

Factors Associated with Islamic Behavior Among Thai Muslim Youth in the Three Southern Border Provinces, Thailand

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this research was to examine the factors associated with Islamic behavior of Thai Muslim youth in the three southern border provinces whose behavior was in accordance with the Islamic religion. In total, 2,160 Thai Muslim youths in the three southern border provinces were interviewed using questionnaires to collect relevant data. Data analysis using the R Program software was employed using frequency distribution, percentage, Pearson's chi-squared test, odd ratios and logistic regression to investigate the independent associations between the predictor variables and the outcomes. We found that 31.7 percent of Thai Muslim youth reported that their behavior was in accordance with the Islamic religion. Islamic behavior was significantly associated with the level of knowledge of the religion, the level of the Islamic way of upbringing children, participation in Islamic religious activities, and participation in Islamic religious training. Thai Muslim youth who were more likely to express Islamic behavior had: a high level and a moderate level of the Islamic way of upbringing children (12.10 and 3.41 times, respectively); a high level and a moderate level of knowledge of Islamic religion (3.61 and 2.00 times, respectively); participated in Islamic religious activities regularly and occasionally (3.45 and 2.35 times, respectively); and participated in Islamic religious training regularly and occasionally (2.99 and 1.93 times, respectively).

Keywords: Islamic behavior, Thai Muslim youth, three southern border provinces

บทคัดย่อ

การวิจัยครั้งนี้มีวัตถุประสงค์เพื่อศึกษาปัจจัยที่สัมพันธ์กับพฤติกรรมตามวิถีแห่งศาสนาอิสลามของเยาวชนไทยมุสลิมในสามจังหวัดชายแดนภาคใต้ โดยเก็บข้อมูลด้วยการสัมภาษณ์ด้วยแบบสอบถามจากกลุ่มตัวอย่างจำนวน 2,160 คน ในเขตสามจังหวัดชายแดนภาคใต้ และวิเคราะห์ข้อมูลโดยใช้คอมพิวเตอร์โปรแกรมอาร์ด้วยการหาค่าความถี่ ค่าร้อยละ ค่าการทดสอบไคสแควร์ ค่าอัตราส่วนออด

และค่าสัมประสิทธิ์สหสัมพันธ์โลจิสติก เพื่อตรวจสอบความสัมพันธ์ระหว่างตัวแปรทำนายกับตัวแปรผลซึ่งแต่ละชุดเป็นอิสระต่อกัน ผลของการวิจัยพบว่าเยาวชนไทยมุสลิมร้อยละ 31.7 รายงานว่ามีพฤติกรรมตามวิถีแห่งศาสนาอิสลาม ซึ่งพฤติกรรมตามวิถีแห่งศาสนาอิสลามมีความสัมพันธ์อย่างมีนัยสำคัญทางสถิติกับตัวแปรระดับความรู้ด้านศาสนา ระดับการอบรมเลี้ยงดูแบบอิสลาม การเข้าร่วมกิจกรรมทางศาสนาอิสลาม และการเข้าร่วมอบรมเกี่ยวกับศาสนาอิสลาม โดยเยาวชนไทยมุสลิมที่มี

โอกาสมีพฤติกรรมตามวิถีแห่งศาสนาอิสลามสูง ได้แก่ เยาวชนไทยมุสลิมที่ได้รับการอบรมเลี้ยงดูแบบอิสลามในระดับสูงและระดับปานกลาง (12.10 เท่า และ 3.41 เท่า) เยาวชนไทยมุสลิมที่มีความรู้ด้านศาสนาอิสลามในระดับสูงและระดับปานกลาง (3.61 เท่า และ 2.00 เท่า) เยาวชนไทยมุสลิมที่เคยเข้าร่วมกิจกรรมทางศาสนาอิสลามเป็นประจำ (3.45 เท่า) และนาน ๆ ครั้ง (2.35 เท่า) และเยาวชนไทยมุสลิมที่เคยเข้าร่วมอบรมเกี่ยวกับ ศาสนาอิสลามเป็นประจำ (2.99 เท่า) และนาน ๆ ครั้ง (1.93 เท่า)

