

Indigenous Social Control Preventing Drug Misuse Among Pampang Youth in Digital Era

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Abstract

This study investigated the role of indigenous social control in preventing drug misuse among youth in Pampang Village, an urban indigenous community of the Dayak Kenyah in Samarinda, Indonesia. The research was motivated by increasing concerns over the digital era's influence, particularly social media on youth behavior and moral disengagement. Using a qualitative descriptive method, data were gathered through interviews with the village head and local officers from the National Narcotics Agency (BNN), as well as field observations within the community. The findings revealed that, despite the exposure of youth to online risks, the Pampang community has sustained a strong internal system of social regulation rooted in customary practices. Regular community gatherings in the Lamin (traditional longhouse), especially during year-end cultural rituals, provide a platform for elders to convey collective advice and reinforce social norms. Additionally, close coordination between traditional leaders and state actors namely the Bintara Pembina Desa (village-based military officer) and Bhayangkara Pembina Keamanan dan Ketertiban Masyarakat (community police officer) enhances early prevention of social deviance. These mechanisms, based on communal shame, moral reinforcement, and solidarity, have effectively safeguarded youth from involvement in drug-related issues. The study concludes that indigenous social control, when aligned with formal institutional support, can serve as a resilient cultural framework for preventing youth delinquency in the digital age.

Keywords: *customary law, digital influence, indigenous youth, preventive strategy, social control*

INTRODUCTION

The rapid development of digital technology and the widespread use of social media have significantly altered youth behavior worldwide. In many contexts, especially among urban indigenous youth, these transformations have introduced new forms of risk, including susceptibility to drug misuse. Although Indonesia has implemented various formal mechanisms to address narcotics abuse, such as law enforcement and rehabilitation programs through the National Narcotics Agency (BNN), these interventions often do not align with the cultural values or lived experiences of indigenous communities. The indigenous youth of Pampang Village in Samarinda, East Kalimantan belonging to the Dayak Kenyah community find themselves at the intersection of traditional life and digital modernity.

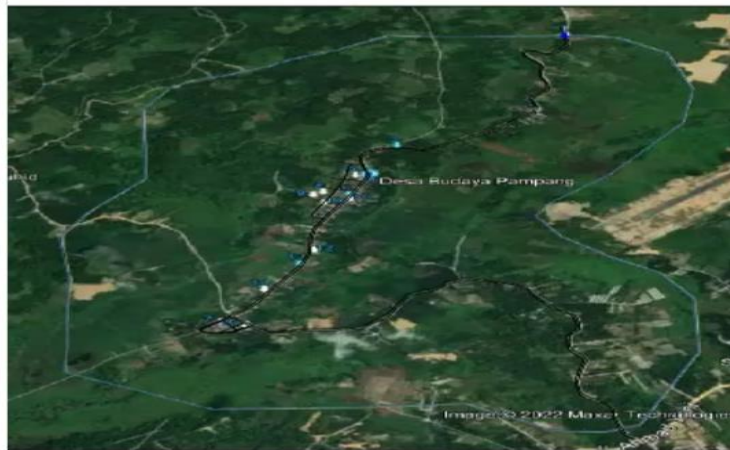


Figure 1. Pampang Urban Village Maps
Source: Pampang Village government (2025)

Pampang Village, led by Muhammad Hendra, SE, spans 33,384.2 hectares and is home to 1,962 residents in 571 households. Officially categorized as a traditional village, Pampang emphasizes cultural preservation and tourism. Its indigenous environment fosters informal governance and behavioral regulation, especially among youth.

This study investigates how traditional social control mechanisms operate as effective informal systems to prevent drug abuse among youth in the digital era. Unlike urban settings that rely primarily on legal sanctions, Pampang maintains strong social cohesion through customary law (*hukum adat*), collective moral responsibility, and cultural rituals. Prior research by Sutisna (2022) on *pikukuh adat* in Baduy and Sudianto (2022) on *vengitus* in Bali demonstrates the power of indigenous norms in resolving social issues [1], [2]. However, there is limited research on how such systems persist in urbanized indigenous settings facing digital threats.

