

Religious Tolerance in the '*Hajat Sasih*' Tradition of *Kampung Naga*: An Ethnographic Perspective

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Abstract :

The phenomenon of religious intolerance has recently become more intractable and intricate. Some records have revealed that secondary-level institutions, state universities, and religious education institutions within the community are susceptible to radical ideologies. This research project aims to analyse and examine the role of local wisdom, exemplified by the *Hajat Sasih* tradition observed by the *Kampung Naga* community, in fostering an attitude of tolerance. The research method applied by a quasi-qualitative, with a focus on understanding the nature of tolerance and its implications for the formation of interfaith harmony in relation to the *Hajat Sasih* culture in *Kampung Naga*. In order to ensure the accuracy and reliability of the data collected, meticulous observation and in-depth interviews were applied as data collection techniques. The findings of this study can be summarised as follows: first, the community views the *Hajat Sasih* culture as a means of respecting and appreciating the local wisdom. Second, the tolerance model applied is through the symbolisation and meaning of the *Hajat Sasih* ceremony. Third, the role of education in *Kampung Naga* is to facilitate the community's openness to the outside world or foreign cultures, while maintaining its local customs.

Keywords: Religious Toleran, *Kampung Naga*, *Hajat Sasih*, Local Wisdom

Abstrak:

Fenomena intoleransi dalam beragama belakangan ini semakin menguat dan kompleksitas. Beberapa catatan telah diungkapkan bahwa lembaga jenjang menengah dan perguruan tinggi negeri serta lembaga pendidikan keagamaan di masyarakat terpapar paham radikalisme. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisa dan menguatkan sikap toleransi yang dilakukan oleh kearifan lokal yakni masyarakat Kampung Naga melalui tradisi *Hajat Sasih*. Metode penelitian yang dilakukan oleh peneliti yakni kuasi kualitatif yang berfokus pada pemahaman toleransi dan implikasinya dalam pembentukan harmoni antar umat beragama dengan Kebudayaan *Hajat Sasih* di Kampung Naga. Teknik pengumpulan data yang diterapkan pada penelitian ini adalah observasi terhadap objek dengan hati-hati (meticulous observation) dan wawancara mendalam (*in depth interview*) yang digunakan untuk mendapatkan informasi yang akurat dari informan atau narasumber. Hasil temuan dalam penelitian ini yakni pertama, pandangan masyarakat terhadap budaya *Hajat Sasih* adalah menghormati dan menghargai adat kearifan lokal yang telah dijalankan oleh para sesepuh/leluhur. Kedua, model toleransi yang diterapkan yakni melalui simbolisasi dan makna upacara *Hajat Sasih*. Ketiga, peran pendidikan di Kampung Naga yang merealisasikan keterbukaannya terhadap dunia luar atau budaya asing dengan mempertahankan adat lokalnya.

Kata Kunci: Toleransi Beragama, *Kampung Naga*, *Hajat Sasih*, Kearifan Lokal

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INTRODUCTION

Cultural Studies paradigms are subject to continual evolution in accordance with a number of factors, including the increasing complexities of cultural practices, the evolving subjectivity of scholars and the critiques levied against existing paradigms. Additionally, new discoveries continue to emerge, contributing to the ongoing evolution of this field of study (Belda-Miquel et al., 2019). In the field of cultural anthropology, a number of paradigms of cultural studies have been proposed, including those of evolutionism, functionalism, structuralism, comparative culture, functionalism-structuralism, the relationship between personality and culture, cultural interpretation, variable analysis, cultural materialism, historical materialism, actor theory, ethnoscience, and postmodernism (Rahardjo, 2022; Stezhko, 2023). In contrast, cultural studies applies a typology of five paradigms, as follows: positivism, post-positivism, critical theory, constructivism, and deconstructivism (Kumbara & Suka, 2017). Naturally, the advancement of cultural practices within society presents its own challenges for those engaged in the field of cultural studies. It is imperative that they produce informed, critical and comprehensive studies that are relevant in the contemporary era.

