


Tradition Adaptation: Creativity and Innovation in the Sasak Community's Kecimol Performance by the Merpati Nusantara Ensemble in Mataram

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Article Info	ABSTRACT
<p>Keywords: Kecimol; Sasak; Tradition Adaptation; Creativity; Innovation</p>	<p>This study examines how tradition is adapted through creativity and innovation in the Sasak community's <i>Kecimol</i> performance, with a focus on the Merpati Nusantara ensemble in Mataram. The research aims to identify how <i>Kecimol</i>, originally a traditional ensemble rooted in <i>Cilokaq</i>, has evolved into a performance that integrates modern instruments, cross-genre repertoires, portable stage designs, and the use of digital media. Using an ethnographic approach involving participatory observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation, the study highlights how the creativity of the artists and the active participation of the community as both audience and co-creators drive collective innovation. This innovation successfully preserves local identity while engaging with global trends. The adaptation demonstrates cultural resilience, sustaining the vitality of tradition amid modernization, despite intergenerational value tensions and negative stigmas. From a socio-economic perspective, <i>Kecimol</i> functions as an alternative income source, a social interaction platform, and a form of public entertainment. This research contributes theoretically by enriching studies on creativity and cultural adaptation, while providing practical insights for cultural preservation strategies, creative economy development, and community-based tourism. Overall, <i>Kecimol</i> exemplifies the Sasak community's identity and the sustainability of traditional arts within the context of globalization.</p>
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INTRODUCTION

Performing arts represent a dynamic form of cultural expression, continuously adapting to social, cultural, and technological changes. In order to remain relevant, traditional arts must maintain their core values while selectively incorporating elements that align with contemporary developments (Suryadmaja, 2025; Suryadmaja & Ningsih, 2024). This capacity for adaptation reflects how communities engage with transformation processes, where

change not only responds to social needs but also serves as a form of creativity driving innovation in artistic practices.

Kecimol, as a traditional performance of the Sasak community in Lombok, stands as a prime example of this cultural dynamism. Over time, *Kecimol* has evolved to meet social needs, blending creativity and innovation to remain relevant to modern audiences (Rosana, 2017). Consequently, the changes in *Kecimol* not only reflect artistic expression but also represent the identity and continuity of Sasak culture, an indigenous community from the island of Lombok, West Nusa Tenggara.

Historically, *Kecimol* originates from the *Cilokaq* arts and began integrating modern elements in the 1980s. Since then, *Kecimol* has become an integral part of Sasak cultural identity (Yudarta & Pasek, 2017a). In a social context, *Kecimol* serves as an alternative to the *nyongkolan* tradition, replacing the Gendang Beleq ensemble, which was previously economically inaccessible (Haslan & Dahlan, 2022; Maulana, 2016; Ramdhani, 2020). *Kecimol* offers a more affordable performance option, enabling the community to create a new form of art that still embodies the adaptive capabilities of local traditions amidst changing times.

Initially, *Kecimol* used simple instruments like Gendang Beleq, gong, cemprenq, rincik, suling, and krotok (Satyananda et al., 2015). Over time, however, the ensemble expanded to include modern instruments such as bass drums, tom-toms, keyboards, electric guitars, and portable sound systems (Supriyanto, 2020). This transformation demonstrates the community's direct involvement with technological advancements and global trends, highlighting the crucial role of creativity in shaping performances that resonate with contemporary audiences.

It is essential to understand that the development of *Kecimol* is not just an aesthetic shift but a cultural adaptation process. The Sasak community positions *Kecimol* as a creative space for innovation while ensuring the continuity of the tradition. This study aims to explore how creativity and innovation emerge within *Kecimol* performances and identify the factors that facilitate this adaptation process. Thus, this research provides a new understanding of the cultural adaptation mechanisms within traditional arts.

This research is highly relevant to the development of local culture and tourism. The West Nusa Tenggara Provincial Regulation No. 7 of 2013 on the Regional Tourism Development Master Plan for 2013–2028 emphasizes the importance of traditional arts in enhancing the competitiveness of tourism (Pemerintah Nusa Tenggara Barat, 2013). Similarly, the 2025–2029 National Medium-Term Development Plan (RPJMN) places the creative industry as a priority for creating quality jobs (Bappenas, 2025). Therefore, the study of creativity and innovation within *Kecimol* not only contributes to academic discussions but also supports regional and national strategic policies.

Theoretically, this research applies the conceptual framework of creativity and innovation. Creativity relates to the ability to solve problems and generate novelty (Nurkanti & Saputra, 2020), while innovation involves the implementation of new ideas or practices by the community (Rokhim, 2018). Both concepts are crucial for understanding changes in traditional arts (Tjaturrini, 2018). The creativity of the artists and community produces variations in *Kecimol* performances, while innovation ensures the sustainability of the art

amidst globalization (Appadurai, 2005; Steger, 2017). These concepts work together as cultural adaptation mechanisms, allowing traditions to survive, evolve, and remain relevant in the modern context (Geertz, 1973).

