

The Muslim Religiosity-Personality Measurement Inventory (MRPI)'s Religiosity Measurement Model: Towards Filling the Gaps in Religiosity Research on Muslims

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ABSTRAK

Sejak bermulanya bidang religiositi sebagai satu bidang inkuiri saintifik, ia telah berada di bawah domain psikologi religiositi. Pendekatan itu diambil ke arah pengkonsepsian religiositi sebagai makna bagi keagamaan sejagat. Walau bagaimanapun, majoriti limpahan instrumen religiositi jatuh di bawah petunjuk agama Kristian dan kajian terhadap orang Kristian. Bagi mempelajari tentang kehidupan beragama tradisi bukan Kristian, terdapat keperluan untuk konsep dan instrumen religiositi bagi menggambarkan tradisi keagamaan tersebut. Peranan tasawur terhadap religiositi adalah penting untuk diambil kira sebagai instrumentasi religiositi kerana tasawur ini dapat memberi asas falsafah untuk konsep operasional religiositi, pembentukan dan item. Oleh sebab pengaruh besar terhadap instrumen religiositi adalah berasaskan tasawur terhadap keagamaan *Judeo-Christian*, instrumen religiositi yang wujud kini pun adalah yang mencerminkannya, dan seterusnya ia tidak menunjukkan kesamarataan keunikan tasawur terhadap pandangan non *Judeo-Christian* yang lain seperti tasawur Islam. Oleh yang demikian, kajian ini bertujuan untuk memberikan pandangan umum terhadap konseptualisasi keagamaan, bersama-sama dengan beberapa jurang yang besar dalam kajian religiositi bagi Muslim. Secara kesimpulannya, kertas kerja ini membentangkan satu model asas religiositi yang berasal daripada tasawur dari segi tauhid Islam, di mana MRPI diasaskan.

ABSTRACT

Since the advent of religiosity as a field of scientific inquiry, it has been under the domain of psychologists of religion. The approach taken toward conceptualizing religiosity, therefore, has always been one purported to be of religious universalism. However, the overwhelming majority of religiosity instruments to date have fallen under the rubric of Christianity and the study of Christian people. As the desire to learn more about the religious life of the non-Christian traditions and people spreads, there is an increasing need for religiosity concepts and instruments to reflect

these particular religious traditions. The role of religious worldview, therefore, is a major consideration in the instrumentation of religiosity, as worldview provides an underlying philosophical foundation for the operationalization of religiosity concepts, constructs and items. As the preponderance of religiosity instrumentation to date has been grounded in the Judeo-Christian religious worldview, existing religiosity instrumentation is also reflective of it, and as such, does not adequately represent the uniqueness of other non-Judeo-Christian worldviews such as the Islamic *tawhidic* worldview. As such, the current study aimed to provide a general overview of religiosity conceptualization in general, along with some of the major gaps in religiosity research for Muslims. In response, the paper concludes with the presentation of a basic religiosity model rooted in the *tawhidic* worldview of Islam, upon which the Muslim Religiosity-Personality Inventory (MRPI) was based.

CONCEPTUALIZATION AND OPERATIONALIZATION OF RELIGIOSITY: BACKGROUND AND CONSIDERATIONS

From the beginning of its advent as a subject of scientific inquiry, the conceptualization and operationalization of religiosity has been primarily the domain of psychologists and sociologists, who sought to understand the role of different measurable elements of religion on the intra- and interpersonal worlds of man. As opposed to scholars and doctors of religion, psychologists and sociologists of religion aimed to understand the impact or effects of the unique institution of religion in purely sociological and psychological terms.

Those who would become important figures in the history of psychology, for example, focused much of their interest and attention on religion. From the early writings of William James and G. Stanley Hall at the beginning of the twentieth century, religiosity as an independent scientific concept has been an important field of inquiry to social scientists (Spilka *et al.* 2003). One of the earliest and most controversial topics in psychology to date, in fact, has been the relationship between religiosity and delinquency, which was a focus of much of the early work on religiosity dating back to the 1930s (Serajzadeh 1998).

The significance of religion to human beings in so many dimensions of daily living has made it an important area of inquiry to researchers. Nevertheless, the importance of religion as an area of focus has not been a universal effort. Attempts to study religion as a social scientific phenomenon have been primarily a Western, Judeo-Christian

undertaking. Hill and Hood (1999) aggregated and analyzed 126 different psychological measurements for religiosity. However, Grace (2000) noted that researchers interested in finding measures applicable to the non-Western religions and spirituality could not find them in Hill and Hood's work. Grace also argued that those interested in finding instruments applicable to other religions would most likely not find them anywhere else, either, since much of the research focus had been on the Christian religion (in particular, American Protestantism). Spilka *et al.* (2003:3) also note that "most psychological research has been conducted within the Judeo-Christian framework." According to Ghorbani *et al.* (2000:2), studies of English-speaking populations have dominated the literature. Though other societies have received recent attention (e.g. Gorsuch *et al.* 1997; Grzymala-Moszczynska 1991; Hovemyr 1988; Kaldestad and Stifoss-Hanssen 1993), Judeo-Christian commitments still remain the most common object of investigation. They also add that the need to empirically study other religious traditions is obvious.

