

# Using Local Wisdom as a Protection from COVID-19

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**Abstract.** The spread of COVID-19, which is difficult to predict, has caused the community to experience shocks both mentally and psychologically which also affects the social relations of the community down to the lowest level. The culture of gathering in Indonesian society that has become a daily routine has stopped and there is no concern about when it will recover. The cracks for the sake of grazing in our society are beginning to be felt. People began to experience panic anxiety so that government recommendations and religious institutions were ignored by some people with logical defects and put forward emotional sentimentality. In that condition, social capital in synergy with local wisdom can be a solution so that social anxiety and fractures do not occur.

**Keywords:** : Social capital, Local wisdom, Optimism

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## 1 Introduction

Culture and all of its products are the outcome of the human life process. Humans' worlds have an effect on how they live. These processes shape how people live and creatively determine their lives. The primal instincts of humans to survive and thrive are realized through these creative manifestations of what we now refer to as culture. Culture provides the framework for the formation of various identities, including local identities. Each local community expresses their culture and their ability to survive through the unique way they interact with their environment. Local wisdom is the capacity to adapt to, organize, and cultivate the influences of the natural world and other cultures. It is this capacity that is responsible for the transformation and creation of Indonesia's remarkable cultural diversity. The material archaeological record from prehistory and early history contains evidence of indigenous wisdom [1].

National culture has always been concerned with issues of national identity, and Indonesian national identity is viewed as a synthesis of all of Nusantara's local cultures, with 'Indonesian's' representing the pinnacle expression of the country's diverse communities' positively valued cultural characteristics [2]. Individual cultural systems acquire datum through their interaction with other cultures in the dynamic processes of everyday life. Acculturation and assimilation have occurred throughout the history of human culture, and these processes have accelerated

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with increased human contact via trade systems and other civilizational changes. Culture is a vehicle for self-expression and the formation of communal identity, and individual expressions of indigenous wisdom come to define and play a central role in a community's cultural life. Local wisdom frequently serves as a response to everyday life challenges as well as the actualization of life systems, as it provides a framework for responding to external forces while retaining a coherent cultural identity into the future. Local wisdom pervades all spheres of human expression, including lifestyle, social patterns, perceptions, and orientations [3].

Local wisdom knowledge gained through research in a variety of fields of study frequently results in conclusions based on particular representations of this aspect of culture. This tendency of different approaches to examining local wisdom to specialize and compartmentalize results in findings that provide only a partial understanding of the phenomenon. Local wisdom is frequently analyzed independently of its connections to other entities in the network of a local cultural system. Local wisdom's multidimensionality and broader connections are overlooked. Due to the narrow focus on specific aspects of indigenous wisdom in accordance with the approaches of individual disciplines, it is not studied holistically or as an integrated life-system [4]. Particularistic approaches frequently overlook these systems' breadth and complexity, as well as their interconnection with other facets and dimensions of human life.

COVID-19, which continues to haunt the public, has created a prolonged cycle of fear. The effect, even combining all lines of community life, from an economic, religious (worship) and social perspective, cannot escape the ferocity of this virus. In figures as of May 17, 2020, COVID-19 cases reached 17,514 cases where 4,129 patients were declared cured and 1,148 were declared dead. These numbers clearly create fear because even more people who recover are also the more people who die. However, the community laymen do not focus on the cure rate but rather focus on the mortality rate. Sometimes fear is more attractive than happiness for people who are not well educated about COVID-19. The government is taking quick steps by implementing social distancing or physical distancing to PSBB (Large-Scale Social Restrictions) in order to prevent the spread of this virus. However, what is being forgotten is that the Indonesian people are people who have a penchant for gathering.

## **2. Literature Review**

### **Local Wisdom as a Life Process**

Due to the narrow focus on specific aspects of indigenous wisdom in accordance with the approaches of individual disciplines, it is not studied holistically or as an integral life-system. Particularistic perspectives frequently overlook these systems' breadth and complexity, as well as their interconnection with other facets and dimensions of human life [5]. Due to the narrow focus on specific aspects of indigenous wisdom in accordance with the approaches of individual disciplines, it is not studied holistically and as an integrated life-system. Particularistic perspectives frequently overlook these systems' breadth and complexity, as well as their

interconnectedness with other facets and dimensions of human life. At the local basis, local wisdom may come in the form of values, norms, customs, and knowledge [6].

In Indonesian philosophy, local wisdom refers to a philosophy that lives in the people's hearts, to wise ways of living, to the correct path of life, as expressed through ritual and custom. Local wisdom, from this vantage point, is the result of centuries of spiritual refinement in the interactions of people from the same culture. It is connected with the concept of God and the human relationship with God, as well as with nature and the self. Local wisdom is intrinsically linked to the concept of locus. The term "local" here refers to human ties to specific locations. In philosophical terms, locus does not simply refer to a geographical perspective; it also refers to the way human life interacts with a division of the world into distinct areas: flatlands or mountains, coasts or forests, rice fields or rice paddies. All forms of unique human wisdom have their origins in humans. Local wisdom is the relational bond formed by the interaction of humans with their environment. Local wisdom is defined by this relational context. All manifestations of human life are a form of wisdom derived from the relationship between humans and their environment. Human sociality can be viewed as a self-contained organism. Almost every aspect of life can be phenomenologically understood as a component of a life system. A proper perspective on life and the interpretation of social reality is critical in determining mankind's direction and orientation [7].

