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NEGOTIATING DEATH, MEMORY, AND CUSTOM: SOCIAL PERCEPTIONS OF GRAVESTONE MEANINGS IN THE TINILO PA'ITA TRADITION OF GORONTALO

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Abstract

The Tinilo Pa'ita tradition is a post-death cultural practice in Gorontalo that involves the symbolic lowering or replacement of gravestones after 40 days of death. Although the tradition remains part of Gorontalo cultural memory, its practice has become increasingly difficult to encounter, and community understanding of its procedures, objects, and meanings has weakened. This study explores how community actors understand the customary meaning of Tinilo Pa'ita and the differences in the number of gravestones used across gendered and regional contexts. Using a qualitative ethnographic design, data were collected through semi-structured interviews with three participants: an imam wilayah, a Tinilo poet, and a family member who had participated in the tradition. The findings show that Tinilo Pa'ita is interpreted through three interrelated dimensions of social perception. Cognitively, participants understood the tradition as sacred poetry, religious prayer, a 40-day death ritual, or a practical gravestone procession. Affectively, the tradition evoked gratitude, sadness, fear, reflection, or emotional distance, depending on language comprehension and cultural involvement. Conatively, participation was shaped by ritual responsibility, family request, social acceptance, and respect for different views. These findings indicate that Tinilo Pa'ita is not merely a mortuary ritual, but a cultural system through which Gorontalo people negotiate death, memory, identity, and indigenous psychological meaning.

Keywords: *Tinilo Pa'ita, Gorontalo Culture, Social Perception, Gravestone Symbolism, Indigenous Psychology.*

INTRODUCTION

Gorontalo is widely recognized as a cultural region in Sulawesi whose social life is shaped by inherited traditions, customary practices, and life-cycle ceremonies. These traditions are not merely decorative expressions of local identity, but social frameworks through which people organize important moments of human life, including birth, marriage, death, and post-death remembrance. Within this cultural order, death is understood not only as the biological end of an individual life but also as an event that reorganizes family relations, activates communal obligations, and opens a symbolic space for remembering the deceased. Mortuary rituals therefore become important because they connect the living and the dead through objects, prayers, gestures, and collective acts of interpretation. As Parker Pearson (1999) argues, practices surrounding death and burial are never culturally neutral; they materialize social relations, identity, status, memory, and the continuing presence of the deceased within the moral world of the living.

One Gorontalo tradition that expresses this relationship between death, memory, and social meaning is Tinilo Pa'ita, also known locally as Mongandhi Botu. The tradition is performed after forty days of death and involves the lowering or replacement of gravestones at the grave of the deceased. In this ritual, the gravestone is not treated merely as a functional grave marker, but as a symbolic object temporarily placed in a ceremonial carrier called tolangga or bele lo pa'ita before being brought to the cemetery. Tinilo Pa'ita has also been described as part of Gorontalo oral-literary expression, because the term tinilo refers to sung or poetic utterances that carry prayer, praise, and remembrance (Hinta, n.d). In this sense, the tradition combines material symbolism, poetic expression, family mourning, and customary obligation. Previous documentation of Tinilo Pa'ita positions it as a Gorontalo tradition associated with the symbolic treatment and lowering of gravestones in post-death ritual life (Alfanikmah & Mistortoify, 2020).

The most distinctive feature of Tinilo Pa'ita in the present study concerns the difference in the number of gravestones used according to gender and locality. For deceased males from urban areas, two gravestones are used, whereas deceased males from regency areas may be represented by one gravestone. Conversely, deceased females from urban areas may be represented by one gravestone, whereas deceased females from regency areas may be represented by two gravestones. The gravestone is dressed in clothing associated with the deceased and may be given a customary head covering or gendered accessory. These practices indicate that the gravestone functions as a semiotic object: it marks the grave, but it also evokes the body, identity, gender, memory, and social location of the deceased (Parker Pearson, 1999). The different number of gravestones thus becomes a culturally meaningful issue because it reveals that the same ritual object may be interpreted differently across local histories, gendered categories, and customary domains.

