

The Practice of Religious Tourism Pilgrimage to Walisongo Among Nahdlatul Ulama Communities in the Digital Age

Dian Filippo Laily Ramadhan, Arif Sudrajat, Ranu Faizal

State University of Surabaya, Indonesia

State University of Malang, Indonesia

Ramadhanfilippo2@gmail.com , ariefsudrajat@unesa.ac.id,

ranufaizal156@gmail.com

Abstract

The phenomenon of pilgrimage to the tombs of the Walisongo among the Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) community reflects not only a spiritual journey but also complex social practices in the context of modern culture, economy, and technology. This tradition demonstrates how religious rituals are practiced within a dynamic social framework, while also serving as a venue for community interaction. This study aims to explore the transformation of the Walisongo pilgrimage practice in the digital age and examine how such activities strengthen social solidarity and cultural identity among the NU community. Using a qualitative approach, this study is grounded in Pierre Bourdieu's theory of social practice, focusing on the concepts of habitus, social capital, and cultural capital as analytical lenses. Data was collected through in-depth interviews, field observations, and documentary reviews. The research findings indicate that digitalization, particularly through social media, has altered how communities interpret and perform pilgrimage. Spiritual experiences are now often shared publicly, shifting pilgrimage into a component of religious identity construction in the public sphere. However, this change does not diminish the spiritual and social values inherent in the practice. On the contrary, pilgrimage practices remain a means of preserving local Islamic culture, strengthening social networks, and serving as an accessible religious alternative. This study reveals that despite modernization, the pilgrimage practices of the Walisongo remain relevant and adaptive in addressing contemporary challenges, making them a living manifestation of both religious and cultural expression within modern society.

Keywords: Pilgrimage to Walisongo; Social Practices; Digitalization of Religion

Permalink/DOI: <https://doi.org/10.18326/infsl3.v19i1.73-94>

Introduction

The pilgrimage to *Walisongo* is not merely a spiritual journey, but a profound social practice for the Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) community. In NU tradition, *Walisongo* is regarded as a spiritual hero who spread the teachings of Islam in a peaceful manner and emphasized local wisdom. Visiting their graves is not only a form of respect but also a means to strengthen relationships among NU community members (Jaelani, 2017). Through this practice, values such as solidarity, mutual assistance, and respect for deceased religious scholars are highly cherished. For some NU members, the pilgrimage also serves as an opportunity to strengthen social networks within their community. The *Walisongo* pilgrimage provides an opportunity to interact with others who share the same beliefs, fostering a sense of solidarity and enriching social relationships. Beyond that, pilgrimage activities are often accompanied by social events such as religious study sessions or discussion forums, which further deepen social bonds among individuals within the community (Keislaman et al., 2025).

Religious tourism in the form of pilgrimages to the tombs of the *Walisongo* plays a very important role in strengthening and preserving the cultural identity of the Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) community. These pilgrimages are not merely spiritual journeys, but also a means of maintaining and preserving the cultural values inherited from the *Walisongo*. In NU tradition, the *Walisongo* are not only remembered as spreaders of Islam but also as guardians of the balance between religious teachings and local culture (Aryani et al., 2023). This is reflected in how NU communities interpret pilgrimages, which are not limited to religious aspects but also serve as a means to reintroduce the rich Islamic cultural heritage of the Nusantara region, deeply rooted in local values. Additionally, through these pilgrimage activities, NU communities, especially the younger generation, are given the opportunity to understand and apply Islamic teachings within a broader cultural context (Fachri, 2018). The NU's cultural identity, rooted in Nusantara Islam, is highly relevant in addressing the challenges of globalization, which tends to erode traditional values. The *Walisongo* pilgrimage helps strengthen public awareness of the importance of preserving local wisdom and upholding the religious values passed down by the saints (Mohammad et al., 2021).

Pilgrimages to the Walisongo tombs have a significant impact on the economy of the surrounding area. Every year, thousands of pilgrims come from various regions, both for spiritual purposes and simply to enjoy the beauty and cultural richness of the area surrounding the tombs (Cahyadi & Saefullah, 2023). For the communities living near the *Walisongo* gravesite, pilgrimage presents a major economic opportunity, as many of them operate businesses catering to the needs of pilgrims, such as providing food, resting places, and souvenirs related to the pilgrimage journey.

This pilgrimage activity not only provides direct income from the sale of goods and services, but also encourages better infrastructure development. Local governments often participate in improving facilities around the grave sites, such as building roads, parking areas, and other public facilities. Additionally, the *Walisongo* pilgrimage provides local communities with the opportunity to introduce their culture to visitors from outside the region, thereby enriching the local tourism sector (Isroani, 2021).

Social practices are phenomena in which individuals interact within a larger social context and influence the way they act, think, and feel. The pilgrimage to the Walisongo performed by the Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) community is more than just a religious activity; it also involves social, cultural, economic, and even political dimensions (Roifah, 2023). Pierre Bourdieu's theory of social practice offers insights into the pilgrimage activities within the NU community. Where individuals and groups operate within a larger social structure. In his view, social practice is the result of interactions between habitus (patterns of behaviors and habits shaped by an individual's social conditions and history), social capital (networks of relationships and solidarity possessed by individuals or groups), and cultural capital (knowledge, skills, and cultural symbols possessed).

