

Research Article

Local Wisdom and Regional Autonomy in Addressing Interreligious Conflict in Central Lombok

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Abstract

Indonesia, as an archipelagic nation, is characterized by a rich diversity of languages, traditions, religions, and cultures. Central Lombok, West Nusa Tenggara, exemplifies this plurality, with a Muslim majority living alongside Christian, Catholic, Hindu, Buddhist, Confucian, and other religious communities. Despite a relatively high tolerance index ranging from 3.5 to 3.7 over the past five years, the potential for interreligious conflict persists, indicating unresolved socio-political tensions. This study seeks to (1) identify and analyze the factors that trigger interreligious disintegration in Central Lombok; (2) examine the extent to which current regional autonomy policies incorporate local wisdom in preventing conflict; and (3) propose a contextual model for integrating local cultural values into policy frameworks to enhance social cohesion. A qualitative approach was employed, combining observation, in-depth interviews, and Focus Group Discussions. Findings reveal that religious tension in Central Lombok is rooted in structural inequalities, insufficient interfaith dialogue, and the marginalization of traditional values in governance. While local wisdom has historically functioned as a cohesive force, it remains underutilized in current regional policies. The SLR further exposes a gap in the literature, where governance and indigenous culture are rarely treated as integrative tools for peacebuilding. This study's novelty lies in its interdisciplinary framework that bridges local wisdom with regional autonomy policy, offering practical insights for conflict prevention in multicultural contexts.

Keywords

Local Wisdom, Regional Autonomy, Inter Religious Conflict, Local Wisdom-based Approach Model

1. Introduction

Religious tolerance is essential for fostering social cohesion and peaceful coexistence in pluralistic societies like Indonesia. It involves recognizing and respecting diverse beliefs, allowing individuals to live without coercion or discrimination [2]. In Indonesia, where religious diversity is constitutionally and culturally recognized, tolerance is both a moral and political necessity, promoting civic trust and reducing conflict

[25]. The state philosophy of Pancasila, especially the belief in one God, underpins interfaith respect. However, challenges remain, including identity politics, majoritarianism, and weak legal enforcement [5, 8].

Despite national commitments to pluralism, inter-religious tensions continue to emerge at the local level. This raises a critical question: Why do religious conflicts persist in regions

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with strong local traditions of harmony and tolerance? Lombok, a culturally rich island in West Nusa Tenggara (NTB), offers an important case study to explore this puzzle. Although the majority of the population in Lombok is Muslim, the island is also home to Hindus, Christians, and Buddhists who have coexisted for generations. This diversity, while a source of cultural richness, also creates a complex social landscape requiring sustained efforts to maintain tolerance and mutual respect.

The central research problem addressed in this study is the apparent disconnect between the existence of local wisdom that promotes tolerance and the persistence of religious tensions in Lombok. Specifically, this research investigates how the integration-or lack thereof-of local wisdom into regional autonomy policies affects interreligious relations on the island. Understanding this relationship is crucial because it can reveal both the limitations and potential of combining traditional mechanisms with modern governance to foster sustainable peace in religiously diverse societies.

Collaboration between the government and local communities is a key element in creating a harmonious environment. While the government plays a vital role through legislation, interfaith dialogue, and inclusive policies [19, 20], effective governance also requires integrating local wisdom and community engagement [13, 16]. In Indonesia, despite Pancasila's emphasis on tolerance, local challenges-particularly for minorities-persist [8].

In Lombok, traditional conflict-resolution mechanisms such as Bale Mediation and the principle of *pekenek alang* (balance and harmony) have long served as tools to manage disputes and preserve interfaith relations. Yet, these mechanisms often operate in parallel with formal governance structures rather than being integrated into them. This disjunction can create policy gaps, especially as modernization and globalization erode the influence of customary institutions. Therefore, this study aims to explore how local wisdom can bridge inter-religious conflicts within the framework of regional autonomy by synthesizing the factors trigger the conflicts, and offer a model to integrate local cultural values into regional autonomy policy frameworks to enhance social cohesion.

This issue is not only academically significant but also practically urgent. Without a clearer synergy between traditional values and regional policies, Lombok risks increased social fragmentation, particularly in the face of rising identity politics and economic disparities. By analyzing Lombok as a microcosm of broader national dynamics, this study contributes to understanding how local governance can either reinforce or undermine interreligious harmony.

Lombok government engages religious, traditional, and community leaders to shape inclusive policies promoting tolerance and religious freedom [13, 19-21]. Through interfaith dialogue and integration of local wisdom, these initiatives foster mutual respect. Programs emphasize tolerance education, responsible media use, and open dialogue [19].

Schools support this by teaching diverse beliefs and promoting critical thinking to prevent extremism [13, 20].

However, these efforts must be supported by strengthening the capacity of local communities to be more active in building awareness and understanding between religious communities. Community involvement in maintaining and preserving local wisdom that supports religious tolerance, such as customary deliberations or interfaith social activities, is an important element in creating a harmonious atmosphere amidst diversity.

In the context of regional autonomy, the government has the authority to formulate policies that are in accordance with local characteristics and needs. One relevant approach to preventing conflict is to integrate local wisdom with regional policies. Local wisdom that has been passed down from generation to generation includes cultural values, customs and traditions of consensus that are still firmly held by the people of Lombok, such as Bale Mediation and Krama Adat Sasak.

Comparative studies at the international level reveal that countries with proactive government involvement in promoting religious tolerance tend to experience lower levels of religious conflict and greater social cohesion [15]. This suggests that the role of the state should extend beyond merely enacting legal frameworks. Governments must also take an active part in cultivating a culture of tolerance through comprehensive, inclusive, and context-sensitive policies that address both structural and cultural dimensions of interreligious relations.

