

## Pamali Culture Existence: Phenomenology Study in Bani Tribe, Tubuhu'e Village, North Central Timor Regency, Indonesia

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### Abstract

This study examines *Bani Tribe's* cultural values by reviewing the meaning of *Bani Tribe's Pamali* culture which is related to prohibitions on certain kinds of food. *Pamali* contains several values and norms, such as trust, compliance, politeness, and ethics. These represent moral education *Pamali* aimed for. Data type obtained was verbal and it exhibits three types of *Pamali*. First is *Pamali* for all communities of Tubuhu'e. Second is *Pamali* for all people in *Bani Tribe*. The third *Pamali* is special *Pamali* for Tribe Chief (*Ana'tobe*). Some of these *Pamali* include prohibition from consuming pigeon meat, duck meat, baby corn in a meal unless all these foods are already stored in a traditional warehouse for sacred rituals or other ceremonies. An in-depth interview has been conducted with respected informants, including persons with important status, such as community elders. Analysis result indicates that *Pamali* culture is believed by *Bani Tribe* to be a set of rule with a strong meaning. Hereby, it is then concluded that the meaning of *Pamali* is understandable from a social construction perspective. There is a fact that verbal tradition in *Pamali* culture has been constructed long ago by the ancestors, and thus, this culture should be their legacy. The ancestors have also ingrained moral education as a supreme virtue and, as a result, this impels *Bani Tribe* to maintain and conserve verbal tradition in *Pamali* culture to keep next generations following the path of their ancestors.

**Keywords:** Suku *Bani*, The Constructions of Meaning, Oral tradition, *Pamali* culture

### INTRODUCTION

Culture is human mind and power which encompasses the variety of science, beliefs or religious systems, art, social organization (including kinship or customs), technology, livelihood, economy, and language acquired by humans as members of society. In general, life in that particular society is a concrete reflection of abstract cultural values (Koentjaraningrat, 2009:146).

The term *Pamali* could be found in cultural subjects. Various kinds of *Pamali* culture are spread in Indonesian society in general with various specified consequences. For example, *Pamali* for moving at mealtimes, using mats as blankets, swearing in the forest, taking pictures in odd numbers, getting up too late, sneezing while traveling, lingering in the bathroom, sitting by a door, girls washing hairs on Saturdays, sadness during pregnancy, sitting in the middle of the door during heavy rain, eating pickles at night, knocking the tip of a cigarette that will be lit to a hard object, biting bottom lips, biting the nail, pretending to cry, whistling at night, giving a handkerchief / perfume to the lover, throwing away the leftover rice due to being full, eating using bowls, wiping face using clothes, wearing clothes while walking, torturing girls, singing or whistling while eating, sleeping on the stomach, and other *amali* existing in various regions. Inherited by language or phrase from generation to generation (Anonymous, 2013) and each *Pamali* has its own meaning in the respective phrase.

An idiom in society usually takes the form of inquisitive language that contains meaning in community life. The idiom is a behavioral guide if it is examined to encompass a variety of high-value life teachings which are also inherited from the ancestors. The old or traditional phrase of *Pamali* idioms inherited by the ancestors orally or hereditary is not documented and published by loyal speakers. These loyal speakers are diminishing with old age. On the other hand, the younger generation exhibits lack of interest on *Pamali* (Endraswara S. , 2005).

Although *Pamali* considered irrelevant to the conditions of an advanced era, for the most part, the older generation still view *Pamali* as a signal from the predecessors to be obeyed. Therefore, *Pamali* is still bequeathed to newer generation in the hope that they can obey these *Pamali* for the sake of their respective security and successful life.

Research result (Sardani, 2013) exhibits that the ceremony of *Pamali Manggodo* is a ceremony inherent in the life of the Sambori community, especially in the agricultural field. This research exhibits that the *Manggodo Pamali* custom ceremony emerges as a system of action that has a function for the social system or for the Sambori community as a means to maintain the continuity of its members and reach equilibrium (balance).

Research analysis entitled " *Perahu Dalam Pamali Orang Bajo* " indicates that the *Pamali* of Bajo tribe is a sign of meaningful symbol. It is concluded that the meaning of *Pamali* is based on semiotic viewpoints describing the tradition of sea fishing and socio-cultural conditions of the Bajo as sailors who rule the oceans. The desire to maintain a sense of superiority to the sea encourages Bajo people to keep *Pamali* in the hope that their generation can follow in the footsteps of their predecessors (Uniawati, 2014).

