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Attitude and Behavior Gap in Sasak Cultural Literacy among Preservice Teachers in an Indonesian University

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Abstract

Preserving local cultural identity and strengthening intercultural competence among preservice teachers are vital elements in maintaining social integration within multicultural societies. This study aims to comprehensively evaluate the Sasak cultural literacy profile of preservice teachers by mapping three primary dimensions: cognitive, affective, and behavioral. Utilizing a convergent parallel mixed-methods design, data were collected from 24 preservice teacher students across educational study programs in Lombok through a structured Google Forms questionnaire comprising 12 Likert-scale indicators and 4 open-ended qualitative questions. Ethical clearance was granted by the Ethics Committee of LPPM Universitas Nahdlatul Wathan Mataram, and participation was voluntary with informed consent. Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, whereas qualitative data were processed through Braun and Clarke's thematic analysis framework. Quantitative results reveal a hierarchical structure in students' cultural literacy: Affective Dimension (M = 4.62; SD = 0.38; Very High) > Cognitive Dimension (M = 4.24; SD = 0.59; High) > Behavioral Dimension (M = 3.69; SD = 0.83; Moderate–High). Convergent triangulation confirms the existence of an Attitude–Behavior Gap, wherein near-perfect affective pride and commitment fail to translate linearly into active physical participation and digital cultural promotion. Qualitatively, four main themes were identified: enculturation of traditional values (Bau Nyale, Nyongkolan, Tolaq Balaq), protective awareness of pluralism, inter-ethnic interaction tolerance, and preservation participation typologies. This study highlights the need for a reorientation toward local wisdom-infused pedagogy in higher education and the provision of structured digital action programs to bridge the gap between cultural pride and actual preservation actions.

1. Introduction

The rapid development of globalization and digitalization has placed a growing pressure on the sustainability of local culture identities. This leads to cultural homogenization, dominated by global cultural forms, and a widening gap between younger generation with their cultural heritage (Alsaleh, 2024; Hiremath, 2025; Rasidi et al., 2025). In this process, digital technology occupies an ambivalent process. On the one side, it can accelerate the local traditions erosion by promoting popular global contents. On the other side, it can also serve as vehicle for cultural preservation when incorporated purposefully into local cultural context (Alsaleh, 2024; Perdana & Heny, 2026).

In response to these challenges, it is pivotal to incorporate local wisdom education curricula in order to preserve local identities for the influences of globalization (Ramadhan et al., 2025; Rasidi et al., 2025). Such integration can encompass the incorporation of local cultural content into the curriculum, project-based learning, and students' active engagement with local cultural communities (Rasidi et al., 2025). Moreover, educational programs that promite cultural diversity and local heritage can strengthen local identity resilience against the dominance of homogenaized global culture (Kerubo, 2024; Perdana & Heny, 2026).

Within this context, teacher education plays a crucial role in preparing preservice teachers who not only receive cultural values but also serve as future transmitters of those values. Therefore, teacher education program is responsible for equipping them with the knowledge, attitudes, and pedagogical competence required to teach effectively in culturally diverse classrooms (Cherng & Davis, 2019; Anugrah et al., 2024; Gulya & Fehérvári, 2023). Multicultural awareness serves as one of the vital elements in helping preservice teachers to create a suppotive classroom climate and direct interaction with non-dominat groups can strenghten this awareness (Cherng & Davis, 2019). Nevertheless, the integration of multicultural education into teacher education curricula remains uneven and largely partial, with limited opportunities for preservice teachers to engage in sustained, practice-based experiences (Gulya & Fehérvári, 2023). Recent Indonesian evidence highlights a gap between knowledge and practice, as preservice teachers tend to possess adequate cultural-literacy knowledge but show less developed practical initiative and intercultural disposition (Saidah et al., 2025). This gap between preservice teachers' cultural knowledge and their readiness to translate that knowledge into practice represents a key empirical issue underlying the present study.

