Learning to Coexist: Education, Cultural Values, and Religious Harmony in Kedang Society

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Abstract

This research explores the resilience of interreligious harmony in Kedang, Lembata Regency, East Nusa Tenggara, by focusing on the intersection of local culture, religion, and governance. The study identifies three central pillars in the philosophy of life for the Kedang people: the Customary, Religious, and Governmental pillars, which together foster a strong social fabric. Key aspects of Kedang culture, including traditional architecture, music, rituals, and customs, are examined for their role in sustaining peaceful coexistence among different religious groups. A phenomenological approach is used to understand these practices authentically, with data collected through participant observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation. The research employs purposive sampling to select informants, including community, religious, youth, and traditional leaders, as well as government officials. Through SWOT analysis, the study assesses the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats related to interfaith relations in Kedang, proposing strategic measures for reinforcing religious harmony. The findings contribute to a broader understanding of cultural and religious dialogue, offering a model for promoting peace and unity in diverse communities, both within Indonesia and globally.

Keywords: cultural values, education, learning to coexist, religious harmony

1. Introduction

Culture and religion embody noble values that serve as guides in human life. Although they are interconnected, they have fundamental differences. Culture arises from human emotions, thoughts, and creativity, whereas religion is a divine revelation from Allah, delivered through the angel Gabriel to the Prophet Muhammad SAW as guidance (*hudan*) for humanity. Culture is an institutional reality. It is not merely a principle but also a fundamental institution of the state or society as a kind of human organization (Mitias, 2024).

In social life, cultural and religious differences often become sources of conflict. Therefore, Civic education helps young people develop political awareness and the skills needed for civic participation. Research on civic education (Alscher et al., 2022) has demonstrated its effectiveness in promoting social cohesion in multicultural societies. However, civic education's integration with Islamic values such as *ta'aruf*, *tafahum*, *ta'awun*, and *takaaful* remains an emerging area of study (Kurniasih et al., 2024; Fathoni & Hidayah, 2023; Karima et al., 2024). While scholars like (Fraser-Burgess & Higgins, 2024) argue that civic education shapes citizens' values, few studies explore its role in reinforcing religious tolerance through culturally embedded practices.

To support this, communication between cultural adherents and religious believers must be regularly promoted, following Islamic communication principles such as *qaulan makrufah* (proper words) and *qaulan karimah* (noble words). Inappropriate communication often leads to misunderstandings, which, if unresolved, can escalate into disharmony and conflict. To maintain harmony and prevent conflicts, Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) established the Medina Charter, recognized as the world's first written constitution (Murdan & Haiwannisa, 2019). Drafted in 622 AD, the charter contained 47 articles—23 addressing relationships among Muslims, particularly between the *Ansar* and *Muhajirin*, and 24 regulating relations between Muslims and other communities, including Jews (Nurhadi, 2019).

The historical acknowledgment of Christian-Muslim relations in Arabia, exemplified by the Medina Charter, highlights the enduring tenets of religious tolerance and coexistence within Islamic tradition. Prophet Muhammad's commitment to safeguarding non-Muslim tribes and upholding their religious freedoms established a foundational model for interfaith harmony (Harianja et al., 2024)., which remains evident in the continued presence of Christian Arabs in Islamic societies. However, as (Arif et al., 2023) assert, interreligious dynamics are inherently fluid, subject to periodic fluctuations and sociopolitical shifts. This perspective aligns with historical trajectories, emphasizing that while the principles of tolerance persist, sustaining interfaith harmony necessitates ongoing dialogue, adaptive strategies, and proactive engagement to mitigate emerging challenges and uphold societal equilibrium.

All religions advocate for tolerance and harmony (Tule, 2000). Religious solidarity is essential in maintaining religious harmony and peace between people (Luqman & Ilhamdi, 2023; Sintang, 2022). However, religious diversity can sometimes lead to clashes and conflicts. Conflicts may occur within a nation between religious communities or even between nations due to various factors. Conflict is a situation where there are differences of opinion or interest between one individual and another individual (Khovivah et al., 2024; Ruslan et al., 2024), an unwillingness to accept the truth, and an attitude of rejecting what is right (Mathar, 2013). Addressing conflicts early to prevent issues from escalating and disrupting organizational dynamics or daily life (Fadillah, 2024).

