

PRESENTATION OF HALAL AND HARAM RULINGS TO THE ORANG ASLI COMMUNITY IN NEGERI SEMBILAN, MALAYSIA: AN ANALYSIS BASED ON THE PROPHETIC METHODOLOGY

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Abstract

The presentation of halal and haram rulings to the Orang Asli community in Negeri Sembilan remains a significant challenge in contemporary da'wah efforts and in strengthening Islamic practice among indigenous communities. Previous studies have shown that concerns related to lifestyle changes, dietary restrictions, customary practices, and religious obligations often influence the acceptance of Islam among the Orang Asli. However, scholarly discussions on the gradual and facilitative presentation of Islamic rulings based on the Prophetic Methodology (*Manhaj Nabawi*) remain limited, particularly from empirical and systematic perspectives. Therefore, this study aims to analyse the halal and haram-related factors that influence the Orang Asli community and to evaluate the application of the Prophetic Methodology as an analytical framework in contemporary da'wah practices. This study employed a quantitative approach using questionnaire instruments involving 68 respondents consisting of Da'wah Activists (*Penggerak Dakwah*), Orang Asli Visitation Companions (*Rakan Ziarah*), and supervising officers in Negeri Sembilan. The data were analysed using descriptive statistics and exploratory factor analysis. The findings identified five major factors contributing to reluctance towards embracing Islam, namely lifestyle changes, religious obligations, abandoning customary foods, giving up preferred foods and drinks, and customary barriers. The study further demonstrates that the Prophetic approaches of gradualism (*tadarruj*), facilitation (*taysir*), and sensitivity to social realities play a significant role in presenting Islamic rulings to indigenous communities. The findings are specific to the Negeri Sembilan field context and suggest that da'wah approaches based on the Prophetic Methodology should be strengthened through a deeper understanding of socio-cultural realities and the application of contextual fiqh approaches.

Keywords: *Prophetic Methodology, Orang Asli, Halal and Haram, Da'wah, Contextual Fiqh*



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INTRODUCTION

The Orang Asli community constitutes an integral component of Malaysia's pluralistic society, possessing a distinct cultural identity and a long-standing historical heritage (Mohd Shah et al., 2018, p. 4). According to records from the Department of Orang Asli Development, the Orang Asli population is estimated at 178,197 individuals, representing approximately 0.5 percent of Malaysia's total population (Zulkipli et al., 2021, p. 7001). This indigenous community consists of 18 ethnic subgroups classified into three major categories, namely the Negrito, Senoi, and Proto-Malay groups, each maintaining its own dialects, customs, and social structures (Mahmud et al., 2022, p. 1).

The livelihood of the Orang Asli community is closely connected to environmental freedom and a strong dependence on the surrounding ecosystem. Statistical data indicate that approximately 38 percent of the Orang Asli population continue to reside in remote interior regions, while 61 percent live in suburban areas surrounded by rich natural resources and biodiversity. Such geographical conditions and socio-cultural isolation contribute to a slower process of adaptation to new lifestyles and social practices (Hassan & Ramli, 2020a).

Within the context of Islamization, various government agencies and non-governmental organizations have actively undertaken Islamic da'wah initiatives among the Orang Asli community for several decades (Don et al., 2024). Nevertheless, the rate of conversion to Islam within this indigenous minority community remains relatively low and continues to present significant challenges (Kamaruddin et al., 2023). Existing studies suggest that the primary obstacle does not merely stem from theological rejection of the concept of monotheism. Rather, it is closely associated with psychological barriers commonly described as conversion anxiety (Rasip et al., 2025). This anxiety is often influenced by concerns over the possible loss of cultural freedom, traditional lifestyles, and existing social practices following conversion to Islam (Hassan & Ramli, 2020b).

The da'wah message delivered to the Orang Asli community sometimes generates concern that embracing Islam may significantly restrict their traditional way of life, particularly regarding compliance with halal and haram rulings (Kamaruddin et al., 2023). Such psychological resistance becomes more pronounced when Islamic prohibitions are perceived as directly affecting their customary dietary practices and traditional sources of hunted protein that form part of their ecological lifestyle. Similar concerns also arise from changes in daily routines associated with the observance of purification (taharah) and prayer obligations (Amin et al., 2018). Consequently, strict interpretations of religious rulings are occasionally perceived by sections of this minority community as burdensome regulations that disrupt their established rhythm of life (Hassan & Ramli, 2020a). Consequently, some within the community perceive Islam as a religion that restricts and confines their freedom, making it difficult to practice (Syed Hussin, 2009).

Accordingly, this article seeks to empirically examine the halal and haram-related factors that contribute to conversion anxiety among the Orang Asli community based on field data. The findings are subsequently analyzed through the framework of the Prophetic Methodology (Manhaj Nabawi) as a critical analytical lens in formulating a more contextual fiqh approach. This approach is essential in ensuring the sustainability of Islamic practice among the Orang Asli Muslim community in Malaysia (Don et al., 2024).

