



Niyahah (Wailing) in Muslim Bereavement: Cultural Continuity and Community Perception

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the practice of Niyāhah (loud wailing) among Mëranaw Muslim families in Tubod, Lanao del Norte, focusing on how cultural traditions align with Islamic teachings on mourning. While Islam allows natural expressions of grief such as silent crying, it discourages excessive lamentation, self-harm, and prolonged mourning, as these contradict patience and submission to God's will. Addressing a gap in existing literature on Muslim mourning, the study employed a descriptive-survey design involving 100 randomly selected Mëranaw families who responded to structured questionnaires containing both closed- and open-ended items. Data were analyzed using frequency, percentage, mean, and thematic interpretation. Findings revealed that most respondents avoid Niyāhah, viewing restraint in grief as a sign of faith and acceptance of divine decree. Silent crying and offering condolences were seen as appropriate expressions. The study highlights how Mëranaw families harmonize cultural identity with Islamic principles, promoting respectful and faith-centered mourning practices.

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1. INTRODUCTION

“Indeed, we belong to Allah, and indeed to Him we will return” (Qur’an 2:156). This verse highlights the Islamic belief that death is an inevitable part of life and a reminder of its temporary nature. In Islam, death is not viewed as an end but as a transition to the afterlife, where every individual’s deeds will be judged. Nevertheless, the loss of a loved one brings profound grief, sadness, and emotional pain, reflecting the deeply human experiences of separation, longing, and remorse. This study acknowledges the existence of the four major Islamic schools of thought (Imam Shafi’i, Imam Hanbali, Imam Maliki, and Imam Hanafi), each offering distinct interpretations and *fatwas* concerning various religious practices. Within the context of Mëranaw culture, this study seeks to explore indigenous knowledge in light of these interpretations, to foster understanding and prevent misinterpretation.

Furthermore, Islam teaches believers to face loss with patience (*ṣabr*) and faith, as emphasized in the verse, “Indeed, we belong to Allah, and indeed to Him we shall return” (Qur’an 2:156). The Mëranaw perceive death as part of Allah’s divine will, a reminder that all worldly things are transient. While expressions of grief are natural, excessive wailing or *niyāhah* is discouraged because it demonstrates resistance to Allah’s decree. Instead, the Mëranaw express love and remembrance for the deceased through prayer (*du‘ā’*), Qur’an recitation, and reflection (*dhikr*), believing that true strength lies in accepting loss with calmness, faith, and hope for reunion in the hereafter.

In Islam, expressing grief through quiet weeping is natural and allowed, as it reflects the softness of the heart and compassion. However, excessive wailing, shouting, or dramatic displays of sorrow are discouraged because they show discontent with Allah’s decree. The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) reminded believers, “Do not destroy the reward of your affliction by shrieking and loud wailing. Wailing does not return the deceased nor remove the grief” (Ṭabrānī, as cited in <https://www.islamweb.net/en/fatwa/364486/wailing-in-loud-voice-unbefitting-of-prophets>), and “Bewailing loudly upon the dead is an act of disbelief” (Saḥīḥ Muslim, as cited in <https://www.islamweb.net/en/fatwa/364486/wailing-in-loud-voice-unbefitting-of-prophets>). Salafi scholars emphasize that while natural crying is permissible, loud lamentation (*niyāhah*) is prohibited. For instance, Shaykh Rabee’ al-‘Aakhirī explains that raising one’s voice with crying and screaming is the *niyāhah* that is forbidden in Islam (see <https://www.islamweb.net/en/fatwa/364486/wailing-in-loud-voice-unbefitting-of-prophets>).

Among the Mëranaw, wailing or *Niyāhah* has been a deeply rooted part of their mourning traditions for generations. Historically, weeping or wailing in Mëranaw communities served as a way to express unity, shared sorrow, and emotional support among relatives, especially the immediate family members (see https://www.academia.edu/download/66077645/Grief_in_Islam.2019.pdf). Such practices help reinforce social bonds and provide emotional comfort to grieving families. From an Islamic standpoint, however, excessive or loud lamentation is discouraged, as it can go against patience and submission to Allah’s will. Mëranaw families, therefore, often balance their traditional practices with religious guidance (allowing silent crying, offering condolences, and supporting the bereaved). Thus, grief is expressed in meaningful ways without violating Islamic teachings. This illustrates how Mëranaw cultural heritage and Islamic principles coexist, shaping a respectful and faith-aligned way of mourning (see https://www.academia.edu/download/66077645/Grief_in_Islam.2019.pdf).

