

## **Seeing Culture Through Space: How Visual and Spatial Arrangements Communicate Sasak Cultural Identity in Dusun Sade's Tourism Setting**

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### **Abstract**

This study examines how cultural identity is communicated without words through the visual and spatial arrangements of Dusun Sade, a living Sasak heritage village in Lombok, Indonesia. Drawing on Foucault's conceptualization of spatial power and Rose's framework of the visual apparatus, the study argues that cultural identity communication in tourism operates through the systematic organization of space, movement, and visibility rather than through explicit narration or display. Systematic photo-documentation yielded a corpus of 127 images collected during fieldwork in December 2025, analyzed for recurring spatial and visual patterns at both empirical and discursive levels. Three patterns were identified: concentrated visitor movement along a primary corridor, consistent architectural emphasis on natural materials within that corridor, and the exclusive positioning of cultural and commercial activities along the established visitor route. Together, these arrangements produce a selective but coherent visual representation of the Sasak tradition that visitors encounter as natural and authentic. This study extends existing applications of Foucauldian and Rose's frameworks to the context of inhabited traditional villages, demonstrating that spatial governance operates as a mechanism of cultural identity production in living heritage tourism settings.

**Keywords:** *Cultural Identity, Visual Order, Spatial Governance, Power, Visibility*

## 1. Introduction

Tourism sites are not merely locations of cultural display; they are structured environments through which culture is communicated, interpreted, and negotiated. In such contexts, cultural identity is not simply presented as an inherent attribute but is actively constructed through various mediating elements, including spatial organization, visual arrangements, and guided interactions. In public cultural spaces, organized activities, services, and even virtual experiences shape cultural identity, which then mediates tourists' intentions to revisit and recommend places (Liu et al., 2024).

Visitors do not encounter culture in a neutral or unmediated way; rather, their perceptions are shaped by curated pathways, framed visual cues, and selective exposure to particular practices and spaces. According to MacCannell (1976), authenticity in tourism does not exist, since tourist sites are organized to represent what visitors expect to see. This suggests that tourism operates not only as an economic or cultural domain, but also as a communicative system in which meaning is produced and circulated. For example, urban squares and public cultural spaces embed regional symbols and culturally meaningful layouts, which strengthen belonging and cultural identity when they are authentic rather than generic (Chunli et al., 2025; Jieqiong & Abdul Malek, 2025).

Existing scholarship on cultural tourism has extensively examined how culture is represented, commodified, and authenticated within tourism settings. Several studies demonstrate that tourism reorganizes cultural practices, including rituals, arts, and everyday life, into commodifiable forms governed by market logics, raising concerns about the erosion of cultural meaning and social significance (Erwen et al., 2025; Kartika et al., 2022; Parmadi & Benardin, 2021; Saleh Seid, 2023). A parallel strand of research complicates this picture by showing that commodification does not simply diminish authenticity but can reconstruct or intensify it: staged performances and selective displays reframe rather than erase cultural meanings, producing hybrid forms that satisfy both local and tourist expectations (Bai & Weng, 2023; Syafii et al., 2025; T. Zhang et al., 2021).

These studies illuminate what is represented in cultural tourism, which practices are chosen, staged, or suppressed, but they share a common limitation, which is that they treat representational content as the primary unit of analysis while paying comparatively little attention to the spatial and visual mechanisms through which representation is organized and communicated. This study addresses this gap by conceptualizing visual and spatial arrangements as active mechanisms of cultural communication, examining how space is organized, how sightlines are structured, and how visitors are guided toward particular cultural encounters. Rather than treating space as a

passive backdrop for cultural display, this research approaches spatial organization as a medium through which meaning is produced and circulated.

To examine these processes empirically, this study focuses on Dusun Sade, a traditional Sasak village located in Lombok, Indonesia. Dusun Sade is a significant case because it is both a living community and a tourism destination, where residents continue their daily activities alongside ongoing tourist visits. This dual role makes it possible to examine how spatial and visual organization operate in a real, inhabited setting rather than a staged environment.

The village has also developed as a cultural tourism site, with clear spatial features such as a defined entrance, a main visitor route, designated activity areas, and consistent architecture along visitor-facing spaces. In addition, its steady flow of domestic and international visitors ensures that the observed spatial patterns are stable and recurring, not incidental. These characteristics make Dusun Sade an appropriate case for analyzing how spatial and visual arrangements communicate cultural identity in a living heritage tourism context.

Two theoretical frameworks are integrated to support this conceptualization. Drawing on Michel Foucault's (1995) analysis of spatial governance, this study understands spatial arrangements as mechanisms that organize behavior and perception not through overt coercion but through the subtle structuring of possibilities and visibility. Complementing this, Rose's (2016) conceptualization of the visual apparatus provides a framework for examining how visibility operates as a site of meaning-making, where what is made visible and how it is framed play a central role in shaping cultural interpretation. These frameworks position spatial and visual organization as an integrated analytical lens through which the communicative function of tourism environments can be examined.

Based on this framework, the study addresses the following research questions: (1) How do visual and spatial arrangements in Dusun Sade function as mechanisms of non-verbal cultural communication? (2) How do these arrangements shape the representation and interpretation of cultural identity within the tourism experience?

