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The Islamic Ethos of Interfaith Socialization: Strengthening Community Harmony

*Khalid D. Daud**

Mindanao State University Main, the Philippines
*Correspondence: E-mail: daud.kd02@s.msumain.edu.ph

A B S T R A C T

This study examined the Islamic ethos of social interaction with non-Muslims, guided by the principles of Maqasid al-Shari'ah, within the context of community service and harmonious coexistence. Conducted in Tubod, Lanao del Norte, Philippines (a predominantly Christian municipality with Muslim minorities), the research explored how Islamic values inform interfaith socialization and contribute to building inclusive, respectful communities. Using a descriptive survey design and purposive sampling, data were gathered through structured questionnaires among 100 Muslim residents. The findings revealed that while Muslims uphold distinct religious and cultural practices, they also advocate for mutual respect, fairness, and peaceful interaction with non-Muslims. Respondents emphasized the importance of tolerance, dialogue, and justice in interfaith relations. The study underscores the civic role of Islamic teachings in fostering community harmony, correcting misconceptions, and promoting interreligious understanding. It offers valuable insights for civic educators, religious leaders, and policymakers in designing culturally sensitive, inclusive community programs rooted in spiritual and ethical values.

A R T I C L E   I N F O

1. INTRODUCTION

Islam, as a comprehensive way of life, establishes a strong ethical foundation for social interaction, both within the Muslim ummah and with non-Muslim communities. Many reports regarding how Islam is taught is explained elsewhere (Anggraeni & Maryanti, 2021; Azizah *et al.,* 2022; Nugraha *et al*., 2022; Al Husaeni *et al.,* 2022; Francis *et al*., 2023; Rohim & Nugraha, 2024; Soelistijo *et al*., 2024; Fauji & Nugraha., 2024; Thoriq *et al.,* 2024; Jamiu, 2022; Al Husaeni & Al Husaeni, 2022; Kayode & Jibril., 2023; Hidayat *et al*., 2024).

From its inception, Islam has emphasized not only the individual's spiritual development but also communal responsibility and harmony. The principles of Maqasid al-Shari'ah (preservation of religion, life, intellect, lineage, and property) are central to this ethical framework and serve as guiding pillars for both personal conduct and collective engagement. These values are foundational to the Islamic worldview and are reflected not only in personal piety but also in public actions, including community service and interfaith relations.

In the current global context, where religious and cultural diversity is increasingly visible, particularly in pluralistic societies like the Philippines, the importance of fostering harmonious social interaction becomes more urgent. Tubod, Lanao del Norte, Philippines, presents a compelling case for such exploration, as it houses both Muslim and Christian populations. In this setting, promoting mutual understanding, respect, and peaceful coexistence is not just a religious ideal but a practical necessity for cohesive community living. Islam, through its teachings and historical precedents, encourages this form of positive interreligious engagement, but always within the boundaries set by divine guidance.

The Qur'an is replete with verses advocating for justice and respect in human interactions. It declares, "Allah does not forbid you from those who do not fight you because of religion and do not expel you from your homes from being righteous toward them and acting justly toward them. Indeed, Allah loves those who act justly" (Qur'an 60:8). This verse has been repeatedly cited in discussions about Muslim relations with non-Muslims, highlighting Islam's commitment to justice and peaceful coexistence. However, it is also critical to contextualize such verses properly to avoid selective interpretations that may lead to either exclusion or undue assimilation (Fatwa; 10-8-1999-Rabee' Al-Akhir).

Misunderstandings about Islam's position on interfaith relations often arise due to a lack of comprehensive understanding of its teachings. Islam warns against compromising core beliefs, such as adopting foreign rituals or celebrating non-Muslim religious holidays. At the same time, it promotes compassion, kindness, and respectful engagement with others. For instance, the verse "O you who believe, do not take My enemies and your enemies as allies, extending to them affection…" (Qur'an 60:1) is often misconstrued as a directive to isolate from non-Muslims. In truth, this verse addresses political loyalty and the safeguarding of faith rather than prohibiting cordial social interaction.

Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) himself exemplified the balance between spiritual integrity and social harmony. His behavior toward non-Muslims—whether Jews of Madinah, Christians of Najran, or polytheists in Makkah—was rooted in wisdom, justice, and mercy. He entered into treaties, visited the sick among non-Muslims, and maintained neighborly ties. His approach underscores the prophetic ethos of being merciful to all creation: "And We have not sent you but as a mercy to the worlds" (Qur'an 21:107). Furthermore, as reported in Bukhari and Muslim, he said, "He who believes in Allah and the Last Day, let him speak good or remain silent," encouraging speech that builds, not breaks, social bonds.

