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ARTICLE (REFEREED)

# Empowering Indigenous Coastal Conservation: Eco-*Muamalat* as a Model for Sustainable Marine Practices

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## Abstract

The degradation of marine ecosystems and the socioeconomic vulnerability of coastal populations are intensifying due to unsustainable fishing methods and inadequate regulatory frameworks. This study seeks to establish the Eco-*Muamalat* framework, a comprehensive model that integrates Islamic principles with *sasi* for marine conservation and community empowerment. Utilizing grounded theory, data were gathered via interview and participant observation of the seaside community of Iha. The results indicate that conservation activities are intricately integrated into religious rites, socio-ecological norms, and ethical economic allocation. The Eco-*Muamalat* framework offers a contextually relevant and ethically sound paradigm for marine governance that fosters ecological sustainability, justice, and public welfare. This work theoretically enhances Islamic environmental ethics by illustrating how religious values serve as both normative goals and practical governing instruments. The framework provides policymakers with a culturally integrated approach religion-informed, community-driven conservation that is scalable and adaptable to many socio-ecological environments.

## Keywords

**Eco-*Muamalat*; Indigenous Custom; Marine Conservation; Maluku Province, Indonesia**

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## Introduction

The preservation of maritime ecosystems encounters substantial obstacles due to heightened exploitation and environmental degradation, undermining ecological equilibrium and the livelihoods of coastal populations. Unsustainable fishing practices, marine pollution, and diminishing biodiversity threaten marine resources and the socioeconomic well-being of coastal communities (Boli et al. 2014; von der Porten et al. 2019). Consequently, numerous coastal communities are forfeiting access to essential natural resources, resulting in economic and social instability. These difficulties underscore the pressing necessity for a conservation strategy that safeguards marine habitats and promotes social and economic equity (Gunaisah et al. 2016). This urgency prompts an inquiry into how religious beliefs and Indigenous traditions might offer sustainable and equitable solutions for marine conservation.

One of the most intriguing local models is *sasi*, a traditional maritime management system employed in some areas of Maluku Province, Eastern Indonesia, which governs access to natural resources through culturally and spiritually rooted mechanisms. Prior research has emphasized that conventional behaviors and religious principles are crucial for conserving marine habitats and empowering coastal communities. Hallatu et al. (2020) and Sumarsono and Wasa (2019) assert that Indigenous practices like *sasi*, rooted in religious principles, efficiently govern the sustainable utilization of marine resources. Uspayanti et al. (2021) emphasize the significance of Indigenous wisdom in promoting economic empowerment while concurrently preserving the environment. Nevertheless, most of these studies concentrate predominantly on a singular facet of conservation—conventional behaviors or spiritual values—neglecting to examine their profound interrelations.

The existing research frequently delineates environmental conservation, religious beliefs, and sustainable economics as different domains, failing to provide a cohesive understanding of how these three components might be amalgamated into a unified conservation and economic empowerment strategy. It has yet to establish a complete framework that integrates Islamic principles with local traditions in marine habitat protection. Most studies concentrate solely on ecological or socioeconomic dimensions and fail to address integrating concepts such as *'Adl* (justice) and *Maslahah* (public welfare) into a comprehensive and adaptive framework. This literature overlooks the potential synergy among religious principles, local customs, and sustainable economics, which could underpin a more comprehensive and equitable conservation strategy. Consequently, research is required to integrate religious values, local traditions, and sustainable economics into a cohesive strategy for marine conservation and community empowerment.

This research is vital due to the necessity of creating a framework that integrates Islamic ethical principles—such as *'Adl* (justice), *Maslahah* (public welfare), and *Hifz al-Bi'ah* (environmental protection)—with indigenous behaviors like *sasi*. Although prior research recognizes the distinct functions of faith and tradition, it does not offer a theoretical framework that situates them within a whole system of sustainable economic empowerment. This study introduces the Eco-*Muamalat* framework, a theoretical model integrating Islamic ethical principles with indigenous environmental governance for marine conservation. Eco-*Muamalat* is designed as a normative and practical framework to direct community conduct, resource distribution, and policy development following ethical responsibility.

## Literature Review

### PRESERVATION OF MARINE ECOSYSTEMS AND BIODIVERSITY

Marine biodiversity is essential for preserving the natural equilibrium of coastal areas and the sustainability of livelihoods reliant on marine resources. Robust marine ecosystems enhance food security, manage climate, and provide economic prospects for coastal communities. Research by Osei Darko et al. (2021), Simanjuntak

et al. (2020) and Triandiza et al. (2019) has emphasized the significance of species conservation and habitat durability. These studies establish a foundational comprehension of the biological aspects of marine ecosystems, especially coral reefs, mangroves, and fish populations. Nevertheless, these studies frequently contextualize biodiversity solely within a scientific framework, sidelining the social and spiritual aspects that influence human relationships with the environment. To formulate effective conservation measures, it is imperative to regard biodiversity as a biological construct and a socio-cultural and ethical issue. This creates opportunities for integrative methodologies that incorporate ecological research with community values and religious doctrines.

Indigenous societies have historically cultivated conservation methods grounded in profound ecological understanding and social governance. The *sasi* system in Maluku Province, Eastern Indonesia exemplifies how traditional taboos govern the timing and scope of resource extraction. Research conducted by Goode et al. (2021) and Sahusilawane et al. (2024) elucidates the role of these systems in facilitating marine recovery, encompassing benthic restoration and coral reef conservation. Nonetheless, these conventional methods are sometimes portrayed as immutable or antiquated despite evidence of their capacity for adaptation to ecological change. Djunarsjah and Putra (2021), and Hatulesila et al. (2021), advocate amalgamating traditional government with zoning and resource allocation frameworks. Many theories still do not effectively delineate how these systems might adapt dynamically to climate change and market forces. Consequently, a more sophisticated comprehension of customary practices is required—one that perceives them as adaptable, dynamic instruments that can enhance formal conservation science.

Adaptive management prioritizes learning, feedback, and adaptable decision-making reacting to ecological changes. Parker (2021) and Satria et al. (2024) contend that participatory methodologies engaging communities, scientists, and policymakers are crucial for sustainable conservation outcomes. However, these frameworks frequently lack methods to integrate local customs or spiritual beliefs into government structures effectively. The disjunction between top-down scientific treatments and bottom-up traditional systems can hinder implementation. A methodology that integrates formal and informal institutions is needed to develop conservation policies collaboratively. This involves integrating zoning systems, technology innovations, and indigenous knowledge into a unified framework. Adaptive frameworks must be contextually aware, acknowledging local circumstances and ethical imperatives rooted in religious and cultural convictions.

The literature emphasizes the significance of comprehending marine habitats and biodiversity conservation via traditional and contemporary techniques. *Sasi* exemplifies the management of maritime resources by indigenous populations, highlighting the conservation of species and habitats such as coral reefs (Gregg et al. 2015). Previous research indicates that combining contemporary technology with ancient knowledge can improve marine sustainability and safeguard biodiversity. The paradigm is predicated on the premise that biological, technical, and cultural variables collaboratively sustain marine biodiversity while fulfilling economic requirements. By integrating these elements, conservation initiatives can develop adaptable and contextually pertinent methods for sustainable utilization.

