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From Tradition to Action: The Potential of Community Empowerment Through Local Wisdom for Sustainable Environmental Protection Practices

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Abstract: Local wisdom is the values, norms, and traditions that are passed down from generation to generation in a community group. This research aims to explore the potential for community empowerment through local wisdom values in the context of protection environmental practices in the community of Lawang Agung Village, South Sumatra, Indonesia. This research uses a qualitative approach with case study analysis techniques. Data collection was carried out by conducting systematic observations and in-depth interviews with participants and supported by documentary data to strengthen the results of research analysis. The informants in this study totalled 8 people consisting of 2 community leaders, 2 traditional leaders, and 4 people who play an active role in various cultural activities in the research locus area and have participated in cultural and environmental communities for more than 5 years. All research data were collected and reduced within the research boundaries so that the research results could be presented in accordance with the research objectives. The research analysis will be interpreted to develop a deeper understanding of the phenomenon under study. The research results show several things including: (1) Lawang Agung Village has a long history of practicing local wisdom and using natural resources wisely. (2) The spirit of *gotong royong* (mutual cooperation) and community cohesiveness is starting to fade due to the impact of individualism and modernization, shifting collective priorities to achieve personal gain. (3) The potential for empowerment for environmental conservation

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practices can be optimized with the stages of identifying empowerment potential, planning and organizing, implementing, and disseminating results/experiences. (4) Integration of spiritual values is also an important step in strengthening the transformation of local wisdom values into concrete actions in sustainable environmental conservation practices. The implication of the findings of this research is the exploration of various potentials of local wisdom values to strengthen environmentally wise behavior by integrating them in people's daily lives. This research also contributes to the strengthening of the theory and practice of environmental empowerment that prioritizes the local wisdom of the community.

Keywords: Local wisdom, Community, Social interaction, Social life

Introduction

The environment plays a vital role in sustaining the life of creatures, plants and humans. Environmental problems faced today cover a wide range of issues, from climate change, habitat destruction, biodiversity loss, to air and water pollution. All of these problems affect the balance of the ecosystem and have the potential to have a serious impact on human life and other creatures on this planet (Al-Khateeb et al., 2017; Herman Susila, 2017; Pratama, et al., 2018). Environmental problems are complex and difficult to overcome if there is no cooperation between governments, communities, and environmentalists (Alwaeli, 2015; Anatona et al., 2023). However, to mobilize people so that they have a shared concern for protecting the environment, various approaches and ways are needed so that people voluntarily contribute to protecting their environment from damage (Herman Susila, 2017; Reniwati & Noviatrri, 2019). One way to address these environmental issues is by empowering communities through the utilization of local wisdom for sustainable environmental practices. Local wisdom refers to knowledge, skills and values that have existed in a community for many years, which have often been tested and proven effective in adapting to the local environment (Abdullah & Wahid, 2022; Azis et al., 2019; Reniwati & Noviatrri, 2019).

Indonesia is a region that has a variety of cultures, local wisdom, and a multicultural society. Each region has its own style and distinctiveness and varies according to its geographical location. Local wisdom has a very important role in shaping and maintaining unity in society. Behind the diverse cultures, traditions, and beliefs of each community, there are local wisdom values that are inherent and become the basis for living together (Jumriani et al., 2021; Karim, 2020). Local wisdom not only includes practical knowledge related to agriculture, the environment, or social values but also reflects the resilience of communities in the face of change and conflict (Siswanto, 2017; Sulaiman et al., 2022). In the context of community unity, local wisdom serves as the glue that connects individuals within the community.

