Indicators for Socio-Religious Harmony Index (SRHI) Instrument for Malaysia: Findings of FDM Expert Panel

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ABSTRACT

This study contributes to an understanding of the Malaysian socio-religious situation. Being a multi-religious country, Malaysia is not immune to contentious issues and incidents that challenge the relationship between different religious groups. Thus, it is crucial for the country to be conscious of its level of inter-religious relationship in order to maintain peaceful coexistence within the nation. This literature review is presented as a guideline to propose suitable indicators for the Socio-Religious Harmony Index (SRHI) instrument. This study uses the Design and Developmental Research (DDR) approach to conduct a Needs Analysis (Phase 1), development of the SRHI instrument (Phase 2) and evaluation of the index (Phase 3). This paper discusses Phase 2 of DDR, which is the development of the SRHI instrument. The method of this phase uses the Fuzzy Delphi Method (FDM) involving 14 expert panels invited to participate in the development of the instrument through a workshop. There were two rounds of FDM sessions, where the first round was to determine the indicators and the second round was to determine the sub-indicators. The end output of this paper is to present the findings of selected indicators for this index instrument as it was determined in FDM round one and two. The result shows that all 22 proposed indicators were accepted for inclusion in the SRHI instrument with

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the highest ranking indicators being mutual respect and the lowest ranking indicator being acknowledgement. The result of FDM round two shows that 53 sub-indicators were accepted out of 58 sub-indicators. Lastly, this paper presents the overall indicators and respective sub-indicators for the SRHI instrument.

INTRODUCTION

Religion and social harmony have a strong mutual relationship and cannot be denied. The relationship has been demonstrated by sociologist Ibn Khaldun, Emile Dukheim and Giambattista Vico (Soyer, 2010) and has been studied by previous researchers (Linehan, 2013). The misconceptions people have about religion leads to wars and terrorist attacks. With religious kinship taking precedence over human kinship, millions of lives are destroyed, and human dignity trampled upon (Muzaffar, 2001).

Concerning religion, Khaldun and Vico agree that religion is one of the factors that implicate a substantial change in civilisation. The emergence of civilisations is due to religion as people tend to group and create a sense of solidarity. It is also agreed by Durkheim, where religion fortifies social solidarity and has a positive role in social control and group harmony. Khaldun proposes that in solidifying a society, religion is the most significant factor, followed by kinship (Soyer, 2010).

All religions have differences and commonalities. Religious diversity can be seen through the respective faiths, rituals, and beliefs. On the other hand, religious commonality can be seen in ethnic and human kinship. Even though they are diverse in their path to realising God, all religions have the same ethics that guide the adherents in pursuing good human relations (Kamaruzaman, 2010). Religion has provided humanity with universal ethical norms and moral values. Therefore, the misunderstanding of religion as a source of conflict should be addressed (Linehan, 2013). Linehan argues that Islam and other religions uphold peacebuilding and practice non-violence towards others. In the same stance, Muzaffar (2001) argues that it is not religion that is the actual problem, but human beings who are unable to live up to the most fundamental ethical standards that are promulgated by the various prophets of God to humanity at all times and all places (Muzaffar, 2001).

Viewing from the Islamic perspective, the kindness of non-Muslims who live peacefully with Muslims, is appreciated, when they do not put up a fight and present hatred against Muslims. They are called *Musalimun* (Qardawi,1992), and due to that, the relationship with them is characterised by human social relations, where the people should spread peace to mankind in general, as is guided in the *Quran*, the practice of the Prophet PBUH, and the Khalifah, except when they appeared to show hostility and hatred against Islam.

Islam advocates harmony with adherents of other religions. Islam as a religion provides not only theories but comes with exemplified models. It is spelled out in the Quran and was demonstrated by the Prophet PBUH and His Companions. The principle of Islam towards other religions is tolerance, where Islam gives no compulsion to others to embrace Islam (Quran 2:155). In other words, Islam accepts the existence of other religions but denies the truth of other religions. Islam accepts religious plurality in human societies, but does not accept the relativism of religious truth. This understanding shows that the existence of religious diversity cannot be denied because it is the *Sunnatullah* (a must) for humans (Quran, 10:99).

