

## The Understanding of Love Amongst the Muslim Youth in Malaysia

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**Abstract:** Love is the feelings of the soul, the vibration of the heart, the instinct which has existed within oneself, especially youth. If these feelings of love are built upon the understanding in adherence to Islam then the self will prosper or otherwise the lives will turn into shambles. In relation to this, this study is conducted to measure the understanding of love among the Muslim youth. Total of 641 respondents (N = 641) comprising of the Muslim youth in Malaysia had taken part in this study. The questionnaires that were distributed are divided into two parts, namely the demographic section and the section which asks questions on the understanding of the concept of love according to Islam. The instrument used was evaluated by the experts before it was given out to the respondents. The level of value of the Cronbach alpha obtained was high (>0.8). The study data were analysed descriptively by looking at the mean, percentage and the standard deviation. The findings show that the Malaysian Muslim youth have high level of understanding on every dimension of love according to Islam.

**Key words:** Understanding, concept of love, Muslim youth, Cronbach alpha, Islam

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### INTRODUCTION

The younger people today only see love as the epitome of the romantic relationship between a man and a woman. The confusion and shallow-mindedness in understanding the whole concept of love are not only something that the youth have to face but also by most of the Muslim communities. Only few have come to understand the concept of love in Islam in a comprehensive way (Syaidatun, 2004; Salamatusaadah and Abdul Kadir, 2009). Therefore, studies done in Malaysia have found that the confusion or lack of understanding about the concept of love has led to the fact that a lot of young Malaysians are caught in social ills that stem from love (Johari *et al.*, 2009; Syaidatun, 2004). The issue of conceiving outside of the wedlock always seems to be linked with the young people who get pregnant outside of the wedlock resulted from their romantic relationships (Jaafar, 2003).

In line with this, most young couples who were involved in sexual relationships before marriage have the misconceptions on the notion of love. As a result, they are involved with cases of baby abandonment in the drains, rivers, mosques and dumping sites. In some cases, they are even willing to kill their babies due to their overbearing sadness towards their irresponsible lovers (Johari *et al.*, 2009). Their poor understanding of

the actual meaning of love (Salamatusaadah and Abdul Kadir, 2009) reveals that most of the youngsters investigated express their desire and love-seeking nature from their partners. They have placed a lot of confidence and the desire to love and be loved and these lead them to consummate their relationship. According to Maslow (1970), the need for love and the feeling of belongingness are both propelled by the need to be loved, admired and needed. Rubiah (2001) states that when they are in love, they are not able to handle a healthy friendship among them and instead become too obsessive or too much influenced by their friends or loved ones so much so that their relationship has gone beyond the boundaries allowed for them. The repercussion from this is what brings them towards committing negative endeavours and into the pithole of multifarious conflicts of morale which have been increasingly becoming commonplace in the society.

A very advanced development process that has taken place in Malaysia, welcome a lot of unhealthy Western values and culture that permeates into the community, especially among teens (Hushim *et al.*, 2006). Consistent with Hashim *et al.* (2008), they discover that moral decline among us Malaysians reaches an alarming rate and subsequently can impede the country's excellence. Baby abandonment is the most obvious proof that Malaysians are hit by a severe wave

of moral decline. Therefore, it is very important for the young people to have the right level or measure of understanding that can prevent them from committing activities which challenges those preached by the religion.

**MATERIALS AND METHODS**

The data obtained were processed using the Social Science Statistical Package of SPSS 20 and come in the form of descriptive statistics. Alias (1997) explains that descriptive statistics are used to elaborate on the information concerning the study sample. The elaboration is confined to the sample involved and not employed to derive any conclusion or make overall generalization to the population investigated. The mean serves as the average score for a set of data that takes into consideration all scores in the data set and serves as the accurate value that representing the data set (Steinberg, 2008). While the variants and the Standard Deviations (SD) make use of the overall score in the set that is in the measurement of distribution (Kieess, 2002). The descriptive statistics concerns with data compiling, conclusion-making and the act of delivering the conclusion in a way that is easy to understand by the target group.

