

# THE VITALITY OF LOCAL COMMUNITIES IN CULTURAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION LEEPS THE DEVELOPMENT OF BUKIT OLLON AS A LEAD TOURIST DESTINATION IN TANA TORAJA

*Vitalitas Masyarakat Lokal Dalam Konservasi Budaya dan Lingkungan Menyongsong Pengembangan Bukit Ollon Sebagai Destinasi Wisata Unggulan Tana Toraja*

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## ABSTRACT

Bukit Ollon is located in Ollon, Bonggakaradeng District, Tana Toraja Regency. Toraja Tourism is known for its beautiful panorama, where the charm of the natural beauty of Bukit Ollon combined with the uniqueness of the local culture is a superior value for Ollon, so if estimated, it can provide high income for Tana Toraja tourism. Seeing these advantages, research was conducted related to the cultural vitality of the Ollon community and the community's strategy to respond to the potential environmental degradation that will occur in Ollon and Bukit Ollon due to the increasing number of tourists who will come. The method applied is in-depth interviews and visual observations in the field while implementing strict health protocols. The results found that the current cultural vitality in Ollon is high. The level of degradation found in the Ollon environment is low. The Ollon community can survive with its unique culture, even though there are still cultural relics of ancestors such as Liang Saratu, which are still maintained and are still very rarely visited. With the opening of tourism doors in Ollon to become superior tourism, the whole community is ready to anticipate degradation.

Keywords: Conservation; Culture; Degradation; Environment; Tourism

## ABSTRAK

Bukit Ollon yang terletak di Dusun Ollon, Kecamatan Bonggakaradeng, Kabupaten Tana Toraja. Sebagaimana Pariwisata Toraja dikenal dengan panoramanya yang indah, dimana Pesona keindahan alam Bukit Ollon yang berpadu dengan keunikan budaya masyarakat setempat menjadi nilai unggul bagi Dusun Ollon, hingga jika taksir dapat memberikan pemasukan yang tinggi untuk pariwisata Tana Toraja. Melihat keunggulan tersebut, dilakukan penelitian terkait vitalitas budaya dari masyarakat Dusun Ollon hingga strategi masyarakat menanggapi potensi degradasi lingkungan akan terjadi di Dusun Ollon maupun pada Bukit Ollon akibat meningkatkan wisatawan yang akan datang. Metode yang diterapkan yaitu metode in-depth interview serta hasil pengamatan visual yang ada dilapangan, dengan tetap menjalankan protokol kesehatan yang ketat. Hasil penelitian menemukan bahwa vitalitas budaya yang ada di Dusun Ollon saat ini tergolong tinggi. Tingkat degradasi yang terdapat di lingkungan Dusun Ollon tergolong rendah. Masyarakat Ollon dapat bertahan dengan budayanya yang unik, bahkan fakta yang ditemukan masih terdapat peninggalan budaya nenek moyang seperti Liang Saratu' yang tetap di jaga, dan masih sangat jarang di kunjungi. Dengan terbukanya pintu pariwisata di Dusun Ollon menjadi wisata unggulan, seluruh masyarakat sudah siap mengantisipasi terjadinya degradasi.

Kata kunci: Budaya; Degradasi; Konservasi; Lingkungan; Pariwisata

## A. INTRODUCTION

Culture is a series of understanding and awareness constructed by members of society to interpret the world around them. This is a kind of tool or series of scenarios that members of society use to carry out their daily lives. Every culture is complex. Cultural complexity can be seen in the following things. Every culture consists of layers that are differentiated into three interconnected systems, namely 1) knowledge and belief systems, 2) value systems and meaning systems, and 3) behavior systems as embodiments of knowledge and values. Tana Toraja is an area with a very diverse and unique cultural heritage. The cultural heritage of Tana Toraja has succeeded in becoming a part of tourism activities, making it one of the attractions of tourism destinations and educational activities for Indonesian and foreign people when visiting South Sulawesi (Sandarupa, 2014).

Tourism influences economic growth through several channels. First, the tourism sector is a foreign exchange earner to obtain capital goods used in production. Second, tourism development stimulates investment in infrastructure. Third, the development of the tourism sector encourages the development of other economic sectors through direct, indirect, and induced effects. Fourth, tourism contributes to increasing employment opportunities and increasing income. Fifth, tourism causes buoyant economies of scale. Tourism is also essential in disseminating technical knowledge, encouraging research and development, and accumulating human capital (Yakup, 2019).

