

The Continuity of Madurese Hajj Experience: Extending William R. Roff's Pilgrimage Framework from *Walimatus Safar* to Post Pilgrimage Transformation

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Abstract

Studies of the Hajj have predominantly examined pilgrims' experiences in the Holy Land, overlooking the continuity of religious life before departure and after return. This study explores Madurese Hajj experiences from *walimatus safar* to post-pilgrimage transformation through William R. Roff's pilgrimage framework. Adopting a qualitative case study design, data were gathered through in-depth interviews with pilgrims, *kyai*, family members, and Hajj guidance officers (KBIHU), supplemented by follow-up interviews. Thematic analysis identified three interconnected phases. First, *walimatus safar* serves as a leavetaking ritual that prepares pilgrims spiritually, psychologically, and socially. Second, encounters with the global Muslim community during pilgrimage prompt negotiation between Madurese devotional traditions and universal Islamic practices, fostering *tasamuh* (religious tolerance). Third, returning pilgrims undergo moral and spiritual transformation, gain social recognition, and reinforce local religious traditions. The study argues that the Hajj constitutes a cyclical socio-religious process rather than an isolated ritual in the Holy Land. Its principal novelty lies in examining the post-pilgrimage phase as the generative center of this cycle. Returning pilgrims reconstruct religious identities, acquire socio-religious authority, and institutionalize practices such as *walimatus syukri*, *tahlilan haji*, and *ziarah*. These activities sustain collective memories of pilgrimage and inspire subsequent generations to undertake the Hajj, initiating new *walimatus safar* rituals. This perspective highlights how individual spiritual change becomes embedded in communal expectations, ritual transmission, and enduring forms of religious leadership. By demonstrating how post-pilgrimage transformations regenerate pre-departure practices, this study extends Roff's framework and contributes an integrated, cyclical perspective to scholarship on Hajj and Southeast Asian Islam.

Keywords: *Hajj, Walimatus Safar, William R. Roff, Madura, Pilgrimage Continuity, Identity Transformation.*

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INTRODUCTION

The Hajj, the fifth pillar of Islam, is a mandatory religious obligation for Muslims who possess the necessary physical and financial capacity. Beyond its ritual dimension, the Hajj has long been understood as a multidimensional socio-religious phenomenon encompassing spiritual transformation, identity formation, cultural negotiation, and community reconstruction.¹ For Muslims, the pilgrimage is not merely a journey to the Holy Land but also a process through which religious identity is continuously shaped before departure, during the pilgrimage, and after returning home. Consequently, understanding the Hajj requires moving beyond ritual performance in Mecca and Medina toward examining the broader continuity of pilgrims' religious experiences.

In Indonesia, the world's largest Muslim-majority country, the Hajj is inseparable from diverse local traditions that accompany pilgrims throughout their journey.² Across different regions, communities have developed distinctive religious and cultural practices surrounding the pilgrimage, reflecting the interaction between Islamic teachings and local traditions. Madura Island, consisting of Bangkalan, Sampang, Pamekasan, and Sumenep Regencies, represents one of the strongest examples of this phenomenon. Among the most prominent traditions is *walimatus safar*, a communal farewell ceremony organized by prospective pilgrims and their families before departure. The ritual generally includes *tawassul*, recitation of Surah Yasin, Hajj-related *shalawat*, religious sermons delivered by *kyai*, collective prayers for safety and an accepted pilgrimage (*hajj mabrur*), public requests for forgiveness, and communal meals shared with relatives and neighbors. Although Islamic jurisprudence does not explicitly prescribe *walimatus safar*, the tradition has become deeply embedded in Madurese religious life, functioning as an important religious and social institution.

The persistence of *walimatus safar* raises broader academic questions regarding the relationship between normative Islam and local religious traditions. Is *walimatus safar* merely a cultural custom, or does it represent a legitimate expression of localized Islam? More importantly, does its significance end before departure, or does it form part of a continuous religious process extending throughout the pilgrimage and beyond? These questions become increasingly relevant in the context of globalization, religious reformism, and the growing standardization of Hajj rituals, all of which influence how local Muslim communities negotiate their religious identities.

The scholarly status of *walimatus safar* itself has been the subject of measured debate within Indonesian and broader Islamic scholarship, and this study takes that debate seriously as part of its theoretical framing.³ Three positions can be identified in the

¹ R. R. Bianchi, "Hajj," in *The Encyclopedia of Global Human Migration* (2013), <https://doi.org/10.1002/9781444351071.wbeghm265>.

² Xue Song et al., "Shaping Resemblance in Relational Dynamics: Exploring the Interactions between Indonesian Islamic Organizations and China," *China Review* 25, no. 2 (2025): 43–81; Mustaqim Pabbajah et al., "Pilgrimage to Bawakaraeng Mountain among the Bugis-Makassar in Indonesia: A Contestation between Islamic Identity and Local Tradition," *International Journal of Religious Tourism and Pilgrimage* 9, no. 1 (2021): 178–90.

³ Ibrahim Siregar and Suheri Sahputra Rangkuti, "Universalism of Islamic Scholarly Tradition: New Directions for Islamic Studies," *Islam Transformatif: Journal of Islamic Studies* 7, no. 2 (2023): 202–25.

literature. First, a *normative-critical position* represented by segments of reformist and Salafi-oriented scholarship views *walimatus safar* with caution as a *bid'ah* (religious innovation) lacking direct textual precedent in the Qur'an, Sunnah, or the practice of the *salaf al-shalih*, and warns against ritual practices that risk conflating cultural celebration with obligatory worship. Second, a *permissive adat position* holds that *walimatus safar* is not a ritual act of worship (*ibadah mahdah*) at all but a legitimate local custom (*'urf* or *adat*) comparable to farewell gatherings in other cultures, and therefore falls outside the scope of the *bid'ah* debate entirely. Third, and most influential in Madurese pesantren networks, is the *integrative-traditionalist position* associated with Nahdlatul Ulama and its *kyai* which classifies *walimatus safar* as *bid'ah hasanah* (a commendable innovation) legitimized by the hadith tradition of communal *du'a* for travelers, the principle of *istihsan*, and the broader *maslahah* of communal reconciliation and spiritual preparation. This study neither adjudicates this debate nor treats *walimatus safar* as normatively unproblematic; rather, it takes the empirical fact of its widespread legitimacy across the four regencies of Madura as its starting point, and analyzes how the ritual functions socio-religiously within the specific cultural-religious ecology that has embraced it. The discussion section returns to this question by showing how Madurese *kyai* and pilgrims themselves negotiate the legitimacy of the practice in the language of *maslahah*, *barakah*, and *silaturahmi* categories that reframe the tradition not as innovation-versus-Sunnah but as a locally grounded expression of Islamic communal ethics.

Recent scholarship has considerably advanced the study of Hajj traditions in Southeast Asia. Effendy et al., through a comparative study of Madurese communities in Indonesia and Malaysia, demonstrated that Hajj traditions reinforce social cohesion and moral recognition despite transformations within transnational contexts.⁴ Similarly, Soehadha et al. found that Hajj practices in Lombok and Madura have undergone processes of festivalization while simultaneously functioning as mechanisms for strengthening communal solidarity.⁵ Furthermore, Soehadha and Hamsah documented the disorientation of Hajj meanings under the influence of modernity and digital technology, suggesting that contemporary pilgrimage experiences are increasingly shaped by global cultural and technological changes.⁶ Beyond social and cultural dimensions, scholars have also examined the institutional and commercial contexts surrounding the Hajj: Henderson analyzed the management challenges of large-scale

<https://doi.org/10.30983/it.v7i2.8050>; Hanan Asrowi and Fachrul Rozy, "Hadith Studies in the Indonesian Context: The Integration of Pesantren and Modern Academic Epistemologies," *Indonesian Journal of Research in Islamic Studies* 3, no. 1 (2026): 61–75, <https://doi.org/10.64420/ijris.v3i1.479>.

⁴ Moh. Hafid Effendy; Erie Hariyanto; Maimun; Anas Ahmadi; and Agus Purnomo Ahmad Putikadyanto, "Jurnal Ilmiah Peuradeun International Multidisciplinary Journal," *Ilmiah Peuradeun* 14, no. 01, no. 1 (2026): 20.

⁵ M. Soehadha et al., "Beyond Pilgrimage: Exploring the Dynamic Spirituality of the Hajj for Shaping Social Engagement in Rural Indonesia," *Miqot: Jurnal Ilmu-Ilmu Keislaman* 50, no. 1 (2026): 33–55, <https://doi.org/10.30821/miqot.v50i1.1545>.

⁶ U. Soehadha, M., Zakiyah, Z., Koeswinarno, K., & Hamsah, *Disorientation of the Meaning of Hajj in Local Indonesian Muslim Communities. Indonesian Journal of Islam and Muslim Societies*, 15 (2) (2025): 385–411, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.18326/ijims.v15i2.385-411>.

religious tourism in Saudi Arabia,⁷ while Yasuda mapped the commodification of the pilgrimage market in Indonesia and its implications for pilgrims' spiritual commitments.⁸

While these studies have significantly enriched contemporary Hajj scholarship, they primarily focus on either local traditions before departure or experiences during the pilgrimage. They rarely conceptualize the Hajj as a continuous socio-religious process linking pre-departure rituals, pilgrimage encounters, and post-pilgrimage transformation within a single analytical framework. Consequently, the continuity of pilgrims' religious experiences remains insufficiently explored.