Lombok, Indonesia, offers a particularly instructive setting for examining this problem. Although Lombok is predominantly inhabited by Muslim Sasak people, the Sasak community has historically maintained a long-standing cultural relationship with the Balinese Hindu minority. (Budiwanti & Eidhamar, 2024). This evidence indicates that social cohesion in this plural setting can be maintained through shared public spaces, cross-group rituals, and competence in traditional culture, even as inter-group relations remain dynamic and are not entirely free of tension (Budiwanti & Eidhamar, 2024; Wirawan, 2017). Shared traditions among Sasak Muslim and Balinese Hindu, such as Perang Topat, represents a symbol of reconcilitation and inter-group harmony (Budiwanti & Eidhamar, 2024). Lestari and Yusra (2022) postulate that Sasak ethno-cultural practices are recognized as vital asset both for Indonesia's wider multiculturalism and for the socio-economic wellbeing of local communities. Additionally, traditional practices like Merariq marriage and the Nyongkolan procession preserve their cultural relevance while continually adjusting to modern and religious dynamics (Azwar et al., 2024).

Taken together, this body of evidence supports the argument that local cultural literacy among preservice teachers is essential not only for preserving cultural identity, but also for sustaining local-wisdom-based multicultural education and reinforcing social integration in plural settings such as Lombok.

In higher education context, cultural literacy is not merely viewed as students' understanding about certain cultures. Rather, it is percieved as a multidimensional competency, including knowledge, attitude, communication ability, critical reflection, and participation in cross-cultural engagement (Liu, 2025; Goh et al., 2024). In line with this conceptual development, contemporary educational pedagogy position cultural learning, cultural reflection, and cultural experiences are interrelated process that develops intercultural competence (Al-Afifi et al., 2026; Cruz et al., 2025; Sierra-Huedo & Aguareles, 2026). Students' multicultural literacy is also enhanced through authentic cultural experiences (Liu, 2025). Moreover, the implementation of structured pedagogical models such as Collaborative Online

International learning (COIL) with sequenced classroom intervention has shown the potential to foster measurable intercultural competence (Hackett et al., 2023; Sierra-Huedo & Aguareles, 2026).

A second, closely related strand of literature indicates that the internalization of cultural values is most effective when learning does not remain confined to the cognitive domain but is translated into direct experience, social habituation, and reflective practice (Cruz et al., 2025; Chessiagi & Yulifar, 2026; Bachri & Tarsidi, 2020). Value internalization, such tolerance and mutual cooperation, can also be enhanced through active participation in immersive and live-in learning program (Chessiagi & Yulifar, 2026; Cruz et al., 2025). Nevertheless, sustaining the internalization of these values remains challenging due to globalization, technological disruption, and limited curricular support (Chessiagi & Yulifar, 2026; Aswasulasikin et al., 2022).

A myriad of research on Sasak-Lombok culture has focused on cultural exploration, values, religious and social values embedded in local traditions; however, systematic investigation of higher education students' perspectives remains limited (Herlina, 2026; Yamil et al., 2026; Zulkarnain et al., 2026). Sasak tradition has been positioned as a medium for transmitting religiosity, solidarity, familial responsibility, respect for elders, and social cohesion (Yamil et al., 2026; Herlina, 2026). Sasak marriage customs, for example, function as an informal mechanism of cultural and social education (Yamil et al., 2026), while practices such as Bejeleng, Bedengah, and Mentanak illustrate a syncretic fusion of Islamic and adat (customary) values in the formation of Sasak identity (Herlina, 2026; Zulkarnain et al., 2026). Education-research focused in Lombok suggest that cultural preservation and values reinforcement require a more systematic approach, including stronger policy support, teacher training, and sustatainable partnership among schools and community (Fatmawati et al., 2026; Aswasulasikin et al., 2022).

None of this literature, however, has yet examined how these three strands — cultural literacy as a multidimensional competence, empirically grounded value internalization, and the Sasak-specific cultural corpus — converge in a single, methodologically integrated inquiry into the cultural literacy of preservice teachers themselves. This convergence gap is elaborated in the following section.

