

## **DEVELOPMENT OF HUMAN CAPITAL THROUGH THE ISLAMIC EDUCATION OF OUR BROTHERS (*MU'ALAF*) IN TERENGGANU**

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### **Abstract**

Development of human capital refers to the changes upon individuals to attain high moral values, be cultured in manners, have healthy mental intellect, be and able to perform their duty as a caliph in this world. In view of this, Islamic education plays an important role in developing the spirituality of the community of our brothers (*mu'alaf*). Thus, the objective of this study is to identify the real appreciation of the Islamic education of our brothers and to identify the relationship between Islamic education and the development of the human capital of our brothers in Terengganu. This study uses a qualitative method with a purposive sampling technique in focus group discussion. The result of the study shows that the level of understanding and religiosity appreciation among our brothers in Terengganu is still weak. This study suggests that more effective Islamic education must be reinforced by focusing on the teaching methods carried out. This study is important because it conveys real

information on the learning situation and religious appreciation of our brothers in Terengganu which will fill the gap of previous studies.

**Keywords:** Development of human capital; religiosity appreciation; our brothers; teaching methods; Islamic education.

### **Khulasah**

Pembangunan modal insan merujuk kepada perubahan ke atas individu untuk mencapai nilai akhlak yang tinggi, berbudaya adab, intelek mental yang sihat dan mampu melaksanakan tanggung jawabnya sebagai khalifah di muka bumi ini. Untuk itu, pendidikan Islam memainkan peranan yang penting bagi membangunkan spiritualiti komuniti saudara kita. Justeru, objektif kajian ini ialah untuk mengenalpasti penghayatan sebenar terhadap pendidikan Islam saudara kita di negeri Terengganu. Selanjutnya untuk melihat hubungkait pendidikan Islam terhadap pembangunan modal insan saudara kita di Terengganu. Kajian ini menggunakan kaedah kualitatif dengan teknik '*purposive sampling*' dengan temubual secara perbincangan berkumpulan. Hasil kajian mendapati bahawa tahap kefahaman dan penghayatan agama beberapa aspek dalam kalangan saudara kita di Terengganu masih lemah. Kajian ini mencadangkan agar pendidikan Islam yang lebih efektif diperkukuhkan dengan memberi fokus kepada kaedah pengajaran yang dijalankan. Hasil kajian ini penting kerana ia menyalurkan matlumut sebenar situasi pembelajaran dan penghayatan pendidikan Islam saudara kita di negeri Terengganu yang akan memgisikan jurang kajian yang lepas.

**Kata kunci:** Pembangunan modal insan; penghayatan agama; saudara kita; kaedah pengajaran; pendidikan Islam.

### **Intoduction**

The Qur'an explains that the main purpose of man being created was to dedicate himself to Allah as in Surah al-

Dhariyat verse 56. The function of mankind is to be a servant of Allah in the perspective of vertical relations (*habl min Allah*) and the caliph of Allah in the perspective of horizontal relations (*habl min al-nas*)<sup>1</sup>. In developing human values, it must be guided by Devine guidance according to the Qur'an and *Sunnah* under the leadership of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) and the previous caliphs. Thus, the message of Islam is conveyed to mankind through its preaching in stages. As a result, many embraced Islam because they discovered the truth and peace of life. Even so, this group of our brothers must be given attention in their entire lives by improving the quality of themselves in terms of welfare, knowledge, guidance, and so on so that they become excellent role models of Muslim human capital.

Past studies have shown that not many studies have been done on the aspect of religious education of our brothers in Terengganu. It was found that the only previous study done was conducted by Razaleigh which studied the religiosity appreciation of the indigenous people (Orang Asli) from Sungai Berua, Terengganu.<sup>2</sup> There are many past kinds of research on the factors of our brothers embracing Islam, the implementation of the 'dialogue of life' of our brothers, inter-religious dialogue, and *da'wah* to our brothers. This study is important because the previous studies did not focus on the problem of religious education of our brothers in Terengganu. However, previous studies provided information that touches on the reality of what is happening to our brothers in Terengganu.

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<sup>1</sup> Muhammad Syukri Salleh, *Pembangunan Berteraskan Islam* (Kuala Lumpur: Utusan Publications Distributors Sdn. Bhd., 2002), 56.

<sup>2</sup> Razaleigh Muamat @ Kawangit, *Penghayatan Agama Saudara Baru Orang Asli Sungai Berua Terengganu* (Bangi: Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, 2014), 1.

## Problem Statement

Our brothers who embrace Islam in search of peace and well-being face many challenges. Their novelty in adapting to new beliefs and ways of life puts pressure on their emotions. In this regard, Kamarulzaman and Nur A'thiroh list the issues that often cause conflict to our brothers such as problems adapting to Islamic and Malay customs and culture, family acceptance, financial and career challenges, facing legal Islamic issues, and so on.<sup>3</sup> Similarly is the difficulty of performing consistent Islamic practices according to the basic demands of Islamic teachings.<sup>4</sup>

Failure to obtain a proper education causes many of our brothers to engage in practices that are contrary to Islamic teachings such as drinking alcohol, gambling, and eating pork. With the pressures experienced by them coupled with the 'weakness' of the faith, some of our brothers decide to revert back to their previous religion.<sup>5</sup> This is evident from the study by Suariza et al. which reported that statistics from the Prime Minister's Department for the period 2000 to 2010 showed that the Syariah Court received 863 cases of applications requesting for changing the status of their religion from Islam back to their original religion and those that managed to obtain approval totaled 135 cases.

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<sup>3</sup> Kamarulzaman Kawi & Nur A'thiroh Masyaa'il Tan Abdullah @ Tan Ai Pao, "Isu dan Cabaran Saudara Kita di Jabatan Agama Islam Sarawak," *BITARA, International Journal of Civilizational Studies and Human Science* 3(3) (2020), 32-39.

<sup>4</sup> Supriadi, S., "Problematika Muallaf dalam Melaksanakan Ajaran Agama Islam di Desa Tumbang Runen Kecamatan Kamipang Kabupaten Katingan," *Jurnal Hadratul Madaniyah* 5(1) (2018), 43.

<sup>5</sup> Nurul Syifaq binti Ruslan & Mohd Radhi bin Ibrahim, "Konsep Akhlak menurut Pandangan Imam al-Ghazali," 2018, accessed 15 September, 2021, [https://www.academia.edu/40635675/KONSEP\\_AKHLAK\\_MENU\\_RUT\\_PANDANGAN\\_IMAM\\_AL\\_GHAZAL%C4%AA](https://www.academia.edu/40635675/KONSEP_AKHLAK_MENU_RUT_PANDANGAN_IMAM_AL_GHAZAL%C4%AA).

