

Strengthening Economic Education Quality as a Pathway to Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals in Indonesia

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Abstract

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This study aims to support the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly the fourth goal on quality education, by improving the quality of Economics Education in Indonesia, which is currently considered suboptimal. This study uses a library research method with a qualitative descriptive approach. Data were obtained through a systematic review of various scientific sources, including national and international journals, scientific articles, and relevant documents related to Economics Education and the SDGs. The results of the study indicate that the quality of Economics Education in Indonesia still faces various structural and pedagogical challenges. The main problems include the uneven quality of Economics Education across regions, low professionalism and capacity of educators, limited allocation of learning time, and a learning approach that tends to be narrow and cognitively oriented with monotonous methods. These conditions have an impact on the low quality of the learning process and student learning outcomes in Economics subjects. To address these problems, this study recommends several strategies, including increasing public trust in Economics Education, developing a curriculum relevant to community needs and global developments, providing adequate educational facilities and infrastructure, utilizing technology in the learning process, and improving teacher competency in the use of technology and digital learning resources, including digital libraries. The implementation of this strategy is expected to improve the quality of Economic Education in Indonesia and contribute significantly to the achievement of the SDGs in the field of education, namely the provision of quality, equitable, and sustainable education for the entire community.

Kata Kunci:

Pendidikan Ekonomi; Kualitas
Pendidikan; Tujuan
Pembangunan Berkelanjutan
(SDGs); Pendidikan
Berkelanjutan; Kebijakan
Pendidikan

Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mendukung pencapaian Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), khususnya tujuan keempat tentang pendidikan berkualitas, melalui peningkatan mutu Pendidikan Ekonomi di Indonesia yang hingga saat ini dinilai belum optimal. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode penelitian kepustakaan (library research) dengan pendekatan deskriptif kualitatif. Data diperoleh melalui kajian sistematis terhadap berbagai sumber ilmiah, meliputi jurnal nasional dan internasional, artikel ilmiah, serta dokumen relevan yang berkaitan dengan Pendidikan Ekonomi dan SDGs. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa mutu Pendidikan Ekonomi di Indonesia masih menghadapi berbagai tantangan struktural dan pedagogis. Permasalahan utama meliputi ketidakmerataan kualitas Pendidikan Ekonomi antarwilayah, rendahnya profesionalisme dan

kapasitas pendidik, keterbatasan alokasi waktu pembelajaran, serta pendekatan pembelajaran yang cenderung sempit dan berorientasi kognitif dengan metode yang monoton. Kondisi tersebut berdampak pada rendahnya kualitas proses pembelajaran dan capaian hasil belajar peserta didik pada mata pelajaran Ekonomi. Untuk mengatasi permasalahan tersebut, penelitian ini merekomendasikan beberapa strategi, antara lain peningkatan kepercayaan masyarakat terhadap Pendidikan Ekonomi, pengembangan kurikulum yang relevan dengan kebutuhan masyarakat dan perkembangan global, penyediaan sarana dan prasarana pendidikan yang memadai, pemanfaatan teknologi dalam proses pembelajaran, serta peningkatan kompetensi guru dalam penggunaan teknologi dan sumber belajar digital, termasuk perpustakaan digital. Implementasi strategi tersebut diharapkan dapat meningkatkan mutu Pendidikan Ekonomi di Indonesia dan berkontribusi secara signifikan terhadap pencapaian tujuan SDGs di bidang pendidikan, yaitu penyediaan pendidikan yang berkualitas, berkeadilan, dan berkelanjutan bagi seluruh masyarakat.

