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**Assessing Attitude toward Interreligious
Harmony among Muslim Students in Malaysian
Secondary Schools**

by

Samsuddin bin Abd Hamid

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the
requirements for the degree of
PhD in Education

Centre for Education Studies,
The University of Warwick.

August 2020

Contents

List of figures	vi
List of tables	vi
Acknowledgement.....	viii
Declaration	x
Abstract.....	xi
Chapter 1	1
Introduction	1
1.1. Research context.....	2
1.2. Research problem	5
1.3. Research questions	7
1.4. Aim and rationale of the study	8
1.5. A brief explanation of terminology.....	10
1.6. Methodological approach.....	11
1.7. Research contributions	11
1.8. The personal and professional context of the study	13
1.9. Organization of the thesis	17
Chapter 2.....	20
Historical background: Cultural and religious diversity in Malaysian society and the development of Islamic Education in Malaysia	20
2.1. Introduction	20
2.2. The context of the Malaysian society	21
2.3. The historical emergence of Islam in Malaysia	28
2.3.1. Historical perspective on the expansion of Islam in Malaysia.....	28
2.3.2. The significance of knowledge and education for Muslim	33
2.4. Religious diversity and education policies in Malaysia	35
2.4.1. Social integration in the Malaysian educational systems.....	36
2.4.2. The Islamic Education system for young Muslims in Malaysia	40
2.4.3. Impact of educational systems to the multicultural and multi-religious society.....	44
2.5. An Islamic perspective on the value of interreligious harmony	48
2.6. Conclusion	51

Chapter 3	53
A critical review of literature exploring religious diversity in modern Malaysia	53
3.1. Introduction	53
3.2. Social identity emphasized in sociological and psychological studies on the wider theme of integration among Malaysian society.	54
3.3. Social psychological research paradigm in examining the interreligious relationship	58
3.4. The research approach in Islamic theology literature on religious diversity.	61
3.5. An empirical study on attitudes within the wider context of social diversity in the educational research approach	64
3.6. Conclusion	66
Chapter 4	69
Methodology	69
4.1. Introduction	69
4.2. Methodological approach	70
4.3. Research questions	71
4.4. Aim of the study	72
4.5. Operational definitions of the central concepts of the inquiry	75
4.5.1. Attitude	75
4.5.2. Interreligious harmony	78
a. The concept of harmony	79
b. The concept of interreligious harmony	81
4.6. Data collection	85
4.6.1. The survey	85
4.7. Procedure and ethical conduct	88
4.7.1. Research setting	89
4.7.2. Participants	90
4.8. Pilot study	91
4.8.1. Procedure	92
4.8.2. Results and discussion of pilot test	93
4.9. Conclusion	96

Chapter 5	97
Data Analysis 1: Attitude toward Islam among Muslim students in Malaysian secondary schools	97
5.1. Introduction	97
5.2. Empirical research measuring Muslims' religiosity and attitude toward Islam...	98
5.2.1. The available scales measuring various dimensions of religiosity	98
5.2.2. The development of the Sahin-Francis Scale of Attitude toward Islam ...	103
5.2.3. The reliability and validity of the Sahin-Francis Scale of Attitude toward Islam	105
5.3. Aims and hypotheses	108
5.4. Methods	109
5.4.1. Translation and back-translation procedure.....	109
5.4.2. Measures	112
5.4.3. Sample.....	113
5.5. Results	116
5.5.1. Profiles of identity preferences and religious practice among the sample	116
5.5.2. Reliability of the scale	118
5.5.3. Comparing the attitude between males and females.....	121
5.5.4. Comparing the attitude among different group of ages	122
5.5.5. Comparing the attitude between faith-based schools and non-faith-based schools	123
5.6. Discussion.....	125
5.7. Conclusion	129
Chapter 6	131
Data Analysis 2: Psychometric properties of the Attitude toward Interreligious Harmony Scale: Evidence for reliability and validity	131
6.1. Introduction	131
6.2. Empirical research assessing attitude toward interreligious harmony	132
6.2.1. Existing research on the attitudinal dimension in the context of religious diversity.....	132
6.2.2. Empirical research on the attitudinal dimension in the interreligious relationship in Malaysia	133
6.2.3. Limitation of previous empirical research	136
6.3. Aims and hypotheses	138

6.4.	A preliminary step toward the construction of the Attitude toward Interreligious Harmony Scale for an operational framework.....	138
6.5.	Methods	141
6.5.1.	Procedure	141
6.5.2.	Measures	141
6.5.3.	Sample.....	143
6.6.	Descriptive results: Agreement with the item that is designed to reflect the article in the Federal Constitution of Malaysia and intercultural and interreligious engagement.....	143
6.6.1.	Reliability analysis.....	148
6.6.2.	Construct validity	150
6.6.3.	Mean scale score of the Attitude toward Interreligious Harmony Scale by demographic backgrounds.....	155
6.7.	Discussion.....	156
6.8.	Conclusion.....	160
	Chapter 7	161
	Data Analysis 3: Attitude toward Interreligious Harmony and its correlate with the attitude towards Islam, religious identity, religious practices and types of school	161
7.1.	Introduction	161
7.2.	Religious variables in empirical studies of attitude toward interreligious harmony	162
7.2.1.	Religious identity	163
7.2.2.	Religious practices.....	165
7.2.3.	Attitude toward Islam.....	167
7.2.4.	Religious schools	169
7.3.	Aims of this chapter	170
7.4.	Methods	170
7.4.1.	Procedure	170
7.4.2.	Measures	170
7.4.3.	Sample.....	172
7.5.	Results	173
7.5.1.	Descriptive results: Identity preferences, religious practices, type of school, attitude toward Islam and attitude toward interreligious harmony.....	173
7.5.2.	Correlation between attitude toward interreligious harmony and religious identity and religious practices	176

7.5.3.	Correlation between attitude toward interreligious harmony and attitude toward Islam	176
7.5.4.	Comparing attitude toward interreligious harmony between students in faith-based schools and students in non-faith-based schools.....	177
7.5.5.	Regression model on attitude toward interreligious harmony.....	181
7.6.	Discussion.....	186
7.7.	Conclusion.....	191
Chapter 8	193
Conclusions and recommendations of the study	193
8.1.	The policy implications of the study.....	198
8.2.	Limitations of the study and recommendations for future research.....	201
References	204
Appendix 1: Questionnaire	239

List of figures

Figure 2. 1: Population of Malaysia (Department of Statistics Malaysia, 2011)	24
Figure 2. 2: Religion in Malaysia (Department of Statistics Malaysia, 2011)	25
Figure 2. 3: Summary of the Malaysian education systems	39

List of tables

Table 4. 1: The distribution of sex, age and types of school	94
Table 4. 2: Scale properties of the Sahin-Francis Scale of Attitude towards Islam and Attitude toward Interreligious Harmony Scale based on data from Pilot Study	96
Table 5. 1. Total number of respondents based on sex and age	114
Table 5. 2: Schools and sex	116
Table 5. 3: Identity preferences	117
Table 5. 4: Frequency of prayer.....	118
Table 5. 5: Frequency of reading Quran	118
Table 5. 6: Frequency of attending mosque	118
Table 5. 7: Scale properties of the Attitude towards Islam Scale	119
Table 5. 8: Item-total correlation, Cronbach's Alpha if item deleted and agreement toward an item in the Attitude towards Islam Scale	120
Table 5. 9: Correlation between attitude towards Islam and religious practices, and identity	121
Table 5. 10: Mean score on the Sahin-Francis Scale of Attitude towards Islam for males and females	122
Table 5. 11: Descriptive details of the Sahin-Francis Scale of Attitude towards Islam and comparison between different groups of ages.....	123
Table 5. 12: Mean scale score of attitudes toward Islam between the students in faith- based schools and non-faith-based schools	123
Table 5. 13: Comparing the attitude between the students in different types of schools	124
Table 6. 1. Total number of respondents based on sex and age	143
Table 6. 2: Participants' agreement with the article in the Federal Constitution of Malaysia and self-reported intercultural and interreligious engagement.....	145
Table 6. 3: Descriptive statistic on each item in the Attitude toward Interreligious Harmony Scale	147
Table 6. 4: Scale Properties of the Attitude toward Interreligious Harmony Scale.....	149
Table 6. 5: Item-total statistics	149

Table 6. 6: Construct validity of the Attitude toward Interreligious Harmony Scale (correlation with intercultural and interreligious engagement).....	152
Table 6. 7: Rotated component matrix	154
Table 6. 8: Correlation between attitude toward interreligious harmony and sex and age	156
Table 6. 9: Mean scale score and t-test result comparing attitude toward interreligious harmony between males and females.....	156
Table 6. 10: Mean scale score and ANOVA results comparing attitude toward interreligious harmony between five different groups of age.....	156
Table 7. 1. Total number of respondents based on sex and age	172
Table 7. 2: Identity preferences	173
Table 7. 3: Frequency of prayer.....	174
Table 7. 4: Reading Quran	174
Table 7. 5: Frequency of attending mosque	174
Table 7. 6 Total number of male and female participants in eight school categories and two types of school.....	175
Table 7. 7: Scale properties of the Sahin-Francis Scale of Attitude toward Islam and Attitude toward Interreligious Harmony Scale.....	176
Table 7. 8: Correlation between attitude toward interreligious harmony and identity, prayer, reading Quran and attending mosque.....	176
Table 7. 9 Correlation between attitude toward Islam and attitude toward interreligious harmony and the three latent variables of attitude toward interreligious harmony.....	177
Table 7. 10: Percentage of agreement toward items in the scale and chi-square test comparing the answer between students in faith-based schools and students in non-faith-based schools.....	179
Table 7. 11: Descriptive statistics of the Attitude toward Interreligious Harmony Scale and its three latent variables among Muslim students in faith-based schools and non-faith-based schools and t-test analysis results comparing students in both types of schools on each component	181
Table 7. 12: Correlation matrix for attitude toward interreligious harmony and demographics, identity, religious variables and type of schools.....	183
Table 7. 13: Summary of five models for hierarchical regression analyses investigating the effect of sex, age, religious identity, religious practices, attitude toward Islam and types of school on attitude toward interreligious harmony.....	183

Acknowledgement

In the name of Allah, the Most Gracious and the Most Merciful.

All praise to Allah and his blessing for the accomplishment of this thesis. I wish to express my sincere appreciation to my supervisors, Dr. Abdullah Sahin and Rev. Prof. Dr. Leslie J. Francis for their continued support of my Ph. D study. To Dr. Abdullah Sahin, you will always be my inspiration to do research in Islamic education and thank you for always providing me with such insightful discussions. To Rev. Prof. Dr. Leslie J. Francis, it has been a blessing and a wonderful experience to have you as one of my supervisors. Your immense knowledge, especially on methodology and hard questions, has helped me grow throughout this research. Thank you again, and I hope that I can continue working with both of you in the future.

To everyone in the Centre for Education Studies including staff, lecturers and other researchers, I would like to say thank you for always being so supportive, never failing to share new ideas, foods and space! You are part of my enjoyment of being a postgraduate student in the University of Warwick. Thank you so much!

To my friends in the UK (Malaysian Community in Birmingham and Malaysian Coventry and Warwick Society), I would like to thank all of you for your invaluable assistance during my studies here. Thank you for accepting me and my family since the first day we arrived in the UK and treating us like your own family members. May Allah reward all of you with *Jannah. Amin.*

A special thanks to my late father, Abd Hamid Sanijan, who left us during my final year of Ph. D study, may Allah grant peace and tranquility in his next journey. To my mother, Rubisah Ibrahim, thank you for always being so supportive and your endless prayers toward my success. Thanks are also due to my siblings who continuously gave me moral and physical support along my journey in the UK. Your prayers for me was what sustained me this far. Thank you!

To my beloved wife, Dr. Nor Fadila Kasim, who inspired me to pursue my doctorate degree, my children, Fatihah Auna, Kauthar Aynaz, and Maryam Azra, thank you for always being there for me and may Allah grant us more happiness and blessings.

Last but not least, to my sponsors, Ministry of Education Malaysia (MOE), and Sultan Idris Education University, Malaysia (UPSI). Thank you for giving me the opportunity to pursue my Ph. D in the UK.

Declaration

This work has not been previously accepted in substance for any degree and is not being concurrently submitted in candidature for any degree.

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This thesis is the result of my own investigations, except where otherwise stated. Other sources are acknowledged by giving explicit references. A bibliography is appended.

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Abstract

This study explores attitudes toward interreligious harmony among Muslim students in Malaysian secondary schools. The inquiry investigates the relationship between Muslim students' attitudes toward interreligious harmony and a range of independent factors such as individual differences, identity preferences, frequency of religious practices, and the types of schools study the participants attended. The study also assesses participants' attitudes towards Islam and examines the relationship between attitudes toward Islam and interreligious harmony.

The research adopts a quantitative research design that includes a large-scale survey completed by a randomly selected group of Muslim students in 55 Malaysian secondary schools, to address the study's questions. The main data collection instrument is a specially constructed attitude questionnaire called 'You and Your Attitude toward Interreligious Harmony'. The questionnaire asked participants' personal backgrounds, identity preferences, frequency of religious practices, attitude towards Islam, intercultural and interreligious engagement and attitude toward interreligious harmony. Responses from 3481 participants, consisting of 1418 males and 2063 females who completed the survey, were analysed using descriptive and inferential statistical analysis.

The key findings are presented in three parts as three analysis chapters. The first part of the analysis deals with religiosity by examining participants' identity preferences, frequency of religious practices and attitude towards Islam. Results indicated that the majority of participants in this study used religion (Islam) to express their identity rather than ethnicity and nationality. In terms of religious practice, the majority of the respondents perform obligatory five daily prayers, read Quran and attend mosque sometimes. 'The Sahin-Francis Scale of Attitude towards Islam' was adopted and translated into the Malaysian language to measure participants' attitude toward Islam. The results indicated that the translated version of the scale was reliable and valid, and relevant to Malaysian Muslim participants. The translated scale possesses a high internal consistency coefficient ($\alpha = .897$). The results indicated that the majority of participants scored high on the scale. The participants among females, self-reported higher religious observance than males and students who attended faith-based schools tended to score a higher attitude towards Islam than non-faith-based schools' students.

The second part of the data analysis provided an initial investigation of the reliability and validity of the 18-item Attitude toward Interreligious Harmony Scale. The scale has a high internal consistency coefficient ($\alpha = .869$). The results support the development of the Attitude toward Interreligious Harmony Scale as a scientific tool for the attitudinal study of interreligious relations and generally appropriate to use when measuring attitude towards interreligious harmony among secondary school Muslim participants within the context of Malaysia.

The results on attitude toward interreligious harmony was demonstrated that respondents' personal background (sex and age), frequency of attending mosque and

attitude towards Islam; attitude towards Islam was a stronger predictor to attitude toward interreligious harmony compared to religious practices and religious identity; and no significant effect of type of school was found on attitude towards interreligious harmony.

The present study has made an original contribution to the emerging empirical body of research in the interdisciplinary field of Islamic Education Studies and the wider education policy discussions in Malaysian context. The limitations and implications of the study, as well as directions for future research, are discussed in the concluding chapter.

Chapter 1

Introduction

The central aim of the present research is to assess attitudes toward interreligious harmony among Muslim students in Malaysian secondary schools. The empirical examination will include exploring the relationship between attitudes toward interreligious harmony and identity preferences, religious practices, the attitudinal dimension of religiosity, types of school, and demographic backgrounds. The emphasis is on the exploration of the link between the attitudes toward interreligious harmony and religiosity, which is measured by participants' frequency of religious practices and attitudes towards Islam.

This introductory chapter provides an overview of the present study, its broad rationale, motivation and briefly clarifies the wider research context. First, a brief social and cultural background of the study will be presented. This will include outlining the rationale of study, its central research questions and my personal and professional experiences that have motivated me to conduct this study. Then, the main research problem will be highlighted, followed by a brief explanation of the central terminology used in this study. This will be followed by noting the methodological approach adopted to address the set of questions raised. This research, by generating new empirical knowledge, aims to make an original contribution to Islamic Education. Islamic Education Studies, as recently argued by Sahin (2018, 2019), is a fast emerging inter-disciplinary field of empirical enquiry, scholarly research and professional practice. The original contribution of the current inquiry to the field of knowledge will be highlighted and finally, the organization of the chapters in the study will be presented.

1.1. Research context

This study is conducted within the multi-cultural and multi-religious society of Malaysia. Historically, Malaysia is formerly known as Malaya named after the Malays, the dominant ethnic group in Malaysia who speaks the Malay language and professes the religion of Islam. The diversity of Malaysian society dates back hundreds of years ago from the prehistoric period and the emergence of Islamic sultanate era in the early 14th century. It is common among people in the past decade to move from one place to another for settlement. Migration among people from other continents to Malaysia was primarily for socio-economic opportunities (Hugo, 1993; Yun, 2000).

The historical formation of modern Malaysia has undergone certain ages such as the industrial revolution, colonialization and finally a declaration of independence in 1957. The society became more diverse during the colonial period in the early 19th century when there were large numbers of migrant workers entering the country to work in rubber plants and the tin mining industry of British companies. When Malaya became an independent state, the government initiated an economic plan to support the development of Malaysia. This created many economic opportunities and required more labour, which finally contributed to the growing number of migrant workers to overcome labour shortages in the country (Kaur, 2008). In the current development, Malaysia still depends on foreign migrant workers from Thailand, Cambodia, Nepal, Myanmar, Laos, Vietnam, Filipina, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, India, Indonesia and Bangladesh to support manufacturing, construction, plantation, agriculture and services sectors (Immigration Department of Malaysia, 2020). Malaysian immigration policies such as the 1953 Ordinance, The Immigration Act of 1959 and The Employment Restriction Act of 1968 also support the immigrants'

settlement in the country. This process of immigration has facilitated a more complex and diverse Malaysian society to emerge.

The cultural diversity has been accepted and recognized as an element of the country's identity at the time of independence since 1957. Based on the latest Population and Housing Census in Malaysia in 2011, the last census, which is collected once for a decade, the majority of the Malaysian citizens are *Bumiputera* (literally meaning the people of the land) which refers to several ethnics: Malays, the dominant ethnic in Malaysia; several groups of aborigine people in Peninsular Malaysia such as Negrito, Senoi and Proto-Malaya; and indigenous tribes in East Malaysia such as Iban and Kadazan-Dusun. The other two major ethnic groups in Malaysia are Chinese and Indian. There is also a small group of people who identified themselves with their country of origin such as Indonesian, Thai, Filipino, Myanmar and Japanese (Department of Statistics Malaysia, 2011).

While Malaysia has always had ethnic and cultural diversity, recent immigration has also facilitated the growth of religious diversity, bringing Chinese religions, Indian religions, and Christianity into Malaysian society (Kim, 1998). In modern Malaysia, Islam is the most widely professed religion, followed by Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Chinese religions, and other religions such as Sikhism and Bahaism. The historical expansion of Islam in the Malay Archipelago began when people from the Arab continent began preaching Islam in the early 14th century. Upon accepting the religion, Islam became a dominant faith in the country, strengthening after the establishment of the first Islamic sultanate era in Malacca. Today, Islam has been regarded as the religion of the Malaysian constitution as stated in the Constitution of

Malaysia, 1957: “Islam is the religion of the federation, and other religions can be practised in peace and harmony.”

Having ethnic, cultural and religious diversity naturally raises questions as to how best achieve social cohesion, interreligious tolerance and foster a shared sense of belonging in Malaysia. The official Malaysian educational and social policies all aim to facilitate the formation of a harmonious, inclusive civic Malaysian nation. However, the interaction between a dominant faith (Islam) and minority faith communities is not conflict-free. Living with religious diversity can bring along a set of sensitive issues and challenges. Considering the wider geopolitical content that informs the presence of Islam in the modern world, Muslim societies with minority faith and ethnic communities face social cohesion related challenges. Similarly, highly secularised Western societies, which have faith communities, also struggle to accommodate the religious-based needs of the communities. As a result of the social significance of religion in Malaysia, the current inquiry aims to explore attitudes towards interreligious harmony among Muslim secondary school students. The desire to achieve interreligious harmony constitutes a significant aspect of contemporary plurality in Malaysia.

It must be noted that, historically, Malaysia has experienced interreligious conflict in the 1950s (Stivens, 2010; Hooker, 2014) and inter-ethnic conflict in the 1960s (Soong, 2008). In the context of religious diversity, many social issues that affect families have been highlighted, such as child custody rights between parents of different religions (Subramaniam, 2018). Other issues that have been highlighted are the publication of religious materials, the propagation of religious faith, freedom of worship, the regulation on houses of worship, Islamic revival, fundamentalism and the call for the Islamic State, as well as constitutional provisions on the freedom to convert

from Islam. Currently, the solution to religious issues and conflicts among different religious adherents seems to rely mostly on constitutional law and political power. A review of literature on religious diversity in Malaysia, as will be discussed in the literature review chapter in detail, reveals that the topic is addressed through theoretical discussions which mostly are informed by legal and theological perspectives.

The present study argues that attitudinal study in the topic of interreligious relations research should be highlighted and the topic should be further examined as a significant aspect of broad educational research, as well as in Islamic Education research and policy development. The Malaysian government has highlighted the important role of the educational sector in fostering a positive attitude towards people of different religious backgrounds. This vision is clearly stated in the Malaysian economic policies such as the New Economic Policy, 1970-1990 (Malaysia, 2020); Malaysian education policies (Malaysia, 2020); several reports on education such as the Razak Report, 1956 and the Rahman Talib Report, 1960 (Ministry of Education, 2020a); and the Malaysian Education Blueprint 2013-2025 (Ministry of Education, 2020a). However, the topic of religious diversity has rarely been investigated in educational research and in Islamic Education Studies. It must be stressed that, as far as the current research is concerned, there has not been any empirical research directly exploring students' attitudes towards religious diversity in Malaysia.

1.2. Research problem

The focus of this thesis is to explore young Muslims' attitudes toward interreligious harmony within the context of contemporary Malaysian society. Although the Malaysian Constitution Law recognizes religious diversity in Malaysia and the constitution protects the right of citizens to practise their religion freely, there is limited

information on the attitudinal aspect of interreligious relations among Malaysian society. The Malaysian educational systems also highlight the importance of social and cultural integration, and interreligious harmony within modern Malaysian society. However, this significant topic has been neglected and the empirical study on young Muslim's attitudes toward interreligious harmony has never been approached in any field of study.

The present thesis asked whether Muslim students in Malaysian secondary schools have a positive or negative attitude toward interreligious harmony. In order to assess their attitudes, the present study developed a scale called the Attitude toward Interreligious Harmony Scale. This study draws on the social psychological study of attitudes toward interreligious harmony. The items in the scale reflect broadly on the Islamic teachings on the wider theme of interreligious relations. Although the study focuses on Islam and Islamic Education, its findings can contribute to the larger interdisciplinary empirical study of religions and interreligious harmony.

The study also explores the importance of religion among young Muslims in Malaysia. In Muslim societies, religion continues to play an important role in the everyday lives of people including Muslim children and youth. This research aims to find out the degree to which religion (Islam) continues to play an important role in the lives of secondary school Muslim students. The analysis in the present study will be on religiosity which will be assessed on the attitudinal dimension of being religious and the frequency in practising religious commitments. The attitude will be assessed on the affective dimension of attitudes using the Sahin-Francis Scale of Attitude towards Islam. Religious practices will be assessed from several questions of the frequency of religious practices, consisting of prayer, reading Quran and attending mosque. This research offers a form of an empirical assessment of Muslim religiosity which is less studied.

The above important issues have been navigated to another research problem in this thesis, namely the correlates of attitudes toward interreligious harmony with personal differences, religious identity, religious practices and attitudes towards Islam. The present study examines the associations between attitudes toward interreligious harmony and personal differences, identity preferences, religious practices and attitudes towards Islam. In addition, the study also explores a correlation between the attitude toward interreligious harmony and types of school. The education systems in Malaysia are varied in terms of the stakeholders, such as the mainstream education system by the Malaysian government, the education system in state-funded schools and the education system in private institutions. The schools can also be differentiated between faith-based schools and non-faith-based schools. Investigating into the schooling background could provide evidence for the correlate and effect of school on students' attitudes toward interreligious harmony. The different environment in schooling systems between Muslims-only-students and other types of schools is significantly important to be studied, because interreligious harmony requires a holistic understanding between people of different religious backgrounds.

1.3. Research questions

The research questions for this study are as follows:

1. What are the attitudes towards Islam among Muslim students in Malaysian secondary schools?
2. What are the attitudes toward interreligious harmony among secondary schools' Muslim students in Malaysia?

3. How do attitudes toward interreligious harmony among Muslim students in Malaysian secondary schools relate to personal differences (age and sex), identity, religious practices, attitudes towards Islam and types of school (faith-based school and non-faith-based school)?
4. How are attitudes toward interreligious harmony among Muslim students in Malaysian secondary schools affected by the factors of personal differences (sex and age), identity preferences, religious practices, attitude towards Islam and types of school, and what is the strongest indicator of attitudes of Muslim students in Malaysian secondary schools toward interreligious harmony between all these factors?

1.4. Aim and rationale of the study

The present study aims to descriptively report participants' attitudes towards interreligious harmony, their demographic background, identity preferences, the frequency of religious practices and attitude towards Islam. The study also aims to examine the correlations between attitudes towards interreligious harmony and personal differences, identity preferences, frequency of religious practices, attitude towards Islam and types of school. It also investigates the correlation between various variables consisting of the attitudes toward interreligious harmony, religiosity, participants' experiences of intercultural and interreligious engagement and demographic background. Finally, the present study investigates the effect of personal differences, identity, religious practices, attitudes towards Islam and the types of school on the attitude of Muslim students in Malaysian secondary schools toward interreligious harmony.

As discussed above, there are social, cultural and educational reasons justifying the need to explore attitudes among Muslim students in Malaysian secondary schools towards interreligious harmony. While many researchers put a lot of effort into highlighting the recognition of religious diversity and the need for interfaith dialogue in the context of Malaysian society, an attitudinal study empirically exploring the theme of interreligious harmony has been lacking. The term of interreligious harmony has never been discussed in the existing literature. The rationale to conduct this study is to explore the term interreligious harmony in the theoretical and operational framework and develop a research model to investigate the attitudes toward interreligious harmony. This could inform future research that is interested to utilise this term in any field of study.

More significantly, the modern field of Islamic Education Studies, in which this present study aims to make a significant contribution, has been dominated by a theoretical–historical research framework (Sahin, 2014, 2018). This study employed a quantitative research design by using descriptive and inferential statistical analysis to examine participants’ attitudes towards interreligious harmony and its correlate with personal factors, identity preferences, religious practices, attitudes towards Islam and types of school. Examining Muslim students’ attitudes in the related theme of religious diversity using empirical method will add evidence to the growing amount of empirical research in the field of Islamic Education Studies.

This research provides data on attitudes towards interreligious harmony and its correlates among Muslims students in Malaysian secondary school. The rationale to conduct this research among young Muslims in Malaysian secondary schools is because this age group has rarely been approached in the previous studies for in-depth analysis,

specifically on the topic of interreligious relations. This age is considered an important stage of personal, social and religious development (Sahin, 2014). This study can provide information on young Muslim generations in Malaysia towards realizing a harmonious way of life within the context of religious differences. Therefore, for these reasons, attitudes toward interreligious harmony among Muslim secondary school students should be studied empirically.

A descriptive and inferential statistical analysis also helps to identify which is the strongest predictive factor of participants' attitudes towards interreligious harmony between personal differences (sex and age), identity preferences, religious practices, attitude towards Islam and the types of school. The study can also provide evidence of differences between attitudes among students in different types of schools, allowing an opportunity of examining whether the type of school (faith-based and non-faith-based) make a difference as to how participants report on the questionnaire items. The rationale of implementing this research approach is to inform and contribute to the growing body of literature by providing evidence on the impact of each factor on attitudes towards interreligious harmony. The results can provide data to researchers who are interested to examine the topic of religious diversity in any field of study.

1.5. A brief explanation of terminology

The term of attitude toward interreligious harmony is the key construct in this study. A theoretical and operational definition of the term will be discussed further in the following chapters, but it deserves a brief explanation in this introductory chapter. The term attitude refers to the affective response of whether one likes or dislikes, and favours or is against any idea (Ajzen and Fishbein, 1977). In general, interreligious harmony means living in harmony with a society of diverse religions and religious

differences. In the Malaysian context, this terminology is referring to the article in the Malaysian Constitutional Law (Malaysia, 2010). In the present study, the term of attitude toward interreligious harmony can be operationally defined by an individual's affective response, whether they like or dislike a harmonious way of life with people of a different religion and toward religious differences.

1.6. Methodological approach

The present study assesses young Muslims' attitudes through a quantitative research framework. This research design can contribute empirical evidence to the field of Islamic Education in which the data from a large-scale sample could be collected through quantitative-based research. The development of the instrument in measuring attitudes toward interreligious harmony has been informed by the knowledge of social psychological studies and Islamic theological studies. This research also employs a well-developed research model in the scientific study of religion. The data will be collected using a survey called 'You and Your Attitude toward Interreligious Harmony', and analysed using descriptive and inferential statistical analysis.

1.7. Research contributions

The study intends to make an original contribution to the gradually emerging empirical studies in Islamic Education research. As discussed above, Sahin (2014, 2018) notes that the field of Islamic Education has been dominated by a theoretical and historical research framework. Theory and practice of modern Islamic Education need to reflect the lived experiences of Muslim children and young people. The present study aims to add empirical data to the field of Islamic Education, specifically on the topic of religious diversity by conducting an attitudinal study on the theme of interreligious harmony. This study is significant to the field of Islamic Education based on several reasons. First, Islamic Education in a broader sense plays an important role in Muslim

society in how Islamic Education has offered a unique system for Muslims' to acquire knowledge. As they live in a multi-religious society, it is important to assess their attitudes towards interreligious harmony to examine how Muslims' reflect on the teaching of Islam in interreligious relations. Secondly, the curriculum and syllabus in teaching Islamic knowledge have been developed systematically in mainstream schools and other types of schools. It is a common belief that Islamic Education helps students in nurturing a positive attitude towards others. However, due to the lack of empirical findings on this topic, we have very limited evidence on young Muslims' attitudes toward interreligious harmony. Any improvements in the education sector should be informed by empirical data to implement an evidence-based teaching and learning approach. Results from empirical research on young Muslims' attitudes also provide data to policymakers and any governmental bodies in the future with special regards to interpersonal development.

The present research employs a social psychological research approach and empirical approach in the scientific study of religion to inform the field of Islamic Education. Research in social psychology highlights social attitudes, such as tolerance and prejudice among people of different religions, and the research also highlights many correlates of attitudes. The present research focusses on attitudes towards a harmonious relationship among people of different religions.

The second area of original contribution is to the psychological study of attitudes towards religion. The scientific study of religion empirically assesses religion in the individual self because religion is deep-seated in the heart of its believer and religiosity can be a reflection of the current educational approach in Islamic Education. This research tradition has been well developed in many social-cultural settings. Current

research trends show the same approach has been increasingly adopted in studies conducted in Islamic settings. This present study aims at contributing to the field of psychology of religion by utilizing this approach in the study among young Muslims in Malaysia by exploring young Muslims' religiosity. A review of the historical development of the educational system for Muslims between the colonial period and current day, and the Muslims' approach towards education as presented in the background chapter show how Muslims place religion in their daily lives. The present study also aims to integrate research models in the psychology of religion in the attitudinal study of interreligious relations. The present study argues that Muslims' religiosity is crucial to highlight in a study that discusses the topic of interreligious relations, specifically in a study of attitudes towards interreligious harmony.

1.8. The personal and professional context of the study

By having an educational background in Islamic studies and Islamic Education, and as a Muslim educator who has significant experience in teaching Islamic Education at mainstream Malaysian secondary schools, I am deeply interested to explore more on people's attitude toward a harmonious relationship, specifically among people of different religious backgrounds. Cultural and religious diversity is a significant feature of Malaysian society. As such, it is significant to find out how Muslim children and young people perceive religious diversity that has become a part of their daily lives.

Furthermore, the future success of community cohesion and peace depends on young people appreciating the diversity of worldviews and plurality of faith traditions. This research is therefore developed from the standpoint of personal commitment, as well as from that of pure intellectual interest. Thus, this narrative can help me to be a reflective researcher and help me to practise a research-based approach to education. It is also important to show how I can locate myself as a researcher in the study.

To provide personal context to the study, I will briefly explain my own personal background on what influenced me to engage with this topic. My entire schooling experience from early childhood education to secondary education has been within the Islamic school system. In Islamic schools, or what are categorized as faith-based schools, religious ethos and religious values are expressed in the school environment, in addition to Islamic knowledge being a core syllabus in the curriculum. These are the most influential factors that attract Muslim parents to send their children to Islamic schools, because the system is believed to help Muslim adolescents in shaping good behaviour and encounter moral problems (Dahari and Ya, 2011). In some faith-based schools, it is clearly stated in the school ethos to prepare Muslim children to encounter non-religious and un-Islamic worldviews by acquiring Islamic knowledge. In Malaysia, parents' motivation to send their children to faith-based types of school started to increase since the 1970s. Their motivation was facilitated by many factors including an increase of awareness among Muslims towards Islamic knowledge, influenced by Islamic movement inside and outside of the nation, and as a reaction towards secularism and the influence of the secular-colonial way of thinking in Malaysian educational systems (Nagata, 1980).

The fragmentation of students in different schooling systems raises a question on how they can integrate with people of different cultural and religious backgrounds. It is significant to examine whether Islam, in theological terms, can accommodate the diversity of faiths. In this sense, there has been interfaith discussions and activities in Malaysia. However, it is also significant to find out how Muslim children and young people actually feel and think about religious diversity and whether they can reconcile their faith harmoniously with the presence of other faiths. The latter can be seen as an issue in empirical theology as suggested by Sahin (2014); thus, the current study tries to

address the issue within contemporary research in Islamic empirical theology. The discussion will be presented in the literature review chapter. It is also important to critically examine the teaching and learning approach towards developing reflexivity among young Muslims to a different religious worldview. The students are aware of the existence of other religions, but the educational approach in faith-based schools for young Muslims for the development of faith seems protective in nature. This will become a problem mainly for Islamic Education if the pedagogical approach does not challenge students to develop their own understanding of Islamic knowledge and personal religious agency.

Pursuing my studies in university for my first degree, I experienced a new living environment with friends from a multi-cultural and multi-religious background, which was different from the typical Islamic school's environment that is only open to Muslim children. Intercultural and interreligious engagement with people from different religious backgrounds is very limited in this school context. The complex social environment shows that many religious issues should be well acknowledged. Interaction among different ethnic groups also become difficult when religious matters arise when in a shared living room and shared eating space. My reflection is that the educational system does not holistically prepare students to engage with many issues in regard to religious differences, even though the students have been exposed to cultural and religious differences in the wider context of social interactions. Perhaps, this is the reason the majority of researchers who are focussing on the social cohesion research theme only address university students in their studies. Their research findings will be presented later in the literature review section. The limited research assessing the attitudinal aspect of religious diversity among students in secondary school is a strong justification to conduct this present study.

I am very fortunate in that I have been exposed to many books in comparative religion written by Muslim scholars during my studies at university. Although most of the literature is concentrated on the comparison between Islam and other religions, some literature that used a different approach in the study of comparative religions has fascinated me to go in-depth on the educational approach to the study of comparative religion. For instance, Al-Biruni (1958) has demonstrated how knowledge about other religions should be learned. Al-Biruni (1958) presents Indian Hinduism in his book *Tabqiq ma li al-Hind* from what we can recognize as a phenomenological research perspective, an approach that ‘...is every actual perception, every actual judgment itself, just as what it is, but nothing of what is perceived, judged, posited in it in the transcendent sense, or implicitly posited along with it.’ as explained by Husserl (2008, p. 209). Researchers (Sachau, 1910; Boilet, 1974; Himyah, 2001) have positioned him as one of the first Muslims to study the philosophy and science of India objectively and sympathetically. Al-Biruni (1958) has demonstrated how knowledge, in particular, astronomical knowledge, has developed within other religious traditions and was integrated into the Islamic tradition. Learning from others and learning about others is also very important for Muslims to attain advantageous knowledge. Hamid and Hambali (2015) have highlighted Biruni’s approach to Indian society from the perspective of comparative religion. However, a limited pedagogical conclusion has been drawn in Islamic Education from Al-Biruni’s approach to learning about other religions. As such, it can be argued that Islam is not against religious diversity as such diversity can show God’s creativity and an opportunity for humanity to learn from one another as reflected from the word of Quran - *li taarafu* - which means to know one another (Quran, 49:13).

The criticisms of faith schools in respect to tolerance do not reflect my own experience as an educator. However, having an experience of teaching the Islamic

Education syllabus in a mainstream school in a rural area, which had students among the Malays only, I witnessed the inadequacy of teaching and learning materials, and pedagogical approaches to support student knowledge and experience to live in a religiously diverse society.

The opportunity to further my studies has widened my view on methodological approaches to teach religion. I also realized that the way we learn about others could enlighten our understanding of Islam and Islamic knowledge. My present study attempts to explore young Muslims' attitudes towards interreligious harmony in various types of secondary schools in Malaysia to add an in-depth understanding on the topic of religious diversity in Malaysia. The present study will examine empirically on young Muslims' attitudes, the link between their attitudes and their personal backgrounds, their frequency of religious practices and attitudes towards Islam. The present study also examines the differences of attitudes towards interreligious harmony between students in different types of schools.

1.9. Organization of the thesis

This chapter has provided an overview of the present study and discussed the rationale of this study, including the research context and the personal and professional circumstances to the study. Then, I have presented the general research aims, the main problem of the study, and the overall methodological orientation of the study.

Chapter two considers the background of Malaysian society, which discusses the presence of religious diversity in the social context and the recognition of religious diversity in Malaysian governmental and educational systems. To locate this study within the context of Islamic Education, chapter two also discusses the historical development of Islamic Education, development of the education system for young

Muslims and theological views on the concept of interreligious harmony from the Islamic perspective.

Chapter three reviews the literature that empirically examines people's attitudes in the wider context of religious diversity. The aim is to contextualize the study by critically reviewing empirical research that has explored the attitudes of young Muslims who lived in a religiously diverse society and examined the development of research on this topic in Malaysia. There are at least four different approaches among researchers. First, literature that assesses a wider context of intergroup relation from the sociological approach. The second group of literature approaches the religious diversity theme from a social-psychological perspective. The third group of literature approaches the religious diversity theme from a theological perspective. The fourth group of literature focusses on the wider context of education. The review of literature in chapter three only focusses on the study that was conducted from the Islamic perspective and research that was conducted in the context of Malaysia.

Chapter four provides an overview of the research design and methods to conduct this study. Overall, this is a quantitative research study; therefore, it will begin with the research design and its relevance in assessing attitudes toward interreligious harmony among Muslim students in Malaysia. Several domains identified will be presented. The construction of instruments, including the development of the Attitude toward Interreligious Harmony Scale and the Attitude towards Islam Scale, which were employed in this study will be briefly described. Then, the sampling process, data collection procedure, and data analysis procedure will be presented.

The analysis on the data of surveys chapter are presented in chapter five, six and seven. In chapter five, the study presents the level of religious observance among

participants through a descriptive analysis of attitudes towards Islam and involvement in practising Islam. The scale of attitudes towards Islam that was adapted for this study will be discussed in detail. Chapter six is considered to be the main chapter of the study in which the construction of a newly developed scale to assess attitudes toward interreligious harmony is discussed and analysed. The presentation involving the psychometric properties of the scale and a correlational analysis between the attitudes score and several domains are recorded in the survey. Chapter seven focusses on the correlation and regression analysis between the attitudes toward interreligious harmony and personal backgrounds, identity, religious practices, attitudes towards Islam and types of schools. Each chapter discusses the findings from the available previous research and reports on the findings from the data collection among Muslim students in Malaysian secondary schools.

Finally, chapter eight presents the overall conclusions and recommendations of the study. The study acknowledges its limitations and makes suggestions for further research. The chapter will highlight how the present study benefits the wider context of education, especially in the field of Islamic Education. The recommendation for future research will also be presented in chapter eight.

