

Cross Religious and Social Interaction: A Case Study of Muslims and Buddhists in Kampung Tendong, Pasir Mas, Kelantan

Engku Ahmad Zaki Engku Alwi, PhD (Corresponding author)

Associate Professor

Faculty of Islamic Contemporary Studies, Universiti Sultan Zainal Abidin

Gong Badak Campus, 21300 Kuala Terengganu, Terengganu, Malaysia

E-mail: drkuzaki@unisza.edu.my

Zuriati Binti Mohd Rashid, MA

Faculty of Islamic Contemporary Studies, Universiti Sultan Zainal Abidin

Gong Badak Campus, 21300 Kuala Terengganu, Terengganu, Malaysia

E-mail: zuriati@unisza.edu.my

Received: February 17, 2011 Accepted: April 10, 2011 doi:10.5539/ass.v7n8p112

Abstract

The main objective of this study is to explore the quality of interaction between Muslims and Buddhists in Kampung Tendong. The researcher prepared one relevant indicator to measure quality interaction, that is religious understandings. Using a convenience sampling technique, a total of one hundred and forty (140) respondents were drawn from Muslims and Buddhists of Kampung Tendong, Pasir Mas, Kelantan. The sample size together with the above-mentioned indicators showed that the quality of interaction based on frequency is above average (i.e., 67.83%). Precisely, for “religious understandings” which were divided into two parts ‘intra-religious understandings’ was 82.95% and ‘inter-religious understandings’ was 34.34% with the average percentage of 42.59. The results show universal values of the two religions, namely Islam and Buddhism that bind people together. On the other hand, the discouraging factor of interaction among the residents of Kampung Tendong was that trivial issues of religious differences. Therefore, the significance of the study lies mainly in showing the level of interaction between Muslims and Buddhists in Kampung Tendong. This result is essential to the policy-makers to develop a better pattern of inter-racial interaction in a remote area of Peninsular Malaysia. The study finally discusses the need for broader and more comprehensive research in this area.

Keywords: Muslim, Buddhist, Social interaction, Cross religious, Universal values

1. BACKGROUND

Malaysia is a predominantly Muslim country. However, the other religions such as Buddhism, Hinduism, Christianity, Sikhism, Taoism, and other traditional believing systems are also practiced. People may wonder why there are many diversified religious followers can co-exist together. Thus, one of the objectives of this study is to explore the relationship or religious interaction between Muslims and Buddhists in Kampung Tendong, Pasir Mas, Kelantan. It is an ethno-religious study of Malay Muslims and Chinese as well as Siamese Buddhists in terms of their religious interaction in Kampung Tendong.

The study in Kampung Tendong could be perceived as a subset study over the dominant set of ethnic groups in Malaysia. This is due the fact that Mukim Tendong is a multi-racial society. Malays are the dominant group which comprises 90.8% of the total population, Chinese 8.4% and others (including Siamese) 0.85% (Population and Housing Census of Malaysia, 2000). The research would be helpful in developing good inter-racial relationships among all groups in Malaysia because it focuses on cross religious and social interaction among Muslims and Buddhists in Kampung Tendong, Pasir Mas. Below is a detailed explanation on historical background of Kampung Tendong and its population.

2. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

As far as the interaction between Muslims and Buddhists in Kampung Tendong is concerned, they live in peace and harmony. They engage their daily activities in a normal way and share same place of work. The Buddhists are mostly Siamese and Chinese. They speak Kelantanese Malay dialect, and dress quite similar to that of the Malays. Some even call themselves as '*orang Cina-Melayu*' or 'Chinese-Malay people' (Hanapi Dollah, 1986). In short, one could perceive the daily activities of the Buddhists are almost similar to the Malays. It means the residents of Kampung Tendong as a whole share a common political, economical, and social environment. Yet, when it comes to religion, it is different. Therefore, this study looks into the religious interaction in Kampung Tendong and argues that a good relationship between the two is due to the universal values shared by both religious traditions.

3. JUSTIFICATION OF THE STUDY

This study is good for interethnic and inter-religious understanding that may lead to national writing in a multi-racial, multi-religious and diversified society. There are many books written on Islam and Buddhism by scholars around the world, unfortunately there are limited sources which stress on the comparison between the two religions. Apparently, the studies focus more on religious doctrines and not about their religious and social interaction. However, there are a few related works to the study:

The works of Morgan and Lawton (1996), Mc Donald (1984), and Ismail Raji al-Faruqi (1998) are some examples of studies that focus on the comparison between religions. These authors deal with the world's major religions like Hinduism, Buddhism, Sikhism, Judaism, Christianity and Islam. Unfortunately, they incline to use the descriptive approach in describing those religions. Therefore, the scope of comparison is not broad enough.

However, among the studies that use the comparative approach are those by Hariri (1980), Prasert Yenprasit (2004) and Sri Mulyati (1982). The authors manage to compare Buddhism and Islam but again in these studies they only focus on one area of comparison, not comparing all religious issues as a whole. For instance, Hariri only discusses the issue of life after death according to Buddhism and Islam and Prasert Yenprasit stresses on the concept of man according to Theravada Buddhism and Islam.

There are several studies that focus on the social interaction between the dominant group and minority group. However, these studies were conducted outside Malaysia which include the studies by Abdo A. Elkholy (1960), Abdullah Bin Taib (1978) and Abdur Rahman I. Doi (1992). Indeed, the first two studies provide information about social interaction and thus may be useful for comparisons of this study.

As stated before, Abdullah Bin Taib (1978) in his dissertation stresses that the Malays perceive other ethnic groups such as Chinese and Indians in Malaysian as different to them and not part of the son of the soil (*Bumiputra*). Due to this perspective, Malays possess unfavorable feelings on other ethnic groups in their surroundings. Even though these three ethnic groups share similar experiences, backgrounds, and social life, yet they have different perceptions upon others. In the same way, the study shows that the Malays have similar perception over local residents of United States of America (USA) even though the Malays used to study in USA.

Additionally, there are two books by Hanapi Dollah (1986) and Teo Kok Seong (2003) that deal with the local situation which focus on the Chinese community in Malaysia. The first book discusses how the Chinese community in Kampung Mata Ayer, Pulau Chondong, Kelantan assimilated Malay culture into their own. While, the second book explains the historical background of Chinese in Kelantan and their pattern of communication which is similar to that of the majority of Malays by using Kelantanese dialect. From their studies, the researcher collects much information about the Chinese way of life particularly in Kelantan.

On the other hand, a book by Mohamed Yusoff Ismail (1993) is very important because it studies socio-religious aspect that emphasizes the ethnicity of the Buddhists and their social and religious structure. Even though it does not carry a comparative approach, its emphasis on the socio-religious study is the best example of this type of research.

The literature reviews by the researcher indicate that a thorough piece of work on the religious interaction between the two has yet to be conducted. Therefore, this research seeks to explore the religious and social interaction between Muslims and Buddhists in Kampung Tendong, to determine the real interaction that takes place between them.