Meanwhile, the statistics of cases of declaration that a person is no longer a Muslim (apostasy) for the period 2011 to 2015 received by the Selangor Islamic Religious Council was 81 cases.<sup>6</sup> All applications declaring apostasy involved those who have embraced Islam because they wanted to marry a Muslim partner and at the same time, the Muslim partner who married them was ignorant of Islam, and have cohabited with their partner before marriage, and did not educate their partner. For example, one applicant stated that his wife did not practice the teachings of Islam, namely not praying and associating freely with other men.<sup>7</sup> This problem of trying to get out of Islam can be shown through several cases that have become a public debate such as Azlina Jailani, Kamariah Ali, and Muhammad Abdullah @ Moorthy. This is due to the failure to provide education and guidance resulting in an increase in the occurrence of apostasy among our brothers.<sup>8</sup> In relation to this, the research done by Muhammad Asraf also concluded that the main problem faced by our apostate brothers is the lack of understanding of Islam and weak faith.<sup>9</sup>

Thus, religious education is important to prevent apostasy among our brothers. Given the challenges faced by our brothers, they need effective and continuous guidance so that their 'perception' of Islam is strong. This was affirmed by Razaleigh who emphasizes that religious education must reach a level that can increase their faith in

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<sup>6</sup> Suariza @ Hidayah Muhammad, Nor Raudah Hj. Siren & Yusmini Md Yusoff, "Faktor Permohonan Isytihar Murtad dalam Kalangan Mualaf di Selangor," *Jurnal Usuluddin* 46(2) (2018), 136.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, 40.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 128.

<sup>9</sup> Muhammad Asyraf Mohd Azlin, "Kaedah Mencegah Murtad di Kalangan Mualaf oleh Unit Ukhuwah, Jabatan Hal Ehwal Agama Islam Negeri Sembilan," *Jurnal Sultan Alauddin Sulaiman Shah Special Issue* (2018), 62-77.

the sense that they practice and appreciate the true teachings of Islam.<sup>10</sup>

### **Research Objectives**

The objective of the study is as follows:

- i. Identify the real appreciation of the Islamic education of our brothers in the state of Terengganu
- ii. Looking at the relationship between Islamic education and the development of the human capital of our brothers in Terengganu.

### **Past Literature Review**

Past literature reviews discussed the concept of human capital development, our brothers in the state of Terengganu, and the Islamic education of our brothers.

#### **i. The Concept of Human Capital Development**

In New Oxford Dictionary,<sup>11</sup> the word 'development' means "the process of becoming bigger, stronger, better, etc." which is a process of developing to obtain progress and advancement. From an Islamic perspective, every development effort must be in line with Islamic teachings. Thus, if a development is implemented not in line with Islamic teachings, then it is not named a development.<sup>12</sup> In relation to this, Muhammad Syukri explained that in order to seek Allah's pleasure (*mardatillah*), a development

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<sup>10</sup> Razaleigh Muhamat @ Kawangit, "Pembangunan Dakwah Muallaf di Malaysia: Cabaran dalam Masyarakat," In Conference, 1st International Keynote Speech on Mualaf Development Empowerment (DE MUALAF) May 2016, accessed 15 September, 2021, [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/303023907\\_PEMBANGUNAN\\_DAKWAH\\_MUALLAF\\_DI\\_MALAYSIA\\_CABARAN\\_DALAM\\_MASYARAKAT](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/303023907_PEMBANGUNAN_DAKWAH_MUALLAF_DI_MALAYSIA_CABARAN_DALAM_MASYARAKAT).

<sup>11</sup> Zubaidah binti Abdul Rahman, *New Oxford English-English-Malay Dictionary*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed. (Shah Alam: Oxford Jafar Sdn. Bhd., 2009), 230.

<sup>12</sup> Muhammad Syukri Salleh, *Tujuh Prinsip Pembangunan Berteraskan Islam* (Kuala Lumpur: Zebra Editions. Sdn. Bhd. 2003), 21-22.

framework must be based on Oneness of Allah.<sup>13</sup> Aziz and Mutiara stated that the development of human capital must include four elements, namely physical, mental, emotional and spiritual development that must be developed simultaneously and in balance.<sup>14</sup> These four elements would result in people who are pious (*taqwa*) performing the commandments, encouraging people to do good and refrain from bad deeds (*amr bi ma'ruf wa nahi 'an munkar*); having a balanced personality (*tawazun*), moral excellence, and feel that he is always in serenity. Based on the above statement, these four elements generate self-identity building and the development of human capital holistically.

In line with the concept of achieving *al-falah* (success) in this world and *mardatillah* (pleasure of Allah) in the Hereafter, Masitah et al. concluded that the requirement for human capital development would comprise the development from the aspects of mind and knowledge (Surah al-Zumar: 9), encouragement and motivation (Surah al-Fajr: 27-30), physical (Surah al-A'raf: 31), emotional (Surah al-Baqarah: 277) and spiritual (Surah al-Shams: 7-10) elements.<sup>15</sup> However, since only with the accomplishment of the pleasure of God could one attain success both in this present world and in the Hereafter, the ultimate aim of Islamic development then is, therefore, the pleasure of God, (*mardatillah*). It is also clear in Surah al-Ma'idah, verse 5 which Allah stated that by seeking Allah's pleasure it is a

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<sup>13</sup> Mohd Shukri Hanapi, "Pembinaan Konsep Pembangunan Berteraskan Islam: Analisis Pemikiran Muhammad Syukri Salleh," *Journal of Islamic Development Politics* 1 (2011), 24-46.

<sup>14</sup> Ab. Aziz Yusof & Mutiara Dwi Sari, "Pembangunan Modal Insan daripada Prospektif Islam: Impak kepada Pengurus," *Malaysian Journal of Social Science and Humanities* 2(1) (2017), 43.

<sup>15</sup> Masitah Idris et al., "Pembangunan Modal Insan (PMI) dari Perspektif Islam," *Journal of Management and Operation Research* 1(2) (2019), 1-12.

means to be guided to the right path thereby invited to enter paradise and be well rewarded.

From the aspect of spirituality, Siti Nur Aafifah stated that balanced development is important to overcome challenges in life through the method of "purification of the soul".<sup>16</sup> Purification of the soul involves the concept of *tazkiyah al-nafs* as the basis of human capital development through four processes that begin with the increase of faith, control of behaviour, the moulding of morals and finally giving rise to a perfect human being. Mohd Nazri, argues that 'education' plays an important role in developing human capital to produce an individual who possesses a strong self-identity, noble personality, knowledgeable, and highly skilled.<sup>17</sup> Besides that, education is also seen to be able to produce human capital that can think critically, creatively, and innovatively, is skilled in problem-solving, capable of creating new opportunities, have resilience, and has the ability to cope with the ever-changing and challenging global environment.

