

# THE IMPACT OF MUSLIM FOOTBALL PLAYERS ON THE DISSEMINATION OF ISLAMIC VALUES IN ARAB SOCIETIES

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**Abstract:** *Football is considered one of the most popular and influential sports in the Arab world, playing a significant role in shaping the cultural and social identity of communities. This study addresses the research problem of how Muslim football players influence the dissemination of Islamic values and enhance cultural and religious identity within Arab societies. The primary objective of this research is to analyze the role of Muslim football players in promoting Islamic values such as honesty, integrity, humility, and commitment to prayer and fasting, and how this commitment can contribute to building a more cohesive and stable society. This role is underscored by the impactful presence of these players in inspiring Muslim youth and reinforcing cultural and religious identity by serving as role models both on and off the field. The research also discusses the importance of dialogue and constructive interaction between players and fans in improving mutual understanding of Islamic values and promoting peaceful coexistence among various social groups. The study will rely on case studies and analysis of the behaviors of Muslim players through a review of relevant literature, as well as conducting interviews with players and fans, and examining the impact of commitment to Islamic values on their interactions with the community and the audience. Analytical methods will also be employed to assess the impact of these practices on enhancing the public image of Islam and Muslims in Arab societies. This research aims to demonstrate how the commitment of Muslim football players to religious values directly affects the proliferation of these values within society, contributes to enhancing understanding among different cultural and religious groups, thereby fostering peaceful coexistence. The research includes proposing a practical model that can be replicated in other sports and social fields, in addition to improving the public perception of Muslim players and raising awareness of the importance of adhering to religious and ethical values in achieving professional and personal success. Furthermore, the study aims to promote a deeper understanding of the role that Muslim athletes play in building communities and enhancing cultural understanding.*

**Keywords:** *Muslim football players, Islamic values, Peaceful coexistence*

## Introduction

Muslim football players play a prominent role in promoting cultural and religious identity in their communities by representing Islamic values and principles in the field of sports. These players, whether professional or amateur, become role models for the fans and especially for the young people who aspire to them. One of the ways Muslim players enhance cultural identity is by showing their commitment to Islamic teachings in their daily and professional life, for example, their commitment to performing the five prayers at their times, even during tournaments and matches, sends a strong message about the importance of religion in their lives, this behavior shows their commitment to Islamic values and enhances the importance of religious identity among fans and society.

Muslim players reflect the values of tolerance and respect through their interaction with colleagues from different cultural and religious backgrounds, this positive interaction enhances cultural understanding and contributes to building a diverse and multicultural society. Ahmed's study (2011) confirms that Muslim players show a high commitment to cultural and religious values, which strengthens their position as role models for Muslim youth. Muslim players also participate in community and charitable activities that contribute to the strengthening of cultural and religious identity, by organizing or participating in events such as the distribution of aid to the poor and needy, these players provide a practical model for the application of Islamic values such as giving and solidarity, these activities are not limited to Muslim communities only, but also include non-Muslim communities, enhancing the understanding and appreciation of Islamic values more broadly.

Despite the growing interest in the role of sports in shaping cultural and social values, there remains a clear research gap regarding how Muslim football players contribute to the dissemination of Islamic values within Arab societies. Previous studies have mostly focused on the influence of religion on athletes' behavior in general, or on the role of Muslim players in non-Muslim societies, while insufficiently addressing their impact in their native environment, where football has significant social and cultural significance in the Arab world. There is also a lack of studies that in-depth analyze how these players interact with the public and promote values such as honesty, humility, and social responsibility, as well as the impact their religious commitment has on society's perception of them and on encouraging peaceful coexistence between different groups. Accordingly, this study seeks to fill this gap by analyzing the role Muslim football players play in disseminating Islamic values and strengthening cultural and religious identity in Arab societies, while providing a practical model that can be applied in other sports and social fields to maximize the positive impact Muslim athletes have on their communities.

The main objective of the study is to analyze the role played by Muslim football players in spreading Islamic values and strengthening cultural and religious identity in Arab societies, by exploring the impact of their commitment to Islamic values such as honesty, humility, and social responsibility on their interaction with the public and promoting peaceful coexistence among different groups.

