

## Roles Of Freedom Of Religion: In Supporting The Formation Of Openness Attitude Among The Southern Of Thailand Society

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### Abstract

Freedom of religion, *al-Hurriyyah al-Diniyyah*, is the important principle that is rarely studied by the researchers. Freedom of religion is proven to be an important element in creating a peaceful life among the religious believers by expressing the openness attitude towards the other believers. Therefore, this study is focusing on the relationship between freedom of religion and the open attitude in terms of theory and practice among the religious believers especially in the Southern Thailand society. For that reason, the combination of qualitative and quantitative methods was applied in the

study. The findings show there is a significant relationship between the understanding of the freedom of religion and the openness attitude of both religious believers towards

the other religious believers. That relationship holds a positive level as higher level of the understanding of freedom of religion will result in higher level of the open attitude among the religious believers.

**Keywords:** Freedom of religion; Important principle; Relationship; Open attitude; Religious believer.

## Introduction

Freedom of religion is the most important element in the formation of a peaceful life of the religious believers in a plural society. It is one of the acknowledged human rights that is widely applied in spreading a religion. There is a significant relationship between the freedom of religion and the open attitude in honouring the free right for human in practising their chosen religion. This is because; all humans should respect and love others by acknowledging their differences as part of humanity.

### Analysis on Roles of Freedom of Religion in Forming the Openness Attitude from the Islamic and Buddhist Perspectives

As suggested by the mentioned topic, this is a field study which focuses on the theory and practical study on the Southern Thailand society specifically Muslims and Buddhists. Thus, the relationship between the freedom of religion and the open attitude was theoretically obtained from both perspectives.

Freedom of religion as one of the human rights is acknowledged and protected in Islam. This is proven by the use of that right as one of the vital methods in spreading Islam. Moreover, freedom of rights is capable in establishing the harmonious life among the religious believers (al-Saleh, S. 1961; Uthman 1968; Qutb, S. 1971; Hasyim, U. 1979; al-Qardawi, Y. 2001). The other authorities to prove that statement can be obtained from *Surah al-Baqarah 2: 256*, *Surah Yunus 10: 99*, which have been explained in the *Hadith* by al-Khatib al-Baghdadi, al-Suyuti and Abi Naim al-Asbahaniy. Said Hawwa (n.d.) who mention that Islam grants no coercion for non-Muslims in choosing their religions. Besides, according to al-Qutb, S. (1971), those verses proved that Allah (s.w.t) put the respects on human by granting them the freedom in choosing their religions. In addition, Al-Saidi, A. M., (1999) stated that freedom of religion prepares the rights of choosing the religion for humans. As a result, nobody has the right

to force an individual to embrace his or her chosen religion. This is because; each individual possesses the right to choose his or her preferred religion. Ismail Badwiy (1980) and Abu Ala al-Mawdudi (1997) further defined the issue in two different situations which are freedom of worship and freedom of belief. Freedom of worship is the human ability to declare their religion and reveal their worshipping activities, while freedom of belief is the human ability to embrace or not to embrace any religion and change or not to change their beliefs.

Islam stresses on few guidelines in choosing a religion or belief which are knowledge, evidence, understanding, wisdom and belief; as tradition brought by the ancestors should not be the main factor (al-Sabiq, S. n.d.; Wafi, A. A.W. n.d.; Salih al-Uthmain, M. n.d.; al-Nashr, A. Q. 1997) as summarized from the Quranic verses in *Surah al-Ma'idah 5: 104* and *Surah al-Baqarah 2: 170*. Even though Islam grants the rights for humans to choose their religion, it does not mean that they have the freedom to change their embraced religions to other religions. This freedom of religion concept is only applicable to non-Muslims in choosing and practising their chosen religions. In Islam, religion conversion (from Islam to other religion) is known as apostasy. Muslim scholars offer various opinions regarding the punishment for the apostates. In brief, there are two opinions related to them; the first opinion from the Muslims *fuqaha'* agreed on punishing the apostates though the exact punishment is not yet determined, while the second opinion from *jumhur fuqaha'* (Hanafi, Maliki, Shafii and Hanbali) agreed on death sentence as the punishment for the apostates (al-Jaza'iri, A. 2011).

