



Jurnal Arsitektur Zonasi

Journal homepage:

<https://ejournal.upi.edu/index.php/jaz>



Cultural Spatial Zoning Model for Neo-Vernacular Resort Design in North Sumbawa

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ABSTRACT

This study develops a Cultural Spatial Zoning model as a conceptual approach to neo-vernacular resort design in North Sumbawa, Indonesia. The research responds to the tendency of contemporary resort development that often prioritizes functional zoning while overlooking cultural spatial structures rooted in local architecture. A qualitative descriptive method was applied through a literature-based approach, focusing on Sumbawa vernacular architecture, spatial hierarchy, cultural values, and resort zoning principles. The analysis explores how traditional spatial arrangements reflect social relations, levels of privacy, and symbolic meanings within the community. The results show that Sumbawa vernacular architecture organizes space into four main layers: public, semi-public, private, and sacred spaces. These layers represent both functional and cultural dimensions. This spatial structure is then reinterpreted into a resort zoning model that integrates cultural values with contemporary tourism needs. The proposed model arranges the resort area into public, semi-public, private, and spiritual zones supported by service areas. This approach shows that cultural spatial structures can become a strong foundation for developing contextually responsive tourism architecture. This study contributes by connecting vernacular spatial knowledge with contemporary design practice and offers a more context-sensitive approach to resort development.

ARTICLE INFO

Article History:

Submitted/Received 23 Mar 2026

First Revised 5 April 2026

Accepted 27 May 2026

First Available online 1 June 2026

Publication Date 1 June 2026

Keywords:

Cultural spatial zoning;
Neo-vernacular architecture;
Resort design;
Spatial hierarchy;
Sumbawa.

1. INTRODUCTION

Coastal-based tourism and local culture are increasingly gaining attention in architectural and regional planning studies because they play a crucial role in regional economic development as well as the preservation of place identity (Stamatiou, 2024). In Indonesia, many tourist areas are developing rapidly but often experience architectural homogenization due to the dominance of global design approaches. This phenomenon indicates that the development of tourist destinations that do not consider local character can lead to the loss of a region's spatial identity. Various studies show that integrating local character into architectural design, particularly through vernacular architecture and regionalism, can strengthen the sense of place and enhance the quality of the tourist experience. (Budiarto Amiuza, 2017; Homepage & Made Bayu Wisnawa, 2024; Nugroho et al., 2023; Solikhah & Fatimah, 2020; Suryawan & Permatasari, 2018)

Northern Sumbawa is known for its rich natural and cultural landscapes and is emerging as a coastal tourism destination (Aprilia, 2021; Homepage & Made Bayu Wisnawa, 2024; M. Nur Febriansyah et al., 2023). This region boasts a rich coastal ecosystem, volcanic landscapes, and a local cultural heritage reflected in the traditional architecture of the Sumbawa people (Stamatiou, 2024; Syahada & Widyaningsih, 2024). The increase in the number of tourists has driven the demand for accommodation facilities, such as resorts, that not only offer comfort but also reflect the local cultural identity (Homepage & Made Bayu Wisnawa, 2024). In practice, however, many resorts still adopt a generic design approach that lacks contextual relevance.

Vernacular architecture has evolved in response to environmental conditions, social systems, and cultural values passed down through generations, so that its spatial organization reflects the ecological adaptations and social structures of the community (Martin et al., 2014; Wazir & Indriani, 2020). In many studies, spatial organization is structured in layers, progressing from public spaces to private spaces based on levels of accessibility and social function. In the context of Sumbawa, the traditional spatial organization of structures such as stilt houses and the Istana Dalam Loka demonstrates a clear division of space between public, family, and private areas (Budiarto Amiuza, 2017; Etnosains et al., 2024). This structure reflects both the social system and adaptation to the tropical environment.

