

# **The openness of Muslim youth towards the transformation of Chinese identity through coffee culture**

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*DOI:10.18326/ijims.v15i2. 355-383*

## **Abstract**

This research aims to explore the openness of Muslim youth toward the transformation of their Chinese identity through coffee culture and its role in promoting cross-cultural communication and tolerance. Employing qualitative research methods and conducting in-depth interviews at Chinese-style coffee shops in Pontianak, Indonesia, this study examines how these establishments facilitate cultural encounters and the formation of hybrid identities. Research evidence suggests that Chinese-style coffee

shops serve as social meeting places that foster cultural exchange, interreligious tolerance, and cultural diversity. This culture is well accepted by Muslim youth, who adapt it to their own context, thereby contributing to the shared cultural practices. This research validates the role of social spaces in raising multicultural presence and cross-cultural interaction. This research presents the suggested strategies for increasing diversity and offers ideas for future research on cultural relations in other settings. The research, therefore, reveals the significance of coffee culture as a medium to bridge social differences and encourage social inclusion.

Penelitian ini mengeksplorasi keterbukaan pemuda Muslim terhadap transformasi identitas Tionghoa melalui budaya kopi dan perannya dalam mendorong komunikasi lintas budaya dan toleransi. Dengan menggunakan metode kualitatif dan wawancara mendalam di kedai kopi bergaya Tionghoa di Pontianak, Indonesia, penelitian ini menganalisis bagaimana ruang-ruang tersebut memfasilitasi pertukaran budaya dan pembentukan identitas hibrida. Temuan menunjukkan bahwa kedai kopi bergaya Tionghoa berfungsi sebagai pusat sosial inklusif yang mendorong pembelajaran budaya, dialog lintas iman, dan apresiasi terhadap keberagaman. Keterlibatan pemuda Muslim dalam budaya ini menunjukkan tingkat toleransi dan adaptabilitas yang tinggi, serta berkontribusi pada terciptanya praktik budaya bersama. Penelitian ini menegaskan pentingnya ruang sosial dalam meningkatkan keberadaan multikultural dan komunikasi lintas budaya. Penelitian ini memberikan rekomendasi strategis untuk mendorong keberagaman dan menawarkan wawasan untuk penelitian lebih lanjut tentang interaksi budaya di konteks lainnya. Temuan ini menyoroti potensi budaya kopi sebagai medium untuk menjembatani kesenjangan sosial dan mendorong inklusi sosial.

**Keywords:** *Muslim youth; Chinese identity; Coffee culture; Interfaith dialogue*

## **Introduction**

Intercultural interactions in a multicultural society create a dynamic environment for identity transformations. The openness of young Muslims towards Chinese culture, especially through coffee culture, is a result of the process of identity negotiation within a pluralistic social space. Chinese-style cafes are not only gathering places but also places for cultural exchange and interfaith understanding. Cafes that incorporate Chinese

cultural elements are proliferating, and Muslim interest in coffee culture is increasing. Tolerance and openness are becoming the keys to harmonious coexistence. This phenomenon highlights that not only is cultural blending reflected in the many coffee shops, but also that these coffee shops help strengthen social bonds and promote the integration of a divided society. As this happens, it is essential to understand this phenomenon to observe how cultural interactions function, develop new identities, and intensify social dynamics in daily life.

Studies of Chinese identity transformation in Indonesia's coffee culture often discuss intercultural interactions and the role of religion, but they have failed to take into account the openness of Muslim youth. Previous research has largely focused on the process of forming values and collective identity within the coffee culture,<sup>1</sup> and has not examined how Muslim openness affects religious harmony. The studies on the identity of Muslim youth in multi religious countries show that external groups are involved in the shaping of cultural openness and national narratives.<sup>2</sup> The three research areas that are relevant are the negotiation of intercultural identity,<sup>3</sup> the role of religion in social identity,<sup>4</sup> and coffee culture as a socio economic phenomenon<sup>5</sup> and identity in the global context.<sup>6</sup> In

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<sup>1</sup>Zuyi Lv and Junxi Qian, "A Coffeehouse Neo-Tribe in the Making: Exploring a Fluid Cultural Public Space in Post-Reform Chinese Urbanism", in *Neo-Tribes: Consumption, Leisure and Tourism*, London: Springer International Publishing, 2018, 51-67.

<sup>2</sup>Naureen Durrani and Barbara Crossouard, "National Identities and the External Other in Muslim Majority Contexts: Youth Narratives in Pakistan and Senegal", *Social Identities*, Volume 26, Number 3 (2020), 314-329.

<sup>3</sup>Troy McConachy and Perry Hinton, *Negotiating Intercultural Relations, Negotiating Intercultural Relations*, London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2023, 133-154.

<sup>4</sup>Robert Wuthnow, "Religion and Identity Power," in *Religion's Power*, New York: Oxford University Press 2022, 142-185.

<sup>5</sup>A. Marchenko and M. Suidi, "Features of Transformation of the Culture of Coffee Consumption in Russia and in Algeria", *Bulletin of Science and Practice*, Volume 6, Number 7 (2020), 272-276.

<sup>6</sup>A. Ikhsanov, "The Crisis of National Culture and Human Identity in the Context of Globalization", *Bulletin of Science and Practice*, Volume 9, Number 3 (2023), 484-487; Lyubov

the coffee shops, Muslim youth interact with Chinese culture, and this is a cultural adaptation, for example, in the Chinese Muslim community, with education and religious practices in a multicultural society.<sup>7</sup> However, existing studies have not sufficiently emphasized the openness of Muslim youth to Chinese identity in coffee culture as it may contribute to more extensive and contemporary social, cultural, and religious dynamics.

