


Original Article

Exploring the Dynamics of Maguindanaon *Kawing* (Marriage): A Keystone to Understanding Culture and Traditions

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Abstract. Unveiling the dynamics of Maguindanaon *Kawing* (Marriage) underscores the religious and social values of Maguindanaon culture and traditions. This study examines the observation of Maguindanaon *kawing*. Using a phenomenological approach, insights were collected from interviews with Ustads and Kamals, who served as key informants of the study. The results provide significant insights into Maguindanaon *Kawing* practices over the past few years. *Kawing* is a notable cultural practice that involves spiritual and logistical guidance. It emphasizes the crucial role of Kamals and Ustads in formalizing the traditional sanctity of *kawing*, which is not only for a marital ceremony but also represents the community's religious and social values. *Kawing* is a sacred ritual that testifies to Maguindanaon identity and renders any practice outside it *haram*. Moreover, the step-by-step process of *Kawing* includes symbolic and traditional portrayals, such as whispering, *panangguni*, *salangguni*, and proper *Kawing*. However, changes in *Kawing* practices are evident, including increased Mah'r and distance relationship practices, which are influenced by evolving societal and economic factors. In addition, some practices are no longer observed, like the *Kulo*, sleeping together after marriage, rush weddings, and *damak*. The Ustads and Kamals emphasized that the process must be followed and valued, as it embodies the essence of *kawing* identity within their distinct cultural representations. The findings highlight the roles portrayed by Ustads and Kamals (in preservation, procedural validity, and authority) and the avoidance of *Zina*. It further encourages future studies to preserve practices, including those in Arabic schools, to gain knowledge of *Kawing* and to promote the participation of male Maguindanaon in preparing to be the Ustads or Kamals of their community.

Keywords: Cultural preservation; Culture and traditions; Maguindanaon *Kawing*; Phenomenological research; Ustads and Kamals.

Marriage is fundamental in many cultures, often steeped in rich traditions and customs. The Maguindanaon people of the Philippines, residing in southern Mindanao, are no exception, with their unique marriage ceremony known as the *Kawing*. This intricate ritual is a testament to the cultural heritage and values of the Maguindanaon community (Zil & Rambe, 2025). The Maguindanaon *Kawing* is a complex and multifaceted ceremony that reflects the community's deep respect for family, tradition, and social harmony. (Pangulu et al., 2022). Unlike other marriage traditions in the region, the *Kawing* is characterized by pre-wedding rituals and processes that strengthen the bond between the betrothed couple and their respective families.

The existing literature offers some insight into the traditional marriage practices of other communities, such as the tribe's deep respect for rituals and sacrifices (Robbins, 2015). Moreover, how urbanization affects religious observances (Simone, 2020), as illustrated in the cases of the Maharjan people of Nepal (K.C., 2020) and the Mandailing people of Indonesia (Daulay, 2022). These studies underscore the importance of traditional rituals and the role of community leaders in the marriage process. However, there is a dearth of research on the Maguindanaon Kawing and the roles of Ustads and Kamals in this specific context. Thus, the roles of the Ustads (religious scholars) and Kamals (traditional marriage officiants) in formalizing and preserving this practice remain largely unexplored. This research paper addresses the research gap by examining the specific functions, dynamics, and responsibilities of these two key figures in the Maguindanaon Kawing marriage process (Mangindra & Sandoval, 2021).

Methodology

Research Design

This study employed a phenomenological research design to investigate the lived experiences of Kamals and Ustads. This approach was chosen because it enables a deep exploration of participants' interpretations and meanings of their experiences (Lapa et al., 2016; Fréchette et al., 2020). The study was guided by Husserl's descriptive phenomenology, which emphasizes understanding the lived experience from the participant's perspective.

