Local Wisdom-Based Interfaith Tolerance Model For Social-Cultural Resilience of Ngadas Community

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Abstract. Religious and cultural pluralism in Indonesia's indigenous communities faces growing pressure from globalization and rapid social change, raising the urgency of strategies that strengthen social-cultural resilience. This study develops a conceptual model of local wisdom-based interfaith tolerance to strengthen the social-cultural resilience of the Ngadas indigenous community, a Tengger settlement on the slope of Mount Bromo-Semeru whose residents adhere to Buddhism, Islam, and Hinduism. A qualitative literature review (library research) method was employed, synthesizing secondary data from journal articles, books, and institutional reports published within the last ten years, obtained through documentary search in Scopus, Google Scholar, ScienceDirect, Taylor and Francis, and SINTA-indexed databases, and analyzed through thematic content analysis. The findings show that customary values such as ageman (the separation of adat and religion), gentenan and sayan (reciprocal mutual assistance), and shared communal rituals function as informal mechanisms regulating interfaith relations. These findings are synthesized into an operational model that integrates customary values, social mechanisms, and institutional actors. The model offers a contextual and transferable framework for strengthening religious moderation and social-cultural resilience in pluralistic indigenous communities across Indonesia.

Keywords: Local Wisdom; Interfaith Tolerance; Social-Cultural Resilience; Indigenous Community; Ngadas Village.

1. Introduction

Religious and cultural diversity is a fundamental characteristic of Indonesian society, including within indigenous communities that live amid complex intergroup relations. Social-cultural resilience has become a critical factor in maintaining social cohesion amid the dynamics of social change and the pressures of modernization. This resilience does not merely refer to a community's capacity to withstand external change, but also to its capacity to preserve harmony, cultural values, and constructive intergroup relations. Local wisdom that develops within a community constitutes significant social capital in sustaining tolerance and social integration at the community level [1].

Empirical studies show that the internalization of local values into everyday social practice strengthens religious tolerance and social cohesion. In Sukodadi Village, the Anjangsana tradition of reciprocal household visits functions as an informal social mechanism that sustains interfaith coexistence through routine interreligious encounters and the intergenerational transmission of inclusive values [2]. Similar patterns are found in Nglinggi Village, where cultural traditions and community leadership sustain interfaith tolerance despite differences in religious affiliation [3], and in Kupang, where interfaith relations are constructed through a civil-sphere perspective that embeds diversity management into everyday communal life [4]. Across these cases, local wisdom is theorized as a form of social regulation that substitutes for, or complements, formal institutional control of intergroup relations.

Theoretically, this study draws on three complementary frameworks. First, social capital theory positions trust, reciprocal norms, and social networks embedded in customary life as resources that communities draw upon to manage diversity and reduce the transaction costs of collective action, including interreligious cooperation. Second, the concept of religious moderation frames tolerance as the balanced enactment of national commitment, tolerance, non-violence, and accommodation to local culture, which together allow religious identity to be expressed without threatening communal harmony [5], [6]. Third, social-cultural resilience theory conceives of a community's capacity to absorb external shocks, such as globalization, migration, and identity politicization, while retaining core cultural values and adaptively reorganizing social practice in response to change.

These three frameworks converge on a common proposition: local wisdom functions as a mechanism that translates abstract values of tolerance into concrete, everyday social practice, thereby producing durable

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resilience rather than merely episodic harmony. This proposition is supported by studies on the Tongkonan ancestral house and communal rituals in Toraja, which operate as structured instruments for conflict resolution and consensus-building across Christian, Muslim, Hindu, and indigenous groups [7] [8], and by studies on customary reconciliation practices used to resolve interfaith friction in Lampung [9]. Local wisdom, in this sense, is not a passive cultural artifact but an active regulatory infrastructure of pluralistic social life.