Values such as gotong royong, consensus, and mutual respect become the foundation of relationships between community members. Local wisdom also teaches the importance of understanding differences and celebrating diversity as a commonwealth (Adinugraha & Sartika, 2022; Ambarwati & Wilujeng, 2023; Andriani et al., 2023). Local wisdom as cultural heritage also creates a sense of pride and belonging to the origins and cultural roots of the community. Thus, local wisdom is not a barrier to unity but rather a force in achieving sustainable unity (Saputra et al., 2021; Silo & Ismail, 2022). Thus, maintaining and respecting local wisdom is an important step in building a harmonious and strong society in facing the challenges of the times. Local wisdom plays a central role in community education, becoming a strong foundation for building the character and identity of each individual. In essence, local wisdom reflects the values, norms, and traditions that develop in a particular society (Kurniawan, 2020; Radetić-Paić & Černe, 2020). Its presence in education provides many invaluable benefits, creating a connection between the past, present, and future.

By empowering communities through local wisdom, it will be possible to create solutions that suit local conditions and needs. For example, in the face of climate change, communities can use their traditional knowledge of local weather patterns and appropriate growing seasons to improve food security. Communities can also develop sustainable agricultural systems, such as the use of local crop varieties that are resistant to extreme weather and organic farming practices. In addition, community empowerment through local wisdom can help in the conservation of natural habitats and biodiversity. Local communities often have in-depth knowledge of the local flora and fauna and the ecosystems they inhabit. By utilizing this knowledge, they can be involved in efforts to conserve forests, conserve wetlands, and replant native vegetation. Thus, through the utilization of local wisdom and community empowerment, we can develop environmental practices that are sustainable and adaptive to today's complex environmental challenges. This is not just about preserving the environment for future generations but also about improving the overall well-being and resilience of local communities. Observing a tradition can also be useful to find out the functions, meanings, and cultural values

contained in the customs practiced by a community group (Sunjata, 2008). Local wisdom is also a legacy of our ancestors in the value system of life that is integrated in the form of religion, culture, and customs. In its development, the community adapts to its environment by developing wisdom in the form of knowledge or ideas and tools, combined with customary norms, cultural values, and activities to manage the environment in order to meet its needs (Suhartini, 2009).

On the other hand, the lives of people in Indonesia cannot be separated from their interactions with their natural environment. Environmental conditions in Indonesia produce a diversity of ecosystems and natural resources, giving birth to Indonesian people who are closely related to natural conditions in carrying out various activities to uphold their survival. Indonesian people respond to nature as a teacher who guides the lifestyle of the community, which is born in the form of natural habits that are poured into life customs oriented to the attitude of nature developed into a teacher (Salim, 2006). Traditional knowledge or traditional wisdom is a system of knowledge and cultural heritage that originates from a long process of experience in the past, adopted, and passed on to the next generation through an evolutionary process (Zulfadrim, 2008; Lampe, 2006). Local wisdom generally contains teachings to maintain and utilize natural resources (forests, land and water) in a sustainable manner. In terms of the environment, the existence of traditional wisdom is very beneficial because it directly or indirectly helps in maintaining the environment and preventing environmental damage. Local wisdom is social capital from the perspective of environmentally sound sustainable development, so it is very important to explore, study, and develop in order to lead to better management of natural resources and the environment (Siswadi, 2011).

Local wisdom itself refers to knowledge derived from people's experiences and the accumulation of local knowledge and local wisdom found in society, communities, and individuals (Phongphit & Nantasuan, 2002). The interaction of indigenous people with their environment produces wisdom and knowledge in managing their natural environment. The attitudes and behaviors of indigenous people will refer to the ecological values prevailing in their communities. Local ecological knowledge refers to the local expertise of people who are different from indigenous peoples, may not have a long-term relationship (i.e., hundreds or thousands of years) with the local environment, but still have local wisdom, experiences, and practices adapted to the local ecosystem. Therefore, local wisdom is important to be studied and preserved in a society in order to maintain a balance with its environment and at the same time preserve its environment. Local wisdom becomes cultural wealth that then grows and develops in the community and is able to strengthen the social cohesion of community members and empirically able to prevent environmental damage. However, over time these traditions have begun to fade as a result of the penetration of modern culture that is difficult to avoid (Permana, 2010).