An analysis of Indonesia's lengthy cultural evolution reveals a concerning pattern of development. A survey of the ethnic and religious diversity of Indonesia revealed the existence of over 1,000 ethnic groups and sub-ethnic groups within the country's multiethnic society (Albury, 2021; Forkel & List, 2020). This demonstrates that human groups that share the same culture initially developed from biological aspects, subsequently expanded to encompass cultural aspects, and ultimately resulted in the emergence of political aspects. Consequently, it can be assumed that ethnicity is a phenomenon that originated in the past, preceding the era of modernisation (Causadias et al., 2018; Gellman, 2016). Ethnicity only became a subject of interest within the field of political science when ethnic groups began to organise themselves into political forces that sought to influence government policy (Suryadinata, 2003).

Every cultural tradition is characterised by a distinctive set of characteristics, exemplified by the Sundanese culture observed in *Kampung Naga*, a village located in Tasikmalaya Regency, West Java Province. Geographically, the village is situated in a valley at an altitude of 488 metres above sea level, representing a traditional settlement area. The *Kampung Naga* region encompasses a range of land uses, including residential areas, rice fields, ponds, hills, and forests. The majority of residents in *Kampung Naga* reside in stilts houses, with approximately 113 buildings arranged from west to east, and doors oriented towards the north or south (Basith, et. al., 2023). The majority of *Kampung Naga*'s residents are farmers, yet they also possess expertise in crafting an assortment of artefacts from bamboo, wicker, cloth, and assorted materials. The provenance of *Kampung Naga* is the subject of some debate, with several competing hypotheses. The figure of *Eyang Singaparna* is regarded as an ancestral figure or a

prominent individual within the *Kampung Naga* community. To date, there remains a tomb that is believed as *Singaparna*. This tomb constitutes an essential element of ceremonies and activities in the local community. Secondly, Islam was introduced to the people of *Kampung Naga* during the 16th to 17th centuries. Thirdly, it is believed that the people of *Kampung Naga* are descendants of the Galunggung kingdom, who adopted Sundanese as their primary language (Taylor, 1944).

In the academic realm, several previous studies have been conducted by several researchers, namely Abdul Basith et al. (2023) with the theme '*Kebudayaan Masyarakat Adat Kampung Naga*'. This study discusses the diverse culture of the indigenous people of *Kampung Naga*, which encompasses a range of activities and traditional equipment, all of which are dependent on the natural environment, which remains largely unaltered and traditional. The residents of *Kampung Naga* are predominantly farmers, and the village is governed by a dual system comprising formal institutions and customary institutions (Basith, et al., 2023). This is similar to the research conducted by Yudhiet Dewantara, et al. (2023), which explores the theme of 'Ritual Gastronomy and Cultural Identity Formation in *Kampung Naga*: an Ethnographic Investigation of the Role of Culinary in Religious Rituals and Cultural Practices'. This research discusses the role of gastronomic rituals in forming cultural identity, particularly through the transmission of cultural values, spirituality, and traditions through food and drink. This study seeks to elucidate the relationship between food, religion, and identity (Dewantara et al., 2023). Furthermore, Anisa Novia Fridayanti et al. (2022) examine the theme of 'Divine Values in the *Hajat Sasih* Ceremony in *Kampung Naga*, West Java'. Their research discusses the implications of the application of divine values in a culture through the *Hajat Sasih* ritual culture, which is perceived to have trust value, beauty value, goodness value, moral value, and religious value (Fridayanti et al., 2022). In the study of the relationship between humans and animals by Yustika Ayu Sekartaji, et al. (2021), the theme of the study is 'Etnozooologi: *Studi Kearifan Lokal Masyarakat Adat Kampung Naga Tasikmalaya*'. This study describes the ethnozoological practices of the community in *Kampung Naga*, Neglasari Village, Salawu District, Tasikmalaya Regency. It reveals unique practices in animal husbandry. The management of animals for medicinal purposes, food, as well as traditional and ritual activities demonstrates the mutualistic relationship between humans and animals. This relationship represents a rich source of knowledge that can be studied in the context of biology. It can be presented in booklet form as a learning material (Sekartaji et al., 2021). Meanwhile, Aisah Astuti, et al. (2020) set forth a theme entitled "*Tradisi Hajat Sasih Mulud di Kampung Naga untuk Bahan pembelajaran Membaca Artikel*," with the objective of providing a basis for learning to read articles. A study of semiotics, the study of signs and their meaning, reveals that the *Hajat Sasih Mulud* tradition in *Kampung Naga* is a ceremony that reflects gratitude to Allah for blessings in the community's life. The tradition is also characterised by a wealth of semiotic elements, including a total of 42 signs, which can be divided into three categories: 13 icons, 10 indexes, and 19 symbols (Astuti et al., 2020). It can be seen that, in the context of previous studies, no researcher has attempted to explain, describe or illustrate the model of religious tolerance observed in *Kampung Naga* through the use of ethnographic methods.

