

THE ROLE OF ISLAMIC VALUES IN SHAPING THE NATURAL CULTURAL WISDOM OF MINANGKABAU SOCIETY

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Abstract

This study examines the contribution of Islamic values to the formation of environmental cultural wisdom in Minangkabau society. The Minangkabau community possesses a distinctive cultural identity that integrates Islamic teachings with local customs through the philosophy of Adat Basandi Syarak, Syarak Basandi Kitabullah (Custom Based on Islamic Law, and Islamic Law Based on the Qur'an). This philosophy serves as a guiding principle in shaping a harmonious, religious, and sustainable way of life. The study aims to analyze the role of Islamic values in fostering environmental cultural wisdom, particularly in natural resource management, environmental conservation, and the strengthening of social solidarity. Using a qualitative library research approach, data were collected from relevant literature, documents, and previous studies related to Minangkabau culture and Islamic teachings. The findings indicate that Islamic values, including trustworthiness (amanah), justice, balance (tawazun), responsibility (mas'uliyah), and social concern, constitute the foundation of local wisdom within Minangkabau society. These values are reflected in customary regulations governing communal land (tanah ulayat), forest preservation, water resource protection, and various traditional practices aimed at maintaining harmony between humans and nature. The integration of Islamic principles and customary traditions has created a cultural system that strengthens community identity while functioning as a social mechanism for environmental sustainability. This study concludes that the environmental cultural wisdom of the Minangkabau people represents the successful internalization of Islamic values and remains highly relevant in addressing contemporary sustainable development challenges. Therefore, preserving and revitalizing these values is essential for supporting environmentally responsible and culturally grounded development in the modern era.

Keywords: Environmental Conservation, Environmental Cultural Wisdom, Islamic Values, Local Wisdom, Minangkabau Societ



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INTRODUCTION

The interconnection between religion, culture, and the natural environment has increasingly become a significant subject of scholarly discussion, particularly in relation to environmental sustainability and sustainable development. Contemporary environmental problems, including climate change, deforestation, ecosystem degradation, biodiversity loss, and pollution, have generated global concerns regarding the future of human life and ecological stability. These challenges have encouraged researchers to seek solutions that extend beyond technological innovation and economic policies by considering social, cultural, and religious dimensions. In this regard, local wisdom and religious values have emerged as important resources for fostering environmental awareness and promoting sustainable environmental practices. Within many traditional societies, environmental ethics are embedded in cultural traditions and belief systems that guide human interactions with nature. Such values function as social norms that encourage communities to preserve ecological balance and utilize natural resources responsibly. Therefore, examining the contribution of cultural and religious values to environmental sustainability has become increasingly relevant in contemporary academic and policy discussions.

As a multicultural nation, Indonesia possesses a rich diversity of ethnic groups, each characterized by unique customs, traditions, and local knowledge systems. These cultural characteristics have contributed to the emergence of various forms of local wisdom that support environmental preservation and sustainable resource management. Among Indonesia's diverse ethnic communities, the Minangkabau people represent a distinctive example due to the close integration between Islamic teachings and customary traditions. Unlike some societies where religious and cultural systems operate separately, Minangkabau culture reflects a harmonious relationship between Islam and adat (customary law). This relationship is embodied in the philosophical principle of "Adat Basandi Syarak, Syarak Basandi Kitabullah" (ABS-SBK), which serves as the foundation of Minangkabau social and cultural life. Through this philosophy, Islamic principles become inseparable from customary practices, shaping social behavior, community values, and collective responsibilities within society.

The historical development of Minangkabau society demonstrates that the spread of Islam brought profound transformations without eliminating pre-existing cultural traditions. Instead of replacing indigenous customs, Islamic teachings were adapted and integrated into local cultural practices, resulting in a unique synthesis between religion and tradition. This process created a social order in which customary institutions and Islamic principles reinforce one another. Consequently, the philosophy of ABS-SBK became a fundamental framework that regulates various aspects of life, including governance, social relations, conflict resolution, and environmental management. Within this framework, religious teachings are not merely

interpreted as spiritual obligations but are also translated into social norms and cultural practices that influence everyday behavior. As a result, environmental stewardship is understood not only as a practical necessity but also as a moral and religious responsibility.

