

# Exploration of Plants in the Mappacci Ritual of the Bugis Tribe in Wajo: Understanding the Ethnobotanical Wealth of Local Community Culture

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**Abstract:** Mappacci is one of a series of traditional wedding rituals of the Bugis tribe. This research aims to classify and identify various types of plants and the meaning of their use in the traditional rituals of the Bugis mappacci tribe. This research method is descriptive qualitative. Data collection through observation, interviews and documentation. The results of the research found 7 types of plants in the Mappacci traditional ritual. The plant species used are Pacar (*Lawsonia inermis* L), Jackfruit (*Artocarpus heterophyllus* Lam), Banana (*Musa paradisiaca* L), Rice (*Oryza sativa* L), Coconut (*Cocos nucifera* L), Palm (*Arenga pinnata* Merr) and Cotton (*Ceiba pentandra*) which includes 6 families, namely Lythraceae, Moraceae, Musaceae, Poaceae, Arecaceae, Bombacaceae. The plant parts used are leaves (75%), fruit (50%), seeds (25%), sap (25%). The plants used in the Mappacci traditional rituals of the Bugis tribe have a philosophical meaning of goodness. Community knowledge in the use of these plants is a tradition passed down from generation to generation from their ancestors

**Keywords:** Ethnobotany; Mappacci; Philosophical meaning; Variety of plants

## Introduction

Indonesia is one of the countries with the largest ethnic diversity in the world, with around 555 ethnic groups living in this country (Ramadhani et al., 2021). One of them is the Bugis tribe who inhabit the island of Sulawesi. This tribe has a rich and unique cultural heritage, including ritual practices such as the mappacci procession at weddings. Mappacci is one of the traditional ritual stages in the Bugis tribe wedding procession (Marfiani, 2022). This ritual is an inherent part of the cultural identity of the Bugis tribe. The uniqueness of this mappacci ritual is the use of plants which the Bugis tribe believe are full of meaning in the process of life. The use of plants in traditional rituals has various meanings

(Angela et al., 2022; Mariati et al., 2022; Syaffa Al Liina et al., 2018).

However, in the era of modernization, technological development and globalization, cultural traditions are often threatened with extinction or experiencing a decline in understanding and practice (Husodo et al., 2017; Ramadhani et al., 2021; Suwardi et al., 2020). Therefore, research related to Mappacci rituals is very important so that people, especially the younger generation, can understand more deeply the Mappacci ritual practices and the role of plants in the local cultural context.

Various types of plants have been used in traditional ceremonies and have symbolic functions (Sutrisno et al., 2020) Such as, *Amaranthus hybridus* L.,

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*Bryophyllum pinnatum* (Lam.) Oken., *Cananga odorata* (Lam.) Hook.f. & Thomson, *Carica papaya* L., *Citrus aurantium* L., *Cocos nucifera* L., *Pandanus amaryllifolius* Roxb. ex Lindl., *Rosa chinensis* Jacq. Human life benefits a lot from plants (Ristante et al., 2020).

The use of plants in various traditional and religious rituals has great meaning and value for local ethnic groups in Indonesia (Duri, Rafdinal, 2022; Hulyati, et al., 2014). Therefore, local knowledge from various tribes needs to be studied and documented better so that it can be widely known and well developed (Zulharman & Noeryoko, 2023).

Plants are biodiversity that is always around us, whether growing wild or cultivated (Patiola et al., 2023; Wahyuni & Afidah, 2022). Traditional communities have long used biodiversity or natural resources around them for their needs (Triyuni et al., 2023). Due to the deep involvement of traditional communities with natural resources and the surrounding ecosystem, a relationship emerged related to plant exploitation (Syaffa Al Lina et al., 2018).

Ethnobotany is a multidisciplinary study that combines ethnology and botany to understand the relationship between humans and plants in the context of culture and tradition (Afentina et al., 2020; Lightner et al., 2021). Ethnobotany carries the potential to explore the hidden heritage knowledge systems of a community or ethnic group, which are related to natural diversity, conservation efforts, and cultural elements (Ens et al., 2015).

