



Integrating Core Culture into Orang Rimba Empowerment Strategies: A Stepping Stone Towards Achieving Sustainable Development Goals

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Abstrak

In pursuing the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), adopting inclusive strategies that align with the unique cultures of marginalized communities is vital. This study emphasizes the critical role of weaving the Core Culture of the Orang Rimba community, a semi-nomadic group residing in Jambi, Indonesia, into existing empowerment strategies. Drawing from recent research trends, this study explores the promising potential of culture-based approaches, where integrating governmental policies with indigenous knowledge and practices can pave a more inclusive and sustainable developmental path. By delving deeper, we aim to foster a novel paradigm in sustainable development that resonates well with the intrinsic values and wisdom inherent in the Orang Rimba community. Central to this approach is an in-depth analysis of the Orang Rimba's Core Culture, presenting an opportunity to craft sustainable empowerment strategies deeply rooted in their rich cultural tapestry. Thus, this research pioneers a pathway that not only honors but actively incorporates the cultural heritage of the Orang Rimba community, catalyzing meaningful strides towards achieving the SDGs. Through this innovative approach, we aspire to unveil policies that are more receptive and inclusive, steering the community towards a brighter and more sustainable future.

Keywords: *Orang Rimba Community, SDGs, Inclusive Empowerment Strategies, Indigenous Knowledge and Practices*

Introduction

Nestled within the forests of Jambi, Indonesia, lies the Orang Rimba community, a semi-nomadic group deeply intertwined with nature, a connection embodied in their local culture, known as the "Core Culture." (1) Since the 1970s, the government has initiated a myriad of empowerment programs aiming to assimilate the Orang Rimba into the mainstream society, focusing primarily on economic interventions and new settlements." (2-3). However, many of these endeavors seem to overlook the vital aspects of Orang Rimba life, especially the values enshrined in their Core Culture, leading to a significant resistance against these initiatives." (4-6)

Recent empirical data reveals some stark realities about the tangible impacts of these government interventions. According to a survey conducted in 2022, although 70% of the Orang Rimba community has received housing assistance from the government, only around 10% have truly settled in these new habitats. A significant 30% outright rejected the relocation, while another 20% chose to maintain their semi-nomadic lifestyle, frequently moving within the forest." (7-12) Additionally, formal education remains alarmingly low, with approximately 97.8% of the population not accessing formal education. Health indicators also raise concerns, particularly regarding the high maternal and neonatal mortality rates." (13-17)

Responding to these findings, this research takes a groundbreaking step to not only evaluate the economic impacts of the empowerment programs but also their ramifications on the Core Culture of the Orang Rimba community. By employing a multidisciplinary approach encompassing anthropology, ecology, and developmental studies, this research aims to bridge the gap between governmental policies and the Orang Rimba community's responses, offering an in-depth analysis of this complex interaction." (18-19)

In the global arena, the realization of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) outlined by the United Nations has become imperative, particularly in promoting inclusivity and social justice. In this context,

numerous research endeavors have emerged highlighting the importance of sustainable and inclusive empowerment strategies, especially involving marginalized communities like the Orang Rimba.”(20-21)

In recent years, there has been an increasing trend in research exploring how the integration of the culture and local wisdom of indigenous communities into empowerment strategies can positively impact efforts to achieve the SDGs. These studies typically emphasize how these strategies, which embrace and integrate local culture and traditional knowledge, can facilitate more inclusive and sustainable development, aligning with the principles of the SDGs.

Following the trail of this innovation, our current research strives to take a step further in unraveling the full potential of this culture-based approach. By focusing on the integration of the Orang Rimba community's Core Culture into empowerment strategies, our goal is to create a new paradigm in sustainable development that not only values but also involves the inherent values and traditional wisdom within this community, fostering a significant step forward towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.

With these considerations in mind, this study pursues the ambitious goal of laying the groundwork for more inclusive and sustainable empowerment strategies. By integrating a profound understanding of the values and socio-cultural orientations of the Orang Rimba, the research aims to formulate holistic and sustainable policy recommendations, cherishing and incorporating the Orang Rimba's Core Culture in devising more effective and inclusive development strategies for the future.

