



## Clean and Sustainability Business

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# ENTREPRENEURS' PERSONAL VALUES AND GREEN BUSINESS CULTURE: A QUALITATIVE STUDY OF INDONESIAN MSMEs

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## ABSTRACT

**Objectives:** This study aims to explore the role of entrepreneurs' personal values in fostering a green business culture among Indonesian Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs). This study aims to understand how moral, social, and spiritual beliefs influence organizational transformation towards sustainability oriented business practices.

**Research Design & Methods:** This study uses a qualitative exploratory case study involving 18 MSME groups (178 members) across Indonesia, using purposive sampling. Data gathered through interviews, observations, and document analysis were thematically analyzed.

**Findings:** The findings reveal that personal values such as responsibility towards nature, gratitude to God, honesty, and social awareness serve as the foundation for sustainable entrepreneurship. These values evolve from individual ethics into collective norms that shape organizational culture. The internalization of these values is manifested in environmentally friendly production, resource efficiency, waste reduction, and community empowerment. The results also show multidimensional impacts: economic (cost efficiency and increased product value), social (strengthened solidarity and environmental awareness), and ecological (waste reduction and natural resource conservation).

**Implications & Recommendations:** Sustainable transformation in MSMEs requires not only financial or regulatory support but also moral and cultural reinforcement through value-based education, ethical leadership, and community-driven sustainability efforts.

**Contribution & Value Added:** This study advances the theory of sustainable entrepreneurship by emphasizing personal values as key social and cultural drivers of green business practices. It offers empirical evidence and a locally grounded framework that reflects the ethical and spiritual dimensions of sustainability in developing countries.

**Keywords:** Sustainable Entrepreneurship; Green Business Culture, Environmental Ethics

**JEL codes:** M14, L26, Q56

**Article type:** research paper

## INTRODUCTION

The role of entrepreneurs' personal values in fostering a green business culture among Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) in Indonesia has become an increasingly relevant issue in facing the challenges of sustainable economic development. As the backbone of the national economy, MSMEs contribute more than 90 percent to the total number of companies outside the agricultural sector and are the largest provider of employment in Indonesia (Tambunan, 2007; Tambunan, 2011). However, the adoption rate of green business practices in this sector is still relatively low, mainly due to limited resources, knowledge, and access to

environmentally friendly technologies (Omowole et al., 2024; Sohns et al., 2023). In this context, entrepreneurs' personal values can be a key factor in driving the transformation towards sustainability, as they influence perspectives, decision-making, and commitment to more environmentally responsible business practices.

In addition to external barriers like limited supportive regulations and access to financing, internal factors—particularly the personal values of entrepreneurs significantly influence the extent to which MSME actors can adopt a green business culture. The values embedded in entrepreneurs play a major role in shaping sustainable business orientation and decisions. Findings from a study by Gunawan et al., (2021) show that value dimensions such as self-enhancement, conservation, and self-transcendence are the main sources of motivation for craft entrepreneurs in Indonesia to implement eco-entrepreneurship practices. The value of self-enhancement encourages entrepreneurs to improve their capacity through green innovation, and conservation emphasizes the importance of maintaining a balance between economic activities and environmental sustainability. At the same time, self-transcendence reflects a concern that goes beyond personal interests for social and ecological sustainability. The combination of these values shows that the adoption of green business is not merely the result of external pressure or economic gain, but also a reflection of the moral orientation and personal identity of entrepreneurs who are committed to long-term sustainability.

In addition, research by Muafi and Roostika (2022), which integrates the concepts of Green Human Resource Management (Green HRM), personal values, green organizational culture, and competitive strategy, shows that although the combination of these factors has the potential to strengthen the business sustainability model, its application among creative MSMEs in Yogyakarta and Central Java is still not optimal. These findings indicate a gap between the potential of entrepreneurs' personal values supporting sustainability and the actual implementation of a green business culture at the organizational level. In other words, although entrepreneurs may be aware of and committed to green values, various obstacles, such as limited human resources, a lack of environment-oriented training, and minimal policy support, mean that these values have not been fully internalized in managerial practices and business strategies. This condition highlights the need for a more systematic approach to bridge personal values and organizational practices, ensuring that the transformation towards a green business culture in the MSME sector is realized sustainably.

The personal values held by entrepreneurs play an important role in determining the direction and strategic decisions of a business, including in the implementation of green business practices. Entrepreneurs who uphold the values of sustainability, social responsibility, and environmental ethics tend to have a higher awareness of the impact of their business activities on the ecosystem and society. These values encourage them to integrate sustainability principles into every aspect of their operations, from production to distribution, and to foster an environmentally conscious organizational culture (Rodrigues & Franco, 2023). In other words, personal values form the moral foundation that shapes entrepreneurs' commitment and motivation to implement consistent green business practices. Therefore, a deeper understanding of these personal values is crucial for designing policies and development strategies that can increase the adoption of green practices in the MSME sector, while strengthening economic performance, social reputation, and sustainable environmental contributions.

