

# Acculturation Values Contained in the Visual Culture of the Holy Tower for Demangan Elementary School

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**Abstract:** This study examines the application of cultural acculturation values in the visual culture of Menara Kudus Elementary School Demangan Kudus. Elementary School Demangan Kudus is a public school that has the principle of preserving the culture around it, namely, the Menara Kudus building. The type of research used is a qualitative approach to ethnographic methods with field research types. The procedure for an ethnographic research cycle includes six steps: 1) selection of an ethnographic project, 2) submission of ethnographic questions, 3) collection of ethnographic data, 4) preparation of an ethnographic record, 5) analysis of ethnographic data, and 6) writing an ethnography. The data collection used is observation, interviews, and documentation. The study results show that Elementary School Demangan Kudus always applies acculturated values in the visual culture of Menara Kudus, such as religious values, tolerance, and politeness.

**Keywords:** Acculturated values, visual culture, elementary school

## 1. Introduction

Indonesia is known as a country with diverse cultures. This cultural diversity makes Indonesia unique and has its (Roszi & Mutia, 2018). Kistanto (2015) says that culture is the knowledge, customs, arts, beliefs, laws, customs, and habits of humans as social beings. Rosana (2017) defines culture as a way of life through dynamic daily social interactions. Culture is often considered art in a narrow sense, and the people involved are called culturalists. Fine art, music, sculpture, literature, philosophy, science, and the beautiful parts of human life are also forms of culture (Syakhrani & Kamil, 2022). Fine art and sculpture are also visual culture. The concept of visual culture is a manifestation of shapes, colors, and strokes in an object born by certain groups (Rostiyati, 2019). Setiawan & Handyaningrum (2020) argues that the creation of a phenomenon through a cultural process by imagining and thinking. Meanwhile, according to Wardoyo (2020) visual culture is defined as a form of meaningful culture regarding material and values that can only be captured through the sense of sight. This agrees Setiawan (2019) that visual culture can only be studied to the extent of the sense of sight by focusing on visual images as an aspect of culture.

Along with the times and increasingly modern human resources, they must be more qualified than many foreign cultures. It does not even rule out the possibility of changes in a culture. Changes that occur in a culture that comes from several cultures at once without losing the original value of the culture and can be accepted by the community is the definition of cultural acculturation (Hidayat et al., 2021). Agree with Widayat & Prameswari (2022) that cultural acculturation means the carriage of forms, systems, and elements from several different cultures in a particular process without eliminating the authenticity of the culture. The occurrence of social contact between groups that have different cultural behaviors and change each other's cultural forms is a characteristic of cultural acculturation. Cultural acculturation has good values for life, including Tolerance between ethnic groups and races, Tolerance between religious communities, and Tolerance between groups (Iwan, 2022).

One form of visual culture that goes through the acculturation process in its formation is the Holy Tower. Menara Kudus is a historical monument with Hindhu ornaments firmly attached to the building's architecture (Ashadi, 2021). Menara Kudus is also a national-level cultural heritage with a busy area for pilgrims, tourists, and Islamic learning centers (Anisa & Lissimia, 2021). Menara Kudus, which has the form of a Hindhu-Buddhist temple in its ornaments, is considered a form of Tolerance of Hindhu, Buddhism, and Islam, as well as a symbol of cultural acculturation (Hermanto, 2023).

The diverse cultures in Indonesia must always be preserved because culture is a national identity. Preserving culture is a form of Respect and appreciation for ancestors. Preserving Indonesian culture is one of them by applying the values contained in the culture. These values are applied as early as possible by participating in several traditional ceremonies, both in the home and school environment. Based on the description of the culture above, researchers aims to conducted ethnographic qualitative research to discover the application of cultural acculturation values at Demangan Elementary School.

## 2. Literature Review

Java was a major hub of Indonesian acculturation, and it continues to be the center of cultural development on the country's island nation. A significant contributing factor to Javanese acculturation has been their Islamic history (Tucunan & Rahmawati, 2019). Acculturation, on the other hand, is a social process that occurs when one social group interacts with another that is steeped in their culture (Ogden et al., 2004).

Acculturation is the process of introducing a foreign culture's influence into a social setting or the blending of two or more cultures that interact and influence one another. Some people in this process pick or filter in order to absorb new cultures; this process involves a variety of factors, not all of which are negotiable (Azzaki et al., 2021). Thus, in addition to acceptance, there is also resistance or rejection of influences that are thought to be at odds with established ideals. Acculturation can also be understood as the outcome of individuals of a civilization coming into contact with one or more other cultures or languages; this process is marked by borrowing and can even give rise to the phenomena of bilingualism (Habibullah et al., 2022).