However, the limitations of previous research that have not sufficiently emphasized the openness of Muslim youth to the transformation of Chinese identity through coffee culture are addressed in this study. This is an important perspective for understanding the dynamics of Chinese culture and identity in Indonesia, particularly in interfaith relations. This research examines the history and culture of both groups to understand how Muslim youth define themselves within this social context. The study provides an academic gap by answering three main questions: How does the openness of Muslim youth manifest in their transformation of Chinese identity in coffee culture?; What factors influence this openness?; and what are the implications of this openness for strengthening interfaith relations? The answers to these questions will help us formulate a model of Muslim youth's openness to the transformation of Chinese identity through coffee culture in Indonesia.

The argument of this paper is that the openness of young Muslims to the transformation of Chinese identity through coffee culture helps to foster intercultural dialogue and cross-religious understanding. The openness this enables in the study of cultural interactions and interfaith coexistence is

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Nevelichko et al., "Formation of the Identity of the Local Community in the Context of Globalization", *World of Science. Series: Sociology, Philology, Cultural Studies*, Volume 13, Number 3 (2022), 1-12.

<sup>7</sup>Rahmawati Rahmawati et al., "Chinese Ways of Being Good Muslim: From the Cheng Hoo Mosque to Islamic Education and Media Literacy", *Indonesian Journal of Islam and Muslim Societies* Volume 8, Number 2 (2018), 225-252.

very important. This research is necessary because three factors underpin it: intercultural interactions require a deeper understanding of identity; the café is a convenient setting to observe global coffee interactions; and inter-religious tolerance is crucial for a harmonious society. This research is, therefore, a practical interest to social integration and tolerance promotion.

To analyze the openness of Muslim youth towards the transformation of Chinese identity through coffee culture, this study employs four interrelated theoretical perspectives. First, the concept of cultural openness highlights flexibility, tolerance for uncertainty, and readiness to engage in intercultural contact. The cognitive, affective, and behavioral dimensions of Muslim youth's openness play a decisive role in shaping their responses to cultural hybridity in coffee shops.<sup>8</sup>

Second, the Islamic values of *tasāmuḥ* (tolerance) and *ukhuwah insāniyah* (universal brotherhood) provide a normative framework for social interaction. These values emphasize that respect for diversity and inclusive relationships are essential for building harmony in plural societies.<sup>9</sup> They also resonate with the principles of *wasathiyah* (moderation) and *maqāṣ}id al-sharī'ah*, ensuring that cultural adaptation does not undermine religious values but rather enhances coexistence.<sup>10</sup>

Third, the transformation of Chinese identity is understood as a dynamic process shaped by globalization, diaspora, and intercultural encounters. Previous studies demonstrate how Chinese communities negotiate between tradition and modernity, constructing hybrid identities

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<sup>8</sup>Sammyh S. Khan et al., "How Collective Participation Impacts Social Identity: A Longitudinal Study from India", *Political Psychology*, Volume 37, Number 3 (2016), 309–325.

<sup>9</sup>L. Carl Brown and Khaled M. Abou El Fadl, "The Great Theft: Wrestling Islam from the Extremists", *Foreign Affairs*, Volume 85, Number 2 (2006), 201.

<sup>10</sup>Prasojo, Zaenuddin Hudi, Elmansyah Elmansyah, and Muhammed Sahrin Haji Masri, "Moderate Islam and the Social Construction of Multi-Ethnic Communities", *Indonesian Journal of Islam and Muslim Societies*, Volume 9, Number 2 (2019): 217–239.

in multicultural settings.<sup>11</sup> In Indonesia, Chinese-style coffee shops become loci where cultural symbols, culinary practices, and language intersect, producing identities that are both rooted and adaptive.<sup>12</sup>

Finally, the concept of coffee culture portrays cafés as social spaces of consumption, interaction, and meaning-making. Coffeehouses not only facilitate symbolic exchanges but also generate new social trends and communal identities.<sup>13</sup> Within these spaces, intercultural dialogues between Muslim youth and Chinese communities foster mutual learning and the negotiation of cultural differences.<sup>14</sup>

By integrating these four perspectives, this paper positions coffee culture as a bridge that links religious values, social practices, and identity transformation. This combined framework allows for a deeper understanding of how Muslim youth's openness contributes to broader intercultural dialogue and social inclusion in Indonesia's multicultural society.

## Cultural Openness

The most dominant and least ambiguous multicultural value is openness, which defines various meanings of equality, freedom, recognition, and authenticity, and authorizes evidence-based policy-making, conflict resolution of the religious kind, revealing that openness has a positive correlation with cultural intelligence in the presence of high agreeableness

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<sup>11</sup>Shaohua Zhan, "Homeland, Host Country, and Beyond: Identity Transformation among Chinese Migrants in Singapore", *Journal of Chinese Overseas*, Volume 18, Number 2 (2022), 265–286.

<sup>12</sup>Debachana Biswas, "Identity Development, Acculturation among Bowbazar Chinese Community", *Asian Ethnicity*, Volume 20, no. 2 (2018), 250–261.

<sup>13</sup>Jennifer Ferreira, Carlos Ferreira, and Elizabeth Bos, "Spaces of Consumption, Connection, and Community: Exploring the Role of the Coffee Shop in Urban Lives" *Geoforum*, Volume 119 (2021), 21–29.