Using a qualitative sociological approach, this study explores indigenous resilience as a form of preventive action. Social control theory explains how bonding, commitment, involvement, and belief regulate behavior [3]. Customary restorative justice, embedded in traditional practices, offers an alternative to punitive models. In Pampang, collaboration between elders, the *kelurahan*, *Babinsa*, and *Bhabinkamtibmas* supports community-based prevention.

Digital platforms have increased youth exposure to drugs. The National Narcotics Agency (BNN) reported that by 2023, 10% of Indonesian teens had experimented with drugs [4], [5]. In Pampang, informal deterrents like shame, elder counseling, and family mediation remain effective. Family resilience also plays a key role, as shown by Kusumawaty et al. (2021) [6].

Simatupang and Faisal (2022) stress the importance of moral education and parental involvement in drug prevention [7]. Indigenous systems naturally uphold these values, offering a sustainable, culturally grounded approach to protecting youth in the digital age.

METHOD

This study employed a qualitative interpretive paradigm, aiming to explore how indigenous mechanisms of social control function as a preventive strategy against drug misuse among youth in the digital era. It focused on understanding the lived experiences and cultural logic embedded

within the social system of the Dayak Kenyah community in Pampang Village, East Kalimantan.

This study employed a descriptive qualitative approach as described by Sugiyono, aiming to understand social phenomena in depth and holistically through naturalistic and contextual data collection [8]. The type of research selected was case study, emphasizing a single bounded case the indigenous community of Pampang as a unit of analysis.

Data were collected through three main techniques:

1. In-depth interviews, conducted with the Head of Economic, Development and Environmental Affairs Pampang Urban Village (*Ahmad Hani Wibawa*), community leaders (customary elders), and representatives from the Samarinda City branch of the National Narcotics Agency or BNN Samarinda City (*M. Irsyad Furqoni*);
2. Field observations, particularly during community gatherings in the *lamin* (traditional longhouse) and interactions involving youth, elders, and government representatives;
3. Document analysis, including secondary sources related to customary law practices and government profiles of the village.

The unit of analysis was the indigenous youth group in Pampang Village, particularly in the context of their social environment, behavioral patterns, and exposure to digital media. Data analysis was conducted through thematic content analysis, involving categorization and interpretation of field notes, transcripts, and observed practices. The process included coding data into themes such as: customary conflict resolution, preventive values, communal sanctions, and the role of elders and external actors (Babinsa and Bhabinkamtibmas) in behavioral control.

The trustworthiness of the data was ensured through triangulation of sources (interviews, observation, documentation) and cross-verification with multiple informants.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This study revealed that drug misuse among youth in Pampang Village is not perceived as a widespread problem, due to strong traditional mechanisms of indigenous social control. However, the risk of media-induced behavioral deviation particularly through exposure to social media—was acknowledged both by community leaders and local institutions such as the National Narcotics Agency (BNN).

1. Indigenous Social Cohesion and Moral Sanctions

Through field observation and interviews, it was found that communal values and customary authority remain central to behavior regulation. Village elders play a key role in reinforcing social norms, particularly through regular gatherings at the *lamin* (longhouse). These events, held annually during the December period, are attended by all customary elders, youth, government officials, and members of the security forces.

“Every year we meet in the lamin before Christmas and New Year to reflect on social issues, and provide moral advice. Most problems are resolved internally before they escalate,” Ahmad Hani Wibawa [9]

This setting provides not only a cultural platform but also a communal space for preventive intervention. Issues such as youth misconduct, minor theft, and disrespect toward

elders are usually discussed openly, followed by *petuah adat* (traditional counsel).

While traditional methods are deeply ingrained in Pampang, there is a recognized limitation in formal data collection regarding drug abuse cases among youth. Bowo indicates that the Pampang urban village doesn't have specific data on teenage drug users. However, he acknowledges that "if you talk about young people, there's always something", suggesting an awareness of issues even without formal records. The community's response tends to be "familial" or "kekeluargaan", aiming for internal resolution rather than public exposure or immediate official intervention. This aligns with the perception that drug use is an "aib" (shame), which often leads families to directly seek rehabilitation services from institutions like the BNN while maintaining privacy.