Research Locale

This study was conducted in the Municipality of Carmen, Cotabato. The municipality of Carmen is politically subdivided into 21 distinct barangays. Cultural diversity is evident among three different groups: Christians, the Bangsamoro, and the Lumads. Each culture coexists peacefully, utilizing abundant resources and deeply ingrained practices that reflect cultural beliefs and traditions. Maguindanaon is a subculture of the Bangsamoro who are

Research Participants

The following parameters were used in the selection process. The study involved ten (10) participants: five (5) Ustads and five (5) Kamal. The Maguindanaon Kamal, with five or more years of experience, and the Ustads must be between 25 and 60 years old. This study employed purposive sampling techniques, enabling the researcher to identify credible participants as direct data sources.

Research Instrument

A researcher's questionnaire was used to gather data from participants. To maintain the questionnaire's credibility, it underwent validation by three experts, who carefully reviewed and edited it to substantiate the key responses. This questionnaire has one central question: What are the dynamics in Kawing? Moreover, there are six sub-questions: How do the Ustads and Kamal understand the role of Kawing in their culture?

What are the Socio-historical Maguindanaon practices on Kawing? How does the Maguindanaon perform Kawing? What Socio-historical narratives are attached to Kawing? What insights can be drawn from the Ustads and Kamal regarding the preservation of the culture of Kawing? How does Kawing explain the culture and traditions of Maguindanaon today?

Data Gathering Procedure

This study employed in-depth interviews and focus groups, including environmental scanning, to validate and confirm participants' presence. The researcher prepared consent letters for participants to be interviewed for this study. The key Participants were informed of the interview time and location, and their convenience was taken into account. Voluntary participation was emphasized. All the interviews were audio- and video-recorded. The data were gathered through face-to-face interviews, using a conversational, informal, and open-ended style. During the sessions, the researcher noted important words and terminologies and asked follow-up questions to clarify the main points. All the interviews were audio- and video-recorded.

Data Analysis

The researcher employed thematic analysis to categorize the data and identify the themes and differences in responses. The data were analyzed carefully to address the questions posed in this study. This study employed a Thematic analysis. (Creswell & Creswell, 2018), which highlights the proper documentation of interview data, coding, and the thematic organization of ideas. First, the data are familiarized, initial codes are generated, themes

are identified, and final themes are derived to address the research questions.

Ethical Considerations

The researcher maintained and valued the confidentiality of the participants' information. Voluntarily, without coercion, they shared their experiences for the study. The researcher also obtained informed consent, which respects participants' interests. All data obtained during the interview were primarily used in the study. Proper references were also observed, crediting the authors' ideas used in the analysis and subsequent discussion. The researcher ensured that all participants' rights, safety, and well-being were protected throughout the research process. Informed consent was given. The participants were informed about the risks associated with their involvement in the research. They were given the option to participate in the study.

Results and Discussion

The emerging themes generated from these studies include an Understanding of Ustads and Kamal about the Role of Kawing in their Culture.

Theme 1: Roles of Ustads in Maguindanaon Kawing

Table 1 shows the sub-themes of the Ustads' roles in Maguindanaon *Kawing*.

Table 1: Roles of Ustads in Maguindanaon Kawing

Sub-themes	Description
Reading of <i>Dua</i>	Ustads read the <i>Dua</i> (Prayer Invocation) during the wedding.
Delivery of <i>Kutba tun Nikah</i>	Delivers a sermon about a married couple that will guide them in their lives after the wedding ceremony.
Delivery of <i>Suratun an-nisa</i>	A sermon for women, marriage, and other aspects of life.
Facilitating the <i>Kawing</i> Process	Ustads will foresee if the Islamic practice of <i>Kawing</i> is followed.

The key aspect of who will initiate the *Kawing* lies in the traditional expertise of religious leaders, who will assist in reciting the *Dua*. The participants stated that the role of Ustads is to read *Dua* during the wedding. This theme is significant during wedding ceremonies. Participant 1 stated that one of Ustad's roles is reading the prayer invocation for the *Kawing*. *Dua* is an Islamic term meaning "Prayer invocation." According to an article published by Islamic Naqsh (2025), the power of *Dua*, or prayer invocation, to Allah is believed to strengthen marriages and resolve conflicts. Among the Maguindanaon, *Dua* is always present at wedding ceremonies, which have become part of their practice. In this case, skipping *Dua* might cause problems during and after the ceremony.