Finally, this study examines the cultural and religious dimensions of *Niyāhah* (wailing) in Muslim bereavement, highlighting how this expression of grief persists or transforms among Mëranaw communities in Tubod, Lanao del Norte, during the years 2025–2026. It seeks to

understand how Islamic teachings and traditional practices shape people's perspectives on mourning. The primary goal is to acknowledge and document Mëranaw culture, particularly its beliefs and customs related to *Niyāhah*. This study is not about the way of thinking of a preacher (*da'ee*), but it conducts independently to analyze the Mëranaw community as a whole. The materials and information used were obtained from various credible online and printed sources. However, some references may not fully represent the views of the Salafi tradition. The study also clarifies not authorized to issue Islamic rulings or engage in religious instruction but merely aims to contribute to a deeper understanding of the cultural and religious aspects of mourning within the Mëranaw community. Specifically, this study seeks to answer the following research questions:

- (i) What are the respondents' demographic and socio-economic profiles?
- (ii) What are the respondents' views or rulings regarding the practice of *Niyāhah*?
- (iii) What are the respondents' perceptions of the observance of *Niyāhah* within their cultural and spiritual contexts?
- (iv) What implications can be drawn from the findings to better understand the relationship between Mëranaw cultural customs and Islamic principles in bereavement?

2. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

This research is grounded in the Qur'an, the Hadith, and the teachings of renowned Islamic scholars, particularly Ibn Taymiyyah and Shaykh Saalih al-Fawzaan, who provide guidance on the proper expression of grief. Mourning is recognized in Islam as a natural human response to the loss of a loved one; however, it is regulated to ensure that sorrow remains within the bounds of patience (*ṣabr*) and acceptance of Allah's decree. Acts such as wailing, loud shrieking, self-harm, or excessive lamentation contradict Islamic teachings, as they indicate discontent with Allah's will (Ibn Taymiyyah, 1991). Similarly, Shaykh Saalih al-Fawzaan advised that genuine relief from grief is achieved through patience, remembrance of Allah (*dhikr*), and recitation of the Qur'an, rather than through external or exaggerated displays of sorrow (see <https://salaficentre.com/2020/03/28/the-cure-for-sorrow-and-grief-shaykh-saaleh-al-fawzaan/>).

Among the Mëranaw, mourning rituals are deeply embedded in cultural tradition. Practices such as silent crying, communal prayers, and supplications are common and consistent with Islamic teachings, which permit quiet weeping and remembrance of Allah. However, customs such as loud wailing, excessive lamentation, or self-harm (though historically present in certain cultural expressions) are discouraged within Salafi thought, as they may signify emotional excess or dissatisfaction with divine wisdom. The Qur'an reminds believers, "*Verily, I will test you with fear and loss of life, wealth, and the fruits of your labor, but give glad tidings to those who are patient*" (Qur'an 2:155), emphasizing that patience in the face of grief is divinely rewarded. Likewise, the Hadith teaches that the reward for enduring the death of a loved one with patience is immense; those who respond with steadfastness and praise to Allah are granted blessings and a special place in Paradise, such as Sunan al-Tirmidhi 1:298-299 in Hadith No. 814.

Integrating these Islamic teachings into Mëranaw mourning practices encourages individuals to express grief in ways that respect both cultural heritage and religious guidance. Mourning should embody patience, supplication, remembrance of Allah, and mutual support within the community, while avoiding acts of excessive wailing or lamentation. In doing so, the grieving process becomes a path toward spiritual growth, emotional healing, and

acceptance, enabling Mëranaw individuals to cope with loss while remaining steadfast in their faith and adherence to Islamic principles.

Finally, in *Riyad-us-Saliheen*, Chapter 153, Imam Al-Nawawi explained that wailing loudly over the dead is strictly forbidden (*haram*), but crying out of natural sadness is allowed (see <https://abdurrahman.org/author/abdurrahmanorg/>). The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) also cried when he lost loved ones, but said that Allah does not punish people for tears or sorrow in the heart, only for words of loud lamentation. This shows that expressing grief through quiet tears is a sign of mercy, not a sin, as long as it is done with patience and acceptance of Allah's will.

Shaikh Ibn 'Uthaymīn and Shaikh Al-Albānī also taught that gathering in one place after a funeral to receive condolences or prepare food for visitors is not part of the Sunnah. Ibn 'Uthaymīn explained that the main purpose of giving condolences is to comfort the bereaved, not to hold large gatherings that can sometimes resemble wailing (see <https://abukhadeejah.com/gathering-in-a-place-after-a-funeral-to-receive-condolences-and-provide-food-by-shaikh-muhammad-ibn-salih-al-uthaimin-and-shaikh-al-albani> and <https://www.sifatusafwa.com/en/majmu-fatawa-wa-risala/majmu-fatawa-wa-rasail-muhammad-ibn-salih-al-uthaymin.html>). Al-Albānī agreed and said that organizing such events or preparing food for guests after a funeral is a religious innovation (*bid'ah*), something not practiced by the Prophet and his companions.

