



Local Wisdom and Social Resilience: Humanities Studies in the Face of Global Crises

Haryono^{a*}

*Corresponding author email: haryono@universitasbumigora.ac.id

Article History

Manuscript submitted:

15 Juny 2025

Manuscript revised:

20 Juny 2025

Accepted for publication:

55 Juny 2025

Abstract

Local wisdom is one of the social capital that plays an important role in maintaining community resilience in the midst of global change dynamics. In the context of global crises such as pandemics, natural disasters, and economic crises, local values are not only cultural identities, but also instruments of social adaptation that are able to strengthen solidarity, expand support networks, and foster collective resilience. This article aims to examine the role of local wisdom in strengthening the social resilience of the community by using a humanities approach, especially in the perspectives of sociology, anthropology, and cultural studies. The method used is a literature-based qualitative analysis, by examining various results of previous research on the practice of local wisdom in various communities in Indonesia. The results of the study show that the values of local wisdom, such as mutual cooperation, deliberation, and community solidarity, have proven to be the main foundation in dealing with crises. In addition, traditional practices and customary rituals also function as a space for strengthening collective identity and mental health, thereby helping communities to be more resilient in facing global pressures. This article emphasizes that strengthening local wisdom must be positioned as a cultural strategy in sustainable development policies, so that it can become social capital as well as a fortress of national resilience in the midst of increasingly complex global challenges.

International Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities © 2025.

This is an open access article under the CC BY-NC-ND license

(<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>)

Contents

Abstract	173
1 Introduction	174
2 Methods.....	175
3 Results and Discussions.....	175
4 Conclusion.....	177
References.....	177

^a University of Bumigora, Mataram, Indonesia

Introduction

In recent decades, the world has faced various global crises ranging from pandemics, climate change, natural disasters, to economic disruptions that put pressure on the social and cultural structure of society. In the midst of this shock, there is an awareness that in addition to technocratic capacity and material infrastructure, the strength of culture and local values of local wisdom plays an equally important role in building social resilience. Local wisdom is elaborated as a collection of values, norms, practices, and traditions formed from the long experience of the community and has an adaptive capacity to face the challenges of the times (Firdaus et al, 2023).

In Indonesia, people have a very rich cultural diversity and local traditions. Values such as mutual cooperation, deliberation, community solidarity, and traditional rituals are often referred to as fundamental social capital for social cohesion and a sense of togetherness (Armawi & Limbongan, 2022). For example, a study on local wisdom-based social capital during the COVID-19 pandemic in Yogyakarta shows that local practices help strengthen people's social resilience through shared norms and embedded social networks.

The study on the integration of local knowledge and local wisdom in disaster mitigation also shows that the community around Mount Anak Krakatau uses natural forecasts (omen), as well as traditional knowledge in house structures and infrastructure as part of disaster resilience strategies. Similarly, in the study of the influence of the pandemic on the informal sector, such as embroidery work in Balai Gurah village, local wisdom also plays a role in socio-economic adaptation so that informal business actors are able to survive during health and economic crises (Fakhriati, 2022).

Local wisdom is not always manifested in the form of rituals or customs, but also in daily social structures. For example, in the study "Diversity, Local Wisdom, and Unique Characteristics of Millennials as Capital for Innovative Learning Models" in North Sumatra, it was found that the millennial generation, despite being under the influence of globalization and political identity currents, still utilize local values such as Dalihan Na Tolu and gotong royong to strengthen social cohesion and reduce social polarity (Amin & Ritonga, 2024).

Social resilience in the humanities and social sciences literature is often understood as the capacity of society to respond, adapt, and recover from social, economic, or environmental shocks while maintaining basic social functions, identity, and cultural integrity (Utami, 2025). In the Indonesian context, local wisdom can be the foundation for such capacity, especially since many people live in disaster-prone areas or remote areas where government intervention or modern technology is often slow or hindered.