Attempts to understand religion and religiosity from the individual or personal perspective have naturally been the domain of psychologists of religion. Since psychology has the overall goal of understanding people and their behaviour, psychologists attempt to do this by studying human motivation, cognition and behaviour (Spilka *et al.* 2003). For those whose domain is to understand religion psychologically, There is a major difference between religion *per se* and

religious behaviour, motivation, perception and cognition. We study these human considerations and not religion as such (Spilka *et al.* 2003: 3). For psychologists of religion, there is little interest in the content and make-up of religion as a body of knowledge, tradition and practice. Thus, there is little interest in the religious knowledge, practices and experiential inputs that dictate how human behaviour, motivation, perception and cognition are arrived at.

In religious psychology, the focus is not on the religion itself, but rather the functionality or output of religion. In most studies on religiosity, the assumption is made that people from all religious traditions express their faith in three ways: through behaviour (e.g. rituals), belief (e.g. belief in the supernatural) and experience (e.g. mystical states) (Spilka *et al.* 2003). Despite such assertions of the universality of religion according to these three constructs, a single definition of 'religion' itself remains elusive for psychologists of religion.

PERSONALITY RELIGIOSITY

CONCEPTUALIZATION AND ITS ROOTS

These considerations lead to important questions about how religiosity has been conceptualized, particularly as it pertains to religious groups outside of the Judeo-Christian tradition. According to Kuçukcan (2000: 461-468) stated that:

"One should bear in mind that almost all of the theoretical frameworks [discussed in this article] were developed after studying predominantly Christian believers and manifestations of Christian religious experience. It is therefore questionable whether these methodological approaches can explain non-Christian religious experience...."

The confirmations by Spilka *et al.*, Kuçukcan and others as to the current limitations of religiosity research due to the majority of work having been conducted according to the Judeo-Christian perspective is an important one. For despite the assertion that religion – from the perspective of religious psychology at least – can be approached universally in terms of measuring its impact on human behaviour, the Judeo-Christian influence is significant in terms of the foundational worldview on which conceptualization efforts are grounded.

According to al-Attas (2001), the role of assumptions stemming from one's overall religious worldview is critical in any scientific process. Although the measurement techniques and methodologies (e.g. quantitative/qualitative, sampling, etc.) may be universally acceptable, the assumptions or assertions made at the fore will unquestionably shape the conceptualization and operationalization process that follows. This will then influence the findings and subsequently the overall conclusions of the research. Thus, religiosity scales claiming to be universal may in fact not be. Implicitly, there is a great likelihood that they will undoubtedly reflect the religious worldview of the author(s) and that of his or her particular religious tradition. Hood and Hill (1999) have echoed this sentiment by claiming that in terms of non-Western faith traditions, relevant scales are virtually non-existent as measures of religion are likely to reflect Christian religious biases, even when not explicitly identified as measures of the *Christian* religion (Heelas 1985). Hood and Hill's statement points to the implicit bias of existing religiosity measurements that stem from the use of a predominantly Judeo-Christian religious worldview as the basis for the conceptualization and operationalization of the vast majority of existing religiosity studies and measures.

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE RELIGIOUS WORLDVIEW IN RELIGIOSITY CONCEPT AND INSTRUMENT DEVELOPMENT

Numerous authors have offered a variety of definitions of 'worldview'. For example, James Sire (1988: 17) asserts that, "A worldview is a set of presuppositions (or assumptions) which we hold (consciously or subconsciously) about the basic makeup of our world." Phillips and Brown (1991: 29) state that "A worldview is, first of all, an explanation and interpretation of the world and second, an application of this view to life. In simpler terms, our worldview is a view of the world and a view for the world." Walsh and Middleton (1984: 32) provide the following succinct explanation, "A world view provides a model of the world which guides its adherents in the world".

Anthropologist Clifford Geertz, for example, whose definition of religion as a "system of symbols which acts to establish powerful, pervasive, and long-lasting moods and motivations in men by formulating conceptions of a general order of existence and clothing these conceptions with such an aura of factuality that the moods and motivations seem uniquely realistic" (Geertz 1973:78), speaks of conceptions of a general order of existence. That is, one of the activities of religion is to tell us about the nature of the world and how it works, also known as metaphysics (Peterson 2001).