Although scholarship on cultural literacy and Sasak local wisdom continues to grow, this synthesis of the literature reveals three unresolved research gaps. First, conceptual and methodological gap: multicultural competence is generally evaluated in broad terms across international studies on cultural literacy and overwhelmingly relaying on single quantitative instrument (Arasaratnam-Smith, 2020; Liu & Shirley, 2021). Conversely, research examining local Indonesian culture is largely confined to descriptive qualitative inquiry, rarely incorporating measurable statistical testing. (Suparman et al., 2023). To date, no mixed-methods study has convergently integrated a three-dimensional quantitative instrument (cognitive, affective, behavioral) with qualitative thematic analysis to evaluate indigenous local cultural literacy.

Second, henomenological gap: the attitude–behavior gap. Social behaviour research indicates that strong affective attitude or stated commitments does not consistently lead to concrete action (Solhaug, 2021). This disconnect remains unexplored within the context of local cultural preservation. Specifically,

there is no study that has investigated the disconnect between students' pride in Sasak culture and their actual physical participation and digital promotion.

Third, contextual and pedagogical gap: preservice teachers in Lombok will enter multi-ethnic classrooms in their future careers, yet studies specifically evaluating how these students extract philosophical values from local traditions (Bau Nyale, Nyongkolan, Tolaq Balaq) and practice inter-ethnic tolerance — for example, with Balinese and East Nusa Tenggara -origin peers — remain very limited (Handayani et al., 2023).

This study constitutes a preliminary investigation within a broader research program titled ‘The Influence of Student and Pupil Engagement in Local Wisdom Campaigns on Enhancing Creativity, Cultural Literacy, and Critical Thinking Skills in Lombok Island.’ Its principal novelty lies in the application of a convergent parallel mixed-methods design that holistically integrates quantitative evaluation across three dimensions of cultural literacy — cognitive, affective, and behavioral — with qualitative thematic analysis grounded in the Braun and Clarke framework, applied specifically to indigenous Sasak culture. As a preliminary study, this research provides foundational empirical evidence by mapping a baseline profile of preservice teachers' cultural literacy and by empirically substantiating the existence of an attitude–behavior gap. This baseline evidence provides a critical foundation for designing precisely targeted local-wisdom campaign interventions in the subsequent, larger-scale study.

Theoretically, this study enriches the literature on multicultural education and indigenous cultural literacy in Southeast Asia by mapping the interaction between literacy dimensions and clarifying how local heritage values are internalized holistically by preservice teachers. Practically and in policy terms, the study offers data-driven insights for higher-education administrators and education policymakers seeking to design local-wisdom-infused curricula. In addition, the findings provide a strategic basis for formulating structured digital-action programs to bridge the gap between students' strong cultural pride and their actual engagement in heritage preservation.

To address the gaps identified above, this study poses three research questions:

1. RQ1: What is the quantitative profile of students' Sasak cultural literacy across the cognitive, affective, and behavioral dimensions?
2. RQ2: How do students understand, internalize, and practice Sasak traditional values and cross-ethnic interaction, as revealed through thematic analysis?
3. RQ3: How do the quantitative findings and qualitative themes converge to explain the attitude–behavior gap in students' cultural literacy?

2. Method

2.1 Research Design

This study employed a Convergent Parallel Mixed-Methods Design (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). This design used a single integrated survey instrument to collect quantitative and qualitative data simultaneously. Each data type was analyzed separately. During the integration phase, the findings were synthesized to achieve a comprehensive view of university students' Sasak cultural literacy levels.

2.2 Participants and Sampling

Participants comprised N = 24 active undergraduate students enrolled in higher education institutions on Lombok Island, West Nusa Tenggara. A Purposive Sampling technique (Etikan et al., 2016) was applied based on the following inclusion criteria: (1) active undergraduate (S1) students, (2) enrolled in teacher education study programs, and (3) originating either from Lombok (West Lombok, Central Lombok, East Lombok, Mataram City) or incoming students from other regions such as East Nusa Tenggara (NTT).