The practice of pilgrimage to *Walisongo* has undergone many changes with the development of the times. In the past, pilgrimages to the tombs of Walisongo were carried out in a simple manner, usually on foot or by public transportation. However, with the development of transportation and technology, pilgrimages to *Walisongo* are now mostly carried out by private vehicles or tourist buses (Ulla et al.,

2023). This indicates a shift in how society views and practices the pilgrimage tradition, making it more accessible and reachable by a wider audience.

Information technology also plays a role in influencing pilgrimage practices. Through social media, many pilgrims share their experiences, photos, and stories about their trips to the *Walisongo* tombs. This attracts many people to participate in pilgrimages, even those who were not initially directly affiliated with the NU community (Artanti & Adinugraha, 2020). The widespread information on social media has made pilgrimage sites more well-known, both among local communities and those from outside the region. The availability of apps and online platforms that simplify ticket or accommodation bookings has further facilitated people's ability to undertake pilgrimage journeys. However, these changes also bring new challenges, such as the potential loss of the spiritual dimension due to the increasing massification of pilgrimage practices.

The Wali Songo pilgrimage not only has a spiritual dimension, but also strongly shapes social interactions among pilgrims. During the pilgrimage, many pilgrims come with their families or specific groups, such as religious study groups or Islamic boarding schools. They not only seek blessings, but also share experiences and strengthen social bonds (Moeliono & Nisa, 2024). This process fosters a strong sense of solidarity within the community, which also helps strengthen bonds among fellow Muslims.

Pilgrimage provides an opportunity to get to know fellow Muslims from various regions and backgrounds. This interaction is not limited to religious matters, but also extends to everyday social life (Rohimi, 2019). Pilgrims often discuss their experiences, their lives, and various social issues they face. This demonstrates how the pilgrimage to *Walisongo* is not merely a religious ritual but also a social practice that strengthens a sense of community and Islamic brotherhood among Muslims, particularly within the NU community. Pilgrimage also provides pilgrims with the opportunity to gain deeper religious knowledge through the religious lectures frequently held around the gravesites.

The *Walisongo* pilgrimage serves as a means of forming strong

social solidarity among Muslims, especially the NU community. This solidarity is created because pilgrims often come together with family or groups who share the same goal, namely to seek blessings and draw closer to God. This practice demonstrates how pilgrimage can serve as an opportunity to strengthen social bonds among fellow believers, thereby creating stronger ties within the community. The solidarity formed through pilgrimage activities is also reflected in other activities often done together, such as religious study sessions or collective prayers. Additionally, these pilgrimage activities highlight a sense of unity among Muslims, often involving people from various regions.

The urgency of this research also lies in the technological and digitalization dimensions, particularly regarding the influence of social media platforms such as Instagram, YouTube, and, most significantly, TikTok in shaping public religious identity (Latiep & Putri, 2023). TikTok has become an effective platform for popularizing pilgrimage practices to the tombs of the *Walisongo*, where users upload content showcasing pilgrimage sites accompanied by hadith quotes, scholars' advice, or religious messages paired with background music such as *shalawat* chants, *qasidah*, or popular religious music (Kifayah & Niamah, 2021). This phenomenon not only broadens the exposure of pilgrimage practices to a wider audience, especially among younger generations, but also fosters emotional attachment and a more modern and easily accessible spiritual perception. However, on the other hand, there is a shift in spiritual authenticity when rituals that were once private and contemplative are now exposed to the public sphere, blurring the boundaries between religious practices and digital entertainment. This indicates that digitalization, particularly through TikTok, not only facilitates the dissemination of religious information and experiences but also reconstructs the meaning of pilgrimage within the context of popular culture and virtual interactions, making it part of contemporary religious phenomena (Pravana et al., 2017).

This research also encompasses the economic dimension, which is closely linked to the development of technology and digitalization. The utilization of social media, particularly TikTok, Instagram, and YouTube, has massively expanded the promotion of the *Walisongo* pilgrimage, thereby driving an increase in visitor

numbers and generating a significant impact on the local economy around pilgrimage sites (Huda et al., n.d.). Digital content showcasing the beauty of the sites, the history of the saints, and religious messages accompanied by Islamic background music has successfully captured the attention of the public, especially the younger generation, encouraging their participation in pilgrimage activities (Rohaeni & Emilda, 2021). This rise in the number of pilgrims directly contributes to local economic growth, such as increased demand for transportation services, accommodations, culinary offerings, and the sale of religious souvenirs. Furthermore, digital advancements have also driven the emergence of professionally managed pilgrimage tour packages, involving travel agencies, digital communities, and local entrepreneurs, thereby shaping a more structured and modern religious economic ecosystem.

This study aims to explore the social practice of pilgrimage to *Walisongo* in the Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) community through the perspective of Pierre Bourdieu's social practice theory and to explore the impact of digitalization and social media on changes in how the NU community conducts and interprets pilgrimage, as well as the relevance of this tradition in facing the challenges of modern times. The urgency of this research is significant given the rapid development of technology and globalization, which have the potential to alter the essence of religious and social practices. The research focuses on identifying the habitus reflected in pilgrimage behavior, analyzing the social capital formed within it, and examining the role of cultural capital in preserving religious and local cultural values.

Methods

This study uses a qualitative approach based on Pierre Bourdieu's theory of social practice. This approach was chosen because it provides a deep understanding of the social dynamics in the *Walisongo* pilgrimage practice, with a focus on the interactions between individuals, groups, and social structures in the Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) community. Bourdieu's theory is relevant for describing how habitus, social capital, and cultural capital shape how the NU community understands and performs pilgrimage rituals. Additionally, this theory can explain how social media influences the transformation of pilgrimage practices in the modern era. Social practice theory helps

identify the relationship between social structures and individual behavior in the context of pilgrimage, which is often adapted as times change.