Chapter 2

Historical background: Cultural and religious diversity in Malaysian society and the development of Islamic Education in Malaysia

2.1. Introduction

In order to assess young Muslims' attitudes toward interreligious harmony, the present chapter discusses the wider context of Malaysian society where the research was conducted. The chapter also focusses on the educational system because of its important role in fostering a harmonious relationship among people in the multicultural and multi-religious society of Malaysia. It is important to look carefully at the overall development of education specifically for Muslims, including the importance of knowledge for Muslims, historical education systems in Malaysia and the Muslim reaction towards the reformation in the Malaysian educational system. Schools with religious character are the most attractive schooling system for the majority of Muslims. This can be shown in the recent increasing number of this type of school emerging. The elaboration to this type of school uses the term 'faith-based school' and 'religious school' interchangeably throughout the discussion in this chapter.

The development of the education system in Malaysia also could be understood through the social structure of Malaysian society and its development process. The presence of religious diversity in Malaysia can be seen in the context of the governmental system as well as in the social context. The diversity of religion in Malaysia has actually been recognized in the governmental system, educational system and social life among the Malaysian society. The above discussion will be explained first in this chapter. It should be noted that although we can easily explain the structure of Malaysian society, the attitude among people concerning religious differences is more complex to address. Exploration of Islamic knowledge clearly demonstrates that Islam

teaches good conduct in the relationship with people of different religions. Historical evidence during the Prophet Muhammad's life also shows the ways in which Muslims lived harmoniously with people of different religions. The discussion in this chapter demonstrates the significance to conduct a study to empirically examine young Muslims' attitudes toward interreligious harmony.

With an attempt to discuss the wider context of Malaysian society, the first part of this chapter highlights the presence and the recognition of religious diversity in Malaysia. Then, the second part of this chapter focusses on the historical process of the presence of Islam from the past decades to current day. The discussion focusses on how Islam has come from the Arab continents to Malaysia and discusses how Muslims became the largest population in Malaysia. The third part discusses the educational development of young Muslims in Malaysia. Muslims' acceptance towards mainstream educational systems will be elaborated. Finally, the study highlights the theological view on the interreligious relationship from the Islamic perspective and the ways in which Islamic knowledge provide guidance in living together with people of different religions.

2.2. The context of the Malaysian society

The cultural diversity of Malaysian society today dates back hundreds of years ago from prehistoric and the emergence of the Islamic sultanate era in early of 14th century.

Historically, Malaysia was known as the Federation of Malaya (*Persekutuan Tanah Melayu*), named after the Malays, the country's dominant ethnic group who speak the Malay language that is the lingua franca of the land, and who are followers of Islam. The strategic location along the Strait of Malacca and the centre for trading activities in Southeast Asia were some of the major factors in attracting people from other countries to come into the land (Kim, 1998).

The composition of a culturally diverse society also developed due to the process of immigration among people from other continents to work as workers during the period of colonialization (Kim, 1998). Malaysian society has experienced of colonization by the Portuguese, British and Japanese. In the early 19th century, British companies started to bring people from other countries to work with them and to reside in Malaysia. Large numbers of migrant workers who worked in rubber plants and the tin mining industry of British companies, finally settled down in Malaysia, which made the society become more diverse.

After a long period of war and colonialism, people from different cultural backgrounds and various religious backgrounds agreed to build the nation together. Malaysia was officially independent and had the right to govern the country independently on 31 August 1957 (Ismail and Arifin, 2015). Consequently, Malaysia became a democratic country based on constitutional monarchy systems. The King of the kingdom called '*Yang Di Pertuan Agong*' is the chief of the nation and has the rights to appoint government ministers from the elected Members of Parliament. The Constitution of Malaysia is the supreme law of Malaysia. In 1963, Sabah, Sarawak and Singapore joined the federation, but in 1965, Singapore left to establish an independent republic known as the Republic of Singapore (Nathan, 2002). Currently, there are 14 states comprised of Federal Territories (Kuala Lumpur, Labuan and Putrajaya) and 13 other states (Selangor, Johor, Melaka, Negeri Sembilan, Pahang, Terengganu, Kelantan, Perak, Pulau Pinang, Kedah, Perlis, Sabah and Sarawak). Physically, Malaysia has two major parts separated by the South China Sea with most of the states located in Peninsular Malaysia while Sabah, Sarawak and Federal Territory of Labuan are located in East Malaysia.

The diversity was accepted and recognized as an identity of the country at the time of independence in 1957. Since the day of independence, the number of migrant workers has increased, with most settling in the country because of economic opportunities and encouragement by the Malaysian government through immigration policy (Kim, 1998; Kaur, 2012; Davie, 2013). In the latest report of the Population and Housing Census in Malaysia as shown in Figure 2.1 below, the total population was 28.3 million of which 91.8% were Malaysian citizens and 8.2% were non-citizens. Malaysian citizens consist of *Bumiputera* (literally meaning the people of the land) which refer to Malays and a group of aboriginal peoples (67.4%), Chinese (24.6%), Indians (7.3%) and other ethnicities that are not mentioned in the report (0.7%). Amongst *Bumiputera*, Malays were the predominant ethnic group which constituted 63.1% of the total *Bumiputera* group in Peninsular Malaysia; the Ibans constituted 30.3% of the total citizens in Sarawak, while Kadazan-Dusun made up 24.5% in Sabah (Department of Statistics Malaysia, 2011).

Immigration has also facilitated the growth of religious diversity, bringing Chinese religions, Indian religions, and Christianity into Malaysian society (Kim, 1998). This was recognized in the Constitution of Malaysia, 1957 (Malaysia, 2010) that states, “Islam is the religion of the federation, and other religions can be practised in peace and harmony.” The Constitution clearly aims at nurturing a harmonious relationship among people of different religious backgrounds. In a social context, religious diversity can be seen in the co-existence of places of worship, religious celebrations, and co-presence of different religious symbolisms in culture, food and clothing. Figure 2.2 shows the percentage distribution of religions in Malaysia. Demographic data on religion in 2011 shows that Islam was the most widely professed religion in Malaysia with the proportion of 61.3%, followed by Buddhism at 19.8%, Christianity at 9.2%, Hinduism

at 6.3%, a group of Chinese religions at 1.3%, other religions at 0.4%, and 1.7% assigned themselves as no religion or unknown. Even though Muslims are the majority in the Malaysian population, it is not evenly distributed across the states. Other religions could be the dominant religion in some states. For example, in Sarawak, the dominant religion is Christianity at 42.9% compared to Islam at 32.2%. In the Federal Territory of Kuala Lumpur and Pulau Pinang, the number of Buddhists and Muslims were equally distributed (Department of Statistics Malaysia, 2011).

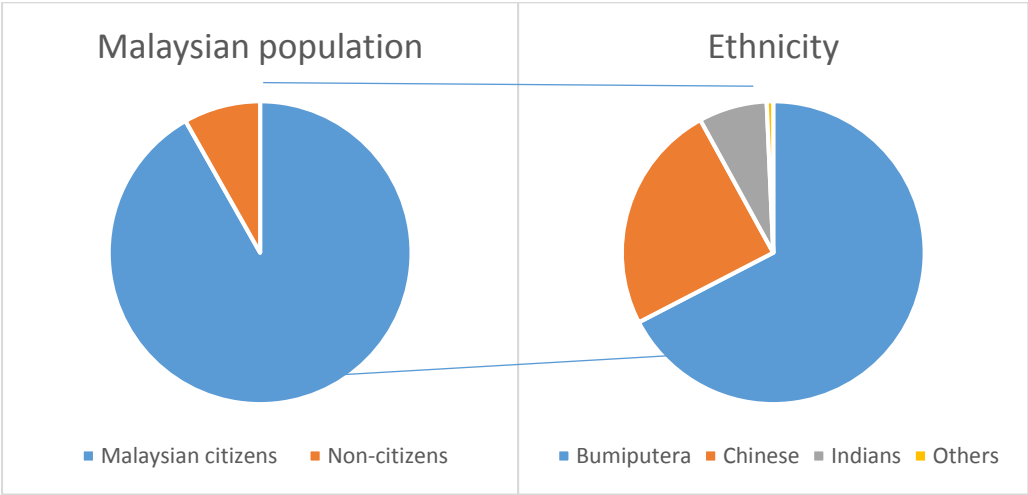


Figure 2. 1: Population of Malaysia (Department of Statistics Malaysia, 2011)

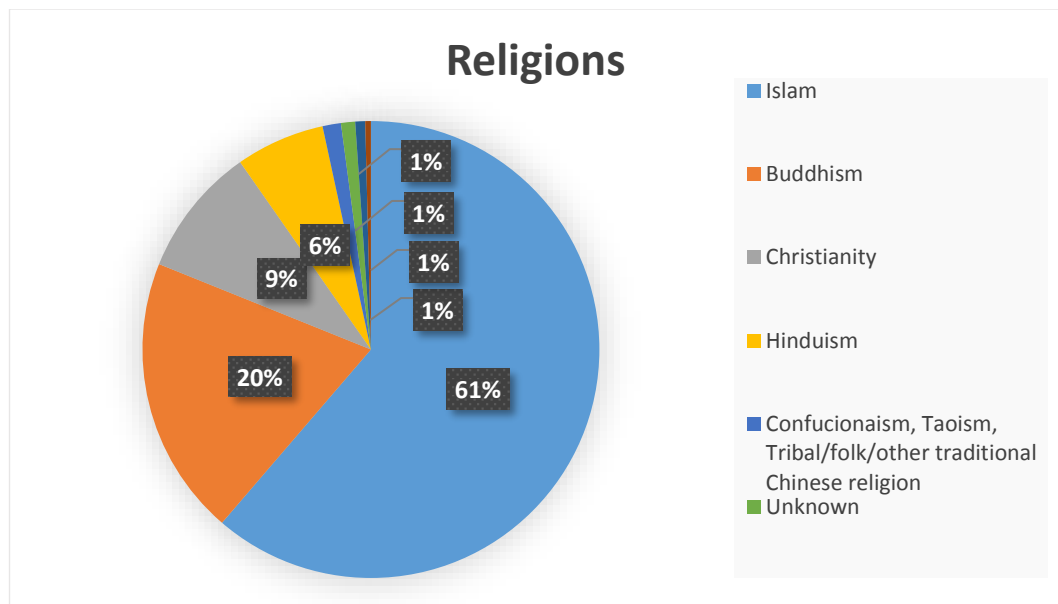


Figure 2. 2: Religion in Malaysia (Department of Statistics Malaysia, 2011)

As the above discussion highlights the demographic background of Malaysian society, the social life among people living in multicultural and multi-religious diversity is more complex. Malaysian society has experienced inter-ethnic and interreligious conflicts during the early period of independence. There were a series of racial riots, which resulted in bloodshed after the conflict reached its peak in Mei, 1969 (Soong, 2008). The Department of National Unity, which is now known as the Department of National Unity and Integration was developed in 1969 after the racial riot as part of the Malaysian government's initiative to solve the interracial problem (Department of National Unity and Integration Malaysia, 2020). In the 1970s, the government managed to implement an integration policy which designed to overcome distrust and enmity, contributing to the harmonious co-existence among people of different ethnics. The National Operation Council (known as *Majlis Gerakan Negara*: MAGERAN) was also formed and the council introduced a New Economic Policy (NEP) for 20 years of implementation starting from 1970 to 1990, which was then followed by several

economic policies until now (Malaysia, 2020). However, the policy focusses primarily on equality in economic distribution between different ethnic groups for social and political stability. The NEP aims at reducing economic inequality among people of different ethnicities and aims at eliminating the identification of race by economic functions.

One of the most highlighted events on the interreligious conflict in Malaysia was known as the Natrah riots in the 1950s (Stivens, 2010; Hooker, 2014). From the legal action on child adoption issues, it sparked interreligious conflict due to a different religious background between the biological family of Natrah (her birth name is Hertogh) and the adopted family. Although there was no major tragic event after that, issues among different religious adherents continue to disrupt a harmonious life in Malaysian society. Among the issues highlighted are the constitutional provisions, perception on Islamic revival, fundamentalism and the call for the Islamic State, freedom of worship and propagation of religious faith, the freedom to convert from Islam, the right to build and maintaining non-Muslim religious building, the issue of child custody rights for parents of different religions and the use of several words in non-Muslim publications (Walters, 2007; Hunt, 2009; Hashim and Mahpuz, 2011). Despite the reality of religious diversity in Malaysia, religions have been regarded as an important element to the individual and to the society, so religious differences have been seen as a source of conflict to the society. The highlighted issues seem that people find it difficult to have a good relationship with each other due to different religious backgrounds. Actually, very limited empirical data inform people's attitudes in the context of religious diversity in Malaysia, in which this present study aims to contribute. The available literature on interreligious issues or conflicts among different religious adherent is mostly focussed on the policy, law and political power.

On 24th February 2010, the Malaysian government introduced a new group that gathers experts to deal with the conflict between religious groups called the Committee to Promote Understanding and Harmony among Religious Adherents (*Jawatankuasa Mempromosikan Persefahaman dan Keharmonian Masyarakat pelbagai Agama: JKMPKA*) under the Department of National Unity and Integration Malaysia (2020). The government's concern is that interreligious issues should be well managed from a holistic approach towards a peaceful and co-existence of a religiously diverse society. JKMPKA aims at strengthening bonds between the people of various religions, meanwhile becoming a mediating body for issues raised among religious adherents, encouraging all religious associations to respect, as well as adhering to the Federal Constitution, and ensuring the government to be attentive to the voices of the religious association and bodies (Department of National Unity and Integration Malaysia, 2020). There is also another initiative created by some non-governmental bodies. For instance, the Malaysian Bar Council initiated to organize The National Interfaith Commission (IFC) by calling religious leaders from all religions including Muslims, Buddhists, Hindus and Christians in Malaysia to sit together in the Commission (Guan, 2005; Riddell, 2005). However, it was not successfully developed because the approach was rejected by many Muslim non-governmental organizations for many reasons (Ahmad and Muhammad, 2014).

It is only recently that religious diversity has been widely discussed from the educational perspective, especially after the tragedy of 9/11 in the US, which has shown the importance of religion in intergroup relations. Researchers started to find empirically-based interventions and solutions to such conflicts, and create tools to enhance interreligious harmony, such as through interfaith dialogue and the study of different religions. However, issues related to religious diversity in Malaysia have only been widely studied at the level of higher education, whereas studies at the secondary

school level is rarely found. The discourse on faith-based school also focusses on the topic of terrorism and extremism, rather than highlighting educational institutions as a platform to enhance the interreligious relationship. The available literature that studies the religious diversity theme will be discussed in the next chapter.

In the next part, the chapter discusses the development of the Malaysian educational system by specifically looking at the integration among people of various religious backgrounds. The historical facts on the expansion of Islam in Malaysia will be discussed first. The discussion helps us to contextualise the historical facts of the Islamic expansion in the country in the present study. It is important to make sense of the educational development and the development of Islamic knowledge among society. The next part of this chapter also puts Islamic knowledge into the context to explain how knowledge and education are important for Muslims.

2.3. The historical emergence of Islam in Malaysia

2.3.1. Historical perspective on the expansion of Islam in Malaysia.

The recognition of Islam as the official religion in the Constitution of Malaysia is a continuation of practices in most of the states in Peninsular Malaysia before the colonial period. Al-Attas (1984) argued that Islam was practised in the Peninsular Malaysia since early of the 14th century based on the artefact that was found in Terengganu, a state that is located in eastern Peninsular Malaysia. The inscription on the stone mentioned the practices of Islamic law and stated the carving dates of the stone on 702 A.H. which is 1303 A.C. (Al-Attas, 1984). The teaching of Islam spread among the masses through various ways such as preaching activity (*da'wah*) and marriage among the ruler. The trading activities in several South-East Asian ports also contributed to the incoming of Muslim traders and Muslim travellers who subsequently preached Islam. Malacca developed as an Islamic empire in early 15th century when King Parameswara

converted to Islam and changed his name to Sultan Iskandar. The term *Sultan* which means the king has been adopted from other Muslim empires. Pasai, the nearest great Muslim empire during that time, made an impact on the expansion of Islam and influenced people in Peninsular Malaysia to embrace Islam.

Before the Islamic era, there is evidence of the Hindu-Buddha Kingdom in the region which can be dated back to the first century. Archaeologists found many places of worship and carved-idols for Hindu-Buddha worshippers in Kedah. The historic places of worship for Hindus, known as Candi, are still preserved on several places in Bujang Valley, Kedah. The influence of Hinduism and Buddhism during that period seem to be very strong among people with the highest level of social status (see Hasni, Ali and Ramli, 2017). These religions were practised among monks and religious leaders, whereas the majority of the general population only assimilated to religious customs and rituals in cultural festivals, such as wedding days and the celebration of a newborn baby (Salleh and Harun, 2015). However, the presence of Hinduism and Buddhism in Malaysia these days are different from this historical story. Hinduism and Buddhism were brought by the immigrants from other continents when they settled in Malaysia during the period of British colonialism (Kim, 1998; Hasni, Ali and Ramli, 2017). Most of the people in the Malay continent historically believed in animism, which is the belief of objects possessing souls' and worshipping these objects. This belief is still practised among the aborigine peoples. Their rituals can be seen from cultural practices and customs. For instance, during harvesting seasons, a special ritual event will be performed, which consists of presenting sacrifices to the soul of plants by bringing any food or fruits.

The emergence of Islam can also be traced in terms of Malaysian legislation development. There are two types of law consisting of common law and Islamic law. The common law is applied to the whole society, whereas the Islamic Law only applies to Muslims for several Muslim conducts such as marriage, inheritance and apostasy. The Islamic law has been practised since before the Independent Day of Malaysia, and it was recognized and referred to as *Syariah* Law in the Constitution of Malaysia. The Article 121(1a) on Judicial Power of the Federation states, “*The courts referred to in Clause (1) shall have no jurisdiction in respect of any matter within the jurisdiction of the Syariah courts.*” The implementation of dual justice systems requires more understanding among society because it may disrupt a harmonious relationship among people of different religious backgrounds. For instance, many issues have been highlighted in the case of apostasy and child custody if one of the parents embraced Islam or left the religion. In each state in Malaysia, Islamic bodies play a significant role in Muslim society such as in managing education, *zakah* (endowment), *waqf* and *fatwa*. There is a consensus in the Islamic bodies to govern Muslim affairs based on the Shafi’i school of thought and follows the theological understanding of Ash’araites and Maturidites approaches (Majid, 2007). In the meantime, the Islamic bodies also recognized Hanbali, Maliki and Hanafi schools of thought (Muhammad Asni and Sulong, 2017).

In terms of the transmission of Islamic knowledge, education during the early period of Islam not only focussed among the rulers and leaders, but it was also spread among the masses. Preachers taught about Islam in many places, such as in the palace, mosques and homes. People started to build small huts to live near to the preacher's place. This is how the earliest system of education called ‘*Pondok*’ (literally meaning small hut) started in Peninsular Malaysia. This system was also applied in other nearby countries with a different name, such as ‘*Pesantren*’ in Indonesia, ‘*Dayah*’ in Aceh and

Southern Thailand using the same term, *Pondok*. Many Arabic books have been translated into the Malay language and there are many Malay manuscripts that have been written in *Jawi*, a Malay alphabet adapted from the Arabic alphabet. It should be noted that the preaching of Islam not only focusses on knowledge transmission, but also contributes to the development of Malay civilization through teaching and writing activities (Salleh, 2010). People slowly shifted from the belief of animism to the Islamic worldview that there is a God who created all things in the world. Islam has been practised by most of the citizens and made an impact to the social changes in many aspects of life, although there are some syncretic elements of which Islamic belief and other traditional belief are mixed in practice. Winstedt (1923, p. 103) highlighted the difficulties to differentiate between Islamic rituals and rituals of other religions by Muslims in the early development of Malaysia.

The learning process during the early period of Islam included the use of challenge and questioning while engaging with Islamic knowledge. Most of the manuscripts critically engages the topic of Islamic knowledge and invites readers to understand the textual and contextual thoroughly. This can be seen in many places in the Malay manuscripts, especially in the discussion about the oneness of Allah (*Tawhid*) and morality (*Akhlak*). The recognition of reasoning in interpreting Islamic knowledge has resulted in the existence of various schools of thought all over the Muslim world. In Peninsular Malaysia, there are at least two different schools of thought called '*Kaum Tua*' (literally meaning the older generation) and '*Kaum Muda*' (literally meaning the young generation) (Abdullah, 1997). *Kaum Tua* prefers to apply Sufism approaches in preaching Islam with special reference to Al-Ghazali's thought, whereas *Kaum Muda* applies more progressive approaches by adapting thoughts of some figures in Islamic movement, such as Ibn Taymiyyah. However, reasoning activity in knowledge

transmission became stagnant since several decades ago, due to many factors such as simply replicating traditional teaching methods and some of the Muslim preachers undermining contextual elements of society. This is actually a problem of Muslim society all over the world.

The transmission of Islamic knowledge among people in the early period of the expansion of Islam was also done without ignoring the importance of respecting other religions and religious differences. The gradual process in the understanding of Islam shows how the preachers focussed on the fundamental belief or '*Aqidah*' in line with Prophet Rasulallah's approach in the early period of his *da'wah*. This is to emphasize that most of the Muslim preachers took seriously on the cultural background of society since it is deep-rooted in the heart. Even in some cases, preachers simply adapted cultural heritage and made it relevant in the daily life as a Muslim. For examples, musical instruments have been used as one of the methods to invite people to learn about Islam. Indeed, a cultural or '*urf*' could be accepted as one of the sources in Islamic law (Ramli, 2006; Jamaluddin, Ramli and Rahman, 2011). This process shows how the multi-religious society of Malaysia became close to each other. This is not until the time of war when the colonialists applied radical approaches and used religion as a weapon to weaken their enemy. The unfortunate fate of the First World War and the Second World War also impacted on the Malaysians' acceptance of each other, even though they had experience of living together in diversity. Nowadays, many interreligious issues have been highlighted that requires a wise approach to encounter. Next, this chapter will discuss the significance of knowledge for Muslims and the impact of a different understanding of knowledge on education.

2.3.2. The significance of knowledge and education for Muslim

As we have discovered above on the historical development of Islam in Malaysia, it is important to highlight the understanding of Muslims towards knowledge (*Ilm* in the Arabic language). The significance of knowledge in Islam led to Malay-Muslim society's demand for the development of educational institutions. As a result, there are many Islamic educational institutions that developed, which will be presented later in the next part of this chapter. However, an uncertain consequence of this process to the Malaysian multi-cultural and multi-religious society requires an empirical study of which the present research aims to explore, which is the attitude toward interreligious harmony and its correlates.

The understanding of the roles of knowledge in Islamic tradition originated from the word of revelation from Allah to Prophet Muhammad, the last messenger of Allah to the whole of mankind, through Angel Gabriel. The first word that was revealed to Prophet Muhammad is *Iqra'* which means reading (Quran, 96:1). The process of transmitting the revelation signifies the importance of education in Islam. The core belief among Muslims is that all the words and actions of Prophet Muhammad is inspired by God (Quran, 53:3-4). There are two primary sources of divine revelation in Islamic tradition: first, the words directly from Allah are compiled into the sacred text of Quran; and second, all Prophet Muhammad's words that were not directly sent down by Allah, and his actions are considered as a *Sunnah* (literally meaning tradition). Such were compiled into several textbooks, such as *Sahih Bukhari* and *Sahih Muslim*. The whole content of the Quran, the compilation of the word of God to Prophet Muhammad, is considered as knowledge because it contains guidance for humankind to live in this world and the preparation for the hereafter life. For Muslims, to acquire the knowledge from one generation to another must be transmitted through the educational

process. Therefore, Quranic verses and historical events during Prophet Muhammad's life are significant references for Muslims towards living in a multicultural and multi-religious society.

Sahin (2014, 2018) has argued that although the educational terminology in Islam is rich, the concept of education in Islam is most compressively expressed with the concept of *tarbiyyah*. Al-Isfahani (1992) defines the term of *tarbiyyah* as a process to grow the human potential to become a good person. The ultimate interpretation of education in Islam begins with Allah as a *Rab* (literally meaning God in English) as the highest knowledge and source of knowledge. Thus, in many verses in the Quran, an important word derives from the word *Rab* which conveys an educative meaning for spiritual, physical and the body. For example, the first verse in the Quran refers to Rabb as the Lord of universe (1:1), *rabba-yarbu* which means to add, grow and develop (30: 39); *rabbiya-yarbu* which means to become bigger; and (3) *rabba-yarubbu* which means to repair, manage affairs, lead and nurture (Al-Nahlawi, 2007). Literally, the concept of education is very clear to facilitate human beings to develop based on their own capacity to be a good human being in this world. People should acknowledge that human development (i.e. emotion, physical and cognitive) involves people around them and that process should not leave one single important point as to how Allah guides the Prophet Muhammad in his life to become aware of God.

The understanding of the ways in which knowledge can be transmitted has an impact on the approach taken by Muslim parents to fulfil the educational attainment of their children. There is a group of people who choose to learn Islamic knowledge to get good rewards and salvation from Allah in the Hereafter. They send their children to learn Quran and texts on Islamic knowledge. Whereas others send their children to the

educational systems with the integration of knowledge between worldly knowledge (i.e. science and mathematics) and religious knowledge. Consequently, there was a diversity of opinion among Muslims on the ways in which the schooling system should be developed for the younger generations to attain knowledge. This approach might contribute to a different attitude toward interreligious harmony among students in different types of school in which this study aims to examine.

These issues also impact on how the educational systems developed within Muslim countries, specifically in Malaysia. In the next part of this chapter, the development of the educational system will be highlighted, and the discussion will also focus on the reaction among Muslims towards living in a multi-religious society in the educational system.

2.4. Religious diversity and education policies in Malaysia

The present research also has been contextualized within Malaysian educational systems by discussing the historical development of education, the educational policies for a multi-religious society and the education systems for young Muslims.

Islam has been practised for centuries in Malaysia through a gradual process of acceptance among society and the development of a nation with a system adapted from Islamic knowledge. The historical development of Malaysia from its earlier period to its Independence Day has shaped today's society. Early Muslim generations learned Islamic knowledge and gradually understood and practised the teaching. During the period of Independence Day, Islamic practices have been protected by the law and Islam was highlighted in the Constitution of Malaysia as the religion of the federation (Malaysia, 2010). Therefore, Islamic value has been a central reference in any approaches taken by the Malaysian government.

The importance of religion to the society contributed to the development of the educational system to ensure that Islamic knowledge is transmitted from one generation to another. In Malaysia, many groups introduced Islamic schooling systems to accommodate the demand from parents. As a result, besides the school initiated by the government, many types of schools and organisations developed different models of education. The educational development for young Muslims in Malaysia consequently raised the question of how the educational system helps young Muslims nurture their attitude towards people of different religious backgrounds and how the attitude toward interreligious harmony can be nurtured. Therefore, it is important to acknowledge the development of education for Muslims in order to empirically assess their attitudes toward interreligious harmony.

2.4.1. Social integration in the Malaysian educational systems

The development of the Malaysian educational system focussed on social integration can be divided into pre-colonial, colonial and post-independence periods. The earliest educational system before the colonial period was developed within the framework of Islamic Education (Jasmi and Tamuri, 2007; Nasir, 2010; Nor and Othman, 2011). It positioned the teacher who had a high reputation in society, as the focal reference of the system. A mosque was the main educational institution and students who had come from afar stayed near to the mosque and teacher's house. This educational system was known as the *Pondok* (small hut) system and later, the upgraded *Madrasah* system, inspired by the educational systems in Middle Eastern countries, was introduced. During this period, the educational systems focussed on teaching about the Muslim faith and the life of the Prophet Muhammad to provide a religious way of life. This schooling system still exists today, but with many improvements, especially in terms of student assessment, recognition of certification from the Malaysian government and

governments of other countries, while maintaining its focus to provide knowledge about Islam. Intercultural and interreligious engagement were not the focus in the educational system, but the teacher and students are very critical towards values and thoughts of other cultures and religions.

During the colonial period, there are at least two educational systems for Malay-Muslims during this period: first, a *Pondok* or *Madrasah* system of education; and second, a Western-secular education system. Despite an increasingly diverse society, a system of ethnic and linguistic segregation was introduced by the British, which resulted in the separation between young people of different ethnics in the educational system. The British also introduced a new Western-style secular education, which created a dualism in education between religious and non-religious education. The new secular schooling system was developed purposely to prepare the student to work in the British colonial government after the completion of their studies (Mat, 1990). For Muslim students who opted to follow the British education system, they would attend after school classes provided by Islamic religious authorities to learn about Islam. Alternatively, they would be taught by a private teacher.

Malaysia's multi-ethnic society gradually became more segregated regarding its educational systems after the Independence Day. So, the government gradually reformed the system by introducing an integration policy, implementing new curricula and developing mixed-ethnic schools. Briefly, several types of schools which have been developed before the Independence Day, have been upgraded by implementing a national curriculum (Ministry of Education, 2020b). For primary education, the schools are known as National School, National School (Tamil type) and National School (Chinese type). For secondary education, there is a National Secondary School, National

Secondary School (Chinese type) and other types of school which are developed with specific interests, such as science colleges and religious schools. The Figure 2.3 shows the summary of the Malaysian education systems. The achievement of students in the Malaysian government schools is assessed by the Malaysian examination system, such as UPSR (*Ujian Penilaian Sekolah Rendah* or Primary School Achievement Test) for primary school students and PTS (*Pentaksiran Tingkatan 3* or Form Three Assessment), and SPM (*Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia* or Malaysian Certificate of Education) for secondary school students. The government effort to integrate the society through the education sector was by introducing mixed-ethnics schools such as National Secondary Schools (*Sekolah Menengah Kebangsaan*) and Vision Schools (*Sekolah Wawasan*). Vision Schools refer to a primary school complex in which two or three schools of different types (National School, National Chinese-type School and National Tamil-type School) are placed. The idea is to set interconnected buildings to facilitate interactions among pupils in these schools, the sharing of school facilities and the planning of activities together (Othman, Ruslan and Ahmad, 2012).

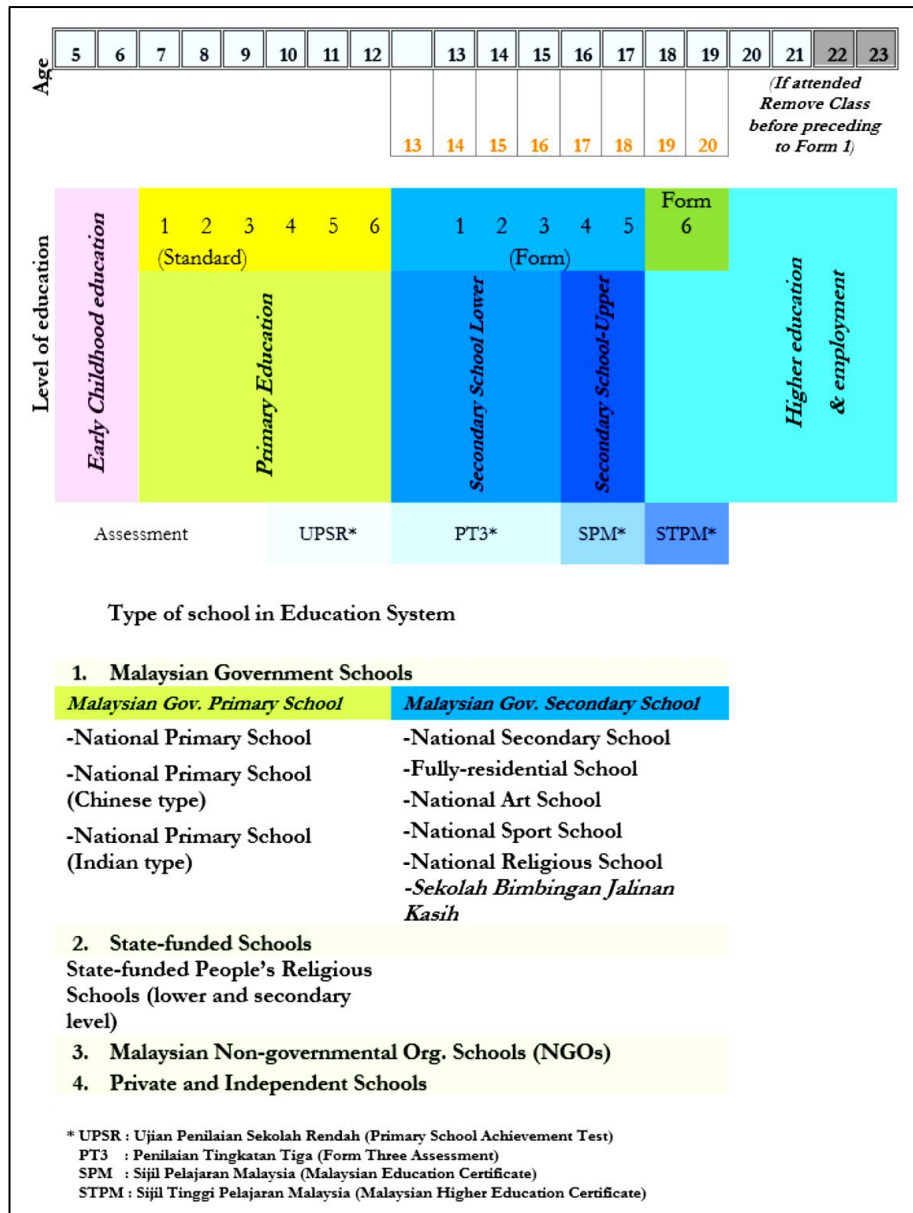


Figure 2. 3: Summary of the Malaysian education systems

The government policy to integrate a society through education was very clear; however, the vision was not shared by all. Various types of schools from the past still exist, including the traditional education system for Muslims and a vernacular school for the Chinese and Indians. In addition, many independent schools exist such as faith-based schools, ethnic-based schools and international schools, which all have different

aims and values. The schooling systems for young Muslims also vary. There are mainstream schools by the Malaysian government, faith-based schools by State Islamic Religious Department, non-government organization schools such as IKRAM and ABIM (Muslim Youth Movement of Malaysia), political parties such as PAS (Malaysian Islamic Party), international organizations and individual private schools. The curriculums offered in different types of schools also vary such as the National Curriculum, the *Azhari* curriculum which focusses in learning Islamic knowledge in the Arabic language, the International curriculum which adapts the syllabus from other countries, and the memorization of the Quran.

2.4.2. The Islamic Education system for young Muslims in Malaysia

The educational system provided for young Muslims to develop an understanding of Islamic knowledge and Islamic education is varied. During the early period of educational reform and after the Independence Day, there are at least two approaches that has been applied. The first approach focusses on teaching about Islam through an Islamic Education curriculum. The second approach offers a holistic learning environment based on Islamic values and teachings. While the first approach has been applied in the mainstream education system, the latter has been conducted in alternative schooling systems, such as by religious authority bodies, non-governmental organization, political party and private institutions. It shows how in Malaysia, Muslims have a different approach toward education and how the Muslim society has started to divide in the education sector.

The first approach has been applied through a reformation in the mainstream educational systems during the Independence Day in which the Islamic Education curriculum was introduced after the demand by the Muslim society. This approach has been implemented in the schools funded by the Malaysian government. The

government's effort not only focussed on integrating the multicultural society in the educational system, but they also introduced a new essential syllabus in the systems. Several reports in education have been made to inform the newly set-up government during the Independence Day. In 1956, the government published a report on education reform entitled 'The Razak Report (Malaya, 1956). The report highlighted that religious education for Muslim students should be provided in the mainstream education system if there is a minimum number of 15 Muslim students in the school. Then, based on the Education Act 1961, the Islamic Education curriculum was made compulsory for Muslim students. However, this educational approach in teaching the Islamic Education curriculum is more exam-oriented, which affected the acceptance among Muslim parents toward National schools (Yunus *et al.*, 2007).

The second approach to teach Islamic knowledge for young Muslims in Malaysia focusses on the idea that the whole educational system should be holistically integrated with Islamic value. This includes the school's values, curriculum, clothing etiquette, environment and extra curriculum. The idea is that young Muslims should be provided with more than just a basic knowledge of Islam, and their life must be shaped in the environment which designs to accommodate religious commitments and development of the student. This type of school is also known as Islamic faith-based schools or religious schools, which is only enrolled by Muslim students. Some of these schools provide hostels to ensure that the students' lives can be shaped holistically based on Islamic value at all times.

Some of the Islamic movements such as *Al-Arqam* and the Malaysian Islamic Youth Movement (Angkatan Belia Islam Malaysia: ABIM), have developed a model of Islamic faith-based school in the early 1970s (Nagata, 2004). *Al-Arqam*, which is

basically a *tasawwuf* group, was founded by Kamal Ashari. The educational model of *Al-Arqam* integrates between entrepreneurship training and religious knowledge to support economic and religious development among their followers. However, due to a different understanding of Islam, the group and its related institutions were banned by the Malaysian government. Then, the movement changed its name to *Global Ikhwan* and *Rufaq*’ but remained closely monitored by the government. Another important Islamic movement, ABIM, was created by Abdul Wahab Zakaria in 1970. ABIM also holds the view that all knowledge should be integrated with Islamic knowledge and a holistic Islamic educational environment should be provided for young Muslims. The first educational institution introduced by ABIM is known as *Yayasan Anda*. The educational systems introduced by ABIM started from early childhood education to tertiary education. However, the curriculum was set up to follow the National Curriculum. In the context of a multi-religious society in Malaysia, ABIM has a unit called Islamic Outreach Centre (previously known as Islamic Outreach ABIM) which focusses on teaching Islam to new Muslim converts and non-Muslims.

The political party named Malaysian Pan-Islamic Party (*Parti Islam SeMalaysia*: PAS) also introduced Islamic faith-based schools. PAS introduced a schooling system for early childhood education known as PASTI (*Pusat Asuhan Tunas Islam*). This expands to primary education (such as Darul Ulum Islamic Primary School), secondary education (such as Darul Ulum Islamic Secondary School) and tertiary education (such as Islamic College of Science and Technology). The schools gain support and are sustained because of their many supporters all over the country.

The Malaysian government also started to introduce Islamic faith-based schools into the mainstream education system in 1977 with the aim to provide Islamic values

holistically in the school environment (Ministry of Education, 2020b). Currently, the Malaysian Ministry of Education has established 55 schools in the category of National Religious Secondary School (*Sekolah Menengah Kebangsaan Agama: SMKA*). Several syllabuses for higher knowledge on Islam were introduced including *Tasawwur Islam*, *Quran wa Sunnah* and *Syariah Islamiyyah*. In recent years, the Malaysian Ministry of Education took over many schools from the religious body in several states. New curriculums known as *Dini/Azhari* (upgraded from the older syllabus in the Arabic language) and *Tahfiz* were introduced. These schools were categorized as Government-funded Religious School (*Sekolah Agama Bantuan Kerajaan: SABK*) and are consistent with the exam-oriented education approach.

Even though the Malaysian government has initiated many improvements in faith-based school management and curriculum, parents are still attracted to sending their children to non-government schools. The number of independent faith-based schools or private faith-based schools has increased dramatically over the years in Malaysia. Many of these schools focus on memorizing the Quran and *Talaqqi Kitab* (literally meaning learn a specific text or book on Islamic knowledge). The education system implemented in this kind of school is defined by the school leader and no structured assessments are applied. Both of these elements follow the traditional educational systems of the past. Some of the traditional educational systems such as *Pondok* are still maintained and receive funding by the state-religious body because of large interest in following the teaching.

Many parents choose to send their children to the Islamic school systems managed by the state religious authority, *Madrasah* or *Pondok* due to the assumption that there is a limitation in the mainstream educational systems in providing Islamic

knowledge for young Muslims. The mainstream education system has been seen as inadequate to provide young Muslims with Islamic knowledge for many reasons. For example, the time allocated for the Islamic Education curriculum in mainstream schooling allows very limited time for the children to learn about Islam. The school environment is also insufficient for them to nurture moral values based on Islamic teaching.

As we have discussed the development of educational systems for young Muslims, we can conclude that Islamic education institutions are very important for Muslims in Malaysia. The increasing number of Islamic schools every year is a result of the motivation and interest among parents to send their children to Islamic faith-based schools. In the next part, the chapter further discusses the integration policy in the Malaysian educational system.

