

The Preservation of Traditional Banjar Houses through the Role of Women in the Domestic Realm

Dahliani¹, Anna Oktaviana², Muhammad Deddy Huzairin³

{dahliani.teknik@ulm.ac.id¹, oktaviana@ulm.ac.id², deddyhuz@ulm.ac.id³}

Architecture Program, Faculty of Engineering, Lambung Mangkurat University, Banjarmasin, Indonesia

Abstract. Preservation is the effort to maintain the condition of a building through safeguarding and protecting it. The protection of buildings can be achieved through daily preventive maintenance activities and periodic curative. Within the home, women play a crucial role. They have domestic responsibilities related to household management, that encompass both preventive and curative maintenance. A house that is well-maintained and cared for by its occupants is likely to have a longer lifespan. This study aims to investigate the role of women in both preventive and curative maintenance of their house to ensure the preservation of traditional Banjar houses. A qualitative approach was employed, using purposive sampling of traditional Banjar houses inhabited by women who serve as household managers. The findings of this study indicate that women play a vital role in preserving traditional Banjar houses. Through daily preventive maintenance activities involving the cleaning of building components, such as sweeping, mopping, scrubbing, wiping, and painting, they effectively maintain the cleanliness of these traditional houses, ensuring their longevity. Similarly, curative maintenance activities such as repairing building components and replacing damaged materials also contribute to the preservation of traditional Banjar houses. The study reveals that in the preservation of traditional houses, women can assume multiple roles, including as implementers of activities, supervisors of activities, initiators of activities, and financial assistants.

Keywords: preservation, traditional Banjar house, role of women, domestic realm

1 Introduction

A house functions as a shelter for protection and rest, a space for human growth and development, and a place for the regeneration of values and culture within a family. The concept of a house encompasses both physical (house) and non-physical (home) aspects. Physically, a house is a unit that defines and limits the space available to family members or occupants. It serves as a residence where various activities take place. The physical presence of the building, along with its various elements, supports the house's function as a space for the activities and needs of its inhabitants. On the other hand, the non-physical aspect of a home represents a living space influenced by cultural, socio-demographic, psychological, and economic factors. A home is not

merely a "place"; it embodies psychological aspects and social meanings. It serves as a foundation for fostering the lives and relationships of its occupants.

Within the home, women play a crucial role. They fulfill domestic responsibilities related to household management, serving as wives and mothers [1]. Women are primarily responsible for maintaining the home. In addition, they provide protection and comfort. Women also contribute to the ambiance of their homes through space arrangement, decorating, filling the space with various furnishings, and even designing the house they live in. All of this reflects the dominant role of women in the household, specifically in performing domestic chores [2], [3].

The primary domestic role of women is to manage the household. This management involves two key aspects: the care of other residents and the upkeep of the home. These responsibilities are closely tied to women's daily activities within the household. Managing the home is an effort to ensure the comfort of its residents, which includes maintaining a clean environment, creating a comfortable layout, and demonstrating care for the overall maintenance and preservation of the living space.

The houses need to be maintained and cared for to ensure their longevity. Daily preventive maintenance activities can help prevent more severe damage and include sweeping, mopping, cleaning wood surfaces of dirt and insects, and painting [4]. Maintenance performed while the house is occupied can help preserve the building's functionality, structure, and aesthetics, protecting it from damage caused by climate conditions [5]. Furthermore, maintenance conducted by residents plays a crucial role in the sustainability of the building [6].

The houses that have survived until now are traditional houses. Local wisdom possessed by the community is able to maintain the condition of the natural environment [7]. Traditional houses have adaptive principles with the context of their place to preserve the shape of the house and its existence [8]. The age of the house can reach more than 100 years, so it needs to be preserved. Numerous studies have explored traditional houses as vital components of the archipelago's architectural heritage. These houses embody local characteristics and cultural identities through their functions, structures, and physical forms, making them worthy of preservation. Preservation can maintain the quality of architecture, culture, history, technical aspects, aesthetics, and building materials [9], [10]. The preservation of traditional houses involves maintaining, protecting, and preventing them from damage. Regular repair and maintenance of these houses can extend their lifespan and usability [11].

