




Preservation Value of Vernacular Architecture in Kampung Kuta: Exploring Its Unique Characteristic

Hani Nurhidayanti^{*1}, Hanson E. Kusuma¹ 

¹Institut Teknologi Bandung, 40132, Indonesia

*Corresponding Author: haninurhida@gamilcom

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ABSTRACT

Presently, numerous traditional villages across various regions are undergoing a series of changes and modifications. Among these changes is the unavoidable influence of globalization. This phenomenon, if unaddressed, poses a significant threat to the distinctive characteristics and uniqueness of vernacular architecture. A case study of Kampung Kuta in Ciamis Regency, Indonesia, illustrates these phenomena. The integration of contemporary elements, including forms, materials, and construction methods, is evident in several new buildings in Kampung Kuta. This research aims to clarify the unique characteristics of the vernacular architecture in the old buildings of Kampung Kuta and analyze their preservation value based on community perceptions. The study was conducted in two stages. The initial stage utilized an exploratory qualitative approach, incorporating a questionnaire survey with open-ended questions, along with documentation of Kampung Kuta, to identify the unique variables of vernacular architectural character and its preservation significance. The second stage of the research was conducted in an explanatory quantitative manner through a survey using a closed questionnaire. This questionnaire was prepared based on the results of the previous qualitative data analysis. The collected data were analyzed using factor analysis and regression to identify the relationship between the uniqueness of Kampung Kuta's vernacular architecture and its preservation value. The results of the analysis were mapped using the conceptual framework of cultural significance in preservation. The analysis yielded five distinct character groups in old buildings in Kampung Kuta: traditional identity, building beauty, cultural heritage, responding to natural context, and sacredness. Of these, three groups customary identity, creating beauty, and responding to natural context, exerted a significant influence on the value of preservation. This research aims to support the preservation of vernacular architecture in traditional villages, particularly in Kampung Kuta.

Keyword: Vernacular Architecture, Kampung Kuta, Characteristic, Preservation

ABSTRAK

Pada saat ini, beberapa perkampungan adat di berbagai daerah mengalami serangkaian perubahan dan modifikasi. Perubahan ini salah satunya disebabkan oleh arus globalisasi yang tidak dapat dihindari. Globalisasi berisiko menghilangkan ciri khas dan keunikan arsitektur vernakular jika tidak disikapi dengan hati-hati. Kondisi serupa terjadi pada salah satu perkampungan adat di Indonesia, yaitu Kampung Kuta, Kabupaten Ciamis. Beberapa bangunan baru di Kampung Kuta telah mengadopsi unsur-unsur modern, seperti bentuk, material, dan konstruksi. Penelitian ini bertujuan mengungkap dimensi keunikan karakter arsitektur vernakular pada bangunan-bangunan lama di Kampung Kuta serta menilai nilai pelestariannya berdasarkan persepsi masyarakat. Penelitian dilakukan dalam dua tahap. Tahap pertama menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif eksploratori dengan survei kuesioner berisi pertanyaan terbuka yang dilengkapi dokumentasi bangunan Kampung Kuta untuk mengidentifikasi variabel keunikan karakter arsitektur vernakular dan nilai pelestariannya. Tahap kedua dilakukan secara kuantitatif eksplanatori melalui survei menggunakan kuesioner tertutup, yang disusun berdasarkan hasil analisis data kualitatif sebelumnya. Data yang terkumpul



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dianalisis menggunakan analisis faktor dan regresi untuk mengidentifikasi hubungan antara keunikan arsitektur vernakular Kampung Kuta dan nilai pelestariannya. Hasil analisis dipetakan menggunakan kerangka konsep signifikansi budaya (*cultural significance*) dalam pelestarian. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan adanya lima kelompok keunikan karakter pada bangunan lama di Kampung Kuta, yaitu identitas adat, keindahan bangunan, warisan budaya, respons terhadap konteks alam, dan kesakralan. Tiga kelompok keunikan, yakni identitas adat, keindahan bangunan, dan respons terhadap konteks alam, memiliki pengaruh signifikan terhadap nilai pelestarian. Penelitian ini diharapkan menjadi bahan pertimbangan dalam melestarikan arsitektur vernakular di perkampungan adat, khususnya Kampung Kuta, Indonesia.

Keyword: Arsitektur Vernakular, Kampung Kuta, Karakteristik, Pelestarian

1. Introduction

Globalization has become an unavoidable phenomenon across regions, reshaping socio-cultural structures and influencing traditional communities and customary villages (Boru, 2013). It introduces new cultural patterns through media and migration, generating diverse lifestyles and housing needs that directly affect vernacular architecture (Al-Malki, et al., 2024).

Kampung Kuta, located in Ciamis Regency, West Java, is a customary settlement with fewer than 300 inhabitants, most of whom rely on agriculture (Syarifudin, et al., 2023). Despite its small population, the community continues to uphold ancestral traditions, preserving distinctive local wisdom and cultural practices. Vernacular architecture represents one of its most notable features, with houses and other structures constructed according to customary rules. Yet, modernization has begun to influence the built environment. Several new buildings now employ fabricated materials such as steel roof structures and Polyvinyl Chloride (PVC) for floors and walls, diverging from traditional forms.

Tourism development has further accelerated these changes. As a modern economic driver, tourism encourages regions to showcase their identity, natural resources, and traditions to compete globally (Kurniati & Wicaksono, 2024). While tourism can support the preservation of vernacular architecture and improve local livelihoods, it also poses risks. These include replacing traditional ornaments with modern designs lacking cultural meaning (Prianta & Sulistyawati, 2024), expanding infrastructure, and generating waste that threatens the environment (Baskaya, 2024).

Previous studies highlight the importance of natural materials, such as wood, in reinforcing the character of tourist areas (Nurmiah & Eka, 2019). Vernacular architecture itself attracts visitors using local materials, harmonious spatial arrangements, climate responsiveness, and representation of regional identity (Ikhsani & Setyowati, 2022). Thus, boundaries must be established to balance adaptation to modern needs with the preservation of local wisdom, ensuring that vernacular architecture in Kampung Kuta remains resilient.

Despite existing studies on Kampung Kuta that emphasize religious influences, customary practices, and spatial organization, little attention has been given to how external audiences perceive the uniqueness of its vernacular architecture. Most prior research relies heavily on local narratives, leaving a gap in understanding how non-resident perceptions contribute to the discourse on preservation values. This study addresses that gap by systematically analyzing external perceptions, thereby expanding the scope of vernacular architecture research beyond community-based perspectives.

2. Method

This study employed a mixed-methods approach, consisting of two stages: a qualitative phase followed by a quantitative phase. The qualitative stage explored variables related to the uniqueness of vernacular architecture in the older buildings of Kampung Kuta. The subsequent quantitative stage categorized these architectural characteristics and examined the relationship between uniqueness and preservation values.

2.1 Qualitative Phase: Data Collection and Analysis

Pada The qualitative phase utilized an online survey with open-ended questions. The questionnaire contained three items, supported by images of Kampung Kuta's vernacular buildings (Table 1) to clarify the questions. Sampling was conducted using the snowball technique, whereby initial respondents referred additional participants who were otherwise difficult to reach (Retnawati, 2017). Respondent attributes included gender,

domicile, age, educational background, and occupation. Data were collected between March 3 and March 20, 2024. A total of 99 respondents participated: 46% male (46 individuals) and 53% female (53 individuals). Occupational distribution included 45.5% private employees, 13.1% students, 10.1% civil servants, and 26.3% others.

Table 1. Sample Supporting Image in the Open-Ended Questionnaire
Vernacular Architecture of Kampung Kuta



Table 2.2. Sample of Open-Ended Questions

No	Question Item	Response Options
1	Have you ever visited a place with buildings similar to the image above?	Ya/Tidak
2	Do the buildings shown above have unique characteristics? Please provide detailed reasons for your answer	Yes/Uncertain/No
3	In your opinion, should the buildings in the image be preserved? Please provide detailed reasons for your answer	Yes/Uncertain/No

Collected data were analyzed using conventional content analysis within the framework of grounded theory, consisting of three stages: open coding, axial coding, and selective coding (Strauss & Corbin, cited in Sudira, 2009). Open coding involved identifying, naming, and categorizing responses based on causal relationships (Sudira, 2009). Axial coding connected and grouped codes derived from the open coding stage (Sudirman et al., 2020). Selective coding refined categories, validated relationships, and organized them into broader conceptual categories for further development (Walidin, et al., 2015). The results of the conventional coding analysis can be seen in Table 2.3.

Table 2.3. Results of conventional coding analysis

Category	Sub-Category	Keywords	
Characteristic	Form	Distinct from modern buildings	Unique form
		Unique form	Unique form
		Simple form	Ordinary building
		Common form	Ordinary building
		Found in other regions	Similar form
	Culture	Cultural value	Cultural value
Traditional building		Traditional building	

	Customary practices	Customary practices
	Customary practices	Customary practices
	Customary practices	Customary practices
	Ethnic identity	Ethnic identity
	Customary practices	Bangunan sakral
	Specific cultural traits	Cultural representation
	Belief system	Reflects tradition
Aesthetics	Natural beauty	Serene impression
	Visually pleasing	Pleasant to view
	Harmony	Harmony
	Balanced composition	Harmony
Construction	Roof design	Unique roof
	Stilt house	Stilt house
	Foundation adapted to site	Foundation type
Contextual	Regional identity	Regional identity
	Adapted to environmental conditions	Specific environment
	Disaster response	Earthquake-resistant building
Impression	Calm	Sense of calm
	Peaceful	Sense of peace
Natural Materials	Natural Materials	Natural Materials
	Ijuk roof	Ijuk roof
Ventilation	Suitable for tropical climate	Tropical climate friendly
	Air circulation in stilt houses	Air circulation
Environmentally Friendly	Environmentally friendly	Environmentally friendly
	Utilizes surrounding natural resources	Surrounding resources
Building Value	Historical value	History
	Tourist destination	Tourist spot
	Dwelling	Suitable for dwelling
Existence	Not extinct	Not extinct
	Existence of ancestral heritage	Ancestral heritage
Aesthetics	Aesthetic	Aesthetic
	Beautiful building form	Beautiful form
Impression	Impression of the past	Impression of the past
	Building nuance	Nuance
Contextual	Identity of a region	Identity
	Reflects a way of life	Way of life
	Geographical condition	Adjusts to geography
	Earthquake resistant	Earthquake resistant building
Building Value	Historical value	Historical continuity
	Tourist attraction	Tourism
Knowledge	Knowledge on the building	Construction techniques
	Knowledge on building structure	Construction techniques
Cultural Heritage	Representation of regional culture	Cultural representation
	Cultural heritage	Cultural heritage
Aesthetics	Unique	Unique

	Consideration	Not suitable for needs	Not suitable for needs
	Consideration of Natural Materials	Material is difficult to obtain Reducing trees	Rare Material Reducing trees
	Lack of Distinctive Feature	Lack of Distinctive Feature	
			Lacks character
	Consideration	Need for concrete construction	Need for concrete construction
Found in other regions	Found in other regions	Not exclusive	

2.2 Quantitative Phase: Data Collection and Analysis

In the quantitative phase of this study, data were collected through an online survey using a structured questionnaire. The questionnaire consisted of 60 close-ended questions, each derived from the categorization results of the preceding qualitative research. These questions were measured using a six-point Likert scale, which is considered to offer higher reliability and reduce individual decision-making bias (Chomeya, 2010). The Likert scale used in this study was designed to capture respondent tendencies, with the following response options: 6 = Strongly Agree, 5 = Agree, 4 = Somewhat Agree, 3 = Somewhat Disagree, 2 = Disagree, and 1 = Strongly Disagree. An example of a Likert-scale item is presented in Table 2.4. To enhance clarity, the questionnaire also included images of vernacular buildings in Kampung Kuta.

Sampling was conducted using the snowball technique, wherein initial participants were asked to refer other individuals who were not directly accessible to the researcher (Retnawati, 2017). The inclusion of non-resident perceptions is deliberate, as preservation values are increasingly shaped by broader societal recognition beyond local communities. Tourism, heritage policies, and cultural discourse often depend on how outsiders perceive uniqueness and authenticity. Thus, non-resident evaluations gathered through online snowball sampling provide valid indicators of preservation values, reflecting how vernacular architecture resonates in wider cultural and preservation contexts.

The questionnaire also collected demographic attributes, including gender, domicile, age, educational background, and occupation. Data collection was carried out over approximately one month, from May 5 to June 4, 2024. A total of 140 respondents participated in the quantitative phase, comprising 60 males and 80 females. The occupational distribution included 61 students, 36 civil servants, 18 private-sector employees, 5 entrepreneurs, and 20 individuals categorized as other.

Table 2.4. Sample of a Question with a Likert Scale

1. The building form of Kampung Kuta is different from modern buildings		
Strongly Disagree	1 2 3 4 5 6	Strongly Agree

Quantitative data analysis was conducted in two stages. In the first stage, the data was examined using factor analysis, which aimed to identify correlations among indicators and group those with similar characteristics into factors (Rahmana & Rahardjo, 2016). In the second stage, the dimensions of uniqueness in Kampung Kuta’s vernacular architectural characteristics, derived from the factor analysis, were further analyzed through multivariate regression analysis. This method was employed to determine the extent to which independent variables influenced the dependent variable (Wijaya & Budiman, 2016). During the regression stage, the categorized architectural characteristics of Kampung Kuta were tested to assess their impact on preservation values. All stages of quantitative analysis were performed using JMP software. The results regarding the influence of architectural characteristics on preservation values were then mapped against the conceptual framework of cultural heritage preservation established by ICOMOS (1999).

3. Discussion

3.1. Results of Factor and Regression Analysis

In the quantitative stage, the collected data were first analyzed using factor analysis to group indicators that

tended to share similar response values. The dimensions subjected to factor analysis in this study were the uniqueness of Kampung Kuta’s vernacular architectural characteristics and their preservation values. The subsequent stage employed multivariate regression analysis to examine the influence of the uniqueness variables of Kampung Kuta’s vernacular architecture on preservation values.

a. Factor Analysis of Architectural Characteristics

Based on the results of factor analysis, five principal groups of uniqueness were identified in the vernacular architecture of Kampung Kuta. The naming of each group represents the variables contained within the dimension of architectural uniqueness, clustered according to the tendency of respondents to provide similar evaluations. These five groups consist of responding to natural context, customary identity, building aesthetic, reflection of sacredness, and cultural heritage. The grouping of these dimensions is presented in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1. Dimensions of Kampung Kuta Character

	Responding to natural context	Customary Identity	Building Aesthetics	Sacredness	Cultural Heritage
Mean	5.157	5.277	5.232	4.486	5.171
Cronbach's α	0.950	0.898	0.902	0.770	0.785
Variance	6.979	4.494	4.234	3.668	3.230
Cum Percent	19.94	32.779	44.877	55.357	64.586
Good air circulation	0.798	0.240	0.318	0.233	0.095
Environmentally friendly	0.736	0.234	0.278	0.009	0.218
Suitable for tropical climate	0.693	0.286	0.215	0.289	0.093
Surrounding natural resources	0.676	0.391	0.362	0.151	0.186
Natural material	0.664	0.199	0.246	0.169	0.392
Foundation adjusts to the location	0.620	0.055	0.259	0.464	0.249
Sense of peace	0.599	0.141	0.461	0.196	0.398
Stilt house	0.584	0.122	0.339	0.262	0.163
Ijuk Roof	0.570	0.347	0.180	0.138	0.317
Disaster responsiveness	0.568	0.120	0.102	0.383	0.161
Sense of calm	0.526	0.245	0.587	0.154	0.215
Building harmony	0.498	0.276	0.403	0.319	0.346
Adjusts to environmental conditions	0.454	0.271	0.264	0.440	0.178
Regional characteristic	0.440	0.284	0.214	0.379	0.422
Historical value	0.424	0.325	0.275	0.190	0.405
Distinctive form	0.167	0.687	0.286	0.225	0.119
Customary building	0.333	0.644	0.190	0.240	0.280

Applicable customs	0.345	0.617	0.210	0.175	0.340
Contains cultural value	0.235	0.607	0.270	0.169	0.427
Uncommon form	0.119	0.543	0.145	0.415	0.130
Traditional building	0.244	0.541	0.249	0.119	0.518
Different form	0.149	0.525	0.122	0.265	0.044
Building cohesiveness	0.319	0.257	0.807	0.220	0.050
Visually pleasing	0.335	0.190	0.751	0.086	0.270
Tourist attraction	0.400	0.335	0.530	0.247	0.221
Pleasant	0.391	0.252	0.504	0.142	0.488
Simple form	0.254	0.331	0.435	0.144	0.056
Distinctive roof	0.238	0.366	0.372	0.303	0.341
Sacred building	0.181	0.264	0.061	0.659	0.145
Reflects beliefs	0.246	0.169	0.195	0.616	0.146
Ethnic	0.234	0.382	0.009	0.503	0.433
Specific regional building	0.061	0.276	0.154	0.477	0.169
Example of a dwelling	0.399	0.137	0.407	0.473	-0.107
Reflection of a specific culture	0.318	0.325	0.084	0.434	0.594
Ancestral building	0.344	0.266	0.188	0.337	0.531

In factor analysis, several statistical parameters were considered, including the mean, reliability measured by Cronbach’s alpha, variance, and cumulative percentage. The mean was used to calculate the average score within each group of data. Cronbach’s alpha assessed the reliability of the instrument; values greater than 0.7 indicate high reliability (Sugiyono, 2021). Variance measured the degree of dispersion within the dataset, while cumulative percentage represented the cumulative proportion of variance explained.

The customary identity group obtained the highest mean score of 5.277. This group represented variables such as distinctive forms, customary buildings, prevailing traditions, cultural values, uncommon forms, traditional architecture, and building forms that differ from modern structures. Its reliability score was 0.898, indicating relatively high reliability. The building aesthetic group achieved a mean score of 5.233, representing variables such as building harmony, visual comfort, tourism appeal, and natural beauty. Its reliability score was 0.902, also reflecting high reliability. The cultural heritage group recorded a mean score of 5.171, representing variables such as reflections of specific cultural traditions and ancestral buildings. Its reliability score was 0.785, which is considered relatively high. The natural context response group obtained a mean score of 5.157, representing variables such as effective air circulation, environmental friendliness, suitability for tropical climates, use of local resources, natural materials, adaptive foundations, feelings of peace, stilt houses, ijuk roofing, disaster resilience, and tranquility. This group achieved the highest reliability score of 0.950. Finally, the sacredness group recorded the lowest mean score of 4.486, representing variables such as sacred buildings,

reflections of belief systems, and ethnic identity. Despite its lower mean, the group demonstrated strong reliability with a Cronbach’s alpha of 0.950.

b. Preservation Analysis Factors

Based on the results of factor analysis, three principal groups of preservation values were identified for the buildings of Kampung Kuta. The naming of each group represents the variables contained within the dimension of preservation values, clustered according to the tendency of respondents to provide similar evaluations. These three groups consist of: agreement with preservation, and disagreement with preservation. The grouping of these dimensions is presented in Table 3.2.

Table 3.2. Dimensions of Preservation Value

	Agree with Preservation	Disagree with Preservation
Mean	5.208	3.132
Cronbach's α	0.963	0.877
Variance	10.099	3.617
Cum Percent	42.081	57.149
Representation of regional culture	0.877	-0.021
Cultural heritage	0.842	-0.053
Identity of a region	0.828	-0.053
Reflects a way of life	0.812	0.041
Unique	0.807	-0.087
Building nuance	0.799	-0.022
Impression of the past	0.798	-0.013
Knowledge on building structure	0.794	-0.034
Tourist destination	0.793	-0.001
Knowledge on the building	0.788	0.028
Existence of ancestral heritage	0.783	-0.083
Building form	0.762	-0.022
Historical value	0.749	0.027
Not extinct	0.729	-0.010
Adjusts to geographical conditions	0.702	0.051
Aesthetic	0.686	0.024
Need for concrete construction	-0.065	0.794
Material is difficult to obtain	-0.078	0.731
Lack of distinctive feature	-0.133	0.728
Reducing trees	-0.043	0.706

Found in other regions	0.043	0.698
Not suitable for needs	0.119	0.696
Found in other regions	0.008	0.647

The analysis revealed that the agreement with the preservation group obtained the highest mean score of 5.208. This indicates that most respondents support the preservation of Kampung Kuta’s buildings. This group encompassed variables such as representation of specific regional culture, cultural heritage, regional identity, reflection of lifestyle, uniqueness, building nuance, historical impression, structural knowledge, tourism destination, architectural knowledge, ancestral legacy, building form, historical value, continuity, geographic adaptation, and aesthetics. The reliability of this group, measured using Cronbach’s alpha, was 0.963, signifying a relatively high level of reliability.

c. Preservation Analysis Factors

Data that had undergone factor analysis were subsequently tested in the next stage to identify causal relationships between the dimensions of architectural uniqueness in Kampung Kuta and the dimensions of preservation. This stage employed multivariate regression analysis, with the results presented in Table 3.3.

The regression analysis demonstrated that the preservation dimension categorized as agreement with preservation was significantly influenced by three uniqueness dimensions of Kampung Kuta’s vernacular architecture: responding to natural context, customary identity, and building aesthetic (see Figure 1). Each of these categories exhibited a significant causal relationship with agreement on preservation, as shown by the following values: responding to natural context ($\beta = 0.332, p < 0.0001$), customary identity ($\beta = 0.243, p < 0.0001$), and building aesthetic ($\beta = 0.308, p < 0.0001$). Among all dimensions of architectural uniqueness, responding to natural context emerged as the dominant factor driving agreement with preservation in Kampung Kuta. By contrast, the categories of sacredness and cultural heritage contributed less significantly to preservation outcomes.

Table 3.3. The Dimensions of the Preservation Value of Kampung Kuta Buildings

Dependent	Agree with Preservation		Disagree with Preservation	
	RSq=0.83	PValue=<0.0001	RSq=0.02	PValue=0.6548
Independent	β	P	β	p
Responding to natural context	0.332	<0.0001	0.096	0.683
Customary Identity	0.243	<0.0001	-0.039	0.854
Building Aesthetics	0.308	<0.0001	-0.103	0.621
Sacredness	0.042	0.293	0.198	0.172
Cultural Heritage	0.052	0.357	-0.261	0.204

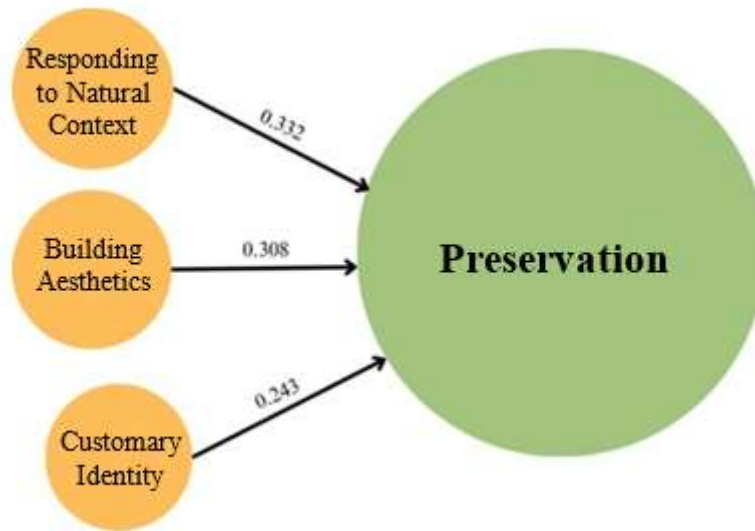


Figure1. Categories Influencing Preservation Value
 Source: Results and Analysis, 2024

3.2. Discussion

Several key values must be considered in the preservation of cultural heritage sites and buildings. These values include aesthetic, historic, scientific, cultural, social, and spiritual dimensions. These elements form the conceptual foundation of cultural significance as outlined in the framework for heritage conservation (ICOMOS, 1999).

This study seeks to map the results of its analysis—alongside findings from previous research onto the concept of cultural significance in preservation. Based on a synthesis of studies conducted between 2014 and 2024, the following distribution of values was identified: scientific (12 points), cultural (7 points), aesthetic (5 points), historic (4 points), social (4 points), and spiritual (1 point) (see Table 3.4). Accordingly, this discussion will focus more deeply on the scientific, cultural, and aesthetic values, as these were found to exert the most influence on the preservation of vernacular architecture in Kampung Kuta.

Table 3.4. Dimensions of Preservation Values
 Dimensi Pelestarian Burra Charter

Articles	Aesthetics	History	Scientific	Cultural	Social	Spiritual
(Nursanty, Husni, Rusmiatmoko, & Destiawan, 2023)	1		1	1	1	
(Kuba, Sahabuddin, & Hildayanti, 2023)				1		
Briones Llorente et al., 2024			1			
(Petrucci, Mancini, & Putzu, 2022)			1			
(Patil, Chaurasia, Shrivastava, Sankat, & Singh, 2021)			1			
(Han, Hu, & Xu, 2024)	1					
(Giannakopoulou, Xypolitakou, Damigos, & Kaliampakos, 2017)	1	1	1	1		

(Baca & López, 2018)				1		
(Zong, Mohamed, Jaafar, & Ujang, 2024)				1		
(Umaru, Adamu, M., & Jolaoso, 2022)				1		1
(Husa & Harun, 2023)	1	1	1	1	1	
(Sinha, 2020)		1		1	1	
(Wahyudi & Wikantiyoso, 2021)						
(Tawayha, Braganca, & Mateus, 2019)						
(Guillaud, 2014)		1	1			1
(Daneshgar Nejad, Nezhad Bahramjerdi, & Hanachi, 2022)			1			
(Eybye, 2020)			1			
(Nurhidayanti, 2024)	1		1	1		
Total	5	4	12	7	4	1

a. Regression Analysis of Scientific Values in Cultural Heritage Preservation

The scientific value in the preservation of cultural heritage buildings represents a dimension that contributes to the advancement of knowledge. This value encompasses aspects such as construction techniques, site selection, material usage, and all elements related to architectural knowledge. The scientific value embedded in buildings is the result of various experiments conducted by past generations, which can serve as a foundational step for conservation practices as well as for the design of new buildings (Petrucci, Mancini, & Putzu, 2022).

One of the clearest manifestations of scientific value can be found in vernacular architecture. Vernacular architecture embodies local cultural knowledge that enriches research in sustainable development, resource conservation, and the preservation of local traditions (Zong, Mohamed, Jaafar, & Ujang, 2024). Traditional buildings are typically well-adapted to their surrounding environment through the use of eco-friendly and sustainable materials (Khei, Mateus, Ortega, & Briones-Llorente, 2024). This adaptability is evident in the older buildings of Kampung Kuta, which significantly influence preservation efforts, particularly through their ability to respond to natural context.

The responding to natural context category emerged as the dominant factor driving preservation. Vernacular architecture often employs technologies that adapt to the needs and challenges of local communities, such as responsiveness to climate, natural disasters, and geographic conditions (Nursanty, Rusmiatmoo, & Widianara, 2023). This adaptability stems from the fact that vernacular buildings are constructed in harmony with natural conditions and utilize locally available materials.

This characteristic is also reflected in the traditional buildings of Kampung Kuta, which share similarities with Sundanese vernacular architecture. Such buildings are typically divided into three parts: the upper section (head), the middle section (body), and the lower section (foot). Each part serves a functional purpose, primarily to protect inhabitants. In Sundanese tradition, the roof is viewed as a simple yet essential element that shields community from rain, wind, and heat (Nuryanto, 2021).

Most of the older buildings in Kampung Kuta continue to employ natural materials. The use of diverse materials in vernacular architecture enhances comfort both inside and outside the building (Zong, Mohamed, Jaafar, & Ujang, 2024). This finding aligns with the research of Aulia and Veronica (2024), which demonstrated that Sundanese vernacular architecture is highly responsive to tropical climates. Therefore, the responding to natural context category in Kampung Kuta’s architecture constitutes a critical consideration in

cultural heritage preservation, as it not only sustains traditional practices but also provides valuable knowledge for future architectural development.

b. Aesthetic Value

Aesthetic value relates to the beauty of architecture or the visual qualities embedded in cultural heritage. The aesthetic dimension of heritage buildings may arise from the representation of regional uniqueness (Han, Hu, & Xu, 2024) and community culture (Kuba, Sahabuddin, & Hildayanti, 2023). The uniqueness and beauty of buildings can serve as a tourist attraction and contribute to the local economy (Giannakopoulou, Xypolitakou, Damigos, & Kaliampakos, 2017). Based on the analysis, the older buildings in Kampung Kuta also possess aesthetic value, which influences their preservation.

Vernacular architecture is a product that embodies the artistic expression of folk architecture and serves as a witness to history (Momeva & Altiparmakovska, 2008). As part of Sundanese architecture, the vernacular buildings of Kampung Kuta exhibit aesthetic qualities. Sundanese architecture is characterized by its exotic and aesthetic values, which can enhance regional potential for attracting tourists (Nuryanto, Ahdiat, & Surasetja, 2016). Previous studies have also identified the aesthetic category in vernacular preservation values, such as in the Tongkonan houses of Toraja. These houses are distinguished by their uniqueness and beauty, making them a prominent tourist attraction (Kuba, Sahabuddin, & Hildayanti, 2023). By maintaining the distinctive features and uniqueness of vernacular architecture, such buildings can continue to attract visitors. Thus, aesthetic value constitutes an important category in the preservation of vernacular architecture.

c. Cultural Value in Heritage Preservation

Cultural value represents local heritage and reflects the cultural values of the communities that inhabit and utilize it. The cultural values embedded in vernacular architecture form the cultural identity of a region (Nursanty, Husni, Rusmiatmoko, & Destiawan, 2023). These values arise because the characteristics of communities and conditions of each region differ, shaping vernacular architecture as the identity of a particular society and culture. Based on the analysis, the identity category significantly influences the preservation of architecture in Kampung Kuta. The customary identity category had a notable impact on agreement with preservation. This category includes distinctive forms, customary buildings, prevailing traditions, cultural values, uncommon forms, traditional architecture, and building forms that differ from modern structures.

The older buildings in Kampung Kuta embody the community's identity through their cultural values. These values include building traditions, uniformity of form, rules governing material use, and all aspects related to cultural context. Vernacular architecture itself serves as an identity marker for the communities that inhabit it. The people of Kampung Kuta adhere to various rules or customs in constructing buildings. They believe that violating these rules will bring misfortune (*katumbuk juru*) (Parliana, Kasiwi, Gumilar, Drajiati, & Febian, 2014). Consequently, the building forms in Kampung Kuta conform to customary practices, reinforcing their role as cultural identity. The massing of buildings in Kampung Kuta is also influenced by customary traditions (Parliana, Kasiwi, Gumilar, Drajiati, & Febian, 2014). Thus, the vernacular identity of Kampung Kuta holds significant value for preservation, as it reflects community identity (Nursanty, Rusmiatmoo, & Widianara, 2023). Preservation efforts in this context foster pride, strengthen solidarity within the community, and ensure the continuity of traditions by honoring architectural heritage (Nursanty, Husni, Rusmiatmoko, & Destiawan, 2023).

In the context of Kampung Kuta's buildings, certain categories such as historical, social, and spiritual were found to have limited influence on preservation. Historical value is often associated with past events such as struggles, politics, social dynamics, and cultural practices embedded in buildings (Wijayanti, Sari, Purnamasari, & Widyani, 2017). The cultural heritage category includes reflections of specific traditions and ancestral buildings. Spiritual value encompasses aspects related to belief systems and community values associated with the buildings, often expressed through symbols or structures (Umaru, Adamu, & Jolaoso, 2022). In Kampung Kuta, the sacred or spiritual category comprising sacred buildings, reflections of belief, and ethnic identity was perceived as less significant. This finding aligns with Parliana, Kasiwi, Gumilar, Drajiati, & Febian (2014), who noted that religious or belief-related factors exert the least influence on the architectural forms of Kampung Kuta.

These findings highlight that the preservation of vernacular architecture in Kampung Kuta is not only a matter of safeguarding physical structures but also of maintaining its cultural significance. The results emphasize that cultural identity expressed through traditional building forms, customary rules, and material use plays a crucial

role in shaping preservation values. This aligns with previous studies showing that the appreciation of rural culture tends to increase when vernacular architectural traditions are preserved and promoted (Zong, Wan Mohamed, Jaafar, & Ujang, 2024). Therefore, the preservation of Kampung Kuta's architecture should not merely focus on the physical continuity of buildings but also on strengthening cultural continuity and community empowerment, which can indirectly support local economic resilience.

Building on this understanding, these findings have important implications for local and regional conservation policies. In West Java, heritage conservation initiatives emphasize safeguarding cultural identity while accommodating sustainable development. The strong influence of customary identity, aesthetics, and natural context on preservation values suggests that policies should prioritize maintaining traditional forms and materials while regulating modern interventions. At the regional level, integration with tourism and cultural heritage programs can ensure that vernacular architecture is not only preserved but also promoted as a living heritage. By aligning community-based preservation efforts with broader conservation frameworks, Kampung Kuta can serve as a model for balancing modernization pressures with cultural resilience.

4. Conclusion

The study on community perceptions regarding the uniqueness of vernacular architectural characteristics in Kampung Kuta and their preservation was conducted in two stages. The first stage explored architectural uniqueness through an exploratory qualitative approach, while the second stage employed a quantitative explanatory approach. The quantitative phase identified categorical dimensions of both architectural uniqueness and preservation and further examined causal relationships between them.

This research found five categories within the dimension of architectural uniqueness in Kampung Kuta: responding to natural context, customary identity, building aesthetic, sacredness, and cultural heritage. Among these, the customary identity category obtained the highest mean score (5.277), indicating that it represents the most distinctive characteristic of Kampung Kuta's architecture.

Preservation values were categorized into three groups: agreement with preservation, and disagreement with preservation. The agreement with preservation category achieved the highest mean score (5.208), suggesting that most respondents support the preservation of Kampung Kuta's vernacular architecture.

Further analysis of causal relationships revealed that three categories of architectural uniqueness exerted dominant influence on preservation: responding to natural context, building aesthetic, and customary identity. Of these, responding to natural context emerged as the most influential factor, reflecting the adaptability of vernacular architecture to environmental conditions. This underscores the importance of preservation not only for safeguarding cultural heritage but also for contributing to environmental stewardship and advancing architectural knowledge. Meanwhile, building aesthetics influenced preservation by enhancing tourism potential and supporting local economic development.

In summary, this study highlights that the preservation of vernacular architecture in Kampung Kuta extends beyond maintaining physical forms to sustaining cultural meaning and community identity. By integrating qualitative and quantitative methods, the research provides new insight into how public perception contributes to preservation values. These findings can inform local and regional conservation strategies in West Java, ensuring that modernization aligns with cultural continuity and sustainable development.

Future research should expand upon these findings by examining the perceptions of indigenous communities themselves regarding the preservation of vernacular architecture in Kampung Kuta. Such studies would provide deeper insights into how community perceive and value the homes they inhabit. Moreover, this research focused primarily on older vernacular buildings; therefore, further investigation is needed to assess preservation values in newer constructions within Kampung Kuta.

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