<sup>14</sup>Elena Lvina, "The Role of Cross-Cultural Communication Competence: Effective Transformational Leadership Across Cultures" *Jurnal Ilmiah Peuradeun*, Volume 3, Number 1 (2015), 1–18.

but not in the presence of low agreeableness.<sup>15</sup> Notably, higher openness to experience mitigates the foreign cultural threat and thus preserves the creativity advantage in intercultural contact for those with lower levels of openness.<sup>16</sup> It will be seen that openness to experience has a significant impact on cultural creativity, politics, social views, marriage, and interpersonal relationships. The level of openness is dynamic and grows over time; cultural engagement enhances openness, and the same holds true for openness enhancing cultural engagement at any age, education level, or income bracket.<sup>17</sup> It also contributed to the initial belief that it is similar and reliable in cross-cultural cooperation.<sup>18</sup>

Studies in this field usually define cultural openness in terms of cultural flexibility, tolerance for cultural uncertainty, and readiness to engage in intercultural contact. A study by Khan classified Muslim youth's cultural openness into three main categories: cognitive openness, affective openness, and behavioral openness, all of which pose different effects on their relation with Chinese culture in the context of coffee culture.<sup>19</sup> The three dimensions of openness are cognitive, affective, and

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<sup>15</sup>Ming Li, William H. Mobley, and Aidan Kelly, "Linking Personality to Cultural Intelligence: An Interactive Effect of Openness and Agreeableness", *Personality and Individual Differences*, Volume 89 (2016), 105–110.

<sup>16</sup>Xia Chen et al., "Cultural Threats in Culturally Mixed Encounters Hamper Creative Performance for Individuals With Lower Openness to Experience", *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, Volume 47, Number 10 (2016), 1321–1334.

<sup>17</sup>Ted Schwaba et al., "Openness to Experience and Culture-Openness Transactions across the Lifespan", *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, Volume 115, Number 1 (2018), 118–136.

<sup>18</sup>Caitlin M. Porter et al., "Cultural and Intellectual Openness Differentially Relate to Societal Judgments of Potential Work Partners", *Journal of Personality*, Volume 85, Number 5 (2017), 632–442.

<sup>19</sup>Sammyh S. Khan et al., "How Collective Participation Impacts Social Identity: A Longitudinal Study from India", *Political Psychology*, Volume 37, Number 3 (2016), 309–325. It has been assumed that participation in group-relevant collective events increases one's investment in such group identities. However, little empirical research explicitly addresses this or the processes involved. We investigated these issues in a longitudinal questionnaire study conducted at one of the world's largest collective events—a month-long Hindu festival in north India (the Magh Mela).

behavioral openness to other cultures. The second factor that affects cultural innovation, political orientation, social views, mate selection, and interpersonal relationships is openness to experience.<sup>20</sup>

### ***Tasamuh and ukhuwah insaniyah in social spaces***

The concept of *tasamuh* (tolerance) in Islam is closely related to the phenomenon of Muslim youth being open to the transformation of Chinese identity in the context of coffee culture. *Tasamuh* in Islam teaches us to respect differences and to maintain mutual understanding between different groups. The values of *tasamuh* are practiced in concrete terms in coffee shops as social spaces. Muslim youth interacting with Chinese culture not only accept but also actively participate in the construction of cultural bridges through discussions, collaborations, and the adaptation of customs.

In addition, this interaction also reflects the concept of *ukhuwah insaniyah* (brotherhood of humanity). Islam teaches that all humans, regardless of their religious and cultural backgrounds, are part of the extended family of mankind and are obliged to support and respect each other. This *ukhuwah insaniyah* is reflected in the coffee shops, where different groups can gather, share ideas, and foster social cohesion. Khaled Abou El Fadl<sup>21</sup> explains that inclusive Islam emphasizes the significance of creating harmonious relations between Muslim and non-Muslim communities in social practice, which is a key value of *ukhuwah insaniyah*.

Halal practices in coffee shops emphasize *maqashid al-shariah* (the purpose of sharia), especially in maintaining the welfare of the people. The application of *wasathiyah*, which balances the religious values and the needs of life in a pluralistic society, is reflected in Muslim youth who

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<sup>20</sup>Robert R. McCrae, "Social Consequences of Experiential Openness", *Psychological Bulletin*, Volume 120, Number 3 (1996), 323-337.

<sup>21</sup>L. Carl Brown and Khaled M. Abou El Fadl, "The Great Theft: Wrestling Islam from the Extremists", *Foreign Affairs*, Volume 85, Number 2 (2006), 201.



encourage the serving of halal food. Mohammad Hashim Kamali stated that *maqashid al-shariah* should serve as a guide in social life, including in building tolerance and harmony between communities.<sup>22</sup>

The involvement of Muslim youth in the coffee culture influenced by Chinese identity is not only a cultural interaction, but also the realization of Islamic values of inclusion and harmony. Nasr Abu Zayd points out that a contextualized interpretation of Islam enables Muslims to adapt to social change without losing the religion's core values.<sup>23</sup> Such a normative foundation of Islam thus supports cultural diversity and integration, as well as cross-cultural interaction that aligns with Islamic principles, and fosters social cohesion in modern society.

### **Transformation of Chinese identity**

Transformation of Chinese identity has been a topic explored in different contexts. Previous studies have examined how young Chinese consumers in Shanghai construct a cosmopolitan 'New Chinese' identity by redefining themselves through market symbols and rejecting stereotypical Chinese images. This argument suggests that Chinese migrants in Singapore develop a transnational identity, that is, a strong identification with both the homeland and the host country.<sup>24</sup> To understand Chinese identity from a global and multicultural perspective, for example, with a focus on coffee culture, we can observe how the Chinese diaspora has both retained and transformed its traditions. Changsong examines overseas cafés

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<sup>22</sup>Asifa Quraishi and Mohammad Hashim Kamali, "Principles of Islamic Jurisprudence," *Journal of Law and Religion*, Volume 15, Number 1/2 (2015), 385–387.