By addressing these questions, this study contributes to the field of cultural and social communication by demonstrating how tourism operates as a structured communicative space in which cultural meanings are produced, organized, and selectively communicated through spatial and visual arrangements. It advances existing discussions by moving beyond content-based analyses of representation toward an examination of the communicative mechanisms that organize visibility and perception. In doing so, the study also offers insights into how cultural identities are not only displayed but actively

constructed through spatial and visual practices, with implications for how heritage is represented and experienced in living cultural tourism sites.

## **2. Method**

This study examines how Dusun Sade's visual order functions in communicating the cultural identity of Sasak through tourism. This study employed a discursive analysis using a visual research method. In line with visual methodologies articulated by Banks and Zeitlyn (2015) and Rose (2016) This study approaches picture synthesis as a fundamental part of data collection rather than depending on finding images. Images were actively created during fieldwork, placing them in a position akin to that of qualitative research interviews. In this approach, the researcher plays an active role in documenting and constructing meaning through systematic visual documentation.

The research was conducted through systematic photo-documentation through fieldwork carried out over one week in December 2025, during which multiple site visits were undertaken to observe recurring tourism activities and spatial practices. The decision to conduct multiple visits across varying times of day was intended to ensure that documented patterns reflected recurring configurations rather than singular or time-specific occurrences.

A total of 127 photographs were taken during fieldwork, capturing spatial layouts, architectural features, visitor movement, and visual displays related to Sasak cultural representation. From this corpus, 18 images were selected for analysis based on their relevance to the research focus, clarity of visual content, and their ability to represent recurring spatial and visual patterns observed across the site. Images that were technically unclear, duplicative of already-documented patterns, or captured under conditions that compromised compositional integrity were excluded from the analytical corpus.

The process of image production was guided by a shooting script developed in relation to the research objectives and theoretical framework. This script functioned as a technical guide and an analytical tool. It directed attention to specific observational dimensions, including spatial organization, mechanisms regulating visitor movement and lines of sight, the visual emphasis placed on cultural symbols such as architecture, performance, and handicrafts, and the spatial positioning of cultural practices in relation to visitor circulation.

The shooting script was developed based on the Foucauldian framework of spatial governance and Rose's concept of the visual apparatus, translated into specific observational dimensions relevant to the tourism village context. The researcher acknowledges that this prior theoretical orientation may have directed attention toward features consistent with the framework. To

minimize this risk, all 127 images were reviewed prior to coding, and analytical categories were confirmed inductively based on patterns that consistently appeared across the full dataset, rather than being selected solely to fit the theoretical framework. The overall research design and analytical sequence employed in this study are summarized in Figure 1.

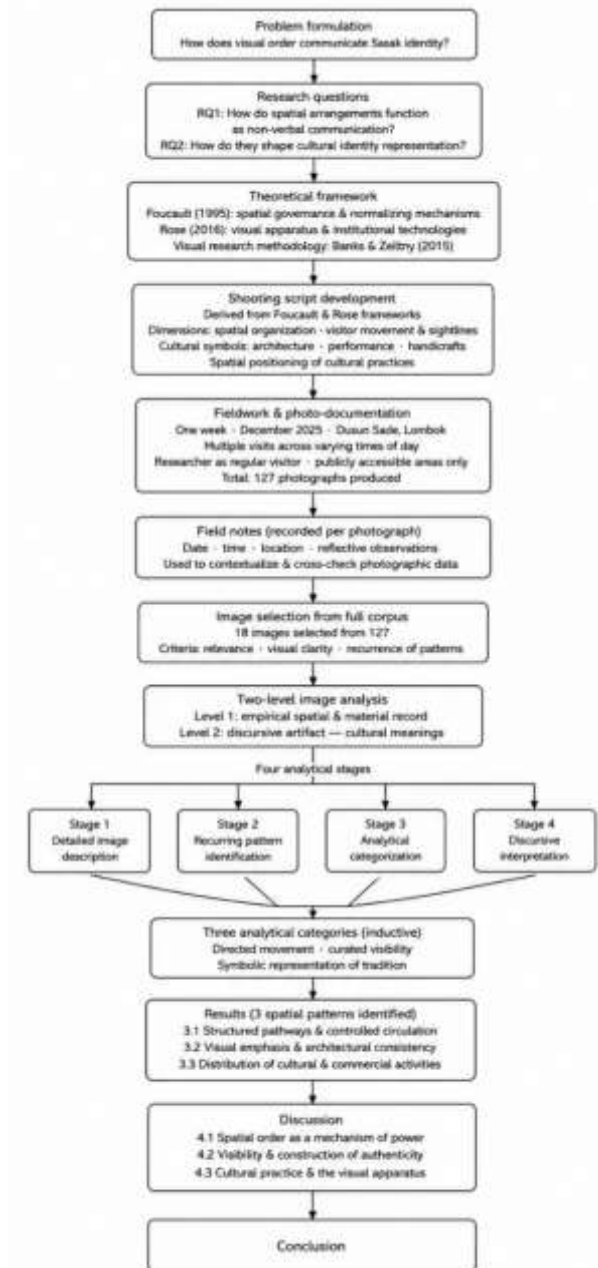


Figure 1. Research Flow Diagram

Each photograph was treated as a unit of analysis and examined at two interconnected levels. At the first level, each image was treated as a visual record of spatial and material arrangements, with attention to spatial layout, object positioning, direction of movement, and the relative positioning of architectural elements and human activity. At the second level, recurring patterns identified across the dataset were interpreted as discursive artifacts, examining how the consistent spatial and visual configurations documented at the first level communicate particular meanings about cultural identity, visibility, and authenticity.

