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REVIVING THE LEGACY: THE ROLE OF ISLAMIC EDUCATION IN PATTANI, SOUTH THAILAND

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Abstract

Pattani is a region located in the southern part of Thailand, bordering Malaysia. It has a rich and diverse cultural heritage that is deeply rooted in Islam. For centuries, the people of Pattani have maintained a unique identity that reflects their Islamic faith, traditions, and way of life. One of the key pillars of this identity is the education system, which plays a vital role in preserving and transmitting the values and teachings of Islam to the younger generation. The purpose of this research is to explore the current state of Islamic education in Pattani, its challenges, and its role in preserving the cultural and spiritual heritage of the region. The study aims to provide insights into the efforts being made to revive the legacy of Islamic education in Pattani and the impact of these efforts on the community. This research utilizes a qualitative research method, specifically, a case study approach. Data were collected through interviews with key stakeholders in the region, including religious scholars, educators, and community leaders. Secondary sources, such as academic articles and reports, were also consulted to provide a broader context for the study. The findings of this research suggest that the traditional Islamic education system in Pattani is facing numerous challenges, including the impact of modernization and globalization, the ongoing conflicts in the region, and the limited access to resources and funding. However, there are also promising developments, such as the establishment of new Islamic schools that incorporate modern subjects into their curriculum and the use of technology to enhance the learning experience. The study also highlights the important role of Islamic education in promoting peace, harmony, and understanding in the region. Overall, this research contributes to a deeper understanding of the importance of Islamic education in Pattani and the challenges and opportunities facing the system. The study provides insights into the efforts being made to revive the legacy of Islamic education in the region and their potential impact on the community.

Keywords: *Cultural heritage, Islamic education, Pattani, South Thailand, Traditional education system.*

1. Introduction

Pattani is a region located in the southern part of Thailand that has a rich and diverse cultural heritage that is deeply rooted in Islam. The history of Islamic education in Patani dates back to the 15th century when Islam was introduced to the region. Since then, Islamic education has played a critical role in shaping the culture and identity of the Pattani people.¹ The traditional Islamic education system in Pattani consists of a network of Islamic schools or pondoks, where students are taught the Quran, Hadith, Islamic law, and other Islamic subjects. The pondoks are usually run by religious scholars or ustaz who have received their education in traditional Islamic institutions in other parts of Southeast Asia.²

These Islamic schools have played a vital role in preserving and transmitting the values and teachings of Islam to the younger generation. They have been instrumental in maintaining the unique identity of the Pattani people, which reflects their Islamic faith, traditions, and way of life. The Islamic schools in Pattani have also contributed to the intellectual and cultural development of the region, producing scholars and intellectuals who have made significant contributions to the field of Islamic studies.³

The development of Islamic education in Thailand shows a very dynamic graph.⁴ Thailand (Muangthai) itself is a country located in Southeast Asia and is a member of the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN). The government is in the form of a kingdom consisting of 76 provinces with a population of 57 million people. Waliyah in southern Thailand is mostly inhabited by Muslims. Their number is 2.3 million or about 4% of the entire population of Thailand. The area which is mostly inhabited by Muslims includes Pattani, Yala, Narathiwat and Satun. They have their own culture when compared to the population of Thailand in other areas where the majority are Buddhists.

The entry of Islam into Southern Thailand (Pattani) cannot be separated from the entry of Islam into Southeast Asia.⁵ This series of Islamic broadcasts in the archipelago is an integral part of the chain of the process of Islamization in the archipelago.⁶ Islamic education implemented in Thailand has similarities with Islamic education in Indonesia. Like, in Thailand there are also boarding schools and madrasas where the education system is the same as in Indonesia. The difference lies in the number of subjects tested at the National Examination and the obligation to learn the Thai language.⁷

¹ Patrick Jory, "Islam, Education and Reform in Southern Thailand: Tradition and Transformation," *The Asia Pacific Journal of Anthropology* 14, no. 3 (June 1, 2013): 284–286, <https://doi.org/10.1080/14442213.2013.787908>.

² Raihani et al., "Delivering Islamic Studies And Teaching Diversity In Southern Thai Islamic Schools," *Al-Jami'ab* 54, no. 1 (2016): 123–146.

³ Nathan Porath, "Muslim Schools (Pondok) In The South Of Thailand Balancing Piety On a Tightrope Of National Civility, Prejudice And Violence," *South East Asia Research* 22, no. 3 (2014): 303–319.

⁴ Rusli Rusli, "Islam Di Thailand," *Khazanah: Jurnal Sejarah Dan Kebudayaan Islam*, December 23, 2017, 41–56, <https://doi.org/10.15548/khazanah.v0i0.60>.

⁵ Naili Hikmah, "Sejarah Pendidikan Di Pattani Thailand" (Makalah, Pekalongan, Sekolah Tinggi Agama Islam Negeri Pekalongan, 2016), <http://nailynikmah.blogspot.com/2016/04/sejarah-pendidikan-di-pattani-thailand.html>.

⁶ Mikael Marasabessy, "Sejarah Pendidikan Islam Di Thailand" (Makalah, Ponorogo, Indonesia, Darussalam Gontor, 2013), https://www.academia.edu/9849017/Sejarah_Pendidikan_Islam_Di_Thailand.

⁷ Rini Rahman and Indah Muliati, "Pendidikan Islam Di Thailand," *Jurnal Kawakib* 1, no. 1 (December 14, 2020): 23–34, <https://doi.org/10.24036/kwkib.v1i1.10>.

