

Acculturation of Javanese Culture and Islam in the Great Mosque of Surakarta Historical Site, Indonesia

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Abstract

The Great Mosque of Surakarta is one of the historical sites in Indonesia; it was first established by Pakubuwana III in 1763 and the construction was completed in 1768. The mosque has an important role as the center of Islamic civilization in Indonesia. The exploration of this study is significant due to the incorporation of Javanese culture in the architecture of the mosque, which is represented by the Islamic ornaments.

This research employed a qualitative approach. The data were collected by observation and interviews. The respondents of the study were visitors to the Great Mosque of Surakarta. The results show that the Great Mosque of Surakarta has been acculturated with Javanese culture as reflected in the architecture of the mosque building and the use of Javanese ornaments that compose up to 82% of the building design.

The people of the Great Mosque of Surakarta still uphold tolerance between religious communities. This is reflected in the situation that the non-Muslim communities do not feel disturbed by the activities in the mosque. In addition, the Great Mosque of Surakarta is able to support the economy near the site, particularly for small stalls and merchants in the Klewer Market. The Great Mosque of Surakarta also functions as a religious tourism site for local and foreign tourists to look back at the history of the spread of Islam in Java and enjoy the beautiful ornaments used in the Great Mosque of Surakarta. Overall, this research provides an overview and insight into the Great Mosque of Surakarta that displays acculturation of Javanese culture.

Keywords: Ornaments, culture, Javanese, Islam, mosque

Introduction

Indonesia is a country that integrates unity and diversity; the country is gifted with diverse social features, ranging from ethnicity, culture, language, and religion (Anwar, 2018). Javanese tribe is one of the largest ethnic groups in Indonesia. The tribe resides mainly in the island of Java, as well as the island with the largest population in Indonesia. The influence of Islam in Indonesia emerged from several areas in the Middle East and East Asia by trade and marriage (Susilo and Wulansari, 2019). Since then, Islamic influences have penetrated and acculturated with the pre-existing Hindu and Buddhist culture in the Java island (Syah, 2016). The cultural elaboration that took place encourages a new civilization to emerge, i.e., the Islamic kingdoms in Nusantara (local term for Indonesian archipelago). The rise of Demak kingdom, which was then continued until Pajang kingdom in Kartasura, gave rise to the spirit of Islam in the Surakarta (Affidah, 2011; Sapto, 2015). Another notable kingdom is the Islamic Mataram kingdom that was established in the Yogyakarta. The kingdom was then split based on Giyanti Agreement into two Keratons, the Surakarta Hadiningrat Kasunanan Palace and the Ngayogyakarta Sultanate Palace (Carey, 1986).

The growth of Islam in the Kasunanan Hadiningrat Palace gave birth to the spirit of culture and Islam in the Surakarta area (Zulaihah, 2011). In addition, as a center of civilization and the advancement of Islamic influence, the Surakarta Hadiningrat Kasunanan Palace also plays a full role in the development of Javanese culture (Bakri and Muhadiyatiningasih, 2019). Javanese culture is the basic instrument of the Keraton palace as a product of the collaboration between Hinduism and Islamic teachings (Bakri, 2014). Javanese culture became popular after entering the era of Dutch East Indies Colonialism in which a large migration policy was established to support the arable land in Sumatra, Kalimantan, and even to Suriname (Karnanta, 2018). The island of Java has a tropical climate different from the Netherlands. Moreover, the architecture, way of dressing, and the lifestyle of Javanese are significantly different from the Dutch settlers. Hence, the Dutch settlers had to adjust to the climatic conditions in Java. For a long period of time, the culture they brought from their nation intertwined with Javanese culture; and it is apparent to this date in the architectural style, lifestyle, art, and the language style (Atmaja and Sodiq, 2017).

One cannot underestimate the role of the mosque as the center of Islamic civilization in Java. Mosques have been the place where numerous great Islamic figures learned about Islam and formulated strategies to spread Islam in the region (Yunianti, 2015). In a broader term, a mosque is viewed as a place of worship for Muslims. Its existence is important for the community as the place to study Islam. In addition, it is also a place of worship, such as prayers, Qur'an recitation, and dhikr, mosques are also used as a place for carrying out socio-religious activities to develop and empower the Islamic community (Yani, 2007). The existence of a mosque has a dominant role and function in the local community, particularly for Muslims. From a tourism perspective, mosques are places of religious tourism destinations. Abduh (2021) in his study stated that mosques can be used as a place of religious tourism which aims to improve religious knowledge. A research conducted by Fitriani and Wilardjo (2017) indicated that the implementation of a mosque as a place of tourism will help advance the economic activities that will support the community's livelihood. The existence of the mosque also acts as the medium to nurture social interaction. Amalina and Achnes (2017) point out that the mosque is a place for community development, as a place for regeneration of Islam scholars, and as a center for Islamic da'wah and cultural events. By these events, social interactions can be established in mosques.

The presence of the Great Mosque of Surakarta as a form of spiritual expression of the Islamic Mataram Kingdom is inseparable from the long history of the Surakarta Kasunanan Palace (Yunianti, 2018). This mosque is a jami' mosque, i.e., a mosque that

is used for congregational prayers with a large size (e.g., for Friday prayers and Eid prayers).

The Great Mosque is designated as the official mosque of the Surakarta Kasunanan Palace. If the Sultan Pakubuwana is regarded as a *panatagama* (regulator of religious affairs), then the mosque acts as the place for the implementation of all religious affairs (Fatikhin, 2018). Moreover, the mosque is designed with a high aesthetic value. The architecture of the mosque highly resembles features of Javanese culture with philosophical meanings (Rochim, 1983). The ornaments engraved on the mosque also represent many noble values (Supatmo and Syafii, 2019). The motifs on the ornaments are the results of a harmonious blend and continuity of decorative arts that rely on tradition and cross-cultural interactions between Javanese and Islamic culture (Setiawan, 2010). In this regard, this study aims to explore the acculturation of culture through ornaments, particularly related to the philosophical meanings, shapes, motif, and styles in the ornaments of the Great Mosque of Surakarta.

