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Relationality and Harmony: A Comparative Study of the Sasak Proverbs Lemah Pade Begawe, Urip Pade Ngemalem and Confucianism

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Abstract

The Sasak proverb lemah pade begawe, urip pade ngemalem embodies principles of communal life that emphasize the importance of mutual cooperation and ecological awareness within agrarian society. This study departs from the question of how the philosophical meaning of this proverb can be understood as a form of relational ethics, to what extent its values resonate with core Confucian principles such as ren (humaneness), li (moral order), and he (social harmony), and what relevance these values hold for modern humans living amid individualism and ecological crisis. To address these questions, this research aims to unpack the meaning of the proverb, place it in dialogical engagement with Confucian teachings, and identify their points of convergence regarding relationality, collective action, and efforts to maintain ecological balance. This study employs a literature-based method to gather the necessary data and sources. The findings affirm that although emerging from different cultural contexts, Sasak wisdom and Confucianism both view humans as relational beings who must build communal life through virtue, harmony, and responsibility toward others and the environment. These values remain relevant in facing contemporary challenges, particularly in reshaping human relationships with the community and with the earth as our shared home.

Keywords

Social Ethics, Harmony, Local Wisdom, Confucianism, Sasak

INTRODUCTION

The ecological crisis today has become one of the urgent issues faced by humanity. Soil degradation caused by excessive exploitation, extreme climate change, and the increasingly fragile relationship between human beings and the environment indicate that modern life has moved far away from the principles of harmony with nature. Floods, landslides, and extreme weather events that frequently occur invarious regions of Indonesia are only a small part of the reality that reminds us that

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the relationship between human beings and the earth is in an unhealthy condition. In such a situation, there is an urgent need to rediscover moral and cultural sources that are able to foster the awareness that caring for the earth is an integral part of caring for life together.

The ecological crisis cannot be understood merely as a technical or scientific problem; rather, it is closely related to a moral crisis involving all living beings within it. An anthropocentric worldview, which places human beings as the center and rulers of nature, has eroded respect for the earth as a shared living space. Nature is treated as an object, no longer as a companion in sustaining life. Therefore, the call to reinterpret traditional wisdom as a foundation for ecological ethics has become increasingly urgent. Local values, especially those preserved within agrarian societies, often contain teachings about balance, togetherness, and human responsibility toward the land as the source of life.

In the Indonesian context, proverbs serve as one of the important means for transmitting moral values and worldviews. Proverbs do not merely convey social advice, but also contain ecological orientations that have grown out of the long experience of communities interacting with nature. One example of such wisdom is found in the Sasak expression lemah pade begawe, urip pade ngemalem, which profoundly emphasizes the importance of collective work, social solidarity, and the awareness that the sustainability of human life is closely connected to the preservation of the land and the environment. However, the forces of globalization and modern individualistic lifestyles often cause local proverbs to fade from the awareness of younger generations, even though the ecological values embedded within them remain highly relevant to the crisis we face today.

A review of the literature shows that studies comparing the values of local wisdom with the various schools of Eastern philosophy are still relatively scarce. Muhammad Harfin Zuhdi, in his article Kearifan Lokal Sasak sebagai Model Pengelolaan Konflik di Masyarakat Lombok, published in Mabasan, Vol. 12, No. 1, January–June 2018, presents a study that mainly examines how local wisdom in Sasak culture can help minimize conflicts and seek solutions to them. He also states that, in order to achieve such an ideal condition, revitalization efforts and renewed public dissemination are necessary so that people may once again appreciate their cultural wealth, which should truly enrich society rather than be abandoned. Therefore, we consider it worthwhile to undertake research that explicitly offers a philosophical

comparative study between the values of local wisdom and one of the schools of Eastern philosophy, in order to further strengthen public awareness of the urgency of shared responsibility in protecting the environment.

