

THE ATTITUDES AND PERCEPTIONS OF SOUTH SULAWESI YOUTH ON *UANG PANAI* AND ITS IMPACTS ON THEM

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Abstract

Uang panai is the core requirement in a marriage in South Sulawesi. It is commonly used to organize a wedding ceremony. The objective of this paper is to examine the attitudes and perceptions of South Sulawesi youth towards uang panai and its impacts on them. For this study, a self-administered survey questionnaire was distributed to 154 South Sulawesi youth. The respondents are South Sulawesi youth aged between 20-40 years old. Some of them have completed their tertiary studies while others are currently pursuing theirs. All data were analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 24. The results show that South Sulawesi youth have positive attitudes and perceptions towards uang panai and its impacts on them have been relatively positive. The findings confirm that the amount of uang panai is more important compared to mahar in Islam. They also do not perceive uang panai as an expensive marriage custom in Indonesia and uang panai does not cause problem among the men. Uang panai is a South Sulawesi identity and this study endorses previous studies on the same topic.

Keywords: mahar, marriage, uang panai

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INTRODUCTION

Every society in the world has their own unique culture which differentiates them from the others, especially where marriage is concerned. Malaysia and India are obvious examples. In Malaysian weddings, there is the giving of bride wealth, while in India, a dowry is given. Bride wealth is the transfer of wealth from the groom's kin to the bride's kin, while dowry is the transfer of wealth from the bride's kin to the groom's kin. However, bride wealth is found in more societies than dowry (Sitaraman, 2015). It is believed that bride wealth is implemented among societies which practise horticulture and/or are pastoral in nature with low levels of stratification. Other correlates of bride wealth include patrilineal descent and patrilocal residence after marriage. Meanwhile, dowry is famous among those who are in complex stratified societies that practise plowing agriculture, emphasize on monogamous marriages and endorse a bilateral kinship system.

One of the larger cities in Indonesia called Makassar has a custom which is related to bride wealth. This custom is known as *uang panai*. Before the ceremonial part of a wedding, the groom is required to bring a certain amount of money as a sign of proposal to the bride.

The amount of money brought by the groom has been previously determined in the discussion made by the families of the groom and bride. If the amount of money asked by the family of the bride cannot be fulfilled by the family of the groom, automatically, there will not be a wedding. Thus, in Makassar culture, *uang panai* takes an important role to determine the marriage (Ardhani, 2017; Hikmah & Ibsik, 2015; Iqbal, 2016; Yudi & Rahayu, 2015).

RESEARCH OBJECTIVE

There have been many researches on *uang panai* among the Makassarians. Makassar, as one of the main cities in Indonesia, has many residents. Among the residents there are also arguments for and against the practice of *uang panai*. Syarifuddin and Damayanti (2015) claim that some of the Makassarians do not agree with the practice of *uang panai* because they believe it is no longer suitable in the modern era. In addition, *uang panai* is also considered as a practice of purchasing women. On the contrary, the findings by Andriani, Sirajuddin and Iba (2016), Kesuma and Nurlela (2015), Lestari (2015), Parawangsa (2017), and Yansa, Basuki and Perkasa (2017) convey that *uang panai* is a sign of appreciation for the women, the norms, the women's family and also social stratification. Therefore, this study aims to examine the attitudes and perceptions of South Sulawesi youth towards *uang panai* and the impacts it has on them.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Uang panai is a custom created by human beings. Certainly, it has generated arguments for and against it within the society. There are many previously conducted studies that highlight how members of the society have different perceptions and attitudes towards *uang panai*, and obviously, the impacts they get from this custom may also differ.

Variations in Perception of *Uang Panai*

Some reasons why the society has different perceptions of the custom of *uang panai* are due to education, social life and economic standing. Based on the findings of Yudi and Rahayu (2015), some societies have negative perceptions towards *uang panai*. It was said that *uang panai* is a financial transaction. In other words, it is akin to purchasing women. In addition, they reported that *uang panai* is a custom which is dominated by parents. Parents demand high amounts of *uang panai* causing men to be afraid to propose to women; consequently, many woman ended becoming spinsters. Some of the studies also stipulated if *uang panai* is a barrier or a factor that caused marriage cancellation between men and women.