Researchers have summarized the punishment for the apostates in two different views. The first view is the Muslim *fuqaha'* (Hanafi, Maliki, Shafii and Hanbali) have agreed on death sentence as the punishment for the apostates (al-Jaza'iri, A. 2011). However, in Hanafi sect, women who committ apostasy will not be put

in the death sentence; as they will be put into prison and asked to repent until they embrace Islam or meet death (al-Zuhayli, 1998; Ibn Qudamah. n.d.). Meanwhile, the second view does not have a rigid punishment as apostasy punishment falls under *Tadhir*, not *hudud* (al-Nakhli, I., al-Thawriy, S., Abu Zahrah and al-Wani, T. J.). Those views are supported by the following *hadith*;

*“It was narrated by Abdul Razaq, al-Bayhaqi and Ibn Hazm; Anas met Umar while he was on his way back from Tutsar. Then, Umar asked him a question, “What have you done to the six people of kabilah Bakr Ibn Wa’il who have committed apostasy and joined the mushrikin?” Then, Anas replied, “Amirul Mukminin, they have committed apostasy and lived with the mushrikin so they were killed in a fight”. After that, Umar said the Istirja, “Inna lillahi wa Inna ilayhi Rajiun”. Then, Anas replied, “Was not killing the only punishment for them?” Umar answered, “Yes, but if I were in your situation, I would have asked them to repent and embrace Islam back, and if they refused, I will send them to prison.” (al-Bayhaqi, no 8/207; Ibn Mansur, S. no. 2573; Ibn Hazm no. 11/221).*

Nevertheless, the second view should be analyzed based on the Maqasid al-Sharciyyah and the current situation. Therefore, al-Qardawi, (2011), has separated bidcah matters into major and minor issue as they differentiate the laws between those who committed bidcah and convey the bidcah message to others and those who do not convey it. Hence, there is a need for us to differentiate the issue of riddah (the apostate) in terms of Riddah al-Ghalizah and Riddah al-Khafifah, as there should be different laws applied for those who committed apostasy and provoke others to join them and those who do not make the provocation. Besides, al-Mawardi stresses on two contexts in determining the punishment for the apostates. Firstly, when an apostate is a citizen of a Muslim country without having any relationship with any non-Muslim country, that person should not be put into death sentence as he or she is still subjected to the

Islamic rule. Nonetheless, the apostates should still be interrogated of their apostasy. If the interrogation result shows that the apostasy is caused by their confusion in understanding the religion, that confusion should be made clear for them and finally persuade them to repent and embrace Islam. The apostates who repent will be forgiven and they will be Muslims like they used to be. The period of repentance is three days after the apostates officially declared their apostasy (al-Dasuqi. n.d.; al-Sharbini. n.d.). However, some scholars claimed that the period of repentance has been prolonged to two months (al-Sharbini. n.d.). The second context is when an apostate has a relationship with any non-Muslim country which has declared to protect him or her in dealing with apostasy. In this case, the apostates should be fought as they can lead Islam to destruction (al-Mawardi, 1985).

It is evident that the relationship between freedom of religion and the open attitude plays an important role in supporting each other. This is because, that relationship portrays the open attitude as the vital impact of freedom of religion declaration. This statement is not merely supported by the ancient scholars such as al-Harrani, (n.d.) and al-Jauziyyah, (n.d.), but the modern scholars like Wafi, (n.d.), al-Qutb, S. (1988), Nabrawi, (2008) also support it as they agreed that the open attitude is a positive attitude that acknowledge others’ rights and avoid from being arrogant. According to al-Sidawi, (n.d.), the practice of open attitude is important in protecting the freedom. In other words, open attitude and freedom cannot be separated. However, the major challenge occurs when only one of the two positive elements is being prioritized. For instance, they only stress on freedom without taking into consideration the openness attitude as the effort in maintaining the freedom. Al-Qardawi, (2001) portrays three levels of open attitude in Islam. Firstly, the low level; non-Muslims are granted freedom of religion as they are not physically forced to change their religion, but they are not allowed to practise their religion freely. Secondly, the

