



Islamic Education and Islamization Channels in Malay Peninsula in 7th- 8th Centuries AD

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Abstract

This study aimed to discuss the role of Islamization channels in the process of entry and spread of Islam in Malay Peninsula in seventh to eighth century AD. The research used qualitative method with a descriptive analytical approach. By taking data through interview, journals and textbooks, then conducting a description and analysis of the data, the results showed that the process of Islamization in Malay Peninsula in seventh to eighth centuries AD was carried out through several channels, namely trade, marriage, Sufi, politics, education, and arts. The study also showed that Islamic education functioned as the main channel in the process of Islamization. The role of Islamic education was mainly enhancing Muslims' understanding about Islam which was implemented informally and non-formally. Informal education occurred through the interaction between the ulama and community carrying out everyday lives; while, nonformal education was conducted by holding learning activities in the mosque through small groups known as halaqah. The study concluded that Islamic education was the main channel of the Islamization process in Malay Peninsula.

Keywords: Islamization channels, Malay Peninsula, informal education, non-formal education and halaqah.

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Abstrak

Penelitian ini membahas tentang jalur-jalur Islamisasi di Semenanjung Melayu pada abad ke tujuh dan ke delapan masehi, sehingga tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah untuk mengetahui tentang peran jalur-jalur islamisasi dalam proses masuk dan penyebaran islam di Semenanjung Melayu pada abad ke tujuh dan ke delapan masehi. Penelitian menggunakan metode kualitatif dengan pendekatan diskriptif analitis. Pengumpulan data dilakukan melalui wawancara, jurnal dan buku teks. Data terkumpul dianalisis secara kualitatif berdasarkan perspektif sejarah dan pendidikan. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa proses islamisasi di semenanjung melayu pada abad ke tujuh dan ke delapan masehi terjadi melalui beberapa jalur, yaitu perdagangan, pernikahan, sufi, politik, pendidikan dan seni. Hasil penelitian juga menguatkan bahwa pendidikan Islam telah ada yang juga berfungsi sebagai jalur utama dalam proses islamisasi. Peran pendidikan Islam meliputi pembelajaran dan pemahaman tentang Islam yang dilakukan secara informal dan nonformal. Pendidikan informal terjadi melalui hubungan antara ulama dan masyarakat dalam menjalankan kehidupan sehari-hari; sedangkan pendidikan nonformal dilakukan melalui pembelajaran di masjid dengan membentuk halaqah-halaqah. Dapat disimpulkan bahwa pendidikan Islam merupakan jalur utama proses islamisasi di Semenanjung Melayu.

Kata kunci: Jalur islamisasi, Semenanjung Melayu, Pendidikan informal, Pendidikan nonformal dan halaqah.

المخلص

تناقش هذه الدراسة دور مسارات الأسلمة و دخول الإسلام وانتشاره في شبه جزيرة الملايو في القرنين السابع والثامن من الميلادي. والطريقة المستخدمة هي طريقة كيفية مع المنهج التحليلي الوصفي. يتم جمع البيانات من خلال المقابلات و مراجعة المجلات والكتب المدرسية، ثم يحلل الباحث البيانات مع تحليل النتائج ووصفها. و أوضحت النتائج أن عملية الأسلمة في شبه جزيرة الملايو في القرنين السابع والثامن من الميلادي قد تم عبر عدة قنوات منها التجارة والزواج والصوفية والقنوات السياسية والتعليمية والفنية. وأظهرت النتائج أيضاً أن التعليم الإسلامي صار طريقاً رئيسياً لعملية الأسلمة في شبه جزيرة الملايو في القرنين السابع والثامن من الميلادي. للتربية الإسلامية دور مهم في تقديم دين الإسلام و علومه لدي المجتمع. و كان نوع التعليم الإسلامي المستخدم في عملية الأسلمة في شبه جزيرة الملايو في القرنين السابع والثامن من الميلادي تعليمًا غير رسمي (إنفورمال) و غير رسمي (نون فورمال). و التعليم غير الرسمي (إنفورمال) يحدث بسبب وجود العلاقة بين العلماء والمجتمع. و أما التعليم غير رسمي (نون فورمال) فيحدث من خلال التعليم في المسجد بالحلقات التعليمية.

الكلمات الرئيسية: مسارة الأسلمة؛ شبه جزيرة الملايو؛ التعليم غير النظامي؛ التعليم غير الرسمي والحلقة.