In light of this, the social teachings of Islam are highly relevant to modern efforts in community development and public service. Community service, in an Islamic framework, is not only permissible but also commendable, especially when it aligns with the objectives of preserving communal peace, welfare, and justice. Engaging with non-Muslims in community projects, neighborhood improvement, or interfaith dialogues becomes not just a civic duty but also a religious expression of faithfulness and service to humanity. The Prophet's own life, rich with examples of peaceful coexistence and service, serves as an enduring model for Muslims navigating diverse communities.

The challenge, however, lies in the gap between theoretical teachings and practical applications. In many cases, socio-political tensions, misinformation, and inherited biases can create barriers to meaningful interaction. Media portrayals and global conflicts have often contributed to a skewed image of Islam and Muslims, fostering suspicion and misunderstanding. Within local communities, especially those with histories of religious tension, such as in parts of Mindanao, these perceptions can be deeply ingrained. As a result, there is an urgent need for empirical studies that reflect the lived realities of Muslim communities engaging with non-Muslims in ethical, peaceful, and constructive ways (Abu-Lughod, 2002)**.**

This study seeks to contribute to that effort by exploring the Islamic ethos of social interaction among Muslims in the Municipality of Tubod, Lanao del Norte. Specifically, it aims to investigate how Islamic principles guide socialization practices with non-Muslims and how these practices are perceived by the local Muslim population. Through this inquiry, the study not only contributes to academic discourse but also provides practical insights for community leaders, policymakers, and social workers who are engaged in interfaith and intercultural dialogue.

Furthermore, this research is framed through a community service lens. The objective is not merely to understand Islamic teachings in isolation but to analyze how these teachings manifest in real-life interactions that contribute to social harmony and communal welfare. In this sense, the study aligns with the broader goals of Education for Sustainable Development (ESD), which emphasizes respect for cultural diversity, social justice, and peacebuilding through inclusive education and community participation.

Understanding the social behavior of Muslims through the lens of Maqasid al-Shari'ah also presents an opportunity to dispel myths and promote a balanced image of Islam as a religion that encourages positive contributions to society. In doing so, this research addresses the dual challenge of preserving religious integrity while embracing inclusive civic engagement, an approach that can significantly enrich community service programs across faiths.

The significance of this study also extends to improving public health, education, and local governance efforts. When Muslim and non-Muslim citizens collaborate in shared community efforts (such as disaster response, clean-up drives, or educational outreach), the social capital generated strengthens community resilience. However, such collaboration must be built on mutual respect and a genuine understanding of each other's faith-based motivations and boundaries. The present study provides critical data and insights that can inform culturally sensitive policies and programs.

Lastly, the study contributes to the growing field of Islamic social ethics, particularly in Southeast Asian contexts. While much literature exists on interfaith dialogue in Western societies, there is limited localized research focusing on Filipino Muslim communities navigating social pluralism. By capturing the voices and views of Muslims in Tubod (a minority in a predominantly Christian municipality), this research not only adds to the scholarly archive

but also empowers local narratives in shaping interreligious cooperation and community service.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW
2.1. Conceptual Framework

This study is grounded in Qur'anic verses and Hadith, which serve as its theoretical framework, emphasizing principles of justice, respect, and peaceful coexistence in interactions between Muslims and non-Muslims. The Qur'an states.

"*Allah does not forbid you from those who do not fight you because of religion and do not expel you from your homes from being righteous toward them and acting justly toward them. Indeed, Allah loves those who act justly*." (Qur'an 60:8)

This verse clarifies that while Muslims are encouraged to treat non-Muslims with justice and kindness, Islam prohibits forms of loyalty that compromise faith, such as adopting their practices or celebrating their festivals. Similarly, the Qur'an cautions believers against forming alliances that could undermine their faith:

"*O you who believe, do not take My enemies and your enemies as allies, extending to them affection*" (Qur'an 60:1)

These verses underscore the importance of justice and respect in dealing with non-Muslims, advocating for fairness while maintaining Islamic principles.

Additionally, the Qur'an highlights the attribute of mercy as embodied by Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h), who was described as a mercy to all creation:

"*And we have not sent you but as a mercy to the worlds*" (Surah al-Anbiya' 21:107)

The Prophet's interactions with non-Muslims exemplified kindness, compassion, and respect, setting a timeless example for Muslims. His teachings also emphasize the importance of constructive speech in promoting peace. As narrated by Abu Hurairah:

"He who believes in Allah and the Last Day, let him speak good or remain silent" (Bukhari and Muslim)

This Hadith stresses the responsibility of Muslims to use their words to foster good qualities and peaceful coexistence. It discourages speech that could lead to discord, advocating instead for communication rooted in respect and understanding.

Together, these Qur'anic verses and Prophetic traditions form the foundation of this study, illustrating the guiding principles for Muslim interactions with non-Muslims and reinforcing the value of justice, kindness, and thoughtful speech in promoting harmony.

