



## Maritime Character Learning Traditions in the Wakatobi Communities

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### **Abstract**

*One of the paradigms for looking at character or personality is culture. This paradigm sees character not only influenced by culture but shaped by culture itself. This affirms that the character of society is dynamic, it will always differ depending on the cultural context that forms it. This article aims to elaborate on the tradition of character learning in maritime society. The source of the data is the result of ethnographic studies in Wakatobi Regency. Data collection was carried out by depth interviews, participant observation, and literature review. The results showed that the distinctive character of marine communities that are tough, hardworking, unyielding, honest, responsible, and friendly to nature, is not formed naturally. Nautical character is shaped by a cultural environment full of challenges and risks, however life in the sea is related to matters of life and death. There are four stages of character learning tradition in nautical society, namely: character learning through prospective sailors, chefs, mustards, and masters. The four stages are an interrelated process, which shows the importance of character building in maritime culture.*

*Keywords: Tradition, Character Learning, Maritime Society*

### **Abstrak**

Salah satu paradigma untuk melihat karakter atau kepribadian adalah budaya, yang tidak hanya memengaruhi tetapi juga membentuknya. Hal ini menegaskan bahwa karakter masyarakat bersifat dinamis, bergantung pada konteks budaya yang membentuknya. Artikel ini mengulas tradisi pembelajaran karakter di masyarakat bahari, dengan data dari studi etnografi di Kabupaten Wakatobi, yang dikumpulkan melalui depth interview, participant observation, dan telaah kepustakaan. Penelitian menunjukkan bahwa karakter khas masyarakat bahari, yang tangguh, pekerja keras, jujur, dan bertanggung jawab, tidak terbentuk secara alamiah. Karakter bahari terbentuk oleh lingkungan budaya yang penuh tantangan dan risiko, karena kehidupan di laut terkait dengan masalah hidup dan mati. Ada empat tahap tradisi pembelajaran karakter pada masyarakat bahari, melalui calon pelayar, koki, sawi, dan juragan, yang saling terkait dan menunjukkan pentingnya pembinaan karakter dalam budaya bahari.

Kata Kunci: Budaya Bahari, Pembelajaran Karakter, Masyarakat Wakatobi

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### الملخص

إن الثقافة هي أحد النماذج للنظر إلى الشخصية التي لا تؤثر فيها فحسب، بل تشكلها أيضًا. وهذا يؤكد أن شخصية المجتمع ديناميكية تعتمد على السياق الثقافي الذي يشكلها. يستعرض هذا البحث تقليد تعلم الشخصية في المجتمعات البحرية، مع بيانات من دراسة إثنوغرافية في محافظة واكاتوبي، الذي تم جمعها من خلال المقابلة العميقة والملاحظة بالمشاركة ومراجعة الأدبيات. ويبين البحث أن الشخصية المميزة للمجتمعات البحرية، التي تتسم بالمرونة والعمل الدؤوب والأمانة والمسؤولية، لا تتشكل بشكل طبيعي. تتشكل الشخصيات البحرية من خلال بيئة ثقافية مليئة بالتحديات والمخاطر، لأن الحياة في البحر مرتبطة بقضايا الحياة والموت. هناك أربع مراحل من تقليد تعلم الشخصية في المجتمع البحري، من خلال البحارة المحتملين والطهاة والسواحي والجراجان، وهي مراحل مترابطة وتظهر أهمية تنمية الشخصية في الثقافة البحرية.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الثقافة البحرية، تعلم الشخصية، مجتمع واكاتوبي، الثقافة البحرية

### INTRODUCTION

In many studies, character and personality are often positioned similarly, if not identically. The differentiating aspect lies in their usage. Personality is more frequently found in psychological studies, whereas character is more common in educational studies. According to Allport<sup>1</sup>, personality is a dynamic organization within the individual that encompasses psycho-physical systems determining how humans adjust to their environment. This definition emphasizes that personality is dynamic, a fundamental structure that continually changes along with the development of human personality. The essence of personality is traits; "character is personality evaluated, and personality is character devaluated," said Allport.

One of the paradigms commonly used in studying personality is the cultural paradigm<sup>2</sup>, which views personality not only as influenced by culture but also shaped by it. Culture and personality are not separate concepts but rather interconnected systems that create and sustain each other. Therefore, community character is dynamic. Each community exhibits different characteristics depending on the cultural context that shapes it. The character of urban communities differs from that of rural communities. Likewise, the character of communities shaped by agrarian land culture differs from those shaped by maritime culture, which tends to be maritime in nature.

