The Muslim Religiosity-Personality Inventory (MRPI): Towards Understanding Differences in the Islamic Religiosity among the Malaysian Youth

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ABSTRAK

Dalam usaha Malaysia untuk mencapai wawasan 2020, para belia semestinya menjadi pemimpin utama bagi negara Malaysia yang telah membangun sepenuhnya. Walau bagaimanapun, perubahan gaya hidup belia semakin menunjukkan kebimbangan terhadap penglibatan mereka dalam tingkah laku yang berbahaya. Walaupun Islam dan kekayaan sejarahnya adalah bukti kesempurnaan agama di dalam mengubah manusia tidak kira tempat atau masa, namun, pelbagai masalah sosial di kalangan Muslim kini telah menimbulkan pelbagai persoalan yang berkaitan dengan pemahaman dan praktis di dalam Islam. Justeru itu, adalah amat diperlukan pemahaman dan penilaian terhadap bahagian penting di dalam komitmen beragama di kalangan belia dan mengenal pasti bagaimana caranya ia dapat berkelakuan sebagai satu aset di dalam proses pembangunan negara. Bagi maklum balas terhadap keperluan ini, Institut Pengajian Komuniti dan Keamanan (PEKKA), UPM bersama-sama para penyelidik dari UKM, menjalankan kajian IRPA selama dua tahun setengah untuk membentuk 'norma' religiositi bagi kumpulan terpilih di kalangan belia Muslim di Malaysia sebagai satu langkah permulaan ke arah memahami religiositi dalam konteks yang lebih luas. Secara keseluruhannya, tiga fasa inisiatif ini bertujuan untuk: 1) memberi pengertian religiositi daripada perspektif Islam; 2) membentuk instrumen pengukuran bagi menilai religiositi Islam; dan 3) memperoleh skor norma religiositi bagi kumpulan terpilih di kalangan belia Muslim. Kertas kerja ini telah mengemukakan model religiositi Islam dan pembentukan instrumen, beberapa dapatan awalnya mendapati secara relatifnya responden bagi Tasawur Islam (pemahaman tentang Islam) mempunyai skor yang tinggi berbanding dengan Personaliti Keagamaan (aplikasi pengajaran Islam dalam kehidupan seharian). Kajian ini akhirnya bertujuan untuk memberikan saranan kepada pembuat polisi dan golongan profesional daripada semua peringkat kerja belia dengan matlamat untuk membentuk intervensi bagi menambah lagi aspek religiositi belia.

ABSTRACT

As Malaysia continues towards its goal of Vision 2020, the youth of today move closer to becoming the first leaders of a fully developed Malaysia. Currently, however, youth's – the Muslim youth in particular – lifestyles are changing and there is great concern over the socially precarious behaviours in which many young people are engaging. Though Islam and its rich history are evidence of the efficacy of religion in upwardly transforming human beings in any time or place, the current prevalence of a variety of social problems among Muslims has raised many questions in relation to the Islamic understanding and practice. As such, there is an urgent need to understand and assess the key areas of the religious commitment among the youth – also known

as religiosity – and begin to explore in the what ways it might act in as an asset within the nation building process. In response to this need, the Institute for Community and Peace Studies (PEKKA) at UPM, along with the researchers from UKM, undertook a two-and-a-half year IRPA initiative to develop the religiosity 'norms' for the selected groups of Malaysian Muslim youth as a first step toward understanding their religiosity in a broader context. Overall, the three-phase initiative aimed to: 1) define religiosity from the Islamic perspective; 2) develop a measurement instrument for assessing Islamic religiosity; and 3) obtain religiosity normed scores for the selected groups of Muslim youth. The current paper presents the Islamic religiosity model and instrument constructs, along with some initial findings that indicate relatively higher scores by the respondents on the Islamic Worldview construct (Islamic understanding) than on the Religious Personality construct (application of Islamic teachings in everyday life). This research ultimately aims to inform policy makers and practitioners at all levels of youth work with the goal of developing interventions to enhance the aspects of the youth religiosity.

INTRODUCTION

The development that Malaysia and its people have undergone over the past thirty years is nothing short of astounding, and the rate of change on all levels of society continues essentially unfettered. For the majority Muslim population in particular, the changes have had somewhat mixed results. The Malaysian Muslims – most of whom are ethnic Malays – have reaped much benefit from the economic success that has been achieved mainly over the past two decades. Such economic success has translated into greater opportunities in all areas including educational advancement, business and economic opportunities as well as social and cultural liberalization.

