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SOCIAL CAPITAL AMONG KELANTAN PERANAKAN CHINESE MUSLIMS IN MALAYSIA

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ABSTRACT

Background and Purpose: Typically, Chinese Muslims have relationship conflicts with their non-Muslim family (bonding social capital) and Malay community (bridging social capital) after converting to Islam. The conflict will affect their social capital**.** The main aim of this study was to identify the bonding and bridging social capitals among the Kelantan Peranakan Chinese Muslim community in Kelantan, Malaysia, in the aspects of trust, reciprocity, and cohesion.

Methodology: This descriptive study was conducted utilising the sequential explanatory mixed method approaches involving Chinese Muslims in the Kelantan state. Seventy-five respondents participated in the quantitative study, and five were involved in the qualitative study. The methods used for sampling were purposive sampling and snowball sampling. The quantitative data were collected through a survey questionnaire, while the qualitative data were gathered through semi-structured interviews.

Findings: The findings revealed that the reciprocal and cohesive elements mostly occurred when bridging social capital only. As for the trust aspect, the respondents indicated that they only believe in bonding and bridging social capital occasionally. It was also found that relationship conflict existed among Chinese Muslims after conversion with their family members who are not converted to Islam and also with the Malay community.

Contributions: This study contributes significantly to the body of knowledge due to the lack of recent publications that explain the relationship in the social capital aspect, which is an essential aspect of changing the community to achieve community development.

Keywords: Social capital, bonding social capital, bridging social capital, religious conversion, Chinese Muslim.

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

The Malaysian citizens are comprised of three main ethnic groups, namely the Malay, Chinese, and Indian, which were formed long ago. A specific religion, such as the Malay as Muslims, the Chinese as Buddhists, and the Indian as Hindus, demarcates each ethnicity. As for the Chinese ethnic, religious conversion to Islam has given rise to an awkward situation in the community, and they also have formed another new community who are in between the Malay ethnic and their original ethnicity.

Awkwardness in society arises due to ethnicity and religious issues. The Chinese ethnic does not have ethnic liquidity to be regarded as part of the Malay ethnic group, which is the majority in Malaysia (Nagata, 1978). It differs from other Muslim ethnicities, such as Indian and Arab ethnic groups, who are more likely to be considered as part of Malays and share the same religion (Pei-Chien, 2015). This difficulty is always linked to the history of tensions and conflicts between the Chinese and Malay ethnic groups, as happened before. Among the major conflicts between the Chinese and Malay ethnicities was the 13th May Event in 1969, which was caused by economic imbalance (Lim, 2003) and other riot series (Shamsul Amri, 2011).

The history has left a huge impact on the Chinese community who want to embrace Islam, which is more synonymous with Malays. Other than that, segregation and polarisation are still happening between the Chinese and Malay ethnicities due to various factors, such as economy, politics, and society (Mohd Azhar et al., 2013). This reality has created various psycho-social factors, such as prejudice, discrimination, and stereotypes among races, especially between Chinese and Malay groups, and it also has led to misconceptions towards the Islamic religion (Noraini, 2009).

However, Chinese Muslim converts have two identities: Pure Chinese and Peranakan Chinese (Straits-born Chinese). Pure Chinese refers to the Chinese who migrated to Malaysia, some of whom were brought in during the British colonial (Teo, 2005). Chinese Peranakan refers to an old-established and stable local Chinese community with a culture distinct from recent immigrants or their local-born offspring. Meanwhile, Zinitulniza (2016) describes Chinese Peranakan as a subset of Chinese ethnic of local and non-local descent who practice their native culture with local culture (Zinitulniza, 2016).

This article focuses on one of the Chinese Muslims from Peranakan Chinese, Kelantan Peranakan Chinese (KPC). The KPC community is one of the minority Chinese communities in Malaysia. KPC showed a high level of assimilation with the heritage and culture of Kelantan's Malay, who are Muslims (Teo, 2005). This makes KPC a unique and distinctive community in terms of language, lifestyle, culture, and religion (Mohd Shahrul Imran Lim, 2014). Therefore, KPC interacts closely with the Malay community in Kelantan, and their socialisation gains an understanding and respect between KPC and the Malay community. For this reason, the relationship of KPC Chinese Muslims with the Malay community was not affected due to the relationship before they converted to Islam. However, after conversion and becoming Chinese Muslim, their relationship with non-Muslim families and the Malay community is unknown.

In the context of community development, relationships have become an important matter to be focused on. Relationships in community development are known as social capital because they are considered capital or assets that can potentially develop a certain community. Through social capital, community members can be assured that they can cooperate to be further developed, strengthen and sustain their relationships effectively, solve problems, and work together towards achieving their aim collectively (Putnam, 1995; Woolcock, 2001; Phillips & Pittman, 2009). Thus, this article aims to identify bonding and bridging social capitals among the Kelantan Peranakan Chinese Muslim community in Kelantan, Malaysia, regarding trust, reciprocity, and cohesion.

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

Religious conversion and the formation of the Chinese Muslim community have led to relationship conflicts among the Chinese Islamic converts. This is because they are always being viewed negatively, being shunned by family and the Chinese community; while being disregarded as becoming Malays, they are also not welcomed by the Malay community due to the suspected motive of embracing Islam (Nagata, 1978; Amran, 1985; Osman, 2001;

Nuraisyah Chua, 2005; Mohd Syukri Yeoh & Osman, 2004; Zainab & Wan Ibrahim, 2009). Due to this reality, it is generally observed that Chinese Muslims face conflicts with their family members who are not converted to Islam and with the Malay community. This reality showed that Chinese Muslims have problems in the aspect of their social capital.