LITERATURE REVIEW

This literature review discusses three principal themes that constitute the foundational framework of the present study. The first theme concerns the socio-cultural isolation experienced by the Orang Asli community and its implications for religious engagement (Hassan & Ramli, 2020a). The second examines the conflict surrounding halal and haram rulings, including issues related to purification (*taharah*), as contributing factors to psychological anxiety among the indigenous community (Hassan et al., 2025). The third theme explores the application of the principles of facilitation (*taysir*) and gradualism (*tadarruj*) within the Prophetic Methodology (*Manhaj Nabawi*) as a contextual *fiqh* approach in Islamic *da'wah* directed towards indigenous communities (Don et al., 2024).

Socio-cultural Dynamics and the Challenge of Isolation among the Orang Asli

Islamic *da'wah* efforts directed towards the Orang Asli community in Malaysia have been actively carried out for more than four decades through the involvement of various government agencies and non-governmental organizations (Mohd Amin et al., 2021, pp. 243–247). Despite these continuous efforts, the process of religious acceptance within the Orang Asli community continues to face significant challenges associated with geographical isolation, cultural identity, and the socio-cultural realities of indigenous life (Kamaruddin et al., 2023).

Hassan and Ramli (2020a) observed that a large proportion of the Orang Asli population still resides in remote tropical forest areas and remains relatively isolated from modern socio-cultural systems. Such conditions contribute to a slower and more cautious process of adaptation towards new religious practices and social norms. Benjamin (1989) and Salleh (1991) further argued that the process of Islamization is frequently misunderstood as a form of cultural assimilation, thereby creating the perception that conversion to Islam simultaneously requires conformity to the cultural identity and lifestyle of the Malay Muslim community (Amin et al., 2017).

This perception indirectly contributes to the emergence of psychological distance between the Orang Asli community and Islamic *da'wah* initiatives (Hassan & Ramli, 2020b). Muhammad and Zin (2000) further emphasized that *da'wah* approaches which fail to appreciate the cultural diversity and social background of the target community may trigger early forms of rejection and sociological resistance towards the Islamic message being conveyed (Mohd Amin et al., 2021, pp. 243–247). Within indigenous communities, issues related to cultural identity and the preservation of traditional practices often become central considerations in the process of religious acceptance and social transformation (Kamaruddin et al., 2023).

The Conflict of Halal and Haram Rulings and Taharah as Factors of Psychological Anxiety

Beyond the issue of cultural identity, anxiety over changes in lifestyle and traditional sources of livelihood also constitutes a significant factor influencing the acceptance of Islam among the Orang Asli community (Hassan & Ramli, 2020a). The community's strong dependence on forest resources makes wild animals such as macaques, langurs, squirrels, and wild boars an important source of daily protein intake (Amin et al., 2017).

Under certain circumstances, a rigid presentation of halal and haram rulings that neglects local socio-cultural realities may create the perception that practicing Islam would complicate

their daily lives (Kamaruddin et al., 2023). This situation becomes increasingly complex when it involves issues related to taharah (purification) and najāsah (ritual impurities) within shared living environments involving non-Muslim family members (Hassan et al., 2025). Hassan et al. (2025) found that one of the major dilemmas experienced by Orang Asli converts concerns the management of najāsah al-khinzīr (porcine impurity), particularly in relation to the shared use of kitchen utensils, dining equipment, and residential spaces.

The application of the definitive view (qaul muṭamad) of the Shafi‘i school of thought, which requires the practice of heavy ritual cleansing (sertu) for utensils exposed to porcine impurities, sometimes generates interpersonal tension within non-Muslim families living in the same household (Hassan et al., 2025). In certain situations, the insistence on performing sertu on shared plates and kitchen utensils is perceived as a rejection of the cleanliness, customs, and cultural practices of their family members (Hassan & Ramli, 2020a). Consequently, this situation may lead to psychological stress, social isolation, and family conflict, ultimately affecting the sustainability of Islamic practice among Orang Asli Muslim converts (Rasip et al., 2025).

This phenomenon may be understood through the framework of conversion anxiety, which refers to the psychological apprehension experienced when the acceptance of a new religion is perceived as requiring substantial changes to one’s identity, social relationships, cultural practices, and daily routines (Rasip et al., 2025). In indigenous communities, concerns surrounding cultural identity and the continuity of traditional practices frequently become central factors influencing religious acceptance and social adaptation (Kamaruddin et al., 2023). Within this context, issues related to halal, haram, and taharah should not be viewed solely as matters of ritual jurisprudence. Rather, they also involve broader social, cultural, and psychological dimensions that significantly shape the reception of Islamic da’wah within the target community (Don et al., 2024).

Literature on shared pluralistic kitchens further indicates that ritual impurity should be managed through verified exposure rather than indiscriminate assumptions about all utensils used by non-Muslim family members. Hassan et al. (2025) recommend a context-sensitive approach that considers actual contamination, practical hardship, and family harmony. Consistent with this distinction, the Federal Territories Mufti Department (2016) states that utensils are presumed clean in the absence of clear evidence of severe impurity; ordinary washing is sufficient for general use, whereas ritual cleansing is required when contact with porcine impurity is clearly established. In practice, cross-contamination can therefore be reduced through clearly labelled or separately stored utensils where necessary, washing food-contact surfaces after confirmed exposure, and avoiding unnecessary declarations of impurity that may intensify family conflict.