Globalization, urbanization, and industrialization are transforming human civilization and lifestyles. As a result, traditional houses are at risk of change and gradual decline due to evolving lifestyles [10], [12], [13]. Traditional houses can experience changes in shape following modern styles. However, the dominant characteristics of the traditional form, such as the spatial arrangement and the high, towering roof shape, are still preserved [14]. Additionally, natural factors pose further threats to the existence of traditional houses [15]. Consequently, preservation efforts are essential to maintain these structures. Preserved traditional houses embody significant cultural heritage and historical value [13]. Conservation activities aim to ensure that traditional architecture is sustained and can be a source of inspiration and knowledge for current and future generations [12], [16].

Research on the preservation of traditional houses has been extensive, particularly focusing on documenting the physical condition of buildings in need of preservation. Additionally, studies have explored the roles of various preservation actors. For instance, [17] investigated the preservation of traditional Acehese houses in the tourist village of Lubok Sukon, Aceh Besar. They highlighted the importance of encouraging community involvement in preserving traditional houses amid the

rise of modern housing styles. The community, as residents of these traditional houses, plays a crucial role in maintaining their existence, thereby facilitating sustainable preservation. Similarly, the preservation of stilt houses in Tanggamus Regency, Lampung, is influenced by the community's desire to uphold their cultural heritage and maintain these structures as family legacies [18]. Community participation is also evident in the preservation of Omah Londo in Sragen, where residents contribute labor to maintain cleanliness [19]. Furthermore, the Aleut community in Bandung actively engages in the preservation of cultural heritage buildings through inventorying, maintenance, rescue efforts, and publication [20].

In addition to the community, the role of traditional leaders is essential for effective preservation. The preservation of the traditional house in Dusun Beleg, Kayangan District, North Lombok Regency, is primarily facilitated by traditional leaders who fulfill their duties in safeguarding customs and culture. These leaders promote awareness and understanding within the indigenous community by modeling exemplary behavior and actively maintaining and preserving traditions [21]. Moreover, the involvement of institutions is crucial as they provide support and education on preservation to the community [22].

Preservation efforts can also be significantly contributed to by women. Their inherent connection to nature positions them as vital participants in the preservation of the Sangiran ancient human site. Women are actively involved in the site preservation program in collaboration with relevant government agencies [23]. Additionally, the role of women is evident in their efforts to uphold social and cultural values through the maintenance of traditions [24], [25], [26]. Moreover, several studies focusing on women in residential contexts emphasize their influence in the spatial arrangement within the home [27], [28], [29].

Despite numerous studies on the preservation of traditional houses, there is a notable gap in research examining the relationship between the house and its occupants, particularly focusing on the role of women living in these traditional settings. Women play a dominant role in the household as their domestic sphere, especially concerning the management of the physical space. Therefore, it is essential to conduct research on the role of women in traditional houses regarding the preventive and curative maintenance of their residences to ensure they remain well-preserved. By exploring maintenance activities within the house, this research aims to contribute to the preservation of traditional houses.

2 Methods

Maintenance and care activities in the preservation of traditional houses serve as protective measures aimed at ensuring the sustainability of these buildings. According to the Guidelines for Building Maintenance and Care (PMPU No. 24 of 2008), preventive maintenance is defined as the process of ensuring the reliability of a building, thereby keeping it functional at all times. Architectural maintenance encompasses regular upkeep to maintain cleanliness, while curative maintenance involves the repair and/or replacement of building parts, components, and materials to ensure the building's continued functionality.

This study employs a qualitative approach with a case study focused on traditional Banjar houses in South Kalimantan province, specifically in two locations: Martapura and Banjarmasin. A

total of 10 traditional Banjar houses were selected as samples, with the criterion that at least one occupant is a woman responsible for managing the household. The primary focus of the study is to examine women's activities within the domestic realm aimed at maintaining and caring for the traditional Banjar houses they inhabit.

Data were collected through direct field observation, interviews with female respondents, and the use of questionnaires. The collected data included daily preventive maintenance activities for cleaning the house, such as sweeping, mopping, brushing, wiping, and painting. Additionally, curative maintenance activities encompassed repairs and periodic inspections of any damage to the building. These activities were evaluated in relation to various components of traditional Banjar houses, including exterior walls, doors, windows, interior walls, floors, ceilings, decorative elements, and roofing. Data collection for maintenance and care activities involved coding the types of activities based on their frequency.

Data analysis was conducted using a qualitative descriptive approach, linking the preventive and curative maintenance activities performed by women to their conditions at home. This analysis revealed the significant role of women in the preservation of traditional Banjar houses.

