

## Activities of the Ta'lim and Istighotsah Assembly at the Islamic Boarding School

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### Abstract

*This article investigates the role of religious activities, particularly istighotsah and majelis ta'lim, in shaping and transforming the religious consciousness of the traditional Bantengan art community in Karangmloko, Batu City. Employing a descriptive qualitative approach, the study utilizes indepth interviews, participatory observation, and documentation. The findings reveal that regular religious activities organized by Pondok Pesantren Sunan Kalijaga promote positive changes in the understanding and practice of Islamic values among the local community. These activities serve as effective dakwah tools by adaptively and inclusively incorporating local cultural elements, thereby reinforcing religious identity while preserving cultural values.*

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Local culture is an important part of the social identity of Indonesian society. Among the various forms of cultural expression, traditional arts such as Bantengan which grew in Karangmloko Hamlet, Batu City, is one of the cultural manifestations that is full of spiritual, symbolic, and historical values.(Kamila, 2024). This art not only functions as a means of entertainment, but also contains magical and ritual dimensions that are rooted in collective beliefs in supernatural powers and the heritage of local wisdom.(Ayatullah, 2015).In the perspective of Islamic theology, some elements in this art are often considered inconsistent with the basic principles of monotheism which reject the practice of shirk and heresy (Soehadha, 2016). The tension between the preservation of local culture and Islamic preaching is a crucial issue in the social dynamics of East Java society, especially in Karangmloko Hamlet.

The Bantengan activist community in Karangmloko tends to maintain cultural practices that are sometimes less in line with Islamic values. The normative-doctrinal da'wah approach often fails to reach grassroots communities living within a traditional cultural framework.(Soemaryatmi, 2015).Therefore, a more inclusive and contextual approach is needed.(Alif, 2020).The Sunan Kalijaga Islamic Boarding School in Batu City is present as an agent of social and religious transformation through a culture-based da'wah strategy, such as organizing istighotsah, taklim assemblies, and a personal approach to artists. This approach is in line with the concept of cultural da'wah, namely the delivery of Islamic values that consider local social, historical, and cultural aspects.(Irawan, 2023).

This research is relevant because it shows how consistent religious activities can be an important instrument in the religious transformation of local cultural communities. The religious transformation in question does not only include changes in religious rituals, but also includes changes in the mindset, behavior, and social interactions of the community based on Islamic values.(Fiqh, 2022).Previous studies have shown that Islamic boarding schools that implement a cultural approach are more effective in fostering indigenous communities compared to exclusive and scripturalist approaches. Therefore, this study examines in depth how the Sunan Kalijaga Islamic Boarding School's da'wah strategy influences the increase in religious awareness in the Bantengan arts activist community.

This study aims to understand the role of religious activities in shaping the religious awareness of the Bantengan arts community. The focus is on how Islamic boarding schools establish dialogue with local culture without negating religious identity, and how the transformation of Islamic values occurs gradually and sustainably. This study is expected to provide theoretical contributions to the development of a local culture-based da'wah model and enrich studies on the relationship between religion and culture.(Sunarto, 2023).

## **2. RESEARCH METHOD**

This study adopted a descriptive qualitative approach with a case study design. The location of the study was Karangmloko Hamlet, the center of Bantengan arts activities. The study population included Islamic boarding school caretakers, religious teachers, local communities, and Bantengan artists. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews, participant observation, and documentation. Data analysis was carried out through the stages of data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions. To ensure validity, data validity was maintained through triangulation of sources and methods.(Sidiq & Choiri, 2019).

## **3. RESEARCH RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

The istighotsah and majlis taklim activities routinely held by the Sunan Kalijaga Islamic Boarding School play a central role in the religious transformation of the Bantengan community in Karangmloko Hamlet. Istighotsah, as an emotional spiritual practice, strengthens the transcendental relationship between the individual and God.(Haris, 2025).Meanwhile, the Majelis Taklim functions as an educational space that conveys Islamic knowledge systematically and dialogically. Both of these activities facilitate the internalization of Islamic values in the affective, cognitive, and psychomotor dimensions, creating holistic changes in the religious awareness of society.(Rohman & Hairudin, 2018).

In the early stages, the community showed resistance to religious activities due to their strong attachment to local traditions that were considered contrary to Islamic values. This resistance reflected the conflict between cultural and religious identities, where the community was concerned that religious activities could threaten the sustainability of Bantengan culture. However, the Sunan Kalijaga Islamic Boarding School overcame this challenge with an inclusive cultural da'wah approach, using persuasive and non-confrontational interpersonal communication. This approach, which emphasizes role models and constructive dialogue, succeeded in reducing resistance and opening up space for acceptance.(Setiawan, 2014).

Over time, people began to actively participate in istighotsah and majlis taklim, considering them as an integral part of the collective routine. These activities, which were initially considered a religious obligation, have now become a means to deepen Islamic understanding.(Aghitsny et al., 2024).

This change in mindset shows that people are starting to view Islamic teachings as a complement, not a threat, to their local culture. Islamic values are also integrated into the

practice of Bantengan art through the insertion of da'wah elements, such as reciting prayers, religious teachings, and Islamic symbols. This transformation shows that local culture can be reformulated to be in line with Islamic values without losing its identity (Muhammad Yunus, 2024)

Pesantren acts as a cultural agent that not only conveys Islamic teachings but also guides society to reinterpret their cultural identity within a moderate Islamic framework (Karlina Putri et al., 2024). This approach reflects a culture-based social transformation strategy, where change occurs from within the social structure of society without severing long-established cultural roots. This phenomenon is in line with the opinion that the integration of culture and religion can create harmony without sacrificing the core values of both (Faliqul Isbah, 2021).

In addition to religious transformation, religious activities also strengthen social cohesion in Karangmloko Hamlet. Participation in istighotsah and majlis taklim not only increases individual spirituality but also strengthens social relations between residents. This activity becomes a forum for mutual support, cooperation, and building community solidarity, thus strengthening the social ties of the community (Fajrussalam, 2020). Thus, Islamic boarding schools not only create religious changes, but also social ones, which have a positive impact on the lives of the community as a whole.

The inclusive approach of Islamic boarding schools also allows the community to maintain a balance between local traditions and Islamic teachings. By respecting local cultural diversity while prioritizing moderate Islamic values, Islamic boarding schools have succeeded in creating a space for dialogue that brings together religion and culture (Mujiati, 2020). This process shows that religion can function as a unifying force, not a dividing one, in the context of a society rich in tradition (Amri, 2025). The transformation that occurred in Karangmloko is proof that religious activities integrated with local culture can produce sustainable and harmonious change.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

Religious activities such as istighotsah and majlis taklim which are routinely held by the Sunan Kalijaga Islamic Boarding School have a crucial role in the religious transformation of the Bantengan community in Karangmloko Hamlet. Although initially facing resistance due to the community's attachment to local traditions, the inclusive cultural da'wah approach has succeeded in integrating Islamic values into local culture without erasing its identity. Da'wah elements such as sholawat, tausiyah, and Islamic symbols enrich Bantengan art, creating cultural expressions that are in harmony with Islamic teachings.

As a cultural mediator, Islamic boarding schools maintain a balance between preserving tradition and implementing religious values through open dialogue. These religious activities also strengthen social cohesion, strengthen relationships between residents, and build community solidarity. The transformation that occurs includes religious and social dimensions, providing a comprehensive positive impact on the Karangmloko community. This study confirms that culture-based da'wah can be an effective model for transforming local communities harmoniously and sustainably.

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