The government's responsibility, therefore, is not only to create laws but to actively participate in shaping a culture of tolerance through comprehensive and well-targeted policies.

The implementation of local wisdom in regional autonomy policies still faces various challenges, such as: lack of synergy between customary institutions and local governments in resolving conflicts, minimal regional regulations that explicitly regulate the integration of local wisdom in resolving inter-religious conflicts, the influence of modernization and globalization that have begun to shift the role of customary institutions in community life.

This phenomenon shows that religious disintegration stems not only from societal factors but also from regional policies that fail to respect plurality and local wisdom. Policies that overlook interfaith approaches and traditional institutions can fuel conflict. Moreover, modernization often erodes local values like deliberation and customary conflict resolution. Modernization can erode traditional values such as *musyawarah* and customary mechanisms like Lombok's Bale Mediation, which promote cohesion, inclusivity, and restorative justice [13]. Education also plays a key role by challenging stereotypes, promoting dialogue, and integrating local wisdom to prevent conflict and strengthen social harmony [19, 20, 13].

This means that a more comprehensive approach in integrating local wisdom into regional autonomy policies is needed, because religious-based conflicts can be prevented by

strengthening local values that have proven effective in maintaining harmony in Lombok society over the years. Strengthening local values such as *pekenek alang* (balance and harmony), *musyawarah* (deliberation), and the use of customary institutions like Bale Mediation has proven effective in maintaining interreligious harmony in Lombok. These values emphasize communal unity, mutual respect, conflict resolution through dialogue, and restorative justice rather than punishment. They reflect indigenous mechanisms that foster social cohesion and prevent tensions from escalating into conflict [4, 13]. Integrating these deeply rooted cultural practices into regional governance enhances the legitimacy and effectiveness of policies aimed at preserving peace in religiously plural communities [19, 21].

2. Literature Review

2.1. Local Wisdom

According to [1] local wisdom reflects ecological knowledge passed down from generation to generation and represents collective ethics in maintaining harmony between humans and nature. These values are important in shaping the behavior of a society that is more sustainable and responsive to the current environment. They refer to such as mutual respect, harmony, cooperation, and stewardship of nature-promote collective well-being and environmental sustainability [26]. These principles are embedded in community customs regulating land, water, and forests, often upheld by moral norms and consensus rather than formal law [10]. Rooted in cultural traditions, they evolve over time and foster both ecological resilience and social cohesion, offering valuable lessons for modern sustainability and conflict prevention [24].

Local wisdom is a representation of local culture and knowledge that is owned and obtained by the community through collective experience (Basuki, et al., 2019; Ramanta and Samsuri, 2020; Widanita, et al., 2021). According to Pornpinon, et al., local wisdom is an element that is highly guarded and preserved as part of identity and harmony with nature, humans, and ancestors. Local wisdom not only reflects but also creates the identity of a community [23].

Geertz interprets local wisdom as a web of meanings created by humans through symbols, reflecting their understanding of the environment. As a cultural product, local wisdom guides communities in responding to ecological, social, and spiritual challenges. It comprises four key dimensions: symbolic, religious, social, and moral, expressed through rituals, traditional arts, folklore, ethics, and community norms [9].

In conclusion, local wisdom represents a body of knowledge, values, and practices that have evolved through the sustained interaction between communities, their natural environments, and cultural traditions. It encompasses deeply rooted principles such as respect for elders, communal coop-

eration (*gotong royong*), consensus-based decision-making, and harmony with both the social and ecological order. These cultural constructs are not merely traditional habits but function as adaptive mechanisms for conflict resolution, resource management, and community cohesion. In the context of regional governance-particularly within diverse societies such as Lombok Tengah-integrating local wisdom into policy frameworks becomes vital for fostering social stability and resilience. By aligning modern governance with culturally embedded practices, local autonomy can more effectively address the unique needs of communities and mitigate social tensions, thus enhancing both the legitimacy and sustainability of development initiatives.

Over time, local wisdom is the knowledge of values and practices developed through a community's interaction with its environment and culture over time. These values, such as respect for elders, communal cooperation (*gotong royong*), and harmony with nature, guide social interactions and help maintain harmony, addressing collective needs in specific cultural contexts. The knowledge of values thus becomes not only a practical tool for managing day-to-day life but also a key source of identity, guiding individuals' behavior in ways that contribute to social cohesion and sustainability [7, 30]. In this context, local wisdom can function as a tool to maintain social harmony and prevent conflict, including religious conflict. This theory is based on the assumption that local communities have a value system that can regulate behavior and maintain social balance without external intervention.

2.2. Principles of Local Wisdom in Customary Law

Customary law in Lombok (*Sasak* and Balinese Hindu) provides legitimacy for local wisdom in resolving conflicts. Principles such as consensus, customary-based reconciliation, and local mutual cooperation are important elements recognized in customary norms.

Relevance: Customary law is often the basis accepted by local communities to resolve conflicts more quickly than formal mechanisms.

2.3. The Importance of Local Wisdom Approach in Resolving Religious Conflict

The local wisdom approach is crucial in resolving religious conflicts as it emphasizes values, traditions, and practices inherent in a community. Its inclusive nature and familiarity with local customs make it effective in mediating differences. Local wisdom, passed down through generations, uses elements like customs, traditions, art, or language to unify and promote harmony [7].