The gap between the potential personal values of entrepreneurs and the reality of implementing a green business culture highlights that internal aspects, such as beliefs, morals, perceptions of the environment, and an intrinsic orientation towards sustainability, play a fundamental role in shaping an organizational culture committed to sustainable business practices. These values not only reflect entrepreneurs' views on social and ecological responsibility but also form the basis for strategic decision-making that impacts the direction and character of their businesses. However, there is still limited qualitative research that explores in depth how these personal values are formed, how entrepreneurs interpret and apply them in their daily business activities, and how the interaction between these values and the social, cultural, and economic context specific to Indonesia influences sustainability practices in the MSME sector. Therefore, this study seeks to explore and comprehensively describe the role of entrepreneurs'

personal values in shaping a green business culture in MSMEs in Indonesia; identify the most influential types of values and their concrete manifestations in managerial and operational practices, while also analyzing the obstacles and supporting factors that influence the process of internalization and sustainability of green culture in the business environment.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Green Business Culture

Green business culture is an organizational approach that instills values of sustainability and environmental responsibility in every aspect of its operations. This concept encompasses not only the implementation of environmentally friendly practices, such as waste management, energy efficiency, and the use of sustainable raw materials, but also reflects the company's commitment to balancing economic profits, social interests, and environmental preservation. By integrating sustainability principles into the work culture, organizations strive to shape employee behavior, managerial strategies, and business processes that are aligned with sustainable development goals. Ultimately, green business culture plays an important role in building a positive company reputation, increasing competitiveness, and making a real contribution to global environmental preservation.

Referring to patterns of beliefs, values, assumptions, norms, and shared practices within an organization that guide its members to pay attention to and act on environmental issues in a sustainable manner. According to [Norton et al., \(2015\)](#), green business culture is "a pattern of shared basic assumptions learned by a group as it adapts to the challenges posed by the impact of human activities on the natural environment in a way that allows it to function daily, which has worked well enough to be considered valid, and therefore to be taught to new members as the correct way to understand, think, and feel in relation to environmental sustainability." Other sources expand this definition by emphasizing that green culture includes visible artifacts (e.g., policies, formal practices, physical symbols), shared norms and values, and basic assumptions that are often invisible but influence how organizations think and act toward the environment ([Piwowar-Sulej, 2020](#)).

The success of a sustainability program in an organization is highly dependent on the level of employee engagement, as their active participation can drive innovation and improve the company's operational efficiency. When employees feel responsible for sustainability goals, they tend to contribute more to the creation of environmentally friendly and efficient work practices. This involvement not only strengthens commitment to long-term environmental responsibility but also has a positive impact on the company's overall performance and competitiveness ([Wang, 2025](#)). In this context, the synergy between green human resource management which emphasizes recruiting, training, and developing employees with an environmental orientation and an organizational culture that supports sustainability values is an important factor in achieving both environmental and economic efficiency ([Shah et al., 2021](#)).

Corporate social responsibility (CSR) plays a strategic role in encouraging green behavior among employees, especially when integrated with green human resource management (Green HRM) practices and an environmentally-oriented organizational culture. Consistently implemented CSR can increase employee environmental awareness and foster their commitment to sustainability practices ([Aukhoon et al., 2024](#)). The implementation of Green HRM, including environmental training, green reward systems, and sustainability-based performance evaluations, acts as a mediator that enhances the positive influence of CSR on employee green behavior ([Alshahrani & Iqbal, 2024](#)). Additionally, an organizational culture that supports green values serves as a driving factor, as pro-environmental norms and values within the organization can strengthen the relationship between CSR and employee green behavior ([Al-Alawneh et al., 2024](#)).

The implementation of green information systems (Green IS) plays an important role in helping organizations achieve sustainability goals by utilizing information technology to optimize energy efficiency, reduce waste, and minimize operational carbon footprints. Green IS not only improves resource and business process efficiency but also supports innovation in developing more environmentally friendly products and services ([Brocke et al., 2013](#)). The implementation of Green

IS enables better integration of environmental data, supports sustainability-based decision making, and strengthens organizational strategies in facing the challenges of climate change (Seddon & Scheepers, 2012). Green IS can also be a driver of organizational innovation because it helps companies adapt to environmental regulations and create competitive value through efficiency and social responsibility (Melville, 2010).

### Personal Values in Entrepreneurs

Personal values are the basic principles or beliefs that form the foundation of how a person views the world and acts within it. For entrepreneurs, these values influence their priorities—for example, whether they prioritize economic profit, social welfare, or environmental sustainability. In the context of green business culture, values such as self-transcendence (concern for others and nature), universalism, altruism, and biospheric values are very important because they provide intrinsic motivation to incorporate environmental aspects into business objectives. The value of self-transcendence positively correlates with sustainable entrepreneurial intentions, while the value of self-enhancement can have negative effects depending on the context (Yasir et al., 2022).

Many green entrepreneurs are driven not solely by economic gain but by an inner drive fueled by social justice and concern for the environment. They want to see justice among communities and sustainable management of natural resources. For example, Allen and Malin's (2008) research found that green entrepreneurs demonstrate strong personal motivation: they prioritize social missions, have a high awareness of the environmental impact of their businesses, feel a sense of responsibility for social justice, and are oriented toward long-term sustainability.

The personality and values of an entrepreneur play an important role in fostering the desire to build an environmentally oriented business. People who are creative, innovative, and passionate about making positive change are usually more sensitive to business opportunities that support sustainability. Creativity helps them find new, environmentally friendly ideas and solutions, while personal innovation encourages the use of green technology in various aspects of business. In addition to personality factors, external support such as government policies, easy access to green financing, and a social environment that emphasizes the importance of sustainability also strengthen the motivation to engage in green entrepreneurship. However, personal values such as ecological awareness, a sense of responsibility towards society, and a desire to make a positive contribution to nature remain the main drivers in the decision to run an environmentally-friendly business (Ye et al., 2020; Qazi et al., 2021).

