ACCULTURATION OF ISLAM IN KABUMI CULTURAL TRADITION OF LEBUAWU VILLAGE JEPARA

Muchammad Ulin Nuha
Universitas Islam Negeri Walisongo Semarang, Indonesia
Email: muchammadulinnuha760@gmail.com

Received: January 4, 2024
Revised: March 10, 2024
Accepted: March 28, 2024

Abstract
This study examines the acculturation of Islam in the implementation of the Kabumi tradition in Lebuawu Village, Pecangaan District, Jepara Regency, Central Java. It employed a qualitative descriptive method to describe the cultural facts surrounding the traditional Kabumi celebration. The findings show that the Kabumi tradition has become a traditional celebration as a form of gratitude by the people of Lebuawu Village to the Creator for allowing them to live on Earth by His grace. They heavily rely on the earth to grow crops, obtain food and drink, and carry out other activities. As a result, they perform earth alms as a way to express their gratitude to the earth. Additionally, the alms to the earth also represent a form of gratitude for the salvation and sustenance received by the community, and are believed to bring protection to their fields, ensuring abundant harvests. The acculturation
of Islam in the implementation of Kabumi also teaches the community to always maintain an attitude of tolerance among people of different religions, as this acculturation preserves local traditions that characterize this custom.


**Keywords:** earth almsgiving, Islamic culture, Kabumi tradition

**Introduction**

Islam entered the Indonesian archipelago through various means such as trade routes, education, marriage, Sufism, politics, and cultural traditions (Permatasari & Hudaidah, 2021). It is noted that Islam first reached Indonesia via Arab, Gujarati, Persian, and Chinese traders. The spread of Islam in Indonesia occurred gradually and involved significant contributions from both local and foreign entities. In its expansion, Islam was embraced not only by coastal communities but also by rural populations.
One of the primary factors that facilitated the spread of Islam in Indonesia was commerce. Muslim traders who visited the archipelago did not solely engage in trade but also propagated the Islamic faith. They introduced Islamic teachings to the local inhabitants, both directly and indirectly. Marriage also played a crucial role; Muslim traders who intermarried with the local community helped spread Islam to their new families. Additionally, political factors significantly influenced the spread of Islam in Indonesia. For instance, in the 13th century AD, the Kingdom of Samudera Pasai in Aceh became the first Islamic kingdom in Indonesia (Permatasari & Hudaidah, 2021), playing a vital role in the propagation of Islam across the archipelago.

By the 14th century AD, the Kingdom of Demak in Java emerged as the most influential Islamic kingdom, successfully uniting Islamic regions in Java and extending the reach of Islam throughout the archipelago (Asroni, 2022). The spread of Islam in Indonesia has led to profound changes in the societal structure. Islam has had a significant impact on social, cultural, and political aspects. Socially, Islam introduced new belief systems, values, and norms to the Indonesian people, who previously practiced Hinduism and Buddhism. Culturally, Islam influenced various fields, including art, music, and literature. Developments in calligraphy, architecture, and Islamic music also began to flourish across the archipelago.

The triumph of Islam, introduced by the Arabs, lay in its ability to dialogue and integrate smoothly into the long-existing cultural structure of the archipelago. In this case it appears that Islam shows the ability to understand and assimilate into the pre-existing local cultural environment, so that it can be accepted by society. This achievement cannot be separated from the cultural approach applied by Islamic preachers in the 13th century, where they skillfully combined Islamic teachings with local customs, thereby creating a harmonious and inseparable unity between the two (Al-Amri & Haramain, 2017). One form of acculturation to local
culture and Islamic teachings is attached to the Kabumi tradition in Jepara. This is a strong reason why further exploration is still needed regarding how the essence of Islam and the implementation of the Kabumi tradition show harmonious acculturation in the community in Lebuawu Village, Jepara.

In the sociopolitical realm, Islam has significantly influenced both government systems and societal structures. The spread of Islam in Indonesia has been a pivotal factor in the formation of the Indonesian nation. Islam has united a society that previously consisted of diverse ethnic groups and religions. As the religion embraced by a majority of the global population, Islam has had a profound impact on human culture and civilization across various regions of the world. The relationship between Islam and culture is complex and has been the subject of scholarly study for centuries (Jamali & Wibowo, 2023; Sunda & Fitri, 2022; Tajdin, 2022). Therefore, the cultural diversity that develops within the societal context of Indonesia merits further study in relation to Islamic values to understand its current dynamics.