Local wisdom plays a vital role in resolving religious conflict by drawing on community-based values, customs, and traditions. Its inclusivity and cultural familiarity foster cohesion and effective mediation. Reflecting Durkheim's concept

of mechanical solidarity, local wisdom reinforces social bonds through shared norms and collective identity [6]. Integrating it into governance is both culturally grounded and sociologically justified, enhancing interreligious harmony through existing social capital.

Local wisdom serves as an essential mechanism for conflict resolution in culturally diverse societies, particularly by promoting inclusive values that prioritize common community interests over sectarian divisions. Its legitimacy stems from its rootedness in local traditions, norms, and belief systems, which makes it more readily accepted by communities than externally imposed solutions. In this context, traditional symbols, rituals, and ceremonies-such as indigenous healing practices or collective prayers-function not only as cultural expressions but also as therapeutic tools that address the emotional and spiritual dimensions of social unrest [3]. By engaging these deeply embedded cultural mechanisms, local wisdom provides a multidimensional framework that addresses the psychological, ethical, and social facets of conflict. As such, it offers a sustainable and context-sensitive alternative to formal conflict resolution models, reinforcing social cohesion and communal resilience.

2.4. Local Autonomy

Regional Autonomy [27] provides greater freedom for regions to manage local affairs. According to him, regional autonomy is a tool to accelerate development, improve public services, and strengthen democracy at the regional level. Regional autonomy encourages regions to be able to manage the potential of natural resources, optimize regional taxes and levies and create a government that is more responsive and accountable to the needs of the local community.

He describes the dimensions of regional autonomy into several categories as follows: first, the dimension of authority where regions are given sufficient authority to regulate and manage government affairs, both in the fields of politics, economy, social, culture, and administration. This dimension is explained into two indicators, namely: a) regional governments have the freedom to formulate local policies without excessive intervention from the central government, b) there is delegation of authority from the center to the regions according to the characteristics of regional needs [27].

Second, the dimension of resource distribution is categorized into the dimension of natural resources and the dimension of financial resources. Regions are also given the right to manage and utilize local natural and economic resources. This includes the management of regional finances for the sustainability of regional development. This dimension is described into indicators, such as: a) regions have the authority to manage and obtain results from existing natural resources, b) increasing regional capacity in managing regional finances, either through taxes, levies, or other resources that can be utilized for development.

Third, the dimension of accountability and transparency.

Regional government accountability is one of the main objectives of regional autonomy to make regional governments more responsive and accountable to their citizens. The indicators are; a) increasing transparency in financial management and public policy; b) increasing community participation in the decision-making process at the regional level.

Fourth, the dimension of democracy and community involvement. This dimension emphasizes the empowerment of local communities where regional autonomy must provide space for local communities to be actively involved in the governance and decision-making process. The indicators are; a) the community has space to participate in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of regional policies. b) there are effective communication channels between regional governments and the community.

Fifth, the dimension of effectiveness and performance of regional government, namely improving the quality of public services which is described into two indicators, including; a) the availability of faster, cheaper and quality public services. b) improving bureaucratic performance in solving community problems.

Finally, Regional autonomy gives local governments the freedom to design and implement policies that are in accordance with the needs of local communities. In other words, regional autonomy is a policy that gives greater authority to local governments to manage administrative, social, and economic affairs in their regions with the aim of increasing efficiency, public participation and public services that are more responsive to local needs.

2.5. Conflict and Resolution

In general, conflicts can be in the form of; 1) social conflict, namely conflict related to differences in norms, values, and social roles in society, 2) economic conflict occurs due to unfair distribution of economic resources, 3) cultural conflict related to differences in traditions, or conflicting cultural practices, 4) political conflict occurs between individuals or groups with different ideologies or political interests.

The causes of conflict are often complex, with differences in values and culture playing a key role. These differences arise from distinct moral principles, beliefs, and cultural norms held by different groups, often rooted in religion, culture, or ideology. When one group fails to understand or accept another's values, it can lead to misunderstandings and conflict [14]. In multicultural societies, value differences can escalate tensions, especially when deeply-held beliefs are perceived as threatening or incompatible [31]. Failure to recognize and respect these differences can perpetuate long-term conflict and hinder peaceful coexistence [11].

Second, social and economic disparities where injustice in the distribution of resources or power causes tension. Conflicts arise from unequal access to resources, opportunities, and power, often worsened by discriminatory practices and unfair wealth or political distribution [11]. When marginal-

ized groups are excluded from key resources like education, healthcare, or political representation, they may feel powerless, leading to social unrest. Economic injustice, particularly unequal wealth distribution, is a major source of instability, as seen in global conflicts (Sen, 1999). Equitable policies can help reduce tensions and promote harmony [22].

Third, resource competition, namely conflicts over access to limited resources such as land, water, or energy. Resource competition arises when groups vie for limited resources, such as land, water, or energy, which can lead to conflict, especially when these resources are vital for survival or economic well-being. For example, disputes over water access are common in regions with scarce supplies [32], and competition for fertile land can lead to territorial disputes, as seen in Sub-Saharan Africa [17]. With climate change and over-exploitation increasing resource scarcity, the potential for conflict grows. Unequal resource distribution intensifies tensions, especially when compounded by existing social, ethnic, or political divides [18, 29]. Addressing these resource conflicts requires cooperation, fair resource management, and policies that ensure equitable distribution to prevent violence and maintain peace.

Fourth, political interests where conflicting political interests or power struggles between individuals or groups. Political interests often fuel interreligious conflict by exploiting religious differences for power. Politicians may manipulate religious identities to gain support or distract from other issues, deepening divisions. In Indonesia, the rise of political Islam and manipulation of religious sentiment have contributed to interreligious violence, such as the 1998 Jakarta riots and tensions in Poso, Sulawesi, where religious identities were politicized for political gain [18, 29].

