

# THE ARABIC CULTURE, LANGUAGE, AND PEOPLE IN THE PERSPECTIVE OF SUNDAANESE COMMUNITY (CASE STUDY OF CIBIUK VILLAGE/DISTRICT COMMUNITY OF GARUT REGENCY)

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## Abstract

**Purpose:** This research is aimed to analyse the understanding of Sundanese people about Arabic culture, language, and people. The research was focused on Cibiuk Village/District, Garut Regency.

**Methodology:** This district was chosen as it is one of the Islamic bases in West Java Province. In this research, the researchers employed a descriptive-analytics method.

**Main Findings:** The results showed that the comprehension of the Sundanese people towards the Arabic culture, language, and people were elementary and only limited to Islam-related. Consequently, there was a mixed understanding of the three aspects. As a recommendation, certain efforts are necessary to improve their understanding of the Arabic culture, language, and people. Additionally, it was also discovered that the varied understanding could be observed from the aspects of historical distribution – which led to the indigenisation of Islam in Nusantara.

**Limitations/ Applications:** This situation occurred after going through sociological, cultural, and theological stages. When the religion entered and spread in Java, it was not in space since the Javanese had established its values, norms, and traditions.

**Novelty/Originality of this study:** The mixed understanding between elements of Arab and Islamic culture in Sundanese people can be observed from the historical aspects of the spread - which prompted the indigenisation of Islam in the archipelago. Owing to the elementary understanding of Arabic teachings in Sundanese people this study suggested that certain efforts are required to improve their understanding of the Arabic culture, language, and people.

**Keywords:** Culture, Language, Arabs, Indigenous Islam, Acculturation.

## INTRODUCTION

To this date, experts still argue on the exact time when Islam initially entered and spread in the Malay world. Some experts claim that Islam has existed since the first century of Hijri or 7<sup>th</sup> century. It is based on Chinese records from the T'ang Dynasty, of which one of the records had described the people of Ta-Shih and identified them as 'Arabs', who settled on the west coast of Sumatra. Additionally, it was stated that the presence of Islam at that time was triggered by the rapid development of maritime affairs between the East and West of Asia, especially after the advancement of three powerful dynasties, namely the Umayyah Caliphate (660-749 AD) in West Asia, the T'ang Dynasty (618-907 AD) in East Asia, and the Srivijaya Kingdom (7-14 AD) in Southeast Asia.

On the other hand, other experts stated that Islam originally entered the Malay World in the 13<sup>th</sup> century. This opinion refers to the attack and invasion of Baghdad by King of Mongol, Hulagu, in 1258 AD. The theory is then reinforced by an archaeological finding, the tombstone of Sultan Malik as-Salih in Gampong Samudera, Lhokseumawe who died in 696 H (1297 AD). This archaeological data is considered as the oldest and first tombstone that has the inscription of a Sultan's name in the region. Afterward, after comparing several historical data, such as Marco Polo's note, the manuscript of *Sejarah Melayu*, and *Hikayat Raja-raja Pasai*, it can be concluded that Islam was present in Samudera from 1270 through 1275 AD (Tjandrasasmita 2009; Raksorn, 2016).

However, disagreements do not overlook the fact that the Islamic missionaries in Nusantara did not only introduce religious teachings but also other cultural elements, including language, art, and literature. As a result, the acculturation occurred with the local community. Therefore, the term "native land" did not only refer to the land where Prophet Muhammad PBUH was born, but also the countries that Islamic teachings had passed through before arriving in the archipelago. These circumstances generated changes and the birth of new elements in literature, language, and social behaviour (Ikram, 1997, 137, 139; Irshad&Taib, 2017). Since the beginning of the AD century, the people of Nusantara, especially those who live on the coast, have international relations so that the possibility of a mutual influence relationship. Later, especially since the 13th AD century, Islamic teachings became the basis and nucleus of the Nusantara civilization. Islam brought a new concept into the cosmology of the local community, from the original concept of *Dewata Mulia Raja-Sang Hyang* to being a concept of *Khaliq-makhluk*. This new concept then demanded the Nusantara inhabitants to have faith and only worship to Allah (Takari 2013). At the beginning of the 15th century, maritime trade was virtually controlled by Muslim traders from India and the Arab World. Traders and Muslim missionaries spread influence along the main routes of sea trade, including Malaysia Peninsular and several coastal areas in Indonesia now (M. H. Abdullah n.d.). The spread of Islam increased due to social contact as a consequence of trade

and, later, international marriages. It was a process that occurs in stages (gradual) and takes place peacefully so that it deserves to be called Islamization, and was not religious conversion. Marriage between different royal rulers also made an important contribution to the further spread of Islam. A king of Malacca, for example, converted to Islam after marrying a princess of Pasai who had already adopted Islam. This event led to commercial expansion while increasing Muslim influence in the region ([\(Nasuruddin 1992\)](#)). At the same time, the indigenous people of Nusantara adopted the new culture and then mixed it with their own culture. That condition then causes changes in many aspects, such as reading materials, government style, music, dance, clothing, games, names, and poetry (*sya'ir*). Moreover, lately, Malay became a language of instruction and literary styles from Arabic, Persian and Indian to the Southeast Asian region. Firstly in Pasai, then in Malacca, Patani, Johor and Makassar, but above all in Aceh during the period 1570-1650, various religious works and classical literature from West Asia were translated, adapted, and this process had presented the new styles of Malay language ([Reid 2014, 275; Matusky&Chopyak 1998, 409-410; Alkatiri&Kamal 2013, 226](#)).

The period of the 15th to 17th centuries, which Anthony Reid called "the commercial period", was a time of great changes for "the land under the wind". In the form of culture and education, as well as in the people's beliefs, the legal system, even in the case of clothing and building styles, these commercial cities reorganize the communities that rely on them. Trade has nurtured the cities with ideas from the outside world, strengthening the elite and countries that are the fastest to benefit from them ([Reid 2014, 277-278](#)). Moreover, the occurrence of Islamic indigenisation became inevitable, especially with the spread of Islamic teachings through text. Text plays an important role in any Islamic development, including the Nusantara. All main teachings in Islam were found in the form of written text, such as Al-Quran and the Prophet's hadith. The explanations of the text in Al-Quran and hadith were also re-written into diverse religious texts, such as the text of *tafsir*, *fiqh*, *tasawuf*, *aqidah*, and so on, and translated into various languages. In the next phase, all of these texts become life guidance (way of life) for each Muslim ([Fathurahman 2010, Don, Puteh, Nasir, Ashaari, & Kawangit, 2016](#)). By practising the Islamic teachings, we would notice that the religious *Nusantara* texts contain efforts to reconstruct various Islamic intellectual thoughts, including daily social lives. These texts present the encounter of cultural, social, political and intellectual between the local culture and Islam at certain locations. In other words, these texts would enrich the local Islamic discourse in Nusantara, not only in Indonesia but also in Southeast Asia. Therefore, this is the definition of the indigenisation of Islam ([Fathurahman 2010](#)).

