

Cultural sustainability: An exploration of local community strategies for preserving the Merariq tradition in Indonesia

Sri Agustina^{1,2*} , I Komang Astina² , Yusuf Suharto² , Singgih Susilo² , Tuti Mutia² 

¹Department of Geography, Faculty of Social Sciences, State University of Malang, Malang, INDONESIA

²Department of Geography Education, Faculty of Social Sciences and Economics, Hamzanwadi University, Selong, INDONESIA

*Corresponding Author: sri.agustina.2207219@students.um.ac.id

Citation: Agustina, S., Astina, I. K., Suharto, Y., Susilo, S., & Mutia, T. (2026). Cultural sustainability: An exploration of local community strategies for preserving the Merariq tradition in Indonesia. *European Journal of Sustainable Development Research*, 10(1), em0346. <https://doi.org/10.29333/ejosdr/17283>

ARTICLE INFO

Received: 09 Jul. 2025

Accepted: 18 Sep. 2025

ABSTRACT

Merariq is a wedding tradition in Indonesia that originated from the Sasak Tribe. This study aimed to explore the strategy for preserving the Merariq tradition within the Sasak Tribe community. This research employed qualitative phenomenological design as a constructive approach. Data gathering methodologies included comprehensive interviews, observational studies, and surveys. The research site was Suela sub-district, East Lombok Regency, Indonesia, with 24 informants, including traditional leaders, community leaders, and residents of East Lombok. Data analysis followed the model of Miles and Huberman, which consists of data collection, data reduction, and conclusion drawing. The data were then tested through triangulation. This study revealed that the Merariq tradition is still practiced and preserved by the people of East Lombok. The strategies used in preserving this tradition include habituation, socialization, deliberation, and education. This strategy is valuable as a source of inspiration for other cultural preservation efforts in various communities around the world.

Keywords: cultural sustainability, Merariq tradition, local culture, strategy, preserving

INTRODUCTION

Local culture has diverse contributions to society, nation, and state. The diversity of these contributions can be seen in their ability to maintain social and environmental harmony through inherited local wisdom (Al'Ghani et al., 2024; Menegatti, 2017). The ethical values, norms, and values in local culture teach solidarity, a sense of community, and respect for nature and others (Chen et al., 2018). In addition, local culture is also a rich source of unique arts and cultural heritage, such as musical traditions, dances, fine arts, and handicrafts (Nowell, 2015). This contribution has various benefits, one of which is to improve the nation's economy (Gultom et al., 2020; Sumarmi et al., 2020), so that local culture needs to be preserved.

Over time, society faces the challenge of social and cultural change, because of globalization due to the pervasiveness of today's mass media (Tzianakopoulou & Manesis, 2018). These changes have the potential to threaten the sustainability of local cultures. Mekonnen et al. show that there are indications that local cultural heritage is starting to be endangered. In addition, it is difficult to preserve cultural values and norms in society (Brunner, 1996), especially in cultural systems that are vulnerable to unsustainability due to the influence of

globalization in the modern era. However, there is one wedding tradition from the local culture of the Sasak Tribe on Lombok Island that still survives today. This tradition is known as Merariq (Hariati et al., 2024).

Etymologically the word Merariq is taken from the word "run", running. Merari'an means melai'ang which means to run. Terminologically, merari' has two meanings. Firstly, running. This is the actual meaning. Second, the overall execution of marriage according to Sasak custom. Running away is a real action to free the girl from the bonds of her parents and family (Sarmini et al., 2018; Sejati et al., 2023). According to the findings of the investigation conducted by Umam et al. (2024), Merariq is the entire series of marriages carried out by the bride and groom to achieve a religiously and culturally valid marriage bond.

The Merariq procession comprises eight stages: midang, mulang, selabar, sejati, sorong serah aji krama, bait janji, nyongkolan, and balas lampaq nae. Mulang is a stage in the Merariq tradition that presents contradictions. Mulang Mulang is the stage where the groom runs away, or is known as stealing the bride, without the knowledge of the family. The aim is to build a household in marriage (Zulvianingrum, 2022). The contradiction is found among religious leaders and cultural experts. Religious leaders consider that Merariq is a Sasak culture that is unethical and does not need to be

maintained because it begins with the stage of running away from women without the knowledge of the family. This stage contradicts any religious values on Lombok Island that teach marriage through the consent of both parents (Rizkiwati et al., 2022). Meanwhile, cultural figures consider that Merariq has local wisdom values that need to be preserved (Hamdani & Fauzia, 2022; Lestari & Yusra, 2022).

In local wisdom there are knowledge, beliefs, insights, ethics, and values upheld by the community (Mooney, 2001; Ogutu et al., 2017), which function as spiritual guidance for behavior and actions in daily life (Maulyda et al., 2024). The local wisdom contained in the Merariq tradition can foster values of cooperation and solidarity which are important for community resilience (Hamdani & Fauzia, 2022). Therefore, the local wisdom found in the Sasak community needs to be preserved because it has a value that is believed to be true until now (Budiwanti & Eidhamar, 2024; Mutia et al., 2019).

Different views within the community in East Lombok cannot reduce the use of the Merariq tradition. Interviews with students at Hamzanwadi University in the department of geography showed that out of 16 students, 14 still wanted to use this tradition. There are only two people who do not want to use this culture to get married. The two respondents were from the Island of Sumbawa or the Sumba Tribe (data from the researcher's interview in 2024). This is certainly interesting because as today's students who are in the modern era, it is likely to influence perspectives and expectations of local culture (Ravasi & Schultz, 2006), particularly regarding Merariq. Students may choose to align the tradition with a more modern lifestyle or emphasize aspects of the ritual that indicate social status or even do not use this tradition at all. Therefore, this study raises a question of research, namely, the strategies used by the community in preserving this tradition.