2.2. Definition of Terms

To ensure a clear understanding of the study, the following terms are defined:

(i)   Benefit. An advantage or positive outcome gained from something (Bahlous & Mohd, 2014). In this study, it refers to the favorable and advantageous outcomes resulting from fostering understanding between Muslims and non-Muslims.

(ii)   Cultural Practices. The customs and traditions of a specific ethnic or cultural group. This study refers to the cultural practices of Muslims and Christians that influence one another.

(iii)   Fatwa. A formal ruling on Islamic law issued by a recognized authority ((Bahlous & Mohd, 2014). In this study, it refers to Islamic rulings provided by knowledgeable Ulama.

(iv)   Hadith. Records of the sayings, actions, and silent approvals of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) (Wikipedia, 2018). In this study, it refers to the narratives or sayings of the Prophet that guide Islamic practices.

(v)   Islam. The religion teaches that there is only one God (Allah) and that Muhammad (peace be upon him) is His prophet (Naz *et al.,* 2018). In this study, it refers to the faith of Muslims, encompassing obligations and prohibitions prescribed by Islamic teachings.

(vi)   Muslimah. An observant Muslim woman adheres to specific dress codes in public or in the presence of non-immediate family members (Brown *et al.,* 2023). In this study, it refers to Muslim women who believe in Allah and follow the teachings of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him).

(vii)   Muslims. Followers of Islam who believe in Allah and His Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) (Malam, 2021). In this study, it refers to individuals who practice Islam and adhere to its teachings.

(viii) Psychological Practices. The application of psychological principles to observe, evaluate, or modify human behavior. This study refers to the psychological behaviors and attitudes exhibited by Christians and Muslims in their interactions.

(ix)   Qur'an. The holy scripture of Islam, regarded as the word of God revealed to Prophet Muhammad (Günther, 2007). In this study, it serves as the primary source of Islamic law and guidance.

(x)   Religious Practices. Activities such as worship, prayer, wearing religious symbols, or adhering to specific religious rules. In this study, it refers to the religious practices mandated by Allah (SWT) that Muslims observe in their daily lives.

(xi)   Social Practices. Actions and behaviors within a social context, reflecting shared customs or commitments. In this study, it refers to common practices among groups or individuals in Muslim and non-Muslim communities.

(xii)   Socializing. Refers to interacting with others in a friendly manner or teaching socially acceptable behavior (Rasdia & Hernah, 2024). This study pertains to the relationships between Muslims and non-Muslims, emphasizing equality, justice, and respect.

(xiii) Ulama. Muslim scholars with specialized knowledge of Islamic sacred law and theology (Bizawie, 2015). In this study, it refers to scholars who disseminate Islamic teachings and provide religious rulings.

2.3. Related Literature

Islam has emerged as the fastest-growing religion globally, gaining considerable momentum, particularly among young people connected through social media platforms. Many reports regarding how Islam is taught is explained elsewhere (Anggraeni & Maryanti, 2021; Azizah *et al.,* 2022; Nugraha *et al.,* 2022; Al Husaeni *et al.,* 2022; Francis *et al.,* 2023; Rohim & Nugraha, 2024; Soelistijo *et al.,* 2024; Fauji & Nugraha., 2024; Thoriq *et al.,* 2024; Jamiu, 2022; Al Husaeni & Al Husaeni, 2022; Kayode & Jibril., 2023; Hidayat *et al.,* 2024).

The impact of social media on religious individuals and organizations has been profound, transforming the way Islamic teachings are disseminated. These platforms have not only reshaped religious practices and deepened religiosity but have also facilitated preaching, the issuing of fatwas, and the creation of virtual communities, particularly within Muslim-majority countries.

Social media has become a modern-day version of traditional social gatherings, enabling individuals to exchange updates and maintain connections, similar to the way family and friends once gathered to share news. The speed and reach of information on these platforms contrast significantly with the methods of early Islamic propagation, where the spread of Islam relied heavily on personal interactions and physical travel. During that time, early Muslims traveled by horse or other local transportation to spread the message of Islam.

Although these methods were not as fast or far-reaching as today's digital platforms, they were nonetheless effective, enabling Islam to spread widely by the grace of Allah.

Some researchers (Haron, 2005) emphasized the importance of social media in da'wah (the Islamic missionary activity), highlighting its role in helping Muslim leaders reach a broader audience and win the hearts and minds of both Muslims and non-Muslims. While a small minority views digital media as incompatible with Islamic practices, the widespread use of social media for religious propagation remains largely accepted. Platforms such as Online Islam and the rise of "Facebook Fatwas" have introduced new ways to issue religious guidance, altering the traditional processes of formulating, distributing, and receiving fatwas. This digital transformation has significantly influenced how Islamic knowledge is communicated in the modern era.