### Research Gap And Research Question

The condition mentioned above piqued the researchers' interest in studying Sundanese comprehension on the Arabic culture, language, and people. The researcher chose Sundanese ethnicity due to the expression of *Islam tëh Sunda* and *Sunda tëh Islam*. Meanwhile, Garut Regency was chosen because it is one of the Islamic bases in West Java, has Islamic-based institutions, and several Islamic thinkers. However, in this research, the researcher would only focus on the case study which was conducted in the community located in Cibiuk Village/ District, Garut Regency.

In overall, the main research question is to discover to what extent is the understanding of the Sundanese people towards the Arabic culture, language, and people? Next, the researcher would like to investigate. There is a condition of mixed understandings between the Arabic culture and Islam within the community? And if this happens, what would be the cause?

### LITERATURE REVIEW

The relationship between Islam, Arab, and the local culture in Indonesia has been a study subject of many researchers. For instance, [Muqoyyidin \(2013\)](#), wrote an article entitled "Dialektika Islam dan Budaya Lokal Jawa" that was published in *Jurnal Ibad'* Volume 11, No. 1, 2013. The article examined the issues in the dynamics of Islamic culture which existed, grew, and developed in Indonesia, specifically ones related to the dialectics between Islam and local Javanese culture. This thinking refers to the framework of cultural sociology. Generally, the spread of Islam in Java predominantly took the form of acculturation, both absorbing and dialogical. Despite the fluctuations in the relationship between Islam and Javanese culture, especially in the 19th century, the face of Javanese Muslim acculturation seems to be dominant among almost every religious expression of Muslim communities in the region. As a result, "syncretism" and tolerance between religions become a unique cultural character for Javanese Muslims. The Javanese context surrounding the rise of Islam in Java was animism and Hinduism. Hence, it is apparent that the "colours" and "taste" of Islam that has developed in Java is also influenced by animism and Hinduism.

Moreover, it was stated that in Indonesia, Islam has interacted with the local culture resulting in a unique and distinctive variant of Islam, such as Javanese Islam, Madura Islam, Sasak Islam, Minang Islam, Sundanese Islam, and so on. The variants of Islam are not Islam that has been detached from its pure roots, but Islam has acculturated with the local culture. In other words, enculturation has occurred. In the study of local culture, enculturation presumes a process of internalising a new knowledge into the context of local culture in a form of accommodation or adaptation. Enculturation is carried out to maintain an identity. Thus, Islam does not drift away from its ideological roots and the local culture does not completely disappear with the initiation of Islam. Islamic teachings in the text of al-Qur'an dan al-Hadith consist of sources of human rights. Undoubtedly, when it is practised or applied in an area – as the guidance of life – at the same time, local tradition may enrich the interpretation of its local community. As the interpretation is complemented with

sacred texts, the symbols that are visualised become sacred as well. Every religious tradition has its sacred symbols that are presented through a series of acts to express their beliefs by performing rituals, praises and servitude.

Similarly, another researcher who observed the interaction of Islam, the Arabs, and the local culture is [Zuhdi \(2012\)](#). His article titled “*Dakwahdan Dialektika Akulturasi Budaya*” was published in the *Religia Journal*, Volume 15, No. 1, 2012. The article also revealed a significant adaptation of Islam in the local traditions. Eventually, Islam is no longer considered as a threat, but a companion who plays an important role in the cultural transformation. Hence, this illustrates the character of the Islamic spread that was influenced by Indian *mubalig* in the early years of Islam in Indonesia. In contrast to the Indian influence, conservative Arabic *mubalig* showed a different approach by eliminating the local community practices. Thus, the Islamic character that was carried by the Indian *mubalig* was adopted by *Wali Sanga* into their *dakwah* in Java Island. The process of Islamic dialogue into the community traditions was actualised in the cultural process mechanism when attending local negotiations. The combination of Islam and local tradition enriched the local *tafsir* so it does not appear to dismiss in the existing condition. Islam shall not be perceived as Islam that exists in Arab regions, but it has to communicate with the local traditions of the community.

The preaching of *Wali Sanga* accommodated Islam as religious teaching that underwent the historisation with cultures ([Abdullah, 2014](#)). For instance, *Sunan Bonang* adapted the Java *gamelan* – that is strongly associated with Hindu aesthetics – into the nuance of *zikr* to stimulate the interest in transcendental life. The song “*Tombo Ati*” was one of his works. Furthermore, in *wayang* (puppetry) performances, *Sunan Bonang* modified the play and included interpretations typical of Islam. Therefore, ‘Indigenous Islam’ in response to ‘Authentic Islam’ presupposes three things. First, ‘Indigenous Islam’ has a contextual nature, that Islam is understood as teaching that corresponds to the context of era and place. Changes in time and regional differences are key to interpreting the teaching. Thus, Islam will experience changes and dynamics in responding to changing eras. Second, ‘Indigenous Islam’ is progressive; the progress of the times is not deemed as a threat to deviations from the basic teachings of Islam, but as a trigger for an intense creative response. Third, ‘Indigenous Islam’ has a liberating character. In a sense, Islam is a teaching that can answer human problems universally unlimited by religious and ethnic differences. Thus, Islam is not rigid in facing the social reality of an ever-changing society.

Based on this elaboration, it can be concluded that the ability to adapt to local culture will facilitate the propagation of Islam into the lowest strata of society. Inevitably, Islam as a religion that spreads throughout the world appears creatively in dialogue with the local community, is in a position to accept the traditions of the community, while modifying it into a new culture that can be accepted by the local community while still within the path of Islam.