People's lives cannot be separated from their interactions with the surrounding natural environment. Interaction with the surrounding environment needs to be preserved for the next generation. Environmental conservation is an effort to create natural environmental conditions that are sufficient in quantity and quality for future generations by involving many parties including indigenous peoples who have existed since long ago and have unique attitudes and cultures. The various parties involved basically have the goal of achieving economic, social, and ecological balance. The way of managing natural resources and the environment by indigenous peoples has been proven to enrich the diversity of natural resources and sustainability. Indigenous peoples are the largest element in the structure of the Indonesian state and play a major role in sustainable development (Martayadi & Supriyadi, 2024; Syamsudin, 2023). Local wisdom does not only stop at ethics but also reaches norms actions and behaviors, so that local wisdom can be like a religion that dominates humans in their attitudes and actions, both in the context of daily life and determining further human civilization (Suhartini, 2009).

A disturbed and damaged natural environment will have an impact on the lives of the surrounding community. Environmental problems will arise as damage is not immediately overcome. For this reason, environmental problems need to be studied further, especially since environmental damage is already alarming. Environmental conservation efforts can be carried out through the values of local wisdom in the community that are inherited and maintained from generation to generation. On the other hand, the existence of a consumptive lifestyle can erode the norms of local wisdom in society. To avoid this, the norms that have been applied in a society that is hereditary and closely related to the preservation of the environment need to be preserved, namely local wisdom. The people of Lawang Agung village are unique in their efforts to protect their environment. Some people of Lawang Agung Village have beliefs and myths to preserve nature because there is a "*puyang*" which is an entity in the form of a tiger that is the guardian of the natural forest of Lawang Agung Village. In addition, the kinship system of the community in the Rupit Subdistrict is very close, so people still often do mutual cooperation to carry out various activities, including cleaning the environment. However, along with the times, this local wisdom is starting to fade because individualistic traits and ignorance of the environment are getting

stronger. Some people feel that keeping the environment clean is not their job, so they do not actively contribute to caring for the environment.

Local wisdom will survive and thrive if there is a process of instilling noble values in every member of the community, from children to parents. Planting these values is done as an effort to make every member of the community realize that the value of local wisdom is very important for human life, which is always side by side with the natural environment. For this reason, environmental issues need to be studied further, especially since environmental damage is already worrying. Environmental conservation efforts can be carried out through local wisdom values in the community that are passed down and maintained from generation to generation. The potential for community empowerment through local wisdom to realize sustainable environmental preservation is an element that must be analyzed so that it can be implemented in community life. Based on environmental problems and the potential of local wisdom in Lawang Agung Village, researchers are interested in researching and analyzing elements of tradition and local wisdom that have long been part of community life so that they can be transformed into community action in protecting the environment.

Method

This research was conducted using a qualitative approach with case study analysis. The qualitative approach research method with case studies is an in-depth research approach to understanding a particular phenomenon through in-depth analysis of one or several cases studied. The qualitative approach emphasizes understanding the context, interpretation, and meaning of a phenomenon so as to provide a rich and in-depth picture (Miles, M. B., & Huberman, A. M., 1994). The locus of this research was Lawang Agung Village, Rupit Sub-district, North Musi Rawas, South Sumatra Province. The sampling technique was carried out by purposive sampling with several criteria, including (1) the informant is the village head because he is an official community leader (*Tokoh Masyarakat*), (2) the informant is a village traditional leader who is respected and respected by the community (*Tokoh Adat*), (3) the informant is a community member who plays an active role in various cultural activities in the research locus and has participated in cultural and environmental communities for more than 5 years (*Masyarakat*). The total number of informants in this study was 8 informants with the following explanation:

Table 1. Research informant data

Initials	Gender	Number	Criteria	Codificaton
RY	M	1	Tokoh Masyarakat (TM)	M-TM-1
GA	M	2	Tokoh Masyarakat (TM)	M-TM-2
RN	M	3	Tokoh adat (TA)	M-TA-3
RF	M	4	Tokoh adat (TA)	M-TA-4
KW	F	5	Masyarakat (M)	F-M-5
SP	F	6	Masyarakat (M)	F-M-6
RA	M	7	Masyarakat (M)	L-M-7
TE	F	8	Masyarakat (M)	F-M-8

Source: Research data, processed in 2023.