Three principal dimensions commonly addressed in the literature include marine biodiversity (Osei Darko et al. 2021; Simanjuntak et al. 2020; Triandiza et al. 2019), traditional ecosystem management practices (Djunarsjah & Putra 2021; Goode et al. 2021; Sahusilawane et al. 2024), and adaptive conservation frameworks (Hatulesila et al. 2021; Satria et al. 2024; Parker 2021). For instance, Osei Darko et al. (2021) delineate technical methodologies for mangrove classification, whereas Goode et al. (2021) evaluate the benthic repercussions of fisheries employing the *sasi* model.

This literature establishes a strong basis for the significance of combining traditional and contemporary methods in marine conservation. Nonetheless, deficiencies persist in successfully executing adaptive techniques across varied circumstances. Djunarsjah and Putra (2021) and Sahusilawane et al. (2024)

emphasize the importance of zoning and customary restrictions. However, they frequently neglect the adaptive strategies of coastal communities in response to evolving ecological and economic circumstances; notwithstanding the increasing acknowledgment of the significance of integrative methodologies, contemporary literature grapples with the challenge of harmonizing traditional, scientific, and religious perspectives into cohesive frameworks. Most approaches either emphasize technical and biological measurements or promote cultural preservation without integrating both realms.

Limited research has investigated the integration of Islamic ideals, such as *Hifz al-Bi'ah* (environmental conservation), with adaptive ecosystem management. Likewise, although the literature acknowledges the practical significance of *sasi*, it hardly investigates how religious values could augment its legitimacy and flexibility. The absence of such integration results in policy fragmentation and restricts community engagement. The neglect of Islamic environmental ethics in modern marine administration leads to lost potential for greater cultural significance.

## EMPOWERMENT OF COASTAL COMMUNITIES THROUGH A SUSTAINABLE ECONOMY

The connection between environmental protection and economic sustainability is widely seen as essential for the resilience of coastal communities. Traditional systems such as *sasi* illustrate how local groups have historically engaged in sustainable harvesting and resource management by ecological cycles. Jamalie and Wibowo (2023) demonstrate that *sasi* not only safeguards marine habitats but also enhances the local economy via community-based regulations on resource utilization. Hallatu et al. (2020) and Keliat et al. (2021) underscore the necessity of aligning conservation objectives with economic sustainability, especially in resource-dependent areas. Amiruddin et al. (2024) reconstitute *Fiqh al-Bi'ah* through the *Islam Hadhari* framework, amalgamating *Muamalah* and cultural aspects into a holistic ecological management mode. Nevertheless, most frameworks regard economic development as a peripheral advantage rather than an integral conservation element. This viewpoint constrains the capacity for anticipatory economic design rooted in local value systems. A sustainable conservation approach should deliberately incorporate economic empowerment as a primary objective rather than a mere ancillary advantage.

Customary systems provide a framework for grassroots economic governance, promoting community independence in managing natural resources. Aipassa et al. (2023) emphasize that indigenous structures maintain ecological functions and foster local leadership and capacity development. In this environment, *sasi* transcends its role as a conservation tool and evolves into a means for social and economic development. Uspayanti et al. (2021) elucidate the correlation between indigenous wisdom and community welfare when integrated with participatory economic decision-making. Nonetheless, despite their contributions, these studies frequently lack a rigorous examination of how power dynamics, gender, and access influence participation and advantages. The presumption of uniform community interests may conceal disparities in resource access within the community. Consequently, forthcoming models must consider community social differences to guarantee that empowerment is genuinely inclusive and equitable.

Policies designed for marine conservation frequently do not align with the experiences of coastal populations or their cultural-economic frameworks. Local traditions such as *sasi* should be included in maritime policy (Sahusilawane et al. 2024); however, this frequently results in top-down interventions that constrain local autonomy. Hatulesila et al. (2021) critique this inclination, underscoring that effective policy must harmonize legal regulation with local ownership and governance. Nonetheless, these initiatives lack strength in integrating ethical and religious aspects into economic systems. The lack of Islamic economic ethics—namely '*Adl* (justice), *Maslahah* (public benefit), and ta'awun (cooperation)—results in a disjointed policy environment. Policy rhetoric must be adjusted to encompass the comprehensive character of communal values that connect religion, economy, and ecology. This transition is essential for policies to have both legitimacy and sustainability.

The practice of *sasi*, the use of Indigenous knowledge, exemplifies the integration of environmental conservation with the economic prosperity of coastal towns (Jamalie & Wibowo 2023). Prior studies indicate that Indigenous traditions, such as *sasi*, influence economic frameworks to be both sustainable and equitable. Comprehending the social, economic, and ecological components can yield a comprehensive model of sustainable economic practices that benefit conservation and community well-being.

The literature draws out three key themes: conservation and local economy (Hallatu et al. 2020; Keliat et al. 2021; Saptenno & Timisela 2024), community empowerment and indigenous tradition (Aipassa et al. 2023; Sumarsono & Wasa 2019; Uspayanti et al. 2021), and policy-driven local conservation (Djunarsjah & Putra 2021; Hatulesila et al. 2021; Sahusilawane et al. 2024). These studies demonstrate that *sasi* safeguards marine ecosystems and cultivates an economic framework that advantages the local community. Saptenno and Timisela (2024) associate *sasi* with conservation and economic empowerment, whereas Uspayanti et al. (2021) examine the influence of indigenous wisdom on community welfare. This literature highlights the connection between environmental conservation and economic sustainability in coastal towns.

The cultural and ecological aspects of *sasi* are extensively examined, although the potential impact of Islamic economic values is insufficiently investigated. Limited research explicitly examines how ideas such as '*Adl* (justice) and *Maslahah* can inform resource allocation, profit distribution, and sustainable ecosystem services. Hallatu et al. (2020) acknowledge religious values in conservation but do not systematically integrate them into frameworks of economic redistribution or social welfare. This oversight constrains the ethical and normative dimensions of conservation-oriented economic operations. Incorporating Islamic economic concepts may offer a value-oriented alternative to neoliberal development frameworks, prioritizing collective welfare over personal profit. Furthermore, it facilitates harmonizing maritime policies with faith-based accountability, particularly in predominantly Muslim areas. Addressing this disparity necessitates concurrent ecological, economic, and ethical models.

## SASI: INDIGENOUS TRADITION IN MARINE CONSERVATION

Traditional ecological knowledge, as demonstrated by the *sasi* system in Indonesia, offers community-driven methods for governing access to and utilization of maritime resources. The *sasi* system forbids the harvesting of marine resources during a set period to allow those resources to regenerate. Indigenous governance frameworks prioritize equilibrium, reciprocity, and sustainability, which are frequently embedded in cultural rites and prohibitions. Research conducted by Batiran and Salim (2020) demonstrates the role of *sasi* in the regeneration of fisheries and the promotion of local responsibility. The investigation demonstrates that local customs are regulatory mechanisms grounded in social consensus and collective memory—nevertheless, they neglect to link traditional activities to overarching political or spiritual narratives. Indigenous government is frequently considered distinct from established legal or religious frameworks, constraining its apparent flexibility. An integrative approach must analyze the interplay between local institutions, spiritual ethics, and governmental policy regulating marine environments.

