At-Risk Muslim Youth in the Three Southern Border Provinces of Thailand: The Roots of Un-Islamic Behavior

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to determine the causes of un-Islamic behaviors among at-risk Muslim youth in the three Southern border provinces of Thailand. The key informants of the study consisted of 30 Muslim youth who demonstrated at-risk behaviors, 15 Muslim leaders, and 15 Muslim academicians. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, and a content analysis was performed using logical comparison with related concepts, theories, and research reports. The results of the study revealed that the at-risk, un-Islamic behaviors of the youth in the three Southern border provinces could be attributed to (1) the absence of breastfeeding as an infant; (2) a lack of a close Islamic upbringing (3) little interest in Islamic activities; (4) Muslim leaders' negligence in looking after youth and (5) apathetic and insufficient study of Islam.

Keywords: At-risk Muslim youth, causes of misbehavior, Islamic behavior, socialization

INTRODUCTION

Thai society is continually developing and rapidly changing in part due to advances in technology, information technology and communication. Consequently, youth accept, imitate and apply aspects of foreign cultures to their everyday life without knowing that they are actually doing this. Youth often lack judgment and the ability to distinguish right from wrong and thus indulge in undesirable behaviors that violate social norms and religious principles and lead to social problems (Juajan, 2005; Suramethee, 2007). These problems have been present in Thai society for quite some time but have become more severe and complex as technology continues to develop. Although attempts have been made to address these problems, these attempts have been less than successful and Thai

society is facing a crisis that weakens it and might possibly lead to worse crises in the future (Suramethee, 2007; Wonglakha, 2012). Muslim society is also faced with social problems in this rapidly changing society. Most Muslim youth lead their lives in ways that are not in agreement with expectations of Muslim society and violate Islamic principles. For example, many Muslim youth are not interested in religious activities, do not study the religion, violate Islamic ethics, commit sins and ignore taboos. Some do not perform their religious duties, become drug addicts, gamble, develop vices, and do not adhere to Islamic dress codes (Anmunajid, 2010; Annadwee, 2004; Laeheem & Baka, 2010).

Some Muslim youth become very materialistic and pay no attention to religious principles. They are obsessed with playing online games, watching movies, listening to music, talking on the phone, talking through the Internet, and dressing in form-fitting clothes, many of which violate Islamic codes of behavior. These acts become a matter of habit and these habits often replace the youth's attention to and performance of religious duties (Laeheem, 2012; Laeheem et al., 2015). Some of the problems commonly seen are, for example, Muslim females who wear a head scarf but dress in a way that shows the body line, youth who have a boyfriend, are addicted to drugs, ascribe to a sexual orientation or identity that is different from their biological sex, do not pray, and cannot read the Quran. These are all problems that have grown and have become a circle of problems without

a way out (Anmunajid, 2010; Annadwee, 2004). This corresponds with a study that found that most Muslim youth in the three Southern border provinces do not lead their lives in the manner expected by the Muslim society, but rather in a manner that violates Islamic principles. Youth openly establish and maintain friendships with members of the opposite sex in ways similar to that of Westerners. They hold hands, kiss, and some even have premarital sex. They give more importance to studying secular academic subjects than to religion; spend time uselessly, are involved in an assortment of vices, have no job, dress in a style that imitates movie stars and popular singers, are estranged from their families, relatives, neighbors and community, neglect their religious duties, do not give importance to performing community service, and do not participate in community activities (Laeheem & Baka, 2010).

Adhering to the codes of Islamic behavior is the most important goal. It provides a strong foundation, a rule for the proper management of life among Muslims, and a measurement of the superb value of being perfect Muslims that helps individuals be happy and true winners in this world and the next. A very important influencing factor for ensuring youth adhere to the codes of Islamic behavior is providing a socialization process via the religious institution and the family. This socialization process not only gives youth a deep understanding of acceptable codes of behavior but it also encourages and supports their acceptance of social values and norms. This acceptance,

in turn, positively affects their present life as well as their future one (Grusec, 1992; Laeheem & Baka, 2010; Sears et al., 1957). It is a process that helps youth develop personality traits, habits, morals, ethics and manners that align with the religious principles that reflect life's truths and can lead youth to true happiness based on Islamic morals and ethics (Khagphong, 2004; Laeheem, 2014). The process also promotes and encourages youth to conduct themselves in accordance with Islamic law, teaching them the behavior that is expected by society and in that is in concordance with Islamic principles. In particular, Muslim youth who have been raised in a strict Islamic way, have studied Islam very well, performed religious duties consistently, and have regularly participated in Islamic activities will become youth who adhere to the tenets of Islamic behavior (Laeheem, 2014; Laeheem & Baka, 2010; Mahama, 2009).