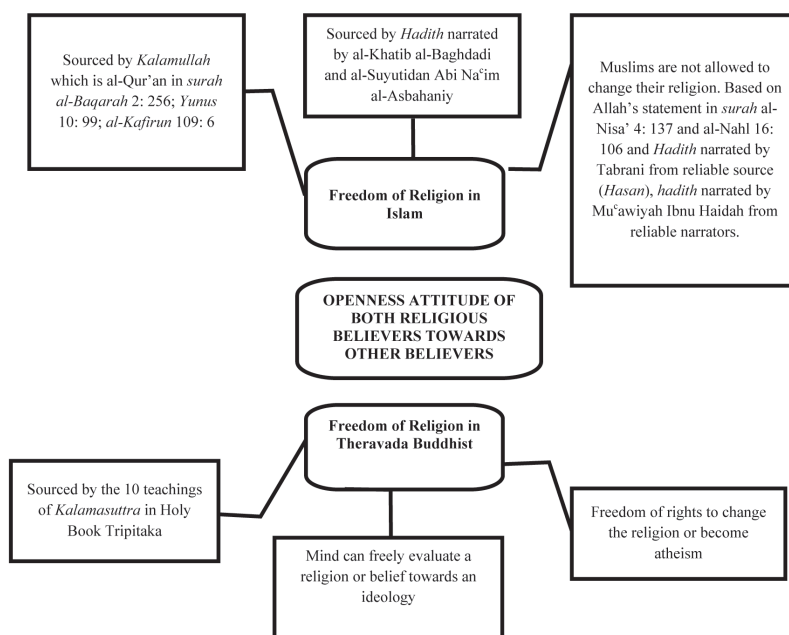
average level; people are allowed to embrace and practise their chosen religion without being forced to betray their religion. Thirdly, the high level, non-Muslims are allowed to practise their religion freely even though the practices are contradicting to Islam. In brief, Islam highly acknowledges freedom of religion among the non-Muslims. By the acknowledgement, a peaceful life will exist and the citizens will help and love each other as the consequence of practising the open attitude.

It is a fact that the concept of freedom of religion is practised by most of the religions in the world. For example, Buddha Theravada acknowledges freedom of religion in human life. It is evident by the teaching of *Kalamasuttra* which listed ten religious prohibitions. Narada (1998) and Krishnanda (2003) affirm that the teaching shows how Buddha acknowledges freedom in human life. He allows his believers to analyse, decide and choose their own religion without any assertion that his teaching is the only true religion. According to Ven. K. Sri Dhammaanda (1997), the teaching of *Kalamasuttra* has given detailed explanation as follows; a) humans should embrace the religion after they have understood it and freely chosen it, not just by blindly believing it or just to be in the safety zone after choosing the religion; b) humans should not believe in something for the sake of religion's name or the teacher's fame; c) humans are free to investigate something and believe it on their own free will; d) humans should not believe or deny something without any valid reason; e) Buddha does not explain any prohibition in doing something, but it is human nature to avoid the negative things as they will lead to problems, hardships and suffering to the society. The concept is also applied to the positive practices by the believers as they practise them not because they are being asked to practise them, but it is because they realize that by practising the positive things, society will enjoy the benefits, f) humans are free to read or learn about other religions, g) humans should not have any fanatic element in their religion. This is because; fanaticism will

influence a person to deny logical decision or scientific analysis. Ang Choo Hong (2003) and Thammayarit (2011) stated that the teaching of *Kalamasuttra* conveys that freedom which is benefited by Buddhists is one of the admired freedom aspects as every individual has a total freedom in thinking and considering a thing before deciding to accept or reject it. This is important in raising a believer to reject blind faith as they need concrete reasoning before believing something.

The wisdom behind freedom of religion is mainly to encourage a believer to believe in something by depending on the concrete and valid reasoning. Humans have the right to choose their own belief by using their mind to examine, analyse, understand and evaluate something to ensure that their chosen belief will facilitate them in the future. The statement is supported by Porahamata (1999) as the teaching of *Kalamasuttra* gives rights to human in choosing the religion. In other words, Buddha has never forced the believers to choose any specific religion, but he challenges them to study his religion by themselves before making any decision that can benefit their future. In Buddhism, monks are responsible to explain and clarify the confusion and doubt from humans. After the clarification is made, humans are still free to choose their beliefs as their freedom rights are respected. Piyadassi Maha Thera (2003), added that humans are attached to some fixed ideology, thinking and view that hold them from expanding their thinking. Therefore, they totally depend on those fixed ideology, thinking and view. Other than that, Patumkantarakon (2011) claimed that religion has clearly stated its advantages and disadvantages to humans. For that reason, humans are supposed to use their minds to freely choose their religion. In other words, Buddhism strictly prohibits humans to blindly choose a religion without any knowledge and logical reasoning (*Amulika Saddha*). This is because, humans are encouraged to use their minds to believe in something with logical reasoning (*Akarawittha Saddha*). In brief, Buddhism encourages its believers to

