

Behantat Tradition: Local Wisdom to Alleviate Poverty in Kuang Dalam Malay Indonesia

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Abstract

Purpose: This study aims to examine the Behantat tradition as local wisdom that supports poverty alleviation and social solidarity in the Kuang Dalam Malay community in Malaysia.

Research Methodology: This study used qualitative field research with a phenomenological approach to gather data. Data were collected through participatory observation, in-depth interviews with community leaders, traditional stakeholders, and local residents, and Focus Group Discussions (FGDs). The data were analyzed thematically.

Results: The findings show that the Behantat tradition is a cultural practice based on food sharing among community members from diverse socioeconomic backgrounds. This tradition strengthens kinship ties, mutual assistance, and social cohesion. It also functions as an informal social safety net by encouraging wealthier community members to share resources with those in need, thereby helping reduce social and economic inequality.

Conclusions: The Behantat tradition reflects social, cultural, and religious values that remain relevant in the community. This practice contributes to poverty alleviation by strengthening collective care and resource redistribution.

Limitations: This study is limited to the Kuang Dalam Malay community and uses qualitative data; therefore, the findings may not be fully generalizable to other communities.

Contributions: This study contributes to discussions on local wisdom and community-based poverty alleviation by demonstrating how traditional practices can support social protection and inclusive welfare.

Keywords: *Behantat Tradition, Local Wisdom, Poverty Alleviation*

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1. Introduction

Poverty is a social problem that continues to be a major challenge in many countries worldwide, including Indonesia (Alvarez, Barney, & Newman, 2015). In the Indonesian context, poverty is caused by several factors, including: Research results state that poverty in Indonesia is caused by limited natural resources, limited capital, limited employment, low education, lazy work, and family burden (Faharuddin & Endrawati, 2022). Adawiyah (2020) found that poverty occurs due to the unavailability of jobs for each labor force, causing the unemployment rate to increase.

[Zuhdiyaty and Kaluge \(2017\)](#) found that the Human Development Index (HDI) affects poverty. The high disparity between regions and groups of people due to unequal income distribution is the cause of poverty ([Bergstrom, 2022](#)). The welfare gap, high number of poor people, lack of access to information, and poor infrastructure in rural areas are the root causes of poverty ([Yunas, 2019](#)). Based on data from the Central Statistics Agency/ *Badan Pusat Statistik* (BPS) in September 2022, the percentage of poor people in September 2022 was 9.57%, or 26.36 million people.

The percentage of the urban poor population was 7.53% in September 2022 or 11.98 million people. Meanwhile, the rural poor population was 14.38 million. Indonesia still faces a high poverty rate. For this reason, various policies and strategies have been implemented by the government to reduce poverty, one of which is equal development between villages and cities, to promote many programs and disburse a lot of development funds and community welfare in the village ([Yunas, 2019](#)). The government has also launched various programs to reduce poverty, such as the Family Hope Program/ *Program Keluarga Harapan* (PKH), Direct Cash Assistance/ *Bantuan Langsung Tunai* (BLT), and community empowerment-based economic development, but optimal results are still difficult to achieve ([Saragih, 2015](#)).

Poverty is not only an economic problem but also a structural problem that involves social, cultural, and political aspects ([Armoyu, 2013](#)). Therefore, to alleviate poverty, not only macro policies are needed, but also approaches that utilize local wisdom that exists in each region. In the midst of the government's efforts to address the problem of poverty, the Indonesian people, especially in regions with rich and diverse cultures, have traditional ways that have been tested in dealing with this social issue. One of the local traditions that is interesting to study is the Behantat tradition that exists in the Kuang Dalam Malay Community, a community in a remote area of Southern Sumatra. The Behantat tradition is a form of social solidarity carried out by the community by sharing food with people from various layers, both rich and poor. This activity is not just about sharing food but further serves as a bridge to strengthen social relations between residents, strengthen social support networks, and provide direct assistance to those in need.

