

TRADITIONAL VALUE OF USING CAVE WATER FOR SUSTAINABLE ECOTOURISM IN WAKATOBI REGENCY, INDONESIA

MARLINA

Universitas Negeri Malang, Faculty of Social Science, Geography Department, Malang, Indonesia, e-mail: marlinamalaia@gmail.com

SUMARMI*

Universitas Negeri Malang, Faculty of Social Science, Geography Department, Malang, Indonesia, e-mail: sumarmi.fis@um.ac.id

I Komang ASTINA

Universitas Negeri Malang, Faculty of Social Science, Geography Department, Malang, Indonesia, e-mail: komang.astina.fis@um.ac.id

Dwiyono Hari UTOMO

Universitas Negeri Malang, Faculty of Social Science, Geography Department, Indonesia, Malang, e-mail: dwiyonohariutomo@gmail.com

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Abstract: Traditional beliefs based on religion have served as a direction for people's lives in interpreting life. Life guidelines received from good education might represent wise methods of dealing with nature. This study aimed: (1) to examine the tradition of using cave water in the Mandati and Wanci tribes, (2) to examine the traditional value and meaning to develop sustainable ecotourism. The research used a qualitative descriptive method with an ethnographic approach to explain facts, meanings, and traditional values of using cave water. Data were obtained through participant observation, in-depth interviews, documentation, and literature study. Data were analyzed using triangulation. Informants were selected from various groups: traditional leaders, government, community leaders. The research revealed that there are four traditions that use water for traditional purposes, namely: (1) *Ufe Karia Mbo'u Mbo'u*, (2) *Ufe Karia Ntooge/Hoporuku*, (3) *Ufe Heraha Kuni*, and (4) *Ufe Kafi* (Wedding traditional water). The tribes believed that cave water was highly beneficial for healing, bringing blessings and health, fortune, and for the soul. The cave water is specifically used for *Ufe Karia*, which symbolizes native behavior in keeping the cave's culture, rituals, and water resources. The community used this tradition to purify, protect and baptize Wakatobi children in preparation for adulthood. Moreover, the wisdom in this tradition aimed to support ecotourism in Wakatobi Regency.

Key words: ecotourism, tradition, conservation, traditional value, cave water management

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INTRODUCTION

Tourism increases can have a major impact on state revenue. Tourism is one of the sectors that contributes greatly to the development of the country (Hadmoko et al., 2021). Indonesia's position as a member of the world's coral triangle provides a strategic advantage for growing local tourism. There are six countries in the Coral Triangle: Indonesia, Malaysia, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Solomon Islands and Timor Leste. Marine Protect Areas (MPAs) are established at the national and local levels to protect the coral triangle area. More than 1,900 MPAs cover 200,881 Km². (1.6% of the exclusive economic zone for this area). Protected areas include critical maritime habitats and ecosystems, with a heavy emphasis on preserving and strengthening the quality of coastal fisheries and as the region's primary food and economic. Wakatobi National Park is both a tourism development area and a protected region due to its location in the middle of the world's coral triangle.

Conservation and tourism are two linked aspects of Wakatobi's area (Al Dilwan et al., 2019). Currently, Wakatobi is one of the top 10 priority destinations Indonesia (Kurniawati et al., 2020). Conservation is a strategy to preserve the environment, and tourism is a strategy for economic advantage. UNESCO (2012) established Wakatobi as a national park and biosphere reserve in Indonesia. Wakatobi National Park is inhabited by various types of marine life. According to WWF (2012), 396 hard coral species and 942 reef fish species were found. This species diversity is the largest in the world, exceeding the number of coral species found in the Caribbean and Red Sea. Besides the marine potential, Wakatobi Regency is interesting to research for another reason, namely the presence of cave waters distributed throughout each island. Given the potential and carrying capacity of cave water resources, further studies on water conservation need to be discussed. The existing cave water is a raw water source to meet the community's domestic water needs example Kontamale Cave water (Agusman, 2017). The use of the cave water area is also related to traditions that are very closely related to the culture and religion of the surrounding community. Many studies on water conservation based on community traditions have been carried out, such as Water resources in Kampung Kuta are used to meet daily needs and for Nyipuh traditional rituals in the Sacred Forest (Hilman and Hendriawan, 2018) the pamali culture in the Reban Bela Traditional Forest is proven to preserve the ecosystem so that

* Corresponding author

water resources can be well maintained; local wisdom from the pamali culture has succeeded in maintaining the sustainability of forests and water resources in Lenek Daya Village (Reza and Hidayati, 2017).