Internationally, political interests have similarly contributed to religious conflicts. In the Middle East, for example, the political rivalry between Sunni and Shia factions, particularly in countries like Iraq, has been linked to broader geopolitical struggles. The U.S. invasion of Iraq in 2003, which led to the destabilization of the region, exacerbated sectarian tensions that were, to some extent, politically driven by competing local and international powers (Kaldor, 2013).

Thus, when political elites prioritize power over interreligious harmony, they can deepen divisions and escalate conflict.

2.6. The Importance of a Local Wisdom Approach in Resolving Religious Conflict

The local wisdom approach in resolving religious conflicts is a very important strategy because it emphasizes values, traditions, and practices that are inherent in a community. Local wisdom has the potential to mediate differences because of its inclusive nature and familiarity with the local community. This is because local wisdom refers to cultural values, norms and practices that are passed down from generation to generation in a society. In the context of religious

conflict, the local wisdom approach involves the use of local elements such as customs, traditions, arts, or languages that can be unifying tools [7].

In Emile Durkheim's statement, the term "languages" refers to more than just the spoken or written word; it includes the broader concept of communication systems within a community that can shape social cohesion and collective identity. Durkheim, in his work on sociology, emphasized the role of shared symbols, rituals, and practices in binding a society together. Language, in this context, is a unifying tool because it is a medium through which people express values, beliefs, and collective understandings that foster social solidarity [7].

In the context of religious conflict, language can serve as both a source of division and unity. On one hand, religious or ethnic language can be used to reinforce boundaries between groups (for example, religious communities may have specific terms that distinguish their beliefs and practices). On the other hand, language can also be a tool of inclusion, as shared language allows for dialogue, mutual understanding, and conflict resolution. Durkheim's view aligns with communicative approaches to conflict resolution, where language is essential for creating shared meaning and bridging gaps between conflicting groups [28].

In regions like Lombok, Indonesia, where religious diversity is prominent, local languages and dialects may also carry cultural wisdom and community values. These shared linguistic traditions can help maintain harmony and prevent conflict by promoting a sense of belonging and mutual respect.

In conclusion, Durkheim's statement underscores the critical role of language as a unifying tool in society, particularly in the context of religious conflict. Language, along with customs, traditions, and arts, serves as a means of communication that binds individuals together by fostering shared values and collective identity. In diverse societies, like Lombok, where religious differences exist, language can transcend divisions by enabling dialogue, understanding, and the resolution of conflicts. Thus, Durkheim suggests that language, as a symbolic and communicative medium, plays a pivotal role in promoting social cohesion and harmony, offering a powerful approach to addressing and preventing interreligious conflict.

Local wisdom in conflict resolution includes several principles such as inclusivity, where local wisdom often reflects common needs without distinguishing religion, so that it becomes a unifying tool. Then, cultural contextualization because it is rooted in local understanding, so it is more easily accepted than external solutions. Next, the use of symbols and rituals, because many local traditions use rituals or symbols to relieve tension such as traditional ceremonies [3].

Finally, local wisdom in conflict resolution is rooted in principles that promote unity and understanding within communities. Its inclusivity ensures that solutions are not based on religious distinctions, making it a powerful unifying tool. Cultural contextualization further enhances its effective-

tiveness, as local wisdom aligns with the community's values and traditions, making it more readily accepted than external interventions. Additionally, the use of symbols and rituals in local traditions provides a means to alleviate tension, as these cultural practices offer symbolic value that fosters reconciliation and harmony. Together, these principles make local wisdom a vital and effective approach to conflict resolution.

3. Materials and Methods

The design of this study used a qualitative descriptive method. The choice of a qualitative descriptive method for this study is primarily due to its alignment with the research goals, which aim to explore and understand the complex, context-specific dynamics of local wisdom and its role in conflict resolution and regional autonomy. Qualitative methods are particularly suited for capturing the rich, nuanced perspectives of participants, which is essential in understanding the deeper cultural, social, and religious factors at play. Additionally, the descriptive nature of this approach allows for a detailed, in-depth exploration of the subject matter, providing a comprehensive portrayal of the phenomenon without testing hypotheses or seeking causal relationships. Since the study focuses on an under-researched area such as the integration of local wisdom into governance policies a qualitative descriptive approach is ideal for generating insights that are both contextually relevant and reflective of the lived experiences of the community. Furthermore, this approach offers flexibility in data collection, ensuring that the study remains grounded in the specific cultural and social contexts of Lombok, which is crucial for understanding how local wisdom functions within these settings.

Purposive sampling is used to determine the informant that

were selected 21 people to be interviewed. Beside in-depth interview, observation and focused group discussion also conducted in the office of Religious Ministry that involving Head of Religious Ministry Office, Head of the Interfaith Harmony Forum (FKUB) of Central Lombok Regency, Head of Kesbangpol Lombok Tengah, Head of the Interfaith Harmony Forum (FKUB) of Central Lombok Regency, Local Academics and Researchers from IPDN NTB, Local Community, Artists and Cultural Performers.

The technique used to select 21 informants with relevant expertise in religious affairs, interfaith dialogue, governance, cultural practices, and community engagement. This non-random method ensured rich and focused data by involving individuals with direct knowledge of the research issues.

This combination of informants provides a well-rounded view of the local context and the potential strategies for integrating local wisdom into policies to prevent religious conflict.