Social capital can be identified through certain elements, such as interdependency, mutual sharing, sharing values and norms, beliefs, closeness, feelings, and social participation (Cuthill & Fien, 2005; Kay, 2006; Boyd et al., 2008; Dale & Sparkes, 2008; Qingwen, Perkins, & Chun, 2010). However, according to Kay (2006), the main element measuring social capital is closeness to indicate whether the social capital of a certain community is strong or otherwise. This is also emphasised by Amir Zal (2016), who stated that closeness is an important element in social capital, which manifests the feelings of belonging, affection, and willingness to sacrifice something for the benefit of others. Nevertheless, the elements can be summarised as trust, reciprocity, and cohesion (Putnam, 1993).

Trust enables people in a society to achieve their goals more successfully. According to Wojciechowska (2020), trust is a factor that generates social capital and is vital for the growth of social groupings. Meanwhile, trust, referred to as relational glue, facilitates or constrains formal and informal social contacts, knowledge sharing, and creative processes (King et al., 2019). Next, reciprocity refers to a two-way relationship in which a favour done to a friend is followed by an expectation and a moral obligation to return the favour at some point (Tuominen & Haanpää, 2021). In other words, reciprocity is defined as assisting someone without expecting anything in return and knowing that support will always be available when needed (Putnam, 2000). Cohesion explains togetherness, tolerance and harmonious coexistence (Zihnioğlu & Dalkıran, 2022).

Social capital can be divided into three types of networks: bonding social capital, bridging social capital, and networking social capital (Woolcock, 2002; Szreter & Woolcock, 2004). Bonding social capital refers to the relationship between individuals in a homogenous community, such as close friends, family, social groups, neighbours, and ethnic (Putnam, 2000; Vyncke et al., 2012). Meanwhile, bridging social capital is a heterogeneous relationship because the relationship occurs among community members who are different by community group, culture, and socio-economic background (Szreter & Woolcock, 2004). As for networking, social capital is the relationship between institution the institution and the authorities (Szreter & Woolcock, 2004).

Every social capital has its certain roles. For example, bonding social capital plays a role in positioning individuals in the community by creating a common identity, developing

local reciprocity, increasing closeness, and providing social support, crisis aid, and emotional support (Gittel & Vidal, 1998). Meanwhile, the main role of bridging social capital is to obtain something of importance from the community outside (Michelini, 2013). Relationships with a weak bond but with strong solidarity can give a lot of benefits to the community. As for networking, social capital is a vertical relationship between the community and other authoritative groups. According to Amir Zal (2014), the term 'vertical' is a recognition of social strata which has unknowingly existed. The role of this social capital certainly involves the existing resources or forces of certain parties (Woolcock & Narayan, 2000). Furthermore, its characteristic is to support the community from being suppressed and exploited (Middelton, Murie, & Groves, 2005).

Regarding conflicts in bonding social capital, it can be observed that there is also a misconception of the family towards the intention to embrace Islam, whereby the Chinese Muslim community is regarded to have betrayed their origin, ancestry, culture, heritage, and religion of their ancestors, at the same time being disregarded as becoming Malay (Marlon, Razaleigh, & Abu Dardaa, 2014). Several studies also mentioned those who have been treated with sarcastic comments, isolated, not allowed to go home, and have broken family ties (Mohd Syukri Yeoh & Osman, 2004; Osman & Mohd Syukri Yeoh, 2008; Nur 'Athiroh Tan & Fariza, 2009; Suraya et al., 2013; Marlon et al., 2014). As for married individuals, they are forced to divorce or live separately from their spouses who have not yet converted to Islam (Mohd Syukri Yeoh & Osman, 2004), and they are also faced with the conflict of child custody rights (Osman, 2005). Other than that, some are denied the inheritance of their family's business (Anuar, 2006; Osman, 2005). In a more extreme condition, there are several Chinese Muslims who are threatened with murder by their original family (Seng, 2009; Osman, 2005).

As for bridging social capital, which is the relationship between Chinese Muslims and the Malay community, Chinese Muslims also have relationship conflicts due to the significant differences in culture, heritage, and value system with Malays; the conflict is more severe for those who are married to Malays and live in their community (Abdullah & Shukri, 2008). Other than that, the Chinese Muslim community also experiences negative perceptions from the Malay community, and Chinese Muslims have to follow the Malay culture and lifestyles after converting to Islam, such as wearing the traditional Malay men outfits, i.e., *baju Melayu* and *kain pelikat*, when praying (Mohd Azmi & Maimunah, 2003). Chinese Muslims also face conflicts of being underestimated by others who address them with certain titles, such as *saudara baru* (new brother/ sister), *masuk Melayu* (becoming Malay), *mualaf* (converts), and second-class Muslims. There are even those among the Malay community who regard Islam as

the religion for Malays only (Abd Latif, 2007; Asrul, 2002; Mahayuddin, 2001). Other than that, the relationship between the Malay and Chinese Muslim communities has become tense when there are those among Malays who regarded the newly converted Chinese Muslims as having certain motives and interests (Osman, 2005; Yu Joy, 2004).

Nevertheless, relationship conflicts discussed above are general views and do not indicate social capital per se. Furthermore, the issues did not represent Kelantan Peranakan Chinese Muslims. This has raised questions about how the reality of Kelantan Peranakan Chinese Muslims' social capital is based on trust, reciprocity, and cohesion under the conflicts and problems that occur after their religious conversion.