One way to promote and support Muslim youth to live in concordance with Islamic behavior is to support youth in knowing about and understanding Islamic principles. Additionally, one needs to ensure that youth perform their religious duties, are brought up the Islamic way, participate in Islamic activities regularly and continuously attend Islamic training (Chaiprasit et al., 2005; Laeheem, 2014; Mahamad et al., 2008).

Thus, the researcher was interested in more closely examining the causes of the un-Islamic behaviors exhibited by at-risk Muslim youth living in the three Southern border provinces. The results of this study could be useful to individuals and organizations struggling with how to best prevent and address the problem of un-Islamic behaviors among Muslim youth.

METHOD

Research Design

This qualitative study used a phenomenological research design. It was part of mixed method study using a sequential explanatory design, through which qualitative data was collected to complement the quantitative data.

Key Informants

There were 60 key informants divided into three groups: 30 youths who exhibited at-risk behaviors, 15 Muslim leaders, and 15 Muslim academicians. The representatives of key informants were recruited with cooperation from the Committee of the Mosque in the sub-district of the target areas.

Data Collection

Data were collected from in-depth interviews with the three groups of informants during the period December 2015 to February 2016, which lasted for approximately 60 minutes.

Research Instruments

A structured interview format was mainly used with specified sequences of questions, time, and place of the interviews. However, during the interview, some flexibility was allowed depending on appropriateness and

context given by the respondent (which made the interview partially unstructured). The researcher asked questions in addition to the prearranged questions in order to clarify and ensure understanding on the part of the researcher.

Protection of Informants' Rights

Before the interviews, the researcher informed the target group about their rights to either participate or not participate in the study. They could refuse not to give information and stop the interview at any time without repercussions, Participants' personal information would not be revealed, data would be presented as overall data or information, and pseudonyms would be used.

Data Analysis

The analysis placed emphases on causes of un-Islamic behaviors among Muslim youth who exhibited at-risk behaviors in the three Southern border provinces. The information and data gathered from the in-depth interviews were analyzed based on related concepts and theories. The data were coded according to the research objectives and questions. The data collected were classified according to the study issues, analyzed using content analysis and logical comparison with related concepts, theories, and research reports along with the context. Conclusions were then drawn from this analysis. The connections and linkages between the research questions and related concepts and theories were analyzed according to the analytical methods to obtain specific concepts from concrete data to find new explanations.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The causes of un-Islamic behaviors among at-risk Muslim youth in the three Southern border provinces of Thailand are as follows.

Bonds Established between Religiously Faithful Mothers and Infants Through Breastfeeding

Islam is a religion that gives importance to promoting breastfeeding for infants, as it asserts that drinking breast milk from a mother who is faithful and strict in her religious practice can serve as a conduit for transferring the mother's spirit and soul to the her child. It is an important life foundation to instill religious practice in the infant to make him or her a complete person physically, mentally, emotionally, and intelligently. Moreover, the child will be a good person with good character, ethics, manners and good conduct which come from love and attachment between mother and child through breastfeeding. Nevertheless, nowadays, it is found that most mothers do not breastfeed their infants, instead opting to use formula, as it is advertised to be as good as breast milk. This is a factor affecting behavior, especially un-Islamic behaviors as can be seen from information obtained from interviewing Muslim leaders and Muslim academicians who said that

> *"...Breastfeeding provides the best foundation for a child's life*

because breast milk serves as a love bond which transfers good things--according to Islamic principles-- from a mother to her child. However, a large number of mothers feed their infants cow's milk which negatively affects the child's development, causing stubbornness and rejection of the Islamic way of life…" (Abdullah; Archem; Rohanee).

