The Acceptance of The Orang Asli Community's Movement Preachers Towards the Construct of Self-Preparation in Dakwah

Abdul Ghafar Don[1*], Anuar Puteh[2], Mohamad Zulkifli Abdul Ghani[3], Razaleigh Muhamat@ Kawangit[4], Zulkefli Aini[5]

[1,2,3,4,5]Da'wah and Leadership Research Centre, Faculty of Islamic Studies, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, 43600 Bangi, Selangor, Malaysia.

Abstract: The community mobilizers for the Orang Asli community are preachers who carry out the missionary work of the Department of Islamic Development Malaysia (JAKIM) in Orang Asli villages. However, do they have sufficient preparation in carrying out the missionary task towards the Indigenous People in the hinterland? This article attempts to analyse the acceptance of Indigenous Community Mobilizers towards items within the construct of self-preparation in preaching. This study is a quantitative research using a survey research design. A total of 140 respondents were selected as the study sample involving all Indigenous Community Mobilizers in Malaysia who have served for more than 5 years. A total of 10 items within the construct of self-preparation were asked to the Indigenous Community Mobilizers. The research data were analysed using SPSS software based on frequency, percentage, and mean. The study results indicate that all 10 items within the construct of self-preparation received approval from the Indigenous Community Mobilizers with a minimum average score of 4.51, indicating a very good level. The implication of the study is that preachers require sufficient self-preparation to carry out preaching duties in the field.

Keywords: Orang Asli, Preachers, Self-Preparation, Da'wah, Malaysia

1. INTRODUCTION

Dakwah literally means calling or invitation. Many definitions of dakwah have been discussed by various authors. For instance, Dr. Abdul Karim Zaydan (1992) defines dakwah as inviting people to the path of Allah, i.e., to Islam. Ali Mahfuz (1976) describes dakwah as stimulating people towards goodness and guidance, enjoining what is right, preventing evil to attain happiness in this world and the hereafter. Al-Qaradawi (1986) explains that dakwah is the effort to guide people to Islam, follow the guidance of Islam, and implement its directives on earth. Based on the given definition, it can be formulated that dakwah is an effort to invite people to Islam so that they may attain goodness and happiness in this world and the hereafter based on certain approaches. Dakwah requires specific preparations that make preachers competent in their field tasks.

2. REVIEW LITERATURE

2.1 Penggerak Masyarakat Orang Asli (PMOA)

Penggerak Masyarakat Orang Asli (PMOA) is a Malay term for Orang Asli Community Mobilizers are employees of the Department of Islamic Development Malaysia (JAKIM) who function as preachers. It is an official position established as a result of the decision made during the 25th National Council for Islamic Religious Affairs Malaysia (MKI) Meeting on December 23, 1983, chaired by Tun Dr. Mahathir bin Mohamed, the Prime Minister of Malaysia at that time. The first intake of PMOA was in 1993, with a total of 253 individuals.

PMOA have been stationed in nine (9) states in Peninsular Malaysia that have Orang Asli villages, namely Perak, Selangor, Negeri Sembilan, Melaka, Johor, Pahang, Terengganu, and Kelantan. Their activities are monitored by the Chief Coordinator and Coordinators under the supervision of the District Religious Officer in each state, except for Kelantan, where they are supervised under the jurisdiction of the state Islamic religious authorities. Below is the PMOA data for the year 2022 according to states in Malaysia:

Table 1: Numbers of PMOA as 2022

Bil	States	Numbers of PMOA 2022
1	Johor	14
2	Kelantan	47
3	Melaka	10
4	Negeri Sembilan	19
5	Pahang	59
6	Perak/Kedah	54
7	Selangor	28
8	Terengganu	4
	Total	**235**

Source: JAKIM 2022

PMOA are responsible for delivering preaching and introducing the beauty of Islam to the Orang Asli community, whether they have embraced Islam or not. PMOA also collaborate with other government agencies and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) to lead local communities in coordinating and implementing programs for the betterment of the Orang Asli community.

