

## The Influence of Bajo Culture in the Design of the Metkayina Tribe House in the Movie Avatar: The Way Of Water

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
<p><b>Keywords:</b> Bajo Culture, Metkayina Tribe's Houses, Avatar Film, Visual Analysis.</p>	<p>This journal analyzes the influence of Bajo culture on the design of the Metkayina tribe's houses in the Avatar Film : The Way of Water using qualitative research methods, fil Analysis, including visual Bajo cultural references, and interpretative approaches. The study aims to identify Bajo cultural elements in the design of the Metkayina tribe's houses and understand the significance of Bajo culture in shaping the tribe's identity in the film. The expected findings aim to provide insights into cultural representation in visual arts.</p>

### INTRODUCTION

The film "Avatar: The Way of Water" is a sequel to the very popular film, "Avatar", which was released in 2009. The film is a cinematic work filled with natural wonders and cultural diversity. One of the interesting elements of this film is the Metkayina tribe, a fictional tribe in the world of Pandora that has a unique and interesting house design (Nuraini, 2016) (La Ode Musrin Ramadhan et al., n.d.).

The Metkayina tribe in the film is inspired by the Bajo culture, an indigenous ethnic group that mostly lives in coastal and marine areas of Southeast Asia. Bajo culture has deep skills and knowledge about the ocean, as well as developing a lifestyle that is closely related to marine resources. The existence of Bajo culture in the design of the Metkayina tribal house gives a message about the importance of cultural preservation and the connection of humans with nature. Director James Cameron revealed that the newly introduced Metkayina clan in Avatar 2 or Avatar: The Way of Water got its inspiration from the lives of the Bajo Tribe people in Indonesia. In the process of making the film, James Cameron and his team conducted a lot of in-depth research on the indigenous culture of the Bajo Tribe, which was then adapted and adapted to the fictional world of Pandora they created.



Figure 1. Children of Bajo Tribe & Metkayina Tribe  
Source : <https://www.goodnewsfromindonesia.id/>

Bajo architecture is a traditional architectural style practiced by the Bajo people in coastal and marine areas of Southeast Asia (Setiadi et al., 2021) (Yuniastuti, 2016). Floating houses or houses on stilts became their architectural icons, built on wooden poles above the water, illustrating their close connection with the ocean.

Using environmental materials such as wood, bamboo, and wicker, the architecture of the Bajo tribe reflects their skills in utilizing natural resources sustainably (Capalulu et al., 2016). The simple layout and flexibility of their homes allow for mobility and adaptation to the dynamic coastal environment. Despite facing modernization challenges, the preservation of the Bajo tribe's architectural culture is important to maintain their local wisdom and respect the rich cultural heritage (Setiadi et al., 2021).

The Metkayina mansion in the movie "Avatar: The Way of Water" is an amazing and unique example of fictional architecture. In the fictional world of Pandora, the houses of the Metkayina tribe are designed to reflect the lives of fictional people influenced by Bajo culture, but also blend with the environmental elements and natural wonders of the planet Pandora itself (Lambert, 2023) (Mahanggi, 2018). The houses of the Metkayina tribe in the film have the characteristics of stage architecture, similar to the floating houses of the Bajo tribe in the real world. These houses are erected on large columns that support a stilt structure above the water, which gives a strong feel about the tribe's connection to the ocean and water environment on Pandora.



Figure 2. Bajo Tribe House & Metkayina Tribe House

Source : <https://www.goodnewsfromindonesia.id/>

The architecture of the Metkayina houses also shows diversity in the use of natural materials, including wood, plants, and other organic materials that give a sense of harmony with their fictional environment. The placement of architectural elements that blend with the surrounding nature and the panoramic beauty of Pandora creates a stunning atmosphere for the viewers. In addition, the houses of the Metkayina tribe in the film "Avatar: The Way of Water" were designed with practicality and mobility in mind. The easily movable structures allow them to adapt to environmental changes or emergencies, which is in keeping with the character of the Bajo people known as an ethnic group with high mobility in the real world.

Research on the influence of Bajo culture in the design of Metkayina houses in the film "Avatar: The Way of Water" has several urgencies that need to be noted:

1. Cultural Preservation: Bajo culture as a unique ethnic group faces the challenges of modernization and environmental change. This research will raise awareness about the richness of Bajo culture and demonstrate the importance of its preservation in an ever-evolving global context (Winarni & Afdholy, 2022) (Malawani & Mardiatno, 2015).
2. Appreciation of Cultural Diversity: Films like "Avatar: The Way of Water" have a huge global impact and attract audiences from a variety of cultural backgrounds. Investigating the influence of Bajo culture in the design of Metkayina houses will reward the cultural diversity and values contained in it.
3. Inspiration in Creative Industries: The world of film and creative industries can take inspiration from this research to create more profound and rich narratives by utilizing diverse and interesting cultural elements.
4. Influence on People's Perception: Movies have the power to influence people's perception of certain cultures and ethnicities. Through this research, we can understand how the influence of Bajo culture in the film "Avatar: The Way of Water" can shape perceptions and understandings of the culture.