In this study, the researchers also felt the need to mention an article entitled “*Kebudayaan Islam Bercorak Jawa (Adaptasi Islam Dalam Kebudayaan Jawa)*” by [SyamsulBakri \(2014\)](#). The article that was published in *Dinika Journal*, Volume 12, Number 2, 2014 also described the struggle of the Islamic teachings with local cultures and its interpretation according to local languages and traditions. In the perspective of cultural anthropology, every human being and society cannot avoid trying to interpret objects that are based on the historical conditions that affect them. This means that humans and society can understand and interpret an object (including religion) that corresponds to the historical conditions and traditions that surround it. Moreover, the interpretation of the object is related to the Islamic teachings, which are recognised as universal and contextual teachings, both in terms of time and place. In its history, Islam spread and faced many challenges that differed from one region to another due to differences in the culture of the people. These challenges were not confronted but rather took an adaptive-compromise path. Not surprisingly, in Java, due to the intellectual and cultural sensitivity of the *Wali*, Islam was presented with a polite, adaptive, and unfrontational face with the native Javanese (*kejawen*) or Javanese-Hindu culture. Islam was promoted through the method of cultural adaptation to be easily adapted sociologically by the Javanese society. By pointing to such historical facts, the *Wali*’s preaching in the indigenisation of Islam was considered successful because Islam developed rapidly in Java naturally through a compromising cultural process. Likewise, in conveying Islamic teachings, the early preachers also employed logic and traditions that had developed in Java, so that Islam was more easily accepted. This was also supported by Javanese culture which was inclusive and adaptable to various foreign traditions. The struggle of Islam with Javanese culture was a mutualistic one.

The next work that must be mentioned in the article entitled “*Pribumisasi Islam Dalam Konteks Budaya Jawadan Integrasi Bangsa*”. The article by [Abdullah \(2014\)](#) was published in the *Indo-Islamika Journal*, Volume 4, Number 1, 2014. The article also examined Islam and Javanese culture, the main theme that became a discourse in the life of the Archipelago. During the past centuries when Islam came to the archipelago, the two dialogued with other faiths, such as Hinduism, Buddhism, and other local religions. Javanese culture, on the other hand, is a legacy of Javanese people for thousands of years and continues to enrich the world’s cultural treasures. The relationship between Islam and Java, therefore, attracted the attention of researchers and has produced many scientific works. Throughout history, the relationship between Islam and Javanese culture has not always been smooth. Tension and consensus occur between the two, both visible and not. This tension refers to the indigenisation of Islam in Java; the mutual lending in the transformation process between external elements into Javanese locality or vice versa. The indigenisation of Islam, therefore, is an articulation of the social interactions of Islam and Java. In the context of the nation-state, Islamic indigenisation must rise to a higher level to achieve national integration. This article discusses the indigenisation of

Islam in the context of Javanese culture which aims to build national integration. This discussion is initiated from the idea that there is no integration without the integration of tribes and there is no integration of the nation without the integration of followers of the religion.

However, the indigenisation of Islam will continue in dialectic of society with an acceleration of change, both qualitatively and quantitatively. In that case, it is necessary to involve intellectual elites to act as cultural intermediaries so that the indigenisation of Islam runs without significant disputes. With a critical attitude of openness, Muslim intellectual elites will respond appropriately and provide key concepts of how the relationship between Islam and Javanese culture is laid down to produce synergy. Islam and Javanese culture have experienced a long process of interaction. Both have learned and appreciated each other. Javanese culture has played itself as a “complementary” to the Islamic vision of *rahmatanlil-‘alamin*. On the other hand, Islam has appeared very effectively in the archipelago because it pays attention to local elements as a means of elaborating on the operational universality of its teachings. However, the indigenisation of Islam in the Javanese culture does not stop at this point. This situation must progress to a broader point, namely the interests of national integration. The relationship between Islam and Javanese culture that has experienced strong familiarity must become a social capital for strong national integration. It must become the glue for the soul of national unity supported by the souls of Indonesian people. The tribes, culture, and values of Islam subsequently become the peaks of Indonesian civilisation. In this context, Islamic values are values that have been tied to local ones to become effective and relevant to the values of civil society.

Another article worthy of mention is the work of [Lutfi \(2016\)](#). The article titled “Islam Nusantara: Relasi Islam dan Budaya Lokal” was published in *Shahih Journal*, Volume 1, Number 1, 2016. This article examined the concept of *Islam Nusantara* (archipelago Islam) in terms of the theoretical structure of Islamic relations and local culture and the reasons it was employed as the concept of Islamic preaching *rahmatanlil ‘alamiin* by Nahdlatul Ulama intellectuals. This commenced from NU's intellectual “claim” that this concept is an intermediary in the debate over the relationship between Islam and local culture, even on a global scale, to be preached on the international stage. *Islam Nusantara* is only a discourse that does not meet scientific standards. The presence of the idea of *Islam Nusantara* (IN) is inseparable from the struggle of the two groups in the interpretation of Islamic universality. The first group defines that the teachings of Islam brought by the Prophet Muhammad - which incidentally is Arabic-cultured - are definitive so they must be followed as they are. It is not surprising that this so-called fundamentalist has the ambition to uniformise all cultures in the world as one, as practised by the Prophet Muhammad. Different cultures are not considered part of Islam. Meanwhile, the second group understands the universality of Islamic teachings as being unlimited in time and place so that they can infiltrate any culture. This group wants Islam to be presented as a value that can influence all cultures. Islam lies in the value, not the physical form of that culture. This group is called the substantive group. Hence, *Islam Nusantara* tries to be an intermediary because it considers the first group has failed. The fundamentalist presents an unfriendly face of Islam and tends to force it on other cultures, even using violence in preaching Islam. They also consider the second group has distorted the Islamic teachings. The problem is, as revealed in [Lutfi's \(2016\)](#) research, the concept of Islamic Nusantara is not yet fully mature ([Al-khresheh, Khaerurrozikin, & Zaid, 2020](#)).

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

This research is a qualitative study that is defined as a process that attempts to gain a better understanding of the complexities that exist in human interactions ([Arnas, 2016](#); [Marshal, 1995](#) in [Sarwono2006](#); [Ramanauskaite&Vaisnys, 2017](#)). The above definition shows several keywords in qualitative research, namely process, understanding, complexity, interaction, and humans. The process of conducting research is an emphasis on qualitative research. Therefore, researchers focus more on the process rather than the final results. The target of qualitative research is humans because humans are the source of problems and at the same time the problem solvers. Even so, qualitative research does not only limit research on humans. Other subjects can be events, history, objects in the form of photographs, artifacts, relics of ancient civilizations, and so forth. Thus, the target of qualitative research is humans along with all their culture and activities ([Sarwono 2006, 193-194](#)).

