
RESEARCH ARTICLE

Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) Value Reflected in Papua Children's Literature: A Study of the Archipelago

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ABSTRACT

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) serve as an urgent call for action by all countries related to critical issues, one of which is environmental sustainability. The focus of SDG related to environmental sustainability is to raise environmental consciousness and advocate for the protection of ecosystems. Papua, as an integral part of the Indonesian archipelago, has a big role in preserving ecological balance and natural resource wealth. Papua, characterized by tropical rainforest, mountains, and marine landscape, faces the ecological challenge of natural destruction. The study presented in the present article aims to scrutinize Papua children's literature to see how Papua children's literature reflects themes of environmental conservation, social harmony, and cultural identity. The children's literature that will be analyzed is Menjaga Laut Raja Ampat (Protecting Raja Ampat Sea) by Ali Muakhir and Sasi Laut di Kampung Sintike (Sintike and The Sasi at Kapatcol) by Dayu Rifanto. The story will be analyzed by the ecocriticism theory. The researchers use a descriptive qualitative method and employ an ecocriticism approach to reveal the SDG value in Papua children's literature. The result of this study shows SDG reflected in the story of Protecting Raja Ampat Sea are SDG 14 (Life Below Water), SDG 12 (Responsible Consumption and Production) and SDG 7 (Affordable and Clean Energy) and the SDG reflected in the story Sintike and The Sasi at Kapatcol are SDG 14 (Life Below Water), SDG 12 (Responsible Consumption and Production), SDG 15 (Life on Land) and SDG 5 (Gender Equality). The findings indicate that Papua's children's literature is a valuable medium for promoting SDG value. It emphasizes the value of environmental conservation, cultural sustainability, and indigenous knowledge.

KEYWORDS

Children literature, ecocriticism, Papua, SDG

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1. INTRODUCTION

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), established by the United Nations in 2015, serve as an urgent call for action by all countries related to critical issues such as peace, justice, poverty, education, environmental sustainability, gender equality, and cultural preservation. One of the fundamental aspects of achieving these goals is environmental sustainability, which is represented by SDG 13 about Climate Action, SDG 15 about Life on Land, and SDG 14 about Life Below Water. The focus of SDG related to environmental sustainability is to raise environmental consciousness and advocate for the protection of ecosystems. Based on SDG 17 Partnership for the Goals, collaboration between interdisciplinarity is needed to achieve sustainable development. Literature as a part of education plays a significant role in fostering awareness about ecosystems and nature. One genre of literature that contributes to environmental sustainability and ethical values is children's literature.

Indonesia, which consists of archipelagic regions, is rich with its children's literature rooted in culture and tradition. Papua, as one of the most culturally rich and ecologically significant regions in Indonesia, presents a unique perspective in children's literature. Papua children's literature reflects themes of environmental conservation, social harmony, and cultural identity. It aligns with

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Quality Education (SDG 4), Reduced Inequalities (SDG 10), Climate Action (SDG 13), Life Below Water (SDG 14), and Life on Land (SDG 15). However, the research about SDG values embedded in Papua's children's literature remains limited. To answer this urgency, the researchers will explore further how these narratives contribute to sustainable development.

This study aims to analyze the representation of SDG values in Papua's children's literature, emphasizing the role of Indigenous tradition in educating people, raising environmental awareness, and building social unity. By examining various children's literature from Papua and the broader archipelago, this research seeks to highlight the role of literature in fostering a deeper understanding of sustainability and cultural preservation among young readers. Furthermore, it will investigate how these narratives can serve as educational resources to bridge traditional wisdom with modern sustainability efforts, ensuring that indigenous knowledge remains significant in today's discussions of sustainable development.