This research applies a qualitative approach, with the methodology based on a literature review. This research method applies a quasi-qualitative design that deviates

from the post-positivist paradigm, situated between the realist and interpretive approaches. The objective of the post-positivism approach is to provide empirically-based argumentation to substantiate the theory. At this juncture, it is imperative to undertake a comprehensive and holistic research endeavour (Bungin, 2022). In order to obtain comprehensive information, researchers apply a variety of methods to gather data from multiple sources. These methods include in-depth interviews with participants and key informants, as well as observations of individuals in the surrounding environment of the research subjects. According to post-positivism, the relationship between the researcher and the subject should be characterised by interaction, rather than a sense of distance between them (Rahardjo, 2023). The primary data for this research is drawn from *Kampung Naga*, which practises the *Hajat Sasih* tradition. This tradition offers insights into the ways in which religious tolerance can be fostered, and provides a model for the coexistence of diverse cultural and religious traditions (Fridayanti et al., 2022). Secondary data is derived from a range of sources, including academic journals, published books, unpublished manuscripts and other scientific works that are pertinent to the study of religious tolerance in the context of *Hajat Sasih* Culture. Both primary and secondary data were collected through the use of documentation and preliminary data collection techniques. This study contributes to the ethnographic literature by elucidating the practice of tolerance within the context of traditional traditions that have been infrequently examined. *Hajat Sasih* represents a distinctive aspect of Sundanese cultural heritage in *Kampung Naga*, characterised by the convergence of traditional rituals and Islamic beliefs. A comprehensive ethnographic analysis can facilitate a more distinctive understanding of the ways in which religious and customary practices can coexist harmoniously.

Based on the above explanation, the following provisional conclusions may be drawn: firstly, the development of cultural studies paradigms is occurring concurrently with an increasing level of complexity in cultural practices. Furthermore, the five principal paradigms, namely positivism, post-positivism, critical theory and constructivism, also exert an influence on cultural studies. Secondly, culture must be transmitted from one generation to the next in order to ensure its continued sustainability. The objective of this research is to identify tolerance models that are relevant to the conditions of contemporary society and can overcome the challenges of globalisation and changes in cultural values, particularly in the *Hajat Sasih* Culture in *Kampung Naga*.

METHOD

The research method applied was quasi-qualitative (Rahardjo, 2023). This quasi-qualitative research is aimed at acquiring an understanding of the typical *Hajat Sasih* tolerance model as practised in *Kampung Naga*. In essence, the quasi-qualitative approach is aimed at elucidating the nature of tolerance and its implications for the establishment of interfaith harmony within the context of the *Hajat Sasih* tradition in *Kampung Naga* (Basith, et al., 2023; Sugiono, 2019). The term "quasi-qualitative" is used to describe a research analysis that applies quantitative methods in a qualitative manner (Mezmir, 2020). This approach allows for the integration of quantitative techniques into a qualitative research framework, while maintaining the fundamental characteristics of qualitative research. This is the reason why it is referred to as quasi-qualitative (Bungin, 2022).

This research applies as the post-positivism approach, a methodology situated between positivism and interpretive paradigms. The objective of the post-positivism approach method is to provide empirical substantiation for the theory of the tolerance model in the *Hajat Sasih* Culture in *Kampung Naga* (Rahardjo, 2023). Furthermore, researchers directly observed the behavior of tolerance models through the *Hajat Sasih* Culture in *Kampung Naga*, Neglasari Village, Salawu District, Tasikmalaya. The research focuses on all activities associated with the *Hajat Sasih* cultural rituals, including those conducted by the tradition's practitioners and members in the period preceding the *Hajat Sasih* rituals, during the ritual's implementation, and after its completion. For the purposes of this study, the opinions of qualified traditional officials have also been considered as data sources (Manan, 2021). The data collection techniques applied in this research are meticulous observation and in-depth interviews, which are used to obtain accurate information from informants or sources (Moleong, 2007). The literature data serves to complement the observations and in-depth interviews, as well as providing relevant media material related to the object of the research. Subsequently, the data is classified, verified and interpreted.