Nonetheless, the increasing pressures of modernization, urbanization, and globalization pose serious challenges to the preservation of local values. Many studies show that traditional values are beginning to erode, especially in young communities, due to popular cultural currents and the massive use of information technology (Amin & Ritonga, 2024). In addition, there is a tendency that development and disaster mitigation policies place more emphasis on technical and economic approaches, while aspects of local culture are often considered complementary rather than core components (Firdaus et al., 2023; Armawi & Limbongan, 2022).

Therefore, studies that explicitly incorporate humanities perspectives, including cultural sociology, anthropology, values-norm studies, and identity studies, are needed to understand how local wisdom can be strengthened, maintained, and integrated into sustainable social resilience strategies. This study focuses on two important things: first, the identification of local wisdom practices that have been proven to strengthen social solidarity and resilience in Indonesia; Second, challenges and opportunities in revitalizing local values in an era of rapid change.

In this context, several social and humanities theories become relevant. The theory of social capital developed by Putnam, for example, emphasizes trust, social norms, and social networks as the basis for collective action. Local values such as mutual cooperation and deliberation are very much in line with this framework. In addition, social identity theory helps explain how communal identity and local traditions provide

a sense of belonging and psychological resources in the face of external pressures. The theory of cultural resilience also suggests that culture is not only a preserved object but also an active agent of transformation and adaptation (Firdaus et al., 2023; Utami, 2025).

The study intends to fill some gaps in the literature: first, many local studies find one specific type of crisis (e.g. pandemic or natural disaster) but fewer that compare different types of crises; second, most of the research focuses on the pragmatic aspect without delving into the dimensions of values-norms and collective identity; Third, there is little research examining how public policies can systematically incorporate local wisdom as a core part of social resilience strategies.

The purpose of this research is to examine in depth the role of local wisdom in strengthening the social resilience of communities in Indonesia, especially by identifying effective local practices, challenges faced in the preservation of these values, as well as policy strategies that enable the integration of local culture into sustainable development. Thus, this article is expected to make a conceptual and practical contribution to academics, policymakers, and society in an effort to maintain social resilience in the midst of an ever-growing global crisis.

Methods

This research uses a qualitative approach with a literature study method (library research) that focuses on a critical examination of scientific sources related to local wisdom and social resilience. The literature sources analyzed include reputable journal articles, academic books, research reports, and policy documents relevant to the Indonesian and global context.

The analysis is carried out with descriptive-analytical techniques, namely examining the main ideas of each literature, connecting them with social theories of the humanities, and identifying patterns, themes, and relationships between local wisdom and social resilience.

Data allocation-based is strengthened through source triangulation by comparing research results from various disciplines, such as sociology, anthropology, cultural sciences, and sustainable development studies. The focus of the study is directed at local wisdom practices that play a role in strengthening social solidarity, increasing adaptation capacity, and maintaining community cohesion when facing global crises such as the COVID-19 pandemic, natural disasters, and economic disruption. The results of the analysis are then interpreted within the theoretical framework of the humanities to show the relevance of local values in the context of contemporary social resilience, as well as make a conceptual contribution to the development of culture-based policies.

Results and Discussions

The results of the literature review show that local wisdom is the main pillar in strengthening the social resilience of the people in Indonesia, especially when facing a sudden and massive global crisis. Cultural values that are inherited from generation to generation are not only symbols of identity, but also function as practical instruments in maintaining social cohesion, solidarity, and adaptability. These findings confirm that the humanities perspective through sociological, anthropological, and cultural studies analysis is very relevant to understand the role of local wisdom in the context of contemporary crises.

First, the results of the study underline the importance of mutual cooperation as the main social capital that strengthens solidarity when people face disasters or health crises. Gotong royong, which in the sociology literature is seen as a form of collective action based on social norms, has proven to be effective in accelerating community recovery. For example, during the COVID-19 pandemic, many villages in Indonesia reactivated solidarity practices in the form of sharing food, social funds, and volunteers to help affected residents. This is in line with Putnam's theory of social capital which emphasizes the importance of social networks, beliefs, and

norms in strengthening community cooperation. Thus, local wisdom in the form of mutual cooperation has been proven to be able to strengthen social resilience through informal mechanisms that actually respond faster to crises than formal government interventions.