Figure.1: Conceptual Framework of the Relationship between Freedom of Religion and Openness Attitude from Islamic and Buddhism Perspectives



continuously test, examine and analyze a religion to ensure that they have made the right decision. Thus, humans are responsible for their decision either to embrace Buddhism or become an atheist (Khemapanyo, 2003). The explanation from *Dhammapada, Khuddhaka Nikaya* is as follows:

*“Thinking is the pioneer of every spiritual matter as it is the leader of every action. If negative thinking is involved, it will result in suffering, as the wheels which just follow the cow steps that pull them” (Widya, R. S. 2004).*

Consequently, it can be understood that the way of thinking in Buddhism plays a vital role in leading and creating one’s action. That means, Buddhism puts freedom of thinking at a high level in its religion. Thus, using thinking means humans are living in reality with the perfect understanding.

The following conceptual framework presents the relationship between freedom of religion and openness attitude from Islamic and Buddhist perspectives as the basic guidance for this field of study.

Islam and Buddhism strictly acknowledge the

existence of various religions in this world and grant freedom of religion to the believers. In addition, the prohibition is also applied to the act of mocking all other religions. This shows that they truly acknowledge the right as it has been the basic principle in uniting all believers from different religions, races and skin colour, as well as preserving the noble tolerant.

Even though Islam has granted freedom of religion to its believers, it is only restricted to the social and society matters, not to the faith and belief matters. Therefore, Muslims do not have freedom to change the religion or being the atheists. It is not part of freedom of religion as the act is considered as a crime that could be punished. This statement is also supported by majority of Muslim scholars such as al-Nakhli, (98H); al-Thawriy, (161 H); Mahmud Shaltut (1966); Mahmassani (1979); al-Mubarak, M. (1980); Abdul Ghani Samsudin (2001);Sachedina, (2001); Mahbulul (2002); Baltaji, (2003); al-Sharawi, (n.d.); al-Qardawi, (2011) as they affirmed that converting from Islam to another religion is known as apostasy which is labelled as crime in al-Qur’an and *Hadith*. The issue is also discussed by Muslim scholars in determining the punishment to the apostates by considering the human rights

principles.

Conversely, in Buddhist Theravada perspective, rational mind is fully utilised in evaluating an issue for a comprehensive explanation. That means, Buddhism has granted freedom of choice for an individual as long as it is accompanied by a comprehensive research of truth. The approach of rational mind in making a decision is one of the objectives listed in United Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR). In other words, all the norms or elements in United Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) are related by the mutual source of thinking in evaluating an issue. In brief, all humans are proclaimed equally by laws.

Even though the source and authority of the principles for both Islam and Buddhist perspectives are different, they still share some freedom of religion aspects which are the freedom to embrace, practise, spread as well as no coercion in choosing the religion. This is because, the declaration of freedom of religion affirms the human rights granted for all human beings. The declaration of that right creates a peaceful environment as well as affirming humanity by putting the collective benefits in discussing freedom of religion. In Islam, humans are created by Allah complete with mind to rule the world and live in a peaceful and harmonious unity (al-Dahabi, 1993). Abd al-Wahid, (1973) and Muhammad Mahmud, (n.d.) and al-Qardawi, (2001) added further that the basis of creating peaceful among the believers in a society are brotherhood, equality and protection of humanity as proven by the words of Allah in *Surah al-Isra*' verse 70. Ays-Shawkani (2009) defined the verse as Allah has blessed humans globally. Besides, Quraish (2010) defined the verse as humans are the unique creation who possess dignity regardless of their devoutness towards a religion. In addition, humans encompass a noble status with the good physical body, speech and thinking ability. Therefore, they have the rights to choose their own free will and live wherever they want. Similarly, Qutb, S. (1975) stressed that there

is no individual who is superior to another individual. This means all humans are equal and Islam protects that right under its social system. The protection suggests that humans are gathered upon the humanity attachment. Likewise in Buddhism, Buddha himself told a lot of stories about social caste as written in the teaching of *Suntarikasutra*, *Silavimangsachadok* and *Akkanyasutra*. In brief, Buddhism portrays that all humans have equal status. Even though an individual was born in a royal or working family, their future is significantly determined by their moral. Thus, albeit humans are entitled to freedom of religion, they are still restricted to not simply violate others' rights or public welfare. In short, that right should abide by the rules through approved agreement in defending others' rights while preserving public welfare (Khareng, M. 2015).