The Lens of the Prophetic Methodology: Taysir, Tadarruj, and Contextual Fiqh

To address the socio-cultural tensions and psychological anxieties experienced by the Orang Asli community, contemporary Islamic scholars have increasingly emphasized a more contextual approach to fiqh that takes into consideration the lived realities of the local community (*fiqh al-waṣiqi*) (Don et al., 2024). Abdul Ghani et al. (2014) argued that the presentation of Islamic rulings within the context of da’wah must be evaluated through the framework of the Higher Objectives of Shariah (*Maqasid al-Shariah*) to ensure that Islamic teachings are not perceived as burdensome or as imposing excessive hardship upon the target community. In this regard, elements such as legal flexibility, concessions (rukhsah), and

da'wah priorities should be carefully considered to avoid an overly literal and rigid approach that may alienate the community (Hassan & Ramli, 2020b).

This approach is firmly rooted in the Prophetic Methodology (*Manhaj Nabawi*), which emphasizes the principles of *taysir* (facilitation), *tadarruj* (gradualism), and sensitivity towards the social conditions of the target community (*mura'at ahwal al-nas*) (Amin et al., 2017). This principle is clearly reflected in the advice of the Prophet Muhammad to Mu'adh bin Jabal and Abu Musa al-Ash'ari when they were sent to Yemen:

يَسِّرُوا وَلَا تُعَسِّرُوا، وَبَشِّرُوا وَلَا تُنْفِرُوا

Meaning: "Make things easy and do not make them difficult. Give glad tidings and do not drive people away" (Narrated by al-Bukhari, 2002).

As an initial effort to formulate a more contextual framework for presenting Islamic rulings to the Orang Asli community, Amin et al. (2017) proposed a conceptual model based on the principle of *taysir* in teaching halal and haram to indigenous communities in Malaysia. The study emphasized that a *da'wah* approach that excessively focuses on prohibitive aspects without considering the socio-cultural realities of the target community may generate fear, misunderstanding, and negative perceptions of Islam among the Orang Asli. Accordingly, the study proposed several foundational elements as part of an alternative framework for the presentation of Islamic rulings. These include the integration of diverse juristic opinions across the major schools of Islamic law, the application of principles of *usul al-fiqh* particularly in situations involving necessity (*darurah*) and need (*hajah*), the consideration of concessions (*rukhsah*), the jurisprudence of priorities (*fiqh al-awlawiyyat*), and the broader framework of *Maqasid al-Shariah* (Amin et al., 2017).

More recent developments indicate that the *taysir* approach has also been extended to more specific issues, particularly those related to *taharah* (purification) management and the family life of Orang Asli Muslim converts. For example, Hassan et al. (2025) employed the Fuzzy Delphi Method involving fatwa experts to develop a *Fiqh al-Taharah* Model for the Orang Asli Muslim community in Malaysia. The proposed model advocates a more flexible approach to *taharah* management that takes into account the realities of pluralistic family life in order to preserve social harmony and ensure the sustainability of Islamic practice among converts.

Institutional guidance in Malaysia also provides a practical basis for this contextual orientation. JAKIM's Guidelines for the Management of New Converts frames post-conversion guidance as an integrated responsibility that protects the welfare of converts and their families and seeks to preserve social harmony (Department of Islamic Development Malaysia [JAKIM], 2015). At the level of applied legal guidance, the Federal Territories Mufti Department's ruling on the use of non-Muslim kitchen utensils distinguishes between unverified use, for which the presumption of purity remains, and confirmed exposure to severe impurity, which requires the prescribed cleansing procedure (Federal Territories Mufti Department, 2016). Although these documents are not exclusively formulated for the Orang Asli, they constitute relevant Malaysian administrative and juristic precedents for applying *taysir*, verification, and family-sensitive guidance to indigenous converts.

Nevertheless, although the *taysir* framework in the presentation of halal and haram rulings has been conceptually developed (Amin et al., 2017) and later applied to specific *taharah*-related issues (Hassan et al., 2025), the application of this principle as a comprehensive

analytical framework grounded in empirical field data has yet to receive systematic scholarly attention. Most previous studies have primarily focused on theoretical model development or specific legal resolutions without directly linking them to statistical analyses of psychological anxiety factors such as lifestyle changes, restrictions on traditional food practices, religious obligations, and conflicts involving cultural identity among the Orang Asli community (Mohd Shah et al., 2018).

Consequently, the present study seeks to expand upon earlier conceptual discussions by integrating empirical field data and systematic factor analysis while utilizing the Prophetic Methodology (Manhaj Nabawi) as the primary analytical framework (Don et al., 2024). Such an approach is essential for achieving a deeper understanding of the relationship between the socio-cultural realities of the Orang Asli community and the need for a more contextual approach in presenting Islamic rulings within contemporary Islamic da'wah in Malaysia (Hassan & Ramli, 2020a).