As an effort to enrich the ethical perspective on this proverb, this study seeks to bring it into dialogue with Confucianism, one of the great philosophical traditions of East Asia that develops relational ethics through the concepts of ren (humaneness), li (moral propriety), and he (social harmony). Confucianism, a school of thought and way of life that emerged within the context of an agrarian society in China, also views human life as a network of relationships that must be sustained through virtue and harmony. The intersection between Sasak wisdom and Confucianism is particularly interesting because both place human beings within a network of moral relationships: with one another, with the environment, and with the broader order of life.

This study is grounded in the awareness that local proverbs such as lemah pade begawe, urip pade ngemalem are not merely traditional expressions, but sources of values that remain highly relevant for fostering ecological awareness and social solidarity amid the contemporary threats of individualism and consumerism. By interpreting this proverb through a dialogue with the principles of Confucianism, this study seeks to demonstrate that there are universal values of virtue, relationality, and harmony that can serve as a foundation for the development of contemporary ecological ethics. More specifically, this research seeks to answer three principal questions. First, what philosophical meaning is contained in the Sasak proverb lemah pade begawe, urip pade ngemalem? Second, in what aspects do these values resonate with the core principles of Confucianism such as ren, li, and he? Third, how are these two traditions relevant in responding to modern challenges, particularly those related to individualism and the ecological crisis?

To answer these questions, this study employs a qualitative method with a library research approach. This approach allows for an in-depth analysis of Sasak cultural texts, the teachings of Confucianism, as well as literature on relational ethics. Through a process of interpretation and cross-traditional dialogue, this research seeks to uncover values that are not only important for indigenous communities, but can also be lived out within the context of modern life.

The preliminary findings of this study indicate that Sasak wisdom and Confucianism both emphasize three principal elements: the importance of collective work, moral responsibility toward the environment, and a commitment to building

social harmony. These three aspects affirm a holistic worldview regarding the relationship of human beings with nature and with one another. Thus, the Sasak proverb, when interpreted in dialogue with Confucianism, offers an important contribution to efforts to develop ecological awareness while simultaneously strengthening social ethics amid the challenges of the modern world. These values are not only a cultural heritage, but also a source of moral inspiration for safeguarding the earth as a common home for present and future generations.

METHOD

This study employs a qualitative approach using the library research method, or document analysis. This method was chosen to explore in depth the philosophical meanings, relational values, and ecological dimensions found in Sasak proverbs and Confucian teachings. Its primary focus is the examination of literature on relational ethics, Sasak cultural texts, and the core concepts of Confucianism.

The objectives of this study are directed toward three main aspects: first, to explain the meaning of the proverb "Lemah Pade Begawe, Urip Pade Ngemalem" as a form of relational ethics; second, to place it in dialogue with the Confucian principles of ren (humaneness), li (moral order), and he (harmony); and third, to demonstrate the relevance of these values in addressing modern challenges such as individualism and the ecological crisis. The Sasak proverb serves as the primary object of study, while books, journals, and other written sources function as secondary data that support and strengthen the analysis.

Data were collected through documentation techniques, namely by systematically reviewing relevant literature in accordance with the focus of the study. The data were then analyzed using Descriptive-Interpretative Analysis through three stages: (1) Identification of key elements within the proverb and Confucian concepts; (2) Contextual Interpretation, namely interpreting the proverb and examining its resonance with Confucian teachings; and (3) Value Interpretation, namely formulating its moral and ecological values as well as their relevance for the younger generation.

The validity of the data was maintained through source triangulation by utilizing various supporting literatures, including Sasak local wisdom, Confucian texts, and studies on ethics and ecology, in order to ensure the accuracy of interpretation. In this way, the study is expected to contribute to the strengthening of social ethics and ecological awareness.

