

Cultural Socialization and Its Relation to the Attitude of Religious Tolerance among Muslim and Buddhist Students in Prince of Songkhla University

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ABSTRACT

Interaction and communication between religions often develop a harmony culture. Without a good interaction and communication, it can emerge prejudice. It means that interaction in the context of a different culture and religion plays an important role in shaping the integration value. In the context of students at Prince of Songkhla University consisting of Muslims and Buddhists who often interact among each other. The question is how far the conflict in Southern Thai has influenced the communication patterns? Hence, this article discusses the patterns of interaction and communication between Muslims and Buddhists at universities. In addition, how far the interaction and communication among both side have created a religious tolerance. The methodology used in the study is qualitative and quantitative approach using questionnaires and interviews. This study shows that most students have a good interaction and communication. In addition, this study also shows that there are a relationship between interaction and communication with the attitude of religious tolerance at a strong level.

Keywords: Buddhist, cultural socialization, Muslim, religious tolerance.

Religion guides human towards peace, tranquillity and happiness. However, there are people who are not tied to any religion, belief, faith and belief, known as the 'atheism' (the belief that denies the existence of Allah) (Anuar 2003: 109). There is no doubt that people often hear the word religion in daily life. The word 'religion' has been increasingly difficult to be defined accurately. Mukti Ali, an expert in comparative religion considers the difficulty in defining the meaning of religion is that religious practice is a subjective matter, discussions about religion should be composed of spirit or strong emotions and conceptions of religion will be influenced by the purpose of the person who gives the meaning of religion itself (Diaz 2006). This statement is consistent with expression of W.C. Smith as quoted by Ramli Awang (2008: 17) where, "*It's not excessive if we say that so far, there is no true definition of religion and be accepted*".

Therefore, none of the definition of religion can be generally accepted. However, people could not be separated by religion, because religion is an important contribution to mankind and religion also serves to uphold human civilization, in which history has shown that none of the great people and have a great empire without being accompanied by religion (Sulaiman Ibrahim 2003: 150). This means that every human being must have religion in their lives. Generally, every religion and faith play an important role towards devotees, among others, as a function of social control, religion gives value to a group of

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human togetherness, religion gives a worldview to every human culture and religion is able to answer all questions that are able to be answered by human beings (Ramli 2008: 33-34).

According to Ramli (2008: 33-34) religion and belief are two things that are very relevant. However, religion has a wider meaning which refers to a comprehensive system of belief while faith refers to the divine aspect. Hence, the belief that only involves one individual is usually not considered as a religion. On the other hand, religion should involve a human community. Thus, religion is a phenomenon of society which can be traced through the action (prayer and ritual customs), attitude (respect and affection), statement (spells) and tangible things (building mosques, temples, etc.). This shows that religion has direct relevance to the ethics of society and not just a matter of the relationship between human and God, but also about the human relationship with humans.

In this regard, Islam accepts the fact of the existence of non-Muslims and is also part of the community. The existence of non-Muslims in Muslim societies is a stipulation of Allah. This is because Allah s.w.t gives freedom to human to choose their own beliefs (Ainon 2003: 25). Allah s.w.t says in Surah al-Kahf, which means: *"And Say (O Muhammad): The truth is from your Lord, so anyone who wants to believe let him believe and whosoever will disbelieve, let him deny it"*. The meaning of the verse above emphasizes that Islam gives freedom to every human to believe or disbelieve. Sayyid Outb interpreted this verse "Those who are not bound by the truth that comes from Allah, it is free for them and those who do not want to make themselves as followers of what come from Allah, there is no compulsion for them (Jawiah 2008: 182). Based on the above verse as a whole, reflecting that people are given the opportunity to think and choose between right and that is not true. Therefore, this result appeared in various religions, beliefs and teachings based on the thinking in this world.