คำสำคัญ: พฤติกรรมตามวิถีแห่งศาสนาอิสลาม เยาวชนไทยมุสลิม สามจังหวัดชายแดนภาคใต้

INTRODUCTION

Islam is not only a belief but also a perfect way of life that combines belief and practice, worldly activities and monastic activities into one inseparable entity. It is a way of life given by Allah that makes it unique. Muslims all around the world strictly follow the text of the Koran and the exemplary models set by the Prophet Muhammad (Anmunajid, 2004; Laeheem & Baka, 2010). Nevertheless, the advancement of technology and constant changes in present times have resulted in youth giving importance to a way of life that is wrong or contradictory to the Islamic principles. For example, they wear a hijab but show their beauty, use drugs, have sexual deviation behavior, do not pray, cannot read the Koran, are in debt, do not make zakat, do not fast, etc. According to Anmunajid (2004), nowadays the behavior of Muslim youth weakens their faith; they commit sins and break taboos without shame and in doing so, such actions have become habit. They can even commit a sin openly; they observe religious activities hurriedly with an absence of mind; they do not ponder over or consider the meaning of the words they say while undertaking religious practice. The study by Laeheem and Baka (2010) revealed that only a small number of Thai Muslim youths

lead their lives according to the expectations of the Muslim society and the Muslim principles. Chaiprasit, Chansawang, and Permark (2005) state that Muslim youths who practice religious activities will tend to have proper behavior because practicing religious activities consists of: 1) self-practice that helps remind Muslim youth of God and His teachings; 2) praying that helps Muslim youth to have self control and refine their minds; and 3) fasting that helps train Muslim youth to be patient and refrain from a desire to do evil.

There are many factors that can lead Muslim youths into a way of life and behavior in accordance with Islamic principles but one important factor is the use of socialization through the religious institution and the family institution such as the Islamic way of bringing up children, the provision of knowledge on religion, and the promotion of participation in religious activities. In socialization, through the process of training and teaching by parents and teachers, youth receive encouragement to practice and behave according to social expectations and Islamic principles. Training and upbringing of children is a process of socialization that make youth understand and adopt the values and norms of the society in which they live (Grusec, 1992). Upbringing, knowledge provision, and actual experience from parents, teachers, and religious leaders can influence children's behavior in the present and in the future (Sears, Maccoby, & Levin, 1957). The upbringing of children plays an important role and has a positive influence on good behavior in Thai youth (Bhanthumnavin, 2003), and the Islamic way of bringing up children reflects truth in the way of life and can lead youth to true happiness based on Islamic ethics (Khagphong, 2004).

In addition, the family institution is considered the beginning of the building of good quality members of society as well as the source or the mold of personality and mind of members of society (Dhammasaccakarn, Janyam, & Chantawattana, 1998). One way of helping and

supporting Muslim youth to behave in accordance with the social norm is to promote youth to acquire knowledge and understanding of Islamic principles and teachings, and to promote the strict practice of religious activities (Chaiprasit, Chansawang, & Permark, 2005). Muslim youth's families have instilled morality in their children at a high level in all aspects of self-discipline, responsibility, patience, honesty, and perseverance (Mahamad, Thongkum & Damcha-om, 2008).

