

INTEGRATION OF ECO CULTURE VALUES FOR THE ACHIEVEMENT OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT: AN ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL PERSPECTIVE

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Abstract

Sustainable development is a concept that integrates three main pillars: economic, social and environmental, to ensure the well-being of future generations. One approach that can support the achievement of sustainable development goals is through the integration of ecological cultural values or 'eco culture'. These values include the principles of living in harmony with nature, wise utilisation of resources, and environmental conservation in a cultural and social context. This article discusses the relevance of integrating eco culture values in the context of achieving sustainable development by highlighting environmental and social perspectives. The link between *eco culture* and Islamic economics is very strong, especially in terms of sustainable management of natural resources, social justice, and ethics in economic transactions. With a culture-based approach, sustainable development is not only seen as a technical and economic issue, but also as a collective effort involving the community and local cultural values that support sustainability.

Keyword: *Cultural Values, Eco Culture, Environmental, Social Perspective, Sustainable Development*

A. INTRODUCTION

Sustainable development is now at the top of the global agenda to address increasingly complex environmental, social and economic challenges. In order to meet the requirements of the present generation without compromising the potential of future generations, the notion of sustainable development emphasizes the significance of human resources that behave responsibly toward the environment. The sustainable development goals (SDGs) agreed by UN member states emphasise the importance of maintaining a balance between human needs, social welfare and environmental protection. According to Prugh (1995), humans must pay attention to ecology in order to meet their needs, through responsible use of natural resources and distancing themselves from value-free perspectives. This behaviour is in line with *eco culture*.

The basic value of *eco culture* teaches humans to not only look at economic development in terms of unlimited natural resource utilisation, but also to pay attention to ecological balance. This becomes very relevant considering that the uncontrolled use of natural resources can lead to a decrease in the quality of human life. A UNICEF report states that around 920 million children experience high exposure to water scarcity (UNICEF, 2021) while global warming has exacerbated the problem of drought and water crisis in many regions (World Water Development, 2024). In line with this, FAO (*Food and Agriculture Organisation*) reports, every year about 10 million hectares of forest are lost due to deforestation, which contributes to deteriorating air quality and increasing greenhouse gas emissions. In addition, about 34% of the world's fish population is already in a state of *overfishing*, which threatens the sustainability of marine ecosystems (FAO, 2020).

Eco culture teaches about the harmonious relationship between humans and nature, and the importance of wise management of natural resources to achieve overall sustainability. Achieving the SDGs in Indonesia faces a wide range of focussed challenges that require coordinated efforts by a wide range of actors. The report emphasises that successful achievement of the SDGs requires a strong commitment by

government, the private sector, civil society (Usman, 2024). This is in line with Islamic economics which teaches balance in all things (Wasathiyyah) including in terms of consumption and use of natural resources. The use of resources must be done in an efficient and non-destructive way, because Allah loves those who do no damage on earth. In Islamic history, there are many examples that teach about sustainable agricultural practices (Ijtima'iyah), such as wise irrigation and land management in the Khilafah era. This concept can be applied in *eco culture* to ensure that human activities do not damage the environment, but rather preserve and manage resources wisely.

One relevant approach is the application of the values of eco culture, which includes ecological principles that have long been applied in daily life by various communities in the world. Eco culture, in this context, refers to the recognition and application of cultural values related to nature conservation and sustainable management of natural resources. In this article, we will analyse how the integration of eco culture values can contribute to the achievement of sustainable development, both from an environmental and social perspective.

B. LITERATURE REVIEW

Sustainable Development: Environmental and Social Perspectives

Sustainable development, according to the Brundtland Report (1987), is growth that can satisfy current needs without jeopardizing the capacity of future generations to satisfy their own. This concept involves three main pillars: environmental, economic, and social. However, from this perspective, it is important to emphasise that sustainable development is not only a technical and economic issue, but also closely related to the social and cultural dimensions of society.

Sustainable development from an environmental perspective emphasises the importance of preserving ecosystems, managing natural resources wisely, and reducing negative impacts on the environment. Meanwhile, from a social perspective, sustainable development includes poverty alleviation, social welfare improvement, gender equality, and empowerment of local communities. In this context, local cultural values - including eco culture - can act as a key driver in creating sustainable solutions based on local wisdom.