The data collection was conducted using purposive sampling techniques, which selected informants based on predetermined criteria, namely those who were directly involved in the *Walisongo* pilgrimage practice or who had in-depth knowledge of the practice. The selected informants ranged from 10 to 15 people, with interviews conducted in stages until reaching the saturation point, where no new information was found. The primary data used in this study were primary data obtained from in-depth interviews, direct observation, and documentation studies with the selected informants. Secondary data were obtained from relevant literature reviews, such as books, articles, and previous studies on the *Walisongo* pilgrimage, NU traditions, and social practice theory. Data analysis was conducted using thematic analysis, which also applied a triangulation approach to ensure data validity. The analysis process began with data reduction, which involved selecting relevant information, followed by categorizing themes related to social capital, habitus, and changes in pilgrimage practices. The final stage was data interpretation to draw conclusions about the influence of social media on changes in the *Walisongo* pilgrimage practices and its impact on social solidarity in the NU community.

Result and Discussion

The Transformation of the Walisongo Pilgrimage Practice in the Modern Context

Pilgrimage to the tombs of the *Walisongo* has become an integral part of the religious traditions of the Javanese people, particularly among the Nahdlatul Ulama (NU). Over time, this practice has undergone significant changes in the way it is carried out. Several factors, such as social development, technological advancements, and the influence of globalization, have played a crucial role in transforming the nature of this pilgrimage (Amanat, 2019) Journal 14. These transformations are not only evident in how the pilgrimage is conducted but also in the meaning and purpose it holds, which now lean more towards modern interpretations. One of the most significant changes is the role of social media, which has made the practice of pilgrimage more

visible in public spaces and has encouraged the formation of a more visible and structured religious identity.

The practice of the *Walisongo* Pilgrimage refers to a series of religious and social activities carried out by individuals or groups at the tomb sites of the *Walisongo*, the nine Islamic scholars who spread Islam in Java. These activities encompass ritual dimensions (such as *tablil*, prayers, and *tabarruk*), social dimensions (interactions among pilgrims and with local communities), economic dimensions (service and product transactions), and symbolic dimensions (the reinforcement of religious identity and piety). In the modern context, the *Walisongo* Pilgrimage is not only conducted offline but also carries a digital dimension, where information, promotion, and representations of pilgrimage experiences are extensively mediated through social media (Cahyono et al., 2022).

The factor that has changed this practice is the emergence of social media. Platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, and YouTube allow pilgrims to share photos and videos of their journeys, making this pilgrimage activity more visible to a wider audience. As a result, the personal goals that were once the core of this journey have now shifted to become a social event that is shared with the public (Hidayattulloh et al., 2024). This practice has given rise to a new trend where people are not only seeking spiritual blessings but also desiring social recognition in the form of 'likes' or positive comments from their online audience. Pilgrimage, in this context, is beginning to be seen as a way to build a publicly monitored religious image. Those who undertake pilgrimages with the intention of drawing closer to God often find that when this process is showcased on social media, the religious value inherent in the act is lost and replaced by a constructed image designed to meet social expectations or the desire for public validation. In this regard.

Changes in how people understand the religious purpose of pilgrimage itself. In the past, pilgrimage was seen as a more spiritually profound journey, simpler, and focused on the goal of drawing closer to God. However, today, many people view pilgrimage as part of their religious identity that must be known and recognized by others. In other words, pilgrimage is no longer just a personal activity but has

become a form of affirming one's existence and social status within society. Another change is evident in the commercialization and management of pilgrimage activities themselves. Today, pilgrimage journeys are often packaged as organized religious tourism with the support of the tourism sector. These activities are no longer merely spiritual endeavors but have become tourist attractions with a more structured and professionally managed approach. Therefore, it is not only the religious aspects that are promoted but also the economic factors that play an important role in attracting more people to undertake pilgrimages, especially when the cost of a pilgrimage is not significantly different from the cost of *umrah* or *haji* (Hosin, 2019).

Pierre Bourdieu views capital as a resource that can be utilized by individuals or groups to gain advantages within a social arena (field) (Collins et al., 2021). This capital is not limited to economic forms but also includes social capital, cultural capital, and symbolic capital, which interact with one another and can be converted as needed. In Bourdieu's perspective, social capital refers to resources possessed due to the existence of sustainable social networks, built through trust, reciprocity, and bonding. This form of capital enables individuals to access information, opportunities, and support that would otherwise be unattainable on an individual basis (Fariszy et al., 2024).

This concept is understood through three main elements. First, *habitus*, a system of dispositions, values, and ways of thinking shaped by an individual's life experiences, which, in the context of pilgrimage, influences how pilgrims interpret their activities—whether as a solemn act of worship, a family tradition, or even as social media content (Rina Juliana et al., 2023). Second, the *field*, or social arena, which refers to the interactive space where actors such as pilgrims, site custodians (*juru kunci*), travel agencies, local vendors, and social media influencers interact, compete, and collaborate, each bringing different forms of capital. Third, *capital conversion*, wherein social capital can be transformed into symbolic capital, such as religious recognition or social status, or into economic capital, such as financial gains from travel services, content promotion, or the sale of souvenirs (Zulkifli et al., 2024)

In the modern practice of the *Walisongo* pilgrimage, social capital plays a pivotal role in processes of adaptation and innovation. *Bonding capital* is evident in religious study communities (*majelis taklim*) that maintain the solemnity and preservation of pilgrimage traditions, while *bridging capital* emerges from interactions with general tourists, travel agencies, or content creators, which broaden access to information while simultaneously opening opportunities for commercialization. Thus, the transformation of pilgrimage practices can be understood as a dynamic exchange of capitals, in which pilgrims, business actors, and site managers leverage their social networks to gain symbolic benefits in the form of status and religious recognition, as well as economic benefits driven by the growing popularity of religious tourism in the digital era (Subahri & Airiza, 2024).