## **ii. Our Brothers in Terengganu**

In Malaysia, "those who embrace Islam" are known as "new brother", "our brother", "Muslim brother" or *mu'alaf*. While the verses of the Qur'an that specifically mention converts are only mentioned once in the Qur'an and that is Surah al-Tawbah verse 60 which describes the new group embracing Islam. In Surah al-Tawbah verse 60, Allah says:

"Alms (*zakat*) is only for the poor and the needy, for those employed to administer it, for

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<sup>16</sup> Siti Nur Aafifah Hashim, "Pembangunan Modal Insan Melalui Konsep *Tazkiyah al-Nafs*," *Jurnal Maw'izah* 3 (2020), 17.

<sup>17</sup> Mohd Nazri Bin Md Din, "Konsep dan Cabaran Pembangunan Modal Insan di Malaysia," *e-Buletin Fakulti Kejuruteraan Mekanikal dan Perbuatan*, Universiti Tun Hussein Onn Malaysia (UTHM) 2020, 2205.



those whose hearts are attracted to the faith (*mu'alaf*), for freeing slaves, for those in debt, for Allah's cause, and for needy travelers. This is an obligation from Allah. And Allah is All-Knowing, All-Wise."

According to Section 91 of Enactment 2 of 2001 Administration of Islamic Religious Affairs (Terengganu) Enactment 2001 1422H/2001M, a person who embraces Islam is required to recite the two phrases of the testimony of faith at the same time understanding that the phrases mean, "I bear witness that there is no God but Allah and I bear witness that the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) is the Messenger of Allah", and the utterance must be made by the person with sincerity on his own free will. In addition, Section 92 of the Enactment stated that "A person is converted to the religion of Islam and becomes a Muslim as soon as he finishes uttering the two phrases of the Affirmation of Faith provided that the requirements of section 91 are fulfilled, and that person shall thereupon be referred to as a *mu'allaf*."<sup>18</sup>

However, among those who embrace Islam, it is uncomfortable to use the term *mu'alaf* for a long period as it places the group as a 'second class' in the Muslim community.<sup>19</sup> Our brothers who embrace Islam not only are not accepted by the non-Muslims but they are not accepted by the Malay community.<sup>20</sup> In view of this, it is important to groom our brothers so that they become

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<sup>18</sup> Enactment No. 2 of 2001, Administration of Islamic Religious Terengganu, date of publication in the Gazette: 22 November 2001, accessed on 19 May 2022, [http://www2.esyariah.gov.my/esyariah/mal/portalv1/enakmen2011/Eng\\_enactment\\_Ori\\_lib.nsf/f831ccddd195843f48256fc600141e84/a9bc4d42df57eb6f4825761d00076ba6?OpenDocument](http://www2.esyariah.gov.my/esyariah/mal/portalv1/enakmen2011/Eng_enactment_Ori_lib.nsf/f831ccddd195843f48256fc600141e84/a9bc4d42df57eb6f4825761d00076ba6?OpenDocument).

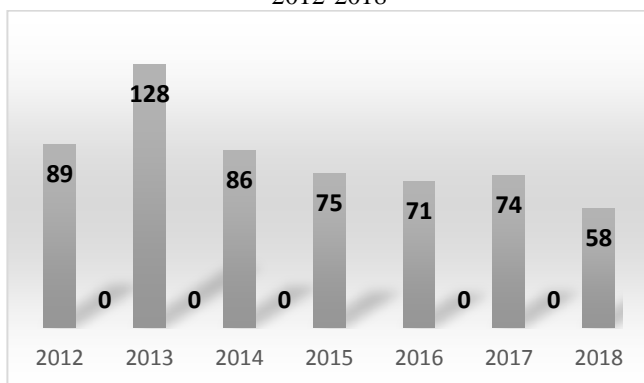
<sup>19</sup> Azarudin Awang & Khadijah Mohd Hambali @ Khambali, "Apresiasi Dialog Kehidupan Berhikmah: Komuniti Cina Muslim di Terengganu," *Jurnal Kemanusiaan* 24(1) (2017), 11.

<sup>20</sup> Kamarulzaman & Nur A'thiroh, "Isu dan Cabaran Saudara Kita, 37.

respectable Muslims in the community in order to overcome this stigma.

Indeed, embracing Islam among the non-Muslim community always happens every year in Malaysia, including in Terengganu. Based on a report from the Terengganu State Religious Department, the number who embraced Islam from 2012 to 2018 was 585 people. Statistics of those who embraced Islam are shown below in Table 1:

Table 1: Statistics of those who embrace Islam in Terengganu 2012-2018



Source: (Terengganu Religious Department, 2020)

The largest group who embraced Islam are non-citizens who comprise 43% and most of them came to work in Malaysia and some got married to locals. Meanwhile, as for the Malaysians, the Chinese community is the largest group, followed by Indians, Sarawakian, and Sabahan. There are various factors that resulted in the non-Muslim community in Terengganu embracing Islam such as social interaction, research, marriage, divine guidance, and receiving the encouragement of families who have long embraced Islam.

Studies show that social interaction is the main factor for non-Muslim communities to embrace Islam. The

uniqueness of this close interaction of daily activities, celebrating festivals, visiting neighbours of different religions, mingling and living together known as the 'dialogue of life' results in the warmth and understanding of Islam among non-Muslims in Terengganu which further encouraged them to embrace Islam.<sup>21</sup> The 'dialogue of life' process can easily happen because the Chinese non-Muslims, who make up the majority of the non-Muslims in Terengganu seem to be able to assimilate the characteristics and elements of Malay culture into their Chinese culture (acculturation).<sup>22</sup>

Table 2 - Statistics of Those Who Embrace Islam in Terengganu 2012-2018

Year Gender/ Race	2012		2013		2014		2015		2016		2017		2018		Total
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	
Chinese	16	8	19	8	17	9	11	9	12	10	12	9	14	5	<b>159</b>
Indian	2	2	11	4	10	3	4	3	7	1	7	2	7	2	<b>65</b>
Sarawakian	7	3	8	8	3	9	3	2	2	2	3	6	1	2	<b>59</b>
Sabahan	2	1	3	0	3	3	0	0	1	2	1	1	0	0	<b>17</b>
Indigenous people	4	3	1	3	2	2	2	0	4	1	2	8	0	1	<b>33</b>
Non- citizen	23	18	30	33	10	15	18	27	15	14	11	12	14	12	<b>252</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>585</b>

Source: (Terengganu Religious Department, 2020)

<sup>21</sup> Azarudin Awang, Azman Che Mat & Sophian Ramli, "Pengukuhan Semula Peradaban Komuniti Cina Muslim Berasaskan Dialog antara Agama: Pengalaman di Terengganu dan Brunei," *Sains Insani* 4(1) (2019), 81.

<sup>22</sup> Azarudin & Khadijah, "Apresiasi Dialog Kehidupan," 11.

As a group that is new to Islam, our brothers have to face challenges and obstacles such as opposition from family members who are non-Muslim, community acceptance, economic problems and so on<sup>23</sup>. Similarly too is the difficulty of consistently performing the basic demands of Islamic teachings.

