

Historical Awareness of the Nualain Village Community in Fostering Nationalism Through Baipor Hatama Local Wisdom

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KEYWORDS	ABSTRACT
Historical Awareness, Nationalism, and Local Wisdom of Baipor Hatama	This research is motivated by the problem of the national perspective of the people in the Indonesia-Timor Leste border region. The objectives to be achieved in this research are to describe the local wisdom of Baipor Hatama, describe and analyze the values contained in the local wisdom of Baipor Hatama which contains historical awareness in fostering nationalism, and describe the activities that emerge from the local wisdom of Baipor Hatama which contains the values of nationalism. The research method used in this research is a case study research method. This research is based on the cultural ties between Indonesia and Timor Leste. The results of this research are first, the community makes Baipor Hatama a symbol of the separation of the tribes in Nualain from those in Timor Leste. Second, the cultural values in the local wisdom of Baipor Hatama and other cultures in the Nualain community can foster nationalism in people in border areas. Third, the historical awareness of the Nualain community is demonstrated by the community's nationalistic attitude by participating in various activities containing nationalist values in the border region.

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Introduction

According to Collingwood (2001), the shaping of a nation's national identity is none other than history. It is even stated that historical knowledge is not only fundamental in the formation of national identity but also serves as a source of inspiration, rich with meaning, in the development of historical awareness among the younger generation.

Belu Regency is one of the districts that borders the country of Timor Leste (Alkatiri, 2018; Winarna et al., 2022). The Belu people share a very strong emotional bond with the people of Timor Leste, due to similarities in regional languages and cultures. The common regional language between Timor Leste and Belu Regency is *Tetun Bunak*, while culturally, there is a connection between the tribes in Timor Leste and the tribes in Belu Regency (Tsuchiya, 2019).

The cultural bond between Timor Leste and the Belu people presents a matter of national perspective. This identity issue emerged after the separation of East Timor from Indonesia, giving rise to questions of identity and patriotism.

This situation becomes particularly interesting to examine further in terms of how the community's historical awareness contributes to fostering nationalism through local wisdom. The lack of historical awareness can be observed in the way people regard their past. Pessimism toward history is evident in the continued attachment of some individuals to Timor Leste, which they consider the origin of their tribe.

Therefore, it is valuable to study the historical awareness of the people in Nualain Village in fostering nationalism through the local wisdom of *Baipor Hatama*.

Based on the problem background described above, the research question is: How is the historical awareness of the Nualain Village community in fostering nationalism through the local wisdom of *Baipor Hatama*? The results of this research are expected to provide a scientific study of the local wisdom of *Baipor Hatama* in fostering nationalism through historical learning.

Materials and Methods

This study uses a qualitative approach with a case study method. According to Nasution (2003), qualitative research, in essence, observes the daily behavior of people in their living environment. The approach to the studied subjects is carried out on an ongoing basis and integrates with them without any boundaries or barriers, attempting to understand their language and their interpretation of the world around them.

In relation to history learning, qualitative research refers to a loosely defined category of research models that produce verbal, visual, and contextual data centered around the research location. The data is collected in the form of descriptive narratives (field notes, recordings, and other written documentation), which are related to the local wisdom of *Baipor Hatama* in fostering nationalism through informal learning.

This case study research aims to examine and present best practices regarding the existence of socio-cultural interactions, relationships and situations, socio-cultural practices, as well as values and attitudes of nationalism in informal history learning. In this study, the researcher was directly involved in the entire process—from observation and planning to implementation in the field—focused on the local wisdom of *Baipor Hatama* in fostering nationalism through learning local history in informal settings.

The location chosen for this study is Nualain Village, South Lamaknen District, Belu Regency, East Nusa Tenggara Province. The researcher chose Nualain Village because it directly borders the State of Timor Leste. Additionally, this village continues to practice the local wisdom tradition of *Baipor Hatama*. The subjects of this study are the residents of Nualain Village, including families, community leaders, and the local government. This choice is based on the consideration that the local wisdom of *Baipor Hatama* is actively applied in the community. In this research process, the primary instrument or research tool is the researcher themselves. The researcher serves as a human instrument, functioning to determine the focus of the study, select informants as data sources, collect data, assess the quality of the data, interpret findings, and draw conclusions (Lincoln & Guba, 1984).

