

The Kudus Minaret as a Material-Symbolic Medium of Theological Acculturation and Social Tolerance in Contemporary Javanese Islam

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Abstract: This study analyzes the Kudus Minaret in Indonesia as an expression of theological acculturation and examines how contemporary communities interpret its symbolism in relation to social tolerance in Kudus. This study is important because previous research has tended to examine the Kudus Minaret separately through architectural, historical, or tourism perspectives. The study employs a historical-interpretive qualitative approach, drawing on a literature review and semi-structured interviews with seven participants: one mosque administrator, three local residents, and three pilgrims. The findings show that the Hindu-Javanese architectural elements of the Kudus Minaret have been interpreted in the literature as forms of acculturation that integrate local symbols into an Islamic framework. The findings also show that the teachings of Sunan Kudus, particularly the prohibition against slaughtering cattle, continue to serve as a moral reference for promoting tolerance and mutual respect among religious communities. However, interpretations of the Kudus Minaret's symbolism vary and are not uniformly understood in social life. These findings contribute to the study of Javanese Islam by positioning religious artifacts as spaces of social interpretation. The originality of this study lies in its integration of architectural, theological, and contemporary social-experiential dimensions in interpreting the Kudus Minaret.

Keywords: Javanese Islam; Kudus Minaret; social tolerance; theological acculturation.

Abstrak: Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis Menara Kudus, Indonesia, sebagai ekspresi akulturasi teologis serta menelaah bagaimana masyarakat memaknai simbol tersebut dalam konteks toleransi sosial di Kudus kontemporer. Kajian ini penting karena penelitian terdahulu lebih banyak membahas Menara Kudus dari aspek arsitektur, sejarah, atau pariwisata secara terpisah. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif historis-interpretatif melalui studi kepustakaan dan wawancara semi-terstruktur dengan tujuh informan yang terdiri atas satu pengelola masjid, tiga warga lokal, dan tiga peziarah. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa unsur arsitektur Hindu-Jawa pada Menara Kudus diinterpretasikan dalam literatur sebagai bentuk akulturasi yang mengintegrasikan simbol-simbol lokal ke dalam kerangka Islam. Temuan menunjukkan bahwa ajaran Sunan Kudus, terutama larangan menyembelih sapi, masih dipandang sebagai rujukan moral dalam membangun toleransi dan menghormati antarumat beragama. Meskipun demikian, pemaknaan simbolisme Menara Kudus menunjukkan variasi dan tidak dipahami secara seragam dalam kehidupan sosial masyarakat. Temuan ini berimplikasi pada penguatan kajian Islam Jawa yang menempatkan artefak keagamaan sebagai ruang interpretasi sosial. Orisinalitas penelitian terletak pada integrasi dimensi arsitektural, teologis, dan pengalaman sosial kontemporer dalam membaca Menara Kudus.

Kata kunci: Islam Jawa; Menara Kudus; toleransi sosial; akulturasi teologis.

1. Introduction

Religious plurality in Indonesia continues to face challenges related to exclusivism, truth claims, and the quality of interreligious relations, despite positive progress in national indicators of religious harmony. These challenges occur within a broader context of religious plurality in which communities continuously negotiate the relationship between religious identity, social coexistence, and recognition of difference (Asrawijaya, 2021). In 2025, the Religious Harmony Index reached 77.89, with tolerance at 88.82 and equality at 79.35, while the cooperation dimension was only 65.49 (Kementerian Agama Republik Indonesia, 2025). This disparity indicates that acceptance of religious differences does not always lead to strong interreligious social engagement. Therefore, tolerance remains an important issue in Indonesian social life (Intan, 2023). At the local level, the Kudus Minaret represents a religious space that demonstrates continuity among historical heritage, religious practices, and contemporary social life. The Kudus Minaret and the Tomb of Sunan Kudus recorded 718,680 visitors in 2019, and 483,955 visitors in 2021, and the site remains one of the major religious tourism destinations in Kudus Regency (Pemerintah Kabupaten Kudus, 2023). The site's continuing social and religious function is also evident in the annual *Buka Luwur* tradition, which the regional government continues to recognize as a cultural and religious event in the area of the Kudus Minaret Mosque and the Tomb of Sunan Kudus (Pemerintah Provinsi Jawa Tengah, 2026). Therefore, the Kudus Minaret functions not only as a historical heritage site but also as an important social-religious space for understanding how contemporary Kudus society interprets the value of tolerance.

Historically, scholars have often interpreted the Kudus Minaret as a representation of acculturation between Islam and Hindu-Javanese culture, evident in both its architectural form and the teachings of Sunan Kudus, particularly the prohibition on slaughtering cattle as an expression of respect for the Hindu community. However, the presence of religious symbols and historical heritage does not necessarily indicate that society uniformly develops or understands tolerance. A more important question concerns how contemporary communities understand, remember, and connect the heritage of the Kudus Minaret with everyday religious practices and social relations. The lived religion perspective understands religion as something that people practice, negotiate, and interpret through social experience, while material religion views objects, spaces, architecture, and symbols as media through which people produce and interpret religious meaning in social life (Ammerman, 2014; Meyer et al., 2010; Whitehead, 2020). In plural religious societies, tolerance is also constructed through social interaction, mutual recognition, and everyday engagement with difference rather than merely through formal theological acceptance (Casram, 2016). Within this framework, this study does not treat the Kudus Minaret as a direct factor in the production of tolerance. Instead, it approaches the site as a material and symbolic resource that people may use to interpret religious values. Accordingly, this study examines how contemporary communities interpret the Kudus Minaret as a representation of tolerance and the extent to which people share or differ in these interpretations.

Research on the Kudus Minaret has developed along several major trajectories. The first trajectory examines the Kudus Minaret as a material artifact that represents the encounter between Islam and Hindu-Javanese culture. Ashadi (2021) demonstrates that the architectural form of the Kudus Minaret closely resembles Javanese temple structures, while Idham (2021) explains that Javanese Islamic architecture developed through the adoption and adaptation of Hindu-Buddhist elements. Pratiwi et al. (2024) identify spatial synchronization between Hindu-Buddhist architecture and traditional Javanese mosques, while Supatmo and Syafii (2020) and Mujiyono (2019) highlight pre-Islamic ornaments, multicultural expressions, and cultural values within the Kudus Minaret complex. These studies successfully explain the material forms, ornaments, and symbols of acculturation. However, they predominantly employ architectural and semiotic perspectives and therefore provide limited explanations of how contemporary communities understand and negotiate the symbolic meanings of the Kudus Minaret.

