

THE VIRTUE IN CORE VALUES OF BUGINESE CULTURE: A WORLDVIEW FROM PHILOSOPHICAL, RELIGIOUS, AND MORAL PERSPECTIVES

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to reveal the implementation of the principles or core values of Buginese culture from three perspectives: philosophical, religious, and moral. The Buginese culture belongs to the Bugis people, a community from South Sulawesi. The Bugis people live in harmony alongside the Makassar, Toraja, and Mandar ethnicities and form social systems and institutions. As an ethnic group that dominates the population of South Sulawesi, the Buginese strongly maintain their culture. It can be seen in the principles or core values of the Buginese culture. The core values of Buginese are also a reflection of their worldview and approach to life. This study aims to uncover 1) the principles or core values of the Buginese ethnicity through their cultural ideologies and 2) the philosophical, religious, and moral perspectives underlying their principles or core values. This study utilizes the Cultural Semantics theory with a qualitative interpretive method, which relies on the analysis of the descriptive meaning of expressions. The results of this study indicate that the principles or core values of a Buginese culture are still alive because Buginese people practice the cultural heritage of their ancestors

by actualizing it in a contemporary context. This research implies that cultural values are maintained when a culture has a dynamic aspect that can adapt to evolving cultural needs.

Keywords: philosophy, religion, moral values, Buginese, culture, life principle, worldview

INTRODUCTION

The Bugis ethnic is one of the oldest ethnicities in Indonesia, inhabiting most of the mainland areas of South Sulawesi. In social life, the Bugis community is known for its strong adherence to the community's principles and values (Macknight, 2016). These life principles or values were passed down from their ancestors and are well preserved. Upholding the ancestral heritage is an important part of the Bugis ethnic culture (Moein, 1990). The characteristics of Bugis culture are that it is full of religious nuances, advice, wisdom, ethics and aesthetics, feelings, and honesty that are devoted to God (Rahim, 1985). In addition, the local wisdom of the Bugis community groups also contains lessons about the meaning of life and resurrection, as well as belief in destiny and change of fate (Al-Rasyid & Ilyas, 2022).

The Buginese or Bugis people are one of the many ethnicities in Indonesia and are called *Tau Ugi* in their local language (Mansyur, 2011; Tahir et al., 2018). They originated and still mostly live in the southern part of the island of Sulawesi. However, over the centuries and in recent times, the Bugis community has spread widely throughout the Indonesian Archipelago and several other countries, including Malaysia, Brunei, Singapore, and the Philippines. It is thought that many Bugis people migrated around 1667, after the fall of the Kingdom of Gowa (Pelras, 2016). Another wave occurred after Indonesian independence in the 1950s to seek a better livelihood. This migration or dispersal is called *sompeq* which means wandering.

The *Tau Ugi*, to use their name for the Bugis ethnic, is ethnic that adheres to a patron-client system or a system of comprehensive group solidarity between leaders and followers. This hierarchical system is very rigid and complex. However, as they have very high mobility, they are also known as a nomadic people. It is readily proven, as anywhere in the territory of Indonesia, it is quite easy to meet this ethnic group. They are known for being tough in

adhering to principles but gentle speaking. Members of this ethnic group typically strongly and even fiercely uphold their honor, working hard for the sake of prosperity while always seeking to maintain individual honor and safeguard the family name (Sugiman, 2017).

The Bugis people speak a distinct regional language called Bugis (*Basa Ugi*), with several different dialects and Indonesian. Bugis is an exonym representing an older form of the name; (*To*) Ugi is the endonym (Tiwary & Kumar, 2009; Ayubi, 2003). The Bugis language belongs to the South Sulawesi language group; other members include Makassarese, Toraja, Mandar and Massenrempulu.

The kinship system of the Bugis people is called *assiajingeng* and follows a bilateral system which is a system that follows the life of the father and mother. The lineage is based on both parents so that a child is not only part of the father's extended family but also becomes part of the mother's extended family. This kinship or *assiajingeng* is divided into two: *siajing mareppe* (close relatives) and *siajing mabela* (distant relatives). Close relatives or *siajing mareppe* are determinants and controllers of family dignity. Members of the *siajing mareppe* are based on two lines: *repper*, or kinship members based on blood relations, and *siteppang mareppe* (*sompung lolo*) or kinship members based on marital relations.