To address this limitation, the present study employs the pilgrimage framework developed by William R. Roff. Roff argues that the Hajj should be understood as a historical and social process rather than merely a ritual obligation, emphasizing its role in shaping Muslim identities and connecting local communities with the wider Islamic world.⁹ His scholarship further demonstrates that pilgrimage functions as a dynamic arena in which local religious traditions interact with universal Islam, producing new forms of religious identity and social authority.¹⁰ Particularly relevant to this study is Roff's concept of "leavetakings,"¹¹ This concept resonates directly with Victor Turner's notion of *liminal transition*, in which ritual subjects occupy a threshold state that formally separates them from their previous social identity while preparing them for reincorporation with a transformed status. Following van Gennep's tripartite scheme, *leavetakings* correspond to the *rites of separation* that must be ritually completed before the liminal phase of pilgrimage can begin. Framing *walimatus safar* through this dual lens Roff's *leavetakings* and Turner's liminal threshold clarifies why the ceremony cannot be dismissed as a merely cultural farewell: it is the ritual mechanism that formally initiates the pilgrim's transition out of ordinary social structure and into the sacred process of the Hajj.

Despite the growing body of literature on Hajj in Indonesia, an important research gap remains. Previous studies have documented local Hajj traditions, social prestige, and pilgrimage experiences, yet none has empirically integrated pre-departure rituals, pilgrimage experiences in the Holy Land, and post-pilgrimage transformation within William R. Roff's pilgrimage framework. Likewise, the concept of *leavetakings* has rarely been operationalized empirically to explain how local traditions contribute to the continuity of pilgrims' religious experiences throughout the entire pilgrimage process.¹²

⁷ J. C. Henderson, "Religious Tourism and Its Management: The Hajj in Saudi Arabia," *International Journal of Tourism Research* 13, no. 6 (2011): 541–52, <https://doi.org/10.1002/jtr.825>.

⁸ S. Yasuda, "Mapping Pilgrimage in the Marketplace: Social Contexts of Bisnis Hajj Dan Umroh in Indonesia," *International Journal of Religious Tourism and Pilgrimage* 11, no. 5 (2023), <https://doi.org/10.21427/A4Q5-5329>.

⁹ William R. Roff, "Pilgrimage and the History of Religions: Theoretical Approaches to the Hajj," *University of Arizona Press*, 1985, 78–86.

¹⁰ William R. Roff, "The Meccan Pilgrimage: Its Meaning for Southeast Asian Islam.," *In R. Israeli & A. H. Johns (Eds.), Islam in Asia: Vol. II. Southeast and East Asia (Pp. 238–258). Magnes Press*, 1984.

¹¹ William R. Roff, *Studies on Islam and Society in Southeast Asia*, in *TA - TT -* (NUS Press, 2009), <https://doi.org/LK%20%20-%20https://worldcat.org/title/191658766>.

¹² Kiran A. Shinde and Daniel H. Olsen, "Reframing the Intersections of Pilgrimage, Religious Tourism, and Sustainability," *Sustainability* 15, no. 1 (2023): 461, <https://doi.org/10.3390/su15010461>.

This study is significant because it expands Hajj scholarship beyond its conventional focus on ritual experiences in the Holy Land by shifting attention toward the continuity of religious experiences that shape pilgrims' spiritual readiness, social identity, intercultural encounters, and post-pilgrimage transformation. Such an approach contributes to a more comprehensive understanding of the Hajj as a socio-religious process rather than a sequence of isolated ritual performances.

Accordingly, this study aims to: (1) develop a novel empirical model of post-pilgrimage transformation that captures how returning Madurese pilgrims reconstruct religious identity, assume new socio-religious authority, institutionalize post Hajj rituals (*walimatus syukri*, *tahlilan haji*, *ziarah*), and reproduce Hajj-related traditions within their communities thereby moving beyond Roff's predominantly departure-oriented analysis; (2) contextualize this post-pilgrimage transformation within the broader continuity of the Hajj experience by examining *walimatus safar* as a leavetaking ritual (van Gennep's separation) and the pilgrimage in Mecca and Medina as liminal transition (Turnerian *communitas*); (3) analyze how Madurese pilgrims negotiate local Islamic traditions with the diversity of global Muslim practices during the pilgrimage; and (4) extend William R. Roff's pilgrimage framework itself grounded in van Gennep's rites of passage and Turner's liminality by developing an empirical model of the Continuity of Madurese Hajj Experience with the post-Hajj phase as its generative and theoretically innovative center.

Roff's conception of *leavetakings* and pilgrimage as a socio-historical process does not emerge in a theoretical vacuum; rather, it builds explicitly on the classical anthropology of ritual developed by Arnold van Gennep in *Les Rites de Passage* (1909). Van Gennep theorized that all major life transitions unfold through a tripartite ritual structure: *rites of separation* (détachment from a previous social state), *rites of transition* (the liminal or marginal phase), and *rites of incorporation* (reintegration into society with a new status). This framework was subsequently elaborated by Victor Turner, whose concept of *liminality* characterizes the transitional phase as a threshold state in which ritual subjects are "betwixt and between" ordinary social categories, experiencing structural ambiguity, *communitas*, and profound personal transformation.¹³ Roff extended these classical concepts into the specific historical and religious context of Muslim pilgrimage, yet the analytical roots trace directly back to van Gennep and Turner. Grounding the present study in this deeper theoretical genealogy is essential because each phase of the Madurese Hajj experience corresponds systematically to van Gennep's tripartite structure: *walimatus safar* as a rite of separation, the pilgrimage in Mecca and Medina as the liminal transition marked by Turnerian *communitas* among the global *ummah*, and the post-Hajj period as the rite of incorporation through which returning pilgrims are ritually reintegrated into Madurese society with a transformed religious and

¹³ Raffaele De Luca Picione et al., "Trajectories of the Notion of Liminality: Identity, Border, Threshold, Affectivity and Spatio-Temporal Processes of Transformation," *Culture & Psychology* 32, no. 1 (2026): 185–207, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1354067X251315735>; Stephen B. Roberts, "Chaplaincy, Liminality and the Future of Theology," in *Future Faith* (Routledge, 2024).

social identity as *haji* or *hajjah*.

METHOD

Research Design

This study employed a qualitative case study design to explore the continuity of the Hajj experience among the Madurese community.¹⁴ A qualitative approach was considered appropriate because the study sought to understand the meanings, lived experiences, and socio-religious transformations associated with the Hajj rather than to measure causal relationships.¹⁵ The case study design enabled an in-depth examination of the Hajj as a continuous religious process encompassing the phases before departure, during the pilgrimage, and after returning home.¹⁶ The study was theoretically informed by William R. Roff's pilgrimage framework, particularly his conception of the Hajj as a socio-historical process involving *leavetakings*, encounters with the wider Muslim world, and the reconstruction of religious identity.¹⁷ Rather than treating these concepts solely as analytical categories, this study operationalized them as sequential stages for organizing empirical data collection and analysis.

Research Site

Fieldwork was conducted on Madura Island, East Java, Indonesia, covering the four regencies of Bangkalan, Sampang, Pamekasan, and Sumenep. Madura was selected because of its strong Islamic traditions, the central role of *kyai* in religious life, and the persistence of *walimatus safar* as a distinctive local Hajj tradition. These characteristics make Madura an appropriate setting for examining the interaction between local Islamic traditions and the universal practices of the Hajj.

Participants

Participants were recruited through purposive sampling based on their direct involvement in different stages of the Hajj experience and their ability to provide information-rich accounts of religious practices, meanings, and socio-religious transformations associated with the pilgrimage.¹⁸ The selection process considered participants' experiences and roles within Madurese Muslim communities, particularly their involvement in *walimatus safar*, pilgrimage activities, and post-Hajj religious traditions. In-depth interviews followed the qualitative interviewing principles outlined by Kvale and Brinkmann,¹⁹ emphasizing participants' lived experiences, subjective interpretations, and reflections on the pilgrimage process.

The initial recruitment involved 14 core informants from four regencies of Madura, namely Bangkalan, Sampang, Pamekasan, and Sumenep. These informants

¹⁴ Robert K. Yin, *Case Study Research and Applications* (Sage Thousand Oaks, CA, 2018).

¹⁵ John W. Creswell and Cheryl N. Poth, *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design: Choosing among Five Approaches* (Sage publications, 2016).

¹⁶ Robert K. Yin, *Case Study Research and Applications*.

¹⁷ Roff, "Pilgrimage and the History of Religions: Theoretical Approaches to the Hajj," 1985.

¹⁸ Creswell and Poth, *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design: Choosing among Five Approaches*.

¹⁹ Steinar Kvale and Svend Brinkmann, *Steinar Kvale and Svend Brinkmann, InterViews: Learning the Craft of Qualitative Research Interviewing*, 2nd ed (Sage Publications, 2009).

comprised six prospective Hajj pilgrims, two religious leaders (*kyai*), four pilgrims' family members, and two Hajj guidance officers (KBIHU). The six pilgrim-informants constituted the primary longitudinal group, while the remaining eight informants provided complementary perspectives on the social, religious, and institutional dimensions of pilgrimage preparation. The distribution of core informants is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Distribution of Core Research Informants

Participant Category	Informant Code	Number
Hajj Pilgrims	JH-01–JH-06	6
Religious Leaders (<i>Kyai</i>)	KY-01–KY-02	2
Pilgrims' Family Members	KL-01–KL-04	4
Hajj Guidance Officers (KBIHU)	KB-01–KB-02	2
Total		14

To enhance methodological triangulation, ten additional pilgrims from Bangkalan, Sampang, Pamekasan, and Sumenep were recruited during the pilgrimage phase, bringing the total to 16 pilgrim-participants (JH-01–JH-16). All completed structured qualitative questionnaires, while 11 were purposively selected for follow-up interviews based on the depth of their responses. During the post-pilgrimage phase, 15 returning pilgrims, including six original informants and nine additional participants, underwent semi-structured interviews. Overall, the study involved 24 unique informants (14 core informants and ten additional pilgrims), with consistent identification codes maintained across phases to ensure confidentiality and facilitate longitudinal analysis.