These relationships are founded on an awareness of something greater and higher than ourselves, or more precisely, something essential. We are aware of this relationality in our daily experiences and inner lives. Local wisdom, in this sense, transcends pragmatic and practical actions and can be viewed as having spiritual dimensions. Through the course of life, a community's spirituality and rationality crystallize into values that contribute to the definition of their identity and culture.

The role and function of indigenous knowledge in Nusantara's local communities can be classified into three categories. To begin, indigenous wisdom serves as a moral and spiritual guide for communities. This is because the standard of truth within a community's particular life system is determined by how that community views the world. Second, indigenous wisdom serves as an inspiration for knowledge that supports life: indigenous wisdom that contains a set of values and a body of knowledge that ensures the continued existence of diverse natural resources and a sustainable way of life for all living creatures in the indigenous environment. Thirdly, indigenous wisdom serves as a safeguard for an integrated way of life characterized by harmonious and equal relationships between people and between people and nature that are not exploitative.

### **Local Wisdom in Indonesian Ethnic**

Indonesia is a multiethnic country that is diverse in terms of religion, race, and class. "as a matter of fact" of the diversity Under the auspices of the Unitary State of the Republic of

Indonesia, *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika* reflects the nation's cultural diversity [8]. The territory extending from Sabang to Merauke is endowed with an abundance of natural and cultural resources that exhibit a variety of characteristics. Based on Article 1 paragraph 30 of Law number 32 of 2009 concerning Environmental protection and management, "local wisdom is a noble value prevailing in society's life to protect and manage the environment sustainably." As a result of Indonesia's legal pluralism, there is no rigid statement in the law regarding the implementation of environmental management principles based on indigenous wisdom. The principles and concepts of local wisdom are actually stillable to coexist with modern culture and become a reference policy for sustainable development by strengthening the empowerment of the local communities [9].

The following regions are home to indigenous wisdom. (1) Papua has a *tea aro neweak lako* belief (nature is me). *Erstberg* and *Grasberg* Mountains are revered as mother heads, and the land is considered an integral part of human life. As a result, it is critical to manage natural resources prudently. (2) *Searawai*, *Bengkulu*, has a *celako kumali* belief. The sustainability of the environment is rooted in their beliefs, a taboo value in their agricultural system, and the *tanjak* tradition. (3) *Dayak Kenyah*, *East Borneo*, has a *tana'ulen* tradition. The customary community owns the forest territory. As a result, its customary law regulates land management. (4) *Undau Mau Mau*, *West Borneo*. By classifying and utilizing the forest, they develop environmental wisdom for their settlement pattern. They practice shifting cultivation in conjunction with the fallow period, but avoid modern technology in favor of simple, environmentally friendly methods. (5) The *Kesepuhan Pancer Pengawinan* community in *West Java's Dukuh Village*. They respect traditional rituals, myths, and taboos, and they make prudent use of the forest. They are permitted to exploit it if the elders so permit. (6) *Awig-awig* is a social custom in *Bali and Lombok*. By appreciating the value of indigenous knowledge, it is necessary to capitalize on its values and apply them to the development of a civilized society.

### 3. Method

A technique is being attempted, and the issues involved are comparable to those encountered in epistemology studies and philosophy of science [10]. The outcome of system theory research contributes to philosophical ideas based on ontological assumptions, epistemological models, and a new paradigm known as the ecological-systemic paradigm, all of which are important contributions to philosophy. As a result of this contribution, the research approach used in the study of local knowledge can be evaluated.

For study on local knowledge, an interdisciplinary model is required. Local wisdom research should be accessible to contributions from a wide range of fields of study [11]. similar to how the study of culture, philosophy of values, and religious studies should avoid reducing the concept of religion to its textual and institutional representations. When examining this phenomenon, the multidisciplinary approach tries to uncover the values hidden within cultural

forms such as myths, tales, customs, rituals, house-building styles, diverse types of illustration, peace, and the concepts of well-being and hospitality. As part of their field and library research, researchers will examine how local wisdom from diverse ethnic groups in Indonesia might be employed to combat the spread of COVID-19.

#### **4. Results and Discussions**

##### **Protecting Ourselves against COVID-19 with Local Wisdom**

People's self-discipline to wash their hands with soap is crucial to protect ourselves from COVID-19. Moreover, Indonesia is entering the new normal to adapt with the COVID-19. Thus, the hand washing with soap campaign is still necessary to ensure the community makes this practice a habit.