The second trajectory examines Sunan Kudus's *da'wa* strategy as a form of theological adaptation to the sociocultural context of Javanese society. Damayanti and Sartini (2023) show that Sunan Kudus developed his approach through self–other relations, respect for difference, and a nonconfrontational

cultural strategy. Kharis (2020) identifies the Kudus Minaret as a medium of *da'wa* that accommodated local culture, while Syakur (2021) and Winarto et al. (2024) interpret the prohibition against slaughtering cattle as an expression of respect for the Hindu community and as a moral reference for religious moderation. Maulana (2022) extends this discussion by demonstrating that the Islamization of Java developed through a pattern of moderation that adapted to local culture. These studies establish important connections among theology, *da'wa*, culture, and tolerance. However, most of them rely primarily on historical and normative reconstructions of Sunan Kudus's teachings and therefore offer limited explanations of how contemporary Kudus society interprets this heritage.

The third trajectory shifts attention from historical artifacts and figures toward tolerance as a social practice in the everyday life of Kudus communities. Yusrina and Ma'arif (2020) show that families, youth organizations, religious activities, and everyday social interactions transmit values of tolerance in Kutuk, Kudus. Zuhri and Bakhrudin (2021) demonstrate that religious moderation develops through practices of coexistence that maintain a balance between religious identity and social relations. Sari et al. (2019) further show how the interfaith and interbelief community *Tali Akrab* facilitates dialogue and interreligious cooperation. These studies demonstrate that tolerance operates not only as a normative value but also as a negotiated practice within social relations and everyday religious experiences. However, these studies primarily focus on families, organizations, communities, and interreligious interactions. They have not specifically integrated the Kudus Minaret as a material artifact, a theological symbol, and a source of social memory into their analysis of tolerance.

These three research trajectories show that previous studies have examined the materiality of the Kudus Minaret, Sunan Kudus's *da'wa* strategy and theological orientation, and practices of tolerance in the social life of Kudus communities. However, scholars have generally examined these dimensions separately. This gap requires an analytical approach that connects religious artifacts, theological narratives, and contemporary social experiences within a single framework. The lived religion perspective understands religion as an experience that people live, practice, and negotiate in everyday life (Ammerman, 2014), while material religion emphasizes the role of spaces, architecture, objects, and religious symbols as important media through which people construct and communicate religious meanings (Meyer et al., 2010; Whitehead, 2020). By combining these perspectives, this study approaches the Kudus Minaret not merely as an architectural legacy but also as a material-symbolic medium that connects historical memory, theological values, and interpretations of tolerance in the contemporary social life of Kudus.

Based on this gap, this study aims to analyze the Kudus Minaret as a material representation of theological acculturation between Islam and Hindu-Javanese culture and to explain how contemporary Kudus society understands its historical and theological meanings in relation to social tolerance. This study does not treat architecture as a factor that directly shapes tolerance. Instead, it examines how people use the Kudus Minaret as a symbolic and moral reference when interpreting religious life.

This study argues that the Kudus Minaret functions as a material-symbolic medium of theological acculturation, providing historical and moral references for interpreting tolerance, although these meanings do not operate deterministically and communities do not understand them uniformly. People construct meanings of the Kudus Minaret through interactions among architectural materiality, historical memories of Sunan Kudus, religious knowledge, and everyday social experiences. This argument extends the perspectives of lived religion and material religion by demonstrating that religious materiality does not automatically shape social behavior. Rather, materiality provides a space for the mediation and negotiation of meanings that social actors may interpret differently within specific social contexts. Therefore, this study contributes theoretically by explaining how religious artifacts, theological memory, and practices of interpreting tolerance interact within contemporary Javanese Muslim society.

2. Methods

The Kudus Minaret constitutes the focal case of this study and is examined as a religious-cultural artifact and a material-symbolic site within the Javanese Islamic tradition. The study analyzes two

interconnected bodies of evidence. The first consists of scholarly and documentary interpretations of the Kudus Minaret's architectural elements, theological meanings, and historical narratives concerning Sunan Kudus's *da'wa* strategy and Hindu-Javanese-Islamic acculturation. The second consists of interview narratives through which selected participants interpret the Kudus Minaret, the teachings of Sunan Kudus, and their meanings in relation to tolerance and contemporary social life. These two bodies of evidence are analyzed in relation to three interrelated dimensions: architectural and material acculturation, theological and historical memory, and contemporary interpretations of tolerance. Accordingly, the study does not treat the Kudus Minaret merely as an architectural object or assume that its material features directly produce particular social meanings. Instead, it examines how scholarly interpretations of its material and historical dimensions intersect with the meanings articulated by contemporary social actors. This analytical focus draws on lived religion, which emphasizes religion as experienced and interpreted in everyday life, and material religion, which approaches spaces, objects, and architecture as media through which religious meanings are produced and negotiated (Ammerman, 2014; Meyer et al., 2010; Whitehead, 2020).

This study employs a qualitative method with a historical-interpretive approach because it seeks to understand meanings, values, symbols, and social experiences rather than measure causal relationships or produce statistical generalizations (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The historical approach traces the processes of Islamization, cultural acculturation, and the formation of theological narratives associated with Sunan Kudus, drawing on academic sources. The interpretive approach examines the meanings embedded in the architecture and symbols of the Kudus Minaret and connects them with contemporary social interpretations. This research design, therefore, enables the study to relate the historical and material dimensions of the Kudus Minaret to the religious experiences of contemporary communities.

The study uses both secondary and primary data. The researchers obtained secondary data from books, peer-reviewed journal articles, and academic publications relevant to the history of Islamization in Java, the architecture of the Kudus Minaret, Hindu-Javanese and Islamic acculturation, Sunan Kudus's *da'wa* strategy, and social tolerance in Kudus. The researchers collected primary data through interviews with seven participants whom they purposively selected based on their knowledge of and experiences with the Kudus Minaret and the surrounding social-religious environment. The participants consisted of one mosque administrator (MA), three local residents (MZ, CA, and S), and three pilgrims (MS, F, and K). This grouping enabled the study to capture perspectives from social actors who occupied different positions and had varied experiences regarding the Kudus Minaret.