Arrogance and superiority complexes frequently fuel cultural and religious conflicts, as well as disputes between nations. Conflicts between cultures, races, ethnic groups, faiths, and life values can result from diversity, but it can also serve as a "unifying force" that brings society together (Hidayat et al., 2024).This highlights the crucial role of Civic Education in shaping responsible citizens who respect laws and engage in dialogue without suspicion (Fajar & Dewi, 2021). There is no peace between nations without peace between religions, and there is no peace between religions without interreligious communication (Irfany, 2023). Scholars have also highlighted the role of interreligious communication and public relations in maintaining peace, particularly in diverse societies (Bhati, 2013; Mulyana, 2000).

Recent studies have examined how local cultural philosophies contribute to peaceful coexistence. Examples include Toraja's tongkonan institution and the motto misa' kada dipotuo, pantan kada dipomate, which promote unity between Christians and Muslims (Manggau, 2020), as well as Manado's philosophy of Torang Samua Basudara, which fosters interfaith harmony (Umar & Pangalila, 2019). The factors that strengthen interreligious harmony, as seen from the efforts made in Pakutandang Village, are more inclined toward deference values (Hamid, 2024).

Similarly, the Kedang community in Lembata, NTT, demonstrates how cultural values, respect, and dialogue can prevent conflicts and create peaceful societies. Building upon these foundations, this study seeks to further explore civic education's role in promoting interreligious tolerance, particularly by integrating Islamic principles of ta'aruf, tafahum, ta'awun, and takaaful with modern civic engagement. This approach contributes to ongoing discussions on religious harmony, social cohesion, and conflict prevention in multicultural societies.

While numerous studies have explored cultural harmony and interfaith coexistence in Indonesia, most have focused on either urban centers or intergroup dynamics at a macro level (Rohman et al., 2024; Azmi et al., 2023). There is a lack of empirical research that examines the interplay between local traditions, spiritual beliefs, and governance at the micro-community level, especially in isolated areas like Kedang. Furthermore, studies on the operationalization of the Islamic civic values—ta'aruf, tafahum, ta'awun, and takaaful—within indigenous civic life remain scarce. This study addresses this gap by offering an in-depth examination of how traditional oaths (Sain Bayan), kinship systems, and intercultural communication strategies contribute to long-term religious harmony in Kedang society.

This research examines the philosophy of the Kedang community, which emphasizes the balance between customs, religion, and government. It focuses on how the "*Sain bayan*" (traditional oath) reinforces moral values such as loyalty and respect. The study highlights how these cultural practices help maintain interreligious harmony between Muslims and Catholics in Kedang, fostering peaceful coexistence through shared values and mutual respect. The research questions in this study were: In what ways do the history and family narratives of the Kedang people, particularly the Uyolewun lineage, contribute to the preservation of peace and interreligious harmony in the community? What specific social and cultural values support and sustain religious harmony within the Kedang community? The research questions in this study looked at how history and family stories, especially from the Uyolewun lineage, helped keep peace and religious harmony in the Kedang community.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Religious Harmony

Harmony is a social condition characterized by compatibility or non-discrimination (harmony, concordance) (Sari et al., 2022). Understanding religious harmony means living in a good and peaceful atmosphere, not fighting, being united, and agreeing among people of different religions; or between people in one religion (Forouhari et al., 2019). Religion is an integral part of the lives of many individuals and societies around the world, influencing actions, values, norms, social structures, personal and universal, (Bhambra et al., 2021; Sari et al., 2022). Some lead ceremonies, while others prepare the venue and ceremonial tools or serve as ritual participants. In Islam, this includes internal cohesion among Muslims through the concepts of *ikhtilâf* and *ukhuwwah Islâmiyyah*, as well as peaceful coexistence with other religious communities (Kamil, 2022).

In contemporary conflict and peace studies, peace (harmony) is categorized into two types: positive and negative peace. Positive peace is achieved through efforts to eliminate structural discrimination. It is typically attained by promoting equal access to fair treatment within existing systems, whether in economic, political, or social domains. On the other hand, negative peace refers to the absence of direct violence, such as war. The concept of comprehensive peace emerges from these two approaches, combining positive and negative peace. Comprehensive peace is a broad framework for building lasting peace (Susan, 2009).

Religious harmony can be achieved by embracing diversity, practicing mutual respect, and encouraging collaboration. To maintain national stability, it's essential to strengthen social capital and apply effective policies and strategies. This involves promoting multicultural awareness and ensuring equitable policies in political, social, economic, and educational development (Bahrul, 2012). Several forms of interreligious collaboration contribute to strengthening unity, including communication forums, dialogue forums, discussion forums, and cooperative initiatives (Hamidah, 2016).

