



## ESTABLISHMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL CARE CHARACTER BASED ON LOCAL WISDOM OF THE BAJO TRIBE IN BAJO VILLAGE, SELATAN HALMAHERA REGENCY, INDONESIA

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### Abstract:

The formation of a caring character for the environment based on local wisdom by the Bajo tribal community in the South Halmahera Regency provides positive results in realizing environmental conservation. This study aims to describe the formation of environmental care characteristics based on the local wisdom of the Bajo tribal community that can be carried out well. With a population of around 2,503 people, most of the Bajo tribal people inhabit the coastline and live through marine-oriented activities. This research uses ethnographic research with a qualitative approach. Data were collected by using observation, interview, and documentation techniques. The object of this research is the community and the younger generation of the Bajo tribe. Informants were selected using purposive sampling by using triangulation of sources that can describe the formation of environmental care characters based on the local wisdom of the Bajo tribe. Data analysis techniques include the stages of data collection, data presentation, and drawing conclusions. The results showed that the formation of environmental care characters based on the local wisdom of the Bajo tribe in the Bajo community had a positive impact on the environment, economy, and education. Meanwhile, the challenges and obstacles are the low levels of public awareness and no sense of responsibility towards the spirit of caring for the environment and preserving the environment.

**Keywords:** local wisdom, Bajo tribe, environmental care character

### 1. Introduction

Indonesia is the archipelagic state largest in the world which has thousands of islands, and a diversity of ethnic groups, languages, and cultures (Elson et al., 2017: 594-596). This

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condition provides enormous potential. Every ethnic group in Indonesia certainly has a variety of life traditions or different cultures. Indonesia is known for the large tribes that inhabit Indonesia such as the Batak, Dayak, Madurese, Javanese, Balinese, Bugis, Moluccans, Papuans, and also the Bajo tribe. Each of these tribes has its own characteristics in managing the life of the community. Of the many ethnic groups in Indonesia, there is one ethnic group, one of which has a unique lifestyle, namely the Bajo tribal community.

The Bajo tribe is a tribe that inhabits the coast, lives above the sea and spreads to the eastern seas of Southeast Asia such as the Philippines, Malaysia, Taiwan, Thailand, even to Madagascar Africa and of course many other islands in Eastern Indonesia (Grang, 2017: 269). -268). Utomo (2016: 10) adds that the ancestors of the Indonesian people were seafarers because the Indonesian nation is a nation with a wide ocean surrounded by islands and has a lot of potential for human resources and abundant natural resources as well as quite a lot of culture and local wisdom. Utomo (2016: 14) explains that the Bajo tribe is one of the many tribes in Indonesia that has an identity as a lover of the sea, because the Bajo tribe cannot be separated from the marine environment, like fish and water, so they can be nicknamed as wandering humans or sea nomads (sea nomads).

Sailing from one water area to another, the Bajo tribe has the toughness to navigate the ocean because the sea is part of their identity (Kende et al., 2018: 1-17). The Bajo tribe as master sailors, their lifestyle develops according to nature and their environment, the sea for the Bajo tribe is a reliable place, their life is very dependent on the marine environment (Kazufumi, 2017: 35-64). Apart from being known as marine lovers, the Bajo tribe are also often found polluting and destroying the marine environment, so that it has an impact on the economic, social, and cultural aspects of life. This can be seen from the character of the Bajo tribe which is still minimal, especially the mindset. Most of these problem conditions have no solution to overcome them.

The transition to the development of community knowledge has an impact on causing environmental problems that stem from the character of ignorance and irresponsibility for the preservation of natural resources. This behavior causes environmental damage, including human life (Keraf, 2014: 67). Building a character that cares about the environment of the Bajo tribe is very important by way of character building. Character is the main value in humans as a whole which is all human activities both in the context of relationships with God, oneself and fellow human beings, and the environment that is manifested in thoughts, attitudes, feelings, words, and actions based on religious norms, laws and regulations, manners, culture, customs (Marzuki, 2015: 21). The formation of a caring character for the environment is something that is not easily formed in every society, therefore, there must be sustainable development from an early age.

