



Cultural Integration in Architecture and Interior Elements of The Grand Mosque of Syekh Quro Karawang

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Abstract

Cultural integration plays a pivotal role in the adaptation of multicultural behavior, influenced of local elements and remnants of past religious buildings can play an active role in supporting the development of mosques as Islamic religious buildings. This study aims to explore how the integration of local cultural elements found in the Grand Mosque of Syekh Quro Karawang based on three cultural component, forms the scope and purpose of this research. The identification stage involves data collection through surveys, interviews, observations, and documentary identification. The data is explored by analysing and discussing it using qualitative descriptive methods covering the objects of mosque architectural elements, mosque interior elements, and ornaments/decorative patterns. The findings of this study indicate that the implementation of local culture in the architectural design and interior of mosques is intended to create harmony between traditional values, Islamic concepts, and contemporary needs as a manifestation of cultural works and the development of mosque architecture and interior elements as a representative of cultural interpretation of local identity and Islamic component in three level (physics, social, and beliefs). The implication of this study is the integration and implementation of local culture in line with the development of the mosque's function in the context of local culture.

1. INTRODUCTION

Cultural integration plays a pivotal role in the adaptation of multicultural behavior, influenced by both community dynamics and personal perspectives [1]. In Indonesia, this is evident within the Muslim community, where extensive cultural integration occurs through the acculturation of Islamic values into local identity, guided by visual interpretations of Islamic principles as implemented in mosque architecture [2]. Indonesian mosque architecture itself has historically been shaped by pre-existing architectural forms present during the arrival of Islam [3]. Consequently, local elements and structural remnants of historical religious buildings actively contribute to the architectural evolution of mosques as Islamic places of worship. As integral components of Islamic cultural heritage and

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representations of Muslim life, mosques have continually evolved over time [4]. With the rise of Islamic culture, various symbols were incorporated in both transformed and original forms, representing secondary attributes of Islamic culture [5]. For instance, elements such as the Coptic-derived mihrab, Persian minarets, and Byzantine domes were integrated with traditional floral motifs, geometric patterns, calligraphy, and muqarnas, ultimately shaping the concept of mosque architectural culture [6]. Through dynamic socio-cultural and historical contexts, these secondary attributes have physically manifested into dominant spatial elements, creating a cohesive impression of a unified Islamic cultural space [4][6].

Traditional Javanese architectural elements are applied to the mosque through characteristic cultural motifs represented in both symbolism and function. One of the most prominent features is the multi-tiered roof, known as *tajug*, which typically consists of three to five tiers that integrate Hindu-Buddhist influences, reinterpreted as an Islamic representation of spiritual transition in mosque architecture [5]. This stacked roof not only symbolizes the Javanese philosophy of natural harmony and spirituality, but also provides shelter while conveying a sense of spiritual majesty and openness aligned with Islamic values. Architecturally, the Sheikh Quro Mosque combines Sundanese traditions—evident in its stepped roof—with four minarets reminiscent of the Prophet's Mosque (*Al-Masjid an-Nabawi*) in Medina, serving as the primary hub for the dissemination of Islam in Karawang.

Over the centuries, the site underwent multiple renovation and expansion phases, notably between 1635 and 1637 under Karawang's first Regent, a project that harmonized Middle Eastern architectural elements with local Sundanese cultural influences [7]. Beyond serving as an active religious center, the mosque's six-century-old architectural and interior elements reflect significant local cultural values, presenting a compelling subject for detailed typological study [8]. Symbolizing its history, a monument shaped like the rudder of Admiral Zheng He's (Cheng Ho) ship stands at the front of the mosque, commemorating its founding near the ancient Sundapura Pajajaran harbor along the Citarum River. To accommodate a growing congregation, the mosque has undergone several major renovations, including in 1635, 1747, 1957, 1967, 1994, and 2017.

Previous literature on the Grand Mosque of Syekh Quro in Karawang has largely focused on the history of Islam's arrival in West Java, Syekh Quro's role in establishing the mosque, and general community social activities [9]. However, existing scholarship remains limited to its historical context, administrative role, and main hall activities [10], alongside its function during the Islamization process as a center for religious consolidation [11]. Crucially, these studies fail to connect historical narratives to the visual manifestations of acculturation, assimilation, transformation, adaptation, or syncretism within the architectural components that actively support social behavior inside the mosque.