The main data source in this research is the variety of cultural elements passed down from generation to generation in the Cibiuk Village/District community, Garut Regency. To maximise the results of the research, data collection was carried out as follows:

- 1) Participation. Data collection techniques through direct involvement with the object study. Because the object of this research was the community, researchers were required to socialise so they can hear, see, and feel their experiences. In practice, the researchers used a questionnaire technique to 100 residents who came from various educational and professional backgrounds.
- 2) Observation. Data collection techniques through systematic recording of events, behaviour, objects seen and other necessary elements to support the research. Initially, the research gathered as much information as possible before carrying out the observation that solely focused on the research theme.
- 3) In-depth Interview. Data collection techniques through face to face with the research objects. This technique allowed the researchers to obtain a lot of data. However, the involvement of emotional aspect became the research weakness. Therefore, good cooperation between the interviewer and the interviewee was highly necessary.



- 4) Document Review. Data collection techniques by reading and studying written materials. This technique was needed to understand the culture and values adopted by the research objects.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### Questionnaire Results

As stated in the previous section, this research was intended to measure the extent of the Sundanese people's understanding of the Arabic culture, language, and people. Nevertheless, this research was carried out with a focus in the area of the Cibiuk Village/District, Garut Regency. The questionnaire and interview of 100 respondents were directed at three aspects to be measured, namely culture, language, and people. In this case, the researchers asked open questions to capture more data from the respondents.

#### *On the Arabic Cultural Aspect*

In this section, the researchers presented 13 questions related to the understanding of culture. **First**, “what form and type of culture do you know from the Arabs?”. To that question, 44 respondents answered “art (calligraphy, *marawis*, and *qaṣīda*)”, 14 respondents answered “attire”, 18 respondents answered “others”, and 24 respondents said, “I do not know”. **Second**, “how do you know the culture?”. 38 respondents answered “Qur’an recitation group”, 28 respondents answered “television / social media”, 4 respondents answered “relatives/parents”, 18 respondents answered “other”, and 12 people answered, “I do not know”. **Third**, “mention Arabic cultures that you know”. 15 respondents answered “Arabic writing/calligraphy”, 16 respondents answered “fasting, reading Qur’an, and *zakat*”, 19 respondents answered “music”, 7 respondents answered “Qur’an recitation”, 15 respondents answered “marriage”, 15 respondents answered “attire”, and 13 respondents answered, “I do not know”. **Fourth**, “does this culture exist in your area?”. For that question, 73 respondents answered “yes”, 12 respondents answered “I do not know”, and 15 respondents answered “other”.

**Fifth**, “is the Arab culture that grows and develops in your area the same as the view of the Qur’an?”. 72 respondents answered “yes”, 8 respondents answered “inconsequent”, and 20 respondents answered, “I do not know”. **Sixth**, “as a native Sundanese Garut, do you know the cultural ceremony for pregnant women, from four months, seven months, and the birth ceremony of a baby?”. 66 respondents answered “yes”, 15 respondents answered “thanksgiving culture”, and 19 respondents answered, “I do not know”. **Seventh**, “how do you view the ceremony?”. 26 respondents answered “an Islamic culture”, 52 respondents answered “good (praying)”, 8 respondents answered “other things”, and 14 respondents answered, “I do not know”.

**Eighth**, “do the *marhabaan* ceremony for newborn together with the *aqiqahan* ceremony belong to the regional culture or the Islamic culture?”. To that question, 71 respondents answered “the Islamic culture”, 15 respondents answered “the Sundanese culture”, 5 respondents answered “other”, and 9 respondents answered, “I do not know”. **Ninth**, “what is your view of circumcision for girls and boys in your area?”. 60 respondents answered “circumcision is *sunnah* for girls and mandatory for boys”, 16 respondents answered “good”, 7 respondents answered “Islamic culture”, 10 respondents answered “others”, and 7 respondents answered, “I do not know”. **Tenth**, “What is your view of *walimatulkhitan* with all the celebratory parties?”. 56 respondents answered “thanksgiving”, 12 respondents answered “Islamic culture”, 12 respondents answered “may if possible”, and 20 respondents answered, “I do not know”. **Eleventh**, “what kind of cultural ceremony do you know that is commonly used when a child will be circumcised?”. To that question, 42 respondents answered “*renggong* horse and *singa Depok*”, 21 respondents answered “thanksgiving event”, 25 respondents answered “inviting *Ustaz*”, and 12 respondents answered, “I do not know”. **Twelfth**, “for a bride, what kind of culture is commonly known and practised in your area?”. 42 respondents answered “*dipingit* (seclusion)”, 21 respondents answered “*siraman*”, 13 respondents answered “*ziarah*”, 12 respondents answered “other”, and 12 respondents answered, “I do not know”. **Thirteenth**, “about *tahlil* and Quran recitation after a family member died, what is your view?”. 15 respondents answered “an Islamic culture”, 12 respondents answered “mandatory”, 58 respondents answered “good to do”, 1 respondent answered “normal”, and 14 respondents answered, “I do not know”.

The results of the questionnaire confirmed that in the Cibiuk Village/District community, Garut Regency there has been a mixed understanding between the teachings of Islam, Arabic culture, and local culture. This mixture of understanding applies to all the rituals that are carried out starting from birth, marriage to death. This can be observed from the existence of rites to the unborn child until his birth. Each prospective mother and father, based on inherited understanding from the ancestors, must prepare for the presence of babies, both material and mental preparation. In this context, it is not surprising that special rites emerge when the fetus is four months and seven months old. Commonly, it involves the Quran recitation, especially Surah Yasin, Surah Yusuf, or Surah Maryam. The reading of the three surahs is not groundless. Some Muslim communities understand that Yasin is the “heart of the Quran”, while Surah Yusuf is read usually after the fetus in the womb is known to be male. Parents hope, if one day the baby is born, he would “inherit” the physical appearance and noble character of the Prophet Yusuf. In the surah, Prophet Yusuf was a prophet who was not only good-looking but also pious, intelligent, and wise. Conversely, if the fetus is known to be female, then Surah Maryam will be recited. It means the same, hoping that the baby would “inherit” the physical appearance and personality of the holy woman.