2.2 Social Values in Society

Social values are both personal and societal: they originate within individuals as abstract principles but are continuously shaped and reshaped by the social environment around them (Ilyas, 2012; Vieyt, 2022). One of the values creatively developed is the social values contained in the third principle of Pancasila, which is "The Unity of Indonesia." To strengthen the Unity of Indonesia, Indonesian Muslim scholars designed the concept of the trilogy of harmony, which includes harmony among religious communities, intra-religious harmony, and harmony between religious adherents and the government. This is particularly relevant as issues of religious tolerance remain a persistent concern in social, national, and state life, as there are still groups in society that act intolerantly (Muhdina, 2016). Humans are social beings because they live together in various organized groups commonly referred to as society (Syamsudhuha, 2008). Society refers to a group of individuals who are closely connected through shared systems, traditions, norms, and laws, which shape a communal way of life (Sastrawan et al., 2024).

2.3 The Formation Process of Culture and Tradition

Culture is the result of human life, created collectively in collaboration with others (Fatonah et al., 2024), Culture is a structured manifestation of human behaviour within social life, shaped by

specific national and local contexts, including political, linguistic, economic, institutional, and professional domains (Muhtarom et al., 2024) it is difficult to eradicate cultural traits that have been ingrained since childhood (Hidayat et al., 2024). Tradition is primarily about passing knowledge across generations, often orally, to ensure its continuity. It represents long-established customs that shape a community's way of life within a specific culture, time, or religion.

3. Research Methodology

3.1 Research Design

This study is classified as qualitative research, which explores and examines a social phenomenon within its natural setting. The research is conducted without interference or manipulation by the researcher, allowing for a deep understanding of the social, cultural, and religious dynamics of the Kedang community in Lembata Regency, East Nusa Tenggara (NTT). This research employs a phenomenological approach, which requires a holistic understanding of the subject in its natural context. The researcher is directly involved in the field, integrating with the community to interpret cultural and religious practices from the perspectives of the people who experience them. This approach ensures that insights into the interplay between tradition, religion, and social stability are captured authentically.

3.2 Data Sources

The study takes place in Lembata Regency, East Nusa Tenggara (NTT), with a specific focus on the Kedang community. The location is selected based on three essential elements: place, people, and activities. This research seeks to uncover the social values and cultural traditions that have sustained religious harmony in the region for centuries. The selection of data sources is done purposively, meaning that informants are chosen based on specific considerations and objectives using purposive sampling. The informants in this study include community leaders (Tomas), religious leaders (Toga), youth leaders (Toda), traditional leaders (Todat), and relevant government officials.

3.3 Data Collection Techniques

Data collection is conducted in a natural setting, using three main techniques: participant observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation. The researcher observes the activities of the Kedang community, focusing on their social values, whether derived from local culture or religious teachings. In addition to observation, the researcher conducts in-depth interviews with selected individuals. The interviews follow a semi-structured format, allowing for deeper exploration of the topics. This research uses two types of documents: Personal Documents, owned by community leaders (*Tomas*), religious leaders (*Toga*), youth leaders (*Toda*), traditional leaders (*Todat*), and government officials. Official Documents, these include internal and external records such as memos, announcements, and organizational rules used in daily life.

3.4 Data Analysis Techniques

In this study, the main research instrument is the researcher (human instrument). The researcher is responsible for determining the research focus, selecting informants, and collecting data. Data analysis follows three main steps: Data Reduction, summarizing and selecting key points, focusing on the social and cultural values in the community. Data Display, presenting the data in an organized manner. Conclusion Drawing/Verification – Interpreting the data and verifying findings.

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4. Results and Discussions

4.1 The Philosophy of Life the Kedang People

The Kedang community bases all aspects of life on a core philosophy known as *nima' telu* (three pillars), which consists of the following:

1) *Ada'* (Customary) Pillar

The Kedang people uphold *sain bayan* (a traditional oath), believing that customs serve as the main pillar of life. To live in harmony and peace whether within the household or the broader community, they must adhere to the *sain bayan* (traditional oath).

2) Pillar of Religion

The pillar of religion emphasizes not only obedience but also devotion to the Creator. In Kedang, this concept is expressed as: *"Puru ling barang lei, inga' nute tau' toye', nikol ude' kara tikol, nadang ude' kara tadan,"* which means "Keep your hands and feet safe in life, remember religious teachings so that your life remains open and free from obstacles."

3) Pillar of *Pamarenta* (Government)

The government serves as a pillar that strengthens both customary and religious pillars. Obedience to the government ensures an orderly life, particularly in matters of public services and taxation.

