

The Application of Cultural Acculturation in the Design of the Grand Mosque of Serang-Banten

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ABSTRACT. Before becoming a sturdy, standing, and attractive building, every mosque must go through a construction and building process. One example is the construction of the Grand Mosque of Serang, Banten. In mosque design, Indonesian architecture often combines various cultures. In the design of the Grand Mosque of Serang, Banten, various architectural styles are integrated. The interior design of the mosque, as well as the design of the existing building, resembles the roof design of the mosque. Since the Grand Mosque of Serang, Banten, is an ancient religious building that has survived to this day, there is cultural assimilation within it. The fact that this relic dates back to ancient times indicates that the architects who designed this mosque must have been involved in this process. The Serang, Banten Grand Mosque has distinctive Javanese, Chinese, and Dutch characteristics. This mosque has strong ties to all three cultures. This study aims to determine the acculturation of the Grand Mosque of Serang, Banten. This study applies a quantitative methodology. It investigates how the elements in the architectural design of this mosque show a fusion of cultural elements originating from various religious and cultural traditions around the world, primarily Javanese, Chinese, and Dutch cultures. The researcher emphasises the importance of cultural acculturation in understanding and appreciating the complex local cultural heritage. Additionally, it highlights the harmony among various traditions and cultures within the local community. The objective of this study is to enhance our understanding of cultural acculturation in the architecture of the Serang, Banten Grand Mosque. Furthermore, it explores how these cultural elements can be applied to its architectural design.

Keywords: acculturation, Grand Mosque of Serang-Banten, nusantara, cultural heritage site

ABSTRAK. Sebelum menjadi bangunan yang kokoh, berdiri, dan menarik, setiap masjid harus melalui proses konstruksi dan pengerjaan. Salah satu contohnya adalah pembangunan Masjid Agung Serang, Banten. Dalam desain masjid, arsitektur Indonesia sering menggabungkan berbagai budaya. Pada desain Masjid Agung Serang, Banten, berbagai gaya arsitektural digabungkan. Desain dalam ruangan masjid serta desain di bagian bangunan yang ada mirip dengan desain atap masjid. Karena Masjid Agung Serang, Banten adalah bangunan religius kuno yang masih bertahan hingga saat ini, ada akulturasi antarbudaya di dalamnya. Fakta bahwa peninggalan ini berasal dari zaman terdahulu menunjukkan bahwa para arsitek yang merancang masjid ini pasti terlibat dalam hal ini. Masjid Agung Serang, Banten memiliki ciri khas Jawa, Cina, dan Belanda. Masjid ini memiliki hubungan yang kuat dengan ketiga budaya tersebut. Studi ini bertujuan untuk menentukan akulturasi Masjid Agung Serang, Banten. Studi ini menerapkan metodologi kuantitatif. Studi ini menyelidiki bagaimana elemen-elemen dalam desain arsitektur masjid ini menunjukkan perpaduan elemen budaya yang berasal dari berbagai tradisi agama dan budaya yang ada di seluruh dunia. Utamanya budaya orang Jawa, Cina, dan Belanda. Penulis penelitian ini menekankan betapa pentingnya akulturasi budaya untuk memahami dan menghargai warisan budaya setempat yang kompleks. Selain itu, menunjukkan keharmonisan di antara berbagai tradisi dan kebudayaan yang ada di masyarakat lokal. Tujuan dari studi ini adalah untuk meningkatkan pemahaman kita tentang akulturasi budaya yang ada di bangunan Masjid Agung Serang, Banten. Selain itu, dia menyelidiki bagaimana bentuk wujud dapat diterapkan pada desain arsitekturnya.

Kata Kunci: akulturasi, Masjid Agung Serang, Banten, nusantara, situs warisan budaya

INTRODUCTION

The Serang-Banten Grand Mosque is the largest mosque on the island of Banten. One of the Islamic

kingdoms in Banten was the Sultanate of Banten, located in the province of Banten. Initially, the Sultanate of Banten was under the Demak Kingdom. However, Banten eventually separated from the Demak Kingdom, and its first ruler was Sultan Hassanuddin, who reigned until 1570 AD. Geographically, the Banten Kingdom was located in the northern part of the island. Initially, the Sunda Kingdom was a sultanate in Banten, due to its location at the southernmost tip of Java Island. (Anisah et al., 2023).

