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INDIGENOUS BLUE ENTREPRENEURSHIP: THE CASE STUDY OF SASI LAUT IN FOLLEY, RAJA AMPAT

KEWIRAUSAHAAN BIRU ADAT: STUDI KASUS SASI LAUT DI FOLLEY, RAJA AMPAT

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the *Sasi Laut* ritual system practiced by the Indigenous Matbat community in Folley Village, Raja Ampat, to understand how customary marine governance shapes community-based economic practices. Using a qualitative ethnographic approach involving participant observation, in-depth interviews, and document analysis, the study interprets the findings through Indigenous Blue Entrepreneurship (IBE), proposed as a conceptual lens that synthesizes insights from Blue Entrepreneurship and Indigenous Entrepreneurship. The findings show that *Sasi Laut* functions not only as a customary institution for marine conservation but also as a system that integrates Indigenous ecological knowledge, customary governance, marine-based innovation, and communal economic practices. The involvement of the church and conservation organizations has contributed to the transformation of *Sasi Laut* while reinforcing its role in supporting sustainable livelihoods. At the same time, the system faces challenges from external resource exploitation and socio-cultural change. This study contributes to discussions on Indigenous entrepreneurship and sustainable marine resource governance by demonstrating how Indigenous economic practices are embedded in reciprocal relationships among culture, ecology, and community well-being.

Keywords: sasi laut, indigenous entrepreneurship, sustainability, indigenous blue entrepreneurship.

ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini mengkaji sistem ritual *Sasi Laut* yang dipraktikkan oleh masyarakat adat Matbat di Desa Folley, Raja Ampat, untuk memahami bagaimana tata kelola laut berbasis adat membentuk praktik ekonomi berbasis komunitas. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan etnografi kualitatif melalui observasi partisipatif, wawancara mendalam, dan analisis dokumen. Temuan penelitian diinterpretasikan menggunakan *Indigenous Blue Entrepreneurship* (IBE) sebagai lensa konseptual yang mensintesis perspektif *Blue Entrepreneurship* dan *Indigenous Entrepreneurship*. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa *Sasi Laut* tidak hanya berfungsi sebagai institusi adat dalam konservasi sumber daya laut, tetapi juga sebagai sistem yang mengintegrasikan pengetahuan ekologis masyarakat adat, tata kelola berbasis adat, inovasi ekonomi kelautan, dan praktik ekonomi komunal. Keterlibatan gereja dan organisasi konservasi turut mendorong transformasi *Sasi Laut* sekaligus memperkuat perannya dalam mendukung keberlanjutan mata pencaharian masyarakat. Di sisi lain, sistem ini juga menghadapi tantangan berupa eksploitasi sumber daya oleh pihak luar serta perubahan sosial budaya. Penelitian ini berkontribusi pada pengembangan kajian kewirausahaan adat dan tata kelola sumber daya laut berkelanjutan dengan menunjukkan bagaimana praktik ekonomi masyarakat adat dibangun melalui hubungan timbal balik antara budaya, ekologi, dan kesejahteraan komunitas.

Kata kunci: sasi laut, kewirausahaan adat, keberlanjutan, kewirausahaan biru adat.

INTRODUCTION

Although marine conservation has received increasing scholarly attention, the relationship between Indigenous coastal communities, marine sustainability, and entrepreneurship remains

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insufficiently understood. Previous studies on *Sasi Laut* in Raja Ampat have primarily interpreted it as a customary institution for marine conservation and community-based resource management (McLeod et al., 2009; Boli et al., 2014; Putri et al., 2020). These studies successfully demonstrate the ecological importance of Sasi Laut in protecting marine ecosystems and regulating resource use. However, they provide limited explanation of how Indigenous knowledge, customary governance, and marine-based economic practices operate together as an entrepreneurial system that simultaneously sustains ecological integrity, cultural continuity, and community livelihoods.

