



MIDDLE EASTERN INFLUENCE ON ISLAMIC  
EDUCATION IN THE MALAY PENINSULA  
FROM EARLY 19<sup>TH</sup> TO THE EARLY 20<sup>TH</sup> CENTURIES:  
THE CASES OF *PONDOK* AND *MADRASAH*

BY

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requirements for the degree of Master of Human Sciences  
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## ABSTRACT

Islamic educational system in the Malay Peninsula began with the arrival of Islam to the region. The need for Islamic education by the natives of the Malay Peninsula grew exponentially from as early as the 18<sup>th</sup> to the early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. As a result of the natives' cumulative need, *pondoks* and *madrasahs* were formed as early as in the 19<sup>th</sup> and the early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries respectively. Both educational institutions were initiated by *'ulama* and Muslim modernists, who experienced the Makkan and Cairo educational systems. These educational institutions played an important role in educating the Malays since they provided the best education compared to vernacular and secular schools, which were established by the British. This research examines the role of *'ulama* and Muslim modernists in transforming the idea of traditional and modern religious system in the region from early 19<sup>th</sup> to the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. In addition, it also focuses on the features of both educational institutions and their impact on the native Malays in the region. In a nutshell, Malay Muslims' education in the region particularly at the *pondok* and *madrasah* is a transformation of the Middle East Islamic educational system. This idea, which was initiated by *u'lama* and Muslim modernists, have brought many improvements towards the Malay society in areas of politics, social, and economics.

## ملخص البحث

بدأ النظام التعليمي في شبه جزيرة ملايو (تانه ملايو) مع دخول الدين الإسلامي فيها. ونشأت معه حاجة المواطنين الملايويين إلى التعليم الديني وذلك في فترة ما بين مطلع القرن الثامن عشر والقرن العشرين الميلادي. فأُنشئت الكتاتيب أو ماتسمى بـ"الفوندوق" والمدارس الدينية تلبيةً لتلك الحاجة. هاتان المؤسستان متبلورتان بفضل العلماء والمجددين المتخرجين من مكة والقاهرة، وقد لعبتا دوراً هاماً في تثقيف الملايويين في الوقت الذي عجزوا عن إنجاز نظام تعليمي مناسب مقارنةً بالنظام التعليمي العلماني المدعم من قبل الإنجليز. لذا ركز البحث في دور العلماء والمجددين في إنشاء الجسور بين النظام التعليمي التقليدي والنظام التعليمي الحديث في جزيرة ملايو ما بين القرن التاسع عشر والقرن العشرين الميلادي. وركز البحث أيضاً في التعريف بخصائص هذه المؤسسات وأثارها على السكان الملايويين بتانه ملايو. وباختصار يمكن القول أن النظام التعليمي في "الفوندوق" وفي تلك المدارس الدينية هو نسخة مشابهة للنظام التعليمي بالشرق الأوسط. هذه الفكرة - التي أنشئت من قبل العلماء والمجددين الإسلاميين - قد جلبت الكثير من التطورات في النواحي السياسية، والاجتماعية، والاقتصادية في المجتمع الملايوي.

## APPROVAL PAGE

I certify that I have supervised and read this study and that in my opinion, it confirms to acceptable standards of scholarly presentation and is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a dissertation for the degree of Master of Human Sciences (History and Civilization).