Furthermore, the influence of Islam extends beyond cultural and societal realms particularly to the people living in villages. Understanding the interplay between Islam and the tradition held by the villagers is crucial for comprehending Indonesian Islamic culture and its implications for broader social developments in the region. Further research exploring the intersection of Islam with cultural practices can provide valuable insights into the complexities of religious influence on societal dynamics.

Culture encompasses everything created by humans as a result of learning and experience in everyday life. According to Wissler et al., culture involves any action that must be learned. Meanwhile, Bakker defines culture as the process of creating, publishing, and processing human values (Firosya, 2023). In Islam, culture plays a significant role in everyday life, teaching values that benefit society and help form a positive culture. The interaction between Islam and culture is mutually influential; in Islam,
culture can strengthen religious values and the faith of Muslims, while Islam can shape the values adopted by Muslims (Meilindasari, 2021).

Indonesia is home to many different races, ethnicities, languages, cultures, religions, and beliefs. The motto “Bhinneka Tunggal Ika” aptly describes the reality and aspirations of the country. According to Pascal, pluralism that does not converge into unity is chaos, and unity that does not preserve plurality is tyranny (Al-Amri & Haramain, 2017). Indonesia, with its variety of tribes and customs, maintains its diverse cultures well. In Java, for example, there is a longstanding tradition known as Nyadran, or earth alms, held annually. This ceremony expresses gratitude to God for the previous year’s crops and includes community prayers for a successful future harvest. Nyadran, conducted every Sha’ban (Hijri calendar) or Ruwah (Javanese calendar) before the Ramadan fast, involves collective visits to tombs to give thanks (Wajdi, 2017).

The Earth Alms belong to one of the annual traditions of farming communities on the north coast of Central Java, carried out after the harvest, specifically in the month of Dzulqo’idah on the weton day of Kliwon. This ceremony is a form of community gratitude for the harvest obtained. In addition, Earth Alms are conducted by the community to anticipate and adapt in the face of trauma, difficulties, tragedies, threats, and all factors that cause stress. Earth Alms are also performed as an expression of community gratitude to God (Rachmawati et al., 2021). Thus, it can be understood that the implementation of the Earth Alms tradition varies in timing and procedures across different regions. During the Hindu-Buddhist period, the implementation of the Earth Alms tradition involved praises and offerings as ritual tools, whereas during the time of Walisongo, the tradition was acculturated with prayers from the Qur’an and Hadith, as practiced by the Lebuawu Pecangaan Jepara community.

People believe that deceased ancestors still exist and influence the lives of their descendants. Therefore, during the Nyadran tradition, they
visit their ancestors' graves as a form of cultural heritage preservation. However, with the influence of Islam, the meaning of Nyadran has evolved from a simple prayer to God into a ritual of reporting and thanksgiving during the month of Sha’ban (Yusof & Kastolani, 2016). According to Islamic teachings, Sha’ban, the month before Ramadan, is a time when people should practice charity. Thus, the trench pilgrimage is also intended as a means of introspection, reflecting on the efforts and achievements of the past year.

Islam, with its noble teachings, has intertwined with the local culture of Indonesia for centuries. An interesting outcome of this interaction is its correlation with the tradition of earth alms, known in Jepara as Kabumi, a ritual where people offer produce. This ritual is practiced in various regions of the archipelago. As described earlier, there is a close correlation between Islam and the culture of earth alms, with each region having its unique way of conducting this tradition. Accordingly, this study examines the implementation of the Kabumi tradition by conducting a structural analysis through direct observations and interviews with traditional and religious figures in Lebuawu Village. This current research is intended to determine the relation of Islam and the culture of the earth alms tradition particularly in the context of Kabumi as practiced by the people of Lebuawu Village in Pecangaan Jepara.

Furthermore, this study holds significance in shedding light on the intricate relationship between Islam and local cultural traditions, particularly the practice of earth alms, or Kabumi, in Indonesia. By delving into the implementation of the Kabumi tradition in Lebuawu Village, Pecangaan Jepara, this research aims to uncover the nuanced interplay between Islamic principles and cultural practices at the grassroots level. Understanding how Islam shapes and is shaped by local customs and rituals is essential for appreciating the cultural diversity and religious dynamics within Indonesian society. Moreover, this study contributes to the broader scholarly discourse on the role of religion in shaping cultural
traditions and societal norms, offering insights that may inform future research and policymaking endeavors aimed at preserving and promoting cultural heritage while fostering religious harmony and understanding.