DISCUSSION

Table 1: Data Coding on the Comparison of Values in Sasak Proverbs and Confucianism

Aspect/Component	Sasak Proverb	Confucianism	Key Meaning	Comparative Findings
Relationality	Living together within the community as the foundation of life.	Human beings are relational beings	Human beings cannot live on their own.	Both traditions reject individualism.
Collective Work	Begawe refers to working together in cultivating the fields.	Li refers to proper conduct and the moral principles of communal life.	Obedience to moral principles preserves the harmonious life of society.	Begawe and Li refer to collective work that brings about harmony.
Solidarity	Ngemalem refers to solidarity during times of hardship (darkness).	Ren refers to empathy toward those who are suffering.	Morality also arises from a sense of solidarity.	Ngemalem and Ren signify solidarity that arises from a sense of empathy.

Ecological Harmony	Lemah refers to the land as the source of life, emphasizing the need to maintain the relationship between human beings and nature.	He refers to maintaining cosmic harmony among human beings, nature, and heaven.	Human beings and nature are partners.	Lemah and He signify that human beings and nature are partners.

Source: Prepared by the researcher, 2025.

Based on the comparative table above, it is evident that both the Sasak proverb and Confucianism emphasize the importance of communal life, collective work, solidarity, and a harmonious relationship with nature. Both traditions reject individualism and portray human beings as relational beings who can attain the goals of a good life only through their connection with others and with the environment. The value of *begawe* in the Sasak tradition corresponds to the principle of *Li* in Confucianism: both require obedience to moral norms and active participation in collective work for the sake of social order. Likewise, the value of solidarity in *ngemalem* parallels *Ren*, as both regard empathy as the foundation of moral action. In the ecological dimension, both traditions recognize the interdependence between human beings and nature, positioning them as partners whose relationship must be preserved for the sustainability of life.

Nevertheless, there are differences in emphasis and character. The Sasak proverb is more deeply rooted in the communal agrarian experience, such as working together in cultivating the fields or the custom of supporting one another during difficult times. As a result, the values expressed are highly concrete, practical, and closely tied to everyday life. In contrast, Confucianism articulates similar values through more systematic moral-philosophical concepts, such as *Li*, *Ren*, and *He*, which not only regulate social behavior but also embody a broader cosmic ethical structure.

Both traditions equally emphasize the importance of relationships, togetherness, solidarity, and harmony with nature. Both the Sasak tradition and Confucianism reject individualistic attitudes and view human beings as creatures who can only live well when connected to others and their surrounding environment. The difference lies in their expression: Sasak values emerge from everyday life practices, such as working together and mutual assistance during hardship, making them more concrete and immediate. Confucianism, on the other hand, conveys similar values through more systematic philosophical concepts such as *Li*, *Ren*, and *He*, which are more structured and abstract. Thus, the underlying foundation is the same; only the mode of expression differs.

Interpretation of the proverb "Lemah Pade Begawe, Urip Pade Ngemalem"

The proverb *"lemah pade begawe, urip pade ngemalem"* is a distinctive expression of the Sasak people that reflects an agrarian worldview, in which land (*lemah*) is understood not merely as an economic resource but also as a symbol of shared life. Literally, the proverb means "the land is worked together, and life is lived by helping one another." This expression emerges from the historical experience of the Sasak community, particularly within agricultural traditions, where fieldwork, planting seasons, and harvests could only be successfully achieved through collective labor.[1] In this context, land becomes both the foundation of human livelihood and a spiritual space that unites human beings with nature and with one another. Therefore, this proverb rejects individualism and affirms the importance of a harmonious relationship between human beings, nature, and the Creator.

The philosophical meaning of this proverb is rooted in an ecocentric awareness that human beings do not live above nature, but within an interdependent web of life. The word *lemah* symbolizes the earth as the ontological foundation of human existence, while *pade begawe* signifies a form of collective labor that forms the basis of togetherness. Meanwhile, *urip pade ngemalem* conveys a message of solidarity in facing difficult times, metaphorically described as "night," when an individual requires the presence of the community. This value is reflected in social structures such as *besiru* (mutual assistance in household and agricultural work) and *banjar*

[1] Lalu Murdi, "Spirit Nilai Gotong Royong Dalam Banjar Dan Besiru Pada Masyarakat Sasak-Lombok," Volume 2 Nomor 1, Juni 2018, 40. https://e journal.hamzanwadi.ac.id/index.php/fhs/article/view/1288.