In the same way, the Permanent Committee for Scholarly Research and Ifta' (see <https://www.al-feqh.com/en/women-gathering-to-wail-over-the-dead>) ruled that women gathering to perform *niyāhah* (loud crying and praising the dead) or *nadb* (lamentation) is forbidden. The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) even cursed the professional mourner and the one who listens to her. Acts such as hitting one's face, tearing clothes, or shouting in grief (similar to customs from the pre-Islamic period (*Jāhiliyyah*)) are also prohibited. Islam teaches patience (*ṣabr*) and faith in Allah's decree as better ways to cope with loss.

In Mëranaw culture, mourning carries a profound sense of community and reverence for the deceased. Expressions of grief often include crying and collective remembrance, which are regarded as acts of love and solidarity. This study acknowledges that although some of these practices may resemble *Niyāhah* (wailing), many are deeply rooted in cultural tradition rather than acts of disobedience. Therefore, understanding both Islamic teachings and local customs is vital to avoid misinterpretation and to promote respect for cultural identity within the boundaries of faith.

For clearer comprehension of the perspectives discussed in this study, the following terms are defined conceptually and operationally in the context of Mëranaw culture:

- (i) 'Aleemah/'Aleem (pl. Aleemāt/Ulamā): Scholars of Islam who possess deep religious knowledge (*'ilm*). In this study, the term refers to individuals within Mëranaw culture who guide proper religious practices, including mourning and funeral rituals.
- (ii) Ahadeeth (Hadith): Narrations of the sayings, actions, or approvals (*Taqrīr*) of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). In this study, the term refers to narrations that inform the proper expression of grief and mourning according to Islamic teachings.
- (iii) 'Iddah: The waiting period a woman observes after her husband's death or divorce. Among the Mëranaw, widows observe four months and ten days, while divorced women observe three menstrual cycles (or until childbirth if pregnant) as an expression of respect for Islamic law and the deceased.
- (iv) Islamic Mourning: The mourning practices permitted in Islam, including increased devotion, receiving condolences, and avoiding decorative clothing or jewelry. In

- Mëranaw culture, this involves quiet reflection, prayer, and patience while avoiding excessive wailing or displays of extreme emotion.
- (v) Islam: Submission to Allah alone, renouncing polytheism, and obeying His commands completely. In this study, it refers to the faith guiding the rituals, attitudes, and expressions of grief among the Mëranaw.
 - (vi) Islamic Law (Shari'ah): The comprehensive system of Allah's commandments governing all aspects of life. Within Mëranaw culture, *Shari'ah* directs proper funeral rites, mourning behavior, and spiritual practices.
 - (vii) Jāhiliyyah: The period of ignorance before Islam. In the Mëranaw context, it denotes pre-Islamic mourning customs such as excessive wailing or self-harm, which were later prohibited in Islam.
 - (viii) Niyāhah: Wailing or prolonged mournful cries. In the Mëranaw culture, such lamentation is culturally recognized but religiously discouraged as excessive and inappropriate.
 - (ix) Mustahab: Recommended actions in Islam, ranked between *Mubāh* (neutral) and *Wājib* (obligatory). Among the Mëranaw, these include praying for the deceased, giving charity in their name, and performing funeral prayers.
 - (x) Ṣabr: Patience in times of trial. Mëranaw mourning emphasizes *Ṣabr* as a reflection of resilience and spiritual strength amid loss.
 - (xi) Tawakkul: Reliance upon Allah. The Mëranaw accept death as part of Allah's divine decree, shaping their cultural approach to grief.
 - (xii) Du'ā: Supplication or prayer. In Mëranaw culture, offering *Du'ā* for the deceased and their bereaved relatives is a valued and regular practice.
 - (xiii) Barakah: Blessing or spiritual benefit. Properly conducted mourning brings *Barakah* to both the deceased and their family.
 - (xiv) Qadr: Divine decree. Death is perceived as part of Allah's wisdom, guiding both cultural and religious responses to loss in Mëranaw tradition.
 - (xv) Janāzah: The funeral prayer for a deceased Muslim. In Mëranaw culture, *Janāzah* highlights prayer, reflection, and communal support through culturally appropriate rituals.

