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Integration of SDG values in Indonesian language course learning

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ABSTRACT

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) have emerged as a global agenda to address challenges such as social inequality, environmental degradation, and the quality of education. Higher education plays a strategic role in achieving these goals by fostering students' critical thinking, academic literacy, and social responsibility. This study employs a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) of scholarly publications from 2025 to examine the integration of SDG values into Indonesian Language courses in higher education. The review identifies key themes, including the role of higher education in SDG implementation, academic literacy development, character formation, social awareness, and strategies for integrating the SDGs into language learning. The findings indicate that Indonesian Language courses possess significant potential as a medium for SDG integration because of their emphasis on academic literacy, critical thinking, and scientific communication. However, the review also reveals that SDG integration remains partial and unsystematic, highlighting the need for a structured conceptual framework. This study recommends the planned incorporation of SDG values into learning objectives, instructional materials, teaching strategies, and assessments, as well as the development of SDG-based learning guides for lecturers. The results provide theoretical and practical implications for enhancing Indonesian Language instruction in alignment with sustainable development.

Keywords: Sustainable Development Goals; higher education; Indonesian Language; academic literacy; systematic literature review; curriculum integration; social responsibility

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RESEARCH & PUBLISHING



1. INTRODUCTION

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) constitute a global agenda designed to address various challenges of global development, such as social inequality, environmental degradation, and education quality (United Nations, 2023). The SDGs emphasize the importance of sustainable development, which is not solely oriented toward economic growth but also toward social justice and environmental sustainability (UNESCO, 2021). Within this framework, education is positioned as a key element in shaping knowledgeable, ethical, and globally aware human resources. Education is regarded as a strategic instrument for transforming learners' values, attitudes, and competencies to align with the goals of sustainable development. Therefore, implementing SDG values through the education sector is indispensable in efforts to achieve inclusive and sustainable development (United Nations, 2022).

Higher education plays a strategic role in supporting the achievement of the SDGs, as it serves as a space for developing students' critical thinking and social responsibility. Numerous studies emphasize that universities function not only as institutions that produce academically competent graduates but also as agents of social transformation that contribute to sustainable development (Leal Filho et al., 2022; Utari & Ayatullah, 2025). The integration of SDGs into curricula and learning processes is viewed as a concrete effort to realize this role, particularly by aligning learning outcomes with sustainability values (Pham Xuan & Håkansson Lindqvist, 2025). Through contextualized learning, students can understand the SDGs not merely as global concepts but as values relevant to their academic lives and their roles as responsible citizens (Setiabudi & Ismi, 2025; Izz & Irfan, 2025).

One course that holds a strategic position in higher education is the Indonesian Language course. This compulsory course aims to develop students' academic literacy, critical thinking skills, and scientific communication abilities (Anindita & Wibowo, 2022; Anandari et al., 2025). Indonesian language learning does not solely focus on linguistic aspects but also emphasizes the ability to understand, analyze, and produce academic discourse responsibly (Masrin, 2025). With these characteristics, the Indonesian Language course has substantial potential as a medium for integrating SDGs values into the learning process, particularly in fostering students' social awareness, academic ethics, and global responsibility (Caridah et al., 2025).

Language plays a central role in building understanding and awareness of various social and global issues. Through activities such as reading, writing, speaking, and discussion, students can be trained to critically and reflectively examine issues related to SDGs (Caridah et al., 2025). Texts addressing sustainability, social justice, and environmental issues can be utilized as learning resources in Indonesian language instruction, as they effectively connect linguistic competence to broader social realities (Masrin, 2025). Thus, language skill development can proceed in tandem with strengthening SDG values among students, particularly in cultivating ethical awareness and social responsibility (Anandari et al., 2025).