Apart from that, Yudi and Rahayu (2015) reported that *uang panai* burdens the man because the wedding expenses are borne by him and his family. Thus, if the woman is eager to have a lavish wedding, she must ask him for a lot of *uang panai*. According to other studies, *uang panai* is totally influenced by the women's level of education, occupation and the family's social stratification. In addition, marriage for South Sulawesi people is a medium to show their social status in the society (Santi, Khumas, & Kurniati, 2017).

Other societies in Indonesia believe that *uang panai* is the identity of South Sulawesi people. Thus, the society should preserve this tradition and must give *uang panai* to the women before they get married (Adiningsih, 2016). *Uang panai* is also considered a way to respect the women (Agustar, 2018). In addition, it is also seen as a symbol of pride among women and as

a way to maintain their families' social status (Erlangga, Dewi, & Hidayat, 2016). Another research by Yansa, Basuki and Perkasa (2017) shows that *uang panai* is a form of appreciation of a man to his beloved woman for whom he is willing to sacrifice by earning a substantial amount of money. Furthermore, *uang panai* can also help the women in preparing a wedding reception so they can invite the family, society and friends. In other words, *uang panai* can help the society to meet and spread the happiness. Furthermore, a report from Santi, Khumas and Kurniati (2017) shows that *uang panai* is a sign of seriousness shown by the man to the woman.

Diversity is a common thing in people's life. The diversity of perceptions among the people about *uang panai* results in the variety of attitudes. Some people refuse to implement the custom of *uang panai* due to some reasons, while others believe they still need to implement this custom. Yudi and Rahayu (2015) claim that a few of their respondents argued that *uang panai* is a *siri* in the society. Those who preserve and implement this custom means that they have preserved their *siri*. *Siri* is the dignity of South Sulawesi people. Thus, wherever the South Sulawesi people live, they need to pay up *uang panai* even if they live outside South Sulawesi.

In addition, they still have a sense of belonging to the *uang panai* custom. This is proven by a research by Ashari (2016) which states that the South Sulawesi people who are settled in Lampung still require the men to bring an amount of *uang panai* for the women as a sign of a proposal. Agustar (2018) also mentions that in Riau, the South Sulawesi people still implement it. Apart from that, a study by Santi et al. (2017) indicates that *uang panai* is the apex of materialism. In other words, the researchers wanted to show that *uang panai* is associated with materialism. Moreover, they also reported that *uang panai* is a proud custom held by the people of South Sulawesi.

The Social Impacts of *Uang Panai*

Uang panai impacts on men and their families. A man, according to Agustar (2018) would even borrow money to fulfil the request for *uang panai* as demanded by the woman's family. If he cannot fulfil it, automatically there is not marriage. In addition, *uang panai* is also used as an excuse to reject the proposal of the man if the family does not approve of the man and his proposal. As a consequence, sometime the man and the woman commit elopement to legalize their relationship.

On the other hand, the man is immediately approved and appreciated by the woman's family if he manages to give a huge amount of *uang panai* to them. For parents who have sons, they will feel anxious about the problem that may occur because of the need to give *uang panai*. Meanwhile, parents who have daughters will also worry if the man may or may not be able to provide *uang panai* for her. So both sides have their own concerns about their children. In relation to this, Arifuddin states that a stabbing incident was mentioned in the Monday, 4th November 2013 edition of *Tribun Timur*. Because "less than seven million rupiah" was paid as *uang panai*, which was considered a meagre amount, blood must be spilled in the name of *siri na pacce*. This incident also made headlines in other daily newspapers.

