

SOCIAL TRANSFORMATION OF POST-HAJJ PILGRIMS FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF ISLAMIC SOCIOLOGY OF EDUCATION

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Abstract: This study examines the socio-religious transformation of post-Hajj pilgrims in Asahan Regency from the perspective of the sociology of Islamic education. Employing a qualitative ethnographic approach, data were collected through participant observation, in-depth interviews, documentation, and snowball sampling, then analyzed using data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. The findings reveal that the Hajj serves as a transformative educational experience that promotes stronger religiosity, deeper spiritual awareness, and the internalization of Islamic values in everyday life. The sustainability of this transformation is influenced by social capital, family support, economic conditions, religious organizations, non-formal Islamic education, and post-Hajj guidance. Post-Hajj pilgrims also contribute significantly to society through exemplary social da'wah, participation in non-formal Islamic education, and mediation of religious values within their communities. From the perspective of the sociology of Islamic education, post-Hajj transformation emerges through the interaction between spiritual experience, social learning, and social structure. Therefore, strengthening sustainable post-Hajj educational programs is essential to foster authentic, enduring, and socially impactful religious transformation.

Keywords: Post-Hajj Transformation, Sociology of Islamic Education, Learning

Abstrak: Penelitian ini mengkaji transformasi sosial-keagamaan jamaah pasca-haji di Kabupaten Asahan dalam perspektif sosiologi pendidikan Islam. Penelitian menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan metode etnografi. Data dikumpulkan melalui observasi partisipatif, wawancara mendalam, dokumentasi, dan teknik *snowball sampling*, kemudian dianalisis melalui reduksi data, penyajian data, dan penarikan kesimpulan. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa ibadah haji merupakan pengalaman pendidikan transformatif yang mendorong peningkatan religiusitas, penguatan kesadaran spiritual, serta internalisasi nilai-nilai Islam dalam kehidupan sehari-hari. Keberlanjutan transformasi tersebut dipengaruhi oleh modal sosial, dukungan keluarga, kondisi ekonomi, organisasi keagamaan, pendidikan Islam nonformal, dan pembinaan pasca-haji. Jamaah pasca-haji juga memberikan kontribusi penting melalui dakwah sosial berbasis keteladanan, keterlibatan dalam pendidikan Islam nonformal, serta peran sebagai mediator nilai-nilai keagamaan di tengah masyarakat. Dalam perspektif sosiologi pendidikan Islam, transformasi pasca-haji lahir dari interaksi antara pengalaman spiritual, pembelajaran sosial, dan struktur sosial. Oleh karena itu, penguatan program pembinaan pasca-haji yang berkelanjutan diperlukan untuk mewujudkan transformasi keagamaan yang autentik, berkelanjutan, dan berdampak positif bagi masyarakat.

Kata Kunci: Transformasi Pasca-Haji, Sosiologi Pendidikan Islam, Pembelajaran

INTRODUCTION

The Hajj pilgrimage is the fifth pillar of Islam that encompasses not only ritual dimensions but also educational, social, and humanitarian dimensions. Hajj is understood not merely as the fulfillment of a religious obligation for Muslims who are financially and physically capable, but also as a process of character formation that integrates spiritual, moral, and social values into everyday life. The religious experience acquired during the pilgrimage is expected to shape a more mature personality, strengthen spiritual awareness, and enhance individuals' social responsibility toward their communities. From the perspective of Islamic education, Hajj represents a process of experiential and social learning through which pilgrims not only gain normative knowledge of Islamic teachings but also internalize values of patience, discipline, equality, solidarity, and service to others (Indra et al., 2024; Jaenudin, 2023).

Etymologically, the term Hajj (al-hajj) derives from the Arabic concept of purposeful intention and journey toward a particular destination. Terminologically, Hajj refers to the intentional journey to the Kaaba to perform a prescribed series of acts of worship at specific times and places in accordance with Islamic law. This definition emphasizes that Hajj is not merely a physical journey to the Holy Land but also a process of spiritual education that integrates intention, religious experience, and acts of worship, all of which contribute to the formation of a Muslim's character. Consequently, the

success of Hajj should not be measured solely by the proper performance of its rituals but also by the transformation of pilgrims' behavior and the quality of their social life after returning to their communities. The educational dimension of Islam itself extends beyond formal instructional activities and encompasses processes through which religious values are transmitted, internalized, and practiced within social life (Darwis, 2006).

Within the Indonesian context, considerable expectations are placed upon pilgrims after they return from Hajj. The titles Haji and Hajjah are regarded not only as symbols of successfully fulfilling the fifth pillar of Islam but also as representations of moral integrity, spiritual maturity, and social legitimacy within society. Communities generally expect returning pilgrims to become exemplary figures in religious life, actively participate in socio-religious activities, and contribute to community development through da'wah, education, and social empowerment. The social status associated with the Haji title demonstrates that Hajj can become an important form of social capital within Muslim communities. The experience of Hajj may therefore influence not only individual religious identity but also social relationships and patterns of participation within the community (Bahri, 2021; Amiruddin et al., 2018). Accordingly, the Hajj experience is ideally expected to produce individuals with stronger social awareness, greater commitment to social harmony, and enhanced capacity to serve

as agents of change within their communities (Hamid, 2025).

