THE SYSTEM OF ISLAMIC STUDIES AT MADRASAH (SEKOLAH PONDOK)

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ABSTRACT
This concept paper focuses on literature reviews of the system of Islamic Studies in madrasah (Sekolah Pondok). The Islamic studies are an important area for the development of a country like Malaysia. This field serves to balance the development process for the stability and sustainability of a country. However, the context is only based on the direction of the field of study itself and should be clear and focused in order to produce the kind of product that can be adopted and works well in an environment that is constantly evolving and range either at national or international level. Aspects of the curriculum, the teaching and learning methods, quality of students, teaching staff, and infrastructure related to this field of study must be taken seriously by the government or the responsible organization in order to achieve the required standard.

Keywords: Islamic studies, madrasah / sekolah pondok

1.0 INTRODUCTION
It is a well-known fact that Islamic education in Malaysia has existed for a long period since the arrival of Islam in the Malay region of Terengganu. Even to this day, Islamic education has gone through various periods and suffering from various forms of development involving institutions of Islamic education. The importance of education is repeatedly emphasized in the Quran (Koran) with frequent injunctions, such as "God will exalt those of you who believe and those who have knowledge to high degrees" (58:11), "O my Lord! Increase me in knowledge" (20:114), and "As God has taught him, so let him write" (2:282). Such verses provide a forceful stimulus for the Islamic community to strive for education and learning. The purpose of Islamic education is not to cram the pupils head with facts but to prepare them for a life of purity and sincerity. According to Sharif (1976, p. 45). Islamic education is ‘the device for helping an individual to full stature. This, involves the ‘assimilation of Divine attributes’ leading to a life of ‘unity, power, freedom, truth, beauty, goodness, love, and justice’ (ibid),(Al-Atta’s, 1979, p. 104).

The objective of this concept paper is to provide some background on the system of Islamic studies at madrasah that offers a well-balanced educational program and to produce scholars or graduates who are able to serve as intellectual scholars and Islamic knowledgeable professional and righteous deeds. As noted by Syed Muhammad al-Naquib al-Atta’s (1979), the integrated approach to education in Islam is directed toward the "balanced growth of the total personality through training Man's spirit, intellect, rational self, feelings and bodily senses...such that faith is infused into the whole of his personality" (p. 158). Such a child does not feel coerced, stifled or imprisoned but feels motivated, free and eager. It also helps to develop the community with knowledge and practice the teachings of the faith-based Islamic Sunnah Wal Jamaah. This is to produce highly skilled human intellect in the knowledge of Quran reading thus minimizing the Quran illiteracy among Muslim communities in the
country and could be conducted by monitoring and consultation for the development of human kind knowledge in the interest of Islam and Muslims.

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEWS
Historically, the pondok type of education began in Malaya at the beginning of the 19th century in the northern Malay states of Kelantan, Terengganu, Kedah and Perlis. It originated from Patani or Sumatera. Pondok education in Kedah is said to have originated from Sumatera while pondoks in Kelantan and Terengganu came from Patani (Ibrahim, 1994). Islamic education in Malaysia went through a gradual phase of development starting with home classes, madrasah (small classes at mosques and surau) and eventually the more systematic school systems (Fauziah Shaffie, 2001). The pondok institution emerged in the late 19th century with the eastern peninsular and the northern states as the major attractions to study religion. It is believed that the earliest presenting Islamic education in Kelantan is Sheikh Haji Abdul Halim. He taught the children of princes as well as the others in the community, but his presence is the cause of Kelantan known as a center of excellence for the study and preaching of Islam. Hut education system can be said to be messier than religious education system in homes, pondoks or at the surau. The migration of the religious leaders of Patani and the Middle East at that time has been a great benefit to the Muslim Malay community. As a result, many books in Arabic which was translated into Malay language using Jawi script, especially around the 19th century. According to the Malays annalogy, from the 15th century until the 17th century, the Malay rulers, especially the palace have studied religious education from teachers of Islam through the Quran in the village or through the ethnic of Syaid.