Prior studies in the literature have investigated aspects including the influence of indigenous knowledge on ecosystem management (Batiran & Salim 2020; Al Muhdhar et al. 2019), the significance of religious values in conservation (Hallatu et al. 2020; Sumarsono & Wasa 2019), and the involvement of communities in conservation initiatives (Keliat et al. 2021; Putri et al. 2020). These elements illustrate how communities employ their traditions and religious beliefs to protect marine resources. Batiran and Salim (2020) emphasize the impact of local customary institutions on conservation practices, whereas Putri et al. (2020) examine the dynamics of community engagement in *sasi* implementation. This collection of research reveals a distinct pattern of efficient conservation methods rooted in cultural and religious beliefs despite the tendency of these studies to examine them in isolation.

While many studies examine spiritual values or local customs, few address both within a cohesive framework. The literature often segregates religious ethics, ecological science, and socioeconomic analysis instead of integrating them. This division constrains the advancement of conservation models that are contextually relevant and spiritually significant. Furthermore, few studies endeavor to theorize from the lived experiences of coastal communities.

## HIFZ AL-BI'AH: RELIGIOUS VALUES ON ENVIRONMENTAL PRESERVATION

Religious doctrines from diverse traditions frequently underscore the sanctity of nature and the ethical obligation to protect it. In Islam, concepts like *'Adl* (justice), *Maslahah* (public welfare), and *Khalifah* (stewardship) establish an ethical basis for environmental involvement. These ideals promote ecological practices and affirm that the irresponsible exploitation of natural resources constitutes a breach of divine trust (*Amanah*). Research by Hallatu et al. (2020) and Sumarsono and Wasa (2019) illustrates that Islamic beliefs can motivate community-driven marine conservation efforts. Nevertheless, these studies examine spiritual values independently of socioeconomic systems and conventional administration. They lack integration with the structural frameworks that govern resource allocation and economic empowerment. Consequently, a more profound investigation is required to understand how Islamic ethics might function concurrently within coastal existence's ecological and economic aspects.

Islamic economics prioritizes ethical concepts, including equity, justice, and the prohibition of injury (*La Darar wa La Dirar*). These principles provide a framework for assessing the equitable distribution and utilization of marine resources for communal advantage. Researchers such as Uspayanti et al. (2021) have advocated incorporating religious principles into community empowerment initiatives to promote ecological equilibrium and economic sustainability. Nevertheless, limited research examines how Islamic economics might contribute to specific marine conservation measures, especially in contexts influenced by *adat* (custom) and Islamic principles. The dissonance between spiritual principles and resource management practices results in lost possibilities for comprehensive development. By prioritizing *Maslahah* and *'Adl*, Islamic economic thinking can facilitate the development of systems emphasizing equity and long-term sustainability. Eco-*Muamalat* aims to implement these principles through frameworks grounded on actual economic and ecological circumstances.

## MUAMALAT: INTEGRATING RELIGIOUS VALUES AND INDIGENOUS TRADITION IN MARINE CONSERVATION

Although prior research has effectively underscored the importance of indigenous tradition and traditional values in environmental conservation, there remains a deficiency in comprehending how religious beliefs and rituals might be pragmatically incorporated into conservation programs. Despite compelling evidence endorsing the efficacy of locally-based conservation, as articulated by Al Muhdhar et al. (2019), there is an absence of a comprehensive approach that integrates religious beliefs with overarching conservation measures. Most research predominantly emphasizes ecological or socioeconomic advantages without a complete framework to examine their relationship. Consequently, further research is essential to comprehend the integration of Islamic values and ancient customs into a comprehensive conservation paradigm.

Traditional practices such as *sasi* illustrate the interplay between religious beliefs and conventions in governing the ethical utilization of marine resources, hence maintaining sustainability and enhancing communal welfare (Noble et al. 2020). Previous research underscores the necessity of incorporating biological conservation, cultural heritage, and socioeconomic factors into a conservation framework. The conceptual foundation for this literature study is founded on comprehending the integration of spiritual values and local customs within conservation initiatives. This integration is essential for establishing

a comprehensive strategy that can effectively reconcile environmental requirements with community livelihoods.

This research introduces the Eco-*Muamalat* framework to rectify these deficiencies, offering a faith-based, community-integrated paradigm for economic empowerment in maritime environments. Eco-*Muamalat* emphasizes Islamic ethics as fundamental to environmental and economic justice, grounded in the principles of stewardship (*Khalifah*), equity (*'Adl*), and public welfare (*Maslahah*). Grounded theory will formulate this model by examining the lived experiences of coastal communities that already utilize traditional conservation techniques. This theory perceives *sasi* not merely as a conservation mechanism but also as a spiritual-economic institution congruent with Islamic principles of distributive justice. It contests the dichotomy between conservation and development by advocating for a cohesive spiritual ecology and economic resilience model. In doing so, Eco-*Muamalat* fosters theoretical innovation and advances policy formulation that is contextually pertinent and ethically sound. This comprehensive perspective could direct initiatives to benefit coastal people while safeguarding the integrity of marine ecosystems.

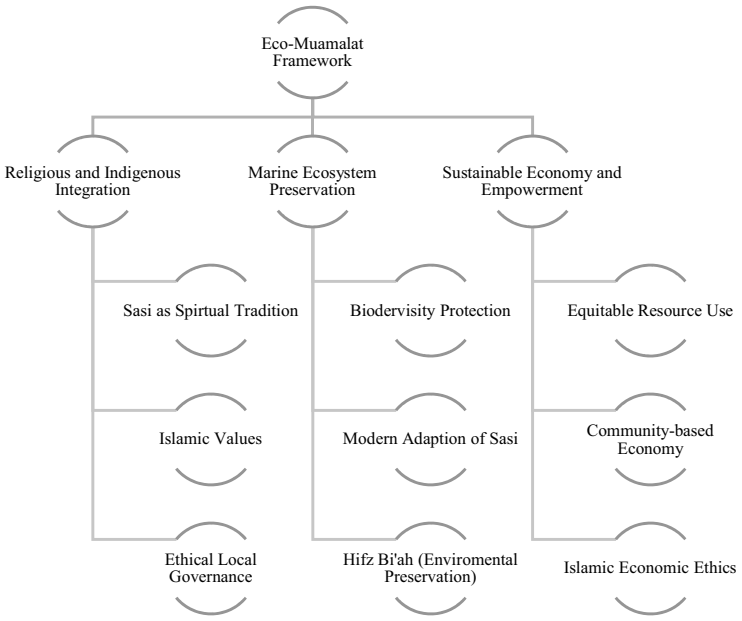


Figure 1. Integrated Spiritual, ecological, and economy for coastal sustainability
Source: Author Compilation from Literature (2024)

## Method

This section delineates the methodology and techniques utilized to investigate the impact of religion and culture on marine conservation within the Iha Indigenous group. This research was carried out in Iha Village (*Negeri* Iha), situated in the Huamual Subdistrict of West Seram Regency, Maluku Province, Eastern Indonesia. The historical designation (*teung*) of Iha is Nurwaitu Amalatu, linked to Kulur Village, collectively referred to as Iha-Kulur or Ama Iha Ulupia. Historically, Iha operated as an Islamic monarchy on Saparua Island, with relics of its religious and cultural institutions still profoundly integrated into contemporary communal life. The inhabitants of Iha maintain a robust blend of traditional administration with Islamic ethical principles, wherein religious morality directs both societal behavior and environmental management. Faith-based values are integrated with conventional marine management approaches, influencing the community's perception of responsibility towards environment. This dynamic amalgamation of belief and culture establishes the contextual foundation for examining how Islamic tenets—such as *Hifz*

*al-Bi'ah* (environmental protection) and *Khalifah* (stewardship)—influence local conservation practices. This work explores the convergence of indigenous and Islamic epistemologies within a cultural-religious context to uphold a comprehensive environmental ethic termed Eco-*Muamalat*.

