

The Sustainability of the Jingitiu Belief Tradition in Indonesia: Challenges and Future of the Ancestral Religion of the Sabu Tribe in East Nusa Tenggara

Muhammad Dachlan¹, Mustolehudin^{2*} , Wardiah Hamid³, Fauziah⁴, Novita Siswayanti⁵, Amiruddin⁶

¹ National Research and Innovation Agency, Jakarta, Indonesia, muba258@brin.go.id, ORCID: <http://orcid.org/0009-0008-5648-3706>

² National Research and Innovation Agency, Jakarta, Indonesia, ORCID: <http://orcid.org/0000-0001-7261-5248>

³ National Research and Innovation Agency, Jakarta, Indonesia, ward006@brin.go.id, ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0009-0007-8025-1932>

⁴ National Research and Innovation Agency, Jakarta, Indonesia, fauz018@brin.go.id, ORCID: <http://orcid.org/0009-0009-2612-6473>

⁵ National Research and Innovation Agency, novi037@brin.go.id, ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0009-0006-3793-2575>

⁶ National Research and Innovation Agency, amir013@brin.go.id, ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-2654-0809>

*Corresponding Author: must014@brin.go.id

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ABSTRACT

This paper examines the resilience and sustainability of Jingitiu, the ancestral religion of the Sabu tribe on Sabu Island, Indonesia. Despite significant decline since the 19th century due to conversions to Christianity and Islam, Jingitiu persists. Using a case study approach with data from interviews, observations, and literature review, this research identifies key factors for its endurance. These include the continuation of ritual practices, performing arts, and the economic empowerment of the indigenous community. The study also explores socio-cultural relationships between Jingitiu, Muslim, and Christian communities. Legally recognized by the Indonesian Constitutional Court, Jingitiu demonstrates how an ancestral faith can endure by asserting its identity and adapting to modernity. It plays a vital role in preserving local cultural heritage, thereby reinforcing national identity.

Keywords: Sustainability, ancestral religion, Sabu tribe, Nusantara civilization

INTRODUCTION

This study explores the resilience of Jingitiu, the ancestral religion of the Sabu ethnic community on Sabu Island, Indonesia. Despite historical pressures that led many followers to register as Christians for administrative purposes, Jingitiu maintains 5,087 adherents. Legally recognized since a 2016 Constitutional Court ruling, the faith is central to Sabu identity (Sari 2022). The research aims to uncover the strategies through rituals, arts, and traditions (Duggan 2009) that have enabled Jingitiu to endure and adapt, contributing to understanding indigenous cultural sustainability (Tahara, Isra, and Tiro).

Indonesia's ancestral religions, like the Jingitiu belief of the Sabu people, represent invaluable but endangered intangible cultural heritage (Duggan 2010). Despite mass conversions to global religions in the past, Jingitiu has survived as the Sabu community's oldest faith. It is more than a spiritual practice; it functions as vital socio-cultural capital, conveying local values and fostering community harmony, thus demonstrating its profound resilience (Mustolehudin et al. 2024).

While existing research on the Sabu tribe's Jingituu belief has explored specific cultural elements such as the *hengad'do* gesture, ethical values (Bani 2022), and ritual practices a dedicated study on its overall resilience and sustainability is absent (Pada 2019). Previous work provides a foundational understanding of its teachings, which emphasize harmony with the creator and the universe, but a comprehensive analysis of the mechanisms enabling its endurance remains unexplored (Rondo and Hudayana 2023).

Supporting research reveals the Jingituu belief is maintained through its daily practice and the preservation of the Sabu language. This language is sustained by ethnic endogamy, daily use, geographic concentration, and oral traditions. Furthermore, Jingituu has demonstrated resilience by adapting alongside other religions, including Christianity, since 1855 (Fakhriati et al. 2023; Soao, Ivana Pascalia & Qisty 2021; Widjaja 2022).

Based on the review of previous works, it is clear that research explicitly addressing how the Sabu community maintains their local traditions, transmits cultural heritage to subsequent generations, and ensures the sustainability of the Jingituu belief has yet to be conducted. Studies focusing on the ritual practices and religious art of the Jingituu faith from the perspective of ancestral religion resilience still need to be completed due to its insufficient. Meanwhile, Christianity has influenced nearly every aspect of the local community in East Nusa Tenggara (Woha 2020). This article aims to fill this gap in the literature, which generally frames local wisdom within the spiritual and cultural context of the Sabu tribe in East Nusa Tenggara.

This article begins with three assumptions. First, as a continuously inherited social practice, the Jingituu belief has simultaneously served as a means to preserve the customs of the Sabu tribe in East Nusa Tenggara, which upholds traditional values such as solidarity and cooperation. Second, the Jingituu belief is estimated to face several challenges, particularly a decline in adherents due to religious conversion. Before becoming the Sabu Raiju Regency, this area was part of Kupang, with approximately 35,000 Jingituu adherents in 2007 (Interview, Titus Duri, 2024). According to current data from the Civil Registration Office, the number of Jingituu adherents is now 5,087. Third, a new accommodative empowerment model based on local wisdom is crucial for the Jingituu community to maintain and preserve their culture.

Maarif (2018) argues that Indonesia's ancestral religions face significant challenges, often being classified as "culture" rather than "religion" due to discriminatory state policies like TAP MPR 4/1978, which forced adherents to adopt a global religion. This political categorization, which frames indigenous practices as animistic or customary, has led to inconsistent recognition and an evolving, contested identity for these belief systems over time (Lamont et al., 2021).

Cultural Resilience in the Context of Ancestral Religion

This study employs cultural resilience theory (Southwick, cited in Tahara et al. (2023) and (Bui et al., 2020) to examine how the Sabu tribe's Jingituu religion endures as an identity marker within a predominantly Christian society. The theory posits that indigenous communities can adapt to external pressures through negotiation and resistance while maintaining core principles. Additionally, community loyalty theory is used to analyze how Jingituu's artistic practices coexist with state-recognized religions on Sabu Island.

This study investigates the resilience of the Sabu indigenous community, who practice the Jingituu belief, applying the concept of cultural resilience (Sihombing et al. 2023). Resilience is defined as a system's capacity to withstand disturbance and maintain function (Gunderson, Allen, and Holling 2012). At a community level, this involves the sustained ability to utilize resources to adapt to and recover from challenges (Pimm 1984), a capacity that operates across individual, familial, and societal levels.