3 Results and Discussion

3.1 Women's Activities in the Preventive Maintenance of Traditional Banjar Houses

In traditional Banjar houses, the primary function of the building aligns with its original purpose as a residence. The occupants engage in daily living activities, which encompass various domestic tasks. The domestic realm is typically associated with activities within the household, primarily carried out by women. Women play a crucial role in this realm as managers of household affairs. Activities within the domestic sphere can vary widely, encompassing all tasks performed in the home environment, including daily preventive maintenance activities aimed at cleaning the house. Through these efforts, women ensure the comfort and livability of their homes for all family members.

Preventive maintenance activities encompass sweeping, mopping, brushing, wiping, and painting. Sweeping is performed on floor components, exterior walls, interior walls, and ceilings using a broom, while windows and doors are cleaned with a broom or duster. Mopping is specifically conducted on floor surfaces. Brushing is applied to both floor components and exterior walls. Wiping activities target interior wall surfaces, windows, doors, and decorative elements. Painting is carried out on exterior walls, windows, doors, interior walls, ceilings, and decorative features. These preventive maintenance activities are recorded using codes based on their frequency. The preventive maintenance activities of the house are presented in Table 1 below.

Table 1. House Preventive Maintenance Activities

Respondent	Walls	Doors	Windows	Partition Walls	Floors	Ceilings	Decorative Elements	Number of Activities
1	B.1	S.4/P.1	S.4	S.4/W.4/P.1	S.5/M.5/B.1	S.3/P.1	S.3/W.3/P.1	15
2	B.1/C.1	S.3/P.1	S.3/P.1	S.3/P.1	S.5/M.4/B.1	S.4	S.3/W.3/P.1	15
3	S.3			S.1	S.1/B.1	S.1	S.1	6
4	P.1	S.2/P.1	S.2/P.1	S.2	S.5/B.1	S.2	S.1	10
5		S.4	S.4	S.3	S.5/M.4	S.2	S.4	7
6	S.2/P.1	S.2/W.2/P.1	S.2/W.2/P.1	S.2/P.1	S.5/M.4/B.1	S.2/P.1	S.2/W.2	17
7	S.2	S.4/W.4	S.4/W.4	S.3	S.5	S.2	S.3	9
8		S.2	S.2	S.2	S.5/M.4/B.3	S.2	S.2	8
9		S.2	S.2	S.2	S.5/M.4/B.4	S.2	S.2	8
10	P.2	S.3/L.1/P.2	S.3/L.1/P.2	S.3/P.2	S.5/M.4/B.3	S.3/P.2	S.3/W.1/P.2	17

: Description of letters and numbers:

S = Sweep	1 = maintenance under particular conditions
P = Mopping	2 = annual maintenance (2-5 years)
K = Brushing	3 = monthly maintenance
L = Wipe	4 = weekly maintenance
C = Paint	5 = daily/routine maintenance

From Table 1, it is evident that the number of preventive maintenance activities performed by respondents on their houses varies. This variation is linked to the conditions of the women within the household.

Respondent 1 lives in a traditional Banjar Bubungan Tinggi House, which has been designated as a Cultural Heritage site. Appointed by the Banjar Regency Government as a Caretaker, the respondent carries a significant responsibility for maintaining the residence, in addition to fulfilling familial obligations. Daily maintenance activities are conducted frequently and with enthusiasm, despite the respondent being 67 years old. The respondent holds the Banjar community value of 'gawi manuntung,' which emphasizes that every task initiated must be completed [30]. The respondent carries out the task of cleaning the house until it is fully completed in all areas of the house. The floor components are swept every day, with the front and middle areas cleaned in the morning and the back area in the afternoon. Mopping occurs every other day. Due to the large size of the traditional Banjar house, the cleaning tasks are divided by room: the front area is cleaned one day, the middle area the next, and so forth. In cases where the floor becomes particularly dirty from activities, it is sometimes brushed as well. The exterior walls are brushed to remove mold adhering to the ironwood surfaces, using a mixture of boiled water from tobacco, cloves, and dried bananas. This task is assisted by the respondent's son, as the walls are high and difficult to clean alone. Doors, windows, and partition walls are cleaned weekly to remove dust, utilizing a duster and broom for

elevated areas. Walls painted with wood finish are wiped with a slightly damp cloth to maintain their appearance. For high ceilings and decorative elements, a long-handled broom is used, often with assistance from the son. Respondent 1 supervises the cleaning of areas that are difficult to reach, ensuring that the house remains presentable, particularly as guests frequently visit to view the traditional Banjar Bubungan Tinggi House.