Since interaction with non-Muslims is a human social relation dimension of connectivity, all the kindness of mankind should be given to them (Quran, 60:8). This is in line with the translation of Yusof Qardawi, the *al-birr* and *al-qisth verses* which mean kindness and justice, where Allah tells Muslims to spread the kindness not only to other Muslims but also to non-Muslims. In neighbourhood communities, Allah specifically asks Muslims to be kind to "whosoever our neighbour may be" (Quran, 4:36). Islam advises adherents to treat neighbours kindly, even if they are not Muslims. This honourable teaching does not only make others feel at peace, but creates peaceful and comfortable feeling among the religious adherents. Islam teaches Muslims to not violate another Muslim, as well as non-Muslims.

The same applies to other religions, where religious teachings guide the religious adherents to be kind to others. By reflecting on the traditions and teachings of the religions, it can be justified that there is a significant relationship of parallel understanding of what constitutes harmonious relations. The shared moral values are the ethical principles that run through all religions like a golden thread. It is called the mother of ethics, or according to the more widely known phrase, the golden rule of life (Muzaffar, 2001). It is vital for harmonious relations in a multi-religious society because harmony induces mutual respect, understanding and cooperation.

In fostering social harmony, Khaldun argues that human beings cannot live and exist except through social organisation and cooperation. In the same vein, Durkheim emphasises that society cannot exist if its parts are not solidary (Soyer, 2010). To define the term, social harmony is about maintaining a level of equilibrium in economic terms in civil society (Galla, 2010). The term social harmony implies a rather passive attitude towards civil society, that is, tolerance is accepted rather than diversity being promoted and valued as both an end in itself as well as something that adds different forms of value to society. According to the President of China (Hu, 2005), a harmonious society is a society that is democratic and ruled by law, is fair and just, trustworthy and fraternal, full of vitality, stable and orderly, and maintains harmony between man and nature (Rothman, 2008). These social values do not only cover the

political and economic institutions, but also cultural and environmental dimensions (Rothman, 2008).

Thus, in this study, socio-religious harmony is defined as a peaceful environment in which different religious groups can live together as a result of acceptance of any religious differences, having mutual-understanding, the ability to cooperate in an environment of rights and justice given to all members of society, as well as the ability to deal with conflicts wisely within a multi-religious society.

PROBLEM STATEMENT

Malaysia is a multi-religious country where religious adherents live together as a community. To date, Malaysia has preserved harmonious relations even though in some instances, religious conflicts occur among people. The interaction among religious adherents in this country needs review and analysis, whether they live in peace or reveal resentment and resistance to others. Past studies have highlighted issues of religious tension (Ghani & Awang, 2014; Ibrahim, 2013; Majid, 2013; Rahman & Khambali, 2013) but are characterised by inconclusive analysis whether social stability will remain or is at risk (Ahmad, 2014). The latest issues related to inter-religious incidents are the spread of the bible in Malay, the use of the word *Allah* to refer to God outside of an Islamic context, church issues in Kampung Medan and the construction of a Hindu temple at Shah Alam (Ahmad et al., 2014).

These issues, for example, the church issues in Kampung Medan, have led to fights among Muslims and Christians. The demonstration has to an extent, jeopardised social harmony in the country, worsened by uneven media coverage (Hasan, 2012) and the intervention by a politician (Institute of Islamic Understanding Malaysia [IKIM], 2016). The sparks from this issue became larger when it was spread by the media and gave a bad perception of religion within the society. However, the real perception of the religious adherents' to others cannot be measured because there are no data that can show the condition (Ahmad, 2014). As such, the society has become more sensitive to the religious issues.

Thus, there is a need to develop an instrument to measure the harmony level of relationships among religious adherents in Malaysia, with an existent harmony index that measures harmony across the countries. Bell and Mo (2013) did not attempt to account for harmony in religious diversity. In their conclusions, they claimed that more refined measurements for diversity are needed. As this study notes, religion is a sensitive issue in a multi-religious society; the element of religion should not be neglected. However, Bell and Mo's attempt to empower the indicator of social relations because it was neglected by another index cannot be denied.

This study builds on the study by Bell and Mo, and proposes social relations to be an important indicator of social harmony. The socio-religious harmony index attempts to measure the relation of religious adherents in a multi-religious country, specifically in the case of Malaysia. However, the

other three indicators proposed by Bell and Mo are not included in this research. Because Bell and Mo treated social harmony in a broad sense, other indicators like those that measure human relationships to the environment, family relations, and international country relations are not included in this study.