INTRODUCTION

Before the arrival of Islam, Malay Peninsula inhabitants were animist. They worshipped certain powerful spirits in the form of carved stone and wood. They embraced religion for the first time when Indian merchants came bringing Hinduism. When Chinese came after that, some of them became Buddhist. These were proven from some relics of the two religions today. Then, Islam came and entered Southeast Asian through Malay Peninsula (Helvenston & Hodgson, 2010).

Islam came to Malay Peninsula in several waves. The first wave was estimated to occur at the end of the first century H (seventh century AD). They were a group led by Makhada Khalifah (Ibrahim, 2018) and the process of Islamization in Malay Peninsula began in Indonesia around the seventh century, namely with the presence of Muslim traders in this region and a large number of natives became Muslims (Amin & Ananda, 2018; Ibrahim, 2018). The process of Islamization in Malaysia around the ninth century AD was carried out by traders and scholars from Arabia, Persia, and Gujarati. They came to this region through peaceful means (Muchsini, 2019; Musa, 2013). The same thing happened in Singapore. Islam came to Singapore before the 14th century AD in a region called Temasik. The arrival of Islam to Singapore was brought by merchants and scholars who came from Arabia, Persia, and Gujarat. While, Islam came to Pattani around the beginning of the 13th century AD and was introduced by two brothers who came from Persia, namely Sheikh Ahmad and Sheikh Muhammad Syaid. Islam came and began spread rapidly in Brunei in the 14th century AD. It was believed that Islam came and entered Brunei since the ninth century AD or rather in 977 brought by foreign traders (Najtama, 2018).

Islamization in Malay Peninsula, according to some opinions, was carried out through several channels, including trade, marriage, education, and politics. However, according to the author, the main channel of Malay Peninsula Islamization was not carried out through trade or marriage, but it was carried out through education by scholars/Sufis who worked as traders. So, the main variable in Malay Peninsula Islamization was education. Islamic education has the concept that education must be tethered to the strength of the creed. Islamic education took place as a main channel of Malay peninsula Islamization in seventh-eighth centuries AD, and from the perspective of the people, Islamic education was a process of socialization, namely the promotion of values, science and skills in life (Anshari et al., 2016; Susanto, 2015).

At the inception of Islamization in Malay Peninsula, Islamic education happened informally and its implementation emphasized the personal relationships and contacts between ulama and the surrounding communities. At the time, the relationship between "ulama" and "community" was an educational process, which was an informal education process. Informal education occurred unconsciously in all environments (Noya et al., 2017). The education in the process of Islamization in Malay Peninsula was very crucial and it was the main channel in the process of effective Islamization because the activities of traders and scholars covered also educational activities through practicing Islamic rituals and teaching about Islam.

There were studies on the Islamization process in Malay Peninsula. Researches conducted by Susanto (2015), Ja'far (2015), and Hamid (2017) revealed that Islamic education in the Southeast Asia had existed since the advent of Islam itself and had even become the cause of Islamization in the Southeast Asia. Complementarily, Amin & Ananda (2018) stated that Islamization in the Malay Peninsula occurred in the seventh century AD by peaceful means through trade and Sufi activities. Ishak (2014) also stated, that the arrival and spread of Islam was the result of the trade and marriage between migrants and local residents. However, the studies did not discuss specifically about the channels and their roles in the Islamization process in Malay Peninsula.

Therefore, they still left rooms to conduct a research on the similar topic. Differently, the study aimed to explore the channels that contributed the Islamization process in the area; and its research questions covered: a) what channels the Islamization process in Malay peninsula in seventh-eighth century AD utilized? and b) what roles the Islamic education as the main channel of Malay Peninsula Islamization in seventh-eighth century AD played?

METHOD

This research used qualitative method with descriptive analytic approach. It seeks to uncover the role of Islamization channels, the role of Islamic education as its main channel and the kind of Islamic education in Malay Peninsula in seventh-eighth century AD. The primary data were obtained through interviews with residents in Malay Peninsula, while the secondary data were taken from several articles, books, unpublished theses/dissertations and other documents concerning with the topic. In determining the source persons, the research used a purposive sampling technique. The source persons engaged in this study were graduated from the Islamic history and civilization study program; or those who knew about Islamization process in Malay Peninsula. While the secondary data were taken both from printed and electronic documents available in the university libraries and Indonesian library. The collected data were descriptively analyzed using the historical and educational approaches. These approaches were used because they were intended to focus on describing some phenomenon, event or situation (Nassaji & Kartchava, 2017). In analyzing the data, the research also applied three main steps: data reduction, data display, dan conclusion drawing. Data reduction were done by sorting and determining the data considered important or necessary; data display was about connecting all available data to lead to drawing conclusion that was looking the answers for the research questions from the organized data and information (Miles et al., 2014).

