

The study examines the role of self-religiosity, father's religious attitude in the moral behaviour of youth from religious and nonreligious schools. Indigenous measures of self-religiosity, father's religious attitude and moral behaviour developed in the pilot study were used in the main study. The subjects for the main study were 100 male Malay youth between 15 and 17 years of age drawn equally from religious and nonreligious schools. Data were collected with the help of class teachers. The subjects were given the father's religious attitude questionnaire in a sealed envelope and were instructed to return it after it was completed by their fathers. Multiple regression analysis of self-religiosity, father's religious attitude, and type of school to the moral behaviour showed a significant effect for regression and a significant beta coefficient for self-religiosity indicating that self-religiosity was the only predictor of moral behaviour of youth. Results also revealed significant correlations between self-religiosity and moral behaviour, and self-religiosity and father's religious attitude. T-tests between religious and nonreligious schools for moral behaviour, self-religiosity and father's religious attitude indicated significant differences suggesting that youth from a religious school exhibited more moral behaviour and they and their fathers were more religious as compared to the youth from nonreligious school. The results suggest a path analytical relationship among the variables indicating that religiosity and religious education played a positive role in the moral behaviour of youth.

Self-Religiosity, Father's Attitude and Religious Education in the Moral Behaviour of Adolescents

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The psychology of religion as a subfield of psychology has grown rapidly since the establishment of the APA division 36, Psychology of Religion, in 1976. A flurry of publications on this topic by the APA and scholars during the last two decades as recently documented by Emmons and Paloutzian (2003) in their review of "The psychology of religion" reflects the importance of religion and psychology. Religion is a part of the human belief system and survey studies reveal that 90% of the world population identifies itself with a religion (Shafranske, 1996). One intuitive meaning of "religious" is spiritual, in the sense of being other-worldly, indifferent to material necessities

or power relations in society (Beit-Hallahimi & Argyle, 1997), increased respect for the inner, contemplative practice of traditional religious systems (Hill et al., 2000; Wuthnow, 1998), and the defense of patterns of beliefs and values (Geertz, 1964). One of the functions of a religious belief system and a religious world view is to provide an ultimate vision of what people should strive for in their lives (Pargament & Park, 1995) and the strategies to reach those goals (Emmons & Paloutzian, 2003) such as religious commitment and rituals, devotion and self-sacrifice.

Religion plays a positive role in the development and maintenance of moral behaviour and altruistic motivations such as helpfulness, tolerance, patience, honesty and obedience to God; hence, it is claimed that religiousness is associated with being a "better person" in numerous ways (Batson, 1983; Hood, Spilka, Hunsberger, & Gorsuch, 1996). Religious people are typically more conservative and are more opposed to abortion (Bryan & Freed, 1993), divorce (Hayes & Hornsby-Smith, 1994), pornography (Lottes, Weinberg, & Weller, 1993; Noon, Haneef, Yusof, & Amin, 2001), atheism (Bibby, 1987), homosexuality (Marsiglio, 1993), feminism (Wilcox & Jelen, 1991), nudity in advertising (Alexander & Judd, 1986), suicide (Domino & Miller, 1992), premarital and oral sex (Donahue, 1995; Haerich, 1992; Janus & Janus, 1993; Jensen, Newell, & Holman, 1990; Wellings, Field, Johnson, & Wadsworth, 1994), and abuse of alcohol and illicit drugs (Benson, 1992; Free, 1994; Gorsuch, 1995; Khavari & Harmon, 1982).

On the other hand, it is not expected of a religious person to lie, cheat or otherwise exhibit antisocial tendencies. Nevertheless, the findings of studies in the area of cheating in examinations, delinquency and certain moral behaviours are contradictory. A number of studies have noted that religious college students believed that it was morally wrong to cheat but there were no differences between religious and nonreligious students on cheating when the opportunity was available (Goldsen, Rosenberg, Williams, & Suchman, 1960; Guttman, 1984; Smith, Wheeler, & Diener, 1975). As regards religiosity and delinquency, Hirschi and Stark (1969) did not observe any relationship between religiosity and delinquency while others have reported a negative correlation between religiosity and some kinds of delinquency (Chadwick & Top, 1993; Donahue, 1995; Free, 1994; Hazani, 1990; Johnson, Jang, Larson, & Li, 2001; Peek, Curry, & Chalfant, 1985). Some scholars believe that the inconsistent findings may be due to the type of crime at issue (Pettersson, 1991) and the religious social support system (Bainbridge, 1989) mediating the relationship between religion and delinquency. We are of the view that in addition to these factors, a person's commitment to religion and consistency in his/her religious beliefs and