METHODOLOGY

This study employed a quantitative research design to empirically examine the barrier factors associated with halal and haram rulings that contribute to psychological anxiety among the Orang Asli community towards embracing Islam. Primary data were collected using a questionnaire instrument consisting of 19 main items measured on a five-point Likert scale.

Sampling and Respondent Profile

The study employed purposive sampling involving a total of 68 respondents (N = 68). The respondents consisted primarily of frontline da'wah personnel, including 40 Orang Asli Visitation Companions (Rakan Ziarah), representing 58.82%; 26 Orang Asli Da'wah Activists (*Penggerak Dakwah*), representing 38.24%; and two officers responsible for supervising Orang Asli affairs at the Negeri Sembilan Da'wah Centre, representing 2.94%. These percentages were calculated to two decimal places and total 100.00%. The distribution of questionnaires and data collection processes were fully conducted at the Negeri Sembilan Da'wah Centre Complex, Paroi.

The methodological strength of this study lies in the precision of its respondent profile. The selected respondents were strategically chosen due to their extensive engagement and direct interaction with the Orang Asli community in the field. More importantly, 24 respondents (35.3%) consisted of Orang Asli converts to Islam who actively served as *da'wah* activists and visitation companions within their own communities. The inclusion of this insider group significantly strengthened the contextual validity of the study, as they possessed deeper insights into the cultural practices, social sensitivities, and psychological resistance experienced within the Orang Asli community. Their lived experience enabled them to understand these realities more accurately and without external bias.

Instrument Reliability and Data Analysis

To ensure that the research instrument met acceptable academic standards, a reliability test was conducted to examine the consistency of respondents' answers to the questionnaire items. Instrument reliability was assessed using Cronbach's Alpha through the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software (Awang, 2009).

The Standardized Items Alpha analysis recorded a Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.759 (75.9%). This value exceeded the acceptable minimum threshold of 0.60, indicating that the research instrument possessed satisfactory internal consistency and was statistically reliable for measuring the intended research constructs (Konting, 1990; Noah, 2002).

The collected data were subsequently analysed using two main statistical procedures:

Descriptive Statistical Analysis: Measures of central tendency, particularly mean scores, were employed to evaluate respondents' levels of agreement regarding the sociological anxieties experienced by the Orang Asli community. These anxieties primarily involved concerns related to abandoning customary foods, fulfilling religious obligations, and adapting purification (*taharah*) practices within their daily lives.

Inferential Statistical Analysis (Factor Analysis): To identify the underlying causes of resistance towards *da'wah*, factor analysis using the Varimax Rotation procedure was applied. This method was used to extract, classify, and reduce the barrier variables into several principal components. The analysis enabled the study to identify the dominant factors collectively contributing to conversion anxiety among the Orang Asli community.

RESEARCH FINDINGS

This section presents the findings derived from the empirical analysis involving 68 respondents consisting of *da'wah* activists and Orang Asli visitation companions in Negeri Sembilan. The findings are organised into two main components. The first presents the descriptive statistical analysis concerning the levels of anxiety and psychological barriers experienced by the Orang Asli community towards embracing Islam. The second discusses the Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) conducted to identify the dominant factors contributing to conversion anxiety within the context of presenting halal and haram rulings.

Descriptive Analysis: Levels of Anxiety and Psychological Barriers

Overall, the analysis of central tendency measurements indicates that most respondents agreed that the Orang Asli community demonstrates a considerable level of anxiety towards embracing Islam due to various prohibitions and religious obligations associated with halal and haram rulings (Mean = 4.10, SD = 0.80). This finding suggests that halal and haram-related concerns significantly shape the Orang Asli community's perception of lifestyle changes following conversion to Islam.

Respondents further agreed that one of the primary sources of anxiety stems from the perception that embracing Islam requires substantial changes to their traditional way of life (Mean = 3.85, SD = 0.95). In addition, many respondents perceived that conversion to Islam is closely associated with cultural assimilation into the Malay-Muslim way of life and identity transformation (Mean = 4.00, SD = 0.81).

From the perspective of traditional food and beverages, the prohibition of alcoholic drinks such as liquor, *tapai* water, and *tuak* recorded the highest mean score as a major source of concern (Mean = 4.23, SD = 0.60). This was followed by the prohibition of consuming pork or swine (Mean = 4.02, SD = 0.75), as well as hunted forest animals such as langurs, macaques, apes (Mean = 3.91, SD = 0.85), and squirrels (Mean = 3.84, SD = 0.93). These

findings demonstrate that traditional food sources, which are deeply connected to the Orang Asli's forest-based lifestyle and dietary culture, strongly influence their perception towards Islam.

Beyond dietary concerns, religious obligations related to daily worship practices were also perceived as challenging factors in the process of embracing Islam. Based on the recorded mean scores, the obligation to perform the five daily prayers (Mean = 4.02, SD = 0.86), fasting during Ramadan (Mean = 4.02, SD = 0.86), and observing Islamic dress codes and *aurah* requirements (Mean = 3.88, SD = 0.83) were identified as among the religious responsibilities considered difficult by the Orang Asli community.