Another example is the Beelah Blumbang Tradition on Mount Ungaran, which functions to protect water resources (Wiyatasari and Lathifah, 2019). In Wakatobi, the tradition that is carried out on a large scale is the Karia Tradition. Karia is a tradition carried out by the local community to fulfill the religious requirements of each child based on customary values (Mobiarto, 2019). The Wanci and Liya tribes believe that maintaining the Karia tradition is in accordance with Islamic values. Based on research it is known the Wanci and Mandati tribes carry out a long procession that can last up to three days. The Wakatobi people view this practice as a unique cultural identity as well as a religious identity.

The fact that the researchers found that the Karia tradition is currently the cultural identity of the local community with the main process of the Karia tradition is Hoporuku, namely preparing bathing water taken from the Lesa'a cave and the Lia Bete cave taken based on customary provisions, being the main impetus for this research. The method of utilizing cave water for traditional purposes illustrates the environmental care behavior of the community in utilizing natural resources so that the preservation of the cave water area can be maintained. In addition, the transfer of area functions based on traditional values will support ecotourism in Wakatobi Regency.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Ecotourism is a presentation of natural and cultural attractions which emphasize teaching and education, not only as a business trip package from one area to another. Therefore, the main goal of ecotourism is to improve the local economy and sustainability. Hijriati and Mardiana (2015) revealed that ecotourism is a tourism trip responsible for environmental sustainability and the welfare of the local community. Ecotourism is a tourism practice that prioritizes sustainability and aims to provide economic benefit for the environment (Purnomo et al., 2020). Sustainable Tourism should therefore be carefully designed to benefit the local community, respect the local culture, and protect the natural resources (Joseph et al., 2021). Aulia and Dharmawan (2010) stated that tourism is an economic sector that needs more attention to be developed.

Discussions about ecotourism have begun to develop in recent years. The concept has main characteristics, namely, (1) nature-based ecotourism, (2) learning and education-centered experiences, and (3) ecotourism projects must prioritize environmental sustainability, nature-based social interaction (Walter, 2013). The composition of ecotourism products generally offers the potential of nature and community culture. Culture influences the management of tourism (Waridin and Astawa, 2021). Natural Heritage (Natural Heritage) and Cultural Heritage (Cultural Heritage) makes an area of economical and strategic value for trade and tourism (Sukmawan et al., 2021). Conservation and sustainability are referred to as the main characteristics of ecotourism. Confirms Mattiro (2021) ecotourism cannot be separated by conservation.

Ecotourism qualities such as socio-culture, community traditions, environmental potential, history, and local economics are needed to accomplish ecotourism objectives. Haryanto (2014) stated that culture, history, and nature are the main characteristics of the ecotourism development model. Education is a critical component of ecotourism and can be accomplished by explaining the local community's culture. The process of interpreting cultural values and local wisdom is believed to support ecotourism management (Marlina et al., 2020). Local wisdom is a manifestation of human wisdom toward nature. Local wisdom is a form of environmental wisdom passed down through generations in a particular location or area (Sumarmi et al., 2020). Local wisdom can take the form of community traditions. Tradition is defined as the community's customs, habits, and culture in which there are good values that reflect the community's behavior in action. The interaction with the environment is influenced by local wisdom in certain area. The tradition's values include not only social and religious life but also human wisdom in relation to nature, such as forest conservation based on the norms given down by previous generations for the wellbeing of life (Sahlan, 2012). Water conservation is accomplished through tradition as a way of expressing gratitude to God Almighty for the blessings of water that have been given upon and passed down from generation to generation (Sudarmadji et al., 2017). Community traditions can be carried out because of a strong belief system and religion that is strengthened by the support of community culture. Local wisdom based on religious values can transfer the nation values as a heritage. This study aimed to cover the traditional values in using cave water resources for sustainable ecotourism management in Wakatobi Regency. Wakatobi Regency, as one of Indonesia's primary tourism destinations, is aggressively optimizing tourism development. Development cannot be based on marine potential without considering the potential of other potentials, particularly the distribution of cave water that the community uses. Sumarmi, 2018 emphasized that the water source must be preserved. The community has used the cave's water resources to fulfill daily needs such as washing, drinking water, and public bathing areas. Moreover, the cave is used for traditional purposes, such as *ufe karia/ufe mbansa*. Implementing *ufe karia/ufe mbansa* is needed to maximize the ecotourism purposes.