Prophetic traditions stress the significance of spreading beneficial knowledge, with sayings like, "If Allah guides a person through you, it is better for you than all that is on earth" (Sahih Muslim). The Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) also stated, "God, His angels, and all those in heavens and on earth, even ants in their hills and fish in the water, call down blessings on those who instruct others in beneficial knowledge" (Tirmidhi). These timeless teachings underscore the importance of sharing knowledge for the benefit of others. With the advancements in media and communication technology, the potential to spread Islamic teachings to billions worldwide is now greater than ever, allowing messages to travel far and wide at unprecedented speeds. This digital age offers unparalleled opportunities to correct misconceptions about Islam and promote a greater understanding of the faith.

In the broader context of interfaith relations, a study published in the Sumatra Journal of Disaster, Geography Education examined the perceptions of social interactions between Muslims and non-Muslims in Malaysia. The study highlighted that religious diversity, while inevitable, can present challenges for social harmony. However, it stressed that positive interaction between religious groups is essential for reducing misunderstandings and promoting unity. It emphasized the need for mutual respect, tolerance, and equitable treatment of all communities to prevent conflicts and promote peaceful coexistence.

The research revealed that certain prejudices persist between the Malay and non-Malay communities in Malaysia. For example, non-Malays often perceive Malay attitudes as self-serving and oppressive, while Malays may harbor doubts about the loyalty and sincerity of non-Malays. Despite these perceptions, many individuals from both groups reported harmonious relationships, mutual respect, and admiration for each other's work ethic. Interviews further revealed that while tensions exist, interfaith relations in Malaysia have generally been peaceful, with communities respecting each other's religious practices.

These findings highlight the importance of fostering positive interfaith relations and addressing religious inequalities to strengthen national unity. The research demonstrated that interfaith harmony is not only achievable but is already being realized through dialogue, mutual respect, and understanding. By integrating these insights, it becomes clear that social media plays a crucial role in promoting both the dissemination of Islamic teachings and the advancement of interfaith harmony in diverse, multicultural societies.

Finally, this study emphasizes the transformative potential of social media in bridging divides, spreading knowledge, and fostering understanding, underscoring its vital role in shaping religious discourse and promoting peace in an interconnected world.

3. METHOD
3.1. Research Design

This study employed a descriptive survey research design, which is well-suited for gathering systematic data on lived experiences and community-based practices. The purpose of using this design was to understand and describe how Islamic teachings shape social interactions between Muslims and non-Muslims in the context of everyday community life, particularly in areas where interfaith engagement is vital to social cohesion and public service.

3.2. Locale of the Study and Respondents

The research was conducted in the municipality of Tubod, Lanao del Norte, Philippines, an area where Muslims are a minority and coexist alongside a predominantly Christian population. The selection of this site was intentional, considering its rich potential for interfaith community engagement. The focus was on two barangays—Kakai Renabor and Bulod—where Muslim residents are more concentrated. These communities were chosen not only for their demographic relevance but also for their ongoing involvement in local programs promoting interreligious harmony and communal service.

The participants in this study were 100 Muslim residents, purposively selected based on their willingness and capacity to reflect on their social practices with non-Muslim members of the community. Participants were chosen because of their potential roles in contributing to community service, civic engagement, and religious outreach within a multicultural setting. They are regarded as the most relevant and reliable sources of information, given their firsthand experiences in day-to-day social interaction and their awareness of cultural and religious sensitivities in a pluralistic community.

As shown in **Table 1**, the majority of respondents (90%) were from Barangay Bulod, while a smaller portion (10%) came from Barangay Kakai Renabor.

Table 1. Distribution of respondents by barangay.

Name of Barangay	Frequency	Percentage
Kakai Renabor	10	10%
Bulod	90	90%
Total	**100**	**100%**

3.3. Research Instrument

The primary research instrument was a survey questionnaire. It was designed to capture the respondents' demographic profiles and explore their religious, cultural, social, and psychological practices when interacting with non-Muslim community members. The questionnaire was constructed with sensitivity to Islamic ethics and community relations, focusing on how values such as justice, tolerance, and cooperation manifest in their behavior toward people of other faiths. The questions were developed in simple language and translated when needed to ensure accessibility and understanding by all participants. The instrument consisted of two major sections:

(i) Socio-demographic profile – capturing gender, age, educational attainment, and community role.
(ii) Islamic Social Interaction Practices – addressing religious and cultural considerations, ethical attitudes, tolerance, and community participation with non-Muslims.