Until now, there has been no qualitative research that explores the strategies used in preserving the Merariq tradition in communities on Lombok Island. Some differences with other studies are Zulvianingrum (2022) and Azwar et al. (2024) in her research analyses social communication strategies as an alternative solution to prevent early marriage cases in Lombok. Hariati and team investigate the Merariq marriage tradition as a social construct within the Sasak Tribe, analyzing its alignment with law number 1 of 1974 provisions (Hariati et al., 2024). Azwar et al. (2024) examine the perspectives of religious and traditional authorities regarding Merariq culture and the interpretation of Islamic law concerning Merariq culture (Sarmini et al., 2018). Fibrianti and Yuliati investigate the impact of Merariq culture (Nikah Menculik) on the prevalence of early marriage in East Lombok Regency (Apriliani et al., 2024).

Despite previous studies examining the Merariq tradition in terms of social, legal, and its impact on early marriage, there is a lack of qualitative research specifically exploring the strategies employed by the Sasak community in Lombok to sustain the Merariq tradition. This study fills the gap in the literature by investigating how the community in Suela sub-district, East Lombok Regency, implements cultural strategies to preserve the continuity of the Merariq tradition amidst the influence of modernity and globalization. Therefore, this research was conducted to fill research gaps that other researchers have not studied.

The purpose of the research is to find out the strategies used by the community to preserve the Merariq tradition and maintain its continuity during globalization. This objective can provide lessons for the community regarding creative approaches used in maintaining the relevance and sustainability of tradition and can be a source of inspiration for other cultural preservation efforts in various communities around the world.

METHOD

Research Design

This study utilized qualitative methodologies to facilitate a profound comprehension and yielded more prosperous, comprehensive insights into societal values (Geertz, 1973). It can also provide an understanding of how local communities preserve their traditions (Creswell, 2014). The approach used by researchers is phenomenology using social construction theory. Social construction according to Berger and Lukman has a core consisting of 3 stages:

- (1) externalization, where individuals adjust to the surrounding socio-cultural world,
- (2) Objectification is the result of assessment of self-adjustment to the social and cultural world, and
- (3) Internalization Individual actions based on the results of understanding and evaluation in the previous process.

Subject and Data Collection

This research begins with initial observations about the Merariq tradition on Lombok Island. Subsequently, East Lombok Regency was designated as the site for distributing questionnaires through social media. East Lombok Regency is known as the city of santri, a hub for students studying Islam while simultaneously maintaining the Merariq culture. The findings of this conclusion are derived from the researcher's preliminary observations. The researchers hailed from the island of Lombok and resided in East Lombok Regency. The involvement of researchers in qualitative research is crucial because researchers in qualitative research are responsible for designing research, which includes choosing the right methodology and sampling strategy (Creswell, 2014; Denzin & Lincoln, 1999), as well as data analysis, interpreter, reporting, and authoring of research results.

This research consists of secondary data and primary data. Secondary data was derived from married individuals in East Lombok. The data was gathered by completing instruments regarding utilizing the Merariq culture through social media, specifically Facebook and WhatsApp groups in each village in East Lombok Regency. The total number of recorded informants was 1,309 individuals. The demographic breakdown of the 1,309 respondents is as follows: In terms of gender, 52% (681 respondents) were male, while 48% (628 respondents) were female. Regarding the age groups, 22% (288 respondents) fell within the 18-25 years range, 30% (393 respondents) were in the 26-35 years group, 25% (327 respondents) aged between 36-45 years, 18% (236 respondents) were between 46-60 years, and 5% (65



Figure 1. Perigi Village (Source: Research Documentation in 2025)

respondents) were over 60 years. As for educational background, 6% (79 respondents) had no formal education, 15% (196 respondents) had completed primary school, 30% (393 respondents) had attended secondary school, and 49% (641 respondents) had higher education (university/college). Geographically, 40% (523 respondents) resided in Selaparang Village, while 60% (786 respondents) were from Perigi Village. This demographic distribution ensures a comprehensive and diverse perspective on the Merariq tradition, representing various gender, age, educational, and geographic groups, and contributes to a balanced understanding of the tradition's significance and practice in East Lombok.

A map illustrating the distribution and extent of the Merariq tradition procession's utilization was derived from secondary sources. The research location was identified through secondary data as Suela Sub-district, which predominantly employed the Merariq tradition. In the Suela sub-district, two villages were selected due to their historical significance: Selaparang village, the burial site of the monarch of Selaparang, and Perigi Village, which retained its rich customs (Figure 1). These two villages are believed to be able to describe how local people preserve the Merariq tradition.

Data Analysis

The data collection techniques used were in-depth interviews, observation, and documentation. After that, the data was analyzed using Miles and Huberman, which consists of data reduction, data display, and concluding (dos Santos Andrade et al., 2021). Data reduction is done to sharpen, classify, discard unnecessary, and organize data so that conclusions can be drawn and then verified. Data display (presentation of data) is data presented in various forms, such as diagrams, brief descriptions, and others. Concluding is the final activity carried out by researchers after other activities have been carried out. The data that has been analyzed is then tested for data validity through data triangulation so that the data is more accurate.

