Understanding School-Based Interpersonal Relationships: the Case of Morning Greetings in a Thai-Muslim School Context

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Abstract

Morning greetings, though often seen as routine, carry deep cultural meanings, especially within specific communities. At Adameesoksavittaya School in Krabi, Thailand—a Thai-Muslim educational setting—these daily practices reflect values such as respect, identity, and community cohesion. This study explores the cultural and social significance of morning greeting rituals in this context, aiming to understand how these gestures influence relationships among students and staff. Using a qualitative ethnographic method, data were collected through observations, interviews, and document reviews. The results show that morning greetings are not mere formalities but expressions of cultural respect and social connectedness. They also vary subtly depending on cultural backgrounds, indicating the complexity behind these everyday actions. The study argues that attention to such daily interactions can reveal broader sociocultural dynamics at play within schools. By acknowledging and valuing these practices, educational institutions can promote inclusivity, mutual understanding, and a stronger sense of community among their members. This research highlights how cultural routines shape interpersonal bonds and foster a supportive school environment.

Keywords: *morning greeting, sociocultural dynamics, Thai education, well-being*
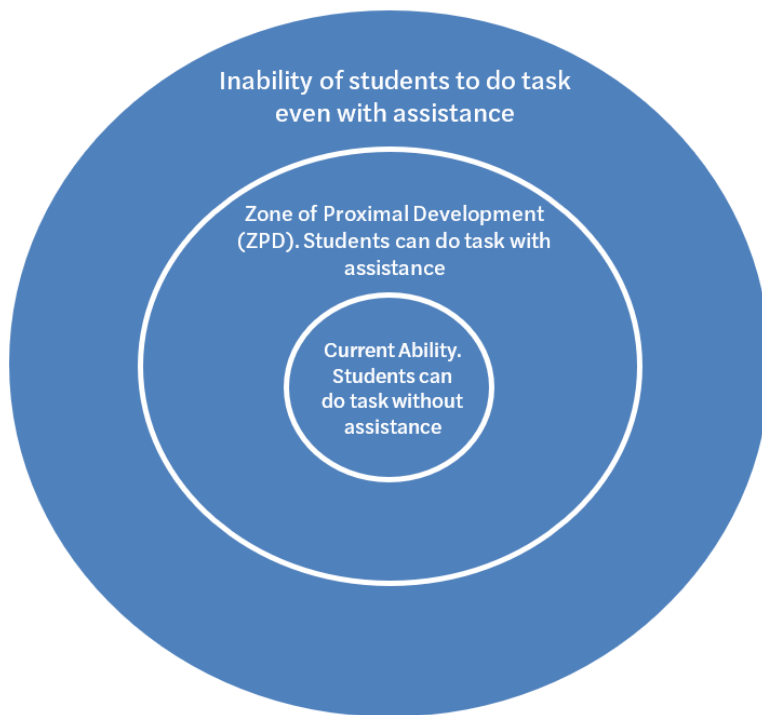
Introduction

A significant part of social engagement and communication in many cultures worldwide is the exchange of good morning greetings. Understanding the morning greeting culture at the school is essential in comprehending the sociocultural dynamics within the institution. In Thailand, the morning greeting reflects the values, traditions and interpersonal relationships that are integral to the school community (Mongkolhutthi, 2018). Morning greetings serve as a foundation for fostering a positive and cohesive environment, where students and staff alike feel welcomed and valued at the start of each day (Benharoon, 2013). Scholarly research from various educational institutions has shown that morning greetings play a crucial role in the sociocultural dynamics of these establishments. These greetings facilitate positive interactions among students, teachers and staff members, setting the tone for productive and inclusive learning environments. (Hallajian & David, 2014).

Sociocultural theories are frequently used in educational research to comprehend the sophisticated relationships that exist between people and their cultural surroundings in learning situations. One such well-known framework is Socio-Cultural Theory, which was developed by Russian psychologist Lev Vygotsky (Rashidova, 2021). According to Vygotsky's theory, social and cultural elements have a significant impact on cognitive development. He highlighted how learning processes and results are shaped by social interactions, cultural instruments and the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD).

Figure 1. *Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development*

Inability of students to do task even with assistance

Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). Students can do task with assistance

Current Ability. Students can do task without assistance

Vygotsky's sociocultural theory provides a comprehensive view of education, emphasizing the significance of examining the sociocultural context in which learning occurs (Munawaroh et al., 2022). It implies that people do not develop in solitude, but rather through interactions with others and their cultural surroundings. This perspective emphasizes the importance of cultural practices, rituals and social norms in educational environments (Karimovna, 2021).

Morning greetings are a common sociocultural practice in educational institutions that reflect the community's social dynamics and cultural beliefs. Vygotsky's theory serves as a prism through which to evaluate how these greetings influence students' sociocultural learning experiences and identity formation (Ekowati & Indira, 2018). Students

participate in social interactions that promote language development, socialization and the absorption of cultural standards by saying good morning to others. Vygotsky's emphasis on the Zone of Proximal Development implies that morning greetings may function within the proximal range of children's developmental capacities, allowing them to scaffold their learning through interaction with more knowledgeable peers or adults (Sulastri, 2018). This emphasizes the importance of instructors and peers in directing children's participation in morning greetings and promoting their sociocultural development.