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents several interesting findings regarding the Islamization channels in Malay Peninsula, the role of Islamic education as its main channel and the kind of Islamic education in Malay Peninsula in the seventh-eighth century AD.

The Religion in Malay Peninsula Before Islam

Malay Peninsula in the seventh-eighth century AD lay between the continents of Asia and Australia, including Indonesia, but did not include the Philippines. As we know, Islam was not the first religion adopted by the population in Malay Peninsula. Before the arrival of Islam, they were firm adherents of Hindu and before the arrival of Hinduism, they adopted animism, dynamism, and worshiped of the gods (*hyang*). So, before the arrival of Islam, the local people believed in supernatural powers.

After Islam had arrived, their orientation shifted to the Islamic belief system. Many Islamic rituals were combined with pre-existing local beliefs because historically religions in Malay Peninsula including in Indonesia were full of complexity. Islam was not the first major religion to develop in Malay Peninsula. Prior to the arrival of Islam, there were other religions such as

Hinduism, Buddhism, and Christianity. These religions had dominated the beliefs of the local people (Ishak, 2014). This can be seen from the daily and religious activities which combined Islam and the previous religion, Hinduism, such as the *Kenduri* and *Tepung Tawar*. These events were prevalent in almost all Malay society. Based on interviews conducted with the source persons, the Malay people felt that they really needed these rituals. They needed *kenduri* for praying to their family who passed away and they did *tepung tawar* for their safety and welfare. From the observations that had been conducted, it appeared that almost all of communities performed both practices because they were a custom that had been carried out since the days before the arrival of Islam. It indicated that there had been a mixture of tradition and religion and it also indicated that Islam was not the first religion that came to Malay Peninsula.

At the time of the spread of Islam in Malay Peninsula, many local belief activities had become one with social life and had become a community tradition, making it difficult to be abandoned. This also reinforced the fact that the spread of Islam in Malay Peninsula was adapted to the existing customs and culture. Islam came to Malay Peninsula by peaceful means and its spread was adapted to religions and beliefs that had existed before Islam. So, until now the implementation of Islamic rituals also absorbed the beliefs of pre-Islamic communities and previous religious practices, such as Hinduism, Buddhism, animism, and localism (Huda, 2017). Thus, we conclude that Islam came to Malay peninsula by peaceful means and by adapting the beliefs of the preceding religions.

Islamization Channels in Malay Peninsula

The Islamization process in Malay Peninsula happened through trade, marriage, Sufism, education, arts, and politics. So, the Islamization channels in Malay Peninsula in seventh-eighth century AD are : a) trade, b) marriage, c) Sufism, d) politics, and e) the art (Amin & Ananda, 2018).

Trade Channel

Abbot and Pippas (2010) stated, Islam has a very important role in the society and culture since the 15th century AD, when traders came to this area, and trade was a channel of Islamization. As the foreign traders came to the region, there were interactions between traders and indigenous people, and they began to study Islam informally. The traders indirectly carried out informal learning activities with the local population, this activity was called informal education. The channel of Islamization in this area was trade, which occurred around the seventh century. In addition to trading, the bearers of Islam from various regions, also spread the religion they professed, using shipping facilities (Syafrizal, 2015). The channel of Islamization through trade caused the strong influence of civilization in Southeast Asia. It was the relationship in the trade route that created interaction between Islamic traders and native peoples of southeast Asia, and from that interaction the process of Islamization took place. Muslim traders played an important role in the introduction of Islamic values to the local population, their presence also made trading cities to be economic centers that supported the development of Islam (Wahyuni, 2013).

Before Europeans had come to Malay Peninsula, many Arab traders came to trade commodities, even camphor which was one of the main substances in the embalming rituals of Pharaohs in Egypt in the century before Christ. The camphor were brought from a small village called Barus, which was located in the west of Sumatra, Indonesia. In the seventh century AD, the Malay peninsula was frequented by Islamic traders from Arabia, Persia, and India. They had taken part in trade activities in Indonesia and consequently created trade relations between the

Indonesian people and Muslim traders. Besides trading, as Muslims, they also had the obligation to preach, Islamic traders also conveyed and taught Islamic religion and culture to others.