(territorial communities that support one another in various rituals, house construction, places of worship, and moments of grief).[2] In the context of Mandalika ethnoecology, collective work is also understood as part of maintaining ecological balance as well as preserving the "spiritual vitality" of the community. All of this indicates that, in the Sasak worldview, human life is constructed through reciprocal relationships, gratitude, and respect for the land as the source of life.

Dari makna filosofis tersebut lahir sejumlah imperatif moral penting. Manusia dipanggil untuk bekerja bersama dalam mengelola bumi, memelihara tanah dengan penuh hormat, serta menjalani hidup dalam semangat membantu dan menguatkan satu sama lain. *Begawe* menjadi simbol tanggung jawab bersama, sedangkan *ngemalem* merupakan ajakan untuk peduli terutama pada masa-masa tersulit. Nilai-nilai ini bukan hanya relevan bagi masyarakat tradisional, tetapi juga menjadi kritik moral terhadap dunia modern yang kerap terjebak dalam individualisme, konsumerisme, dan eksploitasi alam. Kearifan lokal masyarakat Sasak menunjukkan nilai-nilai universal seperti gotong royong, solidaritas, dan kepedulian sosial yang membentuk karakter kemanusiaan sejati. Dengan demikian, *lemah pade begawe, urip pade ngemalem* dapat dibaca sebagai teks moral yang hidup, yang mengajarkan bahwa kehidupan sejati tumbuh dari kerja kolektif, penghormatan terhadap alam, dan kesediaan merawat sesama; bahwa menjaga bumi berarti menjaga martabat manusia itu sendiri.

Confucian Interpretation

Confucianism, as a teaching that has served as the backbone of East Asian civilization for more than two millennia, can be understood through a core set of interwoven moral values aimed at cultivating virtuous character and achieving a balanced life. According to Men Honghua, a scholar of China's soft power, there are four fundamental values in Chinese culture inherited from Confucianism, namely *he*, *li*, and *ren*.[3] Among these values, *Ren* (humaneness or benevolence) stands as the foundational principle, representing deep compassion and empathy toward others, which serves as the seed for genuine human relationships. In addition, this teaching also addresses the cosmic dimension through *Li* (principle or pattern), which refers to

[2] Lalu Murdi, "Spirit Nilai Gotong Royong, 42-48.

[3] R. Tuty Nur Mutia Enoch Muas, "Konfusianisme Sebagai sabuk pengaman RRT", *Paradigma Jurnal Kajian Budaya* Vol. 10 No. 2 (2020): 209. https://scholarhub.ui.ac.id/context/paradigma/article/1059/viewcontent/uc.pdf

the underlying nature or fundamental order of the universe. By aligning personal moral practice with this cosmic understanding, individuals are invited to achieve *He* (harmony), an ideal state of holistic balance that encompasses not only the self, but also family, community, and nature.[4] This harmony is realized as a form of coherence that still respects differences, a principle known as "harmony without uniformity.

***Ren* (*humaneness, empathy, compassion*)**

The concept of *Ren* in the Confucian tradition can be understood as a human attitude or disposition characterized by attentiveness toward others and a desire to do good while adhering to proper moral principles. In this sense, *Ren* is often associated with compassion, kindness, and mutual respect. This concept is highly important in social life because it demonstrates how human beings can live in harmony and support one another, thereby creating a peaceful and understanding environment. The text explains that *Ren* is closely related to the effort of balancing oneself with others, as well as expressing compassion and virtue as the foundation of good and harmonious social relationships. Moreover, *Ren* is not only about personal moral behavior but also serves as a guiding principle in fulfilling social and political responsibilities. In the Confucian tradition, individuals are expected to continuously cultivate *Ren* in order to build a just and harmonious society.[5] For example, a leader who embodies *Ren* will treat their people with fairness and care, rather than merely exercising authority without concern for their welfare. Thus, *Ren* is about becoming a compassionate and responsible human being toward others and the surrounding world. This concept teaches that harmony and peace are not created solely through formal rules, but through sincere attitudes and actions grounded in compassion.