2.2 Orang Asli

The word 'Orang Asli' is a Malay term equal to indigenous people in English. It is a collective term introduced by anthropologists and administrators for the 18 sub-ethnic groups generally classified for official purposes under three major group namely Negrito, Senoi and Aboriginal Malay (Proto Malay). Each of these group comprise six sub-group accordingly. The sub-group for Negrito are: Kintak, Lanoh, Mendriq, Kensiu, Jahai, Bateq, the sub-group for Senoi are: Temiar, Semai, Mah Meri, Jahut, Che Wong and Semaq Beri. Meanwhile Malay-Proto comprises Jakun, Orang Kanaq, Orang Laut, Temuan, Semelai and Orang Seletar. There are about 869 Orang Asli villages throughout the country, 2% are located at the vicinity of existing townships, 61% in the outskirt of existing rural villages and 37% are in the remote areas (Mason & Arifin, 2005). They represent only 0.6% of the total Malaysian population.

3. METHODOLOGY

This study is a quantitative study using a survey research design. A total of 140 respondents among MOA employees were selected as the study sample. The sampling method is purposive sampling, where the 140 selected respondents are experienced MOA personnel who have served for 5 years or more.

3.1 Pilot Studies

Before the actual study was conducted, a pilot study was conducted to establish the reliability and validity of the developed instrument. A total of 30 MOA employees were selected as the study sample, representing two states in Malaysia, namely Negeri Sembilan and Selangor. This pilot studies employs Cronbach's Alpha (α) values to test the reliability and acceptance level towards the constructed construct items. Among the values that need to be achieved are 0.71 to 0.99 because these values are at the optimal level (71% - 99%). The Alpha values are explained as in the table 2 below (Bond & Fox, 2015, Erich C, 2021):

Table 2: Alpha Cronbach Interpretation Score

Skor *Alpha-Cronbach*	Kebolepercayaan
0.9 – 1.0	Very good and effective with a high level of consistency
0.7 – 0.8	Good and acceptable
0.6 – 0.7	Acceptable
<0.6	The item needs to be improved
<0.5	The item needs to be dropped

Source: Bond Fox, 2005

The analysis findings of the pilot study revealed a reliability value obtained based on the Cronbach's Alpha (α) coefficient of 0.96, as shown in Table 4. This value indicates that the instrument used is in excellent and effective condition and can be utilized in actual research.

Table 3: Nilai Kebolehpercayaan Alpha Cronbach bagi Kajian Rintis

Person RAW SCORE-TO-MEASURE CORRELATION = 0.98   CRONBACH ALPHA (KR-20) person RAW SCORE RELIABILITY=0.96

The analysis of the instrument was conducted comprehensively, considering both reliability and respondents' acceptance of the constructed constructs. The findings of the pilot study were based on Table 3, which indicates the respondents' reliability value regarding the acceptance of items.

Table 4: The findings of the pilot study

Bil	Constructs	Alpha Value (α)	Level of Reliability
1	B= Self Preperations	0.94	Very Good
2	C= Mastery of Knowledge	0.97	Very Good
3	D= Approach	0.92	Very Good
4	E= Skills	0.95	Very Good
5	F= Attitude	0.97	Very Good
6	**Overall**	**0.98**	**Very good**

Source: Pilot Studies Survey 2022

3.2 Pilot Studies Result

The results of the pilot study were analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 26.0 based on the Cronbach's Alpha coefficient (α) values. The study found that all five constructed constructs were at an excellent level, ranging from 0.92 to 0.97. The overall Cronbach's alpha score for this pilot study is 0.98, which is at an excellent level.

Based on this pilot study, it can be concluded that validity and reliability are crucial aspects to consider in constructing a new instrument for a study. According to the analysis findings, all 55 items within the constructed constructs received positive and favorable acceptance from the respondents. Therefore, based on the Cronbach's Alpha analysis, these items demonstrate validity and reliability suitable for use in actual research.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The discussion of the results of this PMOA survey study is divided into two main sections. Part A explains the demographic profile of the respondents, while Part B outlines the scores of the minimum acceptance values of PMOA towards competency constructs. Both sections are analyzed using descriptive statistics, namely frequency, percentage, and minimum scores. The research findings are analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software version 26.0.

A. Respondent Demographics

This study involved a total of 140 JAKIM's PMOA from across the Malaysian peninsula, covering demographic aspects such as gender, age, length of service as PMOA, education level, and location of service as PMOA. The study was analyzed using frequency analysis through the SPSS software version 26.0. The distribution of respondent demographics is shown in Table 5 below.