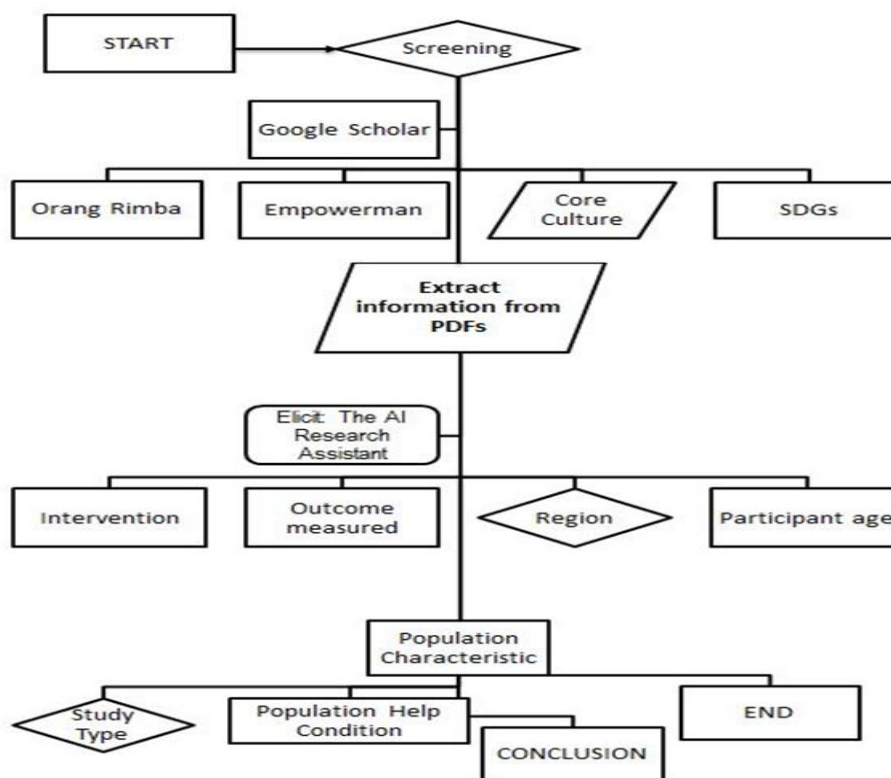


Figure 1. Schematic of Research

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study adopts a comprehensive multidisciplinary approach, including ethnographic research methods, to explore the impact of empowerment programs on the Orang Rimba community and their cultural interactions. The aim is to formulate more effective policies in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This approach integrates aspects of anthropology, ecology, and development studies”(22)

Firstly, the research begins with the collection of secondary data from various sources, including scholarly literature, government reports, and related documents. These data will be analyzed using text analysis software to identify patterns and

In addition to surveys and interviews, the research will also utilize elicitation techniques, such as participatory mapping and visual aids, to further engage with the community and gather qualitative data on their cultural perspectives and interactions with the environment.

Once the data is collected, analysis will be carried out using statistical software for quantitative data, while qualitative data analysis will be done manually by identifying key findings in interview transcripts and other textual data.

The results of the analysis will be used to formulate culturally grounded and sustainable policy recommendations for inclusive development in the future for the Orang Rimba community. culture must encompass their cosmological perspective on the universe and the role of humans within it. their existence, emphasizing harmony with nature as the foundation of their culture themes that emerge in discussions about the Orang Rimba, empowerment, and their culture.