The researchers collected data through a literature review and semi-structured interviews. The literature review traced historical narratives, architectural interpretations, the development of acculturation, and findings from previous studies on the Kudus Minaret (Zed, 2008). The researchers conducted the interviews in May 2026, and each interview lasted approximately 15–20 minutes. The interview guide focused on participants' understandings of the Kudus Minaret, the teachings of Sunan Kudus, the tradition of refraining from slaughtering cattle, practices of tolerance, and experiences of social life in the Kudus Minaret area. Before each interview, every participant provided verbal informed consent. The researchers audio-recorded the interviews and supplemented the recordings with field notes to ensure accurate documentation of the data.

The researchers analyzed the data through data reduction, thematic categorization, comparative reading, and interpretation. In the initial stage, they organized the literature into four themes: architectural acculturation, theological expression, *da'wa* strategies, and social tolerance. They then categorized the interview data according to emerging themes, particularly interpretations of the Kudus Minaret, the prohibition against slaughtering cattle, respect for differences, coexistence, and variations in the understanding of the Kudus Minaret's symbolism. This categorization followed the principles of thematic analysis, which uses patterns of meaning to organize qualitative data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). During the interpretive stage, the researchers connected findings from the literature and interviews through the perspectives of lived religion and material religion. Throughout the analysis, they distinguished scholarly interpretations of architectural symbols from meanings explicitly expressed by

the participants. This distinction prevented the study from attributing social meanings to participants that the empirical data did not support.

3. Results

The Islamization of Java developed through a long social and cultural process that used trade networks, intergroup interactions, marriage, education, and *da'wa* as channels for the spread of Islam (Permatasari & Hudaidah, 2021; Sunanto, 2005). Muslim preachers did not eliminate local culture entirely. Instead, they adapted Islamic teachings to traditions and social structures that had already taken root in local communities. They introduced Islam gradually and relatively nonconfrontationally by incorporating local cultural elements as media for communicating Islamic teachings (Helmiati, 2014; Maulana, 2024). This pattern shows that the Islamization of Java unfolded through negotiations between Islamic values and local culture, thereby shaping a form of Javanese Islam that adapted to its sociocultural environment.

Kudus developed within this broader historical context as a trading center that brought together communities with diverse cultural and religious backgrounds, creating opportunities for social interaction and cultural exchange (Said, 2014). In this environment, Ja'far Shadiq, widely known as Sunan Kudus, developed a *da'wa* strategy that used local culture and symbols as media for religious communication. His approach appeared in architectural forms that adapted local traditions and in practices that expressed respect for the Hindu community, particularly the prohibition against slaughtering cattle, which later became an important narrative in the religious history of Kudus (Atok, 2024; Damayanti & Sartini, 2023; Rubini, 2018). This historical context provides the foundation for understanding the Kudus Minaret as a material artifact that represents the encounter among Islam, local culture, and values of respect for religious difference.

Materiality of the Kudus Minaret as a Representation of Theological Acculturation

The materiality of the Kudus Minaret displays architectural characteristics that differ from conventional mosque minarets in Indonesia and from broader traditions of Islamic architecture. Its structure visually resembles Hindu-Buddhist temple architecture in Java, particularly through its vertically tiered composition, red-brick construction, and massive structural form, all of which reflect local architectural traditions (Ashadi, 2021). These characteristics position the Kudus Minaret as a religious structure that combines an Islamic function with material forms familiar within Hindu-Javanese culture. The structure and architectural style also preserve local pre-Islamic characteristics while maintaining the building's function as part of the Al-Aqsa Mosque–Kudus Minaret complex (Aan & Nindita, 2025; Supriyadi et al., 2022). Thus, the physical form of the Kudus Minaret provides an initial layer of evidence that acculturation occurred through the adoption and reinterpretation of local material traditions within an Islamic religious space.

The use of red brick in the Kudus Minaret further demonstrates the continuity of local architectural traditions that had developed since the Majapahit period. The material not only shapes the building's visual character but also reflects construction techniques and Hindu-Javanese architectural compositions that existed before the Islamization of Java. Supriyadi et al. (2022) show that the gateway structures and red-brick construction within the Kudus Minaret complex preserve elements of Majapahit architectural style. Aan and Nindita (2025) likewise demonstrate that Hindu architectural influences appear in the minaret, gateways, and decorative elements that later acquired new functions within the mosque environment. These findings indicate that acculturation at the Kudus Minaret appears not only in the building's overall form but also in the selection of materials and construction techniques that adapted local architectural heritage to Islamic religious functions.

The continuity of Hindu-Javanese architecture within the Kudus Minaret complex is evident in its gateways and the *Lawang Kembar*, which structures the spatial transition toward the sacred area. These gateways resemble the *candi bentar* tradition and classical Hindu-Javanese gateways, yet the mosque complex incorporates them into an Islamic spatial arrangement and assigns them new functions. Pratiwi et al. (2024) show that traditional Javanese mosques synchronized Hindu-Buddhist spatial

elements with Islamic architecture by adapting spatial patterns and architectural features. Wijaya (2025) identifies *Lawang Kembar* as an important expression of acculturation within the Kudus Minaret complex. Aan and Nindita (2025) further demonstrate that Hindu architectural influences extend beyond the minaret itself to the gateways and other spatial elements. Therefore, acculturation at the Kudus Minaret operates not only through decoration and architectural form but also through spatial organization that adapts transitional patterns from exterior areas into an Islamic religious space.

Figure 1. The Kudus Minaret and *Lawang Kembar* within the Kudus Minaret Complex



Source: Photograph by Dian Utoro Aji/detikJateng, in Safitri (2024).

Traces of acculturation also appear in ornaments associated with pre-Islamic traditions, particularly *Surya Majapahit*, *kala* motifs, and several other decorative elements. Supatmo and Syafii (2020) show that the Kudus Minaret Mosque preserves pre-Islamic ornaments as part of a multicultural expression that records the continuity of Javanese culture before and after Islamization. Pambudi et al. (2023) also demonstrate that the ornaments of the Kudus Minaret contain multiple layers of symbolic meaning related to human relationships, the cultural environment, and religious life. In this context, scholars should not directly classify *Surya Majapahit* and *kala* motifs as Islamic theological symbols. Instead, these elements represent older cultural forms that acquired new contexts and functions after their incorporation into an Islamic religious space. Architectural and semiotic studies therefore interpret the ornaments of the Kudus Minaret as reinterpretations of pre-Islamic visual heritage within the religious materiality of Javanese Muslim society.

