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## Integration of Continuing Education in Indigenous Communities in East Kalimantan

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**Abstract:** This study aims to explore the integration of sustainable education in indigenous communities in East Kalimantan, known for their rich culture and local wisdom. Indigenous groups such as the Dayak and Kutai possess traditional practices aligned with sustainability principles, yet these are not well accommodated in formal education. This study employed a qualitative case study approach involving customary leaders, teachers, and educational stakeholders. The findings reveal that sustainable education incorporating local values enhances the relevance of learning, community participation, and environmental preservation. Indigenous institutions play a vital role in developing culturally based curricula and addressing both social and ecological issues. Government support and regulation are also crucial through inclusive policies and recognition of customary law. This study concludes that synergy between communities, educational institutions, and the government forms the foundation for a sustainable education system rooted in local wisdom and responsive to future development challenges.

**Keywords:** Sustainable Education, Indigenous Communities, East Kalimantan, Local Wisdom, Indigenous Institutions

### INTRODUCTION

East Kalimantan has many customs that have resulted in indigenous communities. Indigenous communities such as Dayak, Paser, and Kutai have knowledge systems, environmental values, and cultural practices that are passed down from generation to generation and are very relevant to the principles of sustainability. Unfortunately, the national education system often ignores this local potential, making education less relevant, resulting in low participation and weakening the cultural identity of younger indigenous generations.

Therefore, the The integration of sustainable education in indigenous communities in East Kalimantan is essential to ensure education remains relevant to local societal development. Especially in the midst of global challenges such as climate change, environmental degradation, and social inequality, sustainable education is becoming increasingly important, especially for

communities that live close to nature and have a spiritual relationship with their environment. Indigenous communities in East Kalimantan have actually implemented sustainability principles through traditional agricultural practices, forest conservation, and customary legal systems. However, this knowledge has not been integrated into the formal curriculum, and indigenous-based education initiatives are still limited to a small scale and have not received comprehensive policy recognition.

Sustainable education offers opportunities for indigenous communities to invest in knowledge and skills that are appropriate to the local context. For example, research by Dirhamsyah et al. shows that Dayak communities actively participate in overcoming forest and land fire disasters, indicating the importance of environmental education combined with local wisdom (Dirhamsyah et al., 2020). In addition, Arkanudin and Rupita emphasize the importance of recognizing customs and culture in supporting the sustainability of indigenous communities, which can also create a foundation for education that focuses on preserving and developing local culture (Arkanudin & Rupita, 2021).

On the other hand, Nugroho explained that the protection of indigenous peoples' rights in the context of moving the nation's capital must be considered in efforts to integrate sustainable education. This shows the need for responsive and inclusive policies that accommodate educational needs with the integration of indigenous peoples' knowledge while maintaining their cultural identity and sustainability (Nugroho et al., 2022)

By elaborating on these aspects, this article aims to explore the integration of sustainable education that is directed not only at preserving culture and the environment, but also at strengthening the role of indigenous peoples in decision-making that affects their lives. This approach is expected to be able to create a framework that supports holistic social transformation, combining traditional and modern knowledge in an effort to build a more sustainable future in East Kalimantan.

Research on "Integration of Sustainable Education in Indigenous Communities in East Kalimantan" is important to explore how sustainable education can be implemented and adapted to the needs and cultural context of local indigenous communities. This research has several urgencies: *First*, Assessing the educational needs of indigenous communities in East Kalimantan, with a focus on the challenges they face in accessing formal education, including social, economic, and cultural aspects that affect their participation in the education system. The formality of education often does not include local knowledge and makes students feel isolated (Wantik et al., 2024). Research shows that a more community-centered approach is needed to improve educational inclusion for indigenous communities (Wantik et al., 2024). *Second*, Exploring the potential for integrating local knowledge into the formal education curriculum, so that education not only functions as a tool for transferring knowledge, but also as a means to preserve the culture and local wisdom of indigenous communities. Education that does not consider the local context can lead to the neglect of existing cultural values, which are the essence of sustainable education (Qomarrullah, 2024). *Third*, Developing an inclusive education model that integrates a community-based approach by involving indigenous communities in planning and implementing educational programs. Collaboration between the government, educational institutions, and indigenous communities is a crucial step to achieve education that is in accordance with the interests and expectations of the community (Oclarit et al., 2023). *Fourth*, Identifying best practices from various contexts that can be applied to improve access and quality of education in indigenous communities. The experiences of indigenous communities in other countries with similar challenges can provide valuable insights for formulating more effective policies and practices in East Kalimantan (Talikan et al., 2024). *Fifth*, Evaluating the impact of continuing education on the social and economic lives of indigenous communities. This includes how well continuing education can improve community welfare, and whether education can be an effective empowerment tool for the younger generation (Zamzuri et al., 2023)

