

Family Law and the Internalization of Multicultural Values: A Phenomenological Study of Interfaith Couples

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ABSTRACT

This study is motivated by negative views toward multiculturalism and interfaith marriage in Indonesia. In contrast, this article views interfaith marriage and the study of multiculturalism as sociological facts rooted in the concept of *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika* (Unity in Diversity), the national motto of Indonesia. This study takes Tosari as its research locus, while its informants consist of seven individuals involved in interfaith marriages in the area. Methodologically, this research is a qualitative study grounded in phenomenological theory; therefore, its data collection relies on in-depth interviews. Through this method, the study produces two findings. First, the practice of interfaith marriage among interfaith couples is regarded as a manifestation of well-internalised multicultural values, particularly religious diversity as one element within the study of multiculturalism. Second, the internalisation of multicultural values among interfaith couples is typologised into two levels: the additive and the transformative.

ABSTRAK

Kata-kata kunci:

Hukum keluarga;

multikulturalisme;

perkawinan beda agama.

Hukum Keluarga dan Internalisasi Nilai-Nilai Multikultural: Studi Fenomenologis terhadap Pasangan Beda Agama. Kajian ini dilatarbelakangi oleh pandangan negatif terhadap isu multikulturalisme dan perkawinan beda agama di Indonesia. Artikel ini memandang sebaliknya, perkawinan beda agama dan kajian tentang multikulturalisme adalah fakta sosiologis yang memiliki akar-akar kajiannya dalam konsep Bhinneka Tunggal Ika sebagai semboyan bangsa Indonesia. Kajian ini menjadikan Tosari sebagai lokus kajian, sementara informannya adalah pasangan nikah beda agama di Lokasi tersebut yang berjumlah tujuh orang. Secara metodologis, penelitian ini merupakan penelitian kualitatif yang berpijak pada teori fenomenologi, sehingga pengumpulan datanya bertumpu pada teknik wawancara secara mendalam. Melalui metode tersebut, kajian ini menghasilkan temuan, pertama, praktik perkawinan beda agama di kalangan pasangan nikah beda agama dipandang sebagai manifestasi dari nilai-nilai multikulturalisme yang terinternalisasi dengan baik, dalam hal ini, keragaman agama sebagai satu unsur di dalam kajian tentang multikulturalisme. Kedua, internalisasi nilai-nilai multikulturalisme di kalangan pasangan nikah beda agama ditipologikan ke dalam dua level yaitu additive level dan transformative level.

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Introduction

As part of family law studies, multiculturalism and interfaith marriage (hereinafter referred to as PBA) are both interesting and controversial issues. Multiculturalism, a discourse recognising diversity across religions, cultures, and ethnicities, is often accused of causing Muslims to abandon their religion and blur the distinction between polytheism and monotheism. In the name of respecting reality, it is no longer important to examine whether intended diversity undermines faith or aligns with religious demands ([Harto, 2020](#)).

The same is true of PBA. Those who advocate for the permissibility of interfaith marriage are inevitably subject to liberal accusations, as were the contributors to the book *Fiqh Lintas Agama* (Interfaith Fiqh). They are considered heretical and misleading because they provide an opportunity for PBA ([Liputo & Kau, 2019](#)). According to critics of the book *Interfaith Jurisprudence* (*Fiqh Lintas Agama*), the reason is simple: PBA has been explicitly prohibited in Islamic theological sources, the Quran and Hadith ([Yaman, 2023](#)).

In the Indonesian legal context, there is no legal space for interfaith marriage (PBA), particularly following the issuance of Supreme Court Circular Letter Number 2 of 2023, which prohibits first-instance courts from granting marriage registration requests from interfaith couples. This provision reinforces Article 2(1) and Article 8(f) of Law Number 1 of 1974 on Marriage, as well as Articles 40 and 44 of the Compilation of Islamic Law (KHI) ([M. Huda et al., 2024](#)).