2.3 Research Instrument

Data were collected using a structured questionnaire divided into three main sections:

- • **Section I (Respondent Demographics)**: Captured student profile variables, including Study Program, Semester, and Home Region/Village.
- • **Section II (Quantitative Questionnaire)**: Comprised 12 items measured on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree / Very Low to 5 = Strongly Agree / Very High). This instrument mapped three dimensions of cultural literacy (Banks, 2019):
- **– Cognitive/Knowledge Dimension (Items Q1–Q4)**: Knowledge of local traditions, understanding of philosophical meaning, ability to explain cultural values, and appreciation of ethnic diversity.
- **– Affective/Attitude Dimension (Items Q5–Q9)**: Commitment to preservation, local pride, comfort in cross-ethnic interaction, and tolerance.
- **– Behavioral/Action Dimension (Items Q10–Q12)**: Physical participation in cultural activities, social media promotion, and perception of positive impact.
- • **Section III (Qualitative Open-Ended Questions)**: Included 4 exploratory items (Items Q13–Q16) designed to examine specific traditional knowledge (Q13), perspectives on diversity (Q14), cross-ethnic interaction experiences (Q15), and concrete cultural preservation actions (Q16).

2.4 Data Collection and Ethical Considerations

We collected data via online Google form to ensure accessibility. The study received ethical approval from the Ethics Committee of LPPM Universitas Nahdlatul Wathan Mataram. All procedures were performed in accordance with the relevant guidelines and regulations, and the study adhered to the principles of the Declaration of Helsinki. Moreover, all potential participants received written information regarding the research purpose, data confidentiality guarantees, and the voluntary nature of participation

prior to completing the survey. All participants signed/agreed to an electronic informed consent form before gaining access to the instrument items. Confidentiality was strictly maintained using anonymous coding (e.g., Respondent 1 to Respondent 24).

2.5 Data Analysis

2.5.1 Quantitative Analysis

Quantitative data were processed using descriptive statistical analysis (Mertler et al., 2021) to calculate the Mean (M), Standard Deviation (SD), and percentage frequency distributions for each indicator and dimension. Mean score ranges were categorized as follows: 1.00–1.80 (Very Low); 1.81–2.60 (Low); 2.61–3.40 (Moderate); 3.41–4.20 (High); and 4.21–5.00 (Very High).

2.5.2 Qualitative Analysis

Qualitative responses from open-ended questions were examined using Thematic Analysis following Braun and Clarke's (2006, 2019) 6-phase framework: (1) Familiarization with narrative responses, (2) Generating Initial Codes, (3) Searching for Themes, (4) Reviewing Themes, (5) Defining and Naming Themes, and (6) Producing the Report incorporating direct participant quotes.

2.5.3 Data Integration (Mixed-Methods Triangulation)

Final synthesis was conducted using Data Triangulation techniques (Fetters et al., 2013) through a joint display comparison of statistical results and qualitative themes to determine convergence, divergence, or an attitude–behavior gap across literacy dimensions.

3. Results

3.1 Overview

In the finding section, we integrate quantitative survey analysis (N = 24) and qualitative thematic analysis to present a comprehensive baseline profile of preservice teachers' Sasak cultural literacy.

3.2 Quantitative Findings

Descriptive statistical analysis of the 12 Likert-scale items evaluating the cognitive, affective, and behavioral dimensions of Sasak cultural literacy is summarized in Table 1.