Tana Toraja Regency divides the tourist attractions in Tana Toraja into four main ones: natural, historical, artistic, cultural, and agro-tourism. Regional income, namely funds used to finance regional development, is insufficient to contribute to regional progress, thus requiring regional governments to continue to develop and increase regional income, especially sources of Original Regional Income (PAD) (Kristianti & Bala, 2019). According to the explanation of Law Number 33 of 2004, the sources of PAD referred to are regional tax proceeds, regional levy proceeds, separated regional wealth processing results, etc. The legitimate source of PAD intends to give authority to regional governments to increase revenue, which the government will use in terms of regional autonomy to realize the principle of decentralization.

Bukit Ollon, located in Ollon, Bonggakaradeng District, Tana Regency, is one of the tourist destinations in Tana Toraja. The beautiful hill views and unique culture make Bukit Ollon a sought-after place for tourists. The government has declared Bukit Ollon one of Tana Toraja's leading tourist attractions. This can be seen by opening roads and supplying electricity to Ollon. Natural and cultural tourism will support the economy of the local population. However, it cannot be denied that tourism can negatively influence local culture and the environment. Inadequate regulations and lacking local nature and culture conservation will damage or eliminate tourism. This research aims to evaluate the cultural vitality and current risk of environmental degradation in Ollon to prepare Bukit Ollon to become a leading tourist attraction in Tana Toraja.

## B. METHODS

Data collection in the field includes socio-cultural data on the community and data on the biophysical conditions of Ollon. Sociocultural data was collected using the in-depth interview method by implementing health protocols. The in-depth interview method was used to see the community's response to the surrounding culture and obtain data on the cultural vitality of the people of Ollon. To evaluate the risk of environmental degradation, environmental observations are carried out regarding the biophysical conditions of the area, either using drones or direct observation. The research team observed river and hill conditions, weather and temperature, vegetation types, and waste processing in Ollon. The data obtained is reduced and tabulated so that irrelevant data can be removed and made coherent so that it becomes a reference for the government to develop Bukit Ollon tourism even better. The results obtained from sociocultural analysis of the community and ecological observations were used as a reference to formulate a cultural and environmental conservation strategy for Ollon. The online data taken by researchers took the form of virtual discussions via the Zoom Meeting application, accompanying lecturers, and interviews with the Head of Bonggakaradeng Subdistrict via cell phone.

## C. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

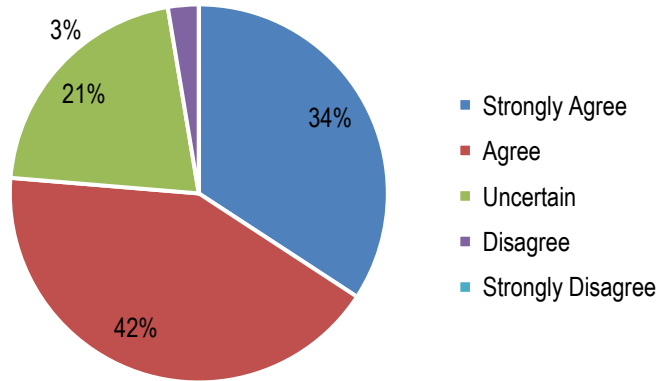
### General Description of Ollon

Ollon is located in Bonggakaradeng District, Tana Toraja Regency, South Sulawesi. The distance from Makale City to Ollon is around 41 km, which can be reached in two hours using a two-wheeled vehicle. Road access is open, although some roads have just undergone paving. Electricity supply from the State Electricity Company (PLN) arrived in 2020, but several houses still have not received electricity. Based on the latest data for 2021 recorded at the Lembang Bau Office, Ollon is in two RT sections, namely, RT To'Bila and RT Ollon, which are inhabited by 40 families and comprise 38 houses. Most of the residents of Ollon work as farmers and livestock breeders. On average, Ollon people have a history of elementary school education. One elementary school in Ollon has six teaching staff: three civil servants and three honorary