The present study aimed to examine the factors associated with Islamic behavior by Thai Muslim youth in the three southern border provinces whose behavior was in accordance with the Islamic religion, include residential rural/urban location, gender, age, family status, level of knowledge of the religion, level of Islamic way of upbringing, participation in Islamic activities, and participation in Islamic religious training. Identifying Thai Muslim youth who are at high risk of not following good examples of Islamic behavior could assist Islamic religious organizations, social and human development authorities, and the government sector to introduce better strategies for promoting and supporting more Thai Muslim youth to have behavior that is in accordance with the Islamic way of life, and for preventing youth from leading a life that is against Islamic principles.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Socialization

Socialization is the process of transferring knowledge, thoughts, attitudes, ideologies, cultures, and personalities through social institutions such as the family, educational institutions, mass media, peer groups, the workplace, and other social organizations. This process helps to make a person's character suitable for society; it promotes and supports interaction among people and regulates their social doings; it molds their personality and teaches them about society and the different ways of life adopted by others within it (Popenoe, 1993).

Socialization is the process of learning about the behaviors and actions necessary to a person's changing status and role (Theodorson & Theodorson, 1967) by which that person adjusts his or her behavior in the direction of social norms (Adivatanasit, 2002). Moreover, socialization refers to the long-term learning process by which a person learns important social values, symbols, behaviors, beliefs, and normative behavior in the social system of which that person is a member (Thitiwattana, 2004). It is the process of transferring knowledge, thoughts, attitudes, ideologies, and personalities from one generation to another generation of social members. This process can be direct and indirect and occurs through the agency of social institutions and its aim is to produce a person whose personality, interactions, and practices accord with those desired and expected by society.

Socialization has four important goals: to provide training for people to learn skills that are necessary for living in society in order to survive and to live happily; to enable people to communicate effectively and develop their ability in speaking, reading, and writing; to enable people to adopt basic beliefs and social values and to harmoniously become part of society; and to enable people to develop their "identity" as the foundation of personality development (Thitiwattana, 2004). Socialization is a necessary process within human society because if the socialization of a new generation of social members did not take place, society could neither be developed nor survive. According to Pajjopakaree, (2010), the benefits of socialization can be stated as:

1. The building of discipline for social members to make them coexist happily. Social organizations function to teach members how to behave properly and to enable them to anticipate how others will behave in a certain situation.

2. To build inspiration, ideology, attitude, and belief for members of society so that they have unity and work together with the same ideology towards the same goal and thus create progress for

society.

3. To build the knowledge and skills necessary for citizens to live within society.

Religion and socialization

A level of knowledge of religion and participation in religious activities are factors that influence youth behavior. Within a society that values religious belief, youth should have: a high level of knowledge about religion and participation in religious activities; and have a high level of behavior that conforms to social norms, because within societies ordered on the basis of religious belief, religion is an important agent of socialization which acts as a guideline and provides people with goals against which they can order their actions according to standards based on morality, a perception of good and evil, self-discipline, and a determination to order their activities according to a clearly stated religious code based on the belief that religion enables people to have morals, morality, and to be able to distinguish between good and evil (Thepsitha, 1998).

Most Islamic socialization occurs through a system of providing knowledge and understanding as well as educating people about Islamic principles. This process not only transfers knowledge, experience, and skills from one generation to the next but also has a broad meaning that covers all aspects of life including acting as a process of life training, instilling intelligence, and training both the body and mind in order to produce perfect humans. The process of education in Islam aims to train and refine the mind, transfer religious and secular knowledge, and foster morals, morality, and discipline. Thus, education within Islam can be characterized as being a process of life-long education that develops all aspects of a human being, be it spiritual, intellectual, physical, or mental. It is a response to the purpose of creating human beings who are to be servants of Allah and to be His representatives on earth to make members of society moral and prosperous (Narongraksakhet, 1997;

Mahama, 2009).

Islamic socialization through the education process also has the goal of seeking favor from Allah for the future life as well as eliminating illiteracy, protecting religion and the existence of Islam, and planning how to meet the needs of society. It also seeks to develop people who have habits and personalities in accordance with religious principles, and who have confidence in their way of life; to create good people who have morals so that they will lead happy, peaceful, and prosperous lives within society (Mahama, 2009).