Culturally and ideologically, the Bugis people prioritize equality in all aspects because the principle of equality contains human values that must be upheld.

Literature Review

Buginese Ethnic In South Sulawesi

The Bugis people are the ethnic with the largest population in South Sulawesi. In the official population data for 2021, the Bugis ethnic comprised just over half of the 8.819.500 people recorded, with other ethnicities collectively contributing a similar proportion, as shown in Table 1.

Table 1 Buginese and Other Ethnicities in South Sulawesi (2021 data)

No	Ethnicities	Population	Percentage (%)	Remarks
1	Buginese	4.414.160	50.05	4.93% are from Luwu
2	Macassarese	2.732.281	30.98	1.3% are from Selayar
3	Torajanese	894.297	10.14	2.8% are from Duri Enrekang
4	Mandarese	57.327	0.65	Relatively few remain since West Sulawesi Province was established
5	Others	721435	8.18	Java 2.86%, Tionghoa 0.55%
Total		8,819,500		

The Buginese population, as mentioned above, originates from and many remain domiciled in South Sulawesi Province. It is estimated that, collectively, those scattered in various places outside South Sulawesi number around three times as much. For example, the Bugis diaspora can now be found in the Johor and Sabah regions of Malaysia, Brunei

Darussalam, Timor Leste, Sulu Island in the Philippines, and to a lesser extent in Singapore. The Bugis ethnic can be found in many other provinces across Indonesia, particularly Kalimantan, Sumatra and Southeast Sulawesi, including Baubau, Buton, and Kendari.



Figure 1. Map of Sulawesi

South Sulawesi Province is located between 0°12' - 8' S and 116°48' - 122°36' E, bounded to the north by West Sulawesi, to the east by the Gulf of Bone and Southeast Sulawesi, to the west by the Makassar Strait, and the south by the Flores Sea (Druce, 2016).

South Sulawesi Province has an area of 46.717.48 km² with a total population of 2012 ± 8.214.779 people giving a mean population density of 175.84 people/km². The province is divided into 24 regencies/cities (21 regencies and 3 cities), with 304 districts and 2,953 villages/suburbs and four main regional ethnic

groups, namely the Bugis, Makassar, Mandar and Toraja ethnics (Mattulada, 2011; Surya, 2017).

Comprising just over half of the total population (50.05%), the Bugis ethnic have distinctive cultural characteristics preserved from generation to generation (Pelras, 2000; Enre, 1985; Rahman, 2018). Maintaining friendship is a core principle that is maintained together. Some examples are seen in the marriage system, the social system, farming methods, manners, systems of cooperation and the principle of advancing each other in kindness and togetherness (Saleh, 2021).

Buginese Culture

In principle, Bugis culture is applied in everyday life and teaches things related to manners and behavior towards others. It includes practices, i.e., saying *tabe'* means taking permission; bowing half body when passing in front of a group of elderly people; saying *iyyé'* when answering questions and before expressing reasons—being friendly, respecting older people and caring for the young (Sumandiyo, 2006; Rahman, 2022). These are just some of the teachings of the Bugis ethnicity, which are practiced in everyday life. The Bugis ethnic is very richly endowed with advice about life in general and particular aspects of living passed down by their ancestors. The Bugis people see that what their ancestors inherited and, in turn, passed on carries a philosophical message that holds moral teachings within it (Bachriani et al., 2018). The Buginese culture is aligned with religious principles, especially Islamic teaching.

The wider Bugis-Makassar ethnic group possesses a rich heritage, philosophy, religious and social structure. Their customs are based on the concept of *Pangadereng*. It originally consisted of *Ade'* (custom), *Rapang* (Jurisprudence), *Bicara* (Judiciary) and *Warik* (Social system). Following the Islamisation of the Bugis-Makassar, *Syara'* (Syariah) was also incorporated into their core values (Nurnaningsih, 2015; Parekh, 2001).

The Bugis ethnic is also richly endowed with distinctive customs: wedding customs, the custom of proposing to a woman, visiting customs, building customs and farming customs (Mattalitti, 1986; Andini, 2021). By maintaining the customary order, they adhere to the core principles of living life principles. It can be observed that Islamic teachings heavily influence these life principles because almost all Bugis people are Muslims. The customs that belong to the Bugis ethnic indicate that at one time, the Bugis people had a great civilization (Gani, 1990; Sukmawaty et al., 2022). The ancestors of the Bugis ethnic were intelligent and wise people who could create and pass on knowledge (Abidin, 1999).