The Kuang Dalam Malay community has made Behantat a part of their daily life. In practice, Behantat involves giving food or crops to others without distinguishing their social status. This concept is closely related to the value of gotong royong, which is part of the strong Malay culture. In this tradition, each individual plays an active role in ensuring that no one goes hungry or is neglected by sharing with each other according to their abilities. Thus, Behantat serves not only as a way to share sustenance but also as a means to create social balance amidst existing economic inequality. This article takes a deeper look at the Behantat tradition as a form of local wisdom that can be used as a model for alleviating poverty in Indonesia. This research aims to explore how this tradition works in the context of the Kuang Dalam Malay community and its relevance to broader poverty alleviation efforts. In addition, this article discusses the potential of Behantat to be adopted as a more applicable solution to overcome poverty in various other regions, especially in areas that still rely heavily on local wisdom in their social life.

It is also important to see how traditions like Behantat can act as a form of cultural revitalization that also contributes to economic and social development at the local level. Although the state has implemented various policies to alleviate poverty, local wisdom such as this can be a very useful complement to creating equitable and sustainable welfare. Therefore, the study of the Behantat tradition is expected to provide a new perspective on a poverty alleviation approach that is more inclusive and based on the existing social forces in the community. With this background, this article comprehensively discusses the meaning and practice of the Behantat tradition, as well as the potential of this tradition in improving the socio-economic conditions of the Kuang Dalam Malay community, which can also be an inspiration for other regions in Indonesia to apply similar approaches in reducing poverty and creating a more prosperous society.

Research on poverty in Indonesia has widely discussed structural, economic, educational, employment, and regional inequality factors, as well as government poverty alleviation programs such

as the PKH, BLT, and community empowerment. However, existing studies have paid limited attention to poverty alleviation approaches based on local wisdom and traditional social solidarity mechanisms in China. In particular, the Behantat tradition in the Kuang Dalam Malay community has not been sufficiently examined as an informal social safety net that supports food sharing, mutual assistance, and resource redistribution among its members. Therefore, this study fills this gap by exploring how the Behantat tradition functions not only as a cultural practice but also as a community-based strategy for reducing poverty, strengthening social cohesion, and supporting inclusive local welfare.

2. Literature Review

The Behantat tradition constitutes one of the most enduring customary practices among the Malay-descended communities of South Sumatra, providing an instructive entry point for understanding how kinship-based ritual exchange can carry latent economic and welfare functions alongside its ceremonial purpose. Ethnographic evidence collected specifically in Kuang Dalam Village, Rambang Kuang Subdistrict, Ogan Ilir Regency, describes Behantat as a structured communication process among adat groups that unfolds through several sequential stages, in which representatives of the prospective groom's family negotiate and subsequently deliver goods to the bride's family as part of the marriage proposal. This process is sustained through carefully coded interpersonal and group communication norms that reinforce hierarchy, respect, and reciprocity between the two kin groups involved ([Linsaniyati et al., 2025](#)).

A closely related study conducted in Sumber Rahayu Village, Muara Enim Regency, further elaborates that the Behantat tradition proceeds through four principal stages, namely betandang, antar-antaran or behantat proper, mbalasi, and nari, and that each stage transmits specific social values and ethical norms, including mutual cooperation, caring, politeness, responsibility, simplicity, and sincerity, values that the study frames not merely as ceremonial etiquette but as a living guideline for everyday social conduct within the community ([Arviansyah et al., 2025](#)). Taken together, these two studies establish that Behantat functions simultaneously as a marriage ritual and as a redistributive mechanism, since the goods physically transferred between families, commonly comprising foodstuffs, staple commodities, and sometimes livestock, represent a concrete transfer of material resources that circulate wealth across kin networks at a moment when a new household is being formed, a point of particular relevance to any inquiry into the tradition's latent poverty-alleviating potential in Kuang Dalam.

Positioning Behantat within the broader scholarly discourse on local wisdom and poverty reduction requires situating it alongside the growing body of research that treats indigenous customary practices as a viable, low-cost complement to formal state-led poverty programs. Qualitative research conducted through an ethnographic design exploring poverty alleviation grounded in local wisdom concludes that community welfare rooted in customary practice can be achieved by optimizing natural and human resources, provided that this optimization is anchored in collective awareness and is formally institutionalized within customary law.