METHODOLOGY

The study used a quantitative research design using the survey method. Questionnaires were distributed to South Sulawesi youth for data collection using the simple random sampling technique. The population of the study were South Sulawesi people between the ages of 20 to

40 and from the ethnic group of Makassar, Bugis, Toraja and Mandar. Their range of education started from those who had graduated or were pursuing their education in various programmes at diploma to doctoral levels.

Data Collection Instrument

The research instrument was a quantitative questionnaire which firstly asked for the demographic background of the respondents' age, gender, ethnicity, education, salary received and number of children. In addition, there were three variables which were attitude (e.g. *uang panai* must be preserved), perception (e.g. *uang panai* is the most expensive marriage custom in Indonesia) and impact (e.g. males feel impoverished by the custom of *uang panai*). Data collection was conducted during a period of five months, starting from June 2018 to November 2018. The questionnaires were distributed to South Sulawesi youth through social media like WhatsApp and email via Google form. As many as 154 South Sulawesi youth responded to the questionnaire. The data were analysed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 22 to satisfy the objectives of the study. The data included descriptive statistics showing percentages, means and one sample t-test.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1. Demographic Information of the Respondents

Demographic characteristics	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Gender:		
Male	68	28.3
Female	86	35.8
Age:		
20-25	95	39.6
26-30	39	16.3
31-35	10	4.2
36-40	10	4.2
Educational Level:		
Diploma	13	5.4
Undergraduate	98	40.8
Master	41	17.1
PhD	3	.8
Ethnicity:		
Makassar	42	17.5
Bugis	107	44.6
Toraja	1	.4
Mandar	4	1.7
Occupation:		
Student	60	25.0
Teacher/Lecturer	29	12.1
Farmer	1	4
Staff	22	9.2
Businessman/woman	22	9.2
Unemployed	20	8.3

Wage:		
Less than Rp.1.000.000	19	7.9
Rp.1.000.000 - Rp.5.000.000	54	22.5
Rp.5.000.000 - Rp.10.000.000	11	4.6
Rp.10.000.000 - Rp.15.000.000	5	2.1
More than Rp.15.000.000	4	1.7
Marital Status:		
Single	115	47.9
Married	37	15.4
Widow/Widower	2	.8

Attitudes towards *Uang Panai*

In order to find the South Sulawesi youth's attitudes towards *uang panai*, one sample t-test with a value of 3 was used as a comparison for the mean of each item. A one sample-test shows that the majority of the items on the attitudes of South Sulawesi youth towards *uang panai* was significant. It means that most of the respondents have positive attitudes towards *uang panai*.

Table 2. Attitudes of South Sulawesi Youth towards *Uang Panai*

No	Attitudes of Sulawesi Youth towards <i>Uang Panai</i>	M	SD	%	t**	df	p
1.	<i>Uang panai</i> benefits women.	2.694	1.007	53.8	-4.322	153	.000
2.	<i>Uang panai</i> burdens men.	2.104	1.018	42.1	11.001	153	.000
3.	<i>Uang panai</i> is still in line with present day lifestyle.	3.214	1.120	64.3	2.374	153	.019
4.	<i>Uang panai</i> must be preserved.	3.350	1.094	67	3.978	153	.000
5.	<i>Uang panai</i> must be implemented wherever we are.	3.494	1.074	69.8	5.702	153	.000
6.	Parents are competing to raise the amount of their children's <i>uang panai</i> .	3.571	1.271	71.4	5.573	153	.000
7.	<i>Uang panai</i> can create a sense of pride to the parents when their daughter gets a large amount.	3.234	1.365	64.6	2.123	153	.035
8.	<i>Mahar</i> is different from <i>uang panai</i> .	2.084	1.192	41.7	-9.521	153	.000
9.	<i>Mahar</i> should be higher than <i>uang panai</i> .	2.948	1.250	58.9	-.515	153	.607
10.	The government should be responsible for determining the amount of <i>uang panai</i> .	3.708	1.235	74.1	7.105	153	.000
Overall attitudes of South Sulawesi youth towards <i>uang panai</i>		3.079	0.504	61.6	1.953	153	.053