Prior research on the Tengger community of Ngadas Village, situated on the slope of Mount Bromo-Semeru in Poncokusumo, Malang Regency, provides an important point of departure. Ngadas is inhabited by adherents of Buddha Jawa Sanyata, Islam, and Hinduism, who have historically coexisted through customary traditions such as gentenan (reciprocal turn-taking in mutual assistance), sayan (invitation to communal celebrations), and nglayat or salawatan (mutual assistance during misfortune) [10]. These traditions are grounded in the shared local knowledge that every individual depends on others, thereby obligating reciprocal assistance regardless of religious affiliation [10]. Complementing this, the Tengger customary system also relies on the conceptual separation between adat (customary practice) and agama (religion), which allows residents of different faiths to jointly participate in customary ceremonies without perceiving them as a threat to their respective religious identities.

The importance of this local separation between adat and agama resonates with broader theoretical debates on toleration in plural societies, where toleration is understood not as indifference to difference but as the deliberate, principled acceptance of practices one may not personally endorse, for the sake of a higher shared commitment to coexistence. In the Tengger context, this principled acceptance is sustained not through abstract philosophical reasoning but through concrete, repeated customary practice, which lowers the cognitive and social cost of daily interreligious interaction. This practice-based character of tolerance is significant because it suggests that interfaith harmony in Ngadas is reproduced through habituation and institutional routine rather than through occasional appeals to tolerance as an abstract value, making it comparatively resilient to short-term social disruption while remaining vulnerable to long-term erosion if the underlying customary institutions are not actively sustained and transmitted to younger generations.

Beyond the Tengger context, comparable dynamics have been documented across Indonesia's religiously plural regions. In Kupang, interfaith relations are increasingly analyzed through the lens of the civil sphere, in which shared civic participation across religious lines, rather than doctrinal convergence, becomes the operative basis of solidarity [4]. In Sumberjambe, Jember, the deliberate integration of Islamic values with customary local wisdom has been cultivated into what local authorities designate a religious moderation village, illustrating that community-level tolerance practices can be recognized, supported, and scaled through policy attention without displacing customary authority [11]. These cases jointly indicate that the mechanisms observed in Ngadas are not idiosyncratic but instances of a broader, theoretically tractable phenomenon in Indonesian indigenous and rural communities.

Nevertheless, existing scholarship on local wisdom and interfaith tolerance in Indonesia remains predominantly descriptive and case-specific, documenting the existence of tolerant practices without systematically synthesizing them into an operational, transferable model for strengthening social-cultural resilience [11]; [12]. Studies specific to Ngadas have similarly tended to describe the phenomenon of religious harmony ethnographically, without articulating how customary values, social mechanisms, and institutional actors can be deliberately integrated into a conceptual model that other pluralistic indigenous communities could adapt. This gap is significant because Ngadas, as a community that has sustained interfaith harmony for generations amid increasing tourism-driven social change on the Bromo-Semeru corridor, offers a strategic case for theory-building on local wisdom-based interfaith tolerance. Accordingly, this study aims to synthesize existing literature on local wisdom, interfaith tolerance, and social-cultural resilience into a conceptual model of local wisdom-based interfaith tolerance applicable to the Ngadas indigenous community and, by extension, to comparable pluralistic indigenous communities in Indonesia.

2. Research Methods

This study employs a qualitative approach using a literature review (library research) design, which is appropriate for synthesizing dispersed empirical findings into a coherent conceptual framework. The research is descriptive-analytical in specification: it does not collect primary field data, but systematically identifies, evaluates, and synthesizes secondary data concerning local wisdom, interfaith tolerance, and social-cultural resilience, with particular attention to studies on the Tengger community of Ngadas Village and comparable pluralistic indigenous communities elsewhere in Indonesia. This design is consistent with the first stage of the broader multi-year research roadmap, in which conceptual model-building through literature synthesis precedes field validation through interviews, participatory observation, and focus group discussion.