This mosque is a cultural heritage site in Banten. It is always bustling and actively visited by both local residents and tourists from outside the region. The mosque is often used for religious activities such as pilgrimages, Friday prayers, and religious education. The socio-cultural aspects and tolerance are clearly visible in the design of the Grand Mosque of Serang, Banten, where the unique architecture blends the acculturation of three cultures into one building, namely Javanese, Chinese, and Dutch.

In Indonesia, cultural acculturation in architecture has a significant influence, as seen in residential homes, historical sites, and mosque designs, which are also applications of this cultural acculturation concept. Intercultural acculturation in mosque designs commonly found in Indonesia is always in harmony with Islamic culture and always features touches of Nusantara design, especially if the mosque is from the past or an ancient mosque. (Izzati et al., 2021). Where cultural acculturation results in different designs. One example is the mosque located in Serang, Banten, namely the Grand Mosque of Serang, Banten. It was built with concepts from Javanese, Chinese, and Dutch cultures. Ultimately, these three cultures produced a unique style that distinguishes the building. (Anisah et al., 2023).

One of the mosques in Banten, the Grand Mosque of Serang, Banten, is a building with a design that reflects cultural acculturation. The design of this mosque shows that it has three cultural acculturations, namely Javanese, Chinese, and Dutch cultures. These three cultures blend perfectly in the architectural design of the Grand Mosque of Serang Banten. As a place of worship for Muslims, this mosque also displays prominent Islamic cultural

design elements in the interior of the building, while acculturation with local Javanese, Chinese, and Dutch cultures can be seen in several parts of the building itself, such as the roof, walls, and carvings. This research is very interesting to discuss because of the unique architectural design of the mosque in Banten. This mosque has its own uniqueness that distinguishes it from other mosques in Banten. (Lestari et al., 2021). Based on the findings mentioned above, the author has the following objectives:

1. Describe the intercultural architecture of the Great Mosque of Banten
2. To understand the manifestation of cultural acculturation in the Great Mosque of Serang, Banten.
3. To enhance knowledge of the religious history of the archipelago in Banten, as well as to explore the existing local wisdom values.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Acculturation in architectural design occurs because it is influenced by the entry of Islamic culture amidst the diversity of Hinduism and local architecture that is widespread in the region. The process of assimilation between Islam and other cultures is an important part of the Islamic religion. Ultimately, this also led to the assimilation of Islamic educational values and even architectural styles through intercultural acculturation. (Azis, 2013).

Profile of the Grand Mosque of Serang, Banten

The Grand Mosque of Serang, Banten, is surrounded by a one-metre-high wall. The mosque was built on a 1.3-hectare site. It has two doors on the east side of the mosque. After entering the main door, the mosque area also has a 23-metre-high minaret that was built in the 16th century. The Grand Mosque of Serang, Banten is the oldest mosque on the island of Banten. This mosque is the centre for the spread of Islam in Banten. It was built in 1556, and therefore the building has its own distinctive architectural design, known as, which highlights the acculturation of three cultures: Javanese, Chinese, and Dutch (Naredi et al., 2020). It is located in the Kasemen District, Serang, Banten

City, Indonesia. This mosque has stood since 1556 until today. The architect who designed and beautified this mosque was Lucaasz Cardeel. The establishment of this mosque was motivated by the increasing number of people and the sultanate's need for Islamic facilities. The existence of the Great Mosque of Banten is considered important because it is a centre for Islamic education. In addition, the mosque also served as a resting place for Islamic soldiers from Demak and Muslim traders from. According to an interview with (Rifqiwati et al. (2023), it is estimated that the mosque was built in the same year as the sultanate was established. This coincided with the establishment of the palace and other supporting facilities. This religious complex stands as a witness to the historical journey of Old Banten.