<sup>23</sup>Nasr Abū Zayd, *Reformation of Islamic Thought : A Critical Historical Analysis*, *Reformation of Islamic Thought : A Critical Historical Analysis*, Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2006, 56-59.

<sup>24</sup>Shaohua Zhan, "Homeland, Host Country, and Beyond: Identity Transformation among Chinese Migrants in Singapore", *Journal of Chinese Overseas*, Volume 18, Number 2 (2022), 265–286.

and demonstrates that coffee culture is a dynamic medium for cultural exchange.<sup>25</sup> Over the past few decades, Chinese society has undergone significant changes in its social ecology.<sup>26</sup> For instance, the Chinese community in Bowbazar Chinatown accultures well in the host society while continuing to maintain their values, beliefs, and ideals, serving as a successful case of acculturation.<sup>27</sup>

Chinese identity in coffee culture encompasses the adaptation of tea traditions to coffee culture, the use of the Chinese language in branding, and the reflection of Confucian values. Chan,<sup>28</sup> and Qian<sup>29</sup> look into how Chinese cafés in global cities use these elements to attract customers and Chinese cultural promotion. What differentiates traditional Chinese identity, unequivocally associated with Confucian values and rituals, from modern Chinese identity is determined by globalization and multicultural exchanges, such as among coffee culture. However, Chinese students overseas are undergoing changes and transformations to their identity; these changes most significantly involve the Chinese students' lives and careers, both in the country where they study abroad and back home.<sup>30</sup> In other words, Chinese national identity has been transformed in the era of

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<sup>25</sup>Wang Changsong et al., "Digital Representation of the Coffee Culture and Cultural Heritage by Chinese Indonesian and Malaysian Coffee Brands", *GATR Journal of Management and Marketing Review*, Volume 6, Number 2 (2021), 137–145.

<sup>26</sup>Takeshi Hamamura and Yi Xu, "Changes in Chinese Culture as Examined Through Changes in Personal Pronoun Usage", *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, Volume 46, Number 7 (2015), 930–941.

<sup>27</sup>Debarhana Biswas, "Identity Development, Acculturation among Bowbazar Chinese Community", *Asian Ethnicity*, Volume 20, no. 2 (2018), 250–261.

<sup>28</sup>Selina Ching Chan, "Tea Cafés and the Hong Kong Identity: Food Culture and Hybridity", *China Information*, Volume 33, Number 3 (2019), 311–328.

<sup>29</sup>Zuyi Lv and Junxi Qian, "A Coffeehouse Neo-Tribe in the Making: Exploring a Fluid Cultural Public Space in Post-Reform Chinese Urbanism", in *Neo-Tribes: Consumption, Leisure and Tourism*, London: Springer International Publishing, 2018, 51–67.

<sup>30</sup>Qing Gu, "An Emotional Journey of Identity Change and Transformation: The Impact of Study-Abroad Experience on the Lives and Careers of Chinese Students and Returnees", *Learning and Teaching*, Volume 8, Number 3 (2015), 60–81.

globalization due to culture, economy, politics, and society.<sup>31</sup>

## Coffee culture

Today, coffee shops in multicultural cities serve as meeting places for people from diverse cultural backgrounds, including young Muslims and Chinese communities. Coffee culture is a term referring to the society practices, traditions, and customs connected with coffee consumption. Voloder examines the comparative coffee culture between countries and how coffee plays a significant role in social interaction.<sup>32</sup> At the same time, Canolli points out that cafés are important social spaces.<sup>33</sup> In Ridaryanthi et al.,<sup>34</sup> symbolic interactions between individuals are explored to understand how coffee culture in Indonesia is formed. According to Yagcioglu,<sup>35</sup> coffee culture is important in language teaching because coffee consumption is related to cultural identity. Lestari and Indriastuti,<sup>36</sup> finally look at how coffee culture is integrated into the daily lives of people in Jombang, Indonesia, and how coffee culture is integrated into the local context. It also includes how cafés become spaces of intercultural interaction and dialogue.

Coffee culture can be classified according to factors related to the type of coffee, the method of serving, and the social environment of

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<sup>31</sup>Lu Zhouxiang, "Introduction: Constructing and Negotiating Chineseness in the Age of Globalisation," in *Chinese National Identity in the Age of Globalisation*, Singapore: Palgrave Macmillan, 2020, 1-20.

<sup>32</sup>Lejla Voloder, "Comparing Coffee Cultures Drinking 'Turkish' Coffee in Australia and 'Bosnian' Coffee in Türkiye", *Comparative Sociology*, Volume 21, Number 6 (2022), 733-750.

<sup>33</sup>Arsim Canolli, "'All They Do Is Drink Coffee:' Notes on Café Culture in Prishtina, Kosova", *Folk Life*, Volume 60, Number 1 (2022): 4-18.

<sup>34</sup>Melly Ridaryanthi, Abdul Latiff Ahmad, and Nindyta Aisyah Dwityas, "Coffee Culture in Indonesia: A Symbolic Interactionism Point of View", *Jurnal Komunikasi: Malaysian Journal of Communication*, Volume 38, Number 2 (2022), 215-230.

<sup>35</sup>Ozlem Yagcioglu, "Teaching Coffee Culture and the Coffee Museums in Esl and Esp Classes", *European Journal of Foreign Language Teaching*, Volume 6, Number 4 (2023), 130-140.

