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Tri Kaya Parisuda as an Ethical Framework for Cooperative Governance: Genealogy, Operationalization, and Its Relevance in Economic Studies

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ABSTRACT

This article examines *Tri Kaya Parisuda* as an ethical framework grounded in Balinese Hindu tradition and its relevance to contemporary economic and management contexts (promoting cooperative governance). The term *Tri Kaya Parisuda*, however, is not found in classical Indian Hindu texts; ethical constructs emphasizing harmony between thought, speech, and action, however, can be traced to the teachings of texts such as the Bhagavad Gita and the Manusmriti. The study adopts a qualitative interpretive perspective, mapping the genealogy of the term from India, through its adaptation in the Old Javanese tradition, to its final crystallization in Bali as an ethical, operational, and pedagogical system. Additionally, this study advances *Tri Kaya Parisuda* as an analytical framework that can be operationalized into research variables and explores its relevance to institutional economics, social capital theory, and cooperative governance. The results show that *Tri Kaya Parisuda* is both a normative ethical system and an institutional mechanism for protecting trust, transparency, and accountability in community-based economic institutions. The findings of the present study help advance the amalgamation of local wisdom with modernity in the social sciences, particularly in economics and management.

1. Introduction

One of the main ethical concepts in Balinese Hindu tradition is *Tri Kaya Parisuda*, which concerns the three purifications of *manacika* (thought), *wacika* (speech), and *kayika* (action). It is not simply a normative doctrine but also forms a living value system that becomes an integral part of Balinese social practice. While the word itself may not be found directly in classical Hindu texts, its foundations lie in the doctrine of Hindu ethics, which promotes thought, word, and deed in alignment with teachings from texts such as the Manusmriti and the Bhagavad Gita. Hence, the *Tri Kaya Parisuda* can be regarded as a creative localization of universal Hindu ethics within Balinese culture.

Balinese people know it as *Tri Kaya Parisuda*, an ethical principle that governs the relationship of oneself (inner self) and is widely used in Balinese society. It is not taught solely in formal education but is also embedded in ritual practices, familial traditions, and everyday social interaction. Then, *Tri Kaya Parisuda* can also be interpreted as a life ethics that constructs social behavior patterns. This understanding aligns with symbolic anthropology, which views cultural value systems as sets of meaning that inform human action [1].

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In a modern-day context, learning about *Tri Kaya Parisuda* is increasingly relevant, especially amid the growing number of ethical crises in social and economic life, such as corruption, misinformation, and the decline of institutional integrity. Under such conditions, local wisdom becomes not only culturally important but also provides an alternative foundation to develop contextual and sustainable ethical frameworks [2-3]. Moreover, contemporary social science has increasingly noted that our task should also be to incorporate local concepts into distributive frameworks [4].

In addition, attention to ethical dimensions has grown in economic and management studies focused on organizational behavior and governance. Research evidence shows that personal integrity, which is a manifestation of congruity between thoughts, words and deeds, has a significant influence on the establishment of trust in organizations leading to better institutional performance [5-6]. Finally, from this perspective, *Tri Kaya Parisuda* can be seen as a relevant ethical framework for economic studies, especially for community-based organizations such as cooperatives.

Ethical values are also viewed as necessary for the long-term maintenance of economic cooperation within social capital and institutional economics approaches. A collective organization requires trust, norms, and individual integrity as preconditions [7-8]. *Tri Kaya Parisuda*, in this context, can be understood as an internalization mechanism that further strengthens honest, consistent, and responsible economic behavior. This is evidence that the socio-ethical categories of local culture extend beyond the cultural domain and also have deep relevance in the contemporary economy.

While there has been extensive literature on ethics as broad concepts in organizational and economic perspectives, not many studies have explicitly integrated local ethical concepts (in this case, *Tri Kaya Parisuda*) into these economic and managerial jargons. Hence, this article fills the gap by proposing *Tri Kaya Parisuda* as a multidimensional ethical framework that can be operationalized in economics studies, especially in cooperative governance. This study makes a theoretical contribution and paves the way for new, more culturally grounded economic research.

Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

Fundamentals of Ethics and Transformation of Culture

Tri Kaya Parisuda derives its concept from the classical Hindu ethical tradition, in which thought (*manasa*), speech (*vaca*), action (*kaya*) is grounded in a single system of moral preferences. Even though the word itself is not mentioned in classical Hindu scriptures, the basic principles of *Sanatan Dharma* can be found in various teachings originating from texts such as the Bhagavad Gita and Manusmriti. Not distinct from intentions and speech, these texts frame ethical discipline as a totality of external activity, so that the moral landscape towards which they point is understood holistically.