Data collection occurred between October 2025 and August 2026 across three interconnected phases. First, the pre-departure phase (October 2025–May 2026) involved observations of *walimatus safar* and interviews with pilgrims, *kyai*, family members, and KBIHU officers, focusing on spiritual preparation and communal religious practices. Second, the pilgrimage phase (May–June 2026) examined pilgrims' experiences in Mecca and Medina through WhatsApp voice messages, structured qualitative questionnaires, and remote interviews, particularly regarding intercultural encounters and the negotiation of local and universal Islamic traditions. Third, the post-pilgrimage phase (July–early August 2026) involved interviews and observations of post-Hajj rituals, including *walimatus syukri*, *tahlilan haji*, and *ziarah*, to explore transformations in religious identity, social recognition, and communal practices. Data were analyzed concurrently with collection using Braun and Clarke's thematic approach. Preliminary themes developed during the pre-departure and pilgrimage phases were subsequently refined through post-Hajj findings, enabling longitudinal comparisons. The integration of interviews, questionnaires, and observations strengthened methodological triangulation and research credibility,²⁰ providing a comprehensive understanding of the Hajj as a continuous socio-religious process.

²⁰ Yvonna S. Lincoln and Egon G. Guba, *Criteria for Assessing Naturalistic Inquiries as Reports.*, 1988.

Data Analysis

Data were analyzed using thematic analysis following Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-step procedure: (1) familiarization with the data, (2) generation of initial codes, (3) searching for themes, (4) reviewing themes, (5) defining and naming themes, and (6) producing the final analytical narrative.²¹ Coding was conducted iteratively across the three phases of data collection rather than separately. Themes emerging from the pre-departure, pilgrimage, and post-pilgrimage datasets were continuously compared using constant comparative analysis to identify recurring patterns and the continuity of religious experiences. The resulting themes were subsequently interpreted through William R. Roff's pilgrimage framework.²² Rather than imposing predetermined theoretical categories, the framework served as an interpretive lens for understanding how local Islamic traditions, encounters with global Islam, and post-pilgrimage transformation formed an interconnected socio-religious process.

Trustworthiness

The credibility of the findings was enhanced through source triangulation, methodological triangulation, and member checking.²³ Source triangulation involved comparing perspectives from pilgrims, religious leaders, family members, and Hajj guidance officers. Methodological triangulation combined in-depth interviews with structured qualitative questionnaires and follow-up interviews. Member checking was conducted with several participants to confirm the accuracy of interpretations. Dependability was strengthened through detailed documentation of data collection and analysis procedures, while confirmability was maintained by preserving verbatim interview transcripts and analytic memos throughout the research process.²⁴

Ethical Considerations

Prior to data collection, all participants received information regarding the purpose of the study and voluntarily agreed to participate. Written or verbal informed consent was obtained before each interview. Participants' identities were anonymized using identification codes (e.g., JH-01, KY-01, KL-01, and KB-01) to ensure confidentiality. The study adhered to the ethical principles of voluntary participation, confidentiality, and respect for participants' cultural and religious values throughout the research process.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This study shows that the Hajj experience of the Madurese people does not take place as a separate series of events before, during, and after the implementation of the Hajj. Rather, the experience forms a continuous religious process (continuity of pilgrimage experience), starting with the ritual of leavetakings, continuing through

²¹ Virginia Braun and Victoria Clarke, *Thematic Analysis: A Practical Guide*, 2021.

²² Roff, "The Meccan Pilgrimage: Its Meaning for Southeast Asian Islam."

²³ Lincoln and Guba, *Criteria for Assessing Naturalistic Inquiries as Reports*.

²⁴ Andrew K. Shenton, *Strategies for Ensuring Trustworthiness in Qualitative Research Projects*, 2004, 63–75, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.3233/EFI-2004-22201>.

spiritual and social experiences in the Holy Land, and then leading to the transformation of identity and reproduction of religious culture after the pilgrims return to their original communities. These findings expand on William R. Roff's framework that views Hajj as a historical-social phenomenon that shapes the Muslim identity of Southeast Asia through the entire Hajj journey, not just during the ritual performance in Makkah and Medina.

Walimatus Safar a Leavetaking Ritual: Spiritual and Social Preparation

The first major finding of this study demonstrates that *walimatus safar* constitutes far more than a cultural farewell ceremony preceding the Hajj. Rather than functioning merely as a social gathering, the ritual serves as a comprehensive process of spiritual, psychological, and social preparation through which prospective pilgrims transition from ordinary community life toward the sacred journey. This finding supports William R. Roff's proposition that the pilgrimage begins long before pilgrims physically depart for Mecca. Instead, the Hajj should be understood as a gradual process initiated through leavetakings, a series of ritualized practices preparing pilgrims for religious transformation.²⁵

Fieldwork across the four regencies of Madura revealed a remarkable consistency in the structure of *walimatus safar*. Although minor variations existed among local communities, the ritual generally comprised several interconnected religious activities, including *tawassul*, the recitation of Surah Yasin, collective *shalawat*, religious sermons (*tausiyah*) delivered by respected *kyai*, communal prayers seeking safety and an accepted pilgrimage (*hajj mabrur*), public requests for forgiveness from family members and neighbors, and the sharing of meals. Participants consistently interpreted these practices as religious rather than merely ceremonial. One pilgrim explained:

"Walimatus safar is not simply a farewell gathering. It is our opportunity to ask forgiveness from everyone because we do not know whether we will return safely from the Holy Land." (JH-03)

Similarly, a religious leader emphasized the spiritual significance of the ceremony:

"Before departing for Hajj, pilgrims must first purify their relationships with both Allah and fellow human beings. Walimatus safar provides a space for repentance, mutual forgiveness, and collective prayer." (KY-02)

These narratives indicate that the central meaning of *walimatus safar* lies not in celebration but in spiritual purification. Publicly requesting forgiveness, seeking blessings from family members, and receiving communal prayers collectively establish a

²⁵ William R. Roff, "Leavetakings: The 'Separation' Stage of Meccan Pilgrimage," *Muslim and Arab Perspective* 1, no. 1 (1993): 220–28; Chaerul Mundzir and Muhammad Arif, "The Historical Development of Hajj: From Pre-Islamic Rituals to a Global Islamic Institution," *Al-Manasik: Journal of Hajj and Umrah Research*, September 30, 2025, 41–53, <https://doi.org/10.68550/al-manasik.v1i1.5>; M. Nashoihul Ibad, "Digital Communication Management in Hajj and Umrah Services: A Systematic Literature Review on the Transformation of Services for Muslim Pilgrims in the Era of Platformization," *Miqat: Journal of Islamic Management* 1, no. 1 (2026): 12–25.

moral foundation before pilgrims embark on the sacred journey. Such practices reflect the Islamic ethical principle that worship cannot be separated from harmonious human relationships (*ḥabl min al-nās*).

Beyond spiritual preparation, participants consistently described *walimatus safar* as an important source of psychological readiness. Many pilgrims acknowledged feelings of anxiety before departure due to the physical demands of the pilgrimage, the possibility of illness, and uncertainty regarding their return. The ritual functioned as a mechanism for reducing these anxieties by strengthening emotional support from family and the wider community. One participant stated: “*After attending walimatus safar, I felt much calmer because I knew many people were praying for me.*” (JH-05)

Another informant remarked: “*The prayers from relatives and neighbors gave me confidence that Allah would protect us throughout the pilgrimage.*” (KL-02)

These findings demonstrate that *walimatus safar* contributes not only to religious preparation but also to emotional resilience. The communal nature of the ritual transforms individual concerns into collective responsibility, enabling pilgrims to enter the pilgrimage with greater confidence and psychological stability.

The social dimension of *walimatus safar* was equally prominent. Family members, neighbors, religious leaders, and local community members actively participated in the ceremony, reaffirming social solidarity before the pilgrim’s departure. Informants repeatedly emphasized that attendance at *walimatus safar* symbolizes communal support rather than social prestige. As one KBIHU officer explained: “*The ceremony reminds pilgrims that they never travel alone. The entire community entrusts prayers and hopes to them.*” (KB-01)

This finding suggests that *walimatus safar* functions as a mechanism for reinforcing collective identity. The pilgrimage is understood not solely as an individual obligation but as a communal religious undertaking in which the entire village symbolically accompanies the departing pilgrim through prayers and blessings.

Interestingly, contrary to assumptions that local Hajj traditions primarily reflect cultural preservation, participants consistently interpreted *walimatus safar* using explicitly religious language. Terms such as *barakah* (divine blessing), *doa* (supplication), *ikhlas* (sincerity), *mabrur* (accepted pilgrimage), and *ridha Allah* (God’s pleasure) appeared repeatedly throughout the interviews. Such narratives indicate that participants themselves perceive *walimatus safar* as an integral part of their religious preparation rather than a cultural obligation detached from Islamic teachings.