Data collection is done through various techniques, such as in-depth interviews, participatory observation, and document analysis. Primary data will be collected from direct participants in the case study, while secondary data can come from relevant sources, such as related literature or documents. Data analysis techniques are carried out in several stages such as data collection with research boundaries that have been determined by the researcher, then data reduction is carried out so that data presentation can be done properly and finally conclusions are drawn to answer research questions. The collected data will be organized systematically to facilitate analysis. This includes transcribing interviews, coding data, and grouping findings based on emerging themes or patterns. The results of the analysis will be interpreted to develop a deeper understanding of the phenomenon under study. Conclusions are drawn based on key findings and implications for theory, practice and future research.

Results and Discussion

Empirical Condition of Lawang Agung Village

Half or 50% (fifty percent) of the total area in North Musi Rawas Regency is a forest area consisting of natural reserve forests, protected forests, and management forests, while the other half (307,260 ha) is used for settlements and industry. One of the villages in North Musi Rawas Regency is Lawang Agung village. Lawang Agung village has a geographical condition of mostly swamp areas, and is included in the lowlands. Lawang Agung village is one of the 16 villages in the Rupit sub-district, North Musi Rawas Regency, South Sumatra Province. However, in recent years, the social landscape in this village has undergone worrying changes. Individualism has begun to erode the cohesiveness and solidarity that have been the main pillars of community life. The people of Lawang Agung Village are traditionally known for their high spirit of *gotong royong* (mutual cooperation). They help each other in every activity, from the construction of public places to building houses. Cooperation is at the core of daily life, where each individual feels a responsibility to help others. However, in recent decades and with the times, slowly but surely, this spirit of mutual cooperation has started to fade. The individualistic nature of the community has changed the social dynamics of Lawang Agung Village. The drive to achieve personal gain and individual interests has begun to shift collective priorities. The *gotong royong* (mutual cooperation) programs that used to be a moment to strengthen relationships between residents are now being abandoned, replaced by indifference and solitude. Community leaders in Lawang Agung village also feel that people are now only concerned with their own interests, as expressed by M-TM-2

"...The community in Lawang Agung Village is not like it used to be, when I was young, about 20 years ago, the people of Lawang Agung Village were very enthusiastic when there were joint events such as cleaning the river, cleaning the roads, even cleaning public places such as places of worship and latrines (places to wash and bathe in the river)."

Furthermore, M-TM-1 also expressed a similar statement that the people of Lawang Agung Village have experienced a decline in their concern and participation in protecting the environment, as revealed in the following interview:

"...In fact, many people in Lawang Agung Village still care about their environment, especially people who feel uncomfortable with the many branches of wood and garbage that fill the river, but that concern only comes from a few individuals, so there are only a few who still play an active role in cleaning the banks of the river that have accumulated due to drifting wood and garbage."

Lawang Agung Village is a village whose territory is drained by the Rawas River, which is a branch of the Musi River, the longest river in South Sumatra province. Through cultural influences and the large number of people who work as planters and fishers in the river, for decades the people of Lawang Agung village have lived around the watershed. The people of Lawang Agung Village also have good social interactions with each other so that they will help each other to keep the environment clean. However, as time goes by, social interaction between communities is decreasing because community members are busy with their own affairs. One of the local wisdoms of the Lawang Agung village community and even most of the people of North Musi Rawas Regency is "*ngejago warisan puyang*". This local wisdom is to maintain ancestral heritage to use nature and rivers wisely so that the community remains concerned with environmental sustainability. This has been passed down from generation to generation, but at present the values contained in local wisdom are rarely implemented in the daily lives of the people of Lawang Agung village. This problem was also expressed by the traditional leader of the Lawang Agung village community, M-TA-3, as shown in the following transcript:

"...Ngejago warisan puyang is the local wisdom of the Lawang Agung village community which is very loaded with values in environmental sustainability, but now the community is not too concerned about the values of this local wisdom, the community is now massively opening oil palm plantations so that many wild animals such as tigers, bears, and birds have lost their natural habitat, besides that illegal gold mining has damaged the quality of river water and polluted river biota, it is exacerbated by the lack of public awareness not to throw garbage in the river."

