

Hindu Culture at the *Menara Kudus* Mosque, Indonesia and Its Influence on Society

Slamet Supriyadi^{1*}, Nadia Sigi Prameswari², Endang Widiyastuti³,
Muhammad Rahman Athian⁴

^{1,3}Art Education Program, Faculty of Teacher Training and Education,
Universitas Sebelas Maret, Surakarta, Indonesia

^{2,4}Department of Visual Arts, Universitas Negeri Semarang, Semarang,
Indonesia

*Corresponding Author's email: pripus@staff.uns.ac.id

Abstract

The Menara Kudus Mosque, built-in 1549 AD has been influenced by some civilizations and is currently used as a site of worship and pilgrimage for Muslims. This research examines the Menara Kudus Mosque building that has similarities with the Hindu temple heritage of the Majapahit Kingdom, which was acculturated with Islamic teachings.

The study uses qualitative research methods. It was conducted in May-June 2022 with a case study at the Menara Kudus Mosque. Data was collected using observations and interviews with visitors, mosque administrators, and the community around the Menara Kudus Mosque.

The research uncovers that the tower's architecture is distinctive in that it takes the shape of a Hindu temple and incorporates aspects of Javanese culture. Islamic ornaments account for 38% of the building, followed by Hindu ornaments (18%), Buddhist ornaments (5%), and Javanese ornaments (15%), Mughal-Indian ornaments (2%) and Dutch-Indies ornaments (1%), and 34 porcelain ornaments (21%) in the shape of pottery mounted on the outer walls of the Menara Kudus building. The condition of the Mosque does not vary from the Islamic principles in its construction.

Islamic ornaments dominate the mosque structures. Islamic ornaments signify the Mosque's existence in a multicultural context. On the other hand, Hindu-Buddhist ornaments are used to respect the local culture and as an Islamization of the society. The Javanese ornamentations represent a Walisongo mosque construction style for years. Meanwhile, jewelry from the Dutch East Indies and Mughal-India is utilized only as a compliment.

The Menara Kudus Mosque has an impact on people's religious sentiments as well as other parts of their lives. The findings reveal that the cultural acculturation at the Menara Kudus Mosque represented aesthetic decorations and the community's customs. The community's practice of appreciating and assisting one other's religious activities demonstrates tolerance amongst the religious groups.

The Menara Kudus Mosque can improve the economy of the neighbourhood around the Mosque and the Kudus's regional income. This Mosque has survived as a place of worship, a historical structure, and a symbol of tolerance amongst religious communities in the Kudus Regency.

Keywords: ornament, culture, Hinduism, Islam, mosque

Introduction

Muslim traders from Arabia, India, and Persia introduced the process of Islamization and the development of an Islamic empire to Indonesia in the archipelago's history. They were always accompanied by Islamic scholars and preachers (Saifullah, 2010). The spread of Islam in Java, Indonesia, cannot be separated from the role of Wali Songo, with the Demak area as the center of the reach of Islam at that time (Azzaki *et al.*, 2021). Kudus, also known as the kretek city is a city in the Central Java Province, Indonesia (Nur and Farohi, 2019). Before the arrival of Islam in Kudus, the majority of the local populace practiced the Hindu-Buddhist faith (Habibullah *et al.*, 2022). *Sunan Kudus* as one of the *Wali Songo* tried to expand Islam to Kudus by using a fabian approach, namely adapting, being pragmatic, letting pre-existing customs, and changing these cultural values little by little, which at that time was still dominated by Hindu culture (Geertz, 1982; Triyanto *et al.*, 2019). Since then, Islamic influences have been assimilated into pre-existing Hindu and Buddhist civilizations (Syah, 2016).

The growth of Islam in Kudus Regency was greatly aided by the acculturation of Hindu culture, particularly in religious construction. The society, primarily non-Muslim at the time, was particularly supportive of Islam since it preached tolerance for Hindu-Buddhist culture and Animism (Indrahti, 2012). During the period, Islamic teachings utilized both Javanese and Hindu cultures in their approach (Rosyid, 2019). The individuals who readily embrace Islamic teachings boost the missionaries' cultural and preaching spirits in the Kudus region (Kharis, 2020).

The Mosque's primary role is to serve as a place of prayer for Muslims (Halimah and Iqbal, 2019). The notion of a mosque evolved not just for religious ceremonies but also for the community's social needs and services, particularly for Muslims, in addition to being utilized as a place of worship (Asif *et al.*, 2021). The mosque is constantly there and has become an important site for the community, especially Muslims, in this heterogeneous society (Hidayat, 2011). The mosque serves as a religious tourism destination too. Moghavvemi *et al.* (2021) point out that the presence of a mosque might be a religious tourism destination to improve spiritual knowledge and understanding of the mosque's historical and cultural assets. Kessler (2015) says that the presence of mosques as sacred tourism sites impacts micro-economic growth and the global economy. The mosque also plays a vital role in developing community empowerment and social engagement. According to Navajas-Romero *et al.* (2020), mosques play an essential role in society by hosting educational events, forming a cadre of individuals and serving as hubs for Islamic da'wah and culture.

The Menara Kudus Mosque, which Sheikh Ja'far Sadiq or Sunan Kudus founded in 956 H or 1549 AD as a form of spiritual expression of *Wali Songo*, is inextricably linked to Sunan Kudus's journey in propagating Islam in Kretek (Hascaryo *et al.*, 2008). The *Menara Kudus* Mosque was featured as a community mosque since it was located on a small street and served as a place of worship for the community surrounding the mosque (Pradisa, 2017). It was created with a high level of beauty and a center for preaching and worship for the Kudus community. The Mosque's architecture represents Hindu and Islamic culture, implying that the Kudus people, who were Hindu then, did not find it strange to worship in the mosque because its shape was identical to the temple (Indrahti, 2012). The atmosphere, location, and time when the mosque was founded determine the mosque's form, purpose, and role (Sumalyo, 2006). The *Menara Kudus* Mosque is a cultural heritage monument with harmonious adornment and carving motifs due to the fusion of Hindu and Islamic traditions and acculturation in Java (Balai Pelestarian Cagar Budaya Jawa Tengah, 2019).

There have been numerous studies on the acculturation of Hindu and Islamic cultures. Kharis (2020) points out that the Kudus population can be Islamized through a cultural approach seen in the *Menara Kudus* Mosque construction, which mixes historic Javanese, Mughal Indian, and Hindu-Buddhist mosque architecture that does not contradict Islamic principles. In his study of the shape of the *Menara Kudus* Mosque and *Bale Kulkul*, Roesmanto (2013) claim that due to acculturation with Hindu culture, the shape of the

Menara Kudus Mosque resembles temples in East Java. Nasichah (2019) emphasizes that the architecture of ancient mosques in the Java region is influenced not only by the Islamic culture but also by Hindu, Javanese, and Chinese cultures. Thus, they become multicultural buildings. Siswayanti (2016) also studied the acculturation of Hindu and Islamic cultures in some ancient mosque buildings in Indonesia and show the dominance of the acculturation influence on the local culture of the surrounding community. According to Haq (2020), the *Menara Kudus* Mosque's acculturation impacts its layout, which is unique among mosques. It lacks elements such as a square, districts, or palaces found in other Old Javanese mosques. Acculturation between the Hindu and Islamic cultures has been well studied, but no one has addressed the form of acculturation in old mosque buildings in the Kudus Regency.

This study investigates and evaluates the acculturation of Hindu, Islamic, and Javanese cultures expressed in mosque architecture, ornamentation, and sculptures. Furthermore, it examines tolerance in the Kudus community, the role of the *Menara Kudus* Mosque on tourism in the Kudus Regency, and the role of the *Menara Kudus* Mosque in encouraging the economic growth of the local community.

Literature Review

Ornamentaion

Islamic Ornament

Islamic architecture and ornamentation can be found in many mosque structures. Rochym (1983), in his study of the architecture of mosques in Indonesia, says that the ornaments in mosques were influenced often by the styles of Syria, Egypt, Iran, North Africa, and a small number of countries in Asia, where Islam developed. His study also shows that Islamic ornamentation in mosques is frequently in the form of plants, symbols, or other geometric shapes because Islamic doctrines forbid the representation of animals and humans. Circular and twisting shapes, idealized representations of plant development, are common motifs in Arabaesk decorations (originating in Arab countries).