The study utilized a qualitative ethnographic approach within a constructivist grounded theory framework. Ethnography was selected for its efficacy in documenting lived experiences and contextual meanings, whereas grounded theory facilitated systematic coding and theory development. Data were principally collected from Iha Village people, encompassing traditional leaders (*Raja* Iha), customary custodians (*kewang*), religious scholars (*ustadz* and *khatib*), fishers, women traders (*Papalele*), and young activists involved in local marine management. Twenty-two individuals were interviewed throughout a four-month fieldwork period from January to April 2023. Data were gathered via comprehensive semi-structured interviews, participant observation, and document analysis of local archives, religious texts, and customary regulations. On-site, continuous contextual interpretation was conducted to guarantee that meanings were evaluated within their situational and ritual contexts. The researchers' dual role as both a Muslim scholar and an external observer facilitated extensive access while necessitating continuous reflexive awareness throughout field participation.

The data analysis employed a three-phase coding technique integral to grounded theory. During open coding, transcripts and observational notes were analyzed to detect and categorize emerging phenomena, resulting in first classifications such as spiritual ecology, customary stewardship, and economic moderation. Axial coding involved establishing links among categories, such as the linkage between ritual *sasi* practices and Islamic stewardship principles, while defining causative factors, methods, and consequences. Selective coding subsequently synthesized these categories into a theoretical framework elucidating the convergence of religious ethics, customary law, and economic sustainability within the idea of Eco-*Muamalat*. The approach was iterative, oscillating between field notes and conceptual memos until theoretical saturation was attained. Data were systematically categorized and coded, enabling the presentation of thematic connections and ensuring analytical consistency. The analysis maintained theoretical sensitivity to ensure that categories accurately reflected the lived experiences of participants. The coding procedure consequently yielded an experimentally based theory that encapsulates both the cultural rationale of Iha and the ethical reasoning of Islam.

Trustworthiness was guaranteed with implemented qualitative validation procedures. Member verification was performed with important informants, including the *Raja* Iha and *kewang* leaders, to verify interpretative accuracy. The triangulation of interviews, observations, and documentation strengthened the findings and reduced potential bias. Reflexive journals were kept to document the researcher's positionality and developing interpretations. Comprehensive contextual descriptions were created to improve transferability and enable readers to evaluate the relevance of findings to other Muslim maritime communities. Audit trails recorded analytical conclusions and coding revisions, ensuring reliability and verifiability. Ethical sensitivity was highlighted, particularly concerning gendered access to ritual places and the confidentiality of sacred oral traditions. These approaches guaranteed that the final interpretation adhered to both scholarly precision and cultural authenticity.

Ethical approval was secured from the Research Ethics Committee of Institut Agama Islam Negeri Parepare (B.048/In.39/LP2M.07/6/2023) prior to the initiation of fieldwork. Informed consent was acquired both verbally and in writing from all participants, with comprehensive disclosure of the study's aims and methodologies. Prior to data collection, interactions with traditional councils and religious authorities were conducted to honor cultural hierarchies and secure legitimate access. Participants were guaranteed secrecy, and pseudonyms were employed in reporting to protect their identities. Delicate ceremonies were not documented or photographed without full consent from the community. The researcher upheld cultural reciprocity by disseminating preliminary findings to local authorities and engaging in

environmental education dialogues. The research integrated scholarly inquiry with the ethical demands of the Iha community through these commitments.

## Results and Discussion

### MARINE ECOSYSTEM CONSERVATION

The study illustrates that the preservation of marine ecosystems under the Eco-*Muamalat* framework is accomplished by applying Islamic principles and Indigenous cultural practices. Fourteen out of twenty-two participants (14/22) articulated that sacred coconut leaves bound at sea symbolized the commencement of *sasi*, delineating areas under divine guardianship. Five *Papalele* traders (5/22) associated these markers as a shared community agreement to refrain from harvesting, illustrating the connection between economic restraint and spiritual dedication. Three religious leaders (3/3) associated prayers and Aroha ceremonies with Qur'anic tenets, including *Hifz al-Bi'ah* (environmental stewardship) and *Ihsan* (moral excellence). The observation of the closing rites indicated that the majority of elders (5/6) perceived the timing of *sasi* as aligning with natural marine cycles. The patterns, detected by open and axial coding, indicate that ecological constraint in Iha is not a matter of technological regulation but rather a moral discipline grounded in faith.

The results demonstrate that *sasi* practices embody a comprehensive ecological and spiritual framework. Fifty percent of participants (11/22) indicated that the ritual borders facilitated both biodiversity restoration and social cohesion, underscoring that environmental conservation constitutes a sort of reverence. This aligns with *Hifz al-Bi'ah* and *Ihsan*, where stewardship and virtue intersect in everyday marine existence. Coconut leaves, ritual prayers, and seasonal bans constitute a cohesive moral ecosystem, rendering conservation an act of devotion. It was observed that these rites function as environmental education for younger generations, integrating sustainability into religious instruction. Axial coding connected topics such as 'sacred markers', 'ritual timing,' and 'eco-friendly restraint' to the overarching category of 'spiritual preservation.' Consequently, *sasi* emerges as both a local ecological technology and a religion of moderation, affirming the explanatory power of the Eco-*Muamalat* paradigm.

The study reveals that conservation practices in the Iha community are not merely ecological restrictions but profoundly religious and symbolic systems. This aligns with the principles of *Hifz al-Bi'ah* (environmental preservation) and *Ihsan* (spiritual excellence), as seen in the symbolic use of coconut leaves and the timing of rituals. These findings on these practices mirror Jusnaidi and Marsuki's (2015) findings on religion-based conservation but go further by detailing how rituals function as ecological governance mechanisms.

Incorporating religious principles into marine conservation via Eco-*Muamalat* presents a distinctive, spiritually grounded method of environmental management. This study illustrates how *sasi*, a regional conservation practice, integrates Islamic concepts such as *Hifz al-Bi'ah* (environmental protection) and *Ihsan* (voluntary benevolence) with cultural traditions to foster ecosystem preservation (Jusnaidi & Marsuki 2015). The results indicate that sacred symbols, ritual prayers, and ecological boundaries constitute an interrelated system corresponding to religious duties and communal ethics. Using coconut leaves to delineate marine limits represents a religious dedication to safeguarding these regions. Rituals such as Aroha, conducted before the opening and shutting of *sasi*, seek spiritual blessings for conservation initiatives—this holistic approach positions conservation as both an ecological endeavor and a spiritual obligation.

