

The History of The Arrival and Development of Islam in the Malay World and its Influence on Society

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Abstract. This article focuses on studying the history of the arrival and development of Islam in the Malay region and its impact on people's lives. This research applies a qualitative descriptive approach as well as a literature study method. Data was collected by reviewing scientific journal articles and historical literature that explain the process of Islam entering the region, trade networks, the role of scholars, Malay kingdoms, and socio-cultural changes. The data obtained were analyzed through source selection, theme grouping, information comparison, and drawing conclusions. Initial research shows that the process of Islamization in the Malay region is a historical process that occurred gradually through trade interactions, social relationships, religious activities, and support from rulers. The growth of Islam also impacted the government system, education, language, literature, law, and societal traditions. This process doesn't happen uniformly across all regions because it's influenced by local conditions and interactions between areas. This article highlights the importance of understanding Islamization as a process of interaction between Islamic teachings and the surrounding communities.

Keywords: *The Malay world, Islamization, Trade, Malay Kingdoms, Community Culture.*

A. INTRODUCTION

The Malay region is a historical area closely connected to maritime activities, trade, and cultural exchange. This region encompasses the Malay Peninsula, the island of Sumatra, the coastal areas of Kalimantan, and other maritime parts of Southeast Asia, which are interconnected through sea trade routes. These trading activities not only facilitated the exchange of goods but also fostered social, cultural, and religious interactions among communities. Andaya (2008) explained that trade interactions and relationships between different social groups also played a role in shaping the dynamics of life in the Strait of Malacca. Meanwhile, Reid (1990) emphasized the significance of maritime trade in the economic and social development of Southeast Asia. These circumstances provided one of the contexts that supported the arrival and development of Islam in the Malay region.

The spread of Islam to the Malay World occurred through interactions involving merchants, Islamic scholars, rulers, and local communities. Islamization cannot be viewed as a sudden event but rather as a historical process that unfolded through various channels over an extended period. In their study of the Inderapura Kingdom during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, Sudarman et al. (2021) examined the relationship between trade and religious conversion in the Malay world. At the same time, Sudarman and Hidayaturrahman (2020) explored the relationship between religion, economics, and royal politics in the Islamization of Malay communities. These studies indicate that trade and political power were two crucial elements in understanding the development of Islam in this region. Nevertheless, explanations regarding the timing and routes of Islam's initial arrival still require critical analysis of various historical sources.

The significance of this research lies in the need to develop an in-depth understanding of the Islamization process and its impact on communities in the Malay World. The historical development of Islam involved not only changes in religious beliefs but also developments in

kingdoms, religious education, intellectual traditions, language use, literature, and social life. Burhanudin (2018) discussed the relationship between kingdoms and the dynamics of Islamization in the Indonesian Archipelago, while Denisova (2013) examined the history of Islam's spread in the Malay World based on Malay Islamic historical documents from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Differences of opinion regarding the initial arrival of Islam demonstrate the importance of historical studies in understanding the historical development of the Malay world. Mohd Noor (2011) discussed the development of Islamic historiography in the Malay region and the significant role of historical writing in shaping Malay communities' understanding of Islamic history. Meanwhile, Aljunied (2015) examined Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas's critique of several historiographical approaches considered inadequate in explaining the Islamization process in the Malay World. These studies demonstrate that discussions of Islamic history concern not only the chronological sequence of events but also how historical sources are read, interpreted, and compared. These studies highlight the importance of examining the relationship between religion, power, and historical sources to understand the development of Malay society. Therefore, an analysis of Islamic history in the Malay World must connect the processes of Islam's arrival and spread with the accompanying social and cultural changes.

Based on the existing literature, this article aims to explore the history of Islam's arrival and development in the Malay World and its impact on people's lives. Specifically, this article seeks to describe the process of Islam's arrival, explain the factors that supported its spread, and analyze Islam's influence on politics, education, language, literature, and social life. This research employs a literature review by examining relevant publications on the history of Islam in the Malay World. Theoretically, this article is expected to enhance understanding of Islamization as a historical process involving trade, the role of local communities, religious activities, and the development of kingdoms. Practically, this article is expected to serve as a reference for students and general readers seeking to study Islamic history and understand its role in shaping the lives of communities in the Malay World.

