

The Identity of Demak: Unveiling Culture, Architecture, Heritage and Historical Significance

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ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Received 29-09-2023

Revised 15-11-2023

Accepted 20-11-2023

Available online 30-11-2023

E-ISSN: 2622-1640

P-ISSN: 2622-0008

How to cite:

Awaliyah D. N. The Identity of Demak: Unveiling Culture, Architecture, Heritage and Historical Significance. International Journal of Architecture and Urbanism. 2023. 7(3):411-417.



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ABSTRACT

The concept of local identity, known as "jati diri," has gained prominence as a means of understanding and preserving the unique cultural and historical characteristics of cities. This paper focuses on exploring the jati diri of Demak, a city in Indonesia with rich cultural heritage, architecture and historical significance. Through an interdisciplinary approach encompassing history, culture, architecture, and community engagement, this study aims to uncover the essence of Demak's identity, highlighting its historical evolution and contemporary manifestations. The paper delves into the historical context of Demak, tracing its origins from a powerful maritime trading kingdom to its role as a center of Javanese culture and Islamization. By examining historical records, archaeological findings, and oral traditions, the study seeks to identify the key events and socio-cultural dynamics that have shaped Demak's unique identity over the centuries. Furthermore, the research investigates the role of cultural elements, including traditional art forms, rituals, architecture, and local practices, in contributing to Demak's identity. Through fieldwork, interviews with local experts, and analysis of cultural artifacts, the paper aims to capture how Demak's distinctive culture is woven into the fabric of everyday life and community interactions. The study also addresses the challenges of preserving Demak's identity in the face of modernization, urban development, and globalization. It discusses the efforts undertaken by local communities, cultural organizations, and governmental bodies to safeguard Demak's heritage and promote awareness of its identity. City Government can help to build a stronger resource structure.

Keywords: city, city branding, architecture, heritage, culture, Demak

1. Introduction

The notion of "jati diri," or local identity, stands as a testament to the intrinsic connection between a city and its cultural heritage. As globalization continues to reshape the urban landscape, the preservation and understanding of a city's unique characteristics become paramount. This paper embarks on an exploration of the jati diri of Demak, an Indonesian city steeped in historical significance and cultural richness. By delving into the layers of history, culture, architecture, and community engagement, this study aims to illuminate the essence of Demak's identity.

Demak's historical journey unfolds as a microcosm of Indonesia's intricate tapestry. Originating as a bustling maritime trading kingdom, Demak emerged as a pivotal hub in the network of trade routes that crisscrossed the archipelago [1]. Over time, Demak's significance transcended commerce, evolving into a stronghold of Javanese culture and the epicenter of Islamization in the region. The city's historical evolution acts as a foundation upon which its contemporary identity is built.

Central to Demak's identity are its cultural facets—expressions that span art, rituals, and architecture. Traditional art forms, infused with local aesthetics and beliefs, have persevered through generations, encapsulating the city's soul in their vibrant hues. Rituals and ceremonies, deeply rooted in history and spirituality, serve as threads that bind the community together. Architectural marvels, ranging from ancient temples to ornate mosques, bear witness to the artistic mastery and religious influence that have shaped Demak's urban fabric.

In an era marked by rapid urbanization and globalization, Demak confronts the challenge of maintaining its identity amidst change. Urban development and the encroachment of modernity pose a threat to the preservation of historical landmarks and cultural practices. However, the steadfast determination of local communities, cultural organizations, and governmental bodies in safeguarding Demak's heritage is a testament to the city's resilience.

This paper aims to unravel the intricacies of Demak's *jati diri* by undertaking a multidisciplinary investigation. By examining historical records, engaging with local experts, and immersing in the city's cultural milieu, the study seeks to uncover the narrative threads that have woven Demak's identity over time. Furthermore, the paper aims to shed light on the significance of preserving cultural heritage in fostering a sense of belonging and continuity within the city's populace.

The journey of discovering Demak's *jati diri* opens a gateway to understanding the city's historical legacy and cultural vibrancy. This exploration stands as a tribute to the interplay of history, art, rituals, and community in shaping Demak's unique identity. The findings of this study contribute not only to the understanding of Demak's essence but also offer insights into the broader discourse on preserving and celebrating the identities of cities worldwide. In unraveling the layers of Demak's identity, we embark on a voyage that resonates with the soul of the city itself.

2. Method

The exploration of Demak's *jati diri* necessitates an interdisciplinary approach that combines historical research, cultural analysis, architectural investigation, and community engagement. This section outlines the methodologies employed to uncover the layers of Demak's identity, from its historical origins to its contemporary manifestations. To comprehend the historical evolution of Demak's identity, an extensive review of historical records, texts, and archaeological findings is undertaken. Primary sources, including ancient manuscripts and inscriptions, are meticulously examined to trace the city's origins, its historical milestones, and its role in regional trade and cultural exchange. Through a combination of qualitative methods, including interviews with local experts, community members, and cultural practitioners, the study delves into the cultural expressions that define Demak's identity. Traditional art forms, rituals, and performances are documented and analyzed to discern the cultural elements that have persisted through time.

