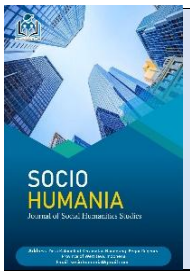

Journal of Social Humanities Studies, Vol 2 (1) 2025: 10-24

Socio Humania

https://mabadiiqtishada.org/index.php/SocioHumania

ISSN: 3047-9517; e-ISSN: 3047-9509

Empowering Communities through Eco-Creative Business: A Case Study of Ichinogami

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ARTICLE INFO

Received June 01, 2025
Accepted June 13, 2025
Published June 16, 2025

Keywords:
Green Economy, Circular Economy, Sustainable MSMEs, Creative Enterprise, Environmental Education

ABSTRACT

This study examines the sustainable business strategies of Ichinogami, a creative MSME based in Jakarta, Indonesia, that specializes in environmentally friendly papercraft. Using a qualitative case study approach, this research explores how Ichinogami aligns its practices with the principles of the green economy and circular economy, contributing to the national agenda for sustainable MSMEs. The findings reveal that Ichinogami integrates eco-certified materials, digital innovation, and a cradle-to-cradle product design model that promotes waste reduction and material reuse. Additionally, the company employs an inclusive business model that emphasizes community empowerment, education, and cultural promotion through creative workshops and community-based marketing. Ichinogami's strategic use of digital platforms and multi-channel distribution has also allowed it to maintain relevance in a competitive market while fostering customer loyalty and environmental awareness. The research highlights Ichinogami's role in promoting low-carbon entrepreneurship and its ability to scale environmental impact through product innovation and community collaboration. The study concludes that Ichinogami is a model for sustainable microenterprise development, though it must continue to address challenges such as limited production capacity and international market penetration.

How to cite: Eriya Wiguna, S., Eria Azola Siregar, A., Nursyamsita Yanuarini, A., Ayu Pratami, P., & Sjarief Sjaiful Nazli, R. (2025). Empowering Communities through Eco-Creative Business: A Case Study of Ichinogami. *SocioHumania: Journal of Social Humanities Studies*, 2(1), 10–24. https://doi.org/10.70063/sociohumania.v2i1.96

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INTRODUCTION

In recent years, the escalating threat of climate change and environmental degradation has prompted a paradigm shift in how businesses operate, particularly in developing countries

like Indonesia. The global call for sustainable development has led to increasing attention on Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) as key drivers of inclusive and environmentally responsible economic growth. MSMEs contribute over 60% to Indonesia's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and employ approximately 97% of the national workforce (**Kementerian Koperasi dan UKM, 2023**). Despite their vital role, many MSMEs face constraints such as limited access to technology, inadequate capital, and low environmental awareness, which hinder the adoption of green practices (**Ahmad, 2024**).

To address these challenges, the concept of the green economy—which emphasizes resource efficiency, low carbon growth, and social inclusion—has emerged as a strategic framework for MSME transformation (**UNEP, 2011**). Moreover, the circular economy approach, which promotes recycling, reuse, and waste minimization, offers practical solutions for integrating sustainability into business operations (**Kirchherr et al., 2017**). Within this context, eco-creative business models that combine environmental innovation with community empowerment are increasingly seen as effective pathways to sustainable development (**Umiyati et al., 2023; Winata et al., 2024**).

Ichinogami, an eco-conscious MSME based in West Jakarta, exemplifies this model by producing high-quality papercraft using certified recycled paper. Since its founding in 2021, Ichinogami has not only reduced its environmental footprint through material efficiency and digital innovation but has also fostered community development through educational workshops, collaborative networks, and value-based marketing. Through initiatives such as the Circular Economic Movement, the enterprise encourages customer participation in sustainability while generating social and economic impact (**Wiguna et al., 2025**).

This research is urgent and significant as it highlights how grassroots innovations from creative MSMEs can contribute to national sustainability targets. As 84% of young Indonesian entrepreneurs now express interest in environmentally driven businesses (**Kemenkop UKM, 2023**), models like Ichinogami provide replicable practices for scaling green entrepreneurship. By analyzing Ichinogami's strategies and their impact on the environment and local communities, this study aims to provide insights into how eco-creative businesses can serve as catalysts for green transformation in the MSME sector.

In line with the principles of social humanities, this research emphasizes the intersection of business innovation, environmental sustainability, and community empowerment. It offers a nuanced understanding of how creative micro-enterprises can build resilience, foster ecological awareness, and contribute to a more inclusive and sustainable society. Hence, this study not only responds to academic gaps in eco-social entrepreneurship but also informs policy directions for supporting green MSME ecosystems in Indonesia and beyond.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study adopts a qualitative case study approach to explore the eco-creative business strategies and community empowerment efforts implemented by Ichinogami, a green MSME in West Jakarta. The qualitative paradigm is appropriate for understanding complex, context-specific phenomena that involve social, environmental, and economic dimensions (**Yin, 2018**). By focusing on a single, purposefully selected case, the study aims to uncover in-depth insights into how sustainability and creativity intersect in micro-enterprise development.