Nevertheless, empirical evidence indicates that such transformation does not always occur optimally. Previous studies have shown that the social and spiritual potential of Hajj requires continuous reinforcement through community interaction and post-Hajj activities. Without appropriate social and educational support, the religious experience gained during Hajj may not necessarily develop into sustainable social practices. Consequently, Hajj may, in some circumstances, be perceived primarily as an individual ritual achievement rather than as social capital capable of strengthening moral leadership and social participation. This condition is particularly important in Indonesia's multicultural society, where returning pilgrims possess considerable potential to promote religious values, strengthen non-formal Islamic education, and contribute to community empowerment based on Islamic principles (Amiruddin et al., 2018; Hamid, 2025).

This phenomenon is particularly relevant when examined through the lens of the sociology of Islamic education, which views education as a lifelong social process extending beyond formal educational institutions. From this perspective, Hajj serves as a form of social learning through which values are internalized via intercultural interaction, collective religious experiences, and intensive worship practices. The pilgrimage provides opportunities for Muslims from diverse social, economic, cultural, and national

backgrounds to interact within a shared religious environment. Such experiences can strengthen solidarity, cooperation, equality, and social integration. The relationship between social solidarity and Islamic education demonstrates that religious experiences can become an important foundation for developing social cohesion and strengthening community integration (Fathoni, 2024). Social learning in Islamic education likewise emphasizes that learning processes may occur through interaction, observation, experience, and participation within social environments (Jaenudin, 2023). These values should ideally generate a new religious habitus reflected in pilgrims' social behavior after returning home. However, the effectiveness of this internalization process is influenced by various factors, including social capital, economic conditions, family support, religious organizations, community environments, and the availability of post-Hajj guidance programs (Amiruddin et al., 2018; Husain & Takdir, 2018).

Asahan Regency is one of the regions in North Sumatra that consistently records a relatively high number of Hajj pilgrims each year. In 2024, a total of 360 pilgrims departed as part of Embarkation Group (Kloter) KNO-01, while another 18 pilgrims joined KNO-14 together with pilgrims from several neighboring regencies. This substantial number of pilgrims reflects the significance of Hajj within the religious life of the Asahan community. Sociologically, local society accords great respect to those bearing the

titles Haji and Hajjah, considering them individuals of higher spiritual and moral standing. The attribution of social status to Haji and Hajjah is also observable in Indonesian Muslim communities, where the Haji title may influence an individual's position and recognition within the social structure (Bahri, 2021). Many returning pilgrims become actively involved in leading majelis taklim (Islamic study circles), organizing religious gatherings, promoting charitable initiatives, and mediating social conflicts within their communities. These phenomena demonstrate that Hajj has considerable potential to function as a medium for non-formal Islamic education that contributes positively to community development. Such a role is consistent with the broader understanding of Islamic education as a social and institutional process that develops religious knowledge, values, and practices within community life (Darwis, 2006).

However, preliminary field observations reveal that the socio-religious transformation of post-Hajj pilgrims in Asahan Regency varies considerably. While some pilgrims demonstrate significant improvements in religiosity and social engagement, others exhibit little or no meaningful change compared to their pre-Hajj condition. Furthermore, the phenomenon of "symbolic Hajj" has emerged, referring to individuals who emphasize their social identity as Hajj pilgrims without actively participating in religious or community development activities. This variation indicates that the

spiritual experience of Hajj does not automatically result in sustainable social transformation. The distinction between the symbolic status of Hajj and its substantive social implications is important because the social recognition attached to the Haji title does not necessarily correspond to increased participation in community life (Bahri, 2021). Therefore, there is a need for comprehensive research capable of explaining the factors that facilitate or hinder such transformation within the local social context.

Previous studies have examined the impact of Hajj from the perspectives of social capital, social status, religious community development, and da'wah, particularly regarding the strengthening of social solidarity and community empowerment (Amiruddin et al., 2018; Hamid, 2025). However, studies that specifically integrate the perspective of the sociology of Islamic education to explain the socio-religious transformation of post-Hajj pilgrims remain limited, particularly within local Indonesian communities. Previous studies have demonstrated that Hajj possesses social capital that can be mobilized within community life, while other research has highlighted the social status attached to the Haji identity. Nevertheless, these perspectives have not comprehensively explored the relationships among pilgrims' spiritual experiences, social capital, family structures, economic conditions, religious organizations, and post-Hajj guidance systems as determinants of social transformation. Moreover, few studies

have proposed a model of non-formal Islamic educational guidance capable of optimizing the role of post-Hajj pilgrims as agents of social change at the community level (Amiruddin et al., 2018; Hamid, 2025).