Data collection was conducted directly by the researcher, who acted as both observer and data collector. Data was gathered from four main sources: interviews, field notes, observations, and physical artifacts (Yin, 2014). Both observation and data collection were carried out in a natural setting.

According to Miles & Huberman (2014), activities in qualitative data analysis are conducted interactively and continuously until completion, ensuring that data becomes saturated. The key stages in data analysis are data reduction, data presentation, conclusion drawing, and

verification. This research also involved testing the validity of the data, specifically in terms of the reliability and accuracy of the findings. The validity test in this study was conducted through member checks and expert opinions.

Results and Discussions

Based on interviews conducted with leaders in Nualain Village, information about the local wisdom of *Baipor Hatama* was obtained. Local wisdom, as a cultural heritage, is valuable and appropriate to be preserved by the cultural bearers. The results of observations show that the public's knowledge of the local wisdom of *Baipor Hatama* is very good. Tiezzi et al. in Ridwan (2007) explain that local wisdom is explicit knowledge that arises over a long period, evolving alongside the community and its environment in a local system collectively experienced. Local wisdom can be explored from a specific region.

In this context, the area studied by the researcher is Nualain Village, Belu Regency, and the focus is on the local wisdom of *Baipor Hatama*. *Baipor Hatama* is a traditional ceremony to relocate and transfer *pamali* objects, which are considered sacred—such as *Kalewang pamali* (sacred sword), *pamali* spears, *kabelak* (male and female jewelry made of silver and gold), and other objects believed to possess magical powers—into a newly built or renovated traditional house.

The *Baipor Hatama* traditional ceremony is regarded and believed by the community as a ritual to sanctify a traditional house. In this regard, Sirtha in Sartini (2004) explains that local wisdom functions as advice, belief, literature, and taboo. The sacred objects involved in the *Baipor Hatama* ceremony are believed to carry taboos that must not be violated, as the community holds the belief that without performing this ritual when constructing traditional homes, such homes are no different in value from ordinary houses.

Levi-Strauss (2005) posits that for a culture to genuinely express itself and be productive, both the culture and its members must be convinced of its originality and, to some extent, its superiority over other cultures. In this study, the local wisdom of *Baipor Hatama* is strongly believed to embody such superiority, and thus it becomes the foundation for the community's mindset and attitude.

The traditional houses of the 30 tribes (*Umametan, Lalgomo, Giralbagal, Leorawan Mual, Reibulot, Leorawan Eser, Leowes*, and 23 other tribes) in Nualain Village trace their ancestry back to Timor Leste. Given these historical facts, the community needs a symbolic foundation to represent their identity and the separation from tribes in Timor Leste. Accordingly, they have embraced the local wisdom of *Baipor Hatama* as such a symbol. This is in line with Naritoom's opinion in Wagiran (2012), where he explains that local wisdom encapsulates a long-standing experience passed down as a moral and behavioral guide.

Thus, the people have used historical legacies to shape current attitudes and actions, and *Baipor Hatama* has come to symbolize the differentiation between tribes in Nualain and those in Timor Leste. This attitude fosters a sense of nationalism among the community, as reflected in Renan's explanation in Bria (2018): nationalism is a desire to live together, rooted in the unity of soul, emotion, and will, realized through a shared collective identity. In this study, the presence of

nationalism is evident in the community's common will to live together, united by culture, including the local wisdom of *Baipor Hatama*.

In the transmission of the local wisdom of *Baipor Hatama* within the Nualain Village community, parents play a central role. They are responsible for introducing traditional ceremonies and teaching children about cultural history. In this case, the local wisdom being passed down is that of *Baipor Hatama*. Family education acts as a process of socialization, where cultural values are introduced to children as the younger generation, enabling them to internalize these values and apply them in daily life. This view is supported by Adiwikarta (1988), who argues that through socialization, cultural values become personal values internalized by individuals.

Apart from parents, a key figure in the broader community is the *Mako'an*. The *Mako'an* is a traditional priest or elder who understands and guides the history and procedures of tribal rituals. The *Mako'an* is essential to all traditional ceremonies, acting as a bridge between the community and ancestral spirits. One important role of the *Mako'an* is to foster love and respect for culture so that cultural traditions can serve as a moral and behavioral foundation. This aligns with Koentjaraningrat's (1992) theory that a cultural value system consists of shared conceptions, upheld by the majority, about what is regarded as significant and valuable in life. The *Mako'an*, therefore, instills these values in the community to serve as guiding principles.

