The Adaptation of Malay Philosophy Values through Maritime education Preservation and Conservation Wisdom

Tajul Shuhaizam Said1, Harozila Ramli2, and Aneesa Damia Natasha3

1,2 Faculty of Art, sustainability and creative industry, Sultan Idris Education University
3 Faculty of Language and Communication, Sultan Idris Education University

Abstract. This academic investigation embarks on a comprehensive exploration of the amalgamation of Malay philosophy, Islamic heritage, and environmental wisdom, which offers a distinctive perspective with far-reaching implications for maritime education. Navigating an array of dimensions encompassing social values, customary norms, environmental ethics, belief systems, and traditional spatial practices, this inquiry unveils the profound significance of Malay wisdom for environmental preservation and harmonious coexistence. Central to this convergence is the deep-seated respect Malay society places on environmental preservation, an integral facet of their cultural identity. This reverence infuses daily life and is embodied in an unwavering commitment to environmental stewardship. Moreover, Malay customary norms stand as an exemplar of sustainable resource management, ensuring responsible resource utilization through traditions passed down through generations. The guiding principle of "Pantang Larang," an array of traditional prohibitions, is instrumental in ecological conservation. At the heart of this environmental wisdom lies a unique set of ethics, firmly rooted in the belief that humans are entrusted with the role of stewards of the environment. These ethical values find resonance in Islamic teachings, emphasizing the responsibility to safeguard the Earth as a divine trust. These principles inform traditional practices, meticulously minimizing environmental impact and ensuring the longevity of vital resources. Islamic heritage further amplifies the Malay commitment to environmental stewardship, accentuating the interconnectedness of all life forms and venerating the environment as a divine gift. In conclusion, this amalgamation of Malay philosophy and Islamic heritage nurtures profound environmental wisdom, deeply embedded in social values, customary norms, environmental ethics, belief systems, and spatial practices. The incorporation of these insights into maritime education has the potential to elevate ecological awareness and encourage responsible practices, acknowledging the interdependence of all life forms and the imperative of sustainable coexistence with the natural world. This research sheds light on the vital role of Malay philosophy and Islamic heritage in nurturing a holistic understanding of environmental stewardship within the context of maritime education.

* Corresponding author: tajul@fskik.upsiedu.my
1 Introduction

The 2023 World Water Day theme is "Be the change," encouraging individuals to take action in their own lives to change how they use, acquire, and manage water. Water is a life-sustaining resource that affects various aspects such as home life, food, culture, health, education, economics, and the natural environment. Neglecting these values increases the risk of mismanagement of water resources. [7]

The World Oceans Day is celebrated to raise awareness of the critical role oceans play in our daily lives. They are a major source of food and medicine, and are a critical part of the biosphere. The event highlights the impact of human actions on the ocean and mobilizes the global population for sustainable management of the world's oceans. This year's theme is "Planet Ocean: tides are changing," and will shed light on how we can work together to ensure the ocean's health and well-being. [8]

Water is an essential element that is deeply intertwined with various cultures and influences multiple religions. It plays a crucial role in several religious rituals, such as purification in Islam, Hinduism, and Christianity. Additionally, water is used both literally and metaphorically in various aspects of culture, including art, music, and literature.

The Malay philosophy and Islamic heritage have a profound impact on environmental wisdom, providing a unique perspective that can enhance maritime education. This article delves into the various dimensions of this wisdom, including social values, customary norms, environmental ethics, belief systems, and traditional spatial practices. These elements collectively form the basis of Malay wisdom for protecting the environment.

The group of the Malay people originates in the natural ecosystem of the archipelago that forms the Civilization of the vast Malay ethnic group. Dapunta Hiyang (647 AD) created a state in Kuala Sungai Musi, Palembang, Sriwijaya in the 13th century AD, Sailendra kingdom, then Majapahit and Melaka Sultanate. (1511 AD); [2]

Malay philosophy is deeply intertwined with environmental wisdom and is reflected in various aspects of society, culture, and belief systems. This article explores the integration of Malay wisdom, rooted in a reverence for nature and sustainability, into maritime education to promote ecological awareness and responsible practices. It also examines the influence of Islamic heritage on ecological and environmental wisdom and the importance of environmental stewardship, conservation, and the interconnectedness of all life forms. This perspective offers valuable insights for maritime education and other fields, fostering sustainable practices and environmental protection.

In the context of education, particularly in Malaysia, learning about Islamic history and civilization is crucial for the development of human capital. The teachings of Islam provide a moral and ethical framework that shapes the character of individuals, instilling values of compassion, justice, and social responsibility. Understanding Islamic history fosters a sense of identity and cultural awareness, contributing to the holistic development of individuals as responsible and informed citizens.

