



Islamic-Based Characteristics: Malay Community Model and Education Pattern

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Abstract: This study aims to examine the characteristics of Malay society based on Islamic values and the educational patterns that grow and develop within this framework. Malay society shows a distinctive social model, where Islamic teachings are carried out as a belief system and integrated comprehensively into everyday life's cultural, social, and political aspects. To achieve this goal, this study uses a qualitative approach with literature study methods and historical-sociological analysis, which allows for an in-depth exploration of the role of Islam in shaping the patterns of life and education of Malay society. The study results show that Islamic-based education in the Malay community emphasizes the formation of noble morals, internalization of the values of monotheism, and preservation of local traditions in line with the principles of Sharia. This educational pattern strategically maintains the continuity of the community's cultural identity while adapting to changing times' dynamics. Thus, integrating Islamic values into the education system is a significant factor in building individual character and strengthening social cohesion in Malay society.

Abstrak: Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengkaji karakteristik Masyarakat Melayu berdasarkan nilai-nilai Islam dan pola pendidikan yang tumbuh serta berkembang dalam kerangka tersebut. Masyarakat Melayu menunjukkan model sosial yang khas, di mana ajaran Islam diterapkan sebagai sistem kepercayaan dan diintegrasikan secara menyeluruh ke dalam aspek budaya, sosial, dan politik kehidupan sehari-hari. Untuk mencapai tujuan tersebut, penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan metode studi literatur dan analisis sosiologis-historis, yang memungkinkan investigasi mendalam mengenai peran Islam dalam membentuk pola kehidupan dan Pendidikan Islam di Masyarakat Melayu. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa Pendidikan Islam di kalangan Masyarakat Melayu menekankan pembentukan akhlak mulia, internalisasi nilai Tauhid, serta pelestarian tradisi lokal yang sejalan dengan prinsip Syariah. Pola pendidikan ini secara strategis mempertahankan kontinuitas Identitas Budaya masyarakat sekaligus beradaptasi dengan dinamika perubahan zaman. Dengan demikian, Integrasi Nilai ke dalam sistem pendidikan menjadi faktor penting dalam penguatan Karakter Islami dan solidaritas sosial di Masyarakat Melayu.

A. Introduction

The term "*Malay*" has a long history closely related to the development of Southeast Asian civilization. Historically and etymologically, this term has undergone various phases of transformation—in terms of culture, religion, and geopolitics. In the process, Malay culture developed into a unique entity combining local elements with external influences such as Hinduism, Buddhism, and Islam (Andaya, 2001). The entry of Islam into Malay society had a profound impact on the formation of character and socio-cultural structures based on Islamic values. Islam introduced principles such as equality, justice, and ethics in social life, which later became the foundation of the character of Malay society. Through the teachings of monotheism, a fundamental transformation occurred in the mindset, social practices, and education system of society (Al Giffari et al., 2020).

However, there are serious challenges in preserving the Malay cultural identity rooted in Islamic values. Modernization, the flow of globalization, and the influence of foreign cultures have caused some Malay people, especially the younger generation, to move further away from their cultural roots. In addition, the lack of a complete historical understanding of the contribution of Islam in the formation of Malay culture has caused this cultural heritage to be marginalized or reduced to just an ethnic identity, not as a complex cultural construction complete of religious values. This problem is urgent to be studied because it can threaten the continuity of cultural and Islamic values in the lives of contemporary Malay society (Nasir, 2011). The integration of Islamic thought and Malay civilization has produced a unique form of Islamic Malay civilization that differs from Islamic civilization in other places. The development and dynamics of the Malay world from time to time have been influenced by Islamic thought, making Malay civilization one of the important foundations of Southeast Asian civilization (Maryamah et al., 2024).

This study offers a historical-cultural approach focusing on the contribution of Islam to the formation and development of Malay culture. This approach was chosen because it can provide a comprehensive and contextual understanding of how Islam influences the value system, law, education, art, and social life of Malay society from time to time. By tracing the periodization of Malay cultural history, from pre-Islam to the modern era, this study is expected to present a comprehensive and academic perspective on the close relationship between Islam and Malay culture. This solution also aims to preserve cultural identity based on inclusive and dynamic Islamic values (Hamka, 1984). Islam developed in Southeast Asia is not a uniform form but the result of acculturation between Islamic teachings and pre-existing local traditions (Fadhil & Imtyas, 2024).