Written sources (history) which were diaries from Chinese, Arabia, Indians, and Persians gave information about the growth and development of sea shipping and trade between the Persian Gulf and China since the seventh century AD or the first century Hijri (Muchsin, 2019). Persians together with the Ta-shih were present in the cities along the banks of the Malacca Strait, the west coast of Sumatra, and the east coast of the Malay Peninsula to the coast of the China Sea. They were known as merchants and accomplished seamen. The presence of Islamic kingdom also strengthened relations between Sumatra and countries in Arabia and Persia. Islam was brought to Malay Peninsula by the Arabs, Persians, and Turks who were traders and preachers who had strong intentions to preach and spread Islam. Islam came to Indonesia in the seventh century in Barus, North Sumatra, it was brought by Arab Muslims from the Arabian peninsula (Abdullah & Wekke, 2018).

The distance was so far that it took months for people from other countries in the world to reach Indonesia, and vice versa from Indonesia to the country of origin of the merchants. Moreover, to sail a ship required proper wind accuracy and this was the reason why the merchants choose to open a representative office in the Aceh area as a stopover. At times many of the merchants did not want to return to their home countries and preferred to become trading agents for goods from their origin and they also lived in Indonesia and assimilated with the indigenous population (cross-marriages). In such favorable conditions, the Arab merchants made use of the opportunity to introduce and spread Islam.

Marriage Channel

Besides trading, the spread of Islam in Malay Peninsula occurred through marriage. Marriage was considered as one of the easiest channels of Islamization since it encompassed physical and spiritual bonds and became a means to seek peace between two individuals. In this case, it was very important in forming a Muslim society. Traders who came to Malay Peninsula settled and formed a Muslim village. This caused many indigenous women to marry them and prior to getting married converted to be Moslems first. Huda (2017) stated, one of the Islamization channels was marriage. Channels of Islamization through marriage between merchants and indigenous women were also a part that was closely intertwined with Islamization. This close relationship was sometimes continued with the marriage between the indigenous daughters and the Muslim traders. Through this marriage, a Muslim was born. Thus, as Sodik and Musthofa (2018) said, that marriage was a strategy of Islam spreading, it was carried out by Muslim traders, they married noble daughters and before marriage, the nobleman's daughter converted to Islam first. Syafrizal (2015) stated, the Malay peninsula Islamization by marriage channel usually occurred between the bearers of Islam with the princess, and through this path, the spread of Islam became stronger.

Sufism Channel

Sufism was an important channel in the process of Islamization. Sufism was a category that functioned and shaped the social life of the Indonesian people, leaving clear evidence in writings between the 13th and 18th centuries. This was directly related to the spread of Islam in Indonesia. Psychiatric adaptation, self-control ability, and the creation of one's psychological integrity. Sufism and mysticism were inseparable parts of the process of spreading Islam in the Malay Peninsula and was relevant for local communities who were heavily influenced by previous

religions, namely Hinduism and Buddhism. Thus, Sufism had an important role in spreading Islam in the Malay Peninsula.

The influence of Sufism was the channel of Malay Peninsula Islamization in general. Sufism played a large role in Malay Islamization. It shows that the style of Islam that was developed at the beginning of Malay Peninsula Islamization was Sufism (Ghaffar, 2015; Putra, 2018). Sufis lived in simplicity, they always tried to live their community life and lived together amid their society. Sufis usually had the expertise to cure illness and others. The path of Sufism, which was the process of Islamization by teaching theosophy by accommodating cultural values and even religious teachings, namely Hinduism into Islamic teachings, was naturally codified with Islamic values so that they were easily understood and accepted. It is estimated that Sufis arrived in Indonesia especially since the 13th century, namely the development and distribution of Sufis from Persia and India. The most obvious development of Sufism was in Sumatra and Java in the 16th and 17th centuries. The Sufis who came to Malay Peninsula in the process of Islamization were the scholars who joined the merchants who came in one ship to trade and spread Islam, and they were Persian preachers and traders who had Shi'ism. They came to the archipelago with the aim of trading and preaching.