From a creativity theory perspective (James C. Kaufman, 2010; Tjaturrini, 2018). The Sasak community acts as a creative agent through Kecimol as an alternative cultural product. This encompasses product dimensions (Kecimol as an artistic entity), personal/group dimensions (the community as creative actors), and process dimensions (adaptation and innovation mechanisms). Kecimol, therefore, is not merely a preserved heritage but also a result of the community's active engagement in responding to social, technological, and economic changes.

In light of current social discourse, this research is particularly timely. Local media report a negative stigma surrounding Kecimol, which is seen as inconsistent with Sasak cultural values and categorized as a "lower-class" art form compared to the more respected Gendang Beleq (Ramdhani, 2020). This tension reflects differing views between traditional values and innovation. Nonetheless, Kecimol has grown increasingly popular, reflecting the appeal of novelty and its expanded reach.

Academic studies on Kecimol are still limited. Previous research has largely focused on its functional aspects (Ramdhani, 2020), youth involvement (Hidayat et al., 2023), or cultural identity (Multazam, 2019; Natonis et al., 2025; Yudarta & Pasek, 2017a). Few studies address adaptation through creativity and innovation as mechanisms for sustainability. This research aims to fill this gap by providing further insights into how traditional arts endure and evolve in the face of globalization.

In conclusion, this introduction affirms that *Kecimol* is a manifestation of the cultural dynamics of the Sasak community, combining creativity and innovation to adapt to changing times. This research aims to uncover the patterns of tradition adaptation in *Kecimol* performances while contributing theoretically to the fields of performing arts, cultural anthropology, and tourism, offering adaptive strategies for the preservation and promotion of traditional arts in the global era.

METHODS

This study adopts an ethnographic approach to understand how the *Kecimol* tradition is adapted through creativity and innovation in the performances of the Merpati Nusantara ensemble in Mataram. The ethnographic approach was chosen as it allows for an in-depth understanding of the social and cultural dynamics behind *Kecimol* practices, with an emphasis on the meanings constructed by the practitioners (Creswell, 2018; Mahmud, 2011). This approach is particularly suitable for exploring the perspectives of the Sasak community, as the owners and custodians of this tradition (King-White, 2017; Siddiq & Salama, 2019), and for studying how creativity and innovation are transforming the tradition within a broader social and cultural context.

The study is conducted in three main stages: (1) data collection, (2) data analysis and validation, and (3) presentation of research findings through ethnographic description. The first stage involves data collection through participatory observation, in-depth interviews, and

document analysis. Participatory observation was carried out to identify how Merpati Nusantara's *Kecimol* integrates creativity and innovation into its performance practices, with a focus on elements such as modern instruments, cross-genre repertoires, and portable stage design (Waruwu, 2024). During the observation process, the researcher was directly involved in performance activities to understand the dynamics of the group and the interactions between artists and audiences.

Interviews were conducted with Sahde, the leader of the Merpati Nusantara *Kecimol* group, to trace the historical development and transformation of *Kecimol* from its traditional form to a more modern one. Interviews were also conducted with various members of the community, including audience members and art practitioners, to understand the social acceptance of *Kecimol*, which is often seen as a form of "new tradition." The selection of informants was based on their expertise and influence within the Sasak community, as well as their contributions to the development of *Kecimol*.

Data analysis was conducted concurrently with data collection, using three steps: data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing and verification. Data reduction involved identifying key themes that emerged during data collection and filtering out irrelevant information. Data presentation was carried out in the form of thematic matrices that organized information based on indicators of innovation and patterns of traditional adaptation. Conclusion drawing was done continuously, strengthened after comprehensive data collection. To ensure the validity of the data, source triangulation was performed, involving cross-checking between informants and existing documents to ensure the credibility of the findings (Mohajan, 2018; Oranga & Matere, 2023).

This research design aims to provide a deep understanding of how traditional performing arts adapt through creativity and innovation within the Sasak community, focusing on *Kecimol*. The study also seeks to explore the processes and strategies that enable *Kecimol* to persist as a dynamic cultural tradition amidst modernization and globalization. Through this understanding, the research contributes to the study of community-based cultural adaptation and provides insights into how traditional arts can remain relevant and sustainable within a broader social context.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Historical Transformation of *Kecimol*: From Tradition to Modern Performance

The research findings show that *Kecimol* has undergone significant transformation since the early 1980s, reflecting the dynamic cultural adaptation and creativity of the Sasak community. Initially, *Kecimol* was a traditional ensemble rooted in *Cilokaq* art, using simple instruments such as *Gendang Beleq*, *gong*, *rincik*, *cempreng*, *suling*, and *krotok* (Satyananda et al., 2015). These instruments symbolized the continuity of Sasak musical traditions, emphasizing not only rhythmic precision but also the profound ritual significance in the community's life.

Over time, specifically since the mid-1980s, *Kecimol* began incorporating modern instruments such as drum kits, keyboards, electric guitars, and portable sound systems (Supriyanto, 2020).. This change affected not only the musical composition but also the overall performance format. Initially, *Kecimol* was primarily known as an accompaniment for

the traditional *nyongkolan* procession. However, over time, it evolved into a more flexible and affordable street performance, providing an alternative form of entertainment for the Sasak community (Yudarta & Pasek, 2015, 2017b). This evolution offered a more affordable entertainment option for the lower middle class, compared to *Gendang Beleg*, which at the time required higher costs (Maulana, 2016).