Vygotsky's sociocultural theory was chosen for this study due to its emphasis on social interaction and cultural context, which aligns closely with the nature of morning greetings (Kattayeva, 2022). Unlike Piaget, who focused on individual cognitive stages, Vygotsky viewed learning as socially and culturally mediated. Morning greetings, as daily social rituals, exemplify this idea—they reflect cultural norms and foster interaction. Additionally, Vygotsky's concept of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) highlights how learners grow through guided participation. These greeting practices offer students opportunities to engage in meaningful social exchanges with support from peers and teachers, reinforcing collaborative learning.

The researchers acknowledge that, while Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development notion is commonly considered as a core premise in sociocultural theory, it is not without controversy. Previous research has identified various limits and obstacles connected with the use of the ZPD framework, which the researchers carefully considered in the design of this study. One critique addressed at the ZPD is its conceptualization as a fixed and measurable construct (Rahmatirad, 2020). Critics claim that establishing the ZPD's borders and estimating the quantity of scaffolding needed for effective learning are subjective and context-dependent. Furthermore, some scholars have expressed concerns about the possibility for over-reliance on the ZPD as a teaching tool, claiming that it may oversimplify the intricacies of the learning process and ignore

individual differences across students (Fani & Ghaemi, 2011). The ZPD has been criticized for prioritizing cognitive growth above other aspects of learning, such as socio-emotional development and cultural identity construction. Critics say that focusing solely on cognitive progress risks overlooking the significance of sociocultural elements in determining learning experiences and outcomes (Rahmatirad, 2020).

Despite its critiques, Vygotsky's sociocultural theory and the concept of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) were adopted in this study for their relevance to understanding classroom interactions and cultural practices (Irshad et al., 2021). The ZPD offers a valuable lens for exploring how morning greetings shape teacher-student dynamics and learning within a sociocultural setting. While acknowledging past criticisms, the researchers recontextualize the ZPD to examine its broader implications(Rozak et al., 2021; Barnett et al., 2011; Institution, 1995). This approach allows for a deeper analysis of how routine practices like morning greetings contribute to students' identity formation and sociocultural learning, ultimately offering richer insights into educational processes.

Thus, while acknowledging Vygotsky's ZPD framework drawbacks, the researchers believe it is still an essential theoretical lens for investigating the sociocultural dynamics of morning greetings at Adameesoksavittaya School, since sociocultural theory has important and diverse implications for morning greetings in educational settings, providing useful insights into the subtle dynamics of cultural practices, social relationships, and identity formation inside schools (Martynyshyn et al., 2020). Morning greetings, as an everyday custom at educational institutions, are an excellent example of how sociocultural theory may be used to better understand the confluence of culture and learning.

Although primarily linked to cognitive development, Vygotsky's sociocultural theory is highly relevant to this study due to its focus on learning as a socially and culturally situated process (Zhou, 2024). It

emphasizes that knowledge and social skills develop through interaction within a community, with language serving as a key cultural and communicative tool (Daneshfar & Moharami, 2018). In this research, morning greetings are seen as structured social practices that help students internalize school norms and values. These interactions reflect a Zone of Proximal Development, where learners gain both language skills and social awareness through guided participation, enhancing inclusion, connection, and group identity within the school environment.

Morning greetings are fundamentally about societal conventions, beliefs and traditions that are passed down and maintained through interpersonal relationships. Examining morning greetings through a sociocultural lens reveals the cultural nuances and significance hidden within these seemingly routine practices (Powell et al., 2014). For example, the rituals and gestures used in morning welcomes may represent broader cultural values about respect, hospitality and community harmony (Kasa, 2021). Understanding these cultural nuances is critical for educators seeking to establish inclusive and culturally responsive learning environments that respect students' different origins and experiences.

Additionally, sociocultural theory provides a framework for investigating the impact of morning greetings in identity formation and socioemotional development. Participating in morning greetings teaches children not just the language and behavioral parts of greeting rituals, but also cultural norms and values that shape their sense of self and belonging in the school community (Van Compernolle, 2021). Morning greetings help to create a healthy school climate and social cohesion, both of which are necessary for student well-being and academic performance. Sociocultural theory offers a solid theoretical foundation for investigating the cultural, social and psychological components of morning greetings in educational contexts.

By using sociocultural perspectives to examine morning greetings, the researchers can acquire a better understanding of how cultural practices intersect with learning processes, identity development and social dynamics in schools. This complete understanding is critical for educators and policy makers who want to promote inclusive, culturally responsive educational approaches that support all children's overall development. As a result, the decision to use Vygotsky's sociocultural theory over Piaget's theory in this study was based on its emphasis on social interaction, cultural context and the concept of ZPD, all of which provide valuable insights into the role of morning greetings in fostering sociocultural learning experiences and identity development among students.