Many previous studies have only examined Malay culture from an ethnolinguistic, customary, or general historical narrative perspective without delving deeply into the transformation of Malay culture due to the complex and ongoing process of Islamization. On the other hand, studies on Islam in the Malay region tend to be normative or theological and do not directly link the influence of Islam on the cultural construction of Malay society. This study seeks to fill the gap by explicitly highlighting how Islamic values become the

leading force in shaping the character of Malay culture in various aspects. The novelty of this study lies in the interdisciplinary approach that combines historical, cultural, and religious perspectives in viewing Malay identity as an entity formed by the active interaction between local culture and Islamic teachings. This research is important because it can be a scientific and practical reference in preserving and developing Malay culture based on Islamic values amidst the challenges of globalization and modernity (Azra, 2004; Coedès, 1968). This study highlights how Islamic-based characteristics are manifested in the Malay community model, as well as how these values are internalized through educational patterns, both formal and informal, understanding the Malay community model as a society whose identity, culture, and education system are shaped by Islamic teachings profoundly and sustainably (Al Giffari et al., 2020).

In general, the purpose of this study is to analyze historically the role of Islam in shaping and developing Malay culture in the Southeast Asian region. More specifically, this study aims to identify changes in Malay culture from pre-Islamic times to the modern era, as well as to analyze the contribution of Islam in various important aspects, such as the legal system, education, and Malay arts and culture. This study also seeks to uncover Islamic values that have been internalized in Malay cultural identity and provide strategic recommendations to preserve Malay culture based on Islamic values amidst the challenges and dynamics of the contemporary era.

B. Method

This research is qualitative with a literature study approach (*library research*). The type of research used is a literature review, which is a method carried out by identifying, evaluating, and interpreting all research relevant to the research question, topic, or phenomenon that is the focus of the study (Fink, 2019). Because it is based on library studies, this research does not involve subjects or participants directly. The research location is not geographically limited because data is collected online and offline through access to scientific journals, books, and other relevant documents.

The data collection technique was carried out using the documentation method, namely collecting information from various relevant literature sources, such as national journals, scientific books, and credible online articles (Zed, 2008). The instrument in this study was a literature review guideline used to assess the quality, relevance, and credibility of the library sources studied. The data analysis technique used the content analysis method, which is organizing information from various library sources and then identifying themes, patterns, and relationships between data relevant to the study's focus (Krippendorff, 2018). Thus, the results of this study are descriptive-analytical and provide a comprehensive understanding of the topic being studied based on library sources that have been systematically selected.

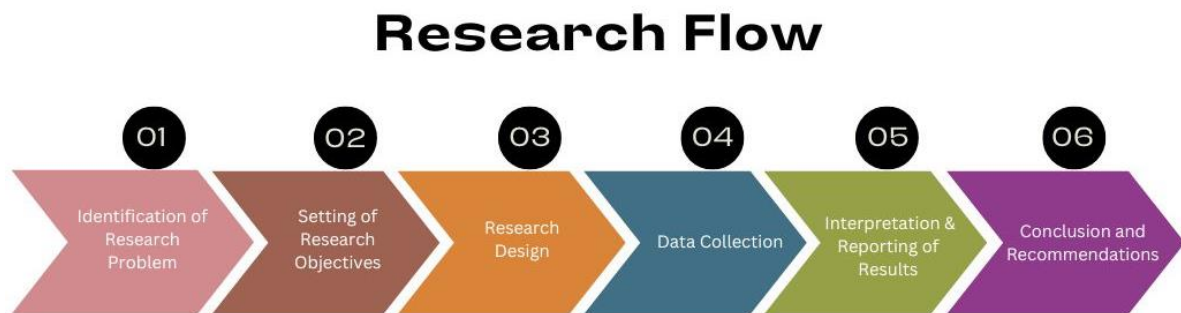


Figure 1. Research Flow

C. Result and Discussion

Malay Society Model

The data analysis process in the study of the Malay community model was carried out qualitatively and descriptively. This approach aims to reveal the meaning and socio-cultural structure of Malay society based on information from various literature. The data collected came from scientific sources such as academic journals, cultural studies books, ethnographic articles, and previous research results. The initial step in the analysis is identifying the main themes related to Malay community life, such as religious values, customs, kinship, leadership, law, technology, language, and economy. After that, data categorization and synthesis are carried out based on similarities in meaning and social context. The results of the analysis aim to describe social phenomena and explain the interrelationships between systems in Malay society so that a comprehensive understanding of their way of life, worldview, and collective identity is obtained.