The ideals of *Hifz al-Bi'ah* and *Ihsan* are intrinsically integrated into the conservation practices of the Iha community, as demonstrated in the coding process. The principles were derived from the data via open coding, resulting in important themes such as 'sacred markers,' 'conservation timing,' and 'eco-friendly practices.' Axial coding connected these themes to overarching categories such as 'spiritual preservation'

Table 1. Marine Conservation

| Traditional Indigenous Practice | Islamic Principle | Evidence (Interview / Observation) | Interpretation (Grounded Theory Code) |
|---|---|---|---|
| Sacred coconut leaves (*janur muda*) tied at sea mark the start of *sasi* and define sacred zones of protection. | *Hifz al-Bi'ah* (Environmental preservation) | Observation and 14/22 participants, mainly elders and *Papalele*, referenced these as signs of divine guardianship. | Sacred markers—faith-based boundary setting for ecosystem protection. |
| Community vows and abstention from harvesting during the *sasi* period. | *Ihsan* (Moral excellence; restraint beyond obligation) | 5/22 participants (*Papalele* traders) related economic abstention to spiritual discipline. | Ethical restraint—voluntary limitation of exploitation as moral virtue. |
| *Aroha* rituals (prayers and offerings) before opening and closing *sasi* seasons. | *Hifz al-Bi'ah* | 3/3 religious leaders emphasized this as collective supplication for marine blessing. | Spiritual preservation—ritualized protection linking ecology and piety. |
| Seasonal timing of *sasi* aligned with calm seas and fish regeneration. | *Ihsan* | 5/6 elders described timing as ecological respect and divine synchronization. | Natural rhythm—harmonizing human activity with creation cycles. |
| Ban on destructive tools (bombs, poison, arrows). | *Hifz al-Bi'ah* | 6/22 participants, including fishers and conservationists, cited prohibition for moral and ecological reasons. | Eco-ethics enforcement—prohibiting harm to sustain balance. |

Source: Field interviews and observations, January–April 2023, Iha Village, West Seram, Maluku.

and 'community-led stewardship,' which pertain to *Hifz al-Bi'ah* and *Ihsan*. The yearly execution of *sasi* demonstrates a profound comprehension of marine cycles, and prayers embody the community's appreciation and reverence for nature. This coding emphasizes that conservation practices are not discrete actions but integral to a spiritual perspective that shapes conduct. These findings correspond with Putri et al.'s (2020) research findings, which indicate that conservation initiatives grounded in local religious values garner increased community support and efficacy. The interrelation of ecological acts and spiritual values establishes a comprehensive foundation for marine conservation.

The findings strongly support the expanding literature that emphasizes the significance of spirituality and culture in conservation initiatives (Irawan et al. 2021). Prior studies underscore that conservation is a technical endeavor and a spiritual obligation informed by religious doctrines. A study by Al Muhdhar et al. (2019) on *Fiqh*-Ecology indicates that Islamic environmental principles offer a moral basis for sustainability. This current study illustrates how Islamic teachings extend beyond theoretical frameworks by linking *sasi* practices to ideas such as *Hifz al-Bi'ah* and *Ihsan*, thereby impacting tangible environmental acts. This

merger of faith and conservation confronts the traditional dichotomy between religion and ecological science, illustrating a route where religious convictions underpin practical conservation efforts.

The mix of religious and ecological practices distinguishes Eco-*Muamalat* from other conservation methods. This approach's success lies in its cultural relevance, as conservation initiatives that connect with local ideas are more likely to be accepted and practiced by the community. By conceptualizing environmental acts as a spiritual obligation, this paradigm enhances the ethical impetus for preservation, leading to a more sustainable and comprehensive strategy for marine ecosystem conservation.

In the particular context of Iha, the practice of *sasi* serves as both an environmental regulator and a spiritual dedication. Community leaders and religious figures are essential in promoting conservation through rituals and ecological symbols, transforming preservation into a community spiritual endeavor (Bakar 2012). The seasonal timing of *sasi*, informed by natural marine cycles, reflects profound ecological understanding and reverence for the environment. The communal prayers conducted before *sasi* times emphasize the conviction that effective conservation is a heavenly favor. This demonstrates that conservation in Iha is fundamentally spiritual, fostering community cohesiveness and accountability for marine preservation.

These findings have substantial ramifications for formulating culturally attuned conservation frameworks. This research argues that conservation is both an ecological activity and a religious obligation, supporting the integration of faith-based approaches in sustainability initiatives. This integration fosters conservation as a moral and spiritual endeavor, augmenting community engagement and enduring dedication. Eco-*Muamalat* can provide a paradigm for other communities aspiring to adopt sustainable environmental practices grounded in their specific religious and cultural frameworks.

Theoretically, this blurs the boundary between religion and ecological management, establishing conservation not as a regulatory imposition but as a sacred responsibility. This supports recent calls for integrating religious environmentalism into mainstream ecological theory (Bagir 2015; Irawan, 2022, 2017) (Irawan, 2022, 2017). However, compared to secular community-based approaches (Berkes, 2004), Eco-*Muamalat* introduces a normative-spiritual dimension that warrants new institutional recognition. Challenges include the risk of ritual desacralization as external actors (e.g., NGOs or government) intervene. Furthermore, rapid climate change may disrupt traditional temporal rhythms used to time *sasi*, requiring adaptive mechanisms. Policymakers must be cautious not to instrumentalize these rituals without understanding their ontological and spiritual significance.

## SUSTAINABLE USE OF MARINE RESOURCES

This study demonstrates that sustainable governance of marine resources in Iha is governed by local customary law and Islamic stewardship. Eight participants (8/22)—mainly council members and religious leaders—articulated that the *Saniri Negeri*[1], the Customary Council, functions as a guardian organization that enforces *sasi* norms based on the notion of *Khalifah* (stewardship). Five fishermen (5/22) indicated that auction victors of *sasi* are required to adhere to sustainability standards for a duration of six to twelve months, reconciling profit with conservation. Four *Papalele* traders (4/22) confirmed that environmentally sustainable fishing equipment, including hand lines and bamboo traps, was promoted in accordance with the principle of *La Darar wa La Dirar* (do no harm). Three youth activists (3/4) highlighted that sustainability lectures are now included into school sermons and mosque discussions, enhancing intergenerational

1 Regional Regulation of West Seram Regency No. 14 of 2019 designates Saniri Negeri as the local nomenclature for the Village Consultative Body (Badan Permusyawaratan Desa, BPD) in the area. This institution operates as a governing entity that preserves customary customs and embodies a type of local democracy in the management of the negeri (village). The members are community representatives chosen based on genealogical and territorial criteria, demonstrating a balance between familial connections and geographic representation.

awareness. Two elders (2/6) indicated that punishments for destructive fishing practices, such as bombing or poisoning, function as moral deterrents based on divine accountability. These facts collectively affirm that Islamic ethics internalize adherence, transitioning regulation from external enforcement to interior conscience.

Axial coding connected 'responsible fishing,' 'resource auctioning,' and 'environmental fines' to overarching concepts of 'stewardship' and 'ethical resource utilization.' Over fifty percent of participants (12 out of 22) emphasized that the timing of *sasi* was synchronized with periods of tranquil seas, demonstrating instinctive ecological awareness. This synchronization reflects the Quranic imperative to maintain natural equilibrium, harmonizing adaptive co-management with spiritual cadence. The results align with the assertions of Bagir (2015), who claim that moral motivation bolsters institutional resilience. The imposition of fines by the *Saniri Negeri* exemplifies Ostrom's (2015) principle of local governance, grounded in theological legitimacy. Six individuals (6/22) perceived these sanctions not as punitive measures but as restorative justice aimed at maintaining social stability.

The research emphasizes the significance of traditional leaders and religious authorities in executing the notion of *Khalifah* by enforcing *sasi* regulations. The customary council (*Saniri Negeri*) serves as a custodian of conservation, overseeing the appropriate implementation of *sasi* regulations. The *sasi* auction victor is responsible for judiciously managing maritime resources and reconciling commercial utilization with environmental preservation throughout the designated auction timeframe. The utilization of eco-friendly fishing equipment and the ban on detrimental techniques correspond with the philosophy of *La Darar wa La Dirar*, which dissuades damaging practices. The synchronization of *sasi* with natural marine circumstances demonstrates a deep comprehension of ecological and social rhythms. Monetary sanctions for infractions serve as a potent deterrent, promoting ethical fishing techniques and averting exploitation. Regular meetings addressing conservation results and establishing future *sasi* boundaries underscore enduring accountability for protected resources.