According to Ghofur (2011) the carriers of Islamic teachings to Indonesia consisted of merchants and Sufis. They then interacted with the indigenous population in the short term (while waiting for the shipping season) to move to their home country or other countries. In the long run, merchants who had come to Indonesia or who had not yet begun to settle mingled and even hold marriages with indigenous people. The Sufis who carried out Islamization came from Persia and they came along with the merchants. The process of Islamization which they carried out was by spreading Islamic teachings through the cultural approach that existed at the time so that some very popular dances in Aceh, namely the *Saman* dance and *Seudati* dance both their movements and songs were closely related to *tariqat* activities.

Education Channel

The scholars, religious teachers, and the king played a major role in the process of Islamization. They spread Islam through education by establishing Islamic boarding schools which were places of teaching Islam for the students. In general, students in the *pesantren* (boarding schools) were taught by religious teachers, clerics, or scholars. They learned religious knowledge from various books, after leaving the *pesantren* they will return to their respective villages to become religious figures. According to Ja'far (2015), that they taught about Islamic education which was a conscious effort in socializing and applying the normative teachings and internalizing its values and still had a place within adherents' heart. Thus, we can conclude, Islamic education was a process of guidance to help someone to be a good Muslim. Such a form of learning at the beginning of Islamization was informal and non-formal which was also done voluntarily.

Islam had spread in Malay Peninsula since the seventh-eighth centuries AD, and individual and cultural contact was estimated to have taken place since then. The Qur'an lessons heard in the surau with Islamic religious lessons including *akida*, the Islamic jurisprudence, and Sufism or morals indicated that the moral teachings of Islam have been inculcated since the early stage (Anwar, 2016). Islamic education in Malay Peninsula in the seventh-eighth took place pervasively and invariably. It was not limited by a particular time and place, but Islamic education happened wherever and whenever there were contacts between *muballiq* traders and the native population. The first place where education system occurred was the environment, then in the *surau*, mosque, manor houses, and wealthy homes (Wahyuni, 2013). Thus, we can conclude that the Islamization

of Malay Peninsula through education channels was carried out by Islamic propagators through several stages, at the first, they taught Islam at any possible places in the form of informal education, then in the mosques in the form of non-formal education and finally learning was conducted in educational institutions.

Art Channel

Islamization in Malay Peninsula could not be separated from the local art and culture that had existed in the society, so Islam could be accepted as a new religion without having to displace the existing local culture. Otherwise, Islam could still be taught without disturbing the harmony of community traditions. According to Masroer Ch. Jb (2017), the early development of Islamic art and architecture in the Malay world was an inseparable part of the process of Islamization of the region, which was in a period when Islamic art in the older Muslim world had developed in its sophisticated fashion.

The channel of Islamization through the arts came in the form of architecture, sculpture, dance, music, and literary arts. The connection between art, religion and culture was common in the process of Islamization in Southeast Asia because art was an inseparable part of people's lives in this region. The connection between religion, art and culture was not unusual, considering that it emerged from the beginning of the growth of Islam in the Malay Peninsula region, together with other cultural artifacts it left behind and until now still well preserved, such as mosque architecture, tombstones, batik ornament, religious ceremonial equipment and media used to spread the religion (Jb, 2017). According to Sodik & Musthofa (2018) the Islamization in Malay Peninsula used cultural art as media. The media used in the process of spreading Islam were shadow puppets, *sekaten* ceremonies, building art (mosques), sculpture or, dance, music, and literary arts, for example in the art of building as can be seen in Baiturrahman mosque in Aceh. Other examples in the art were dance and calligraphy.

The mosque was a Muslim worship building commonly found in Muslim-populated areas. As the main building in Islam, with its significant role, it was very relevant for the mosques to apply the Islamic concept in its building one of which was Baiturrahman mosque. Baiturrahman Grand Mosque was a mosque located in the city of Banda Aceh, Indonesia. This mosque was first built in the era of the Sultanate of Aceh. As we know, the roof of the mosque was made in accordance with the characteristics of mosques in Indonesia at that time, a four-tiered pyramid roof. The Baiturrahman Grand Mosque had seven entrance points spreading in the northern, eastern, and southern part. There were three entrances to the east, and two entrances to the north and south each respectively.