Within the academia, past studies have explored the acculturation of Javanese and Islamic culture. Aziz (2013) emphasized that the transformation of Javanese and Islamic culture takes place as the impact of the arrival of the Malay tribe who brought the influence of Islam to the Hindu-Buddhist Kingdom in Java. In this case, exchange of ideas and acculturation process occurred as the aftermath of the interaction between the two cultures. Ricklefs (2013) discussing Islamization of Java also points out the history of Islam's journey to be accepted by the Javanese people amid all the conditions and obstacles. Sumbulah (2012) explores cultural acculturation that occurs between Islam and Javanese culture as reflected from the expressions of the Javanese people who still adhere to syncretism. The acculturation between Javanese culture and Islam has been widely carried out, but acculturation of culture in mosque building is yet to be explored. Based on the rationale above, the study aims to explore the characteristic forms or ornaments in the mosque that acculturates between Islamic and Javanese culture. The study examines further about the two different elements between Islamic teachings and Javanese culture, which are then manifested in the Great Mosque of Surakarta. This study also examines the role of the Great Mosque of Surakarta in terms of social relations (tolerance), tourism, and the economy.

Literature Review

According to Widayat and Studyanto (2018), ornaments are the basic forms or patterns applied in the beautiful figures found on objects. Aside from the aesthetic function, the ornaments represent an implied symbolic meaning of teachings. These ornaments function as decoration to beautify the interior and exterior of an object/building.

Islamic Ornaments

Decorative ornaments in Islam refer to the structure and type of theme chosen to be applied in buildings, especially mosques, as the final detail that upholds the values of beauty and compatibility on Islamic principles (Rochym, 1983). Rochym also states the teachings of Islam brought by the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) forbid the depiction of creatures such as animals and humans. Thus, this leads to the creation of Islamic ornaments that does not violate the Shari'a laws, i.e., in the form of decorative plants that are drawn in a twisted shape following the design of the ornament. This pattern is known as Arabesque, as this motif is commonly used by Arabs as luxurious ornament forms.

Nirmala, Violaningtyas and Damayanti (2019) classifies Islamic ornaments typical of the Middle East into three, i.e., calligraphy, geometric decoration, and Arabesque. Calligraphy is the art of beautifully crafted handwriting. The writings made by calligraphy refers to the Qur'an or the hadith of the Prophet Muhammad. In addition to the main function of calligraphy as decoration or ornamentation, the art of calligraphy also aims to spread the Qur'an. The second Islamic ornament, as stated by Nirmala, Violaningtyas and Damayanti (2019) is a geometric

motif. This motif is the basis of a form that aims to show attention, perceive, and give the impression of feeling. Geometric motifs are used as Islamic ornaments that are applied to various objects, such as roofs, walls, flower vases, tiles, and others. A study conducted by Supriyadi (2008) regarding the similarities and differences between the ornaments of the Great Mosque of Demak and the ornaments of the Menara Kudus Mosque elaborates that the geometric motifs consist of lines and geometric shapes, as a combination of straight and curved lines that form a certain pattern. The basic forms of geometric motifs in Islamic ornaments comprise kawung, meander, and swastika. Further, Nirmala, Violaningtyas and Damayanti (2019) mentions that Arabesque motif has been commonly applied since the Byzantine era by Muslim artists. Arabesque motif mainly has tendrils, leaves, branches, or tree patterns. Arabesque motif in its application is juxtaposed with calligraphy and geometric ornaments. The main characteristic of arabesque is identical from its overlapping arrangement of sliding, rotating, and mirroring. The greatest achievements in the field of art in Islam are shown by this arabesque ornament. The basic form of arabesque is plant twigs and geometry. The arabesque motif is meant as the alternative of depiction of living creatures, which is forbidden in Islam. The unique and intricate pattern is the main attraction in the arabesque style.

The use of Islamic calligraphy ornaments can be seen in the Menara Kudus Mosque on the dome of the mosque. The calligraphy in this mosque is installed just below the dome as well as on the light ventilation of the room. Calligraphy is drawn in 24 stained glasses lined up around the room. The writings are inscribed with names of Allah (al-Asma'ul Husna). On the larger light vent, the companions of the Prophet Muhammad and the priests of the mazhab (schools of thoughts) are written. The installed calligraphy gives a value of beauty due to the refraction colors of the light. The calligraphy also adds to the Islamic characteristics and lowers the influence of Hindu architectural style in the main room of the mosque, the Menara Kudus building, and the gate. In addition to calligraphy at the Menara Kudus Mosque, the use of Islamic ornaments can be seen in the Dian Al Mahri Gold Dome Mosque located in Depok, West Java, Indonesia. This mosque applies arabesque ornaments to the upper window of the mosque building carved in the form of tendrils as well as in the form of rectangular geometric shape that is conical to the top.

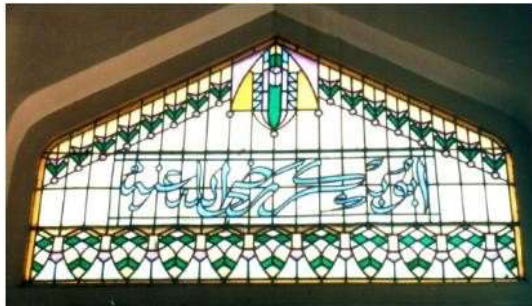


Fig. 1: Calligraphy in Menara Kudus Mosque
Source: Supatmo, 2014



Fig. 2: Arabesque in Dian Al Mahri Mosque
Source: Nirmala, Violaningtyas and Damayanti, 2019

Suratno (2013) suggests that Islamic cultural ornaments are usually applied to iron railings at mosque stairs, mosque garden fences, and in wall ornaments. In line with this, Priyatno (2015) elaborates that Islamic ornaments are also applied to the pillars, floors, and ceilings of mosques. Green and blue colors are chosen to be applied to Islamic ornaments because of the cool and breeze sensation.

Javanese Ornaments

Generally, Javanese ornaments are divided into two, i.e., flora and fauna decorations. The floral decoration resembles happiness, softness, beauty, and mystique. Wood is usually used as a decorative medium; this indicates the Javanese people's occupation in the past as wood

carpenters. Some ornaments carved in the wood medium involve tlacapan, dragon, banyu tetes, gunungan, rooster, banaspati, and others (Ismunandar, 2001).

As Sari (2007) suggests, there are four motifs in Javanese ornament style, i.e., Flora, Fauna, Religion and Belief, and Braids. Floral motifs include saton, nanasan, wajikan, kebenan, patran, padma, lung-lungan, and tlacapan. Lung-lungan motif symbolizes the value of beauty and peace. Meanwhile, tlacapan motif resembles a bright light coming from the heaven. Tlacapan motif represents majesty and brightness. In the meantime, Padma motif symbolizes beauty; this motif is usually applied at the base of the pillar. The Padma motif derives from the lotus flower, which emphasizes a strong and firm symbol of purity. The fauna motif involves peksi garuda, rooster, mirong, and kemamang. The application of fauna ornaments can be seen in the Fig. 3. In this image, a fauna motif is used in the form of a kedhok (one-eyed kala) motif on the padasan of the Menara Kudus Mosque, Indonesia. There are a total of two rows with eight ornaments per row. In Hindu-Buddhist belief, there is an imaginative creature named kala, whose job is to guard the forces of good and reject the forces of evil. At the top, there is an outer pattern that forms an acute angle on the crown with an open mouth which is used as a channel for wudhu water; in the teeth part, there are two canines that curve down. The structure of the kala creature has a large nose, has two eyes on the left and right and one eye in the middle.