Despite this symbolic richness, Tinilo Pa'ita is increasingly difficult to find in contemporary Gorontalo social life. The declining frequency of the tradition has produced a gradual weakening of community knowledge about its procedures, materials, and meanings. Some families may continue to perform the ceremony as a form of inherited practice, but the meaning of the procession, the role of the gravestone, and the reason for regional differences in the number of stones are not always clearly understood. This situation is important because cultural practices often depend on tacit knowledge that is transmitted through repeated participation rather than through formal explanation. Miton and DeDeo (2022) emphasize that tacit cultural knowledge becomes fragile when embodied practice is interrupted because rules, meanings, and procedural distinctions may remain invisible to those who only observe the surface form of a tradition. Tinilo Pa'ita therefore raises a broader problem of cultural transmission: when practice declines, interpretation also becomes unstable.

This instability of interpretation can be understood through the concept of social perception, which has also been used in Indonesian social research to examine how people interpret educational and public issues through their own social experience (Rambing et al., 2017). Perception is not a simple recording of external reality but an active process through which individuals interpret objects, events, and social experiences in relation to their prior knowledge and social environment (Gibson, 2014; Fiske & Taylor, 2013). Walgito (2010) explains that perception involves cognitive, affective, and conative dimensions that shape how individuals understand, feel about, and respond to an object. This tripartite structure is consistent with classic attitude theory, which conceptualizes human evaluation as involving beliefs, emotions, and behavioral tendencies (Rosenberg & Hovland, 1960). Breckler (1984) further shows that affect, behavior, and cognition can be analytically distinguished as components of human response. Applied to Tinilo Pa'ita, this framework makes it possible to examine not only what people know about the tradition, but also how they feel when encountering it and how they participate in or distance themselves from its performance.

The relevance of such a framework becomes stronger when Tinilo Pa'ita is approached from Indigenous Psychology. Indigenous psychology argues that psychological phenomena must be understood within their ecological, historical, linguistic, and cultural contexts, rather than reduced to universal categories detached from local life (Kim et al., 2006). Virgilio G. Enriquez (1992) similarly treats local culture as a source of psychological knowledge, not merely as an object to be explained from outside. From this perspective, Tinilo Pa'ita is not simply a cultural artifact to be described; it is also a psychological space in which people learn to understand death, express gratitude or fear, perform social responsibility, and define their relationship to family and community. The tradition provides a local vocabulary for emotions, obligations, and moral reflection that may not be fully captured by general theories of perception alone.

Existing discussions of Tinilo Pa'ita and Gorontalo tradition remain limited, particularly in relation to how ordinary community members and ritual actors interpret the meaning of gravestones and differences in their number. Earlier work has helped identify Tinilo Pa'ita as a cultural and poetic practice (Alfanikmah & Mistortoify, 2020; Hinta, n.d.), but fewer studies have examined how the tradition is perceived by people who occupy different roles within the ceremony. The perspective of an imam, a Tinilo poet, and a family participant may not be identical because each role offers different access to ritual knowledge, emotional experience, and forms of participation. Mischel and Shoda's (1995) cognitive-affective model suggests that behavior is shaped by the interaction among personal interpretations, affective responses, values, and situations. Thus, differences in perception toward Tinilo Pa'ita should not be treated as errors or contradictions; they may reveal how the tradition is lived differently across roles and experiences.

Based on this background, the present study aims to explore the customary meaning of Tinilo Pa’ita and the social perception of differences in the number of gravestones within Gorontalo society. Specifically, the study analyzes how participants understand the tradition cognitively, how they experience it affectively, and how they participate in it conatively. By focusing on these three dimensions, the study seeks to show that Tinilo Pa’ita is not merely a forty-day post-death ritual but a cultural system through which Gorontalo people negotiate death, memory, identity, and continuity. The contribution of this study lies in documenting a local tradition whose practice is decreasing, clarifying the symbolic role of gravestones in that tradition, and showing how indigenous psychological meanings emerge through the interaction of knowledge, emotion, and cultural participation.

METHOD

This study employed a qualitative approach with an ethnographic design to explore the customary meaning of Tinilo Pa'ita and the social perception of gravestone-number differences in Gorontalo. A qualitative approach was selected because the study focused on understanding how meaning is organized, narrated, and interpreted by people who have direct experience with the tradition. The study did not aim to measure the distribution of opinions across a large population, but to examine social meaning, lived experience, and culturally embedded interpretation.