Respondent 2 is also a Caretaker appointed by the Banjar Regency Government to maintain her residence, which holds Cultural Heritage status. This role entails significant responsibility for maintaining the house, in addition to familial obligations. Daily preventive maintenance activities are frequently conducted, similar to those of Respondent 1, although the frequency is somewhat less due to Respondent 2 performing the maintenance tasks independently. Despite being relatively young (36 years old), Respondent 2 faces challenges in managing house upkeep due to having two young children, which slightly reduces the efficiency of cleaning efforts. Occasionally, the respondent receives assistance from her husband, particularly for cleaning elevated areas using a ladder.



Fig. 1. Respondent Activities in Cleaning the House (Author, 2023)

Respondent 3 has been entrusted by the family to maintain and care for the ancestral house inherited from Datu, although she resides behind the house. She performs cleaning tasks on the building components during specific occasions, such as family *haulan* events or visits from relatives. In addition, the exterior wall components, particularly the front, are cleaned on a monthly basis to ensure they remain presentable.

Respondent 4 has lived in this house since birth and is now 55 years old. Due to a lack of funds to purchase a house, her family entrusted her with the care of a traditional Banjar house inherited from them. She is assisted by her daughter and sister in daily preventive maintenance tasks, resulting

in a high frequency of activities. This maintenance occurs alongside her responsibilities in running a food catering business from home.

Respondent 5, who is 59 years old, has been entrusted by his family to care for the traditional Banjar house. She lives alone, which limits the number of preventive maintenance activities she can perform to what is manageable for her. Nevertheless, she engages in these activities frequently, ensuring that the house remains clean and well-maintained, driven by a sense of obligation to preserve the family's inherited property. Occasionally, her niece visits to keep her company and assist with household tasks.

Respondent 6 has lived in this house since birth and is now 47 years old. She has been entrusted by her family to care for the property, as other family members reside outside the city. Respondent 6 manages daily preventive maintenance tasks herself, fitting them in alongside her work making Banjar cakes to supplement the family's income. She engages in maintenance activities frequently, ensuring the house remains in good condition.

Respondent 7, who is 69 years old, undertakes preventive maintenance activities to the extent of her ability, resulting in limited tasks being performed. However, the frequency of these activities is relatively high, as she receives assistance from her husband and daughter, who visit the house.

Respondent 8 is younger (38 years old) but faces mobility challenges due to a leg injury sustained in an accident, which restricts the extent of preventive maintenance activities. Nevertheless, she engages in the tasks she is able to manage, maintaining a relatively frequent activity level.

Respondent 9 is 48 years old and works as a housewife while also selling fried food in front of her house to generate additional income. Due to her work commitments, she does not perform extensive maintenance activities; however, she engages in preventive maintenance tasks frequently to uphold the family's trust in the house.

Respondent 10, who lives in the house with her cousin and niece, is 83 years old. The household consists of four adult women. Despite her age, Respondent 10 participates in preventive maintenance activities alongside the other residents, resulting in a high volume of tasks being completed. The frequency of these preventive maintenance activities is quite significant, contributing to a very clean and well-maintained living environment, thanks to the collective efforts of all the women in the household.

Based on the explanation above, it is evident that maintenance activities in traditional Banjar houses are predominantly performed by the women who live in the house. Several factors influence both the quantity and frequency of these preventive maintenance activities, namely:

a. Age

Younger individuals are generally more capable of performing preventive maintenance activities independently, leading to a higher frequency of such tasks. Conversely, as age increases, the number of maintenance activities tends to decrease.

b. Physical Condition and Health

Poor physical condition and declining health can significantly reduce the capacity to engage in preventive maintenance activities, resulting in a limited number of tasks being completed.