### **Methodology**

The findings of this study were obtained from processed data through library and field researches, while observation method was used prior to those methods. Following the observation method is the combination of two approaches, is the qualitative and quantitative approach.

### **Research Instrument**

There are three instruments that have been used in this study in obtaining the quantitative data which are the questionnaire, interview and direct observation. Those three instruments were chosen to ease the information gathering process from the respondents (Wiseman, 1999). The use of this approach will further strengthen the understanding of studied aspects by triangulation (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2000). This study refers to Oppenheim theory (1992), which states that questionnaire and interview are the two effective instruments in obtaining the information from the respondents besides the direct observation. Other than that, there are also other advantages for the researchers such as in terms of cost of handling, massive

samples from various places, quick, consistent format and easy to analyzed and code on the computer. Meanwhile, an interview approach allows the researcher to get a clearer and deep explanation at a low cost. Based on the various advantages of questionnaire and interview, the researcher can take the opportunity to obtain the information in conducting the field study.

### **Construct of Questionnaire and Testing the Reliability of Research Instrument**

There are three parts of the questionnaire used in this study. Part A contains 10 items of demographic background which are age, level of study, gender, marital status, religion, race, the relationship with different religious believers, residential area, working status, occupation and district.

For Part B, it contains 18 items to investigate the level of understanding towards freedom of religion. Specifically, items B13 to B15 are used to obtain information on freedom of religion in embracing, practising and spreading the religion. Then, items B16 to B17 are used to gain information on having no coercion in choosing the religion. Other than that, in gaining the information on the rights of believers other than Muslims, items B18 and B22 are used. Meanwhile, items B23 to B26 are used to gain information on freedom of religion and prohibition of violating others' rights. Finally, items B27 to B30 are constructed to investigate the importance of freedom of religion among the religious believers. All items are constructed based on the discussion on freedom of religion by the researcher previously.

Subsequently, Part C contains 20 items in investigating the open attitude of both religious believers towards other religious believers. In evaluating the open attitude among the religious believers, the researcher focuses on 4 elements which are the practice of teaching and belief, patriotism, the practise of custom and culture and the status of religion (minority & majority). Precisely, item C31 to C35 is focusing on

the respondents' feedback on the practice of religious teaching and belief among the other religious believers. However, items C36 to C41 focus on the respondents' perspective on patriotism. Besides, items C42 to C46 focus on the practice of customs and culture by religious believers that was witnessed by the other religious believers. Last but not least, items C47 to C50 is testing on the religious status in the same country, either minority or majority in the eyes of other religious believers.

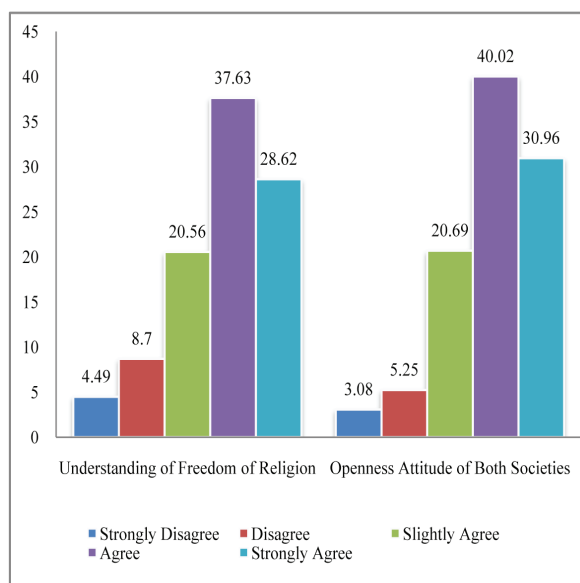
As this study is evaluating the level of agreement and disagreement of respondents towards a variable, the choice of answers are prepared on a Likert scale. The choice is supported by (Wiseman, 1999) as the form of scale is very suitable in responding to the statement in questionnaires. Before the questionnaires are distributed, the researcher has done the validity and reliability test based on the theory by Chua (2006) and Creswell (2008) which includes three process of instrument validity (content validity, construct validity and criteria validity). The content validity can be completed in two forms. The first form is by obtaining responses from a group of respondents who are the experts in a certain field. Therefore, Delphi technique is used by using 12-20 experts for that reason. The involvement of large number of examiners is helping the improvement of the questionnaire (Ludwig, 1997). This is also to ensure all the items and scales in the instrument are able to effectively measure the variables and answer all questions. The items in the questionnaire are vetted and evaluated by the supervisor and expert in determining whether the items were constructed fully based on the study variables. In addition, the content validity is also conducted based on the theory by Jackson (n.d.) in assuring the measured variables and questionnaire construct are parallel with the research theory. For this reason, a pilot study was conducted in evaluating the reliability of the instrument and identifying the strength of all items. Results of the pilot study shows that the understanding of freedom of religion obtained 0.859 and the open attitude of both societies