Ungar (2011) argues that four principles form the basis for an ecological interpretation of resilience: decentralization, complexity, atypicality, and cultural relativity. Studies on resilience, such as those by (Masten 2018); (Ungar 2013), show that resilience can be measured at individual, family, and community levels. Similarly, the cultural tradition of Jingituu belief among the Sabu ethnic group in East Nusa Tenggara involves individuals, families, and communities in maintaining and preserving their ancestral religious identity. Ungar (2011) defines resilience as the capacity of individuals to succeed under pressure and as the capacity of individuals and their environments to interact in ways that optimize developmental processes. Individual functioning depends on environmental triggers to determine whether they act as promotive or protective factors (Greenberg 2006).

Panter-Brick (2015) provides a key theoretical framework, defining cultural resilience as an ethnic community's capacity to endure and adapt amidst different religions. Crucially, she frames resilience as a normative concept tied to moral values, not just a functional outcome. Her ethnographic approach emphasizes analyzing the "political economy" of resilience, where individuals navigate oppressive systems like marginalization. This framework will be used to analyze the local traditions, rituals, and spiritual arts of the Sabu ethnic group's Jingituu belief.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This qualitative research focused on the Sabu ethnic group in East Nusa Tenggara (Dillon 2003; Lune, Howard & Berg 2017). The study aims to uncover the religious dynamics of the Jingituu belief system. Its primary objective is understanding this community's religious traditions, rituals, and arts. Key informants in this research include traditional leaders, community figures, cultural leaders, government officials, and family members of the Sabu ethnic group. Data gathered from these informants relate to ancestral religious traditions, their ritual practices, and the spiritual dynamics of their daily beliefs (Benefiel 2005; Benefiel, Fry, and Geigle 2005). This study explores the historical context of daily life and the interactions of the Sabu people with the broader society. Silverman and Patterson (2022) explain that the research involved literature review analysis, document studies, interviews, and direct observation of the Jingituu belief's social practices in the Sabu community's everyday life.

This research was conducted in 2024 and supported by in-depth interview data involving the following key informants.

Table 1 List of Key Informants for the Jingituu Belief System

No	Name	Information
1	Deo Leo	Elders of the Jingituu Belief System
2	Djari Mate	Elders of the Jingituu Customary Law
3	Degi	Head of the Sabu Raijua Village
4	Ina Imelda	Youth of the Jingituu Belief System
5	Benni Deo (Benni Ratu)	Female Elders of the Jingituu Belief System
6	Dedimus	Young Leaders of the Jingituu
7	Nando	Cultural Leaders of the Jingituu
8	H. Yasin	Chair of the Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI) of Sabu Raijua Regency
9	Umbu Remi	Elders of the Jingituu Belief System in Central Sabu
10	Lodimeda Kini	Young Cultural Leaders of the Sabu Tribe
11	Ama Rohi Haba	Young Leaders of the Jingituu Belief System
12	Ama Mirah Darah	Chair of the Jingituu Customary Council in Liae
13	Totimus B Duri	Regional Government Officials of Sabu Regency

Researchers carefully reviewed and analyzed historical documents, interview results, observations, and literature reviews to identify the ancient civilization of the Jingituu belief system. Adopting an iterative approach, the researchers triangulated historical data to ensure validity and reliability (Lune, Howard, & Berg 2017; Miles, M.B, Huberman, A.M, & Saldana 2019). Ethical considerations played a crucial role throughout this research process. Researchers adhered to ethical standards by respecting the cultural sensitivity and ritual traditions of the Sabu tribe in East Nusa Tenggara.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Social History of Indigenous Religion in the Sabu Tribe

The Sabu ethnic group inhabits the Sabu Raijua Regency, an autonomous region on Sabu Island in East Nusa Tenggara, Indonesia. The island's geography, characterized by a dry climate and location in the Savu Sea/Indian Ocean, has shaped its culture, evident in traditional villages like Namata (Kini 2022). Accessible by air and sea, the region is administratively divided into six districts where the Sabu community maintains its distinct identity (Fadhlan 2016).

From a socio-religious historical perspective, the Sabu ethnic group's ancestors were adherents of Jingituu, an indigenous belief system present since the 3rd-4th centuries (Duggan, Geneviève and Hagerdan 2018; Sooi and Qisty 2021). Christianity was introduced in the 19th century by NZG missionaries. Conversion motives included the desire for eternal life, social status, and practical needs like protection during harsh dry seasons when access to clean water was difficult (Yuda 2021). This led to a syncretic spirituality in the region, blending Christian and traditional practices.

Economic factors also undermine their resilience. For example, because the Jingituu people live in the mountains, they face severe challenges when water is scarce. In such cases, they move to urban areas to find water sources, settle there, and leave their traditional villages. This migration often leads them to assimilate with urban communities and eventually convert to Christianity. Most of them are farmers who cultivate fields during certain seasons (Nando, April 2024).

The arrival of Christianity in Sabu has led to significant growth and development in terms of quantity. Even though Christians now constitute a more significant percentage of the population than adherents of the indigenous religion (Jingituu), they continue to practice ancestral customs and traditions. These practices include offering offerings to ancestors' spirits when someone is ill or faces calamities and conducting rituals to determine the causes of diseases. One such ritual involves stabbing a spear into the main post of the house (kerei kepoke) to seek answers from Deo Ama, especially from the spirits of ancestors, whom they consider to hold greater power than themselves.

Since the Dutch colonial period and subsequent times, the number of adherents to the Jingituu belief has dwindled, with many administratively converting to Christianity, Catholicism, and Islam. Titus B. Duri, the assistant to the Regent of Sabu Raijua, explains this phenomenon:

Before becoming Sabu Raijua Regency, this region was part of Kupang. At that time, the Jingituu community numbered approximately 35,000. However, their numbers dwindled following the arrival of Christianity, Catholicism, and Islam (Interview, April 19, 2024).

In addition to the spread of Christianity among the Sabu people, Islam also arrived later. The exact time of Islam's arrival in Sabu is unknown, but it is believed that traders from Sulawesi introduced Islam to the region. It was explained by Haji Yasin, a prominent Islamic figure in Seba-Sabu and the head of the Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI) in Sabu Raijua Regency.

After King Amaniam Jawa died in 1868, his deputy, Ama Abbu Lehi or Abdullah, automatically succeeded him and ruled from 1868 to 1880. King Abdullah converted to Islam after traveling to Makassar to study the religion. Even before King Abdullah's conversion, many Muslim traders from Sulawesi had visited Sabu. However, these traders did not settle on the island; they traveled back and forth between Sabu and their hometowns for trading purposes.

The arrival of Islam in Sabu, brought by traders, was peaceful. These traders even intermarried with the indigenous Sabu people. These intermarriages led to cultural exchanges between the Jingituu belief and Islam. Developing new religions and marriages with the native Sabu people impacted the demographic and social-religious landscape. By 2023, Abrahamic religions had experienced growth, while the Jingituu belief had quantitatively declined. The following data illustrates the religious composition of the Sabu Raijua population based on their faith in God Almighty.

