

## THE EXISTENCE OF THE *AGGALARA*' TRADITION IN *PASSUNNA*' CEREMONY IN JENEPONTO, SOUTH SULAWESI

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### ABSTRACT:

This research aims to explore the existence of the *aggalara*' tradition in the *passunna*' ceremony, focusing on its historical background and its rhythm of implementation in the modern era in Balangloe Village, Binamu Subdistrict, Jeneponto Regency. This research employs a qualitative approach, with data collection methods including observation, interviews, and documentation. The structural theory of functionalism AGIL Talcott Parsons is used as an analytical knife to explore this research. The results reveal that the *aggalara*' tradition in the *passunna*' ceremony is a cultural heritage passed down from ancestors and has been practiced from ancient times to the present through generations. The *aggalara*' tradition is led by a specific individual trusted by the local community, believed to be a successor mystically appointed by *tau allenguk*. All residents of Balangloe Village do not practice this tradition; instead, it is maintained only by a portion of the community who specifically believe that the *aggalara*' tradition is an ancestral heritage that must be preserved. The advancement of modern times has also influenced the community's logic, leading to the perception that not all traditions need to be perpetuated.

**Keywords:** *Tradition, Aggalara', Passunna'*

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

It is appropriate for people in certain areas to have traditions that have been carried out for years from generation to generation as a form of respect for the heritage of the ancestors. Tradition is one of the important elements in the formation of a society's cultural identity. One expert stated that tradition is a part of culture passed down from generation to generation and reflects the values adopted by the community (Koentjaraningrat, 2009). Traditions are often sacred and become an integral part of people's social life (Durkheim, 2001). One tradition that is still maintained by some Indonesian people is the *aggalara*' tradition at the *passunna*' event in Balangloe Village, Jeneponto Regency, South Sulawesi. This tradition has long historical roots and is closely related to distinctive cultural beliefs and practices.

In anthropological studies, traditions such as *aggalara*' are often categorized as rites of passage, which according to one scholar have three main stages: separation, threshold, and reunification (Van Gennep, 1960). The *aggalara*' tradition at the *passunna*' event reflects spiritual and social values passed down from generation to generation. As stated by experts, traditions, and myths function as tools to maintain social balance in society. In this context, *aggalara*' is not just a ritual, but also a way for people to connect with their ancestors (Levi-Strauss, 1966).

The *aggalara*' tradition is led by a special figure known as *tau allenguk*. This figure is believed to have spiritual legitimacy gained through a mystical process. One of the figures mentioned that such figures are often at the center of cultural practices as they are considered to be the link between the real world and the supernatural world (Geertz, 1973). The belief in *tau alenguk* in the *aggalara*' tradition reflects the community's view of mystical powers and the influence of ancestors in daily life.

However, like any other tradition, *aggalara'* faces great challenges in the era of modernization. Modernity brings changes in social structures, which often reduce the importance of tradition in people's lives (Giddens, 1984). In addition, according to one figure, the younger generation tends to adopt modern values that are more rational and pragmatic (Sztompka, 1993). This could threaten the sustainability of traditions, including *aggalara'*. However, (Hobsbawm & Ranger, 1992) reminds us that tradition can also undergo reinvention to adapt to the context of the times.

The preservation of traditions such as *aggalara'* requires a holistic approach, which not only focuses on the implementation of rituals, but also on education and strengthening cultural values (Udin & S., 2023). In this case, Mead (1928) emphasizes the importance of cultural education for the younger generation so that traditions can be passed on properly. Meanwhile, Benedict (1934) shows that each culture has unique patterns that should be respected and deeply understood.

After researchers searched for references from various sources, there has never been a researcher who examined the *aggalara'* tradition, so this research is the first study that makes a new contribution to research on cultural variations in Indonesia. The *aggalara'* tradition is one of the urgent traditions to be studied because this tradition has various meanings and sacred functions in people's lives, so researchers are very interested in examining how the existence of the *aggalara'* tradition at the *passunna'* event in Balangloe Village, Binamu District, Jeneponto Regency.