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## DECLARATION

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AND *MADRASAH***

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*DEDICATED TO*

*MY HUSBAND AND SON  
KHAIRUL HAFFIZ ABDUL HALIM*

*AND*

*MUHAMMAD BIN KHAIRUL HAFFIZ  
WHO LOVE AND MOTIVATE ME,*

*MY FATHER  
MA 'AROF BIN SADIKIN  
WHO LOVES AND INSPIRES ME,*

*AND*

*MY MOTHER  
MISLIAH KANDAR  
WHO TAUGHT ME THE VALUABLE OF KNOWLEDGE,  
WHOSE BLESSINGS AND PRAYERS  
HELPED AND STRENGTHENED ME TO  
OVERCOME MANY DIFFICULTIES.*

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## TABLE OF TRANSLITERATION

Table of the system of transliteration of Arabic words and names  
used by the International Islamic University Malaysia.

b = ب	z = ز	f = ف
t = ت	s = س	q = ق
th = ث	sh = ش	k = ك
J = ج	ṣ = ص	l = ل
ḥ = ح	dh = ض	m = م
kh = خ	ṭ = ط	n = ن
d = د	z = ظ	h = هـ
dh = ذ	ع = ع	w = و
r = ر	gh = غ	y = ي

Short vowels:	a	i	u
Long vowels:	ā = ا	ī = ي	ū = و
Diphthongs:	ay = ا ي	aw = ا و	

# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.0 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Both the cities of Makkah and Cairo occupy special positions in the hearts of Muslims. Makkah is the most sacred place for Muslims as it is the birthplace of Islam, *qiblah* (direction for prayer) and *hajj* (pilgrimage).<sup>1</sup> Meanwhile, Cairo was accorded special status due to its position as the centre of Islamic learning in the Muslim world. Therefore, both Makkah and Cairo have played important roles in disseminating religious, intellectual and educational ideas to the wider Muslim world including the Malay Peninsula.

Initially, *Sekolah al-Quran* (Quranic School) was established in the Malay society particularly for the purpose of learning the *Quran*. According to Abdullah Abdul Kadir Munsyi, children are taught how to read and write at the early age. Then, they learn the *Quran* from competent *tok gurus* (Quranic teachers).<sup>2</sup> These sessions were conducted at the teachers' houses. These young students were also taught on subjects such as *tawhīd* and *fiqh* in order to widen their knowledge of Islam and to have a better understanding of the religion through a holistic view encompassing the various disciplines in Islam.

Muslims in the Malay Peninsula perform *hajj* in order to fulfill their Islamic obligations. It became a trend among the Malays to further learn about Islam while performing their *hajj* and there were many *hajjis* (those who had performed *hajj*) who

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<sup>1</sup> The *hajj* stations at Arafah, Muzdalifah and Mina on the road east of Makkah appear to have been associated with solar and mountain. Islam; deities prior to the rise of the “standing” at Arafat, the “hurry” to Muzdalifah, and the “storming” at the pillars of Mina. In *The Encyclopedia of Religion*, vol 11, “Muslim Pilgrimage”, 338.

<sup>2</sup> Abdullah Abdul Kadir Munsyi, *Hikayat Abdullah*, (Kuala Lumpur: Penerbit Jambatan, 1953), 18.

chose to settle in Makkah. After returning from Makkah, these *hajjis* established Islamic traditional schools namely *pondoks*.<sup>3</sup> Soon, this system was replaced by *Sekolah al-Quran*. In these *pondoks*, students sat in *halaqahs*<sup>4</sup> and listened to lessons and teachings of their teachers. They memorized all the subjects taught by their teachers in the Arabic language. This educational system was based on the Makkah educational system. It was not an exam-oriented learning like the practice of secular and vernacular schools introduced by the British.

In early 19<sup>th</sup> century, a large number of *pondoks* were built in Kedah, Perak, Kelantan and Terengganu, particularly in the rural areas. The Malay society preferred Islamic education rather than the secular and vernacular system of educations because they wanted to preserve their beliefs in Islam and its teachings. This system became increasingly important as it provided religious understanding to the Malay society. Many of the students who completed their studies at *pondoks* became ‘*ulama*’<sup>5</sup> (the learned) not only in the Malay Peninsula but also in Makkah.

