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Integration of Creative Economy Values and Local Wisdom in Early Childhood Education: Perspectives on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 2030

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ABSTRACT:

The integration of creative economy values and local wisdom in early childhood education (ECE) has gained increasing attention as part of the global agenda for sustainable development. However, research exploring how these values are embedded in ECE practices and their explicit contributions to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 2030 remains limited. This study aims to examine how creative economy values and local wisdom are integrated into ECE learning activities and to analyze their contributions to achieving the SDGs 2030. Using a qualitative approach with an exploratory case study design, data were collected through in-depth interviews, participant observations, documentation, and focus group discussions with teachers, parents, and local creative community actors in several ECE institutions in Kuningan, West Java. The findings indicate that creative economy values—such as creativity, innovation, collaboration, and cultural literacy—are integrated through local wisdom-based activities, including ecoprint, traditional market role-play, storytelling, and local crafts. These practices foster children's creative identity, cultural pride, and early entrepreneurial literacy. Furthermore, they contribute directly to SDG 4.2 (quality ECE), SDG 4.7 (education for sustainable development), SDG 8 (sustainable economic growth), and SDG 11 (sustainable cities and communities). Despite these strengths, challenges remain in teachers' limited understanding of creative economy concepts. Integrating creative economy values and local wisdom in ECE not only strengthens children's cultural identity and 21st-century skills but also provides a clear pathway to achieving the SDGs 2030. Systematic teacher training, contextual assessment tools, and sustainable school–community partnerships are essential to support this integration.

Keywords: Early Childhood Education, Creative Economy, Local Wisdom, Sustainable Development, SDGs 2030.

INTRODUCTION

Early childhood education (PAUD) has a fundamental role in shaping children's personality, character, and life skills, which will form the basis for further growth and development. The early age period is known as the golden age, where children's cognitive, social, emotional, language, and moral development experiences rapid growth (Sonter & Kemp, 2021). Therefore, PAUD does not only emphasize academic aspects but also develops values, culture, and skills that align with 21st-century needs.

On a global scale, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 2030 place education as a

main pillar of sustainable development. Target 4.2 emphasizes that by 2030, all children—boys and girls—should have access to quality early childhood education, while Target 4.7 underlines the importance of education for sustainable development (ESD), global citizenship, and respect for cultural diversity (El Faouri & Sibley, 2024). This agenda requires early childhood education to integrate economic, social, cultural, and environmental dimensions so that the young generation is ready to face the complexity of global challenges (Lestari et al., 2024).

In the national context, the creative economy is one of the leading sectors that contributes greatly to Indonesia's economic growth (Kurniawan et al., 2023). According to a report by the Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy (2021), the creative economy contributes significantly to national GDP, creates new jobs, and strengthens the nation's identity through cultural values (Martanti et al., 2025). At the international level, it refers to the creative economy as an ecosystem based on knowledge, ideas, and culture that contributes not only to economic growth but also to cultural preservation and sustainable development (Lestari et al., 2024). Thus, creative economy values such as creativity, innovation, collaboration, digital literacy, and collective work ethic are very relevant to introduce from an early age.

Indonesia, as a multicultural country, has rich local wisdom, including languages, traditions, folklore, crafts, traditional games, and ecological practices of the community. Local wisdom not only serves as a cultural identity but also as a pedagogical source to develop children's character (Kurniawan et al., 2023). Research by Sonter and Kemp (2021) shows that the use of local wisdom in early childhood learning—such as ecoprint activities—successfully stimulates creativity, fine motor skills, and children's concern for the environment. Similarly, Jolanta KONIECZNY (2023) emphasizes that learning based on local wisdom helps foster cultural awareness and improve children's social skills. However, Martanti et al. (2025) note that most of these practices remain partial, without systematically integrating creative economy values into early childhood learning objectives, let alone mapping them to the 2030 SDGs indicators.