Triangulation is an activity of cross-checking between various sources, collection techniques, and time of data collection methodologies, and temporal aspects of data gathering. Triangulation refers to the process of cross-

checking data from multiple sources, collection techniques, and time frames to ensure the validity and reliability of the findings. In practice, this was applied by comparing data obtained through different methods, such as interviews, surveys, and observational studies, to identify consistency and discrepancies. Additionally, data was cross verified across different groups of informants, including community leaders, residents, and traditional figures, ensuring a diverse and comprehensive perspective. The temporal aspect was addressed by collecting data at various points in time to capture any potential changes or trends in the community's practices and attitudes towards the Merariq tradition. This multi-faceted approach enabled a robust validation of the findings and enhanced the credibility of the research.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The Use of Merariq Tradition in East Lombok

Merariq is a comprehensive sequence of matrimonial ceremonies conducted by the bride and groom to establish a lawful marital union within the Sasak Religion and culture (Hariati et al., 2024). This tradition not only serves to establish marital ties but also has an important role in maintaining social order and harmony in society (van der Horst & Albertyn, 2018). Overall, Merariq illustrates the richness of Sasak culture involving religious values and local wisdom upheld by the Sasak Tribe so that this tradition still exists today even though people on Lombok Island are currently living in the era of modernization and globalization. For example, In India, villages and tribes become protectors in living life based on values and culture (Ma, 2019) and contribute to preserving cultural legacy (Kurpis, 2017).

The results of secondary data show that the use of Merariq tradition according to the views of the people of East Lombok in 2024 reached 91.24%. The elucidation is depicted in Figure 2. On this map, the people of East Lombok in each sub-district still use the Merariq tradition. There are 18 sub-districts out of 21 sub-districts in East Lombok Regency that still use the Merariq tradition with a percentage above 80%. Suela sub-district is the sub-district that uses the Merariq tradition the most.

The continued use of the Merariq tradition demonstrates its preservation and sustainability (Boyle, 1999). This practice is upheld not just as a component of a socially and culturally cohesive ritual but also as a significant aspect of reinforcing their identity as a cohesive group (Budiwanti & Eidhamar, 2024). The questionnaire results indicated that the primary reasons for the East Lombok populace's adherence to the Merariq heritage were their Sasak tribal affiliation (9.13%) and the observance of established customs (33.65%). This indicates that the Sasak people acknowledge the significance of safeguarding their cultural history as an integral aspect of their identity as a tribe residing in the Lombok Island region.

The Merariq tradition has eight processes in its implementation. The following are the eight steps:

1. Midang is a stage of introduction between men and women with the aim of approaching to obtain a marriage agreement.

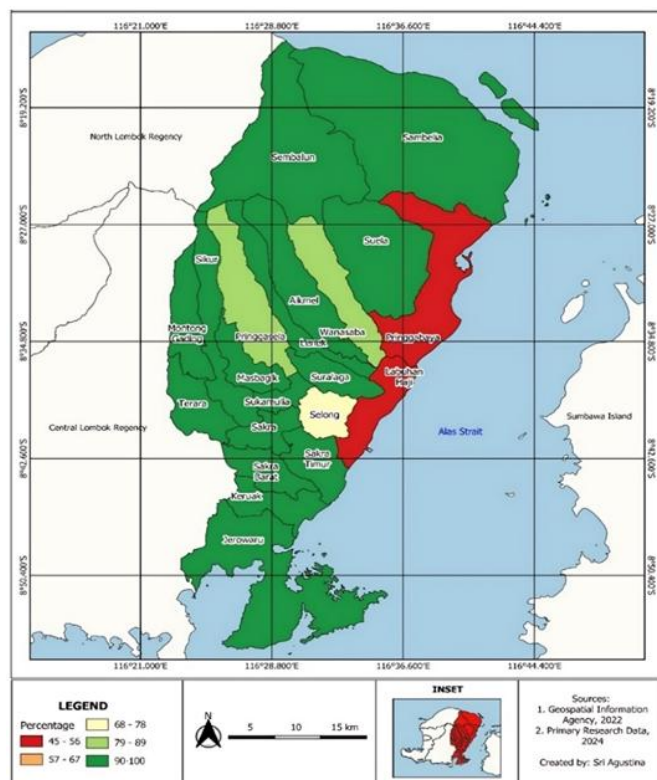


Figure 2. Map of the distribution of community views regarding the use of Merariq (ESRI Satellite in 2025)

2. Memulang is the step of running away/ kidnapping women carried out by men without being known by the families of both parties.
3. Sejati is the process of informing the parents of the emulating process by a delegation from the male side to the female parents, as well as the process of agreeing on pisuka (a fee given to the female family to reward them for raising their daughter well) and ajikrama (a customary fee symbolically paid based on social status).
4. Selabar is the notification to the entire community that a marriage will take place.
5. Sorong Serah Aji Krama is the stage of giving aji krama and pisuka to the woman's family.
6. Akad Nikah / Bait Janji is the handover of responsibility by the woman's family to the husband in the marriage ceremony.
7. Nyongkolan is the stage of visiting the bride's parents by walking with the community accompanied by traditional music (gamelan).
8. Bales Lampaq Nae is an activity carried out by the male family and the bride and groom to visit the home of the female family with the aim of strengthening the relationship between the two families.

Based on data on the completeness of the Merariq tradition procession in several regions in East Lombok, it reached 63.99% of the total use of the Merariq tradition stages of respondents. Suela sub-district (76.15%) is the most complete area in the use of the Merariq traditional procession. This condition is certainly inseparable from the cultural history of Suela sub-district. Suela sub-district, with its rich

cultural history, displays an inseparable heritage from the past. This is closely related to the relocation of King Selaparang due to the invasion of the Balinese Kingdom in Lombok. King Selaparang moved to the village of Selaparang in the Suela sub-district. The tomb of King Selaparang, located in Selaparang village, is clear evidence that the king once lived in this area. This phenomenon explains why the Merariq tradition is still held firmly by the people in Suela Sub-district today. In addition to Selaparang Village, there is also the traditional village of Limbungan, located in Perigi Village, Suela Sub-district, which still maintains a heritage in the form of traditional houses since ancient times. Therefore, Suela sub-district is used as a research location.