Ethnobotany is the study of a particular culture or area. Thus, researchers and academics in biology still have a great opportunity to study ethnobotany in Indonesia (Hidayat et al., 2018). Therefore, the research aims to reveal information related to the various types of plants used by the Bugis tribe community, especially those in Tosora Village, how to use the plants and the philosophical meaning of these plants in the Mappacci traditional ritual.

**Method**

This research is a qualitative descriptive research. The research was carried out in July 2023 located in Tosora Village, Wajo Regency, South Sulawesi.

Data was obtained from key informants selected through purposive sampling techniques with the consideration that these informants were considered important and had knowledge about the use of plants at mappacci traditional events. The informants consisted of three groups of key informants, namely traditional leaders, religious leaders and community leaders. the number of key informants was 10 people.

The instrument used was an interview guide containing informant criteria, a list of questions related to

plant types, plant organs, how to use them, and the meaning of using certain plants in the Mappacci traditional procession. The interview process was carried out using a semi-structured technique and was guided by questions that had been prepared previously.

Apart from that, data was obtained through direct observation and documentation processes during the mappacci customary process to observe the types of plants used by the local community. Next, plant identification is carried out by referring to Steenis' book and sites that provide plant databases such as <http://plantamor.com/>.

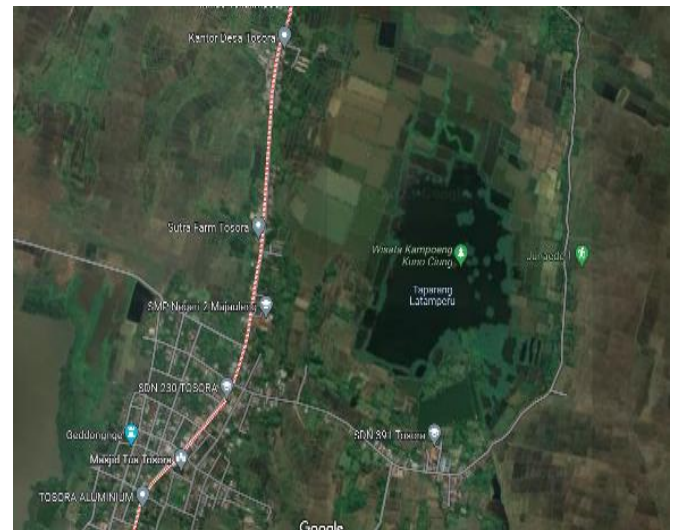


Figure 1. Research location map

Data that has been collected and described. To increase the accuracy of data obtained from sources, triangulation of data from observations, surveys and documentation studies is carried out (Creswell, 2015).

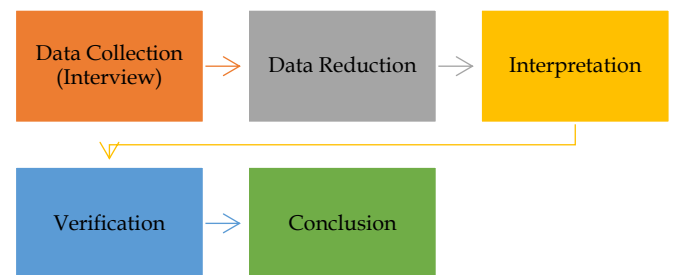


Figure 2. Qualitative descriptive research stages (adapted from Miles & Huberman)

**Result and Discussion**

The results of research conducted on plant exploration in the Mappacci traditional ritual of the Bugis tribe can be seen in Table 1