behaviour are important. A person may be religious in some aspects of behaviour whereas he/she may not be on others. We believe that the social support system, as mentioned by Bainbridge (1989), may not only be relevant to the relationship between religiosity and delinquency, but may also be a potent factor in the religiosity of the person and his/her moral behaviour. For example, it is well known that the two most potent social agents, namely, parents and educational institutions influence the behaviour of youth.

The family practices of religion, parents' religious attitudes, and explicit religious teachings in school affect adolescent religiosity. Schmidt (1988) found significant differences between adolescents from public and Christian schools on the morality index. Researches have also observed the parental impact on the religiosity of children, particularly parents' values, goals, and practices (Hood et al., 1996), adolescent's identification with the parents (Erickson, 1992), and father's attitudes and emotional support (Herzbrun, 1993). An important way in which parents influence their children in religion is through the expression of their religious attitudes, by involving children in the religion at home and by taking them to places of worship (Cornwall, 1989; Cornwall & Thomas, 1990; Hunsberger & Brown, 1984; Slaughter-Defoe, 1995). However, the impact of parental attitudes and religiosity on children depends upon the quality of parent-child relationship (Alwi, 2003; Shah, 1989; 1991; 2001), for example, children reporting a warm, close relationship with their parents were less likely to rebel against religious teachings (Wilson & Sherkat, 1994) and were more religiously-oriented (Dudley, 1978; Hoge, Petrillo, & Smith, 1982; Nelsen, 1980). This study focuses on Malay youth in the rapidly changing socioeconomic environment in Malaysia.

Malaysia is a rapidly developing country in Southeast Asia. The Malays, the majority ethnic group in Malaysia, are Muslims and conscientious about their religion and tradition. The centuries old tradition of religious education and moral development of children has been maintained in the rural areas (Abu Bakar, 1994; Ismail, 1997). Parents, the village community and the mosque provide the initial religious education to children. More religiously-oriented parents send their children to religious rather than to formal schools. Parents send problem children or those lacking in religious education to religious institutions because of their reputation of educating adolescents and building up their moral character. Religious educational institutions follow a comprehensive syllabus of religious teachings, curricular and co-curricular activities and expect the students to observe the dress code and to follow a daily religious routine quite different from nonreligious schools.

The rapidly changing socioeconomic environment and industrialisation in Malaysia have had an impact on the social fabric of society, the traditional value system and family relations. Urbanisation has in particular affected the rural social set-up of Malays forcing them to adjust to the new circumstances for which they were perhaps not yet prepared. Further, growing economic opportunities have lured an increasing number of Malays into excessive material pursuits eroding, to varying degrees, their traditional religious way of life (Ismail, 1997). An increasing number of mothers have joined the workforce enhancing the economic prosperity of the family but at the same time affecting their commitment toward the upbringing of their children (Ibrahim, 1994). The fallout of materialistic pursuits and neglect of family is an increase in juvenile delinquency and social problems among Malay youth. The juvenile statistics compiled by the Ministry of National Unity and Social Development of Malaysia during 1996–2001 revealed an increase of 5% in juvenile acts committed by Malays such as drug abuse, theft, purse snatching, and illegal racing. The proportion of such acts by Malays now amount to 61% of the total juvenile acts in Malaysia. This may be attributed to decreased involvement of the parents in childcare (Kong et al., 1986) and an increase in peer influence (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). Research has shown an increasing tendency toward materialism to be associated with a decline in religion, an increasing divorce rate, and other social ills (Stack, 1991). A less religious and materialistic social environment that provides conflicting messages and opportunities for immoral acts may coerce the impact of religiosity. Some Malaysian studies have reported conflicting results indicating that youth from religious schools in a metropolitan city manifested both more positive and negative moral behaviours as compared to youth from nonreligious schools (Shah, 2003); Noon, Haneef, Yusof, and Amin (2001) observed that religiosity was a significant negative correlate of many social problems in Malaysia.