The objectives of the study are: *First*, to find out the integration of continuing education with indigenous communities in Kalimantan. *Second*, to find out the role model of indigenous institutions in the integration of continuing education. *Third*, to find out the support and government regulations related to the integration of continuing education in indigenous communities in East Kalimantan. Through these objectives, this study is expected to contribute to educational practices that are more responsive and relevant to the needs of indigenous communities in East Kalimantan, as well as to produce recommendations that are useful for public policies related to education. Therefore, this study is important to conduct in depth to examine how the integration of continuing education can be applied to indigenous communities in East Kalimantan.

In the study of sustainable education based on indigenous communities, there are a number of dominant theoretical frameworks that can be used as references to support understanding and implementation. These frameworks attempt to accommodate local cultural values, traditional knowledge, and sustainability principles in the context of education.

One important framework to adopt is the concept of focusing on social and cultural relationships, which is evident in the work of Davy et al. discussing access to health services for indigenous peoples. Where the importance of understanding local cultural values and beliefs is emphasized in order to provide appropriate services (Davy et al., 2016). This is relevant in the context of continuing education, where teaching must respect and understand the culture of the community concerned.

Furthermore, Wilks et al. stated that the success of education in indigenous communities is not only measured by individual academic achievement, but also by the community's ability to maintain collaborative learning traditions and share knowledge (Wilks et al., 2017). This suggests that learning methods that value local knowledge and involve Elders in the educational process should be the foundation.

Kirmayer et al. emphasize the importance of the concept of “resilience” in the context of Indigenous experiences, which connects individual experiences to collective history and identity (Kirmayer et al., 2011). This concept can be applied to create educational programs that support Indigenous resilience by integrating curricula that value their history and culture.

Moriarty et al. present the importance of a relational approach in higher education, which emphasizes connections between educators and learners based on multi-modal and relationship-based learning methods (Moriarty et al., 2025). In the context of indigenous communities, this approach can increase engagement and relevance of education by centering local knowledge.

In the context of education and decolonization, Barkaskas and Gladwin offer a pedagogical understanding that aims to decolonize education through a relationship-based framework that values Indigenous perspectives (Barkaskas & Gladwin, 2021). This suggests that the educational process must involve traditional and holistic methods, in line with the cultural norms and values of the community.

Finally, when discussing the framework that integrates traditional knowledge with educational programs, Assefa emphasizes the importance of inter-sectoral collaboration to recognize educational methodologies that focus on the history, politics, and philosophical views of local communities (Assefa, 2022). This is an important foundation in designing a curriculum that is contextual to the needs and challenges faced by indigenous communities.

Overall, the existing theoretical framework suggests the need for a culturally sensitive approach, integration of local knowledge, active collaboration with communities, and an emphasis on relational values to achieve effective continuing education for indigenous communities.

## **METHOD**

This study uses a qualitative approach with a case study type. This approach was chosen to gain an in-depth understanding of the practices, challenges, and potential of integrating

sustainable education in indigenous communities in East Kalimantan. Case studies allow researchers to explore the social and cultural context of the community holistically and contextually, especially in relation to the formal education system and local knowledge.

The subjects of the study consisted of members of indigenous communities, indigenous figures, teachers in formal schools located in indigenous community areas, school principals, representatives of the Education Office, and representatives of NGOs engaged in education and environmental conservation. The target population in this study was the indigenous Dayak Kenyah and Dayak Bahau communities living in the interior of East Kalimantan, especially in Mahakam Ulu and West Kutai Regencies. The selection of subjects was carried out purposively, taking into account their involvement in educational activities and environmental sustainability.