In an interview with Sahde (53), a *Kecimol* practitioner from Mapak Belatung, Mataram (September 3, 2025), it was revealed that economic factors were the main drivers behind the emergence of *Kecimol*. With a cost of around IDR 3,000,000, a *Kecimol* group with 20–25 members can be formed, making it more affordable without sacrificing the quality of the performance. This explains why *Kecimol* became a popular choice for the community, offering an economical entertainment alternative.

The adoption of technology, especially in terms of sound equipment, also accelerated *Kecimol*'s transformation. *Kecimol* artists showed flexibility in selecting instruments and organizing performances, which were previously more tied to traditional conventions, such as those found in *Gendang Beleg*. The use of portable, customizable sound systems has become a key element in creating a more festive and interactive atmosphere, offering a new experience for younger, more cosmopolitan audiences. This demonstrates the artists' ability to solve problems creatively and remain relevant (Nurkanti & Saputra, 2020).

From the perspective of cultural adaptation theory, we can see how the Sasak local culture integrates external influences without losing its core identity (Appadurai, 2005; Gunawan et al., 2023; Rosana, 2017). This aligns with adaptation patterns seen in other traditional arts, such as *kuda lumping* in Java (Rokhim, 2018) and the revitalization of cultural arts in cultural villages in Central Java and Yogyakarta (Wahyudiarto, 2020). *Kecimol*, thus, becomes a tangible example of folk art adapting, where it maintains its local essence while adopting new elements to remain relevant amidst rapid social and economic development.

Overall, the historical transformation of *Kecimol* reflects innovations in music, performance, and social function, underscoring the Sasak community's ability to preserve traditions while adapting to economic, technological, and global influences. This innovation is not only technical and aesthetic but also highlights how this art interacts with broader social needs, providing space for local identity to evolve within the ever-changing global dynamics.

Artistic Creativity: Innovation in Instruments, Repertoire, and Performance Aesthetics

This study finds that artistic creativity plays a crucial role in the sustainability and relevance of *Kecimol* within the Sasak community. Innovations in instruments, repertoire development, and changes in performance aesthetics demonstrate ongoing cultural adaptation.

The practitioners of *Kecimol* have integrated modern instruments such as keyboards, electric guitars, bass, and drum kits, resulting in a richer musical texture compared to the traditional formation (Satyananda et al., 2015). These innovations reflect a process of hybridization between local traditions and global influences, which, in this context, is referred to as *glocalization* (Supriyanto, 2020). By combining traditional and modern elements, *Kecimol* has become more appealing to younger audiences, making it increasingly relevant to

contemporary music developments. This process illustrates how traditional arts can evolve without losing their core identity while responding to the demands of globalization.

Another notable innovation is found in the development of the repertoire. While *Kecimol* previously only performed traditional Sasak songs, it now also adopts popular national songs and dangdut genres. Some frequently performed songs include *Pandangan Pertama*, *Abang Roni*, *Darah Muda*, *Aku Masih Sayang*, *Ikan dalam Kolam*, *Lima Menit Lagi*, and *Juragan Empang*. This expansion of the repertoire not only enriches the performances but also broadens the audience reach, reflecting *Kecimol's* ability to adapt to contemporary musical tastes without abandoning its Sasak cultural roots (Nurkanti & Saputra, 2020). The innovation in repertoire emphasizes that *Kecimol* functions as "glocal" art, accepted by diverse audiences across generations, creating space for the continuity of local culture in a more dynamic form. Furthermore, the performance aesthetics of *Kecimol* have also evolved. The artists now use portable stages and varying sound systems, enhancing both the visual and auditory appeal. The costumes worn by the performers have become more modern, such as t-shirts, jeans, and shirts, showing their willingness to adapt to the aesthetic tastes of younger generations (Yudarta & Pasek, 2017b). These aesthetic elements indicate *Kecimol's* transformation from a sacred ritual art into a public form of entertainment with higher entertainment value, while simultaneously creating greater interactive space with the audience.

The *Kecimol* artists act as agents of innovation, transforming limitations into opportunities to create new forms of art. As Tjaturrini (2018) notes, artistic innovation serves as a survival strategy and a form of cultural negotiation in the context of globalization. The transformation of *Kecimol* also mirrors similar patterns in traditional arts across Southeast Asia, where instruments and repertoires are adjusted to stay relevant with changing audience preferences (Rokhim, 2018; Wahyudiarto, 2020). *Kecimol*, therefore, not only continues to evolve as a performance art but also serves as an example of how traditional arts can remain alive and adapt to the demands of the times. These forms of innovation can be observed further in Table 1, which illustrates various aspects of artistic creativity within *Kecimol*.

