Risk and Return Analysis on Performance of the Islamic mutual funds: Evidence from Malaysia*

Fadillah Mansor ** and M. Ishaq Bhatti ***

The study used monthly aggregate returns to evaluate performance of the mutual funds for the Islamic and Conventional portfolios in Malaysia, from 1996 to 2009. The evidence from aggregate returns of the 128 Islamic mutual funds and 350 Conventional mutual funds, consists of 160 observations denoted that both portfolios have performed better than the market portfolio within the period. However, the result has shown on average the Islamic portfolio provides slightly less returns relative to the Conventional counterparts. The result revealed a statistically significant difference between the standard deviation of the portfolios, indicating that the Islamic portfolio is riskier than the Conventional portfolio. The results also revealed that both Islamic and Conventional portfolios were depended on the market portfolio of which the former portfolio was closely mirrored to the market movement in relation to the latter portfolio.

Field of Research: Islamic mutual fund, Islamic unit trust, performance analysis, Islamic finance

1. Introduction

In generic, mutual fund (also known as unit trust in Malaysia) is defined as a form of collective investments that allows investors with similar investment objectives to pool their funds to be invested in a portfolio of securities or other assets. The fund managers then invest the pooled funds in the portfolio funds; particularly include some assets classes like cash, bonds, deposits, stocks, commodities and also properties parallel to the fund’s objective.

Similarly, the Islamic mutual fund is managed by the fund managers or investment companies, which initially raise monies from shareholders or the interested investors. However, they (fund managers) shall invest the funds in a group of assets that must be complied with the Shariah principles according to the Islamic financial system, by referring to the Shariah parameters developed for the required type of products.

Thereafter, the money raised is used to buy a diverse set of Shariah stocks, sukus and other Shariah-compliant securities or asset classes. The Shariah-compliance matter makes the Islamic mutual funds (Islamic MF) differ from the Conventional mutual funds (Conventional MF) counterparts, although both funds are managed with the same objective to satisfy the shareholders and to

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gain above average returns. This Shariah-compliance requires activities of the mutual funds to be quarantined from those companies involved in activities, products or services related to conventional banking, insurance and financial services, gambling, alcoholic beverages and non-halal food products. The requirement makes an Islamic mutual fund differ from the Conventional mutual funds fundamentally and conceptually.

However, in the same way to the conventional mutual fund, participants in the fund become shareholders and receive an equity position on the underlying securities of the fund. The fund is then opened to public investment via the sale of shares (in the case of open-ended mutual funds). With closed mutual funds, the investment opportunities are offered to a limited set of investors or simply require investors to keep on their shares or wait for a buyer.

Most mutual funds, including Islamic and Conventional bring diversified and moderate returns as well as the professional benefits, and for these considerations, they charge fees comprising management and/or load fees and place an additional redemption penalty.

Thus, at this stage, in a sense that investors invest not only for maximizing wealth but also to fulfill the responsibilities and welfare towards society, the Islamic MF is likely appropriated to fill the gap. The Islamic MF is emerged in the market as an alternative investment, particularly to Muslim investors who like to invest in mutual fund, but search for a fund according to the Shariah principles. Furthermore, the interest of investors toward Islamic MF is expected to increase tremendously in the near future. This is due to the characteristics of the fund which are perceived similar to the ethical or social mutual funds available in the market. Additionally, Elfakhani and Hassan (2007) reported that there was the strong performance of the Islamic mutual funds compared to the conventional benchmark (S&P 500 Index) and the Islamic benchmark (FTSE Islamic Indices) during the downturns, and for that reason the investors, especially the conventional investors could consider the Islamic funds in their portfolio selection during the recession market.

However, the question remains, either the Islamic MF can perform better rather than the Conventional instead, or vice versa. Hence, this paper aims to provide answer to this question. We expect that the Islamic MF could perform better than the Conventional counterparts due to the fund has shown its tremendously growth in the world market.