Ethnography was used because Tinilo Pa'ita is not only an individual belief but a cultural practice that contains objects, procedures, roles, stories, and collective meanings. The cultural domain examined in this study was the Tinilo Pa'ita ceremony, particularly the meaning of gravestones and the distinction in the number of stones used across gendered and regional contexts. The ethnographic orientation allowed the researcher to approach Tinilo Pa'ita from the standpoint of emic meaning, focusing on how participants themselves organized their understanding of the ritual and distinguished symbolic and practical meanings in Gorontalo social life.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Overview of Findings

The findings demonstrate that Tinilo Pa'ita is understood through three interrelated dimensions of social perception, namely cognition, affection, and conation. These dimensions illustrate how Gorontalo people acquire knowledge about the tradition, emotionally experience its implementation, and participate in preserving it within their communities. Although all participants discussed the same ritual, their interpretations varied according to their cultural roles and experiences.

The imam wilayah emphasized the customary and symbolic meanings of the ritual, the Tinilo poet highlighted its religious and poetic significance, whereas the family participant interpreted the ceremony from the perspective of personal experience. These differences indicate that understanding of Tinilo Pa'ita is socially constructed through participation in the tradition rather than acquired from a single shared source of knowledge.

Overall, the findings suggest that Tinilo Pa'ita functions not merely as a post-death ceremony performed forty days after burial, but also as a cultural system through which Gorontalo people preserve collective memory, express religious values, negotiate social identity, and maintain customary continuity across generations.

Cognitive Perception: Knowing and Interpreting Tinilo Pa'ita

The cognitive dimension of social perception was reflected in participants' understanding of the meaning and purpose of Tinilo Pa'ita. RR described the tradition as a form of customary poetry containing praise and narratives about the good character of the deceased. For him, the ceremony serves to honor the deceased while preserving Gorontalo cultural values. MI, as a Tinilo poet, interpreted the tradition primarily as a religious expression consisting of prayers and praises dedicated to the deceased. In contrast, KI understood Tinilo Pa'ita as a customary ceremony conducted forty days after death, in which the gravestone is ceremonially taken to the cemetery and installed at the grave.

Participants also expressed different views regarding the importance of maintaining the tradition. RR considered Tinilo Pa'ita an essential part of Gorontalo cultural heritage that should continue to be preserved. MI acknowledged its cultural significance but noted that people's acceptance of the tradition varies according to their religious understanding and personal beliefs. Meanwhile, KI viewed the ceremony more pragmatically, suggesting that its implementation may become financially burdensome for some families.

These findings indicate that participants' knowledge of Tinilo Pa'ita is influenced by their social roles and cultural experiences. Individuals directly involved in ritual performance demonstrated a broader understanding of its symbolic and religious meanings, whereas participants whose involvement was limited to family participation tended to focus on procedural aspects of the ceremony. This pattern supports the cognitive perspective of social perception, which proposes that individuals interpret social phenomena through accumulated knowledge and prior experience (Fiske & Taylor, 2013). Similarly, Walgito (2010) explains that perception develops through cognitive processes shaped by learning, experience, and interaction with the surrounding social environment.

The findings therefore suggest that cognition within Tinilo Pa'ita is not simply a matter of factual knowledge but represents culturally embedded understanding. The differences among participants do not indicate contradictory interpretations; rather, they reflect complementary perspectives derived from different forms of participation in the same cultural tradition. These diverse understandings collectively illustrate how cultural knowledge is maintained and transmitted within Gorontalo society.

The Gravestone as Body, Marker, and Symbol

The symbolic meaning of gravestones emerged as one of the central findings of this study. Participants consistently agreed that gravestones function as more than physical markers of burial, although they differed in the depth of their interpretations. RR explained that the gravestone symbolically represents the body of the deceased. Before being placed at the cemetery, it is washed, dressed according to the deceased's gender, and accompanied by customary accessories that reflect social identity. MI similarly described the gravestone as a marker of the deceased's resting place but emphasized the ritual process in which it is cleansed, wrapped in a white cloth, dressed, and ceremonially carried before being installed. In contrast, KI understood the gravestone primarily as a grave marker while acknowledging limited knowledge of its symbolic meaning.

The variation in participants' explanations demonstrates that symbolic understanding is closely related to cultural roles and ritual experience. Participants directly involved in conducting or performing the ceremony possessed more comprehensive knowledge of the symbolic procedures, whereas the family participant interpreted the gravestone from a practical perspective based on personal participation. These differences suggest that cultural meaning is acquired through varying degrees of involvement within the tradition rather than through formal instruction alone.