3.0 METHODOLOGY

This study utilised the mixed method research design by combining quantitative and qualitative approaches. There were two considerations for researchers when using this research design. The first consideration was the need to better answer the research objectives. This is in line with Creswell and Clark (2006), who stated that information in a mixed study can be obtained more clearly and accurately, and researchers can also better understand problem statements compared to a one-method approach. According to McMillan (2012), due to certain limitations in quantitative and qualitative approaches, the mixed method design is the best approach to address research questions. This mixed method design is solved one step at a time, i.e., by implementing the survey first, followed by the interview. This approach is called the sequential explanatory design. This study used this design because the researchers aimed to first obtain the overall reality of respondents, and then the reality will be examined in more depth. According to Ary et al. (2010), sequential analysis can provide the required information for further study implementation.

The study population was Chinese Muslims in Kelantan. Based on the 2010 Population Census, the number of Chinese Muslims in Kelantan is 1,525. Nevertheless, there was no concrete sampling framework for the study sampling on Chinese Muslims in Kelantan, and the study was referred to the authority and Chinese Muslim Association in Kelantan. Therefore, convenience and snowball sampling methods were implemented to obtain the study samples. This is concurrent with Sabitha (2006), who proposed using convenience sampling when there is no sampling framework. A total of 75 respondents were obtained through the sampling procedures. Five of the total respondents were selected as informants for the qualitative study.

In this study, quantitative data were gathered through a survey form, and qualitative data were collected through the interview method. The survey form allows researchers to

organise questions and receive feedback without having to communicate verbally with each respondent (Williams, 2006). The researcher designed the questionnaire in this study based on literature reviews and in-depth interviews. In developing the study questionnaire, the researcher examined related literature to find an operational definition for each variable. These definitions formed the basis for developing a proper survey for this study. This aligns with Yan (2011), who stated that operationalised variables have accurate quantitative measurements. Meanwhile, according to Sabitha (2006), a questionnaire that presents clear variable definitions has undeniably strong validity. This point is also in conjunction with Robbins (2008), who stated that a questionnaire form constructed based on literature reviews would comply with validity and reliability requirements.

Next, the researcher also conducted a series of in-depth interviews. According to Oppenheim (1998), in-depth interviews can assist researchers in constructing survey questions more accurately. Therefore, in this study, the researcher was able to ascertain the information from the literature reviews based on the realities of Chinese Muslims' lives. A total of four Chinese Muslims were interviewed through open-ended questions. Each informant was asked in an open manner based on the operationalised definitions. After the interview sessions, data were analysed, and the analysis results were used to guide the development of the survey items in the questionnaire.

The constructed questionnaire form in this study achieved the required content and face validity. Content validity refers to the extent to which the measurement of a variable represents what it should be measuring (Yan, 2011). In this study, conceptual and operational definitions were used by referring to the literature reviews to obtain content validity of the questionnaire. This is supported by the opinion of Muijs (2004), who stated that content validity can be obtained through reviewing past literature. The researcher confirmed that the study variables could measure their actual concepts through this validity. As Muijs (2004) stated, content validity can represent a measurable latent concept.

The face validity of the study questionnaire was also obtained, and the researcher asked several respondents from the Chinese Muslim community through an informal survey. According to Muijs (2004), by asking questions related to the study respondents, the face validity of a questionnaire form can be confirmed as the respondents were asked whether the questions were relevant or not according to their views. This has guided the researcher in measuring each aspect studied based on the realities of the respondents' lives. Besides, the questions were also helpful for the researcher in ascertaining that the constructed questionnaire met its intended outcomes. As Ary et al. (2010) stated, face validity is where the researchers

believe that their questionnaire has measured what it should measure. In addition to the above, a pilot study was also conducted to confirm the reliability of the questionnaire. A pilot study can be used to ensure the stability and consistency of a constructed questionnaire in measuring certain concepts and to evaluate whether the questionnaire is properly developed or not.

As for qualitative data, this study utilised the interview method to address the study objectives and detail the quantitative findings. This was due to the use of sequential explanatory design. According to McMillan (2012), sequential explanatory design requires the quantitative data to be further explained, elaborated, and clarified.

Quantitative data obtained from the survey were analysed using two types of statistical procedures: descriptive statistics and inference. All data were processed using the SPSS software. As for the analysis of qualitative data obtained from the interview, a manual method was used to analyse data through Open Coding, Clustering, Category, and Thematic processes, as suggested by Tiawa, Hafidz, and Sumarni (2012).

4.0 ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Demographics Profile

Table 1 shows the background of the study respondents in terms of age, gender, and educational level. Regarding age, Figure 4.1 shows that most respondents (32%) were around 46 to 55. This is followed by those aged 56 years and above (27%) and those aged between 36 and 45 (23%). Meanwhile, only a few were aged around 26 to 35 years and 16 to 25 years (9% respectively). Thus, young groups were smaller compared to the older ones. This was because the study respondents were selected among those involved in the official activities of *MAIK* and *MACMA* Kelantan. This situation also aligns with Mohd Azmi and Maimunah (2003), who stated that most new Muslim converts attending guidance classes were adults.

Regarding gender, the number of female respondents exceeded the number of male respondents by five per cent (i.e., 55% females and 45% males). This indicates a nearly equal distribution in the involvement of male and female Muslim converts in formal activities and guidance classes. Although there were reportedly more females than males among new Muslim converts (Mohd Azmi & Maimunah, 2003), this study has shown that this situation did not affect the males' participation in formal activities and guidance classes.

As for the educational background, all respondents obtained their formal education, where the majority (64%) achieved the secondary school level, followed by the primary school level (23%). Meanwhile, only 13 per cent of them obtained higher education levels, whereby 9 per cent received a university education, and the remaining four per cent received a college

education. These data reveal that most respondents in this study obtained their formal education at the school level.