Moreover, this integration aims to promote ecological awareness and responsible practices within the maritime sector. By acknowledging the importance of environmental stewardship and conservation, this article highlights the interconnectedness of all life forms, emphasizing the need for a holistic approach to maritime practices. The insights derived from the integration of Islamic and Malay heritage into maritime education extend beyond the immediate context. They offer valuable lessons and perspectives for various fields, contributing to the fostering of sustainable practices and environmental protection. This approach aligns with the broader goals of promoting responsible tourism, particularly within the framework of global Shariah tourism.[3]

The historical concept of Islamic culture and teachings in the Malay Archipelagos has left an indelible mark on the cultural and educational landscape of Malaysia. The integration of Islamic heritage with Malay philosophy, particularly in the context of environmental wisdom, provides a unique perspective for addressing contemporary challenges. Learning about Islamic history is integral to the development of human capital, contributing to the formation of responsible and informed individuals. The management of maritime connection culture legacy within the Islamic and Malay heritage not only enhances ecological awareness in maritime education but also has broader implications for fostering sustainable practices in various fields.

2 Social Values

Within Malay society, there exists a profound and enduring connection to cultural values that place the preservation of the environment at the forefront. These values, deeply ingrained in the community's collective psyche, find expression through an array of cultural practices that underpin a profound respect for the intricate and delicate balance of the natural world. [8]

The connection between the Malay community and the environment represents an essential element of their social values, with reverence for nature being a central tenet of these values. This belief in the sanctity of the environment as a source of life and spiritual significance has been deeply ingrained in the Malay community, and is a cornerstone of their commitment to the stewardship of the natural world.

These values are not merely expressed through words, but are demonstrated in tangible, daily practices. For example, the concept of "alam sekitar" or "the surrounding world" is incorporated into their daily interactions, emphasizing the interdependence between
the Malay community and the environment. These values are also reflected in the customs and rituals that are carried out with a keen attention to maintaining environmental harmony. It is therefore essential to recognize and appreciate the importance of these values in promoting sustainable development and preserving the natural heritage of the Malay community. Traditional ceremonies and celebrations often incorporate elements that emphasize the importance of the harmonious relationship between humans and nature, recognizing that the environment is not simply a resource to exploit but a vital partner in the intricate dance of life.

This respect for the environment is a fundamental aspect of the aspirations of the Malay community, not only for the present generation but also for future generations. It is an obligation to ensure that the rich environmental wisdom embedded in their cultural values endures and continues to guide the community towards a sustainable coexistence with their natural surroundings. In essence, the social values of the Malay community are deeply grounded in a profound reverence for nature and a commitment to preserving the delicate balance of the environment. This reverence is not superficial but is woven into the very fabric of their culture, customs, and daily life, emphasizing their inherent connection to the environment and their steadfast dedication to its preservation.

The integration of Islamic heritage with Malay philosophy, particularly in the context of environmental wisdom, provides a unique perspective for addressing contemporary challenges. Islamic teachings resonate with Malay values, accentuating the importance of responsible environmental stewardship, sustainability, and the intricate interconnectedness of all life forms.[11] This shared commitment to the preservation of the environment offers a profound and comprehensive approach to ecological awareness and responsible practices, including in the realm of maritime education.

3 Customary Norms

Within the cultural context of the Malay community, traditional practices and customs are intrinsically tied to a resolute commitment to sustainable resource utilization. These enduring activities, encompassing practices such as fishing, farming, and various other components of livelihood, are underpinned by a profound dedication to environmental preservation, with the overarching aim of upholding the vitality of ecosystems and averting harm.

The adherence to sustainable resource utilization stands as a central and unwavering tenet within Malay customary norms. These practices are refined over successive generations to minimize environmental impact and ensure the continued abundance and resilience of natural resources. This eco-centric approach is not merely a superficial cultural trait but is deeply embedded in the community's identity, representing a living heritage passed down from forebears who astutely recognized the imperative of responsible engagement with the environment.

Fishing, as an integral facet of Malay culture, serves as a paradigm that epitomizes the values and norms in question. Traditional fishing methods, such as handline or trap fishing, are executed with meticulous care and a profound consideration for the marine ecosystem. These techniques, far from being solely aimed at securing a sustainable catch, also serve as safeguards against overfishing, contributing to the preservation of the delicate equilibrium of coastal environments. Similarly, agricultural practices are executed with a steadfast focus on ecological sustainability. Principles such as crop rotation, soil conservation, and traditional planting techniques are employed to maintain soil fertility while minimizing environmental degradation. These practices unequivocally exemplify the Malay community's unwavering commitment to responsible resource management.