The transformation of the *Walisongo* pilgrimage practices in the digital era demonstrates that social, economic, and digital dynamics are interwoven in shaping the contemporary meaning of pilgrimage. The development of social media has driven a process of desacralization, where pilgrimage activities often shift towards performativity and commercialization, such as content documentation, standardized tour packages, or the commercial domination of areas surrounding the shrines. This desacralization, however, is not singular; the same social networks also play a role in resacralization, for instance, through the dissemination of educational content, the reinforcement of proper pilgrimage etiquette, and the broader introduction of the history of the *Walisongo* (Garcia et al., n.d.). Social media serves as a space for individuals to redefine the meaning of tradition, making it more relevant to modern social values. Ultimately, despite the many external factors influencing contemporary pilgrimage practices, it is evident that the *Walisongo* pilgrimage has undergone significant transformation.

The Walisongo Pilgrimage as a More Accessible Religious Alternative

Pilgrimage to the tombs of the *Walisongo* has long been an integral part of the spiritual life of the Javanese people, especially among Muslims who regard the *Walisongo* as important figures in the history of the spread of Islam in Indonesia. This practice is not merely a physical journey to visit the tombs of the saints, but also a means of

strengthening spiritual bonds with figures believed to possess barakah or blessings (Maharani et al., 2021). Although this tradition has been around for a long time, in the modern context, pilgrimage to the Wali Songo is now increasingly chosen as a more accessible religious alternative for the community, compared to the more complex and costly pilgrimage to Mecca or Umrah. The following are the results of the author's interviews in the field.

Aj: The Walisongo pilgrimage is considered a religious alternative that is easier to access than the Umrah or Hajj pilgrimages. One of the reasons is that it is more affordable and easier to access. Many people choose the Walisongo pilgrimage because it is a way to get closer to God, and also because it can be done without the need for extensive preparation, such as travelling to holy lands. Additionally, this pilgrimage also provides an opportunity to enhance social quality by gathering with family or friends, strengthening bonds of brotherhood, and sharing religious experiences. This makes the Walisongo pilgrimage not merely a spiritual means.

This practice is not only related to religious aspects, but also social and symbolic capital, such as social recognition within the community. Respondents tend to choose pilgrimage because of its ease of access and low cost, while also strengthening social bonds and gaining religious status in the eyes of the community, making it a more accessible alternative to umrah or hajj.

The reasons why the *Walisongo* pilgrimage is a more attractive option are accessibility and cost. Unlike the Hajj or Umrah pilgrimages, which require extensive preparation and significant expenses, the *Walisongo* pilgrimage can be completed in a relatively short time at a much more affordable cost (Sasongko, 2020). In this context, local pilgrimages offer a practical solution for Muslims seeking to strengthen their faith and gain blessings from religious travel without having to wait for an extended period or spend large sums of money. This makes the *Walisongo* pilgrimage more inclusive for segments of society who cannot afford to perform the Hajj or Umrah due to economic constraints.

Culturally and historically, pilgrimages to the tombs of the *Walisongo* also have a very deep meaning for the Javanese people. The *Walisongo* are considered to be the first to bring the teachings of Islam to the hearts of the Javanese people through a cultural and contextual approach. They not only taught the Islamic faith but also established the cultural roots of Islam in Indonesia, adapting it to local traditions, such as the integration of art, culture, and religious teachings into daily life. Therefore, the pilgrimage to the *Walisongo* is not merely a spiritual ritual but also a transmission of history and a reaffirmation of the cultural identity of the Javanese people, which continues to thrive and evolve to this day.

The advancement of digitalization and social media, particularly through platforms such as TikTok, Instagram, and YouTube, has significantly expanded the accessibility and popularity of the *Walisongo* pilgrimage. Digital content produced by the public, religious communities, and local tourism promoters has introduced new ways of understanding and interpreting the pilgrimage. Short videos showcasing the solemn atmosphere at the shrine areas, accompanied by hadith quotations, scholars' advice, or other religious messages, along with Islamic background music such as *shalawat*, *qasidah*, or popular religious songs, have successfully created a strong emotional resonance, especially among the younger generation. These visual and auditory narratives not only promote the pilgrimage but also foster a sense of spiritual connection even before individuals physically visit the shrine sites.

With the development of the times and the increasing influence of technology, this pilgrimage practice has also undergone significant changes. One of the latest developments is the emergence of virtual pilgrimages that utilize internet technology and social media. Through platforms like YouTube or Instagram, people can watch or even participate in pilgrimage journeys virtually without having to be physically present at the grave site. While this cannot fully replace the spiritual experience gained from a direct pilgrimage, this phenomenon demonstrates how technology can facilitate access and reach more people who previously had no opportunity to undertake such a journey.

This digital visibility has transformed the way society perceives pilgrimage practices, making them more accessible, popular, and relevant to diverse groups. Pilgrimage experiences that were once private and limited are now widely shared through live streaming, vlogs, or short-form content on TikTok, thereby turning pilgrimage into a public practice that can be accessed and appreciated across generations and geographical boundaries. Consequently, the *Walisongo* pilgrimage has evolved into a hybrid religious experience, blending traditional values with the dynamics of digital culture.