4.2 Kedang Culture

Several types of Kedang culture are unique and interesting to study because they all contribute to the harmonization of social life. As what is said by the below Mr. Eha' of *Kedang* culture: The culture of the Kedang people is marked by traditions that foster social harmony and unity. Key elements include the Ebang Rian, a traditional family house supported by four pillars, with a wooden platform underneath for communal gatherings. Weddings, such as Hoe' Lale', and funeral feasts are important cultural practices, often accompanied by prayers for the deceased. Additionally, Kong Bawa, a gong orchestra, and the Soka Hedung dance are performed during significant events, reflecting the community's connection to music and celebration. Traditional rituals like Poan Kemer, led by shamans for health and wellbeing, and the Pemali culture, which enforces moral prohibitions, are vital in maintaining social order. Waya' Doping involves offering respect to guests through the ritual of presenting areca nuts and tobacco. Together, these customs help maintain peace and strengthen relationships among the Kedang people, highlighting the deep ties between their cultural, spiritual, and social life.

4.3 Key Factors Influencing Religious Harmony in Kedang

Based on the research findings, three important aspects need to be studied: 1) The Adhesive Factors of Harmony, which enable the Kedang people to live peacefully without religious conflict. 2) Communication Between Local Cultural Owners and Followers of Islam and Catholicism. 3) Aspects of Citizenship Education. These three aspects also serve as best practices for embodying the human dimension as individuals, social beings, and religious beings in the national and state life within the framework of the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia (NKRI).

4.3.1 Adhesive Factors for Religious Harmony

Research data identifies several adhesive factors that allow the Kedang people to live in peace and harmony without religious conflict. The active roles of the government, community leaders, traditional leaders, and religious leaders serve as structural support in maintaining unity (Samuel & Tumonglo, 2023). However, achieving lasting harmony also requires fostering an open attitude, which encourages dialogue and mutual understanding among religious groups (Purba, 2022). Additionally, reinforcing shared values and norms further strengthens social cohesion by promoting trust, order, and a collective identity within religious communities (Febrianti et al., 2025).

a. The Historical Factor of *Uyolewun*

The history of Uyolewun has influenced the social system, as explained by a scholar who introduced two theories: the theory of universal evolution and the theory of social systems (Basthoni, 2018). This social system theory closely relates to the history of *Uyolewun*, which has been upheld as a guiding philosophy of life and has proven to be a unifying force for the Kedang community. As a result, all Kedang people adhere to the *uri sele* (pledge).

The contents of the life philosophy pledge of the Kedang community are as follows: *Uyelweun Kaya' Tene, Dorong Dope', Ote Nene, Kara One' Pana We', Ular Naga Ari Bora, Ahin Tutu' Kara Dora', Pan Ebeng Bale Bora'.*

b. *Bayan Science* Factor/Customary Oath

This oath is one of the factors in establishing social relations based on mores that uphold moral law. Fundamentally, an oath is a solemn religious act integral to judicial proceedings (Putra & Zuraidah, 2024). An oath reflects the embodiment of commitment to the principle of Belief in One Supreme God (Laluddin, 2021).

The mores in Kedang are known as the Traditional Oath (Sain Bayan), a customary law consisting of binding and sacred rules that have governed social life from the pre-religious era to the present (Interview with Mr. Dato' Boli).

The content of *the bayan sain* stipulated by the customary law of the Kedang community is as follows:

He's got a good sense of himself, the puru larang sin helps break' 'Baby' toye', Tara Puri Ling Lei Goods, Puri Nunu Wowo Goods, Vaccine Nobol Karabatte TEA, Inga' Nute San Tau' Toye' Bayan, iwi' ling tau' lei (Interview with Mr. Dato' Boli).

The verses of the *Sian Bayan* oath constitute the main content of the traditional vow and are applicable worldwide. However, the customary oath that specifically applies to the Kedang people and their surroundings has its own distinct wording, as follows:

Itung we' ongan we', Todi we' baring we', Kara kare' kata' kara piring liwa', Lilin kong bare bala mui eten ul lala, Owan hoing maya' Kahin, Kati awen hole' hama, Paro botin ba' wowo (Interview with Mr. Dato' Boli).

Both the main and supporting *Sain Bayan* contain customary rules regarding the prohibition of slander, incitement, theft, adultery, claiming customary rights to land, and claiming ownership

of humans, goods, and services. These rules are binding and sacred in nature, thereby fostering natural solidarity.