Cultural values play a significant role in the formation of spatial organization, including spatial orientation, relationships between spaces, and symbolic functions. From the perspective of the cultural production of space, space is a social construct influenced by cultural values and societal practices (Martin et al., 2014; Sholihah, 2024a). Studies of vernacular architecture show that cultural values directly influence the spatial configuration and orientation of buildings (Ratodi et al., 2024; Vellinga, 2013; Wazir & Indriani, 2020). In the context of contemporary architecture, particularly resort design, the integration of cultural values is essential for creating spaces that are not only functional but also contextually relevant and imbued with a strong local identity, as spatial arrangements rooted in cultural values have been shown to strengthen a sense of place, enhance the quality of the user experience, and maintain continuity between social practices and the built environment (Martin et al., 2014; Nugroho et al., 2023; Sholihah, 2024a; Stamatiou, 2024; Syahada & Widyaningsih, 2024).

Spatial zoning is a key strategy in resort planning for organizing the distribution of activities, enhancing comfort, and managing visitor flow (Kurniawansyah et al., 2023; Nugroho et al., 2023; Suryawan & Permatasari, 2018). Generally, zoning consists of public, semi-public, private, and service zones. The public zone includes the reception area, the semi-public zone includes recreational facilities, while the private zone includes guest

accommodations (Suryawan & Permatasari, 2018; Syahada & Widyaningsih, 2024). However, most zoning approaches still focus on functional aspects and have not yet integrated cultural values as the basis for spatial organization.

Table 1. A Synthesis of Previous Research on Vernacular Architecture, Neo-Vernacular Architecture, and Resort Zoning

Author	Research Focus	Main Contributions	Limitations
(Budiarto Amiuza, 2017)	The Semiotics of Traditional Sumbawan Architecture	Explaining the symbolic meaning of space in traditional architecture	Has not yet been integrated into the design of the tourist area
(Etnosains et al., 2024)	Dalam Loka Stilt House	Illustrating the relationship between spatial structure and cultural values	Has not yet been implemented in contemporary architectural design
(Wiryadhi Saidi, 2020)	Neo-vernacular architecture	Explaining the transformation of traditional elements in modern architecture	Focus on a single building
(Nugroho et al., 2023)	A resort with a regional focus	Highlighting the importance of local context in resort design	Does not address the cultural structure of space
(Syahada & Widyaningsih, 2024)	Coastal resort planning	Developing principles for resort zoning based on tourism functions	Failing to account for cultural variables

Source: Author, 2026

A synthesis of previous studies on vernacular architecture, cultural values in spatial organization, and zoning approaches in resort design provides an overview of the development of the field and the position of this research within the discourse on architecture and tourism area planning. Table 1 below summarizes the research focus, main contributions, and limitations of several relevant studies. Through this synthesis, the position of the present research can be identified, while also highlighting a research gap related to the integration of spatial cultural structures and zoning strategies in resort design based on neo-vernacular architecture.

Based on this review, there is a research gap regarding the hierarchical structure of vernacular space, the cultural values of space, and their application in resort zoning systems. Therefore, this study proposes the hypothesis that the cultural spatial structure of Sumbawa society can be transformed into a spatial zoning model for neo-vernacular resort design. The research questions in this study are formulated more specifically as follows: (1) What is the relationship between spatial hierarchy and cultural values in Sumbawan vernacular architecture, and what is its potential as a basis for spatial organization? (2) How can a Cultural Spatial Zoning model be formulated that integrates cultural spatial structures with resort zoning principles as the basis for neo-vernacular resort design?

The objective of this study is to identify and analyze the relationship between spatial hierarchy and cultural values in Sumbawa's vernacular architecture as a basis for spatial organization, as well as to formulate a conceptual model of Cultural Spatial Zoning that integrates cultural spatial structures with resort zoning principles as a basis for designing neo-vernacular resorts. Thus, this study not only focuses on a conceptual understanding of vernacular architecture but also leads to the development of an operational design

framework within the context of contemporary tourism architecture. The novelty of this research lies in the formulation of the Cultural Spatial Zoning model, which systematically integrates the hierarchical structure of vernacular space, local cultural values, and resort zoning principles into a single conceptual framework for neo-vernacular architectural design.

