

# **The Role of Cultural Values in The Transformation of Rice Business Strategy Management Among Bugis Entrepreneurs**

**By**

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## **Abstract**

This study aims to describe the role of cultural values in the transformation of rice business strategy management for Bugis entrepreneurs. The rice business for Bugis entrepreneurs is the business of grain milling and rice trading, which includes marketing areas between districts, cities, and provinces. Transformation of business strategy management is a concept born in the era of advanced management science and information technology. In the strategic management of the rice business, Bugis entrepreneurs in the late 20th to early 21st century in South Sulawesi Province, known as Bugis traders, have experienced many changes in several aspects of rice business life. Cultural values have shown their influence on the dynamics of strategic management transformation among Bugis entrepreneurs in the rice business. Demands for work efficiency and effectiveness, especially aspects of production and marketing, are increasing; the development of management knowledge, technology, and information has created opportunities for business strategy management for Bugis entrepreneurs, namely stability strategy and expansion strategy.

**Keywords:** Bugis cultural, strategic management, rice business, entrepreneurs, Indonesia

## **Introduction**

Cultural values are currently beneficial in developing a business such as the rice business. Following modern management principles, cultural values that grow in people's lives can lead Bugis entrepreneurs to manage their businesses well. To maximize the utilization of the rapidly increasing advances in management science and technology, the Bugis cultural values must be increasingly explored for their role in the transformation of business strategy management, especially for Bugis entrepreneurs. The progress of business strategy management will impact competitiveness, effectiveness, and efficiency in business management (Ansar et al., 2019; Kusiani et al., 2021; Seppa et al., 2021; Sukri et al., 2021; Tamsah et al., 2020).

This research describes the study of the role of cultural values in the transformation of rice business strategy management for Bugis entrepreneurs in the past and present. What is observed is related to the cultural values of the Bugis community, namely the matters contained in people's lives and are used as principles in doing business.

Business and cultural values complement each other; cultural values support business life for Bugis entrepreneurs as a life principle, and business life can influence cultural life in the community. In the context of a culture that functions as a system of rules for human

behavior, it plays a significant role in the business development of Bugis entrepreneurs, especially in the rice business.

The life and civilization of the Bugis people are constantly changing and influencing each other in every business life. The culture of the Bugis people is full of cultural values. It can adapt to developments in mastering technology by expanding the mastery of specific importance in economic and cultural activities. The management transformation of the Bugis business strategy is an innovation in changing times and its development in various fields, especially in the era of advances in information technology.

For the people of South Sulawesi, especially Bugis entrepreneurs, rice has a particular position in all aspects of their life because rice is the staple food for most Indonesians, and rice is the primary commodity most regions produce in Indonesia. From this view, researchers see the importance of scientific studies, which try to trace and reveal facts of the ancestral cultural history and business ventures of Bugis entrepreneurs. Disclosure of these facts through the experiences of Bugis entrepreneurs and interpretation of various writings about the culture and behavior of Bugis entrepreneurs in the rice business.

The results of this research are expected to be a reference in scientific development in the management field, especially for lecturers and students, and as input for stakeholders related to the rice trading business in South Sulawesi Province.

## **Literature Review**

### ***Culture value***

Cultural fit is vital in implementing various human resource management techniques and practices in organizations. Procedures and processes, especially those related to social systems, must pay attention to the internal work culture's norms, beliefs, and values so that programs and processes are carried out effectively (Amrullah et al., 2021; Nikmawati et al., 2021; Rahmitasari et al., 2021). Believing that most of the significant values, attitudes, and behaviors are rooted in culture, informants' explanations need to understand how cultural experiences help explain ways of viewing the world and running the business of everyday life. Interventions are needed to minimize constraints from the social environment with various efforts, which include shifting cultural boundaries and building cultural beliefs and values so that their management techniques and practices fit within the local culture. Consistency in carrying out these efforts will ultimately result in organizational success (Gunawan et al., 2021; Umar, Amrin, et al., 2019). Management realizes that society changes, demands also change, and even business is the creativity of creating value, so that value can continue to be extracted from previously accepted values and professionalism.