Delia et al. (2018) describe that the character who cares for the environment is certainly a very complex problem that cannot be separated from the involvement of the younger generation. The character of caring for the environment is closely related to citizenship seen in civic education lies in the character, namely the character of caring for

the environment, of course, in civic education, it does not only form but is able to form responsible citizens through caring for the environment, a sense of care. of rights and obligations as citizens (Enyiaka et al., 2018: 32).

As a young citizen, it is very important to have the awareness that refers to the formation of attitudes and knowledge (Verawati & Afandi, 2016:77-91). The character of caring for the environment is an endless problem. A model of citizenship research conducted by McFarland et al. (2019:143) seeks to examine environmental sustainability against environmental problems, and how public awareness can be realized, namely having responsibility and being actively involved. This model is the basis of many studies in the United States and the Philippines and the data is suitable for creating global awareness.

The current development of the Bajo tribe in maintaining the marine environment is no longer maintained, causing a lot of domestic waste pollution, and the destruction of coral reefs using chemicals or explosives. His generation also does not care about the importance of the environment in the future. The behavior of the Bajo tribe like this shows a low awareness that affects the quality of the environment and aesthetic value (Hung & Jan, 2015: 55). Civic education is an important component that is indispensable, because it can encourage citizens to actively participate in solving various problems. In social life, the Bajo tribe has local wisdom that acts as a means of character formation (*civic disposition*). In addition to civic education, the role of local wisdom is very important as a guide for protecting the environment (Zibenberg et al., 2018).

The local wisdom of the Bajo tribe is a form of local culture by fishing, fishing, spearing and also taking care of the preservation of the sea, one of the efforts that should be revived by the younger generation is the character of caring for the environment based on their local culture because local culture is a form of character that has been lost in life. So, it's been a problem until now. Ode et al. (2017: 91) say that the Bajo community has the potential of local culture as an empowerment for the Bajo community. Empowerment is carried out through cooperation and relations between social groups.

But now the local culture of the Bajo tribe is no longer functioning, and even tends to be abandoned (Ode et al., 2017: 91). Whereas local wisdom always exists and is found in the community. Overcoming obstacles to the formation of environmental care character based on local wisdom of the Bajo tribe, namely, pollution of the marine environment is not an easy thing. The involvement of local wisdom is one of the efforts to become a model as a character building for environmental care (Nolde, 2014: 16).

Departing from the deviant behavior carried out by the Bajo community, especially the younger generation of the Bajo tribe, it is necessary to build a character that cares about the environment. Therefore, to overcome the constraints of local wisdom of the Bajo tribe in the formation of environmental care character, it is done by reviving local wisdom so that it becomes a model to support the Bajo tribal community who cares about the environment. Steinhorst & Matthies (2016:338) social and cultural environmental conditions greatly affect the achievement of the character of the younger generation and society in general, both individually and in groups directly.

## **2. Research Methods**

This study uses a qualitative approach with an ethnographic design to form the interaction between the Sangkuang group and the Torosubang group in South Halmahera Regency by forming environmental care characters based on the local wisdom of the Bajo tribe. The research location can be carried out in Bajo Sangkuang Village, Botang Lomang District, South Halmahera Regency. As a place of research, the sangkuang group is a place for character building to care for the environment through the local wisdom of the Bajo tribe. Data were collected through observation, interviews, and documentation of informants. The research was conducted from October 18, 2021 to December 18, 2021. The informants consisted of two groups of sangkuang and torosubang communities, the younger generation, and the Bajo Village Government, Botang Lomang District, South Halmahera Regency. Researchers observed that the formation of environmental care character that was applied through local wisdom of the Bajo tribe, could be formed as a form of strengthening the character of community members in Bajo Village, South Halmahera Regency. Data analysis using interactive analysis techniques consisting of data reduction, data presentation and conclusion drawing occurs naturally in a certain social group (Creeswell, 2014). The data obtained were directly validated using source triangulation and data collection techniques used in the field.