B. LITERATURE REVIEW

1. The Concept of Islamization in the Malay World

Islamization is the process through which Islam enters, is accepted, and develops within society. In the context of the Malay World, Islamization should be understood as a historical process that unfolded through interactions between local communities and various networks from outside the region. This process not only transformed individual beliefs but also influenced developments in various fields, including social, political, economic, and cultural affairs. Al-Attas (1969) discussed the process of Islamization in the Malay-Indonesian region as being closely associated with changes in the way people perceive and understand their lives. This perspective helps clarify that the development of Islam cannot be measured solely by an increase in the number of its adherents, but also by the influence of Islamic teachings on people's ways of thinking and their daily lives.

In historical studies, the process of Islamization should not be regarded as an event that occurred uniformly throughout the Malay World. Each region has different geographical conditions, power structures, trade networks, and local traditions. Therefore, the history of Islam's development must be studied by examining how Islamic teachings interacted with the circumstances of the communities that embraced the religion. This perspective provides a foundation for understanding the processes of Islam's acceptance and development across the various regions of the Malay World, each of which exhibits distinct characteristics.

2. Trade and the Networks of Islamic Dissemination

Trade is an important aspect of understanding the process through which Islam arrived and developed in the Malay region. The geographical location of this region along the maritime routes connecting the Indian Ocean and East Asia facilitated trade relations among different regions. Reid (1990) emphasized the important role of trade activities in developing the economy and society of Southeast Asia during periods of regional and international commerce. Meanwhile, Andaya (2008) demonstrated that trade networks in the Strait of Malacca were also associated with the formation of social relationships and collective identities among communities. Maritime trade routes also provide a means of illustrating the connections between the Muslim world and communities in the Indonesian Archipelago. Fani et al. (2026) discussed the relationship between the Gujarat–Malacca trade route and the process of Islamization, emphasizing how trade was connected to social interactions, marriage, and the role of Islamic scholars. Meanwhile, Faiz et al. (2026) compared three early historical sources: the geographical work *Al-Masalik wa Al-Mamalik*, the tombstone of Abu Kamil from Phan Rang, and the tombstone of Fatimah binti Maimun from Leran. This study demonstrates the importance of connecting written texts with epigraphic evidence when reconstructing trade networks and the early history of Islam. Therefore, discussions of the routes through which Islam entered the region should take more than one type of historical source into account.

The relationship between trade and the process of Islamization was also examined by Sudarman and Hidayatullah (2020), who discussed the connections between religion, economics, and politics in the Islamization of Malay communities, focusing on trade activities and the role of kingdoms. Economic activities, relationships with political leaders, and interactions with surrounding communities are social processes that must be considered when explaining how Islam spread. In addition, Sudarman et al. (2021) investigated the relationship between trade and religious conversion in the context of the Inderapura Kingdom during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. This study demonstrates that the process of Islamization can be examined through the relationship between economic activities and religious change at the local community level.

Based on these studies, trade should not be understood as the sole factor in the spread of Islam, but rather as one element in the interactions among communities. To explain the development of Islam more comprehensively, the role of merchants must be considered alongside the activities of Islamic scholars, social interactions, and support from political rulers. Accordingly, the spread of Islam can be analyzed as a process involving multiple factors that unfolded within diverse historical contexts.

3. The Role of Kingdoms, Islamic Scholars, and Historiographical Sources

The development of Islam in the Malay World was also associated with the roles of kingdoms and religious figures. Kingdoms could serve as centers of political and religious activity, while Islamic scholars played important roles in conveying religious teachings, providing education, and establishing Islamic scholarly traditions. Burhanudin (2018) examined the relationship between kingdoms and the dynamics of Islamization in the Indonesian Archipelago before the colonial period. This study provides a foundation for understanding the relationship between rulers' acceptance of Islam and changes in community life. Nevertheless, the role of kingdoms must be understood in conjunction with other factors, since the development of Islam also involved trade networks and interactions among communities beyond the royal courts.

Historical research on Islam in the Malay World also requires a critical examination of historiographical sources. Denisova (2013) investigated the spread of Islam based on Malay Islamic historical sources from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The study discussed

narratives concerning the conversion of kings to Islam, the origins of kingdoms associated with Islamic traditions, and the activities of sayyids and Islamic scholars in Johor. Historical sources, such as hikayat narratives and Malay historiographical texts, can provide information about how communities understood Islam and the role of religion in legitimizing political authority. Nevertheless, these sources must be analyzed by considering their contexts of composition, intended purposes, and possible differences between traditional narratives and other historical evidence.