Data were collected through a combination of four qualitative methods:

1. In-depth Interviews with key informants to gather detailed, individual insights.
2. Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) with community members and cultural stakeholders to capture collective narratives and group dynamics.
3. Observations of community events, cultural practices, and institutional settings to contextualize data.
4. Document Analysis of policy papers, institutional reports, and relevant academic literature to supplement field data.

Below is the summary of the data technique analysis:

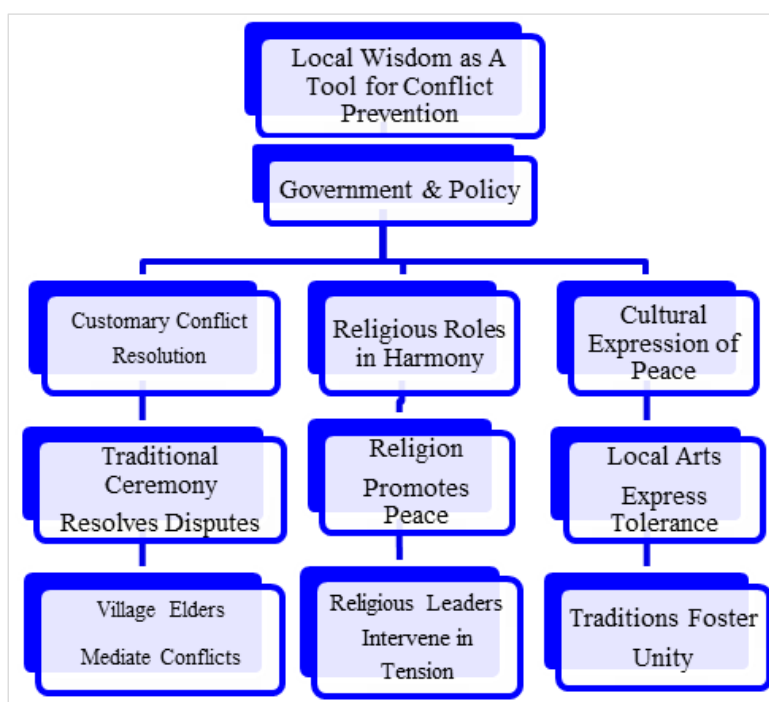
Table 1. Data Technique Analysis.

Stage	Technique Used	Purpose
Data Preparation	Classification (Primary/Secondary)	Organize diverse sources for focused analysis
Coding	Open and axial coding	Identify key patterns, categories, and themes
Thematic Analysis	Manual	Develop thematic maps and relationships across dimensions
Triangulation	Data, method, and observer	Validate findings across sources and perspectives
Theoretical Interpretation	Geertz's interpretive anthropology	Deepen cultural understanding and conceptual model development

All data gained from interviews, FGDs were transcribed and organized them into word documents. Then, reviewed the data thoroughly to become familiarize with the content. After that, manually read the data transcripts line by line, highlight key phrases, statements or ideas to relate the research questions with the theory used. Next step is to assign

a label or code each idea or phrase using thematic development, such as Local Wisdom, Conflict Resolution, Religious Harmony, Regional Autonomy, and Policy integration.

All the themes and codes were visually generated into a coding tree, as followed:



Source: generated by Dwi Indah Kartika, 2025

Figure 1. A Mind Map Illustrate Local Wisdom as A Tool for Conflict Prevention.

By combining data from these diverse sources, triangulation allows the researcher to compare different viewpoints and cross-check information, thereby enhancing the reliability and validity of the findings. This approach helps ensure that the conclusions drawn are comprehensive and reflect the complexities of the research topic from multiple angles.

The Materials and Methods section should provide comprehensive details to enable other researchers to replicate the study and further expand upon the published results. If you have multiple methods, consider using subsections with appropriate headings to enhance clarity and organization.

4. Results

The results section should provide an accurate and concise description of the experimental findings, and the resulting conclusions that can be inferred from the experiments. Meanwhile, the results should be presented in a transparent and truthful manner, avoiding any fabrication or improper manipulation of data. Where applicable, results of statistical analysis should be included in the text or as tables and figures.

5. Discussion

This section presents the key findings of the study and discusses their implications in relation to the research objectives. The analysis focuses on the factors contributing to interregional conflict in Lombok, the extent to which regional autonomy policies incorporate local wisdom, and the devel-

opment of a contextual model for enhancing social cohesion through culturally grounded governance.

5.1. Finding

According to Chairman FKUB said that the Indonesian nation is destined to be a pluralistic nation, a nation of tribes, a nation of diverse religions, as mentioned in the Al-Quran (in the Islamic religion), namely a nation that is *Rahman Lil 'Alamin*. Diversity in religion, beliefs, opinions, political differences, can trigger conflict and even division. This is where the role of customary institutions as formulators of rules for community life with fellow human beings and with the Creator is able to act firmly on all violations committed by the community. The decentralized regional government has the right to autonomy to regulate security and order in their respective regions. In addition, the regional government accommodates customary law so that it can be used as a reference in preventing inter-religious conflict.

One of the academicians also added the idea that in multi-religious settings, socio-economic disparities-such as unequal access to markets, land, or government support-can trigger resentment when linked to religious identity. In Lombok and other regions of Indonesia, perceived favoritism toward one group often leads to social jealousy and distrust, which, when politicized, can escalate economic rivalry into interreligious conflict. He also said that many factors out of different religion and social economy, there are also such as viral issues in social media, different in political point of view, sense of prejudice to new comer who've just visit in our re-

gion.