<sup>36</sup>Neni Dwi Lestari and Yudiana Indriastuti, "Budaya Ngopi Masyarakat Kota Santri Jombang", *Da'watuna: Journal of Communication and Islamic Broadcasting*, Volume 3, Number 1 (2022), 12-26.

coffee consumption. In terms of Chinese influence, the topic of this categorization might also include the adoption of Chinese coffee recipes, the use of Chinese-themed coffee brewing equipment, and the creation of a Chinese coffee-style cafe. To project their peaceful image, the Chinese shape their cultural identity in accordance with the Western model that combines idealism with realism, and influence global affairs.<sup>37</sup> Identity transformation is influenced by coffee culture.<sup>38</sup> Also, coffee culture is brought about by globalization, consumer experiences and construction of consumer identity<sup>39</sup>. Yet, coffee culture is a platform of social, cultural, and personal transformation; it influences individual identities and how they relate to others and the world around them. Cultural spaces that support social interaction contribute significantly to community integration<sup>40</sup>.

### *Cultural exchange and learning*

The visit of Muslim youth to Chinese coffee shops is a great opportunity to learn Chinese culture and become more tolerant. This is evident from the visits of Muslim youth to Chinese coffee shops, where they freely display their respective selves. These visits provide Muslim youth with an opportunity to engage directly with aspects of Chinese culture. Some of the outcomes indicated from Muslim youth visiting Chinese coffee shops include promoting cultural tolerance, enhancing the relationship between intercommunities, and creating an inclusive society. In detail, the cultural

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<sup>37</sup>Dominik Mierzejewski and Bartosz Kowalski, "Beyond the Borders: Utopia, Uniqueness, and Soft-Power", in *Global Political Transitions*, Singapore: Palgrave Macmillan, 2019, 157–220.

<sup>38</sup>Angela Maria Hoffmann Walesko and Catarina Portinho-Nauaiack, "Que Tal Uma Pausa Para Um 'Café Cultural'? Interculturalidade e (Trans)Formações de Identidades de Professores de Línguas", *Revista X*, Volume 16, Number 4 (2021), 1120-1142.

<sup>39</sup>Hazem Abdullah AlKulaib, "Consumer Identity Assembles in Coffee House", *England: SSRN Electronic Journal* (2015), 1–53.

<sup>40</sup>Zaenuddin Hudi Prasajo, Elmansyah Elmansyah, and Muhammed Sahrin Haji Masri, "Moderate Islam and the Social Construction of Multi-Ethnic Communities", *Indonesian Journal of Islam and Muslim Societies*, Volume 9, Number 2 (2019), 217–239.

exchange and learning that the visits to Chinese coffee shops entail are illustrated by Muslim youth in the following ways.

Muslim youth are often seen enjoying food and beverages in Chinese-owned coffee shops. In these spaces, they interact openly with both friends and strangers, reflecting the role of cafés that has gone beyond merely serving as meeting points or business venues. These coffee shops have become arenas of learning and cultural exchange, adding value to both Chinese and Muslim traditions. Such encounters affirm that cafés are not merely commercial places, but dynamic social arenas where intercultural dialogue occurs naturally.<sup>41</sup>

Muslim youth visits to Chinese coffee shops are not merely about consumption but represent social learning practices that embody *tasāmuḥ* (tolerance) and *ukhuwah insāniah* (human fraternity). Coffee shops serve as public spaces that enable intercultural dialogue, strengthen cross-cultural communication competence,<sup>42</sup> and nurture social cohesion.<sup>43</sup> This interaction exemplifies cultural openness, where Islamic values are preserved through halal practices without compromising integration with Chinese cultural traditions, leading to the formation of hybrid identities that support multicultural harmony.

### *Creating inclusive social spaces*

The Chinese coffee shops that welcome young Muslim people have become social spaces for interpenetration and integration. These areas foster free

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<sup>41</sup>Jennifer Ferreira, Carlos Ferreira, and Elizabeth Bos, "Spaces of Consumption, Connection, and Community: Exploring the Role of the Coffee Shop in Urban Lives," *Geoforum*, Volume 119 (2021), 21–29.

<sup>42</sup>Elena Lvina, "The Role of Cross-Cultural Communication Competence: Effective Transformational Leadership Across Cultures," *Jurnal Ilmiah Peuradeun*, Volume 3, Number 1 (2015), 1–18.

<sup>43</sup>Erawadi Erawadi; Fadlan Masykura Setiadi, "Exploring Religious Harmony Through Dalihan Na Tolu: Local Wisdom in Peacebuilding in Indonesia," *Jurnal Ilmiah Peuradeun*, Volume 12, Number 3 (2024), 1379–1408.

and frank communication and the sharing of information between two or more persons of different cultures, thereby promoting cross-cultural values and tolerance. Moreover, these spaces facilitate cooperation in social projects, which demonstrates the potential for collaboration between communities. This inclusiveness can be expressed in several aspects: the creation of large social circles, encounters between people of diverse cultures, and the solutions that can be collectively attained for the public's benefit. In particular, the formation of the inclusive social spaces is expressed in the following way.

The discussion activity entitled "*Coffee Chat on Religious Moderation: Resilience & Relevance of Religious Moderation Policies at IAIN Pontianak*" was organized by the Center for Religious Moderation of IAIN Pontianak at Kopi Asiang (阿祥). This event brought together participants from various community groups and demonstrated that Chinese-owned coffee shops are not merely places serving beverages, but also serve as intercultural arenas that foster intercommunity engagement and reinforce social inclusion.