There has been criticism of this phenomenon of virtual pilgrimage, which is considered to diminish the true spiritual value. Some argue that the direct spiritual experience gained through physical pilgrimage is more profound and authentic, as it involves direct interaction with sacred sites and historical relics rich in religious significance. Physical pilgrimage, according to this perspective, is a form of spiritual journey that cannot be replaced by virtual media, although the two can complement each other (Ashadi et al., 2018).

Regardless of the controversy surrounding physical and virtual pilgrimages, one thing is clear: pilgrimages to *Walisongo* remain a highly relevant alternative in the modern context. Additionally, in today's fast-paced and challenging lifestyle, this pilgrimage offers convenience and comfort for anyone seeking to deepen their religious faith. For those who lack the opportunity or mean to perform the Hajj or Umrah, a pilgrimage to *Walisongo* serves as a more practical and affordable alternative, yet it still holds profound meaning and spiritual blessings.

This pilgrimage practice is also in line with religious values that emphasize simplicity and sincerity in seeking blessings, where people do not need to wait long or travel far to gain a spiritual experience that strengthens their faith. In fact, for some people, the *Walisongo* pilgrimage is a form of local devotion that is closer to the cultural roots and beliefs that have long existed in their communities.

This pilgrimage practice is also related to the phenomenon of social media activism, where visitors to the *Walisongo* tombs often share their experiences through various social media platforms. This has created a new phenomenon, where pilgrimage is not only seen

as a physical journey, but also as an affirmation of religious existence in the public sphere. Through social media, pilgrims can demonstrate their commitment to their religion while introducing the rich cultural traditions of Indonesia to the outside world.

Ultimately, the Wali Songo pilgrimage remains a more accessible religious alternative for many segments of society. Its existence provides a practical solution for Muslims who wish to deepen their faith without having to undertake long journeys or incur significant expenses. With various developments in terms of accessibility, cost, and technology, this pilgrimage is becoming increasingly relevant in the lives of modern society, which continues to evolve. As a means to strengthen religious identity, the *Walisongo* pilgrimage serves not only as a spiritual journey but also as a way to preserve and introduce the cultural heritage passed down by the *Walisongo* since ancient times.

Social Motivation and Desire for Validation

The social motivation that drives people to make pilgrimages to *Walisongo* is closely related to the strength of communal values in Indonesian society. In many communities in Indonesia, particularly within Javanese culture, pilgrimage is an integral part of long-standing religious traditions (Muliadi et al., 2020). The community views this pilgrimage not merely as a form of spiritual achievement but more as a way to express their identity within societal life.

Pilgrimage is not merely a religious journey but also a means to construct identity, strengthen social relationships, and gain recognition from the surrounding community. Using Pierre Bourdieu's theory of capital, this pilgrimage practice can be understood through four interrelated dimensions of capital: economic capital, cultural capital, social capital, and symbolic capital (Muliadi et al., 2020).

First, economic capital serves as a fundamental factor that enables individuals to participate in pilgrimage activities. Financial capability influences access to supporting facilities such as transportation, accommodation, meals, and the purchase of religious souvenirs. For some pilgrims, having greater economic capital also provides opportunities to join more comfortable and exclusive pilgrimage

packages, thereby indirectly enhancing their social image within the community (Yanti, 2020).

Second, cultural capital is reflected in the religious knowledge and understanding possessed by pilgrims. This knowledge includes the history of the *Walisongo*, the proper procedures for pilgrimage in accordance with religious traditions, and the values of *Islam Nusantara* embedded in the practice (Mu'min et al., 2024). This cultural capital has been further strengthened by the wave of digitalization, where educational content shared on social media—such as brief histories of the shrines, specific prayers, or scholars' advice—broadens public knowledge and helps younger generations understand the pilgrimage tradition in a more contextualized manner.

Third, social capital is reflected in the networks of relationships formed during pilgrimage activities. This practice brings individuals together with family members, religious study communities, Islamic boarding school congregations, or interregional groups, thereby strengthening solidarity and togetherness. The interactions that take place not only enhance the spiritual experience but also create social networks that can be leveraged for other purposes, such as collective religious activities, economic collaborations, or social initiatives within their respective communities.

Fourth, symbolic capital becomes an important aspect that illustrates how pilgrimage contributes to building social status and recognition. Individuals who actively engage in pilgrimage are often perceived as more religious, possessing a higher level of spiritual closeness, and earning moral respect within their communities. In the digital era, this symbolic capital has become increasingly reinforced with the growing exposure on social media. The documentation of pilgrimage journeys shared on platforms such as TikTok, Instagram, or YouTube serves not only as a personal archive but also as a representation of religious identity that is publicly acknowledged and appreciated.

These four forms of capital demonstrate that the *Walisongo* pilgrimage is not merely a personal religious activity but also a complex social practice. Economic capital enables participation, cultural capital enriches understanding, social capital expands

networks and solidarity, while symbolic capital constructs a religious image that is recognized within both social and digital spaces. Thus, this pilgrimage practice reflects the adaptation of religious traditions that not only preserve spiritual values but also adjust to the social and cultural dynamics of the modern era.

This social validation is also closely related to religious values in society. In highly religious societies such as Indonesia, those who participate in pilgrimages are considered to have demonstrated their religious commitment, which in turn enhances their social status in society. Although this validation is individual in nature, it is in fact also related to social recognition from society as a whole. This reflects how individuals who go on pilgrimages often receive greater respect in their communities because they are considered to be more religious (Mahzumi et al., 2020).