However, in practice, Indonesian Language instruction in higher education still tends to emphasize technical linguistic aspects, such as grammar, text structure, and conventions of academic writing. Several studies indicate that the integration of global issues into language learning at the tertiary level has not yet been systematically designed and often depends on individual lecturers' initiatives (Pham Xuan & Håkansson Lindqvist, 2025; Setiabudi & Ismi, 2025). This condition results in Indonesian Language learning not being optimally utilized as a means of strengthening students' social and sustainability awareness. Contextual and issue-based language learning is considered capable of providing more meaningful learning experiences relevant to the global challenges faced by students (Leal Filho et al., 2022).

However, academic studies that specifically examine the integration of SDG values into Indonesian Language courses remain relatively limited. Most existing research focuses on SDG integration within science, technology, and environmental disciplines, while general courses and academic literacy have received comparatively little attention (Pham Xuan & Håkansson Lindqvist, 2025). This limitation highlights a research gap that needs to be addressed through conceptual studies and systematic literature reviews. Therefore, such a study is essential as a theoretical foundation for developing Indonesian Language instruction oriented toward sustainable development in higher education.

Based on the foregoing discussion, a systematic examination of the integration of SDG values into Indonesian Language courses is required. This study aims to examine the concept of SDG integration, identify SDG values relevant to the learning outcomes of Indonesian Language courses, and formulate strategies for their implementation in higher education. This study is expected to provide both theoretical and practical contributions to the development of Indonesian Language instruction that is oriented not only toward language skills but also toward the cultivation of awareness and responsibility for sustainable development.

2. METHOD

This study employs a qualitative approach using the Systematic Literature Review (SLR) method to examine the integration of SDGs values into Indonesian Language courses in higher education. The SLR method was selected because it enables researchers to conduct a systematic, transparent, and structured process of literature search, selection, and analysis, thereby producing a comprehensive and scientifically accountable synthesis of knowledge.

The data sources for this study consist of scholarly articles published exclusively in 2025. Limiting the publication year was intended to capture the most recent developments in research on the integration of SDGs in higher education, particularly in the context of language learning and academic literacy. The articles were retrieved through searches of online academic databases, such as Google Scholar and national journal portals, with consideration given to accessibility and relevance to the Indonesian higher education context.

The literature search process was conducted using a combination of keywords, including “*Sustainable Development Goals*,” “*SDGs and higher education*,” “*Indonesian Language in higher education*,” “*academic literacy*,” and “*sustainability-based learning*.” These keywords were applied flexibly and adapted to the search context to obtain articles relevant to the focus of the study. All retrieved articles were then documented and screened in successive stages.

The inclusion criteria for this study comprised: (1) articles published in 2025, (2) studies addressing SDGs within the context of education, learning, or literacy, (3) articles relevant to higher education or language-related courses, and (4) publications appearing in credible scholarly journals. Conversely, the exclusion criteria included articles that were not directly related to SDGs or learning, non-academic popular publications, and studies that did not provide a clear methodological description.

Articles meeting the inclusion criteria were subsequently analyzed using thematic analysis. At this stage, the researcher identified major themes emerging from the literature, such as the role of higher education in achieving the SDGs, the integration of sustainability values in language learning, the strengthening of academic literacy through global issues, and strategies for implementing SDGs within university courses. These themes were then categorized and compared across studies to identify patterns, similarities, and differences in perspectives.

The final stage of the study involved synthesizing the results of the thematic analysis into a conceptual framework for integrating SDG values into Indonesian Language courses. This synthesis was used to formulate theoretical implications and learning recommendations relevant to the higher education context. By employing a Systematic Literature Review focused on publications from 2025, this study is expected to provide an up-to-date overview and serve as an initial reference for the development of Indonesian Language learning oriented toward sustainable development.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

All articles analyzed in this review are scholarly publications published in 2025 that address the interrelationship between the SDGs, higher education, and language learning and academic literacy. The discussion in this study is structured based on a thematic synthesis of relevant 2025 literature concerning the integration of SDG values within the context of higher education learning. The findings presented are

derived from an analysis of 2025 scholarly articles that conceptually highlight the role of higher education and language learning in supporting the achievement of the SDGs.

To clarify the trends identified in this review, a summary of the literature resulting from the Systematic Literature Review is presented in [Table 1](#). This table outlines the research focus, educational context, SDG-related issues discussed, and their relevance to Indonesian Language learning in higher education.