This limitation becomes increasingly important in the context of growing concerns over marine degradation and the need for sustainable coastal development. In Indonesia, destructive fishing practices, unsustainable resource extraction, and coastal development continue to threaten marine ecosystems (USAID, 2018; Solihin et al., 2013). While sustainable entrepreneurship has been promoted as an alternative approach to balancing economic development and environmental conservation, existing conceptual frameworks remain fragmented in explaining Indigenous coastal economies.

One important perspective is Blue Entrepreneurship (BE), which has emerged from the broader discourse of the blue economy. BE emphasizes the sustainable utilization of marine resources to generate economic opportunities while maintaining the health and resilience of ocean ecosystems (Urban Jr., 2022). It promotes environmentally responsible innovation through fisheries, aquaculture, marine tourism, and other ocean-based industries that create employment and support local livelihoods (White, 2017; Habip & Dogan, 2022). Despite these contributions, BE primarily focuses on sustainable business development and environmental management, paying relatively limited attention to Indigenous knowledge systems, customary institutions, and the cultural relationships that shape economic practices in Indigenous coastal communities.

In contrast, Indigenous Entrepreneurship (IE) understands entrepreneurship as a community-based process rooted in Indigenous identities, ancestral territories, cultural values, and self-determination (Yang et al., 2024). Entrepreneurial activities are embedded within kinship relations, customary governance, oral traditions, and collective responsibilities that integrate economic, social, and cultural objectives (Dana & Anderson, 2007; Colbourne, 2021; Henry & Poyser, 2022). Nevertheless, existing studies on IE have devoted comparatively little attention to marine-based customary institutions and the distinctive ways Indigenous coastal communities organize ocean-based economic systems.

Although both BE and IE share a commitment to sustainability, they have largely developed as separate bodies of scholarship. Blue Entrepreneurship provides valuable insights into sustainable marine economic development but insufficiently explains the role of Indigenous cosmologies and customary governance. Conversely, Indigenous Entrepreneurship highlights Indigenous values and community-based economies but offers limited understanding of how marine ecosystems, coastal rituals, and ocean-based livelihoods become integral components of entrepreneurial practice. Consequently, an important conceptual gap remains in explaining how Indigenous marine

knowledge, customary institutions, and marine economic activities are integrated within a sustainable entrepreneurial system.

To address this gap, this article proposes Indigenous Blue Entrepreneurship (IBE) as a preliminary conceptual framework derived from an ethnographic study of the Matbat Indigenous community in Folley Village, Raja Ampat. Rather than presenting an entirely new entrepreneurial theory, IBE synthesizes key insights from Blue Entrepreneurship and Indigenous Entrepreneurship to explain how Indigenous ecological knowledge, customary institutions, marine rituals, and community-based economic practices interact within a sustainable coastal livelihood system. Grounded in ethnographic evidence, the framework identifies five interconnected dimensions of IBE: Indigenous ecological knowledge, sustainable marine practices, customary ecological governance through Sasi Laut, marine-based community innovation, and communal economic systems oriented toward reciprocity and collective well-being.

Accordingly, this article addresses two research questions: (1) how has Sasi Laut been transformed as a system of coastal governance, and (2) how does this transformation contribute to the conceptualization of Indigenous Blue Entrepreneurship? By answering these questions, the study contributes to the growing discussion on sustainable marine livelihoods by offering an empirically grounded conceptual framework for understanding Indigenous entrepreneurship in coastal contexts.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study employed a qualitative ethnographic approach to examine how the Matbat Indigenous community organizes marine-based livelihoods through Sasi Laut. Ethnography was selected because the study seeks to understand Indigenous ecological knowledge, cultural values, everyday practices, and social interactions that cannot be adequately captured through quantitative approaches. Following Chuanshan (2022), the study applied thick description to interpret the meanings that community members attach to marine conservation, customary institutions, and economic activities.