The incorporation of *Khalifah* and *La Darar wa La Dirar* into resource management is seen in auction winners' obligation to adhere to regulations that emphasize ecological equilibrium. These ideas, albeit based on Islamic law, effectively intersect with 'adaptive co-management' in environmental science while offering a more robust ethical framework anchored in divine accountability. Unlike secular methods, Eco-*Muamalat* transitions motivation from external enforcement to internal spiritual duty. This corresponds with the research of Bagir (2015), who posits that religious ethics enhance dedication to stewardship beyond mere legal adherence. Incorporating customary councils as regulatory entities exemplifies the paradigm of institutional variety, and divine commands further substantiate this model.

The findings show that the sustainable utilization of marine resources is not solely an economic endeavor but a spiritual duty influenced by local traditions and Islamic principles. The tenets of *Khalifah* (stewardship) and *La Darar wa La Dirar* (do no harm) govern the judicious and ethical utilization of marine resources, maintaining equilibrium between human requirements and environmental sustainability (Bagir 2015). This is demonstrated by sustainable fishing, regulated resource access, and sanctions for detrimental actions. The *sasi* auction mechanism allocates resource access rights while enforcing obligations for sustainable utilization. These practices aim to preserve marine biodiversity and encourage responsible resource utilization according to Islamic principles.

The coding process distinctly revealed the use of *Khalifah* and *La Darar wa La Dirar* in sustainable resource management. Concepts such as 'responsible fishing', 'resource auctioning', and 'environmental fines' have evolved as essential components of sustainable operations. Axial coding linked these codes to overarching themes of 'stewardship' and 'ethical resource use', highlighting the alignment of leadership and community legislation with Islamic principles of environmental responsibility. The governance of fishing techniques and schedules was classified under *Khalifah*, emphasizing the leadership's responsibility

Table 2. Sustainability

| Traditional Indigenous Practice | Islamic Principle | Evidence (Interview / Observation) | Interpretation (Grounded Theory Code) |
|---|---|---|---|
| *Saniri Negeri* (customary council) enforces *sasi* and regulates access. | *Khalifah* (Stewardship and responsibility) | 8/22 participants, mainly elders and religious leaders, highlighted its role as moral authority. | Community stewardship—collective leadership as sacred duty. |
| Resource auctioning (*lelang sasi*) grants temporary harvesting rights with moral obligations. | *Khalifah* | 5/22 fishers described obligation to manage resources prudently during tenure. | Accountable management—temporary ownership under divine trust. |
| Eco-friendly tools (hand lines, bamboo traps) replace harmful gear. | *La Darar wa La Dirar* (Do no harm) | Observation and 4/22 *Papalele* and fishers noted compliance with non-destructive methods. | Harm avoidance—ethical technology for sustainable extraction. |
| Seasonal conservation aligned with natural cycles. | *Khalifah* | 12/22 respondents referred to timing with calm seas for stock recovery. | Ecological synchronization—adaptive stewardship respecting natural balance. |
| Penalties for destructive acts (bombing, poisoning). | *La Darar wa La Dirar* | 2/6 elders and 6/22 participants cited fines as moral deterrents. | Restorative sanction—moral and ecological correction of harm. |
| Periodic council meetings discussing results and setting new *sasi* zones. | *Khalifah* | 6/22 participants observed routine deliberations on sustainability outcomes. | Adaptive governance—iterative communal reflection ensuring continuity. |

Source: Field interviews and observations, January–April 2023, Iha Village, West Seram, Maluku

to maintain equitable and sustainable resource utilization. This corresponds with Bagir's (2015) research, which posits that Islamic stewardship promotes ecological conservation and communal well-being. The equilibrium between economic opportunity and environmental preservation upholds the *La Darar wa La Dirar* principle, guaranteeing that no detriment is inflicted upon nature or society.

The findings enhance the literature on sustainable resource management by providing a tangible illustration of how Islamic teachings influence and shape local conservation practices. Al Muhdhar et al. (2019) elucidate the function of religious leaders in implementing environmental legislation, whereas Uspayanti et al. (2021) demonstrate that local resource governance is more efficacious when founded on communal and spiritual principles. The findings enhance this understanding by demonstrating that the ideals of *Khalifah* and *La Darar wa La Dirar* are not merely theoretical concepts but are actively

implemented through frameworks such as the *sasi* auction system. The relationship between Islamic teachings and practical resource management enhances the discussion on how faith-based concepts might facilitate sustainable development.

This research provides a distinctive viewpoint on using Islamic principles in local conservation initiatives, surpassing prior studies that examine environmental or economic factors in isolation. The study emphasizes the direct application of *Khalifah* and *La Darar wa La Dirar*, illustrating a comprehensive approach to resource management that is ethical and sustainable. The innovation integrates religious principles into community-driven conservation, establishing a framework harmonizing ecological well-being with economic requirements. This method offers a sustainable and fair framework for managing natural resources.

In the Iha community, sustainable resource utilization is governed by equity, accountability, and ecological reverence principles. Using eco-friendly fishing equipment demonstrates compliance with *La Darar wa La Dirar*, guaranteeing that marine life is not unnecessarily harmed. Community leaders manage the *sasi* auction system, serving as custodians of marine resources by *Khalifah*. The periodic control of fishing activity reflects an understanding of environmental cycles and a dedication to conserving marine biodiversity. These activities demonstrate a synergistic relationship between economic requirements and environmental ethics, guaranteeing that sustainability is attained through both social and spiritual responsibilities.

The findings advocate for formulating sustainable resource management policies that are culturally attuned and rooted in religious tenets. Incorporating Islamic principles and indigenous traditions within the Eco-*Muamalat* framework illustrates that environmental protection and economic endeavors can be harmonized to foster sustainability and equity. Policymakers and conservationists can modify these practices to create sustainable models that are inclusive, ethical, and culturally pertinent, promoting responsible resource utilization and enduring environmental well-being.

Theoretical implications underscore how Islamic principles broaden socio-ecological systems (SES) discourse by incorporating theological aspects of harm and trust. Nevertheless, contemporary factors like commercial fishing and tourism impede the execution of *La Darar wa La Dirar* as local authorities grapple with preserving authority over external exploiters. Policy frameworks must consequently validate local religious-customary governance within a legal context.

## SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC JUSTICE FOR COASTAL COMMUNITIES

The research clarifies the achievement of social and economic justice in coastal communities through the Eco-*Muamalat* framework, which incorporates *'Adl* (justice), *Maslahah* (public welfare), and *Shura* (collective participation). Ten participants (10/22) indicated that sanctions for *sasi* infractions should be commensurate with the quantity of fish harvested, illustrating principles of distributive justice. Four female traders (4/22) articulated how open auctions improved household income and fostered community trust, exemplifying *Maslahah*. Seven respondents (7/22) mentioned communal decision-making in *Shura* meetings, when religious and customary elders discuss conservation policy. Five elders (5/6) confirmed that auction proceeds finance mosques and public amenities, facilitating welfare transfer. This triangulated evidence demonstrates that economic activity and religious ethics are institutionally interconnected. The open coding generated the themes 'fair fines', 'transparent auctions', and 'collective meetings', which axial coding synthesized into 'justice', 'public welfare', and 'collective governance.' These interconnected protocols demonstrate that *sasi* operates concurrently as an economic framework and a moral agreement.