Morning greeting rituals are essential to the sociocultural fabric of schools in Thailand, reflecting long-standing traditions and values such as respect, hierarchy, and communal harmony. These practices vary according to age, gender, and social roles, demonstrating their complexity and cultural depth (Benharoon, 2013). More than simple routines, they foster social integration and a shared sense of belonging among students and staff (Wibowo, 2023). By encouraging regular, respectful interaction, morning greetings strengthen interpersonal bonds and promote unity within the school environment. At Adameesoksavittaya School, these daily gestures reaffirm each individual's role as a valued member of the educational community.

Previous research in the field of cultural anthropology and educational studies has emphasized the importance of understanding cultural practices within educational settings to promote inclusivity (Arrosyad & Nugroho, 2020), mutual respect (Xia et al., 2023), status-related (Powell et al., 2014), and strengthening the sense of brotherhood (Shields-Lysiak et al., 2020). A journal article by Abdullaeva titled 'Introduction to social norms that is implemented in the process of greetings for primary school' provides insightful data on the impact of morning greetings on school culture. The authors conducted a study in a

diverse range of primary schools in Uzbekistan and found that the morning greeting is the beginning of social relations, establishing friendly and benevolent connections between individuals. Familiarizing young people, including primary school students, with greeting rules helps them adapt effectively to social life and develop positive emotions (Abdullaeva, 2020). Another previous study was conducted by Deeana (2021) which focuses on the content and linguistic strategies used in greetings by Thai speakers. It explores the sociolinguistic aspects of greetings in Thai society, considering factors such as social status, politeness and cultural nuances. The study aims to improve communication competence for non-native Thai speakers by understanding the complexities and cultural significance of greetings in Thai society (Kasa, 2021).

Numerous other studies have been carried out on this subject, yielding differing findings. For example, research conducted by Kusmiatun highlights how shared cultural elements like clothing, food, transportation, greeting customs, language politeness, and bargaining habits play significant roles in both Indonesian and Thai societies (Kusmiatun & Liliani, 2020). Furthermore, Dilla's research in 2020 explored the positive impact of implementing morning greetings on students' social ethics development at SDN 52 Kota Bengkulu. This practice was found to positively influence students' behavior and attitudes; with 69.23 percent of students consistently performing morning greetings leading to improved manners such as polite greetings. The implementation also helped foster a culture based on '5S' principles (Smile, Greet, Regards, Polite, Good) among the student body (Udiyana et al., 2020).

Many of the previous studies that have been mentioned use ethnographic methods. Springer (2021) defined ethnography as a method which entails researching other civilizations and capturing impressions using a variety of mediums such as writing, drawing, and photographs. The purpose of ethnography is to record the processes by which people build their reality, with an emphasis on what they do, what they know, and what

they manufacture and use (Müller, 2021). This is also the theoretical basis for the researchers to choose this method because, based on an overview and reading of many previous studies, this method is the most suitable for culture-related research.

Nevertheless, previous researchers have mainly focused on surface-level cultural differences, failing to explore the deeper complexities that shape daily interactions. This study aims to delve into these underlying nuances in order to provide a more comprehensive understanding of cultural identity and social cohesion within educational institutions both locally and globally, which has never been done before. Based on the background that has been described, the following research questions have been formulated:

1. How do morning greetings at Adameesoksavittaya School in Krabi, Thailand reflect cultural values and foster a positive environment?

2. What cultural factors influence variations in morning greetings and their impact on interpersonal relationships at the school?

While this study centers on morning greeting gestures at Adameesoksavittaya School, its findings offer broader insights into how cultural practices shape social interactions in educational settings. While acknowledging that norms vary across contexts and may not be universally applicable, the research highlights how daily rituals reflect deeper societal values and influence community dynamics. These greetings go beyond routine—they embody cultural identity and foster social cohesion. By examining their underlying meanings, the study contributes to a richer understanding of how everyday interactions support inclusive and

connected school environments, both within the Thai-Muslim context and in broader educational landscapes.

Method

This study employed a qualitative ethnographic approach to explore the sociocultural dimensions of morning greeting gestures at Adameesoksavittaya School. This method allowed for a deep understanding of the values, norms, and relationships embedded in daily interactions rituals (Creswell, 2023). Through participant observation, interviews, and document analysis, researchers gathered rich data that revealed patterns and cultural nuances. Ethnography offered a holistic perspective, capturing both visible behaviors and their deeper social meanings. Immersion in the school environment provided firsthand insight into how morning greetings reflect broader cultural dynamics (Cohen, 2018). Ultimately, this approach facilitated a comprehensive analysis of social interaction within the school's cultural context.

Ethical approval for this study was obtained from the researcher's affiliated institution. Informed consent was secured from all participants after explaining the study's aims and procedures. Given the culturally specific context of Adameesoksavittaya School in Krabi, Thailand, ethical considerations such as confidentiality, anonymity, and voluntary participation were carefully maintained throughout the research process.