Maritime communities have distinct characteristics that set them apart from those formed by agrarian land culture. In terms of character, coastal and maritime communities share similarities with inland and mountainous communities, such as being patient, strong, resilient, hardworking, and responsible. However, the patience, strength, and resilience of maritime communities are more pronounced because they are shaped by the challenging and risky maritime world. In terms of mindset, agrarian communities are framed by mountains, their view of nature management hindered by the towering mountains. In contrast, the mindset of maritime communities is only limited by the horizon. The vast expanse of the sea is a "field" that can be cultivated for prosperity. This way of thinking influences their behavior, as agrarian community activities are limited by the size of their land. Consequently, land disputes often occur to expand their farming area. In contrast, maritime communities are not limited; the vast marine environment allows them to set sail and explore the oceans. Their consistency in enduring a challenging life and their ability to conquer nature make them more creative and adaptive to environmental conditions. Intense interactions with various communities make them more open and tolerant of differences. This is why conflicts

<sup>1</sup> G.W Allport, *Pattern and Growth in Personality* (New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1951), 52.

<sup>2</sup> D Matsumoto and L. Juang, *Culture and Psychology* (Wadsworth: Cengage Learning, 2013), 321-322.

are rare in maritime communities. In this context, Friedman and Schustack<sup>3</sup>, recommend that cultural factors should not be overlooked when highlighting personality. They suggest that one solution to the tendency of neglecting culture in personality studies is not to try to eliminate culture but to involve it as a fundamental element in personality.

The Wakatobi community, residing in coastal areas and small islands in the eastern part of Buton Island, Southeast Sulawesi, has an identity that distinguishes them from agrarian communities. This identity is built through maritime traditions. The infertile natural conditions force them to set sail to escape the "shackles" of the coral islands where they live.<sup>4</sup> From Wakatobi, they sail to Maluku, North Maluku, and even Papua, searching for marketable commodities to buy and sell in Java. This process repeats over time. Initially driven by economic motives, long voyages transform into a medium for character building. Intense communication with various communities of different religions, languages, and cultures demands effective communication and friendship-building skills, as well as adaptability. Sailing through storms and waves requires them to be meticulous, vigilant, and cooperative. Moreover, the lengthy voyages shape their character to be patient, strong, resilient, and lead a simple life.

**METHOD**

The ethnographic method was used in this study to understand how people interact and cooperate through observable phenomena in their daily lives. Ethnography provides a comprehensive description of a culture, encompassing all aspects of the culture, both material, such as cultural artifacts (tools, clothing, buildings, etc.), and abstract, such as experiences, beliefs, norms, and value systems of the group being studied. Thick description is a hallmark of ethnography<sup>5</sup>. Geertz first used thick description as "deep painting" in ethnographic studies<sup>6</sup>. In this study, the researcher was deeply involved in conducting participant observation by immersing themselves in the life of the Wakatobi community. This research followed Spradley's<sup>7</sup> twelve-step gradual research progression, namely: (1) selecting informants, (2) interviewing informants, (3) making ethnographic notes, (4) asking descriptive questions, (5) analyzing interviews, (6) making domain analyses, (7) asking structural questions, (8) making taxonomic analyses, (9) asking contrast questions, (10) making component analyses, (11) discovering cultural themes, and (12) writing an ethnography.

The ten informants interviewed in this study included professions such as boat captains, clerks, boat builders, boat owners, and the head of the Wanci traditional institution. They were spread across the four main islands in Wakatobi Regency, Southeast Sulawesi Province, namely Wangi-wangi, Kaledupa, Tomia, and Binongko. The following are all the informants referred to.

Table 1 List of Research Informants

No	Name	Age (Years)	Description
1	La Bauna	71	Former boat captain
2	La Gawe	64	Former boat captain
3	La Yusuf	57	Boat clerk
4	La Daami	66	Boat captain
5	Hasan Ode	67	Boat captain

<sup>3</sup> Howard S Friedman Miriam W Schustack, *Personality Classic Theory and Modern Research, Jilid 2. Terjemahan: Benedictine Widiasinta* (Jakarta: Erlangga, 2006), 106

<sup>4</sup> Abd Rahman Hamid, "Binongko People's Life in Coral Island," *Wacana* 17, no. 1 (2016): 19-37; Abd Rahman Hamid, "Merangkai Indonesia Lewat Laut: Kisah Pelaut Binongko," *Masyarakat Indonesia* 41, no. 2 (2015): 177-190.

<sup>5</sup> D Mulyana, *Metodologi Penelitian Kualitatif: Paradigma Baru Ilmu Komunikasi Dan Ilmu Sosial Lainnya* (Jakarta: Remaja Rosdakarya, 2013), 161.

<sup>6</sup> Clifford Geertz, *Tafsir Kebudayaan (Terjemahan: Francisco Budi Hardiman)* (Yogyakarta: Kanisius, 1992), 6.

<sup>7</sup> J P Spradley, *Metode Etnografi (Terjemahan: Misbah Zulfa Elizabeth)* (Yogyakarta: Tiara Wacana, 2006)

6	H. La Ode Harufa	62	Boat helmsman
7	La Ode Jati	62	Head of Wanci traditional institution
8	La Ode Musu	72	Former boat captain
9	Haeruddin	44	Boat captain and owner
10	La Usumani	56	Boat builder expert

## DISCUSSION

### A. Learning Cycle

Character development within the boat is built through a challenging training process with difficult terrain to navigate. The character-building environment is the vast ocean, the means used is the traditional boat, the challenges faced are waves and storms, and the duration is long and uncertain. This is why not everyone chooses to become a sailor. Many people settle in coastal areas, but only a few choose and persist as sailors.