Table 1. Summary of 2025 Literature on SDG Integration in Higher Education and Language Learning

Research Focus	Key Findings	Relevance to Indonesian Language Courses	References
Integration of SDGs into the curriculum	The curriculum plays a crucial role in internalizing sustainability values and global citizenship among students	Indonesian Language, as a compulsory course, has the potential to serve as a cross-disciplinary medium supporting SDGs	Izz & Irfan (2025); Pham Xuan & Håkansson Lindqvist (2025); Setiabudi & Ismi (2025)
Global issue-based academic literacy	Academic literacy strengthens critical thinking, social awareness, and student engagement with global issues	Aligned with the learning outcomes of Indonesian Language courses emphasizing critical reading and academic writing	Shahira et al. (2025); Manurung et al. (2025); Caridah et al. (2025)
Sustainable education and student character development	Contextual learning promotes character formation, social responsibility, and sustainability awareness	Language functions as a medium for reflection, argumentation, and value expression	Andani et al. (2025); Winandar (2025); Utari & Ayatullah (2025)
Language learning and social awareness	Social discourse in language learning enhances students' ethical sensitivity and social awareness	Relevant to argumentative texts, academic discussions, and discourse analysis	Masrin (2025); Anandari et al. (2025); Iswadi (2024)
Strategies for implementing SDGs in learning	SDG integration needs to be systematically designed through instructional and curricular planning	Requires a structured Indonesian Language learning framework oriented toward value-based education	Setiabudi & Ismi (2025); Caridah et al. (2025); Azizah (2025)

3.1. Higher Education as a Strategic Space for SDG Implementation

The literature review indicates that higher education is positioned as a strategic actor in the implementation of the SDGs due to its direct role in shaping students' knowledge, attitudes, and social awareness. Izz and Irfan (2025) emphasize that integrating SDGs into higher education curricula represents a process of internalizing global citizenship values that can be achieved through structured learning practices. This finding is reinforced by [Pham Xuan and Håkansson Lindqvist \(2025\)](#), whose scoping review reveals that the successful implementation of SDGs in higher education largely depends on the adoption of curricula that explicitly link learning outcomes with sustainable development agendas.

Furthermore, [Setiabudi and Ismi \(2025\)](#) demonstrate that the Outcome-Based Education (OBE) curriculum approach aligns strongly with SDG principles, particularly SDG 4 on quality education. This suggests that compulsory and cross-disciplinary courses occupy a strategic position in supporting SDG achievement. In this context, Indonesian Language courses, as nationally mandated compulsory subjects, have significant potential to serve as comprehensive platforms for internalizing sustainability values. Similar findings are reported by [Nasrudin et al. \(2025\)](#), who highlight that integrating SDGs into higher education teaching materials strengthens students' value orientation, ethical awareness, and social responsibility.

3.2. Academic Literacy and Its Relevance to SDG Values

The 2025 literature analyzed in this review shows a strong connection between academic literacy and the reinforcement of SDG values, particularly SDG 4 and SDG 10. [Shahira et al. \(2025\)](#) argue that strengthening academic literacy through scientific writing training and digital publication enhances students' critical thinking skills and awareness of sustainable development issues. These findings indicate

that academic literacy functions not only as an academic skill but also as a means of empowering students within broader social and global contexts.

Manurung et al. (2025) further support this argument by identifying literacy as a strategic instrument in advancing SDG programs, particularly in improving educational quality and equitable access to knowledge. Meanwhile, Caridah et al. (2025), through a systematic literature review, emphasize that innovative and contextual literacy learning significantly contributes to SDG achievement. In relation to Indonesian Language courses, these findings suggest that academic literacy learning outcomes are inherently aligned with the goals of social awareness and sustainability promoted by the SDGs.

3.3. Sustainable Education and Student Character Development

The literature also demonstrates a close relationship between sustainable education and character development among university students. Andani et al. (2025) emphasize that character education is a crucial component of higher education in fostering students' social responsibility and ethical awareness. This perspective aligns with Winandar (2025), who argues that integrating SDGs into education contributes to shaping a generation that is adaptive, critical, and responsible in the digital era.

