



An Analysis of Penti Ritual as A Local Wisdom of Manggarai Society, In Popo Village

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
Article history Received : March, 14th 2026 Revised : April, 15th 2026 Accepted : May, 26th 2026 OPEN ACCESS	The research employed a qualitative descriptive method. Data were collected through observation, interviews, and documentation involving traditional elders (tua gendang), community leaders, and local residents in Popo Village, North Satar Mese Sub-district, Manggarai Regency. The collected data were analyzed through three stages: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. This method allowed the researcher to interpret the ritual's meanings based on the participants' experiences and the cultural context of the Manggarai society. The research focuses on the social reality and cultural context as experienced and perceived by the Manggarai community members in Popo Village. The final output is a rich, detailed, narrative description of the ritual's history, structures, and the specific meanings it holds (religious, social, cultural, and moral/ecological). The findings show that the Penti ritual embodies several significant meanings: (1) Religious meaning, as an expression of gratitude and devotion to <i>Mori Kraeng</i> and the ancestors; (2) Social meaning, as a medium to strengthen unity, cooperation, and solidarity among community members; (3) Cultural meaning, as a process of transmitting values, norms, and traditional knowledge from generation to generation; (4) Moral and ecological meaning, as a reminder to live in purity, justice, and harmony with nature. These findings indicate that the Penti ritual serves as an important manifestation of local wisdom (kearifan lokal), which guides the moral, social, and spiritual life of the Manggarai people. It functions not only as a religious ceremony but also as a cultural mechanism for maintaining identity, solidarity, and environmental balance.
Keywords:	<i>Penti Ritual, Local Wisdom, Manggarai Society, Cultural Values, Qualitative Study</i>

1. Introduction

According to (Verheijen, 1991), several dialects, in the land of Manggarai. According to Verheijen (1991), the Manggarai region has several language dialects. This means that the language used by the Manggarai people is not uniform or consistent, but varies from one area to another within the Manggarai region. Although these dialects still belong to the Manggarai language family and are generally mutually intelligible, each dialect can have differences in pronunciation, vocabulary, or language structure.

One of the dialects is the central Manggarai dialect spoken by those living the central region of Manggarai. As the dialect is used as the lingua franca among members of the Manggarai ethnic group, it is regarded as the general language in the Manggarai region; known as Manggarai language. While in view of functional variation in language they employ, there are various kinds of registers in Manggarai language. The registers include, for instance, ritual speeches that Manggarai people employ in cultural domains. The forms and meanings of language they employ in the ritual speeches designate the conceptualisations of Manggarai people on the existence of God, ancestors and environmental spirits, as supernatural powers.

The Manggarai people adhere to animism and dynamism (belief in spirits or gods) and believe that spirits (*poti, jing*) live in big trees (*langke*), water sources (*ulu wae*), swamps (*temek*) and dense forests (*puar mese or poco*). Such places are considered to have resources called *pong*. (Nggoro, 2016). Animism is the belief that every object in the universe, both animate and inanimate, has a spirit or soul. This belief assumes that not only humans, but also animals, plants, rocks, water, wind, and even certain places, are inhabited by spirits that must be respected. In animism, the spirits can be good (providing protection, sustenance, fertility), therefore, people who adhere to animism usually perform rituals or ceremonies to honor ancestral spirits. Dynamism is a belief or worldview that believes that every object in the universe has a supernatural power or spiritual power that can affect human life either positively or negatively. The relationship between animism and dynamism in the Penti ritual ceremony in Manggarai is very close, because these two beliefs become the basis of the community's belief in carrying out the tradition.

According to Sudharma, penti is a traditional ceremony of gratitude carried out by the Manggarai community as a form of expression of gratitude to God and the ancestors for the harvest that has been obtained, asking for safety, fertility, and prosperity in the next

planting season, restoring and strengthening social relations between village residents and with ancestors. In the penti ceremony of the Popo village community, all expressions of gratitude from all crops (for example the harvest of coffee, rice, vegetables, candlenuts, etc. are put together in this Penti ceremony moment, not done separately, even though the results of the harvest are not satisfactory but the Popo village community still expresses gratitude and gratitude to God and also to the ancestors). This penti ritual ceremony unites the people of Popo village. The Popo village community highly upholds the customary rules that have been made which have been inherited from generation to generation so that social life is maintained despite the development of this modern era. So that this Penti ceremony is always supervised and from generation to generation and is always maintained because of the strength of customs that are very attached to the Popo village community.