The transition from the first to the second level of analysis was made only where patterns were documented with sufficient frequency across the dataset to support interpretive claims, rather than on the basis of singular or isolated examples. This procedure is consistent with what Rose (2016) refers to as systematic photo-documentation, in which a researcher takes a carefully planned series of photographs to document and analyze a visual phenomenon.

Field notes were recorded alongside each photograph, including date, time, location within the village, and reflective observations to contextualize the visual data. In the analytical process, field notes served two functions. First, they provided contextual information not captured in the images, such as surrounding activity, environmental conditions, and immediate observations during fieldwork.

Second, they were used to check photographic interpretation, particularly in cases where contextual details in the notes clarified, qualified, or contradicted what appeared in the image. Where field notes and photographic data produced divergent readings of the same spatial moment, this tension was noted in the reflexive record rather than resolved by privileging one data source over the other.

The analytical process proceeded through four stages. First, each image was described in detail with attention to spatial layout, object positioning, direction of movement, and elements present or absent within the frame. Second, recurring visual patterns were identified across the full dataset, particularly in relation to spatial organization and the direction of attention and movement.

Third, these patterns were grouped into three analytical categories: directed movement, curated visibility, and symbolic representation of tradition, which were derived from the dataset prior to theoretical interpretation. To strengthen analytical consistency, the frequency of recurring spatial features and visual patterns was recorded across the full corpus of 127 images, allowing the identification of dominant configurations rather than relying on singular illustrative examples. Fourth, the categorized patterns were interpreted discursively to examine how spatial and visual arrangements construct meanings of authenticity and cultural identity.

These interpretations were situated within a Foucauldian framework to analyze how visual order operates as a mechanism of power, shaping what can be seen, accessed, and recognized as legitimate cultural representation. In parallel, Rose's conceptualization of the visual apparatus and institutional technologies informed the analysis of how visual practices are embedded within broader systems of spatial organization.

The researcher entered Dusun Sade as a regular visitor through the public tourist entry point, without formal institutional access, in order to document spatial and visual conditions as encountered under typical tourism settings. As an outsider to the Sasak community, the researcher acknowledges that positionality, including non-local background and gender, may have influenced visibility and access during fieldwork; these factors were documented in reflexive field notes and considered in the analysis. Data collection was limited to publicly accessible areas and focused on spatial and architectural features rather than individuals. All identifiable faces were anonymized prior to publication. The absence of formal informed consent is recognized as a limitation of this observational approach in public settings.

Several steps were taken to strengthen the credibility of the findings. Analytical claims were based on recurring patterns across the full dataset of 127 images rather than isolated examples. Multiple site visits conducted at different times provided a degree of temporal variation, reducing reliance on a single observational moment. Reflexive field notes documented the researcher's observations and interpretive decisions throughout the process. In addition, analytical categories were first derived from the dataset before being interpreted through theoretical frameworks, reducing the risk of predetermined conclusions.

### **3. Results**

#### ***3.1 Structured Pathways and Controlled Circulation***

Visitor movement in Dusun Sade follows a clearly defined spatial pattern that begins at a single entry point and continues along a main pathway connecting key areas of tourist activity. Upon entering the village, visitors are directed through a narrow but open admission corridor marked by a bamboo gate and bordered by traditional housing structures (Figure 2). No alternative entry routes are visibly indicated, and all observed visitors during fieldwork entered through this same point.



**Figure 2.** The main entry point shows a single pathway bordered by bamboo fencing and traditional houses, with no visible alternative routes for entry

Visitors are positioned along a linear route that connects the entry area to central activity spaces within the village. This pathway is visually reinforced by the orientation of buildings and the open arrangement of courtyards, which collectively guide movement forward rather than laterally.

As shown in Figure 3, this area functions as a transition point, organizing the flow of movement and structuring the sequence of spatial experience. This area is visually prominent, positioned directly along the main pathway, and large enough to accommodate groups. Its openness and centrality distinguish it from surrounding spaces, making it a natural point for visitors to stop before continuing further into the village. Field observations further indicate that visitors rarely deviate from this main route.



**Figure 3.** The main route that leads visitors to stroll the village (marked with the red square) is the central pathway, flanked by traditional houses whose entrances face directly onto the route

Beyond this point, the circulation pattern continues through a series of linear pathways that connect different areas of the village. Across five out of 127 images, these pathways appear consistently continuous, with minimal branching or ambiguity in direction. Alternative routes are either physically narrower, partially obstructed, or visually less emphasized compared to the main path (Figures 4 and 5). In no observed instance did an alternative route provide a clearly marked or equally accessible option for visitor navigation.



**Figure 4.** A primary pathway showing continuous, unobstructed forward direction with clear visual cues guiding movement.



**Figure 5.** An alternative side route that is noticeably narrower and partially obstructed by vegetation and building edges, reducing its accessibility compared to the main path.

