

Construction, Validity and Reliability of the Inventory of Basic Religious Knowledge (IBRK)

**Mohammad Aziz Shah Mohamed Arip, Samsiah Mohd Jais, Aniza Benu,
Mohd Safuan Zakaria, Nur Hazwani Zahariman, Norehan Ishak**
Universiti Pendidikan Sultan Idris

Abstract

This study aimed to measure the validity and reliability of the Inventory of Basic Religious Knowledge (IBRK) or in Malay, 'Inventori Pengetahuan Asas Agama'. The IBRK questionnaire aimed to measure an individual's fundamental knowledge of Islam based on four subscales, namely the purification of minor impurities, purification of major impurities, Adhan and Iqamah, and five-time prayer. The IBRK contains 50 items in which every subscale contains 10 items, and each of them consists of 5 positive items and 5 negative items; except for the five-times prayer subscale which contains 20 items, with 10 positive items and 10 negative items. The theoretical framework used for this study is a combination of the basics of Fardhu Ain and Fardhu Kifayah, which describes the specific knowledge and practices that are very important for every Muslim to practise in order to become an ideal Muslim. Six experts in the fields of religion, counselling and languages were selected to answer a specially designed questionnaire in order to get the validity of IBRK. 40 final year undergraduates from the Sultan Idris Education University, Tanjung Malim, Perak, Malaysia were chosen to answer the questionnaire in order to get the reliability of IBRK. Results show that IBRK has good content validity and overall reliability. This study is considered successful in building a basic framework for IBRK. Finally, it is recommended that further studies be conducted to upgrade the IBRK for usage in the future.

Keywords *Inventory, Fardhu Ain, Fardhu Kifayah, validity, reliability.*

INTRODUCTION

According to the definition provided by al-Attas (1978) that refers to the definition by Fakhruddin Al-Razi, "when we refer to Allah as the source of all knowledge, it (knowledge) means the arrival of the meaning of something to someone. When we refer to oneself as the interpreter, knowledge is someone that arrives to the meaning of something". This definition means that Allah is the real source of all knowledge and we (mortal being) are the seeker that are earnestly seeking for knowledge. Therefore, every knowledge comes from *tauhid* which means the knowledge that derives from one source. This definition carry some essential points. Something is regarded as knowledge if it is based on the truth and brings understanding to the owner of the knowledge. The Muslim scholars have divided the Islamic basic knowledge into two types, namely *Fardu Ain* and *Fardu Kifayah*. *Fardu Ain* is a mandated knowledge and

is practised by all Muslims to qualify them as a perfect or ideal Muslim. *Fardu Kifayah* is a non-obligatory knowledge that is encouraged to be acquired and practised so that it may help in forming the individual's morals and human personality, thus making him/her a dignified Muslim. Therefore, both *Fardu Ain* and *Fardu Kifayah* are basic fundamental knowledge of the Muslim's religion and they are both important to be understood and practised in order to produce an ideal Muslim. Enhancing only the basics of *fardhu ain* without improving on the understanding of the application of *fardhu kifayah* will only incur trouble in understanding and translating the meanings of the Islamic values and Qurani (Sidek Baba, 2009). Moreover, some well-known Muslim theologians have given us the quotes of wisdom and knowledge to every mankind. One of them is Imam Abu Hamid Al-Ghazali (ra) or better known as Imam Al-Ghazali who says in his book 'Wahai Anakku' (Ayyuh Al Walad) that means what will you get if you only spend time learning the knowledge of words '*kalam*' (detailed debates of the usuluddin knowledge), the knowledge that explain '*fekah*' in detail, knowledge of medical, literature, arts, astronomy and Arabic but denying the commands of Allah and breaking His rules? Therefore, this study was aimed to develop an inventory list that is able to measure the level of knowledge that encompasses the foundation of both *Fardu Ain* and *Fardu Kifayah* which include: a) Purification of minor impurities; b) Purification of major impurities; c) Adhan and Iqamah; and d) Five-time prayer.

This study looked into the validity and reliability of the inventory to ensure its practical effectiveness. This was due to the current situation, with various issues associated with the basic religious knowledge as acute problems in Muslim societies. Various evidence and studies have shown that the shallowness and lack of understanding and knowledge of the fundamentals of religion in the Muslim community is the main culprit of the various social problems, deviating from the teachings of true religion and leading to apostasy.