Social validation is one of the main motivations for pilgrimage, but not everyone who goes on a pilgrimage has the same motivation. For some people, pilgrimage is an opportunity to draw closer to God and strengthen their personal faith. However, for others, social validation can be a stronger motivation, especially in societies with social hierarchies based on religion and tradition. Therefore, understanding people's motivations for pilgrimage requires a thorough analysis of the various social and cultural factors that influence their decisions.

The development of social media and the phenomenon of pilgrimage are now increasingly influenced by digital dynamics that enable individuals to showcase their religious activities to a wider audience. Many people share their pilgrimage experiences through platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, or YouTube, amplifying this dimension of social validation. Pilgrimage practices are no longer viewed solely from a real-world perspective but also within the virtual realm, where individuals can gain broader recognition.

Individuals who go on pilgrimages do so not only to feel closer to God spiritually, but also to gain greater recognition from the general public. Through social media posts, they can demonstrate that they are more devout or more religiously observant. In this context, pilgrimage can also serve as a form of social performance driven by the desire to gain broader recognition, whether from close

friends or a larger public audience. This highlights how social media has become a new channel for those seeking to communicate their religious identity.

The practice of pilgrimage to the *Walisongo* shrines is not only a spiritual journey but also part of a complex social process. Using Pierre Bourdieu's theory of capital, this pilgrimage can be understood as an interactive space that integrates economic, cultural, social, and symbolic capital. Economic capital provides pilgrims with the means to access facilities that enhance the comfort of their journey. Cultural capital enriches their understanding of the history, values, and spiritual meanings of the pilgrimage (Fitriani, 2021). Social capital expands networks of friendship and solidarity among pilgrims, while symbolic capital grants recognition and religious status, both within social environments and digital spaces. These four forms of capital are interconnected, demonstrating that pilgrimage is not only a religious ritual but also a medium for identity formation and social recognition, which are increasingly reinforced by the influence of digitalization and social media. Thus, the *Walisongo* pilgrimage emerges as a religious practice that preserves spiritual values while simultaneously adapting to social and technological developments in the modern era.

Conclusion

The *Walisongo* pilgrimage tradition within the Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) community represents an integration of spiritual, social, cultural, and economic dimensions that continuously adapt to the dynamics of contemporary developments. This practice functions not merely as a means of strengthening faith but also as a medium for reinforcing social solidarity and preserving the values of Islam Nusantara, which are deeply rooted in local wisdom. Significant transformations have emerged with the advent of digitalization and social media, which have reshaped the way communities interpret and engage in pilgrimage practices. Although this shift has led to a degree of desacralization through commercialization and digital exposure, the spiritual and communal values inherent in the pilgrimage remain intact, and are even further reinforced through educational content and virtual interactions that enhance younger generations' understanding of the meaning and essence of this tradition.

In addition to its spiritual and social dimensions, the *Walisongo* pilgrimage significantly contributes to the local economy, as evidenced by the growth of community-based businesses, improved infrastructure, and the emergence of professionally managed religious tourism packages. From the perspective of Pierre Bourdieu's theory of social practice, the pilgrimage illustrates the dynamic interaction between economic, cultural, social, and symbolic capital, which are mutually convertible depending on contextual needs and social dynamics. With increased accessibility and relatively affordable costs, the *Walisongo* pilgrimage serves not only as an inclusive religious alternative but also as a space for identity formation and social legitimization, both in physical and digital realms. Thus, the *Walisongo* pilgrimage remains relevant and adaptive as a religious practice and a socio-cultural phenomenon in the modern era.

Bibliography

- Amanat, T. (2019). Strategi Pengembangan Destinasi Wisata Berbasis Folklor (Ziarah Mitos: Lahan Baru Pariwisata Indonesia). *Jurnal Pariwisata Terapan*, 3(1), 65. <https://doi.org/10.22146/jpt.49277>
- Artanti, A., & Adinugraha, H. H. (2020). Ziarah Wali Sebagai Manifestasi Ekonomi Islam Sektor Pariwisata (Studi Eksploratif Dampak Keberadaan Wisata Religi Terhadap Perekonomian Masyarakat). *AmaNU: Urmal Manajemen Dan Ekonomi*, 3(2), 2620–7680. <http://repository.usu.ac.id>
- Aryani, E. I., Lindawati, Y. I., & Hayat, N. (2023). Praktik Sosial Pengembangan Wisata Desa di Makam Keramat Solear Kabupaten Tangerang. *Edu Sociata: Jurnal Pendidikan Sosiologi*, December. <http://jurnal.stkipbima.ac.id/index.php/ES/article/view/1383%0Ahttps://jurnal.stkipbima.ac.id/index.php/ES/article/download/1383/803>
- Ashadi, A., Anisa, A., & Nur'aini, R. D. (2018). Kegiatan Ritual Ziarah Makam Habib Husein Alaydrus Dan Pengaruhnya Terhadap Penggunaan Ruang Publik Di Kampung Luar Batang. *NALARs*, 17(1), 79. <https://doi.org/10.24853/nalars.17.1.79-86>
- Cahyadi, I., & Saefullah, A. (2023). Pilgrimage Tradition At the Tomb of Kyai Ageng Muhammad Besari Tegalsari, Ponorogo: Religious