The process of data analysis in quasi-qualitative research within the ethnographic study of the *Hajat Sasih* tradition in *Kampung Naga* comprises a series of stages. Data collection is conducted through meticulous observation, in-depth interviews, and a comprehensive review of relevant literature. The subsequent phase is the classification of the data, which is grouped according to themes such as ritual stages, inter-religious interactions, and the role of tradition. Subsequently, verification is conducted through the triangulation of data from observations, interviews and literature, with the objective of ensuring accuracy. Once verified, the data is interpreted using a post-positivist approach to gain insight into the nature of religious tolerance in *Kampung Naga*, taking into account both objective and subjective dimensions. Although qualitative, quantitative elements may be presented and qualitatively interpreted in order to uncover patterns of religious tolerance. Ultimately, the study concludes with an analysis of the formation and practice of tolerance in *Kampung Naga*, reflecting on its social implications and contributions to the broader understanding of tolerance theory in local culture.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Result

Preserving the *Hajat Sasih* tradition as an annual customary ritual demonstrates inclusive participation from individuals of diverse religious backgrounds. Based on in-depth observations and interviews, it is evident that although the majority of *Kampung Naga*'s residents adhere to traditional Islam, the ritual still accommodates symbolic involvement from Christian minorities and followers of local belief systems. This inclusive nature reflects a deep-rooted cultural tolerance within the community. Moreover, the religious-cultural syncretism manifested in *Hajat Sasih* reveals a distinctive blend of Islamic principles and ancestral Sundanese spiritual traditions. These syncretic elements are evident in the ritual's symbols, language, and practices, which merge Islamic values with indigenous cosmological beliefs. As a result, *Hajat Sasih* functions as a religious observance and a cultural expression that upholds harmony and interfaith coexistence, reflecting the community's commitment to preserving tradition while embracing pluralism.

Figure 1: Explanation of the Hajat Sasih Tradition by Mr. Heri Permana

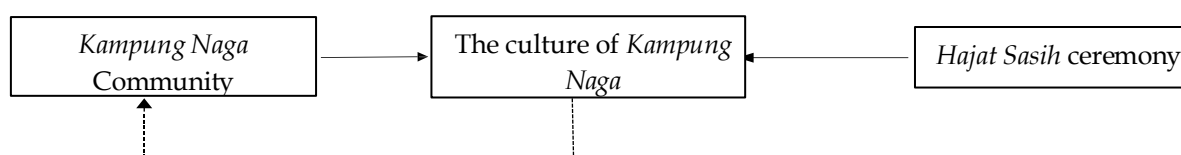


Ethnographic data reveal that material culture serves as tangible manifestation, while immaterial practices constitute integral components, with intergenerational consensus demonstrating cross-generational participation - albeit youth engagement remains predominantly symbolic in nature (Heri Permana (Secretary of the *Lembaga Adat Kampung Naga*), 2023). Consistent with Geertzian thick description, these findings provide not just an account of cultural practices, but reveal the webs of significance in which these actions are suspended, exposing native conceptualizations and the symbolic systems governing behavior (Geertz, 1973).

Our ethnographic documentation of the *Hajat Sasih* ritual reveals substantive interreligious cooperation, particularly in the collaborative ritual preparations between Muslim practitioners and minority religious groups (Hindu and Christian). Quantitative data from authorized village archives (2023) substantiate that nearly three-quarters (72%) of religious minority participants perceived meaningful inclusion throughout ceremonial activities (Heri Permana (Secretary of the *Lembaga Adat Kampung Naga*), 2023). The ethnographic record document's role differentiation in ritual labor, with Hindu community members providing material contributions (handwoven ceremonial objects) while Christian adolescents assumed organizational responsibilities.

The differences and similarities between the concepts of 'tradition' and 'culture' are not immediately apparent, given that they share numerous similarities. However, a number of fundamental differences between tradition and culture. First, tradition refers to immaterial entities (e.g. customs), whereas culture is typically both immaterial (e.g. values, norms, social institutions, etc.) and material (buildings, clothes, or any object that can be seen and touched). Second, culture has a broader scope than tradition. Traditions are typically transmitted orally from one generation to the next, whereas culture can be transmitted orally or in written form, given that writing is a fundamental aspect of human cultural production (al-Qurtuby & Lattu, 2019).