4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The methods adopted in the study are library research and field studies. There are two sources of data: primary source which includes interviews with Muslim religious scholars and Buddhist monks, and a survey questionnaire directed to villagers of all walks of life. Meanwhile the secondary source is collected through library research obtained from both print and electronic media such as books, journals, magazines, internet and statistical reports.

The researcher started the field work by using a survey method through distribution of questionnaires to 200 respondents of Muslims and Buddhists. The researcher then interviewed ten important knowledgeable persons like Muslims religious scholars and Buddhist monks. The researcher used *Bahasa Melayu* as the medium of communication in her study as it is the common language of communicates between them. All data obtained and collected through these methods were then examined and analyzed by the researcher. Thus, this research applies both quantitative and qualitative approaches.

5. DEFINITION OF TERMS AND CONCEPTS UNDER STUDY

5.1 Muslim

A Muslim is a person who adheres to a religion called Islam. Islam is a religion revealed 1400 years old ago. Muslims believe that there is only one God (*tawĦĒd*), called Allah (*subĦĒnahu wa taĦĒĒla*). Islam was revealed to RasĦĒlullah MuĦammad bin ĦĒAbd AllĦĒh. Muslims believe that MuĦammad (*ĦĒallallahu ĦĒalaihi wasallam*) was the last Prophet of Allah (*subĦĒnahu wa taĦĒĒla*). The word "Islam" stems from the fourth verbal form of the root *slm*: *aslama*, which literally means "to submit" or "to surrender". Thus, the word Islam has come to mean "submission", "surrender", "resignation", and "obedience" to Allah (*subĦĒnahu wa taĦĒĒla*) and His guidance (Mir Zohair Husain, 2003: 1).

The religious scripture of Islam is the Holy QurĦĒn and the place for communal worship is called Mosque (*MasĦĒid*). Islam is a way of life, governing religious practice and morality as well as social relationships, marriage, divorce, kinship, economy and political relations. Someone who believes in Islam is a Muslim. Muslims believe that Islam teaches the true and successful way of life for all people.

At present, the Muslims are mainly Malay (Note 1) residents of Kampung Tendong who profess Islamic religion. A unique aspect to distinguish Muslims and non-Muslims (who confess other religious faiths other than Islam) of Kampung Tendong is their dress code. The female Muslims are identified through their *hijabs* that cover their heads and most often they wear long and loose dresses. Majority of males wear headgear tailored (*kopiah*) specially for the purpose of prayers.

5.2 Buddhist

A Buddhist is a person who believes in Buddhism. It is a world faith, a philosophy and a way of life based on the teachings of Buddha, a person of noble birth who was born in India about 2,500 years ago. In the beginning, he led a luxurious lifestyle, lacking nothing materially and his father wanted him to follow his footsteps and become the king of the *Sakya* clan. However, after observing great sufferings at the age of 20 Buddha left the life of luxury and became an itinerant monk to pursue spiritual knowledge.

After years of practicing extreme austerities and engaging in prolonged and intense meditation, Frithjof (1989) noted in his book that Buddha realized that neither the extreme of self-indulgence nor the extreme of self-mortification lead to an end of suffering. He said "avoiding these two extremes I have realized the middle path" (1989: 27). Buddha traveled all over India for about 40 years. After his death, Buddhism spread throughout South East Asia, China, Japan, Tibet and the West.

In the study, Buddhists are the occupants of Chinese (Note 2) and Siamese (Note 3) of the Buddhist faith in Kampung Tendong. Buddhists largely are identified by their Chinese or Siamese names, which are different from the Malays.

5.3 Social Interaction

The term "social" refers to human kind, living together in organized colonies or groups. It also involves the mutual relations and welfare of individuals. Jary David and Julia Jary (1991: 245) defined "social" as also pertaining to human society and/ or to human interaction in organizations and groups.

On the other hand, the word interaction carries different connotations in various disciplines. However, in Sociology, it is defined as "a mutual or reciprocal action" between two or more individuals (or between groups) (Borgatta and Borgatta, 1992:1697). In the same source, interaction is generally defined as "a dynamic interplay and relationship of joint determination between two or more variables". For them, interaction also carries the

meaning of “basic social process represented in a mutual relationship between two or more individuals or groups”.

In the same view, in the book of E. Shaw (1981) interaction defines as when individuals “emit behavior in each other’s presence, they create products of each other or they communicate with each other”. As an example “if person A meets person B on the street, stops and chats about weather, listens to the troubles of the day, and then each other proceeds on his way, they are said to have interacted” (1981:23)

In other words, social interaction is a process of changing sequence of social actions between individuals (or groups) who modify their actions and reactions according to the actions by their interacting partner(s). It seems that there are events in which people attach meaning to a situation, interpret what others mean, and respond accordingly. In the next chapter, the researcher presents a review of the related literature on social interaction in detailed.

5.4 Universal Values

Oxford Dictionary (1989:1397) has described universal as “affecting or done by all people or things in the world or in a particular group”. Meanwhile, value is of two meanings “quality of being useful or worthwhile or important” and “moral or professional standards of behavior or principles” (1989: 1411). In the field of philosophy, universal values are described as an attempt to establish a finite set of concepts that are recognized by all human beings as morally good (Wikipedia; Universal Values, retrieved on 16th May 2007 in (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Universal_values>).

In other words, a value is universal which is applicable at all times (i.e in the past, at the present and in the future), to all humans (i.e in different cultures, different genders and different religious background) and under all circumstances (i.e among members of a family, in work setting and between nations). Thus, for this study, the researcher highlights some universal values of both religions under study which foster their relationship.

6. ISLAMIC AND BUDDHIST PERSPECTIVES ON SOCIAL INTERACTION

Social interaction, as discussed before, a basic social process represented in a mutual relationship between two or more individuals or groups. In the religious perspectives, in general, social interaction is a prominent role plays by all religions in order to be kind to the fellow beings. All religions promote peace and harmonious life. One way to achieve it is through interaction among the believers and non-believers of their specific adherence. With regards to Islam and Buddhism, both have their own perspectives of social interaction and their attitude towards other religions.

For Islam, the basic principle of social interaction is prescribed in the Holy Quran and *Hadith* of Prophet Muhammad PBUH. In the Holy Quran there are several verses which deal with adherence of other religions. Indeed, there is a verse cited as the numerous guidelines that urge humanity to engage in meaningful social interaction. The verse of Al-Quran (Note 4) is quoted below:

“And vie with one another to attain your Sustainer’s forgiveness and to a paradise as vast as the heavens and the earth which has been readied for the God-conscious who spent (in His way) in time of plenty and in time of hardship, and hold in check their anger, and pardon their fellow men because God loves the doers of good” (Al-Quran, 3: 133-134).

There is a prominent *Hadith* which addresses the issue of relations among people. The *Hadith* is; “let him who believes in God and the Last Day either speak good or keep silent, let him who believes in God and the Last Day be generous to his neighbor, and let him who believes in God and the Last Day be generous to his guests” (Imam Nawawi, *Hadith* 15).