On the other hand, the delivery of *Kutba tun Nikkah* is an Islamic term used for wedding ceremonies. It is a sermon about marriage delivered during the couple's wedding ceremony. Moreover, it plays a significant role in weddings, allowing individuals to draw closer to Almighty Allah. Furthermore, it plays a significant role in weddings, allowing individuals to draw closer to Almighty Allah. As noted by Farooq (2018), the *Khutbah* (sermon) is integral to the weekly *Jumu'ah* prayer. It serves as a reminder and guide, educating Muslims and helping them strengthen their relationship with Allah while reinforcing Islamic teachings. Additionally, the *Khutbah* addresses religious and social issues, serving as an essential opportunity for collective worship and reflection among Muslims. This suggests that *Kutba tun Nikkah* also permits Ustads to deliver sermons on marriage and other teachings that guide Islamic believers toward Almighty Allah.

The reading of *Surah An-Nisa* is part of the Ustads' role during wedding ceremonies. "*Nisa*" is an Arabic term meaning "women." Hence, this sermon is for women, marriage, and other aspects of life. Some parts of Chapter 4 (*Surah An-nisa*) discuss responsibility and women's rights, while other verses address other aspects of life. According to the *Qur'an* (4:03), men are allowed to marry up to four wives, but if they cannot provide equal treatment, they should refrain from doing so to avoid injustice to the women. The couple is sermon to learn how to run their marriage with respect and follow the teachings of Islam. Moreover, it is an opportunity for Ustads to discuss aspects of life taught by the Quran during the wedding. All wedding ceremony attendees receive sermons that guide them by the *Qur'an*.

The Participants stated that facilitating the *Kawing* process is also part of the Ustads' role. This is a vital role for the Ustads, as they foresee the wedding ceremony if Islamic and non-Islamic practices are not included to preserve the values and practices of the *Kawing*. The Kamal will invite the ustads on the wedding day, as they will be responsible for facilitating the ceremony. A report from the Philippine Star (2018) states that Ustads play a

significant role in Maguindanaon Kawing. They are responsible for guiding the couple and attendees in reciting the Dua (prayer invocation) during the proper Kawing and overseeing other Islamic customs during the Ceremony. Facilitating, reading dua, and delivering sermons are among the roles of Ustads during Kawing. This involvement ensures that Islamic practices on Kawing are performed.

Theme 2: Roles of Kamal in Maguindanaon Kawing

Table 2 presents the sub-themes related to Kamal's roles in Maguindanaon *Kawing*.

Table 2: Roles of Kamal in Maguindanaon Kawing

Sub-themes	Description
Representatives	Kamal meets with both parents to discuss the marriage process and conditions. Both parties have Kamal as their representative.
Discussing the Process for the <i>Kawing</i>	Kamal details how Kawing practices will be performed and discusses the marriage process with both parents.
Witness	Kamal will serve as a witness during both parents' discussions.

Kamal plays a significant role in Kawing, serving as a representative who informs and discusses all conditions and processes. Kamal serves as a representative to notify the groom's parents of the conditions and to make an additional request on behalf of the bride's party. It also helps the groom's party negotiate these terms and conditions. These terms and conditions are crucial because they are integral to Kawing processes and practices. Sometimes, it can lead to the cancellation of the marriage if it is not provided. Since they serve as the bride's party's representatives, they are also responsible for presenting the terms and conditions and facilitating the negotiation to avoid family misunderstandings. They provide guidance and advice to help families have a successful wedding. Kamal, as a witness, serves during both parents' discussions. According to Bandara (2018), all the terms, conditions, and other requests are discussed and provided during the engagement. This determines whether the wedding will proceed. In Maguindanaon Kawing, the Kamal plays a significant role in presenting the terms, conditions, and other requests from the bride's parents for a thorough discussion.