In another study conducted by Nirmala, et.al (2019) regarding Islamic Ornaments in the Architectural Building of the Depok Gold Dome Dian Al Mahri Mosque, Islamic ornaments in mosques reflect Islamic principles, such as a triangle as a sign of Faith, Islam, and Ihsan, and a hexagon foundation as a symbol of the Pillars of Faith. Islamic ornaments in most Depok Gold Dome Dian Al-Mahri Mosque are divided into three: calligraphy, geometric embellishment, and Arabic. While Rahayu et.al (2017), in their study of the acculturation values of the Great Mosque of Sulaiman Banyumas, mentions different things related to the acculturation of Islamic values contained in mosques, including (1) religiosity, (2) tolerance, (3) cooperation, and (4) creativity. Many symbols are incorporated into the architectural forms of the Mosque, such as the dome, which is said to be a symbol of the sky, the number of columns that represent specific numbers in Islam, and the infinitive ornament which symbolizes the infinity of God. These symbols can be the result of the architect's reflection. They can also be taken for granted knowledge or passed down from generation to generation among designers (Handoko, 2013).

Widayat and Prameswari (2022) in their study about Acculturation of Islamic and Javanese ornaments in the Great Mosque of Surakarta have discovered that Islamic ornaments are applied in 30 points or compose up to 18% which focused on the main building of the mosque as a place of worship. Islamic ornaments were found in many elements of an ancient Javanese mosque, such as in the mihrab, windows, doors, pillars, and towers. Generally, the Islamic ornaments at Great Mosque of Surakarta have stylized plant motifs, geometry, arabesque and calligraphy. In the Great Mosque of Surakarta area, the Islamic ornaments can be found in the roof of Bangsal Pradangga, an administrative office and a motorcycle parking area, the roof of wudhu room, four windows at the front of the main worship room, a mimbar used by religious leaders in preaching, roof of male dormitory at the back of the Great Mosque of Surakarta, roof of female dormitory at the back of the Great Mosque of Surakarta, roof of residence for the administrators of the Great Mosque of

Surakarta, foundation pillars, the roof of school building, wall fence, seven entrances to access the mosque congregation into the worship room, seven sections of backside of the entrance to the worship room, and a mihrab. Islamic ornaments in the Mosque are dominated by calligraphy above the entrance, mihrab, windows, and actower. In addition to calligraphy, the tower also has an arabesque ornament. The frames of five exterior doors are added with wooden panels carved with geometric ornaments.

Hindu Ornament

The Hindu-Buddhist heritage greatly influenced mosques built at the start of Islam's entrance into Java. As a result, Hindu ornamentation predominates in Wali mosque construction over Islamic ornaments (Supatmo and Syafii, 2019). Siswayanti (2016) says that the architecture of the Sunan Giri Mosque represents the architecture of Hindu and Javanese culture. The characteristic Hindu ornaments in mosque including solar ornaments, flora, pineapple, *meru*, *kalamakara*, and *padmasana*. The *mustaka* on the roof of the three-storied Mosque resembles a *meru* on a Hindu building, the mihrab of the Mosque is in the form of *kalamakara*, the pulpit of the Mosque is in the form of a *padmasana*, and the throne is equipped with Majapahit solar ornaments, flora, and pineapple, and the gate of the Mosque is in the shape of a *paduraksa*. At the time of the Wali, the combination of Hindu culture, traditional Javanese architecture, and Islam was often associated with the process of Islamization, and its use was permitted but did not conflict with Islamic teachings.

Roesmanto (2013), in his study of the shape of the minarets of the Kudus mosque, mentioned that the characteristic of ornaments in the Kudus mosque and the *bale kulkul* have similarities with temples in East Java, such as the Jago temple, Kidal temple, and Singasari temple. The shape of the Menara Kudus Mosque consists of the upper part standing above the lower part, with a square plan. Although it has similarities with the shape of the Hindu temples and temples in general, the Menara Kudus Mosque has differences in construction and some of its architecture, including the upper part of the Menara and Bale Kulkul buildings in the form of a wooden frame construction bale, *tajug* overlapping type. The roof of the tower building is supported by 4 *sakaguru* and 12 edge *saka*; *Bale Kulkul* roof is supported by 4, 8, 12, 16 *saka*. Then, the location of the Kudus Mosque Tower building on its land does not apply the building design pattern of Kidal Temple, Jago Temple, Singasari Temple; and *Bale Kulkul* buildings in temple and puri complexes, and *Bale Banjar* in Bali.

Many Hindu ornaments are found in ancient mosque buildings in Indonesia as a result of acculturation between Islamic culture and pre-Islamic culture. Generally, the Hindu ornaments in the mosque are visually similar to the shape of the ornaments in the temple buildings, especially the temples of Majapahit heritage. Characteristics of decorative motifs originating from Majapahit can be identified in the form of decorative motifs of leaves, flowers, coral hills, scenery, makara, snakes, garuda, gunung, solar majapahit and lotus flowers. In addition, the Majapahit decorative motifs are also depicted in the shape of a circle and krawingan (concave) and consist of the tip of the ukel and the leaves of hibiscus and ferns (sulur). These ornaments are also a silent witness to the history of the development of Islam in Indonesia and a symbol of tolerance among religious communities (Mandiri, 2017). The Majapahit Hindu ornaments found at the Sang Cipta Rasa Mosque, Cirebon, West Java, Indonesia are the *Bajang Ratu* ornament at the mosque gate that looks like the *Bajang Ratu* Majapahit gate, the Majapahit solar ornament at the top of the Mosque's mihrab which resembles a beam of light, the lotus flower ornament in the form of a bud found on the top of the Mosque's mihrab. The Mosque's mihrab is like a lotus ornament found around the statue of Raden Wijaya's embodiment, as well as tendril-shaped ornaments found in several elements of the Mosque's building, such as on the walls of the Minakjinggo Temple.

Research Methods

This is a qualitative research with a case study of the *Menara Kudus* Mosque. Qualitative research includes a set of techniques for examining and comprehending the meanings that some persons or groups attach to social or humanitarian issues (Creswell,

2006). This research aims to figure out how the *Menara Kudus* Mosque mirrored the acculturation of Hindu and Islamic civilizations. In addition, the impact of the *Menara Kudus* Mosque on the surrounding community is also investigated in this study.

This study took place in May and June of 2022. Observations and interviews were employed to collect data. The observation process was carried out at and around the *Menara Kudus* Mosque. The sampling technique was carried out using purposive sampling completed with the criteria of informants. In this research, there were 8 informants consisted of 2 merchants, 2 visitors, 3 mosque administrators, and 1 local resident. The primary criteria for each informant were: 1) deep knowledge about the mosque; and 2) have visited mosque at least 5 times.

The analysis in this study is based on the investigation of Widayat and Prameswari (2022) about the acculturation of Javanese and Islamic culture in the Surakarta Grand Mosque edifice (Widayat and Prameswari, 2022). In addition, analysis of ornaments, demography, tolerance, economy and tourism were investigated.

There are several stages of analysis, as follows.

- 1) Demography of the Kauman Kudus Regency area.
- 2) Analysis of the uniqueness of the *Menara Kudus* Mosque.
- 3) Analysis of the ornaments and carvings
- 4) Analysis of acculturation of culture and society at the *Menara Kudus* Mosque.
- 5) Analysis of community tolerance around the Mosque.
- 6) Analysis of the role of the *Menara Kudus* Mosque on tourism in the Kudus Regency.
- 7) Analysis of the role of the *Menara Kudus* Mosque on the economy of the surrounding community.

The table below is the demographic data of informants, consisting of merchants, visitors, local residents, and mosque administrators.

Table 1. Informants' demography

No	Name	Gender	Age	Occupation	Hometown	Frequency of visiting
1.	Syarifudin	Male	43	Merchant	Blitar	Everyday, 4 times
2.	Rita	Female	30	Merchant	Kudus	Everyday, 4 times
3.	Sawaf	Male	23	Local resident	Kudus	Everyday, 5 times
4.	Nur Habibullah	Male	59	Mosque administrator	Pemalang	Everyday, 4 times
5.	Hardi	Male	46	Visitor	Kudus	5 times
6.	Alim	Male	36	Mosque administrator	Kudus	Everyday, 4 times
7.	Suparno	Male	51	Visitor	Bondowoso	7 times
8.	Abdul Ghofur	Male	64	Mosque administrator	Kudus	Everyday, 5 times

Source: Authors

Based on the table above, the demographic characteristics of the informants in this

study included gender, age, and occupation. The informants consisted of 8 people, 7 of them were men. The average age of the informants was 44 years old. Most of the informants came from Kudus Regency. The occupation of each informant consisted of 2 merchants, 2 visitors, 3 mosque administrators, and 1 local community. Informants who work as traders every day sell around the mosque so that when prayer time arrives, they will rest to pray at the mosque. For visitors who come from outside the city, their purpose of coming to the Menara Kudus Mosque is for tours and pilgrimages for the guardians every year, while for the administrators and local residents, they come to the mosque every day to perform the 5 daily prayers at the mosque.

