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The development of blue economy research in Indonesia: A systematic literature review and future research directions

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Abstract

The blue economy framework has been widely adopted to promote sustainable utilization of marine resources while balancing economic growth, environmental protection, and social welfare. However, research on the blue economy remains fragmented across disciplines, methodologies, and spatial scales. This study aims to systematically review the development of blue economy research in Indonesia, focusing on definitions, methodologies, data sources, and geographical coverage. A systematic literature review (SLR) was conducted on 15 selected studies from academic databases. The limited number of findings reflects that the blue economy is still a relatively new concept in the Indonesian context, so it has not been widely adopted explicitly in scientific publications despite the country's strong maritime character. The results show that the blue economy is interpreted from multiple perspectives, including sustainability, economic development, policy, and community-based approaches. The studies employ diverse methods such as qualitative analysis, econometric modeling, spatial analysis, and machine learning, with data ranging from surveys to satellite imagery. Geographical coverage spans local to regional levels, but remains fragmented. The study identifies key gaps, including lack of conceptual consistency and limited methodological integration, highlighting the need for a more interdisciplinary approach to advance future research. This study contributes by proposing an integrated framework for future interdisciplinary blue economy research in Indonesia.

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INTRODUCTION

Indonesia, as the world's largest archipelagic country, possesses vast marine resources with significant economic potential ([Kobayashi, 2023](#)). The marine sector encompasses a wide range of activities, including fisheries, marine tourism, transportation, offshore energy, and maritime industries, all of which contribute substantially to national development ([Choudhary et al., 2021](#); [Martínez-Vázquez et al., 2021](#)). The economic value of Indonesia's marine resources is estimated to reach trillions of dollars annually, underscoring the strategic importance of the maritime sector in achieving sustainable economic growth and national prosperity ([Hastuti et al., 2023](#)). The spatial distribution of Indonesia's marine regions is illustrated in Figure 1.



Figure 1. Administrative Map of Indonesia

The concept of the blue economy has emerged as a key framework for optimizing this potential ([Liang et al., 2022](#)). It emphasizes the sustainable utilization of marine and coastal resources while ensuring environmental preservation and social welfare. This approach promotes efficiency in resource use, waste reduction, and ecosystem conservation, in line with global commitments such as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) ([Choudhary et al., 2021](#)). In Indonesia, the blue economy has increasingly been incorporated into national development strategies and policy frameworks to support long-term sustainability in marine resource management.

The implementation of the blue economy, however, involves a high level of complexity. It encompasses multiple dimensions, including economic, environmental, social, technological, and governance aspects. The growing availability of spatio-temporal data, along with advancements in analytical methods and the integration of diverse data sources – ranging from statistical and survey data to satellite imagery – has further expanded the scope of research in this field ([Vitousek et al., 2023](#)). Consequently, studies on the blue economy employ a wide range of methodologies, including qualitative analysis, econometric modeling, spatial analysis, efficiency measurement, and machine learning approaches.

A growing body of literature highlights the increasing use of spatial and spatio-temporal analysis across various disciplines, such as public health and environmental studies. Research on the blue economy has similarly expanded in recent years, covering topics such as economic determinants, policy evaluation, environmental monitoring, and sectoral applications. Despite this growth, the literature remains fragmented, as many studies focus on specific sectors, regions, or analytical approaches without providing a comprehensive and integrated perspective.

In the Indonesian context, existing studies have explored various aspects of the blue economy, including fisheries development, tourism efficiency, climate impacts, policy interventions, and community-based approaches. Nevertheless, these studies are often conducted in isolation, resulting in limited integration across different perspectives. This

condition constrains a comprehensive understanding of the development of blue economy research, including its key trends, methodological patterns, and potential future directions.

This study aims to conduct a systematic literature review of the blue economy in Indonesia by examining existing research across several dimensions, including definitions, methodologies, data sources, and geographical coverage. By synthesizing the current body of knowledge, this study seeks to provide a more integrated understanding of the development of blue economy research and to offer insights for future studies as well as policy-making. Despite the growing number of studies, there is a lack of integrated synthesis examining methodological trends, data integration, and spatial dimensions of blue economy research in Indonesia. This study addresses this gap by answering the following questions:

- How is the blue economy concept defined?
- What methodologies are used?
- What data sources and spatial scales dominate the literature?
- What are the key research gaps?