Therefore, the discussion of the roles of kingdoms and Islamic scholars in this study is not based solely on accounts of particular figures or rulers, but also considers the social context and historical sources that support these explanations. A historiographical approach is necessary to ensure that the process through which Islam arrived and developed is not explained through a single narrative, but rather through comparisons of various relevant studies and sources.

4. The Influence of Islam on Community Life

The development of Islam in the Malay World was also associated with changes across various aspects of community life. In the political sphere, Islam was connected to the position of kings, the legitimacy of political authority, and the development of Islamic kingdoms. In education and scholarship, the spread of Islam encouraged the growth of religious instruction and Islamic writing traditions. Meanwhile, in language and literature, the development of Malay written traditions became an important aspect of studies on the intellectual history of Muslim communities in the region. Discussions of Malay historiography by Denisova (2013) and Mohd Noor (2011) can be used to examine the relationship between the development of Islam, writing traditions, and Malay communities' understanding of their history.

The influence of Islam on social and cultural life does not mean that all local traditions disappeared following its development. Instead, the relationship between Islamic teachings and local culture should be understood as an interactive process that could lead to acceptance, adaptation, and changes in social practices. Differences in local conditions meant that the influence of Islam manifested itself in different forms and to varying degrees across regions. Therefore, studies of Islam's influence should address both changes and continuities in community life.

Based on this literature review, this study focuses on three main areas: the arrival and spread of Islam, the roles of trade and religious and political actors, and the influence of Islam on community life. Previous studies provide a foundation for understanding the relationship between trade and Islamization, the role of kingdoms in the development of Islam, and the importance of historiographical sources. This article brings these three areas together to develop a more comprehensive understanding of the history of Islam's arrival and development in the Malay World and its influence on community life.

C. METHOD

This study employs a qualitative approach using library research and descriptive and analytical methods. It aims to examine how Islam arrived and developed in the Malay region and its impact on community life, based on relevant written sources. The library research method was selected because the discussion focuses primarily on analyzing and comparing historical literature rather than collecting data through interviews or direct field observations.

The research data were obtained from secondary sources, including academic books, scientific journal articles, and previous research on the historical development of Islam in the Malay World. The sources were selected based on their relevance to the research focus, the clarity of their authorship and publication details, and their suitability for explaining the

Islamization process and changes in people's lifestyles. The reference books used discuss topics such as trade network systems, the roles of Islamic scholars and kingdoms, and the influence of Islam on politics, education, language, literature, law, and social and cultural aspects. Historical documents, manuscripts, inscriptions, and gravestones were used as primary sources when information about these sources was available in the literature examined; this study does not claim to have directly examined the original sources when such examination was not conducted.

Data were collected using the documentation method, which involved searching for and identifying relevant sources, reading their contents, recording information related to the research objectives, and organizing the information according to the topics discussed. The collected data were then analyzed through several steps, namely selecting relevant information, categorizing it by topic, comparing available sources, and conducting historical interpretation. The comparison of sources was undertaken to identify similarities and differences in their explanations of Islam's arrival, its routes of dissemination, and its impact on Malay society. The interpretation considered the temporal and geographical contexts to ensure that the Islamization process was not treated as an event that occurred uniformly throughout the Malay region. The analytical findings were presented descriptively and systematically to address the research objectives and identify the literature used.

D. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

1. The Process of Islam's Arrival in the Malay World

The spread of Islam in the Malay World did not occur through military conquest but rather through a peaceful approach (penetration pacifique). Islam gradually permeated the social structure through various points of social and economic interaction, including maritime trade networks, interethnic marriages, educational institutions, and the preaching activities of Sufi scholars. The geographical location of the Malay region along the Strait of Malacca naturally positioned it as an international trade hub connecting merchants from Mecca, Persia, India, and China.

Debates regarding the chronology of Islam's initial arrival in this region continue among historians. Nevertheless, the role of Arab merchants who also served as Islamic preachers from the early centuries of the Hijri calendar is recognized as one of the key factors that created opportunities for cultural dialogue and the spread of Islamic teachings throughout the Malay coastal regions (Azra, 2004). These commercial activities not only facilitated the exchange of economic commodities but also introduced Islamic values and teachings to local communities through natural processes of social interaction.