Many opinions have been expressed about the history of the arrival of Islam in Thailand and its development,⁸ namely among others:

1. In 1400 AD or around the 15th-16th century, the largest spread of Islam to the archipelago of Nusantara occurred. It is also said that the spreaders of Islam were descendants of the Bani Abbasyiah.
2. It is estimated that in the 10th or 11th century, Islam entered Thailand through the trade routes. The spread of Islam was carried out by Sufi teachers and merchants from the Arab region and the Indian coast.
3. In 1028 AD, Islam entered Thailand through the Kingdom of Samudra Pasai in Aceh. One of the pieces of evidence that supports these opinions is the discovery of an Arabic-inscribed tombstone near Kampung Teluk Cik Munah, Pekan Pahang. In the past, when the Kingdom of Samudra Pasai was conquered by the Kingdom of Siam (Thailand), many Muslims were captured, among whom was King Zainal Abidin, who was taken as a prisoner to Thailand. These captives would be released upon payment of ransom. After their release, some of the freed captives returned to Indonesia, while others chose to settle in Thailand to spread the Islamic faith in the southern regions of Thailand, which directly borders Malaysia.⁹

In the first phase or in the 17th century, Islam in Pattani was characterized by its propagation of Sufism and mysticism by renowned scholars such as Sheikh Syaifuddin. It is widely believed that he was the first to convert the people of Pattani to Islam, but this may be a misconception as Pattani had embraced Islam much earlier, and it was even considered a place that had long accepted Islam, such as Aceh. Islamic education in Pattani began when Islam arrived and settled in Pattani in the 15th century. Basic education began among the Muslim community with the study of the Quran. The reading of the Quran became the main study that had to be undertaken by every member of the community. Quranic education surpassed education in the form of Islamic boarding schools, and then the boarding schools began to be established in Pattani en masse.¹⁰

The Islamic boarding school system, which is commonly found in Java, is also known in the Thai community. The person who first introduced this educational system was a student of Sunan Ampel in Java named Wan Husein. He was an influential scholar in the development of Islam in Pattani. With the introduction of the Islamic boarding school system, Islamic education was no longer exclusively owned by the royal elite, but also became the property of the common people and the general public.¹¹

The Islamic boarding school became the most important educational institution in Pattani. In this regard, Pattani became a renowned center for Islamic education in Southern Thailand and the Malay Peninsula at that time. The Islamic boarding school

⁸ el-Hujjah Crew, "Thailand: Menelusuri Jejak Islam dan Pesantren," *Pesantren Al-Falah Temboro Karas*, n.d.

⁹ William R. Roff, "Pondoks, Madrasahs, and the Production of Ulama in Malaysia," *Studia Islamika* 11, no. 1 (2004): 1–21.

¹⁰ Porath, "Muslim Schools (Pondok) In The South Of Thailand Balancing Piety On a Tightrope Of National Civility, Prejudice And Violence."

¹¹ Andrew D. W. Forbes, "Thailand's Muslim Minorities: Assimilation, Secession, or Coexistence?," *Asian Survey* 22, no. 11 (October 1, 1953): 1056–73, <https://doi.org/10.2307/2643979>.

became a highly influential educational institution and a place of guidance for the community, and it was considered a stronghold for preserving local culture. The students all wore sarongs, Malay shirts, white caps, and used Jawi script and Jawi books.¹²

The process of Islamization in Pattani cannot be separated from the role of education. In the early stages, informal education played a crucial role, which was the informal contact between preachers and the local population. This was followed by the emergence of non-formal education, and finally formal education.¹³ Formal education implemented by the government began during the reign of King Chulalongkorn, or Rama V, in 1899. However, this school did not receive much support from the community. In 1921, the government issued a law mandating compulsory education from the first to fourth grade of primary school. Despite the issuance of this law, the Muslim community in the southern region of Thailand (especially in the four provinces: Pattani, Yala, Narathiwat, and Satun) did not welcome the implementation of the law. This is evidenced by the statistics in 1960, where only 13.67% of the population in that region had completed primary school education from first to fourth grade, and many were still strongly attached to the pondok education system.¹⁴

In government schools, including Muslim students are required to study Buddhism as a compulsory subject. Over time, the government allowed the teaching of Islamic knowledge in government schools, but in reality, this practice failed in the eyes of the Muslim community because the teachers were of poor quality and not permanent. Meanwhile, in terms of the future, private Islamic schools cannot compete with government schools. Therefore, to balance this, secular subjects are also taught in madrasas so that students can succeed in state exams.¹⁵ Graduates of religious schools are not allowed to work in the government. It is not surprising that madrasahs are less popular among Muslim communities. For Muslim parents who enroll their children in government schools, they often send their children to non-formal religious education in mosques.¹⁶

The history of Islamic education in Pattani is a testament to the important role that education plays in preserving the cultural and spiritual heritage of a community. The traditional Islamic education system in Pattani has played a critical role in shaping the culture and identity of the Pattani people, and it remains an important part of the region's history and legacy.¹⁷

¹² Joseph Chinyong Liow and Moch Khafidz Fuad Raya, "Islamic Reformist Movement of Haji Sulong Abdul Kadir In Islamic Education Institutions In Thailand's Southern Border," *Jurnal Pendidikan Islam* 10, no. 2 (November 1, 2020): 1–15, <https://doi.org/10.38073/jpi.v10i2.346>.

¹³ Ruslan Rasid, Abdul Munip, and Hilman Djafar, "Transformasi Sistem Lembaga Pendidikan Islam Di Patani-Thailand Selatan," *Nazhruna: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam* 2, no. 3 (November 20, 2019): 407–420, <https://doi.org/10.31538/nzh.v2i3.1100>.

¹⁴ Rahman and Muliati, "Pendidikan Islam Di Thailand."

¹⁵ Koiy Sahbudin Harahap et al., "Analysis of Islamic Educational Policy: Thailand Case Study," *Al-Tanzim: Jurnal Manajemen Pendidikan Islam* 6, no. 1 (January 26, 2022): 54–64, <https://doi.org/10.33650/al-tanzim.v6i1.3223>.

¹⁶ Jory, "Islam, Education and Reform in Southern Thailand."

¹⁷ Sung Yong Lee, "Peacebuilding and Islamic Leadership in Southern Thailand," *Peace Review* 27, no. 3 (July 3, 2015): 328–36, <https://doi.org/10.1080/10402659.2015.1063376>.

