

# Internal Factors that Influence Local Wisdom of Dayak Communities in Ensaid Panjang Sintang District West Kalimantan Indonesia

Pether Sobian<sup>1,\*</sup>, Maryunani<sup>2</sup>, Endah Setyowati<sup>3</sup>, Harsuko Riniwati<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Doctoral Program of Environmental Science, Postgraduate School, Universitas Brawijaya, Malang, Indonesia

<sup>2</sup>Economics Department, Faculty of Economics and Business, Universitas Brawijaya, Malang, Indonesia

<sup>3</sup>Department of Public Administration, Faculty of Administrative Science, Universitas Brawijaya, Malang, Indonesia

<sup>4</sup>Socio-economic Study Program, Faculty of Fisheries and Marine Science, Universitas Brawijaya, Malang, Indonesia

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**Abstract** This study was conducted to reveal about the internal factors that cause the local wisdom change of Dayak community in the Ensaid Panjang village, Sintang District, West Kalimantan, Indonesia. Research method used in this research is descriptive qualitative research. The data presented in this study was obtained through observations and in-depth interviews with local informants. This research explains the key factors that exist within the community and within the village of Ensaid Panjang society itself which resulted in the change of local wisdom of the Dayak community. It can be explained as follows. The first is increasing population and different cultural interactions result a variety of adjustments, changes, and even contradictions. Second, the change in mutual trust and the belief that became one of the strengths of the social capital of the local community. The community has other references other than indigenous leaders, to find and ensure mutual trust and confidence. Third, the relevance of norms (customary of law and customary of *Mali* or taboo) that have been used and respected began to be criticized and questioned, both the substance and its implementation in line with the existence of other laws and norms higher and more acceptable to the wider community. The forth is the emergence of new relationships that resulted in the knowledge understanding and practice of the community to grow and expand, so that people have information channels from various sources.

**Keywords** Dayak, Local wisdom, Mutual trust, Confidence, Norms, Network

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## 1. Introduction

Traditional cultural changes occur in various places. This is generally associated with modernization and economic development [1]. Similarly, the culture, traditional life and human ecology of Dayak people also experience a very rapid change. Dayak people is tribal society inhabited Kalimantan Island, Indonesia which practicing traditional cultures including local wisdoms. Local wisdom is the positive behavior of society (tribe) when interacting with nature and its environment which is originated from their value of religious customs, advice of the ancestors or local culture, naturally built within a community to adapt to its local surroundings. General behavior and common applications on the community are inherited and developed to become values which are held rigidly called culture [2].

Implementation of local wisdoms in Dayak tribe daily life has recently changed due to external and internal factors. The change in local wisdom in this village seems so real and massive, for example some Dayak society in Ensaid Panjang village which has abandoned traditional life style in a Betang Long House (BLH). The BLH is known as a very long house with 27 rooms or chambers. One room or chambers can be occupied one or more family heads. In this BLH all the daily activities and traditional culture practices of Dayak community of Ensaid Panjang were conducted [3]. The people, who used to live in that BLH, time by time began to leave the BLH and established a 'modern' house around the BLH. Such action led to the abandonment of the customs, beliefs and regulations of the BLH including their local wisdoms. Change of the population affects on changes in people's behaviour and culture. Change occurs because of interaction, interrelation and interdependence of society, especially when the meeting of two or more different cultures within a community. Changes that occur are not always a harmonious change, unidirectional and balanced but more of a competition arena which gives rise to uncontrolled 'developments'.

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\* Corresponding author:

pethersobian@gmail.com (Pether Sobian)

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Research on the Dayak culture is very rare. Among the previous studies, most were conducted in South [4], East [5], and Central [6] Kalimantan. Recent major studies focus on the relationship of culture to nature, through the practice of local wisdom such as the practice of Kaleka (agro-forestry practice) [6]. Local wisdom is a hereditary heritage that is held and maintained by the people in the region, this local wisdom heritage gives the ability and traditional knowledge for the community in the area of environmental management based on their natural intelligence. To preserve their cultural tradition, Dayak community practiced various rituals. The ritual and culture of the Dayak community reflects the close relationship between human society and nature. The Meaning of social capital as the base of sustained life was independence, uniqueness, freedom, preservation and harmony. The meanings contained in the ritual could be classified as respect, maintain, preserve and conserve the natural resource as well as responsibility and care [3]. This study was conducted to reveal about the internal factors that cause the local wisdom change of Dayak community in the Ensaid Panjang village, Sintang District, West Kalimantan, Indonesia.