Participant (Subject) Characteristics

The Adameesoksavittaya Islamic School's employees and students were used to choose the study's participants. Known for its devotion to Islamic traditions and rituals, the school is located in a culturally diverse area. Four staff members and fifty children representing a range of positions and grade levels within the school community, from kindergarten and elementary to junior high school, were involved in the

study. In order to provide a complete picture of the student body at the institution, the sample comprised people of all ages, genders and socioeconomic backgrounds. In order to capture the subtleties of morning greeting customs within an Islamic educational setting, participants were chosen based on the cultural background of the institution. Participation in the school's morning greeting routines was required to meet the inclusion criterion. The wide range of participants made it possible to thoroughly examine the sociocultural dynamics pertaining to morning greetings at Adameesoksavittaya Islamic School.

All participants involved in this study are members of the Muslim community, including both students and school staff at Adameesoksavittaya Islamic School. The school itself operates within the framework of Islamic education and caters specifically to a Muslim student population, aligning its curriculum and daily practices—including the morning greeting ritual—with Islamic principles. While the religious homogeneity of the school community may suggest a unified religious identity, it is important to note that the participants come from a wide range of ethnocultural and linguistic backgrounds, including Thai, Malay and Pattani Malay communities. This internal diversity significantly shapes the way Islamic practices and values are understood, communicated and enacted within the school environment.

Such intra-religious variation influences not only individual interpretations of Islamic teachings but also social interactions and language use. For instance, while all participants share the greeting *assalamu'alaikum*, its articulation, accompanying gestures, and the degree of emphasis placed on religious versus cultural elements often differ according to the participants' familial traditions, ethnic affiliations and regional upbringing. These subtle but meaningful differences contribute to the richness of the morning greeting ritual as a site of both religious affirmation and cultural negotiation. Recognizing this internal diversity allows for a more nuanced understanding of how Islamic identity is performed and co-constructed in daily school interactions, thereby

reinforcing the significance of exploring sociocultural dynamics even within a seemingly religiously homogeneous setting.

Nevertheless, it is important to note that since this is an ethnographic study, the social dynamics and cultural context of the school community serve as the main analytical units rather than the individual participants. The morning greeting customs are followed and examined in the context of Islamic educational practices and Thai cultural standards at Adameesoksavittaya Islamic School. Because of its devotion to Islamic customs and rich cultural variety, this location was selected since it offers an excellent setting for investigating the sociocultural dynamics surrounding morning greetings. This study attempts to acquire insights into the interpersonal dynamics and cultural importance inherent in morning greetings at Adameesoksavittaya Islamic School through immersion fieldwork and observations inside the school context.

Research Design

The study used a naturalistic observational design, meaning that morning greeting customs were watched unaltered by experimental manipulations or treatments. The researchers watched the morning greeting customs as they naturally transpired within the school community, without subjecting participants to circumstances or grouping them. A within-subject approach was used in the study, which concentrated on the interactions and behaviors of people across time in the same cultural context.

The ethnographic study of morning greetings at Adameesoksavittaya Islamic School utilized a systematic approach to collect and analyze data. This involved observational fieldwork, interviews and document analysis, aiming to gain a comprehensive understanding of the sociocultural dynamics surrounding morning greetings.

Participant observation was the primary method used, in which the researchers became fully integrated into the school community to see morning greeting customs firsthand. The researchers attended morning assemblies, classes and other social gathering places, where welcomes were given and received in the school setting with on-site observation lasting for one month. To record observed behaviors, interactions and cultural quirks pertaining to morning greetings, thorough field notes were gathered.

To learn more about their viewpoints on morning greetings, semi-structured interviews were carried out. The purpose of the interview questions was to investigate the attitudes, beliefs and experiences of the participants with relation to morning greetings, as well as their comprehension of the cultural significance and interpersonal dynamics involved. Furthermore, written resources such as rules, handbooks and other documents were examined in order to place the observed morning greeting customs within a larger institutional framework. The formalized components of morning greetings and their compliance with school standards and values were clarified by this document analysis.

In order to guarantee representation across all positions, grade levels and demographics within the school community, participants were purposefully chosen. The data saturation principle, which states that data collecting should continue until no new themes or insights from the observations and interviews emerge, was used to select the sample size. The investigation of various viewpoints and experiences about morning greetings at Adameesoksavittaya Islamic School was made possible by this iterative sampling technique.

As an ethnographic study, the measurement approach focused on qualitative data collection methods such as field notes from observational fieldwork and transcripts from interviews. These sources provided detailed descriptions of morning greeting practices and the sociocultural dynamics surrounding them. No standardized instruments were utilized,

as the focus was on capturing the nuanced meanings and experiences associated with morning greetings within the specific cultural context of the school.

Results

The results section is structured in accordance with the research questions, directing a focused investigation of the sociocultural dynamics surrounding morning greetings at Adameesoksavittaya School. Each subsection tackles various research questions, allowing for a thorough examination of the cultural values, interpersonal interactions, and community dynamics embedded in morning greetings in the school setting.