With regard to the reason, more than half (55%) of the respondents converted to Islam due to their interaction with the local Malay community. Meanwhile, 20 per cent of them said they were attracted to Islam. Other reasons for embracing Islam are the marriage factor (16%), research and reading (7%), and following or being influenced by a spouse (3%). Interaction as the main factor for non-Muslims to embrace Islam is probably due to the high sociability among the multi-cultural community, especially among the Kelantan Chinese (Mohd Shahrul Imran Lim, 2014). The interaction among the Kelantan Chinese indicates a high level of assimilation in the way of life of this community group (Teo, 2005). Indirectly, this situation has caused the Kelantan Chinese community to accept Islam. The result of this study is in line with Azarudin and Khadijah (2015), who stated that the interaction among the Muslim community is the main factor of conversion to Islam among the Chinese community in the state of Terengganu.

In addition, the result shows that the original religion of most respondents (87%) before converting to Islam was Buddhism. Seven per cent were initially Christians, five per cent were Confucian, and the remaining one per cent were atheists. Thus, almost all respondents were originally Buddhists. These results align with previous studies which reported that the Kelantan Peranakan Chinese community still maintains the religious belief of their ancestors, namely Theravada Buddhism (Teo, 2008; Mohd Roslan & Haryati, 2011; Khoo, 2010).

Table 1: Demographic profiles

Item	n	%	Item	n	%
Age			**Gender**		
16 to 25 years old	7	9	Male	34	45
26 to 35 years old	7	9	Female	41	55
36 to 45 years old	17	23			
46 to 55 years old	24	32	**Educational Level**		
56 years old and above	20	27	Primary school	17	23
			Secondary school	48	64
The reason for embracing Islam			College	3	4
Interaction with others	41	55	University	7	9
Attracted to Islam	15	20			
Getting married	12	16	**Original Religion**		
Research and reading	5	7	Christian	5	5
Following spouse	2	3	Buddha	65	87
			Confucianism	4	5
			Atheism	1	1

4.2 Bonding and Bridging Social Capitals of Chinese Muslims

Bonding social capital refers to the relationship with close individuals, i.e., family members who are not converted to Islam. Meanwhile, bridging social capital refers to the relationship of Chinese Muslims with the Malay community. Social capitals are measured based on the frequency of bonding and bridging social capitals in trust, cohesion, and reciprocity. Bonding and bridging social capital are measured based on the same survey items.

4.2.1 Trust Attitude

The frequency of trust element was measured to indicate how frequently respondents trust their bonding social capital, i.e., their original family who are not converted to Islam, and also bridging social capital, i.e., the Malay community, in terms of social, religious, and financial aspects. Figure 1 shows the level of trust in bonding social capital. A total of 47 per cent of trust in bonding social capital was located at the low level, 32 per cent was at the moderate level, and 21 per cent was at the high level. Figure 2 indicates the level of trust in bridging social capital. Only 9 per cent of respondents had a low level of trust.

Furthermore, 49 per cent were at the moderate level, and 41 per cent were at the high level. In conclusion, most respondents had low trust in bonding social capital (i.e., their original family members who were not converted to Islam). Bridging social capital (the Malay

community) obtained higher trust from respondents, whereby almost all were distributed at moderate and high levels.

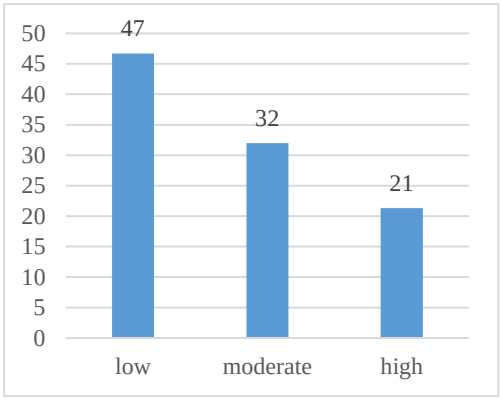

Figure 1: Level of trust in bonding social capital

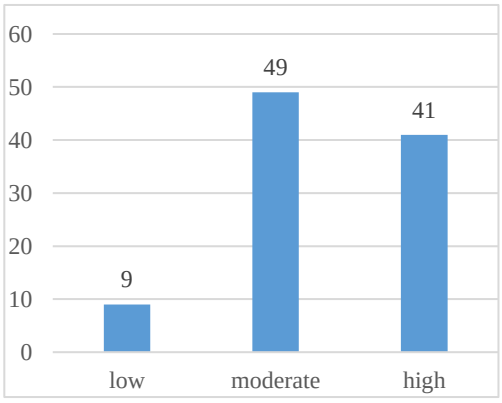

Figure 2: Level of trust in bridging social capital

Table 2 displays the frequency of bonding and bridging social capital for the trust element. Respondents seemed to only occasionally trust their bonding social capital (2.6) and bridging social capital (3.4). Respondents sometimes trust their bonding social capital in the aspects of practising religion (3.2), giving cooperation (2.9), and sharing problems with them (2.7). Nevertheless, as for bridging social capital, respondents occasionally build their trust in different aspects, which are sharing problems (3.4), receiving financial support when needed (2.6), and lending money (2.5). However, in other aspects, respondents indicated that they frequently trust their bridging social capital in giving cooperation (3.9), speaking about religion (3.6), and practising religion together (4.1). Nevertheless, some respondents also showed that they seldom trust their bonding social capital, particularly religious and financial aspects. Specifically, respondents seldom trust talking about religion (2.3), getting money when needed (2.3), and lending money to bond social capital (2.0). Informants also mentioned the frequency of trust in a qualitative study. For bonding social capital, Informant 1 stated that:

> *It's difficult for me to put my trust in my family. It's nothing.. actually, because we have different religious beliefs. If we want to borrow some money, share problems, or anything, we're afraid that our family will look at us negatively for embracing Islam.. like we become lazy when we converted to Islam. No job.. so that's why we don't rely on our family at all.*

According to Informant 1, it wasn't easy to trust one's family due to their religious differences. It is of primary concern that such differences might give a bad impression of the religion being practised; therefore, trust is not placed in the family, either in social, religious, or financial aspects.