Modern educational system or also known as *madrasah*<sup>6</sup> was initiated by Malay modernists as an alternative to not only the traditional system but also secular and vernacular educational systems, which created by the British during early 20<sup>th</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> The word *pondok* derives from the Arabic, *فندق* (lodging), meaning an inn or lodging place for travelers. In Malay, it means hut. The term *pondok* as an educational system refers literally to the students’ lodgings at the traditional Islamic institution. In Che Omar Awang, “The methodology of the teaching in Islam with special reference to the traditional educational methods in Malaysia,” (PhD. dissertation, University of Edinburgh, 1996), 212.

<sup>4</sup> Literally *halaqah* means “circle”, “gathering of people”, “seated in a circle”, and also “gathering of students around a teacher”. In *Encyclopedia of Islam*, vol 11, “Halaqah”, 95.

<sup>5</sup> ‘*Ulama* means the religious scholars of Islam, the guidance, transmitters, and interpreter of its sciences, doctrines, and laws and the chief guarantors of continuity in the spiritual and intellectual history of the Islamic community. In *The Encyclopedia of Religion*, vol 15, “‘Ulama”, 115.

<sup>6</sup> The *madrasah* is an educational institution devoted to advanced studies in the Islamic religious sciences. Its origin has been much debated, but evidence that the term was used in the eastern Iranian area as early as the late 19<sup>th</sup> century nullifies the hypothesis that it arose as the Sunni competitor to the Azhar Mosque School in Cairo founded in 972 for the Isma’ili Shi’i sect. Consequently, the earliest sense of the word itself is place of study, a noun of place for the verb meaning “to study”. In *The Encyclopedia of Religion*, vol 9, “Madrasah”, 77 .

century. The objective of this educational system was to produce Malays, who were not only outstanding and capable in worldly affairs but also in the understanding of “Islam” itself. In addition, this system was an extremely effective mean in propagating Islam to the modern Malay society.

Islamic education was part of the Malay educational system since the days of the Malacca Sultanate as the Malay Peninsula received strong influences from the Middle Eastern educational system. Muslims have benefited from the existence of these *pondoks* and *madrasahs*.. The primary focus of this research is to examine the influences of Makkah and Cairo on Islamic education in the Malay Peninsula from early 19<sup>th</sup> to the early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. This process of Islamization left significant influence on the political and economic developments of the Malay community. In addition, the impact of Islamic education and the intellectual trends from the Middle East had also influenced the realm of Muslim education in the Malay Peninsula, i.e, *pondoks* and *madrasahs*.

## **1.1 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

Despite the wealth of writings on Islam in the Malay Peninsula, there is still a lack of literature on Islam, especially in the English language, specifically on the impact of Middle Eastern educational system on Islamic education. Therefore, this study scrutinizes the emergence of *pondoks* and *madrasahs* in the Malay Peninsula to further elaborate and explain its influences in the Malay Peninsula. This is not an in-depth study of the concepts of *pondoks* and the *madrasahs* in the Malay Peninsula. Rather, the writer’s main concern is to evaluate both the *pondok* and the *madrasah* as representing important tools and avenues for the dissemination of Middle Eastern ideas in the Malay Peninsula.

According to Che Omar, the introduction of the *pondok* in the Malay Peninsula started in late 18<sup>th</sup> or the early 19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>7</sup> Its curriculum offered only Islamic and Arabic subjects. The basic learning method in the *pondok* was known as *menadah kitab* (opening books) in which students open their books while sitting on the ground, listening to their teacher and sometimes asking questions. At the *pondok*, the students studied together in a common class regardless of their age or level of studies without having an examination. This type of learning system was generally based on memorization. This system was founded by ‘*ulamas*, who graduated from Makkah. After returning to Malaya, they established *pondoks* in Kelantan, Terengganu, Kedah, and Perak. The *pondok* graduates would later become *ustaz* (teacher) or *imam* (leader of prayer) in Malaya.