METHOD

This study employs a systematic literature review (SLR) protocol adapted from combination of key words including identification, screening, eligibility, and inclusion stages approach to examine the development of blue economy research in Indonesia. This method enables the researcher to systematically identify, evaluate, and synthesize relevant studies in a structured manner.

The data used in this study consist of secondary data obtained from scientific journal articles, within 2015-2025 timeframe. The literature was collected from various academic databases, such as Google Scholar and reputable open-access journals, ie. WoS. The selection of articles focused on studies related to the blue economy in Indonesia. The literature search process was conducted using several keywords, including “blue economy”, “marine economy”, “coastal”, “fisheries”, and “Indonesia”. These keywords were applied both individually and in combination to ensure a comprehensive and relevant coverage of the topic.

To ensure the quality and relevance of the selected literature, inclusion and exclusion criteria were applied. The inclusion criteria consisted of: (1) articles discussing the blue economy or related concepts, (2) studies focusing on Indonesia, and (3) publications in scientific journals. Meanwhile, the exclusion criteria included: (1) articles not directly relevant to the blue economy, (2) studies without a clear methodology, and (3) duplicate publications.

A total of 15 articles were initially identified, with 15 meeting the final inclusion criteria after screening were then analysed using a descriptive and thematic approach. The relatively small number of selected studies reflects the application of strict inclusion criteria and the emerging nature of blue economy research in Indonesia. The analysis focused on several key dimensions, including the definition of the blue economy, research methodologies, data sources, and geographical coverage. The findings were synthesized to identify research trends, gaps, and potential directions for future studies.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Overview of Selected Studies

This section provides an overview of the selected studies included in this systematic literature review. Due to strict inclusion criteria, total of 15 articles were analyzed, covering various aspects of the blue economy in Indonesia, including definitions, methodologies, data sources, and geographical focus. The summary of these selected studies can be seen in Table 1.

Table 1. Summary of Selected Studies

No	Author & Year	Method	Data & Area	Focus
1	(Rasyid et al., 2022)	Qualitative (NVivo)	Online News - Indonesia	Discourse analysis
2	(Sari & Oktora, 2025)	Exploratory Factor Analysis	PODES - Provincial level	Index construction
3	(Marwa et al., 2024)	Panel regression	Panel data (2012–2021) - Provinces	Economic determinants
4	(Athalia Christina et al., 2025)	Bayesian spatio-temporal	Climate & BEI - Sumatra	Climate impact
5	(Aghnyn et al., 2024)	Spatial downscaling (INLA)	Satellite data - District level	Fishery potential
6	(Sabrina & Putra, 2025)	Thematic analysis	Speech data - ASEAN	Regional policy
7	(Albrecht et al., 2025)	Qualitative	Policy documents - Indonesia & EU	Policy & justice
8	(Trenggono et al., 2025)	Index + PCA	Multi indicators - National	Index & clustering
9.	(Nur Rachma Fitriani et al., 2025)	Case study	Secondary data - Indonesia	Policy evaluation
10.	(Aris et al., 2022)	Qualitative (PESTEL)	Policy data - Indonesia	Trade policy
11.	(Dewi et al., 2025)	Literature review	Secondary data - Bali	Community approach
12.	(Mollet et al., 2024)	Descriptive + SWOT	Survey (111 respondents) - Jayapura	Fisheries development
13.	(Irhamni & Astuti, 2024)	DEA	Tourism data - Jepara	Efficiency analysis
14.	(Jane et al., 2025)	Machine learning	Satellite imagery - Karimunjava	Ecosystem mapping
15	(Hastuti et al., 2023)	Literature study	Secondary data - Indonesia	Marine potential

The selected studies demonstrate considerable diversity in methodologies, data sources, and geographical coverage. Various analytical approaches are applied, ranging from qualitative methods and econometric models to spatial analysis and machine learning techniques. The data utilized also vary significantly, including survey data, panel data, satellite imagery, policy documents, and media sources. In addition, the geographical scope of the studies ranges from local case studies to national and regional levels, indicating a fragmented yet evolving research landscape of the blue economy in Indonesia. While qualitative approaches dominate policy-related studies, quantitative and spatial methods are more prevalent in environmental and economic analyses, indicating methodological segmentation across research domains.