## **3. Results and Discussion**

### **3.1 Formation of Environmental Care Character Based on Local Wisdom of the Bajo Tribe in Bajo Village, South Halmahera Regency**

The Bajo Tribe is one of the seafaring tribes that inhabit the South Halamahera Sea in North Maluku with a population of 2,503 people, or 648 families. The Bajo Village community in South Halmahera, Botang Lomang District, is divided into two community groups, the Sangkuang and Torosubang communities. Their lives are mostly fishermen, catching fish using bagang boats, and other traditional tools such as spears and nets. The local wisdom of the Bajo tribal community goes to the sea every day, for the informants, fishing is a hereditary culture carried out by the people of Bajo Sangkuang or Torosubang Villages.

Fishermen in Bajo Village are broadly divided into two categories, namely fishermen who own boats/skippers and fishermen who work together, but both of them carry out the habit of going to sea to provide for their families. The geographical condition of the Bajo tribal community is located on the coast which is very close to the sea and surrounded by mangrove forests. The results of the study show that the Bajo people mostly use mangrove forests as their fuel needs. Apart from environmental damage lately due to the increasing number of residents who come from outside, the Bajo tribe has mixed with other ethnic groups (multi-ethnic).

The results of interviews with informants that in Bajo Village are still many cases of environmental pollution that often occur in their environment. Whereas character is a character and nature that is inherent in everyone and is difficult to change. According to the Bajo people, it is undeniable that they often pollute the environment because one of them is constrained by low education. Educational graduates are only limited to elementary, middle and high school. The Bajo generation is more likely to go to the sea than to go to school because the sea is a park or called a children's playground but they still don't care about environmental pollution.

The results showed that a number of informants said that the marine environment in Bajo Village, South Halmahera Regency is currently not maintained because those who live in boats called *housesleppa-leppa* and some of them also live on the water or on the shore have shifted ashore and even carried out reclamation. The beach is called hoarding land into the sea because the Bajo people really depend on the sea for their lives, but lately, they don't care about the marine environment.

The young generation explained that the problem related to the environmental damage is caused by the ignorance of youth and society that leads to the environmental pollution until now days. The Bajo tribal community explained that caring for the marine environment is very difficult even though they have been reminded and given warnings that marine pollution such as still using fishing gear that is not based on environmental care can cause environmental damage. With these problems, it can be seen that there is a lack of environmental conservation, so there is a need for methods to reshape attitudes and behavior in environmental conservation.

The two community groups, Sangkuang and Torosubang carry out environmental conservation with various programs to reactivate cultural activities and local knowledge based on local wisdom. The environmental conservation program is an effort to implement the formation of attitudes and behaviors to shape the character of the Bajo community. For two groups of Sangkuang and Torosubang, the activities such as planting mangroves, throwing the garbage in its place, and implementation the local wisdom as an encouragement of environmental sustainability, so that it becomes a responsibility character building and environmental care which is a form of inhabitant's active participation.

There are several local pearls of wisdom of the Bajo tribe from various categories including: fishing, fish archery, taripang diving, catching turtles, and sharing. The local wisdom of the Bajo tribe is the formation of a caring character for the environment. The formation of environmental care characters based on the local wisdom of the Bajo tribe as a form of concern for the marine environment by the two Bajo community groups. The Sangkuang and Torosubang groups have mixed ethnicities and most of them have a livelihood as fishermen. The condition of the two communities cannot be separated from the sea.

In addition, the response of the Bajo community is related to the environmental care program by planting mangroves and cultivating an attitude of community responsibility by re-activating their local wisdom to behave well with nature. This is done

in collaboration with the Bajo village government and the Environment Service (DLH) of the South Halmahera Regency government to provide public awareness in understanding environmental sustainability by upholding the local wisdom of the Bajo tribe.