Conceptual Framework

This study aims to reveal two things; 1) the principle or core values of the Buginese ethnicity through their cultural ideologies, and 2) aspects of the philosophical, religious, and

moral perspectives underlying their principles or core values. These two objectives were achieved through different strategies. The first objective was achieved through a literature study, followed by verification of the results through interviews with several educators, religious leaders, traditional leaders, political figures, and experts on cultural issues to determine their philosophical views. The second objective was achieved through direct observation methods and the use of questionnaires which were given to respondents who were determined purposively. In some ways, in this study, moral and religious teachings are seen as a cluster concept of goodness (virtue).

RESEARCH METHOD

Data Collection Techniques

The research informants were collected through Google Monkey on a number that had to be answered by the respondent. Potential respondents were selected randomly from the members of an established WhatsApp Group with a membership mostly drawn from the Bugis community in Makassar, the capital city of South Sulawesi Province. Preliminary questions related to the potential informant's identity, including ethnicity and occupation. Potential respondents who met the criteria for this study (Bugis ethnicity and active use of the Bugis language) were then asked if they would be willing to become respondents. Respondents were then selected from the potential informants willing to participate and met the required criteria. The verified results found that 90 potential respondents met the requirements. The researcher then communicated with these respondents regarding their selection as research respondents.

The first step after selecting the respondents was to compile and trial a questionnaire. After the trial had been completed, the questionnaire was sent to the respondents to ask them what elements were included in the principles or core values of Buginese culture from both philosophical and moral/religious perspectives. The respondents' responses were then grouped into the nine categories identified in this study. These nine categories (principles or core values) are referred to using the local language terms familiar to the respondents.

The next step was to send the questionnaire back to the respondents to ask them to clarify the meaning of each of these terms based on their perceptions (multiple choice options for answering these queries were provided based on the results from processing the initial data). Each respondent was asked to tick one of the three options. The data were tabulated After the answers were collected to determine the percentage of each aspect that stood out based on the respondents' perception, according to their understanding of the basic principles or core values of Buginese culture.

Bugi's philosophical values can also be explored in other ways, such as through the values specifically contained in *lontaraq*, both open and unpublished. Such an approach requires an in-depth study to trace past cultures because *lontaraq* manuscripts are stored in

various cultural media. With such an in-depth study, the values of Bugis philosophy can be revealed and preserved (Patmawaty, 2016).

Respondents

Respondents in this study were people who are considered to have an understanding of Buginese culture and to understand the basic principles and philosophical meaning of moral messages passed down from Bugis ancestors. The selection of respondents was purposive, with three main considerations, namely that the respondent must be native Buginese (and able to speak the Bugis language), understand cultural issues, and be willing to be a respondent providing answers to the required questions. The gender composition of the respondents was also taken into consideration (Figure 2).

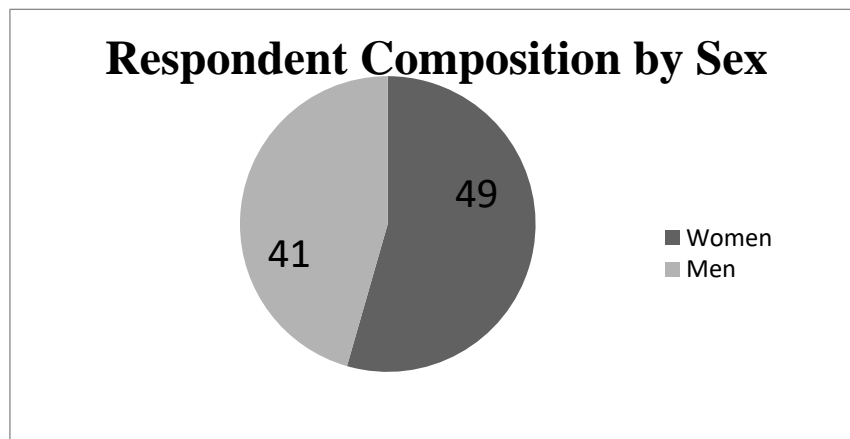


Figure 2. Respondent gender composition

The age composition of the respondents was also considered (Figure 3). The aim was

to have a relatively even age distribution to achieve purposive representation.