2. Literature Review

2.1. The History of Islamic Education in Pattani

Pattani's history of Islamic education is rich and has a strong legacy. Exploring the development of Islamic education in the region and how this legacy has been continued to this day is an important topic. A literature review can delve into the historical background of Islamic education in Pattani, including its origins and evolution over time. It can also highlight the significant figures who played a role in shaping the region's Islamic education.¹⁸

Islamic education has played a critical role in the development of Pattani's society and has a rich historical background. A literature review can explore how Islamic education has influenced the community's values and beliefs, and how this has impacted the region's culture and identity. It can examine how Islamic education has evolved over time and how it has adapted to the changing needs of the community.¹⁹ This includes the emergence of new technologies and teaching methods that have been implemented to enhance the learning experience. Additionally, the literature review can highlight the significant figures who have contributed to the development of Islamic education in Patani, such as scholars, educators, and religious leaders. Understanding the historical roots of Islamic education in Pattani is crucial in appreciating its importance and relevance to the region's cultural identity.²⁰

Furthermore, the literature review can examine the various types of Islamic education institutions that have been established in Pattani throughout history, such as pondok schools, madrasahs, and Islamic universities. It can also explore the curricula and teaching methodologies used in these institutions and how they have evolved over time to meet the changing needs of the community. Additionally, the review can analyze the impact of external influences, such as colonialism and globalization, on Islamic education in Patani and how the community has adapted to these changes.

2.2. The Teaching Approach in Madrasah in Pattani

Madrasah in Pattani has a unique teaching approach that differs from the approach used in conventional schools. A literature review can explore this approach and highlight its distinct features, such as the use of local languages and the emphasis on memorization of the Quran. It can also examine how this approach encourages students to have a deeper understanding and love for Islamic teachings and practices.²¹

Additionally, research studies have shown that this unique teaching approach in Pattani's madrasah has contributed to the preservation of the local culture and identity of the Pattani people. ²²The use of local languages in teaching Islamic subjects has enabled students to better connect with their cultural heritage, and has strengthened their

¹⁸ Lailiyatul Azizah and Moch Khafidz Fuad Raya, "Islamic Education Leadership In Conflict State: Case Study In Southern Thailand," *Jurnal Tatsqif* 19, no. 1 (August 3, 2021): 1–20, <https://doi.org/10.20414/jtq.v19i1.3540>.

¹⁹ Crew, "Abcd (Apakah Bisa Cinta Didustai) ~ edisi 11 Majalah el-Hujjah Temboro."

²⁰ Marasabessy, "Sejarah Pendidikan Islam Di Thailand."

²¹ Marwan Al-Fathoni, "Menelusuri Jejak Islam Dan Pesantren Di Patani," *Beritalangitan.Com* (blog), March 10, 2016, <https://beritalangitan.com/pesantren/menelusuri-jejak-islam-dan-pesantren-di-patani-1/>.

²² Al-Fathoni. "Menelusuri Jejak Islam..."

sense of belonging and pride in their community. Furthermore, the emphasis on memorization of the Quran has not only helped students to develop a strong foundation in Islamic knowledge but has also improved their memory retention skills. Thus, the teaching approach in Pattani's madrasah is not only effective in imparting religious education but also has significant socio-cultural benefits.

2.3. Challenges and Solutions in Improving Islamic Education in Pattani

Islamic education in Pattani faces several challenges, such as the lack of government support and difficulty in developing suitable curricula for the Muslim community. A literature review can examine these challenges and explore potential solutions to improve Islamic education in the region. This can include exploring successful educational initiatives and programs that have been implemented in Pattani and examining the role of community-based organizations in supporting Islamic education.²³

Islamic education has been an important part of Pattani's cultural heritage for centuries. However, it is facing several challenges that are impeding its progress. One of the most significant challenges is the lack of government support for Islamic education in the region.²⁴ This is due to a variety of factors, including government policies that prioritize secular education and the lack of funding for Islamic education institutions. Another challenge is the difficulty in developing suitable curricula for the Muslim community in Pattani. This is because the region has a unique cultural and linguistic heritage that is distinct from other regions in Thailand, making it challenging to develop curricula that are tailored to the specific needs of the local population.

Despite these challenges, there have been successful initiatives and programs implemented in Pattani that can serve as models for improving Islamic education in the region. For instance, some madrasahs have adopted a more modern approach to education, using technology to enhance the learning experience and developing curricula that incorporate subjects beyond Islamic studies, such as science and mathematics. Community-based organizations have also played an essential role in supporting Islamic education in Pattani. These organizations have provided financial support for madrasahs and other Islamic education institutions and have advocated for greater government support for Islamic education in the region.²⁵

In conclusion, a literature review can examine the challenges and potential solutions for improving Islamic education in Pattani. It can shed light on successful initiatives and programs that have been implemented and examine the role of community-based organizations in supporting Islamic education. Such a review can help stakeholders in Pattani and other regions facing similar challenges to develop effective strategies for improving Islamic education and preserving the cultural heritage of the local Muslim community.

²³ Arki Auliahadi, "Dinamika Perjuangan Muslim Patani (Tinjauan Historis)," *FUADUNA: Jurnal Kajian Keagamaan Dan Kemasyarakatan* 1, no. 1 (2017): 1–15.

²⁴ Hifza and Aslan, "Problematika Pendidikan Islam Melayu Patani Thailand," *Journal Al-Ulum* 19, no. 2 (2019).

²⁵ Tohiroh Saah, "Pendidikan Islam Di Patani Selatan Thailand Dalam Perspektif Historis" (Skripsi tidak diterbitkan, Lampung, Islam Negeri Raden Intan, 2017).

2.4. The Influence of Islamic Education on Pattani Society

Islamic education has had a significant influence on Pattani society. A literature review can explore how Islamic education has shaped the views and values of the community and how it has helped strengthen Pattani's identity and unity. It can also examine the impact of Islamic education on social cohesion and interfaith relations in the region.²⁶

Islamic education has been an integral part of Pattani society for centuries, playing a crucial role in shaping the community's beliefs, values, and traditions. The study of Islamic texts and principles is deeply embedded in the daily lives of Pattani Muslims, and Islamic education has helped reinforce the unique identity and culture of the region.²⁷ A literature review can explore the ways in which Islamic education has influenced the views and values of the community, including its impact on gender roles, social norms, and attitudes towards religious diversity. It can also examine how Islamic education has contributed to the promotion of social cohesion and interfaith relations in Pattani. Furthermore, the literature can explore the role of Islamic education in promoting peace and conflict resolution in the region. Understanding the influence of Islamic education on Pattani society can help provide insights into the region's cultural and religious dynamics and facilitate better communication and collaboration between different communities.