Data analysis followed the ethnographic procedures proposed by Chuanshan (2022). Interview transcripts, field notes, and observational records were first coded into preliminary categories, including Sasi Laut, Indigenous ecological knowledge, customary governance, marine-based livelihoods, and community economic practices. These categories were subsequently organized into broader themes through thematic analysis. The final stage involved interpreting these empirical themes through a dialogue with the literature on Blue Entrepreneurship and Indigenous Entrepreneurship. Rather than generating a completely new entrepreneurial theory, this iterative interpretive process informed the use of Indigenous Blue Entrepreneurship (IBE) as a conceptual lens to explain how Indigenous ecological knowledge, customary governance, marine-based innovation, and communal economic practices interact within the Matbat community.

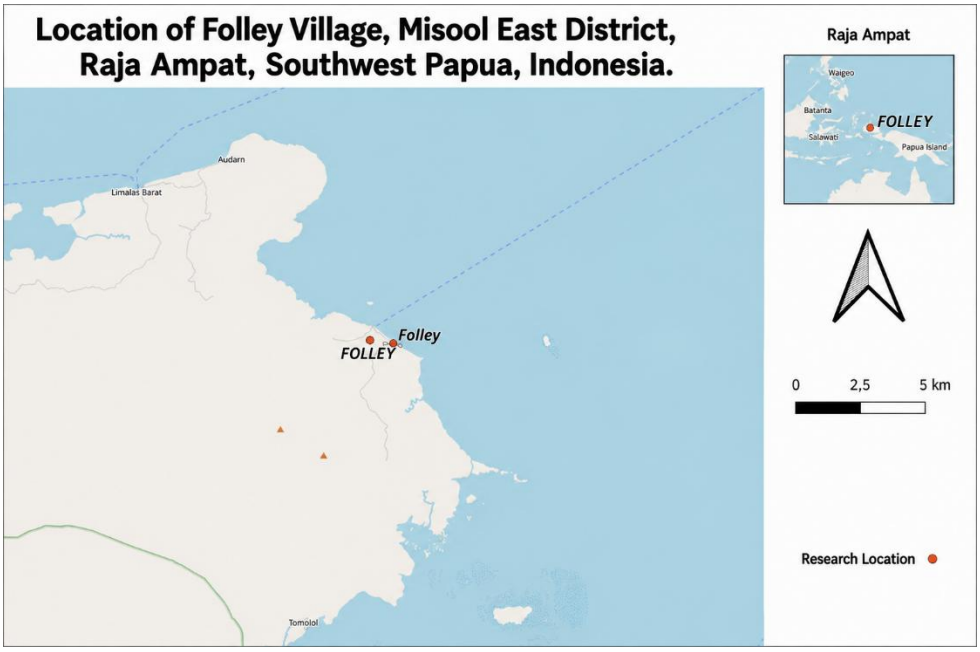

Figure 1. Location of the study.

Folley Village, East Misool, Raja Ampat, Southwest Papua, was selected because it is one of the Indigenous coastal communities where Sasi Laut continues to function as a customary institution regulating marine resource management while simultaneously supporting community livelihoods. This setting provides an appropriate context for examining the relationship between Indigenous ecological knowledge, marine conservation, and marine-based economic practices. Access to the community was established through local contacts and formal research permission obtained from the Moom and Fadimpo clans, the customary rights holders of Sasi Laut.

Fieldwork was conducted over four months (November 2024 to February 2025) using purposive sampling to identify participants with direct knowledge of Sasi Laut and community-based economic activities. A total of seventeen key informants participated in the study, comprising four customary leaders and customary rights holders from the Moom and Fadimpo clans, one Sasi Laut ritual leader, four fishers, two church representatives, two village government representatives, and four participants associated with Yayasan Konservasi Alam Nusantara (YKAN), including members of the Topon Ho working group. Additional participants were identified through recommendations from community members during fieldwork.