2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study employs a qualitative descriptive approach using architectural analysis and cultural interpretation methods. Qualitative approaches in architectural research are often used to understand spatial phenomena in a contextual manner, particularly when the research focuses on the relationship between culture, space, and architectural practice (Putra & Ekomadyo, 2022; Wazir & Indriani, 2020). This method enables researchers to conduct an in-depth analysis of the meaning of space, cultural values, and the relationship between architectural forms and the social practices of a community.

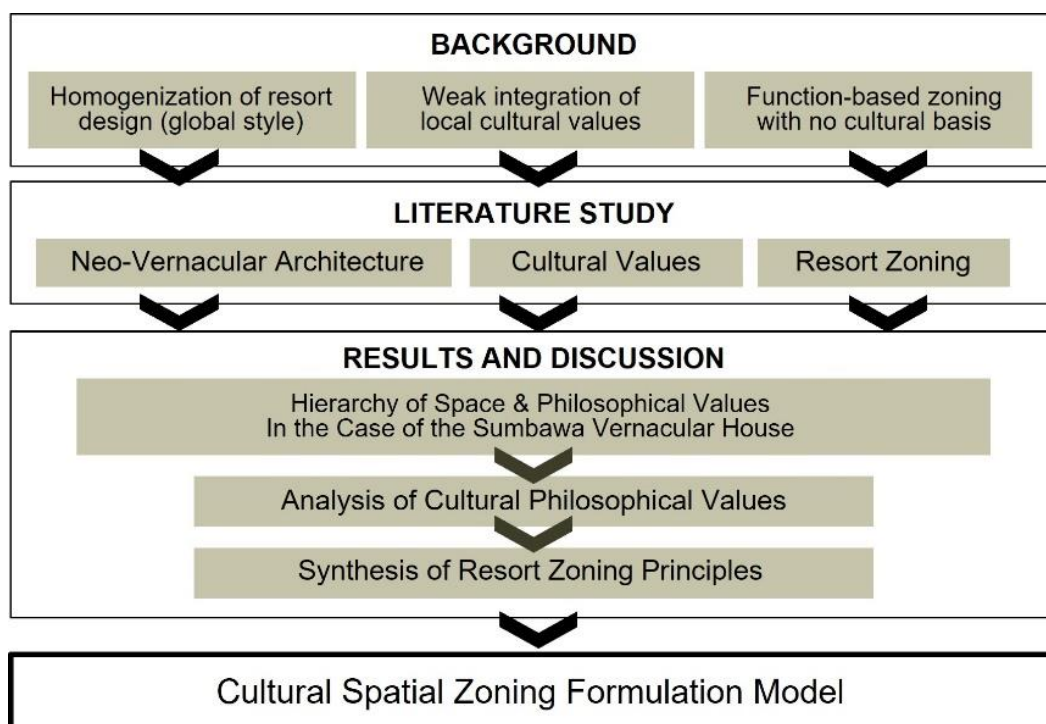


Figure 1. Research Methodology Flowchart
Source: Author (2026)

The research data were obtained through a literature review on Sumbawa's vernacular architecture, local cultural values, and theories of spatial zoning in tourism area planning. A literature review is an important method in architectural design research because it allows researchers to identify spatial patterns, design principles, and the relationship between architectural concepts and the sociocultural context (Budiarto Amiuza, 2017; Ratodi et al., 2024).

The analysis was conducted by interpreting the hierarchical structure of traditional spaces, the community's cultural and philosophical values, and the principles of modern resort zoning. In vernacular architecture research, interpretive analysis is often used to understand spatial patterns, social structures, and the relationship between the physical environment and the community's culture (Ratodi et al., 2024; Sholihah, 2024b). These three aspects were then synthesized to formulate a conceptual model of Cultural Spatial Zoning that can be applied in the design of resorts based on neo-vernacular architecture. The research process was conducted in stages through several phases of conceptual analysis that

integrated a literature review, an interpretation of vernacular spaces, and a synthesis of zoning concepts. The research methodology is illustrated in Figure 1. The diagram shows that the resulting conceptual model is a synthesis of a review of vernacular architecture theory, an interpretation of local cultural values, and the principles of zoning planning for tourist areas.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Conceptual Model of Cultural Spatial Zoning

