Article

The Daegu Mosque and the Construction of Social Cohesion in Multicultural Korean Society

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Abstract

The construction of the Daegu Mosque in South Korea is a significant symbol of transformation, fostering understanding, social cohesion, and the social inclusion of migrants. This study examines how the mosque's construction facilitates the social integration of Muslim migrants into Korean society, particularly within the local community. Utilizing qualitative research methods, including in-depth interviews, document analysis (of pamphlets and other materials), and participant observation, this study investigates the experiences and perspectives of migrant Muslims. The findings demonstrate that the mosque plays a crucial role in mitigating prejudice, promoting solidarity, fostering a sense of belonging among migrant Muslims, and enhancing intercultural understanding, thereby contributing positively to their social inclusion. By bridging religious and cultural divides, the mosque helps strengthen social ties within the broader Korean community. The construction of the Daegu Mosque serves as a positive example of a welcoming place of worship that promotes interreligious harmony and respect, demonstrating how such spaces can foster understanding in interreligious relations. This research underscores the importance of embracing multicultural and religious identities to build more peaceful and inclusive societies.

Keyword

Interreligious relations, social inclusion, migrant integration, Daegu Mosque

Introduction

The cultural and ethnic diversity of Korean society continues to grow with globalization. The growing number of foreign residents from other countries creates an entirely novel challenge for Korean society to deal with while preserving its' democratic principles. The increasing number of foreign laborers entering the country, particularly after the 1988 Seoul Olympics, has facilitated the multi-acculturalization of Korean society. In the early 1990s, the Korean government started Industrial Trainee System (ITS) that increased migrant labor. In the late 1990s, Korean ministry of Education started the Brain Korea 21 (BK21) program that draw attention of many scholars and students to South Korea. Most industrial trainees and academics originate from the Southeast Asian and South Asian regions, with a significant proportion hailing from predominantly Muslim countries. Their arrival introduces cultural and religious diversity. Although Korea has made efforts to accommodate diversity in response to the growing number of foreign residents, Muslim immigrants appear to encounter greater difficulties integrating into society (Park, 2014).

The interaction between Islam and the Korean Peninsula began in the 7th century through trading activities among Chinese, Korean, and Arab merchants. However, the development of the Muslim community in Korea became more visible after the Korean War (1950-1953) (Fathil & Fathil, 2011). The increasing number of Muslim migrants prompted the construction of a mosque by the international Muslim community near Kyungpook National University (KNU) Daegu Campus.

The construction of the Mosque has faced challenges and difficulties. There started a conflict between locals and migrant Muslims on the base of Mosque construction acceptance. The local government allowed migrants to construct worship place. However, the construction of the mosque has been marked by significant challenges, suggesting underlying tensions regarding interfaith tolerance and the practice of multiculturalism (Joowon & Yi, 2022), but the completed Daegu Mosque presents an opportunity to promote social cohesion and inclusivity (Feller & Cottone, 2003; Pigman, 1995).

Furthermore, both scholarly and religious literature acknowledge a correlation between spiritual awareness and the cultivation of positive attributes through religious practices such as contemplation and meditation, as reflected in sacred texts across various faiths, including Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, and Buddhism (Benson et al., 1980; DiLalla, Hull, Dorsey, & Department of Family and Community Medicine, Southern Illinois University School of Medicine, Carbondale 62901, USA. ldilalla@siu.edu, 2004; Kennedy, Kanthamani, & Palmer, 1994; Kennedy et al., 1994; Koenig, McGue, Krueger, & Bouchard, 2007).

Within this framework, this study aims to analyze the construction of the Daegu Mosque as a significant initiative toward promoting social inclusion. It addresses a notable gap in the existing literature on Islam in Korea, as prior research has largely been confined to the national level. By adopting a focused and localized approach, this study delves into a specific case to provide a nuanced understanding of the realities at the community level.

This study aims to examine the role of mosque construction in fostering social inclusion. The Daegu Mosque serves as a catalyst for change in social dynamics by providing a space for Muslim migrants to practice their faith, celebrate their cultural traditions, and take initial steps toward inclusion. It is crucial to analyze how Korean society perceives and responds to the presence of minority groups with diverse ethnic backgrounds. This understanding is critical given the limited cultural, religious, and traditional commonalities between Muslims and Korean society. This study also highlights the importance of respecting and valuing distinct cultural and religious identities, while simultaneously promoting the creation of an inclusive and diversity-embracing environment.