Finding and the Discussion

Demographic of the *Kauman Kudus Regency area*

Kauman village, according to its toponym, is the neighbourhood where the scholars live, which is located around the Menara mosque. The Kauman Kudus area is identical to the middle-upper class breed with trade and educated livelihood, occupying a high social stratum (Rosyid, 2018). Geographically, Kauman Village is adjacent to several villages, known as the Menara Kudus Area. To the South, it is bordered by the Janggalan Village. To the North, it is bordered by the Karyasan Village, to the West Damaran Village, and on the East by Langgar Dalem Village (Rosyid, 2019). Kauman village has an area of 0.40 km², with the entire population Muslim (Nurini, 2011; BPS Kabupaten Kudus, 2021). Kauman Village is the area with the smallest population in the Kudus City District. The total population is only 395 people, with 195 males and 200 females (BPS Kabupaten Kudus, 2021). This village in Kauman is unique and closed. From the visual impression of the environment, the wall fence is high enough to cover the entire house. However, this condition has become rare because the number of original houses has decreased due to the increasing economic needs. What distinguishes it from other villages (especially those in the middle of an urban area) is that Muslims and Javanese ethnicity only inhabit Kauman Village, several houses are *dikilung* (high-fenced), and it only consists of three Neighbourhood Associations and one Citizen Association.

The area of Kauman Village is known as *gusjigang* (*gus*: good behaviour, *ji/ngaji*: learning Islamic knowledge, and *gang*: trading). As an Islamic area, in the Kauman Village, there are historical sites left by Sunan Kudus when spreading Islam in the Kudus area. There are the al-Manarat Mosque, the al-Aqsa Mosque, the Tomb of Sunan Kudus and his family, and an open space in the form of the Banyan Garden in the middle between the Madureksan Mosque and the Hok Ling Bio Temple. The Banyan Park was in the past a traditional market that has been converted now. These sites are rich in aesthetics of acculturation of Hindu-Buddhist culture with Islam, so the mosque building and traditions which devel symbolize tolerance between religious communities. Looking at the mosque foundation complex and the Sunan Kudus Tomb from the front, the al-Aqsa Mosque and the al-Manarat Mosque are seen side by side (the *Menara Kudus* Mosque). The Al-Aqsa Mosque has unique traits that distinguish it from other mosques. It's overall shape is influenced by the Hindu, Buddhist, and Mughal Indian cultures (Said, 2013).

The Uniqueness of the *Menara Kudus* Mosque

The Mosque was constructed to propagate Islam throughout the Kudus Regency. It combines Hindu-Buddhist, Javanese, and Arabic architectural styles. The proportions and shape of the Mosque demonstrate the Hindu features that prevail in every aspect of the Mosque, in addition to distinct materials from the mosque constructions in general. The choice of red brick as the principal architectural material is a defining feature of the mosque complex.



Fig. 1: Differences in the architecture of the *Menara Kudus* Mosque using Hindu Majapahit style in the past (left) and the presence of the architecture of the *Menara Kudus* Mosque using Islamic technique (right).

Source: Authors

In Fig. 1, the tower building on the front left, at a glance, looks like a temple building from the Majapahit Kingdom. In the past, the construction of the Mosque took on the *Hindu Majapahit* style, so it seemed ancient. Meanwhile, the *Menara Kudus* Mosque is being covered in Islamic nuances while retaining the Hindu-Buddhist cultural aspects that have existed for a long time. The head of the tower, made of teak wood with four pillars supporting two stacks of canopy roofs, is formed like a *mustaka* (head), referencing Javanese-Hindu architectural aspects such as the top of the overlapping roof of the main building of traditional mosques in Java. The resemblance of the building is a camouflage carried out by Sunan Kudus to attract the hearts of the Kudus people who have converted to Islam so that they are comfortable worshiping in the Mosque and feel that it is like a house of worship in the previous religion. This is similar to the research conducted by Zainuri (2020), which states that several mosques in Indonesia are places of worship for Muslims that have the form of Hindu or Buddhist buildings. In addition, architecture adopts many structures from the Middle East, such as roofs, domes, and ornaments.

In the past, mosques in Java had a shape similar to the architecture of a temple. It is due to acculturation between local and foreign cultures as part of Islamization. Adityaningrum et.al (2020) note that in the construction of mosques, Islamic elements have become syncretic with elements of traditional Javanese architecture. Hence, the meaning contained in mosque architecture also shows the integration of these two elements. Moreover, mosques with ancient architecture will undoubtedly save the sense of physical (Hindu-Buddhist architecture) and non-physical culture.

The Minaret of the Menara Kudus Mosque

The minaret building at the *Menara Kudus* Mosque is the most monumental building that has a Hindu Majapahit style. The unique shape and large size will not be found in mosque buildings worldwide. The tower building has a height of 18 meters and a length of 100 square meters. The tower building of the Mosque has an architecture similar to a Hindu-Buddhist temple. This can be observed from the shape of the tower that resembles *Bale kulkul* in Hindu-Buddhist-style buildings that are often found in houses in traditional Balinese villages. *Bale kulkul* generally shrinks on the roof, a pattern of building forms like that was also applied by Sunan Kudus in constructing the mosque tower. The *bale kulkul* on the mosque minaret serves as a location to beat the drum marking the time of prayer and the arrival of Ramadan. In contrast, the *bale kulkul* on the mosque minaret serves as a place to strike the gong as a marker of events or deliver information. The tower's legs and body, which were built and carved with Javanese-Hindhu features and traits, including the motif, demonstrate the tower's distinctiveness. Another feature of the elements is the use of non-cement adhesive bricks and the presence of a *Pradaksinapatta* corridor at the base of the building, which is customary in temple structures.

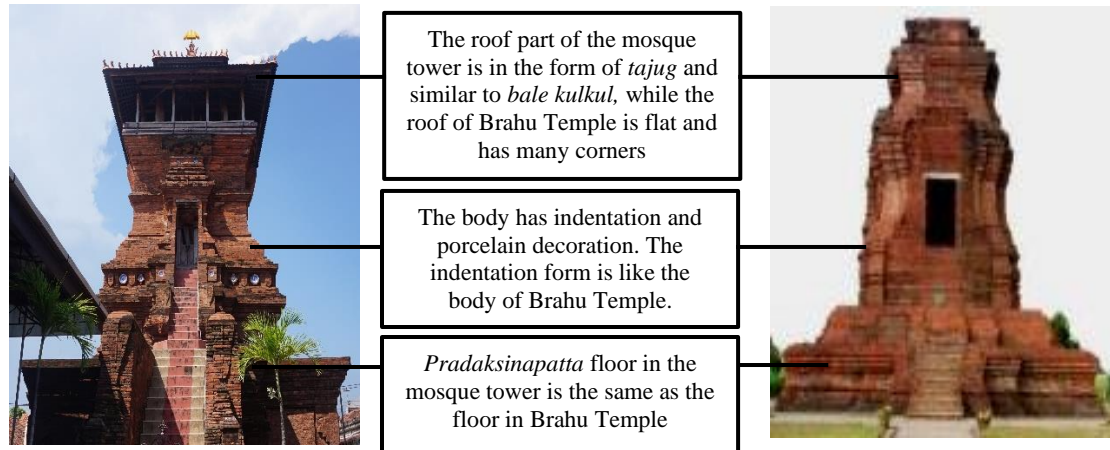


Fig. 2: Comparison of the architecture of the Kudus Mosque Tower (left) and Brahu Temple (right)
Source: Authors

The foot of the tower is composed of brick materials without adhesive and has three seams arranged into one. At the base, there are also Hindu patterned ornaments. The middle part is the protruding part, while the roof consists of several regions where the lower we go, the wider the arrangement pattern (as in Fig. 2). Several *Majapahit* heritage temples, such as Singosari and *Brahu* temples, have the same tower shape. In the center of the tower, as in the body of *Brahu* Temple, there is an indentation. The bottom body of the tower is a broad and high seam divided in half by a thick frame; the middle is a slender square with walls on the East, North, and South sides and an unfilled niche measuring 1.4 m x 0.85 m. It has the appearance of a temple niche. If *Brahu* Temple lacks reliefs and carvings, the *Menara Kudus* Mosque is adorned with diverse carving designs. On the West side is a teak wood entrance with temple sculptures in every corner, which leads to a booth. A plate with a Chinese ornament artwork is still in the middle. There are 32 porcelain ornaments on the tower's body, with the top consisting of a horizontal seam arrangement that grows taller and wider and is supported by 16 pillars. Geometric patterns cross each other on the tower's body, and porcelain images of mosques, humans, camels, date palms, and flowers surround the tower's body. The mosque drum is hung under the roof facing North-South and there is a word of Allah on the top. The difference between the *Menara Kudus* Mosque and the temple lies in the number, if in the temple, the number of buildings is not only one building, but there are complementary buildings, while the *Menara Kudus* Mosque only has one building without complementary buildings.