"…Most modern mothers believe in some wrong method of child raising and use formula milk and readymade baby food because they have to work (due to bad economic conditions) and, consequently, have little time to care for their children. This results in providing improper food to their children, which leads to malnutrition in children who are prone to disease. Islam emphasizes the need for children to have two years of breastfeeding to be certain they are healthy and absorbing their mother's Islamic behavior through the mother-child bond established through breast feeding." (Nureeyah; Sofee; Solihah).

This corresponds with information obtained from interviews with at-risk youth who said,

"…My relatives told me that my mother fed me with reconstituted milk and readymade food and they said that is the reason why I *avoid performing religious duties, especially praying five times a day and fasting during the Ramadan month. They also say that I often misbehave; I am self-centered, disobedient, and aggressive and that I dress strangely and not in accordance with religious principles…"* (Muhammad; Robiyah; Yameelah).

"…My family members usually blame it on the fact that I was not breastfed when I was an infant. This, they say, has caused me to deviate from Muslim social norms, distance myself from religion, commit sins and break taboos. They say that I do these things habitually and openly without embarrassment. I imitate movie stars and popular singers in dress, use drugs and gamble…" (Mahmud; Maroning; Usoh).

The above research results show that one important cause of Muslim youth displaying at-risk behaviors that are un-Islamic is a mother's lack of breastfeeding, even though Islam promotes and ascribes great importance to breastfeeding. This is because it is believed that without breastfeeding the bond between mother and child, and the instilling of faith and the Islamic way of life from mother to her child are lost. Moreover, a lack of breastfeeding impedes a child's physical and emotional development as well as his/her development of intelligence, character, manners, ethics, and good behavior.

According to Aschareef (2009), infants who are breastfed in the first two years of their life will be physically and mentally healthy; they will be well developed in their habits, manners, and ethics. Additionally, breastfeeding provides a valuable opportunity for the mother to train her child to have good manners and behaviors while at the same time enhancing the love and attachment between mother and child. Muslim mothers have moderate knowledge and understanding about the superb benefits of breastfeeding; therefore, there is a need to promote breastfeeding in the first two years of life (Salaeh & Doloh, 2014).

Training and teaching must begin when the infant is in the womb and the infant should be breastfed in the first 30 minutes of birth because the moment that the infant drinks breast milk, the infant and the mother can feel the love and bond they have for each other (Hajimayang, 2012). The way the mother treats her child during breastfeeding is most important because the mother will be the role model for her child in the future (Tounchareon, 2007). Hence, it can be said that when a mother neglects to breastfeed to her infant, it can have negative effects on the future behavior of Islamic youth.

A Lack of Close Islamic Upbringing

Islamic upbringing is defined as teaching, advising, caring, admonishing, and modeling to instill principles concerning faith, practice and ethics in youth as well as promoting the need for fulfilling one's religious duties and strictly avoiding behaviors considered to be taboo. However, at present, parents have no time to train and teach their children as closely as parents in the past did because economic conditions make it necessary for both parents to go out to work to earn income to support their families. Parents have very little time for their children and most of them hire someone else to take care of their child, and this affects the overall development of the children. Some evidence from interviewing Muslim leaders and Muslim academicians is as follows:

> *"…Child development begins at home. Whether a child will grow up to be a good or a bad person depends partially on the methods of upbringing the family uses because the family is a model that forms feelings, thinking, the mind, behavior and awareness of being a complete human being. Moreover, the upbringing methods used by the family instills values, love and experience in the child. However, nowadays it is found that parents do not bring up their children by themselves but hire others to do it or send their children to a nursery. Therefore, socialization of the mind and behavior of the children depend on the persons or places that care for them. As a result, it is obvious that more children demonstrate at-risk behaviors…"* (Nureeda; Paosan; Zakariya).