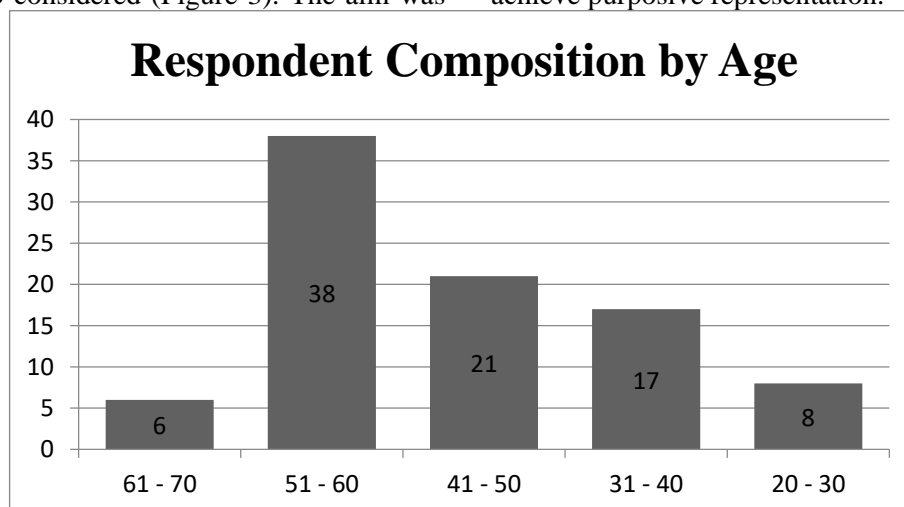


Figure 3. Respondent age-class distribution

Respondents between 41 and 60 years old comprised the majority of the sample. People of this age tended to have sufficient experience and knowledge and were wise in giving views, as is considered the case in the Bugis tradition. At this age, apart from practicing philosophical values, they also generally teach these values to the next

generation, especially to younger people in the environment in which they live (Sari et al., 2019). Apart from considering age, work or employment background is also important. Civil servants and educators comprised the largest proportions (Figure 4). People in these positions are qualified to act as role models in society.

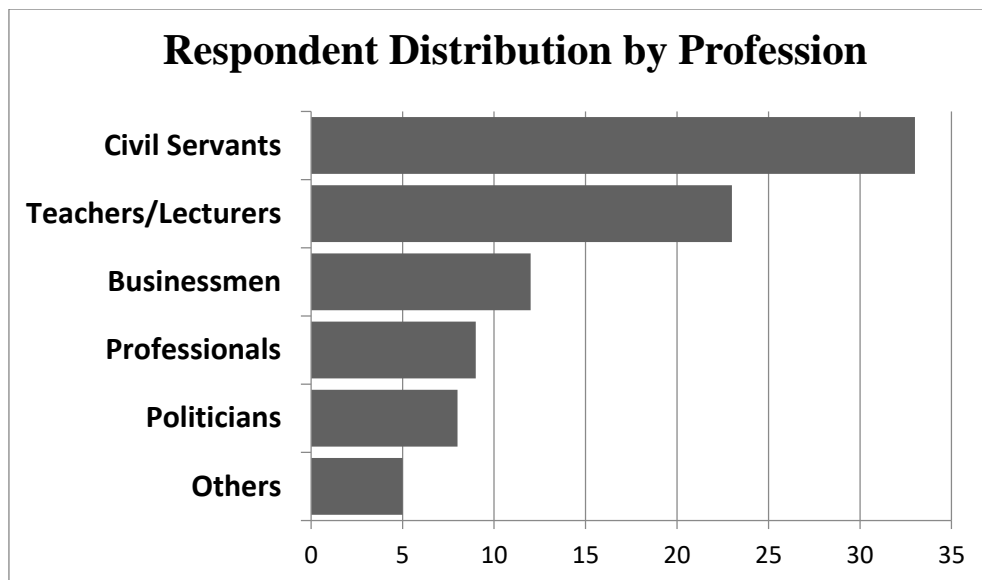


Figure 4. Respondent composition by professional background

Based on the number of respondents, the researchers then sent the questionnaire to 90 respondents with one primary request: please list the basic principles or core values of Buginese culture. From these 90 responses, the researchers analyzed the responses of the respondents based on the following keywords from the Bugis language: 1) *Ininnawa madeceng*; 2) *Lempu*; 3) *Sitinaja*; 4) *Siri na Pesse*; 5) *Reso temmangingngi*; 6) *Sipakainge na Sikapatau*; 7) *Taro ada taro gau*; 8) *Macarinna*, and 9) *Maraja Taneq*. A number of these terms are typical terms in Bugis culture.

