

## Cultural fusion among Mëranao students in the Philippines

**Khalid D. Daud**

Rufo de la Cruz Integrated School, Tubod, Tubod West District  
Department of Education Division of Lanao del Norte, Philippines  
Email: khaloy223@gmail.com

**Abstract:** This study explores the impact of acculturation on selected Mëranao students living in Tubod, Lanao del Norte. As these students adapt to a new cultural environment, they undergo psychological and sociocultural changes that affect their well-being and life satisfaction. The study examines their personal profiles and evaluates how acculturation influences their lifestyle, language, beliefs, and practices. Using surveys and interviews, the research analyzes the role of school and family in their adaptation process. The findings provide insights into the challenges faced by these students and suggest implications for supporting their cultural adjustment. This research aims to guide future studies on acculturation and student well-being.

Keywords: Acculturation, Mëranao students, cultural adaptation, Psychological well-being

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### INTRODUCTION

Acculturation is the process by which individuals or groups adopt cultural traits, behaviors, or social patterns from another culture through prolonged and continuous contact. It involves adjustments in language, values, beliefs, and social norms. Common contexts for acculturation include migration, globalization, and educational exchange, where two or more distinct cultures meet and interact. As noted by Redfield, Linton, and Herskovits (1936), acculturation occurs when individuals from different cultural backgrounds come into first-hand, ongoing contact, leading to cultural exchange and adaptation. This complex process can result in both cultural and psychological changes in individuals and groups.

In recent years, a significant number of Mëranao students have relocated to Tubod, Lanao del Norte for educational purposes, encountering a gradually different cultural environment from their native one. This shift presents unique challenges, particularly in terms of acculturation. Mëranao students, coming from a predominantly Muslim region, are now adapting to the Christian-influenced social and cultural environment of Tubod, Lanao del Norte. As a result, the differences in religious practices, societal norms, and language create pressures for adjustment, which can affect students' academic performance, social interactions, and overall well-being.

Research has shown that acculturation is often accompanied by acculturative stress—feelings of anxiety or frustration that arise when individuals struggle to adapt to a new cultural environment (Berry, 2011). Common issues such as language barriers, homesickness, and social isolation contribute to this stress, which may, in turn, affect students' psychological health and academic success. Further, students who experience higher levels of acculturative stress often show lower levels of life satisfaction and well-being. Hence, the degree of acculturation varies among students, with some adapting more successfully to the new environment while others continue to struggle with cultural and social dissonance.

Nevertheless, it is important to note that factors such as school and family support play a significant role in shaping the acculturation process. Schools, as primary socialization agents, influence how students interact with their new environment and adopt new social practices (Makarova & Birman, 2016). On the other hand, family support provides emotional

and cultural continuity that helps ease the transition. The level of adaptation also depends on how well students can balance maintaining their cultural identity while integrating into the dominant culture, a concept described by Berry and Sabatier (2011) as cultural integration versus assimilation.

The researcher aims to examine the impact of acculturation on Mëranao students studying in Tubod, Lanao del Norte focusing on their academic performance, lifestyle changes, and social behavior. The study will investigate how factors like language, beliefs, and cultural practices influence their adjustment, and how school and family characteristics contribute to their overall acculturation experience. The researcher hopes to provide insights that can support students' adaptation and encourage future studies on acculturation in educational settings.

### *Statement of the problem*

This research aimed to address impact of acculturation on Mëranao students studying in Tubod, Lanao del Norte.

Specifically, it sought to answer to the following questions:

- 1) What is the demographic profile of the participating Mëranao students?
- 2) What acculturation affect the cultural identity of Mëranao students in Tubod?
- 3) What implications arise from the findings regarding cultural fusion among Mëranao students?

## REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

### *Acculturation*

This refers to the process through which individuals acquire and adapt to the cultural values, attitudes, and practices of the majority culture (Berry, 2011). During this process, individuals typically adopt behaviors, beliefs, and attitudes similar to those of the dominant cultural group.

Research on acculturation has primarily focused on its impact on health outcomes, exploring whether it leads to negative health effects or acts as a protective factor (Potochnick & Perreira, 2012). Some studies suggest that acculturation can either exacerbate or alleviate stresses associated with acculturative stress. For instance, less acculturated youth often experience higher risks for acculturative stressors, face language barriers, and may feel disconnected from social support networks. Latino youth, for example, frequently struggle with balancing the expectations and values of their home environment with those of mainstream culture, often resulting in heightened stress (Luis et al., 2015).

One significant mechanism of risk arises from dissonant acculturation, characterized by differing levels of acculturation between children and their families. This phenomenon can create familial tension, as children may assimilate more quickly into the host culture, leading to an "acculturation gap." For instance, youth may develop greater English proficiency and adopt American values, resulting in a disconnection from their cultural roots (Rogers-Sirin et al., 2014).