Personal values influence how entrepreneurs assess strategic choices: what is considered important, what risks they are willing to take, and how to balance economic and environmental goals. For example, the study "Worries for Sustainable Entrepreneurship in Pakistan" found that attitudes toward sustainable entrepreneurship, perceived behavioral control, and social norms are influenced by environmental values, which then mediate green entrepreneurial intentions (Yasir et al., 2022). Meanwhile, a study by Lukes and Feldmann (2024) revealed that individuals with self-direction and achievement value orientations tend to be more courageous in taking initiatives and making innovative decisions in business. However, these orientations can sometimes conflict with conservative values when economic conditions are unstable, indicating the complex dynamics between environmental idealism and market realities in sustainable entrepreneurship practices.

### The Relationship Between Entrepreneurs' Personal Values and Green Business Culture

The relationship between entrepreneurs' personal values and the development of green business culture is complex and mutually reinforcing, with ethical, social, and environmental dimensions converging to shape the direction of sustainable entrepreneurship. Entrepreneurs who possess personal values such as environmental awareness, innovative spirit, and a strong sense of social responsibility tend to integrate sustainability principles into every aspect of their business operations. These values not only influence the way they make strategic decisions but also shape the mindset and behavior of organizations, emphasizing the importance of resource efficiency, the use of environmentally friendly technologies, and compliance with business ethics.

Entrepreneurs who are highly aligned with environmental values typically demonstrate a greater commitment to sustainable entrepreneurship practices. These values play an important role in shaping positive attitudes toward sustainability-oriented businesses, as they reflect moral views and social responsibility toward environmental preservation. Within the framework of the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), environmental values not only directly influence intentions but also indirectly through the formation of attitudes, subjective norms, and perceptions of behavioral control (Yasir et al., 2023). This means that the stronger the environmental values held by an entrepreneur, the greater their tendency to adopt and implement green business practices that focus on balancing profitability and ecological responsibility.

The success of green entrepreneurship is essentially rooted in the intrinsic motivation of entrepreneurs who are oriented towards social justice and environmental responsibility. Entrepreneurs with high ecological awareness tend to view business not merely as a means of achieving profit, but also as a tool for creating a positive impact on society and the environment. This awareness drives them to integrate sustainability principles into every aspect of business operations, from product design and production processes to distribution strategies (Allen & Malin, 2008).

The personal values of entrepreneurs play a fundamental role in driving the emergence of sustainability-oriented innovation, making them a key element in the development of green entrepreneurship. Entrepreneurs who value environmental awareness and social responsibility tend to be more proactive in seeking innovative, environmentally friendly solutions, whether through the development of green products or the implementation of efficient and sustainable business processes. The combination of green innovation performance and proactive entrepreneurial orientation has been proven to increase competitiveness while strengthening long-term business sustainability. Furthermore, dynamic internal capabilities such as green absorptive capacity (the ability to absorb and apply environmental knowledge) and managerial environmental concern (managerial environmental awareness) act as driving mechanisms based on the personal values of entrepreneurs (Makhloufi et al., 2023; Meirun et al., 2020).

In the context of sustainable entrepreneurship, contributions to economic, social, and environmental development are largely determined by the extent to which sustainability principles are internalized into the values and behaviors of entrepreneurs. According to Tekala et al., (2024), when environmental, ethical, and social responsibility values become an integral part of a business's strategic orientation, this can encourage greater and more relevant innovation in addressing global ecological challenges. The integration of these values not only strengthens business competitiveness but also fosters collective awareness, reducing negative impacts on the environment and creating inclusive economic benefits for society.

## METHODS

This study employs a qualitative approach with an exploratory case study design to thoroughly examine the dynamics of entrepreneurs' personal values in building a green business culture. The qualitative approach allows researchers to gain a comprehensive understanding of the experiences, perceptions, and meanings constructed by research subjects in the social and cultural contexts in which they live (Creswell & Poth, 2017). An exploratory case study design was chosen because it provides space to explore complex phenomena in real life in depth and highlights the relationship between personal values, entrepreneurial behavior, and sustainable business practices (Hollweck, 2015). This study is also based on an interpretive paradigm, which emphasizes a subjective understanding of the meaning individuals give to their actions and decisions, thereby revealing how entrepreneurs interpret their role in the context of green business practices (Schwartz-Shea & Yanow, 2013).

## RESULT

### Respondent Profile

This study involved 18 MSME business groups spread across various regions in Indonesia. Each group had different characteristics in terms of business sector, institutional form, and green

business practices. The groups were selected using purposive sampling based on their involvement in sustainable initiatives and the application of green values in their business activities.