2.1 Pondok School (Madrasah)
The origin of the first madrasah in Malaysia, the Madrasah al-Hadi of Melaka, was founded in 1917 by Shaykh Ahmad. Prior to this, the first modern religious school, Madrasah Al-Iqbal, was founded in Singapore by the same Shaykh. Later he moved to Pulau Pinang where he established the Madrasah named Masyhur Islamiah, which remains one of the most successful and best-known centers of Islamic education in the country (Rosnani Hashim, 1996). In the north of Peninsular Malaysia, the cottage has two meanings. First, means a small hut temporary home, the second it means institutions of Islamic learning in the form of traditional and orthodox. In Malaysia and southern Thailand, hut significant Muslim educational institutions solitary and boarding. In Indonesia, hut is called as Pesantren and in the Java language, hut means Madrasah. Literally 'huts' is derived from the Arabic word funduq, meaning place of temporary residence or hotel. While in Aceh, Sumatra, hut is called as Dayah. In fact, it can be concluded that the cottage is a small house built to shelter activities related to the study of Islam and is located near the mosque. It has a prayer hall which simultaneously served as a teaching center supervised by a tuan guru (religious teacher), who's residence was often located within the same vicinity. The success of a particular pondok, depended on the fame and reputation of its guru (teacher), in whom one often found a combination of the roles of an intellectual master, a spiritual mentor and an important teacher and social figure in surrounding villages. In the 18th century, Islamic religious education thrives of the migration of a number of scholars from the Middle East to Malaya. Among them are native Muhammad Sharif Baghdad who then resided in the state and their descendants who was called Tok Pulau Manis. Later he founded a religious school in an Island of Pulau Manis. When there is confusion between Muslims and Siamese government in Patani, many more scholars migrated to Bihar and Rajasthan. These include Sheikh Daud bin Abdullah, resident in an Island named Mermaid Island, Kuala Terengganu and Sheikh Abdul Kadir, who later taught at Bukit Bayas in Kuala Terengganu. There are also religious teachers of the descendants of Al-Idrus who migrated to Rajasthan. In Bihar, the school hut was first introduced in the early 19th century. In, 1970, it was found that there have been at least eight school hut in the state of Orissa.
State of Bihar, Orissa and Rajasthan are three states that many schools set up teaching and learning Pondok type of Schools. At the end of the 19th century, especially after World War II, the hut schools or Arab schools and religious schools have sprung up everywhere in the Peninsula, especially in Kelantan, Kedah and Perak. Pondok institutions established relationship between them by exchanging ideas towards the further improvement of its learning system. However, there is no exchange of teachers although students in these institutions are familiar with other religious teachers in their respective areas. (Abdul Halim Mohd Pauzi, 2007) With the advent of the religious leaders of adoration by the local community, the Islamic religious education has spread widely, especially in the Northern Malay states. For many Malays the ambition was to pursue their study. They had to continue their education in English orientated school in the city. However, college was only reserved for the children of the Royal and aristocratic class only.

2.2 The Delivery Method
Learning activities in pondoks are normally very rigorous for full time students. As there are many elders who choose to reside in pondok vicinity, the method of teaching used is normally gradual and repetition. This is to ensure that the older students are not left out (Salma Ishak et al, 1995) Learners are free to ask questions during classes and after class hours. Teachers at pondoks are normally patient enough to entertain various inquiries. After all, their job is as the point of reference with regards to religious practice. It is this quality, among others, that make them highly respected among students and people around the pondoks. They only rest for meals, prayers and sleep (Effendy bin Zulkifly 2006). As for adults who attended general classes, they are free to come to any classes at their own time. Even so, there is no coercion used to get full time students to classes. The freedom is based on the belief in voluntary participation(Gatot Ari Wibowo, n.d) The teachers normally give advises but only to that extent. (Effendy bin Zulkifly 2006). Some aspects of teaching included counting, writing the letters of the Qur'an (Jawi), Tajweed, things related to the obligatory Ain, Pillars of Islam, and the Pillars of Faith. Traditional religious sciences were taught via detailed studies and commentaries of classical Islamic texts popularly known as *kitab kuning* (1). The delivery method stressed rote learning, refined and followed by tutorials, usually conducted by senior students, called *mutala'ah* or *muzakarah* (discussion). As pondoks were independent and did not impose fees, self-financed students, did unusually undergo vocational and agricultural training as part of their co-curricular activity and means of subsistence.