Essentially, a worldview is how we see and judge the world and its contents. It is our personal vision and understanding of the reality itself. Thus, what that worldview is, what influences it, and how it is constructed is of the utmost concern. Behaviours, values and thoughts all flow from that same core of beliefs about the makeup of reality that we call our worldview. Viewing religion in term of an orienting worldview captures much of what is important and one might say, even essential to understanding religion.

The significance of worldview in regard to understanding the conceptualization and operationalization of religiosity is grounded in the makeup of what a worldview is. According to Funk (2001), a worldview is a set of beliefs

about fundamental aspects of reality that ground and influence all of one's perceiving, thinking, knowing and doing. The elements of one's worldview, the beliefs about certain aspects of reality as explained by Funk (2001), are one's:

- **epistemology:** beliefs about the nature and sources of knowledge;
- **metaphysics:** beliefs about the ultimate nature of Reality;
- **cosmology:** beliefs about the origins and nature of the universe, life, and especially Man;
- **teleology:** beliefs about the meaning and purpose of the universe, its inanimate elements, and its inhabitants;
- **theology:** beliefs about the existence and nature of God;
- **anthropology:** beliefs about the nature and purpose of Man in general and, oneself in particular;
- **axiology:** beliefs about the nature of value, what is good and bad, what is right and wrong.

From Funk's model of worldview composition, a worldview is comprised of many factors that directly influence and are influenced by religion and related beliefs about God, man, the universe and questions of ultimate reality and existence. A developed worldview supplies answers to the questions of origin, purpose and destiny among other things, or as some put it, the "why, whence, and whither" of things (Orr 1948). The beliefs one carries in each of the above listed items, therefore, is greatly carried out in their religious beliefs. Likewise, one's religious beliefs are also dramatically shaped by their beliefs in each of the above items. Each of the subsets of worldview cited by Funk is thus highly interrelated with, and directly affects the others.

In the conceptualization of religiosity, the role of worldview and its impact on the operationalization of measures is an important consideration due to the influence of worldview on the philosophical foundation of

personal religiosity. As highlighted in the previous section and noted by religiosity scholars, the majority of existing religiosity measurements have been developed from the perspective of and according to the Judeo-Christian worldview. This implies not only that the items used to assess religiosity reflect the tenets and practices of Judaism and Christianity, but often that the items are based on specific assumptions about each of the components highlighted by Funk (2001) in his model of worldview composition. This is not to say that every author from a particular tradition has an identical worldview, however, it implies a similarity of certain philosophical considerations and assumptions with other studies from the same perspective (Judeo-Christian), yet different than those from other religious traditions. These considerations, stemming from the differences in religious worldviews, thus influence how religiosity is conceptualized and subsequently operationalized.

HOW RELIGIOSITY HAS BEEN OPERATIONALIZED FOR MUSLIMS

The clear differences in worldview highlighted above raise important questions in term of the operationalization of religiosity instruments for the Muslim populations. Unlike physical or material achievement, standards related to religion are often considered difficult to measure (Family Development Foundation 2002). One such difficulty relates to the different perspectives of religiosity of people, since "... individuals differ in their ways of being religious, as one person might express religion by meditating regularly, another by attending church, another by reading certain literature, and another by participating in a civil rights demonstration" (McGuire 1992: 102). Thus, it follows that differences in religious worldview also have important implications for understanding how measures for the different populations have been developed and applied. Most current scales for Muslims, for example, have been adapted from the scales that were originally designed for the Judeo-Christian populations.

One of the earliest theorists on the dimension of religiosity proposed a four-dimensional model in approaching religious orientation and group involvement (Lanski 1961: 21-24). These dimensions were: 1- 'associational' aspect, which includes frequency of religious involvement in worship and prayer services; 2- 'communal' dimension, which relates to the preference and frequency of one's primary-type relations; 3- 'doctrinal orthodoxy', which refers to the intellectual acceptance of the prescribed doctrines of the church; and 4- 'devotionalism', which involves private or personal communion with God through prayers, meditation and religious behaviour (Kuçukan 2000). This model exemplified the Judeo-Christian focus of the conceptualization of religiosity. It is also multidimensional, which makes it unique among the early models of religiosity, as most early conceptualizations were uni-dimensional in nature.

Religiosity has often been measured with a single-item, such as church attendance or level of participation in various Christian-based religious activities. Much of the early research on religiosity and delinquency, for example, used church attendance as the sole measure of the religious commitment (see Evans *et al.* 1995; Johnson *et al.* 1987; Tittle and Welch 1983). Thus, most research that have attempted to examine religiosity has done so in a limited way, typically by assessing a single item of the religious affiliation (Weaver *et al.* 1998), despite the obvious psychometric shortcomings of the single-item measurements (Emmons 1999).

