



Indonesian Journal of Guidance and Counseling

http://ejournal.utp.ac.id/index.php/CIJGC

THE MEANING OF 'KAPUHUNAN' TRADITION IN BANJARMASIN: AN EXPLORATION OF VIRTUES FROM A POSITIVE PSYCHOLOGY PERSPECTIVE

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Article Information

Received : June 1, 2025 Revised : July 30, 2025 Accepted : August 31, 2025

Abstract

The Kapuhunan tradition is a tradition of sharing food and sincerely accepting the gifts of others, which includes moral messages and virtues from a positive psychology perspective. This study aims to explore and describe the Banjar people's understanding of the kapuhunan tradition, identify and analyze the virtues contained in the kapuhunan tradition, and explain how these virtues are implemented in the lives of the Banjar people. Using a phenomenological qualitative approach, data was collected through in-depth interviews with several Banjar students from southern Kalimantan living in jogja dormitory with a sample size of 3-5 participants and observations. The results showed that the kapuhunan tradition contains virtues such as kindness, respect for others, and social solidarity, which are reflected in the practice of sharing food and receiving gifts from others. This research contributes to the development of positive psychology that is more sensitive to the Indonesian cultural context, and serves as a foundation for the preservation and revitalization of positive values in Banjar culture. As such, it provides new insights into the potential of virtue values in the local traditions of Indonesian society

Keywords: phenomenology, exploration, kapuhunan, virtue value

Introduction

Indonesia is a country renowned for its cultural diversity. This diversity is reflected in various aspects of society, ranging from language, customs, arts, to belief systems (Fatmawati, 2021). According to Danugroho (2024), cultural diversity in Indonesia is undeniable. In the context of understanding a multicultural society, in addition to the cultures of ethnic groups, Indonesian society also consists of various regional cultures that are a blend of the cultures of the ethnic groups present in those regions. This diversity is a wealth that reflects the extraordinary quality of cultural production by society, demonstrating the creativity and adaptability of the Indonesian people to diverse environments (Khasinah, 2024).

Local culture plays a very important role in the formation of Indonesia's national culture. As stated by Agus et al. (2021), local culture is the foundation for the formation of national culture. Each region in Indonesia has its own unique culture that contributes to enriching the national cultural heritage. The values of local culture need to be continuously studied to understand the richness of national culture from a regional perspective (Arifin & Karen, 2024). This study is important for preserving and developing local culture so that it does not disappear amid the tide of globalization, such as the traditions found in Banjar. The Banjar people, one of the largest ethnic groups in

How to cite: Anshary, M. R., Nurhayati, S. R., Herwin, H., Kasyfillah, M. H.(2025). The Meaning of 'kapuhunan' tradition in banjarmasin: an exploration of virtues from a positive psychology perspective. COUNSENESIA: Indonesia Journal of Guidance and Counseling.

6(1). https://doi.org/10.36728/cijgc.v6i1.5035

E-ISSN : 2746-3532

Published by: Universitas Tunas Pembangunan Surakarta

Kalimantan, have a rich history and diverse traditions that can be traced back to the 4th century AD, when Hindu-Buddhist kingdoms flourished (Sebastian & Alkaff, 2024).

According to Nuraisah et al. (2023), this community was born from a mixture of various ethnic groups such as Malay, Dayak, and Javanese, forming a unique cultural identity influenced by migration, trade, and the spread of Islam. Daud (1997) states that Islam became the foundation of their norms and values, influencing customs, society, and architecture, one of which is the traditional house, Rumah Bubungan Tinggi. Faisal & Ariani (2018) mention that the *Kapuhunan* tradition carries a moral message of sharing and appreciating the gifts of others. Muzainah & Mansyuroh (2022) highlight the contribution of the Banjar community in shaping Indonesia's national identity through the spread of Islam and trade, emphasizing the importance of cultural diversity.