Research Method

This study employed a descriptive method with a qualitative research approach. Field qualitative research was conducted by directly observing the phenomena of the Kabumi tradition naturally. As a qualitative research study, it involved the researcher as the main instrument (Sugiono, 2016). The descriptive method was chosen to examine the current state of a person, object, set of conditions, system of thought, or a series of events related to the Kabumi tradition. Descriptive research aims to create a systematic and factually accurate description or picture of the facts, characteristics, and phenomena of Kabumi as practiced by the people in Jepara.

The data source was derived from primary sources, including observations on the implementation of the Kabumi tradition and interviews with local traditional and religious leaders. The secondary source consisted of literature reviews from various scientific journals and books that discuss the same research theme.

The key informants for this study were selected based on specific criteria to ensure comprehensive and representative insights into the Kabumi tradition and its relationship with Islam in Lebuawu Village. Criteria for selecting key informants included their expertise and knowledge of the Kabumi tradition, their active participation in the implementation of cultural and religious practices within the village, and their willingness to share their experiences and perspectives openly during interviews. Additionally, efforts were made to include a diverse range of informants representing different age groups, genders, and social backgrounds to capture a comprehensive understanding of the tradition from various viewpoints within the community.
The data collection technique used was participant observation, carried out when the researcher was involved in the observed activities (Fadli, 2021). The focus of the participant observation was on gaining a comprehensive understanding of the implementation of the Kabumi tradition and its relationship with Islam in Lebuawu Village. During the observation process, the researcher actively engaged in the observed activities related to the Kabumi tradition, immersing himself in the cultural and religious practices unfolding within the community. The primary objective was to observe firsthand the rituals, customs, and behaviors associated with the Kabumi tradition, as well as the interactions and dynamics among participants involved in these activities. Specifically, the researcher paid close attention to the ceremonial proceedings, the roles of key individuals or groups involved, the symbolic meanings embedded in the rituals, and any variations or adaptations of the tradition in response to Islamic influences. Through keen observation and documentation, the researcher aimed to capture the nuances of the Kabumi tradition's implementation and its interconnectedness with Islamic beliefs and practices within the context of Lebuawu Village.

In addition to data collection using observation techniques, this study also employed interview methods by conducting direct questions and answers between the researcher and respondents (Rachmawati, 2007). This study employed semi-structured interviews, conducted with questions that were partially predetermined and partly adjusted according to the conditions during the interview (Fadli, 2021). The questions for the semi-structured interviews were carefully crafted to elicit comprehensive and representative insights into the Kabumi tradition and its relationship with Islam in Lebuawu Village. They were designed to be partially predetermined, providing a framework to guide the discussion, while also allowing flexibility to adjust according to the conditions and responses during the interview. The questions covered various aspects of the Kabumi tradition, including its historical background, cultural significance,
religious practices associated with it, and its role in fostering community cohesion and identity. Additionally, inquiries were made into the participants' personal experiences, beliefs, and perceptions regarding the Kabumi tradition and its alignment with Islamic teachings. Efforts were made to pose open-ended questions that encouraged detailed responses and reflections, facilitating a deeper exploration of the subject matter. Overall, the questions aimed to facilitate a rich and nuanced discussion that captured the diverse perspectives and insights of the participants regarding the Kabumi tradition and its intersection with Islam in Lebuawu Village.