Table 2 Population based on Religion and Beliefs

No	Religion/ Belief	Male	Women	Total
1	Christian	44,329	42,955	87,284
2	Jingituu Indigenous Religion	2,819	2,268	5,087
3	Catholic	1,367	1,357	2,724
4	Islam	454	480	934
5	Hindu	3	2	5
6	Buddhism	1	0	1
7	Confucian	0	0	0
Total		48,973	47,062	96,035

Source: Population and Civil Registration Service of Sabu Raijua Regency 2023

The table above shows that many Sabu still adhere to the original Jingituu belief. Although the number of Christian and Catholic adherents has sharply increased, they maintain their traditions through religious ceremonies, life cycle rituals, and religious arts ingrained in their daily lives. Historically, the ancestors of the Sabu people were followers of the Jingituu belief. The inhabitants of this island refer to their land as Rai Hawu, meaning the Land of Hawu, and they call themselves Do Hawu, meaning the people of Sabu. The Sabu people explain that the island's name originates from Hawu Ga, one of their ancestors believed to be the first to inhabit the island (Sooai et al., 2021). They initially practised the Jingituu belief through various religious rituals. It is supported by the explanation of a young Jingituu leader as follows:

... Jingituu is not merely a culture but a belief system deeply intertwined with the social structure of the Sabu people. Historically, there was no separation between culture, tradition, and the original belief system of the Sabu tribe; they formed a unified whole before external religions arrived in Sabu. For instance, religions introduced by merchants or the Dutch became an abstraction of how they related to the land and the universe, forming an integral part of the Sabu way of life. Thus, referring to Jingituu as a culture might be due to efforts in advocating for our brothers and sisters (ketong) to sustain and gain equal recognition for our original belief system (interview with Lodimedda, April 2024).

In line with this explanation, Sabu's religious and belief systems are deeply interconnected like two sides of the same coin. Religion and traditional beliefs form an integral and interrelated unity. Connor et al. (2021) describe this phenomenon as the resilience of individuals, families, and the Jingitui community in maintaining their beliefs amidst the presence of the Abrahamic religion. (Ellis 2017) also supports this view, noting that the Sabu people continually adapt and demonstrate their resilience in integrating and competing with state-recognized faiths in Indonesia.

Patterns of Resilience and Sustainability in the Jingitui Belief System

The resilience and sustainability of the Jingitui community align with Cana's (Ungar 2011) definition of resilience as the ongoing ability of a community to utilize available resources to respond to, withstand, and recover from disasters. Ellis (2017) adds that building community resilience necessitates strengthening six critical assets: social networks, systemic thinking, adaptability, transformation, sustainability, and courage. Applying these theories, we observe that several of these social assets are still present among the current generation of the Jingitui community.

Access to Jingitui Beliefs differs from other religions with sacred scriptures, making ancestral traditions and norms essential for maintaining these beliefs. One of the resilience and sustainability patterns of Jingitui's belief is their collective living arrangements. The Sabu people live in a robust kinship system, frequently meeting and sharing experiences through oral traditions. This kinship system is diligently maintained among them. Wherever they go, their Jingitui identity remains deeply ingrained. These patterns are naturally embedded in their lifestyle, with oral traditions passed down from their elders, providing systematic and memorable guidance on Jingitui beliefs. It aligns with what a young Jingitui leader recently explained.

Therefore, oral tradition is deeply ingrained among the Sabu people, and the only way to access knowledge is through verbal communication with others. The Sabu people do not practice writing because their way of life is highly collective, whereas writing is very individualistic. When someone writes, it is just between the writer and the text. In Sabu culture, oral tradition is immensely significant. It becomes essential when a family member recounts genealogies, as this preserves knowledge and strengthens familial bonds (Lodimeda, April 2024).

Similarly, many young Jingitui who have converted to significant religions in Sabu, such as Christianity and Catholicism, still adhere to the customs and norms of the Jingitui beliefs. Although baptized, they continue practising traditional rituals and maintaining their ancestral customs. They live with a dual identity: administratively, they are registered as Christians or Catholics, but ritually, they remain devout Jingitui adherents. According to Goosen (2014) and Ceurudin (2022, 2023), this dual belief system is shared among the Sabu people. They are recognized as having dual faiths, with their official religious status as Christians or Catholics, while continuing to practice Jingitui rituals. This duality has allowed the Jingitui beliefs to persist and thrive continuously. Didimus explains this phenomenon as follows.

..... I attended elementary school in Lia. When I was in elementary school, I could not get a diploma, so I went to Kupang and returned to Sabu. The headmaster was no longer there, so I could not get the diploma. Then, I stayed in the Jingitui community because my parents were still alive. Now, my entire family has converted to Christianity. I converted to Christianity before getting married in 2000 to comply with KTP (ID card) documentation requirements, as the government had mandated that everyone complete their paperwork. Another reason was that marriages could not be officially registered at that time because there were no relevant laws, so we converted to Christianity. Those who hold the title "mone" remain Jingitui adherents. With new rules, their religious authenticity is officially recognized, and they might continue practising their Jingitui beliefs.

Another young leader, Lodimeda, a Jingitui youth pursuing a PhD in the Netherlands, initially practised one of the globally recognized religions in Indonesia before the Constitutional Court's decision No. 97/2016. He eventually decided to convert to the Jingitui faith. Here are Lodimeda's reasons for transitioning from Christianity to the Jingitui faith.

I practised one of the significant religions recognized in Indonesia because I lived abroad. It is not accurate to say I ever indeed joined or left that religion; in my family, my father, mother, and grandmother practised it more as a formality, like going to the civil registry office. It was part of the state's requirements and very administrative. The question of whether they genuinely practised that religion is different. When my father read the Bible or any holy scripture, he understood it on a surface level but did not believe in it because he did not find his name in it. For him, those stories were from another place. He needed the stories of his ancestors, his father, and his grandmother, which he could relate to and believe in. Living outside Sabu left us no choice but to select either Islam or Christianity, especially since we had to go to school. When I returned to Sabu, I did not worry about these issues because my most appropriate choice was belief in one almighty God (Jingitui).

The resilience and sustainability patterns described above serve as the foundational narrative that allows the Jingitui faith to persist amid the pressures of significant religions and modernization. The simplicity of the Sabu

Island inhabitants, who recognize Jingitiu as their ancestral heritage, reminds them to give each other space to practice their respective faiths. According to Tahara et al. (2023) and Bui et al. (2020), the Jingitiu faith is a unique ancestral religion among the Sabu people. It has endured and marked their identity in a predominantly Christian society. They withstand external pressures and adapt while maintaining their core religious and cultural principles. Jingitiu adherents adapt, negotiate, and resist cultures that do not align with their identity.