### **3.2 Results of the Formation of Environmental Care Character Based on Local Wisdom of the Bajo Tribe in Bajo Village, South Halmahera Regency**

Goodwin, (2015: 31-38) character behavior that shows the characteristics and traits of a person's personality. According to the research results, the Bajo tribal characters are known as hard workers and tough, their character reflects a tough fisherman who always protects the sea. However, from these results, the Bajo tribe no longer has a good character in all their activities.

The character of caring for the environment is very much needed and needed in the younger generation of the Bajo tribe so that their character is formed for the better. Character is a personal capacity of character and individual moral behavior that is seen in a person which consists of knowledge, skills, attitudes and the environment as well as the actions shown (Peterson & Peterson, 2020). Character are values that are born from human behavior in society, both consciously and unconsciously. Character is a good or bad human habit that is seen in various social problems, such as low or lack of public awareness of the environment.

The results of the study show that there is still a lack of environmental care characters in the younger generation, so character education is needed for the younger generation of the Bajo tribe. If there is character education is implemented in the Bajo tribal community, of course, the character of the community can be formed (Carr, 2014). Character education is a trait of a person who is not only in shape but must be given the inculcation of values in that person Murdiono (2017: 427). It can be analyzed that the character of caring for the environment in the Bajo tribal community is currently not only formed but needs to be strengthened so that the character of caring for the environment will never disappear. For example, fishing using *bagang*, not using trawls, not using bombs, so as not to damage the coral environment.

The current Bajo tribe in Bajo Village, South Halmahera Regency has experienced population growth from various ethnicities, thus affecting the preservation of local culture. Nolde (2009) explained that the ethnic mix in Bajo Village made the settlement pattern change in physical form, and then the residential building experienced significant development, there were still those who maintained the original Bajo tribal buildings and some experienced changes from simple/traditional to semi-permanent/modern. Changes in settlements that occur now are not in accordance with the local wisdom of the Bajo tribe.

The identity of the Bajo tribe is showing the attitude of citizenship who loves the sea so that according to sailors, the wisdom of the Bajo tribe prioritizes ancestral values as part of their identity. This shows that the mindset can also affect their lifestyle (Hewi, 2015). The Bajo Sangkuang and Torosubang community groups have carried out

environmental care activities with various efforts to provide public awareness of the importance of protecting and preserving nature as part of building environmental care character based on the local wisdom of the Bajo tribe.

The results of the formation of environmental care characters based on the local wisdom of the Bajo tribe through several activities carried out have a positive impact on several fields, such as caring for the environment. Mangrove planting is carried out in the formation of environmental care character that can form a mindset and lifestyle so that it is used for the utilization and empowerment of the marine environment. In addition, the mindset of the community in maintaining environmental cleanliness by disposing of waste in its place is the fruit of the formation of the attitude of citizens who are responsible for their concern for the environment based on local wisdom.

With various efforts to build environmental care character based on local wisdom of the Bajo tribe by the Bajo Sangkuang and Torosubang community groups, they uphold collective values and also mutual cooperation. In addition, the Bajo people still have a strong traditional tradition of catching fish called *pamali* (prohibition) as a form of prohibition on taking marine products.

### **3.3 Obstacles in Implementing the Formation of Environmental Care Character Based on Local Wisdom of the Bajo Tribe in Bajo Village, South Halmahera Regency**

The Bajo community living in Bajo Village have experienced a mixture of race and ethnicity so it becomes a different characteristic in showing their concern for the environment. There are several attitudes of the Bajo tribe towards the environment which are reflected in their efforts to preserve mangroves and coral reefs. Preservation of marine resources, among others, by planting mangroves on the coast as happened in Bajo Village, is carried out by building environmental care character through the cultivation of mangrove forests (Dai et al., 2020). Their local character and knowledge about mangrove planting is a form of local wisdom that has been carried since their ancestors.