The survey instrument had been of choice as a tool for gathering data on people’s understanding towards the notion of love the Islamic way. Respondents were asked to provide some answers on the form of understanding on the concept of love whereby the item scores are based on the Likert Scale from 1-5. The scale of 1 denotes strongly disagree, 2 means disagree, 3 means uncertain, 4 means agree and 5 signifies that people are strongly agree with the item.

This study uses the survey distributed to the respondents according the established objective, namely to identify the understanding that people (or especially the Muslim youth) have over the idea of love in Islam. Data were analysed using SPSS Version 20 (Table 1).

Table 1: Cronbach alpha’s coefficient of reliability

Instruments	Item No.	Reliability coefficient
Dimension of love of Allah SWT	4	0.779
Dimension of love of the Prophet Muhammed SWT	6	0.824
Dimension of love of oneself	5	0.797
Dimension of love of parents	5	0.788
Dimension of love of creatures	7	0.716
Dimension of love of knowledge	5	0.809
Dimension of love of goodwill	5	0.879

**RESULTS**

To be specific, this study only focuses on the understanding of the Muslim youth towards the concept of love according to Islam. Every item is subject to the Likert Scale ranging from 1-5. With this, the classification level dictates that the minimum scale of 1 is minused from the maximum scale and divided with the number of class as expressed:

$$\text{Classification level} = \frac{\text{Maximum scale} - \text{Minimum scale}}{\text{Number of interpretation}}$$

$$\text{Classification level} = \frac{5-1}{3}$$

$$\text{Classification level} = \frac{4}{3}$$

$$\text{Classification level} = 1.33$$

As the result, the classification determined for this study is as such: Table 2 and 3 illustrates the score of the understanding the students of higher learning institutions in Malaysia on the dimension of love according to Islam. All seven love dimensions are shown to have high scores followed by the dimension of love of Allah SWT (mean = 4.75, SD = 0.384), dimension of love of our Prophet Muhammed SAW (mean = 4.85, SD = 0.323), dimension of love of oneself (mean = 4.47, SD = 0.517), dimension of love of parents (mean = 4.71, SD = 0.407), dimension of love of creatures (mean = 4.66, SD = 0.384), dimension of love of knowledge (mean = 4.73, SD = 0.392) and dimension of love of acts of goodwill (mean = 4.72, SD = 0.420). This goes to show that the students’ understanding of the concept of love has been very impressive. Thus, this study shows that students’ understanding and knowledge on this concept are at satisfactory level. These data were analysed descriptively and by each dimension.

Table 2: The Interpretation of the concept of love according to Islam

Interpretation level	Range of level
Low	1.00-2.33
Moderate	2.34-3.67
High	3.68-5.00

Table 3: The mean score of the students’ understanding of the concept of love according to Islam

Instruments	Mean	SD	Interpretation
Dimension of love of Allah SWT	4.75	0.384	High
Dimension of love of the Prophet Muhammed SWT	4.85	0.323	High
Dimension of love of oneself	4.47	0.517	High
Dimension of love of parents	4.71	0.407	High
Dimension of love of creatures	4.66	0.384	High
Dimension of love of knowledge	4.73	0.392	High
Dimension of love of goodwill	4.72	0.420	High

N = 641

Table 4: Dimension of love of Allah SWT

Item code	Sub-category	Frequency and percentage (N = 641)					Mean	SD	Level
		STS	TS	TP	S	SS			
C1_1	Allah will love those who love Him	1 (0.20%)	4 (0.60%)	10 (1.60%)	57 (8.90%)	569 (88.80%)	4.85	0.460	T
C1_2	Those loved by Allah will be taken care of by Him	-	2 (0.30%)	7 (1.10%)	5 (18.00%)	581 (90.60%)	4.89	0.373	T
C1_3	Those who have faith are really in love with God	1 (0.20%)	-	9 (1.40%)	68 (10.60%)	563 (87.80%)	4.86	0.410	T
C1_4	Allah loves people who surrender after they with determination, work for it	-	-	9 (1.40%)	97 (15.10%)	535 (83.50%)	4.82	0.419	T
Overall							4.85	0.323	T