Forms of traditions, rituals, and religious arts of the Jingitiu Faith

Ethnic diversity in Indonesia features distinct and unique characteristics in performing life cycle rituals, and the Sabu ethnic group in East Nusa Tenggara is no exception. These life cycle ceremonies hold profound meaning and philosophy. Koentjaraningrat (2002) explains that the sequence of ceremonies throughout the life cycle represents the oldest form of religious activity in human culture and is crucial in many religions, including the Jingitiu belief system. These ceremonies encompass significant events such as marriage, birth, and death. Ekowati (2008), citing Koentjaraningrat (1984), identifies seven universal elements in every culture: language, knowledge system, social organization, life equipment and technology, livelihood system, religious system, and arts. Sedyawati (2006) divides life cycle ceremonies into three major stages: (1) birth, (2) marriage, and (3) death.

The following is a life cycle ceremony in the Jingitiu belief, practiced continuously and preserved by the Sabu ethnic group.

Marriage

The marriage system among the Sabu ethnic group, who predominantly follow the Jingitiu belief, is unique in its implementation. The traditional elders conduct the wedding ceremonies, and as part of the broader Indonesian society, marriage registrations are now accommodated by the state. Regarding this, the assistant to the Regent of Sabu Raijua stated:

For civil services, when a member of the Jingitiu community gets married or passes away, the Regent issues a death certificate on the same day. When I served as the sub-district head of Raijua, I gathered Jingitiu leaders to preserve traditional villages (interview with Timotus, April 2024).

The following is a detailed explanation of the marriage system in the Sabu community. A young man or woman, known as *kepai*, ready for marriage, can be recognized by their physical characteristics or the way a ready-to-marry girl adorns herself, referred to as *pana na'i* (tobacco heat), meaning she has great attraction. Children born outside of marriage are called *ana pa amu* (children at home) or *ana bui pake pue* (children who fell from the tree). During the marriage proposal, a group from the groom's side, led by a spokesperson called *mae* or *maiki* (the father's older or younger brother of the groom), visits the bride's house. This discussion is called *pek* (talking to each other). Suppose the relationship between the prospective bride and groom is already known to both parties, commonly *manang*. In that case, this conversation is usually a formality referred to as "*pedai pe peho'o*" (mutual agreement conversation). During the visit, the groom's side brings betel nut, known as *rikenana*, as a symbol of the marriage proposal. If the proposal is accepted, the bride's parents will chew the betel nut, symbolizing the initial bond for the marriage of both parties' children. At this time, the "price" (*kebue*) is typically discussed, although this is often preliminary, and the groom's side mainly listens to the explanations provided by the bride's side.

The next *pele*, *ukenana ae* (large betel nut), involves the groom's family bringing a pig, referred to as *wawi rukenana ae*, step to the bride's family. This pig is accompanied by the official "price" given to the bride's family. It is at this stage that their respective families officially represent the couple. Government intervention in marriage matters has become more common. For instance, both parties must report their intentions to the authorities immediately after completing the "*pele*" stage. A series of formal questions are then posed to them, including inquiries about the couple's willingness to marry (out of love or coercion), the groom's ability to provide for his wife, and the bride's desire to advise and support her husband. This new practice has shifted village-level officials' responsibilities to higher administrative levels, such as the sub-district assistant (*fetov*).

After reporting to the authorities, the ceremony called *pemaho rukenana ae* or *rewaho kenoto* (inserting the *kenoto*, a small cloth used for carrying betel nut, areca nut, and lime) is conducted. It begins with the groom's family delivering a pig to the bride's parents in the morning. The groom, accompanied by his peers (*ngalai*), enters the bride's house and hangs the *kenoto* on the central pillar (*tan dun*). At this moment, the bride, surrounded by her female peers, is seated on the floor. Thus, the marriage ritual for the Sabu community is completed.

Pregnancy Ceremony

After a young Sabu couple marries, they typically have children. There are specific behaviours that expectant mothers must follow during pregnancy, including dietary restrictions. For example, pregnant women are advised against eating *hengle* and *ketiki* fish because they have spines and scales. Similarly, shellfish are avoided to prevent

difficult labour. Additionally, pregnant women are forbidden from riding horses, laughing at people with cleft lips or other physical deformities, and cutting the legs of dogs or chickens to prevent their babies from being born with similar deformities or physical issues. If a pregnant woman goes out at night, her belly must be protected with specific items like a knife, a horn comb, or an egg to ward off evil spirits (wango or demons). Other protective items include specific fruits, nails, and combs to keep away putiana (kuntilanak, a local ghost).

Following the marriage and subsequent pregnancy, the husband, as the baby's father, must also observe several prohibitions. For instance, he should avoid digging graves or standing by an open grave, believed to anger ancestral spirits. He must not cut his hair to prevent the child from falling ill, avoid working in places with many trees to prevent illness from tree spirits, and not stay away from home for too long to ensure his wife has an easy delivery. Additionally, he should not donate clothes or money, which is customary. When attending a funeral, he should refrain from eating the meat of animals slaughtered during the funeral of someone who died under unnatural circumstances (such as falling from a tree, drowning, being crushed, dying in childbirth, or suicide) to avoid his child meeting a similar fate. At the three-month stage of pregnancy, the couple performs a ritual that involves sacrificing two pigs. The most revered parts, such as the heart (die), liver (ade), head (katu), and ribs (rukabi), are offered to the ancestors and placed on the taru (a ceremonial post in the house) to invite ancestral spirits to bless the unborn child. This ritual is known as Happo Kebake (welcoming the belly). From the seventh month of pregnancy, the expectant mother bathes with water mixed with medicinal herbs prepared and stored in a cooking pot. During this time, she prepares herself for the upcoming childbirth.

Childbirth Rituals

Childbirth is a critical moment, not only for the mother but also for the newborn. However, this critical nature is temporary as the situation evolves and eventually returns to normalcy. This transition is reflected in the specific rituals and behaviours associated with childbirth. Unlike other ceremonies, the birth ritual does not involve elaborate ritualistic expressions. Nevertheless, like other life-cycle ceremonies, the birth ritual underscores the maternal lineage. The birthday is called Lodo Kiri pana kelae (the day of the hot goat), per the ceremonies the parents must perform. On this day, a goat decorated with betel leaves and areca nuts as its necklace is brought to the maternal home, where it is shared and consumed. This act signifies the reinforcement of the maternal lineage, albeit within the immediate and most respected circle. The newborn (especially the firstborn) must pass through this "hot gate" before entering the new environment.