Talcott Parsons' AGIL structural functionalism theory will be used as an analytical knife in dissecting the phenomenon of the *aggalara'* tradition at the *passunna'* event in Balangloe Village, Binamu District, Jeneponto Regency. Parsons believes that four functional imperatives are necessary or characterize the whole system: Adaptation, Goal attainment, Integration, and Latency or pattern maintenance. Together, the four functional imperatives are called the AGIL scheme. The system must carry out these four functions to survive (Ritzer, 2004).

This research is urgent to explore more deeply how the history and rhythm of the implementation of the *aggalara'* tradition at the *pasunna'* event in Balangloe Village, Binamu District, Jeneponto Regency so that the community can gain more intensive knowledge about how the history of the tradition is carried out and be able to make the right decision to preserve or leave the *aggalara'* tradition at the *pasunna'* event in Balangloe Village, Binamu District, Jeneponto Regency. The researcher also chose to use a qualitative approach because this research will reveal various phenomena regarding the *aggalara'* tradition at the *pasunna'* event that cannot be measured quantitatively. This study is expected to contribute to the understanding of the dynamics of local traditions in Indonesia, as well as provide recommendations for their preservation in the future.

## 2. METHOD

This research is a type of qualitative research with historical, anthropological, and religious sociology approaches to deeply understand the history of the *aggalara'* tradition at the *passunna'* event in Balangloe Village, Jeneponto Regency. This approach was chosen because qualitative methods allow researchers to explore meanings, values, and cultural practices holistically, as suggested by (Creswell, 2014). Qualitative research is suitable for studying complex social phenomena, such as traditions and rituals, which involve historical, symbolic, and spiritual aspects (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011).

The data collection techniques when conducting research in Balangloe Village go through several stages, namely, observation, interviews, and documentation. The observation was carried out to directly record the implementation of the *aggalara'* tradition. This technique helps researchers understand the social and symbolic context of the rituals performed. Participatory observation allows researchers to gain in-depth insight into local culture (Spradley, 1980). In-depth interviews were conducted with traditional leaders and actors, also local people involved in the *aggalara'* tradition. Semi-structured interview techniques were used to explore information related to the history, values, and changes of this tradition. In-depth interviews allowed for the exploration of the subjective experiences of the informants (Patton, 2002). Documentation in the form of photos, videos, and local archives was used to complement the data obtained through observations and interviews. This documentation provides visual and historical evidence of the implementation of the *aggalara'* tradition.

The data was analyzed using a thematic approach. The analysis process involved several stages: first, reading and understanding the data in depth; second, identifying the main themes related to the history and meaning of the *aggalara'* tradition; third, interpreting the data in the context of cultural anthropology and sociology theories (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

This study used source and method triangulation techniques to ensure data validity. Triangulation helps increase confidence in research findings. In addition, member checking was carried out by confirming the results of interviews with informants to ensure data accuracy (Creswell, 2014). This research is expected to make a

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significant contribution to understanding the *aggalara'* tradition as part of the local cultural heritage that needs to be preserved.

### 3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

After observing the procession of the implementation of the *aggalara'* tradition at the *passunna'* event in Balangloe Village, Binamu District, Jeneponto Regency. Information was obtained that the *aggalara'* tradition at the *passunna'* event had been carried out since long ago and became an ancestral heritage to each generation. This *aggalara'* tradition is led by one person who has been trusted by the surrounding community to have special abilities and has been specially appointed by *tau allenguk*. The regeneration process that will serve as a mystical confidant for generations will be appointed through a mystical process by *tau allenguk*. The person appointed by *tau allenguk* certainly does not live forever, but at a certain age, according to the will of the power, will leave this world. After the person is appointed by *tau allenguk*, there is a regeneration process that is very interesting for us to examine in detail.

One of the next generation appointed by *tau allenguk* in Balangloe Village, Binamu District, Jeneponto Regency, named Dg. Lenteng stated that the regeneration process takes place naturally, cannot be controlled and cannot be arranged as desired. *Tau allenguk* will know who deserves and is entitled to be the next generation who will be given special skills and powers that can carry out various traditional and other rituals (Interview, 2024). Rituals that are entrusted after being given special skills and powers by *tau allenguk* is very diverse, ranging from rituals of *aggalara'*, *apasili*, *anrong bunting*, *akeka'*, *sanro apamana*, *sanro tau garring* and so on.