- Tourism and Strengthening National Identity. *Jurnal Lektur Keagamaan*, 21(1), 215–258. <https://doi.org/10.31291/jlka.v21.i1.1078>
- Cahyono, M. D., Misbahuddin, M., & Khotimah, K. (2022). Strategi Pemberdayaan Masyarakat Melalui Potensi Wisata Religi Makam Kyai Hasan Husein Di Desa Ngrandu Kecamatan Kauman Kabupaten Ponorogo. *Journal of Community Development and Disaster Management*, 4(2), 81–89. <https://doi.org/10.37680/jcd.v4i2.2070>
- Collins, S. P., Storrow, A., Liu, D., Jenkins, C. A., Miller, K. F., Kampe, C., & Butler, J. (2021). Modal Sosial Dalam Pemerintahan Daerah: Analisis Peran Modal Sosial dalam Penyelenggaraan Semarang Night Carnival. *Journal of Politics and Government Studies*, 23(1), 167–186. <https://ejournal3.undip.ac.id/index.php/jpgs/article/view/38412>
- Fachri, S. (2018). Objek Wisata Religi: Potensi dan Dampak Sosial-Ekonomi bagi Masyarakat Lokal (Studi Kasus Pada Makam Syekh Mansyur Cikadueun, Pandeglang). *Syī'ar Iqtishadi: Journal of Islamic Economics, Finance and Banking*, 2(1), 25–44. <https://jurnal.untirta.ac.id/index.php/JIEc/article/view/3412/2770>
- Fariszy, R., Sagita, V. A., Abadi, M. T. dwi, & Ratna, R. V. A. (2024). Budaya Tradisional sebagai Daya Tarik Konten Modern: Representasi Unsur Budaya Tradisional dalam Konten Video Karya Raditya Bramantya. *Jurnal Ilmu Komunikasi*, 22(1), 120. <https://doi.org/10.31315/jik.v22i1.11558>
- Fitriani, Y. (2021). Pemanfaatan Media Sosial Sebagai Media Penyajian Konten Edukasi Atau Pembelajaran Digital. *Journal of Information System, Applied, Management, Accounting and Research*, 5(4), 1006–1013. <https://doi.org/10.52362/jisamar.v5i4.609>
- Garcia, A. R., Filipe, S. B., Fernandes, C., Estevão, C., & Ramos, G. (n.d.). Fungsi Sosial Ziarah pada Masyarakat Jawa: Analisis Tradisi Ziarah di Wonoyoso. *Gunung Djati Conference Series*, 29, 93–104.
- Hidayattulloh, W., Amrulloh, R., Amrulloh, R., Hawa, F., & Saumantri, T. (2024). Pengaruh Tradisi Ziarah Makam Sunan Gunung

- Djati Terhadap Umkm Masyarakat Sekitar. *AR-ROSYAD: Jurnal Keislaman Dan Sosial Humaniora*, 2(2), 81–93. <https://doi.org/10.55148/arrosyad.v2i2.966>
- Hosin, A. S. (2019). *Perkembangan Pariwisata Ziarah Makam Syaikhona Muhammad Kholil Di Bangkalan Tahun 2005-2018. Avatara: Jurnal Pendidikan Sejarah*, 8(1).
- Zulkifli, Z., Mayasari, D., & Winata, A. (2024). The Religious Values in the Nyunatan Tradition of the Bayan Indigenous Community as a Source of Cultural Learning in Lombok. *INFERENSI: Jurnal Penelitian Sosial Keagamaan*, 18(1), 1–24. <https://doi.org/10.18326/infsl3.v18i1.1-24>
- Huda, B., Surabaya, S. A., & Djaelani, M. (2025). Wisata Religi dan Pemberdayaan Ekonomi Masyarakat Lokal : Studi Pada Kawasan Makam Putri Ayu Dewi Sekardadu dan Mbah Djaelani dalam Perspektif Ekonomi Islam. *Iqtishadia: Jurnal Ekonomi dan Perbankan Syariah*, 12 (1), 113-137. <https://ejournal.iainmadura.ac.id/index.php/iqtishadia/article/view/19297/4742>
- Isroani, F. (2021). Implementasi Rutinan Ziarah Wali Sebagai Media Dakwah Pembentukan Karakter Santri Pondok Pesantren Al Hidayat Lasem. *Alamtara: Jurnal Komunikasi Dan Penyiaran Islam*, 5(1), 69–76. <https://doi.org/10.58518/alamtara.v5i1.1021>
- Jaelani, A. (2017). *Industri wisata halal di Indonesia: Potensi dan prospek (Halal tourism industry in Indonesia: Potential and prospects)*. MPRA Paper, 76237, 1–20.
- Keislaman, J. S., Suhendra, A., Burhani, N., Cahyadi, I., & Yunani, A. (2025). Tradisional and Modernity: The Role of NU in Cultural Transformation in the 2nd Century. *Nizham: Jurnal Studi Keislaman*, 13(01), 66–88. <https://e-journal.metrouniv.ac.id/nizham/issue/view/493>
- Kifayah, N., & Niamah, L. ulfa. (2021). Reaktualisasi Dakwah Walisongo Pada Era Konsumtif Media Sosial. *Tasamuh*, 19(1), 77–97. <https://doi.org/10.20414/tasamuh.v19i1.2898>
- Latiep, I. F., & Putri, A. R. F. (2023). Penggunaan Video Konten Dalam Memperkuat Promosi Produk. *Journal of Career Development*,

1(2), 2987–5323.