Table 1. Artistic Creativity in *Kecimol*

Aspect	Field Data	Analysis
Instruments	Integration of keyboard, electric guitar, bass, electronic drum, bamboo flute, ketipung, tambourine; 6–8 players, vocalists, and dancers; no fixed rules for instrument selection (Interview with Sahde, September 3, 2025)	Shows flexibility and creative freedom of Sasak musicians; hybridization of traditional and modern instruments enhances appeal to younger audiences.
Repertoire	Traditional songs: <i>Gulung Lante</i> , <i>Bajang Lauk Kawat</i> , <i>Menderite</i> , <i>Babar Bile</i> ; Popular/national songs: <i>Pandangan Pertama</i> , <i>Abang Roni</i> , <i>Darah Muda</i> , <i>Juragan Empang</i> , <i>Ikan dalam Kolam</i> ; adaptation of dangdut genre	Expanding repertoire reflects adaptation to contemporary tastes; <i>Kecimol</i> functions as "glocal" art favored across generations.
Performance Aesthetics	Modern costumes (t-shirts, jeans, shirts); portable stage with varying sound systems;	Aesthetic innovations extend to the digital realm, transforming <i>Kecimol</i>

Aspect	Field Data	Analysis
	promotion via YouTube (1,200 followers, 198 videos)	from ritual art to public entertainment, also present in the virtual space.
Artist Creativity	Sahde's initiative to form <i>Ale-ale</i> → <i>Ciledut</i> → <i>Kecimol</i> (2010–2011); driven by personal interest, not formal training	Creativity arises from ordinary individuals as agents of innovation; supports Tjaturrini's (2018) theory that artistic innovation is a form of cultural negotiation.

Artistic creativity in *Kecimol* clearly demonstrates how new musical and performative variations enable the Sasak community to respond to social and global dynamics. The product and process dimensions in creativity theory (James C. Kaufman, 2010) are evident, emphasizing that traditional arts can evolve without losing Sasak cultural identity.

In addition to musical innovations, the visual transformation in *Kecimol* also has a strong semiotic dimension. The performers' costumes modern t-shirts, jeans, and shirts mark a symbolic shift from sacredness to profaneness, from ritual space to public space. In semiotic terms, modern attire serves as a signifier representing cultural openness and the negotiation of youth identity against conservative traditional norms. The portable stage and electric sound systems can also be interpreted as icons of modernity, marking the "new presence" of tradition in urban spaces. Therefore, *Kecimol's* aesthetic elements are not only decorative but form a system of signs that convey social and ideological meanings regarding the changing status of folk art within the Sasak community.

The Role of the Community as Creative Agents and Innovators

The research findings show that the sustainability and transformation of *Kecimol* are not solely determined by the role of individual artists, but also by the active participation of the Sasak community. The community plays a dual role as both creative agents and innovators, driving the emergence of new forms and practices within the *Kecimol* art form. This dual role is reflected in two main dimensions: as consumers influencing the direction of the performance's development, and as producers actively involved in the creative process.

As consumers, the community sets the entertainment standards that *Kecimol* groups must meet. The demand for popular songs, interactive dances, and dynamic visual displays pushes the artists to continuously innovate (Yudarta & Pasek, 2017b). The community's preferences function as a "cultural market" that shapes aesthetic choices and repertoire development. This phenomenon aligns with Appadurai's (2005) view that contemporary cultural practices are highly influenced by audience expectations and global cultural flows.

As producers, the community is not merely a passive audience, but is directly involved in the creation process of *Kecimol*. Many *Kecimol* groups have emerged from village youth collectives, social networks, or extended family associations that form musical groups with limited resources. An interview with Sahde (53), founder of the Merpati Nusantara *Kecimol* group in Mapak Belatung, Mataram (September 3, 2025), revealed that he had no formal music education background. His personal drive, along with community support, led him to form the Modern *Cilokaq* group, which within two years evolved into *Kecimol*. This trajectory

shows that personal initiative, combined with collective community support, plays a key role in the formation of new *Kecimol* groups.

This collective involvement has led to various innovations, such as modifications to traditional instruments, the creation of new songs, and the improvisation of dance movements, which have become distinctive features of each group. For example, the Merpati Nusantara ensemble blends modern instruments keyboard, electric guitar, electric bass, electronic drums, and sound systems with traditional bamboo flute. The ensemble usually consists of 6-8 percussion players (tom group), male and female vocalists, and female dancers. Their repertoire includes popular national songs such as *Pandangan Pertama*, *Abang Roni*, *Darah Muda*, *Aku Masih Sayang*, *Ikan dalam Kolam*, *Lima Menit Lagi*, and *Juragan Empang*, as well as traditional Sasak songs like *Gulung Lante*, *Bajang Lauk Kawat*, *Menderite*, and *Babar Bile*. Meanwhile, modern costumes such as t-shirts, shirts, and jeans underscore the expressive flexibility of *Kecimol*. This practice demonstrates that innovation arises not only from individual artists but as a result of the community's collective dynamics in utilizing available resources (Nurkanti & Saputra, 2020; Tjaturrini, 2018).

Field observations also show that the community plays an important role in promoting and expanding the reach of *Kecimol*. Through digital platforms such as Facebook and YouTube, this art form is documented and widely disseminated. The Merpati Nusantara Official YouTube channel, for example, has uploaded 198 videos since November 23, 2022, and has over 1,200 subscribers. These platforms serve a dual function as a digital archive and a promotional tool, allowing *Kecimol* to reach a broader audience while strengthening cultural diffusion (Rosana, 2017).