Within the Nusantara milieu, however, this moral framework underwent a radical transformation through Old Javanese and Balinese traditions. In Old Javanese literature, ethical messages were formulated more satisfactorily, as illustrated by the Sarasamuccaya, which emphasizes the centrality of the mind and the state as sources of human action. This ethical framework was localized and then crystallized into *Tri Kaya Parisuda* using the processes of vernacularisation and cultural institutionalization in Bali [9-10]

Using data on the interactions between cultural and ethical systems, such transformations showcase the complexity of governing through virtue. Values are not fixed doctrines but are constantly being reinterpreted and internalized in social life. Cultural values, as [1] argued, serve as interpretative lenses that govern human action. In this sense, *Tri Kaya Parisuda* not only acts as a normative teaching but also as an established system of meaning within the everyday social practice.

Important Aspect of Economic and Organization Studies

The significance of ethics in organizational behavior and governance has received increasing attention in modern economic and management research. Empirical evidence from within the organizational scholarship emphasizes that individual integrity, understood as the congruence between thought, speech, and action [5-6], is an important contributor to supporting both organizational trust and institutional performance. This indicates that ethical alignment is not only an issue of morality but rather a strategic element in the effectiveness of organizations.

Moreover, social capital theory indicates that trust and reciprocal norms are crucial for effective economic collaboration [7]. This has been emphasized by [8], who argues that community-based institutions are only sustainable if members have internalized ethical norms. In this light, the values of *Tri Kaya Parisuda* can be viewed as internal institutions that foster trust, thereby lowering transaction costs in economic organizations.

Moreover, institutional theory describes how economic behavior is influenced not only by formal rules but also by informal norms and values held by actors [11-12]. Values such as transparency, accountability, and participation in cooperative governance rely heavily on members' moral qualities [13]. With that in mind, *Tri Kaya Parisuda* can be seen as an adaptation of informal institutions to govern ethical economic practices within organizations.

Research Gap and the Underlying Conceptual Framework

While there is abundant literature on ethics, particularly in cultural and organizational contexts [7], very few attempts have been made to incorporate local ethical concepts into economic and management contexts. Balinese culture is examined primarily in terms of its symbolic and ritual aspects, whereas economic studies tend to adopt foreign models without sufficient attention to local values.

This study contributes to the literature by elaborating on *Tri Kaya Parisuda* as a multidimensional ethical concept that can be operationalized in economic models, particularly in cooperative governance. *Tri Kaya Parisuda* is understood as a system of three dimensions: *manacika*, *wacika*, and *kayika* that are interrelated according to the theory gathered from reviewed literature, which transforms internal value into communication processes and manifests it in individual function. external.

Through cultural, sociological, and economic lenses, this study develops a theory-based model to provide insight into how local ethical values can serve as a foundation for the development of integrity-based organizational governance. By doing so, it adds another building block in the construction of an emically attuned social science now and in the future.

2. Method

Using a qualitative lens grounded in an interpretive paradigm, this study examines the meaning, structure, and change of *Tri Kaya Parisuda* across differing cultural contexts and their implications for economic-related studies. Since the theoretical concept under investigation is not only normative but also symbolic and contextual, an acute understanding of meaning and lived practices is required [14], making this approach particularly appropriate.

The study is informed by an analytical literature review that examines both classical and contemporary sources. These sources range from classical Hindu scriptures such as the Bhagavad Gita and the Manusmriti to Old Javanese works such as the Sarasamuccaya, as well as academic literature in anthropology, sociology, economics, and management on issues of ethics and organizational governance. NGO studies Contemporary literature related to Balinese culture and local wisdom is also included to construct an analytical framework.

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Data analysis is conducted through a hermeneutic approach, focusing on making sense in light of historical and cultural backgrounds. This method relies on a dialogic process among text, context, and theoretical understanding to facilitate greater exploration of the concept's symbolic structure [1].

Moreover, this study uses a constructivist approach to investigate how *Tri Kaya Parisuda* has been socially constructed, institutionalized, and reproduced among Balinese people [10]. This allows the analysis to shift from proximity, as in Sarah Lawrence's work above, to where a term comes from, to how that term gets used within the practices of sociality (how far it can venture).

This study is methodologically grounded in the framework articulated *in Teori dan Metode Penelitian Agama dan Budaya* [15] which explores integrated perspectives on textual analysis, symbolic interpretation, and practical context within the realm of religion and culture. Such an approach opens the possibility of understanding *Tri Kaya Parisuda* beyond a merely doctrinal perspective and of situating it as a living system of meaning.

3. Results and Discussion

Multidimensional Variable of *Tri Kaya Parisuda*

The results show that *Tri Kaya Parisuda* can be characterized as a multidimensional ethical constitution, constructed in three dimensions: *manacika* (thought), *wacika* (speech), and *kayika* (action). These aspects are not separate domains but an integrated system in which thought brings forth speech and, indeed, speech is a mediation in moving to action. The *Tri Kaya Parisuda* refers to three aspects of one's life that can be framed together, from which an analytical framework emerges between internal values and external behavior.

From a social science standpoint, this triadic framework facilitates operationalizing the concept into measurable variables. The *manacika* dimension covers cognitive, behavioral, and affective aspects, including intention, attitudes, and moral awareness. The *wacika* level denotes communicative processes, and *kayika* describes observable behavior. Such integration offers an extensive analytical model that connects psychological, social, and behavioral facets.