Data were collected through in-depth interviews, participant observation, and document analysis. Participant observation involved attending Sasi Laut rituals, accompanying community patrols, observing fishing and sea cucumber harvesting activities, documenting fish processing and other marine-based economic practices, and visiting marine ecotourism sites. These observations enabled the researcher to understand how customary institutions, ecological knowledge, and economic activities are interconnected in everyday community life. Supplementary data were obtained from relevant academic literature, church documents, and reports published by YKAN to contextualize the historical, cultural, ecological, and economic dynamics of the Folley community.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The Sasi Laut System: Structure, Transformation, and Rituals

In Folley, two forms of *sasi* exist: land and sea *sasi* as integral elements of indigenous resource management. *Sasi Laut* refers to the customary prohibition against harvesting marine life during specific agreed-upon periods, especially focusing on sea cucumbers, usually for 6 months to a year. Although not formally included, lobsters and *lola* (sea snails) are also avoided by locals out of respect and fear toward the sacred *sasi* zones. Historically, *sasi* has been rooted in ancestral customs and ritual law. However, over time, Sasi Laut has evolved due to internal and external influences. While originally managed solely by the community through customary norms, *sasi* today involves other actors, including the church and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs). Since the founding of the Talitakumi Church in 1976, the church has played a role in Sasi Laut rituals. A notable memory from the 1980s recalls a *kakyai* (church elder) standing on a boat, praying, and collecting sea cucumbers during a time of abundance (Niksom Moom, 2025). This moment marks a blending of spiritual frameworks, where responsibility for sustaining the sea is attributed not only to ancestral spirits but also to God.

External influences, notably NGOs, have further shaped *sasi*'s evolution. Following The Nature Conservancy's (TNC) involvement in eastern Misool since 2001 for dugong conservation, Yayasan Konservasi Alam Nusantara (YKAN) entered Folley in 2013. Despite initial community skepticism, YKAN's marine monitoring efforts revealed significant sea cucumber potential, leading to their involvement in Sasi Laut management. This collaboration contributed to an increase in identified sea cucumber species from 6 to 11 by 2017, including the valuable *Holothuria scabra* (YKAN, 2021).

Sasi customary areas are ancestrally defined and passed down through generations, with clear natural boundaries for clans like Fadimpo (Tanjung Vagita to Mebel River) and Moom (jetty bridge to Nukari Bay) (Melkisedek Fadimpo, 2024; Putri et al., 2020). The Sasi Laut ritual itself has transformed through encounters with the church, NGOs, and migrants. This has led to an expanded procession and enriched symbolic meanings, while also strengthening existing relationships and social dynamics. External influences have particularly shifted the meaning and linguistic usage within the ritual process.

Before the *sasi* opening ritual, YKAN conducts marine monitoring to determine feasibility. Upon confirmation, the Moom and Fadimpo clans coordinate with the church for a prayer service, followed by the traditional ritual. During this ritual, led by Pak Leonard Moom, who communicates with ancestors using the Matbat language, symbols like betel nut, lime, and tobacco are offered, and mangrove trees are planted to signify ancestral presence and protection during harvesting. The ritual speech itself reflects a transformation of both language and meaning. While rooted in ancestral Matbat, a more recent expression blends customary language with Christian elements (e.g., 'God who created the universe and our ancestors, come and see your people, here is betel nut'). This contrast illustrates a shift from purely ancestral authority to one incorporating divine sanction, where traditional consequences (blindness, deafness, death) are now also attributed to divine judgment.

In traditional rituals led by Pak Leonard, the Matbat language is used, and ritual speech reflects a transformation of both language and meaning. During interviews, I asked the customary leader (syawoi) and other speakers: *"What language is used in the ritual and how is it spoken?"* Their responses revealed two distinct expressions. The first, rooted in ancestral language, states: *Kapil Sasi Otimaingat falov Lom sai na'i Habap ta, hasil nuni hapan aye po falov ji*, which emphasizes remembering the betel nut as a sacred marker and the source of all outcomes. The second, more recent expression blends customary language with Christian elements: *"God who created the universe and our ancestors, sea and land, come and see your people, here is betel nut."* The contrast illustrates a shift from purely ancestral authority to one that incorporates divine sanction, where traditional consequences, like blindness, deafness, or death, are now also seen as acts of divine judgment.

