

## Vean tradition as a local wisdom of customary people and its relevance to maritime history learning

Agustinus Ufie<sup>1</sup>, Jenny K. Matitaputy<sup>2</sup>, Jeanet Kufila<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1,2</sup>Lecturer of Study Program of History Education, Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, Pattimura University, Indonesia

<sup>3</sup>Student of Study Program of History Education, Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, Pattimura University, Indonesia

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### ABSTRACT

Vean is a tool used to catch fish in traditional way in Ohoi Disuk, Kei Island, in Southeast Maluku. This study aims to examine vean tradition as a local wisdom of customary people that has been inherited from generation to generation. This research uses qualitative method applying descriptive analytical approach. The number of respondents is 10 people. The results show that the construction of vean resembles the human body, which implies that humans must move their limbs to work in order to meet the life needs. In addition, vean (sero) can also build relationship between the sea and humans as keepers and connoisseurs of nature. Vean has three main motivations, namely economic aspect to create quality of life, social aspect to develop a sense of justice without expecting anything in return, and ecological aspect for the conservation of ecosystems and marine life. On the other hand, vean has very meaningful values to maintain kinship and brotherhood in building social relations, creating a good social harmony. Based on the perspective, motivation, and values contained in vean, this local wisdom can be used as a way to strengthen maritime culture in history learning because it comes from the culture of local community as a source of learning.

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### Corresponding Author:

Agustinus Ufie  
Study Program of History Education  
Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, Pattimura University  
Jl. Ir. M. Putuhena, Poka-Ambon, 97233 Maluku, Indonesia  
Email: agustufie33@yahoo.com

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Maluku is a part of the Republic of Indonesia, which has thousands of islands and inhabited by a variety of tribes, religions, languages and cultures. This condition has become the strength, guidance, and guideline for the community in developing social relations. Culture, as a major component of social relations, has an important role in guiding human life. Each culture fosters values, rules, practices, and customs, and they establish social order [1]. Moreover, cultural heritage is a valuable resource for economic growth, employment, social cohesion, and valuable source of knowledge [2]. Cultural values or traditions have become guidelines for people in building social relations called local wisdom.

Local wisdom is a conceptual idea about community life [3], which contains cultural knowledge or wealth and values that characterize certain communities [4] in maintaining and passing down habits from generation to generation. Every community has culture and local wisdom that become characteristics and uniqueness [5], showing differences in diversity [6]. A community that owns local wisdom has a good leadership and wise soul because they have a clear vision and become an independent, prosperous, and

happy community [7]. Local wisdom has been successfully implemented in various fields, including the promotion of health [8], the development of education and character [9, 10], students' social interactions in learning [11], leadership in managing schools [12], and environmental protection and management. [3]. Furthermore, local wisdom has also been applied successfully in the conservation of marine resources [13].

A local wisdom that has been maintained for generations in Maluku is a vean, coming from Ohoi Disuk in the Kei Islands. Vean is a tool used to catch fish in traditional way. The vean illustration can be seen in Figure 1. The substance of vean in the Kei Islands is the same as sero in other areas functioning as a traditional fishing tool. The difference between vean and sero are in the form, materials used, and ways of making. Vean resembles a human who has head, neck, hands, mouth, and tongue. It is based on the idea that humans, flora, fauna, and the environment are a unity like the human body with its limbs. Everything is interrelated and interconnected. Earth is an ecosystem, where the amount of organism life is integrated, united, and interconnected [14]. The advantage of using vean as a fishing tool is that it does not cause damage to the marine ecosystem and maintain the sustainability of marine life because the materials used to make the vean are from local materials such as wood, bamboo splits, and coconut leaves.



Figure 1. Illustration of the vean as a traditional fishing tool

The habit of the community to maintain local wisdom in the midst of the strong modernity is a form of community awareness to act for their future. The idea of “think global, act local” that arises in this era of globalization is not to force the world to accept local wisdom. To think globally means to understand better, to explore, to show, and to provide wider insight about what is owned by the world. In terms of protection, maintaining marine ecosystems means directly maintaining the sustainability of human life. Thus, the idea of “think global, act local” means how the skills and values in local community can be implement as guidelines, assisting people to face the current of modernity. The current of modernity and globalization has penetrated the boundaries of world civilization and moved without control [15]. The main challenge for the future is to create a new public policy paradigm by building relationship across race, ethnicity, class, generation and geography [16]. This condition will affect the power of technology, global economy, and demographic changes in order to establish a better society. Many researchers have concerns about the impact of these forces on people's quality of life and their ability to reduce the negative impacts related to rapid social and economic transformation [17].