Subsequently, the research will involve field surveys to gather primary data. Surveys will be conducted using mobile-based survey applications to obtain quantitative data on the impact of empowerment programs on aspects such as settlement, education, and health within the Orang Rimba community. Additionally, in-depth interviews with members of the Orang Rimba community will be conducted to understand individual perspectives and experiences in the empowerment process.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Orang Rimba live in harmony with nature, inheriting the "Core Culture" as an inseparable part of their identity. The Core Culture of the Orang Rimba, closely linked to nature, reflects an integrated cosmological view where nature is an integral element in human existence. In this culture, the elements of nature are inseparable from. profound understanding of the Orang Rimba The Bukit Duabelas Forest is a tropical rainforest area located in the heart of Jambi Province. This region spans across three regencies:

Sarolangun Regency in the south, Tebo Regency in the east, and Batang Hari Regency in the north. These three regencies are adjacent to each other and are referred to as the 'setali bukit' by the Orang Rimba. There are thirteen Orang Rimba settlements in the Bukit Duabelas forest area, with a total population of approximately 2,960 individuals according to data from the Bukit Duabelas National Park.

From a racial perspective, the Orang Rimba are classified within the Mongoloid racial group, exhibiting distinct physical characteristics such as a dusky complexion, slightly curly hair, thick foot soles, and relatively neglected dental hygiene resulting in a brownish appearance. This can be associated with their long-standing habits, including smoking from a young age. In their day-to-day attire, Orang Rimba men typically wear 'kancut,' a garment made of sarong fabric, while Orang Rimba women wear sarong garments that are fastened up to their chest. Generally, they are known to have relatively low intellectual abilities, temperamental dispositions, strong-willed natures, and shyness, particularly when interacting with outsiders. One notable characteristic of Orang Rimba women is their distinctive attire, which includes sarong garments worn in this manner. Generally, they are known to have relatively low intellectual abilities, temperamental dispositions, strong-willed natures, and shyness, particularly when interacting with outsiders. As shown the picture 3 below :

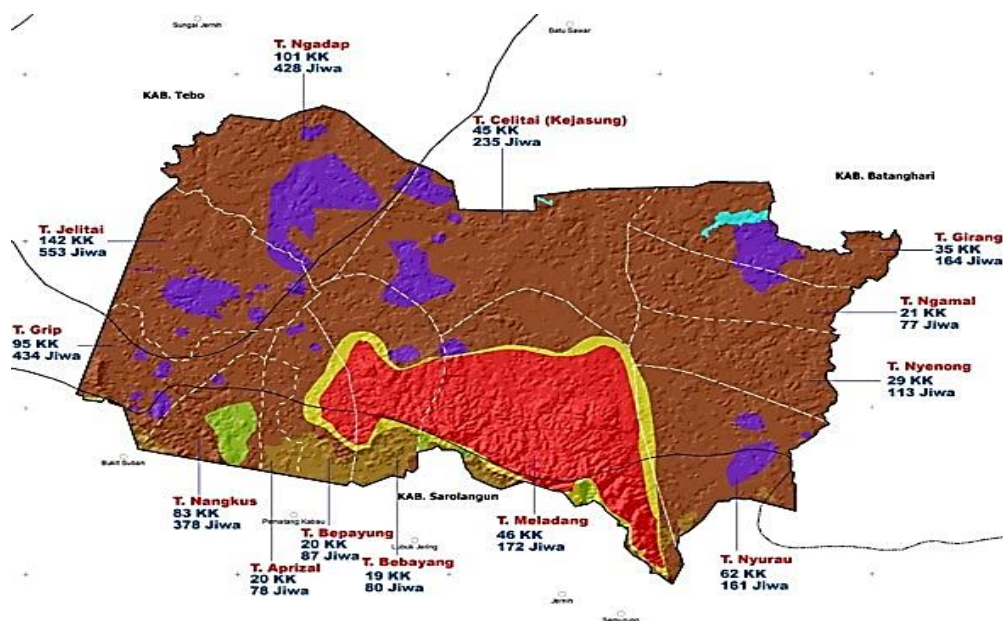


Figure 2. The Map of Bukit Duabelas Jambi

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Figure 3. Orang Rimba (Man and Woman)