In relation to *taharah* (ritual purification) and everyday living practices, respondents agreed that circumcision represents one of the most sensitive and concerning issues (Mean = 3.94, SD = 0.97). Concerns relating to pet dogs also recorded relatively high agreement scores, including restrictions on touching dogs (Mean = 3.88, SD = 0.87), allowing dogs inside the house (Mean = 3.76, SD = 0.88), and keeping dogs as pets in general (Mean = 3.67, SD = 0.96). These findings indicate that issues related to *taharah* are closely connected to the sociocultural realities of the Orang Asli community, particularly their close relationship with domestic animals and the surrounding forest environment.

Exploratory Factor Analysis: Extraction of Dominant Factors

To identify the principal factors contributing to the psychological anxiety of the Orang Asli community towards embracing Islam, an exploratory factor analysis using the Varimax Rotation procedure was conducted on the study items.

The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) Measure of Sampling Adequacy recorded a value of 0.556, while Bartlett's Test of Sphericity was statistically significant ($p < .001$). The KMO value exceeds the minimum threshold of .50 identified by Kaiser and Rice (1974), but it remains within the marginal or 'barely acceptable' range and must therefore be interpreted cautiously. The analysis was retained because Bartlett's test confirmed that the correlation matrix was not an identity matrix, the extraction produced five interpretable components with eigenvalues greater than 1.0, and the components collectively explained 80.31% of the variance. Nevertheless, the modest sample of 68 respondents and the marginal KMO value limit the stability and generalisability of the factor solution. Proceeding with EFA is justified here as an exploratory analysis of a specialised and difficult-to-reach respondent pool; the extracted structure should be validated with a larger and more geographically diverse sample in future research.

The analysis identified five principal factors with eigenvalues exceeding 1.0, collectively explaining 80.31% of the total variance in the study. The extracted factors are presented as follows:

Table 1: Rotated Component Matrix

Factor	Variance (%)
Factor 1: Lifestyle Changes	31.73
Factor 2: Demands of Performing Worship	17.41
Factor 3: Abandoning Customary Foods	15.98
Factor 4: Giving Up Preferred Foods and Drinks	8.10
Factor 5: Abandoning Customs and Traditions	7.08

Based on the Rotated Component Matrix, Factor 1, labelled as “Lifestyle Changes,” emerged as the most dominant factor, contributing 31.73% of the total variance. This factor includes items related to the perceived need to change one’s way of life (.867), the prohibition of keeping dogs (.862), the expectation to adopt a Malay-Muslim lifestyle (.798), restrictions on allowing dogs inside the house (.766), the prohibition of touching dogs (.691), the obligation of circumcision (.640), and the abandonment of traditional taboos and beliefs (.587).

These findings suggest that concerns over changes in daily routines, cultural identity, and traditional lifestyle practices constitute the primary source of anxiety towards Islam among the Orang Asli community.

The second factor, namely “Demands of Performing Worship,” contributed 17.41% of the total variance. This factor encompasses religious obligations such as fasting during Ramadan (.936), covering the *aurah* or modesty requirements (.899), performing the five daily prayers (.877), and the requirement of ritual cleansing (*sertu*) for houses exposed to dogs (.595).

This finding indicates that the practical demands of Islamic worship and purification (*taharah*) significantly influence perceptions regarding the difficulty of practicing Islam in daily life.

The third factor, “Abandoning Customary Foods,” contributed 15.98% of the total variance. The factor includes prohibitions against consuming langurs, macaques, and apes (.932), pork or swine (.812), squirrels (.808), and snakes (.681).

This finding demonstrates that traditional food sources, which are deeply connected to the Orang Asli hunting lifestyle and ecosystem, play a substantial role in shaping attitudes towards the acceptance of Islam.

The fourth factor, “Giving Up Preferred Foods and Drinks,” accounted for 8.10% of the total variance. This factor involves the prohibition of consuming alcoholic beverages such as liquor, *tapai* water, and *tuak* (.745), as well as the prohibition of eating monitor lizards and other reptiles (.726).

The findings indicate that traditional dietary culture and customary beverages are closely associated with the social identity and communal lifestyle of the Orang Asli community.

The fifth factor, “Abandoning Customs and Traditions,” contributed 7.08% of the total variance. This factor refers to the perceived necessity of abandoning traditional customs and cultural practices of the Orang Asli community (.882).

Overall, the findings reveal that the Orang Asli community’s anxiety towards embracing Islam is influenced more by concerns related to social, cultural, and lifestyle changes rather than purely theological issues. This pattern highlights the importance of adopting a more contextual and culturally sensitive approach in presenting Islamic rulings to indigenous communities.

The findings further reinforce the relevance of the Prophetic Methodology (*Manhaj Nabawi*), particularly the principles of facilitation (*taysir*), gradualism (*tadarruj*), and sensitivity towards social realities (*mura’at ahwal al-nas*), in ensuring that Islamic teachings are

conveyed in a manner that is both practical and socially sustainable within the Orang Asli context.