In the Wakatobi community, children who choose the path of sailing are required to gain knowledge from their parents. Only children who have thoroughly studied navigation are allowed to sail. When starting to sail, the role assigned is to be a Chef, then a sailor, and finally a captain. This process forms four characters learning cycles through the "institution" of the boat: knowledge acquisition (prospective sailor), internalization (Chef), action (sailor), and becoming a role model (captain)<sup>8</sup>.

#### 1. Prospective Sailor

Before a child decides to sail the ocean with a traditional boat, the first step is to visit their parents' house to learn navigation. The term "parents" is plural, referring to one's own parents (who have navigation knowledge and experience) or other elders approached to learn navigation. This knowledge is not given to just anyone; it is only provided to those serious about learning and sailing.

There are two primary types of navigation knowledge: pake and sailing knowledge. Pake (etiquette) is the code of conduct that guides all crew members during a voyage. It includes commands and prohibitions, commonly known as homali (taboos). Honesty, responsibility, diligence, strength, patience, consistency, communication, tolerance, cooperation, environmental care, helpfulness, etc., are some of the encouraged traits. In contrast, stinginess, theft, lack of cooperation, causing trouble, disobedience in worship, suspicion, breaking rules, etc., are prohibited traits (homali). Certain habits, like resting one's chin in the hand, excessive joking, midnight bathing with perfumes, and excessive astonishment at strange things, are taboo during a voyage. All these are referred to as pake. Sailing knowledge includes understanding wind directions, stars, reefs, setting sails, knots, etc.

Acquiring knowledge from parents requires patience, as not all questions are immediately answered. This is sometimes intentional to test the prospective sailor's patience and seriousness. Hasan Ode<sup>9</sup>, when asked about his experience of learning from his parents before sailing, mentioned that there are many taboos in sailing, but the most important one is not to disturb someone else's wife. Besides being prohibited by religion, it is also a major taboo in sailing. According to him, no protective spell works if one disturbs someone else's wife. There is no success, only disaster and loss for the perpetrator. If unlucky, even the boat could become a victim.

The above description shows that character formation in sailing begins when a child expresses their intention to their parents when seeking navigation knowledge. During this process, an ethic is built, requiring a child to adhere to unwritten rules. This includes wearing neat clothes, behaving politely, lowering one's voice, arriving at agreed times, being patient since not all knowledge is given at once, and obeying religious commands. Similarly, homali guides the

<sup>8</sup> La Rudi, *Tara, Turu, Toro: Pendidikan Karakter Dalam Budaya Bahari* (Banyumas: Amerta Media, 2022), 163.

<sup>9</sup> Wawancara di Mandati II, 24 Oktober 2017

prospective sailor to practice commendable behavior, as there is a belief that "a voyage will not be successful if not followed." Likewise, taboos (pemali) are strictly observed, as it is believed that "if violated, disaster will ensue."

Through continuous practice, navigation knowledge and etiquette are ingrained in every sailor. In the context of character education, referring to Thomas Lickona's theory, this stage is the process of acquiring moral knowledge (moral knowing), which is the knowledge of good morals. Moral knowledge is the first of three components of character education. It includes six components: (1) moral awareness, which involves using reason to see when a situation requires moral judgment—then carefully considering what is right for the action; (2) knowing moral values, which means knowing how to apply them in various situations; (3) perspective-taking, which is the ability to see from others' viewpoints, imagining how they think, react, and feel; (4) moral reasoning, which is understanding the meaning of being moral and why one should be moral; (5) decision making, which is being able to think about the steps to take when facing a moral issue; and (6) self-knowledge, which is being aware of one's strengths and weaknesses in character and knowing how to improve them<sup>10</sup>.

In the maritime cultural context, these six components of moral knowledge are developed when a prospective sailor learns from their parents. Through the doctrine of pake, the prospective sailor's awareness and knowledge of moral values in sailing and life can grow, allowing them to take perspectives from various viewpoints described by their parents, understand the meaning of being a good person in sailing and why it is necessary, make the decision to sail, and recognize their shortcomings and strive to improve them during the voyage. In maritime culture, knowledge of good morals is not only understood but must be applied during sailing.

## 2. Chef

The Chef's duty is to prepare food for all personnel on board during the voyage, accompany and transport the skipper from the boat to shore or vice versa, accompany the skipper in administrative matters, as well as clean and bathe the boat when docked or at the shipyard. The primary task is the main duty, and the rest are additional tasks.