The critical situation at birth is further addressed through the ritual of cutting the umbilical cord. Before cutting, the cord is rubbed with ginger and ash (awu menga'a = abu "rakus") which is burned and used as a protective measure. The placenta and umbilical cord are placed in an oko pana (hot container) container before hanging on a tree branch. On the 15th day, a ceremonial offering known as nga'a dabu kelae (meal to close the gate) or tabu ki'i wie deo kelaha rou (ritual of sacrificing a goat for deo kening butu) occurs. Food is presented in an oko (now a container of oil rather than the traditional oko pana). It concludes the birth ritual, after which the baby is fully recognized as a member of the maternal family (and paternal if applicable) along with siblings. The baby is also named before the placenta and umbilical cord are hung. On this first day, lontar ru jiu (palm leaves for bathing) is prepared for a symbolic bath known as doka jiu (bath garden).

The second day opens opportunities for broader relations involving extended family members and maternal kin. On this day, a ceremonial hearth known as rao pana (hot hearth) is prepared. This hearth is used for cooking food for the ceremony, which includes members of the maternal lineage (ana ina). Both parents' families visit with gifts, such as oko being (gifts). Preparing ingredients for cooking is part of this ritual activity.

On the third day, the ritual and activities known as kopi ana (welcoming the child) occur. This ceremony focuses on the baby and establishes relations between groups and involved parties. The ceremony is centred around the baby, emphasizing the maternal side. The arrangement and placement of each element of the ceremony—such as the location of the hearth, the place for hair shaving, the position of the mortar, and the bamboo ladder symbolically leaning against the roof—are situated around the women's area and the house (wui). Meanwhile, certain ceremonial materials are stored under the house or in the same wui venue.

In this ceremony, the baby is carried in and out of the house through the wui door by a female caretaker, the se ana ina group, and the mother. Ideally, the baby's sister, banni kerame, does this. The elements used in this series of ceremonies symbolize the good wishes desired for the baby. For instance, applying chewed Chinese bidara leaves and roasted coconut to the baby's body symbolizes a hope that the baby will be protected from various diseases. Similar intentions are expressed through red chilli, nails, wa wui (weights of tala and tiwah, snails or stones), red onions, and forest betel branches. Most of the ceremonial materials are discarded at the place where the placenta and umbilical cord were previously hung. This stage symbolizes transitioning from a critical situation to a safe and normal one, from pana (hot) to meningi (cool).

During these hapo ana days, social relations between individuals and groups are strengthened and maintained. All parties who received contributions in the past and those conducting this ceremony must provide reciprocal contributions. In this way, their relationships are preserved and reinforced. Each contribution received in connection with the birth is promptly collected through the institution called Pebale Pai (returning the woven container for food). Animals contributed by guests are then slaughtered, and part of the meat is returned to the contributor. Thus, pebale pai expresses gratitude for the appreciation and attention and reinforces the existing relationships. The stable transition from a critical to a normal situation is marked on the fourth morning when the baby's mother, accompanied by several members of the se ana-ina, goes and immerses herself in the river.

Bathing Ritual

This bathing or baptism ceremony is the only ceremony in the life cycle events, performed by every family in each rai simultaneously throughout Sabu. It connects the life cycle ceremonies with the annual cycle ceremonies. On the 13th day of the month of Daba, the Pejio ai Daba ceremony is conducted (pejio means bathing; ai means water; daba is the month's name). This annual bathing ritual must be performed during this time. The day before, the baby's or child's mother gathers young betel nuts, betel leaves, and young coconut leaves to distribute to several family members, who are known as Banni Kerame (the baby's caretaker at birth, the mother's female sibling (mother of the mother)), Banni Tabu Dilu (the person who pierces the baby's ears, the mother's female sibling), and Mone Dagu Lango (the mother's people). These individuals play crucial roles in the three birth ceremonies. However, the daba bathing ceremony differs in its execution depending on whether the child is born to a married couple (ana nga ama – a child with a father) or a child born to an unmarried woman or a widow (ana mobani wue – a child of the woman herself) or ana p amu – a child in the house).

Death Ritual

Everyone will inevitably experience death, including those who follow the Jingituu belief system within the Sabu tribe. The death ritual for adherents of this belief system differs from other customs across Indonesia. Before being buried, the deceased is given coins placed on their head and mouth. It provides a provision to ensure they reach their final destination (Kini 2022). In the Jingituu belief system, the deceased is referred to as made. According to Sabu beliefs, death is when an individual returns to the Creator (Deo Ama) to join their ancestors. For those who still adhere to traditional customs, death is a profoundly significant process. According to Padegi, several rituals must be performed for the deceased.

For those who pass away, there are several ritual processes that the surviving family members must perform. These rituals ensure that the deceased can peacefully and safely transition to the spiritual realm. There are two types of death: made nata (sweet death) and made haro (salty death). Made nata refers to a natural death caused by an illness called hagu, where the person passes away peacefully, following the ancestral tradition (Adda). In contrast, made haro refers to a death caused by an accident or suicide (meda reka) (interview, April 2024).

Several specific ceremonies must be conducted during the death rituals of the Sabu tribe. These rituals include 1) the Huhu Kiebie Ritual, 2) the Pemau Do Made Ritual, and 3) the Ru'Ketu Ritual. The Huhu Kiebie Ritual involves recounting the family lineage (ancestry). The person who performs the Huhu Kiebie is naturally or innately capable of doing so, often called possessing a gift or grace.

According to Dajri Mate, the Huhu Kiebie ritual is typically performed by two or more individuals. During the lamentation of the deceased, those performing the Huhu Kiebie are wrapped or covered with a cloth called a blanket. In the Huhu Kiebie, the lineage recited includes maternal and paternal lines. The recitation of the lineage is usually extensive, starting from the deceased and tracing back to the earliest known ancestors (Interview with Dajri Mate, April 2024).

Only some are permitted to perform the Huhu Kiebie, which involves reciting the family lineage when executing this ritual. Those who attempt to recite the lineage without accurate knowledge may encounter misfortune or harm. The next ritual is Pemau Do Made. This ritual takes place after various death rites, including the burial ceremony, and signifies that the family's obligations do not end with the burial of their deceased relative. The bereaved family must perform additional rituals to ensure that the deceased's spirit can peacefully reach the afterlife. The deceased's soul is believed to ascend to heaven or paradise only after the purification ritual, Pemau Do Made, has been performed.