To address this gap, this study explores how local cultural elements are integrated into the Grand Mosque of Syekh Quro Karawang as a physical representation of cultural synthesis in architectural design. Furthermore, it aims to identify these local cultural features across the mosque's architecture, interior components, and decorative patterns to elucidate how local traditions are systematically operationalized within its spatial structure. This research contributes to the theoretical framework of cultural implementation by proposing a three-tiered model of adaptation—encompassing the physical/visual, social, and mental/ideational dimensions—within Islamic religious architecture.

2. METHODS

Focusing on how local cultural forms are implemented within mosque architecture, this study employs a qualitative descriptive design using a single-case study approach centered on the Grand Mosque of Syekh Quro Karawang. A qualitative descriptive framework is particularly suited for this objective because cultural transformation is a context-bound phenomenon that cannot be reduced to numerical measurement, requiring instead the capture of nuanced physical details, spatial designs, and symbolic meanings embedded within the structure. To systematically address this objective, the framework integrates two specialized qualitative methods: typological analysis, which catalogs and classifies physical attributes—such as facades, structural elements, and interior features—to track formal adaptations relative to regional traditions; and cultural interpretation, which contextualizes both physical artifacts and local traditions to explain how these transformed architectural forms acquire cultural significance.

By linking empirical physical documentation (typology) with contextual analysis (cultural interpretation), this methodological integration enables the study to move beyond basic description to achieve a deeper understanding [12] of how local cultural identity is implemented and transformed across the mosque's exterior facade, structural components, and interior spaces.

The Grand Mosque of Syekh Quro Karawang was selected as a critical single case through purposive sampling because it serves as a lived spatial organization where historical cultural layers intersect with ongoing community integration. Unlike historical structures that function solely as static monuments, this mosque actively embodies transformation across three cultural components: artifacts (physical form), where the building's facade, elements, and interior features reflect a tangible hybridity explicitly blending traditional Sundanese and Islamic architectural typologies; sociofacts (social practices), as its design continuously adapts to facilitate communal gathering, civic interaction, and shared social activities as one of West Java's earliest Islamic centers; and mentifacts (values and meanings), wherein the physical and social spaces express underlying cultural values, beliefs, and symbolic meanings that reinforce local identity within West Java's Islamic heritage.

Investigating this specific mosque allows the study to analyze how physical implementation (artifacts) directly responds to and supports community cohesion and cultural continuity (sociofacts and mentifacts), making it an analytically rich environment for evaluating spatial cultural integration.

2.1. Methods of Data Collecting

Prior to data collection, the analytical parameters were established based on a literature review of cross-cultural dynamics, mosque architectural components, and interior features to construct the conceptual framework of this study. Data collection was conducted through a systematic architectural survey, direct observation, and semi-structured interviews with purposively sampled informants. The interview participants comprised 10 Sundanese visitors, 5 mosque administrative staff members, and 2 experts in architecture and interior design specializing in cultural implementation within contemporary design. Direct

observations were carried out to capture empirical data on the spatial transformation of Sundanese cultural forms. A standardized observation checklist and a photographic audit protocol were implemented to ensure the observations yielded systematic architectural evidence rather than informal visual interpretations [13]. The analysis focused on eight primary architectural components: the *mustaka*, *paduraksa*, *bedug*, and *soko guru*, which represent local cultural identity; and the *mihrab*, *minbar*, porch, and minarets, which reflect Islamic architectural influences. Furthermore, physical data were gathered to document the mosque's historical context, spatial profile, and decorative motifs. Finally, the collected data were categorized into two primary components of interest: 1) the Sundanese vernacular elements of the mosque; and 2) the Islamic components, including key arabesque identity markers and ornaments that embody the cultural implementation of Sundanese traditions within functional mosque spaces.