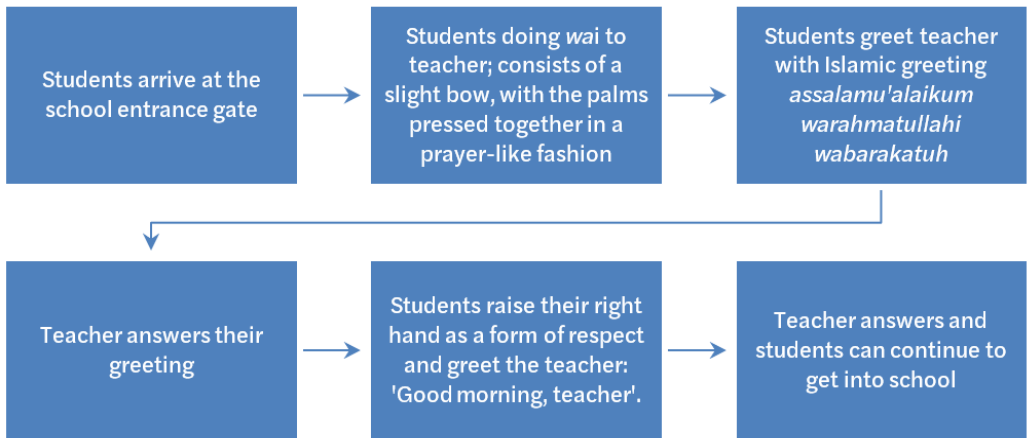### *Reflection of Cultural Values in Morning Greetings; Observations on Greeting Rituals*

During the observation phase of the study, a variety of cultural values and norms were exposed through the morning greeting rituals at Adameesoksavittaya School. The rituals observed highlighted the complex interplay of cultural traditions, social hierarchies and community cohesion in the school setting.

One notable observation was the strict adherence to protocol and respect shown during the welcoming ritual. Students and staff both engaged in courteous discussions, which were frequently accompanied by traditional Thai respect signals such as the *wai* or bow. These gestures not only represent Thai cultural values of courtesy and deference, but they also strengthen hierarchical ties within the school community. For example, pupils often greeted teachers and school officials with greater formality and courtesy than their peers, emphasizing the cultural value put on obeying authority figures.

Furthermore, the observed greeting rituals cast light on the function of collective identity and communal values in the school culture. Morning greetings acted as a unifying ritual, bringing together students and staff from various ethnic origins and instilling a sense of belonging and common identity inside the school. Through the common experience of engaging in morning greetings, children were able to connect with their peers and create a sense of solidarity based on shared cultural customs and values.

Besides, the observations demonstrated the adaptive character of cultural rituals in a multicultural educational setting. Morning greetings were based on Thai cultural customs, but they also included elements of Islamic culture, emphasizing the school's identity as an Islamic institution. For example, students and teachers exchanged greetings using Islamic greetings such as *assalamu'alaikum*, reflecting the school's dedication to incorporating Islamic ideals and practices into its daily routines. To make it easier to understand, here is the structure and flow of the morning greeting in Adameesoksavittaya School.

Figure 2: *Students performing the wai to the teacher*

The observations on morning greeting rituals revealed a diverse tapestry of cultural values, social dynamics and identity formation processes at Adameesoksavittaya School. The observed ceremonies not only showed Thailand's and Islam's cultural legacy, but also demonstrated the adaptability of cultural practices in creating tolerance and community cohesiveness in a heterogeneous educational context. These findings form the basis for a more in-depth study of the sociocultural dynamics at work in the context of morning greetings, as well as the consequences for school culture and community development.

Analysis of Interviews from a Sociocultural Perspective

In addition to the observational data, insights obtained from interviews with school staff shed light on the sociocultural processes that underpin morning greetings at Adameesoksavittaya School. The interview replies provided diverse perspectives on the importance of cultural values, educational methods and identity formation in the school community. The following are simple questions that have been asked during the interviews: "(1) How do you feel about the morning activities at Adameesoksa school (saying greetings, praying, etc.), (2) Do you think the morning activities can help students feel better about learning, and (3) What do you think about Islamic education in Thailand, compared to Islamic education in Indonesia?".

One of the interviewed teachers, who had been teaching at Adameesoksavittaya School for a year, showed enthusiasm for the morning rituals, which included greetings and prayers. When asked how she felt about these events, she reacted enthusiastically, expressing that it felt amazing to be involved in such activities at school. She said: "Doing morning activities at school makes me feel great."

This response emphasizes the importance of morning activities as essential components of the school's sociocultural fabric, fostering a sense of community belonging and shared identity among staff members.

Furthermore, the teacher emphasized the potential for morning activities to improve students' well-being and learning experiences. By recognizing the positive influence of these activities on students' emotional and cognitive engagement, the instructor emphasized the sociocultural function of morning greetings in building a supportive learning environment that promotes student achievement. The conversation shed light on the unique socio cultural background of Islamic teaching at Adameesoksavittaya School. When asked about her thoughts on Islamic education in Thailand versus Indonesia, the teacher underlined the importance of Sunnah teachings in the Thai context. She said: "In Thailand, Islamic education teaches us to follow the steps of Prophet Muhammad. I won't do anything that goes beyond that."