Literature Review

Religious Spaces and Social Inclusion

Research concerning the development of religious spaces and inclusion underscores the significance of infrastructure that supports places of worship and strengthens unity among religious groups (Rivera & Nickels, 2014)at times, proven to be inadequate, reliance on other types of organizations is necessary for some communities to survive. Although there are a number of different actors that played a role in the reestablishment of communities within New Orleans since Hurricane Katrina took place, the Mary Queen of Vietnam (MQVN. Within the context of migrants, the construction of mosques within host communities is deemed crucial as it provides a venue for religious expression and cultural preservation. Studies indicate that the presence of mosques can serve as a tangible representation of inclusion and acceptance, which, in turn, reinforces a sense of identity and cohesion within the community. Furthermore, the construction of places of worship is also believed to have the capacity to mitigate prejudice and enhance intergroup relations (Norris & Inglehart, 2012).

Previous studies on the impact of mosque construction on local communities indicate that such initiatives have the potential to enhance understanding of Islam and Muslims, ultimately reducing discrimination and fostering more empathetic behavior (Dahab & Omori, 2019). These efforts facilitate interaction and dialogue between local residents and the Muslim immigrant community, contributing to the dismantling of stereotypes and the establishment of harmonious social relationships. Empathy, which entails the ability to comprehend and resonate with the emotions of others, is considered a critical aspect of social interaction (Silveira, Hecht, Adli, Voelkle, & Singer, 2022). The presence of places of worship can serve as a catalyst for fostering support and acceptance of religious spaces, particularly in the context of mosque construction, by bridging the divides between diverse cultural and religious groups (Glen, Taylor, & Dautel, 2020).

The establishment of religious facilities has long been recognized as a driver of social development, promoting values of compassion, solidarity, and social inclusion. The construction of the Daegu Mosque marks a significant milestone with the potential to address these issues within the context of South Korea, where the Muslim migrant population faces challenges related to integration and cultural acceptance. The development of religious infrastructure such as

mosques can profoundly influence the dynamics of a community, particularly in multicultural societies. These spaces function as hubs for religious and cultural activities, providing a sense of identity and belonging for religious minority groups.

Through interaction with the physical environment and members of heterogeneous communities, societies can cultivate inclusion by comprehending cultural customs, religious beliefs, and shared values. The construction of places of worship is closely correlated with the notion of acceptance. The presence of mosques constitutes a representation of religious freedom and cultural plurality, concurrently dispelling myths and promoting acceptance. Prior studies have affirmed the significance of mosques and interreligious relations in mitigating cultural disparities, fortifying social bonds, and stimulating unity among diverse communities (Hashmi, Bashir, Hashmi, & Awan, 2023; Idi & Priansyah, 2023; Long, 2022; Majid, 2020; Novebri & Pratiwi, 2021)

Research concerning the construction of mosques and its impact on social dynamics in South Korea remains relatively limited. Nevertheless, research on intergroup relations and multiculturalism in South Korea provides pertinent insights. Migratory flows have engendered rapid demographic shifts in South Korea, which, in turn, pose challenges to social integration and cultural acceptance(Callinan, 2020). This literature review underscores the urgency of mosque construction as a vehicle for advancing empathy, harmony, and inclusion within South Korean society.

This study aims to enrich the scholarly discourse concerning the role of inclusive places of worship in addressing social challenges while simultaneously fostering the creation of a harmonious society. This literature review underscores the potential of the Daegu Mosque construction as a catalyst for strengthening inclusivity and solidarity in South Korea. These findings indicate that the mosque construction process can play a role in mitigating stereotypes and promoting a more profound understanding. This research also focuses on contributing to insights into the transformative role of places of worship within host societies and their significance in promoting social inclusion within multicultural environments.

Societal inclusion

The social integration of Muslims in South Korea has become increasingly relevant with the growing cultural diversity in the country. The demographic shifts in South Korea and the presence of various social groups make understanding the processes and challenges of Muslim integration crucial for fostering inclusion. Several studies emphasize the importance of implementing comprehensive practices in embracing religious diversity. The construction of religious sites, such as mosques, serves as a tangible representation of inclusion. Research indicates that the presence of such religious structures can promote inclusion, challenge stereotypes, and enhance understanding among different social groups (Kim, 2021).