Despite the material success that has resulted from the Malaysia's ongoing economic development of Malaysia, there have been social costs to the nation in the form of social ills that have risen steeply, especially among the younger Malaysians over the past decade or so (Badaruddin 2002). A list of such ills common to the Americans, Europeans and many other Asians, such as the rise in rates of divorce, crime, out-of-wedlock pregnancy, drug abuse and HIV infection, have increased in great numbers (Badaruddin 2002). Child-abuse, incest, runaways, drug abuse, truancy, school dropouts, vandalism, gangsterism, *bohsia* and others have also been rising for several years (Cheu 1997). Such a high prevalence of social problems among our youth directly threatens the current and future direction of the nation, which in turn jeopardizes every other aspect of the national importance including the growth that has made Malaysia the economic jewel of Southeast Asia.

As the nation continues to move forward with its Vision 2020 plan, the youth of today are in line to be the future inheritors of a fully developed and modern Malaysia. The current number of children in Malaysia is estimated to be around 48 percent of the total population. This number is significant considering that they will comprise the working class group in the year 2020—the target for the year of Malaysia's 2020 Vision, where the country is targeted to become a fully developed nation (Badaruddin 2002). Due to the increasing levels and alarming nature of the social ills, however, the health and well being of the young generation, along with the future success of the nation, are in question.

With the dramatic change in the youth lifestyles over the past twenty years, the role of religion in the lives of the Muslim in Malaysia has come under scrutiny. Suggestions by a small minority that religion is important for the national development have jarred a range of people. To the majority, the two worlds are in fact often seen as far apart; with religion as seen dealing with spiritual matters, whereas development is very much in the material world (Marshall 2001).

With the ongoing debate on the appropriate role of Islam in the Malaysians' public life, little room is afforded to substantive dialogue and action toward obtaining a better understanding of the role of Islam in the lives of youth and how the Islamic understanding and practice impacts the development of the country. Consequently, little is known about

how and to what degree the young Muslims in Malaysia apply their knowledge and practice of Islam toward such ends. As such, there is a gap in understanding how the Islamic religiosity among our youth contributes to the communal goal of nation building, and to what extent different 'types' of youth vary in this regard. The terms 'nation building' and 'Islam' have rarely been used together. It leads many to believe, that Islam and religion in general do not contribute positively to the work of nation building in any substantive way. As such, serious efforts to better understand the role of the Islamic religiosity in the lives of Muslim youth and its impact on the national development are clearly needed.

Islam and Nation Building

Nation building is primarily a philosophical study in social-political science and constructed from multiple layers of foundations including economic, political will and polity, social agency, nationalism, citizenship and others (J. Abdul Hamid, personal communication, August 20, 2003). "Nation-building" has always been a highly complex term, encompassing the description of historical experiences, a set of assumptions about "development" of the Third World societies, and the policies of governments that were driven, among other considerations, by the desire to control and expand their own power (Hippler 2002). In its most fundamental form, nation building implies the political, economic and social development and formation of a nation and the institutions that comprise it.

Islam as a religion and comprehensive way of life is part and parcel to any nation building process in which Muslims are involved. This is due to the inherent nature of Islam as *al-din* – or the comprehensive way of life that results from one living in a state of surrender to God. *Al-din* implies the sanctification of all daily living into worshipful acts that unify life in a manner consistent with the *tawhidic* principle of the divine unity. According to the Qur'an, "*Who can be better in religion (din) than one who submits (aslama) his face (i.e. his whole self) to Allah...*" (Al-Qur'an, 4:125). Practice of Islam

as *al-din*, therefore, should make Muslims dynamic, and to always moving forward and progressing in their quest for self-purification and self-perfection through worship, the ongoing acquisition of knowledge and performing of selfless works. This is evidenced by the history of a 1,000+ year Islamic civilization that was responsible for major breakthroughs in all aspects and at all levels of human life. In addition to promoting an individual dynamism, Islam preaches the importance of working righteousness with and on behalf of one's neighbours, families, religious community and greater society. Nation building, therefore, becomes a natural outgrowth of the Islamic religious practice as well as part and parcel to it as a complete way of life.

METHODS

Mixed Method Approach

In the attempt to meet the aforementioned challenge of understanding the current levels of the Islamic religiosity among the Muslim youth in Malaysia, researchers at the UPM's Institute for Community and Peace Studies (PEKKA) in UPM partnership with the researchers from UKM, recently completed a two-and-a-half-year IRPA study titled "Religiosity and Personality Development Index: Implications for Nation Building." The project aimed to develop the Islamic religiosity norms for the selected categories of the Muslim youth or young adults (16 – 35 years old). The initiative included both qualitative and quantitative research methods, and began with the conceptualisation of a definition for religiosity from the Islamic perspective.

To develop the religiosity model (see Diagram 1), in-depth interviews with the noted Islamic scholars in Malaysia were undertaken along with a review of the literature to develop the concept. The second phase of the project entailed the development of a measurement instrument, the Muslim Religiosity-Personality Inventory (MRPI), based on the operational definitions and religiosity dimensions resulting from the first phase of the study. Finally, once

the measurement instrument had been pilot tested, the reliability and validity established, a field test involving nearly 1,700 youth respondents from across Malaysia was undertaken and the resulting data used to develop norms for each of the six sampled groups of young people previously mentioned.