> *"…The family institution becomes weaker because parents spend most of their time working and*

trying to earn more income for the increasingly high cost of living, so they have no time to more closely look after their children. Particularly, they have no time to give knowledge and understanding to their children about religious principles for living and for performing religious duties. Moreover, they have no time to practice the religion for their children to see and use as a model. Consequently, their children exhibit un-Islamic behaviors because they emulate what they see in the media such as not practicing the religion, dressing un-Islamically, and being involved in many vices…" (Adilah; Ahmad; Nureeyah).

These statements correspond with the following statements that youths made during the interviews.

"…My parents don't give me advice, train, teach, or tell me what to do. They don't have time to look after me closely because they work from six in the morning until nine at night every day. When I was very young, they had their relatives look after me and when I grew up I began to spend my time with friends. This makes me happier so sometimes I don't go back home. I never pray and never fast. I'm addicted to drugs and gambling…" (Padiyah; Sofee; Sainab).

"…My friends in the group usually pay no attention to performing religious duties; they spend their life freely, dress strangely, are addicted to drugs, gamble. They go out at night, too, because their parents are not strict and interested in their children's daily life. Some of my friends (and I) studied a little about the religion but our parents never train or teach us. Instead they send us to the ethical training center at the mosque and we usually escape from it and our parents don't say a word about it…" (Abdullah; Solihah; Sulaikho).

The results of the study above show that one of the causes of at-risk and un-Islamic behaviors among Muslim youth is that they do not have an Islamic upbringing, an important factor that directly and indirectly influences whether a child behaves according to Islamic behavioral norms. An Islamic upbringing involves socializing the mind, instilling values, forming awareness, learning social norms and social behaviors in accordance with Islamic principles. Studies have found that an Islamic upbringing is a method used to promote Islamic behavior among Muslim youth. It has been used ever since the time of the Prophet Muhammad to socialize the mind, instill values and correct practice, and learn social norms (Al-Malikiy, 2005; Laeheem, 2013, 2014). One of the factors that insure youth behave in the Islamic way, is being raised in a Muslim family that provides a strict Islamic upbringing that teaches and abides by

Islamic religious principles (Khagphong, 2004; Laeheem, 2012). Parents who do not bring up their children the Islamic way may let youth think freely and allow them to behave in their own way. Most youth who have exhibit at-risk behaviors behave in ways that are un-Islamic; they do not want anyone to look after them or change their behaviors (Laeheem & Baka, 2010; Laeheem, 2013). Therefore, it can be said that a lack of Islamic upbringing can result in youth with un-Islamic behaviors, and that providing an Islamic upbringing promotes and supports youth in the development of desirable behaviors and in accordance with social norms.

A Lack of Apathetic and Sufficient Study of Islam

Studying Islam is crucial for every Muslim to truly know and understand Islamic principles and to practice the religion correctly. However, nowadays a large number of youths do not give importance to studying Islam; they give more importance to general academic subjects and vocational ones for their progress and good future as evidenced in what Muslim leaders and Muslim academicians said in the interviews.

> *"…Most Muslim youth who demonstrate at-risk behaviors focus on studying general academic subjects so much that they neglect studying Islam, which something that is important to the development of the mind, intelligence, morals, soul, and personalities of Muslim youth. As a result, they lack strong morals, abandon daily performance of religious duties, have behaviors that are against religious principles and, in some youth, there is no sign that they are Muslim because they don't study or understand Islamic teachings…"* (Ismael; Kareemah; Nureen).

> *"…Youth who demonstrate at-risk behaviors and do not study Islam don't realize and see importance of performing religious duties and living the Islamic way of life. Most of them display un-Islamic behaviors such as not praying, not fasting, and dressing un-Islamically, having an affair, being involved in drug use and gambling, etc. This is because they have not been inculcated with Islamic principles from the beginning and so they have no faith…"* (Mareeni; Rukayah; Sulaiman).

This is in agreement with what youth who exhibit at-risk behaviors said in the interviews.

> *"…My parents didn't send me to study religion at the ethical training center of the mosque (Tadika) and they didn't send me to a private Islamic school. So I don't have foundation of religious practice or know about how to be a good member of Muslim society…"* (Ameen; Habibah; Mulimah).

