Religious Identity and Social Integration: An Ethnographic Study of the Balinese Hindu Community in East Lampung

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ARTICLE INFO

ABSTRACT

This study examines the process of social integration and the maintenance of religious identity of the Balinese Hindu community in Pematang Tahalo Village, Hamlet IV, Gunung Kerung, Jabung District, East Lampung Regency. Within a predominantly Muslim community, the Balinese Hindu community demonstrates the ability to adapt and build harmonious social relations without obscuring its religious identity. This study aims to understand the social, cultural, and religious mechanisms that shape interfaith relations in a multicultural environment. The method used is a descriptive qualitative approach using in-depth interviews, participant observation, and documentation. Key informants included traditional leaders, religious leaders, community administrators, and Balinese Hindu youth. Data analysis was conducted inductively, referring to the theories of religion as a cultural system (Geertz), social solidarity (Durkheim), and the social construction of religion (Asad). The results indicate that social integration is built through interfaith cooperation, mutual cooperation, and mutual respect. Religious traditions such as mass cremation (ngaben), temple odalan (puppet ceremony), and melasti (pilgrimage ceremony) reinforce collective identity, strengthen social solidarity, and promote local pluralism.

1. INTRODUCTION

Indonesia is known as a social space with a very high level of religious, ethnic, and cultural diversity. This condition shapes the nation's pluralistic character while simultaneously presenting ongoing challenges in maintaining social harmony (Rahman & Setia, 2021). Diversity exists not only as a demographic reality but also as a lived experience that is continually negotiated in daily interactions. Amid differences in religious and cultural backgrounds, Indonesian society builds social relations through various mechanisms of adaptation, dialogue, and value compromise. This situation makes plurality a crucial foundation for building a shared life (Aripudin et al., 2022). This diversity does not exist as a separate entity, but is intertwined in social, economic, and religious practices. In this context, social harmony does not emerge automatically but grows through a long and dynamic social process at the local and national levels (Truna, 2024).

One region that embodies the complexity of this plurality is Lampung Province. Since the New Order era, Lampung has been a primary destination for the national transmigration program, bringing in people from various regions across Indonesia. The migration of people from Java, Bali, and Sunda, along with interactions with the indigenous Lampung community, has created a multi-ethnic and multicultural social configuration. This process

has resulted in a diverse social landscape, where ethnic and religious identities coexist within the same social space. The presence of groups with diverse cultural backgrounds creates distinctive patterns of interaction, both in economic, social, and religious life. In the daily lives of Lampung residents, cross-cultural interactions are an ongoing experience and shape collective perspectives on difference.

Demographically, the Hindu community in Lampung Province occupies a minority position. Data from the Central Statistics Agency (BPS) indicates that the number of Hindus in this region reaches approximately 127,619, or approximately 1.4% of the total population (Lampung, 2023). Although relatively small in number, the Hindu community, particularly those from Bali, demonstrates strong social and cultural resilience. Their existence is maintained through the preservation of traditions, custom-based social systems, and spiritual values passed down through generations. Religious and customary practices are understood not only as ritual obligations but also as a means of strengthening the community's internal social bonds. In a social environment dominated by the majority group, this preservation strategy is crucial for the sustainability of collective identity.

One prominent Balinese Hindu community in Lampung is located in Pematang Tahalo Village, Hamlet IV, Gunung Kerung, Jabung District, East Lampung Regency. This community is known for actively organizing various religious ceremonies, such as mass cremation ceremonies, temple odalan (puppet ceremony), and melasti (pilgrimage ceremony). These ritual activities serve as important markers of the Balinese Hindu community's presence within a heterogeneous society. These religious practices not only carry spiritual significance but also have a strong social dimension. The rituals involve collective participation and strengthen the community's internal solidarity. At the same time, the openness of these rituals makes Balinese Hindu traditions part of the local cultural landscape, recognized and respected by the surrounding community.

Social life in Pematang Tahalo Village takes place within a predominantly non-Hindu community, particularly Muslims and Javanese immigrants. This situation presents a complex yet fascinating social dynamic to observe. The Balinese Hindu community practices its religion while interacting with the prevailing social norms of the majority community. This process demands continuous adaptation, both socially and culturally. Religious identity and customs are not maintained exclusively but are negotiated through daily interactions. This negotiation is evident in the use of cultural symbols, communication patterns, and social relations established at the village level. In this way, identity is not understood as static, but rather as a social construct that is continuously shaped in intergroup relations.

The phenomenon of Balinese Hindu community life in a multicultural environment holds significant relevance for the study of the sociology of religion. This reality demonstrates how religion, culture, and social structure interact to shape patterns of social integration. The integration that develops amidst religious differences demonstrates the community's capacity to manage diversity constructively. Interfaith cooperation and respect for differences become part of everyday social life. In this context, the religious identities of minority groups do not lead to social segregation. Instead, their presence enriches cultural life and expands the space for interfaith dialogue. Such social experiences reflect pluralism lived in practice, not merely as a normative concept.

Besides being influenced by the history of transmigration, the dynamics of social integration of the Balinese Hindu community in East Lampung also reflect broader patterns of minority adaptation in Indonesia. Various studies of Balinese Hindu communities abroad indicate that the sustainability of their religious identity depends heavily on their ability to maintain ritual spaces and customary institutions (Picard, 1996). In this context, temples, banjars, and the gotong royong system serve as key pillars of collective solidarity. These institutions not only regulate ritual life but also serve as centers of social interaction and community decision-making. Through these customary structures, religious and cultural values are consistently passed down amidst ongoing social change.