East Lombok Community Strategy in Preserving Merariq Tradition as a Local Cultural Heritage

The people of East Lombok consist of various tribes. These tribes include Sasak, Javanese, Mbojo, Sumba, and others. The largest tribe that inhabits Lombok Island is the Sasak Tribe. The number of Sasak Tribe is almost 90%, while other tribes are only a few percent (Umam et al., 2024). Most of these tribes have adapted to the local culture on Lombok Island. The results of the questionnaire distribution showed that 83.54% of the 1309 respondents in East Lombok had a desire to preserve the Merariq tradition as an important part of local cultural heritage, even though some respondents came from outside the Sasak Tribe. Therefore, it is necessary to analyze the strategies of the people in East Lombok in maintaining this tradition so that it remains relevant and survives to this day. The strategies of the people in East Lombok in preserving the Merariq tradition are described in **Table 1**.

The people of East Lombok have 17 ways to preserve the Merariq tradition. Of the 17 ways, there are 4 strategies for preserving the Merariq tradition. These four strategies are socialization, education, habituation, and deliberation. These four strategies have an externalization process carried out by parents, society, schools, and the tradition itself so that it is embedded in individuals through an objectification process marked by feelings of pride, wanting to learn, develop, and uphold the Merariq tradition. Objectification subsequently leads to an internalization process, which is evident in persons who perpetuate the Merariq heritage by adhering to relevant regulations and assimilating syariat (Islamic religious rules) with elements of modernity in executing the Merariq tradition

Socialization

Socialization constitutes the preliminary phase of the externalization process in this research. Socialization enables the younger generation to comprehend and internalize the values and standards inherent in local traditions. The socializing strategy is implemented in six methods. One method is to convey the Merariq tradition to the next generation through parental storytelling. This approach helps the younger generation understand historical and cultural insights, reinforcing community bonds and cultural continuity (Schein, 1992).

Parents not only tell stories about Merariq and the Merariq experience to their children but also encourage and even require their children to use the Merariq tradition.

Table 1. How the East Lombok community preserves the Merariq tradition (Primary Data Results, 2024)

Social construction	Contribution	Strategy
Externalization		
1. Teaching children and grandchildren about the <i>Merariq</i> tradition through storytelling, emphasizing that it is an integral part of the Sasak tribal heritage.	Parents	Socialization storytelling
2. Encouraging family members and future generations to marry in accordance with the <i>Merariq</i> tradition.	Parents	Socialization
3. Inviting the community to preserve cultural heritage by actively participating in events that involve the <i>pesilaq</i> tradition, with social sanctions applied for non-participation.	Community	Socialization habituation traditions
4. Utilizing modern technology to promote and introduce regional culture, to local, national, and international audiences	Community	Socialization
5. Fostering cooperation among local residents to preserve the <i>Merariq</i> tradition by involving the younger generation in traditional processions	Community	Socialization and habituation
6. Introducing the tradition to foreign travelers as part of cultural tourism efforts.	Community	Socialization
7. Incorporating local cultural education, including the <i>Merariq</i> tradition, into school curricula through Local Content subjects.	School	Education
8. Community leaders are responsible for teaching the cultural values of <i>Merariq</i> through its various stages, including adherence to rules and enforcement of social sanctions when necessary.	Society and tradition	Socialization
Objectification		
1. Having a sense of pride to be able to maintain, defend, honor, preserve <i>Merariq</i>	Individuals	Habituation
2. Learning the customs on Lombok Island to grasp the philosophy and significance of each stage of the <i>Merariq</i> procession, ensuring the tradition remains relevant in modern times	Individuals school	Education
3. Upholding and respecting cultural customs.	Individuals	Habituation
4. Developing the <i>Merariq</i> tradition by adjusting the influence of globalization and Islamic rules through deliberation with community leaders.	Community	Deliberation
Internalization		
1. Ensuring the <i>Merariq</i> tradition remains a vibrant part of cultural identity.	Individuals	Habituation
2. Preserve the <i>Merariq</i> procession's authenticity by adhering to each stage of the <i>Merariq</i> tradition	Individuals	Habituation
3. Establishing the tradition as a fundamental custom for marriage ceremonies.	Individuals	Habituation
4. Abiding by all rules and norms associated with the <i>Merariq</i> procession.	Individuals	Habituation
5. Continuing traditional practices while incorporating modern elements and Islamic principles to reflect contemporary societal norms.	Individuals	Habituation

“All my children are married by Merariq and if any of my children are unmarried, I will marry them in the Merariq tradition” (in-depth interview with Mr. S).

Parents collaborate with the community to ensure that the younger generation and the community adhere to the Merariq tradition. One method employed is the preservation of the *pesilaq* tradition. *Pesilaq* is an invitation extended by messengers to every household. The event owner extends an invitation by enlisting the assistance of a traditional leader or a respected community member to visit each household to encourage the residents to attend the event. The practice persists today as it embodies a sentiment of gratitude towards the invites. Furthermore, the community imposes social punishments for noncompliance with the sequence of events by excluding individuals from participation in activities. The second sanction stipulates that the community will withhold assistance for any event they organize.

“I feel ashamed if I don’t attend the event if there is a *pesilaq*. Particularly if a *pesilaq* occurs and I do not participate, I fear I will not receive another invitation” (interview with Mr. A).

The duty to adhere to the Merariq tradition influences the comprehension and valuation of the cultural values and Indigenous knowledge embedded within the tradition. By directly engaging in the Merariq tradition, the subsequent generation can comprehend the significance of the process

and acquire knowledge about the cultural history integral to familial and communal identity.

The Merariq tradition, *nyongkolan*, also plays a role in the socialization process. *Nyongkolan* is the stage of delivering the bride to the house of the woman’s family by walking accompanied by music accompanied by the entire community, including children, adolescents, and adults (Figure 3). This stage serves to familiarise the next generation with the Merariq tradition. The *nyongkolan* stage serves as a platform for socialization among tourists, as it is customary for both domestic and international visitors to take photographs and participate in the Merariq parade en route to the bride’s residence. This activity can undoubtedly serve as an introduction to local, national, and international communities.