The case of Ichinogami was selected using purposive sampling due to its unique positioning as an eco-conscious MSME that integrates circular economy principles, environmental education, and community collaboration into its business model. As Stake

(2005) and Sugiyono (2017) suggest, a case study is suitable when the research seeks to investigate a phenomenon in its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between the phenomenon and the context are not clearly defined.

Data collection was conducted through documentary analysis, encompassing various written and visual materials related to Ichinogami. These include company profiles, product catalogs, digital content, social media posts (Instagram, Facebook, YouTube), news articles, and official publications by related partners and stakeholders. The documentary analysis method allows the researcher to examine both the historical development and current practices of Ichinogami without direct intervention, which is essential for understanding longitudinal business transformation (**Bowen, 2009**). To ensure data credibility, a triangulation technique was employed by comparing multiple data sources, including third-party testimonials from customers, media, and institutional partners. This method enhances the reliability of the research findings by validating the consistency of information across different contexts (**Carter et al., 2014**).

The data were analyzed using content analysis, a qualitative technique aimed at identifying recurring patterns, themes, and narratives within the collected documents. The analysis process involved four stages: (1) document inventory and classification, (2) thematic coding based on business strategy, innovation, sustainability, marketing, and social impact, (3) contextual interpretation of each theme, and (4) synthesis into a descriptive-analytical narrative. This approach aligns with Krippendorff's (2013) emphasis on interpreting texts as representations of social practices and organizational values. Through this methodological framework, the research provides a holistic understanding of how Ichinogami operationalizes eco-creative principles to empower communities and support green economic goals. It also offers empirical evidence to inform policy and practice in sustainable MSME development in Indonesia.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

General Profile of Ichinogami as a Green UMKM

Ichinogami, officially registered as PT Ika Cipta Harmoni, is a creative microenterprise specializing in eco-friendly papercraft design. Established in August 2021 and based in Kemanggisan, West Jakarta, the company has rapidly emerged as a pioneer in the niche market of 3D papercraft production in Indonesia. With a vision to become the leading national brand in this sector, Ichinogami emphasizes the delivery of high-quality, artistically engaging products at accessible prices, all while maintaining a strong commitment to environmental and social responsibility.

As a green MSME (Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprise), Ichinogami aligns its business operations with the principles of sustainable development, particularly through three core pillars: environmental stewardship, social empowerment, and ethical governance. On the environmental front, the company utilizes certified eco-friendly paper materials that minimize ecological impact. The production processes are designed for maximum efficiency, aiming to reduce material waste and avoid the use of non-biodegradable substances such as plastic lamination (**Ahmad, 2024**).

Ichinogami's commitment to social impact is evident in its consistent efforts to provide employee training and skills development, particularly in sustainable crafting techniques and digital literacy. Beyond its internal workforce, the company also conducts regular papercraft workshops for the broader community, with a focus on promoting environmental education

and hands-on creativity. These initiatives reflect an inclusive approach that situates Ichinogami as a socially embedded enterprise, not merely a profit-driven business (**Winata, Suryadi, & Nugroho, 2024**).

In terms of governance, Ichinogami maintains a high standard of transparency and ethical conduct. Its operational model integrates accountability in financial, environmental, and social reporting, which aligns with the global trend toward responsible business practices among creative industries (**Hart & Milstein, 2003**). The company positions itself as a value-driven organization, where ethical decision-making is not an afterthought but a foundational principle.

One of Ichinogami's distinguishing features is its strong network of institutional partnerships. The enterprise is a recognized development partner of both governmental and private organizations, including PLN, Bank Indonesia, the Ministry of Cooperatives and SMEs (Kemenkop), the Ministry of Communication and Information Technology (Kominfo), and the YDBA Astra Foundation. These collaborations not only enhance the company's access to resources and mentorship but also validate its role in the broader movement toward sustainable microenterprise transformation in Indonesia (**Kemenkop UKM, 2023**).

Furthermore, Ichinogami is an active member of ASEPHI (Association of Exporters and Producers of Indonesian Handicrafts) and the Community Leadership Circle Indonesia. Through these affiliations, the company gains visibility in national and international craft exhibitions, positioning itself as a representative of environmentally conscious Indonesian craftsmanship on the global stage. These networks help reinforce Ichinogami's branding and establish it as a trusted figure in the green economy sector.

The roots of Ichinogami's sustainability ethos trace back to its founders' involvement in the papercraft community since 2008. Long before it was formally established as a company, Ichinogami had already been nurturing a community of enthusiasts, educators, and artists who shared a passion for environmentally mindful creation. This organic development has imbued the enterprise with a strong community orientation, allowing it to grow not just as a commercial entity but also as a social movement (**Umiyati et.al., 2023**).

