

RELIGIOUS THINKING IN CHILDREN'S SHORT STORY PUBLISHED BETWEEN 2012 AND 2015 AND ITS POSITIVE IMPACT ON CHILDREN

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ABSTRACT

This working paper discusses the religious thought in selected children's short stories published between 2012 and 2015. The Panel of Assessor for Malaysia's Premier Literary Award (HSPM) has expressed their disappointment with the mediocre quality of children's short stories. Some believed that these short stories were written from the perspective of adult authors and did not satisfy the concept for children's literature and child psychology. The present research adopts a qualitative approach of text analysis to identify and analyse whether the religious thoughts presented in each short story have a positive impact on the children or vice versa. This research seeks to determine whether the selected children's short stories failed to provide good examples for their readers and that the authors failed to include child psychology and fulfil the literary concept for children in their writings. Scrutiny of the selected children's short stories published between 2012 and 2015 showed that presented using the teaching elements based on the moral approach, preaching approach, and community approach in the Malay Methodology (Hashim Awang). Even though the authors included religious thought in the short stories to impart positive influence on the children, they failed to present the thought comprehensively because they did not adopt the concept of children's literature and child psychology. Hence, this research seeks to identify and analyse the religious thought presented by the authors by scrutinising its positive influence on the readers, particularly children. This research adopts the model for children's needs (an integration of Maslow's theory with the Malay Methodology theory).

Keywords:

religious thinking; children's short story; between 2012 and 2015; positive impact; children

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INTRODUCTION

Several writing styles are adopted in the world of letters. Each writing style has its own definition and characteristics. Short stories, poems, novels, and drama are categorised as creative writing. Imagination, creativity, and intelligence are of critical importance to stir the conscience of the readers through the stories and themes put forward by the writer.

A literary work often discusses the causes of a particular event and its effects on the community while presenting the author's perspectives and thoughts of the events. Literary works have always been directly involved in the turbulence and community life of readers. Literature has always been an outlet to convey the restlessness, dreams, hopes, and experiences of society. One of

the literary works that serve as the mirror of society is short stories.

As one form of literary works, short stories offer a model of thought that conveys an unusual event that occurred in the past or maybe experienced by humans through the characters in the story. These events are often a source of a series of conflicts that shape the storyline. The authors use the storyline to develop the themes, characters, scene of the event, location of the event, and the climax of the story.

In terms of the growth and development of children's literature, children's short stories are still in its infancy relative to the short stories written for general reading. Generally, the initial stage of children's short stories began in 1956 when the Department of Composition organised

the Short Story Writing Competition. Following this, the children's short story developed rapidly in the 1960s up to the present with the availability of platforms such as *Utusan Kanak-kanak* (1956), *Utusan Pelajar* (1970), *Dewan Pelajar* (1967), *Dewan Siswa* (1979), and others (Othman Puteh, 2001: 75).

Consistent with the title of this paper, Religious Thinking in Children's Short Story for the Period from 2012 to 2015, the researcher linked the concept of thought in the children's short story with those adopted by great thinkers. Asmah Haji Omar (1986: 9) stated that thought as a method of thinking comprises abstract concepts and is related to the thinking level of the society that is the focus of the authors. Thought as a thinking method focuses on various depictions or images for a particular situation. According to Othman Puteh (2010: 95), thought is the heart of civilisation. The height of a civilisation is dependent on the ability of the nation to trigger the thinking that underlies progress, represent worldview, and self-analysis. The thought is also the essence and most fundamental element of life, particularly in providing solutions to several critical issues.

Hence, it can be concluded that the thought in a literary work becomes apparent when the author reveals and connects the relationship between events or situations. The author would then identify the cause and effect that prevails as a result of the event to understand the cause of the event. After making the evaluation, the author uses the newly acquired information and scrutinise the information to provide benefits to the readers. The ideas are then creatively presented in their work implicitly or explicitly to help the readers or researchers of literary work understand how the author intelligently and comprehensively presents a phenomenon.

PROBLEM STATEMENT

The study of the genre of children's short story is not uncommon among the western and local scholars. Researchers study the genre of children's short stories because of its many interesting

scopes. The subjective nature of the literary work, which allows all interpretations, has led to plenty of disagreements when a particular work is selected in a competition or as a research text. Hence, there is a need to answer the question of whether the statement concerning the quality of work is related to the aspect of thought in the children's short story that are contended to receive negative reviews and do not offer any positive values to the readers.

A review of the literature revealed that there is very little research on children's literary work. Instead, most research, including those by Raihaniah Zakaria (2014), Azhar Mohd Ali (2010), Masrizayu Mustafa (2006), Nik Rafidah Nik Affendi (2005), Arbai.e Sujud (2004), Normah Ismail (2001), and Salbiah Sawal (1977), focused on adult literary work. It is worth noting that these researches only analyse the thoughts in modern and traditional literary works such as the KOMSAS novels, teenage novels, selected poems, and saga. Between 1970 and 2015, there was no comprehensive research on thoughts in children's short stories, and this still holds today. In light of this, the present research seeks to identify and analyse the dominant thoughts, especially religious thoughts, in the children's short story published between 2012 and 2015.

The 2015/2016 report by the panel of evaluators for the Malaysia Premier Literary Award (HSPM) opined that the issues with the quality of children's short stories are concerned with the aspect of thought. According to the panel report, some of the thoughts in the children's short stories are too high, while others are too low. The report by the panel of evaluators stated that the low level of thoughts in the children's short stories is because they were written from the author's perspective and not on the perspectives and needs of the children. Other evaluators believed the level of thought was too high because the secretariat has difficulty in choosing a group of short stories that meet the criteria specified by the Malaysia Premier Literary Award (Dewan Sastera 2016: 36).

