

Relationship between Knowledge, Attitude, and Religiosity with the Intention to Provide *Halal* Maintenance among Muslim Fathers in Malaysia

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ABSTRACT

In Islam, fathers have a primary duty to provide for *halal* maintenance, education and good guidance to develop their children into a righteous and respectable person. Statistics from the Syariah Court of Terengganu showed 1371 cases of noncompliance with maintenance order filed between 2010 to 2016 and eight fathers had been ordered to be imprisoned for failure to do so. This study was conducted to determine the relationship between Muslim fathers' knowledge, attitude, religiosity and the intention to provide *halal* maintenance to the family. A total of 353 fathers participated in this study. Descriptive and inferential statistics were used to analyse data. Result revealed that there were significant and positive relationships between knowledge, attitude and religiosity with the intention to provide *halal* maintenance. The findings implied that knowledge, attitude and religiosity influence fathers in their decision to provide *halal* maintenance to their families. Therefore, an increase in knowledge, attitude, and religiosity, will increase the level of intention to provide *halal* maintenance to the family.

Keywords: Attitude, fathers, *halal* maintenance, knowledge, religiosity

INTRODUCTION

Appropriate functioning of the family constitutes the foundation of human civilisation and stability of society. Muslim legal theorists agree that protection of lineage and safeguarding family values are the purposes of Islamic law (*maqasid al Shariah*). Islamic law has a rich heritage of rights and obligation. Furthermore, it

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considers the role of faith and sanctions equally important in the performance of an obligation. It is the responsibility of human being to carry the trust (*amanah*) and duties as entrusted by Allah S.W.T to the benefit of others. Therefore, fulfilling responsibilities as required by the Islamic law are closely associated with rewards and the failure to perform is a sin.

The family has a special status in Islam because it is the nucleus and cradle of the society. This means that the development and well-being of society will depend on how the family institution is structured and cared for. Islam has a significant focus on family and development, providing safeguards, seeing to it that family is a point of comfort and relaxation, strengthening the relationship between the husband and wife, protecting the next generation, guiding the children and minimising marital woes and disruption. Thus, a valid marriage is the backbone of the family structure in Islam which must be upheld in accordance with *Shariah*. Both husband and wife have rights and duties which are legally enforceable. These rights and duties are performed in an atmosphere of love and respect. Moreover, Islam provides a framework for the balance of family life and the fulfilment of both spouses.

While the family is the basis of society and civilisation, the relationship of husband and wife and defining their mutual rights and obligations is the basis of family life. Both husband and wife are assigned specific roles and function to ensure the working of a happy and blessed family (*sakinah*

mawaddah wa rahmah). The husband is the head of household and provider of *halal* maintenance to his dependents while the wife is responsible for looking after the domestic aspects of the family. In addition, the parents are also required to teach their children about the Oneness of Allah, the Qur'anic mandates and principles, the Prophets and their teachings, and the ethical code of Islam according to the Qur'an and the teachings of the Prophet Muhammad S.A.W. It is clear therefore there has to be cooperation between husband and wife or father and mother in building an Islamic (*halal*) family.

Contemporary Muslim scholars define maintenance as provision of food, clothing, accommodation and any kind of necessary services based on the custom of the society (Badrudin & Azizah, 2007; Sha'ban, 1993). Providing maintenance to the family by the husband is compulsory and has been sanctioned by various verses (*ayat*) in the Qur'an as well as the hadith. The absolute burden of maintenance of a wife (as well as family) is placed on the husband whatever the wife's own wealth and income may be. They also become the general guideline to Muslims throughout the world on maintenance of the family. Among the most important one is the verse in Surah al-Nisa':34 which states:

“Men are the protectors and maintainer of women because Allah has given the one more strength than the other and because they support them from their means”.