The urgency of local autonomy in accommodating local wisdom in Lombok Tengah lies in its potential to prevent conflict, strengthen social cohesion, and ensure culturally relevant governance. By institutionalizing local wisdom, Lombok Tengah can build inclusive, responsive policies that reflect community values, reduce intergroup tensions, and promote sustainable peace.

In Lombok Tengah, local authorities acknowledge that interreligious conflicts often stem from socio-economic disparities and political manipulation rather than theological differences. To address these issues, the government collaborates with religious leaders, such as Tuan Guru and Pedanda, who play pivotal roles in mediating tensions and promoting social cohesion through traditional values like empathy and forgiveness. These leaders actively engage in conflict resolution by facilitating dialogue and encouraging restraint among community members. However, challenges persist, particularly when local policies fail to accommodate minority rights or when religious edicts, such as those against Ahmadiyya, are enforced without inclusive dialogue, potentially exacerbating tensions. Consequently, the integration of local wisdom into regional autonomy policies is deemed essential for fostering sustainable peace and preventing the escalation of conflicts into broader sectarian violence.

He also added that both local government and customary law institution synergize together to maintain peace and harmony. This should be supported by local citizens who live here. It is impossible for local government to work alone although we have authority to manage ourselves through regional autonomy.

One of the religious leaders said that Lombok Tengah is categorized as a safe region of conflict. Relations between Sasak Muslims and Balinese Hindus tend to be more harmonious due to shared history and culture, although tensions can still occur in certain situations. However, challenges remain, especially when local policies do not fully accommodate minority rights or when religious fatwas are implemented without inclusive dialogue, which can exacerbate tensions. He added that religion conflict had ever happened between Muslim Sasak and Ahmadiyah. It aroused tensions due to doctrinal differences and the lack of recognition of the Ahmadiyya leadership structure by the Muslim majority.

The informants from the citizens were mostly said that there were no interreligious conflict happens in Lombok Tengah as they can maintain peace and harmony in carrying out each faith, so that tolerance will be maintained and sustainable. They also said that in each home and school, all students are taught to respect others' faiths and do not bother the difference.

5.2. Factors Trigger Religious Conflict in Lombok, West Nusa Tenggara Barat

Based on the interview with the informants, the triggers of

inter-religion conflict are caused by: first, differences in beliefs and intolerance, such as disagreements between different religious groups, especially if there is an exclusive attitude and lack of tolerance, can trigger tensions. If one group feels more dominant and does not respect other beliefs, conflict can arise. Besides, religious sentiment and fanaticism can lead to exclusive attitude and intolerance towards other religious groups. Different culture and custom also can trigger intolerance, as Central Lombok has a diversity of cultures, including between the predominantly Muslim *Sasak* tribe and the still strong Balinese Hindu community. These differences can sometimes trigger tensions if not managed properly.

From the interviews and observations from various community leaders and local residents in Central Lombok reveal that some individuals within the Muslim majority, particularly those adhering to more conservative interpretations of Islam, view themselves as the religious and cultural "majority." This attitude sometimes leads to exclusionary practices, where other religious groups, like the Balinese Hindus, feel pressured to conform to the dominant religious culture or are treated with suspicion or disrespect. The study revealed that when one group feels superior and tries to impose its norms on the others, tensions often arise. This is consistent with Tajfel's (1986) social identity theory, which suggests that group identity can lead to conflict when one group perceives itself as superior and excludes others from the social fabric.

Second, social and economic competition. Economic inequality or competition for resources, such as land, jobs, and businesses, can strain relations between religious communities. If one group feels marginalized or disadvantaged, tensions can increase.

Third, politics of identity. The use of religious issues in politics, such as in regional elections or local policies, can trigger divisions. There are times when politicians use religious sentiment to gain support, which ultimately deepens the gap of differences.

Forth, lack of interfaith dialogue and understanding. Lack of communication and interaction between religious communities can lead to stereotypes and prejudice. If there is no effort to build understanding, misunderstandings can lead to conflict.

Fifth, provocation and hoaxes. The spread of fake news (hoaxes) through social media or from outside parties often triggers inter-religious conflict. Sensitive issues such as the destruction of places of worship or the abuse of religious symbols are often exacerbated by provocateurs.

Sixth, historical factor. In several areas in Central Lombok, there have been inter-religious conflicts in the past which have left trauma and distrust between religious groups.

Moreover, in some instances, religious sentiment and fanaticism contribute to rising intolerance. Religious sentiments can intensify existing animosities when groups engage in rhetoric that frames their religious identity as the "only true faith." In particular, religious fanatics may promote the idea

that their religious practices should dominate or dictate public life. This sentiment can result in discriminatory behavior towards religious minorities, making them feel unsafe and marginalized. For example, in Lombok Tengah, in the case of the *Tuan Guru Bajang* Zainul Mahdi, a prominent Muslim figure in Lombok, his followers and certain political groups have been accused of using religious discourse to exclude non-Muslim communities. Religious extremists may frame these actions as a protection of Islam, but such views create divisions, charging sectarianism and intolerance towards non-Muslim groups, especially the Hindu community in the region.

In addition, Cultural differences between the Sasak Muslims and Balinese Hindus in Central Lombok also contribute to intolerance and conflict. Although both groups have coexisted in the same region for many years, differences in religious rituals, customs, and worldviews sometimes spark misunderstandings. Balinese Hindus, who often practice unique religious and cultural ceremonies, face challenges when their customs are misunderstood or ignored by the Muslim majority. These cultural differences, if not properly managed, can escalate into tensions or even open conflict. For example, the traditional Hindu *Nyepi* Day, a day of silence and reflection, sometimes causes friction with local Muslim communities who do not fully understand or respect this ritual. Hefner [12] noted that cultural differences between religious groups often exacerbate existing tensions when one group feels their practices or beliefs are being threatened or diminished by others.