Betel nut and tobacco symbolize solidarity with ancestors and mark the opening of Sasi Laut. During harvesting, the community is required to use traditional tools like *Kalawai* and *Kaluwun* and adhere to a minimum sea cucumber size of 15 cm. The 2023-2024 open *sasi* period, however, saw a significant decrease in sea cucumber numbers compared to previous periods. *Sasi* is officially closed after all communities have harvested, with the 2024 period opening on November 12 and closing on December 22. During the closed *sasi* period, communities shift their economic activities to gardening, though *non-sasi* marine areas remain accessible.

The Knowledge and Practice of the Fisherman

The Matbat tribe deeply conceives the sea as 'mother,' a perspective rooted in the fishers' identity and praxis. This cosmological principle, passed down through generations, emphasizes sustainability, as articulated by fisher Pak Yance Falon: 'We follow our ancestors' actions, using non-destructive traditional tools because protecting the sea means protecting ourselves and our future generations.' This view interprets the sea not merely as a resource but as a living entity that guarantees daily sustenance and provides comfort, fostering a profound, historical, and intergenerational relationship between fishers and the marine environment, said Nelson Mjam. This deep-rooted knowledge guides their daily fishing practices. Community activities, from children fishing at the dock with the 'baciki' technique (bamboo, nylon, hook, relying on clear water to spot fish schools) to parents using speedboats, reflect their intimate connection with the sea. The 'baciki' technique, for instance, highlights a reliance on traditional methods and environmental awareness.

During the open *sasi* period, fishers primarily target sea cucumbers, adapting their traditional methods. While ancestral practices involved tools like bore roots and petromax lights, the current generation uses *kaluwun* and flashlights. Furthermore, the *sasi* system has evolved through collaborations, notably with The Nature Conservancy (TNC) since January 2024. Four designated fishers work with TNC, reporting daily catches and tools used. This initiative, providing an incentive of IDR 500,000 per month, aims to monitor fish development and species, with all catches remaining the property of the fishers (Izak Moom, 2025).

Fishers explained that their traditional fishing practices emphasize protecting coral reefs and seagrass beds through environmentally friendly fishing methods inherited from their ancestors. Informants also stated that fish catches are commonly shared with neighbours, relatives, and teachers. During interviews, community members described food sharing as an important customary practice within the village. They further explained that community agreements allocate part of the sea cucumber harvest to support children's education and families facing illness.

Marine-Based Economic Practices

The economic activities of Folley Village are characterized by alternating dependence on marine and terrestrial resources. The sea provides fish and sea cucumbers, while gardens produce vegetables and fruits. Marine-based economic activities become more intensive during the open Sasi Laut period, which typically lasts for one month. During this period, community members increase their harvesting activities, particularly during morning and night low tides (*meti*), when sea cucumbers are more accessible. Fishers use local knowledge and experience to identify suitable harvesting times and locations for sea cucumbers and other marine resources. Depending on the species and quality, dried sea cucumbers are commonly sold for between IDR 1,000,000 and IDR 3,000,000 per kilogram.

After harvesting sea cucumbers of the required size, community members process them through traditional smoking (*asar*) using firewood, followed by washing with papaya leaves or fruit to clean and smooth the surface. The dried products are then sold either to buyers who visit Folley Village or transported to Sorong, where some fishers obtain higher prices. Informants stated that income from *Sasi Laut* harvests is commonly used to meet household needs and support children's education. During productive harvesting periods, some families reported earning up to IDR 11,000,000 from sea cucumber sales.

The distribution of sea cucumber harvests is guided by the customary principle of *Faloti Falov* (mutual agreement). During the open Sasi Laut period, all community members, including Muslims, are permitted to participate in harvesting. Informants from the Moom and Fadimpo clans explained that sea cucumber resources are regarded as belonging to the community and may be harvested to support household needs and children's education. The proceeds from sea cucumber sales are distributed through several customary arrangements. The customary rights holders (the Moom and Fadimpo clans) allocate their share to the church as a charitable contribution. Community members also explained that, in certain situations, part of the harvest is collectively allocated to assist families facing medical expenses or to support children's educational costs.