The socialization during the *nyongkolan* procession imparts educational significance, which is crucial for comprehending and transmitting traditional beliefs and customs to future generations, ensuring the Merariq legacy is pertinent and conserved within the community. According to research by Sumarmi et al. (2020), traditional ceremonies in which the community engages serve as a means for cultural acknowledgment and preservation (Prahmana, 2021). Research by Gumuseli and Eryilmaz (2011), and Sumarmi (2015) asserted that the active participation of communities and social groups in cultural activities can formulate policies essential for preserving, developing, and transmitting cultural values, hence fostering community cohesion.



Figure 3. Stages of Nyongkolan in the Merariq procession (Source: Field study)

Socialization strategies are also carried out using existing technology with the aim of introducing regional culture both locally and nationally. Technology can be a tool in the socialization process, enabling the spread of cultural knowledge beyond local boundaries. Digital platforms can host multimedia content featuring traditions, making traditions accessible to a wider audience to spread knowledge of traditions (Anoegrajekti et al., 2018). The Uyghur minority in China also uses digital platforms such as the Internet and online community forums for knowledge dissemination and preservation of their culture (Harris, 1988). People in Selaparang Village also do the same thing. The results of researcher observations in Selaparang Village there is a television network called cable TV, owned by one of the communities. One of the networks shows events held by the community such as the Merariq tradition. The community was very enthusiastic because they saw their video on television even though it was on a local scale in Selaparang village. This activity is certainly a means of introducing the Merariq tradition to the community and the next generation.

“We often watch weddings, deaths, and other events on cable TV that are broadcast by Udi (the person who owns the cable TV). The children are very happy because they can go on TV” (in-depth interview with Mr. D).

The collaboration of parents, the community, tradition, and technological support can foster a sense of community. The socialization process imparts the significance of preserving local customs as a component of social and cultural sustainability within the community.

Education

The externalization process is also carried out by getting to know and learning about regional culture through the school curriculum which is taught from an early age in formal schools in local content subjects. Some schools have begun to introduce this tradition to students in various ways. This includes incorporating traditional knowledge into local content books and curriculum at primary and secondary school levels (Figure 4).

Education serves a crucial function in preserving traditions, as it facilitates the introduction and instruction of

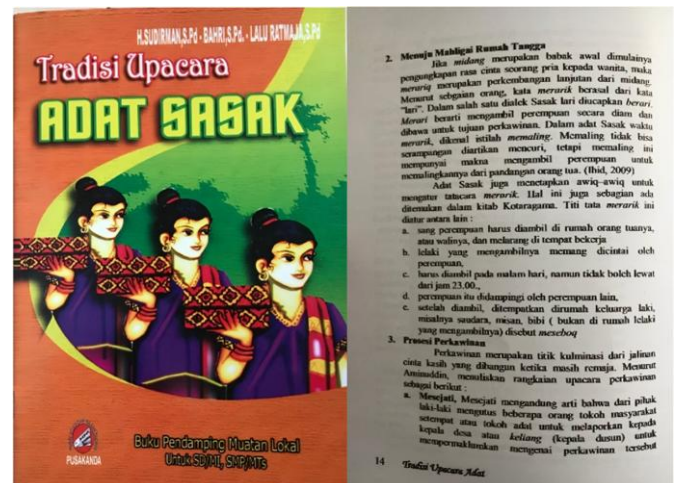


Figure 4. One of the books used by elementary and junior high schools on Lombok Island to introduce Sasak traditions (Bahri et al., 2018)

cultural values to the younger generation, enhancing their comprehension of these traditions (Cimen, 2014). Wulandari et al. proposed that cultural education through training, socialization, and mentoring can significantly enhance the community's cultural index (Boyle, 1999). Community groups include elements of tradition into the educational curriculum to facilitate in-depth learning and transmission of traditional arts, customs, languages, and rituals to subsequent generations. Educational institutions and community organizations contribute to socialization by integrating local customs into curricula and activities. This method guarantees that cultural education is organized and accessible to a broad audience (Tzianakopoulou & Manesis, 2018).

The process of externalization through socialization and educational practices within this tradition can foster comprehension and internalization among individuals regarding the tradition. Establishing a learning environment among families, schools, and communities renders this tradition integral to social life. The findings from the questionnaire disseminated on social media indicate that 83.54% of the 1,309 respondents expressed a strong inclination to preserve the Merariq legacy. This result indicates that the community comprehends the significance of



Figure 5. Deliberation activities in Selaparang Village to determine the stages of the Merariq procession used (Source: Field study)

cultural heritage and is dedicated to preserving the Merariq culture for future generations. This sponsorship enables the preservation and advancement of the Merariq tradition in people's lives. In line with this, Paraweswara's research results show that cultural policies have a positive and significant influence on cultural sustainability. It indicates that the more positive cultural policies implemented, such as education and training policies, the more they can increase cultural sustainability (Gaias et al., 2019).

Deliberation

The community preserves the Merariq tradition by evolving its practice to align with the impacts of globalization and the requirements of Islamic law, which is predominant on Lombok Island. The technique involves engaging with community leaders and other cultural stakeholders to identify an appropriate solution for preserving this tradition (Figure 5).

During this discussion, the community examined elements of the custom that need modification, including the organization of the Merariq procession and the implementation of Syariat norms in alignment with Islamic religious beliefs. An example of a step that is currently rarely used by society is "mulang" or taking the bride without the family's knowledge.

"Historically, brides were taken away without their families' consent; however, it is now common for men to seek permission from the girl's parents before eloping, as there are penalties for grooms who abduct women without the approval of both families" (Mr. B).

