

***Pantang Larang* in The Sepinggán Village Muslim Community from The Perspective of Character Education**

Syamsul Kurniawan

Faculty of Tarbiyah and Teacher Training
Institut Agama Islam Negeri Pontianak, Indonesia
E-mail: *syamsulkurniawan001@gmail.com*

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Abstract

The focus of this research is on *pantang larang* (taboos or superstitions in Malay culture) which serves as local wisdom of the Muslim community in Sepinggán village. It is examined from the perspective of character education. As previous research indicates that the Muslim community in this area has a lot of local wisdom which includes values or a set of unwritten rules about behavior and interaction between individuals in daily life. Among them is *pantang larang* which contains values or moral message, especially in the context of relationship with God, with oneself and with other creatures of God, that should be manifested in thoughts, attitudes, feelings, words and deeds so as to correspond to norms, manners, and *adat* (customs). In other words, the Sepinggán Village Muslim community uses *pantang larang* as a medium as a basis for character building.

Keywords: *Pantang Larang*, Character Building

Abstrak

Fokus penelitian ini adalah *pantang larang* (tabu atau takhayul dalam budaya Melayu) yang berfungsi sebagai kearifan lokal dari komunitas Muslim di desa Sepinggán. Hal ini diteliti dari perspektif pendidikan karakter. Seperti penelitian sebelumnya menunjukkan bahwa komunitas Muslim di daerah ini memiliki banyak kearifan lokal yang mencakup nilai-nilai atau seperangkat aturan tidak tertulis tentang perilaku dan interaksi antar individu dalam kehidupan sehari-hari. Di antaranya adalah *pantang larang* yang berisi nilai-nilai atau pesan moral, terutama dalam konteks hubungan dengan Tuhan, dengan diri sendiri dan dengan makhluk Allah lainnya, yang harus diwujudkan dalam pikiran, sikap, perasaan, perkataan dan perbuatan sehingga sesuai dengan norma-norma, sopan santun, dan adat (kebiasaan). Dengan kata lain, masyarakat Muslim Desa Sepinggán menggunakan *pantang larang* sebagai media sebagai dasar untuk membangun karakter.

Kata Kunci: *Pantang Larang*, Pembangunan Karakter

Introduction

Indonesians were known as people with manners, politeness, friendliness, etc. Unfortunately, all the good impression has changed now, at least in the last two decades. Moral decline, human decadence, environmental crisis are widespread and have even become the hall mark of our nation today. As a result, some of our communities find it difficult to distinguish between good and bad behavior, respectable and disgraceful, noble or shameful deeds (Harahap, 2013: 3).

Character education is urgently needed (Gumelar, 2016). The core of the formation and development orientation of the character itself is goodness, in the sense of thinking good, feeling good, and behaving good. What is means in this context is the unity of thoughts, feelings, and good deeds of a person. Bad characters such as like negligence, shamelessness and the like should be fixed (Listiyati, 2012: 8).

As followers of Islamic teachings, we are certainly aware of the importance of character. The word character in English means mental or moral qualities (Echols, 2006: 107), and is derived from a Greek word *charassein* meaning to make sharp or to deepen (Bagus, 2005: 392), which in Islam is synonymous with the word *akhlak* (morals) (read: Bakry, 1970: 17; Mukhtar, 2004: 32; Marbawi, 1350: 186). In a Hadith, it is also explained that the apostolic mission of Prophet Muhammad is to perfect morality (read: Suyuti, 1966: 92).

In addition, we should understand that the developments of the nation and character building are two different things that cannot be separated from each other. Both are like two sides of a coin. Nation building must go hand in hand with character building. Nation building will only be success if the national character building is done well.

The reasons for the widespread moral degradation, human decadence and environmental crises serve as the reason to reconsider how families and communities can contribute to the formation and development of character (Kurniawan, 2013: 19). Thus, every family or person that becomes an element of society must be involved in the creation of an atmosphere that is comfortable and conducive to the formation and development of character.