2.2. Methods of Data Analysis.

To systematically evaluate cultural implementation across the mosque's architectural and interior elements, the data analysis framework connects empirical observations to a three-tier cultural taxonomy aligned with the triangular model of cultural dimensions. Within this framework, the material level (artifacts) analyzes physical building facades, interior elements, and ornamental decorations, while the social-behavioral level (sociofacts) examines spatial configurations that facilitate community interactions grounded in the Islamic principle of social relations (*hablum minan-nas*). Completing this taxonomy, the spiritual-ideational level (mentifacts) evaluates symbolic elements and orientations reflecting the sacred human-to-God relationship (*hablum minallah*).

To ensure analytical rigor and prevent subjective interpretation, field evidence was gathered through systematic architectural observation protocols, including documentation, visual inventory, and formal feature of mosque elements as architectural component. Furthermore, architectural features were evaluated using explicit classification criteria to identify cultural implementation. Specific indicators such as limasan typologies, local materials, decorative motifs, and sacredness component referenced against established historical literature on Sundanese vernacular architecture and regional Islamic stylistic models. This comparative matrix allows the study to illustrating how local culture is operationalized through Islamic concepts within the mosque's architecture.

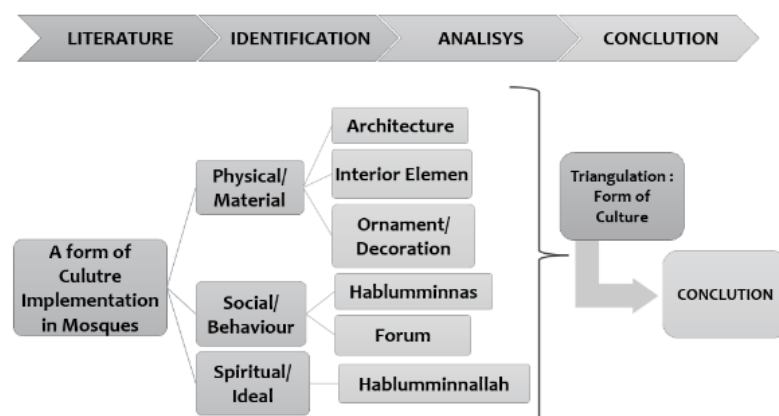


Diagram 1. Research Object Identification Components
[Source: Author, 2024]

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. Results

3.1.1. The Sundanese Vernacular Elements of The Mosque

Existing findings indicate that the Syekh Quro Grand Mosque in Karawang incorporates architectural components that distinctively set it apart from typical mosques in West Java Province. Field observations reveal an immediate contrast in the upper structural roof component or *Mustaka* (Figure 1) as main vernacular elements: rather than adopting a conventional dome (*kubah*), the design features a traditional three-tiered pyramidal roof (*Tajug* or *Limasan*). In Javanese and regional Islamic architecture, this three-tiered pyramid symbolizes the trilogy of Islamic philosophy: *Iman* (faith), *Islam* (obedient), and *Ihsan* (excellence/spiritual perfection)—a connection explicitly confirmed during expert interviews with the mosque's architects. Furthermore, visitor interviews reveal that this distinct roof profile serves as the primary visual marker of identity. Unlike most regional mosques featuring white or black domes, the use of a traditional wooden color on the roof strengthens the mosque's visual connection to indigenous Sundanese architectural heritage while offering a unique expression within contemporary mosque design and inner side of *Paduraksa* represent the dome shape not flat as traditional roof implementation.



Figure 1. Mustaka at The Mosque
[Source: Author, 2024]

The *mustaka* (roof finial) is crafted from stainless steel and features an ornamental inscription of the word 'Allah,' serving as an explicit visual identifier of the building's Islamic identity. Because the underlying multi-tiered *tajug* roof form is shared across various regional and non-Islamic religious structures, this Arabic calligraphy acts as a crucial focal point that clearly designates the Syekh Quro Grand Mosque as a sacred Islamic space. Similarly, calligraphic reliefs are integrated into the main entrance portal (*Paduraksa*). The



Figure 2. Gate/ Paduraksa
[Source: Malikcyber, 2025]

paduraksa (Figure 2) reflects traditional Sundanese spatial concepts by establishing a clear boundary of privacy between the public exterior and the private interior section. Architecturally, this gateway synthesizes Sundanese spatial principles with a slightly pointed

inner arch characteristic of Islamic tradition. Structurally, each gate pier is framed by four pillars (two on the front and two on the rear), while the central panel of each pier is adorned with a square-framed geometric arabesque motif.

