

Social Actions and Cultural Resilience of Fishing Communities Through the Rebo Bontong Ritual in Gili Air, North Lombok

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Abstract

This study is grounded in the importance of understanding the preservation of local traditions as a form of social action in maintaining cultural identity amid the dynamics of modernization and social pluralism. The research aims to analyze the social actions of fishing communities in the Rebo Bontong ritual in Gili Air Hamlet, North Lombok, while also examining its cultural meaning, social functions, and preservation dynamics. This study employed a qualitative method with a phenomenological approach through observation, in-depth interviews, documentation, and literature review, with data analyzed using the interactive model of Miles and Huberman, which includes data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. The findings reveal that the Rebo Bontong ritual represents an instrumentally rational social action performed as a form of disaster prevention, gratitude expression, cultural preservation, social solidarity reinforcement, coastal environmental conservation, and the development of cultural tourism and the community's creative economy. In conclusion, Rebo Bontong serves as a strategic adaptive cultural heritage that strengthens local identity while supporting sustainable social development. This study recommends strengthening collaboration among communities, younger generations, and government institutions to ensure the sustainability of local traditions as a model for community-based cultural development.

Keywords: cultural tourism; fishing community; local culture; rebo bontong; social action.

INTRODUCTION

Culture, customs, traditions, and rituals are integral parts of human life that are passed down from generation to generation as the collective identity of a society. In the Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia (Great Dictionary of the Indonesian Language), custom (adat) is defined as rules or habits that have been continuously practiced for a long time and have become part of the life of a community group. These traditions function as social mechanisms that connect past generations with the present through the transmission of cultural values, norms, morals, and beliefs (Amala & Gafur, 2020; Rahman et al., 2024; Tyas Tuti & Safitri, 2024). Rituals, as concrete manifestations of tradition, are a series of symbolic actions regulated by social norms, customs, and beliefs prevailing within a particular society. Rituals not only possess spiritual meaning, but also serve as social instruments in strengthening solidarity, maintaining social cohesion, preserving the continuity of local culture, and functioning as effective symbolic communication media amid the currents of modernization (Djaya, 2020; Anggara, 2023). Therefore, the diversity of rituals across various regions of Indonesia reflects the richness of national culture while illustrating how communities maintain their social identity through cultural practices inherited across generations (Hidayat, 2024).

Etymologically, the term culture derives from the Sanskrit word *buddhayah*, rooted in *budhi*, meaning intellect or reason, while in Latin it is associated with the term *colere*, meaning to cultivate or preserve. This concept indicates that culture is the product of human creativity, feeling, and

intention that develops within social life. Edward Burnett Tylor defined culture as a complex whole encompassing knowledge, beliefs, arts, law, morals, customs, and various other capabilities acquired by humans as members of society. Thus, culture is not merely a symbolic inheritance, but also functions as a guideline directing human social behavior in various contexts of life (Boanergis et al., 2019). In the context of Indonesian society, local culture holds a strategic position because it serves as a means of social adaptation, community integration, conflict resolution, and development based on local wisdom (Permana et al., 2024; Wardani & Mediatati, 2024). The existence of local culture also demonstrates society's ability to dynamically integrate customary and religious elements in accordance with changing times, making cultural preservation an important component in maintaining social stability and the sustainability of collective identity (Rahman et al., 2024).

Indonesia, as a multicultural country, possesses a wide variety of ritual traditions practiced within local communities, one of which is the Rebo Bontong ritual among the Sasak people of Lombok. This tradition is carried out every last Wednesday of the month of Safar as a ritual of warding off misfortune, which is believed to protect the community from various calamities. This phenomenon aligns with the findings of Zainuddin (2023), who emphasized that the acculturation of Sasak culture and Islam occurs through the integration of customary values, social rituals, and religious practices that harmoniously shape the cultural-religious identity of the Lombok community. Furthermore, Alwi et al. (2023)

demonstrated that various Sasak local traditions continue to be preserved as cultural heritage, while simultaneously undergoing reinterpretation through Islamic teachings, thereby producing social practices that are both religious and cultural. This tradition involves a series of cultural activities such as the use of traditional clothing, cultural parades, traditional gamelan performances, communal prayers, and the mandi Safar ritual. These practices are not only spiritually meaningful, but also function as social media for strengthening community solidarity, reinforcing intergenerational relationships, building collective ritual communication, and introducing local culture to wider society (Bugis & Riyanto, 2024; Tuti & Safitri, 2024). In this context, the Rebo Bontong ritual demonstrates that local traditions possess adaptive capacities in maintaining their existence through the integration of cultural, religious, socio-economic, and cultural tourism values (Hidayat, 2024).