After the baby is born, Sundanese people (as other ethnic groups in Indonesia) have a tradition of welcoming baby births, namely *aqiqah* and *marhaban*. Usually, the rite is held seven days after birth. *Aqiqah* is slaughtering a goat or sheep, while *marhaban* is solemn praise to Allah Almighty in a solemn manner and reciting salutations upon Rasulullah PBUH. Through *marhaban*, by its meaning, everyone welcomes the newborn child. Of course, the welcoming words are accompanied by hopes that one day the child would bring calm, peace, and happiness. This tradition is very similar to the Arabs' rites, especially in Egypt. In Egypt, *marhaban* is called *Sebou* or *Sab'a*, a rite that is held a week after the baby is born. The rite begins with bathing the baby and then putting on new clothes. At the same time, mothers sprinkle salt around the house. The action is believed to protect the baby from being disturbed by spirits. Subsequently, the baby is placed in a specially decorated place and then carried around in the house followed by family members with candles (Gamal 2015).

The mixed understanding can also be observed in weddings, especially in the procession of *siraman* (*saba'a*), and *berinai* (*henna*), giving of dowry, and performances of Zafin dance. Some Garut people, as seen through the results of the questionnaire, consider that the whole procession is the teachings of Islam. No wonder if these series of rituals at a wedding - which is an Arab tradition - has spread to the entire Muslim world, and even in remote areas of Garut Regency, West Java.

However, the cultural behaviour of each community is influenced by the culture of the community's ancestors. Likewise with Arab society. Before Islam came, *Jahiliyah* culture influenced all aspects of behaviours in the Arabs' life. Now, Arab society has changed direction by only accommodating Islamic cultural values. However, even amid contemporary Arab society, sometimes the *Jahiliyah* culture still emerges.

### On the Arabic Language Aspect

In this section, the researchers asked 15 questions related to understanding Arabic. **First**, "what do you know about Arabic?" To that question, 38 respondents answered "language used in prayer", 36 respondents answered "the language of the Quran", 10 respondents answered "*hijaiyah* letters", 6 respondents answered "vocabulary (*baytun*, *masjidun*)", 13 respondents answered "*tajwid*", and 7 respondents answered, "I do not know". **Second**, "how do you know Arabic?". To that question, 45 respondents answered "from teachers", 17 respondents answered "from parents", 18 respondents answered "from books/hadith/Quran", 12 respondents answered "others", and 8 respondents answered, "I do not know". **Third**, "can you read Arabic?". To that question, 77 respondents answered "yes" and 23 respondents answered, "I do not know". **Fourth**, "can you write Arabic?". To that question, 78 respondents answered "yes" and 22 respondents said, "I do not know". **Fifth**, "what kind of knowledge do you know about Arabic?". To that question, 44 respondents answered "Nahwu and Sarf", 20 respondents answered "reading", 15 respondents answered "Al-Quran", 9 respondents answered "others", and 12 respondents answered, "I do not know". **Sixth**, "do you know the science of Nahwu (syntax) and Sarf (morphology)?". To that question, 63 respondents answered "yes" and 37 respondents answered, "I do not know".

**Seventh**, "what do you know about Nahwu (syntax) science?". For that question, 53 respondents answered "*al-kalam/ilmualat*", 15 respondents answered "*mubtada* and *Khabar*", 15 respondents answered "*fi'il* and *maf'ul* changes", 1 respondent answered "other", and 16 respondents answered, "I do not know". **Eighth**, "please mention a few sentences that contain elements of Nahwu (syntax) science?". To that question, 44 respondents answered "*Zaydunqā'imun*", 10 respondents answered "*isim* and *fi'il*", 16 respondents answered "*bismillah*", 7 respondents answered "others", and 23 respondents answered, "I do not know". **Ninth**, "what do you know about Sarf (morphology)?". To that question, 32 respondents answered "change in word forms", 20 respondents answered "*fa'ala-yaf'ilu*", 5 respondents answered "know", 15 respondents answered "others", and 28 respondents answered, "I do not know". **Tenth**, "can you say a few sentences that contain elements of Sarf (morphology)?". On that question, 43 respondents answered "*abaaraba-yaḍribu-darban*", 16 respondents answered "*fa'ala-yaf'ilu-fa'lan*", 14 respondents answered "*qāla-yaqūlu*", 4 respondents answered "other", and 23 respondents answered, "I do not know".

**Eleventh**, "how many patterns or *wazan* do you know are in Sarf (morphology)?". To that question, 47 respondents answered "six", 15 respondents answered "nine", 13 respondents answered "others", and 25 respondents answered, "I do not know". **Twelfth**, "how do you distinguish between the form of *ṣulāsi* and *rubā'i*?". To that question, 53 respondents answered "*ṣulāsi* 3 letters and *rubā'i* 4 letters", 12 respondents answered "*fa'ala*", 3 respondents answered "other", and 32 respondents answered, "I do not know". **Thirteenth**, "do you know the form of *mujarrad* and *mazīd*?". To that question, 62 respondents answered "yes" and 38 respondents said, "I do not know". **Fourteenth**, "are you very familiar with the principles of Sarf (morphology) science?". To that question, 48 respondents answered "yes" and 52 respondents answered, "I do not know". **Fifteen**, "where did you learn the science of Nahwu and Sarf?". A total of 56 respondents answered "in the *pasantren*", 19 respondents answered "in the *majelistaklim*", and 25 respondents answered, "I do not know".

The results of the questionnaire showed that the Garut community's understanding of Arabic was elementary. In some respondents, Arabic is only understood as a language that is directly related to daily religious worship. They have not yet received knowledge that Arabic is one of the languages belong to the Semitic family, related to Hebrew, Akadiah, Aramiyah, and Assyriah. Most of them also do not know that Arabic is the official language of 22 countries located in West Asia (Middle East) and northern Africa. Until now, the existence of Arabic has been maintained mainly because it

is the language of the Quran. In other words, as long as Muslims are living in this world, the Quran and Arabic will preserve.

### ***On the Arabic People Aspect***

In this section, the author asked 10 questions related to the understanding of the Arabic people. **First**, “do you know the Arabs?” To that question, as many as 55 respondents answered “yes” and 45 respondents answered, “I do not know”. **Second**, “how do you know the Arabs?” 42 respondents answered “from the teachers”, 21 respondents answered “from the *ulama*”, 4 respondents answered “television”, 12 respondents answered “from the Quran”, 11 respondents answered “from community leaders”, and 11 respondents answered, “I do not know/forget”. **Third**, “how many Arab nations do you know?” To that question, 32 respondents answered “five”, 13 respondents answered “two”, 22 respondents answered “seven”, 12 respondents answered “other”, and 21 respondents answered, “I do not know”.