METHOD

This study used a qualitative approach with ethnographic methods to explain the traditional values in using cave water for Watakobi tribes. Spradley (2007) stated that the ethnographic method is used to describe a culture. According to Bronislaw Malinowski (Spradley, 2007), ethnography's objective is to understand the locals' point of view, their relationship to life, and to gain their perspective on the world. This study uses ethnographic methods to explain the facts, meanings, and values of the *Ufe Karia* tradition in traditional processions and the behavior of local tribes.

The tradition was carried out by the Wanci and Mandati tribes in the Wakatobi regency. The ethnographic method used in this study refers to Spradley (2007), known as a step-by-step analysis, in which analysis begins with data collection and continues gradually until the study's finish. The researcher determines the end of the research entirely since ideal research results cannot accurately reflect the culture in the research region as a whole and complete.

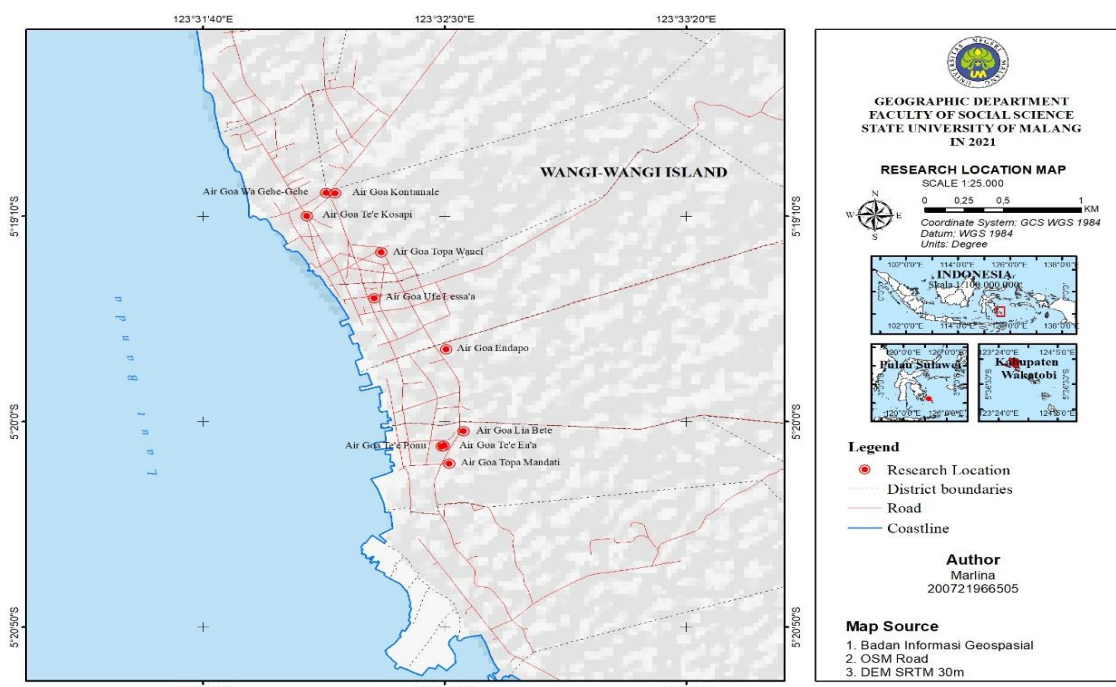


Figure 1. Map of Research Locations (Distribution of Cave Water in Wangi-Wangi Island)

This research was conducted in 10 cave water points in strategic urban areas in 2 sub-districts: Wangi-Wangi District and Wangi-Wangi Selatan District. Wangi-Wangi Island is located at an altitude of 0-200 meters above sea level, with a relatively flat land surface. Wangi-Wangi Island is a low-lying coastal area with an altitude of 0-200 meters above sea level. The land use of Wangi-Wangi Island is quite varied, consisting of shrubs, forests, airport areas, gardens, mangroves, grasslands, settlements, and fields. The following is a map of the research location (BPS, 2020).