DISCUSSION

The findings presented in Section 4 reveal that the Orang Asli community's anxiety toward embracing Islam is influenced more by socio-cultural concerns and changes in daily routines than by purely theological considerations. The five principal factors extracted through factor analysis indicate that lifestyle transformation, religious obligations, traditional dietary practices, and customary norms are strongly associated with conversion anxiety within the indigenous community.

These findings suggest that the presentation of Islamic rulings should not be approached in a rigid or purely literal manner that neglects the lived realities of the target community. Instead, the study highlights the importance of a *da'wah* approach that is sensitive to the socio-cultural context of the Orang Asli community, as reflected in the Prophetic Methodology (*Manhaj Nabawi*). This methodology emphasizes the principles of facilitation (*taysir*), gradualism (*tadarruj*), and consideration of the social conditions of people (*mura'at ahwal al-nas*).

Accordingly, this discussion examines the application of these Prophetic principles through three major dimensions: the management of lifestyle transformation and religious obligations, the handling of halal and haram issues related to traditional dietary practices, and the application of *fiqh al-taharah* within the context of pluralistic family life.

The Application of Tadarruj and Fiqh al-awlawiyyat in Managing Religious Practice and Cultural Identity

The factor analysis demonstrates that anxiety related to lifestyle transformation contributed the highest variance in this study at 31.73%, followed by anxiety associated with religious obligations at 17.41%. These findings indicate that the acceptance of Islam among the Orang Asli community is closely connected to processes of social and cultural adaptation within their everyday lives.

Within the context of *da'wah*, this reality necessitates the application of *tadarruj* (gradualism), as exemplified in the *sirah* of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). The Quran itself introduced Islamic rulings gradually during the formative period of early Muslim society, particularly in matters involving entrenched customs and socio-cultural practices within Arab society. This gradual approach is reflected in the words of Allah SWT:

﴿فَقُولَا لَهُ قَوْلًا لَيِّنًا﴾

Meaning: "And speak to him with gentle speech" (Surah Taha, 20:44).

In the context of the Orang Asli community, imposing the full spectrum of religious obligations and demanding immediate cultural transformation during the early stages of Islamization may generate psychological pressure and serious adaptation difficulties. Consequently, the principle of *Fiqh al-awlawiyyat* (jurisprudence of priorities) becomes highly significant in determining *da'wah* priorities. Greater emphasis should first be placed

on strengthening *aqidah* (creed) and nurturing a fundamental understanding of Islam before expecting the comprehensive implementation of Islamic rulings.

Furthermore, the findings concerning anxiety over abandoning customs and traditional practices demonstrate that cultural identity remains closely linked to the acceptance of Islam among the Orang Asli community. In this regard, *da'wah* approaches must clearly differentiate between the universal principles of Islamic teachings and elements rooted in local Malay culture. As long as particular customs do not contradict the principles of *Shariah* and the higher objectives of Islamic law (*Maqasid al-Shariah*), the cultural identity of the indigenous community should be respected and appreciated as part of the diversity recognized within Islam.

The Taysir Approach in Managing Halal and Haram Issues

The findings of this study reveal that concerns related to traditional dietary practices and customary beverages constitute some of the primary sources of anxiety among the Orang Asli community regarding the acceptance of Islam. Restrictions on certain hunted animals, traditional drinks, and long-established food practices are often perceived as directly affecting the community's survival, cultural continuity, and indigenous identity. Within this context, the principle of *taysir* (facilitation) emerges as a fundamental basis in the presentation of halal and haram rulings. This principle is consistent with the statement of Allah SWT:

﴿يُرِيدُ اللَّهُ بِكُمُ الْيُسْرَ وَلَا يُرِيدُ بِكُمُ الْعُسْرَ﴾

Meaning: "Allah intends ease for you and does not intend hardship for you" (Surah al-Baqarah, 2:185).

This principle is also supported by a hadith narrated in al-Bukhari (2002):

يَسِّرُوا وَلَا تُعَسِّرُوا، وَبَشِّرُوا وَلَا تُنْفِرُوا

Meaning: "Make things easy and do not make them difficult; give glad tidings and do not drive people away" (Narrated by al-Bukhari, 2002).

Referring to the *Taysir* Model in the teaching of halal and haram proposed by Amin et al. (2017), the presentation of Islamic rulings to the Orang Asli community should take into consideration several essential elements. These include the diversity of juristic opinions across the various schools of Islamic law, the consideration of circumstances involving necessity (*darurah*) and need (*hajah*), the application of legal concessions (*rukhsah*), the jurisprudence of priorities (*Fiqh al-awlawiyyat*), and the framework of *Maqasid al-Shariah* (the Higher Objectives of *Shariah*). Such an approach does not seek to arbitrarily alter Islamic rulings. Rather, it seeks to ensure that the presentation of these rulings remains contextual, practical, and sensitive to the socio-cultural realities of the target community.