Bibliometric Analysis

Figure 1 presents the bibliometric analysis of blue economy research in Indonesia. The bibliometric network reveals that economy serves as the dominant central node, indicating that blue economy research in Indonesia is strongly anchored in economic-oriented discussions. This node is closely connected to terms such as development, potential, region, and blue transformation, showing that most studies emphasize economic development and regional resource utilization as core themes. The presence of blue economy approach linked to development further indicates that conceptual discussions are still heavily tied to development-oriented frameworks rather than advanced integrated models. A secondary cluster emerges around environmental and methodological aspects, including statistical downscaling, average rainfall, and coastal tourism. These terms suggest that spatial and climate-based analytical methods are present but not yet dominant, appearing as specialized rather than mainstream

approaches. The connection to BEI (Blue Economy Index) and MFBEI indicates that index-based evaluation studies are still emerging but remain limited in frequency. Overall, the network structure is relatively sparse, with limited node density and weak interconnections across clusters. This suggests that the dataset is still small and the research field is not yet statistically mature in terms of bibliometric strength. The fragmentation of clusters also reflects the multidisciplinary nature of blue economy studies, but with low integration between economic, environmental, and methodological dimensions.

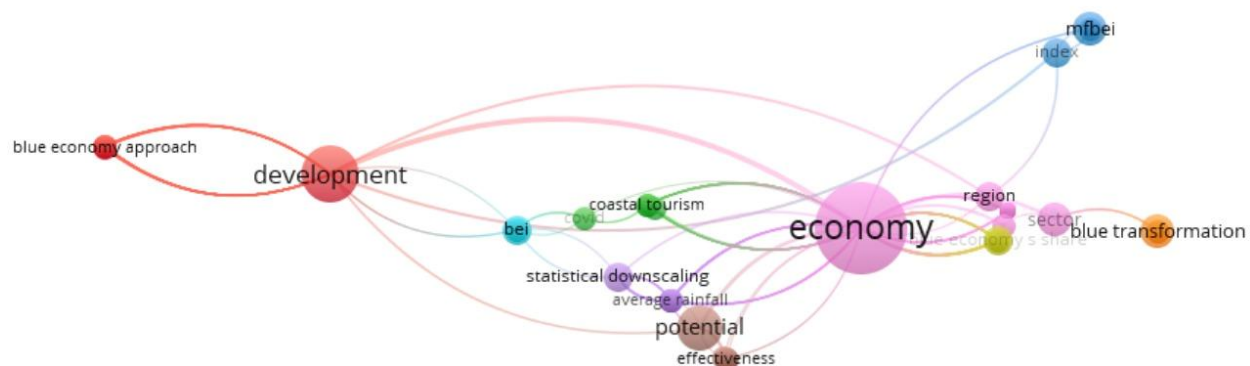


Figure 2. Bibliometric Analysis of Blue Economy

Definition of Blue Economy

The concept of the blue economy has been defined in various ways across the selected studies, reflecting its multidimensional nature and diverse applications. The literature indicates that there is no single, universally accepted definition, as different studies emphasize distinct aspects depending on their research focus and objectives. A number of studies define the blue economy from a sustainability perspective, emphasizing the balance between economic utilization and environmental preservation. In this view, the blue economy focuses on the sustainable use of marine and coastal resources to support long-term ecological stability while maintaining economic benefits. This perspective highlights key principles such as resource efficiency, waste reduction, and ecosystem conservation.

Other studies approach the blue economy from an economic growth perspective, where the primary focus lies in maximizing the economic value of marine resources. These studies emphasize the role of sectors such as fisheries, marine tourism, and maritime industries in driving economic development. The blue economy, in this context, is seen as a strategic tool to enhance national income and regional economic performance, particularly in maritime countries like Indonesia. In addition, several studies define the blue economy through a policy and governance perspective, highlighting the importance of government intervention, regulatory frameworks, and institutional capacity. This perspective emphasizes that the successful implementation of the blue economy depends on effective policies, including taxation, incentives, and sustainable resource management strategies.

Another important perspective identified in the literature is the social and community-based approach, which underlines the role of local communities, traditional knowledge, and social inclusion. This approach stresses that sustainable marine resource management cannot be achieved without active community participation and the integration of local wisdom into policy implementation. The diversity of these perspectives indicates that the blue economy is inherently a multidimensional concept that integrates economic, environmental, social, and institutional dimensions. Despite the increasing number of studies, the absence of a unified definition suggests that the concept is still evolving and being interpreted differently across disciplines and contexts.