Table 5: Dimension of love of our Prophet Muhammad SAW

Item code	Sub-category	Frequency and percentage (N = 641)					Mean	SD	Level
		STS	TS	TP	S	SS			
C2_1	The love for Rasulallah gives blessings to the whole universe	1 (0.20%)	2 (0.30%)	20 (3.10%)	118 (18.40%)	500 (78.00%)	4.74	0.542	T
C2_2	The love for Rasulallah overcomes the feeling of love to all other humans	-	6 (0.90%)	47 (7.30%)	157 (24.50%)	431 (67.20%)	4.58	0.669	T
C2_3	The love for Rasulallah will eventually lead to the love for Allah	-	-	13 (2.00%)	107 (16.70%)	521 (81.30%)	4.79	0.453	T
C2_4	Rasulallah loves his people until the final day	-	1 (0.20%)	8 (1.20%)	54 (8.40%)	578 (90.20%)	4.89	0.368	T
C2_5	Rasulallah is really concerned with the safety of his people	-	1 (0.20%)	9 (1.40%)	54 (8.40%)	577 (90.00%)	4.88	0.375	T
C2_6	Love of Rasulallah is the prerequisite for the flawlessness of faith	3 (0.50%)	3 (0.50%)	41 (6.40%)	128 (20.00%)	466 (72.70%)	4.64	0.666	T
Overall							4.75	0.384	T

Table 6: Dimension of love of oneself

Item code	Sub-category	Frequency and percentage (N = 641)					Mean	SD	Level
		STS	TS	TP	S	SS			
C3_1	People who love themselves will perform obediently the Sunnah of Rasulallah	-	5 (0.80%)	57 (8.90%)	239 (37.30%)	340 (53.00%)	4.43	0.685	T
C3_2	People who love themselves will succumb to other people	9 (1.40%)	15 (2.30%)	64 (10.00%)	240 (37.40%)	313 (48.80%)	4.30	0.848	T
C3_3	People who love themselves will work hard to become individuals with strong physicality	3 (0.50%)	6 (0.90%)	61 (9.50%)	245 (38.20%)	326 (50.90%)	4.38	0.734	T
C3_4	People who love themselves will often evaluate themselves to make self-improvement	2 (0.30%)	2 (0.30%)	23 (3.60%)	180 (28.10%)	434 (67.70%)	4.63	0.602	T
C3_5	People who love themselves will prepare themselves to face the Judgement Day	-	2 (0.30%)	26 (4.10%)	176 (27.50%)	437 (68.20%)	4.63	0.576	T
Overall							4.47	0.517	T

T = High, S = Moderate, R = Low

**The dimension of love of Allah SWT:** Table 4 shows four items with high mean scores namely C1\_1 (mean = 4.85, SD = 0.460), C1\_2 (mean = 4.89, SD = 0.373), C1\_3 (mean = 4.86, SD = 0.410), C1\_4 (mean = 4.82, SD = 0.419). Therefore, all four items for the dimension of love of Allah is at high level, suggesting that students do have a certain level of understanding and knowledge on love, in adherence to Islam whereby this special kind of love is put above others. The way to obtain this feeling of love is through doing what we are asked to do in Shari'a and leaving behind what we are prohibited to do.

**Dimension of love of our Prophet Muhammad SAW:** Table 5 highlights that the six items also have high mean scores, namely C2\_1 (mean = 4.74, SD = 0.542), C2\_2

(mean = 4.58, SD = 0.669), C2\_3 (mean = 4.79, SD = 0.453), C2\_4 (mean = 4.89, SD = 0.368), C2\_5 (mean = 4.88, SD = 0.375), C2\_6 (mean = 4.64, SD = 0.666) and they are also found to be at high level of understanding. With this, this study outcome has unraveled the fact that students grasp the idea that towards reaching the love for Allah, an avenue for this is to materialize the love of His Apostle, Rasulallah SAW. The way to show one's love of Allah is by adhering to what is delivered by His Apostle and not doing what is forbidden through the Messages conveyed by Allah to His Apostle, Rasulallah SAW.

