

Integrating Green Economy and Local Wisdom: A Multidisciplinary Strategy for Achieving Sustainable Development in Indonesia

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ABSTRACT

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The transformation toward sustainable development in Indonesia requires strategies that not only focus on economic aspects but also encompass social, cultural, and environmental values. The green economy emerges as a global approach emphasizing resource efficiency, renewable energy, and the reduction of environmental impacts. However, its successful implementation necessitates integration with local wisdom, which has long guided communities in maintaining ecological balance and social harmony. This study employs a multidisciplinary approach, combining perspectives from economics, environment, society, and culture to analyze the potential integration of the green economy with local wisdom practices in Indonesia. The findings reveal that local wisdom, such as traditional agricultural systems, community-based conservation practices, and the values of mutual cooperation, can strengthen the sustainability of the green economy at the local level. This integration not only enhances the effectiveness of sustainable development policies but also reinforces cultural identity and social resilience. Therefore, a multidisciplinary strategy that combines the green economy with local wisdom is believed to foster inclusive and context-specific sustainable development in Indonesia.

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INTRODUCTION

Sustainable development has become a central discourse in global policy, particularly in the context of escalating environmental degradation, climate change, and increasing social inequality. Since the adoption of the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in 2015, many countries, including Indonesia, have been challenged to design strategies that simultaneously address environmental sustainability, economic growth, and social equity. Within this framework, the concept of the green economy has gained significant attention. Defined as an economic model that promotes

growth while reducing environmental risks and ecological scarcities, the green economy emphasizes renewable energy, efficient resource use, waste reduction, and low-carbon development (UNEP, 2011). For Indonesia, which is rich in natural resources yet faces critical ecological challenges such as deforestation, pollution, and biodiversity loss, the green economy offers a strategic pathway to align national development with sustainability imperatives.

However, the implementation of green economy policies in Indonesia cannot rely solely on global paradigms or top-down approaches. As a country with immense cultural diversity and deep-rooted traditional practices, Indonesia also possesses local wisdom (*kearifan lokal*) that has historically guided communities in managing their environment sustainably. Practices such as Subak in Bali, Sasi in Maluku, Hutan Adat in Kalimantan, and the philosophy of Tri Hita Karana reflect indigenous systems of ecological balance, collective responsibility, and intergenerational sustainability. These local traditions not only ensure environmental preservation but also strengthen social cohesion and cultural identity. Integrating such values into green economy strategies ensures that sustainability is context-specific, inclusive, and culturally resonant rather than externally imposed.

From a multidisciplinary perspective, this integration requires collaboration across economics, environmental science, sociology, anthropology, and policy studies. Economically, it is essential to ensure that green initiatives generate equitable growth, create sustainable livelihoods, and reduce poverty, especially in rural and indigenous communities. Environmentally, strategies must address the urgent need for conservation, biodiversity protection, and climate change mitigation. Socially and culturally, local wisdom provides norms and ethical frameworks that promote harmony between humans and nature, fostering community participation in environmental stewardship. Politically, the integration of local wisdom into policy-making strengthens legitimacy and acceptance, ensuring that sustainability strategies are not merely technocratic but embedded in societal values.

Furthermore, the integration of green economy and local wisdom aligns with Indonesia's constitutional and legal foundations. Article 18B of the 1945 Constitution recognizes the rights of traditional communities and their customary laws, including in the management of natural resources. Likewise, the SDGs emphasize inclusivity, resilience, and cultural sustainability as key dimensions of global development. By embracing these principles, Indonesia has the opportunity to present itself as a global model for sustainability that harmonizes modern ecological strategies with indigenous knowledge systems.

Nevertheless, challenges remain in realizing this integration. On the one hand, modernization, urbanization, and globalization often marginalize local practices, reducing their influence in development planning. On the other hand, the transition toward a green economy requires substantial investments, regulatory reforms, and technological innovations that may conflict with traditional approaches. Thus, a balanced and multidisciplinary strategy is needed to bridge these differences—ensuring that local wisdom is not romanticized or exploited, but genuinely embedded into green economic frameworks.