Othman Puteh (2001: 28) asserted that children's literature must be of high quality in terms of the selected insertion, vision, and satisfying the national aspiration. In other words, the works must be able to put forth new thoughts, provide the opportunity for the readers to think critically and globally, and can creatively produce mature and wise citizens. The problem with the present-day children's short story is the absence of new and universal thoughts, which is due to some of the authors of children's short stories occasionally presenting the same thought in each of their work. As a result, there is an imbalance in the thought aspects presented in their writings.

As a matter of fact, new and universal thoughts concerning politics and religion are rarely put forth in present-day children's short stories. As a result, there is no effort to inculcate national values such as the love for the country, obedience to the rulers, leadership qualities, and spirituality in the children. In 2009, Awang Had Salleh voiced his criticism that, in the context of Malaysia, the thoughts in children's literary work such as short stories should nurture the love for the country or patriotism; promote interracial understanding; inculcate social responsibility to help the poor and less fortunate; foster discipline, respect, and loyalty to the monarchical democracy system of this country; promote goodwill in the Asian region; and nurture the spirit of independence, positive self-concept, and high self-esteem (Dewan Sastera 2015).

Misran Rokiman (2005) believed that the authors of children's literature should present thoughts from the perspective of basic religious education and moral education in their works in keeping with the philosophy of national education and to curb the influence of various Western cultures in this era of globalisation. Simply put, children's literature should play an important role in shaping civilisation and thought of a nation. Sound literature will produce a nation with a strong national identity (*Utusan Melayu*, 20 January 2005). However, does this thought form the basis for the thought in the existing children's literature? This research will identify and analyse

the religious thought in children's short stories published between 2012 and 2015 to determine if they are consistent with the views of Awang Had Salleh (2009) and Misran Rokiman (2005).

Besides, the disappointing presence of children's short stories in the current market is because the excessive level of thought presented in the children's literature failed to persuade children to appreciate children's literature (Dato' Haji Termuzi Abdul Aziz 2010: 54). The shaping of thought, such as religious thought, in the writings, forms the fundamentals for the reader's perspective of the author's creativity in his work. Therefore, various aspects have to be taken into account to produce high-quality children's literature.

Based on the issues presented above, the question now is whether the short stories fail to achieve the thought aspect that meets the children's needs. Are the short stories viewed only from the perspective of an adult without taking into account the perspective of the current phenomenon? Does this mean that the children's short stories are not suitable for children's reading, or does the lack of quality and positive values have elicited different opinions?

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

All research seeks to achieve specific objectives. Hence, through this research on the Islamic thought in the children's short stories published between 2012 and 2015 and their positive impacts on children, the researcher seeks to achieve the following objectives.

1. To classify the religious thought in the reviewed children's short stories published between 2012 and 2015.
2. To analyse the religious thought in the reviewed children's short stories published between 2012 and 2015 and their positive impacts on children.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In this analysis, the researcher adopts a qualitative method for the entire research. This method allows for the gathering of more in-depth data

(Azizi Yahya et al., 2007). The researcher also adopts the content analysis method. This method is selected because the data collection and data analysis are based on the text content of the selected written short stories. Given that this research focuses specifically on the analysis of the text of a group of children’s short stories published between 2012 and 2015, this method gives the researcher a better ability to analyse the tests.

In this research, the researcher adopts the children’s needs model, which is a combination of the Hierarchy of Human Needs (Abraham Maslow) and the Malay Methodology (Hashim Awang). The theory of the Hierarchy of Human Needs comprises five principles or stages of

needs, 1) physiological needs, 2) safety needs, 3) love and belonging needs, 4) esteem needs, and 5) self-actualization needs.

The combined theory of Malay Methodology through the three approaches adopted in this research facilitated the analysis of religious thought in the review of selected children’s short stories. The adopted approaches that analyse the thoughts using Maslow’s theory are the preaching approach, moral approach, and community approach. The two theories are selected because they are suitable for investigating an individual’s needs, desires, motivation, and objective in their daily life and satisfying the needs of children. Figure 1 presents the combined theory used in this research.

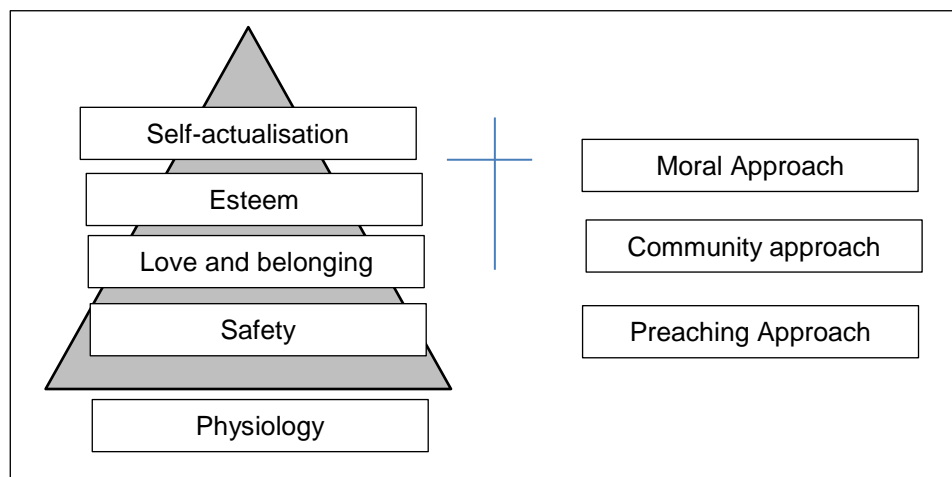


Figure 1: The Combined Theory of Human Needs (Maslow) and Malay Methodology (Hashim Awang)

In the context of this research, religious thought is the thought concerning the belief in God. This aspect is related to faith, the oneness of God, and revelation that are critical in perfecting the knowledge of *fard ain*. The religious thought in Islam is concerned with the vertical human relationship and communication, namely humans as a slave and a vicegerent who have a direct

relationship with Allah S.W.T. The horizontal relationship comprises the relationship of man with man and nature (Mohd Yusof Hassan, 2007:57)

The researcher has selected six groups of children’s short stories published between 2012 and 2015 for the discussion. Table 1 presents the selected six groups of children’s short stories.