The findings support Parker Pearson's (1999) view that mortuary objects are not culturally neutral but serve as material expressions of identity, memory, and social relationships. Within Tinilo Pa'ita, the gravestone symbolizes the continuing relationship between the living and the deceased while reflecting customary values embedded in Gorontalo society. This interpretation is also consistent with Fiske and Taylor (2013), who argue that social perception develops through contextual experience, enabling individuals with different social positions to construct different yet complementary understandings of the same cultural object.

Overall, the findings indicate that the gravestone in Tinilo Pa'ita functions as a symbolic medium through which cultural memory, identity, and customary values are preserved across generations. Rather than serving solely as a physical marker of burial, it embodies the social and psychological meanings attached to death, remembrance, and cultural continuity within Gorontalo society.

Explaining the Difference in the Number of Gravestones

One of the distinctive findings of this study concerns participants' interpretations of the different numbers of gravestones used in Tinilo Pa'ita. RR explained that the distinction originates from a historical narrative concerning the former kingdoms of Gorontalo and

Limboto. According to him, Gorontalo was historically led by a male ruler, whereas Limboto was governed by a female ruler. This historical background is believed to influence the customary use of gravestones, resulting in different numerical representations for male and female deceased persons across local communities. KI provided a complementary explanation by emphasizing that the number of gravestones varies according to regional customary practices. She noted that communities in Gorontalo City, Limboto, Suwawa, and Marisa maintain different traditions regarding whether one or two gravestones are used for male and female deceased individuals.

Although participants described the practice from different perspectives, both recognized that the variation is an inherited cultural tradition rather than an arbitrary ritual procedure. Their explanations suggest that the number of gravestones represents a symbolic expression of local identity, reflecting the influence of regional history, gender, and customary values within Gorontalo society. Rather than functioning solely as a physical component of the burial ceremony, the gravestone becomes a cultural symbol through which communities preserve historical narratives and distinguish local customary identities.

These findings are consistent with Parker Pearson's (1999) argument that mortuary practices communicate social identity through material objects. Within Tinilo Pa'ita, the gravestone functions as a symbolic medium that embodies cultural memory and expresses relationships between the deceased, the family, and the wider community. Furthermore, the variation in gravestone numbers illustrates that symbolic meanings are not universally fixed but are shaped by local historical experiences and customary interpretations.

The findings also demonstrate the importance of tacit cultural knowledge in sustaining traditional practices. As explained by Miton and DeDeo (2022), cultural knowledge is frequently transmitted through participation and repeated practice rather than through explicit instruction. This pattern was evident in the present study, where participants consistently recognized the existence of different gravestone numbers but varied in explaining their historical origins. Such differences do not indicate contradictory understandings; instead, they reflect the diverse ways cultural knowledge is preserved among ritual specialists, cultural performers, and community members. Accordingly, the symbolic distinction in gravestone numbers illustrates how Tinilo Pa'ita continues to function as a living cultural tradition that connects history, locality, identity, and collective memory within Gorontalo society.

Affective Perception: Feeling the Tradition

The affective dimension of social perception was reflected in participants' emotional responses toward the implementation of Tinilo Pa'ita. Although all participants acknowledged the emotional significance of the tradition, the feelings they expressed differed according to their roles and personal experiences. These variations demonstrate that emotional responses to the ritual are shaped by cultural participation as well as individual interpretation.

RR described Tinilo Pa'ita as an expression of gratitude and respect for the deceased. He explained that participating in the ritual brought a sense of sincerity because it represented the family's final customary responsibility toward their loved one. Similarly, MI reported that performing Tinilo poetry often evoked deep feelings of sadness and empathy. As the poetic verses recount the virtues of the deceased while conveying prayers, she experienced strong emotional involvement during the performance. In contrast, KI associated the ceremony primarily with feelings of grief and remembrance. For her, attending Tinilo Pa'ita provided an opportunity to pray for the deceased and strengthen emotional bonds among family members despite the sorrow surrounding the occasion.

These findings indicate that emotional responses toward Tinilo Pa'ita extend beyond personal grief. Participants experienced the ritual as a meaningful cultural event that facilitated remembrance, gratitude, empathy, and family solidarity. Although the emotions varied, they

consistently reflected participants' psychological engagement with the symbolic and religious dimensions of the tradition.