Table 1. Profile of MSME Respondent Groups

No.	Type of Business Group	Address	Total Members	Year Established	Institutional Form
1.	Lestari Farmers Cooperative	Bandung, West Java	12	2016	Cooperatives
2.	Cipta Baru Recycling Community	Bekasi, West Java	8	2019	Social business communities
3.	Nusantara Bamboo Group	Gianyar, Bali	10	2015	Group MSMEs
4.	Toraja Hijau Coffee Cooperative	Tana Toraja, South Sulawesi	15	2014	Farmer groups
5.	Mina Sejahtera Fish Skin SMEs	Padang, West Sumatra	9	2020	Business communities
6.	Alami Berseri Women's Cooperative	Banjarbaru, South Kalimantan	7	2018	Women's cooperatives
7.	Creative Young Green Community	Sleman, Yogyakarta	11	2017	Creative communities
8.	Nusantara Natural Batik Cooperative	Pekalongan, Central Java	10	2015	Cooperatives
9.	Subur Makmur Organic Vegetable Farmers Group	Lembang, West Java	13	2013	Farmer groups
10.	Desa Independent Energy SME	East Lombok, NTB	8	2019	Village business groups
11.	Environmentally Friendly Weaving Community	Pontianak, West Kalimantan	6	2021	Local communities
12.	Green Bioflok Catfish Group	Klaten, Central Java	9	2020	Farmer groups
13.	Eco-Craft Nusantara SME	Denpasar, Bali	10	2016	Collective MSMEs
14.	Berkah Natural Agriculture Cooperative	Magelang, Central Java	14	2012	Cooperatives
15.	Indonesian Eco-Fashion Community	South Jakarta, DKI Jakarta	8	2018	Creative business communities
16.	Laut Lestari Mandiri SME	Manado, North Sulawesi	7	2020	Community MSMEs
17.	Hijau Pesisir Sejahtera Cooperative	Banyuwangi, East Java	11	2015	Fishermen's cooperatives
18.	Lestari Wood Craft Group	Blitar, East Java	10	2014	Collective MSMEs

Based on the results of the table analysis, it can be concluded that the majority of MSME groups in this study are cooperatives or social business communities (72%), reflecting a collective orientation and a strong spirit of cooperation among business actors. Most of them were established between 2013 and 2020, indicating that awareness of environmentally friendly business practices has grown over the past decade as attention to sustainability issues has increased. The diversity of business sectors engaged in—ranging from organic food (27%), environmentally friendly crafts (33%), energy and conservation (17%), to green cosmetics and fashion (23%)—demonstrates that the concept of green business has been widely adopted across various fields. These findings underscore

that the transition to sustainable business practices among Indonesian MSMEs is not solely motivated by economic considerations, but also by social, moral, and spiritual values that are deeply rooted in community-based entrepreneurial culture.

**Education Level and Background**

The diversity of educational backgrounds and experiences among MSME group members is a factor that influences how they understand and implement green business values. The interview results show that most group members have a secondary or bachelor's degree and possess diverse practical experiences, ranging from agriculture and crafts to environmental engineering.

Table 2. Educational Level of MSME Group Members

Educational Level	Total Members (n=178)	Percentage (%)
Elementary school/equivalent	14	7%
Junior high school/equivalent	25	14%
Senior high school/equivalent	79	44%
Diploma	29	16%
Bachelor's degree	33	19%

The data above shows that most members (44%) have a high school education or equivalent, while 35% have higher education (diploma and bachelor's degree). This indicates that formal education is not the only factor determining the successful implementation of green practices in the MSME environment. Some groups with highly educated members, such as the Indonesian Eco-Fashion Community and the Nusantara Natural Batik Cooperative, tend to apply sustainable design innovations through research on natural materials and environmentally friendly production processes. Meanwhile, groups with members who have a high school education, such as the Lestari Farmers' Cooperative and the Subur Makmur Organic Vegetable Farmers' Group, place more emphasis on ecological practices based on local wisdom and resource efficiency.

In addition to formal education, field experience and social learning are the main sources of knowledge for most groups. Members gain an understanding of green business through:

- a. Technical training and mentoring from cooperative agencies, environmental NGOs, and vocational education institutions.
- b. Sharing best practices among members in group forums and green product exhibitions.
- c. Local wisdom and cultural values, such as the principles of cooperation, resource conservation, and environmental stewardship, have been passed down from generation to generation in their communities.

Therefore, it can be concluded that collective values and culture have a greater influence on the formation of green awareness and competence in Indonesian MSMEs than formal education levels. This reinforces the role of personal and social values as the main foundation for the transformation towards a green business culture.

**Green Business Practices Implemented**

The analysis shows that the MSME group surveyed has implemented various forms of green business practices that reflect personal and social values in their operational activities. Although the level of implementation varies, all groups show a commitment to reducing environmental impact and managing resources more efficiently. In general, the green practices carried out include waste management, the use of environmentally friendly energy, sustainable packaging, natural material production, and environmental education for the community or consumers.

Table 3. Various Green Business Practices Implemented by MSME Groups

No.	Type of Business Group	Forms of Green Practices Implemented	Sustainability Focus
1.	Lestari Farmers Cooperative	Production of vegetables and organic fertilizer, management of agricultural waste	Environment & economy
2.	Cipta Baru Recycling Community	Collection and recycling of household plastic waste	Environment & society
3.	Nusantara Bamboo Group	Utilization of local bamboo, without chemicals in the production process	Environment
4.	Toraja Hijau Coffee Cooperative	Production of organic coffee, a conservative planting system	Environment & society
5.	Mina Sejahtera Fish Skin SMEs	Processing fish waste into marketable products	Circular economy
6.	Alami Berseri Women's Cooperative	Herbal soap production, without synthetic ingredients	Environment & health
7.	Creative Young Green Community	Recycling textile and paper waste into art products	Society & environment
8.	Nusantara Natural Batik Cooperative	Natural dyes from local plants	Culture & environment
9.	Subur Makmur Organic Vegetable Farmers Group	Organic planting without pesticides	Environment & health
10.	Desa Independent Energy SME	Utilization of solar panels and biogas for production	Energy & economy
11.	Environmentally Friendly Weaving Community	Use of natural materials (rattan, water hyacinth)	Environment & society
12.	Green Bioflok Catfish Group	Water-efficient biofloc system and minimal waste	Environment & economy
13.	Eco-Craft Nusantara SME	Utilization of non-plastic waste into souvenirs	Circular economy
14.	Berkah Natural Agriculture Cooperative	Use of organic fertilizers & drip irrigation systems	Environment & water efficiency
15.	Indonesian Eco-Fashion Community	Production of clothing from recycled fibers	Environment & innovation
16.	Laut Lestari Mandiri SME	Processing of marine products without chemicals	Health & Environment
17.	Hijau Pesisir Sejahtera Cooperative	Coastal conservation, utilization of marine waste	Environment & Society
18.	Lestari Wood Craft Group	Utilization of certified wood & reforestation	Environment & Sustainability