The relatively harmonious interfaith relations in the Jabung region demonstrate the existence of strong social capital within the community. The values of tolerance, deliberation, and mutual respect have long been part of Indonesian social practices. This social capital enables groups with different religious and cultural backgrounds to build stable and mutually supportive relationships. This condition aligns with the view (Hefner, 2011) which emphasizes that harmony in Indonesia is not built through uniformity, but rather through repeated interactions and the reinforcement of local values. In daily life, social harmony is realized through habits of mutual assistance, informal communication, and recognition of the symbolic boundaries of each religious group.

Based on this context, the study of the Balinese Hindu community in Pematang Tahalo Village has both academic and social significance. This research aims to understand the ongoing social integration process and the strategies employed by the Balinese Hindu community to maintain their religious identity. The study focuses not only on how identity is maintained but also on how it is articulated in interfaith social relations. By examining the experiences of minority communities in a multicultural environment, this research seeks to illustrate the

dynamics of inclusive religiosity. This approach allows for a deeper understanding of how local religious and cultural values contribute to social cohesion at the community level.

This study is expected to foster a more comprehensive understanding of social integration patterns based on religious values and local wisdom. The religious practices of the Balinese Hindu community in East Lampung demonstrate that diversity can be managed through sustainable social interactions and mutual respect. This experience provides insight into the possibility of a harmonious model of living together in Indonesia's pluralistic society. By placing local practices as the focus of analysis, this study demonstrates how pluralism is manifested in everyday life. This reality confirms that interfaith harmony is not merely a normative ideal, but rather a social experience that grows out of the practice of living together.

2. METHOD

This research uses a descriptive qualitative approach with a primary focus on a deeper understanding of the meaning and social dynamics that develop within the Balinese Hindu community in Pematang Tahalo Village, Hamlet IV Gunung Kerung, Jabung District, East Lampung Regency. This approach was chosen because the research focuses on social experiences, cultural practices, and religious expressions that are present in the community's daily lives. Such phenomena cannot be reduced to numbers or statistical variables, but rather require contextual exploration that is sensitive to the subjective meanings of social actors. Through a qualitative framework, the research seeks to capture how the Balinese Hindu community interprets its social relations with non-Hindu groups, maintains its religious identity and customs, and negotiates its existence within a pluralistic social order. This approach allows social reality to be understood as a dynamic and multi-layered process.

The research location was selected purposively, selecting Pematang Tahalo Village, Hamlet IV, Gunung Kerung, Jabung District, East Lampung Regency, as the study context. This area has a relatively large Balinese Hindu community that actively performs various religious rituals, including mass cremation (ngaben), temple odalan (purification ceremony), and melasti (ceremony). These religious activities take place openly in a social environment dominated by Muslims and Javanese immigrant groups. This social configuration presents a relevant dynamic for study, particularly related to the process of social integration and the formation of religious identity in a multicultural space. The presence of the Balinese Hindu community amidst ethnic and religious diversity makes this village a social space rich in cross-cultural interactions. This condition provides an adequate empirical context for understanding the relationship between religion, culture, and everyday social life.

The research subjects were determined by considering the individual's social position and role within the Balinese Hindu community and the surrounding community. Key informants included Ketut Nandi, the customary leader of the Hindu community; Wayan Sana, the Balinese Hindu religious leader in Sidorejo Village; and Wayan Nandre, the community's treasurer. These three informants were selected because of their direct involvement in the management of customs, rituals, and community social life. Furthermore, the research involved non-Hindu community leaders, village officials, and local residents as supporting informants. The involvement of diverse informants enabled the researcher to gain a more comprehensive perspective on the social dynamics under study. Interviews with the informants were conducted in November 2025 in an atmosphere that encouraged open and reflective dialogue.

Data collection was conducted through three main techniques: in-depth interviews, participant observation, and documentation. Interviews were conducted semi-structured to allow informants to broadly express their views, experiences, and interpretations. This approach allowed researchers to adapt the flow of questions to the context of the conversation without losing the focus of the research. Participatory observation was conducted by directly participating in social and religious activities of the Balinese Hindu community, such as mass cremation ceremonies, temple odalan (traditional religious ceremonies), and community service activities. Through this direct involvement, researchers were able to observe patterns of social interaction, symbolic expressions, and the practice of values that serve as a glue for social solidarity. Documentation in the form of village archives, field notes, and traditional documents were used as supplements to strengthen the field findings.

Participatory observation techniques provide researchers with the opportunity to understand social realities not only through verbal narratives but also through direct experience. The researcher's presence in community activities allows for the observation of gestures, symbols, and social practices that are often not fully revealed in interviews. Religious activities such as ngaben (ngaben) and melasti (the cleansing of the body through the ritual of cleansing) demonstrate how religious and customary values are embodied in collective action. Meanwhile, mutual cooperation activities among residents demonstrate the social dimension of Balinese Hindu community life in relation to the surrounding community. Through these observations, researchers gain an understanding of

how value systems, social structures, and cultural symbols work simultaneously to shape social solidarity. Observational data is then systematically recorded in field notes as part of the analysis process.

Data analysis was conducted inductively and interactively, following the stages of data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. In the reduction stage, researchers selected and focused data on information relevant to the research focus, such as forms of social integration, cultural adaptation strategies, and the role of religious identity in community life. This process aimed to filter the abundant data to ensure it remained focused and meaningful. The next stage was data presentation in the form of a systematically structured descriptive narrative. This presentation allowed for clear displays of social patterns, relationships, and dynamics. Conclusions were drawn in stages, paying attention to data consistency and the interrelationships between analysis categories.