The data analysis techniques used in Islamic acculturation research in the Kabumi cultural tradition in Lebuawu Village, Pecangaan District, Jepara Regency consist of several steps. First, the researcher screened all interview transcripts that had been conducted with local communities and traditional and religious leaders comprehensively. The next step involved making a note of the first impression from what occurred in the Kabumi tradition in Lebuawu village, then the researcher re-read the transcripts carefully. The researcher then labeled or marked relevant words, phrases, sentences, or passages in the transcripts. These codes could relate to actions, activities, or anything else that the researcher deemed relevant. After grouping the codes, the researcher identified patterns or themes that arose from the data. The analysis then proceeded with ensuring that it was consistent and reliable, considering the validity of the data and whether the findings were in accordance with the context of the study. Lastly, the researcher wrote a report that explained the findings comprehensively, including direct quotes from interview transcripts to support the findings. The final stage was drawing conclusions to answer the research question concerning the acculturation of Islam in the implementation of the Kabumi tradition.
Findings & Discussion

The influence of Islam in the implementation of Kabumi tradition

"Kabumi" is a term used for the tradition of earth alms or *Nyadran* in Lebuawu Village, Pecangaan, Jepara. According to Mr. Sarmadan, a cultural and religious stakeholder in Lebuawu Village, the term derives from "sede-kah bumi," originating from "kah bumi" and has evolved into "kabumi" over time. This event is a tradition held annually in Lebuawu Village during the Javanese month of "Apit" which is chosen because it falls between two Islamic holidays, namely Eid al-Fitr and Eid al-Adha (Kumparan.com, 2022).

A research interview conducted with Mr. Zamroni, a religious leader in the village, revealed that the Kabumi tradition is a sacred annual event that blends Javanese and Islamic traditions. According to Maarif (2018), this integration represents a harmonization of Islam with local customs, a concept present in the local community's culture and known as conservative theory. This method of cultural acculturation combines elements of Javanese culture with Islamic teachings introduced by the Walisongo. One example is the adaptation of traditional arts such as wayang and Javanese songs, which have been modified by the Walisongo to include Islamic messages (Waluyo, 2021).

Several interviews have highlighted the significant influence of Islam on the Kabumi tradition in Lebuawu Village, Pecangaan, Jepara. The tradition includes various activities aligned with Islamic teachings, such as the slaughter of large cattle. Mr. Sarmadan mentioned that traditionally, cows were used, but over time, buffalo slaughter has been adopted to accommodate the religious sentiments of other communities in the area. Additionally, the village conducts *slametan* activities as part of the Kabumi tradition.

*Slametan* is a cultural tradition in Indonesia that has been practiced for a very long time. It involves a communal prayer session to ask for
salvation from God, usually concluding with a shared meal (Amin & Salim, 2018). The *slametan* at the Kabumi tradition in Lebuawu Village marks the opening of the event. Mr. Sarmadan explained that this *slametan* is conducted as a prayer so that the entire event, from start to finish, is blessed.

Following the opening *slametan* is the activity of Tahtimul Quran Binnadhor. This involves collectively reading the Quran with the aim of receiving blessings from this holy book, which is a primary source of Islamic teachings (Syaripudin, 2016). This activity is led by local religious leaders and santri from the village, where santri are students studying Islam in pesantren (Amin & Salim, 2018).

All residents of Lebuawu Village, including children, youth, and the elderly, bring food to the grave of Mbah Citro Rangin Kusumo for a pilgrimage. Mbah Citro Rangin Kusumo was the pioneer of "babat alas" activities in Lebuawu Village, a term referring to the clearing of forest areas for settlement and the development of civilizational life. This activity traditionally involves opening new land or clearing existing land (Cahyono, 2022). During this visit, the community performs *Tahlilan*, reciting the Arabic phrase "La ilaha illa Allah" and reading verses from the Quran such as Surat Al Iklas, Al Alaq, An Nas, along with a series of prayers (Amin & Salim, 2018). Mr. Zamroni mentioned that the *Tahlilan* at Mbah Citro Rangin Kusumo’s grave is performed to honor his contributions to the community and to pray that his deeds are recognized and rewarded by God.

After completing the *Tahlilan*, the community, along with traditional leaders and other dignitaries, gather to pray together at the tomb of Mbah Citro. This collective prayer seeks to transfer blessings from God. Through this prayer, the community expresses hope that the crops harvested this year will bring blessings and that the crops in the following year will yield abundant results, benefiting the villagers even more. This additional
information was provided by Mr. Hariyanto, a religious figure in Lebuawu Village.

After the series of events at the tomb concluded, the *slametan* event resumed at the Lebuawu Village Hall following Maghreb prayers, as reported by Mr. Sarmadan. This *slametan* was intended to seek blessings for the smooth running of the next event, namely the shadow puppet show held at the village hall. The wayang kulit performance was chosen because shadow puppets are a medium for spreading Islam introduced by Sunan Kalijaga, who created stories and incorporated Islamic content into his performances (Vindalia et al., 2022). Additionally, the Lebuawu community greatly enjoys shadow puppet shows.