**Dimension of love of oneself:** Table 6 shows that all five items carry equally high mean scores-C3\_1 (mean = 4.43, SD = 0.685), C3\_2 (mean = 4.30, SD = 0.848), C3\_3

Table 7: Dimension of love of parents

Item code	Sub-category	Frequency and percentage (N = 641)					Mean	SD	Level
		STS	TS	TP	S	SS			
C4_1	Sacrificing for parents is an epitome of loving them	1 (0.20%)	4 (0.60%)	11 (1.70%)	142 (22.20%)	483 (75.40%)	4.72	0.541	T
C4_2	The love of a child to their parents is manifested through their loyalty	-	2 (0.30%)	8 (1.20%)	118 (18.40%)	513 (80.00%)	4.78	0.463	T
C4_3	The love of parents towards their children has made them appreciative of all the things they do	1 (0.20%)	4 (0.60%)	21 (3.30%)	130 (20.30%)	485 (75.7%)	4.71	0.574	T
C4_4	Love for parents will give blessings in life	-	-	7 (1.10%)	79 (12.30%)	555 (86.60%)	4.85	0.382	T
C4_5	Being kind to the friends of the parents is one form of deeds that can be committed to the parents	2 (0.30%)	7 (1.10%)	62 (9.70%)	160 (25.00%)	410 (64.00%)	4.51	0.74	T
Overall							4.71	0.407	T

Table 8: Dimension of love of creatures

Item code	Sub-category	Frequency and percentage (N = 641)					Mean	SD	Level
		STS	TS	TP	S	SS			
C5_1	Doing good deeds to the partners (husband or wife) is one proof of love of Allah	-	2 (0.30%)	60 (9.40%)	205 (32.00%)	374 (58.30%)	4.48	0.676	T
C5_2	Love of creatures cannot overcome the love of Allah and the Apostle	6 (0.90%)	5 (0.80%)	20 (3.10%)	91 (14.20%)	519 (81.00%)	4.73	0.646	T
C5_3	The love between the husband and wife is not only to fulfill sexual needs	8 (1.20%)	8 (1.20%)	24 (3.70%)	94 (14.70%)	507 (79.10%)	4.69	0.717	T
C5_4	Love is a gift	-	-	12 (1.90%)	100 (15.60%)	529 (82.50%)	4.81	0.44	T
C5_5	There should be justice in love	-	3 (0.50%)	19 (3.00%)	99 (15.40%)	520 (81.10%)	4.77	0.513	T
C5_6	Love between the husband and wife necessitates good communication	-	2 (0.30%)	4 (0.60%)	109 (17.00%)	526 (82.10%)	4.81	0.432	T
C5_7	Love between the husband and wife seeks to sustain the generation	9 (1.40%)	17 (2.70%)	66 (10.30%)	204 (31.80%)	345 (53.80%)	4.34	0.871	T
Overall							4.66	0.384	T

T = High, S = Moderate, R = Low

(mean = 4.38, SD = 0.734), C3\_4 (mean = 4.63, SD = 0.602), C3\_5 (mean = 4.63, SD = 0.576). These high mean scores show that students claimed that they love themselves with close adherence to the Shari'a of Islam. By following the dos' and donts' dictated by Allah SWT, in order for us to take care of ourselves in this world and the next, ridding ourselves from the tortures in Hell in the afterworld, this is what the students believe as a sign that they do love themselves in accordance with Islam.

**Dimension of love of parents:** Table 7 shows that the five items have high mean scores-C4\_1 (mean = 4.72, SD = 0.541), C4\_2 (mean = 4.78, SD = 0.463), C4\_3 (mean = 4.71, SD = 0.574), C4\_4 (mean = 4.85, SD = 0.382), C4\_5 (mean = 4.51, SD = 0.740). This particular dimension with six items are at high level, showing that the students' understanding on the concept of love for their parents is extremely good where they know how to prove their love to their parents (being loyal and obedient to what their parents want them to do or not do as long as they do not conflict with the Shari'a of Islam).