This study highlights that maximizing resource use, strengthening moral responsibility, and cultivating a shared sense of identity ownership are indispensable for translating local wisdom into sustainable shared prosperity ([Ruja & Idris, 2023](#)). This finding resonates with a subsequent systematic review of poverty reduction programs in Indonesia, which observes that formal government interventions, such as cash transfers and food assistance schemes, while numerically substantial, frequently operate in isolation from the social and cultural resources already embedded within the recipient communities. The review argues that greater effectiveness could be achieved by deliberately integrating customary institutions and locally legitimate authority structures into the design and delivery of poverty reduction programming, rather than treating culture as incidental to economic policy ([Ruja et al., 2024](#)).

A parallel line of inquiry into the empowerment of traditional villages through local wisdom preservation similarly finds that customary institutions retain considerable capacity to organize

collective welfare-oriented action, particularly when that capacity is channeled through cultural tourism development and community-based resource management rather than being allowed to atrophy under the pressure of modernization. This pattern lends further credibility to the proposition that Behantat redistributive dimension in Kuang Dalam could be deliberately cultivated as a poverty alleviation resource rather than left to persist purely as a ceremonial custom ([Suardana et al., 2022](#)).

The mechanism through which customary practices such as Behantat plausibly translate into measurable welfare benefits is best understood through the lens of social capital theory, which frames mutual assistance, reciprocal obligation, and collective ritual participation as tangible community assets capable of substituting or supplementing formal financial and institutional resources. Research examining the evolving role of gotong royong within Indonesia village fund policy demonstrates that traditional cooperative labor practices are not static relics but are actively renegotiated within contemporary governance structures. Rural communities, particularly rural women, adapt inherited cooperative norms into procedural forms of collective action that align with national development frameworks while preserving the underlying values of solidarity and shared responsibility ([Humaedi et al., 2025](#)).

Complementary evidence from a case study of community adaptation strategies toward tidal flooding similarly finds that gotong royong functions as a critical form of social capital in disaster risk reduction, enabling affected households to pool labor, materials, and information more efficiently than they could through individual actions alone. This dynamic plausibly generalizes to the redistributive goods exchange embedded within Behantat, since both mechanisms rely on the same underlying logic of reciprocal community obligation substituting formal insurance or credit markets ([Aksa & Afrian, 2022](#)). Further reinforcing this interpretation, research on social solidarity across rural and urban communities on Lombok Island during the COVID-19 pandemic reports that customary and communal support networks proved markedly more resilient and more rapidly mobilized in rural settings than comparable formal assistance channels, suggesting that where kinship-based ritual exchange, such as Behantat, remains socially binding, it may continue to serve as a de facto informal safety net precisely in the moments when formal poverty alleviation infrastructure is slowest to respond ([Sayuti et al., 2023](#)).

Notwithstanding this accumulating evidence, the literature also identifies clear institutional gaps that constrain the extent to which customary traditions like Behantat can be systematically leveraged for poverty alleviation rather than merely observed as cultural heritage. Research on the relationship between environmental management policy and the local wisdom of Indonesia indigenous peoples finds that formal governmental structures frequently lack adequate mechanisms for recognizing, formalizing, or channeling resources through customary institutions, even where those institutions demonstrate a clear capacity for collective welfare management, which the study attributes to a persistent disjuncture between state legal frameworks and living customary law ([Nugroho, 2021](#)). This institutional gap is echoed in evaluative research on the effectiveness of social protection and security programs implemented through multi-sector partnerships in rural West Java, which finds that poverty reduction outcomes improve substantially when formal government assistance is deliberately coordinated with locally embedded social structures and community-level cooperation.

This implies that the redistributive potential already present within traditions such as Behantat is likely to remain underexploited unless local government and community development actors in Ogan Ilir Regency intentionally design complementary interventions around it, rather than around formal cash or in-kind transfers alone ([Kuntjorowati et al., 2024](#)). Synthesizing these strands of evidence, the literature reviewed here suggests that Behantat in Kuang Dalam Village occupies a theoretically significant but empirically underexamined position at the intersection of customary rituals, social capital, and informal welfare redistribution. It is precisely this gap that justifies a closer empirical investigation of how the tradition's material exchange practices might be more deliberately mobilized as a locally legitimate, low-cost complement to the formal poverty alleviation policy in the district.