Moreover, this study had found out that all along a specific questionnaire consisting of basic religious knowledge had never been formulated in detail by local researchers in Malaysia. Therefore, any research related to the construction, validity and reliability of religious inventories should be encouraged. Hence, this study aimed to develop an inventory that can measure the level of knowledge that encompasses the foundation of both *Fardu Ain* and *Fardu Kifayah* and that possesses high values of validity and reliability.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The role of religion and spiritual aspects cannot be ignored altogether in any form of education. Moral education based on faith and religious values is ideal and this can assure the production of an individual of high quality, in accordance with the purpose of the creation of a human being as a servant and vicegerent of Allah on the earth, as said by Allah which means, "I did not create genie and mankind but to worship Me" (Surat az-Zariyat, verse 56). This proves that it is therefore important for every Muslim to acquire the basic knowledge of the Islamic religion.

In the development of the human capital, the 5th former Prime Minister of Malaysia, Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, in his message on Independence Day on August 30, 2005, reminded that human capital development should be balanced by the strength

of committed spiritual of every citizen. He stressed that in order to develop human capital, adequate knowledge should be given so as to educate the people to become a nation of honor, integrity, dedication, and love for the country, besides having the physical and spiritual strength. In this matter, Prophet Muhammad S.A.W. likewise reminded his followers about the priority and importance of seeking knowledge. In relation to that, the IRKB is built on the construct of basic religious knowledge that encompasses the fundamentals of both *Fardu Ain* and *Fardu Kifayah*.

BASIC THEORETICAL CONSTRUCTION OF IRKB

The Inventory of Basic Religious Knowledge (IBRK) was composed by the researchers in this study based on the fundamentals of *Fardu Ain* and *Fardu Kifayah* that should be acquired by each individual Muslim. Amongst the many religious fundamentals that a Muslim must learn, the most notable and basic knowledge that are compulsory to be acquired in a religious life are purification of minor impurities, purification of major impurities, Adhan and Iqamah, and the five-time prayers. This is very important because according to Ahmad Hatta, (2009) a person is forbidden from engaging in any religious activities when he/she is in a state of minor impurity. These activities include the obligatory or voluntary prayers, and other similar practices, like reciting prostrate, prostration of thanks, delivering the Friday sermons or the funeral prayer, circumambulate the Kaaba, be it obligatory or voluntary, and holding or touching any part of the Qur'an, or any of its verses. The Prophet said, "The religion of Islam is based on cleanliness". Thus, Muslims must cleanse themselves because being in the state of minor impurity will result in invalidation of lustrations and forbids a person to perform worship (Johari Alias, 2009).

According to Sulaiman Nordin (1999), knowledge in Islam has two basic characteristics. They are the unity and hierarchy which differ from the Western beliefs which only acknowledge the concepts of classification of knowledge. The characteristics of the knowledge that were disclosed through divine means and thoughts are united and completes each other. However, at the same time, they come in a hierarchy. The classifications of the knowledge of *fardhu ain* and *fardhu kifayah* are the best example for the structure of the knowledge hierarchy. This shows that in Islam, there are different stages of knowledge. According to Wan Mohd Nor (1991), the basic scheme for the knowledge of *fardhu ain* and *fardhu kifayah* have been agreed upon by all Islamic experts even though they do have some disagreement on certain parts of the content. In his study, Syed Muhammad Dawilah (1993) had stated that the division of the knowledge between *fardhu ain* and *fardhu kifayah* was significant. Through the division, Islam has set the rights for knowledge and for those who seek knowledge. This division is essential, nowadays, particularly to answer the doubts incurred by the Western philosophers concerning the concepts of knowledge.

The major impurities are involved because they are considered '*maknawi*' (dirt which is invisible to the naked eye) which is prevalent on the entire body of the individual, and will prohibit the individual from performing the prayer or worship. From the language perspective, being in a major impurities state would require the individual to perform an obligatory bath. Among the causes of a person to be in that

state of major impurities would include having sexual intercourse (sexual intercourse or coitus), being in menstruation, intentional or unintentional discharge of semen and ‘wiladah’, which means women who have given birth would carry with them by blood or being wet (Johari Alias, 2009). All these things will forbid a person to perform worship. This is explained in the Qur’an, Surah Al-Nisa, verse 43 which means,

“O you who believe! Approach not prayers with a mind befogged, until you can understand all that you say - nor in a state of ceremonial impurity (except when travelling on the road), until after your whole body. If you are ill or on a journey, or one of you come from office of nature, or you have been in contact with women, or you find no water, then take for yourselves clean sand or earth, and rub therewith your faces and hands. For Allah does blot out sins and forgive you again and again.”

With this, it is clear that the basic knowledge about cleansing of the minor and major impurities is very important and must be understood by Muslims because it involves various religious practices.