In the ancestral history of the Bugis, explaining the journey of life and dharma devotion. They uphold the value of honor that is always carried out, namely their "*Siri*" culture has made "*ulaweng tau*", the total value of nobility in their attitude toward life. The term "*lempu, ada tongeng, getteng, taro ada taro gau*" is not only a slogan but proof of his life. The sense of justice, honesty, and the implementation of trust in trading activities, especially the issue of inter-island transportation, has long been maintained by a law known as "*Amanna Gappa Law*" elements of mutual trust, elements of honesty, and the fairest possible profit sharing. Cultural values are a measure used as a basis for acting and accepting the actions of other people (Cahaya et al., 2022; Mustafa et al., 2020; Nurman et al., 2022; Tamsan & Yusriadi, 2022; Yusriadi & Cahaya, 2022).

### ***Transformation***

Digital transformation is a concept that describes the application of digital technology to all aspects of a business. If effective, these activities will change how businesses operate, improve teamwork efficiency, optimize work efficiency, and deliver customer value. The industrial revolution 4.0 and digital transformation will create business development opportunities. To adapt, companies must fundamentally change the way they operate, be willing to accept cultural changes, and rethink the status quo (Shin et al., 2022; Tamsah et al., 2021; Zacharias, Rahawarin, et al., 2021). The results of interviews with informants explained that digital transformation is not about adapting to new technologies at all but directing organizations to become more adaptive to change themselves. Corporate culture is formed and developed along with business processes, not only communication culture but also prices (Ilyas et al., 2022; Misnawati et al., 2022; Yusriadi, Awaluddin, et al., 2022). The importance of corporate culture plays a role in helping businesses adapt to changes in the external environment. The transformation of business strategy management is determined by cultural values embedded in everyone's behavior (Idris et al., 2022; Kasim et al., 2022; Yusriadi, Makkulawu Panyiwi Kessi, et al., 2022). Business value is a key value for implementing the values of honesty, decency, and firmness.

### ***Business strategy management***

Strategic Management is a set of decisions and actions that result in formulating and implementing plans designed to achieve company goals. The process of formulation and implementation includes nine main activities:

1. Formulating the company's mission, including a broad statement of its aims, philosophy, and objectives.
2. Perform an analysis that reflects the company's internal conditions and capabilities.
3. The company's external environmental assets, including general competitive and contextual factors.
4. Analyze the company's choice by adjusting its resources to the external environment.
5. Identification of the most desirable options by evaluating each option based on the company's mission.
6. Choose a set of long-term goals and a grand strategy to achieve the most desirable options.
7. Develop annual objectives and short-term strategies that correspond to the selected set of long-term goals and grand strategies.
8. Implementing strategic choices through budgeted resources where matching tasks, people, structure, technology, and reward systems are emphasized.
9. Evaluate the success of the strategic process as input for future decision-making.

Culture is the unique way an organization does business. Culture includes the set of shared values, beliefs, attitudes, habits, norms, personalities, and cults that define a company (Awaluddin A et al., 2019; Umar, Hasbi, et al., 2019). Managers can implement changes quickly and easily if the company's strategy is supported by cultural products such as values, beliefs, rites, rituals, ceremonies, stories, symbols, language, and worship. The main strategy alternatives in a company are Stability Strategy, Expansion Strategy, Integration Strategy, Shrinking Strategy, and Combination Strategy. This strategy can be influenced by mission, values, and environment, while implementing this strategy uses a representative approach, namely product, market, and technology.

## **Methods**

This research is a case study among Bugis entrepreneurs in South Sulawesi Province by selecting informants from Bugis entrepreneurs who own a milling business and trade rice. The design of this research is qualitative research carried out among Bugis entrepreneurs. The approach is to collect data through information sources that can be classified into three types of informants: key informants, primary informants, and supporting informants. In addition, document analysis was also carried out from various sources such as books, magazines, and the internet.

Data collection was carried out using direct observation and interviews with Bugis entrepreneurs. This study uses a case study research design focused on one phenomenon related to cultural values and strategic business management. This phenomenon was explored by several informants who were rice millers and rice traders simultaneously.

Sources of data in this study used primary data through interviews with informants and observations and secondary data support obtained through documents and research reports on Bugis entrepreneurs in the rice trade. One key informant from the chairman of the South Sulawesi Province was considered to have a lot of information about the problems of Bugis entrepreneurs in the rice business. Ten other informants were the main and supporting informants, namely Bugis entrepreneurs who knew technically and in detail about the problems of the milling business and rice trade.