Data sources in this study included oral data sources and written data sources. Oral data were obtained from actors in the tradition of using cave water, while the written data were obtained from documents owned by the government in the research area. Oral data was collected from actors involved in the tradition of cave water use, while written data was collected through government records in the research area. The informants consisted of various groups, namely the government, community, and traditional leaders with in-depth knowledge of the tradition. The informants included representatives from various sectors, including the government, the community, and traditional leaders with extensive understanding of the tradition. Spradley (2007) identified five minimum requirements for selecting informants: the informant has an extensive understanding of the tradition; directly involved in the cultural events under study; know in detail about the cultural atmosphere; have sufficient time to participate in research; be able to describe events in a scientific manner.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A. Cave water and traditional tradition

Each group uses natural resources differently; some use them traditionally, while others use technology to support their daily needs, including religious requirements and traditions. Individuals can use the potential of nature in a variety of ways to contribute to the community's socio-economic wellbeing. Economic activities by individuals can develop adaptation patterns to the environment (Marlina et al., 2021). The research results found that several traditions were related to cave water in Wakatobi Regency, Indonesia. This study was conducted on two tribe groups: Wanci and Mandati tribes in Wangi-Wangi Island, Wakatobi Regency. Each tribe uses the water surrounding caves to fill the traditional processions. The Wanci tribe used the Lesa'a cave water, while the Mandati tribe used the Lia Bete cave water.

Table 1. Use of cave water for traditional processions (Source: of research, 2021)

No	The Water Needs	Needs and Objectives	Description
1	<i>Ufe Karia Mbo'u Mbo'u</i> (Small Karia traditional process)	Traditional leaders bathe girls between the ages of 2 and 5 years.	Generally, it is done for girls at the age of 3 because toddlers are incapable of comprehending all of the traditional processions. The objective is to avoid <i>Ambanga</i> (public humiliation) and <i>Paganda</i> (telling to others).
2	<i>Ufe Karia Ntooge/Hoporuku</i> (Big Karia traditional process)	Traditional leaders bathe boys and girls between the ages of 5 and 12 years.	The procession at this point is critical because the child has been recognized as a Muslim.
3	<i>Ufe Heraha Kuni</i>	Traditional elders bathe girls who have had menstruation.	The procession at this stage aims to explain the girls who experienced the menstruation process using turmeric (<i>Kuni</i>).
4	<i>Ufe Kafi</i> (Wedding traditional process)	Traditional leaders bathe the prospective bride and groom before the wedding day.	The traditional leader bathes the bride and groom before the wedding day to purify and prepare them for life in a household.

The use of cave water is carried out to fulfill various mandatory requirements for the tradition. The study found four mandatory traditions that use cave water: (1) *Ufe Karia Mbo'u Mbo'u*, (2) *Ufe Karia Ntooge/Hoporuku*, (3) *Ufe Heraha*

Kuni, and (4) *Ufe Kafi* (wedding tradition). There are no notable changes in the use of cave water for Wanci and Mandati tribes, but the only distinction is that the traditional procession is prepared and commanded. The Karia tradition is still carried out by the community every year. The use of cave water for traditional processions is shown in the following Table 1.

The use of cave water in Ufe karia is defined as a tradition procession to baptize young children based on Islamic values. This procession was carried out in the months of Shawwal, Zulhijah, Safar, and Sa'ban in the Hijri year (Islamic Year). Using cave water was the initial event of the procession series that needed to follow. Local people are called *Ufe* (water) and *Karia* (baptize). Table 1 shows four traditional events that used cave water for blessing. The complete implementation of Karia is given to a young girl three times: a toddler (2-5 years old), teenager (5-12 years old), and after having the first menstruation. Meanwhile, a young boy only performed *Karia Nto'oge/Hoporuku* procession at 5-12 years old. The procession served as a symbol that the child was ready to grow up. An interview with the traditional leader stated: "*Suru tokaria'e na ana mbou'u fofine mina karia mbou'o mbou'o apa no karia nto'oge, daimo no dahani ngkaramano kua no tooge mo, no dahani emo na jao kene leama, no dahani emo na pake leama fana diajara ako nu nabi ke rasul, fana ajara ako nu mansuana, kene fanaumpa nu ajara agama ako no salama di junia kene akherati*" (Interview with Traditional Leaders, 2021). "*The main reason that a girl must participate in Karia from childhood to adulthood is to know responsibility as an adult, know the difference between good and bad, know to behave probability based on Islamic values to live safely.*" (Interview with Traditional Leaders, 2021).