Sampling

The selected groups included in the study sample were: IPTA (public university) youth, youth affiliated with youth organizations, youth in Serenti drug treatment centres, youth affiliated with political parties, young factory workers and 'at-large' youth sampled at shopping centres. The six cluster groups or sub-populations were chosen from a master list of youth populations in Malaysia through brainstorming/feedback from the members of the Research Team that included several youth experts. The six clusters represented the "successful" or "achieved" youth, (i.e. IPTA students and degree holders);""general" or "unaffiliated" youth, (i.e. Youth At-large); "troubled" youth, (i.e. Serenti youth); "affiliated" youth, (i.e. Youth Organization members), and so on. The diversity of the sampling framework, though challenging to complete, included many different 'types' of young people broken down according to a variety of social groupings. The sample size according to cluster is illustrated below.

TABLE 1: Sample description by cluster

Variable Cluster	Category	Frequency	Percent
	IPTA	399	23.6
	Youth Organization	429	25.4
	Serenti	277	16.4
	Political Party	147	8.6
	Youth At-Large	244	14.4
	Factory Workers	196	11.6
	Total	1692	100.0

MRPI Religiosity Model and Instrument Development

Prior to assessing the differences in religiosity among young Muslims in Malaysia, a religiosity

model and instrument reflective of the *tawhidic* worldview of Islam was developed. The need for such an instrument has been identified by Shamsuddin (1992) who indicated that Muslims, in particular, are in need of a relatively different scales to measure their 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). Spilka *et al.* (2003), in their comprehensive text,""The Psychology of Religion" also noted that "most psychological research has been conducted within the Judeo-Christian framework (p. 3)." According to Ghorbani *et al.* (2000), "Studies of English-speaking populations have dominated the literature. Other societies have received greater recent attention (e.g., Gorsuch *et al.* 1997; Grzymala-Moszczynska 1991; Hovemyr 1988; Kaldestad and Stifoss-Hanssen 1993), but the Judeo-Christian commitments still remain the most common object of investigation (Hood *et al.* 1996: 2)." They add, "The need to empirically study other religious traditions is obvious. Success in meeting that need clearly rests upon the availability of relevant psychological scales (Ghorbani *et al.* 2000: 2). Finally, Wilde and Joseph (1997) added, "Work on religiosity has tended to focus almost exclusively on Christianity (p. 899)." The disproportion of research efforts being almost exclusively from a Western, Judeo-Christian perspective and worldview raises important questions pertaining to how religiosity has been conceptualised in much of the current literature and depicts a clear need for organic measurement instruments reflective of other non-Judeo-Christian faiths (Krauss *et al.* 2006).

To address this need in religiosity instrumentation, the MRPI was created to reflect the unique *tawhidic* (divine unity) worldview of the Islamic faith. This religiosity model purports that religiosity from the Islamic perspective can be understood according to two main constructs. The first is
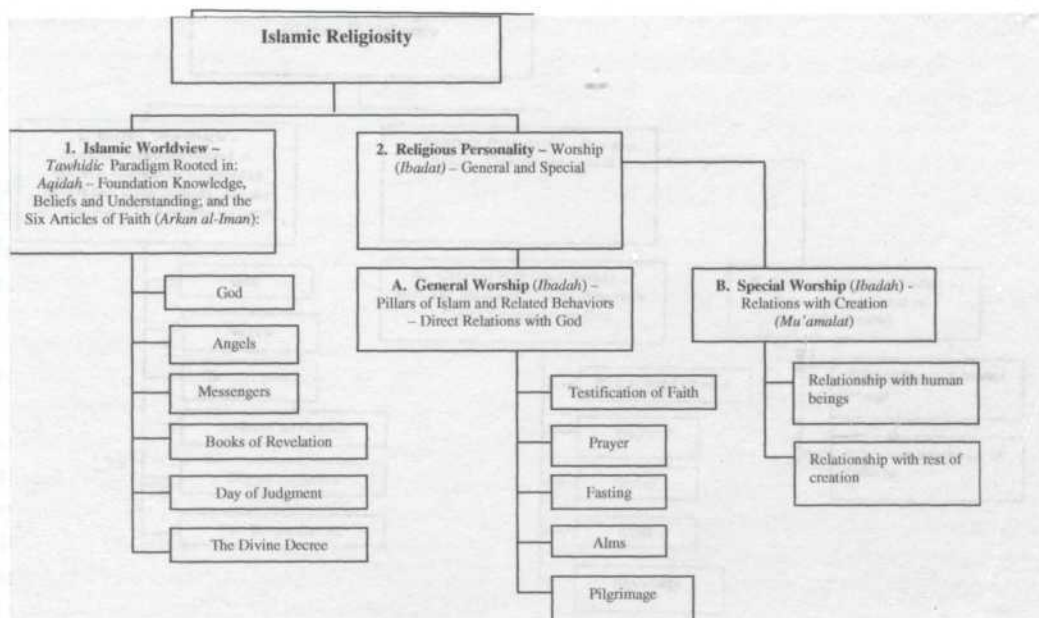
Figure 1: MRPI Muslim religiosity measurement model

