



# The Value of *Ora Ilok* as the Ecological Wisdom of the Rawa Pening Community in Social Studies

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**Abstract:** The importance of overcoming the problem of environmental damage needs to be a top priority in saving the earth. Ecological wisdom is an alternative in preventing environmental damage. The cultivation of the value of cultural wisdom through the "ora ilok" tradition is a public prohibition to maintain the ecosystem in Rawa Pening. The main focus of this study is to identify the values of the prohibition tradition as ecological wisdom described in social studies learning. This study aims to describe the value of "ora ilok" as the ecological wisdom of the Rawa Pening community and analyse the implementation of local cultural-ecological wisdom in social studies learning. This study uses a descriptive qualitative research method to describe the value of "ora ilok" as ecological wisdom and a literature study method for implementing ecological wisdom in social studies learning. The implementation of ecological wisdom in social studies learning is analysed through a literature review with various previous studies that have been published in the form of scientific journals. This study indicates that the value of "ora ilok" owned by the community around Rawa Pening is still relevant to be used in social studies learning to maintain the ecosystem and preserve the environment.

**Keywords:** Ecological wisdom, social studies, *ora ilok*, value of local wisdom



## Introduction

Various groups in the world face the problem of environmental damage. It should be realized that humans cause most environmental damage. Natural damage seems to have harmed the balance of the ecosystem. Based on these problems, there is a need to overcome them, namely by developing awareness through environmental-based education. Awareness of the environment shows the general orientation of the individual towards the environment. A person's level of concern for environmental issues is a valuable predictor of environmentally conscious behaviour. Awareness is the state of a person who has deep knowledge and can be seen from his behaviour and attitude. In comparison, the environment is everything that affects humans or animals. So, environmental awareness is a multidimensional construction consisting of cognitive, attitude, and behavioural components (Schlegelmilch et al., 1996). The cognitive component consists of knowledge of one's environment. It is related to current environmental issues.

Humans should live in harmony with nature; as stipulated in the Law of the Republic of Indonesia no. 32 of 2009, concerning Environmental Management, it is said that the environment is a unity of space with all objects, forces, conditions, and living things, including humans and their behaviour, which affect nature itself, the continuity of life, and the welfare of humans and other living creatures. Various ways are done to maintain the balance of the ecosystem, one of which is by utilizing local wisdom based on noble values. Exploring the values of ecological wisdom from local communities is needed to overcome environmental damage caused by humans. Ecological wisdom is a form of wisdom built through intellectual, social, and emotional intelligence. Goleman (2012) describes ecological wisdom as ecological intelligence that can be developed through a learning process using learning resources extracted from the local culture of traditional communities. Closely related to local wisdom, Indonesia is one of the countries with a strong tradition that contains elements of local culture to overcome environmental damage. Based on this, the traditions of local communities in Indonesia can be explored as a source of learning and further studied to develop human ecological intelligence.

Rawa Pening is a natural lake located between four sub-districts, namely Banyu Biru District, Bawen District, Tuntang District, Ambarawa District, Semarang Regency, Central Java. Rawa Pening has an area of 2,670 hectares. The Rawa



Pening area belongs to a group of swamps that are still beautiful and rich in various freshwater fish, water hyacinth plants, and humus soil. The three natural resources have significant benefits for the surrounding community. The local community protects the ecosystem in Rawa Pening by using the values of local cultural wisdom. Alfian (2013) describes local wisdom as a way of life and knowledge and a life strategy in the form of activities carried out by local communities in meeting their needs.

The form of local cultural wisdom of the people around Rawa Pening is considered as values, norms, beliefs, and sanctions in carrying out daily life that is in contact with the natural conditions of Rawa Pening. The local community still maintains the local cultural wisdom as the *ora ilok* value. This value represents the local community about the value and normality in maintaining the Rawa Pening ecosystem. The value of *ora ilok* is a concept of prohibition as a form of rules, proverbs, or advice by ancestors used as guidelines for daily life. Rawa Pening makes the surrounding community form local genius or local knowledge to interact and beautifully adapt to nature. The local culture of the Rawa Pening community becomes a manifestation of ideas and behaviour as a condition for the values of ecological wisdom.