Chinese ceramics that decorate parts of the structure further reveal the multicultural layers of the Kudus Minaret. Their presence shows that the building's materiality emerged not only from encounters between Islam and Hindu-Javanese culture but also from connections with broader cultural and commercial networks. Pambudi et al. (2023) show that the ceramics and ornaments of the Kudus Minaret carry symbolic values that enrich its visual character while representing connections with diverse cultural traditions. The incorporation of Chinese ceramics into an Islamic religious structure also reflects the movement of people, objects, and ideas that accompanied the development of trading centers along Java's northern coast. The materiality of the Kudus Minaret therefore reflects a layered process of acculturation that brought Islamic, Hindu-Javanese, and Chinese cultural influences together within the same religious environment.

Scholarly interpretations of the Kudus Minaret also identify theological meanings in its structural composition. Supriyadi et al. (2022) interpret the vertical divisions and structural arrangement of the minaret as representations of the six articles of faith, while they interpret the mosque's five main doors as symbols of the five pillars of Islam. This interpretation corresponds with Idham's (2021) finding that Javanese mosque architecture developed through the adoption and reinterpretation of Hindu-Buddhist elements within an Islamic framework without eliminating the sacred function of the structure. In this

context, the materiality of the Kudus Minaret provides a space in which older architectural forms acquire new religious interpretations. However, interpretations involving the six articles of faith, the five pillars of Islam, *Surya Majapahit*, and *kala* motifs derive from architectural and semiotic scholarship rather than from meanings directly expressed by the participants in this study. This distinction prevents the analysis from conflating scholarly theological interpretations with the social meanings that communities themselves attribute to the Kudus Minaret.

Figure 2. Porcelain Plate Ornaments on the Kudus Minaret



Source: Ariswanto (2012), Wikimedia Commons, CC0 1.0; the interpretation of the ornaments follows Rosyid (2019).

The porcelain plates attached to the Kudus Minaret further demonstrate that the building's materiality developed through cultural interactions that extended beyond the relationship between Islam and Hindu-Javanese traditions (Figure 2). Rosyid (2019) documents dozens of porcelain ornaments on the exterior of the minaret that reflect historical connections to broader Asian cultural and trade networks. Their use as decorative elements on a religious building shows how communities incorporated material objects from outside the local environment into the architectural composition of the Kudus Minaret without removing its religious function. These porcelain ornaments, therefore, reinforce the character of the Kudus Minaret as a material artifact shaped by layered processes of cultural exchange, adaptation, and reinterpretation throughout the history of Javanese Islam.

The materiality of the Kudus Minaret shows that theological acculturation is evident not only in its architectural form but also in its materials, spatial organization, ornamentation, and associated symbols. The temple-like form of the minaret, red-brick construction, *Lawang Kembar*, pre-Islamic ornaments, and porcelain plates demonstrate the continuity and convergence of diverse cultural traditions within an Islamic religious space. At the same time, scholarly interpretations of the six articles of faith and the five pillars of Islam demonstrate how academic studies have assigned theological meanings to the building's structure. These findings show that the Kudus Minaret represents a process that reinterpreted preexisting cultural elements by placing them within Islamic functions and contexts. The distinctive character of the Kudus Minaret, therefore, lies in its capacity to materially preserve and represent cultural encounters without erasing the historical traces that shaped its development.

Sunan Kudus's Teachings as a Moral Reference for Tolerance

The teachings of Sunan Kudus remain present in the social and religious memory of communities surrounding the Kudus Minaret and continue to serve as a moral reference in discussions of interreligious harmony. People associate this heritage not only with Sunan Kudus as a historical figure

but also with values of respect for difference that local religious narratives have transmitted across generations. The mosque administrator (MA) explained:

“We continue to uphold all of the teachings that Mbah Sunan Kudus passed down, especially those concerning social harmony. We firmly uphold these teachings in order to promote tolerance within the community. Even the architectural form of the Kudus Minaret represents the tolerance taught by Sunan Kudus” (MA, Personal Communication, May 2026).

This statement shows that people continue to remember and use the teachings of Sunan Kudus as a moral framework for explaining harmony and tolerance within the religious life of the Kudus Minaret area.

From the perspective of the mosque administrator, the relationship among the teachings of Sunan Kudus, the Kudus Minaret, and tolerance also forms part of an institutional narrative through which the religious heritage is interpreted. The emphasis on the phrase “we firmly uphold” indicates an effort to preserve the memory of Sunan Kudus’s teachings as a reference for explaining harmonious social relations (MA, Personal Communication, May 2026). However, this statement should be interpreted proportionally as the perspective of the mosque administrator and should not automatically be treated as representative of all residents of Kudus. The data primarily show that, at the level of religious-space management, the Kudus Minaret and the teachings of Sunan Kudus remain associated with narratives of harmony and respect for difference.

The most concrete expression of this memory appears in the continuing tradition of refraining from slaughtering cattle, which remains widely known in the Kudus Minaret area. One pilgrim (MS) stated:

“To this day, people still experience tolerance in everyday life during Eid al-Adha, when the community refrains from slaughtering cattle for sacrifice because cattle are regarded as a sacred symbol by Hindus” (MS, Personal Communication, May 2026).

F expressed a similar view, stating that “the tradition that remains deeply rooted is the practice of showing respect by not slaughtering cattle, especially among residents living around the Kudus Minaret” (F, Personal Communication, May 2026). These statements show that people continue to remember the prohibition against slaughtering cattle as a practice of respect for Hindu traditions, particularly within the religious life of communities surrounding the Kudus Minaret. This interpretation is consistent with studies that identify the prohibition against slaughtering cattle as part of Sunan Kudus’s strategy of cultural adaptation and his respect for the Hindu community (Damayanti & Sartini, 2023; Rubini, 2018; Syakur, 2021; Winarto et al., 2024).

Therefore, the findings show that the significance of Sunan Kudus’s heritage does not lie in proving that the tradition directly produces tolerance. Rather, its significance lies in the way communities use historical memory to assign moral meaning to respect for difference. The teachings of Sunan Kudus function as a symbolic reference that helps people explain practices of harmony through locally familiar religious and historical narratives. In this context, people do not understand the prohibition against slaughtering cattle merely as a remnant of a past tradition. They also remember it as an expression of respect that remains relevant in contemporary religious life. In this way, the memory of Sunan Kudus provides a moral framework that connects historical heritage with contemporary interpretations of tolerance in social life.