Therefore, the more adolescents are committed to religion, the more they can control their actions and behavior in a way that is desired and expected by society. They will feel free to do wrong only when their commitment to religion or social rules is destroyed.

Factors associated with youth behavior

Residential location is another possible influence on children's behavior. Some evidence has suggested that this behavioral problem is greater in urban locations than in rural ones (Kumchali, 2005). Another study found that there was a similar behavioral problem in both urban and rural locations (Nolin & Davies, 1995). Jordan (2000) and Wright (2005) reported that a residential location (urban or rural) was not associated with behavioral problems. DeVoe, Kaufman, Miller, Noonan, and Baum (2004) concluded that a behavioral problem was more likely to occur in a rural location but Pallas (1988) and Stewart (2003) suggest that such a problem is more likely in residences located in urban areas.

The occurrence of bullying behavior was also affected by gender, age, and family status (with whom the children live). Boys more often than girls had behavioral problems (Baldry, 2003), whereas Wright (2005) found no gender differences in behavioral problems. A significant difference was determined between behavioral problems at different ages, with older youths having a higher rate than younger youths (Baldry, 2003). In contrast,

the study by Brown, Birch, and Kancherla (2005) stated that youths of different ages did not differ significantly in how often they admitted to having behavioral problems. There was no association between family status and behavioral problems reported by Public Health Agencies of Canada (2004).

There were associations between the level of knowledge of religion, the level of Islamic way of upbringing, participation in Islamic activities, and participation in Islamic religious training with regard to youth behavioral problems (Khagphong, 2004; Laeheem & Baka, 2009; Laeheem & Baka, 2011). A person's behavioral development is, indeed, influenced by socialization which can enable a person to have desired characteristics as required by the society. Accordingly, through the family institution and socialization which emphasize social order, establishment of discipline, acceptable life expectations, social roles and certain life skills, the individuals will eventually realize what their respective social positions are and how they should act within their designated roles (Thitirat, 2004; Sereetrakul, 2009).

In addition, the study of Islamic principles is regarded as an essential duty for every Muslim. Equipping a child with religious knowledge is one of the effective ways to make that child lead a life in accordance with Islamic principles. All youngsters are required to thoroughly study religion in order to get a better understanding of religious principal practices, ethics, and virtues, so they can apply all of these as guidelines in leading their daily life correctly. In addition, with such guidelines, youth will develop to be completely perfect people according to Islamic belief and adopting ways which lay emphasis on values, attitudes, and the performance of daily religious practice (Laeheem & Baka, 2010). According to Narongraksakhet (1997) and Mahama (2009), the pursuit of knowledge is the most valuable pursuit of mankind. Therefore, all Muslims are required to thoroughly study Islamic principles in order to live a peaceful, decent life in a

society with virtue and ethics. Moreover, based on Laeheem and Baka (2010), the study of Islam is an essential obligation for Muslim youth, for this will protect them from the surrounding problems and certain social distractions. Eventually, based on strong faith, they will be not only disciplined and obedient, but also humble, and all of these traits will enable them to lead an Islamic way of life. Bhanthumnavin (2003) point out that socialization helps youths understand and acknowledge social values and the standards of the society in which they are living. This can also positively motivate their behavior in both the present and future. Mahamad et al. (2008) state that religious organizations are key among social figures in cultivating quality social members who have good minds and good personalities. They play key roles in encouraging Muslim youths to develop a good knowledge and understanding of Islamic principles. In cultivating Islamic ideology, Muslim leaders implant virtue and morality according to religious principles through religious practices which can direct juveniles' behavior towards social and religious expectations.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Participants

The participants were 2,160 Thai Muslim youths in the three southern border provinces of Thailand, and were selected using multi-stage sampling as follows:

Stage 1: Districts were stratified into three strata: 1) districts where the density loss per population was high and very high; 2) districts where the density loss per population was moderate; 3) districts where the density loss per population was low (Center of Deep South Watch, 2010). Then, two districts per region were selected using simple random sampling, resulting in 18 districts being chosen.