Another role of Kamal is to discuss the process by which Kawing is to realize. The Kamal from the bride's and groom's sides will lead the discussion on how the Kawing process should be performed for the couple. Kamal can participate in discussions to help avoid misunderstandings between the two families. All conditions and terms, including their wishes for the Kawing, are discussed during these discussions. This discussion will tell if the supplication and engagement are approved. Kamal's presence will conform to the traditions and other procedures of the marriage. This is why the processes and practices of Kawing persist today. These traditions and cultures are preserved through Islamic practices and the authority granted to Kamals.

Moreover, every Muslim wedding ceremony has been witnessed. Kamal unites both couples to discuss matters of the Kawing properly. Kamals are considered the most essential figures in Maguindanaon marriages. They must implement the Traditional customs and rituals of the Maguindanaon during the wedding. With their presence, all practices and agreements are implemented and provided. According to Mulla & Mulla (2024), when one or more of these conditions are unmet, it can lead to a perceived loss of the wedding's traditional essence. Marriage needs to be witnessed. There should be two witnesses. It can be a man, a woman, or a man and a woman. In the case of Maguindanaon Kawing in Carmen, North Cotabato, the witnesses are predominantly male. Scholars argued that such omissions can affect the religious validity of the marriage (Hallaq, 2005). In the case of Maguindanaon Kawing in Carmen, North Cotabato, the witnesses are predominantly male. Kamals have three rules, as stated by the Participants. First, their role during Kawing is to serve as a representative of the Families' party. Second, they also discuss the Kawing process, including the marriage terms and conditions for the bride's party. Lastly, they witness the union of the man and woman and recognize that their marriage is legal. Kamal is crucial as they represent and witness the wedding process. They ensure that all agreed-upon terms and conditions are met and adhered to during the ceremony.

Theme 3: Importance of Maguindanaon Kawing

Table 3 shows the importance of the Maguindanaon Kawing sub-theme.

Table 3. *Importance of Maguindanaon Kawing*

Sub-themes	Description
Legalize Relationships Between Unmarried Men and Women	It is forbidden for a man and a woman to have an intimate relationship without marriage. Thus, cohabitation between unmarried men and women through Kawing can be legalized through Maguindanaon Kawing.
Avoidance of Zina	The importance of Kawing is to avoid unlawful sexual intercourse between unmarried men and women.
Sunnah and Worship of Allah	It follows the Islamic practice and constitutes an act of worship to Almighty Allah.

The importance of Kawing lies in its legalization of cohabitation between men and women. Kawing is the best way to legalize Maguindanaon cohabitation. In fact, in the eyes of other followers of Islam, without Kawing, their relationship is considered Haram. Haram is an Arabic word meaning "forbidden". Moreover, live-ins are strictly monitored in Muslim areas. The Qur'an states, "And do not come near to adultery, it is a shameful deed and an evil and opening the road to other evils" (Qur'an, 17:32). Cohabitation is different from marriage. In terms of marriage, sexual intercourse means having legitimate offspring and is said to be an act of worship. On the other hand, in cohabitation, sexual intercourse is haram, unlawful, and a means of producing illegitimate offspring. This case applies to Maguindanaon, who follow Islam.

The participants stated that Kawing helps to avoid unlawful sexual intercourse beyond marriage. According to the English version of the Qur'an, Qur'an Verse 17:32, it says, "And do not approach unlawful sexual intercourse. 31 Indeed, it is even immortality and is evil as a way." This verse explicitly advises against participating in any sexual activities that are deemed immoral and prohibited. It serves as a reminder to uphold moral standards and exercise caution regarding the adverse effects and the unethical nature of such behaviors. It encourages people to make wise decisions and exhibit virtuous behavior in matters of sexuality. Moreover, this implies that Kawing keeps individuals from Zina. In this case, unmarried men and women cohabiting through Kawing will be lawfully legalized.