The Banjar community in South Kalimantan has a unique and fascinating cultural tradition known as *Kapuhunan*. *Kapuhunan* is the Banjar people's belief regarding misfortune or disaster resulting from refusing or failing to eat food that has been offered (Firdaus et al., 2023). Putri (2019) explains that *kapuhunan* is the misfortune or disaster we experience when we refuse food that is offered or fail to eat food that has been served. This belief shapes the social behavior of the Banjar community, particularly in terms of sharing food and accepting others' offers. According to Hapip (2006), *Kapuhunan* is interpreted as being able to cause misfortune or disaster because of ignoring others' offers. The origins of the *Kapuhunan* tradition are difficult to trace precisely, but it is believed to have existed since ancient times and has been passed down through generations in the Banjar community (Akbar et al., 2025).

Sari (2018) argues that the *Kapuhunan* tradition is part of the local belief system of the Banjar community, which has been deeply rooted in their culture for centuries, possibly originating from the pre-Islamic era. This belief likely developed as a social mechanism to maintain harmony and solidarity within the community, particularly in terms of sharing food and valuing others' offerings (Faisal & Ariani, 2018). The *Kapuhunan* belief is similar to the explanation of the *kemponan* myth in Malay culture, as it influences social behavior, particularly in accepting offers of food or drink (Purwanto et al., 2022). Banjar communities generally strive not to refuse offers of food or drink, or at least taste a little as a sign of appreciation. Putri (2019) explains that *kapuhunan* is the misfortune or disaster we experience when we refuse food that is offered or fail to eat food that has been served. This belief shapes the unique social ethics of Banjar society, where refusing food offerings is considered rude and potentially brings misfortune.

The tradition of *kapuhunan* has significant social and cultural functions in Banjar society. Socially, this belief strengthens communal bonds and encourages sharing among community members. Faisal & Ariani (2018) state that *kapuhunan* contains a moral message to share with one another and appreciate the gifts of others as a form of kindness. Its cultural function is evident in how this tradition has become an integral part of Banjar cultural identity, reflecting the values of hospitality and respect for others that are highly cherished by the community (Maulaya & Fauzi, 2024). The *kapuhunan* tradition has the potential to contain important virtue values from a positive psychology perspective. These virtue values are reflected in the Banjar community's habit of sharing food and sincerely accepting others' gifts. According to Faisal & Ariani (2018), *Kapuhunan* carries a moral message of mutual sharing and valuing others' gifts as an act of kindness.

This aligns with the concept of virtue in positive psychology, which emphasizes the importance of prosocial behavior and positive character (Yudhawati & Pabbajah, 2025). There is a strong connection between virtue values and cultural practices. Vauclair et al, (2014) demonstrate that social norms and daily practices reflect the moral values of a culture. In the *kapuhunan* tradition of the Banjar community, values such as kindness and social solidarity are evident in the practice of sharing and receiving food. Markus &

Kitayama (2010) revealed that cultural practices shape individual psychology in a continuous cycle, making it important to examine this relationship so that virtue values can develop within a specific cultural context.

In the context of the Banjar community's *kapuhunan* tradition, positive psychology is relevant, showing that although there are universal values, the manifestation of virtue differs across cultures (Biswas, 2006). The *kapuhunan* tradition emphasizes the value of sharing and appreciating the gifts of others (Faisal & Ariani, 2018). Research by Hendriks et al. (2019) shows that positive psychology interventions are generally developed in Western contexts, indicating the need for a more culturally diverse approach. This research aims to identify and analyze the values of virtue in the *kapuhunan* tradition that can enrich positive psychology in Indonesia, creating a more contextual understanding of human well-being. In line with Daud (1997), the *kapuhunan* tradition also serves a psychological function in overcoming daily anxiety, emphasizing the importance of this research for the development of positive psychology based on local wisdom.

The concepts of virtue and character strengths are at the core of positive psychology, developed by Peterson & Seligman (2004) through the *Values in Action* (VIA) classification. Virtues are defined as core characteristics valued by moral philosophers and religious thinkers, while character strengths are considered distinct psychological routes to achieving virtues. Peterson & Seligman (2004) identified six primary virtues in Table 1.