Cultural Acculturation

Cultural acculturation consists of two words, namely acculturation and culture. According to the Indonesian dictionary, acculturation means the mixing of two or more cultures that influence each other. (Roszi & Mutia, 2018). The term acculturation is defined as a phenomenon in which two cultures that unite undergo change. The system of giving and receiving encourages cultural change. (Habibullah et al., 2022). One of the reasons for the ease of cultural acculturation is the changing times and the advancement of technology and thinking. Ultimately, these things have become taboo among the community, triggering change. Another factor that determines the ease of acculturation or assimilation in a community is the dominance of a new culture, so that the length of immigration also determines the resulting assimilation. (Azis, 2013). The ease of acculturation or assimilation depends on many factors. One of them is emotional maturity and intellectual intelligence. Additionally, attention and understanding of the indigenous culture are also considered. Therefore, cultural acculturation is a social process that occurs when a society adopts a particular culture, then accepts and transforms it into its own culture, creating a new culture without abandoning its original culture.

METHOD

Quantitative Method This study uses a quantitative approach to collect data on the elements of cultural acculturation in the design of the Grand Mosque of Serang-Banten.

Steps:

Data Collection:

Survey: Distributing questionnaires to mosque visitors and architectural experts to collect data on their views regarding design elements that reflect cultural acculturation.

Observational Study: Conducting direct observations of design elements (roof, walls, ornaments) to identify characteristics of each culture (Javanese, Chinese, and Dutch).

Data Analysis:

Descriptive Statistics: Using descriptive statistics to analyse the results of the survey, including the frequency and percentage of respondents who recognised certain elements in the design.

Qualitative Analysis: Combining qualitative data from observations to provide context to the survey results and understand how acculturation is reflected in architectural design. Evaluation and Conclusion:

Integrating findings from quantitative and qualitative data to provide a holistic understanding of cultural acculturation in the design of the Grand Mosque of Serang-Banten.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Banten Grand Mosque building is a cultural site and an essential place in this region. The mosque, which is often used for religious activities and Islamic history education, reflects intercultural acculturation that has good socio-cultural aspects (Pasaribu, 2019). This mosque has unique architectural design characteristics, as there is an acculturation of three cultures embedded in its structure, namely Dutch, Chinese, and Javanese cultures. The Banten Grand Mosque has many philosophical meanings. The six doors of the

mosque symbolise the pillars of faith. The entrance doors are deliberately shortened so that visitors bow down to the creator. The mosque's pillars consist of 24, symbolising the 24 hours of the day. The other parts of the building are extensions of the mosque that have been added to the old building. Another distinctive feature of Banten is the Banten Grand Mosque lighthouse. The current Banten Grand Mosque building is a renovated structure (Anggraheni & Attamimi, 2020).



Figure 1. Front of the Banten Grand Mosque Building
Source: google.com

As previously explained, the architecture of this mosque stems from various cultural acculturations, including Chinese, local Javanese, and Dutch cultures. There is a fusion of Chinese cultural elements in the form of the roof and lighthouse tower. The ornamental patterns on the minaret follow Chinese cultural models and resemble Dutch cultural elements. The roof shape, such as a stacked or tiered roof, has four main pillars or long beams in the centre of the mosque area.

Construction Period of the Mosque

This building has a rectangular shape and consists of three main areas within the Banten Grand Mosque complex. Namely, the mosque in the centre, a similar structure on the side, called the tiyamah, and a cemetery area. There is also a tower to the east of the mosque that resembles a lighthouse. The position of the pulpit in this mosque follows Islamic law, where the pulpit is located in the centre, as previously explained, according to (Indriastuty et al., 2020). This mosque building has strong and unique characteristics. One of these is the istiwa and bencet or mizwalah walls. The mosque is also supported by 24 pillars. The eastern wall divides the main hall, which has a pyramid-shaped roof. Everyone who passes through this wall must bow their head upon entering, even if they come from a certain social status.

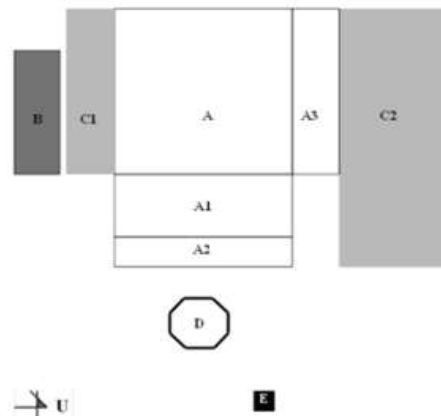


Figure 2. Construction period of the Great Mosque of Banten.

