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### Exploring Buddhists' Understanding and Attitudes on Forest and Land Fire in Central Kalimantan Province, Indonesia

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#### ABSTRACT

Forest and land fires that occurred in Central Kalimantan Province were disasters on a national scale which occurred on a small and large scale every year. The population of Central Kalimantan consists of various ethnicities, religions and cultures, one of which is the Buddhist community. The purpose of this research is to measure the level of understanding and attitudes of Buddhists towards forest and land fires in Central Kalimantan, to analyze the relationship between Buddhist understanding, attitudes and roles of forest and land fires in Central Kalimantan, and to formulate the efforts that can be made by Buddhists in prevent and control forest and land fires in Central Kalimantan. The method used is data collection from respondents using a purposive questionnaire in three research areas, namely Palangka Raya City, East Kotawaringin Regency and West Kotawaringin Regency using a Likert Scale, according to Sugiyono (2010: 93) Likert scale is used to measure attitudes, opinions and perceptions. a person or group of people about social phenomena. For each answer option given a score, the respondent must describe, support the statement. The result found in this study is that there is a significant correlation between age and Buddhist understanding and attitudes towards forest and land fires. The understanding of Buddhists in West Kotawaringin District is very uniform, but they tend to have different attitudes about the forest and land fire cases. In contrast, the understanding of Buddhists in East Kotawaringin District tends to vary, but they tend to have the same attitude towards forest and land fires. Meanwhile, in Palangka Raya City, the level of Buddhist understanding of forest and land fires is consistent with their attitude.

#### 1. Introduction

Forest and land fire incidents in Indonesia that have occurred for decades have turned to be an annual environmental crisis that prompts the country's attention

to the problem of forest and land fires. As contended by Adinugroho et al. (2005), forest and land fires in Indonesia have been seen as a regional and global disaster. The problem of forest and land fires in Indonesia, particularly in Central Kalimantan, has become the main environmental problem in the 21<sup>st</sup> century era. It is caused by the greenhouse effect and global warming, depletion of the ozone layer, acid rain, environmental pollution, environmental pollution, forest degradation, and reduced forest area, and a decrease in the quality of natural resources (Yasin et al., 2019). Furthermore, the results of the study by several parties also concluded that 99% of forest and land fires in Indonesia occurred due to human interference by burning forests and land for use. Some of these fires occurred in peat swamp forests. Educating forest and peatland fires to the community is also carried out by Buddhists in Central Kalimantan Province through Buddhist teachings. Buddhism is a universal love for all beings, including the universe, as stated in the Tripitaka holy book. Buddhists are taught how to respect and protect natural conditions so that disasters such as forest and land fires do not occur, which adversely affect human life. This teaching is broadcast through *da'wah* and real social activities.

The Buddha Gotama has given a warning and appeals to mankind to avoid a more terrible and terrible fire disaster, a disaster for mankind and a disaster for life in the universe. The existence of Buddhists in Central Kalimantan is classified as a minority. Based on data on the number of religious followers according to districts in Central Kalimantan Province in 2019, it was recorded that in 2019 there were 17,744 Buddhists (source of Buddhist Community Guidance for the Ministry of Religion of Central Kalimantan Province 2019). This number is only 0.62% of the total population of Central Kalimantan of 2,846,851 people. Most of the Buddhists as many as 6,500 people (36.19%) are in East Kotawaringin Regency, as many as 5,350 people (29.79%) are in West Kotawaringin Regency, and as many as 3,000 people (16.70%) are in Palangka Raya City, while in small numbers, namely between 0.5% - 2.64%, it is found in other districts in Central Kalimantan Province. Handling forest and land fires through understanding, attitudes, and roles of Buddhists can be seen from four aspects, namely age, education, social status and ethnicity, seen from Buddhist teachings.