This is in line with what was once proclaimed by the Government of Indonesia in 2010 with the movement of "Cultural Education and National Character" which was asserted in the President's speech on National Education Day on May 2, 2010. Based on the President's speech, the community is expected to contribute to the formation and development of character. Local wisdom can be a positive capital in this case. Besides, political developments in Indonesia recently have provided fresh air for each region to build its own area according to the principles of autonomy, and this also means that each region should pay attention to existing local wisdom (see Mukhtar, 2007).

The Sepinggan Village Community has a lot of local wisdom which includes values or a set of unwritten rules regarding behavior and interaction in daily life. Among them is *pantang larang* (see Depdiknas, 2013: 1016 and 790; Sarmidi, 2015: 533). Based on the research, the Sepinggan Village Muslim community is familiar with *pantang larang* as values or unwritten rule that should be observed in their daily lives as ethnic Malay. It is a long time practice and passed from one generation to the next.

Pantang larang as local wisdom for Muslim community in Sepinggan Village essentially contains values or moral message, especially in the context of their relationship with God, with oneself and with other creatures of God, is seen to be embodied in the thoughts, attitudes, feelings, words and deeds, thus corresponding to the norms, manners, and *adat* (customs). In other words, the Sepinggan Village Muslim community uses *pantang larang* as a medium for the formation and development of character.

Research Method

This research is started from the research that the writer conducted throughout 2015 until mid 2016 in Sepinggan village, Semparuk Subdistrict, Sambas Regency, West

Kalimantan Province. The focus of this research is on *pantang larang* which serves as local wisdom of the Muslim community in this area, and is examined from the perspective of character education.

Methodologically this research used a qualitative approach with a descriptive method. Thus, qualitatively, this research is not based on statistical or mathematical calculation but on subjective assessment. It means that the measure of value used in this research is not numbers or scores, but the categorization of the value or quality. This is in line with the characteristics of a descriptive method chosen for this research with a view to describe the state (the object under research) as the way it is and in a contextual manner, as the way it occurred when the research was being conducted.

Research Findings and Discussion

1. Geographic and demographic conditions of Sepinggan Village, Sambas Regency

As previous description above, the focus of this paper is on *pantang larang* practiced by the Muslim community in Sepinggan village. So, before getting to the core of the discussion, first of all, I need to provide a general description of the geographic and demographic characteristics of the Sepinggan Village. This is because there is a belief that the growth and development of local wisdom is inevitable due to the community or the environment that support it (see Asmin, 1998: 39-43).

Administratively, the village is located in Sepinggan Village, Semparuk Subdistrict, Sambas Regency, West Kalimantan. To get to this village from the city of Pontianak, we can drive and it takes approximately five to six hours. Most of the people who live in this village are ethnic Malay. In general, the climatic conditions in Sepinggan Village are not much different from other places in Sambas Regency and other areas in West Kalimantan. Sepinggan Village has a tropical climate, so that the air temperature in this area is relatively hot.

The definition of Malay in this paper refers to an ethnic group in society that still observes rituals and traditions and beliefs of the Malay (i.e. Islam) (see Hermansyah, 2015: 1). It can also be said that the Malay identity refers to people who are Muslims and practicing the traditions or *adat* (customs) of the Malay in everyday life. From the aspect of language, the Malay community in Sepinggan village uses the Malay language in communicating (see Hashim, 1992: 3) particularly Sambas Malay.

In terms of family relationship, ethnic Malay in the Sepinggan Village hold to the bilateral or parental principle (see Soekamto, 1993: 56) by adopting an extended family system (see Hartini, 1992: 140). This suggests a balanced kinship system between patrilineal and matrilineal lines. Father and mother are therefore equal in the eye of a child, although the backbone of the family is still the father. This means that a father has a higher honor and is very decisive in making difficult decisions in a family. In addition to the nuclear family, in one household, often there are also in-laws and brothers/sisters-in-law.

A father is the main worker and protector of the family, while a mother the person in charge of the household. Children become dependent from parents until they are able to

support themselves or married. The Malay community in Sepinggan village also has the terms 'close relative' and 'distant family' based on the closeness of kinship or blood relation.