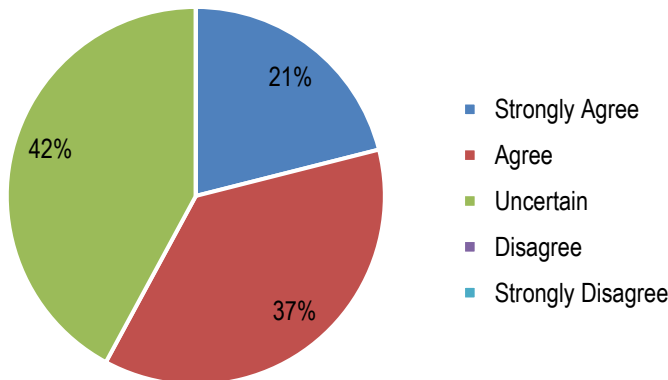
others. Most of the people of Ollon embrace Protestant Christianity. There is a church in Ollon which was built in 2018. The culture in Ollon is similar to Toraja culture in general. The customs in Ollon are usually called Adat Bau (Ada' Bau). The Ollon environment is still beautiful even though it has experienced a lot of degradation, especially in residential areas and tourist attractions. Bukit Ollon is rarely covered with trees; only the areas around the riverbanks are covered with trees. The government has attempted to conduct reforestation at several points in Bukit Ollon, and this is still ongoing today.

**Cultural Vitality of Ollon**

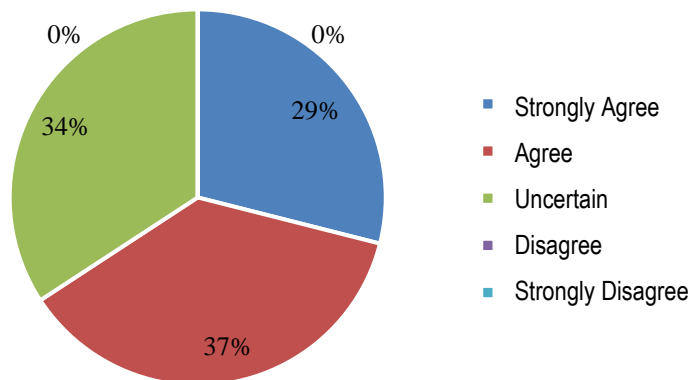
The results of the data obtained in the field can be concluded that the cultural vitality in Ollon is relatively high. This is illustrated by the diagram in Figures 1-4.



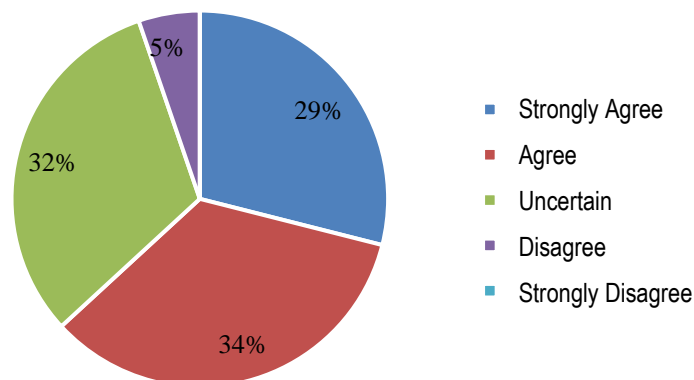
**Figure 1.** Respondents' opinions about the importance of upholding and maintaining the traditional culture of their ancestors



**Figure 2.** Respondents' opinions about breaking rituals will bring bad things



**Figure 3.** Respondents' opinions about the obligations that rule violators must carry out



**Figure 4.** Respondents' opinions regarding offerings that must be given when entering or cleaning Liang Saratu'

Figure 1 shows that the percentage of respondents who strongly agreed and agreed reached 76%, while only 2% of respondents said they disagreed or strongly disagreed, while the other 21% were undecided. Figure 2 shows that the percentage of respondents who strongly agree and agree reached 58%, and only 0% of respondents said they did not agree or strongly disagree. In comparison, the other 42% were undecided. Meanwhile, the data in Figure 3 shows that the percentage of respondents who strongly agree and agree reached 66%, and only 0% of respondents said they did not agree or strongly disagree. In comparison, the other 34% were undecided. This indicates that the people of Ollon Village still highly uphold the values and culture they hold today. So, Ollon's cultural vitality is relatively high.

Figure 4 shows that 63% of respondents strongly agreed or agreed with Liang Saratu. Only 5% disagreed or strongly disagreed, while the other 32% were undecided. This shows that the local people really pay attention to and care about one of their ancestors' legacies.