Based on these considerations, this study possesses substantial academic and practical significance. Academically, it seeks to enrich the body of knowledge within the sociology of Islamic education by examining the process of social transformation resulting from religious ritual experiences. This study also advances the perspective that Hajj functions as a form of social education that shapes both religious habitus and social capital for community development. The educational process associated with Hajj can be understood as part of the broader social dimension of Islamic education, in which religious values are developed through experience, interaction, and participation in community life (Darwis, 2006; Jaenudin, 2023). The novelty of this research lies in its integrative analysis of the forms of socio-religious transformation experienced by post-Hajj pilgrims, the factors influencing such transformation, and the formulation of a community-based non-formal Islamic education model for post-Hajj guidance within the local context of Asahan Regency. The findings are expected not only to contribute to the theoretical development of the sociology of Islamic education but also to provide practical recommendations for local governments, the Ministry of Religious Affairs, Islamic community organizations,

and da'wah institutions in designing sustainable post-Hajj guidance programs that enable returning pilgrims to serve effectively as agents of social transformation, promoters of Islamic education, and contributors to community development grounded in Islamic values (Hamid, 2025; Fathoni, 2024).

METHOD

This study employed a qualitative approach with an educational ethnography design to gain an in-depth understanding of the social transformation of post-Hajj pilgrims within the sociocultural context of Asahan Regency. This approach was selected because it is capable of uncovering the meanings, values, cultural practices, and patterns of socio-religious interaction that naturally develop after pilgrims return from the Holy Land. Qualitative research emphasizes a holistic understanding of social phenomena by exploring the experiences, perceptions, motivations, and actions of participants within their natural settings. From an ethnographic perspective, the study not only describes social behavior but also provides thick descriptions of pilgrims' actions, changes in socio-religious values, the dynamics of Hajj alumni groups, and the process of internalizing Hajj values in everyday life.

The research was conducted in Asahan Regency, North Sumatra Province, Indonesia, which was purposively selected because of its consistently high number of Hajj pilgrims,

strong religious culture, and active Hajj alumni associations and majelis taklim (Islamic study circles), all of which provide a natural setting for observing post-Hajj social learning processes. The study focused on pilgrims' socio-religious activities after returning from Hajj, including their involvement in non-formal Islamic education, da'wah activities, Islamic study groups, community organizations, and various forms of social service within their local communities.

In this study, the researcher served as the primary research instrument (human instrument) and was directly involved in both data collection and interpretation. The researcher adopted an emic-etic perspective, seeking to understand the experiences, viewpoints, and meanings constructed by the pilgrims from their own perspectives while maintaining sufficient analytical distance to produce objective scientific interpretations. The researcher's presence in the field was manifested through participant observation in various religious activities, including majelis taklim, Hajj alumni gatherings, mosque-based activities, and community social programs, thereby enabling a comprehensive understanding of the socio-religious transformation experienced by post-Hajj pilgrims.

The study utilized both primary and secondary data sources. Primary data were obtained through in-depth interviews with 20 informants selected purposively and subsequently expanded

using the snowball sampling technique until data saturation was achieved. The informants included post-Hajj pilgrims, community leaders, mosque management board members, leaders of Islamic organizations, the Head of the 2024 Asahan Regency Hajj Embarkation Group, Regional Hajj Officers, the Head of the People's Welfare Division of the Asahan Regency Government, the Head of the Ministry of Hajj and Umrah Office of Asahan Regency, and Islamic studies academics from the Daar Al-Ulum Islamic Institute of Asahan. Secondary data were collected from Hajj administration documents, records of Hajj guidance programs, institutional reports, and relevant literature concerning the sociology of Islamic education and socio-religious transformation.

Data were collected through in-depth interviews, participant observation, and document analysis. In-depth interviews were conducted to explore the subjective experiences, perceptions, and processes of social transformation experienced by post-Hajj pilgrims. Participant observation enabled the researcher to directly examine pilgrims' behavior, social interactions, and involvement in religious and community activities. Document analysis complemented the empirical findings through the examination of official reports, archival records, activity documentation, photographs, and institutional documents related to Hajj administration and post-Hajj guidance.

Data analysis followed an interactive analytical process consisting of data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification. The analytical process was conducted simultaneously with data collection, allowing the researcher to continuously refine categories, identify thematic relationships, and develop comprehensive interpretations of the social transformation experienced by post-Hajj pilgrims. To ensure the trustworthiness of the findings, the study employed several validation strategies, including source, method, and theory triangulation, prolonged engagement in the field, member checking, and the maintenance of a comprehensive audit trail. These procedures were implemented to enhance the credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability of the research findings, thereby ensuring both their academic rigor and practical relevance for the development of community-based post-Hajj guidance programs within the framework of Islamic education.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Transformation of Religious Behavior: From Ritual to the Internalization of Values

The findings of this study indicate that the earliest form of social and religious transformation among post-Hajj pilgrims in Asahan Regency is the transformation of religious behavior, characterized by a shift in religious orientation from merely fulfilling ritual obligations toward the

internalization of spiritual values in everyday life. Based on participant observation, in-depth interviews, and informant tracing through the snowball sampling technique, nearly all participants reported an increase in the intensity of their religious practices after returning from the Holy Land. This enhancement was reflected not only in the more frequent performance of congregational prayers, voluntary fasting, Qur'anic recitation, and participation in majelis ta'lim (Islamic study circles), but also in the deepening of their spiritual appreciation of worship. Religious observance was no longer perceived as a normative routine that simply had to be fulfilled; rather, it became a spiritual necessity that provided inner peace and served as a moral compass for guiding social behavior. These findings are consistent with Indra et al. (2024), who demonstrate that Hajj and Umrah have implications for the spiritual and social dimensions of Muslim life.