In my observation, religion is practiced en masse by the Malay people of Sepinggan Village. It can be seen from the fact that one can always find many worshipers in every mosque, especially during Friday prayer. Socialization of religious teachings have started from an early age.

Religious *dakwais* often carried out, especially on Islamic holy days. Each ceremony is also always conducted in an Islam way, at least with the recitation from religious leaders. Even so, the remains of animism and dynamism in the past still exist, and it appears in most forms of local wisdom, such as the rituals of *tepung tawar*, *ngantar ajjong*, *bepappas*, and *pantang larang*, or belief in mantra (see Skeat, 1967) which are originally unknown in the teachings of Islam (Yusriadi, 2006: 106).

2. *Pantang Larang as local wisdom of Muslim community in Sepinggan Village Sambas Regency*

In daily life, each individual in a community is inseparable from socio-cultural influence surrounding them. Therefore, it can be understood that a person's way of thinking is affected socially and culturally. This is because the human nature creates a culture or their social environment as an adaptation to their physical, biological, and socio-cultural environment.

Similarly, *pantang larang* serves as local wisdom developing among the Muslim community in Sepinggan village. Based on the interviews with a number of informants in the research sites, *pantang larang* has long become a habit and common practice, grew and developed, then passed down from one generation to the next. Thus, people who believe in *pantang larang* in this area almost never question the exact origin of the legacy of such wisdom. They are conditioned to accept it as the truth about life around them, as taboos, prohibitions, and certain values are defined as local wisdom in society even if they are unwritten.

Pantang larang in the Sepinggan village Muslim community as local wisdom has been integrated as values or unwritten rules that follow their daily lives as ethnic Malay. In fact, for some writers, Malay and Islam are identical. As Hermansyah argued that the Malay means the followers of Islam. According to this view, Islam is a marker of a person's Malay identity (Hermansyah, 2015: 1).

It is true that *pantang larang* is not recognized in Islam. However, it is also understandable given the nature of Islam being flexible, so as to blend and merge with culture in society anywhere. Islam is a universal religion. This characteristics make it relevant to culture, time and society. The universal characteristics of Islam once again open the opportunity of developing local wisdom among followers of Islam in the archipelago (see Hermansyah, 2015: 15), included among the people of Muslim majority in Sepinggan Village who are Malay (Roza, 2013: 117).

Obviously, not all elements of local wisdom can be consistent with the teachings of Islam. Similarly, not all of the elements of local wisdom can be absorbed by the Muslim community. Generally, elements that contradict with the teachings of Islam are removed or replaced. The arrival of Islam does not have to disconnect a society from its past, but it should help to preserve what is good and true from the past. This awareness also causes the propagator of Islamic teachings in the past in West Kalimantan, including in Sambas, used the resources of local wisdom for Islamization (Yusriadi, 2006: 105-106). Very much in line with the principles of *al-muhafadzah 'ala al-qadm al-shalih, wa al-akhdzu bi al-jadid al-ashlah* (maintaining good old traditions and obtain something new and better). In a diagram, the relationship pattern between local wisdom and Islam is as follows:

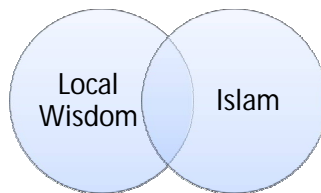


Diagram 1: The pattern of the relationship between local wisdom and Islam

The pattern of the relationship between local wisdom and Islam, as shown in Diagram 1 and the previous discussion above, appears in line with the development trend of Islam in Sambas Regency (see Yusriadi, 2006: 102), including Sepinggan village as a place where the research was conducted. In Sepinggan village, *pantang larang* despite being authentically unknown in Islam, is maintained by the Muslim community in this area and integrated as values or unwritten rules that follow their daily lives as ethnic Malay. Obviously, *pantang larang* that is not against the teachings of Islam is preserved while elements that are not in line with the teachings of Islam have slowly been eroded and finally disappeared.