With regard to traditional beverages such as *tapai* and *tuak*, the findings further indicate that imposing immediate and rigid prohibitions during the early stages of Islamization may generate negative psychological responses towards Islam. In this regard, the principle of gradualism (*tadarruj*), as reflected in the gradual prohibition of alcohol during the Prophetic era, offers an important pedagogical framework for understanding the dynamics of social transformation and the gradual development of religious commitment and practice.

Contextual Fiqh al-Taharah in Pluralistic Family Life

The findings of this study indicate that issues related to *taharah* (ritual purification) are closely associated with the Orang Asli community's anxiety towards embracing Islam, particularly in matters involving pet dogs, shared living spaces, and the communal use of household utensils with non-Muslim family members.

Within the context of pluralistic family life, the rigid and overly literal application of *taharah* rulings without adequate consideration of local socio-cultural realities may generate social tension and adaptation difficulties among new Muslim converts. This situation is particularly evident in issues related to *najāsah al-khinzīr* (porcine impurity) and the requirement of performing *sertu* (ritual cleansing) on household utensils shared with non-Muslim family members.

A more context-sensitive approach can be observed through the development of the *Fiqh al-Taharah* Model proposed by Hassan et al. (2025) using the Fuzzy Delphi Method (FDM) involving fatwa experts. The model advocates a more flexible approach to *taharah* management by taking into consideration family harmony, daily living challenges, and the principles of *Maqasid al-Shariah* (the Higher Objectives of Islamic Law). In circumstances involving hardship and practical limitations, the model allows the application of ordinary washing that removes the visible traces of impurity as part of a contextual *rukhsah* (legal concession) approach.

This approach is consistent with the word of Allah SWT:

﴿وَمَا جَعَلَ عَلَيْكُمْ فِي الدِّينِ مِنْ حَرَجٍ﴾

Meaning: "And He has not placed upon you in the religion any hardship" (Surah al-Hajj, 22:78).

At the same time, the *taysir* (facilitation) approach in *da'wah* towards the Orang Asli community should not be misunderstood as an attempt to arbitrarily dilute *Shariah* rulings or disregard the discipline of Islamic jurisprudence (*fiqh*). Rather, it represents a contextual application of *fiqh* that takes into account the lived realities of the target community while remaining grounded in the principles of *Maqasid al-Shariah*, *fiqh al-waqi'* (contextual jurisprudence), and the Prophetic Methodology (*Manhaj Nabawi*). Such an approach is essential in ensuring that the adaptation process of new Muslim converts towards Islamic practice develops in a more sustainable, practical, and wise manner (*hikmah*).

Overall, the findings demonstrate that the presentation of Islamic rulings to the Orang Asli community requires a balanced approach between preserving the fundamental principles of *Shariah* and understanding the socio-cultural realities of the target community. In this regard, the Prophetic Methodology (*Manhaj Nabawi*) offers an important framework for developing a more contextual, compassionate, and sustainable *da'wah* approach among indigenous communities in Malaysia.

IMPLICATIONS FOR DA'WAH AND THE PRESENTATION OF ISLAMIC RULINGS

The findings of this study offer several important implications for *da'wah* approaches and the presentation of Islamic rulings to the Orang Asli community in Malaysia. Overall, the study demonstrates that a more contextual and reality-based approach to Islamic legal

discourse, particularly one that takes into account the lived realities of the target community (*fiqh al-waqi'*), plays a crucial role in reducing psychological anxieties surrounding conversion to Islam among indigenous communities.

First, the principles of facilitation (*taysir*) and gradualism (*tadarruj*) highlighted in this study should be systematically incorporated into training modules and foundational syllabi for *Da'wah* Activists (*Penggerak Dakwah*) and Orang Asli Visitation Companions (*Rakan Ziarah Orang Asli*). Field preachers should be equipped with a deeper understanding of the distinction between definitive Islamic principles (*qat'i*) and culturally embedded Malay practices. Such understanding is essential to ensure that Islam is not perceived as a mechanism of cultural assimilation or the erasure of indigenous identity.

Second, from the perspective of fatwa administration and guidance for Muslim converts, the empirical findings of this study indicate that factors such as geographical isolation, levels of religious literacy, pluralistic family structures, and dependence on traditional sources of livelihood must be carefully considered in the presentation of Islamic rulings. In this regard, approaches that appreciate the richness and diversity of the Islamic legal tradition, including the application of *rukhsah* (legal concessions), *Maqasid al-Shariah*, and sensitivity to local realities, have strong potential to facilitate a more sustainable and compassionate process of religious adaptation among Orang Asli Muslim converts.

Third, the findings also contribute to the development of a more contextual and culturally responsive model of *da'wah* for minority and indigenous communities in Malaysia. An excessively literalistic presentation of Islamic rulings, without due consideration of the sociocultural realities of the target community, may create psychological distance and negative perceptions towards Islam. Therefore, a *da'wah* approach grounded in the values of mercy (*rahmah*), wisdom (*hikmah*), and cultural understanding is viewed as more consistent with the Prophetic Methodology (*Manhaj Nabawi*) in conveying Islam to indigenous societies.