For fishing communities in Gili Air Hamlet, Pemenang District, Rebo Bontong is not merely a cultural ritual, but also possesses social, economic, and tourism dimensions. The implementation of this tradition serves as a means to strengthen the collective identity of coastal communities, increase social participation, maintain community solidarity, and support the promotion of regional cultural tourism (Rahayu et al., 2022; Hidayat, 2024). Coastal cultural traditions such as this have been proven to create strong social solidarity because they involve all elements of society in both preparation and implementation processes (Rahayu et al., 2022). In addition, cultural rituals often become spaces for negotiation between the preservation of tradition and the dynamics of modern social change, including debates between cultural and religious perspectives (Djaya, 2020). Nevertheless, the continued existence of Rebo Bontong demonstrates that local culture plays an important role in maintaining social balance within society while simultaneously functioning as a culturally strategic asset in sustainable social development (Anggara, 2023). Therefore, research concerning the social actions of fishing communities within the Rebo Bontong ritual is important in order to understand cultural meanings, social functions, ritual communication, and the dynamics of preserving local traditions within pluralistic and modern societies.

RESEARCH METHODS

Time and Research Location

This research was conducted over a two-month period, from February to March 2025, in Gili Air Hamlet, Pemenang District, North Lombok Regency, West Nusa Tenggara. The research location was selected based on the characteristics of the local community, the majority of whom work as fishermen, practice Islam, and consistently carry out the Rebo Bontong ritual as a cultural and religious tradition passed down through generations. This location was considered relevant because it provides a social, cultural, and religious context that aligns with the focus of the study concerning the social actions of fishing communities in the Rebo Bontong ritual.

Research Design

This study employed a qualitative research design with a phenomenological approach. The phenomenological approach aims to understand the lived experiences of subjects in depth based on their own perspectives toward a social and

cultural phenomenon (Creswell et al., 2007). This approach was chosen because it is capable of exploring the subjective meanings of the fishing community regarding the Rebo Bontong ritual as a manifestation of culture, religiosity, social solidarity, and collective identity. Phenomenological qualitative research enables researchers to holistically describe the social experiences of communities within the context of local culture (Fadli, 2021). Therefore, this study seeks to understand the essence of the social actions of fishing communities in preserving the Rebo Bontong tradition amid modern social dynamics.

Population and Research Sample

The population of this study consisted of all residents of Gili Air Hamlet who were directly or indirectly involved in the implementation of the Rebo Bontong ritual. The research sample was determined using purposive sampling techniques, namely the deliberate selection of informants based on specific considerations relevant to the research objectives (Creswell et al., 2007). The main informants included traditional leaders, the hamlet head, religious leaders, community leaders, fishermen, and local residents who understood the implementation of the Rebo Bontong ritual.

The main research variables included social actions of the community, the cultural meaning of the ritual, social solidarity, and the socio-economic functions of the tradition. Data collection was conducted through in-depth interviews, non-participant observation, documentation, and literature studies. Research instruments included semi-structured interview guidelines, audio recording devices, documentation cameras, and field notes.

Research Procedure

The research began with a preparation stage involving problem identification, literature review, proposal preparation, and the determination of research informants. The implementation stage was carried out through field observations to understand the social conditions of the community, followed by in-depth interviews with key informants to obtain data related to social actions, ritual meanings, and cultural dynamics. The researchers also conducted documentation in the form of photographs, videos, village archives, and customary records as supporting data. All collected data were then verified through source triangulation, method triangulation, and prolonged observation to ensure data validity (Rahman et al., 2024). The final stage involved data processing and interpretation based on Max Weber's theory of social action.