The data interpretation process was conducted by referring to the theoretical framework (Geertz, 2013) regarding religion as a cultural system and the perspective (Asad, 1993) on the social construction of religion. Geertz's theory is used to understand religious practices as symbolic systems that give meaning to the social life of the Balinese Hindu community. Meanwhile, Asad's perspective helps to interpret religion as a practice formed through social relations and local power structures. These two frameworks are used in a complementary manner to interpret how religion and culture are intertwined in shaping collective identity and social solidarity. This theoretical approach allows the analysis to go beyond describing rituals and explore the social meanings inherent in religious practices in a multireligious context.

Data validity was maintained through the application of source and method triangulation techniques. Source triangulation was conducted by comparing information obtained from various informants, including religious leaders, traditional leaders, village officials, and the general public. This comparison helped identify congruences and differences in perspectives regarding the phenomenon being studied. Meanwhile, method triangulation was conducted by combining the results of interviews, observations, and documentation. The use of various data collection techniques allowed researchers to check the consistency of findings and strengthen the validity of interpretations. Through triangulation, the resulting data was more comprehensive and methodologically sound, while minimizing bias that might arise from a particular source or method.

In addition to the use of triangulation, this study also adopted the thick description technique as introduced by (Geertz, 1973). This approach is based on the understanding that social action cannot be separated from the cultural context that surrounds it. Context-rich descriptions enable researchers to capture the layers of meaning hidden behind the surface of social practices. Within this framework, research goes beyond simply recording religious events or activities, but also seeks to explore the symbolic meanings that reside within them. By positioning religious practices as cultural expressions, thick description serves as an analytical tool for understanding how the Balinese Hindu community interprets its social world through rituals, symbols, and recurring social relations.

The thick description approach emphasizes the importance of understanding religious practices as symbolic acts imbued with cultural values and knowledge. In the context of the Balinese Hindu community, rituals are not understood simply as religious obligations, but rather as symbolic communication media that connect individuals with the community, ancestors, and the cosmic order. Practices such as prayer, Melasti, and Ngaben (nguben) become spaces where social and spiritual values are concretely realized. Through in-depth descriptions, researchers place these rituals within a broader social framework, allowing their meanings to be fully understood. This approach helps avoid reductive interpretations of religion as merely formal activities.

Through thick description, research attempts to interpret the social context surrounding each religious practice. This interpretation encompasses relationships between individuals, the social structure of the community, and values passed down through generations. Religious activities are understood as social events connected to the lived experiences of the community. In this way, the meaning of rituals is inseparable from the daily lives of social actors. This approach allows for a more in-depth understanding of how religious symbols, gestures, and narratives function in building social cohesion. Research goes beyond simply documenting what the community does but also explores how these practices are understood and experienced by community members in their daily lives.

The application of thick description also allows the voices and perspectives of social actors to emerge more authentically. Through this approach, religious experiences are not reduced to mere analytical categories but are presented as meaningful lived experiences. The researcher strives to present the perspectives of the Balinese Hindu community as they understand and explain their own religious practices. This allows readers to view these practices within the framework of meaning used by the community, rather than solely from the researcher's

perspective. This approach aligns with efforts to provide a more empathetic understanding of the social and cultural dynamics under study.

In addition to thick description, this research also utilizes a mini-ethnography or micro-ethnography approach, as described by (Spradley, 2016). This approach allows for intensive research in relatively small communities. The narrow yet in-depth focus allows researchers to observe social dynamics in greater detail. In the context of the Balinese Hindu community, this approach is relevant because the community studied has distinctive social characteristics and is closely tied to the local context. With a limited scope, the research can explore social and religious practices in greater depth without losing their complexity.

The micro-ethnography approach emphasizes direct observation of the social interactions that occur in the daily lives of communities. Through intensive involvement, researchers can understand the patterns of relationships formed among community members and between the Balinese Hindu community and the surrounding community. This approach allows for the uncovering of local power relations that are often invisible at first glance. The social dynamics that emerge through routine interactions, religious practices, and social activities provide a crucial source of data for understanding the social structures that exist at the community level.

Using micro-ethnography, research can explore the social adaptation strategies employed by the Balinese Hindu community in greater detail. These adaptations are not always evident in formal policies, but are often present in informal, everyday practices. This approach helps reveal how the community negotiates its religious identity within ongoing interfaith relations. Focusing on the micro-scale allows researchers to capture dynamics often overlooked in broader studies. Thus, the research can provide a more accurate picture of the community's social life.

A mini-ethnography approach is also relevant in understanding the contribution of Balinese Hindu communities to pluralism and social harmony at the local level. By directly observing social practices, research can demonstrate how the values of tolerance and cooperation are realized in everyday life. This approach places local experiences at the center of analysis, so that pluralism is understood not as an abstract concept but as a concrete social practice. Through detailed descriptions, the research demonstrates how small communities can play a crucial role in maintaining social harmony in a multicultural environment.

The combination of thick description and micro-ethnography provides a complementary methodological framework. Thick description allows for a deeper understanding of the symbolic meaning of religious practices, while micro-ethnography provides an intensive social context. Together, these two approaches help researchers comprehensively understand the religious and social practices of the Balinese Hindu community. This approach avoids overgeneralization while respecting the specifics of the local context. Thus, the research can provide a rich, in-depth, and contextualized picture of the social and religious dynamics under study.

Overall, the application of thick description and micro-ethnography allows this research to provide a comprehensive understanding of the social integration and resilience of the religious identity of the Balinese Hindu community. This methodological approach positions religious practices as an integral part of social life, rather than as isolated phenomena. Through in-depth descriptions and intensive focus, the research is able to demonstrate how the Balinese Hindu community interprets its religious practices and contributes to social harmony at the local level. This approach enriches the sociological analysis of religion by presenting the community's lived experiences in a more intimate and meaningful way.