- c. **Productive Work and Childcare Obligations**
Women at home engage in productive work that supports the family's economy, such as baking and catering, which reduces the time available for daily house maintenance. Nevertheless, they still strive to keep their homes clean.
- d. **Childcare Responsibilities**
Women have the responsibility of caring for their young children; however, they continue to engage in house preventive maintenance activities alongside their obligations to ensure that their homes remain clean and well-maintained.
- e. **Support from Family Members**
Women request assistance from other family members to help with house maintenance, resulting in a variety of preventive maintenance activities being carried out.
- f. **Family Trust**
The commitment to preserving the heritage of their ancestors inspires women to engage actively in house preventive maintenance activities. This dedication ensures that the home is well cared for. The traditional Banjar house continues to be used by the extended family for annual gatherings. Thus, through these maintenance efforts, the existence of the traditional Banjar house is effectively preserved.

3.2 Women's Activities in the Curative Maintenance of Traditional Banjar Houses"

Curative maintenance activities encompass periodic repairs and inspections to address damage to buildings.

3.2.1 Repair Activities

Repairs are conducted by respondents when there is damage to any of the building components, such as the roof coverings, walls, floors, doors, windows, ceilings, and decorative elements. The curative maintenance of traditional Banjar houses, specifically in the form of repairs, is illustrated in Table 2 below. Numeric codes are utilized to categorize the various types of repair activities performed.

Table 2. Curative Maintenance Activities for Houses (Author, 2023)

Respondent	Roof Coverings	Walls	Doors	Windows	Partition Walls	Floors	Ceilings	Decorative Elements
1	4			2		4		
2	4					4		
3	4						1	
4	2	1	1			2		
5	2	1						
6	4			2				
7	2	1				1		
8	2	1				2	2	

9	2	1	2	1
10	2		4	

Source: author, 2023

Description of Numbers:

1 = No repairs were made due to a lack of funds.

2 = Repairs were made only to the damaged parts (coated/joined).

3 = Repairs involved coating the material on the entire component.

4 = Repairs were made by replacing the material on the entire component.

Based on Table 2, it is evident that the building components most frequently repaired are the roof and floor coverings, while other components receive less attention. The following actions are taken by respondents to address damage to their homes:

- a. **Roof Repairs:** Repairs involve replacing the roofing material. The roof may be replaced with the same type of material, such as shingles, or with new materials like zinc. The replacement of roofing materials is conducted in stages, depending on the available funds (respondents 1, 2, 3, and 6).
- b. **Partial Roof Repairs:** In some cases, only the damaged parts of the roof are addressed. This involves covering the shingle roof with zinc (respondents 4, 5, 7, 8, 9, and 10). This approach is taken because the overall quality of the roofing material remains good, necessitating repairs only to the damaged areas. Alternatively, the lack of funds for comprehensive repairs may lead to only addressing leaking sections by covering them with zinc on the exterior. Additionally, plastic sheeting is placed under the roof where there is no ceiling, extending the width of the room to mitigate unexpected leaks.
- c. **Wall Condition:** Walls constructed from ironwood boards can endure for hundreds of years and appear well-maintained today (respondents 1, 2, 3, 6, and 10). In contrast, walls made from other materials are beginning to rot due to frequent exposure to rain and direct sunlight. Some respondents do not repair the outer walls that show signs of deterioration due to financial constraints. To address this issue, some respondents cover damaged areas (such as holes) with plywood, plastic, or cupboards from the interior of the house.



Fig. 2. The Exterior Walls of the House Made of Ironwood Board, which Remains in Good Condition
(Author, 2023)



Fig. 3. The Exterior Walls of the House Showing Signs of Rotting and Damage (Author, 2023)

- d. Doors: The door components (the main entrance door and the interior door) are generally in good condition due to the use of ironwood. Only the door of respondent 4 shows partial damage on the exterior, but there are no funds available for repairs.
- e. Windows: All windows in the respondents' houses are in good condition, with only minor repairs needed for the windows of respondents 1 and 6. Damage to the hinges and locks was promptly addressed by the respondents.
- f. Floors: The floors, made of high-quality ironwood, remain durable. Repairs are made by replacing damaged sections with the same material—ironwood boards—in specific areas of the house (respondents 1, 2, and 10). Some repairs involve patching holes in the floor with makeshift boards. For areas of the floor that are beginning to decay (not made of ironwood), financial constraints have prevented repairs, leading to the use of plastic mats or carpets to mitigate further deterioration.
- g. Ceilings: The ceilings in the houses of respondents 3 and 9 are damaged, but there are no funds available for repairs. In contrast, respondent 8 has made repairs by adding plywood and plastic beneath the roof to serve as a ceiling.