As a complementary decorative element representing traditional Sundanese identity, the bedug (a traditional wooden drum used to signal prayer times) serves as a historic mosque heirloom. From the visitors' perspective, only the drumhead skin is visible, while the main body of the wooden cylinder is concealed behind a wall—accessible primarily for maintenance, as observed during the researchers' close physical inspection. The drum is supported by concrete blocks supplemented with decorative wooden framing for aesthetic exhibition.

Although this bedug (Figure 3) represents a local cultural heritage deeply respected by the Karawang community, its physical preservation presents a contradiction. According to interviews with mosque staff, the original heirloom bedug is stored away to protect its authenticity, while the displayed replica—subject to direct public interaction—exhibits noticeable physical wear and surface tear. In the original bedug, the use of authentic teak wood and traditional joinery reinforces Sundanese-Javanese cultural values of resilience and authenticity. While minimal ornamentation is present due to its primary function as an acoustic instrument, the bedug at the Syekh Quro Grand Mosque synthesizes practical function, religious symbolism, and local cultural identity passed down through generation.



Figure 3. Beduk
[Source: Author, 2024]

Several historical relics linked to the mosque's founding remain on site, such as the wooden soko guru (main pillars) located on the second floor. Additionally, a historical chair representing the region's royal heritage is displayed on the side porch near the fountain pool area to showcase the roots of Sundanese identity. According to mosque management, the original chair was moved to a restricted room to prevent potential superstitious practices or deviations from Islamic faith. Because the chair's grand size and traditional ornamentation resemble a royal throne, administrators noted that its direct association with royalty could spark unverified myths and mislead visitors.



Figure 4. The Royal Throne Chair and Used Columns, Early Mosque Relics
[Source: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fGUE8soXA58>; Author, 2024]

This concludes the implementation of traditional identity in the Syekh Quro Grand Mosque is largely limited to the physical dimensions or outer level section. This physical representation is adapted to strengthen the local position of the contemporary mosque, combining visitor attraction with local authenticity. Meanwhile, in community behavior toward relics and the inner level section of belief, core Sundanese cultural elements are placed alongside traditional mosque practices as social positioning in community refer to middle level section.

3.1.2. The Islamic Components, Such as Main Elements of Arabesque Identity, Ornaments, and Structural Alignment Combine in Traditional Adaptation

The Islamic components were observed in detail and categorized into three distinct classification groups, each representing key functional attributes within architectural, interior, and ornamental elements—specifically geometric, arabesque, and floral motifs. These motifs are manifested across four primary mosque components: the mihrab (prayer niche), pulpit (mimbar), porch (serambi), and minaret. The integration of these arabesque architectural elements reinforces the religious identity of the space, serving to facilitate both human-to-human relationships (hablum minan-nas) and the human-to-God relationship (hablum minallah).

The observed mihrab wall is dominated by a dark brown wood-textured finish, while the inside of the mihrab utilizes a white marble-patterned ceramic material (Figure 5). In addition, the background wall is painted with a yellow and green floral motif, and the upper inner arch is highlighted in blue with Asma'ul Husna calligraphy. This component represents a combination of traditional wooden identity and arabesque patterns. Cultural acculturation is also reflected in the floral patterns, which merge batik motifs with traditional carving techniques. The ornaments on the mihrab and mosque interior combine geometric, floral, and calligraphic motifs typical of Islamic architecture, which forbids animal illustrations in religious buildings; the use of organic Sundanese floral touches aligns directly with this rule. According to the expert in mosque interior designer, the mihrab of the Syekh Quro Grand Mosque in Karawang is the result of a harmonious acculturation between traditional Sundanese-Javanese elements, local ornaments, and strong Middle Eastern Islamic influences, creating a unique aesthetic and deep historical value considering the detail meaning and representative patterning.