Data were collected through a documentary search of peer-reviewed journal articles, books, and institutional reports indexed in Scopus, Google Scholar, ScienceDirect, Taylor and Francis Online, and SINTA/Garuda, using combinations of the keywords "local wisdom", "interfaith tolerance", "religious moderation", "social-cultural resilience", and "indigenous community" together with "Indonesia" or "Tengger" or "Ngadas". Sources were

included if they were published within the last ten years and directly addressed local wisdom, interfaith relations, or community resilience, with a small number of foundational qualitative-methodology references retained beyond this window in accordance with common academic practice for canonical texts. Sources were excluded if they were non-peer-reviewed opinion pieces, duplicated the findings of an already-included source, or addressed religious diversity outside the Indonesian indigenous-community context without offering comparable theoretical value. Data were analyzed using thematic content analysis [13], involving open coding of recurring values and mechanisms across sources, categorization of codes into thematic clusters, and synthesis of these clusters into an integrated conceptual model, which was then cross-checked against the theoretical framework of social capital, religious moderation, and social-cultural resilience described in the Introduction.

To ensure analytical rigor, each included source was appraised for its research design, the specificity of its empirical setting, and the clarity with which it articulated a value-mechanism or institutional-actor relationship relevant to interfaith tolerance, following the general quality-appraisal logic recommended for qualitative synthesis [14]; [15]. Findings that recurred across at least two independent sources were treated as more robust bases for model-building than single-source observations, and were prioritized when constructing the conceptual model presented in the Results and Discussion. As a literature-based study, this research draws its findings from a synthesis of already-published interpretations rather than from direct field observation, a characteristic that is common to model-building studies of this kind and that this study addresses by triangulating findings across multiple independent sources before incorporating them into the proposed model.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1 Religious and Cultural Diversity in the Ngadas Indigenous Community

The literature consistently characterizes Ngadas Village as a Tengger settlement whose population is distinguished by its plural religious composition, comprising adherents of Buddha Jawa Sanyata, Islam, and Hinduism living within a single, spatially unsegregated customary territory [10]. Unlike most Tengger villages, where Hinduism is the majority religion, Ngadas is unusual in that Buddhism is regarded by residents as the ancestral religion of the community, alongside sizeable Muslim and Hindu populations. This demographic configuration positions Ngadas as a distinctive case for examining how a single ethnic-customary identity, Tengger, can accommodate multiple religious identities without producing chronic intergroup conflict.

This condition is reinforced by the geographic and economic context of the village. Located at high altitude on the Bromo-Semeru tourism corridor, Ngadas has experienced accelerating exposure to outside visitors, market integration, and lifestyle change, all of which are widely recognized in the literature as forces that can erode local values and heighten the salience of religious identity [2]. The persistence of interfaith harmony under these pressures suggests that Ngadas's customary institutions possess an adaptive capacity that merits systematic documentation and theorization, rather than being treated merely as an isolated ethnographic curiosity.

Furthermore, the plural religious composition of Ngadas is embedded within, rather than layered on top of, a single overarching Tengger customary identity. Religious affiliation in Ngadas functions as one dimension of personal and household identity, while Tengger customary membership functions as the shared, encompassing identity that structures land use, agricultural calendars, life-cycle ceremonies, and village governance. This layered identity structure is theoretically significant because it implies that interreligious cooperation in Ngadas does not require residents to subordinate or dilute their religious commitments; rather, it channels cooperation into a customary domain that is deliberately kept conceptually distinct from religious doctrine, a pattern that recurs across the comparative cases discussed in later sections of this study.

3.2 Local Wisdom Values as Mechanisms of Interfaith Tolerance

Across the reviewed literature, local wisdom operates as interfaith tolerance through at least three recurring value-mechanisms. First, the conceptual separation between adat and agama allows customary ceremonies to be treated as shared cultural obligations rather than religious rituals, enabling residents of different faiths to participate jointly without compromising their doctrinal commitments. Second, reciprocal-assistance traditions such as gentenan, sayan, and nglayat institutionalize mutual obligation across religious lines, embedding tolerance in the practical, everyday economy of communal life rather than leaving it as an abstract normative ideal [10]. Third, communal rituals and shared customary spaces, exemplified elsewhere by the Tongkonan ancestral house in Toraja [16] and the Anjangsana reciprocal-visit tradition in Sukodadi [2], create recurring, low-stakes opportunities for interreligious encounter that gradually normalize coexistence.