The transformation of Merpati Nusantara from *Cilokaq* → *Ale-ale* → *Ciledut* (*Cilokaq Dangdut*) → *Kecimol* reflects a broader pattern of adaptation in Lombok's folk arts. These changes show how the local essence is maintained through the use of traditional instruments, while adapting new elements in music, costumes, and media distribution to remain relevant to social changes.

Thus, the Sasak community is not a passive spectator but a key actor ensuring the vitality and sustainability of *Kecimol*. The collective creativity that emerges from the interaction between artists and the community shows that *Kecimol* is a community-based performing art, where innovation is an integral part of daily cultural practices. The sustainability of *Kecimol* depends on the synergy between social needs, collective aspirations, and the capacity of the community as creative agents and innovators.

Adaptation to Technology and Global Trends

The research findings also indicate that one of the key factors behind *Kecimol*'s sustainability is its ability to adapt to technological developments and global music trends. This adaptation is evident in the use of portable sound systems, digitalization of music, and a repertoire that blends dangdut, pop music, and regional songs.

In Merpati Nusantara's *Kecimol* performances, various popular songs are performed to accompany the *nyongkolan* procession and entertainment shows, such as *Pandangan Pertama*, *Abang Roni*, *Darah Muda*, *Aku Masih Sayang*, *Ikan dalam Kolam*, *Lima Menit Lagi*, and *Juragan Empang*. They also perform Sasak regional songs (*Gulung Lante*, *Bajang Lauk*

Kawat, Menderite, Babar Bile) and Balinese regional songs like *Luh Mai Luh*, arranged in a rock style.

The integration of modern audio technology has allowed the *Kecimol* group to enhance the quality of their performances while expanding their audience reach. The Merpati Nusantara group actively utilizes digital platforms such as YouTube to document and promote their work, with over 198 videos and 1,200 followers as of September 2025.

This technological adaptation shows that *Kecimol* can interact with global dynamics without losing its local tradition roots. The combination of local repertoire and national popular music reflects glocalization practices, where local and global trends meet (Steger, 2017). This practice enhances *Kecimol's* appeal to younger generations while strengthening cultural resilience, proving that traditions can transform and remain vibrant amidst change (Appadurai, 2005; Rosana, 2017).

Field observations also reveal that digital media through video recordings, social media distribution, and online promotion has significantly expanded *Kecimol's* accessibility at a national level. The Merpati Nusantara Official channel (www.youtube.com/@MERPATI558), active since November 23, 2022, serves as both an archive and promotional medium. Documentation of the *nyongkolan* procession and *Kecimol* performances is also widely uploaded by community members through Facebook, indicating significant digital participation from the public.

This transformation shifts *Kecimol* from a traditional ritual practice to a popular form of entertainment that can be enjoyed in various regions, including outside Lombok such as in the *nyongkolan* procession in Karang Cemes, Sumbawa Besar (November 20, 2023). Thus, technology plays a dual role as a broadcasting medium and a creative space for artists and the community to innovate, network, and strengthen the presence of local culture in the digital era.

This adaptation aligns with broader patterns of modernization in Indonesian folk arts, where traditional performances in Bali and Java have also adopted modern instruments, electronic sound systems, and cross-genre collaborations (Rokhim, 2018; Wahyudiarto, 2020). This shows that *Kecimol* is part of a larger trend in which local arts continually renew themselves to remain relevant to contemporary tastes.

Therefore, the adaptation to technology and global trends affirms *Kecimol's* capacity as a dynamic traditional art. Its continuity depends not only on artistic innovation and community involvement but also on the ability to creatively leverage technology while maintaining its local identity in the global cultural landscape. The following table illustrates the diverse forms of *Kecimol's* adaptation to technological advancements and global cultural currents that have shaped its transformation.

Table 2. *Kecimol's* Adaptation to Technology and Global Trends

Adaptation Form	Field Data	Analysis
Digitalization of Music & Use of Modern Instruments	<i>Kecimol</i> Merpati Nusantara instruments: keyboard, electric guitar, bass, electronic drums, sound	Reflects transformation from <i>Cilokaq</i> → <i>Ale-ale</i> → <i>Ciledut</i> → <i>Kecimol</i> ; audio technology improves

Adaptation Form	Field Data	Analysis
	system (Interview with Sahde, 03/09/2025)	performance quality and relevance to popular music trends.
Cross-Genre Repertoire (National, Sasak, Bali – Rock, Dangdut)	<i>Pandangan Pertama, Abang Roni, Darah Muda, Aku Masih Sayang, Gulung Lante, Bajang Lauk Kawat, Menderite, Babar Bile, etc.</i>	Glocalization practice: combining local music with popular national/global songs to attract younger audiences.
Digital Media & Online Promotion	Official YouTube channel: 1,200 subscribers, 198 videos (active since 2022); promotion through Facebook and <i>nyongkolan</i> documentation (Social media data)	Social media as a creative space and audience reach expansion; tradition shifts from ritual to popular entertainment.
Contemporary Visual and Performance Style	Costumes: t-shirts, shirts, jeans; female dancers (2-4 people)	Visual adaptation strengthens modern image and public appeal, negotiating local identity in the context of global culture.

