



## Building Religious Tolerance Through Character Education Based on Local Wisdom of Bugis Culture



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### Abstract

This study focuses on the issue of the relevance of Bugis culture in creating a tolerant religious community through character education. This is nothing but a contribution to religious tolerance which has recently been eroded due to primordial issues, ethnicity and so on. This research is an qualitative research with ethnography approach. Overall, the authors note that local wisdom of Bugis culture is quite effective, this can be seen in the application inside the classroom and outside the classroom and not an obstacle to creating a tolerant religious community. The local wisdom held in the Bugis culture above in fact has the values of empathy, compassion, togetherness, respect for differences, willing to sacrifice, giving opportunities to others and being patient in acting. In addition, the local wisdom that is cultivated by the Palopo Community, especially the Bugis, when used as the basis for developing character education in universities is in line with the plurality values that characterize this nation. Thus, local wisdom can make universities more characterized and at the forefront in promoting cultural values for progress and development at the national and international levels.

**Keywords:** *Culture, Education, Religious Pluralism, Bugis*

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### Abstrak

*Penelitian ini berfokus pada persoalan relevansi budaya Bugis dalam mewujudkan komunitas Agama yang toleran melalui pendidikan karakter. Hal tersebut tidak lain sebagai sumbangsih terhadap toleransi beragama yang belakangan ini terkikis karena isu primordial, kesukuan dan sebagainya. Penelitian ini merupakan penelitian kualitatif dengan pendekatan etnografi. Secara keseluruhan, penulis mencatat bahwa kearifan lokal budaya Bugis cukup efektif, hal ini terlihat dalam penerapan di dalam kelas dan di luar kelas dan tidak menjadi hambatan untuk menciptakan komunitas beragama yang toleran. Kearifan lokal yang dipegangi dalam budaya Bugis di atas nyatanya memiliki nilai-nilai empati, kasih sayang, kebersamaan, menghargai perbedaan, bersedia berkorban, memberikan kesempatan kepada orang lain serta sabar dalam bertindak. Selain itu, kearifan lokal*

*yang dibudayakan oleh Masyarakat Palopo khususnya suku Bugis bila dijadikan dasar pengembangan pendidikan karakter di perguruan tinggi sejalan dengan nilai-nilai pluralitas yang menjadi ciri khas bangsa ini. Dengan demikian, kearifan lokal dapat menjadikan perguruan tinggi lebih berkarakter dan terdepan dalam mempromosikan nilai-nilai budaya untuk kemajuan dan pembangunan di tingkat nasional dan internasional.*

**Kata kunci:** Budaya, Pendidikan, Toleransi Beragama, Bugis

## **A. INTRODUCTION**

Implementation of religious education in schools or universities. Not to mention the heavy burden of religious education which is the anchor in building student morale (Listia, 2007, p. 208). This condition also makes most lecturers trapped in administrative technical issues of education, rather than thinking about developing material that is fun for students. In the end, students also feel indifferent, even lazy to follow Islamic and cultural material in schools and colleges. Whereas higher education is a place for seeking knowledge, solving various problems, critiquing the works produced, and as a center for human training. According to Wynne, the world of college is a place to sow, educate and train students to become students who have high reasoning power, sharp and broad analysis (Wynne & Ryan, 1993, pp. 123–124).

Unfortunately, universities do not give a portion to the character building of students. If higher education promises to shape and develop student character as is the case in England, it is only the rhetoric of modern university institutions. Even though the Indonesian people still have hope in universities as places of training and education for their sons and daughters to become intellectuals who have high knowledge and commendable behavior. Ironically, there is no university that guarantees its graduates have good ethical morals. On the other hand, the mission of higher education is teaching, research and application of science (Stiff-Williams, 2010, p. 117). So, character building is not explicitly considered a university task.