**Table 1.** Variety and Types of Plants Used in Mappacci Traditional Rituals

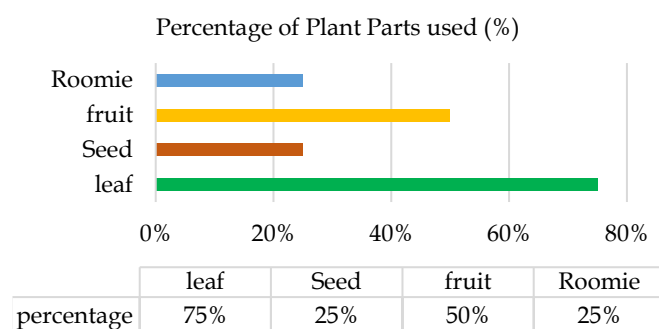
Local Name	Common Name	Scientific name	Family
Pacci'	Henna	<i>Lawsonia inermis L</i>	Lythraceae
Panasa	Jackfruit	<i>Artocarpus heterophyllus</i>	Moraceae
Utti'	Banana	<i>Musa paradisiaca</i>	Musaceae
Ase,	Paddy	<i>Oryza sativa L</i>	Poaceae
Kaluku	Coconut	<i>Cocos nucifera</i>	Arecaceae
Kanau'	Palm	<i>Arenga pinnata Merr</i>	Arecaceae
Kawu-kawu	Cotton	<i>Ceiba pentandra</i>	Bombacaceae

Source: Research data

**Table 2.** Parts of Plants, How to Use Them and Philosophical Meaning in Traditional Mappacci Rituals

Plant Names	Parts used	How to use	Meaning
Henna	Leaf	Henna leaves are rubbed on the palms of the bride and groom	Pacci in Bugis mappacing language means purity of the heart of the bride and groom and symbolizes eternal marriage.
Jackfruit	Leaf	7 or 9 jackfruit leaves are placed on the banana leaf	Nangka or Panasa in Bugis language is similar to the word Minasa which means noble ideals, symbolizing prayer and hope in Bugis language "mamminasa ridecengge"
Banana	Leaf	Banana shoot leaves are placed on a silk sheath	Banana leaves symbolize sustainable life, as it is known that when banana leaves dry up, young buds will appear in the Bugis Maccoli Mad-daung language with the hope that the bride and groom will have offspring as successors in the future.
Paddy	Rice Grains	Rice is sprinkled on the bride and groom	So that the prospective bride and groom can be more successful and live independently in building a household
Coconut	Young coconut	A package of young coconuts and brown sugar that have been peeled are placed near the mappacci equipment	Young coconut and brown sugar symbolize deliciousness, the hope that the bride and groom can complement each other in building a harmonious household
Sugar palm	Nira that has been processed into brown sugar	Packages of brown sugar and young coconut are placed near the mappacci equipment	Young coconut and brown sugar symbolize deliciousness, the hope that the bride and groom can complement each other in building a harmonious household
Cotton	Fruit which is in the form of fiber	Kapok fruit fiber is used as stuffing for pillows, where the pillow is a base for placing silk covers, jackfruit leaves and banana leaves.	In the Bugis language, Angkalungen pillows contain kapok which symbolizes prosperity, the pillow is also a pillow for the head when sleeping and the head is the noblest part of the body so the pillow is also symbolized as honor or dignity in the Bugis language it is called mappakalebbi

Source: Research data



**Figure 3.** Percentage of plant parts used in Mappacci traditional rituals

Discussion

*Various Types of Plants in the Mappacci Ritual*

Henna (*Lawsonia inermis L.*) is a plant from the Lythraceae family. This plant usually takes the form of a shrub or small tree, with green oval or lanceolate leaves. Henna is known for its leaves which have strong natural coloring properties. In the traditional mappacci ritual, henna leaves are rubbed on the palms of the bride and groom's hands. There are ritual plants that can be used as dyes on the human body (Geng et al., 2017).

Jackfruit (*Artocarpus heterophyllus*) is a type of tropical tree from the moraceae family, which can grow to a height of 20-30 meters with an upright stem and many branches. Jackfruit leaves are oval or oval, dark green,



and arranged spirally along the branches. These jackfruit leaves are placed in a row on the pillow

Banana (*Musa paradisiaca* L.) is a type of flowering plant from the Musaceae family. This plant is known for its sturdy stems and wide, green leaves. Bananas are usually cylindrical in shape with yellow skin when ripe. Banana plants are widely grown in tropical and subtropical areas. Banana leaves are placed on a pillow covered with a silk cover.

Paddy (*Oryza sativa*) is a grain crop. This plant belongs to the Poaceae family. Rice grows mainly in tropical and subtropical areas that have a suitable climate. Rice has slender stems and long, slender leaves. The fruit is in the form of grains of seeds found in panicles or bunches. Grains of rice in the form of rice are kept in a container near the pacci place and thrown excitedly after the pacci is placed in the bride and groom's hands.