Referring to the Act 2 of 2001 of the Administration of Islamic Religious Affairs (Terengganu), the Terengganu Religious Department or *Majlis Agama Islam dan Adat Melayu Terengganu* (MAIDAM) does not limit the length of time from date of embracing Islam as criteria to be referred to as a *mu'alaf*. MAIDAM also encourages the use of the title "*our brother*" instead of the title *mu'alaf*. For this study, the title "*our brother*" is used as recommended by MAIDAM. MAIDAM is fully responsible for the management of our brothers under the New Brothers Training Centre.<sup>24</sup> Kamarulzaman and Nur A'thiroh are of the view that our brothers need human capital development such as guidance and the need for encouragement from the community to live life with the professional conduct of a Muslim in accordance with the Islamic *Shari'ah*.<sup>25</sup>

### **iii. Islamic Education of Our Brothers**

In developing the human capital of our brothers, Islamic education plays a very important role so that they become true Muslims. According to al-Qaradawi, a strong religiosity appreciation of Islam must occur simultaneously, namely faith as the creed of life, worship to be put in practice in life, *Shari'ah* as a rule and

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<sup>23</sup> Kamarulzaman & Nur A'thiroh, "Isu dan Cabaran Saudara Kita," 32-39.

<sup>24</sup> Khadijah Mohd Khambali et al., "Muhajir Penjana Interaksi dan Toleransi Beragama Saudara Baru-Muslim-Non-Muslim," *Akademika* 87(2) (2017), 71.

<sup>25</sup> Kamarulzaman & Nur A'thiroh, "Isu dan Cabaran Saudara Kita," 41.

consideration of life and morality as ethics of life.<sup>26</sup> Therefore, to ensure that our brothers are always strong in appreciating the religion of Islam, they need to be strengthened and enriched with knowledge that touches on all four aspects. Saying two verses of *shahadah* is the initial expression of adherence to the true faith. Faith is the pillar and backbone of Islam for every Muslim. Ahmad Yunus et al. explained that a sound faith education will foster a good appreciation and understanding of Islam, especially in building the human capital personality of our brothers so that all their goals and their way of life are performed according to a clear framework.<sup>27</sup>

Besides being closely related to the development of faith, Zulkepli et al. see the human capital building of our brothers as closely related to the enrichment of *Shari'ah* knowledge. He explained that the focus of the development of Islamic education of our brothers includes the development of faith that is, what is believed in the pillars of faith, while in the aspect of *Shari'ah*, it is related to the implementation of the jurisprudence of worship (*fiqh 'ibadah*) and the jurisprudence of commercial transactions (*fiqh mu'amalah*). The findings of his study emphasized that the basic knowledge of faith and law (*Shari'ah*) is very important as the initial core in developing the human values of our brothers in appreciating and practising the teachings of Islam.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> Yusuf al-Qaradawi, *Ke Arah Pelaksanaan Syariah Islamiyyah*, terj. Abdul Rahman Ahmad Jerlun (Shah Alam: Dewan Pustaka Fajar 1984), 12.

<sup>27</sup> Ahmad Yunus Kasim, Samsuddin Abdul Hamid & Misnan Jemali "Pengajaran Akidah dalam Kalangan Mualaf di Institut Dakwah Islamiyah PERKIM," *Jurnal Perspektif* Special Issue 1 (2017), 99.

<sup>28</sup> Zulkiple Abd. Ghani & Nor Salimah binti Abu Mansor, "Penghayatan Agama Sebagai Asas Pembangunan Pelajar: Analisis Terhadap Beberapa Pandangan al-Imam al-Ghazali," In Student Development Conference (NASDEC), 2006, 16.

Good morals are a manifestation of the existence of strong faith while morals must always be within the framework of Islamic knowledge. According to al-Ghazali, the function of knowledge is to reap the benefit of being able to touch the heart resulting in the desire to do good and pious deeds. This is achieved when the knowledge gives rise to the fear of Allah (the owner) by quoting verse 28 of Surah Fatir which means: "Surely those who fear Allah from among His servants are those with knowledge". This is because, with knowledge, one can know God, worship and glorify Him, as well as fruitful obedience and restraint from immoral acts thereby grooming His servant to have good morals.<sup>29</sup>

In line with this concept, Nurul and Mohd Radhi emphasize that the formation of noble morals (*akhlaq mahmudah*) and excellence of human capital must be based on the concept of *tazkiyah al-nafs* through the purification of the soul.<sup>30</sup> A combination of education that encompasses development from external and internal aspects will give rise to our brother having comprehensive and holistic knowledge.<sup>31</sup>

Based on the above discussion, it can be stated that developing the human capital of the community of our brother is to develop Islamic religious education itself. Basically, the development of our human capital includes the learning of faith, *shariah*, worship and morals. While a good religiosity appreciation of these aspects can generate our brother to become a great and excellent Muslim.

### **Research Methodology**

The research is done through the descriptive data qualitative method and the sampling method used is the

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<sup>29</sup> Abu Hamid Muhammad al-Ghazali, *Minhaj al-'Abidin* (Cairo: Maktabah al-Jundi, 1964), 17-23.

<sup>30</sup> Nurul Syifaq & Mohd Radhi, "Konsep Akhlak Menurut Pandangan Imam Al- Ghazali."

<sup>31</sup> Siti Nur Aafifah, "Pembangunan Modal Insan," 23.

purposive sampling method which refers to a group of participants that have the characteristics which can help the researcher generate or discover a theory or specific concepts within the theory<sup>32</sup>. Therefore, studies that use such a design can provide an overview, information, explanation, perception and in-depth understanding to answer the research questions that have been formed.

The number of participants in this study is a total of 13 of our brothers who are involved in attending MAIDAM classes in Terengganu. The sample size is considered sufficient for the purpose of this qualitative case study. Lichtman reiterated that there are no "hard" rules for how many units should be included in the research sample.<sup>33</sup> This is supported by Adler & Adler who identified that small sample sizes are highlighted in non-funded research (few studies reach 30 or more respondents, and most samples include 6-12 units).<sup>34</sup> Scandlewski too concurred that most qualitative studies are run on small samples.<sup>35</sup>

The purposive sampling technique was used in the focus group discussion for the interviews and in-depth discussions with our brothers who share the same experience and background. The advantage of the focus group discussion technique is that such interaction within

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<sup>32</sup> Creswell, J., *Educational Research: Planning, Conducting & Evaluating Quantitative and Qualitative* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska & Pearson Education International, 2012), 208.

<sup>33</sup> Lichtman, L. ed., *Qualitative Research in Education: A User's Guide* (Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, 2010), 142.