She explained that Islamic education in Thailand primarily concentrates on lessons taken from the steps of Prophet Muhammad's life, known as Sunnah, without adopting other rituals common in other Islamic societies such as Indonesia. She said this comment throws light on the many cultural and pedagogical approaches to Islamic education in diverse sociocultural situations, emphasizing the need of taking into account local cultural norms and values in educational activities.

While morning greetings often promote inclusion and a sense of community in schools, they can also have unintended negative effects in multicultural settings. In linguistically and religiously diverse environments, Islamic greetings like *assalamu'alaikum* may unintentionally create feelings of exclusion or reinforce social boundaries. Chao (2017) highlights this in Java, where such greetings function as both religious expressions and social signals. Non-Muslim individuals, especially Christians, may feel pressured to conform or marginalized when they abstain. This illustrates how routine linguistic practices can subtly regulate social belonging, underscoring the complex role of greetings in culturally diverse educational spaces like southern Thailand.

Religious greetings in Muslim communities are shaped by varying theological interpretations, which can affect interfaith communication. Ali (2020) notes that Islamic organizations like Muhammadiyah and Nahdlatul Ulama hold differing views on whether Muslims should exchange greetings with non-Muslims, reflecting deeper ideological divides. While such tensions may be minimal within predominantly Muslim schools like Adameesoksavittaya, they remain relevant given the religious diversity in the broader Krabi region. Acknowledging these debates adds depth to the analysis by showing how greetings, though routine, are linked to complex religious and cultural discourses, potentially serving as both inclusive and exclusionary acts.

Overall, the interview findings provide valuable insights into the sociocultural dimensions of morning greetings and Islamic education at Adameesoksavittaya School, emphasizing the impact of cultural values, community engagement and educational philosophies on the school's sociocultural landscape. These findings supplement the observational data, offering a more complete picture of the cultural relevance and socio-educational implications of morning greetings in the school setting.

Influence of Cultural Factors on Interpersonal Relationships; Variations in Greetings Based on Cultural Backgrounds

The research location, Krabi Province, Thailand, has a substantial impact on the anatomy of morning greetings at Adameesoksavittaya School. Krabi Province, with its rich cultural terrain, has a particular blend of Thai and Islamic influences, thanks to its large Muslim population. This distinct socio cultural environment impacts the character and dynamics of morning greetings, distinguishing them from those witnessed in other parts of Thailand, such as Bangkok, where Buddhism is prevalent. It is this finding that differs from the findings of previous research, instead of only examining a culture in one location, this research compares more than one culture and makes an in-depth analysis for further discourse.

In Krabi, the morning greetings at Adameesoksavittaya School demonstrate the merging of Thai and Islamic traditions. While keeping the Thai custom of showing respect through gestures like the *wai*, morning greetings also integrate Islamic aspects such as the sharing of Islamic greetings such as *assalamu'alaikum*. This fusion of cultural customs represents the school community's different religious and cultural backgrounds, promoting tolerance and appreciation for cultural diversity.

Furthermore, the prevalence of Islamic culture in Krabi Province influences the social dynamics and conventions associated with morning greetings. Unlike in Buddhist-dominated areas, the emphasis on Islamic teachings and values impacts how greetings are exchanged, emphasizing ideas of brotherhood, humility and respect rooted in Islamic culture. This cultural influence helps to foster interpersonal interactions in the school community that are marked by mutual understanding, tolerance, and acceptance.

In contrast, in Buddhist-dominated areas such as Bangkok, morning greetings may adhere to diverse cultural norms and traditions, reflecting the area's main religious and cultural customs. While pleasantries and gestures of respect may still be exchanged, the absence of Islamic influences may result in differences in the anatomy and significance of greetings compared to those in Krabi. Cultural influences, particularly the fusion of Thai and Islamic culture in Krabi Province, have a significant impact on the structure and dynamics of morning greetings at Adameesoksavittaya School. Understanding these cultural nuances is critical for grasping the sociocultural environment in which morning greetings take place, as well as developing cross-cultural understanding and peace within the school community.

Although inclusivity is often discussed in relation to ethnic, religious or linguistic diversity, it also holds critical relevance within homogeneous environments by encompassing the emotional, interpersonal and psychological dimensions of belonging. In the context of

Adameesoksavittaya Islamic School, where all students and staff are Muslim, inclusivity refers not to interfaith tolerance but to the cultivation of a school climate that affirms each individual's identity, encourages respectful interaction across cultural subgroups, and minimizes social exclusion. Morning greetings play a central role in fostering this environment by offering consistent, low-stakes opportunities for positive social engagement between students and teachers. As Walton and Cohen (2011) suggest, seemingly minor social cues—such as being greeted or acknowledged—can significantly influence individuals' sense of belonging and perceived acceptance within institutional settings. In this study, an inclusive school atmosphere is thus defined as one in which students feel recognized, respected and socially integrated through daily communicative rituals that reinforce mutual care and community membership.