INTRODUCTION

Education is the main foundation in human development and plays a strategic role in improving the quality of human resources in a sustainable manner (Aprilianto et al., 2025; Kartiko et al., 2024). (Aulia et al., 2025) emphasizes that quality education is key to building an inclusive, just, and globally competitive society. In Indonesia, education is normatively regulated by Law of the Republic of Indonesia Number 20 of 2003 concerning the National Education System, which emphasizes the holistic development of students' potential (Masfufah & Salito, 2025). However, various international reports show that developing countries, including Indonesia, still face serious challenges in realizing quality and equitable education (Marleni et al., 2026; Satria et al., 2025). One of the areas of study affected is Economic Education, which plays a strategic role in shaping students' economic literacy, critical thinking skills, and socioeconomic awareness (Walstad et al., 2013), Effective economics education contributes significantly to an individual's ability to make rational and responsible economic decisions. However, the phenomenon in Indonesia shows that the quality of economics education remains suboptimal, marked by low learning outcomes, disparities between regions, and limited pedagogical innovation. This condition becomes even more crucial in the context of the global commitment to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly Goal 4, which emphasizes quality education and lifelong learning (Elfert, 2019; Kurnia et al., 2023; Said & Abdallah, 2024).

Previous research shows that education is not only oriented towards the transfer of knowledge, but also towards the development of character, values, and 21st-century competencies. (Acerbi et al., 2017; Tirri et al., 2016) emphasizes the importance of a holistic educational approach that encompasses cognitive, emotional, social, and spiritual aspects. In line with this, (Schinkel, 2017, 2023) states that education has an important role in helping individuals find the meaning of life and improve the quality of life in a sustainable manner. In the context of Economic Education, research by (Rohmah et al., 2025; Setiawan et al., 2025; Walsh et al., 2016) shows that contextual and reflective economic learning can increase social awareness and understanding of sustainable development issues. Meanwhile, regarding education policy, (Bell, 2020; Pont & Viennet, 2017; Stevenson, 2014) emphasizes that education policy is a strategic instrument for the state to direct the education system in line with national and global development goals. However, several international studies note that the implementation of education policy in developing countries is often hampered by limited institutional capacity, funding, and the quality of teaching staff (Klees et al., 2012; OECD, 2019). Although many studies have been conducted on quality education and education policies, research that specifically examines Economic Education within the SDGs framework is still relatively limited.

Based on the phenomena and findings of previous research, this study aims to analyze the role of Economics Education in supporting the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by improving the quality of education in Indonesia. Specifically, this study aims to identify the actual condition of Economics Education in Indonesia, examine the factors that influence the low quality of Economics learning, and analyze the relevance of educational policies in supporting sustainable education. This study also aims to formulate strategies to improve the quality of Economics Education that align with the principles of sustainable education and national development needs. By using a library research approach, this study is expected to provide a comprehensive overview of the relationship between the quality of Economics Education, educational policies, and the achievement of the SDGs. The results of this study are expected to not only provide academic contributions in the development of studies on Economics Education and sustainable education, but also serve as considerations for policymakers in designing educational policies that are more responsive to global challenges and the needs of Indonesian society.

Although studies on quality education, education policy, and the SDGs have progressed significantly, there are still research gaps that need to be filled. Most previous studies tend to discuss education at a macro level or focus on policy aspects without specifically examining the role of Economic Education as a strategic instrument for sustainable development. However, according to (Arnold, 2015; A. Gough, 2018; M. Z. Gough, 2015; Scalabrino et al., 2022), Integrating economic education with sustainability principles is crucial for developing socially and economically responsible citizens. Furthermore, research linking the quality of economic education to education policy and the achievement of the SDGs in developing countries, particularly Indonesia, is limited and not yet comprehensive. Therefore, this study offers a novel contribution by integrating the analysis of the quality of economic education, education policy, and the SDGs framework into a single, systematic conceptual study. Therefore, this study is expected to strengthen the argument that improving the quality of economic education is an integral part of the national strategy for realizing sustainable education and achieving sustainable development goals in Indonesia.

METHOD

This research uses a library research method with a qualitative descriptive approach (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998). Library research was chosen because the focus of the study was directed at tracing, assessing, and synthesizing various concepts, theories, and previous research findings that were relevant to the topic of improving the quality of Economic Education in supporting the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). (Madum, S. Sy et al., 2025) explains that library research is a series of activities that include collecting library materials, critical reading, recording, and systematic data processing to gain a deep understanding of a research problem. Therefore, this research goes beyond literature collection but also emphasizes the process of critical analysis of the content and relevance of the sources used.