The process of Islamization gained greater momentum when political centers, such as the Sultanates of Samudera Pasai and Malacca, began adopting Islam as their official religion. According to Al-Attas (1972), the arrival of Islam triggered a fundamental epistemological shift in the Malay people's worldview, transforming their intellectual framework from the Hindu-Buddhist era toward a mode of thought grounded in tawhid (the oneness of God) and rationality. Ultimately, the emergence of the Jawi writing tradition and the integration of Islamic teachings into local languages and customs became fundamental foundations for the formation of a Malay-Islamic civilizational identity.

2. Trade as a Channel for the Spread of Islam

Maritime trade constituted the primary channel and initial gateway for the introduction of Islamic influence into the Malay World. The Strait of Malacca, as a vital artery of global maritime commerce, transformed the Malay coastal regions into dynamic meeting points for merchants from different continents. Unlike the spread of religions in other regions, which was

often accompanied by conflict, Islam entered the Indonesian Archipelago through peaceful commercial interactions (penetration pacifique). Muslim merchants came not only to exchange economic commodities but also to introduce moral values, customs, and Islamic teachings that they practiced in their daily lives at trading ports.

According to Azra (2004), the intensity of maritime trade conducted by Arab, Persian, and Indian merchants who also served as Islamic preachers from the early centuries of the Hijri calendar provided a major foundation for the formation of Islamic networks in coastal regions. In this context, ports functioned as spaces for cultural contact, facilitating direct communication between foreign Muslim communities and local populations. Commercial relationships founded on honesty and justice gradually attracted the interest of port rulers and local residents, encouraging them to learn about and embrace Islam.

The implications of these commercial activities extended beyond religious conversion to encompass broader sociocultural transformations. In line with Al-Attas's (1972) perspective, these trade networks facilitated the emergence of new scholarly traditions and rational modes of thought that transformed the Malay people's worldview. Through commercial interactions in coastal areas, the Malay language was adopted as a lingua franca, serving as a common language for economic activities and intercultural communication. Subsequently, the development of the Jawi script further supported the dissemination of Islamic knowledge.

3. The Roles of Islamic Scholars and Kingdoms in the Development of Islam

a. The Role of Islamic Scholars in the Development of Islam

Islamic scholars (ulama) are individuals with a comprehensive understanding of Islamic teachings who assist communities in studying and implementing religious principles. Throughout Indonesian history, Islamic scholars have played various important roles in the development of Islam.

b. Disseminating Islamic Teachings

Islamic scholars are responsible for conveying Islamic teachings to communities through da'wah, or Islamic preaching. These activities include delivering sermons, teaching the Qur'an, explaining the principles of faith and moral conduct, and demonstrating exemplary behavior. The dissemination of Islamic teachings takes into account the social circumstances and cultural characteristics of local communities to facilitate acceptance. One of the most prominent groups associated with the spread of Islam in Java is the Wali Songo. They contributed to the expansion of Islam through preaching, education, and culturally oriented approaches.

c. Developing Islamic Education

Mosques, surau, dayah, and pesantren have served as important institutions for the development of Islamic education. In these institutions, communities study the Qur'an, hadith, fiqh (Islamic jurisprudence), aqidah (Islamic creed), and akhlak (moral conduct). Such educational settings enable individuals to acquire religious knowledge and convey Islamic teachings to others. Consequently, these institutions constitute important means of sustaining the continued development of Islam in Indonesia.

d. Guiding Community Life

In addition to preaching and teaching, Islamic scholars provide guidance on social and religious matters. They emphasize the importance of honesty, justice, solidarity, tolerance, and concern for others. They also assist community members in understanding religious issues and provide advice on various social and religious concerns. Through these contributions, Islamic scholars have become respected and trusted figures within their communities.

e. The Role of Kingdoms in the Development of Islam

Islamic kingdoms were centers of political authority that exerted considerable influence

over various aspects of community life, including social, political, economic, and religious affairs. Their establishment helped accelerate the development of Islam across different regions of Indonesia.

f. Serving as Centers for the Spread of Islam

Islamic kingdoms became important centers for the dissemination of Islam because of their considerable political influence and extensive relationships with diverse communities. When a king or sultan embraced Islam, the royal court could become a center for the development of religious activities. Examples include the Sultanate of Samudera Pasai on the island of Sumatra and the Sultanate of Demak on the island of Java. Both kingdoms occupy prominent positions in the history of Islam's development in the Indonesian Archipelago and illustrate the growth of Islamic political institutions in Sumatra and Java.