The cultural condition of the people in a region is an essential factor in supporting tourism development. One of the attractions of tourism is the development of cultural tourism, which means the ability to package the various cultural assets owned to meet tourism market demand is required. The local community's concern for the development of tourism as part of community life in their area is also a supporting factor. The socio-cultural conditions of society can be seen from the community structure and community involvement in various tourism activities. Tourists visiting a destination are driven, among other things, by the desire to get to know, know, or study the conditions in an area or the culture of the people in the destination area. While in a tourist destination, tourists will interact with the community, not only with those who directly serve tourists' needs but also with the community. Apart from local values and art, one of the primary assets for developing community cultural tourism is the development of regional cultural values because the cultural value of Ollon is an essential issue for the government to develop the tourism sector (Waani, 2016).

### Risk of Environmental Degradation

The results of environmental observations concluded that the risk of ecological degradation in Ollon Village is low. The river in Ollon is still relatively straightforward and can be used by the community for daily needs. There is a water reservoir to collect water from the river, which is then distributed to each resident's house. Bukit Ollon has experienced light erosion at several points. This is due to the lack of trees around Bukit Ollon to channel rainwater into the ground. The vegetation on the Bukit Ollon is teak (*Tectona grandis*), white teak (*Gmelina arborea*), johar (*Senna siamea*), continental (*Octomeles sumatrana*) and Kesambi (*Schleichera oleosa*). The Liang Saratu' tourist attraction experienced a landslide, so several caves were covered with soil. The steep slopes and high rainfall at the tourist attraction cause this.

Waste management at the Bukit Ollon tourist attraction can be said to be good. Communities and local governments can manage household waste well. There are rubbish dumps in several places and rubbish bins in each household. Garbage is collected in landfills and then burned periodically.

### Strategy Recommendations

The researchers' recommendations for local governments are made based on the data that has been collected, as follows:

1. Regular meetings between the community and local traditional stakeholders are necessary so that the existing cultural values do not fade but still survive and the community can appreciate all Toraja cultural values.
2. Preserving Toraja culture through annual art performances played by local and Toraja people outside Ollon. This will allow tourists who witness it to understand the philosophical aspects behind all the existing rituals, ensuring that they continue to exist and always attract tourists.

3. Determining the operational schedule for the Bukit Ollon tour every week so that an excellent environmental recovery cycle occurs to avoid degradation. The local community has tried to implement this but is hampered by the schedule's lack of publicity, and the security management strategy is not running optimally.
4. Clean water management to meet the community's and tourists' needs when visiting Ollon.
5. Utilize the river flow as a rafting arena and monitor the cleanliness of the area around the river, which is managed by the local community.
6. Restricting the *camp area* for visitors so that the monitoring area for security and environmental cleanliness can run efficiently.
7. Providing agricultural seeds, which are still minimal in Ollon, to be managed on each community's land so that tourists who visit can enjoy the agricultural products in Ollon can boost the community's economy.

## D. CONCLUSION

A leading tourism heritage for Tana Toraja, South Sulawesi. The beautiful natural landscape of the hills of Ollon and the environmental conditions, which are still clean from plastic waste to this day, provide added value, namely the surrounding natural conditions and the local culture called *Ada'Bau*. This makes Ollon unique for tourists who visit it. The cultural vitality that exists in Ollon is currently relatively high. The Ollon people still adhere to the cultures of their ancestors. Their parents still advise the younger generation in Ollon Village to continue to interpret the existing culture by the teachings of their religion. The Ollon people can survive with their unique culture while maintaining the cultural heritage of their ancestors, namely *Liang Saratu'*, which is still rarely visited. This place has the potential to become a tourist spot.

The level of environmental degradation in Ollon is relatively low. With the opening of the tourism doors in Ollon to become a leading tourist destination, the entire community is ready to anticipate degradation. This can be seen in maintaining a very close and family attitude design of regulations and input regarding the operational rationale for Bukit Ollon tourism, which will be open later. The local community supports the government's plan to open tourism to Ollon. The increasing development of natural tourism in Ollon will open up opportunities for residents to create jobs to excel in selling agricultural products.

## E. ACKNOWLEDGMENT

This research was carried out with financial support from the Ministry of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia through the PKM Social Humanities Research Student Creativity Program Grant. The research team expresses its gratitude for this support. Thanks were also expressed to the Head of the Faculty of Forestry and the Head of Hasanuddin University, as well as the people of Ollon and the Tana Toraja Regency Government.

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