called the 'Islamic Worldview'. The Islamic Worldview construct reflects the Islamic *tawhidic* paradigm (doctrine of the divine unity/oneness of God) and is measured or assessed primarily through the Islamic creed (*aqidah*), which details what a Muslim should know, believe and inwardly comprehend about God and religion as laid down by the *Qur'an* and *Sunnah* (way) of the Prophet Muhammad, representing 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 the statements relating to the Islamic pillars of faith (*arkan al-Iman*) (i.e. belief in: God, Angels, Messengers and Prophets of God, Books of Revelation, The Day of Judgment and the Divine Decree), which represent the foundation of the Islamic creed (*aqidah*).

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 the righteous works (*amalan saleh*), or the particular ways that a person expresses his or her traits or adapts to diverse situations in the world - the manifested aspects

of a personal identity, life definition and worldview – that are guided by the Islamic religious teachings and motivated by God-consciousness. The Religious Personality includes behaviours, motivations, attitudes and emotions that aim to assess personal manifestation of the Islamic teachings and commands. This construct is represented by item statements relating to the formal ritual worship or 'special *ibadat*', that reflects one's direct relationship with God; and the daily *mu'amalat*, or the religiously-guided behaviours towards one's family, fellow human beings and the rest of creation i.e., animals, the natural environment, etc. known as the general worship or 'general '*ibadat*'.

The underlying key 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 lawgiver, 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*.

The Development of the MRPI Sub-Dimensions
From the two main MRPI survey dimensions described above, sub-dimensions were created using a rationale method. Though in scale development this step usually takes place before creating and selecting item, given the fact that the items were pulled directly from the Islamic sources of knowledge, i.e. the Qur'an and hadith, a 'master list' of items was first selected and then the sub-dimensions were used to further determine the items to be included and discarded. According to Norrie (2004), there are multiple ways of conducting instrument development and item selection, depending on the specific nature of the study and item content.

For the Islamic Worldview construct, the items were broken down into three sub-dimensions derived from the Islamic Worldview definition. The sub-dimensions for the Islamic Worldview construct and their definitions are:

1. Creator and Creation. Items in this dimension were designed to assess the relationship between man and God – man as the highest form of creation and God as the Creator of all life and existence. 'Creator and Creation' reflects the core elements of the *tawhidic* paradigm and assesses one's understanding of dependence on God as the Sustainer of all life, and how one is to approach his/her relationship with the Creator as such. Unlike other religiosity models that include similar dimensions, e.g., the 'relationship with the divine', this dimension is unique in its 'two-wayness' of not only including man's relationship with God, but also man's understanding of God's relationship with His creations.

This sub-dimension acts as an indicator of one's understanding of the relationship between man and God, implying God-consciousness.

2. Existence and Transcendence. Items in this dimension are comprised of statements regarding unseen realities based on the Islamic knowledge of such. This includes key elements of the six articles of faith, namely, the Hereafter; the Day of Judgment; the Angels; reward and punishment; continuity of existence after death; and the different states of the self in its journey through life. This dimension aims to assess the spiritual understanding of events and awareness of the different spiritual and non-corporeal realities according to the Islamic perspective. Such realities are a major tenet of an Islamic worldview that puts forth a notion of reality that views life as a multi-dimensional continuum.

3. All-encompassing Religion. Items in this dimension are aimed to assess the understanding of Islam as a religion for all times, situations and places. To uncover this, the sub-dimension includes items related to *fitra* (man's natural state); the universality of Islamic teachings and texts; the applicability of Islamic law and *Sunnah* (way) of the Prophet; the applicability of the Islamic teachings in the modern age, and others. This sub-dimension includes items that are related to the universal applicability of the Islamic teachings that act as an indicator for a consistent outlook and approach to life, consistent with the Islamic *tawhidic* paradigm. This sub-dimension is designed to capture the key worldly aspects of the Islamic worldview to complement the first two, which focus on spiritual and other worldly elements.

The MRPI Islamic Worldview sub-dimensions comprise the six articles of faith as described in *Fig. 1* as follows.