According to Koentjaraningrat (2009), local wisdom is part of a community's culture that reflects values, norms, knowledge, and habits that are passed down from generation to generation, and serves as a guide in everyday life, especially in dealing with the natural and social environment.

Local wisdom as a guide, controller, and indicator of behavior in community life has a very important function in preserving natural resources and the environment (Wibowo 2012). Wibowo explained that local wisdom as a guideline is local wisdom that functions like a moral compass or life guide for the community. It is a set of values, norms, ethics and traditional knowledge passed down from generation to generation. Local wisdom as a behavior controller is local wisdom that not only tells what is right, but also has a mechanism to control behavior to keep it in line with existing norms. This involves social sanctions or even customary law for violators, and the last is local wisdom as an indicator of behavior in community life. Functioning as an indicator means that local wisdom becomes a marker or benchmark for whether the behavior of a person or group is in line with the principles of sustainability and community values.

The development of increasingly advanced technology makes us begin to forget the old habits that have been maintained by our ancestors. Therefore, researchers raised this title to explain to the public that we must maintain local culture. Local culture is a culture that has been passed down from generation to generation. Therefore, local culture must be preserved and maintained as well as possible. The researcher will examine Penti ceremony

as one of the local wisdoms in Manggarai regency, especially in Popo village. The researcher will collect important information about the Penti ritual ceremony.

Penti is part of the local cultural heritage in the Manggarai region in the village of Popo. As young people who are the successors of this local culture, penti must be preserved so that the existence of this local culture is maintained forever without any influence from other cultures amid rapid technological advances and globalization. Therefore, it is very important to examine the local culture of the Penti ritual in the following two questions: 1) What are the structures of the Penti ritual in Popo Village? 2) What are the meanings of the Penti ritual in Popo Village?

2. Research Method

This study uses a qualitative descriptive case study design to examine the structure and meaning of Penti rituals practiced by the Manggarai community in Popo Village. This approach was chosen because the study aims to document and interpret culturally specific rituals as they occur in their natural contexts, rather than to test hypotheses or generate abstract theories. Qualitative descriptive design allows for a clear and systematic depiction of ritual stages, participant roles, and symbolic expressions, based on direct observation and participant interpretation. Penti rituals involve symbolic actions, traditional utterances (*torok*), and collective values that are best understood through qualitative inquiry based on local perspectives. Although this research is located within the cultural community, it is not a full ethnographic study, as it does not involve prolonged immersion or a comprehensive analysis of Manggarai culture. It is also not phenomenological, as the focus is not on individual life experiences but on the shared cultural meanings embedded in ritual practices. Therefore, this study is best categorized as a descriptive qualitative case study, with the Penti ritual as the specific case being investigated. Data was collected through direct observation, semi-structured interviews with traditional elders and community members, and documentation. The data analysis followed the qualitative procedures of data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawn, resulting in a concise but rich description of the Penti ritual as a form of local wisdom that underpins religious, social, and cultural values in the Manggarai community. The research was conducted in Popo Village, Manggarai Regency. A total of 5 informants participated in this study. They consist of traditional elders (*drum elders*), traditional leaders, and community members who actively participate and have

knowledge of the Penti ritual. The informants were selected using purposive sampling, because this study required participants who had specific cultural competencies and direct involvement in the ritual. This technique is considered appropriate because not all members of the community have the necessary knowledge to explain the structure, procedure, and meaning of Penti rituals. The criteria for selecting informants include: (1) individuals who hold customary roles or are recognized as cultural authorities in society; (2) members of the community who actively participate in the Penti ritual; (3) individuals with sufficient experience and understanding of ritual procedures, symbols, and meanings; and (4) the willingness to provide detailed and reliable information. These criteria ensure that the data collected accurately reflects the cultural practices and shared meanings of Penti rituals in the Manggarai community

3. Research Findings and Discussion

Research Findings

Popo Village is a mountainous village that is still thick with Manggarai customs and religious social life. Popo village has a population of 1,586 people. Despite facing several social and infrastructure challenges, the village has shown positive development through government programs and community participation.