**Fourth**, “what are the characteristics of the Arabs that you know of?” 32 respondents answered “wearing the veil”, 12 respondents answered “wearing cloak”, 15 respondents answered “speaking Arabic”, 28 respondents answered “big and tall”, and 13 respondents answered, “I do not know”. **Fifth**, “which continent that the Arabs live?” To that question, 42 respondents answered “Asia and Africa”, 38 respondents answered “others”, and 20 respondents answered, “I do not know”. **Sixth**, “where did the Arabs settle?” 42 respondents answered “Saudi Arabia”, 9 respondents answered “Egypt”, 21 respondents answered “Medina”, 13 respondents answered “other”, and 15 respondents answered, “I do not know”. **Seventh**, “which countries are located in the territory of the Arabs?”. 41 respondents answered “Saudi Arabia”, 12 respondents answered “Iraq”, 20 respondents answered “Egypt”, 13 respondents answered “others”, and 14 respondents answered, “I do not know”. **Eighth**, “what is your view of the contemporary Arabs?” To that question, 49 respondents answered “good”, 33 respondents answered “advanced”, and 18 respondents answered, “I do not know”. **Ninth**, “what is your view of the Arabs at the time of the Prophet?” 52 respondents answered “good”, 10 respondents answered “not good”, 23 respondents answered “Islamic”, and 15 respondents answered, “I do not know”. **Tenth**, “what do you know about Saudi Arabia?” 42 respondents answered “Kaaba and Nabawi Mosque”, 23 respondents answered “dates and Zamzam water”, 14 respondents answered “Arabic writing”, 10 respondents answered “other”, and 11 respondents answered, “I do not know”.

The results of the questionnaire showed that most respondents knew the Arabs. However, the knowledge was still limited to physical appearance. Most respondents did not have in-depth knowledge about the identity of the Arabs, let alone the history of cultural development. They did not have the knowledge that the Arabs originated from the *Samiah* (Semites), son of Prophet Noah PBUH, Sam. They also did not know that the Arabs were divided into two groups, namely *Ba'idah* Arabs and *Baqiah* Arabs. The Arab *Ba'idah*, the early Arabs, are said to have become extinct, such as the Ad, the Thamuds, and the Imlaq. While the *Baqiah* Arabs are further divided into two: *Musta'ribah* Arabs and *Aribah* Arabs. *Musta'ribah* Arabs are the descendants of the Prophet Ismail, also known as *Adnaniyah* Arabs. Meanwhile, *Aribah* Arabs are the descendants of Ya'rib bin Yasjub bin Qahthan, also known as *Qahthaniyah* Arabs. The main difference between the two tribes is their skin colour, with *Adnaniyah* Arabs, have a brighter skin colour compared to *Qahthaniyah* Arabs. In terms of their settlements, the *Qahthaniyah* Arabs inhabit the southern regions of the Arabian Peninsula, such as Yemen.

During the life period of *Ba'idah* Arabs, before the 7th century AD, the Arabs only lived in four regions, namely *Syibhul Jazirah Arab*, Valley of Sham and Iraq, *Syibhul Jazirah Sinai*, and Eastern Sahara Wadi Nile. At that time, they lived in two regions, namely the northern and southern regions of the Arabian Peninsula. The northern region was inhabited by the *Adnaniyah* Arabs, while the southern region was inhabited by the *Qahthaniyah* Arabs. Later, after Islam was present, the Arabs spread to Iraq (Hirrah), Syria (Damascus), Egypt (Alexandria), Libya, Morocco, Tunisia, Algeria, and even Spain (Sevilla, Elvira, Toledo) and France (Bordeaux and Poitiers). However, along with political developments, the two regions on the European continent were abandoned in the 15th century AD. Furthermore, during the Umayyad Caliphate, the Arabs had expanded into the Balkans, Bukhara, Khawarizm, Ferghana, Samarkand, and Afghanistan, even to the regions of India, Balukhistan, Sind, Punjab, and Malta.

At present, the largest portion of the Arab communities settles in the arid regions of West Asia and North Africa. The Arab world stretches from the coast of Mauritania and Morocco in the west to the Arabian Gulf in the east, and from Somalia in the south to Iraq and Syria in the north. Administratively, the Arab countries are located in five regions: (1) the Arabian Peninsula, namely the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Oman, Qatar, and Yemen; (2) Al-Hilal al-Khashib, namely Iraq, Syria, Jordan, Lebanon, and Palestine; (3) the Wadi Nile region, namely Egypt and Sudan; (4) the African Qarn Region, namely Somalia and Djibouti; and (5) the Maghribi Arab Region, namely Libya, Tunisia, Algeria, Morocco, and Mauritania. All Arab countries belong to the Arab League (*al-Jāmi'ah al-'Arabiyyah*), a charitable organisation to protect the interests of its members, which was founded in Cairo, Egypt on March 22, 1945.

### **Arab, Islam, dan Local Culture**

As discussed in the previous section, missionaries of Islam in the archipelago not only carried religious teachings but also other cultural elements, including language, art, and literature. Afterward, there was acculturation with the indigenous community. Thus, the term “native land” did not only refer to the land where Prophet Muhammad was born,



but also the countries that Islamic teachings had passed through before arriving in the archipelago. These circumstances generated changes and the birth of new elements in literature, language, and social behaviour (Ikram 1997, 137, 139). In summary, according to Marcus and Fisher (1986) as noted by Sumarsam (2003, 2-3), all cultures in the world, including Javanese and Sundanese cultures, must be viewed as “a product of the history of alignment, resistance and adjustment”. Thus, the key to understanding any cultural element lies in its historical outlook. One of the main features of Javanese history is the continued openness of Javanese people to foreign cultures and ideas. In essence, relations with foreign cultures stimulates the development of Javanese culture. If viewed as such, it would be inappropriate to consider the Javanese culture as a single entity that develops from the 14th century AD until today; we ought to recognise it as the plural culture. After all, we must always be attentive of these plural traits in any historical period because there are always differences between racial groups (Javanese, European, Eurasian, Chinese, Arabic, Malay), class systems, rural-urban, and gender. However, tradition is man-made, so it is triggered, developed, and changed according to the perspective of the performer. Cultural changes affect the attitude of traditional performers and cause sustainability, development, or changes in tradition. Whenever there is contact with a foreign culture, cultural change or development is very likely to occur. To fully understand the development of Javanese culture, we must discuss the longstanding relationship between Javanese and foreign cultures (Sumarsam, 2003, 3).