This article examines the relationship between multicultural values and interfaith marriage practices in Tosari District, Pasuruan Regency. Using a phenomenological approach, it explores interfaith marriage as a sociological reality and analyses the legal behaviour arising from the internalisation of multicultural values. The study argues that interfaith marriages in Tosari are closely linked to the internalisation of multicultural values embedded in community life. Conversely, opposition to interfaith marriage may be seen as an anomaly within an inherently diverse society. This perspective is consistent with Indonesia's national doctrine, *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika* (Unity in Diversity), which reflects the nation's commitment to multiculturalism ([Istianah et al., 2024](#)).

One such study is Riwanto Tirtosudarmo's study of multiculturalism. He believes that multicultural issues in Jakarta, the capital of Indonesia, a predominantly Muslim country, can serve as a good case study of the challenges of managing a culturally diverse nation outside the context of Western society. As a pluralistic society, Indonesia has successfully established the fundamental principle of equality for all citizens through its national ideology, Pancasila ([Tirtosudarmo, 2022](#)).

Erik Jaenudin studied multiculturalism in relation to the Indonesian education model. According to him, value pluralism and conflicts between diverse values are key challenges in creating an inclusive education system that respects diversity. These conflicts demand thoughtful, dialogical, and inclusive approaches to curriculum design, teacher training, and learning practices that accommodate Indonesia's cultural, religious, and ethnic diversity ([Jaenudin et al., 2024](#)).

Slamet Panuntun conducted a similar study, examining the prospects for multicultural education in Indonesia. His research showed that achieving the goals of multicultural education requires the participation and support of teachers, professors, educational institutions, and

educational policymakers. Multicultural education can be implemented within the framework of Islamic Sharia. Furthermore, Panuntun stated that this strategy aims not only to facilitate students' understanding of their lessons but also to raise their awareness and encourage humanistic, pluralistic, and democratic behaviour ([Panuntun & Aziz, 2023](#)).

Regarding the PBA, extensive research has also been conducted, including on the practice in Tosari, which has led to the conclusion that the PBA is a living law that overrides the legal-formal aspect. This was done through a legal investigation known as *fraus legis* ([Salam & J, 2025](#)). Furthermore, studies of PBA as an issue intertwined with human rights have concluded that the differences in formulation between Islamic law and human rights law regarding the legality of interfaith marriage stem from differences in the underlying arguments. Islamic law is based on a theocentric paradigm centred on God's will and decrees, while human rights law is based on an anthropocentric paradigm centred on human beings and their rights ([Salam et al., 2024](#)).

A relevant study by Nor Salam examined SEMA 2/2023 on the prohibition of interfaith marriage registration. The study concluded that SEMA provides legal certainty for an issue that had long been debated. However, it also raises concerns regarding human rights protection. According to the study, the registration of interfaith marriages in Islamic jurisprudence, legislation, and human rights conventions represents a form of state protection of citizens' rights, including equality before the law as a principle of democracy and the rule of law in Indonesia ([Salam & Zaman, 2024](#)).

The novelty of this study is its integration of multiculturalism and PBA practices. Unlike previous studies focusing on legal aspects, this research identifies the internalisation of multicultural values as a factor contributing to PBA.

Method

In terms of its subject matter, this study intersects with family law and social science studies. Legal studies are often referred to as socio-legal ([Feenan, 2013](#)). Thus, the appropriate research method for this study is phenomenological, positioning the practice of PBA and the internalisation of multicultural values as "living" phenomena in the social life of the Tosari community in Pasuruan.

The phenomenological research method is conceptually linked to how individuals perceive objects, events, or situations they experience ([Nasir et al., 2023](#)). In this study, the internalisation of multicultural values and the practice of PBA are presented as they are, without constraints imposed by assumptions or judgments. To address the study's basic questions, in-depth interviews were the primary data collection method. In this study, interviews were conducted with several informants. As requested by the informants, only their initials were used, and emic data on the internalisation of multicultural values and their relationship to PBA were obtained ([Haapanen & Manninen, 2023](#)).