The procession expected that every child could behave according to religious values, following the local norms to live safely. Each Karia Process is closely related to Islamic values. Karia tradition has meaning: 1) commemorating the process of mass conversion to Islam, 2) the life-span of an individual towards maturity, 3) restore community harmony by maintaining contact with relatives and family.

B. Traditional procession in using cave water

The use of cave water for various traditional purposes, especially the Karia Tradition, passes through three stages as follows:

1. Preparation Stage

Before carrying out the Karia traditional ceremony, a meeting is held between traditional leaders, religious leaders, local government, and community leaders. The meeting is held in *Sombonga/Hu'u*, the community leader house who considered economically capable of custom with the royal title "*Ode*" to lead the implementation of customs. The meeting discussed the requirements of ceremonies, date and place, and costs needed for the ceremonies.



Figure 2. The preparation stage for the Karia Tradition (Source: of research, 2021)

Additionally, the parents of Karia participants needed to provide *Kamondo* (preparation) and are ready to do *Paapadangku* (banging the head on a coconut). The *Kamondo* (preparations) must provide: 1) 8 chicken eggs for the children from Ode (royal families) and 4 chicken eggs for the children from Mbaradika (ordinary families), then stored on a white plate containing plenty of rice, 2) 80,000 rupiah in coins for each participant, 3) 4 pieces of corn, 4) 1 coconut wrapped with cotton yarn, 5) 3, 5, to 7 betel nuts, 6) Lifo (various types of traditional food), and 7) Toba and some money in a plate. The most important requirement in this stage is *Ufe Karia* from the cave water. In Mandati tribe, the water from Lia Bete cave is taken by a child with criteria: 1) boys or girls, 2) physically and mentally healthy, and 3) have a complete family. The water was taken secretly (*Kanalako/Impi*). The process including: 1) prepare the dish in a piece of betel leaf equipped with gambier, tobacco, lime, and areca nut placed on a banana leaf as a plate, 2) place the dish on a rock around the cave water, 3) after the water is filled then the child brings water to the Karia procession is carried out. Some taboo said to bring the water quietly and do not answer any questions. The interview with the traditional leader stated: "*Ara to impi te ufe, to bafa emo kene hanganto sa, maka toala di safengka moana, ara to faliako sa mbisa no ema kita te emai bara nto balo'e. Suru toala impi'e na ufe bara ako to gogo, kene to tauko'e te toba akonte bolosi nu ufe mondo dialanto. Ma'ana no iso kua te sukurunto kua Moori akonte ufe ana mbeaka no mose-mosenga*" Interview with Traditional Leaders, 2021). "*If you take water, you must secretly bring food and then take it on the right side, then if you are on your way home you are not allowed to answer even if someone asks you a question. Why take water secretly*

so as not to make a fuss, and bring food to replace the cave water that we take. The meaning of the procession is proof of gratitude to God because the cave water given never dries up” (Interview with Traditional Leaders, 2021).

Although the criteria are the same as the Mandati tribe, the Wanci tribe carried out different processes. The Wanci tribe takes Lesa'a cave water by throwing coins into the cave water, filling the kettle, and finishing. This represented as the price for water taken. The community recognizes that cave water is God's creation, and thus we should not misbehave, such as yelling and shouting. The interview with the traditional leader stated: “*Te ufe karia ana to kanalakomo di ufe Lesa'a toka totompa ako lagi te doe, ako te sarati nu ufe di alanto. Suruntu tompa ako te ufe ako kua todahaani ngkaramanto te ufe ana mina di Moori, jari bara to gogo, bara to homo-homo ako daimo uka te ufe dialanto ana no jari hekombi, no jari joa ako to seha-seha*” (Interview with Traditional Leaders, 2021). “*We take water secretly in the Lesa'a cave water but first throw coins into the cave water as required for the water we take. We pay for water because we are aware that the water is God's creation, so we must not make noise, cannot yelling, so that the water will always stay healthy.*” (Interview with Traditional Leaders, 2021). Utilization of Lesa'a cave water as a fulfillment of the mandatory requirements for belief in the efficacy of cave water as a healer and repellent to evil. The Lesa'a cave water is used as a healer or repellent from evil. Lesa'a refers to "soul freedom" or "soul openness." Individuals can heal from all diseases and maintain good health by drinking and bathing in cave water. The community believes that sustaining cave water is necessary and that water can also be beneficial for the community if the water is always clean.