Field observations indicate that visitors to Dusun Sade include both guided and unguided groups. Tour guides were observed accompanying visitor groups along the primary circulation route, providing verbal explanations at designated stopping points. However, visitors without guides were also documented during fieldwork, moving independently through the village.

In all observed instances, both guided and unguided visitors followed the same primary circulation corridor, with no documented instance of an unguided visitor deviating significantly toward peripheral or secondary routes. This parallel pattern, in which guided and unguided visitors consistently traverse the same spatial trajectory, indicates that the primary route is followed

not solely as a result of guide instruction but as a product of the spatial configuration itself.

The width, visual openness, and building orientation along the main pathway provide sufficient directional cues to sustain visitor movement along the established corridor independently of verbal guidance.

Several stopping points are consistently observed. These include areas where cultural activities such as weaving demonstrations, handicraft displays, and informal interactions with residents take place (Figures 6 and 7). These activity zones are positioned directly adjacent to the circulation route, allowing visitors to observe without leaving the path. In 10 out of 127 photographs, such activity spaces appear immediately accessible from the pathway, indicating a repeated spatial configuration in which observation is integrated into movement.



**Figure 6.** Villages pathway with activity zones positioned on both sides, allowing visitors to observe ongoing activities without stepping off the main route.



**Figure 7.** Weaving activities are displayed along the primary visitor path. The loom and weaver are positioned at the path's edge, directly within the line of sight of passing visitors.

Visitors tend to slow down or stop at these points, particularly when activities are already in progress or when other visitors are gathered, suggesting that movement is influenced by both spatial layout and social cues.

The spatial arrangement also shapes the rhythm of movement. Open areas with clear visibility (recorded in 13 out of 127 images) encourage longer stop times and taking a picture, while narrower point sections facilitate continuous movement. This produces a patterned flow in which visitors alternate between movement and stop at specific points within the village.

Figure 8 shows one of the areas encountered on visitor routes. The space is open, visually accessible, and positioned along the main circulation path, encouraging visitors to stop, observe, and take photographs.



**Figure 8.** Open space positioned in the main pathway, frequently used as a viewing and stopping point by visitors

Certain areas remain outside the primary circulation pattern. Spaces located behind housing structures or beyond the visible edge of the main route appear in fewer than five images across the dataset. These areas are not physically enclosed or signposted as restricted; however, their limited visual prominence and distance from the main pathway result in minimal visitor entry. No visitor was observed entering these peripheral areas during field observation.

### ***3.2 Visual Emphasis and Architectural Consistency along the Visitor Route***

Across the dataset, certain visual and architectural features are present with consistent consistency in images taken along the primary circulation route, while others are documented less frequently and at greater spatial distance from the main pathway. This uneven distribution reflects the spatial positioning of different areas relative to the established visitor corridor rather than deliberate staging or alteration of the built environment.

Building structures directly facing the main pathway share a set of recurring visual characteristics. 19 out of 127 images have certain architectural forms, material features, and visual elements that appear repeatedly, forming a consistent pattern within the most frequently traversed areas of the village. This repetition is particularly evident in images taken along the main pathways, where visitors are concentrated and where visual exposure is most sustained.

In the majority of images documenting the main circulation routes, traditional house structures display similar visual characteristics. These include low, elongated rooflines, consistent building orientation, and the use of natural materials (Figure 9). Within the frame, these structures often occupy central or mid-ground positions, aligned parallel to the pathway. This repeated placement creates a continuous visual sequence in which similar forms are encountered successively as visitors move through the space.



**Figure 9.** Traditional house structures viewed from above, showing consistent roofline profiles, parallel orientation, and natural material use across multiple buildings along the main pathway

Material elements further reinforce this pattern. Surfaces such as earthen floors, thatched roofing, and wooden structural components appear in most images taken along the primary routes. These materials are typically visible in the foreground or middle ground, where they are directly encountered within

the line of sight. In contrast, elements that differ in material or condition tend to appear less frequently and are more often located off-trail in the frame, reducing their visual prominence.

The repetition of these visual elements is closely linked to their spatial positioning. Elements that appear most frequently are not randomly distributed, but are consistently located along central pathways and within dominant sightlines. Thus, they are encountered more often than elements positioned outside these areas. For example, structures aligned with the main pathway and facing directly toward the viewer are visible across a larger number of images compared to those located behind other buildings or outside the primary circulation routes.

Visibility is also shaped by sightline organization along the route. Open areas with unobstructed forward sightlines (documented in 13 out of 127 images) consistently position culturally significant objects or architectural features at the end of a visual axis extending from the foreground toward the background (Figure 8). In these images, the pathway occupies the center of the frame, with surrounding building structures arranged parallel to the route and reinforcing forward orientation. This spatial configuration places selected architectural elements within a sustained and repeated line of sight across multiple points along the route.

Interior spaces appeared in only 8 of 127 images, compared to exterior pathway areas in 19 images, reflecting their more restricted accessibility. Entry into these spaces is typically mediated, occurring in guided contexts rather than through unrestricted movement. Attention is directed toward specific elements within the space, often those positioned in the immediate foreground or highlighted during guided explanations. Unlike exterior environments, which are repeatedly encountered along main pathways, interior spaces are selectively accessed and therefore less consistently represented across the dataset.

This difference contributes to an uneven distribution of visibility, in which exterior spaces are more prominently and repeatedly seen, while interior spaces remain comparatively limited in visual exposure.