The influence of parents and religious education may be crucial in inculcating moral behaviour among adolescents, but a person's own religious attitudes and practices may have a more direct link to his or her morality. A number of variables when considered in combination may better explain the moral behaviour of adolescents rather than considering them individually. A person's own religiosity, parents' religious attitudes, and religious institutions are strong determinants of moral behaviour of youth. Modernisation, economic greed and value decadence in society will have less impact on youth with sound religious grounding.

There is little empirical research on religion and moral behaviour in Malaysia. Research in this area is needed to address the pressing problems of Malaysians during the transition from a developing to a developed country.

This study investigated the importance of self-religiosity and fathers' religious attitude in the moral behaviour of Malay adolescents studying in religious and nonreligious schools. Religiosity is defined here

as the awareness and tendency of an individual to strive for a harmony between the worldly desires and the compliance with the divine commands of God. It is achieved through consciousness of God, piety (Taqwa and Wara', in Arabic) and the dual deeds of respecting and observing the rights of the Creator and of his creation. It is an additive product of religious beliefs and practices.

Religious attitude is taken as an indicator of one's religiosity but it may not be necessarily related to religious practices.

It was hypothesised that religiously-oriented students would exhibit more moral behaviour as compared to less religiously-oriented. It was also hypothesised that students of religious schools would be more religiously-oriented than those studying in nonreligious schools. It was further hypothesised that students of religious schools would manifest more moral behaviour as compared to those studying in nonreligious schools. A positive relationship was assumed between one's religious orientation and his moral behaviour. A positive relationship between the father's religious attitude and the adolescent's religiosity was postulated.

Method

The study was conducted in two phases—a pilot study and a main study.

Pilot Study

A pilot study was conducted to construct three indigenous measures that were used in the main study. These were (a) a measure of self-religiosity, (b) a measure of father's religious attitude, and (c) a measure of moral behaviour. Two psychologists, including the author, and five postgraduate students were involved in the initial search and preparation of the items. Various sources such as religiosity scales, Islamic literature and magazines were scanned for the relevant constructs and the items for the scales. In addition, three senior colleagues from different areas of Islamic Revealed Knowledge were consulted

regarding the contents and the aspects of religiosity from an Islamic perspective. On the basis of their recommendations, items were finalised for the religiosity measures. Some items were also taken from a measure of religiosity developed by Noon, Haneef, Yusof, and Amin (2001).

The items for the moral behaviour index were generated in an earlier project study. These items pertained to various Islamic moral and immoral activities, such as helping parents, giving charity, helping in the community, vandalising public property, smoking, and stealing.

Scale Construction. Three measures were constructed and tested in the pilot study. The items included in these measures were prepared on the basis of material collected earlier. Rating scales were developed for each measure. The instructions for each scale were written in order to facilitate the response of the subjects.

MEASURE OF SELF-RELIGIOSITY. The measure of self-religiosity included 12 positive and 11 negative items. The items were rated on a 5-point Likert-type rating scale. The numerical and the semantic categories included: "1": strongly disagree, "2": disagree, "3": do not know, "4": agree, and "5": strongly agree. The negative items were reverse scored.

MEASURE OF FATHER'S RELIGIOUS ATTITUDE. This measure comprised 20 items with 11 positive and 9 negative items. Each item was rated on a 5-point Likert-type scale with the categories: "1": strongly disagree, "2": disagree, "3": do not know, "4": agree, and "5": strongly agree. The scoring for the negative items was reversed.

MEASURE OF MORAL BEHAVIOUR. The moral behaviour index included 28 items with an equal number of positive and negative items. The responses to the items were indicated on a 4-point rating scale with the categories: "1": not at all, "2": some of the time, "3": most of the time, and "4": always. The scoring of the negative items was reversed.

All the measures were pretested on a sample of 5 male and 5 female students of International Islamic University Malaysia for the clarity of the instructions and the items. Two items in the self-religiosity measure and one item in the moral behaviour index were slightly modified on the basis of feedback from the students. The subjects did not experience any difficulty in understanding the instructions and the items of the scales. The instructions for the subjects were printed on the top of each scale. A separate sheet was used to obtain demographic information from the subjects.