Fig. 3: Fauna Ornaments
Source: Supatmo, 2014



Fig. 4: Floral Ornaments
Source: Budiono, Rachmaniyah and Anggraita, 2021

The application of floral ornaments can be seen in the Fig. 4 which is found in the Sunan Giri Mosque, Gresik, Indonesia. The decorative lung-lungan pattern found in the Sunan Giri Mosque is a stylized plant form, consisting of stalks, leaves, flowers, and fruit that spread with an asymmetrical composition. This ornamental variety symbolizes a paradise plant and the traits of helpful and sociable.

Research Methodology

This research employed a qualitative method with a case study approach at the Great Mosque of Surakarta. The purpose of this study was to explore the acculturation of Javanese and Islamic culture which is reflected in the building of the Great Mosque of Surakarta. This exploratory study conducted investigate, find, and understand research problems (Marshall and Rossman, 1999). This study also explored the influence of the Great Mosque of Surakarta on the nearby community. The data were collected by observations and interviews carried out in October 2021. The observation was carried out near the research site and its surroundings, while the respondents of this study were visitors who entered the Great Mosque of Surakarta and were selected randomly. Further, this research was analyzed in several stages: 1) analysis of the influence of the Great Mosque of Surakarta complex; 2) analysis of Islamic ornaments at the Great Mosque of Surakarta; 3) analysis of the influence of the Great Mosque of Surakarta on aspects of Javanese cultural acculturation, tolerance of people of other religions, economy, and tourism.

Table 1: Respondents' demography

Source: Authors

No	Name	Age	Sex	Place of residence
1	Asrul hasibuan	28	Male	Medan
2	Yeni	24	Female	Semarang
3	Mitarsih	48	Female	Yogyakarta
4	Endang	19	Female	Semarang
5	Aryadi	50	Male	Yogyakarta
6	Maulid Murjito	65	Male	Surakarta

Findings and the Discussion

Demographic Analysis of Great Mosque of Surakarta

The Great Mosque of Surakarta is one of the ancient mosques from the Islamic Mataram Kingdom located in Surakarta City, Central Java Province, Indonesia. This mosque has ancient Javanese architecture; the main building of the mosque is supported by four sokoguru (main pillars) with 12 saka rawa (additional pillars); these features make the mosque looks like a joglo traditional house in a glance. The Great Mosque of Surakarta is a part of the Surakarta Kasunanan Palace, with an area of 19,180 square meters. The Surakarta Grand Mosque building is a tajug-style building with three overlapping roofs and a crown peak. Almost all parts of the mosque are dominated by solid teak wood. The Great Mosque of Surakarta has an Arabic-Persian-style gate that stands firmly in front of the mosque. In addition, there is also the adzan tower in which the architectural style is inspired by the Qutub Minar in Delhi, India. The Great Mosque of Surakarta is located north of the Klewer Market. Klewer Market is the largest traditional textile market in Central Java. Klewer market is not only a center for the local economy, but also a tourist destination and a symbol of the city of Surakarta. In addition to traditional markets, in Surakarta City there is also a BTC (Benteng Trade Center) building as a modern fabric shopping center. In these two shopping centers, the economic activities are very busy, contrasting with the activities carried out in the Great Mosque of Surakarta. Mosques are used as a means of getting closer to God for Muslims; thus, the atmosphere tends to be quiet. The nearby community appreciates the existence of the Mosque, considering that its location is at the opposite of the Klewer Market. All economic activities stop within the mosque complex so it doesn't interfere with people who are offering prayers.

Surakarta Kidul Square is located to the East of the Great Mosque of Surakarta. The Kidul Square of Surakarta (or often referred to as Alkid) is still a part of the Surakarta Hadiningrat Sunanate Palace. Not far from the location of the Great Mosque of Surakarta, there is Fort Vastenburg, which is 1.5 KM to the North of the Great Mosque of Surakarta. Vastenburg Fort is one of the historical buildings of the Dutch heritage located in Gladak, Surakarta, Indonesia. The fort, which began construction in 1745, was built by the Governor General Baron Van Imhoff who was the ruler of Surakarta and the Surakarta palace at that time. Opposite this fort is the office of the Surakarta City Hall, which used to be the residence of the Dutch governor. The Vastenburg Fort building and the Surakarta Kasunanan Palace have several similarities, which are located on the roof motif and the roof crewing in the Fort guard area with the shape of the roof motif and the roof kruwing at the main gate of the Surakarta Kasunanan Palace. In addition, both of them have a guard statue in which the symbol of the statue is the guardian of the main gate. The existence of the Dutch culture and its heritage has influenced the architecture of the Great Mosque of Surakarta, such as the white pillars of the mosque's foyer and the minarets of the Great Mosque of Surakarta.

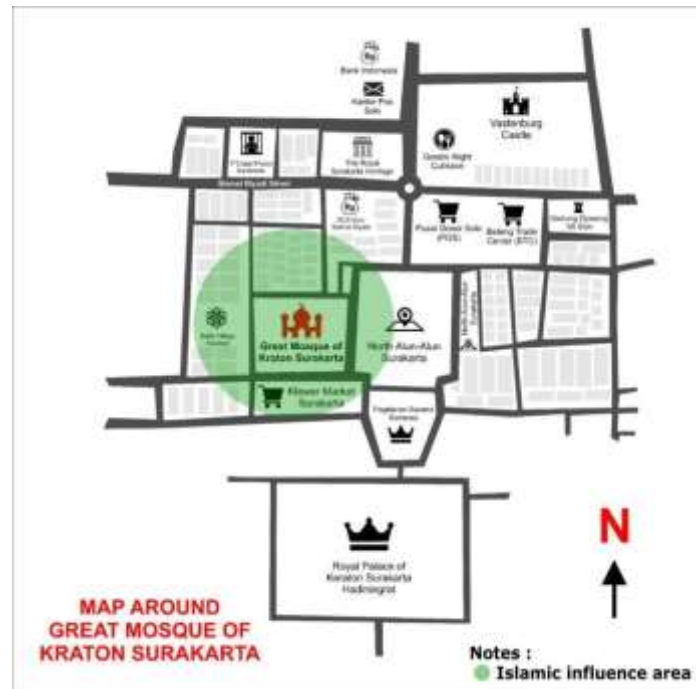


Fig. 5: Map around Great Mosque of Kraton Surakarta
Source: Processed data

The Great Mosque of Surakarta, which was built on an area of approximately one hectare, can accommodate about 2,000 followers. The pilgrims come from various places to pray or just have a rest. At the time of the Friday prayer, the people mostly came from the trade center at the Klewer Market due to the short distance. In addition, worshippers for Friday prayers also come from shops and sites in the mosque area, and a few from the Northern Square of Surakarta.