Furthermore, a literature review can also analyze the role of Islamic education in promoting peaceful coexistence and conflict resolution in Pattani. It can explore how Islamic teachings on justice, compassion, and tolerance have been integrated into the education system and how they have been used to address the ongoing conflict in the region. The review can also investigate the impact of Islamic education on the empowerment of women and the promotion of gender equality in Pattani.

In addition, the review can examine the challenges facing Islamic education in Patani and potential solutions to address them. These challenges may include limited resources, inadequate teacher training, and the need for more diverse and inclusive curricula. The review can also explore the role of technology in enhancing Islamic education in the region and the potential of online and distance learning to address some of the challenges facing traditional classroom education. Overall, a literature review on Islamic education in Pattani can provide valuable insights into the unique approach and challenges of Islamic education in the region, as well as its impact on the community's social, cultural, and political landscape.

2.5. The Commitment to Islamic Education among Youth

Islamic education is essential in shaping the younger generation in Pattani. A literature review can explore the commitment of youth to Islamic education and examine how it helps shape the moral character of the younger generation and strengthens their Muslim identity. It can also examine the challenges and opportunities for engaging youth

²⁶ Rasid, Munip, and Djafar, "Transformasi Sistem Lembaga Pendidikan Islam Di Patani-Thailand Selatan."

²⁷ Sifa Fauziah, "Sejarah Perkembangan Pendidikan Islam Di Thailand Selatan (Patani) Pada Abad Ke XVII Sampai XX," April 1, 2012, <https://repository.uinjkt.ac.id/dspace/handle/123456789/1781>.

in Islamic education and the potential impact of youth involvement in promoting Islamic education in Pattani.²⁸

Islamic education plays a crucial role in shaping the moral and social values of the younger generation in Pattani. A literature review can examine the level of commitment of young people in the region to Islamic education and how this affects their social and religious identity. This can include exploring the role of madrasahs and other Islamic educational institutions in providing opportunities for young people to learn about their faith and participate in community activities. Additionally, the review can explore the challenges and opportunities for engaging youth in Islamic education, including the role of technology and social media in promoting Islamic education among younger generations. Finally, the review can examine the potential impact of youth involvement in promoting Islamic education in Pattani, including the impact on social cohesion, community development, and interfaith relations.

Furthermore, the literature review can also investigate the impact of modern technology and social media on Islamic education for youth in Pattani. With the rapid development of technology and the rise of social media, young Muslims in Pattani have more access to various Islamic education resources and platforms. This can lead to both positive and negative impacts on their learning experience and engagement with Islamic education. The review can also explore the potential of using technology and social media as a tool to promote Islamic education among youth in Pattani and address some of the challenges faced in traditional approaches to education.

3. Research Method

The study aims to provide insights into the efforts being made to revive the legacy of Islamic education in Pattani and the impact of these efforts on the community. This research utilizes a qualitative research method, specifically, a case study approach. Data were collected through interviews with key stakeholders in the region, including religious scholars, educators, and community leaders. Secondary sources, such as academic articles and reports, were also consulted to provide a broader context for the study.

4. Findings and Discussion

4.1. The Government Condition in Thailand

Very cruel and heinous events have occurred in Thailand in the past, causing many Thai people to lose their lives. These events were caused by the lack of attention or policies implemented by the Thai government, or some form of punishment to deter those who fight against Muslims in Thailand from repeating actions that harm others, particularly the Muslim community.²⁹

- a. In April 2004, during the leadership of Thaksin Shinawarta, a bloody incident occurred that resulted in the deaths of 30 Muslim youths at the Kru Se Mosque.
- b. The second heinous incident occurred in October 2004, which resulted in the deaths of 175 Takbai Muslim detainees. As a result, at the end of 2008, Thailand aimed to have a new Prime Minister who was expected to bring about change.

²⁸ Auliahadi, "Dinamika Perjuangan Muslim Patani (Tinjauan Historis)."

²⁹ Thanet Aphornsuvan, *History and Politics of The Muslim in Thailand* (Thammasat University, 2003).

The new regime had to work hard to find alternatives to address the conflict in southern Thailand.

In 1961, the Thai government issued a policy to transform traditional pesantren schools into modern pesantren or Private Pesantren Schools. This change was intentionally made by the Thai government to transform the education system, which was originally based on Islam, into a semi-secular education system.³⁰ The Thai government's strategy has indeed produced results. In about 50 years, many young Muslim Malays have become more inclined to speak Thai than Malay, both in school and in daily life. However, this was not their choice but due to the Thai government's policy of forcing the use of Thai language in every interaction among young people in school and in high-level official forums.

The use of Thai language is mandatory by the government, not only in government offices and schools, but also in the media and even in Madrasah or private Islamic schools. Traditional Malay education, which emerged in the 17th century with institutions such as Madrasah and Mosque, emphasized the importance of both religious learning and the spread of Islam, with the mosque not only serving as a place of worship but also as a center for Islamic education.³¹

4.2. Religious Life

Islam in Thailand is a minority group that has emerged since the thirteenth century AD in southern Thailand, especially the Pattani and Songkhla areas. In its journey, Islam grew very difficult in Thailand, because it was always under pressure from the Buddhist-majority government.³²

It is reported that 94.6% of the population in Thailand are followers of Theravada Buddhism, making Thailand the country with the largest Buddhist population in the world. As of 2013, the percentage of Buddhists in Thailand was still around 80%. However, the situation for Muslims in Thailand is not as fortunate as that of Muslims in Malaysia, where the government provides facilities for Islamic propagation such as mosques, prayer rooms, and media platforms like TV and radio, and even pays salaries for imams, preachers, prayer callers, and mosque administrators.

The southern region of Thailand, which is predominantly Muslim Malay, is a conflict zone with a long-standing background of religious and ethnic disputes. The conflict in southern Thailand began when the British colonial government handed over the northern Malay territories to the Kingdom of Siam, and the Anglo-Siamese Treaty was signed, which undermined the rights and status of the Muslim Pattani community. This led to resistance, which was perceived by the central government as separatism, and martial law was imposed in the region.