Stage 2: Sub-districts were selected using simple random sampling, totaling 36 sub-districts.

Stage 3: Villages were selected using simple

random sampling, totaling 72 villages.

Stage 4: Thirty youths from each village were selected using simple random sampling, totaling 2,160 youths.

Data collection

Verbal consent to participate in the study was obtained from each Thai Muslim youth after assurance of scheduled interview confidentiality was given. The collection assistants (36 interviewers) in face-to-face collection of data were teachers studying for a Graduate Diploma in Teaching at Yala Islamic University and were staying in the target villages whose residents volunteered to participate. The collection assistants were trained in the interviewing techniques and the details of the questionnaire. They were asked to take care not to rush through the questionnaire and also to record responses accurately and authentically.

Measures

In this study, the Islamic behavior outcome was classified into two categories; Thai Muslim youths whose behavioral attributes were in accordance with the Islamic religion and those whose were not, as measured by asking each respondent twenty questions. Then, the scores of all items in the 20 questions measuring Islamic behavioral attributes were added after the reverse scoring of negative statements. The criteria for scoring from “Never”, “Once in a while”, “Rather often”, “Often”, and “Regularly” were 0, 1, 2, 3, and 4, respectively. The scores were transformed into Z-scores (standardized to a mean of 0 and a standard deviation of 1), and then divided into two categories: 1) those who had a standardized score greater than or equal to 1.0 ($Z \geq 1.0$) were classified in the category of Thai Muslim youth whose behavior was in accordance with Islam while those who had a standardized score lower than 1.0 ($Z < 1.0$) were classified as having behavior were not in accordance with the Islamic religion (Gini 2008; Laheem, Kuning, & McNeil, 2009).

Data analysis

The important factors of interest were residential rural/urban location, gender, age, family status, level of knowledge of the religion, level of Islamic way of upbringing, participation in Islamic activities, and participation in Islamic religious training.

The Islamic behavior outcome was divided into two categories—namely: (a) behavior not in accordance with the Islamic religion, and (b) behavior in accordance with the Islamic religion.

All the important factors of interest were categorical. Pearson’s chi-squared test was used to assess the associations in the univariate analyses. Multivariate analyses were performed to investigate any independent associations between the predictor variables and outcome categories (‘behavior was in accordance’/ ‘behavior was not in accordance’) using a logistic regression method (Kleinbaum & Klein, 2002) and variables were eliminated from the model by the backward method.

RESULTS

There were 2,160 Thai Muslim youth in this study and most of them (75.6%) lived in rural areas, were females (51.3%) in the age range of 18–21 years (43.4%) followed by the age of 17 years and younger (28.8%) and 22 years and older 27.8 percent, respectively.

More than half of the Thai Muslim youth (57.0%) lived with their parents, 23.3 percent lived either with their father or their mother, and 20.7 percent lived with their relatives. About fifty seven percent of the Thai Muslim youth had a moderate level of knowledge about Islam, followed by 26.1 percent who had a high level of knowledge about Islam, and 17.1 percent had a low level knowledge of Islam. For the Islamic way of upbringing, it was found that most of the Thai Muslim youth (40.1%) had a moderate level of upbringing, followed by those (36.3%) who had a low level of the Islamic

way of upbringing, and those (23.5%) with the high level of the Islamic way of upbringing, respectively. Most of the Thai Muslim youth (41.8%) never participated in religious activities, followed by those (35.7%) who regularly participated, and those (22.5%) who participated every once in a while, respectively. It was found that 42.2 percent of the Thai Muslim youth never participated in Islamic religious training, followed by those (29.8%) who

participated every once in a while, and those (28.1%) participated regularly.