<sup>34</sup> Adler A. Adler, P., "How Many Qualitative Interviews is Enough?" in *Expert Voices and Early Career Reflections on Sampling and Cases in Qualitative Research*, eds. Baker, S. E., Edwards, R., & Doidge, M. (Southampton: National Centre for Research Methods, 2012), 8-9, accessed 20 May 2022, [http://eprints.ncrm.ac.uk/2273/4/how\\_many\\_interviews.pdf](http://eprints.ncrm.ac.uk/2273/4/how_many_interviews.pdf).

<sup>35</sup> Sandelowski, M., "Sample Size in Qualitative Research," *Research in Nursing & Health* 18(2) (1995), 179, <https://doi.org/10.1002/nur.4770180211>.

the group offers valuable data on the consensus and the diversity among the participants which is a unique strength of focus groups<sup>36</sup>. The interview method was conducted to obtain background information about the history, views and experiences of the respondents from the aspects of the practice of worship, faith, morals and the study of Islamic religious knowledge. In this regard, the questions are constructed based on the themes that have been identified with a list of questions as a guide during the interview process. The interview guide can be used as a checklist so that no information is missed and data collection is stopped when the data obtained has reached saturation<sup>37</sup>.

Data from the interview results were recorded and transcribed verbatim with the results of the interviews being shown through descriptive narratives. To maintain the confidentiality of the respondents and facilitate the analysis, the authors used the codes respondents#01 to respondents#13 in place of the names of study participants as suggested by Nurulhuda and Ramlee<sup>38</sup>. The analysis method used for this study is a thematic analysis by an inductive approach where the themes identified from data are strongly linked to the collected data set.<sup>39</sup> The inductive technique is used involving the coding process of research data, after its collection via focused group discussion. The analysis involves summarizing the content of the data extracts as themes to collate to form the main

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<sup>36</sup> David L. Morgan, "Focus Groups," *Annual Review Review Social* 22 (1996), 139.

<sup>37</sup> Creswell, "*Educational Research*," 433.

<sup>38</sup> Nurulhuda, C. A., & Ramlee, M., "Kajian Kes Usahawan Tani Industri Kecil Sederhana (IKS) Bumiputera di Negeri Terengganu," *Jurnal Pendidikan Malaysia* 34(2) (2009), 147.

<sup>39</sup> Anindita Majumdar, "Thematic Analysis in Qualitative Research," *IGI Gopal* (2018), 200, [https://DOI/10.4018/978-1-5225-5366-3.ch009](https://doi.org/10.4018/978-1-5225-5366-3.ch009).



theme, and finally to evaluate and justify that the selected themes are relevant to the research topic and question.

A pilot study on 5 of our brothers was conducted before the proper interview process to confirm that the list of questions is relevant to achieving the objectives of the study. Apart from that, the focus group discussions were conducted by Professor Dr. Khairul Anwar Mastor from the University Kebangsaan Malaysia and the researcher herself who also holds the position of Chairperson of the Malaysian Chinese Association Terengganu Branch. This study selected a group of our brothers from Terengganu as the sample because the non-Muslim communities in Terengganu have a history of interacting closely with local Malays. This high ethnic and religious tolerance among the non-Muslims in Terengganu coupled with the manifestation experience of tolerance nurtured through intermarriages creates an inclusive attitude in the Terengganu community.<sup>40</sup>

### **Findings of Study and Discussion**

The findings of the study explain the background of the respondents, identify the real appreciation of the Islamic education of our brothers and identify the relationship between Islamic education and the development of human capital of our brothers in Terengganu. The supportive relation for each fact is shown through verbatim transcription from the interviews held on 28 March 2020 at the MAIDAM class.

#### **1. Demographic Profile of Respondents**

Table 3 – Category of Race/Origin and Gender of Respondents

Race / Origin	Male	Female
Chinese	2	3
Sarawakian	0	1

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<sup>40</sup> Khadijah et al., “Muhajir Penjana Interaksi,” 73.

Sabahan	0	1
Indonesian	1	0
Philippine	1	0
Siamese	2	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Percentage %</b>	<b>46%</b>	<b>54%</b>

Respondents consisted of 7 males (54%) and 6 females (46%). This sample is in line with the statistics of conversion to Islam in Terengganu from 2012 to 2018 which also shows that the conversion of men is more than women (Table 3). Four female respondents are from abroad who have lived in Malaysia for a long time and are married to Malaysians.

Table 4 – Background of Respondents

No	Category	Description	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1	Gender	Male	7	54
		Female	6	46
2	Location of Islamic class	Kuala Terengganu	5	38
		Bukit Payung	8	62
3	Duration embracing Islam	1-10 years	3	23
		11 above	10	77
4	Race	Chinese	5	38
		Sabahan	1	8
		Sarawakian	1	8
		Non-citizen	6	46
5	Age	40-50	5	38
		50-60	4	31
		61 above	4	31
6	Type of	Not working	8	62

	employment	Working private sector	2	15
		Self-employed	3	32
7	Monthly Income	No income	8	62
		RM1001-RM1500	5	38
8	Education	Primary School	6	46
		No Education	7	54

Based on table 4 above, three of our brothers have embraced Islam for up to 10 years and the others have embraced Islam for more than 10 years. Respondents who are not Malaysians represent 46% while the largest group of Malaysians are the Chinese which is 38% (5 people) followed by Sarawakian 8% (1 person) and Sabahan 8% (1 person). In terms of education, 46% have primary school education and 54% do not have school education. They consist of the age group with 62% of respondents aged over 50 years. Thus, 62% of them are unemployed with 15% working in private companies and the rest are self-employed.

## **2. Appreciation of Faith as a Catalyst for Human Capital Development**

Our brothers came from various backgrounds of religious beliefs before embracing Islam. For that, our brothers should aim to develop Islamic education to enable themselves to become Muslim human capital who achieve success in this world and the hereafter. Thus, Ahmad Yunus et al. explained that the main foundation of Islamic education that needs to be understood by our brothers is the understanding and appreciation of the knowledge of

faith.<sup>41</sup> Orally, all 13 respondents answered that they were 'confident' completely in everything explained in the Islamic faith. As proof, they acknowledge that they have abandoned all practices that would lead to the erosion or corruption of the creed contained in their previous religion. Their confidence in their belief are described as follows:

"When I go to *Ching Ming* (to visit the grave) with my family, I go to socialize with my family and I just observe. I don't worship my ancestors like I used to." Respondent#07 (Chinese)

"I want to die in Islam ..." Respondent#08 (Siamese)

Respondents also acknowledged the implications of adhering to false beliefs. This is stated as follows:

"If like in Islam, it's a sin. We can't believe in *tok bomoh* (shaman)." Respondent#02 (Siamese)

The next respondent stated that he would be steadfast in Islam and not return to his original religion even if he was rewarded or the like. This is explained as follows:

"If given RM20 million, I don't want to change my religion." Respondent#011 (Sabahan)

Based on the above transcript, all respondents said that they are convinced of the Islamic faith and that they will never commit *shirk* such as worshipping their former gods, believing in shamans or worshipping their ancestors.

