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The role of community in conserving of the 18th Century mosques Jakarta: reviving vultural diversity

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Abstract

This paper discusses the community's role in reviving the cultural diversity of Jakarta's 18th-century mosques. Jakarta is Indonesia's melting pot city, and its many 18thcentury mosques show its rich history. This mosque is not only a place of worship but also a place where people from different cultures can meet. These mosques show how diverse the city is as a whole and show the cultural diversity of the people. But over time, many historic mosques have been ignored, fallen into disrepair, and lost some cultural significance. Methodologically, this research uses a multidisciplinary approach, combining architectural, historical, and socio-cultural studies to examine how society keeps these sacred spaces alive and sustainable. This approach thoroughly examines historical records, architectural documentation, and fieldwork such as interviews, surveys, and participant observation in local communities. The results show that it is critical to get community involved to help old mosques return to life. Local communities play an essential role in conserving historical and cultural values, leading restoration efforts, and ensuring that religious sites can be managed sustainably. Community involvement also gives people a sense of ownership and pride, which makes them more likely to protect their cultural heritage. This study also shows how critical historical mosques in Jakarta are for showing different cultures. This research reveals how important it is to notice and celebrate changes in architecture, art, and religious practices. Accepting diversity adds to the city's cultural landscape and makes it easier for people from different backgrounds to live together peacefully.

Ultimately, this research shows how significant it is for the community, policymakers, cultural heritage conservation groups, and community leaders to work together to conserve objects and revive the cultural diversity of Jakarta's heritage mosques. This sacred space can potentially become a hub for cultural exchange, dialogue between people of different religions, and community cohesion. By recognizing and using the power of local communities, Jakarta can bring back its old mosques and keep the rich culture that makes them what they are today.

Keywords: Community Role, Heritage Conservation, Reviving Cultural Diversity, 18th Century Mosques, Jakarta.

1. Introduction

Jakarta has many historic mosques (Heuken, 2003; Setiawan and Haris, 2010; Ashadi, 2018). Some historic mosques date back to the 18th century (Heuken, 2003; Setiawan and Haris, 2010; Blackburn, 2012; Ashadi, 2018; Ataladjar, 2018). These mosques have a lot of cultural and architectural value and demonstrate Indonesia's rich cultural and historical heritage (Setiawan and Haris, 2010; Ashadi, 2018; Aziz et al., 2023). These old mosques are great examples of architectural fusion and cultural harmony between Javanese, Sundanese, Betawi, Balinese, Chinese, European, and Islamic architecture. Furthermore, these mosques also show how diverse the city is as a whole and show the cultural diversity of the people. But over time, many historic mosques have been ignored, fallen into disrepair, and lost some cultural significance. Additionally, Jakarta's rapid urbanization and modernization may make it less culturally diverse and more challenging for people to feel connected to their cultural heritage (Ernawati et al., 2022; Fauzi and Abdul Ghani, 2022). They show how the city has changed and how different cultures have affected it (Siregar, 2018; Syahid et al., 2020).

These mosques are places of worship. More than that, these mosques have been essential parts of Jakarta's cultural and architectural history (Aziz *et al.*, 2023). Not only that, these historic mosques also have important cultural significance for the history, science, aesthetics, social culture, and spirituality of the people of Jakarta. For this reason, it is essential to maintain and preserve the existence of these mosques for future generations. So, present and future generations must maintain our ancestors ' historical and cultural assets (Martokusumo, 2003; Eryudhawan, 2017; Khalid, 2021). Local communities must be involved in conservation work because they have strong ties to historic sites and play an essential role in maintaining, protecting, and conserving them (Suprapti and Iswanto, 2018). When people feel like they own their local culture, they work to conserve and keep it alive (Orbasli, 2008; Nurdiani and Felicia, 2021). Conserving cultural heritage requires the community to help keep 18th-century mosques in Jakarta and bring them back to life (Saeedi, 2022). Also, keeping these old mosques around can bring back cultural wealth and strengthen the cultural identity of city residents (Petrevska and Nestoroska, 2023).

