

ACCULTURATION OF ISLAM AND LOCAL CULTURE IN ACEHNESE TRADITIONAL TRADITIONS: A STUDY ON *PEUSIJUEK HAJI*

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Abstract

This study explores the acculturation between Islam and local Acehese culture within the Peusijuek Haji tradition, a customary ritual performed before departure or upon the return of pilgrims from the Hajj. This tradition represents the convergence of two sacred dimensions, religious and cultural, reflecting the Islamization of local symbols through a reinterpretation of their spiritual meanings. The research aims to describe the forms of Islamic and local cultural acculturation within Peusijuek Haji and to explain its philosophical meanings and socio-religious functions for Acehese society. The study employs a descriptive qualitative method using a library research approach, analyzing literature, customary archives, and local documentation. The findings indicate that acculturation occurs through symbolic and social transformation: traditional elements such as rice (*breuh padee*), ceremonial flour (*teupong taweu*), and leaves (*on sisijeuk*) are redefined as symbols of purification and blessings consistent with Islamic teachings. Furthermore, a dialogical dynamic among religious scholars, customary leaders, and pilgrim families shapes ritual practices that harmonize with Islamic law while preserving cultural values. Variations across generations and regions reveal that Peusijuek Haji represents a selective form of acculturation, demonstrating the Acehese community's ability to maintain a balance between tradition and religion. This study concludes that Peusijuek Haji functions not only as a religious symbol but also as a means of strengthening social solidarity and Acehese cultural identity.

Keywords: *Islamic Acculturation; Acehese Local Culture; Peusijuek Haji*

A. Introduction

Aceh is known as an area that has a specialty in the application of Islamic values and the preservation of local customs. Since the sultanate, Aceh has integrated religious and cultural norms in the life of its people. Customs and religion are two elements that cannot be separated, as reflected in the expression "*A Judge Who Is Guilty of Murder.*" In this context, various traditional traditions such as peusijuek (unsalted flour) have become symbols of local wisdom that are inherited across generations. *Peusijuek* present in various important moments of

life, such as marriage, birth, moving house, to the release of pilgrims, and functions to strengthen social solidarity and reflect the religious values that live in the Acehnese society. Traditions such as *Peusijek* is still used as a place to express the identity of the Acehnese people. However, debates about the distinction between custom and sharia have arisen as the demand for religious reform increases. To understand socio-religious dynamics, it is important to study how acculturation occurs in everyday rituals (Marpuah et al., 2024).

One of the forms of tradition that is interesting to study is *Peusijek* Hajj, which is a ritual that is carried out when a person is about to leave or return from the Hajj. This tradition is the meeting point between religious rituals (hajj) and local traditional rituals (*Peusijek*), so that it reflects the combination of the spiritual dimension of Islam and the cultural expression of Aceh. In practice, *Peusijek* Hajj is not just a symbol of welcome or prayer for salvation, but also a mirror of acculturation between the teachings of Islam and the traditional values that live in society. This tradition shows how the people of Aceh interpret the hajj not only as an individual spiritual journey, but also as a social and cultural event that binds the relationship between community members. To understand the acculturation that occurs in *Peusijek* between Islam and local cultures, it is important to explain how traditions persist or change (Hidayat, 2022).

Based on this background, this study seeks to answer several main problems, namely: (1) how the form of acculturation between Islam and local culture is reflected in ritual elements *Peusijek* Hajj in Aceh; and (2) what is the philosophical meaning and socio-religious function of the *peusijek* hajj tradition for pilgrims and the people of Aceh. Through these questions, this research is expected to be able to reveal the dynamics of the relationship between religion and customs in the context of the Acehnese society which continues to experience social and religious changes. By looking at this process, we can see different types of acculturation, from syncretism to selective assimilation (Anida & Ristawati, 2024).

The purpose of this research is to describe the form of acculturation of Islam and local culture in the *Peusijek* Hajj tradition, as well as to explain its philosophical meaning and socio-religious function for the people of Aceh. Theoretically, this research is significant to enrich the study of Islam in the archipelago, especially in understanding the process of Islamization that takes place through cultural approaches. Practically, the results of this research are expected to be a reference in efforts to preserve traditional values that are in

harmony with Islamic principles and strengthen the Islamic identity and civility of the community.