Additionally, *Niyāhah* (wailing) is associated with the pre-Islamic era of ignorance (*Jāhiliyyah*) and is regarded as a form of minor disbelief (*kufr asghar*), whether committed by a man or a woman, though more commonly among women. *Niyāhah* involves loud lamentation, weeping, tearing of clothes, or striking the cheeks (see *Encyclopedia of Translated Prophetic Hadiths*).

Furthermore, the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said: "*Listen carefully! Allah does not punish for tears that are shed or for sorrow in the heart, but He punishes or shows mercy because of this*", and he pointed to his tongue, "*and indeed, the deceased is punished because of the wailing of his family over him*" (*Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* in Vol. 2 in Hadith No. 1286; *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*). Wailing refers to loud and excessive mourning, which Islam strictly prohibits. The Prophet also taught that wailing is among the practices of the pre-Islamic period of ignorance (*Jāhiliyyah*), and that a professional mourner who fails to repent will be punished in the Hereafter (*Muslim*, Hadith No. 934). Moreover, he required women to pledge not to wail over the dead (*Bukhārī*, Hadith No. 1306; *Muslim*, Hadith No. 937). These teachings affirm that while Islam allows natural expressions of sorrow and tears, it forbids exaggerated displays of grief that reflect discontent with Allah's decree.

Islamic scholars further emphasize that public wailing is prohibited, as mourning is for the deceased, whereas martyrs are regarded as living in a special spiritual state (Qur'an 2:154). Among the Mëranaw, grief is expressed through patience, silent tears, prayers, and remembrance, reflecting Islamic values of dignity and submission to divine will. The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said, *"The deceased is punished because of the wailing of his family over him"* (Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī; Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim). Scholars clarify that this applies only to those who instructed or permitted such wailing, for Allah says, *"And no bearer of burdens shall bear the burden of another"* (Qur'an 35:18). While wailing is prohibited, quiet weeping and natural sorrow are permitted, as the Prophet said, *"Allah does not punish for the tears of the eyes or the sadness of the heart, but He punishes for what the tongue utters that is forbidden"* (Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī; Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim).

Authentic (ṣaḥīḥ) aḥādīth from the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) indicate that the deceased may be affected by the wailing of their family members. Scholars explain that this applies to cases in which the deceased, during their lifetime, encouraged or failed to forbid such practices, as this implies approval of a prohibited act. Allah states: *"And no bearer of burdens shall bear the burden of another"* (Qur'an 6:164). Therefore, if the deceased neither approved of nor condoned wailing, they are not held accountable. The word *yu'adhdhab* in the ḥadīth is interpreted to mean that the deceased is afflicted or distressed (not punished for sin) by the wailing of others.

Islam permits silent weeping and the natural expression of sorrow, as these reflect compassion and emotional humanity. However, loud wailing, striking oneself, tearing garments, or hiring mourners are considered prohibited practices that originate from pre-Islamic (Jāhiliyyah) traditions.

Culturally, the Mëranaw reflect these Islamic teachings by expressing grief through prayer, devotion, and communal support rather than through extreme or exaggerated displays. Mourning is observed for four months and ten days in the case of a widow and for three days for other relatives, in accordance with the Prophet's instructions (peace be upon him). This period underscores the importance of *ṣabr* (patience) and acceptance of Allah's decree. Experiencing grief is natural, but it should be expressed within the limits set by Islam so that the deceased may benefit from the prayers and good deeds performed on their behalf. Reflection on death serves as a spiritual reminder for believers to strengthen their relationship with Allah, recognize the transient nature of worldly life, and seek appropriate emotional and spiritual support (including counseling) while remaining guided by the Qur'an and the Sunnah (Daud, 2024).

In Islam, mourning (*ḥidād*) is a prescribed period of reflection and self-restraint following the death of a loved one. For widows, it entails refraining from adornment, including the use of makeup, perfume, and jewelry, as well as avoiding unnecessary outings. Mourning is permitted for three days for most relatives, but for a husband, it extends to four months and ten days, known as the *'iddah* period (Qur'an 2:234). This period provides time for the widow to grieve, engage in prayer, and strengthen her connection with Allah, while abstaining from prohibited behaviors such as loud wailing, slapping, or self-harm. During *'iddah*, widows are encouraged to remain primarily within their homes, cared for by close family members, and to refrain from entertaining marriage proposals or making any arrangements for remarriage until the period concludes (Daud, 2024). Shedding tears is natural and permitted in Islam, but believers are taught to control their emotions and express grief with respect and composure.