The statement expressed by M-TA-3 was also reinforced by one of the informants who is a member of the Lawang Agung village river care community organization, F-M-5, who revealed that illegal logging in the upper reaches of the river causes the river to overflow very quickly and can cause flooding if the rain intensity is very high.

"...We have tried to continue to protect the forest and river environment throughout North Musi Rawas Regency so that it continues to be sustainable and becomes a blessing for the community itself, but a handful of unscrupulous people damage the river by carrying out illegal logging so that there is no more water absorption"

when it rains. Of course, this problem will have an impact on the overflow of river water which will trigger flooding."

Another local wisdom is "*Bekarang iwak*" this tradition is one of the traditional wisdom of the community in Lawang Agung Village with the aim that the community will not look for fish by concentrating, poisoning or damaging. This tradition is also carried out to build community understanding to preserve the river and not catch fish using chemicals or gentrification, because if the community violates the customary leaders will punish the perpetrators. In addition to *bekarang iwak*, there is another local wisdom of the Lawang Agung Village community in catching fish, namely "*Nakul*". This tradition is used to catch fish with a special box-shaped tool with bamboo as a handle. This local wisdom still survives today although not as much as it used to. This was revealed by P-M-7, who is a cultural actor of the Lawang Agung village community

"...For Nakul, the people of Lawang Agung Village still do it quite a lot, especially when it is fish season, the people of Lawang Agung Village, especially mothers, will gather together to nakul and collect their catches to be sold or made into processed foods such as pempek or tekwan."

Another local wisdom of the Lawang Agung village community is "*sedekah maling*" which means almsgiving in secret. Usually people who do this will give their garden products in the form of fruits or food in general at the mosque when people are praying.

Aspects of Local Wisdom Potential for Environmental Sustainability Practices

One of the main elements in a community's local wisdom values is social interaction. Social interaction plays a crucial role in supporting and strengthening sustainable environmental practices. Sustainable environmental stewardship practices based on local wisdom not only cover the physical aspects of environmental preservation, but also take into account the social and cultural factors involved in the process. In this context, social interactions within the community are important as they play a major role in shaping and sustaining such practices. Social interactions within the community enable the exchange of knowledge and (Agusta, 2021; Asril & Yoserizal, 2019; Pratama et al., 2021) experiences related to local wisdom in environmental management. Through conversations, discussions and cooperation between individuals and groups, traditional knowledge and practices that have proven effective in protecting the environment can be acquired, maintained and enriched. Social interaction plays an important role in shaping a strong community identity that embraces the values of local wisdom in environmental management. Through the formation of social bonds and a sense of attachment to their environment, community members tend to feel a responsibility to maintain and preserve the environment in which they live.

Social interactions also provide important emotional support in carrying out environmental stewardship practices. Through mutual encouragement and support among community members, individuals are better able to persevere and remain motivated to engage in sustainable environmental conservation efforts. In addition, the formation of cooperation networks and collaboration between individuals, groups and organizations that have the same goals in environmental care practices. Through cross-sector cooperation and partnerships, efforts to implement sustainable practices based on local wisdom can be strengthened and expanded (Aflisia et al., 2019; Pratama et al., 2021). Based on this, in the context of local wisdom-based sustainable environmental care practices, social interactions play a very important role in supporting, strengthening and expanding environmental conservation efforts. Therefore, it is important to recognize and understand the role that social interactions play in this context, as well as to promote the formation of broader networks and collaborations in support of such sustainable practices.

Through the local wisdom of the Lawang Agung Village community, there are several aspects that can be optimized in increasing the potential of local wisdom that has survived for a long time but has begun to not be implemented in everyday life. The first aspect is of course education, Educating the community about the importance of environmental sustainability and local wisdom values is an important step. With increased awareness, people will be more inclined to practice local wisdom in their daily lives. The education in question is applying the principles of adult learning in the learning process. As expressed by M-TA-4 that environmental education is basic and important for the people of Lawang Agung village.