Dissatisfied with the inadequacy of the traditional Islamic learning, Malay modernists such as Sheikh Tahir Jalaluddin and Syed Sheikh al-Hadi initiated a new type of modern Islamic school known as the *madrasah*. Unlike the *pondok*, the *madrasah* is better in terms of its facilities and system of education. For example, the Madrasah al-Iqbal al-Islamiyyah in Singapore had better facilities such as chairs, desks, class schedule, grade system and a broader curriculum which included Islamic as well as modern subjects. As stated by Sufean Hussin:

In the post-war period, Madrasah al-Mashur in Penang offered not only various Islamic disciplines but also numerous modern subjects, which included general knowledge, geography, logic, psychology, philosophy and biology.<sup>8</sup>

Therefore, the major concern of this study is to analyze the origins of both *pondok* and *madrasah* systems of education and the key figures responsible for the transmission of these trends into the Malay Peninsula. The founders of the *pondok*

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<sup>7</sup> Che Omar Awang, 213-214.

<sup>8</sup> Sufean Hussin, *Pendidikan di Malaysia: Sejarah Sistem dan Falsafah*, (Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, 1993), 21.

were traditionalists, who studied in Makkah, while the founders of the *madrasah* were modernists, who studied in Cairo. These systems were the alternative education systems compared to the colonial system of the West.

In addition, this research compares the main features of these institutions in the Malay Peninsula. The *pondok* institution is based on a conservative approach from Makkah, while the *madrasah* is inspired by the Cairo model. Of course, both approaches are different since the *pondok* was introduced in early 19<sup>th</sup> century and the *madrasah* in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century.

This study also examines how knowledge was acquired and taught in both institutions. Moreover, both learning and teaching methods were different because the *pondok* followed the education system from Makkah while the *madrasah* adopted Cairo's modern education. The discrepancy between both institutions created different learning cultures in the Malay Peninsula. Although the methodology of teaching is diverse but the main principle is to convey the message of Islam.

Furthermore, this study examines the impact of *pondok* and *madrasah* educational systems on Islamic educational systems of today. The Malay society still supports the existence of these educational systems since these are the only systems which provide a balanced education for the Malay society compared to other educational systems, especially the one introduced by the previous colonial power.

## **1.2 JUSTIFICATION OF THE PROBLEM**

Both *pondok* and *madrasah* were important educational institutions that produced proficient Muslims, in both Islamic and modern learning. It originated in the Middle East and was brought to Malaya by Malay students. The above educational institutions

catered to the educational needs of the local people in early 19<sup>th</sup> to the early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries.

This study highlights the emergence of these institutions in the Malay Peninsula in early 19<sup>th</sup> to the early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. Both systems have different origins where the *pondok* was initiated by the ‘*ulama*, who graduated from Makkah, while the *madrasah* was initiated by modernist, who adopted the idea of modern religious education from Cairo. As attested by Mohammad Redzuan Othman, Muhammad Yusof bin Muhammad or Tok Kenali (d.1933), who graduated from Makkah and who had opened his own *pondok* in Kelantan to educate Muslims on the fundamental knowledge of Islam.<sup>9</sup> Madrasah al-Hadi in Malacca was founded by Syed Sheikh al-Hadi, the famous Malay modernist in 20<sup>th</sup> century and he was one of the teachers in the Madrasah al-Mashur in Penang.<sup>10</sup> The utmost significance brought about by both institutions were that they helped to guide Muslims back to the fundamental teachings of Islam.

This paper also analyzes the approaches used by both systems in educating Malays in this region. The *pondok* was based on the traditional system, whereas the *madrasah* on the modern system. Although both systems catered for religious education for Malays, the *madrasah* became more popular since it fulfilled both the current needs of the Malays while not neglecting its religious needs.