Ren is the core of Confucian teaching, emphasizing the importance of building harmonious relationships between individuals and society through good intentions and virtuous actions.[6] A person who possesses *Ren* will always strive to understand and respect others, as well as uphold moral principles such as justice and virtue. In practice, *Ren* encourages individuals to act with humility and compassion toward

[4] Hartati, Dewi. "Konfusianisme dalam kebudayaan Cina modern", *Paradigma Jurnal Kajian Budaya* Vol. 2 No. 2 (2012): 176. https://scholarhub.ui.ac.id/context/paradigma/article/1351/viewcontent/uc.pdf.

[5] Li, Chenyang. "The Confucian ideal of harmony", *Philosophy East and West* Vol. 56, No. 4 (Oct., 2006): 583-603. https://www.jstor.org/stable/4488054.

[6] Li, Chenyang. "The Confucian ideal of harmony", *Philosophy East and West* Vol. 56, No. 4 (Oct., 2006): 583-603. https://www.jstor.org/stable/4488054

others, thereby contributing to a more peaceful and orderly world. This is because *Ren* functions not only as a personal virtue but also as the foundation of etiquette and social norms that enable society to function harmoniously and complementarily. Thus, in Confucian thought, *Ren* serves as the primary foundation for achieving an ideal society and a world filled with peace.

***Li* (*moral norms, customs, and codes of conduct that sustain harmony*)**

The concept of *Li* occupies a very important and central position within the framework of Confucian thought. Essentially, *Li* is a comprehensive guide that regulates all aspects of social behavior. More specifically, *Li* refers to everything that encompasses proper conduct, appropriate etiquette, and behavioral norms that every individual is expected to observe.[7] The main purpose of all these rules is to preserve and maintain the fragile harmony both within society and in every human interaction.[8] Therefore, *Li* functions as a fundamental teaching that guides individuals to consistently behave politely and show respect toward others. Such conduct must be applied appropriately, in accordance with one's role, social position, and the specific situation being encountered. By consistently practicing *Li*, a person directly contributes to the creation of a peaceful, tranquil, and mutually respectful atmosphere among all members of the community.

More than mere obedience, *Li* is not a set of static or rigid rules. Instead, it is understood as a dynamic and continuous process of learning and self-cultivation. This process of self-development is achieved through open dialogue and practical experiences in everyday life.In a broader sense, especially in a global context, upholding *Li* carries a profound meaning. It requires a willingness to listen attentively to others and to make genuine efforts to understand different cultures, rather than simply holding on to one's own rules and habits. By adopting this inclusive approach, international relations and cultural exchanges can be established more effectively, thereby minimizing the potential for conflict. Thus, the concept of *Li* helps us to recognize that the diversity of the world is a valuable asset that must be respected and protected, rather than ignored, forced to change, or made uniform.

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[7] Yanti, Komang Heri, "Humanisme dalam ajaran Konfusianisme", *Jurnal Widya Katambung* Vol 12 No 1 (2021):62. https://mail.ejournal.iahntp.ac.id/index.php/WK/article/view/694

[8] Tu, Wei-Ming, "Confucian humanism as a spiritual resource for global ethics", *Peace and Conflict Studies:* Vol. 16: No. 1, Article 1, (2009): 1-8. https://nsuworks.nova.edu/pcs/vol16/iss1/1/.