3.   RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Social Integration Process of the Balinese Hindu Community in a Multireligious Environment

The research findings show that the Balinese Hindu community residing in Pematang Tahalo Village, Hamlet IV, Gunung Kerung, Jabung District, East Lampung Regency, demonstrates consistent social adaptation in building harmonious relationships with the surrounding community, the majority of whom adhere to Islam. This adaptation develops through repeated and ongoing interactions in daily life. The social relationships that are established do not emerge instantly, but rather through a process of getting to know each other and understanding each group's position within the village's social structure. The existence of the Balinese Hindu community is accepted as part of the local social order, not as a separate group. This condition reflects a collective awareness that diversity of beliefs is a social reality that needs to be managed through inclusive social practices. Thus, social harmony is formed through a balance between religious identity and shared interests as village residents.

In daily practice, social relations between the Balinese Hindu and Muslim communities are reflected in cooperation across various aspects of life. Agricultural activities serve as a key interaction space, where residents from different religious backgrounds assist each other in production and land management. Furthermore, mutual cooperation (gotong royong) is an important means of strengthening social relations between groups. Gotong

royong is understood not only as a physical activity but also as a symbol of social solidarity that affirms the bonds between residents. The involvement of the Balinese Hindu community in village social activities, such as the construction of public facilities and the provision of assistance to residents experiencing disasters, demonstrates that social relations are built on a foundation of shared concern. These practices demonstrate that differences in belief do not hinder practical cooperation oriented toward collective well-being.

This depiction of coexistence is reinforced by a statement by Wayan Sana, the religious leader of the Balinese Hindu Community in Pematang Tahalo Village, Hamlet IV, Gunung Kerung. He said: "We live side by side with the Muslim community here, helping each other out during community service or village events. When we have ceremonies at the temple, they help maintain order. We also help out when they have activities at the mosque."

This statement illustrates the empirical experience of interfaith social relations that occur naturally in everyday life. The quote emphasizes that cooperation is not one-sided, but rather reciprocal. Each group demonstrates a willingness to participate in maintaining order and the smooth running of other groups' activities, without necessarily engaging in religious rituals. This type of relationship reflects the practice of tolerance rooted in concrete actions.

Wayan Sana's statement also embodies the fundamental values underlying interfaith relations in the Sidorejo region: mutual respect and social responsibility. These relationships are not solely built on personal closeness, but also through an awareness of each person's role as part of the village community. Mutual respect is reflected in the attitude of maintaining each other's religious space, while social responsibility is evident in active involvement in collective activities. This pattern of relationships demonstrates that tolerance does not stop at accepting differences but is manifested through participation in shared social life. In this context, interfaith relations serve as an important foundation for social stability, as each group feels recognized and has an equal role in the village's social structure.

The growing tolerance is also evident in the participation of non-Hindu communities in Hindu religious activities. At events such as mass cremation ceremonies and temple odalans, non-Hindus contribute to logistical preparations and the provision of supporting facilities. This involvement is not interpreted as ritual participation, but rather as a form of social support for fellow villagers. This practice demonstrates a shared understanding of the boundaries between religious belief and social solidarity. By maintaining these boundaries, religious identity is maintained without diminishing the quality of social relationships. The presence of non-Hindu communities in Hindu religious activities demonstrates that tolerance is realized through practical cooperation that respects differences while strengthening a sense of togetherness in community life.

This social phenomenon can be analyzed through the sociological perspective of Emile Durkheim (Hausner, 2019), specifically the concept of organic solidarity. Organic solidarity refers to a form of social bonding that arises from interdependent relationships between individuals and groups in a complex society. In the context of Pematang Tahalo Village, differences in belief do not hinder solidarity formation, as each group plays complementary roles and functions. Religion and customs function as elements that regulate patterns of social interaction, not as sources of conflict. Social balance is maintained through a collective awareness that harmony requires contributions from all elements of society. Thus, organic solidarity becomes a social mechanism that enables multireligious societies to maintain cohesion amidst religious diversity.

Religion and custom in a multireligious society act as a social glue that maintains stable relations between residents. These two elements do not exist in isolation, but rather are intertwined in shaping mutually agreed-upon social norms. Religious practices are carried out taking into account the social context, while custom serves as a meeting place that allows various groups to interact on an equal footing. In daily life, the balance between religion and custom is reflected through mutual respect in various village activities. This pattern demonstrates that social integration does not require a fusion of identities, but rather requires an awareness of the presence of others within the same social space. Thus, religion and custom are important instruments in maintaining a harmonious social life.

Daily interactions between Hindu and Muslim communities also demonstrate a pattern of horizontal integration. This integration is fostered through non-religious activities that are part of the residents' routines, such as community service, interactions at the village market, and participation in community social gatherings (arisan). These social spaces allow for intense and repeated encounters, strengthening interpersonal relationships. This horizontal integration demonstrates that social relations are not always built on ideological similarities, but rather on shared practical needs. The relationships established in this context are egalitarian, as each individual participates as a villager without a dominant religious identity. This pattern contributes to the creation of relatively stable social cohesion.

(Putnam, 2000) explains that social relationships built through daily activities can generate social capital that strengthens trust and cooperation within a community. In the context of Pematang Tahalo Village, horizontal integration serves as a source of social capital that enables residents from diverse backgrounds to work together effectively. This social capital is reflected in the relatively high level of trust among residents and their willingness to help each other in various situations. Social relationships based on shared needs create a space for open dialogue and reduce the potential for identity-based conflict. Thus, social cohesion is maintained not only through formal norms but also through social practices that occur in everyday life.