Previous studies Marpuah et al., (2024); Hidayat, (2022); Anida & Ristawati, (2024) has highlighted the process of acculturation of Islam and local culture in various traditions of the Acehese people, but has not specifically discussed *peusijuek* hajj as a practice that brings together two sacred dimensions: religious and cultural. This research has a novelty (*novelty*) In examining the Hajj through the Ritual Anthropology Approach and the Cultural Acculturation Perspective, with an emphasis on the symbolic meaning and socio-religious legitimacy built by society. Thus, this research contributes to the enrichment of the literature on Islamic syncretism and customs in the context of contemporary Aceh.

At the social level, *Peusijuek* serves as a cohesion mechanism that governs family relationships, social status, and moral responsibility. (June et al., 2025). Study *Peusijuek* Hajj is very important because it is a tangible example of the acculturation of Islam and local culture (Hidayat, 2022). This analysis helps to distinguish syncretism, assimilation, and ritual accommodation from each other. The right method can show how a tradition is maintained, altered, or perpetuated (Marpuah et al., 2024). To reconstruct the transformation, it is important to investigate oral history and local documentation. Historical research helps put the *Peusijuek* Hajj on the trajectory of cultural-religious transformation (Marzuki, 2020). This method offers a perspective on how socio-religious legitimacy is constructed in the real world (Nabila & Riza, 2024).

This study contributes academically by positioning the *Peusijuek* Hajj tradition as a form of selective Islamic acculturation analyzed through ritual anthropology and socio-religious perspectives. Unlike previous studies that discuss *Peusijuek* in general contexts, this research specifically examines the Hajj-related ritual as a convergence of two sacred dimensions, religious obligation and cultural expression.

Based on the above background presentation, the researcher is interested in conducting research on "Islamic Acculturation and Local Culture in Acehese Traditional Traditions: A Study on *Peusijuek* Hajj".

B. Research Methods

The research methodology is an elaboration of the theoretical concepts of various methods, concerning the advantages and disadvantages which are then followed by determining the methods used (Sedarmayanti, 2002; 37). In this study, the researcher uses a qualitative approach, meaning a qualitative approach because it uses data that is stated verbally and the qualifications are theoretical. From a qualitative approach, it is able to make an in-depth description that can be observed in a certain context and studied from various perspectives.

To ensure the validity and credibility of the findings, this study employs source triangulation and theoretical triangulation. Source triangulation is conducted by comparing various types of literature, including classical Islamic texts, contemporary academic journals, customary archives, and local documentation related to the *Peusijuek* Hajj tradition. Meanwhile, theoretical triangulation is applied by analyzing the data using multiple perspectives, namely ritual anthropology, Islamic acculturation theory, and socio-religious function theory. This approach allows a comprehensive interpretation of the *Peusijuek* Hajj tradition within the framework of Islamic teachings and Acehese local culture.

C. Results and Discussion

Ritual of *Peusijuek* Hajj

Peusijuek linguistically derived from the word *Squirt* Acehese means cold, then added the prefix *scarcity* to make something be, means to make something cold, or to cool. *Peusijuek* is a practice that is carried out using leaves and plants that are believed to have *sampeuna-sampeuna* (forces) in them (Anggraini, 2023). Etymologically and culturally, *Peusijuek* has roots of the word *Squirt* which means "cool" or "cold", so that *Peusijuek* means "to cool, soothe, or reassure." In the context of Acehese society, this term contains the meaning of rituals of purification, blessing, and symbol of spiritual welfare. In practice, the *peusijuk* ritual is carried out at various important moments in the lives of the Acehese people such as marriage, birth, occupying a new house, departure of the hajj, to traditional and state events. This ritual is led by traditional leaders, *Squirt* (ulama), or people who are considered to have "luck" and are usually accompanied by the recitation of Islamic prayers. *Peusijuek*, which in language means "to cool/calm", is a traditional procession of the community that conveys prayers, blessings, and symbols of protection to those who experience important