Besides Bell and Mo, there are indices that have been developed internationally and locally in societal and peace contexts, but none of them clearly measures the socio-religious harmony relation. Global Peace Index (GPI) seems a little bit closer to the harmony index, but it does not cover the religious part of harmony. There is also Societal Stress Index (SSI) that measures tension levels in the society of Malaysia. However, SSI contrasts with the objective of this study to measure the harmony level among religious adherents.

In religious aspects, there are the Religious Diversity Index (RDI), Government Restriction Index (GRI), and Social Hostilities Index (SHI). Even these indices look at various religious aspects, but none has measured the socio-religious harmony relations in their indicators. The indicators used in Social Hostilities Index (SHI) does not seem applicable in Malaysia due to mob violence, terrorism, and religious criminal cases are very rare, except for tongue wagging that increases the level of religious tension (An, 2008). There is also the Religious Tolerance Index (RTI) that measures the level of tolerance among religious adherents and the tolerance practised by the government (Talib, 2010).

However, RTI contrasts with this study where the focus of this study is to access harmonious interactions among religious adherents.

OBJECTIVES

This study examines the indicators of socio-religious harmony in the context of Malaysia. The establishment of domain, indicators and sub-indicators could eliminate subjective interpretation and perception towards socio-religious harmony. This study also aims to identify the experts' agreement on socio-religious harmony indicators and sub-indicators.

METHODS

Development Phase

This phase involves the development of the socio-religious harmony index based on the elements determined in the needs analysis phase. The development of the index is through the Fuzzy Delphi Method (FDM). Fuzzy Delphi was introduced by Kaufmann and Gupta (1988). It is a combination of fuzzy set theory and Delphi technique (Murray, Pipino, & van Gigch, 1985). The Fuzzy Delphi method is an analytical method for decision making that incorporates fuzzy theory in the traditional Delphi method. The Delphi method itself is a decision-making method that involves several rounds of questionnaire surveys to elicit experts' opinion on an issue being investigated. Hence, the aim of the Delphi method is to make a decision based on achievement of consensus on a particular

study. The method does not only allow integration of opinions from various experts for predicting outcomes but it also meets the requirement of gaining the opinions independently from each expert through multiple cycles of questionnaires (Linstone & Turoff, 1975).

In developing indicators and an index, FDM has been frequently used. There are several indexes that have been developed by using FDM. One of them is the inherent safety index in food industries developed by Tadic, Savovic, Misita, Arsovski and Milanovic (2014). There is also the Partnering Performance Index (PPI) for construction research developed by Yeung, Chan and Chan (2007). Cho and Lee developed a new technology product evaluation model for assessing commercialisation opportunities using the Delphi method and fuzzy AHP approach (Cho & Lee, 2013). Another researcher developed road safety performance indicators using FDM and Grey Delphi Method (Ma, Shao, Ma, & Ye, 2011). Xia, Chan and Yeung (2011) used FDM in selecting design-build operational variations in the People's Republic of China. All of these construction indexes can be used as guidance in developing the socio-religious harmony index.

Method of Development Phase

The preliminary study is the first step in the development phase of the research reported here. The main aim of this phase is to develop the inter-religious index instrument. Because the study employed the fuzzy Delphi method, the procedures for this phase are as follows:

1. Review of literature. From the literature review and past studies, indicators are categorised into six domains: peacefulness, acceptance, understanding, cooperation, right and justice, and conflicts. The domains were then proposed to the experts to be measured in the instrument. From the domains, there were 22 indicators and 58 sub-indicators listed before they were proposed to the experts.

2. Selection of experts to evaluate the indicators and sub-indicators. In the Delphi method, the most important step is the selection of experts because it affects the quality of the result of the study (Jacobs, 1996; Taylor & Judd, 1989). A total of 14 experts from various stakeholder backgrounds, such as religious officers, ministry, NGOs, religious heads from the main religions (Islam, Christianity, Buddhism, Hinduism), academicians, were involved in the workshop. Likewise, Adler and Ziglio (1996) emphasised that the selection of experts should be based on four expertise requirements:

   • knowledge and experience with the issues under investigation

   • capacity and willingness to participate

   • sufficient time to participate in the study

   • possessing effective communication skills

Specifically for religious leaders in the field of inter-religious dialogue, there are several criteria that need to be fulfilled in order to become a representative. Because they are the transformative agents in multi-religious society, Kamaruzzaman (2010) suggests the criteria of being competent, knowledgeable, and committed towards religion (Kamaruzaman, 2010) as necessary. In the same vein, Karim, Khambali and Saili (2014) argue that the selection of panel members should be based on overall aspects, not only the position that is held by a person, but also knowledge in the inter-religious field. Karim et al. (2014) examined the factor of education level, experience in

religious dialogue, and religious level of the religious leaders in determining the level of understanding of the panel.