With respect to the global development, World Islamic funds experienced excellent growth during the late 1990s as they benefited from the technology boom and record oil price. Most of them demonstrated high positive returns, even higher than their benchmarks. The number of world funds increased from 8 funds, prior to 1992, to 95 funds (with USD $5 billion assets) in 2000 (Elfakhani and Hassan 2005, Elfakhani et al. 2005). This indicates a record growth of 1,087.5% within 8 years. The number of Islamic mutual funds has grown tremendously as they received approximately 135.9% average annual growth per year, within the period. None of the products in the global finance history has experienced such a high growth.
Since then, more funds have been launched with brighter market expectations and knowledge of the system continually increasing. With reference to the Islamic equity funds, the total assets for Islamic equity funds have sprung from USD800 million in 1996 to USD3.6 billion in 2003 (Abderrezak 2008). According to him, there were 29 Islamic equity funds in the year 1996, and the number were increasing to 232 funds, based on the latest list provided by Failaka Advisors, as of March, 2009. Out of the total list, Malaysia alone conquered 68 funds. Hence, the data has proven that the world Islamic equity funds have shown significant impact as the growth of the funds was 700% within the past 13 years.

Thus, the trend shows that Islamic finance is becoming an important part of the international financial system. Due to their significance in the current market, better performance of the Islamic mutual funds can therefore be seen to lead to continuing development in Islamic finance. The Islamic mutual fund industry is the fastest growth industry in Islamic finance so far. The performance of Islamic mutual funds can also be seen improving with time. This is due to the capability of the Islamic mutual funds to act differently during the bearish market (Elfakhani and Hassan 2007). The situation implies that the Islamic mutual funds have shown their credibility to remain solid during the global crisis. Indirectly, the funds could be a good hedging investment for the investors, if used to hedge against market downturns (Elfakhani et al. 2005).

Globally, the world Islamic mutual funds industry has grown tremendously throughout the past three decades but more significantly during the last 15 years. The industry reached its peak in mid-2000, when “the dot-com bubble burst, investors worldwide rushed to safety, existing equity funds in favor of hedge funds, fixed-income securities and real estate” (Abderrazak 2008, p.15).

Furthermore, many conventional financial institutions offer Islamic investment funds in their list. Such a trend is leading towards integration of Islamic finance with conventional finance. As a result, the New York and London Stock Exchanges launched Islamic Indices to track the performances of firms which conform to Islamic investing rules. Besides, several indices have emerged in global arena to provide a sound comparison of performance between the funds and their respective benchmarks. This will ultimately improve the supply of information and spur Islamic mutual funds to improve accountability to their current/potential investors, so as to permit participants to know best and make informed choices (Girard and Hassan 2005).

At the same time, the global awareness of both ethical and socially responsible funds (SRI) is increasing among international investors. The SRI fund has experienced an explosive growth around the world reflecting the increasing awareness of investors to social, environmental, ethical and corporate governance issues. This type of fund is expected to continue growth and relative importance as an asset class due to the growing social awareness of investors and the increasingly positive regulatory environment.
At the same time, western countries have taken many regulatory initiatives to stimulate SRI (Renneboog et al. 2008).

Though, the trend shows that there is a continuous demand for the Islamic funds in the current market and in the near future. Hence, the enhancement of the Islamic mutual funds worldwide is crucial as indirectly it might give an impact to the continuing development of the Islamic finance globally.

With the similar pattern, the growth of the Islamic mutual fund in Malaysia is expected to be increased due to the higher demand from foreign market player, especially Middle-East and Western players, as well as the increasing awareness among the domestic investors towards Islamic funds.

In Malaysia, the Islamic fund management activities have begun to grow rapidly in the 1990’s. Although there was an Islamic fund before that, but their existence was rarely gave impact to the industry. There was a record that the first Islamic fund in Malaysia was Tabung Amanah Bakti by Asia Unit Trust Berhad in 1971, but officially, the first Islamic mutual fund was launched in 1993, namely Tabung Ittikal Arab-Malaysian, managed by Arab-Malaysian Unit Trust Bhd.

The aim of this paper is to examine the performance of the Islamic mutual funds in Malaysia based on aggregate return performance and compare with the Conventional peers and the market benchmark. According to the 2002 IOSCO Islamic capital market as quoted by Nathie (2008), the Malaysian Islamic funds market has grown much faster than in other countries. This is supported by the recent figure of the Islamic mutual funds as reported by the Failaka advisors as there are 377 Islamic funds in operation all over the world in March 2009, and Malaysia alone dominated more than one third of the funds (There are 149 Islamic mutual funds in Malaysia as December, 2008 based on the database from Securities Commission, Malaysia). Moreover, most of the Islamic funds worldwide are belong to emerging markets. Hence, by examining the Islamic mutual fund industry in Malaysia, it could provide evidence on the trend movement of the Islamic mutual fund globally.