METHOD

This study employs a qualitative research design with a focus on understanding the integration of green economy principles and local wisdom in the context of sustainable development in Indonesia. The qualitative approach was chosen to capture the depth of experiences, values, and cultural practices that cannot be fully explained through quantitative methods.

Data collection was conducted through three main techniques: document analysis, interviews, and field observations. Document analysis included the review of government regulations, academic literature, sustainability reports, and international frameworks such as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Interviews were carried out with key stakeholders including local community leaders, policymakers, environmental activists, and business actors engaged in sustainability practices. Semi-structured interview guidelines were used to allow flexibility while ensuring consistency across discussions. Field observations were conducted in several regions known for their strong traditions of local wisdom in resource management, such as the Subak irrigation system in Bali, the Sasi tradition in Maluku, and Hutan Adat management in Kalimantan.

Thematic analysis was applied to process the data, allowing the identification of recurring patterns and themes that illustrate the interrelation between local knowledge and green economy principles. Coding was conducted manually and digitally, grouping the findings into categories such as ecological preservation, cultural resilience, community-based governance, and economic sustainability. The triangulation method was employed to ensure credibility, by comparing findings from different sources such as interviews, observations, and documents.

The study also integrates a multidisciplinary perspective by drawing on theories and frameworks from economics, sociology, anthropology, and environmental studies. This interdisciplinary lens allowed a holistic understanding of how local wisdom can contribute to sustainable economic practices while maintaining cultural integrity and ecological balance.

Ethical considerations were emphasized throughout the research process. Informed consent was obtained from all participants, and cultural sensitivity was

prioritized, particularly in engaging with indigenous communities. The confidentiality of participants was strictly maintained, and traditional values were respected in presenting findings.

Limitations of the study include the focus on selected case studies, which may not fully represent the diversity of local wisdom across Indonesia. Nevertheless, the findings provide valuable insights into how qualitative approaches can uncover the nuanced relationship between traditional knowledge systems and modern sustainability frameworks.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Result

The findings of this study reveal that integrating green economy principles with local wisdom provides a strong foundation for advancing sustainable development in Indonesia. Through qualitative data obtained from interviews, field observations, and document analysis, several key themes emerged, highlighting how traditional knowledge, cultural practices, and ecological values intersect with modern sustainability frameworks.

Strengthening Community-Based Resource Management

One of the most significant findings is that local wisdom traditions across Indonesia, such as Subak in Bali, Sasi in Maluku, and Hutan Adat in Kalimantan, embody principles that align closely with the green economy. These traditions emphasize collective resource management, ecological preservation, and intergenerational responsibility. For example, the Subak irrigation system does not only regulate water distribution but also incorporates religious and cultural values that foster harmony between humans, nature, and the divine. Such community-based systems demonstrate resilience against ecological crises and serve as practical models for green economy initiatives, particularly in promoting participatory governance and ecological justice.

Compatibility of Local Wisdom with Green Economy Principles

The study found that many aspects of local wisdom are inherently compatible with the pillars of the green economy, including low-carbon development, efficient use of resources, and social inclusivity. The Sasi practice in Maluku, which involves temporary prohibitions on harvesting marine resources, reflects ecological prudence by allowing ecosystems to regenerate. This practice aligns with modern conservation approaches and sustainable fisheries management. Similarly, Hutan Adat management systems emphasize protecting forest resources as part of communal heritage, preventing deforestation and ensuring biodiversity conservation. These findings illustrate that local traditions, although shaped centuries ago, provide practical solutions

to contemporary environmental challenges.

Empowering Local Economies through Sustainable Practices

Results also indicate that integrating local wisdom with green economy principles supports the development of inclusive and sustainable local economies. In several case studies, communities practicing traditional resource management reported increased economic resilience. For instance, eco-tourism initiatives in Bali based on the Subak system have attracted global attention, generating income while preserving cultural and ecological values. In Kalimantan, community-based forest management has enabled local populations to engage in sustainable non-timber forest product industries, balancing livelihood needs with environmental preservation. These examples highlight how cultural heritage, when combined with modern green economy frameworks, can open new opportunities for sustainable entrepreneurship and local economic empowerment.