These empirical findings extend previous studies on Madurese Hajj traditions. Effendy et al. argued that Hajj traditions reinforce social cohesion and moral recognition within Madurese communities.²⁶ Demonstrated that communal Hajj celebrations

²⁶ M. H. Effendy et al., “Cultural Traditions of Hajj and Umrah: A Comparative Study of Madurese Communities in Indonesia and Malaysia,” *Jurnal Ilmiah Peuradeun* 14, no. 1 (2026): 77–96, <https://doi.org/10.26811/peuradeun.v14i1.1870>.

strengthen social solidarity despite increasing festivalization.²⁷ While these studies successfully explain the social functions of Hajj traditions, the present findings reveal an additional dimension: *walimatus safar* simultaneously performs spiritual, psychological, and social functions that prepare pilgrims for the transformative journey ahead. Thus, the ritual cannot be adequately understood solely through cultural or sociological perspectives.

The findings also provide strong empirical support for William R. Roff's concept of leavetakings. Roff Argued that the farewell rituals preceding departure constitute an essential stage of the pilgrimage because they prepare pilgrims emotionally, spiritually, and socially before entering the sacred space of the Hajj. However, the Madurese case demonstrates that *leavetakings* involve not merely symbolic departure but also the reconstruction of relationships between pilgrims, God, family, and the wider community. Through *walimatus safar*, pilgrims undergo a gradual transition from ordinary social life toward a sacred moral identity, indicating that the pilgrimage effectively begins before leaving their homeland.²⁸

More importantly, this study suggests that *walimatus safar* should not be viewed as an isolated pre-departure ritual. Rather, it represents the initial phase of a continuous pilgrimage process that unfolds throughout the Hajj and continues after pilgrims return home. The spiritual commitments established during *walimatus safar* including repentance, communal prayer, mutual forgiveness, and moral responsibility—reappear during the pilgrimage experience in Mecca and Medina and subsequently shape pilgrims' post-Hajj religious identities.²⁹ Consequently, *walimatus safar* functions as the foundation of the broader Continuity of Madurese Hajj Experience, providing the first empirical evidence that extends William R. Roff's pilgrimage framework beyond the concept of *leavetakings* toward an integrated model of pre-departure preparation, pilgrimage experience, and post-pilgrimage transformation.

Pilgrimage as Spiritual Transformation

The second major finding demonstrates that the spiritual commitments established during *walimatus safar* were not confined to the pre-departure phase but continued to shape pilgrims' religious experiences throughout the pilgrimage. Rather than representing an isolated ritual journey, the Hajj emerged as a transformative process in which pilgrims experienced profound emotional, spiritual, and existential changes. These findings indicate that spiritual transformation is best understood as a continuation of the *leavetaking* process initiated before departure, thereby reinforcing the continuity of the pilgrimage experience.

Almost all participants described their first encounter with the Kaaba as the most emotionally intense moment of the pilgrimage. Although individual expressions varied,

²⁷ Soehadha et al., "Beyond Pilgrimage: Exploring the Dynamic Spirituality of the Hajj for Shaping Social Engagement in Rural Indonesia."

²⁸ Roff, "Leavetakings: The 'Separation' Stage of Meccan Pilgrimage."

²⁹ Kholoud Al-Ajarma, "After Hajj: Muslim Pilgrims Refashioning Themselves," *Religions* 12, no. 1 (2021): 36, <https://doi.org/10.3390/rel12010036>.

participants consistently reported feelings of awe, humility, gratitude, and emotional release. Several pilgrims admitted that the experience exceeded their expectations and could not be adequately expressed in words. One participant reflected:

“I had imagined seeing the Kaaba for many years, but when I finally stood before it, I could not control my tears. At that moment, I felt that Allah had truly invited me.” (JH-02)

Another pilgrim stated:

“Everything disappeared from my mind. I only remembered Allah. The Kaaba was no longer merely a building; it became a reminder of how small I am before Him.” (JH-05)

These narratives illustrate that pilgrims did not simply observe a sacred object but experienced what may be described as an existential encounter with the Divine. The Kaaba functioned as a spiritual symbol through which participants reinterpreted their lives, acknowledged human limitations, and renewed their relationship with God. Such experiences transformed the pilgrimage from a sequence of prescribed rituals into a deeply personal spiritual journey. Beyond the emotional impact of seeing the Kaaba, participants consistently identified Wuquf at Arafat as the most meaningful religious experience during the Hajj. Informants described Arafat as a moment of self-evaluation, repentance, and complete submission before Allah. Rather than emphasizing the ritual procedure itself, pilgrims highlighted the inner experience of standing before God while reflecting upon their past lives. One participant explained:

“During Wuquf, I felt as if my entire life was being reviewed before Allah. I cried while asking forgiveness for my mistakes and prayed that I could become a better person after returning home.” (JH-01)

Another respondent recalled:

“Arafat taught me that every human being is equal before Allah. Wealth, social status, and occupation no longer mattered. We stood together only as servants of God.” (JH-06)

These accounts demonstrate that Wuquf functioned as a profound moment of moral reflection rather than merely fulfilling one of the obligatory pillars of the Hajj. Participants associated the experience with repentance, humility, and personal renewal, suggesting that spiritual transformation occurred through an internal process of self-reconstruction. The findings also reveal that spiritual transformation was strengthened through continuous worship during the pilgrimage. Participants reported increasing the frequency of voluntary prayers, Qur’anic recitation, remembrance (*dhikr*), supplication, and reflection beyond the obligatory rituals. Many described an overwhelming desire to maximize every opportunity for worship while in the Holy Land. As one pilgrim

remarked:

“I felt reluctant to waste even a single moment. Every prayer, every recitation, every step inside the Haram felt valuable because I realized this opportunity might never come again.” (JH-04)

This intensified devotional practice reflects an important dimension of pilgrimage spirituality. Rather than viewing the Hajj solely as the fulfillment of legal obligations, pilgrims perceived the Holy Land as a sacred space encouraging continuous spiritual discipline. Such experiences gradually reshaped participants’ religious consciousness throughout the pilgrimage. An equally significant finding concerns the emotional relationship between pilgrims and the wider Muslim community. Participants repeatedly described feelings of unity when performing rituals alongside Muslims from diverse cultural, linguistic, and national backgrounds. Although differences in dress, language, and ritual practices were clearly visible, these differences did not diminish participants’ sense of belonging to a single global religious community. One respondent stated:

“When praying together with Muslims from many countries, I realized how great Islam is. We were different in language and appearance, but we worshipped the same Allah.” (JH-03)

This experience broadened pilgrims’ understanding of Islam beyond their local cultural context while simultaneously strengthening their attachment to their own religious identity. Rather than creating confusion, encounters with global Muslim diversity enriched participants’ appreciation of Islam as both universal and culturally diverse.

The present findings complement previous studies emphasizing the transformative dimensions of the Hajj. Bianchi argues that Argues that pilgrimage constitutes a process of religious transformation through which pilgrims reconstruct personal identity and deepen spiritual commitment.³⁰ Likewise, Alzeer and Abuzinadah demonstrate that contemporary pilgrimage continues to function as a powerful medium of religious renewal despite increasing modernization.³¹ However, these studies primarily focus on the pilgrimage experience itself without sufficiently considering its relationship with pre-departure preparation. Furthermore, Alnabulsi et al. demonstrated that participation in the Hajj strengthens Muslim identity and fosters positive attitudes through collective identification,³² while Al-Ajarma showed that pilgrims actively refashion their

³⁰ Bianchi, “Hajj.”

³¹ A. H. Alzeer and J. Abuzinadah, “Beyond Borders: Exploring the Mental, Emotional, and Spiritual Significance of Hajj,” *Annals of Thoracic Medicine* 19, no. 3 (2024): 179–89, https://doi.org/10.4103/atm.atm_72_24.

³² H. Alnabulsi et al., “Understanding the Impact of the Hajj: Explaining Experiences of Self-Change at a Religious Mass Gathering,” *European Journal of Social Psychology* 50, no. 2 (2020): 292–308, <https://doi.org/10.1002/ejsp.2623>.

religious and moral selves upon returning from the Hajj.³³ These findings collectively suggest that spiritual transformation associated with pilgrimage is not confined to Mecca but extends across the entire pilgrimage trajectory.

The Madurese case suggests a broader interpretation. The emotional intensity experienced while seeing the Kaaba, standing at Arafat, and engaging in continuous worship cannot be understood independently from the spiritual preparation already established through *walimatus safar*. Participants repeatedly referred to the prayers, advice from *kyai*, and requests for forgiveness received before departure as sources of inner strength during the pilgrimage. Consequently, spiritual transformation should be viewed not as an isolated event occurring in Mecca but as a process initiated before departure and progressively deepened throughout the pilgrimage.

This interpretation substantially extends William R. Roff's pilgrimage framework. While Roff emphasizes the importance of *leavetakings* as the initial stage of the pilgrimage, the present findings demonstrate that the spiritual commitments established during farewell rituals continue to influence pilgrims' religious experiences in the Holy Land. The pilgrimage therefore unfolds as a continuous spiritual trajectory linking preparation, sacred encounter, and transformation rather than as a collection of disconnected ritual events.³⁴

Accordingly, the second phase of the Continuity of Madurese Hajj Experience is characterized by pilgrimage as spiritual transformation, in which the moral intentions established before departure evolve into lived religious experiences that redefine pilgrims' relationship with God, themselves, and the wider Muslim community. This transformation subsequently provides the foundation for the reconstruction of religious identity and social authority after pilgrims return to Madura, which is discussed in the following section.