### ***3.3 Distribution of Cultural and Commercial Activities within the Village Space***

Cultural and commercial activities in Dusun Sade are spatially distributed along the full length of the primary visitor circulation route, with activity zones appearing at consistent intervals from the village entry point through to the furthest documented section of the main pathway. Field observations and photographic documentation indicate that all observed cultural and commercial activities are positioned directly within or immediately adjacent to the main visitor corridor, with their orientation consistently directed toward the pathway rather than toward adjacent spaces or secondary routes.

Weaving activity constitutes the most frequently documented cultural practice in the dataset, appearing in 10 out of 127 images. Across all observed instances, weaving stations are located directly adjacent to the main pathway, with the loom and practitioner positioned at the veranda edge or within the open frontage of the building facing the route (Figures 7 and 10). This placement ensures that weaving activity remains within the immediate visual field of visitors moving along the path without requiring deviation from the main corridor. Weaving stations are distributed across multiple points along the entire length of the route rather than concentrated at a single location, with documented instances appearing at the entry segment, mid-route, and further sections of the main pathway.



**Figure 10.** Weaving activities and textile exhibitions

The spatial positioning of weaving stations also facilitates direct interaction and commercial exchange. Woven textiles are displayed alongside active weaving demonstrations, arranged at pathway-edge locations where they are directly visible and physically accessible to passing visitors (Figure 11). Displayed textiles are positioned on hanging structures or surface arrangements at standing eye level, within the immediate reach of visitors. In several instances, displayed items extend partially into the pathway space itself, positioning them within the immediate physical reach of passing visitors.



**Figure 11.** Display of woven textiles

Commercial transaction points locations where direct exchange between residents and visitors was observed appear in seven out of 127 images, distributed at intervals along the main route without clustering into a single concentrated market area.

Traditional performance activities, including Peresean and Gendang Beleq (Figure 12), are associated with the central open area documented in Section 3.1 (Figure 3), the same open area positioned in the main circulation route, sufficient open space to accommodate visitor groups. Unlike weaving stations and display areas, which are distributed along the full length of the route, performance activities take place at predetermined locations and at scheduled times contingent on prior booking arrangements, meaning the space functions primarily as a circulation and stopping point during regular visiting hours and transitions into a performance space only on scheduled occasions. During fieldwork, it was directly observed that the same physical space served as both a designated performance venue and a transitional gathering area. The space's circulation function was documented with fewer than ten images in the dataset and field notes mentioned it as the site of a planned performance activity.



**Figure 12.** Peresean and Gendang Beleq

The orientation of each activity zone shows that the space is constructed to direct the movement and way visitors experience the place. This indicates that every activity zone is situated not only inside the visitors' pathway but also directly in the direction of it in every instance that has been observed. a spatial arrangement where commercial and cultural activities are regularly placed to align with and continue to be accessible from the established visitor circulation pattern described in Section 3.1.

## **4. Discussion**

### ***4.1 Spatial Order as a Mechanism of Power***

The findings from Section 3.1 indicate that visitor movement in Dusun Sade is consistently concentrated along a single primary corridor, with alternative routes remaining physically narrower, less visually prominent, and rarely traversed. This pattern is consistent with Foucault's (1995) analysis of

how spatial arrangements exercise power not through prohibition but through the organization of conditions that make certain behaviors appear natural and self-evident. In Dusun Sade, there are no clear signs or physical barriers restricting visitors from accessing peripheral areas; instead, the spatial arrangement of the pathway, its width, visual openness, and the orientation of buildings create an environment where adherence to the main route seems instinctive, while the opposite direction appears unusual.

Particularly significant in this regard is the observation that both guided and unguided visitors consistently follow the same primary circulation corridor. Tour guides were observed accompanying visitor groups and providing verbal explanations at designated stopping points along the route. However, visitors moving independently without guide accompaniment were equally documented traversing the same spatial trajectory, with no observed instance of an unguided visitor deviating toward peripheral areas.

This parallel pattern indicates that the primary route is not simply a product of guide instruction but is sustained by the spatial configuration itself. The pathway's width, visual openness, and the consistent orientation of building facades toward the corridor provide directional cues sufficient to channel visitor movement along the established route independently of verbal guidance. In this sense, the spatial order functions as what Foucault describes as a normalizing mechanism, one that organizes behavior through the structuring of the environment rather than through direct command. The built environment thus acts as a silent regulator, structuring behavior through affordances, constraints, and visual cues.

This finding aligns with prior research showing that spatial configuration significantly shapes movement patterns in heritage settings, Jamhawi et al. (2023) demonstrate that spatial configuration through elements such as accessibility, connectivity, and the distribution of activities directly shapes visitors' movement patterns and the concentration of visitor flows within heritage sites. However, the case of Dusun Sade extends this argument by showing that spatial configuration not only influences movement probabilistically but can effectively stabilize a singular, dominant route, minimizing deviation even in the absence of explicit instruction.

The regulatory function is further reinforced through the relationship between movement and visibility. The placement of activity zones, such as weaving demonstrations and handicraft displays, directly adjacent to the main circulation route ensures continuous exposure without requiring visitors to deviate from the path. This configuration integrates observation into movement, effectively synchronizing circulation with visual consumption. As a result, what visitors encounter is not an open-ended exploration of the village, but a curated sequence of culturally legible scenes.