(Surah al-Nisa, 34)

In one hadith narrated by Jabir (R.A.), the Prophet Muhammad S.A.W. in his final sermon said:

“Fear Allah concerning women! Verily you have taken them on the security of Allah, and intercourse with them has been made lawful unto you by words of Allah. You too have rights over them, and that they should not allow anyone to sit on your bed [i.e., not let them into the house] whom you do not like. But if they do that, you can chastise them but not severely. Their rights upon you are that you should provide them with food and clothing in a fitting manner...”
(Sahih Muslim, Kitab al-Haj, 1218)

The provision of maintenance (*nafaqah*) by a husband to the family is a responsibility that must be fulfilled (Ahmad, 2007; Mimi Kamariah, 1999; Najibah et al., 2016) and has been legislated in Islamic Family Law in Malaysia. The current Islamic Family Law in Malaysia stipulates that the court may, relying on hukum *syara'*, order a man to pay maintenance to his wife or former wife. However, a wife shall not be entitled to maintenance when she is *nusyuz* or unreasonably refuses to obey the lawful wishes or commands of her husband (section 59 of the Islamic Family Law Act (Federal Territories) 1984 (IFLA 1984)).

The relationship between parents and children gives rise to mutual rights and duties according to *maqasid shariah*. These rights relate to the protection, care, and

maintenance of the child ('Abdur Rahman, 2002). To take good care of children and show compassion toward them is one of the most commendable deeds in Islam. Thus, responsibility for the child's welfare is a question of first priority for every parent.

It is a crucial part of the Islamic faith that Muslim consumes only *halal* food. Therefore, it is incumbent on the father/husband to seek *halal* earning and ensure that only *halal* food is consumed by the family. In a hadith narrated by Abdullah Ibn Mas'ud, the Prophet S.A.W was reported as saying, "Seeking *halal* earning is a duty after the duty." This *hadith* clearly specifies that finding a *halal* job is an obligation of a father after his other fundamental religious obligations, such as *solat* (prayer), *zakat* (giving alms) and *hajj* (pilgrimage to Makkah).

The following are some of verses of the Qur'an and *hadith* which clearly explain the importance of *halal* food and its impact on Muslim:

“O mankind! Eat of that which is lawful and good on the earth, and follow not the footsteps of Shaitan. Verily, he is to you an open enemy.”
(Surah al-Baqarah: 168)

In a *hadith* narrated by Abu Hurairah (May Allah be pleased with him), the Prophet S.A.W was reported to say,

“O people! Allah is Pure and, therefore, accepts only that which is pure. Allah has commanded the believers as He has commanded

His Messengers by saying: 'O Messengers! Eat of the good things, and do good deeds.' (Surah al-An'am: 51) And He said: 'O you who believe (in the Oneness of Allah)! Eat of the lawful things that We have provided you...'" (Surah Al-Baqarah: 172). Then the Prophet S.A.W made a mention of the person who travels for a long period of time, his hair is disheveled and covered with dust. He lifts his hand towards the sky and thus makes the supplication: 'My Rabb! My Rabb!' But his food is unlawful, his drink is unlawful, his clothes are unlawful and his nourishment is unlawful, how can, then his supplication be accepted." (Sahih Muslim: 2214)

Why does Islam emphasis on *halal* earning and *halal* food? From the above verses of the Qur'an and *hadith*, it is clear that *halal* earning will enable father/husband to provide *halal* maintenance to the family. This will lead to *halal* food consumption. *Halal* food consumption is one of the tenets set by Islam to ascertain the quality of faith and it is also an act of worship (*ibadah*) - doing what is enjoined and restraining from what is prohibited (Ghazali & Md. Sawari, 2014). Empirical studies have pointed to the relationship between quality of diet and mental disorders such as depression and anxiety among children and adult (Miller, 2015). *Halal* food which is pure in nature, ensures good health and purifies the heart and activates it to do good deeds. In other

words, the benefits of consuming *halal* food among others will boost the development of Islamic *akhlak* (disposition) among the Muslims, increasing the chances that the *du'a* (supplication) will be accepted by Allah S.W.T. and protect themselves from vices.