Encountering Global Islam: Negotiating Madurese Religious Identity

One of the most significant findings of this study is that the Hajj functions as a unique arena in which Madurese pilgrims encounter the diversity of the global Muslim community. While previous sections demonstrated how *walimatus safar* prepared pilgrims spiritually and how the pilgrimage generated profound religious transformation, the present findings reveal another important dimension of the Hajj: the negotiation between local Islamic traditions and the plurality of global Islamic practices. Rather than abandoning their religious identity, Madurese pilgrims actively maintained local devotional traditions while simultaneously developing greater appreciation for the diversity of Islam. This process illustrates that the Hajj serves not only as an act of worship but also as a space of intercultural religious encounter.

Participants consistently reported that performing the Hajj exposed them to Muslims from numerous countries, including Türkiye, Egypt, Pakistan, India, Bangladesh, Nigeria, Malaysia, Brunei Darussalam, and various African and European

³³ K. Al-Ajarma, "After Hajj: Muslim Pilgrims Refashioning Themselves," *Religions* 12, no. 1 (2021): 1–14, <https://doi.org/10.3390/rel12010036>.

³⁴ Roff, "Leavetakings: The 'Separation' Stage of Meccan Pilgrimage."

nations. For many pilgrims, this was their first direct experience of interacting with Muslims from different linguistic, cultural, and jurisprudential backgrounds. These encounters broadened their understanding of Islam as a global religion expressed through multiple cultural traditions. One participant explained:

“Before performing Hajj, I thought that Muslims prayed almost exactly as we do in Madura. In Mecca, I discovered many different ways of performing certain practices, yet all of them worshipped the same Allah.” (JH-04)

Another respondent recalled: *“Every day we met Muslims from different countries. Although we could not communicate through language, we understood each other through worship.”* (JH-02) These narratives indicate that participants experienced the Hajj as an encounter with what may be termed Global Islam a lived reality in which religious unity coexists with cultural and ritual diversity. Rather than producing uncertainty, this experience expanded pilgrims’ religious horizons by demonstrating that Islamic unity does not require complete ritual uniformity.

A particularly important finding concerns the continuity of Madurese devotional practices during the pilgrimage. Contrary to assumptions that local religious traditions disappear in the universal setting of the Holy Land, participants consistently reported maintaining many devotional practices that had long been embedded in Madurese Islamic life. Informants mentioned continuing to recite *Ratib al-Haddad*, *Shalawat Nariyah*, *Shalawat Fatih*, *Shalawat Jibril*, *Kanzul Arsy*, Surah Yasin, Surah Al-Waqi’ah, Surah Al-Mulk, *Istighatsah*, *Tahlil*, *Barzanji*, and *Burdah* during their stay in Mecca and Medina.

One pilgrim stated:

“Even in Mecca, I continued reading Ratib al-Haddad and Yasin after congregational prayers because these practices had become part of my daily worship since before departing from Madura.” (JH-05)

Another participant commented:

“Performing Hajj did not make me abandon the traditions taught by my kyai. Instead, I became more convinced that these practices strengthened my remembrance of Allah.” (JH-01)

These findings demonstrate that the pilgrimage did not replace local religious traditions with a supposedly uniform model of Islamic practice. Instead, pilgrims selectively preserved devotional practices that they considered spiritually meaningful while simultaneously participating in the universal rituals prescribed for all Muslims.

Importantly, participants also acknowledged encountering ritual differences among Muslims from various countries. Variations were observed in prayer postures, supplications, styles of *dhikr*, and other non-obligatory religious practices. However, respondents overwhelmingly reported that these differences did not generate conflict or confusion. Rather, they came to understand such diversity as part of the richness of Islamic civilization. As one participant reflected: *“Initially, I was surprised to see*

different ways of praying, but later I realized that every community has its own scholarly traditions. We respected each other.” (JH-06)

This finding suggests that the Hajj encouraged a process of religious negotiation rather than religious assimilation. Madurese pilgrims neither rejected alternative Islamic practices nor abandoned their own traditions. Instead, they negotiated their religious identity by maintaining local devotional practices while recognizing the legitimacy of diverse Islamic expressions.

The present findings resonate strongly with William R. Roff’s broader conception of the Hajj as a meeting point between local Muslim societies and the wider Islamic world. Roff argued that pilgrimage historically enabled Southeast Asian Muslims to engage with transnational Islamic networks, generating new religious ideas while simultaneously reinforcing local identities. However, whereas Roff primarily examined these dynamics through historical developments, the present study provides contemporary empirical evidence demonstrating how individual pilgrims actively negotiate religious identity through everyday interactions in the Holy Land³⁵.

The findings also enrich previous studies on Hajj traditions in Southeast Asia. Effendy et al. emphasize the importance of Hajj in strengthening social cohesion among Madurese communities,³⁶ while Soehadha and Hamsah discuss the influence of globalization and digital media on contemporary Hajj experiences.³⁷ The present study complements these perspectives by showing that globalization during the pilgrimage does not necessarily erode local Islamic traditions. Instead, direct encounters with the diversity of global Islam may reinforce pilgrims’ confidence in their own religious heritage while simultaneously cultivating greater openness toward different Islamic traditions. This finding resonates with the broader literature on the socializing effects of the Hajj: Clingingsmith et al. found that participation in the Hajj increases observance of global Islamic practices and promotes tolerance toward people of other faiths and ethnicities,³⁸ while Alexseev and Zhemukhov demonstrated that the pilgrimage to Mecca strengthens social capital and religious tolerance among returning pilgrims.³⁹

From a theoretical perspective, this study extends William R. Roff’s pilgrimage framework by demonstrating that encounters with the global Muslim community constitute an integral stage in the continuity of the Hajj experience. The pilgrimage should therefore be understood not merely as movement from homeland to the Holy Land but also as a dynamic process of negotiating identity between local Islam and global Islam.

³⁵ Roff, “The Meccan Pilgrimage: Its Meaning for Southeast Asian Islam.”

³⁶ Ahmadi; and Putikadyanto, “Jurnal Ilmiah Peuradeun International Multidisciplinary Journal.”

³⁷ M. Soehadha and U. Hamsah, “Disorientation of the Meaning of Hajj in Local Indonesian Muslim Communities,” *Indonesian Journal of Islam and Muslim Societies* 15, no. 2 (2026): 385–411, <https://doi.org/10.18326/ijims.v15i2.385-411>.

³⁸ D. Clingingsmith et al., “Estimating the Impact of the Hajj: Religion and Tolerance in Islam’s Global Gathering,” *Quarterly Journal of Economics* 124, no. 3 (2009): 1133–70, <https://doi.org/10.1162/qjec.2009.124.3.1133>.

³⁹ M. A. Alexseev and S. N. Zhemukhov, “From Mecca with Tolerance: Religion, Social Recategorisation and Social Capital,” *Religion, State and Society* 43, no. 4 (2015): 371–91, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09637494.2015.1127672>.

This negotiation neither dissolves local religious traditions nor produces rigid exclusivism; rather, it enables pilgrims to reconstruct their religious identity through interaction, reflection, and mutual recognition.

Encounter with Global Islam as employed in this study refers to the intersubjective religious experience through which Madurese pilgrims, carrying distinct local devotional traditions (such as *Ratib al-Haddad*, *Shalawat Nariyah*, *Barzanji*, and *Burdah*), meet, observe, and negotiate with Muslims from vastly different linguistic, cultural, *madhhab*, and jurisprudential backgrounds within the shared sacred space of Mecca and Medina. Drawing on Roff's conception of the Hajj as a meeting point between local Muslim societies and the wider Islamic world, and on Turner's notion of *communitas* the temporary levelling of social difference among liminal subjects this encounter is understood here not as a mere demographic observation but as a *formative liminal experience* that simultaneously expands pilgrims' understanding of Islamic diversity and reinforces their commitment to the specific religious traditions of their homeland. The analysis that follows unpacks three interrelated dimensions of this encounter: (a) exposure to jurisprudential and cultural diversity within the global *ummah*; (b) continuity and negotiation of Madurese devotional practices within a plural Muslim community; and (c) the cultivation of *tasamuh* (religious tolerance) as an ethical response to religious difference that pilgrims subsequently carry back into Madurese community life.

Accordingly, the third phase of the Continuity of Madurese Hajj Experience is characterized by the negotiation of religious identity within the plural landscape of the Muslim world. The spiritual maturity developed through these encounters subsequently shapes pilgrims' attitudes toward religious diversity after returning to Madura, as discussed in the following section on *tasamuh* as the dominant pattern of post-pilgrimage religious engagement.

Table 2. Themes, Empirical Evidence, and Corresponding Concepts in William R. Roff's Framework

Theme	Empirical Evidence	Roff's Concept
Encounter with Global Islam	Interactions with pilgrims from various countries and cultural backgrounds.	Transnational Islamic Networks
Continuity of Devotional Practices	Continued recitation of Ratib al-Haddad, Shalawat, Surah Yasin, and Tahlil during the pilgrimage.	Local Islam
Religious Negotiation	Respect for differences in religious practices and expressions of worship among Muslim communities.	Negotiation between Local and Universal Islam
Identity Reinforcement	Preservation and reaffirmation of local religious traditions following encounters with the global Muslim community.	Reconstruction of Religious Identity

***Tasamuh* as the Dominant Pattern of Religious Engagement**

One of the most remarkable findings of this study is that encounters with diverse Islamic traditions during the pilgrimage did not generate religious tension among

Madurese pilgrims. Instead, participants consistently described the Hajj as a learning process through which they developed greater appreciation for the plurality of Islamic practices. This experience cultivated *tasamuh*—religious tolerance grounded in Islamic ethics—as the dominant pattern through which pilgrims responded to differences encountered in the Holy Land. Rather than encouraging theological relativism or weakening local religious identity, *tasamuh* enabled pilgrims to maintain their own traditions while respecting those of other Muslims.