The value of *ora ilok* as the local cultural wisdom of the Rawa Pening community needs to be transformed to the younger generation. This is done so that local wisdom can be sustainable against the values to maintain and preserve the environment. The process of transforming the values of ecological wisdom can be done in school learning, one of which is in social studies learning. Social studies learning is a lesson that has a strategic role in the process. Marsh in Supriatna (2017) states that social studies education is essential in passing on knowledge about society and the environment. Society has a close relationship with the environment as a means of cultural transmission or cultural inheritance. Based on this, this study aims to describe the value of *ora ilok* as the ecological wisdom of the Rawa Pening community and analyse the implementation of local cultural-ecological wisdom in social studies learning.

## **Methods and Research Design**

*Methods.* The literary study used to analyze the implementation of local wisdom as ecological wisdom in social studies learning. The method conducted in this

research is descriptive qualitative research method and literature study. The descriptive qualitative method is used to understand the phenomenon of what is experienced by the subject (Moleong, 2007: 6). In line with this understanding, Creswell (2015: 59) argues that qualitative research begins with an assumption and an interpretive framework that can form a study of research problems related to meaning related to social problems.

*Research Design.* The research was conducted in the community around the village of Rawa Pening. The descriptive qualitative method in this study was to obtain information related to the value of *ora ilok* as ecological wisdom from the community directly through observation and interviews. This literature study is due to the difficulty of researchers conducting direct research in social studies learning as we are currently experiencing the COVID-19 pandemic, which has limited access and time for research in a school. The validity of the data in this study was obtained through data triangulation techniques by utilizing other sources obtained through research, namely the results of observations and interviews with other informants.

## Findings and Discussion

*Overview of the Rawa Pening Community.* Rawa Pening is a natural lake located in Semarang Regency. The lake stretches across four sub-districts, namely Bawen, Ambarawa, Tuntang, and Banyubiru sub-districts. In addition, Rawa Pening is located in Merbabu Mount, Telomoyo Mount, and Ungaran Mount. The area of the lake is 2,670 hectares. Here is a picture of Rawa Pening.



**Figure 1.** Rawa Pening (Researcher Documentation, September 2021)



Rawa Pening has abundant natural resources in the Semarang Regency area. Natural resources that the community can utilize include humus soil, fish, and water hyacinth. According to the Environment Agency (2020) data, the water hyacinth that grows around Rawa Pening is experiencing very rapid growth. This causes the presence of handicrafts by utilizing water hyacinth. Some of these natural resources can be used by the surrounding community freely. Soil humus resources can be used to mix organic soil, planting media, and organic fertilizer. Fish can be caught by the community with fishing rods or nets. Water hyacinth plants are used as many raw materials for making handicrafts.

Rawa pening is famous for a Baru Klinthing myth. The myth has become a local belief of the community as the origin story of Rawa Pening. The myth has become a hereditary story that is told to children. The myth attached to Rawa Pening gives rise to magical properties that follow it. This causes the community to create other myths to protect the Rawa Pening ecosystem. These myths are wrapped in the words or words of previous parents about prohibitions that are not allowed to be carried out in Rawa Pening. The prohibition that is considered as the belief of community is *ora ilok*.

*The Value of "Ora Ilok" as Ecological Wisdom of the Rawa Pening Community.* Ecological wisdom is a combination of local wisdom and ecological knowledge. Indonesia is one of the countries that connect it based on its local wisdom. According to Keraf (2010), local wisdom is all forms of knowledge, belief, understanding, insight, and customs or ethics as guidelines for human behaviour in their ecological life. According to Koentjaraningrat's (1990), local wisdom is a view of life, knowledge, and various life strategies in the form of activities carried out by local communities to answer various problems of meeting needs. Meanwhile, Goleman (2010) argues that ecological intelligence is the ability of humans to adapt within the scope of ecology. Ecological intelligence is an ability or competence that students have in responding to conditions around their environment and applying it in their daily lives.