Case Studies: Eco Culture Integration in Some Countries

Indonesia: Customary-based Forest Management

In Indonesia, many indigenous communities have developed forest management systems based on local wisdom. For example, in Kalimantan, Dayak communities have long managed forests sustainably with *customary forest* principles that regulate logging and other natural resource utilisation. This model has proven effective in maintaining the sustainability of forest ecosystems and improving community welfare. In addition, in Indonesia, not only in cultural centers, the eco-culture approach has been applied, since the past such as Rumoh Aceh until now the housing industry such as PT Citra Residence as the one who implements the eco-culture approach in buildings (Vania, et al, 2022: 128). And The SDGs emphasise the 5Ps: People, Planet, Peace, Prosperity, and Partnerships (Arif Sofianto, 2019:26). The SDGs have 17 goals and 169 targets, in contrast to the MDGs, which only have 7 goals and 21 targets which only has 7 goals and 21 targets. In terms of process, the MDGs have from drafting to implementation are exclusive and highly bureaucratic without involving non-governmental organisations, such as civil society organisations, the private business sector, and other groups in Indonesia organisations, the private business sector, and other groups in Indonesia. The SDGs are an integrated and comprehensive effort (Adi Nawir, 2022).

Japan: The Concept of Satoyama in Daily Life

In Japan, the concept of *satoyama* refers to a system of agriculture and land management that maintains a balance between humans and nature. In certain areas, this concept is applied to preserve

biodiversity and maintain environmental quality. Communities that apply satoyama values also tend to have a more sustainable and environmentally-friendly lifestyle.

In the context of sustainable development, the concepts of *eco culture* and *Islamic economics* are closely related, although they come from different traditions. *Eco culture* refers to a culture of life that respects nature and promotes ecosystem sustainability, while Islamic economics is an economic system based on the principles of Islamic teachings, including ethics in economic transactions, resource management, and social welfare. Although both emerged in different contexts, there are many common values that can be used as the basis for building synergies between the two in order to create a just, prosperous and sustainable society.

C. METHOD

This research uses a qualitative approach that aims to understand symptoms that do not require quantification. According to John W. Creswell in the book *Research Design*, One way to characterize, investigate, and comprehend the significance that various people or groups of people assign to social or humanitarian issues is through qualitative research methods. Important efforts are made during the qualitative research process, including asking questions and following protocols, gathering particular data from participants, inductively analyzing the data to identify broad themes, and interpreting the data's significance. The structure or outline of the research's final report is adaptable. Anyone conducting this type of research should interpret the intricacy of topics, concentrate on personal significance, and use an inductive research viewpoint. (Creswell 2013:4-5).

This research uses the Systematic Literature Review (SLR) method. The SLR method is a term for a way of identifying, evaluating, and interpreting all available research that is relevant to the formulation of the problem or topic area under study. The process of finding, evaluating, and interpreting all available study material in order to provide answers to particular research questions is known as SLR.

SLR research is conducted to identify, evaluate and interpret all relevant research results related to a specific research question, a specific topic, or a phenomenon of concern. The purpose of this SLR research is to find strategies that will help overcome the problem at hand and identify different perspectives related to the problem being studied and reveal theories that are relevant to the case in this study which examines more deeply the Integration of Eco Culture Values for Achieving Sustainable Development: An Environmental and Social Perspective

D. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Eco culture refers to a lifestyle and cultural values that place nature and the environment as an integral part of human life. In contrast to conventional development paradigms that often prioritise the exploitation of natural resources for economic growth, eco culture promotes harmony between humans and nature. The concept emphasises the importance of respect for natural cycles, biodiversity and sustainable use of resources.

The values of eco culture can be found in various local traditions around the world, such as the concept of *sustainable farming* in organic agriculture, forest management based on local wisdom, and rituals that respect nature. Thus, eco culture not only prioritises environmental conservation, but also involves social and cultural aspects that bind people in a harmonious relationship with nature.