Furthermore, Informant 1 also provided a statement regarding the frequency of trust in bridging social capital:

> *oooo.. it's different with Malays.. Malay people are more.. they accept with open heart. They care about you.. so, it there's anything, it's easy for us to refer them. I always refer."*

This statement indicates that Chinese Muslims frequently trust the Malay community because of their concern towards them. However, regarding their trust in the financial aspect, the informants said that Chinese Muslims do not put high trust in Malays. This is as stated by Informant 3 below:

> *When it comes to money, it's a bit hard.. it's about certain Malays who are reluctant to pay back. And then, before converted to Islam, there was also a perception among the Chinese who said that it's hard for Malays to pay money (debt). They are reluctant to pay.. like my grandmother who sells living chicken.. she let them took items first, but they're behind payments until now.. maybe my grandmother told others that it's difficult to deal with Malays.. and then when I was still a kid.. I always heard Malay people said, it's okay to not settle your debt to Chinese .. they're kafir (non-believers).*

Informant 3 said that it is quite difficult for Chinese Muslims to trust Malays in the financial aspect due to the perception nurtured in them since they were still not converted to Islam; they were even exposed to that mindset since they were kids.

Table 2: Frequency of the trust element in bonding and bridging social capitals

No	Statement	Bonding Social Capital	Bridging Social Capital
1	Cooperating with them	2.9	3.9
2	Sharing problems with them	2.7	3.4
3	Telling them about my religion	2.3	3.6
4	Performing religious practices while with them	3.2	4.1
5	Confident to be able to get money from them when needed	2.4	2.6
6	Lending money to them	2.0	2.5
	Overall mean	**2.6**	**3.4**

**Note: Average Scores are based on the following scales:*

1: Never *2: Rarely*

3: Occasionally *4: Often*

5: Always

In conclusion, respondents' trust attitude towards bonding social capital was low and only happened on an occasional basis. A similar result was observed for bridging social capital, whereby the frequency of trust was also occasionally. Yet, the level of trust in bridging social capital was found to be good. The statement also indicates that respondents frequently trust their bridging social capital in social and religious aspects. This shows that bridging social capital, i.e., the Malay community, receives better trust from respondents than bonding social capital. i.e., their original family, who have not converted to Islam.

The occasional occurrence and moderate level of trust suggest that the Islamisation of an individual in a certain bonding social capital has caused the lack of trust in their bonding social capital. This implies that Islamisation has changed the trust attitude due to the difference in values in religion, which was common before. This relationship was seen to be limited because of such differences in values. This is similar to the view of Brennan and Barnett (2009), who stated that a relationship can be retained because of the common values between connected individuals. A limited relationship restricts the interaction among bonding social capital, whereas the development of trust depends on interaction (Amir Zal, 2016).

Furthermore, according to Payne (2006), interaction manifests that trust has occurred. It was observed in this study that failure to maintain the interaction between respondents and bonding social capital happened because Chinese Muslim individuals were afraid of the negative views of bonding social capital towards their newly embraced religion. This is in contrast to other views stating that the interaction of Chinese Muslims was affected when their

family rejected the Islamisation of Chinese Muslims (Nur A'thiroh Tan & Fariza, 2009). Conflicts have emerged in bonding social capital, such as being isolated, treated with sarcasm, not allowed to return home, and family members breaking the family ties (Mohd Syukri Yeoh & Osman, 2004; Abdullah & Shukri, 2008; Nur A'thiroh Tan & Fariza, 2009; Suraya et al., 2013; Marlon et al., 2014). Therefore, it can be concluded that the low level of trust among respondents towards the family was due to the religious difference, which made them feel afraid to connect with bonding social capital, and this was not related to the conflicts with bonding social capitals as faced by Chinese Muslims in other states in this country.

Although the trust element to bridging social capital occurs occasionally, respondents indicated their frequent trust for bridging social capital in terms of social and religious aspects. This is because, even before they converted to Islam, the Chinese Muslim community in Kelantan generally had a high level of societal ability with the Malay community, and this makes it easier for them to respond to changes in the current environment, such as clothing, food, and leisure activities that are similar to the Malay community (Mohd Shahrul Imran Lim, 2014; Pue & Charanjit, 2014). Furthermore, according to Hanapi (1986), the assimilation of Kelantan Chinese has transformed the social and household organisations into Malay as far as crossing their religious boundary, whereby the Chinese community in Kelantan even invite Muslim spiritual leaders among Malays to perform prayer for entering new homes. Meanwhile, according to Pue and Charanjit (2014), there is no hindrance for the Kelantan people of Chinese descent (peranakan) to apply other religious elements if they believe it will benefit them. Nevertheless, these factors did not make the respondents trust their bridging social capital for problem-sharing and financial aspects. This indicates that closeness, assimilation, and Islamisation do not make it easy for them to share problems and obtain financial resources through their bridging social capital. It is also similar to lending money to bridge social capital.