3.4. Data Collection Procedures

This study utilized both library research and field data collection, beginning with a literature review to contextualize the study within the frameworks of Islamic ethics and community engagement. Fieldwork involved the administration of the survey to the selected respondents with prior explanation of the research goals and the importance of their contributions to interfaith community service initiatives.

The distribution and collection of surveys were conducted in person, with the researcher visiting households and local community centers. For participants needing assistance, the questionnaire was administered verbally to ensure inclusion and accurate responses. This method helped foster rapport and a sense of shared community values, reinforcing the research's participatory nature.

3.5. Data Analysis

The data collected were analyzed using descriptive statistics, specifically computing weighted means to interpret the degree of agreement or disagreement with the provided statements. Each item was rated on a Likert scale, and results were categorized under thematic domains: Religious Practices, Cultural Practices, Social Practices, and Psychological Practices, all viewed through the lens of interfaith relations and community-based coexistence.

The statistical interpretations aimed to identify which Islamic values and practices most significantly contribute to building a respectful, cooperative, and service-oriented relationship with non-Muslims. These insights were crucial in drawing implications for interreligious community work and civic harmony.

3.6. Ethical Considerations

This study adhered strictly to ethical research principles. Voluntary participation, informed consent, and confidentiality were ensured at every step. Participants were informed of their right to withdraw at any point and assured that no harm—physical, psychological, or social—would result from their involvement. Names and identifying details were excluded from published findings to maintain anonymity. Furthermore, the study emphasized cultural and religious sensitivity, ensuring that Islamic principles were upheld in both research conduct and content.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the findings of the study concerning the Islamic ethos of social interaction among Muslims living in a predominantly Christian environment in Tubod, Lanao del Norte. The results are based on the survey responses from 100 Muslim participants, who were asked about their perceptions regarding religious, cultural, social, and psychological practices related to interfaith interaction. The findings are interpreted through descriptive statistics using weighted mean and integrated with relevant literature to offer a broader understanding of Islamic principles guiding community-based interreligious engagement.

4.1. Religious Practices and Interfaith Coexistence

The responses to the first set of items focused on religious practices, particularly the influence of Christianity on Muslim society and the importance of religious tolerance and recognition of differences. The item "The religion practiced by Christians can influence our society" received a mean score of 1.75, suggesting that respondents were undecided. This reflects a neutral perception among Muslims regarding the extent to which Christian beliefs affect their way of life. This may indicate a conscious separation of religious boundaries within daily interactions, where Muslims maintain their own beliefs without being affected by others.

The item "The recognition of religious differences is vital for all Muslims" garnered a mean of 1.40, indicating agreement. This underscores the importance of mutual respect and understanding as foundational values in Islamic teachings. The Qur'an affirms that "There is no compulsion in religion" (Surah Al-Baqarah 2:256), highlighting that Islam promotes peaceful coexistence without imposing beliefs on others.

In a multicultural setting such as Tubod, recognizing and respecting religious differences is essential for community cohesion. As part of community service efforts, such recognition enables collaborative initiatives in areas like disaster relief, local governance, and education, where citizens of various religious affiliations work together toward common goals.

Similarly, the statement "The religion of Christian friends can affect the spiritual values of a Muslim friend" had a mean score of 1.77, again falling under the category of undecided. This reflects an internal confidence in the strength of Islamic identity among respondents, suggesting that while they interact with non-Muslims, their spiritual beliefs remain intact. It also speaks to the importance of spiritual resilience, an important quality in community leaders and civic volunteers involved in interfaith programs.

Moreover, the statement "Tolerance of religious practices should always be observed and considered" received a mean of 1.73, showing that the respondents were still undecided, perhaps indicating some reservations about the boundaries of tolerance. While Islam encourages kindness and justice in dealings with non-Muslims (Qur'an 60:8), this data may reflect the need for clearer community guidelines on interfaith boundaries, especially when social customs diverge. As part of public service programming, this insight is critical for developing policies that respect religious sensitivities while promoting mutual aid.

Finally, the item "Religion is not the only reason to treat others with respect" had a mean of 1.55, showing that the respondents agreed. This response reflects the broader Islamic principle that all human beings are worthy of respect regardless of their religious affiliation. Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) emphasized noble character, even stating, "I was sent to perfect good character" (Bukhari). From a civic education and community service

perspective, this teaching supports inclusive social programming that values all community members.

4.2. Cultural Practices and Preservation of Islamic Identity

The next dimension of analysis involved cultural practices, focusing on the relationship between Muslim and non-Muslim cultures. The first item, "The cultural practices of non-Muslim friends can influence Muslim behavior," received a mean of 1.62, showing an undecided stance. This ambivalence may reflect the cultural balancing act Muslims experience when integrating into predominantly Christian societies. While cultural exchange is inevitable, Muslims in Tubod seem cautious in adopting practices that may conflict with Islamic norms. This caution is in line with Islamic guidance on maintaining a distinct identity while engaging peacefully with others.