The researchers use an ecocriticism approach to examine the interrelatedness of literature, culture, and nature. For ecocritics, "nature really exists, out there beyond ourselves, . . . present as an entity which affects us, and which we can affect, perhaps fatally, if we mistreat it" (Barry, 1995). Ecocriticism offers a new perspective on nature and its relationship to human life. As Bertens (2014) states, Ecocriticism "seeks to dismantle . . . the human/nature hierarchy, and sides with posthumanism in its deconstruction of the human/nature dichotomy, an opposition that for ecocritics involves both the human/animal and the culture/nature oppositions". Ecocriticism provides a lens to explore how both classic and modern narratives represent environmental consciousness, the preservation of biodiversity, and sustainable living practices. The ecocriticism approach aligns closely with several SDG principles. Concerning environmental sustainability, ecocriticism is closely related to SDG 13 about Climate Action, SDG 15 about Life on Land, and SDG 14 about Life Below Water, which the approach emphasizes. Concerning Indigenous knowledge in sustainability, ecocriticism is closely related to SDG 4 (Quality Education) on how analyzing Indigenous narratives can be an effective tool for environmental education. Ecocriticism will enhance our understanding of the role of literature in sustainability and reinforce the importance of cultural narratives in shaping ecological consciousness for a sustainable future.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The study related to ecology concerning literary works was conducted by Evia Firnadia and Nurizzati in 2022 with the title *Literary Ecology Study of Novels: A Strategy for Instilling Environmental-Based Character Education Values*. The research objectives are to describe the attitude of avoiding the nature of damaging the environment, fostering an attitude of caring and responsible for the environment, and the attitude of saving the environment contained in the novel *Serdadu Pantai* by Laode Insan and the novel *Dari Rahim Ombak* by Tison Sahabuddin Bungin. The research used a qualitative descriptive approach with the research stages of the preparation stage, the field stage, and the data analysis stage. The results of this study are: the novel *Serdadu Pantai* dan *Dari Rahim Ombak* emphasizes to the reader how important it is to have a character who cares about the environment, so that humans can live in harmony with nature. In both novels, there is a great message to the readers about how fatal the impact will be received by humans if they live by destroying the environment (Firnadia et al, 2022).

The study of nature preservation was conducted by Alireza Sardari in 2020. The focus of the study is investigating the relationship between human culture and the natural world in Willa Cather's *The Enchanted Bluff* (2009). Sardari's study shifted its focus from the anthropocentric attitude to the biocentric and focuses on nature and its correlation with humanity. This paper challenges the human/nature binary to help us look at the natural world stripped of established stereotypes. The results indicate that nature is an indivisible portion of human identity; furthermore, humankind and the natural world are codependent and interconnected; the results also emphasize that preserving the natural world is, indeed, the prerequisite for the protection of humanity (Sardari, 2020).

Another study on human ecology in the novel was conducted by Annisa Sabrina in 2021. Using the human ecology concept from Philip J. Stewart as a key concept, this study aims to describe how human fragility and natural domination presented in the novel *The Bear* (2020) support the idea of human ecology, as well as how human ecology voiced in the novel *The Bear* (2020) criticizes the view of anthropocentrism which believes that humans are the center of life. This study shows that the voice of human ecology in the novel *The Bear* (2020), which is presented through human fragility, natural domination, to criticism of the anthropocentrism view, offers the idea of a balance between humans and nature. The balance in question is a condition in which humans and nature return to an equal position, where neither one of them is harmed (Sabrina, 2021).

While there have been numerous studies conducted on the works related to the issue of ecology, this research offers the novelty of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The topic of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) is one such piece that has not been frequently studied in academia, particularly in the context of Papua children's literature. While the existing studies focus on themes such as ecology and culture, this study highlights the subtleties of living on land and living under water as two principles of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

3. METHODOLOGY

The method used in this study is descriptive qualitative, which used documentation as the data collection technique. Punch explains that the descriptive method sets out to collect, organize, and summarize information about the matter being studied (Punch, 2000). There are two sources used, namely primary and secondary sources. The primary sources of this research are *Menjaga Laut Raja Ampat (Protecting Raja Ampat Sea)* by Ali Muakhir and *Sasi Laut di Kampung Sintike (Sintike and The Sasi at Kapatcol)* by Dayu Rifanto. Words, phrases, and intrinsic elements in the story that explain the SDGs principles are sorted as data. To support the primary source and to enrich the discussion, journals, articles, and book reviews, as well as a short history of the cultural and sociopolitical conditions of Papua, are used as the secondary data.

