring.	2.125	2.940
ATT_4	I feel comfortable discussing school matters with my child.	2.750	2.810
ATT_5	Discussing school with my child is enjoyable.	2.813	2.940
ATT_6	Discussing school with my child will be beneficial.	2.250	2.810
ATT_7	Discussing school with my child is a good activity.	2.313	3.190
	Total	2.563	2.960
Norm			
NOR_1	Discussing school with my child is valuable.	2.625	3.000
NOR_2	My friends should discuss school matters with their children.	2.625	3.060
NOR_3	I support my friends who discuss school with their children.	2.625	3.000
NOR_4	I am willing to engage if my friends want to discuss our children's schooling.	2.563	3.500
	Total	2.610	3.140
Engagement			
ENG_1	Students participate in learning activities.	2.250	2.250
ENG_2	Students pay attention when the teacher explains.	2.310	2.500
ENG_3	Students' involvement in school activities.	2.440	2.880
ENG_4	Students talk with teachers about learning.	2.440	2.500
	Total	2.360	2.530
Academic Performance			
ACP_1	Students' achievement in learning meets established standards.	2.250	2.690
ACP_2	Students complete learning tasks.	2.310	2.560
ACP_3	Students fulfill their responsibilities in learning.	2.440	2.690
ACP_4	Students can complete tasks properly as expected.	2.440	2.380
	Total	2.360	2.580

Pretest and posttest results were analyzed using the Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test. Findings confirmed statistically significant improvements across all dimensions of family social capital. Significance was indicated by Asymp. Sig. values below the 0.05 threshold. Thus, the program effectively strengthened parental intentions, attitudes, and subjective norms.

Despite improvements, changes in student engagement and academic performance were not statistically significant. Wilcoxon test results showed significance values exceeding the 0.05 criterion. Although mean scores increased after intervention, statistical evidence did not confirm significance. These outcomes are presented and summarized in Table 6.

Table 6. Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test

	Intention	Attitude	Norm	Engagement	Academic Performance
Z	-3.433 ^b	-3.358 ^b	-3.131 ^b	-1.667 ^b	-1.414 ^b
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	0.001	0.001	0.002	0.096	0.157

a. Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test

b. Based on negative ranks

In addition to statistical significance, the magnitude of the intervention’s impact was evaluated using effect size analysis. Effect sizes were calculated using the formula $r = Z \text{ divided by the square root of } N$, providing insight into the practical significance of the findings. The results are presented in Table 7.

Table 7. Effect Sizes of the Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test

Variable	Z	p-value	Effect Size (r)	Magnitude
Intention	-3.433	0.001	0.81	Large
Attitude	-3.358	0.001	0.79	Large
Subjective Norm	-3.131	0.002	0.74	Large
Student Engagement	-1.667	0.096	0.39	Medium
Academic Performance	-1.414	0.157	0.33	Medium

To determine the magnitude of the intervention’s impact, effect sizes were calculated using the formula $r = Z \text{ divided by the square root of } N$. The results indicated large effect sizes for parental intention ($r = 0.81$), attitude ($r = 0.79$), and subjective norm ($r = 0.74$), demonstrating the substantial effectiveness of the social marketing intervention in strengthening educational social capital. Meanwhile, student engagement ($r = 0.39$) and academic performance ($r = 0.33$) showed medium effect sizes, suggesting meaningful practical improvements despite the absence of statistical significance.

Discussions

1. Social Marketing Strategy

The findings demonstrate that social marketing serves as an effective strategy for strengthening educational social capital within indigenous communities. The intervention, implemented through direct engagement, focus group discussions, poster campaigns, and structured home visits, successfully fostered parental awareness and involvement. These approaches align with direct marketing principles that emphasize interpersonal communication and audience responsiveness (Key & Czapski, 2017). Within the broader promotion mix, such strategies represent core components of contemporary social marketing interventions (Kotler & Armstrong, 2023; Lang et al., 2022; Mangold & Faulds, 2009).