Table 1: Six Titles of the Group of the Selected Children’s Short Stories

No	Title of Group of Short Stories	No of short	Year of Publication	Publisher	Author
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		stories			
1.	<i>Wajah Pada Skrin</i>	25 short stories	2012	Aras Mega (M) Sdn. Bhd	Ahmad Fadzillah Muhamad
2.	<i>Kisah Si Puteri Gaun Merah Jambu</i>	5 short stories	2013	PTS One Sdn. Bhd	Natasha Effyzal, Aizam Aiman, Iman Qaisara, Haryani Kamilan & Adha Ameera.
3.	<i>Desktop Ke Laptop?</i>	5 short stories	2013	Ana Muslim Sdn. Bhd	Anies Hisham
4.	<i>Kerana Ais Krim & Makaron</i>	5 short stories	2014	Ana Muslim Sdn. Bhd	Nur Shamsiah On
5.	<i>Jersi Syawal Untuk Ramadan</i>	5 short stories	2014	Ana Muslim Sdn. Bhd	Aimi Rahman
6.	<i>Kek Cawan Online</i>	15 short stories	2015	PRIMA Sdn. Bhd	Kamil, Kusyi Hirdan, Roziah Adama, Siti Zarinah & Tg. Norlaila.

RESEARCH DISCUSSION

The word religious is derived from the word “religion.” Poerwadarminta (1986: 18) defined religious as follows, “Religiosity is the characteristics of a religion or everything related to religion or religious matter.” H.M. Ariffin (1985: 69) defined religion from the subjective (personal traits of man) and objective perspectives.

The subjective aspect of religion includes the human behaviour that is imbued with religious values that are the spiritual values which regulate and direct the behaviour of a person and shapes his relationship with God and his relationship with the community and nature. The objective aspect of religion in this context contains the values of God’s teaching for humans to achieve the objectives that are in line with the requirement of the teaching.

According to the fifth edition of the *Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia* (2016:323), "Religion is a system that regulates the belief (faith) and worship of God Almighty and the rules for the interaction of man with man and his surroundings." The word "religion" has its root in Sanskrit, which means "tradition". Another word for this concept is *religi* which is derived from the Latin word *religio* and has its root in the verb *re-ligare*, which means "to bind again"; this implies that a person who is *religi* is one who has attached himself to God.

Analysis of the reviewed children's short stories published between 2012 and 2015 revealed that the authors of the short stories included religious thought in their writings. The thought is usually presented through the theme, event in the story, character, personality, and others. Mohd Yusof Hasan (2012: 33) believed that, in Islamic teaching, the religious aspect is presented from various perspectives, including the paired Islamic teaching. The pair may refer to Allah and Muhammad, the Quran and Hadis/Sunnah, Pillars of Faith and Pillars of Islam, Believer and Muslim, Slave and Vicegerent, *Fard Ain* and *Fard Kifayah*, Enjoining Good and Prohibiting Evil, Deeds and Worship, the World and Hereafter.

The analysis showed that there are two main aspects of religious thinking, namely the relationship of man with God and the relationship of man with man. These aspects are presented through the themes, events, characters, personalities, and background of the stories. The religious thought concerning the relationship between man and God is described in terms of man's responsibility, belief, and obedience to God. Responsibility is the obligation that all men and women must fulfil following the reasons for their creation. Men must know that they are created on this earth to be a slave of God.

Thus, the obligation of man to God is to give their full attention, emotion, and consideration in performing all good deeds. The two critical aspects in religious thought in the reviewed children's short stories are **the relationship of man with God**, such as praying, fasting, and

patience, and **the relationship of man with man**, which includes filial piety and enjoining good.

Religious Thought (The Relationship of Man with God)

A review of the present-day children's short stories reveals that the relationship of man with God is manifested through the characters that practice the values of man's responsibility towards God, namely praying, fasting, and patience.

(i) Prayer

Prayer is the pillar of religion and is critical in building resilience. Religion is the basis for all of a person's actions. A responsible person must perform his prayers as a way of remembering God. The Muslims remember God through their five daily prayers. The Hindus and Buddhists have their own way of remembering God. The Hindus remember God by worshipping Him three times every day, in the morning, afternoon, and evening (Mohd Rosmizi Abd Rahman 2005: 17).

The emphasis on religious thinking concerning prayer in the reviewed children's short stories published between 2012 and 2015 is evident in *Wajah Pada Skrin* written by Ahmad Fadzillah Muhammad (2012). Prayer is presented to the children in an indirect but profound manner. As an example, the character Najiha performs her morning prayer every morning even when she is in a hurry. Najiha eventually begins to change by waking up earlier in the morning and performing her prayers properly. She even has the time to read several verses of the Quran and make supplication. One of the examples is as follows.