In addition to horizontal integration, the Balinese Hindu community also demonstrates the practice of strategic accommodation in its social life. This concept refers to a form of social adjustment carried out without eliminating religious identity, while still taking into account the sensitivities of the surrounding community (Barth, 1998). One concrete example of this practice is seen in the scheduling of religious ceremonies to avoid conflicts with the Muslim community's religious study schedule. This adjustment reflects social skills in understanding the local context and maintaining mutual comfort. The practice of strategic accommodation demonstrates that diversity can be managed through flexible social strategies, without requiring the sacrifice of identity. Thus, relations between religious communities are maintained within a framework of mutual respect and an awareness of living together.

Maintaining Religious Identity and Tradition

The Balinese Hindu community residing in Pematang Tahalo Village, Hamlet IV, Gunung Kerung, Jabung District, East Lampung Regency, demonstrates consistent efforts to maintain the sustainability of its religious identity. This identity is maintained through the implementation of religious rituals, the use of sacred symbols, and the existence of actively functioning social organizations. In the context of migrant life, religious practices serve not only as personal spiritual expressions but also as a collective means to strengthen a sense of togetherness. The community's social structure is built in an organized manner, allowing for the continuous transmission of religious values. The existence of traditional and religious institutions is an important foundation in maintaining the continuity of this identity. Thus, religious identity is not merely understood as individual beliefs, but as a living social system maintained through shared practices in daily life.

The temple occupies a central position in the life of the Balinese Hindu community in Pematang Tahalo Village. In addition to serving as a center for spiritual activity, the temple also serves as a social space that brings residents together for various collective activities. The interactions that take place in this space strengthen social bonds among community members and build internal solidarity. The temple serves as a place where religious values are practiced and discussed in a social context. Its presence enables the community to maintain the continuity of tradition, especially in a social environment where the majority adhere to different religions. Thus, the temple serves not only as a place of worship but also as a symbol of the Balinese Hindu community's presence within the village's social structure. This dual role makes the temple a crucial element in maintaining social cohesion and the community's collective identity.

Religious ceremonies such as temple odalan (puppet ceremony), melasti (pilgrimage ceremony), and mass cremation (ngaben) are conducted collectively and in a well-coordinated manner. These activities are managed by the banjar (traditional community) institution, which serves as the primary regulator of the community's social and religious life. The banjar not only regulates the technical aspects of the rituals but also ensures equal participation by residents. Through this mechanism, every individual plays a role in maintaining the continuity of traditions. These ceremonies serve as important moments for strengthening a sense of togetherness and affirming community identity. Collective ritual performance also creates a social learning space for the younger generation to understand their symbolic meaning and values. Thus, religious rituals serve as a means of continuous cultural transmission.

The practice of maintaining harmony with the surrounding social environment is reflected in the statement by Wayan Nandre, Treasurer of the Balinese Hindu Community in Pematang Tahalo Village. He stated: "We always strive to maintain harmony and respect the surrounding environment. For example, during cremation ceremonies, we ensure we do not disturb other residents by wisely arranging the time and location. Likewise, during melasti or temple odalan ceremonies, we coordinate with village officials and community leaders to ensure the activities run orderly. Essentially, our customs and religion are still carried out, but in a spirit of tolerance and mutual respect."

This quote demonstrates that religious rituals are performed with consideration for the broader social context. This awareness demonstrates the community's ability to balance internal interests with sensitivities to the surrounding environment. This practice reflects social skills developed through the experience of living alongside other groups.

Wayan Nandre's statement also demonstrates that religious rituals have a significant social dimension. In addition to their spiritual value, rituals serve as a mechanism for strengthening internal community solidarity. Collective involvement in the preparation and implementation of rituals creates a strong sense of belonging among community members. These activities also impact the economic aspect, particularly through the shared distribution of roles and the contribution of resources. Thus, rituals are interpreted not only as religious obligations but also as social strategies that strengthen community structures. This practice aligns with (Geertz, 1973) view that religion is a symbolic system that provides a framework of meaning for social life. In this context, symbols and rituals serve to strengthen collective identity while also regulating patterns of social interaction.

Religious rituals are concrete expressions of religion as a symbolic system that shapes a community's perspectives and social actions. Rituals do not stand apart from everyday life but are integrated into broader social structures. The religious practices of the Balinese Hindu community in Pematang Tahalo Village reflect this function, where symbols and rituals serve as a means of affirming collective identity. Through rituals, religious values are translated into observable social actions. Rituals also serve as a symbolic communication medium that reinforces a shared understanding of the community's position within the social environment. Thus, religion is not only a source of spiritual belief but also an interpretive framework that gives meaning to social relations and the community's life experiences.

Balinese Hindu ethical values such as dharma, tat twam asi, and tri hita karana serve as the primary foundation for shaping citizens' social attitudes. Dharma is understood as the principles of truth and moral responsibility that govern individual behavior in social life. Tat twam asi emphasizes an awareness of equality and empathy for others, while tri hita karana emphasizes the importance of balanced relationships between humans and God, fellow humans, and nature. These values are not only taught normatively but also practiced in daily interactions. By using these values as guidelines, the Balinese Hindu community is able to build harmonious social relations in a multicultural society. These ethical values serve as a bridge between religious identity and broader social life.

Ketut Nandi, the Head of the Hindu Community, also expressed his views on the importance of social balance. He said: "We are taught to maintain balance with everyone. If we respect others, they will also respect us. That is the teaching of tat twam asi that we hold."