The urgency of this research can be seen from three aspects. First, in terms of global policy, early childhood education is required to support the achievement of the 2030 SDGs, especially Targets 4.2 and 4.7, which emphasize the quality of education and strengthening sustainability (El Faouri & Sibley, 2024). Second, from a national perspective, the creative economy is growing rapidly as a new force for development. If its values are not instilled early, there is a risk that the younger generation will only become passive consumers of global creative products, not competitive producers (Sonter & Kemp, 2021). Third, in terms of children's education, learning based on local wisdom has proven effective in fostering character, but without integration with creative economy values, it loses the dimension of innovation and collaboration relevant to 21st-century challenges (Pham Xuan & Håkansson Lindqvist, 2025).

Therefore, this research is urgent because it offers a conceptual model and learning practices that integrate creative economy values and local wisdom in line with the SDGs 2030 agenda, so that PAUD is not only a space for cultural preservation but also a laboratory for creativity and sustainability.

Studies on learning based on local wisdom in early childhood education show positive results for child development. Kurniawan et al. (2023) found that such learning can improve children's social skills and cultural awareness. Jolanta KONIECZNY (2023) developed an ecoprint innovation that not only trains children's fine motor skills but also introduces environmental and aesthetic values. Meanwhile, studies on early childhood entrepreneurship show that values such as responsibility, initiative, and collaboration can be instilled through role-playing methods and mini-market simulations (Atikoh et al., 2024).

At the international level, Agus et al. (2021) emphasized that ECEfS (Early Childhood Education for Sustainability) must include ecological, social, cultural, and economic dimensions. Wahyuningtyas et al. (2025) even emphasized the importance of contradiction as a means of children's learning in understanding the complexity of sustainability. However, Gao et al. (2023) note that most global research still limits the economic dimension to responsible consumption

behavior, without touching the aspect of the creative economy. In addition, the Nepal (2025) framework provides tools for assessing creativity and critical thinking that have potential for adaptation to early childhood education, but until now, no instrument has been developed contextually with local Indonesian wisdom.

Table 1. Conclusion of the Research GAP

Aspects	Previous Research (2018–2021)	Identified Gaps	Position of this research
Learning Focus	Sustainable Development Through Community Empowerment Based on Local Wisdom (Kurniawan et al., 2023).	It has not explicitly integrated the value of the creative economy.	Designing the integration of the creative economy + local wisdom in early childhood education.
Economic Dimension	Educulture Entrepreneurship as an Innovation to Improve the Quality of Education: An Analysis of Achieving Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (Atikoh et al., 2024)	It has not emphasized a creative, innovative, collaborative disposition.	Adapting the core values of the creative economy according to the development of children.
Contribution of SDGs 2030	Connecting the UNESCO Sustainable Development Goals with Australian Early Childhood Education Policy to Transform Practice (Sonter & Kemp, 2021).	Contributions to SDGs 4.2 & 4.7 are not explicit.	Mapping the contribution of PAUD integration to SDGs indicators in a measurable manner.
Assessment Instruments	Traditional Ecological Knowledge and the Sustainable Development Goals: Integrating Indigenous Wisdom for Global Sustainability (Nepal, 2025).	There is no instrument based on local wisdom for early childhood education	Develop contextual formative assessment instruments.
Education Ecosystem	Education for sustainable development at the early childhood education (Jolanta KONIECZNY, 2023).	The relationship between schools and creative ecosystems has not been mapped.	Connecting PAUD with local creative actors as a learning laboratory.

Based on the description above, the problem raised in this study is how to design the integration of creative economic values with local wisdom in early childhood education so that learning not only preserves culture, but also fosters creativity, innovation, and collaboration. These issues include how to develop learning models that are relevant to the 2030 SDGs, how to measure child development indicators related to the value of the creative economy, and how to build synergy between early childhood education and the local creative ecosystem.

The purpose of this research is to develop a conceptual framework and learning model that integrates the value of the creative economy and local wisdom in early childhood education. This research also aims to design a local culture-based formative assessment instrument that can measure indicators of creativity, collaboration, and appreciation of early childhood culture. In addition, this study seeks to map the contribution of the developed model to the achievement of the 2030 SDGs, especially targets 4.2 and 4.7.