The ongoing debate among the researchers deals specifically with the question of whether religiosity is best measured as either a uni-dimensional or multidimensional concept. Although single-item measures like church attendance remain relevant within the literature, it is important to acknowledge that treating religion as multidimensional has been more of a methodologically desirable goal (Gorsuch and McFarland 1972). Johnson *et al.* (2001) examined 40 published studies on religiosity to determine the number of factors used to measure religious commitment. For

instance, they were interested in determining if the church attendance only was used (one factor), if salience and prayer were both used (two factors), or if several indicators were used to develop a multidimensional measure of religiosity (i.e. three factors, or four or more factors) (Johnson *et al.* 2000). According to Johnson *et al.*'s systematic review, salience and attendance were the two most frequently used variables to measure religion (85% and 65%, respectively). Prayer was used to measure religious commitment in 35% of the studies. Participation in religious activities was used in 27.5% of the studies to measure religiosity, whereas denomination and Bible study were used in only 22.5% of the 40 articles.

Although it has been suggested that using multiple factors to measure religion is preferable (Gorsuch and McFarland 1972), most of the studies in Johnson *et al.*'s review failed to do so. Less than half of the studies (19 of 40) used more than two factors to measure religion. Slightly more than half of the articles (21 of 40) reviewed in the study measured religiosity with one or two factors (Johnson *et al.* 2001).

Concerning the literature on religiosity instruments used with the Muslim populations, several studies made use of a measure of religiosity. Among these, two studies (Pouryousefi 1984; Samandari 1982) included Glock and Stark's model (see below), while in others an ambiguous, arbitrary or sometimes subjective single-item definition of religiosity was used (see Hassani 1978; Yahya 1988; Junger and Polder 1993; Afshari 1994) (in Serajzadeh 1998).

In Samandari's work (in which the site of the study was Babol, a city in the North of Iran), the measure consisted of forty items. According to her report, a long process of discussion and consultation with the religious leaders and university professors in Iran was followed to check the validity of the scale. Nevertheless, nothing about the internal validity and the reliability of the scale, as well as sub-scales, was reported in her work. Most surprisingly, in the data processing stage, only five items of forty were used with this short

explanation: "due to the extensiveness of the list of items measuring the degree of religiosity, only the responses to a limited number of items were utilized for analysis" (Serajzadeh 1998).

In Pouryousefi's work, a 31-item Likert scale of Glock and Stark's model of religiosity, excluding the intellectual dimension, was constructed to measure the religiosity of Muslim students studying in the United States. Administering a pre-test, he seemed to have constructed and used the scale more precisely. However, in his work the statistical results of the internal validity and reliability of the scale were not reported either (Serajzadeh 1998).

Wilde and Joseph (1997) devised, in English, a 14-item 'Muslim Attitudes Towards Religion Scale' or in short MARS. The scale contained items adapted from the Francis Attitudes Toward Christianity scale (Francis 1978; Francis and Stubbs 1987). According to Hill and Hood (1999), the Attitude Toward Christianity Scale focuses solely on the people's perception of the Christian religion. The MARS, therefore, is an adapted scale for the Islamic faith. Items were developed "under the guidance and supervision of the University of Essex Moslem society" (Wilde and Joseph 1997: 899).

Glock and Stark's discussion (1965) on the dimensionality of religion turned scholars' attention towards a multidimensional definition of religiosity. This issue has been consistently associated with their name (DeJong *et al.* 1976; Himmelfarb 1975; Roof 1979; Spilka *et al.* 1985). Glock and Stark's model of religiosity, in spite of some criticism, has been predominantly employed, either partly or completely, in different fields. Thus, in order to measure the religiosity of the Muslim respondents, Glock and Stark's model was also adapted to the religion of Islam in Wilde and Joseph's study (Serajzadeh 1998).

Glock and Stark (1965: 19-20) argue that in all religions of the world, in spite of their great variation in details, there are general areas in which religiosity is manifested. These areas, considered by Glock and Stark as the core dimensions of religiosity, are the

'Ideological', the 'Ritualistic', the 'Experiential', the 'Intellectual' and the 'Consequential' dimensions.

- The 'Ideological' dimension or religious belief, encompasses beliefs that are expected to be held by the followers.
- The 'Ritualistic' dimension or religious practice, includes the specific religious practices, such as worship, prayer, participation in special sacraments, fasting and so on, which are expected to be performed by the believers.
- The 'Experiential' dimension or religious feeling, refers to feelings, perceptions and sensations of having communication with a divine essence (i.e. with God) ultimate reality or transcendental authority.
- The 'Intellectual' dimension or religious knowledge encompasses the basic information and knowledge about the tenets of the faith and its sacred scriptures that are expected to be known by the believers.
- The 'Consequential' dimension or religious effects, includes the effects of religious belief, practice, experience and knowledge on the believer's everyday life (Glock and Stark 1965: 20-21).