Analysis of Javanese and Islam Ornaments in Great Mosque of Surakarta

The close distance between the Great Mosque of Surakarta with the Surakarta Keraton instigates an acculturation to take place between Javanese and Islam culture. The acculturation in Surakarta brought impacts to the construction of the Great Mosque of Surakarta that was established within the complex of Surakarta Keraton Palace as the heritage of Islam Mataram Kingdom. The acculturation of Islam and Javanese culture at the Great Mosque of Surakarta is apparent in the architectural style of the mosque. In the interior of the Great Mosque of Surakarta, there are several buildings that have Javanese-Islamic characteristics. Inside the complex there is also a maksura (a special place for prayers for royal kings).

The use of ornaments as an element of mosque decoration can be seen in Fig. 6. The study shows that Javanese ornaments dominate the application of decoration elements of the Great Mosque of Surakarta, i.e., 139 points or 82%. Javanese ornaments were applied in almost every building in the mosque area, starting from the main gate, garden lights, the main building of the mosque, and to other buildings adjacent to the mosque. Meanwhile, Islamic ornaments are applied in 30 points or compose up to 18% which are focused on the main building of the mosque as a place of worship.

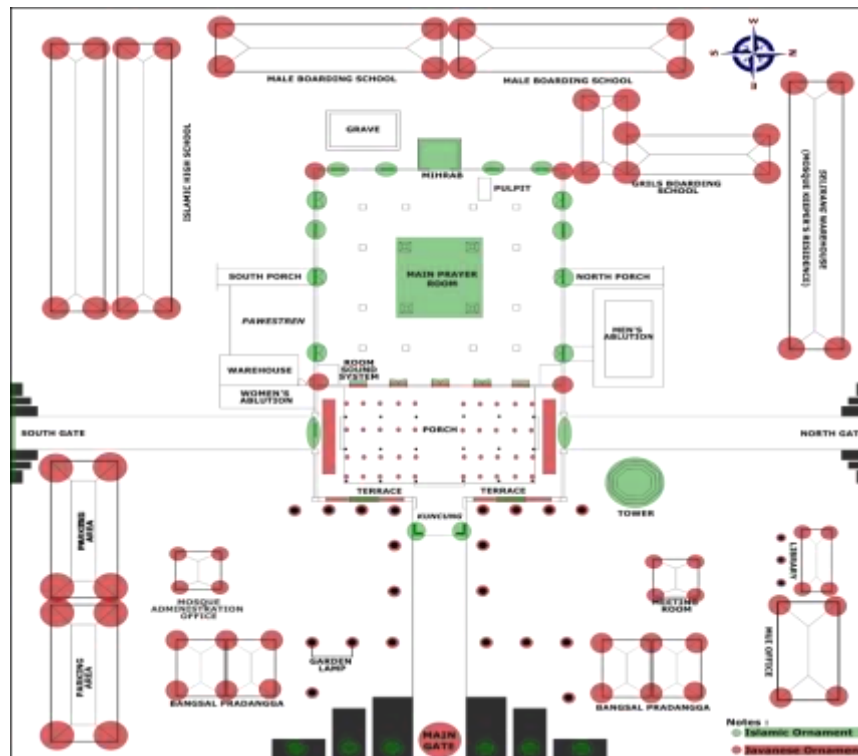


Fig. 6: Spread of Javanese and Islam Ornaments

Source: Processed data

In the mosque area, there are three gates for visitors to enter the Great Mosque of the Surakarta. The first gate is the main front gate, made of stone and painted white with Islamic patterns and Persian Arabic style. On the front side of the gate, there are two calligraphy points on the left and right, while in the upper center there is the Surakarta Kasunanan Palace logo, and on the back side of the gate there are 2 calligraphy on the right and left, and there is the Surakarta Kasunanan Palace logo on the top center. Then the next gate is in the right area (North Gate), and the left area (South Gate) which has the Surakarta Kasunanan Palace logo and has Islamic style architecture. From the front of the gate, it is visible that the Great Mosque of Keraton Kasunanan Surakarta has a blend of Islamic and Javanese architecture on the roof. The mosque yard is located after the main gate. In the mosque yard, there are 23 lamp posts that have the typical motif of the Surakarta Kasunanan Palace. On the right side of the yard, there is a building called the Bangsal Pradangga, a meeting room, a library, and the MUI office. The four buildings have a roof that is typical of Javanese style, which is pointed upwards at the ends. On the left side of the yard of the Great Mosque of Keraton Kasunanan Surakarta, there is a building called Bangsal Pradangga, an administrative office and a motorcycle parking area whose roof also has a Javanese style.

After passing the mosque yard, there is a wall fence that combines the shape of the mosque dome and Javanese motifs, then after that there is an iron fence with a moon and star motif that limits the mosque terrace with the mosque yard. On the terrace of the mosque, there are 40 ornate Javanese foundation pillars. Then on the right side of the mosque courtyard, there is also an Islamic-style minaret, and there is an inscription of PB X which is the 10th king of the Surakarta Kasunanan Palace. On the right side of the mosque building, there is a wudhu room for men and on the left side of the mosque building there is a wudhu room for women. Both of these buildings have a roof with a Javanese style, which at the left and right ends are made sharp upwards. After that, there are 7 entrances to access the mosque congregation into the worship room. The door has Javanese carvings and there is a motive of Islamic calligraphy on top of the door. On the front side of the entrance to the worship room, there are three doors that have a combination of Javanese carving motifs and Islamic calligraphy. On the backside of the entrance to the worship room, there are seven sections in which the combination of Javanese carvings with Islamic calligraphy is applied. After entering the room in the main worship area, on the right side, there are four doors made of dark brown teak wood which has a carved motif and calligraphy carvings above the doors. The theme can also be found on the left side of the main worship room, which has four doors made of dark brown teak wood, which has a carved motif, and on it, there are calligraphy carvings. At the front of the main worship room, there are four windows that have Javanese carved motifs, and then at the top of the window there are Islamic calligraphy carvings. After that, at the front there is a mihrab used by the priest to lead congregational prayers at the Great Mosque of Surakarta. The mihrab (imam's prayers place) is filled with calligraphy and Javanese carvings. Then next to the mihrab, there is a mimbar used by religious leaders in preaching. The mimbar is decorated with Javanese carving motifs. At the back of the Great Mosque of Surakarta there is a male dormitory, in which the roof structure is made using a typical Javanese style. On the left side of the back of the mosque, there is a female dormitory which also applies Javanese style architecture. Next to the girls' dormitory, there is a building that is used as a residence for the administrators of the Great Mosque of Surakarta with a Javanese-style roof. Then on the left rear of the mosque, there is a school building which also has a roof with a typical Javanese style.