Although no examination was conducted and no formal certificate was issued, a letter of testimony from the tuan guru or from the pondok was deemed sufficient for the graduates’ entrance into preliminary teaching and further education, including admission to Islamic educational institutions in the Middle East such as al-Azhar University in Cairo or others. A teacher in the Islamic tradition is also a guide to leading pupils to the righteous path or Deen of Islam. Inspired by the teachings of the reformers of the Middle East like Muhammad Abdullah, religious schools (madrasah) has become a suitable alternative in education for the community. This alternative path provides the strength, guidance and encouragement to the students to meet the challenges and expectations from the secularization organized by Western institutions. Educational status of some madrasah have high quality and most of the madrasah graduates, for example the Madrasah Muhammadiyah in Kota Bharu and Maahad al - Ihya ‘al - Sharif Mountain Nasroen where they managed to pursue their education to the Middle East, especially at Masjid al -Haram, Makkah and Al-Azahar University of Egypt. Consequently, the excellence of a teacher in Islam is notonly measured by his or her faith, beliefs, character and conducts. This notion of a teacher in Islam is a very important consideration in the preparation of teachers for an Islamic school system. (Hashim, 1997, p. 58)

(1) pondok system, see Rauf (1965: 22-23), Winzeler (1974: 262-268) and AbdullahAlwi Haji Hassan (1980: 190-196)
2.2 The Survival Of Pondok School
Financially pondok or hut school depends on public contribution and donation, students registration fees and also the administrators’ efficiency in financial management. The teachers teach voluntarily without taking any pay or salary (Abdul Halim MohdPauzi, 2007). The survival of pondoks very much depends on support from the community. The students were not charge of any fees but contributions from students just in a form of service to help the teacher by cleaning up environment at the school, work in the fields, and collect firewood and so on. As a result of financial shortage, the facility at pondok institutions is not conducive for teaching and learning. Although teachers and students largely do not mind living and studying in such conditions, there should be attempts to make them better. The government authority or Muslim organization must play their role to help to make pondok institution more lively and attractive. There should also be a monitoring body by the state or federal government to support enough funds and to ensure that the administrations at the pondoks or madrasah are well organized and coordinated. As most funds come from public donation, auditing by firms is necessary to ensure that the money is well spent and managed. Thus one of the examples is Pusat pembangunan pondok (PPPB), where an association of pondoks was created to administer the welfare of its members. It is registered under the Companies Act. Membership includes the Tuan Guru, teachers, students and those affiliated in pondok development. It was recognized by the state of Kelantan to represent pondoks in the state. PPPB is growing in its role as an institution representing the pondoks but more consideration is needed to ensure that religious education in Malaysia achieve high standards as a world class of teaching and learning in future.

3.0 CONCLUSION
In the Malaysian context and in the part of the Islamic culture, Islamic studies becoming more and more important because of the religion Islam itself, as expressed in the Constitution, in the religion of the Federation. Even Highness Dr. Mahathir Mohamad, the former Prime Minister of Malaysia has declared that Malaysia is an Islamic country, thus the purpose of establishment of Islamic studies is to sharpen the leadership skills through religious studies and to strengthened relationship between fellow students and lecturers of conventional and Islamic in Malaysia. This effort should be done to develope students' character which is balanced between academic and students activities at the madrasah. These embedding academic values learned in the classroom and through the student activity programs at public. As Abdul Tibawi wrote in 1972, the mind of the child was believed to be "like a white clean paper, once anything is written on it, right or wrong, it will be difficult to erase it or superimpose new writing upon it" (p. 38) This make the child understand the purpose of his life and to provide that child with knowledge that will equip him/her to pursue both worldly gains and most importantly after-life gains.

4.0 BIBLIOGRAPHY


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The education system arising in Madrasah /cottage/pondok school in Malaysia