Islam is against all distinctions and discriminations based on race, color, nationality, language or caste. It brings all people together on a pure human basis and at the same time grants them full freedom to practice the religion of their choice. The Quran says: “There shall be no coercion in matters of faith. Distinct has now become the right way from (the way of) error: hence, he who rejects the powers of evil and believes in God has indeed taken hold of a support most unfailing, which shall never give way: for God is all-hearing, all-knowing.” (Al- Quran, 2:256).

The Quran also commands the Prophet Muhammad PBUH to tell the non-believers: “Say O you who deny the truth! I do not worship that which you worship, and neither do you worship that which I worship. And I will not worship that which you have (ever) worship, and neither will you (ever) worship that which I worship. Unto you your moral law, and unto me, mine.” (Al- Qur’En, 109: 1- 6). Based on this verse, Dr Muhammad Sharif Chaudry (2006: 90) in his work stressed that Prophet Muḥammad (*Īallallahu Ņalaihi wasallam*) gave absolute freedom to

the Jews and Christians of Najran of Madinah. This is formulated in the first constitution of Islam which is called *Salifah al-Madinah*, the Constitution of Madinah or also known as Charter of Madinah.

Likewise, Buddhism also promotes peace and harmonious way of living. Thus, in order to attain peace in this life, there is an attitude to be practiced among Buddhists which is tolerant. Professor Tachibana (1975) has commented over the ethical conduct of Buddha, regarding tolerant as ‘the Buddha himself was a person of a wonderful tolerant nature...he showed an unparalleled toleration...Even in the case in which his disciples committed offences, the Buddha never used any harsh language, but simply rebuked them gently for their committal...No angry words came out of his mouth in these time’ (Tachibana, 1975: 237-239).

In the case of social interaction, Buddhism taught and urged its adherents to engage in social interaction with all folks of humanity. In a guidebook called *Di Zi Gui* (Note 5) (2005), stated some Buddhism perspectives on social interaction are to attain a meaningful life. Those teachings are as follows;

“Human beings, regardless of nationality, race, or religion – everyone – should be loved equally. We are all sheltered by the same sky and we all live on the same planet earth” (*Di Zi Gui*, 2005: 65).

“A person of high ideals and morals is highly respected. What people value is not based on outside appearance” (*Di Zi Gui*, 2005: 65).

“A person’s outstanding abilities will naturally endow him with a good reputation. Admiration from others does not come from boasting or praising oneself” (*Di Zi Gui*, 2005: 65-66).

All of above statements show that the aim of Buddhism is to guide everyone to lead noble life without harming anyone, to cultivate humane qualities in order to maintain human dignity, to radiate all-embracing kindness without any discrimination and to train the mind to avoid evil and to purify the mind to gain peace and happiness.

7. MEASUREMENT PROCEDURES

The major concept of the study was social interaction. There are various elements to be indicators of measuring social interaction. Abdullah Bin Taib in his PhD dissertation (1978) highlighted 15 indicators to measure social interaction among Malay students in America. Those indicators were the Index of Social Position (ISP), occupational experience, education, religious education, age, sex, residence, marital status, overseas experience, “usra” attendance, ABIM membership, ideology, length of stay in the United States, goals of studying in the country and language competence (1978: 93). Meanwhile, Abdul Mu’min employed five indicators; group characteristics, generalized norms, everyday sociability, togetherness and costs and rewards (2006: 30-31). Thus, the indicator of social interaction in this study was religious understandings among the Muslims and Buddhists in Kampung Tendong. The detail explanations of the indicator is as follows:

7.1 Religious Understandings

These include the level of understanding over the respondents’ faith and faith of each other religion, namely Islam or Buddhism. The measurements are important to identify the frequent interaction among the religious and pious persons towards other religion and their understandings towards other religion. Religious understanding is important in formalizing a society. This is because receiving correct information about own religion and other religion would make life more meaningful because mutual understanding of the society could be achieved.

8. DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

The questionnaire provided information regarding social and demographic variables such as gender, academic level, religion, ethnic group, age, length of stay in Kampung Tendong, occupation, amount of salary and marital status. For the purpose of the study, religion was divided into two groups: Muslim, (67.1%) and Buddhist (32.9%). Academic level was categorized into five categories; none (2.9%), primary (13.7%), secondary (56.8%), Vocational and *Politeknik* (9.4%), and university (17.3%). Ethnic group included; Malay (65.5%), Chinese (32.4%), Siamese (0.7%), others (1.4%). Age was categorized into seven categories; 18 to 25 (25%), 26 to – 30 (20.7%), 31 to 35 (11.4%), 36 to 40 (17.1%), 41 to 45 (7.9%), 46 to 50 (7.1%), 51 and above (10.7%). While length of stay in Kampung Tendong was divided into six groups; less than two years (8%), 3 to 10 years (12.4%), 11 to 20 years (17.5%), 21 to – 30 years (34.3%), 31 to 40 years (10.9%), 41 and above (16.8%). Occupation included; unemployed (8.7%), student (10.1%), self-employed (45.6%), governmental sector (16.7%), and private sector (18.8%). Amount of salary was categorized into six categories; RM 0 to RM 300 (22.8%), RM 301 to RM 500 (19.1%), RM 501 to RM 800 (26.5%), RM 801 to RM 1200 (14.7%), RM 1201 to RM 1500 (5.1%), RM 1501 and above (11.8%). Meanwhile marital status included; bachelor (42.4%), married (56.1%), and divorce (1.4%). Lastly, gender consisted of male (68.6%) and female (31.4%).

9. MEASURING INTERACTION

Under this segment, the findings of the study of social interaction between Muslims and Buddhists in Kampung Tendong are presented in detailed. To measure social interaction between Muslims and Buddhists in Kampung Tendong, simple frequencies and percentages, as well as means is calculated. The discussions and interpretation would begin with the two indicators of measurement.

9.1 Religious Understandings

This segment is divided into two parts. The first is about intra-religious understandings which focus on one's own religious perspectives. How far it followers understand its teachings, tenets, and so on. So in this part, the religions under study are mainly Islam and Buddhism. Whereas, the second part stresses on the issue of inter-religious understandings of the community in Kampung Tendong. It focuses on the cross-religious understandings of the Muslims and the Buddhists; how Muslims perceive Buddhism and its adherents; and how Buddhists perceive Islam and its followers. These items were designed to answer the research question "What are the factors which make both ethnic groups interact? Are there hindrances which might disrupt positive religious interaction?"

The discussion of intra-religious understandings is essentially highlighted. The frequency distribution and percentages of the respondents' opinions towards four items designed to examine the intra-religious understandings of the respondents. The first item was to determine the level at which respondents understand their own religious teachings. Almost all of the respondents noted that they did know and understand their religious teachings, principles and the like. Specifically, 97% responded "yes" while, 3.33% reported that they did not really understand about their religious tenets.

In brief, the results of item one prevailed that almost all of the respondents were having enough information about their own religion. While, the results of item two showed that irrespective of the religion, there is small number of their followers who do not usually join the religious ceremony but indeed, they are believers of the religion.