The introduction of Islamic teachings into Indonesia has resulted in modifications and persistence of many cultural practices. The architecture of the old mosques in Central Java, such as the Kudus Tower and Al-Aqsa Mosque, is one of the effects that is easily seen (Habibullah et al., 2022). This reinforces the traces of a cultural connection that existed before Islam arrived, when the local community adhered closely to the archipelago's traditions or adopted Hindu-Buddhist beliefs. As seen by the design of holy sites, the integration of Islamic religious ideals with traditional values has resulted in acculturation and direct interaction, strengthening the harmonious notion that Islam and local culture can coexist (Triyanto et al., 2019).

Sunan Kudus employed a fabian strategy—adaptation, absorption, pragmatism, and a process of gradual compromise—to disseminate Islamic teachings throughout Kudus while maintaining tolerance for the local community's cultural beliefs, which at the time still adhered to Hinduism. The Kudus Tower Mosque in Central Java is one historical relic that gained notoriety at the time when Sunan Kudus was spreading Islam (Pratiwinindya, 2021). The Kudus Tower Mosque's architecture is not just a typical building designed to house a place of worship for Muslims; it also pays homage to Hindu culture and religion by incorporating typical Hindu ornaments like towering buildings, gates, and other architectural features that are acculturative expressions of symbolic elements and values resulting from the merging of two distinct cultures (Hermanto, 2023).

Mosque structures are dominated by Islamic decorations. Islamic decorations represent the Mosque's multiracial setting. However, Hindu-Buddhist jewelry are utilized as an Islamization of the community and as a sign of respect for the indigenous culture. For years, the Javanese decorations have served as a symbol of the Walisongo mosque building style. In the meantime, jewelry from Mughal India and the Dutch East Indies is worn only as a decorative accent. In addition to other aspects of their lives, people's religious beliefs are influenced by the Menara Kudus Mosque. According to Supriyadi et al. (2022), the Menara Kudus Mosque's cultural acculturation portrayed the community's customs and aesthetically pleasing decorations. Tolerance between the various religious groups is demonstrated by the community's custom of respecting and supporting one another's religious endeavors. This mosque has endured in the Kudus Regency as a house of worship, a historically significant building, and a representation of religious tolerance.

Numerous research on the blending of Islamic and Hindu civilizations have been conducted. Kharis (2020) notes that the Menara Kudus Mosque, which blends traditional Javanese, Mughal Indian, and Hindu-Buddhist mosque architecture that does not go against Islamic principles, is an example of how the Kudus community might be Islamized through a cultural approach. According to Roesmanto's (2013) analysis of the Menara Kudus Mosque's shape and Bale Kulkul, the structure's shape is similar to East Javan temples as a result of the mosque's acculturation with Hindu culture. According to Nasichah (2019), Islamic, Hindu, Javanese, and Chinese cultures have all had an impact on the construction of the region's historic mosques. They so develop multiracial structures.

Siswayanti (2016) investigated the blending of Islamic and Hindu traditions in a few old Indonesian mosque structures and demonstrated how much this blending influenced the local way of life. Wahyudi (2023) asserts that the Menara Kudus Mosque's layout is distinct among mosques due to the influence of acculturation. Unlike other Old Javanese mosques, it does not have a square, districts, or palaces. The process of acculturation between the Islamic and Hindu cultures has been well researched, but the acculturation that takes place in the Kudus Regency's old mosque buildings has not.

### 3. Methodology

This research uses a qualitative ethnographic approach. Qualitative approach research is research that uses a natural setting to interpret a phenomenon that occurs. It is carried out with various methods in its research (Fadli, 2021). Ethnography is a method that describes a culture. This method aims to interpret from the indigenous point of view about a view of life (Sukadari et al., 2015). A study said to be ethnographic is the context and conditions related to an action and statement of the person observed and recorded accordingly. Understanding the phenomena experienced by research subjects in behavior, perception, motivation, and action is also the definition of qualitative research (Mohajan, 2018). Ethnographic research describes the culture of a group to understand the point of view of natives related to life in getting a view of the world (Sari et al., 2023). Basias & Pollalis (2018) states that ethnographic researchers follow a cyclical pattern in their research practices. The ethnographic research cycle procedure includes six steps: 1) selection of an ethnographic project, 2) asking ethnographic questions, 3) collecting ethnographic data, 4) making an ethnographic record, 5) analyzing ethnographic data, and 6) writing an ethnography.