She wakes up early in the morning to get ready for school. She is not late for school anymore. Even her mother is amazed by Najiha's attitude. She immediately gets up and goes straight to the bathroom. She no longer performs her *Subuh* prayer in a hurry. She even has the time to recite several verses of the Quran and make supplication.

(*Wajah Pada Skrin*, pg.70)

This is in agreement with the contention of Abdul Rahman Mohd Aroff (1999: 76) that obligatory worships must be performed sincerely and properly to build a noble character and achieve rewards. It will also help a person to refrain from evil and bad deeds.

The author clearly persuades the children to get up early in the morning to fulfil their prayer obligation before going to school. The apparent change in Najiha's character, who prays properly, indirectly persuades her to sincerely recite the Quran and supplicate without having to rush to school. Prayer is also important in other religions; in Hinduism, for example, the morning prayer is significant because the calm and serene morning atmosphere makes it the best time to pray and receive sustenance (Abd Aziz Harjin, 2010:18).

This exposure is beneficial and crucial for children who are just beginning to learn about the prayer ritual. For instance, in the story written by Natasha Effyza et al. (2013), *Kisah Si Puteri Gaun Merah Jambu*, Puteri Arabella and her family obediently perform the five daily prayers and *tarawih* prayer in congregation at the palace. This is a manifestation of the family's faith and piety.

"They have to lead the prayer at the palace tonight," answered her grandmother even though she asked her father.

(*Puteri Arabella*, pg. 14)

After dinner, they perform the *Maghrib* prayer in congregation, and later the *tarawih* prayer.

In the above passages, the author clearly shows that the prayers are performed in congregation. Puteri Arabella's family nurtures the importance of performing congregational prayer in the princess and her siblings while they were still young. They were trained and brought up to pray in congregation at the palace five times a day. In fact, both Puteri Arabella's brothers were trained to be the *imam* and *Bilal* in the congregational prayer.

Short stories are critical in building the character of children. Therefore, the thought on religiosity, such as the relationship of man with God, must be presented using a simple method suitable for the children's psychological development. Through this emphasis and education, the author indirectly conveys a positive message to the children, which helps them learn and understand that the ritual of performing congregational prayer is a good deed practiced in daily life, especially by the Muslims. This performing of the congregational prayer also nurtures a harmonious relationship in the family because of all the rewards promised by God to those who pray. Congregational prayer helps the children to foster a stronger relationship with other members of their family. Another beneficial impact of prayer is that it indirectly nurtures affection among family members.

In Maslow's theory of the Hierarchy of Needs, the third stage is the need for love and belonging, which is a universal need of all human beings, especially children. Children live by believing in themselves, their friends, and family members (Nor Nazimi Mohd Mustaffa, 2017: 19) because they

trust the people around them to provide them with love and affection. This is consistent with the contention made by Maslow (1970: 67) that it is human nature to live in a group and to be accepted to achieve harmony in their life.

Also, offering prayer is consistent with the first stage of the theory of the Hierarchy of Human Needs, which is the physiological need. It is the most basic need of all living creatures to survive (Mathes 1981:19). To fulfil this need, humans need to have oxygen, food, water, rest and sleep, and adequate shelter to survive.

Hence, the religious thought concerning prayer is one of the necessities that must be fulfilled by a man just as they have to satisfy the physiological needs stated in Maslow's hierarchy of needs. Abraham Maslow emphasised the physiological need in the theory of the Hierarchy of Human Needs because he believes that the failure to satisfy the physiological needs means that the individual does not wish to move to the following stage (Maslow 1970: 36-37). This is similar to the basic needs in the teachings of all religions, which emphasises prayer as the fundamental pillar in human life.

(ii) Fasting

Besides the portrayal of the character who practice the value of man's responsibility to God, such as praying, there are also values of obedience in practicing another act of worship, namely fasting. Fasting is a practice in all religions of the world, including Islam, Hinduism, and Buddhism. Muslims are required to fast in the month of Ramadhan.

Fasting is a practice that has many benefits. Fasting promotes better health, exemplary qualities such as patience, resilience, honesty, and others, and prevents detestable qualities such as greediness, haughtiness, and jealousy. Fasting is also a sign of gratitude to God, and those who fast achieve two joys when they break their fast and on eid day as well as when they meet God on the day of judgment (Muhammad Al-Ghazali, 1994: 15).

Fasting is also practiced in Hinduism, Buddhism, and Christianity. The objective, motivation, and benefits of fasting in these religions are similar to those in Islam. For example, fasting in Hinduism, which is known as *Upawasa*, is similar to fasting in Islam in that the Hindus fast not just to bear hunger and thirst but is a way to draw themselves closer to God the Creator. One of the objectives of fasting is to improve self-control and enhance spirituality (Efri Aditya, 2014:22). Self-control means abstaining from wrongdoings such as lying, stealing, and slandering.

As an example, in the short story written by Natasha Effyza et al. (2013), *Kisah Si Puteri Gaun Merah Jambu*, the author conveys religious thoughts related to fasting indirectly but in a way that has a profound impact on the children. The character in the story, Puteri Arabella, fasted the entire month of Ramadhan.

Another character, Raja Amirullah, explains the purpose of fasting so that his daughter, Puteri Arabella, understands the reasons for fasting. The following passage is one example of Raja Amirullah teaching his daughter.

Raja Amirullah smiles and says, "I am sure you know that fasting is not just bearing hunger and thirst. Fasting trains us to be truthful. If we fast and still lie, it would be fruitless. We only feel hunger and thirst."

(Puteri Arabella, pg. 5)

Ustaz Khairi reminds them on the second day of fasting, "This fasting month is the month for us to train ourselves to be sincere in all our deeds. We must always be sincere. We make this month as a month of training."