Chinese coffee shops have proven to be inclusive public spaces capable of embracing diversity. The religious moderation discussion held at Kopi Asiang, for example, demonstrates its role as a neutral and productive arena. The participation of various community groups in such forums affirms that these coffee shops are not merely sites of consumption but also social nodes that strengthen intergroup connectedness. Such practices illustrate the implementation of *wasathiyah* (moderation) in managing differences and align with findings that moderate Islam plays a pivotal role in fostering social cohesion in Indonesia's multiethnic society.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>44</sup>Prasojo, Zaenuddin Hudi, Elmansyah Elmansyah, and Muhammed Sahrin Haji Masri, "Moderate Islam..."

### *Contribution to multicultural identity*

Muslim youth's presence in Chinese coffee shops shows their role in constructing multicultural and hybrid identity and dynamic cultural integration. It engages people to step into Islamic culinary influences like the halal menu options in the Chinese experience as a form of shared culture. Furthermore, the Chinese transitional food culture, blending with the Muslim restricted cuisine, has also led to the formation of diversified new taste buds, which reflects the advancement of a diversified, flavorful cooking culture. This makes it easier to see the Muslim youth's tolerance, including portraying a changing Chinese identity through food variety and creativity. It proves a cultural exchange that continues to be enhanced through the use of food, and fosters awareness of food diversity, which is a key to building cross-cultural relations.

Informant D reported that the *halalness* of food in Chinese coffee shops is no longer a matter of debate, as the café owners make sure that the food is both halal and hygienic. In fact, she usually goes to Café Asiang (阿祥) to eat *bakpao* and *kwe tiau*,<sup>45</sup> and has coffee there regularly. In Pontianak, dishes such as dimsum, laksa, and kue moci are served with high hygiene standards, which are observed. Some coffee shops even employ Muslim chefs to ensure that the food served is halal. These establishments are not only venues for cultural interaction but also sites of adaptation that strengthen social relations in a diverse society.

The presence of Muslim youth in Chinese coffee shops illustrates their role in shaping hybrid identities. The adjustment of halal menus is not merely a business strategy but a form of cross-cultural accommodation that fosters mutual trust. Some establishments even employ Muslim chefs to guarantee the halal status of their products. This practice highlights the synergy between Islamic values and the realities of a plural society, in line

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<sup>45</sup>Interview with Informant D, Asiang Coffee, on February 8, 2024 in Pontianak.

with the principle of *maqāṣid al-sharī‘ah*, which emphasizes collective well-being. Such dynamics also resonate with studies emphasizing how everyday practices, including culinary adaptation, serve as vehicles for intercultural negotiation and identity formation.<sup>46</sup>

### *Recognition and respect for cultural diversity*

Young Muslims visiting Chinese-owned coffee shops demonstrate a profound understanding and appreciation of cultural differences, thereby building social capital. In choosing the name of the shop and distinguishing accessories, they not only enjoy coffee in industrialized cafés- styled, but they also respect Chinese identity. Thus, via this type of communication, young Muslims engage in and foster a meaningful discursive culture and embrace diversity. The recognition and respect for cultural diversity can be seen in three tendencies: the increasing number of such meetings in these coffee shops, positive intercultural communication,<sup>47</sup> and collaborative projects that emerge from these interactions.

Chinese coffee shops, such as Aming Coffee (阿明咖啡) and Sukahati Coffee Shop, serve as gathering places for Muslims who enjoy Chinese cuisine, including dishes like fried banana with srikaya. Informant S emphasized that these establishments are not merely venues for drinking coffee, but also important spaces for multicultural communication.<sup>48</sup> In Pontianak, observation indicates that Muslim youth are involved in a cultural exchange through food. Eating Chinese dishes is a form of cultural exchange that promotes ethnic unity. These coffee shops become cultural bridges that celebrate diversity.

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<sup>46</sup>Asifa Quraishi and Mohammad Hashim Kamali, “Principles of Islamic Jurisprudence,” *Journal of Law and Religion*, Volume 15, Number 1/2 (2015), 385–387.

<sup>47</sup>James William Neuliep, *Intercultural Communication: A Contextual Approach*, 7th ed., London: SAGE Publications Ltd, 2017, 33-65.

<sup>48</sup>Interview with Informant S, Asiag Coffee, on January 20, 2024 in Pontianak.



Muslim youths' visits to Chinese coffee shops also represent a form of respect for cultural diversity. Aming Coffee and Sukahati Coffee Shop, for example, serve as gathering spaces where local specialties such as fried banana with srikaya are enjoyed while engaging in interethnic interactions. Shared culinary activities become informal yet effective forms of cultural dialogue that nurture social solidarity. In these settings, respect for Chinese identity goes hand in hand with the acceptance of Muslim identity, thereby forming robust cultural bridges.<sup>49</sup> This dynamic affirms the importance of everyday social spaces in strengthening multicultural coexistence and intercultural communication competence.

### *Integration and creation of a hybrid identity*

Muslim youth's acknowledgment of the Chinese-owned coffee shop is a sign of cultural osmosis and the creation of a new culture that has traditional Chinese and local content. First, this interaction enables them to introduce halal practices into the Chinese cuisine environment and come up with diverse menus. Second, since most coffee shops contain features borrowed from both the British and American cultures, more continuity flows between the intercommunity social activities. Some examples of such an integration are the use of ethnic forms of writing, the settlement of various ethnic groups in new areas such as coffee shops, and multiformat presentation and menu.

Informant N, the manager of Lim Kok Tong Café, said that all the cooks are Muslim and the menu is suitable for Muslim customers.<sup>50</sup> Informant A, a member of the General Elections Commission and FKPLATO chairperson, stated that Chinese coffee shops are now more open and modern. The transformation of coffee shops into a place of meeting and

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<sup>49</sup>L. Carl Brown and Khaled M. Abou El Fadl, "The Great Theft"..., 201.

