Level of Chinese Muallaf Assimilation to Malay Custom in Malaysia

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Abstract

This article attempts to to examine the level of Chinese Muallaf assimilation to their Malay counterpart's custom in Malaysia. Their coversion to Islam has put them in dilemma between practising Islam andat the same time to assimilate Malay customsince Malaysia Constitution equates Malay to Islam. It is however not to say that not all Malay custom are in line with the Islamic teachings. But the expectation of Malay Muslim to those of converts whether Chinese, Indian or other races in Malaysia is to assimilate or practice Malay custom which they considered as Islamic. The objective of the research is to analyze the level practice of Malay customs in the aspects of language, culture, norms and values of the Malays among Chinese Muallaf.This quantitative research design employsquestionnaire as an instrument of the study by selecting 600 Chinese Muallaf in Kuala Lumpur as a sample of the study. The research found that social assimilation level of Chinese Muallaf is at the low level with the mean score 2.67.

Keywords:1. Chinesse, 2. Muallaf, 3. Assimilation, 4. Malay Custom, 5. Saudara Kita

Introduction

Malaysia is a typical multi-racial and multi-religious country. The ethnic groups of Malaysia consist mainly of the Malay as the largest population, the Chinese community as the second largest and the Indian community the third largest population. The population of Malaysia according to 2010-2020 statistic is 31.7 million people. (Department of Statistics Malaysia,2019). Bumiputera including Malay form 68.6% of the whole population, Chinese 23.4%, Indian 7.0%. and the others 1%. This multi-racial character of the populationhas also produced a variety of culture, religion, social norms, custom and values.It is a great challenge to maintain unity in such heterogeneous society.

In terms of religion, Islam as stated in Malaysian Federal Constitution (MFC), article 3(1) is a religion of the state, but other religions may be practiced in peace and harmony in any part of the Federation. Islam is therefore, has been embraced by various ethnic in Malaysia including Chinese. The number of Chinese conversionto Islam is quite small. According to a source from Malaysian Chinese Association (MACMA) there are 42,028 Chinese Muslim in Malaysia. Most of Chine in Malaysia are Buddhist 5,341,687, followed by Christian706,479 and Confusianism, Taoism andfolk religion 218,261.

This research set outs to measure the level of social assimilation between Chinese Muallaf(Chinese convert to Islam) to the dominant Malay community. These Muallaf fall into two district groups: the majority group have rejected their previous customs, traditions and 'way of life' in order to embrace Islām; the remaining (smaller) group are 'born into' the Chinese Muallaf community, and are therefore not confronted with decisions which divide them from their former ethnic ties. Their conversion to Islam not only demand them to practice Islamic teachingssuch as prayer, fasting, observance of ritual, alcohol prohibition, eating only *ḥalāl*and etc, but there are expectation from some of people in Malaysia that they should also practice Malay customs. Since Islam in the Malaysian context has been considered as equate to Malay, the non-Malay conversion to Islam including Chinese also will be considered as conversion to Malay. Thus, in this case they need to adapt and assimilate themselves with Malay customs. This will create a problem as not all Malay practicing Islam in their daily life.

The Meaning of Social Assimilation

Assimilation, in anthropology and sociology is defined as the process whereby individuals or groups of differing ethnic heritage are absorbed into the dominant culture of a society. The process of assimilating involves taking on the traits of the dominant culture to such a degree that the assimilating group becomes socially indistinguishable from other members of the society. Although assimilation may be compelled through force or undertaken voluntarily, it is rare for a minority group to replace its previous cultural practices completely; religion, food preferences, proxemics (e.g., the physical distance between people in a given social situation), and aesthetics are among the characteristics that tend to be most resistant to change. Assimilation does not denote "racial" or biological fusion, though such fusion may occur (Encyclopædia Britannica, 2016).

Assimilation is considered as a process due to prolonged contact (Sarah E. Simons 2021). It may, perhaps, be defined as that process of adjustment or accommodation which occurs between the members of two different races, if their contact is prolonged and if the necessary psychic conditions are present. The resultis group-homogeneity to a greater or less degree. Figuratively

speaking, it is the process by which the aggregation of peoples is changed from a mere mechanical mixture into a chemical compound.