The Gate of the Menara Kudus Mosque

Aside from the tower, the *Menara Kudus* Mosque has another significant feature in the form of a gate that is distinctive in its own right. The gate is commonly referred to as a gate in Javanese. The word "gate" comes from the Arabic word "*Ghafura*" (al-Ghaffar), which means "most forgiving." The Hindu temple's gate structure is a representation of *Mahameru* Peak and a metaphor for representing the entrance to paradise. The Mosque's gate, on the other hand, is seen as a path to Allah's forgiveness. According to Javanese culture, those who enter the gate can expect forgiveness, joy, and contentment in their lives. There are three Hindu-Buddhist-style gates in the *Menara Kudus* Mosque: the *Candi Bentar* gate, the *Paduraksa* gate leading to Sunan Kudus' mausoleum, and the *kori agung* 'lawang kembar' gate.

The Gate of Candi Bentar Masjid Menara Kudus

The shape of the front gate of the Mosque is visually similar to the *Candi Bentar* building in Hindu art. *Candi Bentar* is a gate that resembles a symmetrical part of a mountain, generally without a roof (see Fig. 3). In Java, the *Candi Bentar* Gate was mostly built after the

collapse of the Hindu-Buddhist Kingdom or during the transition from Hinduism to Islam. At the beginning of the Mosque's construction, Gapura Bentar, located at the front of the Mosque, served as a fence for the Mosque's courtyard. However, at this time, Gapura Bentar functioned as the entrance to the Al-Aqsa Mosque.

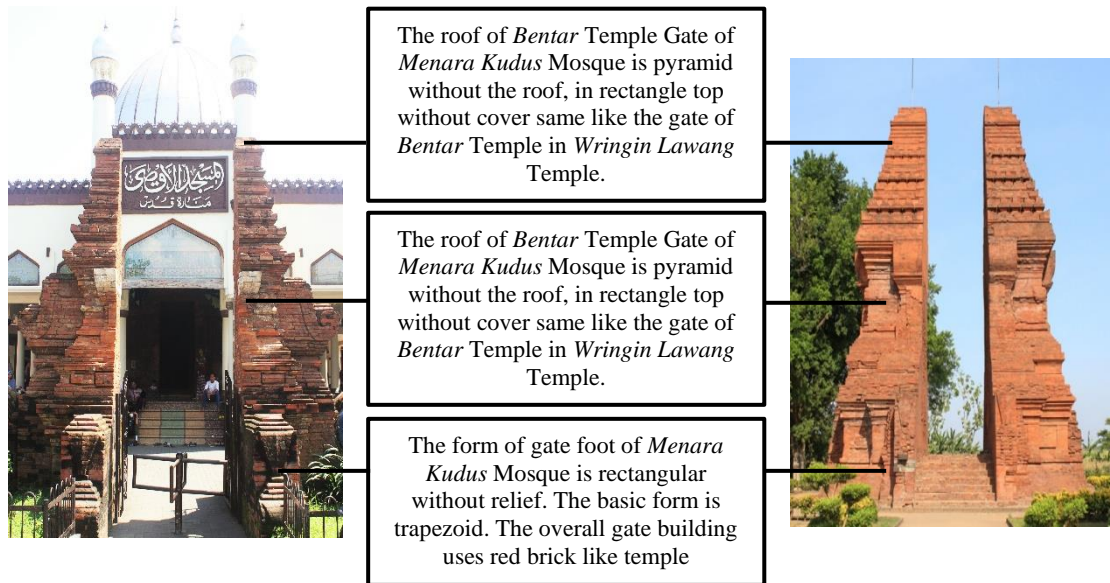


Fig. 3: Comparison of the architecture of the Gate of *Bentar* of the *Menara Kudus* Mosque (left) and the Gate of *Bentar* the *Wringin Lawang* Temple (right)
Source: Authors

Of the first appearance, the Candi Bentar Gate at the *Menara Kudus* Mosque resembles the Candi Bentar Gate at the *Wringin Lawang* Temple structure (see Fig. 3). The *Candi Bentar* gate of the *Menara Kudus* Mosque is similar to the *Wringin Lawang* Temple entrance in that both are made of red bricks and have a roof in the shape of a stacked pyramid with no top. Another similarity can be noticed in the trapezoidal gate's basic form. Other Hindu temples' *Candi Bentar* Gates usually include reliefs or ornaments. However, the *Menara Kudus* Mosque's *Candi Bentar* Gate lacks sculptures on all sides.

Paduraksa Gate of the Menara Kudus Mosque

The Sunan Kudus Tomb's gate (see Fig. 4) is shaped like the Paduraksa Gate, with a symbolic animal adornment at the bottom. On both sides of the entrance, the figurative ornament is in the form of two twin animals in the shape of a deer or rabbit facing each other. In Hinduist-Buddhist art, animal figures are frequently related to mythological animals, commonly shown in *Tantri* or *Jataka* stories. On the walls of *Singasari* temples and the lids of the *Surawana* Temple in East Java, figurative animal motifs can be discovered. Because the temple is the embodiment of *Mahameru*, animal themes are generally the manifestation of animals in the mountains and woods, and the relief of the temple is considered a metaphor for representing the wilderness surrounding humanity, where there is a path to heaven.

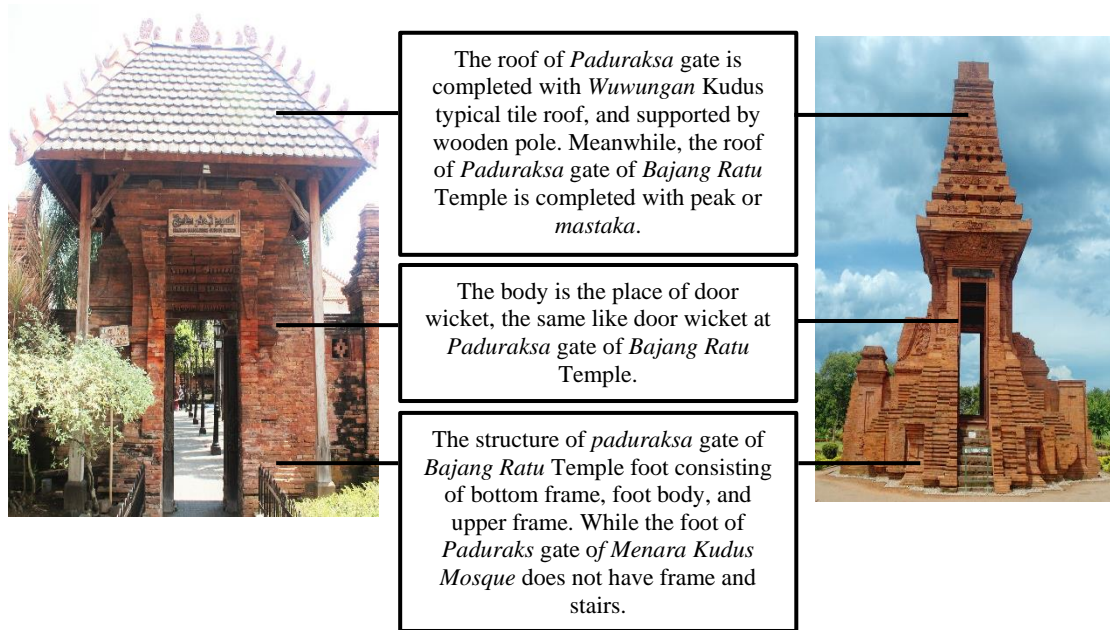


Fig. 4: Comparison of Islamic architecture at the *Paduraksa* Gate of the *Menara Kudus* Mosque (left) and the Hindu architecture of the *Paduraksa* Gate of *Bajang Ratu* Temple (right)