Currently, several regions in East Lombok, particularly Selaparang, impose penalties on men who marry girls without the consent of both parents. This sentence is imposed based on the consensus of parents, customary elders, and the community, as some believe that the memulang stage does not align with Islamic principles. Parents enforce a penalty as a pisuka fee levied on the male, which is considerably higher than typical.

"My parents requested a significantly larger sum of pisuka money than usual because I was taken by my future husband

without my parents' knowledge" (interview with the wife of Mr. Sp).

This modification is an alternative resolution to the discord between indigenous perspectives and those who deem the Merariq tradition incompatible with Islamic law. The imposed regulations offer advantages for the sustainability of the tradition while upholding Islamic law, ensuring that individuals who possess a greater understanding of the deviations of the Merariq tradition from religious tenets can continue to engage in this practice without apprehension of sin.

The adaptability of the Merariq heritage defines its essence. The Merariq tradition persists; however, certain stages are adapted to align with the parents' requirements and capabilities. Applying all or specific phases of the Merariq tradition is distinctive, it is unique, there are no sanctions for those who carry out some of the stages of the tradition. The sanction is applied to the rules that are not carried out. Mr. Yahya the head of Batman Hamlet stated

"At present, the Merariq tradition is still practiced, but adherence to the entire traditional procession is not strictly enforced; it may be conducted according to the capabilities and mutual consent of the bride and groom."

The flexibility of Merariq is a positive thing for the continuity of this tradition so that people continue to carry out the tradition even by using half the stages of the tradition. With this approach, the Merariq tradition can not only be preserved but it can also be practiced in a more modern way and in accordance with the needs of today's society, thus keeping the tradition alive and valued in an increasingly globalized context.

Habituation

Habituation is a process of internalization of tradition that involves various parties, including the community, family, and self who consciously want to continue using and preserving the Merariq tradition. This habituation begins at the externalization stage which involves the participation of the community and parents to introduce this tradition to the younger generation. Through habituation, the younger generation begins to recognize and then gets used to participating in the various stages of the tradition. Habituation also helps strengthen inter-generational social ties, where traditional knowledge and skills can be transferred from parents to their children. Thus, habituation not only preserves Merariq as an integral part of local identity but also ensures that this cultural heritage continues to be alive and relevant in the future (Kurpis, 2017).

The continuous habituation process helps the younger generation to understand the Merariq tradition. The younger generation not only knows but creates awareness about the importance of this tradition in their social life. Thus, the younger generation will participate voluntarily and not feel forced in the implementation of the Merariq tradition. This helps to create an emotional attachment to the tradition. Continuous habituation also creates a sense of pride and responsibility to preserve the Merariq tradition as part of their



Figure 6. Community participation in every traditional event (Source: Field study)

cultural identity. Through this sense of pride, they respect and maintain the values contained in the Merariq tradition, and endeavor to pass the tradition on to the next generation. Therefore, habituation plays an important role in preserving local culture (Apriliani et al., 2024). Outcomes of an interview with Mr. An:

“I always follow every procession of the Merariq tradition in the village. If someone gets married, without being invited, I will come unless I am sick.”

The interview results indicate that the processes of externalization and objectification are effective, leading to the internalization of community values within individuals. Internalization is the process by which individuals consciously adopt the Merariq tradition without external pressure. This approach encompasses the utilization of tradition and the community's active involvement in each procession.

The merariq tradition integrates into their social and cultural identity and is recognized, esteemed, and utilized as cultural heritage daily. Consistent habituation across diverse situations, including home, school, and community, will facilitate the maintenance of the merariq heritage. Conscious habituation will facilitate preserving and maintaining this heritage for future generations. Consequently, the merariq tradition persists not merely in ritualistic form but also evolves into a fundamental aspect of social life that remains pertinent to contemporary society (Figure 6).

CONCLUSION

The preservation of the Merariq tradition in the community of East Lombok is carried out through four main strategies: socialization, education, deliberation, and habituation. These strategies are implemented in a collaborative and continuous manner by families, schools, communities, and traditional institutions. The goal of these strategies is to ensure that the Merariq tradition, which holds significant cultural and social value, remains alive and cherished by future generations. Each of the four strategies contributes to a different aspect of cultural transmission and

practice, working together to create a robust framework for sustainability.

Socialization plays a key role in introducing the Merariq tradition to younger generations, ensuring that children are aware of and exposed to this important cultural practice. In schools, education about the Merariq tradition is integrated into curricula, where students are taught its historical and cultural significance, as well as the rituals and values associated with it. Through deliberation, community members engage in discussions and dialogues about the importance of maintaining such traditions in the face of modern challenges. These conversations allow for a deeper understanding of the benefits of preserving cultural heritage, fostering a collective commitment to the tradition. Lastly, habituation involves the regular practice of Merariq-related activities, such as ceremonies and celebrations, which help engrain the tradition into the daily lives of community members. This research highlights the crucial role that local traditions and cultures play in shaping social cohesion and community identity. However, many such traditions face the threat of disappearing due to the influence of modernization and globalization. This study provides valuable insights into the methods that can be employed to sustain and revitalize fading traditions. The findings demonstrate the significance of community-driven efforts in preserving cultural heritage.

Despite these contributions, there are limitations in this research. The study was conducted within a single community in East Lombok, which may limit the generalizability of the findings to other regions or cultural contexts. Additionally, the research focused primarily on the strategies for preserving Merariq, without delving into the deeper, underlying challenges that the community faces in maintaining such traditions in the long term. Future research could address these limitations by exploring other regions and conducting a comparative analysis of the preservation strategies across different cultural practices. Furthermore, it would be valuable to develop a sustainability model for local traditions, which could then be tested and applied in other regions to preserve their unique cultural practices.