Education plays a crucial role in advancing social inclusion. Educational programs focused on cultural competence and religious literacy are essential for

overcoming barriers and facilitating dialogue between different religious and cultural groups. These programs not only expand the knowledge and understanding of the broader community but also contribute to creating an environment where diverse perspectives are valued. Collaboration between local communities and the international Muslim community in the construction of mosques has been recognized as a key factor in promoting social inclusion. Research has highlighted the importance of community participation, emphasizing the values of mutual cooperation, shared goals, and relationships built on respect and trust (García, 2014).

The success of integration programs is often determined by the active participation of both local communities and newcomers, fostering mutual understanding, inclusion, and collaboration. Leadership and policy frameworks also play a crucial role in shaping the social inclusion of international Muslims in South Korea. Strong leadership that upholds diversity and supports equal rights is essential for creating an inclusive society. Furthermore, policies that promote multiculturalism, anti-discrimination, and equal opportunities contribute to creating an environment where individuals from diverse ethnic backgrounds are recognized. Despite progress, challenges remain that must be addressed to achieve full social inclusion. Challenges such as cultural misconceptions, stereotypes, and discrimination require sustained attention and effort. Regular monitoring, evaluation, and adaptation of policies and programs are necessary to tackle emerging challenges and ensure that the social inclusion of Muslims in Korean society remains a dynamic and evolving process in line with mosque construction. The lessons learned from existing practices, as observed in the context of the Daegu Mosque, provide valuable insights for formulating future strategies and promoting a more inclusive and harmonious multicultural society in South Korea (Valero et al., 2020).

A crucial aspect within the discourse of social inclusion is the recognition of the active roles and contributions of Muslim individuals to Korean society. It is imperative to acknowledge the complex nature of social inclusion and the necessity of sustained efforts to achieve it. This highlights extant challenges, including language barriers, disparities in cultural understanding, and the impact of predominantly negative media portrayals. Addressing these challenges necessitates a comprehensive approach, encompassing educational programs, media literacy initiatives, and opportunities for intercultural exchange to foster understanding of Muslim culture and beliefs. The process towards social inclusion not only benefits those directly involved but also holds the potential to positively influence broader society in promoting inclusivity (Jones, 2015).

In light of these challenges, the success of social inclusion for Muslims in South Korea goes beyond merely fostering understanding and harmony between communities. It also necessitates active efforts to shape a positive image of Islam, which is critical in combating issues such as Islamophobia. Fear and hatred towards Islam often stem from misunderstandings, stereotypes, or misinformation. Thus, applying Islamic principles that emphasize peace, multiculturalism, and rahmatan lil alamin (mercy for all) can significantly contribute to building positive relationships with the surrounding community. These principles provide

a strong foundation for Muslims to be accepted and coexist harmoniously with other groups, ultimately enriching diversity and promoting social harmony (Ik, Jazuli, Rohmah, & Chanifah, 2024).

Moreover, research indicates that socially inclusive environments have a positive impact on the overall well-being of both the host society and international Muslims. Societies that exhibit higher levels of inclusion tend to experience lower levels of stress, anxiety, and feelings of isolation (Dong-Jin & Jae, 2012; Meer & Modood, 2009; Modood, 2005). In this regard, physical structures such as the Daegu Mosque not only serve as symbols of inclusion but also as platforms for introducing and instilling positive Islamic values into the broader society, enhancing integration and reducing discomfort that may arise from ignorance or fear of Islam.

Method

This study investigates the construction of the Daegu Mosque as a potential catalyst for the social inclusion of international Muslims. Employing qualitative research methods, the study seeks to provide in-depth insights into how the establishment of mosques influences the development of social inclusion through an analysis of individual experiences, viewpoints, and behaviors. To gain a comprehensive understanding of the impact of the Daegu Mosque's construction on social inclusion, a descriptive and exploratory research design was adopted. In order to capture the nuanced sentiments and perspectives of migrant Muslims, in-depth interviews were conducted with a purposive sample of individuals from this population. Participant observation was also undertaken by the researchers during various stages of the mosque's construction process (Babbie, 2020). Data collection was conducted through both face-to-face interviews and via WhatsApp calls. The respondent pool was limited to international Muslims due to the reluctance of native Korean Muslims to participate in interviews. While this limitation presented a challenge, participant observation provided valuable opportunities to observe interactions, activities, and dynamics among diverse community members. Thirteen participants, all of whom were Muslim migrants in Korea, were interviewed for this study. To facilitate effective communication and interaction with the interviewees, interview questions were administered in both English and Urdu.