The arrangement of pathways, buildings, and activity areas controls what visitors see, from where, and in what order. Rather than making all parts of the village equally visible and accessible, it directs attention to certain areas while pushing others out of view, shaping how the village is understood. This pattern is consistent with findings from other heritage settings. Previous studies show that visibility can play a more decisive role than physical accessibility in shaping tourist movement, with open and visually prominent spaces attracting more visitors than narrow or enclosed routes (G Cheirchanteri, 2025; Wang et al., 2025). They add that, at the same time, tightly enclosed and winding pathways tend to accelerate movement and discourage stopping.

In Dusun Sade, a similar dynamic is evident; open areas along the main route encourage visitors to pause and engage, while narrower side paths promote continuous movement and are often bypassed. This suggests that spatial configuration not only directs where visitors go, but also how long they stay and how they experience different parts of the village.

Equally important, some parts become less noticeable. Spaces behind houses or outside the main road remain accessible, but visitors rarely enter them. This is not because they are limited, but because they are more difficult to see, less connected, and not visually highlighted. Thus, these places get little attention and become less important in the visitor experience. This pattern supports previous findings that in traditional and historic settings, local connectivity alone is often not enough to attract movement into side streets or back spaces if they are not part of clear through routes (Fareh & Alkama, 2022). In Dusun Sade, although some peripheral paths are physically connected, their separation from the main circulation route limits their use, reinforcing the dominance of a single, continuous visitor pathway.

These findings suggest that Dusun Sade operates through a form of spatial governance in which circulation, visibility, and experience are tightly interlinked. Movement is channeled along a predetermined route, visual access is selectively curated, and alternative spatial possibilities are minimized without explicit restriction. This configuration creates an environment in which visitors experience the village as coherent, navigable, and culturally authentic, while simultaneously limiting the scope of what can be encountered. The organization of space in Dusun Sade can be understood not simply as a matter of design, but as a strategic arrangement that structures both movement and meaning within the context of tourism.

However, the spatial concentration of visitor movement along the primary corridor may also reflect practical considerations rather than deliberate governance. Previous studies show that movement tends to concentrate along highly accessible and well-connected routes, particularly those located near

main entrances and globally integrated pathways, while less integrated segments remain underused (B. Li et al., 2025). Similarly, research in theme park settings demonstrates that visitor flows are shaped by factors such as entrance location, distance between attractions, and the distribution of key activities, which together create natural high-flow corridors (Y. Zhang et al., 2017). The primary pathway in Dusun Sade, being the widest, most visually open, and most directly connected route from the entry point, satisfies these practical conditions independently of any governance intention.

The stronger concentration of visitor movement in Dusun Sade compared to larger heritage tourism sites may be influenced by several specific spatial conditions in the village. Dusun Sade has a single entrance, a relatively small spatial layout, and building facades that consistently face the main visitor pathway. These conditions make visitor routes easier to follow and reduce confusion in movement, unlike larger or more complex tourism environments. Similar patterns found in other heritage tourism settings, especially regarding how visibility shapes visitor movement, suggest that this mechanism is not unique to Dusun Sade but reflects a broader spatial pattern commonly found in traditional tourism villages.

However, this study does not contend that the spatial arrangement was intentionally designed to control visitor behavior. Rather, it argues that the observable concentration of visitor movement and attention along a designated corridor emerges as an effect of the spatial configuration itself, regardless of its original intention or historical formation. In this sense, the findings are analytically consistent with Foucauldian understandings of spatial order as a mechanism that organizes behavior indirectly through arrangement and visibility rather than through overt enforcement.

For heritage tourism management, this finding suggests that spatial design functions as a subtle mechanism guiding visitor movement. Route concentration is shaped not only by visitor preference, but also by spatial configuration, which can be adjusted to broaden visitor exposure to different spatial experiences without explicit direction.

#### ***4.2 Visibility and the Construction of Authenticity***

The findings from Section 3.2 indicate that architectural consistency and visual emphasis are concentrated within the spatial zone directly adjacent to the primary visitor corridor. Every building in the Dusun Sade facades consistently displays natural materials, such as thatched roofing, bamboo walls, and wood, and appears in 19 out of 127 images, while elevation outside Dusun Sade, peripheral structures, and interior spaces are documented far less frequently. This means that visitors moving along the primary route repeatedly encounter a consistent set of architectural forms and material surfaces, while

other spatial configurations within the same inhabited village remain comparatively less visible.

This pattern is analytically significant because it shows that authenticity is not simply an inherent quality of the place, but is produced through spatial and visual repetition. Authenticity in tourism has been widely understood as constructed and negotiated rather than as a fixed or inherent property of a place or practice (Rickly et al., 2025). From a Foucauldian perspective, what becomes recognizable as “authentic Sasak culture” is not everything that exists in the village, but what is made consistently visible through the organization of space and sightlines.

The repetition of thatched roofs, bamboo walls, and natural-material surfaces along the primary corridor establishes these elements as the dominant visual markers of Sasak tradition, not because they are the only or most culturally significant features, but because they are the most frequently encountered along the visitor route. This pattern reflects a broader dynamic identified in previous studies, where authenticity in cultural tourism emerges through spatial arrangements that integrate architectural elements and curated displays within visitor-accessible areas (Q. Li et al., 2024). In Dusun Sade, the prominence of specific visual features is therefore not incidental, but produced through their repeated positioning along the main circulation path, where they are consistently seen and reinforced.