The Chef is not subordinate to all positions on the boat, but a working partner who manages specific tasks such as cooking and food preparation. The role of the Chef is usually assigned to novice sailors, namely children or teenagers who are just beginning to sail. As a novice sailor, they do not yet know much about sailing, so it is very risky to immediately give them important roles such as steering, watching for coral, or handling and controlling sail ropes. Besides the main and additional tasks, what the Chef does is absorb knowledge and experience during the voyage. If needed to assist in steering, spreading or rolling up sails, or monitoring the presence of coral, then these tasks will be performed under the supervision of other personnel.

Cooking and food preparation is a tough task because food materials need processing before cooking, the cooking vessel is very cramped and simple, and the cooking area is on a sailing boat constantly influenced by wind, waves, and rain. Most provisions brought on voyages are raw materials that are not easily damaged by water and are durable, such as dried cassava. Before corn is cooked into corn rice, it must first be ground. Similarly, dried cassava, before steaming into kasuami, requires time to be cleaned and cut into small pieces. The cooking vessel on the boat is a medium-sized square-shaped tin stove. The cooking area is at the front next to the boat pole. This position is very vulnerable to the wind, so the fire can be blown away by the wind and hit the sail or other parts of the boat. Rain extinguishes the fire and wets the wood, making it difficult for the Chef to make a fire.

Another difficulty is the cooking environment. The rough and large waves during the voyage make it difficult for the Chef to Chef. More than once or twice, the meal together with the kitchen

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<sup>10</sup> Thomas Lickona, *Character Matters (Persoalan Karakter). Bagaimana Membantu Anak Mengembangkan Penilaian Yang Baik, Integritas, Dan Kebajikan Penting Lainnya (Terjemahan: JA. Wamaungo Dan JA. Rudolf Zien)* (Jakarta: Bumi Aksara, 2012)

and stove were washed away by waves into the ocean. If hit by the slap of waves, the fire in the stove will go out immediately or sea water splashes mix with the cooking soup. When the waves come rushing and dragging the pan along with the stove and its fire into the ocean room, the Chef must re-prepare the food, prepare the stove and make fire, then Chef. In unfavorable weather situations, the Chef Chefs while tying his body with a rope to the boat pole to avoid being swept away by waves. This situation continues to recur. When strong winds and large waves, the food must still be served on time. Here's La Bauna's experience as a Chef<sup>11</sup>:

"When I started sailing in 1968, my job was as a Chef. The toughest part of the job was during the windy season. Sometimes the stove would be dragged by waves, sometimes the food mixed with seawater, and sometimes rainwater mixed in as well. The danger was not to get swept away by the waves into the middle of the sea. Therefore, when cooking, I would tie myself to the boat pole."

In the context of character development, the role of the Chef becomes the second stage, namely the stage of moral feeling. It is a process of molding a sailor so that the knowledge and attitudes gained in the initial stage can be deeply felt. Thus, sailing activities are not taken as a sideline effort, or due to peer influence or experimentation, but truly as a calling of the soul. Sailing is a choice for the future, so it must be embraced and carried out well and consistently, despite all its risks. Making traditional sailing activities a profession demands dedication so that the profession can be carried out wholeheartedly and responsibly.

If the first stage of learning takes place at home, then the second stage occurs on the boat. A child who chooses the path of sailing immediately experiences the joys and sorrows of sailing. La Bauna<sup>12</sup> mentioned that the role of novice sailors on the boat is as a Chef. A Chef must be ready to accept whatever is ordered by the sawi or skipper during the voyage. In terms of accompanying and fetching the skipper, the feet must always be prompt and quick, never making the skipper wait.

All sailors start their activities with the role of Chef. Although this role is considered the most difficult and suffering, none of them stop sailing because they are unable to perform their duties. Many Chefs are promoted to sawi or even skipper after becoming good Chefs, as stated by La Bauna<sup>13</sup>, La Gawe<sup>14</sup>, and La Daami<sup>15</sup>. They started sailing in their teenage years as Chefs. After successfully becoming good Chefs, they were entrusted by the boat owners to become skippers.

In this context, the Chef serves a dual function in the development of tough sailor characters. First, as a vessel for implementing knowledge gained during pre-sailing, when demanding knowledge about sailing from parents. They become a "class" to apply the knowledge they have. Second, as a crucible that shapes resilient, diligent, and steadfast sailors. The heavy work as a Chef does not deter their intention to become sailors, but instead makes them stronger, steadfast, disciplined, responsible, and reliable sailors. The role of the Chef has integrated the profession of sailing with themselves, so that whatever they do does not feel burdensome. Everything is done because of the demands of the profession.

Such situations indicate the embodiment of maritime character in the Chef. All the joys and sorrows of sailing do not make them retreat or stop sailing, but even make them more in love and proud of traditional sailing. In character education, Lickona calls this moral feeling, which has six components: conscience, self-respect, empathy, liking for goodness, self-control, and humility<sup>16</sup>. In the concept of character education by Ki Hadjar Dewantara, moral feeling is called Ngeroso or feeling<sup>17</sup>.

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<sup>11</sup> Wawancara dengan La Bauna di Kelurahan Waetuno, 9 Oktober 2017

<sup>12</sup> Wawancara, 9 Oktober 2017

<sup>13</sup> Wawancara, 9 Oktober 2017.