3. Research Methodology

This study is qualitative research ([Ernest, Fonkem, & Jude, 2023](#)). Qualitative research is used because the aim is to understand social phenomena more deeply ([Fadli, 2021](#)). Especially related to traditions and local wisdom that exist in the Kuang Dalam Malay community. This study aims to explore the meaning, values, and perspectives of the local community regarding the Behantat tradition and its role in alleviating poverty. The research approach used was phenomenological. This approach was chosen because phenomenology focuses on understanding the lived experiences of individuals or groups in their social contexts ([Creswell & Poth, 2024](#)). In this study, the phenomenological approach allowed researchers to explore the meaning behind the practice of the Behantat tradition and how the Kuang Dalam Malay community interprets and applies the tradition to overcome poverty problems. Phenomenology also allows researchers to capture the community's direct experiences and perceptions of the effectiveness of the Behantat tradition in their social, economic, and cultural contexts.

This is important because each community has unique contexts and values that cannot always be explained through quantitative approaches. To ensure methodological rigor, purposive sampling was used to select participants, targeting individuals with extensive knowledge and direct experience with the Behantat tradition, including traditional leaders, community elders, local government representatives, and community members actively involved in the practice. Sampling continued until data saturation was achieved, as indicated by the absence of new themes, insights, or information emerging from subsequent interviews and discussions. The credibility and trustworthiness of the findings were enhanced through methodological triangulation involving observations, in-depth interviews, and Focus Group Discussions (FGDs), as well as source triangulation by comparing the perspectives of different participant groups.

Member checking was also conducted by presenting preliminary findings to selected participants to confirm the accuracy of the interpretations. Researcher reflexivity was maintained throughout the study by keeping reflective field notes and continuously evaluating potential biases, assumptions, and positionalities that could influence data collection and interpretation. Ethical considerations were carefully observed by obtaining informed consent from all participants, ensuring voluntary participation, maintaining confidentiality and anonymity, and allowing participants to withdraw from the study at any stage without any consequences. Furthermore, the research procedures complied with institutional ethical guidelines and received approval from the relevant academic authority prior to the data collection.

The phenomenological approach and qualitative methods were chosen because this research aims to explore deeper meanings related to cultural practices and traditions that cannot be measured by numbers or statistics. The research focuses on local wisdom and the way the community interprets and applies the Behantat tradition, making this approach very relevant to understanding the social and cultural complexities that exist in the Kuang Dalam Malay community. With this approach, the researcher can reveal the community's perception of how their tradition contributes to poverty alleviation and identify the social, cultural, and economic factors that influence the sustainability and effectiveness of the tradition in a broader context. The data collection methods used in this study were open-ended, flexible, and in-depth, involving several key techniques. First, participatory observation, according to [Horrell, Varcoe, Brown, Stajduhar, and Browne \(2024\)](#), the researcher will be directly involved in the lives of the Kuang Dalam Malay community to observe the Behantat tradition firsthand. By making observations, the researcher can capture the social dynamics that occur in the community and how the tradition is implemented in the context of their daily lives. Second, in-depth interviews: These interviews will be conducted with various stakeholders, including traditional leaders, the community, and the local government. [Susanto and Jailani \(2023\)](#) aim to obtain a more personalized and in-depth view from each informant on this local wisdom and its impact on poverty alleviation. Third, Focus Group Discussions (FGDs): FGDs can be conducted to obtain the collective perspective of the community regarding the Behantat tradition and how they perceive it as a solution to the problem of poverty in their area. These discussions can also explore how different groups within the community understand this local wisdom, such as the younger generation vs. the older generation.

The data obtained through observations, interviews, and discussions will be analyzed using thematic analysis. In thematic analysis, researchers identify the main themes that emerge from the collected data [Lewis \(2015\)](#) and then categorize these themes to answer the research questions. Some of the stages in this analysis include: Identifying the main themes related to the Behantat tradition, local wisdom, and its relation to poverty alleviation [\(Braun & Clarke, 2021\)](#). Grouping data based on similar themes or topics [\(Kushnir, 2025\)](#). For example, how Behantat affects the economic, social, and cultural life of the community, as well as its role in alleviating poverty. Interpreting the meaning of the emerging themes to understand how the Behantat tradition is applied and accepted by the community and how it contributes to their economic and social empowerment [\(Rahman et al., 2023\)](#). The verification process was conducted to ensure that the data obtained were valid and reliable by cross-checking the findings through data triangulation (comparing data from various sources).

4. Results and Discussions

4.1 Behantat Tradition in Kuang Dalam Malay Community

Etymologically, the word tradition comes from the Latin *traditio*, which means 'handing over' or 'passing on' [\(Rusli, 2022\)](#). This word comes from the root word *tradere*, which consists of *trans* (through) and *dare* (give), so it literally means 'to give or convey from one generation to the next' [\(Clavé and Hijjas, 2024\)](#). In English, the term becomes *tradition*, and in Indonesian it is adapted to 'tradition.' Terminologically, tradition refers to a set of habits, values, norms, customs, or practices that are passed down from generation to generation within a particular community [\(Dewi, Yulius, & Nisam, 2023\)](#). Traditions often include aspects of culture, beliefs and rituals that become the identity of a social group and serve as a way to maintain the continuity of past values in contemporary society [\(Januardi, Superman, & Nur, 2024\)](#).

Tradition is an important element of culture that reflects the continuity of past values but can also adapt to social dynamics. The Behantat tradition is a social custom in the Kuang Dalam Malay community that involves the delivery of food to relatives, neighbors, and certain people at certain times, especially in the month of Ramadan, during the celebration of Eid al-Fitr and Eid al-Adha, and in the context of wedding receptions. This tradition is not just about giving or receiving food but is a manifestation of close social relations, mutual giving, and strengthening family and kinship ties in the community. The Behantat tradition is carried out at various moments, including the following:

First, Behantat occurs during Ramadan. In Ramadan, especially at certain times, such as the beginning, middle, and end of fasting, the Kuang Dalam Malay community carries out the Behantat tradition. The food delivered is usually an iftar menu along with side dishes, which can also be used for the sahur. Behantat in this holy month symbolizes friendship, care, and sharing between the younger generation and their parents or older family members.

In practice, children deliver food to their parents, sisters deliver food to their brothers, and grandchildren deliver food to their grandparents. This not only shows respect for elders but also demonstrates the importance of maintaining family and social relationships in the community. The tool used in this tradition is the *tingkat* (*rantang*), a tiered lunch box used to carry food. This is significant in Malay culture because, in addition to its function as a container for food, it also symbolizes a respectful gift, where the food delivered has a high social value. The food carried in this tier symbolizes sincere giving and the bond that is maintained.

Second, Behantat on Eid al-Fitr and Eid al-Adha. Apart from Ramadan, the Behantat tradition also takes place during the celebrations of Eid al-Fitr and Eid al-Adha. On these two major holidays, people deliver food to their closest family, friends, and neighbors, and even to certain people who have a certain position or social status in the community, such as village heads, traditional elders, or people who are respected for their educational achievements or contributions in the community. In this tradition, in addition to using a level to deliver food to relatives, for more respected or favored people, especially for men sending food to a woman, the tool used is a *thalam*. Although the basic function of this *thalam* is the same as that of the tier, it has differences in design and is often more luxurious,

reflecting a special honor or interest. The contents of the food delivered in the *talam* are typical holiday dishes, such as *ketupat*, *opor ayam*, *rendang*, and various *Lebaran* cakes.

Food delivery creates space for greater social interaction at both the family and community levels. It also strengthens social relations by demonstrating mutual respect, sharing, and maintaining bonds among individuals in the community. Third, *Behantat* at Marriage Reception Celebrations *Behantat* tradition is also implemented at marriage reception celebrations, which is an important moment in the social life of the *Kuang Dalam* Malay community. On this occasion, food delivery was carried out on a larger scale and to many groups without distinguishing the status of the rich and poor. Meals are given starting from the closest family to people who have a certain position or status in the community, such as traditional elders, village heads, friends, colleagues, and people who are respected for their contributions in various fields, such as education or social activities. In the context of marriage celebrations, *Behantat* becomes a symbol of shared joy and a way to strengthen social and familial ties within the community. This process becomes a moment to share happiness and simultaneously reminds us that in every happiness, there are social responsibilities that must be maintained, one of which is through the tradition of sharing with anyone.