The implementation of character education in higher education will face its own challenges. Some of the things that cause character education in universities to encounter obstacles are due to the erroneous opinion that a person's character is already formed before entering college and it is the responsibility of parents to shape the character of their children. Universities, especially lecturers, have no interest in character building, because they were not recruited to do that. Carl A. Grant (2001, pp. 187–188) states that by inculcating awareness of pluralism, students are able to interact across cultures, countries, religions, ethnicities, and social classes. Verma and Ashworth's research shows that learning with a multicultural perspective creates an awareness of empathy for other people who have different personality and cultural identities. Meanwhile, Tiedt and Tiedt emphasize that the institutionalization of values and multicultural learning in education is based on 3 (three) elements, namely esteem, empathy, and equity. These three elements later became the basis for the implementation of local wisdom education (Tiedt & Tiedt, 2005, p. 32).

In this study, it will lead to new findings that are conceptualized in character education based on local wisdom in higher education institutions in Palopo Citi With research, it will be found synthesis, assimilation and acculturation which are the result of marriage between character education and Bugis culture that takes place in a persuasive way, and it is perceived that there are original ideas of original teachings from that

religion and culture, or on the other hand it may be found that there is mutual acculturation. between character education and Bugis culture. This research was carried out in the 2018-2019 period using the ethnographic method. This method is used by the author on the grounds that this paper ultimately wants to see clearly the social structure through the culture adopted by a group of people (Windiani & Rahmawati, 2016, p. 89), of course in this case the Bugis.

Bugis culture is seen in *pangngaderreng*. It consists of four elements (*ade ' , talk, rapang and wari'*) and then sara 'after Islam is accepted as the official and common religion in Bugis society (Rahman, 2006, p. 387). The value of religion (Islam) is the highest value that is highly valued by the entire Bugis community. Ownership of the Islamic religion gave birth to the phrase "Not Bugis if not Muslim" (Kusumayanti, 2007, p. 85; Mattulada, 1983, p. 235; Patmawati, 2014, p. 204, 2016, p. 184; Pelras, 2006, p. 16). So that this piece of history later became an important character for the Bugis people. Islam and culture for the people of South Sulawesi are fundamental and humanitarian issues. Fundamental because every religious community must have faith, and fundamental because it is the foundation of diversity. For believers, religion and culture are the source of all life (Haryono, 2005, p. 1; Saran, 2014, p. 469). The problem of belief is so urgent that it is a starting point for anyone who wishes to embrace a religion (Madjid, 2005, p. 17).

Research on Bugis culture is not a new issue. Muhammad Yusuf (2013) has studied the relevance of Bugis culture to gender issues, especially in the interpretation of the Bugis language. Irwan Abbas (2013) explains that the noble values in the Pappaseng script can be used as local content in the social studies learning process. A.B Takko Bandung (2020) examines how firmly the Bugis people adhere to moral values so that they can survive wherever they are. This study shows that no one has studied the contribution of Bugis culture in building a pluralistic religious society. Culture that develops in certain tribes, there have been many studies showing that it has other contributions besides the preservation of ancestral heritage. At least, this can be seen from the results of a study conducted by Roberth Souhaly (2018) and Muh. Arif & Mahfud Harim (2019).

## **B. DISCUSSIONS**

### **1. Pluralism Education Model That Can Break Tribe Conflict in Palopo City**

The application of an educational model like this aims to invite students to deepen their beliefs and be able to participate in understanding and appreciating cultures and religions that are different from them. The indicators of using a learning model like this are: *First*, students can show their belief in the religion they believe in; *Second*, students can show a low attitude today; *Third*, students are able to understand that all the differences that exist on this earth are due to the will of Allah SWT; *Fourth*, students always develop a culture of prejudice; *Fifth*, because each of Allah SWT's creations is different, students are required to get to know each other and build togetherness in differences; *Sixth*, students can work together and make positive contributions to people of different religions, ethnicities,

*Tudassipulung* learning is a new paradigm in learning which is based on the idea that students must be actively involved in constructing their knowledge. In cooperative learning, students are divided into small groups, usually consists of 4-6 people who are heterogeneous (Santaria et al., 2016, pp. 700–701). Group heterogeneity is made on the basis of student achievement, gender (gender), ethnic background, etc. In its implementation, groups review learning materials, share with each other, help each other and reinforce one another so that the group and group members can master the competences of Islamic subjects and local wisdom.