Table 1. The Demographic Information of Respondents

Name	Age	Gender	Nationality	Education	Occupation	Entry year in Korea	Marital Status/ Married	Number of children
A	25	M	Bangladesh	M.Phil.	Student	2019	Yes	No
B	21	M	India	Undergraduate	Student	2018	No	--
C	28	M	Ethiopia	Ph.D.	Student	2018	No	--
D	24	M	Nigeria	M.Phil.	Student	2019	No	--
E	30	M	Pakistan	Ph.D.	Student	2017	No	--
F	24	M	Bangladesh	M.Phil.	Student	2019	No	--
G	27	M	Pakistan	Ph.D.	Student	2020	No	--

H	38	M	Pakistan	Intermediate	F a c t o r y worker	2018	Yes	03
I	34	M	Pakistan	Undergraduate	F a c t o r y worker	2019	Yes	01
J	23	M	Nigeria	Undergraduate	Student	2020	No	--
K	26	M	Ethiopia	Undergraduate	Student	2019	No	--
L	24	M	Pakistan	Undergraduate	Student	2020	No	--
M	34	M	Pakistan	Intermediate	F a c t o r y worker	2019	Yes	--

Source: Data were gathered in interview sessions from April to August 2021.

The interviewed respondents as of August 2021 were mostly from South Asia. There are huge religious and racial differences between South Asia and South Korea. Out of these 13 respondents, nine are in their 20s, while three in 30s that shows all of them are young. From them 10 are international students and three belongs to factory workers. There is no single female participant as; they were not directly involved in Mosque construction process. Majority of the respondents are from Pakistani, followed by Bangladesh, India, Nigeria and Ethiopia. Out of them, three had completed their Ph.D. and M.Phil. Degrees while five completed their undergraduate and two of them did intermediate. Four were married in their home country none of them married with Korean partner and two of married respondents has children. One respondent was living with his spouse in Korea. All of the respondents were living in Korea for more than 13 months.

Results and Discussion

International Muslims Perception in South Korea's Cultural Landscape

Regarding interviewees' perceptions of the position of international Muslims within South Korea's cultural landscape, respondents articulated that Islam faces the ongoing challenge of navigating unfamiliarity and long-standing misconceptions. From the Korean War period to the present, the prevailing narrative surrounding Muslims in Korea has frequently portrayed them as enigmatic outsiders rather than active contributors to the nation's social fabric. Despite possessing a historical presence in Korea comparable to other established religions, Islam continues to contend with its characterization as a foreign faith.

There are numerous hurdles obstructing the integration of Muslims into the Korean Society. There is a huge difference between Islamic traditions and Korean customs, the Korean societal pressure for traditionalism, and the limited number of Mosques in Korea is a reason that Korean cultural do not allow to mix easily. These challenges, as Baker points out, have reduced Islam's position in Korea, prompting the religion to contend for recognition (Baker, 2006). However, as the demographics shift and the Muslim community grows, then possibly host community will rethink and International Muslims culture and customs. The scary incident shockwaves of the 9/11, attacks blamed on Muslims acted as a turning point in Koreans' perception of Islam too. The event, while triggering initial negative anxieties, also spurred a positive introspection among Koreans. Koreans started to do more studies about Islam. he phenomenon prompted self-reflection

among the Korean people, encouraging them to question their preconceived views, which have often been shaped by inaccurate media portrayals. Although positive efforts have been made, the lingering negative image still persists (Hee-soo, 2006).

A study conducted by the Korean Broadcasting System (KBS) Research Institute revealed a prevalent negative perception of Islam among the Korean populace, indicating the emergence of a subtle form of Islamophobia in the 2000s. The association drawn between Islam and terrorism, particularly in the aftermath of the September 11th attacks, served as a catalyst for this shift, reflecting Western narratives that had permeated Korean societal consciousness. These apprehensions were not solely rooted in global events but also resonated with the religious landscape within Korea itself. The fundamentalist traditions inherent within Korean Protestant churches contributed to the amplification of these anxieties. The tensions manifested at the 2005 conference commemorating the 50th anniversary of the Muslim presence in Korea exposed a conflict between Korean Protestant churches and Islam. These fears were further exacerbated by provocative pronouncements in Christian mission media, which employed alarmist terminology such as " Surging Islamic Raid"" or "The Islamization of Korea by 2020" (Dong-jin & Won-jae, 2012; Hannun, 2022, p. 9).