Various studies of vernacular architecture indicate that spatial organization is typically arranged in layers, progressing from public to private spaces, taking into account accessibility, privacy, and the social functions of the spaces (Satar et al., 2018; Solikhah & Fatimah, 2020). This hierarchical pattern reflects the relationships between human activities, family structures, and cultural values that form the basis for the creation of space in vernacular architecture (Özge et al., 2019; Shayegani & Joklová, 2023). In the context of Sumbawa's vernacular architecture, traditional spatial organization can be observed in stilt houses and the Istana Dalam Loka complex, which demonstrate a clear division of space between reception areas, family spaces, and private quarters. This spatial structure reflects the social system of Sumbawan society, which places social interactions in the front or open areas, while domestic family activities take place in the central and rear spaces, which offer a higher degree of privacy (Budiarto Amiuza, 2017; Etnosains et al., 2024; Solikhah & Fatimah, 2020). In addition to reflecting social structures, this spatial organization also demonstrates adaptation to tropical environmental conditions through the use of open spaces, natural ventilation, and elevated structures that allow for better air circulation. In several types of traditional and vernacular houses in Sumbawa, such as the Dalam Loka, Bale Pekat, and Bale Panggung, the spatial organization is generally arranged in a linear and layered manner, progressing from the public front spaces toward the more private domestic spaces, thereby forming a spatial hierarchy that serves as the basis for interpreting the spatial organization scheme in Figure 2.



Figure 2. Spatial organization in the architecture of Sumbawa vernacular houses
Source: Author (2026), adapted from Budiarto Amiuza (2017)

The diagram in Figure 2 further clarifies this hierarchy through a color-coded spatial classification. The green color represents the serambi or reception area, which functions as a primary public space for receiving guests. The blue color indicates the living room, categorized as a semi-public space where family interactions occur. The yellow color represents the transitional or secondary private spaces, often associated with gendered or semi-private domestic functions. Meanwhile, the red color denotes the most private or sacred spaces, such as bedrooms, which are typically restricted and associated with higher levels of privacy and cultural significance. This visual representation reinforces the layered spatial organization from public to private domains and highlights how cultural values are embedded within the spatial structure of Sumbawa vernacular architecture.

Based on a synthesis of traditional spatial structures, local cultural values, and resort zoning principles, this study formulates a conceptual model of Cultural Spatial Zoning. This model illustrates the relationship among the three main components of the study, which subsequently yields a zoning structure for the resort area (Fig 3). These findings align with studies on culture-based spatial production, which emphasize that architectural spatial configurations are shaped not only by functional needs but also by the social and cultural value systems of the community that influence spatial organization (Martin et al., 2014; Sholihah, 2024a). In the context of Indonesian vernacular architecture, spatial hierarchies often serve as representations of social and symbolic relationships within society, which can then be reinterpreted in contemporary architectural design through approaches such as neo-vernacular (Putra & Ekomadyo, 2022; Satar et al., 2018; Wazir & Indriani, 2020).

