



Final Report

Integrated Islamic Education in Southern Thailand and Northern Malaysia: Reforms and Challenges

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Chulalongkorn University**

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Executive Summary

This study is an investigation to the nature of the integrated Islamic education in both Southern Thailand and Northern Malaysia. The establishment of Islamic Education Curriculum in accordance with the Core National Curriculum of Basic Education (2008) in Thailand and the Education Act 1996 leading to the establishment of national integrated curriculum in Malaysia are solid evidence that Thailand and Malaysia have decided to settle the integrated Islamic education for their future generations.

Certain difficulties have surfaced later, which are thought to impede the implementation of the integrated Islamic Education in these countries. Therefore, the objective of this research is to study the role, functions and challenges of Integrated Islamic Education in northern Malaysia and southern Thailand. It is also intended to examine the implementation of the Integrated Islamic Education system in both regions. The study is also focused to evaluate the need to revise and improve the current Integrated Islamic education system.

The study focuses on the basic level (primary and secondary) of Islamic Integrated education in southern Thailand and northern Malaysia. There are several types of basic level education institutions, namely the Qur'anic schools, *Pondok*, *Madrasa*, secular public primary and public secondary schools. However, the study is focused only on the schools those follow the integrated Islamic curricula. These schools have continued to be popular with Muslim parents in both the regions. The number of school enrollment is higher in these schools compared to the government financed public primary schools (Southern Thailand). The Islamic schools combine both the national and *religious* curriculum bring in the element of duality in education system.

A mixed methodology was followed in conducting the research. Data sources are both primary and secondary. The researchers used documents from a variety of sources. The secondary data provided the initial lining of the research. Relevant texts, conceptions and ideas from the three main kinds of sources were reviewed and analyzed. The documentary data was particularly valuable in answering the question

about dualism regarding education system in southern Thailand and northern Malaysia. Secondary information also helped to understand the implementation strategy of integrated Islamic education in both the regions. The documentary data was used to construct the educational context within which the private Islamic schools exist.

This was followed by field level data collection. The researchers used in-depth interview and observation as tools to collect the primary data. The primary data substantiated the findings from the secondary information. The in-depth interviews were in semi-structured fashion. The interviewees were of three categories:

- i. Officials of the Ministry of Education
- ii. Islamic scholars and
- iii. Head teachers.

As policy-makers are responsible for preparing the curricula- these officials were included as interviewee. Muslim scholars and head teachers are involved at the implementation of the integrated Islamic education. The interviews allowed the researchers to grab the critical views of the stakeholders and substantiate the findings from the documentary research. The responses of the interviewees settled the direction of the analysis regarding the challenges facing Islamic education in southern Thailand and northern Malaysia.

The data analysis was a qualitative one. Basically the outcome from the documentary analysis was used as the key feature for designing the interview. The outcome of the interview was used as the yardstick to accept or reject the outcome from the documentary interview. Thus the findings of the research are combination of two approaches, where the data outcome from the field substantiated the secondary analysis.

This study has taken examples of Southern Thailand and Northern Malaysia, two country- one with Muslim minority and another with Muslim majority. One that responded to the crying demand of religious and cultural rights of Muslim and another formed integrated Islamic education as a national strategy to address protection of

national identity. The research argued, in order to sustain the benefit from such system the integrated curriculum needs to be uniformed and centrally coordinated or managed. At the same time the priority of teachers training as well as harmonizing the Islamic subjects with other Islamic subjects as well as general subjects is vital. The system needs to be inclusive and shall be sensible towards the spiritual and national needs. The system shall have sufficient budgetary allocation as well. It is potential to minimize the gaps among various faith groups by providing non-bias perspectives. The research described that at the implementation level there are certainly some similarities and differences between Thailand and Malaysia. It shows that the similarities could be the avenue for national level cooperation.

The study has identified the underlining differences in the contexts, implementation and extends of the integrated Islamic curriculum in the two countries. It has revealed the qualitative aspects of the integration. The study has identified that Malaysia has developed significantly the policy and curricula but remain short in developing skills for the implementation of such integrated Islamic education. On the other hand, curricula and skills remain as challenge for integrated Islamic education in southern Thailand.

The researchers have argued that the challenges of longer school hours, lack of wider student involvement and poorer integration can be addressed through extending cooperation among various stakeholders. It has recommended that the cooperation shall not remain limited within the national border rather explore the hugely potential cross-border cooperation. Finally, this subject is still at its earlier phase in development- thus requires more investigation in future. However, the major findings of this study are;

1. Role of Integrated Islamic Education

In the description of the Education Acts in both Thailand and Malaysia the religious education was linked with moral and ethical development. The education policies are designed to create sensible citizens. Thus the integration of Islamic education for Muslim helps to meet objective. The integrated Islamic curricula in Malaysia are receiving more attention compare to the national schools. It's the

competitive nature of the school admission that shows the popularity of Islamic school. These schools are producing better graduates. It can be noted that the integrated Islamic schools are leading a positive role in the society by developing qualified pupils.

On the other hand, the integrated Islamic school are developing a section of qualified pupils but challenged due to lack of qualified educators. However, all of the scholars accepted the role of the students of the Islamic Private Schools as positive in the sense that they are better engaged with the society and country. This integrated Islamic curriculum is potential to develop qualified and responsible citizen. If we describe this into context of southern Thailand- it's an obvious truth that the integrated Islamic curriculum helps to meet the religious aspiration of the students in the southern provinces as well as others. But especially the inspirations of national and religious curricula jointly enhance the capacity of responsible citizenry. This is indeed a potential contributory factor to develop a unitary nation with common aspiration across various religious groups by substantially reducing chance of anti-state or anti-co-existent activities.