Coconut (*Cocos nucifera*) belongs to the Arecaceae family. Coconut trees have tall, straight trunks with long, hanging leaves. Each part of the coconut tree has various uses, ranging from food, drink, building materials, to fuel. Coconuts also have high cultural value, especially in the mappacci tradition. In the mappacci ritual, coconut flesh is placed near the bride and groom, with the hope that the bride and groom will become human beings who are full of benefits for others and the natural surroundings.

The palm plant (*Arenga pinnata*) belongs to the Arecaceae family. Palm trees have tall, slender trunks with wide, hanging leaves. Palm fruit is dark red when ripe and produces a fruit called "aren" which contains sap, a sweet liquid that can be drunk directly or processed into palm sugar. In the mappacci ritual, palm sugar is placed into a split coconut. Sugar and coconut are symbols of pleasure, which means a harmonious life.



Figure 4. Bugis tribal mappacci equipment

The Cotton plant (*Ceiba pentandra*) belongs to the Malvaceae family. Cotton trees have tall, straight trunks with wide, hanging leaves. The flowers are large and white or cream colored, and produce fruit containing fine fibers that are light and water-resistant. Kapok fiber

is often used as raw material for making pillows or mattresses. Pillows containing kapok in the mappacci ritual are used as a base for placing silk sarongs, banana leaves and jackfruit leaves. Pillows containing cotton mean respect.

#### *Philosophical Meaning of Plants and Tools in Mappacci Traditional Rituals*

Based on the results of interviews conducted by researchers with several key informants in Tosora village, data revealed that the use of plants in the mappacci traditional ritual is a form of respect or glorification of someone as well as a form of "Assenu-sennureng" in Bugis language which means an expression that radiates from a hope that grows in seeds, an attitude of optimism, encouraging determination to carry out an action.

The Mappacci traditional ritual is interpreted as a ceremony that depicts purity (Nuruddin & Nahar, 2022) and purity, with the aim of cleansing and purifying the soul and body of the prospective bride and groom before they enter the journey that will take them into the ark of married life. Ritual mappacci procession is the symbolic act of giving pacci leaves (henna leaves) carried out by pre-selected guests. This shows a symbol of family (Nuruddin & Nahar, 2022).

#### *The Equipment Used in the Mappacci Traditional Ritual and its Meaning Include Angkalungeng (Pillow)*

Angkalungeng is the Bugis name for a pillow, which is placed in front of the bride and groom, a pillow containing fibers from cotton that have been selectively collected, to provide a soft base for the head. The pillow, as a support for the head, depicts a deep meaning in the symbolism of a newly discovered human. Just as the face forms the head, which in turn reflects the identity and uniqueness of each individual. In this perspective, pillows represent the sincere appreciation given to someone, mutual respect or in Bugis language sipakatau. The pillow in the mappacci ritual contains a message that the bride and groom always maintain their dignity and respect each other (Haq, 2021).

#### *Lipa Sabbe (Silk Sarong)*

Silk sarongs play an important role as an elegant blanket for the human body, protecting a person's privacy and dignity. As expressed in the Bugis language, "Mabbelang" this carries the concept of honor and keeps away from shame due to being uncovered or naked. In the view of the Bugis people, the silk sarong functions as a symbol of protection to maintain one's honor. Therefore, it is hoped that the prospective bride and groom will continue to take good care of their dignity, so as not to attract disgrace in the eyes of society in the future.

#### *Colli Daung Utti (Banana Shoot Leaves)*

After carefully arranging the pile of silk covers in layers on the pillow, then the banana shoot leaves are placed on the surface of the pillow that has been arranged together with the silk cover. Like banana leaves which always change, reflecting the concept of life which never stops turning and continuing. In the Bugis language, this change is represented by the term 'macolli,' which refers to banana leaves that always appear new before the old ones completely wither or grow old. According to some indigenous groups' cultural meanings, bananas have philosophical significance that has to do with relating to life processes and imparting moral teachings (Hapsari et al., 2015).