<sup>50</sup>Interview with Informant N, Lim Kok Tong Coffee, on March 25, 2024 in Pontianak.

hybrid identities, that reflect cultural diversity.<sup>51</sup> Besides being a social space, coffee shops also contribute to cultural products in society, promote cross-community interactions, and promote integration in a multicultural environment.

Chinese-style coffee shops have transformed into social laboratories for the creation of hybrid identities. This new identity emerges from the fusion of Chinese cultural symbols—such as the use of Mandarin script and traditional ornaments—with Islamic practices, including the provision of halal menus. The outcome is a form of local cosmopolitan identity that not only adapts to tradition but also generates a new, more inclusive culture, one that is embraced by diverse groups. Such hybridity reflects the dynamic negotiation of identity in multicultural contexts, aligning with studies that underscore how everyday intercultural encounters produce shared meanings and hybrid forms of belonging.<sup>52</sup>

### *Influence on social trends and practices*

Young Muslim people's involvement in the Chinese coffee culture can be seen as a force that can greatly transform social patterns. The increase in the number of coffee shops may encourage other companies to incorporate various cultural aspects into their operations, making society more accepting. This, in turn, helps extend global cultural exchange, thereby encouraging cultures to embrace diversity. Some of these are observable changes in the diversification of the varieties offered in coffee and designs on coffee house exteriors, as well as greater interpenetration among cultures, and cooperative projects being born out of these interactions.

The adoption of cultural diversity can be seen in the ornamental

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<sup>51</sup>Interview with Informant A, Aming Coffee, on May 01, 2024 in Pontianak.

<sup>52</sup>McConachy, Troy, and Perry Hinton, *Negotiating Intercultural Relations*. *Negotiating Intercultural Relations*, 1st ed, London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2023. <https://doi.org/10.5040/9781350276963>.

naming practices of Chinese community coffee shops. For instance, Loka Arta Coffee has its name written in Mandarin characters 阿薩商店 (A Sa Shangdian), meaning “Asa Store.” Since there is no equivalent spelling for ‘Artha’ in Mandarin, the owner chose to approximate it as ‘Asa.’ The store name is also written in Arabic script as قهوة تيام (Qohwah Tiam), meaning “Tiam Coffee,” while the English version, “Tiam Coffee,” appears at the top. The word Tiam or Dian (店) itself is derived from Mandarin, meaning “shop” or “tavern.”

Informant S, a Muslim customer, reported that the use of Arabic script in the shop name attracts his attention when he visits the coffee shop.<sup>53</sup> According to informant E, an increasing number of Chinese coffee shops are adapting to attract Muslim customers.<sup>54</sup> This supports the idea of Chinese community coffee shops with Muslim youth support in building a more inclusive social landscape. Coffee shops are not only places of consumption but also social spaces where cultural trends and practices in a multicultural society are changed through cultural integration.

The Chinese coffee culture in Pontianak has had a significant impact on social patterns. Branding practices that incorporate Mandarin, Arabic, and Latin scripts suggest that coffee shops have become venues for cross-cultural integration.<sup>55</sup> Through their active presence, Muslim youth serve as agents of social change, encouraging local businesses to become more inclusive. This phenomenon reflects grassroots cultural diplomacy that broadens global exchanges while simultaneously strengthening local cohesion. Such dynamics resonate with prior findings that highlight how public spaces and everyday practices foster multicultural solidarity and the negotiation of hybrid social identities.

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<sup>53</sup>Interview with Informant S, Loka Arta Coffee, on July 11, 2024 in Pontianak.

<sup>54</sup>Interview with Informant A, Cuan Coffee, on May 01, 2024 in Pontianak.

<sup>55</sup>McConachy, Troy, and Perry Hinton, *Negotiating Intercultural Relations. Negotiating Intercultural Relations...*

### *Exchange of perspectives and cultural experiences*

The young Muslims mix with other people in ethnic groups while at coffee shops, and this crosses people's beliefs, enhancing the cultural values that are most important. First, views on traditions of the counterpart, such as Chinese ornaments, their meaning, or Islamic rituals, reveal more general knowledge. Second, it encourages respect and empathy, leading to the promotion of tolerance and diversity in this exchange. There are three emerging patterns from these interactions: intercultural communication broke down, resulting in a greater awareness of each other's cultures, new programs were initiated as an outcome of discussions, and the atmosphere in the coffee shop became more inclusive.

Chinese coffee shop owners demonstrate their respect for Muslim customers by, among other measures, obtaining halal certification to ensure that the food served is safe for consumption. Informant J, a Muslim convert, emphasized that the dishes offered are products of cultural interaction, blending Chinese elements with Islamic values. Such adaptations position coffee shops not merely as sites of consumption but as neutral meeting grounds where tolerance and cultural exchange are actively cultivated within a multicultural society.<sup>56</sup>

Interethnic encounters in Chinese coffee shops open up opportunities for the exchange of perspectives. Halal menus and culinary adaptations serve as a medium for cultural dialogue, affirming identity negotiation without compromising either religious values or Chinese traditions.<sup>57</sup> These interactions foster empathy, mutual respect, and broader awareness of diversity. In this sense, coffee shops function as dynamic public spaces where tolerance is tangibly practiced. Such findings align with studies

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<sup>56</sup>Interview with Informant J, CW Coffee, on February 28, 2024 in Pontianak.

<sup>57</sup>Asifa Quraishi and Mohammad Hashim Kamali, "Principles of Islamic Jurisprudence", *Journal of Law and Religion*, Volume 15, Number 1/2 (2015), 385–387.

emphasizing the role of everyday intercultural interactions in enhancing communication competence and strengthening multicultural coexistence.