The participants stated that Kawing is essential to the Maguindanaon, a practice associated with Prophet Muhammad and considered an act of worship to Almighty Allah. Kawing not only legalizes sexual intercourse alone but also has another purpose. According to the Qur'an, Surah An-Rum, Verse 21 states that the purpose of marriage is to create couples who give each other peace, love, and affection. This suggests that Kawing is a union of two people, grounded in love and affection, intended to create peace. Moreover, marriage is an act of worship to Muslims. According to Mangelen, Bawa, Untong, and Mohamad (2023), Maguindanaon couples must stay together. In Islam, marital relationships are viewed as an essential part of being a Muslim. They even equate this with an act of worship. This is also the reason why cohabitations are not allowed in Islam. Table 3 indicates that Kawing's importance lies in the legalization of cohabitation between unmarried men and women. Through Kawing, their union is legalized and recognized by the community and Islamic religious leaders. Moreover, this act constitutes worship of Allah. They believe that this is a part of the practice of the Prophet Muhammad and needs to be done to get closer to Allah. Furthermore, this will lead to the avoidance of Zina or unlawful sexual intercourse done by unmarried men and women.

Theme 4: Observed Changes in Maguindanaon Kawing

Table 4 shows the observed changes in Maguindanaon Kawing.

Table 4. *Observed Changes in Maguindanaon Kawing*

Sub-themes	Description
Increase in <i>Mah'r</i>	An increase in Mah'r helps keep marriages together by preventing men from toying with them.
Distance Relationship Practice	A wedding is permitted if the man and woman are aware of the marriage and have the consent of both parents.

The practices during Kawing change. The amount of Mah'r of the bride increases. This increase helps maintain marriages and prevents men from devaluing them. To prevent men from devaluing their wives and marriage, they had to increase the mahr and dowry of women to remind them that marrying is an expensive act. The mahr is a gift for the bride during the wedding ceremony. The Mahr is a mandatory practice whereby the groom must provide for his bride, serving as a sign of respect for her and recognition of her independence. Another reason for

the increase is women's higher educational attainment. As women have increased their contributions to academic research and achieved positions of authority in society, their reputations have also grown. In the case of Maguindanaon Kawing, Participant 4 stated that Kamals initiated and permitted this act to prevent men from devaluing marriage.

A wedding is permitted if the man and woman are aware of the marriage and have the consent of both parents. Today, women and men can marry even when they have not seen each other in person due to distance. These days, virtual Muslim weddings are being performed (Torres, 2020). Cyber nikahs, or virtual Muslim wedding ceremonies, have increased significantly due to the global health crisis caused by COVID-19 and the advancement of digital and media technologies. However, the acknowledgment and approval of Virtual weddings vary among Islamic scholars and legal systems. In this case, seeking guidance from local religious leaders or scholars is advisable to confirm the legal and religious legitimacy of such a marriage, and/or to obtain their approval before performing the wedding. The participant also shared that their community acknowledges this practice and does not violate any rules or orders regarding their traditions and practices on Kawing. Table 4 shows that the current practice of Kawing permits distant weddings, provided that the parents' consent to the marriage is obtained. Moreover, they increased the amount given to the bride at the wedding ceremony to prevent men from devaluing their marriages.

Theme 5: Diminishing Practices of Maguindanaon Kawing

Table 5 shows the diminishing practices of Maguindanaon Kawing.

Table 5: Diminishing Practices of Maguindanaon Kawing

Sub-themes	Description
<i>Kulo</i>	<i>Kulo</i> is a marriage contract ritual. The groom's guardian asks him whether he will accept the marriage.
Sleeping together is not Allowed After the Wedding	It takes a few months before he can sleep with her, nor before he can perform the vows and his right to their wedding.
<i>Pebpanikan bu sa pandita</i>	Pandita is a Maguindanaon term meaning "religious leader." For some reason, this pandita (imam) will conduct a rushed wedding ceremony for a man and a woman.
<i>Damak</i>	Delivering trays of food to the bride's party.