In some coastal towns, Islam is not the religion of the local community but rather that of individuals who are part of an international network of associations. Islam spread

³⁰ Chris Baker and Pasuk Phongpaichit, *A History of Thailand* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014).

³¹ Paulus Rudolf Yuniarto, "Minoritas Muslim Thailand Asimilasi, Perlawanan Budaya Dan Akar Gerakan Separatisme," *Jurnal Masyarakat Dan Budaya* 7, no. 1 (2005): 89–118.

³² Abdul Wahab Syakhrani, "Pendidikan Agama Islam Di Thailand," *ADIBA: JOURNAL OF EDUCATION* 2, no. 1 (March 13, 2022): 74–79.

throughout Southeast Asia through trade, the Hajj pilgrimage, and movements by students, teachers, and Sufis, with Singapore being a center for Islamic reform.

4.3. Education in Thailand

Education in Thailand is provided by both government and private institutions, with levels of education ranging from primary school to university. The education system in Thailand is based on a national curriculum set by the Ministry of Education. Basic education in Thailand is compulsory for nine years, consisting of six years of primary education and three years of lower secondary education. After completing lower secondary education, students can choose to continue their education for three years in upper secondary education or enter vocational education.

In Thailand, there are many public and private universities that offer a variety of degree programs. One of the well-known public universities in Thailand is Chulalongkorn University, which is the oldest and most prestigious university in Thailand. This university offers programs in various fields such as law, business, technology, and the arts. Additionally, there are also private universities such as Assumption University that are well-known for their business and information technology programs.

Despite the quality of education in Thailand being relatively good, there are still many challenges that need to be addressed. These include the gap between education in urban and rural areas, the need to improve the quality of teaching, and the high cost of education for low-income families. The Thai government continues to work towards improving the quality of education and providing greater opportunities for all citizens to receive a good and quality education.

The education promoted by the Royal Government of Thailand is considered discriminatory towards Islam. In 1923, several Islamic Madrasas, which were considered extreme, were closed down. Islamic schools were required to teach national education and ethics based on the core teachings of Buddhism. At certain times, school children were also required to sing songs that were based on Buddhist beliefs, and teachers were expected to pay homage to Buddha. The Ministry of Education distorted history and accused Muslims of being the ones who wanted to oppose the government of Siam and overthrow the king. They even alleged that Islamic schools or Madrasas had been spreading violence, which had caused the crisis in Southern Thailand to continue. Madrasas were easily accused of recruiting militants in Southern Thailand, and it was claimed that these schools had given birth to rebels who considered Buddhists as infidels.

The current strategy that the Muslim community in Southern Thailand needs to adopt is to promote education, support national development, and maintain local stability. However, to this day, the Muslim community in Pattani, Thailand, faces prolonged complex discrimination and terrorism. This has limited their social and political life significantly, and the Thai government has not been able to provide equal education to the Muslim community. Security-based pressures always threaten them, and this gap has lowered the nationalism of the non-Buddhist Thai community.

However, there are also Madrasas in Southern Thailand that have been subtly rebelling against the Thai government by incorporating traditional education systems that emphasize Islamic principles. They hope that by doing so, the education provided

in these schools will help to maintain their religious beliefs and ensure that their children become fully devoted Muslims. This, in turn, would enable them to gain the necessary skills to find employment easily.

4.5. Muslims in Thailand as a Minority

Islam in Thailand is considered a minority religion, especially in the southern region of Pattani, Yala, and Marathiwat, where the number of Muslims is only around 5%, or 1.5 million people. They often face discrimination in all aspects of life. Currently, the majority of the Thai population, around 80%, practices Buddhism. The regions of Thailand were originally part of the Islamic Malay kingdom of Pattani Darusalam. The areas that are now known as southern Thailand were previously independent and sovereign sultanates, with Pattani being one of the largest.

At that time, Islam in southern Thailand was very much a minority, and because of the very small Muslim community, many hardships were experienced by the Muslim population. These included:

- a. Restrictions on their own movements, such as to obtain their rights in the fields of economics, politics, and religion. And because of the classic problems that have been going on for a long time, they have violated the values of their beliefs and Islamic values themselves.
- b. In the social order, Thai Muslims were given an unpleasant nickname from their non-Muslim brothers and sisters. For example, Kheik or Khaek, which means outsider, is literally translated to mean migrant or someone who only came to stay. Such terms that indicate that Muslims are only considered as migrants have been well-known among Thai society for centuries. However, the Muslim community in Thailand did not just accept this label, and instead, they expressed that their arrival was earlier than that of the Buddhists in Thailand, leading to the emergence of the term Thai-Islam in the 1940s. However, this term created many contradictions because the term Thai is actually a synonym for Buddhists, while Islam is identified with the Malay Muslim community at that time. So how could someone be Buddhist and Muslim at the same time? Therefore, the Malay-Islam community preferred to be called by that term instead.

However, Muslims in Thailand have faced various forms of discrimination and marginalization throughout history.³³ In the early 20th century, the Thai government closed down several Islamic schools (madrasahs) that were deemed too extreme and required Islamic schools to teach national education and ethical values based on Buddhist teachings. Muslims were also required to sing Buddhist songs and pay respect to Buddhist teachers. The Thai government has also accused Muslims of being responsible for various forms of violence and unrest in the southern provinces. The development of Islamic education runs to the situation in extending ethnic, religious expression, and politic.³⁴

³³ Ismail Suardi Wekke, Muhammad Ashrori, and Budianto Hamuddin, "Institutional Transformation Of Madrasa Of Muslim Minority In Thailand," *Jurnal Pendidikan Islam* 4, no. 1 (2018): 15–26.

³⁴ Ismail Suardi Wekke, Siddin Siddin, and Sukree Langputeh, "Islamic Education in Thailand Pattani Muslim Minority: What Are the Institutional Continuity and Change," *Tadris: Jurnal Keguruan Dan Ilmu Tarbiyah* 4, no. 1 (June 28, 2019): 127–134, <https://doi.org/10.24042/tadris.v4i1.3753>.

Despite these challenges, many Muslims in Thailand have made significant contributions to Thai society and culture. They have played important roles in business, politics, and the arts, and have helped to shape Thailand's multicultural identity. However, more work needs to be done to address issues of discrimination and promote greater understanding and acceptance of Thailand's Muslim minority.