A broader perspective was adopted by Nimer (2001) who added more criteria for religious representatives in a panel. The criteria he proposed include: (1) religious level, (2) political factors, (3) current demand factors and also (4) prestige factors (Karim et al., 2014). Thus, based on the criteria of experts as listed above, for this study, the experts were selected in five categories that are related to socio-religious context. The categories consist of various stakeholders' backgrounds as listed below.

Table 1
Expert's category

Category of experts	Range of year experience	Position
Policy makers	5-15 years	Director of Institut Kajian dan Latihan Integrasi Nasional (IKLIN) under Jabatan Perpaduan Negara dan Integrasi Nasional (JPNIN)
High authorities Muslim institutions		Director of Institut Kefahaman Islam Malaysia (IKIM) and Jabatan Kemajuan Islam Malaysia (JAKIM)
Muslim NGOs		High position personnel of Malaysian Chinese Muslim Association (MACMA), Allied Coordinating Committee of Islamic NGO's (ACCIN) dan Majlis Perundingan
Religious leaders		Religious leaders of Hindu Sangam, Christianity, Buddhism, Bahai, Sikhism, and Taoism
Academicians		Doctorate in comparative religions in several higher education institutions, publish a lot of papers related to the topic

3. In order to address the issue of fuzziness among the experts' opinion, a linguistic scale frames the respondents' feedback. The linguistic scale is similar to a Likert scale with an additional set of fuzzy numbers given to the scale of responses

based on the triangular fuzzy number. For every response, three fuzzy values were given to consider the fuzziness of the experts' opinions. The three values consist of three levels of fuzzy value: minimum value (m_1), most plausible

value (m_2), and the maximum value (m_3). In other words, the linguistic scale is used to convert the linguistic variable into fuzzy numbers. The level of agreement scale should be in odd numbers (3, 5, or 7 points linguistic scale). In this study, a 7- linguistic point scale is applied.
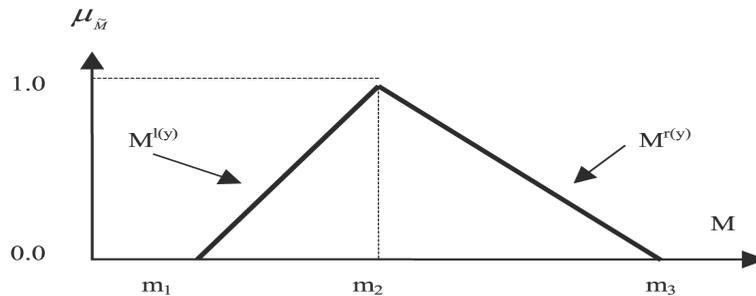

Figure 1. Triangular fuzzy number

Table 2
Linguistic variable and fuzzy scale

Linguistic variable	Fuzzy scale			
Strongly disagree	1	0.0	0.1	0.2
Disagree	2	0.1	0.2	0.4
Moderately agree	3	0.2	0.4	0.6
Agree	4	0.4	0.6	0.8
Strongly agree	5	0.6	0.8	1.0

4. The experts' responses with the correspondent fuzzy number scales for each questionnaire item on their view of the model were inserted in an excel spreadsheet. The next step was to calculate the difference between the experts' evaluation data and the average value for each item to identify the threshold value, 'd'. The threshold value is important to determine the consensus level among experts. According to Cheng and Lin (2002), if the threshold value is less than or equal to 0.2, then all the experts are considered to have achieved a consensus. However, what is more important to consider is the overall consensus on all items. The overall group consensus should be more than 75%; otherwise, the second round of Fuzzy Delphi needs to be conducted.

5. Once the group consensus is achieved, the aggregate fuzzy evaluation is determined by adding all the fuzzy numbers for each item. The final step of the procedure of this phase is called the defuzzification process. The defuzzification value for each questionnaire item was calculated using the following formula:

$$A_{max} = 1/4 * (a_1 + 2a_m + a_2)$$

In the general application of Fuzzy Delphi, defuzzification is essential to classify the variables agreed by consensus of the experts through the ranking of the variables. The

variable that has the highest defuzzification value is ranked highest in priority to be considered as the output variable.