Fig. 4. The Ironwood Floor, which Remains Clean and Shiny (A); Newly Replaced Ironwood Floor (B) (Author, 2023)



Fig. 5. Plank Floor Covered with Plastic Mat/Carpet and Patchwork Repairs (Author, 2023).

During the repairs, some respondents directly supervise the workers. Some even purchase the necessary materials themselves. Additionally, respondents may undertake repairs on their own when feasible, such as patching holes in the floor using makeshift materials.

In this curative maintenance activity, the availability of funds significantly influences the maintenance efforts undertaken. Respondents 1 and 2 received assistance from the government due to the status of their homes as cultural heritage buildings. Respondents 6 and 10 utilized personal funds, supplemented by family contributions. Meanwhile, the other respondents lacked sufficient funds, so they strive to repair their traditional Banjar houses to the best of their abilities. In terms of financial matters, women play a significant role not only within the domestic realm but also outside it to support the family income. Additionally, women have a crucial role in managing the allocation of funds for family expenses [3], [31].

3.2.2 Periodic Inspection

Periodic inspection refers to the systematic evaluation of building components to assess their reliability and functionality over a designated timeframe. Respondents 1 and 2, who serve as caretakers of cultural heritage buildings, conduct routine inspections of the traditional Banjar houses in which they reside. This activity occurs monthly and is subsequently reported to the Banjar Regency Tourism Office. In the event of any damage, relevant parties are promptly informed to facilitate the allocation of funds for necessary repairs.

Conversely, other respondents do not engage in regular inspections but assess the condition of their homes only when damage occurs. If the damage significantly disrupts their comfort, they notify their husbands, children, or other family members for assistance in repairs. In this context, the

respondents, particularly women, play a crucial role in monitoring the condition of the house they inhabit.

3.3 Efforts to Preserve Traditional Banjar Houses through the Role of Women

The preventive and curative maintenance activities conducted by the respondents (women) have ensured that traditional Banjar houses, some of which are hundreds of years old, continue to survive and function effectively as residences. In contrast, without preventive and curative maintenance, these traditional houses would deteriorate over time, leading to significant damage and eventual destruction.

There are several roles that women play in the preventive and curative maintenance of traditional Banjar houses, namely:

- a. Activity Implementers
Household preventive maintenance activities are carried out daily by the respondents to ensure that the house remains clean. The respondents serve as the primary implementers, supported by family members.
- b. Activity Supervisors
The respondents assume the role of supervisors for repair activities involving damaged building components. This responsibility arises from their commitment to maintaining the condition of the house in which they reside. Additionally, since the men (husbands or children) responsible for these repairs are often away from home for work, the respondents oversee the repair process while the workers are on site.
- c. Activity Initiators
The respondents act as initiators of both preventive and curative maintenance activities. They take the initiative to conduct home maintenance, as this is traditionally regarded as a woman's duty to keep the household clean. For curative maintenance, the respondents assess the condition of each building component to determine whether it is functioning properly. If any damage is identified, they will report it to the relevant parties, such as the cultural heritage office, or inform the head of the family or other capable family members. In some cases, they may even undertake repairs themselves, provided they have the financial resources and physical ability. This proactive approach ensures that the respondents and other residents can live comfortably without being disturbed by damage.
- d. Financing Assistants
The respondents play a role in financing maintenance activities in the following ways:
 1. They may finance all maintenance activities themselves.
 2. They may cover part of the maintenance costs according to their financial capacity.
 3. If they do not participate in financing, they seek funding from family members or relevant agencies.

4 Conclusion

The domestic realm is an area primarily managed by women, encompassing various responsibilities within the home. The daily activities related to preventive and curative maintenance enable women to play a crucial role in maintaining and preserving the house they inhabit.

Common preventive maintenance activities include sweeping, mopping, wiping, and brushing, all of which are typically performed by the women themselves. In contrast, curative maintenance activities often involve covering damaged areas with new materials, particularly on the roofing. While preventive maintenance is generally undertaken independently, curative maintenance may be supported by family members or contracted builders.

Through these preventive and curative maintenance activities, women ensure that their homes are well maintained and cared for. A clean, comfortable, and well-kept house positively impacts the quality of life for all family members and can also extend the lifespan of the building. In addition, these efforts can also extend the lifespan of the building. This aligns with the initiatives to preserve the existence of buildings, especially traditional Banjar houses.

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