This study included seven informants, whose initials are MT, ID, SD, HD, MS, NN, and KL. They were selected based primarily on being married to partners of different religions. The data obtained from these informants was analysed inductively. To ensure the validity of the data, the researchers familiarised themselves with the research setting and the informants ([Afiyanti, 2008](#)). Through this method, the researchers obtained valid data on the matter under study.

Results and Discussion

Tosari and the Recognition of Multicultural Values

Multiculturalism is a perspective that recognises and respects the diversity within society. In a country comprised of various ethnicities, cultures, religions, languages, and social backgrounds, multiculturalism is essential for building a harmonious life. Rather than viewing this diversity as a barrier to unity, it is seen as a wealth that must be preserved and developed together (Sidi, 2019). As a way of life, multiculturalism is reflected in ideas, policies, attitudes, and actions that promote equality among social groups. It provides equal opportunities for individuals and communities to preserve their cultural identities without discrimination, enabling peaceful coexistence amid differences (Wasino, 2013).

Multiculturalism also represents a worldview that recognises the diversity of religions, cultures, and social identities. This perspective is embodied in policies and practices that encourage mutual respect, tolerance, and appreciation of differences, with the aim of strengthening unity in diversity and pride in national pluralism (Kewuel et al., 2021; Khilmi et al., 2024). Multicultural societies emerge through factors such as geographical conditions, cultural interactions, intermarriage, and climate differences. Indonesia exemplifies this diversity, with its thousands of islands inhabited by various ethnic, religious, and racial groups. Historical migration from China, Arabia, and India has further enriched Indonesian society, resulting in diverse customs, values, and worldviews that shape its multicultural character (Agustina, 2016).

This diversity is reflected in the social life of the Tosari community. Thus, it is not surprising that Tosari was named a *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika* (Unity in Diversity) district. This designation is based on three indicators: First, more than one religion is practised in the village. Second, there are three places of worship representing different religions. Third, religious adherents in the village have never experienced conflict, resulting in peace and harmony (Rochmawati et al., 2024).

The Tosari District is one of 24 districts in Pasuruan Regency, East Java. Geographically, it is located on the slopes of Mount Bromo and boasts beautiful natural scenery and cool air. Its strategic location makes Tosari a vital part of the hinterland of the Mount Bromo-Semeru national tourist destination. This tourist area significantly impacts the social and economic life of the local community, particularly in the tourism, trade, and service sectors (Manggala, 2019).

In addition to its outstanding natural resources, the Tosari District is known for its rich sociocultural heritage. The region is home to the Tenggerese, an indigenous community that has long lived around Mount Bromo. The Tenggerese are known for their traditions and cultural values, which are still preserved today. They continue to preserve various traditional ceremonies and local wisdom as part of their cultural identity (Adam & Liana, 2020).

Another distinctive feature of Tosari District is its strong interfaith tolerance. Despite religious diversity, the community lives harmoniously by upholding togetherness, cooperation, and respect for differences. As a result, Tosari is often regarded as a model of social harmony and tolerance in Indonesia (Pangestu & Sukarman, 2022).

These conditions influence the recognition of multicultural values within the Tosari community. According to cultural theory, individuals are shaped by their cultural backgrounds, which influence their thinking, behaviour, and social interactions (Salamor, 2025). Therefore,

culture plays an important role in forming social identity, worldview, and patterns of interaction ([Hadi et al., 2025](#)).

In Tosari, the recognition of multicultural values is closely linked to its long-standing pluralistic culture. The presence of different religious and social groups encourages continuous interaction, fostering collective awareness that diversity is a natural and accepted part of community life ([Sudirman et al., 2025](#)).