Source: Authors

Compared to Hindu temples' *Paduraksa* gate architecture, the *Menara Kudus* Mosque's *Paduraksa* Gate does not fully incorporate Hindu culture but provides the impression of Javanese architecture. Fig. 4 shows the similarities and contrasts between the construction forms of the *Paduraksa* Gate, *Bajang Ratu* Temple, and the *Menara Kudus* Mosque's *Paduraksa* Gate. For example, the *Paduraksa* Gate of the *Menara Kudus* Mosque roof is covered with a traditional Kudus *Wuwungan* roof and supported by wooden poles, rather than a peak-shaped roof or *mastaka* as in *Bajang Ratu* Temple buildings or other Hindu temples. The *gawang* or frame of the *Paduraksa* Gate of the *Menara Kudus* Mosque is wider than the *gawang* of the *Bajang Ratu* temple. In addition, unlike other Hindu temples, there is no frame on the *Paduraksa* Gate's foot of the *Menara Kudus* Mosque.

***Kori Agung* Gate 'Lawang Kembar' of *Menara Kudus* Mosque**

The gate on the porch and inside the Mosque is shaped like *Paduraksa*, which residents call the *lawang kembar* or twin gates. In contrast to *Gapura Bentar* which does not have a roof, *Gapura Kori Agung* or *Lawang Kembar* (see Fig. 5) has a roof. The placement of the *Kori Agung* Gate is always behind the *Bentar* Gate. The uniqueness of the *Kori Agung Lawang Kembar* Gate at the *Menara Kudus* Mosque is the roof shaped like a *gunungan* or mountain, the motif of four Islamic curly braces, and the *Padma* (Hindu) flower motif on the outer frame. Then there are ornamental vines outside (terrace) (vines and *lunglungan*). Meanwhile, in the center, twin doors lead to the twin gates region within the Mosque. *Gapura Kori Agung "Lawang Kembar"* is currently housed beneath the Mosque's dome, which serves as an entrance to the Mosque's courtyard and a source of air circulation. The *lawang kembar* has three doors, intending to eliminate public lines entering the Mosque's courtyard. According to the estimates, the *Menara Kudus* Mosque was once relatively modest, with only the *Kori Agung* Gate in the Mosque leading to the current imam's residence.

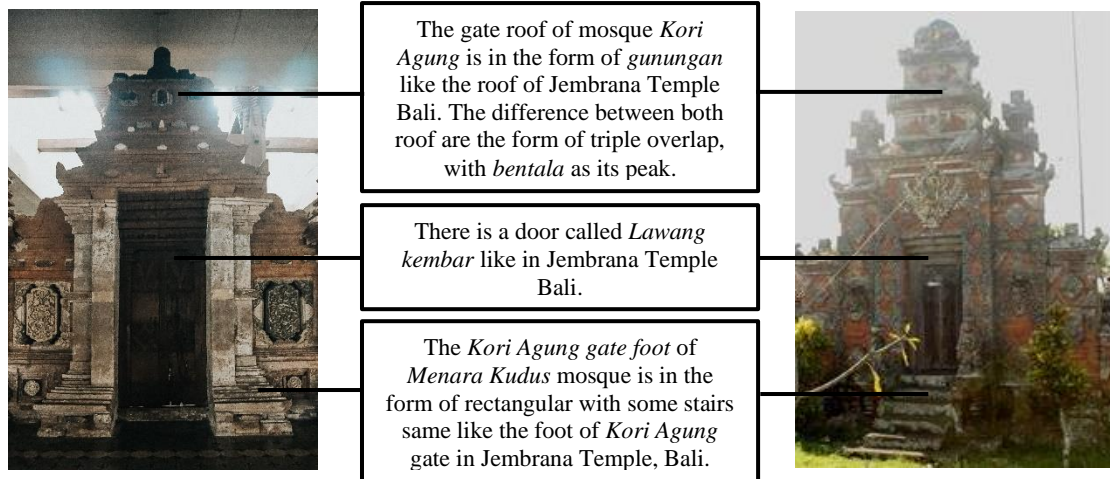


Fig. 5: Comparison of the *Paduraksa* Gate building with Islamic architecture at the *Menara Kudus* Mosque (left) and Hindu architecture at the *Kori Agung* Gate, Jembrana Temple, Bali (right)
Source: Authors

Architecturally, “*Lawang Kembar*” Kori Gate differs slightly from *Kori Agung* Gate in Hindu temples. As in Fig. 5, it can be seen that there is a difference in the shape between the *Kori Agung* Gate of Jembrana Temple Bali and the “*Lawang Kembar*” *Kori Agung* Gate of the *Menara Kudus* Mosque. *Kori Agung* gate of Pura Jembrana Bali is more complicated and shows Hindu architecture with a three-storied roof and the ornaments used on the gate which adopts more Hindu-Buddhist motifs. Judging from its breadth, the *Kori Agung* Gate of Jembrana Temple Bali is horizontally wider than the *Kori Agung* Gate, the “*lawang kembar*” of the *Menara Kudus* Mosque. “*Lawang Kembar*” *Kori Agung* Gate of *Menara Kudus* Mosque only adopts part of Hindu culture, but overall its architecture is a mixture of Hindu, Islamic, and Javanese cultures. In terms of the size, the “*Lawang Kembar*” Gate is not as big as the *Kori Agung* Gate at temples in Bali. Generally, the materials used in the *Kori Agung* Gate temple are made of solid rock and bricks, while red bricks dominate the material for the “*Lawang Kembar*” Gate.

Ornaments and carvings in the *Menara Kudus* Mosque

With 62 pieces (38%), Islamic embellishments dominate the entire structure. Furthermore, there are 29 Hindu decorations (18%), 8 Buddhist ornaments (5%), 25 Javanese ornaments (15%), 3 Mughal-Indian ornaments (2%), and 2 Dutch-Indies ornaments (1%). There are 34 porcelain ornaments (21%) in the shape of pottery mounted on the outer walls of the *Menara Kudus* building, in addition to ornaments.

Islamic ornaments

Acculturation has impacted the construction of the *Menara Kudus* Mosque, a legacy of Sheikh Ja'far Sadiq. Acculturation of Islam and Hindu-Buddhist culture can be seen in the architecture of the mosque building, which resembles other ancient Javanese mosques. Even though it is thick with Hindu-Buddhist culture, the Mosque is still built in the corridor of Islamic rules. This is the basis of the dominance of the existence of Islamic ornaments in the mosque building. For example, in the domed building on the front porch, there is Arabic calligraphy in the form of stained glass ornaments (stained glass) totaling 24 pieces of Asma'ul Husna writing. Meanwhile, 13 pieces of calligraphy with the names of the Prophet Muhammad's companions and the Imams of the Islamic School are displayed on the larger skylight (see Fig. 6). In addition, the “*Lawang Kembar*” Gate medallion is embellished with a *kurung kurawal* pattern on the outside circle frame.

Meanwhile, the *padasan wudhu* had Arabesque patterned embellishments. In addition, 18 knots of woven pattern ornaments made of white stone fill the panels on the

padasan and the *kala* embellishments. The body of the *lawang kembar* gates is likewise adorned with *arabesque* patterned decorations (see Fig. 7).



Fig. 6: Arabic Calligraphy ornaments
Source: Authors



Fig.7: Arabesque *padasan* knot pattern ornament
Source: Authors

Other Islamic ornaments include Arabic calligraphy that says “*Al-Quds Menara Kudus Mosque*” and the year the Mosque was built on the face of the wall above the Mosque’s foyer’s front door (see Fig. 8). On the upper side of the mihrab is another calligraphy (see Fig. 9) from Surat Ali Imran: 37, which says, “*Kullamaa dakhola’alaihaa Zakariyyal mihrooba.*” The calligraphy is made of copper metal and dates from around the middle of the 15th century when Islam first arrived in the island of Java, whereas the shape of the building is in the form of a two-level roof as a symbol of the two sentences of the *Syihadat*. The structure of the building with two levels and four levels roofs below is a symbol of *Rukun Iman* in Islam. Another feature of the Islamic buildings can be seen in the use of the five main entrances to the Mosque, which symbolize the five Pillars of Islam.