Based on studies mentioned above, it can be concluded that it is possible that there are differences in the meaning of *Pamali* due to changing era. *Pamali* is considered as a myth that is sometimes ignored. But the real *Pamali* also contains a strong and logical reason for the belief. *Pamali* is a prohibition on conducting bad behavior and utter swears for oneself or the environment. Its' violation is usually associated with fortune, soul mate, heredity, and safety.

In this study, the research was conducted in *Tubuhu'e* District. *Bani* Tribe was chosen as a data source. Data obtained was in the form of existing *Pamali* in *Bani* Tribe, *Tubuhu'e* District community. The researcher chose *Bani* tribe as the community tend to adhere to *Pamali*. Therefore *Pamali* is still being adhered to and utilized in daily activity. Considering the changing era, their community lifestyle changes as well. This led to the researcher's curiosity in conducting research on existing *Pamali* in *Bani* tribe community.

*Bani* tribe lives in Maslete village, *Tubuhu'e* district, Kefamenanu city, North Central Timor Regency, *Nusa Tenggara Timur* Province. Maslete village is located in the town's center. Maslete was the center of *Bikomi* Kingdom government which possessed two rulers, Lake and Sanak.

Its community adheres to mutual cooperation (*gotong royong*) and most of the tribe member works as a farmer (85%) while the rest possess other occupation (15%). They mainly utilize traditional farming technique such as slash and burn (*tebas bakar*). The community's education awareness is relatively low as most parents don't consider high education for their children.

*Bani* tribe society consists of community adhering to customs and traditions, therefore, the value of culture has a very deep meaning. The strength of the value of this tradition disables people from rejecting the various inherited knowledge and belief in ancestral culture. Society can only make adjustments to the various rules of culture which includes customs. In relation to *Pamali* in the *Bani* tribe, *Pamali* is more powerful as a norm or a rule than any other written rule. Despite not recorded in writing, the community would adhere to it as it is correlated to the public trust.

*Pamali* culture is also believed to be a norm or rule passed down by ancestors and should be obeyed. For example, when a child from the *Bani* tribe is in another area and was served fish or duck meat, then the child does not touch the food. This is an aspect of tribal culture which was understood and admitted by the community.

The study of *Pamali* culture in *Bani* tribe is a tradition that has been maintained from generation to generation. The *Bani* tribe is one of the many tribes within North Central Timor Regency retaining the oral tradition of *Pamali* culture. This tradition is bequeathed through hereditary tales from their ancestors. This is similarly experienced and obeyed by other tribes as well.

Based on these conditions, this paper examines the *Pamali* associated with existing *Pamali* maintained by *Bani* tribe: the construction of the *Bani* people's interpretation on oral tradition of *Pamali* culture, the oral tradition of *Pamali* culture which is still maintained and preserved in modern era, and the value contained in the oral tradition of the *Pamali* culture.

In this research, the theory used to analyze *Pamali* in *Bani* Tribe is "Social Construction Theory". Social construction theory will view the purpose of this paper which is constructed through the process of externalization, objectivity, and internalization of the community and the meaning of *Pamali* culture for *Bani* tribe which allows *Pamali* to exist and maintained until modern era.

Based on research background, the problem is described as follows: how does *Bani* tribe construct *Pamali* culture and what is the meaning of *Pamali* culture to *Bani* tribe community. The purpose of this study is to understand and analyze the meaning of "oral tradition of *Pamali* culture" in *Bani* Tribe. To understand and analyze the construction of "oral tradition of *Pamali* culture" which is still maintained and preserved by *Bani* Tribe community.

## RESEARCH METHOD

The research method used is qualitative by using phenomenology approach that aims to understand the meaning of the incident, the symptoms that arise, and or the interaction for the individual in certain conditions and situations in daily life in a particular society (Fachan, 2013:88).

Qualitative methods are used to obtain in-depth data, a meaningful data. Meaning is the actual data or a value behind the visible data. Therefore in qualitative research does not emphasize generalization, but emphasizes the meaning (Sugiyono, 2015:3).