This finding was consistently observed across different groups of informants. Several pilgrims acknowledged that, after performing the Hajj, they developed a strong inner motivation to preserve the spiritual atmosphere they had experienced in Makkah and Madinah. One informant even stated that missing congregational prayers created a profound sense of loss that had never been experienced before. Another explained that the Hajj experience encouraged the development of new religious habits, such as performing nightly prayers (*qiyām al-layl*) and regularly reciting the Qur'an as a

means of maintaining spiritual closeness to Allah. These changes demonstrate that the religious experience gained during the Hajj fostered a process of self-reflection that transcended formal ritual observance and gradually evolved into a more conscious, personal, and sustainable pattern of religious practice. Rosyidi and Dulwahan (2019) similarly show that the Hajj experience can contribute to transformation in the self-concept of pilgrims, indicating that pilgrimage may become a significant moment of personal and religious reorientation.

From the perspective of the sociology of Islamic education, this phenomenon can be understood as a process of social learning through religious experience. During the pilgrimage, pilgrims encounter situations that demand patience, discipline, self-control, and respect for cultural and ethnic diversity. These experiences subsequently shape a new religious habitus that influences how individuals interpret both worship and social life upon returning to their communities. Consequently, the transformation extends beyond the individual level and carries broader social implications, as the values internalized during the pilgrimage begin to manifest in everyday patterns of social interaction. Jaenudin (2023) explains that social learning in Islamic education is closely associated with interaction, social networks, and learning experiences that occur within particular social environments.

Field observations further revealed that changes in religious behavior did not end with improvements in personal worship. A number of pilgrims began assuming more active roles in religious activities within their local communities by organizing *wirid* gatherings, serving as substitute imams, and encouraging community members to participate more actively in Islamic study circles. These findings indicate that initially personal spiritual experiences gradually developed into social practices that positively influenced the surrounding community. Within the framework of Islamic education, this transformation reflects a movement from individual piety toward social piety, in which religious experience strengthens not only one's vertical relationship with Allah but also one's social responsibility toward the broader community. This pattern is in line with Hamid (2025), who emphasizes the social role of post-Hajj pilgrims in community-based *da'wah* and community empowerment.

Nevertheless, this study also found that religious transformation did not occur uniformly among all participants. For some informants, the observed changes were more symbolic than substantive. The increased use of religious attire, the more frequent adoption of the honorific title "Haji," and greater participation in ceremonial religious activities suggest that the Hajj experience does not always produce profound behavioral transformation. Some informants even criticized what they referred to as "status Haji," a condition in which the social

identity associated with the Hajj title becomes more prominent than genuine changes in personal character and everyday conduct. In their view, societal respect for the Hajj title often develops more rapidly than the internalization of the spiritual values that should accompany the pilgrimage experience.

This phenomenon illustrates the dialectical relationship between individual spiritual experience and the social construction of religious identity. On the one hand, the status of Hajj provides moral legitimacy that encourages individuals to improve their conduct. On the other hand, social recognition of the Hajj title may foster a symbolic orientation if it is not accompanied by sustained reflection and continuous religious guidance. These findings support Bahri's (2021) argument that Hajj possesses both religious and social dimensions that elevate an individual's status within society. Amiruddin et al. (2018) further explain that the Hajj experience can generate social capital that strengthens an individual's position and relationships within the community. Zainuddin (2013) likewise demonstrates that Hajj status is closely associated with religious symbolism and social status among Muslim communities. However, from the perspective of the sociology of Islamic education, such social capital can only generate authentic transformation when it is reinforced by the internalization of values, critical reflection, and a supportive social environment that sustains behavioral change.

Overall, this study demonstrates that the religious behavioral transformation of post-Hajj pilgrims occurs along a broad continuum, ranging from profound spiritual renewal to more symbolic forms of religious expression. The Hajj experience clearly possesses the capacity to function as a transformative educational process that shapes a new religious habitus. However, its effectiveness depends largely on individuals' ability to sustain their spiritual experiences through consistent religious practice, as well as the presence of a supportive social environment. Therefore, the true significance of the Hajj should not be measured merely by the completion of the pilgrimage rituals in the Holy Land, but by the extent to which the values acquired during the pilgrimage are continuously actualized in both personal life and the broader social life of the community. This understanding is consistent with Indra et al. (2024) and Hamid (2025), who place Hajj within both spiritual and social dimensions of Muslim life.

Factors Influencing Changes in Religious and Social Behavior

The findings of this study indicate that changes in the religious and social behavior of post-Hajj pilgrims in Asahan Regency constitute a complex process that does not occur automatically upon the completion of the pilgrimage. Although the spiritual experience in the Holy Land serves as the starting point of transformation, the sustainability of this change is largely determined by a range of

interrelated factors originating from both the individual and the surrounding social environment. The study identified at least six factors that influence the continuity of post-Hajj transformation: social capital, family structure, socioeconomic background, the role of religious organizations, gender dynamics, and institutional support through post-Hajj guidance. These factors do not operate independently; rather, they interact with one another to produce diverse patterns of transformation among individual pilgrims.