Utari and Ayatullah (2025) further highlight that education plays a key role in promoting sustainable social change through value reinforcement, critical reflection, and collective awareness. Within the context of Indonesian Language learning, language functions as a medium for reflection, argumentation, and critical dialogue, enabling students to articulate sustainability values and social responsibility in an academic manner.

3.4. Language Learning and Social Awareness

Literature specifically addressing language learning suggests that incorporating social discourse into language instruction enhances students' ethical sensitivity toward issues of justice, equality, and peace, which align with SDG 5 and SDG 16. Masrin (2025) asserts that integrating Indonesian Language learning with social contexts contributes to the development of students who are both character-driven and socially responsive. This finding is supported by Anandari et al. (2025), who demonstrate that character-based Indonesian Language instruction fosters not only language appreciation but also awareness of national and social values.

3.5. Strategies for Implementing SDGs in Indonesian Language Learning

The synthesis of literature indicates that SDG integration in learning must be designed systematically and structurally. Setiabudi and Ismi (2025) stress the importance of aligning learning outcomes, instructional materials, and assessment within an OBE framework to ensure that SDG integration is not fragmented. Similarly, Caridah et al. (2025) highlight that consciously designed and contextual literacy learning strategies are more effective in supporting SDG achievement.

Azizah (2025) specifically proposes a language learning framework in higher education oriented toward sustainable development. This framework is highly relevant for adaptation in Indonesian Language courses through the selection of SDG-themed texts, global issue-based academic writing assignments, and critical discussions that encourage reflection and social responsibility. Through these strategies, Indonesian Language learning functions not only as a means of strengthening academic literacy but also as a strategic vehicle for SDG implementation in higher education.

3.6. Thematic Synthesis and Learning Implications

Based on the reviewed literature, studies published in 2025 consistently position learning as the primary vehicle for integrating SDGs in higher education. Indonesian Language courses possess characteristics that align closely with SDG objectives, particularly in promoting academic literacy, ethical communication, and critical thinking. Therefore, integrating SDG values into Indonesian Language learning should be intentionally designed, encompassing material selection, instructional strategies, and assessment practices. Through this approach, Indonesian Language education extends beyond language

skill development and contributes meaningfully to the formation of students who are conscious of and responsible for sustainable development.

4. CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the Systematic Literature Review of publications in 2025, it can be concluded that the integration of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) values into higher education learning is both a relevant and strategic necessity, particularly in supporting the achievement of SDG 4 on quality education. Indonesian Language courses hold significant potential as a medium for SDG integration because they focus on the development of academic literacy, critical thinking, and students' scientific communication skills. The academic literacy fostered through Indonesian Language instruction enables students to understand, critically analyze, and communicate issues of sustainable development in a reflective and responsible manner. However, the review findings indicate that SDG integration in Indonesian Language courses has not yet been systematically implemented and tends to be partial, highlighting the need for a more structured conceptual framework.

Based on the findings of this study, it is recommended that Indonesian Language courses in higher education begin integrating SDG values in a planned manner across learning objectives, instructional materials, teaching strategies, and assessments. The use of reading texts, writing assignments, and critical discussions focused on SDG-related issues can serve as an initial, contextual, and easily implementable strategy. In addition, the development of SDG-based Indonesian Language learning guides or models is necessary to provide lecturers with a practical reference for implementing sustainability-oriented teaching. Future studies are recommended to empirically examine the implementation of SDG-based Indonesian Language instruction to further strengthen the conceptual findings generated in this research.

Ethical Approval

Not Applicable

Informed Consent Statement

Not Applicable

Authors' Contributions

Not Applicable

Disclosure statement

The authors declare that there are no relevant conflicts of interest related to this research

Data Availability Statement

The data supporting this study are not publicly available due to privacy considerations but can be provided upon reasonable request from the corresponding author

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Notes on Contributors

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