

The Ethnoecology of Sasak Sade Community: Preserving Nature Identity Culture in Lombok

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Abstract: Sade Village is a traditional Sasak settlement that functions both as a cultural tourism destination and as a center of enduring ethnological and ecological practices. This study aims to explore the ethnological and ecological perspectives of the Sade community and to provide strategic recommendations for preserving the nature identity culture of the Sasak Sade people in support of SDG 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities) and SDG 12 (Responsible Consumption and Production) in Lombok. The research uses a qualitative ethnographic design through observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation. Informants were selected purposively, particularly adat leaders and community members knowledgeable about ecological regulations. The findings show that the community maintains ancestral rules such as prohibitions on cutting trees without permission, mandatory replanting, and the use of local materials in traditional architecture. However, tourism has introduced challenges, including increased plastic waste and declining youth interest in traditional customs. This study recommends strengthening adat institutions, providing ecological cultural education for youth, and integrating traditional values with modern sustainability strategies to safeguard Sade's nature identity culture.

Keywords: Ethnoecology, Local Wisdom, Sade Village, Cultural Sustainability

INTRODUCTION

Sade Village is one of the traditional settlements that attracts significant attention from both domestic and international tourists. Through the Governor of West Nusa Tenggara Decree No. 2/1989, the area was officially designated as a cultural tourism site, serving as an important representation of Sasak heritage. As a leading tourism village, Sade plays a strategic role in maintaining the balance between cultural preservation and the economic development of its community. The strong attachment between the Sade people and their natural surroundings has given rise to ethnoecological practices systems of resource use and environmental management grounded in traditional knowledge passed down through generations (Mansur et al., 2022). Architectural characteristics such as thatched roofs, bamboo walls, and earthen floors not only reflect the sustainable use of local materials but also embody the value of nature identity culture, which integrates ecological relationships, local identity, and community cultural life (Nursilah et al., 2021).

Despite Sade Village's reputation for maintaining its traditions and ethnoecological practices, the rapid growth of tourism has introduced inevitable transformations. These changes are experienced at the hamlet level and have begun to affect both cultural identity and environmental conditions (Claudea et al., 2024). Infrastructure development such as the construction of paving-block pathways has improved tourist accessibility but simultaneously reduced water infiltration areas, potentially causing ecological disturbances (Putri et al., 2019). The shift in livelihoods from agriculture to tourism, along with the increasing volume of waste, indicates a decline in ethnoecological practices and weaknesses in environmental management (Pratiwi et al., 2019). These developments show that tourism dynamics not only provide economic benefits but also pose challenges to the sustainability of local culture and the environment.

Most previous studies have focused primarily on cultural and tourism aspects. Research by Saptaningtyas et al., (2024) emphasizes that both the community and the

government hold responsibility for preserving Sade as a cultural center and tourism destination. However, very few studies explicitly link Sade's ethnoecological system with global agendas, particularly the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). In fact, the ethnoecological practices of the Sade community hold strong potential to contribute to two SDGs: SDG 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities), relating to the preservation of cultural and natural heritage, and SDG 12 (Responsible Consumption and Production), concerning sustainable resource use. Given this context, the present study is crucial for examining the contribution of Sade's ethnoecological practices to the preservation of environmentally friendly traditional architecture and the efficient use of resources, particularly within agriculture and local crafts. This research also responds to ongoing social dynamics resulting from tourism and modernization. Therefore, the objectives of this study are to analyze the ethnoecological perspectives of the Sasak Sade community in maintaining nature identity culture, and to formulate strategies to strengthen Sade's nature identity culture in support of SDG 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities) and SDG 12 (Responsible Consumption and Production) in Lombok.

METHODS

This study employed a qualitative approach with an ethnographic design. The ethnographic design was chosen because it enables an in-depth exploration of values, behaviors, and ecological practices embedded in the community's daily life. As explained by Mansur et al. (2022), ethnographic research in ethnoecology focuses on understanding the complex relationship between humans and their natural environment. Data were collected through participant observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation. Participant observation was used to directly observe patterns of natural resource use, the spatial arrangement of traditional houses, and everyday cultural activities. In-depth interviews were conducted to explore residents' ecological knowledge, customary values, and their interpretations of human–environment relations. This interview technique was selected because it allows researchers to uncover the meaning of participants' lived experiences (Pratiwi et al., 2019). Informants were selected purposively based on their mastery of customary

knowledge, including traditional leaders and community members who understand the village's ecological practices. Documentation in the form of photographs of the environment, architecture, and customary activities was used to further support the field findings. Data were analyzed using qualitative descriptive analysis through the stages of data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. This process was designed to organize information into thematic patterns that reflect the community's ethnoecological practices. The validity of the data was strengthened through technique triangulation by comparing observations, interviews, and documentation to ensure the consistency and reliability of the findings.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Ethnoecological Perspectives of the Sade Community in Achieving SDG 11 and SDG 12

The findings of this study indicate that the ethnoecological practices of the Sade community have developed into a system of local knowledge that preserves harmony between humans, nature, and ancestral spiritual values. This principle is reflected in customary rules requiring community members to perform rituals before engaging in ecological activities such as land clearing, tree cutting, or house construction as a form of respect for natural forces. This aligns with Widisono (2024), who explains that the Sade community views nature as an entity whose balance must be protected through customary laws (*awig-awig*) passed down across generations. The prohibition against cutting trees without permission and the obligation to replant each felled tree demonstrate the presence of ecological mechanisms embedded within the community's social structure. The Sasak Sade community utilizes natural resources selectively and with strong adherence to customary regulations. Based on interviews and observations, sustainable consumption practices are evident in the transmission of cultural values, efficient use of water due to its limited availability, and the prioritization of agricultural produce for household needs rather than mass production. Traditional architecture in Sade is constructed using natural materials such as wood, bamboo, clay, and locally sourced thatch.