This quote demonstrates that the value of tat twam asi is understood as an ethical principle governing relationships between individuals. This principle encourages mutual respect in social interactions, regardless of differences in background. This understanding serves as the foundation for communities to build inclusive relationships with their surrounding communities. By practicing this value, religious identity becomes less of a source of exclusivity and more of an ethical foundation for harmonious coexistence.

These ethical values guide the Balinese Hindu community in adapting to the majority society without losing its religious identity. This adaptation is reflected in the practice of symbolic tolerance, such as scheduling ceremonies so that they do not coincide with religious activities of other communities. This adaptation demonstrates a contextual awareness in carrying out religious traditions. This practice is not interpreted as diminishing the meaning of rituals, but rather as a social strategy to maintain harmony. In this way, the community can still carry out its religious obligations while maintaining good relations with its surroundings. Symbolic tolerance is part of a social adaptation strategy that enables the continuity of religious identity in a pluralistic social space.

The religious identity of Balinese Hindu communities in diaspora areas often exhibits a stronger intensity than that of their homelands. This identity functions as a boundary maintenance mechanism, marking symbolic boundaries between the community and other groups (Cohen, 2013). In this context, rituals such as temple odalan not only have spiritual significance but also serve as a means of identity politics. Rituals serve as a medium for affirming the community's existence and ensuring that younger generations understand and inherit its cultural roots. By collectively maintaining rituals, communities maintain the continuity of their identity amidst diverse social environments. This practice demonstrates that religious identity serves as a crucial social resource in maintaining the continuity of diaspora communities.

Obstacles and Challenges in the Integration Process

Although the process of social integration in the daily lives of the Balinese Hindu community is relatively harmonious, various structural and cultural challenges remain. These challenges arise in line with the ever-changing social dynamics that influence the lifestyles of rural communities. One significant issue is the current of modernization, which brings changes in values and life orientations, particularly among the younger generation. These changes do not always align with the traditional value systems that have long been the foundation of community life. This situation requires the community to continually negotiate its position within an increasingly

complex social landscape. Well-established integration does not necessarily eliminate internal challenges; instead, it opens up space for reflection on how to maintain cultural identity amidst rapid social change.

The tide of modernization has direct implications for the younger generation's involvement in traditional and religious practices. Many young people are showing a tendency to focus more on technological developments, digital media, and social media. This orientation is slowly shifting interest toward traditional activities that require time and collective commitment. Noble values previously passed down through direct practice are beginning to lose their place in the daily experiences of the younger generation. This shift is not always accompanied by an open rejection of traditional practices, but rather a shift in priorities and lifestyles. In this context, customs and traditions face the challenge of remaining relevant to the lives of a generation growing up in a digital environment. This situation requires communities to seek new approaches so that traditional values can still be understood and internalized.

In addition to the changing orientation of the younger generation, limited resources also pose a challenge to the Balinese Hindu community in optimally implementing traditional ceremonies. Performing religious rituals requires financial support, skilled practitioners, and sufficient time. In some situations, financial constraints and a reduced number of practitioners impact the completeness of the ceremonies. This situation does not necessarily diminish the spiritual significance of the rituals, but it does impact the technical aspects of the rituals, which have been traditionally maintained. These challenges reflect changes in social structures that affect the community's ability to maintain traditional practices. Thus, preserving traditions depends not only on symbolic commitment but also on increasingly limited resources.

Recognizing these challenges, the Balinese Hindu community has demonstrated adaptive efforts in responding to the social changes taking place. Adaptation is understood as a dynamic process that enables the community to maintain the continuity of traditional values without closing itself off to modern developments. These efforts are not carried out sporadically, but rather through planning involving traditional and religious leaders. This adaptation strategy aims to maintain the connection of the younger generation to traditional customs and religious values in a more contextual way. In this way, the community strives to avoid creating too wide a gap between tradition and the realities of modern life. Adaptation is a crucial mechanism for maintaining the relevance of traditional customs amidst inevitable social change.

Wayan Sana explained these adaptation efforts through his statement: "However, we continue to adapt, for example by holding cultural training and utilizing digital media for religious and traditional education."

This quote demonstrates that the community consciously utilizes familiar means for the younger generation to convey traditional and religious values. Cultural training provides a participatory learning space, while digital media is used as a more accessible educational medium. This approach reflects the understanding that the transmission of values need not be tied to conventional methods. By utilizing technology, the community seeks to bridge tradition with contemporary social realities. This practice demonstrates a strategic awareness in facing the challenges of modernization.

The strategy of utilizing cultural training and digital media can be understood as a form of social innovation aimed at maintaining the continuity of customs and religious values. This innovation does not change the substance of the tradition, but rather adapts the method of delivery to be more relevant to the context of the younger generation. With this approach, customs and rituals remain positioned as an important part of community identity. This social innovation also reflects the cultural flexibility that enables communities to survive amidst global changes. This flexibility does not eliminate the core values of tradition but rather expands the scope for their actualization. In this context, adaptation and innovation are crucial instruments in maintaining the sustainability of religious identity and community social cohesion.

Amidst the dynamics of social change, the Balinese Hindu community's openness to technological developments demonstrates a reflective and contextual attitude. Technology is not viewed solely as a threat, but rather as a tool that can be utilized to strengthen the transmission of values. This attitude demonstrates the community's ability to critically and selectively interpret social change. By integrating tradition and technology, the community seeks to create new spaces for the continuity of customs in modern life. This cultural flexibility plays a crucial role in supporting pre-established social integration. The sustainability of religious identity depends not only on steadfast adherence to tradition but also on the ability to adapt to a constantly changing social context.