As a result, this study is important because it will provide investors and regulators overviews and insights on the performance of the Islamic MF concurrently with the Conventional MF, and the industry in particular. The findings shall benefit them especially if they plan to invest or participate in the mutual funds industry, in an emerging market like Malaysia. Moreover, to the best of our knowledge, the data used in this study are more recent and comprehensive relative to the previous literatures. The rest of the article is organized as follows. The next section reviews the literatures. It follows with section 3 that provides methodology and the data. Section 4 presents findings and the discussions of the study. Finally, section 5 concluded.

2. Literature Review

There are few studies that have previously been conducted on Islamic mutual funds performance. For example the works of (Abderrezak 2008, Elfakhani
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Ismail and Shakrani (2003) studied on the weekly price data for 12 Islamic unit trusts and the Shari`ah Index for the period of 1 May 1999 until 31 July 2001. They separated the study to two different time periods, which comprise the up market, covers 60 weeks and the down market covers 58 weeks. The Shariah Index was used as a proxy for market return. The study has been done to prove empirically the relationship between portfolio return and portfolio beta, by using time-series and cross-sectional test of CAPM. They found that the adjusted-$R^2$ and standard error of the conditional relationship is higher in down-markets than in up-markets. Based on that finding, they suggested that beta could be used as a tool in explaining cross-sectional differences in Islamic unit trusts’ returns and as a measure of market risk.

The study by Elfakhani, et al. (2005) used a sample of 46 Islamic mutual funds. They tracked the performance of Islamic mutual funds between the January 1, 1997 and August, 31 2002. They found no statistical difference in the performance of the studied funds compared to their respective indices. They concluded that the performance of Islamic mutual funds was improving with time, as the fund managers were gaining more experience and sense of the market. However, the possibility exists that the result could be biased due to the short time frame in which the study was conducted. Throughout the duration of the study, the industry was still in its early stage of the development, indicated by poor transparency, insufficient experience of fund managers in fund management, and a rather limited diversification in portfolio funds.

Other study by Elfakhani and Hassan (2007) suggested that the behaviour of Islamic mutual funds does not differ substantially from that of the other conventional funds, with some Shari`ah-compliant mutual funds overperforming their benchmarks and others underperforming them. They considered the overall sample of 46, the total number of outperforming funds ranges between 29(63%) and 11 (24%), depending on the performance measure and market benchmark used. The result indicated that the Islamic indices may generate higher returns at lower risk over the full period.

In addition, the major observation of the study revealed the strong performance of Islamic mutual funds relative to both benchmarks during the recession period. They explained the generating of this pattern might shows that this fund’s performance is improving with time, as fund managers are gaining more experience and better sense of the market. In fact, they suggested that there is no any statistically significant risk-adjusted abnormal reward or penalty associated with investing in Shariah-compliant mutual funds, and thus they concluded that the conventional investors could consider Islamic mutual funds in their portfolio collection, especially during slow market periods, with the duty remains to the investors to investigate the various potential mutual funds in the market to suit their needs regardless of whether
the fund is a conventional one, or Islamic, or ethical or socially responsible fund (Elfakhani and Hassan, 2007).

Besides, the study by Abdullah, et al.(2007) concluded that the conventional funds perform better than Islamic funds during good economic periods and vice-versa during bad economic periods. This finding was perceived to be similar to the result obtained by Elfakhani et al. (2005). They measured the returns performance of the Malaysian Islamic unit trust funds from 1995 to 2001 based on their net asset values (NAV), and compared the returns of Islamic funds to those of conventional funds. The study found that both categories of investment vehicles slightly underperformed the market and offered relatively poor selection and market timing ability for all classes of funds.

A recent study by Abderrezak (2008) demonstrated the similar performance abilities of Islamic and ethical funds. His result also showed no significant difference in performance between Islamic and ethical funds, by using the Fama's performance measures. Overall, both groups failed to outperform the S&P 500, the conventional index proxy for the US stock market.

Hence, the significant finding from most of the studies (see Abdullah et al. 2007; Elfakhani and Hassan, 2007; Elfakhani et al. 2005; and Abderrazak, 2008) proven that Islamic mutual funds are a good hedging investment against market downturns as their returns performance show only a mild correlation with market movement.