4. The Influence of Islam on Politics and Governance

a. Changes in Royal Governance Systems

One of Islam's effects on Indonesian politics was the transformation of royal governance. Before Islam began to spread, several kingdoms in the Indonesian Archipelago adhered to Hindu and Buddhist traditions. As Islam developed, Islamic kingdoms emerged under the leadership of kings or sultans. Examples include the Sultanate of Samudera Pasai, the Sultanate of Aceh Darussalam, the Sultanate of Demak, and the Sultanate of Banten.

These kingdoms served as centers of government and as focal points for the development of Islam within their respective territories. In Islamic kingdoms, rulers were responsible for maintaining public security, managing community affairs, and supporting religious activities. Islam also influenced how rulers understood political authority and their responsibilities toward the people. Nevertheless, governance systems differed among kingdoms according to the social, cultural, and political circumstances of their respective historical periods.

b. The Influence of Islam on Government Policies

Islam influenced government policies, particularly in matters concerning religion, law, and community life. In several Islamic kingdoms, rulers consulted Islamic scholars or religious officials for advice on governmental issues. Islamic values, including justice, honesty, trustworthiness, and accountability, served as moral guidelines for political leadership. Rulers were expected to exercise their authority fairly and refrain from exploiting their positions for personal gain.

In some Islamic kingdoms, Islamic law was applied to specific matters, including marriage, inheritance, and religious affairs. Its implementation varied across kingdoms, depending on local social conditions and the policies adopted by individual rulers. These developments illustrate the relationship between Islamic principles and government policy, particularly concerning the application of religious values, the involvement of Islamic scholars, and changes in community life.

c. The Role of Islamic Scholars in Politics and Governance

Islamic scholars played an important role in shaping the relationship between Islam and government. In addition to conveying religious teachings to the public, they advised kings and sultans on religious matters and social issues. In the history of Islamic kingdoms, scholars could serve as advisers to rulers, teach within royal courts, or assist in resolving matters involving religious law. Their presence contributed moral perspectives and religious reasoning to the exercise of governmental authority.

During the colonial period, several Islamic scholars also participated in struggles against colonial rule. They encouraged communities to preserve their religion, homeland, and people's rights. This role demonstrates that Islamic influence extended beyond governmental

affairs to include the struggle for independence. Wahid examined the relationship between Islam, Islamic scholars, and political authority in the context of Indonesian political history in an article entitled "Pergumulan Islam dan Politik di Indonesia." The relationship between Islam and politics developed from the period of the sultanates through the colonial era and into the independence period.

5. The Influence of Islam on Education and Scholarly Traditions

Islam regards knowledge as a fundamental aspect of human life, as reflected in the first revelation, which emphasizes the command to read in Q.S. Al-Alaq: 1–5. The arrival of Islam established a theological foundation and worldview in which the pursuit of knowledge was regarded not merely as an encouragement but as a moral and religious obligation for every Muslim (Sarkowi, 2021). This understanding fostered an awareness that revelation encompasses a framework of knowledge integrating spiritual and rational dimensions in a holistic manner. It also contributed to the transformation of pre-Islamic Arab civilization into a society that placed considerable importance on intellectual traditions (Nata, 2018).

Islam's significant influence on education is evident in the transformation of learning systems. Initially conducted informally in mosques and suffah, educational activities gradually developed into structured formal institutions, such as madrasahs and universities, during the Umayyad and Abbasid dynasties (Sarkowi, 2021). Scholarly traditions in Islamic education were supported by a strong commitment to knowledge, reflected in the traditions of riwayat (transmission of knowledge), dirayah (critical understanding and analysis), and rihlah 'ilmiyyah (scholarly journeys) undertaken by Islamic scholars to study various disciplines. Classical Islamic education also successfully integrated religious sciences (naqli) with rational sciences (aqli), thereby establishing a non-dichotomous educational system that did not rigidly separate religious and rational knowledge (Nata, 2018).

Islamic scholarly traditions were supported by rich epistemological methods that integrated the bayani approach (text-based reasoning), the burhani approach (rational and demonstrative reasoning), and the irfani approach (intuition and contemplation) (Nata, 2018). This epistemological integration gave rise to numerous Muslim polymaths, or scholars proficient in fields ranging from astronomy, medicine, and mathematics to philosophy, without separating scientific inquiry from divine values.