In the Mëranaw context, death rituals often include communal mourning, poetic eulogies (*bayok*), and public expressions of sorrow. While Islam acknowledges the human need to grieve, excessive wailing and self-harm are discouraged, as they cause unnecessary distress

to both the deceased and the living (*Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*). By following Islamic guidelines while respecting Mëranaw customs, families can honor the deceased in a manner that is both meaningful and spiritually safe.

Mourning should allow individuals to reflect, pray, and support one another without deepening emotional suffering. When expressed within Islamic boundaries, grief becomes a process of healing and remembrance, helping the bereaved to find comfort while granting the deceased peace and dignity (Daud, 2024).

Additionally, crying is a natural human response to sadness, loss, and other intense emotions, serving as a healthy outlet for grief. Islam permits crying for the deceased or in times of personal suffering, as illustrated by numerous accounts of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) shedding tears over the deaths of his loved ones, including his son Ibrāhīm and daughter Ruqayyah (*Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, 1284; *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, 923). Crying provides emotional release and alleviates distress; however, Islam forbids wailing, loud lamentation, self-harm, or other destructive expressions of grief, practices that were common during the pre-Islamic *Jāhiliyyah* period. Such actions are considered excessive and detrimental, both spiritually and socially (*Musnad Aḥmad*; *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*).

The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) emphasized that tears from the eyes and sorrow in the heart are natural signs of mercy, while wailing or lamenting with the tongue or body are prohibited (*Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, 1304; *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, 924). In Islam, mourning is generally limited to three days for relatives, except for widows, who observe a period of four months and ten days (*‘iddah*), allowing time for reflection, spiritual healing, and support from family and the community (Daud, 2024).

Among the Mëranaw, mourning practices have historically blended Islamic teachings with local cultural expressions. Silent crying and gentle tears are regarded as acceptable and even encouraged, as they reflect compassion and emotional sincerity. However, public displays of loud wailing or lamentation are discouraged, in alignment with Islamic principles that emphasize patience (*ṣabr*) and composure.

Mëranaw widows traditionally observe the prescribed *‘iddah* period, remaining within the household and refraining from adornment or social gatherings, while receiving care and emotional support from close family members. These customs provide comfort and protection, ensuring that the widow is not left vulnerable or pressured into new relationships during a period of emotional fragility. In doing so, the Mëranaw community demonstrates a thoughtful balance between cultural values and Islamic rulings, honoring both heritage and faith in their approach to grief and mourning (Daud, 2024).

Such integration illustrates how Mëranaw Muslims express grief in ways that honor both their faith and local cultural traditions. Grief and silent crying are natural human responses to loss and are permissible in Islam, as they reflect genuine emotion without transgressing *Sharī‘ah* (Ibn al-Jawzī, 597 AH / 1201 CE). In contrast, wailing (*al-niyāhah*) (which involves loud screaming, scratching the face, tearing clothes, or disheveling hair) is prohibited, as it is associated with the pre-Islamic practices of *Jāhiliyyah* (*Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*; *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*; *Sunan Abī Dāwūd*).

The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) permitted the expression of sorrow through tears but forbade excessive lamentation, urging believers to remain patient and place their trust in Allah’s divine decree (*Musnad al-Shāfi‘ī*). Among the Mëranaw, mourning follows these Islamic principles: widows observe the prescribed waiting period (*‘iddah*), refrain from adornment, and receive emotional and social support from their families. This practice

reflects a delicate balance between emotional healing, respect for cultural values, and adherence to spiritual obligations (Daud, 2024).

Additionally, crying and laughing are natural ways for humans to express emotions when words cannot fully convey what they feel (Al-Domi, 2015). Tears may come from happiness, sadness, fear, or reverence for God, and they serve as a way to release stress and negative emotions from the body. In Islam, crying quietly due to grief or loss is permitted, but loud wailing, striking oneself, or tearing clothes is prohibited, as these actions are linked to practices from the pre-Islamic period of ignorance (Ibn Mas'ud; Abu Dawud).

Cultural practices also shape how people express grief. Among the Ayt Merghad (Moroccan Berbers), women often lead wailing rituals to honor the dead and support the community, though harmful behaviors have mostly stopped (Gaddar, 2023). Similarly, the *Mëranaw* balance grieving with religious guidance, encouraging silent tears and proper funeral practices while avoiding excessive lamenting (Daud, 2024). Grief is personal, but cultural and religious rules help people manage it in ways that respect both faith and community.

3. METHODS

This study utilized a descriptive-survey research design to assess the beliefs, practices, and perceptions regarding *Niyāhah* (wailing) among selected *Mëranaw* families in Lanao del Norte, the Philippines. This design was appropriate as it provides a systematic description of existing cultural and religious conditions without manipulating variables. Similar descriptive approaches were applied in studies examining Muslim mourning rituals and beliefs, highlighting how religion and tradition influence expressions of grief (Ümmühan et al., 2022; Zorlu et al., 2024; Alsolais, 2023).