3. Methodology

3.1 The Data

The study used monthly average returns from January 1996 to April 2009. The monthly average returns for all mutual funds were obtained from the Morningstar, Database. The KLCI index which is used as the market benchmark in the study was downloaded from SIRCA and DataStream database. In addition, some statistical data especially about Islamic MF and Conventional MF features and the development of the Malaysian mutual fund industry are obtained from annual report of the SC and the Federation of Investment Managers Malaysia (FIMM) website.

The data period has been chosen because the Islamic MF industry in Malaysia within this period is relatively matured. The NAV of the industry, which has recently started in 1993, has grown tremendously from RM0.19billion to RM17.19billion as at December 2008. Thus, it will make a sound comparison with its Conventional peers. The data are also enough to cover bearish and bullish period in a normal market cycle.

3.2 Hypotheses and Testing

In Malaysia, about 20% of the markets shares are belong to the mutual funds industry. As at the end of April 2009, according to the Securities Commission
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Malaysia (2009), the NAV of the industry is about RM150.47 billion as compared to the Kuala Lumpur Stock exchange (KLSE) market capitalization is about RM754.20 billion. The Kuala Lumpur Composite Index (KLCI) is chosen as a proxy for the market return in Malaysia. The study expected that the Islamic and conventional mutual funds follow the market trend and have a positive relationship with the market return. This observation yields to the first hypothesis. The $H_1$ is the returns of the mutual funds industry have positively correlated to total return of the KLCI, proxy for the market return, and both portfolios follow the market movement.

Based on the Malaysian evidence, the study expects that the growth of return of the Islamic mutual funds is higher than the growth of return of the conventional mutual funds. As noted by Nathie (2008) and Lewis (2009), the interest of the investors towards Islamic mutual funds was increasing tremendously. Thus, it leads to the second hypothesis, the $H_2$ is the return performance of the Islamic MF is differ and not equal to the return performance of the Conventional MF. It is expected that the both funds would have positive returns but the Islamic funds would get higher.

The study also assumed that the average return performance of the Islamic mutual funds is higher than the average return performance of the conventional mutual funds. The expected result is that the Islamic mutual funds show better performance than the conventional mutual funds. The study assumed better performance mean the fund would give a superior return to the investors. As a result, there should be a difference in term of risk between these two portfolios. The risk of Islamic MF is expected to be higher due to high risk high return principle. Thus the third hypothesis, the $H_3$ is the risk performance of the Islamic MF is not equal to the risk performance of the Conventional MF.

4. Findings and Discussion

The summary statistics of the data is presented in Table 1. The statistics indicated the Islamic MF and Conventional MF have positive returns about 0.378% and 0.42% respectively. Meanwhile, the market portfolio has obtained losses about 0.003%. In contrast to Abdullah et al. (2007), the results show the mean returns of the Islamic and Conventional portfolios are positive and greater than the market portfolio.
Table 1
The summary statistics of the returns for the Islamic MF, Conventional MF and KLCI return, proxy for the market portfolio.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Islamic MF</th>
<th>Conventional MF</th>
<th>KLCI</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>0.377451</td>
<td>0.419782</td>
<td>-0.002506</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median</td>
<td>0.647792</td>
<td>0.629008</td>
<td>0.574873</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maximum</td>
<td>20.01187</td>
<td>18.52425</td>
<td>29.44212</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minimum</td>
<td>-20.69660</td>
<td>-17.72116</td>
<td>-28.46320</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Std. Dev.</td>
<td>5.311661</td>
<td>4.694071</td>
<td>7.972990</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skewness</td>
<td>0.114840</td>
<td>0.188258</td>
<td>0.025074</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kurtosis</td>
<td>7.041505</td>
<td>5.910952</td>
<td>5.563609</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jarque-Bera</td>
<td>109.2434</td>
<td>57.43605</td>
<td>43.83070</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Probability</td>
<td>0.000000</td>
<td>0.000000</td>
<td>0.000000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sum</td>
<td>60.39212</td>
<td>67.16508</td>
<td>-0.400915</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sum Sq. Dev.</td>
<td>4485.985</td>
<td>3503.454</td>
<td>10107.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Observations</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>160</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In addition, the residual test indicated the data was approximately normal distributed as the histogram generally showed the bell-shape. Table 1 also reports that the skewness and the kurtosis for an each variable is zero and is slightly upper than 3 respectively. The data are also stationary and fluctuate over time as presented in Figure 1. Figure 1 shows the graph of the mean returns of all the portfolios.