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<sup>41</sup> Ahmad Yunus et al., "Pengajaran Akidah dalam Kalangan Mualaf," 92.

### 3. Developing Human Capital through the Practice of Prayer

As Muslim, apart from having to adhere to the true faith, our brothers need to develop human capital by implementing all the basics of worship as required by the teachings of Islam. In order to implement all the basics of worship, the consolidation of the knowledge of *fiqh 'ibadah* and the appreciation of its teachings in earnest according to the framework outlined by Islam is able to strengthen the self-identity of our brothers. This is because according to al-Ghazali developing human capital by performing all the acts of worship and the laws of Allah is a demand on every Muslim.<sup>42</sup>

In other words, gaining knowledge that can strengthen the implementation of the law of God is an obligation to every one of our brothers. Allah said in Surah al-Mu'minun verses 1-2, the practice of prayer can lead to excellence and peace in your life. While the implementation of prayers performed with devotion and quality successfully develops the self-identity of a Muslim.<sup>43</sup> In this regard, all respondents acknowledged that the implementation of prayers provides peace of mind and has an effect on other daily practices. This is explained as follows:

“If we don't pray, it's like we have done something wrong to God. It's like we owe a debt to him. It's hard for us. I used to miss my prayers, *Subuh* or *Zohor* or *Asar*. So, we have to replace our prayers (*qada*). If we don't replace our prayers (*qada*), we feel guilty, and not at peace to do our work. When we do

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<sup>42</sup> Al-Ghazali, *Minhaj al-'Abidin*, 20.

<sup>43</sup> Ghuzni binti Hashim & Hilmi bin Mat Said, "Standard Kualiti Solat Pemangkin Kecemerlangan Akademik: Satu Kajian di Kulliah As-Sultan Abu Bakar, Pekan, Pahang Darul Makmur," *International Journal Of Humanities, Technology and Civilization (IJHTC)* 10(2) (2021), 123.

business, we feel it is difficult. It won't work whatever it is." Respondent#02 (Siamese)

Respondent#02 (Siamese) felt uneasy when missing prayer because he believed that prayer is a source of success and a cure for all difficulties in life. Prayer is a pillar of success and a source of happy inspiration to those who believe in God. This is also confirmed by Allah himself in Surah al-A'la verses 14-15. The position of a good deed depends entirely on the good or bad of the worship of prayer.

Of course, the imperfection of performing the prayer is very much related to the laxity in obtaining Islamic education, the time period required to adapt or the level of confidence in the religion is still not intact. This situation can be seen when the respondents were asked about their experiences in performing prayer. This transcript explains that there are among the respondents who are not able to perform the obligatory prayers five times fully. This is explained as follows:

"I work in a dirty place, right? I do not have time to clean up. If I clean up, it will take too much time. After that, my break period will be over, can't make it." Respondent #03 (Chinese)

Similarly, respondent#01 (Sarawakian) who works as a lorry driver said:

"Dawn prayer (*Subuh*) very rarely can I make it. Sometimes mid-afternoon (*Zohor*) prayer too I can't make it because I will be driving the lorry, for example travelling a long distance to Kemaman."

Based on the above transcript, the respondents admitted that the factors of a dirty body, failing to wake up early and worrying about being late on arrival at the destination caused them to abandon the performance of

prayer intentionally. The performance of prayer is the 'basis' of worship and for that reason, it becomes an obligatory responsibility of every Muslim who is *mukallaf*. Who then is a *mukallaf*? Azman et al. summarise *mukallaf* as a person who has reached puberty and is sane and with his intellect and knowledge, he is able to do the demands of Allah according to *Syari'ah*.<sup>44</sup> Islamic prayer is a form of worship that is able to develop human capital, especially having an effect on the soul and spirituality of every human being.

Mohd Alif's study confirmed that the practice of prayer affects not only maintaining a relationship with Allah but also a relationship with fellow human beings. Maintaining the practice of prayer is very important because it involves spiritual, physical, emotional and intellectual aspects that can produce a balanced Muslim in his way of life and at the same time display the noble morals of a good Muslim. Thus, a successful Muslim is a Muslim who always preserves and appreciates the performance of his prayers.<sup>45</sup>

The appreciation of the practice of prayer is not only maintained by keeping to praying on time only but also includes the aspect of paying attention to the recitation in the prayers. This is important because the 'acceptance' of one's prayers is related to the observance of the pillars of prayer, which include the pillars of recitation (*qawli*). In relation to this, the respondents were asked about the recitation of Surah al-Fatihah and other recitations in the prayer. However, all 13 respondents who were asked

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<sup>44</sup> Azman Ab. Rahmana et al., "Kaedah Pengukuran Penentuan Status Mu'alaf kepada Mukallaf dalam Konteks Malaysia," *International Journal of Islamic and Civilizational Studies* 2 (2020), 41-49.

<sup>45</sup> Mohd Alif Aiman Asari, Rushidah Md Rosdi & Mohd Faisal Mahdi, "Amalan Solat Berjemaah dalam Membentuk Akhlak Pelajar Politeknik & Kolej Komuniti," *e-Proceedings 10<sup>th</sup> National Conference in Education: Technical & Vocational Education*, Politeknik Tuanku Syed Sirajuddin, 13-14 October, 2020, 1357.

could not answer perfectly. The transcripts of the answers given are as follows:

"Yes, I can. For *bismillah* I can. To translate *Fatihah*, I can't." Respondent#02 (Siamese).

Similarly, Respondent#03 (Chinese), when asked to give a translation of Surah al-Fatihah, he was only able to give a translation for two verses only. This is stated as follows:

"Allah is One and Only. Most Loving, Most Merciful. The Ruler of the Universe."  
Respondent#03 (Chinese).

When our brothers were asked about the 'purpose' of performing prayers and the 'meaning' of the recitations in the prayers, they were unable to give an answer. Respondent#04 (Indonesian) for example admitted that the religious teacher in the class had taught them the meaning of Surah al-Fatihah but she was still not able to remember it. This is explained as follows:

"Don't know yet. He taught me already. Indeed, I don't know yet." Respondent#04 (Indonesian).

Therefore, based on the above findings, it indicates that our brothers do not know the meaning of what is recited during the prayer. Just by paying attention to the outward form of prayer and not the existence of rational and heartfelt knowledge of remembrance and recitation would deem the prayer meaningless and in vain. The effect of prayer is tied and depends closely on an understanding of the recitations and having a presence of the heart in order to experience spiritual closeness during the communication with the Almighty Allah. The presence of the heart is when one empties the heart of everything for the sake of preoccupying oneself with worldly matters until he knows what he is doing and what he is saying and concentrating his thoughts on prayer, this is what is called



a humble heart (*khushu'*). The presence of the heart is to worship Allah SWT as if we see Him and when we realize that if we are not able to see Him then he can see us.<sup>46</sup> In view of this, it is important that the appreciation of the practice of prayer be enhanced to ensure the effect of prayer on the spirituality and physical moral conduct of our brothers.