"...As a traditional leader, I really hope that environmental education that prioritizes adult learning will be presented in Lawang Agung Village. The people of Lawang Agung Village need additional knowledge and

insight so that the local wisdom that has been passed down by the ancestors can be increased in potential so that the community can again apply it in their daily lives but still adapted to the times."

If environmental education is implemented, it can be a way to encourage active community participation in environmental decision-making, which will increase the recognition and application of local wisdom. Inclusive consultation and dialogue processes can ensure that local knowledge is valued and integrated in environmental policies and programs. In addition, another important aspect in increasing the potential of local wisdom is by empowering the local economy. This empowerment is carried out to encourage the development of a sustainable local economy based on local wisdom so as to increase community motivation to protect the environment. Recognizing and protecting the community's traditional rights to natural resources will strengthen their position in preserving the environment. This includes land, forest and water rights, which are the basis for local wisdom practices (A.A.K.J, 2020; Andari et al., 2022; Bu'ulolo, 2020).

Another important aspect is that combining modern technology with local wisdom can increase the effectiveness of environmental sustainability practices. An example is using geographic information systems (GIS) for participatory mapping of natural resources based on local knowledge. This aspect is considered effective when applied to the natural resource mapping of Lawang Agung village as stated by F-M-8 that the integration of technology in natural resource mapping will help optimize the potential implementation of local wisdom values. This aspect should also be supported by increasing the capacity of local communities in terms of skills, knowledge, and access to resources will strengthen their potential in practicing local wisdom. This capacity building can be done through training, formal and non-formal education, and exchange of experiences between communities.

"...As a person who cares about the environment, I believe that by mapping the potential natural resources of Lawang Agung village, the local wisdom that has begun to disappear from people's lives will be applied again optimally if this local wisdom is properly categorized according to its potential to protect natural resources and accompanied by increasing the capacity of local communities."

Local wisdom has an important function in relation to the conservation and preservation of natural resources, as well as advice, beliefs, and taboos. Preserving the natural environment and natural resources is something that really needs to be done because of its sustainability for the next generation. Local wisdom in this case has a function for this. Restoring the potential of local wisdom to preserve the environment that has faded due to the lack of community spirit involves a series of steps that focus on strengthening social ties and collective values in the community. One approach that can be taken is through revitalizing local culture and strengthening community identity. Revitalizing local culture can start with collecting and documenting traditional knowledge related to the environment and natural resources. This includes traditional methods in agriculture, forest management, waste management, and other practices that have proven sustainable over the centuries. With a holistic and sustainable approach, it is hoped that the potential of local wisdom can be reactivated and become a major force in maintaining environmental sustainability, even amidst the ongoing challenges and changes in modern society.

Integration of Spiritual Values for Environmental Conservation Practices

The implementation of spiritual values in local wisdom reflects the integration between the spiritual dimension and the local wisdom of a society or culture. It involves understanding and applying spiritual values in daily life, which are often reflected in local norms, customs and traditions. In this context, spiritual values are not only considered as religious practices, but also as a foundation for behavior and actions that reflect balance, harmony and meaning in life. It is important to note that local wisdom is a cultural heritage that develops over generations, encompassing ways of seeing and values that are unique to a particular community. While spiritual values, by their nature, encompass a deeper dimension of life, involving a connection with a greater power or transcendent existence. The integration of spiritual values in local wisdom has a profound impact on the mindset, behavior and social relationships of the community concerned.