Table 1. Values of character strength virtues

Wisdom	Courage	Humanity	Justice	Temperance	Transcendence
Creativity	Bravery	Love	Teamwork	Forgiveness	Appreciation of beauty and excellence
Curiosity	Perseverance	Kidness	Fairness	Humility	Gratitude
Judgement	Honesty	Social Intelligence	Leadership	Prudence	Hope
Love of learning	Zest			Self Regulation	Humour
Perspective					Spirituality

There has not been much research exploring the values of virtue in the local traditions of Indonesian society, particularly the *kapuhunan* tradition among the Banjar people. Most studies on *kapuhunan* have focused on aspects of belief and myth, without delving deeply into the potential positive values within it. However, according to Humaeni (2013), myths in Indonesian culture contain important cultural meanings that are worth understanding. Therefore, research on the values of virtue in the *kapuhunan* tradition can provide a new perspective in understanding the local wisdom of the Banjar community.

This research is important for enriching the study of positive psychology based on local cultural wisdom in Indonesia. Until now, most theories and concepts in positive psychology have originated from a Western perspective. However, as stated by Christopher & Hickinbottom (2008), positive psychology needs to consider cultural variations in understanding what is considered a good or flourishing life. By exploring the values of virtue in the *kapuhunan* tradition, this research can contribute to the development of positive psychology that is more sensitive to the Indonesian cultural context. This aligns with the call by Hendriks et al. (2019) to develop a more inclusive and culturally diverse positive psychology.

This study aims to explore and describe the Banjar community's understanding of the *kapuhunan* tradition, identify and analyze the virtues found in the *kapuhunan* tradition of the Banjar community, and explain how the virtues are implemented in the *kapuhunan* tradition of the Banjar community. The results of this study are expected to contribute to the development of positive psychology that is more sensitive to the cultural context of Indonesia, while also serving as a foundation for the preservation and revitalization of positive values in Banjar culture.

Method

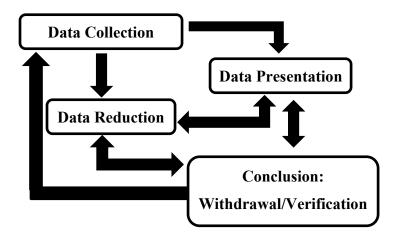
This study uses a qualitative method with a phenomenological approach to explore the values of virtue in the *kapuhunan* tradition of the Banjar community. Qualitative research involves a naturalistic interpretation approach to understand phenomena in their natural setting. The focus of phenomenology is on experiences or events that have been felt to provide in-depth information related to the phenomenon being studied. This study focuses on the interpretation of the *kapuhunan* tradition in Banjar, South Kalimantan. Data collection was conducted through participant observation and in-depth interviews with 3-5 key participants who were purposively selected from the Banjar community who have in-depth knowledge of the *kapuhunan* tradition. The research location was at the South Kalimantan Student Dormitory *Pangeran Antasari* in Yogyakarta. The demographic data of the informants are shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Demographic Data of Research Subjects

No	Initials	Age	Status
1.	BI	20	University students
2.	KN	24	University students
3.	Al	21	University students

Researchers acted as the main instruments for data collection, directly involved in the observation, interview, and interpretation processes. Data analysis used the Miles and Huberman model, which includes: (1) data reduction; (2) data presentation; and (3) drawing conclusions, with the aim of revealing the meaning and values of virtue in the *kapuhunan* tradition from the perspective of the Banjar community itself. The steps of data analysis using the Miles and Huberman model are shown in Table 3.