One of the biggest contributions of eco culture to sustainable development is in preserving the environment. Many indigenous and local communities have been applying the principles of sustainable natural resource management for a long time. An example is the terraced farming system applied by farmers in Bali, which not only optimises agricultural yields, but also maintains the balance of nature and prevents soil erosion. In addition, some indigenous communities also have local wisdom-based forest management systems that prevent deforestation and preserve biodiversity. Eco culture also plays a role in reducing carbon footprints by prioritising a low-emission lifestyle, such as using renewable energy or avoiding the consumption of goods that

damage the environment. On a larger scale, the application of eco culture principles in public policy can encourage the creation of a more environmentally friendly society that is responsive to climate change.

From a social perspective, eco culture can strengthen social solidarity and empower local communities. By involving communities in natural resource management and development decision-making, the principles of eco culture promote self-reliance and community welfare. In many places, the implementation of ecosystem-based local economic systems, such as ecotourism or nature-based handicraft products, not only provides economic benefits, but also maintains local cultural identity. In Farmi Irhamsyah (2019:51), as a global issue, the SDGs must be addressed wisely. Because there is a saying that as a nation we need to “think globally, act locally”.

In addition, eco culture also supports social inclusiveness by encouraging the involvement of all levels of society, including marginalised groups, in the development process. This culture-based approach can raise public awareness about the importance of nature conservation and encourage behavioural change towards a more sustainable lifestyle.

Ecoculture is a new focal concept that reflects the inseparability of nature and culture. Ecoculture refers to the connectedness and relationship between places, making it a productive academic framework that challenges dominant anthropocentric ideologies and emphasises the relationship between people, cultures and their ecosystems. This method has been critically operationalised (Melisa, 2020). Ecoculture plays an important role in raising awareness and inspiring environmental advocacy, thus making it an indispensable discipline to face the ecological challenges of our time (B Azkahluth, 2023:2)

In Supriatna, Nana (2016: 212), Goleman and Barlow suggest that the concept of *ecoliteracy* and *ecoculture* as an integration of emotional, social, and ecological intelligence, where these three aspects are divided into five important points, one of which is *embracing sustainably as community practice*.

In both *eco culture* and Islamic economics, there is a strong emphasis on human responsibility to preserve nature. In Islam, the earth and everything in it is a trust from God that must be maintained by mankind. In the Qur'an, Allah says:

‘And it is He who has made everything on earth useful for you.’ (QS. Al-Baqarah: 29)

This principle is in line with *eco culture*, which considers that nature is not only to be utilised, but also to be preserved. This leads to sustainable management of natural resources and the adoption of an environmentally friendly lifestyle. In achieving the SDGs, there needs to be a combination of performance from the agricultural environment, trade (business) and financial institutions. And this has been made easier because the Islamic financial forum has implemented sharia contracts using the form of existing products. With the application of products using sharia contracts, the Islamic financial forum in Indonesia has begun to show the role that Islamic economics is able to support the realisation of SDGs in a country that is known for its dominant Muslim population (Eny Latifah, 2022)

The implementation of Islamic economics and *eco culture* values has resulted in a more sustainable economic system. For example, in sharia-based organic farming systems, farmers use farming techniques that do not damage the soil and minimise the use of chemical pesticides. They also pay attention to social welfare by ensuring fair prices for their products and sharing the harvest with neighbouring communities. In addition, an Islamic economic model that supports green industry or renewable energy can also create jobs, reduce dependence on fossil energy, and preserve nature, which is at the core of *eco culture*.

E. CONCLUSION

The integration of eco culture values has great potential to support the achievement of sustainable development. By combining environmental and social perspectives, eco culture can be a strong foundation for creating a harmonious, sustainable and responsive society to global challenges. Therefore, a concerted effort is needed from various parties to promote eco culture values in development policies and daily life, to ensure a better future for future generations.

The link between *eco culture* and Islamic economics is very strong, especially in terms of sustainable management of natural resources, social justice, and ethics in economic transactions. These two concepts can complement each other to create a more equitable and environmentally friendly economic system. By integrating these principles in development policies, a prosperous, just and sustainable society can be created, in accordance with the main objectives of sustainable development.

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