towards the other religious believers obtained 0.894. This suggests that the result of the pilot study is larger than 0.6 which means the Alpha Cronbach coefficient value for all variables are at a very good level and suitable for this study.

### Analysis of Field Study Data

The following result was obtained through the field study conducted with the society Southern of Thailand. Based on the two basic constructs which are the freedom of religion and the open attitude, 37.63% respondents agreed, 28.62% strongly agreed, 20.56% slightly disagreed, 8.7% disagreed and 4.49% strongly disagreed to the first construct which is freedom of religion. Meanwhile, for the second construct which is the openness attitude, 40.02% respondents agreed, 30.96% strongly agreed, 20.69% slightly disagreed, 5.25% disagreed and 3.08% strongly disagreed.

Figure 2: Average percentage for both constructs (Source: Researcher)



Since this study is meant to identify the relationship between the understanding of freedom of religion among the religious believers and the openness attitude of both societies towards the other religious believers in the Southern of Thailand, the correlation inferential analysis was utilised to measure the existence of correlation level between both

variables. The strength of correlation between the two variables was measured by the coefficient correlation valued (r) between -1 to +1. If the coefficient correlation value is 0, that means there is no relationship or correlation between both variables. In contrast, if the coefficient correlation value is reaching value 1, that means the relationship or correlation between both variables is strong (Ali, H. 1994). The following table displays the interpretation of coefficient correlation scale table.

Table 1: Interpretation of Coefficient Correlation Scale

Coefficient Correlation Value (r)	Correlation Strength
<0.10	Weak Relationship (can be ignored)
0.10-0.30	Moderate Relationship
>0.30	Strong relationship

### Result and Discussion

#### *The Relationship between the Understanding of Freedom of Religion and the Openness Attitude among the Religious Believers*

The correlation analysis used in this study is meant to test the null hypothesis offered by the researcher; there is no significant relationship between the understanding of freedom of religion and the open attitude of both societies towards the other religious believers in the Southern Thailand. Thus, the Pearson Correlation analysis was used in analysing the relationship. The findings are portrayed in the following table.

The Pearson Correlation analysis of the relationship between the understanding of freedom of religion and the open attitude of both societies towards the other religious believers is shown in the table above. Based on the table, it can be seen that the relationship between both societies is at a high level with the value;  $r=0.597$ ,  $sig=0.000$  ( $p<0.05$ ). This means, the hypothesis that there is no significant relationship between the understanding of freedom of religion and the open attitude among both societies towards



Table 2: The relationship between the understanding of freedom of religion and the openness attitude among the religious believers

Construct		Understanding of Freedom of Religion	Openness Attitude of Both Societies Towards Other Religious
Understanding of Freedom of Religion	Pearson Correlation (r) Sig. (2-tailed) (p) N	1 . 870	.597** .000 87
Openness Attitude of Both Societies Towards Other Religious Believers	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed) N	.597** .000 870	1 . 870

*r* = Pearson correlation; *p* = significant  
 \*two-way significant *p* < 0.05

the other religious believers should be rejected. The finding shows that the relationship between the understanding of freedom of religion and the open attitude of both societies towards the other religious believers is positive. In short, higher level of understanding of freedom of religion among the religious believers will result in higher level of openness attitude among both societies towards the other religious believers.