Qualitative methods used here have not been able to explain in detail should only qualitative methods were utilized. In order to obtain in-depth information, researchers used transcendental phenomenology method. This type of method starts at the object themselves, then the final judgment was based on researcher's knowledge on the subject. Thus, this approach explains in detail the process of experience and knowledge of informants until the emergence of a common meaning for the wider community. The similarity of meaning produced by a man by accident, because the inadvertence is influenced by differences in the background of each individual. Therefore, the use of this approach aims to obtain empirical data through natural meanings based on the experience, knowledge, and awareness of the *Bani* tribe in carrying out the oral tradition of *Pamali* culture in everyday life.

Transcendental phenomenology is a logical approach, as it seeks and identifies prejudices and places them outside the object. The phenomenological approach is more appropriately used in this study because, the meaning of the phenomenon is apparent, but it also reveals the meaning behind the apparent phenomenon.

Data analysis technique used in this research is a method which put forward by Moustakas. Methods of data analysis are: phenomenological data analysis method following the concept given by Stevik-Colaizzi-Keen. Researchers then follow these steps to analyze field data obtained (Kuswarno, 2009:70-71).

Data collection techniques used were participant observation, in-depth interviews, documentation or documents. Instruments used in the form of cellphone camera and an interview guide.

The sample in this study is called informant. Sampling technique in this research is snowball sampling. Snowball sampling is a technique of sampling the source of data that initially started in a small amount, and increased by time. In relation to phenomenology research, the criteria of informants in phenomenology research are those who directly experience a phenomenon to be studied and capable to articulate their experiences. Cresswell argues that the most important thing in phenomenology research is to describe the meaning of a small number of people who experience a phenomenon. The number of informants is not a measure, as long as it is able to provide sufficient information. However, Dukes recommends the use of between 3 and 10 informants to be able to perform data comparisons (Cresswell, 1998:122).

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

From the results of direct research to *Bani* tribe community, *Tubuhu'e* Village, Kefamenanu District, North Central Timor Regency, East Nus Tenggara Province. The *Tubuhu'e* village consists of ten tribes: Ta'niik, Sife, Timo, Apaulbana, *Bani*, Nepsa, To'menus, Maol, Tfaintem and Sba'at Tribes.

In the *Tubuhu'e* society, there is a *Pamali* that applies to the whole society in particular. Each tribe possesses one but *Bani* people's *Pamali* is still not widely known.

*Pamali* is often considered only a myth and taboo inherited from ancestors, but the authors consider *Pamali* possessing an important purpose and function in society. Researchers wanted to explore the true meaning of the *Pamali*. Therefore, this research is very important to be implemented.

*Pamali* contain both traditional and modern values that are very precise to be preserved even though most of the *Pamali* sentences contain superstitions.

*Pamali* which is still preserved and maintained by the people of *Bani* tribe (1) *Pamali* for *Tubuhu'e* society; (2) *Pamali* for Tribe Chiefs (Ana'atobe); (3) *Pamali* for *Bani* tribe community.

(1). *Pamali* that applies to the *Tubuhu'e* society: first, *Pamali* Luma which means every seven years King Bana and King Sanak in *Tubuhu'e* Village bring historical evidence within five days. The historical evidence is in the form of Dawan (the Timorese local language "Nes hitum tak mese es suni blak oemanus, auni blak oemanus es la'na which is usually mentioned as *Suni tapaul neno, Auni tapaul neno, fleu neno, Kap noni nok ue noni*". This idiom means "Seven swords or glazes in a holster, golden bridles, golden spears and rattan made of gold (for horseshoe equipment).

Luma is one of the *Pamali* types that applies to *Tubuhu'e* community including *Bani* tribe. Luma is said to be a *Pamali* because when King Bana and King Sanak mount their horses and walk down the path they will pass the community. The people meeting the kings must bend their heads, whether sitting or standing and should not see the king's visage until he had gained a certain amount of distance.

A passer-by who saw the king's visage must follow the kings to the custom house (*Ume Le'u*) to carry out traditional ceremony for the offense. Should one violates the Luma *Pamali*, it is said that the offender will die on the same hour, day and month the following year after one commits the offense. *Pamali* is very feared by the entire community, Bikomi tribe in particular.