The first finding reveals that social capital is the most influential factor in sustaining post-Hajj transformation. In this context, social capital is understood not merely as the breadth of one's social network but also as the trust and moral legitimacy attached to the status of being a Hajj pilgrim. Pilgrims who actively participate in Badan Kemakmuran Masjid (BKM, Mosque Prosperity Councils), majelis ta'lim (Islamic study circles), wirid groups, and other religious organizations tend to maintain positive behavioral changes more consistently than those with weaker social connections. ZS emphasized that pilgrims who remain active in mosque and religious study activities are not only better able to preserve the quality of their worship but also become agents of positive change within their communities (Interview, April 30, 2026). A similar experience was reported by BS, who acknowledged that participation in various religious activities after returning from the Hajj helped sustain spiritual enthusiasm (Interview, May 3, 2026). This finding is

reinforced by Dr. H. Taufik, who explained that the social solidarity established during the pilgrimage constitutes a powerful form of social capital that often weakens once pilgrims return to their daily routines due to the limited availability of continued guidance and mentoring (Interview, April 28, 2026). Conversely, some pilgrims successfully maintained these networks by establishing religious study groups and rotating savings associations, as described by Dr. H. Syahrul Nasution regarding the Pengajian Arisan Haji Golden Manazil and Pengajian Haji Romance Al-Bait, which function as platforms for social interaction and post-Hajj spiritual reinforcement (Interview, April 30, 2026).

This phenomenon suggests that the Hajj experience generates not only spiritual transformation but also social memory, which is subsequently institutionalized through collective activities. Amiruddin et al. (2018) demonstrate that Hajj can function as social capital within community life. This finding is also consistent with Indra et al. (2024), who identify social implications of Hajj and Umrah, as well as Saefullah and El Syam (2022), who demonstrate the significance of Islamic education among Hajj alumni through majelis taklim and religious activities. Rosyidi and Dulwahab (2019) further show that the Hajj experience can transform the self-concept of pilgrims, while Rohmah and Hidayat (2023) highlight the social role and capital associated with the identity of Hajj figures within rural communities. Zainuddin (2013) likewise explains that the Hajj title

contributes to the construction of religious identity and social position.

In contrast, pilgrims with limited social networks tended to experience more individualized forms of transformation that were more susceptible to decline over time. BS admitted that he gradually returned to previous habits because he lacked a supportive mosque or religious study environment capable of sustaining his spiritual experience (Interview, May 3, 2026). Public trust associated with the Hajj title also serves as a form of social legitimacy that enhances pilgrims' influence in encouraging community participation in religious activities, as noted by NM (Interview, May 2, 2026). These findings demonstrate that the sustainability of Hajj values is strongly influenced by the existence of social environments that facilitate continuous religious interaction. The importance of solidarity and social integration in Islamic education is also emphasized by Fathoni (2024), who explains that social solidarity can strengthen integration and the development of religious education within society.

Beyond social capital, family structure emerged as another critical determinant of the sustainability of post-Hajj transformation. The family represents the primary setting in which spiritual values are practiced, tested, and transmitted across generations. Pilgrims from families with well-established religious traditions generally found it easier to maintain positive behavioral changes after returning from the

pilgrimage. This pattern was evident in the experiences of AS and AD, who explained that the family culture of performing congregational prayers, reciting the Qur'an, and mutually reminding one another about religious obligations strengthened their commitment to religious life after returning from the Holy Land (Interviews, April 29 and May 5, 2026). In contrast, LH and BS acknowledged that post-Hajj transformation often encountered resistance when other family members were not accustomed to the new religious habits adopted after the pilgrimage (Interview, May 3, 2026). These findings demonstrate that post-Hajj transformation is not a linear process but rather one characterized by ongoing social negotiation within the family.

This conclusion reinforces the view that the family constitutes the first and foremost educational institution in the internalization of religious values (Yasin, 2019; Husain & Takdir, 2018). Darwis (2006) likewise places family and social environments within the broader dynamics of Islamic education. Accordingly, the family can be understood as the primary agent of socialization that may either reinforce or hinder the preservation of mabrur Hajj values. The family environment therefore becomes an important context for ensuring that religious experiences acquired through Hajj are translated into sustainable patterns of behavior.

Another important factor is socioeconomic background, which influences opportunities for the

actualization of religious values after the Hajj. The study found that pilgrims with relatively stable economic conditions had greater opportunities to participate in religious activities, contribute to mosque programs, and strengthen their social engagement because they were less burdened by economic pressures. This pattern was reflected in the experiences of AS and NM, who reported being able to participate more actively in mosque affairs and community religious activities due to their stable financial circumstances (Interviews, April 29 and May 2, 2026). In contrast, BS explained that the demands of earning a livelihood often limited his ability to attend religious study circles and mosque activities despite maintaining strong spiritual motivation (Interview, May 3, 2026). Nevertheless, the study also found that economic limitations do not necessarily diminish religious commitment. MWH's experience demonstrated that modest economic conditions actually strengthened attitudes of *tawakkul* (trust in Allah), patience, and dependence upon Allah (Interview, May 5, 2026).