The item "The culture of Muslims should not be associated with non-Muslim culture" had a mean of 1.61, indicating agreement. This aligns with the desire to preserve Islamic values and customs. In multicultural settings, cultural integrity is crucial for minority communities to retain their sense of belonging and purpose. Community-based programs can support this by integrating cultural preservation into education, arts, and local leadership development initiatives.

In contrast, the statement "Cultural diversity should be considered to understand others" had a strong mean of 1.32, reflecting agreement among respondents. This result highlights a positive disposition toward intercultural learning. Understanding cultural diversity is essential to minimizing miscommunication and promoting peaceful coexistence (Aririguzoh, 2022). Programs that celebrate cultural heritage days, culinary festivals, and youth exchange activities can capitalize on this openness to promote solidarity and reduce prejudice.

Interestingly, the statement "The cultural practices of Muslims should always prevail in the Muslim community" received a mean of 1.82, showing another undecided response. This may reflect a tension between the desire for cultural dominance in Muslim spaces and the reality of living in a pluralistic society. It also presents an opportunity to design public forums that address how Islamic culture can flourish in shared civic spaces without diminishing the presence of others.

Finally, the item "The culture of non-Muslim friends should not be embraced by Muslim friends" had a mean of 1.74, indicating a neutral stance. This further supports the notion that while Muslims may appreciate certain cultural aspects of their Christian neighbors, full integration or adoption of non-Islamic practices is approached with caution. This sentiment can guide local policymakers and interfaith advocates to frame community service projects that respect cultural lines while promoting joint action for common causes.

4.3. Social Practices and Community Engagement

Social practices were the third area explored, with a focus on practical interactions between Muslims and non-Muslims. The statement "Socializing with non-Muslims was permissible even during the time of the Prophet" had a mean score of 1.51, indicating agreement. This response is significant as it reflects the foundational Islamic history of peaceful interreligious dialogue. Historical records show that Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) engaged with Jews, Christians, and pagans in ways that respected their faiths while staying true to his own (Rasdia & Hernah, 2024; Haron, 2005).

Similarly, the item "Socializing is permissible under any circumstances" received a mean of 1.56, again showing agreement. However, the phrasing "under any circumstances" might be interpreted with nuance—many Muslims agree on social interaction but within the

boundaries of halal behavior. This has implications for local government units and NGOs designing community events—such programs must be inclusive yet mindful of Islamic ethics, especially concerning food, dress, and conduct.

The statement "Socializing with non-Muslims helps in understanding Christians more deeply" scored a mean of 1.65, indicating agreement. This reflects a clear belief in the value of interfaith relationships. Exposure to others' customs and beliefs often dispels stereotypes and fosters empathy. From a community service lens, such openness is vital for effective collaboration, especially in joint health initiatives, environmental projects, and emergency response programs.

Continuing the analysis under Social Practices, the item "Muslims are obligated to attend any programs or parties hosted by non-Muslim friends" received the highest mean score in this section at 2.58, indicating that the respondents disagreed. This finding reflects the careful consideration that Muslims give when engaging in social events hosted by non-Muslims. Attendance is not seen as obligatory, and such participation is likely evaluated based on the nature of the event and its alignment with Islamic values. According to the teachings of Maqasid al-Shari'ah, Muslims are encouraged to avoid actions that could potentially harm their faith or contradict Islamic principles. This aligns with Qur'anic teachings such as, *"And do not incline toward those who do wrong, lest you be touched by the Fire…"* (Surah Hud 11:113).

Lastly, the statement "Regardless of differences, Muslims should treat non-Muslims fairly" garnered a mean score of 1.50, indicating agreement. This response confirms the deep-rooted Islamic principle of justice and fairness in all dealings, including those with individuals of different faiths. As the Qur'an states: *"Indeed, Allah loves those who act justly"* (Qur'an 60:8). This finding has important implications for community service efforts that involve cross-cultural partnerships, fair treatment, respect, and ethical engagement are critical in ensuring long-term collaboration between faith communities.

4.4. Psychological Practices and Interpersonal Influence

Social practices were the third area explored, with a focus on practical interactions between Muslims and non-Muslims. The statement "Socializing with non-Muslims was permissible even during the time of the Prophet" had a mean score of 1.51, indicating agreement. This response is significant as it reflects the foundational Islamic history of peaceful interreligious dialogue. Historical records show that Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) engaged with Jews, Christians, and pagans in ways that respected their faiths while staying true to his own (Elkholy, 1966).