The Concept of Muallaf In Islam

The *Encyclopedia of Islām* explains that the word *Muallaf* comes from the Arabic *'Al-MuallafahQulūbuhum'* which means "those whose hearts are won over" or "those hearts that need softening" (Bostworth 1993). Terminologically the concept of '*al-muallaf*' has a clear foundation in theQurānas stated in*Sūrah Al-Tawba*: 60 as the following:

"The alms surely forthe poor, the destitute, those who collect it, reconciling people's hearts (Muallaf), frees slaves, spending in the way of Allah, and travellers. It is legal obligation from Allah. Allah is all knowing, all wise"

The above Qur'anic verse indicates that *muallaf*has aspecial allocation foralms or*zakāt* in order 'to win' and 'to soften' their hearts to accept*Islām* as a way of life. To give better understanding about *Muallaf,* especially their categories according to the Islamic view, the word should be discussed together with *Zakāt*.

Muslim scholars have different view on the meaning of*Muallaf.* Some of them are of the opinion that 'muallaf' is strictly applied for the new Muslim while the other included Non-Muslim as '*muallaf*'.In Maliki and Hambali's*Mazhab* (school of thought) for example, muallaf refers both for Muslim and Non-Muslim. The zakat giving to the the Non-Muslim according to Maliki and Hambali school of thought is expected to winning their hearts to convert to Islam. While in Shafi'i school of thought, muallaf is constrained to Muslims only i.e new converts. The giving of zakat reflects the fact perfection of wisdom of God in administering the affairs of His servants at every aspect of the situation and the environment (Qutb, 1998).In Malaysia the concept or meaning of *muallaf*refers to those of converted to Islam and given alms to him to strengthen his faith. This definition is in line with the view of the Shafi'i school of thought.

The way *Muallaf*assimilate with ordinary Muslims probably can be seen best through a consideration Islamic education or sometimes the discussion can be found in the *'da'wa Islāmia'*[1] section. For example, according to al-Qurtubī the reason to give attention and guidance to*Muallaf*in the way of Islām is part of *da'wa* methodology since it is obligatory for Muslims to propagate Islām, to save them here on earth and the life after death. After that, al-Qurtubī(1954) gave some emphasis by giving them priority in guidance, briefly as follows:

1.	To prevent them from deeds that may spark social unrest.
2.	To make them realise the wholesomeness (*Shumūl*) of Islām as their constant guide on the right path.
3.	To encourage them to hope for the blessing of Allah, so that their hearts are open to accept the teaching of Islām.

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[1]*Da'wa* is an Arabic term meaning 'invite' or 'invitation'. It is considered to be an obligation on Muslims to invite others to understand and practice Islām as a way of life. *Da'wa* is usually referred to as the act of 'preachingIslām'. It can apply to both Muslims and non-Muslims. For example, in the al-Qurān, *SūraAl-Nahl 16:125* states: *"Invite (all) to the Way of the Lord with wisdom and beautiful preaching; and argue with them in ways that are best and most gracious: for the Lord know the best, who have strayed from His Path, and who receive guidance".*

4.   To show them how Islām always cares for and loves the *Muallaf* and that the Prophet Muhammad s.a.w is a blessing for all and especially the new convert.

Meanwhile, according to Ibn Hishām (1986) the purpose of providing guidance to the *Muallaf* in the basic knowledge of the *'Dīn'* (religion) and instilling them with qualities of correct moral behaviour is to encourage them to willingly embrace Islām, and to avoid evil deeds. Ibn Hishām said that the best example of love and guidance can come from *'Hijra'*. The companions were ever willing to sacrifice themselves, their nation, home, wealth, friends and families to migrate to Yathrib (Medina). As an example, Ali bin AbīTālib willingly took the place of Prophet Muhammad s.a.w, lying on his bed even though he knew the pagan *Quraish* had already designed to kill the Prophet s.a.w. Abū Bakr, too, constantly looked ahead to ensure that he had chosen the best way for the Prophet Muḥammads.a.w , and at the same time looked back to see no danger coming from behind in order to protect the Prophets.a.w whilst on their journey to Yathrib.