The findings indicate that justice and wellbeing are not just abstractions but are social covenants upheld by moral authority. Fifty percent of respondents (11/22) connected *'Adl* to the prevention of exploitation, and eight respondents (8/22) correlated *Maslahah* with community development initiatives, including the renovation of schools and mosques. Three religious leaders (3/3) emphasized that community assemblies under *Shura* exemplify the prophetic concept of participatory governance. Sanctions and auctions are

integrated into an ethical economy where transparency and virtue intersect. This is consistent with the assertions of Jamalie and Wibowo (2023) and Putri et al. (2020), who contend that justice-oriented Islamic economics promotes equitable resource governance. Two youth activists (2/4) voiced apprehension regarding the persistence of these ideals in subsequent generations, indicating the necessity for adaptive socialization. The incorporation of *'Adl*, *Maslahah*, and *Shura* into everyday economic activities substantiates Eco-*Muamalat* as a moral and pragmatic framework for coastal fairness.

Table 3. Social Welfare

| Traditional Indigenous Practice | Islamic Principle | Evidence (Interview / Observation) | Interpretation (Grounded Theory Code) |
|---|---|---|---|
| Fines for *sasi* violations based on fish volume. | *'Adl* (Justice) | 10/22 participants, including *sasi* enforcers, affirmed fairness of proportional penalties. | Distributive justice—punishment matched to infraction magnitude. |
| Transparent *sasi* auctions with open participation. | *Maslahah* (Public welfare) | 4/4 women traders stated transparency increased trust and equity. | Inclusive economy—economic openness as communal benefit. |
| Communal meetings were elders and imams deliberate resource decisions. | *Shura* (Collective consultation) | 7/22 respondents and 3/3 religious leaders emphasized participatory governance. | Collective decision-making—shared authority reflecting prophetic model. |
| Allocation of auction revenues for mosques and infrastructure. | *Maslahah* | 5/6 elders and 8/22 respondents mentioned welfare reinvestment. | Welfare redistribution—economic surplus turned into public good. |
| Social sanctions for severe violations (public reprimand or exclusion). | *'Adl* | 6/22 participants acknowledged these as deterrents ensuring fairness. | Moral deterrence—maintaining order through ethical accountability. |
| Youth engagement in community deliberations and learning. | *Shura* | Observation and 2/4 youth activists mentioned involvement in sustainability education. | Intergenerational continuity—transmission of justice ethics through dialogue. |

Source: Field interviews and observations, January–April 2023, Iha Village, West Seram, Maluku

The findings demonstrate a robust correlation between social justice principles and Islamic economics. *'Adl* directs the equity of sanctions, *Maslahah* guarantees communal advantage, and *Shura* facilitates participatory governance. Unlike secular welfare economics, this paradigm incorporates moral limitations into market mechanisms—fines, auctions, and revenue redistribution are theologically justified.

The research indicates that social and economic justice within the coastal Iha community is strictly governed by '*Adl*, *Maslahah*, and *Shura* principles. *Adl* is enforced via a system of fines and punishments commensurate with violations of *sasi* regulations. Fines are determined by the quantity of marine items harvested unlawfully, with the revenue allocated to the rightful auction victor. Sanctions such as whipping or expulsion for grave violations create an efficient and equitable deterrent mechanism. The transparency of the *sasi* auction process guarantees equitable access to marine resources for all community members, fostering communal economic advantages (*Maslahah*). The proceeds from these auctions are designated to fund public welfare initiatives, such as mosque upkeep and other public infrastructure projects. Community engagement in decision-making via traditional assemblies and the presence of religious leaders exemplify the principle of *Shura*, ensuring that every community member has a say in managing their resources. The allocation of money from *sasi* is administered equitably, promoting public welfare and individual earnings, thus achieving economic fairness in resource distribution. Ultimately, the participation of customary and religious leaders in community dialogues guarantees that conservation measures are congruent with societal requirements and religious principles. This aligns with the research of Jamalie and Wibowo (2023), who advocate for justice-oriented Islamic economics and build upon the research of Putri et al. (2020) on fair resource governance and Islamic principles in everyday decision-making.

This research presents several limitations. Initially, the highly context-dependent nature of sasi limits the applicability of its findings to other socio-cultural and ecological settings. Although grounded theory facilitated the inductive discovery of local patterns, it may have failed to recognize more profound power imbalances, including elite influence and gender-based exclusion. The commercialization of sasi by external entities also prompts concerns regarding the potential distortion of its ethical and communal significance. Furthermore, sectarian interpretations of *Adl* and *Maslahah* pose the risk of fostering divisions that necessitate thorough examination. Generational changes in the perception of tradition further confound the preservation of sasi practices. These limitations necessitate a more reflective methodology and an adaptable interpretation of Islamic ethics in future research.

The interplay between social and economic justice in coastal communities is closely associated with religious tenets and traditional government, establishing a fair and equitable system for resource allocation. The tenets of *Adl* (justice), *Maslahah* (public welfare), and *Shura* (collective involvement) provide equitable and transparent access to maritime resources for all community members. *Sasi* practices encompass mechanisms including penalties for infractions, profit distribution from resource auctions, and communal decision-making, all of which jointly enhance social and economic prosperity. This equitable methodology underscores the direct application of Islamic principles to uphold balance and fairness in the community's economic and social spheres.

The coding procedure elucidated the operationalization of *Adl*, *Maslahah*, and *Shura* in advancing social and economic justice within the community. Open coding revealed codes such as 'fair fines', 'transparent auctions', and 'collective decision-making', reflecting the community's dedication to egalitarian governance. Axial coding linked these codes to overarching themes of 'justice',', 'public welfare', and 'collective governance', aligning with the ideals of *Adl*, *Maslahah*, and *Shura*. Imposing fines according to the gravity of infractions demonstrates a dedication to justice, and allocating auction revenues for public benefit exemplifies the principle of *Maslahah*. Community gatherings in resource management exemplify *Shura* by acknowledging all voices (Gayatri 2017; Tucker 1997; Alotaibi 2021; Wibowo et al. 2021). This analysis corresponds with the research of Putri et al. (2020), which underscores the significance of equity and communal well-being in resource governance based on Islamic principles.

The findings enhance the current literature on Islamic economics and social justice by illustrating how principles such as *Adl*, *Maslahah*, and *Shura* are implemented in practical, community-oriented policies. Previous research by Irawan et al. (2021) examined the influence of Islamic principles on fostering equitable economic systems, whilst research by Saptenno and Timisela (2024) highlighted the significance

of transparent government in conservation efforts. The results of this study exemplify the application of these concepts, demonstrating how *sasi* practices efficiently reinforce Islamic doctrines of justice and public welfare. This establishes a framework for comprehending how religious principles might promote societal cohesiveness and equitable economic practices in resource management.

This research has provided a clear illustration of the direct impact of Islamic beliefs on the social and economic dynamics of coastal communities. This research elucidates the mechanisms by which principles such as *'Adl*, *Maslahah*, and *Shura* are realistically implemented to guarantee equitable resource allocation and communal welfare, in contrast to prior studies that examine similar notions theoretically. The study's value is in its illustration of how these principles manifest in daily actions, including transparent auctions and structured sanctions, offering a comprehensive model for just and equitable economic management.