Subjects. The sample comprised 83 male Malay students from a religious and a government school and their parents from the Gombak area. The subjects were 9th level students in the age range of 14–18 years and were tested in a group. The class teachers assisted in the selection of subjects as well as in data collection.

Procedure. The researcher met the subjects in a classroom and informed them that the objective of the study was to examine people's orientation in everyday life situations. The subjects were told to read the instructions properly before answering the questions. They were instructed not to omit any question. The researcher assured them that their responses would be treated confidentially and would be used only for research purposes. Upon completion of the first questionnaire, the researcher handed out the second one. Half of the subjects were administered the measure of self-religiosity first followed by the moral behaviour measure. The order was reversed for the other half of the subjects. After the completion of the questionnaire the subjects were given a sealed envelope containing the measure of father's religious attitude and a return envelope. Both the envelopes and the measure of father's religious attitude were marked with the same code given to the subject. The subjects were instructed to hand over this envelope to their father and to return it in the second envelope as early as possible. The class teachers collected the envelopes later. As two envelopes were not returned the data analysis was based on the responses of 81 subjects.

Results. Item analyses were performed on the data obtained by the self-religiosity and moral behaviour measures. Item analysis was also done on the data obtained from the fathers. The criterion used for the selection of items was an alpha probability of 1% and above.

The item analysis for self-religiosity indicated 18 significant item–total correlations at 0.01 level. One item was significant at 0.03 level whereas four items had nonsignificant item–total correlations. The final self-religiosity scale comprised 18 items—9 positive and 9 negative items. Cronbach's alpha was used to determine the internal consistency reliability of the 18-item scale. The alpha coefficient was 0.76. Item analysis was also performed on the data obtained on moral behaviour. The item–total correlations revealed 24 significant correlations at 0.01 alpha level—11 positive and 13 negative items. Four items were not significant at the required level. The alpha coefficient for the 24-item moral behaviour scale was 0.83.

Item analysis was also used to select items for the measure of father's religious attitude. The item–total correlations revealed 15 significant correlations

at 0.01 alpha level. The significant items included 9 positive and 6 negative items. Three items were significant at the lower levels whereas two items were not significant. The internal consistency reliability for the measure of father's religious attitude was 0.67.

Main Study

Subjects. The sample comprised 100 male Malay subjects in the age range of 15–17 years. Fifty subjects each were randomly selected from a religious school (Al-Amin Secondary School) and a regular school (Hill Crest Secondary School). The principals of each school were contacted and were requested for permission to collect data for a study on religiosity of the students and their moral behaviour. The principals instructed the teachers to use the class register to identify 50 students from the 9th and 10th levels (SPM). The subjects assembled in the school hall under the supervision of the teachers and administered the questionnaires. Demographic characteristics of the two samples are listed in Table 1.

Instruments.

SELF-RELIGIOSITY SCALE. This scale was developed to measure religiosity of the subjects. The scale consisted of 9 positive and 9 negative items in the form of statements. Each statement had to be rated on a Likert-type rating scale comprising categories "1": strongly disagree, "2": disagree, "3": do not know, "4": agree, and "5": strongly agree. The negative items were reverse scored. A high score on the scale indicated the religious orientation of the subject. The alpha coefficient for the scale was 0.76. One of the positive items of the scale was "Religion gives me comfort and security in life"; and a negative item was "When I face a problem, religion is the last thing on my mind".

FATHER'S RELIGIOUS ATTITUDE SCALE. This scale was used to assess the religious attitudes of fathers of the subjects. The 15-item scale included 9 positive and 6 negative items. Each item had to be rated on a 5-point Likert-type scale with the categories: "1": strongly disagree, "2": disagree, "3": do not know, "4": agree, and "5": strongly agree. The scoring for the negative items was reversed. A high score indicated the religious attitudes of the fathers. The Cronbach alpha for the scale was 0.67. A positive item of the scale was "I send my children to mosque to attend religious activities", and a negative item was, "Religion does not play a role in the upbringing of my children".