The data collection technique is conducted in several steps. The researchers read and comprehended the children's literature. In the next step, the researchers analyze the intrinsic elements of the story and then collect evidence related to the SDGs principles. Next, the researchers related the ecology issue by employing Cheryl Glotfelty's Ecocriticism theory. Cheryl Glotfelty has offered three patterns (stages) for conducting an ecocritical study. The first stage is about 'representations'; that is, "how nature is represented in literature. . . where is the natural world in this text? But nature per se is not the only focus of ecocritical studies of representation. Other topics include the frontier, animals, cities, specific geographical regions, rivers, mountains, deserts, Indians, technology, garbage, and the body". The second stage spotlights the overlooked nature-oriented writings; this process raises the public's environmental consciousness. And finally, the third stage is concerned with "examining the symbolic construction of species. How has literary discourse defined the human? Such a critique questions the dualisms prevalent in Western thought, dualisms that separate meaning from matter, sever mind from body, divide men from women, and wrench humanity from nature" (Glotfelty, 1996).

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A. The Representation of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in *Menjaga Laut Raja Ampat (Protecting Raja Ampat Sea)*

Protecting Raja Ampat Sea is a story about the life of Papuans who live near Raja Ampat, one of the richest marine biodiversity in the world, which has a unique fishing tradition called Balobe. Raja Ampat is famous for its marine habitats, such as the coral reef and reef fish. Balobe is a sustainable fishing method that is done by using a lantern at night to attract and guide the fish to a pond as a trap. Unlike destructive fishing methods such as poison fishing, trawling, or using dynamite, Balobe does not destroy the marine habitat and coral reefs. This fishing method is a part of indigenous local wisdom that believes in the harmonious relationship between humans and nature. In the story, Papuans educate their children to preserve nature by doing this fishing method together. It can be seen when Billy, his father, and other Papuans practice Balobe together.

"Not long after, the fish began to arrive. The fish were happy to see the light of the lantern.

"The fish are ready to enter the trap, Father," Billy said with a smile.

"Billy's boat drove the fish."

"Until they arrived at the edge of the fish trap pond" (Muakhir, 2019)

The scene above reflects SDG 14 (Life Under Water). People of Raja Ampat conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas, and marine resources for sustainable development. From those quotations, it can be seen how the Papuans got the fish for their daily needs. They attract fish's attention with the lantern's light and direct them to enter a pond as a trap. Thus, Papuans do not hurt the fish at all. This fishing culture fits the SDG 14 goal, prevent and significantly reduce marine pollution of all kinds, in particular from land-based activities, including marine debris and nutrient pollution. They conserve the oceans, seas, and marine life as they do not harm the fish, the ecosystem, and the nature underwater.

The quotation above also reflects SDG 12 (Responsible Consumption and Production). SDG 12 ensures sustainable consumption and production patterns. Furthermore, one of the SDG 12 targets is to achieve the environmentally sound management of chemicals and all wastes throughout their life cycle, in accordance with agreed international frameworks, and significantly reduce their release to air, water, and soil in order to minimize their adverse impacts on human health and the environment. The Papuan's fishing culture, which does not use any chemicals, fits this target. They only use the light from the lantern and a trap pool. Hence, Papuan's fishing culture minimizes the impact of chemicals on human health and the environment.

SDG 7 (Affordable and Clean Energy) is also reflected in the story. The goal of SDG 7 is to ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable, and modern energy for all. Moreover, the target of SDG 7 by 2030 is to substantially increase the share of renewable energy in the global energy mix. Water is one of the renewable energy resources humans have. With no-harm fishing that the Papuans do, they indirectly increase the share of renewable energy. The water becomes well-maintained and unpopulated. Hence, the water that can be used as a renewable energy source increases. Other than that, the target could also fit this culture, as it is

stated that by 2030, double the global rate of improvement in energy efficiency. By using a lantern to attract the fish, instead of a high-energy lamp, which needs a lot of electricity, the Papuans contribute to energy efficiency.

B. The Representation of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in Sasi Laut di Kampung Sintike (Sintike and The Sasi at Kapatcol)

Sintike and The Sasi at Kapatcol is Papuan Children's Literature that tells a story about the fishing customary law from the indigenous Papuan tradition. In this customary law, certain marine areas were temporarily closed for fishing for a specific period to allow the marine habitat, such as fish, sea cucumber, and coral reefs, to regenerate.