Fig. 8: Arabic calligraphy on the facade
Source: Authors



Fig. 9: Calligraphy on the side of the *mihrab*
Source: Authors

Hindu ornaments

As the shape of the *Menara Kudus* Mosque adopts a Hindu temple building, Hindu ornaments are also placed as a form of cultural tolerance taught by Sunan Kudus and provide building aesthetics. *Padhasan wudhu* or ablution showers are made in two rows divided into eight showers. The shower is made by adding Hindu-Buddhist art in the form of *kala* (mythological creatures in Hindu-Buddhist beliefs that can guard, protect from evil, and give good strength) (see Fig. 10). Small *medallion* ornaments attached in a row, with *sulur-suluran* and *lung-lungan* motifs on the gate of *lawang kembar*, show a very artistic ornamentation style typical of the *Majapahit* Kingdom (see Fig. 11). Meanwhile, other Hindu figurative ornaments are found at the bottom of the front side of the *paduraksa* gate to the tomb complex, which has a rabbit and deer motif. The animal figures are realistic representations of imaginative animals in Hindu mythology.



Fig. 10: The motif of *kala* in the *padasan*
Source: Authors



Fig. 11: Medallion motif ornament in twin door
Source: Authors

Animal figurative ornaments in the form of deer and rabbits were found at the foot of the *Paduraksa* Gate leading to the tomb of Sunan Kudus (see Fig. 12). Figurative ornaments are representations of stories in Hinduism. The decorations in the *Menara Kudus* Mosque are generally dominated by *Majapahit* patterned decorations, such as the decoration of the Sunan Kudus pavilion buffer decoration (see Fig. 13). The *blandar* support is made of teak wood with stylized leaves and flowers with the Majapahit motifs. The function of the decoration is to beautify the pillars supporting the pavilion. This building is built after the second renovation after the increase of religious tourism pilgrims.



Fig. 12: Figurative ornament on *Paduraksa*
Source: Authors



Fig. 13: Sunan Kudus pavilion buffer decoration
Source: Authors

North Bali motifs are also found at the main entrance to the Kudus Tower (see Fig. 14). This motif is thought to have been influenced by Balinese Hinduism which was acculturated with Islamic culture in Kudus. The decoration is made of white stone. The brick wall (see Fig. 14) has an ancient Hindu Pajajaran motif that serves to decorate the gate wall. *Lung-lungan* ornaments are also found on the upper border of the mihrab (see Fig. 15). The ornament is influenced by the *Hindu Majapahit* style. Made of white stone, which is believed to be the existence of these decorations, attracts Hindus who have converted to Islam to feel familiar with the Mosque.



Fig. 14: North Bali and *lung-lungan* motif
Source: Authors



Fig. 15: *Lung-lungan* motif on the upper mihrab
Source: Authors

Buddhist Ornaments

To attract Buddhists, Sunan Kudus also added elements of Buddhist culture to the Mosque's construction. Elements of Buddhist culture can be found in the eight showers in men's ablution places which are associated with the Buddhist teaching of "*astasanghika marga*" which implies the eight priority paths (see Fig. 16). The pattern of the *padasan* shower has similar to drains of *jaladwara* in the Hindu-Buddhist tradition of building art.

While in the women's ablution place, there is a lotus leaf plant stylized decoration, typical of North Bali decorative motifs, made of white stone (see Fig. 17), which serves to beautify the ablution place.



Fig. 16: Men's *padasan* shower pattern
Source: Authors



Fig. 17: Women's *padasan* shower pattern
Source: Authors

Javanese Ornaments

The *Menara Kudus* Mosque was built in almost the same shape as the unmodified form of the old Javanese mosque building from *Walisongo*. Therefore, this mosque building adopts Javanese architecture by adjusting to the surrounding culture. The characteristic of Javanese culture is seen in the shape of the overlapping pyramid roof made of octagonal teak wood, which is supported by eight pillars of the teak in the main part of the Mosque. There are three columns, namely the pillar located in the Mosque's main room, which is made of teak wood with carvings on the top (see Figure 18a). The second column is located in the Mosque's foyer, which is made of wood with a diameter of ± 15 cm with ornaments and branches at the top of the column (see figure 18b). The third column is located in the foyer of the building in the form of a column with a diameter of ± 35 cm with concrete material (see figure 18c). The inner pulpit of the Mosque has an architectural style identical to the *Walisongo* mosque's architecture in Java. Then, there is a carving of the *sengkalan Gapura Rusak Ewahing* with Javanese letters and the use of the Saka year on the top of the tower's door leaf.



Fig. 18: The first mosque column (left), the second mosque column (middle), (c) the third mosque column (right).
Source: Authors

At the *lawang kembar* gate, there are quite complex and intricate carvings in the form of tendrils combined with geometric motifs with *wajikan* and *tumpal* patterns (see Fig. 19). The combination of the *tumpal* motif and the *kawung* motif (currently has been arranged with a leaf motif) gives rise to an Islamic-Javanese nuanced ornament. The *tumpal* motif can be seen from its triangular structure. In contrast, the *Kawung* motif is said to be due to the circular sides at the four corners of the motif, so its design is the same as the *Kawung* batik motif (see Fig. 20). The existence of wood carving ornaments at the *Menara Kudus* Mosque is seen as the forerunner to the development of sculpture in the Kudus area.



Fig. 19: Detail of the tendril-patterned wooden
Source: Authors



Fig. 20: *Tumpal* and *Kawung* patterned chaise
Source: Authors



The *gebyok* Kudus motif is found on the ancient *gambyong* lamp support carving (see Fig. 21). The decoration material is made of teak wood and polished finishing. The decoration was made after the renovation of the *Menara Kudus* Mosque. The Javanese motif *kerpus* decoration is found on the cupola roof of Sunan Kudus's tomb (see Fig. 22). *Kerpus* is made of clay that has been burned and comes from artisans in the Demak area. The function of the *kerpus* is to close the gap between two interlocked tiles, so they don't come loose and leak when it is exposed to rain.



Fig. 21: Kudus *gebyok* motif on the lampstand
Source: Authors



Fig. 22: Javanese motif *kerpus* decoration
Source: Authors

Mughal-Indian Ornaments

Besides being built with a blend of Hindu-Buddhist, Javanese and Islamic cultural elements, another culture that has contributed to the construction of the *Menara Kudus* Mosque was the Mughal-Indian culture. Elements of Mughal-Indian culture can be found on the Mosque's doors and windows, which use transparent glass (see Figure 23). Other Mughal-Indian elements are located on the roof of a large dome accompanied by two smaller domes and in the form of semicircular formations with a fault in the middle.



Fig. 23: Glass doors
Source: Authors

Indies-Dutch Ornaments

The windows in the *Menara Kudus* mosque use one type of jalousie or two shutters. The windows use teak wood material with a Dutch-Indies architectural style. Meanwhile, other complementary elements in the form of a double door with two doors are one of the hallmarks of the door in the Indies-Dutch architectural style (see Fig. 24).



Fig. 24: Mosque Door
Source: Authors

Decorations of porcelain

On the outside of the minaret building, there is porcelain decoration. A total of 32 porcelain decorations on the walls with two main motifs, namely 20 scenic motifs (mosques, people, camels, date palms) which have a blue color, the other motifs are 12 floral motifs (see Fig. 25). In the beginning, porcelain plate decorations came from Vietnam and China. However, these decorations were replaced with porcelain plates from the Netherlands because many of the decorations were damaged during the Dutch colonial rule. Porcelain plates if observed in more detail there, are small rectangular panels, rhombuses and circles on the outer wall of the tower body. In addition to the circular shape, there is also a rectangular shape with meander motifs combined with stylized floral forms and organic shapes, which are identified as originating from Vietnam. Decorative porcelain shaped like a butterfly and a rectangular shape determined above the front of *paduraksa* gate (see Fig. 26).