These findings indicate that the relationship between socioeconomic conditions and post-Hajj transformation is dialectical rather than a simple cause-and-effect relationship. This interpretation is consistent with Wahab (2022), who discusses the balance between rationality and spirituality in Islamic economics, and Mansyur (2023), who examines the relationship between spirituality and Islamic economics. Saeful et al. (2023)

likewise demonstrate that economic activity can be understood within Islamic ethical and spiritual principles. Therefore, socioeconomic conditions are better understood as contextual factors that shape opportunities for the actualization of religious values rather than as primary determinants of the quality of religious transformation.

The Contribution of Post-Hajj Pilgrims to Social Da'wah and Non-Formal Islamic Education

The findings of this study indicate that the contributions of post-Hajj pilgrims in Asahan Regency to social da'wah and non-formal Islamic education develop gradually through continuous social interaction within the community. These contributions are not generated through formally designed institutional programs but emerge as a consequence of the social recognition attached to the status of being a Hajj pilgrim, which subsequently gives rise to moral expectations from society. Field findings reveal that the community does not merely regard Hajj pilgrims as individuals who have fulfilled one of the pillars of Islam but also as figures expected to embody and promote Islamic values in social life. Through observation, in-depth interviews, and social network tracing of informants, this study found that these contributions are manifested in three primary forms: social da'wah through exemplary conduct, participation in non-formal Islamic education, and serving as mediators of religious values within the community. This finding is consistent with

Hamid (2025), who emphasizes the social role of post-Hajj pilgrims in community-based da'wah.

The most prominent contribution is reflected in da'wah through exemplary conduct (da'wah bi al-ḥāl). Unlike da'wah that primarily relies on sermons or public lectures, the influence of post-Hajj pilgrims is largely exercised through their everyday behavior, which is directly observed by the community. Their consistency in performing congregational prayers, politeness in social interactions, concern for others, and simplicity in daily life constitute forms of da'wah considered more effective than verbal communication alone. This finding is supported by Dr. H. Taufik, S.Ag., M.A., Head of Hajj Group 01 of Asahan Regency in 2024, who stated that people are more likely to evaluate an individual's transformation through observable behavior rather than spoken words. Pilgrims who remain humble, actively assist community members, and consistently attend the mosque are perceived to exert a stronger da'wah influence than those who speak extensively about religion but fail to provide a good example (Interview, April 28, 2026). A similar perspective was expressed by Dr. H. Syahrul Nasution, S.H.I., M.A., who explained that rural communities tend to imitate positive behaviors they observe daily rather than advice they hear only occasionally (Interview, April 30, 2026).

These findings demonstrate a shift in the orientation of da'wah from a predominantly verbal approach toward a practical form of da'wah expressed

through concrete actions. AS (68 years old) stated that after completing the Hajj, he preferred to improve himself rather than speak frequently about religion, reinforcing the view that behavioral transformation represents a more grounded and authentic form of da'wah (Interview, April 29, 2026). Field observations further revealed that post-Hajj pilgrims often become moral references within their communities by mediating minor disputes, assisting with community activities, and exemplifying discipline in worship. According to TM (57 years old), people are more likely to follow Hajj pilgrims who consistently demonstrate exemplary conduct, even without offering frequent religious advice (Interview, April 30, 2026). Hamid (2025) similarly emphasizes the importance of post-Hajj pilgrims' social roles in community-based da'wah.

This phenomenon closely aligns with the concept of *uswah ḥasanah* (excellent example) as emphasized in Qur'an Surah Al-Aḥzāb [33]:21, which presents the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) as the finest role model for humanity. The Indonesian Ministry of Religious Affairs' interpretation explains that the Prophet's exemplary conduct embodies faith, patience, perseverance, and noble character that serve as guidance for human life (Kementerian Agama Republik Indonesia, 2011). From the perspective of the sociology of Islamic education, exemplary behavior functions as a medium for the continuous transmission of values through social interaction. Consequently, religious education occurs not only

through formal instruction but also through everyday social practice.

Nevertheless, the study also found that the effectiveness of da'wah through exemplary conduct depends heavily on the moral consistency of post-Hajj pilgrims. NM (49 years old) explained that society holds very high expectations of individuals bearing the Hajj title, making any inconsistency in behavior more readily subject to negative judgment (Interview, May 2, 2026). Dr. H. Lakum, S.Ag., M.Sos., similarly emphasized that people pay greater attention to how Hajj pilgrims behave, speak, and treat others than to their ability to deliver sermons. Therefore, behavior inconsistent with religious symbolism diminishes the moral legitimacy associated with the Hajj status (Interview, April 30, 2026). Accordingly, the Hajj title represents not merely a religious symbol but also a social responsibility that must be demonstrated through consistent moral conduct. This finding corresponds with Bahri (2021) and Zainuddin (2013), who both highlight the social significance of Hajj status within Muslim communities.

Beyond exemplary behavior, this study found that post-Hajj pilgrims make significant contributions to non-formal Islamic education. Their involvement develops naturally through participation in pengajian (Islamic study groups), majelis ta'lim, yasinan gatherings, and various community-based religious activities. Initially, they participate simply as attendees; however, as public trust increases, they are gradually invited to lead prayers, deliver religious instruction, and

organize local religious learning activities. TM (57 years old) explained that after returning from the Hajj, he was frequently asked to teach prayer procedures, ablution, and daily supplications, eventually establishing a regular study group in his home (Interview, April 30, 2026). These findings suggest that non-formal Islamic education develops primarily through social relationships and religious experience rather than through formally structured educational systems.