The legal provisions on the husband's duty to provide maintenance to children, under the current Islamic family law in Malaysia can be found in section 72 of IFLA 1984. The duty of the father to maintain his children does not end with a divorce, whether he has custodial rights or whether the children have reached the age of majority. In the case of *Sharifah Sapoyah v. Wan Alwi* (1989) 2 JH 259, the court held that the father must maintain his three children until they reach 18 years old. Furthermore, section 79 of IFLA 1984 provides that the court has the power to extend the duration of financial support until the child completes his tertiary education. Parental responsibilities are one of the important elements which have been identified by Islamic law as it connotes legal and moral obligation throughout the children's lives.

Section 61 of IFLA 1984 provides that: "In determining the amount of any maintenance to be paid, the Court shall base its assessment primarily on the means and needs of the parties, regardless of the proportion the maintenance bears to the income of the person against whom the order is made". A similar provision can be found in other Islamic Family Law Enactments in Malaysia such as in Selangor

Islamic Family Law Enactments 2003 as provided for under section 6. Therefore, providing financial support is considered as a religious obligation and can be legally enforceable.

According to Najibah (2007), many Muslim husbands have no clear knowledge of the meaning of maintenance (*nafqah*) and the duties to provide it and some of them even feel that they are not duty bound to maintain a working wife as she has her own lifeline (to support herself). Thus, claims for maintenance had been brought by wife and former wife to the Shariah Courts in Malaysia. Zainoor (2009), Najibah (2007), Zaleha, Roziana and Noorfaizah (2005), and Norasmaliah (2000) also found that there were fathers who had a negative attitude with regards to their duties to provide maintenance to the children after divorce to the extent that they refuse to comply with the court's order to pay for child support. This has caused financial hardship to the single mothers who are given custody of the children upon divorce. Furthermore, the reluctance of a non-custodial father to establish contact with his children further aggravates the issue of non-payment of maintenance of the children after divorce.

Religiosity and spirituality provide the context from which couples can view marriage and parenting as deserving their attention. This can lead to better family interactions and cohesiveness while decreasing the risk of divorce, marital discord, unfaithfulness, violence, and abuse in the family. Spilman, Neppl, Donnellan, Schofield and Conger (2013) revealed that

religiosity acts as a personal resource that is uniquely and positively associated with the quality of family relationships. Their findings support the role of religiosity in a developmental process that promotes positive family functioning. Family religiosity was also found to be the strongest predictor of family functioning for parents (Agate, Zabriskie, & Eggett, 2007). These findings imply that religious couple will perform their functions better. The father's behaviour in providing *halal* maintenance is a part of his explicit behaviour. The Theory of Planned Behaviour (Ajzen, 1991) is one of the most influential models for predicting human behaviour and behavioural natures. According to this theory, behaviour or actions are seen as directly determined by intentions. Attitudes (evaluation of the behaviour as positive or negative), subjective norm (perceptions of social pressure or expectations), and perceived behavioural control (perceived difficulty or ease in carrying out the behaviour) are believed to play a direct role in influencing intentions.

There were no previous studies that examined the relationship between knowledge, attitude, and religiosity with the intention to provide *halal* maintenance to the family. The closest research of this nature was the intention to purchase the *halal* product (Haslenna, Zuraini, Normala, & Kamaruzaman, 2013; Hayat, Ahmad Nabeel, & Zeeshan, 2012; Noor, Farah, & Aflah, 2014; Nur Haslizatul, 2011) and compliance intention to pay *zakat* (Nurul, Nova, Yosi, & Purnama, 2012;

Zainol, Kamil, & Faridahwati, 2009). Therefore, the present study, the first of its kind, was conducted to examine the relationship between knowledge, attitude, and religiosity with the intention to provide *halal* maintenance to the family among Muslim fathers in Malaysia.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Sample and Procedures

This study was conducted in four states (Kedah, Johor, Selangor, and Terengganu) which represent the geographical zone in Peninsular Malaysia. The total numbers of participants were 353. They were married Muslim men working in government agencies and chosen randomly to participate in the study. Respondents' approval and willingness to participate were sought prior to the distribution of structured questionnaires. Participants were also informed of the confidentiality of their response. The questionnaires were self-administered and a token of appreciation was given to the participants upon completion of their questionnaire.