Interpretations of Sunan Kudus’s teachings also vary according to the participants’ social positions. As the mosque administrator, MA emphasized Sunan Kudus’s teachings as a guideline for harmony and as a moral foundation for explaining tolerance. By contrast, MS and F, as pilgrims, more strongly associated this heritage with the concrete practice of refraining from slaughtering cattle. These differences show that people can interpret the same religious heritage from different perspectives, whether through institutional roles or through everyday religious experience. This variation is important because it shows that the meaning of Sunan Kudus’s teachings does not take a single, uniform form. Instead, participants articulate these meanings according to their experiences, social positions, and proximity to the Kudus Minaret.

Table 1. Interpretations of Sunan Kudus's Teachings as a Moral Reference for Tolerance

Code	Participant Position	Main Theme	Expressed Meaning
MA	Mosque administrator	Teachings of Sunan Kudus	Understood as a moral reference for harmony and tolerance
MS	Pilgrim	Prohibition against slaughtering cattle	Interpreted as an expression of respect for Hindu traditions
F	Pilgrim	Continuation of the tradition of refraining from slaughtering cattle	Understood as a legacy of respect that remains recognized around the Kudus Minaret

Source: Interview data, May 2026, processed by the researchers.

Table 1 shows that participants continue to interpret the teachings of Sunan Kudus as a moral reference for explaining tolerance, although their emphases differ according to their social positions. The mosque administrator situates Sunan Kudus's teachings within a framework of harmony and tolerance, while the pilgrims emphasize refraining from slaughtering cattle as a concrete expression of respect for Hindu traditions. These differences show that participants do not understand the heritage of Sunan Kudus in a single uniform way. Instead, they articulate it through different experiences and social positions. Overall, the data do not show that Sunan Kudus's teachings directly produce tolerant behavior. Rather, they show that communities continue to draw on the memories and traditions associated with him to assign moral meaning to interreligious practices of respect in the social life surrounding the Kudus Minaret.

In summary, the findings show that people continue to remember the teachings of Sunan Kudus as a moral reference for understanding harmony and respect for difference. The mosque administrator emphasizes the value of tolerance within Sunan Kudus's teachings, while the pilgrims more strongly associate his legacy with the tradition of refraining from slaughtering cattle as an expression of respect for the Hindu community. These differences in emphasis show that people interpret the heritage of Sunan Kudus through different experiences and social positions. Nevertheless, the data reveal a consistent pattern: communities continue to draw on the memory of Sunan Kudus to assign meaning to interreligious practices of respect in the social life surrounding the Kudus Minaret.

Negotiating the Meaning of Tolerance in Contemporary Social Life

The interpretation of the Kudus Minaret as a symbol of tolerance emerges from the social experiences of residents who live around the site. One local resident (MZ) stated that "the community still sees the Kudus Minaret as a symbol of tolerance. These values are still present and maintained today. One clear example of tolerance is the practice of respecting and honoring the beliefs and religions of each religious community" (MZ, Personal Communication, May 2026). This statement shows that residents understand the Kudus Minaret not only as a historical heritage site but also as a symbol associated with mutual respect in interreligious life. However, this finding should be interpreted proportionally as a Muslim resident's perception of the surrounding social environment and should not be treated as a direct representation of the views of all religious groups in Kudus. In this sense, the Kudus Minaret functions in residents' experiences as a symbolic reference for explaining respect for difference in everyday social life.

Practices of coexistence also appear in residents' interpretations of how people use social space around the Kudus Minaret. One local resident (CA) explained:

"Until now, Confucian communities have continued to live alongside the Minaret. The relationship between the temple and its administrators and the Minaret community has remained peaceful. Even the temple parking area has been used as a parking space for people attending Gus Baha's religious lectures" (CA, Personal Communication, May 2026).

This statement shows that, from the perspective of a Muslim resident, the spatial proximity between the Kudus Minaret and the *klenteng* (Chinese temple) is part of everyday coexistence. However, these data cannot directly represent the views of the *klenteng* community because this study did not include non-Muslim participants. Therefore, this finding is more appropriately interpreted as a Muslim resident's perception of shared space and interreligious social relations around the Kudus Minaret.

Participants also interpreted tolerance as an ethical principle that emphasizes respect for difference without erasing religious identity. One pilgrim (K) stated that tolerance means "respecting differences while maintaining the principles of one's own faith" (K, Personal Communication, May 2026). This statement shows that the participant did not understand tolerance as the equalization or blending of religious beliefs. Instead, the participant understood tolerance as the ability to maintain religious commitment while respecting others' beliefs. In this context, tolerance functions as a relational ethic that guides how individuals interact with different religious groups without eliminating the boundaries of their own religious identities.

Although participants often associated the Kudus Minaret with tolerance, they did not interpret its symbolism uniformly. One local resident (S) explained:

"If we look at its physical form, then yes, but in practice, we still prioritize Islamic values. People need to know the history, but those who do not understand it may not see the same meaning. There are still relationships between the Chinese community, the temple, and us as the Muslim majority. We live side by side, respect one another, and do not interfere with each other" (S, Personal Communication, May 2026).

This statement provides an important contrast because it shows that the meanings of tolerance do not automatically attach to the physical form of the Kudus Minaret. Understanding its symbolism depends on historical knowledge, social experience, and familiarity with the narratives associated with the site. The materiality of the Kudus Minaret, therefore, provides opportunities for interpretations of tolerance, but it does not ensure that all members of society understand its symbolism in the same way.

The variation in interpretations of the Kudus Minaret becomes clear through the different emphases expressed by MZ, CA, S, and K. MZ primarily interpreted the Kudus Minaret as a symbol of tolerance associated with mutual respect across religious communities, while CA emphasized experiences of social coexistence through spatial proximity and interaction with the *klenteng* community. S showed that people do not necessarily understand the meaning of tolerance directly because interpretations of the Kudus Minaret depend on each individual's historical knowledge and social experience. Meanwhile, K interpreted tolerance as an ethical principle that enables people to respect differences without abandoning their own religious commitments. These differences show that the meanings attached to the Kudus Minaret remain plural, contextual, and nonuniform. Therefore, the Kudus Minaret is better understood as a cultural and religious reference point that creates space for diverse interpretations of tolerance, shaped by individuals' social positions, experiences, and knowledge.