Data Analysis Methods

The research data were analyzed using tabulation to determine the percentage of respondents' responses to each element in each question. The responses with higher percentages are considered stronger. They are believed to be predominant among the respondents who live in that culture and practice elements of that culture in their daily lives. The aspects that stand out for each basic principle or core value in Buginese culture are

similar and related. However, the proportions reflect their overall perception of the element in question.

For each question, the respondents ticked the answers they thought were most relevant to the aspect presented. This research combined quantitative and qualitative methods. Quantitative methods were used to measure the tendencies or trends in respondents' answers, while the discussion used qualitative methods. The qualitative method is seen as able to philosophically describe the core moral messages of the Buginese ethnicity.

As mentioned, Bugi's philosophical values can be traced through *lontaraq*, which certain people in society still store. Bugis philosophies that have had and still retain a very strong influence include the values in the *lontaraq* text aligned with values in Islamic teaching. These include the values expressed in the Bugis philosophy that *ade'* (*adat* in Indonesian, meaning the body of local tradition/customs or local customary law) is based on *syara'* (Islamic law) and *syara'* is based on the Qur'an. Thus, *ade'* and *syara'*

coexist peacefully as two aspects of Bugis culture (Mattulada, 1983, p. 240).

DISCUSSION

This study formulated nine points corresponding to the basic principles or core values of Bugis culture (based on 90 responses from 90 respondents). The aspects that stand out from each point can be seen in Table 2.

To complement this research data, the researchers conducted interviews with respondents to further study the cultural ideology and refine the philosophical and moral (religious) perspectives underlying the principles of Bugis ethnic life values (Pelras, 1996). The resulting explanation of each principle is summarized below.

Table 2. Key Aspects of the Basic Principles or Core Values of Buginese Culture

No	Basic Principle or Core Value of Buginese Culture	Key aspects	%
1	<i>Ininnawa madeceng</i> (positive thinking)	positive thinking	35 (39.1%)
		prejudice	32 (35.5%)
		always grateful	23 (25.4%)
2	<i>Lempu</i> (honesty)	honesty	41 (45.6%)
		credibility	30 (33.3%)
		transparency	19 (21.1%)
3	<i>Sitinaja</i> (reasonableness)	obey the principle of propriety	35 (38.8%)
		behave naturally	28 (31.1%)
		no boasting/showing off	27 (30.1%)
4	<i>Siri na Pesse</i> (pride and togetherness)	maintain honor	51 (56.7%)
		maintain self-esteem	22 (24.4%)
		maintaining togetherness	17 (18.9%)
5	<i>Reso na temmangingngi</i> (work hard without giving up)	work earnestly	34 (37.8%)
		do not easily give up	31 (34.4%)
		remain optimistic	25 (27.8%)
6	<i>Sipakainge na Sikapatau</i> (mutual advising and respect for each other)	respect for everyone	49 (54.3%)
		mutual respect	27 (30.1%)
		openness to receiving advice	14 (15.6%)
7	<i>Taro ada taro gau</i> (word and deed are one)	remain true to a pledge	44 (48.9%)
		commitment to keeping promises	36 (40.0%)
		avoid deviousness	10 (11.1%)
8	<i>Macarinna</i> (thrifty)	avoid wasteful consumption	35 (39.0%)
		make use of anything in a balanced way	32 (35.5%)
		avoid arrogance/showing off	23 (25.5%)
9	<i>Maraja Taneq</i> (highly appreciates)	respect the kindness of others	41 (43.3%)
		reciprocate	39 (45.6%)
		avoid becoming a burden to others	10 (11.1%)

Ininnawa madeceng (positive thinking). One of the cultures passed down by the ancestors of the Bugis ethnic is the principle of *ininnawa madeceng*. In the Bugis teachings, it is mentioned that *naiyya*

ininnawa madecengng E deceng cappa'na. It means that positive thinking is the starting point for achieving well-being.