4.3.2 Resilience of Religious Harmony in Kedang, Lembata Regency – East Nusa Tenggara

Table: SWOT Analysis of the Resilience of religious Harmony in Kedang

Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
1. Preservation of the Social Values of the Kedang Community: a. Values of Obedience b. Values of Kinship c. Values of Mutual Cooperation d. Values of Affection 2. The Uyolewun Historical Factor 3. The Customary Oath/Sain Bayan Factor 4. The Patron-Client Factor 5. The Sustained Existence of Traditional Customary Institutions and Clans	1. The social values of the Kedang community have not been formally documented as part of a scientific heritage and reference, which may eventually lead to the dilution of these values. 2. The descendants of Uyolewun remain culturally homogeneous and have not been exposed to heterogeneous conditions. 3. The Customary Oath/Sain Bayan is reputed to possess "magical" powers through the use of spiritual services, a belief that is not consistently endorsed by the devout. 4. A crisis of exemplary leadership. 5. The presence of preconceived attitudes among younger generations regarding the existence of traditional customary institutions and clans.	1. The Indonesian government's commitment to strengthening Tri-Interfaith Harmony in order to create a harmonious national atmosphere. 2. The government's commitment to bolstering the pillars of the state to prevent national disintegration. 3. An increasing scholarly interest in Kedang culture from both national and international researchers. 4. The presence of a democratic environment. 5. The rise of community and youth organizations.	1. The onset of a heterogeneous era in Kedang society, particularly with regard to the control of economic, political, and land resources by non-indigenous groups. 2. The unregulated sale of traditional alcoholic beverages and the ease of access to narcotics distribution. 3. A state of metamorphosis within the Kedang community due to the influence of advanced information technology and external cultural shift. 4. Distortions in democratic practices, along with issues related to gender and human rights. 5. The influence of contemporary ideologies.

Based on the SWOT analysis of the resilience of religious harmony, and having identified the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats, it is imperative that all stakeholders in Kedang, Lembata Regency – East Nusa Tenggara, undertake systematic, sustainable, and strategic measures both short- and long-term.

a. To strengthen religious harmony in Kedang, it is crucial to reinforce local values like adherence to norms, kinship, cooperation, and compassion through education. The history of Uyolewun should be documented to preserve the community's identity, and the Traditional Oath (*Sumpah Adat*) must be maintained as a moral symbol. The patron-client relationship and customary

institutions are key to ensuring social order and interfaith solidarity, and should be reinforced for conflict resolution and community unity.

b. To address the weaknesses in sustaining religious harmony in Kedang, several actions need to be taken. The social values of the Kedang community, which have not yet been documented, should be preserved and shared through educational initiatives, such as writing competitions that convey their importance to younger generations. Cultural festivals can also help nurture creativity and unity among the youth, fostering solidarity across different faiths and preventing external cultural influences from eroding local traditions. Furthermore, the history of Uyolewun and the Sain Bayan (Traditional Oath) should be formally documented and included in the local curriculum, ensuring that these cultural elements are preserved and serve as references for future generations. Additionally, legal measures, such as Village Regulations (PERDES) and Regional Regulations (PERDA), should be introduced to protect the cultural institutions and clans that play a crucial role in maintaining social harmony and religious unity in Kedang.

c. To take advantage of existing opportunities, the government needs to strengthen the Tri Kerukunan and national pillars like the 1945 Constitution, Pancasila, Bhineka Tunggal Ika, and the NKRI to maintain national unity. Increased attention to Kedang's culture from researchers opens the door to promote local values. Moreover, democracy provides space for people to actively participate in maintaining interfaith harmony, while community and youth organizations can help build solidarity and peace in Kedang.

d. To address the threats in Kedang, the community must confront challenges such as the growing influence of non-indigenous people in economic, political, and land control, the availability of alcohol and drugs, and the impact of technology and external cultures on traditional values. Additionally, there are concerns about biases in democracy, gender, and human rights, and the spread of radical ideologies. To mitigate these, local leaders, including religious, community, youth, and customary figures, should promote harmony through education on Three Harmonies, while government and community organizations collaborate to strengthen national values like the Constitution, Pancasila, and NKRI. Educational institutions should also offer life skills training and raise awareness about the dangers of extremism.

4.4 Communication between Cultural Leaders and Religious Believers

The process of communication consists of three main elements: the communicator, the message, and the recipient. The goal is for the recipient to understand the message conveyed (Priarni, 2018). One of the communication styles used is a cultural approach, which has proven to be highly effective and impactful for religious communities and society in general (Al-Fikri, 2024). Based on this, this study focuses on two types of communication: cultural and religious. Thus, the communicators are cultural leaders and religious believers, the message is local culture, and the recipients are the Kedang people.

