Implementation Of Riau Governor's Regulation Policy Number 33 Of 2018 Concerning Education For Sustainable Development (ESD) In Pekanbaru City

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Abstrak

Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) is internationally recognized as a strategic instrument for promoting sustainable development by integrating environmental, social, and economic dimensions into educational processes. In Indonesia, the commitment to ESD has been institutionalized at the regional level through Governor Regulation of Riau Province Number 33 of 2018 concerning Education for Sustainable Development. However, empirical evidence regarding how this regulation is implemented at the local level remains limited. This study aims to analyze the implementation of the regulation in Pekanbaru City, focusing on policy communication, institutional capacity, integration of ESD into educational practices, and monitoring and evaluation mechanisms. This study employed a qualitative descriptive approach with a case study design. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews with government officials, school principals, teachers, university representatives, non-governmental organizations, and community leaders, supported by document analysis and non-participant observation. The data were analyzed using an interactive thematic analysis model consisting of data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing. The findings reveal that although the ESD policy has been formally disseminated among government institutions, stakeholder understanding at the school and community levels remains uneven. ESD is predominantly interpreted as environmental education, while its social and economic dimensions receive limited attention. Institutional capacity constraints, including the lack of trained teachers, limited technical guidelines, and the absence of dedicated funding, significantly hinder effective implementation. Furthermore, ESD integration mainly occurs through extracurricular activities and school culture initiatives, rather than through systematic curriculum integration. The study also identifies the absence of specific monitoring and evaluation instruments for assessing ESD outcomes, which weakens policy accountability and continuous improvement. This study concludes that the implementation of Governor Regulation Number 33 of 2018 in Pekanbaru City is still at an early stage of institutionalization and has not yet produced comprehensive systemic change. Strengthening operational guidelines, capacity-building programs, curriculum integration, and evaluation frameworks is essential to enhance the effectiveness of ESD as a governance instrument for sustainable urban development. This research contributes to the literature by providing empirical insights into local-level ESD policy implementation and by positioning ESD as a critical component of sustainable development governance.

Keywords: Education for Sustainable Development, Policy Implementation, Local Governance, Sustainable Development, Pekanbaru City

1. Introduce

Sustainable development has become a central paradigm in global policy discourse, emphasizing the balanced integration of economic growth, social equity, and environmental protection to ensure the well-being of present and future generations. This paradigm is institutionalized in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development adopted by the United Nations, which comprises 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Among these goals, SDG 4 explicitly highlights the strategic role of quality education in promoting sustainable development by fostering knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes necessary for responsible citizenship

and sustainable lifestyles [1]. Consequently, education is widely recognized not only as a sectoral policy domain but also as a transformative instrument for achieving broader sustainability objectives.

In response to this global commitment, many countries have integrated the concept of Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) into their national and subnational policy frameworks. ESD is defined as an educational approach that empowers learners to make informed decisions and take responsible actions for environmental integrity, economic viability, and a just society, for present and future generations [2]. Rather than focusing

solely on cognitive learning outcomes, ESD emphasizes holistic learning processes that integrate ethical reflection, critical thinking, and participatory action.

Indonesia has adopted the principles of sustainable development through various national development policies and sectoral regulations, including those in the education sector. At the regional level, the Province of Riau has institutionalized ESD through Governor Regulation of Riau Province Number 33 of 2018 concerning Education for Sustainable Development. This regulation serves as a strategic legal framework to guide educational institutions, local governments, and other stakeholders in integrating sustainability principles into educational planning, implementation, and evaluation.

Pekanbaru City, as the capital of Riau Province and a rapidly growing urban center, faces complex sustainability challenges such as urban environmental degradation, recurrent haze disasters, increasing energy consumption, waste management problems, and socio-economic disparities [3]. These challenges demand not only technical and infrastructural solutions but also fundamental changes in public awareness, behavior, and values. In this context, the effective implementation of ESD becomes critically important, as education is expected to function as a catalyst for long-term behavioral and cultural transformation toward sustainability.

However, despite the existence of a formal regulatory framework, preliminary observations and previous studies indicate that the implementation of ESD policies in Riau Province has not yet achieved optimal outcomes. Several studies report that ESD-related activities tend to be fragmented, project-based, and limited to certain institutions or programs, without strong systemic integration into curricula, institutional management, and community education [4]. Moreover, differences in understanding of ESD concepts among educators, school administrators, and policymakers contribute to inconsistencies in policy interpretation and execution.