Lempu (honesty). Bugis ancestors taught and emphasized *lempu* (honesty). A

child is taught to be honest from childhood in a family environment. Parents must set an example to their family members in the family environment. As a result, if someone has ever been dishonest, he will be humiliated for life, both in the human context and in social relationships, especially from the perspective of religion, namely Islam.

Sitinaja (reasonableness). The word *sitinaja* has many meanings, but in the context of a moral message, *sitinaja* in the Bugis language may mean 'obey the principle of propriety, 'behave naturally,' and 'do not boast.' The principle of propriety is to place each thing according to its place. Likewise, 'behaving naturally' is practiced in Bugis ethnic. In behaving naturally, of course, one should not boast.

Siri na Pesse (pride and togetherness). One of the characteristics of the Bugis ethnic character is the nature of *Siri na Pesse*. *Siri* means embarrassment, while *pesse* means scathing. In this context, *Siri* means that the Bugis are willing to make sacrifices to maintain their honor and dignity. In this context, *pesse* means that the Bugis have a keen sense of brotherhood; if someone experiences a problem, it is as if other people also feel or share it. That is the reason why the Bugis ethnic maintains life together and togetherness.

Resopa na temmangingngi (work hard without giving up). This principle taught by Bugis ancestors means to work hard and never give up. In order to improve their standard of living, many Bugis people have dared to leave their hometowns to migrate. Overseas, they still practice the teachings of their ancestors.

Sipakainge na Sikapatau (mutual advising and respect for each other). The Bugis ethnic has collective characteristics; they feel responsible for each other and the suffering of others, respect everyone, especially each other, and consider it important to be prepared to give and receive

advice. One of the principles of social togetherness that the Bugis ethnic ancestors have passed down to succeeding generations.

Taro ada taro gau (word and deed are one). Breaking a promise or commitment is a despicable act and is not praiseworthy for the Bugis ethnic. In everyday life, if a person is known to have broken or does not hold true to this life principle, they will be ostracized; they will lose respect and even be shunned or cut off from the association. Thus, the Bugis does not make promises lightly, but once he makes a promise, in whatever way or whatever it takes, he will fulfill it, even if his life is at stake.

Macarinna (thrift). The Bugis are known as thrifty people. This principle is positive, in contrast to the nature of being stingy or mean, which can be categorized as negative. Matters related to the thrift principle, avoiding conspicuous or excessive consumption, using things in a balanced manner, and avoiding overbearing behavior or arrogance. For the Bugis ethnic, the character of overbearing/arrogance is against (hated by) their religion. It is their reason for keeping the aforementioned thrifty character.

Maraja Taneq (strong appreciation). If someone is courteous and gives help to a Bugis, they will try to repay that kindness, even striving to repay it in a much better and more meaningful way. There are three main aspects related to this principle: respecting the goodness of others and always remembering it, loving reciprocity, and striving not to be a burden to others.

Based on the data analysis regarding characteristic aspects of the nine life principles of the Bugis ethnicity (the aspects that stand out), it seems that for each principle, there is an aspect that stands out based on the responses from the respondents (Table 2). The aspect of each principle with the highest proportion of respondents is shown in Figure 5.