***He* (*Harmony as the goal of social ethics*)**

The concept of *He* in Confucianism can be understood quite simply as a way of thinking that sees human beings, nature, and "Heaven" as interconnected entities that must live in harmony. *He* refers not only to harmony among human beings, but also to harmony with nature and with a greater cosmic order.[9] Modern Confucian thinkers such as Qian Mu, Tang Junyi, and Feng Youlan emphasize that human beings should not position themselves as rulers standing above nature. Instead, humans are part of the same web of life; we are capable of feeling the suffering of other humans, animals, plants, and even inanimate objects, because all originate from the same source of life. Thus, *He* arises from the awareness that we are interconnected with the entire cosmos, and therefore we bear responsibility for maintaining this relationship in harmony. *He* also means that human beings do not become "spiritual" by escaping the world, but rather by engaging deeply with what is closest to life: the body, home, family, community, and environment. In Confucian thought, everyday life itself is already part of a cosmic calling. When people care for their families, maintain their communities, and treat nature with respect, they are participating in the larger process of cosmic transformation. In other words, *He* is a fundamental attitude that enables human beings to build balanced relationships with others, with nature, and with the moral order of Heaven. From these relationships emerges a world that is peaceful, sustainable, and humane.

Philosophical Dialogue: Sasak Proverbs and Confucianism

The philosophical dialogue between the Sasak proverb *"lemah pade begawe, urip pade ngemalem"* and Confucian ethical principles reveals that both originate from the same fundamental awareness: human beings can only become fully human when they live within harmonious relationships. Relationality is not merely a social value, but an ontological foundation concerning how human beings ought to exist in the world.[10] In Sasak wisdom, human existence is always tied to the land on which one stands and the community with which one shares life. Land is not merely an economic

[9] Luque-Moya, Gloria, "Toward a harmonic relationship between humans and nature: A humanist reinterpretation of early Confucian philosophy", *Asian Studies* 11 (3) (2023): 135. https://journals.uni-lj.si/as/article/view/13339

[10] Mathias Jebaru Adon, Charles Virgenius Setiawan, Arnold Suhardi, "Konsep Filsafat Relasionalitas Armada Riyanto sebagai Metode Berfilsafat di Indonesia, Pancasila" *Jurnal Keindonesiaan*, Vol. 05, No. 01, April 2025, 3. https://ejurnalpancasila.bpip.go.id/index.php/PJK/article/view/646

resource, but a symbol of life, fertility, and ecological interconnectedness. [11] Meanwhile, a life lived through mutual assistance reflects the reality that human beings never stand alone; rather, they grow and survive through the network of relationships that sustain them. This perspective aligns with Confucian thought, which emphasizes that human beings cannot be understood as isolated individuals, but as relational beings who become themselves through their connections with family, society, and the moral order of the cosmos. Confucianism understands the human person as the center of a moral cultivation process that unfolds through relationships, not outside of them.[12]

This relational awareness shows that both traditions equally reject the individualistic anthropology that has developed in modernity. In Sasak society, collective work in *begawe* is not a secondary activity or merely a practical habit, but a way of life that sustains moral order. A person is considered truly rooted in the community when they are willing to engage in collective labor, whether in cultivating land, building houses, assisting grieving families, or participating in traditional rituals. *Begawe* functions as an ethical arena in which individuals learn responsibility, humility, and the willingness to contribute. Confucius expresses a parallel principle through the concept of *Li*: moral rules, social practices, and cultivated habits that together maintain social harmony. *Li* is not a rigid law, but a way of life that guides individuals to act appropriately according to context, relationships, and social roles. When read together, *begawe* and *li* reveal a shared ethical pattern, namely that social harmony does not arise solely from external regulations, but from each person's willingness to actively shape communal life through everyday actions.

The dimension of solidarity becomes even more evident when examining the meaning of *urip pade ngemalem*. Here, we find the essence of Sasak humanism in its most concrete form. Living together is not only for times of joy, but especially for moments of hardship. *Ngemalem* describes a vulnerable condition, when a person

[11] Lalu Murdi, "Spirit Nilai Gotong Royong Dalam Banjar Dan Besiru Pada Masyarakat Sasak-Lombok" Volume 2 Nomor 1, Juni 2018, 44. https://e-journal.hamzanwadi.ac.id/index.php/fhs/article/view/1288.