**Dimension of love of creatures:** Table 8 shows seven items with high mean score which is C5\_1 (mean = 4.48, SD = 0.676), C5\_2 (mean = 4.73, SD = 0.646), C5\_3 (mean = 4.69, SD = 0.717), C5\_4 (mean =

4.81, SD = 0.440), C5\_5 (mean = 4.77, SD = 0.513), C5\_6 (mean = 4.81, SD = 0.432), C5\_7 (mean = 4.34, SD = 0.871). These findings highlight that the dimension of love of creatures is at a high level. This portrays that the Muslim youth are really aware and understand clearly the notion of love following Islam and this indicates how important it is to know and understand this, towards taking care of the husband-wife relationship, in the sustainability of their generation.

**The dimension of love of knowledge:** Table 9 illustrates 5 items with high mean scores which are C6\_1 (mean = 4.53, SD = 0.680), C6\_2 (mean = 4.89, SD = 0.333), C6\_3 (mean = 4.81, SD = 0.446), C6\_4 (mean = 4.78, SD = 0.479), C6\_5 (mean = 4.67, SD = 0.598). The understanding of Muslim youth towards the dimension of love for knowledge stays at a high level which suggests that the respondents are aware of the importance of seeking for knowledge and whereby the need for knowledge serves as a shield as we make the life decisions. The advantage of seeking for knowledge also functions as the motivating factor to the respondents, as to ignite their spirit in seeking for knowledge and delivering it to others.

**The dimension of love of goodwill:** Table 10 highlights 5 items with high mean scores-C7\_1 (mean = 4.67,

Table 9: The dimension of love of knowledge

Item code	Sub-category	Frequency and percentage (N = 641)					Mean	SD	Level
		STS	TS	TP	S	SS			
C6_1	Knowledge-seekers are prayed for forgiveness by Allah's creatures	1 (0.20%)	1 (0.20%)	59 (9.20%)	178 (27.80%)	402 (62.70%)	4.53	0.68	T
C6_2	Muslims are encouraged to seek knowledge	-	-	4 (0.60%)	63 (9.80%)	574 (89.50%)	4.89	0.333	T
C6_3	Allah gives the highest rank to those who seek knowledge	-	-	15 (2.30%)	90 (14.00%)	536 (83.60%)	4.81	0.446	T
C6_4	Those who love knowledge will share his knowledge with others	-	1 (0.20%)	16 (2.50%)	104 (16.20%)	520 (81.10%)	4.78	0.479	T
C6_5	People who teach his knowledge to others will be prayed by creatures of both worlds	-	-	44 (6.90%)	122 (19.00%)	475 (74.10%)	4.67	0.598	T
Overall							4.73	0.392	T

Table 10: Dimension of love of goodwill

Item code	Sub-category	Frequency and percentage (N = 641)					Mean	SD	Level
		STS	TS	TP	S	SS			
C7_1	Positive-thinkers are often high-spirited to perform goodwill	-	3 (0.50%)	13 (2.00%)	174 (27.10%)	451 (70.40%)	4.67	0.537	T
C7_2	Allah loves people who do good deeds	-	-	13 (2.00%)	105 (16.40%)	523 (81.60%)	4.80	0.451	T
C7_3	People of good morale are included in individuals who love and are loved	-	1 (0.20%)	32 (5.00%)	156 (24.30%)	452 (70.50%)	4.65	0.580	T
C7_4	One good deed will lead to more good deeds	-	1 (0.20%)	12 (1.90%)	149 (23.20%)	479 (74.70%)	4.73	0.496	T
C7_5	Allah loves people who are determined to do something	-	-	17 (2.70%)	121 (18.90%)	503 (78.50%)	4.76	0.487	T
Overall							4.72	0.420	T

T = High, S = Moderate, R = Low

SD = 0.537), C7\_2 (mean = 4.80, SD = 0.451), C7\_3 (mean = 4.65, SD = 0.580), C7\_4 (mean = 4.73, SD = 0.496), C7\_5 (mean = 4.76, SD = 0.487). The five items for the dimension of love of goodwill are also at high level. From this, the outcome of the study shows that the understanding and knowledge of the youth in terms of the love for acts of goodwill have moved them to perform acts of kindness in achieving divine love.