Gillian Rose’s (2016) The concept of the visual apparatus helps explain how this process operates. The alignment of building orientations, pathway visibility, and activity placement forms an institutionalized system that organizes what can be seen and how it is interpreted. In Dusun Sade, this apparatus makes the natural material architectural profile of the primary corridor the dominant visual reference for Sasak cultural identity, while other areas are less significant. They stay out of the primary field of vision, especially those where modern materials are more noticeable.

This does not mean that the village’s architecture is artificial or staged for tourism. The use of natural materials reflects genuine building practices. However, the spatial organization of the visitor route ensures that these elements are encountered in a highly consistent and concentrated way, exceeding what would occur through undirected movement across the village.

The structured exposure produced by this spatial arrangement plays a key role in shaping how authenticity is perceived by visitors. Research indicates that tourists tend to experience authenticity through cultural elements made accessible through spatial design, often without recognizing how these encounters are organized (Park et al., 2019). In Dusun Sade, the repeated alignment of traditional materials and activities along the main pathway

intensifies this effect, allowing authenticity to appear immediate and natural, even though it is structured through spatial arrangement

Within this context, what visitors recognize as “authentic Sasak culture” is not the full complexity of village life as inhabited and practiced by residents. It is instead a selective visual representation produced through the consistent spatial positioning of particular architectural elements and material surfaces along the established visitor route. This selectivity is not a product of deliberate deception, but of spatial organization; the route itself determines what is repeatedly seen and therefore what becomes visually synonymous with authenticity.

The alignment between this finding and Q. Li et al.’s (2024) Observations suggest that the production of authenticity through architectural consistency along visitor routes reflects a broader pattern across heritage tourism settings. However, Dusun Sade differs from many comparable cases because its traditional architecture remains part of an actively inhabited village rather than a reconstructed or simulated heritage site. Visitors encounter not only visually consistent architecture, but also spaces that continue to function as part of everyday community life. This condition may strengthen the perception of authenticity observed in this study. For tourism management, the findings indicate that visitor routes and spatial visibility play an important role in shaping how cultural authenticity is perceived, particularly in living heritage villages where certain aspects of community life become more visible than others.

#### ***4.3 Cultural Practice, Commercial Activity, and the Visual Apparatus***

The findings from Section 3.3 show that all observed cultural and commercial activities, including weaving demonstrations, textile displays, and scheduled performances, are positioned within or directly adjacent to the primary visitor corridor, with their orientation consistently facing the pathway. As a result, visitors encounter these activities continuously as they move along the established route, while areas outside the corridor contain no documented activity of these types.

This pattern extends the analysis of spatial power from the organization of movement and visibility to the organization of cultural practice itself. The placement of weaving stations at veranda edges facing the pathway (documented across 10 out of 127 images) means that weaving is not encountered as an incidental domestic activity, but as a practice consistently presented within the visitor’s line of sight.

This reflects a broader pattern in cultural tourism, where everyday practices such as craft production are reorganized and repositioned as visitor-oriented attractions, making them more visible and accessible (Umbu & Listyorini, 2025). In Dusun Sade, weaving is therefore not only practiced, but

spatially arranged as a continuous visual presence along the circulation route. This aligns with Rose's (2016) concept of the visual apparatus, in which practices and objects are organized within a visual field to produce stable and recognizable meanings.

The integration of textile display and commercial transactions (documented in five display and seven transaction point images) within the same pathway-edge zone further reinforces this arrangement. Cultural practice and economic exchange occupy the same spatial position relative to the visitor route, allowing both to be encountered simultaneously. This doesn't necessarily reduce the cultural significance of weaving for residents, but within the context of tourism, it positions the practice as both a cultural expression and a point of transaction within a single, continuous encounter.

In contrast, traditional performances such as Peresean and Gendang Beleg follow a different spatial and temporal logic. Unlike weaving and display activities distributed continuously along the main route, these performances take place in a designated central space and only occur when scheduled, typically in response to visitor demand. By confining them to a specific location and time, these practices are transformed into discrete, bounded events rather than ongoing activities. This pattern reflects a broader dynamic identified in cultural tourism, where staged performances create a separation between everyday cultural life and its touristic representation (Alamineh et al., 2023).

The contrast between continuously distributed activities and location-specific scheduled performances reveals that cultural practices in Dusun Sade are not organized uniformly but are differentiated according to their spatial and temporal accessibility to visitors. Weaving, textile display, and commercial transactions are integrated into the continuous flow of visitor movement along the primary corridor, while performances are extracted from this continuous flow and bounded within a specific space and time. This differential organization means that visitors are exposed to weaving and commercial activity as part of their continuous movement through the village, while performances are encountered only under specific, scheduled conditions, producing two distinct modes of cultural encounter within the same spatial setting.

The spatial organization of cultural practices in Dusun Sade both aligns with and extends findings from previous tourism studies. Similar to findings by Umbu and Listyorini (2025) Weaving activities are positioned within accessible visitor areas, making them continuously visible throughout the tourism experience. However, unlike purpose-built cultural tourism sites that concentrate craft demonstrations in designated zones, weaving in Dusun Sade

is distributed along the inhabited circulation corridor, integrating cultural visibility into everyday village movement.