In item two, 77.8% of the respondents frequently visited their house of worship for the purpose of fulfilling religious rituals. Whereas, 22.2% did not regularly go to their house of worship either mosque or temple. Table 1 below further illustrates this scenario.

Majority of the respondents did know and regularly practiced their religious obligations regardless of their religions, either Islam or Buddhism. Both parties showed that they are committed to their religious teachings. Hence, one could note that the Buddhists have full freedom to practice their religion in Kampung Tendong although they are small in number. A respondent who is an authority in Kampung Tendong gave his overall perceptions of his Chinese neighbors:

Chinese who are Buddhists in this village are religious persons and there is a special place - temple - for them to practice their religion. Their religious ceremonies and events do not disturb the Malays. Even if they - the Buddhists - ask permission to conduct several religious events I would permit them because there is no such racial tension arise from their ceremonies because these ceremonies have been practiced ever since.

Item three of 'intra-religious understandings' sought to find out whether respondents were committed in performing their religious duties. The results showed that 80.7% were committed while, 19.2% not that committed in fulfilling religious obligations.

With item four, respondents were asked whether they followed strictly their religious teachings. To this, 76.3% gave positive answer that they uphold their religious teachings strictly. As opposed to, 23.6% gave negative answer which noted that they were not a committed believer who followed religious obligations wholeheartedly.

Whereas in the second part of "religious understandings" is inter-religious understandings. In measuring inter-religious understandings, there were two patterns of questionnaires. The first was sought answers of "yes" and "no" while, the second, requested the respondents to select an appropriate answer based on the rating scale.

With these two kinds of questionnaires, there are five items which are regarded as collective perceptions of respondents in order to measure interaction of "religious understandings." Under these mutual perceptions, those five items are using the "yes" and "no" options. Then, the different types of questionnaires were administered to the Muslims and Buddhists. For the Muslims there were sixteen items used in measuring the level of understandings towards Buddhism. While, the Buddhists, attempted to twelve items only. Further analyses of this information are presented in three separate tables in order to indicate their findings.

At the beginning, the discussion would focus on the mutual perceptions of Muslims and Buddhists towards opposite believers. Under this part it contains five items, which sought to measure inter-religious understandings.

The first item attempted to find the extent of the respondents knowledge on other religious teachings like Buddhism or Islam. As it is observable in the table, nearly half of the respondents did know about other religions. However, majority of them agreed that they did not know about others' faith. Generally, 55.8% did not know while 44.2% knew about it. All particular details about these five items are as stated in table 2.

Item two further requested the respondents to verify whether they had ever learnt about other religion (i.e Buddhism or Islam). Of all respondents, 88.5% of them stressed that they never learnt about other religions. Only 11.5% persons in Kampung Tendong did learn about other religions. Out of these 16 respondents, 7.2% of the Buddhists admitted that had learnt about Islam while only 4.3% of the Muslims had learnt about Buddhism.

Item three looks for religious understandings of the respondents. That means the question was aimed at knowing one's understandings toward a religion. This issue is important in measuring the level of inter-religious understandings of the respondents.

Thus, the results showed that majority of 76.3% did not understand other religions at all. But only 23.7% of the respondents did know about other religions quite well. Therefore, it is confirmed that the community of Kampung Tendong did interact socially but on religion, majority of them did not know about one another.

The last item under 'inter-religious understandings' asked whether the respondents had ever read any readings about other faiths. As shown in the table, more than half of the respondents (51.1%) did not read any publication of other religions. Whereas, 48.9% noted that they did read other religions' publications. Approximately 60.9% of Buddhist respondents did read some works about Islam.

From item two to item seven of inter-religious understandings, it can be observed that the majority of the Muslim respondents did not know about the concepts and main doctrines of Buddhism. Only a small number of them claimed that they knew about these tenets. It can be argued that whether their understandings of these doctrines were similar to what is understood by the Buddhists. Their understanding is questionable whether they received proper information about Buddhism or vice versa.

For overall results of inter-religious understandings, majority of the responses, irrespective of Muslims or Buddhists said that they did not know about other religions and did not even learn or read any publication. Table 2 shows that the Buddhists know better about Islam more than the Muslims know about Buddhism. It is suggested that, they might need to read about Islam in order to understand the nature and attitude of the majority of Muslims around them. This would escape them from the circle of subordinate. (Note 6)

Furthermore, Islamic publications are easier to access compared to Buddhists publications. These works are easily found in bookstores or even in small business retail stores in which thousands of them are written in Malay language. In contrast, Buddhists publications are limited in number, difficult to find in the bookstores and scarcely written in Malay language. As stated by Osman Chuah Abdullah (2002), there is hardly any book explaining the concepts of *tawhid* (oneness of Allah *taala*) and the Islamic way of life in Malaysia in Chinese.

The scarcity of written texts on Buddhists information could contribute to the ignorance of Muslims understanding toward Buddhism. This ignorance would lead to the misconceptions of Muslims towards Buddhism.

The following information describes the perspectives of the Muslims and the Buddhists over their religious understandings towards Buddhism or Islam. The researcher used two patterns of questionnaires in exploring the findings. For the first pattern, there are nine items for the Muslims. While, there are seven items applied to Buddhists. Then, in second pattern, there are seven items addressed to Muslims and five to Buddhists. In total, sixteen items are for the Muslims and twelve for the Buddhists.

For the first nine items to the Muslims, the results showed that majority of the respondents did not know about Buddhism as a whole. The first item sought to examine whether the respondents did know anything about the holy book of Buddhism, 'The Wisdom Books of Tripitaka'. Only 4.2% of the respondents knew about it, then the rest 94.7% as the majority did not know about it.

The second item is aimed to find out whether respondents did understand about the concept of 'Nirvana' according to Buddhism. Again, the results discovered that the majority of 85.1% were not aware of it only a few of them, while 13.8% knew quite well about 'nirvana'.

In the third item, the respondents were asked to ascertain whether they know about 'Theravada' and 'Mahayana' of Buddhism. Nearly 90.4% of the respondents did not know about it compared to 8.5% who knew about the two school of thoughts of Buddhism.

Item four sought to find out whether the Muslim respondents know about the main doctrine of Buddhism that is the concept of 'Four Noble Truths'. The majority of 77.7% responded that they did not know about it, while 21.2% knew about the doctrine of 'Four Noble Truths' of Buddhism.

Item five was designed to identify whether the respondents were aware about the next doctrine of Buddhism, 'The Eight Fold Paths'. It is observed that the majority of the respondents did not know about the main doctrines of Buddhism. Precisely, 81.9% of them gave negative answer, while only 17% gave positive answer.

With item six, the question requested the respondents to verify whether they knew about the rule of Buddhism, 'The Ten Precepts'. The results revealed the same that majority of the Muslim respondents, (81.9%) did not know about it, while, only 17% reported that they knew about the concept of 'Ten Precepts'.

In item seven, 95.7% of the total Muslim respondents insisted that they did not know about the concept of 'Triratna' of Buddhism, while, 4.3% noted that they knew about it.