4.4.1 Communication of Cultural Patterns

Culture is a system adopted by members of society, representing a collective rather than an individual identity. It integrates various components in a way that ensures consistency and coherence (Berdame & Lombogia, 2020). Like other cultures in Indonesia, Kedang culture has unique characteristics that define it.

a. Understanding *Ebang Rian* Culture

Ebang Rian is a traditional family house with four pillars, a thatched or reed roof, and a *lipu rian* (large veranda) underneath.

This building plays a crucial role in unifying families and serves as the center for the bineng maing ceremony, a discussion regarding marriage plans for a son or daughter.

This discussion is led by the *kalake leu* (customary elders) as a sign of respect for the dignity of the daughter and her extended family.

b. Understanding *Kong Bawa* and *Soka Hedung* Culture

Kong Bawa is a traditional musical ensemble played during cultural celebrations, democratic events, the welcoming of honored guests, the return of pilgrims, and public festivities. The ensemble consists of a variety of gongs and a drum, including one *kong utun*, one *kong tu'*, two *kong rian*, two *kong leka'*, and a drum (*dobang*). From a communication perspective, the *Kong Bawa* and *Soka Hedung* cultures convey cultural messages, including: A message of gratitude, symbolized by drumming rhythms that express joy and celebration, often accompanied by *soka hedung* (a traditional dance). A message of respect for guests, represented by the beating of the drum and gong, along with the *soka hedung* dance. These traditions are performed during celebrations, the arrival of distinguished guests, and the funerals of traditional or governmental leaders. The drum and *soka hedung* serve as a tribute to the contributions of these figures.

c. Understanding *Waya' Doping* Culture

Similar to *Kong Bawa* and *Soka Hedung*, *Waya' Doping* conveys a message of respect to guests. This is done by offering areca nuts either at the host's home or in the *ebang rian* (traditional house). In Kedang cultural communication, this act symbolizes honor and hospitality.

An act of respect for guests, among the Kedang people, serving ue mal bako (areca nut and tobacco/cigarette) is a way of showing respect and reverence. An act of honoring guests, in traditional ceremonies, discussions do not begin until the guests have been served ue mal bako (Interview with Mr. Saiful Yusuf).

Guests feel deeply honored when presented with areca nuts and tobacco, while failing to offer them may be considered an insult, particularly in ceremonies like *bineng maing*.

4.4.2 Communication of Religious Patterns

The religious communication approach is a way of thinking about religion that takes organizational life seriously (Djupe & Neiheisel, 2022). These factors help create harmonious dialogue, prevent misunderstandings, and strengthen tolerance and relationships among religious communities (Azmi et al., 2023). In Kedang culture, religious communication involves the use of cultural practices and symbols to express religious values. This includes thanksgiving prayers in *hoe' lale'* culture and a deep respect for divine justice in *poan kemer* culture.

a. Understanding *Hoe' Lale'* Culture

Hoe' Lale' refers to wedding receptions and communal feasts that follow the *bineng maing* ceremony. These celebrations are often marked by prayer ceremonies Islamic weddings include prayers and *tahlilan* (recitations for the deceased) led by the village imam, while Christian weddings involve a religious service conducted by a priest.

c. Understanding *Pemali* Culture

Pemali culture refers to traditional prohibitions, known in Kedang as *niping ireng*. Violating these prohibitions is believed to result in immediate consequences. Examples include: *Puru ling barang lei*, prohibition against theft and wrongful claims over customary rights. *Tau ula loyo*, prohibition against adultery.

c. Understanding *Poan Kemer* Culture

Before the introduction of Islam and Christianity, the Kedang people practiced animism and dynamism. Communication with *Tuang Ala Laha Tala* (the Creator) was conducted through *Poan Kemer*, a traditional ritual led by *molan* (shamans) at the request of individuals or families seeking healing (*tuo moleng balo laen*). The ritual involved the recitation of Kedang mantras and the offering of white cotton, free-range chicken eggs, and *tuak* (palm wine) placed on *lapa'* (flat stones) as a medium for supplication to *Toang Ala* (the Creator). The belief underlying this ritual was that *ino welin tuan tana, amo laha ula loyo* (the Creator who formed the heavens and the earth).

4.5 Citizenship Education

In Kedang, social values are always taught through two pathways: the cultural pathway and the formal education pathway.

4.5.1 Cultural Pathway in Citizenship Education

Citizenship Education encompasses the social values of the Kedang community, including:

a. Values of Compliance (*Inga' Nute Sain Tau' Toye' Bayan*)

Obedience to advice is an important aspect of local culture, known in the Kedang language as *Inga' Nute Sain Tau' Toye' Bayan*.