Author contributions: SA, IKA, & SS: investigation, supervision; SA, SS, & TM: validation; SA & IKA: conceptualization, data curation; SA, SS, & YS: methodology; SA

& TM: software; **IKA, YS, & SA:** formal analysis; **IKA, SS, & TM:** visualization; **SA, IKA, & YS:** writing – review & editing; **SA, IKA, & SS:** project administration; **SA:** writing – original draft preparation. All authors agreed with the results and conclusions.

Funding: No funding source is reported for this study.

Ethical statement: This study does not require ethical approval. All informants involved as data sources have signed a letter of consent acknowledging their participation in the research. Their informed consent ensures that their involvement is voluntary and based on a clear understanding of the study's objectives and procedures.

AI statement: The authors stated that they used AI for language transition from Indonesian to English. They did not use AI for constructing substance and content.

Declaration of interest: No conflict of interest is declared by the authors.

Data sharing statement: Data supporting the findings and conclusions are available upon request from corresponding author.

REFERENCES

- Al'Ghani, M. Z., Budijanto, B., Sumarmi, S., & Susilo, S. (2024). The fertility in child marriage families: In-depth investigation in Indonesia. *Changing Societies & Personalities*, 8(2), Article 465. <https://doi.org/10.15826/csp.2024.8.2.283>
- Anoegrajekti, N., Sariono, A., Macaryus, S., & Kusumah, M. S. (2018). Banyuwangi Ethno Carnival as visualization of tradition: The policy of culture and tradition revitalization through enhancement of innovation and locality-based creative industry. *Cogent Arts & Humanities*, 5(1), Article 1502913. <https://doi.org/10.1080/23311983.2018.1502913>
- Apriliani, N., Mayasari, D., Winata, A., & Jadhav, R. A. (2024). Bride kidnapping as a marriage tradition: An examination of newcomers' perspectives on Merariq in Lombok Island. *Fikri: Jurnal Kajian Agama, Sosial Dan Budaya*, 9(2), 239-258. <https://doi.org/10.25217/jf.v9i2.4874>
- Azwar, W., Mayasari, D., Winata, A., Garba, M. M., & Isnaini. (2024). Exploration of the Merariq tradition in Sasak Lombok, Indonesia: Analysis in Islamic law and socio-cultural dynamics perspectives. *IBDA: Jurnal Kajian Islam Dan Budaya*, 22(1), 23-38. <https://doi.org/10.24090/ibda.v22i1.10766>
- Bahri, Sudirman, Ratmaja, R., & Sahlan. (2018). *Tradisi Upacara Adat Sasak* [Tradition of Sasak Traditional Ceremony]. Mataram: Pusat Studi dan Kajian Budaya Prov. Nusa Tenggara Barat.
- Boyle, D. (1999). The road less traveled: Cross-cultural, international experiential learning. *International Social Work*, 42(2), 201-214. <https://doi.org/10.1177/002087289904200208>
- Brunner, J. (1996). *The culture of education*. Harvard University Press. <https://doi.org/10.4159/9780674251083>
- Budiwanti, E., & Eidhamar, L. G. (2024). Religious diversity in Lombok: Peaceful coexistence or minorities at risk? *Religions*, 15(12), Article 1544. <https://doi.org/10.3390/rel15121544>
- Chen, R., Sai, J., Zhu, Q., Zhou, R., Li, P., & He, S. (2018). Horizontal spatial metaphors for morality: A cross-cultural study of Han Chinese students and ethnic minority Hui students in China. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 9. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2018.01145>
- Cimen, O. A. (2014). Discussing ethnomathematics: Is mathematics culturally dependent? *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 564, 344-356. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2014.09.215>
- Creswell, J. W. (2014). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods approaches* (4th ed.). SAGE.
- Denzin, K. N., & Lincoln, Y. S. (1999). *Handbook of qualitative research*. SAGE.
- dos Santos Andrade, L. R., Linhares, R. N., Costa, A. P., & do Carmo Souza, F. S. (2021). Data visualisation in software supporting qualitative analysis. *Acta Scientiarum. Education*, 44, Article e52857. <https://doi.org/10.4025/actascieduc.v44i1.52857>
- Gaias, L. M., Johnson, S. L., Bottiani, J. H., Debnam, K. J., & Bradshaw, C. P. (2019). Examining teachers' classroom management profiles: Incorporating a focus on culturally responsive practice. *Journal of School Psychology*, 8(2), 156-167. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jsp.2019.07.017>
- Geertz, C. (1973). *The interpretation of cultures: Selected essays* (1st ed.). Basic Books, Inc.
- Gultom, E. M., Syahputra, E., & Fauzi, K. M. A. (2020). Differences in students' mathematical communication ability through the application of Batak culture-oriented learning on problem-based learning and guided discovery. *International Journal of Multicultural and Multireligious Understanding*, 7(10), Article 731. <https://doi.org/10.18415/ijmmu.v7i10.2236>
- Gumuseli, A. L., & Eryilmaz, A. (2011). The measurement of collaborative school culture (CSC) on Turkish schools. *New Horizons in Education*, 59(2), 13-26.
- Hamdani, F., & Fauzia, A. (2022). Tradisi Merariq dalam kacamata hukum adat dan hukum Islam [Merariq tradition in the perspective of customary law and Islamic law]. *Jurnal Hukum lex Generalis*, 3(6), 433-447. <https://doi.org/10.56370/jhl.v3i6.245>
- Hariati, S., Jamin, M., & Sulistiyono, A. (2024). The legal status of marriage (Merariq) implementation within the indigenous people of Sasak Lombok. *Jurnal IUS Kajian Hukum dan Keadilan*, 12(2), 406-422. <https://doi.org/10.29303/ius.v12i2.1475>
- Harris, J. (1988). National assessment of irish-language speaking and listening skills in primary-school children: Research issues in the evaluation of school-based heritage-language programmes. *Language, Culture and Curriculum*, 1(2), 85-130. <https://doi.org/10.1080/07908318809525031>
- Kurpis, L. H. (2017). Developing students' cultural intelligence through an experiential learning activity: A cross-cultural consumer behavior interview. *Journal of Marketing Education*, 39(1), 30-46. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0273475316653337>