Based on this description, local wisdom as the knowledge that becomes a guide in everyday life can be used to raise ecological intelligence. Ecological intelligence needs to be developed to become a habit so that it is well constructed to maintain and preserve ecosystems. The relationship between local wisdom and ecological intelligence is called ecological wisdom as it has the meaning of guidelines or rules carried out from generation to generation



in everyday life about the environment. The existence of ecological wisdom can be well maintained due to the implementation of tradition as a form of cultural inheritance. One of the local wisdom used as ecological wisdom is the value of *ora ilok* in the Rawa Pening community,

The value of *ora ilok* is a prohibition believed by the people of Rawa Pening. The prohibition has become a myth that has become a tradition in the local community around Rawa Pening. The word *ora ilok* comes from the Javanese word *ora* which means no, and *ilok*, which means good. Based on this, the word *ora ilok* means something that is not good or not good to do. The people of Rawa Pening take advantage of their knowledge of using the Javanese language to understand the meaning of these values better. The concept of the *ora ilok* prohibition is a form of protecting the Rawa Pening ecosystem. The guard using the value of *ora ilok* has been constructed by word of mouth by the people of Rawa Pening despite a prohibition that the Javanese people highly uphold. Prohibitions that are upheld by local communities have consequences when someone violates them. These consequences are known as plagues. The concept of plague cannot be explained rationally, but it is explained through magical beliefs.

The value of *ora ilok* has the meaning as a prohibition that cannot be carried out around Rawa Pening, namely: 1) *anggan jupuk soko rowo kudu secukupe, ora kurang, ora lumih* (if you take natural resources from the swamp just enough, no less, no more). This is interpreted as a symbol of simplicity, as we use nature not to be greedy to take existing natural resources, including water hyacinth plants, humus soil, and existing fish. It aims to protect the swamp ecosystem in the future; 2) *ora ilok anggen ninggali reregetan ning rowo* (it is not good to leave dirt or garbage around the swamp). Garbage or dirt does harm the swamp ecosystem, especially plastic waste. This is interpreted as a form of human responsibility to bring back the goods they carry and not leave any trash, and 3) *ora ilok ngomong saru* (it is not good to say bad words. The sentence means a form of courtesy, as we must use good and polite language in any place. The three values of *ora ilok* have consequences associated with the mystical world; that is, if you violate it, you will get a plague in the form of disturbance from the swamp watchman like a ghost.

Ecological wisdom through the value of *ora ilok* has a positive essence for the survival of human life, especially the environment. The objectives that can be



learned from the value of *ora ilok* include 1) environmental preservation of Rawa Pening; 2) Ecosystem balance, especially fish resources, humus soil, and water hyacinth plants; 3) sustainable lifestyle for living things and the environment; 4) Cultivating a sense of caring for each other and reminding each other to protect the environment; and 5) Can live in harmony, superficial, and not greedy with nature. Based on the purpose of the *ora ilok* value used by the Rawa Pening community, it can be a good lesson for the younger generation.

*Implementation of Local Cultural Ecological Wisdom in Social Studies Learning.* Social studies learning can take advantage of simple life, environmental sustainability, and the futuristic perspective of traditional society, which is practiced and based on local wisdom. Social studies learning is closely related to the scope of society and the environment. According to NCSS (in Somantri, 2001), that:

“Social studies is the integrated study of the social sciences and humanities to promote civic competence. The primary purpose of social studies is to help young people develop the ability to make informed and reasoned decisions for the public good as citizens of culturally diverse, democratic society in an independent world”.

This definition implies that social studies as a study whose sources come from the social sciences and humanities has a vital role in realizing good citizens where the goal is to prepare the younger generation to have the ability to make rational decisions that will be applied in social life. Local communities, with their ecological wisdom, have taught modern society about the problem of natural resources. Supriatna (2017) suggests that learning from local communities can be appointed as a medium and source of social studies learning, which includes aspects; 1) Values that develop from the past; 2) Inheritance of Cultural Values; 3) The concrete problems and situations an environment is facing; 4) An independent local community, and 5) attitudes or behavior that can reflect native culture.

Social studies learning based on local culture is a form of integration between knowledge of local wisdom about the environment and social studies learning. It aims to introduce local cultural values to students so that there is awareness of the importance of local cultural wisdom values to be interpreted in everyday life. Ecological wisdom in local culture contains guidelines, rules, or

norms that are both wisdom and exemplary. The following is a table of literature reviews on the use of ecological wisdom in social studies learning.