Social and Economic Functions of *Kecimol* in the Sasak Community

This study reveals that *Kecimol* plays a dual and significant role in the Sasak community's life, functioning as both a social medium and an alternative economic source. Socially, *Kecimol* serves as a more affordable form of entertainment in the *nyongkolan* tradition compared to hiring large gamelan ensembles or other traditional arts. According to interviews with event organizers in West Lombok, the cost to hire a *Kecimol* group consisting of around 20 members ranges from IDR 2,500,000 to IDR 3,000,000. This price is relatively cheaper than that of a Gendang Beleq group, yet still able to create a festive and lively atmosphere. As mentioned by Suratman (39), an user from Labuapi, "*Using Kecimol is cheaper, and the event is livelier. If we use other traditional arts, it's usually more expensive and feels sacred, while Kecimol is more vibrant and lively.*" (Interview, August 20, 2025)

Economically, *Kecimol* also opens up income opportunities for artists, particularly for the younger generation in rural areas. Based on an interview with Sahde (53), the founder of the Merpati Nusantara *Kecimol* group, each performer typically earns between IDR 100,000 and IDR 200,000 per performance, depending on their role and the instrument they play. Although the individual pay is relatively small, the high frequency of performances almost every day except Fridays allows the performers to earn a monthly income of around IDR 2,000,000 to IDR 3,000,000. For larger events that require overnight stays, a group can receive between IDR 10,000,000 and IDR 12,000,000, with accommodation and meals provided by the organizer. This data shows that *Kecimol* functions as an alternative source of income outside the formal sector.

In addition to providing economic benefits, *Kecimol* also functions as a space for regeneration for artists and collective community participation. Performances during the *nyongkolan* procession bring together various social groups from the organizing families and village youth to the wider community in a celebratory atmosphere. The music and dance of *Kecimol* create an environment that encourages cross-generational interactions, strengthening social cohesion and community solidarity. In this context, *Kecimol* not only

serves as entertainment but also as a medium for social interaction that reinforces togetherness within the community.

This dual function can be analyzed through the lens of innovation theory, which emphasizes that cultural practices that endure are those that meet the social and economic needs of the community. *Kecimol* is chosen not only for its aesthetic value but also for its adaptability to the needs for affordable entertainment and available economic opportunities. In other words, the innovation of *Kecimol* is accepted because it provides tangible benefits that align with the needs of the Sasak community.

From a regional development perspective, *Kecimol* can be seen as part of the local creative industry. This art form contributes to the creation of culture-based jobs, in line with the National Medium-Term Development Plan (RPJMN) 2025–2029, which designates the creative economy as one of the main pillars of national development (Bappenas, 2025). In this regard, *Kecimol* can become a strategic asset that strengthens Lombok's position in the national creative industry map, supporting regional tourism strategies that leverage performing arts as a cultural attraction (Rokhim, 2018).

Stigma, Controversy, and Cultural Identity Negotiation

The existence of *Kecimol* is not entirely free from stigma and debate within the Sasak community. Some groups still label it as "lower-class" art, especially when compared to *Gendang Beleq*, which is considered more sacred and prestigious (Maulana, 2016). This stigma is reflected in the statement by Mamiq Sumardi, a Sasak cultural figure: "*Kecimol is just an addition; it cannot replace the essence of our original tradition. Gendang Beleq is our identity.*" (Rokhim, 2018).

A similar view was expressed by several cultural elites and religious figures, some of whom even proposed banning *Kecimol* during the *nyongkolan* procession, arguing that this form of entertainment did not align with customary norms and Islamic teachings. This indicates that some groups still regard *Gendang Beleq* as the authentic symbol of Sasak culture, while *Kecimol* is viewed as profane entertainment.

The discourse surrounding the potential ban of *Kecimol* typically arises from concerns that the sacred values of ritual traditions are being replaced by "lower-class" entertainment (Rahim, 2021). In this perspective, *Gendang Beleq* is seen as a noble art that represents the spiritual values of the Sasak people (Maulana, 2016). In contrast, *Kecimol* is seen as problematic because it combines elements of popular entertainment that are considered incompatible with customary and religious norms, thus provoking resistance from conservative factions.

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Field observations support this view. In the *nyongkolan* procession in Karang Cemes, Sumbawa Besar (November 20, 2023), *Kecimol* not only accompanied the wedding procession but also attracted attention from people along the street. The atmosphere was lively, and the cheering of the audience turned the procession into a public spectacle. A similar phenomenon occurred in Gapok, Central Lombok (May 7, 2024), where the *nyongkolan* procession was accompanied by popular dangdut songs. While the bride and groom wore traditional attire, participants in the procession expressed themselves by dancing to the rhythm of the music.

A similar situation was observed in Mataram (May 22, 2024) when Merpati Nusantara *Kecimol* accompanied the *nyongkolan* procession, which once again drew public attention. The wedding procession turned into a collective celebration enjoyed by the wider community. Even in Suralaga, East Lombok (April 12, 2025), *Kecimol* music encouraged spontaneous participation: people in traditional dress danced, while procession elements like the wedding umbrella swayed to the rhythm. The streets were filled with people dancing, demonstrating how *Kecimol* blurs the boundaries between ritual traditions and mass entertainment.