*5-point scale whereby 1= Strongly Agree, 2=Agree, 3=Neutral, 4= Disagree, 5= Strongly Disagree

The results show that seven in ten of the respondents or 74.1% believed that the government should be responsible for determining the amount of *uang panai*. Perhaps people cannot control the amount of *uang panai* determined by others, therefore they ask the government to do this. Moreover, 64.3% of them considered *uang panai* as still relevant in this modern era, *uang panai* must be preserved (67%) and *uang panai* must be implemented wherever we are (69.8%). According to Ashari (2016), *uang panai* is the core custom in the culture of the South Sulawesi people and customs will always exist in societal life. It was also admitted that it is difficult to eliminate *uang panai* because it is a basic regulation in marriage; there is not marriage without *uang panai* (Ikbal, 2016).

Furthermore, the researches by Ardhani (2017) and Erlangga et al. (2016) show that *uang panai* aims to maintain the dignity of the Bugis Makassar women and is also an indication whether a man is able to provide for his wife and future children. Many South Sulawesi people continue to implement this tradition even though they live outside South Sulawesi. As proven by Azizah (2017), a South Sulawesi man living in Monokowari, West Papua was obligated to bring forth *uang panai* when proposing to a woman. This is because this custom has been maintained by society for many years. In addition, Agustar (2018) and Ashari (2016) also indicate that in Riau and Lampung Selatan, the Bugis ethnics also provide *uang panai* before marrying the local women.

Additionally, half of the respondents (53.8%) agreed that *uang panai* benefits women but burdens men (42.1%). However, women do not directly get huge benefit from this custom. The possible reason is that the *uang panai* is fully handed by the women's parents and it is spent for the wedding reception (Hikmah & Ibsik, 2015). In terms of parents competing to raise their daughter's *uang panai*, it was noted that 71.4% of the respondents admitted that this was happening. Finally, six in ten of them indicated that the parents feel proud when their daughter is given a large amount of *uang panai*. According to the study by Syarifuddin and Damayanti (2015), this happens because the parents feel that they can raise their social status by raising their daughter's *uang panai*. Apart from that, the family also feels they are respected by the man when he can fulfil the amount demanded for the *uang panai* (Kamal, 2016). It indicates that *uang panai* is really meaningful for the parents because it can raise their social status in the society.

In the analysis, one item is reported as not significant "*mahar* should be higher than *uang panai*" ($M=2.948$, $SD=1.250$, $t(153)=-.515$, $p=.607$). This means that the parents do not see the value of *mahar* because what is more important for them is the amount of *uang panai*. The society in general does not consider the importance of *mahar*. However, for the overall results, the respondents (61.6%) had a certain attitude towards *uang panai* ($M=3.079$, $SD=0.504$, $t(153)= 1.953$, $p=.053$).

Perceptions towards *Uang Panai*

A one sample-test shows that the majority of the items on perception of South Sulawesi youth towards *uang panai* is significant. This means that most of the respondents had a positive perception of *uang panai*.

Table 3. Perceptions of South Sulawesi Youth towards *Uang Panai*

No	Perceptions of Sulawesi youth towards <i>uang panai</i>	M	SD	%	t**	Df	P
1.	Large amount of <i>uang panai</i> is used to gain popularity.	3.234	1.337	64.7	2.169	153	.032
2.	Large amount of <i>uang panai</i> is used to show social status.	3.039	1.366	60.8	.354	153	.724
3.	Small amount of <i>uang panai</i> given to the woman can cause embarrassment to the man (e.g. <Rp.100 million).	3.286	1.224	65.7	2.895	153	.004
4.	<i>Uang panai</i> is the most expensive marriage custom in Indonesia.	2.234	1.021	44.7	-9.310	153	.000
5.	The demand for large <i>uang panai</i> is one way to reject a man's proposal.	2.805	1.299	56.1	-1.861	153	.065
6.	<i>Uang panai</i> is determined most by the women's families.	2.312	1.057	46.2	-8.079	153	.000
7.	The amount of <i>uang panai</i> can be discussed by men and women.	1.799	.858	35.5	-17.365	153	.000
8.	Men are allowed to borrow money from the family to pay <i>uang panai</i> .	3.156	1.243	63.1	1.556	153	.122
9.	<i>Uang panai</i> is the identity of the people of South Sulawesi.	2.221	1.127	44.4	-8.577	153	.000
10.	Large amount of <i>uang panai</i> is a sign of men's seriousness towards women.	3.045	1.374	60.9	.411	153	.682
	Overall perceptions of South Sulawesi youth towards <i>uang panai</i>	2.713	0.608	54.3	-5.857	153	.000