From a strategic perspective, the program reflects the application of the marketing mix framework, which encompasses product, price, place, and promotion. In this study, the product refers to parental behaviors that support children's education, while price includes both financial and social considerations. Place denotes the household and school environments where behavioral changes occur, and promotion involves persuasive communication through educational posters and discussions. This alignment with the marketing mix underscores the adaptability and effectiveness of social marketing in educational settings (Teske et al., 2022).

Despite the absence of digital media due to limited internet access, the intervention proved effective through culturally responsive and contextually grounded communication. Previous studies highlight the growing importance of digital technologies in enhancing social marketing effectiveness (Flaherty et al., 2021; Putkonen et al., 2024). However, the present study demonstrates that traditional communication methods remain impactful when tailored to the sociocultural characteristics of target communities.

2. Social Marketing Effects on Educational Social Capital

The results indicate that social marketing significantly strengthened educational social capital among Dayak Meratus families. Improvements in parental intentions, attitudes, and subjective norms confirm the effectiveness of the intervention in promoting supportive educational behaviors. These findings are consistent with prior research demonstrating that social marketing contributes to behavioral change and social wellbeing across diverse contexts (Gordon et al., 2006; Stead et al., 2007).

The large effect sizes observed in parental intention, attitude, and subjective norms further underscore the practical significance of the intervention. These results align with the Theory of Planned Behavior, which posits that behavioral intentions are shaped by attitudes and social norms (David & Rundle Thiele, 2018). By influencing these determinants, social marketing effectively fostered parental engagement and strengthened family based educational support.

The study also reinforces the role of social capital in educational achievement. Parental expectations, trust, and communication have been shown to influence students' academic success and educational aspirations (Israel et al., 2001; Sandefur et al., 2006). Thus, strengthening family educational social capital represents a sustainable pathway for improving educational outcomes in marginalized communities.

3. Implications for Student Engagement and Academic Performance

Although student engagement and academic performance showed positive trends, the improvements were not statistically significant. This finding suggests that changes in academic outcomes require longer periods to manifest. Educational development is inherently cumulative, and the effects of strengthened family support often emerge over time. Similar studies indicate that parental involvement contributes to long term educational success rather than immediate academic gains.

Nevertheless, the medium effect sizes observed in these variables indicate meaningful practical improvements. These findings highlight the indirect influence of social marketing interventions on students through enhanced parental engagement. As family support becomes more consistent, its long term impact on student achievement is expected to become more evident.

4. Theoretical and Practical Contributions

This study offers significant contributions to the literature. Theoretically, it extends social marketing theory into the domain of educational social capital within indigenous contexts, an area that remains underexplored. Methodologically, it demonstrates the effectiveness of integrating participatory action research with social marketing to foster sustainable behavioral change. Practically, the findings provide culturally responsive strategies for policymakers, educators, and community stakeholders seeking to promote educational equity and inclusion among marginalized populations.

Furthermore, the study highlights the importance of community based interventions in addressing educational disparities. By positioning families as central agents of change, the

research underscores the transformative potential of social marketing in advancing inclusive and sustainable education.

Conclusion

This study demonstrates that social marketing is an effective mechanism for strengthening educational social capital among indigenous families, particularly within the Dayak Meratus community in South Kalimantan, Indonesia. The findings reveal statistically significant improvements in parental intentions, attitudes, and subjective norms following the intervention, confirming the effectiveness of culturally responsive and community based strategies in fostering supportive family environments for children's education. By integrating participatory action research with social marketing, this study highlights the importance of empowering families as key agents in promoting sustainable educational development and enhancing parental engagement in marginalized communities.

Although student engagement and academic performance showed positive trends, the changes were not statistically significant, indicating that academic outcomes require sustained interventions and longer implementation periods. Nevertheless, the observed practical impacts suggest promising long term benefits of strengthened family support. This study contributes theoretically to the advancement of social marketing and educational social capital literature within indigenous contexts, methodologically to the application of participatory action research, and practically to the development of culturally grounded strategies for policymakers and educators seeking to promote educational equity and inclusive development. Future research is recommended to involve larger samples, longitudinal designs, and broader implementation across diverse indigenous communities.

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