The findings support Walgito's (2010) explanation that the affective component of perception involves emotional evaluation toward an object or event. Likewise, Rosenberg and Hovland (1960) argue that attitudes are formed not only through cognition but also through emotional responses that influence how individuals evaluate social phenomena. Within the context of Tinilo Pa'ita, participants' emotions were shaped by their cultural roles, ritual responsibilities, and personal relationships with the deceased. These emotional experiences also reinforce the view that mourning rituals function not only as customary obligations but also as psychological spaces in which individuals express compassion, maintain social relationships, and preserve collective memory.

Overall, the findings demonstrate that the affective meaning of Tinilo Pa'ita lies in its ability to connect cultural practice with emotional experience. Through prayer, poetry, and shared participation, the ritual enables community members to express respect for the deceased while strengthening emotional ties among the living. Consequently, Tinilo Pa'ita serves not only as a customary ceremony but also as a cultural mechanism through which emotional values and social solidarity are sustained within Gorontalo society.

Conative Perception: Participation and Cultural Responsibility

The conative dimension of social perception was reflected in participants' attitudes and intentions toward participating in and preserving the Tinilo Pa'ita tradition. Although participants occupied different cultural roles, all expressed a willingness to support the continuation of the tradition according to their respective responsibilities. Their responses indicate that participation in Tinilo Pa'ita is influenced not only by personal beliefs but also by social obligations, cultural values, and family expectations.

RR explained that, as an imam wilayah, he continues to participate in Tinilo Pa'ita because it constitutes part of his customary and religious responsibilities. He emphasized that leading prayers and assisting families during the ceremony are important forms of service to the community. Likewise, MI demonstrated her commitment through the performance of Tinilo poetry, viewing her role as a means of preserving Gorontalo oral tradition while conveying prayers and respect for the deceased. Although KI did not possess formal ritual responsibilities, she expressed her willingness to participate whenever family members organized the ceremony, considering her presence a form of respect and solidarity toward relatives who were mourning.

These findings suggest that participation in Tinilo Pa'ita extends beyond ritual performance and represents an expression of cultural commitment. While ritual specialists actively preserve the tradition through their customary roles, family members contribute by maintaining participation in accordance with inherited social expectations. Consequently, cultural continuity is sustained through the complementary roles performed by different members of the community rather than through the responsibility of a single individual or group.

The findings are consistent with Walgito's (2010) concept of the conative dimension, which refers to behavioural tendencies that emerge from cognitive understanding and emotional evaluation. Similarly, Mischel and Shoda (1995) argue that behaviour is shaped by the interaction between personal interpretation and situational context, while Howe and Krosnick (2017) emphasize that behavioural intentions are influenced by values and social experiences. Within the context of Tinilo Pa'ita, participants' willingness to remain involved reflects the integration of cultural knowledge, emotional attachment, and social responsibility. Their actions demonstrate that participation is not merely a habitual practice but a conscious effort to preserve cultural identity and maintain relationships within the community.

Overall, the findings indicate that the conative dimension of Tinilo Pa'ita is expressed through continued participation in customary practices despite differences in individual roles and levels of ritual expertise. The tradition therefore functions not only as a ceremonial obligation but also as a collective cultural practice through which Gorontalo people reinforce social solidarity, fulfil moral responsibilities, and ensure the continuity of indigenous cultural knowledge across generations.

Discussion

Indigenous Psychology and Cultural Meaning

The findings of this study demonstrate that Tinilo Pa'ita extends beyond its function as a customary post-death ritual and represents a culturally embedded psychological system through which Gorontalo people understand death, maintain social relationships, and preserve collective memory. Across the cognitive, affective, and conative dimensions, participants consistently interpreted the tradition according to their cultural roles and lived experiences. These findings suggest that psychological meanings are inseparable from the cultural context in which the tradition is practiced.

From the cognitive perspective, participants constructed different understandings of Tinilo Pa'ita according to their ritual responsibilities and cultural knowledge. Ritual specialists demonstrated a more comprehensive understanding of the symbolic meanings of gravestones, ceremonial procedures, and customary values, whereas the family participant interpreted the tradition primarily through direct experience of participation. Affective responses further revealed that the ritual provides a meaningful space for expressing grief, gratitude, empathy, and respect for the deceased. Meanwhile, the conative dimension showed that participation in Tinilo Pa'ita reflects not only behavioural intention but also a commitment to preserving cultural identity and fulfilling social responsibilities within the community. Together, these findings illustrate that cognition, affection, and conation interact dynamically in shaping community members' perceptions of the tradition.