The research data comes from secondary data obtained through various scientific literature. (Acerbi et al., 2017) states that secondary data is data that is already available and previously compiled in the form of written documents, archives, research reports, and scientific publications. In this study, secondary data sources include academic books, reputable national and international journal articles, previous research results, and policy documents related to Economic Education, education quality, continuing education, and the SDGs. The selection of literature

sources was carried out selectively, taking into account the relevance of the topic, the credibility of the source, and the recency of the publication so that the data used can be scientifically accounted for.

The data collection technique in this study uses the documentation method (Daruhadi & Sopiati, 2024). The data collection process is carried out through several systematic stages as stated by (Miles et al., 2014), namely: (1) identifying and collecting literature relevant to the research topic; (2) classifying library sources based on their level of relevance and contribution to the focus of the study; (3) recording data and main ideas in a structured manner; (4) cross-checking between sources to ensure data validity; and (5) organizing data in accordance with the research writing systematics. A list of literature used as secondary data sources is presented in Table 1 as a form of academic transparency and accountability.

Table 1 List of Literature as Research Data

No.	Research Title	Author	Year	Source
1.	Upaya Peningkatan Pendidikan Indonesia Dalam Mencapai Target Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)	Destia Hera Ramadani; Nursiwi Nugraheni	2024	Jurnal Penelitian Pendidikan Indonesia Vol. 1, No. 3 April 2024, Hal. 126-132
2.	Upaya Peningkatan Pendidikan Berkualitas di Indonesia: Analisis Pencapaian Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)	Alvira Oktavia Safitri1; Vioreza Dwi Yunianti; Deti Rostika	2022	Jurnal Basicedu Vol 6 No 4 Tahun 2022, Halaman 7096 - 7106
3.	Upaya Mewujudkan Program Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) dalam Membangun Kualitas Pendidikan Indonesia	Avita Ayu Anggiasti; Nursiwi Nugraheni	2024	Madani: Jurnal Ilmiah Multidisiplin Volume 2, Nomor 4, May 2024, Halaman 265-272
4.	Upaya Meningkatkan Kualitas Pendidikan Agama Islam Di Indonesia Dalam Mewujudkan Program Sustainable Development Goals (SDGS)	Noor Isna Alfaien; Ahmad Mulyadi Kosim; Khaidir Fadil	2023	Edupeedia: Jurnal Studi Pendidikan dan Pedagogi Islam Vol. 7, No. 2, Januari 2023 pp. 127-142
5.	Optimalisasi Literasi Digital untuk Mencapai Pendidikan Berkualitas Menuju Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 2030	Awanda Mella Stevani; Nursiwi Nugraheni	2024	Madani: Jurnal Ilmiah Multidisiplin Volume 2, Nomor 4, May 2024, Halaman 216-222
6.	Membangun Kualitas Pendidikan di Indonesia dalam Mewujudkan Program Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)	Siti Aisyah Nurfatimah; Syofiyah Hasna; Deti Rostika	2022	Jurnal Basicedu Vol 6 No 4 Tahun 2022, Halaman 6145 - 6154
7.	Memahami Dampak Literasi Digital Terhadap Kesehatan, Ekonomi, dan Pendidikan Untuk Mencapai Sustainable Development Goals 2030	Anita Ratna Puspita; Anisa Fitri Almukharomah; Ichsan Fauzi Rachman3	2024	Jurnal Ilmiah Multidisiplin Vol. 1, No. 4 April 2024, Hal. 216-223