events, such as the departure of the Hajj. Typical Acehnese elements, such as rice or glutinous rice, leaves, brushes or stalks, and the recitation of verses or salawat, are still used in *Peusijek* Hajj, but it is often rearranged to conform to the sharia. The meunasah or ulama management leads the prayer, while traditional leaders lead the symbolic side of the custom. *Peusijek* Hajj is described in local literature as a meeting point between local customs and local religious teachings (Riezal et al., 2019). For the departure of Hajj, *Peusijek* Hajj consists of a series of local rituals, such as sowing rice or sticky rice, flushing or splashing water, watering leaves, and advice from scholars. The purpose is to pray that the pilgrims can carry out the hajj smoothly, safely, and return home with the title of "hajj mabrur".

The implementation of *Peusijek* is carried out in various important moments in the lives of the Acehnese people such as marriage, birth, entering a new house, recovery from illness, inauguration of something, to the release and welcome of pilgrims. In this context, *Peusijek* is not only interpreted as a traditional activity, but also contains elements of Islamic spirituality, because it is accompanied by the recitation of prayers and holy verses of the Qur'an.

One form of implementation *Peusijek* that have a deep religious meaning are *Peusijek* Hajj, which is a traditional ritual that is carried out before departure or after the return of the pilgrims. In practice, the pilgrimage uses symbolic tools such as rice, water in small containers, leaves (often seulanga leaves or meuriya leaves), potpourri, and white cloth. The materials are prepared by the family or traditional leader who leads the ceremony. The procedure usually begins with a joint prayer, the recitation of Qur'anic verses or salawat, then a procession of sowing rice and splashing water to the head of the pilgrims as a symbol of purification and asking for salvation in the pilgrimage journey (Anida & Ristawati, 2024).

The perpetrators of the *Peusijek Hajj* generally consist of close relatives, neighbors, religious leaders (teungku), traditional leaders, and gampong communities or members of the community. This ritual is a moment of togetherness that strengthens social relations between residents while showing a form of acculturation between Islamic values and local culture of Aceh. As observed in community practice, *Peusijek* Hajj functions as a form of collective respect and prayer so that pilgrims obtain blessings, safety, and prosperity during the Hajj, as well as strengthen social solidarity and cultural identity of the Acehnese people (Shifa, field observation, 2025).

The general process and ritual components of the *Peusijek* hajj are as follows (differences that occur between regions):

1. Ritual ingredients that have been prepared, such as rice and glutinous rice (such as "*breuh padee*"), glutinous rice (such as "*bu leukat*"), and special leaves (such as *sineujuek*, *anek mano*, and *naleung sambo*), are used as symbols of cleansing or blessing.
2. Opening: usually led by clerics, religious leaders, or traditional leaders. After that, prayers, prayers, or advice about the departure of Hajj are read.
3. Watering or sprinkling: as a sign of blessing, rice or glutinous rice is sprinkled on the body or clothes of prospective pilgrims (or pilgrims), and rose water or clean water is sprinkled as a sign of "cleanliness from disease or obstruction."
4. Affirmation of customs and places: Affirmation of customs is usually carried out at the meunasah, the house of traditional leaders, or the hajj departure terminal when the pilgrims are departed.
5. Conclusion: the last advice asking to follow the sharia while in the Holy Land can be given with money or symbolic donations from the family or the local government (Riska, 2020).

Beyond its procedural aspects, the Peusijuek Hajj ritual represents a symbolic negotiation between Islamic doctrine and local cultural expressions. The repeated use of rice, water, and prayers is not merely ceremonial but reflects a recontextualization of pre-Islamic symbols into Islamic meanings of purification, blessing, and communal solidarity.

Traditional figures or *tuha meunasah* often hold traditional authority in the implementation of traditional rituals because they have a strong symbolic significance and historical value in the community. According to scholars or religious institutions, rituals must be in accordance with the sharia and do not contain elements of shirk or superstition. For example, replacing mantras with prayers, or removing elements that are considered deviant. Counseling usually occurs before major ceremonies, through *gampong* deliberations, customary-religious forums, or when preparing for the departure of the hajj. The result: an agreed form of ritual from the point of view of symbolism (material, sprinkling, and advice) and religion (Prayetno & Qomaruzzaman, 2021). Empirical example: in the Kuta Baro District, Aceh Besar, research shows that traditional leaders accept ritual modifications to comply with sharia, provided that the traditional symbols are maintained so that the community feels "connected" with their ancestors (Prayetno, 2021).