Figure 5. Mihrab
[Source: Author, 2024]

Regarding the mihrab detailing, the pulpit (mimbar; Figure 6) is a central mosque component with significant positioning as the only hereditary furniture item in Islamic tradition used to deliver sermons during Jumu'ah and Eid prayers, representing a symbol of leadership as mentioned by the Imam in interviews. Its unique character is reflected in the detailed carvings displayed on every side. The carving motifs adapt floral shapes, while the upper center features golden Arabic calligraphy. The entire pulpit is made of teak wood,

featuring the natural brown color typical of teak, which gives a traditional Javanese impression through natural materials. This pulpit integrates elements of local Javanese-Sundanese culture—particularly through the choice of timber and regional wood carving—combining local floral motifs and geometric patterns with sacred Arabic calligraphy to signify the unity of culture and religion. Overall, the pulpit of the Syekh Quro Grand Mosque in Karawang harmonizes local artisanal crafting with Islamic functional status.



Figure 6. Pulpit/Mimbar
(Author, 2024)

While the main hall of the mosque functions as a religious space for interaction between humans and God (*hablum minallah*), the porch (*serambi*, Figure 7) implements a social area for human-to-human interaction (*hablum minan-nas*). According to management staff, this area is used for teaching the Quran to children every weeks and serves as a space where community members gather in small groups to study or in larger groups to rest and chat without disturbing those praying inside. The porch uses a different color scheme from the interior, combining yellow, cream, and black. The column bases in the porch are decorated with square geometric motifs typical of mosque decoration, while the plain colors reflect its open atmosphere. Ultimately, the design differences between these two spaces create a clear distinction between private religious devotion and public social interaction within religious boundaries.

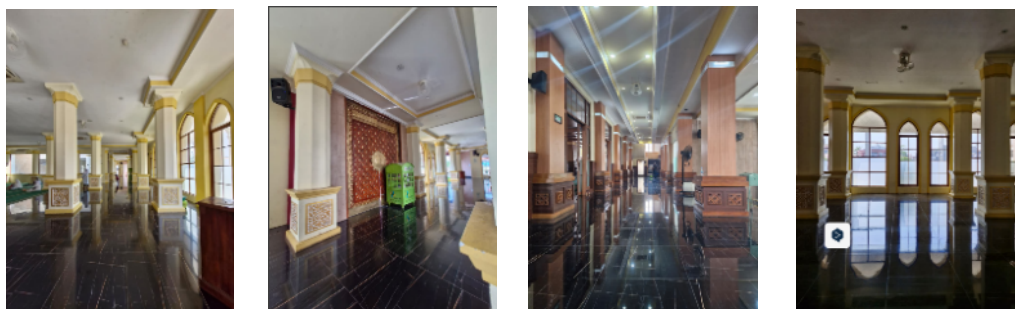


Figure 7. Serambi
[Source: Author, 2024]

Conversely, a distinct adaptation is evident in the representation of the minaret (Figure 8) at The Syekh Quro Grand Mosque in Karawang. Traditionally, regional West Javanese mosques featuring a multi-tiered *tajug* (pyramidal) roof omitted minarets, relying instead on the *bedug* (traditional drum) to announce prayer times. In this mosque, however, the minaret is incorporated alongside contemporary arabesque design elements within the building complex. The functional role of traditional sound is not located within the central pyramidal roof structure, but assigned to the minaret, reflecting a nuanced process of cultural acculturation.



Figure 8. Minaret
[Source: Author, 2024]

3.2. Discussion

3.2.1. The Cultural Implementation of Traditions within The Functional Mosque Elements in Three Cultural Elements

The cultural implementation (Diagram 2) of the Syekh Quro Grand Mosque in Karawang is separated into three levels based on cultural dimensions, as Huxley [14] categorizes culture into mental (inner) level relating to beliefs and ideological perspectives, social values (mid-level) representing the mosque in community interaction, and visual values (outer level) seen through motifs, patterns, facades, and ornamental details. To simplify these three levels, the artifact component lies within architectural and interior elements; as McDonnell [15] argues, these tangible elements adapt meaning through physical decoration. This aligns with the visual presence of the mustaka, paduraksa, minaret, soko guru, porch, mihrab, pulpit, and bedug in the observational findings. Meanwhile, the social function across these components adapts community activities (*hablum minan-nas*), such as gathering in the porch area, agreeing with Lukman [16] that physical components encompass social practices rather than just personal behavior. Finally, at the highest (mentifactual) level, the mosque is fundamentally a place of worship where belief is experienced as a personal, ideological connection to God (*hablum minallah*), agreeing with Jansma [17] that the mosque serves as a medium for expressing religious faith.