Therefore, a variety of resources and efforts are needed to maintain culture as the main pillar of the future building of society. Local wisdom of vean as the main pillar of the implementation of “think global, local act” [18] is very relevant for the development of Maritime History because maritime sector has been able to become a driving force of human history [19]. Indonesian maritime in historical perspective is very important due to its strategic meaning in developing Indonesian maritime culture. At this point, the study of maritime history needs to be developed since the human life in the past can be explored to educate the importance of the sea and waters as well as their contribution to shape Indonesian culture. Furthermore, the learning sources must also refer to local wisdom [11]. Vean tradition, as a local wisdom of customary people, contains social and moral meaning that needs to be maintained, preserved, and developed in the study of Maritime History. This study is very important for the next generation, as cultural successors, to understand the importance of inheriting local wisdom of vean as a manifestation of customary people in protecting the marine ecosystem from the negative impacts of modernity and globalization to maintain the sustainability of human life.

## 2. RESEARCH METHOD

This research is conducted in Disuk village, Kei Kecil Timur District, Southeast Maluku, Maluku for a month. Respondents of this research consist of 10 people, namely 1 traditional leader, 1 village head, 3 fishermen who have vean, 2 fishermen who have boats, 1 floating restaurant owner, and 2 vean workers. The method used in this study is a qualitative method applying analytical approach. This method is usually used to explore various social problems thoroughly that are obtained from the respondents naturally [20]. Direct observation was done to the field to see various activities of the Ohoi Disuk community related to the implementation of the local wisdom of vean and the management of marine resources. In-depth interviews conducted with traditional leader, village head, vean owners, boat fishermen, floating restaurant owner, vean workers, and others regarding the concepts, ideas, and understanding of informants about local wisdom, traditional fishing activities, and the management of marine resources. Study documents was done especially those related to local wisdom.

Data analysis is carried out through three stages can be seen in Figure 2: 1) managing all data collected from observations, interviews, and documents then performing data reduction, managing data units, and making abstractions; 2) classifying data so that the process of categorizing and grouping data can be better; 3) arranging correlation between categories then comparing one with other data, interpreting the correlation of each data so that meaning and conclusions are found. Schematically, data analysis in this study uses an interactive model [21].

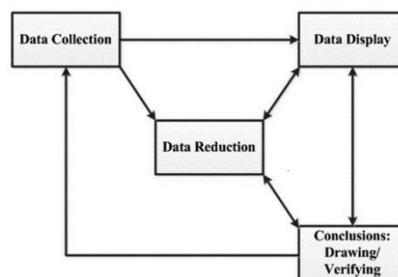


Figure 2. Technical analysis of interactive data models (redrawn [21]).

## 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### 3.1. Construction of vean in traditional fishermen perspective

Vean is a fishing tool made of wood, bamboo, or coconut leaves woven then plugged in the edge of the sea extending to the middle of the sea. Some parts of the space form a triangle functioning as a fish trap. Vean in each region has differences, especially in the raw materials used and how to use them. In Disuk village, vean is built using local materials like wood, woven bamboo, and coconut leaves. This traditional fishing tool is still used by traditional fishermen in spite of various types of modern fishing tool. Based on the interviews with vean owners, it is explained that vean construction resembles a standing human, where the process of plugging vean in the sea sequentially starts from the feet, hands, tongue, neck, and head that functions as a fish container. The vean construction by traditional fishermen can be described as illustrated in Figure 3. Although the process of plugging is not simultaneous, the vean parts become a single entity that are all interrelated and interconnected with one another. This implies that humans must move their limbs in order to meet their life needs.

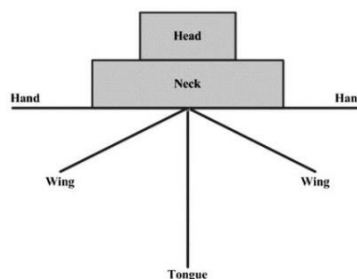


Figure 3. Vean construction by traditional fishermen

It is the same as vean. Based on traditional fishermen's belief, vean construction resembles a human body will bring good luck, namely a lot of catch, because all the parts of vean will function like the human body. Furthermore, the understanding of traditional fishermen can be seen through vean construction that well illustrates the natural relationship between the sea and humans as guardians and nature lovers.