With the importance of conserving the history of 18th-century mosques in Jakarta, it is essential to do this research to answer the research question of how community participation in preserving 18th-century mosques in Jakarta affects the loss of Jakarta culture. Case studies of the Jami'Al Mansur Mosque and the Hidayatullah Karet Semanggi Mosque can show what is wrong with this historic Jakarta Mosque from the 18th century. So, conservation work includes keeping buildings in good shape and bringing back cultural traditions, practices, and identities to save culture from dying. So, this research aims to find out how the community in Jakarta works to keep 18th-century mosques in good shape and what effect that has on bringing back cultural diversity in the city. By looking at the role of the community in conserving 18th-century mosques in Jakarta, this research can give valuable insights and practical solutions that will help Jakarta and become a model for efforts to conserve cultural heritage in other culturally diverse urban areas worldwide.

2. Literature Review

Jakarta boasts a rich and extensive history spanning centuries. In the 18th century, the city was recognized as Batavia and a hub for Dutch East India Company (VOC) trade activities (Niemeijer, 2012; Ataladjar, 2018; Van Der Linde, 2020). Dutch dominion prevailed over Jakarta and its environs during this era, significantly influencing the city's architectural and urban layout, as documented by Herald Van Der Linde (2020) and Jean et al. (2009) (Blackburn, 2012; Ataladjar, 2018). Notably, the VOC's administration left a lasting imprint on the city. Despite the Dutch colonial presence, Islam remained central to the lives of the local community. Consequently, during the 1800s, Jakarta's Muslim community constructed mosques to fulfill the city's spiritual requirements. Beyond serving as places of worship, these 18th-century mosques held a broader role in the social and cultural life of the community, functioning as venues for gatherings and learning Fields (Heuken, 2003; Blackburn, 2012).

Jakarta earned its status as a melting pot city due to its prominence as a trading center during the 18th century (Arieza and Herwindo, 2018). A striking manifestation of this cultural amalgamation can be observed in the design and artistic elements incorporated into its mosques. Mosques in Jakarta exhibited diverse architectural styles, often blending traditional Indonesian and Islamic influences with Dutch colonial aesthetics. The mosaic of cultures within society, encompassing various customs and worldviews, represents a cultural wealth that finds expression through architectural diversity. This, in turn, enriches the architecture, fostering tolerance, empathy, and understanding among individuals. By breaking down negative cultural stereotypes and promoting openness and peace, cultural interactions give rise to fresh ideas and stimulate cultural innovation. The convergence of images, new art forms, technology, and artistic expression yields benefits extending to all members of society, enabling individual and collective self-expression while fostering a sense of belonging. Heritage conservation plays a pivotal role in this process by connecting people with their cultural and historical roots and conserving the values, customs, and knowledge of the past in a rapidly changing world.

Community participation in safeguarding cultural, historical, and architectural treasures is indispensable. When the public, local communities, and stakeholders actively participate in planning, decision-making, and conservation efforts, they cultivate a sense of ownership and responsibility for safeguarding these heritage assets. Such involvement often entails preserving local knowledge, traditions, and oral histories associated with these sites. It ensures a comprehensive appreciation and conservation of heritage structures' uniqueness and cultural significance. Community-driven cultural heritage conservation yields social and cultural benefits, fostering pride, community cohesion, and the conservation of cultural identities. Through community participation, residents grasp the importance of cultural heritage within society.

Additionally, community participation can stimulate regional economic development, underscoring the importance of conserving cultural and historical assets that contribute to a shared sense of identity. Such participation is pivotal in conservation efforts by fostering a sense of ownership, responsibility, and community connection (Kay, 2019). Ultimately,

these efforts aim to safeguard heritage sites, ensuring their enduring value, protection, and conservation for future generations.

3. Methodology

This study will use qualitative research methods to collect data and analyze complex social phenomena like community participation to learn more about stakeholders' experiences, perspectives, and motivations in mosque conservation and cultural diversity initiatives. Data were gathered through surveys, interviews, looking through old records, and observation. Surveys were used to get information from the community, experts on cultural heritage, and policymakers about how the community is involved, how they feel about cultural heritage, and how they see cultural diversity. There were in-depth interviews with stakeholders, community members, mosque caretakers, and cultural heritage experts to find out what they had to say and what they had learned. Archival research was done to look at old records, documents, and archives about the mosques in Jakarta from the 18th century. This method can help people understand the historical background, architectural details, and past efforts to preserve the area. Getting a first-hand look at mosque-related events, community meetings, or activities to protect cultural heritage can teach a lot about how the community works together and how to keep cultural traditions alive.