MORAL BEHAVIOUR SCALE. The moral behaviour scale measured the morally desirable and undesirable activities of the subjects. Of the 24 items, 11 were positive and 13 were negative. The responses to the items were indicated on a 4-point rating scale with the categories: “1”: not at all, “2”: some of the time, “3”: most of the time, and “4”: always. The scoring for the negative items was reversed. A high score was indicative of morally desirable behaviour. The alpha coefficient for the scale was 0.83. One of the positive items of the scale was “I do things for the welfare of my community”; and a negative item was “I bully my friends”.

Procedure. In each school subjects assembled in the school hall under the supervision of the teachers. The researcher explained that the purpose of the study was to examine people’s religious activities and assured them of the anonymity of the information provided. Two envelopes, marked with the same number, had been placed on each table. The subjects were instructed not to open the envelope labelled “father” and to open the unlabelled envelope. The researcher informed them that the envelope marked “father” contained a questionnaire as well as another envelope and they were instructed to hand this envelope to their fathers and request them to complete the questionnaire and seal it in the second envelope. The subjects were asked to hand over the sealed envelope to their teachers. In the unlabelled envelope there were three questionnaires in the form of a booklet and the subjects were asked to answer the questionnaires systematically by reading the instructions for each questionnaire. Further, they were told not to omit any item and to raise the hand if they had any question. The first questionnaire pertained to personal information, the second questionnaire was the moral behaviour scale and the last was the self-religiosity scale. The researcher and the teachers collected the complete questionnaires. All the fathers returned the completed questionnaires within the next three days.

Results

The data were analysed to determine the significance of the three predictor variables—self-religiosity, father’s religious attitude, and type of school for the criterion—namely, moral behaviour of the subjects. The data were also analysed to determine the differences between religious and nonreligious schools on moral behaviour, self-religiosity, and father’s religious attitude

using a *t*-test for independent samples. Correlations were computed between the moral behaviour of the subjects, self-religiosity, and father's religious attitude.

The results of multiple regression revealed a significant F-value for regression, $F(3, 96) = 5.303$; $p < 0.002$. The multiple correlation coefficient, R was 0.377, R square was 0.142, and the adjusted R square (R^2) was 0.115. This showed 14.2% common variance between the predictor variables and the criterion. The results also revealed a significant beta (b) coefficient for self-religiosity, 0.251; $t = 2.2$; $p < 0.03$. The beta coefficients for the types of schools and father's religious attitude were not significant, indicating that self-religiosity was the best predictor of the moral behaviour of the subjects.

The correlations in Table 1 indicate a significant relationship between self-religiosity and the moral behaviour of the subjects, $r(98) = 0.348$; $p < 0.01$; and a significant correlation between self-religiosity and father's religious attitude, $r(98) = 0.203$; $p < 0.05$. All other correlations were not significant. The coefficients of determination (r^2) for the above correlations were 0.121 and 0.041 respectively. This indicated that the common variance between self-religiosity and moral behaviour was 12.1%, whereas it was 4.1% between self-religiosity and father's religious attitude. This finding suggested a stronger relationship between self-religiosity and moral behaviour.

Table 1
*Intercorrelation Matrix of Moral Behaviour, Self-religiosity,
and Father's Religious Attitude*

<i>Variables</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>
Moral behaviour		0.348**	0.100
Self-religiosity			0.203*
Father's religious attitude			

Notes: * = $p < 0.05$; ** = $p < 0.01$.

The results of *t*-test between religious and nonreligious schools for the subjects' scores on moral behaviour, self-religiosity and father's religious attitude are presented in Table 2. A highly significant difference was noted between the two types of schools regarding subjects' moral behaviour, $t(98) = -3.277$; $p < 0.001$. The mean moral behaviour score of subjects from nonreligious schools was 72.5 (SD = 7.28) and the mean score of their counterparts from religious schools was 77.12 (SD = 6.8). This indicated that subjects from religious schools were more morally-oriented as compared to those from nonreligious schools.

Table 2
Mean Differences between Religious and Nonreligious Groups

<i>Variable</i>	<i>Religious Group</i>	<i>Nonreligious Group</i>	<i>t</i>
Moral behaviour	77.12	72.50	3.277**
Self-religiosity	78.48	69.48	6.617**
Religious attitudes	63.42	59.90	2.902*

Notes: * $p < 0.05$.