Some practices in Kawing are no longer observed because they conflict with Islamic teachings and formalities. Participant 3 reported that during the *kulo*, the Ustads have the groom's father hold his hands and teach him what to do as part of the wedding. However, today, this is suppressed and not encouraged to perform in the religion of Islam. Their advice is to practice proper marriage and teach them to lead a good life in this world and the afterlife. Moreover, he added that marriage is part of the obligations of a Muslim. It is a heavy task for a person of the ideal marriage age. Kawing is an Islamic practice that followers are encouraged to experience. The Kawing will not be accepted if it is not performed in accordance with Islamic practice. According to Alfanta (1972), in an article entitled "Maguindanaon people of the Philippines: History, culture and arts, customs and traditions", *Kulo* is a practice during Kawing in which Ustads take the groom's right hand and cover it with a white handkerchief to ask about his vows. After acceptance, the ustads will take their time to deliver a sermon on marriage. Few researchers have documented or paid attention to these details, yet many Maguindanaon individuals are aware of this practice. According to the Participants, this practice is being diminished because it does not belong to the religion of Islam.

According to the participants, this type of practice had previously been performed. However, since it devalues the rights of the bride and marriage, this was suppressed because it also does not belong to the religion of Islam. This practice is prohibited because it violates the groom's right to his wife. The groom must claim his right to his wife after the wedding. Most highly rewarded are those who can grant the husband's right to his wife immediately after the wedding. The groom most rewarded is the one who can perform his right to his wife on the first night of their marriage. Sexual intercourse is permissible after a wedding and should have etiquette. As per Muhammad & Kassim (2016), the initial and foremost principle of sexual relations within Muslim couples is the presence of mutual consent. Both partners must voluntarily and comfortably participate in any form of intimate activity. Before initiating any physical intimacy, it is advised to make dua, seeking Allah's blessings and safeguarding against Satan. It is recommended for Muslim couples to engage in foreplay and mutual stimulation before proceeding to engage in sexual relations.

The “Pebpanikan bu sa Pandita” literally means “Climbed by a Muslim leader (Pandita).” This was noted as involving rushed engagements and weddings. Moreover, this is because when an unmarried woman commits Zina. In Islamic practice, when a couple finds out that an unmarried man and woman have committed Zina, they should be married right away because this is a serious sin according to Shari’ah Law. There is another reason for the rush in engagements and weddings. The reasons for running away with their partners are sometimes pregnancy or wanting to get married, but their guardians do not allow them to for some reason. According to the Participants, for Maguindanaons, rushed engagements and weddings are discouraged, as they want every union to be facilitated and to follow all Kawing practices without haste. Some Ustads can execute sudden weddings when requested by Kamals with the unexpected pregnancy of an unmarried woman. According to Fathur (2023), sudden weddings are due to unplanned pregnancies of unmarried women. Many families choose a sudden wedding ceremony to make sure that the child is born after the wedding in the belief that the child will escape the sin that his/her parents committed.

The participant shared that this practice is no longer observed because it requires financial support. According to Alfanta (1972), this is a request from the bride's party. Failure to provide this Damak may result in the cancellation of the wedding. Since the Maguindanaons are now following Islamic practices, these practices are suppressed because they do not align with Islamic customs. Moreover, marriage in Islam is intended to facilitate the marital process for the couple. This practice is observed in many Maguindanaon communities. However, the wedding will be canceled if the woman's guardian does not accept the proposal without the Damak as a term of the marriage. Table 5 reflects that the diminished practices on Kawing include Kulo and Damak, which prevent the bride from sleeping with the groom after the wedding, as well as rushed engagements and weddings. These practices are suppressed as they violate the rights of men and do not belong to the religion of their tribe.

Theme 6: Processes and Practices on Maguindanaon Kawing

Table 6 shows the processes and practices of Maguindanaon Kawing.