Sunan Kalijaga utilized wayang as an effective da’wah medium to draw people closer and garner sympathy for Islam. He possessed a captivating ability to puppeteer, earning him fame under various pseudonyms in different regions. For instance, in the Pajajaran area, he was known as Ki Dalang Sidab郎nti, and in Tegal, as Ki Dalang Bengkok (Vindalia et al., 2022). His flexibility and wisdom in preaching allowed the Javanese, who still upheld ancient beliefs, to feel unthreatened. Sunan Kalijaga approached the community subtly and non-coercively; he even dressed in a manner not typically associated with Islamic attire, which helped people feel less intimidated and more receptive to his teachings.

Sunan Kalijaga is one of the most celebrated walis in Java. He was not only respected by the Javanes people but also regarded as a great and holy teacher. In his preaching, Sunan Kalijaga did not discard the religious values and ancient beliefs of the Javanese. Instead, he gradually integrated Islamic values into these traditional beliefs, making it easier for people to accept Islam. This flexible and wise method of da’wah was crucial in spreading Islam throughout the archipelago, particularly in Java. The traditional media used by Sunan Kalijaga, namely wayang kulit, is a popular Javanese art form. By incorporating Islamic teachings into the wayang stories, he made the principles of Islam more accessible to the Javanese
people. Examples of Islamic values he included in puppet stories are moral values such as honesty, loyalty, and compassion; spiritual values like faith in God, prayer, and fasting; and social values such as helping and supporting each other.

Islamic tradition is deeply embedded in the Kabumi tradition, as observed by researchers. It is essential to preserve the Kabumi tradition because it not only incorporates Islamic teachings but also includes elements of Hindu customs, integrating them with Islamic religious teachings. The influence of Islamic tradition in the traditional Kabumi ceremonies is profound. It attracts various groups to preserve various activities of local traditions and customs. In addition, it teaches a sense of tolerance between religious communities.

The practical implications of the Kabumi tradition, with its blending of Javanese and Islamic elements, extend beyond cultural significance to encompass broader societal benefits. Firstly, the tradition serves as a model for fostering gratitude and resilience within communities. By participating in the series of events associated with Kabumi, such as the slametan, Tahtimul Qur'an, and Tahlilan activities, individuals are encouraged to cultivate a deep sense of gratitude towards God and their fellow community members. This heightened sense of appreciation can contribute to improved mental and emotional well-being, enhancing individuals' ability to cope with challenges and adversity. Furthermore, the emphasis on friendship and tolerance within the Kabumi tradition promotes social cohesion and harmony within the community. Through the integration of Islamic values and local customs, the tradition fosters an inclusive environment where diversity is embraced and celebrated. As such, the Kabumi tradition serves as a practical example of how cultural practices can be harnessed to strengthen community bonds and promote positive social values.
People’s views on Kabumi

Based on the interview with Mrs. Parsi, the tradition of earth alms instills gratitude within the community of Lebuawu Village for the blessings bestowed by Allah Almighty. These blessings manifest in the form of earthly products, reminding people that everything on this earth belongs to God, and their duty is to utilize these gifts wisely and be grateful for them. Another interview, this time with Mr. Nizar, a youth from Lebuawu Village, revealed that Kabumi serves as a gathering place for fostering friendships among the residents. During the Kabumi event, people gather at the grave of Mbah Citro to pray and share meals, fostering bonds of friendship among them.

Additionally, in an interview with Mr. Kasnan, it was mentioned that Kabumi serves as a reminder of gratitude and promotes friendship, which in turn benefits the local economy. When puppet performances are held, villagers are allowed to set up bazaars or engage in trade around the Lebuawu Village Hall. Another informant, Mr. Hamzah, emphasized the importance of preserving the Kabumi tradition in the village as it serves to uphold the cultural heritage passed down by previous generations. Additionally, this event plays a vital role in enhancing the community's understanding, particularly among the youth, of the local traditions in Lebuawu Pecangaan Jepara Village.