Table 2. Variations in Interpretations of the Kudus Minaret and Social Tolerance

Code	Participant Position	Interpretation of the Kudus Minaret	Expressed Form of Tolerance
MZ	Local resident	Symbol of tolerance	Mutual respect across religious communities
CA	Local resident	Space for coexistence	Interaction and shared use of space with the <i>klenteng</i> community
S	Local resident	Meaning depends on historical knowledge	Not everyone understands the symbolism of the Kudus Minaret in the same way
K	Pilgrim	Ethical reference	Respecting differences while maintaining the principles of one's own faith

Source: Primary interview data from MZ, CA, S, and K, May 2026, processed by the researchers.

Table 2 shows that interpretations of the Kudus Minaret do not form a single pattern but develop according to each participant's experiences and social position. Local residents emphasize symbolic meaning, social coexistence, and the importance of historical knowledge, while the pilgrims place greater emphasis on tolerance as an ethical principle for respecting differences. These variations show that the Kudus Minaret does not automatically produce a uniform understanding of tolerance. Instead, participants negotiate its meanings through social experience, proximity to religious space, historical knowledge, and their own understandings of interreligious relations. The Kudus Minaret, therefore, functions as a cultural-religious reference that provides space for diverse interpretations of tolerance in contemporary Kudus society.

The findings show that participants associate the Kudus Minaret with values of tolerance, but these interpretations do not develop in a single or automatic form. Meanings of tolerance emerge through social experience, historical knowledge, social position, and individual understandings of interreligious relations in everyday life. Some participants emphasize the Kudus Minaret as a symbol of tolerance and a space of coexistence, while others emphasize respect for difference or the importance of historical knowledge for understanding its symbolic meaning. Therefore, the Kudus Minaret is more appropriately understood as a cultural-religious reference that provides space for diverse interpretations of tolerance rather than as a factor that directly and deterministically produces tolerant behavior in society.

Continuity of the Kudus Minaret as a Social-Religious Space

The Kudus Minaret and the Tomb of Sunan Kudus continue to function as active religious spaces in contemporary community life. Communities preserve these sites not only as historical heritage but also sustain them through pilgrimage, prayer, religious visits, and various social practices that take place throughout the complex. Maulana (2024) shows that individuals and groups continue to visit the Tomb of Sunan Kudus as part of religious practices associated with honoring a Muslim saint and seeking blessings. These ongoing activities also shape the use of space around the Kudus Minaret, as the mosque and tomb complex has become a meeting point for religious activities, pilgrim mobility, and the social life of local communities (Anisa & Lissimia, 2020; Marsono et al., 2018). Therefore, the Kudus Minaret is better understood as a religious space that people continue to use and interpret in everyday life, rather than merely as a historical artifact detached from contemporary social dynamics.

The frequency of visits also indicates that the Kudus Minaret area remains an active space for pilgrimage and religious activities. Jiwandhana (2024) reports that approximately 2,000 pilgrims visit the Tomb of Sunan Kudus each day, and that the number can increase to 7,000 during certain periods, particularly Muharram and holiday seasons. The Government of Kudus Regency also recorded 718,680 visits to the Kudus Minaret and the Tomb of Sunan Kudus in 2019 and 483,955 visits in 2021, confirming the area's position as one of the major religious tourism destinations in Kudus (Pemerintah Kabupaten Kudus, 2023). These figures demonstrate that the Kudus Minaret area continues to experience high levels of use and remains an active pilgrimage site in contemporary religious life.

Pilgrimage activities in the Kudus Minaret area also influence the use and function of surrounding spaces. Nila et al. (2022) show that residents have adapted several houses and residential spaces within the complex to accommodate pilgrims' needs and support religious activities. Anisa and Lissimia (2020) likewise demonstrate that the presence of historic buildings contributes to changes in spatial organization and activities throughout the surrounding area. These transformations show that the religious life associated with the Kudus Minaret extends beyond the mosque and tomb into residential areas, circulation routes, commercial spaces, and other social spaces in the surrounding neighborhood. The Kudus Minaret area, therefore, demonstrates an ongoing relationship among material space, religious practice, and social activity in contemporary community life.

The continuing social-religious function of the Kudus Minaret also appears in the annual *Buka Luwur* tradition, a ritual in which the community replaces the cloth covering the Tomb of Sunan Kudus on the tenth day of Muharram. The tradition includes a series of prayers, Qur'an recitations, religious

lectures, and food distribution as expressions of respect for Sunan Kudus (Mundakir & Hidayat, 2020; Rosyid, 2022). Maulana (2024) shows that *Buka Luwur* remains an important component of pilgrimage practices and the veneration of Sunan Kudus in the religious life of the Kudus community. The scale of community participation became visible in the 2025 observance, when organizers distributed more than 36,000 portions of *nasi jangkrik* to participants from various regions (Huda, 2025). This level of participation shows that communities continue to actualize the memory of Sunan Kudus through collective ritual practices that connect the tomb, religious activities, and contemporary social experience.

Figure 3. Community Participation in the *Buka Luwur* Tradition in the Kudus Minaret Area



Source: Photograph by RRI/Roy Kusuma (2026).

The continuity of the Kudus Minaret's religious function also coincides with the development of economic activities that serve pilgrims and other visitors. The literature shows that the area surrounding the mosque and tomb accommodates food vendors, souvenir sellers, parking services, informal transportation providers, and various small businesses associated with pilgrimage activities (Anisa & Lissimia, 2020; Marsono et al., 2018). Firdausiyah (2018) shows that business activities in the Kudus Minaret tourism area are associated with traders' income, while Pujiyanto et al. (2019) connect the entrepreneurial tradition of the Kudus community with the local value of *gusjigang*, which places commerce within the broader context of social and religious life. These developments have also encouraged residents to convert some domestic spaces into business spaces that support visitor mobility. Therefore, the economic dimension surrounding the Kudus Minaret is more appropriately understood as a contextual consequence of continuing pilgrimage activities and religious-space use rather than as an economic impact directly measured by this study.

Communities continue to sustain the Kudus Minaret through a range of ongoing religious and social activities. Pilgrimage to the Tomb of Sunan Kudus, high levels of visitation, changes in the functions of surrounding spaces, the annual *Buka Luwur* tradition, and the development of trade and service activities all demonstrate that the area continues to serve active functions in contemporary community life. Communities do not merely preserve the buildings, tomb, rituals, and surrounding spaces as historical heritage; they continue to use, interpret, and adapt them to contemporary religious and social needs. The Kudus Minaret can therefore be understood as a form of material heritage that remains socially and religiously alive through pilgrimage, collective rituals, spatial use, and accompanying socioeconomic activities.