Table 5: The Distribution of Respondent Demographics

Item	Demografi	Kekerapan	Peratusan (%)
Sex	Male	97	69
	Female	43	31
Age	26-30	15	11
	31-35	26	19
	36-40	41	29
	40 and above	58	41
Length of Service	5-9	43	31
	10-20	61	44
	20 and more	36	25
Educational Level	SPM[1]	51	36
	Diploma/STPM[2]/STAM[3]	60	43
	Degree	26	19
	Others	3	2
Place of Service	Kedah/Perak	26	19
	Terengganu	4	3
	Selangor	21	15
	Negeri Sembilan	10	7
	Melaka	6	4
	Johor	11	8
	Pahang	37	26
	Kelantan	25	18

Source: Survey 2023

1. Sex

Table 6 shows the distribution of the number of MOA personnel and the percentage according to gender. The respondents involved in this study consist of a total of 97 (69%) male MOA personnel and 43 (31%) female MOA personnel. Based on this table, it is evident that the number of male MOA personnel is more dominant compared to the number of female MOA personnel.

Table 6: The Distribution of the Number of PMOA and Percentage by Gender

Jantina	Number of PMOA	Percentage
Male	97	69
Female	43	31
Total	**140**	**100**

Source: Survey 2023

2. Age

Table 7 shows the distribution of the number and percentage of MOA personnel according to age. A total of 15 (11%) MOA personnel are within the age range of 26-30 years. Meanwhile, 26 (19%) MOA personnel are within the age range of 31-35 years. Furthermore, 41 (29%) MOA personnel are within the age range of 36-40 years, and 58 (41%) MOA personnel are aged 40 years and above. Based on this table, it is evident that MOA personnel aged 40 years and above have the highest percentage.

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[1] Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia (Malaysian Certificate of Education)

[2] Sijil Tinggi Pelajaran Malaysia (Malaysian Higher School Certificate)

[3] Sijil Tinggi Agama Malaysia (Higher Certificate for Religious Education Malaysia)

Table 7: The Distribution of the Number and Percentage of PMOA By Age

Age	Numbers of PMOA	Percentage (%)
26-30	15	11
31-35	26	19
36-40	41	29
40 and above	58	41
Total	**140**	**100**

Source: Survey 2023

3. Length of Service

Table 8 shows the distribution of the number and percentage of MOA personnel according to length of service. A total of 43 (31%) MOA personnel have served for 5 - 9 years. Meanwhile, 61 (44%) MOA personnel have served for 10-20 years. Furthermore, 36 (25%) MOA personnel have served for 20 years and above. Based on this table, it is evident that MOA personnel who have served for 10-20 years have the highest percentage. In general, it can be concluded that all MOA personnel selected as the study sample are experienced in propagating the message to the Indigenous community.

Table 8: The Distribution of the Number and Percentage of PMOA According to Length of Service.

Length of Service	Numbers of PMOA	Percentage (%)
5 – 9 years	43	31
10 – 20 years	61	44
21 years and above	36	25
Total	**140**	**100**

Source: Survey 2023

4. Educational Level

Table 9 shows the distribution of the number and percentage of MOA personnel according to their educational level. A total of 51 (36%) MOA personnel have an education level of SPM, while 60 (43%) MOA personnel have an education level of Diploma/STPM/STAM. Furthermore, 26 (19%) MOA personnel have an education level of Degree, and 3 (2%) MOA personnel have an education level in other categories such as *Thanawi* (Arabic word for medium level). This table indicates that the educational level of Diploma/STPM/STAM has the highest percentage among MOA personnel.

Table 9: The Distribution of the Number and Percentage of PMOA According to Educational Level

Educational Level	Number of PMOA	Percentage (%)
SPM	51	36
Diploma/STPM/STAM	60	43
Degree	26	19
Others	3	2
Total	**140**	**100**

Source: Questionnaires 2023

5. Place of Service

Table 10 shows the distribution of the number and percentage of PMOA according to their place of service. A total of 26 (19%) MOA personnel serve in the states of Kedah/Perak, while 4 (3%) MOA personnel serve in the state of Terengganu. Additionally, 21 (15%) MOA personnel serve in the state of Selangor. Furthermore, 10 (7%) MOA personnel serve in Negeri Sembilan. There are also 6 (4%) PMOA personnel serving in the state of Melaka. Moreover, 11 (8%) PMOA personnel serve in the state of Johor. A total of 37 (26%) MOA personnel serve in the state of Pahang, and finally, 25 (18%) PMOA personnel serve in the state of Kelantan. Based on this table, it can be seen that PMOA

personnel serving in the state of Pahang have the highest percentage, followed by Perak and Kelantan, respectively, in the second and third positions in terms of the highest number.