Participants acknowledged that they encountered numerous differences in ritual practices throughout the pilgrimage. Variations were observed in the manner of congregational prayer, the position of the hands during prayer, the recitation of supplications, collective remembrance (*dhikr*), and other devotional practices. Although these differences were initially unfamiliar to some pilgrims, respondents consistently reported that they chose to observe, learn, and respect rather than criticize.

One participant explained:

“At first I was surprised because the way some Muslims prayed was different from what I had learned in Madura. But then I realized that they also had scholars and traditions. We came to worship Allah, not to debate.” (JH-04)

Another pilgrim reflected: *“The Hajj taught me that differences in minor religious practices should not divide Muslims. We stood together before Allah regardless of our backgrounds.”* (JH-02)

These narratives demonstrate that participants interpreted religious diversity through an ethical rather than polemical perspective. Instead of evaluating alternative practices according to rigid standards of correctness, pilgrims emphasized the shared objective of worship and the unity of the Muslim community. Such attitudes illustrate that *tasamuh* was not merely a theological principle but an embodied social practice experienced during the pilgrimage.

Importantly, participants distinguished between preserving their own religious traditions and respecting the practices of others. Most respondents stated that they continued performing devotional practices learned from their *kyai*, including *Ratib al-Haddad*, *Shalawat Nariyah*, *Tahlil*, and Qur’anic recitation, while refraining from judging Muslims who practiced differently. One respondent stated:

“I continued the traditions taught by my teachers because they strengthened my worship. At the same time, I never felt the need to criticize people who practiced differently.” (JH-06)

This finding indicates that the pilgrimage encouraged a form of religious maturity characterized by confidence in one’s own religious tradition alongside openness toward diversity. Rather than producing assimilation into a single model of Islamic practice, the Hajj fostered coexistence among multiple expressions of Islam. Another important aspect emerging from the interviews concerns the influence of direct interaction on pilgrims’ perceptions of religious diversity. Several participants admitted that prior to performing

the Hajj they had only encountered different Islamic practices through social media or public debates, where differences were often presented in confrontational ways. Experiencing those differences directly in Mecca and Medina transformed these perceptions. As one participant noted:

“On social media, religious differences often become arguments. But in Mecca, I saw Muslims from all over the world praying peacefully together. That experience changed the way I look at differences.” (JH-03)

This observation suggests that lived interaction plays an important role in reducing prejudice. Rather than reinforcing sectarian boundaries, the pilgrimage provided opportunities for pilgrims to experience Islamic diversity in everyday religious life. Through shared rituals, common spaces, and collective worship, participants developed a broader understanding of Muslim unity.

These findings complement previous research on the Hajj in Southeast Asia. Soehadha et al. argue that the pilgrimage strengthens communal solidarity despite increasing social transformation.⁴⁰ Similarly, demonstrate that Madurese Hajj traditions reinforce collective identity within local communities.⁴¹ The present study extends these findings by showing that solidarity is not limited to local society but expands toward recognition of diversity within the global Muslim community. Consequently, *tasamuh* emerges not only as a local cultural value but also as an experiential outcome of the pilgrimage itself.

From William R. Roff’s perspective, this finding further illustrates the Hajj as a space where local Muslims engage with the broader Islamic world. Roff argues that pilgrimage historically connected Southeast Asian Muslims with transnational Islamic networks, enabling both the circulation of religious ideas and the reconstruction of religious identities.⁴² The present study confirms this argument while extending it in an important way. Rather than producing homogenization or erasing local traditions, encounters with global Islam encouraged pilgrims to develop greater religious tolerance without abandoning their own devotional heritage. The Hajj thus became a process of learning to live with diversity while maintaining commitment to one’s religious identity.

Within the Continuity of Madurese Hajj Experience, *tasamuh* represents the ethical outcome of pilgrims’ encounters with global Islam. The spiritual maturity cultivated during the pilgrimage transformed participants’ perspectives on religious differences and prepared them to assume new roles within their communities after returning home. This ethical transformation became one of the defining characteristics of their post-pilgrimage identity, discussed in the following section.

⁴⁰ Soehadha et al., “Beyond Pilgrimage: Exploring the Dynamic Spirituality of the Hajj for Shaping Social Engagement in Rural Indonesia.”

⁴¹ Effendy et al., “Cultural Traditions of Hajj and Umrah: A Comparative Study of Madurese Communities in Indonesia and Malaysia.”

⁴² Roff, “The Meccan Pilgrimage: Its Meaning for Southeast Asian Islam.”; Fathor Rosid et al., “The Implementation of the Book “Washoya Al-Abaa’ Lil Abnaa” in Improving Ethics in Madrasah,” *Al-Jadwa: Jurnal Studi Islam* 4, no. 2 (2025): 291–304, <https://doi.org/10.38073/aljadwa.v4i2.2598>.

Becoming *Haji*: Identity Transformation and the Reproduction of Madurese Hajj Culture

The final stage of the Madurese Hajj experience demonstrates that the pilgrimage does not conclude upon pilgrims' return from the Holy Land. Instead, participants consistently described the post-Hajj period as the beginning of a new phase of religious life characterized by moral responsibility, social recognition, and the reproduction of Hajj-related religious traditions within their communities. These findings suggest that becoming a *Haji* represents not merely the completion of a religious obligation but the construction of a renewed religious identity that continues to shape individual conduct and communal religious life. Consequently, the pilgrimage should be understood as a transformative process whose effects extend well beyond the performance of rituals in Mecca and Medina.

Almost all participants acknowledged significant changes in their religious attitudes after returning from the pilgrimage. Rather than emphasizing external status, respondents consistently described increased self-discipline, stronger commitment to daily worship, greater patience, humility, and heightened awareness of moral accountability before God. Many participants expressed a deep sense of responsibility to preserve the spiritual values experienced during the pilgrimage in their everyday lives.

One pilgrim reflected: *"The greatest challenge began after returning home. Maintaining the spirit of Hajj is much more difficult than performing the pilgrimage itself."* (JH-02) Another participant explained: *"After Hajj, I became more careful in my words and actions because people now expected me to become an example."* (JH-05) These narratives indicate that participants perceived the pilgrimage not as the culmination of religious achievement but as the beginning of continuous moral commitment. The title *Haji* was understood less as a symbol of prestige than as a reminder of ethical responsibility before both God and society.

An equally important finding concerns the transformation of social identity. Participants consistently reported that their communities treated them with greater respect after returning from the pilgrimage. They were frequently invited to lead communal prayers, deliver religious advice, participate in village deliberations, and provide guidance to prospective pilgrims. Such expectations reflect the emergence of new forms of religious authority grounded in lived pilgrimage experience. As one participant noted: *"People began asking me about Hajj and expected me to guide them. I realized that becoming a Haji also means becoming responsible for helping others."* (JH-03) Similarly, a *kyai* explained: *"In Madurese society, the title Haji is not simply an honorific. It carries moral expectations that the individual will become a role model for the community."* (KY-01)

These findings demonstrate that the Hajj reconstructs social identity by generating new forms of religious legitimacy. Pilgrims return not only with personal spiritual experiences but also with increased communal responsibilities, reinforcing the close relationship between pilgrimage and local religious leadership.

Perhaps the most significant finding concerns the continuity of Hajj traditions

after pilgrims return to Madura. Participants consistently reported that their pilgrimage experiences strengthened their commitment to preserving local religious traditions rather than abandoning them. Many became actively involved in organizing *walimatus safar*, mentoring prospective pilgrims, participating in religious gatherings, and sharing practical and spiritual experiences with future Hajj candidates. One returned pilgrim stated:

“After experiencing the Hajj myself, I understood why our elders always organized walimatus safar. Now I feel responsible for preserving that tradition for the next generation.” (JH-06)

Another participant remarked:

“Before going to Hajj, I joined walimatus safar simply because it was our custom. After returning, I realized that it prepares pilgrims spiritually in ways I had never fully understood.” (JH-01)

The reproduction of Madurese Hajj traditions across generations, as documented in this study, can be productively read through Pierre Bourdieu’s theory of *habitus* and *cultural reproduction*. Bourdieu argues that durable social practices are transmitted not primarily through explicit doctrine but through embodied dispositions acquired within specific social fields. Returning Madurese pilgrims — through their embodied performance of *walimatus syukri*, *tahlilan haji*, *ziarah*, and their subsequent participation as officiants of younger relatives’ *walimatus safar* — function as living transmitters of a religious *habitus* that reproduces the Madurese Hajj tradition without requiring formal instruction. This Bourdieusian reading complements the van Gennep–Turner–Roff framework by clarifying *how* the cyclical mechanism identified in this study is sustained across generations: not merely through discrete ritual acts, but through the intergenerational transmission of embodied dispositions within the pesantren-centered social field of Madurese Islam. These accounts illustrate an important process of cultural reproduction⁴³. Rather than perceiving *walimatus safar* merely as inherited tradition, returned pilgrims reinterpreted it through their own lived experiences in the Holy Land. Their personal transformation subsequently reinforced the legitimacy of local Hajj traditions within the community.