Measures

Knowledge of the responsibility to provide *halal* maintenance. Knowledge of the responsibility to provide *halal* maintenance was measured by an adaptation of Halal Haram Consumer Index (Nor Aini & Mohd Ali, 2013). The scale consisted of eight items. Some of the items included were, 'I know what is meant by *halal* maintenance', 'I know that in Islam, father/

husband has the responsibility to provide for *halal* maintenance to the family' and 'I know that legal action can be taken against me if I failed to provide for maintenance to my family'. The responses were rated on a 4-point scale ranging from 1=strongly do not know to 4=strongly know. For this study, the alpha coefficient for knowledge was 0.90 which indicated a good internal consistency of the scale.

Attitude of the responsibility to provide *halal* maintenance. The attitude of the responsibility to provide *halal* maintenance was measured by an adaptation of Halal Haram Consumer Index (Nor Aini & Mohd Ali, 2013). The scale consisted of six items. Some of the items included were, 'For me, it is important to provide *halal* maintenance to the family', 'For me, it is a great achievement if a father/husband is able to ensure that the maintenance provided to the family is *halal*' and 'I always strive to provide *halal* maintenance to my family'. The responses were rated on a 4-point scale ranging from 1=strongly disagree to 4=strongly agree. For this study, the alpha coefficient for attitude was 0.90 which indicated a good internal consistency of the scale.

Religiosity. Religiosity was measured by an adaptation of the Religiosity Scale (Abdul Shukor & Jamal, 2013). The scale consisted of 14 items. Some of the items included were: 'My religion is not important to me', 'Religious belief influence all my dealings with others' and 'A true Muslims are those

who practise the commandment of Allah S.W.T and forsake all that He forbid'. The responses were rated on a 4-point scale ranging from 1=strongly disagree to 4=strongly agree. For this study, the alpha coefficient for religiosity was 0.84 which indicated a good internal consistency of the scale.

Intention to provide *halal* maintenance.

Intention to provide *halal* maintenance was measured by an adaptation of Intention Scale (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975). The scale consisted of 3 items. The items were, 'I plan to provide for *halal* maintenance to my family', 'It is most likely that I will provide for *halal* maintenance to my family' and 'I will provide *halal* maintenance to my family'. The responses were rated on a 4-point scale ranging from 1=strongly disagree to 4=strongly agree. For this study, the alpha coefficient for intention was 0.64.

Socio-demographic characteristics.

Participants answered demographic questions, such as age on years of education, years of marriage, income, and the number of children.

Data Analyses

First, descriptive analysis was conducted to provide a clearer picture of data distribution. Second, exploratory data analysis was conducted to determine whether the inferential statistical methods selected fulfilled the basic assumptions in terms of normal distribution of population, linearity between the dependent variable and the

independent variables. Third, the magnitude and strength of the relationship of the studied variables were quantitatively measured using Pearson product-moment correlations.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Socio-Demographics Characteristics

The mean age of participants was 38.4 years old (SD = 9.7). On average, they had completed 13 years of formal education (SD = 1.9) and had been married for about 11 years (SD = 9.6). They had an average income of RM2458.11 (SD = RM1082.30). The average number of their children was 2.53 which is slightly below the average size of the Malaysian family of 2.76 (Ninth Malaysian Plan 2006-2010).

Knowledge, Attitude, Religiosity, and Intention to Provide *Halal* Maintenance

Based on the findings as shown in Table 1, a little over half of the participants (51.0%, n=180) reported having high level of knowledge on the responsibility to provide *halal* maintenance while 38.8% (n=137) and 16.0% (n=36) of participants reported having low and moderate level of knowledge on the responsibility to provide *halal* maintenance. In terms of attitude on the responsibility to provide *halal* maintenance, most (68.6%, 242) participants were categorised in the high level, followed by 24.0% (n=86) at the low level and the remaining 7.1% (n=25) at moderate.