The BNN's approach to rehabilitation also incorporates a degree of localized engagement. While core rehabilitation materials are standardized from national and international sources, the BNN encourages clients to be active in community activities like *gotong royong* (mutual cooperation). This subtle integration aims to facilitate reintegration by fostering social participation within the existing communal framework. Furthermore, the BNN actively conducts socializations in communities, including Pampang, to educate the public on the dangers of drugs and, crucially, to advocate against stigmatizing individuals who have undergone rehabilitation. This anti-stigma campaign is vital, as negative social pressure can trigger relapse. The BNN emphasizes that rehabilitated individuals should be accepted, given space for interaction, and even offered opportunities if they possess skills, without dwelling on their past struggles. This highlights a shared objective between traditional community values, which often prioritize internal resolution and support, and the BNN's efforts to promote acceptance and reintegration for those seeking recovery.

2. Strategic Collaboration: Adat–State Synergy

The collaboration between customary leaders, the village government, and formal security apparatus (Babinsa and Bhabinkamtibmas) strengthens the community's ability to respond quickly to social threats. BNN officials confirmed this synergy during interviews.

"They have their own way of managing it. Even if there are incidents, it's rarely escalated because the community resolves them internally," M. Irsyad Furqoni [10]

BNN also reported having conducted community outreach in the *lamin* using cultural storytelling and interactive games, as shown in Figure 2 below.



Figure 2. Youth Engagement Session in Lamin Pampang Using Cultural-based Media

Source: Kaltimkece.id (2020) [11]

This hybrid approach demonstrates that informal institutions, when supported by formal actors, can serve as a reliable barrier against external risks like drug abuse. Funding for this public awareness campaign comes from Probebaya, the Mayor of Samarinda's flagship Community Development and Empowerment Program, which operates at the RT (neighborhood unit) level. Samarinda has an ambitious goal to be "*Bersinar*" an acronym that stands for "free from drugs."

Beyond structured public outreach efforts like the *Probebaya*-funded awareness sessions, local-level monitoring mechanisms in Pampang Village also benefit from continuous informal communication between state and adat actors. According to Pak Bowo, the Village Head's Economic and Development Officer, coordination with Babinsa and Bhabinkamtibmas is not merely formal but rooted in shared locality.[12]

"Mr. Bintang, the Babinkamtibmas, is a local himself. He lives here, he knows the youth, and he talks directly with adat leaders." Ahmad Hani Wibawa

This embedded relationship fosters a unique monitoring model where social issues are detected and addressed early often before reaching formal punitive thresholds. For instance, while there is no official data on youth drug use at the village level, minor signs of deviant behavior are often processed through community gatherings held in the *Lamin* at the end of the year. In these forums, which can last for hours, community elders (15 or more at times) deliver public reflections and admonitions. These rituals serve as collective moral audits that reinforce local norms, including those related to youth behavior and substance use.

BNN views adat forums as complementary, combining structured rehab support with culturally legitimized moral discourse. Together, they form a hybrid governance model, balancing technical protocols with symbolic authority and community inclusion.

"Even if the adat sanctions are not formalized anymore, people still listen when elders

speak. That's the cultural capital we work with." Ahmad Hani Wibawa

Together, these elements form a multi-layered system of resilience. The collaboration doesn't eliminate risks, but it allows for adaptive, culturally grounded responses. In contexts like Pampang where statistical visibility is low, but community integration is high this adat and state synergy becomes not just strategic but essential.

3. Customary Control as a Restorative Framework

The findings show that the community does not rely on punitive sanctions but rather on restorative mechanisms grounded in shame, reputation, and reconciliation. A youth who violates social norms will typically be summoned by elders and asked to undergo a counseling-like session, often involving family and respected figures. Rather than being isolated, the individual is brought into dialogue with the community, where moral boundaries are reaffirmed through collective reflection.