- Maharani, M., Asmuni, A., & Sanusi, B. (2021). Studi Tindakan Sosial: Tradisi Ziarah Makam Nyi Mas Gandasari Di Desa Panguragan Kabupaten Cirebon. *Jurnal Yaqzhan: Analisis Filsafat, Agama Dan Kemanusiaan*, 7(2), 230. <https://doi.org/10.24235/jy.v7i2.9374>
- Mahzumi, M. A.-Q. A. S., Nurhidin, E., & Zuhdi, M. (2020). Analisis Motivasi Tradisi Ziarah Kubur Di Makam Syeikh Syamsuddin Al-Wasil Kota Kediri. *Spiritualita*, 4(2), 1–18. <https://doi.org/10.30762/spr.v4i2.2691>
- Moeliono, P. T., & Nisa, K. K. (2024). Pemaknaan Tradisi Ziarah Makam Wali Sunan Pandanaran Kecamatan Bayat Kabupaten Klaten. *SOSEBI Jurnal Penelitian Mahasiswa Ilmu Sosial Ekonomi Dan Bisnis Islam*, 4(1), 1–27. <https://doi.org/10.21274/sosebi.v4i1.8616>
- Mohammad, N. N., A., H. M. R. S., Biswajit, N., Eivin, R., Ma, S., & Paul, K. (2021). Economic valuation of tourism of the Sundarban Mangroves, Bangladesh. *Journal of Ecology and The Natural Environment*, 13(4), 100–109. <https://doi.org/10.5897/jene2021.0910>
- Mu'min, M. D. N. A., Hasob, H. A. A., Abubakar, A., Basri, H., & FazakaRifah, M. A. (2024). Telaah hubungan sosial dalam Al-Quran : studi tafsir QS. Al-Hujurat ayat 10. *Journal of Management and Innovation Entrepreneurship (JMIE)*, 1(2), 338–350. <http://ejournal.stitta.ac.id/index.php/ambarsa/article/view/174/140>
- Muliadi, M., Fasya, T. K., & Ilham, I. (2020). Wisata Ziarah Sebagai Identitas Sosial: Studi Antropologi Budaya Di Makam Sultan Malikussaleh Kecamatan Samudera, Kabupaten Aceh Utara. *Aceh Anthropological Journal*, 4(1), 58. <https://doi.org/10.29103/aaj.v4i1.3152>
- Pravana, N. K., Piryani, S., Chaurasiya, S. P., Kawan, R., Thapa, R. K., Shrestha, S., Brouwer, I. D., Jager, I. de, Borgonjen, K., Azupogo, F., Rooij, M., Folson, G., Abizari, R., Frempong, R. B., Annim, S. K., Boah, M., Azupogo, F., Amporfro, D. A., Abada, L. A., ... WHO. (2017). Ziarah Virtual (Studi Deskriptif Kualitatif Ziarah

- Virtual Melalui Media Sosial Instagram Pada Tahun 2016/2017). *Development Studies Research*, 3(1), 43.
- Rina Juliana, Resekiani Mas Bakar, & Andi Nasrawati Hamid. (2023). Pengaruh Intensitas Penggunaan Media Sosial Tiktok Terhadap Perilaku Konsumtif Pada Mahasiswi. *PESHUM: Jurnal Pendidikan, Sosial Dan Humaniora*, 2(6), 1067–1079. <https://doi.org/10.56799/peshum.v2i6.2381>
- Rohaeni, A. J., & Emilda, N. (2021). Wisata Religi Berbasis Kearifan Lokal dan Pemberdayaan Ekonomi Masyarakat Adat Kampung Dukuh. *Panggung*, 31(3), 426–438. <https://doi.org/10.26742/panggung.v31i3.1716>
- Rohimi, R. (2019). Historis Dan Ritualisme Tradisi Ziarah Makam Keleang di Dusun Kelambi Desa Pandan Indah: Studi Terhadap Pendekatan Antropologi. *SOCIA: Jurnal Ilmu-Ilmu Sosial*, 16(2), 161–171. <https://doi.org/10.21831/socia.v16i2.29720>
- Roifah, M. (2023). Mitos Dan Ritual Dibalik Tradisi Ziarah Wali: Studi Kasus Di Makam Syaikhona Kholil Bangkalan. *PARAFRASE: Jurnal Kajian Kebahasaan & Kesastraan*, 23(1), 24–35. <https://doi.org/10.30996/parafrase.v23i1.7909>
- Sasongko, R. W. D. (2020). Dampak Ekonomi Wisata Ziarah Makam Gus Dur Dalam Upaya Pengembangan Pariwisata Jombang. *Jurnal Nasional Pariwisata*, 9(1), 1. <https://doi.org/10.22146/jnp.59452>
- Subahri, B., & Airiza, I. (2024). Ziarah Kubur sebagai Media Konseling Islam dalam Meningkatkan Kesehatan Mental Masyarakat. *Psychospiritual: Journal of Trends in Islamic Psychological Research*, 3(1), 9–26. <https://doi.org/10.35719/psychospiritual.v3i1.19>
- Ulla, I., Thahir, A. H., Basri, H., & Qomarul Huda, M. (2023). *Ziarah Wali dalam Tradisi Masyarakat*.
- Yanti, V. (2020). Dinamika Modal Sosial Dalam Pemberdayaan Masyarakat Pada Desa Wisata Halal Setanggor: Kepercayaan, Jaringan Sosial Dan Norma. *Reformasi*, 10, 34–44. <https://jurnal.unitri.ac.id/index.php/reformasi/index>