In addition, this research sheds light on the main features of the *pondok* and the *madrasah* in the Malay Peninsula. The *pondok* focuses on religious education, whereas the *madrasah* emphasizes on both religious and modern education. These Islamic institutions were responsible in educating Muslims to become experts not only in religious, but also intellectual and professional aspects. Such a need to balance the

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<sup>9</sup> Mohammad Redzuan Othman, *Islam dan Masyarakat Melayu: Peranan dan Pengaruh Timur Tengah*, (Kuala Lumpur: Penerbit Universiti Malaya, 2005), 66.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, 115.

religion and worldly affairs can be seen in the remark by Sheikh Tahir Jalaluddin as quoted by Mohd Sarim Mustajab, who stated that the colonial educational system would produce secular society and, therefore, it is necessary to include religious education in order to preserve the Malays' beliefs.<sup>11</sup>

By examining all these issues, the study attempts to highlight the influence of the Middle East in the Muslim educational system in Malaya and investigates its role in shaping the Malay society. An educational discourse, particularly in Muslim education will be highlighted in this study and its consequence in the Malay Peninsula will be critically assessed.

### **1.3 DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS**

The idea of Islamic modernism was brought and introduced to the Malay Peninsula in early 20<sup>th</sup> century mainly through Sheikh Tahir Jalaluddin (d.1956) and Syed Sheikh al-Hadi (d.1934). The Islamic modernism idea was defined by Adam as:

Muhammadan modernism...constitutes an attempt to free the religion of Islam from the shackles of a too rigid orthodoxy and to accomplish reforms which will render it adaptable to the complex demands of modern life. Its prevailing character is that of religious reform; it's inspired and dominated chiefly by theological considerations.<sup>12</sup>

It differs from modernism idea,<sup>13</sup> which focused only to the development of worldly affairs without the intervention of religion itself. Therefore, the idea that was brought by Sheikh Tahir Jalaluddin and Syed Sheikh al-Hadi was to modernize their society based on Islamic guidance.

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<sup>11</sup> Mohd Sarim Mustajab, "Syekh Tahir Jalaluddin al-Falaki: Pelopor Gerakan Pembaharuan Agama dan Perubahan Masyarakat," in *Sheikh Tahir Jalaluddin: Pemikir Islam*, edited by Sohaimi Abdul Aziz, (Pulau Pinang: Penerbit Universiti Sains Malaysia, 2003), 23.

<sup>12</sup> Adams C.C., *Islam and Modernism in Egypt*, (New York: Russell and Russell, 1968), 1.

<sup>13</sup> Modernism is a conclusive terms. It implies what is new as opposed to what is ancient, what is innovative as opposed to what is traditional or handed down. In *The Encyclopedia of Religion*, vol 10, MacMillian Publishing Company, New York, 1987, 18.

Both of them were known as Muslim modernists, who Fazlur Rahman defines Muslim modernists as those who have made articulate and conscious effort to reformulate Islamic values and principles in terms of modern thought or to integrate modern thought and institution of Islam.<sup>14</sup> In this particular issue, both of them endeavoured to upgrade and value-add the current educational system by integrating both the religious and secular education, which was implemented in Cairo brought by Muhammad Abduh (d.1905).

#### 1.4 LITERATURE REVIEW

Many studies were conducted on the Middle Eastern influence on the Islamic educational system, but comparatively little have been written on *pondoks* and *madrasahs* in the Malay Peninsula in early 19<sup>th</sup> to the 20<sup>th</sup> centuries.

Mohammad Redzuan Othman's important work entitled "The Middle Eastern influence on the development of religious and potential political thought in Malay society 1880-1964", which sheds light on the role of Middle East in the process of Islamization of the Malay society.<sup>15</sup> He argued that, performing *hajj* in Makkah also provides an opportunity for the Malays to continue their studies in Baitullah al-Haram because Makkah is the Islamic and educational centre of the Muslim world. In addition, during their course of studies, Malay students were influenced by the ideas of Cairo's Islamic modernists. They transmitted their ideas to the Malay Peninsula through *al-Imam* (The Leader) published by Sheikh Tahir Jalaluddin from Singapore.