The obstacle to the formation of environmental care character based on the local wisdom of the Bajo tribe is that the community is still indifferent and does not care about the marine environment, assuming that environmental conservation and local wisdom of the Bajo tribe are not important in this day and age. Likewise, their fishing process must use environmentally friendly nets so that only large fish can be caught, this is a form of concern for the preservation of marine ecosystems including coral reefs as an underwater buffer ecosystem (Wisudo & Hasrawaty, 2017).

Obstacles in character building through the local wisdom of the Bajo tribe from the results in the field show that the two groups are reflected in a bad climate so that transitions often occur in large waves. Judging from the results of the research, it is clear that local wisdom like this is difficult for the younger generation to understand. In addition, the community's understanding is minimal by believing that the sea and all its contents must be used to the maximum for human needs without thinking about the impacts that occur. Sulpi Affandy (2017) affirmed that local culture may be able to help the Bajo tribe behave according to their wisdom values.

The character of citizenship is very much needed as an effort to overcome the problem of the lack of character of the younger generation and society based on their local wisdom, namely the local wisdom of the Bajo tribe in their attention to the community environment (Enyiaka et al., 2018). Because every citizen has responsibilities and obligations in maintaining and preserving the surrounding environment. Descriptively, it was found that the character who cares for the environment really needs civic education because it contains the character of caring for the environment and the independent character of the citizen. Lickona (2021) said that character is a mindset and a trait of goodness in humans so the character is an alternative to instilling good things in the Bajo tribal community.

The formation of the character of responsible citizens in Bajo Village, Botang Lomang District, South Halmahera Regency is based on local wisdom, the Bajo tribe has a sense of responsibility, independence, and care for preserving the environment so that it can encourage the formation of environmentally caring characters (Reysen & Katzarska-Miller, 2013). Citizenship education can encourage the younger generation and society how to think, behave, and act to be good citizens of the environment.

Constraints in the formation of the character of caring for the environment are always experienced by every society which begins with social unconsciousness. Leha Silfiana (2019) says that the involvement of citizens with the environment is inseparable from a balance of life. Humans and the environment relate to each other well. Therefore, everyone has the right to protect the environment (Smith, 2019). The character of caring for the environment in the Bajo tribal community, part of the younger generation and the community, has been seen, but it still needs formation and planting so that it can be formed to cope with the environment well.

Environmental care behavior among youth shows that it prioritizes the value of self-awareness towards pro-environmental attitudes (Mungmachon, 2012). Environmental behavior in the Bajo tribe certainly cannot be separated from the active participation of every thought of a cultural activity that has its own value in the environment (Zibenberg et al., 2018). The Bajo tribe must further increase their awareness of the impact of environmental damage.

In the results of the research above, there must be obstacles in the formation of social interaction between the community, and how they care for the environment based on local wisdom. Awareness of social interaction between individuals and groups is still relatively weak. Murdiono et al. (2017) explained that efforts to build community character are by inculcating character education values. In a good way of social interaction, it can grow the character of caring for the environment and public awareness.

#### **4. Conclusion**

Based on the results of the study, it was concluded that the formation of environmental care character based on local wisdom of the Bajo tribe in the research locations that have been discussed has been good and several obstacles emerged including the lack of



awareness of environmental care activities, such as the occurrence of garbage disposal in the yard of the house and the mining of mangrove forests to meet the needs of the community. secondary. In addition to the lack of awareness of environmental care, the community's low awareness of village officials such as village officials on the importance of protecting the environment. The low level of education is also one of the factors that become obstacles in the formation of the character of the Bajo tribe. Citizenship Education is an effort to overcome obstacles through the re-implementation of local culture in the formation of environmental care characters. In this study, it has been seen that some of the mindsets of the young generation that have not yet been formed are still polluting and damaging the marine environment. In this sense, it is understood that the wisdom of the Bajo tribe is not working well. For this reason, in the formation of environmental care characters in Bajo Village, Botang Lomang District, South Halmahera Regency, it is hoped that the community and the younger generation can reactivate the local wisdom of the Bajo tribe.

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### **Conflict of Interest Statement**

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

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