These mechanisms are mutually reinforcing rather than independent. Reciprocal-assistance norms depend on the prior legitimacy conferred by the adat-agama separation, while communal rituals provide the periodic occasions through which reciprocal norms are publicly enacted and intergenerationally transmitted. This layered structure echoes findings from Tana Toraja, where religious moderation is strengthened when local traditions function simultaneously as symbols of cultural identity and as structured instruments for consensus-building [8],

and from Lampung, where customary resolution mechanisms actively de-escalate interreligious friction rather than merely preventing its occurrence [9].

A further mechanism identifiable in the literature concerns the intergenerational transmission of tolerance values through oral tradition, folklore, and informal socialization rather than formal curriculum. Narrative accounts of village origin, transmitted across generations of Tengger households, encode expectations of reciprocity and communal obligation that later manifest as concrete tolerant behavior. This transmission pathway is important because it explains how interfaith tolerance in Ngadas persists without depending on external educational intervention, while also indicating a point of vulnerability: as younger residents increasingly access formal schooling, seasonal labor migration, and digital media outside the village, the informal channels through which these values were historically transmitted may weaken unless deliberately reinforced.

It is also worth noting that these value-mechanisms operate primarily at the informal, community level rather than through formal legal or bureaucratic channels. Unlike state-driven religious harmony forums, which rely on codified regulation and appointed representatives, the mechanisms identified in Ngadas and in comparable communities emerge from, and are enforced by, everyday social expectation: failure to participate in reciprocal obligations carries social, rather than legal, consequences. This informality is a double-edged characteristic. On one hand, it grants the mechanisms flexibility and cultural legitimacy that formal regulation often struggles to achieve; on the other hand, it makes their continuity dependent on sustained community consensus, rendering them potentially fragile in the face of rapid demographic or economic change that weakens shared expectations across generations.

3.3 Theoretical Synthesis: From Local Wisdom to Social-Cultural Resilience

Read through the lens of social capital theory, the value-mechanisms identified above constitute a stock of bonding and bridging capital: bonding capital sustains solidarity within each religious group, while bridging capital, generated through shared customary institutions, connects groups across religious boundaries. Read through the lens of religious moderation theory, these mechanisms operationalize the four pillars of national commitment, tolerance, non-violence, and accommodation to local culture identified by Ardianto [5] as the socio-cultural foundations of interfaith harmony. Read through the lens of social-cultural resilience theory, the mechanisms function as adaptive capacity: they allow the community to absorb the pressures of tourism-driven change and generational shift while preserving the core value of coexistence, rather than freezing customary practice in an unchanging form.

This synthesis suggests that social-cultural resilience in a pluralistic indigenous community is not the passive absence of conflict, but the active, continuously renewed outcome of customary institutions that keep translating shared values into cooperative practice under changing conditions. This framing addresses a limitation noted in prior scholarship, namely that studies of local wisdom and tolerance have tended to describe harmony as a static cultural trait rather than as the product of an ongoing regulatory process [11].

This dynamic conception of resilience also clarifies why local wisdom-based tolerance should not be equated with the mere absence of overt religious conflict. A community may avoid open conflict simply through spatial or social segregation between religious groups, without any active mechanism of cooperation; such an outcome would not constitute social-cultural resilience in the sense intended here. What distinguishes Ngadas, and the comparative cases discussed below, is the presence of positive, recurring mechanisms of cross-religious cooperation that actively produce shared identity and mutual obligation, rather than a merely negative absence of hostility. This distinction is analytically important for the conceptual model developed later in this study, as it specifies that the model's target outcome is active social cohesion, not passive coexistence.

3.4 Comparative Insights from Other Indigenous Communities in Indonesia

Comparison across cases strengthens confidence in the transferability of the mechanisms identified in Ngadas. In Kupang, interfaith relations are sustained through a civil-sphere approach in which shared civic participation, rather than religious sameness, becomes the basis of solidarity [4]. In Sumberjambe, Jember, the integration of Islamic values with local customary wisdom has been deliberately cultivated into a designated "religious moderation village", illustrating that local wisdom-based tolerance can be scaled through intentional community branding and policy support [11]. In Toraja, both the Tongkonan ancestral house and structured communal deliberation function as parallel instruments of conflict resolution and consensus-building across four

religious traditions [8]; [16]. In Sukodadi, the Anjangsana tradition demonstrates that even a single, regularly repeated ritual practice can function as durable social infrastructure for tolerance [2].