Inclusivity within Adameesoksavittaya Islamic School also entails acknowledging and integrating the diverse cultural expressions of Islam practiced by its ethnically varied student body. Despite a shared religious affiliation, students and teachers differ in their linguistic backgrounds, regional customs and interpretations of Islamic etiquette—differences that, if unaddressed, could generate feelings of marginalization or cultural hierarchy (Memon & Alhashmi, 2018). The structured morning greeting ritual provides a culturally neutral yet religiously resonant platform that allows these differences to coexist under a unifying practice. As Booth (2013) explains in her study of inclusive practices in Islamic schools, inclusivity is not solely about religious pluralism but also involves fostering respect for intra-religious diversity and ensuring that institutional practices accommodate various interpretations of shared values. By encouraging daily participation in greetings that emphasize respect and unity, the school promotes a form of cultural inclusivity that affirms students' varied identities while reinforcing a collective sense of religious and communal belonging.

Impact of Greetings on School Community Dynamics

The observation and interview procedure demonstrated that morning greetings have a substantial impact on the dynamics of the Adameesoksavittaya School community. Both students and teachers reported that using morning greetings improves their mood and establishes a welcome tone for the day ahead. This communal experience of starting the day on a positive note develops a sense of excitement, camaraderie and belonging among members of the school community.

Observations revealed that the morning greeting routine acts as a significant social lubricant, facilitating interactions and interpersonal bonds between students and teachers. The exchange of pleasantries allows people to acknowledge each other's presence, show mutual respect, and establish social relationships. Through this shared ritual, students and teachers develop rapport, trust and a sense of solidarity, resulting in a helpful and welcoming learning environment.

Interviews with teachers confirmed similar findings, with many emphasizing the good effect of morning greetings on school community dynamics. Teachers underlined that partaking in morning greetings not only improves the moods of children and teachers, but also develops a sense of solidarity and teamwork among school community members. Morning greetings set a cheerful tone that lasts throughout the day, improving the overall learning experience for everyone engaged.

Furthermore, the interview replies emphasized the importance of morning greetings in establishing the link between students and teachers throughout the learning process. Teachers stated that morning greetings foster a sense of connection and mutual respect, which promotes an environment suitable to teaching and learning. Students feel respected, supported and driven to actively participate in classroom activities, resulting in a positive cycle of engagement and achievement.

In conclusion, observations and interviews show that morning greetings have a significant impact on school community dynamics at

Adameesoksavittaya School. Morning greetings help to create a friendly and inclusive school atmosphere that encourages learning and personal growth by establishing a happy mood, social cohesion and interpersonal interactions. Recognizing the importance of morning greetings in building school culture and community dynamics is critical for educators and stakeholders who want to foster a healthy and supportive educational environment.

Discussion

The discussion section serves as a platform to interpret and contextualize the results obtained from the study on morning greetings at Adameesoksavittaya School, Krabi, Thailand. Through an examination of the cultural significance of morning greetings and their influence on interpersonal relationships, this discussion aims to elucidate the implications of the findings and provide insights into the broader socio cultural landscape of the school community.

Cultural Significance of Morning Greetings

Morning greetings serve as cultural touchstones, encapsulating the unique fabric of traditions, values and beliefs that make up the Adameesoksavittaya School community. Morning greetings play an important function in imparting cultural values and developing a sense of group identity among students and teachers.

Morning greetings at Adameesoksavittaya School are rich in cultural symbolism, reflecting both Thai and Islamic traditions. The combination of traditional Thai gestures like the *wai* and Islamic greetings like *assalamu'alaikum* represents a peaceful synthesis of cultural traditions. Through these rituals, students and teachers actively participate in the perpetuation of cultural norms, emphasizing the value of respect, humility and communal peace in the educational setting. This is in line with some

previous research that has been mentioned in the introduction (Benharoon, 2013; Kusmiatun & Liliani, 2020). Furthermore, morning greetings serve as vehicles for transmitting cultural wisdom and lessons, such as the importance of Sunnah in Islamic education, increasing students' understanding of their cultural legacy.

According to Kasa (2021), Thai speakers express care and goodwill through linguistic strategies in greetings by using heartfelt expressions, questions and statements to convey concern, care, goodwill and surprise towards the listener. This reflects the speaker's caring heart towards the listener's life in various aspects such as eating, well-being, health, actions, appearances, clothes, traveling and work (Kasa, 2021). This finding is also in line with this research, since morning greetings have cultural importance beyond simply ritualistic gestures; they profoundly impact the school climate and contribute to the development of a healthy learning environment.

Morning greetings in Adameesoksavittaya school, which begin the day with displays of mutual respect and friendship, set an inclusive and warm tone that pervades the entire school community. These collective interactions build a sense of belonging and unity, boosting social cohesion and emotional well-being for both students and teachers. Morning greetings foster a perceptible sense of community, creating a supportive environment in which people feel appreciated, accepted and empowered to succeed academically and personally (Bruce et al., 2006). Thus, morning greetings emerge as a potent method for cultivating cultural pride, fostering interpersonal ties, and creating an environment conducive to holistic growth and development, not only within Adameesoksavittaya School but in educational institutions in general.