8.	Implementasi Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) Dalam Meningkatkan Kualitas Pendidikan Di Papua	Roy Eka Pribadi	2017	eJournal Ilmu Hubungan Internasional, 2017, 5 (3): 917-932
9.	Education in Sustainable Development Goals Using the Spatial Data Infrastructures and the TPACK Model	Javier Álvarez-Otero; María Luisa de Lázaro y Torres	2018	Education Sciences, 2018, 8, 171
10.	A Review Of Turkish Science Course Curriculum In Terms Of Sustainable Development Goals	Mustafa Kemal YÜZBAŞIOĞLU; Mehmet Altan KURNAZ	2022	Acta Didactica Napocensia, Volume 15, Number 1, 2022, halaman 187-199
11.	Implementation of sustainable development goals in higher education modalities: Literature review	Ragil Meita Alfathy; Sulistyo Saputro; Sarwanto Sarwanto; Murni Ramli	2024	Journal of Turkish Science Education, 2024, 21(1), 22-43.
12.	Integrating the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in the Curriculum and Strengthening Teacher Training Programs to Align with NEP 2020	L. Radha; J. Arumugam	2023	Shanlax International Journal of Education, Volume: 11, Issue: 4, September 2023
13.	Socio-scientific inquiry-based learning: An approach for engaging with the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals through school science	Ruth Amos; Ralph Levinson	2019	International Journal of Development Education and Global Learning, 2019, 11 (1): 29–49.
14.	Understanding of Sustainable Development Goals: The Case for Yarmouk University Science students' in Jordan	Farouq Alomari; Abdullah Khataybeh	2021	Pegem Journal of Education and Instruction, Vol. 11, No. 2, 2021 (pp. 43-51)

Data analysis in this study was carried out using content analysis techniques. (Burrell & Cane, 1982). Content analysis was used to deeply examine the meaning, patterns, and trends of ideas contained in various literature sources. The data analysis stages included data selection, theme coding, comparison between sources, synthesis of findings, and drawing conclusions relevant to the research objectives. Through this approach, it is hoped that a comprehensive understanding of the role of Economics Education in supporting the achievement of the SDGs by improving the quality of education in Indonesia will be achieved.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

The analysis of various literature shows that education occupies a central position in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) agenda, particularly Goal 4 on quality, inclusive, and equitable education. Most of the studies analyzed agree that the success of achieving the SDGs is largely determined by the quality of the national education system, especially in developing countries like Indonesia. The literature confirms that although Indonesia has demonstrated a strong commitment to implementing the SDGs through national and sectoral policies, actual achievements on the ground still face various structural obstacles. Regional inequality, limited infrastructure, low teacher competency, and weak integration of sustainability values into the curriculum are dominant issues that recur in almost all the studies reviewed. These findings indicate a gap between normative policies and educational implementation practices. Education is understood not only as a means of knowledge transfer but also as an instrument of social transformation capable of shaping critical awareness, sustainability ethics, and global responsibility in students. However, the literature also shows that the orientation of education in Indonesia still tends to focus on short-term cognitive achievements and has not been fully directed at long-term capacity building in line with the principles of sustainable development. Thus, education, including Economics Education, needs to be repositioned as a strategic pillar in achieving the SDGs, not merely a supporting sector.

One of the most consistent findings in the literature is the persistent disparity in access to and quality of education in Indonesia. The studies analyzed show that the educational gap exists not only between urban and rural areas, but also between western and eastern Indonesia. Remote and underdeveloped regions, such as Papua and border areas, still face limited physical facilities, a shortage of teaching staff, and a lack of adequate learning resources. This situation directly impacts the quality of learning, including in Economics, which requires the availability of data, actual context, and an analytical approach. The literature confirms that this disparity contributes to low learning outcomes and widens the gap in human resource quality between regions. In the context of the SDGs, this condition poses a serious obstacle because it contradicts the principles of justice, inclusivity, and equal opportunities for learning. Several studies highlight that government programs such as SATAP and SM3T have had a positive impact, but are insufficient to address the root causes of the problem systemically. This finding strengthens the argument that improving the quality of education cannot be done partially, but rather requires an integrated policy approach between infrastructure development, strengthening educational human resources, and contextual curriculum reform.