The discussion of freedom of religion of this study is not merely focusing on the knowledge, but also the behaviour. This is because, the influence of the level of understanding on freedom of religion towards the religious believers is clarified based on the data obtained from the respondents. This is also relevant as an individual's behaviour is determined by his or her knowledge. Moreover, people with wider knowledge possess wider experience. In other words, people with knowledge tend to practise it compared to those without knowledge. In brief, those findings have supported few theories offered by psychology scholars such as Fiesbein & Ajzen (n.d.) who stated that knowledge is the basis in determining attitude, intention and behaviour (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975). Behavioural changes are caused by the changes in level of knowledge. This is also supported by Valente, et al., (n.d.) mentioned that people tend to change their behaviour once they improved their knowledge. The changes will cause behavioural or human practical changes (Valente, et al., (1998). Likewise, Fernbach, (2002), indicated that people will be influenced by a message if they are frequently exposed to

it. The component that influences attitude is the cognitive or thinking that is accompanied by knowledge and belief towards an issue or information that eventually leads to certain act. This is parallel to the opinion of Bloom, B. S. (1956) in which he asserted that people's attitude is formed by three related components which are effective, behaviour and cognitive. The effective component includes positive and negative emotion towards something. Meanwhile, behaviour component includes the tendency to act according to certain behaviour related to attitude. The last component which is cognitive refers to belief and thinking possessed by someone towards certain object. All three components are significantly related and functioning in forming people's attitude.

Other than that, Kaliyaperumal, (2004) highlighted an action or practice that refers to people's manner in showing their knowledge according to what they do. Once an individual has a deep understanding of knowledge, his or her attitude will be better and create awareness. In other words, the theory of attitude, either positive or negative, emerges from the perception on a subject or event. The perception is determined by a value system to act in certain condition. By referring to that theory, it confirms the findings of Pearson Correlation analysis that show the open attitude of both societies towards other religious believers is formed by understanding the level of freedom of religion.

The discussion of the open attitude in the religious society is basically focusing on the

belief towards a religion which forms attitude and behaviour of its society. This is because religion plays a vital role in improving and balancing a society as well as its harmonious structure. In addition, it also prepares values that motivate the action of an individual and society. Besides, religion acknowledges the existence of the variety of culture in the world as well as protecting the rights of belief based on the natural environment and the known etiquette. In short, it is not merely about rituals.

Even though the role of religion is capable of encountering the conflicts in society, the shallow society will still exist in every religion. Most of the religions demand their believers to be proud and obey their teaching, love each other, and reject other religions as they are not the true religions. Al-Qardawi, (1995) further explained that most of the societies are having shallow thinking; they are not discipline in knowledge, and being too fanatic towards religion that causes them to reject any differences in other religions without deep thinking.

As the findings portray a significant relationship between the understanding of freedom of religion and the openness attitude of both societies towards the other religious believers, there is a need for an exact definition of related principles in freedom of religion in every religious believer's heart. Besides, the religious good values that encourage cooperation, helping and loving each other, be open minded towards any differences should also be instilled in the heart of every believer to form positive attitude when facing the differences that are not against the religion. Consequently, it can be the defence of any aspect that could harm the peaceful relationship among the religious believers especially in the context of multi-religious and multiracial society.

## Conclusion

It is impossible to deny the role of freedom of religion as the important policy in forming a consensus society. It is labelled as the human rights and protected by most of the laws in the world. The findings of this study prove that both Islam and Buddhism teach freedom of religion to their believers. As a result, the teaching is capable in generating the forming of the open attitude in a society. Thus, it is impossible to have a harmonious living without the awareness of freedom of religion. This portrays that the forming of the open attitude in a society is depending on the freedom of religious motivation among the religious believers themselves. Accordingly, it is vital for all religious believers to instil the motivation of freedom of religion in their hearts. The following are few suggestions from the researcher in practising the freedom of religion while protecting the harmonious living of society. a) All believers should be aware of roles and responsibilities and seriously pay their attention towards religious demands in terms of social relationship as it can give huge impact in forming the harmonious living society; b) Acknowledge and respect human rights, especially the freedom of religion as that right is one of the important element in solving the conflicts among religions; c) Instilling the motivation of cooperation, loving, helping and respecting each other as well as be open minded in all aspects of life; d) Follow, understand and cooperate in all programs planned by the authorities in uniting the religious believers; e) Perform all country's demands diligently as long as they are not against the religion; f) Behave with good manners in socialising and doing something to ensure others' rights are not violated and g) Ensure that freedom of religious right is protected, acknowledged and respected consistently by the society

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