Item eight was to determine whether the respondents think that Buddhists worship an idol, which is the statue of Buddha. Surprisingly, majority of them with 75.5% did say that Buddhists do so, whereas, only 23.4% declined that Buddhists were not idol worshippers. All particular details of Muslims responses towards nine items of measuring religious understandings are presented in the table 4.11.

Responses of item eight is a good example of misconception that Muslims carry along with them towards Buddhism. In fact, Buddhists do not worship idol of Buddha, but they honor the statue as if the honorable Buddha is present in front of them. Another presupposition is that the study was conducted in rural area, thus, it can be considered that their general knowledge somehow is poor to that urban citizens. That is why there were a few who responded to item nine that Buddhism and Hinduism were of the same religion.

The last was to ascertain whether they think that Buddhism is similar to Hinduism. Almost 60.3% disagreed that Buddhism is similar to Hinduism but 35.1% of them did think so.

Below contains information pertaining to religious understandings of Muslims toward Buddhism based on seven items by using the second pattern of questionnaire, selecting answer based on a scale of one to five.

The first item was to ascertain Muslims whether they agreed that Buddhists' ethical concept is similar to that of Islam. It is observed that the majority of the respondents fall under disagreement rating scale. Precisely, 11.7% disagreed, while 33% strongly disagreed to the item. In other words, nearly half of the respondents disagreed, that is 44.7%, and only a small majority of 21.3% agreed. However, 31.9% of them were not certain of their responses. One could see that there was an approximately 31.9% who said that they were not sure whether Islam and Buddhism does share the same ethical concept. So again, due to the lack of general knowledge, they attempted to say they have no certain answers to this item.

Item two sought to examine whether Muslim respondents were aware that Buddhists are prohibited from committing vices and evils in the world. As shown in the table 4.12, 66% of the respondents agreed with the statement 22.3% were uncertain, and 9.6% disagreed. All particular details of these items are explain in table 4:

The third item under "religious understandings" was to determine whether the respondents were aware that Buddhists are prohibited from consuming liquor. It showed that 49% answered in affirmative to this item, 30.9% were uncertain and 17% cogently disapproved.

Item four, then, sought to establish a clear understanding whether Muslims notice that Buddhists are prohibited from eating pork. About 37.2% were uncertain, 35.1% declined, while 24.5% affirmed and strongly agreed.

Item five sought to know whether the respondents think that Buddhists are vegetarians. Almost 36.2% of the respondents were not sure of it, 31.9% were not only disagreed but strongly disagreed, whereas, 28.7% strongly agreed.

From item one to six, the uncertainty was quite high. It shows that Muslims of Kampung Tendong were not sure about the main doctrines of Buddhism. Moreover, majority of them also did not know about it at all. Once again, this situation reflects that the Muslims do not know anything about Buddhism and their ignorance leads to wrong perception on Buddhism.

Item six aimed to find out whether respondents considered Buddhists practice caste system in their social hierarchy. It can be observed that majority of them, 51.1% gave unsure answer, 30.8% disagreed whereas, 12.8% agreed.

Item seven required the respondents to justify whether Buddhism is a man-made religion or a divine religion. It is illustrated that the majority of 75.5% did strongly approved that Buddhism is a man-made religion, 14.9% were uncertain, whereas 5.3% disapproved.

In the case of the Buddhists, for the first pattern of questionnaire, there were seven items used. Whereas, there were five items used in the second pattern of questionnaire.

The first item sought to examine whether the Buddhists did understand the meaning of '*JihÉd*' according to Islamic point of view. The results revealed that majority of them, 54.3% did not know about it, whereas, 45.7% knew about it.

Item two requested the respondents to verify whether they understand the meaning of '*Halal*'. Generally, almost all of them did understand the meaning of '*Halal*'. Precisely, 93.5% gave positive respond, whereas 6.5% responded negatively. Again, the Buddhists understanding towards the meaning of '*Halal*' here is subjected for further investigation.

In item three, the question was further aimed to justify the Buddhists understanding towards the meaning of '*Haram*'. The results revealed the same as previously where the majority of 93.5% approved of their understanding, while, only 6.5% responded that they did not know about it.

Item four sought to know whether the respondents know about the major sins of Islam. Almost 69.6% of the respondents stressed that they knew about it very well. Only 30.4% respondents in Kampung Tendong did not know about the 'dos' and 'dents' according to Islam.

All particular details about these seven items are as shown in table 4.13:

Item five was designed to identify whether the respondents were aware about the meaning of '*Khurafat*' according to Islam. It is observed that the majority of the respondents did not know about that specific rule of Islam. Precisely, 73.9% of them gave negative answer while only 26.1% gave positive answer that they knew about it.

For item six, the question requested the respondents to verify whether they know about the rule of Islam, 'The Pillars of Islam' or 'Rukun Islam'. The majority of Muslim respondents who do not know about it (82.6%), while, 17.4% reported that they knew about the doctrine of 'The Pillars of Islam'.

The last item attempted to find out the extent to which the respondents understood 'The Pillars of Iman' or 'Rukun Iman' of Islam. Once again, the results revealed the same as previously where the majority of 93.5% understood of their understanding, while only 6.5% responded that they did not know about 'Rukun Iman'.

In the next part, five items are identified to explore the inter-religious understandings of Buddhists towards Islam. The first item was to ascertain Buddhists' agreement on Islamic faith that Muslims are not allowed to commit vices and do evils actions in this world. It is observed that the majority of the respondents fall under the agreement rating scale. Precisely, 14.6% agreed, while 35.4% strongly agreed to the item.

Item two sought to examine whether Buddhist respondents were aware that Muslims are prohibited from consuming liquor. The results imply that majority of them agreed that Muslims are prohibited from consuming liquor. Specifically, 56.3% of the respondents agreed with item two, 6.3% were uncertain, and another 6.3% disagreed.

The third item was to determine whether the Buddhists were aware that Muslims are prohibited from consuming pork. About 52.1% affirmed that Muslims should not eat pork. The rest, 8.3% were declined and another 8.3% were uncertain of the statement.

Item four, then, sought to establish a clear understanding whether Buddhists notice that Muslims are vegetarians. Nearly 27.1% of the respondents were not sure of the item, 22.9% disagreed, whereas 12.5% strongly disagreed.

For item one to four, there were huge percentages which claimed that they knew about Islam. These figures are questionable because one might question whether the Buddhists do understand the items as similar to what the Muslims understood. Some might argue that their level of understandings were limited and indeed would not understand the real concept as what being understood by the Muslims.

With item five, the aim was to find out whether respondents consider Muslims as worshipers of Muhammad. It can be observed that majority of them, 18.8% agreed whereas 6.3% strongly agreed. On the other hand 16.7%

gave unsure answer, 12.5% strongly disagreed and 8.3% disagreed. The responses for 'uncertain' was quite high. It shows that the Buddhists of Kampung Tendong were not sure whether Islam is about worshipping Muhammad or something else. Moreover, majority of them gave wrong answer by saying that Muslims did worship Muhammad. Hence, one could make a simple assumption that Buddhists do not really know much about the religion of Islam. This ignorance, again, might lead to misinterpretation about Islam.