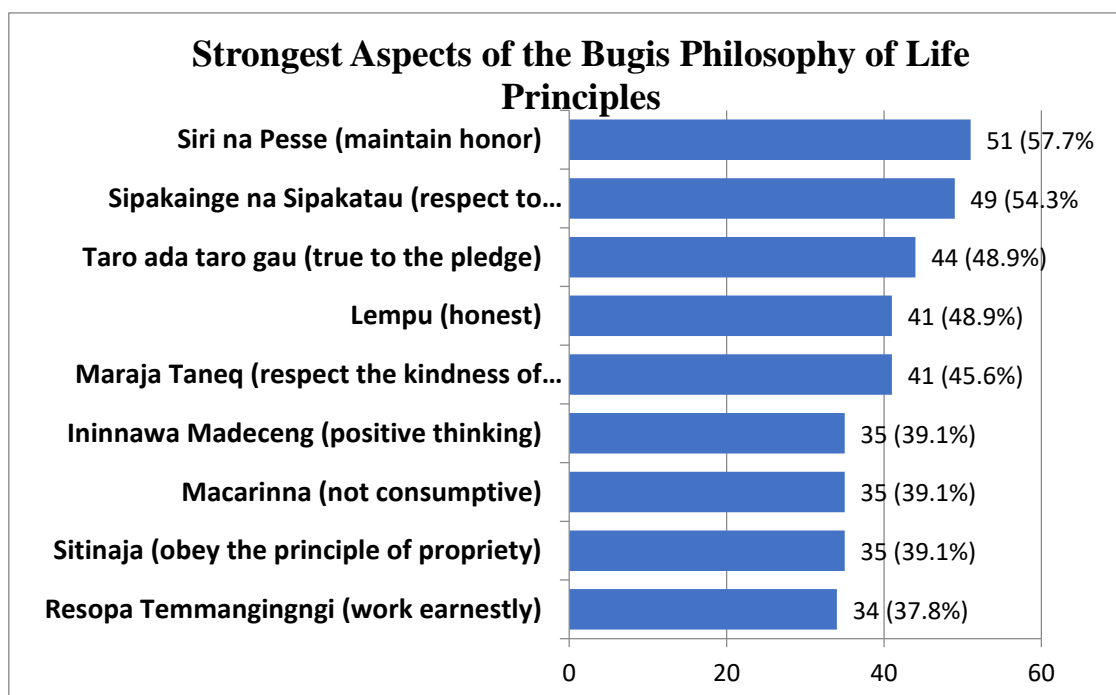


Figure 5. Strongest Aspects of the Nine Core Principles of the Bugis Philosophy of Life

These nine aspects are intrinsic aspects of the nine core principles of the Bugis philosophy of life. The core philosophy of life of the Bugis ethnic is linguistically stated in Buginese terms (Bugis language) because it is difficult to find true equivalents to these terms in English. However, the authors have tried to bring these terms into English with a semantics approach.

To conclude, the aspects of Bugi's philosophy of life, this philosophy seems to be lasting. It is still practiced because the Bugis expression says *mali siparappe, rebba sipatokkong, malilu sipakainge* (save each other if someone is drifting, lift each other if someone falls, remind each other if someone has forgotten). This expression highlights that the Bugis as an ethnic are not individualistic but rather aim to cultivate life together and like to work together. Every person has a *macarinna* characteristic that is not oriented towards consumption. People should have something not based on wants but based on their needs.

Thus, based on the discussion above, the philosophy of life of the Bugis ethnic is formed from various elements which, in essence, collectively form the community benchmark for actions and behavior. Many

elements of Bugis culture originate from local wisdom embodied in the *lontara*. The influence of Islamic teachings is also highly significant in maintaining cultural continuity. It also makes sense because the Bugis are devout Muslims.

CLOSING

The philosophy of life of the Bugis ethnic is marked by the crystallization of an ideological system that has been passed down from generation to generation. The combination of religious and human moral values has made an important contribution to the philosophy of life of this ethnicity. Social control is an important part of preserving these values as Bugis culture adheres to the principle of living together and supporting each other. It is embodied in the philosophy of *mali siparappe, rebba sipatokkong, malilu sipakainge* (save each other if someone is drifting, lift each other if someone falls, remind each other if someone has forgotten). They are far from being individualistic in maintaining their society and order in their lives.

Based on the objectives of this research, it can be seen that two important things are revealed. Firstly, the principle or core values of the Buginese ethnicity are

revealed through their cultural ideology, which is reflected in the philosophical and moral perspectives underlying the key aspects of their principles or core values.

Secondly, regardless of the philosophical, religious, and moral perspectives behind aspects of their principles or core values, the Bugis are an ethnic civilization that has quite ancient roots but also has a global viewpoint. It balances every action's social and moral aspects by referring to religious teachings—the Bugis ethnic respects local wisdom and accepts modern civilization. It is also true to say that the core values of the Buginese are a reflection of their worldview in this life. However, balance, harmony, and peace are the main considerations.

The results of this study indicate that two things largely determine the philosophical and moral aspects of Buginese culture. The first is the local wisdom in the *lontara* manuscripts taught by their ancestors. In contrast, the second is the strong influence of the teachings of Islam, considering that almost all Buginese follow the Muslim religion. The implications of this research will foster a new awareness for the Buginese to protect their cultural heritage better and, at the same time, will provide knowledge for outsiders to better understand the principles or core values of Buginese culture from both philosophical and religious (moral) perspectives.

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