The results of the grouping analysis show that MSMEs most commonly implement five main categories of green business practices. These findings reflect diverse yet complementary patterns of adaptation and implementation of sustainability principles across various business sectors. Each category describes a different strategic focus—ranging from resource efficiency and waste management to environmentally friendly product innovation, community empowerment, and the implementation of sustainable business ethics. The diversity of these practices confirms

that the green approach at the MSME level is not uniform, but rather develops contextually in accordance with the values, capacities, and socio-economic characteristics of each business group.

Table 4. Quantitative Analysis of Green Practice Implementation

Green Practice Category	Total Groups (n=18)	Percentage (%)	Examples of Implementation
Environmentally friendly production	13	72%	Use of natural materials, no chemicals
Waste management & recycling	12	67%	Compost, plastic waste, fish waste
Energy efficiency	7	39%	Solar panels, biogas, energy-saving lights
Green packaging & distribution	8	44%	Biodegradable packaging, local sales
Community education & participation	5	28%	Environmental training, green campaigns

The main findings of this study indicate that the most dominant green business practice implemented by MSMEs is environmentally friendly production (72%), which focuses on using natural materials and applying non-polluting production processes to maintain environmental quality. In addition, waste management and recycling activities (67%) are important strategies in creating resource efficiency, especially among community-based businesses that prioritize the principles of the circular economy. However, the implementation of energy efficiency (39%) is still relatively limited and is generally carried out by groups that receive technological support or assistance from government programs. On the other hand, environmental education activities (28%) have emerged as a significant form of social contribution, primarily conducted by groups with a social and community focus, such as the Creative Young Green Community and the Pesisir Sejahtera Cooperative.

Interestingly, in-depth interviews revealed that the main motivation behind implementing green practices was not solely economic but rooted in moral and spiritual values to maintain the balance of nature. As expressed by a representative of the Toraja Hijau Coffee Cooperative,

"We don't just grow coffee, we also grow life. If nature is damaged, coffee will not grow well either."

This statement clearly illustrates that the ecological awareness of MSME actors stems from beliefs and noble values that emphasize harmony between humans and nature, not merely compliance with regulations or market demands. This shows that values and ethics play a central role in driving business culture towards sustainability.

### Identified Personal Values

In-depth interviews with 18 MSME groups show that the implementation of green business is not solely driven by external factors such as regulations or economic incentives, but is more influenced by the personal and communal values held by group members. These values form the ethical and spiritual basis for daily business decision-making. In general, the most dominant personal values are concern for the environment, honesty and social responsibility, spirituality and gratitude towards nature, as well as innovation and local independence. These values serve as moral drivers that strengthen commitment to green practices despite limited resources.

Table 5. Personal Values Underlying Green Business Practices

No.	Type of Business Group	Dominant Personal Values	Manifestation in Business Practices
1.	Lestari Farmers Cooperative	Responsibility towards nature	No chemical pesticides, water conservation
2.	Cipta Baru Recycling Community	Social awareness & collaboration	Educating the community on waste sorting
3.	Nusantara Bamboo Group	Simplicity & sustainability	Manual production without heavy machinery
4.	Toraja Hijau Coffee Cooperative	Gratitude towards nature	Replanting shade trees for coffee
5.	Mina Sejahtera Fish Skin SMEs	Innovation from limitations	Processing fish waste into valuable products
6.	Alami Berseri Women's Cooperative	Honesty & health	Products without synthetic ingredients
7.	Creative Young Green Community	Creativity & social awareness	Recycling used materials into works of art
8.	Nusantara Natural Batik Cooperative	Love for culture & nature	Natural dyes from local plants
9.	Subur Makmur Organic Vegetable Farmers Group	Discipline & social responsibility	Strictly controlled organic production
10.	Desa Independent Energy SME	Independence & innovation	Utilization of renewable energy
11.	Environmentally Friendly Weaving Community	Hard work & togetherness	Production based on local groups
12.	Green Bioflok Catfish Group	Efficiency & sustainability	Water-saving technology for cultivation
13.	Eco-Craft Nusantara SME	Creativity & environmental responsibility	Recycled non-plastic waste products
14.	Berkah Natural Agriculture Cooperative	Sincerity & sustainability	Planting trees after harvest
15.	Indonesian Eco-Fashion Community	Innovation & global responsibility	Production of clothing from recycled fibers
16.	Laut Lestari Mandiri SME	Gratitude & social awareness	Seawater processing without toxic waste
17.	Hijau Pesisir Sejahtera Cooperative	Collective leadership & cooperation	Community-based conservation programs
18.	Lestari Wood Craft Group	Integrity & business ethics	Use of certified wood, reforestation

Based on the results of thematic coding of interview and field observation data, four main themes of personal values were identified that form the foundation of green business culture among Indonesian MSMEs. These four themes reflect the moral, social, and spiritual dimensions that guide entrepreneurial behavior towards sustainability. These values not only serve as ethical guidelines but also as a source of internal motivation that drives innovation, environmental responsibility, and community collaboration. Through a process of reflection and habit formation, these values develop into a shared belief system that guides daily decision-making and business practices.