In addition to its grassroots origins, Ichinogami plays a catalytic role in shaping a broader ecosystem for green and creative industries in Indonesia. By combining design innovation, environmental values, and digital storytelling, the company serves as a model for how MSMEs can adapt to climate challenges while nurturing local identity and community participation (**Carter et al., 2020**). The papercraft medium, though seemingly simple, becomes a powerful platform for conveying messages about recycling, cultural heritage, and participatory creativity.

This synthesis of business, art, and environmentalism allows Ichinogami to occupy a unique space in Indonesia's MSME landscape. It stands as an example of how small-scale enterprises can engage with complex global issues—such as climate change, resource scarcity, and social inequality—through innovative, community-rooted solutions. As young entrepreneurs increasingly seek purpose-driven business models, Ichinogami's story offers practical and inspiring insights (**Kementerian Koperasi dan UKM, 2023**).

Overall, Ichinogami's profile as a green MSME reflects a broader transformation occurring within Indonesia's creative economy sector. Through its strategic focus on sustainability, ethical governance, and community empowerment, Ichinogami exemplifies how localized, creative industries can serve as key drivers in achieving national environmental goals and promoting inclusive growth within the framework of the circular economy (**Kirchherr et.al., 2017**).

Business Strategy and Sustainability

Ichinogami's business strategy is deeply rooted in the principles of sustainability and the circular economy, presenting a model where environmental values are inseparable from commercial operations. From the outset, the company has prioritized eco-efficiency by using only certified environmentally friendly paper, setting a strong foundation for sustainable production. Every stage of product development is approached with the intent to reduce waste and conserve resources, demonstrating the company's alignment with the zero-waste philosophy central to circular economy models (**Kirchherr et.al., 2017**).

Central to Ichinogami's strategy is the concept of design efficiency. The papercraft kits are meticulously structured to ensure optimal use of materials while maintaining creative value and aesthetic appeal. These designs not only reduce off-cuts and paper waste but also appeal to environmentally conscious consumers who value resource-aware production. In line with global digital transformation trends, Ichinogami has replaced traditional printed instruction manuals with QR-code-based digital guides, significantly reducing paper use and promoting paperless interaction (**Ahmad, 2024**).

Packaging, often overlooked in sustainability efforts, receives considerable attention in Ichinogami's operations. Since July 2024, the company has eliminated plastic lamination from its packaging materials. Instead, it employs biodegradable and recyclable alternatives that maintain product integrity without compromising the environment. This shift reflects broader industry moves toward eco-packaging solutions, responding to consumer demand and regulatory pressures regarding plastic reduction (**IESR, 2024**).

A pivotal development in Ichinogami's sustainability strategy is the launch of the "Circular Economic Movement" in October 2024. This initiative invites customers to return used packaging in exchange for new papercraft kits, at no extra charge. By involving consumers directly in the recycling loop, the company fosters environmental accountability while reinforcing its brand's commitment to circular practices. Such participatory programs are increasingly recognized as effective tools for enhancing customer engagement and building environmental literacy (**Winata et.al., 2024**).

Ichinogami's approach to business transcends mere profit-making. It positions itself as a change-maker within the local green economy by integrating community empowerment into its strategic agenda. The company actively engages with schools, local organizations, and creative communities to conduct environmental education and creative training programs. These efforts not only raise awareness but also build local capacity, enabling broader community participation in sustainable development (**Umiyati et.al., 2023**). To amplify its impact, Ichinogami has established a dedicated client services division that caters to business-to-business (B2B) needs. This division develops customized educational merchandise, facilitates creative workshops, and provides promotional materials for environmentally aligned brands. Through this outreach, Ichinogami extends its sustainability mission beyond individual consumers, influencing institutions and organizations to adopt green practices (**Carter et al., 2020**).

The integration of sustainability into Ichinogami's business strategy illustrates how micro-enterprises can become pivotal actors in the green transition. In a context where MSMEs form the backbone of Indonesia's economy, companies like Ichinogami offer scalable and replicable models for eco-conscious entrepreneurship. Their success proves that environmental responsibility and profitability are not mutually exclusive, but can, in fact,

reinforce one another when approached with creativity and intention (**Kementerian Koperasi dan UKM, 2023**).

Furthermore, Ichinogami's emphasis on educational content—both in product form and through workshops—adds an important cultural and cognitive dimension to its sustainability mission. It helps demystify environmental concepts for the general public, particularly for young learners and creative communities, aligning closely with the growing global interest in environmental humanities and arts-based ecological education (**Ahmad, 2024**). By embedding sustainability across its value chain—from raw materials and design to packaging and after-sales engagement—Ichinogami is contributing to a new narrative in Indonesia's MSME sector. It demonstrates that even small creative enterprises can enact large-scale change when their strategies are holistically designed and community-focused. In doing so, the company aligns itself with national and international sustainability agendas, such as the SDGs and green growth frameworks (**IESR, 2024**).