Traditional fishermen place the vean at sea by plugging and extending it to the middle of the sea, in which the parts of the vean are arranged into a single unit resembling a human body that has their respective functions. Based on the interviews with respondents, it is explained that the principle of this fishing tool consists of 5 parts, namely feet/tongue, wings, hands, neck, and head. Moreover, vean is built extending from shallow area to the sea, and the shape is built resembling a human body. The position of the tongue is towards the coast with open wings functioning as the entry point for fish then led to the vean head. The purpose of the wings is to attract the attention of fish to enter the vean from both the left and the right. The wings have an open shape by leaning on the hands functioning to drive the fish to the vean area. Meanwhile, the hands on the vean functions to drive the fish that has entered through the tongue and wings to the door at the neck of the vean. The neck of the vean functions as a playground for fish, both small and large fish. Once the fish are in the neck area, the fish cannot get out. Large fish will come out of the vean neck to the vean's head then ready to be harvested. The longer the tongue, wings, and hands of the vean, the more fish will be led into the vean area, or vice versa.

The tradition of catching fish using traditional fishing tool like vean is still maintained by traditional fishermen in Ohoi Disuk, and it has been passed down from generation to generation and become a traditional fishing tradition. It is different from other traditional fishermen in the coastal area of Kei Islands, in which they commonly use various modern fishing tool. This habit of traditional fishermen proves that the local community still has awareness in maintaining and preserving their culture, so that vean becomes a means of establishing spirit of solidarity and social harmony and therefore conducive to human well-being [22]. This method is a way of maintaining and preserving the marine ecosystem. Moreover, they believe that by protecting the marine ecosystem, they will guard their own life. Based on the belief of customary people, the sea is the giver of life for both current and future generations. The habit of traditional fishermen to still use vean in the fishing process is a form of local wisdom of customary people in preventing damage and preserving marine life for the future of their children and grandchildren. This local wisdom is a manifestation of conservation that aims to prevent damage and to repair the marine resources [13]. The attitude of protecting the marine ecosystem carried out by traditional fisherman of Ohoi Disuk shows that their understanding of local wisdom is not just a concept but a concrete implementation in their daily lives [8].

### 3.2. Vean tradition and sustainability of the Ohoi Disuk community

Vean is as a part of cultural institution in Maluku, especially for the customary people in Ohoi Disuk, in the utilization and management of biological natural resources and marine biota. Vean is not only used to meet the economic needs, but also to preserve the continuation of marine life and human life as supporters and to create a harmonious social life. In the view of local community, the marine ecosystem is the pulse of human life because the sea is the source of life and plays a role in improving the economy of the community. Thus, the sea must be protected [13]. Vean is a concrete form of efforts by customary people in protecting the marine ecosystem. People believe that the marine ecosystem has a number of very large role in supporting sustainable living for the lives of customary people and their supporting environment in the circle of sustainability. Figure 4 shows the sustainable living model is a nest model that covers economic, social, and ecological fields [23].



Figure 4. Sustainability triangle/diagrams showing the three overlapping components of sustainability (redrawn [23])

Based on economic circles, the main motivation of the vean tradition is the availability of life guarantee. Through this guarantee, humans must be responsible for preserving nature and creating quality of life by improving better environmental quality of natural resources. Vean can be understood as a management to achieve the quality products of natural resources and economic value. The quality of life with economic value can be seen in the harvest of vean fishermen. Fish yields in vean are abundant in quantity, and it even has a higher selling value because of the higher quality and various sizes of the fish. Table 1 shows the compared with fishermen who use boats to catch fish, they can only get certain size and types of fish, affecting their economic income.