Muallaf In Malaysian Connotation

In Malaysia, the concept of *Muallaf*is based on Shafi'i school of thought. The concept related to *Muallaf* in Malaysian context can be seen in the following scenario:

1.   The *Muallaf*refers to newly converted to Islam. This term of muallafaccording to Syarul, Abur and Muhammad (2016) mainly used by Muslim society in general and the Malay in particular. Khadijah et al (2017) share the same view concerning the word of muallaf. However, there are several terms have been used interchangeably by da'wah organisation to describe the new Muslims such as*Saudara Kita'* (the Malay word for our brother) and 'SaudaraBaru'. By using these words of 'Saudara Kita' and 'SaudaraBaru', da'wah organisation are of the opinion that 'muallaf' feel comfortable and their conversion to Islam is welcoming and appreciated. Referring to them as such is a way to enhance Islamic brotherhood's care for and love of the converts.

2.   In general, instead of the words *'Saudara Kita'* and *'SaudaraBaru'*, Malay Muslims categorised all the converts in one category called *'Muallaf'* which referred to those who are not Malay. It happens because, as Malays, they do not know whether the *Muallaf* was born as a Muslim or just embraced Islām. Then, this also invited some problems. For example, the word seems to indicate there are gaps between them, and for sure it will be considered a racism issue. On the other hand, the *Muallaf* have prior complex feelings because they assume they are on their own, without any support from their surroundings. All this makes the assimilation between Malays as a majority, and the*Muallaf* as 'new comers' to Islām, get worse. The problem appeared to be not a simple matter, and it was faced not only by*Muallaf* but also by other minorities. The difference was that what was happening to *Muallaf was* considered as being between Muslims, for the others it was between different races.

In this research, the term 'convert' will be used with the same meaning as*Muallaf*. The term will be utilised to bring several denotations, such as to differentiate between those who are born Chinese Muslim and those who embrace Islām after birth as a non-Muslim. It is also applied in the Malaysia Federal Constitution (Article 11(1) and Article 12 (3 & 4) to refer to a person who has changed his religion, and to some regulations especially concerning the *Zakāt*funds by State Religious Departments in Malaysia who usually refer to such a term.

Location of The Study

Kuala Lumpur was selected as the specific location for this fieldwork for various reasons. Firstly, a large community of Chinese *Muallaf*has established inKuala Lumpur. This location could represent the other location in Malaysia where Chinese *Muallaf*is to be found.According to a source from Jabatan Agama Islam Wilayah Persekutuan (JAWI, 2019)the Wilayah Persekutuan Religious Department there are 5,277 Chinese *Muallaf* in Kuala Lumpur.

A second reason for selecting this specific fieldwork location is the interesting fact that the Chinese ethnic group is actually bigger in number than the Malay community. This means that if a Chinese person has converted to Islām in this particular area, he or she encounters social influences from both Chinese and Malay groups; this may increase the likelihood of assimilation between them.

A third reason for this choice of location is the learning and guidance support extended to the Chinese Muallaf by JAWI. This religious department is the only one to provide at least three Muslim Convert learning centres throughout Kuala Lumpur.

JAWI's strategies to promote assimilation among Chinese *Muallaf*and the Malay community take several forms, such as family and sports days that are organised, together with learning conferences and seminars, where widely respected Islamic scholars address the new*Muallaf*. Teaching sessions also take place twice a week. These have as their purpose instruction in the basic principles of Islamic right conduct in all areas of human activity, and importantly how to practice Islam in such a way as to assimilate into the Malay Muslim community.[2]

It therefore seems to be a part of official JAWI policy that Chinese *Muallaf*to Islām should adopt the norms and 'behavior' of the Malay Muslim community in order to achieve assimilation within it. This is a 'message' which is subtly reinforced by the Malay Muslim scholars who address them in teaching conferences arranged by JAWI. All of these factors combine to provide a potentially rich sample population for measurement of the actual levels of assimilation.

The Objectives Of The Study

The general objective of this study is to look into the social assimilation of the Chinese Muslim converts with the Malay Muslims in Kuala Lumpur by measuring the level of such assimilation. The level here means the statistical results affected from testing and analysis made by the researcher through the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) software.