Fig. 25: Porcelain on the tower body
Source: Authors



Fig. 26: Porcelain on the front gate of *Paduraksa*
Source: Authors

The analysis results show that the ornaments and carvings found in the *Menara Kudus* Mosque are a form of acculturation of Islamic culture open to other cultures. This is also corroborated by Kusyanto's research (2020) which states that several forms of ornaments and carvings on the *Menara Kudus* Mosque were also found in the Javanese mosques during the Islamic Mataram Kingdom, one of which is the Demak Mosque which is considered a typical universal and traditional Javanese mosque. Savitri and Sumardiyanto (2021) say that cultural transformations between Islam and Java was influenced by the emergence of Islam in Java and had an impact on local culture that had taken root and developed during the Hindu-Buddhist heyday. The results of this acculturation can be seen in architecture, art and various traditions in celebrating Islamic holidays, especially in the Java area. Ornaments, as one of the *Wali* Mosque's elements, have multiple forms due to the acculturation of local (Hindu-Buddhist) and non-local (Islamic) cultures with aesthetic and symbolic value.

Acculturation of Culture and Society at *Menara Kudus* Mosque

The existence of the *Menara Kudus* Mosque amid Hindu, Buddhist, Arab and Javanese communities has influenced its architecture. This is supported by the shape of the mosque building, which adopts the four cultures. The influence of Hindu, Arabic, Buddhist and Javanese culture can be seen in the use of ornaments which are the aesthetic elements of the Mosque. The Hindu-Buddhist ornaments used are figurative elements from the

Majapahit heritage and mythological creatures—Javanese ornaments in the form of tendrils, motifs and typical Kudus carvings.

The *Menara Kudus* Mosque has a unique and distinctive building that has experienced acculturation with a Hindu temple. This is as conveyed by Alim, as follows:

“For the uniqueness, there are two, namely the twin doors. That’s right, there is one inside, then outside there is one. Until now, none of the mosques has one because initially, only the twin doors were left. Until now, the door has not dared to be opened. Its location is in the middle of the Mosque, like a mountain that looks like a door but the sides are bricks. If all of this has been renovated.” (Alim 2022, personal communication, 28 May).

The *Menara Kudus* Mosque building is a historical building related to the spread of Islam, especially in the Holy City, as argued by Sawaf:

“Yes, for uniqueness, it’s good. The problem is that the one who built the Mosque had the title Sunan, the goal was to attract residents to the teachings of Islam at that time. Yes, indeed how to attract the hearts of the residents, one of them is by building a mosque which is almost the same as a temple building.” (Sawaf 2022, personal communication, 28 May).

Suparno asserts that the *Menara Kudus* Mosque played an important role in the spread of Islam to the Hindu community, as seen from the combination of the buildings as follows:

“In the past, the population was not Muslim but Hindu. So, this Mosque is a more Hindu impression. The uniqueness of this Mosque lies in its decoration and architecture because the tower’s shape is like a temple. There were many influences from Hinduism, Buddhism, and others in the past. But for the mosques that are currently at most, there are no minarets. So, yes, the tower is the same, only the difference is in the tower’s shape. Because here is the typical tower.” (Suparno 2022, personal communication, 28 May).

Syarifudin conveyed the same issue that Sunan Kudus took a humanist approach in carrying out Islamization in Kudus through the construction of a mosque of Islamic-Hindu style:

“In accordance with stories I know from the literature I read, Hinduism existed before Islam came. With a humanist approach to Hinduism, Islam allows them to coexist. That’s why there is a menorah symbol there. If towers like those in the Middle East are usually tall, this one looks like a temple. The existence of Islam is well accepted among Hindus so that indirectly, without feeling, Hindu culture also affects the architecture of this Mosque.” (Syarifudin 2022, personal communication, 28 May).

The effect of Hindu, Buddhist, and Islamic culture on the ornaments of the *Menara Kudus* Mosque, as conveyed by Alim:

“It’s adopting Buddhist or Hindu culture. There used to be a kind of acculturation because this Mosque might almost have something in common with a temple. This ornament is almost the same as Buddhism and Hinduism because Sunan used to be very tolerant.” (Alim 2022, personal communication, 28 May).

Sawaf asserts that the use of Hindu ornaments can be seen in:

“If you go to the ablution place, there is a kind of Hindu relief like a statue, until now it is still there. There are eight ornaments in the ablution shower. Then, if you enter the minaret mosque, there is a relief like animals under the bud.” (Sawaf 2022, personal communication, 28 May).

Suparno has revealed the use of Islamic ornaments in mosques as seen in:

“In terms of Islamic ornaments, it is more visible in mosques, such as the use of calligraphy, Sir.” (Suparno 2022, personal communication, 28 May).

The combination of various cultures in the Mosque creates a beauty that is full of meaning, as conveyed by Hardi, as follows:

“The impression is very beautiful. The tower is unique and doesn’t exist anywhere else in the building. As for what culture, I don’t know, Sir. But this has something to do with Hindu, Buddhist and Islamic culture.” (Hardi 2022, personal communication, 28 May).

The findings indicate that the *Menara Kudus* Mosque is one of the historical buildings in the island of Java that is unique and antique because various cultures have influenced it. The ornaments were created to prove that Islam can blend with other cultures in society. Setyowati et al. (2017) explain that acculturation in mosque buildings did not eliminate the old culture that had existed before. Therefore, acculturation in the *Menara Kudus* Mosque building can be well received by the local community. This happens because Depari (2013), Javanese people and adherents of Islam are very open to changes that characterize cultural diversity in society. Through this attitude of openness, Sunan Kudus and his followers tried to Islamize the Kudus community at that time through an artistic approach without reducing the meaning of the mosque building.

Tolerance of the Society around the *Menara Kudus* Mosque

As part of the process of Islamization, Sunan Kudus has brought tolerance into the pluralistic Kudus society. Intercultural tolerance at the *Menara Kudus* Mosque is reflected in the community’s visual formation and social life.

The existence of the *Menara Kudus* Mosque within a pluralistic society can merge with other religions in celebrating the traditions of the Kudus community, as argued by Alim:

“In my view, the people around here are predominantly Muslim. Adherents of other religions, there are Christians, Hindus, Buddhists. However, the event that we seem to be tolerant of is at Buka Luwur. Buka Luwur is khaul Sunan, sir. Then during Eid al-Qurban, many people of Chinese descent helped. So, that’s tolerance. Then the other tolerance is seen when there is a blandhangan event before fasting or if the Kudus people say it is dandhangan. The meaning is simple: the dandhangan starts from the beginning before fasting. The history that I have shared with the tower area was that it was used to prepare food before the fasting month, so many people sold it. Then, in the event, there was an activity to cook rice in the Holy language, dandhangan. That finally became a tradition, until now its activities have expanded, not only for the Muslim population, but other ethnic communities can also feel it.” (Alim 2022, personal communication, 28 May).

As Sawaf says, the surrounding community also applies tolerance for the visitors of the *Menara Kudus* Mosque to respect the solemnity of visitors when worshipping at the Mosque,

“When there are more visitors, we are usually not allowed to ride motorbikes on the road so as not to interfere with visitors’ access to the mosque.” (Sawaf 2022, personal communication, 28 May).

Sawaf further adds that the Adherents of Islam and followers of non-Muslim religions respect each other, including in terms of worship.

“Yes, all of them here are Muslim. Even though there is a temple near here, it doesn’t interfere with other worship, so it’s just peaceful.” (Sawaf 2022, personal communication, 28 May).

Syarifudin also says the same thing as follows:

“There is also a temple here, Sir. The period of construction was not far from the construction of Menoro. Even then, he can come side by side with this mosque.” (Syarifudin 2022, personal communication, 28 May).

Syarifudin points out that in terms of culinary, the Kudus society respects Hindus by not eating beef as taught by Sunan Kudus:

“There is no use of beef due to appreciation or tolerance for other people. Because the cow itself is considered a god by Hindus”. (Syarifudin 2022, personal communication, 28 May).

Abdul Ghofur adds that tolerance to the use of beef is not only carried out in the culinary industry but cattle are also prohibited from being slaughtered during the Eid al-Adha celebration.

“For celebrating Muslim holy days, such as during Eid al-Adha, cows can generally be used as sacrificial animals. However, out of respect for Hindus, we have never slaughtered a cow but replaced it with a buffalo or a goat” (Abdul Ghofur 2022, personal communication, 28 May).