The next ritual is Ra' Ketu. If a Sabu person dies outside the island of Sabu, a piece of their hair is brought back; nowadays, a photo or clothing can also be used. It is done to inform the family in Sabu that one of their members has passed away. In Sabu culture, every individual belongs to the land of Sabu, and wherever they travel, they are obliged to return to their homeland. The retrieval of Ra' Ketu is conducted using traditional rituals.

The Sabu community was once predominantly adherents of the Jingitiu faith. After conversions to Christianity and Catholicism, the death rituals adapted to the new religions they embraced. For instance, when a Jingitiu adherent dies, there are specific death rituals for handling the body that have not yet embraced Christianity. Regarding this, Mirah Dara explains as follows:

In the death rituals for those who have not converted to Christianity, the deceased is typically provided with a 50-rupiah coin to use "in the afterlife." Additionally, the seating position of the deceased is significant: men are positioned facing west, while women face east. The deceased is tied with a rattan rope, wound to the left, which is nine arm spans long (one arm span equals the width of two extended arms), symbolizing the umbilical cord. When the burial is about to take place, the rope is loosened to resemble a baby in the womb. The grave is round and lined with a mat. The burial must be performed at 1 PM. That evening, a Keleku ceremony (a thanksgiving ritual) is held immediately (Interview with Ama Mirah Dara, April 2024).

In the death ritual, the treatment of the deceased varies between men and women, especially concerning the shroud. If a man dies, he is wrapped in a shawl; if a woman dies, she is wrapped in a sarong and must wear traditional clothing, not attire from prominent figures. Additionally, the number of clothes or sarongs given to the deceased must be odd (Interview with Degi, April 2024).

In Sabu culture, if the husband of a sister dies, following the burial ceremony, the sister's brother or the wife of the deceased may request to take their sister back home with them. However, if the children disagree, they may say, "Mama's milk has not dried up yet, so we still want Mama to stay with us," implying that they still need their mother's care and affection. The family of the deceased husband might respond, "We took her (the mother/wife) with respect, so we cannot let her go just because we are facing challenges and loss." This practice is mandatory as it is a customary law.

Cycle of Time

Understanding time in Sabu culture is intricately linked to observing natural phenomena, particularly the moon. A month is viewed as a complete cycle of time, beginning with the day the moon rises in the west. This cycle proceeds through its first half until the full moon appears in the east, known as Waru pa dida (the moon above) or keha. The second half of the cycle starts on the day after the full moon, lasting approximately 15 days, and is called wane pa da'i (the moon below) or hape. A year comprises nine such cycles, consisting of half cycles within one season, followed by half cycles of the months in the subsequent season.

In Liae, a large cycle lasts seven years; in Haba (Seba), it spans nine years; and in Dimu (East Seba), it lasts six years. Each major cycle comprises seven "Tou" (years) cycles. Each annual cycle consists of two sequences of seasons, each lasting half a year. Each half-year cycle contains six lunar cycles, including the cycle before the full moon, lasting 15 days. The Sabu community uses these cycles to guide agricultural activities and other rituals.

Pehera Jara Dance

The Pahere Jara dance originated within the Sabu community, specifically in the village of Wadualla in the Liae district. This dance emerged from joy and pride over significant achievements, such as successful harvests. The community typically celebrates and gives thanks for such successes through the Pahere Jara dance. According to Ama Haba, the Pahere Jara dance has its roots in Liae, as explained in the following account.

Ama Haba explains that the Pahere Jara dance first appeared in the Liae area, now known as the Liae District. At that time, a plague of locusts attacked the plantations or farms of the Liae community, causing significant anxiety due to the damage inflicted on their crops. In response, the traditional elders of that era took action to drive away the pests by dancing and using horses as part of the process. This dance became the Pahere Jara (Horse Dance) (Interview, April 2024).

The Pahere Jara dance is performed to drive away locusts. This dance involves a single horse equipped with bells on its legs and decorations on its head, accompanied by gong and drum music. Regarding this, Ama Mirah Dara explains:

The Pahere Jara dance is a traditional performance intended to drive away locusts that damage the crops of the Liae community. It is derived from the dances known as D' ab' a (the moon D' ab'a) and Hole (the moon Bangaliwu). Everyone in Liae does not perform this dance, but it is specifically carried out by men who own horses. According to Mabunga, the Pahere Jara dance was first performed in response to a locust infestation that ruined the community's crops. During that time, harvests were frequently damaged, prompting men to ride their horses around a sacred place or a tree considered holy by the Sabu community. The horses were adorned with belts around their necks and legs. After circling the holy tree, the men would rotate around the fields until the locusts were driven away, thus saving the crops (Interview, April 2024).

Each year, the community performs the Pahere Jara dance. This activity aims to prevent the recurrence of locust infestations. According to both informants, the Pahere Jara dance drives away locusts that attack the agricultural fields of the Liae community. The dance is performed on horseback, with the horses adorned with belts around their necks and giring on their legs. Only men who own horses are permitted to perform the Pahere Jara dance.

Kudji Ratu (68, adat elder) explains that the purpose of the Pahere Jara dance is to repel locusts. The dance is performed on horses equipped with belts and giring on their legs, with the giring specifically intended to drive away the locusts.

Pedo'a Dance

The Pedo'a dance is a traditional mass dance originating from the Sabu ethnic group in Sabu Raijua Regency, located in the southern part of East Nusa Tenggara Province. This dance embodies values, artistry, and moral teachings for the Sabu-Raijua community. The Pedo'a dance was initially performed to establish peace and end tribal wars on the island of Sabu-Raijua. Alongside the Pedo'a dance, Pe'iu manu (cockfighting) was also held as a substitute for tribal conflicts. The Pedo'a dance is performed massively, with participants including youths and elders, men and women, forming a circle. The dancers hold hands with those beside them, creating a cohesive group.

Each participant in the Pedo'a dance holds hands with the person to their left and right while following the movement of their feet, which rotate clockwise. The dance accompanies the rhythmic sound of feet bound with ketupat filled with green beans, creating a harmonious motion and sound. It is accompanied by songs and lyrics that convey values of goodness, moral teachings, warnings, and critiques of deviant behaviour within the community. For the Sabu people, the Pedo'a dance holds special significance; it brings them closer to God and expresses gratitude for the blessings bestowed by God. This dance is a traditional ritual the Sabu community performs, often at the end of the rainy season and every moon night.