According to a local figure, Mrs. Wati, Islam is a religion that accommodates cultural practices with flexibility. Initially, there was a significant contradiction between Islam and culture, as cultural practices were perceived as shirk, or associating partners with Allah. In the past, offerings were made to appease spirits believed to inhabit the area, aiming to prevent their interference during cultural events such as the Kabumi tradition in Lebuawu village. However, with the introduction of Islam, this practice underwent a transformation. The tradition of offerings, initially intended to appease spirits, has evolved into communal prayers. While offerings are still made, they are no longer dedicated to spirits but are
instead offered as alms to animals such as ants, grasshoppers, and others. The tradition of earth alms is highly beneficial, especially for the millennial generation, as it provides valuable lessons from the Kabumi tradition, fostering a sense of community familiarity and harmony among the people of Lebuawu Village.

From the interviews conducted, it is evident that the people of Lebuawu Village hold a very positive view towards the Kabumi tradition, which has evolved alongside Islam. The Kabumi tradition instills in the community a sense of gratitude for the agricultural and fisheries products bestowed upon them by God. Furthermore, it emphasizes the importance of community cohesion and harmony within Lebuawu Village, encouraging mutual care and the preservation of cultural heritage. Moreover, the Kabumi tradition serves to broaden the insights of both young and older members of the village, as it has become a renowned symbol of Lebuawu Village and an integral part of its cultural identity.

The results of the interviews show the diversity of perceptions on the benefits of the Kabumi tradition as also stated by Rachmawati et al. (2021) that the earth alms celebration can be used as an example in increasing feelings of gratitude and community resilience. Through the earth alms ceremony, there is an increase in spiritual belief and devotion to God, as well as in the community's sense of gratitude and resilience. Almsgiving to the earth is a strategy used by society to anticipate and adapt to various traumas, difficulties, tragedies, threats and situations that cause stress. Apart from that, earth alms event is also a form of expression of people's gratitude to God.

While the interviews shed light on the positive aspects of the Kabumi tradition in Lebuawu Village, it's essential to acknowledge some limitations in the findings. Firstly, the interviews represent a small sample size and may not fully capture the diversity of perspectives within the community. Additionally, the interviews primarily focus on the perceived benefits of the Kabumi tradition, potentially overlooking any challenges or criticisms
associated with it. Furthermore, the interviews provide subjective accounts that may be influenced by the respondents' personal experiences and biases. Future research could aim to address these limitations by conducting a more extensive and representative study, considering a broader range of viewpoints, and exploring potential drawbacks or controversies surrounding the Kabumi tradition.

Conclusion

Kabumi refers to the tradition of earth alms or Nyadran in Lebuawu Pecangaan Jepara Village, carried out annually during the month of "Apit" in Javanese terms. This sacred custom blends Javanese and Islamic traditions, exemplifying the process of harmonizing local culture with Islam through cultural acculturation, where elements of Javanese culture are combined with Islamic teachings brought by the walisongo. For instance, arts such as wayang and Javanese songs were adapted by the Wali to fit the context of Islamic da’wah.

Islamic acculturation within the Kabumi tradition instills a profound sense of gratitude among the people of Lebuawu Village, evident in the series of events like the slametan. It is a communal prayer activity seeking salvation from God, includes Tahtimul Quran to seek blessings from the holy book, the primary source of Islamic teachings. This activity involves local religious leaders and village students. Following Tahtimul Quran is the Tahlilan activity, where the community, along with traditional leaders and figures, pray together at the tomb of Mbah Citro, seeking blessings for the crops to benefit the people of Lebuawu village. Subsequently, another slametan seeks blessings for the smooth conduct of the next event—the shadow puppet show at the Lebuawu village hall. Wayang kulit is chosen as a medium for spreading Islam, a practice introduced by Sunan Kalijaga.
Islamic acculturation within the Kabumi tradition emphasizes gratitude and fosters friendship among the people of Lebuawu Village. This tradition not only embodies local culture but also encompasses Islamic values. It promotes an attitude of tolerance within the community since this acculturation does not eliminate local traditions that became the feature of Kabumi tradition.

References


Kumparan.com. (2022). Asal Usul Penamaan Bulan Apit dalam Kalender...


el Harakah: Jurnal Budaya Islam Vol. 26 No. 1, 2024
Pendidikan Sejarah dan Sejarah, 1(3), 17-25. https://doi.org/10.22437/krinok.v1i3.18085