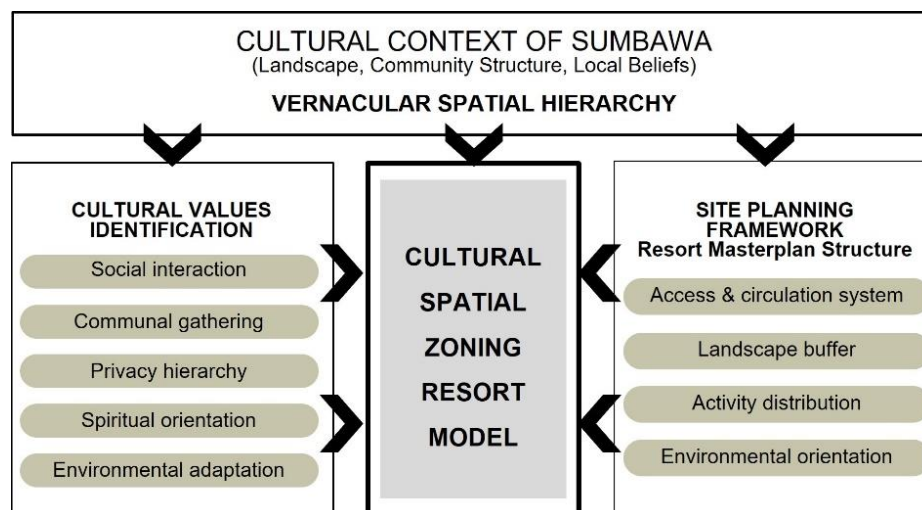


Figure 3. Conceptual Model of Cultural Spatial Zoning
Source: Author (2026)

Therefore, the Cultural Spatial Zoning model developed in this study is not only a conceptual synthesis of traditional Sumbawan spatial analysis but also an effort to reconcile the principles of vernacular spatial organization with the functional and structural requirements of zoning in modern resort design, as discussed in research on tourism area planning and contemporary resort design (Kurniawansyah et al., 2023; Özge et al., 2019; Satar et al., 2018; Syahada & Widyaningsih, 2024). The model demonstrates that resort zoning is determined not only by tourism needs but also by the cultural spatial structure of the local community. This approach results in a zoning system that is more attuned to the cultural identity of the area.

3.2 The Transformation of Cultural Values into Architectural Design

The relationship between cultural concepts and design implementation in this study is formulated through the process of transforming local cultural values into architectural design elements for the resort. Table 2 summarizes the systematic analysis of the relationship between local cultural values, traditional spatial principles, and their implications for resort design. In general, the table shows that each cultural value, such as spatial hierarchy, spirituality, communal interaction, and environmental adaptation, is translated into spatial organization principles and operational design strategies, ranging from the creation of layered zoning, the provision of contemplative spaces, the design of open communal spaces, to the application of building forms responsive to climate and landscape. Thus, this table confirms that the transformation of cultural values is not merely symbolic but plays a direct role in shaping the spatial structure and the quality of the spatial experience in neo-vernacular resort design.

Table 2. Transformation of Cultural Values into Spatial Design Principles in The Design of a Neo-Vernacular Resort

Local Cultural Values	Traditional Spatial Principles	Implementation in Resort Design
The hierarchy of social spaces	A layered division of space from public to private	Area zoning: public – semi-public – private
Sacred and spiritual space	Separating quiet spaces from social activities	Reflection garden/meditation area
Community social interaction	Open space for community gatherings	Plaza, open lobby, communal restaurant
Adaptation to the environment	Stage structure and natural ventilation	Stilted cottages and open-air structures
Connection to nature	Visual connection with the landscape	The building faces the ocean

Source: Author (2026)

Table 2 shows that cultural values are not only expressed as visual symbols but are also translated into principles of spatial organization and architectural design strategies within the resort area.

3.3 The Transformation of Traditional Spatial Hierarchy into Resort Zoning

Research findings indicate that the traditional spatial structure of Sumbawan society exhibits a spatial hierarchy that can be adapted to a resort zoning system. This structure generally consists of four main spatial layers: public spaces, semi-public spaces, private spaces, and sacred spaces. Such a spatial hierarchy is a common feature of vernacular architecture in Indonesia, where the organization of space reflects social relationships, levels of accessibility, and the community's cultural values (Budiarto Amiuza, 2017; Wazir & Indriani, 2020).

In traditional architecture, public spaces serve as areas for social interaction among the community and as places to receive guests (Özge et al., 2019). In the context of traditional Sumbawan houses, this room is typically located at the front of the building and serves as a space for receiving guests and as a venue for community gatherings (Etnosains et al., 2024). In the context of resort design, these functions can be translated into the entrance zone, lobby, and guest reception area, which serve as orientation spaces and the starting point of the visitor experience. This zone is located at the front of the property with direct access from

the main road, thereby facilitating visitor orientation and creating a spatial transition between the outdoor area and the resort.