One could assume that folks of Kampung Tendong live in peace and harmony. This peaceful and harmonious life is achieved through strong relationship of the two communities – Muslims and Buddhists. In other words, their social ties are strong. However, when it comes to religions both did not seem to understand each other. One probability is that religious ignorance towards other religions leads to misjudging of the religion. This phenomenon if not be tackled sooner, will jeopardize their relationship in a long period of time.

A detailed analysis on Buddhists responses towards religious understandings is presented in table 5:

Nowadays, these two religious groups are enjoying harmonious life because of their strict commitment to their religions. Both religions promote the same values of living beings, such as give full respect to the elders, not to quarrel against them, listen to their words and so on. These shared universal values could bind their social relationship together. The results prevailed that their low level of inter-religious understandings would not harm their close relationship. This is because one possible prediction, people of Kampung Tendong adhere to their religions. When both parties, the Muslims and Buddhists strongly uphold their religions, tolerant could be achieved because both religions promote high tolerant towards other beings. So, as a result of their religiousness, they are in directly practice great tolerant in their life. On the other hand, what would happen once they have neglected their religious obligations and norms in future.

Thus, in order to ensure their peaceful condition of life, both parties must learn to understand each other's religion. Once they have achieved this, mutual understanding of the two groups could be attained. This mutual understanding, then, could set a way to build up their social relation. By so doing, they definitely could eliminate those misconceptions that they might have.

10. CONCLUSIONS

In the previous discussion, the one indicator of social interaction is used it is religious understandings which is briefly explained below:

Based on previous discussions, under the religious understandings, there were two important things to discuss. Both groups, either Muslims or Buddhists were having good understandings of their own religions and this deep understanding is not a disruptive aspect to their relationship. Furthermore, in term of the lack of understandings in other religious teachings would not also a determinant to hinder their positive interaction. In short, religious difference would not break but rather enhance and strengthen the good relationship of the two groups. The main reason is due to the shared values that their religions have in common.

The study discovered that, the possible variable that facilitates interaction is universal values shared by the two religions – Islam and Buddhism. These similarities would bind their relationship together and tightly bonded.

On the other hand, the study also found that the possible destructive element to their relationship is that trivial religious issues. These issues are the sole factor that could discourage close relationships among them. However, it could not break the strong ties among them. Why? Possible answer is the concept of universal values that shared by both religions that drive their good relationship.

Lastly, the result of the study yielded an affirmation towards the process of assimilation. The above two mentioned reasons are the best explanations of the assimilation process in Kampung Tendong.

Most importantly, universal values are the sole factor that binds Muslims and Buddhists in Kampung Tendong tightly. They freely interact with each other because their religious faiths encourage them to do so. Thus, if they tightly adhere to the religion, peaceful co-existence among them would enhance.

As a conclusion, one might say that the residents of Kampung Tendong were having positive interaction between the two groups, namely Muslims and Buddhists. Even though they have huge differences of religious beliefs, cultures, norms and practices yet it could not break or even shaken the closed relationship that they have. Uniquely, there is no conflict or collision case reported by the local government or authorities. It shows that they were having good interaction with each other.

In line with the findings, the suggestions below may be useful for policy-makers, especially regarding the interactions between Muslims and Buddhists in Kampung Tendong.

In the first place, the lack of collective activities designed for the Muslims and the Buddhists in Kampung Tendong did not hinder interaction among them. This may be due to the everyday interaction between them. The Buddhists cannot isolate themselves from the large majority of Muslims. They use to settle among Muslims, work together and most of the time sharing leisure times together. Their daily social activities do promote interaction.

However, the existence of collective activities and programs that promote interaction particularly between the Muslims and the Buddhists in Kampung Tendong should be frequently organized by the authority and by the residents themselves. These programs aimed at bringing Muslims and their Buddhists counterparts would further deepen the willingness of those who are already engaged in interactions and the few reluctant ones to interact.

In the second place, the discussion of Islamic principles of brotherhood and unity should be one of the main issues during Friday sermon (*khuḷbah jum'at*). It should also be discussed in various religious talks. The religious leaders should be encouraged to educate and remind the Muslim residents about the need to constantly observe the Islamic values on human interactions (Abdul Mu'min, 2006: 68). Muslim residents should pay precaution attention to social interaction, especially to Buddhists. This is because the study found a group of the Muslim respondents 11.4% faced problems in their relationship with the Buddhists in comparison to the Buddhists with 1.5%.

In the third place, the leaders, either religious or social leaders, should play an exemplary role in promoting interaction among the residents of Kampung Tendong. They have a responsibility to stress on the issue of interaction to the masses by developing awareness, knowledge and skills of uniting them into one cohesive group. They must acknowledge that all individuals are equal and share the same characteristics of homo-sapiens regardless of their religions.

Indeed, the researcher believes that if these suggestions are taken into considerations by the authorities and the residents, themselves, they might help to improve social interaction among them.

References

- Abdo A. Elkholy. (1960). *Religion and assimilation in two muslim communities in America*. PhD Dissertation, Princeton University.
- Abdul Mu'min Abdulai. (2006). A sociological study of the quality of interaction between muslim and non-muslim students at IIUM. International Islamic University Malaysia: Unpublished Master thesis.
- Abdullah Bin Taib. (1978). *Malay students on an american campus: a study of social interaction, ethnicity and islamic ideology*. PhD Dissertation, University of Kentucky.
- Babbie, E. R. (2001). *The practice of social research* (9th ed.) Belmont, California: Wadsworth Thomson Learning.
- Bailey, K. D. (1987). *Methods of social research*. New York: Macmillan Publishers.
- Borgatta, E. F. and Marie L. Borgatta. (1992). *Improving inter-cultural interactions: models for cross-cultural training programs*. California: Sage Publications.
- Dhammapada*: Verses on Dharma. (1931). Rhys Davids. (ed. & trans.). London: Oxford University Press.
- Di Zi Gui: Guide to a happy life*. (2005). Pure Land Learning College Assn. Inc. Toowoomba. Australia: Pure Land Books.
- Farley, J. E. (1995). *Majority - minority relations*. (3rd ed). USA: Prentice Hall.
- Fasching, D. J. and deChant, D. (2001). *Comparative religious ethics: a narrative approach*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Frithjof Schuon. (1989). *In the tracks of buddhism*. London: Unwin Paperbacks.
- Gard, R. A. ed. (1962). *Buddhism*. New York: George Braziller.
- Hanapi Dollah. (1986). *Assimilasi Budaya: kajian kes komuniti Cina di Kelantan*. Bangi: Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia.
- Hariri, Y. S. (1980). *Studi perbandingan tentang hidup sesudah mati menurut ajaran agama Buddha dan Islam*. Jakarta: Inst. Agama Islam Negeri Sharif Hidayatullah.
- Hosein, Imran N. (1972). *Islam and Buddhism in the modern world*. New York: Masjid Dar al-Quran.
- Imam Nawawi's collection of forty Hadith: Arabic text, translation and notes*. (1996). Kuala Lumpur: Islamic Book Trust.