Table 6. Thematic Analysis

Personal Values	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Main Description
Concern for the environment	15 groups	83%	Ecological awareness and commitment to preserving nature
Social and moral responsibility	12 groups	67%	Concern for the welfare of the surrounding community
Innovation and local independence	10 groups	56%	Creativity in creating sustainable local solutions
Spirituality and gratitude	9 groups	50%	Religious and ethical motivation in maintaining the balance of nature

**Representative Quotes from Interviews**

The following interview quotes illustrate how green business practices among Indonesian MSMEs are rooted in spiritual, social, and local wisdom values.

“We believe that the earth is a gift from God, so if we destroy it, it is the same as being ungrateful.” (Alami Berseri Women's Cooperative)

“At first, we didn't know the term ‘green business,’ but we knew that we shouldn't be wasteful and that we should be beneficial to our surroundings.” (Environmentally Friendly Weaving Community)

“For us, innovation is not just about technology, but how to survive without damaging nature.” (Desa Independent Energy MSMEs)

Overall, these quotes reflect that the green business culture among Indonesian MSMEs is built on a foundation of spirituality, local ethics, and social solidarity. With its value-based and community-oriented character, the concept of green entrepreneurship in Indonesia is unique in that it emphasizes moral balance and social harmony rather than simply focusing on the market, efficiency, or technological advancement.

**The Process of Transforming Values into Practice**

Qualitative analysis of in-depth interviews and field observations shows that the personal values held by entrepreneurs and MSME groups do not automatically translate into green business practices. The transformation of values into concrete actions is a dynamic and multi-layered process involving individual reflection, social interaction, and continuous learning within their business ecosystems. This process shows that the adoption of sustainability values not only stems from moral awareness but is also shaped through practical experience, collective discussion, and community cultural support. Conceptually, the process of value transformation can be explained through three main stages, namely:

- a. Internalization of values (personal belief stage) – the initial stage when fundamental values such as responsibility, honesty, fairness, and concern for the environment begin to take root in the consciousness of individuals and groups. At this stage, these values serve as a moral foundation that shapes entrepreneurs' views of the business world and the surrounding environment.
- b. Interpretation of values in a business context (reflection-to-action stage) – a reflective stage in which personal values are processed and translated into principles and operational strategies relevant to the realities of business. In this process, MSME actors adjust their idealism to market conditions, available resources, and community needs, so that moral values take practical form in everyday business policies and decisions.
- c. Implementation and habituation (collective reinforcement stage) – a stage where these values are not only applied individually, but become part of collective behavior reinforced by organizational culture. Through routines, internal communication, and consistent leadership

examples, green values become shared habits that guide all group members to behave in accordance with sustainability principles.

Table 7. Model for Transforming Personal Values into Green Business Practices

Transformation Stage	Mechanisms that Occur	Examples of MSME Activation	Direct Impact
Internalization of Values	Process of self-reflection, formation of ecological awareness, and spirituality	Group members discuss the importance of preserving the environment and resources	Increased environmental and moral awareness
Interpretation of Values	Translation of values into business policies and strategies	Establishment of rules for chemical-free production, waste management, and energy efficiency	Formulation of green operational guidelines
Implementation & Habituation	Consistency in applying values through collective action	Building internal recycling systems, reforestation, and the use of alternative energy	Changes in organizational behavior and culture
Collective Strengthening	Values are strengthened through collaboration and community education	Environmental training, partnerships with green communities	Expansion of social and ecological impact

- **Narrative Model of Value Transformation**

The study's results reveal that value transformation at the MSME group level occurs through four main narrative patterns, describing the close relationship between beliefs, social culture, and sustainable business practices. These four patterns show that the basic values embraced by business actors play a major role in shaping ecological behavior and sustainable entrepreneurial ethics.

a. **Spiritual Reflection → Ecological Responsibility**

For groups such as the Lestari Farmers' Cooperative and the Toraja Hijau Coffee Cooperative, environmental sustainability is seen not only as a moral responsibility but also as a form of spiritual devotion to the Creator. Religious reflection and gratitude for natural resources foster awareness of the need to maintain ecosystem balance and reject exploitative business practices. As expressed by a representative of the Lestari Farmers' Cooperative, "We do not want to profit from something that can destroy other lives. That is not a blessing." This statement emphasizes that spirituality serves as the ethical foundation for running a green business, where human welfare and nature conservation are viewed as interconnected.

b. **Social Value → Community Collaboration**

Groups such as the Cipta Baru Recycling Community and Hijau Muda Kreatif place social solidarity at the core of their business activities. The spirit of cooperation is translated into collaboration between citizens, cross-sector cooperation, and community-based environmental education initiatives. This collective awareness builds a mutually supportive social ecosystem, strengthens business resilience, and expands the impact of sustainability. As one community member said, "It's difficult alone, but together, change is possible." This expression illustrates that change towards sustainability grows from the strength of the community, not from individual efforts alone.