Tenggerese culture, which developed in Tosari, also teaches values such as togetherness, cooperation, and respect for others, regardless of religious differences or other identities. Through cultural inheritance from generation to generation, these values are internalized within the community and serve as guidelines for daily life. Thus, the tolerance and acceptance of diversity in the Tosari community did not emerge spontaneously but rather resulted from a pluralistic cultural construction deeply rooted in their lives ([Rahmawati & Suseno, 2021](#)).

Given this context, the practice of PBA in Tosari District is inseparable from how the community interprets and internalizes the long-standing multicultural values in their social life. Religious diversity, part of the Tosari community's daily reality, fosters intense interaction among individuals with different religious backgrounds. This interaction occurs in various aspects of life, including the family environment, education, work, social activities, and the implementation of local traditions and culture ([Anwar, 2018a](#)). In situations like this, religious differences are not always boundaries that separate social relationships between individuals but rather one form of diversity present in community life ([Rahayu et al., 2025](#)).

The multicultural values that developed within the Tosari community have shaped social relationships based on respect for differences, tolerance, and acceptance of diverse identities. People grow up in an environment that allows them to interact openly with people of other religions, fostering an understanding that everyone has the right to practice their beliefs ([Lintong et al., 2025](#)). Living in this pluralistic environment influences how people build social relationships, including friendships, kinships, and relationships that lead to family formation ([Ismaya et al., 2024](#)).

Therefore, PBA can be understood as part of the social dynamics that develop within a society accustomed to living alongside diversity. The social closeness fostered by shared activities enables personal relationships to transcend boundaries of religious identity ([Tanshzil & Lestari, 2025](#)). Emotional closeness, shared life experiences, and involvement in the same social environment often form the basis of these relationships. Religious diversity is not always viewed as an obstacle to be avoided but as a reality of social life ([Cahyono et al., 2025](#)).

Furthermore, the Tosari community's strong local cultural ties contribute to harmonious relationships between religious communities. Identity as part of the Tengger community often serves as a meeting point, strengthening a sense of togetherness amidst differences in belief ([Widodo, 2024](#)). Cultural values emphasising harmony, social solidarity, and respect for others shape the community's perspective on differences, including those related to marriage. Thus, interfaith marriages occur within a social context shaped by the long-standing experience of living in a pluralistic, multicultural environment ([Nurcahyono & Astutik, 2018](#)).

Internalisation of Multicultural Values and Interfaith Marriage Practices

Interviews revealed that interfaith marriages in the Tengger community are influenced not only by legal factors but also by strong values of diversity and tolerance, which reduce religious barriers to marriage. Another contributing factor is the “blessing” of community leaders. However, this term refers to a reluctant or forced approval, as leaders often accepted such marriages because they could not prevent couples from proceeding with their plans (MT, personal communication, October 18, 2025).

Another informant stated that the practice of PBA in the Tosari region is not seen as something foreign to their social life. In fact, according to this informant, a trader, the Tosari community has long lived in a diverse environment, both in terms of religion and social background. This environment allows for open and intense interaction between residents in various daily activities, so that differences in belief do not become a barrier to social relations (SD, personal communication, August 20).

In light of the above perspective, which states that the practice of PBA is not foreign to their lives, it is important to position the function of religion along two interrelated dimensions: the individual and the social ([Ihsan et al., 2025](#)). Within the individual dimension, religion is understood as a personal belief system that provides moral guidance, meaning in life, and spiritual orientation for each adherent. In this context, religious truth is a matter of individual belief and cannot be imposed on others, as belief is part of the inherent right to religious freedom ([Lolong & Timomor, 2025](#)).

Meanwhile, in the social dimension, religion serves not only as a source of values and norms but also as a social glue that builds solidarity, a sense of togetherness, and collective identity in community life. Through the values it teaches, religion encourages harmonious social relations, intergroup cooperation, and various social practices oriented towards the common good ([Cahyono et al., 2025](#)). Therefore, in its social aspect, religion is a crucial foundation for the emergence of PBA practices, as the religious values embedded in society foster mutual respect and tolerance and strengthen social bonds amid diversity.