These findings are consistent with the perspective of Indigenous Psychology, which argues that psychological phenomena should be understood within their historical, cultural, linguistic, and ecological contexts rather than solely through universal psychological concepts (Kim et al., 2006). Likewise, Enriquez (1992) emphasizes that local traditions should be regarded as legitimate sources of psychological knowledge because they reflect the values, meanings, and social realities experienced by members of a particular culture. Within this framework, Tinilo Pa'ita can be understood as a culturally grounded psychological practice through which Gorontalo people negotiate mourning, reinforce family solidarity, transmit customary values, and sustain collective identity across generations.

The present study also contributes to the growing body of Indigenous Psychology by documenting a local tradition whose practice has gradually declined in contemporary society. While previous studies have primarily described Tinilo Pa'ita as a cultural or literary tradition (Alfanikmah & Mistortoify, 2020; Hinta, n.d.), the present findings demonstrate that the tradition also contains psychological meanings reflected in how individuals think about death, experience emotional attachment, and choose to participate in customary practices. By integrating social perception with Indigenous Psychology, this study provides a broader understanding of how cultural practices function simultaneously as systems of knowledge, emotion, and social behaviour.

These findings have both theoretical and practical implications. Theoretically, the study expands Indigenous Psychology by demonstrating that local rituals can serve as culturally grounded psychological frameworks through which cognition, affection, and conation are expressed in everyday social life. The findings also enrich discussions of social perception by illustrating that individual interpretations of cultural traditions are influenced by ritual roles,

historical knowledge, and community participation. Practically, the study highlights the importance of documenting and preserving Tinilo Pa'ita as an element of Gorontalo cultural heritage. Maintaining the continuity of the tradition contributes not only to cultural preservation but also to the transmission of indigenous knowledge, moral values, and collective identity to future generations. Collaboration among customary leaders, religious figures, local communities, and educational institutions is therefore essential to ensure that the psychological and cultural significance of Tinilo Pa'ita continues to be understood and appreciated.

Limitations

This study has several limitations that should be considered when interpreting its findings. First, the study involved only three participants representing different cultural roles, namely an imam wilayah, a Tinilo poet, and a family member. Although this participant composition was appropriate for an ethnographic inquiry seeking depth of understanding rather than statistical generalization, it may not fully represent the diversity of perspectives within Gorontalo society. Second, the findings were derived primarily from interviews and supported by literature review. Future studies may strengthen the understanding of Tinilo Pa'ita by incorporating prolonged participant observation, documentation of ritual performances, or comparative investigations across different regions of Gorontalo. Despite these limitations, the present study provides an important contribution by documenting the customary meanings of Tinilo Pa'ita and demonstrating how cognitive, affective, and conative dimensions shape community perceptions of this indigenous cultural tradition.

CONCLUSION

This study shows that Tinilo Pa'ita contains complex cultural and psychological meanings that cannot be reduced to a post-death ceremonial form. Through the perspectives of an imam wilayah, a Tinilo poet, and a family participant, the tradition appears as a symbolic system that connects gravestones, poetry, prayer, memory, and social responsibility. Cognitively, participants interpreted the tradition through different layers of knowledge, ranging from sacred poetry and religious prayer to practical gravestone replacement. Affectively, Tinilo Pa'ita evoked gratitude, sadness, fear, reflection, or emotional distance depending on role, language comprehension, and cultural proximity. Conatively, participation was shaped by ritual duty, family invitation, cultural attachment, and respect for differing views. The findings indicate that differences in perception are not simply signs of misunderstanding, but evidence that Tinilo Pa'ita is lived through multiple social positions. At the same time, the declining practice of the tradition threatens the transmission of its procedural and symbolic knowledge. Preserving Tinilo Pa'ita therefore requires more than repeating the ceremony; it requires explaining its meanings, documenting its local variations, and creating intergenerational dialogue about its relevance. By examining Tinilo Pa'ita through social perception and indigenous psychology, this study contributes to understanding how Gorontalo people negotiate death, memory, identity, and cultural continuity in everyday life.

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