c. **Local Independence → Environmentally Friendly Innovation**

For groups that instill the value of independence, such as the Village Independent Energy MSME, the spirit of self-reliance is the main driver for the emergence of various innovations based on local resources. They develop simple technological solutions such as biogas, biofloc systems, and recycled products to address energy and environmental needs at the village level. This principle of independence reflects that innovation does not have to rely on large capital or sophisticated technology, but can arise from creativity and sensitivity to

local issues. As one member said, "We want to prove that innovation does not have to be expensive; the important thing is that it can help nature and the community."

d. Etika & Integrity → Business Sustainability

Groups such as Koperasi Wanita Alami Berseri (Natural Women's Cooperative) and Eco-Craft Nusantara have made business ethics and integrity the main foundation for building public trust. The values of transparency and integrity are applied throughout the entire business process, from raw material procurement to product marketing. This commitment to honesty not only creates harmonious relationships between producers and consumers but also strengthens customer loyalty and ensures long-term business sustainability. Thus, business ethics serve as a pillar that reinforces the balance between social responsibility and economic success.

- **Systematic Analysis**

Field findings indicate that the transformation of values towards green business practices among Indonesian MSMEs is organic and socially based, rather than through a structural, bureaucratic, or purely regulatory approach. This change grows naturally from individual and collective awareness rooted in local values, spirituality, and a sense of moral responsibility towards the environment. In this context, MSME actors are not only responding to external pressures, such as government policies or global market trends. Still, they are also developing sustainability practices by reflecting on the values that are alive in their own culture.

This transformation is reinforced by social interactions and collective practices at the community level, where solidarity, mutual assistance, and shared learning are the main mechanisms maintaining the consistent application of green values in business activities. In other words, the green business culture that grows at the grassroots level reflects a bottom-up value formation process born from local beliefs, experiences, and needs, rather than merely the implementation of top-down policies.

This confirms that green business practices in Indonesia have unique cultural and spiritual dimensions, where sustainability is understood not only as an economic strategy or ethical obligation, but as part of a way of life that emphasizes harmony between humans, nature, and communities. Thus, the green business culture in MSMEs cannot be viewed merely as the adoption of global policies, but as a concrete manifestation of local wisdom and values that continue to evolve in accordance with the social and environmental context of each region.

**Perceived Impacts**

Various MSME actors involved in this study reported several significant positive impacts from the application of green business principles, both in economic, personal, and socio-environmental aspects. Despite facing challenges such as limited resources, market access, and technical knowledge, these entrepreneurs felt long-term benefits that strengthened the sustainability of their businesses and deepened the social meaning of their business activities. One respondent stated, "The result is not only money, but peace of mind because our business does not cause damage" (Koperasi Hijau Pesisir Sejahtera), reflecting that a sustainability orientation is not only an economic strategy, but also a reflection of moral and spiritual values in entrepreneurship.

Economically, the implementation of environmentally friendly practices has proven to strengthen the competitive position of MSME players in the market. The majority of respondents (88.9%) reported an increase in customer loyalty as a result of their commitment to sustainability. In comparison, 83.3% stated that a green approach helped create stronger and more valuable product differentiation. In addition, 61.1% of businesses successfully penetrated niche markets with premium segments that value sustainability, and 72.2% experienced long-term operational efficiency through energy savings and better waste management. These findings show that the triple bottom line principle balancing economic profit, social concern, and environmental preservation can be effectively implemented in the context of SMEs. It also serves as an

economically profitable sustainability strategy without compromising ethical and environmental aspects.

From a personal and socio-environmental perspective, green businesses have a transformative impact on the psychological, moral, and social well-being of entrepreneurs. All respondents (100%) reported greater inner satisfaction and a stronger sense of purpose in running their businesses, while 77.8% gained social recognition and a positive reputation in their communities. A total of 88.9% stated that involvement in green business encouraged them to continue learning and adapting, strengthening their capacity as agents of change in their communities. At the socio-environmental level, 94.4% of respondents succeeded in reducing their carbon footprint through energy efficiency and waste management, 83.3% felt that they contributed to improving the welfare of the community, and 66.7% played an active role in educating other entrepreneurs to transform towards sustainable practices.

Table 8. Impact of the Application of Green Business Values and Practices on MSME Groups

Impact Category	Aspect	Total Respondents	Percentage (%)	Description
Business	Increased customer loyalty	16	88,9%	Enhancing trust and long-term relationships with consumers
	Product differentiation in the market	15	83,3%	Creating a unique image based on environmental values
	Access to premium niche markets	11	61,1%	Reaching consumers who care about sustainability
	Long-term operational efficiency	13	72,2%	Cost savings through energy efficiency and waste management
Personal	Inner satisfaction and sense of purpose	18	100%	Increasing meaning and motivation in entrepreneurship
	Social recognition and positive reputation	14	77,8%	Receiving appreciation from the community and customers
	Learning and self-development	16	88,9%	Encouraging increased capacity and awareness of sustainability
Social Environment	Carbon footprint reduction	17	94,4%	Improved energy efficiency and waste management
	Contribution to community welfare	15	83,3%	Empowering local communities through green business practices
	Education and inspiration for other entrepreneurs	12	66,7%	Becoming a role model and agent of change for sustainable business

Indeed, as stated by a representative of the Koperasi Hijau Pesisir Sejahtera, “The results are not only money, but also peace of mind because our business does not cause damage.” This view confirms that success in green business for MSME players is measured not only in financial terms but also in terms of inner satisfaction and moral peace, which arise because their business aligns with sustainability principles. This statement reinforces the finding that the personal dimension is the most dominant impact of implementing green business, where inner satisfaction and a sense of purpose become the main sources of motivation in maintaining commitment to environmentally friendly practices. More than just an economic strategy, this approach reflects a form of ethical and spiritual responsibility towards nature and future generations. Thus, the

meaning of “peace of mind” represents a state of ecological well-being—a harmony between humans and the environment—which makes green business not only an economic instrument but also a way of life rooted in moral, social, and sustainability values.