Figure 1
Summary statistics of the mean returns of the Islamic MF, Conventional MF and the KCLI return.

Figure 1 plots the line and density graphs of the returns distribution for all the portfolios. The density functions of all the portfolios are estimated using Gaussian Kernel estimation. The comparison of these line and density function provide informed but intuitive inference about the movement of the portfolios. The null hypothesis can be rejected as both portfolios follow the
market trend. The Islamic and Conventional portfolios are moving together follow the market portfolio. It can be seen that the movement of all the portfolios is fluctuated overtime within the period.

For the Islamic, the kernel density plot is visibly shifted to the left relative to the Conventional one, indicating that the fund portrays more outliers. The Islamic MF has shown less dispersed as the data are not closely assembled at 0 point, relative to its Conventional MF peers. For the market, the density plot is also left-shifted but to a more extent. The results reveal that the Islamic MF is more volatile and closely mirrored to the market portfolio. Consistent with the residual test, all portfolios indicate that their distributions are approximately normal distributed.

The study then expected that the mean return performance of the Islamic MF and the Conventional MF is not equal to each other, as mentioned in the second hypothesis. However, if it is no significance difference between these two portfolios, we cannot reject the null hypothesis of this study is the mean return for the Islamic MF is equal with the mean return of the Conventional MF. The test aims to analyse the return between two portfolios in order to see better performance return between them. The t-test is applied and the result is shown in Table 2.

**Table 2**
The t-test between the Islamic MF and Conventional MF monthly aggregate returns, January 1996 to April 2009

| Test for Equality of Means Returns Between Series |
|---------------------------------|-------|------|------|
| Method                          | df    | Value | Probability |
| t-test                          | 318   | -0.075537 | 0.9398 |

| Category Statistics |
|---------------------|--------|--------|--------|
| Portfolio           | Obs    | Mean   | Std. Dev.  |
| Islamic MF          | 160    | 0.377451 | 5.311661 |
| Conventional MF     | 160    | 0.419782 | 4.694071 |
| All                 | 320    | 0.398616 | 5.004569 |

The t-test in Table 2 shows there is statistically no significant difference between both portfolios as the p-value is 0.9398 with the t-stat of -0.0755 at degree of freedom of 318. Thus the null hypothesis is accepted; indicate that there is no statistically significant difference between the returns performance of the Islamic and Conventional MF. However, the result shows the mean return of Conventional MF is slightly higher than the Islamic MF with a low of standard deviation about 4.6941. The return of the Islamic MF is 0.3775 relative to the Conventional MF at 0.4198.
In order to further analyse the risk, the study applies the variance analysis. The study runs the test for the standard deviation of both portfolios and the results are presented in Table 3. The null hypothesis is the standard deviation is equal between both portfolios, and the alternative hypothesis is they are not equal to each other, as noted in the third hypothesis.

The result of F-test in Table 3 denotes there is a highly significant difference between the risk performance of these two portfolios, and the result is statistically significant at significant at both 5% and 10% levels. Thus, the null hypothesis can be rejected. The result reveals that the Islamic MF portfolio is riskier than the Conventional MF counterparts. It is implied that the Islamic portfolio has higher risk with slightly higher standard deviation as compared with the Conventional portfolio.

### Table 3
The t-test between the Islamic MF and Conventional MF monthly aggregate returns, January 1996 to April 2009

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Method</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Probability</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>F-test</td>
<td>(159, 159)</td>
<td>1.821548</td>
<td>0.0002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bartlett</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>14.04169</td>
<td>0.0002</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Category Statistics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Std. Dev.</th>
<th>Mean Diff.</th>
<th>Median Diff.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Islamic MF</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>2.490446</td>
<td>1.775312</td>
<td>1.623886</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conventional MF</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>1.845257</td>
<td>1.314828</td>
<td>1.260933</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All</td>
<td>320</td>
<td>2.200487</td>
<td>1.545070</td>
<td>1.442409</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Bartlett weighted standard deviation: 2.191722

To strengthen the results and for the robustness test, the study also runs the covariance test between both portfolios and for each portfolio with the market portfolio. The study expects the value of the test is not equal to zero, indicating that both portfolios as well as the portfolios with the market portfolio are dependent and correlated to each other, as previously discussed in the first hypothesis. Three covariance tests are conducted that are; between the Islamic MF and Conventional MF; between the Islamic MF and the market portfolio and between the Conventional MF and the market portfolio. The results are presented in Table 4.
Table 4 reports the covariance between Islamic and Conventional MF are not equal to zero, then the null hypothesis can be rejected as the covariance of this portfolio are 23.87, implying that these two portfolios are dependent to each other.