Researchers used "purposeful sampling" to choose people or groups who know much about or are involved in mosque conservation and cultural diversity projects. The themes, patterns, and categories that kept coming up in the interview transcripts, FGDs, and content analysis of textual data were used to analyze the qualitative data. Cross-referencing results from different data sources (interviews, surveys, and archival records) is a way to validate and strengthen research conclusions through data triangulation.

4. Architectural and Cultural Significance

The architectural style of Jakarta's 18th-century mosques is distinct and characterized by its historical, cultural, and religious significance. These mosques, with a history spanning over 300 years, serve as enduring symbols of the city's diverse cultural heritage and historical context (Nur Isnaini *et al.*, 2019; Aziz *et al.*, 2023). They transcend their primary function as places of worship to stand as remarkable architectural wonders, reflecting the rich tapestry of Jakarta's cultural diversity.

As demonstrated in case studies, the Al Mansur Mosque and the Hidayatullah Karet Mosque hold considerable aesthetic, symbolic, and social value as heritage structures. These two mosques have served as places of worship and witnesses to the Batavian people's struggle for independence from Dutch colonial rule, often used for anti-colonial activities. Moreover, mosques have historically played multifaceted roles encompassing education, commerce, social interactions, and cultural events. Their architectural uniqueness lies in the fusion of various design elements, such as wooden construction, intricate roofs, towering minarets, and spacious prayer halls, showcasing a blend of Javanese, Sundanese, and Islamic architectural influences.

These mosques are mainly distinguished by their intricate woodwork, featuring detailed carvings on panels, beams, and ceilings, showcasing the era's craftsmanship. Their multitiered roofs, adorned with ornate carvings and finials, provide shelter and enhance their overall visual appeal. The tiered minarets serve both as calls to prayer and architectural adornments. Inside, the expansive prayer halls are designed to accommodate large congregations and are adorned with geometric patterns on the floors and walls, adding to the grandeur of the interiors.

Beyond their architectural significance, these historical mosques hold cultural importance due to their deep connection to Jakarta's historical heritage, cultural exchanges, religious and social functions, community identity, representation of diversity, tourism potential, educational value, and as living witnesses to the city's past (Aziz *et al.*, 2023). Erected during a period marked by cultural interaction and development, these mosques are tangible reminders of Jakarta's history. In the 18th century, they embodied the region's cultural diversity, blending Javanese and Sundanese traditions while incorporating various architectural and cultural influences, including Chinese, Indian, and European elements.

In addition to their role as places of worship, these mosques have been vibrant centers for social and community activities, fostering a sense of community and identity among Jakarta's residents (Ashadi and Anisa, 2019). They celebrate the city's multiculturalism, drawing people from various backgrounds to participate in cultural and religious activities. The conservation and conservation of these historic mosques are imperative to safeguard Jakarta's cultural heritage and identity as significant markers of the city's unique character and historical continuity. Furthermore, these mosques hold the potential to attract tourists interested in Indonesia's cultural heritage and serve as valuable educational resources, imparting knowledge about the city's history and cultural diversity to both visitors and locals.

5. The Role of Community Participation in Heritage Conservation

Community participation in heritage conservation refers to the involvement of local communities, stakeholders, and residents in planning, decision-making, and implementing initiatives to preserve and protect cultural heritage assets, such as the Jakarta Mosque from the 18th century. This approach acknowledges that preserving cultural heritage is not solely the responsibility of government authorities or cultural heritage professionals but also involves those with a cultural, historical, and emotional connection to the heritage site. Participation by the communities participate actively in conservation efforts, they feel a stronger connection to the site and assume greater responsibility for its protection (Kusyanto, Triyadi and Wonorahardjo, 2019).

Communities frequently possess valuable local knowledge regarding heritage sites' history, cultural significance, and traditional practices. This information is essential for decision-making and preserving cultural heritage as it was initially created. Community-led conservation efforts are likely to employ sustainable methods that align with the desires and needs of residents. This method can include eco-friendly construction techniques, routine maintenance, and resource management. Cultural heritage sites can serve as focal

points for community gatherings and cultural events, bolstering residents' social cohesion and sense of identity. Community participation in heritage conservation strengthens this function (Kubontubuh and Martokusumo, 2019; Syahid *et al.*, 2020). Involving societies in cultural heritage conservation can revitalize associated cultural practices, rituals, and traditions. Transform into a living space for the conservation of cultural heritage.