Popo Village is located in North Satar Mese Sub-district, the western part of Manggarai Regency, NTT. Popo Village is a hilly highland village, located in the Flores Mountains region. It has a tropical climate with high rainfall ($\pm 3,500$ mm/year). The soil is dominated by latosol, mediteran, and lithosol types, suitable for agriculture and plantations.

The majority of the population is of Manggarai ethnicity. Almost all residents embrace the Catholic religion. Social life is deeply rooted in customary culture and mutual cooperation. The community still maintains customary traditions such as Manggarai traditional houses (*Mbaru Gendang and Niang*). Customary and religious activities are an important part of village life. The word Penti or the definition of Penti is a ritual performed by the people of Popo village as an expression of gratitude and thanks to God and to the ancestors in welcoming the new year. Penti is performed by the people of Popo village as a large and festive event in celebrating the turn of the year filled with gratitude. In this ritual shows gratitude and thanks to God and to the ancestors for all the fortune received during

the previous years, from all the abundant harvests from the Popo village community united in this ritual. The expression in the traditional language is *"mai ga ite cama-cama naka ntaung weru, oke ntaung manga, kudut bole koe loke baca tara"* (let us together welcome the new year, all the bad things that happened in the previous year will be forgotten so that all our hearts are clean to welcome this new year).

Discussion

These findings reveal that the religious, social, and ecological dimensions of Penti rituals function as an integrated structural system rather than as separate elements. Religious belief in creators and ancestral spirits provides spiritual legitimacy for social hierarchies, particularly traditional elder authority (drum elders), whose ritual leadership and decision-making roles are understood as divinely approved. This religious foundation strengthens communal obedience, social cohesion, and the continuity of traditional practices. At the same time, the ecological consciousness in the Penti ritual is embedded in a spiritual cosmology that views nature as a sacred trust given by the divine and guarded by ancestral forces. The expression of gratitude for the agricultural harvest symbolically affirms the moral responsibility to environmental conservation, as ecological balance is believed to affect spiritual blessings and communal well-being. Through these interconnected structures, the Penti ritual supports religious devotion, legitimizes social order, and promotes ecological ethics within the Manggarai community of Popo Village.

In addition, this study shows that the Penti ceremony contains interconnected meanings. Religiously, Penti serves as an expression of gratitude to Mori Kraeng (God) and ancestors for the harvest and protection throughout the year. Socially, this ritual serves as a means to strengthen solidarity, cooperation, and unity among community members, as seen in joint preparations, joint rituals, and joint celebrations. Culturally, Penti acts as a mechanism for passing on traditional values, norms, and knowledge between generations, ensuring the continuity of Manggarai cultural identity.

In addition, the Penti ceremony has moral and ecological significance, emphasizing harmony between humans, nature, and the spiritual world. The respect for the land, harvest, and natural resources reflected in the Penti ceremony demonstrates the community's awareness of environmental balance as part of their local wisdom. Therefore, the Penti ceremony represents a holistic worldview that integrates spiritual beliefs, social cohesion,

cultural preservation, and ecological responsibility in the lives of the Manggarai people in Popo Village.

4. Conclusion

This research contributes academically by providing a systematic and context-based analysis of the Penti ritual as a form of local wisdom practiced by the Manggarai community in Popo Village, an area that has received limited scientific attention. This study expands on previous ritual studies by showing that religious beliefs, social hierarchies, cultural transmission, and ecological ethics in Penti rituals operate as integrated structural systems rather than as isolated values. It shows how spiritual cosmology legitimizes indigenous authority, maintains social cohesion, and frames environmental responsibility as a moral obligation. In addition, this research contributes to the study of applied linguistics and cultural discourse by highlighting the role of ritual language (torok) as a medium for transmitting cosmological beliefs, social norms, and local knowledge across generations. By offering empirical documentation and conceptual insights, this study positions the Penti ritual as a living cultural mechanism that preserves identity, social order, and ecological awareness in the midst of modernization

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