Secondly, there is one *Pamali* that applies to *Tubuhu'e* village when they provide tribute by inserting seven corn grain into Sonaf (palace). When corn is brought to Sonaf, a ceremony will be held. One who makes a mistake during the ceremony would die in the following year, similar to *Pamali* Luma.

*Pamali* is also believed to be the hardest set of rule and is believed by the Maslete community. Should a king makes a mistake during a traditional ceremony, a field snake would emerge and circles the audience. The audience should not be surprised by the snake's emergence, or the offender would die. This is also one of the oral traditions of a *Pamali* culture that is very feared by society. Those who follow the ceremony at Sonaf (Istana Raja) are elderly who are believed to be cultural leaders and are already familiar with the tradition.

(2) The *Pamali* for the *Bani* tribal chief signifies that the tribal chief differs from the members of the *Bani* Tribe because they hold the highest office in their tribe. There are special *Pamali* for the tribal chief (Ana'atobe) which are described as follows: first, *Pamali* from eating freshwater fish or animals that come from fresh water, it is believed that in ancient time their grandmother was turned into crocodile when bathing in the river. The river becomes the *Pamali* water springs for the people of *Bani* tribe.

Second, *Pamali* to eat food in funeral home. This *Pamali* is inherited from ancient time. It is believed by the *Bani* tribe community from generation to generation that every tribal head should *Pamali* (avoid) to eat food in

funeral home even it is their own biological parents funeral. The tribal chief will eat in a different house. A violation would incur disaster bestowed by ancestors. This *Pamali* applies only to the chief of the tribe not to *Bani* tribe members.

(3) *Pamali* for the *Bani* Tribe including the Tribe Chief. *Pamali* in the *Bani* tribe community is described as follows: first, *Pamali* to provide wrong information on what is associated with customs and history of the tribe's ancestors. Secondly, *Pamali* from eating eat duck and pigeon meat. Duck and pigeons are believed to be ancestors. The ancestors taking shape of duck and pigeon fall in love and get married. The *Bani* tribe community believes that they are the descendants of the ducks and doves.

Third, *Pamali* to eat corn crops before the traditional ceremony (*Dawannya na'tek pena*). In this case, tribe members must present their first harvest to God the Creator (*Uis Neno*) and to their ancestors. In the ceremony, every first harvest must be put into the traditional house (*Ume Le'u*) to be used in traditional rituals. This *Pamali* is one of the religious systems of *Bani* Tribe concerning their beliefs.

*Pamali* has existed since ancient times and had a very strong influence on *Bani* tribe community life. *Pamali* is considered as the norm and rule that should be obeyed by society. *Pamali* as an objective reality that has developed with the existence of various aspects of the value contained in it. *Pamali* has existed for a long time from *Bani* tribe ancestors which is carried on continuously and hereditary. It is a set of rules that cannot be removed from their tribe.

In the construction of the oral tradition *Bani* tribe *Pamali* culture began at the time of the newborn child socialized by observing how significant others, namely parents and others close to him interact and carry out their social roles. In this case, the child is introduced by the parents about the basic oral tradition of *Pamali* culture believed by their tribe since time immemorial. This means that parents socialize their children about the oral tradition of *Pamali* culture. It is an internalization process for the child.

The oral tradition of *Pamali* culture has at least a function to become norms and rules capable to educate and form a positive character by providing information on prohibition and abstinence on a certain matters.

Individuals adapts to the environment in which they live. In this process, individuals perform activities to devote themselves behaving properly to adhere to the environment by receiving *Pamali* or even reject *Pamali* that have been set in the tribe.

This process of the individual experiences an awareness in acting that realizes that he is in the process of interaction with others. *Pamali* possess legitimacy in the surrounding community. Despite being oral tradition, *Pamali* is recognized and obeyed as an existing rule in a tribe.

Each of the three moments corresponds to an essential characterization of the social world. Through the internalization of human beings is the product of society; through externalization, society is an individual product; and through the objectification of society into a unique reality. There is a process of pulling out (externalization) as if the phenomenon occurs outside (objective), and there is a process of withdrawal inside (internalization) therefore outside factor appears as if it occurs within.