*5-point scale whereby 1= Strongly Agree, 2=Agree, 3=Neutral, 4= Disagree, 5= Strongly Disagree

Six in ten of the respondents (65.7%) admitted that a small amount of *uang panai* given to the women can cause embarrassment to the men (e.g. <Rp.100 million). This is supported by the finding from Syarifuddin and Damayanti (2015) that a man would be embarrassed if he only gives a small amount of *uang panai* compared to his friends. A similar percentage (63.1%) has the perception that men should be allowed to borrow money from the family to pay for *uang panai*. This is supported by the research from Ahsani, Hos, and Peribadi (2018) which confirms that to pay up the *uang panai*, men tend to borrow money from other people or leave the village to earn money. According to 60.1% of the respondents, *uang panai* is seen as a sign of men's seriousness to the women, thus they will work hard to give the amount of *uang panai* demanded by the women's family. One of the ways is to borrow money to give *uang panai*.

Less than two thirds of respondents (64.7%) felt that a large amount of *uang panai* is used to show one's social status within the society. This is because *uang panai* is an aspect of culture which is highly respected by society members. Therefore, by raising the amount of *uang panai*, some people use this to gain popularity. The families also prepare a huge reception because the large amount of *uang panai* can be reflected in the lavish preparation for the wedding (Syarifuddin & Damayanti, 2015). More than half of the respondents (60.8%) claimed that if the woman is from a wealthy family, they will ask for more *uang panai* since it is also used to show the social status of the family. The family will be ashamed to be given a small

uang panai (Marini, 2018), therefore they will demand for a large amount (Hikmah & Ibsik, 2015).

In the determination of the amount of *uang panai*, 46.2% of the respondents said that *uang panai* is determined by the woman's family. Only 35.5% of them agreed that *uang panai* can be discussed by the man and the woman. Despite the fact that the amount of *uang panai* is high, less than half of them (44.7%) agreed that *uang panai* is the most expensive marriage custom in Indonesia (Kamal, 2016). However, the respondents still have a positive perception towards *uang panai*. Even *uang panai* requires the use of lots of money, they have nothing negative to say about this custom. The overall mean for perception on *uang panai* is 2.713, while the standard deviation is .608. The South Sulawesi youth's highest perception of *uang panai* is (M=3.234, SD=1.337. p=.000).

Impacts of South Sulawesi Youth on *Uang Panai*

A one sample test shows that all items are significant. It means that South Sulawesi youth positively impact the custom of *uang panai*.