The Concept of Islamic Acculturation and Local Culture of Aceh

In a socio-cultural process known as "acculturation", elements from different cultures meet, influence each other, and produce new practices or adaptations of meaning. In Aceh, "acculturation" is a term that refers to the way local traditions, such as *Peusijuek* ceremonies, tomb rituals, and family customs, meet and interact with Islamic norms, symbols, and practices so that rituals emerge that are considered "Islamic" but still contain elements of local culture (Arifin, 2016).

One of the main entrances to Islam in the archipelago is Aceh. Islamic values emerged as a result of long-standing relationships with merchants, clerics, and religious institutions. These values were then integrated with pre-Islamic traditions. With time, local practices that were originally cosmological or magical underwent "Islamization", or symbolic Islamization. For example, mantras are replaced with prayer or *salawat*, but symbols such as rice or leaves are still used and reinterpreted (Anida & Ristawati, 2024). Since the early maritime era, Aceh has been one of the entrances to Islam in the archipelago. Trade and connections between Hadhrami/ Arab-Malay clerics accelerated the process of Islamization. This process takes place gradually and safely, with local elements often reinterpreted to conform to Islamic rules, resulting in a unique acculturative pattern of Aceh, which incorporates traditional symbols into religious worship (Fitri & Mawaddah, 2025).

The interaction of two or more cultural groups results in changes and adaptations of cultural elements in the form of selection, replacement, integration, or the creation of new forms. This is called the acculturation process. In rituals *Peusijuek* for prospective pilgrims in Aceh, acculturation occurs when the dominant Islamic values, symbols, and practices interact with local customary traditions dating back to pre-Islamic or Hindu-Buddhist times (Riezal et al., 2019).

The acculturation process requires consultation between the younger generation, scholars, traditional leaders (*tuha meunasah*), and community leaders. They dispute in *gampong* deliberation forums, *taklim* assemblies, or through the mediation of religious institutions to allow traditional rites to be "*disyar'ikan*" (adapted to religious norms) or to abbreviate or shift their function towards *da'wah* if necessary. In addition, formal institutions such as mosques, Ministry of Religion offices, and educational institutions are responsible for implementing forms of ritual that are considered to be in accordance with religion (Arifin, 2016). The concept of acculturation of Islam and local Acehnese

culture shows that the dynamics of this process allow the emergence of local religious practices that are religiously valid while maintaining the symbols of Acehese cultural identity. This is not just the replacement or abolition of customs.

Analysis of Acculturation in *Peusijuek* Hajj: Symbolic Meaning and Recontextualization of Islam

In this section, the focus of the discussion is directed to an in-depth analysis of the tools used in the ritual *Peusijuek* Hajj, such as "*Come on, Daddy, Daddy. (rice rice), Uncategorized (unsalted flour), and foliage On the other side of the pond*. Each of these elements has symbolic origins rooted in the agrarian culture and animistic beliefs of the Acehese people before the arrival of Islam. In agrarian culture, rice and water are the main symbols of fertility and life, while green foliage symbolizes coolness and safety. However, along with the process of Islamization of Acehese culture, these symbolic meanings underwent religious reformulation adapted to Islamic teachings (Azra, 2002).

Example *Breuh Padee*, which was once understood as a symbol of fertility and agrarian prosperity, is now reinterpreted as a symbol of hope for the blessings of sustenance from Allah SWT for pilgrims who will perform the Hajj. Similarly, *teupong taweu water*, which was previously interpreted as a magical repellent, has now turned into a symbolic medium to calm the hearts of pilgrims. The effect of serenity is no longer believed to come from the power of objects, but from Islamic prayers uttered by religious leaders during the implementation of rituals (Marzuki, 2011; Riska & Sumarno, 2022).