The findings show that the existence of the *Menara Kudus* Mosque does not merely create acculturation in the form of buildings, but also affects the community’s social life around the *Menara Kudus* Mosque. This is in accordance with Arif’s (2014) statement that Islam in Kudus is present while bringing a new culture, but Islamic conversion is not iconoclastic (destroying local icons). Even though it is located in the middle of the Hok Ling Bio Temple and the Catholic Church, the people around the *Menara Kudus* Mosque have been able to mingle and live in harmony for hundreds of years. This fact is reinforced by the study of Fuadi (2013) that the Kudus community usually carries out the *Buka Luwur* tradition to honor Sunan Kudus as an ancestor, the ceremony is generally followed not only by Muslims but is open to all religions. As a form of cooperation, the community carries out *bancaan* activities, namely donating food that will later be distributed to the Kudus community (Said, 2016). Until now, the form of cultural heritage is the tolerance of the Kudus people, who do not slaughter cows. All food in Kudus does not use cows but buffalo as food ingredients. There is a prohibition on killing cows during the Muslim festival of Eid al-Adha because it is a form of respect for the Hindu community. In the teachings of Hinduism, it is considered that cows are sacred animals.

The Role of the *Menara Kudus* Mosque in Kudus Regency tourism

The existence of the Mosque is a definite tourist attraction for some tourists. Adiyati et al. (2019) say that the purpose of tourists doing religious tourism is in the context of

worship and spiritual improvement. Carrying out religious activities contain messages to realize a more civilized life. As a historical place, the *Menara Kudus* Mosque is used as a sacred tourist object which is always crowded by tourists, especially during certain celebration days, so in 2014, the *Menara Kudus* Mosque area was named a Religious Tourism Village.

Alim points out that as a place of religious tourism, *Menara Kudus* Mosque always takes care to maintain the beauty and integrity of the building:

“The treatment is carried out daily so that many officers on duty. There are about six officers who must control it every day. So if the treatment is taken care of every day, it doesn’t matter how many weeks or months.” (Alim 2022, personal communication, 28 May).

Alim further adds that since its first construction, the *Menara Kudus* Mosque has been renovated several times to keep the structure of the building as a cultural heritage site in the Kudus area:

“If the renovation has been done many times. As far as I remember, the renovations have been carried out almost three times. It was last renovated in 2017 and not a total renovation. So, if something is damaged, it will be renovated by the Antiquities Service, not here.” (Alim 2022, personal communication, 28 May).

Suparno says the same thing that the purpose of the renovation of the *Menara Kudus* Mosque was to rejuvenate the building structure and expand the place of worship:

“The renovation is aimed at expanding the place of worship, changing the layout and materials after hundreds of years for rejuvenation.” (Suparno 2022, personal communication, 28 May).

The findings have indicated that the *Menara Kudus* Mosque area has been used as a catalyst for religious activities alongside residential areas around the Mosque. Pilgrimage tours, *Buka Luwur*, and *Dandhangan* are religious tours in the *Menara Kudus* Mosque area that tourists most visit. Tomb pilgrimage tourism is a tourist activity never deserted by tourists daily. Visitors always demand religious tourism to meet spiritual needs and strengthen faith (Suryani and Kumala, 2021). In line with research by Rosyid (2014), the prospect of religious tourism in Indonesia is tremendous because most of the Indonesian population is Muslim. Religious tourism products are not only oriented to places of worship or halal culinary but develop with time. The existence of tourist attractions can encourage changes in settlement patterns and the local economy. With these tourist attractions, changes in the community’s economic structure can be seen from the type of work, and income level, to the increase in land prices (Biantoro and Ma’rif, 2014). Meanwhile, the development of tourist attractions affects changes in the spatial layout of settlements (Hantari and Nareswari, 2021). The same thing was also expressed by Najib (2010) that tourism development will affect accommodation. Therefore, capacity development is always directly proportional to the changes in population settlement patterns.

The Role of the *Menara Kudus* Mosque on the Economy

Besides increasing individual religiosity, religious tourism also has an impact on improving the income of a region (Lin, 2021) and giving a chance for new jobs for the surrounding society (Yan and Halpenny, 2019). The existence of the *Menara Kudus* Mosque as a tourist place will foster economic efforts to increase society’s income.

Rita reveals that there is a relationship between the existence of the *Menara Kudus* Mosque and the economic growth of the society around Kudus:

"I do agree if the Menara Kudus Mosque is used as a tourist spot because there is a relationship between the existence of the Menara Kudus Mosque and the economic improvement of the surrounding society. The impact felt by the existence of the Menara Kudus Mosque can improve the economy and increase society productivity." (Rita 2022, personal communication, 28 May).

Syarifudin has revealed that the effect of the existence of the *Menara Kudus* Mosque on increasing the economy was due to suggestions from the community regarding Islamic attributes sold by traders in the mosque area:

"Oh sure, Sir. It gives an impact, Sir. Because of this attraction, Sir. The Kudus society in particular, and other communities in general. Niku suggests that trade-related for all Islamic attributes, oil, and other things is a blessing. This is because so many say that buying in Kudus is good." (Syarifudin 2022, personal communication, 28 May).

Sawaf also has added that the existence of the *Menara Kudus* Mosque has an impact on the economy of the surrounding community, especially on Fridays:

"For residents, it may have a big impact because there are visitors or pilgrims. On Friday, traders usually sell souvenirs, so it's busier than usual. On weekdays there are more culinary businesses, but there are stalls too. Some sell paintings too." (Sawaf 2022, personal communication, 28 May).

Syarifudin explains that the economy at the *Menara Kudus* Mosque continues to develop from time to time along with population migration, thus affecting the economic pattern of the surrounding community:

"The people here are even tiny, the majority of people here are rich, Sir. Kudus Kulon is famous for rich people. That's why these stalls were built, which filled non-residents from here, the majority of people from out of town. Sing is growing, Sir. When Kulo Dugi mriki started this scary mboten., it continued gradually but got crowded. There is a positive impact. In the past, residents here whose houses were very closed are now starting to open, in other words, shops are starting to be rented out, it's getting more and more crowded, Sir. In the past, the seller could count by only using the finger." (Syarifudin 2022, personal communication, 28 May).

However, Rita points out that the Covid-19 pandemic has caused a decrease in the turnover of traders due to the closure of tourist access to the *Menara Kudus* Mosque.

"During Covid-19, the number of visits decreased. The small number of visits greatly has impacted our daily income. Turnover has certainly decreased compared to before Covid-19." (Rita 2022, personal communication, 28 May).

The findings have indicated that the economy in the area of the *Menara Kudus* Mosque complex can be observed through economic activities carried out together within the house and financial activities carried out outside the home. The businesses run by the community around the *Menara Kudus* Mosque are generally in the form of convection, culinary, accessories and souvenirs, pilgrimage attributes, and paintings. This condition is in accordance with Ncube and Chikuta (2020) study, who argue that people can work around religious tourism sites to be entrepreneurs. Population migration has also helped develop the

economic sector in the *Menara Kudus* Mosque area. According to Amalia et al. (2020), religious tourism's influence at the Menara Kudus Mosque can increase society's income significantly, especially on weekends. Ojo and Busayo (2017) reveal that the contribution of religious tourism to economic development can be seen from four indicators: primary income, infrastructure improvement, increased employment, and promotion of investment products. Therefore, the economic development of the community around the *Menara Kudus* Mosque will have not only an impact on economic welfare but also other social welfare.

Conclusions

The Menara Kudus Mosque does not merely function as a place of worship. Still, it also leaves traces of history and acculturation of Hindu, Islamic, Javanese, Mughal-Indian, and Dutch-Indian cultures carved in the Mosque's ornaments and building elements. The Islamic nuance can blend with the environmental conditions around the Mosque, so it emerges into cultural acculturation that transcends social boundaries. This acculturation has appeared in Islamic ornaments that were more dominating than other artistic ornaments. The dominance of Islamic ornaments in mosque buildings is that since mosques' construction must not deviate from Islamic rules, Islamic ornaments are used as symbols of the existence of mosques in a multicultural environment. Meanwhile, Hindu-Buddhist ornaments are used as a symbol of respect for local culture and as a form of Islamization of the local community. Javanese ornaments reflect a building style that has been used for generations in other *Walisongo* mosques. Meanwhile, the forms of Dutch East Indies and Mughal-India ornaments are only used as a compliment.

The existence of the *Menara Kudus* Mosque has an impact not only on society's religious attitudes but also other aspects. Tolerance between religious communities can be seen in the community's tradition of respecting and helping each other's religious activities. Meanwhile, from an economic and tourism perspective, the existence of the *Menara Kudus* Mosque can improve the economy of the community around the Mosque and increase Kudus Regency's regional income. Throughout the time, this Mosque still maintains its existence as a place of worship, a historical building, and a symbol of tolerance between religious communities in the Kudus Regency.

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