The findings further reveal that post-pilgrimage transformation extended beyond individual piety to influence family and community life. Several participants described becoming more active in mosque activities, religious education, charitable initiatives, and community service after returning from Hajj. Family members likewise reported positive changes in pilgrims’ attitudes, including greater patience, generosity, and commitment to religious education within the household. Such transformations demonstrate that the effects of the pilgrimage radiate outward from the individual to broader social relationships.

⁴³ Pierre Bourdieu, *The Logic of Practice* (Stanford University Press, 1990).

These findings both support and extend previous scholarship. Effendy et al. argue that Hajj contributes to social recognition and strengthens communal cohesion among Madurese Muslims,⁴⁴ while Soehadha et al. describe the pilgrimage as an important source of social prestige and collective identity.⁴⁵ The present study confirms these observations but offers a broader interpretation. Social recognition should not be understood merely as symbolic prestige; rather, it represents an outcome of moral transformation that encourages pilgrims to reproduce religious knowledge, communal responsibility, and local Hajj traditions within society. This pattern of post-pilgrimage cultural reproduction and community reintegration has also been observed in other Indonesian Muslim communities: Pabbajah et al. documented how returning pilgrims strengthen Islamic identity and reproduce religious authority in their local communities,⁴⁶ while Mustaqilla et al. showed that even in communities with contested ritual practices, symbolic capital acquired through pilgrimage enables sustained reproduction of local religious traditions across generations.⁴⁷

From William R. Roff's perspective, these findings complete the pilgrimage process. Roff emphasizes that the significance of the Hajj extends beyond ritual performance by reshaping religious authority, communal identity, and social relations within pilgrims' home societies.⁴⁸ The present study empirically confirms this proposition while extending it in an important way. The Madurese case demonstrates that post-pilgrimage transformation is not limited to individual identity reconstruction but also contributes to the reproduction of local Hajj culture. Returned pilgrims become active agents who preserve, reinterpret, and transmit traditions such as *walimatus safar* to subsequent generations. In this sense, the continuity of the pilgrimage is sustained through the reciprocal relationship between personal transformation and communal religious practice.

Taken together, the findings across all phases demonstrate that the Hajj among the Madurese is best understood as a continuous socio-religious process. The pilgrimage begins with *walimatus safar* as a leavetaking ritual, develops through spiritual transformation and encounters with the diversity of global Islam, cultivates *tasamuh* as an ethical orientation toward religious plurality, and culminates in the reconstruction of religious identity accompanied by the reproduction of local Hajj traditions. This continuity forms the basis of what this study conceptualizes as the Continuity of Madurese Hajj Experience Model.

Unlike previous studies that examine pre-departure rituals, pilgrimage

⁴⁴ Effendy et al., "Cultural Traditions of Hajj and Umrah: A Comparative Study of Madurese Communities in Indonesia and Malaysia."

⁴⁵ Soehadha et al., "Beyond Pilgrimage: Exploring the Dynamic Spirituality of the Hajj for Shaping Social Engagement in Rural Indonesia."

⁴⁶ Pabbajah et al., "Pilgrimage to Bawakaraeng Mountain among the Bugis-Makassar in Indonesia: A Contestation between Islamic Identity and Local Tradition."

⁴⁷ S. Mustaqilla et al., "Ritual Contestation in Contemporary Acehese Islam: An Ethnography of Fasting and Pilgrimage Practices in Blang Pu'uk, Nagan Raya, Aceh, Indonesia," *El-Usrah* 8, no. 2 (2025): 1254–72, <https://doi.org/10.22373/ujhk.v8i2.27103>.

⁴⁸ Roff, "The Meccan Pilgrimage: Its Meaning for Southeast Asian Islam."

experiences, or post-Hajj identity separately, this study demonstrates that these phases constitute a single interconnected process. Accordingly, the principal theoretical contribution of this research lies in extending William R. Roff's pilgrimage framework by proposing an empirical model that explains how spiritual preparation, pilgrimage encounters, and post-pilgrimage transformation continuously interact in shaping the religious life of Madurese Muslims.

Theoretical Synthesis: Extending William R. Roff's Pilgrimage Framework

The findings of this study demonstrate that the Hajj among the Madurese cannot be adequately understood as a sequence of isolated religious rituals confined to the period in Mecca and Medina. Instead, the pilgrimage constitutes a continuous socio-religious process through which spiritual preparation, ritual experience, intercultural encounter, ethical learning, and post-pilgrimage identity reconstruction become mutually reinforcing stages. Taken together, the five themes identified in this study form an integrated model of the Continuity of Madurese Hajj Experience, thereby extending William R. Roff's pilgrimage framework through contemporary empirical evidence from Indonesia.

The first theme establishes *walimatus safar* as a leavetaking ritual that prepares pilgrims spiritually, psychologically, and socially before departure. The findings confirm Roff's argument that the pilgrimage begins before pilgrims physically leave their homeland. However, the Madurese case demonstrates that *leavetakings* involve more than symbolic farewell rituals.⁴⁹ Through collective prayer, mutual forgiveness, religious guidance, and communal participation, *walimatus safar* initiates a process of moral preparation that continues to shape pilgrims throughout the pilgrimage.

The second theme reveals that spiritual transformation during the Hajj represents the continuation rather than the beginning of religious change. Experiences such as witnessing the Kaaba, standing at Arafat, engaging in intensive worship, and deepening one's relationship with Allah cannot be separated from the spiritual commitments cultivated before departure. Consequently, the pilgrimage emerges as a progressive process of religious maturation rather than a collection of independent ritual events.

The third and fourth themes further demonstrate that the Hajj functions as a meeting point between local Islam and global Islam. Encounters with Muslims from diverse cultural, linguistic, and jurisprudential backgrounds did not weaken Madurese religious identity. Instead, pilgrims actively negotiated their local devotional traditions within the broader landscape of the Muslim world while simultaneously developing *tasamuh* as an ethical orientation toward religious diversity. These findings reinforce Roff's view of the Hajj as a transnational arena connecting Southeast Asian Muslims with the wider Islamic world, while also showing that such encounters strengthen rather than diminish locally rooted Islamic traditions.⁵⁰

Finally, the fifth theme illustrates that the pilgrimage does not conclude with pilgrims' return home. Becoming a *Haji* involves the reconstruction of moral identity, increased communal responsibility, and the reproduction of Madurese Hajj traditions

⁴⁹ Roff, "Leavetakings: The 'Separation' Stage of Meccan Pilgrimage."

⁵⁰ Roff, "The Meccan Pilgrimage: Its Meaning for Southeast Asian Islam."

through mentoring future pilgrims, participating in religious leadership, and preserving *walimatus safar*. In this sense, post-pilgrimage transformation extends the meaning of the Hajj beyond individual spirituality into the continuity of communal religious life.

Taken together, these findings suggest an important refinement of William R. Roff's pilgrimage framework. Roff conceptualized the Hajj as a socio-historical process involving departure, pilgrimage, and return⁵¹. The present study confirms this perspective while proposing a more explicit empirical model in which these phases are interconnected through a cyclical process of cultural and religious reproduction. As illustrated in Figure 1, the continuity of the Madurese Hajj experience unfolds through three major phases: (1) Pre-Hajj Preparation, characterized by *walimatus safar* and *leavetaking*; (2) Pilgrimage Experience, encompassing spiritual transformation, encounters with global Islam, religious negotiation, and the cultivation of *tasamuh*; and (3) Post-Pilgrimage Transformation, in which reconstructed religious identities contribute to the preservation and transmission of local Hajj traditions.

The cyclical nature of this model constitutes the principal theoretical contribution of the study. Rather than ending with the pilgrims' return, post-Hajj transformation generates new religious practices, values, and social responsibilities that prepare subsequent generations of pilgrims through the continuation of *walimatus safar* and other communal traditions. The end of one pilgrimage thus becomes the beginning of another, creating an enduring cycle through which individual religious transformation continuously reproduces Madurese Hajj culture.

Post-Hajj Rituals: The Empirical Site of Continuity

Fieldwork revealed that post-Hajj rituals in Madura constitute a rich and structurally organized domain that has, until now, received limited attention in Southeast Asian Hajj scholarship. Across the four regencies of Bangkalan, Sampang, Pamekasan, and Sumenep, three post-Hajj rituals were consistently identified: *walimatus syukri*, *tahlilan haji*, and *ziarah*. Each ritual performs a distinct socio-religious function, and together they constitute the empirical mechanism through which the post-Hajj phase generates the next cycle of *walimatus safar*.

First, *walimatus syukri* (thanksgiving feast), usually held within days of the pilgrim's return, mirrors *walimatus safar* structurally while inverting its ritual function. Whereas the pre-departure gathering seeks forgiveness, prayers, and protection through communal supplication, *walimatus syukri* performs the incorporation function in van Gennep's tripartite ritual structure by publicly reintegrating the transformed pilgrim into ordinary community life while acknowledging the new religious status of *haji* or *hajjah*. Participants consistently framed this ceremony in the language of *syukur* (gratitude), *mabrur* (accepted pilgrimage), and *barakah* (blessing), which were symbolically shared with attendees through Zamzam water, dates from Mecca, and communal meals.

Second, *tahlilan haji* refers to a series of communal recitations consisting of *tahlil*, Surah Yasin, and Hajj-related *shalawat*, usually performed at the returned pilgrim's home

⁵¹ William R. Roff, "Pilgrimage and the History of Religions: Theoretical Approaches to the Hajj," *University of Arizona Press*, 1985, 78–86.

over several consecutive evenings. Attendance commonly includes relatives, neighbors, and, significantly, the *kyai* who had earlier officiated the pilgrim's *walimatus safar*. This continuity of ritual actors between pre- and post-Hajj ceremonies provides strong empirical evidence that the two events are not separate ritual moments but linked phases within a single socio-religious arc. As one *kyai* explained, "When I lead *tahlilan* for a returning *haji*, I am completing what we began together at *walimatus safar*—the same *shalawat*, the same prayers, but now with the *mabrur* already achieved" (KY-02).