Ultimately, Ichinogami's business strategy reflects a shift in entrepreneurial thinking—one that moves beyond transactional models toward transformational practices. Through eco-design, digital innovation, consumer involvement, and social outreach, the company not only creates environmentally responsible products but also builds an ecosystem of shared sustainability values. It stands as a vivid example of how business, environment, and community can be harmoniously integrated into a coherent and impactful strategy.

Product Innovation and Differentiation

Product innovation and differentiation are at the heart of Ichinogami's strategic direction, positioning the enterprise as a leading figure in Indonesia's environmentally conscious creative industry. Unlike conventional papercraft producers, Ichinogami offers a holistic experience that merges aesthetics, educational value, and cultural relevance. Its product development is not solely focused on the functional aspect of crafting but extends to storytelling, user engagement, and environmental awareness. These dimensions elevate the papercraft product from a simple artistic object to a multidimensional tool for learning and expression.

One of Ichinogami's most notable innovations is its use of thematic specificity in design. The company produces detailed and diverse papercraft models that reflect popular interests and societal trends, including animals, public transport vehicles such as trains, buses, and airplanes, as well as characters from both local and global cultural narratives. These themes are carefully curated to appeal to different demographics, encouraging intergenerational participation and creating opportunities for cross-cultural appreciation (**Ahmad, 2024**).

In addition to thematic variety, Ichinogami offers clear product segmentation based on difficulty levels. This allows the company to cater to a broad range of skill levels—from beginners and children to seasoned collectors and professional builders. Simple, introductory kits provide an accessible gateway into papercraft for new users, while complex 3D anatomical models challenge experienced users and promote advanced craftsmanship. Such differentiation not only broadens the customer base but also supports the development of motor, cognitive, and spatial skills (**Winata et.al., 2024**).

Ichinogami also emphasizes the physical presentation of its products through exclusive, high-quality kits. These kits are pre-cut and ready for assembly, printed on eco-certified paper using fade-resistant inks. The packaging itself is designed with visual appeal in mind and made from biodegradable or recyclable materials. This attention to material quality and

packaging experience enhances the product's value, making it suitable as a gift item and a collector's piece, thus contributing to the growing trend of sustainable, premium creative goods (**IESR, 2024**). What sets Ichinogami further apart is its internal design team, which is responsible for creating original models that reflect a high degree of artistic and technical sophistication. Their designs often resemble action figures or detailed miniatures, giving the final products a refined, professional appearance. This internal creative capacity ensures a steady flow of original content and protects the brand from market saturation or product commodification—a challenge often faced by small creative businesses (**Umiyati et.al., 2023**).

Ichinogami's innovation strategy is also embedded in its strong branding philosophy. The brand name, derived from Japanese—"Ichi" meaning "one" and "Kami/Gami" meaning "paper"—symbolizes its mission to be the number one papercraft brand in Indonesia. The branding strategy is not merely linguistic but reflects a cultural positioning that combines Japanese precision and Indonesian creativity. This cross-cultural brand identity appeals to a global audience while reinforcing a sense of national pride and originality (**Kemenkop UKM, 2023**).

Through these innovations, Ichinogami redefines the purpose and perception of papercraft as more than just a recreational activity. Its products function as educational tools, especially for introducing local culture, engineering concepts, and artistic skills to younger generations. For instance, assembling traditional transportation models or cultural figures fosters cultural appreciation while simultaneously enhancing fine motor coordination and problem-solving ability (**Carter et al., 2020**).

Moreover, the product's collectible aspect adds a commercial and emotional dimension to consumer engagement. Customers often see the kits not only as art projects but also as display-worthy items, which enhances user satisfaction and repeat purchases. Collectors form communities that share assembly experiences and display collections, further embedding Ichinogami's products within a larger cultural and social practice of creative sustainability (**Ahmad, 2024**). The combination of aesthetic sophistication, functional design, and environmental responsibility allows Ichinogami to occupy a niche that few creative enterprises have explored in the Indonesian MSME landscape. This model not only differentiates Ichinogami in a competitive market but also aligns with the increasing consumer demand for products that are both meaningful and sustainable (**IESR, 2024**).

Ichinogami's product innovation and differentiation strategy demonstrate how a microenterprise can achieve competitive advantage through creative excellence and sustainable values. Its ability to integrate design, education, and environmental consciousness into a cohesive product line serves as a model for future MSMEs in the creative sector. In doing so, Ichinogami not only strengthens its brand identity but also contributes to the broader vision of a green and culturally enriched economy in Indonesia.