Table 1. Fish price comparison of boat fishing and vean fishermen

No	Fish Type	Price of boat fishing	Price of vean fishermen	Information
1	Red Snapper	The price of a pile of fish, 5-10 fish, will be sold at a price of IDR 50,000, even IDR 100,000	1 large fish sold for IDR 300,000	If 10 x IDR 300,000 = IDR 3,000,000, the profit difference is IDR 3,000,000 IDR 100,000 = IDR 3,900,000
2	Sakuda	The price of a pile, 5 fish, is sold at IDR 25,000	1 large fish sold for IDR 300,000	If 5 x IDR 300,000 = IDR 1,500,000, the profit difference is IDR 1,500,000 IDR 25,000 = IDR 1,475,000
3	Bubara	The price of a pile of fish, 3 fish, is sold at IDR 50,000	1 large fish sold for IDR 300,000	If 3 x IDR 300,000 = IDR 900,000, the profit difference is IDR 900,000 IDR 50,000 = IDR 850,000
4	Gulana	The price of a pile of fish, 5 fish, from IDR 25,000 IDR 50,000	1 large fish sold for IDR 300,000	If 5 x 100,000 = IDR 500,000, the profit difference is IDR 500,000 IDR 50,000 = IDR 450,000
5	Samandar	The price of a pile of fish, 5 fish, from IDR 25,000 to IDR 50,000	1 large fish sold for IDR 300,000	If 5 x 100,000 = IDR 500,000, the profit difference is IDR 500,000 IDR 50,000 = IDR 450,000
6	Sandbone	The price of a pile of fish, 5 small size, IDR 25,000	1 large fish sold for IDR 100,000	If 5 x 100,000 = IDR 500,000, the profit difference is IDR 500,000 IDR 50,000 = IDR 450,000
7	Lema	The price of a pile of fish, 5 small size, IDR 25,000	5 large fish sold for IDR 300,000	If 5 x 50,000 = IDR 250,000, the profit difference is IDR 250,000 IDR 20,000 = IDR 230,000

In addition to the seven types of fish above, there are various types of sea fish in one vean and economic benefits from other fish, such as palala, lalosi, seru, walo-walo, toras, raju bau, biki nangka (sarean), moan, sembilan, kapas, selay, lahay, cafu, farun, and bisbisuk fish. Table 1 shows that there are significant differences from natural resource management, in which the implementation of vean has a very high selling price value that brings economic benefits to fishermen, compared to fish catching by using boats. Thus, vean has the potential value of visibility because it contributes greatly to each of its supporters in the economic sustainability of the community, especially the Disuk community.

Based on social circles, vean also brings social sustainability. The spirit of using vean is a form of social sustainability by developing a sense of justice through maren in the form of cooperation and mutual help by the community without expecting anything in return. A sense of social justice will be manifested through cooperative attitude and mutual help by the community without expecting anything in return [24, 25]. The concept of maren is simple but shows the meaning of high social solidarity. The concrete manifestation of solidarity is shown by Disuk community in carrying out every work together, including vean work that is done with a family spirit without demanding wages. It aims to preserve the social relations among people. Other social roles are also seen in the sharing attitudes at the time of harvesting vean to others who help in making vean. The sharing attitude is built by the sense of solidarity for others in the local community. This attitude is constantly manifested as a cultural awareness to face the storm of modernization. The awareness of the local community in their interaction shows the ability to express the local culture as an identity [26].

The next circle is ecological sustainability. In its implementation vean teaches humans to live in harmony with nature. Every living thing can live according to its life cycle both human and natural resources. In terms of ecology, vean local wisdom helps in preserving nature (marine ecosystem) to remain stable. Thus, children and grandchildren can enjoy the results of natural resources and the natural beauty of Disuk Village in the future. This happens because vean local wisdom is very environmentally friendly and does not damage the marine ecosystem especially coral reefs. Moreover, vean can catch large and small fish but usually small fish are allowed to live and to grow in the vean while those taken to be consumed or sold are medium and large fish. Looking at the ecological side, the conservation of ecosystems and marine

life especially fish is maintained and preserved because the small fish continue to breed so that the sustainability of fish life is also maintained and protected from extinction. The understanding of local community is in line with the idea that the sea and its various ecosystems must always be maintained and preserved because the sea is not only a source of life for today but for the future of their children and grandchildren [6].

On the other hand, the implementation of vean local wisdom can provide sustainability for the vean owner, the community, and marine ecological environment. Sustainability is not only an idea of doing something for the environment. but also for preserving the quality of life of customary people and all life on earth. Thus, vean local wisdom has answered the triple-bottom-line where the human economy cannot live without ecology and the ecology cannot be separated from the social life of people. In addition to the three factors of sustainable living, economic and social development can be managed properly in order to reduce the adverse impacts on the environment. Vean also strengthens the concept of sustainable living that reveals the meaning of triple-bottom-line to meet the ecological, social, and economic needs.