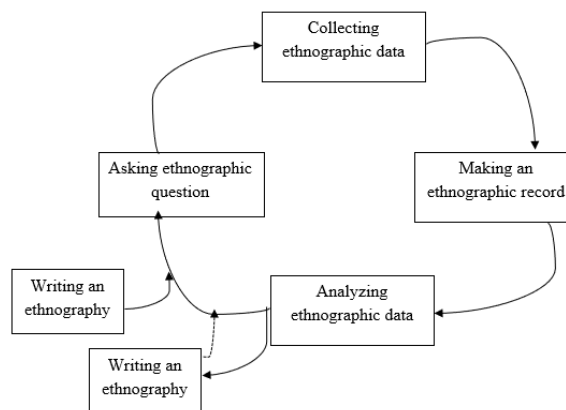


Fig. 1: Steps of the ethnographic method

### 4. Results

The Holy Tower is one form of cultural acculturation. The Holy Tower is an axis mundi, a cosmic pillar that connects the earth where humans stand with heaven as a place after death (Hermanto, 2023). Menara Kudus was established in 1687 AD based on the existing inscription in Javanese *Candra sengkala*, which means broken gate Menara Kudus (Anisa & Lissimia, 2021). Menara Kudus is a form of cultural acculturation from Hindhu-Buddhist and Islamic cultures.

Elementary School Demangan Kudus is one of the public schools that has the principle of preserving the surrounding culture. One form of cultural preservation at Elementary School Demangan Kudus involves students in a cultural process so that students have a learning atmosphere that is not monotonous. According to their vision, "the realization of the profile of Pancasila students who are strong in faith and noble character, intelligent with character, able to adapt to culture and technology."

The main objectives of cultural preservation at Demangan Kudus Elementary School are respecting and appreciating ancestors, creating harmony and peace among others, creating unity, and realizing a sense of nationalism and love for the country. One way to preserve culture is by practicing the values contained in the culture. The following are the values of cultural acculturation in the visual culture of the Holy Tower that have been applied at Demangan Kudus Elementary School.

### 5. Discussion

#### 5.1 Religious Value

Religious value is a person's behavior influenced by an explicit or implicit conception of his religion (Rifa'i, 2016). It can be said that religious values originate from religion and penetrate the soul. Religious values are essential to instill in educational institutions, such as Demangan Kudus Elementary School, which applies religious values to students as early as possible. The religious value contained in the visual culture of the Holy Tower is in the form of staying in touch, praying together, and carrying out worship obligations.



**Fig. 2:** Praying together at the tomb of Sunan Kudus

The activity is a joint prayer and *tahlil* held at the tomb of Sunan Kudus as a form of gratitude and respect. Prayer and *tahlil* are one example of the religious value of cultural acculturation in the visual culture of the holy tower.

## 5.2 Tolerance

Tolerance is a simple attitude that has a positive impact on the integrity of the nation. In essence, Tolerance is an attitude of appreciation and Respect aimed at anyone. Iwan (2022) argue that Tolerance is divided into three types, namely: a) tolerance between ethnicities, languages, and races, b) the attitude of Tolerance between ethnicities, languages, and races, namely not mocking, demonizing, insulting, or demeaning other ethnicities and races, not differentiating in making friends, helping neighbors who are in trouble even though they are of different races and ethnicities, c) tolerance between religious communities, d) religious tolerance includes emphasizing the attitude of brotherhood in every religion, fostering a sense of brotherhood, staying away from all things attacking other religions, and narrowing the differences between each religion, e) tolerance between groups.

Habituation in children includes behaving and respecting other people properly regardless of their background, not talking about the ugliness of others, not speaking harshly and dirty, and not disturbing others.



**Fig. 3:** Group work as a form of tolerance

Group work is one of the learning activities with a common goal. Discussion is an essential thing in group work. You are conveying opinions to each other with different thoughts. Respecting and valuing different opinions in group work is a form of applying Tolerance.

## 5.3 Good Manners

Manners are rules born from an environment and agreed upon to regulate speaking and behavior (Prastica & Krisphianti, 2017). Politeness can also be said to be ethics or manners to others. Here are some indicators of good manners. a) Respect for elders, b) Receiving everything given with the correct hand, c) Always keep from speaking in a dirty, rude, and arrogant manner, d) Greeting teachers or parents when met, e) Respecting other people's opinions that are different from ours.

## 6. Conclusions

Based on the research results, the Holy Tower is a form of visual culture that undergoes a process of cultural acculturation. Elementary School Demangan Kudus, located close to the Menara Kudus area, constantly carries out religious tourism activities to the Menara Kudus. Elementary School Demangan Kudus always practices acculturation values in the visual culture of the Holy Tower, such as religious values, tolerance, and courtesy. Applying these values in daily life is a form of preserving and practicing the culture and the values of Pancasila.

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