Table 10: The Distribution of the Number and Percentage of PMOA According to Place of Service in Sates of Malaysia

Lenghty of Service	No.of PMOA	Percentage
Kedah/Perak	26	19
Terengganu	4	3
Selangor	21	15
Negeri Sembilan	10	7
Melaka	6	4
Johor	11	8
Pahang	37	26
Kelantan	25	18
Jumlah	**140**	**100**

Source: Survey 2023

B. Acceptance Of PMOA Towards Self-Preparation Construct

The questionnaire in this study is divided into five sections: Section A (respondent demographics), Section B (self-preparation construct), Section C (knowledge mastery construct), Section D (approach construct), Section E (skills construct), and Section F (attitude construct). Questions in Sections B, C, D, E, and F are prepared by the researcher and need to be answered by respondents based on a five-point Likert Scale as follows:

1.   Strongly Disagree (SD)

2.   Disagree (D)

3.   Neutral (N)

4.   Agree (A)

5.   Strongly Agree (SA)

Each section is analyzed using descriptive statistics, namely frequency, percentage, and minimum scores. These findings are analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software version 26.0. The results of this descriptive analysis are presented in the form of tables containing minimum values and item percentages. To answer the research questions, the researcher employs the interpretation of minimum values as presented in Table 11 below:

Table 11: Interpretation of Mean Value

Mean Values	Mean Interpretations
1.00 – 1.80	Very Poor
1.81 – 2.60	Poor
2.61 – 3.40	Moderate
3.41 – 4.20	Good
4.21 – 5.00	Very Good

The analysis results regarding the acceptance of PMOAs towards the self-preparation construct in preaching are presented in Table 12 below.

Table 12: The Distribution of Number and Percentage of PMOA's Assessment of Self-Preparedness Construct Acceptance

Bil	Item	STS	TS	KS	S	SS	Min
B1	I need to understand the meaning of the task as a PMOA			1.4% (2)	22.9% (32)	75.7% (106)	**4.74**
B5	I need to have mental strength to preach in the Orang Asli villages			2.1% (3)	35.0% (49)	62.9% (88)	**4.61**
B6	I need to have stable emotions to preach in the Orang Asli villages			2.1% (3)	39.3% (55)	58.6% (82)	**4.56**
B10	I need to have patience and a high level of mental fortitude			2.9% (4)	38.6% (54)	58.6% (82)	**4.56**
B2	I need to have interest in the career as a PMOA			2.1% (3)	42.9% (60)	55.0% (77)	**4.53**
B4	I need to have spiritual strength to preach in Orang Asli villages			3.6% (5)	41.4% (58)	55.0% (77)	**4.51**
B9	I need to have a good plan in preaching work in Orang Asli villages		0.7% (1)	2.9% (4)	41.4% (58)	55.0% (77)	**4.51**
B7	I need to assess and identify my strengths and weaknesses in driving preaching initiatives			4.3% (6)	47.1% (66)	48.6% (68)	**4.44**
B8	I need to be able to identify opportunities and threats in preaching work in Orang Asli villages			3.6% (5)	54.3% (76)	42.1% (59)	**4.39**
B3	I need to have the necessary facilities and equipment for preaching work in Orang Asli villages such as vehicles and mobile phones	0.7% (1)	3.6% (5)	15.0% (21)	31.4% (44)	49.3% (69)	**4.25**
	Jumlah						**4.51**

Source: Survey 2023

Table 12 shows the minimum values and percentages for the self-preparation construct achieving excellent acceptance levels with an overall mean of 4.51. The highest minimum value is attained by item B1 (I need to understand the meaning of the tasks as a PMOA), with a minimum value of 4.74. The second-highest minimum value is achieved by item B5 (I need to have mental strength to preach in Orang Asli villages), with a minimum value of 4.61. As for the third-highest minimum value, two items share the same minimum value of 4.56, which is achieved by item B6 (I need to have stable emotions to preach in Orang Asli villages) and B10 (I need to have patience and a high mind).