The analyzed literature consistently places teacher professionalism and competence as key factors in improving the quality of education. Numerous studies confirm that the quality of learning is largely determined by teachers' ability to effectively design, implement, and evaluate the learning process. In the context of Economics Education, teacher competence encompasses not only mastery of material but also the ability to relate economic concepts to social realities, sustainable development issues, and global challenges. However, literature findings indicate that many teachers still lack ongoing training related to innovative pedagogy, digital literacy, and the integration of the SDGs into learning. This results in economics learning tending to be conventional, teacher-centered, and emphasizing memorization of concepts. Several international studies confirm that strengthening teacher capacity through practice-based training, professional collaboration, and the use of technology has proven effective in improving the quality of education.

Therefore, the results of this study confirm that investment in teacher professional development is a key prerequisite for efforts to improve the quality of Economics Education oriented towards achieving the SDGs.

The literature review indicates that the curriculum is a strategic instrument for integrating SDG values into education. However, much of the literature reveals that the Indonesian curriculum, including the Economics curriculum, does not fully accommodate issues of sustainability, the green economy, and inclusive development. Economics learning still tends to emphasize theoretical and cognitive aspects, while the affective and psychomotor dimensions related to ethical attitudes, social responsibility, and environmental awareness have not been optimally developed. Several international studies have shown that a curriculum integrated with the SDGs can increase the relevance of learning and build students' global awareness. These findings indicate an urgent need to reform the economics curriculum to make it more contextual, applicable, and aligned with sustainable development goals. The curriculum needs to be designed to encourage students to think critically about issues of poverty, inequality, sustainable consumption, and inclusive economic growth.

Digital literacy emerged as a significant theme in the literature analyzed. Research shows that the use of digital technology has significant potential to improve the quality of learning and expand educational access. In Economics Education, digital literacy enables the use of actual economic data, market simulations, and more interactive project-based learning. However, the literature also highlights a significant digital divide in Indonesia, both in terms of internet access, device availability, and user capabilities. This gap has the potential to widen the disparity in educational quality if not addressed systematically. Several studies confirm that good digital literacy can foster analytical thinking, innovation, and student readiness for the digital economy. Therefore, the results of this study emphasize that strengthening digital literacy must be an integral part of strategies to improve the quality of Economics Education within the SDGs framework.

Analysis of international literature shows that the implementation of the SDGs in education has been widely implemented in various countries, particularly in higher education. SDG integration is carried out through the development of specialized courses, project-based learning, and cross-disciplinary collaboration. However, education's contribution to the SDGs is still dominated by teaching, with community service and public advocacy relatively minimal. These findings are relevant to the Indonesian context, where economics education holds significant potential to bridge academic knowledge and socio-economic practices. By integrating the SDGs into economics learning, educational institutions can act as active agents of social change. The results of this study indicate the need for a more comprehensive implementation framework to ensure education not only produces academically competent graduates but also possesses social awareness and a commitment to sustainable development.

The literature synthesis confirms that economics education has strong relevance to achieving the SDGs. Economic concepts such as production, distribution, consumption, and public policy are directly related to issues of poverty, inequality, environmental sustainability, and economic growth. SDG-oriented economics learning can equip students with the ability to make rational, ethical, and sustainable economic decisions. However, the literature also indicates that this potential has not been optimally utilized in educational practice in Indonesia. Economics education is still viewed solely as an academic subject, rather than as a vehicle for character building and awareness of sustainable development. These findings underscore the need for a reorientation of economics education to make it more contextual and transformative.

The analyzed literature identifies various barriers to SDG implementation in the education sector, both structural and cultural. Structural barriers include budget constraints, weak coordination between institutions, and a lack of synchronization between central and regional policies. Meanwhile, cultural barriers include low levels of economic literacy in the community, traditional values that limit access to education, and resistance to change. In the context of Economic Education, these barriers complicate efforts to integrate SDG values into learning. Therefore, this study emphasizes the importance of a multisectoral and participatory approach to addressing these barriers.