It should be also understood that *pantang larang* developing in this area is growing in a mythical condition among the people. Oral remarks from generation to generation are often heard from parents, such as grandfather (*nek aki*), or grandmother (*nek uwan*). When carefully examined, the taboos or restrictions passed down from older generation contain wisdom and values. Obviously, the remarks in the form of words or sentences containing taboos or restrictions could allegedly stem from a number of cases resolved because it can be rationalized that its existence is taken for granted, passed down between generations in some situations without clear reasons.

Based on the results of observation, the Muslim community in Sepinggan village has used this *pantang larang* as a medium for building character among them. Moreover, *pantang larang* embraces a set of values or rules not properly written in order to relate with God, with ourselves, with others and with nature or the environment that should be embodied in the thoughts, attitudes, feelings, words and deeds, thus corresponding to

norms, manners, and *adat* (customs). If drawn into a diagram, then *pantang larang* in the village following Sepinggan can be described as follows:



Diagram 2: Classification of *pantang larang* in Sepinggan Village

Based on interviews held at the research sites with a number of informants, the following information about *pantang larang* is found among the people:

a. *Pantang larang* related to theological wisdom

No	<i>Pantang larang</i>	Consequences of violation	Rationale
1	Step over the Qur'an	<i>Tullah</i> (receiving misfortune).	Al-Quran is the holy book, not appropriate to step over.
2	Playing outside ahead of sunset prayer time for children.	Abducted by ghosts	It is time to prepare for sunset prayer.
3	Eating sugar cane ahead of sunset prayer time for children.	the mother or the father of the child will die	It is time to prepare for sunset prayer.

b. *Pantang larang* related to wisdom in treating one self

No	<i>Pantang larang</i>	Consequences of violation	Rationale
1	Sitting on a pillow	Pain in the behind	It is unethical to sit on a pillow because it is used for laying your head on.
2	Lifting legs while lying down on your stomach	the mother or the father will die	Sleep on your stomach with feet up is not good for your health; may result in abnormalities of the lungs; It also teaches someone about manners.
3	Leaving the food uneaten	The chickens raised will die	Leaving food uneaten is wasteful.
4	Cutting nails at night	short life	It is feared that one may cut their finger instead of their nails.
5	Sewing clothes while being worn	Bad luck	One can be injured by the needle

6	Sitting in the front door for girls	Becoming a spinster	It is impolite.
7	Sleeping after meal	Bloated stomach or obesity.	Sleeping after meal is not good for health.
8	Pulling out eyelashes and shaving eyebrows	Seeing ghosts	Some ulemas prohibit these activities.
9	Pregnant women walking under a clothesline	Difficult childbirth	It is feared that a pregnant woman may fall over or get caught by clothesline thereby harming the womb
10	Pregnant women sleeping late	Her face will be swollen	Ethically, getting up late is impolite.
11	Pregnant women looking at solar eclipse	<i>Iddab</i> (deformity) in children, such as facial mole.	Looking at solar eclipse directly may cause blindness.
12	Pregnant women wrapping a towel around neck	Umbilical cord wrapped around the baby's neck at the time of birth	Ethically, it is impolite.
13	Eating twin bananas	Having twin children	Importance to stay away from gluttony.
14	Eating directly from pot (rice bowls)	<i>Iddab</i> (deformity) in children, or ugly face	It is impolite, because eating should use a plate or bowl.
15	Eating in squatting position	Difficult to get livelihood	It is impolite as normally people defecate or urinate in a squatting position.
16	Eating in the dark	Inviting ghosts	It is feared that food will be spilled. fish bones may get stuck in your throat.
17	Going out during sun shower (one can be exposed to sun shower by <i>besunting</i> (tucking the grass next to the ear).	Experiencing a high fever caused by <i>jaring</i> ghost.	Sunshower can be bad for health.
18	Using umbrellas in the house	short-lived	It is inappropriate. In addition, local people analogize with "covering a dead body with an umbrella from the house to the cemetery".
19	Eating shrimp head	Becoming stupid	The term <i>motak udang</i> (shrimp brain) refers to a foolish person. In addition, the head of the shrimp is not really good for health.
20	Sleeping late	Chickens have picked all the worms	Getting up late is inappropriate as it is synonymous with laziness.