Inga' means "remember," while nute sain refers to an oath passed down through generations. Tau' toye' bayan means "fear of customary sanctions due to a customary oath (sain bayan) (Interview with Mr. Stanis Kapo' Lelang Wayan).

The interview reveals that the Kedang people maintain social harmony through strong cultural values. Inga' (remember) and nute sain (ancestral oath) emphasize the importance of honoring traditions. Tau' toye' bayan shows that people are guided by a fear of violating customary oaths, which helps regulate behavior and uphold community unity.

b. Kinship Values (*Ine Ame Binen Maing*)

Kinship in the *Uyolewun* Lineage. The Kedang people believe they are descendants of Adam's children, expressed as *tein ude' dewa' eha', ine ude' ame eha'* ("we come from the same womb, from one mother and one father").

Kinship Through the *Mawin* Marriage Route. Based on the interview with Mr. Eha', kinship through marriage in Kedang involves several specific stages. Partner selection occurs either through parental arrangement (dahang rehing) or mutual consent (aran we/beyeng keu). The *bele money* ceremony (bele ke' pae) follows, where both families agree on the bride price (belis), typically ivory or gongs, with amounts based on the 1978 Budaa Seminar. Marriage contracts are conducted according to religious customs by the KUA for Muslims or the Church (Stasi) for Catholics. The wedding celebration (Walimatul Ursy) formally introduces the couple and includes a

communal feast. Compassion is deeply rooted in Kedang values, expressed as *ebeng we' bora' we* sibling-like love that lasts a lifetime. Additionally, mutual cooperation (*te' we' bare we'*) is central, encouraging support across cultural and religious lines.

4.5.2 Civic Education and Political Pathways

Since the arrival of Islam and Catholicism in Kedang, educational institutions were established as a means of spreading religion, in addition to the roles played by mosques and churches. According to historical records from one of Kedang's religious figures, Husen Noer said:

a. Madrasah Education Pathway

The dissemination of knowledge, including civic education, can be effectively facilitated through formal educational channels, particularly within the madrasah system (Khaidir Fadil et al., 2022). To teach Islamic teachings outside of mosques, madrasahs were also established in Buyasuri, including MIS Nurul Huda Kalikur, MIS Siti Harfan Leuwutung, MIS Leuwohung, MIS Atu'laleng, MIS Bean, MTs/MTsN Kalikur, and MAS/MAN Kalikur. In Leuwutung, madrasahs included MTs/MTsN Leuwutung. In Omesuri, there were MIS/MIN Hoelea, MIS Nurul Hadi Leubatang, MIS Al-Mansyur Meluwiting, MIS Leuwehe', MIS Mahal, MIS Nilanapo, MIS Al-Hikmah Baluring, and MTs Hingalamamengi.

b. Catholic School Education Pathway

In 1602, the Dutch arrived and colonized the archipelago, including the Kedang region. They came with a Christian-Catholic mission, spreading Catholicism through Catholic churches and elementary schools (SDK) in several villages, as well as junior high schools (SMP) and Bosko in *Ali'ur Oba* Village, Buyasuri District. Meanwhile, churches were established in every village in Kedang, except for Kalikur Village, Leubatang Village, and several expansion villages in the 1990$_s$.

c. Political Education Pathway

The Dutch introduced Catholicism but sought to avoid conflict with the Kedang government under the *Hamente* (King), who was Muslim. As a result, they adopted a political approach by recognizing the *Hamente* (King) of Kedang with two distinct functions: one as the King of Religion for religious affairs and the other as the King of Government for administrative governance. The jurisdiction covered two sub-districts: Omesuri and Buyasuri District. Based on the discussion of the research findings, this study can serve as a best practice for preventing conflicts and fostering religious harmony in other regions of Indonesia.

This study's findings echo recent research emphasizing the role of localized moral frameworks in sustaining religious harmony (Rizki & Suryaningsih, 2021; Chandra & Faisal, 2022). In many communities, moral and ethical norms are deeply rooted in culture, often passed down through oral traditions, rituals, and customary law. However, the Kedang community presents a unique case in which indigenous systems, such as the Sain Bayan (traditional oath), function not only as cultural artifacts but also as dynamic instruments for conflict prevention and social regulation. These oaths are considered sacred and binding, enforcing community ethics and promoting accountability within both interfaith and intrafaith interactions. Unlike studies from other regions that emphasize the importance of formal interfaith councils or institutionalized dialogue platforms—such as in Bukit Malintang or Papua, where harmony is facilitated by structured communication between religious leaders (Rohman et al., 2024; Harianja et al., 2024)— the Kedang approach is informal yet deeply structured by local norms. The moral governance in

Kedang is internalized through communal narratives, symbolic language, and shared ceremonies that transcend religious boundaries. This resonates with the findings of Widodo & Karimah (2023), who argue that in some rural Indonesian contexts, the integration of traditional wisdom with everyday life is more effective than top-down models of religious moderation.