Overall, the results of this literature review demonstrate that improving the quality of Economic Education is a crucial strategy to support the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals in Indonesia. The literature findings indicate that the main challenges lie in unequal access, low teacher professionalism, limited curricula, and the digital divide. Conversely, significant opportunities exist through curriculum reform, strengthening digital literacy, improving teacher competency, and integrating SDG values into economics learning. This research provides a conceptual contribution by synthesizing various national and international findings and affirming the need for economic education to be positioned as a strategic instrument for sustainable development. The implications of this research emphasize the need for more targeted, evidence-based, and long-term education policies to achieve quality, equitable, and sustainable education in line with the SDGs agenda.

Based on the description of the research results above, the findings of economic education research in supporting the achievement of the SDGs in Indonesia can be summarized in Table 2.

Table 2 Research Findings on Economic Education in Supporting the Achievement of SDGs in Indonesia

No	Aspect of Findings	Key Findings	Implications for Economic Education and the SDGs
1	Inequality in Access to Education	The literature indicates persistent disparities in access to and quality of education across regions in Indonesia, particularly between urban areas and remote regions.	Economic Education has not been evenly accessible or implemented, thereby hindering the principles of equity and inclusiveness under SDG 4.
2	Teacher Professionalism and Competence	Many studies highlight the low pedagogical and professional competence of teachers, especially in integrating sustainability issues and contemporary economic contexts.	Strengthening teacher capacity is essential for Economic Education to foster economic literacy and awareness of sustainable development.
3	Curriculum Limitations	The Economic Education curriculum remains cognitively oriented and has not been optimally integrated with SDG values and sustainable education principles.	Curriculum reform is necessary to make economic learning more contextual, applicable, and aligned with the sustainable development agenda.
4	Digital Divide	Digital literacy and access to technology remain uneven, leading to disparities in the quality of technology-based economic learning.	Enhancing digital literacy is a crucial prerequisite for improving the quality of Economic Education and

			supporting sustainable learning.
5	Integration of SDGs in Learning	Most of the literature shows that the integration of SDGs in learning remains partial and unsystematic.	Economic Education has strong potential as a strategic medium for internalizing SDG values if systematically integrated.
6	Opportunities for Educational Reform	Significant opportunities exist through policy reform, improvement of teacher competencies, and the use of educational technology.	Economic Education can serve as a strategic instrument for sustainable development if supported by evidence-based policies.
7	Conceptual Contribution of the Study	This study synthesizes national and international findings related to Economic Education and the SDGs.	It provides a conceptual foundation for the development of SDG-oriented Economic Education policies and practices.
8	Educational Policy Implications	The literature emphasizes the need for well-directed, integrated, and long-term oriented education policies.	SDG-based education policies are required to achieve quality, equitable, and sustainable education.

DISCUSSION

The discussion of this research's findings can be placed within the framework of the grand theory of sustainable development, which places education as a key pillar of social, economic, and environmental development. This theory asserts that development is measured not only by economic growth but also by a country's ability to sustainably build human capacity. In this context, the SDGs, particularly Goal 4, serve as a normative manifestation of sustainable development theory, emphasizing quality, inclusive, and equitable education. (Boeren, 2019; Franco & Derbyshire, 2020; Oktavianatun & Nugraheni, 2024). The results of this study align with this view, indicating that the quality of national education is a determining factor in the success of achieving the SDGs, especially in developing countries like Indonesia. Education is no longer understood as a purely technical sector, but rather as a strategic instrument of social transformation capable of shaping critical awareness, sustainability ethics, and global responsibility in students (Sedwal, 2024). However, the research findings also reveal a gap between normative policy commitments and the reality of implementation on the ground, indicating that the internalization of sustainable development theory in the Indonesian education system is still suboptimal.