Critical appraisal is carried out to assess the extent to which the literature used can be scientifically accounted for and is relevant to the focus of the study. This process involves an assessment of methodological validity, author authority, publication context, and the relevance of the content to the structure and dynamics of Malay society. Primary literature, such as the work of Kamaliasari & Amrizal (2021), which is widely used in this analysis, is considered adequate because it has methodological clarity, consistency of analysis, and depth of discussion of important elements in Malay culture. In addition, other sources used have been selected based on the accuracy of the information, conceptual depth, and relevance to the cultural, religious, and social dimensions of Malay society. By conducting a systematic appraisal, the literature sources used in this study have an academic and empirical weight that can support the validity of the review results.

The literature review results reveal that Malay society has a complex social and cultural structure deeply rooted in Islamic and customary values. In terms of religion, Malay society adheres to the Shafi'i school of thought and practices Sunni Sufism, which emphasizes the balance between Sharia and reality. The Malay society's value system is based on three main frameworks, namely the Islamic value system (vertical), the customary value system (horizontal), and the traditional value system (relational to nature), all of which are integrated into everyday life. Their outlook on life is characterized by Sufi values

such as shame, simplicity, deliberation, and monotheism. Customs play an important role in maintaining social harmony through various rituals and cultural practices passed down from generation to generation. The bilateral kinship system emphasizes distinctive greetings as a symbol of social relations. In leadership, Malay society upholds the values of justice, exemplary behavior, and deliberation. Their legal system is a combination of customary and Islamic law that is flexible to the development of the times.

On the other hand, local knowledge, such as stilt house architecture, traditional medicine, and agricultural techniques, shows environmental adaptation. Malay literature through pantun, syair, and gurindam is a medium for passing on values and norms. In the economic field, Islamic economic practices such as arisan and garden pawning show the integration between tradition and Sharia. Overall, these results show that Malay society has a social model that is integrated, dynamic, and responsive to changes in the times.

Table 1. Data Analysis Matrix of the Malay Community Model

Theme/Subtheme	Literature Sources	Key Quotes / Core Ideas	Relevance to Research Topic
Understanding and Practice	Kamaliasari & Amrizal (2021)	Malay society tends towards Sunni Sufism and Shafi'i fiqh	Showing Islam as the basis for community behavior
Value System & Norms	Tamrin (2015); Rohani et al (2018)	Three value systems: Islam, customs, traditions	The foundation of social and moral norms of Malay society
Outlook on Life & Identity	Amrizal (2018); Purba et al (2018)	The concept of monotheism and shame as the primary social values	Explaining Sufi values in Malay identity
Customs	Fariani (2019)	Traditional ceremonies as a social binding mechanism	Shows the continuity of tradition in everyday life
Kinship	Purba et al (2024)	Bilateral system and kinship greeting values	Building solidarity and social identity
Leadership	Soraya et al (2022)	The principle of "just kings, kings are worshipped" and deliberation	Demonstrates the ideal leadership model of Malay society

Educational Patterns of the Malay Community

Data analysis in this literature review was conducted through a systematic approach to various literature sources that discuss the education patterns of Malay society, both from historical, cultural, and institutional aspects. The researcher first identified relevant sources, such as scientific journals, books, and research reports, that raised the education theme in Malay society. The selected literature was then analyzed based on the topic's suitability, the source's validity, and its contribution to understanding Malay education patterns. This approach includes grouping data based on the main themes that emerge, such as character education through "tunjuk ajar," the role of the family in early education, the function of the

surau as a traditional educational institution, and the evolution of madrasahs and schools as a form of modernization of Islamic education. By organizing data thematically, this analysis allows a complete understanding of how education is formed and inherited in Malay society.

Critical appraisal of the literature is conducted to assess the quality, relevance, and reliability of the sources used. Each source is analyzed based on the research method used, the author's background, and the strength of the arguments presented. For example, sources originating from empirical field research or historical studies have their weight in providing an authentic picture of educational practices in Malay society. In addition, the assessment also includes identifying gaps in the literature, such as limited studies on the role of suluk houses in adult education or the lack of literature connecting traditional education and modern curriculum. Through this process, the literature used is collected randomly and carefully selected to support the validity of the study's findings.