In the Philippines, urban migration has contributed to an increased population in urban areas, with about 48% of Filipinos now residing in cities (Philippine Statistics Office, 2013). Migration to urban centers such as Metro Manila, which boasts the highest concentration of educational institutions, often reflects a pursuit of economic opportunities and better educational prospects. The National Statistics Office reported a literacy rate of 99% in Metro Manila, which exceeds the national average (Dumaraog et al., 2012).

Additionally, student migrants often face various factors influencing their decisions, including family opinions and peer influences. Overall, acculturation and assimilation processes illustrate the dynamic interplay between minority and majority cultures, highlighting both the opportunities and challenges faced by individuals in navigating these cultural transitions.

## METHODOLOGY

### *Research design*

This study employed a descriptive survey method to assess the impact of acculturation among selected students residing in Tubod, Lanao del Norte. This approach involved a systematic process of data gathering, analysis, classification, and tabulation to explore prevailing conditions, practices, beliefs, processes, and cause-effect relationships. The descriptive research design facilitated an adequate and accurate interpretation of the data, with or without statistical treatment. This methodology was particularly effective in elucidating the impact of acculturation among the selected student population in Tubod, Lanao del Norte.

### *Locale of the study and respondents*

This study was conducted in the Municipality of Tubod, Lanao del Norte, selected for its accessibility and the ease of identifying potential respondents. The participants comprised selected Mëranao students residing in Tubod, Lanao del Norte. The researcher employed random sampling from five barangays within Tubod: Barangay Poblacion, Pigcarangan, Tubaran, San Antonio, and Bulod. The anticipated sample size for this study included ninety-eight (98) selected Mëranao students residing in the targeted barangays.

### *Research instruments*

The sampling method employed in this study was convenience sampling, which involves selecting participants based on their availability and willingness to participate. While the researcher primarily used convenience sampling, the actual selection of respondents was conducted through simple random sampling to ensure a more representative sample. This approach was deemed necessary due to ethical considerations and the nature of the population targeted in this study. Utilizing convenience sampling likely facilitated the collection of honest and reliable responses, as participants were chosen based on their readiness to engage in the research process.

### *Data analyses procedure*

The data analysis began with organizing and reviewing the collected data to ensure accuracy and completeness. Descriptive statistics will summarize the demographic profiles and levels of work values, engagement, and burnout. Inferential statistics, such as ANOVA or t-tests, will assess significant differences across demographic groups. Correlational analysis will explore relationships between work values, work engagement, and burnout, with potential regression analysis to predict their impact on each other.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The study revealed significant insights regarding the impact of acculturation among selected Mëranao students in Tubod, Lanao del Norte. A substantial majority of respondents, predominantly aged 16-20 (93.9%), were single (95.9%), and a significant proportion (72.4%) were female, suggesting that younger women are particularly influenced by acculturative processes. The data indicated that these students actively adopt contemporary

lifestyle trends while firmly maintaining their Islamic identity, as evidenced by their consistent adherence to Muslim dress codes and practices.

Language use also reflected this dynamic; while respondents predominantly preferred other languages for communication, they displayed a commitment to their native tongue and cultural expressions. Beliefs remained largely intact, with respondents expressing a strong adherence to their religious teachings and a preference for their cultural food traditions.

However, the findings also indicated that acculturation posed challenges to religious practices, as many respondents reported infrequent participation in religious services. Overall, while the Mëranao students demonstrated adaptability by integrating certain positive aspects from surrounding cultures, they concurrently prioritized the preservation of their ethnic identity and cultural heritage. These results underscore the complexity of acculturation, highlighting both the influences of external cultural forces and the resilience of individual cultural identities.

## CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATION

This study reveals that the majority (93.9%) of respondents are aged 16 to 20 years, predominantly male, single, and enrolled in senior high school. Respondents adopt contemporary trends while striving to maintain their Islamic identity, occasionally integrating positive aspects of Christian lifestyles. They frequently communicate in languages other than their native tongue to prevent misunderstandings and discrimination. Furthermore, respondents regard themselves as committed to their religious teachings, preserving their tribal identity.

Future research should explore the long-term impacts of acculturation on Mëranao students' identities and examine how these dynamics influence their social interactions in diverse communities. Additionally, Parents should continuously support their children to prevent the assimilation of non-Muslim values while residing in a Christian community. It is crucial to promote Islamic principles to preserve their Muslim identity. Students must actively uphold their beliefs and protect their religious identity consistently.

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## Cultural fusion among Mēranao students in the Philippines

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