The breakdown of items for each sub-dimension was conducted using a rational

TABLE 2
Sub-dimensions of the Islamic worldview construct with related Islamic theological concept

MRPI Sub-dimension		Islamic Theological Concept - (from six Articles of Faith)
1. Creator/Creation:	=	Belief in Allah
2. Existence/Transcendence:	=	Belief in 'Fate and Predestination'
		Belief in Angels
		Belief in Day of Judgment
3. All-Encompassing	=	Belief in Revealed Books
Religion:	=	Belief in Messengers

method, as opposed to a statistical or factor analytic method.

For the Religious Personality construct, items were originally grouped using the rational method and according to the literature on the Islamic personality and character. Based on the work of al-Hashimi (1997), the religious personality items were originally broken down into 47 separated sub-dimensions, with three items in each, but were later re-grouped into three larger sub-dimensions, based on further examination of the literature and to coincide with the Islamic Worldview dimension. The three sub-dimensions for Religious Personality were thus defined as follows:

1. Self (self-directed). This dimension was aimed to assess the self-directed aspects of religious-based personal strivings from the Islamic perspective. This refers to the internal aspects of the Self both the state/ condition of our internal selves (*nafs*) as well as the external or physical self, which refers to our physical health and condition. The internal aspects of the self include virtues and vices such as humility, modesty, courage, compassion, truthfulness, jealousy, envy, tranquility and others. This dimension captures these 'states' through the statements on attitude, motivation, emotions and practices or behaviours. This dimension represents one's relationship with Allah based on the state or health of one's Self.

2. Social (interpersonal - interactive). Items in this dimension were aimed to assess the social and interpersonal aspects of the religious-based personal strivings from the Islamic perspective. These include the ability to understand, work with and relate to one's neighbours, family, co-religionists and others. This dimension also measures the extent to which one responds to the motivation, moods and feelings of others. Specifically, this dimension includes some interpersonal constructs that are consistent with the Islamic religious personality as defined by the Qur'an, *Sunnah* (way of the Prophet) and scholarly works based on them. This dimension represents one's relationship with Allah based on one's behaviour toward others and the rest of creations.

3. Ritual (formal worship). Items in this dimension were aimed to assess the personal strivings related to the Islamic ritual worship. Unlike the prior two dimensions, the ritual dimension reflects one's direct relationship with Allah through his or her ritualistic acts such as prayer, fasting, reading Qur'an, charity and others. This dimension also includes obedience to the external Islamic discipline such as one's dress and appearance, as well as items specific to the Islamic legal rulings. This dimension thus aims to assess one's level of commitment (*iltizam*) toward the ritualistic strivings.

TABLE 3

Sub-dimensions of religious personality construct
with related Islamic theological concept

MRPI Sub-Dimension		Islamic Theological Concept (from 'general' and 'special' worship constructs)
1. Self:	=	Relationship with Self
2. Social:	=	Relationship with man and creatio
3. Ritual:	=	Direct relationship with Allah – (Commitment to Islamic ritual worship)

TABLE 4

Factor loadings, communalities, eigenvalues and variance percentages
for the principle component analysis with varimax rotation

	Communality (h2)	Factor I Islamic Worldview	Factor II Religious Personality
Creator	.773	.869	00
Existence	.637	.779	00
All-encompassing	.704	.796	.00
Self	.865	.00	.909
Social	.911	.00	.926
Ritual	.841	.00	.895
	Eigenvalue	1.300	3.432
	% Variance	21.668	57.198

The re-organization of the 47 sub-dimensions into three was in line with the Religious Personality conceptual framework as presented in Diagram 1. Table 3 illustrates how the three MRPI Religious Personality sub-dimensions were broken down according to the framework presented above.

PSYCHOMETRIC ANALYSIS OF THE MRPI

The Principal Component Analysis
The principal component analysis on the survey pilot test data was conducted using all the six MRPI sub-dimensions, as a confirmatory technique to determine the level of correlation between the different sub-dimensions (as variables) and the two main factors (dimensions) of the study. This was done to confirm the fit of the particular sub-dimensions under each of the main dimensions.

Before conducting the analysis, the results indicated that Bartlett's test of Sphericity was significant at the .01 level (p<.001) and the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin value was greater than 0.6 (Blaikie, 2003). These findings indicated that all variables in the analysis had factorability values.

Using the principle component analysis with varimax rotation, results indicated that the top two factors accounted for 78.9% of the total variance. The number of factors was determined by an Eigenvalue greater than one. Table 4 illustrates the factor distribution. Each factor had an Eigenvalue of more than one and when combined, accounted for 78.9% of the total variance. The results showed that all variables exceeded the factor loading criteria of more than .40 in one extraction (Blaikie 2003).