4. Discussion

This study identifies four interrelated findings concerning the relationship between the materiality of the Kudus Minaret, historical and theological memory, and contemporary interpretations of tolerance. First, the material features of the Kudus Minaret represent a layered process of cultural adaptation in which Hindu-Javanese architectural forms were incorporated and reinterpreted within

an Islamic religious setting. Second, the memory of Sunan Kudus and his teachings, particularly the tradition of refraining from slaughtering cattle, continues to provide a moral reference through which participants interpret respect for religious difference. Third, these meanings are not uniformly understood; interpretations of the Kudus Minaret and tolerance vary with historical knowledge, social experience, and participants' positions in relation to the site. Fourth, the continued intensity of pilgrimage, ritual participation, and social use demonstrates that the Kudus Minaret remains a socially activated religious space rather than a static heritage object. Taken together, these findings suggest that the relationship between religious materiality and tolerance operates through processes of memory, mediation, and social interpretation rather than through a direct or deterministic influence of religious artifacts on social behavior.

The perspectives of material religion and lived religion help explain these findings because both approaches conceptualize the relationship between religious artifacts and social life as a process of meaning mediation rather than as a direct causal relationship. Material religion views architecture, objects, spaces, ornaments, and ritual practices as media through which people experience, communicate, and interpret religion in social life (Meyer et al., 2010; Whitehead, 2020). Lived religion, meanwhile, emphasizes that religious meanings become socially relevant when people enact them through memory, experience, practice, and everyday interaction (Ammerman, 2014). In the context of the Kudus Minaret, this mechanism begins with the structure's materiality and moves through historical narratives about Sunan Kudus, which social knowledge and collective memory then activate through religious experiences and everyday interactions, before individuals interpret them as values of tolerance. The finding that participants do not understand the symbolism of the Kudus Minaret in the same way demonstrates that materiality does not operate deterministically. The same physical structure can serve as a reference point for tolerance among individuals who understand its historical narratives, whereas those without such knowledge may interpret it differently. This study, therefore, extends the material religion perspective by showing that the social significance of religious artifacts lies in their capacity to provide spaces for the mediation and negotiation of meaning, while the actualization of those meanings depends on the knowledge, experiences, and social positions of the actors who interpret them.

These findings confirm previous studies identifying the Kudus Minaret as a representation of architectural acculturation between Islamic and Hindu-Javanese traditions. The similarities appear in the temple-like form of the minaret, the use of red brick, the presence of *Lawang Kembar*, pre-Islamic ornaments, and spatial patterns that adapt Hindu-Buddhist architectural elements within the mosque complex (Ashadi, 2021; Idham, 2021; Mujiyono, 2019; Pratiwi et al., 2024; Supatmo & Syafii, 2020; Supriyadi et al., 2022). However, this study extends these interpretations by showing that the materiality of the Kudus Minaret extends beyond questions of architectural form, symbolism, and spatial composition into processes of social interpretation in contemporary community life. Participants do not automatically understand architectural meanings identified in the literature as representations of acculturation in the same way. Some participants connect the materiality of the Kudus Minaret with tolerance and respect for difference, while others show that such interpretations depend on historical knowledge and social experience. This study therefore shifts the analytical focus from asking what architectural symbols represent to examining how contemporary communities receive, interpret, or fail to fully understand those representations. This shift extends previous architectural and semiotic studies by treating the materiality of the Kudus Minaret as an object whose meanings remain subject to social negotiation rather than as a symbol with a single and fixed social meaning.

The findings also correspond with studies that interpret Sunan Kudus's *da'wa* strategy as a form of religious adaptation to the sociocultural context of Javanese society, particularly through respect for Hindu traditions and the prohibition against slaughtering cattle (Damayanti & Sartini, 2023; Kharis, 2020; Maulana, 2022; Rubini, 2018; Syakur, 2021; Winarto et al., 2024). The similarity lies in the continuing interpretation of the prohibition against slaughtering cattle as an expression of respect for the beliefs of another religious community. Similar patterns have been identified in studies of Indonesian Islamic traditions, which show that local cultural practices may function as spaces where

religious values are preserved, interpreted, and transmitted through culturally embedded forms (Sari, 2024). However, this study shows that contemporary communities preserve not only the practice itself but also the moral memory of Sunan Kudus, which they use to explain how people should conduct interreligious relations. MA, for example, interprets the teachings of Sunan Kudus as an institutional reference for explaining social harmony, whereas MS and F articulate the same memory through the continuing tradition of refraining from slaughtering cattle. This pattern shows that the historical teachings of Sunan Kudus function as a moral repertoire, or a symbolic and normative resource that communities can invoke to provide moral legitimacy for contemporary practices of respect rather than as a single cause of tolerant behavior. From the perspective of lived religion, this continuity shows that traditions retain social relevance when communities continue to remember, narrate, and reuse them to interpret everyday religious experiences (Ammerman, 2014). This study, therefore, extends scholarship on Sunan Kudus's *da'wa* from historical analyses of adaptive strategies toward an understanding of how communities continue to activate memories of those strategies as moral resources in contemporary social life.

The findings further reinforce studies showing that people in Kudus construct and maintain tolerance through everyday social practices, including family life, youth organizations, religious activities, neighborhood relations, and interfaith interactions (Sari et al., 2019; Yusrina & Ma'arif, 2020; Zuhri & Bakhrudin, 2021). However, this study adds that material heritage and historical memory also provide references that individuals use to interpret interreligious relations. The different interpretations expressed by MZ, CA, K, and S clarify this mechanism. MZ interprets the Kudus Minaret as a symbol of interreligious respect, CA associates it with experiences of coexistence and shared use of space, and K understands tolerance as an ethical principle that allows individuals to respect differences without abandoning their own religious commitments. By contrast, S demonstrates that people do not always read tolerance directly from the physical form of the Kudus Minaret because such interpretations depend on individual historical knowledge and social experience. This contrasting finding is important because it shows that religious symbols do not uniformly reproduce tolerance. Tolerance is better understood as a negotiated process that brings together historical memory, religious identity, social experience, individual knowledge, and everyday interaction. This understanding corresponds with recent studies showing that religious tolerance is not simply a fixed value but is continuously constructed through narratives, representations, and social negotiations within particular contexts (Pauzian, 2025). This study, therefore, extends previous research on tolerance in Kudus by demonstrating that material heritage can provide one source of social meaning, while its interpretation remains contextual, plural, and incapable of automatically producing identical patterns of interreligious relations among individuals.