The local wisdom of *Baipor Hatama* upholds cultural values embraced by the people of Nualain Village. As noted in previous research by Asriati (2012), many traditional values that reside in a community often go unnoticed yet can be implemented as integral components of character education. In this context, social values and norms rooted in custom—such as *Feto Sawa* and *Malu Ai* in the local wisdom of *Baipor Hatama*—promote kindness, social harmony, self-discipline, and a spirit of national pride and unity.

The cultural values found in the traditions of Nualain society must constantly be instilled, especially in the younger generation. Values such as love and pride in one's tribe form the basis of national character—shaping attitudes and behaviors aligned with national identity.

Nationalistic values embedded in *Baipor Hatama* include love of country, pride in national identity as Indonesians, appreciation for the struggles of national heroes, and reverence for Indonesia's cultural diversity. Anderson (Septianingsih, 2010) explains that nationalism manifests in various aspects, including a shared mother tongue and mutual understanding of language. This linguistic connection contributes to national perspective issues. Through the practice of *Baipor Hatama*, the people believe that their tribal identities have become independent and differentiated from those in East Timor. Considering that East Timor has become an independent nation, separate from Indonesia, the use of *Baipor Hatama* serves to reinforce cultural identity and a national outlook aligned with loyalty to Indonesia.

Smith in Bacon (2018) states that a comprehensive understanding of nationalism must engage with the "sacred sources" that predate modern states and shape national identity. In this case, the local wisdom of *Baipor Hatama* is such a sacred source and serves as a cornerstone for cultivating love for the Republic of Indonesia. Historically, when Timor Leste was still part of Indonesia, many people migrated and settled there. However, after Timor Leste's independence,

individuals whose tribal roots lay in Belu Regency (Indonesia) returned and resettled in Belu, driven by tribal allegiance.

The community considers *Baipor Hatama* central to their identity. During the *Baipor Hatama* ceremony, traditional elders explain tribal history and ritual meaning through poetry, allowing participants to absorb and reflect on the values embedded in the tradition. This ritual process reflects the historical awareness of the tribes in Nualain Village. In line with this, Ismaun (2005) defines historical awareness as the ability to identify historical values, filter them, choose and develop positive aspects as personal values, and avoid or negate negative ones.

The *Baipor Hatama* ritual is a significant cultural event that serves as a learning medium, especially for children, helping them to understand the history and identity of their ethnic group, and encouraging them to preserve the values it contains. A value, once internalized by an individual, greatly influences their way of thinking, behavior, and actions in achieving life goals (Ahmadi & Uhibiyati, 1991).

Moreover, the researcher found that there is special attention from the government, including village authorities and TNI (Indonesian National Armed Forces), in helping to strengthen nationalistic ideas within the community. This is evident in the public's actions—besides participating in community competitions, students and local leaders commemorate the Independence Day of the Republic of Indonesia by hoisting the Red and White flag. This ceremony involves participants marching while carrying the national flag from the center of South Lamaknen Subdistrict, near Nualain Village, to a nearby hilltop, and raising the flag together as a declaration of love for the Republic of Indonesia. This activity reflects the people's historical awareness, particularly among those living along the Indonesia–Timor Leste border, who recognize and commemorate significant past events, such as the separation of East Timor and the tribal histories passed down through figures like the *Mako'an*.

Conclusion

The local wisdom of *Baipor Hatama* is used as a cultural foundation because performing the *Baipor Hatama* traditional ceremony signifies the separation of tribes in Indonesia from those in Timor Leste. The *Baipor Hatama* ceremony is also a means to foster nationalism, as it contains cultural values that strengthen national identity among the people of Nualain Village, a border area between Indonesia and Timor Leste. To prevent issues related to national perspective among border communities, it is essential to pass on cultural values to the people. The inheritance of the cultural values embedded in the local wisdom of *Baipor Hatama* and other traditional ceremonies in Nualain Village involves several key components: the *Mako'an*, the family, the community, and the government. The process of cultural inheritance functions effectively because all parties mutually support one another in preserving *udaya* (cultural) values and traditional customs. With the successful transmission of these cultural values, a strong sense of nationalism continues to grow and develop within the community.

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