4.2.2 Reciprocity

The reciprocal element refers to the mutuality between respondents' bonding and bridging social capitals in social, religious, and financial aspects. Figure 3 illustrates the level of respondents' reciprocity with bonding social capital. The study findings indicate that 47 per cent of respondents' reciprocity with bonding social capital was at a moderate level, 31 per cent was at a low level, and the other 23 per cent was at a high level. Meanwhile, Figure 4 shows the level of reciprocity for bridging social capital. 52 per cent of respondents indicated the high level, 37 per cent were at the moderate level, and only 11 per cent were at the low level. Overall, it can be seen that there was a higher level of reciprocity among respondents

when bridging social capital. In contrast, respondents' reciprocity with bonding social capital was moderate, and some were even noted at a low level.

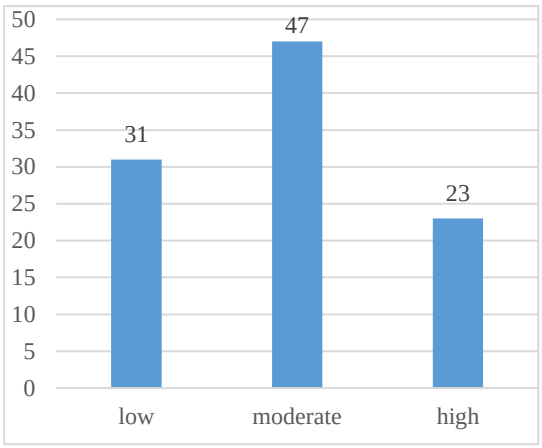

Figure 3: Level of reciprocity with bonding social capital

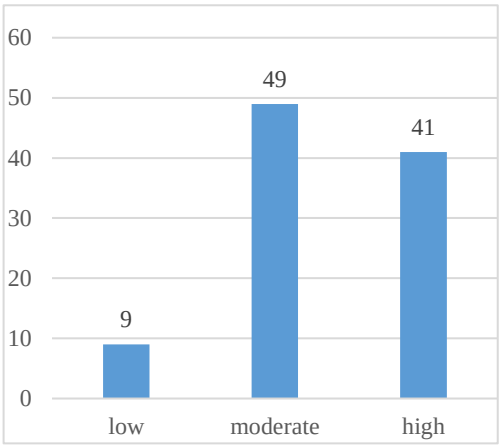

Figure 4: Level of reciprocity with bridging social capital

Table 3 indicates results about the frequency of respondents' reciprocity with bonding and bridging social capital. Generally, based on the study findings, reciprocity occurred occasionally for bonding social capital (2.7) and frequently for bridging social capital (3.5). In terms of bonding social capital, reciprocal relationships occasionally occur in the aspects of mutual respect for religious belief (3.1), visiting each other (3.1), and helping one another (3.0). Then, data also shows that respondents seldom (2.4) help each other financially. Other than that, reciprocity also rarely happened in exchanging religious opinions (2.3) and borrowing and lending money (2.1). As for bridging social capital, the study findings showed that respondents were often reciprocal in the aspects of mutual respect for religious belief (4.0), visiting each other (3.8), helping one another (3.8), and exchanging religious opinions (3.7). However, reciprocity seldom occurred in the aspects of giving financial support to each other (2.9), likewise for borrowing money from each other (2.7).

As discussed above, the frequency of reciprocity was also supported by findings obtained from the interview with respondents. In terms of bonding social capital, informant 2 mentioned that:

> *It's difficult to help each other.. or anything.. How to help others when we don't even have enough to eat? Then, my mother wanted to come to help. But, we seldom meet.. So, we don't ask for help.. just on our own. After all, we already have our own family."*

According to Informant 2, it is difficult for reciprocity to occur among respondents because they are also living a hard life, and their families seldom come to help them because they rarely meet. Due to this, reciprocity only happens occasionally. In addition, the informant also stated that they do not ask for help from family, and they manage everything by themselves, especially when they already have their own Muslim family. This shows that reciprocity occurs among respondents at a moderate level and only occasionally with bonding social capital.

As for bridging social capital, the following statement was obtained from the interview with Informant 2:

> *I have asked for rice from Malays. We didn't have any rice to cook.. we didn't borrow. We asked for one or two cups. The Malay people gave us. If we have some rice, we also give them one or two cups. There is no problem with Malays. If they are doing hard, we help them as much as we can. It's because we live together (Informant 2)*

Informant 2 mentioned that the Malay community always help them when they are out of rice. Likewise, the informant also helps to the possible extent the Malay community who are in need. This is because they live together in the Malay community's social environment.

Thus, it can be implied that respondents' reciprocity with bonding social capital occurred less frequently than the one established with bridging social capital, which was more frequent. At the same time, reciprocity is related to the financial aspect, which occasionally happens for both social capitals.

Table 3: Frequency of reciprocal element in bonding and bridging social capitals

No	Statement	Bonding Social Capital	Bridging Social Capital
1	Visiting each other	3.1	3.8
2	Helping one another	3.0	3.8
3	Mutually respecting each other's religious beliefs	3.3	4.0
4	Exchanging religious opinions	2.3	3.7
5	Providing financial helps to each other	2.4	2.9
6	Borrowing and lending money from each other	2.1	2.7
	Overall mean	**2.6**	**3.5**

**Note: Average Scores are based on the following scales:*

1: Never *2: Rarely*
3: Occasionally *4: Often*
5: Always

The occasional occurrence and the moderate level of reciprocity with bonding social capital indicate that respondents' interdependency towards bonding social capital decreases after converting to Islam. This is because, according to Aeby, Widmerb, and Carlob (2014), family is the resource of social capital that involves mutually beneficial relationships and information and emotional support from one another. This is in contrast to the reality of respondents before embracing Islam. Hanapi (2007) stated that interdependence in the family is characteristic of the Chinese in Kelantan, where they help and respect each other and thus have close relationships. However, qualitative findings indicated that respondents lived in hardship after converting to Islam, suggesting that reciprocity did not occur among them. Therefore, this community no longer has a strong bond (family) to support the community members. As stated by Schmid (2000), bonding social capital is to support the community members.