## 2. Research Methods

This research was conducted in Ensaid Panjang village, Kelam Permai Sub-district, Sintang District, West Kalimantan, Indonesia. Ensaid Panjang villagers are Dayak people who are Ibanic sub tribes or Iban clumps. The village of Ensaid Panjang consists of four hamlets and the only hamlet that still owns and maintains their tradition inhabited the Betang Long House. Internal factors affecting the local wisdom of Dayak people in this hamlet not only because of 'pressure' or influence from other external factors but also lie in the interaction, wishes and expectations of the community at their house.

Data collection techniques were conducted in two ways; direct observation to the field and in-depth interviews. The interviews were conducted with ten key persons, seven men and three women selected by snow ball sampling. The selected informants were those who have knowledge, experience, cadence, position in the cultural context in which they live. With the knowledge criteria of the local wisdoms in which they live. The selected key persons were a village chief, sub village chiefs, chairman of village consultative body, a tribal chief, Elders of BLH, former tribal chairperson and three persons from the Dayak weaving group. Test the validity of data researchers do by doing triangulation of sources and triangulation method. Data analysis was done by interactive data model analysis method [7]. All the data is collected neatly and systematically. Such data was shorted to determine the right and main data in accordance with the problem and purpose of research.

The presentation of data is done after going through a series of scientific selection, namely through sorting, organizing and data condensation. After going through a

series of scientific selection, the data are grouped and done interpretation and conclusion.

## 3. Results and Discussion

Local wisdom change in society is determined by internal and external factors and how society reacts. This study focused on the internal factors of the Ensaid Panjang community, particularly in BLH. Local wisdom change affect to the environment, institutions, community behaviour and social relationships. Local wisdom change itself can usually occur very quickly and unconsciously. This is expressed by a member of the community, who says:

“We sometimes do not realize of our cultural and traditional life changes. We begin to aware when many cultural customs has no longer implemented. We do not understand what the root of problems. We finally know little if our community members here also want a variety of changes in various things. The first local wisdom abandonment is the practice of living in a long house and the last is the erosion of thought and values of life in the long house. Thoughts, ideas and desires are not doing wrong, but a good public opinion is ultimately used, even though that opinion is ‘getting rid of’ the culture. These thoughts, ideas and hopes unconsciously erode traditional life and culture here because they are not ‘aligned’ with the preservation of local wisdom.”

In line with the above opinion, one member of the community stated a similar opinion namely;

“More so when the campaign for election time arrived, both the election of village head, hamlets, regent, and house of representative, the real dynamics and disagreements in the community occurred. There were always different strongholds of interest. This eventually led to the partition between us here. Unfortunately, the situation is lasting even though the election passed”.

People are generally slow to realize the local wisdom change. The change can be seen by those who have awareness of the preservation of local wisdom. Those who maintain and care for their local wisdom are better able to see the factors that cause the cultural shift. These people compare the circumstances of local wisdom now with the situation in recent years. Such awareness gives the capability to the concerned to voicing warnings and finding cultural preservation efforts.

### 1. The dynamic of mutual trust and confidence

There are two elements of mutual trust between peoples affecting the local wisdom of dynamics and another is the belief of community that is; trust, belief and faith.

#### a. Trust & Belief

Trust is a community philosophy that believes everyone is basically good. As one member of such a society said;

“We were born and raised here, the natives here, from the beginning we knew that we had to respect, and believe that others were good. When we meet and socialize with other people, we also believe others people are as innocence as us and they appreciate us”.

Unknown or non-family members are also believed to be good. This can be seen for example when there are people outside this village come to sell around to the BLH; they are respected, well received. But now our beliefs have begun to shift because of our experience that there are people who can not be trusted, some are not good, some are dishonest, disrespectful or self-respecting and selfish. This situation do not only happened to outsider but also to fellow community members here.

Further members of the community say so;

“The level of public confidence in the leaders was very high when we were living together in BLH. It may because at that time we only knew one leader only. The leader has two functions; the existing leadership and the village head (the period is called *Empung* or head of hamlet). Now the belief is gradually faded, probably causes by many people who have been educated in this village. Another reason is because the leader in this village holds many roles. Our leader is not only the traditional board, but also the village head, the head of the hamlet and other community leaders. Above all it is the cause of the loss of trust with each other in this village is politics. The difference in political support creates bulkheads and prolonged conflicts of interest. The political differences are brought to everyday life.”

Over time the level of public confidence in its leaders began to decline. Shifting the level of public confidence is not solely because of the development of relations and knowledge of society. Increased knowledge and community relationships bring many choices. Society has other references to, leadership, justice, sincerity, honesty and good public service. Decreasing level of public confidence both to the leaders and among fellow citizens was caused by another thing namely abandonment of BLH. Secondly, because of the system that does not side with the unity of society. Third is the inability of society to contest and compete or in other languages the inability of people to manage emotions.