Table 3. Steps of Data Analysis



Result and Discussion

The results of this study indicate that the *kapuhunan* tradition is not merely a belief in bad luck if one refuses food, but also reflects deep social and moral values. Based on interview analysis using the Miles and Hubberman model, the three informants openly shared data in conveying narratives and experiences related to the *kapuhunan* tradition as follows:

Theme 1: Kindness and Social Intelligence

The *kapuhunan* tradition teaches the importance of accepting gifts from others as a form of respect and hospitality. In the interviews, the informants explained that kindness is evident when someone offers food, and social intelligence emerges when the recipient appreciates the offer. This tradition teaches us to share and appreciate the gifts of others. As explained by the interviewee in the interview transcript:

"When someone offers us food, whether it be cake, fruit, or other dishes, we are expected to accept the offer, even if it is just a small taste," (Subject 1)

"It strongly reminds us of kapuhunan, and our elders used to emphasize that we should never refuse food offered by others, such as during a baaruhan ceremony (a celebration). For example, if someone offers food, it is feared that refusing it might bring bad luck," (Subject 2)

"The tradition of kapuhunan is still very strong and I often experience it in my daily life. For example, when visiting neighbors or relatives, my parents always remind me not to refuse food or drinks offered, even if it's just a small taste." (Subject 3)

Theme 2: Gratitude and Hope

This tradition teaches the importance of gratitude and hope. By accepting food offerings, a person is encouraged to be grateful for the blessings they receive, whether from their own work or from others. One interviewee said, "By accepting the offer, we learn to be grateful for what is given." Gratitude is considered one of the virtues that significantly contributes to individual happiness. *Kapuhunan* also plays a role in strengthening social bonds. In the interview, the interviewee explained how this tradition encourages people to share and strengthen social solidarity. This aligns with the concept in positive psychology that emphasizes the importance of prosocial behavior and positive character in building a harmonious society. The *kapuhunan* tradition, therefore, is not only a form of respect for others' gifts but also a means of maintaining social harmony in Banjar society. As explained by the interviewee in the transcript of the interview:

"In my opinion, because we were taught to accept what others give us, it means we learn to be grateful for what others give us. So, blessings don't just come from ourselves or from the work we do, but can also come unexpectedly from others who offer them." (Subject 1) "Yes, of course, it increases our sense of gratitude. On one hand, we are reminded by others to be cautious about kapuhunan, and on the other hand, we can be more grateful, for example, when receiving food or anything else from others with a sense of gratitude for accepting it." (Subject 2)

"Like, if we get blessings from others, we shouldn't refuse them. In the context of kapuhunan, the blessings we get are food or drinks. So, I'm grateful that people care about us." (Subject 3)

Theme 3: Humility and Fairness

This tradition specifically reflects the values of humility and fairness. The informants stated that refusing an offer of food is believed to bring misfortune, calamity, or disaster upon oneself. This belief is so strong that it has become part of the values embraced by most of the Banjar community. This statement shows that accepting an offer

of food with respect is not only about avoiding misfortune, but also an important form of social ethics. As explained by the informant in the interview transcript:

"In the Banjar community's belief, if we reject the offer of food, it is believed that it can bring music, disaster, or calamity to ourselves. This belief is so strong and has become part of the values held by most Banjar people." (Subject 1)

"There is also food so if for example it is true or given like that, don't refuse it because the kapuhunan can become like that." (Subject 2)

"In practice, when someone offers food or drink, we are expected to accept or at least underestimate it a little as a form of being given and to avoid the possibility of getting bad luck." (Subject 3)

Theme 4: Prudence and Self-Regulation

One important aspect of this tradition is the increase in caution (*prudence*) and caution (*self-regulation*) in social interactions, especially when accepting or rejecting offers of food. As explained by the informant, the *kapuhunan* tradition encourages individuals to be careful not to disturb the feelings of others who offer food. This, according to him, helps maintain social harmony and prevent conflicts that can damage interpersonal relationships. As explained by the informant from the interview transcript statement:

"So during my one and a half years in Jogja I rarely heard the word kapuhunan so when I was in Jogja I almost never heard it unless I went back to South Kalimantan, Well the words Kepunan are often like parents reminding or friends or even relatives often remind be careful kapuhunan." (Subject 2)

"Because I believe in the kapuhunan belief, which states that refusing food that is offered can bring bad luck. So, I don't want to have to accept and subscribe to the food to respect the host and avoid the possibility of kapuhunan. This feeling is a combination of respect for the host and belief in the kapuhunan tradition that has been passed down from generation to generation in Banjar society." (Subject 3)