Informants stated that religious differences do not hinder social life in Tosari. According to DF, community members regularly interact through traditional activities, community service, village events, and economic activities without considering religious backgrounds. These interactions strengthen trust, respect, tolerance, and togetherness, values that are instilled through families and local customs from an early age (HD, personal communication, August 23, 2025).

Another informant explained that interfaith marriages often develop from long-standing social relationships. Daily interactions at school, work, and community activities allow individuals from different religions to build close relationships. In many cases, personal compatibility, emotional closeness, and community acceptance of diversity are more influential than religious differences (MS, personal communication, September 20, 2025).

Interviews revealed that the Tosari community has embraced multicultural values in their daily lives. This is evident in their acceptance of differences as a natural part of life that does not disrupt social harmony ([Judijanto et al., 2024](#)). According to NN, a community leader, values such as cooperation, harmony, and respect for differences have become traditions passed down through generations. These values then shape a community mindset that is open to various

forms of difference, including interfaith marriage (NN, personal communication, September 23, 2025).

From the informant's perspective, interfaith marriage in the Tosari community demonstrates that multicultural values are internalised in daily practices, not just in discourse. Interfaith marriages are still accepted and practised by community members, demonstrating the existence of a social space that allows for the harmonious coexistence of different beliefs ([Himanen, 2018](#)). In this context, religious differences are not viewed as obstacles that automatically sever social ties but as part of the diversity that has become an essential element of Tosari community life.

The internalisation of these multicultural values is reflected in the community's view of religious identity. While each individual remains steadfast in their religious beliefs, there is a collective awareness that social life requires mutual respect and recognition of others' existence. This awareness shapes relationship patterns that are not based on religious exclusivity but on the principles of togetherness, kinship, and social solidarity. Thus, religious differences do not become a dominant source of conflict, but rather become part of the social reality that is accepted and managed constructively ([Kartika et al., 2024](#)).

In interfaith marriages, multicultural values are evident in the ability of family and community members to maintain harmonious relationships despite their differing beliefs. Kinship ties formed through marriage encourage interaction among people of different religions. Ultimately, these interactions foster a form of tolerance rooted in the lived experience of coexistence, not merely normative in nature ([Mulyadi et al., 2025](#)). This tolerance manifests not only as respect for others' religious rights but also as various forms of social support, participation in family activities, and respect for each party's religious practices ([Schmidt-Leukel et al., 2021](#)).

Furthermore, interfaith marriage in the Tosari community can be understood as a social mechanism that strengthens cohesion within a multicultural society. Marital relationships make religious identity boundaries, which might otherwise create social distance, more fluid by connecting individuals and groups of different faiths through family ties. This demonstrates that multicultural values have been internalised and have become an integral part of the community's social culture ([Fathudin & Fitria, 2012](#)).

Thus, the continuity of interfaith marriage practices in Tosari reflects interreligious tolerance and demonstrates the community's success in building a shared life based on respect for differences, acceptance of diversity, and commitment to social harmony. SP argued that

Interfaith Married Couples and the Pattern of Internalising Multicultural Values

According to James A. Banks's classification, the process of internalising multicultural values occurs in two stages: the additive stage and the transformative stage. At the additive level, multicultural values are introduced and instilled gradually through various social environments, such as family, school, and community. From an early age, children become accustomed to the idea of mutual respect and living alongside individuals from different religious backgrounds. Additionally, the community actively involves all religious groups in joint activities commemorating religious holidays and national celebrations. This involvement fosters a sense

of brotherhood, strengthens harmony, and maintains unity amid religious diversity ([Fahruddin et al., 2021](#)).