Table 2. Motif style in Great Mosque of the Surakarta's architecture

Source: Authors

No.	Part of Building	Javanese Style	Islamic Style
1.	Main front gate	V	
2.	North and South gate	V	
3.	Islamic-style minaret	V	
4.	4 doors in the main worship area	V	
5.	The roof of Bangsal Pradangga, an administrative office and a motorcycle parking area		V
6.	40 ornate Javanese foundation pillars		V
7.	The roof of whudu room		V
8.	4 windows at the front of the main worship room		V
9.	A mimbar used by religious leaders in preaching		V
10.	Roof of male dormitory at the back of the Great Mosque of Surakarta		V
11.	Roof of female dormitory at the back of the Great Mosque of Surakarta		V
12.	Roof of residence for the administrators of the Great Mosque of Surakarta		V

13.	Roof of school building		V
14.	Wall fence	V	V
15.	7 entrances to access the mosque congregation into the worship room	V	V
16.	7 sections of backside of the entrance to the worship room	V	V
17.	A mihrab used by the priest to lead congregational prayers at the Great Mosque of Surakarta	V	V

The Great Mosque of Surakarta combines Islamic Ornaments and Javanese Ornaments. The Islamic ornaments can be found from the main gate to the interior of the mosque. It is dominated by calligraphy above the entrance, mihrab, windows, and tower. In addition to the calligraphy, the tower also has an arabesque ornament. The frames of five exterior doors are added with wooden panels carved with geometric ornaments. There are also geometric ornaments at the top of the window frame.

Javanese ornaments used in the mosque are flora and fauna ornaments at the entrance, mihrab, and pillars. The middle door is decorated with animal carvings, e.g., a stylized animal head, like a gaping dragon. Next, the exterior door connecting the main prayer room with the mosque's porch is decorated with floral-patterned carving (lung-lungan, tlacapan, and sengkulun). Flora ornaments can also be found at the top of the window.



Fig. 7: The Entrance of the Mosque
Source: Authors



Fig. 8: Pilaster
Source: Authors

Calligraphy used in the Great Mosque of Surakarta is displayed in Figure 7. The calligraphy reads “Assasa hadzal jami’ assyarif Jalalatul Malik Al Afkhom Almarhum Al Mukarrom Al Janab Al ‘Aly Abdurrahman Assabi’ adamallah mulka dzurriyyatihi bil’izzi wal aman, amin. Wakanat sanatu faroghul bina’I fii khomis sahru Ramadhan sanah 1272 Hijriyah, wa muwaafiqon sanah 1784 Jawiyyah” (Eng: “This glorious mosque was built by the late 7th King, His Honor Al Mukarrom Al Janab Al ‘Aly Abdurrohman. May Allah preserve his kingdom for his descendants with glory and security, Amen”). The construction of this mosque was completed on Thursday, the month of Ramadan, Hijri 1272, 1784 Javanese Year).

Fig. 8 shows the right and left sides of the mihrab. Both sides are equipped with a pair of pillars or dorian-style wooden pilasters connected with a semicircular arch with a chapter at the top. The calligraphy as the Islamic ornament, which reads Salawat for Prophet Muhammad, adorns the arch and the chapter. There is also calligraphy about four companions of the Prophet Muhammad (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) who earned the nickname of Khulafaur Rashidin, namely Abu Bakar Ash-Shiddiq, Umar bin Khattab, Utsman bin 'Affan, and Ali bin Abi Thalib. Calligraphy comprising the hadith about Five Pillars of Islam also completes the ornament. The right and left sides of the mihrab are also equipped with geometric ornaments. At the top, there are Tlacapan ornaments, including sunlight, highlight, brightness, or greatness; it means that a leader must have authority or greatness (Yunianti, 2018). Figure 9 displays a 33-meter tall tower as the highest building around the Great Mosque of Surakarta. The tower is used to echo the call to prayer (adhan or a reminder for Muslims to come to mandatory prayer five times a day). It has a typical Indian building architecture. The tower window also gets an Islamic ornament of arabesque. Above the tower door, there is Arabic calligraphy surrounding the wall.



Fig. 9: Mosque Tower
Source: Authors



Fig. 10: Mosque Door
Source: Authors

The door of the Surakarta Great Mosque has double doors, as presented in figure 10. Every door and its frame are made of teaks. The exterior entrance of the mosque has Javanese ornaments of decorative flora, such as lung-lungan, tlacapan, and sengkulunan as stylized curly spider plants and flowers. Lung-lungan ornament symbolizes fortune and generosity. This word is derived from the words lung and tetulung. Lung refers to vines which also mean fortune/luck that keeps coming; meanwhile, tertulung is interpreted as mutual help. Therefore, lung-lungan indicates continuous fortune/luck given by God to humans. The fortune is granted to help others (Yunianti, 2018).

Javanese Culture Acculturation

The presence of the Great Mosque of Surakarta amid Javanese society has affected the mosque architecture. This is also strengthened by the Kasunanan Surakarta Palace located in the mosque area. The effect of Javanese culture in the mosque architecture is evidenced by Javanese ornaments as the aesthetic elements of the mosque with flora and fauna motifs. Such ornaments can be found in nearly all parts of the mosque. Both Javanese and Islamic ornaments in the mosque look very attractive.