Furthermore, the emergence and development of Islam in the Indo-Malay world led to the transformation of local cultures and civilizations, for example, in Java, we know about *wayang* and in Aceh, we know about *Saman* and *Seudati* dance. The most popular art form of dance was *seudati* and *saman* dance. Both dances had movements that resembled movements at the time of celebrations commemorating the martyrdom of Sayyidina Husain on the 10th of Muharram. The term *seudati* originated from the Arabic word *syahadatain*, which meant to declare or submit oneself to Islam by way of expressing the two shahadat sentences. *Seudati* was also an Acehese art of dancing with its own distinct nature of music, using the dancers' bodies to produce music by hitting their chests, snapping fingers, and stomping legs (Fazal, 2017). Art has a very important role in the process of Islamization in the Malay peninsula, even in Aceh which was one part of the Malay peninsula making art a unifying Muslim community. In addition, *saman* was one of the dances originated from the Gayo highlands, Aceh. This dance was displayed at the celebration of

the birth of the Prophet Muhammad, even the name of the *Saman* dance came from the name of a Sufi, Shaykh Saman. This dance verse used Arabic, Acehnese language, and sub-Aceh languages too (Duhri, 2016).

Political Channel

As we stated previously, Islamization in the majority of predominantly Malay Muslim countries such as Indonesia, Malaysia, Brunei, and the minority of Malay Muslims in Vietnam, Cambodia, Thailand, Singapore, and the Philippines brought several changes. According to Jalil (2014), the strong possibility of Malaysia's contribution of Malay people on the early Islamization in the Malay peninsula was the ability of Malays to adopt and adapt foreign influences to suit their needs and to reject the view that they only accepted whatever was introduced to them from outside the Malay world blindly. Islam in the Malay Peninsula was a religion integrated with the traditions, norms, and daily life of the local population, the indigenous community that had been integrated into Islam, then politically institutionalized in the form of Islamic empires (Amin & Ananda, 2018). In addition, Islamization in the Malay Peninsula was a process that could not be separated from politics. In the process of Islamization, the turning point of religious changed, however, this did not occur in a complicated manner, rather it was a consequence of the Islamization process.

The influence of the power of the king was very strong in the process of Islamization. When a king embraced Islam, the people also followed their king's footsteps. The people had very high obedience and the king as a role model even became a role model for his people. For example, in South Sulawesi and Maluku, most of his people converted to Islam after their king converted to Islam, so that the king's political influence greatly helped the spread of Islam in this area. The king's political influence greatly helped the spread of Islam in the area and Ghofur (2011) states, Islam became a political power that entered in the 15th century AD after the fall of the Kingdom of Srivijaya and Majapahit. The Sultanate played a very important and strategic role in the spread of Islam in the archipelago (Indonesia), especially at the beginning of its development.

The Role of Islamic Education in Malay Peninsula in seventh-eighth centuries AD.

In general, Islam came and spread to Malay Peninsula by peaceful means through the activities of the merchants and Sufis, as Amin stated that Islam entered southeast Asia through informal Islamic education which was conducted at the beginning process of Islamization (Amin & Ananda, 2018). Islamization did not only mean inviting to embrace Islam, but also implied efforts to purify Islam from elements of non-Islamic beliefs and strive for Islam to be carried out in various aspects of life, which included religious, economic, socio-cultural, political, legal and administrative rituals. Islamization was stated as a complex process, with various dimensions and consequence. Since the beginning of Islamization, Muslims had practiced Islamic teachings done in a very simple system. They learned about Islam in the informal and non-formal education. In the informal education, they learned Islam wherever possible; whereas in the non-formal education people learned about Islam in *halaqah* that was carried out in mosques, prayer rooms, and even in the houses of the scholars. *Halaqah* meant a circle or meeting of small group of people. It was a unique way of basic education to gain knowledge at the beginning of Islamization in the Malay Peninsula. The activity was done at the mosque where the teacher sat in the middle and the students sat around him (Al-Hasani, 2019). Although currently teaching and learning of Islamic education was carried out in schools and madrassas, mosques had played a very important role in Islamic education since the time of the Prophet Muhammad because it had contributed to help students to get good

achievements in Islamic education (Tamuri et al., 2012). The process of Islamic education in the beginning was not conducted in one place only, but it was also carried out wherever and whenever preachers, traders, and native people met. The Islamic education system initially took place in the family environment, then flourished in the mosque and finally entered the house of the noblemen (Wahyuni, 2013). Thus, at the beginning of Islamization, educational activities had occurred, namely informal education that did not follow a plan, it happened in all settings and the learning was unconscious (Latchem, 2014). Jalil (2014) said, Malays' contribution at the beginning of Islamization was their ability to adopt and adapt to foreign influences according to their needs and they did not want to take that influence blindly. Islam was easily accepted as a religion because Islam taught tolerance and equality among others. Islam did not recognize the existence of caste or social stratification in society. Islam taught all humans to have the same degree.