This finding is strongly supported by Saefullah and El Syam (2022), who specifically examine Islamic education among Hajj alumni through majelis taklim and dzikir activities. Mustanadi (2021) likewise demonstrates the importance of non-formal Islamic education and majelis ta'lim in strengthening religious behavior within transitional communities. Darwis (2006) further explains that Islamic education develops through diverse educational forms and institutions, including those operating within community life. Thus, post-Hajj pilgrims can become important actors in community-based Islamic education when their spiritual experience is connected to sustained educational activities.

Despite these positive contributions, the study also identified limitations in the pedagogical dimension. Most pilgrims reported that the religious material they shared was largely based on personal experience rather than systematic instructional methods. NM (49 years old) acknowledged that his teaching relied primarily on his Hajj experience and

therefore lacked structured pedagogical organization (Interview, May 2, 2026). This finding is consistent with the principle of da'wah articulated in Qur'an Surah An-Nahl [16]:125, which emphasizes the importance of conveying religious teachings with wisdom, good instruction, and approaches appropriate to the audience's circumstances (Kementerian Agama Republik Indonesia, 2011). Accordingly, the spiritual capital of post-Hajj pilgrims should be strengthened through pedagogical training, communication skills development, and organizational management of religious study circles so that their contributions extend beyond motivation toward more effective and sustainable educational practices.

Another important finding is that post-Hajj pilgrims also function as mediators of religious values, bridging Islamic teachings with the social realities of community life. They are frequently consulted regarding family matters, inheritance disputes, differences in religious practices, and other social conflicts. AS (68 years old) explained that community members often seek advice from Hajj pilgrims because they are perceived to possess deeper religious understanding after completing the pilgrimage (Interview, April 29, 2026). Similarly, SP (50 years old) stated that Hajj pilgrims frequently serve as mediators in family conflicts, although they do not necessarily issue formal religious or legal rulings (Interview, May 6, 2026). These findings indicate that the social legitimacy

of post-Hajj pilgrims rests more on moral authority than on formal scholarly authority. NM (49 years old) also acknowledged that in complex matters, pilgrims generally prefer to facilitate reconciliation while referring legal decisions to individuals with greater religious expertise (Interview, May 2, 2026).

Taken together, these three forms of contribution demonstrate that post-Hajj pilgrims possess substantial spiritual capital, social capital, and moral legitimacy to strengthen social da'wah and non-formal Islamic education in Asahan Regency. Nevertheless, these contributions continue to develop in an informal, sporadic manner and rely largely on individual initiative. Statements from AS (68 years old) and TM (57 years old) indicate that there is still no structured institution capable of organizing and sustaining this considerable potential (Interviews, April 29–30, 2026). These findings underscore the need for more systematic post-Hajj development programs so that individual transformation may evolve into a broader collective social movement. Hamid (2025) reinforces the importance of community-based da'wah in optimizing the social role of Hajj pilgrims. From the perspective of Islamic education, this potential can also be developed through non-formal educational structures such as majelis ta'lim, which provide a sustainable environment for religious learning and social interaction (Mustanadi, 2021; Saefullah & El Syam, 2022).

Theoretical Analysis from the Perspective of the Sociology of Islamic Education

The findings of this study indicate that non-formal Islamic education serves as the primary arena for sustaining the socio-religious transformation of post-Hajj pilgrims in Asahan Regency. Various community-based religious activities, such as *pengajian* (Islamic study circles), *majelis ta'lim* (Islamic learning assemblies), Yasin recitation groups, and other religious forums, function not only as channels for transmitting Islamic knowledge but also as spaces for social learning, where the spiritual experiences acquired during the Hajj pilgrimage are reflected upon, shared, and re-internalized through continuous social interaction among pilgrims. These findings demonstrate that post-Hajj transformation is not an individual process but rather develops through active participation in religious communities that reinforce religious values, cultivate habitual religious practices, and foster sustainable character formation. This finding is consistent with Aisyah et al. (2025), who emphasize the strategic role of the social environment in Islamic education as a space for character formation, value habituation, and reinforcement of religious behavior.

Field data further reveal that pilgrims who actively participate in religious activities are better able to maintain their spiritual enthusiasm and actualize the values acquired during the Hajj in their daily lives. Interactions within *pengajian* and *majelis ta'lim* are dialogical,

enabling participants to exchange experiences, motivate one another, and mutually remind each other to uphold Islamic teachings. Hj. Fatimah, SHI (54 years old), explained that *pengajian* is not merely a place to listen to religious lectures but also a forum for sharing experiences, making Islamic values easier to implement in everyday life (Interview, May 7, 2026). This perspective is reinforced by Dr. H. Lakum, S.Ag., M.M., who stated that *majelis ta'lim* provides an environment that helps preserve the spiritual enthusiasm gained after performing the Hajj (Interview, April 30, 2026). These findings corroborate Mustanadi's (2021) study, which concludes that *majelis ta'lim* plays a significant role in strengthening religious understanding, social solidarity, and the preservation of religious traditions within society.