Second, other findings show the role of deliberation as a mechanism for conflict resolution and collective adaptation. In many communities, especially in rural areas, deliberation is not just a formal forum, but a deliberative space that allows the participation of citizens to reach consensus. When a crisis occurs, such as a natural disaster that damages agricultural land or a pandemic that breaks the local economic chain, deliberation becomes a strategic arena to determine joint steps, share resources, and agree on solutions that are considered fair. From a humanities perspective, deliberation represents a community-based democracy that is able to reduce the potential for social conflict while strengthening the legitimacy of collective decisions. Thus, the value of deliberation is an important instrument in maintaining social stability when society is under the pressure of a global crisis.

In addition, the study found that local customary rituals and traditions also play a significant role in strengthening people's collective identity and mental health. Many communities in Indonesia carry out traditional ceremonies as a form of gratitude, prayer, or request for protection from disasters. This tradition, although often seen as a cultural aspect, actually has a great psychosocial function: it reinforces a sense of community, reduces collective anxiety, and gives spiritual meaning to crisis events. For example, the ritual of the Ketupat War in Lombok or Ruwatan in Java has the function of not only maintaining culture, but also fostering community solidarity in the face of uncertainty. Within the framework of cultural resilient theory, traditional rituals can be seen as symbolic adaptation strategies that help people internalize the experience of crisis and transform it into a collective force.

Third, the results of the study show that local wisdom also plays a role in disaster mitigation and environmental adaptation. The traditional knowledge of coastal communities, for example, is often linked to natural signs that help them recognize the symptoms of a tsunami or hurricane. Similarly, agrarian communities in Java use prey systems as seasonal guidelines that help determine planting and harvest times in a more adaptive way to climate change. This local knowledge, while simple, has been shown to make a major contribution to food security and disaster risk mitigation. From an anthropological perspective, this proves that local wisdom is an alternative form of epistemology that can be combined with modern science to create more effective adaptation strategies.

Furthermore, the discussion highlighted the relevance of local wisdom in the context of the global health crisis. Case studies during the COVID-19 pandemic show that communities that still hold tightly to the values of solidarity and communal trust are able to survive better than fragmented communities. This can be seen from the emergence of various community-based movements that provide cheap food, public kitchens, and psychosocial support for isolated residents. Thus, local wisdom has proven to be a social capital that is able to complement the weaknesses of formal health systems that are often overwhelmed in the face of the burden of global crises.

However, this study also found serious challenges to the preservation of local wisdom. Modernization, urbanization, and globalization have shifted the lifestyle of people, especially the younger generation, from a communal to an individualistic pattern. The influence of digital media and global popular culture has caused traditional values such as mutual cooperation and deliberation to slowly degrade. In addition, the commercialization of local culture in the tourism industry often changes the essence of local wisdom to just an attraction, no longer a daily practice of life. This poses a risk of value erosion that results in weakening social cohesion.

Within the framework of humanities theory, the phenomenon can be understood as a form of tension between tradition and modernity. On the one hand, modernization brings technological advances and access to information that accelerate social mobility; On the other hand, it has the potential to erode local values that have been the basis of social resilience. This challenge requires a policy strategy that not only preserves local wisdom as a cultural symbol, but also actualizes it to be relevant to the needs of modern society.

Further discussion also showed that the integration of local wisdom into sustainable development policies is still relatively weak. Many development programs emphasize more on technical and economic aspects, while the socio-cultural dimension is only used as a complement. In fact, without the support of local values, policies often face public resistance or are not sustainable. Therefore, strengthening local wisdom must be

positioned as a core part of development strategies, both in disaster mitigation, food security, and public health.

For example, the Disaster Resilient Village program implemented in various regions of Indonesia is proof that the integration of local values into the formal system can strengthen the adaptation capacity of the community. This program is successful because it not only relies on technical protocols, but also utilizes social networks, local trusts, and the value of mutual cooperation as the basis for implementation. This shows that the synergy between local knowledge and formal policy can create more effective models of social resilience.