The continuity of the Kudus Minaret as a social-religious space shows that the value of religious heritage extends beyond the physical preservation of buildings, as communities continually reproduce that value through spatial use and practices within and around the site. Pilgrimage activities, the *Buka Luwur* tradition, changes in the functions of residential spaces, and the development of trade and services for pilgrims demonstrate that communities continue to activate the materiality of the Kudus Minaret in contemporary religious and social life (Anisa & Lissimia, 2020; Marsono et al., 2018; Maulana, 2024; Mundakir & Hidayat, 2020; Nila et al., 2022; Pujiyanto et al., 2019; Rosyid, 2022). This pattern corresponds with Tucunan et al. (2026), who show that *ziyarah*, rituals, and memory within historic Islamic districts in Java continue to interact with processes of urban spatial formation. It also aligns with Chae (2026), who argues that the significance of living religious heritage depends on ritual continuity and communal use rather than solely on the physical presence of artifacts. However, the continuity of these functions does not mean that researchers can generalize the social meanings of the Kudus Minaret uniformly. S demonstrates differences in participants' knowledge of the symbolism of the Kudus Minaret; statements about relations with the *klenteng* community still come from Muslim participants; this study did not directly include Hindu, Confucian, or Christian participants or *klenteng* administrators; and the analysis of the pilgrimage economy relies primarily on secondary sources. These empirical limitations matter because actors articulate the meanings of religious heritage from

particular social positions, experiences, and interpretive frameworks. Astor et al. (2017) show that societies construct the meaning of religion as cultural heritage through processes of framing in plural settings, while Zhu (2025) demonstrates that social and spatial negotiations among actors with different interests continually redefine sacred spaces. Therefore, the Kudus Minaret is more appropriately understood as a living religious space that communities continue to use and interpret, while interpretations of its social, religious, and tolerance-related functions remain contextual and open to diverse perspectives.

These findings generate closely related practical and theoretical implications. At the practical level, the findings suggest potential value in developing contextual historical interpretation, intergenerational educational initiatives, documentation of oral histories, and public educational activities that communicate the historical relationships among acculturation, religious heritage, and tolerance. Such initiatives may be relevant to the administrators of the Kudus Minaret, local government agencies, cultural heritage managers, and educational institutions because the findings indicate that participants do not interpret the symbolism of the Kudus Minaret uniformly; their interpretations vary according to historical knowledge, social experience, and their positions in relation to the site. These implications should be understood as potential directions rather than specific policy recommendations, as this study did not evaluate existing heritage programs, educational interventions, or stakeholder needs. At the theoretical level, this study extends the perspectives of lived religion and material religion by demonstrating that religious artifacts do not automatically shape social behavior. Instead, materiality provides a space for mediation in which actors negotiate meanings through interactions among material forms, historical memory, religious knowledge, social position, and everyday experience (Ammerman, 2014; Meyer et al., 2010; Whitehead, 2020). The study, therefore, proposes that religious materiality possesses contingent rather than deterministic interpretive capacity. In this sense, the Kudus Minaret not only represents theological acculturation historically but also functions as a material-symbolic medium whose meanings are continually negotiated in contemporary social life. This argument contributes to scholarship on lived religion and material religion by showing that the continuity and social significance of religious meaning depend on ongoing processes of mediation, transmission, and interpretation.

5. Conclusion

This study shows that the Kudus Minaret constitutes a material-religious heritage site in which theological acculturation, historical memory, and contemporary interpretations of tolerance intersect. Its temple-like form, red-brick construction, *Lawang Kembar*, pre-Islamic ornaments, and porcelain decorations have been interpreted in the literature as material expressions of cultural adaptation within the development of Javanese Islam. The interview findings further show that selected participants continue to draw on the memory and teachings of Sunan Kudus, particularly the tradition of refraining from slaughtering cattle, as a moral reference for interpreting respect for religious difference. However, these interpretations are not uniform. Participants understand the Kudus Minaret and its relationship to tolerance differently, depending on their historical knowledge, social experiences, and positions in relation to the site. Together with the continuing use of the site for pilgrimage, ritual, and other social-religious activities, these findings indicate that the Kudus Minaret remains a living religious space whose meanings continue to be interpreted and negotiated rather than a static historical artifact with a single social meaning.

The scientific contribution of this study lies in connecting religious materiality, theological memory, and contemporary social interpretation, dimensions that previous studies of the Kudus Minaret have generally examined separately. By bringing material religion and lived religion into dialogue, the study demonstrates that the social meanings associated with religious artifacts do not arise automatically from their material or symbolic characteristics. Rather, materiality provides a medium through which meanings are mediated and negotiated in relation to historical narratives, religious knowledge, social memory, social position, and everyday experience. On this basis, the study proposes that religious materiality possesses a contingent rather than deterministic interpretive

capacity. The Kudus Minaret can therefore be understood as a material-symbolic medium whose historical meanings of theological acculturation remain available for contemporary interpretation, while the ways in which those meanings are understood depend on the actors and social contexts through which they are encountered.

This study is limited by the scope and composition of its empirical data. The interviews involved only seven participants—one mosque administrator, three local residents, and three pilgrims—and did not directly include Hindu, Confucian, or Christian participants or administrators of other religious sites. Consequently, the interview findings represent the perspectives of the selected participants rather than those of the society of Kudus or its religious communities as a whole. In addition, interpretations of several architectural features and the discussion of socioeconomic activities surrounding the Kudus Minaret rely primarily on secondary sources. These limitations mean that the study cannot establish causal relationships between the materiality of the Kudus Minaret and tolerant behavior, nor can it generalize its findings across the wider population of Kudus. Future research could broaden the range of participants across religious, generational, and institutional backgrounds and employ ethnographic or longitudinal approaches to examine how interpretations of the Kudus Minaret are produced, transmitted, contested, and transformed over time. Comparative research on other sites of Islamic acculturation in Java could further examine whether similar relationships among religious materiality, historical memory, and the negotiation of tolerance emerge across different social and cultural contexts.

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