A structured questionnaire containing both closed-ended and open-ended items was employed to collect data on respondents' perspectives regarding *Niyāhah*. Quantitative data were analyzed using frequency, percentage, and mean, while open-ended responses were interpreted thematically to capture the cultural meanings associated with mourning. Ethical considerations (including voluntary participation, confidentiality, and cultural sensitivity) were strictly observed throughout the research process.

The participants of this study consisted of selected Muslim families residing in Tubod, Lanao del Norte. Since Tubod has a mixed population of Muslim and non-Muslim residents, with Muslims forming a minority group, this study utilized random sampling to ensure fair representation of the target population. A total of 100 respondents participated in the study, drawn from barangays with predominantly Muslim populations, namely Barangay Baris, Barangay Barakanas, Barangay Bulod, Barangay Kakai Renabor, and Barangay Malingao (see Table 1).

Table 1. Distribution of Respondents by Barangay.

Name of Barangay	Number of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Baris	28	28%
Barakanas	15	15%
Bulod	25	25%
Kakai Renabor	25	25%
Malingao	7	7%
Total	100	100%

To gather data for the study on *Niyāhah (Wailing) in Muslim Bereavement: Cultural Continuity and Community Perception*, a survey questionnaire served as the primary instrument. It was designed to align with the study's three research questions.

The questionnaire had three parts: the first part covered the respondents' personal profile; the second part focused on the rulings and religious understanding of the respondents regarding *Niyāhah*; and the third part assessed their perceptions and cultural views toward its observance. Open-ended items were also included to draw insights on the implications of the findings between *Mëranaw* culture and Islamic principles in bereavement.

The collected data were analyzed using descriptive statistics such as frequency, percentage, and weighted mean to interpret the respondents' rulings and perceptions toward the practice of *Niyāhah* (wailing). This approach was chosen since the study aimed to describe existing cultural and religious views without manipulating variables. Responses were tabulated and summarized to determine patterns and implications that reflect the connection between *Mëranaw* customs and Islamic teachings in bereavement.

Descriptive analysis effectively captures religious and cultural practices, particularly in understanding how Indonesian Muslims preserved mourning traditions during the COVID-19 pandemic ([Hidayaturrahman et al., 2021](#)). Descriptive methods are valuable in examining grief rituals within Javanese Muslim communities, showing how cultural and faith-based beliefs merge in mourning practices ([Dewi et al., 2024](#)). These studies support the use of descriptive analysis in this research, which seeks to explore how traditional *Mëranaw* beliefs about *Niyāhah* align with or differ from Islamic teachings ([Hidayaturrahman et al., 2021](#); [Dewi et al., 2024](#)).

The study used both primary and secondary data. Primary data were gathered through questionnaires distributed to selected Muslim families in Tubod, Lanao del Norte, while secondary data came from books, journals, online resources, and related studies on *Niyāhah* (wailing) and Islamic bereavement practices.

Combining field data with scholarly references enhances reliability in Islamic cultural studies ([Aminnuddin, 2025](#)). Merging empirical and textual sources provides deeper insight into community beliefs and practices ([Adiyono et al., 2024](#)).

This research strictly adheres to the Data Privacy Act. In conducting the study, consent was obtained from all participants. All data collected are treated with the utmost confidentiality and are used solely for data analysis and in presenting the results of the study. Given that the research concerns *Mëranaw* culture and Islamic practices, careful consideration was observed to ensure cultural sensitivity and respect for Islamic values. Ethical standards were maintained throughout the process to protect participants' rights and uphold the integrity of *Mëranaw* customs and beliefs within the framework of Islamic teachings.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

As shown in **Table 2**, the study involved 100 Muslim respondents from selected barangays in Tubod, Lanao del Norte (Baris, Barakanas, Bulod, Kakai Renabor, and Malingao). Most respondents (32%) were aged 21–25 and predominantly married (75%), with smaller groups single (15%), divorced (5%), or widowed (5%). In Islamic education, 64% completed secondary-level studies, 10% attained college-level, while 25% had no Islamic education. For secular education, 42% were college graduates. A majority (72%) worked in business, 17% as Arabic teachers, and 11% as government employees. Nearly half (46%) earned ₱5,000–₱9,000 monthly, reflecting modest income levels. This demographic profile highlights a community of young, married, and economically active Muslim families whose education and occupation

shape their understanding and practice of *Niyāhah* (wailing) in alignment with *Mëranaw* culture and Islamic principles.