From a global perspective, the results of this study are relevant to show that local wisdom is not only a domestic issue, but can also be a universal strategy in dealing with global crises. Indonesia's experience with its cultural diversity and local traditions can be a valuable lesson for the world on how local values can strengthen people's adaptive capacity. In the midst of the challenges of globalization, local wisdom can actually be an alternative to a more humane and sustainable development paradigm.

Thus, these results and discussions confirm that local wisdom is a very important social capital in building social resilience. Values such as mutual cooperation, deliberation, solidarity, traditional rituals, and traditional knowledge have proven to make significant contributions in dealing with various global crises. However, the sustainability of this role is highly dependent on the extent to which communities and countries are able to maintain, actualize, and integrate local wisdom into contemporary development policies.

Conclusion

This study emphasizes that local wisdom is a crucial socio-cultural asset in strengthening the social resilience of the community, especially in the midst of a global crisis. Values such as mutual cooperation, deliberation, solidarity, and traditional ritual practices have been proven to be able to increase social cohesion, strengthen adaptation capacity, and provide psychosocial support for the community. In other words, local wisdom is not just a symbolic cultural heritage, but also a practical instrument in responding to complex external changes and pressures.

From a humanities perspective, local wisdom can be understood as living knowledge that is integrated with the collective identity of society. This shows that culture-based approaches must be placed in parallel with political, economic, and technological strategies in building social resilience. Indonesia's experience provides concrete evidence that strengthening local wisdom can help communities survive pandemics, disasters, and economic crises by utilizing social capital that has been formed for generations.

However, there are major challenges that need to be overcome, such as the weakening of cultural values due to modernization, urbanization, and globalization. Therefore, policies that integrate local values into sustainable development strategies are needed. The government, academics, and local communities need to work together to preserve and actualize local wisdom according to the context of the times. In this way, local wisdom can continue to be a fortress of social resilience that is adaptive, relevant, and effective in the face of uncertain global dynamics.

References

Amin, M., & Ritonga, A. D. (2024). Diversity, Local Wisdom, and Unique Characteristics of Millennials as Capital for Innovative Learning Models: Evidence from North Sumatra, Indonesia. *Societies*, 14(12), 260. <https://doi.org/10.3390/soc14120260>

Armawi, A., & Limbongan, S. A. (2022). The local-wisdom-based social capital for strengthening social resilience during the COVID-19 pandemic. *Society, Culture and Politics*, 35(4), 514–526. <https://doi.org/10.20473/mkp.V35I42022.514-526>

Birgi, J. (2024). The role of spatial structures and social values in shaping local productive systems: New lessons from the wood-furniture cluster of Jepara, Indonesia. arXiv preprint. <https://arxiv.org/abs/2411.08081> arXiv

Fakhriati, F., & Erman, E. (2022). COVID-19, local wisdom, and resilience: The case of embroidery artisans in Indonesia. *Cogent Arts and Humanities*, 9 (1), 1–12. <https://doi.org/10.1080/23311983.2022.2129034>

Firdaus, A., Lestari, F., Afiff, S. A., & Herdiansyah, H. (2023). Integration of knowledge and local wisdom for disaster resilience in Anak Krakatau volcano. *Jàmbá-Journal of Disaster Risk Studies*, 15(1), 1457. <https://journals.co.za/doi/abs/10.4102/jamba.v15i1.1457>

Hokky Situngkir & Yanu Endar Prasetyo. (2015). On Social and Economic Spheres: An Observation of the 'gantangan' Indonesian tradition. *arXiv preprint*. <https://arxiv.org/abs/1508.05352> arXiv

Utami, I. D., Anshori, N., Saptaningtyas, H., & Astuti, S. P. (2025). A food resilience model integrating local wisdom and sociotechnical dynamic systems: Case study flood-affected communities in the Bengawan solo area. *Progress in Disaster Science*, 26, 100413. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pdisas.2025.100413>