The factor loading values, variances, communalities and variance percentages resulting from the principal component analysis with varimax rotation are also listed

TABLE 5

The normed mean scores for the Islamic religiosity dimensions – by cluster group

Cluster	Islamic Worldview		Religious Personality	
	Mean	Std. Dev.	Mean	Std. Dev.
IPTA	3.89	.878	3.61	.925
Youth Organization	3.60	.980	3.60	.998
Serenti	2.98	1.014	3.00	1.009
Political Party	3.76	1.108	3.82	.956
Youth At-Large	3.24	.918	3.30	.995
Factory Workers	3.48	.914	3.86	1.086
Overall	3.51	1.007	3.51	1.027

in Table 4. The variables are arranged from high to low and are clustered based on the loading size. Loadings below .30 were changed to .00 (.30 considered as meaningful by potential). Both factors I and II had three loading values of more than .70 and all factors had communality values of more than .30.

Reliability - Internal Consistency
The internal consistencies of the two main religiosity dimensions were tested using the Cronbach Alpha. The internal consistencies greater than .70 were considered adequate (Epps, Park, Huston and Ripke 2003). For the Islamic Worldview scale, the alpha was .86 whereas, for the Religious Personality scale, the alpha was .94.

RESULTS
From the field test data, the raw scores were obtained and normed using a standardized (z-score) method (see Rodriguez 1997). Standard or z-scores, usually between –3 and +3 for a normal distribution, can be converted into a linear scale. For the present study, the z-scores were 'transformed' or converted into a scale of 1 – 6, indicating the six 'levels' of religiosity: very low, low, moderate-to-low, moderate-to-high, high and very high (Krauss 2005).

A comparison of the normed mean scores for both the religiosity dimensions across the six cluster groups indicated that the IPTA youth, Youth Organization members and Political Party youth all recorded scores above

the mean on both dimensions, while Serenti youth and Youth At-large scored below the mean for both dimensions. Factory worker youth scored below the mean on the Islamic Worldview, but higher than the mean on the Religious Personality. The IPTA youth scored the highest on the Islamic Worldview, while the political party youth scored highest on the Religious Personality and Serenti youth scored lowest on both dimensions. The findings are reported in Table 5.

The normed score results for the religiosity dimensions were further broken down into individual sub-dimensions. Starting with the Islamic Worldview sub-dimensions, the results indicated that the IPTA youth scored the highest on all the three sub-dimensions, with the Serenti youth indicating the lowest scores on all three. Furthermore, five out of the six cluster groups scored highest on the All-Encompassing Religion sub-dimension, with the exception of IPTA youth who scored highest on the Creator-Creation dimension. Furthermore, three of the groups (IPTA, Youth Organization, Serenti) scored lowest on the Existence-Transcendence dimension while the remaining three scored lowest on the Creator-Creation dimension. The results are illustrated in Table 6.

For the Religious Personality sub-dimensions, the results indicated that the Factory Worker youth scored highest on the Social and Ritual sub-dimensions, while Political Party youth scored highest on the Self-dimension. Again, the Serenti youth scored

TABLE 6

The normed mean scores for THE Islamic worldview sub-dimensions

Cluster	Creator-Creation		Existence-Transcendence		All-Encompassing Religion	
	Mean	Std. Dev.	Mean	Std. Dev.	Mean	Std. Dev.
IPTA	3.90	.816	3.80	.930	3.87	.894
Youth Organization	3.56	1.010	3.50	1.061	3.59	.991
Serenti	3.03	1.070	2.92	1.018	3.10	1.041
Political Party	3.62	.995	3.71	1.170	3.73	1.050
Youth At-large	3.20	1.103	3.23	1.006	3.36	.889
Factory Workers	3.45	1.014	3.45	.951	3.52	.942

TABLE 7

The normed mean scores for the religious personality sub-dimensions

Cluster	Self		Social		Ritual	
	Mean	Std. Dev.	Mean	Std. Dev.	Mean	Std. Dev.
IPTA	3.69	.939	3.68	.941	3.48	.984
Youth Organization	3.56	1.023	3.63	1.010	3.64	1.008
Serenti	3.05	1.054	3.00	1.037	2.99	.971
Political Party	3.75	1.052	3.64	.929	3.91	.979
Youth At-large	3.36	1.039	3.36	1.019	3.30	.966
Factory Workers	3.69	1.086	3.82	1.099	3.93	1.038

lowest on all three dimensions indicating the strong possibility of a significant relationship between religiosity and social ills such as drug abuse. Three of the groups (Factory Workers, Political Party, Youth Organization) scored highest on the Ritual sub-dimension while the remaining three scored highest on the Self-dimension. None of the groups (with the exception of the Youth At-large who indicated the same score as the Self sub-dimension) scored highest on the Social sub-dimension. The results are shown in Table 7.

DISCUSSION

Religiosity Dimensions– The Islamic Worldview and Religious Personality

The findings presented in Table 5 for the overall religiosity dimensions indicated that the IPTA youth were strongest in term of of the Islamic Worldview. This finding lends support to the Islamic Worldview scale as a knowledge-based construct, implying that there is some level of correlation between the religious understanding, as represented in the MRPI, and academic attainment. This could be explained by the fact that religious education is a compulsory subject for all the Muslim students in the Malaysian public schools, and as such, higher levels of educational advancement imply a higher potential for synthesizing religious knowledge.