The Great Mosque of Surakarta has a classic and antique building. The building has undergone acculturation with the Kasunanan Surakarta Palace, as stated by Asrul Hasibuan below:

“Menurut saya sih, kalo yang Masjid Agung Surakarta ini bener-bener klasik, antik banget gitu bangunannya, dan ciri khasnya keliatan Keraton Jawa banget gitu. Masih bertahan banget antiknya. Kesan pertama saya saat pertama kali melihat Masjid Agung ini adalah antik, dan punya ruh tersendiri gitu. Bangunannya masih lawas banget tapi masih sangat kokoh sampai sekarang, tapi ya itu yang jadi ciri khas tersendiri yang dimiliki oleh Masjid Agung ini” (Eng: “I personally think that the Great Mosque of Surakarta is very classic with antique building. It reflects the Javanese Palace. The first time I saw this mosque, it was antique and had its own spirit. Although it is old, the building is still very sturdy until today, making it distinctive”) (A Hasibuan 2021, personal communication, 31 October).

The Great Mosque of Surakarta is a historical building associated with the spread of Islam, particularly on Java Island.

“Ya kalau saya lihat ini banyak sejarahnya, saya nggak begitu paham sih, tapi kalo menurut saya Masjid Agung Surakarta ini tentunya tidak lepas dari penyebaran Islam di Pulau Jawa, khususnya Surakarta. Pasti tidak terlepas dari para ulama yang waktu jaman dahulu memiliki misi untuk menyebarkan agama Islam di Pulau Jawa, dan yang jelas pasti berkaitan dengan kepemilikan Keraton di Surakarta. Kalau setahu saya ini kan punya Keraton Kasunanan ya mas. Setelah saya lihat bangunannya itu ya saya ngerasa khas Jawa banget. Ngeliat pertama langsung kebayang gimana kehidupan kerajaan di Jawa jaman dahulu, masih banyak ulama- ulama, prajurit dan rakyat di Solo ini belum begitu mengenal Islam, dan kemudian perlahan mereka mulai mengenal apa itu Islam dengan dibangunnya Masjid Agung ini.” (Eng: “Yes. I believe this mosque is full of history, but I don’t really understand it. In my opinion, the Great Mosque of Surakarta relates to the spread of Islam on Javanese Island, specifically Surakarta, and clerics who intended to spread Islam in this region. The mosque also associates with Palace ownership in Surakarta. As far as I know, this mosque belongs to Kasunanan Palace, isn’t it? Once I see it, I can sense the Javanese kind of things, imagining how was royal life back then. There were a lot of clerics, soldiers, and community members who did not know Islam. They then slowly began to understand this religion with the construction of this Great Mosque”) (A Hasibuan 2021, personal communication, 31 October).

In the same tune, Aryadi also opines that the presence of the Great Mosque of Surakarta, which was established hundreds of years ago, plays a crucial role in the spread of Islam in Javanese Island, as seen from the integration of the building.

“Kalau menurut saya sih ya itu mas, ini bangunan sangat bersejarah dan memegang peranan penting pada masa penyebaran agama Islam di pulau Jawa, terkhusus kalau kaitannya dengan Masjid Agung Surakarta ya penyebaran Islam di Surakarta. Tentunya pasti banyak pihak yang terkait, dari berbagai elemen masyarakat, ada pemuka-pemuka agama, tokoh masyarakat, bahkan sampai Raja Pakubuwono ini pun saya yakin pasti terlibat waktu itu. Dilihat dari bangunannya sepertinya ya usia ratusan tahun, jadi ada kesan kuno dan banyak ukiran-ukiran khas Jawa yang menghiasi pintu-pintu masjid ini. Terus auranya itu beda mas, ada aura tersendiri gitu, adem. Kejawen, Islam semua terpadu jadi satu, dan ini bisa menunjukkan bahwa Islam itu bisa masuk ke segala lini masyarakat, dan toleransi akan terlihat indah ketika dipadukan dengan budaya setempat yang melekat pada masyarakat.” (Eng: “I think that this mosque is very historical and plays an important role during the time Islam was spread in Javanese Island, especially in Surakarta. I believe that many parties involved, including the people, religious leaders, prominent figures, and even Pakubuwono King. The building looks like it is hundreds of years old, creating an ancient feel. Lots of Javanese carvings adorn the doors of the mosque. The mosque also has its own ambience. Javanism and Islam become one, showing that Islam can unite with the local culture. Tolerance seems beautiful”) (Aryadi 2021, personal communication, 31 October).

Further, Yeni, a tourist from Semarang, says that this historical building combines elements of Java, Islam, and the Netherlands:

“Ya kalo saya sih ngeliatnya Jadul, tapi khas gitu mas. Jadi ya keliatan banget ini bangunan bersejarah. Ya mungkin lebih ke kaitannya sama sejarah Islam sih mas di Surakarta ini. Sama kalo saya kan pernah ke Masjid Agung Demak, lha ini yang Masjid Agung Surakarta lebih luas kalo secara bangunannya daripada Masjid Agung Demak. Kalo yang di Solo ini keliatan Jawa banget gitu bangunannya, walaupun ya ada perpaduan sama negara belanda sih kalo saya liat.” (Eng: “Yes, I see it very old-fashioned, but unique. It is obviously a historical building. I think this mosque is more about its relation to the history of Islam. I have been to the Great Mosque of Demak, but the Great Mosque of Surakarta is more spacious. I see that this mosque really shows a Javanese look, although being combined with the Dutch element”) (Yeni 2021, personal communication, 31 October).

Islamic ornaments are characterized by the use of Arabic calligraphy:

“Sae sanget mas, kok iso yo nggawe kados meniko. Antik banget, tapi ya ada unsur Islamnya yang saya suka. Ada tulisan-tulisan arabnya itu, seneng gitu.” (Eng: “So antique. I love the Islamic elements, the Arabic”) (Yeni 2021, personal communication, 31 October).

Javanese ornaments can also be seen in the Javanese carvings:

“O gitu ya mas. Iya sih mas, kaya kerajaan banget gitu kesannya. Pintu-pintunya keliatan khas Jawa, terus tiang-tiangnya itu kaya ada ukiran-ukiran juga, tapi ya aku ngeliatnya ini Jawa banget, dan estetik.” (Eng: “I see. Yes, it looks like a palace. The doors get the sense of Java, and the pillars have carvings. Overall, I see it very aesthetic and reflecting Java”) (Yeni 2021, personal communication, 31 October).

According to an interviewee who has lived around the Great Mosque of Surakarta since childhood, the mosque underwent minor renovation:

“Suasananya mas, dulu ya belum rame seperti ini. Terus ada beberapa bangunan yang didandani biar tetep bagus. Tapi ya nggak banyak berubah kok.” (Eng: “The ambiance. It was not crowded like this. Besides, some buildings are beautified, but not that much”) (M Murtijo 2021, personal communication, 31 October).