The unfair competition in the electoral system is sometime occurred. Competition and such means lead to of society fragmentation. Stakeholders should be pro-active in conducting political education to the public especially to their supporters. Society is not necessarily ‘pitted and burned’ to achieve the goals of a person or group of people. Not all citizens of society have the awareness and understanding of politics in good ways. Differences or ‘contradictions’ of interest or support in the political arena are carried over to everyday life. Differences of support and opinions in the political world ‘spread’ to other spheres of social life. This is not only due to low education, lack of experience or because of rural communities, but it is

related to ‘emotional management’. The community became disconnected, dislike, unwillingness to be led, unpreparedness to cooperate and distrust with each other in society.

#### b. Faith

The Dayak people used to belief to the ultimate power. The Devines are not a human beings. They are believed to have power and authority over the lives of the people. According to the public figure Ensaid Panjang:

“As a Dayak, if I want to farm, I should listen to the sound of birds first, whether the sound is good or bad. Likewise, when our society will make a field, it can not be cultivated in any place. Our society also believes that every river, forest, wood, stone, land or certain places must have a master. ”

According to the custom administrators open the field closely related to spirituality. The level of believe of Dayak people to magical things is very high. As told by such public figures;

“For the Dayak people who still admit and use the old customs or BLH custom, the activities of cutting and slashing the field are determined by his belief in the sound of certain birds.”

Lately, such beliefs have been lost, not only because of the influences of modern religions or other external factors, but rather on the internal factors of consciousness and understanding arising from education, self-understanding and internalization of citizens. As stated by community leaders interviewed by researchers;

“Today, there are many citizens abandoned of using this belief, that why there are lots people who avoid to the ways of farming. The deep poles in the river, the big woods, the jungles and the formerly haunted places, have been encroached by the people activities with modern apology. If they are not changed on by the community, they are eventually altered by palm oil companies that enter this area. Places that were once considered taboo and ghosts, now become common. There are now more people who do not use customary *mali* anymore except members of the community who live in BLH, and even then not all the *mali* used anymore.”

The community prefers to farm because it can grow rice or harvest more than once a year. Compare it with farms that can only grow rice and harvest once a year. Furthermore, in katakana by community leaders,

“The rice from our cultivation is more delicious and more profitable. We can harvest two or three times a year if rice fields, otherwise we do not need to perform customary rituals Dayak if paddy. Complicated, difficult and less profitable to farm if compared with the rice fields. Automatically all the rituals of confidence as we did at the time of farming we do not do again when we paddy.”

## 2. Relevance of Norms

Social norms are common habits that characterize behavior in society and certain 'boundaries' in social interaction. Norms evolve with the social agreements of society, and the changing wants, needs and expectations of society. Social norms are often referred to as social rules. Norms is concern about appropriate behavior in community social interactions. The existence of norms in society is forcing an individual or a group to act in accordance with the social rules that have been formed. Essentially, norms are arranged so that the relationship between humans or human relationships with nature can take place as orderly as expected.

The relevance of norms in society is now being questioned by society, especially the younger generation; they question its benefits with the needs of today's society. Along with the times that have been so advanced and modern, things that people think is illogical, began to be discussed and abandoned. According to them there are certain parts in the norm that need to be abandoned and replaced, there must be changed especially the superstitious and unreasonable beliefs.

### a. *Mali* (taboo)

The meaning of the word *mali* or taboo thing or action means violations that bring bad luck, disaster, sickness, loss of material, and other bad things. Violation of taboo usually occurs due to unintelligence or ignorance. Although the offense is unintentional or the perpetrator does not understand, the penalty must keep dropping. The customary leader of Ensaid Panjang Village said thus:

"The purpose of the punishment *mali* should be kept so that all misfortunes, crimes, sickness, loss, and death do not happen to the offender, whole society and BLH. If punishment is not given, then bad luck will surely happen, that is the belief of society about indigenous *mali*."

*Mali* violations committed by a person must be covered or removed with objects or goods that have been determined. According to the traditional village administrator of Ensaid Panjang,

"The violators of *mali* had to surrender the living adult chicken, rice, bowls, plates and iron and some money to the home elder (even the house). Even the House is entitled to perform the ceremony to eliminate the misfortune that will happen for the offense *mali* has done."

Lately the custom becomes a discussion often raised and questioned by the young and educated. Criticism or 'discourse' about customary *mali* is questioned because it is far from common sense. As said by the board.