Strong social bonds involving attachment, commitment, involvement, and belief are critical in reducing the likelihood of deviant behavior. In Pampang, these bonds are not only familial but deeply cultural [13]. Customs and traditions provide the moral scaffolding that guides behavior and social expectations, particularly among the youth. The presence of elders and community leaders in daily life—who are both respected and accessible—ensures that norms are communicated not only formally but also through subtle, everyday interactions.

This restorative model finds its most visible expression in the annual lorangian, a community-wide assembly held in December. During this event, all villagers gather in the Lamin, the traditional communal hall, where elders and customary leaders speak one by one to review the social and moral conduct of the community over the past year. Topics range from tourism and cultural issues to youth delinquency and social harmony. These sessions can last up to five hours and are compulsory for all villagers to attend. As described by Bowo,

"Everyone has to be there. The back and front doors are closed. People can't leave. They must listen. " Ahmad Hani Wibawa

Through this ritualized space, the community performs a collective audit of its values, gently correcting those who have strayed and reaffirming its moral commitments. Significantly, this model does not exclude collaboration with the state. In fact, restorative mechanisms practiced by the adat community are complemented by government-supported rehabilitation programs. Recognizing their legal status as children, the state protects teenagers involved in drug-related incidents from criminalization. Instead, they are offered rehabilitation as a means of breaking the cycle of substance abuse. These programs go beyond individual treatment. As described by BNN official Irsyad, rehabilitation includes family counseling, group therapy, and post-rehabilitation monitoring that helps reintegrate individuals back into their social environments.

These efforts are conducted within the youths' closest social circles, in alignment with local values. This proximity is critical in easing their return and ensuring that they are not stigmatized by their past. Irsyad further emphasizes that stigma from family members or neighbors can become a major trigger for relapse, often undoing months of progress. Thus, BNN's strategy

involves educating communities to view former users not as criminals, but as individuals in recovery who need care, structure, and support. In this way, state institutions reinforce not replace the restorative ethos already practiced at the local level.

In Pampang, then, customary authority offers a culturally grounded pathway for restorative justice, while the state contributes formal resources for recovery and reintegration. This dual structure works in synergy: adat forums prevent minor violations from escalating, while formal mechanisms offer structured support for more complex cases. Additionally, social infrastructure such as Posyandu, PKK, and community social workers (PSM) provide a web of practical and emotional support to vulnerable families.

Rather than resorting to exclusion or incarceration, Pampang's approach restores youth to their roles within family and society. The model shows how restorative traditions, when supported by responsive state systems, can provide a humane, culturally appropriate response to youth vulnerability. In a context where statistical data is often absent, but community cohesion is strong, this blend of customary and formal care offers a compelling alternative to punitive models.

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Strong social bonds involving attachment, commitment, involvement, and belief reduce the likelihood of deviant behavior. In Pampang, these bonds are not only familial but deeply cultural [13]. Recognizing their status as children, the state also protects teenagers caught in drug-related situations from ending up in prison. Instead, the government offers rehabilitation as a crucial step to break the cycle of drug abuse. This rehabilitation is not just for the individual user, but also extends to their family and the surrounding community.

These rehabilitation efforts are delivered within their closest social circles. This approach helps ensure they align with local values, making it easier for them to adapt and reintegrate into society. Therefore, strong support and synergy from the community around these young people are vital. This collective effort greatly facilitates the restoration of their roles and functions within their families and society.

4. Comparison with Other Indigenous Systems

Compared to *Pikukuh Adat* in Baduy and *Vrêngitus* in Bali, Pampang's system is less formalized yet remains equally effective due to its adaptability and strong collaboration with state actors. Unlike remote or isolated tribes, Pampang is located in an urban periphery, making it a unique example of urbanized indigenous resilience, as further illustrated in Table 1.