This is in line with Sandi et al. (2022) the main purpose of marriage, which aims to continue and enrich the bloodline. Just like human life continues to develop from one generation to the next through the bonds of marriage.

#### *Daung Panasa (Jackfruit Leaves)*

After placing banana shoot leaves as a base, followed by placing jackfruit leaves on top, wrapping them gently in silk cloth, then giving them a base in the form of a pillow. Although jackfruit leaves may not have significant commercial value, they contain rich and deep meaning. The term "Panasa" contains a meaning that is closely related to "minasa," which refers to the "highest goal" symbolized as a cry of prayer and aspiration full of glory. In the Bugis dialect, the term "mamminasa ri de-cengnge" refers to the determination to devote attention to noble values and goodness.

#### *Daung Pacci (Henna leaves)*

The pacci daung has deep symbolism, representing a sacred concept. In this context, Daung pacci has an important role in cleansing the bride and groom of all negative energy, bringing them into a blessed marriage. Apart from that, these leaves are also considered to be a preparation for the soul of the prospective bride and groom, bringing overall purity, both physically and spiritually, to start a new chapter in life.

#### *Berre' (Rice)*

Rice is a basic element in nutrition, with the hope that a potential life partner will remain the main choice and will always absorb and apply the message contained in the rice philosophy, namely "the more full the lower". Therefore, it is desirable that the bride and groom do not prioritize pride, but always maintain a clean heart and adhere to simplicity in living this journey of life. The white color of rice also symbolizes purity of heart after we apologize for mistakes made to others (Rianti et al., 2018) Rice is kept near the pacci holder and thrown with excitement after the pacci is placed in the bride and groom's hands. The goal is to encourage the bride and

groom so that they can bloom and grow with unlimited strength.

#### *Liling (candle)*

In Bugis language, a candle is not just a light in life which is called 'sulo mattappa', but also a hope that a potential future partner will always receive guidance from God (Dayani Rajab, 2016). This candle also has a deeper meaning, namely being a light for people in the future, like a source of light that will illuminate the journey they will take.

#### *Pacci container*

This Pacci place symbolizes a deep union, depicting two individuals united in a strong bond. This idea means that married couples are expected to continue to be united, enjoying the beauty of love and affection on their journey to form two families full of happiness.

#### *Brown sugar and coconut*

Represents pleasure with deep symbolism. With the hope that the bridal couple will find perfection in their shortcomings and enjoy all the flavors in their life's journey, both sweet and bitter. The cultural value of a plant is proportional to its use (Blanco & Carrière, 2016).

#### *Implications of Ethnobotany and Cultural Conservation*

The exploration of plants in the Mappacci ritual does not only focus on cultural aspects, but also has important implications in the fields of ethnobotany and cultural preservation (O'Neill et al., 2017; Supiandi et al., 2019). The relationship between humans and natural resources shows that indigenous peoples understand how to manage natural resources and the environment, so that they can reduce the impact of damage and maintain its sustainability (Sitanggang et al., 2022).

## **Conclusion**

Based on the research results, it can be concluded that the Bugis community in Wajo, especially in Tosora village, still uses plants in traditional mappacci events. There are 7 types of plants used, namely Pacar (*Lawsonia inermis* L), Jackfruit (*Artocarpus heterophyllus* Lam), Banana (*Musa paradisiaca* L), Paddy (*Oryza sativa* L), Coconut (*Cocos nucifera* L), Palm (*Arenga pinnata* Merr) and Cotton (*Ceiba pentandra*) consists of 6 families, namely Lythraceae, Moraceae, Musaceae, Poaceae, Arecaceae, Bombacaceae. The plant parts used are leaves (75%), fruit (50%), seeds (25%), sap (25%).

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#### Author Contributions

Conceptualization, S.R., N, A.Y.; methodology, S.R, N.; validation, A.Y., and R.I.; identification, observation, documentation, S.R, N.; resources, R.I.; original draft preparation writing, S.R and A.Y.; writing – review and editing, R.I., and A.Y.; visualization, N. All authors have read and approved the published version of the manuscript.

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#### Conflict of interest

The authors declare that there are no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this article

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