## Methodology

This study adopts a qualitative research methodology that relies on content analysis of multiple sources, including previous studies, and analyzing the behaviors of Muslim football players through media materials, such as published interviews, press coverage, and digital content, in

addition to analyzing their discourses and actions in sporting and social contexts. The focus will be on specific case studies of prominent players from the Arab world, drawing on a theoretical framework that links Islamic values to the societal influence of athletes. Media content will also be analyzed to understand how Muslim players are presented as symbols of religious values and their impact on the cultural and social landscape in Arab societies. The analysis relies on deconstructing recurring patterns in media discourse and player behavior, linking them to cultural and social theories that explain the dissemination of values through sports. This methodology contributes to a deeper understanding of the role of Muslim football players in promoting Islamic identity, without relying on direct data collection tools such as interviews or questionnaires, making it an analytical approach that relies on available sources and existing texts.

### Literature Review

There are five points that will be discussed in the literature review. First, the role of dialogue in enhancing cultural and religious understanding will be examined, highlighting how it helps dispel stereotypes and fosters mutual respect. Second, the contribution of Muslim players in building bridges of understanding will be explored, focusing on their interactions with fans and participation in community activities. Third, the impact of educational and training programs in promoting cultural and religious awareness will be analyzed. Fourth, the significance of positive interaction between players and audiences in fostering peaceful coexistence will be discussed. Finally, specific examples, such as the Albanian experience, will be presented to illustrate how Muslim athletes influence societal perceptions of Islamic masculinity and challenge negative stereotypes.

In the Western context, Muslim athletes are often viewed from a dual identity perspective, with their athletic performance evaluated alongside their religious commitments. This sometimes leads to their portrayal as either positive models reflecting values of discipline and commitment, or as problematic cases when their religious practices conflict with prevailing sporting norms. For example, Muslim athletes' commitment to fasting during Ramadan has sparked widespread debate in Western sports circles, with the debate centering on its impact on physical performance. According to Western studies (e.g., Cleland & Cashmore, 2016), Muslim athletes are sometimes portrayed as symbols of cultural integration, but at other times, they are treated as the different "other," especially during times of political or social crises that affect perceptions of Muslims in the West.

In contrast, in the Arab context, Muslim athletes, particularly football players, are viewed as ambassadors of Islamic culture, with their religious commitment celebrated as an integral part of their professional and personal success. Arab media outlets focus on their roles in spreading Islamic values and promoting morality in sports and society, reflecting a more harmonious view of religion and sports than the Western perspective. Arab media showcase Muslim players as role models for youth, emphasizing their charitable contributions and ethical stances on and off the field. Ahmed (2011) study highlights Muslim players as an inspiration to youth through their commitment to values of honesty, humility, and giving.

This comparison reveals a clear contrast between Western and Arab perceptions of Muslim athletes. While the Arab context emphasizes moral and religious aspects as a positive factor that strengthens the identity of the Muslim athlete, the Western context often views religion as an additional factor that can lead to challenges or misunderstandings, especially in sporting

environments dominated by secular values. This contrast reflects differences in the cultural and political backgrounds that influence the way Muslim athletes are represented in the public sphere, making it necessary to analyze how these perceptions affect the players themselves and the image of Islam in the global sports arena.

## **Dialogue as a tool to improve mental image**

### **The Importance of Dialogue in Enhancing Cultural and Religious Understanding**

Dialogue is one of the essential tools for improving cultural and religious understanding between Muslim players and audiences. Through constructive dialogue, these players can present a positive image of Islam and foster understanding between different cultures and religions. Dialogue helps dispel negative stereotypes and promotes mutual respect among individuals from diverse backgrounds. According to Ahmad (2023), dialogue plays a pivotal role in improving the perception of Muslims in non-Muslim societies and can have the same effect in Arab societies.

In addition, intercultural dialogue is an essential tool for promoting mutual understanding and peaceful coexistence among different peoples. According to the United Nations, intercultural dialogue requires an exchange of ideas and differences with a view to developing a deep understanding of different perceptions, thus promoting social cohesion and contributing to the creation of an enabling environment for sustainable development. Through this dialogue, negative stereotypes can be corrected and mutual respect promoted among individuals from diverse backgrounds. For Muslim players, they can use this tool to present a positive image of Islam and promote understanding between different cultures and religions. (Khalid & Lopez, 2023)

### **The Role of Muslim Players in Building Bridges of Understanding**

Through open and honest interaction with fans, Muslim players can explain their values and beliefs, contributing to building bridges of understanding and mutual respect. Ahmad (2023) suggests that constructive dialogue with the public and participation in community activities can lead to a better understanding of Islamic values and promote peaceful coexistence. The importance of dialogue is evident in various settings, such as press conferences, interviews, and public meetings, where Muslim players can share their personal experiences and explain how they adhere to Islamic values. These opportunities allow them to present a realistic picture of Islam and Muslims, fostering better mutual understanding.

### **Participation in Educational and Training Programs**

Additionally, Muslim players can take part in educational and training programs aimed at promoting cultural and religious understanding. Through these programs, they can conduct workshops and lectures on Islamic values and cultural awareness, helping to spread knowledge and appreciation of cultural and religious diversity. Positive interaction between players and fans significantly impacts peaceful coexistence, as demonstrating Islamic values such as tolerance, respect, and justice contributes to building more cohesive and stable societies.

A study (Insaf et al., 2024) showed that redesigning and evaluating a public education course to enhance students' knowledge of tolerance and respect for diversity, based on Islamic values in the United Arab Emirates, enhanced students' understanding of these concepts and their

application in their lives. The results suggest that an educational process based on Islamic principles can be a means of socializing and shaping human life, through caring for others, showing compassion and sharing knowledge, as essential elements for promoting TDS.

### **The Impact of Positive Interaction on Peaceful Coexistence**

Ahmed's (2023) study suggests that dialogue and positive interaction can significantly contribute to improving the perception of Muslims and fostering peaceful coexistence. By actively engaging in community activities and positively interacting with fans, Muslim players can demonstrate their commitment to Islamic values and help strengthen mutual understanding and respect among different social groups. They can also participate in humanitarian and charitable initiatives aimed at improving living conditions for individuals and communities. Through these efforts, they exemplify Islamic values in action and interact with people from diverse backgrounds, promoting peaceful coexistence and social solidarity.

Muslim players can contribute to promoting peaceful coexistence by participating in cultural and educational initiatives aimed at spreading the values of tolerance and understanding among different cultures. By organizing workshops and lectures that highlight Islamic values that call for peace and mutual respect, they can promote awareness of the importance of coexistence and peace. A study (Al-Hamadi, 2024) indicates that cultural actions, such as holding joint events and providing platforms for open dialogue, contribute significantly to the peaceful coexistence of different groups. This study shows that such initiatives promote mutual understanding and respect, leading to more stable and secure societies.

### **Notable Examples and Their Influence on Public Perception**

The Albanian experience is a striking example of how Muslim football players influence societal perceptions of Islamic masculinity. Albanian Muslim players have demonstrated how one can adhere to religious and moral values while maintaining outstanding sports performance. Ferzai's (n.d.) study highlights how these players shape societal perceptions of Islamic masculinity by presenting a positive image of religious and moral commitment. Their influence is evident in their respectful treatment of colleagues and fans, reinforcing the public's understanding of masculinity in Islam as encompassing both moral integrity and religious devotion. Through their on-field performance and off-field behavior, these players illustrate that masculinity is not solely about physical strength or athletic success but also about ethical conduct and adherence to values. Additionally, they contribute to changing negative stereotypes about Muslims in non-Muslim societies by providing a real-life example of balancing religious and professional life. This experience fosters mutual understanding and strengthens respect between different cultures and religions.

### **Specific models and effects**

The Albanian experience is one of the notable examples that highlights the influence of Muslim football players on society's perceptions about Islamic masculinity. Muslim Albanian players provided a clear example of how to adhere to religious and moral values, while maintaining outstanding sports performance. Ferzai's study (n.d.) She points out how these players influence society's perceptions of Islamic masculinity by presenting a positive image of religious and moral commitment. The influence of these players is manifested in how they treat their colleagues and fans, showing great respect for Islamic traditions and values. This behavior enhances the public's understanding of the meaning of masculinity in Islam, which includes a commitment to morality and religious values. Through their performance on the court and their behavior outside it, Muslim Albanian players show that masculinity means not only physical



strength or athletic performance, but also includes adherence to morals and values. In addition, these players contribute to changing the negative stereotype about Muslims in non-Muslim societies, providing a vivid example of how to balance religious and professional life. This experience contributes to improving mutual understanding and strengthening mutual respect between different cultures and religions.

### **The Impact of Arab Players on Understanding and Coexistence in Britain**

The case of Arab players in the English Premier League and the British national football team provides another example of how Muslim players can be influential in promoting understanding and coexistence in multicultural societies. Cleland & Cashmore's (2016) study sheds light on how Arab minorities are welcomed into national sports teams and the impact this has on understanding and coexistence between different groups within British society. In this context, the Arab players are facing great challenges due to the political and social situation in Britain, where Cultural and religious identity issues are part of the public debates. However, these players show an ability to positively interact and peacefully coexist with their colleagues and fans from different cultural and religious backgrounds. They not only reflect their outstanding sports skills, but also serve as a role model of coexistence and mutual respect in a sometimes tense environment. Through their participation in the national teams and the Premier League, Arab players contribute to breaking down cultural and religious barriers, Promoting Understanding between different communities in Britain. This participation offers an opportunity to change stereotypes and promote mutual respect between different groups. Cleland & Cashmore (2016) point out that the interaction of Arab players with their colleagues and fans contributes to reducing tensions and promoting understanding and peaceful coexistence. In addition, Arab players in British sports teams can play an important role in transmitting the values of tolerance and mutual respect to the new generation of players and fans. Through their commitment to Islamic values and outstanding performance, these players provide a role model for young people, and contribute to building a more cohesive and stable society in Britain.

### **Islamic values in social entrepreneurship**

Islamic values play a pivotal role in shaping social and humanitarian entrepreneurship initiatives. Muslim football players can set an example in this context by adopting and applying these values in their off-field activities. They include core Islamic values such as giving, solidarity, and social justice, and these values can be reflected in their social initiatives. According to the study of Iksan and Jamaluddin (2022), Islamic values can be applied in social entrepreneurship by focusing on activities that enhance the well-being of society and provide support to needy groups. For example, Muslim players can participate in the creation of charitable foundations aimed at providing financial, educational and health assistance to poor communities. These institutions can work to promote social justice by offering equal opportunities to all and achieving sustainable development. In addition, Muslim players can organize awareness campaigns aimed at spreading awareness about important social and environmental issues. Through these campaigns, they can encourage the masses to actively participate in the improvement of society and the preservation of the environment. These activities reflect Islamic values in caring for creation and achieving good for all.

According to Rehan et al., (2019), Islamic values and practices play a significant role in shaping entrepreneurial intentions within Islamic communities. These values encourage ethical business practices, social responsibility, and the pursuit of economic activities that benefit

society as a whole. The study highlights that principles such as honesty, fairness, and concern for social welfare influence the way entrepreneurs in Islamic contexts approach their business ventures. For instance, Muslim entrepreneurs, including football players engaged in social entrepreneurship, are more likely to establish initiatives that align with these ethical and moral guidelines.

### **The Impact of Players' Charity Work on Society**

Muslim football players play an important role in supporting society through their participation in charitable activities and humanitarian initiatives. Such participations not only strengthen their image as athletes committed to moral values, but also contribute to improving the living conditions of needy groups and strengthening social cohesion.

The study of Iksan & Jamaluddin (2022) showed that Muslim players who participate in charitable activities reflect a strong commitment to Islamic values such as zakat and charity, which enhances the collective spirit and solidarity in society.

By providing financial and moral support to orphans, the needy, and communities affected by disasters, these players provide a vivid example of the application of Islamic values in practical life.

The impact of these posts extends to improving relations between players and their fans, as fans see in these players good role models worthy of respect and recognition. This promotes positive interaction between players and the community, which contributes to building more cohesive and stable relationships. In addition, Muslim players can use their fame and influence to influence public policies related to social and humanitarian issues.

By participating in campaigns aimed at achieving positive change, they can push governments and institutions to take concrete steps to improve living conditions and promote social justice. It can be said that the application of Islamic values in social entrepreneurship and the role of Muslim players in supporting society through charitable activities and humanitarian initiatives contribute significantly to enhancing social cohesion and achieving sustainable development. Through these efforts, players can make a positive impact that extends to all segments of society, reinforcing the values of justice, solidarity and social solidarity.

### **Sports professionalism and moral values**

Professionalism in sports involves not only physical performance, but also adherence to moral and behavioral values. Professional Muslim players are vivid examples of how to balance religious commitment with high Sports Performance.

Adherence to ethical values, such as honesty, honesty, and humility, is an integral part of their daily lives, both on and off the court. Players who demonstrate high moral behavior positively reflect Islamic values, which enhances their image as a good role model. This commitment to ethical values not only enhances their personal reputation, but also contributes to improving the image of Islam and Muslims in sports circles and the communities with which they interact. Ahmed's (2011) study shows that Muslim players show a great commitment to religious and moral values, which strengthens their position as role models for Muslim youth.

Professionalism requires players to adhere to the highest standards of ethical behavior at all times. This includes their commitment to fairness in the game, respect for competitors, dealing with sportsmanship even in difficult situations. Players who adhere to these values contribute to the promotion of sportsmanship and provide a role model for the next generation of athletes. According to Aljassar et al. (2023), professionalism in sports administration plays a crucial role in ensuring the effective management and ethical governance of sports organizations. The study emphasizes that professionalism is not limited to technical and managerial competencies but also includes adherence to ethical principles, transparency, and social responsibility. In the context of Muslim athletes, professionalism extends beyond performance on the field to how they conduct themselves in their interactions with fans, sponsors, and media. By embodying Islamic values such as integrity, fairness, and respect, Muslim players contribute to a positive sporting environment and reinforce the importance of ethical conduct in the industry. Additionally, professional sports administration that integrates cultural and religious awareness can help create more inclusive policies, ensuring that Muslim athletes have opportunities to balance their professional careers with their religious commitments. This approach fosters a more supportive and equitable sports ecosystem, benefiting both athletes and the broader community.

### **The Influence of Professional Players on Youth Adherence to Islamic Values**

Professional players play a big role in guiding young people towards adherence to Islamic values, by providing a role model in religious and moral commitment. Young people who look up to these players see in them good role models and draw inspiration from them to adopt the same values and principles. Ahmed's study (2011) suggests that the religious and moral commitment of Muslim players can have a significant impact on fans, especially young people, as it encourages them to appreciate the importance of religious and moral values in their daily lives. This influence extends to encouraging young people to exercise in a way that enhances their physical and psychological health, while adhering to Islamic values.

Professional players can also participate in educational and awareness programs aimed at guiding young people towards adherence to ethical and Islamic values. Through these programs, they can offer workshops and lectures on the importance of adhering to ethical values in sports and everyday life, helping to build a new generation of young people committed to Islamic values. In addition, Muslim players can play a role in promoting cultural and religious understanding among young people through direct interaction with them in sports and social activities. This type of interaction can contribute to building positive relationships and strengthening mutual understanding and respect between young people of different cultural and religious backgrounds. Sports professionalism and adherence to moral values are an integral part of the life of professional Muslim players. By providing a role model in religious and moral commitment, these players can contribute to guiding young people towards adopting the same values and principles, thus enhancing social cohesion and mutual understanding in societies.

### **Islamic values in sports media**

Sports media plays an important role in shaping the public image of Muslim players and conveying their values to the wide public. How these players are presented in the media can have a significant impact on the dissemination of Islamic values and the promotion of mutual understanding between different cultures. Sports media that focus on the sporting and moral



successes of Muslim players can contribute to presenting a positive image of Islam and Muslims. By highlighting the commitment of players to religious and moral values, the media can enhance the public's appreciation of these values. According to Ahmed's (2011) study, it shows that the media can play a big role in presenting Muslim players as role models, enhancing understanding and appreciation of Islamic values in society. The sports media can also highlight the charitable and social activities carried out by Muslim players. This coverage enhances the image of the players as individuals who adhere to Islamic values such as giving and solidarity, which contributes to the wider dissemination of these values. For example, covering the participation of players in charitable and humanitarian initiatives highlights the humanitarian and religious side of their lives, enhancing their positive impact on society.

According to Hafiar et al. (2024), the interconnection between religiosity and sports communication on social media significantly influences how Muslim athletes engage with their audiences. The study highlights that Muslim athletes use digital platforms not only to share their professional achievements but also to express their religious identity and values. By incorporating Islamic teachings into their online presence, they foster a sense of community and strengthen their influence on social and cultural discussions. This digital engagement allows athletes to promote positive behaviors, such as discipline, respect, and humility—values deeply rooted in Islam. Additionally, their interactions on social media contribute to shaping public perceptions of Islam by demonstrating how faith and sports can coexist harmoniously. Through this medium, Muslim athletes also participate in awareness campaigns, charity initiatives, and discussions on ethical sportsmanship, reinforcing the broader impact of religiosity in modern sports culture.

### **The role of sports media in promoting Islamic values and changing stereotypes**

Sports media is not just a means of presenting sports news, it can be a powerful tool for spreading values and promoting cultural understanding. Sports media can play a vital role in changing negative stereotypes about Muslims by presenting success stories of Muslim players who adhere to Islamic values and achieve outstanding achievements. Ahmed's (2011) study suggests that the media can be an effective tool in changing stereotypes and promoting positive values. By presenting success stories and highlighting the religious and moral commitment of Muslim players, the media can contribute to improving the public image of Islam and Muslims in sports circles and various communities. Sports media can also organize programs and dialogues focusing on the role of sports in promoting moral and religious values. From these programs, viewers can get acquainted with Islamic values and their importance in the life of athletes. This type of coverage can enhance cultural and religious understanding and encourage peaceful coexistence between different groups in society. Moreover, sports media can use their platforms to offer educational and awareness-raising initiatives aimed at promoting Islamic values among young people. By collaborating with Muslim players, workshops and educational programs can be organized that focus on moral and religious values and the importance of sport in promoting these values. The sports media plays a pivotal role in presenting Muslim players as role models and in spreading Islamic values. By covering the sporting successes and the moral commitment of the players, the media can contribute to changing stereotypes and promoting cultural and religious understanding in societies.

## Conclusion

Muslim football players play a vital role in spreading Islamic values in Arab societies through their daily interaction and ethical behavior on and off the pitch. These players contribute to the strengthening of cultural and religious identity by adhering to Islamic values such as prayer, fasting, humility and honesty. Muslim players provide vivid examples of the practical application of these values, strengthening the respect and appreciation of the masses for them and encouraging young people to follow the same approach. The sports media plays an important role in presenting a positive image of Muslim players and highlighting their humanitarian and charitable activities. This media coverage enhances cultural and religious understanding and helps change stereotypes

This contributes to the promotion of peaceful coexistence and mutual understanding in diverse societies. Various experiences are shown, such as the influence of Muslim Albanian players on society's perceptions of Islamic masculinity, and how Muslim players can be a bridge to promote understanding and coexistence between different groups in society. By adhering to Islamic values and participating in humanitarian initiatives, these players can contribute to improving the living conditions of needy groups and strengthening social cohesion. This study emphasizes the importance of adherence to moral values in the lives of professional players and their great role in guiding young people towards adherence to Islamic values. Muslim actors can play a leading role in building a more cohesive and stable society by providing a role model in religious and moral commitment.

Thus, it can be said that Muslim football players play a pivotal role in spreading Islamic values and promoting cultural and religious understanding in Arab societies. Through their continuous efforts and positive interaction with the community, these players can leave a positive impact that will last for a long time and contribute to building more cohesive and stable communities.

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