Environmental cultural wisdom within Minangkabau society is reflected in the collective values, knowledge systems, and traditional practices that govern human relationships with nature. Over generations, the Minangkabau people have developed mechanisms for managing natural resources in ways that emphasize sustainability, social justice, and ecological balance. Such wisdom can be observed in customary regulations related to communal land ownership, forest utilization, water resource management, and agricultural activities. Traditional institutions play an important role in ensuring that natural resources are managed for the collective benefit of the community while safeguarding their availability for future generations. The concept of tanah ulayat (communal land), for example, demonstrates how resource ownership is accompanied by social responsibilities and collective obligations. Through these customary arrangements, environmental protection becomes an integral component of community life and cultural identity.

The ethical principles contained within Islamic teachings provide a strong foundation for the development of environmental wisdom among the Minangkabau people. Islamic doctrines emphasize the importance of maintaining harmony within creation and prohibit actions that lead to environmental destruction. The Qur'an and the teachings of the Prophet Muhammad encourage human beings to act as responsible stewards of the earth, entrusted with the duty of protecting and preserving natural resources. Values such as amanah (trustworthiness), adl (justice), tawazun (balance), mas'uliyah (responsibility), and ihsan (benevolence) serve as ethical guidelines for environmental conduct. These principles have been incorporated into customary norms and social institutions, influencing the ways in which communities manage and utilize their natural surroundings. Consequently, environmental conservation within Minangkabau society is deeply rooted in both religious beliefs and cultural traditions.

Despite the strength of these traditional values, contemporary social changes have introduced various challenges to the preservation of environmental cultural wisdom. Processes such as modernization, urbanization, globalization, and economic transformation have significantly altered traditional patterns of life and resource utilization. In many communities, the influence of customary institutions has gradually weakened as modern systems of governance and market-oriented economic activities become more dominant. Furthermore, younger generations may have limited exposure to traditional knowledge and cultural values that were once transmitted through communal practices and customary education. These developments have raised concerns regarding the sustainability of local wisdom as an effective mechanism for environmental management. Simultaneously, environmental issues such as land degradation, deforestation, and water pollution continue to threaten ecological systems and community livelihoods, underscoring the need to strengthen culturally based approaches to environmental conservation.

A growing body of literature has examined the relationship between Minangkabau culture, Islamic teachings, and local wisdom. Previous studies have discussed the philosophical foundations of ABS-SBK, the role of customary institutions in maintaining social order, and the significance of communal land systems in community development. Other researchers have explored the contribution of local wisdom to environmental sustainability within different cultural settings across Indonesia. However, there remains a lack of comprehensive studies that specifically investigate how Islamic values are embedded within Minangkabau environmental wisdom and how these values influence traditional approaches to natural resource management. Existing research often addresses cultural and religious dimensions separately, leaving important questions regarding their interrelationship insufficiently explored. This gap highlights the necessity of conducting further studies that examine the integration of Islamic ethics and local wisdom within environmental contexts.

Considering these circumstances, this study seeks to explore the role of Islamic values in shaping the environmental cultural wisdom of Minangkabau society. The research focuses on identifying the Islamic ethical principles that underpin customary environmental practices and analyzing their contribution to environmental sustainability, natural resource conservation, and social cohesion. By investigating the interaction between religious teachings and cultural traditions, this study aims to contribute to a deeper understanding of the social and cultural dimensions of environmental stewardship. Furthermore, the findings are expected to provide valuable insights for policymakers, educators, and community leaders seeking to develop sustainable environmental strategies that are rooted in local cultural values. The Minangkabau experience offers an important example of how indigenous traditions and Islamic ethics can be integrated to support ecological sustainability and community resilience in the face of contemporary environmental challenges.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study adopted a qualitative research methodology utilizing a library research approach. A qualitative framework was selected because it facilitates a comprehensive understanding of cultural, social, and religious phenomena through the interpretation of textual materials and documentary evidence. The library research approach was considered suitable for the present study since it emphasizes the examination and synthesis of existing scholarly works related to Islamic values, environmental cultural wisdom, and the Minangkabau community. Instead of relying on field-based data collection, the research focused on analyzing relevant literature to explore the contribution of Islamic teachings to the development of environmental wisdom within Minangkabau culture.