Marketing and Community Strategy

Ichinogami employs an integrated marketing strategy that synergizes content marketing, community engagement, and business partnerships to strengthen its market presence and deepen customer loyalty. In an increasingly digitalized economy, the brand has adapted by positioning itself as a digitally native enterprise, actively utilizing platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, Facebook, and YouTube to deliver high-quality visual content. This includes step-by-step papercraft tutorials, time-lapse build videos, behind-the-scenes production insights, and user-generated content that showcases the versatility and appeal of

Ichinogami products (**Carter et al., 2020**). By prioritizing storytelling and visual aesthetics, Ichinogami fosters emotional connection and trust with its audience.

A key feature of Ichinogami's digital strategy is its use of social proof to drive consumer engagement. Customers are encouraged to share their completed papercraft creations using hashtags like #Ichinogami. This participatory practice amplifies the brand's visibility through organic reach, enabling it to tap into niche enthusiast networks. The resulting user-generated content functions as both community validation and marketing collateral, which has been shown to significantly influence consumer perceptions and purchasing behavior in creative industries (**Kementerian Koperasi dan UKM, 2023**).

Ichinogami's marketing success is rooted in the longstanding foundation of the Papercraft Indonesia community, which the brand has nurtured since 2008. This grassroots network comprises thousands of active members who exchange tips, showcase works, and support each other both online and offline. Through community building, Ichinogami ensures that its brand is not merely transactional but relational—built on shared interests, creativity, and values. The company's consistent investment in this community over the years provides a robust social infrastructure that supports both customer retention and co-creation (**Ahmad, 2024**).

The integration of digital payment systems, particularly through QR-based platforms such as QRIS, further reinforces Ichinogami's digital-first philosophy. The exponential growth of QRIS users in Indonesia—from 29.6 million in late 2023 to 56.3 million by Q1 2025—demonstrates a nationwide shift toward cashless, accessible payment solutions, with MSMEs accounting for a significant proportion of adopters (**Bank Indonesia, 2025**). Ichinogami's alignment with this trend allows for seamless transactions across online and offline environments, streamlining the customer journey and expanding reach among tech-savvy consumers.

In parallel to digital platforms, Ichinogami maintains a strong presence across various e-commerce marketplaces such as Tokopedia, Shopee, and Padi UMKM, in addition to its official website. This multi-channel distribution strategy ensures wide accessibility, allowing customers across Indonesia to purchase products regardless of geographic limitations. Moreover, the brand maintains physical sales points in high-footfall tourist destinations like TMII, Seaworld, and Grand Indonesia, as well as retail partnerships with stores like Paperclip, Sarinah, and Dufan. This hybrid approach combines the convenience of digital commerce with the experiential value of in-person interaction (**IESR, 2024**).

To strengthen its branding and visibility, Ichinogami regularly participates in national and international exhibitions such as Inacraft, Comic Con, and Trade Expo Indonesia. These events not only enhance market exposure but also position the company within the broader ecosystem of cultural and creative industries. Face-to-face engagements allow the brand to build deeper relationships with both consumers and stakeholders while introducing its products to diverse and global audiences (**Winata et.al., 2024**).

Beyond traditional promotional efforts, Ichinogami embraces an experiential marketing strategy that emphasizes meaningful interaction and educational value. Through workshops, demonstrations, and interactive booths, the company enables customers to directly engage with the brand's values—creativity, sustainability, and craftsmanship. This strategy enhances emotional attachment and fosters a sense of ownership among consumers, which is especially effective in markets where authenticity and social impact are increasingly valued (**Umiyati et.al., 2023**).

Partnerships also play a vital role in Ichinogami's marketing ecosystem. The brand collaborates with both governmental and private sector institutions as a registered development partner and member of organizations such as ASEPHI (Association of Exporters and Producers of Indonesian Handicrafts). These affiliations lend credibility, facilitate knowledge sharing, and open opportunities for joint promotions and cross-sector initiatives that extend the company's influence beyond commercial boundaries (**Ahmad, 2024**).

Ichinogami's community-based marketing strategy reflects a broader shift in consumer behavior toward participation and sustainability. By positioning itself not just as a product supplier but as a platform for education, creative exploration, and ecological awareness, the company contributes to the cultivation of a conscious consumer base. In doing so, it aligns itself with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly those related to responsible consumption, education, and innovation (**IESR, 2024**).

Ichinogami's marketing strategy exemplifies a forward-looking, socially engaged approach that integrates digital innovation, community loyalty, and experiential learning. This multifaceted strategy not only enhances brand equity and customer satisfaction but also positions the company as a transformative actor within Indonesia's creative MSME landscape. Through its emphasis on value-driven marketing and ecosystem building, Ichinogami is laying the groundwork for long-term sustainability and social impact in the cultural economy.