At the transformative level, the internalisation of multicultural values moves beyond introducing diversity toward developing critical and inclusive perspectives on cultural, ethnic, and religious differences. Parents, religious leaders, community leaders, teachers, and Qur'anic teachers contribute to fostering understanding and attitudes that support life in a pluralistic society ([Fahruddin et al., 2021](#)). Through formal and informal education, individuals learn to appreciate different perspectives and build harmonious social relationships. As a result, values such as tolerance, democracy, respect for diversity, and peaceful coexistence become part of everyday awareness and practice ([Fahruddin et al., 2021](#)).

Field data from interviews indicate that the internalisation of multicultural values among interfaith married couples begins within the family, the primary space for interaction with diversity ([Nufus et al., 2024](#)). In interfaith families, religious differences are not merely learned through education or social interaction but are experienced directly in daily household life, becoming an integral part of family members' social experiences ([Aulia et al., 2024](#)).

The presence of spouses with different religious backgrounds creates life dynamics that require processes of adjustment, understanding, and respect for each other's beliefs ([Mustofa, 2020](#)). In such situations, each family member encounters diverse religious practices, ranging from the performance of worship to the celebration of religious holidays to values that guide daily life. These ongoing interactions create a social learning environment that enables the development of openness toward differences ([Novita et al., 2025](#)). Therefore, multicultural values do not exist merely as abstract concepts but rather as concrete experiences lived within family life.

At a certain stage, families of interfaith couples also function as a medium for the socialisation of values for children and other family members. Children who grow up in such family environments are introduced from an early age to the existence of religious differences as a natural part of social life ([Warsah, 2018](#)). They not only acquire knowledge about diversity but also directly witness how their parents build harmonious relationships amid differences in belief ([Arifah & Saputra, 2023](#)). These experiences become an important means of shaping perspectives that appreciate diversity and developing the ability to coexist with people who are different.

The process of internalising multicultural values within the family also takes place through various forms of simple yet meaningful daily interactions ([Misbah et al., 2021](#)). Mutual respect in carrying out religious practices, providing space for a spouse to follow the teachings of their religion, and participating in family moments related to each other's religious traditions strengthen acceptance of differences ([Agustina et al., 2023](#)). Through these experiences, family members learn that differences in belief do not have to be obstacles to harmonious relationships; rather, they can be managed through tolerance and respect for every individual's right to practice their religion ([Hafiz et al., 2024](#)).

In broader social life, families of interfaith couples are also part of diverse kinship and community networks. Relationships with the extended families of both sides bring individuals into contact with different religious traditions, symbols, and practices ([Lao et al., 2022](#)). This condition further enriches the multicultural experiences of family members. Through these

various interactions, values such as tolerance, dialogue, respect for differences, and the ability to adapt to diversity continue to be reinforced ([Lao et al., 2022](#)). Thus, the family is not only a place where the couple's private life takes place, but also a social arena that enables the internalisation of multicultural values to occur naturally and continuously ([Hafiz et al., 2024](#)).

In the context of studies on multiculturalism, the process of internalizing multicultural values among interfaith married couples borrowing Caleb Rosado's analysis has fulfilled all the elements encompassed in the meaning of multiculturalism, namely recognition of abundant cultural diversity; respect for existing differences; acknowledging the legitimacy of various cultural expressions and contributions; valuing what other cultures have to offer; encouraging the contributions of diverse groups; empowering people to strengthen themselves and others to achieve their fullest potential by being critical of their own biases; and celebrating, not merely tolerating, differences to realize unity through religious diversity ([Bakry, 2021](#)).

Several of the elements above can be observed in the social lives of interfaith married couples. The aspect of recognition of diversity is reflected in the awareness of couples and their families that religious differences are an existing reality and have become part of their lives ([Harisantoso & Toding, 2025](#)). The existence of two belief systems within one family is neither denied nor eliminated; rather, it is accepted as a social fact that must be confronted and managed together. This recognition serves as an important foundation for creating harmonious relationships because each party acknowledges the existence of the other's religious identity ([Ramadani & Rosyad, 2025](#)).