Furthermore, the Kedang model demonstrates resilience in an era where external influences and modernization often weaken traditional authority. The continued adherence to the nima' telu (three pillars) philosophy—encompassing custom, religion, and governance—suggests a community-oriented method of conflict resolution that is proactive, rather than reactive. This supports the perspective of Prasetyo & Wijaya (2023), who found that culturally embedded civic education reinforces tolerance more effectively when it includes local practices and beliefs. By documenting these processes, this study offers an alternative framework to interreligious harmony that prioritizes cultural ownership, trust-based governance, and community engagement over formal institutions. It reinforces the idea that sustainable peace is not always dependent on legal frameworks, but often on deeply ingrained, collectively upheld values.

The novelty of this research lies in its in-depth documentation and analysis of the Kedang community—a society that has received limited academic attention, especially in the context of interfaith harmony. By employing a phenomenological approach, this study offers a rare glimpse into how indigenous mechanisms function at the grassroots level to prevent religious conflict and promote social cohesion. Unlike many studies that focus on formal interfaith institutions, legal frameworks, or state-driven programs, this research highlights how deeply rooted cultural practices and oral traditions can sustain harmony in a decentralized, community-led manner. A key contribution of this study is its exploration of the Sain Bayan, a traditional oath system that functions as a moral compass and regulatory tool in social interactions. Together with the nima' telu philosophy—emphasizing balance between custom, religion, and governance—these indigenous systems provide a holistic foundation for peaceful coexistence between religious groups. The research demonstrates how these cultural constructs are not merely symbolic but actively shape behavior, resolve disputes, and reinforce shared values within the Kedang community. This study also stands out for its integration of cultural anthropology, religious studies, and civic education, offering a multidisciplinary perspective on peacebuilding. Its focus on remote, traditionally structured communities broadens the scope of peace education discourse and introduces a culturally embedded model of religious tolerance that may be adapted in other multi-faith contexts. By emphasizing lived experiences and local wisdom, the research challenges dominant narratives that often privilege institutional or state-based approaches to interreligious dialogue and conflict resolution.

The findings of this study offer valuable insights for educational practices, especially in culturally diverse and religiously plural settings. By incorporating indigenous mechanisms of peace—such as the Kedang community's Sain Bayan (traditional oath) and the nima' telu philosophy—into civic and religious education, educators can nurture values of tolerance, empathy, and social responsibility among students. Embedding local wisdom into the formal education system enables learners to connect more deeply with their cultural heritage while fostering appreciation for religious differences. This approach not only enriches the curriculum but also supports character education and national cohesion. Schools and educators are encouraged to design learning materials that reflect local cultural practices and emphasize peaceful coexistence, mutual respect, and the importance of community collaboration. Furthermore, educational

policymakers may consider developing localized modules or extracurricular programs that highlight traditional values as part of broader civic and peace education strategies. These efforts can help students develop practical skills in intercultural dialogue and conflict prevention, preparing them to become responsible citizens in a diverse society.

5. Conclusion

The Kedang community exemplifies a harmonious blend of customary, religious, and governmental values rooted in their core philosophy *nima' telu* (three pillars). Their way of life, sustained by the *Sain Bayan* (traditional oath), promotes social cohesion, moral integrity, and cultural continuity. Unique traditions such as *Ebang Rian*, *Hoe' Lale'*, and *Kong Bawa* reflect deep respect for family, spirituality, and community. Religious harmony in Kedang is supported by several adhesive factors, including shared history (*Uyolewun*), customary law, and the active role of leaders. Effective communication both cultural and religious facilitates mutual understanding among Muslims and Catholics. Additionally, citizenship education through cultural practices, formal institutions, and political engagement plays a vital role in shaping inclusive civic values. The Kedang experience serves as a model for fostering peace, tolerance, and religious harmony in diverse societies across Indonesia. For the future, teachers, religious leaders, and the government should work together to keep these traditions alive. By including them in schools, community activities, and policies, Lembata-NTT can continue to be a place where people of different religions live peacefully together.

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