Thus, social conflict or misunderstanding in religion resulting from the difference was considered normal in any society that is multi-religious or ethnic groups. This is because every religion has its principles and different teaching of religion such as, different perception of God, different life after death, different method of ritual worship and so forth (Ghazali 2009: 14. In the context of the conflict in southern Thailand, the author would like to determine on how they affect the pattern of relations between Islam and undergraduates Buddha Prince of Songkhla University (PSU). At the same time, how far the interaction and communication between adherents of different religions can establish the religious tolerance. According Rattaya (2001), the conflict in Southern Thailand is becoming more and more increasing concern, particularly among Muslims in defense of cultural identity as a direct integration process has a commitment to the rules of society that is driven by the Siamese government. However, the attempts to identify or understand in depth about the events that occurred in southern Thailand are very difficult.

Methods

The approach used in this study is qualitative and quantitative approaches. Qualitative approach; the researcher conducts the library research to obtain primary and accurate data while the quantitative approach, the researcher expects several methods which include research design, selection of study areas, sample selection, data collection and data analysis.

Research Design

The survey method is a very important research strategy to obtain information related to the study. This study is a study of evaluating the level of interaction and communication

among the students. Thus, the researcher used the survey method as a first step because it is the method for analyzing the data collected, compare and explain the knowledge, attitudes, practices and behaviour. Norasmah's quotation based on Oppenheim, Fink and Kasecoff's study explained that the survey method is a form that can be used to collect data or information for future planning or as a guide to analyze the relationship between the variables. In addition, it is the best method used in studies aimed at finding and gathering information about feelings, motivations, plans, beliefs, personal, educational or in respect of a program directly from the respondent (Norasmah 2002: 156-157). This method has been implemented by researcher since early in ensuring that researcher really knows and understands the group and problems to be studied. To obtain accurate information, the researcher has done surveys and participant observations either in terms of students' daily lives. Since researcher is people living in the study area, this condition can help researcher to obtain more accurate and profound information. Although, the focus of community respondents in this study is students of different religions, but this is not an obstacle for the researcher because one of the advantages the researcher is, able to master the local language (Siamese language).

In this study, the researcher conducts qualitative research method that tends to the method of data collection through analysis of documents (Ahmad 2011: 26). This method is designed to obtain information and understand the concepts related to the scope or field of study. Besides, the researcher has gone over in detail at the results of previous studies of the scholars to ensure the truth that is going to be done by the researcher in order to prevent the misunderstanding of the problem studied. However, there is a variety of materials collected by the researcher whether in academic books, scholarly journals, documents, dissertations, theses and other resources relevant to the topic or problem being studied.

Research Instruments

This study used questionnaires and interviews, as two of these methods are appropriate to the context of Norasmah's quotation that in a book written by Oppenheim (1966) and Tuckman (1978) states that questionnaires and interviews are two forms of effective instruments for obtaining information from other respondents besides observations. Both forms of the instrument are detailed below:

Questionnaire & Interview

Questionnaire distribution method is the method most widely and popularly used in the social sciences. It is used in conjunction with other methods such as participant observation and interviews to strengthen the research information. According Norasmah (2002), questionnaire has to be constructed carefully, clearly, easily understood and simple. Accordingly, the chance of getting inaccurate answers may not occur unless the respondent did not read the question properly. The questions raised in the questionnaire should include matters related to the purpose of interest. The questions in the questionnaire should not involve sensitive matters including local sensitivities, religion, race and politics. In addition, the questionnaire should not overlap each other either in terms of meanings or phrases and the order of the questions in the questionnaire should be arranged in the correct order form and easily understood (Ahmad 2011: 60). The questionnaire is divided into three parts. The first part is the part A of the background of demographic, consisting of age, years of study, education level, gender, religion, residence, and individual / groups of all

faiths. The second part is the part B, containing 12 items about students' perceptions of interaction and communication patterns that are based on religious or moral orientation that lead to religious tolerance. Next, the third part of the C, containing 10 items regarding the perception of religious tolerance. This section refers to the four aspects of social behaviour among students with different religion, respectful attitude towards the teachings of other religions, the attitude of respect for the views or thoughts of other religions and attitudes of respect for culture and the practice of other religions. Based on that, this study is to measure the attitudes and perception regarding religious tolerance among students. Thus, researcher builds the questionnaire by providing the selection answers in the form of Likert scale. It is because this scale is suitable for assessing the level of acceptance or rejection of the respondents to one question raised (Jaffary 2007: 106).