<sup>14</sup> Wawancara dengan La Gawe di Waetuno, 10 Oktober 2017

<sup>15</sup> Wawancara dengan La Daami di Patuno, 12 Oktober 2017.

<sup>16</sup> Lickona, *Character Matters (Persoalan Karakter). Bagaimana Membantu Anak Mengembangkan Penilaian Yang Baik, Integritas, Dan Kebajikan Penting Lainnya (Terjemahan: JA. Wamaungo Dan JA. Rudolf Zien)*, 79-85.

<sup>17</sup> MLPTS, *Karya Ki Hadjar Dewantara: Pemikiran, Konsepsi, Keteladanan, Sikap Merdeka. Jilid 2 Kebudayaan* (Yogyakarta: Majelis Luhur Tamansiswa., 2011).

### 3. Boat crew (Sawi)

The third stage of maritime character education is through action. In this stage, the traditional sailing character is implemented in the entire interaction of the boat crew (sawi), from the beginning of the voyage until reaching the destination area, and returning to the hometown. This character implementation applies before boarding the boat, during the voyage, and after disembarking (rest). This is evident in the division of tasks assigned to the sawi during the voyage.

In traditional sailing, sawi are distinguished by their tasks and functions. First, the helmsman, responsible for steering the boat. Second, the lookout, tasked with observing the presence of coral during the voyage until docking at the destination. Third, the scribe, responsible for recording all buying and selling transactions during the voyage, whether related to business capital or consumption needs. Fourth, the paymaster, whose duty is to pay all shopping expenses and receive payments from sales<sup>18</sup>.

Not all boats have a sawi composition as described above. The sawi who "must" be present are the helmsman and the lookout, while the scribe and paymaster are not necessarily present or considered optional. For boats that do not have a scribe and paymaster, these roles are usually performed by the skipper. Regarding this, Laode Musu<sup>19</sup> stated:

“On the boat, there are those who are responsible for monitoring coral called the lookout, those who are responsible for steering the boat called the helmsman, a scribe who records all transactions, a paymaster who handles cash and pays all expenses, a Chef who serves as the Chef, and the sailing leader called the skipper. Now, only the skipper, sawi, and Chef remain. Sawi refers to all personnel on the boat and are under the control of the skipper. In motorized ships, they are now called crew members (ABK)”

The completeness of the sawi composition on the boat depends greatly on the number of personnel and mutual agreement. Boats that only have five personnel sometimes only have a helmsman and lookout, so the tasks of the scribe and paymaster are combined by the skipper. Meanwhile, boats with seven to eleven personnel have a complete sawi composition. This is determined through deliberation among all boat personnel, whether the presence of the scribe and paymaster is necessary or not. If the skipper combines the roles of scribe and paymaster, then all expenditure and income transactions must not be done alone by the skipper; there must always be someone accompanying them, whether it be a sawi or a Chef<sup>20</sup>.

In traditional sailing, the prominent character is strength, or locally known as Tara. This strength encompasses both physical and mental dimensions. Physical strength is required because traditional sailing relies on wind as the primary force. Boat crews must be able to face various extreme conditions such as heat, cold, hunger, thirst, and carry cargo tirelessly. Mentally, they must be resilient in facing the challenges of the sea, large waves, and unexpected storms. This mental toughness includes courage, perseverance, and patience, enabling boat crews to face any situation without fear and endure in difficult conditions.

Sailors must possess strength not only physically and mentally, but also in maintaining attitudes and behaviors considered taboo. During the voyage, boat crews must adhere to applicable rules. One taboo (pemali) is the prohibition of sewing clothes, even if they are torn. This is because it is believed that sewing on the boat will attract strong winds and damage the boat's sails. Therefore, it is advised not to sew during the voyage, even if clothes are damaged. Sewing is only allowed after docking. The principle emphasized is not to sew while on the sea journey<sup>21</sup>.

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<sup>18</sup> Rudi, *Tara, Turu, Toro: Pendidikan Karakter Dalam Budaya Bahari*.

<sup>19</sup> Wawancara dengan La Ode Musu di Liya Togo, 6 September 2017

<sup>20</sup> Diolah dari hasil wawancara dengan La Bauna, 9 Oktober 2017; La Gawe, 10 Oktober 2017; La Ode Harufa, 30 Oktober 2017; dan Laode Musu, 6 September 2017

<sup>21</sup> Wawancara dengan La Yusuf di Patuno, 11 Oktober 2017

Attitudes and behaviors that are embodied in advice and taboos during sailing become routine practices for sailors, both on and off the boat. This is not only relevant in the context of sailing, but also in various aspects of life. The consistency of boat crews in applying these has formed distinct sailor characteristics. These characteristics are reflected in moral actions that consistently follow moral, cultural, and religious values. The principle held firmly by sailors is that "good behavior will bring safety, while bad behavior will lead to danger."