Similarly, the item "Socializing is permissible under any circumstances" received a mean of 1.56, again showing agreement. However, the phrasing "under any circumstances" might be interpreted with nuance—many Muslims agree on social interaction but within the The fourth dimension of the findings focused on Psychological Practices, which delved into respondents' perspectives on emotional and cognitive engagement with non-Muslims. The first item, "Non-Muslim friends should treat Muslims with kindness and accept their identity", received the lowest mean in this section at 1.31, indicating strong agreement. This suggests a high expectation among Muslim respondents that their religious identity be respected and acknowledged by their non-Muslim peers. It also reflects the human need for belonging and acceptance, particularly in multicultural communities.

Similarly, the item "Differences in personal viewpoints should be acknowledged and not lead to disrespect" scored a mean of 1.35, again showing strong agreement. This indicates that respondents value open dialogue and mutual understanding, even amid differing beliefs. This finding supports the idea of *intercultural psychological safety*—a necessary condition for effective community collaboration and social integration (Desrosiers *et al.*, 2011). For local leaders and public service programs, this highlights the need to foster respectful spaces where differences are embraced without conflict.

The statement "The practices of non-Muslim friends can be tolerated under certain circumstances" received a mean of 1.74, reflecting an undecided response. This shows that while tolerance exists, it is conditional—Muslims may accept certain practices if they do not contradict core Islamic teachings. This kind of conditional tolerance aligns with Leininger's Theory of Culture Care, which emphasizes the need for culturally congruent care and interaction. Therefore, any interfaith activity or program must be designed with sensitivity toward Islamic norms.

Next, "Non-Muslims can influence Muslim friends" also received an undecided response with a mean of 1.73. This suggests some openness to the idea of influence, but perhaps not to the extent that it challenges Islamic identity. Similarly, "Non-Muslim friends can influence Muslim friends throughout their friendship" scored 1.54, showing agreement. These results together reflect a nuanced understanding that friendships are reciprocal and dynamic, capable of shaping behavior and beliefs over time. However, the respondents' continued commitment to Islamic values serves as a moderating force. Community service programs, therefore, must recognize that mutual influence is possible, but any shared values or policies must be inclusive and respectful of faith-based boundaries.

Table 2 displays the mean scores from respondents' perceptions of social and psychological interaction practices with non-Muslims. These data demonstrate generally positive attitudes toward interfaith engagement tempered by a strong adherence to Islamic values.

Table 2. Mean scores of respondents on social and psychological practices in interfaith interaction.

Domain	Statement	Mean	Interpretation
Social Practices	Socializing with non-Muslims was permissible during the Prophet's time	1.51	Agree
	Socializing is permissible under any circumstances	1.56	Agree
	Helps understand Christians more deeply	1.65	Agree
	Obligated to attend non-Muslim parties	2.58	Disagree
	Muslims should treat non-Muslims fairly	1.50	Agree
	Non-Muslim friends should treat Muslims with kindness	1.31	Strongly Agree
	Differences in viewpoints should not lead to disrespect	1.35	Strongly Agree
Psychological Practices	Non-Muslim practices can be tolerated under some circumstances	1.74	Undecided
	Non-Muslims can influence Muslim friends	1.73	Undecided
	Influence continues throughout friendship	1.54	Agree

4.5. Implications for Community Service and Interfaith Engagement

The findings of this study offer several practical implications for community development and public service in multicultural areas such as Tubod, Lanao del Norte. Firstly, it is evident that socializing with non-Muslims is permissible and even encouraged within Islamic guidelines, as long as religious boundaries are respected. This opens the door for joint

initiatives between Muslims and Christians in areas such as disaster response, public health, education, and local governance.

Secondly, the strong emphasis on mutual respect, kindness, and understanding suggests that Muslims are open to collaboration with non-Muslims in improving communal life. This supports the creation of interfaith civic councils, youth dialogue circles, and shared community development programs. Interfaith identity can become a powerful tool for resilience and cooperation when nurtured through inclusive practices (Peek, 2005).

Third, the cautious but open attitude toward influence from non-Muslims highlights the need for value-sensitive programming. Community service models should incorporate religious sensitivity training, allowing non-Muslim partners to understand Islamic values while maintaining their own identity. This ensures trust and sustained engagement.

Lastly, the role of Islamic teachings in guiding ethical behavior and social responsibility must be acknowledged. Maqasid al-Shari'ah not only promotes justice and compassion but also encourages the preservation of life, intellect, and property, goals that align closely with sustainable community service initiatives.

The findings of this study hold several important implications for community service, particularly in multicultural and religiously diverse environments such as Tubod, Lanao del Norte. The research demonstrates that the Mëranao Muslim community, grounded in Islamic principles, promotes respectful, peaceful, and ethically guided interaction with non-Muslims. These values, deeply rooted in the Maqasid al-Shari'ah, can be leveraged to strengthen interfaith cooperation and enhance inclusive community development.