This research is expected to contribute to three main domains. Theoretically, this study expands the ECEFS literature by including the value of the creative economy as a pedagogic dimension that can be measured in early childhood education. Practically, this research offers a learning model based on local wisdom that fosters children's creativity and collaboration, as well as producing ready-to-use assessment instruments for PAUD teachers. In terms of policy, this research supports the mainstreaming of ESD in PAUD and strengthens the synergy between educational institutions and the national creative economy ecosystem, to make a real contribution to the achievement of the 2030 SDGs.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study used a qualitative approach with an exploratory case study design. This approach was chosen because the research problem is related to a deep understanding of the process of integrating creative economic values and local wisdom in early childhood learning practices. In line with the views of (Mangkhang et al., 2025), the qualitative method allows researchers to explore the complex meanings, experiences, and perspectives of the participants as well as the socio-cultural context in which the phenomenon takes place.

The research was carried out in several PAUD units in Kuningan Regency, West Java, which have implemented learning based on local wisdom in daily activities. The selection of the location was carried out by purposive sampling considering:

1. Early childhood education units that actively integrate activities based on local wisdom (e.g. traditional games, ecoprints, crafts, or folklore).
2. The involvement of local creative communities (MSMEs, craftsmen, regional artists) in school activities.
3. Support from teachers and principals to participate in research.

The research subjects include early childhood education teachers, school principals, parents, and local creative actors involved in school activities. Early childhood (4–6 years) is observed as the main object in the context of learning, but data is obtained from educators and parents as key informants.

To obtain in-depth data, the following techniques are used:

1. In-depth Interviews Conducted, with teachers, principals, and parents to explore their experiences, perceptions, and practices in integrating the value of the creative economy with local wisdom. The interview is semi-structured to be flexible in terms of context (Adeoye-Olatunde & Olenik, 2021).
2. Participant Observation: The Researcher conducted direct observation of early childhood learning activities that utilize local wisdom, such as handicraft activities, traditional games, and miniature market simulations. Observations are focused on children's behavior related to creativity, innovation, collaboration, and cultural

appreciation.

3. Documentation Collect school documents such as RPPH (Daily Learning Implementation Plan), photos of activities, learning videos, and children's portfolio notes. This document is a supporting data to verify the results of interviews and observations.
4. Focus Group Discussion (FGD)
Involving local teachers and creative actors to discuss the model of integrating creative economy values in early childhood education. The FGD serves to strengthen the validity of the data and gain a collective perspective.

Data analysis was carried out thematically, following the steps proposed by (Espedal et al., 2022):

1. Data familiarization: repeated reading of interview results, observation notes, and documents.
2. Initial coding: labeling data relevant to the research theme (e.g.: creativity, innovation, collaboration, cultural appreciation, community engagement).
3. Theme search: grouping the code into major themes, such as the integration of local wisdom, the value of the creative economy in learning, and the contribution to the SDGs.
4. Theme review: verifies the theme's compatibility with the overall data.
5. Theme definition: clarify the meaning and interconnectedness between themes.
6. Narrative preparation: writing down the results of the analysis in a thorough and in-depth manner.

To ensure the credibility of the research, several data validation strategies are used (Espedal et al., 2022):

1. Triangulation of sources (teachers, parents, creative actors, school documents).
2. Triangulation method (interview, observation, documentation, FGD).
3. Member check, which is reconfirming the results of interviews and interpretations with informants to ensure accuracy.
4. Trail audit, which is keeping detailed records of the research process so that it can be retraced.

This study pays attention to research ethics with the following steps:

1. Request informed consent from teachers, parents, and schools before data collection.
2. Ensure the confidentiality of participants' identities by using an anonymous code.
3. Avoid any form of pressure or coercion in research participation.
4. Adjust data collection procedures to be child-friendly and not disturb their comfort.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. Integration of Creative Economy Values in Early Childhood Education Activities Field Findings

The results of observations in three PAUD showed that the integration of creative economic values emerged through local practice-based activities. One of them is an ecoprint activity with teak leaves and frangipani flowers. The teacher gives the child the freedom to choose the leaves and colors they like, then press the leaves onto a plain cloth. Children express themselves through different patterns, even though the materials used are the same. From the interview, one teacher mentioned:

" Anak-anak lebih bahagia jika pekerjaan mereka berbeda dengan teman-teman mereka. Mereka merasa bangga ketika menunjukkan hasilnya kepada orang tua mereka." (Interview, PAUD A Teacher, 2022).