"…My friends in the group don't pay attention to studying Islam at all. They don't read religious books and don't attend sermons, so they don't understand Islamic teachings about what to do and what not to do. As a result, their daily life is un-Islamic…" (Hamidah; Ruslee; Zakariya).

"…My friends in the group and I usually escape from religious lessons and reading the Quran because we think they're not important, nonsense and a waste of our play time. We don't know how to perform religious duties and our behaviors violate social norms…" (Abdulrohim; Lukman; Mustofa).

The study results above indicate that one of the causes of Muslim youth developing at-risk and un-Islamic behaviors is the fact that they do not study Islam. Studying Islam can have direct and indirect effects on Islamic behaviors because studying Islam is a process of transferring knowledge, experiences, skills, habits, and socialization of the mind to have morals and ethics to correctly perform religious duties correctly to Islamic law (Laeheem & Madreh, 2014; Laeheem, et al., 2015; Mahama, 2009). Youth who have not learned and do not understand Islamic principles cannot apply the principles needed to perform religious duties or behave in Islamic ways (Laeheem, 2015; Mahama, 2009; Narongraksakhet,1997). Likewise, youth who have not had an opportunity to study Islam regularly and continuously are more likely to exhibit un-Islamic behaviors and lack the skills to perform religious duties. Some may neglect doing these duties at all. This can eventually destroy the system that forms and instills Islamic behaviors in Muslim youth (Khagphong, 2004; Laeheem, 2012, 2013; Mahama, 2009). Thus, it can be said that not studying Islam, which is a duty that all Muslims must do to understand and practice in their everyday life, can deter youth from living the Islamic way of life.

Youth are Not Interested in Islamic Activities; Instead, they Turn to Modern Activities that they Deem as more Exciting and Fun

Islamic activities directly and indirectly influence the promotion of Islamic behaviors among youth. Participating in Islamic activities is a process of exchanging experience in which youth are developed with skills and in seeking knowledge which gives them life skills that are in accordance with Islamic principles. Additionally, participating in Islamic activities results in the formation of good attitudes, provides correct religious teachings and encourages youth to behave according to and corresponding with social norms. However, many youths are not very interested in Islamic activities but in activities presented by different types of media with modern, exciting and fun content. Engaging in these secular activities often result in youth turning away from the correct way of life. They cannot distinguish right from

wrong and they indulge in technological advancements. These are reflected by the following statements made by Muslim leaders and Muslim academicians.

"...At-risk youth are not interested in participating in activities—cleaning religious places, studying the Quran, learning to perform religious activities, participating in group study for development, attending an ethical camp, and the Tadika—that serve society and are designated by Islam. Instead, most youth are interested in playing computer games, on-line football gambling, dancing and singing songs with un-Islamic lyrics, etc. As a result, many youth imitate behaviors seen in the media such as being involved in drug addiction, and they eventually abandon being Muslims by not practicing the religion..." (Katini; Natsarun; Roseleena).

"...Youth in the at-risk group don't participate in Islamic activities in the community because they think that it is not necessary and they don't see importance of it. They do not think it is their duty to do it; and they believe they don't get any benefit from doing it. As a result, they have not been trained, have no knowledge, or understanding of the religion and and cannot practice it correctly. Moreover, their hearts

are blind and make them youth who behave un-Islamically..." (Abbas; Haleemoh; Metta).

These are in agreement with what at-risk youths said.

"...Friends in my group never participate in Islamic activities that promote and support youth to have morals and ethics, instill in them the value of working for the public, and help them develop Islamic behaviors. So, they have no spirit of devotion or dedication to the public good. Most of them are interested in singing, dancing, enjoying online activities, and going out with their girlfriends or boyfriends, etc...." (Dawood; Pranee; Rafal).

"...Even though we know that experiences from participating in Islamic activities are necessary and useful for our Muslim life, my friends and I are not interested in participating in them at all whether it is an activity in studying Islam or an activity that gives us knowledge and understanding of Islamic principles or an ethical camp. Most of my friends in the group enjoy going out at night, spending time with a boyfriend or girlfriend, going to a Karaoke, Turkish massage and gambling..." (Kangsada; Pantipa; Somsak).