Meanwhile, the reciprocal element with bridging social capital occurred frequently at the higher level. This is in line with Azarudin (2015), who stated that the tolerance values between the Chinese Muslim and Malay communities, such as in doing daily activities, visiting each other, exchanging food, helping one another, and so on, implies that there is a mutually supportive level between each other. Nevertheless, this level of reciprocity did not happen in the financial aspect. This is because bridging social capital is not only to obtain social needs but also to benefit the economy (Grafton & Knowles, 2004). This finding suggests that Islamisation allows respondents to work cooperatively to obtain social and religious benefits from bridging social capital, but not financially.

4.2.3 Cohesion

The cohesive element indicates respondents' feeling that they are being accepted belong to and are loved by bonding social capital (i.e., family members who are not converted to Islam) and bridging social capital (i.e., the Malay community). Figure 5 shows the cohesive level of bonding social capital. The study findings reveal that 37 per cent of respondents indicated a moderate level, 32 per cent were at a low level, and 31 per cent were at a high level. Figure 6 illustrates the cohesive level of bridging social capital. Based on the results, it can be seen that 52 per cent of respondents were at the high level, 44 per cent were at the moderate level, and only four per cent were at the low level. Regarding cohesion with bonding social capital, respondents were distributed almost equally at each level. This is different from the case of bridging social capital, in which the majority of respondents indicated a high level of cohesion, and only a few had a low level.

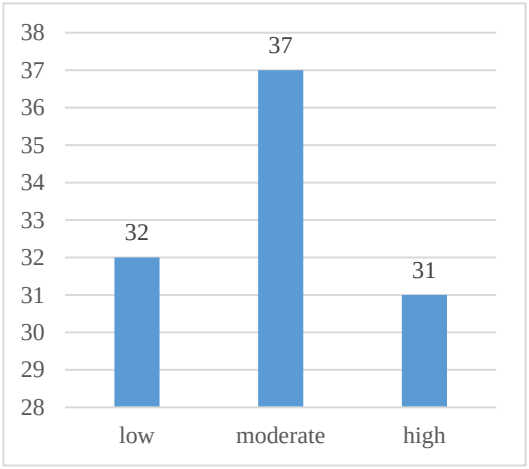

Figure 5: Level of cohesion with bonding social

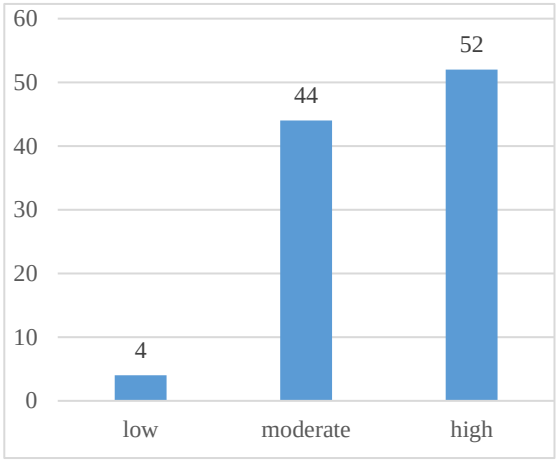

Figure 6: Level of cohesion with bridging social

Table 4 shows results pertaining to the frequencies of cohesion with bonding and bridging social capitals. As a whole, cohesion with bonding social capital happened on occasion only (2.8), whereby respondents at times feel in agreement (3.3), friendly (3.3), their religion is being respected (3.3), and can talk about religion (2.5) with their bonding social capital. In addition, cohesion in the financial aspect rarely happened, whereby respondents seldom talked about finance (2.2) and rarely could borrow money easily (2.2) from their bonding social capital. This finding was noted by Informant 4, who stated:

> *We're not close because we feel that they (family) shun us.. they feel that we shun them. That's why we've become not very close. Because it's different now, right... we don't have the same religion, that's why." (Informant 4).*

According to Informant 4, cohesion happened less frequently in bonding social capital due to the different perceptions between respondents and bonding social capital. The informant also mentioned that religious difference explains the occasional occurrence of cohesion.

Regarding the frequency of cohesion in bridging social capital, Table 3 reveals that cohesion generally happens frequently (3.5). Specifically, respondents are often friendly (4.0) and in agreement (3.9) with bridging social capital. Furthermore, the Islamic religion which they have embraced is frequently respected (3.9), and they often talk about the Islamic religion (3.9). However, regarding the financial aspect, their cohesion only took place occasionally.

Respondents can sometimes borrow money easily (2.7), and only on occasions where they could talk about the financial aspects (2.9) with their bridging social capital. This finding indicates that cohesion between respondents and bridging social capital frequently occurs, except for those involving the financial aspect. This point was also agreed by informants, such as the statement by Informant 3:

> *Malay people are very welcoming.. they said that we have become Malays.. we are treated warmly.. they are very open.. Malays feel happy seeing that we could wear Baju Melayu.*

According to Informant 3, the Malay community accepts Chinese Muslims as part of them, and Chinese Muslims are being treated very warmly by Malays. This has resulted in a good cohesive element between the Chinese Muslim and Malay communities.