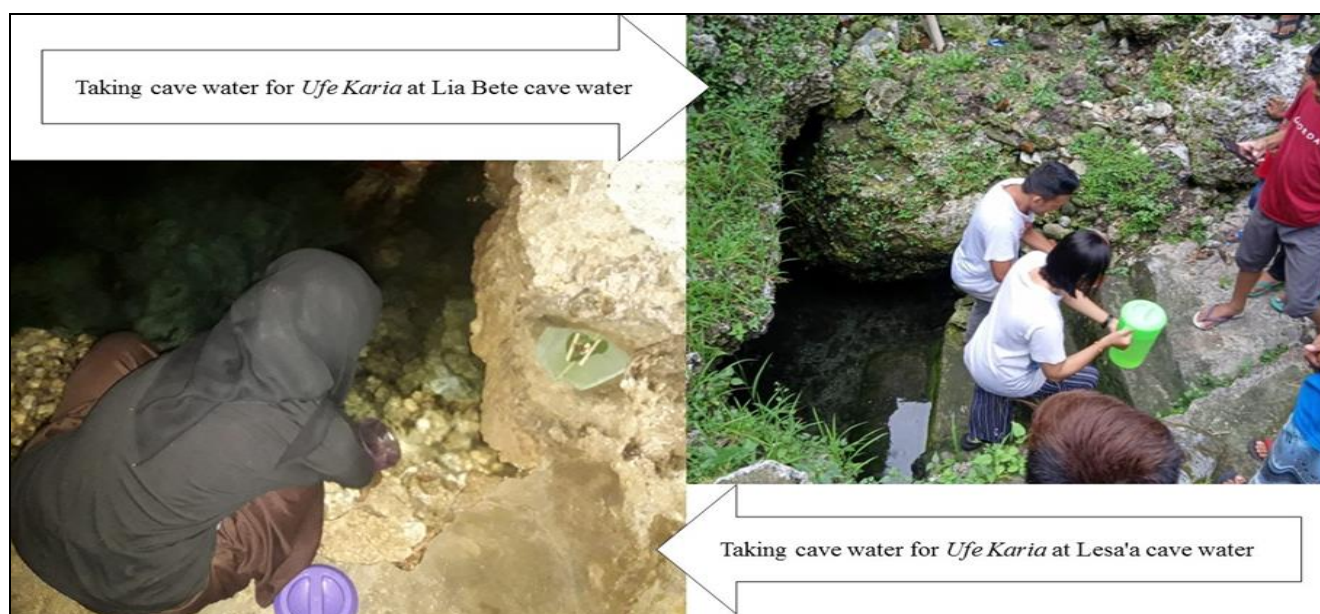


Figure 3. The procession of taking cave water for Karia tradition (Source: of research, 2021)



Figure 4. The Bathing Procession with *Ufe Karia* by Traditional Leaders (Source: of research, 2021)

Figure 5. Procession of Advising Karia Participants by Traditional Leaders (Source: of research, 2021)

2. Implementation Stage (*Hoporuku*)

Hoporuku begins by calling the name of each child, then is bathed from right to left while rubbing the whole body and drinking water three times, then directed to say the shahada following Islamic values.

The child received advice (*Ndou-Ndou*) from parents, traditional leaders, and religious leaders about having good

behavior following Islamic values called "*Pake Leama*". It taught children the attitudes towards parents, fellow friends, teachers, the environment, and God according to the Qur'an and Al-Hadith.

3. Karia Celebration Stage

The final stage of the Karia Tradition procession is the coronation of participants by bringing the children to parade around the village led by traditional leaders (*Sara Hu'u*) and religious leaders (*Sara Hukumu*). The community rejoices over the process and is grateful because the child is ready to live in society.