FINDINGS

The defuzzification value is calculated, and the indicators are ranked using Fuzzy Delphi technique. The expert consensus in FDM 1 is 76%, which is accepted based on FDM rules. Based on the findings in FDM 1, 22 indicators are accepted, and FDM 2 revealed the 53 sub-indicators that were accepted out of 58 sub-indicators.

Similar to FDM1, a ranking of the sub-indicators was based on the collective agreement of participants and discussion among them. For example, both socio-religious sub-indicators, "Majority of religious leaders portray positive attitude towards co-existence," and "Majority of the religious adherents are treated justly by the community" generated the highest fuzzy evaluation score of 11.5, hence, listed as the most important sub-indicators followed by the socio-religious sub-indicators "Majority of the people practise non-violence attitude in their multi-religious neighbourhood" and "Majority of the people are satisfied with the rights of religious practice as enshrined in the Constitution", which registered 11.33 and 11.23 fuzzy evaluation scores respectively. However, unlike FDM 1, for FDM 2, the ranking of the sub-indicators was not to measure their significance to socio-religious harmony. Instead, the accepted sub-indicators are to detail out the indicators based on the experts' concern.

However, after conducting the cut-off point procedure in finalising the result, the list of the socio-religious sub-indicators was reduced to 53 initiatives after eliminating initiatives that scored lower than 9.1. Socio-religious sub-indicators that were removed included "Majority of people consider other religious adherents are trustworthy", "Majority of people can rely on other religious adherents", "The amount of minor physical, religious conflicts", "Adequate number of inter-religious dialogue among religious adherents" and "The amount of criminal cases due to religious issues." Further refinement of the list by the participants resulted in the final list as shown in Table 3 (as in Appendix) that shows 53 socio-religious sub-indicators under 22 indicators.

DISCUSSION

Based on the calculation of FDM 1, scale agreement of five was selected as the minimum number to be accepted. Due to that, the defuzzification number of 9.8 was the minimum number for an indicator to be included in the instrument. Fuzzy calculation shows that all indicators were accepted with expert consensus of 76%.

Findings show that the experts consensually agree that mutual respect has to be the highest priority indicator that portrays socio-religious harmony. It is relevant and essential in the interaction of multi-religious society in Malaysia, as argued by Kamaruzaman (2010). Rothman in the same vein emphasised that people

should respect the differences in religious beliefs in order to achieve a harmonious society (Rothman, 2008). Moreover, respect motivates religious adherents not to belittle or ridicule differences (Schirmer, Weidenstedt, & Reich, 2012).

In the context of this study, to align with the framework of Malaysia's constitution, respect is defined as having shared acknowledgement with other religious adherents' right to conduct their respective religious celebrations, rituals, and beliefs. In addition, religious adherents need to respect the Constitution, where Islam is the official religion of the majority, who are the Malays. Thus, propagation of other religions toward Muslims is prohibited, such the Malay bible case. Respecting these articles and avoiding the sensitivities of other religious differences will foster socio-religious harmony.

Experts also agree that the rights and freedom of the religious adherents should not be neglected. It is argued that the recognition of the rights of non-Muslims is more fundamental to an ethical Islamic society (Muzaffar, 2001). Malaysia's challenge currently is to define the rights of Muslims and non-Muslims which remain indistinct (Rahman & Khambali, 2013). It cannot be denied that the issue of the rights and freedom in religious conversion, demolition of temples, apostasy, and Islamic state discourse have widened fault lines among different religious communities in Malaysia (Jha, 2009). This view has also been supported by Rahman and Khambali (2013), where these problems have become the main factors that hinder the harmony of

various religions because it causes struggle for power as well as violation of rights and laws. In some cases such as the Kampung Medan case, instead of struggling for the Christian rights, the Muslim sensitivities on church surpassed the need for respect, as Muslims are the majority population in the area (Qardawi, 1992).

The same can be said of justice; it is a determinant factor of socio-religious harmony index based on experts' view. They agree that justice is a requirement of every human being regardless of religious beliefs (Rahman, 2012). Justice is proven to be the main principle of social harmony compared to fairness in the dualistic model of harmony (Leung, Koch, & Lu, 2002).