The special skills and strengths obtained by the next generation in various ritual traditions have also been examined by several other researchers, such as the *assunna'* tradition in research on the existence of the *assunna'* tradition in the community in Langkura Village, Turatea District, Jeneponto Regency, stating that *assunna'* is a tradition that is still carried out by the surrounding community with certain objectives such as purifying themselves (Sri Rahayu Patiha, 2019). Other research also states that the *passili* tradition has been ingrained in the people of Pabiringa, Jeneponto Regency whose origins are not known for certain. Which is only preserved continuously from previous ancestors (Windiasari & Cahyani, 2020). There is also an *anrong bunting* ritual that has been researched in the research *Anrong bunting* in the Wedding Tradition in Tamanroya Village, Tamalatea District, Jeneponto Regency (Study of Islamic Cultural Elements) which states that the *Anrong Bunting* Tradition in the wedding custom in Tamanroya Village is believed to have existed since the royal period in South Sulawesi. People who have knowledge about makeup and bridal preparations are called *Anrong bunting* (Azriani, M, 2021). Research on the *aggalara'* tradition has never been discussed, therefore researchers are very enthusiastic about researching the tradition.

According to the confession of the next generation informant appointed by *tau allenguk* in Balangloe Village, Binamu District, Jeneponto Regency, he never asked to be used as the next generation to be given special skills and powers, but at one time *tau allenguk* came to him mystically and appointed him as the next generation to be given special skills and powers. Dg. Lenteng explained that at first he did not believe in this, that he would be appointed to continue the mandate, but *tau allenguk* came to him regularly until he was convinced that it was indeed he who would be the next generation previously given by his other family (Interview, 2024).

According to the information of the next generation, who is familiarly called by the name Dg. Lenteng that he was appointed naturally by the *tau allenguk*, when we have been appointed by the *tau allenguk* and he refuses, the *tau allenguk* will give him a certain disease that requires him to accept the *tau allenguk's* decision (Interview, 2024). Many times the next generation mystically refuses to become the next generation who has special skills and strengths, but illnesses come and go so that finally he must accept the mandate entrusted by *tau allenguk*.

Being the next generation with special skills and strengths is not easy. Dg. Lenteng explained that in terms of time we must be ready to serve the community because various rituals have been entrusted to us so we must be good at managing time and energy. Sometimes, I have to go to a ritual location that is very far away and spend the night at that location, which means far from my family. On the other hand, I sometimes feel bad for the local community because not all rituals can be performed even if the next generation wants to and has the time to do them (Interview, 2024).

When certain rituals or events are offered to the next generation and will bring danger, mystically *tau allenguk* will give certain signs so that the next generation does not accept the offer. This is sometimes an obstacle for the next generation because when the next generation continues to perform rituals that have been given a rejection by *tau allenguk*, the next generation will be given certain diseases, one of which has been felt

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by the next generation is vomiting blood. Therefore, every time there is a ritual offer, the next generation must communicate mystically with *tau allenguk* whether the offer is worth continuing or not.

This *aggalara'* tradition has many different opinions from informants regarding the validity of carrying out the tradition. One informant named Mr. Basri stated that the *aggalara'* tradition at the *passunna'* event in Balangloe Village, Jeneponto Regency no longer needs to be preserved, considering that it is contrary to religion (Interview, 2024). This was also expressed by an informant named Mrs. Ika who stated that in the *aggalara'* procession it was against religion because one of the *aggalara'* processions used an *adupa* container, which is a container in the form of a plate that is given fire and is carried around the person who will be *sunna'* (Interview, 2024). On the other hand, there is also an informant named Mrs. Erniati who explains that the *aggalara'* tradition still wants to be preserved because the tradition has been carried out for generations and inherited from great-grandmothers (Interview, 2024). From these two phenomena, the functional structural theory can be in terms of the adaptation function, where over time, people's thought patterns have changed and began to adapt to the *aggalara'* tradition at the *passunna'* event, thus forming two camps in terms of implementation selection.