Semi-public spaces serve as an intermediary between social and private spaces in traditional homes. These spaces are typically used for shared activities or community gatherings within a more intimate setting, such as a family room or a gathering space. In resort design, this function is realized through facility zones such as restaurants, swimming pools, meeting rooms, spas, and shared recreational areas that foster social interaction among guests (Syahada & Widyaningsih, 2024; Wazir & Indriani, 2020)

In traditional architecture, private spaces are used for family activities and have more restricted access. In vernacular buildings, these spaces are typically located in the center or rear of the building and serve as bedrooms or family living areas. ((Budiarto Amiuza, 2017; Wazir & Indriani, 2020). Within the resort, this zone consists of cottages, villas, or other lodging units designed to provide comfort, tranquility, and privacy for guests.

In addition to these three zones, the study also identified the presence of sacred spaces in Sumbawan culture that are associated with spiritual and symbolic activities. The existence of these sacred spaces indicates that spaces in vernacular architecture serve not only practical functions but also carry specific cultural and spiritual meanings (Martin et al., 2014; Özge et al., 2019; Wazir & Indriani, 2020). In the context of a resort, the concept of a sacred space can be interpreted as a reflection area, a meditation garden, or a contemplative space that provides a peaceful atmosphere for guests.

Based on this transformation, the Cultural Spatial Zoning model for resort design can be defined in four zoning layers: public zones, semi-public zones, private zones, and spiritual zones. This zoning structure is arranged in layers, progressing from areas with high activity levels to areas with greater tranquility and privacy, in accordance with the principles of zoning in tourism area planning, which emphasize the regulation of activities and the comfort of space users (Kurniawansyah et al., 2023).

3.4 Analysis and Interpretation of Results

The research findings indicate that the spatial hierarchy in traditional Sumbawan architecture can serve as a conceptual foundation for the zoning of a resort area based on neo-vernacular architecture. The transformation of traditional spatial structures into resort designs enables the creation of spatial layouts that are not only functional but also culturally contextual. This finding aligns with various studies on vernacular architecture, which indicate that traditional spatial organization generally reflects social structures, cultural values, and the relationship between humans and their environment (Budiarto Amiuza, 2017; Wazir & Indriani, 2020).

These findings suggest that spatial organization in resort design can be enriched through a cultural interpretation approach. Integrating local cultural values into site zoning can strengthen the architectural identity of a tourist destination and create a more authentic spatial experience for visitors. Research on Indonesian vernacular architecture also confirms that traditional spatial structures not only serve practical functions but also reflect the cultural value systems of the community that shape the social production of space (Martin et al., 2014; Sholihah, 2024a).

The findings of this study are consistent with various studies on vernacular architecture that emphasize the importance of the relationship between culture, the environment, and spatial organization in traditional buildings (Etnosains et al., 2024; Ratodi et al., 2024). In addition, research on tourism planning also indicates that spatial zoning is a key strategy for managing tourism activities, regulating visitor flow, and enhancing the quality of the spatial

experience within tourist destinations (Kurniawansyah et al., 2023; Stamatiou, 2024; Syahada & Widyaningsih, 2024).

However, this study also reveals a different approach compared to conventional resort zoning models, which generally consider only the functional and spatial capacity aspects. The Cultural Spatial Zoning approach developed in this study places local cultural values at the core of the area’s zoning structure, ensuring that the spatial structure of the tourism area is determined not only by operational needs but also by the cultural spatial structure of the local community (Homepage & Made Bayu Wisnawa, 2024; Salman, 2019; Stamatiou, 2024).

Thus, the resulting zoning model serves not only as a tool for regulating tourism activities but also as a medium for representing local cultural identity in tourism architecture and as a contextual design strategy in the development of culture-based tourism areas. To clarify the conceptual relationship between the research findings and previous literature, the Cultural Spatial Zoning model can be understood as a process of transformation from the cultural structure of space to the structure of contemporary resort zoning. This relationship can be illustrated through the following conceptual diagram.