Education in Malay society is formal and very thick, with informal and non-formal approaches based on values and traditions. One of the main concepts found is *tunjuk ajar*, a form of character education with moral, spiritual, and cultural teachings passed down through advice, guidance, and role models. In addition, the family institution has a crucial role in forming children's religious and social foundations from an early age. The role of surau and mosques is not only as a place of worship but also as a center for teaching religion, customs, and life skills. Meanwhile, the teacher's house and suluk house becomes a place for further education for adults, especially in spirituality and tarekat. The study also shows that along with the development of the times, Malay society adapted to formal educational institutions, such as madrasahs and schools, without abandoning the fundamental values of tradition and religion.

Table 2. Data Analysis Matrix of Malay Community Education Patterns

Author & Year	Focus of Study	Method (Type)	Key Results
Darwis et al (2022)	Traditional Malay Community Education Patterns	Qualitative	Education is a means of instilling cultural values and social norms that emerge from society.
Waluyo et al (2023)	Character Education in Riau Malay Culture	Theoretical study	Teaching religious, social, and cultural values is applied in formal education.
Rahim (2021)	The role of the family in religious education	Descriptive	Parents instill religious values through worship activities and the habituation of religious behavior.
Juliwansyah & Iswantir (2022)	Education in surau and teacher's house	Ethnographic	The surau and teacher's house are places for religious and character education, especially for teenagers.
Zein (2011).	History and role of surau in education	Historical-qualitative	Surau, a socio-cultural and educational institution, uses slogans and halaqah methods.

Nizar (2009)	The origins of the kuttab and its function in early Islam	Historical	Kuttab taught basic literacy and the Qur'an, an early model of Islamic education.
Muspiroh (2019)	Kuttab in modern Indonesia (Al-Fatih)	Descriptive	Modern kuttab focuses on Qur'anic education and faith values with the halaqah system.
Sitanggang et al (2023)	Al-Fatih Kuttab Curriculum	Descriptive study	Modern kuttab emphasizes spiritual education and the cultivation of Islamic character.
Masykur (2018)	The development of madrasahs in Indonesia	Policy studies	Madrasah is a formal Islamic education system integrated with the national curriculum.
Nizar & Syaifudin (2010)	Transformation of Islamic education into a school model	Historical	Madrasahs developed from mosques; schools were influenced by the colonial system and were considered secular.

Discussion

Social and cultural changes in Malay society due to modernization, globalization, and the penetration of information technology have created new dynamics in society's perspective, customary practices, and value orientations. Amidst the challenges to preserving identity and self-identity, various solutions based on local wisdom and integrating Islamic values have emerged to maintain cultural continuity. In this context, this discussion seeks to examine the solutions offered in the social practices of Malay society and relate them to relevant theoretical frameworks to strengthen their scientific basis.

First, efforts to revitalize customary values and norms through education and cultural transmission show a connection with the theory of cultural reproduction developed by Pierre Bourdieu. Education, both in formal and informal forms (such as Tunjuk Ajar Melayu and oral-literary heritage), becomes a strategic arena for transferring habitus, values, and cultural symbols to the next generation (Bourdieu, 1986). In this case, literary works such as Gurindam Dua Belas are a medium for Islamic moral and ethical education that has long shaped the Malay community's collective character.

Second, strengthening cultural identity through inclusive and collective religious practices (such as tahlil, kenduri, and zikir) can be explained using Émile Durkheim's social integration approach. Durkheim (1995) emphasized that religion is a social cohesion system that creates solidarity and emotional attachment within a community. In Malay society, Islam functions as a spiritual system and a social identity that strengthens customary structures and social relations.

Third, solutions to preserving nature and the environment through local wisdom – such as the menetau ceremony, the prohibition of indiscriminate logging, and the principle of "cutting do not destroy" – can be explained through Julian Steward's cultural ecology theory. Steward (1955) stated that culture responds to the environment and the human adaptation system to its ecosystem. In this framework, Malay customs that regulate the

relationship between humans and nature are symbolic and contain high ecological rationality while preventing the destructive exploitation of resources.

Fourth, the ideal leadership model in Malay culture, which emphasizes the values of trustworthiness, justice, and morality, is the transformative leadership model, as explained by Burns (1978). In the Malay tradition, leaders are positioned as moral role models who must be "preceded one step and elevated one twig," a symbol of respect for the quality of integrity and wisdom. From this perspective, leadership is not just a formal position but a devotion oriented towards collective welfare and strengthening community values.

Fifth, in the economic field, the Malay community developed a system based on social and Sharia values, such as jejula (arisan), pedua, and garden pawn. These practices show the integration between the economy and social structure, as stated in the theory of social economy by Karl Polanyi. Polanyi (2001) stated that economic activities are inseparable from moral, customary, and religious values in traditional society. In this case, Malay economic practices prioritize mutual assistance and distributive justice principles that align with Islamic teachings.