The research results strengthen the perspective of human capital theory which states that investment in education contributes directly to improving the quality of human resources and long-term development (Leoni, 2025; Sumual et al., 2024). However, this research also shows that the educational approach in Indonesia still tends to emphasize short-term cognitive achievements, such as academic grades and graduation, rather than sustainable long-term capacity development. Within the framework of transformative learning theory (Grund et al., 2024; Singer-Brodowski, 2025), Education should be able to encourage changes in students' thinking through critical reflection on social and economic realities. Economics education, in this regard, has great potential to become a vehicle for social transformation because it addresses fundamental issues such as

poverty, inequality, consumption, and public policy. However, research shows that this potential has not been fully utilized. Economics education is still positioned as an academic subject, rather than as a tool for fostering awareness of sustainable development. This indicates the need to reposition the paradigm of economic education from a transmissive approach to a transformative one.

Findings regarding inequality in access and quality of education can be analyzed through the theory of social justice which emphasizes the principles of justice, equality, and inclusivity (Shofi et al., 2025). Regional disparities between urban and rural areas, and between western and eastern Indonesia, demonstrate that the principle of equity in education has not been fully realized. In the context of the SDGs, this situation is contradictory, as Goal 4 explicitly emphasizes equal learning opportunities. Research shows that limited infrastructure, uneven distribution of teachers, and a lack of learning resources are the primary causes of this inequality. While government affirmative action programs have made a positive contribution, they have not been able to address the problem systematically. This indicates that a partial and short-term policy approach is insufficient to address structural inequality in education. A more holistic, integrated, and long-term policy is needed to ensure equitable access to Economics Education for all students.

The research confirms that teacher professionalism and competence are key factors in improving the quality of Economics Education. This finding aligns with human capital theory and the capacity building approach, which places human resource development as a primary prerequisite for sustainable development. Teachers serve not only as transmitters of material but also as facilitators of learning, agents of change, and role models of sustainable values. However, this study shows that many teachers still lack ongoing training related to innovative pedagogy, digital literacy, and SDG integration in their learning. As a result, economics learning tends to be conventional and less relevant to social realities. This situation suggests that improving teacher competency cannot be done sporadically but must be designed as a structured, needs-based, and continuous professional development system.

The curriculum is a key tool in transforming SDG values into educational practice. From a curriculum theory perspective, the curriculum functions not only as an academic document but also as a representation of a nation's values, ideology, and development direction. The research results show that the Economics Education curriculum in Indonesia is still predominantly cognitively oriented and has not fully integrated issues of sustainability, the green economy, and inclusive development. This situation indicates a gap between the global demands of the SDGs and the national curriculum design. Curriculum reform is urgently needed so that economics learning can equip students with critical, ethical, and future-oriented thinking skills. An SDG-integrated curriculum is expected to not only increase the relevance of learning but also strengthen the role of education in developing socially and economically responsible citizens. Digital literacy, which emerged as a key finding, can be analyzed through the theory of educational modernization, which emphasizes the use of technology as a driver for improving the quality and access to education. The research findings indicate that digital technology has significant potential for improving the quality of Economics education through the use of actual data, simulations, and project-based learning. However, the still-significant digital divide in Indonesia has the potential to widen the disparity in education quality. In this context, digital literacy encompasses more than just the technical ability to use technology, but also the critical ability to utilize information responsibly. Therefore, strengthening digital literacy must be designed as an integral part of the strategy for improving the quality of Economics education, not simply as a supplement to learning.

The research findings indicate that the implementation of the SDGs in education in Indonesia is still dominated by teaching, while the dimensions of community service and public advocacy have not been optimally utilized. From an institutional theory perspective, educational institutions should function as active agents of social change. Economics education has strategic potential to bridge economic theory with socio-economic practices. However, without a comprehensive implementation framework, education's contribution to the SDGs will be largely symbolic. Therefore, educational institutions need to develop learning models that simultaneously integrate teaching, research, and community service. The research findings confirm that Economics education has direct relevance to key SDG issues, such as poverty, inequality, and sustainable economic growth. From an economic literacy theory perspective, sound economics education will enhance individuals' ability to make rational and ethical economic decisions. However, this research indicates that Economics education in Indonesia has not yet fully focused on fostering awareness of sustainable development. This indicates the need to reorient the goals and approaches of economics learning to be more contextual, reflective, and transformative.