Social, Environmental and Economic Impacts

Ichinogami exemplifies a model of sustainable microenterprise development by integrating business activities with community engagement and environmental stewardship. This approach aligns with Indonesia's national strategy to promote green MSMEs, which are seen as key contributors to achieving inclusive, low-carbon economic growth. Rather than isolating sustainability as a peripheral concern, Ichinogami embeds it at the core of its operations, creating a synergistic relationship between entrepreneurship, social empowerment, and ecological responsibility.

At the national level, micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) remain the backbone of Indonesia's economy. According to the Ministry of Cooperatives and SMEs, MSMEs contributed 61% to the national GDP and absorbed 97% of the labor force in 2023, maintaining their critical role in economic resilience and employment creation (**Kementerian Koperasi dan UKM, 2023; IESR, 2024**). Ichinogami, through its innovative and environmentally aligned business practices, sustains and enhances this contribution by fostering employment in the creative sector, advancing local supply chains, and promoting sustainable consumption and production.

In the creative economy domain, Ichinogami generates employment for a range of professionals including graphic designers, papercraft builders, and creative workshop facilitators. The company also strengthens local value chains by collaborating with certified paper producers, sustainable print service providers, and illustrators, many of whom are sourced domestically. This inclusive model expands the creative workforce while supporting environmental targets, reflecting the triple-bottom-line approach (people, planet, profit) emphasized in sustainable business frameworks (**Hart & Milstein, 2003**).

Ichinogami also cultivates a vibrant community ecosystem, both online and offline, that serves as a platform for knowledge sharing, collaborative design, and skill enhancement. These communities foster cultural exchange, collective learning, and mutual support. The use of culturally themed papercraft—featuring local heritage, traditional transportation, and

folklore—functions not only as a creative product but also as a cultural transmission tool. This contributes to preserving and promoting Indonesian cultural identity, particularly among youth and international audiences (**Ahmad, 2024**).

From an environmental standpoint, Ichinogami implements a series of eco-conscious practices that reduce its ecological footprint. These include sourcing FSC-certified paper, optimizing product design to reduce waste, and offering digital instructions to replace printed manuals. The company also partners with environmental organizations such as Waste4Change to manage and recycle production and workshop waste. Such actions reflect a commitment to circular economy principles and showcase how even small enterprises can operationalize sustainability through practical, low-cost innovations (**Kirchherr et.al., 2017**).

In the realm of environmental education, Ichinogami leverages its papercraft kits as interactive learning tools. These kits are integrated into workshops aimed at children, families, and educators, teaching them about recycling, environmental responsibility, and creative expression. This educational focus aligns with the broader movement toward environmental literacy, where creative tools are used to instill sustainability values from an early age (**Carter et al., 2020**). Such programs also bridge formal and informal education, providing engaging, hands-on alternatives to traditional environmental learning. Ichinogami's business model also contributes to local economic development by sourcing materials from domestic, eco-friendly suppliers and by involving local labor in packaging, assembly, and logistics. This approach reduces transportation emissions while strengthening the regional economy. Additionally, by providing training and mentorship for aspiring entrepreneurs in creative industries, Ichinogami indirectly catalyzes the formation of new microenterprises and startups, further expanding the green economy ecosystem (**Umiyati et.al., 2023**).

Furthermore, the workshops and training programs organized by Ichinogami offer not only technical instruction in papercraft but also entrepreneurial education. Participants learn about product development, eco-packaging, and digital marketing, which equips them with the skills necessary to build sustainable, small-scale businesses. This capacity-building aligns with government efforts to support green MSME incubation and empowerment at the grassroots level (**Kementerian Koperasi dan UKM, 2023**).

Ichinogami's contributions exemplify how MSMEs can go beyond economic performance to serve as agents of social and ecological transformation. By uniting business, environment, and education in a single operational model, the company demonstrates the viability and scalability of integrated sustainability practices in the creative economy sector. Its approach offers a replicable framework for other MSMEs aiming to meet both market demands and sustainability goals simultaneously (**Winata et.al., 2024**).

Ultimately, Ichinogami's role in Indonesia's green MSME landscape underscores the transformative power of socially embedded entrepreneurship. Through its combination of environmental action, cultural education, and community collaboration, Ichinogami not only contributes to national economic indicators but also enriches the fabric of sustainable development. As policymakers and researchers continue to explore models for resilient and inclusive growth, Ichinogami provides a grounded, locally relevant case of how small businesses can lead systemic change from the bottom up.

SWOT Analysis of Ichinogami Sustainability

The sustainability strategy of Ichinogami, while ambitious and innovative, can be more fully understood through a structured SWOT analysis that identifies the company's internal

strengths and weaknesses, along with external opportunities and threats. This analytical framework provides a holistic perspective on Ichinogami's current position and long-term sustainability prospects within Indonesia's rapidly evolving green MSME ecosystem.