Figure 2: Interaction Between Main Actors of the Integration Process

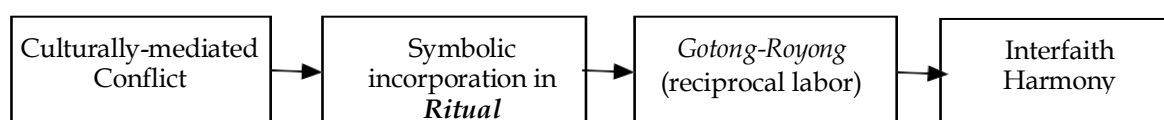


Third, tradition in general cannot be verified through the academic process.

Despite this, tradition is accepted as a historical fact by the general public. In contrast, culture is a historical phenomenon that can be empirically verified and proven to exist. It is the product of human creativity and can be studied and proven to exist in a verifiable manner. A further differentiation between tradition and culture is that the transmission process in the former is not contingent on academic learning. Instead, it is accomplished by means of practical experience and by action. In contrast, the transmission process in the latter is based on the learning process. As a result of its continuous transmission from one generation to the next, culture becomes a tradition and a habit that is widely practised in society (al-Qurtuby & Lattu, 2019). Therefore, the evidence shows significant distinctions between tradition and culture. However, it is challenging to differentiate between tradition and culture, as both concepts are intertwined and practised concurrently by the same community. It is therefore unsurprising that tradition is often considered an inherent component of culture.

The tradition structurally embeds religious tolerance via a tripartite framework: (1) material co-production through culturally-mediated conflict resolution, (2) symbolic incorporation in ritual practice to maintain sociocultural continuity, and (3) the institutionalization of *gotong-royong* (reciprocal labor) as a mechanism for interfaith harmony.

Figure 3: The Model Tradition Structurally Religious Tolerance in *Hajat Sasih*



Discussion

The *Hajat Sasih* ritual tradition in *Kampung Naga*, Tasikmalaya, serves as a cultural expression embodying deeply rooted values of spirituality, communal cohesion, and ancestral reverence. It illustrates how indigenous belief systems and social structures are maintained and negotiated through ceremonial practice (al-Qurtuby & Lattu, 2019; Asad et al., 2023; Foley, 2020; Liu & Chen, 2024). This ritual not only reinforces the cultural identity of the indigenous community but also serves as a vital mechanism for fostering and sustaining interreligious tolerance (Bambang, 2013). Although all residents of *Kampung Naga* embrace Islam, they continue to practice ancestral traditions with deep reverence, reflecting a harmonious acculturation between Islamic teachings and indigenous belief systems (Ismanto, 2020). The role of education, both formal and informal, is crucial in transmitting these values to younger generations, thereby ensuring the continuity of the tradition amid the currents of modernization (Pratika et al., 2021).

In *Kampung Naga*, the *Hajat Sasih* tradition continues to be preserved and maintained by the local community. The sustainability of this tradition is influenced by various interconnected supporting factors (Heri Permana (Secretary of the *Lembaga Adat Kampung Naga*), 2023). One of the key factors is the ancestral values that remain highly revered by the community to this day. These values are passed down through generations and serve as a guiding principle in daily life. Additionally, *Kampung Naga*'s relatively remote geographical location helps shield the tradition from external influences. The community also upholds religious norms with deep sincerity while remaining open and inclusive toward external developments et al., 2023). The harmony between spirituality and openness allows the community to live in balance.

The primary motivation behind preserving the *Hajat Sasih* tradition is the desire to maintain social harmony among its members. For them, upholding tradition means preserving peace and unity in communal life (Heri Permana (Secretary of the *Lembaga Adat Kampung Naga*), 2023). Thus, this tradition serves as a cultural safeguard, protecting the community from social fragmentation caused by modernization or interventions that disregard local values.

The preservation of the *Hajat Sasih* tradition exerts a substantial influence on the social dynamics of *Kampung Naga*'s community, wherein the intrinsic tolerance embedded within this ritual has been empirically demonstrated to simultaneously mitigate potential conflicts and cultivate interfaith mutual respect (Suganda, 2006). The preservation of the *Hajat Sasih* tradition exerts a substantial influence on *Kampung Naga*'s social dynamics, wherein its intrinsic tolerance mechanisms - empirically demonstrated to mitigate interfaith conflicts while cultivating mutual respect (Saifuddin, et al., 2021). Therefore, the people of *Kampung Naga* are encouraged to adopt a balanced approach to the practice of religion, encompassing both the secular and the spiritual, and to recognise the importance of this in their daily lives. The term "tolerance" notwithstanding, interfaith tolerance has in fact become an integral aspect of Indonesian Islamic tradition, encompassing both religious and cultural dimensions within the Indonesian context.