This research task is to evaluate this level in the context of various situations of the Chinese *Muallaf* in Kuala Lumpur. Therefore, it is interesting to find out about assimilation between the Chinese Muslim converts and the Malays. It is interesting to know the exact level of their assimilation. The group of Chinese *Muallaf* will be divided according to selected criteria. Therefore, the general statement of the problem of this research is: if Islām is equated to Malay, based on the Constitution of Malaysia, do the Chinese Muslim converts change their social aspect in line with the identity of Malays. This means, do theyassimilate with the Malays and what is the exact level or degree of their assimilation?

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[2] A financial incentive to attend classes of instruction is also provided by JAWI. The sum of 15 Malaysian Ringgit from the 'Zakāt' fund is presented to each convert after the session.

Specifically, the objective of the research is to look into the practices of social aspects such as language, culture, norms and values of the Malays and to examine and analyse whether Chinese Muallaf assimilate with such things. Therefore, these researches focuson the achievement of studying the level of social assimilation of Chinese Muallaf with the Malays by using several Malay practices.

Research Methodology

Generally, this study will follow the research methodologyas below:

i.   Library Research

Library research is an essential part of this research. The library research will involve gathering data not only from the libraries but also from the various centres for Muslim converts, such as non-government organisations as well as governmental organisations. The numbers of conversions to Islām were available from the Muslim preaching organisation and governmental departments dealing with Islām. The concepts dealing with ethnic relationships such as ethnic polarisation, conflict, identification, characteristics ofMalays and Chinese Muallaf and national culture, will provide a lot of information as a theoretical and conceptual background. Besides that, the impact of history on the races in Malaysia, due the colonists' policy of 'divide and rule' over the various ethnic groups, will provide the background to an analysis of the relationship between the Chinese *Muallaf* and Malays.

ii.   Survey questionnaire

A random sample around 600 out of officially 5277 (based on year 2020 Chinese Muallafregistration by JAWI) or unofficially 6000 (figures gave by *Muallaf*officer at JAWI which considered those who are not registered their name with JAWI but registered with non-government organisations) Chinese Muallaf will be selected from various places in Kuala Lumpur. Some of the questions will be posted to them when they come to learn about Islām in various places, especially in the learning centres. It will also be done at the Islamic Centre of Kuala Lumpur when there were programmes for the Muallaforganised by the JAWI. The questionnaires will be conducted in Malay and English by the researcher and his assistants, especially the officers at the learningcentres.

iii.   Theories and application

Chuah, O (2001), used six profiles, which are age group, gender, occupational and educational backgrounds, monthly income group and marital status, as criteria for collectingdata in his research related to the measurement of the problems faced by Chinese Muallaf after their conversion in the states of Selangor in Malaysia. Moreover, he also used seven criteria taken from the '1971 National Culture Policy of Malaysia', namely *Baju Melayu, Nasi Lemak, Bersunat, Kenduri*, wearing *Songkok*, celebrating *E^{c}id* and *Salam* as criteria for measuring the level of problems that needed to be solved.

Although the results of the research of Chuah, O. (2001), which used the *Likert scale,* shows poor levels of problem solving for those in the lower age group (below 17 years-old) and those in the lower groups in terms of occupation, education and monthly income level, nevertheless both the criteria, for collecting data and measuring the levels, are very useful. JAWI itself, when delivering a statistical report of Muslim converts in Kuala Lumpur, also adapted his theory. As a

result, this research into assimilation will use the same criteria and formats as used by Chuah, O. (2001) and JAWI.

Although both criteria's which are used to collect the data and to measure the level of assimilation follow on from those used by Chuah. O (2001), and JAWI, the content of every single question in the questionnaire of this research, as well as the question format, are different. The differences occur because this research has its own objectives to achieve. As a result, the main purpose in following established theories and methodologies is to ensure that this research achieves its goal. Furthermore, it is difficult for the researcher to create a new theory to collect the data and to measure the levels, since a new theory would remain untested and unproved in any research or report. This would affect the validity of the findings of the research.

iv.   Questionnaire design

The survey questionnaire is a crucial part of this research to obtain the data and to enable the measurement. Without the correct design, difficulties in measuring the assimilation can result. Moreover, the research findings themselves will also be affected by poor design. It is important to mention here that the use of a survey questionnaire was chosen in this research to obtain the data and then to measure the level of assimilation, so that all information will be documented and not just verbal. It is more critical when the SPSS needs to be applied. Noticeably, verbal data is difficult to analyse, and very hard to conduct through the system (SPSS). The questions are likely to touch their experiences, recent practices, attention and awareness, feelings about and enthusiasm for certain issues related to assimilation.