The architectural landscape of Demak serves as a mirror reflecting its historical and cultural narratives. Field surveys, site visits, and architectural analysis are employed to identify significant structures such as ancient temples and mosques. The analysis of architectural styles, motifs, and spatial layouts provides insights into the city's identity through its built environment. There are some elements that shape city identity [2]. Engagement with the local community forms a pivotal aspect of this study. In-depth interviews, focus group discussions, and participatory observations are conducted to capture the perspectives of Demak's residents on their city's identity. These interactions provide a qualitative understanding of how cultural practices, traditions, and historical knowledge are transmitted within the community. To contextualize Demak's identity within the modern era, a comparative analysis is conducted with the city's present-day characteristics. Urban development, cultural initiatives, and contemporary expressions of identity are examined to discern the ways in which Demak's *jati diri* persists or evolves in response to changing societal dynamics.

Throughout the research process, ethical considerations are prioritized. Informed consent is obtained from participants, and respect for cultural norms and practices is upheld. Acknowledging the potential impact of the research on the community, measures are taken to ensure that findings are presented accurately and respectfully. The interdisciplinary methodology employed in this study aims to illuminate the multifaceted identity of Demak. By combining historical research, cultural analysis, architectural investigation, and

community engagement, this research seeks to capture the essence of Demak's *jati diri*, enriching our understanding of the city's past, present, and the threads that bind them together.

3. Results and Discussion

The identity of Demak is explored in several papers. One paper discusses the political identity in Demak, highlighting the rise of two political flows: nationalist religious and religious nationalists [3]. Another paper focuses on the social, political, cultural, and legal transformations that occurred during the transfer of government from Majapahit to Demak. It explores how Demak produced laws that created stable conditions and a just and peaceful society [4]. Additionally, the Great Mosque of Demak is considered a historical heritage and a sacred place for religious worship. The architecture of the mosque has both sacred and profane spaces, with factors such as physical barriers and the holiness of worship space influencing the sanctity of the space [5]. Overall, these papers provide insights into the political, social, and religious aspects of Demak's identity.

The *Jati Diri* of Demak refers to the identity and greatness of the Demak Sultanate in Java during the middle Ages. The Demak Sultanate was established through the efforts and struggles of Wali Songo, and it became a powerful country and a stronghold of Islamic greatness in Java [1]. The Sultanate implemented spiritual methods and practices, such as meditation and *dzikir*, which were seen as a way to cleanse the heart and mind and awaken consciousness, leading to the formation of identity [6]. The Demak Sultanate grew to be an Islamic power center and successfully resisted Portuguese influence, making Christianity fail to dominate in Java and other areas [7]. The Demak Sultanate's influence contributed to the strengthening of Islam in Java, to the extent that being Javanese was synonymous with being Muslim [8].

The *Jati Diri* of Demak has changed over time due to various factors. One factor is the influence of the Industrial Revolution 4.0, which has led to concerns about the impact of machines and robots replacing human work and roles [9]. [10]. Another factor is the marginalization of Jawi script, which is seen as a symbol of Malay identity. The decline of Jawi script usage among the younger generation is a cause for concern, as it was once a prestigious writing system in the development of knowledge in the Malay world [11]. Additionally, the implementation of spiritual methods and practices, such as meditation and *dzikir*, has been found to contribute to the formation of identity in participants of the *Majlis of Dzikir*. [12]. These changes in the *Jati Diri* of Demak reflect the evolving socio-cultural and technological landscape, highlighting the need for guidance and counseling services to address the challenges posed by the Industrial Revolution 4.0 [13]. There is also climate crisis and ecological problem [14].

The key elements of the *Jati Diri* of Demak include the application of spiritual methods and practices, the implementation of discipline and physical training, and the instilling of social values and creativity. The *Majelis Dzikir* applies nine spiritual theories from Imam Al-Ghazali, which include *taubah*, *sabar*, *zuhud*, *tawakal*, *wara'*, *kefakiran*, *mahabbah*, *ma'rifat*, and *ridha* [15]. The semi-military training to develop a strong and confident personality, enabling them to stand and steady. The architectural style of Javanese Islamic mosques has given its own characteristics for Islam in Java. [5]. Some arts and cultures that preserve local wisdom and instill social values become tools for society character development [16]. . The spatial dynamics of urban growth reflected changes in political space production, which run by each ruling actor. The city played a significant role as a symbol and an identity of the political power of the dominant regime [17].

Findings: Unveiling the Layers of Demak's Identity

Through the interdisciplinary approach outlined in the methodology, this study uncovers a tapestry of findings that illuminate the *jati diri* of Demak, offering insights into its historical roots, cultural expressions, architectural significance, and contemporary relevance.