This change in meaning indicates a symbolic transformation in the ritual *Peusijuek* hajj. Old elements such as flushing, greeting blessings, and the use of water and rice are retained, but given a new spiritual meaning. Water and rice are now interpreted as symbols of self-purification and prayer of spiritual salvation, so that the hajj runs smoothly and is accepted by Allah SWT (Khairunnisak, 2020). Thus, traditional practices can remain sustainable because they are combined with religious language and intentions that are in accordance with Islamic views and accepted by religious leaders and congregational families (Riezal et al., 2018).

In addition to symbolic transformation, there is also a reorganization of the social functions of the *Peusijuek* hajj. If previously this ritual only functioned as a traditional ceremony of welcome or release, now it also functions as a socio-religious ritual. *Peusijuek* functions to strengthen social relations between

families and between members of the community, as well as a medium of religious education where Islamic values are conveyed contextually through local customs (Abdullah, 2006). Thus, the community can maintain a form of ritual that has a social and religious function at the same time.

This process also shows the institutionalization and negotiation of power at the local level. Traditional leaders, scholars, and families of pilgrims actively participate in determining the elements of the ritual that are worth preserving. Some elements are simplified or removed based on theological considerations, while elements that have social and symbolic value are preserved. This dynamic gives rise to a variety of practices *Peusijuek* between generations and between regions (villages and cities), which shows selective acculturation rather than passive syncretism. The people of Aceh consciously choose and adapt customary elements to Islamic principles, while continuing to dialogue with other elements within the local framework (Marzuki, 2011; (Marzuki, 2020).

This finding is in line with the results of field studies and academic studies that show that *Peusijuek* Haji is a real example of Islamic acculturation and Acehese traditions that takes place in a conscious, selective, and functional manner, without losing its religious or cultural identity (March, 2020; Azra, 2002).

Institutionalization and power negotiation are other forms of acculturation. Traditional figures, local clerics, and families of pilgrims participate in the arrangement of ritual elements, with some elements simplified based on theological arguments while core elements are retained due to socio-cultural needs. This process creates a variation of practice between generations and between spaces (villages rather than cities), while making *Peusijuek* Hajj example of selective acculturation (not passive syncretism): the community chooses things that are in accordance with local Islamic principles and talks about other things through local dialogue. Recent field studies and academic studies support these empirical findings (Marzuki, 2020).

Deep *Peusijuek* hajj, The pilgrims' farewell procession revolves around symbolic objects and activities, such as rice or flour, water or sprinkling, joint prayers, and blessings. These components are layered with religious justifications in recent field data and studies, which recontextualize possible pre-Islamic ritual goals (such as magical cleansing and community protection) as acts of spiritual purification, seeking blessings, and strengthening the determination to perform the hajj. By preserving the material components but reinterpreting them using regional Islamic terminology and values, this method makes the

ritual socially and religiously acceptable to local religious leaders and practitioners (Marpuah et al., 2024).

From an analytical point of view, this recontextualization serves as strategic legitimacy: indigenous leaders and local religious leaders, known as *tengku* or *ulama*, collaborate to "translate" the meaning of symbols to align with Islamic ideals while maintaining the social function of traditions. This approach involves the creation of levels of meaning (multi-layered meanings) rather than simply exchanging meanings; The same symbol may have religious (intention, prayer, purity) and cultural (identification, ancestral survival) connotations. (Anida & Ristawati, 2024).

These findings have practical implications that these various symbolic dimensions should be recognized in conservation efforts or interventions (e.g., religious guidelines, local cultural initiatives, or teaching materials). The rejection or loss of the social function of rituals can occur as a result of interventions that only evaluate forms of ritual from a formalist religious perspective without taking into account their cultural significance; On the other hand, discussions that acknowledge diverse meanings and involve scholars and indigenous leaders can produce forms of preservation that are socially beneficial and religiously acceptable. To preserve the understanding of the younger generation, the following recommendations were made: (1) recording the explanations of the perpetrators about the meaning of symbols; (2) collaborate with local religious authorities to create culturally sensitive guidelines; and (3) integrate *Peusijek* symbolic studies into local religious education (Hidayat, 2022).