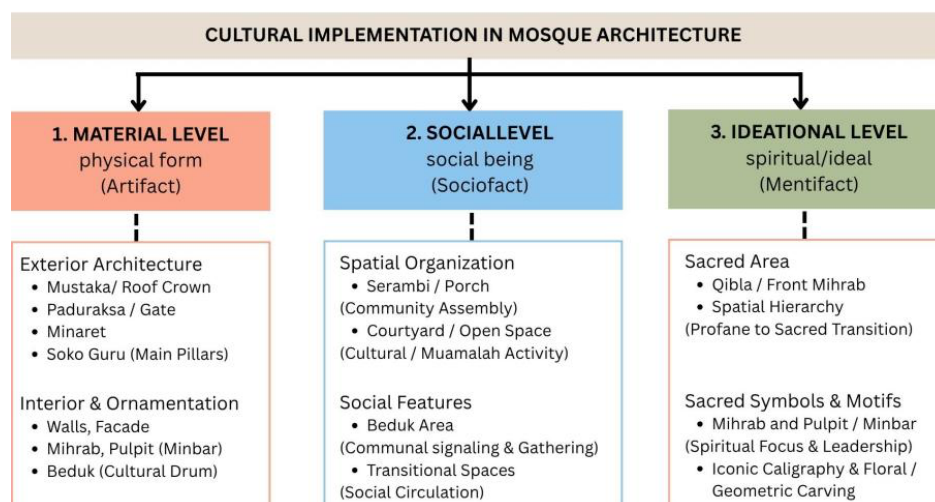


Diagram 2. Three Cultural Dimensions in The Mosque Component
[Source: Author, 2026]

The Syekh Quro Grand Mosque in Karawang serves as a tangible manifestation of the integration between local Sundanese-Javanese culture and coteremporary Islamic traditions. Beyond its primary function as a sacred space for worship, the mosque's architecture and interior embody social and cultural symbols reflecting regional and religious values. Through its multi-tiered roof, wood carvings, batik-inspired decorations, and Middle Eastern design elements, the site retains immense historical and aesthetic significance. Architectural components—such as roof profile, spatial layout, wood carving motifs, and natural material palettes—establish a strong visual identity. As noted by Fitriana [18], this synthesis blends local building characteristics with foreign influences; in this case, traditional Sundanese forms are cross-culturally integrated with Islamic arabesque identity at the artifactual level of ornamentation. The decorative program incorporates geometric patterns and floral motifs characteristic of Sundanese art across the mihrab and mimbar (pulpit), establishing a pronounced cultural identity while preserving the sacred functionality of the worship space.

At the sociofactual level, the use of floral wood carvings on the mimbar reinforces the elevated status and religious leadership of the Imam within the community. The material palette is dominated by natural timber and stone, elements historically utilized in high-status Sundanese architecture. Furthermore, the three-tiered tajug/limasan roof structure reflects a traditional social hierarchy: while ordinary residential dwellings historically featured a single tier, three-tiered roofs were reserved for high-status structures and sacred pilgrimage sites, signifying the highest level of community importance as analyzed by Lopes [19]. Similarly, the spatial layout accommodates broader social and educational functions, such as communal gatherings and Quranic instruction. By synthesizing these elements, the mosque functions not only as a place of worship, but also as an enduring symbol of regional heritage and harmonious cultural implementation.