Meanwhile, the element of respecting differences is evident in the daily lives of interfaith married couples. Each party gives their partner space to practice the teachings of their religion according to their beliefs, without pressure to abandon or change their religion ([Hasibuan, 2023](#)). This mutual respect is reflected in appreciation for prayer times, the observance of religious rituals, and various other religious obligations. The relationship that develops is not built on uniformity of identity but rather on respect for the differences each individual possesses ([Muchtar et al., 2023](#)).

Another important aspect is recognising the validity of diverse cultural expressions and contributions, a concept also evident in the family life of interfaith married couples. Each spouse's religious tradition is viewed as having its own meaning and value that deserves respect ([Susanti & Rumondor, 2022](#)). Celebrations of religious holidays, family traditions, and social practices associated with a particular religion are not seen as a threat to the other party's identity. Rather, these religious expressions are accepted as part of the family's rich life experiences, broadening understanding of diversity ([Hidayatulloh & Saumantri, 2023](#)).

Furthermore, multiculturalism includes valuing what other cultures or groups offer, as reflected in couples' openness to learning about and understanding the values embedded in their partners' religious traditions. While they may not share the same beliefs, they make an effort to recognise the universal values found in other religious teachings, such as compassion, respect for others, solidarity, and social responsibility. Thus, religious differences are accepted and viewed as a source of learning that enriches perspectives and life experiences ([Anwar, 2018b](#)).

Additionally, encouraging the contributions of various groups is equally important. In the context of interfaith married couples, this can be seen in family members' involvement in social

activities that engage with different religious communities. Interfaith couples generally do not limit their social relationships to members of their own religion. Rather, they build inclusive relationships with diverse groups within society. This fosters social cooperation that transcends religious identity boundaries and strengthens community solidarity ([Sabela et al., 2022](#)).

Meanwhile, empowerment is also achieved through the couple's ability to recognise prejudices and biases that may arise due to religious differences. Life in a plural family requires each member to continuously learn to understand others' perspectives, manage differences constructively, and avoid exclusive attitudes ([Setyabudi, 2022](#)). This process strengthens individuals' capacity to navigate diversity and encourages family members to spread tolerance and respect for differences into the broader social environment ([Amanah et al., 2025](#)).

Furthermore, celebrating differences is evident in how religious diversity within the family is accepted as a valuable part of shared life, not merely tolerated. These differences are not viewed as threats or obstacles to building a family but rather as social assets that broaden experiences and strengthen relationships among family members ([Indramayapanna, 2022](#)). Family members often participate in one another's significant religious events as a sign of respect and togetherness without blurring the boundaries of their beliefs ([Saefudin & Widyawati, 2019](#)). Through these practices, interfaith married couples internalise multicultural values, demonstrating that recognition, respect, appreciation, valuing, support, empowerment, and celebration of differences are present not only as normative principles but also as part of their lived social experiences ([Samosir & Akbar, 2023](#)). These values manifest in everyday interaction patterns that allow religious differences to exist within a framework of harmonious, equal, and mutually reinforcing relationships ([Hafiz et al., 2024](#)).

Conclusion

This study successfully concludes that there is an interconnection between interfaith marriage and the internalisation of multicultural values. Indeed, interfaith marriage is a manifestation of well-internalised multicultural values. The views of the informants, interfaith married couples who tend not to make an issue of their partner's religion, support this conclusion. They perceive their marriages as closely related to a tolerant attitude and a view of diversity as an undeniable sociological fact.

From the perspective of internalising multicultural values, the views of interfaith married couples reflect elements of multiculturalism studies, which focus on the additive and transformative levels. This indicates that the internalisation of multicultural values one aspect of which is religious diversity does not merely stop at individual recognition but rather advances to a stage of transformation grounded in the multicultural perspectives they uphold.

The findings of this study contribute to the development of multiculturalism and family law studies. The results provide an academic basis for understanding the connection between internalising multicultural values and the "softening" of religious values that have long been considered static dogmas in the establishment of prohibitions against interfaith marriage.

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