**Table 1.** Literature Review of Ecological Wisdom in Social Studies Learning

| Authors                   | Year | Article Title  |
|---------------------------|------|--|
| Nunung<br>Julaeha, et al. | 2019 | Ecological Wisdom in the Bubur Suro Tradition in Rancakalong, Sumedang Regency                           |
| Yosi Wulandari            | 2017 | Ecological Wisdom in the Legend of “Bujang Sembilan” (Origin of Lake Maninjau)                           |
| Ramli Utina               | 2012 | Ecological Intelligence in the Local Wisdom of the Bajo Community, Torosiaje Village, Gorontalo Province |
| Mina Holilah              | 2015 | Ecological Wisdom of the Local Culture of the Cigugur Indigenous Peoples as a Social Studies Learning.   |

The research of Julaeha, et al. (2019) describes a tradition that is carried out from generation to generation as a form of ecological wisdom. The need to protect the ecosystem is an effort made by the community. Ecosystems are destroyed by changing biodiversity into homogeneous plants; by itself, it will threaten human survival. Community efforts to involve the younger generation in traditional activities are a good step to preserve traditions as a form of awareness from the community about the benefits of these traditions to the environment. Research in the Wulandari article (2017) shows that the abnormal condition of the Maninjau lake, which often occurs every year, is considered by the community to be related to the Legend of "Bujang Sembilan". The legend of "Bujang Sembilan" is a folk tale that tells the origin of Lake Maninjau. This study aims to describe 1) the values expressed in the legend of “Bujang Sembilan” are consistent with ecological wisdom; 2) the role that the physical setting (environment) can play in the “Bujang Sembilan” plot.

Utina (2012) describes the tradition of *Mamia kadialo* with its taboo that has the value of preserving coastal ecosystems. Traditional values, attitudes, and behavior with an ecological perspective in the living order of local communities form the ecological intelligence of society. This local value, for example, applies to coastal communities; it turns out to be quite effective in managing natural resources and efforts to conserve their ecosystems. Holilah's research (2015) shows that the Cigugur indigenous people have ecological



wisdom values that can be used as social studies learning, including the value of environmental conservation, disaster mitigation, and environmentally friendly consumption patterns. The value of environmental conservation consists of agricultural patterns, guarding the prohibition *leuweung*, preservation of springs or *cainyusu*, and the philosophical value of the *Seren Taun* ceremony. The value of disaster mitigation and environmentally friendly consumption patterns is contained in the advice or prohibitions still used as guidelines for daily life.

Based on some of these studies, relevant local wisdom is used in learning in schools, especially in social studies learning. The implementation of values in the local culture of the Rawa Pening community in social studies learning can be done as an example of implementing environmental conservation using local wisdom. The application of social studies learning can be applied to learning resources for the forest, natural resources, and natural resources in Indonesia. The application was carried out in class VII semester 1 to preserve the environment using ecological wisdom. The development of ecological wisdom values is designed in the lesson plan to introduce local wisdom and maintain the balance of the ecosystem for environmental conservation. Social studies learning can be carried out more meaningfully when it involves students' contribution to understanding the concept of the value of ecological wisdom. Students are provided with concepts and are also equipped with the cultivation of positive attitudes and actual actions useful for everyday life. This is carried out through social studies learning based on local culture to explore the ecological wisdom of the community as a form of synergy between humans and nature, environment, society, and culture.

### **Discussion and Recommendations**

This study resulted in several conclusions regarding the value of *ora ilok* as the implementation of the ecological wisdom of the Rawa Pening community as a source of social studies learning. First, the value of “ora ilok” is a belief constructed by the people of Rawa Pening to 1) protect natural resources (humus soil, water hyacinth plants, and fish); 2) maintain cleanliness around Rawa Pening; 3) maintain the ecosystem around Rawa Pening. The prohibition in the form of the myth of “ora ilok” is closely related to the consequences of a plague or a consequence that violators must mystically accept. The value of “ora ilok” as the ecological wisdom of the Rawa Pening community teaches



humans to live or not to be greedy, be responsible for what they do, and care for each other and the surrounding environment. Students are expected to know, understand, appreciate, and apply the values of the ecological wisdom of the Rawa Pening community in social studies learning in the form of the value of environmental conservation, living simply and in harmony with nature, sustainable living patterns, compassion for nature, and concern for nature.

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