- Lestari, Y. B., & Yusra, K. (2022). Identifying tourism potentials of ethno-cultural attractions in Lombok. *Sustainability*, 14(23), Article 16075. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su142316075>
- Ma, X. (2019). An application of cultural models theory to cross-cultural awareness cultivation in primary school English teaching. *Theory and Practice in Language Studies*, 10(1), Article 111. <https://doi.org/10.17507/tpls.1001.16>
- Mauliyda, M. A., Khusniyah, T. W., Anggraini, H., Mei, A., & Muthmainah, M. (2024). Improving the moral attitudes of primary school students through social activities in the community. *Journal Human Research in Rehabilitation*, 14(2), 343-356. <https://doi.org/10.21554/hrr.092410>
- Menegatti, M. (2017). Do gender and ethnicity make the difference? Linguistic evaluation bias in primary school. *Journal of Language and Social Psychology*, 36(4), 415-437. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0261927X17694980>
- Mooney, L. A. (2001). Experiential learning in sociology: Service learning and other community-based learning initiatives. *Teaching Sociology*, 29(2), 181-194. <https://doi.org/10.2307/1318716>
- Mutia, T., Sumarmi, S., Bachri, S., & Budidjanto, B. (2019). A study on Bayan Community perception towards awiq-awiq local wisdom based forest management. In *Proceedings of the 1st International Conference on Social Knowledge Sciences and Education*. <https://doi.org/10.2991/icskse-18.2019.8>
- Nowell, A. (2015). Children, metaphorical thinking and upper paleolithic visual cultures. *Childhood in the Past*, 8(2), 122-132. <https://doi.org/10.1179/1758571615Z.00000000034>
- Ogut, J. O., Kuloba, B., Piepho, H.-P., & Kanga, E. (2017). Wildlife population dynamics in human-dominated landscapes under community-based conservation: The example of Nakuru wildlife conservancy, Kenya. *PLoS ONE*, 12(1), Article e0169730. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0169730>
- Prahmana, R. C. I. (2021). When culture meets mathematics as a starting point in learning mathematics. *ISGEM Newsletter*, 19(2).
- Ravasi, D., & Schultz, M. (2006). Responding to organizational identity threats: Exploring the role of organizational culture. *Academy of Management Journal*, 49(3), 433-458. <https://doi.org/10.5465/amj.2006.21794663>
- Rizkiwati, B. Y., Widjaja, S. U. M., Haryono, A., Wahyono, H., & Majdi, M. Z. (2022). Financial literacy education models for 7-12 years old based on the local wisdom of Sasak Tribe. *Pegem Journal of Education and Instruction*, 12(2), 58-70. <https://doi.org/10.47750/pegegog.12.02.05>
- Sarmini, Nadiroh, U., & Fahmi, M. S. (2018). Reduce conflicts in traditional merariq traditions through the long tradition of the tribal people of sasak lombok. *Journal of Physics: Conference Series*, 953, Article 012186. <https://doi.org/10.1088/1742-6596/953/1/012186>
- Schein, H. E. (1992). *Organizational culture and leadership*. Joosey-Bass Publishers.
- Sejati, A. E., Sumarmi, S., Astina, I. K., Susilo, S., & Kurniawati, E. (2023). The environmental conservation value of tengger tribe's traditional ceremony in supporting the mount bromo tourism area. *GeoJournal of Tourism and Geosites*, 46(1), 315-326. <https://doi.org/10.30892/gtg.46135-1029>
- Sumarmi, S. (2015). Local wisdom of Osing people in conserving water resources. *Komunitas*, 7(1), 43-51. <https://doi.org/10.15294/komunitas.v7i1.3429>
- Sumarmi, S., Bachri, S., Mutia, T., Yustesia, A., Fathoni, M. N., Muthi, M. A., & Nuraini, S. G. (2020). The deep ecology perspective of awig-awig: Local tribal forest preservation laws in tenganan cultural village, indonesia. *Journal of Sustainability Science and Management*, 15(8), 102-113. <https://doi.org/10.46754/jssm.2020.12.009>
- Tzianakopoulou, T., & Manesis, N. (2018). Principals' perceptions on the notion of organizational culture: The case of Greece. *Universal Journal of Educational Research*, 6(11), 2519-2529. <https://doi.org/10.13189/ujer.2018.061117>
- Umam, F., Al Humaidy, M. A., & Amrulloh, M. A. (2024). Dialectics between Islam and local culture in Wetu Telu Lombok Muslims' Merariq tradition: An urf perspective. *AL-IHKAM: Jurnal Hukum & Pranata Sosial*, 19(1), 104-125. <https://doi.org/10.19105/al-lhkam.v19i1.10603>
- van der Horst, C. A., & Albertyn, R. M. (2018). The importance of metacognition and the experiential learning process within a cultural intelligence-based approach to cross-cultural coaching. *SA Journal of Human Resource Management*, 16. <https://doi.org/10.4102/sajhrm.v16i0.951>
- Zulvianingrum, D. (2022). Pendekatan komunikasi dalam melihat budaya Merariq study kasus di desa Mampe Kecamatan Jerowaru Kabupaten Lombok Timur [Communication approach in observing Merariq culture case study in Mampe Village, Jerowaru District, East Lombok Regency]. *Al-IHKAM: Jurnal Hukum Keluarga Jurusan Ahwal al-Syakhshiyah Fakultas Syariah IAIN Mataram*, 14(1), 45-56. <https://doi.org/10.20414/alihkam.v14i1.6582>