These narratives show that, in practice, *Kecimol* is not just an accompaniment to rituals but an agent that creates communal spaces, collective joy, and new forms of social expression. Despite facing stigma from certain groups, *Kecimol* continues to endure and has even become more popular within the broader community.

Sahde, the leader of Merpati Nusantara *Kecimol*, emphasized that economic factors are one of the main drivers behind the community's preference for *Kecimol*. With a cost of around IDR 3,000,000, a *Kecimol* group can bring together 20–25 members, complete with music, dancers, and sound systems (Interview, September 3, 2025). This practical orientation stands in stark contrast to *Gendang Beleq*, which emphasizes sacred values and requires higher costs and more preparation. This flexibility, despite often being viewed negatively by traditional leaders, has become the main appeal for the general public.

From a cultural identity perspective, *Kecimol* is also actively using social media as a space for promotion and documentation. The Merpati Nusantara YouTube channel hosts hundreds of performance videos, showing that the process of negotiating *Kecimol*'s identity now occurs not only in traditional spaces but also in virtual spaces. The testimonies of young performers reinforce this direction: "*I enjoy performing in Kecimol because I can perform in front of many people, make lots of friends, and have fun,*" said Wayan (28) (Interview, August 28, 2025). "*In Kecimol, we can express ourselves more freely. There are many songs, and if there's something new, we immediately follow it. In traditional arts, it's not that free,*" added Renda (27) (Interview, August 28, 2025).

This generational contrast is becoming more apparent: traditional leaders emphasize norms, order, and sacredness, while younger generations prioritize freedom of expression, flexibility, and togetherness. Thus, the controversy surrounding *Kecimol* is not merely a debate over the form of performance art but reflects a clash between two value systems the older generation that upholds tradition and the younger generation that seeks to adapt to modern times.

Drawing on Geertz's (1973) perspective, *Kecimol* can be understood not just as musical entertainment, but as a social symbol that continues to be debated. This negotiation process aligns with Supriyanto's (2020) findings, which state that folk arts often face stigma when innovating, but it is within that stigma that the vitality of culture is tested. Therefore, the stigma and controversy surrounding *Kecimol* are part of the Sasak community's dynamic negotiation of their cultural identity in the modern era.

In the framework of social semiotics, the dance movements and gestures in *Kecimol* can be understood as communicative actions that negotiate meaning between "tradition" and "entertainment." The body movements of female dancers more expressive and interactive with the audience are often interpreted by conservative groups as symbols of value deviation, while for younger generations, they represent freedom of expression and collective participation. This clash of interpretations gives rise to the "low" and "high" cultural stigma within Sasak society. In other words, the debate surrounding *Kecimol* is not just a moral issue but also a semiotic issue: who has the right to assign meaning to the symbols of body and public space in art.

Theoretical and Practical Implications

Theoretically, the existence of *Kecimol* enriches the discourse on creativity and innovation in traditional performing arts. Referring to the framework of Kaufman and Sternberg (2010) in *The Cambridge Handbook of Creativity*, creativity is understood not solely as an individual product, but as a product of social interaction and cultural context. Field data from *Kecimol* performances demonstrate how creativity manifests in the following dimensions:

1. Instrumental Adaptation

Kecimol demonstrates the integration of traditional instruments such as *rebane* and *kukul* with modern instruments like electric guitars, keyboards, electronic drums, and portable sound systems. This hybridization process creates a distinct musical atmosphere that is also relevant for contemporary audiences.

2. Flexible Composition Structure

Kecimol performances often begin with a soft Sasak-style intro, then abruptly shift to popular genres such as dangdut, rock, koplo, and even reggae. This shift underscores the high degree of improvisation and experimentation in the creative process of *Kecimol* musicians.

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Kecimol features a unique interaction between performers and audiences. Instead of performing on a static stage, musicians move through the streets, interacting directly with the community. This approach transforms the audience from passive receivers into active participants, who dance and sing along, making the performance a participatory social event.

4. Formalization and Professionalization Process

Today, *Kecimol* is performed not only in street parades but also on formal stages with professional audio systems, marking a shift from informal folk entertainment to a more institutionalized and professional art form.

Theoretically, *Kecimol* exemplifies the dynamics of tradition open to innovation. This folk art shows that tradition is not a static entity, but an experimental arena responsive to social and technological changes. Therefore, *Kecimol* should be understood as a product of dynamic social creativity, rather than merely a relic of the past.

From a cultural anthropology perspective, folk arts such as *Kecimol* serve as spaces for negotiating identity. This explains that cultural symbols are always open to diverse interpretations (Geertz, 1973). The stigma of *Kecimol* as "lower-class" art, in contrast to its widespread acceptance, reflects cultural tensions that enrich the identity dynamics of the Sasak community.

This view is reinforced by Yudarta and Pasek (2017), who assert that folk arts are adaptive cultural expressions, even amidst the currents of modernization and globalization (Appadurai, 2005; Steger, 2017). In this context, *Kecimol* reflects local creativity in a global condition, where tradition is revitalized through contextual and innovative practices.