This research will provide meaningful benefits in several aspects:

1. Knowledge Enrichment: This research will improve our understanding of Bajo culture and how these cultural elements are adapted in the fictional world.
2. Cultural Conservation: By understanding the influence of Bajo culture in the design of Metkayina houses, this research can help strengthen awareness about the importance of preserving unique and vulnerable cultures.
3. Sources of Inspiration for Design and Creativity: Research findings can be a source of inspiration for designers, artists, and writers in creating works rich with diverse cultural elements.

4. **Positive Impact on the Film Industry:** This research can provide insight for filmmakers and the entertainment industry into the importance of accurate cultural representation and appreciating ethnic diversity in film production.

Thus, research on the influence of Bajo culture in the design of the Metkayina tribal house in the film "Avatar: The Way of Water" has significant urgency and has the potential to benefit the wider community and the world of creative industries.

## **METHOD**

This study will use a qualitative descriptive research approach to investigate and describe the influence of Bajo culture in the design of Metkayina tribal houses in the film "Avatar: The Way of Water". This research method will combine film analysis and comparative studies to understand in depth the influence of Bajo culture reflected in the design of Metkayina tribal houses (Rahim et al., 2018).

### **1. Film Analysis**

The first step in the study is to conduct an analysis of the movie "Avatar: The Way of Water". Researchers will observe and visually record the design elements of the Metkayina tribe's houses that show the influence of Bajo culture, such as building shapes, building materials, decorations, and spatial layouts. This analysis will provide an initial overview of the elements of Bajo culture adapted in fictional design.

### **2. Comparative Study**

Researchers will conduct a comparative study between the design of the Metkayina tribe's house in the film with the traditional Bajo tribe's house in the real world. Through this comparison, researchers will identify similarities and differences in design elements that reflect the influence of Bajo culture in the design of Metkayina tribal houses.

### **3. Data Analysis**

The data collected from film analysis and comparative studies will be analyzed qualitatively. Analysis of this data will involve the process of identifying and organizing findings relevant to the influence of Bajo culture in the design of Metkayina tribal houses.

### **4. Interpretation of Results**

The results of the data analysis will be interpreted comprehensively to present findings on the influence of Bajo culture in the design of Metkayina tribal houses in the film "Avatar: The Way of Water". This interpretation will be linked to the theoretical foundation of Bajo culture and the context of the film.

Through the methodological steps that have been described, this research is expected to provide an in-depth understanding of the influence of Bajo culture in the design of Metkayina tribal houses in the film "Avatar: The Way of Water". Using qualitative descriptive research methods supported by film analysis, researchers identified design elements that reflect the influence of Bajo culture, such as building shapes, building materials, decoration, and spatial layout.

A comparative study with traditional Bajo houses in the real world allows researchers to see similarities and differences in design that reflect the influence of Bajo culture in the design of Metkayina tribal houses. This provides an understanding of how elements of Bajo culture can be adapted in the design of fictional environments (Gobang et al., 2018).

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

This study aims to examine the influence of Bajo culture in the design of the Metkayina Tribe house in the film "Avatar: The Way of Water". Through an in-depth analysis of the architectural elements of the Metkayina tribe inspired by the Bajo culture, researchers have identified various aspects that reflect the harmonious relationship between people, culture, and environment in the world of Pandora. The results of this study show that the design of the Metkayina Tribe house is strongly influenced by the Bajo culture, which lives in water areas and learns to live sustainably with limited natural resources. Architectural elements typical of Bajo culture, such as the use of natural materials, aerodynamic house forms, and harmonious integration with the natural environment, can be clearly found in the houses of the Metkayina Tribe. In addition, the advanced technology used by the Metkayina Tribe is also synergistically combined with the traditional values of Bajo culture.

### **The Influence of Bajo Culture on the Design of Metkayina Houses**

#### **Use of Natural Ingredients**

The Bajo culture has lived on the waters for centuries and relies on the sea as their main source of life. Limited resources at sea teach them to use naturally available materials sustainably. This is reflected in the design

of the Metkayina Tribe houses that use organic materials, such as bamboo, wood, and animal skins, to build the structure of their homes. The use of these natural materials not only creates a natural aesthetic impression, but also deepens the Metkayina Tribe's relationship with the environment. By using materials obtained from nature, the Metkayina Tribe shows their respect for the environment and wisdom in utilizing natural resources sustainably.



Figure 3. Natural materials. Bajo Tribe House & Metkayina Tribe House  
Source : Author's Analysis

### 1. Aerodynamic House Shape

The shape of the Metkayina Tribe house features an aerodynamic design similar to a traditional Bajo boat. Such shapes help their homes adapt to Pandora's diverse environment, including waters, forests, and steep cliffs. The aerodynamic design of this house allows them to easily move from one place to another and explore the various ecosystems that exist on the planet. In addition, this aerodynamic shape also helps reduce wind resistance and allows good air circulation inside the house, maintaining the comfort of its occupants amid the changing climatic conditions on Pandora.