The practice of "Pantang Larang," an encompassing set of traditional prohibitions within Malay culture, serves as a comprehensive guide for ecological conservation. This compendium contains directives and taboos explicitly aimed at forestalling harm to the environment. These enduring customary norms are far from vestiges of history; they wield a substantive influence on contemporary Malay society, particularly within coastal communities.

In Malay culture, an indelible reverence for the environment and a profound recognition of the interconnectedness between human activities and the natural world are deeply ingrained. This ethos finds tangible expression in customary norms and practices, emphasizing sustainable resource utilization across various domains, including fishing and agriculture. These venerable traditions, far from being relics of the past, offer a wellspring of ecological knowledge that can inform and enrich fields such as maritime education by imparting a resolute sense of responsibility and nurturing ecological awareness among succeeding generations.

4 Environmental Ethics

The Malay philosophy emphasizes the significance of environmental conservation, sustainability, and stewardship. It highlights the responsibility of humans to protect the environment and maintain a harmonious relationship with the natural world. This philosophy recognizes the environment as a divine gift and views it as a sacred trust, which requires an active and ongoing commitment to preserve it for future generations. The concept of environmental stewardship is deeply rooted in the Malay cultural ethos and reflects a sense of guardianship and custodianship over the natural world, emphasizing that it should not be treated as a resource to exploit, but as a heritage to protect and preserve.

Conservation, an essential aspect of Malay environmental ethics, advocates for a proactive and
deliberate approach to protecting natural resources. This ethos is reflected in traditional practices that are carefully structured to minimize harm to the environment and ensure the sustained abundance of resources. This commitment to conservation signifies a deep respect for the interconnectedness of all life forms and the intrinsic value of ecological balance.

Sustainability, a cornerstone of this philosophy, emphasizes the importance of responsible resource management. Malay practices are characterized by their longevity and their capacity to endure, resulting in minimal negative impacts on the environment. This extends to sustainable fishing methods and agricultural techniques, which embody a delicate balance that ensures resource renewal and ecological equilibrium.

The conviction that the environment is a divine gift, which is in line with the spiritual and religious traditions of the Malay culture, particularly influenced by Islamic heritage, underscores the importance of protecting and preserving nature. This view advocates for the responsible care of the environment as it is considered a trust bestowed by a higher power to humans.

Malay environmental ethics emphasize the commitment to environmental conservation and sustainability, which is rooted in the belief that nature is sacred. This ethical stance is reflected in the practical and sustainable practices that are deeply ingrained in Malay culture and can offer valuable lessons for fields such as maritime education by promoting ecological awareness and responsible behaviour.

5 Belief Systems

The profound influence of Islamic heritage, which has played a pivotal role in shaping Malay philosophy, contributes significantly to the wealth of ecological and environmental wisdom within this cultural framework. Islamic teachings emphasize the fundamental importance of environmental stewardship, sustainability, and the intrinsic interconnectedness of all living beings. Notably, this perspective closely aligns with the core tenets of Malay philosophy. Islamic heritage has left an indelible mark on Malay environmental ethics, infusing it with a profound sense of responsibility towards the environment. Central to Islamic teachings is the notion of custodianship, wherein humans are considered stewards of the Earth, entrusted with the task of preserving and protecting the natural world. This sacred trust accentuates the importance of ensuring the environment remains unharmed and undiminished for future generations. Furthermore, Islamic teachings underscore the imperative of sustainability. The concept of "mizan" or balance is a fundamental principle within Islam. It signifies the need for equilibrium and moderation in all actions, including resource utilization. This resonates deeply with Malay philosophy, which has also been moulded by a commitment to balance and harmony with nature.

The interconnectedness of all living beings, a central theme in Islamic heritage, reinforces the Malay perspective of the environment as a complex web of relationships. This recognition that human actions can have far-reaching effects on the environment and its inhabitants highlights the need for responsible and considerate interactions with the natural world.