[12] Chenyang Li, "The Confucian Ideal Of Harmony," *Philosophy East & West Volume* 56, Number 4 October 2006, 586-587. https://www.jstor.org/stable/4488054

falls into difficulty and requires a helping hand.[13] This value presupposes an inner sensitivity to be present for those who are vulnerable. This understanding is very close to the concept of *Ren* in Confucianism, which many thinkers regard as the core of Confucius' entire teaching. *Ren* refers to sensitivity toward the suffering of others, an inner disposition that makes a person unable to remain indifferent when seeing others in distress.[14] Mencius states that a virtuous person is one who first feels the pain of others' suffering even before that suffering directly affects themselves. In this sense, *Ren* and *ngemalem* share the same ethical vision: that true morality begins with a heart moved by compassion, rather than by rules or self-interest.

The harmony between the two traditions is also evident in how they understand the relationship between human beings and nature. In Sasak wisdom, land (*lemah*) is regarded as a living entity that must be respected. This relationship is not one of domination, but of reciprocity. The land gives life, and humans are obligated to preserve its fertility. This perspective is very close to Tu Weiming's argument on the global ecological crisis as a result of the breakdown of humanity's relationship with the cosmos. Tu emphasizes that the human–nature relationship has lost its spiritual dimension due to the dominance of instrumental rationality and a profit-oriented culture. He stresses that the Earth should be understood as humanity's spiritual home, a space where the human soul, body, and consciousness are rooted. In Confucianism, human beings live within a harmonious cosmic order; moral action is action that aligns with the rhythms of nature. Thus, the concept of harmony in Confucianism is not only social but also cosmological. This awareness meets the ecocentric view of the Sasak people, who believe that damaging the relationship with the land will lead to the breakdown of communal life. Therefore, both traditions, through different paths, teach that the ecological crisis is fundamentally a moral crisis.

From this entire dialogue it appears that both Sasak wisdom and Confucianism are not merely local traditions or cultural heritage, but complex ethical systems that remain highly relevant for the modern world, and both offer a sharp critique of contemporary problems such as extreme individualism, consumerism, ecological

[13] Lalu Murdi, "Sejarah Lokal Dan Pendidikan Karakter (Tinjauan Dalam Kearifan Lokal Masyarakat Sasak Lombok," *Fajar Historia* Volume 1 Nomor 1, Juni 2017, 44. http://e-journal.hamzanwadi.ac.id/index.php/fhs/article/view/580

[14] Tu Weiming, "The Ecological Turn in New Confucian Humanism: Implications for China and the World," *Daedalus*, Vol. 130, No. 4, Religion and Ecology: Can the Climate Change? (Fall, 2001), 246-247. https://www.jstor.org/stable/20027726

degradation, and the weakening of social solidarity. Sasak wisdom reminds us that human life cannot be separated from the land and from others, while Confucianism emphasizes that human beings can only develop through a process of moral cultivation grounded in relationships and virtuous action. By bringing the two together, it becomes clear that harmony is not an abstract ideal condition, but a process that must be built through collective effort, interconnectedness, empathy, and respect for the Earth. In the context of the global ecological crisis as described by Tu Weiming, these two traditions provide ethical resources that help modern humans reconstruct their relationship with both community and nature as a shared home, and ultimately this philosophical dialogue shows that traditional wisdom still holds transformative power in addressing the challenges of our time, especially when read through a mutually enriching cross-cultural perspective.

Relevance For Modern Life

Individualism and Solidarity

In the modern era, which is strongly influenced by currents of individualism, the Sasak proverb *"lemah pade begawe, urip pade ngemalem"* together with the Confucian teaching of *Ren* (empathy) emphasizes the importance of collective work and care for others. Mutual cooperation and social solidarity serve as a counterbalance to a lifestyle that often distances individuals from their communities. This proverb reminds us that a person's success is never achieved alone, but is always connected to the support of others. In everyday life, this is evident in community traditions of mutual assistance during celebrations, house construction, or when facing economic difficulties. The Confucian principle of empathy reinforces the awareness that human beings cannot live solely by prioritizing themselves, but must place themselves within relationships of mutual support. Therefore, the value of togetherness becomes a moral safeguard that prevents individuals from falling into loneliness and moral alienation.