The questionnaire will be divided into 2 sections. Section 1 will cover the respondents' responses in relation to the sixcriterias mentioned before. This is followed by Section 2, which will have questions designed to help measure the level of assimilation in social aspect.

Furthermore, the questionnaire uses three different question formats:

a)   Open question format. In this type of question, respondents will be asked especially about their ages, educational and occupational backgrounds and their monthly income. The advantage of this format is that it will elicit real answers from the respondents that will be easy to categorise and analyse. However, the research uses this format only in the subjects mentioned above, which are in Section 1 in the questionnaire.

b)   Statements with tick box categories. The respondents need to tick the box that best matches their answer. This type of format is suitable for the measurement of general attitudes and is easily understood and quick to complete. The research uses this type of format to get information about the gender and marital status of the respondents in Section 1 of the questionnaire.

c)   Rating scales. The respondents will be given questions with a rating scale of 1 to 5. The scales 1 and 2 will indicate their agreement with the question or statement, while scales 4 to 5 indicates their disagreement with the question or statement. In the meantime, scale 3 shows a neutral response to the question or statement mentioned. This sort of format is used in Section 2 and is appropriate for measuring social assimilation. Furthermore, this type of format follows the Likert scale which was produced by Rensis Likert.

Earlier, the questionnaire was distributed to twenty Chinese Muallaf students from National University of Malaysia, each of them members of the PERKIM Student Movement (PSM).[3] They were responsible for evaluating and giving advice regarding the selection of the questions on the questionnaire form. As a result, they have agreed that the questions are easy to understand and to answer.

v.   Criteria for measuring the level of assimilation

Significantly, this research requires direct information about the level of social assimilation. For this research the customs, practices and activities in the '1971 National Culture Policy of Malaysia' were chosen to be the criteria for measuring such levels. Furthermore, several parts of the policy were used effectively by Chuah, O. (2001).

In order to select the practices, norms and values appropriate to this research, all the things that are covered in the research need to be accounted for. For example the main aspect involved is social aspect. There has also been a clarification of the criteria for collecting the data, including the criteria for the various ways in which the respondents are to be grouped, as well as an analysis of the condition and population of Kuala Lumpur as the place where this research needs to be conducted. All these things provide clarification that helps not only in determining the social practices, but also in how to design the questions.

The criteria for measuring the level of social assimilation of Chinese Muslims to Malay customs indicated as below:

1.   Malay dress (*Baju Melayu* , batik and songkok)
2.   Malay wedding.
3.   *Kenduri* (meals).
4.   *Kompang* (is a type of musical instrument used to welcome the bride and groom)
5.   Malay food (Nasi Lemak).
6.   Malay writing (*Jawi* script).
7.   Malay daily practice while meeting (*Salam*).
8.   *Bersunat*.
9.   *Khatam al-Qurān*.
10.   *Eid* celebration.

These Malay customs which consisting of dress, food, daily practices and religious practices are the most common values and practices expecting Chinese convert to assimilate and practice them in their new life.

Findings of the Study

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[3] PERKIM Student Movement of the National University of Malaysia is one of the most active student clubs at the university. Although they only have around one hundred members among the university students their activities recorded a higher number of participants involved. This student clubs have the same objectives as PERKIM itself which is to enhance welfare especially through the medium of education. In the case of this research, twenty of them were selected because all of them are Chinese Muallaf or born as Chinese Muslims. Generally, they understood the situation of Chinese Muallafin Malaysia as they are part of them. Therefore, they can evaluate the questionnaire effectively. They took a week to evaluate the questionnaire, from3[rd] of January until 9th of January, 2009 and gave their responses verbally. Three days after, the questionnaire was distributed to the real respondents in Kuala Lumpur.

The study reveals the following aspects:

i.   Respondents' Demography

The study has selected 600 Chinese Muallaf in Kuala Lumpur as sample of the study. They are 300 male and women consecutively. In regard to the age, repondents aged 15-55 years old were involved in the study. The most of them are between 15-17 years old consisting of 120 people , followed by aged between 41-45 years old consisting of 110 people. The fewest respondent are aged 55 years above.