Responding to these two things, the next generation of Dg. Lenteng responded that the implementation of various traditions in Balangloe Village is indeed divided into two camps. Some people have done it but now have stopped doing it for various reasons and some people still do it from the past until now from generation to generation in each generation. One of the reasons for people who still preserve the tradition is that if the tradition is not carried out then sometimes there are family members who will get sick and other disasters, therefore the *aggalara'* tradition must be carried out during the *pasunna'* event (Interview, 2024). From this phenomenon, we can analyze that the *aggalara'* tradition at the *passunna'* event has a main purpose by functional structural theory in terms of the Goal function or achieving the main goals inherent in society so that when the *aggalara'* tradition at the *passunna'* event is not carried out it will cause havoc for the closest family who is carrying out the event.

Along with the development of increasingly modern times, the next generation of Dg. Lenteng also stated that the number of people who perform various *aggalara'* traditions every year is getting smaller. However, this is not a problem and it is not something that must be imposed on the *pasunna'* event. Even without *aggalara'*, the *pasunna'* is still valid. All people have the right to choose whether to carry out the *aggalara'* tradition or not according to their own beliefs (Interview, 2024). From this phenomenon, it can be seen and analyzed that the functional structural theory in terms of the integration function is very visible in the life of the local community, where people who carry out the *aggalara'* tradition at the *passunna'* event and people who do not carry out the tradition still live in harmony and respect each other without any conflict with each other.

The next generation who is called Dg. Lenteng also noticed that the change of traditional interest in the community of Balangloe Village is inseparable from the influence of foreign cultures that have begun to enter in remote areas of the village because in this modern era all levels of society can access freely using via the internet, thus continuously influencing the mindset of the community and comparing various traditions around the world. However, this still has a positive impact on society, where people can update and increase knowledge of various traditions in various countries (Interview, 2024). This phenomenon follows functional structural theory in terms of the Latency function or maintenance of patterns where people have begun to renew traditional patterns in order to increase motivation in creating and maintaining certain traditions.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

The *aggalara'* tradition in the *passunna'* event in Balangloe Village, Binamu District, Jeneponto Regency is a cultural heritage passed down from generation to generation by the ancestors. This tradition has unique characteristics, especially in the regeneration process of the next generation appointed by *tau allenguk* mystically. This appointment is believed to take place naturally and cannot be regulated by humans, where the next generation gains special skills and powers to carry out various traditional rituals, such as *apasili*, *anrong bunting*, *akeka'*, *sanro apamana*, and others.

The phenomenon of regeneration that takes place through a mystical approach is of particular interest for further research, especially since this tradition has not been studied much in depth, unlike other traditions in Jeneponto such as *passili*, *assunna'*, or *anrong bunting* that have been studied previously. The results of this study reveal that the *aggalara'* tradition is not only full of cultural values, but also presents a dilemma for the next generation. They often experience emotional and physical stress due to the demands of performing the ritual, and even face certain risks if they refuse the responsibilities given by *tau allenguk*.

The dynamics of preserving the *aggalara'* tradition also show the diversity of community views. Some consider the tradition needs to be stopped because it contradicts religious teachings, while others see it as an ancestral heritage that must be preserved. The belief in mystical consequences, such as illness or calamity if the tradition is ignored, is a reason for some people to continue carrying out the ritual. However, with the times, the

number of people who carry out this tradition tends to decline. The next generation states that the implementation of this tradition is no longer an absolute obligation in the *passunna'* event, but depends on the beliefs of each individual.

The *aggalara'* tradition reflects the continuity of cultural and spiritual values that are deeply rooted in the Balangloe Village community. However, this tradition also faces challenges during social change and the diversity of community perceptions. Therefore, an in-depth study of this tradition is important to understand local cultural values that can be used as a foundation in maintaining local wisdom without ignoring the dynamics of changing times.

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