As shown in **Table 3**, the results show that most respondents agree that *Niyāhah* (wailing) should be avoided by Muslim families. They believe that not practicing it helps the community accept Allah's will, keeps their faith strong, and prevents harm to the deceased, which reflects *Mëranaw* cultural values of respectful and patient mourning. Respondents also understand that the Qur'an and the teachings of Prophet Muhammad (SAW) discourage excessive crying and loud lamentation (see <https://islamqa.info/en/answers/154215> and <https://riyadh.islamenc.com/en/page/306>). Recent Islamic scholars also emphasize that wailing is not allowed because it goes against patience, following Allah's plan, and the Sunnah (see <https://riyadh.islamenc.com/en/page/306>). Hence, *Mëranaw* Muslim families practice grief in ways that follow Islamic teachings while respecting their cultural traditions.

Table 2. Socio-demographic Profile.

Profile	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Age	18 – 20 years old	6	6%
	21 – 25 years old	32	32%
	26 – 30 years old	28	28%
	31 years old and above	34	34%
Civil Status	Single	15	15%
	Married	75	75%
	Divorced	5	5%
	Widow/Widower	5	5%
Educational Attainment (Islamic)	No Islamic Education Attained	25	25%
	Secondary Level	64	64%
	College Level	10	10%
Educational Attainment (Secular)	No English Education Attained	0	0%
	Elementary Level	10	10%
	Secondary Level	38	38%
	College Level	42	42%
	Masteral Level	10	10%
Occupation	Business	72	72%
	Government Employee	11	11%
	Arabic Teachers	17	17%
Monthly Income (₱)	5,000 – 9,000	46	46%
	10,000 – 14,000	22	22%
	15,000 – 19,000	18	18%
	20,000 and above	14	14%

Table 3. Respondents' Agreement on *Niyāhah* (Wailing).

Statement Indicators	Mean	Verbal Interpretation
Do you agree that the prohibition of <i>Niyāhah</i> should be recognized by Muslim families?	1.75	Agree
Does the prohibition of <i>Niyāhah</i> help the Muslim community accept predestination?	1.85	Agree
Does practicing <i>Niyāhah</i> weaken a Muslim's belief?	1.90	Agree
Do you agree that wailing may cause suffering for the deceased in the grave or hereafter?	1.55	Strongly Agree
Do verses in the Qur'an and the teachings of Rasulullah (SAW) prevent Muslims from practicing <i>Niyāhah</i> ?	1.80	Agree

As shown in **Table 4**, the results indicate that the respondents generally agree that *Niyāhah* (wailing) should be prohibited in Muslim families. They recognize that avoiding wailing helps the community accept Allah's decree, strengthens faith, and prevents harm to the deceased, which aligns with *Mëranaw* cultural values of respectful and patient mourning. Specifically, respondents agreed with previous studies (see <https://kalamullah.com/Books/Fatawa-Islamiyah-Islamic-Verdicts-Vol.-3.pdf> and [https://www.academia.edu/download/66077645/Grief in Islam.2019.pdf](https://www.academia.edu/download/66077645/Grief_in_Islam.2019.pdf)). They also strongly agree that loud wailing can cause suffering for the deceased in the grave, reflecting the Qur'anic guidance on patience and acceptance of Allah's will (see <https://islamqa.info/en/answers/154215>). Furthermore, respondents agree that the teachings of the Qur'an and Sunnah of Prophet Muhammad (SAW) guide Muslims to refrain from indulging in haram practices like *Niyāhah* (see [https://www.academia.edu/download/66077645/Grief in Islam.2019.pdf](https://www.academia.edu/download/66077645/Grief_in_Islam.2019.pdf)).

Regarding permissible expressions of grief, respondents agree that silent weeping and crying are allowed during the death, funeral, and burial of a loved one. They strongly agree that Muslims must acknowledge calamities as part of Allah's plan and accept divine decree. Respondents disagree that mourning after three days for absent relatives is necessary, but agree that offering condolences is a virtuous act in Islam. Lastly, they disagree that crying for a deceased loved one is improper, recognizing it as a natural expression of grief (Hedayat, 2006). These results show that *Mëranaw* Muslim families integrate Islamic guidance with their cultural practices, observing grief in a respectful and balanced manner.

Table 4. The rulings of the respondents regarding the practice of *Niyāhah*.