Table 1
Descriptive Statistics of Sasak Cultural Literacy Indicators (N = 24)

Cultural Literacy Dimension	Code	Assessment Indicator	Mean (M)	SD	Category
Cognitive (Knowledge)	Q1	Knowledge of local Sasak traditions	4.25	0.74	High
	Q2	Understanding of philosophical meaning & values	4.42	0.78	High
	Q3	Ability to explain cultural philosophy to outsiders	3.63	1.21	Moderate
	Q4	Appreciation of ethnic diversity in Lombok	4.67	0.56	Very High
Cognitive Sub-Mean		**Total Cognitive Dimension**	**4.24**	**0.59**	**High**
Affective (Attitudes & Pride)	Q5	Commitment to preserving cultural diversity	4.92	0.28	Very High
	Q6	Pride in Sasak/Lombok local culture	4.96	0.20	Very High
	Q7	Comfort in cross-ethnic interactions	4.54	0.66	Very High
	Q8	Respect for customs of other ethnic groups	4.33	0.70	High
	Q9	Openness and tolerance toward differences	4.33	0.82	High
Affective Sub-Mean		**Total Affective Dimension**	**4.62**	**0.38**	**Very High**
Behavioral (Participation)	Q10	Active engagement in cultural preservation	3.63	1.06	Moderate
	Q11	Cultural promotion via social media / community	3.46	0.83	Moderate
	Q12	Perception of positive impact of preservation	4.00	0.98	High
Behavioral Sub-Mean		**Total Behavioral Dimension**	**3.69**	**0.83**	**Moderate–High**

3.2.1 Dimension-by-Dimension Analysis

Affective Dimension (M = 4.62; SD = 0.38): Consistently registered the highest scores. Pride in local culture (Q6, M = 4.96; SD = 0.20) and commitment to preserving diversity (Q5, M = 4.92; SD = 0.28) approached perfect scores. The low standard deviations (SD < 0.30) indicate strong consensus among students regarding cultural pride and affective commitment.

Cognitive Dimension (M = 4.24; SD = 0.59): Students exhibited strong knowledge regarding ethnic diversity (Q4, M = 4.67; SD = 0.56) and philosophical meaning (Q2, M = 4.42; SD = 0.78). However, the ability to explain cultural philosophy to outsiders (Q3) dropped to M = 3.63 with the highest dispersion (SD = 1.21), revealing disparities in cultural communication capacity.

Behavioral Dimension (M = 3.69; SD = 0.83): Registered the lowest mean score. Active physical participation (Q10, M = 3.63; SD = 1.06) and digital promotion on social media (Q11, M = 3.46; SD = 0.83) remained in the moderate category.

3.2.2 Hierarchy of Cultural Literacy

Comparative analysis reveals a clear hierarchical structure: Affective Dimension (M = 4.62) > Cognitive Dimension (M = 4.24) > Behavioral Dimension (M = 3.69). While items Q5 and Q6 showed 100% response concentration in options 4 (Agree) and 5 (Strongly Agree), items Q3, Q10, and Q11 displayed response dispersion across options 1 (Very Low), 2 (Low), and 3 (Moderate).

Source: Sasak Culture Literacy Survey Data (2025)

These quantitative findings indicate confirm the presence of the Attitude–Behavior Gap phenomenon in students' cultural literacy. Although students possess strong affective attitudes and national/local pride, these sentiments have not translated linearly into concrete actions or digital promotion activities.

3.3 Qualitative Findings

The qualitative responses were structured through Braun and Clarke’s thematic analysis framework, resulting in a matrix of four main themes and eight sub-themes summarized in Table 2.