Taken together, these cases show a common structural pattern: locally rooted values are embedded in recurring social practices, which are in turn sustained by recognized customary or religious institutional actors. This pattern is consistent with what is observed in Ngadas, where the dukun adat (customary leader), village government, and religious figures jointly steward the adat-agama separation and the reciprocal-assistance traditions. The consistency of this pattern across geographically and culturally distinct communities supports the plausibility of a generalizable conceptual model, while also indicating that the specific content of local wisdom, whether Anjangsana, Tongkonan, or gentenan, is necessarily context-bound and must be adapted rather than transplanted wholesale.

The comparative cases also differ in one instructive respect: the degree of deliberate policy support they receive. Sumberjambe's designation as a religious moderation village reflects an explicit government-community partnership [11], whereas the Anjangsana tradition in Sukodadi and the customary mechanisms in Ngadas appear to have persisted largely through community-internal stewardship, with comparatively limited external institutional reinforcement [2], [10]. This variation suggests that local wisdom-based interfaith tolerance can be sustained without external intervention, but that deliberate policy support, when it reinforces rather than displaces customary authority, may accelerate the documentation, protection, and intergenerational transmission of these mechanisms, a consideration directly relevant to the conceptual model proposed in the following subsection.

3.5 Toward a Conceptual Model of Local Wisdom-Based Interfaith Tolerance

Building on the thematic synthesis above, this study proposes a conceptual model comprising three integrated dimensions. The first dimension, customary values, consists of the normative foundation of tolerance, namely the adat-agama separation and the ethic of mutual obligation. The second dimension, social mechanisms, consists of the recurring practices through which these values are enacted, including reciprocal-assistance traditions and shared communal rituals. The third dimension, institutional actors, consists of the customary and religious leadership, together with village government and external facilitating partners, who legitimize, supervise, and adapt the first two dimensions in response to social change. These three dimensions interact cyclically: institutional actors interpret customary values into context-appropriate social mechanisms, the enactment of these mechanisms reinforces the legitimacy of the underlying values, and periodic external pressures, such as tourism growth, are absorbed through incremental institutional adjustment rather than value abandonment.

This model extends previous conceptualizations of local wisdom as interfaith communication [17] by explicitly incorporating an institutional dimension and by framing the outcome not merely as religious harmony but as social-cultural resilience, that is, the sustained capacity to reproduce harmony under changing conditions. In doing so, the model moves beyond a descriptive account of Ngadas toward an operational framework that can inform the design of participatory interventions, such as co-designed workshops with customary and religious leaders, and that can be adapted by other pluralistic indigenous communities facing comparable pressures from modernization and tourism-driven change.

Table 1. Three-Dimensional Conceptual Model of Local Wisdom-Based Interfaith Tolerance

Dimension	Description	Illustrative Elements in Ngadas
Customary Values	Normative foundation legitimizing cross-religious cooperation	Ageman (adat–agama separation); ethic of mutual obligation
Social Mechanisms	Recurring practices through which values are enacted and transmitted	Gentenan, sayan, nglayat/salawatan; shared communal rituals
Institutional Actors	Actors who legitimize, supervise, and adapt values and mechanisms	Dukun adat, village government, religious figures, facilitating partners

3.6 Implications for Community Practice and Policy

The proposed model carries practical implications consistent with Sustainable Development Goal 16 on peaceful, just, and inclusive societies. For village governments and customary institutions, the model suggests that strengthening social-cultural resilience does not require introducing new external programs, but rather requires the deliberate documentation, transmission, and institutional protection of existing reciprocal-assistance traditions and shared ritual spaces, particularly as younger generations face competing socialization pressures from education, migration, and tourism employment. For policymakers concerned with religious moderation, the model indicates that policy support is most effective when it reinforces existing customary institutional actors, such as the dukun adat, rather than substituting external religious authorities for locally legitimate ones. These implications are provisional, since they are derived from literature synthesis rather than field validation, and are intended to inform the subsequent empirical stages of the broader research roadmap, including in-depth interviews, participatory observation, and focus group discussion with local stakeholders.