The alignment between Islamic heritage and Malay philosophy creates a powerful synergy, fostering a shared commitment to environmental stewardship, conservation, and sustainability. Islamic teachings resonate with Malay values, accentuating the importance of responsible environmental stewardship, sustainability, and the intricate interconnectedness of all life forms. This shared commitment to the preservation of the environment offers a profound and comprehensive approach to ecological awareness and responsible practices, including in the realm of maritime education. The integration of Islamic values for environmental conservation has been analysed in school textbooks, and efforts have been made to apply environmental education in the school system in Malaysia.[6] Islamic studies students in Malaysia recognize the importance of the role of religious people in environmental conservation, and their proposed roles are in line with Islamic values related to environmental conservation.[1]. The influence of social and religious factors on environmentally ethical behaviour (EEB) of the Muslim community in Malaysia has also been studied, and young Muslim environmental activists base their environmentalism firmly on their Muslim faith.[7]

The Malay rural traditional village landscape is under pressure to being transformed into other uses to fulfil current socio-economic needs and rapid urbanization, but some development continues to erode the natural environment and cultural values that embody the landscape that has maintained the traditions are under threat.[6] Despite the manifestation of environmental education activities across the educational establishment, much of what passes as Islamic education today is not representative of the holistic, integrated and comprehensive educational philosophy of Islam. Islamic teachings resonate with Malay values, accentuating the importance of responsible environmental stewardship, sustainability, and the intricate interconnectedness of all life forms. This shared commitment to the preservation of the environment offers a profound and comprehensive approach to ecological awareness and responsible practices, including in the realm of maritime education.

6 Traditional Spatial Practices

Within Malay culture, traditional spatial practices constitute an integral dimension that actively promotes and sustains environmental sustainability. These practices, rooted in a deep understanding of the natural
world, encompass deliberate measures such as the utilization of green spaces and the preservation of natural habitats. This reflective, time-honoured approach exemplifies a holistic and comprehensive commitment to ecological preservation.

Green spaces, within the context of traditional spatial practices, serve as vital components of the Malay cultural landscape. These spaces are intentionally designed and maintained to ensure that nature thrives alongside human habitation. Gardens, courtyards, and communal areas are harmoniously integrated into the built environment. Notably, these green spaces are not merely ornamental but are functional, providing both aesthetic pleasure and a source of sustenance, such as through the cultivation of herbs and edible plants.

The deliberate inclusion of green spaces underscores the Malay understanding that the environment is not an entity separate from human existence but an integral part of daily life. It symbolizes a profound respect for the intrinsic connection between humans and the natural world. This perspective is not only aesthetic but embodies a deeply rooted ecological awareness, emphasizing that urban planning can coexist harmoniously with nature.

In parallel, the preservation of natural habitats represents a fundamental practice within traditional spatial wisdom. Coastal communities, in particular, have long recognized the value of preserving mangrove forests and other critical ecosystems. These practices are more than just preservation for the sake of biodiversity; they are an acknowledgment of the intricate balance of coastal environments and the vital role these habitats play in supporting marine life and protecting coastlines from erosion.

The preservation of natural habitats within Malay culture is a testament to the long-term vision and deep ecological understanding of the interdependence between humans and nature. It underscores the commitment to safeguarding not only present but future generations' access to the essential resources and services provided by these ecosystems. Traditional spatial practices within Malay culture are far from being superficial ornamentation. They embody a deep-rooted ecological awareness and a commitment to environmental sustainability. The integration of green spaces and the preservation of natural habitats reflect a profound understanding of the interdependence between humans and the environment. These practices have much to offer to maritime education, providing a tangible example of how responsible coexistence with the environment can be woven into the fabric of daily life.

7 Exemplary Initiatives: Incorporating Malay Philosophy for Maritime Preservation and Education

we have the privilege of celebrating the remarkable initiatives that have successfully integrated Malay philosophy's values into maritime preservation, education, and sustainable practices. These initiatives stand as beacons of hope and exemplify the potential of cultural wisdom to drive positive change in our relationship with the oceans. Let us delve into some inspiring examples.

Langkawi's Geopark: A Testament to Sustainable Tourism

Langkawi, an archipelago in Malaysia, is renowned for its pristine natural beauty. The Langkawi Geopark, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, is a stellar example of how Malay philosophy's values have been embraced to promote sustainable tourism. The Geopark combines ecological conservation, cultural heritage, and eco-friendly practices to ensure that the region's stunning natural landscapes are preserved for future generations.

Langkawi's inhabitants have embraced the reverence for nature and environmental stewardship, deeply rooted in Malay philosophy, by adopting sustainable fishing practices, reducing plastic waste, and conserving vital ecosystems. The Langkawi Declaration on Environment and Development, influenced by Malay philosophy's values, guides the Geopark's policies, ensuring that tourism and conservation go hand in hand.