** $p < 0.01$.

None: $N = 50$ in each group.

The results of t -test between religious and nonreligious schools for the subjects' scores on the self-religiosity scale revealed a highly significant difference between the religiosity of subjects from the two types of schools, $t(98) = -6.617$; $p < 0.0001$. The mean score of subjects from nonreligious schools was 69.48 (SD = 7.04) and of their counterparts from religious schools was 78.48 (SD = 6.55). This implied that subjects from religious schools were more religiously-oriented.

The results of t -test between religious and nonreligious schools for the father's religious attitude scores showed a significant difference between the religious attitudes of fathers of the two groups $t(98) = -2.902$; $p < 0.005$. The mean score of fathers of adolescents from nonreligious schools was 59.9 (SD = 6.062) and of fathers of subjects from religious schools was 63.42 (SD = 6.068). This implied that fathers of adolescents from religious schools were more religiously-oriented as compared to those of adolescents from nonreligious schools.

Discussion

Multiple regression analysis revealed that adolescents' religious orientation was the best contributor to their moral behaviour. Among the three variables, i.e., self-religiosity, father's religious attitude, and educational institutions, self-religiosity was a good predictor of moral behaviour. This implies that religiosity has a positive influence upon the moral behaviour of an individual. Religious people have positive attitudes toward moral issues and they engage in moral and socially desirable activities. Many studies in different countries have observed that religious involvement is negatively correlated with all types of deviance (Benson, Donahue, & Erickson, 1989; Donahue, 1995; Ellis, 1985; Francis & Mullen, 1993). Religious people perform religious

rituals regularly such as Muslims pray five times daily and recite the Holy Quran and Christians go to the church that not only strengthens their religious beliefs but also primes (Herr, Sherman, & Fazio, 1983; Higgins & King, 1981; Srull & Wyer, 1980) them for other good moral deeds like love, justice, compassion and mercy (Oliner & Oliner, 1988). A number of studies have noted that persons volunteering for charity or other social welfare activities were motivated by religious reasons (Batson, Schoenrade, & Ventis, 1993; Bolt, 1982; Lynn & Smith, 1991; Myers, 1992), and religiosity in African-Americans was related to friendliness as rated by the interviewers (Ellison, 1992). Malay youth who are religious perform congregational prayers five times daily. They also attend "Ibadah camps" (weekend monthly/quarterly religious gatherings) and engage in other religious activities. These youth are less involved in "Lepak" (loafing), drug abuse, youth violence (Alwi, 2003), illegal motorbike racing, bullying, and other antisocial activities (Noon et al., 2001) rampant among Malaysian youth.

Religious teaching positively influences the overall conduct of a person. Studies have reported positive correlations between religiosity and empathy (Watson et al., 1984), and similar results have been observed in the case of social interest and humanitarian values (Beit-Hallahimi & Argyle, 1997). Religion instils discipline and a disciplined person has a sound personality to face life crises (Emmons & McCullough, 1999). Religious practices enable people to feel that they have more control, to face the future with optimism, have greater self-confidence, self-esteem and sense of purpose (Dull & Skohan, 1995). All the revealed religions emphasise good moral conduct and the purpose of religious training in major religions of the world is to reform the person and his/her moral conduct.

Other influences on the moral behaviour of an individual may be indirectly important as compared to one's religiosity. A strong significant correlation between self-religiosity and moral behaviour and a nonsignificant correlation between father's religious attitude and moral behaviour of the subjects indicated that an individual's religious orientation and attitudes were more important in guiding his actions as compared to other influences. However, the correlation between self-religiosity and father's religious attitude indicated that the children of religious fathers tended to be more religiously-oriented (Cornwall, 1989; Cornwall & Thomas, 1990; Hadaway, 1980; Kluegel, 1980; Slaughter-Defoe, 1995). The role of parents, particularly of the father, is crucial in shaping the religious orientation of children (Ozorak, 1989; Potvin & Sloane, 1985). In the Muslim Malay society, the father is usually responsible for the discipline and moral conduct of his children. The father role is often to communicate to the child the values, expectations, and demands of