Another major issue concerns the absence of a comprehensive and standardized monitoring and evaluation mechanism for ESD implementation at the local level. Without clear indicators and performance measurement tools, it becomes difficult to assess the extent to which the objectives of Governor Regulation Number 33 of 2018 have been achieved, as well as to identify best practices and areas requiring improvement. This condition potentially weakens policy accountability and reduces the strategic value of ESD as a long-term development instrument.

Based on these considerations, a systematic and in-depth study on the implementation of the Governor Regulation on ESD in Pekanbaru City is urgently needed. Such a study is expected to generate empirical evidence regarding the effectiveness of policy implementation, identify institutional and contextual barriers, and formulate policy-relevant recommendations. More importantly, this research positions ESD not merely as an educational innovation, but as a governance instrument for strengthening sustainable urban development.

2. Method

This study adopted a qualitative descriptive research approach with a case study design to examine the implementation of Governor Regulation of Riau Province Number 33 of 2018 concerning Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) in Pekanbaru City. A qualitative approach was selected because it enables an in-depth exploration of social phenomena by capturing meanings, interpretations, and processes experienced by policy actors and stakeholders in natural settings [5]. The case study design allows researchers to investigate contemporary phenomena within real-life contexts, particularly when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident, as in policy implementation processes [6]. This design is especially appropriate for analyzing how regulatory provisions are translated into operational practices within educational institutions and community environments.

The research site was Pekanbaru City, which was purposively selected due to its strategic position as the capital of Riau Province and its complex sustainability challenges, including environmental degradation, rapid urbanization, and socio-economic inequality. As the administrative center of the province, Pekanbaru is expected to function as a leading model for the implementation of provincial policies. Therefore, examining ESD implementation in this city provides an important representation of how regional regulations are operationalized at the local level.

Informants in this study were selected using purposive sampling based on their relevance, authority, and involvement in ESD-related policy formulation and implementation. Purposive sampling is widely used in qualitative research to ensure that participants possess rich and relevant information related to the research focus [5]. The diversity of informants was intended to capture multiple perspectives and reduce single-source bias. The main categories of informants and their roles are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Categories of Informants and Research Roles

No	Informant Category	Role in ESD Implementation
1	Provincial Education Office officials	Policy coordination and technical guidance
2	City Education Office officials	Local implementation and supervision
3	School principals	Institutional management and policy translation
4	Teachers	Classroom-level implementation
5	University representatives	Academic support and community service programs
6	NGO representatives	Community-based sustainability initiatives
7	Community leaders	Local engagement and socialization

Data were collected through in-depth interviews, document analysis, and observation. Semi-structured interviews were conducted to explore informants' understanding of ESD, experiences in implementing the regulation, perceived benefits, challenges, and expectations for improvement. Semi-structured interviews allow flexibility while ensuring that core issues related to policy implementation are consistently addressed [7]. Document analysis included the Governor Regulation, strategic plans, school curricula, lesson plans, and implementation reports. Document analysis is essential in policy studies because it provides insight into formal intentions, regulatory consistency, and institutional commitments [8]. Observations were conducted in selected schools and community learning activities to examine how ESD principles were manifested in teaching practices, school culture, and daily behavior.

Data analysis followed an interactive model consisting of data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing. This model emphasizes continuous movement between data collection and analysis, allowing emerging insights to shape subsequent data gathering [9]. Interview transcripts, observation notes, and documents were coded thematically. Codes were grouped into broader categories such as policy communication, institutional capacity, stakeholder collaboration, and monitoring and evaluation. Cross-case comparisons were then conducted to identify recurring patterns and explanatory relationships.

The trustworthiness of the findings was ensured through source triangulation, method triangulation, member checking, and peer debriefing. Triangulation enhances credibility by comparing information obtained from different sources and methods [9]. Member checking was conducted by sharing preliminary interpretations with selected informants to confirm accuracy and resonance with their experiences. Peer debriefing with academic colleagues supported analytical rigor and minimized researcher bias.

Ethical considerations were addressed throughout the research process. All participants were informed about the purpose of the study and voluntarily consented to participate. Confidentiality and anonymity were ensured by using codes instead of real names. The study adhered to fundamental ethical principles of respect, beneficence, and justice.