In addition to being used for spiritual ceremonies, dance also serves as a medium for fostering unity and togetherness. It is reflected in the Pedo'a dance, where participants gather and dance together regardless of gender or social status. The Pedo'a dance is led by a singer known as the Mone Pe'jo, who sings the verses and directs the dance from start to finish. The Pedo'a dance includes various movements, each with its meaning, such as forward and backward steps, foot stomps, rapid foot movements, and other variations that enhance the artistic value of the dance. When the Pedo'a dance is part of a traditional ceremony or to welcome guests, the dancers wear traditional Sabu attire. However, dancers may wear casual clothing when the Pedo'a dance is performed solely for entertainment.

The Pedo'a dance has been adapted to fit the current pandemic conditions. The dance and accompanying verses vary significantly, with distinct forms including the Sabu Timur, Sabu Seba, Sabu Mesara, Sabu Liae, and Sabu Raijua styles. The differences among these forms lie in the verses and songs, as well as in the specific foot movements and other elements that highlight their unique characteristics. The Pedo'a dance is a cultural heritage of East Nusa Tenggara (NTT) that has gained popularity both within the region and internationally. It has been introduced to Europe as a critical cultural asset in promoting NTT's cultural tourism sector. This initiative aligns with one of the missions of the NTT Governor, which is to enhance tourism development as part of the regional economic growth and to establish NTT as a significant gateway and centre for national tourism development (Kini 2022).

State Support for Indigenous Religion

The resurgence of local religions in Indonesia has garnered domestic and international attention from scholars. An intricate relationship exists between religion, ancestral faith, and the state, each influencing the others. Historically, in Indonesia, ancestral religions have faced discrimination due to the state's definition of religion based on the dominant group's perspective. According to Maarif (2018), the dominant groups in Indonesia have exerted significant influence, mainly through the spread of Islam and Christianity to minority groups or adherents of ancestral religions. Efforts by communities practising traditional beliefs to gain state recognition have been ongoing for a significant period.

Regarding this issue, Joseph Lamont cites the views of Marshall and Sudarto, noting that during a period of acute political instability, the government enacted the 'Anti-Subversion' Law (Anti-Subversion Law 1965), which effectively suppressed unorthodox or minority viewpoints, including religious views. According to the UN Declaration of Human Rights (United Nations 1948), the law was framed to classify any belief system outside the five 'state-sanctioned world religions'—Islam, Christianity, Catholicism, Hinduism, and Buddhism—as 'subversive.' This approach repressed and excluded from the legal framework all Indigenous religions of Indonesia,

which Indigenous groups across the country had historically practised before the arrival of these state-sanctioned religions. By the early 1970s, more than 600 Indigenous religions were practised in Indonesia (Lamont et al. 2021).

After several decades of discriminatory policies, a landmark decision by the Constitutional Court in 2016 (Constitutional Court Decision No. 97/PUU-XIV/2016) legally recognized all indigenous religions in Indonesia. This decision initiated the implementation of less discriminatory administrative, educational, and legal policies for their adherents (Lamont et al., Gradually, members of the belief communities who do not adhere to one of the major religions could be listed in the religion column of their Identity Cards (Kartu Kependudukan or KK). Following the enactment of Law No. 23 of 2006 on Population Administration, they were allowed to fill the religion column with a symbol (-) indicating their belief.

Following the 2016 Constitutional Court decision, the existence of adherents of indigenous beliefs has gained increasing recognition from the state. In 2016, the struggle of belief communities received a significant boost. State services for these communities have improved, as evidenced by the issuance of Constitutional Court Decision No. 97/PUU-XIV/2016. This decision marked a crucial event for social justice for adherents, demonstrating that the state has officially recognized the presence of indigenous beliefs (Ceprudin 2022). The government has formally recognized ancestral religions, including the Jingitui belief and other indigenous beliefs in Indonesia.

The regulation officially protecting ancestral religions (belief in God Almighty in Indonesia) demonstrates the state's recognition of these ancestral faiths. Identity resilience is a tactic employed by indigenous religious leaders to persevere. According to Gunderson (2013), resilience among belief adherents in Indonesia is defined as the ability of a system to maintain its functions and control when faced with disturbances (discrimination). A system's resilience level is determined by the degree of disruption it can tolerate and persist. Meanwhile, (Bhamra, Dani, and Burnard 2011) argue that community resilience is defined as the sustainable ability of a community to utilize available resources to respond to, endure, and recover from various states of adversity.

It is exemplified by the Jingitui community among the Sabu people in East Nusa Tenggara, who strive to maintain their traditions amidst the presence of Abrahamic religions that have spread in the region. The resilience of Jingitui beliefs among the Sabu people is also evidenced by the local government's efforts to incentivise Jingitui traditional leaders. However, only some leaders have been accommodated. This situation is explained by Totimus B. Duri as follows:

Government attention towards the Jingitui community is evident in several forms of support. The government has renovated their traditional places of worship by providing funds of 50 million rupiahs per adat house. Additionally, traditional leaders receive a monthly incentive of 500,000 rupiahs to assist with ritual activities. For civil services, if a Jingitui community member gets married or passes away, a death certificate is issued by the regent on the same day. As a former Subdistrict Head of Raijua, I gathered Jingitui leaders to preserve their traditional village (interview, April 2024).

In addition to government regulations, the resilience and sustainability of the Jingitui belief system among the Sabu ethnic group are also supported by the strength of their ritual traditions and religious art practices. Religious traditions such as the Cium Hidung (Nose Kissing), life cycle traditions, and the Pehera Jara dance are concrete examples of how they have managed to preserve and perpetuate their customs and rituals sustainably.

Ritual and Art of Jingitui Beliefs vs. Abrahamic Religions

As previously discussed, the Sabu ethnic group, particularly those practising Jingitui beliefs, has managed to sustain and pass down their faith through various religious ceremonies inherited and perpetuated through generations. Their adherence to tradition is evidenced by their observance of life-cycle rituals, time-cycle traditions, and artistic celebrations during the full moon, pre-planting season, and post-harvest periods. These practices demonstrate the resilience and commitment of the Sabu community in preserving their beliefs and cultural heritage.

Ellis (2017) argues that building community resilience requires six critical assets for strengthening communities: social capital, systemic thinking, adaptability, transformation, sustainability, and courage. For the Sabu ethnic group practising Jingitui beliefs, their collective and adaptive way of life significantly supports their resilience. Despite external pressures and transformations, their communal lifestyle and kinship ties provide a substantial foundation for maintaining cohesion and continuity in daily life (Masten 2018). The life-cycle patterns of the Jingitui community contribute to their ability to engage with generations who have converted to global religions such as Christianity, Catholicism, and Islam. Their participation in traditional life-cycle rituals exemplifies their commitment to their ancestral beliefs, even as they embrace other religions (Segara et al., 2023). This enduring connection to Jingitui traditions, despite religious shifts, underpins the resilience of their beliefs. Traditional rituals and practices remain integral to their cultural identity and spiritual life.