"The sasi is a tradition that is upheld by the local community to manage and preserve the balance of the natural resources. This is done by imposing a restriction on harvesting certain natural resources within a certain period of time. The Sasi restriction is applied based on the seasons. During high tides, the sasi is imposed on the seas. When the sasi is imposed on the seas, the on-land sasi is lifted, and the people are allowed to harvest the natural resources of the land. When the seas are calm, the on-land sasi is imposed. People are not allowed to pick or harvest any vegetables or plants that grow in the area where the sasi is imposed, except vegetables or plants that are used for daily consumption. When the on-land sasi is imposed, everyone heads for the seas to lift the sea sasi. When the sea sasi is lifted, people are allowed to harvest the resources from the sea. This local wisdom only has one purpose, and that is to protect and preserve the natural resources for future generations" (Rifanto, 2022)

The quotation above reflects SDG 14 (Life Below Water). The goal of this SDG is to conserve and sustainably use the ocean, seas, and marine resources for sustainable development. Hence, the quote supports the goal. The Sasi tradition shows how the Papuans conserve their marine resource and make them sustainable. It is because they give time for the marine resources to develop, and they do not greedily exploit them continuously without interruption.

The quote above also reflects SDG 15 (Life on Land). The goal of this SDG is to protect, restore, and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, halt and reverse land degradation, and halt biodiversity loss. The Sasi tradition also applied to the land, hence the goal was achieved. By not picking or harvesting plants in the land, Sasi, the Papuan, successfully protects the terrestrial ecosystem and stops land degradation.

SDG 12 (Responsible Consumption and Production) is applied in this quote. The goal of this SDG is to ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns. By implementing Sasi, the Papuans show that they responsibly consume and produce materials from the marine resources. They realize that nature should have resting time, and humans cannot take advantage of it continuously. The unique thing about Sasi tradition in Papua is that it is also done by women.

Usually, the sasi is managed by a group of men. But there is something a little different at Kapatcol Village. There is a special sasi area that is managed by a group of women, or mama-mama as they are called here, and Mama Anike is the leader of this group. (Rifanto, 2022)

SDG 5 (Gender Equality) is applied in this quote. This point's goal is to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls. It is stated in the quote that usually Sasi is managed by men, but in Kapatcol Village, women can also manage it. One of the examples of a woman who leads Sasi is Sintike's mother, Mama Anike. Hence, the Sasi celebration in Kapatcol has already achieved SDG 5's goal. Men and women are considered equal there. The other quotation from the story reflects SDG 12 and SDG 14.

Mama Marike is taking a brief rest on the boat, but she keeps shouting out reminders to the people, "Choose the sea cucumbers and lobsters wisely. Get the big ones only!" "Why only the big ones, Aunty?" Yanti asks. "Well, so they can grow and reach a certain size, and we can harvest them at the next sasi." "I see. So, we have to wait until they've grown and become big before we can take them." "Correct! You are such a smart girl!" Mama Anike says. (Rifanto, 2022)

SDG 12 (Responsible consumption and production) is applied in this quote. The goal of this point is to ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns. Although Sintike and the Papuan there take marine resources to produce or consume them, they are still being selective. They only select large sea cucumbers and lobsters because the small sizes still need to grow. This mindset demonstrates the responsibility this tradition holds for marine resources.

SDG 14 (Life Below Water) is applied in this quote. The goal of this point of the SDG is to conserve and sustainably use the ocean, seas, and marine resources for sustainable development. The selective mindset of choosing which marine resources to take is also an act of conservation. By doing it, the Papuans successfully conserve the sea cucumbers and lobsters because their life cycle

would also be undisturbed. The small-sized sea cucumbers and lobsters could still grow and reproduce. Hence, the amount of those marine resources would still be.

5. CONCLUSION

These Papua children's literature portray local wisdom, harmonious relationships with nature, and communal values that align with SDG principles. The story *Protecting Raja Ampat Sea* reflects SDG 14 (Life Below Water), SDG 12 (Responsible Consumption and Production) and SDG 7 (Affordable and Clean Energy) and the story *Sintike and The Sasi at Kapatcol* reflects SDG 14 (Life Below Water), SDG 12 (Responsible Consumption and Production), SDG 15 (Life on Land) and SDG 5 (Gender Equality). By embedding themes of ecological awareness, cultural identity, and social justice, Papua children's literature functions as both a pedagogical tool and a cultural medium that supports sustainable development at the local level. The findings indicate that literary works from Papua not only offer aesthetic and imaginative experiences for young readers but also promote SDG-oriented values in early education for strengthening awareness of sustainable futures among young generations.

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