"The old custom used because no one has been educated. Now many are educated, critical and dare to question the custom. The customs of *mali* are many of which do not make sense to us. We should apply reasonable rules to be accepted by others. How do we

want to maintain a rule that governs the lives of people with something that does not make sense? We honor our parents who still keep the custom, but they also have to respect the decisions of those who are not willing to follow all the custom."

### b. Customary law

According to the members of the Ensaid Panjang community interviewed by the researcher, it follows:

"Customary law is a set of customary rules governing the behavior and life of traditional societies associated with whether or not a person may perform an action or work."

In other languages, customary law is a set of rules governing the behavior of Dayak people.

Further said by other community members is;

"Customary law is the protection and legal certainty of all societies. The freedom of society is limited not only by the ethics, morality of the person and the rights of others. The freedom of traditional society is also limited by the forces of nature, *mali* and the factors of spirituality, especially customary law."

Customary law is the last device used by indigenous peoples to limit and judge a person's behavior that is considered to violate the provisions of customs. A respondent said that:

"There are many community members who have different thoughts or opinions. Members of the community who have come out of long or educated betas usually have different opinions, they prefer to use other rules (state law) rather than customary law."

According to the narrative community members say that:

"Customary law is a set of rules governing community interaction. It can also be said to be a benchmark of behavior, which limits the behavior of community members in order not to violate the rights of others. Actually this custom does not need us to defend anymore, we already have government regulations, yes it is the will of our parents, we just follow."

The relevance of customary law in the contemporary context is often the subject of their critical questions. The younger generation and those with experience outside the village have knowledge in the field of law criticizing certain parts of customary law. Some people question the essence of customary law itself. As the community members of the younger generation say:

"Since my school has often asked the relevance of this customary law to our day. Not that I disagree with our customs, but many are irrelevant to our times and needs. That is why I then when the family left the BLH and set up their own house outside the BLH so as not to be bound by the customs in the house. We have a government, have state rules, have police have stronger rules. So, irrelevant customs do not have to be maintained anymore."

### 3. Widespread Network

Humans need the help of others to meet their physical, psychological and spiritual needs. In social life, such networks are important. Humans can get the desire and meet the needs of his life very easily, comfortably, and effectively through the network. For example: To find out if the city hospital is open and provide a service, we do not have to come directly and see or ask at the hospital, but simply by texting to people we trust and asking them.

Widespread social networking in the community gives a positive and negative impact to the existence of local wisdom in a region. The Long Ensaid Society, which used to have only networks or relationships among individuals around its village, now extends to such an extent. The availability of the internet network allows people to have networks to the outside world. As told by a weaver of traditional cloths of Dayak.

"We never really come out of this area, to Sintang rarely because access is so difficult, to Sintang must be reached through the river. If to Sintang do not know where to stay, nothing is known. Now we are starting to open, after we are often taken out of the island, even out of the country. We can see how our people culture and confidence grow. We have a lot of relationships with people outside."

Networks in the daily life of the Ensaid Long community can be seen in their daily activities. Starting from its leaders, the network is visible when making decisions. The Customary Board has a network not only to the community under it, but also to other indigenous board in other villages. Through interviews with customary officials, he said that

"The network between fellow Customary Board needs to be cemented in order to exchange information and keep the perception of the problems handled quickly, good and does not create new problems".

Fellow members of a group of weavers for example, the network they build is very interesting to be listened to. In addition to fellow members, their network to buyers, buyers and providers of fabric base materials. Among the members of the weavers group are sharing information exchange and sharing basic materials of woven fabric. According to a mother of weavers;

"There are some weavers in Ensaid Panjang who already have experience visiting the island, abroad, for example to the Philippines, to the Netherlands and to America. I am one of them. We already have an exit network, it's just that our difficulties do not have the ability to speak English, so we have difficulty communicating with our acquaintances that are elsewhere or abroad, but the relationship is still good and kept well woven."

Weavers usually affect each other in work or weaving. If one weaver begins to weave early then the other weavers will also follow. If the same Weaver continues the weaving work in the afternoon, then the others will also follow. The

network of weavers is not just happening to the weaver's circle in the BLH.

The BLH and social interaction in it become the attraction of many people from outside to come to visit. Coupled with the establishment of this village as a tourist village and BLH, this was set up as a cultural heritage by the government. Often the uniqueness, traditional life and culture of Ensaid Panjang Village communities are exploited by policy designers to make political visits. Like the opinion of a member of the community who said:

"Now we are here already know and relate with many people ranging from officials in the District to the District. If they do not come to this village, we are asked to come to the District or to the District for guidance and direction. Likewise board members, come to Dayak gala events, religious holidays, campaign periods. Regents often come in Dayak gear, even the governor has come. We have known a lot, lots of networks we've built."