Serajzadeh (1998), in his study on the Iranian Muslim youth and crime, developed an adapted measure for religiosity based on the Glock and Stark's model. The assumption for using the model was "since the three monotheistic religions (namely Judaism, Christianity and Islam) seem to share similar elements in their structural tenets, some items developed by researchers for Christianity and Judaism seem to be applicable to Islam too" (1998: 138-139). For each of Glock and Stark's five dimensions, Serajzadeh included or applied the aspects of the Islamic faith. For example, for the 'Ideological' dimension, the Islamic 'articles of faith' or the 'five pillars' were used. For the 'Ritualistic' dimension, Serajzadeh included daily prayer (*salat*) and fasting during the month of Ramadan (as part of the "Pillars of Islam"), reading the Holy

Book, the "Koran", attending public prayer (both daily and during the Friday prayer), taking part in ceremonies held on holy days in mosques and others.

The adaptation of the Glock and Stark's model to an Islamic religious context, although more comprehensive than most multidimensional models measuring the Muslim populations, has important shortcomings that must be highlighted. Glock and Stark's model is an attempt to universalize a set of primary religiosity dimensions, based on commonalities in "general areas in which religiosity is manifested" (Glock and Stark 1965: 19-20). This model, although perhaps achieving its general goal, neglects the uniqueness and spirit of the individual religious tradition, however, including each tradition's unique understanding of what religion is and is meant to be in the life of its followers. This stems ultimately from a faith's particular worldview. Accordingly, Glock and Stark's model is suitable for a general religiosity, in that it was developed by looking at commonalities across the religious traditions. However, for measuring Islamic religiosity specifically, the Glock and Stark's model may be inadequate for generalizability and commonalities with other traditions is of less concern. Rather, what is desired is to capture the unique qualities and the most relevant dimensions of religiosity from the perspective of Islam alone.

Thus, the dimensions of Glock and Stark's model, although they can be shown to exist within Islamic religiosity, may not be the most appropriate given the makeup of the Islamic religious worldview and how the worldview is manifested in the daily lives of Muslims. This has been highlighted by Shamsuddin (1992: 105) who indicated that Muslims, in particular, need a relatively different scale to measure religiosity because "... the Islamic concept of religion is fundamentally different from the [above mentioned] concept of religion." In response, Shamsuddin proposed a model of Islamic religiosity represented by the concept of *taqwa* (God-consciousness) — a multi-dimensional variable of religiosity that includes

knowledge (*'ilm/ma'rifah*), belief (*iman*), practice (*'amal*), consequences (*natajah*) and realization of excellence (*ihsan*). Since the scope of religion, i.e. its dimensions, are defined by the very concept of religion, "... the content dimensions of the Muslim religiosity vary considerably with the Judeo-Christian religious tradition" (Shamsuddin 1992: 105).

In adapted measurements such as the Glock and Stark model, therefore, there remain a lack of integration between the unique religious elements that comprise the Islamic *tawhidic* worldview. The Glock and Stark's model does not reflect the Islamic religiosity elements such as the role of the self in religious practice, the different categories of knowledge that comprise religious worldview, e.g., worldly and other-worldly dimensions of knowledge and others that are inherent within the *tawhidic* worldview of Islam.

GAPS IN THE LITERATURE:

ISLAMIC RELIGIOSITY

The gap in the religiosity literature in the area of instrumentation reflective of the *tawhidic* worldview of Islam was identified by Shamsuddin (1992) who indicated that Muslims, in particular, are in need of a relatively different scale to measure religiosity because "... the Islamic concept of religion is fundamentally different from other concepts of religion." Since the scope of religion, i.e. its dimensions are defined by the very concept of religion, "... the content dimensions of the Muslim religiosity vary considerably with the Judeo-Christian religious tradition" (Shamsuddin 1992: 105). Western scholars also raise "the need to empirically study other religious traditions is obvious. Success in meeting that need clearly rests upon the availability of the relevant psychological scales" (Ghorbani *et al.* 2000: 2).

BETWEEN THE EXTREMES: THE TAWHIDIC WORLDVIEW OF ISLAM

Islam claims to represent the middle or balanced way as the path between the extremes of worldliness and other-worldliness. Although it posits a God-centred reality, it essentially combines the two attitudes. There are no dichotomies between the spiritual and the material as well as between the religious and secular life, between thought and action, values and facts, theory and practice, ethics and economics, science and arts, knowledge and life, the individual and the community. The *tawhidic* worldview, with its focus on the unity of the Creator, includes the element of what Emmons (2003) calls the 'ultimate concerns', which serve as focal points around which people organize their lives, views of themselves, goals, and activities. He writes,

"With the divine incorporated into one's worldview, a person is able to see various midlevel tasks, plans, and purposes as related to, and perhaps part of, a larger ultimate concern. Theoretically, this would enable the person to organize the various aspects of his or her life in relation to the larger framework. This would also serve as the basis for seeing life in the long view, for long-term motivation and sustained performance of even mundane behaviours as part of a set of spiritual goals or strivings. Imbuing a goal with a sense of the divine is likely to decrease any prior ambivalence in commitment to that goal. Does one need a greater justification than the perception that one's goals are pleasing to God?" (Emmons 2003: 23).