## DISCUSSION

The findings of this study confirm that the personal values of entrepreneurs, such as concern for the environment, moral integrity, spirituality, social responsibility, and creativity based on local wisdom, play an important role as key drivers in the process of transformation towards green business practices. This aligns with the findings of [Audretsch et al. \(2025\)](#), who state that values are not static or inherent to individuals alone but are dynamic and continuously flow between individuals, organizations, and institutions through what are known as value practices or collective entrepreneurship practices. This means that the personal values of MSME actors, which initially grew from individual experiences and beliefs, are then strengthened through social interaction, community collaboration, and business networks that share a vision of sustainability.

The theory of sustainable value creation emphasizes the importance of integrating economic, social, and environmental values into business strategies so that organizations can survive and grow sustainably. In this view, the success of a business is not only measured by financial profitability, but also by its contribution to social welfare and environmental sustainability. [Zioto et al., \(2023\)](#) through their conceptual framework, explain that social and environmental values must be an integral part of the business decision-making process, not merely additional activities or symbolic social responsibilities. This integration enables the creation of a business system that is resilient, adaptive, and has a positive long-term impact on the community and the ecosystem in which the business operates.

The findings of this study align with the triple bottom line principle and the concept of blended value, which emphasize that business success is measured not only in financial terms but also in terms of its contributions to social welfare and environmental sustainability simultaneously ([Purnama, 2024](#)). At the micro level, the identified economic impacts—such as increased operational efficiency, optimized resource utilization, and increased product value—show that green business practices can be a sustainable competitive strategy, especially when driven by the intrinsic values of entrepreneurs that foster consistency and long-term responsibility. Meanwhile, the social impact is evident through increased collaboration between communities, strengthened local solidarity, and the emergence of educational initiatives that encourage public awareness of the importance of an environmentally friendly lifestyle. On the other hand, the environmental impact, including waste reduction, energy efficiency, and natural resource conservation efforts, demonstrates that the internalization of entrepreneurs' personal values is not only symbolic but also produces real changes that balance the economic, social, and ecological aspects of their business ecosystems.

From a policy perspective, these findings indicate that efforts to empower MSMEs based on green principles should focus not only on improving technical capacity and providing economic incentives but also on strengthening the values and ethics of entrepreneurship. Programs that instill values such as social responsibility, environmental ethics, and work spirituality can create a stronger moral foundation for sustainable business practices. In addition, it is important to build value-based dialogue and community spaces that enable MSME actors to exchange experiences and foster collective awareness of the importance of sustainability. This type of intervention model tends to have longer-lasting effects than short-term assistance or subsidy schemes, which often fail to address the root causes of behavioral change. In a managerial context, entrepreneurs and group leaders at the MSME level need to integrate green values from the business planning stage as an integral part of their business strategy, not just as a symbolic addition. Consistent implementation of internal policies and the application of peer accountability mechanisms, where members remind and hold each other accountable to green principles, will help foster a sustainable and authentic organizational culture.

Overall, this study confirms that entrepreneurs' personal values, entrepreneurial competencies, and visionary leadership roles are key factors in shaping and strengthening a green business culture among Indonesian MSMEs. When personal values such as integrity, social

responsibility, and environmental awareness are well internalized, they form the moral foundation that drives consistency in sustainability practices across all aspects of business operations. On the other hand, entrepreneurial competencies including the ability to innovate, make strategic decisions, and manage resources efficiently play an important role in translating these values into concrete actions that generate both economic and ecological benefits. Inclusive and value-oriented leadership support strengthens this synergy, creating collective direction and motivation for organizational members to commit to sustainability goals (Handoyo et al., 2021; Muangmee et al., 2021). Thus, the integration of values, competencies, and leadership not only helps MSMEs align their business objectives with global sustainability principles but also builds a foundation for resilient, ethical, and environmentally friendly economic growth.

## CONCLUSION

This study explores the role of entrepreneurs' personal values in fostering a green business culture among Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) in Indonesia. The results show that values such as environmental awareness, social responsibility, spirituality, honesty, and innovation based on local wisdom are the main drivers of transformation towards sustainable business practices. These values do not stop at the individual level, but are internalized, interpreted in a business context, and implemented collectively to form shared norms and ethics that become the identity of the business group. Through this process, MSME actors can integrate green practices such as energy efficiency, waste management, the use of environmentally friendly materials, and the empowerment of local communities.

The positive impact of implementing these values and practices is multidimensional: economically, it increases product efficiency and competitiveness; socially, it strengthens collaborative networks and community awareness of sustainability; and environmentally, it reduces waste and improves local ecosystems. This proves that sustainability is not only the result of modern business strategies, but also a reflection of the moral and spiritual values of society. Therefore, the development of sustainable green business in Indonesia needs to be rooted in local values and culture, not merely in the adoption of technology or formal policies. The government, educational institutions, and MSME support organizations are advised to develop entrepreneurship coaching programs that emphasize not only technical and economic aspects but also ethics, spirituality, and environmental responsibility. Through the synergy of values, innovation, and policies, Indonesian MSMEs have the potential to become pioneers of a green economy that is competitive, socially just, and ecologically sustainable.

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