#### **4. Developing Human Capital through the Practice of Fasting**

The practice of fasting in the month of Ramadan is one of the pillars of Islam that is commanded on every Muslim. In addition to resisting hunger and thirst, the practice of fasting serves to educate a person with patience and discipline. In general, the results of the study show that the majority of our brothers do not face problems in the practice of fasting. However, there are still some of them who cannot perform the worship perfectly. This is stated as follows:

“We feel guilty for not fasting completely. There is no meaning. I want to get better, how do I start? I do you know” Respondent#03 (Chinese)

Meanwhile, the transcript of Respondent#01 (Sarawakian) who works as a lorry driver having to load and unload goods from the lorry explains as follows:

“Firstly, it is because of hard work. Loading and unloading the goods. It’s never enough (to complete the fast). I thought that this year’s fasting is enough (to complete 30 days). Did not achieve too. The most I achieved was up to 2 weeks. Can’t do it”. Respondent #01 (Sarawakian).

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<sup>46</sup> Famawati, “Nilai Pendidikan Akhlak dalam Shalat,” *Jurnal al-Amin - Kajian Pendidikan dan Sosial Kemasyarakatan* 5(1) (2020), 83.

Work factors or types of work are the reasons for not perfecting the above-mentioned worship. Failure to appreciate fasting as a form of worship properly is due to the attitude and motivation of the respondents themselves.<sup>47</sup> This is also about the weakness of faith (*'aqidah*), namely our brothers who fail to manifest faith in God through maintaining the performance of obligatory worship. In this aspect, it should be highlighted here that understanding the faith will result in the understanding and the desire to practice worship when the spirituality of our brother is stronger in appreciating Islam as a whole. Hence, it is important to emphasize on educating our brothers to strengthen their faith which in turn will contribute to worship and moral appreciation.<sup>48</sup>

### **5. Implications of Religiosity Appreciation on the Development of Moral Human Capital**

The relationship between faith (*'aqidah*), Islamic law (*syariah*) and morality is an inseparable relationship. Moral education is actually an education that is directly obtained through the study of faith and Islamic law. This means that a person who has good faith and *Syari'ah* is a good person in terms of morals. This also confirms that one's belief is not enough just to be kept in the heart.<sup>49</sup> In fact, it should be appropriately practiced in daily life in the form of admirable morals. This is evident in the findings of this study which showed that the conversion to Islam changed the respondents' morals for the better. This is explained as follows:

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<sup>47</sup> Supriadi, "Problematika Muallaf," 43.

<sup>48</sup> Syarul Azman Shahrudin et al., "Tahap Kefahaman Akidah dalam Kalangan Muallaf di Negeri Selangor," *Jurnal Sultan Alauddin Sulaiman Shah* 5(1) (2018), 89.

<sup>49</sup> Alnida Azty et al., "Hubungan antara Aqidah dan Akhlak dalam Islam," *Journal of Education, Humaniora and Social Sciences (JEHSS)* 1(2) (2018), 122.

"Now I feel that if I am angry with a person, I am more gentle.... I no longer think badly of the person." Respondent#08 (Siamese)

"It used to be hot-tempered ... now I am a little more patient." Respondent#01 (Sarawakian)

"There are changes. Unlike before converting to Islam, we like to have a fight with people. For example, people would say something. We will argue back. Kind of answer back verbally. Like now, if people were to say anything, we can be a little patient." Respondent#04 (Indonesian)

"I can be patient. I change in terms of my *akhlaq* compared to the time when I was a *kafir*." Respondent#02 (Siamese)

The development of the moral human capital of the respondents is closely related to the continuity of moral education obtained through teaching in classes conducted by MAIDAM. Respondents realized that they had gone through a process of change of behaviour and morals for the better than before embracing Islam. These findings show that faith is a catalyst for the development of good behaviour and morals among the community of our brothers. Even the implementation of all routine religious practices such as prayer, fasting and so on can generate positive values in developing the human capital of our brothers. This is as described in the following transcript:

"It means that when we perform the *hajat prayer* we make our request. After that we *zikir*, it causes us to be patient." Respondent#02 (Siamese)

"Yes, fasting makes us more generous and love to give charity." Respondent#03 (Chinese).

Many verses of the Qur'an explain that the implementation of religious practices is closely related to the development of values such as training to be more disciplined with consistency to abandon all vices (Surah al-Ahzab: 36 and Surah al-'Ankabut: 45), training to abandon all forms of sins and remain steadfast to always seek protection from Allah (Surah al-Nas: 5-6) and educate oneself with a patient character (Surah al-Baqarah: 45). Related to this, it should be emphasized that the education of our brothers should be holistic and should be involving the purification of the soul through *tazkiyah al-nafs* as the basis of developing human capital.<sup>50</sup>

Indeed, Islam teaches that its followers should always have a good relationship with their original family, even if they have different religions. Thus, the development of the moral human capital of our brothers is also highlighted in their relationship with the original family. Related to this, when asked about the relationship with their original family, the respondents all confirmed that the relationship with their original family is much better than before. Although some of them are distant from their families and are staying in other countries such as Sarawak, Thailand and the Philippines, they will always contact their families by telephone. For example, Respondent#04 (Indonesian) narrated as follows:

"I am close to my original family. Because we live far away and rarely see my sister so I just (call them by) telephone only". Respondent#04 (Indonesia).

"My family did not stop me from converting to Islam. After converting to Islam, I always go

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<sup>50</sup> Siti Nur Aafifah, "Pembangunan Modal Insan," 19.

back to the village. My mother will buy big fish and cook *halal* chicken for us as a family to eat together". Respondent#07 (Chinese)

Yet there are among parents who take time to accept their children back as family members after their children become Muslims. Respondent#02 (Siamese) explained as follows:

"Hmm., in the past it (the relationship with my father) was not good. Now it is good."  
Respondent#02 (Siamese)

Strictly speaking, our brothers play a role in explaining the true Islamic ethics such as family relationships, daily activities (including worship), *halal* and *haram* in food and so on to eliminate any form of prejudice among their non-Muslim family members. Besides that, our brothers also have the role of explaining to the born-Muslim families the need to defend the original culture, the preservation of their respective identities and the involvement together in the cultural activities with their original family despite having converted to Islam.<sup>51</sup> This situation of having a better understanding of Islam and better morality shown by our brothers as Muslims play a very important role in calming the anger of the original family as a result of living in a multi-religious community sharing life's experience of daily routine and cultural interactions such as celebrating festivals, visiting neighbours of different religions, celebrating a baby's birthday and sharing grief when death occurs.<sup>52</sup>

## **6. Challenges of Developing Human Capital**

Indeed, our centre of guidance for our brothers plays a huge role in developing the Islamic educational entity for

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<sup>51</sup> Azarudin et al., "Pengukuhan Semula Peradaban," 80.