The research was conducted for 1 month, starting from the month. The data collection process was carried out at the main location of the agreed indigenous community and accompanied by local indigenous leaders to ensure openness and active community involvement. In addition, observation activities were also carried out in several elementary and secondary schools located in or near the indigenous community area.

The main instruments in this study were in-depth interview guides, observation sheets, and documentation. Interviews were conducted in a semi-structured manner to provide space for exploration of the subjects' experiences and views. Participatory observation was used to observe the interaction between formal education and daily community activities that contain sustainability values. Documentation in the form of photos, videos, and local archives (e.g. local syllabus or customary records) was also collected to strengthen the data.

The research procedure began with a preliminary study to understand the local context, followed by data collection through interviews, observations, and documentation. The data were then analyzed thematically by identifying emerging patterns related to the integration of continuing education. Data validity was maintained through triangulation techniques of sources, techniques, and time.

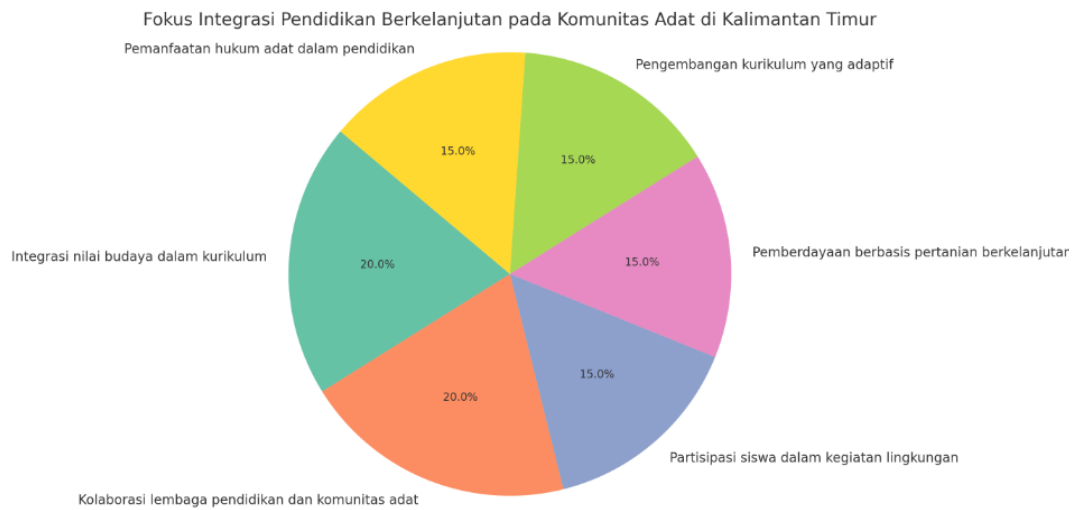
Data analysis techniques were carried out qualitatively using the interactive model of Miles and Huberman, namely through the process of data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions/verification. Data from interviews and observations were coded to find the main themes that were relevant to the research objectives. This analysis process was carried out iteratively and reflectively to ensure the depth of meaning and accuracy of interpretation.

During the research process, researchers maintain research ethics by obtaining permission from relevant parties, conveying research objectives transparently to subjects, and maintaining the confidentiality of participant identities. The involvement of traditional leaders as local partners in research is also part of an ethical and cultural strategy to build trust.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **A. Integration of continuing education with Indigenous Communities in Kalimantan**

Integration of sustainable education in indigenous communities in East Kalimantan is essential to maintain local wisdom and improve the quality of life of the community. This approach draws inspiration from various principles of sustainable education that focus on preserving culture, the environment, and empowering communities. See the following diagram:



Source: Processed by Researchers (2025)

**Figure 1: Focus of Integration of Continuing Education in Indigenous Communities in East Kalimantan**

A more complete explanation of the diagram on the integration of continuing education in indigenous communities in Kalimantan above is as follows: One approach that can be applied is to utilize cultural locality as an integral part of the education curriculum. Saefullah et al. suggest that the interaction between culture and the environment can be utilized as a platform for the development of education and historical awareness in indigenous communities (Saefullah et al., 2023) . This provides space for the community to be directly involved in the learning process that is contextual and relevant to their daily lives. By using local cultural elements, such as art, ways of life, and traditions, education can be carried out in an interesting and educational form.