(Puteri Arabella, pg. 17)

The short story by Natasha Effyza et al. (2013), *Puteri Dian Adelia*, also discussed the relationship of man with God through fasting. In this story, Puteri Dian Adelia's parents and Izyan advised her of the importance of *suhur* and practicing other *sunnah* worship when fasting in Ramadhan. The following passage is one example of the advice.

“We have to eat *suhur*. Haven’t I told you before that Prophet Muhammad encourage us to eat *suhur*. There is a blessing in *suhur*,” says Queen Saffiya as she continues to persuade.

(Puteri Arabella, pg. 46-47)

The above example clearly shows that the author conveys a useful lesson to the children who are just learning the meaning of fasting. The author presented the benefits and privileges of fasting indirectly to encourage the children to fast. The examples presented in this story give awareness to the children of the need to learn to fast. Teaching children to fast is an important responsibility of the parents that should not be trivialised.

This research found that of the 60 reviewed short stories, only five contains religious thought concerning the relationship of man with God through the practice of fasting, namely *Sebuah Buku Setinggi Harapan* (2012), *Puteri Dian Adelia* (2013), *Puteri Arrabela* (2013), *Puteri Qaira* (2013), dan *Puteri Humaira* (2013).

Through fasting, society, including children, learns to abstain from the negative behaviours discussed in the short stories, including lying and engaging in trivial talk. Another benefit of fasting is the society is trained to be sincere in their performing their worship, which helps to establish a harmonious society and makes the members of the society ‘feel safe,’ which is one of the needs in Maslow’s theory. According to Maslow (1970: 77), the need for safety that children seek at this stage is “... the feeling of safety, stability, independence, protected, freedom from fear and worries, the need for structure, direction, laws, limits, and others.”

In summary, Maslow (1968: 71) defined the need for safety as mental and spiritual safety. Also, the presentation of religious thought concerning fasting shows that there is a need for love for God. Even though the theory of the Hierarchy of Human Needs does not include love for God, the Muslims worship God Almighty. Similarly, the believers of other religions believe in their god.

Hence, religious thinking concerning fasting is one of the human’s need for love and affection for God. Through this need, the love portrayed in

each character is love without a boundary and rights. This is because, in all religions, love is a good deed.

(iii) Patience

The relationship of man with Good is also scrutinised in terms of the man’s patience with his Creator. Patience means submitting to God concerning what happens and will happen in the future. According to Muhammad Al-Ghazali (1994: 56), patience is submitting to God in dealing with an important matter, relying on Him in times of difficulty, steadfast when facing a calamity, and feeling content and peaceful. Tallal Ali Turfe (2013:66) contended that patience is a process of controlling the emotion of anger or when in a tense situation. Many people are not patient when faced with various problems and difficulties. Patience is of critical importance in the life of man in this world. It should be inculcated during childhood. Thus, the effort to nurture patience in the children’s short stories has an impact on training the children to refrain from anything that is of no benefit.

A review of 60 children’s short stories showed that 35 of the short stories inculcate the concept of patience. The dominant concept of patience is concerned with the characters who can accept the decree of God. Patience is closely related to an individual’s faith in his Creator. Humans do not have the ability to reject the decree of God, be it good or bad. As an example, in the short story written by Kamil et al. (2015), *Pesan Emak*, Anis was portrayed as being patient in dealing with the difficulties of life. Anis is an orphan who has the ability to deal with the problems and difficulties she faced in her life. The patience shown by Anis can serve as an example for the children. Anis’ patience is evident in her dealing with her family problems, which is a conflict between her grandmother and father. Anis was able to control her emotion, between her desire for love and her grandmother’s wish to not allow Anis to have a relationship with her father.

Because of her patience, Anis eventually won the love of the two persons she loves, her father and grandmother. The patience shown by Anis is in agreement with the contention made by Maslow (1970:38) that the patience shown in achieving the need for love is an interpersonal effort and involves the feeling of belonging. This need is very profound during childhood because, at this stage, children need someone close to them. This is what Anis went through, and it is apparent in the following passages.

”Mommy said that you must never neglect your prayer. You must be kind to others and always give to charity when you have earned your own income.”

“Mommy said that you must always keep in touch with your father.” Anis looks at her grandmother. “Mommy said that the disagreement is between your father and I. Do not take sides.”

“But ... daddy does not care about me.” Clearly, the child is sullen. Grandma Ana is sure that Anis is hurting. “Anis, did he not visit when your mother passed away?” “Yes, he was here. But he never contacts me since then.” Grandma Ana sighs deeply. “I am sorry, Anis. The truth is, your father called, but I would not let him speak with you.”

(*Pesan Emak*, pg. 33-43)

Researchers have analysed human needs for love from three (3) perspectives, 1) the love for god, 2) the love for other humans, and 3) the love for nature and animals. Concerning the presentation of patience in the reviewed children’s literature published between 2012 and 2015, the researcher noted that the patient perspective is presented under the need for love and man’s love for God.

Patience is a critical element in all multi-ethnic communities. Patience is one of the teachings in Islam, Christianity, Buddhism, and Hinduism. In Islam, patience is required in the effort to solve a problem (Al Baqarah 153). Similarly, for Christians, patience is an effort to achieve an objective (Jacob 5:7). In Buddhism (Dhammapada, couplet 184) and Hinduism

(Sarasamuccaya, sloka 94), patience is related to controlling the emotion of anger to avoid hurting other people. Thus, based on the definition of patience in each religion, someone who is patient will always live with love.