Another significant work by Mohammad Redzuan Othman is "Masjid al-Haram sebagai Sebuah Institusi Pengajian: Peranannya dalam Perkembangan Awal

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<sup>14</sup> Fazlul Rahman, *Islam*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1969), 222.

<sup>15</sup> Mohammad Redzuan Othman, "The Middle Eastern influence on the development of religious and potential political thought in Malay society 1880-1964," (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Edinburgh, 1994), 55.

Pendidikan dan Intelektualisme Melayu.” This work is a treasure of information in relation to Makkah as the famous centre for Islamic education.<sup>16</sup> Muslims studied at this traditional institution, where *sistem tadah*<sup>17</sup> and the *halaqah* system were practiced. Although Muslims went to Makkah to perform *haji*, they also took the opportunity to seek religious knowledge there. Upon their return to their hometowns, they taught the Malay society the teachings of Islam.

Another important source in Bahasa Melayu was by Abdullah Ishak entitled *Pendidikan Islam dan Pengaruhnya di Malaysia*.<sup>18</sup> It deals with the importance of Islamic education in the Malay Peninsula particularly Islamic educational philosophy and objectives. In addition, he discusses the *pondok* institution; its contribution to Islamic education in the Malay Peninsula and its problem in facing challenges from modern schools that were introduced by the British. However, he does not discuss in detail the importance of the *madrasah* system in the Malay Peninsula.

Other significant work in Bahasa Melayu was by Abdul Rahman al-Ahmadi entitled “Pendidikan Islam di Malaysia: Pembinaan Intelek Agama.” This work sheds light on the responsibilities of the ‘*ulama* in establishing the *pondok* system since 19<sup>th</sup> century such as in Kedah, Perak, Kelantan, and Terengganu.<sup>19</sup> He argues that, almost all the ‘*ulamas* were educated in Makkah. In addition, he also cites the role of Sheikh Tahir Jalaluddin and Syed Sheikh al-Hadi in introducing the *madrasah* system in the

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<sup>16</sup> Mohammad Redzuan Othman, “Masjid al-Haram sebagai Sebuah Institusi Pengajian: Peranannya dalam Perkembangan Awal Pendidikan dan Intelektualisme Melayu,” in *Islam di Tanah Melayu Abad ke 19*, edited by Farid Mat Zain, (Shah Alam: Karisma Publications, 2007), 50.

<sup>17</sup> The students were required to have the prescribed book and to bring them to the particular reading and listening sessions. During the session the read his book in Malay or Arabic and the students just opened their books, which were similar to the teacher’s book, to the particular pages being read and looked at them from time to time while they listened to their teachers. In Rahimin Affandi Abdul Rahim, *Hamdard Islamicus*, vol 22, no 3, (1999): 84-85.

<sup>18</sup> Abdullah Ishak, *Pendidikan Islam dan Pengaruhnya di Malaysia*, (Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, 1995), 45.

<sup>19</sup> Abdul Rahman al-Ahmadi, “Pendidikan Islam di Malaysia: Pembinaan Intelek Agama,” in *Tamadun Islam di Malaysia*, edited by Mohd Taib Osman and A.Aziz Deraman, (Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, 2000), 445.

Malay Peninsula. He contends that, these people were influenced by the idea of Islamic modernism of Muhammad Abduh (d. 1905) and Muhammad Rashid Rida (d.1935) in Cairo. However, his article only focuses on the establishment of *pondok* and *madrasah* system in northern and eastern part of the Malay Peninsula, which excludes the southern region of the Malay Peninsula.