Taking actions in line with moral, religious, and cultural values is an important part of character education. Thomas Lickona refers to this component as moral acting. Moral actions are seen as the result of the other two aspects of character, namely moral knowing and moral feeling. Although someone has strong moral knowledge and feelings, sometimes they struggle to translate these into action. This shows that there are three aspects of character that drive a person to act morally: competence, will, and habit<sup>22</sup>. This emphasizes the importance of holistic character training so that a person can perform actions in line with their cherished values.

The three aspects of character that drive moral action, according to Lickona's concept, are related to the aspects of character that drive traditional sailing. In maritime culture, the three aspects of character that drive sailing include: (1) competence, reflected in the ability to manage the rhythm of sailing even in the midst of storms; (2) will, which motivates them to sail the seas and conquer waves and storms to succeed in sailing; and (3) experience, which is realized through the instinctual strength to read natural signs to determine the course. The difference lies in the nature of moral action: Lickona's concept tends to be theoretical, while in maritime culture, moral action is more practical. According to Lickona, moral action requires field examples, while in sailing culture, moral action is directly applied in sailing activities."

#### 4. Skipper

In sailing, the skipper becomes the main actor who plays a crucial role in character education. Like a teacher in a school or a kiai in a pesantren, the skipper sets an example that is followed by the boat crew. Every action, from speech to attitude, becomes an example for the sawi and the Chef. Besides being a role model, the skipper also acts as a protector for the entire boat crew. They can pour out their grievances to the skipper, who is ready to listen and provide support. In this context, the skipper not only serves as a leader but also as a figure who influences the attitudes and behaviors of the entire boat crew.

The skipper plays a crucial role as a leader in sailing. In this context, the boat is likened to a country, and the skipper becomes the head of the "boat country" government. As a leader, the skipper is fully responsible for safety during the voyage. Every event, whether small or large, is their responsibility. This ranges from the health issues of the sawi, losses, failure to obtain cargo, disputes among the boat crew, running out of provisions, or navigational accidents—all are related to the skipper's responsibility. In all matters, the skipper has a crucial role in maintaining stability and safety during the voyage<sup>23</sup>.

Sawi who are appointed as skippers have significant responsibilities, and therefore, they are not chosen casually. Before being selected through a consensus forum, there are criteria that must be met, namely having deep knowledge, sufficient experience, and good attitudes and behaviors. Knowledge criteria are not only related to sailing but also to skippering, which includes aspects of life and death at sea. This knowledge is unwritten and is usually acquired through learning from parents. The importance of skippering knowledge is emphasized by La Usumani, who states that events such as sinking, burning, or capsizing of the boat heavily depend on the decisions and actions

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<sup>22</sup> Lickona, *Character Matters (Persoalan Karakter). Bagaimana Membantu Anak Mengembangkan Penilaian Yang Baik, Integritas, Dan Kebajikan Penting Lainnya (Terjemahan: JA. Wamaungo Dan JA. Rudolf Zien)*, 86–87

<sup>23</sup> Wawancara dengan La Ode Jati di Wanci, 3 November 2017



of the skipper and the sawi. Making mistakes in decision-making can lead to disasters during sailing. Therefore, skippering knowledge is key to avoiding mishaps during the voyage<sup>24</sup>.

The burden that a skipper must bear in traditional sailing is very heavy. According to Haeruddin<sup>25</sup>, the skipper is the main responsible party in every aspect of sailing. All successes or mishaps that occur, the speed of obtaining cargo, the health of the boat crew, food supplies, arrival times at destinations, and others, all fall under their responsibility. Therefore, the skipper must have extensive knowledge of sailing, both recorded and unrecorded. Recorded knowledge includes technical aspects such as navigation, the use of ropes, knowledge of reefs, and sea depths. Meanwhile, unwritten knowledge involves specific skills that can only be learned through experience or learning from parents, such as how to deal with pirates and sea ghosts, how to "bathe" the boat, and how to repair the boat during the journey.

In facing the great responsibility as a skipper, there are two principles that are strictly adhered to in building harmonious relationships and obedience among the boat crew. First, upholding honesty. In the context of sailing, honesty is the primary foundation emphasized. In a series of inter-island journeys to search, market, and purchase cargo, mutual trust among the boat crew is crucial. Therefore, the skipper must consistently uphold honesty in all aspects. Second, maintaining financial transparency. The capital used in sailing comes from the boat owner and the entire crew. Expenditures during the voyage, such as commodity purchases and provisions, as well as the profits gained, must be recorded and openly reported to the entire boat crew. This principle serves as the basis for maintaining transparency and trust among all parties involved in the sea journey.

The great responsibility of a skipper in sailing requires them to always be cautious, wise in words and actions, both during the voyage and in social life. Everything said and done by the skipper is followed obediently by the boat crew because it directly relates to safety during the voyage. However, the obedience of the boat crew to the skipper is not absolute; they only obey in the context of goodness and truth. If the skipper's actions or commands comply with safety and common good norms, they will be followed obediently. However, if they contradict sailing norms, such as unfair or dishonest actions, the boat crew has the right to criticize or even hold a forum to replace the skipper who is deemed to have endangered safety and the reputation of sailing.