Furthermore, sustainable education initiatives also include the development of collaborative programs between educational institutions and indigenous communities. Mustaqim stated that synergy between institutions can support comprehensive economic development in indigenous communities through sustainable education that is halal in nature, prioritizing general principles that help the economic growth of the community while maintaining religious norms and local wisdom (Mustaqim, 2023) . Thus, education not only functions as a transfer of knowledge, but also as a means to improve sustainable economics.

Anggraeni et al. showed that integrating sustainability principles into the educational curriculum can encourage active involvement of students to create sustainable solutions in their communities (Anggraeni et al., 2024) . This can provide space for students to participate in environmentally oriented activities, such as land restoration programs, natural resource management, and conservation initiatives that are part of their own cultural heritage.

On the other hand, community empowerment programs that prioritize sustainable agriculture in urban environments as studied by Nusran show that education can be focused on empowering communities to utilize existing resources (Nusran et al., 2024) . In the context of East Kalimantan, indigenous communities who have wisdom in land management and traditional agriculture can be used as a center of study so that adapted educational practices include environmentally friendly agricultural methods, sustainability values, and agroecological systems.

Furthermore, education within a sustainability framework also needs to pay attention to curriculum management that is responsive to social and environmental changes. Herman and Muadin explain that curriculum development that supports improving the quality of education must involve continuous assessment and evaluation (Herman & Muadin, 2023) . This process

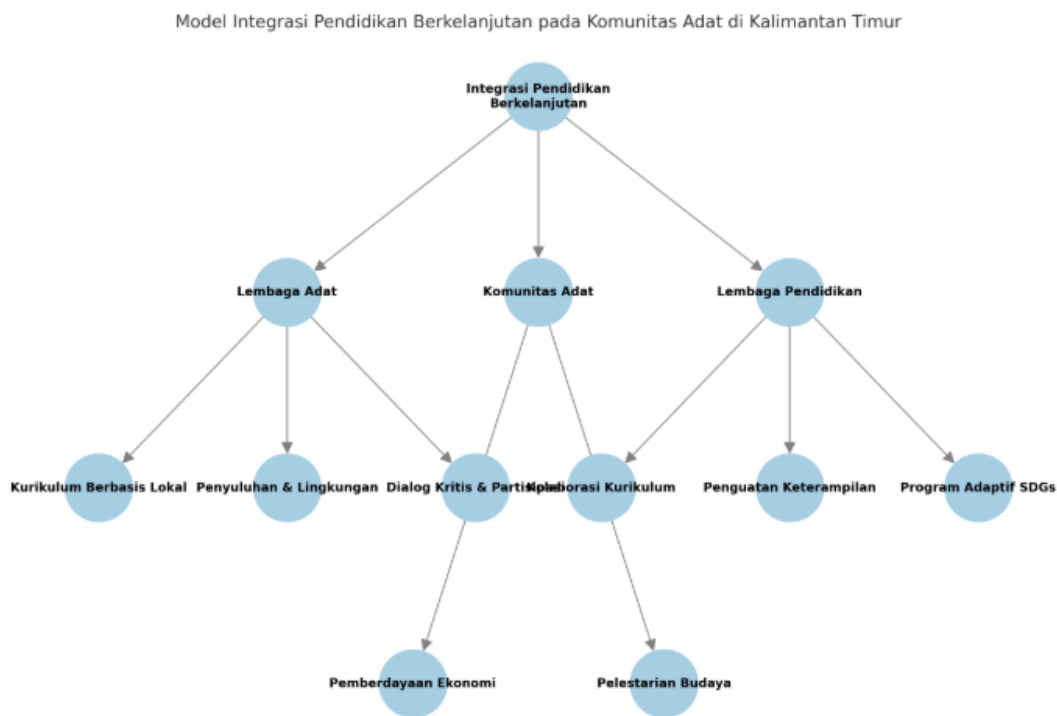
is important to adapt education to the needs of indigenous communities and the challenges faced in their environmental context.