Ecological Crisis and the Ethics of Caring for the Earth

In the midst of the global environmental crisis, both Sasak tradition and Confucianism teach an ethics of caring for the Earth. The Sasak tradition emphasizes the importance of protecting and respecting land as the source of life, while Confucianism, through the concept of *He* (harmony), positions human beings as part

of the cosmos whose balance must be maintained. Both traditions offer an ecocentric perspective that rejects the exploitation of nature for mere profit. This message is especially relevant today, as humanity faces environmental destruction caused by industrialization, deforestation, and excessive consumption. Sasak local wisdom, which regards land as the mother of life, reminds us that harming the natural world is equivalent to harming ourselves. Confucianism adds a philosophical dimension by asserting that cosmic harmony can only be achieved if human beings are able to restrain their greed. Therefore, both traditions can serve as a foundation for ecological ethics that encourages sustainable policies, environmentally friendly lifestyles, and a shared awareness of the Earth as a common home.

Social Polarization and the Path of Mediation

In the midst of increasing social polarization and conflict, harmony and solidarity become key mechanisms of mediation. The Sasak tradition, which emphasizes togetherness in both joy and sorrow, aligns with the Confucian teaching of *Li*, which instructs individuals to act in accordance with their social roles and relationships. These values can serve as a foundation for a more peaceful and inclusive society. When political, religious, or ethnic differences trigger tensions, the Sasak sense of togetherness reminds us that human beings remain one large family that must support one another. Confucianism adds the importance of moral order to ensure that social relations are maintained and do not descend into chaos. By integrating these two principles, society can find ways to resolve conflicts through dialogue, deliberation, and respect for shared norms. Their relevance extends to the global level, offering inspiration for a world currently facing extreme polarization

Character Education and the Future Generation

Character education that integrates Sasak local wisdom with Confucian virtues provides space for the emergence of a generation rooted in its own culture while remaining open to universal values. Mutual cooperation, empathy, moral order, and harmony can be incorporated into learning materials to foster social and ecological awareness. In this way, education does not merely produce intellectually capable individuals, but also persons of character who are caring and responsible toward society and the environment. Value-based education of this kind will produce a generation capable of combining modern knowledge with traditional wisdom. They are not only skilled in technology but also possess strong social and ecological

sensitivity. Schools and educational institutions can serve as spaces for forming holistic human beings: knowledgeable, cultured, and ethical. This integration also strengthens local identity so that it can endure amid the pressures of globalization, while at the same time fostering openness to universal values that enrich shared life.

CONCLUSION

From the overall analysis, this study shows that both Sasak proverbs and Confucian teachings are grounded in relational values that emphasize the importance of harmony among human beings and awareness of interconnectedness with the environment. Both traditions view relationships not merely as social bonds, but as ethical spaces in which human beings are formed and called to take responsibility for the consequences of their actions. This similarity demonstrates that, although emerging from different cultural contexts, both traditions ultimately direct attention toward the importance of living in harmony and maintaining balance. However, this study also highlights a clear difference in the way these values are articulated. Sasak proverbs express wisdom in a practical, concrete form that is closely tied to the rhythms of communal life. In contrast, Confucianism develops relational principles through a more philosophical and systematic normative framework. This comparison shows that diversity in modes of expression actually enriches human understanding of how to build ethical and sustainable relationships, both in social and ecological contexts.

Thus, the objective of this research to explore both the points of convergence and divergence in relational values, philosophical meanings, and ecological perspectives—has been achieved. The findings indicate that Sasak local wisdom and classical Confucian ethics both offer moral orientations that are relevant to the modern context, especially in the face of relational and ecological crises. Ultimately, both traditions remind us that caring for nature is not merely an ethical choice, but a moral imperative that requires collective engagement. The balance of life can only be restored when humans recognize that harmony with others and harmony with nature are two aspects of the same responsibility a responsibility that must be lived together, now and into the future.

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