The structural and cultural barriers identified in this study demonstrate the complexity of SDG implementation in the education sector. From a policy implementation theory perspective, policy success is largely determined by regulatory consistency, implementing capacity, and social support. Budget constraints, weak inter-agency coordination, and cultural resistance to change are key inhibiting factors. Therefore, SDG-based education policies need to be designed contextually and participatory to ensure effective acceptance and implementation.

Theoretically, this research strengthens the integration of sustainable development theory, human capital theory, and transformative learning theory within the context of Economics Education. The literature synthesis demonstrated that improving the quality of Economics Education impacts not only academic achievement but also the development of students' character and social awareness. This theoretical contribution broadens understanding of the role of Economics Education as a strategic instrument for sustainable development, particularly in developing countries.

Based on the research findings, future development of Economics Education needs to be directed toward an integrative and adaptive SDG-based learning model. Future initiatives include developing an economics curriculum based on local and global issues, practice-based and technology-based teacher training, and utilizing digital platforms for collaborative learning across regions. Furthermore, further empirical research is needed to test the effectiveness of SDG-oriented Economics Education models in improving students' economic literacy and sustainability awareness.

Overall, this discussion confirms that improving the quality of economics education is a key strategy in supporting the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals in Indonesia. Economics education needs to be repositioned as a strategic instrument for sustainable development through curriculum reform, strengthening teacher competencies, integrating digital literacy, and evidence-based education policies. With a targeted and long-term approach, economics education has significant potential to contribute to realizing quality, equitable, and sustainable education in line with the SDGs agenda.

The novelty of this research lies in its conceptual synthesis, which systematically positions Economic Education not merely as an academic field of study but as a strategic instrument for sustainable development within the framework of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in Indonesia. Unlike previous studies, which generally discuss the SDGs and education in general or

focus on policy aspects and quantitative outcomes, this research presents an integrative perspective by simultaneously linking inequality in access, teacher professionalism, curriculum reform, digital literacy, and the integration of SDG values within the context of Economic Education. Another novelty lies in the integration of national and international findings to build a holistic analytical framework that explains the gap between normative policies and implementation practices, while also offering a repositioning of Economic Education as a vehicle for developing sustainable economic literacy, ethical awareness, and social responsibility in students. Thus, this research provides relevant theoretical and conceptual contributions to the development of evidence-based education policies and the strengthening of the role of Economic Education in supporting the achievement of the SDGs in a sustainable and equitable manner.

CONCLUSION

The most compelling finding of this study demonstrates that Economics Education has significant strategic potential in supporting the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), yet this potential has not been optimally utilized in educational practice in Indonesia. The literature review reveals that the main challenges lie not only in structural aspects such as unequal access, limited infrastructure, and the digital divide, but also in substantive aspects such as the low integration of sustainability values into the curriculum and learning process. These findings highlight a significant gap between normative educational policy commitments and implementation at the educational unit level, particularly in Economics Education, which remains predominantly cognitively oriented and less transformative.

The primary contribution of this study lies in strengthening the conceptual and analytical foundations for the role of Economics Education within the framework of sustainable development. This research not only synthesizes national and international findings but also offers a new perspective by repositioning Economics Education as an instrument for developing sustainable economic literacy, ethical awareness, and social responsibility in students. This contribution is expected to serve as a reference for policymakers, educators, and researchers in designing curricula, learning strategies, and education policies that are more focused, evidence-based, and aligned with the SDGs agenda, particularly Goal 4 on quality, inclusive, and equitable education.

However, this study has several limitations that require attention. First, it is entirely based on a literature review and therefore does not include empirical field data that could illustrate the actual practice of Economics Education in supporting the SDGs in various educational contexts. Second, the scope of the analysis is still limited to available literature relevant to the Indonesian context, so generalizations of the findings require caution. Therefore, future research is recommended to combine a literature review approach with empirical research, such as case studies, surveys, or classroom action research, to enrich understanding of the implementation of SDG-oriented Economics Education in a more contextual and applicable manner.

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