5.3. Relationship Between Geertz's Theory and the Findings on Local Wisdom in Lombok Tengah

Geertz, in his anthropological studies of religion and culture in Indonesia, emphasized that local wisdom is deeply embedded in symbolic systems-such as rituals, language, customs, and beliefs-that give meaning to social life. He argued that religion and culture in traditional societies are not separate systems but are interwoven, creating a framework through which communities interpret their world and maintain social order [8].

In the context of Lombok Tengah, the findings of this study align closely with Geertz's theory. Local traditions-such as *pekenek alang* (balance and harmony), *Bale Mediation*, and *deliberation* (*musyawarah*)-serve as cultural and moral systems that provide mechanisms for resolving conflict, maintaining social cohesion, and fostering religious tolerance. These practices reflect Geertz's idea that local wisdom is not just practical knowledge, but symbolic and ethical guidance rooted in a community's collective experience.

The finding that differences in beliefs and intolerance trigger conflict reinforces Geertz's insight that when symbolic systems are disrespected or displaced, social fragmentation and misunderstanding can occur. Conversely, when these

systems are acknowledged and integrated into policy (as through FKUB or community-based dispute resolution), they serve as powerful tools for reconciling religious differences.

Thus, Geertz's theory helps explain why integrating local wisdom-as a culturally embedded and symbolically rich system-can be effective in preventing interreligious conflict and sustaining intergroup harmony in multicultural societies like Central Lombok.

5.4. Local Autonomy Accommodate Local Wisdom as a Preventive Strategy to Overcome Interreligious Conflict

Local autonomy plays a crucial role in accommodating local wisdom as a preventive strategy to overcome interreligious conflicts. By leveraging local cultural values, traditions, and community engagement mechanisms, local governments can foster social harmony and minimize tensions between religious groups. Here's how local autonomy can integrate local wisdom into conflict prevention:

According to the findings from Lombok Tengah, interreligious tensions often stem from intolerance, cultural differences, and exclusive attitudes. However, these tensions are frequently addressed through localized efforts such as the *Bale Mediation*, interfaith dialogue forums (like FKUB), and culturally embedded practices of deliberation and consensus (*musyawarah-mufakat*).

Ryaas Rasyid asserts that regional autonomy allows districts to formulate policies that reflect local aspirations [26], traditions, and values. In Lombok Tengah, this means the district government has the legal and political space to integrate Sasak traditions, Hindu customs, and Islamic values into governance and conflict mediation processes.

This autonomy enables:

1. Involvement of religious and traditional leaders in policymaking (as shown in local policies that involve FKUB and community consensus).
2. Institutional support for customary mechanisms like *Bale Mediation*, which aligns with community expectations and enhances legitimacy.
3. Development of education and social programs that promote tolerance and intercultural understanding, reflecting local cultural wisdom.

Thus, local autonomy doesn't just decentralize authority-it becomes a channel for embedding local wisdom into formal governance structures, thereby creating a responsive, culturally grounded approach to conflict resolution [26].

Below how local autonomy Accommodate Local Wisdom to Prevent Interreligious Conflict in Lombok Tengah. The local government conduct:

5.5. Incorporating Local Wisdom into Governance

Customary Laws and Traditions. Many communities have

traditional conflict resolution mechanisms (e.g., *musyawarah* or deliberation in Indonesia) that emphasize consensus and peace-building. Local governments can formalize these practices in resolving interreligious disputes.

Recognition of Local Values: Certain indigenous values, such as *gotong royong* (mutual cooperation) in Indonesia, can be promoted through policies that encourage interfaith cooperation and solidarity.

5.6. Strengthening Community-based Dialogue and Mediation

Interfaith Forums and Councils: Local autonomy allows for the establishment of interfaith councils or religious harmony forums (Forum Kerukunan Umat Beragama in Indonesia), which facilitate ongoing dialogue between religious leaders and communities.

Traditional Mediators (Elders and Religious Leaders): Local wisdom often recognizes the role of community elders and religious leaders as mediators. These figures can be empowered to resolve disputes informally before they escalate.

5.7. Culturally Inclusive Education and Awareness Programs

Teaching Tolerance through Local Narratives: Schools and community programs can integrate local stories and historical examples of religious harmony into their curricula to instill values of respect and coexistence.

Public Awareness Campaigns: Local governments can promote campaigns emphasizing shared cultural heritage and interfaith cooperation, reinforcing unity over division.

5.8. Recognizing and Supporting Interreligious Festivals and Cultural Events

Cross-Religious Celebrations: Events that highlight shared cultural elements across religions, such as traditional arts, music, or community gatherings, help bridge gaps between different religious groups.

Government-Sponsored Cultural Initiatives: Local authorities can fund cultural preservation efforts that promote peace and shared identity.

5.9. Decentralized Policy-making for Conflict Prevention

Custom-Tailored Regulations: Local autonomy enables regions to craft policies that reflect their unique religious demographics, ensuring fair representation and protection of minority groups.

Localized Law Enforcement Approaches: Community-based policing that respects local customs and religious sensitivities can prevent the escalation of conflicts.

5.9.1. Utilizing Local Communication Networks to Counter Misinformation

Strengthening Social Networks: Local communities often have informal information-sharing networks, such as village meetings or religious gatherings. These can be used to counter misinformation that fuels interreligious tensions.

Early Warning Systems: By utilizing local knowledge and communication structures, local governments can detect early signs of religious discord and take preventive measures before conflicts escalate.