Furthermore, the interdependence of these dimensions facilitates causal analysis, helping us understand how internal values are translated into social action. Discrepancies between thought, speech, and action are considered ethical dissonance, while the integrated approach indicates personal integrity. So, *Tri Kaya Parisuda* serves as both a normative system and an analytical tool for measuring behavioral quality in the social and economic spheres.

Tri Kaya Parisuda Sebagai Wadah Etika Ekonomi

Given its economic and organizational relevance, *Tri Kaya Parisuda* serves as an ethical framework for cooperative governance. The *manacika* dimension communicates honest, non-exploitative economic intentions and affects decision-making at the individual level. Behavioral economics indicates that economic decisions are influenced not only by rational calculations for optimal solutions but also by moral values and psychological factors [16].

Wacika's dimension concerns communication practices in organizations, particularly transparency, honesty, and accountability. However, open communication is key to trust; trust in fellow members leads to engagement in cooperatives. The consequent line of reasoning sees unethical communication as a source of conflict and decline. At the same time, it makes a case for the mediating role of ethical speech between individual belief and collective action.

On the other hand, the *kayika* dimension embodies tangible economic action such as distributional equity, environmental stewardship, and corporate social responsibility.

Institutional economics asserts that repeated ethical behavior accumulates, creating paths that lead to the consideration of norms as organizational rules (North, 1990). Accordingly, the combination of these three angles provides a consistent moral system that improves both organizational conduct and social validity.

Connection to Social and Economic Theories

The study also shows that *Tri Kaya Parisuda* is theoretically aligned with mainstream frameworks in social and economic theory. In the context of social capital theory, trustworthiness (e.g., trust and honesty) is a critical resource for economic cooperation [7]. Through internal alignment between thought, speech, and action, *Tri Kaya Parisuda* reinforces these values.

In the application of *Tri Kaya Parisuda*, this can be seen from an institutional viewpoint as informal institutions that direct a certain economic behavior by internalizing morality [11-12]. These are informal guidelines that shape individual behavior within the organization. Therefore, ethics operates not only as a moral compass but also as an effective regulatory authority.

The principles of cooperative governance, transparency, accountability, and participation [13] have much in common with the *Tri Kaya Parisuda* dimensions. Where *wacika* is for transparency, *kayika* for accountability, and *manacika* to ensure sincerity in decision-making. This alignment reflects the importance of *Tri Kaya Parisuda* in recent management theory.

Integrative Model of *Tri Kaya Parisuda*

Through the analysis, an integrative model is offered that places *manacika* as input, *wacika* as the process, and *kayika* as the output of a behavioral economy system. This model highlights that economic activities are shaped not only by structural factors but also by individuals' moral qualities.

Value orientation and intention are depicted on the input level by *Manacika*. At the process level, *wacika* serves as a means of communication between internalized values and collective action. At the output level, *kayika* reflects actualized values expressed in material economic practices. These relationships represent a causal change from values to actions.

The model is also dynamic, with feedback loops that reinforce the internalization of value through repeated efforts. Therefore, it is not just a linear model but rather a cyclical one that attends to the dialectical relationship between values and practices in organizational settings.

Theoretical Contributions and Implications

Theoretically, this research contributes to the development of *Tri Kaya Parisuda* as a multidimensional ethical framework relevant to economics and management studies. It broadens the field of social science by showing how local knowledge can serve as a source of analytical theory rather than merely an object of cultural study.

The study's findings also align cultural values with contemporary theoretical frameworks, offering a context-based approach to understanding organizational behavior. This will achieve dialogue between the local wisdom of *Tri Kaya Parisuda* and concepts such as social capital, institutional theory, and cooperative governance in global scholarship.

This could enhance trust, transparency, and accountability in cooperative organizations by directly implementing the *Tri Kaya Parisuda* values. These trends have significant implications for sustainable community-based economic development and underscore the need to regard ethics as an essential pillar of long-term organizational success.

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4. Conclusion

The findings of this study indicate that *Tri Kaya Parisuda* is an ethical system derived from classical Hindu traditions, underwent a radical transformation over time, and appears to have crystallized in the Balinese context. While the specific term is not used in classical writings, its conceptual basis is consistent with holistic ethical teachings that strongly emphasize harmony among thought, speech, and action.

Tri Kaya Parisuda is, in theory, a multidimensional construct consisting of cognitive, communicative, and behavioral dimensions. Its connections to social capital, organizational theory, and cooperative governance demonstrate its relevance within contemporary theoretical paradigms.

In the economic and organizational settings, *Tri Kaya Parisuda* has an appropriate value basis for strengthening trust, transparency, and accountability. This study provides an integrative model that demonstrates how economic behavior is driven not only by structural factors but also by internalized moral values.

This work is a scholarly contribution, as it provides at least the possibility of conducting culturally rooted economic and management studies, in which local wisdom can serve as a theoretical source. This model could spark a series of empirical studies and work to investigate cultural values in relation to economic outcomes.

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