Finally, it is also important to utilize customary law as a basis for managing sustainable education. Research by Magdalena shows that customary law still plays a role in forest management and protection with a sustainable approach among indigenous communities (Magdalena, 2013) . This can be integrated into the educational process by including these values to build awareness of the importance of preserving the environment and cultural heritage together.

Overall, the integration of continuing education with indigenous communities in East Kalimantan is a strategic step in strengthening cultural identity, developing community capacity, and ensuring that traditions and the surrounding environment are preserved for future generations.

### B. The Role of Traditional Institutions in the Integration of Continuing Education

Customary institutions in East Kalimantan play a key role in integrating sustainable education by embedding local values into the broader educational framework. This process reflects an effort to maintain local wisdom while supporting sustainable development goals that are tailored to the context of indigenous communities. This role can be seen in the following diagram model:



Source: Processed by Researchers (2025)

**Figure 2: Model of Integration of Continuing Education in Indigenous Communities in East Kalimantan**

The picture above can show several things. *First* , customary institutions function as a liaison between the community and the formal and informal education systems. They maintain and educate the younger generation about local culture and traditions. According to Qomarrullah, indigenous communities are involved in developing curricula that are relevant to their culture, providing teaching materials based on local wisdom, and participating in school activities. Collaboration between educational institutions and customary institutions like this

can strengthen cultural identity while equipping students with the skills needed for the future (Qomarrullah, 2024).

Furthermore, customary institutions are also involved in counseling and disseminating information on sustainability issues and environmentally friendly practices. Qomarrullah emphasized the importance of involving educational institutions in conveying sustainable development concepts, and customary institutions can play an important role in integrating the concept into local culture. Educational practices that emphasize environmental preservation may be facilitated by customary institutions by supporting programs that teach communities about sustainability and ecological responsibility.

In addition, customary institutions can play a role in strengthening communities through collaborative initiatives. By working with government and non-governmental organizations, they help create training and education programs aimed at empowering communities in a sustainable economic context. By involving community members in decision-making processes, customary institutions ensure that education is adaptive to local needs and challenges, as demonstrated by Mustaqim (Mustaqim, 2023)

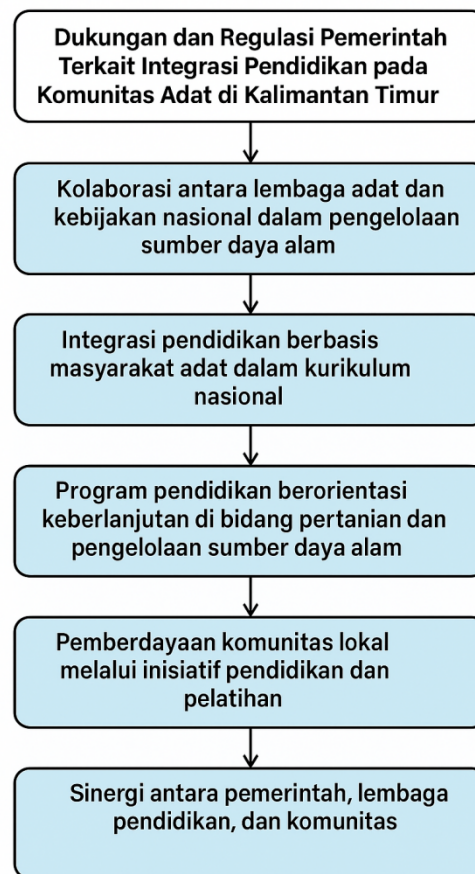
The sustainable education approach also includes attention to social issues faced by the community, such as food security, social justice, and health. Customary institutions play a role in raising awareness of these issues through the provision of integrated education, as suggested by Setiawan on the importance of resolving disputes through customary law (Setiawan et al., 2023). This shows how local laws and traditions can be used to resolve community problems while being part of the education process.

Finally, customary institutions facilitate discussions and forums on customary values relevant to sustainable education, helping to build critical awareness among indigenous communities. This is in line with Freire's approach based on dialogue and active participation in learning. Through this dialogue, customary institutions can provide space for communities to express their opinions and experiences, and contribute to the development of a more inclusive and comprehensive curriculum.

Overall, customary institutions in East Kalimantan play multifaceted roles in integrating sustainable education from developing culture-based curricula to active community participation. Through collaboration with various parties, they are able to create education that is adaptive and responsive to the needs of indigenous communities while promoting environmental welfare.