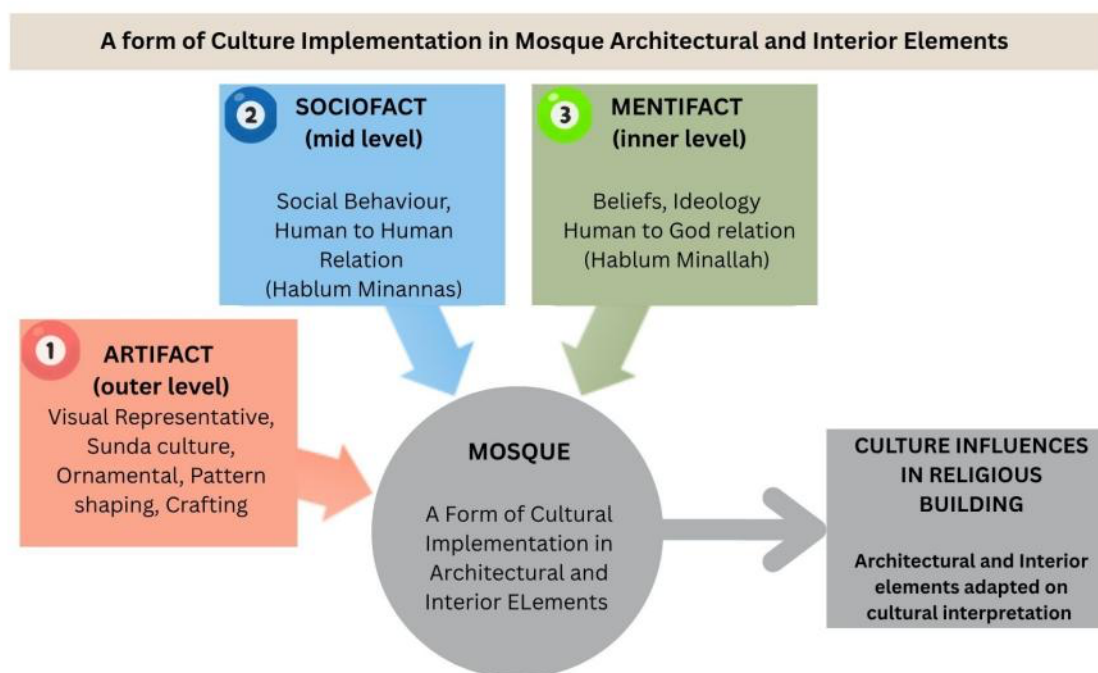


Diagram 3. Research Diagram
[Source: Author, 2024]

At the highest level of cultural implementation, the Syekh Quro Grand Mosque in Karawang reflects not only ideological values of belief, but also how selected representative objects embody deep philosophical meanings. For example, the mustaka in traditional Sundanese

culture refers to the "head" or peak [10], symbolizing protection over what lies beneath and representing the highest hierarchy in the community. Similarly, the paduraksa (gateway) traditionally serves as a protective barrier signifying power and sanctuary [20]. At the Syekh Quro Grand Mosque, these philosophical meanings synthesize the protective functions of both the upper crown and the front boundary, emphasizing the mosque's social importance through visual architectural components and interior ornamental details. This strategic positioning completes the integration of the mosque across all three cultural dimensions, unifying its individual components into a coherent framework of artifacts, sociofacts, and mentifacts (Diagram 3).

4. CONCLUSION

The Syekh Quro Grand Mosque in Karawang serves as a tangible manifestation of the integration between local Sundanese-Javanese culture and global Islamic traditions. Beyond its primary function as a sacred space for worship, the mosque's architecture and interior embody social and cultural symbols that reflect both regional and religious values. Through its multi-tiered limasan roofs, wood carvings, batik-inspired decorations, and Arabesque design elements, the site retains profound historical and aesthetic significance.

This study examines the detailed implementation of local culture across architectural and interior elements through ornamental, societal, and ideological approaches, thereby contributing to a broader theoretical framework for religious architecture. The findings demonstrate how contemporary applications of cultural identity across three levels of culture can accommodate different culture influences—even within religiously sensitive contexts—provided that social behaviors align with both visual acceptance and shared mental connections. This alignment fosters a unified interpretation of cultural values within architectural and interior elements. Consequently, this theoretical framework is adaptable not only to Islamic sacred architecture, but also to other religious building typologies incorporating local culture through the tripartite model of physical/visual forms, social behaviors, and spiritual beliefs.

Nevertheless, the integration and implementation of culture identified in this study require further in-depth investigation, particularly regarding local community habits and their direct influence on mosque design. Ultimately, this research illustrates cultural transformation within architecture and interior elements across three cultural dimensions as a theoretical model for unifying diverse cultural ideations in religious buildings. Future research is recommended to expand this framework beyond mosques to include other culture-based religious architectural and interior environments.

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