Finally, local autonomy allows for more flexible, culturally appropriate, and community-driven approaches to managing interreligious relations. By embracing local wisdom, local governments can promote a model of conflict prevention that is not only effective but also deeply rooted in the values and traditions of the community.

5.9.2. Effective Model to Integrate Local Wisdom into Local Autonomy to Prevent Interreligious Conflict

To effectively integrate local wisdom into local autonomy as a strategy for preventing interreligious conflict, a collaborative governance model that combines traditional values, inclusive policies, and community-based initiatives is needed. Below is an effective model that local governments can implement; firstly, Interfaith Councils & Customary Elders' Committees. Local governments should formalize interfaith councils (Forum Kerukunan Umat Beragama - FKUB in Indonesia) that include representatives from different religious communities. Moreover, Traditional community leaders (tokoh adat, village elders) should be empowered as mediators in conflict resolution.

Second, Decentralized Conflict Resolution Mechanisms. Establish community peace teams (Tim Perdamaian Komunitas), composed of religious leaders, traditional elders, and youth leaders, to mediate disputes before they escalate. Recognize and integrate customary conflict resolution practices (e.g., *musyawarah mufakat* – consensus-based deliberation) into local governance structures.

Third, Legal and Policy Support for Local Wisdom. Incorporate traditional values of tolerance into local regulations (e.g., policies that encourage mutual respect in religious practices). Ensure that customary and religious leaders are consulted in policy-making related to social cohesion.

Forth, Cultural and Educational Integration Model. This approach promotes awareness, education, and shared cultural identity to prevent conflict and foster mutual understanding. There are some key components to implement this model:

(a) Interfaith Education Programs

- 1) Develop localized school curricula that highlight historical examples of religious harmony within the region.
- 2) Introduce subjects that teach local wisdom and interreligious tolerance from an early age.

(b) Cross-Religious Cultural Programs & Festivals

- 1) Encourage local governments to fund and support joint cultural and religious events that involve multiple faith communities.
- 2) Promote traditional art, music, and storytelling that reinforce shared cultural identity and unity.

(c) Community Workshops on Tolerance & Peacebuilding

Organize training sessions on peaceful coexistence based on local wisdom, targeting youth, religious leaders, and local officials.

Fifth, Early Warning System Model. This model focuses on detecting, preventing, and responding to potential interreligious conflicts before they escalate. The components of this model are:

(a) Local Peace Monitoring Teams

Train community-based conflict monitors to track early signs of tension and report them to local authorities.

(b) Customary-Based Mediation

Use traditional mediation methods (adat-based dispute resolution) to intervene in conflicts before they escalate into violence.

(c) Religious Harmony Hotline & Reporting Mechanisms

Establish hotlines or digital reporting platforms where people can report religious tensions, discrimination, or hate speech anonymously.

Sixth, Economic and Social Empowerment Model. Economic disparity can fuel tensions; thus, integrating local wisdom into economic collaboration and social inclusion helps prevent conflict. The components of this model are:

(a) Interfaith Economic Cooperation Programs

Develop joint economic projects (e.g., cooperative businesses, shared farming initiatives) that involve members of different religious communities.

(b) Local Government Support for Religious Minorities

- 1) Implement affirmative policies ensuring equal economic opportunities for religious minorities.
- 2) Encourage shared markets and trade networks to strengthen economic interdependence.

(c) Gotong Royong (Mutual Cooperation) Programs

Promote community service projects where different religious groups work together to solve local issues (e.g., disaster relief, infrastructure development).

At last, a holistic, multi-level approach is the most effective model for integrating local wisdom into local autonomy involves a multi-level approach, combining governance, education, conflict prevention mechanisms, and economic empowerment. By embracing traditional values of tolerance, inclusivity, and mutual cooperation, local governments can proactively prevent interreligious conflicts and foster long-term social harmony.

In this section, authors are advised to provide a thorough analysis of the results and make comparisons with relevant literature, not a short summary or conclusion. Any future research directions could also be stated in the discussion.

6. Conclusions

Lombok Tengah, as a region with diverse religious and cultural communities, faces challenges in maintaining interfaith harmony. Local autonomy provides an opportunity to integrate local wisdom as a preventive strategy against interreligious conflicts. By incorporating traditional values, customary dispute resolution mechanisms, and community-based governance, local authorities can foster social cohesion and prevent tensions from escalating into conflict.

The local wisdom approach in conflict prevention emphasizes participatory governance, cultural integration, and economic cooperation. Traditional practices such as *musyawarah mufakat* (deliberative consensus), *gotong royong* (mutual cooperation), and the role of customary and religious leaders serve as effective tools for early conflict detection and mediation. Interfaith councils, peace monitoring teams, and educational programs promoting tolerance further strengthen this approach.

Additionally, economic and social empowerment initiatives that promote interfaith collaboration in business, social projects, and cultural events can reduce economic disparities that often fuel tensions. Digital platforms and local peace teams also enhance the early warning system to detect and address potential conflicts before they escalate.

By integrating local wisdom into local autonomy, Lombok Tengah can establish a sustainable, community-driven framework for interreligious peace. This approach not only prevents conflicts but also strengthens regional resilience, unity, and inclusive development. Therefore, fostering dialogue, cultural understanding, and shared economic opportunities remains key to ensuring long-term religious harmony in the region.

Abbreviations

FKUB	Forum Kerukunan Umat Beragama (Interfaith Council)
IPDN	Institut Pemerintahan Dalam Negeri
NTB	Nusa Tenggara Barat or West Nusa Tenggara
FGD	Focused Group Discussion

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

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