The fireflies of Kuala Selangor offer another extraordinary example of how Malay philosophy's values have been harnessed to promote ecotourism and preserve delicate ecosystems. The fireflies' habitat along the Selangor River is a testament to the interconnectedness of all life forms, as emphasized in Malay philosophy. Their presence is a vital part of the local culture, and their conservation is paramount.

The community, driven by a deep respect for nature, has established responsible ecotourism practices that allow visitors to witness the fireflies' mesmerizing displays without causing harm to their habitat. Local fishermen have adapted their practices to minimize disturbance to the fireflies, exemplifying the commitment to conservation deeply ingrained in Malay culture.
Penang’s Maritime Heritage: Nurturing Cultural Identity

Penang, a cultural melting pot in Malaysia, has embarked on a journey to preserve and promote its maritime heritage, which is deeply intertwined with Malay philosophy's values. By conserving traditional boats, promoting maritime education, and showcasing the cultural significance of the sea, Penang is fostering an appreciation of the ocean that transcends generations.

The Penang Heritage Trust has initiated educational programs that incorporate Malay philosophy's values, instilling a sense of responsibility and stewardship of the marine environment in the younger generation. This initiative not only preserves cultural identity but also contributes to the sustainability of maritime practices and the protection of the oceans.

The Laut Biru Project, Indonesia

Moving beyond the borders of Malaysia, we find the Laut Biru Project in Indonesia, a marine conservation initiative that exemplifies the global reach of Malay philosophy’s wisdom. This project focuses on preserving marine biodiversity, promoting sustainable fishing practices, and raising awareness about environmental stewardship.

The Laut Biru Project's success lies in its ability to weave traditional Malay values, such as customary norms and environmental ethics, into modern marine conservation efforts. By engaging local communities and educating fishermen on responsible practices, the project has not only helped protect marine life but also bolstered the livelihoods of coastal communities.

Coral Triangle Initiative: A Regional Commitment

The Coral Triangle, a marine area encompassing parts of Malaysia, Indonesia, the Philippines, Papua New Guinea, Timor-Leste, and the Solomon Islands, is a global hotspot for marine biodiversity. Recognizing the importance of preserving this invaluable region, the Coral Triangle Initiative (CTI) was established.

The CTI places a strong emphasis on the interconnectedness of all life forms, echoing Malay philosophy’s values. It aims to conserve and sustainably manage marine and coastal resources, incorporating traditional knowledge and practices, which have been passed down through generations. This regional initiative underscores the potential of Malay philosophy to drive collaboration and conservation on a global scale. In these exemplary initiatives, we witness the successful integration of Malay philosophy's values into maritime preservation, education, and sustainable practices. These examples demonstrate that cultural wisdom, when embraced and harnessed effectively, can be a powerful force for positive change in our relationship with the oceans. As we move forward, let us draw inspiration from these initiatives and continue to explore the potential of cultural heritage in safeguarding our shared marine environment.

8 Conclusion

The integration of Malay wisdom into maritime education stands as a unique and invaluable opportunity to imbue ecological awareness and sustainability into the education of future maritime professionals. Rooted in a rich tapestry of knowledge derived from social values, customary norms, environmental ethics, belief systems, and traditional spatial practices, Malay philosophy offers a holistic and comprehensive framework for promoting responsible maritime practices and the safeguarding of our environment.

The enduring and intrinsic bond between Malay culture and the environment, deeply enshrined in their social values, ensures that this wisdom is not a mere theoretical concept but a living practice. It extends an authentic model for maritime education to cultivate a new generation of seafarers who genuinely respect and safeguard the delicate ecosystems they traverse.

Furthermore, the profound influence of Islamic heritage on Malay philosophy enhances this environmental perspective, underscoring the intricate interconnectedness of all life forms and emphasizing the divine significance of environmental stewardship. This harmonious fusion of cultural values and religious teachings aligns maritime education with a broader ethical and spiritual commitment to preserving the environment.

As our world grapples with pressing environmental challenges, the incorporation of Malay wisdom into maritime education offers a beacon of hope. It not only equips future maritime professionals with the knowledge and values to navigate our oceans responsibly but also serves as a reminder of the imperative of global cooperation in conserving our invaluable natural resources. It reinforces that we are not just stewards of the sea but also custodians of our shared planet.

In summary, this holistic approach, intricately woven from the rich tapestry of Malay culture and Islamic heritage, furnishes a profound foundation for maritime education. It fosters ecological awareness, instills responsible practices, and reinforces the commitment to environmental protection. This integration is a testament to the wisdom of the past, guiding us toward a more sustainable future on our blue planet.
References