Influence of Cultural Factors on Interpersonal Relationships

The study's results revealed the tremendous impact of cultural influences on interpersonal connections within the Adameesoksavittaya

School community. Morning greetings arose as a key tool for navigating cultural variety, building meaningful connections and encouraging cross-cultural understanding among students and teachers.

The observed variations in morning greetings based on cultural origins are consistent with the initial aims mentioned in the introduction, underlining the importance of cultural elements in creating interpersonal dynamics in educational contexts. The incorporation of Thai and Islamic cultural aspects into morning greetings emphasizes the cultural diversity inherent in the school community, as well as the significance of creating inclusive environments that honor and respect many cultural traditions.

According to scientific interpretation of the findings, morning greetings are more than just social rituals; they are strong tools for developing intercultural discussion and cultivating empathy and respect among people from various cultural backgrounds. Students and teachers actively participate in cross-cultural encounters that transcend linguistic and religious barriers by greeting one another in the morning with a synthesis of Thai and Islamic cultural values. This fosters a sense of belonging and unity, enhancing interpersonal relationships and building social cohesiveness within the school community.

The findings of this study are also consistent with earlier studies indicating that cultural integration improves interpersonal connections in educational settings. According to research, inclusive environments that value cultural diversity develop a sense of belonging and positive intergroup relations (Kroismayr, 2021). However, the Adameesoksavittaya School's distinct socio cultural environment adds subtlety to these findings, stressing the significance of contextual elements in creating interpersonal interactions within various cultural contexts. The findings highlight the critical significance of cultural influences in shaping interpersonal connections in the school community. Morning greetings facilitate cultural integration by fostering empathy, respect and mutual understanding among students and instructors. These findings add to a

growing body of research emphasizing the significance of creating inclusive environments that celebrate cultural variety and promote pleasant social interactions in educational settings.

Practical Implications and Recommendations

This study reinforces the idea that morning greetings play a key role in fostering cultural awareness and positive interpersonal relationships within the school. Reflecting both Thai and Islamic traditions, greetings at Adameesoksavittaya School serve as tools for cultural transmission and enhancing empathy. Aligned with Powell et al. (2014), who identified multiple functions of the *wai* greeting, the findings show similar cultural significance. While rigorous data collection and triangulation reduced bias, subjective interpretations and individual perceptions may still affect results. Although focused on a specific context, the study indicates that morning greetings moderately to strongly influence cultural integration and social cohesion in educational environments.

It is important to understand that while the study provides useful insights, its limitations include the cultural context's distinctiveness and the possibility of social desirability bias in interview responses. Alternative explanations for reported outcomes, such as individual differences in cultural sensitivity or past intercultural experience, should also be considered. Thus, the findings of this study may be applicable to other multicultural school contexts where morning greetings are cultural customs. However, it is important to be cautious when extrapolating findings to contexts with distinct cultural components or educational procedures.

Finally, the findings highlight the importance of morning greetings in developing cultural awareness and building strong interpersonal interactions in educational settings. Schools that embrace cultural variety and promote cross-cultural empathy can establish inclusive environments

that assist students' overall development and contribute to the promotion of broader societal goals of intercultural harmony and social cohesion.

Conclusion

This study explores the sociocultural dynamics embedded in the morning greeting ritual at Adameesoksavittaya Islamic School in Krabi, Thailand. Situated within a Muslim-only educational context, the research reveals that despite religious homogeneity, the school community exhibits rich intra-religious diversity rooted in ethnicity, language and regional traditions. The daily practice of exchanging *assalamu'alaikum* emerges not merely as a religious formality, but as a dynamic communicative act that fosters affective connection, reinforces interpersonal respect, and cultivates a sense of collective belonging among students and teachers. The findings underscore the critical role of routine language rituals in shaping inclusive school climates, where inclusivity is understood not as tolerance across religious differences, but as recognition and affirmation of intra-group variation and individual identities.

This study contributes to broader academic debates on language, ritual and social cohesion by extending the lens beyond interreligious and multicultural contexts. While much of the existing literature focuses on how greetings can create friction or facilitate understanding across divergent belief systems (e.g., Chao, 2017; Ali, 2020), this research demonstrates that similar dynamics of negotiation, inclusion and identity construction occur within seemingly homogenous religious environments. It challenges reductive understandings of 'Muslim identity' as monolithic and highlights the importance of micro-level communicative practices in managing social diversity within Islamic schooling. Furthermore, it advances theoretical discussions by suggesting that morning greetings function as everyday acts of 'cultural bridging' and psychological safety, resonating with Vygotskian perspectives on the mediational role of social interaction in identity and community development.

Given the findings, it is recommended that future researchers further explore greeting rituals in other mono-faith but culturally diverse educational settings, especially across different regions of Southeast Asia. Comparative studies involving different Islamic schools—or even across religious traditions—may uncover additional layers of meaning in how greetings operate as tools of inclusion, exclusion and power. Additionally, longitudinal or ethnographic studies could enrich the understanding of how these practices evolve over time and are negotiated by students as they navigate adolescence, religious learning and identity formation. Exploring students' perceptions directly, particularly through participatory methods, would also deepen insights into how ritual language is internalized and experienced across generational lines.

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