Theme 5: Citizenship and Leadership

The *kapuhunan* tradition is not only seen as a belief related to bad luck if you refuse an offer of food, but also as a deep social practice. This tradition teaches the importance of solidarity and cooperation in Banjar society. This *kapuhunan* tradition is one of the keys to togetherness in terms of sharing in Banjar society. When someone offers something, the party who is offered must accept. This shows that *kapuhunan* functions to strengthen social ties and uphold leadership values in maintaining cultural traditions. As explained by the source from the interview transcript statement:

"Maybe in Banjar society itself, this has a positive influence because as I mentioned earlier, it binds and unites togetherness between fellow people in the Banjar environment." (Subject 1)

"It cannot be denied or should not be denied if I rationalize it to mean that one of them is that we can appreciate the person who gives, secondly we do not reject sustenance, thirdly we can establish friendship, so that's what I can mean." (Subject 2)

"In this way, we can maintain social harmony and avoid the possibility of bad luck." (Subject 3)

The implementation of the values of the *kapuhunan* tradition in the daily lives of the Banjar community can be seen in two different contexts. In traditional environments, the values of the *kapuhunan* tradition are an integral part of daily social interactions. The Banjar community applies the principles of *kapuhunan* in various social situations, such as accepting offers of food or drinks from others, sharing food with neighbors, or welcoming guests. This practice helps build and maintain harmonious relationships

between residents. This is reflected in the statement of one of the informants, if we try to rationalize the *kapuhunan* tradition which was previously considered not to be denied or not to refuse food, if I rationalize it to give meaning, one of them is that we can appreciate the person who gives, the second is that we do not refuse sustenance, the third is that we can establish friendship, so that's what I can interpret. This practice is in line with the concept of the virtue of Humanity put forward by Peterson & Seligman (2004), which includes love, kindness, and social intelligence.

On the other hand, in the modern environment, the implementation of the virtue values of the *kapuhunan* tradition has undergone adaptation and transformation (Tantray & Mir, 2021). Despite facing the challenges of modernization and globalization, many Banjar people still try to maintain the essence of this tradition as a valuable cultural heritage. However, its application tends to be more flexible and adjusted to the context of modern life. One of the informants stated, because it is also far from Banjar culture, meaning it is no longer located there (Kalimantan Selatan). Finally, some cultures such as these things, which might be thought of rationally, I no longer believe in the *kapuhunan* itself. This more rational approach allows the positive values of the *kapuhunan* tradition to remain relevant in modern life, while avoiding aspects that are considered inconsistent with the times. This is in accordance with the concept of *Wisdom and Knowledge* from Peterson & Seligman (2004) which emphasizes the importance of openness of mind and perspective in facing changes in the times.

The *kapuhunan* tradition faces various challenges in the context of an increasingly heterogeneous modern society. One of the main challenges is the cultural differences between ethnic groups, especially when the Banjar community interacts with other ethnic groups that do not have similar traditions. As expressed by one of the informants, The challenge is to adjust to the situation if in the city people sometimes do not know the language of *kapuhunan*. This shows a gap in understanding that can lead to misunderstandings or even cultural conflicts. As explained by Yeganeh (2012) Local culture can be an important resource in dealing with global cultural homogenization, by offering alternatives and uniqueness that global culture does not have. However, this can also be a challenge when dealing with other different cultures.

Another challenge faced is the tendency of some modern societies to regard traditions such as kapuhunan as myths or superstitions that are irrelevant to contemporary life. One of the informants stated, For now it seems less relevant because language influences meaning but does not sideline kapuhunan. This view reflects a shift in perception of tradition among the younger generation. However, as argued by Sedyawati (2006) Local culture is the forerunner of the formation of national culture. Therefore, it is important to maintain the essence of the values of this tradition even though the form of its practice may need to be adjusted. In an effort to preserve the *kapuhunan* tradition, the main focus needs to be directed at the positive values contained therein, such as kindness, respect for others, and social solidarity. As expressed by one of the informants, Most importantly, in preserving this tradition, we need to focus on the positive values underlying it such as kindness, respect for others, and social solidarity, not on the superstitious aspects. This approach is in line with the concept of positive psychology proposed by Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi (2000) which emphasizes the importance of developing character strengths and positive values in improving the well-being of individuals and society.