The Great Mosque of Surakarta is a historical building in spreading Islam, particularly on Java Island. The mosque that has been standing for hundreds of years looks classic and antique as it gets architectural influence from the Kasunanan Surakarta Palace located around the mosque. It is shown that the Great Mosque of Surakarta combines Javanese and Islamic elements, i.e., the use of aesthetic ornaments. Islamic ornaments include calligraphy, and the Javanese ones are flora and fauna carvings on the mosque doors and pillars with Dutch fort elements in the gate. This mosque has undergone some renovations, yet it has not changed its characteristics.

Tolerance of other Devotees

A study conducted by Nisvilyah (2013) reveals that a harmonious life in society is in line with the availability of space and time for devotees to safely worship according to their beliefs. The existence of a mosque as a Muslim house of worship has a good influence on other devotees. During the celebration of Eid al-Fitr, non-Muslim communities participate in halal bi halal (visiting family and relatives) events.

The Great Mosque of Surakarta among people with different ethnicities and religions does not trigger discrimination. Instead, they respect each other, as described by Maulid Murtijo:

“Masyarakat area sekitar masjid memang kebanyakan beragama islam. namun di sekitar masjid itu ada pasar klewer, yang pembelinya berasal dari seluruh indonesia karena pasar klewer sangat populer. pastinya para pembeli tersebut bukan hanya dari muslim saja, namun juga dari non muslim. masyarakat sini sangat ramah, tidak membedakan antara muslim dan non muslim. dan yang non muslim juga tidak merasa terganggu dengan keberadaan masjid di sebelah pasar tradisional klewer contohnya suara azan pada saat sholat lima waktu, tidak ada yang merasa keberatan dengan suara adzan tersebut” (Eng: “The people living around the mosque are mostly Islam. However, there’s a popular textile market called Pasar Klewer near the mosque whose buyers come from all over Indonesia with different religions. The people here are very friendly and don’t differentiate between Muslims and non-Muslims. Also, the non-Muslim communities are not bothered by the mosque next to the market, not to mention the call to prayer five times a day”) (M Murtijo, 2021, personal communication, 31 October).

Maulid Murtijo also adds that the tolerance between them can be witnessed during the Friday prayer:

“Masyarakat pemeluk agama selain islam juga tidak memperlakukan ketika dilaksanakan sholat jumat. Saat itu masjid sangat ramai didatangi oleh para jamaah hingga mengakibatkan kemacetan di area sekitar masjid, namun mereka tidak merasa terganggu oleh hal itu dan tetap melanjutkan kegiatan mereka.(Eng: “Non-Muslim communities have no problem with Friday prayer. During that time, the mosque is very crowded with worshipers, causing congestion around the mosque. Nevertheless, they are unbothered and continue their activities”) (M Murtijo, 2021, personal communication, 31 October).

The findings also show that the Great Mosque of Surakarta has built tolerance between religious communities, as seen in how the people around the mosque are not only Muslims. They respect any religious events held at the mosque. Additionally, the tolerance can also be viewed from the religious diversity of buyers and sellers at Pasar Klewer. Non-Muslim communities do not mind the presence and activities of the mosque, including the sound of the call to prayer and the crowd during the Friday prayer.

People's Economic Condition

The position of the Great Mosque of Surakarta and Pasar Klewer reminds us of the hadith regarding the relationship between mosques and markets (Purwadi, 2014). A study by Tiaranisa and Saputra (2021) suggests that the mosque and Pasar Klewer have a special relationship, in which there is a good reciprocal relationship between the two places. If a big event is held at the mosque, it will affect the local community's economy because those who watch the event will also visit Pasar Klewer for shopping. As a result, the people's income will increase. Until today, the presence of the mosque has a good impact on the local economy. The Great Mosque of Surakarta, as a tourist destination, will grow economic businesses which then better the community's income. Visitors who come to the mosque for tours also go to Pasar Klewer to shop or buy souvenirs for their families back home. The tourists also help improve the economy of the local people who sell food around the mosque.

The Great Mosque of Surakarta has helped the economy of retailers around the mosque, as stated by Mitarsih below:

“terus nek ekonomi mungkin saget mbantu pedagang-pedagang cilik sing teng mriki mas biar ekonominya itu muter terus.” [Javanese language] (Mitarsih 2021, personal communication, 31 October).

Similarly, Yeni also explains that the presence of this mosque helps better the economy of MSME:

“Terus kalo untuk ekonomi, ya paling bisa ngelarisin UMKM yang ada di sekitar masjid ini, bisa membantu perekonomian mereka, pengunjung masjid ini juga banyak yang dari luar kota sekalian mampir ke Pasar Klewer juga buat belanja produk-produk lokal.” (Eng: “In terms of the economy, the mosque can help the MSME be in demand and improve the economy. Many visitors of the mosque also come from out of town, so that they stop by Pasar Klewer to shop for local products”) (Yeni 2021, personal communication, 31 October).

Further, Aryadi expresses that the tourists get involved in helping the economy of the local community by buying local products at Pasar Klewer:

“Terus kalau dari sektor perekonomian, ya ini mungkin bisa membantu pedagang-pedagang kecil yang ada di sekitar Masjid Agung Surakarta, karena jaraknya juga berdekatan dengan Pasar Klewer, maka ya ini bisa menarik pengunjung juga untuk berbelanja produk lokal khas Solo. Dengan begitu bisa saling bersinergi antara menarik wisatawan dan juga menstabilkan perekonomian di Surakarta. Saya sendiri kalau datang ke sini, pasti satu paket, yaitu mampir di pasar klewer dan mampir di Masjid Agung Surakarta” (Eng: “For the economic sector, it may help retailers around the mosque as it is close to Pasar Klewer. It can attract the tourists to shop for Solo products, thus stabilizing the economy in Surakarta. Even if I come here myself, I will go to Pasar Klewer and the Great Mosque of Surakarta altogether”) (Aryadi 2021, personal communication, 31 October).

The Great Mosque of Surakarta has helped the economy of the local people. The results reveal that retailers around the mosque benefit from the tourists who come and buy their products. MSME and sellers at Pasar Klewer also receive a positive impact in terms of the economic sector. In addition to visiting the mosque, the tourists, both from Surakarta, other regions, and even other countries, also stop by the market to shop for local products, thus helping improve the local community's economy.