Table 6: Processes and Practices on Maguindanaon Kawing

Sub-themes	Description
Step 1: Pangengedung Other Terms: Manganakan(courting) Panirongsilong, Kapanininting, Mangengedung, Mapakay (Approval)	During this traditional Maguindanaon practice, the woman's parents are informed that a marriage proposal is being made for their daughter and are asked for their approval to give their daughter's hand in marriage.
Step 2: Panangguni Other Terms: Kambuleg	The groom's party approaches Kamals to seek help and brings Kamals as a witness for the Panangguni. Both families gather to witness and observe the event. Discussing conditions is a requisite part of the wedding, a traditional practice among the Maguindanaon.
Step 3: Salangguni Other Terms: Sunggura/Sungguda	This practice involves providing the conditions and prerequisites of the Kawing and setting the wedding date after fulfilling the requisites and other terms. It is a traditional practice among Maguindanaon Kawing. It is traditional to Maguindanaon Kawing.
Step 4: Kawing Ceremony	Reading prayer invocations is the first practice. Al-i'jabul Qabul (Marriage vow, Marriage Contract) occurs after reading the prayer invocations. Delivering a sermon follows the marriage vow. Giving the Mah'r takes place after the sermon, with closing remarks as the last process.

This term means “whispering”. Other terms include Manganakan(courting), Panirongsilong, and Kapanininting. Although many terms exist, they have the same meaning and intention. During courting (whispering), the Kamaman (the groom's party) will propose marriage to the woman's family on behalf of their daughter. They intend to obtain the family's approval before proceeding with the next step of Kawing. The main party will go directly to the prompt families of the young lady's guardians, including the power within the family, who may be either the young lady's grandparents or an uncle or aunt. This is the first step of the Kawing practice.

Another term is Kambuleg, which means “Gathering”. During Panangguni, Kamals are invited to lead discussions regarding the terms and conditions of Kawing. After receiving the woman’s family's approval, they can proceed to the next step. As the Participant mentioned, after their “whispering,” they can now proceed to Panangguni. During this practice, Kamals are invited to lead discussions on the terms and conditions of the marriage. During Panangguni, each family has a spokesperson, also called a Kamal. (Mendoza, 2015). Moreover, parents on both sides of the family do not communicate directly; they leave it to Kamal to discuss the wedding terms and

conditions. After this, they will schedule the Salangguni (Engagement).

Other term is Sunggura/Sungguda. As stated in the interview, during Salangguni, relatives and other family and friends are invited to join and witness the engagement. He also stated that during the Salangguni, the role of Kamals enters. The role of the Kamals is to inform the groom's and bride's parties of the requirements for the marriage. Firstly, Pat-pangkatan will be given. In Pat-pangkatan, sumabpet (Dowry) should be provided first. Then, the bride's parents will inform the Kamals of the dowry. Then, the Kamals will tell the groom's party of the amount of the dowry. The amount of the dowry is at the bride's parents' discretion. If the bride's dowry is far from the groom's capability, then the groom's parents may ask to lower the dowry to have the wedding. The wedding will be canceled if the bride's parents refuse to reduce the dowry. The wedding depends on the willingness and commitment of the groom's party. These are some of the terms and conditions requisite to the wedding. Items and other requests are also discussed during this engagement. Bride parties may request entertainment. The common pre-wedding entertainment is Dayunday. According to Talusan (2021), Dayunday is a pre-wedding concert/party requested by a Kababayan (Bride's party). This is an entertainment in which performers play the guitar and sing. This is also akin to a role-play. It is a musical courtship where two men entertain the other female performers by playing the guitar and singing lyrics they have composed for them. This entertainment was offered to the bride's relatives upon their arrival two days after the wedding. Many Maguindanaons enjoy such entertainment, but since it does not belong to the practice of Islam, they eventually suppress this kind of concert. According to the participants, the examples of suppressed entertainment are Dayunday and Banda (Local Maguindanaon Bands). On the other hand, Sagayan (War dance), Kulintang, Muhadara (Reading verses from the Qur'an), and Sigkil sa igan (Delivery of a complete set of Beddings) are allowed as entertainment before Kawing. These cultural practices reflect the Maguindanaon tribe's culture. It presents socio-historical narratives about the Maguindanaon and their traditions.