Direct interview method obtains information in the form of views from respondents. In this context, there is a bilateral relationship between researcher and respondent. Further, the information through interviews is produced when there is information sought, a clear understanding of the respondents and the existence of the spirit to answer. There are several advantages of this interview method, such as researcher is able to find information quickly and directly, more convincing answers because it can be seen on the attitude or behaviour of the respondents. Interview method also provides a flexible environment for researchers to ask questions and give more space to the respondent to answer questions (Ahmad 2011: 65). Norasmah's quotation based on the study of Rae (1999) states that the advantages of using the interview method is the ability to ask questions, getting a clear explanation of the things better and deeper, a more flexible approach depending on the circumstances, obtaining better number of respondents and participants are able to get the benefit of the assessment (Norasmah 2002: 159-160). This interview technique is also an effective method to learn individuals, especially regarding their thoughts and views on matters that occur in their daily lives as well as to learn about how the situation may affect their lives. Therefore, it is an important responsibility for the researcher to study and understand first the thing required in the interview. In this study, researcher used two forms of interview which is unstructured interview during the distribution of questionnaires whereby researcher began an interview with a description and a brief introduction about the research and respondents are asked to provide a response. It is known as unstructured because no allocation time is granted for the interview process and questions are given freely, without order. There are several advantages of this unstructured interview. Among them are, researcher can train research assistants to interview on his behalf as specific eligibility is not required to do an interview, the interviewer and the respondent are natural condition and comfortable, and able to explore a lot of information because the conversation is not focused to complete the questionnaires alone (Ahmad 2011: 66).

The second form of interview conducted in this study was a telephone interview. This method is popularly used in developed countries, particularly in identifying public opinion on issues. It helps researchers to communicate directly and quickly with the respondent, and to avoid going to a place to get information. This method also helps researchers to obtain samples in a broader location. However, during the interview conducted by researchers either in person or by telephone, researchers must overcome several drawbacks such as the accuracy of information presented by the respondent. Respondents may be suppressed by fear, shame and so on. In addition, the fatigue factor interviewers such as, emotionally disturbed, bias against the person causing the answers in an interview is not perfect (Ahmad 2011: 68). Those who are selected for the interview are

among the student leaders in universities, four persons among the lecturers, student affairs staff and student representatives in university.

Pilot Study to Evaluate Instrument Reliability

The value of the reliability instrument must be determined to identify the level of internal accuracy of the items used in the instrument of a study. For this purpose, the reliability of the instrument was tested using Cronbach Alpha, because the value of a reliability coefficient indicates the suitability of the items as a set of questions. The closer the alpha value to one (1) means that the higher the reliability. While the alpha value of less than 0.6 is considered weak and acceptable alpha value 0.7 (Dearana 2010: 76).

Table 1: Value of Cronbach alpha reliability coefficient for each construct.

Construct	Number of Items	Cronbach Alpha Value
Patterns of interaction and communication based on religious practice and orientation behaviour that can lead to religious tolerance.	12	0.7971
Attitude toward religious tolerance.	10	0.9362
Total	22	0.8666

Source: 2011 Survey

The findings above are the result of data obtained from testing the validity of the overall reliability of the instruments used in this study and found that all the instruments have high reliability and valid for the actual study.

Sample Selection & Data Collection

The sample is one of the things that matter in any quantitative study because it is a source of research data. Researcher needs to ensure that the selected sample can give accurate data sources to produce a truly study (Faiz 2009: 8). Sampling is a procedure to select or decide which of the population of subjects will be used as the sample. Generalization about the population is made as a result of study or research on selected samples. The purpose of the selected sample is to save cost and time and avoid the impossibility of researchers to gather information from all populations (Ahmad 2011: 70). Samples used in this study consisted of students who study at the university level. Before distribution of questionnaire done, researcher will make a requirement to anyone who will be the respondents in this study in order to ensure that the information or data obtained consistent with the topic of the research. Among the conditions is that the respondent should be local or children born in the study area and have friends of different religions. Population and sample selection in this study was conducted in accordance with Schedule Krejcie & Morgan of the population (N) and sample (S). Thus, the study population according to the conditions set as a whole has acquired a total of 1.534 persons, then, the respondents in this study were approximately 300 people.