Research Methodologies

The analysis of the selected studies reveals a wide range of research methodologies used in examining the blue economy in Indonesia. This diversity reflects the complexity of the topic, which requires different analytical approaches depending on the research objectives and data availability. A significant portion of the studies employs qualitative methods, particularly in research focusing on policy analysis, discourse, and community-based approaches. These studies typically utilize techniques such as content analysis, thematic analysis, and literature reviews to explore narratives, governance frameworks, and social dynamics related to the blue economy. Qualitative approaches are especially useful in understanding institutional roles, policy implementation, and socio-cultural dimensions.

In contrast, several studies adopt quantitative approaches, including econometric modeling and statistical analysis, to examine the economic aspects of the blue economy. Methods such as panel data regression and exploratory factor analysis are used to identify key determinants and construct composite indices. These approaches provide measurable insights into economic performance, regional disparities, and development patterns.

Moreover, there is a growing use of spatial and spatio-temporal methods in blue economy research. These methods are particularly relevant for analyzing geographically distributed data and environmental variables. Techniques such as spatial statistical modeling, Bayesian spatio-temporal regression, and statistical downscaling are applied to assess climate impacts, resource distribution, and regional variations in blue economy indicators.

In addition to traditional statistical methods, several studies incorporate advanced analytical techniques, including machine learning and efficiency analysis. Machine learning models, such as Random Forest and Support Vector Classification, are used for environmental mapping and ecosystem classification. Meanwhile, methods like Data Envelopment Analysis (DEA) are applied to evaluate the efficiency of sectors such as coastal tourism. The findings indicate that blue economy research in Indonesia does not rely on a single dominant methodology but instead utilizes a combination of qualitative, quantitative, spatial, and advanced computational approaches. This methodological diversity highlights the interdisciplinary nature of the field and the need for integrated analytical frameworks to better capture the complexity of the blue economy.

Data Sources

The selected studies utilize a wide variety of data sources, reflecting the increasing complexity and diversity of blue economy research in Indonesia. The data employed can generally be categorized into several main types, including survey data, secondary statistical data, satellite data, policy-related data, and media-based data.

A number of studies rely on survey and field data, particularly those focusing on local or community-level analysis. These data are typically collected directly from respondents, such as coastal communities or stakeholders in the fisheries sector, and are used to examine socio-economic conditions, local potentials, and development challenges. This type of data provides detailed and context-specific insights but is often limited in spatial and temporal coverage. In addition, many studies use secondary statistical data, including panel data and large-scale datasets from government sources. Examples include village-level datasets and multi-year economic indicators, which enable researchers to conduct quantitative and econometric analyses. These data are essential for identifying broader trends, regional disparities, and long-term development patterns within the blue economy framework.

Another important category is satellite and geospatial data, which has become increasingly prominent in recent research. These data are used to analyze environmental conditions, map ecosystems, and assess the impact of climate variables on marine and coastal resources. The integration of satellite imagery with spatial modeling techniques allows for more comprehensive and large-scale analysis, particularly in geographically complex regions such as Indonesia.

Furthermore, several studies utilize policy documents and institutional data to examine governance, regulatory frameworks, and government interventions. These data sources are commonly used in qualitative analyses to evaluate the effectiveness of policies, including taxation, incentives, and sustainability programs related to the blue economy. Media-based data, such as online news and public discourse, are also used in some studies to explore how the concept of the blue economy is communicated and perceived in society. This approach provides insights into public narratives and the dissemination of policy-related information.

Overall, the findings indicate that blue economy research in Indonesia increasingly relies on diverse and multidimensional data sources. The integration of different types of data – ranging from micro-level survey data to large-scale satellite imagery – demonstrates a shift toward more comprehensive and data-driven analysis. A key observation is the dominance of qualitative and policy-oriented approaches, particularly in governance and sustainability studies. In contrast, quantitative and spatial methodologies are more frequently employed in environmental and resource-based analyses. This divergence suggests a lack of methodological convergence, which may hinder the development of comprehensive and evidence-based policy frameworks. This diversity also highlights the importance of combining multiple data sources to better capture the complexity of the blue economy.