International Muslim respondents reported that segments of the Korean populace express concerns that the increasing presence of Muslim immigrants, coupled with the prevalence of intercultural marriages, could potentially facilitate the infiltration of Islamic fundamentalism, often associated with terrorism, into the social fabric of Korean society. In recognition of the 50th anniversary of the Muslim presence in Korea, the Korea Muslim Federation (KMF) has undertaken efforts to mitigate these anxieties by disseminating information about Islam through its publication, "Islam in Korea: Golden Anniversary of Islam in Korea," aiming to foster a more nuanced and comprehensive understanding of the faith. Within these complex dynamics, the narrative surrounding Islam in Korea remains subject to flux, shaped by historical trends, global events, and the evolving cultural consciousness of the Korean people. The KMF leaflet outlined "Da'wah Plans in the Future," which encompassed the following initiatives: (1) a construction plan for a new mosque; (2) the establishment of an international Islamic primary school and kindergarten; (3) the opening of a Da'wah center; (4) the formation of a Holy Quran translation committee; (5) the Korean Islamic college project; and (6) a translation and publication committee.

Daegu Mosque Construction as a Symbol of Social Inclusion

Regarding the construction of the Daegu Mosque, respondents posited that the project serves as a significant catalyst for social inclusion. Recognizing the influence of mass media on perceptions of minority groups, which can either promote inclusion or exacerbate prejudice (Goldman & Mutz, 2010), the respondents emphasized the mosque's transformative impact on the cultural landscape and its role in fostering the inclusion of foreigners, particularly on the basis of religion. The Daegu Mosque visibly signifies the presence of the Muslim community and facilitates interaction among individuals from diverse

ethnic backgrounds, functioning as a symbol of unity and inclusion. It acts as a conduit for mutual learning and engagement, enabling cross-cultural exchange of experiences and promoting stronger intergroup bonds. Through its religious rituals and practices, the mosque not only allows the migrant Muslim population to maintain their faith but also provides the local community with opportunities to understand and appreciate these customs. Consequently, the Daegu Mosque functions as a bridge, promoting acceptance and social inclusion while dispelling preconceptions and myths, thereby contributing to a more harmonious and interconnected society.

For migrant Muslims residing in Daegu, the mosque represents a significant milestone, providing a tangible symbol of acceptance and inclusivity that enables them to freely practice their faith and preserve their cultural identity, despite existing challenges. It serves as a central hub for collective gatherings, strengthening their sense of belonging and facilitating connections with others, thus mitigating feelings of homesickness and stress. Notably, the mosque offers a safe space for migrants to express their cultural and religious beliefs openly, cultivating a profound sense of unity and inclusion. This enhanced sense of belonging helps to alleviate the isolation and discrimination that Muslim communities sometimes experience in unfamiliar host environments (Kaya, 2019).

Moreover, the presence of the Daegu Mosque signifies a broader societal embrace of religious and cultural diversity within multicultural Korea, promoting respect and tolerance. Therefore, the mosque's construction not only symbolizes inclusion but also demonstrates its transformative potential. Through this project, the wider community demonstrates its capacity to understand and accommodate the needs of its migrant Muslim members, ultimately fostering positive experiences, acceptance, and integration within the larger community (Vertovec, 2010).

Daegu Mosque as a Bridge of Social Inclusion

Regarding the question of whether the Daegu Mosque promotes social inclusion, respondents affirmed that its construction serves as a source of hope and fosters understanding within a diverse community. This landmark functions as a bridge connecting local residents and the migrant Muslim population, mitigating stereotypes and promoting inclusivity. As the community becomes more acquainted with the mosque and its members, misconceptions are dispelled, and shared understanding is cultivated, leading to enhanced social cohesion and a more inclusive environment. These observations align with findings from existing research. As demonstrated in a case study by Horowitz, Robinson, and Seifer (2009) promoting knowledge, inclusion, and acceptance, the Daegu Mosque has the potential to cultivate a more harmonious society where individuals from all backgrounds are valued and embraced. The construction of the mosque emerges as a significant catalyst for social inclusion, affording individuals the opportunity to genuinely understand and share the experiences and values of the global Muslim community. Through interactions such as dialogues and participation in cultural events, a deeper appreciation for the distinct cultural traditions and religious

beliefs of international Muslims is fostered. This enhanced understanding, in turn, cultivates tolerance, respect, and acceptance, ultimately dismantling potential cultural barriers and facilitating migrants' successful adjustment and acculturation within the host population. The Daegu Mosque, therefore, not only facilitates social interaction but also promotes intercultural learning and the celebration of diversity, standing as a symbol of unity and social inclusion (Wessendorf, 2016).