One of Ichinogami's primary strengths lies in its strong commitment to sustainability, which is embedded not only in its production methods but also in its broader brand philosophy. Since its establishment, Ichinogami has demonstrated a clear and consistent vision for integrating environmental, social, and economic considerations in its business practices. Its longstanding involvement in the papercraft community—dating back to 2008—has cultivated a loyal customer base and an active creative network that contributes to the resilience and authenticity of the brand (**Ahmad, 2024**).

The company also benefits from extensive partnerships with national institutions such as Bank Indonesia, Kemenkop, and ASEPHI. These affiliations provide not only reputational credibility but also access to funding, mentorship, and platforms for promotion. Ichinogami's commitment to high-quality production, particularly in using certified eco-friendly materials and original designs, further enhances its market positioning. These elements combine to create a robust value proposition that resonates with consumers seeking environmentally responsible and culturally rich products (**Kementerian Koperasi dan UKM, 2023**).

Despite these advantages, Ichinogami faces several internal limitations that may constrain its ability to scale. One notable weakness is the limited production capacity, which restricts the company's ability to meet growing market demand, especially during peak seasons or major exhibitions. Additionally, its current marketing and promotional efforts, while effective domestically, have yet to fully penetrate international markets or leverage broader e-commerce ecosystems. Without investment in operational infrastructure and global branding, Ichinogami may struggle to transition from a niche enterprise to a competitive international player (**IESR, 2024**).

On the opportunity front, Ichinogami is well-positioned to benefit from a growing global and national interest in sustainable and educational products. A 2023 national survey indicated that 84% of young Indonesian entrepreneurs are interested in green businesses, suggesting a receptive market for creative, eco-conscious goods (**Kemenkop UKM, 2023**). Furthermore, potential collaborations with schools, cultural institutions, and sustainability-focused brands could allow Ichinogami to expand its reach while reinforcing its educational and environmental impact.

Another promising opportunity involves the integration of papercraft into formal and informal learning environments. With increased interest in experiential education, Ichinogami's hands-on kits offer pedagogical value in areas such as environmental education, engineering basics, and cultural studies. These synergies create prospects for collaboration with museums, libraries, and educational publishers, thereby diversifying revenue streams and expanding the company's influence (**Carter et al., 2020**).

However, several external threats may hinder Ichinogami's long-term sustainability. Price volatility in raw materials, especially specialty paper and printing supplies, poses financial risks—particularly as the company insists on using certified sustainable materials. Moreover, shifts in consumer preferences, especially among younger demographics accustomed to instant gratification and digital media, could diminish demand for manual, time-intensive hobbies such as papercraft (**Winata et.al., 2024**).

Digital automation and the rise of AI-generated design tools also present competitive challenges. While Ichinogami thrives on handcrafted and personalized design, the proliferation of digital papercraft platforms and 3D printing technologies may reduce the

perceived uniqueness of its offerings. This potential threat underscores the need for Ichinogami to continually innovate and to leverage its community engagement as a differentiating factor that cannot be easily replicated by automation (**Umiyati et.al., 2023**).

Given these dynamics, Ichinogami must adopt proactive strategies to enhance its resilience. Key recommendations include scaling up production through local partnerships or decentralized models, investing in global digital marketing, and developing strategic alliances with cultural and environmental organizations. Additionally, continuous monitoring of consumer trends and technological shifts will be essential to adapt product offerings while maintaining core values. The SWOT analysis highlights that Ichinogami possesses a strong foundational base and unique brand positioning within Indonesia's green economy landscape. However, sustaining this position will require addressing capacity limitations, enhancing global outreach, and innovating against emerging threats. With the right balance of internal strengthening and external responsiveness, Ichinogami can continue to thrive as a role model for sustainable microenterprises in the creative sector.

The Compatibility of Ichinogami Strategy with the Green Economy and Circular Economy Concepts

Ichinogami's strategic framework reflects a high degree of alignment with the foundational principles of both the green economy and the circular economy. In the context of a green economy, enterprises are expected to foster inclusive economic growth while minimizing environmental degradation and social inequality. Ichinogami meets these criteria by centering its business on the use of certified eco-friendly paper, reducing material waste through design efficiency, and implementing digital tools to replace printed materials. These efforts demonstrate a low-carbon, resource-efficient approach that remains socially inclusive through community education and collaboration (**Ahmad, 2024**).

At the heart of Ichinogami's strategy lies a strong commitment to environmental stewardship and social value creation. The company's shift toward digital instruction via QR codes, for instance, not only reduces paper usage but also enhances accessibility. Moreover, Ichinogami's frequent community-based workshops, particularly those that engage children and educators, serve as platforms for spreading environmental literacy and sustainability values. Such practices fulfill the green economy's dual aim of economic viability and social development through environmentally responsible means (**Hart & Milstein, 2003**).