The above research results show that Muslim youth engage in risky and un-Islamic behaviors because they are not interested in Islamic activities which affects their behaviors directly and indirectly. This is because participating Islamic activities is an important component in the socialization of the mind. It provides opportunities for knowledge exchange and practice of religious activities, experience with doing good deeds, developing morals and ethics, and behaving in accordance to Islamic principles. This corresponds with the concept that participation in Islamic activities helps youth to develop themselves, to seek knowledge and understanding, to have good attitudes and correct ideology according to social norms. All of which results in the nurturing of Islamic behavior among youth (Khagphong, 2004; Laeheem, 2013; Mahama, 2009; Narongraksakhet, 1997). Most youth who do not participate in Islamic activities are those who have behavioral problems because their mind has not been socialized and their intelligence, body and mind have not been nurtured to become youth who have good behavior, morals, ethics, and who are well-disciplined, and accepted in society (Laeheem, 2012, 2013).

Participating in Islamic activities is considered a factor that directly and indirectly influences Islamic behaviors among youth. Youth who rarely or participate in Islamic activities will become youth who have undesirable and youth who behave in ways that violate social norms because their minds have not been properly socialized and they have nothing for which their minds can adhere. They do not do good deeds; they have no morals or ethics. They behave badly and are not embarrassed committing sins or doing wrong. They easily violate principles, morals, ethics and traditions, and they are not committed to performing religious duties (Laeheem, 2012; Laeheem & Madreh, 2014; Thepsitha, 1998). Consequently, it can be said that not participating in Islamic activities is another factor that causes un-Islamic behaviors among Muslim youth because they have no models or patterns to follow to obtain the necessary knowledge and understanding. Moreover, they have not been instilled with awareness, and they have no system of life for their daily practice.

Muslim Leaders Neglect and Ignore Looking after Muslim Youth who Exhibit Risky Behaviors

Muslim leaders are individuals who are praised, respected, and have a very important role in helping youth with developing their feelings, thinking, and behavior. They teach youth the Muslim way of life by training, suggesting, admonishing, and encouraging them to adhere to Islamic principles. Other duties of Muslim leaders include: surveying Muslims' living conditions; helping to solve social problems; socializing Muslims to adhere to the religion; teaching and demonstrating good deeds, morals, ethics and appropriate behaviors; raising awareness about right and wrong, and encouraging Muslims to follow the Islamic way of life. Nevertheless, nowadays, it is found that

most Muslim leaders do not realize the responsibilities they have for assisting at-risk youth and helping make these youth behave according to the Islamic way. The leaders usually ignore the problems that youth in the at-risk group have; they do not address the behavioral problems, especially un-Islamic behaviors among the youth. The problems are left unsolved and become common. This view can be seen in the following statements gathered from interviews with Muslim leaders and Muslim academicians.

> *"...Most Muslims ignore behavioral problems or un-Islamic behaviors among youth who have risky behavior, and are not earnestly interested in solving the problems. Thus, the youth nowadays deviate from the correct way of life, cannot distinguish right from wrong, and indulge in modernity and become slaves of Western values and cultures that flow into Muslim society in such a way that is almost impossible to intercept..."* (Khodeeyah; Nurhakeema; Sapita).

> *"...Muslim leaders give more importance to the living conditions of their own families than the way of life of youth who have risky behaviors. Consequently, they have no time to teach, look after, admonish, or control youth nor do they help to solve the problems as they did in the past because of the economic and social changes*

that have affected Muslims and Muslim leaders' living conditions and way of life. Muslims leaders are too busy with earning their living to carry out their duties appropriately in accordance with their role. Therefore, this is an important cause of un-Islamic behaviors among youth who have risky behaviors..." (Mayutee; Nuttaya; Yumaila).

The statements made by Muslim leaders correspond with those made by youth who have risky behaviors.

> *"...Muslim leaders are not interested in problems of youth with risky behaviors. They're not sincere and not serious in solving the problems. There's no cooperation in instilling in youth awareness of the Islamic way of life, and there is no regular and continuous ethical training for youth. Leaders ignore the problematic behaviors found among this at-risk group of youth such as adultery, drug addiction, gambling, night life, alcohol use, and not practicing the religion, etc...."* (Amin; Solihah; Sukree).