c. *Pantang larang* related to social wisdom

No	<i>Pantang Larang</i>	Consequences of violation	Rationale
1	Baby's clothes soaked in the water for a long time.	The baby may have stomach pain.	It is feared that the clothes will produce bad smell if not immediately washed.
2	Carrying a baby on the back	<i>Tullah</i> (misfortune)	It is feared that the baby will fall
3	Whistling in the house	Inviting ghosts	Ensuring a pleasant atmosphere at home
4	Spitting at the time of defecation	Dental damage	Maintaining the cleanliness of the restroom.
5	Taking back goods that have been given to someone else	<i>Buruk siku</i> (ugly elbow) The elbow will suffer from skin diseases such as ringworm.	Taking back the goods that have been given to others shows insincerity.
6	Pointing at the rainbow	Jari kudung (disfigured finger).	It is feared that one may accidentally point at someone else, thus potentially leading to misunderstanding.
7	Girls singing in the kitchen while cooking	Be married to an old man	It is feared that the dishes will be contaminated with saliva for fun singing.
8	Sweeping the floor of the house at night	Shortage of sustenance	Not good for health.
9	Let the rice jar empty.	Shortage of sustenance	It is feared that when guests come there is no food supply at all to serve them.
10	Pregnant women berating or revealing someone's weaknesses	<i>Iddab</i> (deformity) in children	Not to hurt someone's feelings
11	Disobeying or yelling at parents or in-laws.	<i>Tullah</i> (misfortune)	Disobeying or yelling at parents or in-laws is not justified in view of the religious and social norms.

d. *Pantang larang* related to environmental wisdom

No	<i>Pantang larang</i>	Consequences of violation	Rationale
1	Frolicking in the forest	inviting ghost	The forest is not a place to frolic
2	Reprimanding something strange in the woods	Being possessed	Avoiding unseen beings.
3	Whistling in the woods	inviting ghost	Avoiding unseen beings or animals.
4	Taking 'odd' things found in the woods	Being followed by ghost	Avoiding unseen beings
5	Carelessly urinating in the woods	<i>Burrut</i> , which is swelling of the testicles.	Environmental wisdom.

6	Roasting <i>belacan</i> (shrimp paste) in the woods	inviting ghost	environmental wisdom
7	Urinating on graves	<i>Burrut</i> , which is swelling of the testicles.	Environmental wisdom.
8	Torture, hitting or hurting the animal for pregnant women	Children will be born with disability or deformity (<i>iddab</i>).	Importance of loving animals.
9	Mocking or laughing at apes or monkeys.	Children will be born with disability or deformity (<i>iddab</i>), e.g. having a monkey's face	Importance of proper treatment of animals.
10	Burying a cat after being hit in an accident	Getting a misfortune or calamity	Importance of proper treatment of animals.

Source: Adapted from a number of informants during research

The *pantang larang* described above are still observed by the Muslim community in Sepinggan village. In addition to the above *pantang larang*, there are also taboos that are difficult to find the rationale such as a prohibition on taking pictures in an odd number, as people believe that it would lead to the death of one of people in the photograph. Another *pantang larang* hitting the water surface when boating on the river if you do not want to get struck by crocodiles. And so is the case with many other taboos.

3. *Pantang larang* Local Wisdom in Character Building

The Sepinggan village Muslim community is rich with local wisdom, one of which is *pantang larang*. In fact, *pantang larang* seems to restrict individual freedom since it makes no sense at times. The *Pantang larang* that is still practiced majority Muslim community in Sepinggan village serves as a survival guide that includes what to do and what not to. Moreover, it has become commonplace that traditional society learn through oral tradition. *Pantang larangan* oral practice growing through oral tradition from one generation to the next.