3. Results and Discussion

This section presents and discusses the findings of the study based on thematic analysis of interviews, observations, and document review regarding the implementation of Governor Regulation of Riau Province Number 33 of 2018 concerning Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) in Pekanbaru City. The findings are organized into four major themes: (1) policy communication and understanding, (2) institutional capacity and resources, (3) integration of ESD into educational practices, and (4) monitoring and evaluation mechanisms.

Policy Communication and Stakeholder Understanding

The findings indicate that the dissemination of the ESD policy has been conducted primarily through formal meetings, circular letters, and limited socialization activities at the provincial and city levels. Officials from the education offices generally demonstrated a good understanding of the objectives and principles of ESD. However, variations in comprehension were found at the school level, particularly among teachers and non-teaching staff.

Most school principals perceived ESD as closely related to environmental education activities, such as tree planting, waste segregation, and school cleanliness programs. Meanwhile, only a small number of informants recognized ESD as a holistic framework encompassing social, economic, and cultural dimensions in addition to environmental sustainability. This indicates that ESD is often interpreted narrowly, which potentially limits its transformative impact.

Table 2. summarizes the level of stakeholder understanding of ESD concepts.

Stakeholder Group	Dominant Understanding of ESD	Level
Provincial Education Officials	Holistic (environmental, social, economic)	High
City Education Officials	Mostly holistic	Medium–High
School Principals	Environmental-focused	Medium
Teachers	Environmental-focused	Low–Medium
Community Representatives	Activity-based sustainability	Low

These findings align with policy implementation theory, which emphasizes that clear and consistent communication is essential to ensure uniform interpretation and execution of policies [10]. Inconsistent understanding among implementers can result in fragmented and symbolic implementation rather than substantive change.

Institutional Capacity and Resources

The study found that institutional capacity significantly influences the extent to which ESD is implemented. Schools with prior experience in environmental or character education programs tended to integrate ESD more actively into school activities. However, most schools reported limited human resources with formal training in ESD, as well as insufficient financial and technical support.

Several teachers stated that they had never received specific training related to ESD, and therefore relied on personal interpretation when integrating sustainability topics into lessons. Budget allocation for ESD-related activities was also not specifically earmarked in most schools, causing ESD initiatives to depend largely on incidental funding or external support.

Table 3. presents a summary of institutional capacity conditions.

Indicator	Condition
Availability of trained ESD teachers	Limited
Dedicated ESD budget	Mostly unavailable
Teaching guidelines/manuals	Limited
External partnerships	Occasional

From a policy perspective, this condition reflects the importance of resources as a determinant of successful implementation. Adequate staffing, training, and funding are key variables affecting policy outcomes [10]. Without strengthening institutional capacity, ESD implementation is likely to remain superficial.

Integration of ESD into Educational Practices

The integration of ESD into educational practices in Pekanbaru City occurs mainly through extracurricular activities and school culture initiatives rather than through systematic curriculum integration. Examples include:
1. Clean and green school movements
2. Waste management campaigns
3. Tree planting activities
4. Energy-saving campaigns

Only a small number of schools reported explicitly embedding sustainability concepts into lesson plans across subjects such as science, social studies, and civics education.
Observation results suggest that classroom-based integration of ESD is largely dependent on individual teacher initiative. There is no standardized framework or compulsory requirement to integrate ESD learning outcomes into all subjects.

Table 4. shows the forms of ESD integration identified.

Form of Integration	Frequency
Extracurricular activities	High
School culture practices	High
Integrated in lesson plans	Low
Project-based learning	Low
Community-based projects	Very Low

These findings indicate that ESD implementation in Pekanbaru remains largely operational and activity-oriented, rather than curricular and systemic. This supports previous research suggesting that ESD often becomes an add-on program rather than a transformative educational approach [11].

Monitoring and Evaluation of ESD Implementation

The study found that no specific monitoring and evaluation (M&E) system exists for ESD implementation at the city level. Evaluation of ESD-related activities is usually merged with general school supervision processes, without specific indicators or performance benchmarks.

Education office officials acknowledged that they do not possess standardized instruments to measure ESD outcomes, such as changes in student attitudes, behaviors, or competencies related to sustainability. As a result, policy success is often assessed based on the presence of activities rather than their impact.

Table 5 summarizes the status of monitoring and evaluation.