These scholarly activities were further strengthened by the establishment of library institutions, such as the Bayt al-Hikmah, as well as by the considerable recognition and appreciation that rulers and communities extended to scholars (Sarkowi, 2021). Overall, Islam's influence on education and scholarly traditions laid the foundations for a global civilization in which science and religion occupied complementary positions. The moral and spiritual framework taught by Islam ensured that the advancement of knowledge was directed toward the welfare of humanity and service to God (Sarkowi, 2021). Therefore, the achievements of classical Islamic scholarly traditions demonstrate that Islamic teachings served as a major source of inspiration for the development of an objective, progressive, and civilized academic culture (Nata, 2018).

6. The Influence of Islam on Malay Language and Literature

The arrival of Islam in the Indonesian Archipelago had a fundamental influence on the transformation of the Malay language from a local language of everyday communication into a language of civilization and intellectual expression that reached broader communities (Herniti, 2017). Before the arrival of Islam, Malay was heavily influenced by Sanskrit, and its use tended to be concentrated in royal circles and Hindu-Buddhist traditions. The process of Islamization subsequently elevated the status of Malay to become the principal lingua franca

of the Indonesian Archipelago, alongside the expansion of Islamic preaching and commercial activities.

Through these religious interactions, thousands of words from Arabic and Persian were incorporated into Malay, particularly in the fields of theology, law, government administration, and knowledge (Maulana & Khadijah, 2026). One of the most significant linguistic consequences of Islamic influence was the introduction of a new writing system known as Jawi, or Arabic-Malay script. The adaptation of the Arabic alphabet to accommodate the phonemes and sound system of the local language gave rise to a new literacy tradition among Malay communities (Herniti, 2017).

The Jawi script functioned not only as a medium for official records and royal correspondence but also stimulated a substantial increase in the production of religious manuscripts, works on Islamic jurisprudence, and treatises on Sufism. Consequently, the Jawi script became an important instrument for documenting Islamic intellectual thought throughout the Malay-Indonesian region (Maulana & Khadijah, 2026).

In the field of literature, the arrival of Islam also transformed the styles, themes, and aesthetics of Malay literary works, which had previously been dominated by Hindu-Buddhist heroic narratives and local mythology. The introduction of Islamic values gave rise to new literary genres characterized by moral instruction, rational reflection, and spirituality, including *syair* (poetry), *gurindam* (didactic verse), and Islamic-themed *hikayat* (narrative works) (Herniti, 2017). Classical works and the Sufi thought of Hamzah Fansuri and Nuruddin ar-Raniri demonstrate how Malay literature evolved into a medium for teaching tawhid and exploring profound philosophical ideas.

The emergence of these new genres enriched the aesthetic repertoire of local literature with universal spiritual and theological values (Maulana & Khadijah, 2026). Overall, the integration of Islam into Malay linguistic structures and literary traditions elevated the language into a sophisticated and highly adaptable medium of intellectual expression. Enriched by Arabic and Persian vocabulary and supported by the Jawi script, Malay became capable of accommodating various classical disciplines of knowledge. Ultimately, the strong foundations established by Islamic civilization made Malay an essential historical foundation for the development of language and literature in the modern era (Herniti, 2017; Maulana & Khadijah, 2026).

7. The Influence of Islam on Law and Sociocultural Life

The development of Islam in the Malay region also influenced the relationship between law, political authority, and people's ways of life. In the legal sphere, Islam introduced values and principles concerning justice, responsibility, and the regulation of interpersonal relationships. However, the implementation of Islamic law throughout Malay history remained closely connected to political conditions and changes in governmental structures. Hussin (2007) explained that the development of Islamic law in the Malay Peninsula, particularly during the colonial period, was associated with negotiations between colonial authorities and local elites. This process also influenced the development of Islamic law and the formation of Malay national identity. Therefore, the development of Islamic law should be understood as part of a historical process involving religion, political authority, and society.

In politics and governance, Islam was also associated with the position of kings and the basis for the legitimacy of their authority. Milner (1981) examined the relationship between Islam and Malay systems of kingship, emphasizing the importance of studying the role of religion in Malay political life. This relationship demonstrates that Islam was not merely a matter of personal belief but also a factor contributing to the formation of political identity and systems. Nevertheless, the influence of Islam on governance did not remain uniform across

different regions and historical periods. To avoid treating Malay history as a uniform experience, differences in governmental structures and political developments across regions must be taken into account.