6. Reviving Cultural Diversity

Mosques hold significant importance in the lives of Muslims, serving as essential places for worship, community gatherings, and education. In Jakarta, the rich multi-ethnic history is evident in the fusion of Islamic architectural elements with Indonesian and foreign cultural influences. Establishing an inclusive atmosphere that embraces individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds is pivotal for revitalizing cultural diversity. Mosques can actively engage in interfaith dialogues and collaborations with other religious communities to champion cultural diversity, promoting mutual respect and cooperation among people of varying religions and cultures.

Two prominent mosques in Jakarta, Al Mansur Mosque and Hidayatullah Mosque, exemplify the incorporation of cultural diversity into their architectural designs. Both mosques integrate elements from different cultures into their architecture and décor, symbolizing the community's commitment to fostering harmony, tolerance, and cultural diversity. This visual representation extends the mosque's dedication to promoting cultural diversity, facilitating the exchange of information through cultural events and religious tourism. Mosques host a variety of global holidays and cultural festivals, including Eid al-Fitr, Eid al-Adha, *Maulid, Isro Mi'raj*, Christmas, and Chinese New Year celebrations. Additionally, workshops and seminars about the cultural backgrounds of mosque establishments are organized, promoting cultural awareness, and cross-cultural appreciation, dispelling stereotypes, and encouraging unity.

Al Mansur Mosque boasts a museum gallery (figure 1) open to local and international tourists, vital in revitalizing cultural diversity. This museum narrates the historical journey of Al Mansur Mosque, spanning over 300 years, from its construction to Indonesia's independence. The mosque is pivotal in history, as it witnessed a significant event when teacher Mansur hoisted the red and white flag during Indonesia's fight for freedom.

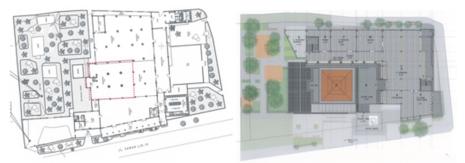


Figure 1: Plan of Al-Mansur Mosque before Revitalization (left), Plan after Revitalization 2020 (right) **Source:** Sandhy Sihotang, 2022 The one-of-a-kind architecture on display reflects the cultural diversity of the people and the outstanding craftsmanship of the time. The architectural evidence, such as pillars, is identical to those found in ancient Indonesian mosques. Aside from that, the pillar column's shape resembles a Greek Doric column, a trademark of Dutch colonial architecture. The mosque's original design was four-square, with a three-tiered *tajug* roof and a crown decoration. A small niche in the mosque room serves as a mihrab. The ornaments on the mosque's window doors show evidence of acculturation from Chinese culture, with carvings from Javanese culture and a window jalousie from Betawi culture. The Al Mansur Mosque has a minaret that combines local and Middle Eastern (Yaman) culture (figure 2).

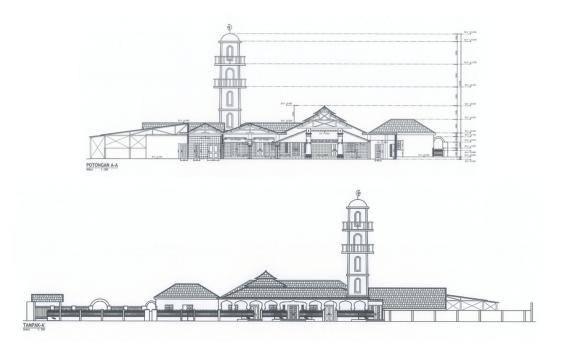
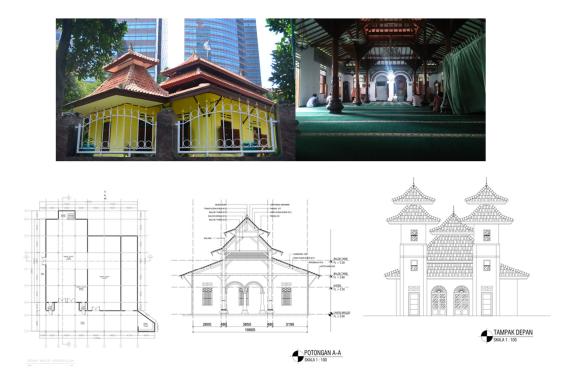