### DISCUSSION

The study outcome finds out that the level of understanding of the Muslim youth towards the concept of love according to Islam is high. This is evident when the study findings show that all dimensions of love in accordance with Islam remain at high level of interpretation, namely the dimension of love to Allah (mean = 4.85, SD = 0.323), the dimension of love to the Apostle (mean = 4.75, SD = 0.384), the dimension of love to oneself (mean = 4.47, SD = 0.517), the dimension of love to parents (mean = 4.71, SD = 0.407), the dimension of love of creatures (mean = 4.66, SD = 0.384), the dimension of love of knowledge (mean = 4.73, SD = 0.392) and the dimension of love of goodwill (mean = 4.72, SD = 0.420). In a study by Tamuri and Razak (2011), they point out that the social ills can be explained by the misunderstanding, the lack of understanding, ignorance and arrogance amongst people towards the order of God

and His Apostle, Muhammad SAW. Apart from these, the surrounding factors also give contributions to the moral decline. This study outcome demonstrates that there is high level of understanding in the youth, concerning the concept of love within the scope of Islamic teachings. This is going against the direction steered by the researcher in terms of the study problems whereby the the issues raised relate with the moral decline amongst students and which in turn is connected to their lack of understanding towards Islamic concept of love. If such an understanding follows closely the statement of Sternberg (1988), the understanding of the concept of love comprises of three elements-intimacy, passion dan commitment. Passion (lust) embodies the feelings of romance constituted into physical and sexual appeal between partners. An example for physical appeal can be seen in the men choosing sexy women and the women going for well-built, good-looking and strong men. This is when the problems emerge as the understanding of youth on the idea of love is very much conflicted with the idea of love as demanded by Islam. This study shows that the real problem does not begin from their lack of understanding on what constitutes the actual notion of love.

The actual issue really stems from the fact that the actions committed are not in adherence to the knowledge learned. The knowledge they gain has not been uphold as principles that can guide them through life. The outcome

of a study written by Baharom *et al.* (2008) reveals that the students' level of understanding is high as far as Islamic education and moral education are concerned but remains moderate when it comes to the implementation or practising the knowledge in their daily lives. Hence, at this point the theoretical knowledge is insufficient to make a person become the best person that he or she can be. According to Imam Fakhrurazi (Salehudin and Mustari (2012), we need to make sure that wisdom does not escape from two concepts theory and practice. This is due to the fact that human wisdom is identified only by two things-getting to know what is the truth and have faith in it and secondly, knowing the truth and praying. The first aspect is based on the aspects of appropriate knowledge while the second aspect is based upon its implementation. Based on the Quran, from the verse of As-Saf, 2-3. Allah dictates:

O you who have believed! Why do you say what you not do? Great is hatred in the sight of Allah that you say what you not do

Hushim *et al.* (2006) in his study advises that we are not supposed to be comfortable with the idea that students who excel academically are also excellent in their character and morale. It is also worth pointing out that teenagers in this era become mature ahead of their time caused by various external pressures. Understanding and implementation are expressible as they are both rooted from the mind. Meanwhile, appreciation is expressed from Spiritual practices which are rooted from the heart. Najati (1993) contends that the decline of moral values in a society is not only threatening to the individual's sense of mentality but Malek (1998) adds that morale is also the actual reason for societal destruction as it can break every vein in the society.

### CONCLUSION

The study findings show that the level of understanding of the Muslim youth towards the concept of love according to Islam is at high level. Therefore, this study shows that the theoretical knowledge alone is insufficient to form one's personality. As a result, as knowledge is deemed insufficient, practical aspects and behaviour should also be emphasized.

In relation to this, similar studies need to be prolonged and improved whereby aspects like attitude and practice that lead to such misbehavior should be given equal focus. Therefore, it may not be enough to look into the aspect of understanding alone but the practical aspect should also be examined. It is anticipated that further studies can be done in the direction of

knowing the real reason behind the emerging issues and seeking to find a way out to curb social ills that are becoming widespread in the current Malaysian community. This is because the emerging issues among the youth today do not just give effect to the society but also able to stunt the development of the country.

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