## 2. Method

This research was conducted in three districts in Central Kalimantan Province, namely Palangka Raya City, East Kotawaringin Regency, and West Kotawaringin Regency. Respondents in this study were selected purposively in the three selected districts. These three areas were designated as research areas because of the Buddhist population and the largest number of places of worship (Vihara) in Central Kalimantan. In addition, in these three districts, forest and land fires also occurred, although not as severe as those that occurred in districts with large peatland areas, such as Pulang Pisau Regency and Kapuas District.

Data were collected using a questionnaire, which was given a statement item, distributed to each respondent. The questionnaire contains statement items with answers using a Likert scale from 1 to 5. Strongly disagree is given the number 1, while strongly agree is given the number 5. The Likert scale is used to measure the attitudes, opinions and perceptions of a person or group of people about social phenomena (Sugiyono) 2020. The questionnaire was tested for validity and reliability in advance to determine whether the questionnaire used was valid or not (Ghozali, 2009). To analyze the data, percentage and spearman rank were used in this study.

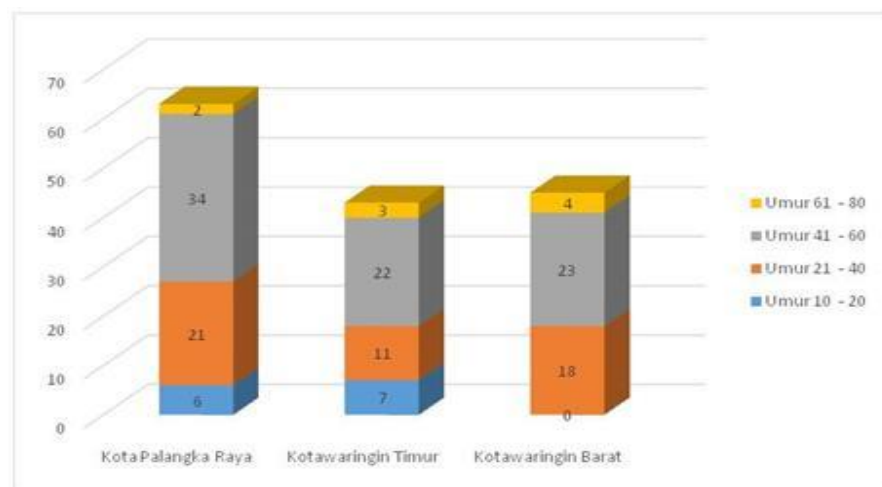
### 3. Results And Discussion

#### Buddhist Profiles at the Study Site

Buddhists against forest and land fires in Central Kalimantan who were used as respondents in this study can be seen from several aspects such as aspects of age, aspects of ethnicity, aspects of education, and aspects of social status.

##### a. Respondents by age

Respondents in the three study areas can be classified according to age, which clearly illustrates the understanding, attitudes, and roles of Buddhists towards forest and land fires in Central Kalimantan. Respondents were grouped by age in the three research areas of Palangka Raya City. Respondents with this age classification have differences in numbers between the three research areas of Palangka Raya City, East Kotawaringin Regency, and West Kotawaringin Regency, as shown in Figure 1.



**Figure 1. Respondents by age in the three research areas**

In the graph above, it can be explained that the most respondents with age 21-60 in the three research areas are Palangka Raya City with 34 people, then 23 people in West Kotawaringin Regency and 22 people in East Kotawaringin Regency, these respondents are average - Productive average age that can

contribute to understanding, attitudes and roles towards forest and land fires. In Kotawaringin Barat, there were no respondents who were 10-20 years old, but those aged 61-80 were the most. And at the age of 21-40 the most respondents were in Palangka Raya City with a total of 21 people and the second in West Kotawaringin Regency was 18 people.

#### b. Respondents Based on Ethnic

Respondents based on ethnicity in this study were divided into 4, namely: Javanese, Chinese, Dayak, and others. The ethnic Chinese dominate Buddhists in all study areas, namely 55% in Palangka Raya City, 96% in East Kotawaringin, and 88% in West Kotawaringin. This Chinese ethnicity came from several big cities in Indonesia, such as Surabaya, Pontianak and Medan. Their professions include traders, company / independent plantations and mining (Figure 2).