### 3.3. Values of vean tradition as a local wisdom of customary people

Vean tradition concretely spreads the inspiring values that are able to direct, to guide, and to protect the local community in building relationship among people. The sustainability of culture is very dependent on the extent to which the noble values of the culture are implemented and inherited by its supporters [24]. The consistency of traditional fishermen to preserve the tradition of fishing using vean is a concrete form of their desire to maintain the values of local wisdom. Through interviews their belief is that by continuing to use vean. the marine ecosystem is maintained. and thus the future lives of their children and grandchildren are maintained as well. Furthermore, according to the respondents the fishing tradition using vean is an ancestral culture and must be preserved even though the world continues to develop with increasingly modern technology. They believe that this tradition has the value of togetherness, beauty, and goodness that binds the customary people. Values are the result of cultural behavior articulated in the norms and beliefs of the community behavior [27].

In fact, vean tradition has social and moral values that have inspired the customary people to build relationship and togetherness with one another. These values are manifested through the attitudes of Ohoi Disuk people namely:

- a) The attitudes of *yante te ain ni ain hamaren* (attitude of belonging to one another kinship mutual help) are the basic attitudes of the customary people of the Kei Islands in general. These attitudes of life are also found in Ohoi Disuk where people always live in the habit of carrying out any work or any celebration together. unconditionally. For example one of the families who want to build a vean. the Ohoi people must altogether hand in hand to help them voluntarily. They have a spirit of unity because they have sense of belonging.
- b) The attitudes of *ub let hormat tung tam ham wang wang* (mutual respect for each other. the attitude of life to share) are also always found in the life of the Ohoi Disuk community. They believe that mutual respect among people will bring peace and respect between the young to the old or between people to their leaders and vice versa. It is a principle that must be maintained and preserved. The attitudes of sharing or giving and receiving are not separated from the life of the Ohoi Disuk customary people. Concretely, these attitudes are seen when there is a celebration/occasion or funeral building a house or even making a vean. These attitudes must be there. For the vean fishermen, each of their catch is not only sold but also distributed to their relatives who are willing to help in building the vean.

Both of these attitudes are the customary values of the vean tradition that become the local wisdom of the Ohoi Disuk community and must be maintained because preserving these values is very meaningful for them to maintain kinship and brotherhood (social relations) so that social harmony grows well. The feeling of having the same fate and harmony among each other penetrates the boundaries of their diversity so that the activities of customary people at any time can result in coolness, calmness, and peace.

### 3.4. Vean local wisdom and its relevance for maritime history

Maritime history is an interesting issue to be developed. Along with the maritime aspect that now becomes a national issue. This is the momentum of maritime renaissance of Indonesia. The theme of maritime in the study of Indonesian history is closely related to the activities of the community since its initial dissemination by sea. Indeed, Indonesia's maritime history cannot be separated from the history of Southeast Asia. In a broader context, Indonesia's maritime history is part of Southeast Asian history. Then, it justifies that this region is a large entity that has never been separated geographically or socio-culturally where the constellation of regions has created a cultural relationship for a long time and reached a peak at a period called commercial era [28].

One of the proper ways to strengthen maritime culture is through history learning both in formal school and informal school or family lines. The maritime history study sourced from the culture of local community continues to develop in accordance with the new paradigm of history learning where the environment around schools can be used as a source of learning. The environment can be in the form of natural environment, historical objects, and traditions of local communities so that the learning maritime history can strengthen the students' character. One approach to build students' character is through cultural awareness because culture has beneficial values to life [29]. Thus, the vean tradition, as a local wisdom of customary people, can be used as a source of learning about maritime history.

The integration of various learning topics of maritime history continues to be developed based on aspects that are interrelated to one another such as regional integration (hinterland and foreland). It is a long story of Indonesian maritime culture that was born from the life of local communities then evolved into real maritime history, starting from the writing "*Orang Laut, Bajak Laut, and Raja Laut: Sejarah Kawasan Sulawesi Abad XIX*" (Sea Men, Pirates, and Sea King: The History of Sulawesi Region in XIX Century) [30]. The concept of maritime history learning should be developed from the diversity of tribes, cultures, and customs which are built together with people who inhabit various areas surrounded by the sea. Diversity is not a mere concept but can be actually implemented in the learning process. Implementing the values of multiculturalism born of various traditions, the culture of the local community must be an important source in the world of education especially the history learning. History learning can accommodate a variety of local wisdom that grows and develops in people's lives so that history learning takes part in the process of stopping various social phenomena that threatens the diversity of our society today. Thus, in educational context, multicultural beliefs are in line with teaching and learning practices that make cultural diversity a resource and additional values [31].