Figure 2: View (above) and Sectiion (below) of Al-Mansur Mosque Source: Author

A similar endeavor unfolds at Hidayatullah Mosque Semanggi, with religious tourism initiatives frequently conducted in collaboration with the DKI Provincial Tourism and Creative Economy Department. Visitors to this mosque are offered comprehensive insights into its history and cultural significance. It draws numerous local and foreign communities to admire its unique architecture and learn about its historical and cultural heritage. This mosque's distinctive design harmoniously blends elements from Hindu, Chinese, and Betawi cultures, mirroring Jakarta's pluralistic and multi-ethnic societal fabric. The mosque's roof, a fusion of these cultural influences, resembles a multi-tiered shield reminiscent of Chinese temple architecture (figure 3). Wooden door frames and windows resemble traditional Betawi house structures, while the interior is influenced by the Javanese *Joglo*-style ceilings,

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featuring exposed rafters and *Soko Guru*-style support poles. Arabic calligraphy adorns the pillars, and Chinese ornamental motifs reappear as floral carvings on the mosque's pulpit. The mosque is supported by eight pillars, symbolizing the five pillars of Islam (*syahadah*, prayer, zakat, fasting, and hajj) and the three core pillars of the Islamic faith (Islam, Iman, and Ihsan). Additionally, the mosque boasts twin towers.





These mosques have implemented specific strategies and initiatives to create a welcoming environment where individuals from diverse backgrounds can worship, learn, and connect. The conservation of these historic mosques serves as an inspiration, fostering participation and appreciation for Jakarta's cultural diversity among people from all walks of life. These sacred places represent harmony and a shared heritage in a city characterized by its rich tapestry of cultures.

7. The Role of Al Mansur Mosque and Hidayatullah Mosque in Promoting Cultural Heritage and Tolerance

The unique architectural designs of Al Mansur Mosque and Hidayatullah Mosque serve as distinctive representations of the surrounding communities' rich cultural and artistic diversity. These mosques offer opportunities for these communities to showcase their customs, creative expressions, music, and culinary traditions. In doing so, they actively encourage cultural exchange and appreciation among the city's residents. Notably, both local and visiting tourists, as well as cultural heritage researchers, frequently make

pilgrimages to these historic Jakarta mosques. Visitors gain insights into the city's cultural history and enduring traditions through tourism.

These sites offer guided tours and educational programs that provide valuable insights into the importance of tolerance and celebrating diversity. The active involvement of the community in preserving and maintaining these mosques fosters a sense of belonging, shared ownership, and collective responsibility among its members. Consequently, this engagement promotes cooperation and collaboration across various segments of society, further enhancing social cohesion and tolerance.

Furthermore, these mosques contribute significantly to conserving cultural heritage by maintaining and showcasing these architectural gems. Beyond their role as architectural marvels, mosques promote tolerance by facilitating interactions among individuals from diverse religious backgrounds. These interactions foster mutual understanding and respect for one another's beliefs and traditions.

Participation in various mosque activities also encourages community members to share their cultural experiences, ultimately contributing to developing a more inclusive and tolerant society. As hubs of communal engagement, Mosques actively contribute to creating a diverse and harmonious community.

Al Mansur Mosque and Hidayatullah Mosque frequently engage in charitable activities, including food assistance to those in need. Such acts of compassion promote tolerance and empathy for others. These mosques are also open to anyone interested in history and culture, further fostering cultural exchange and mutual understanding.

In addition to their religious functions, mosques are essential platforms for advocating tolerance, respecting diversity, and promoting peaceful coexistence. Religious leaders within these mosques play a pivotal role in shaping the attitudes and values of their congregations.

It is important to note that the impact of religious institutions, including mosques, on promoting cultural heritage and tolerance can vary significantly based on factors such as their leadership, location, and the communities they serve. To fully appreciate the specific contributions of Al Mansur Mosque and Hidayatullah Mosque to cultural heritage and tolerance, it is necessary to conduct research into their activities and initiatives."