Table 2
Thematic Analysis Matrix of Sasak Cultural Literacy

Main Theme	Sub-theme	Codes / Keywords	Sample Representative Quote
1. Enculturation of Traditional Values & Philosophy	1.1 Identification of Local Traditions	Nyongkolan, Bau Nyale, Peresean, Begawe, Tolaq Balaq	"The Bau Nyale tradition carries values of togetherness and solidarity..." (Respondent 5)
	1.2 Internalization of Communal & Spiritual Values	Togetherness, harmony, religious safety, bravery	"The Tolaq Balaq tradition is a sign to pray for safety to Allah SWT" (Respondent 11)
2. Protective Awareness of Pluralism	2.1 Acceptance of Multiculturalism	Regional wealth, important asset, local pride	"respecting and fully supporting diversity as an important regional asset" (Respondent 8)
	2.2 Resistance to Westernization	Local culture protection, filtering Western values	"we must preserve it so it is not replaced by Western cultural values" (Respondent 2)
3. Cross-Ethnic Interaction Dynamics	3.1 Social Cultural Exchange	Cultural discussion, learning local languages	"sharing cultural values and experiences we have gone through" (Respondent 2)
	3.2 Inter-Faith Tolerance	Respect for religious differences, harmonious friendship	"we differ in religion and belief, but we respect each other" (Respondent 6)
4. Preservation Participation Typology	4.1 Physical-Ritual & Arts Participation	Nyongkolan procession, traditional dancer, attire	"participating in dance contests and opening events as a dancer" (Respondent 18)
	4.2 Academic & Creative Industry Contribution	Essay writing, digital documentation, tour & travel	"training at a private tour and travel company" (Respondent 22)

Theme 1: Enculturation of Traditional Values & Philosophy

Students' knowledge about Sasak culture extends beyond the recognition of tradition forms, but it has gone deeper to the understanding of underpinning philoshopies. Within this context, traditions such as Bau Nyale and Nyongkolan are onceptualized as social-cultural space, serving as means to build and transmit communal knowledge. Through cultural engagement and reflection, students are able to extract the core principles of solidarity and togethernes, for instance, from the Bau Nyale Festival. They view *"the Tolaq Balaq tradition is a sign to pray for safety to Allah SWT"* (Respondent 11), and Presean Shield-fighting as a representation of chivalry, barave and sportmanship.

Theme 2: Protective Awareness of Pluralism and Local Identity

Student attitudes toward Lombok's multicultural landscape are characterized by a dual commitment: enthusiastic acceptance of ethnic diversity (Sasak, Balinese, Sumbawa, Bima, Javanese) alongside a protective stance against cultural homogenization. In this context, diversity is viewed as vital social capital in building harmonious relationship among ethnic groups. As expressed by one student *"I am very open and respect differences, and I am proud to live in this region"* (Respondent 11). Simultaneously, they express a strong awareness of the need to critically filter various foreign cultural influences: *"we must preserve local culture so it is not replaced by Western values"* (Respondent 2).

Theme 3: Cross-Ethnic Interaction Dynamics and Inter-Faith Tolerance

Cross-cultural interactions occur naturally across university, residential, and social settings. The activities of sharing stories and narratives play a critical role in building mutual understanding and relationships across ethnic groups. As expressed by Respondent 2: *"sharing cultural values and experiences we have gone through"*. Also, the students demonstrate a maturity to build inter-faith tolerance and mutual respect when interacting with Balinese Hindu peers. This is indicated by the respondents' reflection: *"we differ in religion and belief, but we respect each other"* (Respondent 6), and *"I have Balinese friends; I always behave well and maintain tolerance"* (Respondent 23).

Theme 4: Preservation Participation Typologies

Concrete preservation actions manifest in two primary forms: physical-artistic participation and academic-creative contributions. Physically, students engage in ceremonial events and traditional dress: *"participating in events related to Sasak customs such as wearing the lambung attire"* (Respondent 19) or performing traditional dances (Respondent 18). Academically, students translate literacy into essay writing (Respondent 9) and local tourism engagement (Respondent 22).

4. Discussion

4.1 Explaining the Attitude–Behavior Gap and Cognitive Communication Dispersion

Evidence revealed by convergent triangulation indicates the presence of an Attitude–Behavior Gap which aligns with Solhaug's (2021) theoretical framework. Although students' affective pride on local culture approaches a maximum level (M = 4.62) their physical engagement (Q10, M = 3.63) and digital media promotion (Q11, M = 3.46) remain moderate. This gap stems from to primary factors. First, their participation remains largely passive-ceremonial without formal institutional facilitation from universities. For instance, during the nyongkolan procession or Bau Nyale, they mainly observe the events without doing any formal cultural activities. Second, while possessing intense cultural pride, they lack the ability to create digital content to transform traditional naratives into educational media content.