Another notable work in Bahasa Melayu is by Faudzinaim Badaruddin entitled “Pendidikan Pondok dan Peranannya di Tanah Melayu Abad Ke-19.” It deals with the foundation of *pondok* and its role as Islamic educational institution in the Malay Peninsula in early 19<sup>th</sup> century. He argued that Makkah and Madinah influence on *pondok* in the Malay Peninsula was founded by ‘*ulamas*, who receive their education in Arab Peninsula.<sup>20</sup> He also argued that at the onset, the foundation of *pondok* was not the aim of ‘*ulamas*, rather it was a request from the Malay society, who were eager to learn and attain Islamic knowledge. Since then, those ‘*ulamas* who completed their studies in Makkah and Madinah have almost immediately establish *pondoks* to make it easier for Malays to learn Islam.

Ibrahim Abu Bakar’s important work is *Islamic Modernism in Malaya: The Life and Thought of Syed Sheikh al-Hadi 1867-1934*. The author highlights on the early life of Syed Sheikh al-Hadi until the end of his life.<sup>21</sup> He strongly argued that Syed Sheikh al-Hadi had his own ideas with regard to Islamic ritualism, education, women and politics in Islam. His ideas on education is that the *madrasah* should be an alternative avenue to the secular and the *pondok* systems in the Malay Peninsula. However, he does not discuss adequately enough on the development of the *madrasah* system.

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<sup>20</sup> Faudzinaim Badaruddin, “Pendidikan Pondok dan Peranannya di Tanah Melayu Abad ke-19”, in *Islam di Tanah Melayu Abad ke-19*, edited by Farid Mat Zain, (Selangor: Karisma Publication, 2007), 118.

<sup>21</sup> Ibrahim Abu Bakar, *Islamic Modernism in Malaya: The Life and Thought of Syed Sheikh al-Hadi 1867-1934*, (Kuala Lumpur: University of Malaya Press, 1994), 29.

Jamilah Othman's comprehensive work is "Syed Sheikh al-Hadi: His role in the transformation of Muslim societies in Peninsular Malaya and the Straits Settlement during the latter half of the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries" cites Syed Sheikh al-Hadi as a Muslim modernist, who disseminated the idea of Islamic modernism in the Malay Peninsula.<sup>22</sup> However, in Jamilah Othman's work, she provided less emphasis on the importance of the modern religious system in the Malay Peninsula which was introduced by Syed Sheikh al-Hadi himself.

An important work by Roff, W.R. is "*Pondok, Madrasah and the Production of 'Ulama in Malaysia*", which highlights the importance of *pondoks* and *madrasahs* in the Malay Peninsula in early 19<sup>th</sup> to the early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries.<sup>23</sup> He argued that *pondoks* were introduced by Muslim graduates from the Middle East, particularly from Makkah and Madinah, whereas the *madrasah* was introduced by Muslim modernists, who graduated from al-Azhar University, Cairo. Moreover, he explains that the *pondok* system has produced many '*ulamas*, who righteously guided Muslims to the right teachings of Islam. In contrast, *madrasah* graduates are more inclined to become Muslim political leaders, who fought for the independence of Malaya from the British.

Another important work by Roff, W.R. is *The Origins of Malay Nationalism* which discusses on the establishment of the *madrasah* institution in the Malay

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<sup>22</sup> Syed Sheikh al-Hadi was born in Kampung Hulu, Melaka on Friday, 25 Rejab 1281/ 24 December 1867. At the age of 14, he was sent to Riau to learn theology, Malay and Arabic language by Raja Ali. At the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Syed Sheikh went to Makkah, Beirut and Cairo for further studies. In fact, he became a student of Muhammad Abduh at Cairo, a renowned Muslim reformist in the Middle East. Upon returning from Cairo, Syed Sheikh al-Hadi opened Madrasah al-Iqbal Islamiyyah in 1908, Singapore, Madrasah al-Hadi in 1915, Malacca and Madrasah al-Mashur in 1926, Penang. He felt that, it was only with these schools, he could reformulate the faith of Muslim society in Malay Peninsula, in Jamilah Othman, "Syed Sheikh al-Hadi: His role in the transformation of Muslim societies in Peninsular Malaya and the Straits Settlement during the latter half of the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, (M.A dissertation, National University of Singapore, 1984), 67.