society. Since the father represents these social conceptions and values, he is the one who helps the child to accept societal values (Lamb & Oppenheim, 1989). Parents act as role models by performing religious activities that influence the children vicariously (Bandura, 1977; DiBlasio & Bandura, 1990), and parents' religious activities are shared by their children as being the part of a given culture and system (Rohner, 1994; Triandis, 1972). Further, parents influence the religious outlook and worldview of their children through their child rearing practices (Beit-Hallahimi & Argyle, 1997). Parental beliefs are deliberately and consciously transmitted as part of identity formation during childhood (Beit-Hallahimi, 1989), which fulfils an individual's universal need of bonding and security (Burton, 1990). Parental influence and socialisation help adolescents avoid value conflicts later in the outside world. The influences of mass media (Berkowitz, 1984), peer group pressures and the secularising influences of globalisation giving conflicting messages in the century of information technology have the potential to influence the thinking, feelings and behaviour of the youth (Bhattacharji, 1998; Desrechters, 1997; Oommen, 1998) if they do not have sound religious foundations. Also, the youth who lack sound religious foundations succumb to negative peer influence (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). Parents' religiosity may be a factor in adolescents' religiosity if the family environment and the relationship between the family members are sound (Alwi, 2003; Shah, 1989, 1991, 2001; Wilson & Sherkat, 1994).

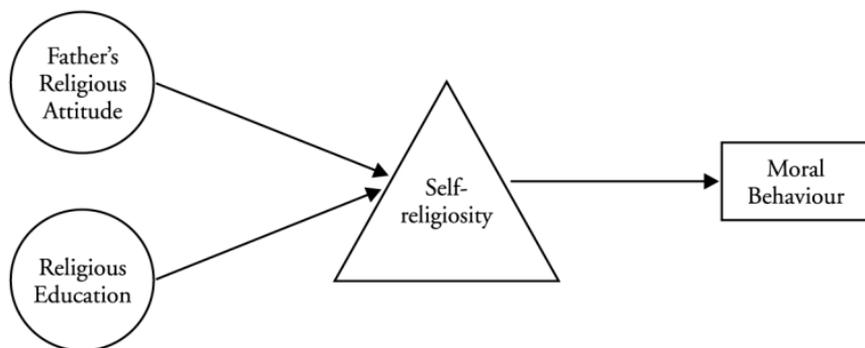
The results of *t*-tests revealed the impact of type of education and schooling on the religiosity and moral behaviour of adolescents, the former being stronger. The significant difference in the religiosity of students from the two types of schools indicated the importance of education and the environment provided by religious schools imparting religious knowledge to the students (Johnstone, 1966). Many studies have documented the effects of formal religious schooling (Francis, 1984). Erickson (1992) noted that religious education had an overwhelming influence on religious socialisation of adolescents. Consistent with our findings other researchers have also observed that religious school attendees were more religious than their public schools counterparts (Greeley, 1967; Lenski, 1961). Also, church related schools had a direct positive influence on the religiousness of their students (Benson et al., 1986; Francis & Brown, 1991; Himmelfarb, 1979). Religious schools in Malaysia not only impart religious education, but also build the moral character of their students (Schmidt, 1988) in accordance with Islamic teachings. This training prepares the students for later life. Therefore, majority of the students from religious schools show moral integrity and excel in their careers. Religious schools in Malaysia are perceived to be credible