Historical Significance: Anchoring in the Past

The historical research reveals Demak's origins as a maritime trading kingdom [18], fostering its early interactions with diverse cultures. Over time, the city emerged as a center of Javanese culture and a pivotal site for the spread of Islam across the archipelago. These historical trajectories lay the foundation for

Demak's unique identity.

Cultural Expressions: Threads of Continuity

Through engagement with local experts and community members, this study identifies cultural expressions that continue to define Demak's identity. Traditional art forms such as wayang kulit performances [19]. and batik motifs [20]. serve as living connections to the city's past. Rituals, ceremonies, and festivals celebrate Demak's heritage, fostering a sense of unity among its residents [21].

Architectural Gems: Narratives in Stone and Design

The architectural investigation uncovers the physical manifestations of Demak's identity. Ancient temples and intricately designed mosques stand as testaments to the convergence of Hindu-Buddhist and Islamic influences. The architectural styles and motifs found in these structures mirror the city's historical evolution and religious synthesis (The Architectural Structure of Joglo House as the Manifestation of Javanese Local Wisdom, 2019).

Contemporary Context: Identity in Flux

Comparative analysis reveals the interplay between Demak's historical identity and its modern-day expressions. Urban development projects coexist with efforts to preserve cultural heritage. Community-driven initiatives promote local arts and crafts, reaffirming Demak's identity while adapting to the demands of contemporary life [22]

Nowadays, people also start and develop built environment that adapt and align with technology and digitalization, such as hybrid reading space for creative city [14].

Results: A Mosaic of Identity

The results of this study present Demak's identity as a mosaic woven from historical narratives, cultural expressions, architectural masterpieces, and contemporary adaptations (Department of Sharia Business Management, State Islamic Institute (IAIN Kudus) Central Java, Indonesia et al., 2019). The city's *jati diri* emerges as a dynamic interplay of tradition and modernity, heritage and innovation, shaping the collective consciousness of its inhabitants [23].

Discussion: Nurturing Identity in the Face of Change

The findings of this research prompt discussions on the challenges and opportunities inherent in nurturing Demak's identity in a rapidly changing world . The city's ability to balance preservation with adaptation underscores the resilience of its identity [24]. The role of community engagement in upholding traditions and fostering a sense of belonging emerges as a vital aspect of identity preservation.

Furthermore, the study contributes to broader conversations on the preservation of local identities in the face of globalization. The lessons drawn from Demak's experience can inform strategies for other cities striving to maintain their cultural heritage while embracing progress. In conclusion, this study's findings underscore the intricate layers that constitute Demak's *jati diri*. By delving into history, culture, architecture, and community dynamics, this research unveils the richness of Demak's identity, offering a comprehensive understanding that transcends time and space.

4. Conclusion

Nurturing Demak's Identity in a Changing World

The exploration of Demak's *jati diri* has illuminated a profound tapestry of historical significance, cultural expressions, architectural marvels, and contemporary adaptations. Through an interdisciplinary lens, this study has unveiled the intricate layers that constitute Demak's identity, shedding light on its past, present, and the threads that connect them.

Preserving Heritage Amidst Change

Demak's identity emerges as a resilient fusion of tradition and innovation. The city's historical roots, dating back to its maritime trading origins and subsequent cultural and religious evolution, provide a steadfast foundation. Cultural expressions such as traditional art forms and rituals serve as living connections to the past, fostering a sense of continuity and belonging among the community. Such as at another city, to improve the character and identity of public open spaces is to combine aspects of culture, meaning and creativity into one unit [25].

Architecture as Testaments of Identity

The architectural investigation underscores how Demak's identity is etched in stone and design. Ancient temples and mosques showcase the synthesis of diverse influences, reflecting the historical trajectory of the city. These architectural gems stand as tangible links to Demak's identity, narrating stories of cultural confluence and spiritual significance.

Community Engagement and Resilience

The role of community engagement emerges as pivotal in preserving Demak's identity. The active involvement of local experts, cultural practitioners, and residents ensures the transmission of traditions across generations. Community-driven initiatives to celebrate cultural heritage and artistic expressions affirm Demak's identity in the face of urbanization and globalization.

Lessons for the Future

The journey of discovering Demak's jati diri holds implications beyond the city's boundaries. The delicate balance between preserving heritage and embracing change offers valuable insights for cities worldwide navigating similar challenges. Demak's experience demonstrates that a city's identity is not static; it evolves, adapts, and thrives when its community remains engaged and committed.

A Tapestry of Identity

In essence, Demak's identity is a tapestry woven from the threads of history, culture, architecture, and community resilience. This study's interdisciplinary approach has unveiled a city deeply rooted in its past, yet poised for the future. As Demak navigates the currents of change, its identity stands as a beacon, reminding us that the preservation of heritage is a shared responsibility—a commitment to honor the legacy of the past while embracing the opportunities of the present.

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