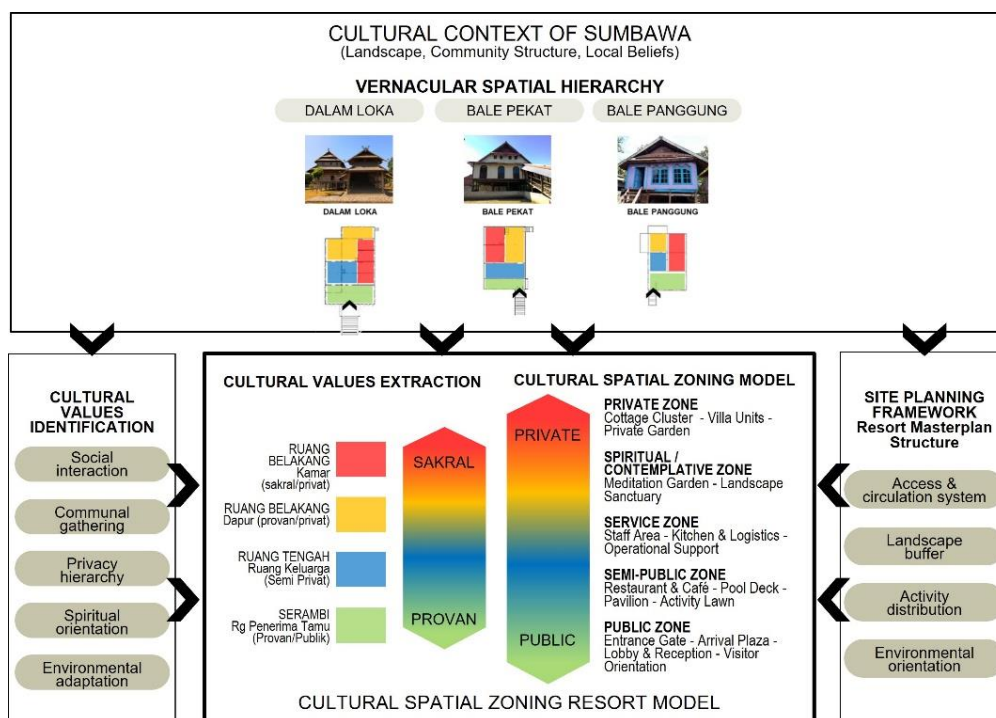


Figure 4. Spatial-Cultural Zoning Model for the Design of a Neo-Vernacular Resort
Source: Author (2026)

The diagram (Fig 4) shows that the design process does not proceed directly from tourism functions to spatial zoning, but rather goes through a stage of cultural interpretation that translates local social structures and values into architectural design principles. This approach positions culture as a mediator between vernacular spaces and the needs of contemporary tourism functions.

4. CONCLUSION

This study confirms that the spatial hierarchy found in Sumbawa vernacular architecture can be systematically translated into a Cultural Spatial Zoning model for neo-vernacular resort design. The findings show that the division of space into public, semi-public, private, and sacred areas reflects not only functional needs but also social relationships and cultural values within the community.

The transformation of this spatial structure into a resort zoning system demonstrates that cultural aspects can play a central role in shaping spatial organization, rather than being treated as a complementary element. This approach allows the design to become more contextually grounded while maintaining functional effectiveness in tourism development.

The main contribution of this study lies in offering a conceptual link between vernacular spatial knowledge and contemporary architectural design. By positioning culture as a guiding principle in zoning strategies, this research provides an alternative approach to resort planning that emphasizes identity, meaning, and user experience.

In practical terms, this study suggests that future resort development, especially in areas with strong cultural backgrounds, should incorporate local spatial structures as part of the design framework. This can support the creation of spaces that are not only functional but also culturally relevant and sustainable.

However, this study is limited to a conceptual approach based on literature analysis. Further research is needed to test the proposed model through design application, simulation, or post-occupancy evaluation in order to better understand its impact on spatial quality and user experience.

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