**Figure 1:** Learning process in Living Values

The main material that was studied in the previous stages and meetings was obtained by students, namely through classroom learning activities, so this stage can be defined as the value reflection stage in which the lecturer tries to see the extent to which students understand the values that are consciously believed by students. Creation of a slogan as an effort to spread the living values. Through these slogans, students exchange values with other fellow students so that the rich values of life are found among the students in the class. Lecturers provide value reinforcement for all aspirations and appreciation shown by students. All students arrive at the ability to create value-laden slogans even at the first stage of learning. "Success is not achieved with wasted effort. It takes dreams,

This educational model aims to enrich the curriculum with literature from societies of different cultures, ethnicities and religions. In its implementation, students are invited to assess or test and then appreciate the perspective of school members on their respective religious and cultural traditions. Actually, an integration between the contribution model and the enrichment model with student real activities which in turn can have an impact on the occurrence of social interactions in society in general. Students are not only required to understand social issues, but also do something important related to these issues. This means that students do not only stop at mastering the material, but also go directly to society to apply the theories they get in the classroom.

## 2. Success Religious Pluralism

Religious harmony is a social condition where all religious groups can coexist without limiting their respective basic rights to fulfill their obligations and beliefs which are considered absolute truth (Agbaje, 2014, pp. 27–28). The phenomenon of social conditions in Palopo City. By educating in religious pluralism, it seems that no individual or religious group sees apathy towards followers of other religions so that conflicts between religions can be avoided. The religious pluralism referred to here is not like inclusivism, which considers that there are similarities in dimensions (substance values) between religions. Diana L. Eck (2002, pp. 41–45) stated that there are three important points in pluralism: *First*, pluralism requires active involvement in the midst of diversity and differences that create awareness and participatory attitudes in diversity. *Second*, pluralism is more than just tolerance. When there is an awareness in tolerance of the





importance of respecting others, but wanting to go beyond this achievement in pluralism. *Third*, pluralism is not relativism. Pluralism is an attempt to find mutual commitment between different obligations (facing obligations).

The manifestation of this social value is shown by the building of strong friendship bonds. The Muslim communities in Palopo and Toraja cities have been accustomed to visiting each other during cultural holidays. The history of mutual cooperation between the Torajan people and Muslims in building higher education institutions in Palopo City, the habit of people in Palopo City to stay in touch with the community is very high. This can be seen from the habit of Muslims in Palopo City to give alms regardless of religious differences. The manifestation of this social value is shown by the building of strong friendship bonds. The Muslim communities in Palopo and Toraja cities have been accustomed to visiting each other during cultural holidays.

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Pluralism is not the same as simply believing in religious plurality and tolerance. People who understand religious diversity do not necessarily believe in the values of truth or the way of salvation in other religions. A person in this position usually falls into the category of exclusive or inclusive, but not pluralist. Likewise, someone who is tolerant is included in these two categories because tolerance is a social attitude of someone who is willing because he has no choice but to live side by side with other people of different religions even though their religious understanding of their neighbors does not agree or dislike. Someone who is tolerant and believes in pluralism may be a person who has great social and humanitarian concern for other people of different religions, but still fails to recognize the wrong ways of other religions .

Differences in ethnicity, religion and race also do not limit their economic activities. In the Sukamaju transmigration settlement, the social relations of the multiethnic community are harmonious, because each tribe understands and is ready to accept other ethnic cultures, for example Javanese and Balinese who first came to Sukamaju (Tana Luwu) to accept and understand the life of local people and adapt to local culture. Housing is also created when there is a village head election, they compete fairly, each tribe proposes people who are believed to have the ability to become leaders and protect all ethnic groups in Luwu. Each ethnic group tries to reduce conflicts that can arise in elections so that whoever is elected.

This tradition is manifested by carrying out pelarungan or by sweeping offerings in the form of the head of a four-legged animal such as a cow or buffalo which is decorated in this way (also with additional accessories) in the middle of the sea, as a thank you or gratitude for the fish catch received by the fishermen. fishermen at sea must be asked for blessings, care and safety. In the terminology of Palopo City, this tradition is an unreal cosmic order and originates from the ideology of Makera Tasi.

*The Maccera Tasi /Sea Party* tradition in Palopo City is carried out by two people of different religions, namely those who are Hindu and who are Muslim. *The macera tasi* tradition in Palopo City, Malangke (Tokke), West Malangke (Amasangen) is a means of communication between fishermen with different beliefs. *The Maccera Tasi* tradition has several functions, namely; Individual function, social function and psychological function. The belief of the coastal community in Palopo City is one of the most important factors in the continuity of the Maccera Tasi tradition. The people of Palopo, Malangke, Malangke Barat do not dare to change or limit any part of the tradition. Because basically the traditions that are carried out are based on the beliefs or beliefs of the local people who carry out these traditions. The implementation of the Makera Tasi tradition is a tradition practiced by the Luwu and Bugis people, but the Toraja people always attend this celebration (Hafid, 2016; Latif, 2015; Persistence & Luwu, 2016) .

The *Maccera Tasi* tradition is a means for society and government to communicate and dialogue between religious communities in order to create a harmonious, safe and peaceful community life (Pabbajah, 2012). This tradition not only facilitates communication between religious communities, but also communication between the community and the government. The higher the level of trust or belief between the two religious communities in Palopo City, the lower the incidence of social inequality and conflict between religious communities. In addition, trust and togetherness are very influential for inter-religious harmony. To prevent conflicts between religious communities in each region,

### **3. Pluralism Approach in Communicating**

The strength of the principle of pluralism rests on an educational process in which religious and cultural values are taught simultaneously. So that the results of the education model do not cause conflict between culture (Bugis and Toraja) and local culture. With a sharper sentence, Pippa Noris and Ronal Inglehart argue that "Culture is important - in fact, it is very important. Historical religious traditions have had an influence on contemporary values (Inglehart & Norris, 2003, pp. 62–70). Culture is an autonomous core that determines the black and white quality of a civilization, and in these cultural units there is a belief system inspired by religion. The words of Pippa Noris and Ronal Inglehart are very real and active in the activities of religious and cultural life in the people of Palopo City.

Pluralism education must start from within the family to create deep community awareness. All these differences - by the people of Palopo City - are used to help each other, complement each other, correct and remind each other about what aims to promote brotherhood in social interaction in the plural-multicultural community Strengthen in Palopo City (Arhanuddin, 2018; Surur, 2013; Tyson, 2008). There are two fundamental views on this subject which attempt to overcome the contradiction between unity and difference. First is monism and second is pluralism. Both monism and pluralism can be spiritualistic or materialistic. However, in order to achieve one's personal identity, it must contain many aspects or modes or forms of existence, all of which are limited, different and contradictory. Together and connected with each other, they form this (or unit).



Despite the differences, the diversity of individual units is not completely autonomous. They are just a large group of unlimited numbers (Bakker, 1992, pp. 26–27).

Pluralism is also divided into two parts: absolute and malleable. Absolute pluralism seeks to eliminate all unity and uniformity as much as possible, so that what remains is only absolute pluralism, namely material fragments or spiritual points. Each entity (being) is completely autonomous, without unity with the others. However, it is impossible to maintain pluralism because in reality there is only one soft pluralism and one pluralistic tendency. According to soft pluralism, reality is intrinsically pluralistic, multifaceted, and consists of units that are completely autonomous and without intrinsic relationship. However, for differences and diversity to truly become contradictions and comparisons with one another, a real uniform framework is needed.

The constructive changes of individual can be the forerunner to the birth of a life full of diversity, which is full of respect for differences. At this stage, it is hoped that a bond of diversity can be mutually reinforcing, mutually supporting and respecting each other, which is covered in the concepts of *Sipakatau*, *Sipakalebbi*, *Sipakaingge* (Nurmalasari & Mamonto, 2020, p. 4). Training should be based on the experiences of each student. Each student can explore his or her religious experiences without being intimidated by the religious experiences of others. Because that is the importance of forming pluralism here. This is because pluralism education emphasizes the teaching aspect. It is not enough just to memorize formal religions and cultures in Indonesia. It is easy to create a religious learning model for memorizing, but it does not affect the educational process that will be achieved, especially if the final assessment is based on numbers. Religious education and the flexibility of local wisdom must be based on the extent to which a student can express, experience, and change his religious beliefs in everyday life.

*At least*, religious education in Indonesia ignores the aspects of managing students' religious experiences. Transfer of knowledge that ignores aspects of personal experience in religion results in students becoming insensitive and aspiring to other religious beliefs traditions. *Second*, Local wisdom education must be able to develop aspects of shared learning. Make religion a scientific topic that can be studied and studied from various perspectives and approaches. Prioritizing strengthening aspects of noble values and universalism of religious or cultural truth. Without having to be trapped in the teachings and spirituality of a culture. Local wisdom education must provide space for students to always express their beliefs without feeling pressured and intimidated by the religious / cultural beliefs of other students. (Zainuddin, 2018, p. 63). *Third*, Students must be instructed to express, experience firsthand, and transform what should lead to the noble values of religion in everyday life, the noble values of their beliefs.

Cultural education must take place with the principle of openness to critically reflect one's own position (Leirvik, 2014, p. 16). Principles that promote a critical openness for each student to see themselves and others. Critical power is not only needed when dealing with other religious traditions. One of the students (Toraja) Ikram (personal communication, 3 March 2019) stated that students will be more motivated to understand each other. So far, there has often been hatred between religions because they do not understand each other. What was conveyed by Ikram was a sign of the importance of mutual understanding between different ethnic / religious groups. Lack of adequate understanding of each religious tradition creates prejudice that leads to hatred. This is a very dangerous condition because this hatred can be ignited at certain times and acts of

violence occur. In this case, conflict and chaos in the name of religion can no longer be avoided.

Changes in student understanding from prejudice to appreciation and positive appreciation of other cultural traditions. Character education based on local wisdom does not provide room for students to change religions/cultures (Ismail Suwardi Wekke, Arhanuddin Salim, 2018, p. 42). Herein lies the importance of strengthening "culture". The process of living our faith may have so far broken the ice of our religion. In this case, of course, we have to meet a lot with culture both in the field and in the spiritual field. Cultural strength is reflected in the main capital in building sociological relationships between people of different religions and cultures. Personal awareness that is illuminated by the light of belief in the truth will certainly give birth to a sociological awareness which has implications for the creation of harmonious relationships between religions of different beliefs. It is created in these circumstances Strengthening at the micro level of society the power of understanding in the micro-social field. (Dewey et al., 2013; Nobles & Schiff, 2012, p. 14).

In addition, demographic factors are one of the causes of social change in the population of Palopo City and become the gateway for immigrants from various regions with different colors (religion and culture). In response to this, the practice of tertiary education has become a means of cultural socialization for the City of Palopo to socialize culture through education. Azyumardi Azra (2003) argues that universities should be a place for the seeds of democracy to grow. He added that maintaining traditions is not only inherited because the mindset, action and culture of democracy is something that needs to be socialized, taught and renewed by the young generation to the younger generation through education. The function of education is not only as a means of cultural socialization, but also as a means of promoting social solidarity that leads to mutual trust between fellow citizens and the realization of democracy in Palopo City (Putnam et al., 1994, p. 233).

Democracy is built in society, social interactions are very complex. Cooperation and coordination in society is almost impossible if it is only based on the knowledge and rational calculations of each parishioner, because individuals have limited information and knowledge to make decisions (Mujani, 2007, p. 118). An attitude of mutual trust helps people solve any problem and, through this collective collaboration, allows the community to interact, even if they sometimes lack knowledge. The educational process in tertiary institutions aims to convey cultural values and norms in the form of respect for individual rights and the promotion of a work ethic (Warren, 1999, p. 3).

#### **4. Implementation of Character Development Based on Local Wisdom**

Local wisdom education which is implemented in higher education in Palopo City, has changed in some way public perception. *Salik* (a traditional leader) explained this, for example, that quite a number of young people /students who they think that in Tana Luwu, have problems of inter-religious relations (Islam and Toraja or with other ethnic groups (Balinese / Javanese). , now many have realized the importance of diversity and respect for other religions / ethnicities. It seems that there is a change in the perceptual aspects of the students, which at first started to be apathetic, then they changed to be optimistic. This optimism is reflected in the large number of people, especially young people who take an important role in every learning of local wisdom education carried out. The government and society are easily moved to be able to actively campaign for a peaceful and tolerant life.





*First*, inter-tribal marriage. Inter-religious and ethnic marriages can be seen from the large number of Torajans who married women from Tana Luwu. Cross-cultural marriages - whether they have their own motives, political or out of love - create their own kinship ties. Even as admitted by a student, one of the Toraja (Christian) students, that the Toraja people feel very lucky if they have a Muslim son-in-law, even though their child will become a Muslim. This is because it will further enrich the cultural treasures and the combination of characters between the two (Muslim and Toraja).

*Second*, borrowing of identities or cross-affiliation (*cross cutting affiliation*). The borrowing of ethnic identities like this creates very high opportunities for integration and assimilation which results in the formation of a strong brotherly bond. Because integration and assimilation create distinct advantages in various aspects of life. Thus, interaction, assimilation, and integration will arise naturally, grow into *toonidi* (brotherhood). This long struggle in ethnic contestation has made the integration of Bugis, Javanese, Balinese, and Lombok cultures stronger and embedded from generation to generation. Education, tradition and history are important factors in maintaining and strengthening this integration so that it can continue to be carried out towards civil society (*civil society*) in the era of regional and global autonomy.

*Third*, *subak* organization (irrigation organization). The ability of community coexistence has implications for the creation of social integration. As in agricultural organizations and all those surrounding them (*subak*), it can be found in the districts of Luwu, North Luwu, East Luwu, and Palopo City. To add to the dimension of their spirituality, each religious community builds their own holy places (such as mosques, churches, temples). In fact, in order to avoid ethnic domination and hegemonization in Tana Luwu, *subak* residents for the Luwu people as seen in Sukamaju have been rejected.

*Fourth*, The *Bala-Bala* competition, interdependence in the fundamental values of life, causes them to make mutual agreements so that life in the long term can be maintained and harmonious. It cannot be denied that there are some individuals who find this organizational integration strange. This is due to differences in the value system of each teaching. Therefore, it is very important to understand that in the process of integration and assimilation, the ultimate goal of this activity is the creation of a multicultural society as the fruit of God's plan (design of God).

The city of Palopo is a direct rejection of issues related to religious conflict. For residents in Palopo City, they feel there is no need to say that "I am not affected", but the manifestation of tolerance, or an understanding of pluralism, as well as religious phenomena, can be seen directly through; acculturation, high intensity of religious practice, artistic collaboration, and acceptance, and being able to adjust, then the growing understanding of all kinds of differences that are owned by each ethnic group.

The Toraja, Bali, Lombok (Sasak tribe), Javanese and Luwu people in Palopo City, realize that they cannot live exclusively or want to win alone. Because indeed, when viewed from its nature, humans cannot live alone. Humans have a unique feature that distinguishes themselves from creatures, namely reason. With this reason, humans continue to explore the potential that is around them, because from time to time they will definitely experience the development of civilization. The socio-political motives in Palopo City are indeed very dominant. This is evidenced by the openness in Palopo City, long when Islam entered Luwu and continues to this day. Residents in Palopo City have local wisdom to accept and tolerate differences. Therefore, they do not need to homogenize religions, but be based on justifying differences as reflected in the concept *pateddungi*, namely the recognition of cultural relativism in accordance with

circumstances, space, time and humanizing humans in response to the conditions they face.

### C. CONCLUSION

Local wisdom of Bugis culture is quite effective, this can be seen in the application inside the classroom and outside the classroom and not an obstacle to creating a tolerant religious community. The local wisdom held in the Bugis culture above in fact has the values of empathy, compassion, togetherness, respect for differences, willing to sacrifice, giving opportunities to others and being patient in acting. In addition, the local wisdom that is cultivated by the Palopo Community, especially the Bugis, when used as the basis for developing character education in universities is in line with the plurality values that characterize this nation. Plurality is a global problem, so this research is still open to be developed in specific issues of religion and other Bugis people's customs.

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