At a broader scale, the transferability logic identified in the comparative analysis suggests that the three-dimensional model could inform a general policy toolkit for religious moderation in customary villages, comprising a documentation template for locally specific customary values, a facilitation guide for co-designing culturally appropriate social mechanisms with community leaders, and a set of monitoring indicators that combine qualitative narrative accounts with simple quantitative measures of cross-religious participation in communal activities. Such a toolkit would allow the underlying logic of the model, values sustained through mechanisms stewarded by institutional actors, to be adapted to communities whose specific customary content differs substantially from that of Ngadas, without imposing a uniform template that disregards local particularity.

3.7 Novelty and Limitations of the Study

The novelty of this study lies in three respects. First, it moves beyond single-case ethnographic description of Ngadas by systematically situating its customary mechanisms within a comparative body of literature on local wisdom-based interfaith tolerance across Indonesia, thereby testing the generalizability of the observed patterns rather than treating Ngadas as an isolated case. Second, it formulates these patterns into an explicit, three-dimensional operational model, distinguishing customary values, social mechanisms, and institutional actors as analytically separable yet interdependent components, a level of conceptual specification that is largely absent from prior descriptive accounts [11], [17]. Third, it explicitly reframes the outcome of interest from religious harmony, understood as a static condition, to social-cultural resilience, understood as a dynamic, continuously reproduced capacity, thereby aligning the model with contemporary theoretical concerns about how communities adapt to globalization-driven change while retaining core cultural values.

These contributions should nonetheless be read alongside the study's limitations. As the model is derived entirely from secondary literature rather than from direct engagement with Ngadas residents, it cannot yet capture context-specific nuances, internal disagreements, or emerging tensions that only field research can reveal. The literature search, although systematic, was also limited to English- and Indonesian-language sources indexed in the databases consulted, which may exclude locally circulated grey literature or oral accounts not yet documented in academic outlets. These limitations reinforce, rather than undermine, the value of the proposed model as a structured synthesis of documented practice, offering a coherent conceptual reference point for understanding how local wisdom sustains interfaith tolerance in Ngadas Village and in comparable indigenous communities.

4. Conclusion and Suggestion

This study set out to synthesize existing literature on local wisdom, interfaith tolerance, and social-cultural resilience into a conceptual model applicable to the Ngadas indigenous community. The literature review indicates that interfaith harmony in Ngadas is sustained through a conceptual separation between adat and religion, reciprocal-assistance traditions such as gentenan and sayan, and shared communal rituals, all of which are stewarded by recognized customary and religious institutional actors. Comparison with other pluralistic indigenous communities, including Sukodadi, Toraja, Kupang, and Sumberjambe, shows a consistent structural pattern in which locally rooted values, recurring social mechanisms, and institutional stewardship jointly produce durable, rather than incidental, interfaith tolerance. Based on this synthesis, the study proposes a three-dimensional conceptual model, integrating customary values, social mechanisms, and institutional actors, as an operational framework for strengthening social-cultural resilience in pluralistic indigenous communities. This model addresses a gap in prior scholarship, which has tended to describe local wisdom-based tolerance descriptively rather than to formulate it as a transferable, operational model. It is recommended that future studies further enrich

the proposed model through in-depth interviews, participatory observation, and focus group discussion with customary leaders, religious figures, and community members in Ngadas Village, and that policymakers and community partners consider the model as a basis for co-designing context-sensitive, participatory interventions that strengthen, rather than replace, existing customary institutions of tolerance. Finally, given that the mechanisms identified in this study appear to be most vulnerable at the point of intergenerational transmission, future research and policy attention should give particular weight to how customary values and reciprocal traditions are communicated to, and internalized by, younger residents amid competing influences from formal education, seasonal labor migration, and digital media. Sustaining local wisdom-based interfaith tolerance in Ngadas, and in comparable indigenous communities, is therefore best understood not as the preservation of a fixed cultural inheritance, but as an ongoing, intergenerational project of institutional stewardship that this study's conceptual model seeks to make explicit and, ultimately, actionable.

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