Before the European culture arrived in Java, the Javanese tradition had long been developing; many foreign elements had been absorbed. These foreign elements - namely Hindu, Buddhist and Islamic elements - were all synchronised and absorbed into the cultural matrix of the “original” Javanese *keraton* (palace) which had become very complex. No wonder then that religion underlay the traditional Javanese culture. However, the absorption of European culture was remarkably different because it was essentially secular (European religion has no significant effect on Java). In essence, religion also underlay Javanese perceptions of their society. The role of religion in the spread of foreign culture in Java caused the term “Hinduisasi”, not “Indianisation”, more appropriate as an explanation of the strong influence of Indian culture. Yet, the process was not a simple matter in which Hinduism replaced the Javanese belief system. Furthermore, the gradual syncretisation embedded Hindu-Buddhist elements into Javanese belief systems and formed traditional Javanese value systems and “authentic” customs of Javanese life. This value system then became the foundation of the future Javanese way of life. The foundation of the traditional Javanese value system was very strong so that the coming of Islam in the next period did not result in significant changes in values. As Sumarsam (2003, 8) stated, referring to Anderson (1990), this was because “there are many elements of compatibility between the types of Islam that entered Java in the 15th and 16th centuries and the cultural traditions they faced”. Moreover, according to Affandi (1999: 74), Islam brought by traders from Gujarat, West India has been influenced by Hindu culture to make the religion very close to the life of Nusantara’s people. It is also important to point out that Sufi Islam dominated the early Javanese Islamisation. This helped the resilience and development of the preceding traditional spectacle arts because Sufism believed in the power of music as a way to unite man and his God. This positive step and attitude of Sufism towards music supported the development of Javanese and Islamic music. There is evidence that these two music interacted, encouraging the development of Javanese gamelan and Javanese Islamic music (*rebana*) (Sumarsam, 2003, 8-9).

Ricklefs (2012, 5-7) stated that *keraton* and Islamic traditions were acted and reconciled by the greatest king of Mataram, Sultan Agung (r. 1613-1646 AD). He continued his royal liaison with the most powerful of Central Java’s indigenous (and not Islamic) deities, the Goddess of the Southern Ocean (*Ratu Kidul*), but he also took decisive steps to make his court a more Islamic one. Agung’s reconciliation of Islamic identity with Javanese royal traditions, however, was not pursued with similar enthusiasm by his successors. For several decades, rebellions against the dynasty largely justified themselves in the name of Islam. After decades of destructive civil wars in which religious identity played a major role, a second reconciliation of the *keraton* and Islamic sensibilities took place in the reign of Pakubuwana II (r. 1726–1749). There were indeed *keraton*-led efforts to make the society more devoutly Islamic. The people were commanded to be diligent in attending the mosque on Fridays, gambling was outlawed at the court (with an exception for cock-fighting) and there is some evidence of the hands of thieves being amputated. Pre-Islamic doctrines, works of literature and other practices were, however, preserved within the court, but they were understood as being properly Islamic. This Islamisation project was idiosyncratic in other ways as well. Opium was banned (in theory) but the court’s taste for European wine, liquor and beer was evidently unabated. Pakubuwana II was no ideal king. He was young and inconstant. His court disintegrated into deadly cliques that he could not manage. In 1740, when the war began between the Dutch East India Company (VOC) and locally domiciled Chinese with their Javanese allies, the king first sided against the Company. He attacked, besieged and eventually compelled the surrender of the Company fortress at his court city of Kartasura, forcing the surviving Europeans to convert to Islam. He was now the conquering Sufi king of the Holy War, bringing low Christian kafirs. But changing military circumstances then made him think that this had been a mistake and that it would have been wiser to side with the Company after all. Tentative steps towards reconciliation produced disaster since neither the Company nor the rebels could now trust him. He found that his court became the target of the rebels; in 1742 the *keraton* fell to them and Pakubuwana II took flight. Until Mataram was split into the Yogyakarta Sultanate and the Surakarta Sunanate, as a consequence of the Giyanti agreement in 1755, the reconciliation of Javanese and Islamic identities, beliefs and styles produced what Ricklefs has termed a ‘Mystic Synthesis’. Within the capacious boundaries of Sufism, this synthesis rested on three main pillars. First, a strong sense of Islamic identity: to be Javanese was to be Muslim. Second, observation of the five pillars of Islamic ritual: the confession of faith (*Shahada*), five daily prayers in the direction of Mecca (*salat*), giving alms (*zakat*), fasting during the month of Ramadan (*puasa* or



*pasa*) and the pilgrimage to Mecca (the hajj) for those who were able to undertake it. Third, despite the potential contradiction with the first two, acceptance of the reality of local Javanese spiritual forces such as RatuKidul (the Goddess of the Southern Ocean), SunanLawu (the spirit of Mount Lawu, essentially a wind-god) and a host of lesser supernatural beings.

Reading from a sociological perspective on the phenomenon that Islam was present and dialectic with tradition showed that Islam was a response to conditions that were specific to Arab land ([Muqoyyidin2013, 9-10](#)). Islam as a universal and cosmopolitan religion is always open to ideas and traditions from the outside that are different and often give a very good appreciation, by adopting and making it an integral part of Islam itself. Reflections and manifestations of Islamic cosmopolitanism can even be traced from the earliest history of Islamic culture in the lifetime of the *Rasulullah* to subsequent generations, both in nonmaterial formats (such as concepts of thought) and those that are material (such as architectural art of building). Greek civilization with its philosophy has also been widely known to have a strong influence on the construction of philosophical traditions in Islam. There was even a great effort from Muslim philosophers to combine religion (Islam) with philosophy as a dual thing that comes from the same source, namely God ([Abidin, 2009: 301-302](#)). In this context, several conditions need to be recognised. First, to borrow Bizawie's term (2003, 33-34), Islam itself was born as a local product which was later universalised and transcended so that it became universal Islam. In this context, what is meant by Islam as a local product is Islam that was born in the Arab region (Hijaz), in the Arab situation and was intended as an answer to the native problems there? Second, however much it is believed that Islam is a universal revelation from God, it is ultimately perceived by followers following experience, problems, intellectual capacities, cultural systems, and all diversity in the community. In other words, the actualisation of Islam in history has made it inseparable from the aspect of locality, ranging from Arabic, Persian, Turkish, Indian, to Southeast Asian, each of which has its characteristics. Thus, as Islam develops, it will never be the same from one place to another or from one time to another. In the next phase, Islam and the views associated with it form a cultural tradition or a complex of traditions. These cultural traditions grow on their own, change, and broader in scope ([Hodgson 2002, 112; Najitama, 2007](#)). [Abadi and Susanto \(2012, 229\)](#) identified this reality as an accommodationist perspective which, in turn, will lead to an understanding that the relationship between Islam and local culture happens in the appreciative-accommodative-affirmative construction so that it will display the face of diverse Islamic traditions. In this perspective, the talk about the processes of enculturation and acculturation of local cultural traditions run in various forms. History has also proven that there is no single form of Islamic cultural tradition ([Muqoyyidin 2013, 9-10](#)). This condition also applies to the Cibiuk Village/District community, Garut Regency, the main object of this study.