Table 4: Frequency of cohesive elements in bonding and bridging social capitals

No	Statement	Bonding Social Capital	Bridging Social Capital
1	Feeling in agreement with them	3.1	3.8
2	Being friendly with them	3.0	3.8
3	Talking about religion with them	3.3	4.0
4	My religion is being respected by them	2.3	3.7
5	Discussing about financial aspect with them	2.4	2.9
6	Borrowing money easily from them	2.1	2.7
	Overall mean	**2.6**	**3.5**

**Note: Average Scores are based on the following scales:*

1: Never *2: Rarely*
3: Occasionally *4: Often*
5: Always

In conclusion, the cohesive element occurs more frequently between respondents and bridging social capital, compared to bonding social capital, which occurs occasionally. The occasional occurrence and moderate level of cohesive element, as found in this study, is different from the reality of the Chinese community. According to Lyndon, Wei, and Mohd Helmi (2014), the Chinese community has a close relationship with their family. In this study, respondents' conversion to Islam did not lead to the persistence of cohesion between respondents and

bonding social capital. Based on qualitative findings, respondents generally stated that there are different perceptions between respondents and bonding social capital whereby in the relationship context, respondents felt that family is shunning them, and likewise for their family. The lack of cohesion among respondents in this study contradicts the views of Amran (1985), Mohd Syukri Yeoh and Osman (2004), and Osman (2005), stating that the Chinese community have more negative perceptions towards Chinese people who converted to Islam than other religions. On the contrary, our study findings were only related to the family's perception that the Islamic converts no longer want to be a part of the family.

Furthermore, the transformation of Chinese Muslims' way of life to adapt to the living of the Malay community (Razaleigh et al., 2012) was also observed to be the factor causing the lack of cohesion in respondents' bonding social capital. This is because the Islamisation of Chinese Muslims is regarded as they are becoming Malay, and thus causing Chinese Muslims to abandon their life as Chinese.

Another factor that negatively affects respondents' cohesive elements is religion has a disintegrative effect in which its presence has built a subtle and thin boundary between those who have embraced a new religion and those still holding the inherited old world (Taufik, 2009). Therefore, respondents' Islamisation has given a certain perception towards respondents and their bonding social capital, thus reducing the cohesion among them. The fact is that the cohesive element is important for the community members to feel that they are being accepted by and belong to the community, as well as having 'a sense of own place' in the community (Dale & Sparkes, 2008).

Furthermore, the high level and frequent occurrence of respondents' cohesion with bridging social capital, as noted in this study, are not in line with Razaleigh et al. (2012), who found that Chinese people are socially less integrated with the Malay community after they embraced Islam. Similarly, Marlon et al. (2014) who stipulated that racial sectionalism is still taking place between the Chinese Muslim and Malay communities, reported that the levels of understanding, acceptance, and integration of Chinese Muslims towards the Malay culture are still moderate. This shows a difference between Chinese Muslims in Kelantan and those in other states in this country in terms of cohesiveness.

5.0 CONCLUSION

The Chinese Muslim community in this study indicated that their social capital in the aspects of trust, reciprocity, and cohesion with family members who are not converted to Islam (i.e., bonding social capital) only occur on an occasional basis after their conversion to Islam. A

different result was observed for respondents' bridging social capital, i.e. the Malay community, whereby their social capital in the aspects of trust, reciprocity, and cohesion has taken place frequently, and most of them were noted at a high level. Thus, it can be concluded that the potentials of the community, which are social capital, can be affected by the religious factor.

Other than that, bonding social capital could also have implications on maintaining the sustainability of the relationship and affect its ownership because those elements impact the interaction between respondents and bonding social capital. Limited interaction in a strong relationship, like bonding social capital, will lead to a lack of psychological support, as well as negative impacts on the quality of relationships, mutual assistance, and togetherness between respondents and bridging social capital. The lack of those elements can also affect respondents' harmonious living, and it might as well jeopardise their daily lives. Moreover, it is also of concern that respondents' low level of bonding social capital could cause them to lose social and economic support in their own community, and it is also worrying that it might break the ties between respondents and their bonding social capital. Indirectly, this could lead to negative perceptions among non-Muslim family members towards Islam and the Muslim community.

Meanwhile, bridging social capital (i.e. the Malay community) was found to have positive implications for the Chinese Muslim community, whereby they can obtain various benefits from the close social bridging. Moreover, it also provides a wider network to respondents when their bonding social capital becomes limited in terms of closeness. Other than that, bridging social capital also contributed to respondents' collective actions in solving problems, while increasing the closeness among the local community in order to provide a good social environment to the respondents' group of community. However, in view of the negative aspect, such a high level of closeness and frequent occurrence of this element might give the implication revealing respondents as the absolute property of bridging social capital (the Malay community), yet in fact, they are actually a part of bonding social capital (family of origin). It is worrying that this element could lead to the emergence of negative perceptions which jeopardise respondents' bonding social capital. It is even worse when respondents no longer need functions of bonding social capital. However, there is still more space for them to re-establish their relationship with bonding social capital after they convert to Islam.

Therefore, it is suggested that the Chinese Muslim community should improve and strengthen their relationship and interaction with bonding social capital. Chinese Muslims should also bear in mind that the Islamic religion they have embraced highly emphasises the need to establish a good relationship with an original family who is non-Muslim. Through this

effort, the Chinese Muslim community can regain its position as part of its bonding social capital, even with differences in the aspects of religion and values. From another context, Chinese Muslims should also continually strengthen and maintain the relationship with bridging social capital so that such a good relationship can give more contributions towards the quality of life of the Chinese Muslim community.

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