In the beginning period, the process of Islamization was believed to occur through trade and marriage. The channel of Islamization through this trade was very profitable because the kings and the aristocrats participated in trading activities as the owners and sponsors. However, Islamization was initially carried out through the channels of education. Trade, and marriage were only intermediate variables that led to the process of Islamization. The actual variable that caused the Islamization process in Malay Peninsula was the Islamic education. Most of the traders who came to Malay Peninsula had a good knowledge about Islam, so they could introduce and teach Islam to the local people. It showed that since the beginning of the arrival of Islam to Malay Peninsula, learning process had been carried out by Islamic propagators, who worked as traders, scholars or Sufis. Education was a process of change towards goodness. Hamm (2012) defined education as every effort aimed at educating and building personality in all aspects, whether spiritual, emotional, moral, and so on. Thus, we conclude that Islamic education in this study was the Ulama's activity in transferring intellectual knowledge and individual character which could happen in informal and non-formal setting. According to Latchem (2014) informal education had no obligations to students, no contracts for activities carried out and did not provide diplomas to students. In informal education, the responsibility for learning belonged to the individual. Mistakes were valued and were considered important for learning. More mistakes meant more learning. Islamic education was carried out in mosques or *langgar* in non-formal education, they formed the *halaqahs* and so on and its implementation became increasingly intensive after the formation of formal educational institutions, such as *pesantren*, *dayah*, and *maktab* and after the 20th century, *madrasas and colleges have been build*.

Nowadays, the educational process began to change into non-formal education, because at this time the place, objectives, and traditional curriculum began to be applied. Latchem (2014) stated that non-formal education/learning should consider the objectives, location, and methods; and were determined externally by education and training providers. This happened in a kind of boarding school. Islamic boarding school or *dayah* was the oldest educational institution in Indonesia. This was in accordance with Rahayani (2017) opinion, that *pesantren* was the oldest educational institution with a focus on teaching and learning about Islam, community values and arithmetic. The term *pesantren*, which derived from the root word "santri" and meant the place of *santri*, it had its origins from the Indonesian pre-Islamic time. It functioned as a Hindu-Buddhist monastery where later religious functionaries got special pieces of training and courses on religious subjects and others that are related to religious services. *Pesantren* was basically a traditional Islamic education, so the elements of boarding schools were dormitories, *kiyai*, *santri*, mosques and yellow books (Rosidin, 2012; Syafe'i, 2017). The contribution of Islamic educational institutions to the Islamization process could be seen from the graduates of these institutions who

became educated human beings/scholars or young clerics who carried out Islamization, either through education.

CONCLUSION

Malay Peninsula is the main gateway to the Malay archipelago towards Southeast Asia. Before the arrival of Islam, the locals were faithful Hindus and before the arrival of Hindus, they believed in supernatural powers by adopting animism, dynamism, and worship of the gods (*hyang*). After Islam had arrived, their belief shifted to the Islamic belief system. Many Islamic rituals were mixed with historically pre-existing local beliefs. Islamization in Malay Peninsula was a long process and Islam came and spread to the Malay peninsula peacefully by adapting the preceding religion. Islamization in the Malay Peninsula was carried out through several channels, including trade and marriage, as well as other channels such as education, art, and politic. However, the main channel of Islamization was conducted through education done by scholars and Sufis who worked as traders. Thus, the actual variable that caused the Islamization process in Malay Peninsula was the Islamic education variable, trade and marriage were only an *intermediate variable* that caused the process of Islamization.

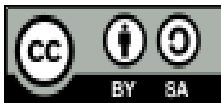
The scholars carried out Islamization in Malay Peninsula in the seventh-eighth centuries AD through informal and non-formal education channels. Informal education occurred when there were contacts between "ulama" and "community", nonformal education was carried out by conducting learning in mosques or *langgars*, they also formed halaqah which in turn intensified the activity. Islam could be easily accepted as a religion because Islam taught tolerance and equality among others. Islam did not recognize the existence of caste or social stratification in society. Islam taught all humans to have the same degree.

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