The study also reveals that they are balance in terms of occupational background whereby each type of occupation namely general workers, semi-skilled workers, skilled workers and professional workers consist of 150 people. In addition, education background, monthly income and marital status also share the same pattern despite different numbers.

The table below shows respondents' demography in detail:

Table 1: **Respondents' demography**

Data gath. Resp. Cri	Criteria background	Number of data gathered	Percentage
1. Age	15-17 years-old	120	20
	18-24 years-old	60	10
	25-30 years-old	80	13
	31-35 years-old	60	10
	36-40 years-old	60	10
	41-45 years-old	110	18
	46-54 years-old	70	12
	55 years-old and above	40	7
Total		**600**	**100**
2. Gender	Male	300	50
	Female	300	50
Total		**600**	**100**
3. Occupational background	General workers	150	25
	Semi-skilled workers	150	25
	Skilled workers	150	25
	Professional workers	150	25
Total		**600**	**100**
4. Educational background	Primary school	150	25
	Secondary school	150	25
	College/Institute/Pre-University Classes	150	25
	University	150	25
Total		**600**	**100**
5. Monthly income	Upper income group (RM 5,000.00 and above)	200	Approximately 33.3
	Middle income group (From RM 1, 000.00 to RM 4,000.00)	200	Approximately 33.3
	Lower income group (RM 200.00 to RM 900.00)	200	Approximately 33.3
Total		**600**	**100**

6. Marital status	Single	300	50
	Married (including single parent and widow)	300	50
Total		**600**	**100**

Source: returned questionnaires

ii.   Instrument Reliability

The reliability in this research means consistency, or the degree to which an instrument will give similar results for the same individuals at different times. The best quotation to explain instrument reliability in research is through the definition the term given by Joppe (2000). She defined the reliability as *"…the extent to which results are consistent over time and an accurate representation of the total population under study is referred to as reliability and if the results of a study can be reproduced under a similar methodology, then the research instrument is considered to be reliable"*

However, the researcher cannot be sure of unchanging elements in extraneous influences, such as something that might cause an attitude transformation among the respondents. This could lead to a difference in the responses provided. In spite of this, any attitude change that can be considered as unexpected cannot be counted as a cause of an unreliable instrument. Following on what Joppe (2000) illustrated in reliability analysis by using the alpha (α) method, she concluded that an alpha (α) score of 0.6000 and above has a good reliability. The result of reliability testing of this research, after using the same method of testing as Joppe (2000) is shown in the following table. The result shows that each of the instruments (questions) has alpha 0.9000 and above or alpha 0.9990 in percentage. It means the instruments or the questions used in this research are reliable and can be validly applied in the questionnaire. Table 2 below shows the level of reliability of the study.

Table 2: **Reliability analysis results**

Item/question number	Item/question total correlation	Alpha (α) analysis result
Q7	0.9724	0.9990
Q8	0.9710	0.9990
Q9	0.9640	0.9990
Q10	0.9891	0.9989
Q11	0.9862	0.9990
Q12	0.9909	0.9989
Q13	0.9886	0.9989
Q14	0.9916	0.9989
Q15	0.9913	0.9989
Q16	0.9643	0.9990
Q17	0.9892	0.9989
Q18	0.9891	0.9989
Q19	0.9922	0.9989
Q20	0.9922	0.9990
Q21	0.9925	0.9990
Q22	0.9874	0.9991
Q23	0.9897	0.9990
Q24	0.9744	0.9989

Q25	0.9239	0.9989
Q26	0.9642	0.9990
Q27	0.9891	0.9990
Q28	0.9899	0.9989
Q29	0.9917	0.9990
Q30	0.9876	0.9989
Q31	0.9834	0.9989
Q32	0.9886	0.9989
Q33	0.9657	0.9990
Q34	0.9872	0.9990
Q35	0.9921	0.9990
Q36	0.9929	0.9989
Q37	0.9901	0.9998
Q38	0.9936	0.9989
Q39	0.9932	0.9989
Q40	0.9907	0.9989