4.2 *Behantat* Tradition as a Solution to Poverty Alleviation

Poverty is a major problem facing Indonesia, especially since the Asian Financial Crisis of 1998 ([Idrus & Rosida, 2020](#)). Data shows that the majority of poor people in Indonesia live in rural areas and generally work in the agricultural sector ([Ngadi, Zaelany, Latifa, Harfina, Asiati, Setiawan, & Rajagukguk, 2023](#); [Sudaryanto, Dermoredjo, Purba, Rachmawati, & Irawan, 2023](#)). The main challenges faced by rural communities include limited access to productive resources, underdeveloped agricultural technology, lack of infrastructure, and dependence on crop yields that are heavily influenced by weather ([Yusriadi & Cahaya, 2022](#)). These factors often result in low income for rural communities and high levels of vulnerability to poverty.

To address these issues, the Indonesian government has implemented various models and strategies, such as: social assistance programs, including cash transfers, food subsidies, and the Family Hope Program/ *Program Keluarga Harapan* (PKH) ([Nardin, 2019](#); [Saragih, 2024](#); [Carolina, 2022](#)). Building Rural Infrastructure, strengthening Microcredit and Agricultural Programmes such as the People's Business Credit/ *Kredit Usaha Rakyat* (KUR) to help farmers get business capital to providing Agricultural Extension, entrepreneurship training, and improving the skills of rural communities ([Suharto, 2015](#); [Poluan, Lengkong, & Londa, 2021](#); [Burhansyah, 2021](#)).

4.3 Discussion

Apart from government intervention, local communities also play an important role in alleviating poverty through local wisdom. One interesting tradition is the *Behantat*, carried out by the *Kuang Dalam* Malay community. This tradition is in the form of a habit of delivering food to certain people at special moments, such as Ramadan, Eid al-Fitr, and Marriage Celebrations. The *Kuang Dalam* Malay community incorporates *Behantat* into their daily lives. In practice, *Behantat* involves giving food or crops to others without distinguishing their social status.

The *Behantat* tradition has various positive impacts on poverty alleviation. The process of sharing food in this tradition creates a circular economy in the community. A circular economy is an economic system or model that aims to generate economic growth ([Ramadani, 2023](#)). One of the programmes that the Indonesian Government is aggressively promoting ([Alfakihuddin, Zakiyyah, & Praditha, 2022](#)). Communities that have more resources, whether in the form of agricultural products, fish catches, or garden products, will play an active role in supplying food to those who are more in need. These resources may include rice, side dishes, vegetables, or other traditional food ingredients that are processed and served to other community members. This practice helps optimize local resources in the neighborhood and strengthens local food security. In this way, communities do not rely on external supplies that can be affected by market price fluctuations but rather rely on the economic potential within their own communities. The circular economy is efficient and highly effective in extracting natural resources ([Cahyadi, Hidayati, Zahra, & Arif, 2024](#)).

Furthermore, with this tradition, there is a sharp reduction in social and economic inequality, although in the broader economic context, inequality remains ([Hussain et al., 2023](#)). During holiday celebrations or major events, the delivery of food to neighbors, friends, or even respected people (such as village heads or community leaders) also demonstrates the importance of maintaining social relations within the community structure. For example, better-off families not only provide food to close relatives but also to people who may have a higher status, which can help improve their social position in the community. In this sense, the Behantat tradition can serve as a means of social safety net, as the food given not only helps fulfil the physical needs of those receiving, but also gives them the opportunity to participate in a larger social network ([Fourat, Closson, Holzemer, & Hudon, 2020](#)). These social networks then open the door to other opportunities that can support improved economic well-being, such as employment opportunities, access to education, and other social assistance ([Rüdel & Steinmann, 2024](#)).