For instance, adherents of Jingitui continue to perform rituals that involve offering food and incense to their ancestors during holidays and significant ceremonies. This practice not only honours their ancestors but also serves as a means of connecting with their spiritual heritage (Burrows 2019). Also, Jingitui's beliefs emphasize living in

harmony with nature and respecting all life forms. This principle is reflected in their rituals, which often include ceremonies to celebrate seasonal changes and life cycles. Overall, the Jingitiu traditions remain central to the lives of their practitioners, serving as a link to the past and a guide for their future (Vargas 2012).

One of the fundamental principles of Jingitiu's belief is the concept of balance and interconnectedness. Adherents believe that everything in the universe is interrelated and that maintaining harmony is crucial for a fulfilling life (Fry 2003). This belief is evident in their daily activities, where they consistently strive to balance their actions and relationships. Through their rituals and ceremonies, followers of Jingitiu aim to strengthen their connection with nature and foster a sense of unity with all living beings. This deep respect for nature is a spiritual practice and a way of life for those who adhere to the Jingitiu teachings (Widjaja 2022).

Challenges and Threats to the Ancestral Religion of the Sabu Tribe

Despite the deeply rooted beliefs and practices of the Jingitiu faith, the Sabu people's ancestral religion faces several challenges and threats in the modern era. One of the most significant challenges is the increasing influence of Western religions and ideologies, which often clash with the traditional beliefs of the Sabu community (Ly et al. 2023). As more younger members of the tribe are exposed to external influences, there is a risk that the Jingitiu faith may be overshadowed and eventually forgotten. Concerns about the potential extinction of the Jingitiu faith were previously raised by Duggan, who suggested that this belief system might face extinction. However, recent studies reveal that the Jingitiu faith among the Sabu people is, in fact, experiencing a resurgence. This resurgence is attributed to the Indonesian government's official recognition of their existence, as evidenced by the Constitutional Court Decision Number 97/PUU-XIV/2016, which clarified their status in terms of religion and belief in the almighty God.

Another challenge is the rapid pace of modernization and development in the region, which threatens the sacred natural environment of the Sabu community (Basoeki and Puspandari 2018). Deforestation, pollution, and climate change threaten to disrupt the balance that followers of the Jingitiu faith strive to maintain with nature. Despite these challenges, the Sabu people remain steadfast in their commitment to preserving their ancestral religion and way of life. Through education, advocacy, and community engagement, they aim to ensure that the principles of the Jingitiu faith are passed down to future generations.

One of the key initiatives undertaken by the Sabu people is establishing a conservation program to protect their sacred lands and the biodiversity it supports. This program involves collaboration with local governments, environmental organizations, and other stakeholders to implement sustainable practices that minimize human environmental impact. By promoting reforestation, waste management, and renewable energy projects, the Sabu community preserves their cultural heritage and contributes to global efforts to combat climate change (Allam and Jones 2019). Additionally, they are actively engaged in raising awareness about the importance of environmental conservation among their community members and beyond. By fostering a sense of stewardship and responsibility towards nature, the Sabu people are paving the way for a more sustainable future for themselves and future generations.

Their dedication to environmental preservation has garnered recognition and support from various organizations and government agencies. Through partnerships and collaborations, the Sabu people have been able to implement large-scale projects that positively impact the surrounding ecosystems. With innovative approaches and a commitment to sustainability, they exemplify how indigenous communities can lead environmental conservation efforts (Duncan 2018). By continuously inspiring others to follow their example, the Sabu demonstrate that traditional knowledge and modern solutions can coexist to foster a more harmonious relationship between humans and the environment.

Their success in balancing economic development with environmental conservation has garnered attention from researchers and policymakers alike. By sharing their practices and wisdom with the broader community, the Sabu people protect their lands and resources and contribute to the global conversation on sustainability. As more people learn from their example, the potential for positive change on a larger scale will grow exponentially (Laherrère and Sornette 1998). The Sabu people's dedication to their ancestral lands and commitment to sustainable practices serve as a beacon of hope in a world increasingly confronted with environmental challenges.

Research Implication

The research on the resilience and sustainability of Jingitiu practices and beliefs among the Sabu people has broad implications, impacting various aspects of academic research, tradition preservation, and policy development.

1. The success of the Sabu people in preserving, maintaining, and transmitting their cultural heritage can serve as a model for other indigenous communities in Indonesia. Their tradition-based and religious approach

demonstrates that ancestral religions and other faiths can coexist harmoniously, fostering unity in their ritual practices.

2. The Jingitiu belief system among the Sabu people reflects gender equality in the division of labour and traditional practices. It is reflected in life cycle traditions and ritual and artistic practices within their belief system.

3. This study underscores the importance of maintaining local belief traditions (ancestral religions) through sustainable practices, as exemplified by the Sabu community.

4. The Sabu people's ability to adapt and acculturate with other cultures and religions demonstrates that survival strategies can be effectively implemented through the sustainable practice of their cultural traditions. This research guides addressing challenges, barriers, and opportunities related to preserving ancestral belief practices from cultural, social, economic, and environmental perspectives.

5. The study offers valuable insights into ethnographic research on indigenous communities. Observational data and interviews with various community members provide a holistic understanding of social institutions. This research can serve as a model for other scholars investigating ancestral belief traditions within different indigenous societies.

Limitations and Future Research Directions

This study provides valuable insights into developing and preserving Jingitiu traditions and beliefs among the Sabu people in East Nusa Tenggara. However, it is limited to narratives on how the Sabu people maintain various aspects of local traditions, rituals, and religious arts. Further in-depth research is needed to ensure the sustainability of these practices. For instance, future research could explore how traditional institutions on Sabu Island collaborate to build harmony in preserving and promoting their religious traditions through cultural events involving the entire Sabu community.

Future studies could also investigate how the Sabu community innovates in developing natural resources for producing Sabu batik art. Another potential research avenue is an in-depth exploration of various herbal plants used in traditional medicine within the Sabu Raijua Regency. Additionally, collaborative research could examine the educational practices of children of Jingitiu adherents following the implementation of regulations for educational equality, including Christian, Catholic, and Islamic education, in the Sabu community.

CONCLUSION

The resilience of the Sabu people's Jingitiu belief system demonstrates a profound commitment to their cultural and environmental heritage. Their ability to sustain these ancestral practices amidst challenges has garnered global admiration. The Sabu model a holistic approach, integrating traditional knowledge with modern methods, proving that cultural preservation and environmental stewardship are interconnected. By sharing their practices, they have emerged as leaders in sustaining a harmonious relationship between culture and nature.

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