- Ismail Raji Al-Faruqi. (1998). *Islam and other faiths*. ed. Ataullah Siddiqui. USA: The International Institute of Islamic Thought and The Islamic Foundation.
- Izutsu, Toshihiko. (1966). *Ethico-religious concepts in the Qur'ān*. Montreal: McGill University Press.
- Jary, D. and Julia Jary. (1991). *The Harper Collins dictionary of sociology*. New York: Harper Collins Publishers.
- Kessler, C. S. (1978). *Islam and politics in a Malay state: Kelantan 1838-1969*. London: Cornell University Press.
- McDonald, H. (1984). *The ethics of comparative religion*. Lanham, MD.: University Press of America.
- Mohamed Yusoff Ismail. (1993). *Buddhism and ethnicity: social organization of a Buddhist temple in Kelantan*. Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies.
- Morgan, P. & Clive Lawton. (eds.). (1996). *Ethical Issues in Six Religious Traditions*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press Ltd.
- Muhammad Asad. (1980). *The message of the Quran*. Gibraltar: Dar Al-Andalus.
- Muhammad Sharif Chaudhry. (2006). *Social and moral code of Islam*. Kuala Lumpur: Masterpiece Publication Sdn. Bhd.
- Nachmias, C. F. and David Nachmias. (1996). *Research methods in the social sciences*. New York: St. Martin's Press.
- Narada. (2006). *The Buddha and his teachings*. Mumbai: Jaico Publishing House.
- Osman Chuah Abdullah. (2002). *Preaching to the non-muslim Chinese in Malaysia*. Kuala Lumpur: Research Centre, International Islamic University Malaysia.
- Population and Housing Census of Malaysia. (2000). Kuala Lumpur: Department of Statistics Malaysia.
- Prasert Yenprasit. (2004). *The Concept of man in Theravada Buddhism and Islam: a comparative study*. International Islamic University Malaysia: Unpublished Master thesis.
- Ramatou Mahamat Houtouin. (2005). A study of social integration among students at IIUM. International Islamic University Malaysia: Unpublished Master thesis.
- Roff, W. R. (1974). *Kelantan: religion, society, and politics in a Malay state*. London: Oxford University Press.
- S. Hadi Abdullah. ed. (2004). *Universal values and human renewal a reader*. Kuala Lumpur: Malaysian Institute of Management.
- Sharpe, E. J. (1986). *Comparative religion: a history*. (2nd edn). Illinois: Open Court.
- Stephen W. L. J. (1999). *Theories of human communication*. Belmont: Wadsworth Publishing Company.
- Tachibana, S. (1975). *The ethics of Buddhism*. London: Curzon Press.
- Tan Teong Jin, Ho Wah Foon, & Tan Joo Lan. (2005). *The Chinese Malaysian contribution*. Kuala Lumpur: Centre for Malaysian Chinese Studies.
- Turner, J. H. (1988). *A theory of social interaction*. California: Stanford University Press.
- Ven Dr K Sri Dhammananda. (2007). *Buddhist attitude towards other religions*. Kuala Lumpur: Buddhist Missionary Society.
- Wikipedia. *Assimilation*. [Online] Available: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Universal_values (16th May 2007)
- Wikipedia. *Universal Values*. [Online] Available: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Assimilation> (16th May 2007)
- Winick, C. (1956). *Dictionary of anthropology*. New York: Philosophical Library, Inc.
- Winthrop, R. H. (1991). *Dictionary of concepts in cultural anthropology*. USA: Greenwood Press.
- Winzeler, R. L. (1985). *Ethnic relations in Kelantan: A Study of Thai as Ethnic Minorities in a Malay State*. Singapore: Oxford University Press.

Notes

Note 1. According to Federal Constitution of Malaysia, Malays are those who confess Islam, speak Malay language, practice Malay culture and those who were born before or on the Independent Day of the Federal or Singapore and settle in Federal or Singapore. See *Perlembagaan Malaysia*, Kuala Lumpur: International Law Book Services.

Note 2. Chinese populations of Southeast Asia or outside China are a set of distinct communities linked by language and culture to the mainland Chinese society, but in many respects are very different from that natal society. See Teo Kok Seong (2003: 1).

Note 3. Siamese refers to the native of Siam which is now known as Thailand. Thailand is situated in the north of Kelantan. Because of this closed location to Kelantan, Siamese are easily found in various places of Kelantan.

Note 4. All Qur'anic translation of this work please refers to *The Message of The Qur'an* by Muhammad Asad.

Note 5. *Di Zi Gui* in English means standards for being a good student and child. It is the guide to a happy life.

Note 6. By so doing, the minority group would escape themselves from the circle of subordinate. The world today is having two patterns of human beings, one is dominant and the other one is subordinate. If a person in a circle of subordinate, he is dominated by the dominant or the superior. The dominant is defined by Farley (1995:8) the majority group being regarded as the dominant while the minority group is claimed to be the subordinate.

Table 1. Measuring Interaction: "Intra-Religious Understandings"

	Response	Muslims		Buddhists		Total	
		N.	%	N.	%	N.	%
Do you understand your religious teachings?	1. Yes	86	63.7	45	33.3	131	97
	2. No	3	2.2	1	1.1	4	3.33
	Total	89	65.9	46	34.1*	135	100
Do you frequently visit your house of worship (i.e mosque or temple)?	1. Yes	61	45.2	44	32.6	105	77.8
	2. No	28	20.7	2	1.5	30	22.2
	Total	89	65.9	46	34.1*	135	100
Are you committed in performing your religious duty?	1. Yes	75	55.6	34	25.2	109	80.7
	2. No	14	10.3	12	8.9	26	19.2
	Total	89	65.9	46	34.1	135	100
Do you follow strictly your religious teachings?	1. Yes	70	51.9	33	24.4	103	76.3
	2. No	19	14	13	9.6	32	23.6
	Total	89	65.9	46	34.1*	135	100

Note: * Decimals have been rounded off.

Table 2. Measuring Interaction: "Inter-Religious Understandings"

	Response	Muslims		Buddhists		Total	
		N.	%	N.	%	N.	%
Do you know other religious teachings like Buddhism/ Islam?	1. Yes	30	21.7	31	22.5	61	44.2
	2. No	62	44.9	15	10.8	77	55.8*
	Total	92	66.7*	46	33.3	138	100
Have you ever learned about Buddhism/ Islam?	1. Yes	6	4.3	10	7.2	16	11.5
	2. No	87	62.6	36	25.9	123	88.5
	Total	93	66.9	46	33.1	139	100
Do you understand Buddhist / Islamic teachings?	1. Yes	14	10.1	19	13.7	33	23.7*
	2. No	79	56.8	47	33.8	106	76.3*
	Total	93	66.9	46	33.1*	139	100

Do you feel comfortable with Buddhist/ Islamic teachings surrounding you?	1. Yes	22	16.7	19	14.4	41	31.1
	2. No	71	53.8	20	15.2	91	68.9*
	Total	93	70.5	39	29.5*	132	100
Have you ever read any books about Buddhism/ Islam?	1. Yes	36	27.5	28	21.4	64	48.9
	2. No	56	42.7	11	8.4	67	51.1
	Total	92	70.2	39	29.8	131	100

Note: * Decimals have been rounded off.