As for the Religious Personality dimension, the high score indicated by Factory Workers is a somewhat surprising result. Many considered the factory workers in Malaysia to be affiliated with crime, drug abuse and behaviours not often affiliated with high religiosity (Doraisamy 2002). Doraisamy (2002) claims that "Social problems among young workers and youth in general are

alarming. For instance, the largest proportion of young workers, especially the unemployed, is infected with HIV/AIDS. So are the alarming figures of 400,000 young workers addicted to drugs" (Para. 9). The picture painted by Doraisamy (2002) of the young workers in Malaysia seems to contradict the findings in the current study in relation to the Religious Personality. One way the current study findings can be explained is by examining the sample itself. Upon examining the factories from which the Factory Worker sample was drawn, most included in the study engaged in some kind of regular religious programming for their staff such as religious-based retreats and regular religious-based morning motivational sessions. Therefore, the culture of several companies included in the study may have worked to attract individuals with already higher levels of religiosity through a religiosity-promoting work culture.

Religiosity Sub-Dimensions – The Islamic
Worldview and Religious Personality

The results for the Islamic Worldview sub-dimensions indicated that five of the six cluster groups scored highest on the All-Encompassing Religion sub-dimension. According to its operational definition discussed above, All-Encompassing Religion focuses on understanding Islam as a religion for all times, people and places, which is represented through item statements that pertain to many of the worldly aspects of the faith, i.e., the Islamic external discipline, universality of Islamic religious teachings, Islamic law, Islam's relevance to contemporary life, etc. Accordingly, this sub-dimension represents the 'material' level of the Islamic metaphysical worldview. The findings indicated that in terms of the worldview, most of the youth groups leaned towards a materialistic understanding of Islam. There are numerous possible explanations for this finding. The fact that the findings relate to knowledge could mean that the numerous educational factors and institutions that play a part in shaping the religious worldview of Muslim youth are more focused on the

material subjects within the Islamic knowledge. This has been alluded to by certain regional scholars such as Syed Farid Alatas of the University of Singapore who commented, "Religious education in Malaysia amongst the Muslims has become very legalistic. The stress in the Islamic education is on the allegiance to rules and regulations. There has been less emphasis on Islam as a culture, as a way of life and more emphasis on certain specific rules and regulations; for example, how women should dress, the rituals involved in prayer, [and that] Muslims are required to avoid certain prohibited practices such as the drinking of alcohol. Islam becomes reduced to a series of rules and regulations" (Jagdish 2001). The focus of legalism in the Islamic education has also been prevalent in other parts of the world, due to the rise of many modern exoteric Islamic movements such as the Wahhabi phenomenon of Saudi Arabia and the Gulf states, which condemn many traditional esoteric elements of the Islamic knowledge and practice such as *tasawwuf* (Sufism) and *tariqat* (Sufi orders). Such movements condemn many of the traditional spiritual practices of Islam as unlawful innovations and due to their influence and resources, they have had a major influence on the contemporary Islamic education and discourse (Krauss 2005).

In addition to the possible contribution of the formal religious education is the role that the non-formal and informal learning plays in shaping the youths' religious worldview. The emphasis on improving the economic status of the Malaysian society that has steadily risen over the past decade or two, with its emphasis on the national economic development, has perhaps seeped into the religious thinking and educational philosophy of the nation. Perhaps the ongoing push to greater material heights has also shifted the focus of religious education – in all its forms – towards a more material understanding and approach to Islam, in an effort to make the religious teachings more applicable to the nation's current development goals. An over-emphasis on the exoteric religious knowledge can have major ramifications on the nature of

religious understanding among our youth, however, just as too much emphasis on the esoteric can likewise be problematic, as both extremes indicate a loss of balance between the'*zahir* (external) and *batin* (internal) elements of Islam. An over-emphasis on the exoteric, for one, can result in a decrease in spirituality and an overly legalistic approach in education, which in turn can produce hard-heartedness and intolerance among the Muslims if taken to an extreme.

Another possible explanation to the above findings is that high scores on the All-Encompassing Religion sub-dimension reflect the open-mindedness and tolerance of the Muslim youth in Malaysia and their belief that Islam is applicable to contemporary times. This alternative possibility is based on the operational definition of the sub-dimension and items statements themselves, which include several items relating to the universality of the Islamic teachings being for all mankind, all places and all times. Items such as "Islamic teachings are of benefit to all creations," indicate that the youth sampled perceive Islam as a universal creed that is relevant to both the times and nation's chosen path. However, a more thorough analysis of this sub-dimension is needed to further determine this.