The Role and Relationship Between Ulama, Traditional Leaders and Pilgrims' Families

In traditional practice *Peusijek* Hajj, the involvement of scholars, traditional leaders, and pilgrims' families have a very important position and complement each other. Clerics as religious leaders play a major role in providing religious legitimacy, such as reciting prayers, describing the Islamic meanings contained in the procession, and ensuring the passage *Peusijek* not contrary to the sharia. Traditional leaders act as guardians of tradition, ensuring that symbols, ordinances, and processions remain in harmony with Acehese cultural values that have been passed down from generation to generation. Meanwhile, the families of the pilgrims function as the main driving force for organizing the event, starting from preparing ritual equipment to inviting relatives and neighbors, as well as feeling the emotional meaning of the procession as a

moment of farewell and prayer together before departure to the holy land (Marpuah et al., 2024).

Relations between scholars, traditional leaders, and pilgrims' families in tradition *Peusijuek* The hajj takes place in a dialogical and dynamic manner. In its implementation, there is often a bargaining process between scholars and traditional leaders, especially when there are doubts regarding the suitability of rituals with sharia teachings. Scholars generally provide guidance so that the procession is carried out simply and free from elements that can be considered heretical, while traditional leaders emphasize the importance of symbols and social functions *Peusijuek* as a community adhesive medium. On the other hand, the families of the pilgrims are often the determining parties to the compromise, by choosing a form of implementation that is religiously and culturally acceptable. This kind of interaction gives birth to selective acculturation, in which elements that are not in accordance with sharia are removed or adjusted, while aspects that strengthen social solidarity and cultural identity are maintained (Anida & Ristawati, 2024).

The implication of the harmonious relationship between the three actors is the preservation of the continuity of the *Peusijuek* tradition which remains relevant to the development of the times without giving up its cultural roots. Scholars and traditional leaders play an important role in ensuring a balance so that the procession does not lose spiritual and cultural value, while the congregation's family functions as the main motor in maintaining and reviving this tradition in the midst of social life. Therefore, efforts to preserve *Peusijuek* should be carried out in an inclusive manner by actively involving all three parties. Measures such as documentation, dialogue between scholars and traditional leaders, and empowerment of pilgrim families will be important keys in maintaining *Peusijuek* Hajj remains religiously meaningful while strengthening the social cohesion of the Acehnese people (Ramadhan et al., 2024).

Variation in Practice Between Spaces and Between Generations

Implementation *Peusijuek* Hajj in Aceh shows quite striking variations both between regions and between generations. Among rural communities who still hold fast to customs, the procession is usually carried out completely, starting from the preparation of ritual materials such as rice and leaves to joint prayers led by traditional leaders. In contrast, more modern urban societies and those affected by globalization tend to perform *Peusijuek* in a more concise form, with an emphasis on shared thanksgiving prayers and simple symbols. The older

generation tries to maintain traditional practices with all their symbols and cultural meanings, while the younger generation is more inclined to choose a form of implementation that is in line with normative Islamic values and more efficient worship practices (Riska, 2020).

These differences can be interpreted as the result of the interaction between the level of education, the development of the media, and the increasingly textual understanding of religion in society. In rural areas, socio-cultural functions *Peusijuek* such as strengthening kinship, paying respect to prospective pilgrims, and maintaining community solidarity remain priorities so that its original form is more maintained. However, in urban areas, the practice is often influenced by the views of scholars who emphasize conformity with Islamic teachings, resulting in simplification and even a shift in meaning *Peusijuek*. It is just a prayer of salvation for the pilgrims. The younger generation is more likely to accept this change because in addition to being based on religious legitimacy, they are also shaped by a practical and modern lifestyle (Marpuah et al., 2024).

The existence of variations between regions and generations shows that the acculturation between Islam and local culture in the Acehnese tradition is not uniform, but contextual and dynamic. This confirms that *Peusijuek* Always adapting according to the needs of society and changing times. If the village community emphasizes symbolic values and togetherness, then the urban community prioritizes formal religious meaning. The differences between generations show that this tradition is not only preserved, but also reconstructed based on religious understanding and modern mindsets. Therefore, cross-generational and regional research is needed to examine the dynamics of the development of this tradition as well as formulate preservation strategies to remain relevant without losing its social and spiritual significance (Anida & Ristawati, 2024).