The findings indicate that understanding the tasks as a PMOA receives the highest acceptance because understanding the tasks will provide encouragement to the preacher to always be responsible and know how to conduct preaching correctly. This can also foster sincere intentions to convey Islamic knowledge and continually enhance one's faith as a devout Muslim obedient to Allah's commands. The study's results are supported by Zulkefli Aini (2016), who stated that as a preacher, one must have an understanding of the duties and responsibilities involved. Understanding from the perspective of tasks means delving into the discipline used to convey the content of preaching to the target audience. This is aligned with other aspects such as a clear understanding of the purpose of life as a preacher among others and staying away from all prohibitions of Allah and always involving all activities with the reward of the hereafter in min Internal preparation such as mental and emotional strength is a crucial aspect needed to initiate any task, especially in preaching, because the preacher's internal aspects can influence external behavior. Mental strength is necessary as it requires wise thinking to devise strategies and handle any issues that may arise

during preaching. On the other hand, emotional strength is needed because emotions are related to one's feelings, which can influence self-motivation to remain consistent and committed to the given tasks. A preacher's emotions may be influenced by factors such as distance from family, dealing with the whims of the target audience, and the surrounding environment of the target community.

According to Redwan, Sayuti, and Burhanuddin Jalal (2014), Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) faced warfare by first preparing himself mentally. This preparation was done to avoid any possibilities and to distance oneself from being negligent or in a state of al-Ghaflah, which refers to negligence or indulgence that could bring destruction to one's faith. Furthermore, with mental strength, preachers can also protect themselves from being easily swayed and influenced by Western elements that can affect a preacher's thinking. On the other hand, from the perspective of emotional strength preparation, one can control oneself from feelings that could affect motivation in preaching. The mastery of self-control or self-control applied by Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) provides peace and maintains emotional stability despite facing various situations.

Meanwhile, the lowest-scoring item is item B3 (I need to have the necessary facilities and equipment for preaching work in Orang Asli villages such as vehicles and mobile phones), with a minimum value of 4.25. Additionally, the second lowest-scoring item is item B8 (I need to be able to identify opportunities and threats in preaching work in Orang Asli villages), with a minimum value of 4.39. As for the third lowest-scoring item, it is item B7 (I need to assess and identify my strengths and weaknesses in initiating preaching work), with a minimum value of 4.44.

The findings indicate that the provision of facilities poses challenges for preachers because all these amenities require additional costs that need to be supported by the involved agencies. Among the facilities needed while on duty are specialized vehicles such as rugged 4x4 vehicles because Orang Asli village areas are typically located in remote areas with difficult roads to traverse. This aligns with Zuhfika & Khazri (2022), stating that additional costs are crucial when conducting preaching activities, especially in Orang Asli villages. These costs need to be provided by the responsible agencies to ensure the welfare of Orang Asli preachers and facilitate the management of preaching activities. On the other hand, in terms of identifying opportunities and assessing one's weaknesses, there is low acceptance because preachers require continuous research and experience. Through experience, preachers can identify existing weaknesses and require supportive training to enhance their preaching skills.

In the context of preaching to the Orang Asli community, meticulous knowledge is required because the lifestyle and customs practiced by the Orang Asli community are slightly different from other local communities. This presents some challenges and difficulties for preachers to research all the information relevant to the target audience. According to the study by Muhamad Faisal & Nabil Ahmad (2020), training preachers requires prolonged training. In the development of preaching, this study focuses on three elements that can be used in training and guidance programs for preachers: knowledge, attitude formation, and skill enhancement. Preparing for a preacher involves equipping oneself with extensive knowledge, especially understanding the background of the target audience and being aware of current issues occurring in the target areas.

CONCLUSION

Self-preparation is among the crucial competency elements that preachers must master and internalize. This study finds that the self-preparation construct is important and needs to be ingrained in preachers before they engage in fieldwork. This is based on the research findings showing a very good acceptance level among PMOAs towards the items within the construct, with minimum scores exceeding 4.21. The average minimum score for all items is 4.51, interpreted as excellent.

Acknowledgements

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