4.6. Islamic education in Thailand

Thailand, especially in a couple of regions such as Pattani, Setul, Yala, and Narathiwat, Islamic education with boarding school, and Madrasah become Islamic identity backbone and Islamic struggle against the central government. Meanwhile, the different condition takes place to Islamic education in Singapore. There is still an unclear purpose between Islamic education with the national education system, there is no Islamic university, no standard curriculum, no central Islamic education administration, and the lack of fund and economical status of religion teacher.³⁵

The main characteristic of traditional Islamic boarding schools (pondok) is:

- a. Non-classical education is practiced in Southern Thailand, where students are called "tok pake" and are not divided into class levels. The level of knowledge and education of an individual is measured based on the books they have read. Therefore, there is no specific time limit to complete their education.
- b. The curriculum is focused solely on religious education based on classical texts.
- c. The teaching method is centered on the correct recitation and comprehension of classical texts through the guidance of the teacher.
- d. Management does not prioritize administrative management, such as student identification numbers, report cards, certificates, and others.

Islamic education in Thailand has been provided by both government and private institutions. Islamic schools in Thailand are known as "pondok" or "madrasah" and usually cater to Muslim students who wish to study Islamic teachings in addition to their regular academic studies. These Islamic schools are typically located in the southern region of Thailand where the Muslim population is more concentrated.

In addition to Islamic schools, there are also Islamic universities such as Yala Islamic University and Fatoni University that provide higher education in Islamic studies. These universities offer degree programs in various fields of Islamic studies such as Islamic law, Islamic economics, and Islamic education.

Islamic education in Thailand faces challenges such as a lack of resources and funding as well as limited access to quality Islamic education for students outside of the southern region. Despite these challenges, the Thai government has made efforts to promote Islamic education and support the development of Islamic institutions in the country.

4.7. Surau and Masque

Since the emergence of Islam in Pattani, brought by preachers from outside as well as local preachers, in the early stages of spreading and teaching the Islamic religion,

³⁵ Pendi Susanto, "Perbandingan Pendidikan Islam Di Asia Tenggara," *Jurnal Pendidikan Islam* 4, no. 1 (June 1, 2015): 71–93, <https://doi.org/10.14421/jpi.2015.41.71-93>.

they used surau or mosques as a means of forging religious insights and strengthening Islamic education for the people of Pattani.³⁶ One example of the preaching through this education system is as demonstrated by Sheikh Daud bin Abdullah al-Fathani, who made the surau a place to spread Islam by teaching Islamic knowledge, such as studying the Quran, Fiqh, Barzanji, and preaching.

Up to now, through this mosque-based education, Muslim children in Patani are taught about religious values so that the mosque is not only used as a place of daily worship by the Muslim community, but also as a place for studying the Quran, learning to read and memorize the Book of Barzanji, planting and strengthening Fiqh knowledge, and so on. Surau, in anthropology, is an acculturation of Buddhist religious culture in Pattani, which they call ashram. In the Buddhist tradition, this place is a place where Buddhist students deepen their knowledge of Buddhism. Socially, we can see that the preachers in Pattani have the same patterns in spreading Islam in Java, in general. At the beginning of their arrival, they did not make significant frontal changes to the model of facilities or traditions. Instead, they first went through a process of cultural acculturation, adapting to the customs and habits of the local community. Psychologically, this serves as a strategy so that the target audience or dakwah object is not shocked and can easily accept the presence of Islam due to the attractive persuasive approach they see and the similarities to their previous beliefs.

For Muslim communities in Pattani, mosques or surau are still used as a central place or hub for Islamic religious activities, whether related to worship or Islamic activities such as maulid, yasinan, training, reading the Book of Barzanji, and so on. Sometimes they are also used as centers for social activities such as mass circumcision or activities involving many people from different religious or cultural backgrounds. Based on the moderate practices carried out by the managers/takmir of the mosque, it slowly erases the assumption that mosques in Patani are a basis for extremist ideology.

In Pattani, they want the management of Islamic educational institutions based on mosques and surau to not only strengthen the pillars of Islamic foundations, but also emphasize that Malay traditions and culture continue to live and exist amidst the political struggles and policies of the Thai government that always suppress all religious activities of the Muslim community in Pattani. Moreover, efforts to eliminate Malay traditions that have been rooted for hundreds of years since the era of the Patani kingdom. Therefore, in managing Islamic educational institutions, some have incorporated the mosque system into the Malay school or TADIKA system (Kindergarten Education Garden) so that Muslim minority children in Patani are not only taught about Islamic insights but also increased towards instilling Malay culture as a form of their love for their ancestral heritage.

4.8. The Traditional Pondok System

Anthropologically and functionally, traditional pondoks in Pattani are not much different from pondoks in general in the Nusantara, where their presence is certainly to maintain the identity and existence of religion. This is in line with Michael Gilquin's view that traditional pondoks have an important role in teaching Islam in a local area in Southeast Asia in general. As for their function, traditional Muslim pondoks are used as

³⁶ Rasid, Munip, and Djafar, "Transformasi Sistem Lembaga Pendidikan Islam Di Patani-Thailand Selatan."

a place to implement the talaqqi method (direct reading of books in front of the "Tok Guru" for the Malay community or kyai in terms commonly used in Nusantara).

So the teachers who teach religious education in traditional Islamic boarding schools teach their students to learn to read the books themselves and become good *qudwahs* for the students who study alongside them, as well as guides, advisors, and builders. The hope is that after the students complete their education in the traditional pondok, they can become teachers in various places in Tanah Melayu in general, so that the "tok pakai" students who have graduated can participate in developing pondoks in the Pattani region and other Muslim bases, as well as teaching Islamic education.

4.9. The Madrasah System

The madrasah system in Pattani-Southern Thailand has similarities with the madrasahs in the Nusantara, which were established based on the community's desire, especially in developing religious knowledge and other general knowledge. The difference between the madrasah system in Pattani and the Nusantara lies in the ownership status. In the Nusantara, some madrasahs are owned and managed by the government, while others are owned by foundations or private institutions. However, in Pattani, all madrasahs are owned by private institutions, and the government does not provide support to develop Islamic education.