<sup>52</sup> Khadijah et al., "Muhajir Penjana Interaksi," 73.

the newly converted community. Through the weekly classes conducted by MAIDAM, our brothers are taught the various basic disciplines of Islamic education so that our brothers can develop their human capital, thus producing a Muslim who is not only an example to other Muslims but also able to set a good example to the original family. However, based on the feedback from 13 respondents, only 2 of them stated that they understood 50% of the weekly studies organized by MAIDAM. While others only gain an understanding below the level of 30% of the knowledge gained.

There are various factors that caused respondents to fail to obtain maximum understanding. Among them, the respondents could not follow the studies conducted because the teachers delivered their lessons very fast. This is explained as follows:

"He explained just like that, and then he went on to another topic." Respondent#01 (Sarawakian)

"We want it slow ... we want quality until we understand". Respondent#07 (Chinese)

"The issue is that he should repeat what he teaches". Respondent#3 (Chinese)

This is also what Rasulullah p.b.u.h. suggested that it is important to repeat what is taught so that it is easy to remember and understand. This is explained according to a hadith as follows:

"From Anas bin Malik, "Indeed when he speaks, he will repeat it three times so that it can be understood."<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>53</sup> Al-Bukhari, Sahih al-Bukhari, Kitab al-'Ilm, Chapter: Repeating Ones Talk Thrice in Order to Make Others Understand, vol. 1, book 3 no 95, Sunnah.com, <https://sunnah.com/bukhari:95>.

Furthermore, the teacher did not carry out practical, for example, teaching the ritual of ablution, teaching prayer with explanation through action, thereby causing lack of understanding resulting in the students not being able to practice perfectly the knowledge acquired. This is explained as follows:

“There must be practical... we don't have a high qualification so how are we going to study. There has to be practical. If it is just theory only without practical, with just knowledge we will not be able to understand... people who study in the university with just theory they too will not be able to understand.”  
Respondent#011 (Sabahan)

Teaching theory combined with practice makes it easier for students to understand when compared with just teaching theory.<sup>54</sup> This is also what Rasulullah p.b.u.h. practiced when he taught his companions about religious issues. He often gave understanding through practical actions to be more effective. The method known as *al-tatbiqi wa al-'amali* is also recommended for teaching our brothers as their educational backgrounds and ages are diverse.<sup>55</sup>

Next, respondents were also faced with the problems of communication when classes were conducted using Malay as the language of instruction. The situation becomes more problematic when our brothers are not Malaysian citizens who have less understanding of the

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<sup>54</sup> Siti Adibah & Siti Zubaidah, “Pengurusan Mualaf di Malaysia: Kerjasama Dinamik antara Agensi Kerajaan dan Bukan Kerajaan,” *Jurnal Usuluddin* 46(2) (2018), 106.

<sup>55</sup> Noraini Mohamad, Mariam Abd. Majid & Badlihisam Mohd Nasir, “Pendekatan Dakwah dalam Kaedah Pengajaran kepada Mualaf,” 2020, accessed 15 September 2021, <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/340662020> .

Malay language. Respondent#011 (Sabahan) narrated his experience as follows:

"If there is a *ustaz* (religious teacher) who can teach in the Thai language, that is better, if possible, just like in Kelantan there is a Thai *ustaz* (religious teacher)... but he is from Kelantan, but he is smart .... he speaks the Thai language." Respondent#011 (Sabahan)

"If I refer to Sarawak, I originally studied in Sarawak. To be appointed as a *daie* (preacher), I had to do practical work for six months. After that, when I went out to teach converts, people said we were better (as covert teachers) than (born) Muslims teaching converts as we knew our situation during our time in the past (before we embrace Islam)". Respondent#011 (Sarawakian)

In this regard, those who are less fluent in the Malay language among our brothers will affect their learning process.<sup>56</sup> Relating to this issue, it is better to teach our brothers using the language of their mother tongue which will give an added value to further enhance the level of understanding of what is taught in the classroom.<sup>57</sup>

The findings also found that the respondents failed to gain the maximum possible understanding of Islamic education due to their background and level of education. When a lesson is delivered at a too high level, some of our brothers will find it difficult to understand. This is explained as follows:

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<sup>56</sup> Wan Zuhaira Nasrin Wan Zainudin & Nur A'thiroh Masyaa'il Abdullah @ Tan Ai Pow, "Dakwah kepada Saudara Baru di Kelantan," *Fikiran Masyarakat* 6(3) (2018), 110.

<sup>57</sup> Kamarulzaman & Nur A'thiroh, "Isu dan Cabaran Saudara Kita", 40.



"We go to school (but) not at a very high level... some did not even go to school one day..." Respondent#07 (Chinese).

"Sometimes the delivery is at too high a level.... sometimes we don't get it".  
Respondent#011 (Sabahan).

In fact, the majority of our brothers are in their 40s and older. Thus, teaching methods must be appropriate to their level of thinking and ability taking into account their educational and cultural differences. To develop the human capital of our brothers, the Islamic education that is recommended should be a comprehensive module of study by looking into the syllabus and appropriate teaching methods because the backgrounds of our brothers are different in terms of age, level of education, language ability and culture.<sup>58</sup>

## **Conclusions**

The best way to develop the human capital of our brothers in Terengganu is to develop their level of confidence and religiosity appreciation. On the whole, it can be stated that some of our brothers are still not able to consistently maintain religiosity appreciation of the teachings of Islam, especially the aspects that touch on the performance of prayer and fasting in the month of Ramadan, even though if from the aspect of their belief in the faith is considered to be quite good. The failure to appreciate the teachings of this religion is closely related to the level of understanding of our brothers on Islamic education delivered in the classroom. Factors such as education level, age, Malay language ability, culture and teaching methods used by the teachers form the basis of acquiring an understanding of our brother's community.

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<sup>58</sup> Azman Ab. Rahman et al., "Sorotan Literatur Kajian Modul Pengajian Mualaf di Malaysia," *Diskusi Syariah dan Undang-Undang* 1 (2020), 50.

Our brothers need to develop their human capital as 'role model' that need to be emulated because they play a role as a bridge that connects the Muslim community and the non-Muslim community through a network of joint activities. The role of our brothers as human capital is highlighted by some of our outstanding brothers such as Tuan Haji Nicholas Slyvester, Prof Dr. Haji Taufik Yap Yun Hin, Datuk Haji Mustapha Ma, Dr. Rosey Ma, Dr. Ravi Abdullah, Brother Shah Kirit and Dr. Farid Abdullah. Thus, this study opens for further research, especially touching on the techniques and syllabus of our brothers' studies conducted at MAIDAM to unravel the real problems of teaching and learning faced by the community of our brothers.

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