Nowadays, many interesting stories on how the community promotes hand washing with soap have appeared. In Bantaeng district, a runner club named Bantaeng Runners Community (BRC) led by Andi Harianto or known as Anto uses local wisdom to run the hand washing with soap campaign.

##### **Inspired by Tradition**

Anto and his friends in BRC made 'Barraneng' to help their surrounding community develop hand washing with soap habits as they were inspired by the tradition of Bantang people. 'Barraneng' or often known as 'gumbang', 'bempa' or 'padasang' by the Bugisnese-Makassar community is a crock containing water usually used to wash hands and feet.

'Barraneng' was commonly found in front of the people's houses so that the owners and guests could wash their feet before entering the house until 1990s. "To make the hand washing with soap a sustainable behavior, there should be a modification that is rooted from the local culture," Anto explained. Thus, the BRC modified the 'barrenneng' and equipped it with water tap and soap.

##### **Used Home Appliances**

Before re-introducing the 'barraneng', Anto and the BRC members had actually made hand washing with soaps from used home appliances.

According to Anto, the development of hand washing with soap stations is a form of BRC's participation to prevent the COVID-19 from spreading wider as well to set an example of hygiene and healthy behavior for the community.

In the beginning, BRC only made two hand washing with soap stations from used bucket or water bottle to save some money. Then, the facilities were placed in front of Anto's house, which is also the meeting venue for the BRC members.

The BRC's initiative also received supports from USAID IUWASH PLUS. Through a collaboration, USAID IUWASH PLUS provided water taps as well as hand washing with soap promotional posters and stickers, while the BRC prepared for the used home appliances.

Only within a week, 17 hand washing with soap stations were ready to use and to be distributed to the BRC members. Those facilities were placed in front of the members' respective houses.

### **Social Media Promotion**

To attract more people, Anto uploaded the 'barraneng' and the activity to develop hand washing with soap stations in his social media. It turns out that his posts receive warm responses from the netizens. Some of them shared Anto's posts. Even more, many people follow Anto's path to make the 'barraneng'. Furthermore, Anto also helped the community members who are not able to make the hand washing with soap stations independently.

### **Becoming the Agent of Change**

Anto admitted that before the COVID-19 spread out widely, he less cared about hand washing with soap. "In the past, I washed my hands simply, when my hands looked dirty," said Anto. Yet, the fast spread of the COVID-19 has changed Anto's perspective and habits. He, who used to be less care, now becomes the motor for the hand washing with soap behavior change.

Not limited to the hand washing with soap, Anto and the BRC members are committed to promoting other hygiene and healthy behavior, such as stop open defecation and piped water use. Thus, USAID IUWASH PLUS provided an online training on how to develop promotional poster using digital media to five members of the BRC and to other organizations, such as Fattayat NU and Boetta Ilmu.

"The message on personal hygiene and sanitation is very good and important to disseminate. We will become the agent of change for those behavior change," ended Anto.

There were lessons learned and best practices shared by each province that can be adopted to other provinces. Some key innovations were also identified:

- a. In Central Java, "Joko Tonggo" uses local wisdom as solidarity within the community to help each other prevent starvation during COVID-19 pandemic.
- b. In DI Yogyakarta, local wisdom "Lajon/ Boro" monitors community compliance to physical distancing requirements.
- c. In South Kalimantan, introduction of Kampung Tangguh, village level community enforcement of basic COVID-19 prevention measures.
- d. In Bangka Belitung, the use of a contact monitoring phone application that alerts the community task force of contact breaches to ensure compliance of 14-day self-isolation for contacts of COVID-19 patients.

- e. In South Sulawesi, asymptomatic contacts of confirmed COVID-19 cases participate in a 14-day quarantine programme, during which they are provided with COVID-19 prevention training and education that they can then share with their communities once the quarantine period is completed. This is known as the Duta COVID-19 (COVID-19 Ambassador) programme.

## 5. Conclusion

The COVID-19 pandemic, which is still a mystery to this day in terms of its treatment, has created social shocks which are increasingly creating chaos in social relations. Even small cracks can now slowly make large holes and in the end a condition of distance both socially and physically appears to be gaping. People who from the beginning were a communal group whose hobby was gathering experienced divorce due to panic, anxiety and excessive fear. The important role of social capital as social values in synergy with local wisdom is to keep the cracks from happening. Even if the rift has occurred, social capital has become the glue back to the incomplete social association.

Social capital is one of the social instruments that have long coexisted with society, so it is very possible that this unfavorable social condition is caused by the COVID-19 pandemic amputated so that the virus does not spoil too far the existing social order. So all individuals either as a community or small communal must build social awareness and rise up with a strong social optimism in order to get out of this condition. At the same time, to create a society that is more prepared to face similar or different things. All current differences must be put aside to heal social conditions so that the equilibrium of people's lives is maintained and everything gets better. Awareness of social capital grows well when optimism and enthusiasm and a sense of belief that all can be faced together with the spirit of social values or local wisdom, then society will return to its fullness and the social process goes as expected peace and tranquility.

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