Practically, this research contributes to strategies for cultural preservation, creative economy development, and the formulation of cultural policies in West Nusa Tenggara. *Kecimol* demonstrates that cultural preservation does not simply mean maintaining old forms but also providing space for innovation and transformation (Nelson et al., 2025; Rosana, 2017; Satyananda et al., 2015). The shift of *Kecimol* from street performances to staged concerts reflects increasing social recognition and economic potential, requiring institutional support, particularly from the West Nusa Tenggara Cultural Department.

Moreover, *Kecimol* holds significant potential as part of the local creative industry and cultural tourism attractions, in line with national development directions in the RPJMN 2025–2029 (Bappenas, 2025) and the Regional Tourism Development Master Plan for West Nusa Tenggara (2013). With its community-based and participatory format, *Kecimol* can become a cultural identity marker as well as a competitive economic asset.

Active community participation is key to the sustainability of this revitalization. Field findings show that *Kecimol* provides livelihoods for young musicians in NTB, particularly during the wedding season. When the community is involved in management, performances, and decision-making, local cultural ownership is strengthened, which in turn drives sustainable preservation (Supriyanto, 2020; Wahyudiarto, 2020).

Conceptually, this study positions *Kecimol* as a model of community-based cultural adaptation, distinct from more elitist or institutionalized traditional arts such as those in Java and Bali. In the realm of creativity studies, *Kecimol* demonstrates that innovation arises not only from individuals but also from collective social dynamics. The Sasak community negotiates with limitations in resources, technology, and global tastes through creative practices that manifest in cultural hybridization and musical innovation. Therefore, *Kecimol* is not only significant as a local performing art but also as a conceptual model for understanding how traditions adapt creatively amidst social and cultural changes.

This study enriches global discourse on cultural adaptation and creativity, while affirming the resilience and transformative potential of Eastern Indonesian folk arts. Local traditions such as *Kecimol* prove their ability to evolve through hybridization, glocalization, and community empowerment-based innovation.

This analysis demonstrates that semiotic and iconographic approaches can deepen our understanding of *Kecimol*. In line with Geertz's (1973) view of culture as "webs of significance," every visual and musical element of *Kecimol* from costume colors to procession structures represents a sign system that articulates the social position and collective identity of the Sasak community. These symbols are not neutral; they are continually negotiated through performance practices and public discourse, making *Kecimol* not only a form of entertainment but also an arena for producing cultural meaning.

Stigma, Controversy, and Cultural Identity Negotiation

The existence of *Kecimol* is not entirely free from stigma and debate within the Sasak community. Some groups still label it as "lower-class" art, especially when compared to *Gendang Beleq*, which is considered more sacred and prestigious (Maulana, 2016). This stigma is reflected in the statement by Mamiq Sumardi, a Sasak cultural figure: "*Kecimol is just an addition; it cannot replace the essence of our original tradition. Gendang Beleq is our identity.*" (Rokhim, 2018).

A similar view was expressed by several cultural elites and religious figures, some of whom even proposed banning *Kecimol* during the *nyongkolan* procession, arguing that this form of entertainment did not align with customary norms and Islamic teachings. This indicates that some groups still regard *Gendang Beleq* as the authentic symbol of Sasak culture, while *Kecimol* is viewed as profane entertainment.

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CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that *Kecimol* represents a community-based model of cultural adaptation, transforming from traditional arts such as *Cilokaq*, *Ale-ale*, and *Ciledut* into a contemporary form through creativity and innovation in aspects of instruments, repertoire, and performance aesthetics. The integration of traditional and modern instruments creates a musical texture that resonates with younger audiences, illustrating the process of glocalization in folk art. *Kecimol* underscores the role of the community as both creative agents and innovators. The community not only acts as consumers but is also directly involved in production, from the repertoire to digital promotion via platforms such as YouTube and Facebook, expanding its reach and engaging audiences across generations. This active participation positions collective creativity as a key factor in maintaining the relevance of local traditions amidst globalization. Socially and economically, *Kecimol* provides an affordable alternative form of entertainment and creates economic opportunities for village musicians. Despite facing stigma as "lower-class" art, *Kecimol* demonstrates remarkable adaptability and reinforces cultural resilience, proving that tradition can transform and remain vibrant within a modern context. This research contributes to the study of community-based creativity and innovation, emphasizing that cultural innovation arises not only from individuals but also from collective social interactions. Practically, the findings support strategies for cultural preservation and creative economy development, particularly in West Nusa Tenggara, and demonstrate that tradition must make room for innovation to remain relevant. *Kecimol* is not merely a surviving art form, but a dynamic model of cultural adaptation that continues to evolve through hybridization, glocalization, and community empowerment, showcasing the resilience and transformative potential of Eastern Indonesian folk arts.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We sincerely thank the Ministry of Higher Education, Research, and Technology of the Republic of Indonesia for the financial support that enabled this research, titled "Adaptation of Tradition: Creativity and Innovation of the Sasak Community in the *Kecimol* Performance of the Merpati Nusantara Group in Mataram," to be conducted. We also express our appreciation to all members of the Merpati Nusantara *Kecimol* ensemble for their cooperation and openness during the fieldwork. Special thanks go to the people of Mataram who generously contributed their time and shared their knowledge to enrich this study. Finally, we acknowledge the support of the Performing Arts Study Program at Universitas Bumigora for facilitating the research activities and providing an academic environment conducive to the completion of this study.

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