The rulers to visit this village packed in such a way but still can smell the political aroma is also 'utilized' the community as a 'network'. Community members have new relationships and closeness with local stakeholders. This is a picture of the widespread network of people who once confined in their villages without having the courage and opportunity to relate with the community outside. Since access to Ensaid was open, network was available between Ensaid Panjang with the outside communities.

This study has revealed the change in the local wisdom due to internal factors. The increase in the number of educated citizens raises ideas and criticisms of local wisdom community. Members of the community who attend school and have the experience of living in other areas when returning to their villages also bring out the dynamics of local wisdom. The relevance of *mali's* customary and indigenous laws (rules governing the beliefs of power society) began to be questioned by the people. Basic beliefs in and out of BLH previously held firm by Dayaks are now being criticized and abandoned. The reason for abandoning the basic beliefs of Dayak society is based on the name of 'modern logic'. People who criticized customs, *Mali's* customs and culture, abandon it and 'create their own culture' or follow the development of 'modern culture' which according to his belief is 'logical'. The network of community members has been so much moreover supported by various technological tools. It finally opened the understanding and the eyes of the community about the changes and the development of the outside world. People are beginning to realize the changes of the outside world offers ease, fluency, progress and much different from the reality of their traditional life. Relationships or community networks are so widespread because one of them by the need to develop themselves and the need for information. Personal relationships and groups can be just a friendship can also be a colleague or as a community effort.

This change occurs because of the declining social capital

in society. The level of public confidence in others is running low. This can not be separated from abandonment of living system in BLH. The values of local wisdom that contain religious values, socio-cultural values, practical values, environmental balance, and sustainability that have the functions of protection, conservation, control and conservation of natural resources. The relevance of customary law in contemporary contexts is often the subject of their critical problems. The younger generation and those with experience outside the village have legal knowledge that criticizes certain parts of customary law. Some people question the essence of customary law itself.

Faith associated with the behavior and life at BLH quite a lot and diverse. Faith is concerned with the interaction or life at home from the way up or entering the BLH, what can and can not be brought from outside to the house, and forbidden words or behaviors that done inside. Today, members of the 'unprepared' community with a series of beliefs in long bets choose to leave the BLH and set up their own homes around or move to other hamlets. The people who leave the home are betrayed, not bound by the rules and beliefs (confidence) in the BLH. Those who abandoned the BLH, also abandoned the rules, the trust of the house.

Custom *mali* is the most pro and contra habit in the Dayak community. There are groups who want to keep it but on the other hand there are many groups that do not use it anymore. Community groups that maintain customary *mali* are usually older groups while young and educated groups behave vice versa. The Long Ensaed people no longer use or practice indigenous *mali*, except those living in Betang, and not all families or rooms.

Cultural change is influenced by various internal and external factors. All around the world local culture is suppressed by the development of modern culture; this resulted in the loss of cultural diversity [8]. These changes are not always viewed from a negative perspective, because interaction with external culture can produce a new universal attraction if local wisdom can keep up with technology in a way taking into account the local character, the climate and natural conditions in the built environment. In the dynamics of the modern context, the components of local cultural contact, and internal socio-political dynamics have raised local wisdom to a national scale resulting in a universal appeal [9]. Unfortunately, in the context of Dayak local wisdom, these changes have led to the abandonment of communal living patterns in a large house which has an impact on the interaction between humans and nature. These changes internally occur because of the destruction of social capital in society which consists of capital trust, belief and faith. Traditional society has long lived in harmony socially and with nature. Therefore if the symbols and values are removed from the social and natural world, this encouraged changes in ethnic identity [10].

## 4. Conclusions

This research reveals the change in local wisdom of Dayak

community in Ensaed Panjang. The main cause of the change in local wisdom in Dayak community was internal factors. Community members who have abandoned BLH avoid Dayak custom, so their cultural identity becomes altered. First, increasing population and different cultural interactions has affected a variety of adjustments, changes, and even contradictions. Second, the change in mutual trust and the belief that became one of the strengths of the social capital of the local community. The community has other references other than indigenous leaders, to find and ensure mutual trust and confidence. Third, the relevance of norms (customary of law and customary of *mali* or taboo) that have been used and respected began to be criticized and questioned, both the substance and its implementation in line with the existence of other laws and norms higher and more acceptable to the wider community. Forth, the emergence of new relationships that resulted in the knowledge and practice of the community has grown and expand, so that people have information channels from various sources. So the Dayak community should rethink, reformat a systematic and hasty formula to reinforce the elements of social capital that have been 'neglected'.

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