Implementing values of vean local wisdom as a learning source of maritime history is very important in the midst of the ever-challenging stretch of modernity where various local traditions continue to erode. Preserving a variety of local cultures such as fishing traditions using vean as the local wisdom of customary peoples is a tangible act of preserving social identity, fostering the awareness of young people about the cultural environment, and marine ecosystems for their lives and for society today and in the future. Revitalizing the values of local wisdom through the learning process really helps strengthen the character of the younger generation (students). The local culture is the social identity of the local community so that the process of building awareness about learning local wisdom is to learn the culture which gives students the opportunity to demonstrate the achievement of their understanding about cultural diversity [4]. Achieving an understanding of diversity as a strength and national identity requires real action, and real action will produce awareness to preserve the values of local wisdom. The attitude of maintaining and exploring cultural values as an anchor of resilience is a process of strengthening identity and social order [32].

Thus, various cultures and traditions in the life of local people must have good social, moral, and ethical values so they need to be preserved continuously. Vean local wisdom that is still held by traditional fishermen in Ohoi Disuk can be used as a learning source of Maritime History courses in the Study Program of History Education on Maritime Communities in Indonesia especially in Maluku. It uses sub-competency that can be given to the students namely explaining the life orientation of the Maritime community in Indonesia especially Maluku traditional fishermen. The essential indicator is the life orientation of the maritime community in the archipelago especially Maluku traditional fishermen.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

Vean is a traditional fishing tool used by fishermen for generations and has become the local wisdom of Ohoi Dusuk community although various types of fishing tools are constantly evolving. Vean has a human-shaped construction in which traditional fishermen believe that this construction will bring good luck because all parts will function like the human body and create a relationship between humans and nature. Vean is a local wisdom that has a very large role in supporting sustainable economic, social, and ecological life. Economic sustainability is generally the main motivation for the availability of life guarantees. Through this guarantee humans must be responsible for preserving nature creating quality of life by improving the environmental quality of natural resources. In terms of social sustainability, vean develops a sense of justice through maren culture which is a mutual-cooperation system built in the lives of Kei community specifically in Ohoi Disuk.

Other social roles are also seen in the sharing attitude at the time of harvesting to others who have helped in making the vean. Furthermore, in the ecological role, vean teaches humans to live in harmony with nature so that nature conservation is created naturally. The vean tradition has social and moral values that have inspired customary people to build relationship among them. These values are manifested through

the attitudes of the Ohoi Disuk community namely yante te ain ni ain hamaren which reflect the spirit of unity because they have sense of belonging. The attitude of ub let hormat, tung tam ham wang wang reflects the life of mutual-respect to each other and the attitude of sharing or give and take. Both of these attitudes are the customary values of the vean tradition which become the local wisdom of Dusuk customary people in the context of building kinship and brotherhood (social relations). In line with the new paradigm of history learning, various things in the community environment in the form of culture and tradition as local wisdom can be used as a source of learning. This local wisdom is an idea or concept that can be used as a learning source of maritime history. Vean forms the attitudes and behavior of the younger generation so that various local cultures can be well-explored to become a learning source of maritime history at various levels of education. Furthermore, the implementation of the values of vean local wisdom can be applied to the society in building sustainable economic and social relations as well as conservation of ecosystems and marine life.

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## BIOGRAPHIES OF AUTHORS



Agustinus Ufie is a lecturer of the Historical Education Study Program at the Faculty of Teacher Training and Education (FKIP) of the Pattimura University of Ambon. He completed his undergraduate education at Pattimura University majoring the History Education Study Program in 2001. He followed the Masters Program in the Historical Education Study Program of the Postgraduate School of the Indonesian Education University (UPI) of Bandung in 2011 to 2013. He is still actively conducting research and writing in scientific journals.



Jenny Koce Matitaputty, born in Ambon on June 22, 1984. She obtained her Bachelor of Education (S.Pd) in 2007 in the Historical Education study program at the Faculty of Teacher Training and Education (FKIP) of Pattimura University. In 2010 she completed her S2 (master) study at the Social Science Education Study Program (IPS) at Indonesian Education University (UPI) of Bandung. In 2015. She continued her studies at the Social Science Education Study Program at Indonesian Education University (UPI) and graduated in 2018.



Jeanete Costantia Kufila, born in Ambon on January 5, 1999. She graduated from High School in 2016 and in the same year she was registered as a student of the Historical Education Study Program at the Faculty of Teacher Training and Education at Pattimura University. Currently she is in the final process of her study at the Bachelor of History Study Program at Pattimura University.