From a circular economy perspective, Ichinogami's model exemplifies the "cradle-to-cradle" philosophy, where product life cycles are extended through reuse, recycling, and closed-loop systems. The launch of the "Circular Economic Movement" is a prime example of this principle in action. By encouraging consumers to return old packaging in exchange for new products, Ichinogami not only reduces waste but also fosters consumer participation in sustainability. This approach reflects the broader transition from linear (take-make-dispose) models to circular systems increasingly adopted in the MSME sector (**Kirchherr et.al., 2017**).

Ichinogami's product and packaging designs are meticulously crafted to support recyclability and longevity. The materials used are biodegradable or recyclable, and the content is designed to be educational and reusable. This emphasis on lifecycle thinking and minimal environmental footprint places Ichinogami in a strong position to lead as a green microenterprise, particularly as consumer awareness around sustainable production continues to rise (**IESR, 2024**).

Data from a 2023 national survey conducted by the Ministry of Cooperatives and SMEs reinforces the relevance of Ichinogami's strategy. The survey revealed that 84% of young entrepreneurs in Indonesia are interested in starting businesses that support environmental sustainability. This growing interest represents a significant market opportunity for MSMEs offering eco-friendly and educational products—areas where Ichinogami already demonstrates strong capability (**Kementerian Koperasi dan UKM, 2023**).

In the same survey, 58% of respondents reported that environmental improvement was their primary motivation for launching a business. This shift indicates that entrepreneurship among the younger generation is increasingly driven by moral and social objectives rather than solely financial gain. Ichinogami's business model, which integrates environmental values, social engagement, and economic innovation, aligns closely with this evolving entrepreneurial mindset (**Umiyati et.al., 2023**).

Further findings from the survey showed that 56% of MSMEs have already adopted low-carbon or recycled product models. This trend suggests that circular economy practices are gaining traction at the grassroots level, as small and medium-sized enterprises begin to incorporate recycling, resource efficiency, and lifecycle design into their operations. Ichinogami's papercraft business—centered around the reuse of materials and digitalization—is a tangible embodiment of this emerging movement (**Winata et.al., 2024**).

The convergence of Ichinogami's business strategy with these national trends underlines its strategic foresight and responsiveness to evolving market expectations. Its commitment to certified sustainable paper, elimination of plastic packaging, and consumer education on recycling not only satisfy consumer demand but also align with Indonesia's national green economy policies. As such, Ichinogami is more than a creative business—it is an active participant in the transformation toward a green, resilient, and knowledge-based economy (**IESR, 2024**).

Ichinogami's inclusive and innovation-driven model demonstrates how circularity and sustainability can be embedded in creative MSMEs without compromising commercial viability. By promoting environmental values through accessible and enjoyable products, the company bridges the gap between sustainability and everyday consumer behavior. It empowers individuals and communities to participate in eco-friendly practices, thus contributing to broader environmental objectives while supporting economic development (**Carter et al., 2020**).

Ichinogami's strategic alignment with the principles of green and circular economies positions it as a leading example of sustainable entrepreneurship in Indonesia. Its use of eco-materials, cradle-to-cradle product design, participatory education, and community engagement presents a replicable blueprint for MSMEs aspiring to integrate environmental ethics into their core operations. As global and national attention increasingly shifts toward sustainable development, Ichinogami stands as a model for how microbusinesses can drive systemic change through creativity, responsibility, and community collaboration.

CONCLUSION

Ichinogami exemplifies a successful green microenterprise that integrates sustainability into every aspect of its business model—from eco-friendly production and circular product design to community empowerment and digital marketing. By aligning its practices with the principles of green economy and circular economy, Ichinogami not only produces environmentally responsible and culturally meaningful products but also fosters inclusive

economic growth and environmental education. Its innovation in product design, community-driven marketing, and educational engagement positions the company as a pioneering case for MSMEs striving for sustainability in Indonesia's creative industry. Despite facing limitations in production scale and global reach, Ichinogami's adaptable and value-based approach demonstrates how microbusinesses can play a transformative role in achieving national sustainability goals while maintaining economic competitiveness.

LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH RECOMMENDATIONS

This study is limited by its reliance on a single case study, which, while rich in detail, may not fully capture the diversity of approaches among other green MSMEs in Indonesia. The findings are context-specific and may not be generalizable to enterprises operating in different sectors or regions. Moreover, the data is drawn primarily from document analysis and may benefit from triangulation with direct interviews, field observations, or customer feedback for deeper validation. Future research should explore comparative studies involving multiple MSMEs across various industries to assess different sustainability strategies and outcomes. Longitudinal studies could also track the long-term impacts of eco-creative business models on economic resilience, consumer behavior, and community transformation. Additionally, further investigation into the role of digital transformation and policy support in accelerating MSME sustainability in developing countries would provide broader insights into effective green entrepreneurship models.

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