### *Formation of an inclusive social network*

The Chinese coffee shops that are often attended by young Muslims are involved in the process of creating an integrated social network of people. Through the informal setting of a coffee shop, members of different communities have the opportunity to hold casual meetings and engage in informal discussions, thereby enhancing social relations among them. These interactions foster the development of business and friendly relations as well as the improvement of the social life of the visitors. This phenomenon is indicative of the increasing trend of intercultural interaction, sharing of festivals and cultural practices, and community development outcomes of such interactions.

As a symbol of good luck in Chinese tradition, many Chinese community coffee shops are decorated with cultural attributes such as red lanterns. These venues are not merely places to drink coffee, but also social spaces that bring together diverse communities. According to Muslim Informant F, coffee shops serve as sites of cross-cultural interaction that foster friendships, community building, and business opportunities.<sup>58</sup> Similarly, Chinese Informant Y emphasized their role in sustaining social relationships across groups. Today, Chinese coffee shops function as spaces of communication where diversity and social connectedness are actively reinforced.<sup>59</sup>

Chinese coffee shops attended by young Muslims illustrate how everyday interactions can evolve into durable social networks that extend beyond casual encounters. The informal atmosphere not only encourages

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<sup>58</sup>Interview with Informant F, Sukahati Coffee, on March 12, 2024 in Pontianak.

<sup>59</sup>Interview with Informant Y, Utama Rasa Coffee, on March 15, 2024 in Pontianak.

conversations but also nurtures collaborative initiatives, from small-scale business ventures to community-driven projects. The presence of cultural symbols such as red lanterns affirms Chinese identity while simultaneously welcoming diverse patrons, creating a symbolic bridge between traditions. This dual role—as cultural markers and inclusive meeting grounds—enables coffee shops to operate as hubs of social capital, where friendships, trust, and mutual obligations are cultivated. In this way, they actively transform cultural diversity into tangible forms of connectedness and shared development.<sup>60</sup>

### *Promoting openness and tolerance*

Through their continued social interactions, particularly at the Chinese coffee shops with other ethnic groups, the young Muslim people gain acceptance, and racially, there is integration. The friendly environment enables completely natural communication which makes discussions more cohesive and reduces conflicts. This creates for them a common ground, so they learn to respect each other and appreciate their differences. This development can lead to increased freedom of interaction and integration between the two communities in areas such as regular meetings, the launch of projects, and common causes that support social integration and/or share success stories of mutual integration.

Informant H, a Muslim visitor, stated that coffee shops are now a place where people gather and exchange constructive ideas. To them, coffee shops are a place to gather, discuss, complain, chat, in short, everything. There are numerous positive aspects associated with coffee shops. For instance, they talked about the Cap Go Meh tradition and the Tatung ritual in Singkawang. They have even planned to write an academic paper to the Mayor of Singkawang, so that the form of the Cap Go Meh celebration

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<sup>60</sup>Elena Lvina, "The Role of Cross-Cultural...

can be reviewed and developed to be more varied and interesting.<sup>61</sup> The finding suggests that coffee shops are not just places to drink coffee, but have also become a significant space in laying the foundations for a more inclusive and tolerant society.

Sustained interactions in coffee shops foster deeper openness and tolerance. These interactions demonstrate how everyday social encounters in coffee shops evolve into intercultural exchanges that reinforce tolerance and inclusivity. Discussions on traditions such as Cap Go Meh, for instance, have developed into academic initiatives to enrich local cultural celebrations. Coffee shops thus serve as an essential foundation for building a more inclusive, tolerant, and harmonious society.<sup>62</sup>

## Conclusion

This study demonstrates that the openness of Muslim youth toward the transformation of Chinese identity through coffee culture in Pontianak is not merely a reflection of tolerance but a dynamic process of identity negotiation and cultural integration. Coffee shops emerge as inclusive public spaces where symbols of Chinese tradition and Islamic practices—such as the incorporation of halal menus—intersect, producing hybrid identities that are accepted by both communities. These everyday encounters highlight that multicultural coexistence is sustained not only through policy but also through daily practices rooted in mutual respect and social interaction.

Theoretically, the findings contribute to the understanding of cultural openness, identity transformation, and the role of religion in multicultural settings. By situating concepts such as *tasāmuḥ* (tolerance), *ukhuwāh insāniyah* (human fraternity), and *wasathiyah* (moderation) within the lived

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<sup>61</sup>Interview with Informant H, Asiag Coffee, on June 17, 2024 in Pontianak.

<sup>62</sup>Wuthnow, Robert, “Religion and Identity Power”, In *Religion's Power*, New York, NY, USA: Oxford University Press, n.d., 2022: 142–185.

experiences of youth in coffee shops, this study affirms that Islamic values can harmonize with multicultural realities. Coffee shops thus operate as micro public spheres of intercultural communication, enabling the practice of inclusive Islamic principles in the formation of hybrid identities.

Practically, the results emphasize the importance of fostering cross-cultural negotiation—cafés, art venues, or other communal hubs—as arenas of dialogue and cultural diplomacy at the grassroots level. These spaces not only strengthen social cohesion locally but also resonate with broader global challenges of multicultural integration, positioning Pontianak as a microcosm of Southeast Asian interfaith coexistence.

For future research, further comparative studies across other Southeast Asian cities could broaden the understanding of how Muslim and Chinese interactions evolve in different contexts. In addition, longitudinal research is needed to assess the long-term implications of these intercultural practices for policy-making, particularly in promoting social harmony and inclusive multicultural governance.

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