Table 4. Impacts of South Sulawesi Youth on *Uang Panai*

No	Impacts of <i>Uang Panai</i> on South Sulawesi Youth	M	SD	%	t**	Df	p
1.	Society members, especially the males, have a problem with the practice.	1.948	0.867	38.9	-15.15	153	.000
2.	Men feel impoverished by the custom of <i>uang panai</i> .	2.831	1.059	56.6	-1.978	153	.050
3.	Men often borrow money to pay for <i>uang panai</i> .	2.552	1.079	51.4	-5.154	153	.000
4.	Family harmony is affected by <i>uang panai</i> .	3.442	1.220	68.8	4.489	153	.000
5.	Family will be happier when they get a large <i>uang panai</i> .	4.199	0.856	83.9	17.318	153	.000
6.	People who do not follow the custom of <i>uang panai</i> will be socially sanctioned by the public.	4.201	1.012	84.0	14.728	153	.000
7.	Elopement is the main result of large <i>uang panai</i> .	2.526	1.289	50.5	-4.562	153	.000
8.	People cannot marry when <i>uang panai</i> cannot be fulfilled.	3.409	1.229	68.1	4.130	153	.000
9.	People of South Sulawesi consider <i>uang panai</i> of having sacred value.	2.766	1.203	55.3	-2.411	153	.017
10.	Family tends to divorce when there is no <i>uang panai</i> .	3.948	1.077	78.9	10.920	153	.000
11.	Getting a large amount of <i>uang panai</i> is important to be covered by the media.	4.026	1.149	80.5	11.084	153	.000
	Overall impacts of South Sulawesi youth on <i>uang panai</i>	3.258	0.497	65.2	6.456	153	.000

*5-point scale whereby 1= Strongly Agree, 2=Agree, 3=Neutral, 4= Disagree, 5= Strongly Disagree

The majority of the respondents claimed that *uang panai* leaves impacts onto the South Sulawesi society in general and families in particular. Firstly, 84.0% of them said that the people who do not practise the custom of *uang panai* will be sanctioned by the public; in other words, they will be scorned by the society because they are not following a tradition which has been set in place many years ago. Secondly, 83.9% of the respondents stated that the family will be happier when getting a large amount of *uang panai*. With this money, the family can have a big reception, invite many friends and families and be honoured by the society (Yu'min, 2017; Yansa et al., 2017). Apart from that more than three-quarters of respondents (80.5%) admitted getting a large amount of *uang panai* guarantees coverage by the media.

Meanwhile, 78.9% of them believed that couples who do not exchange and get *uang panai* tend to divorce ($M=3.948$, $SD=1.077$). The possible reason for this is that many people from South Sulawesi believe that the custom of *uang panai* can prevent any divorce since a man will think twice about divorcing his wife after a large amount of *uang panai* had already been given. Hence, the divorce case in Bugis Makassar, for instance, is low (Yudi & Rahayu, 2015). Two thirds of the respondents (68.8%) also claimed that family harmony is influenced by the amount of *uang panai*.

It should be noted that 68.1% of the respondents believed that people cannot marry when *uang panai* cannot be given. This is because the core requirement for marriage is to give *uang panai* (Kamal, 2016). As a result, more than half of the respondents (55.3%) said *uang panai* has sacred value. Despite the fact that 51.4% of the respondents said men often borrow money to pay up *uang panai* and 56% said men feel impoverished by the custom of *uang panai*, only 38.9% felt that *uang panai* can cause a problem, especially for men ($M=1.948$, $SD=0.867$). It is indicated that South Sulawesi youth have never considered *uang panai* as an obstacle in their life. The overall mean for the impacts of *uang panai* on South Sulawesi youth is 3.7259, the standard deviation is .497 and the value of p is .000. This indicates that they considered *uang panai* as giving positive impacts on them.

CONCLUSION AND LIMITATIONS

In conclusion, the results of the research show that the South Sulawesi youth have positive attitudes towards *uang panai*. It can mainly be reflected from the statement that *mahar* is higher than *uang panai*. In addition, their perceptions towards *uang panai* are also positive. Despite the fact that *uang panai* requires the preparation of a large amount of money, they maintain that *uang panai* is not an expensive marriage custom in Indonesia. Finally, the South Sulawesi youth never consider if *uang panai* can cause problems, especially for the men.

There were limitations faced when conducting the study, mainly the data collection process. It was quite challenging due to the fact that some respondents were reluctant to answer the questionnaires as they were busy with their daily activities. This limitation required the researchers to extend the duration for data collection. This study is also limited to the South Sulawesi youth living in South Sulawesi. Therefore, it is suggested for future studies to include other South Sulawesi youth who live outside South Sulawesi. It is also suggested to compare the attitudes and perceptions of South Sulawesi youth living in South Sulawesi and abroad to test their level of understanding about *uang panai*.

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