First, the study reveals that Islamic teachings do not discourage interfaith interaction but instead guide it through frameworks of justice, mutual respect, and social harmony. This insight is especially relevant for community service practitioners, policymakers, and civil society organizations that seek to design culturally sensitive and inclusive service programs. Understanding the Islamic ethos of social interaction enables the development of initiatives that encourage participation from both Muslim and non-Muslim populations without compromising religious values.

Second, the research underscores the importance of cultural and religious literacy in community work. Community service efforts must be mindful of Islamic practices concerning modesty, social boundaries, and religious observance. This awareness allows for respectful collaboration and helps prevent misunderstandings that could hinder cooperation or perpetuate stereotypes.

Third, the respondents' openness to socializing with non-Muslims, as long as Islamic values are respected, suggests that Muslims are willing and capable contributors to joint civic efforts. Therefore, service initiatives such as health missions, disaster response, education programs, and environmental clean-ups can serve as platforms for building bridges between religious groups and fostering unity in diversity.

Fourth, the psychological and social findings of the study highlight the emotional intelligence and interpersonal awareness among Muslims in interfaith settings. This presents a valuable resource for community service, where empathy, cooperation, and mutual respect are essential for success.

Lastly, the study implies that religious leaders (*ulama*), educators, and local government units can play a key role in reinforcing Islamic values that promote community peace and coexistence. By integrating these teachings into community programs and outreach activities, they can help sustain long-term interreligious harmony and civic engagement.

In summary, the Islamic principles guiding social interaction are not obstacles to community service; in fact, they can be strong foundations for it. Recognizing this potential allows for more effective, inclusive, and ethically grounded service initiatives that reflect the true spirit of cooperation and social responsibility across faiths.

5. CONCLUSION

This study examined the social, religious, cultural, and psychological dimensions of how Muslims interact with non-Muslims, particularly in the context of the Mëranao community in Tubod, Lanao del Norte. Guided by the principles of Maqasid al-Shari'ah, the findings revealed that Muslim respondents uphold respect, fairness, and mutual understanding when engaging in interfaith relationships, provided these interactions align with Islamic values. Across domains, the participants agreed that peaceful coexistence, respect for diversity, and acknowledgment of religious and cultural boundaries are crucial for maintaining harmonious relationships with non-Muslims.

Notably, the study found that while religious and cultural influences from non-Muslim communities are present, they do not significantly alter Muslim identity or spiritual values. Respondents generally displayed openness to interfaith interactions, provided that core Islamic teachings remain intact. These findings emphasize that Islamic social ethics foster values that are not only tolerant and respectful but also conducive to community-building and public service initiatives. From a community service perspective, these results underscore the potential of Islamic teachings to inspire collaborative, ethical, and inclusive civic action. The Maqasid al-Shari'ah framework promotes social justice, the preservation of life and dignity, and compassionate interaction, all of which are essential values in service to the community, regardless of religious affiliation. Recommendations are in the following:

(i) Foster Interfaith Dialogue and Cooperation: Local leaders and civic organizations should establish platforms for interfaith exchange, where Muslims and non-Muslims can engage in mutual learning and joint service projects. These spaces must be grounded in respect and guided by cultural sensitivity to Islamic values.

(ii) Promote Religious Literacy in Community Programming: Government agencies, NGOs, and educational institutions should include religious literacy components—particularly on Islamic beliefs and practices—in their community outreach. This will build mutual understanding and avoid unintended offense or conflict.

(iii) Encourage Joint Community Service Projects: Programs such as community clean-ups, livelihood training, disaster response, or health outreach can be opportunities for Muslims and non-Muslims to work side by side, reinforcing social cohesion and shared responsibility.

(iv) Respect for Religious and Cultural Boundaries: Community service efforts should avoid practices or expectations that could conflict with Islamic principles. Respecting dress codes, food restrictions, and religious holidays is crucial to ensuring participation without compromising identity.

(v) Utilize social media for Community Building: Given its power to shape perceptions, social media platforms should be strategically used to promote positive narratives of interfaith cooperation, share stories of successful Muslim-non-Muslim collaborations, and correct common misconceptions about Islam.

(vi) Policy Support for Inclusive Civic Engagement: Local governance structures should implement policies that support interfaith civic engagement and protect the rights of religious minorities, ensuring that participation in community service does not marginalize any group.

Finally, Islamic values as practiced by the Mëranao community demonstrate a strong alignment with the goals of ethical, respectful, and inclusive community service. Through interfaith understanding, social responsibility, and guided interaction, Muslims can contribute meaningfully to building harmonious societies while also preserving the integrity of their faith.

6. AUTHORS' NOTE

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this article. Authors confirmed that the paper was free of plagiarism.

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