The role of the Interfaith Harmony Forum (FKUB) and the village government is crucial in strengthening cross-community communication. Through interfaith deliberation forums and social activities, these two institutions strive to create a space for open and equal dialogue. The presence of the FKUB allows various religious groups to express their aspirations and resolve potential problems collectively. The village government serves as a facilitator, ensuring that cross-community interactions take place within a cooperative framework. This

effort aims to prevent differences in belief from developing into a source of social tension. Thus, social integration is not only maintained internally by the community but also supported by institutional structures at the local level.

In this context (Asad, 1993) perspective is relevant for understanding how religious understanding is shaped through social processes and local power relations. The religious practices of the Balinese Hindu community are inextricably linked to interactions with village institutions and interfaith forums. These relationships are continually negotiated within a social space involving various actors. Religious understanding develops through dialogue, local regulations, and the accompanying social dynamics. Thus, religion is not understood as a static entity, but as a social practice shaped within the context of local power relations and social structures. This process demonstrates that social integration is also influenced by how local institutions mediate relationships between communities.

In addition to the challenges of modernization, interfaith stereotypes that develop through social media are also a problem facing society. The spread of misinformation, in some cases, has the potential to undermine trust between residents and trigger misunderstandings. This situation demands the active role of traditional and religious leaders in mitigating potential conflict. These figures function as cultural brokers, bridging communication between groups. Through family dialogue and village deliberations, potential conflict is managed persuasively and based on established social relationships (Lederach, 2005). This role demonstrates that locally based conflict resolution mechanisms play a vital role in maintaining the stability and social integration of multicultural communities.

Contribution to Pluralism and Harmony

The Balinese Hindu community residing in Pematang Tahalo Village, Hamlet IV, Gunung Kerung, Jabung District, East Lampung Regency, plays a significant role in strengthening the values of pluralism and social harmony at the local level. This community's existence not only contributes to the village's cultural diversity but also serves as an active social agent in building interfaith relations. Their social practices demonstrate an openness to differences and a commitment to peaceful coexistence. In the context of a multicultural society, this contribution is crucial because pluralism is not simply understood as the existence of diverse groups, but rather as a social practice manifested through daily interactions. Thus, the Balinese Hindu community not only maintains its religious identity but also plays a role in creating an inclusive social space for all villagers.

One concrete form of the Balinese Hindu community's contribution to social harmony is reflected in the practice of the tradition of joy and sorrow. This tradition is interpreted as a form of mutual cooperation that occurs in both happy and sad situations, regardless of religious background or social identity. Joy and sorrow serve as a symbol of interfaith solidarity that is alive in the daily lives of the people of Pematang Tahalo Village. Through this practice, residents help each other in various life events, such as celebrations, disasters, or other social activities. This tradition demonstrates that solidarity is not built through shared beliefs, but through a collective awareness of the importance of supporting each other as fellow citizens. In this context, joy and sorrow become an effective social medium in strengthening social cohesion and maintaining harmony between different groups.

The Balinese Hindu community's participation in cultural activities also creates a space for open and participatory interfaith interaction. One prominent example is the ogoh-ogoh parade leading up to Nyepi Day. This cultural event involves not only Hindus but also Muslims and other groups living in the surrounding villages. This cross-community involvement demonstrates that religious traditions can become spaces for inclusive social encounters. The ogoh-ogoh parade is not positioned as an exclusive activity, but rather as a cultural event to be enjoyed and supported together. Through such activities, social interaction naturally develops and strengthens a sense of togetherness within the community.

Wayan Sri Widianti, a representative of the Hindu Community, shared her experience of interfaith involvement in this cultural event. She said: "During the ogoh-ogoh parade, many Muslim residents helped guard the roads and provide logistical support. We feel this is a form of mutual respect between neighbors." This quote illustrates the empirical experience of interfaith cooperation that concretely occurs in everyday life. The participation of Muslim residents in maintaining security and assisting with logistical needs demonstrates a shared sense of responsibility for the smooth running of social activities. This statement also reflects the existence of social relations based on mutual respect as neighbors, regardless of differences in faith. Thus, cultural activities serve as a vehicle for building trust and social solidarity.

The interfaith interactions that occur within the context of cultural and social activities can be understood as a form of practical interfaith dialogue. This dialogue does not take place in formal forums or theological discussions, but rather through concrete actions in everyday life. This practice of dialogue strengthens social cohesion because it is built on shared experiences and collective work. Through direct involvement in social activities, residents from different religious backgrounds have the opportunity to understand each other and build

more personal relationships. This interaction reflects the practice of pluralism that grows from the grassroots, where tolerance is realized through concrete actions, not merely normative statements. Thus, interfaith dialogue becomes an integral part of the social dynamics of village communities.

Hindu values emphasizing harmony and balance in life align with universal humanitarian principles also upheld by other religions. These values encourage mutual respect, empathy, and social responsibility in community life. In the context of Pematang Tahalo Village, these values are not only internalized by the Balinese Hindu community but also resonate in interfaith relations. This alignment of values allows for ethical common ground that strengthens social cooperation. By embracing harmony and balance as guidelines, the Balinese Hindu community contributes to the creation of a social climate conducive to communal living. These values serve as a moral foundation that supports the practice of pluralism in everyday life.