In terms of settlements, the housing of the Orang Rimba Dalam remains remarkably simple. They refer to their dwellings as "bubungan," "teratak," or "pesaken" (Handini, 2005). Based on their functionality, the Orang Rimba Dalam divide their homes into two categories: "rumah sudung" (temporary homes easily disassembled and relocated) and permanent homes. In the past, "rumah sudung" resembled open huts with roofs made from benal leaves, serdang, or rumbia. These structures were located within dense thickets in the forest. Each "sudung" housed a separate family and was positioned at a distance from other family "sudung." Older children would have their own "sudung" not far from their parents', and the same practice applied to a husband's and wife's families. The interaction of the Orang Rimba with external communities has also influenced the construction of "sudung." Presently, "sudung" no longer utilizes forest foliage but instead employs plastic tarps. This shift is a result of the decreasing forested areas. The form and construction of the "rumah sudung" can be observed in Figure 4.



Figure 4. The House of Orang Rimba (Sudung and Rumah Godong)

This research offers profound insights into the lives and culture of the Orang Rimba, a community deeply connected to nature and enriched by a vibrant core culture. The study reveals the existence of two types of dwellings within the Orang Rimba Dalam community, namely temporary homes ("rumah sudung") and permanent houses ("rumah godong"). These structures reflect their adaptive strategies in response to changing environmental conditions and evolving interactions with external society. The utilization of plastic tarps as roofing material for the temporary homes underscores the impact of environmental changes on their way of life, highlighting the challenges faced by this community.

The nomadic way of life practiced by the Orang Rimba community within the Bukit Duabelas forest is pertinent to several key Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Primarily, in the context of SDG 15 (Life on Land), the Orang Rimba exemplify a harmonious coexistence with nature, actively contributing to the preservation of biodiversity and the integrity of forest ecosystems within their habitat. Moreover, the nomadic lifestyle underscores the educational challenges faced by the Orang Rimba, aligning with the principles of SDG 4 (Quality Education), which emphasize the provision of inclusive and high-quality education for all, irrespective of their background. Consequently, addressing these educational disparities and enhancing access to formal education for marginalized communities such as the Orang Rimba is imperative.

Additionally, the Orang Rimba's profound dependence on the natural environment serves as a poignant reminder of the significance of environmental preservation and climate action, corresponding with the objectives of SDG 13 (Climate Action). In summation, the nomadic existence of the Orang Rimba, while distinct from urban societies in various aspects, holds contemporary relevance within the framework of SDGs, specifically with regard to the promotion of environmental conservation, social inclusivity, and the improvement of overall quality of life. The interpretation of this research underscores the Orang Rimba Dalam as a community that has long adapted to the forest and its surroundings.

However, they now confront new challenges due to deforestation and increased interaction with external communities. This interpretation underscores the critical importance of preserving both their cultural heritage and the environment. For instance, the shift to using plastic tarps as roofing material signifies lifestyle changes that can have environmental implications. Therefore, safeguarding the cultural and environmental aspects of the Orang Rimba Dalam needs to be a central focus in the pursuit of more inclusive and sustainable development efforts. Within the context of this study, various perspectives are pertinent. From an anthropological standpoint, the research illuminates how the Orang Rimba Dalam community strives to maintain its cultural identity amidst changing environmental circumstances and

external interactions. From an environmental perspective, the adoption of plastic tarps as roofing material serves as a stark indicator of the adverse effects of deforestation. In the context of sustainable development, this research underscores the imperative of integrating cultural and environmental considerations into development efforts aimed at achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This comparative analysis underscores the urgency of formulating comprehensive and sustainable policies that cater to communities like the Orang Rimba Dalam within the international discourse on sustainable development.

The data presented in this table encompass various research studies with distinct outcomes and population characteristics. The first study, titled "Double Exposure and Fractal City," explores the mental disorders among urban residents, emotional and cultural disengagement from their place of residence, 'solastalgia,' social tension, immobility, distress, and future insecurity. It focuses on young people who have permanently lived in the city of Yogyakarta, Indonesia, for more than 20 years, utilizing ethnographic interviews to understand their experiences and combined suspected mental health issues. The second study delves into the role of values for social cohesion, encompassing topics such as social cohesion, behavior conducive to social cohesion, policy choice, institutional design, universalistic scope of welfare institutions, social trust, and political trust. However, it lacks specific details regarding participant age and region. Finally, the third study examines the sustainability of local cultural heritage based on the landscape narrative, with a focus on origin, functional, and meaningful landscape narratives. This study involves a diverse population, including aborigines, long-term residents, merchants living near Qing Yan Yuan, tourists, and local residents, using qualitative methods to explore this cultural heritage sustainability without specifying participant age.