<sup>23</sup> Roff, W.R., "*Pondoks, Madrasah and the Production of 'Ulama in Malaysia*," *Studia Islamika*, vol. 11, no. 1 (2004): 38.

Peninsula in early 20<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>24</sup> In his view, this institution is the most important medium in spreading the idea of Islamic modernism in the Malay Peninsula. Furthermore, he suggested that the reform of religious educational system in the Malay Peninsula is needed for the benefit of the Malays themselves. However, in his work, he does not discuss in detail on the *pondok* and the *madrasah* system and the influences from the Middle East.

Another important contribution was by Mustafa Abdullah is “Beberapa Pembaharuan Muhammad Rida dan Sumbangannya Kepada Pembaharuan Ummah.” In this work the author mentioned the contribution of Muhammad Rashid Rida to the Muslim world.<sup>25</sup> He also briefly discusses the history of the *pondok* and *madrasah* system in the Malay Peninsula. He strongly asserts the idea of integration of religious subjects and modern subjects, implemented in Cairo was adopted by the Malay Peninsula in early 20<sup>th</sup> century, which was introduced by several Muslim modernists namely Sheikh Tahir Jalaluddin and Syed Sheikh al-Hadi.

An important work was written by Rosnani Hashim entitled *Educational Dualism in Malaysia: Implications for Theory and Practice*. She highlights the historical background of the educational system in the Malay Peninsula before and after independence. She included the development of Islamic educational system beginning from traditional educational system (*pondok*) until the emergence of modern educational system (*madrasah*).<sup>26</sup> She emphasizes that both the educational systems have played a major role in educating the Muslim society in the Malay Peninsula. Moreover, she believed that, the Islamic educational system was a pioneer

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<sup>24</sup> Roff, W.R., *The Origins of Malay Nationalism*, (Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1994), 49.

<sup>25</sup> Mustafa Abdullah, “Beberapa Pembaharuan Muhammad Rida dan Sumbangannya kepada Pembaharuan Ummah”, in *Pemikiran Islam dan Cabaran Semasa*, edited by Mohd Fauzi Hamat, Mohd Fakhruddin Abd Mukti dan Che Zarrina Sa’ari, (Kuala Lumpur: Jabatan Akidah dan Pemikiran Islam, APIUM, 2004), 81.

<sup>26</sup> Rosnani Hashim, *Educational Dualism in Malaysia: Implications for Theory and Practice*, (Kuala Lumpur: The Other Press, 2004), 39.

of educational system in the Malay Peninsula. Nevertheless, she did not highlight further on the Middle East influence on the Muslim educational system in this region.

Despite the abundance of studies on the *pondok* and *madrasah* educational systems, the general collection is still lacking in terms of Makkah's and Cairo's influences on the Islamic educational system in the Malay Peninsula, particularly in early 19<sup>th</sup> to the early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. Therefore, this research will try to fill this gap for the benefit of others who are interested in learning about this research in depth.

## **1.5 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

In this research, archival materials (i.e. reports and documents) from the National Archive and secondary sources (i.e. books, dissertations and journals) will be used. Inductive method, which is based on primary sources such as contemporary issues of *al-Imam* and textual analysis, will be used to discuss the role of Makkah and Cairo as Islamic educational centers and to examine the emergence of the *pondok* and *madrasah* system in the Malay Peninsula from early 19<sup>th</sup> to the early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. The textual analysis of the archival materials and secondary sources will provide the historical background of Makkah and Cairo's influence on the Muslim educational system in Malay Peninsula and their impact in producing *'ulamas* and intellectuals in the region. It is hoped that the combination of the textual analysis and secondary sources will enable us to further understand the Middle Eastern influence on the Muslim educational system in the Malay Peninsula and their impact on the Malay society from early 19<sup>th</sup> to the early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries.