

Analysis of the Implementation of Tri Hita Karana in the Grave Stone-Pulling Ritual on Sumba Island

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ABSTRACT

The tradition of pulling grave stones on Sumba Island is a traditional ritual that has high cultural value and reflects local beliefs and relationships between humans, nature, and spirituality. This article aims to analyze the application of the Tri Hita Karana concept, which includes the harmonization of the relationship between humans and God (parahyangan), humans with each other (pawongan), and humans with nature (palemahan)—in the event of pulling grave stones on Sumba Island. Using a qualitative approach and participatory observation methods, this study found that the implementation of this ritual is not only a symbol of solidarity and togetherness of the community, but also represents the spiritual connection of the Sumba community with their ancestors and the surrounding environment. The integration of the Tri Hita Karana concept in this tradition supports the preservation of local wisdom while strengthening cultural values that can be passed on to future generations. The findings of this study can provide new understanding of how local culture adapts and survives in the development of the times and contribute to the study of cultural philosophy in social practices

INTRODUCTION

Indonesia is a country rich in culture and traditions that have been passed down from generation to generation. One tradition that has strong cultural and spiritual values is the grave stone pulling ceremony, which originates from the Sumba community, East Nusa Tenggara. This ceremony is known as a traditional ritual that involves transporting large stones to build ancestral graves, which is believed to be a form of respect for them. This tradition not only has social and cultural functions, but also involves deep philosophical values, including the concept of the relationship between humans, nature, and spiritual powers believed in by the local community (Lindsay, 2012).

In the context of cultural philosophy, the concept of Tri Hita Karana, which means "three causes of happiness," is a concept derived from Balinese Hindu teachings that teaches the importance of maintaining a balance between three main aspects: the relationship between humans and God (parahyangan), the relationship between humans and others (pawongan), and the relationship between humans and the natural environment (palemahan) (Ardika, 2007). Although this concept originates from Bali, its values can be applied to various other local cultures in Indonesia, including the tradition of pulling grave stones in Sumba, which also seeks to create harmony between humans, nature, and ancestors.

The implementation of pulling grave stones in Sumba contains elements of Tri Hita Karana which are reflected through community mutual cooperation, offering rituals, and respect for nature and ancestors. According to Oka and Ardika (2013), the sustainability of a culture like this is highly dependent on the balance between the social and religious values of the community, as well as their compliance with customary rules. This reflects that local traditions not only play a role as a form of cultural expression, but also as a means to maintain the balance of nature and social relations (Fox, 1997). Thus, this study aims to explore how the concept of Tri Hita Karana is applied in the ritual of pulling grave stones and its role in strengthening the values of local wisdom in Sumba.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Tri Hita Karana (THK) as a Philosophical Framework is a Balinese Hindu philosophy that focuses on harmony between humans and God (parahyangan), humans and others (pawongan), and humans and the environment (palemahan). This philosophy has become an important framework in building social, spiritual, and ecological harmony. Ardika (2007) explains that THK is a universal guide that can be applied in various cultures to create balance in life. Although originating from Bali, THK values are universal and flexible to be applied in other cultural contexts.

Huang and Rockwell (2020) highlight that the THK concept can support the preservation of local traditions and strengthen community harmony, as found in Sumbanese cultural practices. Respect for Ancestors (Parahyangan), the parahyangan aspect in THK emphasizes the relationship between humans and God or spiritual power. In the Sumbanese context, respect for ancestors is at the heart of the grave stone pulling tradition. Lindsay (2012) states that belief in ancestors creates a deep spiritual connection, which is the foundation of cultural

values in Sumbanese society. This is reinforced by Oka and Ardika (2013) who explained that local spirituality often functions as a mechanism to maintain harmony in social structures. Social Solidarity in Local Traditions (Pawongan), the pawongan aspect in THK is manifested through interaction and cooperation between humans. In the tradition of pulling grave stones, mutual cooperation is a symbol of social solidarity.

According to Fox (1997), this kind of customary tradition not only strengthens social cohesion, but also becomes a means of collective expression to maintain community unity. Oka and Ardika (2013) also emphasize that these solidarity values play an important role in maintaining the sustainability of local traditions. Custom-Based Environmental Management (Palemahan) The palemahan principle in THK highlights the harmonious relationship between humans and nature. In the Sumba tradition, the selection of stones for the grave stone pulling event is carried out by considering environmental sustainability. Fox (1997) observed that local traditions often have a strong ecological dimension, which supports the preservation of natural resources. This is in line with Huang and Rockwell's (2020) view that THK-based practices can create a balance between human needs and environmental conservation. Adaptation of THK in Local Context Previous research has shown that the adaptation of THK values in local culture can strengthen cultural identity amidst modernization.

Suarjaya (2019) explains that local traditions integrated with universal concepts such as THK are able to survive and thrive despite the challenges of globalization. Huang and Rockwell (2020) add that these values can enrich the understanding of human harmony with nature and spirituality. Theoretical Basis for the Grave Stone Pulling Tradition The implementation of the grave stone pulling tradition in Sumba reflects the application of the THK principle. This tradition is not only a symbol of spirituality and solidarity, but also shows wise environmental management. Lindsay (2012) and Oka and Ardika (2013) state that this kind of tradition plays an important role in maintaining the balance between the spiritual, social, and ecological dimensions of society. Thus, the grave stone pulling tradition in Sumba can be understood as a local form of implementing THK values that are relevant to the local cultural context.

METHODOLOGY

This study uses a qualitative approach because it aims to understand the deep meaning of the application of Tri Hita Karana in the context of the grave stone pulling culture. This approach is suitable for exploring how the Tri Hita Karana concept is applied in social, spiritual, and ecological aspects in the Sumbanese traditional tradition. In addition to the qualitative approach, a case study was also conducted that allowed researchers to explore the unique elements of this tradition and how Tri Hita Karana is applied in the context of the local culture of the Sumbanese people, covering aspects that may not be visible in quantitative-based research. The methods used are:

- **Participatory Observation**

Considering that the grave stone pulling event is a public ritual, participatory observation allows researchers to be directly involved in the event, observe community interactions, and understand the values of Tri Hita Karana reflected in the implementation of the ritual.

1. *In-depth Interviews*

Researchers conducted interviews with traditional leaders, community members, and ritual practitioners to provide first-hand perspectives on the spiritual, social, and ecological values associated with the grave stone pulling event. These interviews can delve deeper into local beliefs and how communities understand the concept of Trihita Karana in their culture.

2. *Documentation*

Documentation in the form of photos, videos, or field notes will help capture the visual aspects of the event, as well as complement qualitative data from observations and interviews.

Data Analysis

The data were analyzed using thematic analysis methods, in which researchers identified key themes related to the concept of Tri Hita Karana, such as parahyangan (relationship with God), pawongan (relationship between humans), and palemahan (relationship with the environment). This technique allows researchers to find important patterns in the data and explore the relationship between the concept of Tri Hita Karana and the practices of the grave stone pulling culture. The following are the stages in data analysis:

Data Reduction

The first step in qualitative data analysis is data reduction, which is selecting, focusing, and simplifying the raw data obtained from interviews, observations, and documentation. Data reduction is important to select information that is relevant to the application of Tri Hita Karana in aspects such as parahyangan, pawongan, and palemahan found in the traditional event of pulling grave stones.

Data Presentation

The reduced data is then presented in the form of a matrix, diagram, or narrative that describes the relationship between the concept of Tri Hita Karana and the elements of custom in Sumba. In this context, data can be arranged based on categories such as spiritual, social, and ecological values that are relevant to Tri

Hita Karana. This presentation aims to make it easier for researchers to see significant patterns or findings in the data.

Coding and Categorization

The coding process is a step in which each data is marked or coded based on a theme or category that is relevant to the research, such as "relationship with ancestors" for the parahyangan aspect, "social solidarity" for pawongan, and "environmental preservation" for palemahan. This approach helps in identifying recurring patterns that indicate the application of Tri Hita Karana values in local Sumbanese traditions.

Drawing Conclusions and Verification

After the data has been processed and analyzed, the final step is to draw conclusions from the data that has been compiled. At this stage, the researcher makes an interpretation of how the THK concept is understood and applied in the traditional event of pulling grave stones and its influence on social structures, spirituality, and environmental preservation in Sumba. Verification is carried out by triangulating data to ensure that the findings are consistent and reliable

Triangulation for Data Validity

Validity in qualitative research can be improved through triangulation, namely comparing and confirming data from various sources, such as the results of interviews with traditional leaders, observation notes, and related literature on Tri Hita Karana in Sumbanese and Balinese cultures. This triangulation is important to strengthen the validity and reliability of the findings

RESULTS

Based on data analysis using qualitative methods conducted on the grave stone pulling event on Sumba Island, the results of the study show the real application of the Tri Hita Karana (THK) philosophy through the following aspects:

1. Parahyangan (Relationship with God/Ancestral Spirits)

The results of the study show that the grave stone pulling tradition in Sumba is a very spiritual ritual, reflecting deep respect for ancestors and belief in their protection. In the context of Tri Hita Karana, this event shows the community's efforts to maintain harmony with supernatural powers that are considered to provide blessings and prosperity to the community. Respect for ancestral spirits is the core of the parahyangan aspect of this event.

2. Pawongan (Interhuman Relations)

In the implementation of the grave stone pulling event, participation and cooperation from various members of the community are very prominent. This study found that this event strengthens social relations and solidarity among the community, where everyone is involved in mutual cooperation activities to move large stones. The pawongan aspect in THK is reflected in the togetherness and unity that is established, which is also an important cultural value in maintaining social cohesion in Sumba.

3. *Palemahan (Relationship with the Environment)*

The analysis shows that the Sumbanese people pay attention to environmental sustainability when selecting and moving stones for graves. The stones used are not taken carelessly, but from locations that do not damage the surrounding ecosystem, in line with the palemahan principle which respects nature as a source of life. This shows that the environmental value or palemahan of Tri Hita Karana is applied well, while preserving existing natural resources

4. *Strengthening Local Cultural Identity*

This study also shows that the application of Tri Hita Karana in the grave stone pulling event in Sumba not only maintains tradition, but also strengthens local cultural identity amidst modernization. The community views this event as a form of cultural expression that maintains traditional values while adapting THK concepts originating from Bali. This shows that THK, although originating from Balinese culture, has the flexibility to be adapted in other contexts and cultures. The following are the results of research on the Implementation of Tri Hita Karana in the Gravestone Pulling Event on Sumba Island which are presented in table form:

Table 1. Implementation of Tri Hita Karana in the Gravestone Pulling Ceremony on Sumba Island

Aspects of Tri Hita Karana	Implementation in the Grave Stone Pulling Event	Description and Findings
Parahyangan (Relationship with God/Ancestral Spirits)	Respect for ancestors through rituals	The Sumbanese people consider this event as a form of offering to their ancestors, to ask for protection and well-being. This ritual is a means of maintaining spiritual harmony with a higher power.
People (Interpersonal Relationships)	Mutual cooperation and social solidarity in the event	This tradition shows cooperation between community members involved in moving large stones. This strengthens social ties and solidarity within the Sumba community, as a form of collective participation in maintaining social harmony.
Palemahan (Relationship with the Environment)	environmentally friendly stone selection	The process of selecting stones for this event takes into account the preservation of nature, by avoiding environmental damage. The Sumbanese people preserve nature through wise management of natural resources, which is in line with the principles of environmental preservation in Tri Hita Karana.
Strengthening Cultural Identity	Adaptation and preservation of local cultural values	The implementation of Tri Hita Karana in the grave stone pulling event helps strengthen the cultural identity of the Sumbanese people, who are able to maintain their traditional traditions despite the influence of modernization. This shows that local values can adapt to universal concepts such as THK.

Overall, this study concludes that THK values can be adapted in the context of local Sumbanese culture, enriching the understanding of harmony between humans, nature, and spirituality. This application also has a positive impact on preserving local culture and environment, as well as strengthening social ties in Sumbanese society.

DISCUSSION

Based on the results of the study, it shows that THK values can be adapted in the context of local Sumbanese culture and have a positive influence on social, spiritual, and ecological well-being.

1. *Relevance and Adaptation of Parahyangan in Local Context*

The aspect of parahyangan, or spiritual relationship with ancestors, which is an important element in Tri Hita Karana, is adopted and applied uniquely in the grave stone pulling tradition. In this event, respect for ancestors is carried out through rituals that are believed to provide protection and blessings for the community. This shows how the concept of spirituality from Tri Hita Karana, which originally came from Bali, can be applied in the belief system of the Sumbanese people, who highly respect the spirits of their ancestors and make them an important element in their social and cultural structure. This is in line with the view that spiritual values can form close social relationships in a society that prioritizes spiritual harmony

2. *Pawongan as a Foundation for Social Solidarity*

The pawongan aspect in Tri Hita Karana, which focuses on relationships between individuals in the community, is clearly seen in the practice of mutual cooperation at this event. Discussion of the research results shows that the stone pulling activity requires physical involvement from many people, and this builds solidarity and strengthens social cohesion. This is in line with the results of previous studies which show that mutual cooperation in traditional events is an important mechanism for strengthening social ties and a sense of belonging in society.

3. *Palemahan in Environmental Conservation*

The palemahan aspect in Tri Hita Karana relates to a harmonious relationship with nature, and in the context of Sumba, this is manifested through the selection of stones that do not damage the environment. The Sumbanese people maintain environmental sustainability through the wise use of natural resources, which reflects the principles of nature conservation in Tri Hita Karana. This respect for the environment is not just a ritual, but has been integrated into customary values that support the sustainability of natural resources. This principle also emphasizes that local traditions can have a positive impact on ecology.

4. *Strengthening Cultural Identity through THK Adaptation*

The application of Tri Hita Karana in the local Sumbanese tradition shows that these concepts not only function as a belief or value system, but also as a mechanism to maintain cultural identity in the face of modernization. Through the adaptation of Tri Hita Karana, the Sumbanese people find a way to strengthen local values, which keeps them steadfast to their cultural roots while accepting external concepts that support.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study concludes that the adaptation of Tri Hita Karana values in the local context can contribute positively to the spiritual, social, and ecological balance of the Sumbanese people, while enriching the understanding of the potential of the Tri Hita Karana concept to be applied in other cultures.

FURTHER STUDY

Research Limitations:

1. Field Data Constraints: Not all communities in Sumba may be fully represented, given the diversity of traditions across different regions of the island.
2. Multidisciplinary Approach: The research may lack a multidisciplinary perspective, such as incorporating anthropology, sociology, and theology, which could enrich the analysis of the *Tri Hita Karana* implementation.
3. Time Constraints: Data collection within a limited timeframe may not fully capture the dynamic nature of the ritual, which could vary over time.
4. Language and Cultural Barriers: The interpretation of *Tri Hita Karana* values might be influenced by the researcher's understanding of the local language and cultural nuances.
5. Limited Literature: There may be limited supporting literature on integrating *Tri Hita Karana* with rituals outside of Bali.

Suggestions for Future Research:

1. Conduct more in-depth ethnographic studies by spending extended periods within the community to understand local practices and meanings comprehensively.
2. Include multidisciplinary experts to explore a broader range of perspectives.
3. Incorporate interviews with more stakeholders, such as traditional leaders, religious figures, and the general community.
4. Develop comparative studies with other communities that also implement *Tri Hita Karana* in their traditions.
5. Foster collaboration with local academics to minimize cultural interpretation biases.

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