This confirms Suparman et al. (2023) showing that the main challenge of cultural preservation is the lack of digital literacy skill, not a loss of cultural pride.

Furthermore, the high dispersion in Q3 (SD = 1.21) indicates a gap in students' intercultural communication. Although the majority of students understand various forms of local culture, they, however, are not confident to express the philosophical meaning of the tradition to external groups. This confirms Deardorff's (2020) framework that passive cognitive knowledge is not sufficient to shape an intercultural communicative competence. Interactive narrative training is required to equip students to be effective intercultural communicators.

4.2 Enculturation of Sasak Traditional Philosophy and Multicultural Social Capital

The qualitative findings of this study suggest that cultural enculturation continuously operates across both domestic and public domain. Students can reflectively connect local traditions (*Bau Nyale, Tolaq Balaq and Presean*) with modern comunal values such as togetherness and social integration. The spiritual meaning in Tolaq Balaq tradition represents a harmonious synergy between Islamic teaching and Sasak local wisdom. Similarly, they conceptualize Presean shield-fighting as as a symbol of sportivity, courage, and chivalry, not as physical violence. These findings align with the recent ethnographic research by Budiwanti (2020) and Zulkarnain et al. (2026).

The findings also reveal that students demonstrte maturity in interacting with other ethnic members. This is evidence when they engage with peers from Balinese, Sumbawa, Bima, Javanese, and NTT backgrounds. This engagement is grounded on mutual respect. Moreover, students' commitment in maintaining harmonious relationships with Balinese Hindu peers is consistent with previous findings on social cohesion. Social cohesion is sustained through shared public spaces and cultural competence (Budiwanti & Eidhamar, 2024; Wirawan, 2017). These shared practices can serve as an important social capital for preventing inter-communal conflict (Harnawi et al., 2022).

4.3 Pedagogical Implications for Teacher Education

The findings address the contextual-pedagogical gap by offering insights for higher education curriculum design. Teacher education program must move beyond theoretical exposure toward an integrated approach, including practice-based experiences or community engagement program. This can enhance students' critical thinking and intercultural communication skills. Also, universities should design project-based learning initiatives encouraging students to produce digital documentation, cultural essays, and tourism promotion content across digital platforms. This is crucial to bridge the Attitude–Behavior Gap.

5. Conclusion

5.1 Main Conclusions

Preservice teachers in Lombok possess a highly positive Sasak cultural literacy profile characterized by a hierarchical structure: Affective Dimension (M = 4.62, Very High) > Cognitive Dimension (M = 4.24, High) > Behavioral Dimension (M = 3.69, Moderate–High). Convergent analysis validates the Attitude–Behavior Gap, wherein near-perfect affective commitment is not linearly reflected in physical or digital preservation actions. Qualitatively, students successfully internalize spiritual and communal values from local traditions while demonstrating strong social capital in maintaining inter-ethnic tolerance.

5.2 Limitations

This study acknowledges two primary limitations. The sample size only involved N = 24 preservice teachers. Therefore, generalization of quantitative findings to broader student populations should be made with caution. Also, the data collection included mainly students from Lombok, excluding excluding student dynamics on neighboring islands such as Sumbawa.

5.3 Future Research Directions

Drawing on the limitation of this study, future research should expand the sample size quantitatively across multi-disciplinary programs and higher education institutions throughout West Nusa Tenggara. Also, future reseacher should develop and test a Digital Cultural Project-Based Learning model to evaluate its efficacy in bridging the Attitude–Behavior Gap among university students.

Declarations

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Competing interests

The authors declare that they have no competing interests.

Ethics approval and consent to participate

This study involved human participants and was approved by the Ethics Committee of LPPM Universitas Nahdlatul Wathan Mataram. All procedures were performed in accordance with the relevant guidelines and regulations, and the study adhered to the principles of the Declaration of Helsinki. All participants provided informed electronic consent prior to data collection.

Consent to publish: Not applicable.

Data availability: The dataset generated and analyzed during the current study is available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request.

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Code availability: Not applicable.

Declaration of Generative AI and AI-Assisted Technologies in the Writing Process

During the preparation of this work, the author(s) used Gemini/Generative AI tools in order to assist with language translation (Indonesian to English), grammatical refinement, and document formatting. After using this tool, the author(s) thoroughly reviewed, edited, and verified the content as necessary and take(s) full responsibility for the final content of the publication.

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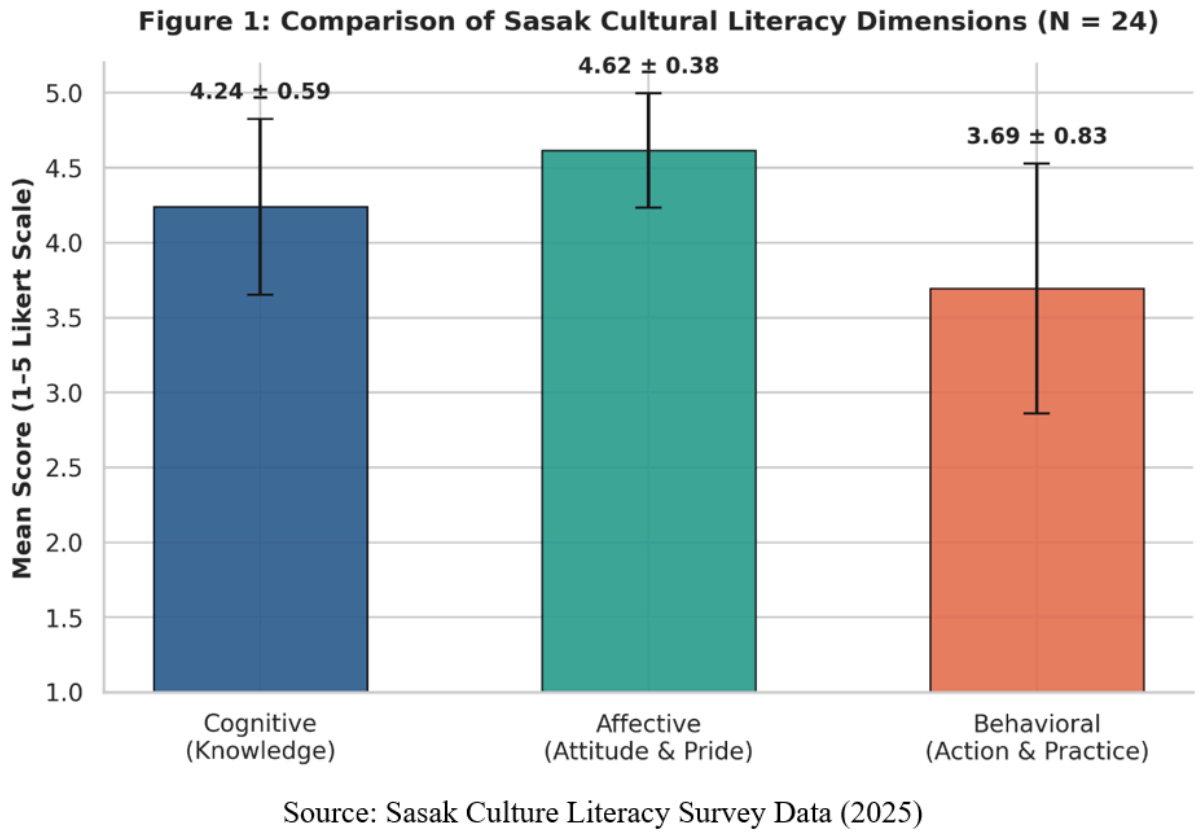
Figures



Source: Sasak Culture Literacy Survey Data (2025)

Figure 1

See image above for figure legend.