As regards to religiosity, 43.3% (n=153) of the respondents were categorised at the high level followed by 36.5% (n=129) at

the low level and the rest (n=71) at the moderate level. As shown in Table 1, most (58.9%, n= 208) participants reported of having a high level of intention to provide *halal* maintenance to the family followed by 31.2% (n=110) having a low level and 9.9% (n=35) having a moderate level.

From these data, it is clear the respondents were knowledgeable about their responsibility to provide *halal* maintenance to their families. This may be due to the fact that most (64.5%) of them were either in the high or moderate level of religiosity category and had spent an average of 13 years pursuing their education.

Relationship between Knowledge, Attitude, and Religiosity with Intention to provide *Halal* Maintenance

Correlational analyses were used to explore the relationships among variables in the study (Table 2). Findings revealed that

there were positive relationships between knowledge ($r=0.279$, $p<0.001$), attitude ($r=0.289$, $p<0.001$), and religiosity ($r=0.410$, $p<0.001$) with the intention to provide *halal* maintenance to the family. These findings showed that the intention to provide *halal* maintenance to the family is influenced by knowledge, attitude, and religiosity. In addition, these findings imply that when fathers are knowledgeable about their responsibilities, have a positive attitude towards them and have a good religious background, they will be more ready, willing and intend to comply with the responsibilities.

The results of this study confirm those of earlier ones by Spilman et al. (2013) and Agate et al. (2007) which supported the role of religiosity in a developmental process that promotes positive family functioning and that family religiosity was the strongest

Table 1
Level of knowledge, attitude, religiosity and intention to provide halal maintenance

Variables (score)	n	%
Knowledge		
Low (<29)	137	38.8
Moderate (29-30)	36	16.2
High (≥ 31)	180	51.0
Attitude		
Low (<18)	86	24.4
Moderate (18-19)	25	7.1
High (≥ 20)	242	68.6
Religiosity		
Low (<52)	129	36.5
Moderate (52-54)	71	20.1
High (≥ 55)	153	43.3
Intention to provide halal maintenance for the family		
Low (<10)	110	31.2
Moderate (10-11)	35	9.9
High (≥ 12)	208	58.9

predictor of family functioning for parents. As regard to attitude, the finding confirmed the Theory of Planned Behaviour (Ajzen, 1991) that suggests attitude plays a direct role in influencing intentions.

The findings are also consistent with those of other studies (on factors which influence intention) which seem to support the idea that knowledge, attitude and religiosity motivate intention to perform certain behaviour (Azmawani, Ebrahim, Suhaimi, 2015; Farah Mastura & Zainol, 2015; Hayat et al, 2012; Noor et al., 2014).

Table 2
Correlation between variables of the study

Variables	Intention to Provide <i>Halal</i> Maintenance for the Family	
	r	p
Knowledge	.279***	.000
Attitude	.289***	.000
Religiosity	.410***	.000

Note: *** Level of significant is at $p < 0.001$

CONCLUSION

This study provides a foundation for future research in this area as this is the first known research that investigated the relationship between knowledge, attitude, religiosity and intention to provide *halal* maintenance in the context of Malaysian Muslims. The positive relationships as shown by the data indicated that the increase in the level of knowledge, attitude, and religiosity, tend to increase the level of intention to provide *halal* maintenance to the family.

Some limitations of the present study should be noted. Firstly, due to cross-sectional nature of the data, the conclusion

about the effects of the relationship between knowledge, attitude, religiosity and intention to provide *halal* maintenance cannot be generalised to other population. Second, data was retrieved from the self-reported questionnaire. Therefore, the validity and reliability of the information obtained depended solely on the integrity of the respondents.

On a final note, although the data did not represent all the Muslim fathers in Malaysia, the findings pointed to a clear trend on the relationship between knowledge, attitude, religiosity, and intention to provide *halal* maintenance. The findings of this study are very significant as they provide the baseline knowledge on the matter. Most importantly, this study is the first of its kind and has successfully filled the research gap pertaining to Malaysian Muslim father's intention to provide *halal* maintenance to the family.

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