> *"...Muslim leaders don't give importance to and don't perform their duties, especially in looking after youth to behave in the Islamic way which is their duty in this world and the next world. They lack awareness of their duty to take care*

of Muslim youth and to help them learn how to behave according to the teachings of Islam. As a result, these youth have no opportunity to learn and understand the Islamic principles of faith, morals and ethics, so as to be able to adhere to and correctly practice these principles in their daily life. They don't employ preventive measures to keep youth away from environmental and social problems. Because of that, Muslim youth in this at-risk group are aggressive, rough, mentally blind, and have an un-Islamic way of life…" (Areenun; Amree; Khodafee).

The research results above show that Muslim leaders neglect and ignore youth, particularly by not looking after youth in the at-risk group and this has become an important cause of un-Islamic behaviors among these youth. The youth have not been trained, taught, socialized, and instilled with intelligence that would make them complete Muslims as specified by Islamic principles. Moreover, they have never been given the knowledge and understanding of the faith, practice, morals and ethics, and because of this, live lives that do not follow the teachings of Islam, this is evidenced in the study results which reveal that Muslim leaders do not attach importance to the socialization of at-risk youth leaving them without the necessary understanding of religious principles, discipline, morals and ethics to behave according to social norms and in accordance with the teachings

of Islam (Laeheem, 2012; Laeheem & Madreh, 2014; Mahama, 2009). Having not been socialized the Islamic way from very young by Muslim leaders is a factor making Muslim youth live their lives un-Islamically due to the fact that they have no system of life to adhere to which otherwise would have made them live happily in society (Mahama, 2009; Narongraksakhet, 1997). The fact that Muslim leaders do not perform their duties fully has resulted in youth in the risk group having nothing to prevent them from problems making them go astray with the environments and social changes with blinded mind, and so they refuse to practice the religion, and finally lead their lives in conflict with Islamic principles (Laeheem, 2012, 2013; Laeheem & Baka, 2010; Laeheem, et al., 2015). Thus, it can be seen that Muslim leaders cannot look after Muslim youth to make them behave in the Islamic way. As a result, youth pay no attention to the socialization process that instills awareness of good deeds, ability to distinguish right from wrong and to feel embarrassed to commit sins.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study results presented above indicate that most of Muslim youth in the at-risk group lead an un-Islamic way of life due to (1) the absence of breastfeeding as an infant; (2) a lack of a close Islamic upbringing (3) little interest in Islamic activities; (4) Muslim leaders' negligence in looking after youth and (5) apathetic and insufficient study of Islam.

All five reasons are the result of social changes caused by rapidly changing technological advancements. They directly and indirectly affect the way of life of Muslim youth who ignore religious activities, abandon religious practice, are involved in many vices and drug use, and have deviated from the correct way of life to indulge in the alluring technological advancements in the age of globalization. Therefore, all concerning individuals and organizations at all levels whether they are in the government or private sectors, parents and guardians, and Muslim leaders must realize importance of the problems and jointly solve the problems finding ways to help this group of youth. In particular, youth in the at-risk group must be taught how to have the correct way of life that is Islamic. Additionally, prevention measures must be implemented for youth who currently adhere to the Islamic way of life but who may be tempted to stray from that life.

The results of this study can help individuals, Islamic religious organizations and government organizations to look after youth in the three Southern border provinces by informing the development of good policy and concrete strategies for solving the problem of Muslim youth who have un-Islamic behaviors. These results point to a need for programs designed to instill awareness of the Islamic way of life in Muslim youth, the creation of regular and ongoing Islamic ethical camps, the establishment of activities in which youth perform religious duties. The results also suggest the need for developing and strengthening the family institution. Additionally, individuals and organizations involved in looking after youth in the three Southern border provinces should promote and support non at-risk to further develop and maintain their Islamic behaviors and religious practices. For example, promoting youth to perform religious duties strictly, providing them with knowledge and understanding of Islamic teachings, promoting Islamic upbringing among Muslim families, promoting youth to participate in Islamic activities and to attend Islamic training, etc.

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