In Sepinggan village, the Muslim community, in fact, has many kinds of *pantang larang*. Some of which have been reviewed above. Not all of the *pantang larang* make no sense. This is in line with the findings at the research sites where there are several taboos that are difficult to find the rationale, such as a ban on taking a picture of an odd number people, of which people believe would cause one of them to die. However, the majority of *pantang larang* make sense and are relevant to values of character building.

Pantang larang thrive in the midst of society, especially with regard to social environment, culture, and nature of the place they reside in. More importantly, that sort of knowledge serves as part of their local wisdom. Previous generations use oral tradition to introduce and pass on local wisdom heritage. So, *pantang larang*, implies a profound message, especially regarding the importance of building good relationship with others and the nature, and to develop ethics or manners in everyday life.

The interviews with a number of informants at the research site indicate that *pantang larang* in the past was used as a strategy, especially for parents to teach their children about how to interact with others and the nature, including supernatural beings that even though they are unseen, they live side by side with humans. In terms of health, *pantang larang* teaches the community to live a healthy life, and in addition it can be connected with religious teachings.

Pantang larang also deals with ethical lessons as described above. For example, a girl is prohibited to sit on the doorway. This prohibition teaches people not to sit in the way as it is impolite and may disturb those who need pass by. Similarly, one is not allowed to sleep late as for most people such habit is synonymous with laziness. It is obviously also related to improving social relations (morality) prevailing in society.

Pantang larang also can be seen as an effort to maintain the health and hygiene. For example, the ban on sleeping on one's stomach, cutting the nails at night, etc. All is a manifestation of the wisdom of parents to teach life lessons to their children.

Meanwhile there are also prohibitions related to the environmental health. For example, there is *apantang larang* which bans children to go out during a sun shower which is not good for their health, because the mix of heat and rain water might cause fever. However, there is an important moral message in such *pantang larang*, that is do not let your child play in a weather condition that is unhealthy and unsafe.

The ban on leaving food uneaten is also very close to the teachings of religion, especially Islam which prohibits wasteful habit. Moreover, it also teaches the children to appreciate food, regardless of the amount. Such attitude should in fact be taught from an early age because it will shape one's behavior when they reach maturity.

A child is not allowed to play outside the house ahead of sunset prayer time suggests that it is important for children to join the prayer. One is not allowed to urinate and roast shrimp paste in the woods teaches about the importance of 'being kind' to the environment, including not to contaminate it as a form of environmental wisdom. In addition roasting something in the woods may also cause fire. Positive environmental attitude needs to be cultivated in a person's character. This is completely understandable as disasters such as haze, floods, landslides, etc., are partly due to the destructive actions of man on nature (Kurniawan, 2006).

In this context, *pantang larang* suggests that the environment needs to be preserved. This is in line with the results of the interviews with a number of informants at the research site, where most people recognize the importance of forests and sustainability need to be maintained, because for them the forest is a natural resource that provides for their livelihood.

Thus, the Muslim community in Sepinggan village has used such bans as the media for character building. *Pantang larang* embraces a set of values or unwritten rules in order to relate with God, with oneself, with others and with nature or the environment, and

should be manifested in thoughts, attitudes, feelings, words and deeds, in order to correspond to the existing norms, manners, and *adat* (customs).

Conclusion

It can be concluded that the Muslim community in Sepinggan village recognize the values of *pantang larang* as a set of unwritten rules about behavior and social interaction in everyday life. As local wisdom, *pantang larang* has been used since long ago as a medium for the formation and development of character in this village.

Pantang larang is a set of dos and don'ts that may result in either real or superstitious consequences. *Pantang larang* serves as moral values or message, especially in order to establish a good relationship with God, oneself, and fellow creatures of God that should be embodied in the thoughts, attitudes, feelings, words and deeds, so as to correspond to the existing norms, manners, and *adat* (customs).

From the perspective of character education, obviously *pantang larang* is still relevant to the effort in establishing values related to character building, especially in communities that are still relatively traditional and still acknowledge the existence of local wisdom. It can also be concluded that through *pantang larang*, the community has its share in the formation and development of noble character.

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