Table 5. Monitoring and Evaluation Conditions

Aspect	Status
Specific ESD indicators	Not available
Routine reporting	Limited
Impact measurement	Not conducted
Feedback mechanism	Weak

This situation weakens policy accountability and limits opportunities for continuous improvement. Effective policy implementation requires systematic feedback loops that connect policy objectives, implementation processes, and outcomes [12].

Discussion: Toward Strengthening Local ESD Governance

The overall findings indicate that the implementation of Governor Regulation Number 33 of 2018 in Pekanbaru City is still in an early and transitional stage. While there is formal recognition of ESD, practical implementation remains fragmented, resource-constrained, and weakly institutionalized.
The dominance of environmental interpretations of ESD suggests a need to strengthen conceptual clarity regarding the multidimensional nature of

sustainability. Furthermore, limited integration into curriculum structures indicates that ESD has not yet been internalized as a core educational paradigm.

From a governance perspective, this study highlights that ESD should be positioned not only as an educational innovation, but also as a policy instrument for urban sustainability transformation. Strengthening coordination among government agencies, schools, universities, and civil society organizations is essential to achieve this goal.

The findings extend existing literature by demonstrating how local regulatory frameworks shape ESD implementation patterns and by identifying governance-level constraints that influence educational transformation.

4. Conclusion

This study examined the implementation of Governor Regulation of Riau Province Number 33 of 2018 concerning Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) in Pekanbaru City, with the objective of understanding how the policy is communicated, interpreted, operationalized, and evaluated at the local level. The findings indicate that although ESD has been formally recognized within regional policy frameworks, its practical implementation in Pekanbaru City remains partial, fragmented, and largely activity-oriented.

First, the study reveals that policy communication has reached key government institutions; however, the transmission of ESD concepts to schools and community-level actors is still uneven. Differences in understanding among stakeholders have resulted in varying interpretations of ESD, with a strong tendency to equate ESD primarily with environmental activities. This narrow interpretation limits the transformative potential of ESD, which is intended to integrate environmental, social, economic, and cultural dimensions of sustainability.

Second, institutional capacity constitutes a major determinant of implementation effectiveness. Most schools lack teachers who have received formal training in ESD, and there is no dedicated budget allocation or standardized technical guideline for ESD implementation. Consequently, schools rely heavily on individual initiatives and existing environmental programs rather than systematic and structured integration of sustainability principles. This condition weakens the consistency and sustainability of ESD practices across educational institutions.

Third, the integration of ESD into educational practices has not yet reached the curricular level in a comprehensive manner. ESD is predominantly manifested through extracurricular activities and school culture programs, while classroom-based integration into lesson plans, learning outcomes, and assessment systems remains limited. This indicates that ESD has not been fully institutionalized as a core pedagogical approach, but rather functions as a complementary program.

Fourth, the absence of a specific monitoring and evaluation framework for ESD implementation significantly constrains policy effectiveness. Without clear indicators, baseline data, and outcome-oriented measurement instruments, policymakers are unable to accurately assess progress, identify best practices, or design targeted interventions. As a result, accountability mechanisms related to ESD remain weak.

Taken together, these findings suggest that the implementation of Governor Regulation Number 33 of 2018 in Pekanbaru City is still in an early stage of institutionalization. The regulation has succeeded in establishing a normative foundation for ESD, but has not yet produced strong systemic change within educational governance and practice. Therefore, ESD in Pekanbaru can be characterized as administratively acknowledged but pedagogically underdeveloped.

This study contributes to the literature by demonstrating how a regional regulatory framework shapes local ESD implementation and by highlighting governance-level constraints that influence educational transformation. Unlike previous studies that focus primarily on pedagogical dimensions of ESD, this research positions ESD as a governance instrument that requires coherent policy design, institutional alignment, and intersectoral collaboration.

Based on the findings, several strategic directions can be proposed. Local governments should develop operational guidelines and standardized indicators for ESD implementation. Continuous capacity-building programs for teachers and school leaders are essential to strengthen conceptual understanding and pedagogical competence in ESD. Furthermore, ESD principles should be formally integrated into curriculum documents, lesson planning requirements, and assessment systems. Strengthening partnerships with universities, civil society organizations, and the private sector can also enhance resource mobilization and innovation.

In conclusion, strengthening the implementation of ESD in Pekanbaru City requires a shift from fragmented, activity-based approaches toward a coherent, systemic, and governance-driven model. Such a transformation is crucial if ESD is to function effectively as a catalyst for sustainable urban development and as a strategic instrument for achieving long-term sustainability goals in Riau Province.

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