In this study, the Islamic behavior outcome was classified as a dichotomous variable; 'whose behavior was not in accordance with the Islamic religion' (1,475 youth) and 'whose behavior was in accordance with the Islamic religion' (685 youth). The percentage of Thai Muslim youth reporting that their behavior was in accordance with the Islamic

Table 1 Associations between 'those whose behavior was in accordance with the Islamic religion' and important factors in the univariate analysis

| | Islamic behavior | | | χ^2 | <i>p</i> |
|-------------------------------------|------------------|-------------------|---------------|----------|----------|
| | All youth | Not in accordance | In accordance | | |
| Residential location | | | | 0.667 | 0.416 |
| Urban | 528 | 66.9 | 33.1 | | |
| Rural | 1,632 | 68.8 | 31.3 | | |
| Gender | | | | 1.012 | 0.296 |
| Male | 1,051 | 69.4 | 30.6 | | |
| Female | 1,109 | 67.3 | 32.7 | | |
| Age group | | | | 1.193 | 0.551 |
| 17 years or less | 621 | 69.2 | 30.8 | | |
| 18-21 years | 938 | 68.8 | 31.2 | | |
| 22 years or more | 601 | 66.6 | 33.4 | | |
| Family status (Stay with) | | | | 3.654 | 0.162 |
| Parents | 1,232 | 66.7 | 33.3 | | |
| One parent | 481 | 69.4 | 30.6 | | |
| Relative | 447 | 68.3 | 28.6 | | |
| Knowledge of the religion | | | | 73.221 | 0.000 |
| Low | 370 | 82.2 | 17.8 | | |
| Moderate | 1,226 | 69.7 | 30.3 | | |
| High | 564 | 56.0 | 44.0 | | |
| Islamic way of upbringing | | | | 359.337 | 0.000 |
| Low | 785 | 88.0 | 12.0 | | |
| Moderate | 867 | 68.3 | 31.7 | | |
| High | 508 | 37.8 | 62.2 | | |
| Participation in Islamic activities | | | | 103.342 | 0.000 |
| Never | 903 | 79.4 | 20.6 | | |
| Occasionally | 486 | 66.7 | 33.3 | | |
| Regularly | 771 | 56.3 | 43.7 | | |
| Participation in Islamic training | | | | 124.162 | 0.000 |
| Never | 911 | 80.7 | 19.3 | | |
| Occasionally | 606 | 64.0 | 36.0 | | |
| Regularly | 643 | 54.7 | 45.3 | | |

religion was 31.7 percent.

Table 1 shows the results of the chi-square analysis assessing the associations between the Islamic behavior and potential important factors. There were statistically significant associations with the level of knowledge about the religion, the level of the Islamic way of upbringing, participation in Islamic religious activities, and participation in Islamic religious training ($p = .000$). The proportion of Thai Muslim youth whose behavior was in accordance with the Islamic religion was high among youth who: had a high level of knowledge about Islam, had a high level of the Islamic way of upbringing, regularly participated in Islamic religious activities, and regularly participated in Islamic religious training. In contrast, the proportion of Thai Muslim youth whose behavior was not in accordance with the Islamic religion was high among youth who: had a low level of knowledge about Islam, had a low level of the Islamic way of upbringing, never participated in Islamic religious activities, and never participated in Islamic religious training.

Table 2 shows the results of the logistic

regression model examining any independent association between the predictor variables and the likelihood of Islamic behavior. Associations with the level of knowledge about the religion, the level of the Islamic way of upbringing, participation in Islamic religious activities, and participation in Islamic religious training were statistically significant in the multivariate analysis.