When compared to other indigenous rituals in Indonesia, such as *Bali's Nyepi*, the *Hajat Sasih* tradition similarly embodies values of peace and spiritual reflection (Poerwanto, 2000; Karim et al., 2022). Both traditions emphasize the paramount importance of inner tranquillity and harmonious relationships among humans, nature, and the social community (Astuti et al., 2020; Fridayanti et al., 2022). Their collective implementation, requiring full societal participation, establishes these traditions as effective mechanisms for reinforcing social bonds (Suganda, 2006). Such practices significantly contribute to establishing and maintaining social harmony within community life. The parallels between *Hajat Sasih* and *Nyepi* demonstrate that values of tolerance and local cultural preservation play a strategic role in strengthening intergroup solidarity (Keraf, 2010). Thus, the preservation of indigenous traditions across Indonesian regions constitutes a key element in fostering social stability within multicultural societies.

Given the strategic value of *Hajat Sasih*, more concrete policies are needed to support the preservation of this tradition. One recommended approach involves integrating local wisdom values-such as tolerance and social harmony-into the educational curriculum of surrounding regions (Usman, 2008; al-Attas, 1979). It can be defined that education is about recognising the fundamental concepts of Islamic worldview, and subsequently implementing them through a response to the challenges that emerge. Furthermore, the development of community-based tourism that foregrounds *Kampung Naga*'s cultural values could serve as a dual strategy for both heritage preservation and local economic empowerment (Sinaga & Chandra, 2021). Thus, the tradition is not only merely preserved as a symbolic artifact, but also actively integrated into contemporary community life-ensuring its dynamic relevance as both cultural practice and lived social reality.

CONCLUSION

The customary institution and practices of *Kampung Naga* have established a programme that encourages welcome to the outsiders or foreigners from *Kampung*

Naga, based on principles of tolerance. This endeavour is of great significance in rekindling the vibrancy of diversity, characterised by friendliness, politeness, inclusivity and a willingness to collaborate despite differing beliefs. The view of the *Kampung Naga* community, the culture of tolerance and the education of the *Kampung Naga* community tolerance model as a derivative represent a strategic step to improve the understanding and meaning of religion by the *Kampung Naga* community. This is not only limited to the context of local residents who are far from urban areas. In light of the pressing need for inter-religious tolerance, particularly in *Kampung Naga*, it is imperative to foster collaboration between the local Customary Institution and the residents of *Kampung Naga*.

In order to realise the beneficial value of this effort, it is expected that activities such as the *Hajat Sasih* tradition will be carried out by the *Kampung Naga's* community as a form of gratitude for the harvest of crops, as a gesture of respect for the power of nature and ancestors, and as an expression of tolerance and togetherness. It is such evident that the success of this tolerance model is contingent upon the involvement of traditional institutions, which provide a structured framework for its implementation. The *kuncen*, in this context, serves as a role model for the residents of *Kampung Naga*, exemplifying the values and practices that underpin the model. It is therefore important to emphasise that the model of tolerance taught through the *Hajat Sasih* culture is beneficial to all citizens of *Kampung Naga* and, more widely, to all Indonesians. The objective is to foster a pleasant and inclusive religious and cultural milieu. The mutual respect for cultural diversity will foster a wise and creative attitude in promoting harmony among the people of *Kampung Naga*, who live in a context of plural cultural, social and religious backgrounds.

Although the findings provide a strong foundation for understanding the tolerance model of *Kampung Naga*, this study has limitations that should be addressed in future research. For example, the data are largely descriptive and focused on local traditions, which may not fully capture the dynamics of modern influences or differing interpretations within younger generations. Further studies should explore how the tolerance model is perceived and adapted by different age groups and whether it can be transferred or modified to suit communities outside *Kampung Naga*. Additionally, future research could benefit from applying comparative analysis with other traditional communities in Indonesia to identify universal and unique features of local tolerance mechanisms. Using qualitative and participatory methods could also strengthen the findings by providing deeper insights into lived experiences and collective memory related to tolerance practices.

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