Furthermore, the study employed a descriptive-interpretative approach to investigate the interaction between Islamic principles and local environmental practices. This approach enabled the researcher to describe cultural and religious concepts while simultaneously interpreting their significance in shaping environmental ethics and sustainable resource management. Through this framework, the philosophy of Adat Basandi Syarak, Syarak Basandi Kitabullah was examined as a cultural foundation that integrates religious values with customary traditions in Minangkabau society.

The research utilized secondary data obtained from a variety of credible academic and documentary sources. These sources included books, peer-reviewed journal articles, conference papers, research reports, dissertations, and other scholarly publications relevant to the themes of Islamic values, local wisdom, environmental sustainability, and Minangkabau culture. In addition, Islamic references such as Qur'anic interpretations (tafsir), Hadith literature, and contemporary studies on Islamic environmental ethics were consulted to provide a broader understanding of the religious principles associated with environmental stewardship.

Additional supporting information was collected from official documents, institutional publications, government reports, and reputable online academic databases. The selection of sources was guided by several criteria, including relevance to the research topic, academic reliability, credibility of publication, and contribution to the objectives of the study. Particular attention was given to sources that discuss the relationship between Islamic teachings, customary institutions, and environmental management practices within the Minangkabau context.

Data were gathered through a systematic literature review process. The researcher conducted an extensive search of relevant publications using various academic databases, digital repositories, libraries, and electronic resources. To facilitate the search process, several keywords and thematic phrases were employed, including "Islamic values," "Minangkabau society," "local wisdom," "environmental conservation," "customary institutions," "ABS-SBK," and "environmental ethics."

Following the identification stage, the collected materials underwent a screening and selection process to ensure their suitability for the research objectives. Publications were evaluated based on their relevance, scholarly quality, and contribution to the understanding of Islamic values and environmental cultural wisdom. The selected sources were then reviewed thoroughly and organized into thematic categories. Important information, theoretical perspectives, and empirical findings related to the integration of Islamic teachings and environmental practices were systematically recorded to facilitate subsequent analysis.

The collected data were analyzed using qualitative content analysis. This analytical technique was employed to identify, examine, and interpret recurring themes, concepts, and patterns found within the selected literature. The analysis began with a process of data organization and reduction, whereby information directly related to Islamic ethics, environmental wisdom, and Minangkabau cultural traditions was extracted and classified according to the focus of the study.

Subsequently, the data were grouped into several thematic categories, including Islamic moral values, customary environmental regulations, natural resource governance, environmental conservation practices, and social responsibility. These themes were analyzed to explore the extent to which Islamic principles have influenced the formation of environmental wisdom within Minangkabau society. The interpretation process emphasized the interaction between religious teachings and cultural traditions in shaping environmentally responsible behavior.

The final stage involved synthesizing the findings through an inductive reasoning process. Information derived from different sources was integrated to construct a comprehensive understanding of the role of Islamic values in fostering environmental awareness and sustainable resource management. To ensure the trustworthiness of the analysis, source triangulation was applied by comparing data from multiple references and examining the consistency of findings across various studies. This procedure strengthened the validity of the conclusions and provided a more holistic perspective on the relationship between Islam, culture, and environmental wisdom in Minangkabau society.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Synergy between Islamic Values and Minangkabau Customary Philosophy

The findings reveal that Islamic teachings serve as a fundamental element in the construction of Minangkabau cultural identity. This relationship is embodied in the philosophy of Adat Basandi Syarak, Syarak Basandi Kitabullah (ABS-SBK), which functions as the principal framework governing social interactions, customary regulations, and communal life. The philosophy illustrates that customary norms are developed in harmony with Islamic principles, creating a cohesive system in which religious teachings and cultural traditions mutually reinforce one another.