Figure 1 shows the odds ratio plots of Islamic behavior categorized by four different important factors. Thai Muslim youth who had a high level and those who had a moderate level of Islamic way of upbringing were more likely to behave in accordance with Islamic behavior than those who had a low level of Islamic way of upbringing (odds ratio 12.10, 95% confidence interval 9.14, 16.01, and odds ratio 3.41, 95 percent confidence interval 2.64, 4.42, respectively). Thai Muslim youth who had a high level of knowledge of Islam were 3.61 times (95% confidence interval 2.64, 4.95) and those with a moderate level of knowledge of Islam were 2.00 times (95% confidence interval 1.49, 2.68) higher than those who had a low level of knowledge of Islam to have

Table 2 Multivariate analysis of associations between important factors of Islamic behavior

| Factors | Odds ratio | Standard error | <i>p</i> -value |
|-------------------------------------|------------|----------------|-----------------|
| Knowledge of the religion | | | 0.000 |
| Low | 0 | | |
| Moderate | 2.00 | 0.17 | 0.003 |
| High | 3.61 | 0.18 | 0.000 |
| Islamic way of upbringing | | | 0.000 |
| Low | 0 | | 0.000 |
| Moderate | 3.41 | 0.14 | 0.000 |
| High | 12.10 | 0.15 | 0.000 |
| Participation in Islamic activities | | | 0.002 |
| Never | 0 | | 0.000 |
| Occasionally | 1.93 | 0.14 | 0.000 |
| Regularly | 2.99 | 0.13 | 0.000 |
| Participation in Islamic training | | | |
| Never | 0 | | 0.000 |
| Occasionally | 2.35 | 0.14 | 0.002 |
| Regularly | 3.45 | 0.13 | 0.000 |

behavior that was in accordance with the Islamic religion.

Thai Muslim youth who regularly participated in Islamic activities were 3.45 times (95% confidence interval 2.75, 4.33) and those who occasionally participated were 2.35 times (95% confidence interval 1.86, 2.96) more often likely to behave in accordance with Islamic behavior than those who never participated in Islamic activities. Thai Muslim youth who regularly participated in Islamic religious training, and those who occasionally participated tended to behave more according to the Islamic religion than those who never participated in Islamic religious training (odds ratio 2.99; 95% confidence interval 2.41, 3.71, and odds ratio 1.93; 95% confidence interval 1.50, 2.47, respectively).

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

It can be concluded from this study that all

four independent variables related to the religion—level of knowledge of Islam, level of Islamic upbringing, participation in Islamic religious activities, and participation in Islamic religious training were factors that affected Islamic behavior of Thai Muslim youths. The level of the Islamic way of upbringing was the variable that affected Islamic behavior the most (with an opportunity of 12.10 and 3.41 times), followed by the variable on knowledge of the Islamic religion (with an opportunity of 3.61 and 2.00 times), the variable on participation in Islamic religion activities (with an opportunity of 3.45 and 2.35 times), and the variable on participation in Islamic religious training (with an opportunity of 2.99 and 1.93 times). In fact, the extent to which youths who had a high level of Islamic way of upbringing were most likely to behave in accordance with Islamic behavior was 12.10 times greater than for youths who had a high level of knowledge of Islam, youths who regularly participated in Islamic activities, and youths who