Figure 1. Documentation of interview activities



Figure 2. Documentation of observation of thatch roof production

Traditional architecture and spatial organization in Sade illustrate the integration of culture and environment that supports the achievement of SDG 11. Houses are constructed according to land contours and wind direction and are prohibited from facing away from the hills. The spatial layout typically includes a kitchen and a birthing room. Once a week, floors are polished using fresh cow dung, and during ceremonies, buffalo dung is used. These practices reflect ecological awareness and the community's effort to maintain harmony between living spaces and the natural environment. Ramadhan et al. (2024) note that bale tani holds a high level of sustainability due to its ecological adaptability. Lukita et al. (2016) further emphasize that spatial arrangements function as social symbols regulating relations among residents based on kinship networks. Any new construction or modification must be approved by customary leaders to ensure adherence to traditional principles.



Figure 3. Documentation of a Sade Sasak traditional house

In relation to sustainable consumption and production (SDG 12), the Sade community

continues to apply simple and environmentally friendly lifestyles. The use of natural construction materials, repairable household tools, and low-emission nyesek weaving techniques represent sustainable production practices (Setianny, 2024). Organic waste is reused as fertilizer, while inorganic waste is sorted and transported by village waste management officers. Nonetheless, maintaining consistent waste sorting remains a challenge due to the increasing presence of commercial goods driven by tourism. Suprihatin and Hailuddin (2022) highlight the importance of integrating customary values with modern systems to ensure the sustainability of traditional villages.



Figure 4. Documentation of village-provided waste bins

Overall, the findings reveal that the ethnoecological practices of the Sade community significantly contribute to achieving SDG 11 and SDG 12 through traditional spatial planning, the use of natural materials, community-based social practices, and low-emission cultural production. Modern challenges such as tourism and cultural commodification require adaptive strategies

to ensure the relevance of customary values in sustaining the environment and cultural identity.

Recommendations for Strengthening the Nature Identity Culture of Sade Village

Based on interviews with community members and customary leaders, strategies for strengthening the nature identity culture of Sade Village must integrate existing customary values with modern sustainability needs. Informants emphasized that the Sade customary system already contains strong ecological principles, such as the prohibition against cutting trees without permission and the obligation to replant as a form of ecological responsibility. However, emerging challenges such as increased plastic waste and shifts in consumption patterns due to tourism are not yet fully addressed in current customary rules. As noted by Wibisono (2024), customary institutions play a crucial role in environmental governance within traditional villages. The transmission of ecological and cultural values to the younger generation is a key strategy. Interviews indicate a declining interest among youth in learning traditional customs, suggesting the need for training programs, local school-based cultural education, and youth forums to revitalize traditions such as communal labor (*gotong royong*) and nyesek weaving. According to customary leaders, strengthening the nature identity culture of the Sasak Sade community should prioritize empowering youth as guardians of cultural and environmental sustainability. Younger generations must be introduced to the village's history, the meanings embedded in customary practices, and the philosophical foundations that link humans and nature, enabling them to recognize that environmental degradation directly threatens cultural continuity.

Preserving customary traditions and maintaining environmental integrity are inseparable. These efforts require strong collaboration between village authorities, customary institutions, and the community, particularly in maintaining environmental cleanliness, ensuring that construction adheres to traditional architectural principles, and developing sustainable tourism that respects local cultural identity. The involvement of customary institutions in village development planning must be strengthened to ensure that all infrastructure development aligns with

traditional architectural principles. Decision-making on public facilities or tourism development should be conducted through customary deliberation. Studies by Ramadhan et al. (2024) and Wahyudi (2025) affirm that such customary deliberation mechanisms help maintain ecological spatial planning and ensure that development aligns with the sustainability principles upheld by the Sade community.

CONCLUSION

The ethnoecological system of the Sasak Sade community represents an integrated mechanism of ecological knowledge embedded within social structure, spatial organization, and cultural practices, enabling the preservation of nature identity culture amid the pressures of tourism and modernization. Human nature relations in Sade operate through customary rules that regulate resource use, environmentally adaptive traditional architecture, and low-emission production practices. These findings demonstrate that the first research objective to analyze the ethnoecological perspective in sustaining nature identity culture has been achieved through the identification of customary values and ecological practices as the foundation of community based environmental sustainability. Furthermore, the formulated recommendations for strengthening the village's nature identity culture highlight the urgency of integrating customary values with contemporary environmental governance mechanisms. The roles of customary institutions, youth groups, and the village government are central in addressing emerging challenges such as increasing waste generation, shifting consumption patterns, and development pressures. This synthesis confirms that the second research objective to formulate sustainability strategies supporting the achievement of SDG 11 and SDG 12 has been met through an emphasis on institutional collaboration, revitalization of local ecological knowledge, and customary-based development governance. Prospectively, this research opens opportunities for developing further studies on models of customary institutional strengthening in environmental governance, quantitative evaluations of tourism impacts on ethnoecological practices, and intergenerational studies on the transmission of ecological knowledge as an indicator of cultural sustainability. Advancing research in these areas

holds significant theoretical and practical contributions for the preservation of traditional villages and the development of environmental management frameworks consistent with sustainable development principles.

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