For the Religious Personality sub-dimension results, the IPTA youth indicated a considerable drop in the score for the Ritual sub-dimension. This cluster indicated moderate-to-high scores for the Self and Social sub-dimensions (3.69 and 3.68, respectively). Nevertheless, for the Ritual sub-dimension, the normed mean score dropped below the mean and into the moderate-to-low level (3.48). This indicates that although the IPTA youth may have a stronger grasp of the Islamic Worldview than other groups in the sample, their practice in the area of religious rituals is noticeably lower.

Similar to the IPTA youth, the Political Party youth also indicated considerable differences across the three Religious Personality sub-dimension scores, i.e. 3.75, 3.64 and 3.91, respectively. In contrast to the IPTA youth, the Political Party members'

scores indicated their best result for the Ritual sub-dimension. This shows the differences in the nature of the Religious Personality scores for these two groups, the IPTA youth and Political Party members. Likewise, for the Factory Worker cluster, the highest scoring group on the Religious Personality dimension as a whole, the scores were also somewhat diverse, i.e. 3.69, 3.82 and 3.93, respectively. This group indicated similar results as the Political Party cluster, with their highest score being for the Ritual sub-dimension.

At the low end of the spectrum, the Serenti youth indicated a score of 2.99 for the Ritual sub-dimension and 3.00 for the Social sub-dimension. The Social sub-dimension is an indicator of one's religiosity from the perspective of interpersonal relations. It acts as a relevant indicator of the quality of one's interactions with others, including one's family, neighbours and fellow citizens. Accordingly, this particular sub-dimension could potentially be an indicator for the social integration and capital, as many of the item statements relate to positive contributions to the social harmony and integration (e.g., 'I am willing to help old people when they need it', 'I establish good relations with my neighbours', 'I immediately apologize if I wrong someone', etc.). In such a way, the Social sub-dimension could be said to act as a potential secondary indicator for the societal well being. As the focus of the other two sub-dimensions is inward, i.e. towards oneself and God, the focus of the Social sub-dimension is outward, towards others within one's community and society. From this perspective, the Social sub-dimension could act as a key indicator for one's potential contribution to the nation building insomuch as positive interactions and interrelations with others are an important element within the greater scope of nation building.

From this perspective, the results of the Social sub-dimension indicate that the Factory Worker youth stood out from the other groups at 3.82, followed by three other groups – the IPTA, Political Party youth, and Youth Organization members at 3.68, 3.64 and 3.63, respectively, followed by the Youth At-large and

Serenti Youth at 3.36 and 3.00. Accordingly, four groups scored in the moderate-to-high range while two scored moderate-to-low.

Although more examination of the Social sub-dimension is required to determine its potential role as a societal well-being indicator, the results from the current study indicate that four of the groups that indicated a moderate-to-high score on the Social sub-dimension appear to have a greater possibility of being positive contributors to the well being of society from the perspective of interpersonal relations with others.

CONCLUSION

The religiosity scores for the six cluster groups that consistently scored higher than the mean, i.e. the IPTA youth, Political Party members and Youth Organization members, reflect a level of consistency with the literature on the positive relationship between the educational attainment, social group affiliation and religiosity. The mixed findings for the factory worker cluster, however, are less clear and possibly the result of the nature of the sample, or the religious-based programming of the specific factories from which respondents were drawn.

From the differences in the scores between the cluster groups, the social group affiliation appears to be a primary indicator of religiosity among the youth sampled. Earlier discussion highlighted the importance of social affiliation according to the Islamic teachings as Muslim scholars have written much on the importance of 'keeping good company'. Accordingly, the importance of socialization on the youth religiosity appears to be universal. This is not discounting the possibility that youth with already high levels of religiosity seek formal group memberships with those similar to them. Rather, the authors are suggesting merely that there is a positive association between the higher levels of religiosity and formal group membership among the Muslim youth in Malaysia. Further support of this conclusion came from the findings for the lowest two scoring groups, the Youth At-large and Serenti youth groups, which represent unaffiliated youth and young drug addicts, respectively. The findings by the cluster group, therefore, present a fairly strong evidence of a relationship between religiosity and the positive group membership among young Muslims in Malaysia, and that such group membership can be mobilized as a positive force for nation building.

The findings also indicated higher Islamic Worldview scores for those more advanced in the formal education. This not only conforms with the findings of many previous studies on the educational advancement and religiosity, but leads to many questions for future research in Malaysia. As the Islamic Worldview construct aims to assess the Islamic religious understanding according to the *tawhidic* worldview of Islam, further inquiry is required to understand the extent to which higher educational attainment can foster a better understanding of the *tawhidic* Islamic worldview, above and beyond the obvious possibility that the results are due to such youth having acquired more formal Islamic education on the way up the educational ladder.

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