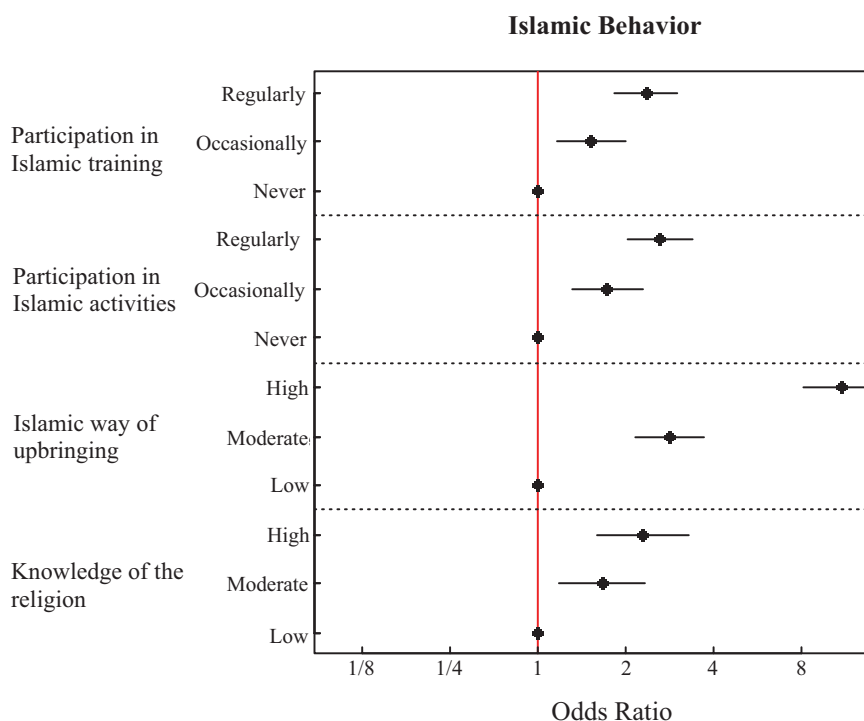


Figure 1 Odds ratio plots of Islamic behavior categorized by four different important factors

regularly participated in Islamic religious training. Indeed, all four predictor variables that were found to be significantly related to Islamic behavior were characteristics indicative of young people who are closely associated with Islamic principles. Clearly, the youth who were best at behaving in accordance with Islamic behavior did so not only in a righteous way but also in accordance with the expected social standards and Islamic principles.

These were the results of the socialization where parents and Muslim leaders taught, advised, and instilled the norms to Thai Muslim youth. Consequently, the youth had the correct understanding and experience according to social ethics and norms, and they eventually could behave in the way they were expected to by society and in accordance with the Islamic principles, as it is said that socialization is the process of transferring knowledge, thoughts, attitudes, ideologies, cultures and personalities to make individuals behave the way the society desires (Broom & Selznick, 1958; Cohen & Orbach, 1990); and practice according to their status and role that changes according to social norms (Theodorson & Theodorson, 1967; Popenoe, 1993; Adivatanasit, 2002; Thitiwattana, 2004). Socialization enables youths to understand and adopt the values and social norms of the society they live in; socialization also has a positive influence on children's behavior in the present and the future (Sears, Maccoby, & Levin, 1957; Grusec, 1992; Bhanthumnavin, 2003; Thitirat, 2004; Sereetrakul, 2009).

Dhammasaccakarn et al. (1998) state that family is the starting point for creating good quality social members with good personality and good heartedness. Chaiprasit et al. (2005), and Mahamad et al. (2008) claim that promoting Muslim youths to have knowledge and understanding of Islamic principles and teachings, to strictly practice religious activities, and to possess Islamic morality, such as self-discipline, being responsible, patient, and honest, and having perseverance can make them behave in accordance with social norms. Thepsitha

(1998) specifies that religious factors are one of the factors that enables a person to be moral and ethical as well as aware of right and wrong. Likewise, Mahama (2009) and Khagphong (2004) state that socialization in Islam is the process of developing personality, habit, morality, and manner according to Islamic principles in order for humans to have the right way of life and to build a peaceful and happy society, and to bring true happiness based on Islamic morality and ethics. Laeheem (2012) points out that youth in every community were supervised by the spiritual leaders and community leaders through youth clubs and various youth groups; therefore, the majority of youth led a way of life within the frame of Islamic principles.

The results of this study can help Islamic religious organizations and the government sector in forming concrete policies and strategies for promoting and supporting Thai Muslim youth to behave in accordance with Islamic principles; for example, developing policy on instilling awareness in Thai Muslim youth to behave according to the Islamic way of life and following the Prophet, the best role model; developing policy on Islamic moral training camps to be held regularly in different communities; developing policy on organizing activities and training to give knowledge about the religion and practice according to Islamic principles for youths and their parents; and developing policy on promoting and developing the family institution to strengthen it so that it can control children and keep them in the Islamic frame of reference.

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