Table 1. Comparison of Customary Social Control Practices in Selected Indigenous Communities

Community	Customary Tool	Geographic Setting	Integration with State	Drug Prevention Mechanism
Baduy (Banten)	<i>Pikukuh Adat</i>	Remote	Minimal	Sacred prohibition

Bali (Murutuwu)	<i>Vrêngitus</i>	Rural	Moderate	and isolation Ritual cleansing and sanctions
Dayak (Kalteng)	<i>Hakum Tambu</i>	Semi-remote	Moderate	Customary fines and excommunication
Pampang (Kenyah)	<i>Lamin-based forum</i>	Urban– peripheral	Strong collaboration	Moral advice and early intervention

Source: Author's analysis (2025) [14]

The comparative overview in Table 1 shows that indigenous social control in preventing drug misuse is shaped not by a single factor, but by the interplay of geographic setting, customary tools, state integration, and resulting prevention mechanisms. First, geographic setting influences access to state institutions. Remote communities have minimal contact with formal actors, while urban–peripheral ones like Pampang benefit from close collaboration with agencies such as the National Narcotics Agency (BNN), Babinsa, and community police. This integration enhances access to rehabilitation, digital literacy programs, and monitoring systems. Second, the type of customary tool shapes preventive strategies. Tools rooted in sacred prohibition or ritual cleansing emphasize symbolic sanctions and isolation, whereas forums like the *lamin* in Pampang rely on dialogue, moral advice, and early intervention. The latter proves more adaptable to digital-era challenges, as flexible mechanisms can incorporate digital literacy and prevention messages more effectively than rigid, ritual-based practices. Third, integration with the state amplifies the reach of customary tools. Strong collaboration allows cultural legitimacy to merge with technical support, as seen in *adat* gatherings at the *lamin* that double as venues for BNN campaigns and digital literacy initiatives. Fourth, drug prevention mechanisms sacred prohibition, ritual cleansing, fines, or dialogical approaches emerge from the interaction of these variables. The most adaptive models balance cultural legitimacy, open communication, and institutional support.

In the digital era, risks such as online dealers, normalization of drug use, and virtual peer pressure require both flexible customary tools and strong institutional collaboration. Pampang illustrates this synergy: its urban–peripheral context, dialogical *lamin* forum, and robust partnership with state actors create a culturally grounded yet flexible system responsive to digital-age challenges.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the indigenous community of Pampang Village demonstrates a strong and adaptive system of social control that effectively prevents drug misuse among youth, particularly in the face of growing exposure to social media. Rooted in Dayak Kenyah customs and reinforced through communal values, the mechanism operates through a combination of customary advice (*petuah adat*), public reflection forums in the *lamin*, and early intervention supported by formal actors such as *Babinsa*, *Bhabinkamtibmas*, and the National Narcotics Agency (BNN).

The effectiveness of this indigenous system lies in its emphasis on moral accountability, collective responsibility, and restorative resolution, rather than punitive or legalistic approaches.

The findings validate social control theory while simultaneously offering a culturally embedded extension of it demonstrating how traditional norms can remain relevant and influential even in urbanized indigenous communities. The synergy between customary institutions and formal state actors serves as a replicable model for other communities navigating the risks of modernization and digital influence.

Recommendations from this study highlight the need to:

1. Institutionalize cultural-based preventive models into broader national drug prevention frameworks.
2. Strengthen support for intersectoral collaboration between indigenous leaders and formal institutions.
3. Facilitate inclusive public policies that recognize and empower indigenous approaches to social protection.

From a methodological perspective, this research expands the utility of qualitative interpretive inquiry in understanding culturally specific preventive systems. Theoretically, it calls for a re-contextualization of social control theory in postcolonial and indigenous urban settings.

Further studies are encouraged to explore longitudinal effects of cultural interventions, comparative models across other Dayak subgroups, and the role of digital literacy in indigenous youth resilience. Exploring the interface between customary wisdom and contemporary communication platforms may also contribute to designing more culturally responsive youth development strategies.

DECLARATION OF GENERATIVE AI

During the preparation of this work, the author used *ChatGPT by OpenAI* to assist in refining the structure, enhancing clarity of language, and translating selected parts from Indonesian to English. After using this tool, the author carefully reviewed and edited all generated content to ensure accuracy, academic integrity, and contextual relevance, and takes full responsibility for the content of the publication.

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