Within this framework, it is important to highlight that the implementation of spiritual values in local wisdom is not always uniform in every society or culture. Each community group may have a different interpretation of spiritual values and how to apply them in daily life. In this framework, it is important to highlight that the implementation of spiritual values in local wisdom is not always uniform in every society or culture. Spiritual values emphasize the importance of achieving balance between humans, the environment and spiritual forces. Local wisdom can reflect efforts to live in harmony with nature and achieve harmony in social relations. With

well-maintained local wisdom values, communities remain united in the bond of unity. Balance and harmony are deep concepts and involve various aspects of human life. In the context of the local wisdom of the Lawang Agung village community, this concept becomes the basis for the community to achieve a balanced, harmonious and sustainable life. The implementation of balance and harmony in local wisdom covers various dimensions, such as human relationships with nature, between individuals, between generations, as well as in spiritual and economic aspects. In addition, balance between individuals and in social relations is also a major focus of local wisdom. Traditional communities often have norms that promote mutual respect, fairness and cooperation. These value systems create a social environment that favors balance and harmony between individuals, avoiding conflicts that are detrimental to communal life. Principles such as *gotong royong*, deliberation and social justice form the foundation for daily life practices.

Balance and harmony in local wisdom also involve an intergenerational dimension. Understanding and respecting the knowledge passed down from generation to generation is an important aspect. Traditional societies often value the role of parents and ancestors and regard them as a source of wisdom and experience. Therefore, the implementation of intergenerational balance involves the transfer of knowledge, values and skills from the older generation to the younger generation, creating continuity and maintenance of local identity (Diab et.al, 2022; Farhan & Anwar, 2016; Sandoval-Rivera, 2020, Yuliana, et.al 2017). This theory is also supported by one of the community cultural actors of Lawang Agung village, F-M-6, who revealed that spiritual values are still closely held by most of the people of Lawang Agung village so that it has the opportunity to be integrated with local wisdom for sustainable environmental conservation practices.

"...Although the implementation of local wisdom has begun to fade, the people of Lawang Agung village are mostly religious adherents who practice their worship so that it will be an opportunity if stakeholders strive to integrate local wisdom values in various spiritual activities such as environmentally friendly practices in worship with good waste management and not polluting the river"

Furthermore, the use of symbols of nature in spiritual practices is also an example of the integration of local wisdom values. For example, in many cultures, trees are considered symbols of life and the power of nature. In spiritual practices (Abeyewickreme et al., 2013; Adamson & Bromiley, 2013; Cox, 2014; Coy et al., 2021). trees are often considered sacred and revered, and respectful treatment of trees becomes part of religious practices. In addition, many spiritual practices also teach values such as simplicity, balance and respect for all forms of life. This is in line with local wisdom values that emphasize harmony between humans and nature and the importance of maintaining ecological balance. Such integration of local wisdom values with spiritual activities can provide a strong foundation for sustainable environmental conservation practices (Blair, 1985; Chowdhury et al., 2020; Tuçaltan, 2020). This is because it combines spiritual beliefs with concrete actions in preserving and protecting nature, thus creating a deep and sustainable commitment to caring for the earth as a common home for all living beings. (Adelman, 1993; Gortmaker, 1999; Mahfud et al., 2021).

From Tradition to Action and Future Research Directions

Based on the research findings and discussion of the potential for community empowerment through local wisdom for sustainable environmental sustainability practices, stages can be identified that can be carried out so that the process of converting knowledge values and local wisdom practices into real actions. This stage begins with an understanding of local wisdom. This stage involves an in-depth understanding of the local wisdom that exists in the Lawang Agung village community. It requires a study of the traditional knowledge, cultural practices and values that have accumulated over the years in interacting with the environment such as *bekarang iwak*, *nakul*, *sedekah maling*, and *ngejago warisan puyang* that can be synthesized into action in environmental conservation inherent in the attitudes of the people of Lawang Agung village.

The next step is to identify the potential for community empowerment contained in the local wisdom. This stage can be in the form of certain skills, knowledge or practices that can be used to strengthen the community's role in preserving the environment. In the case of the Lawang Agung village community, participatory approaches are needed that prioritize a "sense of belonging" to local wisdom and environmental conservation practices that are starting to fade. The results show that most people know the local wisdom in Lawang Agung village but it is still limited to the level of knowledge without practice. Therefore, a powerful strategy is needed that prioritizes real actions in supporting sustainable environmental practices. The government plays an important role in facilitating, providing budgets, and optimizing efforts to convert local wisdom values into concrete actions to preserve the environment.