Source: google.com and Personal Documentation, 2024

The front minaret of the mosque symbolises the letter "Alif," which signifies Islam. This minaret was used in the past as a place to call the adhan. There are a total of 24 pillars, representing the 24 hours of the day. Additionally, the Great Mosque of Banten has relatively short doors, signifying that anyone inside the mosque should bow their heads and not be arrogant in the eyes of Allah SWT. (Anggraheni & Attamimi, 2020).



Figure 3. The Minaret of the Great Mosque of Banten.
Source: Personal Documentation, 2024

Mosque Roof

According to Judging from its minaret, this mosque has a unique characteristic, namely that the roof of the mosque building has five layers like a Chinese pagoda. The five-tiered roof design of the mosque, which resembles a Chinese pagoda, is the first striking feature of the Banten Grand Mosque. (Sadono & Purnomo, 2020).



Figure 4. Roof of the banten grand mosque.
Source: Google & Personal Documentation, 2024

Elements within the Mosque Space

Inside the mosque itself, there are also strong elements of cultural acculturation with Javanese culture. The Banten Grand Mosque has its own spatial layout, including a prayer hall, a pulpit, a wudu area, and a mosque porch. The complex of the Great Mosque of Banten consists of several structures, including the main mosque building, the tiyamah porches on the right and left sides, the minaret, and the cemetery located on the northern side adjacent to the courtyard.



Figure 5. Exterior and interior of the mosque.
Source: Personal Documentation, 2024

Prayer Hall

The Banten Grand Mosque has an elongated prayer hall. The prayer hall is divided into two sections, one for male worshippers and another for female worshippers. Four main pillars in brown form the main space. Meanwhile, inside the mosque itself, there are also elements of Javanese cultural acculturation, namely the presence of soko guru. (Janah et al., 2022). This large mosque is supported by 24 pillars. There are also 4 main pillars in the centre, and at least 24 roof support pillars, all of which are octagonal in shape. The eight square shapes are the result of 24 divided by three. According to Banten figures, the 24 pillars symbolise the 24 hours in a day, while the number 3 symbolises worship, ma isya, and rest. Therefore, the message conveyed is that Muslims should manage their time in the most equitable way in these three areas. The presence of these pillars is a Javanese architectural feature commonly found in pendopo (open-air pavilions) (Pamungkas & Haerunnisa, 2007).



Figure 6. Interior of the Mosque.
Source: Personal Documentation, 2024

Mihrab and Mimbar

Additionally, Javanese cultural elements can be seen in the mosque's mihrab, which serves as the imam's standing position, as previously explained. The positions of the mimbar and mihrab are located at the centre of the prayer hall. This aligns with Islamic Sharia and the hadith of Prophet Muhammad SAW, as previously explained. (Hizmiakanza & Rahmawati, 2019).



Figure 7. Mosque Minbar.

Source: Personal Documentation, 2024

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that the Grand Mosque of Serang-Banten is a concrete example of harmonious cultural acculturation between Javanese, Chinese, and Dutch cultures. Through an analysis of architectural elements, it was found that:

Cultural Element Integration:

The architectural design of the mosque, which includes a pagoda-like ornamented roof and walls and carvings influenced by Javanese and Dutch culture, demonstrates a rich cultural integration within a single building.

Symbolism in Design:

Each design element has a profound meaning, such as the number of pillars symbolising 24 hours and the lowered doors reminding visitors to be humble before God.

Cultural Significance:

The Grand Mosque of Serang-Banten is not merely a place of worship, but also an important representation of local history and cultural heritage, reflecting tolerance and intercultural interaction.

Implications for Architectural Studies:

These findings underscore the importance of understanding acculturation in architecture as a way to appreciate and preserve complex cultural heritage, as well as providing deeper insights for the disciplines of architecture and cultural studies.

Thus, this research not only contributes to the understanding of mosques as religious buildings but also shows how architecture can serve as a bridge to understand cultural interactions in a broader context.

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