Geographical Coverage

The geographical coverage of the selected studies shows considerable variation, ranging from local case studies to national and regional analyses. This variation reflects the diverse contexts in which the blue economy is examined in Indonesia. Several studies focus on local or sub-national levels, such as districts, cities, or specific coastal regions. These studies typically aim to explore detailed socio-economic conditions, resource potential, and sectoral performance in specific areas. Case studies conducted in regions such as coastal cities and tourism areas provide in-depth insights into local challenges and opportunities, particularly in fisheries, tourism, and community-based resource management.

At a broader level, a number of studies analyze the blue economy at the provincial level, allowing for comparisons across regions. These studies often utilize aggregated data to assess regional disparities and development patterns. The findings generally indicate differences between western and eastern regions of Indonesia, highlighting unequal distribution of resources, infrastructure, and development outcomes. Some studies adopt a national-level perspective, examining the overall development of the blue economy across Indonesia. These studies typically focus on policy frameworks, national strategies, and large-scale economic potential. By using comprehensive datasets and multidimensional indicators, they provide a more general overview of the country's blue economy performance. Furthermore, the analysis highlights an imbalance in research focus. Economic and environmental aspects are relatively well represented, whereas social and spatial dimensions remain underexplored. This gap is particularly significant in the Indonesian context, where coastal communities and regional disparities play a crucial role in shaping blue economy outcomes.

In addition, a limited number of studies extend beyond national boundaries and consider the regional (ASEAN) context. These studies emphasize Indonesia's role in promoting the blue economy at the regional level and highlight the importance of international cooperation, particularly in managing shared marine resources and advancing sustainable practices. Furthermore, the analysis highlights an imbalance in research focus. Economic and environmental aspects are relatively well represented, whereas social and spatial dimensions remain underexplored. This gap is particularly significant in the Indonesian context, where coastal communities and regional disparities play a crucial role in shaping blue economy outcomes. Despite this diversity, the overall geographical distribution of the studies remains fragmented. The bibliometric findings further reinforce the presence of isolated research clusters, indicating limited interdisciplinary collaboration. Such silos may restrict knowledge integration and reduce the practical applicability of research findings in policy and decision-making

processes. Most research is concentrated on specific regions or sectors, with limited integration across different spatial scales. This fragmentation makes it challenging to obtain a comprehensive and unified understanding of the blue economy in Indonesia. From a theoretical perspective, the study underscores the need for a more integrated framework that bridges economic growth, environmental sustainability, and social inclusivity. Without such integration, the blue economy risks being implemented as a fragmented set of initiatives rather than a cohesive development strategy.

CONCLUSION

This study provides a systematic literature review of blue economy research in Indonesia by examining key dimensions, including definitions, methodologies, data sources, and geographical coverage. The findings indicate that the concept of the blue economy is inherently multidimensional and continues to evolve, with varying interpretations across studies. Existing research approaches the blue economy from sustainability, economic, policy, and community perspectives, reflecting its broad scope and interdisciplinary nature.

The review also reveals substantial diversity in research methodologies and data utilization. Studies employ a combination of qualitative and quantitative approaches, alongside the increasing use of spatial, spatio-temporal, and advanced analytical techniques such as machine learning. In addition, a wide range of data sources is used, including survey data, secondary statistics, satellite imagery, and policy-related information. Despite these advancements, the integration of methods and data sources remains limited, and research coverage is often fragmented across sectors and geographical scales.

Overall, the literature highlights several critical gaps, including the lack of conceptual consistency, limited methodological integration, fragmented data usage, and uneven geographical coverage. Addressing these challenges requires a more comprehensive and interdisciplinary approach that integrates multiple analytical methods, data sources, and spatial perspectives. This study contributes by providing a structured synthesis of existing research and is expected to support future studies and inform policy-making toward more sustainable and inclusive blue economy development in Indonesia. Advancing blue economy research in Indonesia requires a paradigm shift from fragmented analyses towards an integrated, interdisciplinary, and data-driven approach. Future research should integrate spatial analytics, economic modeling, and governance frameworks to develop a more holistic blue economy assessment model.

AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTIONS

All authors made significant contributions to this study. AT was responsible for the conceptualization of the study and the preparation of the initial draft of the manuscript. Author MY was involved in data collection and processing. AC performed the formal analysis and developed the methodology and models. SS and ST contributed to the validation of the results and the presentation of visualizations. ANB supervised the entire research process, managed project administration, and reviewed and refined the manuscript. All authors have read, revised, and approved the final version of the manuscript for publication.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare that they have no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this manuscript.

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