Socialization of the philosophical meaning of the *kapuhunan* tradition is also key to preserving its relevance in the modern era. By understanding the philosophy behind this tradition, people can better appreciate the values contained therein and see their relevance to contemporary life. This is in line with the view of Dahlsgaard et al. (2005) who emphasized that Virtue plays an important role in facilitating positive social

interactions and building a strong society. Adapting the *kapuhunan* tradition to the current context is also an important strategy in its preservation efforts. This can be done by integrating traditional values into modern practices, as suggested by Hendriks et al. (2019) in the context of developing more inclusive and culturally diverse positive psychology interventions. Thus, the *kapuhunan* tradition can remain relevant and meaningful to the younger generation, while maintaining the essence of the virtue values that are at its core.

The contribution of this study to the field of positive psychology is significant, especially in enriching the understanding of virtues and character strengths from a local cultural perspective. The tradition of *kapuhunan* in Banjar society provides a concrete example of how universal virtue values can be manifested in specific cultural practices. As expressed by Peterson & Seligman (2004) Virtue is a core characteristic valued by moral philosophers and religious thinkers around the world. In the context of *kapuhunan*, values such as kindness, respect for others, and social solidarity are concrete manifestations of character strengths such as kindness and social intelligence identified in the Values in Action (VIA) framework. Understanding cultural meanings contributes to the formation of social identities and positive characters based on cultural values, especially in existing traditions (Rusfandi, 2024).

The findings of this study also contribute to the development of psychological interventions that are more sensitive to cultural contexts. Hendriks et al. (2019) assert that most positive psychology interventions are developed in Western contexts, indicating the need for a more inclusive and culturally diverse approach. Integration of local values such as those contained in the *kapuhunan* tradition into counseling practices can increase the effectiveness and cultural relevance of psychological interventions. This is in line with the research of Budiasa et al. (2024) which shows that Balinese cultural values contained in the Tridatu Bracelet can be integrated into multicultural counseling practices to increase the effectiveness and relevance of psychological interventions for clients with a Balinese cultural background.

Conclusion

The meaning of the *kapuhunan* tradition is an integral part of the local belief system of the Banjar people that has been deeply rooted in their culture for centuries. This tradition has a significant social and cultural function in the Banjar community, especially in terms of sharing food and accepting gifts from others. Values of virtue such as kindness, respect for others, and social solidarity are reflected in the practice of sharing food and accepting gifts from others in the *kapuhunan* tradition.

In general, the results of the study also show that the values of virtue in the *kapuhunan* tradition are in line with the principles of positive psychology, which focus on positive experiences, positive individual traits, and institutions that enable this. Integration of local wisdom values such as the *kapuhunan* tradition into positive psychology interventions can increase their effectiveness and cultural relevance. This study emphasizes the importance of developing a more inclusive and culturally diverse positive psychology approach, including integrating local wisdom such as the *kapuhunan* tradition in the Banjar community. Thus, this study contributes to the development of positive psychology that is more sensitive to the Indonesian cultural context and the results of this study can be used as a reference for the development of indigenous research models in psychology studies.

Acknowledgments

Thanks are conveyed to the management of the South Kalimantan regional dormitory who have given the author the opportunity to conduct this research, and to the

students from other regions who are continuing their studies in Yogyakarta who have participated in completing this research.

Author Contributions Statement

The completion of this article would not have been possible without the valuable contributions of all authors involved. The authors have contributed to the development of this article from start to finish. Providing conceptual contributions in developing theories or concepts that form the basis of the research conducted by MRA, SRN, H, and MHK. The authors collectively express their gratitude for the opportunity to collaborate on this project and acknowledge that the final product is a testament to the collaborative research efforts that have been undertaken.

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COUNSENESIA: Indonesia Journal of Guidance and Counseling

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