Once the potential for community empowerment is identified, the next step is to plan and organize efforts to integrate local wisdom into sustainable environmental practices. This involves forming working groups, developing strategies, and setting clear goals that the community will easily understand. Then the next stage is implementation, which involves applying sustainable practices based on local wisdom. While implementation is taking place, it is also important to evaluate and adjust. It is important to continuously evaluate the practices and make adjustments if necessary. This ensures that the practices are effective in achieving the goal of sustainable environmental sustainability and remain in line with existing local values and wisdom. The final step in transforming local wisdom values into concrete actions for sustainable environmental practices is the dissemination of results and experiences. This step is done by sharing the results and experiences of local wisdom practices with other communities or related parties. In addition, this method can also inspire others to adopt the same practices and expand their positive impact in maintaining environmental sustainability (Pratama, et.al, 2021).

The potential of local wisdom of the Lawang Agung village community such as *nakul*, *bekarang iwak*, *sedekah maling*, and *ngejago warisan puyang* is local wisdom that has tremendous potential for sustainable environmental conservation practices. Empowering the community and increasing collective awareness will transform the values of local wisdom into real action in protecting forests, rivers and everything in them. Based on the results of the study, future research directions can explore the concepts of community empowerment and local wisdom through the lens of diverse disciplines, such as anthropology, sociology, ecology, and economics. The integration of these various approaches can provide a more holistic understanding of how traditions and local wisdom can be used for environmental sustainability practices. Research can also focus on analyzing policies that support or hinder community empowerment and local wisdom-based environmental sustainability practices. This involves exploring existing policies, identifying gaps or challenges in their implementation, and recommendations for improvements or the development of new policies that are more inclusive and sustainable. In addition, it explores how technological innovations can be used to strengthen local wisdom-based environmental behavior. Researchers suggest that the development and implementation of technologies that are appropriate to the local cultural and environmental context and pay attention to the needs and knowledge of local communities will help in optimizing the conversion of local wisdom/tradition values into concrete actions of sustainable environmental conservation practices.

Conclusion

Lawang Agung Village, located in North Musi Rawas Regency, has a long history of practicing local wisdom that reflects a harmonious relationship between humans and nature. However, in recent years, worrying social changes have taken place in the village. The spirit of gotong royong and community cohesiveness has begun to fade due to the impact of individualism and modernization, shifting collective priorities to achieve personal gain. However, while local wisdom values such as "nakul" and "bekarang iwak" have survived, their practice has begun to regress. Communities need to be actively involved in protecting the environment, which is an important part of local wisdom. Social interaction plays a crucial role in shaping and maintaining sustainable environmental conservation practices. Through the formation of social bonds and a sense of attachment to their environment, community members are likely to feel responsible for maintaining and preserving the environment in which they live. The proposed strategy based on the research findings to strengthen local wisdom practices and maintain environmental sustainability involves various stages, from in-depth understanding of local wisdom, identification of community empowerment potential, to implementation and evaluation of sustainable practices. Governments, community organizations and individuals need to work together to support these efforts. Through combining modern technology with local wisdom values, as well as strengthening community education and participation, we can optimize sustainable environmental conservation practices. The integration of spiritual values is also an important step in strengthening the collective commitment to maintaining the balance between humans, nature and spiritual forces.

Recommendations

Based on this research on the potential of community empowerment through local wisdom for sustainable environmental sustainability practices, it can be recommended that future research can further explore how to strengthen local wisdom practices and promote community participation in maintaining environmental sustainability. This involves more in-depth policy analysis, development of sustainable technologies, as well as integration of spiritual values in people's daily practices. With these measures, we can safeguard cultural and natural heritage for generations to come.

Scientific Ethics Declaration

The authors declare that the scientific ethical and legal responsibility of this article published in EPESS journal belongs to the authors.

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