### **C. Government Support and Regulation Regarding the Integration of Continuing Education in Indigenous Communities in East Kalimantan**

Government support and regulation are vital to ensuring that local wisdom is integrated into broader educational policies in East Kalimantan. Participatory approaches and recognition of indigenous peoples' rights are key to creating an inclusive and sustainable education environment.



Source: *Processed by Researchers (2025)*

**Figure 3: Chart Government Support and Regulation Regarding the Integration of Continuing Education in Indigenous Communities in East Kalimantan**

First, the government has recognized the importance of collaboration between customary institutions and national policies in natural resource management, including education. Sariyadi shows that harmonious collaboration between indigenous peoples and government institutions can provide significant support for sustainable resource management, where customary laws are recognized and integrated into public policies (Sariyadi et al., 2025) . This allows indigenous peoples to play a role in decision-making related to education and natural resource management in their environment.

Second, the government is also trying to integrate indigenous community-based education into the national curriculum, such as the Merdeka Curriculum. Cantika et al. noted that this curriculum provides space to accommodate the values and cultural needs of indigenous communities, although challenges remain regarding access and relevance of the curriculum (Cantika et al., 2024) . Through this policy, there is recognition of the importance of involving local wisdom in the education process, with the aim of realizing relevant education for students.

From an environmental policy perspective, Irawan et al. noted that collaboration between the government and local communities is needed to develop sustainable practices in agriculture and natural resource management (Irawan et al., 2023) . Government support in sustainability-oriented education programs is essential to increase public awareness of the importance of protecting the environment and the benefits of good natural resource management.

Furthermore, the government is expected to empower local communities through various education and training initiatives. Empowerment and capacity building of communities are very important so that they can actively participate in resource management and education in their areas. This can be seen from studies that suggest the need for government support in the form

of regulations and incentives for indigenous communities in developing education and environmental conservation activities (Utomo et al., 2024)

Finally, it is important to note that synergy between various elements, including government, educational institutions, and communities, will strengthen the integration of sustainable education. Hariatama et al. emphasized that the issuance of regulations that support collaboration between government and community is a key element in creating sustainable and inclusive impacts in education (Hariatama et al., 2024)

By articulating the needs of indigenous peoples within a policy framework, continuing education can be maximized to support broader goals.

Overall, government support and regulation in East Kalimantan for sustainable education in the context of indigenous communities is an important step to ensure that local values are integrated, provide direct benefits to communities, and support cultural and environmental preservation in line with sustainability principles.

## CONCLUSION

This study shows that; First, the integration of sustainable education with indigenous communities in East Kalimantan plays a very important role in maintaining local wisdom and improving the quality of life of indigenous people. Through an approach that involves local culture in the education curriculum, indigenous people can be directly involved in relevant and contextual learning. This not only strengthens their cultural identity but also increases their capacity to face future challenges. In addition, collaboration between educational institutions and indigenous communities contributes to sustainable economic development and maintaining environmental sustainability, which supports development based on the principle of sustainability.

Second, customary institutions in East Kalimantan play a central role in integrating local values into education. They not only act as a link between indigenous communities and the formal education system, but also play an active role in developing local wisdom-based curricula that introduce environmentally friendly practices. Through collaboration with the government and other organizations, customary institutions strengthen communities by empowering them in a sustainable economic context and facilitating the resolution of relevant social issues, such as food security and social justice.

Third, Government support and regulation in the context of sustainable education for indigenous communities also play a very important role in ensuring that national education policies accommodate local wisdom. Government recognition of collaboration with indigenous institutions and the implementation of relevant frameworks, such as the Merdeka Curriculum, has created space for inclusive and sustainable education. The government also supports sustainable natural resource management through education programs based on local values. Synergy between the government, educational institutions, and indigenous communities is a key factor that can encourage cultural and environmental preservation and ensure sustainability for future generations.

Overall, this research makes a significant contribution to the development of sustainable education in the context of indigenous communities, and opens up space for the implementation of a more inclusive approach based on relevant local values. In the future, collaboration between various parties can be a model for the development of sustainable education in other sectors, such as natural resource management and wider community development.

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