This accommodationist perspective had been carried out brilliantly by *Wali Sanga*. They attempted to introduce Islam through traditional channels so learning the local wisdom was necessary. They selectively adopted elements of local culture, social systems, arts, and government styles which were considered to be appropriate and then developed them in the Islamic tradition. This strategy has proven effective in familiarizing Islam with the local environment. The teachings of Islam can also be well received by the local community because they do not face frontally with the local long-time customs and traditions ([Farida, 2015, p. 144-145](#)). From this point, various *serat* or books were born. Puppetry which was a ritual and ceremonial part of Hinduism could be transformed into a means of *da'wah* and introduction to monotheistic teachings. This was such sophisticated creativity that all members of society in all social strata including farmers, traders and aristocrats were Muslimised through this path. They felt safe in the presence of Islam because it existed without threatening their traditions, culture and position ([Muqoyyidin 2013, p. 10](#)). By many circles, this is called the indigenisation of Islam that has a direct bearing on the long history of the development of Islam in the archipelago. the indigenisation of Islam as a socio-historical process is a necessity. That is because the universality of Islam requires an operational description for its existence to be more effective. Furthermore, universality will not be effective without being bound by local values. For the universality of Islam to be present and relevant to the roar of social life on earth, it needs to be simplified, easily understood by reason, so that it becomes a practical guideline for human life. If this is the case, the indigenisation of Islam has found its meaning ([Abdullah 2014, p. 68-69](#)).

Judging from the history of origins, all religions on Java were imported. Hindus came from India, Buddhism was from India-China, while Islam and Christian originated from the Middle East (Arabic). The original "religion" of Java is Animism, a belief in spirits and rulers outside themselves. This historical reality reinforces the notion that the religion in Java is a hybrid product of the cross-cultural intercourse of religions that arrived there. Islamologists call it a syncretic religion. *Wali Sanga* understood this reality so that their method of preaching was highly tolerant and respected local traditions ([Abdullah 2014,p. 71-72](#)).

The past spread of Islamic indigenisation in Java was engrained and brought forth many theories. These theories have advantages and disadvantages. However, the indigenisation of Islam or other world's big ideas into Javanese locality is a natural process that cannot be stopped. This kind of process also occurs in other regions. When it spread out of the shell of the Arabian Peninsula, Islam acculturated with a variety of traditions that were originally valid in the "occupied" territories. Africa, India, South Asia, Europe, America, Southeast Asia, and Australia were regions that had their civilisations when Islam came. It demonstrates that the intellectual interaction between Islam and local cultures contributes to more insightful Islamic treasures. The encounter of Islam with other regions records brilliantly how it refines the interpretations of Islam. Treasures of literature, art, science, philosophy, hermeneutics, medicine, and theatre enrich Islamic views. In the encounter with Hellenism (Greek-Roman) civilisation in the Middle Ages, Islam reaped

many benefits by causing the leap of Islamic civilisation to the world. Islamic teachings based on the Quran and Hadith were enriched by hybrid views. The explanation above tells us that the spread of Islam to Java, and also to all corners of the world, through the stages of sociological, cultural, and also theological. Therefore, when Islam entered and spread on the island of Java, it was not space. The groups of values, norms and Javanese traditions were rooted in the souls of Javanese people and Islam fulfilled with richer meanings. With the palace as the centre of excellence and also the centre of social change, dissemination, meaning, and understanding of Islam participated in the process called the indigenisation. Thus, learning the indigenisation of Islam should not be from the perspective of fiqh, for example, limited to the law of permissible or forbidden but also by paying attention to the esoteric aspects of Islam and the inner symbols of Javanese culture. This viewpoint is perceived as unbiased and breaks through the shell of fiqh rigidity. In the long run, the viewpoint of esoteric Islam can be a pillar for the growth of tolerance and harmony, creating the meeting points of civilisation ([Abdullah 2014, 72-76](#)).

## CONCLUSION

Based on the above explanation, it is known that the understanding of Sundanese people, especially those who live in Cibiuk Village/District, Garut Regency, on the Arabic culture, language, and people is still elementary. Their understanding of these three aspects purely refers to their relation to Islam causing a mixed understanding. Therefore, it is suggested that certain efforts are required to improve their understanding of the Arabic culture, language, and people.

The mixed understanding between elements of Arab and Islamic culture can be observed from the historical aspects of the spread - which prompted the indigenisation of Islam in the archipelago. It happened after going through the stages of sociological, cultural, and theological. When it arrived and spread to the island of Java, Islam did not enter a space because Javanese society had deep-rooted groups of values, norms, and traditions; it is Islam that fulfilled and enriched its meaning. Thus, learning the indigenisation of Islam should not only be from the perspective of fiqh, but also by paying attention to the esoteric aspects of Islam and the inner symbols of Javanese culture.

## LIMITATION AND STUDY FORWARD

This study has some limitations which must not be overlooked. In terms of data collection, this study adopted a survey method, interviews as well as observations to obtain maximum information from respondents; still, the possibility of human error cannot be overruled. Moreover, since this study utilized open-ended questions from respondents to gather information regarding the understanding of Sundanese people owing to Arabic culture, language, and people; open-ended questions provide more information yet the information is scattered and difficult to process. Therefore, further explorations from future scholars are encouraged. Another limitation of this study is that it is conducted in a single region i.e., Cibiuk Village/District, Garut Regency; thus, researchers are encouraged to explore research problems with diverse samples and varied demographics. Multiple studies in a similar domain with consistent findings will enhance the credibility of these findings.

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## AUTHORS CONTRIBUTION

Tb. Ace Fahrullah worked on the initial write-up and data collection through interviews, surveys, and documents. And Hazmirullah worked on data assemblage and analysis and final drafting of the manuscript.

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