In the process of constructing *Pamali* culture by *Bani* tribe society, researched used Social Construction theory Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckman as analysis base to understand the *Pamali* culture. In understanding various opinion of each member of the *Bani* Tribe, the dialectics put forward by Berger and Luckman takes place with three simultaneous momentum: (1) externalization, adaptation to the socio-cultural world as a human product; (2) objectivity, social interaction in the institutionalized world of intersubjective or institutionalization process; (3) internalization, in the form of individual identifies with the social institution or social organization in which one belongs.

The dialectical process that occurs in *Bani* tribe society is through the process of internalization, externalization, and objectivity. The internalization process that occurs in *Bani* tribe society is the most important socialization process.

Socialization occurs in the internalization process. King Bana and King Sanak possess an important role to convey *Pamali*. The kings invited the chieftains in to be present at Sonaf (palace) to convey *Pamali* to *Tubuhu'e* Village. Based on the audience with the kings, the chieftain conveys the *Pamali* to members of the respective tribe gathered in traditional houses. In the internalization process for special *Pamali* to *Bani* tribe chief and *Pamali* for *Bani* tribe society through the same socialization. Parents possess an important role in the process of socialization. Parents will choose the right moment to deliver the *Pamali* prevailing in the respective tribe. Those who become chief will be chosen by their ancestors. Therefore tribe chief must continue to accept the assigned task. The chosen chieftain will naturally understand the tribe history and customs.

The objectivity of *Pamali* culture is the result of the construction of *Bani* society in the socio-cultural context, therefore existing opinion difference in society indicates the possibility of variations in obeying *Pamali* or pattern of action in interpreting *Pamali* culture. Tribe members obey *Pamali* as a norm or value. They could even violate it. Therefore *Pamali* culture will be in *Bani* tribe daily activity.

Interpretation in *Bani* tribe society to a *Pamali* culture based on knowledge, experience, and experience. The meaning of *Pamali* culture arises when a violation is committed intentionally or unintentionally.

Externalization in the society of *Bani* tribe argues about *Pamali*. The existence of a behavior committed by members of the *Bani* Tribe when obeying and believing the *Pamali* culture that has existed since their ancestors in antiquity and is believed to be one of their ancestral heritage.

Every member of the tribe who faces hardships and failures, woe and death, will always be understood in relation to his behavior in his tradition, including with objects (animals being sacrificed).

The behavior of one of the members of the *Bani* tribe who commits a violation of the *Pamali* culture has been established. Violations committed either intentionally or unintentionally will be punished by challenges or reprimands from their ancestors. This occurrence comes in the form of accidents, illnesses such as scurvy and itching, as well as wounds covering the whole body, pests damage cattle and crops, damage existing plants, cause blindness or death. *Pamali* violation may lead to a breach of safety.

Members of *Bani* tribe who have violated *Pamali* could obtain forgiveness, should the offender conduct ritual or ceremony yan called *na'sapu* (in Dawan language). The ceremony used plant named *safe* or *hau manikin*. These are sprinkled while praying for forgiveness from ancestors for violating the *Pamali*.

Any offense committed will have consequences. Nevertheless pardon is granted should the offender begs forgiveness to their ancestors. One who never violates *Pamali* will get the blessings and abundance in their life.

*Pamali*'s significance for *Bani* tribe society is that it acts as a rule or norm, customary law, or prohibition in the form of oral tradition. Offenders who violate *Pamali* would receive punishment and challenge. *Pamali* does not differentiate people with higher education or status (officials) for behaving poorly in certain time and place. *Pamali* is an inheritance from time immemorial. *Pamali* test the obedience and trust. *Pamali* culture is believed to be associated with the name of the *Bani* Tribe.

## CONCLUSION

Although *Pamali* considered irrelevant to the conditions of the times that have advanced, for the most part, especially the old generation still look at *Pamali* as a signal from the predecessors to be obeyed. Therefore, *Pamali* is still bequeathed to newer generation in the hope that they can obey *Pamali* to obtain security and successful life.

In understanding the varied opinion of *Bani* Tribe members, the dialectics put forward by Berger and Luckman takes place with three simultaneous momentums: (1) externalization, adaptation to the socio-cultural world as a human product; (2) objectivity, social interaction in the institutionalized world of intersubjective or institutionalization process; (3) internalization, an individual identifies with the social institution or social organization in which he or she belongs.

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