Emmons' 'ultimate concerns' are an integral element of the Islamic worldview and its approach to the world. Ultimate concerns represent the terminal values or end goals for both individuals and societies, and act to the shape worldview (Family Development Foundation 2002). Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi (1983), speaking from the Islamic perspective, claims that true civilization, a stable and just human society, can only be built on the foundation of a right concept of God and his attributes, a recognition of the necessity of

divine revelation, and a worldview which places man in his rightful place in the total system of the Theo-centric creation. Thus, as a way of life and religion, Islam has its own distinct worldview that is unique from others (Aziz 2000).

According to al-Attas (2001), a worldview is not merely the mind's view of the physical world and of man's historical, but also the social political and cultural involvement in it. This is because the worldview of Islam is not based upon philosophical speculation formulated mainly through observation of the sensible world or the world of created things. The worldview of Islam is therefore not limited to the existence of this world alone, but encompasses both the 'sacred' and the 'profane'—this world (*al-dunya*) and the world hereafter (*al-akhirah*). Furthermore, these are not two separate, unrelated entities or concepts but are directly related, continuous and inseparable to one another. Thus, the worldview of Islam is the vision of reality and truth that reveals what all of existence is about; for it is the world of existence in its totality, which includes both the seen worlds and those unseen (al-Attas 2001).

In the Islamic worldview, this totality is the eternal Divine principle of unity that pervades and rules all things. It is expressed in the metaphysical world of the hereafter and the Day of Judgment, in the external world of the cosmos and nature and in the inner world of the mind and spirit. Underlying this universal order and totality is a living unity, which is all-pervading and everlasting. Everything has a purpose, which is the realization of the essence of the Divine nature developing within it. To be able to realize and reveal the essence of one's being and of existence in general, Islam points its adherents to the path for realizing the essence of life. The path is *tawhid*, which reveals the unity of God. *Tawhid* comes from the Arabic verb *wahhad*, which literally means 'to unite'. In the Islamic terminology, it means to realize and maintain the unity of God in one's actions (both inwardly and outwardly) (Crane 2004).

It is *tawhid* that comprises the essence and spirit of Islam. It is through the dialectic of *tawhid*, and the worldview that flows from it, that allows Muslims to accept contradiction in their beings, nature and the universe around them. *Tawhid* keeps the balance among diverse multiplicities and contradictions. *Tawhid* gives Islam its spirituality by reminding its followers of the ultimate goal as the testification to and manifestation of the oneness of God (al-Zeera 2001).

The *tawhidic* worldview of Islam is thus a metaphysical one that puts God not only at the centre, but upholds Him as the Ultimate Reality and makes return to Him the inevitable result for everything in creation. The Islamic worldview defines God as not only the Creator and lawgiver, but also worship and service in His way as the very object of life itself. According to the Qur'an, God says, "I have only created the Jinn and Man that they may serve Me" (Qur'an: 51:56). And, "Do they seek other than the religion of God? While all creatures in the heavens and on earth have, willing or unwilling, submitted to His will and to Him shall they all be returned" (Qur'an: 3:83). Thus, from the Holy book of Islam we can see that the *tawhidic* worldview presupposes a way of life that requires constant and ongoing consciousness of not only the present, earthly world (*al-dunya*), but that of the life-to-come (*al-akhirah*). In so much as Islam purports that God is the One from which man came and will return to upon death, the One to whom all are accountable and the One who sustains all life at every moment, the Islamic worldview is thus God-centered.

In being God-centred, however, Islam does not discard or discount the life of this world in the same way as the Traditional or Religious worldview as described by Aziz (2000). As man is told in the Qur'an, "And there are men who say: 'Our Lord! Give us good in this world and good in the Hereafter, and defend us from the torment of the Fire'" (Qur'an: 2:201) while, "To the righteous (when) it is said, 'What is it that your Lord has revealed?' they say, 'All that is good.'" To those who do good, there is good in this world and the Home of the Hereafter

is even better and excellent indeed is the Home of the righteous" (Qur'an: 16:30).

The concept of continuity of life put forth in the Qur'an offers that the *tawhidic* worldview of Islam is not 'worldly' nor is it 'other-worldly.' Rather, Islam includes the entire spectrum of life, even including the pre-creation stage where the Qur'an claims that the souls of man were made to testify to God's Lordship (see Qur'an 7:172). According to the eighteenth century Muslim scholar Shah Waliullah, the purpose of Islam is to purify the inner life of man and to make him realize the Divine Will by creating a society wherein man is able to develop his potential to the fullest (Nik Mustapha Hj. Nik Hassan 2000). Islamic sources of knowledge therefore posit that Islam cannot be understood except as an all-encompassing way of life that defines reality in both worldly and spiritual terms.