‘Adhan’ on the other hand is meant as a notification. In Islamic terminology, it means a combination of certain words as notification of prayer times with the recitation-specific pronouncement. According to Abdul Salam Mohd Zain, (2004) ‘Adhan’ (prayer call) is a specific thought of Allah in actions. Meanwhile, ‘Iqamah’ means ‘to evoke the congregation to perform the prayer’. Together, the Adhan and Iqamah are ‘sunnah mu’akkadah’ in *Kifayah* before performing any obligatory prayers whether in congregation or done alone, or whether it is the ‘qadha’ or current prayer for the men. For a man who prays alone, both Adhan and Iqamah are desirable in *Ain*. For women, whether they are praying alone or in congregation, they are encouraged to recite the Iqamah for fear of vilification if they raise their voice. The act of Adhan and Iqamah is deemed as non-obligatory by the majority of scholars. However, it is one of the important things for a Muslim to know and is a rudimentary knowledge in Islam before performing the compulsory five-time daily prayers.

As known by everyone, prayer is the obligatory duty of all Muslims. Allah says in Surah An-Nisa, verse 103, which means “And when you finish the prayer, so you must speak and remember Allah while standing or sitting, and whilst lying down. Then when you are in peace, do perform your prayers (in proper manner and as usual). For prayer is a decree that is mandated for the believers at stated times” (Ahmad Hatta, 2009). Therefore, the IBRK is used to measure how far a person has acquired the basic religious knowledge especially in terms of Fardu *Ain* and Fardu *Kifayah*, which include the purification of minor impurities, purification of major impurities, Adhan and Iqamah, and the five-times prayers.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The aims of the study were as follows:

- a. To investigate the validity of the Inventory of Religious Knowledge Base (IBRK) questionnaire holistically.

- b. To investigate the validity of IBRK subscales: a) purification of minor impurities; b) purification of major impurities; c) Adhan and Iqamah; and d) five-times daily prayers and the reliability of the IBRK questionnaire holistically.
- c. To investigate the reliability of IBRK subscales: a) purification of minor impurities; b) purification of major impurities; c) Adhan and Iqamah; and d) five-times daily prayers.

STUDY METHOD

The study employed the descriptive method to obtain the content validity and reliability of IBRK. This study involved two phases: Phase 1 was to obtain the content validity; and Phase 2 was to obtain the reliability values of IBRK.

Phase 1 Study

Phase 1 was carried out to obtain the content validity of the IBRK. There were two methods used to obtain the content validity, which were the surface validity and the content validity by external critics (external criticism). After the construction of IBRK, the language was verified in terms of sentence structure and contents by three specialists: a linguist, and two religious experts from the Sultan Idris Education University, Perak, Malaysia. These experts have reviewed and proposed recommendations to improve on the language, sentence structure and the understanding of the IBRK terminology so as to make it more accurate and appropriate.

To test the validity of the IBRK, the authentication method was carried out by experts or external critics. According to Othman Mohamed (1999), a number of six to nine experts are sufficient to conduct the evaluation of the research constructs and items. Hence, the panel of six experts who were assigned to assess the IBRK was selected based on their expertise in the field of religion and counseling, in the construction of modules, and their in-depth knowledge and experience as academicians. Besides, the religious experts had provided plenty of guidance for the construction of IBRK and the construction of modules, with their in-depth knowledge and experience as academicians. In this respect, the researchers provided a full introduction and study of IBRK, together with the relevant documentary attachments so as to solicit comments and expert opinions. The scale for this assessment was a ten-pointer: 1 (strongly disagree) to 10 (strongly agree).

Phase 2 Study

The Phase 2 study was to conduct the reliability analysis of IBRK. The reliability test was performed to ensure that the IBRK questionnaire was appropriate and possessed high consistency in measuring the aspects that should be evaluated. The basis for a reliable questionnaire is referred to Kerlinger (1979), in of which a questionnaire that has an alpha (α) value in excess of 0.6 at the significant level of .05 is a good questionnaire. To obtain this reliability, the IBRK questionnaire was given to 40

undergraduates randomly selected at the Sultan Idris Education University (UPSI), Perak, Malaysia.

Location and Sampling

The studies for Phase 1 and Phase 2 were conducted at the Sultan Idris Education University, Perak, Malaysia. In Phase 1, the participants were divided into two groups. Three specialists from UPSI reviewed the language accuracy and terminology in the IBRK while six experts assessed the content validity of the IBRK. In Phase 2, the participants consisted of 40 bachelor degree students from UPSI.

Instrumentation

The instruments used to assess the content validity of the IBRK questionnaire were developed with four subscales which were the purification of minor impurities, purification of major impurities, Adhan and Iqamah, and the five-times prayers. The IBRK had 50 items to test the four subscales. Each subscale had 10 items and was further divided into five positive and five negative items, except for the five-times prayers subscale which had 20 items and was divided into 10 positive and 10 negative items. In terms of scoring, the IBRK was designed with the nominal scale of 'YES' or 'NO'. The IBRK questionnaire was then administered to the participants to obtain the Cronbach alpha value for reliability.