Data collection techniques are in the form of interviews, observation, and documentation. Observation activities carried out are to obtain qualitative data on objects by direct observation of entrepreneur activities to deepen entrepreneurs' behavior. Data analysis was carried out by preparing, organizing, and describing qualitative data from realities and specific facts obtained from observations and interviews with informants. Then a general pattern was built that could provide general explanations related to the management of business strategies among Bugis entrepreneurs in the rice trade.

## **Result And Discussion**

Social issues, especially the role of cultural values in doing business, are more of an essential sociological problem to study and reconstruct indicators of cultural values upheld by the Bugis community in the past, especially those that influenced the attitude of a businessman or trader in doing business.

This study analyzes the role of cultural values in strategic management transformation, which shows the dynamics of business development among Bugis entrepreneurs, especially in the rice milling and trading business, both between districts, provinces, and islands. The cultural value system that has developed in the Bugis community has colored and become one of the guidelines for behaving or responding to all activities that are carried out, including doing business.

The transformation of business strategy management among Bugis entrepreneurs, which is the focus of this research, is the stability strategy and business expansion strategy about the cultural values they carry out in developing the rice business. The stability strategy is the attitude or design of the Bugis entrepreneur that is implemented in maintaining production and marketing stability so that it can still meet market demand. At the same time,

the strength of business expansion is the attitude or strategy of Bugis entrepreneurs who are always trying to expand their business in production and marketing areas. Both strategies are heavily influenced by Bugis cultural values among entrepreneurs.

### ***Bugis cultural values***

Understandably, the discussion in this study concerns the behavior or responses of Bugis entrepreneurs in doing business, namely, engaging in rice milling and/or rice trading, where cultural values embedded in them influence their attitude and behavior in managing their business (Zacharias, Yusriadi, et al., 2021).

Bugis entrepreneurs have played various cultural values in developing the rice business; they have been able to navigate the oceans of shipping and trade in the past in developing their business which deserves our appreciation as ideal historical values that can influence change and growth in people's lives, especially in business.

The cultural values that can influence behavior patterns and management strategies for Bugis entrepreneurs in doing business include the values of honesty, flexibility and firmness, social values, feelings of shame or "*Siri*" (covering shame when committing fraud, not being successful, and not keeping promises), formal education, business experience, sources of business capital, the principle of hard work and destiny, the principle of working for a charity, the principle of cooperation (share). These cultural values are reflected in the behavior of Bugis entrepreneurs in developing the rice business. There may still be cultural values that have not been observed and have escaped the author's observation, so they were not included in this study.

### ***Honesty value***

Honesty is part of business ethics Bugis businessmen or merchants in the past highly upheld the values of honesty because, for him, honesty is the principal capital in doing business. Among the Bugis, honesty is known as "*ada tongeng*" or "*lempu*". "*Ada tongeng*" means telling the truth or giving a true statement. Likewise, the word "*lempu*" which means straight, means the word honest. They believe that without honesty, there is a "*tongeng*" or "*lempu*" in a person, and it will impact other people's distrust of him. In line with what was stated (Ilyas et al., 2022) that in the culture of the Bugis-Makassar people, several values are considered the central values. The central values referred to are "*siri*", "*pesse*", "*lempu*", "*getteng*", "*ada tongeng*", and "*reso*." Being honest in business activities, namely in terms of weighing, measuring, sharing, making promises, paying debts, and being honest in dealing with other people, will give an entrepreneur physical and mental peace.

Islamic teachings prohibit Muslims from acting fraudulently. If the seller works fraudulently towards the scale, size, type, and value, then the effect on the buyer is that the buyer's purchasing power decreases. If the buyer resells the item, the selling value will increase. Therefore, cheating by the seller will lead to further consumer losses.

Bugis entrepreneurs, in carrying out their business, believe that the value of honesty influences the progress of their business, and their principal capital in trading is trust based on the value of honesty. Suppose someone has been judged dishonest by others. In that case, it means that he has no meaning in life because other people no longer trust him, so he has the principle that it is better to die or go far away from his hometown to a region or country—another, where no relatives or people from the village know him.