Figure 4. The shape of the Metkayina Tribe House with the analogy of the Lepa Boat  
Source : Avatar Movie The way Of Water



Figure 4. "Lepa" Bajo Tribe Boat House  
Source : <https://id.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lepa>

### 2. Harmonious Integration with the Natural Environment

One of the distinctive features of Bajo culture is their ability to live in harmony with the sea and the surrounding natural environment. The Metkayina tribe in the film also adopts these values by creating houses

that are harmoniously integrated with nature on Pandora. Their houses are designed to blend in with tall trees, vines, and other vegetation, thus creating the impression that they almost "blend" into the natural environment. This integration shows the Metkayina Tribe's concern for the surrounding ecosystem and efforts to minimize negative impacts on the environment. By maintaining a balance between human needs and the preservation of nature, the Metkayina Tribe shows a high awareness of the importance of maintaining the sustainability of the environment in which they live.



Figure 5. Metkayina Tribe House integrated with mangrove tree roots  
Source : Avatar The Way Of Water



Figure 6 Bajo Tribe House in synergy with the surrounding environment  
Source : Author's Analysis

### 3. Synergy Between Advanced Technology and Traditional Values of Bajo Culture

In the movie "Avatar: The Way of Water", the Metkayina Tribe uses advanced technologies, such as renewable energy-based lighting systems and environmentally friendly transportation technologies, which are subtly integrated with their traditional values. This technology helps strengthen the sustainability and empowerment of the Metkayina Tribe in the face of modern challenges. However, the Metkayina do not forget their cultural roots and ensure that the technology is used wisely to support their sustainable living and connect with nature.

The use of this advanced technology in the context of traditional values of Bajo culture shows the importance of synergy between local wisdom and technological progress. The Metkayina realized that technology could be used as a tool to strengthen and preserve their culture, not as a tool to replace it. This thoughtful integration of technology also inspires us to develop future designs and technologies, by adopting a holistic approach that combines advanced technology with local wisdom, thus creating a harmonious balance between people and nature.

### 4. Implications and Relevance

This research is an important step in exploring the cultural values of Bajo and recognizing its influence in the design of Metkayina houses seen in the film "Avatar: The Way of Water". Through this research, we can appreciate the uniqueness and richness of Bajo culture, and realize how it is able to create extraordinary works of art and have a positive impact on the environment and society.

In the film "Avatar: The Way of Water", the design of the Metkayina Tribe house shows how elements of Bajo culture are integrated with architectural design, creating amazing results. The blend of local wisdom and modern technology in this design may be the inspiration for creating future cities that are sustainable and connected to nature. Through the application of design principles that respect the environment and utilize cultural richness, future cities can become more environmentally friendly, strengthen cultural identity, and improve people's quality of life. In addition, this research can also encourage a deeper understanding of how culture can be a source of inspiration for art and architecture. By re-exploring the existing cultural heritage, we can create works of art that are more diverse and reflect the identity and cultural richness of a society.

Another implication of this research is the importance of respecting and protecting traditional cultures, including the Bajo culture, from extinction. Cultural sustainability is crucial in facing the era of globalization and modernization. By understanding the values of traditional cultures, we can keep the continuity of these cultures alive and developing along with the changing times. The incorporation of cultural elements in architectural design can also have a positive impact on tourism and the creative industries of an area. Local people can use their cultural wealth to boost the economy and attract tourists from different parts of the world. This can create new jobs and improve the welfare of local communities.

Thus, research on how Bajo culture influenced the design of Metkayina houses in the film "Avatar: The Way of Water" brought great benefits to social, economic, and environmental life. This research provides an important foundation for the creation of sustainable future cities and strengthens cultural identity, and teaches us about the importance of maintaining the sustainability of traditional culture for the betterment of society and human life as a whole.

## CONCLUSION

The conclusion of the research on how Bajo culture influenced the design of Metkayina houses in the film "Avatar: The Way of Water" is that the incorporation of cultural elements in architectural design can create unique works of art and have a positive impact on the environment and society. Through the application of local wisdom and modern technology, the design of Metkayina homes illustrates the potential to create future cities that are sustainable and connected to nature. This research teaches the importance of respecting and protecting traditional cultural heritage, such as Bajo culture, to maintain the sustainability of these cultures in the face of globalization and modernization. By understanding traditional cultural values, we can create diverse works of art and architecture, enrich cultural identity, and support the development of society.

The implications of this research extend to a wide range of fields, including tourism, creative industries, and the economy of local communities. The incorporation of cultural elements in architectural design can be a tourist attraction, create new jobs, and improve the welfare of local communities. In conclusion, the study provides important insights into how cultural values can be integrated in architectural design to create works of art that have a positive impact on the environment and society. By appreciating and harnessing traditional cultural heritage, we can create future cities that are sustainable, connected to nature, and enrich people's lives as a whole.

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