Data Analysis

Data analysis employed the interactive model of Miles and Huberman, which consists of data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification (Miles et al., 2014). Data reduction was carried out by simplifying, selecting, and focusing on important data relevant to the research objectives. Data presentation was conducted in the form of systematic descriptive narratives to facilitate interpretation. Conclusions were drawn gradually through the interpretation of patterns of social actions among fishing communities in the Rebo Bontong ritual. Data validity was strengthened through source and method triangulation to enhance the credibility of the study (Malik et al., 2025). The analysis was conducted manually using an interpretative approach based on phenomenological perspectives and social action theory.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

General Overview of Gili Indah Village

Gili Indah Village is one of the administrative regions located in Pemenang District, North Lombok Regency. The village is situated at the northwestern tip of Lombok Island and consists of three main islands: Gili Air, Gili Meno, and Gili Trawangan. Geographically, Gili Indah Village holds a strategic position because it is surrounded by marine waters that serve as the primary source of livelihood for the local community, particularly fishermen. The administrative boundaries of Gili Indah Village are as follows:

- To the north: the Java Sea
- To the west: the Lombok Strait
- To the south: Kombal Bay
- To the east: the Sira Sea

The total area of Gili Indah Village is approximately 678 hectares, divided into three main hamlets:

- Gili Trawangan Hamlet: 340 hectares
- Gili Air Hamlet: 188 hectares
- Gili Meno Hamlet: 150 hectares

Gili Air Hamlet, which serves as the research location, covers approximately 27.7% of the total village area and functions as one of the centers of social, cultural, and economic activities within the coastal community.

In terms of population, Gili Indah Village has approximately 5,077 residents with a total of 1,577 households. Gili Air Hamlet itself has around 2,001 inhabitants and 635 households. The people of Gili Air engage in diverse occupations, including fishing, tourism businesses, trading, handicrafts, and small and medium enterprises (SMEs). Based on village government data from 2024, approximately 75 residents in Gili Air Hamlet work as active fishermen.

The social conditions of the Gili Air community are strongly influenced by the characteristics of the coastal environment and the tourism sector. Besides being recognized as an international tourist destination, the community of Gili Air is also known for maintaining strong social values such as mutual cooperation, cultural traditions, and religious practices. The diversity of ethnic groups, including the Bugis, Sasak, and migrants from other regions, has created a pluralistic society that lives harmoniously through various local traditions, one of which is the Rebo Bontong ritual.

Overview of the Rebo Bontong Ritual

a. History of the Rebo Bontong Ritual

The Rebo Bontong ritual is an ancestral cultural tradition that continues to be preserved by the people of Gili Air Hamlet. This tradition is believed to have originated from the Bugis ancestors who migrated from Sulawesi and settled in Gili Air hundreds of years ago.

Historically, Rebo Bontong, also known as Mandi Safar, is conducted on the last Wednesday of the month of Safar as a ritual to ward off misfortune, seek protection from disease, and express gratitude to Allah SWT. Based on an interview with the Head of Gili Air Hamlet, Mr. Sukding:

“The Rebo Bontong ritual, commonly known as Mandi Safar, is a sacred ritual for coastal communities, especially the Bugis ethnic group. This ritual is believed to protect the community from danger, particularly diseases believed to descend at the end of the month of Safar. Therefore, people

enthusiastically participate in sea bathing, dhikr, and prayers to avoid illness and obtain safety while at sea.”

In addition to serving as a spiritual symbol, the ritual also carries ecological and social purposes:

“The essence of this ritual is to pray to the Creator while collectively cleaning and protecting the sea from environmental destruction such as littering and the use of fish bombs that damage coral reefs. The sea is the primary source of livelihood for the people of Gili Air, so it must be protected together.”

This statement indicates that Rebo Bontong functions not only as a religious ritual but also as a medium for environmental awareness among coastal communities.

b. Values Embedded in the Rebo Bontong Ritual

The Rebo Bontong ritual embodies religious, cultural, social, ecological, and economic values that are integrated into the lives of the fishing community. Religious values are reflected through prayers, dhikr, and gratitude to Allah SWT; cultural values are seen in the preservation of ancestral traditions; social values emerge through togetherness and mutual cooperation; ecological values relate to awareness of marine conservation; while economic values appear through the potential development of cultural tourism based on local traditions.