In the context of this research, the patience in religious thought shows that children need self-respect and respect from other people. Children can express their love and affection towards others when this aspect is fulfilled. The analysis showed that the authors of children’s short stories published between 2012 and 2015 succeeded in presenting religious thought from the perspective of patience that satisfies the need for love and affection towards God.

In summary, the authors of children’s short stories published between 2012 and 2015 emphasised the importance of Islamic values that portrays the issues related to truth. The belief in God and obedience to Him produce an intellectually, spiritually, emotionally, and physically balanced individual. This statement is congruent with the Religious Methodology espoused by (Hashim Awang 1997: 122-123). The Religious Methodology is based on faith supported by the Islamic creed as taught in the Quran and Hadith. The formation is based on the objectives of manifesting the Greatness of Allah and enhancing piety towards Him.

There are three related approaches in the theory of Malay Methodology from the religious methodology principle, namely the Preaching Approach, Community Approach, and Arts Approach. In this research, the religious thought from the perspective of man’s relationship with God (praying, fasting, and patience) is related to the preaching approach that can serve as a platform to enhance a person’s piety towards God. The authors of the children’s short story published between 2012 and 2015 presented the issues of God’s nobility and greatness. The inclusion of God’s greatness as The Creator indirectly helps man to know God better and understand the attributes and essence of God. The piety can help man to increase and enhance their love and respect for God.

Therefore, the thought aspect, through praying, fasting, and patience, elucidated through the Malay Methodology presents the goodness, guidelines, lessons, knowledge, and the history of Malay civilisation to the readers. Jumali Hj Selamat (2209:35) discussed the relevance of the Malay Methodology that includes the preaching perspective, which brings good and progress that

can influence a person to be a better Muslim who can choose and be a pious man as required by the teaching of Islam. Table 2 presents the general connection between religious thinking (man’s relationship with God) with the model for children’s needs (the combined theory of Hierarchy of Human Needs and Malay Methodology).

No.	Thought Aspect (The relationship of man with God)	Impact of Children’s Needs	Theory of Hierarchy of Human Needs
1.	Praying	- Harmonious relationship that strengthens the love among family members.	Stage 3 The need for love
2.	Fasting	- Prevent a person from adopting a negative attitude. - Harmonious society and a sense of security.	Stage 3 The need for love
3.	Patience	- Train the children to refrain from engaging in anything non-beneficial	Stage 3 The need for love
THEORY OF MALAY METHODOLOGY – THE PREACHING APPROACH			

Table 2. The relationship of Religious Thought (Man’s Relationship with God) with the Model for Children’s Need

Religious Thought (The Relationship of Man with Man)

Religious thought includes the relationship of man with man presented in the reviewed children’s short stories published between 2012 and 2015 and was manifested through two behaviours, (i) filial piety and (ii) enjoining good.

(i) Filial piety

A review of 60 short stories showed that only 25 short stories discuss filial piety and respecting the elders. The researcher found that 13 short stories discussed how to shows respect towards the parents, and 12 short stories discussed how to respect older people, including grandfather, grandmother, sisters, teachers, brothers, uncles,

aunts, and neighbours. The short stories that discussed mutual respect present the idea through the behaviour of obedient children and the gentle and polite behaviour of children when interacting with older people.

Several reviewed short stories provide examples for obeying the parents. One of them is the character Aqilah in the short story written by Ahmad Fadzilah Muhammad (2012), *Selagi Masih Ada*, who is a very obedient child. Obedience means the willingness to fulfil the wishes of the parents. In this short story, Aqilah never questioned her father’s decision; this is in line with the principle in the theory of human

needs of showing respect and being obedient. Aqilah believed that she must obey the decisions made by her parents and not question the decisions. Some of the examples of her obedience are as follows.

Aqilah's father smiles and says, "Your grandmother is not well. You should accompany her."

Aqilah is silent. She understands her father well. He is firm in making decisions. Once he made a decision, he expects to be obeyed.

(*Selagi Masih Ada*, pg. 5-9)

A short story by Nur Shamsiah On (2014) presented filial piety through a character in *Asam Pedas Tok Wan*, Tihani, is the only child of a family who lived in the city but was asked by her mother to live with her grandmother in the village. Even though Tihani initially refused to go to school in the village, she eventually obeyed her parents. According to Maslow, this showed the good relationship Tihani has with her mother and grandmother. Tihani's attitude towards her mother is an indication of her respect for her mother, and her attitude towards her grandmother showed that she was able to accompany her grandmother, who lived alone in the village. In this sense, Tihani achieved the self-actualisation described in Maslow's theory when she took positive action. This is evident in the following passages.

"I think that this is best for you. You will be sitting for your UPSR next year. You would be able to focus more at the village. You always lose your focus here. You know ... with the Internet, shopping malls, and so many other things."

Tihani does not respond. She knows. There is no point in disagreeing with her parents. Her mother and father would have insisted she obeys them.

"All right," she finally agrees, even if reluctantly.

(*Asam Pedas Tok Wan*, pg. 79)

In fact, the filial piety shown by Tihani was also shown by the character Ai Chia in a short story written by Kamil et al. (2015), *Kek Cawan Online*. Ai Chia is very obedient towards her parents even though they do not always see eye to eye. Ai Chia was respectful and responsible towards her mother. Islam commands its followers to speak gently and never raise their voices with their parents.

Even though Ai Chia is not a Muslim, she is an obedient child and did not use harsh words that may hurt her parents' feelings. She always makes her mother happy by obeying her instructions and requests. The following passages are an example of her filial piety.

Ai Chia looks at her sobbing mother. Why is she crying? She has never seen her father raising his voice to her mother. But, on that night, she witnesses something very hurtful. She does not want her happy home to change. She wants her family life to be a bed of roses.