institutions for reforming problematic and deviant youth. The daily religious activities such as regular prayers and social activities are instrumental in inculcating religious beliefs and behaviours in the students. Further, the daily religious activities and the religious environment of these schools primes the students with good thoughts and behaviours (Gouaux, 1969; Liebert, Sprafkin, & Davidson, 1982; Silverman & Sprafkin, 1980) and more moral themes and behaviours become available to the adolescents in their general life situation. The students become aware of evaluating their actions and behaviours in terms of do's and don't's according to Islamic teachings. That explains why religious people are more conservative in their attitudes (Hood et al., 1996) toward various antisocial and anti-religious actions such as bullying, harming others and violating their rights (Alwi, 2003), homosexuality (Marsiglio, 1993), pornography (Noon et al., 2001) suicide ideation (Domino & Miller, 1992; Donahue, 1995), and premarital sex (Haerich, 1992; Janus & Janus, 1993; Wellings et al., 1994). Religious attitudes, religiosity and moral behaviour go hand in hand. Sometimes, religiosity alone is not sufficient to foster moral behaviour in an individual. The findings of studies on cheating highlight this discrepancy (Chadwick & Top, 1993; Goldsen et al., 1960; Spilka & Loffredo, 1982) between religiosity and moral behaviour. This means that religious attitudes and religious teachings per se are not sufficient for moral behaviour unless one has the proper motivation and commitment to follow these teachings wholeheartedly. According to the findings of Benson et al. (1986), the teachings of religious schools on religiosity had a positive effect if the school stressed religion and the development of community faith. If personal conviction does not underlie religious attitudes the discrepancies between religious attitudes and moral behaviour become apparent. The teachings in religious schools clarify many issues related to moral behaviour in daily life. Researchers comparing religious and public schools have concluded that religious schools were better in forming adolescents' personality and guiding their moral behaviour (Schmidt, 1988). There are innumerable situations in which people are tempted to indulge in immoral activities because they apparently appear to be harmless and trivial. If adolescents are not aware of these activities and they do not have the competence to resist them, they could easily be lured into them. Islamic religious institutions not only impart religious teachings, but also provide guidance and the skills required to face critical situations in life.

The findings of this study pointed to a specific relationship among the variables; some had a direct whereas others an indirect relationship. Regression analysis revealed a strong direct relationship between self-religiosity

and moral behaviour; whereas correlational analysis highlighted relationships between father's religious attitude and adolescents' religiosity. Also, *t*-test results showed a highly significant difference for self-religiosity, father's religious attitude and moral behaviour of students from religious and nonreligious schools. According to these results, there existed a path analytical relationship among the variables (Figure 1).

Figure 1
A Path Analytical Relationship between Father's Religious Attitude, Religious Education, Self-Religiosity, and Moral Behaviour of Children



This means that father's religious attitude and religious education contribute to self-religiosity which in turn fosters moral behaviour of adolescents. A number of studies have substantiated our proposed relationship among the variables. Research on the relationship between fathers' and their children religiosity noted high correlations between the two (Cornwall, 1989; Cornwall & Thomas, 1990; Hadaway, 1980; Kluegel, 1980; Slaughter-Defoe, 1995), and the influence of father on adolescents' religiosity (Ozorak, 1989; Potvin & Sloane, 1985). Similarly, a number of studies have documented the role of religious education and schools in the religiosity of adolescents (Benson et al., 1986; Erickson, 1992; Francis, 1984; Francis & Brown, 1991; Gouaux, 1969; Greeley, 1967; Himmelfarb, 1979; Lenski, 1961; Liebert, Sprafkin, & Davidson, 1982; Silverman & Sprafkin, 1980). Finally, a series of empirical findings support our proposition about the link between self-religiosity and the moral behaviour of adolescents (Alwi, 2003; Domino & Miller, 1992; Donahue, 1995; Haerich, 1992; Hood et al., 1996; Janus & Janus, 1993; Marsiglio, 1993; Noon et al., 2001; Wellings et al., 1994). As these studies have examined the relationships between these variables individually or in combination with other variables, the parameters of our path analytical model needs to be tested in a separate study.

The woes of living in the era of globalisation, industrialisation and prosperity, sexual liberalism promoting pornography, nudity and an unending greed for materialism contribute to moral degradation in a developing country like Malaysia. These factors have led to a decline in religion and family values in the West (Stack, 1991). Sound religious foundation of youth and parental care and appreciation of children's religious education act as protective factors against deviance in adolescents (Haddad, Barocas, & Hollenback, 1991).

Although, this study provides some useful data about the importance of religion in moral behaviour, had a larger and a diverse sample of schools from different states of Malaysia have been included it would have broadened the scope of the study. There is a need to test the reliability and other psychometric properties of the scales used in the study as this was not possible in the scope of this study. It is important to test the instruments on other samples and replicate the study on a larger national sample. Low correlations among the variables highlights the need for proper sampling to control the influence of other variables such as social class, rural–urban differences, the school curriculum, and the level of the schools.

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