The Strategic Implications of *Peusijuek* Haji on the Social and Religious Life of the Acehnese People

Tradition *Peusijuek* Haji as a form of acculturation is a rich source of learning for local-based religious education, because it combines cultural symbols with religious values that are easy for the public to understand. This integration provides an opportunity for PAI teachers to use *Peusijuek* As a real example in learning the concept of intention, common prayer, social ethics, and the meaning of worship in a local context, so that religious teachings do not feel

abstract for students. Based on field data and recent studies, it shows that when the *Peusijek* Associated with the historical and theological context of learning, the younger generation is better able to understand the difference between religious substance and cultural elements that are flexible, thus reducing attitudes of rejection or conflict with local traditions (Nabila & Riza, 2024).

From the perspective of capacity building, the research emphasizes the importance of cross-actor training, which involves religious teachers, traditional leaders, and religious leaders to share narratives of ritual legitimacy so that the delivery of educational values is consistent and culturally sensitive. Collaborative training models, such as co-teaching workshops between religious teachers and traditional leaders, as well as the preparation of modules based on local values, can strengthen the legitimacy of the curriculum while enriching character education methods such as tolerance, mutual cooperation, and responsibility. Recent studies have also shown that Islamic boarding schools and madrassas integrate cultural studies *Peusijek* in the local content curriculum has succeeded in suppressing the potential for value conflict between religion and customs, as well as forming a more inclusive religious identity (Marpuah et al., 2024).

In the context of cultural preservation, the main implication is the need for participatory and contextual policies. Documentation, regulation, and promotion of culture must involve traditional leaders and scholars so that representation *Peusijek* It has not shifted to just a tourist commodity. The use of digital documentation combined with local curriculum can maintain the continuity of symbolic knowledge such as the meaning of water, rice, and prayer and provide a source of reference for educators and researchers. Recent research also recommends a "religious-based preservation" approach, which is a preservation effort that respects the religious dimension of the community while affirming its socio-cultural value, so that local government policies and educational institutions can synergize between cultural preservation and locally-based religious education (June et al., 2025).

D. Conclusion

The *tradition of Peusijek Hajj* in Aceh is a tangible form of Islamic acculturation and local culture that takes place dynamically and selectively. This ritual depicts the combination of Islamic religious values with traditional Acehnese symbols that are full of philosophical and social meaning. In practice, *Peusijek Hajj* functions not only as a purification ritual and prayer for salvation

for pilgrims, but also as a means of strengthening social relations, maintaining cultural identity, and strengthening the spiritual values of the Acehnese people. Symbols such as *breuh padee* (rice rice), *teupong taweu* (unsalted flour), and leaves *on sisijeuk* that were once rooted in agrarian culture and animistic beliefs, are now reinterpreted in the Islamic frame. This transformation shows that the people of Aceh not only maintain traditions, but also adapt them to be in harmony with Islamic values.

The role of ulama, traditional leaders, and the congregation's family is key in maintaining a balance between customs and religion. Ulema play a role in providing religious legitimacy, traditional leaders preserve cultural symbolic values, while the family of the pilgrim is the executor who ensures the harmony of the two elements. In addition, the variety of practices *Peusijuek* Inter-regional and inter-generational hajj shows the cultural flexibility of the Acehnese people. In the countryside, the tradition is still carried out in full with strong traditional symbols, while in the urban areas the practice is simpler with an emphasis on prayer and spiritual values. This difference reflects the ability of tradition *Peusijuek* to adapt to social changes, education, and people's religious understanding.

Overall *Peusijuek* Hajj not only functions as a traditional religious ritual, but also as a mechanism of social cohesion and expression of Acehnese identity. This tradition proves that Islam and local culture can synergize harmoniously through a wise acculturation process, where religious values enrich the meaning of the customs without erasing their cultural root. Academically, this research enriches the discourse on Islam Nusantara and Islamic acculturation by offering a contextual model of how local rituals can be religiously legitimized without losing cultural identity. Practically, the findings provide insights for religious educators, cultural policymakers, and traditional leaders in formulating culturally sensitive and theologically grounded preservation strategies.

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