Haeruddin said<sup>26</sup> that although sailing responsibilities lie with the skipper, the key to success in sailing is cooperation, as without cooperation, achieving success is difficult. To maintain solidarity in sailing, the skipper always acts gently towards the sawi, including towards the Chef. If given the opportunity, the skipper does not hesitate to help the Chef with Chefing. Every task is done together and helps each other. For sailors, the boat is their home, so it must be treated well so that those inside always feel comfortable. Maintaining cleanliness, solidarity, trust, and mutual respect are important. The skipper is respected as if they were respecting their own parents, while the sawi are valued as if they were respecting their own siblings. With such an attitude, success in sailing can be achieved.

The four stages of character education in maritime culture begin with the tradition of learning sailing knowledge, then proceed to the stage of embodiment in the role of the Chef, followed by the implementation or action stage in the role of the sawi, and end with leadership or role modeling by the skipper. This process is gradual, meaning that a person will not be allowed to sail before seeking knowledge about sailing, and a person will not be entrusted to be a skipper if they have not passed the stages of becoming a Chef and a sawi. These four stages (see figure 1) constitute the cycle of character development in maritime culture, a learning stage that emphasizes both knowledge and practice. This stage is distinctive because it is not found in other cultures, such as agrarian culture.

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<sup>24</sup> Wawancara dengan La Usumani di Lamanggau Tomia, 15 Desember 2017. Dia adalah ahli perahu keturunan Binongko yang menikah dengan orang Tomia

<sup>25</sup> Wawancara dengan Haeruddin pada tanggal 28 November 2017 di rumah kediaman beliau di Desa Haka

<sup>26</sup> Wawancara dengan Haeruddin, 28 November 2017

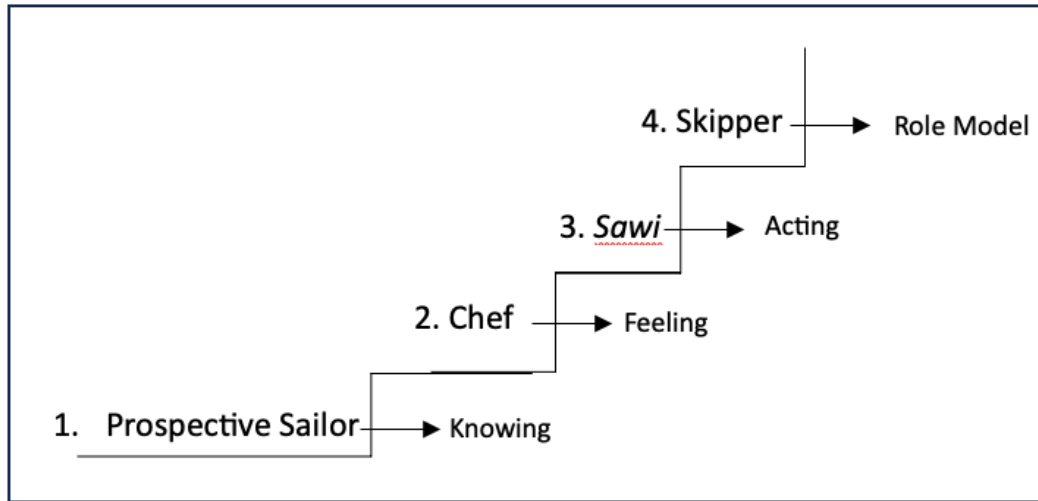


Figure 1. Four stages of character development in maritime culture  
Source: Processed from research results

One key to success in maritime sailing is task allocation, but this division does not function structurally like in government bureaucracy; rather, it is more cultural in nature. Roles on the boat are not meant to emphasize superior and subordinate positions structurally, but to affirm functional role coverage. The position of one role compared to another does not establish a subordinative hierarchy, but emphasizes core tasks bound by common goals, known as "sabangka sarope" (one boat one purpose). The Chef is not subordinate to the Sawi, and the Sawi is not subordinate to the Skipper. The role of the Chef on the boat is an initial role, like a student entering elementary school who is not subordinate to middle or high school students, but is at the beginning stage of formal education.

This stage is certainly different from the stages of character education according to Thomas Lickona's concept, which only recognizes three stages (moral knowing, moral feeling, moral acting). In Lickona's concept, role modeling is not considered one of the stages of character formation, but only a part of the way to instill character, besides providing knowledge and habituation. However, in maritime culture, role modeling is the fourth stage in character formation. Character formation requires a role model, a central figure who serves as an example for the community. In maritime sailing, this role model is directly played by the skipper.