Historically, this madrasah system was first initiated by H. Sulong. The madrasah was then named Madrasah Modern Al-Ma'arif Al-Wathaniyyah in 1933 as a transformation of the traditional Islamic boarding schools education system. Before the establishment of this madrasah system, the Pattani Muslim community only knew the traditional Islamic boarding school's education system. In other words, they only focused on religious studies and did not have a structured education system with time limitations. Additionally, anyone could enroll in a traditional Islamic boarding schools without age limitations. Besides, the Pattani community had their own concerns regarding the weaknesses of the traditional Islamic boarding school's education system. Some argue that the inspiration and motivation to establish the madrasah-based Islamic education system in Pattani were influenced by the modernization of Islamic education in Minangkabau during the 1900s to 1930s, which applied a classroom system, desks, and integrated general knowledge with religious studies.

4.10. The modern Islamic boarding school system

The modern Islamic boarding school system in Pattani-Southern Thailand is similar to those in Nusantara, established based on the community's demand, particularly in developing religious knowledge and other general sciences. The difference between the Islamic boarding school's system in Pattani and Nusantara lies in the ownership status; in Nusantara, some Islamic boarding schools are owned and managed by the government, while others are owned by foundations or private individuals. However, in Pattani, it can be said that the Islamic boarding schools are entirely privately owned, and the state does not provide support for the development of Islamic education systems.

Historically, this modern Islamic boarding school system was first proposed by H. Sulong. It was named Madrasah Modern Al-Ma'arif Al-Wathaniyyah in 1933 as a transformation of the traditional Islamic boarding school education system. Before the establishment of this Islamic boarding school system, the Muslim community in Pattani

only knew the traditional Islamic boarding school's system, in which they focused solely on religious studies. There were no time limits or age restrictions for students who wanted to study at the traditional Islamic boarding schools.

Aside from the community's concerns regarding the weaknesses of the traditional Islamic boarding school's system, some argue that the inspiration and motivation to establish an Islamic education system based on modern Islamic boarding schools in Pattani was influenced by the modernization of Islamic education in Minangkabau in the 1900s to 1930s. This system incorporated classrooms, desks, and a combination of other general sciences with religious studies

The modern Islamic boarding school system is a transformation carried out by the Thai government through the Education Center of Region Two, Yala Province, which oversees the Council of Islamic Education Assembly. The main factor in the formation of this boarding school system is based on the Thai government's desire for all educational institutions under its jurisdiction to be registered and regulated by the system and regulations.

Historically, the process of transforming to the boarding school system (private Islamic education schools) is inseparable from the tug of war between the Pattani community and the Thai government. On the one hand, the Pattani community only wants to transform Islamic education with an educational model that still strongly holds Malay traditions. They desire to adopt a modern education system but still within the Islamic and Malay cultural corridor. Therefore, in the national context, for the Pattani community, the government must guarantee freedom and not intervene frontally in the education system that applies in Pattani and its surroundings, such as eliminating their identity as Malay nation or substantial things in Islamic education. On the other hand, the Thai government, as the legitimate government, claims that Pattani is its territory. Thus, it naturally does not want such things to happen and requires that all policies issued by the Thai government be obeyed by all citizens.

4.11. Islamic Higher Education

As an example of Islamic higher education in Thailand, the College of Islamic Studies at Prince of Songkla University can be mentioned. The College of Islamic Studies has the same status as a faculty. It was established in 1989 to meet the needs of the Thai Muslim community in the field of higher Islamic studies. This college is the only state-run Islamic college in Thailand and is expected to become a center for higher Islamic studies in the country.

In addition to conducting academic activities in the study of Islamic sciences, this college also carries out research and community service. The university often organizes seminars and discussions on religious and Islamic issues involving both local and international Muslim scholars.

There are two levels of education managed by this college. The first is the undergraduate program (4 years) which includes Islamic Law, Islamic studies, Arabic Language, Islamic Economic and Management, and Middle East Study. The second is the Master's program which includes Islamic studies with specialization, Islamic law, Usuludin, History and Civilization of Islam, and Islamic Education.

Studies show that the teaching and learning implemented at the college are based on meaningful and practical syllabi that are feasible and appropriate. Furthermore, the teaching and learning methods used impart new knowledge, achieve the learning aims and objectives, and are conducted according to plan and quality curriculum standards.³⁷

4.12. Education Methods in Pattani, Thailand

In Pattani, Thailand, the education system is mainly based on traditional methods, with the teacher being the main source of knowledge and students expected to absorb and memorize information. However, in recent years, there has been a shift towards more student-centered approaches, such as inquiry-based learning, problem-based learning, and project-based learning. Inquiry-based learning encourages students to ask questions, seek information, and solve problems through hands-on experiences. Problem-based learning involves students working in groups to solve complex problems, with the teacher acting as a facilitator. Project-based learning allows students to work on long-term projects that require critical thinking, creativity, and collaboration.

Furthermore, technology is also being integrated into the classroom to enhance learning. Digital resources such as online learning platforms, multimedia tools, and educational apps are being used to supplement traditional teaching methods. The ultimate goal of these new education methods is to cultivate critical thinking, creativity, and innovation among students, which will better prepare them for future challenges in their personal and professional lives. The Islamic teaching methods in Pattani, Thailand can be categorized into three types, each with its own distinct characteristics, namely:

a. Sorogan Method

The term sorogan comes from the Javanese language which means 'to present or to offer'. It is a method of individual learning where a student interacts with a teacher on a one-on-one basis. The teacher or kyai faces the students one by one in turn. In its implementation, many students come together and wait in line for their turn. The sorogan method describes that a kyai always aims to achieve his goal in giving his teachings and always tries to ensure that the students can read, understand, and comprehend the contents of the book.

One of the key advantages of the Sorogan Method is the tailored learning experience it provides. With individual attention, the teacher can address the specific needs, strengths, and weaknesses of the student. This personalized approach allows for a deeper understanding of the subject matter and facilitates the customization of teaching strategies to suit the student's learning style. Furthermore, the Sorogan Method promotes active engagement and dialogue between the student and the teacher. This direct interaction fosters effective communication, encourages the student to ask questions, seek clarification, and participate in meaningful discussions. Such engagement enhances the student's critical thinking skills, analytical abilities, and overall comprehension of the subject being studied.