**Figure 2. Respondents based on ethnicity**

The Javanese Buddhists are mostly found in Palangka Raya City, with 41%, followed by West Kotawaringin and East Kotawaringin, respectively, at 12% and 4%. The high number of Javanese respondents in Palangka Raya City is because the Buddhists who are taken as respondents are mostly state civil servants as well as administrators and clergy. Respondents from the Dayak tribe and others were only found in Kota Palangka Raya, namely 3% and 1%, respectively. Other ethnicities are citizens of Indian descent who have long lived in Palangka Raya.

#### c. Respondents Based on Education Level

Education level of respondents in all research areas can be said to be quite good because most of them have graduated from high school and college. Only a small proportion of respondents have the lowest education or only graduated from SD. Respondents with higher education were mostly found in Palangka Raya City, where 60% of respondents had graduated from college, followed by West Kotawaringin and East Kotawaringin districts, respectively 46% and 40%. Respondents with low education were mostly found in Palangka Raya City, which was only 8%, followed by West Kotawaringin at 4%. Respondents with the lowest education were not found in East Kotawaringin.



**Figure 3. Respondents based on ethnicity / ethics**

d. Respondents Based on Social Status

Respondents based on social status are divided into 3 parts, namely: clergy, management and community. Rohaniawan is a level in Buddhism which is divided into spiritual levels of Bhiksu / Bhiksuni with 227/250 Precepts, Samanera is a spiritual level before becoming a Bhiksu by observing Sila as many as 10 rules, the Spiritual level of Romo Pandita is a household member by observing the precepts of 8 rules. Administrators are Buddhists who are entrusted with running the organization and come from the spiritual level, priest pandita or Buddhists themselves, while the people are a level in Buddhism who practice the 5 precepts by living in a household or not, the difference between the spiritual level and the people is the implementation of regulations.

Most of the respondents in this study were people, namely more than 50% in all research locations. The highest percentage of people is in East Kotawaringin, which is 64%, followed by West Kotawaringin and Palangka Raya City, 58% and 57%, respectively. The smallest percentage of respondents is Rohaniawan, with a percentage of not more than 20% in all research locations. The highest percentage of clergy is in West Kotawaringin with 18%, followed by East Kotawaringin at 12% and Palangka Raya at 8%. Furthermore, the percentage of management is mostly found in Palangka Raya City, which is 35%, while in West Kotawaringin and East Kotawaringin it is 24% each.

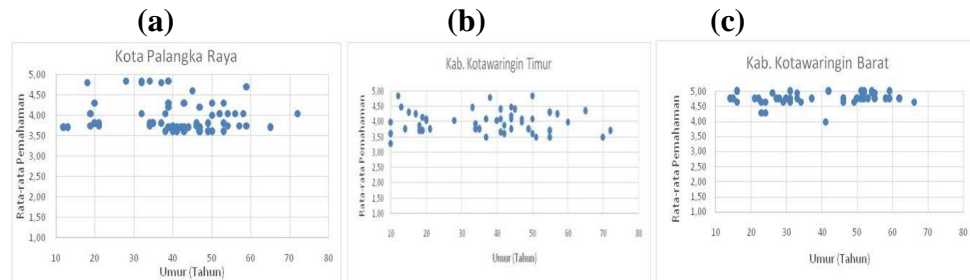


**Figure 4. Respondents based on social status**

## A. Respondents' Understanding and Attitudes Toward Forest and Land Fires

### *Buddhist Levels of Understanding of Forest and Land Fires*

Respondents' understanding of forest and land fires in Palangka Raya City can be seen in Figure 5.