A local religious leader, H. Kadir, stated that:

“This ritual does not contradict Islamic teachings because it begins with dhikr, Al-Barzanji recitations, and collective prayers, reinforcing that Rebo Bontong is an expression of gratitude by fishermen for the blessings of the sea granted by Allah SWT.”

Research by Alwi et al. (2023) also emphasizes that various Sasak traditions continue to preserve their cultural roots while undergoing reinterpretation through Islamic teachings, resulting in social practices that are both religious and socially functional within community life. Furthermore, Zainuddin (2023) explains that the socio-religious practices of the Sasak people in Lombok represent a harmonious integration of adat, Islam, and social solidarity that maintains local cultural identity.

From ecological and economic perspectives, these findings align with Mentansan et al. (2023), who argue that coastal traditions based on local wisdom, such as those practiced in Raja Ampat, play strategic roles in marine conservation while simultaneously supporting sustainable tourism development that improves local economic welfare. Similarly, Wulandari and Septian (2024) demonstrate that coastal tourism villages based on local wisdom strengthen cultural preservation, environmental sustainability, and alternative economic opportunities for fishing communities through culture-based tourism and coastal resource management.

Thus, the local culture of coastal communities serves not only as a socio-cultural identity but also as an important instrument for environmental conservation and community economic empowerment through sustainable cultural tourism.

c. Preparation for the Rebo Bontong Ritual

The implementation of the Rebo Bontong ritual begins with deliberations among traditional leaders, religious leaders, and community members, followed by committee formation, funding arrangements, and the organization of various cultural

activities. This demonstrates that the tradition is not merely an annual ceremony but also a social mechanism that strengthens collective solidarity among fishing communities.

The preparation process, which involves various social groups, reflects strong values of mutual cooperation, community participation, and the sustainability of local socio-cultural systems passed down across generations. These findings are consistent with Zainuddin (2023), who explains that Sasak traditions are carried out through collective social structures involving customary leaders, religious figures, and community members as forms of cultural and religious integration.

In addition, Family and Fikri (2023) explain that Sasak rituals integrated with Islamic values function as mechanisms for strengthening social cohesion, cultural legitimacy, and local identity preservation amid modernization. A broader perspective is also supported by Pulthinka (2023), who highlights that Nusantara Islamic traditions among the Sasak community serve as instruments of social integration, tolerance, and harmony among community members.

Therefore, Rebo Bontong possesses unique characteristics as a socio-religious cultural practice that functions not only spiritually but also as a means of social organization and strengthening social capital within coastal communities.

Compared to other coastal traditions such as Sasi in Raja Ampat, which also emphasizes collective participation and socio-ecological functions (Mentansan et al., 2023), Rebo Bontong shares similarities in maintaining social solidarity and cultural preservation. However, it differs due to the stronger dominance of Islamic religious values throughout the ritual process. This distinction highlights Rebo Bontong as a unique socio-cultural collaboration model integrating Sasak coastal traditions with Islamic teachings harmoniously.

The implications of these findings suggest that preserving the Rebo Bontong ritual is important not only for cultural conservation but also as a strategic medium for character education, strengthening social cohesion, and developing sustainable community-based cultural tourism. Nevertheless, challenges such as modernization, cultural commercialization, and declining youth participation must be anticipated through cultural documentation, revitalization programs, and the integration of local values into formal and informal education to ensure the sustainability of the tradition in the future.

d. Implementation of the Ritual

The implementation of the Rebo Bontong ritual involves the use of traditional Bugis clothing, collective prayers, dhikr, cultural parades, traditional art performances, communal sea bathing, and symbolic offerings to the sea. These activities demonstrate that the tradition possesses complex cultural dimensions encompassing religious, social, aesthetic, and symbolic aspects.

The sequence of activities confirms that Rebo Bontong functions not only as a customary ritual but also as a medium for preserving local culture and strengthening the collective identity of fishing communities through the reproduction of traditional values across generations. Suryani (2023) also emphasizes that the management of sustainable cultural festivals based on community social capital can increase collective participation, strengthen local identity, and support socio-cultural sustainability.

Thus, Rebo Bontong has strong relevance as a coastal cultural festival that strategically contributes to preserving cultural identity, social cohesion, and community sustainability. Moreover, Markhamah et al. (2024) demonstrate that the integration of cultural rituals and religious values in coastal societies strengthens social legitimacy while enhancing cultural attractiveness as a sustainable tourism asset.

Consequently, Rebo Bontong represents a multidimensional form of coastal culture in which cultural preservation operates alongside the reinforcement of spiritual and social values within the community.

From a cultural tourism perspective, the participation of domestic and international tourists in the Rebo Bontong ritual indicates the transformation of local traditions into cultural tourism attractions capable of encouraging community creative economies through cultural promotion, local crafts, and community-based economic activities. These findings align with Setiawati and Syam (2023), who argue that culture-based tourism rooted in local traditions contributes strategically to community economic development through community-based tourism integrating local culture, technology, and creative industries.

Their study demonstrates that culture-based tourism villages can increase community income, expand local business opportunities, and strengthen cultural identity as a sustainable economic asset. However, compared to other coastal cultural festivals in Indonesia, Rebo Bontong is unique due to its Bugis-Sasak cultural fusion and the dominant role of Islamic values within the ritual, making it a distinctive model of coastal religious-cultural tourism.

The implications of these findings indicate that Rebo Bontong has strong potential to be developed as a strategic asset for strengthening sustainable cultural tourism, cultural education, and local economic empowerment. Nevertheless, challenges such as cultural commercialization and modernization may reduce the sacred value of the ritual. Therefore, community-based preservation strategies, cultural regulations, and tourism management oriented toward balancing economic sustainability and cultural authenticity are essential.

Social Actions of Fishing Communities in the Rebo Bontong Ritual as a Manifestation of Cultural Meaning and Social Functions

The Rebo Bontong ritual practiced by the fishing community in Gili Air Hamlet represents a concrete form of social action rich in cultural meaning, religiosity, social solidarity, and economic adaptation within coastal society. From Max Weber's perspective, the social actions embedded in this ritual cannot merely be understood as ceremonial activities, but rather as meaningful actions consciously carried out with specific subjective orientations. Based on the findings of this study, the dominant form of social action within the Rebo Bontong ritual is instrumental rational action (*zweckrational*), in which community members consciously perform the ritual as a form of spiritual protection (*tolak bala*), an expression of gratitude to Allah SWT, and an effort to maintain the social and economic stability of the fishing community.

This instrumental rational action is reflected in the community's belief that conducting the ritual at a specific time serves as a preventive measure against disasters, disease

outbreaks, and disturbances in socio-economic activities, including fishing activities. In this context, cultural rituals function as symbolic systems that provide collective security while reinforcing the social legitimacy of cultural practices inherited across generations. These findings are consistent with Kuswanto et al. (2021), who found that traditional rituals among coastal communities in Gunungkidul function as spiritual media for seeking safety, warding off misfortune, and maintaining harmony between humans, nature, and transcendental forces through structured social actions. Similarly, Afriansyah and Sukmayadi (2022) emphasized that the Sedekah Laut tradition among coastal communities not only carries spiritual significance but also functions rationally in maintaining social solidarity, mutual cooperation, and social stability. Therefore, traditional rituals among Indonesian coastal communities can be understood as rational social actions that combine spiritual beliefs, preventive functions, and the reinforcement of community social structures.

In addition to instrumental rational actions, the Rebo Bontong ritual also reflects value-rational action (wertrational), where community members act based on cultural, religious, solidarity, and communal values. Social values emerging through mutual cooperation, deliberation, collective participation, and youth involvement indicate that the ritual plays an important role in maintaining social cohesion within the community. The ritual is not merely a cultural heritage but also a social reproduction arena that transmits social values to future generations. This finding is supported by Rahayu et al. (2022), who explain that local traditions among coastal communities function as instruments of cultural education, social solidarity formation, and communal identity strengthening through deliberation, collective prayers, cultural parades, and intergenerational participation. Their research highlights that coastal traditions serve not only as cultural heritage but also as social mechanisms for maintaining community cohesion amid modern social changes. Furthermore, Hadid and Surtikanti (2024) demonstrate that the Nadran tradition strategically contributes to preserving local cultural sustainability, strengthening community identity, and instilling ecological and social values through collective rituals inherited across generations. Thus, local traditions within coastal communities can be understood as multidimensional instruments functioning in cultural preservation, social education, and the reinforcement of communal structures amidst modernization.

Within the dimension of affective action, the emotional involvement of the community during the preparation and implementation of the ritual reflects a strong emotional attachment to ancestral culture. The spontaneous participation of community members without coercion indicates that Rebo Bontong has become part of a culturally embedded collective consciousness. These findings align with Hanif et al. (2024), who assert that traditional cultural rituals play a significant role in strengthening emotional bonding between communities and their local cultural identity while enhancing community social resilience through collective participation, cultural value internalization, and the reproduction of intergenerational social memory. Similarly, Ramadhan et al. (2025) found that collectively preserved local traditions strengthen emotional attachment, increase social solidarity, and sustain cultural identity amidst modernization. Therefore, affective actions within cultural rituals function not only as

expressions of individual emotions but also as social foundations that strengthen cultural resilience and the continuity of indigenous communities.

Furthermore, traditional action within the Rebo Bontong ritual emphasizes that the implementation of the ritual is based on the continuity of ancestral traditions passed down through generations. The sustainability of this tradition demonstrates a process of cultural conservation that functions to preserve the local identity of the Sasak community. Markhamah et al. (2024) explain that the preservation of traditional rituals in Indonesia not only maintains culture but also strategically contributes to the development of community-based cultural tourism. From a socio-economic perspective, the Rebo Bontong ritual also serves pragmatic functions by increasing economic activities through MSMEs, local handicrafts, traditional culinary businesses, and cultural tourism. The presence of domestic and international tourists participating in the ritual generates direct economic impacts for fishing communities. Consequently, the ritual functions not only spiritually and socially but also as an instrument of local economic development based on culture.

This finding is consistent with Riyanto and Sari (2023), who argue that local cultural festivals in coastal areas, such as the Petik Laut tradition in South Malang, contribute significantly to community welfare through the integration of culture, tourism, and creative economy sectors. Their research demonstrates that transforming cultural rituals into tourism events based on local wisdom positively impacts community income through trade, homestays, local culinary businesses, and community-based creative industries. In addition, Mentansan et al. (2023) emphasize that local wisdom among coastal communities strategically contributes to sustainable tourism development, cultural conservation, and economic strengthening through locally based tourism management. Therefore, coastal cultural festivals function not only as mechanisms for preserving traditions but also as sustainable economic development instruments through the synergy between culture and creative economy.

Overall, the social actions of fishing communities within the Rebo Bontong ritual demonstrate that local culture plays multidimensional roles, namely as: a medium of religiosity and spiritual protection, An instrument of social solidarity and community cohesion, a medium for intergenerational cultural socialization, a mechanism for preserving local cultural identity, and a strategy for economic development through cultural tourism. Thus, the Rebo Bontong ritual proves that local traditions are not static but adaptive to modern social developments without losing their essential values. Understanding the social actions of fishing communities within this ritual is important for recognizing how local culture functions as a foundation for sustainable social development in pluralistic societies.

Dynamics of Preserving the Rebo Bontong Local Tradition in a Pluralistic and Modern Society

The preservation of local traditions within pluralistic and modern societies is a dynamic, adaptive, and negotiation-based social process involving cultural heritage values, modernization, societal changes, and social diversity. The Rebo Bontong ritual in Gili Air Hamlet demonstrates that local traditions do not merely survive as symbols of the past but have transformed into instruments of social integration, economic development, tourism, and multicultural

interaction. In this context, Rebo Bontong functions as a cultural mechanism that preserves the collective identity of fishing communities while also becoming a space for interaction among local residents, migrants, domestic tourists, and international visitors.