In the Iha community, social and economic fairness is a policy objective and a deeply ingrained practice rooted in religious and Indigenous cultural values. The community's imposition of fines and transparent *sasi* auctions guarantees the maintenance of justice (*'Adl*), thwarting any individual or organization from unjustly exploiting marine resources. The allocation of funds for communal welfare, encompassing the upkeep of religious institutions and public initiatives, exemplifies the community's commitment to *Maslahah*. Furthermore, implementing *Shura*, or collective decision-making, guarantees that each community member participates in the stewardship and utilization of marine resources. This local application highlights the attainment of social justice through religious tenets and civic unity.

The data show that women (locally known as *mamak-mamak Papalele* and *jibu-jibu*) play a pivotal role in the coastal economy. They predominantly control fish distribution in marketplaces, auctions, and through door-to-door sales. This role positions women as the economic foundation, guaranteeing equitable distribution of maritime resources throughout households. Their contribution demonstrates that local authority is not exclusively held by male leaders but greatly relies on women's agency. The Eco-*Muamalat* concept embodies spiritual and ecological principles alongside gendered economic behaviors. These practices exemplify distributive justice in everyday life, despite their informal nature. The findings from this study contest the prevalent notion that customary governance is solely patriarchal.

Without intervention, Eco-*Muamalat* may perpetuate inequality while ostensibly advocating for justice and wellbeing. Consequently, gender-sensitive governance is crucial for harmonizing *'Adl* and *Maslahah* with inclusive participation.

The results suggest that the Eco-*Muamalat* framework may be a practical paradigm for advancing social and economic fairness in resource management. This paradigm guarantees that resource governance is equitable, transparent, and community-oriented by harmonizing Islamic principles with local practices. Policymakers and leaders in other coastal regions might implement analogous models prioritizing equitable distribution, collective welfare, and participatory governance, promoting sustainable economic growth and social cohesion. This paradigm harmonizes with religious doctrines and practical governance requirements, providing a holistic strategy for managing natural resources for the common benefit.

Currently, maritime administration in Iha is peaceful, showing no signs of dissent. The Raja elucidated that the island's seclusion had protected the monarchy from outsider interference. Customary verdicts are authoritative and universally acknowledged by all families without dispute. Each clan adopts distinct roles, including religious leaders (*pikahulan*) and ritual enforcers, to maintain social cohesion and stability. This allocation of responsibilities strengthens the authority and mitigates conflicts around marine resources. Consequently, Eco-*Muamalat* operates efficiently within the parameters of local autonomy and cohesion. Nonetheless, this strength indicates that its resilience to external challenges remains untested.

Table 4. Summary Eco-*Muamalat* Framework

| Domain | Islamic Principle | Traditional Indigenous Practice | Key Finding (Empirical Evidence) | Interpretation (Grounded Theory Category) | Policy Implication |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Conservation** | *Hifz al-Bi'ah*, *Ihsan* | *Sasi* rituals, sacred markers, seasonal prohibitions | 14/22 participants linked ritual markers and prayers to environmental protection; timing harmonized with sea cycles. | Spiritual preservation — ecological regulation through sacred boundaries and moral restraint. | Faith-based conservation policies should legitimize community rituals and respect sacred ecological timing. |
| **Sustainability** | *Khalifah*, *La Darar wa La Dirar* | *Saniri Negeri* council governance, eco-friendly fishing tools, resource auctions | 8/22 participants cited stewardship duties; 4/22 noted non-harmful tools; penalties reinforce moral compliance. | Ethical stewardship — divine accountability institutionalized in local governance. | Recognize customary councils as co-management bodies integrating Islamic ethics with adaptive conservation law. |
| **Socio-Economic Justice** | *'Adl*, *Maslahah*, *Shura* | Revenue sharing, fines, public welfare redistribution, collective meetings | 10/22 described proportional fines; 7/22 discussed communal decision-making; 4/4 women traders highlighted transparency. | Equitable governance — justice and welfare achieved through participatory and transparent management. | Resource revenues should support shared welfare structures and participatory decision-making at village level. |
| **Integration / Synthesis** | – | Eco-*Muamalat* as synthesis of faith, ecology, and economy | Combined evidence from 22 participants reveals interdependence of moral, spiritual, and ecological dimensions. | Holistic equilibrium — fusion of indigenous knowledge and Islamic morality forming a sustainability ethic. | Adopt Eco-*Muamalat* as a culturally attuned framework for marine policy in Muslim coastal regions. |

Source: Author's synthesis from field interviews, observations, and document analysis (Iha Village, West Seram, Maluku, 2024).

## Conclusion

This study suggests that the Eco-*Muamalat* framework offers a holistic and cohesive paradigm for marine conservation, sustainable resource utilization, and socioeconomic equity in coastal communities. By anchoring practices such as *sasi* in Islamic tenets like *Hifz al-Bi'ah* (environmental preservation), *Khalifah* (stewardship), *La Darar wa La Dirar* (do no harm), *'Adl* (justice), and *Maslahah* (public welfare), the community adeptly oversees marine ecosystems while guaranteeing equitable economic advantages and communal well-being. These ideals are ingrained in local customs, rituals, and practical resource management, demonstrating how faith and culture may inform sustainable environmental practices. The research indicates that Eco-*Muamalat* is not merely a theoretical construct but a practical paradigm that effectively amalgamates religious principles, environmental initiatives, and economic equity.

This research's strength is its thorough examination of the practical application of religious ideas in marine resource control, providing a distinctive viewpoint that connects faith, culture, and sustainable development. In contrast to traditional conservation strategies that prioritize ecological or economic aspects, Eco-*Muamalat* adopts a comprehensive approach that highlights moral, spiritual, and social qualities. This study's originality is in demonstrating the implementation of Islamic teachings and local customs through targeted conservation measures, economic allocation, and community-driven governance, thereby assuring sustainable resource utilization and equitable benefit distribution. This comprehensive strategy enhances environmental stewardship and promotes social justice and communal well-being.

Theoretically, the Eco-*Muamalat* framework contributes to developing religion-based environmental governance models by bridging Islamic ethics with customary law. It expands the literature on Islamic environmentalism and socioeconomic justice by demonstrating how religious doctrines are embedded in local practice and how they govern ecological behavior. This integrative approach challenges conventional environmental management paradigms by prioritizing community-led, ethically charged governance mechanisms. Practically, the findings offer actionable insights for policymakers and conservation practitioners to design culturally embedded programs that harness the normative force of religion and tradition. Eco-*Muamalat* illustrates that when communities are empowered through values they trust, conservation and economic management become more resilient and legitimate.

Future research should explore the adaptability of the Eco-*Muamalat* model across diverse ecological and cultural settings, including comparisons with similar faith-based conservation practices in Southeast Asia or the broader Muslim world. Longitudinal studies are needed to assess the long-term sustainability of Eco-*Muamalat*, especially in contexts facing ecological disruption or socioeconomic shifts. In addition, researchers should further examine the interaction between state policies and local faith-based practices to better understand potential conflicts or synergies. Expanding interdisciplinary methodologies—such as by combining grounded theory with participatory action research—may also deepen insights into how religious-ecological values evolve and influence conservation behavior over time.

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