Malay society is not passive in facing social change but seeks to develop adaptive strategies that remain rooted in cultural and religious identity. The theoretical approach used in this discussion shows that these local solutions are not merely tactical legacies but rather forms of cultural rationality that can be accepted within a scientific framework. Therefore, the preservation of Malay values must be carried out systematically with the support of cultural education, traditional institutions, and public policies that encourage the sustainability of local identity within the framework of modern society.

Malay community education offers contextual and integral solutions for building individual character based on religious, cultural, and moral values. One of the main approaches adopted is *Malay tunjuk ajar*, a teaching system based on advice, examples, and teachings full of moral and spiritual messages. *Tunjuk ajar* functions not only as a transmission of values but also as an instrument for holistically internalizing Islamic teachings and Malay culture (Waluyo et al., 2023). This aligns with Lickona's character education theory, which emphasizes moral education's three dimensions: *knowing*, *feeling*, and *action*. All three are reflected in the practice of *tunjuk ajar*, which teaches values through authentic experiences and role models.

Another prominent solution is the optimization of informal educational institutions such as surau, Guru's House, and Suluk House. These places are not only places of worship but also function as centers for character building and spirituality of the community. Surau-based education teaches the Qur'an, morals, customs, and other life skills in an egalitarian and collective atmosphere (Zein, 2011). This role strengthens Durkheim's view of social institutions as a vehicle for the socialization of society's collective values. In addition, the learning process through direct interaction with teachers or religious figures in the surau environment reflects Albert Bandura's social learning theory, which emphasizes the role of observation and imitation in the learning process (Bandura, 1977).

The existence of madrasahs and schools also shows the ability of the Malay community to synergize traditional and modern education. As a result of the evolution of the religious study system in mosques, Madrasahs have become an important milestone in the formation of character and understanding of Islam for the younger generation (Kamaliasari & Amrizal, 2021). This transformation reflects the theory of social reconstructionism according to George Counts, who views education as a tool to form a new society based on ideal values. This process can also be understood within the framework of Herbert Spencer's theory of educational evolution, which states that the education system will continue to develop by social dynamics.

No less important is the role of the family as a very significant early educational institution in Malay society. Religious education, manners, and life skills are instilled early through parental role models, direct teaching at home, and family spiritual habits such as congregational prayer and reading the Qur'an (Sajidah et al., 2021). This is in line with Bronfenbrenner's developmental ecology theory, which emphasizes the strong influence of the microenvironment (family) on individual development. Regarding the pedagogical approach, educational practices in the family also follow Carl Rogers' humanistic views, emphasizing the importance of empathetic and warm relationships in the learning process.

Overall, the Malay community's educational solution not only answers local needs but also has a strong theoretical basis from various scientific perspectives. This shows that the Malay community's value-based and cultural education model can inspire the development of a relevant, contextual, and sustainable education system.

D. Conclusion

This study confirms that traditional Malay society has a complex and integrated socio-cultural system, including aspects of language and literature, economic systems, and educational patterns that are deeply rooted in Islamic religious values and local wisdom. Malay language and literature are a medium for preserving cultural identity, the economic system prioritizes sharia principles, and traditional educational patterns such as surau and madrasah reflect a contextual and practical character education model. All of this shows that Malay culture has a comprehensive value system and is still relevant to be used as a reference in the development of today's society.

These findings provide important contributions to the study of local culture and the development of value-based education systems. By understanding Malay society's social structure and cultural values, educational institutions and local governments can design more contextual and practical policies for preserving culture and developing character education. Knowledge of the traditional Malay economy based on Sharia also opens opportunities for developing a creative and inclusive economy in local communities that align with Islamic principles.

As a development suggestion, this has the potential to be used as a basis for further field-based research, such as ethnographic studies or value transformation analysis, in the context of the Malay youth generation. The involvement of respondents, the use of

qualitative instruments, and a reflective-critical approach will strengthen the validity and relevance of the study to the actual conditions of Malay society today.

Further research is suggested to explore more deeply the influence of modernization on the sustainability of Malay cultural values amidst globalization. Comparative studies between the traditional Malay education system and the modern education model are also needed to formulate a relevant and applicable integrative approach. In addition, community-based quantitative research can strengthen data on the effectiveness of applying Malay values in contemporary society's socio-economic and educational life.

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