They are very obedient to everything they believe in, such as the value of honesty among the people is still highly respected, and it is an essential teaching for every parent to their child, to be honest in all their activities and hate people who don't act honestly. This has become a guideline for every Bugis entrepreneur in the past, where honesty was the principal capital in doing business.

### ***Feelings of embarrassment***

Feelings of shame among the Bugis are known as "Siri," which means shame. "Siri" implies guilt for doing things contrary to religious and social values in society. "Siri" is the value of someone's honor that must be maintained, and even willing to sacrifice their wealth and soul to keep that good name or recognition. Shame embedded in everyone's behavior influences their behavior in daily activities, such as for Bugis entrepreneurs in developing a trading business. Shyness can make them more careful in making agreements and transactions of goods by credit.

Bugis people even risk their "Siri" when they go abroad; they feel ashamed if they cannot go home to show proof of their success overseas (Gani et al., 2019; Hasbi et al., 2019). The embarrassment includes the embarrassment of cheating, the shame of failing, and the embarrassment of not keeping promises in carrying out or developing a rice trading business. After leaving their homeland, sometimes they don't return for years, only to seek wealth until they succeed.

### ***Formal Education***

Education greatly influences the quality of a person in thinking and acting, especially in business activities. For an entrepreneur, education helps him carry out his activities, such as administrative arrangements, establishing partnerships, and various activities that support his business. However, among Bugis entrepreneurs in the past, the view was that formal education for a rice entrepreneur was not too important for business development; instead, it was a business experience so that they had broad business insights and knowledge. In managing their business, they use traditional administrative records, namely simple records, so they cannot separate capital ownership, income, and business profits. This is in line with what was stated (Sahid et al., 2020; Yusriadi, Farida, et al., 2019; Yusriadi, Sahid, et al., 2019) that culture can have a greater influence on perceptions of skills than entrepreneurship education, while other findings state that entrepreneurship education is important because it correlates with long-term entrepreneurial intentions and better perceptions of business opportunities.

Over time, with the development of management science and technology, especially information technology, Bugis entrepreneurs believe that formal education for a businessman is essential and greatly influences quality management or business management. The entrepreneur's education must support today's business because the level of competition, technological advances, and the needs of increasingly advanced business administration demand higher levels of knowledge and skills. This is what causes the importance of formal education for every entrepreneur, as well as having to gain experience. Bugis entrepreneurs believe that management knowledge is increasingly needed, such as production management, warehousing management, transportation management, and strategic management, all of which support the implementation of a strategy of stability and business expansion.

### ***Trying experience***

Experience in doing business is essential for a trader, especially for past Bugis entrepreneurs, because they were not equipped with adequate knowledge or formal education,

so they had to learn from experience every time they pursued business activities. Experience is trying to be a great teacher; as the saying goes, that experience is a great teacher. They develop their business by relying only on their knowledge; even with experience, they can be more resilient and prosperous in inter-island trade.

Indeed, in the past, an inter-island trader had limited means and facilities to support his business, such as transportation, communication, and other facilities, so he needed tenacity and the ability and courage of a trader to decide. The decision of a rice entrepreneur, especially in inter-island trade, is very vulnerable to risks of damage to goods, drowning, delays, and market uncertainty, which are the tough challenges he faces.

The current Bugis entrepreneurs in the inter-island rice trade are not as heavy as they felt in the past because now there are much better and more complete motorboats with adequate facilities and infrastructure to guarantee the condition or quality of the rice. The risk of time or delays in arriving at the destination market is relatively more minor and can be overcome; in addition, the advancement of increasingly sophisticated communication tools allows every entrepreneur to communicate with their trading partners via telephone or WhatsApp messages so that they can contact partners at any time. They are trying to find out market conditions.

Business experience supports Bugis entrepreneurs in developing expansion strategy management (business expansion), including production scale and market expansion. Business experience among Bugis entrepreneurs is needed to grow their businesses. The more experiences they go through, the more they support them in carrying out an expansion strategy, namely increasing production capabilities and expanding marketing areas. Those with business experience steeped in cultural values, accompanied by the ability to adjust to developments in management science and technology, are better able to maintain and improve their business through a strategy of stability.

Ruin often occurs due to a manager's lack of experience and expertise. His indifference to change results in making decisions that are not right, causing the achievement of the goals as planned to fail. Old habits or traditions used previously in organizations are still being used without regard to very dynamic changes and developments (Ahdan et al., 2019).