During the distribution of questionnaires carried out, the researchers distributed questionnaires according to probability sampling techniques whereby it gives equal opportunities to each subject of the population to be selected as the sample. This method

can avoid the bias elements of sample selection because it represents the study population and ultimately generalization can be accepted by the scientific. In Probability Sampling techniques, there are several methods which include Simple Random Sampling, Systematic Random Sampling, Layered Random Sampling, Random Sampling Group. Thus, in the context of this research, researcher selects the Simple Random Sampling where the sample of research is selected according to 'Fishbowl Draw' by entering the names of all subjects into a container and draws will be done based on the number of samples that are going to be used (Ahmad 2011: 73-77).

During the distribution of questionnaires carried out, the researchers gave the time and opportunity to the respondent to answer questions for a week, so that all the answers from questions posed are able to achieve the research objectives. Questionnaire collection process in this study was conducted in January to February 2011. After the deadline over, the researcher gathers all questionnaires and divided according to religion, namely Islam and Buddhism. Next, all sets of questionnaires are checked personally in details to ensure that all questions have been answered according to the instructions. After the researchers carrying out the collection and review, found that from 300 sets of questionnaires that had been distributed, a total of 245 sets that have been returned. According to Cohen and Manion in Norasmah study (2002), the rate of return of questionnaires from 70 percent to 80 percent is sufficient. Thus, the rate of return of this questionnaire is to meet the target of more than 70 percent. In this study, the researcher chose only 200 questionnaires to be used to ease the researcher conducting the SPSS data analysis, although there are more questionnaires that are complete, perfect and can be used in this study.

Despite of relatively small number of respondents, researchers think that this number can represent the entire students because the researcher adheres to students. As the researcher holds to Fasold comment on the study done by Gal in Faiz (2009) stated that the number of respondents is not a determinant of the validity of the study. On the other hand, there are still other matters to be considered, such as a comprehensive survey of the communities under study and others (Faiz 2009: 9). Next, all questionnaires are processed by using the program Statistical Packages for Social Science (SPSS). These data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics.

Results & Discussion

The research data should be reported clearly and neatly, making the reader understand and appreciate the results. For the analysis of quantitative research, although there is no format that can be agreed upon by all researchers in various fields of studies, reports can usually be written according to specific formats (Chua 2008: 328). Therefore, the researcher selects the form of diagrams and tables report that describes the distribution of mean scores, standard deviations, frequencies and percentages. In addition, the purpose of this study was to examine the relationships between patterns of interaction and communication based on religious or moral orientation among college students' attitudes toward religious tolerance. Thus, inferential analysis of correlation was done to see to what extent the existence of such relationships.

Patterns of Interaction and Communication Orientation Based on the Practice of Religion and Morals among Student

Interaction and communication patterns that are based on religious or moral orientation in this study refer to students' perceptions of socializing with friends of different religions

during lesson and attitudes of a student towards the practices of any other religion. Overall, the results of the study are as shown in the table below (Source: 2011 survey):

Table 2: Distribution of mean scores and standard deviation of the interaction and communication patterns based on religious or moral orientation towards religious tolerance