RESULTS

Content validity of IBRK

A specific formula was used to obtain the content validity in which the total scores given by the expert (x) were divided by the total score (y). A validated questionnaire is certified as being high in validity when it scores more than the value of 0.7 (Tuckman, 1978; Jamaludin, 2002; Sidek, 2002; Sidek & Jamaluddin, 2005). Table 1 shows the result from the expert panels' evaluation on the validity of the IBRK.

Table 1 The validity of the IBRK based on Expert Assessment Panel (n=6).

Scale/ Subscale	No, of Items	Validity Value (%)	Expert Assessment
IBRK (as a whole)	50	0.86 (86)	Accepted
Purification of Minor Impurities	10	0.84 (84)	Accepted
Purification of Major Impurities	10	0.86 (86)	Accepted
Prayer Call & Iqamah	10	0.86 (86)	Accepted
Five-times Prayer	20	0.87 (87)	Accepted

Table 1 shows that the content validity of the IBRK is high. The results indicated that the IBRK questionnaire had good content validity with an overall score of 0.86 (86%). Meanwhile, the validity of the IBRK subscales for: a) purification of minor impurities was 0.84 (84%); b) purification of major impurities was 0.86 (86%); c) Adhan and Iqamah was 0.86 (86%); and d) five-time prayers was 0.87 (87%). The validity for all four subscales was also accepted by the experts. According to Tuckman (1978), the level of mastery and achievement of 0.7 is deemed to have good control or to attain a high level of achievement.

The reliability of IBRK

In Phase 2, a pilot study was conducted to test the reliability of the IBRK. The findings of this study are as follows:

Table 2 Reliability of IBRK.

Scale/Subscale	No. of Items	Reliability Value
IBRK (as a whole)	50	0.71
Purification of Minor Impurities	10	0.53
Purification of Major Impurities	10	0.32
Adhan & Iqamah	10	0.46
Five-times prayer	20	0.57

Based on Table 2, the reliability of IBRK had a high overall reliability coefficient of .71. This coefficient value was consistent with the opinion of Mohd Majid (1998), Sidek (2002) and Sidek (2005) that a good questionnaire should have a reliability coefficient of .60 or more in order to be acceptable. However, the reliability of the subscales of the IBRK was at a low level with: a) purification of minor impurities .53; b) purification of major impurities .32; c) Adhan and Iqamah .46; and d) five-time prayers .57.

DISCUSSION

This study has provided some theoretical and practical implications in the field of psychology and counseling, particularly in the testing and measuring of religious knowledge. This study clearly shows that the IBRK had a good content validity value, and a good overall reliability value. However, the reliability values for the four subscales were relatively low and considered unacceptable. This inventory requires further study so that immediate improvement can be made to the four subscales to achieve greater reliability standards.

This study has also shown that the IBRK, with the four subscales: a) purification of minor impurities; b) purification of major impurities; c) Adhan and Iqamah; and d) five-time prayers had a high validity coefficient. Thus, the study shows that the validity of using expert opinion as recommended by Mohd Majid (1998) is

feasible for measuring inventories of testing in Malaysia. The low reliability of the IBRK subscales implies that the inventory requires a re-evaluation in terms of the content such as sentence and structure, usage of appropriate language. Further research should include studies involving a wider spectrum of public respondents with different backgrounds as well as age. These can show the differences in the understanding levels of the respondents about the four subscales. Respondents could be selected from the primary school students through the Religion and Fardhu Ain Classes program or in Malay, '*Kelas Agama dan Fardhu Ain (KAFA)*', that are conducted based on the concept of strengthening the basics of Islamic Knowledge through reading of the Al-Quran and the basics of Fardhu Ain, up till the university undergraduates. A validity test of the proposed re-evaluated inventory by the panel of experts should also be performed for the improvement of the items in the inventory.

Overall, this study proves that the IBRK can be formulated and applied as a tool to measure the fundamental knowledge of religion among the youth. Accordingly, the IBRK should be enhanced in the study of its validity and reliability to ensure that this inventory really meets the standards and the standard measurement tools can be used by students. A valid and reliable inventory, is very important in obtaining data related to the level of basic religious knowledge among the youth.

CONCLUSION

Overall, this study has succeeded in formulating the IBRK questionnaire framework based on the combination of both the Fardhu Ain and Fardhu Kifayah, in measuring the basic religious knowledge of the individuals. This was proved by the research findings of the content validity of each subscale, namely the purification of minor impurities, purification of major impurities, Adhan and Iqamah, and five-time prayers, with coefficient values of good and adequate validity. Although the overall value and reliability of the IBRK is acceptable, the reliability of the four subscales of IBRK is low and unacceptable. Nevertheless, this study has successfully built a basic framework for the further development of the IBRK. Finally, future research should be conducted to refine the IBRK which will be able to meet the standard features of a good survey tool.

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