### ***Sources Of Venture Capital***

Capital is one of the main factors determining an entrepreneur's success in developing his business. For Bugis entrepreneurs in the past, the view was that in trading, trust was needed as the primary capital to build a partnership with other parties, so the confidence of other people could overcome that dependency on preparing business capital that came from one's wealth.

Bugis entrepreneurs are starting and developing their businesses with sources of capital that can come from their abilities and from outside, such as family, partners, and banking financial institutions. Their capital ability is minimal, so they will need help developing their business, so they must be assisted by outside capital, which generally comes from banking institutions (Setiawan et al., 2021).

Business capital in the form of cash was one of the essential factors for an entrepreneur in the past to create continuity of activities and smooth rotation of the rice trading business. Cash as business capital is very much needed in everyday life. The size of

an entrepreneur's trading business scale also depends on their capital ownership, significantly money. Bugis entrepreneurs in the past prioritized are storing their wealth apart from cash, also storing it in the form of objects or valuables. Such as gold jewelry, rice fields, gardens, ponds, boats, and houses, as well as other valuables they considered could be used as the capital by selling them to other parties, if needed.

Available at any time to maintain the stability of fulfilling consumer demand. For Bugis entrepreneurs, capital savings in cash are currently needed. Still, more are used to develop businesses in other sectors or are kept in deposits at banking institutions, which support the stability strategy they are implementing, namely where Bugis entrepreneurs maintain business stability with working capital.

Capital ownership for Bugis entrepreneurs is a benchmark in developing rice milling and trading businesses. The amount of capital and sources of money it has determines the strategy to be implemented, such as a business expansion strategy that can only be implemented if the availability of capital supports it.

Today's financial transaction activities are different from in the past, where there is no longer too much importance on having cash in transactions, but by using banking services, namely the facility of making certain transactions or withdrawing money through Automated Teller Machines (ATMs) or Automatic Teller Machines. In addition, other bank payment facilities such as Mandiri debit cards, business partner cards, simple cards, and mobile banking facilities provide services to bank customers to conduct banking transactions. This requires entrepreneurs to keep their capital in banking which can be used at any time to launch a stability and expansion strategy.

### ***The principle of work for charity***

Bugis entrepreneurs in the past, with their dominant religion being Muslim, influenced their behavior in doing business more. In developing their business, they also do not abandon religious activities; in fact, they generally become pioneers in building places of worship (mosques and mullahs) in every region and religious activities in Islam.

Few of them in the past held the view that working or conducting a trading business was an activity for charity; moreover, the goods they traded were rice, a basic need for society. Therefore, most of the Bugis entrepreneurs who trade rice are reluctant to leave the business (Kasim et al., 2022), even though the profit levels are not very promising, and even face many risks of losses, such as decreased quality of rice due to damage, facing imported rice at relatively lower prices. Still, they believe the rice business is profitable, and we can do charity because it fulfills basic human needs.

For Bugis entrepreneurs in developing rice milling and trading businesses, it is not only to pursue profit as the motivation of every entrepreneur, but they are also driven by a view that work is for charity.

## **Conclusion**

Cultural values have shown their role in influencing the behavior of Bugis entrepreneurs in acting and transforming rice business management strategies so far. The cultural values that exist in society color their attitudes toward doing business. Still, in line with the development of time and advances in management science and technology, the



attitudes and behavior of Bugis entrepreneurs also experience the dynamics of the management transformation of the business strategies they develop.

Bugis entrepreneurs developing their business in the form of rice milling and trading are known as stability and business expansion strategies. The stability strategy is used in developing its business, especially in creating stability in production activities and capital and fulfilling the demands of consumers or business partners. At the same time, the expansion strategy is carried out to expand the business in the aspects of production and marketing.

The role of cultural values in the transformation of business strategy management developed by Bugis entrepreneurs can be demonstrated in the attitudes and management decisions they take, which include the importance of honesty, flexibility and firmness, social values, feelings of shame or "Siri" (covering a sense of guilt if: committing fraud, not succeeding and not keeping promises), formal education, business experience, sources of business capital, the principle of hard work and fate/destiny, the focus of working for a charity, the focus of cooperation.

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