Third, *ziarah* to local *kyai* and to the graves of ancestors functions as a formal "reporting-back" visit through which returning pilgrims convey blessings from the Holy Land, distribute Zamzam water and Madinah dates, and receive renewed spiritual counsel regarding their post-Hajj religious responsibilities. This ritual strengthens the pilgrim's standing within local religious networks and, most importantly for this study, activates the pilgrim as a future *penggerak* (initiator) of the next generation's *walimatus safar*. Several informants explicitly stated that after completing their own *ziarah*, they were invited within one or two years to attend, sponsor, or help organize *walimatus safar* for younger relatives and neighbors preparing for pilgrimage.

Taken together, *walimatus syukri*, *tahlilan haji*, and *ziarah* represent more than ceremonial expressions of pilgrims' return. Within van Gennep's tripartite ritual structure, these practices perform the incorporation phase by facilitating the reintegration of returning pilgrims into their communities and marking the transition from Turnerian liminality to renewed social participation. Through these rituals, pilgrims reaffirm their religious identities, gain social recognition, and transmit religious values and practices to their families and communities. Importantly, they also become active participants in organizing and sustaining *walimatus safar* for future pilgrims, thereby linking the completion of one pilgrimage to the preparation of the next.

This finding provides the empirical foundation for the Continuity of Madurese Hajj Experience Model, which conceptualizes the Hajj as a cyclical rather than merely linear socio-religious process. The model integrates three interconnected phases: pre-Hajj separation through *walimatus safar*, spiritual transformation and encounters with global Islam during the pilgrimage, and post-Hajj incorporation through religious identity reconstruction and cultural reproduction. The post-Hajj phase occupies a central position because it transforms individual pilgrimage experiences into communal practices that sustain subsequent pilgrimage traditions.

By identifying these post-Hajj ritual mechanisms, the study extends William R. Roff's historical interpretation of the Hajj through a contemporary empirical perspective informed by van Gennep's and Turner's theories of ritual transition. Rather than viewing pilgrimage solely as a journey between the homeland and the Holy Land, the proposed model demonstrates how religious preparation, intercultural encounters, spiritual transformation, and communal reintegration form an interconnected cycle. Its principal theoretical contribution lies in explaining how post-pilgrimage practices sustain the continuity of local Islamic traditions and contribute to the reproduction of religious identity and authority within Madurese Muslim communities.

These interconnected processes are synthesized in the Continuity of Madurese Hajj Experience Model (Figure 1), which illustrates how post-Hajj religious transformation and cultural reproduction contribute to the continuity of pilgrimage traditions across generations.

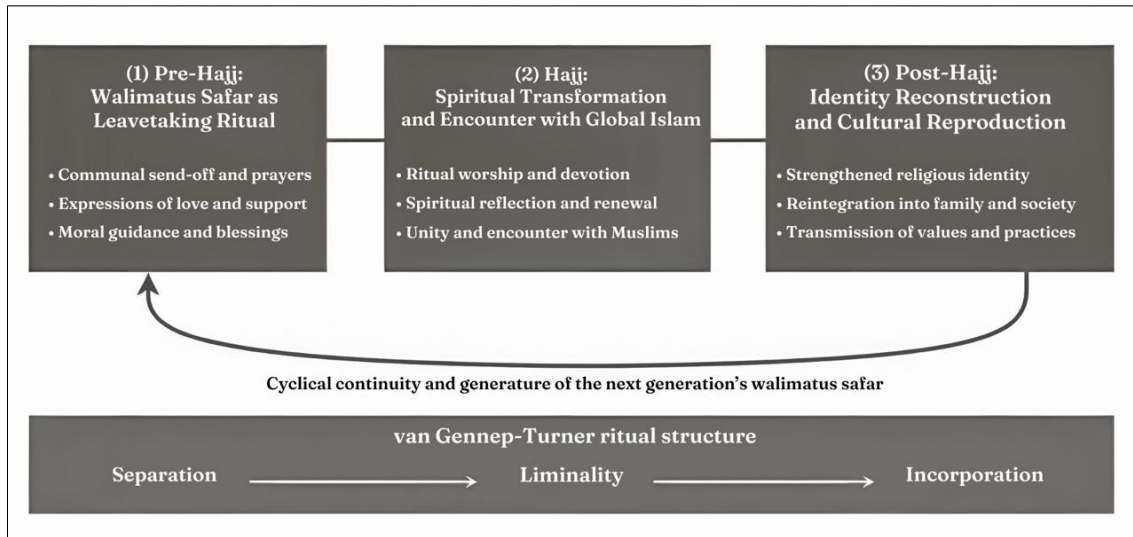


Figure 1. The Continuity of Madurese Hajj Experience Model

Note. The model illustrates three interconnected phases of the Madurese Hajj experience: pre-Hajj preparation through *walimatus safar* (separation), pilgrimage experiences and encounters with global Islam (liminality), and post-Hajj religious identity reconstruction and cultural reproduction (incorporation). Drawing on William R. Roff's pilgrimage framework and van Gennep–Turner's ritual transition perspective, the model emphasizes the cyclical relationship between post-Hajj transformation and the preparation of subsequent pilgrims. Post-Hajj practices, including *walimatus syukri*, *tahlilan haji*, and *ziarah*, constitute the mechanisms through which returning pilgrims reinforce religious identity, transmit communal traditions, and contribute to the continuity of *walimatus safar* across generations.

Source: Authors' conceptualization based on fieldwork conducted from October 2025 to August 2026.

CONCLUSION

This study examined the continuity of the Hajj experience among the Madurese community by extending William R. Roff's pilgrimage framework beyond its conventional focus on pre-departure *leavetakings*. Drawing on qualitative fieldwork across the four regencies of Madura, the findings identify five interconnected dimensions of continuity: (1) *walimatus safar* as a leavetaking ritual that prepares pilgrims spiritually, psychologically, and socially; (2) profound spiritual transformation during the pilgrimage itself; (3) the negotiation of local Islamic identity within the plurality of global Islam; (4) the cultivation of *tasamuh* as an ethical response to religious difference; and (5) post-pilgrimage transformation that reconstructs pilgrims' religious identity and reproduces Madurese Hajj traditions across generations.

Theoretically, this study contributes the *Continuity of Madurese Hajj Experience Model*, which extends Roff's framework by empirically demonstrating that the three

phases of the Hajj are connected through a *cyclical* — rather than linear — process of ritual and cultural reproduction. Grounded in the deeper anthropological genealogy of van Gennep and Turner, and centered analytically on the post-Hajj phase where the cycle regenerates itself through *walimatus syukri*, *tahlilan haji*, and *ziarah*, the model reframes the Hajj as a self-sustaining socio-religious institution in which individual spiritual transformation feeds directly into the sustainability of communal religious life.

Practically, the findings suggest that Hajj guidance institutions — including KBIHU, religious leaders, and government agencies — should move beyond technical ritual instruction toward a holistic guidance model that integrates pre-departure spiritual preparation, intercultural learning during the pilgrimage, and structured post-Hajj mentoring. Institutionalizing this holistic model within KBIHU curricula would strengthen pilgrims' religious maturity, social responsibility, and capacity to sustain the ritual cycle within their home communities.

This study is subject to several limitations. It was conducted exclusively within the Madurese cultural context, so the proposed model should not be automatically generalized to other Muslim communities. The qualitative design privileges depth over breadth and did not examine institutional, policy, or cross-national comparative dimensions. Future research could test the model in other Southeast Asian and global Muslim contexts, employ mixed-methods or longitudinal designs to track post-Hajj transformation across multiple pilgrimage cycles, and examine the extent to which digital and diasporic communities reproduce — or transform — the ritual mechanisms identified in this study.

DECLARATION OF AI AND AI ASSISTED TECHNOLOGIES IN THE WRITING PROCESS

In the preparation of this manuscript, the authors utilized ChatGPT (OpenAI) to assist with language refinement, academic writing, and editorial revision. All outputs generated with AI assistance were critically reviewed and revised by the authors. The authors assume full responsibility for the accuracy, originality, interpretation, citations, and final content of the published manuscript.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTION STATEMENT

Abdul Halim: Contributed to the conceptualization, methodology, investigation, data collection, formal analysis, interpretation of findings, and preparation of the original manuscript. Zainuddin Syarif: Contributed to the theoretical context, critical review of the manuscript, and refinement of the conceptual framework. Nor Hasan: Contributed to the academic context, validation of the analysis, and critical revision of the manuscript. Rudy Haryanto: Contributed to the methodological review, interpretation of findings, visualization, and critical revision of the manuscript. All authors reviewed and approved the final version of the manuscript. Moh. Hafid Effendy: Contributed to the final editing of the manuscript and completed the Conclusions section.

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DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENT

The qualitative interview data supporting the findings of this study are not publicly available because they contain potentially identifiable information and are subject to participant privacy and ethical considerations. De-identified data may be made available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request, subject to ethical approval, participant consent, and applicable institutional restrictions.

DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

The authors declare that they have no financial, personal, professional, or other competing interests that could have influenced the research, analysis, or publication of this article.

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