TOWARD FILLING THE GAP – THE MUSLIM RELIGIOSITY-PERSONALITY INVENTORY (MRPI)

To address this need in religiosity instrumentation, one that is reflective of the *tawhidic* (divine unity) worldview of the Islamic faith in particular, a multi-disciplinary research team in Malaysia created the Muslim Religiosity-Personality Inventory (MRPI). This religiosity model purports that religiosity from the Islamic perspective can be understood according to two main constructs. The first is called the 'Islamic Worldview'. The Islamic Worldview construct reflects the Islamic doctrine of the divine unity/oneness of God. It is measured or assessed primarily through the Islamic creed (*aqidah*), which details a Muslim should know, believe and inwardly comprehend about God and religion. Thus the Islamic creed is laid down by the *Qur'an* and *Sunnah* (way) of the Prophet Muhammad, which represent the two primary sources of the Islamic religious law, belief and practice within (*Sunni*) Islam. Thus, the MRPI survey items developed for the 'Islamic Worldview' construct aimed to ascertain one's level of agreement with statements relating to the Islamic pillars of faith (i.e. belief in: God,

Angels, Messengers and Prophets of God, Books of Revelation, The Day of Judgment, and the Divine Decree).

The second major construct of the Islamic religiosity concept is called the 'Religious Personality'. The Religious Personality represents the manifestation of one's religious worldview in worship (*ibadah*), in the greater sense meaning righteous works (*amalan saleh*), or the particular ways a person expresses his or her traits or adapts to diverse situations in the world - manifested aspects of a personal identity, life definition and worldview – that are guided by the Islamic religious teachings and motivated by God-consciousness. It flows from the relationship with the Master (*Hablu Min'Allah*), which determines the mode of relationship with fellow servants (*Hablu Min'An-Nas*) (Hassan 1995).

The 'Religious Personality' includes a variety of everyday behaviours to assess the extent to which they reflect Islamic teachings and commands. This construct is represented by item statements relating to the formal ritual worship or 'special *ibadat*', that reflect one's direct relationship with God; and daily *mu'amalat*, or religiously-guided behaviours towards one's family, fellow human beings and the rest of creation, i.e., animals, the natural environment, etc., which are known as the general worship or 'general *ibadah*'. '*Ibadat*' is often translated as 'worship' but is in actuality much broader in meaning. '*Ibadat*' comes from the Arabic word '*abd*' or slave. '*Abd*' has the connotation of 'being owned' by Him Whom he serves, rather than simply being a 'servant', which is known in Arabic as *khadim* (al-Attas 2001). The '*abid*' is thus one who "is indebted absolutely to God, abases himself in service to Him; and hence the act of service appropriate for him is called *ibadah* and the service is *ibadat*, which refers to all conscious and willing acts of service for the sake of God alone and approved by Him, including such as are prescribed worship" (al-Attas 2001: 50-51).

A key underlying aspect of the Religious Personality construct in sum is *akhlaq Islamiyyah*, or the Islamic notion of refined character that underpins a religious

personality. *Akhlaq Islamiyyah* is the manifestation of the *tawhidic* worldview in one's everyday actions, which presupposes a way of life that requires constant and ongoing consciousness of not only the present, earthly world (*al-dunya*), but that of the life-to-come (*al-akhira*).

The *tawhidic* worldview of Islam is thus a metaphysical one that puts God at the centre,

and upholds Him as the Ultimate Reality, making return to Him the inevitable result for everything in creation. The Islamic worldview thus defines God as not only the Creator and law-giver, but also worship and service in His way as the very object of life itself (Al-Attas 2001). These concepts are illustrated in Fig. 1.