As soon as she finished drinking her Milo, she goes to her room. Mrs. Goh had asked her to study. She obeys. She does not want to hurt her beloved mother's feelings.

(*Ai Chia Aisyah*, pg. 154)

Parents have an honourable position in the sight of God. The sacrifices of parents, especially the sacrifice of a mother when she is pregnant and giving birth, cannot be measured. Similarly, the father works hard to take care of and provide for his family until the children reach adulthood. The three short stories reviewed by the author reveal that the key children characters showed filial piety. Both Aqilah and Tihani are obedient children who did not go against their parents' wishes. Similarly, despite having a conflict with her mother, Ai Chia still obeyed her mother and did not speak harshly with her mother.

In conclusion, the authors of the reviewed short stories published between 2012 and 2015 presented filial piety as the main principle in their

short stories. The authors presented the role of fathers and mothers in real life who would have wanted their children to obey their advice and teachings. The authors emphasised the importance of obedience, which is often absent from modern society. They concluded their stories with a happy ending for the children when they obey and listen to their parents.

This has a strong influence on the minds of the children reading the short stories because they gain something beneficial when they contribute to ensuring harmony in the family through their relationship with their parents. In the relationship of man with man in the theory of the Hierarchy of Human Needs, obedience and respect for the parents is a form of self-actualisation. The need for self-actualisation is the fourth stage in the theory of the Hierarchy of Human Needs. In this stage, Abraham Maslow presented an idea that is congruent with the values adopted by all nations throughout the world.

According to Maslow (1970: 46), there are two forms of needs for self-actualisation for a man. The first highest need for self-actualisation is related to a person's ability to assess, appreciate, and respect themselves by feeling confident, competent, independent, and free to act. The second need is the need to respect others and when the person feels that other people respect him. This respect is in the form of recognition, status, edification, appreciation, attention, interest, dignity, and power (Maslow 1968: 45).

The researcher believes that obedience and respect for the elders are the second form of self-actualisation. Every normal person wants their presence and actions to be appreciated by others. Appreciation can be shown through kind words, giving presents, recognition, good treatment, good behaviour or conduct, and others. Those who have achieved the second form of self-actualisation feel more confident with their capabilities.

In summary, the obedience and respect for the elders contained in the religious thought, namely the relationship of man with man, has succeeded in satisfying the second form of needs in the self-actualisation stage. The researcher analysed this aspect using the theory of the Hierarchy of Human Needs and found that children need acknowledgment and support from their family members, peers, and the community as they provide the children with the opportunities to practice new behaviours and further develop their social skills in the future. In fact, children can obey and respect their elders when they have achieved self-actualisation.

(ii) Enjoining Good

Enjoining good means calling, guiding, and convincing others to practice the teachings of the religion. Men are supposed to advise one another. Humans need to have a sense of responsibility to advise or remind others to do good deeds, guide them to the straight path, and facilitate the achievement of good. They also have to strive hard to enjoin good and convey good even when they are faced with difficulties and have to make financial sacrifices.

The act of enjoining good is evident in the conversation of Pak Soleh with Imran in the short story written by Anies Hisham (2013), *Fatima Solehah*.

“You must always speak the truth. If something is wrong, say that it is wrong. If someone hated you, there is nothing you can do about it. It is difficult to uphold the religion of Allah,” says Pak Soleh. Imran knows that Pak Soleh is very knowledgeable, and he always has good and firm opinions.

(*Fatima Solehah*, pg. 68-69)

This scene shows that the fulfilment of the psychological needs of children involves the need for love and affection among men. Maslow (1970: 43) asserted that it is human nature to live in a community and to be accepted as a member of the community. The relationship of an individual with other individuals in the community is a social

relationship. This relationship brings forth cultural patterns (Fallatah and Syed 2018: 37). The cultural pattern is the enjoining of good, as shown by the characters of Pak Soleh and Imran.

The act of enjoining good is also shown by the character Marisa in a short story written by Aimi Rahman (2014), *Sombong Membawa Padah*. Marisa is constantly giving advice and reminders to Nabila and some of her classmates to refrain from engaging in negative behaviours that have become their habits, such as showing off, arrogant, and looking down on Mia. One example is in the following passage.

“I seek the forgiveness of Allah Almighty. Nabila, you must remember that everything that we have is from Allah SWT. We cannot be arrogant. It is okay if you do not want to join us. But I want to study with Mia,” Marisa says curtly.

(*Sombong Membawa Padah*, pg. 11)

However, as a child who has been given religious education, and obediently follows the teaching of Islam, and who aspires to portray the image of a Muslim child, Mia and Marisa were willing to forgive and forget the things that were done to them. This willingness represents the willingness to forgive, remind, and counsel one another.

The analysis showed that religious thought, in terms of the relationship of man with man, is manifested in the children obeying their parents and enjoining good. Mustaffa Haji Daud (1995: 29) opined that the value of respecting the elders and enjoining good is a part of a virtuous mindset to establish peace, wellbeing, and harmony, as well as to preserve unity. In fact, all men are encouraged to practice and live the good universal values to foster the spirit of integration in the multicultural society of this country, which treasures peace and harmony. These attitudes show that goodness and benevolence benefit society, especially the children. This statement is congruent with the view of Hashim Awang (2002: 63) that the preaching approach is a platform for

asking all types of questions and the social phenomenon that occurs in the life of man.