The null hypothesis can also be rejected as the values of the covariance are not equal to zero. The covariance of the Islamic MF is slightly higher than the covariance of the Conventional MF, at 37.69 and 34.72 respectively, implying the Islamic portfolio is comparatively more volatile than the Conventional portfolio. The findings provide consistency with the results as previously discussed. The descriptive statistics and the graph in this study indicate that the Islamic MF portfolio has more volatile with higher standard deviation in relation to its Conventional peers. The evidence implies that the former portfolio (i.e. Islamic MF) is closely mirrored to the market movement as compared with the latter portfolio (i.e. Conventional MF).

In addition, the results denote that both Islamic MF and Conventional MF portfolios are also dependence on the market portfolio. The null hypothesis can be rejected as the Islamic and Conventional MF are highly positively correlated to each other at 0.9636. The study also conveys that both portfolios have strongly correlated with the market portfolio at 0.8955 and 0.9336 respectively.

5. Conclusion and Limitation

The main finding in this paper denotes there is a highly strong correlation between the Islamic and Conventional MF portfolios with the market portfolio, indicating that market trend has given the impact to the development of the equity market, directly to the mutual funds industry in Malaysia. The findings reveal that, on average, both returns performance of the Islamic and Conventional MF portfolios are higher than the KLCI index, proxy for the market returns for the period of January 1996 to April 2009. However, it is reported that on average, the Islamic mutual funds portfolio provides slightly less mean returns performance relative to the Conventional counterparts.
within the duration period. However, the result is statistically insignificant. Moreover, the result is also shown a statistically significant difference between the standard deviation of the portfolios, indicating that the Islamic MF portfolio is riskier than the Conventional MF. One possible reason is due to the market penetration is small and the volatility of the fund portfolio is higher rather than Conventional counterparts.

Although the study assumes that the Islamic MF portfolio could perform better than the Conventional MF due to it is tremendously growth in the market, but the result does not support the hypothesis. The other possible reasons are the Islamic MF is relatively new, and the funds developments are still young and limited. As acknowledged by Elfakhani et al., (2005), the Islamic mutual funds are still in their infancy stage of growth and development was improving with time.

However, the highly significant difference of the standard deviation of the Islamic MF relative to the Conventional MF can be interpreted that the Islamic MF is more volatile and reacted faster rather than the Conventional peers, in relation to the market movement. Therefore, the Islamic MF portfolio is suitable to the investors who plan to have higher volatility return from the investment selection based on market trend performance.

Yet, the study limits the evaluation on average monthly aggregate returns performance of both funds portfolios only for overall period from 1996 to April 2009. As a result, the returns performance based on different market cycle has not been evaluated. In addition, the study focuses on overall funds rather than an individual fund. The evaluation on performance by taken into consideration some of the points could portray more significant findings. Hence, further study shall be done to evaluate the performance according to market situation, especially during the bullish and bearish market. This could be benefit in order to capture the different movement of the funds based on the particular market trend. We shall investigate these matters in future work.

Acknowledgements

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Endnotes

\(^1\) The calculation is based on; 95-8/8*100. Even the most popular Islamic financial products, that is sukuk could not reach the similar growth as Islamic mutual funds. The Malaysian government pioneered Islamic finance globally when it issued the first sukuk in 2002 for US$600million (Bhatti, I. 2007) As reported by Bernama (2008), Malaysia is considered as the world’s largest sukuk market with RM213 billion (68.9 %) of the global outstanding sukuk as at end 2007. In terms of growth, it comprised of an average annual growth in issuances of 22 percent for the period 2001-2007. Furthermore, for the industry, the Islamic finance has continued to demonstrate its evolution and strong growth as assets have expanded by 22%
to RM192 billion in Malaysia alone for the year 2008 and now accounts for 15.0% of the total assets in the Malaysian industry (Ghani, 2009).

ii 13 years refer from year 1996 to March, 2009; the calculation is based on 232-29*100.

References