2.4.3. Impact of educational systems to the multicultural and multi-religious society

To address the issues arising from a multicultural and multi-religious society, the Malaysian government has put a major emphasis on the educational system as a way of promoting social and community cohesion. Issues on integration among society and preventative solutions for the conflict in society have been highlighted in the Razak Report (Malaya, 1956), and the Rahman Talib Report (Malaya, 1960), those in which formed the basis of the Education Act of 1961 and the revision of the Education Act in 1996. This effort has been framed in National Education Philosophy which states:

“Education in Malaysia is an on-going effort towards further developing the potential of individuals in a holistic and integrated manner, so as to produce individuals who are intellectually, spiritually, emotionally and physically balanced and harmonious, based on a firm belief in and devotion to God. Such an effort is designed to produce Malaysian citizens who are knowledgeable and competent, who possess high moral standards, and who

are responsible and capable of achieving high level of personal well-being as well as being able to contribute to the harmony and betterment of the family, the society and the nation at large,” (Ministry of Education, 2020a).

The initiative has been supported by several other policies such as a National Language Policy and National Cultural Policy. The latest report in the Malaysian educational system named Malaysia Blueprint 2013-2025 (Ministry of Education, 2020a) also focusses on integration among the multicultural society by emphasizing five aspirations – Access, Quality, Equity, Unity and Efficiency. It is a continuous process by the government to integrate people from different socio-cultural backgrounds because each ethnic group has different aspirations in education and different perceptions toward majority-minority rights, language and socio-economic opportunities in education (Jamil and Raman, 2012).

When we look carefully at the government’s approaches, the integration seems to be only focussed on ethnic differences compared to other elements in society. As there are many elements closely related to ethnic identity, it seems that any intergroup issues should be solely approached from ethnicity-based paradigms. This approach therefore neglected other important elements for integration among society, such as the importance of religion in individuals. Religion, that has been regarded to intertwine with ethnicity, might be assumed as less important or too sensitive to be discussed.

The Malaysian government also introduced many programs into the schools to facilitate good interaction among students with different cultural backgrounds. However, most of these programs were approached solely from sociological paradigms which emphasize intergroup contact. The relationships among young generations from different religious backgrounds in schools also became more complicated when only students in mixed-ethnic schools benefitted from the program. For the school

management and students in other types of schools or segregated schools, they were left to manage themselves in nurturing good attitudes towards intergroup cohesion and intergroup harmony in a religiously diverse society. A holistic approach to children's development that emphasize spiritual, emotional, intellectual and physical aspects of the children helps them in having a positive attitude towards others in the intergroup relationship.

There are several guidelines and rules by the Malaysian Ministry of Education regarding the right to manifest religious beliefs and practise religion in mainstream schools. The regulations and rules are related to hair and wearing of religious symbols in school (Ministry of Education, 1976, 2015), reading a specific prayer (Ministry of Education, 1977), food preparation (Ministry of Education, 1981), organizing religious-based clubs (Ministry of Education, 2011a) and teaching religious knowledge in school (Ministry of Education, 2011b). These documents proved that the right to practise any religion has been recognized in the Malaysian educational systems and religious diversity was taken as an important element, but the religious plurality has not been managed holistically and comprehensively. The discourse on the interreligious relations among students in the school is very limited. Most of the time, the approach taken in the mainstream educational system towards a harmonious religious society has been based on the specific issue that arises in the school. The religious matter has been regarded as a sensitive issue, but it has been left to the responsible parties, such as school management and government bodies to resolve those issues.

Despite insufficient initiative towards interreligious cohesion and harmony, some of the faith-based schools have been targeted for breeding terrorism. Hashim and Langgulung (2008) raised their concern about people's attitudes towards Islamic

religious schools, especially after the 9/11 tragedy because many of the Islamic schools have been seen as having a connection with terrorism (see also Buang, 2007; Chernov-Hwang, 2011). The attitude towards Islamic schools also affected many religious schools in Malaysia. Historically, the Malaysian government has urged all faith-based schools' management to get accreditation by the government to ensure any certificate that offered to students who attend to this kind of school will be recognised by the Malaysian government body. As an incentive, the government gave funding to manage the school. However, in the 2000s, the government stopped providing funding to numerous schools for two reasons: lack of facilities and lack of trained teachers (Hashim and Langgulung, 2008). The decision made by the government has raised a question of whether it was a sincere agenda or motivated by the political agenda or pressure from other countries impacted by the tragedy of 9/11 and other terrorist activities. It has been the same *modus operandi* by the Pakistani government in the same year to close some *madrasah* which had a connection with a militant reputation. For the same reason, it was decided that the *madrasah* sector would be reformed (see Leirvik, 2008). As a result, many religious schools in Malaysia closed because of limited funding and due to many students moving to mainstream schools. However, some of the schools that were affected by the policy survived. Interestingly, within the limitation of the funding, many of the religious schools gained support from Muslim parents, not because of their quality in teaching and learning, but the Islamic socio-environment of school (Buang, 2007). Despite the above claims on Islamic faith-based schools, there is very limited empirical evidence regarding the outcome of integration in society. Based on this background, the study aims at empirically assessing attitudes among young Muslims towards interreligious harmony in all types of schools in Malaysia.

2.5. An Islamic perspective on the value of interreligious harmony

We have discussed the importance of knowledge in Islam, the development of educational systems for Muslims in Malaysia and the available policies in the educational system in regard to religious diversity. The discussion has highlighted the fact that Islam has been a major influence in the educational system in Malaysia, whether it be the mainstream Malaysian national education system or other alternative education systems offered by independent organizations. The Quranic and prophetic traditions constitute sources of the educational system. Therefore, it is important to look at what Islam says about religious diversity. The final part of this chapter discusses Islamic views on managing interreligious relationships based on the sources of knowledge in Islamic tradition: Quranic verses and the prophetic traditions.

The value of relationships among humankind from an Islamic perspective has been grounded on the concept of human creation. While the Bible suggests humans are created in the image of God to explain the concept of human dignity, the Quran avoids this anthropomorphism as God is unlike any image people could imagine. Instead, Allah explicitly states that human beings have been honoured (*karamah*) with a distinctive creation. Allah declares '*And We have certainly honored the children of Adam and carried them on the land and sea and provided for them of the good things and preferred them over much of what We have created, with definite preference*' (Quran, 17: 70). It began with the creation of Adam and Hawa, and from them, Allah created the generations of human beings. In Islam, it is clear that people of different social backgrounds come from the same lineage. Allah has honoured human beings by giving them the ability to think. There are different forces consisted of spirit (*ruh*), intellect (*aqal*), and the passionate soul attached to the body (*nafs*) (Ashraf and Hussain, 1979). By approaching these elements, it gives more meaning to the study of individual differences as these elements are primary in the creation of

humans. Individual responses to their environment might also be different from others due to many factors, such as sociological backgrounds. Therefore, Islam recognizes individual differences and requires people to know others and learn about others (Quran, 49: 13).

From Islamic perspectives, individual affairs have been tied on a vertical and horizontal aspect of a relationship with God, mankind and the whole world. The vertical aspect of the relationship is between the self and Allah as a God. This is a divine relationship because Allah is the Creator and the Best Companionship (Al-Quran, 50: 16; 57: 4). Whereas, the horizontal relationship is between the individual and society, and the relationship with other creatures such as animals and plants. However, these relations are integrated and not isolated to each other. The consciousness of life as a *Khalifah* of Allah (literally means vicegerent and the word also means stewardship of earth, one who looks after it) makes Muslims acknowledge that people are interconnected as one society called '*ummah*'. For example, the gathering of Muslims in the mosque has been seen as a hallmark for Muslims' religiosity, shifting from private to the public sphere of religion (Cesari, 2005). These relations also require Muslims to realize their roles and responsibility to society which includes collective value. A collective value in Islamic teaching has been emphasized in the faith of God (*Tawheed*) and several religious practices such as in praying (*Salat*), sharing wealth through alms (*zakat*), and performing a pilgrim (*Hajj*). The purpose of performing such religious practices is to elevate spiritual achievement from self-awareness to social awareness. These are amongst the important aspects in Islamic teaching which guides Muslims toward developing a just and peaceful society.

Islamic knowledge also teaches Muslims to be just and to do well towards people of different backgrounds, including non-Muslims. Islamic teaching provides a holistic approach towards establishing a harmonious society such as through mutual respect, lack of hostility, as well as having a dialogue and tolerance to others. Based on Quranic guidance, which is a key Islamic source, there is a clear invitation for interreligious harmony even in the call to preach Islam because as it states that there is no compulsion to submit to Islam, *“There is no compulsion in religion; truly the right way has become clearly distinct from error; therefore, whoever disbelieves in the Shaitan and believes in Allah he indeed has laid hold on the firmest handle, which shall not break off, and Allah is Hearing, Knowing”* (Quran, 2: 256). This principle is further demonstrated in the words *“You shall have your religion and I shall have my religion”* (Quran, 109: 6).

An encouragement for interreligious dialogue often rely on the following Quranic verses: *“Call to the way of your Lord with wisdom and goodly exhortation, and have disputations with them in the best manner; surely your Lord best knows those who go astray from His path, and He knows best those who follow the right way”* (Quran, 16: 125), and *“Say: O followers of the Book! Come to an equitable proposition between us and you that we shall not serve any but Allah and (that) we shall not associate aught with Him, and (that) some of us shall not take others for lords besides Allah; but if they turn back, then say: Bear witness that we are Muslims”* (Quran, 3: 64). There is also a guide to use an appropriate word towards other beliefs as mentioned: *“And do not abuse those whom they call upon besides Allah, lest exceeding the limits they should abuse Allah out of ignorance. Thus, have We made fair-seeming to every people their deeds; then to their Lord shall be their return, so He will inform them of what they did”* (Quran, 6: 108).

Living together in a multi-religious society requires Muslims to acknowledge the differences and create understanding in relationships. It is a clear message in Islam for

mankind to strive to be a good Muslim as well as a good man among humankind. It must be supported through knowledge and understanding, rather than coercion. It is very unfortunate that the historical fact and current issues in politics contributed to Islamophobia, Islam being seen as the religion of war, and many misperceptions that are definitely unacceptable.

2.6. Conclusion

In conclusion, religious diversity has been recognized in the Malaysian governmental system, the Malaysian educational system and society as a whole. It can be seen from the various ways such as in the Constitution of Malaysia, the policies implemented, and the presence of religious identification on building and cultural heritage. However, the attitude among people in the context of religious diversity is very complex to discuss. Some conflicts in the past show how the society struggles in maintaining a harmonious relationship among people of different religious adherents. Therefore, an empirical study to assess attitudes among young Muslims in which the present study aims to conduct is very important. The present study could provide data to inform the attitudes towards interreligious harmony among the young Muslim generation in Malaysia.

The above discussion has highlighted the expansion of Islam in Malaysia through systematic education to ensure people to understand Islamic knowledge and practices in daily life. It is only due to the unfortunate events of war that impact Muslims' perceptions towards people of other religions and vice versa. The education systems for young Muslims are also separated due to different approaches toward education and different understandings of the importance of education among Muslims. It is clear that Islamic knowledge emphasizes on good conduct in intergroup relations and highlights human differences in various aspects. The education system that was strongly developed based on Islamic views undeniably helps Muslims to strengthen

their relationship with people of different religious backgrounds. However, the topic of religious diversity and interreligious relations does not focus on addressing or enabling students to develop positive attitudes towards religious diversity. The education system should help students to understand their environment, including the reality of religious diversity. It is important to conduct research to empirically examine young Muslims' attitudes towards interreligious harmony to inform the educational field.

Chapter 3

A critical review of literature exploring religious diversity in modern Malaysia

3.1. Introduction

The previous chapter has discussed the historical and cultural background of education in Malaysia where the present research is set up. The Malaysian government systems and the Malaysian education systems recognise cultural and religious diversity as important identity factors of Malaysian society. The previous chapter also highlighted the development of education systems in terms of integration among people of different backgrounds in society. In addition, the fact that society has experience of conflict due to racial and religious differences and many issues on interreligious relations was highlighted.

This chapter aims at critically reviewing previous research on the topic of religious diversity and empirical research using the attitudinal dimension of an interreligious relationship in Malaysia. Research that assesses attitudes toward interreligious harmony among young Muslims in Malaysia will be highlighted, if any. The focus is on any research related to the topic in sociological, socio-psychological and theological studies. The review will also focus on literature in Islamic Education and a wider context of education in Malaysia. It is vital to locate an appropriate focus in the research through reviewing previous literature. A review of literature helps researchers understand the topic of discussion and acknowledge related available literatures in the research.

A review of literature in the present chapter will begin to look at a sociological and psychological study that assesses the wider topic of intergroup relationships in Malaysia. The second part focusses on literature in the field of social psychology and a

social psychological research framework on religious diversity. The third part focusses on literature in the theological research framework. Finally, this chapter examines the literature on Muslims' attitudes on the topic related to religious diversity in the field of Islamic education and the wider context of education in Malaysia.

3.2. Social identity emphasized in sociological and psychological studies on the wider theme of integration among Malaysian society.

Social identity is almost exclusively a topic of inquiry among sociologists in the study of intergroup cohesion. Within the limited number of empirical studies on the topic of interreligious harmony in Malaysia, this part aims to highlight the available empirical research in evaluating the impact of social identity in the wider context of intergroup harmony. Social identity has been regarded as an important factor that affects a harmonious relationship among people of different cultural backgrounds. A review of literature found that sociological research on early development of modern Malaysia mostly focussed on ethnic identity. For instance, Hewstone and Ward (1985) suggested that sociocultural factors such as Islamic traditions should also be examined to study the inter-group relations. However, they only highlighted on ethnic identity, such that Malays favour their own group and show a higher frequency of intra-group behaviours than other ethnicities. Their studies limit on theoretical discussion, and thus do not inform the field of study on the impact of Malay identity on attitudes towards religious diversity or ethnic diversity in Malaysia. Sociological research should include religion as part of their sociological research because religion is an important source of identity among Malays.

Social identity among Malaysians could be based on nationality, ethnicity and religion. However, research focusses on social identity mostly based on ethnicity and nationality rather than religion, whether in a sociological research perspective or

psychological research perspective. Religion is also regarded as a significant part of social identity and serves as an important role in shaping a good intergroup relationship. This is rarely acknowledged and taken up by the research in the fields of sociology and psychology.

In the context of the multicultural and multi-religious society of Malaysia, several studies have highlighted the importance of social identity in the relationship among people of different cultural backgrounds. There is a vast amount of research investigating the impact of social identity in intergroup cohesion and intergroup conflicts. A review of the available literature indicates that most of the research from sociological approaches were conducted to examine government implementation to enhance social cohesion among society. Some of the studies in this group of literature assess multi-racial integration (Abdullah, 2010), the *Rukun Negara* or literally, meaning the pillars of the Malaysian nation (Singh, 2005; Radzlan, Gill and Talib, 2013; Basir *et al.*, 2014) and the concept of One Malaysia (Khairi, 2011; Talib *et al.*, 2012). The institutional approaches in managing the intergroup relationship are prevalent in literature as noted by Noor and Leong (2013).

It should be noted that the way in which identity among Malays is portrayed is unique from other cultures because the Malay ethnicity is identified with religion. Even though identity is located in the inner self of people, we can trace the fluidity of identity as reflected by the history and the current phenomenon in the diverse society of Malaysia. According to Bordieu (1977), humans as actors, learn and acculturate to their culture in which make them unable to recognize social reality, which thus results in the reproduction of human history. Frith (2000) highlighted that the concept of the habitus of Bordieu (1977) has a limitation for Malay-Muslims' identity because the concept

dismisses the reflexivity in identity. Frith found the mode of identity among Malay-Muslims change in different groups of interaction between Malay-Malay, Malay-Chinese (non-Muslim) and Malay-Chinese (Muslim). With a recognition of the fluidity of identity and acknowledgement of the impact of identity on the integration among the society, empirical research could provide data to inform on the relationship between identity and attitudes toward interreligious harmony.

Social identity among Malays is more complicated because their identity intertwines along the line of ethnicity and religion, whereas people of other ethnics in Malaysia are not associated with any particular religious belief. For instance, Chinese and Indians have various religious beliefs within their ethnic group including Buddhism, Hinduism, Christianity and Islam. The intertwined identifier between ethnic and religion for the Malays is stated in the Article 106(2) of Malaysian Federal Constitution: *'Malay means a person who professes the Muslim religion, habitually speaks the Malay language, conforms to Malay custom and: (a) was before Merdeka Day (Independent day) born in the Federation or born of parents one of whom was born in the Federation or is on that day domiciled in the Federation, or (b) is the issue of such a person.'* Siddique (1981) suggested that the hyphenated ethnic "Malay-Muslim" is more accurate to attach with Malay identity because their ethnic identity is exclusively tied to Islam, which affected socio-cultural, political and economic developments.

Empirical sociological research supports the importance of religious identity among Malays. For instance, Brown (2010) conducted a study to investigate the most preferred identity among people of different ethnicities. Brown found that among Malay respondents, 93.3% of them want to identify themselves based on their religion. Some of them preferred nationality (68.1%), ethnicity (37.8%), and other elements

(below than 30%) such as language, gender, place of residence, place of birth and political ideology to identify themselves. This is also in line with Martin's (2010) findings in the study to uncover the daily discourse among young Muslims in Malaysia. She found that most of the respondents (seven out of eight) would publicly identify themselves as a Muslim. Some of them rejected the ethnic (Malay) identification because of the typical negative perception and some of them want to be identified as a Muslim because the religion makes them feel worthy, although they are not practising the religion. This highlights that religious identification among Malaysians must be carefully assessed. The appearance of religious identity can be seen from various ways, including in literary fiction. In ethnographic research on identity, Banks (1990) stated there is a clear picture of Malay-Muslim characters and their identity as depicted in novels between urban and rural people, and between fundamentalists and non-fundamentalists. Omar and Che Dan (2007) also highlighted how the element of race, religion and gender shape modern literature and how the depiction of religion has become common in modern literature.

Essentially, some literature has highlighted the importance of religious identity in the intergroup and interfaith relationship in Malaysia. Lee and Ackerman (1997) has described the early period of Islamized Malay culture by the concepts of patrimonialism of Weber (1947) that affect social changes and the social relationship among Malaysians. Hunt (2009) also highlighted the narrative of Malay identity in which he argued that the process of identity development among Malay-Muslims dismissed people of different group of ethnics and religions. He highlighted the consequent effect of the narrative of identity among Malay-Muslims on the engagement with non-Muslims.

A psychological study on social identity could also provide evidence for the development of religious identity among Malays and link with attitudinal studies in intergroup harmony. However, psychological research rarely approaches social identity, especially on religious identity among Malay-Muslims. Research in the field of psychology, for instance, has looked at religiosity as a part of identity (Ysseldyk, Matheson and Anisman, 2010) and investigated the role of religions in the intergroup relationship. However, no psychological study on religious identity has been developed within the context of the multi-religious society of Malaysia. This highlights the importance of the present study in which religious identity will be linked with young Muslims' attitudes towards interreligious harmony because empirical evidence can provide more data to the field of study.

Within the limited number of previous research that empirically assesses religious identity, the literature that focusses on the interreligious relationship is rarely approached empirically. The next part of this thesis will review literature that assesses the intergroup relationship in Malaysia and highlights the dominated focus among researchers in the study of intergroup relations. Most of this literature has been conducted from the social psychological research framework.

3.3. Social psychological research paradigm in examining the interreligious relationship

Despite the increasing number of studies in the field of social psychology in the Malaysian context, the theme of religious diversity is not a central research focus. Haslam and Kashima (2010) have reviewed social psychological studies that have been conducted among participants in Malaysia. They found the common themes were personality and individual differences, culture, interpersonal relations and interactions, social cognition (e.g., stereotypes and perception), emotion organizations, group and

intergroup processes health (e.g., mental health), well-being (e.g., coping, stress and adjustment), sex attitudes (e.g., sexual prejudice and sex-role stereotype), judgement and decision-making (e.g., consumer psychology), intercultural processes communication, families and parenting, violence and child abuse, political psychology, and justice (e.g., fairness and equity).

The major theme in the research that approaches the attitudinal dimension of cultural diversity from a social psychological perspective, focusses on the inter-ethnic relationship. Some of the research focusses on ethnic tolerance (Idris *et al.*, 2016; Nizah *et al.*, 2017), ethnic stereotypes (Tamam *et al.*, 2010), perceived behaviour towards inter-ethnic relationships (Idris *et al.*, 2008), the impact of social contact on attitude toward ethnic differences (Tamam, 2009), and the impact of the educational system on the unity among Malaysian society (Hassan *et al.*, 2010). For instance, Tamam *et al.* (2010) examined ethnic stereotypes among the Malay and Chinese. They found that the stereotypes for Malays are mainly based on beliefs and attitudes, rather than food choice, physical appearance and current issues. Some of these studies have also discussed the effect of religion on ethnic tolerance. For instance, Idris *et al.*, (2016) discussed this and highlighted the effect of religious personality and gender differences on the perceived behaviour towards people of different ethnics in everyday lives among youths. However, they also approach the topic from a theoretical research framework without empirically examining the subject.

Even though the social psychological research does not focus on the interreligious relationship in Malaysia, the topic of tolerant attitudes towards people of different religions has been part of the research question in several studies that examined social cohesion in Malaysia. These studies have assessed participants'

perceptions towards people of different cultural and religious backgrounds (Muslim and Noor, 2014) and their tolerant attitude (Talib, 2012; Yunos, 2013; Talib *et al.*, 2014).

Muslim and Noor (2014) examined a tolerant attitude among students in higher education institutions towards living in ethnic diversity. Their study demonstrated that the majority of students acknowledged cultural and religious diversity, had a good relationship with people of different cultural backgrounds, and were ready to share resources among the society. They also found that religious value has been used as a parameter in the interaction between people of different cultural backgrounds such as in food choices, dress code, religious symbols and mixed marriage. Talib and his colleagues examined the tolerant attitude among Malaysians (Talib, 2012; Talib *et al.*, 2014). The tolerant attitude was assessed on the experience of living together, perceptions and behaviours towards people of different cultural and religious backgrounds. Their studies found that young people from the age of 18 and above in Peninsular Malaysia (Talib, 2012) and young people in the East of Malaysia: Sabah and Sarawak (Talib *et al.*, 2014) show high tolerant attitudes. Yunos (2013) also assessed the tolerant attitudes among adolescents in Malaysia. His research examined relationships between tolerant attitudes and religious orientation, ethnic identity and student involvement in co-curricular activities at school. His study used The Revised Version of Allport and Ross's (1967) Religious Orientation Scale by Gorsuch and McPherson (1989) to measure intrinsic and extrinsic religiosity. Briefly, an extrinsic person is motivated to use his religion, whereas an intrinsic person is motivated to internalize his beliefs and live by his religion (Allport and Ross, 1967, p. 434). The report shows how the concept of religious orientation was misinterpreted when Yunos (2013) presented the data as the level of religiousness, rather than the distinction between intrinsic and extrinsic orientation. The reviews in this chapter aim to highlight that the topic of

religious diversity has recently started to become a focus in the research of social diversity. A critical review of the instrument used in previous literature will be highlighted in the analysis chapters.

The present study has been developed to assess the attitudes towards interreligious harmony and examine how it correlates with religiosity. A harmonious relationship among people of different religious backgrounds is one of the Malaysian government's priority for social cohesion. The present study argues that studies on interreligious harmony should be conducted from a social psychological research perspective. An empirical study should be conducted to explore using the term of interreligious harmony because the term has been used widely in the Malaysian context, such as in the constitutional law of Malaysia and in the Malaysian educational policy. The term has never been discussed in the literature and no empirical research has been conducted to explore the term within society. The theme of social harmony that has been well developed in the wider context of social psychology will guide this study. The term will be elaborated in the theoretical and operational framework in this study.

3.4. The research approach in Islamic theology literature on religious diversity.

Research on the theme of religious diversity has also been of focus in the field of Islamic Theology. The beginning of the 21st century shows an increasing number of studies discussing this theme specifically among researchers in Theology in Malaysia. However, the body of knowledge remains largely dominated by a theoretical-historical approach to this topic. Some of the highlighted topics are the recognition of religious diversity (Muthaliff *et al.*, 2016; Ramli and Awang, 2016) and Islamic views on living in a multi-religious society (Ramli and Jamaludin, 2011; Rahman, 2012).

The field of knowledge also has been informed theoretically by these kinds of literature on the ways in which good relations among people of different religious backgrounds could be improved. Most of these studies suggested to increase understanding between people of different religious backgrounds through interfaith dialogue activities (Ishak, 2009; Nor, 2011; Rahim *et al.*, 2011; Khalid *et al.*, 2013; Rahman and Hambali, 2013; Yusof and Majid, 2013; Zohdi, Ramli and Awang, 2014; Omar and Ismail, 2016).

In practice, many interfaith dialogues in Malaysia have been conducted and some of the dialogue has been broadcasted on Malaysian television channels. It is undeniable that participation in the interfaith dialogue helps Muslims in nurturing their attitudes towards having a harmonious relationship with people of different religious backgrounds. Several studies have been conducted to examine the impact of this kind of program to participants' knowledge of other religions. Research that assesses the impact of the broadcasted interfaith dialogue on television found that the program helps the audience in developing their knowledge about other religions, and that the audience supports this type of practice because it is a platform to learn and gain knowledge about the diversity of religious beliefs, practices, customs and traditions (Karim and Saili, 2011; Mazhisham and Khalid, 2015). The study on the impact of attending or watching interfaith dialogue programs among undergraduate students also shows that the program helps them in increasing their knowledge about other religions (Awang and Ramli, 2011). Research that empirically examines on the impact of interfaith dialogue towards religious tolerance found that regular interactions among participants help in fostering interreligious tolerance (Rahah, 2009; Misra and Awang, 2012; Karim, Khambali and Saili, 2014).

However, Karim and Sali (2011) argued that the interaction through the dialogue activities in a setup event was only limited to a specific group of people, as most of the time, the dialogue was conducted among experts in religion and participation among the audience is very limited. The level of understanding of and knowledge about other religions also determined by participation in interreligious dialogue, participant engagement with others and participant level of knowledge. Sintang *et al.* (2013) argued that the interaction among people of different religious backgrounds should not be limited in the participation in the interfaith dialogue. Sintang and her colleagues have conducted a study to explore how the people of different religious backgrounds in Sabah, a state located in the East of Malaysia, co-exist in daily interaction. They found that the interaction among people of different religious backgrounds happens in their daily lives. They suggested a term of ‘dialogue *al-Hikma*’ or literally meaning ‘a wise dialogue’ to describe the approach taken by Muslims in the interaction with others in daily life. More empirical research should be conducted to explore how the interaction among people of different religions, among non-experts in religions or among the general population is like. Perhaps, the present study could inform on the knowledge on young Muslims attitudes in the context of religious diversity.

Within the religious diversity literature, a study conducted in another country has attempted to explore the effect of religious factors and theological factors on attitude towards religious diversity. Francis and McKenna (2017) conducted empirical research to assess attitude towards religious diversity among young Muslims in the UK. They found that students who agree that religious identity is important have a more positive attitude toward religious diversity, and have a theological understanding of whether exclusivism, inclusivism or atheism has a significant effect on attitude towards

religious diversity. These findings indicated the important role of religion and the importance of theological factors in the interreligious relationship. Thus, an empirical study among students in different cultural and religious backgrounds should be conducted to inform the field of study.

As highlighted in the previous chapter, Islamic teaching emphasizes a good conduct among people as an internal and external realization of good virtue. As a result of learning and understanding the religion, Muslims who have good knowledge of Islam and have internalized the faith is believed to have a good relationship with Allah and with other people. Due to the lack of empirical research models to assess how Muslim perceive their religion and their attitudes towards religion, the field of knowledge has very limited data to correlate with other attitudinal studies in interreligious relations. Empirical research to explore the effect of religiosity on attitudes towards religious diversity is also not the focus. This study will be conducted to examine attitudes toward interreligious harmony – informed by the field of Islamic theology – to explore the link between religiosity and the attitudes toward interreligious harmony.

3.5. An empirical study on attitudes within the wider context of social diversity in the educational research approach

The present part reviews literature that approach the wider context of religious diversity from the educational perspective. Even though religious diversity has been regarded as an important element in Malaysian society, there has been very little empirical evidence from the educational research perspective regarding Muslims' attitudes on this topic. The previous chapter has highlighted the ways in which social cohesion among citizens has been highlighted in the Malaysian education systems. However, a review of the literature found that young Muslims' attitudes towards interreligious harmony has never been discussed or assessed empirically from the educational perspective. The previous

literature seems to focus on ethnic diversity, while religious diversity is governed solely by the policy in education and school management if there is any issue arisen.

Many researchers have highlighted the importance to develop a proper curriculum to enhance social cohesion in the multicultural and multi-religious society of Malaysia. There is research assessing the ways in which integration among students of various backgrounds could be achieved through a well-structured curriculum design. Seman *et al.* (2011) focussed on History Education as a medium to enhance integration among students. They found that through the learning process using a Multicultural Teaching Module which includes a module to understand cultural differences, cultural similarities and appreciating the uniqueness of multiculturalism resulted in a high score for racial tolerance. They suggested that national integration could be possible by learning history.

However, the element of ethnic differences has been a major focus in the curriculum provided for students. In systematic review research, Raman (1997) examined the content of the selected textbooks for Year 1 to Year 3 secondary schools students in promoting national unity and integration. The textbooks included in his investigation were *Bahasa Malaysia* (Malaysian Language), English Language, History Education and Moral Education. Raman found that only a few textbooks provide appropriate content for a multicultural society, while History and *Bahasa Malaysia* textbooks concentrate heavily on majority-race identity. Raman (1997) also found that the curriculum was presented from a majority-race perspective.

The Islamic Education curriculum also plays a significant role in fostering a positive attitude among Muslim students in a relationship with people of different religious backgrounds. However, the Islamic Education curriculum does not focus on

the theme of religious diversity. Salleh and Khahar (2016) was analytically reviewed the theme of intergroup integration in the Islamic Education curriculum. Their findings demonstrated that the theme of integration heavily focusses on teaching towards a good relationship with other people without specifically highlighting religious differences. Although the educational systems play an important role in teaching about integration in religious diversity, this theme is not a focus in the Islamic Education curriculum.

So far, a review of the literature found that the educational research approach in fostering a positive attitude towards interreligious harmony has never been discussed. There is literature that empirically assesses on the development of interreligious understanding from educational approaches. However, the previous study only focusses on Muslims adults and young Muslims in higher education institutions. In the context of a multi-religious society, it is essential to investigate attitudes towards interreligious harmony among the Malaysian young generation, which this study intends to focus on, particularly among Muslim students in secondary schools. Even though the present study only aims at exploring the concept of interreligious harmony and assessing the attitude towards interreligious harmony, the data could provide evidence for educators and researchers to think from an educational view and consider students' perspectives while devising educational activities to foster inter-religious harmony. The data could also provide evidence on the important element of nurturing a positive attitude towards interreligious harmony.

3.6. Conclusion

This chapter has reviewed previous literature which relates to the study on attitudes toward interreligious harmony among young people. The review reveals several research themes emphasized on religious diversity in Malaysia from sociological and psychological paradigms and educational research. The review also reveals that there is

no research exploring attitudes towards interreligious harmony among young Muslims. It is obvious that there is a lack of empirical research in research on religious diversity.

Currently, available research from sociological and psychological approaches give more attention to the cultural background of societies in addressing intergroup relations. Sociological factors such as race and ethnicity, family background and socioeconomic status are among the focus in the research. The focus is closely related to the development of self-identity and social identity; for instance, the character held by a person is determined by their in-group and out-group differences or the changes in the society. The identity also develops within the religious environment, but as far as this study is concerned, this is not a major focus in the study of intergroup relations.

Research assessing people's attitudes towards religious diversity from the social psychological paradigm also largely focusses on the multiethnic differences. Only a few pieces of research assess the analytical aspects of religiosity such as religious orientation, while the majority of the survey inquired about religious affiliation. Research approaching from a theological perspective also gives little attention to the empirical research, even though the field of knowledge is very important in the religiously diverse society. The theoretical research framework on the topic of religious tolerance and interfaith dialogue is the focus; however, most of the research discussed is based on religious texts. It appears that attitudes toward interreligious harmony among Muslim adolescents in Malaysia have not been investigated. This study is believed to be the first to attempt to explore attitudes toward interreligious harmony among young Muslims in Malaysia. The present study highlights the lack of empirical research on young Muslims' attitudes to inform the field of Islamic Education. Young people are an important entity in the society that shapes the future. Thus, research assessing their attitudes toward

interreligious harmony is very important. The discussion on the related topic of study that developed in a different social context will be reviewed in the sections of data analysis.

Chapter 4

Methodology

4.1. Introduction

The previous chapter has highlighted the available literature in the theme of cultural and religious diversity in the Malaysian context. A review of available literature on a wider context of religious diversity found limited attitudinal studies in the research theme of religious diversity among young Muslims in Malaysia. Within that limited number of studies, it appears no study has been conducted to empirically assess on attitudes toward interreligious harmony, although the term of interreligious harmony has been widely used in the Malaysian government and education systems. The field of Islamic Education, of which this present study intends to contribute to, also lacks empirical data on the attitudinal study in the theme of religious diversity, and lacks empirical data on the effect of individual differences in religiosity on the attitudinal study of religious diversity.

Against this background, the present research aims to examine attitudes among Muslim students in Malaysian secondary schools toward interreligious harmony. Generally, this study aims to contribute to the growing empirical literature on the theme of religious diversity in the field of Islamic Education and the psychology of religion by approaching the topic from the social-psychological research perspective. A quantitative research design will be employed to provide empirical evidence to the field of study. In general, this is an explanatory study to descriptively present the attitudes toward interreligious harmony and the causal relationships of those attitudes. A theoretical discussion and empirical evidence in the available literature will inform this study. In addition, this study also employs an exploratory research framework to develop the instrument to collect the data. The process to develop the instrument for the survey is

considered as exploratory, due to the limited discussion on the theme of interreligious harmony in the literature.

This chapter discusses the methodological framework of the study in several parts. The first part of this chapter begins with the methodological approach, then states the aim of the study and research hypotheses. The second part of this chapter focusses on the terminology of two important terms: attitude and interreligious harmony, which will guide the research in the operational framework. The third part provides the ethical conduct for the data gathering, sampling procedure, data collection procedure and data analysis. Finally, the last part of this chapter presents the data from the pilot study.

4.2. Methodological approach

A selection of the research design is primarily based on the nature of the research questions, specific research approach and methods in obtaining the data, analysis procedures and interpretation of the data. Having a proper methodology in a study helps researchers secure the validity of their study. Overall, this study is quantitative in nature, mainly because the present study applies explanatory research through descriptive and inferential research analysis. A quantitative research design will be employed in this study to empirically assess the attitudes toward interreligious harmony among Muslim students in Malaysian secondary schools. This study will explore the relationship between the attitudes toward interreligious harmony and identity, religious practices, the attitudinal dimension of religiosity, types of schools and demographic backgrounds.

Referring to the nature of the research problem in this study, a research design using a large-scale quantitative survey has many advantages. Many researchers have

successfully developed techniques to measure attitude in quantitative studies, such as Likert (1932) and Thurstone (1949). Their techniques have been tested by many scholars in many fields of study and have been proved to be valid. The findings can provide empirical data that can be effectively generalized to the wider population. A correlational study that is part of the analysis in the quantitative study also provides causal data, which makes a big contribution in many fields of study (Edmonds and Kennedy, 2016). Furthermore, research that approaches people's attitudes from a sociological and psychological research framework has applied a quantitative research method.

In non-experimental research, issues on internal validity, construct validity and statistical analysis procedures are a major concern (Edmonds and Kennedy, 2016). The present study has put a priority on these issues during the data analysis. The validity of the scales used in this study will be presented in each data analysis chapter.

It is also important to highlight that this study aims at contributing empirical data to the field of Islamic Education on young Muslims' attitudes toward interreligious harmony since the research in Islamic Education and the wider research theme in Islamic Studies have been dominated by the historical and theoretical research framework. The present study could contribute to the increasing amount of empirical research on the interreligious relationship in the context of Malaysian society.

4.3. Research questions

The central research question in this study addresses the attitudes toward interreligious harmony among Muslim students in Malaysian secondary schools. There is a need to examine the attitude of young Muslims toward interreligious harmony because the topic has never been approached in previous literature. The presence of religious diversity has

been recognized in the governmental system and social context; however, no research has been conducted to empirically explore young Muslims' attitudes toward interreligious harmony.

The general questions of the research are:

1. What is the attitude towards Islam among Muslim students in Malaysian secondary schools?
2. What is the attitude toward interreligious harmony among secondary schools' Muslim students in Malaysia?
3. How do attitudes toward interreligious harmony among Muslim students in Malaysian secondary schools relate to personal differences (age and sex), identity, religious practices, attitudes towards Islam and types of school (faith-based school and non-faith-based school)?
4. How are attitudes toward interreligious harmony among Muslim students in Malaysian secondary schools affected by the factors personal differences (sex and age), identity preferences, religious practices, attitude towards Islam and the types of school, and what is the strongest indicator of attitudes of Muslim students in Malaysian secondary schools toward interreligious harmony between all these factors?

4.4. Aim of the study

The purpose of this study is to investigate the attitudes toward interreligious harmony among Muslim adolescents in Malaysia. It also investigates the correlation between various variables consisting of the attitude toward interreligious harmony, religiosity, social and religious distance and demographic background.

In general, the aims of this study are:

1. To assess the attitudes among Muslim students in Malaysian secondary schools towards Islam and its' correlate with personal factors, identity preferences and frequency of religious practices.
2. To assess the attitudes among Muslim students in Malaysian secondary schools toward interreligious harmony.
3. To investigate the degree of the relationship between attitudes toward interreligious harmony and personal differences, identity, religious practices, attitudes towards Islam and types of school (faith-based school and non-faith-based school). In particular, this study investigates:
 - a. The degree of the relationship between the attitude toward interreligious harmony and students' demographic backgrounds, consisting of sex and age.
 - b. The degree of the relationship between the attitude toward interreligious harmony and religious identity.
 - c. The degree of the relationship between the attitude toward interreligious harmony and religious practices (prayer, reading Quran and mosque attendance).
 - d. The degree of the relationship between the attitude toward interreligious harmony and attitude towards Islam.

- e. The degree of the relationship between the attitude toward interreligious harmony and types of school, consisting of faith-based schools and non-faith-based schools.
4. To investigate the strongest indicator of attitude of Muslim students in Malaysian secondary schools toward interreligious harmony between personal differences (sex and age), identity, religious practices, attitude towards Islam and the types of school.

The data will be analysed in three different chapters. The first analysis chapter will be dedicated to assessing the level of religiosity, the second analysis chapter will be dedicated to examining the level of attitude toward interreligious harmony and the third analysis chapter focusses on correlation and regression analysis.

Each analysis chapter as highlighted above tests different hypotheses. As an introduction to this study, some general hypotheses are as follows:

1. Because Islamic teachings emphasize the value of interpersonal relationship, the present study expects that the attitude towards Islam will be positively associated with attitude toward interreligious harmony;
2. The attitudinal dimension of religion which assesses attitude towards Islam is a strong predictor of attitude toward interreligious harmony compared to religious practices;
3. No effect of school differences on attitude toward interreligious harmony; and,
4. Religion-based self-identity will be positively associated with attitude toward interreligious harmony.

4.5. Operational definitions of the central concepts of the inquiry

Two important terms: attitude and interreligious harmony that have been used in the present study require explanation because each term carries a special definition. This part discusses the theoretical and operational definition of these terms. The present study also employs a psychological measure of attitude towards Islam. However, the discussion in this part only focusses on the terms attitude and attitude toward interreligious harmony. The term attitude towards Islam will be discussed in the first part of data analysis concerning with empirical data on religiosity.