C. The traditional value of using cave water for sustainable ecotourism

The long process that each child goes through is led by traditional leaders (*Sara Hu'u*) and religious leaders (*Sara Hukumu*). Each process contained the values of the good of life. The values contained in the tradition are as follows:

1. Religious values are absolute and eternal spiritual values based on human faith and trust. The tradition of *Ufe Karia* remains to exist because of the mass commemorate of Muslims. Also, the Karia tradition teaches to behave following religious values.

2. The value of collaboration is manifested in individual behavior or actions to do something for the common interest or to a particular individual. It can be seen in the Karia tradition during the preparation process by the local community, such as: set up tents, arrange chairs, cook for 3 days, and others.

3. The Karia traditional process will unite families. The family values can be seen in the *Hopoboka* activities, such as: bringing some money, rice, eggs, or others and then giving to Karia participants, also in the *Kontamanga*, such as: cleaning Karia participants houses, setting up tents, and arranging chairs, cooking for 3 days to prepare the traditional process. This event can unite different levels of families and reduce ceremony costs.

4. Traditional leaders are well knowledgeable about the customs and serve as a model for society. Therefore, all activities carried out by traditional leaders can help the community in understanding customs values. The leader must ensure that each activity or deed is viewed positively by the community, including participating in all cultural activities.

Regular community life based on religious beliefs, traditional norms, and the good life principles can serve as a guide and reference point for social life. The primary purpose of the Karia tradition is to teach religious values and kindness to children from an early age. Quality life can reflect human behavior towards nature. Good environmental quality is also a reflection of the quality of life. Geertz (1973) revealed that many belief systems in society influence how people behave, including environmental behavior. The primary factor contributing to decreasing environmental quality is human activity's exploitation of nature. According to Sasmito (2015) environmental damage is increasing due to overexploitation of nature and unsustainable industrialization. The importance of cave water for society teaches humans to respect nature and recognize that God created natural resources to meet human needs and that humans are responsible for conservation. Conservative values in the tradition of using cave water can be seen based on table 2 below:

Table 2. Traditional value of using cave water for conservation (Source: of research, 2021)

<i>Ufe Karia Tradition</i>	Values and Interpretation
Prohibited activities: The following activities are prohibited: littering, creating noise, cursing, collecting water, and conducting immoral behaviors.	Ecological value, which includes a restriction on damaging cave water.
Allowed activities: Water is taken for traditional and customary uses, water is taken for medicinal purposes, the environment is cleaned, and the water is kept clean.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The procedure for extracting water from the cave demonstrates the importance of balance, which encompasses the concept of living in harmony with nature. - Through non-destructive operations, the value of sustainability is maintained for the cleanliness of cave water. - The importance of mutual cooperation, water collection, and use in the Karia traditional procession.
Activities to do: Required to conduct actions such as securing and protecting cave water resource locations and creating social and cultural infrastructure for cave water ecotourism in Wakatobi Regency.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ecological value, which includes the prohibition on maintaining always-clean and sustainable cave water. - The value of sustainability indicates that water resources can remain sustainable for the growth of ecotourism in Wakatobi with careful use.

Based on the overall results, the use of cave water for the needs of the Karia tradition is a real effort for the development of ecotourism in the Wakatobi Regency. The values of the goodness of life in the community and conservative values are clear evidence that cave water does not only have natural beauty besides that it is water that supports traditional completeness. The values in the tradition contain teachings about the importance of preserving water resources. For the community, cave water contains blessings from God. The community believes the water of the cave to purify and heal and even cure disease. The strong public trust in the water content of the cave has shaped conservative behavior in its use. Used as customary water to fulfill customary requirements in the mandatory tradition is a symbol of public awareness for water conservation.

CONCLUSION

Cave water for indigenous peoples is not merely raw water to meet their needs, but more than that, cave water is closely related to community traditions. Utilizing cave water for traditional water needs in the Karia tradition is a water conservation practice. Values in the use of cave water is an effort to preserve the environment and culture.

Very meaningful Karia tradition is a form of true ecotourism implementation Based on the results of this study, it is possible to maintain the significance and value of tradition to develop sustainable ecotourism in Wakatobi Regency. It is not difficult to sell tourism products with ecotourism features (natural potential, traditions, and community culture with educational and instructional values) to maximize ecotourism.

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