A similar distinction appears in traditional performances. While previous studies describe staged performances as fixed tourism attractions (Alamineh et al., 2023) Performances in Dusun Sade occur only under scheduled or visitor-requested conditions. This suggests that cultural display in the village is not entirely fixed institutionally, but remains partly shaped by local control over when and how performances occur. For heritage tourism management, these findings indicate that distributing cultural activities along visitor routes may create a more continuous and natural cultural encounter, while flexible scheduling of performances may help balance tourism accessibility with community control over cultural representation.

From a Foucauldian perspective, these patterns reflect a form of spatial and visual governance in which space and time shape how culture is encountered and interpreted. At the same time, they may also respond to practical considerations such as accessibility and visitor management. Taken together, the arrangements documented across Sections 3.1-3.3 function as an integrated system of non-verbal cultural communication. Through the organization of movement, visibility, and cultural practice along the primary corridor, Dusun Sade communicates a recognizable representation of Sasak cultural identity through what visitors repeatedly see and encounter during their movement through the village.

## **5. Conclusion**

This study examined how Dusun Sade communicates Sasak cultural identity through visual order within the context of tourism, addressing two interrelated questions: how visual and spatial arrangements function as mechanisms of non-verbal cultural communication, and how these arrangements shape the representation and interpretation of cultural identity within the tourism experience.

The findings demonstrate that both processes operate through the same underlying spatial logic. The concentration of visitor movement along a single primary corridor, the consistent visual emphasis on natural material architectural features within that corridor, and the exclusive positioning of cultural and commercial activities directly adjacent to the established visitor route together constitute an integrated system through which Sasak cultural identity is communicated without explicit narration.

Visitors are guided through a spatially curated sequence of encounters, defined by thatched architecture, continuous weaving activity, textile display, and bounded cultural performance, that collectively produce a coherent and recognizable representation of Sasak tradition. This representation is not

fabricated or artificially staged, but is selectively produced through the cumulative effect of spatial organization on what visitors repeatedly see, where they move, and what they encounter.

These findings contribute to theoretical understandings of power and representation in cultural tourism. By demonstrating that spatial governance in Dusun Sade operates through the normalization of a dominant visitor route rather than through explicit restriction, this study extends Foucault's framework beyond institutional settings to the context of an inhabited traditional village where residents and visitors share the same physical space. The application of Rose's visual apparatus framework further shows that cultural identity communication in tourism operates as an institutionalized visual system, one in which building orientation, pathway design, and the positioning of cultural practices work together to produce stable and repeatable representations. This study shows that visitors don't need a guide to follow the route. Even without a guide, they walk the same path as guided groups. This means the layout of the village itself directs how people move. Dusun Sade is different from tourist places that are specially built, and it is more complex because people still live there.

Methodologically, this study demonstrates that systematic photo-documentation can serve as a rigorous primary method for examining spatial and visual organization in tourism settings. By treating 127 fieldwork photographs as both empirical records and discursive artifacts, and by grounding all interpretive claims in the frequency of recurring visual patterns across the full dataset, the study shows that visual methodology can produce empirically substantive findings without relying solely on interview or survey data. The use of a theoretically guided shooting script combined with reflexive field notes provided a consistent and accountable basis for moving from visual observation to discursive interpretation, a methodological approach that may be applicable to comparable studies of spatial governance in other heritage tourism contexts.

The findings also carry practical implications for the management of cultural tourism in traditional village settings. The spatial concentration of visitor movement and cultural activity along a single primary corridor produces a highly consistent tourism experience but simultaneously limits visitor exposure to the broader complexity of village life. Tourism planners and village administrators may consider whether the current spatial arrangement adequately reflects the diversity of Sasak cultural practices, and whether complementary routes or additional activity placements could increase visitor engagement while maintaining the community's residential integrity.

The community-managed scheduling of performances such as Peresean and Gendang Beleq, contingent on pre-booking rather than continuous display, represents a form of local governance over cultural visibility.

This study acknowledges several limitations. The fieldwork was conducted over one week in December 2025, which limits the temporal scope of observations. As a result, the findings reflect patterns observed within this specific period and may not capture longer-term variations in spatial and visual configurations. While 127 photographs provided a sufficient basis for identifying recurring spatial patterns, the dataset remains limited in scope. A larger corpus collected across multiple visits over an extended period would enable more robust frequency analysis and allow for finer distinctions between spatial configurations that appear similar in a smaller sample. The current dataset is sufficient to support the identification of dominant patterns but may not capture the full range of spatial variation present across the site.

The study also relies on visual and spatial data, with no interview or ethnographic data from residents, meaning that the perspectives, intentions, and lived experiences of the village community remain outside the scope of the analysis. Claims regarding spatial governance and cultural representation are therefore grounded in observable patterns rather than in documented accounts of community decision-making or resident agency.

Future research would benefit from integrating resident perspectives through interviews or participatory visual methods, examining how spatial arrangements and visitor behavior vary across seasons and visitor volumes, and extending comparative analysis to other inhabited traditional villages in Indonesia and Southeast Asia to assess the broader applicability of the spatial and visual patterns identified here.

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