Within the pluralistic society of Gili Air, inhabited by diverse ethnic groups such as Sasak, Bugis, and migrants from various regions, the Rebo Bontong ritual serves as an effective instrument of social integration. The tradition becomes a unifying medium through collective participation regardless of ethnicity, race, or social status. This demonstrates that preserving local culture plays a strategic role in maintaining social harmony amidst societal diversity. These findings are reinforced by Awaru (2025), who explains that local traditions within plural societies function as mechanisms of social cohesion that strengthen solidarity, tolerance, and social stability through collective cultural participation. Likewise, Souisa and Kissya (2025) emphasize that local cultural rituals contribute to building collective memory, strengthening communal identity, and maintaining social harmony. Thus, local traditions function as important instruments in preserving social cohesion and cultural sustainability. Consequently, Rebo Bontong not only preserves ancestral culture but also strengthens the social pluralism of coastal communities.

Modernization and globalization are often perceived as threats to the existence of local cultures. However, this study reveals that the people of Gili Air have instead adapted culturally by integrating the ritual with cultural tourism and creative economic sectors. Today, Rebo Bontong is not only spiritually and culturally oriented but also supports local tourism promotion, MSME empowerment, performing arts, and the strengthening of cultural tourism destination branding. This transformation demonstrates that local traditions can remain sustainable when they adapt to modern societal needs without losing their essential values.

Anoerajekti et al. (2021) argue that local cultural festivals based on community tourism can improve economic welfare through creative industries while simultaneously supporting the sustainability of traditional cultures. Similarly, Farhan Shafly and Yuliarti (2025) found that local cultural festivals contribute to increasing community income through MSME empowerment, cultural promotion, and local identity strengthening. Therefore, integrating cultural festivals with community-based tourism becomes an effective strategy for strengthening local economies while preserving traditional culture.

Furthermore, the preservation of the Rebo Bontong tradition also highlights the importance of cultural regeneration through the socialization of traditions to younger generations. The involvement of children and adolescents in the ritual represents a form of intergenerational cultural knowledge transfer. According to Markhamah et al. (2024), the success of preserving local traditions heavily depends on transmitting cultural values to younger generations through informal cultural education and direct participation in customary practices. In this context, Rebo Bontong functions as a medium of cultural education that instills values of solidarity, religiosity, mutual cooperation, and local identity from an early age.

The dynamics of preserving local traditions are also inseparable from the support of village governments and social stakeholders. The Government of Gili Indah Village

actively promotes Rebo Bontong as an annual cultural agenda supported through public festivals and tourism promotion. The synergy among indigenous communities, religious leaders, government institutions, and local economic actors demonstrates that cultural preservation requires a collaborative approach. Febrianty et al. (2023) emphasize that the sustainability of local cultures in the modern era is strongly influenced by institutional support, particularly through government and community involvement in protection, regulation, and integration of local culture into sustainable social development. Their research highlights that policy support, community-based preservation, and strengthening local institutions are key factors in maintaining traditional existence amidst modernization.

Nevertheless, modernization also presents challenges such as cultural commodification, shifts in ritual meanings, and the potential transformation of spiritual values into mere tourist attractions. Therefore, communities must maintain a balance between preserving cultural authenticity and adapting to modern needs.

Overall, the dynamics of preserving the Rebo Bontong tradition in Gili Air Hamlet demonstrate that local traditions within pluralistic and modern societies serve several important functions: Preserving local cultural identity, strengthening social solidarity among multiethnic communities, serving as media for intergenerational cultural transmission, supporting creative economic development and tourism, and Functioning as instruments of sustainable social development. Thus, the Rebo Bontong ritual proves that local traditions are not merely remnants of the past but strategic cultural assets capable of adapting to modernity and social plurality without losing their cultural roots.

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that the Rebo Bontong ritual in Gili Air Hamlet represents a form of social action among fishing communities oriented toward instrumental rationality, as conceptualized by Max Weber, because it is consciously performed as a spiritual, social, and cultural effort to ward off misfortune, express gratitude to God, and maintain the safety and well-being of coastal communities. This tradition functions not only as an ancestral cultural heritage that strengthens the local identity of the Bugis-Sasak community, but also plays a strategic role in fostering social solidarity, strengthening relationships between the community and the government, preserving coastal environments, and promoting tourism and the creative economy in Gili Air. Therefore, the preservation of Rebo Bontong should continue to be strengthened through the involvement of younger generations, institutional support from the government, and adaptive cultural management to ensure that this local tradition remains alive, authentic, and relevant amid the dynamics of a pluralistic and modern society.

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