This close relationship has contributed to the establishment of a socio-cultural structure that influences various dimensions of community life, including environmental management. Within this framework, environmental preservation is not solely perceived as a practical necessity but also as a moral and spiritual responsibility. The findings suggest that the ABS-SBK philosophy has played a significant role in maintaining environmental awareness by ensuring that customary practices remain grounded in ethical values derived from Islamic teachings. Consequently, the integration of religion and culture strengthens both social solidarity and ecological responsibility.

Islamic Moral Values as the Basis of Environmental Wisdom

The analysis demonstrates that environmental wisdom among the Minangkabau people is strongly influenced by a number of Islamic ethical principles. These include amanah (trust), adl (justice), tawazun (balance), mas'uliyah (responsibility), and ihsan (benevolence). Such values provide ethical guidance that shapes community attitudes and behaviors toward the environment and natural resources.

The concept of amanah emphasizes that human beings are entrusted with the responsibility of protecting and maintaining the natural world. This perspective encourages the careful and sustainable use of resources while discouraging exploitative actions that may harm the environment. Likewise, the principle of tawazun promotes equilibrium between human interests and ecological sustainability. The findings indicate that these values have become deeply embedded within local traditions and customary practices, contributing to the development of a collective environmental ethic. As a result, environmental stewardship is viewed not only as a social obligation but also as an expression of religious devotion.

The Contribution of Customary Institutions to Resource Governance

The findings further indicate that customary institutions play a vital role in regulating the management and utilization of natural resources within Minangkabau communities. Traditional authorities, customary leaders, and local councils are entrusted with overseeing the implementation of customary rules concerning land use, forest conservation, and water resource management. These institutions function as community-based mechanisms that support environmental sustainability while ensuring equitable access to shared resources.

A notable example is the administration of tanah ulayat or communal land, which is collectively owned and managed according to customary principles. This system promotes collective responsibility and discourages excessive exploitation by individuals. Through customary governance, environmental protection becomes a shared commitment among community members rather than an individual concern. The findings suggest that the effectiveness of these institutions stems from their ability to combine cultural legitimacy with ethical principles rooted in Islamic teachings, thereby fostering sustainable resource management practices.

Traditional Environmental Conservation Practices

The study identifies a variety of traditional practices that contribute to environmental protection and ecological sustainability. These practices include customary restrictions on forest exploitation, the preservation of water sources, sustainable agricultural methods, and communal agreements governing the use of natural resources. Such measures demonstrate the community's awareness of the importance of maintaining environmental balance and ensuring resource availability for future generations.

Environmental conservation practices within Minangkabau society are closely linked to both cultural traditions and religious values. Activities that threaten ecological stability are often regarded as violations of customary norms as well as Islamic ethical principles. The findings indicate that these traditional conservation measures represent practical expressions of environmental wisdom that have been transmitted across generations. Their continued implementation highlights the capacity of local knowledge systems to contribute meaningfully to contemporary environmental management efforts.

Human–Nature Relationships in Minangkabau Cultural Perspectives

Another important finding concerns the Minangkabau worldview regarding the relationship between human beings and nature. The analysis reveals that nature is not viewed merely as an economic asset but as an integral component of cultural, social, and spiritual life. This perspective is reflected in traditional sayings, customary teachings, and cultural expressions that emphasize respect for and harmony with the natural environment.