Table 3. Measuring Interaction: “Religious Understandings” (based on the Muslims responses)

	Response	Muslims	
		N.	%
Do you know anything about ‘The Wisdom Books of Tripitaka’ of Buddhism?	1. Yes	4	4.2
	2. No	89	94.7
	Total	93	98.9
Do you understand the concept of ‘Nirvana’ according to Buddhism?	1. Yes	13	13.8
	2. No	80	85.1
	Total	93	98.9
Do you know about Theravada and Mahayana Buddhism?	1. Yes	8	8.5
	2. No	85	90.4
	Total	93	98.9
Do you know about ‘Four Noble Truths’ of Buddhism?	1. Yes	20	21.2
	2. No	73	77.7
	Total	93	98.9
Do you know about ‘Eight Fold Paths’ of Buddhism?	1. Yes	16	17
	2. No	77	81.9
	Total	93	98.9
Do you know about ‘Ten Precepts’ of Buddhism?	1. Yes	16	17
	2. No	77	81.9
	Total	93	98.9
Do you know about ‘Triratna’ of Buddhism?	1. Yes	4	4.3
	2. No	90	95.7
	Total	94	100
Do you think that Buddhists worship the statue of Buddha?	1. Yes	71	75.5
	2. No	22	23.4
	Total	93	98.9
Do you think that Buddhism is similar to Hinduism?	1. Yes	33	35.1
	2. No	60	63.8
	Total	93	98.9

Table 4. Measuring Interaction: “Religious Understandings” (based on the 5 point Likert scale from the Muslims responses)

	Response	Muslims		
		N.	%	
Do you agree that Buddhists' ethical concept is similar to Islam?	1. Strongly Disagree	31	33	Mean Score= 2.4348
	2. Disagree	11	11.7	
	3. Uncertain	30	31.9	
	4. Agree	19	20.2	
	5. Strongly Agree	1	1.1	
	Total	92	97.9	
Do you agree that Buddhists are prohibited from committing vices in this world?	1. Strongly Disagree	4	4.3	Mean Score= 3.7826
	2. Disagree	5	5.3	
	3. Uncertain	21	22.3	
	4. Agree	39	41.5	
	5. Strongly Agree	23	24.5	
	Total	92	97.9	
Do you agree that Buddhists are prohibited from consuming liquor?	1. Strongly Disagree	9	9.6	Mean Score= 3.4176
	2. Disagree	7	7.4	
	3. Uncertain	29	30.9	
	4. Agree	29	30.9	
	5. Strongly Agree	17	18.1	
	Total	91	96.8	
Do you agree that Buddhists are prohibited from consuming pork /swine?	1. Strongly Disagree	16	17	Mean Score= 2.8791
	2. Disagree	17	18.1	
	3. Uncertain	35	37.2	
	4. Agree	8	8.5	
	5. Strongly Agree	15	16	
	Total	91	96.8	
Do you agree that Buddhists are vegetarian?	1. Strongly Disagree	11	11.7	Mean Score= 2.9341
	2. Disagree	19	20.2	
	3. Uncertain	34	36.2	
	4. Agree	19	20.2	
	5. Strongly Agree	8	8.5	
	Total	91	96.8	

Do you agree that Buddhists are practicing caste system?	1. Strongly Disagree	18	19.1	Mean Score= 2.6180
	2. Disagree	11	11.7	
	3. Uncertain	48	51.1	
	4. Agree	11	11.7	
	5. Strongly Agree	1	1.1	
	Total	89	94.7	
Do you agree that Buddhism is a man-made religion (a religion which is not ordained by God)?	1. Strongly Disagree	2	2.1	Mean Score= 4.2667
	2. Disagree	3	3.2	
	3. Uncertain	14	14.9	
	4. Agree	21	22.3	
	5. Strongly Agree	50	53.2	
	Total	90	95.7	

Table 4.1. Measuring Interaction: "Religious Understandings" (based on the Buddhists responses)

	Response	Buddhists	
		N.	%
Do you understand the meaning of 'Jihad' according to Islam?	1. Yes	21	45.7
	2. No	25	54.3
	Total	46	100
Do you understand the meaning of 'Halal' according to Islam?	1. Yes	43	93.5
	2. No	3	6.5
	Total	46	100
Do you understand the meaning of 'Haram' according to Islam?	1. Yes	43	93.5
	2. No	3	6.5
	Total	46	100
Do you understand the concept of major sins of Islam?	1. Yes	32	69.6
	2. No	14	30.4
	Total	46	100
Do you understand the meaning of 'Khurafat' according to Islam?	1. Yes	12	26.1
	2. No	34	73.9
	Total	46	100
Do you understand the 'Pillars of Islam' or 'Rukun Islam'?	1. Yes	8	17.4
	2. No	38	82.6
	Total	46	100
Do you understand the 'Pillars of Iman' or 'Rukun Iman'?	1. Yes	8	17.4
	2. No	36	82.6
	Total	46	100

Table 5. Measuring Interaction: “Religious Understandings” (based on the 5 point Likert scale from the Buddhists responses)

	Response	Buddhists		
		N.	%	
Do you agree that Muslims are prohibited from committing vices in this world?	1. Strongly Disagree	5	10.4	Mean Score= 3.9688
	2. Disagree	0	0	
	3. Uncertain	3	6.3	
	4. Agree	7	14.6	
	5. Strongly Agree	17	35.4	
	Total	32	66.7	
Do you agree that Muslims are prohibited from consuming liquor?	1. Strongly Disagree	2	4.2	Mean Score= 4.2727
	2. Disagree	1	2.1	
	3. Uncertain	3	6.3	
	4. Agree	7	14.6	
	5. Strongly Agree	20	41.7	
	Total	33	68.8	
Do you agree that Muslims are prohibited from consuming pork/ swine?	1. Strongly Disagree	3	6.3	Mean Score= 4.1818
	2. Disagree	1	2.1	
	3. Uncertain	4	8.3	
	4. Agree	4	8.3	
	5. Strongly Agree	21	43.8	
	Total	33	68.8	
Do you agree that Muslims are vegetarian?	1. Strongly Disagree	6	12.5	Mean Score= 2.2333
	2. Disagree	11	22.9	
	3. Uncertain	13	27.1	
	4. Agree			
	5. Strongly Agree			
	Total	30	62.5	
Do you agree that Muslims are worshipping Muhammad?	1. Strongly Disagree	6	12.5	Mean Score= 2.9667
	2. Disagree	4	8.3	
	3. Uncertain	8	16.7	
	4. Agree	9	18.8	
	5. Strongly Agree	3	6.3	
	Total	30	62.5	