Equally important, this tradition builds strong social relations, mutual help, and harmonious social relations, creating a social safety net when facing economic difficulties. Thanks to this tradition, inter-individual relationships are created within extended families and communities. It also creates a space to strengthen ties between generations, young and old, and individuals and the wider social group. Through this tradition, the community plays an active role in creating a sense of community and collective strength among its members. Despite these limitations, this tradition teaches the value of sharing and mutual aid, which helps reduce the impact of poverty. For example, better-off families send food to those in greater need. Meanwhile, poorer families receive food, which not only helps them fulfill their basic needs but also gives them the opportunity to remain socially connected to their families and communities.

The success of the Behantat tradition in reducing poverty in the Kuang Dalam Malay Community can be seen from its significant impact on the pattern of wealth distribution and social welfare. This tradition provides space for the community to help each other and reduce dependence on external assistance from the government and other institutions. In this context, Behantat can be seen as an alternative solution sourced from local wisdom that integrates social-based economic principles with the values of togetherness and solidarity. The active involvement of all community members in this tradition shows that poverty problems can be solved not only through government policies but also through the active participation of the community itself.

In addition, the Behantat tradition serves to strengthen social relations at the local level. Communities bound by this tradition feel more connected to each other, establish closer brotherhood, and create a sense of belonging and care for others. This is particularly important given that social and economic inequalities often lead to tensions within communities. With Behantat, this community can defuse potential social conflicts that could arise due to the existing economic disparity.

5. Conclusions

5.1 Conclusion

The Behantat tradition in the Kuang Dalam Malay community is a cultural heritage that reflects social and religious values and is an integral part of strengthening social and kinship ties. This tradition involves delivering food at certain moments, such as the month of Ramadan, Eid al-Fitr, Eid al-Adha, and wedding celebrations, which are carried out with full respect, using a level or talam as a symbol of intimacy and respect. In addition to functioning as a symbol of friendship and social solidarity, Behantat also significantly contributes to poverty alleviation through the implementation of a circular economy, namely, optimizing local resources to meet shared needs.

This tradition helps reduce social and economic inequality by creating a social safety net that strengthens community cohesion, allowing better-off people to share resources with those in need. In addition, Behantat strengthens intergenerational relationships and fosters the value of mutual cooperation, which plays a role in building social harmony. Thus, Behantat is not only a manifestation of culture but also an effective local strategy to overcome social and economic challenges. This study contributes to the literature on local wisdom, social solidarity, and poverty alleviation by

demonstrating that traditional cultural practices can function as informal social protection mechanisms. The findings reveal that the Behantat tradition serves not only as a cultural heritage but also as a community-based strategy that promotes mutual assistance, kinship, reciprocity, and collective responsibility in addressing poverty issues.

From a practical perspective, the tradition strengthens community resilience through food sharing, resource redistribution, and social support among residents, thereby providing an effective community-driven model for assisting vulnerable groups, particularly in rural areas with limited access to formal welfare systems. In terms of policy implications, the findings suggest that governments and local policymakers should recognize and integrate local wisdom into poverty alleviation initiatives to ensure their effectiveness. Traditions such as Behantat can complement formal social welfare programs by reinforcing social safety nets, encouraging community participation, and fostering sustainable and culturally grounded approaches to improve community welfare.

5.2 Research Limitations

This study is limited to the Kuang Dalam Malay community; therefore, the findings may not fully represent other communities with different cultural, social, and economic backgrounds. In addition, the study uses a qualitative phenomenological approach, which emphasizes lived experiences and community perceptions rather than the quantitative measurement of poverty reduction outcomes.

5.3 Suggestions and Directions for Future Study

Future studies should examine similar local wisdom practices in other regions to compare their roles in poverty alleviation and social welfare. Further research may also use mixed-methods or quantitative approaches to measure the economic impact of the Behantat tradition more systematically. Future studies can explore the role of younger generations in preserving and adapting the Behantat tradition in modern society.

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Author Contributions

LM conceptualized the study, developed the research framework, conducted the data collection, performed the data analysis, and prepared the original manuscript draft. HA contributed to the research design, data interpretation, validation of findings, critical review of the literature and manuscript revision. Both authors discussed the results, approved the final version of the manuscript, and agreed to be held accountable for all aspects of the work.

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