Statement Indicators	Mean	Interpretation
Prohibition of <i>Niyāhah</i> should be recognized by Muslim families	2.30	Agree
Prohibition of <i>Niyāhah</i> helps the community accept predestination	2.10	Agree
Practicing <i>Niyāhah</i> weakens Muslim belief	2.15	Agree
Wailing may cause suffering for the deceased in the grave	1.80	Strongly Agree
Ayah of the Qur'an and Sunnah refrain Muslims from indulging in <i>Niyāhah</i>	2.05	Agree
Crying and weeping silently during the death/funeral is allowed	1.90	Agree
Muslims should understand calamity as Allah's will	1.70	Strongly Agree
Mourning for absent relatives after three days is required	3.20	Disagree
Offering condolences is an obligation for Muslims	2.15	Agree
Crying for a deceased loved one is improper	3.10	Disagree

As shown in **Table 5**, the study shows that most respondents agree that *Niyāhah* (loud wailing) should be avoided by Muslim families. They believe that not practicing it helps people accept Allah's will, keeps their faith strong, and prevents harm to the deceased. At the same time, respondents said that silent crying and offering condolences are acceptable, showing a balance between expressing grief and following Islamic teachings. These practices also reflect *Mëranaw* cultural values of respect and patience during mourning. Scholars in the Salafi tradition emphasize that loud wailing, excessive tearing of clothes, or self-harm are not allowed because they go against patience and the Sunnah of Prophet Muhammad (Zaidah & Abdullah, 2024). Overall, *Mëranaw* Muslim families follow Islamic rules while expressing grief in culturally respectful ways.

Table 5. The perceptions of the respondents concerning the observance of *Niyāhah* within their cultural and spiritual setting.

Statement / Indicator	Mean	Interpretation
<i>Niyāhah</i> (wailing) should be prohibited	2.40	Agree
Prohibition of <i>Niyāhah</i> helps accept Allah's will	1.90	Agree
Practicing <i>Niyāhah</i> destroys Muslim belief	1.94	Agree
Wailing may cause suffering for the deceased	1.64	Strongly Agree
Qur'an and Sunnah discourage excessive wailing	1.80	Agree
Crying and weeping silently is permissible	2.40	Agree
Understanding calamity and Allah's control	1.60	Strongly Agree
Mourning beyond three days for absent relatives	3.10	Disagree
Offering condolences is a Muslim obligation	2.30	Agree
Tearing clothes symbolizes grief	3.06	Disagree
Tearing clothes reflects emotional pain	2.38	Agree
Wearing black to show sadness has a basis in Islam	3.68	Strongly Disagree
Clothes should not be wasted; give them to the needy	1.62	Strongly Agree
Keeping clothes for blessing	2.32	Agree
Loud wailing or prolonged outbursts show weak faith	2.16	Agree
Expressing "If Only" regret opposes Allah's will	1.84	Agree
Self-injury during mourning	2.04	Agree
Martyrdom should not be mourned with self-torture	3.24	Disagree
Striking cheeks shows objection to the divine decree	2.20	Agree
Scratching face makes one lose faith	2.14	Disagree

5. CONCLUSION

This study reveals that the respondents began learning Islamic teachings from an early age, with a significant number attaining college-level education in both Arabic and English studies. These findings demonstrate that pursuing dual educational pathways does not hinder religious understanding; rather, it shows that Muslim individuals can uphold their faith while engaging in formal secular education. The results indicate that grief over the loss of a loved one is natural, and silent weeping is permissible in Islam. However, loud wailing (*Niyāhah*), excessive lamentation, self-injury, or any act that signifies objection to Allah's decree are strictly prohibited, as such behaviors contradict patience (*ṣabr*), submission to divine will, and adherence to the Sunnah of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). Most respondents agreed that avoiding *Niyāhah* helps families and communities accept Allah's will, strengthens their faith, and prevents harm to the deceased, reflecting Mēranaw cultural values of dignified, patient mourning. At the same time, respondents acknowledged that expressing grief through silent crying, offering condolences, and engaging in prayer are acceptable and even encouraged. This reflects a balanced approach to mourning that harmonizes emotional healing with Islamic guidance. The study further revealed that gatherings held solely for condolences or the preparation of food for visitors, when accompanied by lamentation or wailing, are discouraged as *bid'ah* (innovation), in accordance with the teachings of Islamic scholars. Mēranaw Muslim families, therefore, integrate religious principles with cultural traditions, observing mourning in ways that remain faithful to Islam while respecting cultural heritage. These results highlight the importance of continued awareness and education on proper mourning practices. The findings suggest that seminars and guidance from 'Ulamā and Islamic scholars could further enhance understanding among Muslim families. Future research may replicate this study in other Muslim communities to determine whether these patterns are consistent across different socio-cultural settings.

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7. 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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