In addition, traditional mini market games are also widely practiced. Children are asked to play the role of a seller or buyer using traditional image-based toy money (puppets and batik). The documentation shows children not only learn to count, but also learn transaction etiquette, such as saying hello, asking for permission, and saying thank you. One parent said:

" Anak saya sering berpura-pura menjual di rumah. Dia tahu bahwa uang memiliki

nilai, meskipun dia tidak bisa menghitungnya dengan sempurna. Itu membuat saya bahagia karena saya belajar sambil bermain." (Interview, Parent B, 2022)

Analysis of Findings

These findings show that children can internalize creative economic values (creativity, innovation, communication, responsibility) through simple activities. This is in line with (Wahyuningtyas et al., 2025) who emphasized that role playing is an effective method of fostering an entrepreneurial attitude from an early age.

2. Utilization of Local Wisdom as a Learning Basis Field Findings

PAUD in Kuningan generally uses local wisdom as the main learning medium. From the observation results, there are three forms of utilization:

1. Sundanese folklore, such as "Lutung Kasarung" and "Sangkuriang," were used in early literacy activities. Children listen to stories and draw their favorite characters.
2. Traditional games such as engklek and congklak are used to train gross motor skills, strategy, and cooperation. One teacher said:

"Saat Anda bermain congklak, anak-anak belajar untuk bersabar menunggu giliran mereka dan tidak mudah marah jika kalah." (PAUD B Teacher, 2022).

3. Local crafts, for example, making simple batik with natural dyes. Children are invited to draw typical Kuningan batik motifs, then color them with environmentally friendly dyes.

The results of the children's portfolio documentation show that children not only produce works, but also recognize regional cultural symbols. Local wisdom is a pedagogical bridge that strengthens children's cultural identity as well as creativity. (Atikoh et al., 2024) found that the integration of local wisdom through art activities provides children with the opportunity to learn cultural values while developing creativity. Thus, this approach places children as active subjects in preserving culture, in line with (Jolanta KONIECZNY, 2023) recommendations on *Early Childhood Education for Sustainability (ECEfS)*.

3. The Contribution of Early Childhood Activities to the 2030 SDGs Field Findings

The results of FGDs with teachers and local creative actors showed that the practice of integrating creative economic values and local wisdom contributed to the achievement of the SDGs. For example, teachers mentioned that ecoprints help children understand the importance of protecting the environment from an early age, supporting SDG 4.7 (Education for Sustainable Development). The mini-market game is considered to help children understand simple exchange rates, supporting SDG 8 (Economic Growth).

One of the local creatives, a batik craftsman, said:

"Dengan anak-anak belajar membatik sejak dini, tradisi kita tidak hilang. Mereka dapat menghargai pekerjaannya, bahkan jika itu hanya motif sederhana." (FGD, Batik Creative Actors, 2022).

Analysis of Findings

This activity shows the relevance of PAUD to SDG 4.2 (access to quality education), SDG 4.7 (sustainable education), SDG 8 (sustainable economic growth), and SDG 11 (preservation of local culture). (Sonter & Kemp, 2021) emphasizes that culture-based early childhood education is the key to achieving long-term sustainable development.

Table 2. Mapping Early Childhood Activities with SDGs 2030

Early Childhood Activities	The Value of the Creative Economy	Local Wisdom	Contribution to the SDGs
Ecoprint leaves & flowers	Creativity, innovation	Local ecological practices	SDG 4.7 (ESD), SDG 11 (Sustainability)
Traditional minimarket games	Collaboration, simple economic literacy	Local folk markets	SDG 4.2 (quality early childhood education), SDG 8
Simple batik crafts	Creativity, patience, aesthetics	Regional cultural arts	SDG 4.7, SDG 11
Regional folklore	Cultural literacy, moral values	Oral traditions	SDG 4.7, SDG 16 (Peace, Justice)

4. Implementation

Challenges Field

Findings

While integration practices are well underway, there are several key challenges:

1. Limited teacher understanding. Many PAUD teachers do not fully understand the concept of the creative economy. One teacher revealed: *"Kita hanya tahu bahwa ekonomi kreatif adalah tentang kerajinan, meskipun harus lebih luas. Kami membutuhkan pelatihan."* (Interview, PAUD C Teacher, 2022).
2. The assessment instrument is not yet standard. Teachers only rely on diary records to assess children's creativity, making it difficult to measure development consistently.
3. The involvement of the local creative community is still limited. The FGD shows that the involvement of local artisans or artists is usually only based on seasonal invitations, not yet institutionalized in the curriculum.