The Impact of the Daegu Mosque on the Harmony and Multiculturalism

The construction of a mosque, representing diversity and unification, serves as a powerful symbol of inclusion and acceptance. By facilitating discourse, fostering social network development, and promoting tolerance and respect, it dispels misconceptions and cultivates a strong sense of community among individuals from diverse cultural and religious backgrounds. This collaborative effort not only strengthens interpersonal relationships but also paves the way for a more harmonious and cohesive society where individuals experience a sense of belonging, acceptance, and value. Essentially, the mosque becomes a symbol of hope and a catalyst for positive social change, contributing to a more peaceful and integrated community.

Despite existing challenges, the construction of the Daegu Mosque has demonstrably impacted the surrounding neighborhood. Through active engagement with and increased understanding of the immigrant Muslim population, local residents have experienced a significant shift in their perspectives and attitudes. This enhanced understanding of diverse rituals, beliefs, and customs helps dispel myths and preconceptions, fostering greater tolerance and respect for other cultures and religions. The mosque has facilitated both cultural exchange and interfaith dialogue, broadening the local community's perspective and fostering a more global outlook. The development of support networks further reinforces this positive change, promoting ongoing cooperation and mutual assistance. Consequently, the Daegu Mosque has played a crucial role in promoting inclusion. These observations are consistent with empirical research. A study by Kamil & Darojat (2019) examined the relationship between mosques and external social integration in both historical and contemporary contexts, comparing majority Muslim societies in Indonesia and minority Muslim communities in Europe. Their findings demonstrate the consistent significance of mosques in strengthening the external integration of Muslim communities across both historical periods and contemporary settings.

Religious space and diversity

Concerning religious space and diversity, the establishment of religious spaces, such as the Daegu Mosque, plays a crucial role in fostering inclusiveness, diversity, and harmony within communities like South Korea. These spaces provide tangible settings for religious expression and cultural preservation, cultivating unity and a sense of community among diverse cultural and religious groups. The efficacy of engagement and dialogue, as exemplified by the Daegu Mosque project, demonstrates how meaningful exchanges of ideas and experiences can mitigate prejudice and cultivate mutual understanding. These initiatives contribute

to a more inclusive and understanding society by promoting educational initiatives focused on cultural competence, religious literacy, and intercultural understanding. Recognizing the significance of diversity and respecting diverse cultural and religious identities is essential for fostering unity and inclusion. The successful resolution and subsequent coexistence between international Muslims and local Koreans regarding the Daegu Mosque exemplifies initiatives centered on collaboration and partnership, underscoring the value of cooperative endeavors, shared objectives, and relationships founded on respect and trust (Putnam, 2007). Strong leadership that values diversity, supports equal rights, and promotes multiculturalism, coupled with enabling policies, is vital for an inclusive society that prioritizes social cohesion. Ultimately, sustaining and strengthening unity and inclusion necessitates ongoing commitment, community engagement, and consistent monitoring of progress. The lessons learned from the Daegu Mosque's construction can inform efforts to address social challenges and build peaceful, inclusive, and multicultural societies that effectively promote the social inclusion of migrants.

Conclusion

This research examined the role of the Daegu Mosque in fostering inter-religious relations and promoting social inclusion among migrant communities in South Korea. The study revealed that the mosque serves as a crucial space for migrant Muslims to practice their faith and maintain their cultural identity, contributing to their sense of belonging and reducing social isolation. Despite facing challenges related to religious tolerance and acceptance within the broader community, the construction and ongoing presence of the mosque highlight the potential for religious institutions to facilitate positive intergroup relations. The research also demonstrated the importance of community engagement and media representation in shaping public perceptions and promoting inclusivity. These findings suggest that fostering interfaith dialogue and promoting accurate portrayals of religious minorities can contribute to a more inclusive and harmonious society. This study underscores the transformative potential of religious spaces in promoting intercultural understanding and offers valuable insights for developing strategies to enhance social inclusion in increasingly diverse societies

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