SNA=Strongly Not Agree, NA=Not Agree, LA=Less Agree, A=Agree, As=Strongly Agree

Num.	Item	Frequency & Percentage (N=200)					Mean & SD		Int.
		SNA	NA	LA	A	SA			
C1	I befriended with anyone regardless the religion	3.0 (6)	1.0 (2)	13.0 (26)	36.0 (72)	47.0 (94)	4.23	0.92	High
C2	I visit all friends who are hit by accident, regardless the religion	0.5 (1)	1.5 (3)	9.0 (18)	39.0 (78)	50.0 (100)	4.36	0.75	High
C3	I am ready to live in the same room with any friend, regardless the religion.	5.0 (10)	3.0 (6)	30.0 (60)	22.0 (44)	40.0 (80)	3.89	1.12	High
C4	I always attend the religious festival, regardless any religious festival.	17.0 (34)	21.5 (43)	25.0 (50)	17.5 (35)	19.0 (38)	3.00	1.35	Moderate
C5	I will help all friends, regardless the religion.	1.0 (2)	0.5 (1)	12.5 (25)	35.5 (71)	50.5 (101)	4.34	0.79	High
C6	I always go to the house of worship.	0.5 (1)	5.5 (11)	51.5 (103)	28.0 (56)	14.5 (29)	3.50	0.82	High
C7	I have never broken my promise with my friends..	- -	11.5 (23)	55.0 (110)	26.0 (52)	7.5 (15)	3.29	0.76	Moderate
C8	Conversion among different religions reflect the existence of religious tolerance.	0.5 (1)	6.0 (12)	34.0 (68)	36.0 (72)	23.5 (47)	3.76	0.89	High
C9	I am comfortable living nearby the house of worship of other religion.	10.0 (20)	24.5 (49)	29.5 (59)	20.5 (41)	15.5 (31)	3.07	1.21	Moderate
C10	I always discuss with the other religion's believer on religious issues	16.5 (33)	22.0 (44)	33.0 (66)	21.5 (43)	7.0 (14)	2.80	1.15	Moderate
C11	Religion forbids me to do evil as stealing, gambling, drinking and homosexuality (sex)	1.0 (2)	7.0 (14)	9.0 (18)	12.5 (25)	70.5 (141)	4.44	0.98	High

C12	I can forgive someone for me.	1.0 (2)	2.0 (4)	10.0 (20)	23.5 (47)	63.5 (127)	4.46	0.83	High
Overall mean							3.76	0.59	

The table shows the mean and standard deviation scores to explain twelve items. Based on the table, from twelve items of religious or moral orientation towards religious tolerance among students, there are eight items that achieve a high mean score of interaction regardless of religion (item C1, C2, C3, C5, C8 and C12) achieve the mean score (mean = 4.23, sd. = 0.92; min = 4:36, sd. = 0.75; mean = 3.89, sd. = 1.12; mean = 4:34, sd. = 0.79, mean = 3.76, sd. = 0.89 and mean = 4:46, sd. = 0.83); the attitude of a student to the practice of religion (item C6, C11) achieved mean scores (mean = 3:50, sd. = 0.82; mean = 4.44, sd. = 0.98). The rest, the four items that achieve moderate mean score of interaction regardless of religion (item C4, C7, C9 and C10) that achieve the mean score (mean = 3.00, sd. = 1:35; mean = 3.29, sd. = 0.76; min = 3:07, sd. = 1.21 and mean = 2.80, sd. = 1.15). Overall, respondents in this study have levels of religious and moral orientation that can lead to a high level of religious tolerance achieving the overall mean score (mean = 3.76, sd. = 0.59).

Level of Interaction and Communication Patterns based on Religious or Moral Orientation among Students

Result shows that the patterns of interaction and communication are at the high level, reaching 66.0%, 33.0% moderate and only 1.0% showed a low level. Descriptive analysis of the findings in this study suggests that most of the students which is 66.0% have good levels of interaction and communication between Muslims living mingle with Buddhist. Religious practices and the moral orientation, referring to the two main components in the association between the attitude of Muslims with Buddhists in learning session. In this case, it stated some students' attitudes, such as visiting a friend who had an accident, regardless of religion, be able to live in a room together with a different religion, being comfortable eating with friends of different religions and so forth. Next, the second component is the students' attitude towards the believers of other religion.

While a small part of the students that 33.0% had levels of interaction and communication based on religious or moral orientation that simple. This means either a small group of Muslims or Buddhists would rather hang out with friends and sisters than friends with different religions. At the same time, they have the awareness and spirit to preserve and defend their own religion. Such findings support the results Faiz (2009) that the Muslim students in particular have the awareness to protect his identity in the study period. Ardiez (2004) and Nirut (2006) stated in their research that environmental factors influence the attitudes and views of a person in order to interpret things. This means that if the situation is in the environment of peace and tranquillity, it is difficult to emerge misunderstanding in the mingle living, but if the situation is vice-versa then, it is easy to create conflict, and hardly to be handled.