Al Ijabul Qabul (Marriage vow, Marriage Contract) delivers a sermon, reads Dua, and gives the Mah'r, which takes place during proper Kawing. This means the bride's parents or guardians will initiate the groom's acceptance ceremony. The parents or guardians will say, "We will marry our daughter to you based on what has been discussed and agreed upon." According to Gautam (2020), in Guzman (2020), this is because parents or guardians are honored in this celebration. The groom will only respond with "yes or no." This vow should be taken seriously. Saying no to this as a joke will lessen the commitment you displayed. After this, Qutba tun Nikkah (Marriage sermon) will be held, during which the groom and bride will receive a sermon from the Ustads about marriage. Subsequently, wishes or prayers will be offered. In the case of Maguindanaon Kawing, they even bring Kamals and other wealthy individuals to serve as witnesses to the marriage. Maguindanaon practices and customs during Kawing are observed and practiced through these. The presence of Kamals and Ustads ensures that all agreements are fulfilled and unrelated practices are suppressed to preserve and promote the authentic identity of the Maguindanaon tribe.

Conclusion

The dynamics of Maguindanaon Kawing reflect the essential roles of Ustads and Kamal, who play integral parts in upholding the traditions and sanctity of this cultural practice. They are responsible for tasks ranging from guiding reading obligations and delivering sermons to facilitating the Kawing process and setting schedules. Their involvement underscores the spiritual and logistical guidance underpinning Kawing, emphasizing the reverence with which this tradition is approached in Maguindanaon culture. Kawing is not only a ceremony but a representation of the community's religious and social values, and the roles of Ustads and Kamal are crucial in nurturing and preserving these values. The importance of Kawing to the Maguindanaon people extends beyond a mere marital ceremony. It serves to legalize relationships through marriage, making it a cornerstone in upholding religious and moral obligations while preventing zina or illicit relationships. The cultural significance of Kawing is further underscored by the belief that marriage conducted through Kawing is the only legitimate way, emphasizing the tradition's gravity within the community. The Maguindanaon people hold Kawing in such high regard that a relationship is deemed haram (forbidden) if not formalized through this sacred process, underscoring its deep-rooted significance within their social fabric. The step-by-step process of Kawing underscores the meticulous and sacred nature of this traditional practice. Each step is profoundly significant in symbolizing the commitment and sanctity of the marital union.

The researchers recommend that there be appropriate cultural education on Kawing processes and practices, including rules and regulations governing unmarried couples and the proper exercise of authority to suppress

any non-related acts involving Kawing. Moreover, attending classes in Arabic schools will help every individual improve their knowledge of the practice of Islam to avoid committing unlawful acts in their community. These will help preserve and develop the details of the Maguindanaon practices. Moreover, this will improve the identity of the Maguindanaon tribe and their culture. This research could attract the attention of future researchers conducting related studies and offer valuable perspectives on Maguindanaon Kawing practices, thereby enhancing the identity and traditions of the Maguindanaon tribe. To gain deeper insights into Kawing, future researchers must focus not only on the Maguindanaon but also on other tribes, including the Maranao, the Iranun, and other groups that perform Kawing in accordance with Islamic teachings. In the coming years, all strategic approaches to preserving Kawing's practices and processes can be considered and implemented. This study demonstrated that theoretical lenses grounded in qualitative data aligned with its objective. To have a proper Maguindanaon Kawing, every Maguindanaon, especially Kamals and Ustads, should learn, study, or research the proper execution and implementation of practices and processes of the Maguindanaon Kawing to have proper Kawing as well as preserve the tradition and its culture. Moreover, adequate schooling in this matter could help Kamals and Ustads improve their service to every couple who seeks their help.

Contributions of Authors

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Conflict of Interests

Indicate if there is any conflict or no conflict of interest.

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