The religious thought related to the relationship of man with man is suitable for the preaching approach that sees literature as a platform to increase a person's faith in Allah SWT. The presentation of religious thought (the relationship of man with man) raises several questions that persuade the readers to refrain from engaging in the acts prohibited by Him, desecrating the sanctity of Islam, and do good deeds in their life in this world as a sign of their love for Allah SWT. To the readers, a Muslim, when seen through the preaching and community approach, can do good deeds and uphold justice in the society while increasing their faith and piety. Among the non-Muslims, it can bring out good morals in their worldly life as the characteristics of a community approach that seeks good and justice to ensure a harmonious community life.

The examples for religious thought concerning the relationship of man with man clearly and accurately present admonition as a benefit, practice, and guidance for all individuals (recipient) in real life. For example, when presenting thought in terms of love and enjoining good, the effect is in the character of the children who regretted their actions and tried not to repeat the mistake. If they did, they would face even more dire consequences such as calamity and insecurity. Thus, the preaching and community approach can serve as social control for the readers in that they persuade the readers to be honourable in their lives.

Also, the religious thought concerning the relationship of man with man serves to prevent wrongdoings as well as uphold good and justice in an Islamic based community. This is in line with the preaching and community approach in the theory of Malay Methodology. According to Hashim Awang (1997: 123), in the preaching and community approach, literature serves as a tool for revealing all types of questions that seek to

bring out good and justice in society as required by Islam. In this context, literature serves as a norm to clearly, truthfully, and openly expose the wrongdoings, injustices, fraud, pretense, bribery, as well as the problems that are seen as the causes for a sick society and the faith of man. The societal problem in this context is viewed from the Islamic perspective, which is to establish the wellbeing of society and enhance faith and piety. Based on this, literature research should focus on the primary issues and themes of the problem; the research should also focus on the author’s background to determine the extent to which their attitude and world view influence the thoughts they present in the short stories regarding the welfare of society.

Nevertheless, the religious thought presented in the reviewed children’s short stories in terms of the relationship of man with man raised the questions that serve as a social control contained in the virtues that should be emulated and applied by the readers in their life. These values also serve as social control that preserves and protects cultural integrity. They also foster the values and ethics in social communication that focuses on the socialisation process related to the norms and code of conduct such as enjoining good, giving charity, mutual respect, mutual help, and various positive values that must be practiced in the community life. This statement is congruent with that made by Mohd. Rashid Md Idris (2012: 6), that, in the social context, those values are entrenched in the

Malay community and shape their identity in their interaction and social life.

In summary, the authors of the children’s short stories published between 2012 and 2015 conveyed various messages that serve a social function in the reader community. According to Soerjono Soekanto (1982: 20), social interaction is a dynamic social interaction between individuals, between groups of people, and between an individual with a group of people. Social interaction is also a general form of social process. In community life, social interaction takes place in the form of cooperation, competition, and conflict.

In conclusion, the need for love and affection among people, through the religious thought (the relationship of man with man), such as filial piety and enjoining good, makes man dependent on one another because they are willing to give and take out of their love and affection for one another. Those who love one another would feel guilty if the people they love made a mistake or stray from doing good deeds. Thus, it is the primary responsibility of everyone, children in general, to fulfil the need for love and affection among man by reminding and advising one another to do good deeds. Table 3 presents the general relationship between religious thought (the relationship of man with man) with the model for children’s needs through the combined Maslow’s theory and the theory of Malay Methodology.

No.	Thought Aspect (The relationship between man and God)	Impact of Children’s Needs	Theory of the Hierarchy of Human Needs
1.	Obey the elders (filial piety)	- Able to accept decisions - Able to mind their conduct and carry out their responsibility as a child.	Stage 4 The need for self-actualisation.
2.	Enjoining good	- Thankful for their life - Refrain from negative behaviour, such as arrogance, haughtiness,	Stage 4 The need for self-actualisation.

	condescending, and others	
THEORY OF MALAY METHODOLOGY – THE PREACHING AND COMMUNITY APPROACH		

Table 3. The Relationship of Religious Thought (Relationship of Man with Man) with the Model for Children's Needs

CONCLUSION

A review of selected six groups of children's short stories published between 2012 and 2015 showed that the stories discussed the conflicts that children go through. The characters and themes in each story present the religious thought in the selected short stories and serve as a useful example for present-day readers. This is useful in developing the children's spiritual life based on the particular situations, conditions, and character of the children through the use of the model for children's needs (the combined Maslow's theory and the theory of Malay Methodology).

The researcher noted that the religious thought in the reviewed short stories was concerned with the relationship of man with God and the relationship of man with man. The relationship of man with God was described through the practice of praying, fasting, and patience; the discussion on the relationship of man with man was in terms of filial piety and enjoining good. The authors included religious thought in the reviewed short stories to impart a positive influence on the children even though there was no emphasis on the concept of children's literature and child psychology.

This research found that the religious thoughts in the children's short stories published between 2012 and 2015 that are presented from the perspective of the relationship of man with God and the relationship of man with man have a positive influence on the children's behaviour and thinking. The result of the analysis performed using the children's needs model (a combination of the theories proposed by Maslow and Hashim

Awang) can satisfy the psychological needs of children.

Most of the religious thoughts in the reviewed short stories are concerned with the relationship of man with man. The religious thought concerning the relationship of man with God and the relationship of man with man was not presented comprehensively. Despite this, it is still a suitable approach for exposing the children to religious thought. For example, the religious thought concerning the relationship of man with God, such as praying, fasting, and patience, was elaborated in several of the reviewed short stories published by the companies that adopt religious themes, such as Ana Muslim and PTS Sdn Bhd. Most aspects of the religious thought in the reviewed children's short stories were presented through the teaching (didactic) element.

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