In the context of this study, justice is represented by Malaysia's Federal Constitution where it gives rights and freedom to other religious adherents without putting aside its main concern, which is Islam. Article 3(1) states that the freedom of professing religion within the context of Islam is recognised as the official religion of Malaysia and other religions can be peacefully practised in any territory of the Federation. This study found a strong reason for Islam to be spelled out as the religion of the Federation because it is the religion of the indigenous inhabitants and the majority population, who are Malays. This is supported by Husin and Ibrahim (2016) who revealed in their study a similar trend which is also witnessed in other countries, where the official religion is based on the dominating population, such as the selection of Church of England

in the United Kingdom, Shinto in Japan, Catholicism in the Republic of Ireland and Islam in Indonesia.

In addition to the article above, Article 11(1) add on the freedom to profess and practise a religion as every person has the right to profess and practice his own religion. In this article, Husin and Ibrahim (2016) explain that the constitution, however, is rather specific about freedom of religion for the Muslims. Such issues are referred to the jurisdiction of the Syariah court because they are confined to the purview of Islamic Laws. On the other hand, the constitution does specify any prohibition for the non-Muslims from professing any religion or converting to any other religion.

This study views that special restriction is put upon Muslims by the constitution to further strengthen Islam's role as the official religion of the constitution. It is supported by Husin and Ibrahim (2016) who rationalise that the constitution's defensive nature of the Islamic faith can be interpreted as not in favour of levelling all religions.

Concerning provocation, it was agreed as an important indicator of the instrument. Even though Sintang (2014) claims in her writing that the people in East Malaysia are not easily influenced by provocations, however, the challenge is not easy due to several issues that occur today. In addition, the spread over media about the disharmony Malaysia experiences regarding the inter-religious issues can be proven in actual data whether it is true or not by using a measurable instrument (Talib et al., 2014).

Cohesiveness of a society is known by sociologists as social solidarity. The experts' opinion is aligned with the sociologists' where social solidarity provides a strong bond and contributes a measure of stability to the society. The importance of solidarity as a social bond and a harmonising factor is a feature of a particular phase of the progress of human association. Social solidarity also unifies people through blood ties and bonds of alliance (Sumer, 2012).

However, acknowledgement was registered as the indicator with the lowest significance. Acknowledgement was debated among the experts as a high stakes indicator, especially when regarded from the theological perspective. However, in this study, all the indicators were discussed and considered through a social lens and not from a theological viewpoint. This resulted in low acceptance among experts in viewing acknowledgement as a socio-religious harmony indicator.

Unexpectedly, dialogue for understanding is the second least favoured on the indicators' list. Even though dialogue has been conducted for 55 years in this country, with 28 years of active dialogue, it seems to give less effect toward socio-religious harmony (Karim et al., 2014). There are several reasons to explain this result. Rahman and Khambali (2013) argue that findings and discussions of dialogue are simply known by the participants without involving resolutions and implementation on the society. This effort has ultimately led to provision of an understanding of religious

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unity to become a discussion platform of the idea.

Moreover, knowledge in dialogue is left as theory alone, without implementation and practice. Thus, it brings no improvement between ties of different religious beliefs. Karim et al. (2014) too emphasise the same notion where dialogue is a method of reconciliation that builds understanding among religious adherents. Besides this, it should also play its role as a platform to minimise conflicts in any inter-religious issue that is raised. However, Karim et al. (2014) question whether these dialogues have effectively built harmony among people and minimised conflicts in practical life. By looking at the real issues that happen in the country, it is highly doubted and questionable that the implementation of dialogue is the best platform to foster socio-religious harmony in the country (Karim et al., 2014).

However, the result of the study does not justify that dialogue is not important. Previous researchers have also studied the role of dialogue and its implementation in the country (Ibrahim, 2013; Karim et al., 2014; Rahim, Ramli, Ismail, & Dahlal, 2011; Sintang et al., 2013). Based on FDM session 2, experts in this study agree that it is not the adequacy of the dialogue that determines religious harmony, but it is the effectiveness of dialogue implementation that should be revised.

CONCLUSION

This paper has presented findings of selected indicators using an expert panel by using the Fuzzy Delphi Method (FDM). Experts agree that 22 indicators and 53 sub-indicators are important and need to be included in the instrument to measure harmony relations among religious adherents in Malaysia. Based on experts' consensus, mutual respect is the cardinal principle of maintaining religious harmony in this country. This result leads to other important indicators, namely rights and freedom, justice, and cohesiveness of the society. The overall result through the indicators and sub-indicators show a mix of functional and conflicting aspects of indicators to be included in the practical measurement of social harmony. As a conclusion, this study does not only propose indicators and sub-indicators for the index instrument but offers a perspective in the manipulation of key informants (experts) in developing significant indicators for the construction of socio-religious harmony index (SRHI) instrument contextually for Malaysia. However, due to the small population of non-religious people in Malaysia which is less than 1%, they are not considered in the SRHI index. The consideration will result in insignificant value.