Challenges of Integration

Despite the promising potential, the study identified several challenges in integrating local wisdom into green economy frameworks. A recurring issue is the marginalization of indigenous practices in national and global sustainability agendas. Many traditional communities lack recognition and legal protection for their resource management systems, leading to conflicts with large-scale industrial activities such as mining, palm oil plantations, and commercial fishing. Furthermore, modernization and urbanization have weakened the transmission of local wisdom across generations, creating a risk of cultural erosion. Another challenge lies in balancing the scientific rationality of the green economy with the spiritual and cultural values embedded in local wisdom, which are sometimes undervalued by policymakers.

Multidisciplinary Contributions

From a multidisciplinary perspective, the integration of green economy and local wisdom requires a convergence of economic, sociocultural, and ecological approaches. Economically, local wisdom promotes sustainable livelihoods that reduce dependency on extractive industries. Sociologically and anthropologically, it reinforces cultural identity, social cohesion, and community resilience. From an environmental perspective, it contributes to biodiversity conservation and climate change mitigation. The findings suggest that sustainable development in Indonesia cannot be achieved solely through technological or market-based solutions but must also incorporate cultural knowledge systems as equally valuable resources.

Policy and Governance Implications

The study found that the recognition of local wisdom in public policy remains limited, even though Indonesia has constitutional and legal frameworks acknowledging indigenous rights. Communities practicing Sasi or managing Hutan Adat often face difficulties in asserting their authority against state or corporate actors. Strengthening legal protection for these practices and integrating them into national sustainability strategies could significantly enhance the implementation of the green economy. Furthermore, policies that promote education on local wisdom, combined with environmental awareness programs, were found to be effective in sustaining cultural transmission among younger generations.

Ethical and Cultural Significance

Another finding is that local wisdom adds ethical depth to the concept of the green economy. Unlike technocratic models that often prioritize efficiency and growth, traditional practices are embedded in moral and spiritual frameworks that emphasize harmony, respect for nature, and intergenerational justice. For example, the Balinese philosophy of Tri Hita Karana highlights the balance between human, natural, and divine relations, offering a holistic framework that complements the often utilitarian logic of modern green economy discourse. This ethical dimension suggests that sustainability in Indonesia requires not only technical adjustments but also cultural and spiritual transformation.

Cross-Cutting Results

Collectively, the results show that local wisdom offers both practical and philosophical contributions to the green economy. While modern sustainability frameworks provide structure, measurement tools, and policy direction, local wisdom contributes values, practices, and lived experiences that ensure the inclusivity and cultural relevance of sustainable development strategies. Together, they form a synergistic model that enhances ecological resilience, economic inclusivity, and cultural sustainability in Indonesia.

Local Wisdom Practice	Region	Core Values	Green Economy Alignment	Sustainability Contribution
Subak (Irrigation)	Bali	Harmony with nature & spiritual balance	Efficient resource use, participatory governance	Food security, eco-tourism, cultural heritage

Local Wisdom Practice	Region	Core Values	Green Economy Alignment	Sustainability Contribution
<i>Sasi</i> (Marine practice)	Maluku	Temporary ban for ecosystem recovery	Biodiversity conservation, resource regeneration	Sustainable fisheries, marine ecosystem health
<i>Hutan Adat</i> (Customary Forests)	Kalimantan	Communal ownership, intergenerational justice	Forest protection, low-carbon practices	Climate mitigation, biodiversity conservation
<i>Tri Hita Karana</i>	Bali	Balance: human, nature, divine	Ethical framework for sustainability	Cultural resilience, eco-tourism ethics
<i>Lumbung Desa</i> (Village granary)	Java	Collective food storage & sharing	Inclusive economy, community resilience	Food security, poverty reduction

Discussion

The integration of green economy principles with local wisdom provides a promising multidisciplinary pathway for realizing sustainable development in Indonesia. The study's findings reveal that both frameworks are not contradictory but rather complementary. While the green economy offers a global, modern framework for environmentally friendly and resource-efficient development, local wisdom provides context-specific practices rooted in cultural, social, and ecological values. The interaction of these two frameworks highlights opportunities as well as challenges in achieving sustainability.