This understanding corresponds closely with Islamic teachings concerning the role of humans as khalifah (stewards) on earth. According to this perspective, individuals are expected to utilize natural resources responsibly while preserving ecological equilibrium. The findings suggest that this worldview has significantly influenced community attitudes toward environmental protection and sustainable resource use. By recognizing the interdependence between human well-being and environmental integrity, Minangkabau society has cultivated values that support long-term ecological sustainability.

Challenges to the Preservation of Environmental Cultural Wisdom

Although environmental wisdom continues to play an important role within Minangkabau society, the findings indicate that its sustainability is increasingly challenged by contemporary social and economic transformations. Processes such as modernization, globalization, urban development, and market expansion have altered traditional lifestyles and patterns of resource utilization. As a result, the influence of customary institutions has diminished in certain areas, while the transmission of traditional knowledge to younger generations has become less effective.

In addition, environmental degradation caused by unsustainable development practices and excessive resource exploitation presents significant threats to local ecosystems. The weakening of customary values and traditional governance systems may reduce the effectiveness of community-based environmental management. Therefore, preserving and revitalizing environmental cultural wisdom is essential for ensuring its continued relevance in addressing present and future ecological challenges. Strengthening customary institutions, promoting environmental education, and reinforcing Islamic ethical values may serve as important strategies for safeguarding this cultural heritage.

Relevance to Sustainable Development

The findings underscore the potential contribution of Islamic values and local wisdom to contemporary sustainable development initiatives. The environmental ethics embedded within Minangkabau culture offer an alternative perspective for addressing environmental issues through culturally informed approaches. Rather than relying exclusively on technological interventions or regulatory frameworks, sustainable development can be enhanced by incorporating indigenous knowledge systems and religious principles into environmental policies and practices.

The Minangkabau experience demonstrates that environmental conservation becomes more effective when supported by cultural traditions and moral values that are widely accepted by the community. Such an approach encourages active participation, strengthens social responsibility, and fosters long-term environmental awareness. Consequently, local wisdom should be recognized as a valuable resource in the formulation of sustainable development strategies. Integrating these cultural and religious values into environmental education programs and public policies may contribute to the creation of more inclusive, effective, and sustainable solutions to contemporary environmental challenges.

CONCLUSION

The present study affirms that Islamic values have a central role in the formation of environmental cultural wisdom within Minangkabau society. The strong integration between Islamic teachings and customary traditions, embodied in the philosophy of Adat Basandi Syarak, Syarak Basandi Kitabullah (ABS-SBK), has created a normative framework that regulates social conduct, environmental ethics, and the management of natural resources. Within this framework, Islamic principles are not limited to spiritual dimensions but are operationalized through customary norms that guide community behavior toward environmental sustainability.

The findings indicate that essential Islamic ethical principles such as amanah (trust), adl (justice), tawazun (balance), mas'uliyah (responsibility), and ihsan (virtue and excellence) form the moral foundation of environmental awareness in Minangkabau culture. These values are manifested in various traditional practices, including communal land governance, forest preservation, water resource protection, and the maintenance of ecological harmony between humans and nature. Customary institutions further reinforce these principles by ensuring collective participation and regulating the sustainable utilization of natural resources.

In addition, the study shows that the environmental cultural wisdom of the Minangkabau people represents a harmonious synthesis of religious ethics and indigenous knowledge systems. This synergy has contributed to the preservation of cultural identity while simultaneously supporting environmentally sustainable practices. Nevertheless, this traditional wisdom is currently facing various pressures, particularly from modernization, globalization, and socio-economic transformation, which have the potential to weaken customary authority and disrupt intergenerational transmission of local knowledge.

Hence, strengthening and revitalizing this environmental wisdom is essential through integrated efforts involving education, community participation, and policy development that align Islamic values with local cultural traditions. The Minangkabau case demonstrates that religious teachings and indigenous wisdom can jointly serve as a strong foundation for environmental sustainability. Future research is recommended to conduct empirical field studies and comparative analyses with other indigenous communities in order to deepen understanding of the relationship between religion, culture, and ecological preservation.

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