In social and cultural life, the development of Islam was associated with changes in values, identity, and the ways communities understood and practiced their religion. These processes emerged through interactions between Islamic teachings and local customs. Islam could provide a new foundation for social interactions, while local customs continued to influence how communities accepted and implemented religious teachings. Therefore, the relationship between Islam and Malay culture should not be understood as the replacement of an older culture with a new one. Rather, it is more appropriately understood as a historical process involving change, adaptation, and the continued coexistence of traditions.

Islam's influence on Malay society should also be examined by considering differences in how its history has been interpreted. Scholars continue to disagree about when Islam arrived, the regions from which it spread, and the extent to which Islam transformed the structures of local community life. These debates demonstrate that the influence of Islam cannot be established through a single theory alone. Accordingly, analyses of law and sociocultural life must consider various historical sources and the specific regional contexts being studied.

8. Synthesis of Findings and Limitations of the Study

Based on the preceding discussion, the arrival and development of Islam in the Malay region constituted a complex historical process involving various forms of interaction. Trade, social interactions, religious instruction, the role of political authorities, and the expansion of religious networks are among the important factors to consider when examining Islamization. Nevertheless, explanations of this process remain a subject of debate in historical scholarship.

The original text contains an unclear passage concerning Alatas (1985) and Amir (1922), which prevents a reliable translation of the specific argument attributed to these authors. Nevertheless, the surrounding discussion indicates that conclusions regarding the arrival of Islam must be established through the examination of historical sources and comparison of scholarly arguments.

The development of Islam was also associated with changes in governance, law, and the social and cultural identities of communities. However, these changes did not occur uniformly throughout the Malay World. Political conditions, interregional relationships, and local traditions influenced the ways in which Islam developed. Therefore, understanding the history of Islam in the Malay World requires careful consideration of regional differences and the historical periods in which particular events occurred to avoid overly generalized conclusions.

This study has limitations because it relies on library research based on academic books and scientific journal articles. Consequently, the findings depend on the breadth, quality, and interpretation of the published sources examined. Tekin (2024), in a study of Ottoman manuscripts, demonstrated that documents originating outside the Malay region can also provide information about historical connections and the development of Islam in the region. This finding highlights the importance of incorporating diverse types of historical sources rather than relying exclusively on a single body of literature.

This study has not undertaken an in-depth, direct examination of all manuscripts, inscriptions, royal archives, and other historical documents. Furthermore, the discussion does not adequately establish the differences in the Islamization process across the various regions of the Malay World. Future research should compare written sources from different regions and historical periods, including local manuscripts and archival materials originating outside the Malay region. Such comparisons could help assess the consistency of information across

sources and provide a deeper understanding of how Islam arrived and spread, as well as its impact on community life.

E. CONCLUSION

Based on the research conducted, the arrival and spread of Islam in the Malay region constituted a gradual historical process shaped by interactions between local communities and networks across the Islamic world. Maritime trade played a crucial role in the spread of Islam by bringing Muslim merchants into contact with communities at various trading centers. This process was also supported by social ties, intermarriage, religious study gatherings, the roles of Islamic scholars, and the involvement of royal governments in the development of religious life. The process of Islamization in the Malay World occurred gradually and varied across regions, reflecting differences in local historical and sociocultural conditions. The development of Islam also influenced Malay society, particularly in the areas of politics and governance, education, language, literature, and sociocultural life. The emergence of various Islamic kingdoms strengthened the position of Islam in political and social life, while developments in education and scholarly traditions facilitated the dissemination of religious knowledge. In the fields of language and literature, the interaction between Islam and Malay communities influenced the incorporation of Arabic vocabulary into Malay, the development of the Jawi script, and the emergence of literary works reflecting Islamic influences. Nevertheless, these influences varied across the Malay World because each region had distinct social, political, and cultural conditions.

This study emphasizes that the history of Islam in the Indonesian Archipelago should be understood through comparisons of diverse historical sources and careful consideration of their temporal and geographical contexts. The study is limited by its reliance on library research and the availability and quality of the literature reviewed. Further research should involve more extensive examinations of historical manuscripts, inscriptions, gravestones, and other primary sources. Such investigations would help develop a more critical and comprehensive understanding of the Islamization process and its impact on communities throughout the Malay World.

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