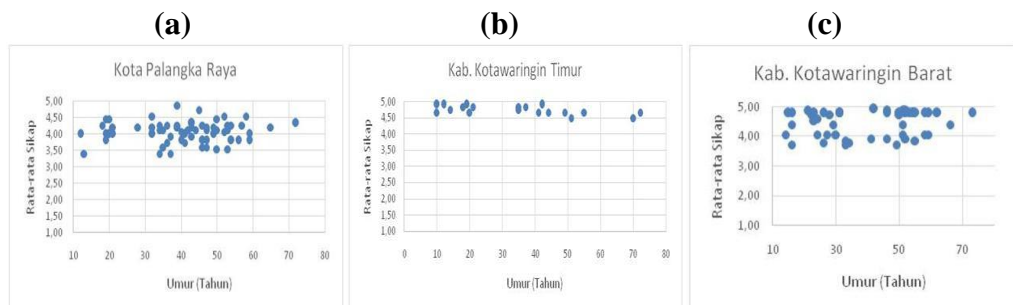


**Graph 5. Correlation of Age and Level of Understanding of Respondents in the three research areas**

The three graphs above show that the understanding of Buddhists from the perspective of age, there are several facts that can be explained. Buddhists in Palangka Raya City have very varied levels of understanding (figure 5.a) of forest and land fires in Central Kalimantan. In East Kotawaringin District, the understanding of the community is more varied in seeing cases of forest and land fires (figure 5.b), while in West Kotawaringin District the respondents' understanding of forest and land fires is very good and relatively the same (figure 5.c).

### *The Variation of Levels of Buddhist Attitudes Toward Forest and Land Fires*

Respondents in Palangka Raya City tend to have various or varied attitudes towards forest and land fires, however in East Kotawaringin Regency they prefer the same attitude, while respondents in the Kotawaringin Barat Regency area tend to have different or varied attitudes towards forest and land fires in Central Kalimantan. Seen in the following graph:



**Figure 6. Correlation of Age and Attitude of Respondents in the three research areas**

There is no statistically significant correlation between age and Buddhist understanding and attitudes towards forest and land fires. However, the understanding of Buddhists in West Kotawaringin Regency is very uniform. Still, they tend to have different attitudes about the forest and land fire cases in Central Kalimantan Province. Cases of forest and land fires in Central Kalimantan Province.

There are differences in understanding and attitudes in the three study areas. It can be seen that there are differences in culture, culture, education and traditions that are influenced by ethnic differences. However, there is another research theory put forward by Aprizal, et al (Journal article 2007) which suggests that there is a difference in understanding and attitudes in the case of forest and land fires in several regions of Indonesia due to differences in the level of education and the level of living between urban and rural areas, both levels. This will affect one's thinking and acting in making decisions.

The notion of attitude is explained by Azwar (2010), where attitude is defined as a reaction or response that arises from an individual to an object, which then raises the individual's behavior towards that object in certain ways. Meanwhile, according to Benjamin S. Bloom, understanding (comprehension) is a person's ability to understand or understand something after something is known and remembered. So it can be concluded that someone who understands the dangers of forest and land fire cases, but not necessarily everyone who understands, has the same attitude to do it because everyone's reaction or response is different in seeing an object. But there are those who do not have the same understanding but have the same attitude. This is influenced by the ability to understand the same object.

#### **4. Conclusion**

Although there is no statistically significant correlation between age and Buddhist understanding and attitudes towards forest and land fires, three interesting phenomena were found in terms of the level of understanding and attitudes of Buddhists towards forest and land fire cases in Central Kalimantan. The first phenomenon is that it is found in this study that there is a significant correlation between Buddhist understanding and attitudes towards forest and land fires. The second phenomenon is that the understanding of Buddhists in West Kotawaringin Regency is very uniform, but they tend to have different attitudes about forest and land fire cases in Central Kalimantan, and the third phenomenon is, on the contrary, the understanding of Buddhists in East Kotawaringin Regency tends to vary, but they tend to have different attitudes. Same for forest and land fires. The understanding of Buddhists in West Kotawaringin Regency is relatively uniform, but their attitudes show varied towards forest and land fires in Central Kalimantan Province. In contrast, the understanding of Buddhists in East Kotawaringin District varies, but they have the same attitude towards the forest and land fire cases in Central Kalimantan Province. Variables of age and ethnicity influence differences in understanding and attitudes. It is necessary to further studies on the factors that cause

variations in Buddhist understanding and attitudes towards forest and land fires.

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