Analysis of Findings

This challenge shows the need to strengthen teacher capacity through training on creative pedagogy, adaptation of creative disposition-based assessment instruments (Nepal, 2025), and strengthening school-community partnerships. As stated by (Lestari et al., 2024) community involvement is important to build a sustainable learning ecosystem.

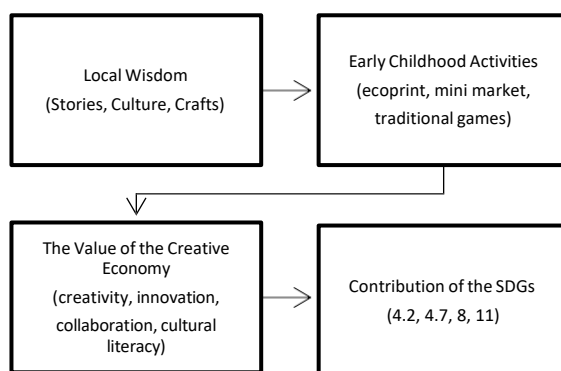


Diagram 1. Model of Integration of Creative Economy Values and Local Wisdom in Early Childhood Education

1. Integration of Creative Economy Values in Early Childhood Education Activities

The results of the study show that leaf ecoprint activities and traditional mini markets are effective mediums to instill the value of creativity, innovation, and simple economic literacy. This supports the (Nepal, 2025) view that children's creativity can be nurtured through authentic activities that provide space for freedom of expression. Interviews with

teachers show that children feel proud of their work that is different from their friends, indicating a process of internalizing *creative identity*. In addition, the mini-market activity not only trains arithmetic, but also communication and responsibility. This is in line with research by (Kurniawan et al., 2023) who found that role play strengthens social skills and entrepreneurial values in early childhood. In the perspective of (Sonter & Kemp, 2021), the habituation of simple entrepreneurial activities at an early age serves as an early economic literacy that is relevant to build children's independence in the future.

Critical analysis: This integration still tends to be partial, depending on the creativity of the teacher. To strengthen it, there needs to be a thematic curriculum that explicitly accommodates the value of the creative economy in daily learning activities.

2. Local Wisdom as a Learning Basis

The results of the field show that local wisdom, such as Sundanese folklore, traditional games, and simple batik crafts, are important mediums in early childhood learning. This activity not only develops motor and social skills, but also strengthens the child's cultural identity. As one of the teachers said, traditional games train children to be patient and accept defeat. This is in accordance with the research of (Martanti et al., 2025) which emphasizes that local wisdom can instill moral and social values through the practice of play. More broadly, research by (Wahyuningtyas et al., 2025) proves that local culture-based activities, such as *ecoprints*, can integrate the value of art, creativity, and environmental care. These findings are also in line with the concept of Early Childhood Education for Sustainability (ECEFS) developed by (El Faouri & Sibley, 2024) and Grindheim et al. (2019), which emphasize that sustainability education will be more meaningful if it starts from the child's local context.

Critical analysis: Although local wisdom has been integrated into learning activities, its use is still limited to symbolic aspects (stories, games, crafts). It is necessary to develop a more systematic pedagogical model so that local wisdom is not only an additional activity, but the core of the early childhood learning approach.