Pluralism in Pematang Tahalo Village does not stop at the level of discourse or slogans, but exists as a social reality experienced directly by residents. Village social life demonstrates that pluralism grows from a culture of mutual assistance and the habit of peaceful coexistence. The practice of mutual cooperation, interfaith participation in cultural activities, and daily interactions reflect the practical existence of pluralism. In this context, pluralism is not understood as an abstract concept, but rather as a pattern of social relations built through shared experiences. Harmonious coexistence demonstrates that differences in belief do not hinder the creation of social solidarity. Thus, pluralism becomes part of the village's social identity.

Overall, the results of this study indicate that the Balinese Hindu community in Pematang Tahalo Village is able to maintain its religious identity without creating social segregation. Religious identity is practiced openly and contextually, thus not creating distance from other groups. Instead, this community acts as a social bond that strengthens interfaith relations. Through humanitarian values, local wisdom, and deep-rooted spirituality, the Balinese Hindu community contributes to the creation of an inclusive social life. Their social practices demonstrate that religious identity can go hand in hand with social openness. Thus, the existence of the Balinese Hindu community is a crucial factor in maintaining social harmony at the local level.

The Balinese Hindu community's contribution to pluralism can be understood through the concept of everyday tolerance. This concept refers to tolerance present in everyday life, not solely within the framework of formal discourse or institutional policies (Brown, 2015). In the context of Pematang Tahalo Village, this tolerance is reflected in the involvement of Muslim residents in helping prepare ogoh-ogoh and other forms of social cooperation. These practices demonstrate that tolerance is manifested through simple, repeated actions in daily life. Everyday tolerance allows interfaith relationships to develop naturally and sustainably. Thus, tolerance becomes part of the social routine that strengthens the cohesion and stability of a multicultural society.

Through the practice of everyday tolerance, the Balinese Hindu community and the surrounding community build social relationships based on trust and mutual understanding. Tolerance is not imposed through formal rules, but rather grows out of consistent shared experiences. This practice demonstrates that sustainable pluralism requires the active involvement of all elements of society. The presence of the Balinese Hindu community as an integral part of village life demonstrates that diversity can be a source of social strength. By practicing tolerance in their daily lives, the people of Pematang Tahalo Village are building a solid social foundation for continued interfaith harmony. This pattern of relationships demonstrates that pluralism can grow organically in a local context.

4. CONCLUSION

The Balinese Hindu community in Pematang Tahalo Village, Hamlet IV Gunung Kerung, Jabung District, East Lampung Regency demonstrates a high level of social and cultural adaptation in building a harmonious life in a multi-religious society. Their presence in Pematang Tahalo Village, Hamlet IV Gunung Kerung, Jabung District, East Lampung Regency is a concrete representation of how minority groups can maintain their religious and cultural identity without creating social segregation with the majority group.

First, the process of social integration between the Balinese Hindu community and the surrounding community occurs naturally through daily social interactions based on the values of mutual respect, cooperation, and interfaith mutual assistance. The involvement of Hindus in village social activities, as well as the participation of non-Hindus in religious rituals such as mass cremation ceremonies, demonstrates the formation of strong social solidarity. This pattern of interaction demonstrates that religion can serve as a moral and symbolic force that strengthens social cohesion rather than dividing society.

Second, from a religious identity perspective, the Balinese Hindu community maintains and preserves spiritual values and ancestral traditions, such as temple odalan (traditional ceremonies), melasti (a traditional Hindu ritual), and the Tri Hita Karana teachings. These traditions are not only interpreted as religious obligations

but also as social mechanisms that strengthen the community's unity and collective identity. In a predominantly Muslim environment, they demonstrate contextual adaptations that adapt rituals without losing their religious essence. This creates a space for tolerance and broad social acceptance.

Third, in facing social and cultural challenges, the Balinese Hindu community demonstrates an open, dialogical, and resilient attitude. Obstacles such as the tide of modernization and the younger generation's lack of interest in customs and their preoccupation with technology and social media. These efforts strengthen a culture of tolerance, mutual understanding, and harmony between religious communities at the local level.

Fourth, the Balinese Hindu community has made a significant contribution to strengthening pluralism and interfaith harmony in Pematang Tahalo Village, Hamlet IV, Gunung Kerung, Jabung District, East Lampung Regency. Through the tradition of "mutual cooperation" (mutual cooperation in joy and sorrow), the ogoh-ogoh parade, and involvement in interfaith social activities, they present inclusive and civilized religious practices. This community's presence enriches the local cultural heritage and serves as an ideal model for managing multicultural life in Indonesia.

Overall, this study confirms that the social integration and religious identity of the Balinese Hindu community in Pematang Tahalo Village, Hamlet IV, Gunung Kerung, Jabung District, East Lampung Regency, reflects an inclusive, dynamic form of religiosity rooted in local wisdom. Harmonious interfaith relations in this area are not born solely from formal policies, but rather from collective awareness and deeply rooted humanitarian values within the community.

In addition to strengthening local pluralism, the Balinese Hindu community integration model holds strategic value for the development of modern Indonesian society. This integration pattern, which does not erase religious identity, instead enriches the national cultural landscape. This research reinforces the view that harmony is not built through monoculturalism, but through strengthening local values, dialogue, and a collective awareness that differences are a social asset.

The integration model demonstrated by the Balinese Hindu community in Pematang Tahalo Village, Hamlet IV, Gunung Kerung, Jabung District, East Lampung Regency, can serve as a theoretical and empirical reference for the development of sociological studies of religion and pluralism in Indonesia. In practice, the results of this study can also serve as a basis for local governments and religious institutions to formulate strategies to strengthen harmony grounded in local wisdom. Thus, this community is a concrete manifestation of the spirit of *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika* (Unity in Diversity), which states that differences are not threats but rather social richness that strengthen unity, humanity, and nationality.

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