Table 1. Data extract from Elicit.ai

Title	Outcome measured	Participant age	Region	Population characteristics	Detailed study type	Population on health conditions
Double Exposure and Fractal City: Cultural Disengagement and Disembodied Belonging due to Outdoor Thermal Changes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •MentalDisorders Among Urban Residents •Emotional And Cultural DisengagementFrom Their Place Of Residence •'Solastalgia' •SocialTension •Immobility •Distress •FutureInsecurity 	young people who have permanently lived in the city of Yogyakarta, Indonesia for more than 20 years	Yogyakarta City, Indonesia	5 young people	ethnographic interviews	combined suspected mental health issues such as stress, mood swings and rapid changes in levels of anxiety
The role of values for social cohesion: theoretical explication and empirical exploration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •SocialCohesion •Behaviour Conducive ToSocial Cohesion •PolicyChoice •InstitutionalDesign •UniversalisticScope Of Welfare Institutions •SocialTrust •PoliticalTrust 	-	-	-	a discussion paper that offers theoretical explication and empirical exploration	-
On the Sustainability of Local Cultural Heritage Based on the Landscape Narrative: A Case Study of Historic Site of Qing Yan Yuan, China	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •OriginLandscape Narrative •Functional LandscapeNarrative •Meaningful LandscapeNarrative 	-	China	aborigines, long term residents, merchants living within 500 m of Qing Yan Yuan, residents who are more than 3 km away but frequently visit the garden, 2 tourists in the park, 2 local residents of Huai'an, and 2 residents who worked and settled in Huai'an	qualitative	-

Contrastingly, when considering the analysis of Orang Rimba's life in Bukit Duabelas, we are presented with a distinct socio-cultural context. Orang Rimba's lifestyle is profoundly intertwined with the forest, characterized by a semi-nomadic existence, and their dwellings are categorized as temporary or permanent, reflecting their adaptability to fluctuating environmental conditions. This lifestyle is notably different from the urban-centric focus of the studies in the data table. Furthermore, the Orang Rimba's cultural identity is intricately linked to their natural surroundings, emphasizing environmental preservation, whereas the studies in the table encompass various themes such as cultural disengagement, social cohesion, and landscape narratives, each serving a distinct scholarly purpose. The data studies address issues prevalent in urban settings and cultural aspects from varied angles, the examination of Orang Rimba's life in Bukit Duabelas underscores their profound connection with nature and their distinctive cultural practices. Both

contexts provide valuable insights into diverse facets of human existence and culture, contributing to a broader understanding of societal dynamics and cultural preservation.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this comprehensive analysis highlights the unique lifestyle and cultural identity of the Orang Rimba community living in Bukit Duabelas, Indonesia. Their semi-nomadic existence and deep connection with the forest stand in stark contrast to the urban-centric studies discussed in the data table. While the studies in the table delve into issues related to urban mental health, social cohesion, and cultural heritage, the Orang Rimba's way of life underscores the critical importance of environmental preservation and the preservation of indigenous cultures. This comparison emphasizes the diversity of human experiences and cultural practices across different contexts. While the data table studies contribute to our understanding of urban dynamics and social issues, the examination of the Orang Rimba's life enriches our knowledge of the intricate relationship between humans and their natural environment. Both strands of research are invaluable in their own right, offering insights that contribute to broader discussions on culture, environment, and societal well-being. As we navigate an increasingly interconnected world, recognizing and respecting such diversity becomes imperative for fostering sustainable and inclusive development that addresses the needs of various communities.

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