4.5.1. Attitude

Researchers generally agree that attitude is the evaluation towards anything, which can be favourable or unfavourable, liked or disliked, and positive or negative. Allport (1935) and Strauss (1945) have a comprehensive discussion on the definition of attitude offered by researchers during their time. There is extensive literature discussed on attitude. Among them, Thurstone (1931) hold the views of attitude as "the affect for or against a psychological object"; Katz (1960) defined attitude as "the predisposition of the individual to evaluate some symbol or object or aspect of his world in a favourable or unfavourable manner"; Ajzen and Fishbein (1977) simply defined attitude as "the evaluation of the entity in question" such as a behaviour, a physical object, and any subject; and, Eagly and Chaiken (1993, p. 1) treat attitudes as personal dispositions, that is, "a psychological tendency that is expressed by evaluating a particular entity with some degree of favour or disfavour". Generally, definitions point towards attitude being an evaluation of something, but some researchers add a more behavioural approach to the definition. Chave (1928) defined attitude as "a complex of feelings, desires, fears, convictions, prejudices or other tendencies that have given a set or readiness to act to a person because of varied experiences"; Allport (1929) argued that attitude incorporates

with the notion of cognition towards any objects or something that is measured. For Allport, attitude is “a disposition to act which is built up by the integration of numerous specific responses of a similar type, but which exists as a general neural ‘set,’ and when activated by a specific stimulus results in behaviour that is more obviously a function of the disposition than of the activating stimulus. Attitudes as broad, generic (not simple and specific) determinants of behaviour.” He also defined attitude as “a mental and neural state of readiness, organized through experience, exerting a directive or dynamic influence upon the individual's response to all objects and situations with which it is related”; while Bogardus (1931, p. 52), defined attitude as “a tendency to act toward or against some environmental factor which becomes thereby a positive or negative value”.

The major argument on the concept of attitude since a few decades ago lies on the distinction of its structure (DeFleur and Westie, 1963; Ashworth, 1980). There are at least two different views on the structure of attitude. First, a group of researchers who agree on the tripartite theory that classifies attitude into three components, consisting of affective, behavioural and cognitive components (Rosenberg and Hovland, 1960; Ostrom, 1969; Bagozzi *et al.*, 1979). The affective component of attitude refers to the feeling towards an object, such as favour towards the objects or feeling good with something. The behavioural or conative component refers to a conative nature such as behavioural inclinations, intentions, commitment and action with respect to the object. The cognitive component refers to the thoughts that associate with the object in question, such as the character or attribute of some object.

In contrast to the above view, there are some researchers that hold attitude as a single dimension of affection for or against a particular object. Fishbein and Ajzen (1974) argued that attitude towards any object is defined as an evaluation towards

something, whether it is people, behaviours or events. Fishbein and his colleague argued that assessing attitude from the affective domain will give more accurate findings on attitude. Attitude towards something might not be correlated with behaviour. For instance, Ajzen and Fishbein (1977) reported that in an investigation among undergraduate students on religious behaviour and attitude, the correlations between behaviours and attitudes were quite low. Ajzen and Fishbein (1980) clearly defined attitude toward performing a behaviour as a function of beliefs about the behaviour, primarily its positive or negative consequences. Although the evaluation of any object or behaviour is influenced by the previous knowledge or relevant information that the respondent has in mind, there is a possibility that the attitude towards the object or behaviour is new. It was explained by other researchers such as Schwarz (1990) in the process of which respondents respond to the questionnaire. Schwarz (1990) explained that, during the process of answering the question, the respondents will find an appropriate answer to the question based on their memory or develop their judgement on the spot. Thus, in order to evaluate attitude, the context of the respondent, such as their social environment, should put into an account, especially when considering limitations to the study of attitude. Clearly, attitudes can be differentiated with behaviour or knowledge of something.

In this present study, the concept of attitude offered by Ajzen and Fishbein (1977) will guide this study in assessing attitude toward interreligious harmony and attitude toward Islam. Ajzen and Fishbein (1977) defined that attitude is the evaluation on an affective dimension, which can be favourable or unfavourable towards the entity in question. Besides the idea that domain of affect accurately measures attitude compared to other domains (i.e.: cognitive and behaviour), the present study approaches attitude on the affective domain based on several reasons. First, engagement

among students with people of different religious and social backgrounds, such as the different experiences of living together with people of a different religion were taken into account in the present study. Researchers such as Ahmad and Saibeh (2011), Idris *et al.* (2016) and Rahim (2003) have highlighted the segregation of students according to ethnicity in schools and not all students had friends from other ethnic backgrounds. Second, as far as this research is concerned, there is no specific syllabus taught about other religions in Malaysian secondary schools. Assessing other domains (i.e. cognitive and behaviour) provides limited evidence for the study. Third, assessing attitude toward interreligious harmony among Muslims in secondary schools on the affective dimension provides strong empirical evidence to the field of Islamic Education and provides new contributions to the field of social psychology.

4.5.2. Interreligious harmony

The term interreligious harmony has been used in the governmental policy, especially in Asian countries such as China, Malaysia, Singapore and Indonesia. A few countries have a particular policy on interreligious harmony, such as the Act on Interreligious Harmony in Singapore (Li-Ann, 2004) and The Indonesian Draft Law on Inter-Religious Harmony in Indonesia, which is still in progress (Crouch, 2013). In Malaysia, there is no particular policy on interreligious harmony (Bakar, 2011); however, this term can be referred to the Federal Constitution of Malaysia which declares that everyone has the right to practise their own faith in peace regardless of their belief and religion. Article 3(1) of the Federal Constitution of Malaysia states that “Islam is the religion of the Federation, but other religions may be practised in peace and harmony in any part of the Federation.” Although the term interreligious harmony has been used widely in Malaysian governmental policy, it has been rarely discussed in the operational framework. In order to develop this study, it is important to get a clear understanding

of the term interreligious harmony in the conceptual framework before developing the operational framework. As an exploration to develop the concept of interreligious harmony, the discussion will focus on the concept of harmony and interreligious harmony.

a. The concept of harmony

The term harmony has been used widely in the study of music to explain how music gives a pleasant feeling to listeners when different chords or notes are played simultaneously. This is the first definition in many dictionaries, such as the Cambridge Dictionary and Merriam-Webster Dictionary. People might interpret sound harmony differently based on their personal views or cultural background. The term harmony also has been utilized in other fields of studies such as in sociology and psychology. In the latter fields of study, the term harmony refers to the value in humanity that shows the balance in life at an individual level, and at a societal level (Hofstede, 1983; Schwartz, 2006). Harmony as a value in philosophical terms also evolved in some cultures such as in Confucianism and many societies in Eastern countries (Chow and Yau, 2005; Leung *et al.*, 2011). For instance, Schwartz and his colleagues investigated the type of values that is held by societies in different parts of the world in responding to challenges in living with the natural and social world. They found two types of values held by different societies which include harmony value and mastery value. Harmony value focusses on social justice and is helpful in enhancing social harmony (Schwartz, 2006), whereas mastery value involves one choosing their own goals, being independent, ambitious, daring, successful and capable (Schwartz *et al.*, 1999). Schwartz (2006) defined harmony as to *'accept the world as it is, trying to fit in rather than to change or exploit it ... emphasized on the world in peace, protect the environment and world of beauty.'* Societies firmly attached with value of harmony will emphasize on harmoniously fitting

into the environment whereas for societies with value of mastery, they stand to promote actively changing the world through self-assertion and exploitation of people and resources.

Researchers in other fields of study also offers a definition of harmony. In a study of management, Kozan (1997, pp. 344-348) defined harmony as an attempt to “... *make conflict less salient, ... emphasis[e] on interdependence, ... [stress] cooperative behavior in handling differences, ... [involve] third-party in conflicts, ... [judge] effectiveness of resolution [including] face-saving concerns along with distributive justice*”. The term has been used by Kozan to differentiate three types of conflict management style: the harmony model, the confrontational model and the regulative model. Each type of conflict management can be differentiated from various elements such as thoughts, emotions and behaviour. For example, based on the harmony model, people will opt for avoidance and accommodation in encountering conflict rather than direct interaction and discussion; this is unlike the confrontational model. According to the regulative model, however, one would entirely opt for avoidance.

Morling and Fiske (1999, p. 382), in the research of life-span developmental psychology, defined harmony as to “*adjust things as they are, accepting what their roles [are], their relationships with others ... without acting directly on the environment.*” They suggested that harmony control as an important factor in self-determination. Based on the study by Heckhausen and Schulz (1993), self-determination can be divided into Primary control and Secondary control. Primary control refers to the people who tend to change the situation to suit themselves with the environment, and Secondary control focusses on changing themselves in the situation that they cannot change. However, Morling and Fiske (1999) suggested that Secondary control can be subdivided into a further two

different types of control: first, a Secondary control that manages losses in Primary control; and second, a Harmony control that has an indicator of independence as in Primary control and is related with interdependence and collectivism as in Secondary control.

In conclusion, the term harmony can be defined from many perspectives. For instance, it can be referred to a value related to social behaviours, such as peace, helpfulness, the elimination of conflict and accepting others in the context of a collective group. This term has been also used to set a specific value to reduce conflict in interpersonal relationships and with the natural world. A review of previous literature as highlighted above showed that research on interpersonal relationship explained the way in which people try to adjust themselves to live in a diverse society. In this present study, the term will be used to examine the ways of conduct in the interpersonal relationship with a focus of religion as one of the important elements in society. This present study explores the concept of interreligious harmony in which it can be used to assess the positive approach of young Muslims in the interreligious relationship. In this research, the term harmony is interpreted as a positive value to maintain a good relationship among people of different religious backgrounds. Kozan (1997) views on the concept of harmony will be applied in the present study.

b. The concept of interreligious harmony

Based on the notion of harmony, the term interreligious harmony can be defined as having a peace-mindedness towards people with different religious backgrounds and towards religious differences. The important features in the concept of interreligious harmony are the recognition of religious diversity. It is a recognition of the existence of people in Malaysia that have different religious beliefs and a recognition to live in co-existence with people of different religious backgrounds among Malaysian society. It is

not only a recognition of religious diversity in the Malaysian government system through constitutional law, policies, and the education system, but in the wider context of society. Interreligious harmony emphasizes a positive approach in intergroup relationship such as by practising respect and justice in society. Interreligious harmony also uses wise approaches to resolve any conflict such as through dialogue. By having interreligious harmony, the multi-religious society can live in peace and have good relationship between people of different religious backgrounds.

It is also noted that the concept of harmony is not free from any conceptual issues as the question of whether harmony is focused on conflict avoidance, or whether it means someone will surrender their self or belief in order to achieve the harmony exists. Based on the theoretical discussion on the concept of harmony highlighted by Kozan (1997) and Kwok, Leung, Koch and Lu (2002), several conceptual issues on the concept of interreligious harmony will be discussed. The first conceptual issue deals with conflict resolution, which explores whether this concept refers to conflict-avoidance or interreligious harmony. The second is a matter of win, lose and draw in the conflict to achieve interreligious harmony. The third is the issue of interreligious sensitivity which questions whether interreligious harmony encourages religious relativism or towards an understanding of the differences in belief.

1. Conflict Resolution. In conflict management studies, there are at least two approaches in dealing with conflict: solving and avoidance. The first method refers to someone who is ready to face and solve the problem. The second method refers to conflict-avoidance; for example, if someone is not willing to address the problem and chooses to avoid the conflict. These approaches are described in the concept of primary-secondary control (Heckhausen and Schulz, 1993). Avoidant individuals “*are*

likely to downplay the significance of conflict while minimizing the importance of their partner's complaints; distance themselves cognitively or emotionally from the conflict or try to avoid interacting with their partner." However, in harmony, people are not necessarily avoiding the conflict, but they opt for another positive element to resolve the conflict as in Kozan's (1997) framework. For the concept of interreligious harmony, people do not necessarily avoid the conflict, but they can decide either to solve the issue or find another solution to settle the conflict. Although the solution tends to deviate from the main issue in the conflict if it might not resolve the conflict, it can help to reduce the causes of the dispute before it becomes worse. For example, the dialogue among different believers will help to reduce intergroup conflict, but it might not resolve the conflict of beliefs, and instead may help both parties understand and create more opportunities for further dialogue session. This thus suggests that interreligious harmony readies people to engage more in maintaining a good relationship with others, which opposes the idea that it means that people should not act upon a conflict.

2. Harmony as giving up a personal goal? The second conceptual issue of harmony is related to the win-lose-draw outcome. In the conceptual discussion by Hwang (1997), someone might "*[give] up one's personal goal, for a prior consideration of maintaining a harmonious relationship.*" He divided the relationship into two types of relations: vertical and horizontal. The vertical relation refers to the structure of the society that carries different roles as a superior-subordinate relationship. For example, in the conflict among family members, a younger member might keep their goals silent because the older, as the superior, does not permit them to achieve the goals. The horizontal relationship refers to any kind of relationship, such as among workers. However, in this type of relationship, Hwang highlighted that a harmonious relation only appears in in-group members but not out-group members. These vertical and

horizontal relationships are not fit in the interreligious relationship. The concept of interreligious harmony focusses on the broader relationship of humankind. The aim is to focus on maintaining a good relationship and the agreement to solve any problem or conflict in a proper way. The concept of interreligious harmony refers to the conflict resolution that people do not need to abandon their self or religious belief but be responsible for making the relationship harmonious. Instead, interreligious harmony is focused on the relationship between people with different religious backgrounds and make different people trust each other in the relationship.

3. Interreligious sensitivity. Managing sensitivity in an interreligious relationship due to the differences in religion, such as belief and practices, could prevent interreligious conflict. Some researchers suggested that people should arrive at the stage of religious relativism to show that they have sensitivities towards different religions. For example, Abu-Nimer (2004) conducted a series of experimental studies to nurture good understanding among people with different beliefs. He found that exposition to other beliefs can help in fostering good relationships among the participants. He suggested the attitude of religious-centric should be shifted to religious-relativism in which people should believe there are some good elements in other religions, and other believers can hold the different beliefs and practices in order to develop a good relationship. In the same vein, Holm, Nokelainen and Tirri (2011) developed an Interreligious Sensitivity Scale (IRSS) which consisted of 24 items on five constructs: denial, defense, minimization, acceptance and adaptation. Holm and colleagues found that people who are higher in acceptance and adaptation show an increased interreligious sensitivity. Holm, Nokelainen and Tirri (2011) adapted the idea of religious-relativism from Abu-Nimer (2000). For examples, the items asked, 'I can pray with a person of another religion if she or he asks me to,' and 'I could participate in the

service of no matter religion with a believer of that religion.’ In contrast to the idea of Abu-Nimer (2000) and the measurement conducted by Holm, Nokelainen and Tirri (2011), the concept of interreligious harmony in the present study is not arrived at the level of religious relativism to develop the harmonious relationship among people of a different religion. This is also in line with the concept of harmony as depicted in the Harmony Control where people are not changing the self to be in harmony with the environment (Kozan, 1997).

4.6. Data collection

4.6.1. The survey

The present research was administered in secondary schools in Malaysia and the data was collected using a survey called ‘You and Your Attitude toward Interreligious Harmony’. The survey consists of a variable to measure attitudes toward interreligious harmony, a variable to measure attitudes towards Islam, a variable of intercultural and interreligious engagement, a variable of demographic backgrounds, a variable of self-identity and a variable of religious practices. These variables consist of categorical variables including binary, nominal and ordinal data, as well as continuous variables.

The first part of the survey aimed to collect information on the demographic backgrounds of respondents. The questions on the demographics of the samples asked about sex and age. In the survey, the participants were asked to choose between male (coded as 1) and female (coded as 2) to give information about sex. Age was asked as an open question in which the participants were asked to state their age. The present study also aimed to collect information about the school; however, the information on the type of school was determined before collecting the data. The schools were chosen based on the values and practices as documented by the institution itself. Students were not required to give any information about their school.

The second part of the survey contains questions on identity preferences and frequency of religious practices. The item on identity preferences among the respondents was operationalized by asking the students to self-assign their most preferred identity between three options, consisting of religion, ethnicity and nationality. The answer 'Being Muslim' refers to religion as the most important identity, the answer 'Being Malay' refers to ethnicity as the most important identity, and the answer 'Being Malaysian' refers to nationality as the most important identity.

The questions concerning with religious practices consists of self-reported answers on the frequency of prayer, frequency of reading Quran and frequency of attending mosque. Frequency of prayer was assessed on a five-point scale: 'Five times a day' coded as 5, 'Several times a day' coded as 4, 'Friday only' coded as 3, 'Occasionally' coded as 2, and 'Never' coded as 1. Frequency of reading Quran was assessed on a five-point scale: 'Every day' coded as 5, 'At least once a week' coded as 4, 'At least once a month' coded as 3, 'Occasionally' coded as 2, and 'Never' coded as 1. Frequency of attending mosque was assessed on a five-point scale: 'Every day' coded as 5, 'At least once a week' coded as 4, 'At least once a month' coded as 3, 'Sometimes' coded as 2, and 'Never' coded as 1. In Islam, there is a daily religious practice for Muslims to follow. There is a consensus among Muslim scholars on the importance of religious practices such as prayer and reading the Quran. It is a realization of knowledge about God in daily life.

The third part of the survey collects data on participants' experiences of intercultural and interreligious engagement, an agreement towards the article in the Federal Constitution of Malaysia which is concerned with religious diversity, and participants' attitudes towards interreligious harmony. Several items on intercultural and

interreligious engagement were asked to assess participants' engagement with people of different ethnics and religions. The items are 'I join group discussions with friends from a different ethnic background', 'I have lunch with friends from a different religious background', 'I spend time speaking with neighbours from a different ethnic background', 'I visit friends from a different religion during their religious celebration day', 'I attend funeral ceremonies of people of different religious background', and 'I have a family member married to someone from a different ethnic background'. The participant was asked to answer Yes (coded as 1) or No (coded as 0) for each question.

There is a question that reflected on the article in the Federal Constitution of Malaysia concerned with religious diversity. The Federal Constitution of Malaysia states that 'Islam is the main religion in Malaysia, but other religions may be practised in peace and harmony in any part of the country'. The survey asked student agreement towards the item 'I agree that Islam is the main religion in Malaysia, but other religions may be practised in peace and harmony in any part of the country'. The participants were asked to respond on a five-point Likert scale (Likert, 1932): 'Strongly agree' coded as 5, 'Agree' coded as 4, 'Not sure' coded as 3, 'Disagree' coded as 2, and 'Strongly Disagree' coded as 1.

There are also 19 questions asked to measure affective responses toward interreligious harmony among respondents. The questions asked their readiness and openness towards religious diversity and their attitude towards different beliefs and practices. The questions was formed on a five-point Likert scale (Likert, 1932): 'Strongly Agree' coded as 5, 'Agree' coded as 4, 'Not Sure' coded as 3, 'Disagree' coded as 2, and 'Strongly Disagree' coded as 1. The results will be analysed as a single measure called the Attitude toward Interreligious Harmony Scale.

The last part of the survey contains questions on the attitudinal dimension of religion to measure attitude towards Islam. The Sahin-Francis Scale of Attitude towards Islam (Sahin and Francis, 2002) was adopted in this study and the scale was translated into the Malaysian language by conducting a translation-back-translation procedure that will be discussed in details in a dedicated chapter on religiosity. The scale was formed on a five-point Likert scale (Likert, 1932): ‘Strongly Agree’ coded as 5, ‘Agree’ coded as 4, ‘Not Sure’ coded as 3, ‘Disagree’ coded as 2, and ‘Strongly Disagree’ coded as 1.

There are two newly developed scales based on the data gathered in this study: The Attitude toward Interreligious Harmony Scale and the Malaysian translation of the Sahin-Francis Scale of Attitude towards Islam. First, the Attitude toward Interreligious Harmony Scale was developed to measure attitude toward interreligious harmony among young Muslims in Malaysia. The development of the scale was informed by theoretical and empirical findings in the previous literature in social psychology and theology. The discussion with experts in a related field of study to the interreligious relationship in Malaysia also informs this study. Second, the scale of Attitude towards Islam has been adopted from Sahin and Francis (2002) and translated into the Malaysian language to measure attitudes towards Islam among Muslims in Malaysia. The psychometric properties of both scales will be presented in the next incoming chapters.

4.7. Procedure and ethical conduct

The research was conducted with careful following of ethical conduct. As a prerequisite to conducting research in Malaysia, the research proposal must be approved by the Malaysian local authority bodies before approaching any school management. For this research, the approval was granted by the Economic Planning Unit of Malaysia before the data collection started. The approval was also obtained from the Malaysian Ministry of Education, Selangor Department of Education and Selangor Islamic

Department. Several private school managements also agreed to allow the researcher to conduct the study in schools. Although the private schools have different procedures, most of the school managements rely on an approval letter from the Malaysian Ministry of Education for its reputation in educational research.

The survey was administered by teachers in the Islamic Education Unit within the participated-schools during a class session. Where applicable, I also helped the teacher to administer the survey which gave an opportunity for me to interact and engage with students. In Islamic schools or schools with a majority of Muslim students, the survey could be distributed at any class session. However, in the school with students from various religious beliefs, the survey was conducted during an Islamic Education class session to ensure that the questionnaire would be only distributed to Muslim students. It should be noted that in schools with multi-religious student background, Muslim students attend Islamic Education class while the other students attend Moral Education class. These subjects are taught separately in a parallel session by a different teacher. Only students who consented to participate were involved in the study. The survey does not require a name to ensure confidentiality and anonymity, and to eliminate socially desirable answers (Paulhus, 1984).

4.7.1. Research setting

The survey on attitudes toward interreligious harmony was conducted in the state of Selangor. There are several reasons to conduct the study in the state of Selangor. First, Selangor was recorded as the largest percentage of the total population in Malaysia (Department of Statistics Malaysia, 2011). The Census 2010 shows the tabulation of ethnics in Selangor consists of Malays (52.9%), Chinese (29.8%), Indian (14.1%) and other ethnic groups (2.8%) which indicates a diverse background of the society. Furthermore, there are many religions that are practised in this state such as

Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism, Christianity and Bahaism. Although the research only focusses on young Muslim students in different types of schools, a random sample from this state will be broadly reflective of the wider population. Second, young people in this state have the highest rate of literacy (98.7%) and the highest rate of computer literacy (73.2%) based on the Report on Education and Social Characteristics of the Population (2010). While for this reason, it is convincing that students will be able to understand and answer the questionnaire, the pilot test was conducted with the concern of whether the language in the survey could meet the level of literacy among every student. In addition, every student in participating schools had an equal chance to get involved in this study.

4.7.2. Participants

The sample of the study involved Muslim students in Malaysian secondary schools. This study applies a probability sampling technique by using a stratified random sampling method to ensure the sample is randomly selected from each stratum in the population (Brewer, 1999). The population in this study is divided into strata based on school location, school identification (faith-based and non-faith-based), school stakeholder, sex and age. First, the schools were selected based on geographical location by dividing the population into 10 districts in Selangor consisting of Klang, Hulu Langat, Petaling Perdana, Kuala Langat, Kuala Selangor, Gombak, Sabak Bernam, Hulu Selangor, Sepang and Petaling Utama (Selangor Department of Education, 2019). The schools selected from each district were comprised of faith-based schools and non-faith-based schools. Then, the schools were randomly selected within stratum defined by school stakeholder. This study was conducted in various categories of schools that are managed by different stakeholders, including the Malaysian government, the Selangor Islamic Religious Council and several independent school managements. Malaysian

Government Mainstream Schools made up the biggest group in this study, which were proportionated with the number of schools in each district in the population. The list of Malaysian government-funded schools was obtained from the Malaysian Ministry of Education (Ministry of Education, 2016). For the other categories of schools, the list was obtained from organizations such as Selangor Islamic Religious Council and Organization of Islamic Religious School. School involvement in this study depended on the approval of the school management. The survey was distributed to students in schools which already known to be willing to co-operate as suggested by Lewis (1973). In some of the private schools, school admission open to children from seven years old up to 23 years old. For this study, only students from 13 years old to 18 years old were involved.

4.8. Pilot study

The ‘You and Your Attitude toward Interreligious Harmony’ survey has been constructed based on the results of the pilot study to exercise good research conduct by using a tested, valid and reliable scales and instruments. The final part of this chapter discusses the pilot study in which the survey uses the same questionnaire as it would be administered in the real study. A central aim of the pilot study was to examine the reliability and validity of the questionnaire and to improve the reliability and validity of it by administering the survey among the sample in a near-identical manner to the real study. Second, the procedure helps the researcher to assess the language in the questionnaire to make it suitable for all levels of students. Feedback from the respondents helps to revise and discard any unnecessary or difficult questions. Third, it is also important to record the time taken by the respondents to complete the questionnaire in a reasonable period (Peat *et al.*, 2002; Teijlingen van and Hundley, 2002).

The analysis of the pilot test reports the reliability of the scales on internal consistency reliability of the items within a scale using Cronbach's alpha. The internal consistency reliability estimates consistency of responses across the items within a scale. Reliability coefficients around .90 are considered excellent, .80 are very good, and .70 are minimum alphas value for a test to be considered as good (Kline, 2000; Field, 2013). The reliability test can be calculated using many techniques such as a single administration of a test, test-retest reliability and inter-rater reliability; however, a single administration of a test is also sufficient to obtain the value of reliability of the scale (Robin, 2001). Robin (2001) highlighted some factors that may affect the reliability of a scale, including the different samples of the study and the test conditions. In the present thesis, the pilot study tests the reliability of the scales among young Muslim participants in Malaysian secondary schools.

Validity is defined as the ability of the instrument to measure the attributes of the construct under study. Devon *et al.* (2007) suggested two types of construct validity: translational (face validity and content validity) and criterion validity (concurrent, predictive, convergent and discriminant). Content validity that has been conducted in the present study was performed by defining the construct based on the literature, seeking expert opinion and conducting the survey using the agreed scales (Devon *et al.*, 2007).

4.8.1. Procedure

The pilot study was conducted in four different categories of Malaysian secondary schools which were interested to be involved in this study. These schools were comprised of Fully Residential Schools with students among mixed ethnicities, Government Schools (Religious type), Government Mainstream Schools and Private religious-type Schools. The survey was administrated by Islamic Education teachers in

each school with approval by the Malaysian Ministry of Education and school management.

The questionnaire used in the pilot study has three parts. The first part asked demographic questions such as sex, age, living area, parents' background and identity preferences. The second part contained questions asking on intercultural and interreligious engagement, agreement to items reflecting on the statement in the Malaysian Constitutional Law on the right to profess religion in Malaysia and the Attitude toward Interreligious Harmony Scale. The third part asked several indicators of religious practices (frequency of prayer, frequency of attending mosque and frequency of reading Quran) and the Malaysian translation of Sahin-Francis Scale of Attitude towards Islam.

4.8.2. Results and discussion of pilot test

A descriptive and inferential statistical analysis have been conducted using statistical analysis software (SPSS) to test the data from the pilot study. The distribution of sex, age and types of school are presented in Table 4.1. The analysis used data from the pilot test among 193 Muslim students in several types of Malaysian secondary schools. Any uncompleted surveys were not included in the data analysis. The data shows that 46.1% of respondents are male and 53.9% of the participants are female. In terms of age, there are 23 participants (11.9%) aged 13 years old, 85 participants (44%) aged 14 years old and 85 participants (44%) aged 16 years old. In terms of school, 50 participants are from Fully Residential Schools, 61 participants are from Government-funded Schools (Religious type), 32 participants are from Government Mainstream Schools (open to students from all social backgrounds) and 50 participants are from Private religious-type Schools.

Table 4. 1: The distribution of sex, age and types of school

School	Sexes		Age			Total
	Boys	Girls	13	14	16	
Fully Residential Schools	28	22	0	25	25	50
Government Schools (Religious type)	19	52	23	18	20	61
Government Mainstream Schools	17	15	0	22	10	32
Private religious-type Schools	25	25	0	20	30	50
Total (%)	89 (46.1)	104 (53.9)	23 (11.9)	85 (44)	85 (44)	193

The pilot study addressed the language used in the scale, lengthy time for the completion of the questionnaire and reliability and validity of the scales. Several important points to highlight and changes to the questionnaire have been made based on the results of the pilot study. Overall feedback from teachers and students demonstrated that the questionnaire used a suitable language and took an appropriate time to complete in one lesson session. However, the pilot test also found that student have different literacy skills which effects time to complete the questionnaire and understanding of the questionnaire. The questionnaire has been amended to ensure that students with different abilities can answer all the questions during a one-session class with an approximate time of 20 to 30 minutes.

Table 4.2 shows the scale properties of the Malaysian translation of the Sahin-Francis Scale of Attitude toward Islam and Attitude toward Interreligious Harmony Scale based on data from the pilot test. The Attitude toward Interreligious Harmony Scale achieved good reliability for 18 items. The reliability test on the Attitude toward

Interreligious Harmony Scale shows the scale achieved at alpha coefficient .801. Based on analysis of the data, the item 'I would be happy for a close family member to marry someone from a different religious background' suffered from construct validity. This question might not be acceptable for Muslims in the context of Malaysian society. Nevertheless, the results suggested that the 18-items Attitude towards Interreligious Harmony Scale can be used in the real study to assess attitudes toward interreligious harmony among Muslim students.

The Malaysian translation of the Sahin-Francis Scale of Attitude towards Islam was also proved to be reliable in the pilot test among Muslim students in several Malaysian secondary schools. The Cronbach's alpha for the Sahin-Francis Scale of Attitude towards Islam is .882. This scale proved to be reliable and support findings in other studies (Sahin and Francis, 2002; Francis, Sahin and Al-Ansari, 2006; Francis, Sahin and Al-Failakawi, 2008; Francis, Tekke and Robbins, 2016). Several changes to the scale's item in other studies have been taken into account. For example, Musharraf, Lewis and Sultan (2014) was replicated this scale to examine Muslim students' attitudes towards Islam in Pakistan. They modified item 7 in the original scale (Sahin and Francis, 2002) to 'I think Mosque sermons/*khutbah* or religious meetings/*deeni mehfilen* are not boring' due to women in Pakistan occasionally praying in a mosque. In the present study, the item 'I think lessons in the Mosque are boring' was added to see the correlation with item number 7. The analysis found that inter-item correlation matrix between item 7 and the new item is .310 which indicates that both items were not correlated and it is assumed that the new item produces an additional item in the scale. If the new item was included in the scale, the Cronbach's alpha was reduced to .880. The details of discussion on the reliability and validity of the scale in previous studies will be highlighted in the data analysis chapters.

Table 4. 2: Scale properties of the Sahin-Francis Scale of Attitude towards Islam and Attitude toward Interreligious Harmony Scale based on data from Pilot Study

	N	<i>a.</i>	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	SD
Attitude toward Interreligious Harmony	193	.801	35	82	65.70	8.37
Attitude toward Islam	193	.882	67	115	108.36	7.09

The present research was aware of the limitation of the pilot study on reliability and validity of the scale used in the study. The reliability and validity test will be conducted for the data gathered from the real study. The psychometric properties of the scales in the real study among Muslim students in Malaysian secondary schools will be presented in the analyses chapters.

4.9. Conclusion

The present chapter has highlighted the methodological approach in conducting a study to assess attitudes toward interreligious harmony among Muslim students in secondary schools in Malaysia. The study aims to empirically assess the attitude toward interreligious harmony by using quantitative methods to collect the necessary data. The terms attitude and interreligious harmony have been highlighted. This chapter discussed construction of the main data collection instrument, the Attitude toward Interreligious Harmony Scale and the Malaysian translation of the Sahin-Francis Attitude towards Islam Scale. The detail process of the development of the Attitude toward Interreligious Harmony Scale and the translation process of The Sahin-Francis Scale of Attitude towards Islam into the Malaysian language will be presented in the next two chapters. The data gathered from the pilot study demonstrated that the instruments gained good validity and reliability results. Thus, this questionnaire can be used in the real study and the data analyses will be presented in the next three chapters.

Chapter 5

Data Analysis 1: Attitude toward Islam among Muslim students in Malaysian secondary schools

5.1. Introduction

The present research set out to examine the attitude toward interreligious harmony among Muslim students in Malaysian secondary schools and its correlates. Chapter four has discussed the methodology of the study, including the relevance of quantitative research design to conduct this study. The procedure to administer the research was also highlighted. The pilot test demonstrated that the survey instrument called ‘You and Your Attitude toward Interreligious Harmony’ is valid, reliable and understandable. The first part of data analysis in this study aims to provide descriptive statistics data on religious characteristics of students through looking at identity preferences, religious practice and attitude toward religion among participants.

As we have discovered in previous chapters, the Malaysian educational system emphasizes facilitating religious development among young Muslims. The educational system has been progressively developed by enabling the young generation to be systematically equipped with Islamic knowledge from early childhood education. It can be seen through many facets of the educational system and educational development in Malaysia. For instance, the number of faith-based schools has increased every year. In the mainstream education system, the Islamic Education curriculum also has been revised regularly to ensure the syllabus is updated. As such, the chapter aims to find out profiles of religiosity including religious identity, religious practice and attitude toward religion among the study participants as a way of understanding the impact of the current practice in teaching Islamic knowledge within the context of Malaysia.

The discussion in this chapter is structured in several parts. The first part reviews previous empirical studies that explore Muslims' religiosity. The present study highlights the Sahin-Francis Scale of Attitude toward Islam as an important scale in the empirical study of religion which assesses affective response toward religion among Muslims. There are limited models and methods in empirically assessing young Muslims' religiosity. This study makes use of the Sahin-Francis Scale of Attitude towards Islam which is a widely used instrument to assess Muslim religiosity. The present chapter discusses the translation of the Sahin-Francis Scale of Attitude toward Islam into the Malaysian language to measure attitudes toward Islam and examines the psychometric properties of the translated scale among Muslim students in Malaysian secondary schools. The report of reliability and validity of this scale in various empirical research in the past will be presented. The second part focusses on aims, hypotheses and procedure to conduct the analysis in the present chapter. The third part discusses results from a descriptive and inferential analysis of the scale including the reliability, validity and correlates with other variables from the survey conducted among Muslims students in Malaysian secondary schools before a discussion and conclusion are made for this chapter.

5.2. Empirical research measuring Muslims' religiosity and attitude toward Islam

5.2.1. The available scales measuring various dimensions of religiosity

There are many different definitions of religiosity in which some of the definitions have been discussed by Batson, Schoenrade and Ventis (1993). The term of religiosity and religiousness are interchangeably used in the literature. The present study simply adopted the definition of religion and religiosity from its functional definition to an

individual by Batson, Schoenrade and Ventis (1993) as “whatever we as individuals do to come to grips personally with the questions that confront us...”.

There is a growing number of empirical studies examining Muslims’ religiosity. Some of the available scales that measure Muslims’ religiosity are the Muslim Attitude toward Religion Scale (MARS), developed by Wilde and Joseph (1997); Sahin’s Muslim Subjectivity Interview Schedule (2013) which includes the Sahin-Francis Scale of Attitude toward Islam (Sahin and Francis, 2002); the Muslim Religiosity-Personality Inventory (MRPI) developed by Krauss *et al.* (2005); the Psychological Measure of Islamic Religiousness Scale (PMIR) developed by Abu Raiya *et al.* (2008); the Ummatic Personality Dimensions Scale, developed by Othman (2011); the Multidimensional Measure of Islamic Spirituality Scale (MMS) developed by Dasti and Sitwat (2014); and the OK – Religious Attitude Scale (Islam), developed by Ok (2016).

In the wider context of the scientific study of religion, researchers highlighted a view that religiosity could be measured from multiple dimensions, comprising of religious belief, religious practices, religious knowledge, and religious affect. The description of these dimensions has been well articulated by Glock and Stark (1965) and Hood Jr., Hill and Spilka (2009). According to the influential study by Glock and Stark (Glock, 1962; Glock and Stark, 1965; Stark and Glock, 1968), religious belief refers to the ideological dimension to inquire into what people believe, or the saliency of belief or the function of belief for the individual. It refers to a cognitive aspect of religiosity, the belief that someone holds based on religious teaching. Religious practice refers to the ritualistic dimension, such as the frequency of prayer or the pattern of religious practices. Religious knowledge refers to the intellectual dimension, such as religious literacy and the degree of criticalness when reading the scripture. Religious affect refers

to the consequential dimension and the expectation from the religious commitment. The religious affiliation could be added to identify the group or sect to which individuals attach themselves to, for example, Islam, Christianity or Hinduism. Religious affiliation gives meaningful information about the religious group and differentiates between a believer's denominations because each religion has different values and religious rules. Researchers who approach individual religiousness from its multiple dimensions highlighted this approach as vital to empirically obtain a closer understanding of belief, practice, knowledge and the feeling of being religious.

Most of the available religiosity scales in the research among Muslim samples were developed based on the idea that Muslims' religiousness will be properly measured through a multi-dimensional understanding of religion. For instance, Abu Raiya *et al.* (2008) developed the Psychological Measure of Islamic Religiousness Scale (PMIR) with two domains: the core domains of Islam and the non-specific religious dimension. The core domains of Islam, which demonstrated the multi-dimensional nature of religiosity, is comprised of five core Islamic religious dimensions: religious beliefs such as the belief in Allah and predestination; religious practices for examples prayer and pilgrimage; ethical conduct—dos such as being humble and honouring the parents; religious ethical conduct—don'ts such as not eating pork and not drinking alcohol; and Islamic universality of viewing every Muslim in the world as a brother or sister. The long list of items in the Psychological Measure of Islamic Religiousness Scale (PMIR) measures religiosity and physical and psychological well-being.

In the research developed to measure religiousness among young Muslims in Malaysia, Krauss and colleagues also developed a multi-dimensional religiosity scale called the Muslim Religiosity-Personality Inventory (MRPI). The scale was constructed

on the theological-based research paradigm that refers to the six Articles of Faith (*Rukn al-Iman*) (Krauss, 2005; Krauss, Hamzah, Juhari, *et al.*, 2005; Krauss, Hamzah, Suandi, *et al.*, 2005). There are three constructs: creator and creation, existence and transcendence, and all-encompassing religion. In addition to that, they included the dimension of religious personality consisting of three constructs: self-directed, social, and religious ritual.

While assessing various approaches in the social scientific study of religion, Francis (2009) suggested that the attitudinal dimension of religiosity provides the strongest foundation for empirical research in religion compared to other dimensions. He thus suggested assessing people's attitudes toward religion, such that whether someone has a positive or negative attitude toward their religion. Francis argued that the affective domain gives more impact to the research on religiosity because it gives information on an individual's feeling toward his or her religion because religion is deep-seated in the heart of the believer. Francis and Kay (1984) highlighted that attitude toward religion is different from religious attitude. Religious attitude is the religious dimension in life, such as belief and behaviour, whereas attitude toward religion is the level of favorableness toward their religion. Francis developed a scale called the Francis Scale of Attitude toward Christianity which was constructed within the Christian context (Francis, 1978a, 1978b; Francis and Stubbs, 1987). The scale has been used in many studies, including the studies within the different social contexts and the studies among people of different group of ages.

Based on this argument, Sahin (2002) replicated and amended the Francis Scale of Attitude toward Christianity to use within the Muslim context and then presented it in Sahin and Francis (2002) as the Sahin-Francis Scale of Attitude toward Islam. Francis,

Sahin and Al-Failakawi (2008) highlighted that attitude is the strongest indicator based on the idea that: first, assessing attitude ‘gets close’ to the heart of the believer; second, the affective dimension can transcend the division between denominations and avoid the polarization between different beliefs; third, the attitudinal dimension could be assessed beyond the development of maturity or immaturity in religiosity; and fourth, at an operational level, researchers have developed well-established techniques to assess attitude. Sahin (2014) has also suggested a psycho-social research model called the Semi-Structured Muslim Subjectivity Interview Schedule (MSIS) to explore the formation of Muslim religiosities. The research instrument includes the Sahin-Francis Scale of Attitude toward Islam, a self-characterisation sketch and several theological/socio-political themes that the participants are invited to discuss. The interviews are analysed by applying a set of assessment criteria constructed to discern psycho-social processes of commitment and exploration as articulated within the religious lives of the participants. The MSIS has been replicated to explore faith leadership formation within the Muslim minority context of the UK (Khan, 2015) and examine the relationship between religiosity and attitudes towards social cohesion (Zaheer, 2018).

The above discussions highlight the increasing number of scales to empirically assess religiousness among Muslims and shows how empirical research has started to develop in the field of Islamic Education. The present study will employ a scale to assess the attitudinal dimension of religion and frequency of religious practices. Scales that assess the multi-dimension of religiosity has several limitations. First, these scales were developed with a long list of items which require a lengthy amount of time to complete. Second, a multi-dimensional scale which included cognitive dimensions may not recognize the limitation in the human capacity to memorize things, especially on the cognitive aspect of religion such as memorizing some religious knowledge. For instance,

someone might not be able to answer a question reflecting on the Five Pillars of Islam well, perhaps due to a lack of knowledge or having difficulty to remember things but is good in practising his religions. Considering these challenges, the present study focusses on the affective dimension of religion and employs the Sahin-Francis Scale of Attitude toward Islam without ignoring other important aspects of Islamic religiousness such as religious identity and the frequency of religious practices in the survey. The development of the Sahin-Francis Scale of Attitude toward Islam and its reliability and validity will be discussed below. This will be followed by explaining the translation of the scale into the Malaysian language that was carried out in this study.

5.2.2. The development of the Sahin-Francis Scale of Attitude toward Islam

The Sahin-Francis Scale of Attitude toward Islam has been developed parallel with the scale that was developed within the Christian context called the Francis Scale of Attitude toward Christianity, which was originally developed by Francis (1978a, 1978b). The reliability and validity of the Francis Scale of Attitude toward Christianity, which contained 24 statements with ratings of a five-point Likert scale, were supported in many studies. First, the scale was found reliable and valid in measuring attitude among different age groups during childhood, adolescence and adulthood as reported in Francis and Stubbs (1987). Second, the scale has been employed and found useful to explore the relationship between religiosity and different types of personality such as neuroticism, psychoticism and different types of extraversion as reported by Francis and Pearson (1988). Third, the scale has been employed to explore the relationship between religiosity and various elements of life, such as attitude toward religious diversity (Francis *et al.*, 2012); personality (Jones and Francis, 1999; Bourke, Francis and Robbins, 2005); empathy (Khan *et al.*, 2005); attitude toward substance use (Francis, 1997); attitude toward alcohol (Francis, 1992; Francis, Fearn and Lewis, 2005); and mental

health (Ghorbani *et al.*, 2000). Francis (1978a) suggested for replication of the scale in a cross-cultural study.

In order to conduct empirical-based research to measure the affective dimension of religiosity among Muslims, Sahin adopted the Francis Scale of Attitude toward Christianity to be used in an Islamic context (Sahin, 2002; Sahin and Francis, 2002). Sahin and Francis (2002) invited several Muslim scholars to ‘carefully scrutinize and debate’ the instruments in the Francis Scale of Attitude. Finally, the Sahin-Francis Scale of Attitude toward Islam was developed with agreement on 23 items. One of the items in the original scale which aimed to explore the intergenerational difference in terms of perception of Islam was removed as it was not an aim of the current study. The scale was originally developed with the intention to assess the development of faith and identity among young British Muslims and to explore the correlation between attitude toward Islam and modes of religious subjectivity among young Muslims in Birmingham, UK (Sahin, 2002). The scale measures Muslims’ affective responses toward a negative and positive statement on several important elements in Islam: *i’tiqad* (belief), *ibadat* (worship), *mu’amalat* (interpersonal relationships) and *akhlaq* (ethics). Each item is rated on a five-point scale: agree strongly, agree, not certain, disagree, and disagree strongly. In the study among young Muslims in Birmingham, Sahin found that the majority of respondents had a positive attitude toward Islam, and further analysis through ‘a static and constitutional, and genetic and generative level of the phenomenological analysis’ suggested by Sahin (2014, p. 59) found three different modes of religious subjectivity called ‘diffused, foreclosed and exploratory’. The results indicated the importance of religion in the lives of young Muslims, exhibiting diverse modes of religious subjectivity.

Sahin and Francis (2002) also invited other researchers to use the scale in different cultural contexts, or with Muslim participants coming from different cultural backgrounds. Adopting a scale in a cross-cultural study helps researchers learn about the same issue in a different cultural context. With many pieces of research conducted in different cultural backgrounds, it further emphasizes the reliability and validity of the scale which also helps researchers to conduct research with confidence. Previously, the English language version scale has been replicated to measure attitudes toward Islam among Muslims in several countries such as Pakistan (Khan and Watson, 2006); Kuwait (Francis, Sahin and Al-Failakawi, 2008); the USA (Herzig, 2012); and Malaysia (Francis, Tekke and Robbins, 2016). It was also translated into several other languages such as the Arabic language in the research conducted in Kuwait (Francis, Sahin and Al-Ansari, 2006), and the Urdu language in the research carried out in Pakistan (Musharraf, Lewis and Sultan, 2014). The scale has been used in Muslim minority and majority contexts. These studies demonstrated that the scale might be worth using in empirical research assessing attitudes toward Islam among secondary school Muslim students in Malaysia and could be used to explore correlations with the attitude toward interreligious harmony. This present study aims at adopting the Sahin-Francis Scale of Attitude toward Islam and translating the scale into the Malaysian language for Muslim students in Malaysian secondary schools.

5.2.3. The reliability and validity of the Sahin-Francis Scale of Attitude toward Islam

The development of psychometrics requires a report on the reliability and validity of the scale. The Sahin-Francis Scale of Attitude toward Islam proved to be reliable and valid in the study among Muslims in many countries. Most of the studies using this scale reported an alpha coefficient value to show the reliability of the scale. In the first study that employed the scale, the questionnaire was completed by 381 Muslim

adolescents in Birmingham with the reliability of Cronbach alpha coefficient of .90 (Sahin and Francis, 2002). In the study conducted among young Muslims in Kuwait, the scale achieved an alpha coefficient of .85 (Francis, Sahin and Al-Failakawi, 2008). In the study conducted in Malaysia using the English language version scale, the reliability of the scale achieved an alpha coefficient of .92 (Francis, Tekke and Robbins, 2016).

Several validity tests have been conducted in previous studies. First, the content validity test has been conducted to ensure each statement measures the attitude accordingly. The scale has been validated by the agreement of experts in the field of study. Sahin and Francis (2002) reported the scale has been scrutinized by several Muslim thinkers until they agreed on 23 items on attitude toward Islam.

Second, the construct validity of scale is measured by its correlation with different religious variables. Sahin and Francis (2002) show the scale correlates with personal prayer .24 ($p < .001$). Francis, Tekke and Robbins (2016) provide positive correlations between attitude and frequency of reciting the Quran ($r = .26, p < .001$), feeling that life is being guided by Allah/God ($r = .32, p < .001$) and religious experience ($r = .36, p < .001$).

Third, the scale also has been validated by taking a serious concern on 'social desirability'. For instance, some of the items were also revised in a series of studies within the different cultural backgrounds as it was found that some of the negatively phrased items were found unacceptable in Muslim majority societies (Francis, Sahin and Al-Ansari, 2006). In the research conducted in Pakistan, the negative items were changed to positive items to ensure that the questionnaire followed the regulations in Pakistan for taking account on the blasphemy act (Musharraf, Lewis and Sultan, 2014). Francis, Sahin and Al-Ansari (2006) suggested for positively worded items that were

more suitable to ask among Muslim living in the majority Muslims. They argued that different cultural and religious tradition have different levels of acceptance towards negatively worded items in survey. In the study conducted in Kuwait, some of the phrases were changed from the original items. For example, ‘Allah/God doesn’t mean anything to me’ was replaced by the positively phrased item ‘Allah/God means everything to me’, and the original item ‘I find it hard to believe in Allah/God’ was replaced by the positively phrased item ‘I do not find it hard to believe in Allah/God’. In the latest study, Francis, Tekke and Robbins (2016) have made a few changes from the original scale such as the item ‘I think the Qur’ān is out of date’ was replaced by the positively phrased item ‘I think the Qur’ān is up to date’; the item ‘I think praying/du’ā’ does no good’ was rephrased as ‘praying/du’ā’ is beneficial’; the item ‘I think going to the mosque or religious gathering is not a waste of my time’ was rephrased as ‘Going to the mosque or religious gathering is a good use of my time’; and the item ‘I think mosque sermons/*khutbah* or religious meetings/*deeni mehfilen* are not boring’ was replaced with ‘Mosque sermons/*khutbah* or religious meetings/*deeni mehfilen* are interesting.’ The item ‘Allah/God doesn’t mean much to me’ was replaced with ‘Islam means a lot to me’, because if this item was re-written with ‘Allah/God’ it would be similar to another item in the scale. The validity test based on social desirability proved that the scale can be used in cross-cultural research, although with some amendments. In the present study, experts’ opinion has been used to validate the items in the original scale before conducting the survey in the main study.

Fourth, the scale has been improved by taking into consideration of the impact of sex differences in terms of attitudes toward religion, as well as the social-based sex differences in terms of observing congregational prayers in mosque as women tend not to attend Friday prayers in mosques. For the latter reason, Francis, Sahin and Al-Ansari

(2006) amended items on attitudes toward mosque sermons. In the research using the scale in different languages, Musharraf, Lewis and Sultan (2014) found that the original form of the scale suffered from validity because some of the questions are not suitable for use in different cultures, and some of the questions are not suitable for both sexes. For example, the item on mosque attendance is not suitable to ask in Pakistan for both sexes because women only occasionally go to the mosque in Pakistan. These reports on the validity of the scale in previous literature show that the scale could be best used for further research after taking into account the findings on validity. The present study has been conducted by taking these issues into considerations. The translated item in the scale have been validated by experts in Islamic Education and the bodies in Malaysian Education systems (Malaysian Ministry of Education and Malaysian Unit of Economic Planning). The negatively worded items were maintained in the scale and items on attitude towards religious sermons during Friday prayer were changed to attitude towards general religious teaching/religious classes at the mosque.

5.3. Aims and hypotheses

The general aim of the present chapter is to provide descriptive statistics data on religious characteristics through looking at identity preferences, frequency of religious practices and the attitude toward Islam among Muslim students in Malaysian secondary schools. The present study measures attitudes toward Islam among participants using the Sahin-Francis Scale of Attitude toward Islam. The scale has been translated into the Malaysian language to ensure it is applicable in the study within the Malaysian Muslim context. The reliability and validity of the Malaysian translation of the Sahin-Francis Scale of Attitude toward Islam in cross-cultural research within Malaysian society will be presented. Previously, the scale has been used in the study among participants in Malaysia by Francis, Tekke and Robbins (2016); however, the study was conducted

among university students using the English language. The translation procedure will be discussed in detail below. The present study also examines the score of attitudes toward Islam and compares attitudes between sexes, ages, and different types of schools by conducting a descriptive and inferential statistical analysis.

The present chapter tests the following hypotheses:

1. Females will record higher scores on the Malaysian translation of the Sahin-Francis Scale of Attitude toward Islam than males.
2. There is no difference between the different age groups of respondents on attitude toward Islam.
3. Types of school show a significant difference in attitude toward Islam with students in faith-based schools scoring higher on attitude toward Islam, compared with students in non-faith-based schools.

5.4. Methods

5.4.1. Translation and back-translation procedure

The present study adopts the Sahin-Francis Scale of Attitude toward Islam (Sahin and Francis, 2002) to be completed by young Muslims in Malaysia. Brislin (1970) suggested several procedures to adopt a scale used in a cross-cultural study including back-translation, bilingual technique, committee approach and pre-test procedure. The back-translation process involves the translation of the text or instrument from the source language to the language of the targeted research sample. Then, the translation of the text is back-translated into the source language (Brislin, 1970). The bilingual technique requires the instrument to be administered in the original language and the targeted language to a bilingual participant. The committee approach needs experts in the fields of study to discuss and make an agreement on the translated scale. The pre-

test procedure, or pilot test in which the instrument will be piloted before used in the real study, is required. The most common procedure to use is the back-translation procedure because several other procedures are included during the translation process. This process helps the researcher to construct the scale equivalent to the original scale.

In the present study, the translation and back-translation procedure will be applied due to its ability to achieve a thorough translation process. In addition, the process also requires views from experts, agreement by the committee and a pilot test as in other approaches. In order to achieve an adequate translation, several procedures should be taken into consideration. Wild *et al.* (2005) suggested to consider several processes before translating a questionnaire into a different language for a cross-cultural research including 1) preparation for the translation process; 2) forward translation of the source language to translators; 3) reconciliation of the translation in which the reconciled translation can be used for back-translation; 4) back-translation from the target language to source language by different translators; 5) back-translation review to ensure the translation is equivalent to the source language; 6) harmonization by comparing all translations and make a harmonization between each translation; 7) cognitive debriefing by administering a pilot testing on a small sample group; 8) review of cognitive debriefing results followed by back-translation procedure and finalization to improve the translation; 9) proofreading; and 10) a final report of the whole process of translation back-translation.

The present study conducted several procedures to achieve an adequate translation equivalent to the original scale as suggested by Wild *et al.* (2005), which are as follows:

- i. Translators who were expert in both languages: the Malaysian language and English language were asked to translate the instrument. The translation was also verified by experts in Islamic Education and experts in Malaysian Language to validate the appropriate language for young Muslims in Malaysian secondary schools.
- ii. Reconciliation by teachers who are expert linguist in the Malaysian language and English language. The translation version of the scale was sent to teachers in Islamic Education and teachers in the Malaysian Language to verify and validate the language used in the questionnaire for young Muslims in secondary schools.
- iii. Back-translation from the Malaysian language to the English language by several expert linguists who were not involved in the previous procedure.
- iv. The questionnaire was reviewed by other experts to validate the translation.
- v. Harmonization by two committees. First, among the expert linguists and second by the research committee.
- vi. A pilot study among young Muslims in several types of Malaysian secondary schools.
- vii. Several questions were amended based on the analysis in statistical analysis software (SPSS).

The pilot test was conducted among secondary school students. As a result, the agreed translated scale on 23 items was used in the questionnaire among young Muslims in secondary schools. The next part of this chapter provides data on the reliability and validity of the Malaysian translation of the Sahin-Francis Scale of Attitude toward Islam.

5.4.2. Measures

In the present chapter, the descriptive and inferential analyses use data from the survey of 'You and Your Attitude toward Interreligious Harmony'. The analyses mainly report on attitude towards Islam among Muslim students in Malaysian secondary schools.

Several measures from the instrument are as follows:

1. The Malaysian translation of the Sahin-Francis Scale of Attitude toward Islam was used. The translated scale was proved as reliable and valid in the pilot test. The scale was assessed on a five-point Likert scale: 'Strongly Agree' coded as 5, 'Agree' coded as 4, 'Not Sure' coded as 3, 'Disagree' coded as 2, and 'Strongly Disagree' coded as 1. Based on the pilot test, the item 'I think mosque sermons/*kebutbah* are boring' was changed to 'I think religious classes at mosques is boring' because this item is suitable for both sexes. Female attended religious lessons rather than the sermon/*kebutbah* during Jumaah prayer.
2. Several indicators of religious practices were included to explore correlation with the attitude toward Islam. The survey asked participants to rate their frequency of prayer, frequency of reading Quran, and frequency of attending mosque. Frequency of prayer was asked based on the frequency of performing obligatory prayer. The frequency was assessed on a five-point scale: 'Five times a day' coded as 5, 'Several times a day' coded as 4, 'Friday only' coded as 3, 'Occasionally' coded as 2, and 'Never' coded as 1. Frequency of reading Quran was assessed on a five-point scale: 'Every day' coded as 5, 'At least once a week' coded as 4, 'At least once a month' coded as 3, 'Occasionally' coded as 2, and 'Never' coded as 1. Frequency of attending mosque was assessed on a five-point scale: 'Every day' coded as 5, 'At least once a week' coded as 4, 'At least once a month' coded as 3, 'Sometimes' coded as 2, and 'Never' coded as 1.

3. Self-identity has been operationalised by asking the most preferred identity between three options of religion, ethnicity and nationality. The answer 'Being Muslim' indicated that religion is the most important identity to the participant; the answer 'Being Malay' indicated that ethnicity is the most important identity, and the answer 'Being Malaysian' indicated that nationality is the most important identity. In the correlational analysis, the answer 'Being Muslim' has been defined as religious identity (coded as 1) and answers 'Being Malay' and 'Being Malaysian' have been defined as other identities (coded as 0).
4. The analysis also aims to differentiate attitude toward Islam between the students in different types of school. Students were not required to state the type of school in the questionnaire to avoid confusion. The questionnaires from each school were separated and grouped based on type of school. During the data entry process, each school was assigned two number-based codes to identify school categories and type of school.
5. For demographics background information, the survey asked about sex between male (coded as 1) and female (coded as 2), and age, which was asked as an open question in which the participants were asked to state their age.

5.4.3. Sample

Analysis in this chapter uses data from the 'You and Your Attitude toward Interreligious Harmony' survey. The study was administered in 55 secondary schools in the state of Selangor in Malaysia. The final analyses were based on a survey answered by 3481 Muslim students who completed the survey. Originally, over 3500 students were involved in the study; however, some of the partially completed surveys were removed from the data analysis. Table 5.1 shows the total number of respondents involved in

this study based on sex and age. The data show there were 3481 Muslim students, consisting of 1418 males and 2063 females who answered the survey.

There were 973 students aged 13 years old consisting of 440 males and 533 females; 934 students aged 14 years old consisting of 383 males and 551 females; 180 students aged 15 years old consisting of 68 males and 112 females; 1182 students aged 16 years old consisting of 437 males and 745 females; 104 students aged 17 years old consisting of 43 males and 61 females; and, 108 students aged 18 years old consisting of 47 males and 61 females. The data also showed that the largest group of participants was among students aged 16 years old (34%) followed by 13 years old (28%), 14 years old (26.8%), 15 years old (5.2%), 17 years old (3%) and then 18 years old (3.1%).

Table 5. 1. Total number of respondents based on sex and age

	Age						Total (%)
	13	14	15	16	17	18	
Male	440 (31.0)	383 (27.0)	68 (4.8)	437 (30.8)	43 (3)	47 (3.3)	1418 (40.7)
Female	533 (25.8)	551 (26.7)	112 (5.4)	745 (36.1)	61 (3)	61 (3)	2063 (59.3)
Total (%)	973 (28.0)	934 (26.8)	180 (5.2)	1182 (34)	104 (3)	108 (3.1)	3481

Overall, 55 schools were involved in this study. The schools' names will not be exposed in this study for confidentiality and anonymity. These schools have been grouped into eight categories of school comprising of Government Mainstream Schools, State-funded Schools (Religious type), Integrated Schools, Vocational Schools, Government-funded Schools (Religious type), Private Schools (International), Non-government Organization funded Schools, Government-funded Schools (Ethnic type) as shown in Table 5.2. The classification is based on the stakeholder and special characteristics of the school. There are four categories of schools funded by the

Malaysian government that were involved in this study, consisting of Government Mainstream School, Government-funded School (Religious-type), Government-funded School (Ethnic-type) and Vocational School. Government Mainstream School refers to public schools which allow admission to any Malaysian citizen; Government-funded Schools (Religious type) refers to schools with a focus on Islamic value, which offer more subjects on Islamic knowledge (i.e.: *Syariah Islamiyyah* and *Quran al-Sunnah*) and teach the Arabic language; Government-funded School (Ethnic-type) refers to schools that manage by specific ethnics; and Vocational Schools, refers to technical and vocational schools (Ministry of Education, 2016). Other categories of schools involved in this study are named State-funded School (Religious type) which refers to a school that is managed by the Selangor Islamic Religious Council; Integrated School which refers to schools with the integration of *Tahfiz* and technical knowledge, or the integration of *Tahfiz* and scientific knowledge; Private School (International) which refers to schools with international curricula such as ICGE or ICE; and Non-government Organization funded School which refers to schools owned by non-government organization (NGO).

These 55 schools were also grouped into two types of school: faith-based schools and non-faith-based schools. Faith-based school refers to schools with religious ethos and values in the overall school environment and the number of syllabi on Islamic knowledge offered by the school. Non-faith-based school refers to schools with a mainstream schooling system that has students from various cultural backgrounds. It should be highlighted again that young Muslims in non-faith-based schools also learn Islamic knowledge through the Islamic Education curriculum and its major differences with faith-based schools are the school ethos and values. The classification of faith-

based school and non-faith-based school in this research is different compared to the UK or other European countries.

Table 5. 2: Schools and sex

	School categories and types of school	Gender		Total (%)
		Male	Female	
1	Government Mainstream Schools	742	1237	1979 (56.9)
2	State-funded Schools (Religious type)	407	548	955 (27.4)
3	Integrated Schools	78	78	156 (4.5)
4	Vocational Schools	83	57	140 (4)
5	Government-funded Schools (Religious type)	33	61	94 (2.7)
6	Private Schools (International)	42	17	59 (1.7)
7	Non-government Organization funded Schools	25	41	66 (1.9)
8	Government-funded Schools (Ethnic type)	8	24	32 (0.9)
1	Faith-based Schools	560	704	1264 (36.3)
2	Non-faith-based Schools	858	1359	2217 (63.7)
Total		1418	2063	3481

5.5. Results

5.5.1. Profiles of identity preferences and religious practice among the sample

Table 5.3 shows identity preferences among Muslim students in Malaysian secondary schools. The survey asked the most preferred identity between three options, consisting of religion (being Muslim), ethnicity (being Malay) and nationality (being Malaysian).

The data shows that 92.3% of participants identified themselves as a Muslim, 2.8% of participants identified themselves as Malay and 4.9% of participants identified themselves by their nationality as Malaysian.

Table 5. 3: Identity preferences

	Being Muslim	Being Malaysian	Being Malay
Male	1279	45	71
Female	1891	51	99
Missing			45
Total (% without missing answer)	3170 (92.3)	96 (2.8)	170 (4.9)

Table 5.4 presents the frequency of personal prayer reported by Muslim male students and Muslim female students in Malaysian secondary schools. The data show 81.4% reported praying obligatory prayer five times a day, 9.9% several times a day, 0.3% Friday only, 8.4% occasionally, and only one student reported to never praying. More females reported praying five times a day compared to males and there was one female who stated that she never prays.

Table 5.5 presents the frequency of reading the Quran reported by Muslim students in Malaysian secondary schools. The data shows that 46.5% reported reading the Quran every day, 29.2% at least once a week, 4.2% at least once a month, 19.5% occasionally, and 0.6% reported to never doing so. The data shows more females frequently read the Quran every day compared to males.

Table 5.6 presents the frequency of mosque attendance reported by Muslim students in Malaysian secondary schools. The data show 21% attend mosque every day, 26% at least once a week, 6.2% at least once a month, 44% attended mosque sometimes and 2.8% reported to never attending mosque. Among them, more males reported attending mosque every day compared to females.

The demographics of religious practices among the samples indicate that a majority of young Muslims reported high levels of religious commitments in term of the

frequency of prayer, the frequency of reading Quran and the frequency of attending mosque. It also demonstrates that the study was completed by a majority of the respondents who were on the same level of religious practices.

Table 5. 4: Frequency of prayer

	Five times	Several times	Friday only	Occasionally	Never
Male	1136	169	9	104	0
Female	1696	175	1	190	1
Total (%)	2832 (81.4)	344 (9.9)	10 (0.3)	294 (8.4)	1 (0)

Table 5. 5: Frequency of reading Quran

	Every day	Once a week	Once a month	Occasionally	Never
Male	645	400	63	302	8
Female	972	618	84	376	13
Total (%)	1617 (46.5)	1018 (29.2)	147 (4.2)	678 (19.5)	21 (0.6)

Table 5. 6: Frequency of attending mosque

	Every day	Once a week	Once a month	Sometimes	Never
Male	407	620	48	338	5
Female	324	286	168	1192	93
Total (%)	731 (21)	906 (26)	216 (6.2)	1530 (44)	98 (2.8)

5.5.2. Reliability of the scale

Table 5.7 shows scale properties of the Malaysian translation of the Sahin-Francis Scale of Attitude toward Islam in terms of the number of participants, the alpha coefficient, minimum and maximum scale score, the mean and standard deviation for the total scale score. The analysis was conducted based on the data of 3481 participants. The reliability test of the scale achieved an alpha coefficient of .897. The minimum score was 65 and the maximum score was 115 with a mean of 108.27 and standard deviation of 7.61.

Table 5.8 shows the item-total correlation, Cronbach's alpha if a particular item was deleted and the total number of students who reported 'strongly agree' and 'agree' to each item. The item-total correlations ranged between .32 and .60. In general, item-total correlation above .30 is considered good (Field, 2013). If any item was deleted, the Cronbach alpha would decrease, except for item 13 'I feel that I am very close to Allah/God' which would increase the alpha value to .90. For this study, the value of inter-item correlation and the value of Cronbach's alpha indicated that item 13 is acceptable for retention. These statistics support the homogeneity, unidimensional and internal consistency reliability of the scale. These results indicate that the Malaysian translation of Sahin-Francis Scale of Attitude toward Islam can serve as a valuable tool to assess attitude towards Islam among Muslim students in Malaysian secondary schools.

The present study examined students' agreements toward each item on the scale. The data was changed from Likert type data to nominal data by combining 'Agree' and 'Strongly Agree' as 'Yes'; and 'Not sure', 'Disagree' and 'Strongly disagree' combined as 'No' for the analysis. The data shows that the most agreed items by the respondents in the scale are 'I know that Allah/God helps me' with 98.9% of respondents agreeing to the item and 'Allah/God means a lot to me' with 98.9% of respondents agreeing to the item. The item 'I feel that I am very close to Allah/God' is the least agreed item with only 73.1% of respondents agreeing to the item. The data also demonstrated that the majority of students show a positive attitude toward Islam.

Table 5. 7: Scale properties of the Attitude towards Islam Scale

	<i>N</i>	<i>a.</i>	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	SD
Attitude toward Islam	3481	.897	65	115	108.27	7.61

Table 5. 8: Item-total correlation, Cronbach's Alpha if item deleted and agreement toward an item in the Attitude towards Islam Scale

		Corrected Item- Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted	Agreement toward the item (%)
1	I find it inspiring to listen to the Qur'ān	.42	.894	3375 (97)
2	I know that Allah/God helps me	.54	.893	3442 (98.9)
3	Saying my prayers/du'ā' helps me a lot	.59	.891	3421 (98.3)
4	Attending the Mosque is very important to me	.40	.896	2937 (84.4)
5	I think going to the Mosque is a waste of my time*	.46	.894	3311 (95.1)
6	I want to obey Allah/God's law/shari'ah in my life	.51	.892	3375 (97)
7	I think lesson in the Mosque are boring*	.49	.894	3012 (86.6)
8	Allah/God helps me to lead a better life	.59	.891	3423 (98.3)
9	I like to learn about Allah/God very much	.52	.892	3362 (96.6)
10	Allah/God means a lot to me	.60	.892	3444 (98.9)
11	I believe that Allah/God helps people	.58	.892	3439 (98.8)
12	Prayer/salāt helps me a lot	.60	.891	3411 (98)
13	I feel that I am very close to Allah/God	.32	.900	2546 (73.1)
14	I think praying/salāt is a good thing	.59	.891	3424 (98.4)
15	I think the Qur'ān is out of date*	.52	.892	3290 (94.5)
16	I believe that Allah/God listens to prayers/du'ā'	.55	.892	3389 (97.4)
17	Allah/God doesn't means anything to me*	.53	.892	3290 (94.5)
18	Allah/God is very real to me	.56	.891	3382 (97.2)
19	I think praying/du'ā' does no good*	.58	.890	3342 (96)
20	Belief in Allah/God means much to me	.60	.891	3423 (98.3)
21	I find it hard to believe in Allah/God*	.50	.894	3170 (91.1)
22	I am happy to be a Muslim	.57	.892	3436 (98.7)
23	I love to follow the life/sunnah of the Prophet	.50	.893	3298 (94.7)

In the present study, a Pearson product-moment correlation was run to determine the relationship between attitude towards Islam and religious practices. Table 5.9 presents the correlation between the score of the Sahin-Francis Scale of Attitude toward Islam and several religious practices consisting of frequency of prayer, frequency of reading Quran and frequency of attending mosque. The data shows that there was a positive correlation between attitudes towards Islam and religious practices which was statistically significant. Attitude towards Islam scores correlated with personal prayer ($r = .193, p < .001$); reading Quran ($r = .212, p < .001$); and mosque attendance ($r = .083, p < .001$).

Table 5.9 also shows the correlation between attitude towards Islam and identity preferences among participants. The data shows attitudes toward Islam significantly correlates with religion as identity preferences ($r = .185, p < .001$). The data also shows that attitudes towards Islam is negatively associated with identity preferences as Malay ($r = -.094, p < .001$) and identity preferences as Malaysian ($r = -.149, p < .001$). Therefore, preferring to identify as Muslim significantly correlates with a higher positive attitude toward Islam compared to other identity preferences.

Table 5. 9: Correlation between attitude towards Islam and religious practices, and identity

	Pray	Quran	Mosque	Identity		
				Muslim	Malay	Malaysian
Attitude toward Islam	.193*	.212*	.083*	.185*	-.094*	-.149*

Note: * $p < .001$

5.5.3. Comparing the attitude between males and females

Table 5.10 presents the mean score on the Sahin-Francis Scale of Attitude toward Islam for males and females and presents a t-test analysis comparing males and females on the

score of attitudes toward Islam. The present study tests the hypothesis that females will record higher scores on the Sahin-Francis Scale of Attitude toward Islam than males. The data shows that female participants had statistically a significant higher score of attitudes toward Islam (108.81 ± 7.04), compared to male (107.50 ± 8.32), $t(3481) = -4.85, p < .001$. The data supports the hypothesis that Muslim females score higher than males on attitude toward Islam.

Table 5. 10: Mean score on the Sahin-Francis Scale of Attitude towards Islam for males and females

Sex	N	Mean	SD	SE Mean	<i>t</i>
Male	1418	107.50	8.32	.22	-4.85*
Female	2063	108.81	7.04	.15	

Note: * $p < .01$

5.5.4. Comparing the attitude among different group of ages

Table 5.11 presents the descriptive details of the Sahin-Francis Scale of Attitude toward Islam for different groups of ages and compares the score of attitudes toward Islam among six ages groups. The present study tests the hypothesis that there is no difference between the ages of respondent on attitude toward Islam. The data shows there was statistically no significant difference of attitude toward Islam between age groups as determined by a one-way ANOVA ($F = 1.12, p = \text{NS}$). This study accepts the hypothesis that age among respondents demonstrates statistically no significant difference in score of attitudes toward Islam.

Table 5. 11: Descriptive details of the Sahin-Francis Scale of Attitude towards Islam and comparison between different groups of ages

Age	N	Mean	SD	SE Mean	F
13	973	108.74	7.63	.23	1.12
14	934	107.79	7.90	.25	
15	180	108.04	6.72	.41	
16	1182	108.17	7.55	.21	
17	104	108.28	8.15	.60	
18	108	108.86	8.03	.59	

5.5.5. Comparing the attitude between faith-based schools and non-faith-based schools

Table 5.12 present the mean scale score of attitudes toward Islam, comparing attitudes toward Islam between the students in faith-based schools and students in non-faith-based schools. Analysis was conducted using an independent t-test. The present study hypothesizes that students in faith-based schools and non-faith-based schools do not differ in their attitude toward Islam. The data shows that participants in faith-based schools had statistically significantly higher score of attitude toward Islam (108.98 ± 7.43) compared to students in non-faith-based schools (107.86 ± 7.69), $t(3481) = 4.24$, $p < .001$. These results reject the hypothesis and suggest that different schooling foundations have an effect on attitudes toward Islam among Muslim students in Malaysian secondary schools.

Table 5. 12: Mean scale score of attitudes toward Islam between the students in faith-based schools and non-faith-based schools

	N	Mean	SD	SE Mean	t
Faith-based schools	1264	108.98	7.43	.21	4.24*
Non-faith-based schools	2217	107.86	7.69	.16	

Note: * $p < .001$

Table 5.13 present the one-way ANOVA test and Tukey posthoc test comparing attitudes toward Islam between students in eight categories of schools: Private Schools (International), Integrated Schools, Vocational Schools, State-funded Schools (Religious type), Government Funded Schools (ethnic type), Government Mainstream Schools, Government Religious School and Science College MARA MRSM. The data shows there was a statistically significant difference among students in different categories of school as determined by a one-way ANOVA ($F= 13.54, p < .001$). The data from a Tukey posthoc test revealed two important points. First, there was no significant difference between the mean score of attitudes toward Islam between students in the faith-based schools (Integrated Schools, State-funded Schools (Religious type) and Government-funded Schools (Religious type). Second, the attitude toward Islam among students in Government-Funded Schools (Ethnic type) was significantly lower than students in other types of school.

Table 5. 13: Comparing the attitude between the students in different types of schools

	School categories	Mean	SD	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	F
1	Government Mainstream Schools	107.94	7.66	6.06*	-1.78	5.60*	-.40	.61	-2.14*	-1.35*	13.54***
2	State-funded Schools (Religious type)	109.28	7.47	7.41*	-.43	6.95*	.94	1.96	-.79		
3	Integrated Schools	110.08	6.12	8.20*	.36	7.74*	1.74	2.75*			
4	Vocational Schools	107.31	8.47	5.45*	-2.40	5.00*	-1.01				
5	Government-funded Schools (Religious type)	108.34	6.88	6.47*	-1.37	-1.74					
6	Private Schools (International)	102.34	10.50	.46	-7.37*						
7	Non-government Organization funded Schools	109.71	5.01	7.84*							
8	Government-funded Schools (Ethnic type)	101.88	13.80								

Note: * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$

5.6. Discussion

In the present study, the majority of study participants used religious affiliation instead of ethnicity or nationality as the core of their identity. The majority of respondents also reported a high frequency of religious practices. The majority of the respondents perform prayers five times a day, read the Quran and attend mosque sometimes. The data on the performance of religious practices are consistent with the findings in previous literature among young Muslims in Malaysia, such that young Muslims in Malaysia pray and recite the Quran daily (Francis, Tekke and Robbins, 2016) and frequently attend mosque (Shukri *et al.*, 2014). However, there were some researchers who found that young Muslims in Malaysia engaged less in reading Quran, less in attending mosque and less in daily prayer (Dahalan *et al.*, 2014). Currently available data in the literature shows various research findings with contradictory results on the frequency of religious practices among young Muslims in Malaysia. More empirical data is needed to inform the field of Islamic Education on the frequency of religious practices.

The present chapter discusses the measurement of attitudes toward Islam among Muslim students in Malaysian secondary schools by adopting the Sahin-Francis Scale of Attitude toward Islam. The scale has been translated into the Malaysian language through the process of translation and back-translation. Based on the data from the survey, the scale has good reliability and validity. The results also indicate that the scale can be used to examine attitudes toward Islam among young Muslim in Malaysian secondary schools for further study. The reliability and validity test's conclusions are as follows:

First, the scale achieved an alpha coefficient of .897 with corrected item-total correlations ranging between .32 and .60, suggesting that the scale has good reliability

and relatively high internal consistency. This result supported the conclusions of previous empirical research such as those among young Muslims in the UK (Sahin and Francis, 2002), in Kuwait (Francis, Sahin and Al-Ansari, 2006), in Pakistan (Musharraf, Lewis and Sultan, 2014), and among university students in Malaysia (Francis, Tekke and Robbins, 2016). For item 13 'I feel that I am very close to Allah/God', the value of the corrected item-total correlation at .32 indicated that young Muslims scored differently between each other. It is also possible that the respondents misunderstood the item which may have affected the analyses' results. However, the value above .30 is acceptable for retention (Field, 2013) and the item has been included for the analysis of the scale. A replication of the scale in any future study using the same translated item could provide support for reliability of the scale.

Second, attitudes toward Islam correlated with the frequency of religious practices. In other words, attitudes predicted behaviour. Students who reported a higher frequency of prayer scored higher on attitudes toward Islam ($r = .193, p < .001$); students who reported higher frequency of reading Quran scored higher on attitudes toward Islam ($r = .212, p < .001$); and students who reported higher frequency of attending mosque scored higher on attitudes toward Islam ($r = .083, p < .001$). These results suggested that attitudes towards Islam can predict young Muslims' religious behaviour. Religious practices remain a good predictor of students' attitudes toward Islam. The previous studies using the same scale support these findings. Attitude toward Islam also significantly correlates with preferring to identify as being Muslims, as identity preferences scored higher on attitude toward Islam compared to ethnic or national self-identity preferences ($r = .185, p < .001$). This result also suggests that attitude towards Islam could predict identity preferences based on religion among Muslims students in Malaysian secondary schools.

The data demonstrated that the majority of respondents show a high positive attitude toward Islam with a mean scale score of 108.27 (SD 7.61). The data on the attitude towards Islam is consistent with Sahin's (2014) and other researchers' findings, that the majority of studies participants have a strong positive attitude towards Islam. This is also supported by Francis, Tekke and Robbins (2016) who used the Sahin-Francis Scale of Attitude toward Islam in their research among young Muslims in Malaysian higher education institutions. They found a highly positive attitude toward Islam among the participants, with a mean scale score of 110.1 and standard deviation of 6.1. High positive attitude toward Islam among young Muslims in Malaysia was also clearly shown in the data as the majority of the students agreed toward each item in the scale. As highlighted in a previous chapter, Muslim parents stress religious education for their children. The Malaysian education systems also focus on nurturing religious development for the young Muslims through various approaches, particularly through the curriculums, syllabi and school environment. The present study suggests that researchers in the field of Islamic Education should focus on empirical study to further examine young Muslims' religiosity.

In terms of sex differences, the data supports the hypothesis that Muslim female students recorded higher scores on the Sahin-Francis scale of Attitude toward Islam compared to Muslim male students. This finding is supported by previous research on attitude toward Islam which also found this sex difference (Francis, Tekke & Robbins, 2016). This finding has been found across different religions and cultures. This is in contrast to Sahin (2002) in the research among Muslim students in the UK that showed Muslim males scoring higher on attitude toward Islam compared to females. Sahin suggested that the social context of the Muslim society in the UK should be taken into consideration to explain the lower attitude toward Islam among young Muslim females.

In the wider context of the social-cultural background of Malaysia, the data shows young Muslims females obtain the freedom to learn and express their religion. This is consistent with the data on the frequency of religious practices which indicate that young Muslim females in Malaysia practised their religion with high levels of frequency.

In terms of age differences, the present study found age to not be significantly associate with the attitude toward Islam. This is consistent with Sahin and Francis (2002) who also found no significant change in attitude toward Islam between the ages of 16 to 20 years old among young Muslims in the UK.

In terms of schooling foundation differences, the present study found attitude toward Islam slightly higher among students in faith-based schools compared to students in non-faith-based schools. This is consistent with previous research in other religious contexts which recorded that the mean scale score of attitudes toward religion among students in faith-based schools were higher than students in non-denominational schools (Francis, 1984; 1987; Francis and Greer, 1990). Nevertheless, the differences among the mean scale score of attitudes of students in both types of school in the present study are very small. It should be noted that in the Malaysian educational systems, Muslim students in both types of school formally learn about Islam in school and the Islamic Education curriculum is a compulsory subject for Muslim students. The Islamic Education curriculum has been implemented based on Malaysian Educational policy which requires school management to offer the syllabus on Islamic knowledge if there is a minimum of 15 Muslims students in the school. In addition, the schools participating in the present study have a majority of Muslim students, except for the Government-funded Schools (Ethnic-type). The majority of students who were involved in this study were also learning in schools with other students with similar

religious and cultural backgrounds. The major difference between faith-based schools and non-faith-based schools in the Malaysian educational system is the values offered by the school, such that faith-based schools focus on Islamic value in every aspect of teaching and learning, whereas non-faith-based schools do not focus on religious values, although do offer syllabi on Islamic knowledge. Faith-based schools also promote a schooling environment in line with Islamic teaching to ensure religious development among the students such as clothing, organizing religious activities and ensuring social interaction among students based on Islamic values, especially between females and males.

5.7. Conclusion

The present chapter has examined attitudes toward Islam among Muslim students in Malaysian secondary schools. The data for the analysis in this chapter were gathered by several instruments from the survey called 'You and Your Attitude toward Interreligious Harmony', including the Malaysian translation of the Sahin-Francis Scale of Attitude toward Islam, several indicators of religious practices, and background demographics. The Malaysian translation of the Sahin-Francis Scale of Attitude toward Islam proved to be reliable and valid in the study among Muslim students in Malaysian secondary schools. The results show that the majority of young Muslims scored high on the attitude toward Islam scale. Inferential statistical analyses found females scored higher on the attitude toward Islam scale than males. The study found no significant difference in attitude toward Islam among different age groups. In terms of schooling background, students in faith-based schools scored a higher attitude toward Islam than students in non-faith-based schools.

The findings suggested that the scale could be further used in wider contexts of study among young Muslims in Malaysia. Even though the majority of the participants

recorded a high score of attitudes toward Islam, there were a few students who scored low on attitudes toward Islam. Nevertheless, this study is limited in its findings on attitude toward Islam and the correlations with several instruments as highlighted above. A further empirical study to investigate the causes of high and low attitude toward Islam should be conducted. Further research should be conducted in other parts of Malaysia to obtain rich data on attitudes toward Islam among young Muslims in Malaysia. The scale could be used together with assessing religious practice among young Muslims in Malaysia as some previous studies highlight young Muslims in Malaysia are engaging less frequently in religious practices.

The reliability and validity of the Malaysian translation of the Sahin-Francis Scale of Attitude toward Islam demonstrated that the scale can be further used to analyse relationships with the attitude toward interreligious harmony. The correlational analysis will be presented in Chapter seven by correlating all the instruments used in the 'You and Your Attitude toward Interreligious Harmony' survey, including Attitude toward Islam, Attitude toward Interreligious Harmony, several items on inter-cultural and inter-religious engagement, demographic backgrounds and several indices of religious practice. In the next chapter, the study presents the development of the Attitude toward Interreligious Harmony Scale, reliability and validity of the scale and its correlates.

Chapter 6

Data Analysis 2: Psychometric properties of the Attitude toward Interreligious Harmony Scale: Evidence for reliability and validity

6.1. Introduction

The previous chapter has examined the level of religiosity among Muslim students in Malaysian secondary schools by assessing their attitude towards Islam, identity preferences and frequency of religious practices. The data generated from the analysis, presented in the previous chapter, shows that the majority of respondents among Muslim students in Malaysian secondary schools had a high positive attitude toward Islam and observance of religious practice. This data could give more information in the correlational study with the attitude towards interreligious harmony. The central research questions explored in the present chapter focusses on the attitude toward interreligious harmony among Muslim students in Malaysian secondary schools. The specially constructed instrument called the Attitude toward Interreligious Harmony Scale has been used in this study to measure the attitude among respondents toward interreligious harmony. This study is considered as exploratory research due to the limited number of previous research in the topic of interreligious harmony and lack of attitudinal studies on this topic. The scale was constructed within a social psychological framework.

This chapter will be presented in four parts. The first part of this chapter discusses the emerging empirical research concentrated on the attitudinal study in the context of the multi-religious society of Malaysia. Previous studies approaching Muslims from an attitudinal dimension on the related topic of interreligious harmony will be explored. This part critically evaluates the available scale used in previous research. Then, the present study highlights the importance of developing a scale to measure

attitudes toward interreligious harmony and presents the ways in which the construct relevant to assessing young Muslims' attitudes toward interreligious harmony is shaped. The second part of this chapter discusses the theoretical and operational framework to assess attitudes toward interreligious harmony. The scale construction was informed by theories in social psychology and literature in Islamic theological on the interreligious relationship. The third part of this chapter presents the procedure to in developing the scale. The final part of this chapter reports the validity and reliability of the Attitude toward Interreligious Harmony Scale in the research among Muslim students in Malaysian secondary schools before concluding the chapter.

6.2. Empirical research assessing attitude toward interreligious harmony

6.2.1. Existing research on the attitudinal dimension in the context of religious diversity

Since the early development of social psychology, there is a large number of empirical studies assessing attitudes among people toward cultural and religious diversity. Social attitudes such as prejudice, bias, stereotypes and tolerance have been the focus among researchers. The earliest research investigating attitude in the early 1900s (see Fishbein and Ajzen, 2011) has led to subsequent rigorous research on various themes in intergroup studies (see Maio, Haddock and Verplanken, 2019) and applied different approaches to explore cognitive, affective and behavioural dimensions of attitude (Brewer and Kramer, 1985). Over a period, the field of empirical knowledge on social attitudes gained great interest among researchers, especially when Thurstone (1928) and other pioneers (Chave, 1928; Likert, 1932; Guttman, 1944; Osgood, Suci and Tannenbaum, 1957) started to measure attitudes. Empirical research on attitudes toward people of different religious backgrounds also has been developed since then (Batson, Schoenrade and Ventis, 1993; Beit-Hallahmi and Argyle, 1997; Saroglou, 2014).

Even though research on intergroup attitudes has been developed over a long time, the number of studies on Muslims has only started to increase after the 9/11 and 7/7 tragedies (Jamal and Naber, 2008). Muslims have received tremendous attention after crises and wars in Middle Eastern countries, especially when immigrants and refugees from countries in crisis increased dramatically in other parts of the world. Most of the Muslim-related studies focussed on themes, such as attitudes toward Muslims (Fetzer and Soper, 2003; Kalkan, Layman and Uslander, 2009; Khan and Ecklund, 2012; Baker, Gabrielatos and McEnery, 2013) and attitudes toward Muslim immigrants (Strabac, Aalberg and Valenta, 2014; Hellwig and Sinno, 2017). Some of the available research concerning on Muslims examine the integration among Muslim immigrants or Muslim refugees with the local people in the host countries (Verkuyten and Martinovic, 2012; Maliepaard and Schacht, 2017) and Muslims' attitudes toward religious diversity (Francis and McKenna, 2017; Hermisson, Gochyyev and Wilson, 2019). Studies on Muslims were mostly conducted in Muslim minority countries such as in the UK and other European countries. There has been relatively little empirical research approaching the attitudinal dimension of the interreligious relationship in majority Muslim countries and no empirical research assessing attitudes toward interreligious harmony among Muslim children.

6.2.2. Empirical research on the attitudinal dimension in the interreligious relationship in Malaysia

As highlighted above, this present study aims at assessing attitudes toward interreligious harmony among Muslim secondary school students. A review of previous literature found that empirical research on the interreligious relationship involving Malaysian participants and research conducted in Malaysia solely focus on tolerant attitudes (Talib, 2012; Yunus, 2013; Muslim and Noor, 2014; Talib *et al.*, 2014). For instance, Muslim and Noor (2014) empirically measured perception toward living in ethnic diversity

among students in higher education institutions. The study specifically wanted to examine participants' readiness for a good relationship with and the acceptance of people from different religious backgrounds in the participants' lives. The questions asked about participants' readiness to share resources, readiness to live in a diverse society and opinions about food choices, dress codes, religious symbols and mixed marriages. They found that the level of tolerance was high on making good relationships, sharing resources and living in a diverse society. They also found that Muslim students among Malay scored low on acceptance toward items related to religious values such as food choices, dress codes, religious symbols and mixed marriages.

Another empirical study assessing religious tolerance was conducted by Talib and colleagues (Talib, 2012; Talib *et al.*, 2014). In a series of studies, they conducted a survey by utilizing a scale called 'Ethno-religious Tolerance' in which they assessed perception, behaviour and experience among Malaysians in their daily routines. Talib (2012) and Talib *et al.* (2014) reported that people (from the age 18 and above) in Peninsular Malaysia and young people in the other two states in East Malaysia: Sabah and Sarawak show an attitude of high tolerance. A critical review of these reports has found some limitations. First, these studies did not report the validity and reliability of the scale. Secondly, the Ethno-religious Tolerance Scale has content validity issues because items on tolerant attitude were mixed with items on belief in the scale. For instance, the item 'Any religious people should be tolerated toward other people of different belief' is well focused on tolerant attitude, whereas the item 'I believe that my religion and other religions are equally true' refers to beliefs about religious truth claims. For theologians, the question is related to religious truth, such as an absolute truth of one religion and a transcendent unity of God is considered as a fundamental belief of

some religions. It also highlights individual preference because people might hold different ideas within their religious group. Clearly, the idea of religious truth is different from tolerant attitude. Research on empirical theology distinguished between Atheism, Agnosticism, Exclusionism, Inclusivism, Pluralism, and Interreligious perspective (Astley and Francis, 2016). A previous study in the UK found that young Muslims hold different positions on religious truth and some positions are significantly correlated with positive attitudes toward religious diversity (Francis and McKenna, 2017).

The third piece of literature examined relationships between religious orientation, ethnic identity, student involvement in co-curricular activities at school and tolerant attitudes by Yunos (2013). The tolerant attitude was measured on religious tolerance, cultural tolerance and social tolerance. There are two major problems with the study. First, the items in the scale combined items on interreligious contact, 'I have friends from religious backgrounds different from my own [sic]' and items on readiness to live with others, 'I am willing to live in a community of people with religions different from my own [sic]'. Second, the religious orientation scale replicated a revised version of Allport and Ross's (1967) intrinsic and extrinsic religiosity scale by Gorsuch and McPherson (1989); however, the report shows the concept of religious orientation was misinterpreted as a level of religiousness rather than as a distinction between intrinsic and extrinsic orientation. For instance, he suggested that respondents who have a 'higher level of religious orientation,' a strong ethnic identity and were actively involved in co-curricular activities tended to be more tolerant. As a result, his study failed to examine the type of religious orientation and how it correlates with a tolerant attitude and other variables.

Some empirical studies use a specific question to assess attitudes toward other religions. However, the question is only relevant to the participants in the study and only applicable in specific situations. For example, Halim and Awang (2016) conducted a study to examine perception toward interreligious relationships among people in several states in Malaysia. They asked the respondents to rate their agreement to statements such as ‘All religions teach good values’ and ‘I don’t have any problem living near to a worship house of different religions.’ The disadvantage of asking questions that are too specific is that participants will find it very hard to answer them if they have limited knowledge about the values of other religions, or have never experienced living near to a worship house of other religions. Halim and Awang (2016) findings demonstrated that the percentages of answers for the item ‘living near to the worship house of other religions’ were equally distributed among answers ‘not sure’ (22.3%), ‘agree’ (27.4%) and ‘totally agree’ (29.5%) which may reflect the answer of participants who had not experienced that situation. Regarding this problem, Brockett, Village and Francis (2010) suggested that participants may choose the neutral answer (i.e. not sure) because of a lack of understanding, rather than as a response of a particular attitudinal stance.

6.2.3. Limitation of previous empirical research

As demonstrated above, there is some empirical research on interreligious relationships and tolerant attitudes among Muslims in Malaysia toward people of different religious backgrounds. The empirical study concerned on tolerant attitude is very important to inform the field of knowledge on attitude among adolescents in Malaysia. However, there are some limitations in these previous studies, especially in regard to the following elements: research topic, scales used and research samples.

First, empirical studies concerning Muslims' attitudes toward people of different faiths focussed on tolerant attitude and on perceived harmonious relationships within the participants' lived areas. In addition, some of the important elements in assessing attitudes in the context of religious diversity are generally not considered in the existing scales. The instruments only focus on intercultural and interreligious engagement, whereas attitude toward other important elements in religion, such as beliefs, religious texts and places of worship have been neglected. Second, there are limitations in previous studies on the theoretical discussion during the establishment of the scale, and on the failure to report on validity and reliability of the scales. Third, another limitation is that existing research on attitudes among Muslims toward people of other faiths in Malaysia has been conducted only among undergraduates and adults. Consequently, little is known about Muslim students in secondary schools.

Against this background, the present research advances current scholarship in several directions. This study explores the concept of interreligious harmony and attitude toward interreligious harmony. First, the present study focusses on assessing attitude toward interreligious harmony in which the topics of discussion differ from assessing social attitudes. While social attitude research focusses on attitude toward other groups, this study assesses attitude toward realizing interreligious harmony in a multi-religious society. The scale assesses attitude toward several important elements of religion such as people, values, religious texts and places of worship of other religions. Second, the present study is the first study to explore attitude toward interreligious harmony among young Muslims in Malaysian secondary schools. A scale will be developed to measure attitude toward interreligious harmony by carefully implementing good research practice. The development of the scale will be informed by literature in social psychology and Islamic theology. Third, the present study aims to contribute to

the field of social psychology by developing a scale to measure young Muslims' attitudes toward interreligious harmony in Malaysia, a Muslim-majority country.

6.3. Aims and hypotheses

This chapter aims to examine the psychometric properties of a newly developed instrument called the Attitude toward Interreligious Harmony Scale. This exploratory research examines the internal consistency reliability of the scale, validity and dimensionality. The data will be gathered from the 'You and Your Attitude toward Interreligious Harmony' survey among Muslim students in Malaysian secondary schools. A descriptive and inferential analysis will be conducted.

The present chapter tests the following hypotheses:

1. There is no significant relationship between sex and attitude toward interreligious harmony.
2. There is no significant relationship between the age of respondent and attitude toward interreligious harmony.

6.4. A preliminary step toward the construction of the Attitude toward Interreligious Harmony Scale for an operational framework

The construction of the scale uses a rational method based on a discussion in the literature in Islamic theology. The items on the scale also refer to Malaysian policies and legislations to make sense to Malaysian society. It is an exploratory approach to develop the measurement because this is the first attempt to measure attitude toward interreligious harmony among young Muslims in Malaysia.

In the present study, interreligious harmony was operationalized as having a good relationship with people of different religions, respect for other religions and

responding positively to religious differences such as the beliefs, the values, the sacred texts and the places of worship of other religions. Several important values in interreligious harmony are respecting, helping, good communication, conflict avoidance and learning about others. These values are in line with Islamic teaching as Islam precisely focusses on good relationships among people.

Considering the importance of living together among people of different religious backgrounds, several items in this scale were developed following the social distance theory by Bogardus (1959). In sociology, social distance refers to a group conception to an out-group; cultural differences between an in-group and an out-group; and norms of social distance and their expression in society (Poole Jr, 1927). The concept has been well integrated into social psychological studies. Among the major scales contributed to the study in the inter-group relationship is the Social Distance Scale by Bogardus (1933) which assesses the affective element in the relationship (Wark and Galliher, 2007). The items asked about participants' readiness to have a close relationship with people from a different background, such as being close relatives by marriage, accepting them as regular friends, being a neighbour on the same street, being co-workers in the same occupation, accepting them as citizens in the same country and accepting them as non-citizen visitors in their country.

In other studies, several scales were developed based on the social distance theory of Bogardus (1933, 1959) to measure attitude towards religious diversity. Francis *et al.* (2012) developed a scale to assess affective responses to religious diversity called the Attitude toward Religious Diversity Scale (ARDI) consisting of 11 items. The scale included social distance items such as 'I would not like to live next door to a Buddhist', 'I would not like to live next door to a Hindu', and 'I would be happy about a close

relative marrying someone from a different faith.’ The scale was reported as having statistically good reliability and validity. Furthermore, Francis and McKenna (2017) developed another scale called the Muslim Attitude toward Religious Diversity Index (MARDI) to assess young Muslims' attitudes toward religious diversity in the UK. Some of the items in ARDI were removed and negatively worded items changed to positively worded items. This present study, drawing on the same theory, included several items based on social distance theory to assess readiness toward intercultural and interreligious engagement. The items included: ‘I would be happy to live with someone from a different religious background’; ‘I would be happy to help someone from a different religious background’; ‘I would be happy to talk with someone from a different religious background’; ‘I would be happy to have a lunch/dinner with someone from a different religious background’; and ‘I would be happy to be friends with someone from a different religious background’ (Bogardus, 1933).

Based on a critical review of literature in Islamic theology, several items were also included in the scale that refers to responses toward the differences between religions such as the beliefs, the values, the sacred texts and the places of worship. The items included: ‘Respecting other religions gives a lot of benefits’; ‘I believe all religious groups should have equal rights’; and ‘I believe that everyone should have the right to learn about their religion’. The list of items is presented in the findings part.

Then, the scale has been validated through two procedures: content validity and construct validity. Content validity is a process to assess the items in the scale by experts who are asked to judge whether the contents are adequate to measure the specific phenomena related to the topic in the questionnaire. Construct validity refers to experimental exercise measuring the construct using a statistical analysis test. In this

study, experts were among Islamic scholars in Malaysia in the field of Comparative Religion and Islamic Education. According to the experts' judgment, 19 items in the scale are adequate to measure attitude toward interreligious harmony. In the pilot test, the Attitude toward Interreligious Harmony Scale achieved good validity and reliability for 18 items. Based on the analysis of the data generated from the pilot test, one item 'I would be happy for a close family member to marry someone from a different religious background' issues with construct validity in statistical analysis, was removed from the scale. The present study employs an 18-item scale to assess attitudes toward interreligious harmony among Muslim students.

6.5. Methods

6.5.1. Procedure

The data was gathered from the 'You and Your Attitude toward Interreligious Harmony' survey. As highlighted in the previous chapter, the survey was administered at school by teachers and, where applicable, I helped teachers to conduct the survey. Only Muslim students were involved, and students had the right to participate or not in the study. They were encouraged to answer all the items in the questionnaire without any fear. Students were not required to put their names on the survey in order to guarantee confidentiality and anonymity.

6.5.2. Measures

The analysis in this chapter focusses on several groups of item from students' responses in the survey consisting of attitude towards interreligious harmony, agreement toward an item that reflects the article in the Federal Constitution of Malaysia on religious diversity, interreligious and intercultural engagement and demographic profile of students. Each item is measured using the following scale and questions:

1. The main scale for analysis in this chapter is the Attitude toward Interreligious Harmony Scale. Participants were asked to respond to each item on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Based on the results of the pilot test, the 18-item scale had high internal consistency with the alpha coefficient.
2. An item designed to reflect the article in the Federal Constitution of Malaysia on religious diversity: 'I agree that Islam is the main religion in Malaysia, but other religions may be practised in peace and harmony in any part of the country'. Again, participants were asked to respond on the five-point Likert scale: 'Strongly agree', 'Agree', 'Not sure', 'Disagree, and 'Strongly Disagree'. This study expects scores on the attitude scale to correlate with responses to the item reflecting the article in the Federal Constitution of Malaysia. The correlation could provide support for the construct validity of the scale.
3. Several questions referring to interreligious and intercultural engagement were asked. The items are 'I join group discussions with friends from a different ethnic background', 'I have lunch with friends from a different religious background', 'I spend time speaking with neighbours from a different ethnic background', 'I visit friends from a different religion during their religious celebration day', 'I attend funeral ceremonies of people of different religious background', and 'I have a family member married with someone from a different ethnic background'. These questions examine intergroup contact following the Contact Theory by Allport (1954) and following the findings in the meta-analytic study by Pettigrew and Tropp

(2006) that intergroup contact results in a positive attitude toward other people. The correlation will provide support for the construct validity of the scale.

4. In regards to demographics, the survey asked about sex between male (coded as 1) and female (coded as 2), and age was asked as an open question in which the participants were asked to state their age.

6.5.3. Sample

The study was administered in 55 secondary schools in the state of Selangor in Malaysia. There were 3481 Muslim students, consisting of 1418 males and 2063 females, who answered the survey. There were 973 students aged 13 years old, 934 students aged 14 years old, 180 students aged 15 years old, 1182 students aged 16 years old, 104 students aged 17 years old and 108 students aged 18 years old as shown in Table 6.1.

Table 6. 1. Total number of respondents based on sex and age

	Age (%)						Total (%)
	13	14	15	16	17	18	
Male	440 (31)	383 (27)	68 (4.8)	437 (30.8)	43 (3)	47 (3.3)	1418 (40.7)
Female	533 (25.8)	551 (26.7)	112 (5.4)	745 (36.1)	61 (3)	61 (3)	2063 (59.3)
Total (%)	973 (28)	934 (26.8)	180 (5.2)	1182 (34)	104 (3)	108 (3.1)	3481

6.6. Descriptive results: Agreement with the item that is designed to reflect the article in the Federal Constitution of Malaysia and intercultural and interreligious engagement.

Table 6.2 shows descriptive results of participants' agreement with the item that was designed to reflect the article in the Federal Constitution of Malaysia and participants' self-reported answer on intercultural and interreligious engagement. First, the responses to the agreement of the item 'I agree that Islam is the main religion in Malaysia; but

other religions may be practised in peace and harmony in any part of the country' was changed to 'Yes' and 'No' responses for the analysis. The 'Strongly agree' and 'Agree' responses were combined as 'Yes' and coded as 1; and 'Not sure', 'Disagree' and 'Strongly disagree' responses were combined as 'No' and coded as 0. The data shows that 75.8% of respondents agreed on the item 'I agree that Islam is the main religion in Malaysia; but other religions may be practised in peace and harmony in any part of the country.' Second, the data shows the percentage of participants who answered 'Yes' for items on intercultural and interreligious engagement. To elaborate, 55.1% of participants answered 'Yes' on the item 'I join group discussions with friends from a different ethnic background', 36.3% of participants answered 'Yes' on the item 'I have lunch with friends from a different religious background', 39.9% of participants answered 'Yes' on the item 'I spend time speaking with neighbours from a different ethnic background', 20.8% of participants answered 'Yes' on the item 'I visit friends from a different religion during their religious celebration day', 5% of participants answered 'Yes' on the item 'I attend funeral ceremonies of people of a different religious background', and 12.9% of participants answered 'Yes' on the item 'I have a family member married with someone from a different ethnic background'. The data demonstrated that the participants have different experiences in the intercultural and interreligious engagement, even though social and religious diversity is the identity of Malaysian society.

Table 6. 2: Participants' agreement with the article in the Federal Constitution of Malaysia and self-reported intercultural and interreligious engagement

No.	Items	Total (%)	Mean	SD
1.	I agree that Islam is the main religion in Malaysia, but other religions may be practised in peace and harmony in any part of the country.	75.8	1.76	.428
2.	I join group discussions with friends from a different ethnic background.	55.1	.55	.497
3.	I have lunch with friends from a different religious background.	36.3	.36	.481
4.	I spend time speaking with neighbours from a different ethnic background.	39.9	.40	.490
5.	I visit friends from a different religion during their religious celebration day.	20.8	.21	.406
6.	I attend funeral ceremonies of people of a different religious background.	5.0	.05	.218
7.	I have a family member married someone from a different ethnic background.	12.9	.13	.336

The data displayed in Table 6.3 shows descriptive details of the Attitude toward Interreligious Harmony Scale in terms of the mean score of each item, the standard deviation of each item, and the total number of students who agreed with each item. Participants rated the statements on a five-point Likert scale from 1 (Strongly disagree) to 5 (Strongly agree). The mean scores of items in this scale ranged from 2.94 to 4.46 and the standard deviations of the items ranged from .691 to 1.114. For example, participants scored relatively high on items 'Respecting other religion gives a lot of benefits' (mean 4.46, SD .691), and scored relatively low on items 'I am interested to visit other religious places of worship' (mean 2.94, SD 1.103).

The table also presents the frequency of agreement among respondents with items on the scale. The answers of the five-point Likert scale was changed to answer 'Yes' and 'No' by combining 'Strongly agree' and 'Agree' responses as 'Yes', and

combining 'Not sure', 'Disagree' and 'Totally disagree' responses as 'No'. The data shows that 91.6% of the students, the highest percentage of agreement among participants, agreed to the item 'Respecting other religions gives a lot of benefits.' There were a few items that scored below 50% of acceptance; for example, 46.7% of the students agreed to the item 'I am interested to watch or listen to interfaith dialogue programs', 44.9% of the students agreed to the item 'I would be happy to have a lunch/dinner with someone from a different religious background', 41.3% of the students agreed to the item 'I think reading a book of other religions is a waste of my time', 38% of the students agreed to the item 'I would be happy to live with someone from a different religious background', 36.6% of the students agreed to the item 'I am interested to talk about other religions with my friends', and 29.7% of the students agreed to the item 'I am interested to visit other religious places of worship'.

Table 6. 3: Descriptive statistic on each item in the Attitude toward Interreligious Harmony Scale

No.	Items	Mean	SD	Frequency of agreement toward the item (%)
1.	Interreligious harmony means we are living in peace and harmony with people from different faith	4.42	.711	3609 (89.4)
2.	I would be happy to live with someone from a different religious background	3.24	1.083	1534 (38.0)
3.	I would be happy to help someone from a different religious background	4.20	.737	3420 (84.7)
4.	I would be happy to talk with someone from a different religious background	4.10	.787	3181 (78.8)
5.	I would be happy to have a lunch/dinner with someone from a different religious background	3.44	1.020	1812 (44.9)
6.	I would be happy to be friends with someone from a different religious background	3.71	.972	2318 (57.4)
7.	I think reading a book of other religions is a waste of my time	3.24	1.114	1436 (41.3)
8.	I am interested to visit other religious places of worship	2.94	1.103	1199 (29.7)
9.	I am interested in finding out about other religions	3.41	1.029	2025 (50.2)
10.	I am interested to know about values shared across religious traditions	3.96	.833	3080 (76.3)
11.	I am interested to watch or listen to interfaith dialogue programs	3.49	.975	1885 (46.7)
12.	Respect other religion gives a lot of benefits	4.46	.691	3696 (91.6)
13.	I believe all religious groups should have equal rights	4.09	.839	3020 (74.8)
14.	I believe that everyone should have the right to learn about their religion	4.04	.833	2899 (71.8)
15.	I believe that everyone should be allowed to practice their religion	3.96	.891	2761 (68.4)
16.	I am interested to talk about other religions with my friends	3.25	.987	1479 (36.6)
17.	I believe that someone cannot force others to believe in their religion	4.07	.883	3115 (77.2)
18.	Helping each other among people of different faith gives a lot of benefits	4.27	.777	3400 (84.2)

6.6.1. Reliability analysis

Table 6.4 presents the properties of the Attitude toward Interreligious Harmony Scale and Table 6.5 presents the corrected item-total correlations and Cronbach alpha if items were deleted. The reliability of the Attitude toward Interreligious Harmony Scale was measured in terms of internal consistency of the items by using Cronbach's alpha coefficient. In a pilot study, this scale generated an alpha coefficient of .801. The 18 items scale achieved an alpha coefficient of .869 for 3481 participants in the final study. There are two conclusions regarding the reliability of the scale based on these statistical analyses.

First, the correlations between individual items (ranging from .36 to .59) and the total score of the scale suggested that all items are worthy for retention. All items correlated with the total scale to a good degree. Generally, Pearson correlation coefficients lower than .30 are a cause for concern because it is an indication that the item might not be measuring the same construct. A value above .30 is considered good (Field, 2013). The correlation with each item in the scale suggested that all items in the scale tap a single construct. The data also shows that removing any one of the items from the scale will decrease the alpha coefficient of the scale.

Secondly, four items (3, 4, 5 and 6) showing readiness for physical contact are central to the affective domain of attitude toward interreligious harmony among Muslim students in Malaysian secondary schools. This will be clearly visualised after running a factor analysis, which will be presented below.

Table 6. 4: Scale Properties of the Attitude toward Interreligious Harmony Scale

	N	<i>a.</i>	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	SD
The Attitude toward Interreligious Harmony Scale	3481	.869	21	85	68.30	9.139

Table 6. 5: Item-total statistics

		Corrected Item- Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
1.	Interreligious harmony means we are living in peace and harmony with people from different faith	.43	.864
2.	I would be happy to live with someone from a different religious background	.50	.862
3.	I would be happy to help someone from a different religious background	.57	.859
4.	I would be happy to talk with someone from a different religious background	.59	.858
5.	I would be happy to have a lunch/dinner with someone from a different religious background	.58	.858
6.	I would be happy to be friends with someone from a different religious background	.57	.858
7.	I think reading a book of other religions is a waste of my time	.36	.868
8.	I am interested to visit other religious places of worship	.43	.865
9.	I am interested in finding out about other religions	.53	.860
10.	I am interested to know about values shared across religious traditions	.53	.860
11.	I am interested to watch or listen to interfaith dialogue programs	.42	.865
12.	Respecting other religion gives a lot of benefits	.49	.862
13.	I believe all religious groups should have equal rights	.45	.863
14.	I believe that everyone should have the right to learn about their religion	.50	.861
15.	I believe that everyone should be allowed to practise their religion	.47	.863
16.	I am interested to talk about other religions with my friends	.51	.861
17.	I believe that someone cannot force others to believe in their religion	.40	.865
18.	Helping each other among people of different faith gives a lot of benefits	.51	.861

6.6.2. Construct validity

Validity refers to the accuracy of the assessment (Cronbach and Meehl, 1955; Clark and Watson, 1995). The present study reported on content validity and construct validity. The items were thoroughly reviewed by Islamic scholars in Malaysia who are experts in the field of Comparative Religion and Islamic Education to validate the items for content validity. As a result, the Attitude toward Interreligious Harmony Scale was developed with 19 items. After the pilot test, one item that had low internal consistency reliability was dropped from the scale, and the 18-items scale was used in the analysis for the real study.

A construct validity test of the scale has been conducted by examining the correlation between the total score of the scale and several items as follows:

1. The correlation between the total score of the scale and agreement toward the item is designed to reflect the article in the Federal Constitution of Malaysia on religious diversity.
2. The correlation between the total score of the scale and several items on intercultural and interreligious engagement.
3. The correlation between latent variables in the scale. First, factor analysis will be conducted to explore if any latent variables can be generated in a meaningful way. Then, a correlational analysis between latent variable will be conducted.

First, construct validity was evaluated by analyzing the correlation coefficient between the total score of the scale and agreement with the item designed to reflect the article in the Federal Constitution of Malaysia on freedom to practise any religion: ‘I

agree that Islam is the main religion in Malaysia, but other religions may be practised in peace and harmony in any part of the country'. Participants were asked on a five-point Likert scale from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree). The data presented in Table 6.6 shows the mean score of this item is 4.51 and standard deviation is .81. A point-biserial correlation was computed and the result suggested that attitude toward Interreligious Harmony significantly correlated with agreement toward the item ($r = .265, p < .001$).

Second, construct validity was evaluated by analyzing the correlation between attitude toward interreligious harmony and several items on intercultural and interreligious engagement. A point-biserial correlation was computed to determine the relationship between the attitude and several items on intercultural and interreligious engagement. The data presented in Table 6.6 shows there is a significant positive correlation between attitude toward interreligious harmony and the item 'I join group discussions with friends from a different ethnic background' ($r = .185, p < .001$); the item 'I had lunch with friends from a different religious background' ($r = .293, p < .001$); the item 'I spent some time to speak with neighbours from a different ethnic background' ($r = .152, p < .001$); the item 'I visit friends from a different religion during their religious celebration day' ($r = .204, p < .001$); the item 'I attend funeral ceremonies of people of different religious backgrounds' ($r = .129, p < .001$); and the item 'I have a family member married with someone from a different ethnic background' ($r = .156, p < .001$).

Table 6. 6: Construct validity of the Attitude toward Interreligious Harmony Scale (correlation with intercultural and interreligious engagement)

No.	Variables	Mean	SD	Correlations
1.	I agree that Islam is the main religion in Malaysia, but other religions may be practised in peace and harmony in any part of the country.	4.51	.81	.265*
2.	I join group discussions with friends from different ethnic backgrounds.	.55	.497	.185*
3.	I had lunch with friends from a different religious background.	.36	.481	.230*
4.	I spent some time to speak with neighbours from a different ethnic background.	.40	.490	.152*
5.	I visit friends from a different religion during their religious celebration day.	.21	.406	.204*
6.	I attend funeral ceremonies of people of different religious background.	.05	.218	.129*
7.	I have a family member married someone from a different ethnic background.	.13	.336	.156*

Note: * $p < .001$

Third, exploratory factor analysis was conducted to discover any latent variables underlying the scale before conducting a correlational analysis between the different constructs. As highlighted above, the statistical result indicates the scale measures on the affective dimension on whether students favour or do not favour interreligious harmony. Factor analysis has been conducted to cluster the items in the Attitude toward Interreligious Harmony Scale in a meaningful structure. Factor analysis helps researchers in several ways, including to acknowledge the structure of a set of variables; to construct a questionnaire; to measure underlying variables; and to reduce a dataset to a manageable size while retaining as much of the original information as possible (Field, 2013). Statistically, factor analysis reveals latent variables that shared variance in the scale.

The data in Table 6.7 shows that three components were detected based on a rotated component matrix. The questions that load highly on the first component show attitudes of respects to others, such as believing that respecting other religions gives a lot of benefits, believing all religious groups should have equal rights and believing that everyone should have the right to learn about their religion. The first component can be labelled as Respect. The questions that load highly on the second component focus on readiness to have people of other religions in the participants' lives, such as being happy to live with someone from a different religious background and being happy to help someone from a different religious background. This component can be labelled as Proximity. The questions that load highly on the third component refer to readiness to engage with other religions, such as being interested to visit other religious places of worship, being interested in finding out about other religions and being interested to know about values shared across religious traditions. The third component can be labelled as Interreligious engagement.

Based on three latent variables in factor analysis, several procedures have been conducted to assess the validity of the scale. All items were combined in each component before running a correlational analysis to find a relationship between different components. The data shows that each component significantly correlates to each other. The component of Interreligious engagement significantly correlates with Proximity ($r = .49, p < .001$) and Respect ($r = .46, p < .001$) and Proximity significantly correlates with Respect ($r = .50, p < .001$).

Table 6. 7: Rotated component matrix

	Component		
	1 (respect)	2 (proximity)	3 (Interreligious engagement)
(2) Interreligious harmony means we are living in peace and harmony with people from different faith	.459	.367	.015
(16) Respecting other religion gives a lot of benefit	.599	.251	.111
(17) I believe all religious groups should have equal rights	.713	.102	.080
(18) I believe that everyone should have the right to learn about their religion	.727	.077	.164
(19) I believe that everyone should be allowed to practise their religion	.684	.103	.129
(21) I believe that someone cannot force others to believe in their religion	.528	.095	.188
(22) Helping each other among people of different faith gives a lot of benefits	.589	.277	.143
(4) I would be happy to live with someone from a different religious background	.152	.621	.202
(5) I would be happy to help someone from a different religious background	.284	.720	.100
(6) I would be happy to talk with someone from a different religious background	.188	.796	.150
(7) I would be happy to have a lunch/dinner with someone from a different religious background	.128	.732	.260
(8) I would be happy to be friends with someone from a different religious background	.137	.764	.208
10. I think reading a book of other religions is a waste of my time'	.055	.116	.595
(12) I am interested to visit other religious places of worship	.061	.152	.688
(13) I am interested in finding out about other religions	.119	.169	.778
(14) I am interested to know about values shared across religious traditions	.396	.217	.452
(15) I am interested to watch or listen to interfaith dialogue programs	.271	.078	.519
(20) I am interested to talk about other religions with my friends	.169	.205	.652
Properties			
Mean	18.70	29.31	20.29
Standard deviation	3.567	3.713	4.017
Minimum	5.00	11.00	5.00
Maximum	25.00	35.00	25.00
Construct validity of the Attitude toward Interreligious Harmony Scale (correlation between component)			
Religious engagement	.49*	.46*	
Respect	.50*		

Note: * $p < .001$

6.6.3. Mean scale score of the Attitude toward Interreligious Harmony Scale by demographic backgrounds

A correlational analysis revealed a significant association between the attitude and sex ($r(3481) = .176, p < .001$) and a significant correlation between the attitude and age ($r(3481) = .205, p < .001$) as shown in Table 6.8. Table 6.9 presents t-test results comparing attitudes toward interreligious harmony between male and female. The data shows attitudes toward interreligious harmony were significantly higher among females (69.64 ± 8.74) than males (66.37 ± 9.37). The variance is not balanced between males and females, therefore the assumption of homogeneity of variance is not met. Female mean attitude score ($3.27 \pm .31$) was higher than male mean attitude score. There was a statistically significant difference in mean attitude scores between females and males, with females scoring higher on a positive attitude toward interreligious harmony than males, $t(2904.88) = 10.41, p < .05$.

Table 6.10 presents ANOVA results comparing attitudes toward interreligious harmony between five different groups of ages. The data shows there is a statistically significant difference between age groups as determined by a one-way ANOVA ($F = 32.78, p < .05$). Further analysis using a Tukey posthoc test (Table 6.10) revealed that there is no significant difference between the ages 13 (mean 66.46), 14 (mean 66.82) and 15 years old (mean 68.02). The attitude among 16 years old (mean 70.48) is significantly higher compared to 13 years old ($p < .001$), 14 years old ($p < .001$) and 15 years old ($p < .01$); attitude among 17 years old (mean 70.91) is significantly higher compared to 13 years old ($p < .001$) and 14 years old ($p < .001$); and attitude among 18 years old (mean 71.90) is significantly higher compared to 13 years old ($p < .001$), 14 years old ($p < .001$) and 15 years old ($p < .01$).

Table 6. 8: Correlation between attitude toward interreligious harmony and sex and age

	Mean	SD	Correlation
Sex	1.59	.491	.176*
Age	14.67	1.419	.205*

Note: * $p < .01$

Table 6. 9: Mean scale score and t-test result comparing attitude toward interreligious harmony between males and females

Sex	N	Mean	SD	SE Mean	Df	<i>t</i>
Male	1418	66.37	9.37	.249	2904.88	-10.41*
Female	2063	69.64	8.74	.192		

Note: * $p < .05$

Table 6. 10: Mean scale score and ANOVA results comparing attitude toward interreligious harmony between five different groups of age

Age	N	Mean	18	17	16	15	14	<i>F</i>
13	973	66.46	-5.439 ***	-4.454 ***	-4.023 ***	-1.557	-.362	32.78*
14	934	66.82	-5.077***	-4.092***	-3.661***	-1.195		
15	180	68.02	-3.881**	-2.897	-2.466**			
16	1182	70.48	-1.416	-.431				
17	104	70.91	-.985					
18	108	71.90						

Note: * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$

6.7. Discussion

The present chapter discussed the psychometric properties of the Attitude toward Interreligious Harmony Scale among Muslim students in secondary schools. Overall, the result of this study demonstrated that the scale has good reliability and validity to assess young Muslims' attitudes toward Interreligious Harmony. The study was conducted among a majority of Muslim students who answered 'Agree' and 'Totally Agree' on the item 'I agree that Islam is the main religion in Malaysia, but other

religions may be practised in peace and harmony in any part of the country' (75.8%).

Some of them reported to having the experience of joining group discussions with friends from a different ethnic background (55.1%), having lunch with friends from a different religious background (36.3%), spending time speaking with neighbours from a different ethnic background (39.9%), visiting friends from a different religion during their religious celebration day (20.8%), attending funeral ceremonies of people of a different religious background (5%), and having a family member married with someone from a different ethnic background (12.9%).

The descriptive analysis demonstrated that Muslim students in Malaysian secondary schools scored high on the Attitude toward Interreligious Harmony Scale. Most of the student agreed to each statement on the scale, although some items gained below 50% of agreement among the respondents. The highest percentage of students agreed on the item 'Respecting other religions gives a lot of benefits' and the lowest percentage of students agreed on the item, 'I am interested to visit other religious places of worship'. The scores show varied levels of agreement among participants toward each item from low to high scores.

The newly developed scale has been validated in the pilot study and in the real study. In the pilot test, the 19-item scale as agreed by experts was used. After analysis of the data from the pilot test, one item was removed from the scale to achieve better reliability and validity. With an alpha coefficient at .869 and item-total correlations ranging between .36 and .59 in the real study among 3481 Muslim students in Malaysian secondary schools, the study suggests that the 18-item scale has good reliability and relatively high internal consistency. The results suggested the retention of all the items. The present study advocates further research to examine the reliability of the Attitude

toward Interreligious Harmony Scale among people in a different location and different religious backgrounds.

The construct validity of the scale has been established by examining the correlations with various variables. First, the scale demonstrated good construct validity based on the correlation between attitude score and agreement toward the article in the Federal Constitution of Malaysia with regards to freedom to practise religions in the country. A higher score on the Attitude toward Interreligious Harmony Scale was expected to be correlated with agreement toward the article in the Federal Constitution of Malaysia with regards to freedom to practise religions in the country. The data supports the hypothesis that students who scored high on the Attitude toward Interreligious Harmony Scale have greater agreement to the article. The correlation between scale scores and agreement to the article also supports the view that the scale assesses affective responses toward interreligious harmony.

Second, the correlational analysis between the Attitude toward Interreligious Harmony Scale and endorsement of interreligious and intercultural engagement shows significant correlations between the attitude score and all the items asked. These items mostly refer to intergroup contact such as 'I join group discussion with friends from a different ethnic background', 'I had lunch with friends from a different religious background', 'I spend time speaking with neighbours from a different ethnic background', 'I visit friends from a different religion during their religious celebration day', 'I attend funeral ceremonies of people of a different religious background', and 'I have a family member married with someone from a different ethnic background'. The correlation between the Attitude toward Interreligious Harmony Scale and several statements on interreligious and intercultural engagement suggested that intergroup

engagement is a good predictor of attitudes toward interreligious harmony. Even though some of the correlations are relatively small, these results suggested that students who have contact with people of different religious and ethnic backgrounds scored higher on the attitude scale. These results also support the Contact Theory of Allport (1954).

Third, in addition to the report on internal consistency provided by the Cronbach's alpha coefficient, this study explores the latent variable in the scale among young Muslims. The scale was developed by considering several elements such as readiness to know about other religions, to engage with people of different backgrounds, to respect outgroups, to respect other religions, and to participate in interreligious engagement. Three meaningful constructs in the scale from factor analysis were named as Respect, Proximity and Interreligious engagement.

The correlational analysis revealed that attitude scores significantly correlated with sex and age. In terms of sex differences, the mean scale scores of females were higher than males. This data supports the hypothesis that Muslim female students recorded higher scores on the Attitude toward Interreligious Harmony Scale compared to Muslim male students. In terms of age differences, the data rejected the hypothesis and accepted that age is significantly related with attitude score, the ANOVA test revealed that 16, 17 and 18 year-old Muslim students significantly differed from 13, 14 and 15 year-old Muslim students. Future research is needed to focus on a different aspect of personal differences and to examine other indicators of attitudes toward interreligious harmony. For instance, Francis and McKenna (2017) added psychological variables in their study to examine the effect of personal differences besides sex and age on attitude toward religious diversity among Muslim adolescents in the UK. Their study

found that females scored higher on the scale, that age was not significantly correlated with the scale, and that the effect of sex was reduced when psychological differences were added in the regression analysis.

6.8. Conclusion

In conclusion, the present chapter has highlighted the importance of developing a scale to measure attitudes toward interreligious harmony. The instrument called Attitude toward Interreligious Harmony Scale has been developed to assess whether Muslims students in Malaysian secondary school favour or do not favour interreligious harmony. The development of the scale took into account theoretical foundations in the operational framework.

The present chapter examined the psychometric properties of the Attitude toward Interreligious Harmony Scale. The data has demonstrated that the scale has good validity and reliability in the study among Muslim students in Malaysian secondary schools. The results indicate that the scale can be used for further study concerned with the correlates of attitude toward interreligious harmony among Muslim students in Malaysian secondary schools. In the following chapter, the present study will explore the relationship between attitudes toward interreligious harmony and religiosity.

Chapter 7

Data Analysis 3: Attitude toward Interreligious Harmony and its correlate with the attitude towards Islam, religious identity, religious practices and types of school

7.1. Introduction

The previous chapters reported on the psychometric properties of the Malaysian translation of the Sahin-Francis Scale of Attitude toward Islam and the Attitude toward Interreligious Harmony Scale. The scales were used with Muslim students in Malaysian secondary schools. The results show the reliability and validity of the scales. Muslim students in Malaysian secondary schools scored high on the Sahin-Francis Scale of Attitude toward Islam. An inferential analysis suggested that the mean scale score of attitudes toward Islam was significantly different among the participants as determined by sex differences and types of school. They also scored high on the Attitude toward Interreligious Harmony Scale. An inferential analysis demonstrated that the mean scale score of attitudes toward interreligious harmony are significantly different among the participants as determined by sex and age differences.

Chapter seven aims at examining the correlations between attitudes toward interreligious harmony and several religious variables consisting of identity preferences, religious practices and attitude toward Islam. This study also aims at exploring the effect of personal variables, identity preferences, religious practices, attitude toward Islam and school differences on score recorded on the Attitude toward Interreligious Harmony Scale. Briefly, personal variables refer to sex and age. Identity preferences determine whether the respondents prefer to identify based on religion, nationality or ethnicity. Religious practices refer to the frequency of prayer, frequency of reading Quran and frequency of attending mosque. The scores of attitude toward Islam, which has been

generated from previous analysis in chapter five refers to the attitudinal dimension of religiosity. School differences refer to two categories of school: faith-based schools; and non-faith-based schools.

The present chapter is structured in three main parts. The first part highlights several religious variables that have been used to examine the relationship between religiosity and attitude toward interreligious harmony. The present chapter discusses the indicators of religiosity, such as religious identity and religious practices that have been used in numerous studies to correlate with various social attitude. Then, the second part focusses on the research methods. The third part presents findings from a descriptive and inferential statistical analysis. The inferential statistical analysis focusses on the correlational study and regression analysis. Finally, the results will be discussed and concluded.

7.2. Religious variables in empirical studies of attitude toward interreligious harmony

Religiosity is multifaceted (Glock and Stark, 1965; Hood Jr., Hill and Spilka, 2009), and previous scientific research of religions have recognized that each dimension might have a distinctive impact on any correlational study. Previous literatures explore various approaches to assess an individual's religiosity, such as assessment on religious practices (Allport and Kramer, 1946), extrinsic and intrinsic types of religiosity (Allen and Spilka, 1967; Allport and Ross, 1967; Hall *et al.*, 1986; Gorsuch, 1988), quest orientation (Batson and Ventis, 1982; Batson *et al.*, 1986; Altemeyer and Hunsberger, 1992), and religious fundamentalism (Altemeyer and Hunsberger, 1992; Kirkpatrick, 1993; Rowatt *et al.*, 2006).

Even though the findings are varied, many studies have found that religiosity is significantly correlated with various positive social attitudes, such as association with

altruism (Eckert and Lester, 1997), prosocial values (Schludermann, Schludermann and Huynh, 2000) and attitude toward religious diversity (Francis and McKenna, 2017). The present study examines the relationship between attitude toward interreligious harmony and several indicators of religiosity as highlighted in the scientific study of religion. Religiosity will be assessed on religious identity, religious practices and attitudinal aspects of religiosity. The aim of the study is to determine which of the religious dimensions make a significant impact on attitude toward interreligious harmony. Simultaneously, the study aims to examine the effect of school foundation on attitudes toward interreligious harmony, particularly between faith-based schools and non-faith-based schools. This is significant because the schools apply different approaches in their educational systems. This analysis could also provide evidence to the argument on the impact of schools on young Muslims' attitudes concerning religious diversity, specifically on the effect of faith-based schools as mentioned in the early part of this thesis.

7.2.1. Religious identity

Religious identity might be explicitly used to define the boundaries of religions. In empirical studies, self-assigned identification to any religious group provides information to acknowledge religious identity (Hackett, 2014). In sociological and psychological research paradigms, religious identity also refers to individual identity and social identity (Ysseldyk, Matheson and Anisman, 2010). Self-identification is also important in assessing identity formation, which is recognizing a group to which someone holds a strong sense of attachment and indicating identity achievement (Furrow, King and White, 2004). Religion contains resources to facilitate identity development, provide an individual psychological stability and provide common values that are shared within the religious community (Seul, 1999).

Self-identity is an important issue in the study of intergroup relations. Attitude toward outgroup members naturally develops when someone has a group identity as suggested in the most influential theory of Social Identity by Tajfel and Turner (1979). The theory suggests identity formation is an integral part of human nature. People automatically form groups by differentiating themselves from others. Consequently, a particular group identity becomes a self-identification and endorse in-group-stereotypes. A social category or group that people feel they belong to, will influence individual characteristics. This theory also suggests out-group stereotypes develop and intergroup relations will be affected depending on the groups with which they interact. Social identity theory has made contributions to many fields of study in the theme of intergroup relations. Another theory developed from this perspective concern with psychological group membership; this is called self-categorization theory (Turner *et al.*, 1987), which is complementary to social identity theory.

Findings from numerous empirical studies give support for the effect of religious identity on attitude toward the religious other (Ciftci, Nawaz and Sydiq, 2016), interreligious dialogue (Rydz and Wieradzka-Pilarczyk, 2018) and attitude toward religious diversity (Francis and McKenna, 2017). However, the findings are varied. For instance, Ciftci, Nawaz and Sydiq (2016) found that global contact has a positive effect on attitude toward religious outgroups, whereas holding religious identity increases negative sentiments toward religious outgroups. Rydz and Wieradzka-Pilarczyk (2018) examined identity status among students in Poland and found three different types of identity status in which each group of students responded to interreligious dialogue differently. Adolescents with internalized religious identities are more open to interreligious dialogue, compared to adolescents with external religious identities and students seeking religious identity. Francis and McKenna (2017) found that Muslim

students have much more positive experiences of religious plurality than religiously unaffiliated students, and Muslim students have a greater acceptance of the public display of religious difference than shown by religiously unaffiliated students. These findings indicate the important role of identity in the interreligious relationship. Thus, an empirical study among students in different cultural and religious backgrounds should be conducted to inform the field of study.

Different researchers employ different methods in assessing religious identity in their research (see review by Alwin *et al.*, 2006; Hackett, 2014). A question that was commonly asked to respondents concerned their religious affiliation to identify their religious group or denomination; it asks whether the respondents belong to any religious group or not and then asks them to state their religion if any. This type of question is beneficial to use in exploratory research to study groups of religions in unexplored society. Another method used the denominational approach if the questionnaire was only distributed to a specific religion (i.e.: Sunni or Shia for Muslims; Protestant or Catholic for Christians). Some researchers use a long list of measures to assess religious identity. The present study adopted a sociologically-based research approach to test the effect of self-identity on attitude toward interreligious harmony. The survey aims to identify self-assigned identity categories by asking Muslim students their most preferred identity between religion and other identities (ethnicity and nationality).

7.2.2. Religious practices

One of the methods of assessing religiosity is by investigating the frequency of religious practices. An empirical study of religions investigates religious practices by examining involvement in prayer, reading scripture and attending a public ceremony as these practices are considered as an important aspect of religious behaviour. In Islam, a

summary of obligatory religious practices is contained in the Five Pillars of Islam (declaration of faith, prayer, giving alms, fasting during the month of Ramadhan and pilgrimage to Mecca). Some of these practices are limited to affluent people (giving alms and pilgrimage to Mecca) and during the month of Ramadhan only (fasting) whereas prayer is only obligatory for Muslims upon reaching the age of puberty. Although reading the Quran is not compulsory, there is a consensus among Islamic scholars on the importance of reading the Quran for Muslims because it is the main source for Islamic teaching.

The results of numerous empirical studies indicate the significant effect of religious practices on attitude and behaviour in the interpersonal relationship. Several researchers have shown that those who frequently perform prayer also show more helping behaviours (Sharp, 2019); team cohesion (Murray *et al.*, 2005), marital stability (Call and Heaton, 1997), and greater quality and quantity of social support (Ellison and George, 1994). Frequently reading religious scripture is also significantly associated with a negative attitude toward drug use (Francis, 1997). There are also some empirical studies that highlight involvement in religious practices as a strong indicator of negative attitudes toward anti-social behaviour and intolerance. For instance, Karpov and Lisovskaya (2008) found religious practices have a small but significant impact on religious intolerance among Muslims in Russia. A study that was conducted by Mustafa, Suandi, Hamzah and Ismail (2016) in the Malaysian context also found that delinquency correlates with a lower frequency of practising religious commitments.

To discover more about the correlates of religious practices, researchers in the scientific study of religions divide religious practice into two categories: private religious activities and public religious activities. Private religious practice is defined as practising

religious commitment individually such as prayer, meditation and the study of religious scriptures. Public religious practices are defined as collective practices, such as attending a religious ceremony. Litchfield, Thomas and Dao Li (1997) found the private religious practice was a stronger indicator of attitude toward deviance than public religious practice. In another field of study, Nicholson, Rose and Bobak (2010) found attending religious services was associated with self-rated health, and private religious practices were significantly positively associated with health. In Islamic teaching, some religious practices (e.g., prayer and reading Quran) are considered private religious practices, whereas others such as attending mosque are considered both a private and public practice for Muslim. Attending mosque is one of the individual commitments for togetherness in prayer, as well as a social commitment as one society (*Ummah*) in Islam.

As far as this research is concerned, correlational research between religious practices and attitudinal variables among Muslims in Malaysia has never been conducted. This present study aims at assessing the effect of religious practices on attitudes toward interreligious harmony.

7.2.3. Attitude toward Islam

This present study also measures attitudes toward religion, which tap into the affective dimension of religion. Measures of attitude toward religion assess whether people favour or do not favour their religion. A scientific study of religion differentiates between attitude toward religion and religious attitude. While attitude toward religion refers to the positive or negative view that people show toward their religion, a religious attitude refers to the religious dimension in life (Francis and Kay, 1984).

A growing number of empirical studies concerned with the attitudinal dimension of religion have established the correlate of attitude toward religion.

Researchers have found a significant relationship between attitudes toward religion and various topics of study, such as attitude toward religious diversity (Francis, Croft and Pyke, 2012); personality (Jones and Francis, 1999; Bourke, Francis and Robbins, 2005); empathy (Khan *et al.*, 2005); attitude toward substance use (Francis, 1997); attitude toward alcohol (Francis, 1992; Francis, Fearn and Lewis, 2005); and mental health (Ghorbani *et al.*, 2000). The present study examines the relationship between attitude toward religion and attitude toward interreligious harmony, as well as the correlation with another religious dimension. This present study is an exploratory study to investigate the effect of the attitudinal dimension of religion on attitude toward interreligious harmony. The Malaysian translation of the Sahin-Francis Scale of Attitude toward Islam as presented in chapter five will be employed in this study.

Other reasons to employ the Sahin-Francis scale is because the previous studies demonstrated that the parent scale was associated with intrinsic religiosity. Many scales on extrinsic and intrinsic religiosity found strong correlates with good social attitudes. Previous empirical findings suggested that that intrinsic oriented religious people are more positively associated with tolerant attitudes compared to extrinsic oriented religious people. Theoretically, intrinsic religious people tend to live their life with religion whereas extrinsic religious people tend to use religion to live. The previous studies which employed scales such as the Religious Orientation Scale (Allport and Ross, 1967) and the Social Intrinsic Religiosity Scale (Van Camp, Barden and Sloan, 2016) found that intrinsically religious people did not score high on prejudice and tended to be more tolerant. Empirical evidence by Hills and Francis (2003) supports the parent scale of the Sahin-Francis Scale of Attitude toward Islam as it found that it correlates with the intrinsic measurement in the Religious Life Inventory (Batson and Schoenrade, 1991). Even though the present study does not investigate the relationship

between personality and attitude toward Islam, the Sahin-Francis Scale of Attitude toward Islam is considered to be consistent with the parent scale which correlates with intrinsic religiosity. Thus, the present study expects that those who scored high on the Sahin-Francis Scale of Attitude toward Islam also scored high on the Attitude toward Interreligious Harmony Scale, thus showing a correlation with a more positive attitude toward interreligious harmony because Islamic teaching places a high value on interpersonal relationships. The present study also expects attitudinal religiosity to predict attitude toward interreligious harmony more so than religious identity and religious practices.

7.2.4. Religious schools

In addition to variables related to dimensions of religiosity, the present study also aims to test the effect of school type on attitude toward interreligious harmony. Despite a major concern with the role of schools in Malaysia in nurturing a tolerant attitude toward people of other religions (Buang, 2007; Hashim and Langgulong, 2008; Chernov-Hwang, 2011), there is no empirical evidence in the literature exploring on the impact of faith-based schools or the different impacts of faith-based schools and non-faith-based schools on interreligious relationships. This is the first piece of research to examine the effect of schools and the differences between the attitudes of Muslim students in faith-based schools and non-faith-based schools toward interreligious harmony in Malaysia.

Against this background, the present research explores the differences in attitudes toward interreligious harmony between students in faith-based schools and students in non-faith-based schools. Empirical research should be conducted to inform the field of Islamic Education and other related fields of study. It should be noted that the difference between those schools in Malaysia is the value offered in the schooling

system as emphasized by the school management, whether it is based on a religious foundation or it is open to all students. Muslim students in both types of schools learn Islamic knowledge because it is a compulsory syllabus for Muslim students.

7.3. Aims of this chapter

The present chapter aims to examine the correlation between attitude toward Interreligious Harmony and religious identity, religious practices, and attitude toward Islam. The present chapter also examines the correlation between attitude toward interreligious harmony and type of school. Finally, the present chapter explores the predictive power of religious variables on attitude toward interreligious harmony when demographic variables and type of school were included in the model.

7.4. Methods

7.4.1. Procedure

The present chapter used data gathered from the survey 'You and Your Attitude toward Interreligious Harmony'. The survey was administered by the teachers and researcher in 55 Malaysian secondary schools. Only Muslim students were involved in the survey. They were encouraged to answer all the items in the questionnaire without any fear. Students were not required to put their names on the survey form as an exercise of confidentiality and anonymity.

7.4.2. Measures

The demographic backgrounds of students asked about sex and age. The present study tests the differences between males and females based on the sociologically grounded theory in which males and females are differentiated based on social acceptance of sex and based on physical self-identification (Eagly and Wood, 1991). Age was asked as an open question in which the participants were asked to state their age. The information about the school's type was also determined before collecting the data and designated

based on the values and practices as documented by the school. Students were not required to give any information about the school. In addition, the present chapter analyses data on several measures:

1. The Attitude toward Interreligious Harmony Scale. Participants were asked to respond to each item on a five-point Likert scale: 'Strongly Agree' coded as 5, 'Agree' coded as 4, 'Not Sure' coded as 3, 'Disagree' coded as 2, and 'Strongly Disagree' coded as 1.
2. The measure of religious identity. Identity has been defined by asking the most preferred identity out of three options, religion, ethnicity or nationality. The answer 'Being Muslim' indicated that religion is the most important identity, the answer 'Being Malay' indicated that ethnicity is the most important identity, and the answer 'Being Malaysian' indicated that nationality is the most important identity. For the purpose of correlation and regression statistical analyses in this chapter, the answer 'Being Muslim' will be categorized as religious identity (coded as 1), and the answers 'Being Malay' and 'Being Malaysian' will be combined, categorized as other identities (coded as 0).
3. The measure of attitude toward Islam. The Malaysian translation of the Sahin-Francis Scale of Attitude toward Islam has been used. The translated scale has been proved as reliable and valid in the pilot test and in the real study as presented in chapter five. The scale was assessed on a five-point Likert scale: 'Strongly Agree' coded as 5, 'Agree' coded as 4, 'Not Sure' coded as 3, 'Disagree' coded as 2, and 'Strongly Disagree' coded as 1.
4. The measure of religious practices. Frequency of religious practices was measured by asking about the frequency of prayer, frequency of reading Quran and frequency

of attending mosque. Frequency of prayer was assessed on a five-point scale: ‘Five times a day’ coded as 5, ‘Several times a day’ coded as 4, ‘Friday only’ coded as 3, ‘Occasionally’ coded as 2, and ‘Never’ coded as 1. Frequency of reading Quran was assessed on a five-point scale: ‘Every day’ coded as 5, ‘At least once a week’ coded as 4, ‘At least once a month’ coded as 3, ‘Occasionally’ coded as 2, and ‘Never’ coded as 1. Frequency of attending mosque was assessed on a five-point scale: ‘Every day’ coded as 5, ‘At least once a week’ coded as 4, ‘At least once a month’ coded as 3, ‘Sometimes’ coded as 2, and ‘Never’ coded as 1.

7.4.3. Sample

The survey was administered in 55 secondary schools with a total of 1418 Muslim male students and 2063 Muslim female students in Malaysian secondary schools who answered the survey as shown in Table 7.1. There were 973 students aged 13 years old, 934 students aged 14 years old, 180 students aged 15 years old, 1182 students aged 16 years old, 104 students aged 17 years old and 108 students aged 18 years old.

Table 7. 1. Total number of respondents based on sex and age

	Age (%)						Total (%)
	13 (%)	14 (%)	15 (%)	16 (%)	17 (%)	18 (%)	
Male	440 (31)	383 (27)	68 (4.8)	437 (30.8)	43 (3)	47 (3.3)	1418 (40.7)
Female	533 (25.8)	551 (26.7)	112 (5.4)	745 (36.1)	61 (3)	61 (3)	2063 (59.3)
Total (%)	973 (28)	934 (26.8)	180 (5.2)	1182 (34.0)	104 (3)	108 (3.1)	3481

7.5. Results

7.5.1. Descriptive results: Identity preferences, religious practices, type of school, attitude toward Islam and attitude toward interreligious harmony.

The present part shows results from descriptive and inferential analysis, and the results will be discussed thoroughly in the next part of this chapter. In terms of identity preferences as shown in Table 7.2, 92.3% of participants, consisting of 1891 females and 1279 males, wanted to identify themselves based on religion as Muslim and 7.7% of participants, consisting of 150 females and 116 males, wanted to identify themselves based on ethnicity as Malay; and nationality as Malaysian.

Table 7. 2: Identity preferences

	Being Muslim	Being Malaysian	Being Malay
Male	1279	45	71
Female	1891	51	99
Missing			45
Total (% without missing answer)	3170 (92.3)	96 (2.8)	170 (4.9)

Table 7.3, Table 7.4 and Table 7.5 present data on the frequency of prayer, frequency of reading Quran and frequency of attending mosque respectively. The demographic data of religious practices shows that 81.4% reported praying obligatory prayer five times a day, 9.9% several times a day, 0.3% Friday only, 8.4% occasionally, and only one student reported never praying. In terms of reading Quran, 46.5% reported reading Quran every day, 29.2% at least once a week, 4.2% at least once a month, 19.5% occasionally, and 0.6% reported never doing so. In terms of attending mosque, 21% attend mosque every day, 26% at least once a week, 6.2% at least once a month, 44% sometimes, and 2.8% reported never attending mosque. The data suggests

that the study was completed by a majority of young Muslims with a high level of religious commitments.

Table 7. 3: Frequency of prayer

	Five times	Several times	Friday only	Occasionally	Never
Male	1136	169	9	104	0
Female	1696	175	1	190	1
Total (%)	2832 (81.4)	344 (9.9)	10 (0.3)	294 (8.4)	1 (0)

Table 7. 4: Reading Quran

	Every day	Once a week	Once a month	Occasionally	Never
Male	645	400	63	302	8
Female	972	618	84	376	13
Total (%)	1617 (46.5)	1018 (29.2)	147 (4.2)	678 (19.5)	21 (0.6)

Table 7. 5: Frequency of attending mosque

	Every day	Once a week	Once a month	Sometimes	Never
Male	407	620	48	338	5
Female	324	286	168	1192	93
Total (%)	731 (21.0)	906 (26)	216 (6.2)	1530 (44)	98 (2.8)

Respondents are from eight different categories of school, consisting of Government Mainstream Schools, State-funded Schools (Religious type), Integrated Schools, Vocational Schools, Government-funded Schools (Religious type), Private Schools (International), Non-government Organization funded Schools and Government-funded Schools (Ethnic type). Among them, the schools have been grouped as faith-based schools and non-faith-based schools. Table 7.6 shows the total number of male and female participants in the eight different categories of school based on different stakeholders and the total number of male and female participants in faith-based schools and non-faith-based schools. The data shows there were 1264 (36.3%)

respondents from faith-based schools and 2217 (63.7%) respondents from non-faith-based schools.

Table 7. 6 Total number of male and female participants in eight school categories and two types of school

School categories and type of school		Gender		Total (%)
		Male	Female	
1	Government Mainstream Schools	742	1237	1979 (56.9)
2	State-funded Schools (Religious type)	407	548	955 (27.4)
3	Integrated Schools	78	78	156 (4.5)
4	Vocational Schools	83	57	140 (4.0)
5	Government-funded Schools (Religious type)	33	61	94 (2.7)
6	Private Schools (International)	42	17	59 (1.7)
7	Non-government Organization funded Schools	25	41	66 (1.9)
8	Government-funded Schools (Ethnic type)	8	24	32 (0.9)
1	Faith-based School	560	704	1264 (36.3)
2	Non-faith-based School	858	1359	2217 (63.7)
Total		1418	2063	3481

Table 7.7 presents the scale properties of the Malaysian translation of the Sahin-Francis Scale of Attitude toward Islam and the Attitude toward Interreligious Harmony Scale among Muslim students in Malaysian secondary schools. The data shows that Muslim students scored relatively high on the Sahin-Francis Scale of Attitude toward Islam, with a mean scale score of 108.27 and standard deviation of 7.61. The data also shows that Muslim students scored relatively high on the Attitude toward Interreligious Harmony Scale with a mean scale score of 68.30 and standard deviation of 9.14.

Table 7. 7: Scale properties of the Sahin-Francis Scale of Attitude toward Islam and Attitude toward Interreligious Harmony Scale

	<i>N</i>	<i>a.</i>	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	SD
Attitude toward Islam	3481	.897	65	115	108.27	7.61
Attitude toward Interreligious Harmony	3481	.869	21	85	68.30	9.14

7.5.2. Correlation between attitude toward interreligious harmony and religious identity and religious practices

Table 7.8 shows the correlations between attitude toward interreligious harmony and religious identity, prayer, reading Quran and attending mosque. The data shows significant positive correlations between attitude toward interreligious harmony and frequency of prayer ($r = .042, p < .01$) and frequency of reading Quran ($r = .064, p < .05$), but no significant correlations between attitude toward interreligious harmony and religious identity ($r = .018, p = \text{NS}$) and frequency of attending mosque ($r = .032, p = \text{NS}$).

Table 7. 8: Correlation between attitude toward interreligious harmony and identity, prayer, reading Quran and attending mosque

	Identity	Pray	Quran	Mosque
Attitude toward Interreligious Harmony	.018	.042*	.064**	.032

Note: * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$

7.5.3. Correlation between attitude toward interreligious harmony and attitude toward Islam

A Pearson product-moment correlation was run to determine the relationship between attitude toward interreligious harmony and attitude toward Islam. The present study tests the hypothesis that attitude toward Islam positively correlates with the attitude toward interreligious harmony. Table 7.9 presents the correlation between attitude toward Islam and attitude toward interreligious harmony and the three latent variables

of attitude toward interreligious harmony. The correlation between attitude toward Islam and attitude toward interreligious harmony was statistically significant ($r = .157, p < .05$), but with a very weak correlation. This study accepts the hypothesis that those with a high score on the Sahin-Francis Scale of Attitude toward Islam scored high on the Attitude toward Interreligious Harmony Scale.

Table 7. 9 Correlation between attitude toward Islam and attitude toward interreligious harmony and the three latent variables of attitude toward interreligious harmony

	Attitude toward Interreligious Harmony	Respect	Proximity	Interreligious engagement
Attitude toward Islam	.157*	.241**	.083**	.061**

Note: * $p < .05$; ** $p < .001$

Three components were developed from the factor analysis within the Attitude toward Interreligious Harmony Scale named Respect, Proximity and Interreligious engagement. The correlational analysis between attitude toward Islam and the three components in the Attitude toward Interreligious Harmony Scale found a significant correlation between each other. The data (Table 7.9) shows the correlation between attitude toward Islam and attitude toward interreligious harmony on the component Respect ($r = .241, p < .001$) is stronger than the component Proximity ($r = .083, p < .001$) and Interreligious engagement ($r = .061, p < .001$).

7.5.4. Comparing attitude toward interreligious harmony between students in faith-based schools and students in non-faith-based schools

The present study compares attitude toward interreligious harmony between students in faith-based schools and students in non-faith-based schools by conducting descriptive and inferential statistical analysis, which are as follows:

1. Percentage distribution of answers on agreement toward each item in the Attitude toward Interreligious Harmony Scale among students in both types of school.
2. A chi-square test of homogeneity for an association between agreement toward each item and types of school.
3. Comparison of scores between students in both types of school on the Attitude toward Interreligious Harmony Scale and comparison of scores on each latent variable in the scale.

Table 7.10 shows the percentage of agreement toward each item in the Attitude toward Interreligious Harmony Scale among students in faith-based schools and students in non-faith-based schools, and the chi-square test comparing answers between students in both types of school. The data on the percentage of agreement toward each item between students in both types of school are varied. A chi-square test of homogeneity was performed to determine whether the agreement toward items in the scale are the same among the students in both types of school. The data shows agreement toward items between students in both types of school was significantly different for nine items (items 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 11 and 13). Agreement to items 1, 2, 10, 12, 14, 15, 16, 17 and 18 were not significantly different between students in both types of school.

Table 7. 10: Percentage of agreement toward items in the scale and chi-square test comparing the answer between students in faith-based schools and students in non-faith-based schools

No.	Items	Faith-based (%)	Non-faith-based (%)	2x2
1.	Interreligious harmony means we are living in peace and harmony with people from different faith	90.8	90.8	.00
2.	I would be happy to live with someone from a different religious background	40.3	39.2	.42
3.	I would be happy to help someone from a different religious background	83.0	87.6	13.82***
4.	I would be happy to talk with someone from a different religious background	75.9	84.2	36.24***
5.	I would be happy to have lunch/dinner with someone from a different religious background	41.9	50.7	25.08***
6.	I would be happy to be friends with someone from a different religious background	51.1	64.6	60.84***
7.	I think reading a book of other religions is a waste of my time	43.4	40.0	3.90*
8.	I am interested to visit other religious places of worship	31.3	29.5	5.60*
9.	I am interested in finding out about other religions	53.0	49.5	3.90*
10.	I am interested to know about values shared across religious traditions	77.3	78.3	.44
11.	I am interested to watch or listen to interfaith dialogue programs	51.9	45.2	14.70***
12.	Respecting other religions gives a lot of benefit	92.0	92.4	.15
13.	I believe all religious groups should have equal rights	79.7	75.0	9.95**
14.	I believe that everyone should have the right to learn about their religion	75.0	73.7	.66
15.	I believe that everyone should be allowed to practise their religion	72.9	69.8	3.61
16.	I am interested to talk about other religions with my friends	37.7	38.0	.02
17.	I believe that someone cannot force others to believe in their religion	77.8	78.5	.24
18.	Helping other people of a different faith gives a lot of benefits	86.2	84.3	2.25

Note: * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$

Table 7.11 shows the descriptive statistics for the Attitude toward Interreligious Harmony Scale and its latent variables among Muslim students in faith-based schools and non-faith-based schools and shows t-tests comparing attitudes toward interreligious harmony between students in faith-based schools and non-faith-based schools. The data

displayed in Table 7.11 shows the mean score of attitudes toward interreligious harmony among students in non-faith-based schools (68.37 ± 8.98) and among students in faith-based schools (68.20 ± 9.41). The t-test analysis demonstrated that there was statistically no significant difference in mean attitude scores, although students in non-faith-based schools scored higher than students in faith-based schools, $-.17 \pm .33$, $t(2527.03) = -.519$, $p = \text{NS}$.

The present study conducted further analysis to examine in which components the students in both types of school are different. Based on the factor analysis results as presented in chapter six, there are three components consisting of Respect, Proximity and Interreligious engagement. The t-test analysis was conducted to compare attitude toward interreligious harmony on its latent variables between students in both types of schools. The data presented in Table 7.11 shows the mean score on the component Respect among students in faith-based schools (29.55 ± 3.68) and students in non-faith-based schools (29.18 ± 3.73), the mean score on the component Proximity among student in faith-based schools (18.19 ± 3.70) and students in non-faith-based schools (18.99 ± 3.46); and the mean score on the component Interreligious engagement among students in faith-based schools (20.45 ± 4.18) and students in non-faith-based schools (20.20 ± 3.92).

The t-test comparing the mean score of each component between students in both types of schools demonstrated that there was a statistically significant difference in the mean score of Respect, with students in faith-based schools scoring higher than students in non-faith-based schools, $-.37 \pm .130$, $t(2656.59) = 2.86$, $p < .01$; there was a statistically significant difference in the mean score of Proximity, with students in non-faith-based schools scoring higher than students in faith-based schools, $-.80 \pm .127$, t

(3479) = -6.38, $p < .001$; and there was no statistically significant difference in the mean score of component Interreligious engagement, although students in faith-based schools scored higher than students in non-faith-based schools, $[-.256 \pm .144, t(2487.32) = -1.77, p = \text{NS}]$.

Table 7. 11: Descriptive statistics of the Attitude toward Interreligious Harmony Scale and its three latent variables among Muslim students in faith-based schools and non-faith-based schools and t-test analysis results comparing students in both types of schools on each component

	Faith-based School			Non-faith-based School			T-test	
	<i>N</i>	Mean	SD	<i>N</i>	Mean	SD	<i>df</i>	<i>t</i>
The Attitude toward Interreligious Harmony Scale	1264	68.20	9.411	2217	68.37	8.982	2527.03	-.52
Respect	1264	29.55	3.677	2217	29.18	3.727	2656.59	2.86*
Proximity	1264	18.19	3.701	2217	18.99	3.456	3479	-6.38**
Interreligious engagement	1264	20.45	4.183	2217	20.20	3.917	2487.32	1.77

Note: * $p < .01$; ** $p < .001$

7.5.5. Regression model on attitude toward interreligious harmony

Regression analysis was run to determine the strength of effect that the independent variables have on attitude toward interreligious harmony. Multiple regression analyses were used to test if personal factors, religious identity, religious practices, affective religiosity and types of school significantly predicted participants' scores of attitudes toward interreligious harmony. Five models have been developed to test the outcome. Model one examines the effect of the personal factors, consisting of sex and age on attitude toward interreligious harmony. Model two adds religious identity to examine the effect of sociological factors on attitude when sex and age were in the

model. The answers on identity have been grouped into two, religious identity for the answer 'being Muslims' and other identities for the answers 'being Malay' and 'being Malaysian'. Model three adds religious practices to examine the effect of prayer, reading the Quran and attending mosque on attitude when sex, age and religious identity were in the model. Model four adds the score of attitudes toward Islam to examine the effect of affective religiosity on attitude toward interreligious harmony when sex, age, religious identity and religious practices were in the model. Finally, Model five adds the type of school to predict the effect of school on attitude toward interreligious harmony when all the previous variables were in the model.

Table 7.12 shows correlations between every pair of variables. The table provides a preliminary look for multicollinearity in the data. There is no substantial correlation ($r > .9$) between predictors which indicates no multicollinearity in the data. Multicollinearity refers to a situation in which independent variables in the regression model are highly intercorrelated; however, it causes inaccurate estimates of coefficients and standard error (Grewal, Cote and Baumgartner, 2004). Multicollinearity also makes it difficult to assess which variable is served as an important predictor to dependent variables (Field, 2013).

Table 7. 12: Correlation matrix for attitude toward interreligious harmony and demographics, identity, religious variables and type of schools.

	Type of schools	Attitude toward Islam	Mosque	Quran	Prayer	Identity	Age	Sex
Attitude toward interreligious harmony	.009	.157**	.032	.064**	.042*	.018	.205**	.176**
Sex	.055**	.085**	-.379**	.034*	-.007	.025	.051**	
Age	.006	-.020	.034*	.002	-.005	-.009		
Identity	-.132**	.185**	.053*	.172**	.179**			
Pray	-.215**	.193**	.203**	.370**				
Quran	-.304**	.212**	.287**					
Mosque	-.174**	.083**						
Attitude toward Islam	-.071**							

Note: * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$

Table 7. 13: Summary of five models for hierarchical regression analyses investigating the effect of sex, age, religious identity, religious practices, attitude toward Islam and types of school on attitude toward interreligious harmony

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5
Sex	.166***	.166***	.200***	.186***	.185***
Age	.197***	.196***	.192***	.195***	.195***
Religious Identity		.020	.035*	.055**	.053**
Prayer			.022	.006	.008
Reading the Quran			.029	.010	.015
Attending mosque			.090***	.082***	.084***
Attitude toward Islam				.145***	.145***
Types of school					.022
R ²	.070	.070	.081	.100	.100

Note: * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$

Table 7.13 shows a summary of the five models for the hierarchical regression analyses in which attitude toward interreligious harmony is the dependent variable and sex, age, religious identity, religious practices, attitude toward Islam and type of schools are the independent variables. The table shows the fit of the regression in each model based on the values of R square, which demonstrated the percentage of variation accounted for the attitude toward interreligious harmony in each model and beta coefficient of each predictor in each model.

The data in Model one indicates the two predictors (sex and age) explained 7% of the variation on attitude toward interreligious harmony. In Model two, there was no additional contribution to the variance of the model when religious identity was added in the model. Model three accounts for approximately 8.1% of the variance, an additional of 1.1% when religious practices (prayer, reading Quran and attending mosque) were added in the model. Model four explained 10% of the variance on the Attitude toward Interreligious Harmony Scale scores, which is an additional of 1.9% of variance to the Model three when the attitude toward Islam was put in the model. Finally, in Model five, there was no additional contribution from types of school for the variance of the model.

Table 7.13 also shows that the beta coefficient value of a variable informed which predictor has more effect on attitude toward interreligious harmony in each regression model. In Model one, the beta coefficients confirm the effect of age ($\beta = .197, p < .001$) was stronger than the effect of sex ($\beta = .166, p < .001$) on attitude toward interreligious harmony. In Model two, religious identity ($\beta = .020, p < NS$) has no significant effect on attitude toward interreligious harmony when sex and age stayed in the regression model. In Model three, the data shows participants' attitudes were

predicted by their frequency of attending Mosque ($\beta = .090, p < .001$) but there was no significant effect of frequency of prayer ($\beta = .022, p = \text{NS}$) and frequency of reading Quran ($\beta = .029, p = \text{NS}$) on the attitude toward interreligious harmony. The data also shows that sex ($\beta = .200, p = \text{NS}$) and age ($\beta = .192, p = \text{NS}$) remained as strong predictors for attitude, and the data shows the significant effect of religious identity ($\beta = .035, p < .05$) when religious practices were put in Model three.

In Model four, participants' attitudes toward interreligious harmony were also predicted by their attitudes toward Islam ($\beta = .145, p < .001$). When the attitude toward Islam score is put in the model, sex, age, religious identity and attending mosque remained as having a significant effect on attitude toward Interreligious harmony. The present chapter hypothesizes that attitudinal religiosity strongly predicts attitude toward interreligious harmony compared to religious practices and religious identity. The data has demonstrated that the effect of attitudinal dimension of religiosity ($\beta = .145, p < .001$) is stronger than religious practices (in this model, only attending mosque is significantly predicts attitude toward interreligious harmony with $\beta = .082, p < .001$) and religious identity ($\beta = .055, p < .01$). The results support the hypothesis that the attitudinal dimension of religiosity is a stronger predictor to attitude toward interreligious harmony than religious practices and religious identity. The data also shows that the effect of sex ($\beta = .186, p < .001$) and age ($\beta = .195, p < .001$) are stronger than the attitude toward Islam on attitude toward interreligious harmony among Muslim students in Malaysian secondary schools in Model four. Finally, the present chapter hypothesizes that there will be no effect of school differences on attitude toward interreligious harmony. The data shows no significant effect of type of school ($\beta = .022, p = \text{NS}$) on regression Model five. This study accepts the hypothesis that there is no

difference of attitude toward interreligious harmony between participants in faith-based schools and non-faith-based schools.

7.6. Discussion

This study was conducted to examine the relationship between attitude toward interreligious harmony and several religious variables among Muslim students in Malaysian secondary schools. The religious variables consist of religious identity, religious practices, and attitude toward Islam. This study also aims at exploring the effect of personal variables (sex and age), identity preferences (religious identity or other identity), religious practices (frequency of prayer, frequency of reading Quran and frequency of attending mosque), attitude toward Islam and school differences (faith-based schools and non-faith-based schools) on attitude toward interreligious harmony. Overall, Muslim students scored relatively high on the Attitude toward Interreligious Harmony Scale with a mean of 68.30 and standard deviation of 9.14. The data has been analysed by using descriptive and inferential statistical analyses, including correlational and multivariate regression analyses. Several conclusions from the analyses are as follows:

First, a correlational study between attitude and personal factors, consisting of sex and age found both factors are significantly correlated with the score of attitudes toward interreligious harmony. Females scored higher on the attitude scale compared to males, and older students (from age 15 years old and above) scored higher on the attitude scale compared to 13, 14 and 15 years old students. A multivariate regression analysis indicates that both factors make a significant effect on attitude toward interreligious harmony with age as a stronger predictor compared to sex. Compared to other empirical research, Francis and McKenna (2017) found that females scored higher on attitude toward religious diversity than males and no significant differences

according to the age of respondent on attitude toward religious diversity. In Malaysian secondary schools, students at age 13, 14 and 15 years old are grouped in the first phase of study and students at the age of 16 years and above are grouped in the second phase of study. The results concerning the effect of age in this present study can be interpreted as entering the second phase of the study in Malaysian secondary schools from the first phase has changed students' attitudes toward interreligious harmony.

Second, the data indicates that religion is the most important identity among Muslims compared to ethnicity and nationality. The results supported other sociological research that religion is the most important category of identity among Muslims. In the previous chapter, the correlational analysis found a significant relationship between attitude toward Islam and identity preferences. In the present chapter, no statistically significant correlation between identity preferences and attitude toward interreligious harmony was found, but religious identity significantly predicted attitude toward interreligious harmony in the regression model. The result supports the Social Identity Theory (Tajfel and Turner, 1979) since the analysis found religious identity is an important indicator in respect to attitude toward interreligious harmony. Francis and McKenna (2017) also found that Muslim students who give greater attention to religion as their identity hold a more positive attitude towards religious diversity if theological factors (such as pluralism, exclusivism and atheism) are not taken into account.

Third, the descriptive results on self-reported religious practices showed that the majority of participants frequently practised religious commitments by praying five times a day and reading the Quran every day. Only a quarter of them attended mosque every day, whereas the majority of respondent occasionally attended mosque. The correlational study found that prayer and reading the Quran are significantly correlated

with attitude, and that there is no significant relationship between attitude and attending mosque. The multivariate analysis indicated the effect of mosque attendance on attitude toward interreligious harmony whereas prayer and reading the Quran showed no significant effect on attitude score. There are at least three interpretations from these results. First, attending mosque involves a personal and public commitment of religions. In the mosque, Muslims perform obligatory prayer in collective worship or join religious activities in the mosque. These activities help young Muslims in developing their interpersonal skills, such as communication and nurturing good social attitudes. Second, the frequency of attending mosque significantly affects attitude after taking sex and age into account. The results are interpreted as the effect of attending mosque on attitude may be caused by the difference of sex and age of respondents. For example, the results from the correlation analysis demonstrated no statistically significant correlation between attitude and frequency of attending mosque. However, the data from the regression analysis demonstrated that attending mosque had a significant effect on attitude when sex and age were included in the regression model, possibly because females reported less frequent attendance of mosque than males. Three, Islamic teaching highlights how religious practices influence behaviour and how these practices intend to make Muslims capable in interpersonal relationships. However, the results indicated that we cannot rely solely on religious practices to shape attitudes among Muslims, but we should holistically look at other important elements in individuals. This is also an important note to the field of Islamic Education on the importance of the empirical study to explore various dimensions of religiosity and its correlates among young Muslims.

Fourth, the data on Attitude toward Islam, which measures the attitudinal dimension of religiosity, shows that the majority of the respondent scored high on the

scale. The data indicates the score on attitude toward Islam significantly correlates with the attitude toward interreligious harmony. The regression analysis also confirmed that the attitudinal dimension of religiosity serves as a better predictor of attitude toward interreligious harmony compared to religious practices. It can be argued that social-based self-identification can inform religious affiliation of individuals; however, individuals' responses on intergroup relations may be affected by their religious beliefs, knowledge or feeling. It is consistent with the previous literature that highlights religious affiliation acts as a relatively poor predictor than other religious indicators (Field, 2014; Francis and Robbins, 2014). It is important for Muslims to ensure holistic development of religiosity on each dimension without leaving one dimension behind.

Fifth, the data on school differences shows that students in non-faith-based schools record a mean score of attitudes that were higher than their counterparts. However, there was statistically no significant difference between students in both types of schools on attitude toward interreligious harmony. A chi-square test of homogeneity indicates the differences between students in both types of schools were significant for nine items (items 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 11 and 13). Agreement to items 1, 2, 10, 12, 14, 15, 16, 17 and 18 were not significantly different between students in both types of school. The inferential analysis indicates several points. First, there is statistically no significant difference between students' scores recorded on the attitude scale between students in both types of school; thus, type of school is not a good predictor for the scale of attitude toward interreligious harmony. Second, the data on the component Respect shows that the mean score on this component is significantly higher among young Muslims in faith-based schools than students in non-faith-based schools - although, this difference is small. This is interpreted as suggesting that the value provided by the religious school helps in nurturing a better respectful attitude among young Muslims in

their life. Third, the comparison between students' attitudes on its latent variables shows that the mean scale score on the component Proximity among students in non-faith-based schools is higher than their counterparts. The data in chapter six has confirmed that only a small number of young Muslims in faith-based schools met people of different religious background or spent time with them for a study discussion, or for a conversation. Based on sociological theory, less contact with other people of different social and religious backgrounds has an effect on attitude. The data in this chapter supports the hypothesis that exposure to social contact prepares the student for readiness for a close relationship. Fourth, data on the component Interreligious Engagement shows no significant difference on the mean score of this component between students in both types of schools, which suggests that the students in both types of school were positively ready to learn about other religions. The results suggested that intergroup contact significantly affect attitude towards interreligious harmony on readiness to have intergroup contact.

The results on the differences between attitude towards interreligious harmony among students in both types of the schools reflect the school approach in nurturing young Muslims' attitudes in interreligious relations. While students in non-faith-based schools demonstrated a high positive attitude in terms of readiness to have contact with people of different religious backgrounds, their counterpart in faith-based schools seem to be not ready to have close contact with people from different religious backgrounds. On the other hand, while students in faith-based school demonstrated a high positive attitude in terms of respecting religious differences, their counterpart in non-faith-based schools seems less ready for respecting religious differences. The result suggests that the management in both types of schools should look at a holistic approach in nurturing students' attitudes toward interreligious harmony. School with only Muslim students

should take an opportunity to integrate their students with people of different backgrounds more through learning activities. On the other hand, interreligious harmony is not only about engagement or having contact with people of different religious backgrounds, but also the responses to religious differences such as place of worship and the belief of religion are put into the account in the interreligious relations.

7.7. Conclusion

The present chapter has examined the relationship between attitude toward interreligious harmony and religious identity, several religious variables, demographic variables and types of school among Muslim students in Malaysian secondary schools. The present chapter has also examined the effect of religious identity, several religious variables, demographic variables and types of schools on attitude toward interreligious harmony. The data has demonstrated that demographic variables (consisting of sex and age), religious practices (consisting of prayer and reading Quran) and the attitudinal dimension of religion are significantly correlated with the attitude toward interreligious harmony, but religious identity, attending mosque and types of schools have no significant relationships to attitude toward interreligious harmony. The data also indicates that religious identity, attending mosque and the attitudinal dimension of religiosity are good predictors of attitude toward interreligious harmony. Even though prayer and reading Quran are important in Islam, these factors are not good predictors of attitude toward interreligious harmony. The present study has demonstrated that the attitudinal dimension of religiosity functions as a better predictor of attitude toward interreligious harmony, compared with religious practices and religious identity. Although religious practices show how they performed religious obligation and externalized religiosity, the empirical study indicated the strong effect of the internal aspect of religiosity on attitude toward interreligious harmony. However, it should be

noted that for Muslims, religion is holistically developed, and maturity of the religion will be achieved with the development of all dimensions. The present study also found no significant effect of school type on Muslim students' attitudes toward interreligious harmony, even though some of the previous research has highlighted the negative impact of faith-based schools on young Muslims' attitude towards others.

Chapter 8

Conclusions and recommendations of the study

This research investigated attitudes toward interreligious harmony among young Muslims in Malaysia, a Muslim-majority country with a multicultural and multi-religious society. This study intended to contribute to the gradually emerging empirical studies in Islamic Education. The inquiry examines the attitudinal dimension of interreligious relationships as perceived by the Malaysian secondary school students and adopts an overall social-psychological research perspective. The study explored attitudes toward interreligious harmony among Muslim students in Malaysian secondary schools and examined how attitudes toward interreligious harmony related to personal differences, identity preferences, religious practices, attitudes towards Islam and types of schools. The study aimed to investigate the correlates of attitude with personal factors and religious factors; and examine strong indicators of attitudes of Muslim students in Malaysian secondary schools toward interreligious harmony between personal differences (sex and age) factor, identity preferences factor, religious practices factor, attitude towards Islam factor and the types of school factor.

For the accomplishment of a large-scale study, a quantitative research design was adopted in this study. The data was gathered by conducting a survey called ‘You and Your Attitude toward Interreligious Harmony’. Several scales have been used to examine attitude toward interreligious harmony and its correlates, including the newly developed scale of the Attitude toward Interreligious Harmony Scale and the Malaysian translation of the Sahin-Francis Scale of Attitude toward Islam. The validity and reliability test for both scales were proved good to be used in this study. In addition, the

survey asked of the demographic backgrounds of respondents, identity preferences and frequency of religious practices.

The research introduced the historical, cultural and religious background of Malaysia in chapter two to further contextualise the inquiry and explain the research context. The Malaysian society was made up of people of different cultural backgrounds and different religious backgrounds before the Independent Day on 31st August 1957. Even though the cultural and religious diversity are accepted as part of the identity of the nation, the attitude among people towards each other's ethnic and religious background is more complex. In terms of religious diversity, which is the focus of this study, many issues have been highlighted in previous studies such as the readiness to live together, issues related to a place of worship and food choices. However, empirical evidence on people's attitudes toward each other's faith traditions is very limited, especially on the topic of religious diversity among young people at secondary schools. A review of previous literature, as highlighted in this study in chapter three, demonstrated that attitudes toward interreligious harmony among Muslim adolescents in Malaysia has not been investigated. There is a lack of empirical research on understanding the attitudinal dimension of interreligious relationship among Muslim adolescents to inform theory and practice of Islamic Education. Against this background, the present study aimed to address this lacuna in the field and empirically assess attitude toward interreligious harmony among Muslim students in Malaysian secondary schools.

The inquiry was further contextualized within the Malaysian education system and its provision of Islamic Education. The discussion focused on the educational development during the period of early Islamic expansion of the nation, the period of

colonialism and the post-independence period. Currently, the education systems in modern Malaysia for young Muslims are varied with many organisations setting up different types of schools. Despite the different approach in learning Islamic knowledge, the school differences are also believed to have an effect on intercultural and interreligious engagement among young Muslims. The present study made a significant contribution to the field of Islamic Education and the wider context of Malaysian education systems by examining young Muslims' attitudes towards interreligious harmony and exploring the attitude differences between the students in several types of schools in Malaysia.

A quantitative research method was used to assess attitude towards interreligious harmony among Muslim students in Malaysian secondary schools. The data gathered from the survey called 'You and Your Attitude towards Interreligious Harmony among Muslim students in Malaysian secondary schools' was analysed using a descriptive and inferential statistical analysis. The data was analysed on three major parts. First, data was collected on several variables to empirically examine on participants' religiosity. Second, data was collected on several variables to examine the attitude of participants towards interreligious harmony. Third, data on participants' personal backgrounds, attitude towards interreligious harmony, identity preferences, religious practices, attitude towards Islam and types of school was gathered to be used in the correlation and regression analysis.

The main study findings are presented in three main parts. The first part of data analysis that explored individual differences on religiosity revealed that respondents self-identified themselves differently. The majority of the respondents wanted to describe their identity by using religion, rather than ethnicity and nationality. They also reported

different frequencies of practising religious commitments. Among them, the majority of respondents were praying five times a day and reading the Qur'an every day. Only a quarter of them reported that they were attending mosque every day, whereas the majority of them were attending mosque sometimes. The results of sex differences in religious practices were understood as males and females have an equal opportunity to practice their religion. There was a small percentage of students that practise religious commitments less, so this could be seen as the sign of less religiousness among some of the Muslim students.

Consistent with the idea that religiosity is a multi-dimensional construct, this study argued that the attitudinal dimension of religiosity provides a meaningful result to understand individual religiosity and is worth to correlate with attitude toward interreligious harmony because it measures young Muslims' favorableness toward Islam. The Sahin-Francis Scale of Attitude toward Islam has been utilized and translated into the Malaysian language to assess Malaysian Muslim students' attitudes toward Islam. Although respondents scored a range of answer on the Malaysian translation of the Sahin-Francis Scale of Attitude toward Islam, the results demonstrated that the majority of them scored high on the scale. The study has reported on the psychometric properties of the Malaysian translation of the Sahin-Francis Scale of Attitude toward Islam among participants. The data supports for the reliability and validity of the scale among Muslim students in Malaysian secondary schools, which is consistent with other studies that have used the different language versions of the same scale. The validity test of the scale was analysed by conducting correlations between attitude score and personal background; between attitude score and age; and between attitude score and two different types of school (faith-based schools and non-faith-based schools). The attitude score did not correlate significantly with age differences. The results

demonstrated that the attitude score correlated significantly with religious practices, with females scoring higher than males. The study concluded that the majority of respondent who reported high levels of religious practise scored high on attitude toward Islam. There was also a small number of respondents, who reported less religious practice scored low on attitude toward Islam. The attitude score correlated significantly with the type of school, with students in faith-based schools scoring higher on attitude toward Islam than students in non-faith-based schools. Although there was a significant difference between attitude toward Islam among students in faith-based schools and students in non-faith-based schools, the differences were relatively small.

The second part of data analysis has reported on the psychometric properties of the Attitude toward Interreligious Harmony Scale among respondents to provide evidence for the primary aims of this present study. The reliability and validity test indicated that the scale is relevant to assess Muslim students' attitudes toward interreligious harmony. Participants in this research reported various responses to each item on the scale and adopted different attitudes, with the majority of them having a positive attitude toward interreligious harmony.

The validity of the scale was supported by several statistical analyses. First, the scale correlated significantly with the item designed to reflect the articles in the Malaysian Constitutional Law on religious diversity and this result demonstrated that the scale assesses the affective dimension of attitude. Second, the correlations between the scale and several items on intercultural and interreligious engagement demonstrated that social proximity is a good predictor for a positive attitude toward interreligious harmony. Third, factor analysis indicated that there are three meaningful latent variables, referring to the respect of the religious right of others, the readiness for

intergroup contact and the readiness to engage with all the important elements in other religions.

The third part of data analysis has presented the prediction of attitude toward interreligious harmony among participants from personal differences (sex and age), identity preferences (differentiation between religious identity and other identities), religiosity (praying, reading Quran, attending mosque and attitude toward Islam) and type of school (faith-based school and non-faith-based school). The regression analysis demonstrated that although personal differences (age and sex) were significant predictors of attitude toward interreligious harmony, factors associated with identity preferences and the attitudinal dimension of religiosity served as significant predictors. Attitudes toward Islam was a stronger predictor of attitude toward interreligious harmony compared to religious practices. In terms of religious practices, only frequency of attending mosque served as a significant predictor of attitude toward interreligious harmony, and there was no significant effect of praying and reading Quran on attitude toward interreligious harmony. On the type of school, school differences did not predict the attitude score.

8.1. The policy implications of the study

This section considers research and policy-related implications of the inquiry within the context of the wider education system in Malaysia. The present study suggests that the term interreligious harmony should be clearly defined in the Malaysian government's policy documents. The operational definition of the term suggested in the study could help policy makers for future policy development and practice in education. The discussion has highlighted that the important features in the concept of interreligious harmony consist of proximity, readiness for interreligious engagement, and respect the

differences between religions such as the belief, the house of worship and the sacred text.

The present study suggests that whole education system for young Muslims should be designed to reflect the philosophy of Malaysia Education, which emphasizes that education, is a process to inculcate values of tolerance and respect among the citizens. The National Education Philosophy, clearly states that *“education in Malaysia is an on-going effort to further develop the potential of individuals in a holistic and integrated manner, so as to produce individuals who are intellectually, spiritually, emotionally and physically balanced and harmonious, based on a firm belief in and devotion to God. Such an effort is designed to produce Malaysian citizens of high moral standards, knowledge and competence, and who are responsible and capable of achieving a high level of personal well-being as well as being able to contribute to the harmony and betterment of the family, the society and the nation at large.”* (Ministry of Education, 2020a).

In the context of religious diversity, the education system is a good platform to nurture good relationships among people of different religious backgrounds and nurture a positive attitude toward interreligious harmony. This could be achieved by designing the curriculum and providing suitable co-curriculum activities in the schools. Such activities are important for students as this provides exposure and practice for living in the nation with a culturally and religiously diverse society harmoniously. A holistic approach in education systems prepares them to get involved in the cultural and religious diversity of Malaysian society. Some of the results in the present study gave an important point to be reflected. To inculcate positive attitudes toward interreligious harmony among students, the school management in any type of school is suggested to include all aspects of interreligious harmony in designing a better approach in education through curriculum and co-curriculum activities.

The Malaysian education sector has wide space to develop well-structured programs in nurturing a positive attitude toward interreligious harmony and retain a positive attitude in interreligious relationships for young generations. Funding for the research in education, especially by the government, can help the education sectors to develop research-based and evidence-based programs. Researchers who intend to contribute to the field of Islamic Education are encouraged to apply various research approaches and practise good research conduct. The present study has also demonstrated that an empirical research approach has provided an in-depth understanding of Muslim students' attitudes toward interreligious harmony and its correlates. As highlighted in the early part of this thesis, a historical-theoretical research approach has dominated the field of Islamic Education. This is not to argue which approach is more important, but the empirical-based data could more effectively inform the field of study on the current development of the social lives of young Muslims.

Therefore, it is important for educators in Islamic Education to implement an evidence-based teaching approach. Education for young Muslims should emphasize on how the curriculum can develop a learner to have a high positive attitude toward Islam. Again, empirically-based data could support the improvement in the field of Islamic Education. These practices could help educators and officials in the field of Islamic Education to develop a suitable teaching method according to the students' levels and abilities. It is important for educators and officials in the field of Islamic Education to exercise a critical reflection on how they can nurture a positive attitude toward Islam among young Muslims.

Social-awareness-based education, evidence-based teaching and learning style could be implemented to enhance interreligious competence by taking into

consideration of the religious diversity in the Malaysian context and that of other countries. The knowledge-based educational approach also could help the student to understand others, rather than distancing themselves from them. It should be mentioned that the early part of this thesis has highlighted the approach taken by Al-Biruni (1958) who is a famous Muslim thinker for his greatest work of *Tabqiq ma li al-Hind*. His ability to understand the social and religious life of Indian society during his journey to attain knowledge on astronomy in India demonstrated that the knowledge about others could help learners to understand knowledge in a wider field of study. Even though the Malaysian society has a multi-religious background, not much research approaches this topic from an educational perspective. The results from this study also have demonstrated Muslim students' readiness to learn about others, but a critical review of the literature showed the topic of religious diversity has never been discussed in syllabi.

8.2. Limitations of the study and recommendations for future research

As final remarks, the present study highlights some limitations in this research and recommendations for future research in the field of Islamic Education Studies and the wider Malaysian educational systems.

The results in the present study must be interpreted with caution. As far as the current inquiry is concerned, this is the first study in the field of Islamic Education that empirically assesses the attitude toward interreligious harmony in the Malaysian context. As an exploratory research, the study used the theoretical and operational frameworks informed by the research in the field of social psychology, the psychology of religion and Islamic theology to exercise good research conduct and secure reliability and validity of the research model. The study has also presented the psychometric properties of the newly developed scale called the Attitude toward Interreligious Harmony Scale

that has been used in this study. Replication of the research model in the future could provide evidence for reliability and validity of the research model.

Even though the present study is considered as a large-scale study due to the number of participants involved, the findings will not be easily used to generalize to the entire young Muslims population in Malaysia. The study was conducted only among Muslim students in Malaysian secondary schools, specifically in the Selangor state of Malaysia. The results suggested the importance of examining attitudes toward interreligious harmony among different group of people in Malaysia. This scale has been proved to be reliable, valid and relevant to assess attitudes toward interreligious harmony among young Muslims in the Malaysian contexts. Replication of the research model in a future study among the same set of respondents at a different time and for future research among people of different groups in Malaysia and different Muslim majority and Muslim minority contexts could support the validity and reliability of the instruments and provide evidence of attitude towards interreligious harmony for a bigger population. It is also good to expand and replicate this study to assess attitude toward interreligious harmony in Malaysia and across other cultures and religions to see the further applicability the scale develop in this inquiry.

Research that is interested to examine Muslims' religiosity should recognize the multi-dimensional approach to examine religiosity and each dimension must be assessed carefully. A longitudinal study assessing the frequency of religious practices among Muslim students in the future helps provide data on changing patterns in practising religion among young Muslims. Based on an empirical evidence in this study, further empirical study should be carefully conducted to examine why there are Muslim students less favoured to Islam. The attitudinal dimension of religiosity might affect

other aspect of life especially when referring to the data on a correlational study, which indicated young Muslims who practised religion less scored low on attitude toward Islam. The present study also focused on three different aspects of religiosity (consisting of identity, practices and the attitudinal dimension of religion). In the future, research should explore other dimensions of religiosity to assess the correlate and predictors of attitude toward interreligious harmony, such as the extrinsic and intrinsic scales of religiosity and the quest scale of religiosity. Future research in Islamic Education could also be developed by integrating empirical sociological and psychological approaches in exploring the formation of religious identities within the process of formal and informal Islamic education.

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Appendix 1: Questionnaire



Anda dan Sikap Anda **Terhadap Keharmonian Antara Agama** *You and Your Attitude towards Interreligious Harmony*

Borang soal selidik ini bertujuan melihat sejauh mana sikap anda terhadap keharmonian antara agama. Sila jawab berdasarkan apa yang anda fikirkan dan jawab secara jujur dan tepat. Tiada jawapan betul atau salah dan jawapan yang anda berikan adalah rahsia. Jawapan anda tidak akan dibaca oleh sesiapa di dalam sekolah anda. Sila elakkan daripada menulis nama pada borang soal selidik ini.

This survey looks at what is your attitude towards interreligious harmony. Please say what you really think and try to be as honest and accurate as possible. There are no wrong or right answers and everything you tell us is completely private and confidential. No one in your school will read your answer. Please do not write your name in this booklet.

Terima kasih atas kerjasama anda mengisi borang soal selidik ini.

Thanks for your help.

Samsuddin Abd Hamid

Postgraduate Student.

Center for Education Studies,

University of Warwick.

Bahagian A: Maklumat mengenai diri anda. Sila tanda (/) pada petak yang berkenaan sahaja. Part A: Information about you. Please tick (/) the appropriate box.				
1.	Jantina anda. <i>Are you?</i>	Lelaki (<i>Male</i>)	1	
		Perempuan (<i>Female</i>)	2	
2.	Nyatakan anda berada di Tingkatan berapa. <i>Please write in your school year.</i>			
3.	Apakah tahap pendidikan ayah anda? <i>What is your father's educational level?</i>	Universiti (<i>University</i>)	1	
		Sekolah Menengah (<i>Secondary school</i>)	2	
		Sekolah Rendah (<i>Primary school</i>)	3	
		Tidak bersekolah (<i>None</i>)	4	
4.	Apakah tahap pendidikan ibu anda? <i>What is your mother's educational level?</i>	Universiti (<i>University</i>)	1	
		Sekolah Menengah (<i>Secondary school</i>)	2	
		Sekolah Rendah (<i>Primary school</i>)	3	
		Tidak bersekolah (<i>None</i>)	4	
5.	Apakah etnik keturunan ayah anda? <i>What is your father's ethnicity?</i>	Melayu (<i>Malay</i>)	1	
		Cina (<i>Chinese</i>)	2	
		India (<i>Indian</i>)	3	
		Lain-lain (sila nyatakan) <i>Others (please specify)</i> -----	4	
6.	Apakah etnik keturunan ibu anda? <i>What is your mother's ethnicity?</i>	Melayu (<i>Malay</i>)	1	
		Cina (<i>Chinese</i>)	2	
		India (<i>Indian</i>)	3	
		Lain-lain (sila nyatakan) <i>Others (please specify)</i> -----	4	

7.	Berapakah pendapatan ibu dan bapa/penjaga anda (dalam RM) <i>Your father's and mother's/guardian's salary (in RM)</i>	0-2500	1	
		2501-5000	2	
		5001-10000	3	
		10001-20000	4	
		20000 dan ke atas (<i>and above</i>)	5	
8.	Di manakah kawasan tempat tinggal anda? <i>What kind of area do you live in?</i>	Bandar (<i>Urban</i>)	1	
		Pinggir bandar (<i>Sub-urban</i>)	2	
		Perkampungan (<i>Rural</i>)	3	
		Estate (i.e. Felda, Felcra)	4	
9.	Apakah rumah ibadat yang terdapat dalam kawasan tempat tinggal anda? (Sila tandakan semua yang berkenaan) <i>In my living area, there is/are... (please tick all that apply)</i>	a. Masjid (<i>Mosque</i>)	1	
		b. Tokong Buddha (<i>Buddhist Temple</i>)	1	
		c. Gereja (<i>Church</i>)	1	
		d. Kuil Hindu (<i>Hindhu Temple</i>)	1	
		e. Tokong Cina (<i>Chinese Temple</i>)	1	
		f. Gurdwara (<i>Gurdwara</i>)	1	
10.	Sahabat saya terdiri dalam kalangan... (Sila tandakan semua yang berkenaan) <i>I have friends who are... (please tick all that apply)</i>	a. Muslim (<i>Muslim</i>)	1	
		b. Buddha (<i>Buddhist</i>)	1	
		c. Kristian (<i>Christian</i>)	1	
		d. Hindu (<i>Hindhu</i>)	1	
		e. Tao, Confucius atau Kepercayaan Tradisi Masyarakat Cina (<i>Toaist, Confusist or Traditional Chinese Religion</i>)	1	
		f. Sikh (<i>Sikhs</i>)	1	
		g. Bahai (<i>Bahaist</i>)	1	
		h. Tiada agama (<i>Athiest</i>)	1	
11.	Jiran anda terdiri dalam kalangan... (Sila tandakan semua yang berkenaan) <i>I have neighbors who are... (please tick all that apply)</i>	a. Muslim (<i>Muslim</i>)	1	
		b. Buddha (<i>Buddhist</i>)	1	
		c. Kristian (<i>Christian</i>)	1	
		d. Hindu (<i>Hindhu</i>)	1	
		e. Tao, Confucius atau Kepercayaan Tradisi Masyarakat Cina (<i>Toaist, Confusist or Traditional Chinese Religion</i>)	1	
		f. Sikh (<i>Sikhs</i>)	1	
		g. Bahai (<i>Bahaist</i>)	1	
		h. Tiada agama (<i>Athiest</i>)	1	

12.	Apakah jatidiri yang paling penting dalam hidup anda? (Tandakan satu sahaja) <i>What is the most important to your identity? (Please tick only one)</i>	a.	Menjadi bangsa Malaysia <i>Being Malaysian</i>	1	
		b.	Menjadi bangsa Melayu <i>Being Malay</i>	2	
		c.	Menjadi seorang Muslim <i>Being Muslim</i>	3	
13.	Bagaimanakah kekerapan anda menunaikan Solat? <i>Frequency of obligatory prayer.</i>		Lima kali dalam sehari <i>Five times a day</i>	5	
			Beberapa kali sahaja dalam sehari <i>Several times a day</i>	4	
			Solat Jumaat sahaja <i>Friday only</i>	3	
			Kadang kala <i>Occasionally</i>	2	
			Tidak pernah <i>Never</i>	1	
14.	Bagaimanakah kekerapan anda menghadiri Solat berjemaah di Masjid? <i>How often do you perform prayer at the mosque?</i>		Setiap hari <i>Every day</i>	5	
			Sekurang-kurangnya seminggu sekali <i>At least once a week</i>	4	
			Sekurang-kurangnya sebulan sekali <i>At least once a month</i>	3	
			Kadang kala <i>Sometimes</i>	2	
			Tidak pernah <i>Never</i>	1	
15.	Bagaimanakah kekerapan anda membaca Qur'an? <i>How often do you read al-Quran?</i>		Setiap hari <i>Every day</i>	5	
			Sekurang-kurangnya seminggu sekali <i>At least once a week</i>	4	
			Sekurang-kurangnya sebulan sekali <i>At least once a month</i>	3	
			Kadang kala <i>Occasionally</i>	2	
			Tidak pernah <i>Never</i>	1	

Bahagian B: Hubungan anda dengan pelbagai latar belakang masyarakat. Sila pilih Ya atau Tidak pada pernyataan berikut:

Part B: Social and religious engagement. Say Yes or No to the statement

1.	Saya ada menyertai perbincangan dalam kumpulan bersama rakan yang berlainan kaum. <i>I join group discussion with friends from a different ethnic background.</i>	Ya <i>Yes</i>	Tidak <i>No</i>
2.	Saya ada menyertai rakan-rakan yang berlainan kaum untuk makan bersama di dalam satu ruang makan. <i>I have lunch with friends from a different religious background.</i>	Ya <i>Yes</i>	Tidak <i>No</i>
3.	Saya ada meluangkan masa berbual dengan jiran daripada pelbagai kaum di kawasan tempat tinggal saya. <i>I spend time speaking with neighbours from a different ethnic background.</i>	Ya <i>Yes</i>	Tidak <i>No</i>
4.	Saya ada mengunjungi rumah rakan-rakan yang berbeza agama semasa hari perayaan agamanya. <i>I visit friend from a different religion during their religious celebration day.</i>	Ya <i>Yes</i>	Tidak <i>No</i>
5.	Saya ada mengunjungi kematian seseorang yang berbeza agama. <i>I attend funeral ceremonies of people of different religious background.</i>	Ya <i>Yes</i>	Tidak <i>No</i>
6.	Terdapat dalam kalangan ahli keluarga saya yang berkahwin dengan kaum lain. <i>I have a family member married with someone from a different ethnic background.</i>	Ya <i>Yes</i>	Tidak <i>No</i>
7.	Terdapat dalam kalangan ahli keluarga saya yang berkahwin dengan penganut agama lain. <i>I have a family member married with someone from a different faith.</i>	Ya <i>Yes</i>	Tidak <i>No</i>

Soalan seterusnya berkaitan perasaan dan sikap anda dalam hubungan antara agama. Sila baca dengan teliti pernyataan berikut dan fikirkan adakah anda setuju mengenainya.
Please read each statement and tick to indicate your agreement with each statement.

Jika anda **sangat setuju**, sila tandakan pada ruang nombor 5

If you are **strongly agreed**, please tick on 5

Jika anda **setuju**, sila tandakan pada ruang nombor 4

If you are **agreed**, please tick on 4

Jika anda **tidak pasti**, sila tandakan pada ruang nombor 3

If you are **not sure**, please tick on 3

Jika anda **tidak setuju**, sila tandakan pada ruang nombor 2

If you are **disagreed**, please tick on 2

Jika anda **sangat tidak setuju**, sila tandakan pada ruang nombor 1

If you are **strongly disagreed**, please tick on 1

5	4	3	2	1
5	4	3	2	1
5	4	3	2	1
5	4	3	2	1
5	4	3	2	1

8. Pandangan saya terhadap agama lain dan penganutnya banyak dipengaruhi oleh:

My views about other religions have been influenced by:

- Ayah saya (My father)
- Ibu saya (My mother)
- Guru saya (My teacher)
- Rakan seagama (My friends with same religion)
- Rakan yang menganuti agama tersebut (My friends from different religion)
- Televisyen (Television)
- Internet (The internet)
- Surat khabar (A newspaper)
- Kitab agama lain (Scriptures or book of other religion)

5	4	3	2	1
5	4	3	2	1
5	4	3	2	1
5	4	3	2	1
5	4	3	2	1
5	4	3	2	1
5	4	3	2	1
5	4	3	2	1
5	4	3	2	1

9. Jika saya ingin mengetahui mengenai agama lain, saya akan mendapatkannya melalui...

If I want to know more about other religion, I will ask from...

- Ayah saya (My father)
- Ibu saya (My mother)
- Guru saya (My teacher)
- Rakan seagama (My friends with same religion)
- Rakan yang menganuti agama tersebut (My friends from different religion)
- Televisyen (Television)
- Internet (The internet)
- Surat khabar (A newspaper)
- Kitab agama lain (Scriptures or book of other religion)

5	4	3	2	1
5	4	3	2	1
5	4	3	2	1
5	4	3	2	1
5	4	3	2	1
5	4	3	2	1
5	4	3	2	1
5	4	3	2	1
5	4	3	2	1

1.	Di tempat tinggal saya, masyarakat daripada pelbagai latar belakang agama hidup secara baik bersama. <i>Where I live, people from different religious backgrounds get on well together.</i>	5	4	3	2	1
2.	Keharmonian antara agama bermaksud kita hidup bersama secara aman dengan orang yang berbeza agama dengan kita <i>Interreligious harmony means we are living in peace and harmony with people from different faith.</i>	5	4	3	2	1
3.	Saya setuju bahawa Islam adalah agama rasmi di Malaysia, manakala agama lain bebas diamalkan secara harmoni. <i>I agree that Islam is the religion of the Federation of Malaysia; but other religions may be practiced in peace and harmony in any part of the Federation.</i>	5	4	3	2	1
4.	Saya berbesar hati tinggal bersama seseorang yang berbeza agama dengan saya. <i>I would be happy to live with someone from a different religious background.</i>	5	4	3	2	1
5.	Saya berbesar hati menolong seseorang yang berbeza agama dengan saya. <i>I would be happy to help someone from a different religious background.</i>	5	4	3	2	1
6.	Saya berbesar hati berbual dengan seseorang yang berbeza agama dengan saya. <i>I would be happy to talk with someone from a different religious background.</i>	5	4	3	2	1
7.	Saya berbesar hati makan bersama seseorang yang berbeza agama dengan saya. <i>I would be happy to have a lunch/dinner with someone from a different religious background.</i>	5	4	3	2	1
8.	Saya berbesar hati berkawan rapat dengan seseorang yang berbeza agama dengan saya. <i>I would be happy to be friends with someone from a different religious background.</i>	5	4	3	2	1
9.	Saya berbesar hati saudara terdekat saya mengahwini seseorang yang berlainan agama. <i>I would be happy for a close relative to marry someone from a different religious background.</i>	5	4	3	2	1
10*	Saya fikir membaca buku berkaitan agama lain hanya membazirkan masa saya. <i>I think reading a book of other religions is a waste of my time.</i>	5	4	3	2	1
11*	Berbincang mengenai agama-agama lain bersama rakan tidak mendatangkan manfaat. <i>Discussing about other religions with my friends does no good.</i>	5	4	3	2	1
12.	Saya ada hasrat ingin melawat ke rumah ibadat agama lain. <i>I am interested to visit other religious places of worship.</i>	5	4	3	2	1
7						

13.	Saya berminat untuk mengetahui lebih lanjut mengenai agama-agama lain. <i>I am interested in finding out about other religions.</i>	5	4	3	2	1
14.	Saya berminat mengetahui nilai-nilai murni yang mempunyai persamaan dalam setiap agama. <i>I am interested to know about values shared across religious traditions.</i>	5	4	3	2	1
15.	Saya berminat mengikuti rancangan berkaitan dialog antara agama. <i>I am interested to watch or listen to interfaith dialogue programs.</i>	5	4	3	2	1
16.	Menghormati semua agama memberikan banyak kebaikan. <i>Respecting all religions gives a lot of benefit.</i>	5	4	3	2	1
17.	Saya percaya bahawa setiap kumpulan agama harus mendapat hak masing-masing. <i>I believe that all religious groups should have equal rights.</i>	5	4	3	2	1
18.	Saya percaya setiap orang perlu diberikan peluang mempelajari asas ajaran agamanya. <i>I believe that everyone should have the right to learn about their religion.</i>	5	4	3	2	1
19.	Saya percaya bahawa setiap orang berhak menganut dan mengamalkan ajaran agamanya. <i>I believe that everyone should be allowed to practice their religion.</i>	5	4	3	2	1
20.	Saya berminat bercakap mengenai agama lain dengan rakan saya. <i>I am interested to talk about other religions with my friends.</i>	5	4	3	2	1
21.	Saya percaya bahawa kita tidak boleh memaksa orang meyakini kepercayaan agama kita. <i>I believe that someone cannot force others to believe in their religion.</i>	5	4	3	2	1
22.	Bekerjasama dan saling bantu membantu antara pelbagai penganut agama memberikan banyak kebaikan <i>Helping other people of different faith gives a lot of benefit.</i>	5	4	3	2	1
23*	Kita tidak perlu menghormati kepercayaan agama yang berbeza dengan kepercayaan kita <i>I believe that we do not have to respect religious beliefs different from our own.</i>	5	4	3	2	1

Bahagian C: Hubungan anda dengan Islam						
Part C: Attitude towards Islam and your religiosity						
1.	Saya rasa sesuatu yang menginspirasi untuk mendengar al-Qur'ān. <i>I find it inspiring to listen to the Qur'ān.</i>	5	4	3	2	1
2.	Saya tahu bahawa Allah banyak membantu saya. <i>I know that Allah/God helps me.</i>	5	4	3	2	1
3.	Membaca doa banyak membantu saya. <i>Saying my prayers/du'ā' helps me a lot.</i>	5	4	3	2	1
4.	Menghadiri masjid sangat penting bagi saya. <i>Attending the Mosque is very important to me.</i>	5	4	3	2	1
5.	Saya fikir pergi ke masjid adalah suatu pembaziran waktu saya. <i>I think going to the Mosque is a waste of my time.</i>	5	4	3	2	1
6.	Saya mahu patuh pada perintah Allah dan mengikuti hukum Syariat dalam hidup saya. <i>I want to obey Allah/God's law/shar'ah in my life.</i>	5	4	3	2	1
7.	Saya fikir khutbah Jumaat di masjid membosankan. <i>I think Mosque sermons/khutbah are boring.</i>	5	4	3	2	1
8.	Allah membantu saya menuju kehidupan yang baik. <i>Allah/God helps me to lead a better life.</i>	5	4	3	2	1
9.	Saya suka belajar mengenai Allah sebanyak-banyaknya. <i>I like to learn about Allah/God very much.</i>	5	4	3	2	1
10.	Allah begitu bermakna kepada saya. <i>Allah/God means a lot to me.</i>	5	4	3	2	1
11.	Saya yakin bahawa Allah membantu manusia. <i>I believe that Allah/God helps people.</i>	5	4	3	2	1
12.	Solat banyak membantu saya. <i>Prayer/salāt helps me a lot.</i>	5	4	3	2	1
13.	Saya rasa saya begitu dekat dengan Allah. <i>I feel that I am very close to Allah/God.</i>	5	4	3	2	1
14.	Saya fikir bersembahyang adalah perkara yang baik. <i>I think praying/salāt is a good thing.</i>	5	4	3	2	1
15.	Saya fikir Quran sudah tidak sesuai dengan zaman sekarang. <i>I think the Qur'ān is out of date.</i>	5	4	3	2	1
16.	Saya percaya bahawa Allah mendengar doa. <i>I believe that Allah/God listens to prayers/du'ā'.</i>	5	4	3	2	1
17.	Keimanan kepada Allah tidak memberi apa-apa makna kepada saya. <i>Allah/God doesn't mean anything to me.</i>	5	4	3	2	1
18.	Allah sangat nyata dan benar bagi saya. <i>Allah/God is very real to me.</i>	5	4	3	2	1
19.	Saya fikir membaca doa tiada kebaikan. <i>I think praying/du'ā' does no good.</i>	5	4	3	2	1
20.	Kepercayaan kepada Allah begitu penting kepada saya. <i>Belief in Allah/God means much to me.</i>	5	4	3	2	1

9

21.	Saya mendapati sangat sukar mempercayai Allah <i>I find it hard to believe in Allah/God.</i>	5	4	3	2	1
22.	Saya sangat gembira menjadi seorang Muslim. <i>I am happy to be a Muslim.</i>	5	4	3	2	1
23.	Saya suka mengikuti cara kehidupan Rasulullah S.A.W. <i>I love to follow the life/sunnah of the Prophet.</i>	5	4	3	2	1
24.	Saya fikir pengajian di masjid sangat membosankan. <i>I think lesson in the Mosque are boring.</i>	5	4	3	2	1
26. Pilih satu sahaja pernyataan yang paling dekat dengan pendirian anda. <i>Tick the one statement that comes closest to your own belief.</i>	Hanya satu sahaja agama yang benar manakala agama lain adalah salah. <i>Only one religion is true, and all others are totally false.</i>	1				
	Hanya satu sahaja agama yang benar, tetapi sebahagian kebenaran juga terdapat pada agama lain. <i>Only one religion is true but at least one other is partly true</i>	2				
	Semua agama adalah sama benar. <i>All religions are equally true.</i>	3				
	Semua agama membawa kebenaran melalui cara yang berbeza-beza. <i>All religions express the same truth in different ways.</i>	4				
	Semua agama adalah salah. <i>All religions are totally false.</i>	5				
	Kebenaran boleh diperolehi dengan mengambil manfaat daripada ajaran semua agama. <i>Truth comes from listening to all religions.</i>	6				
	Saya tidak tahu keperluan beragama. <i>I do not know what to believe about religions.</i>	7				
10						

Soal selidik tamat. Sila pastikan anda telah menjawab semua soalan yang diberikan. Terima kasih kerana telah memberikan kerjasama untuk menjawab keseluruhan soalan yang diberikan.

Please make sure you have answered all the questions. Thank you for your help.