8. Discussion

After researching the role of community involvement in safeguarding 18th-century mosques in Jakarta and its influence on the resurgence of cultural diversity, it is essential to analyze the findings. This study has ascertained that community engagement is pivotal in protecting Jakarta's historical mosques. Communities contribute financially and physically by sharing their local knowledge and a deep sense of belonging to these sacred sites. The conservation endeavors concerning these mosques significantly contribute to rejuvenating Jakarta's cultural diversity. The city's diverse architectural styles, cultural customs, and traditions are celebrated through these conservation efforts. The involvement of local communities empowers them to actively participate in conserving their cultural heritage, fostering a sense of pride and responsibility as custodians of their heritage. However, effective participation in conservation initiatives poses several challenges that communities must overcome. These challenges include financial limitations, bureaucratic hurdles, and the need for capacity building. A noteworthy example is the Hidayatullah Mosque, where the primary obstacle is developing the surrounding area into Jakarta's most expensive office center. Multiple investors are keen on commercializing this land, potentially impeding conservation efforts. Furthermore, reducing the local population due to relocations has also hindered conservation efforts. Nonetheless, the strong involvement of the community, coupled with support from the government and the cultural heritage conservation community, led to the successful conservation of this mosque.

Another case in point is the Al Mansur Mosque, located near a residential area, where the primary barrier to preservation is a lack of funding. Nevertheless, the community actively maintains and conserves the mosque's authenticity due to its historical and architectural significance, which drives their commitment.

Significant disparities in community capacities, especially concerning funding and knowledge, exist between the two mosques. Interviews with community members and stakeholders revealed variations in community participation models. Therefore, the dedication of the local community and political backing from the government are pivotal in realizing the roadmap for preserving the city's cultural heritage. The cultural heritage approach encourages community involvement in preserving cultural heritage (Suprapti, 2021).

9. Conclusion

The conservation of 18th-century mosques in Jakarta, exemplified by case studies of the Al Mansur Mosque and the Hidayatullah Mosque, is a compelling illustration of how community involvement can serve as a blueprint for safeguarding cultural diversity while embracing the city's rich historical legacy. This endeavor seeks to protect tangible cultural heritage and the intangible bonds encompassing identity, community, and tradition that define the vibrant cultural mosaic of Jakarta. Moreover, this research carries implications for cultural revitalization. Key findings of the significance of community engagement in cultural heritage conservation include:

- 1. This study underscores the pivotal role of local communities in preserving cultural heritage. These communities provide vital support regarding finances, labor, traditional knowledge, and a sense of ownership.
- 2. Conservation endeavors related to these historic mosques have significantly impacted the revival of Jakarta's cultural diversity. They embody the diverse architectural styles, cultural customs, and traditions that enrich the city.
- 3. Active involvement of local communities in cultural heritage conservation empowers them to become proactive participants, instilling a sense of pride and responsibility and motivating them to safeguard their cultural legacy.
- 4. This research is poised to identify communities' barriers to effectively participating in conservation initiatives. Constraints such as financial limitations, boundary issues, and the need for capacity-building may be uncovered.

5. This study holds considerable significance for Jakarta's cultural heritage and the global domain of heritage conservation. The 18th-century mosques of Jakarta symbolize the city's multifaceted, multicultural history, and their conservation contributes to a more profound comprehension and celebration of cultural diversity. Additionally, this research offers valuable insights into the role of community engagement in cultural heritage conservation, offering best practices that can be applied in similar contexts worldwide.

These findings yield practical applications and recommendations:

- 1. Policymakers should contemplate formulating policies that incentivize and facilitate community participation in cultural heritage conservation. They could encompass financial incentives, streamlining bureaucratic processes, and providing capacity-building programs.
- 2. Organizations dedicated to cultural heritage conservation and governmental agencies should develop comprehensive strategies to involve local communities effectively. These strategies should encompass educational initiatives, training programs, and the establishment of community engagement platforms.
- 3. Efforts should be directed towards enhancing educational heritage programs that raise awareness among the public and tourists about the cultural significance of these mosques. These programs are pivotal in nurturing an appreciation for Jakarta's diverse cultural heritage.
- 4. Encouraging collaboration among government officials, cultural heritage experts, and local communities is essential. Such a partnership can leverage the strengths of each stakeholder group to ensure the successful conservation of Jakarta's historic mosques.

These findings may pave the way for further research, such as a detailed exploration of specific challenges or success stories in community-led cultural heritage conservation. Ongoing research in this domain can contribute to a deeper understanding of the landscape and guide future conservation efforts.

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