The abundance of sea cucumbers in Folley has attracted buyers from outside Raja Ampat, although prices offered within the village are often lower than those available in Sorong. YKAN conducts periodic monitoring of sea cucumber populations before the opening of *Sasi Laut* and provides technical assistance during its implementation. During fieldwork, several informants reported that sea cucumber harvests in the most recent *Sasi Laut* period were substantially lower than in previous years. For example, one fisher, Yance Falon, stated that his income declined from

approximately IDR 11,000,000 in the previous harvesting period to around IDR 1,500,000 in the most recent one. Nevertheless, informants explained that income from sea cucumber harvesting remained an important source of household expenditure, particularly for daily needs and children's education.

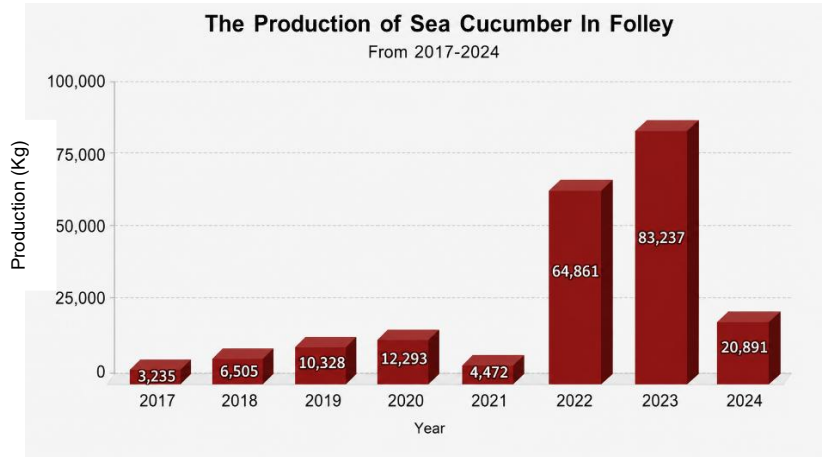

Figure 2. Sea Cucumber Productivity Data from The Implementation of Sasi Laut in Folley Village, 2017-2024, According to a Report from YKAN (YKAN, 2025)

In general, Figure 2 shows an increasing trend in sea cucumber production between 2017 and 2020, followed by a decline in 2021. Production increased again during 2022–2023 before declining sharply in 2024. According to YKAN monitoring reports, the organization has supported sea cucumber monitoring and the implementation of Sasi Laut in Folley since 2013. The decline in production observed in 2024 is consistent with earlier findings reported by Putri et al. (2020), who documented reduced sea cucumber productivity during fieldwork conducted between September 2018 and April 2019.

Beyond the periodic Sasi Laut system, Folley's economy is further diversified through marine ecotourism and fishing activities in non-*sasi* areas. The Sasi Laut ritual attracts domestic and international visitors, creating opportunities for residents through the sale of local products, entrance fees to tourism sites, tour guide services, and boat rentals. In non-*sasi* marine areas, fishers continue using traditional tools such as fishing rods and *kalawai* (spears) to catch various fish species, which are commonly sold for IDR 10,000–IDR 50,000 per kilogram. Historically, fish traders from the village supplied markets in Sorong every week.

Despite transportation constraints and high fuel costs, small-scale marine trade continues, often following the Folley–Sorong ferry schedule. Several Matbat students studying in Sorong also sell fish after returning from their village. Other livelihood activities include crab harvesting by residents such as Pak Nehemia Fadimpo and Jumaidi Metsui-Moom, with the latter reporting earnings of up to IDR 2,000,000 over two weeks. Since 2023, YKAN has also supported the Topon Ho working group in producing fish chips from *bubara* fish, which are marketed in Sorong and Waisai. To support this initiative, a dedicated production facility and sales outlet are currently under construction in Folley Village.