In Islam, religious practices and moral orientation can be done at any place, as the word of Allah Meaning: "*Allah is with those who do right, and those who do good*". (al-Quran, Nahl 16: 128). Lesson of the verse shows that Allah s.w.t is generous with His servant to give an opportunity to do a variety of good deeds in any place, but should be accompanied by faith and sincerity. According to Ghazali (2009: 13-14), almost all of comparative religion scholars agreed that the problems or misunderstandings often occur in people of different religions because all religions have different teachings and principles. However, religious

practices or ritual ceremonies in many religions have in common in terms of explaining the nature of religion. Almost all religions play an important role by suggesting a variety of benefits to its adherents, moral values in human life and made a source of strength that influenced all aspects of regional peace-building process.

Referring to the humanitarian nature, no one is willing to accept things that contradict his own teachings, such as pork forbidden for Muslims and others. Thus, each religion must understand and appreciate the religious practices and moral orientation that orientate towards religious tolerance with confidence, sincerity and patience in order to create a harmonious society and peaceful. This statement supports the view of Imam Munawwir (n.d, 23) emphasizing that disunity among the people indeed is due to the failure of ummah to appreciate the value of tolerance in the association.

Relationship between Level of Interaction and Communication Practice Based on Religion and Morals with Orientation Attitudes of Religious Tolerance

Results of correlation analysis to identify the relationship between the level of understanding of religious attitudes among students of religious tolerance shown in the following table:

Table 3: Relationship between level of religious and moral orientation of attitudes toward religious tolerance

Construct		Pattern of Interaction and Communication based on Religious Practices and Moral Orientation	Attitudes Towards Religious Tolerance
Pattern of Interaction and Communication based on Religious Practices and Moral Orientation	Pearson Correlation	1	.767**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
	N	200	200
Attitudes Towards Religious Tolerance	Pearson Correlation	.767**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
	N	200	200

*Significant at the level of 0.01

Source: 2011 survey

Correlation analysis to identify the relationship between patterns of interaction and communication based on religious or moral orientation to the attitude of religious tolerance among the students are listed in the table above. The table showed that the relationships between the level of interaction and communication patterns based on religious practices or moral orientation to the attitude of religious tolerance are at high levels, with $r = 0.767$, $\text{sig} = 0.000$ ($p < 0.01$). Results in this study also found that the relationship between religious practices and moral orientation of attitudes toward religious tolerance is the positive relationship. This means higher levels of religious practice and moral orientation, the higher moral attitude toward religious tolerance among students. It was so in line with Allah's words: "For Prayer restrains from shameful and unjust deeds" (al-Quran, al-Ankabut 29: 45). The meaning of the verse explains that those who perform prayers properly as

required by the laws of Allah s.w.t can form a good behaviour and morals and noble personality (Dearana 2010: 157). Based on such understanding, it can be concluded that a practice or work can mould attitudes and the behaviour of a person, for example, when a Muslim visits non-Muslim friends who had an accident, then, it will increase the love within his association. Overall, practices and jobs directly related to the formation of attitudes and opinion. This means that if a person is negative behaviour, then it will produce a despicable and contemptible behaviour. But if the behaviour is positive, it will create a virtuous character.

This study describes the interaction and communication behaviour based on religious or moral orientation among students between Muslims with Buddhists. It was found that the majority of students are related to interaction and communication is at a good level. However, it appears also some who still fail to have enough interaction and communication only at a moderate level. Environmental factors influence the attitudes and views in an effort to interpret things. It means that the conflict in southern Thailand that influence students' attitudes and views that can affect the daily lives of students. As for the relationship between the level of interaction and communication based on religious or moral orientation to the attitude of religious tolerance among the students did that relationship is at a high level and this means that the stronger the interaction and communication between Muslims and Buddhists, the higher the attitude toward religious tolerance in daily life.

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