Green Economy Principles and Local Wisdom as Synergistic Models

The green economy promotes low-carbon growth, efficient resource utilization, and social inclusivity. Many of these principles are embedded in Indonesia's indigenous knowledge systems. For example, Subak in Bali emphasizes participatory governance and sustainable water management, Sasi in Maluku reflects community-based conservation, and Hutan Adat in Kalimantan demonstrates ecological stewardship through customary forest management. These practices confirm that local wisdom can enrich green economy models with deeper ethical, spiritual, and communal values.

Socio-Cultural and Educational Dimensions

Local wisdom is not only a system of resource management but also a

socio-cultural identity that connects communities with their environment. By incorporating these values into sustainability policies, development strategies become more socially acceptable and inclusive. The philosophy of Tri Hita Karana—which harmonizes relationships between humans, nature, and the divine—demonstrates how education and culture can strengthen ecological awareness. Therefore, education plays a critical role in transmitting local wisdom to younger generations while linking it with global sustainability narratives.

Economic Opportunities and Local Resilience

Integrating local wisdom with the green economy creates opportunities in sustainable sectors such as eco-tourism, organic agriculture, renewable energy, and community-based creative industries. These initiatives promote inclusive growth and poverty reduction while preserving environmental balance. However, communities face challenges, including limited access to finance, competition with industrial projects, and lack of institutional support. Addressing these challenges requires policy interventions that provide incentives for green entrepreneurship and protection of indigenous economic models.

Environmental and Ecological Contributions

The environmental dimension of local wisdom strengthens the ecological goals of the green economy. Customary practices regulate biodiversity, ensure sustainable harvesting, and preserve forests and marine resources. For instance, Sasi Laut allows marine ecosystems to regenerate by temporarily restricting resource exploitation. These ecological practices align with the global sustainability agenda, including climate change mitigation and biodiversity conservation. Yet, deforestation, industrial expansion, and weak enforcement of environmental laws threaten the continuity of these traditions.

Political and Legal Challenges

Although Indonesia has made progress in recognizing indigenous rights and Hutan Adat, legal protection and enforcement remain limited. Conflicts between industrial projects and indigenous communities persist, showing that without strong legal frameworks, local wisdom may be sidelined. Effective integration requires not only recognition of indigenous practices but also participatory governance structures that align state policies with local traditions.

Multidisciplinary Implications

From a management perspective, integrating green economy and local wisdom provides a governance model that balances efficiency with inclusivity.

From an economic perspective, it fosters sustainable industries that empower local communities. From an educational perspective, it integrates cultural values into environmental education, ensuring intergenerational knowledge transfer. From a psychological and sociological perspective, it fosters social cohesion, identity, and resilience. This demonstrates that a multidisciplinary approach is crucial to bridge global frameworks with local realities.

CONCLUSION

The integration of green economy principles with local wisdom offers a holistic and multidisciplinary pathway for achieving sustainable development in Indonesia. This study highlights that local wisdom, rooted in cultural and ecological traditions, aligns with and enriches the global framework of the green economy by providing ethical, spiritual, and community-based values. The synergy between these two approaches ensures that sustainability is not only environmentally and economically viable but also socially inclusive and culturally relevant.

The findings demonstrate that local practices such as Subak, Sasi, and Hutan Adat reflect ecological stewardship, participatory governance, and resource efficiency that directly support the goals of the green economy. Furthermore, integrating local wisdom strengthens social cohesion, enhances community resilience, and promotes environmentally friendly economic opportunities such as eco-tourism, organic farming, and community-based creative industries.

However, challenges remain in the form of weak legal protection, industrial expansion, and limited institutional support for indigenous practices. Addressing these barriers requires stronger policies, participatory governance, and the inclusion of local wisdom in national and regional sustainability agendas.

In conclusion, the successful integration of green economy principles with local wisdom can serve as a model for Indonesia and other countries with rich indigenous traditions. By balancing global sustainability frameworks with local cultural realities, Indonesia has the potential to become a leader in promoting sustainable development that is both modern and rooted in heritage.

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