Indigenous Blue Entrepreneurship as a Conceptual Lens

The findings of this study suggest that the economic practices of the Matbat community in Folley cannot be fully understood through Blue Entrepreneurship (BE) or Indigenous Entrepreneurship (IE) when each is considered independently. As discussed in the Introduction, BE primarily emphasizes sustainable marine resource management and innovation within the blue economy, while IE highlights Indigenous self-determination, collective well-being, and culturally embedded entrepreneurship. However, the ethnographic evidence from Folley demonstrates that marine-based livelihoods emerge through the simultaneous interaction of ecological knowledge, customary governance, spiritual beliefs, and communal economic relations. These interconnected elements are not adequately captured when the two perspectives are applied separately.

The transformation of Sasi Laut, the fishers' understanding of the sea as *mother*, community-based harvesting practices, and the customary distribution of marine resources illustrate that economic activities in Folley are inseparable from Indigenous cultural institutions and marine ecology. Rather than functioning merely as a conservation mechanism or a resource management system, Sasi Laut regulates when harvesting may occur, how marine resources are utilized, and how economic benefits are distributed within the community. Economic practices are therefore embedded within reciprocal relationships among people, the sea, ancestors, customary authorities, and the church. This finding extends existing discussions of marine entrepreneurship by demonstrating that sustainability is maintained not only through ecological management but also through cultural norms and customary institutions.

These findings are synthesized in this study through the concept of Indigenous Blue Entrepreneurship (IBE). Rather than proposing a new entrepreneurial theory or a universal framework, IBE is offered as a conceptual lens for understanding how Indigenous coastal communities organize marine-based economic activities by integrating ecological knowledge, customary governance, community innovation, and collective economic values. In the Folley case, entrepreneurship is not primarily oriented toward maximizing individual profit, but toward sustaining reciprocal relationships between people and the marine environment while supporting collective welfare.

The ethnographic findings indicate five interrelated characteristics of IBE. First, economic activities are grounded in Indigenous ecological knowledge that understands the sea as a living and relational entity rather than merely an economic resource. Second, marine livelihoods are organized through sustainable harvesting practices regulated by Sasi Laut and local ecological knowledge. Third, customary governance continues to shape access to, use of, and responsibility for marine resources despite ongoing collaboration with churches and conservation organizations. Fourth, marine-based innovation develops through locally grounded initiatives, including fish processing and community-based ecotourism, which build upon existing cultural and ecological practices. Finally, economic benefits are distributed through communal arrangements that prioritize education, social support, religious contributions, and collective well-being rather than individual accumulation.

Taken together, these findings suggest that Indigenous Blue Entrepreneurship broadens existing understandings of marine entrepreneurship by recognizing that economic innovation, environmental sustainability, and Indigenous cultural values are mutually constitutive rather than separate domains. In this sense, IBE provides an analytical perspective for interpreting marine-based livelihoods in Indigenous coastal communities where economic activities remain embedded within customary institutions, ecological ethics, and communal social relations.

Marine Innovation and Communal Economy in Indigenous Blue Entrepreneurship

Having established Indigenous Blue Entrepreneurship as a conceptual lens, this section discusses how the concept is manifested in the economic practices of the Matbat community. The findings indicate that innovation within the Matbat community differs from conventional entrepreneurial innovation, which is commonly driven by market expansion and profit maximization. Instead, innovation in Folley emerges through the interaction of Indigenous ecological knowledge, customary governance, and collective community interests. This observation supports arguments that Indigenous innovation is fundamentally place-based and embedded in local knowledge, cultural practices, and social relations rather than detached technological advancement (Peredo et al., 2019; Vunibola & Scobie, 2022). In the Folley context, innovation is inseparable from the ecological and cultural principles embodied in Sasi Laut, ensuring that economic development remains compatible with marine sustainability and collective well-being.