3. Contribution to the 2030 SDGs

The mapping of early childhood activities to the SDGs shows real relevance, especially in SDG 4.2 (access to quality early childhood education), SDG 4.7 (sustainable education), SDG 8 (sustainable economic growth), and SDG 11 (preservation of local culture). The teacher said that children learn to protect the environment through *ecoprints*, while batik creative actors

emphasized that batik traditions can be preserved if introduced from an early age. This reinforces (Sonter & Kemp, 2021) view that early childhood education plays a strategic role in achieving long-term sustainability targets. In addition, the (Martanti et al., 2025) emphasizes that the SDGs can only be achieved if inclusive community-based education is developed from an early age. Thus, the integration of the creative economy and local wisdom in early childhood education not only meets the needs of national education, but also contributes to the global development agenda.

Critical analysis: The connection of early childhood education with the SDGs is still implicit and has not yet become formal curriculum awareness. This requires national education policies to further emphasize the integration of SDGs in early childhood education.

4. Challenges and Implications

The field findings show that there are three main challenges: (1) limited teachers' understanding of the concept of the creative economy, (2) non-standard assessment instruments, and (3) the involvement of the local creative community is still sporadic. Teachers admitted that they only understand the creative economy as limited to handicrafts, even though this concept is broader, encompassing innovation, digital literacy, and cross-sector collaboration. This challenge is in line with (Jolanta KONIECZNY, 2023) research which highlights the limitations of teachers in implementing entrepreneurial

values in PAUD. In terms of assessment, the has provided a framework for assessing creativity, but its adaptation to early childhood education in Indonesia is still minimal. Meanwhile, research by (Sonter & Kemp, 2021) emphasized the importance of *school-community partnerships* to support the sustainability of early childhood education.

Implication:

1. For teachers: creative pedagogy training based on local wisdom is needed.
2. For schools: it is important to develop contextually appropriate assessment instruments for children's creative disposition.
3. For education policy: it is necessary to encourage school collaboration with the local creative community to be sustainable, not just based on momentary initiatives.

CONCLUSION

This research confirms that the integration of creative economic values and local wisdom in early childhood education (PAUD) has a significant role in building the foundation of 21st century skills, strengthening cultural identity, and supporting the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 2030. First, creative economy-based activities such as leaf ecoprints and traditional mini markets have succeeded in fostering creativity, innovation, collaboration, simple economic literacy, and a sense of children's sense of responsibility. This shows that the value of the creative economy can be instilled from an early age through a contextual and fun approach. Second, the use of local wisdom (folklore, traditional games, and simple batik crafts) functions as a pedagogical medium to strengthen children's cultural identity while fostering social, moral, and ecological skills. This approach proves that education based on local culture can support the global sustainability agenda. Third, early childhood education practices based on local wisdom and the creative economy contribute directly to the achievement of the SDGs, especially SDG 4.2 (quality early childhood education), SDG 4.7 (sustainable education), SDG 8 (sustainable economic growth), and SDG 11 (preservation of local culture and sustainable communities). Fourth, this study also found major challenges, namely the limited understanding of teachers related to the creative economy, non-standard creativity assessment instruments, and the involvement of the creative community that is still sporadic. Thus, this study fills the gap in the literature regarding the explicit connection between early childhood education, the creative economy, local wisdom, and the 2030 SDGs, as well as providing a practical foothold for the development of a sustainability-based early childhood education curriculum. Based on the findings and discussion, this study offers practical recommendations for integrating creative economic values and local wisdom into Early Childhood Education (ECE). For teachers, it is recommended to develop creative learning methods rooted in local wisdom (such as adapting traditional games into literacy and numeracy media), participate in specialized training on the creative economy that includes digital literacy and innovation, and compile children's creative portfolios as non-formal assessment tools. Educational institutions should formalize the integration of these values into daily lesson plans (RPPH), build strategic partnerships with local creative communities, and provide environmentally friendly creative learning facilities. For governments and policymakers, developing a national ECE curriculum that emphasizes this integration, organizing sustainable teacher training programs on creative pedagogy and the SDGs, and promoting policies that strengthen school-community-government collaboration are essential. Further research should include longitudinal studies on the long-term impact of this integration, the development of a contextual creativity assessment model for Indonesian ECE, and exploration of its intersection with early childhood digital literacy. Ultimately, this integration is not only a pedagogical

strategy but also a socio-cultural investment. If managed systematically through the synergy of all stakeholders, ECE can become a forefront for achieving the 2030 SDGs while preserving the nation's cultural heritage.

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