Supporting Tourism

The Great Mosque of Surakarta is chosen as a tourist destination for some tourists. Amalina and Achnes (2017), in their study, point out that tourists do not travel only for fun but also to enhance their insights and skills. The term “religious tourism” is familiar to a Muslim. It is a kind of tourism when one visits a place with a religious history to gain insights and deepen religious values. Another research by Fitriani and Wilardjo (2017) indicates that from the economic perspective, tourism activities will contribute to a region through funds from parking fees and tickets, taxes, and earning foreign exchange from international tourists. For such reasons, as a tourist attraction, this mosque is a state asset if appropriately managed.

The Great Mosque of Surakarta has become one of the tourist destinations in the city of Surakarta. The location is very strategic and close to other tourist attractions, such as Kasunanan Surakarta Palace, Pasar Klewer, Alun-Alun Surakarta, and Vastenburg Fort. Hence, the tourists can visit these sites at the same time. The tourists, who come from various regions, visit the Great Mosque of Surakarta due to its strategic location near the palace. They also want to improve their insights by understanding the history of the palace.

The Great Mosque of Surakarta contributes to the tourism sector, as emphasized by Asrul Hasibuan below.

“Kalau saya lebih condong memberikan kontribusi di sektor pariwisata mas, karena Masjid Agung ini sangat khas corak-coraknya, Jawa banget dan ini bisa memberikan gambaran terkait sejarah penyebaran agama Islam pada masa sebelum kemerdekaan, mengingatkan perjuangan para ulama, tokoh-tokoh masyarakat dalam menyebarkan agama Islam di Indonesia, terkhusus di Pulau Jawa ini. Masjid itu fokusnya lebih ke tempat untuk ibadah dan wisata yang sifatnya religi. Istilah saya itu gak lengkap jika ke Surakarta gak ke Masjid Agung Surakarta” (Eng: “I think the mosque tends to contribute to the tourism sector due to its unique style that reflects Java. This mosque can also depict the history of how Islam was spread before independence, reminding us the struggle of the clerics and prominent figures in spreading Islam in Indonesia, especially in Java Island. The mosque focuses more on places for worship and religious tourism. I mean, it’s not complete if you go to Surakarta without having a visit to the Great Mosque of Surakarta”) (A Hasibuan 2021, personal communication, 31 October).

Tourists can visit this mosque as a religious tourist attraction and gain insight into the spread of Islam in Java, as expressed by Yeni:

“Kalo pariwisata ya mungkin bisa menarik pengunjung untuk wisata religi, bisa napak tilas jaman penyebaran agama Islam dulu di Jawa.” (Eng: “In terms of tourism, the mosque can attract people for religious tourism, retracing the history of the spread of Islam in Java”) (Yeni 2021, personal communication, 31 October).

The Great Mosque of Surakarta is a worth-visiting destination for both the local community and international tourists. Endang states that:

“Ya bisa banget sih mas, malah menurutku kalo buat wisatawan asing juga bisa, misal mereka mungkin pengen liat kebudayaan Jawa, atau pengen liburan aja gitu, atau malah buat diteliti, biasanya kan ada yang mereka kuliah lagi di Indonesia, terus neliti tentang kebudayaan gitu.” (Eng: *“Of course. In my opinion, international tourists can come to this mosque to see Javanese culture, or simply for holiday or research. There are students who study in Indonesia and conduct a research on culture”*) (Endang 2021, personal communication, 31 October).

According to an interviewee who has lived around the Great Mosque of Surakarta since childhood, the local people visit this mosque together with other groups of tourists for religious tourism:

“Kalau sektor pariwisata, menurut saya ini bisa untuk salah satu referensi wisata religius, melihat sejarah jejak penyebaran agama Islam di Jawa. Kemudian ya bisa memperkenalkan kebudayaan Jawa dan Keraton Kasunanan ini kepada wisatawan baik dari luar kota hingga mancanegara, karena bangunan ini perlu dilestarikan, dijaga dan dirawat sebaik mungkin sebagai peninggalan leluhur kita yang terdahulu. Apalagi kalau orang Solo, wajib menurut saya untuk menjaga ini. Sering-sering didatangi, sholat jamaah disini, hati juga jadi tenang. Terus ini kan juga bisa dipake acara-acara yang besar, berkaitan dengan agama Islam, mungkin pengajian mendatangkan habib-habib, ulama, atau ustadz yang kajiannya bisa bermanfaat bagi umat Islam.” (Eng: *“In terms of the tourism sector, this mosque can serve as one of the references to religious tourism, considering the history of the spread of Islam in Java. Besides, it can also introduce the culture of Java and Kasunanan Palace to national and international tourists because this building needs to be preserved and taken care of as ancestral heritage. Specifically, the local community of Solo has to take care of this mosque by frequently praying in congregation here. We can also hold big events here at the mosque about Islam, such as Quran recitation inviting habib, clerics, or ustad (Islam teacher or master) whose studies can be useful for Muslims”*) (M Murjito 2021, personal communication, 31 October).

Several events usually held at the Great Mosque of Surakarta include:

“Ya kalau acaranya seringnya pengajian, hadrah, maulidan, ya gitu sih mas.” (Eng: *“Quran recitation, Hadra (Islam ritual), and Mawlid (the observance of the birthday of the Prophet Muhammad) celebration”*) (M Murtijo 2021, personal communication, 31 October).

The Great Mosque of Surakarta contributes to tourism in Surakarta. It is shown that the mosque has unique, antique, and classic architecture as it combines the elements of Java and Islam. Thus, it can attract local and international tourists to discover the diversity of Javanese culture reflected in the building. This Great Mosque is very popular in Java because its presence is inextricably linked with the history of the spread of Islam on this island. The mosque serves as a religious tourist attraction for locals to get to know the figures who have contributed to the spread of Islam and improve knowledge of the process of spreading Islam in Java.

Conclusion

The Great Mosque of Surakarta is a historical mosque located on the Java Island, precisely in Surakarta, Central Java. It is close to public places, including Pasar Klewer, Alun-Alun Utara Surakarta, and shops. The lives of the local people are closely related to the mosque as their worship place. The mosque combines Islamic Ornaments and Javanese Ornaments as the architecture. Moreover, the use of Javanese ornaments is influenced by the Kasunanan Surakarta Palace around the mosque. These ornaments are more dominantly used than Islamic ornaments.

The findings show Javanese culture acculturation in the Great Mosque of Surakarta with the use of Javanese ornaments. People around the mosque are very tolerant; non-Muslim communities are never disturbed by the activities held at the mosque. The Great Mosque of Surakarta has also positively impacted the economic sector, especially the retailers around the mosque and sellers at the Pasar Klewer. The mosque has also become a religious tourist attraction for local and international tourists to observe the history of the spread of Islam in the Java Island and see the beauty of Javanese ornaments.

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