The development of fish-chip production by the Topon Ho working group illustrates this distinctive form of Indigenous innovation. Rather than representing a purely commercial enterprise, the initiative depends upon the continued availability of marine resources protected through Sasi Laut. Community members explicitly associate fish abundance with customary conservation practices, indicating that economic innovation is understood as an outcome of maintaining reciprocal relationships with the sea rather than increasing resource extraction. The collaboration with YKAN further demonstrates that external institutions can strengthen Indigenous enterprises by providing technical and marketing support while local communities retain authority over resource use and production practices. This finding extends previous discussions of Indigenous innovation by showing that external partnerships do not necessarily weaken Indigenous autonomy when customary governance remains the primary institutional foundation (Peredo et al., 2019).

Marine ecotourism represents another important expression of Indigenous Blue Entrepreneurship. Existing studies argue that Indigenous knowledge constitutes a fundamental basis for sustainable marine ecotourism because local communities possess ecological knowledge and cultural institutions that regulate human interaction with coastal environments (Garrod & Wilson, 2003). The Folley case supports this argument while extending it by integrating ritual, customary authority, and local participation. Rather than transforming culture into a commercial commodity, the Sasi Laut ritual, traditional performances, local guiding services, and community hospitality remain embedded within their original cultural and spiritual contexts. Economic benefits therefore emerge alongside the preservation of cultural identity and marine ecosystems, rather than replacing them.

Beyond innovation, the findings also demonstrate that Indigenous Blue Entrepreneurship is sustained through a communal economic system that prioritizes collective welfare over individual accumulation. The distribution of Sasi Laut harvests through the principle of Faloti Falov (mutual agreement) allocates economic benefits not only for household livelihoods but also for church contributions, children's education, and families facing medical hardship. Such practices reflect what Indigenous entrepreneurship scholars describe as collective reciprocity and community well-being rather than profit maximization (Dana & Anderson, 2007; Henry & Poyser, 2022; Jurado & Mika, 2022). In the Folley case, economic value is redistributed through customary institutions, illustrating that entrepreneurship functions simultaneously as an economic, social, and cultural practice.

Taken together, these findings demonstrate that Indigenous Blue Entrepreneurship is not simply concerned with creating marine-based economic opportunities but with maintaining reciprocal relationships among people, customary institutions, and marine ecosystems. Fish processing, marine ecotourism, and the communal distribution of *sasi* harvests illustrate interconnected dimensions of a coastal Indigenous economy in which innovation, ecological stewardship, and collective welfare reinforce one another. The Folley case therefore suggests that marine-based entrepreneurship can contribute to sustainable development when economic initiatives remain grounded in Indigenous knowledge, customary governance, and communal responsibility rather than being separated from them.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

Conclusion

This study demonstrates that the Sasi Laut system in Folley has evolved from a customary marine conservation institution into a collaborative model of coastal governance shaped by Indigenous institutions, the church, and non-governmental organizations. This transformation reflects the dynamic adaptation of Indigenous knowledge while maintaining the ecological and cultural values that underpin community life. Furthermore, this study proposes Indigenous Blue Entrepreneurship (IBE) as a conceptual lens for understanding how Indigenous ecological knowledge, customary institutions, and marine-based economic practices are integrated within a community-led entrepreneurial system. Unlike conventional blue economy approaches, IBE emphasizes the reciprocal relationship between people and the sea, local cosmology, and collective well-being as fundamental dimensions of economic life. The findings demonstrate that Sasi Laut functions not only as a mechanism of marine conservation but also as a system that integrates ecological governance, cultural continuity, and sustainable livelihoods. In doing so, this study contributes to ongoing discussions on Blue Entrepreneurship and Indigenous Entrepreneurship by showing how ethnographic evidence from the Matbat Indigenous community in Folley, Raja Ampat, can be interpreted through Indigenous Blue Entrepreneurship as a conceptual lens for understanding marine-based Indigenous livelihoods.

Suggestion

This research is limited to local entrepreneurship. Therefore, it is recommended to expand the research area to explore trade networks and company dynamics operating within *sasi* areas (e.g., snail companies near Folley Village). This further study is crucial to assess the extent to which these company activities support or harm marine ecosystems, understand the licensing regulations and power relations involving the provincial government, identify deeper challenges faced by coastal communities, and strengthen the Indigenous Blue Entrepreneurship framework.

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