Source: Reliability analysis through SPSS

iii.	Research Findings

The word 'level' in this research can be interpreted as certain numbers within the measurement which allows one to conclude that assimilationis at the high or low levels. Apparently, the usual formula used to get the levels is by looking at the 'Median'(Y) value score, comparing it with the 'Mean'(X) value score; if the 'Median' (Y) value score is higher than the 'Mean' (X) value score (Y>X), it means one can come to the conclusion that the level of assimilation at the high level. On the other hand, if the Y<X, this means the degree is at the low level.The testing and analysis of the level is summarised in the following table:

Table 3: **Testing and analysing results of the assimilation level**

		SOCIAL INTERACTION
Respondents	Valid	600
	Missing	0
Mean (X)		2.8441
Median (Y)		2.6667
Mode		1.00
Std. Deviation		1.3782
Variance		1.8994
Range		4.00
Minimum		1.00
Maximum		5.00
Sum		1706.44
Percentiles	25	1.6944
	50	2.6667
	75	4.0000

Source: Testing and analysing through SPSS

Clearly, derived from Table 3 above, the (Y) value score less than the (X) value score (Y (2.6667)<X (2.8883)). This leads to the conclusion that the level of social assimilation of Chinese

Muallaf is at the low level. The exact numbers and percentages relating to this low level can be obtained from the following table of testing and analysis:

Table 4: **Testing and analysing results of the numbers and percentages of social assimilation**

(Y) value score level		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1.00	118	19.7	19.7	19.7
	1.11	2	.3	.3	20.0
	1.44	1	.2	.2	20.2
	1.67	29	4.8	4.8	25.0
	1.78	10	1.7	1.7	26.7
	1.89	23	3.8	3.8	30.5
	2.00	52	8.7	8.7	39.2
	2.11	5	.8	.8	40.0
	2.33	2	.3	.3	40.3
	2.44	11	1.8	1.8	42.2
	2.56	2	.3	.3	42.5
	2.67	**56**	**9.3**	**9.3**	**51.8**
	2.78	22	3.7	3.7	55.5
	2.89	29	4.8	4.8	60.3
	3.00	1	.2	.2	60.5
	3.11	5	.8	.8	61.3
	3.22	15	2.5	2.5	63.8
	3.33	3	.5	.5	64.3
	3.44	1	.2	.2	64.5
	3.56	2	.3	.3	64.8
	3.67	8	1.3	1.3	66.2
	3.78	7	1.2	1.2	67.3
	3.89	1	.2	.2	67.5
	4.00	76	12.7	12.7	80.2
	4.11	3	.5	.5	80.7
	4.22	8	1.3	1.3	82.0
	4.33	1	.2	.2	82.2
	4.44	1	.2	.2	82.3
	4.56	11	1.8	1.8	84.2
	4.67	1	.2	.2	84.3
	4.78	2	.3	.3	84.7
	4.89	5	.8	.8	85.5
	5.00	87	14.5	14.5	100.0
	Total	600	100.0	100.0	

Source: Testing and analysing through SPSS

Noticeably, the (Y) value score of social assimilation of Chinese Muallaf is 2.6667 and it was close to 2.67 from the (Y) value score level at Table 3. Commonly, the close value from the score level can be used to conclude the precise percentage of the certain level (in this case, the percentage of social assimilationof Chinese Muallaf). Therefore, from the cumulative percentage of the 2.67 (Y) score level is 51.8%. It means, 51.8% of the 600 respondents of Chinese Muallaf, or 311 of them, are not assimilating socially with the Malays.

Conclusion

Chinese convert or new Muslim assimilation to Malay custom is among the issue that is often discussed and debated. Some Malays expect that Chinese converts need to change their life by practising Malay custom and culture. While not all Malay custom and culture that is consistent with the Islamic teachings. According to Islamic teachings, by converting to Islam one should understand and practice Islam, not Malay custom. They can practice Malay culture and custom as long as such practices are not against Islamic teaching since Islam accepts any form of custom and culture that preserve religious spirit and human moral values.In relation to Chinese muallaf assimilation to Malay custom, the result of the study show that their level of assimilation are low with 51.8% or 311 of them out of 600 respondents could not assimilate to a Malay custom. This level of assimilation is not significant since the conversion to Islam doesn't mean one need to assimilate to Malay custom. They rather need to practice Islam as awy of life.

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