From the perspective of the sociology of Islamic education, these findings demonstrate that the internalization of religious values occurs through a continuous process of social learning. The spiritual experiences acquired during the Hajj gain renewed meaning when they are communicated and reflected upon collectively within religious communities. Consequently, non-formal Islamic education functions not only as a means of knowledge transmission but also as a vehicle for developing collective consciousness that enables Islamic values to be practiced within the social life of the community. Mukhlis (2024) likewise emphasizes the significance of the social environment in shaping individuals' patterns of thought, attitudes, and

character. Therefore, the existence of religious communities is essential in ensuring that religious experiences do not remain merely emotional episodes but instead develop into enduring religious habits embedded in everyday life.

These findings are also consistent with Social Learning Theory, which explains that human behavior is shaped through observation, imitation, and social interaction. In the context of post-Hajj pilgrims, behavioral change is influenced not only by spiritual experiences in the Holy Land but also by the surrounding social environment, which continuously provides models, reinforcement, and evaluation of religious behavior. This principle is normatively grounded in the Qur'an, where Allah the Almighty states:

وَلْتَكُنْ مِنْكُمْ أُمَّةٌ يَدْعُونَ إِلَى الْخَيْرِ وَيَأْمُرُونَ
بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَيَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ
الْمُقْلِحُونَ

And let there be [arising] from you a nation inviting to [all that is] good, enjoining what is right and forbidding what is wrong, and those will be the successful (Ali Imran: 104).

This verse emphasizes that religious education and moral development constitute a collective responsibility nurtured within community life. Jaenudin (2023) explains that social learning highlights the quality of interaction, social networks, and collective reflection as fundamental elements of successful learning processes.

Nevertheless, this study also found that the effectiveness of non-formal Islamic education continues to face several challenges. Some informants observed that pengajian sessions often emphasize repetitive delivery of religious material rather than reflective learning capable of encouraging behavioral transformation. NM (49 years old) explained that religious study sessions frequently repeat the same topics without providing sufficient opportunities for participants to engage in deep reflection, thereby limiting their impact on behavioral change (Interview, May 2, 2026). A similar view was expressed by ZS (60 years old), who argued that pengajian should not merely focus on transmitting knowledge but should also encourage participants to think critically and implement meaningful changes in their daily lives (Interview, April 30, 2026). These findings indicate that pedagogical quality, facilitator competence, and participatory learning design are crucial factors in determining the effectiveness of non-formal Islamic education as an arena for social transformation. This is consistent with Jaenudin (2023), who emphasizes the importance of learning processes and social interaction in Islamic education.

Overall, the findings affirm that non-formal Islamic education constitutes a strategic arena for sustaining the transformation of post-Hajj pilgrims. The spiritual experiences gained during the pilgrimage are more likely to be internalized when supported by active, dialogical, and reflective learning communities. Conversely, without a

conducive social environment, such experiences may remain personal and fail to develop into sustainable social transformation. These findings reinforce the argument of Hamid (2025) that Hajj pilgrims possess an important social role in community empowerment through religious and social activities. Saefullah and El Syam (2022) likewise demonstrate the relevance of Islamic education for Hajj alumni through *majelis ta'lim* and *dzikir* activities. Thus, from the perspective of the sociology of Islamic education, non-formal Islamic education is not merely a setting for learning religious knowledge but also a social ecosystem in which the values of the Hajj are practiced, reproduced, and transmitted collectively, thereby generating more authentic, profound, and sustainable socio-religious transformation.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the socio-religious transformation of post-Hajj pilgrims in Asahan Regency is a dynamic, gradual, and multidimensional process. The Hajj experience serves as the starting point for change by fostering greater religiosity, strengthening spiritual awareness, and shifting religious orientation from the mere performance of ritual obligations toward the internalization of Islamic values in everyday life. However, the success of this transformation does not occur automatically; rather, it is influenced by individuals' capacity for self-reflection and by the support of a social environment that sustains the continuity

of change. The findings also demonstrate that social capital, family, economic conditions, religious organizations, non-formal Islamic education, and post-Hajj guidance are key factors determining the consistency of pilgrims' religious and social behavioral transformation. Furthermore, Hajj status constructs a social identity that confers moral legitimacy while simultaneously generating societal expectations regarding pilgrims' conduct. This condition positions post-Hajj pilgrims as strategic social actors who have the potential to serve as role models, promoters of social *da'wah*, facilitators of non-formal Islamic education, and mediators of religious values within their communities. From the perspective of the sociology of Islamic education, post-Hajj transformation is understood as the outcome of the interaction between spiritual experience, social learning processes, and the social structures surrounding individuals. Therefore, strengthening this transformation requires more than enhancing personal worship; it also demands a sustainable educational ecosystem supported by *majelis ta'lim* (Islamic learning assemblies), *pengajian* (Islamic study circles), religious communities, and more systematic and participatory post-Hajj development programs. Consequently, the attainment of Hajj *mabrūr* is reflected not only in individual piety but also in pilgrims' ability to internalize Islamic values through concrete actions that contribute to character development,

social cohesion, and the advancement of a religious and civilized society.

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