³⁷ Abdulrasyid Bin Hassan, Muhammad Azhar Zailani, and Ghazali Darussalam, "Pelaksanaan Kurikulum Dipelajari Dan Pembelajaran Pendidikan Islam Di Sebuah Kolej Pengajian Islam Selatan Thailand," *Journal of Issue In Education* 43 (2020): 1–11.

Another potential benefit of the Sorogan Method is the establishment of a strong teacher-student relationship. The one-on-one setting promotes a closer bond between the teacher and the student, enabling the teacher to better understand the student's learning needs and preferences. This connection can create a supportive and motivating learning environment, fostering trust, respect, and a sense of collaboration. However, it is worth noting that implementing the Sorogan Method may require significant resources, particularly in terms of time and personnel. One-on-one instruction necessitates dedicated attention from the teacher, limiting its scalability in large classrooms or educational settings with limited resources. Additionally, the effectiveness of the method may depend on the competency and expertise of the teacher, as well as their ability to adapt teaching strategies to suit individual students' needs.

b. Bandungan Method

The Bandungan method is often referred to as halaqah, where only one book is read by the kiai during the study, while the students bring the same book and listen and pay attention to the kyai's reading. The orientation of the Bandungan method is more towards the students' participation in the study. Meanwhile, the kyai tries to instill understanding and awareness to the students that the study is an obligation for mukhalaf. In this case, the kyai views the organization of halaqah studies in terms of worship to Allah SWT.

The Bandungan method, also known as halaqah, is a unique approach to teaching and learning in traditional Islamic boarding schools. This method involves a focused study session where the kiai (Islamic teacher) reads aloud from a specific book, while the students actively participate by bringing their own copies of the same book and attentively listening to the kyai's reading. This method serves several purposes. Firstly, it promotes a sense of unity and cohesion among the students as they collectively study from the same text. It creates a shared learning experience and fosters a sense of community within the pondok. Secondly, the Bandungan method emphasizes the oral tradition of Islamic education. By listening attentively to the kiai's reading, students develop strong listening skills and improve their ability to comprehend and retain information through auditory means. This oral tradition is deeply rooted in Islamic pedagogy, as it allows for the transmission of knowledge from teacher to student in a direct and personal manner.

Furthermore, the Bandungan method encourages active engagement with the text. Students not only listen to the kiai's reading but also follow along in their own copies of the book. This active participation enhances their understanding of the material and enables them to ask questions or seek clarification from the kiai when needed. It also cultivates a sense of responsibility and self-discipline in students, as they are accountable for their own learning progress. Overall, the Bandungan method, with its emphasis on halaqah-style study sessions and active student participation, provides a unique and effective approach to Islamic education in traditional pondok settings. It combines the oral transmission of knowledge, communal learning, and individual engagement with the text, fostering a comprehensive learning experience for students.

c. Weton Method

The term weton comes from the Javanese language which means periodic or timely. Weton studies are not daily routine studies, but are carried out at certain times, for example, after Friday prayers and so on. Weton study participants do not have to bring books, because what the kyai talks about cannot be certain. The kyai's way of conveying the message to study participants varies, some are given meaning, but some are interpreted freely.

Thus, the transformation of the Islamic educational institution system in Pattani, specifically, there are at least five models of educational institution systems for the Muslim community of Southern Thailand, namely mosque or surau-based educational institutions, traditional Islamic boarding schools, madrasahs, Malay schools and modern Islamic boarding schools (private Islamic education schools).³⁸

The Weton method is a traditional Javanese practice that involves determining an individual's personal characteristics, destiny, and compatibility based on their birth date in the Javanese calendar system. It is widely used in Javanese culture for various purposes, including marriage, career choices, and personal guidance. One of the key elements of the Weton method is the belief that each person possesses a unique combination of five elements: Wuku, Pasaran, Dina, Vaar, and Dina. These elements correspond to specific days in the Javanese calendar and are believed to influence an individual's personality traits, strengths, weaknesses, and overall destiny. The Weton method seeks to analyze and interpret the interaction of these elements to provide insights into a person's life path and compatibility with others.

Practitioners of the Weton method typically consult a Javanese calendar or an expert in Javanese astrology to determine the individual's Weton combination. This information is then used to provide guidance and advice on various aspects of life, such as career choices, relationships, and decision-making. It is important to note that the Weton method is deeply rooted in Javanese culture and traditional beliefs. While it holds significant cultural and historical value, its accuracy and scientific validity are subjective and depend on individual beliefs. Some people embrace the Weton method as a source of guidance and find value in its insights, while others may view it as a superstition or folklore.

5. Conclusion

The Pattani community in southern Thailand has lost some aspects of their traditions due to economic growth and modernization. However, Islamic education has helped preserve their native language and culture. Through Islamic education, the Pattani people can learn about their history and traditions, as well as the language used by their ancestors. Therefore, Islamic education has become an important tool in preserving the cultural heritage and identity of the Pattani community.

In addition to being a tool for cultural and identity preservation, Islamic education can also help improve the economic well-being of the Pattani people. Through

³⁸ Abdulroman Mahir, Fachruddin Azmi, and Syafaruddin Syafaruddin, "Manajemen Finansial Pendidikan Islam Di Fatoni University Thailand," *Edukasi Islami: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam* 10, no. 02 (October 10, 2022): 747–758, <https://doi.org/10.30868/ei.v10i02.2537>.

Islamic education, the Pattani people can acquire new skills such as expertise in the textile industry and handicrafts, as well as micro and small business management. This can help the Pattani community generate better income and overall improve the economic conditions in the area. Despite the benefits that Islamic education has brought to the Pattani community, there are still some challenges that need to be addressed. One of these challenges is the lack of support from the government, both in terms of funding and infrastructure. Additionally, the prolonged political conflict in southern Thailand has also had a negative impact on the sustainability of Islamic education programs. Overall, this article provides an interesting overview of the role of Islamic education in preserving the cultural and identity heritage, as well as in improving the economic well-being of the Pattani community in southern Thailand. Furthermore, this article also demonstrates that Islamic education can play a crucial role in sustainable development in the region.

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