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APPENDIX

Table 3

The overall indicators and respective sub-indicators for SRHI

Indicators		Sub-indicators	
1	Mutual respect	1	The majority of people respect other religious adherents to celebrate their festivals
		2	The majority of people respect other religious adherents to practise their rituals
		3	The majority of people respect others to adhere to their beliefs
2	Rights and freedom of practising religious teachings	4	The majority of people are satisfied with the freedom of religious practice
		5	The majority of people are satisfied with the rights of religious practice as enshrined in the constitution
3	Inter-religious social justice towards other religions	6	The majority of religious adherents are treated justly by the communities
		7	Religious infrastructure is adequately provided for all religious adherents
		8	Religious minority adherents are treated justly by the communities
4	Provocation	9	Frequent use of provocative words against other religious adherents
		10	Frequent provocative actions against other religious adherents
		11	Frequent provocative actions against other religious practices
		12	Frequent provocative actions against other religious institutions
5	Cohesiveness of the community	13	The majority of people support inter-religious activities
		14	The majority of people are happy working with other religious adherents in the community
6	Community engagement	15	The degree of interaction within multi-religious neighbourhoods
		16	The degree of having social activity involving different religious adherents
		17	The degree of having voluntary work involving different religious adherents
		18	The effectiveness of community engagement among different religious adherents
7	Appreciation	19	The majority of people appreciate the kindness of other religious adherents
		20	The majority of people appreciate the common values of religions
8	Awareness of others' beliefs	21	The majority of people are aware of other religious rituals
		22	The majority of people are aware of other religious beliefs
		23	The majority of people are aware of sensitive issues of other religions
9	Non-violence	24	The majority of people practise non-violence in their multi-religious neighbourhoods.
		25	The majority of people are against violence towards other religious adherents for peaceful co-existence.
10	Feeling safe and secured	26	The majority of people feel safe living in a multi-religious neighbourhood

Table 3 *(continue)*

Indicators		Sub-indicators	
		27	The majority of people feel secure living in multi-religious neighbourhood
11	Religious tolerance	28	The majority of religious leaders practise tolerance towards other religious celebrations, rituals and beliefs
		29	The majority of religious adherents practise tolerance towards other religious celebrations, rituals and beliefs
		30	The majority of religious adherents practise tolerance towards neighbours from other religions.
12	Physical and non-physical socio-religious conflict	31	The amount of major physical, religious conflicts
		32	The amount of non-physical religious conflicts
13	Peaceful feeling	33	The majority of people promote peaceful living with other religious adherents
		34	The majority of people live peacefully with other religious adherents
14	Social trust	35	The majority of people can put trust in other religious adherents
15	Religious prejudice and stereotypes	36	The degree of prejudice against other religious adherents
		37	The degree of stereotyping against other religious adherents
16	Co-existence	38	The majority of religious leaders portray positive attitude towards co-existence
		39	The majority of religious adherents portray positive attitude towards co-existence
17	Comfortable	40	The majority of people feel welcomed living together with other religious adherents
		41	The majority of people feel at ease living together with other religious adherents
18	Socio-religious tension	42	The degree of religious tension in society
		43	The amount of religious tension incidents
19	Religious discrimination	44	The degree of religious discrimination in the neighbourhood
		45	The degree of religious discrimination in the workplace
20	Dialogue and understanding	46	Adequate number of mainstream media exposure on inter-religious understanding to public
		47	Adequate number of mainstream media coverage of inter-religious understanding activities
		48	Effectiveness of dialogue activities in promoting understanding among religious adherents
21	Acknowledgement	49	The majority of people acknowledge the interest of other religious adherents towards peaceful co-existence
		50	The majority of people acknowledge the effort of other religious adherents towards peaceful co-existence
		51	The majority of people acknowledge the commitment of other religious adherents towards peaceful co-existence
22	Shared values of neighbourhood and friendship	52	The majority of people have a sense of belonging to their multi-religious neighbourhood
		53	The majority of people befriend religious adherent of other religions