## B. Advantages of Character Education

Character learning in maritime culture occurs in a highly contrasting situation compared to character education in schools. In the maritime world, character learning takes place in the open ocean, with traditional boats as very simple school buildings easily swayed by the force of the wind. Learning interactions take place during the voyage, with waves, wind, coral, sea ghosts, and various other maritime objects as learning media. Therefore, character learning in maritime culture is unique, not found in societies with different cultural bases such as agrarian or inland communities, nor in formal or non-formal school institutions.

Theoretical character introduction in maritime culture is only given briefly before sailing, and the boat's personnel are immediately involved in sailing activities. In this way, the ups and downs of the voyage are directly experienced by all personnel. The rough waves, scorching sun, narrow and cramped boat, cold nights, and length of the journey become part of their experience. This process shows that character building is done through direct learning experiences. Each personnel is involved in all dynamics of sailing with their respective roles and responsibilities. They learn what must be done and avoided, build cooperation, communicate with different communities,

read natural changes, and utilize potential for sailing success. This intense interaction instills character values that must be implemented in life.

Character learning in maritime culture is applied through the method of learning by doing in boat institutions. Role division ensures that all personnel know their tasks and responsibilities. The Chef is responsible for Chefing and assisting in all matters, while the sawi has various roles such as helmsman, stonemason, payer, and writer. The skipper acts as the leader of the sailing. These tasks and responsibilities encourage boat personnel to act according to the division of labor. From these roles, they gain knowledge of good character, embody it, and act accordingly. Although there are no written rules, homali etiquette (adab pemali) is followed, guiding them to act well and avoid disgraceful behavior, which is considered essential for safety and success in sailing. Therefore, all boat crews always adhere to this etiquette during the voyage.

Maritime sailing activities are repeated over a long period. Starting from the hometown, the journey continues to the east to find marketable commodities, then returns to the west to market the cargo. This process is repeated over a long period, with emphasis on compliance with homali. During this process, good and bad are always emphasized, along with courage, adventurous spirit, ability to read natural signs, skill in building relationships with external communities, patience, simple living, and firm stance. Instilling character values in maritime culture is done through habituation, with repeated processes and emphasis on compliance with homali. With this consistency, boat crews can maintain good character during the voyage.

The skipper in character education in the maritime world is a charismatic figure who sets an example for the entire boat crew, with their commands followed, advice heeded, and behavior emulated. In this position, the skipper always pays attention to speech, ethics, manners, and acts according to applicable norms. They must also be honest, open, promote cooperation, engage in consultation in decision-making, take responsibility for all issues, be fair, gentle, and obedient to religious commands. The skipper's consistency in maintaining these character values makes them respected and considered a role model, both on the boat and in society. For the skipper, maintaining good character is not just for themselves, but also for the family left behind, as the safety of sailing also depends on that family.

Thus, maintaining good character in sailing is not a choice, but a necessity. Character learning in maritime culture differs from existing approaches in school culture. In boat institutions, character is not taught through theory or direct teacher-student interaction as in schools. Direct experience in sailing is the primary method, where learners (boat personnel) are directly involved in activities. They experience joys and sorrows, absorb knowledge, internalize, and act accordingly. Character habituation is done consistently and over the long term, supported by the role model of the skipper who prioritizes homali in sailing. This tradition is effective because it directly relates to safety and success in sailing. Additionally, the environment full of waves and storms in the ocean demands knowledge, internalization, and good actions for shared safety, making character building in maritime culture highly relevant.

Character learning in maritime culture integrates knowledge of goodness, love of goodness, and good actions in balanced proportions. This approach aligns with Lickona's<sup>27</sup> concept of moral knowing, moral feeling, and moral behavior, and does not contradict Dewantara's education of *ngerti*, *ngeroso*, *ngelakon*. Furthermore, character learning in maritime culture also reflects similar emphasis aspects to the concept proposed by Ryan & Bohlin<sup>28</sup>, who view character as a series of knowing the good, loving the good, and doing the good.

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<sup>27</sup> Thomas Lickona, *Educating for Character: How Our School Can Teach Respect and Responsibility* (New York: Bantam Books, 1991), 51

<sup>28</sup> Kevin Ryan and Karen E Bohlin, *Building Character in Schools-Practical Ways to Bring Moral Instruction to Life* (San Fransisco: Jossey-Bass a Wiley Imprint, 1999), 5.

## CONCLUSION

The tradition of character education in the maritime society of Wakatobi has distinctive features that set it apart from agrarian societies. Here, they not only live in harmony with the marine environment but also master it. Their strong, resilient, hardworking, honest, responsible, and nature-friendly characters are formed through a lengthy process. Character building is achieved through direct learning, learning by doing, habituation, and through role modeling. There are four stages in this tradition of character building. First, moral knowledge is taught by parents to aspiring sailors, emphasizing social etiquette in the homali doctrine. Second, moral internalization is carried out by the Chef, who applies the knowledge received through their role. Third, moral action is carried out by the sawi, who applies their knowledge of good morals in sailing practice. Fourth, role modeling is demonstrated by the skipper, who sets an example for the entire boat crew in all situations, whether during voyages, within the family, or in society.

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