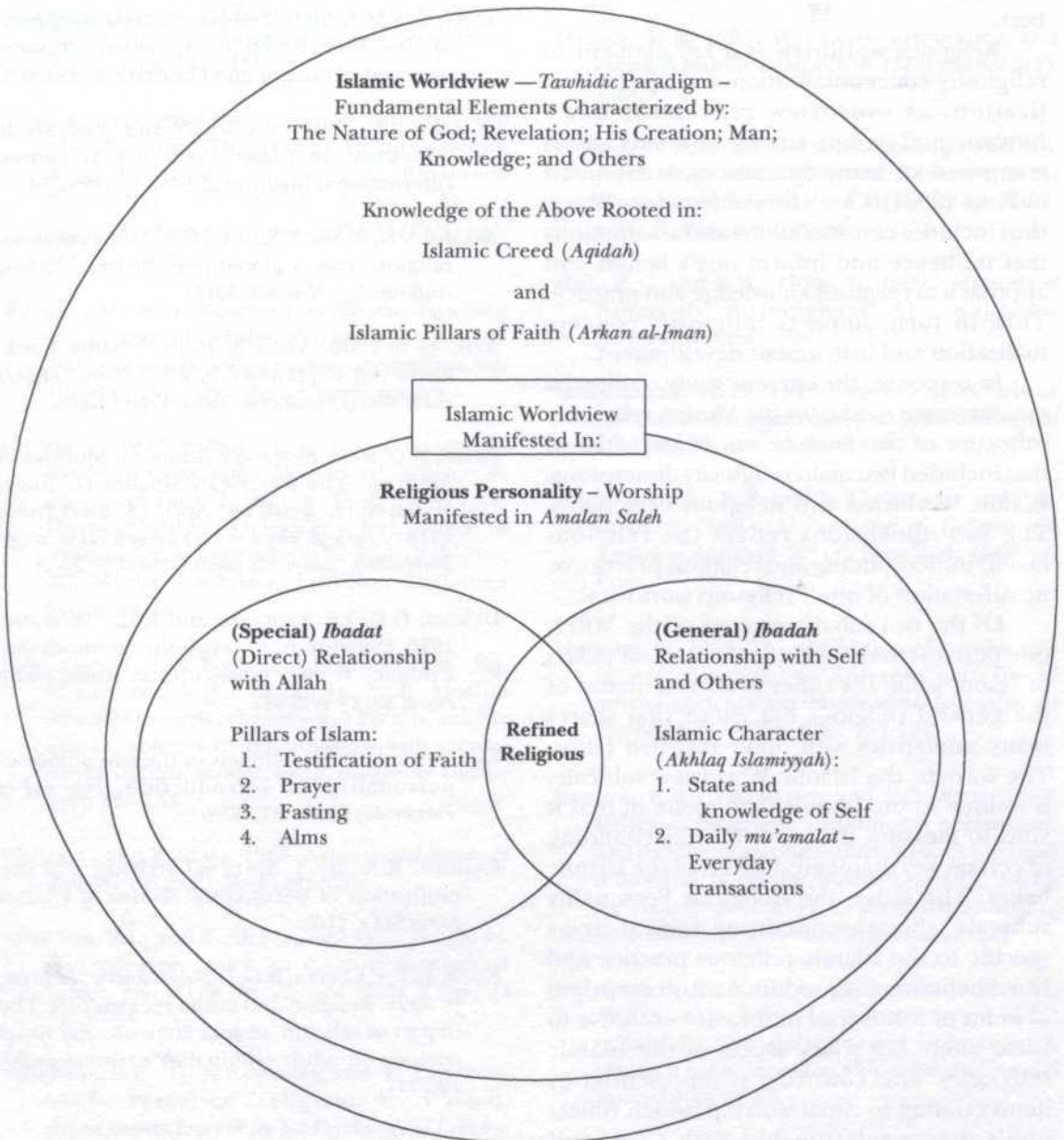


Figure 1: MRPI muslim religiosity measurement model

CONCLUSION

This article aimed to provide a philosophical background and justification for the development of a Muslim religiosity measurement model given existing gaps in the literature in the area of Muslim religiosity measurement. From a review of the religiosity literature, it was determined that existing religiosity instrumentation reflective of a *tawhidic* worldview model of Islam is scant at best.

Religious worldview is a key element to religiosity conceptualization and operationalization, as worldview represents one's fundamental understanding of reality and is comprised of many dimensions as espoused by Funk (2001). One's fundamental worldview thus includes considerations and assumptions that influence and inform one's beliefs and approach to religious knowledge and practice. This, in turn, impacts religiosity conceptualization and instrument development.

In response, the current study outlined a measurement model for the Muslim religiosity reflective of the *tawhidic* worldview of Islam that included two main religiosity dimensions, Islamic Worldview and Religious Personality. The two dimensions reflect the religious belief/understanding and religious practice or manifestation of one's religious worldview.

Of the two sub-dimensions of the MRPI, one pertains to the specific theological pillars of Islam, while the other is representative of the general religious behaviour that shares many similarities with other revealed faiths. The former, the Islamic Worldview subscale, is unique to the Islamic faith alone in that it aims to measure the levels of understanding of certain key theological tenets of the Islamic belief. The latter, the Religious Personality subscale, though containing several items specific to the Islamic religious practice and ritual behaviour, is predominantly comprised of items of a universal nature not exclusive to Islam alone but a key aspect of the Islamic religiosity. This construct is represented by items relating to ritual worship, which reflect one's direct relationship with God; and *mu'amalat*, or religiously-guided behaviours

towards one's family, fellow human beings and the rest of creation, i.e. animals, and the natural environment (Krauss *et al.* 2006). A secondary version of the latter scale is currently being developed at UPM to be used as a universal religious personality scale for use with other faith communities in Malaysia and beyond.

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