Furthermore, this study opens new avenues for the development of a more interdisciplinary framework for *da'wah* and Islamic legal engagement by integrating perspectives from hadith studies, *fiqh*, *Maqasid al-Shariah*, anthropology, and social psychology in understanding the challenges associated with conversion and Islamic practice among the Orang Asli community in Malaysia.

CONCLUSION

Overall, this study empirically demonstrates, based on field data collected from 68 respondents comprising *da'wah* activists and Orang Asli visitation companions, that anxiety surrounding the acceptance of Islam among the Orang Asli community is influenced more by social, cultural, and lifestyle-related changes than by purely theological concerns. The factor analysis findings indicate that the five principal factors identified in this study collectively explain 80.31 percent of the variance in such anxieties. These factors include lifestyle transformation, religious obligations, changes in traditional food practices, restrictions on customary beverages, and concerns over the loss of local customs and cultural identity.

In this context, the study highlights the significant relationship between contextual approaches to the presentation of Islamic rulings and the Orang Asli community's adaptation to Islamic practices. The application of the Prophetic Methodology (*Manhaj Nabawi*),

particularly through the principles of facilitation (*taysir*), gradualism (*tadarruj*), and sensitivity to the social realities of the people (*mura'at ahwal al-nas*), offers a relevant framework for understanding *da'wah* challenges among indigenous communities in a manner that is more compassionate (*rahmah*), wise (*hikmah*), and sustainability-oriented.

The findings further suggest that the presentation of Islam to the Orang Asli community should not be approached within the narrow framework of cultural assimilation. Rather, it should be understood as a *da'wah* process that acknowledges and respects socio-cultural diversity, provided that such practices do not contradict the principles of *Shariah* and the higher objectives of Islamic law (*Maqasid al-Shariah*). In this regard, a contextual *fiqh* approach that appreciates the lived realities of the target community possesses significant potential to strengthen both the acceptance and long-term practice of Islam among indigenous communities in Malaysia.

Additionally, the study demonstrates that overly literal *da'wah* approaches that are detached from the lived realities of the target community may contribute to psychological distancing from Islam. Consequently, a more facilitative, compassionate, and context-sensitive approach to the presentation of Islamic rulings is viewed as being more consistent with the orientation of the Prophetic Methodology (*Manhaj Nabawi*) in engaging minority and indigenous communities.

For implementation, these findings require coordinated action beyond individual field preachers. JAKIM and state Islamic religious authorities can align convert-guidance modules with locally appropriate legal guidance; state fatwa committees can clarify recurring issues involving food, beverages, taharah, and shared family spaces; the Department of Orang Asli Development (JAKOA) can contribute community access and socio-cultural expertise; and halal authorities can develop practical, non-stigmatising educational materials for shared indigenous households. Such inter-agency cooperation would translate the Prophetic principles of facilitation, gradualism, and wisdom into a sustainable support ecosystem for Orang Asli Muslim converts.

Nevertheless, this study remains exploratory in nature and is limited to the context of the Orang Asli community in Negeri Sembilan, involving respondents with specific field experience in *da'wah* activities. Therefore, further studies involving Orang Asli communities from different regions of Malaysia, as well as broader methodological approaches such as longitudinal and in-depth qualitative studies, are necessary to enhance understanding of the dynamics surrounding the acceptance and practice of Islam among indigenous communities.

Overall, this study illustrates that the Prophetic Methodology (*Manhaj Nabawi*) possesses considerable potential both as an analytical framework and as a practical approach for presenting Islamic teachings to the Orang Asli community in Malaysia, particularly in developing a *da'wah* approach that is more contextual, compassionate, and grounded in wisdom.

DECLARATIONS

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Competing Interest

The authors declare that they have no competing interests.

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Authors' contributions

Mohd Zohdi Mohd Amin: Conceptualization, methodology, investigation, formal analysis, data curation, and writing – original draft. Azman Ab. Rahman: Validation and writing – review and editing, particularly in relation to Islamic legal rulings and Maqasid al-Shariah. Mohd Azhar Ibrahim Residi: Validation and writing – review and editing, particularly regarding the background and context of da'wah among the Orang Asli community. Ahmed Abdulrazzaq Khalf: Validation and writing – review and editing, particularly in relation to Islamic legal rulings and Maqasid al-Shariah. Othman Nayef Hifi: Validation and writing – review and editing, particularly regarding the Prophetic traditions and their interpretation. All authors read and approved the final manuscript.

Data Availability

The data supporting the findings of this study are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request.

Ethics Approval

Formal ethics approval was not obtained for this study. The study did not directly involve members of the Orang Asli community or other vulnerable participants. The respondents were adult da'wah practitioners, Orang Asli visitation companions (*Rakan Ziarah*), and supervising officers. Participation was voluntary, informed consent was obtained from all respondents, and their confidentiality and anonymity were maintained throughout the study.

Use of Artificial Intelligence

ChatGPT was used solely to assist with the translation and language editing of the manuscript. All content, analysis, arguments, interpretations, and conclusions were reviewed, verified, and approved by the authors, who remain fully responsible for the final manuscript.

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