However, the most important aspect of the integrated Islamic education indicates the philosophical and value of the religious conviction of Muslims regarding education. As the research has unveiled that the essential factor of education in Islam is not limited with the theological learning. The holistic nature of Islamic education links the theology with the practical world that Muslims are living in. It's the mandatory nature of being educated that makes Muslim to be sensible towards the system and contents of the lessons. An integrated Islamic curriculum is a positive step towards this direction. Thus the expected outcome of the system shall be logically affirmative for the interest of nation, humanity and religious convection.

2. Function of Integrated Islamic Education

Integrated Islamic education is a requirement for the Muslims. Thus in a Muslim society it is expected that the natural grooming of its young population shall be under an integrated system. The research has explained both philosophical and traditional aspect of knowledge acquiring in a Muslim society. However, the impact of colonial era (secular education) and modern practices focused on practical skill development

contradicts with the spiritual aspect of knowledge searching. Thus integrated Islamic education somehow perceived by the mainstream policy makers as a newly emerged trend, which has lack of familiarity, clarity and expertise. Both in southern Thailand and northern Malaysia this very issue has been posing functional challenge for the integrated Islamic education.

However, we can be divided the functional aspect of integrated Islamic education into three phases: i) policy, ii) content and iii) skill. It is important to note that there is no clear policy about the certification of the integrated Islamic education. Since the present integration is still as the subject level- in Thailand the student assessment is basically managed on the secular and religious subjects separately, whereas, the truly integrated system shall have a recognized central certification. Secondly, the content is yet to be fully integrated. Though Malaysia has done relatively better in the field but it is yet to be fully integrated. There is a need of new books and teaching system. Finally, the skill issue remains the biggest challenge in both countries. There is no institutional arrangement to develop and train instructors or teaching officials enable to teach the integrated Islamic curriculum. In doing so, the instructors shall be well qualified not only in the regular and religious subjects but also able to link the two.

However, the research explained that the functional benefit of such integrated education is multi-folded. It is indeed drawing more attention among the Muslims in both countries. Though there are issues of excessive learning period and other functional challenges – the students are still proving their excellence. This may be the positive factor that can encourage the policy makers to provide more attention for the improvement of integrated Islamic education.

3. Challenges of Integrated Islamic Education

The overall challenge of successful integrated Islamic education both in southern Thailand and northern Malaysia is related with the skill or implementation aspects. This is to say that the teacher training is a core for the successful implementation of the integrated Islamic curriculum. It's not the recent practice that the teaching officials are qualified in learning subjects of the national curricula with solid reference from Islamic theological lessons. Rather the traditional institutes train either the secular or Islamic curriculum. There are some initiatives to train in both disciplines,

which in a way promote the dualism. But the integrated aspect of these two still remains challenging to be trained. There is no institutional arrangement for training teaching officials on the integrated Islamic curricula.

The research also sheds light on the aspect of integration. It identifies that the integrated Islamic education is yet to be successful because such effort fails to cover all aspects of Islamic education. It is noted that the integration is mostly a structural and subject integration, but not curriculum or content integration. Though the degree of such integration is different in southern Thailand and northern Malaysia, it is common in both countries that the understanding of content integration is very slowly taking shape among the policy makers. Thus it is important to rise proper understanding about integrated Islamic education and its practical utility is vital. This is also a challenge among the education activists to be poorly connected with the policy makers having insufficient understanding about the totality of integrated Islamic education.

Lastly, the integration of Islamic education will be incomplete if it lacks the curriculum and content integration. The analysis of general and religious subject shows that the content integration should be emphasized. This can be accelerated through collaboration by sharing experiences and constant communication. Meanwhile, the collaboration between Thailand and Malaysia in light of mutual exchange between the educational institutions, co-research initiatives and utilization of the existing intergovernmental mechanisms should be enhanced in order to identify the comprehensive approach for Islamic integration.

Abstract:

Muslim world is in dilemma due to the dualism in education system. As a response several scholarly initiatives have emerged to ensure the necessary balancing between the secular and religious curricula through integration. Integrated Islamic education has been implemented in Southern Thailand and several states of northern Malaysia to response to the different requirements of the states. This research attempted to compare the reforms and challenges faced by these two neighboring countries in implementing the integrated Islamic curriculum mainly in some medium level schools. The research has identified the underlining differences in the contexts, implementation and extends of the integrated Islamic curriculum in the two countries. It has revealed the qualitative aspects of the integration. The research has identified that Malaysia has developed significantly the policy and curricula but remain short in developing skills for the implementation of such integrated Islamic education. On the other hand, curricula and skills remain as challenge for integrated Islamic education in southern Thailand. The researchers have argued that the challenges of longer school hours, lack of wider student involvement and poorer integration can be addressed through extending cooperation among various stakeholders. It has recommended that the cooperation shall not remain limited within the national border rather explore the hugely potential cross-border cooperation.

KEY WORDS: Islamic Education, Integrated Curricular, Standardization and Private Islamic School.

Chapter One

Introduction

1.1 Background

The most crucial crisis faced by the contemporary Muslim world is rooted at the problem of educational dualism i.e. the existence of two systems of education, namely the national - modern secular system and the traditional - Islamic religious system¹. Education system in the Muslim world is based extensively on the compartmentalized and secularized Western educational system. Muslim scholars felt that there are shortcomings in both systems. In 1977, the First World Conference on Muslim Education² held that the problems of education in the Muslim world stemming from the dual education system inherited from the colonial masters, i.e. the national type system and the religious system³. The national education seems to be designed to produce professionals deficient in religious values while religious education has developed religious specialists who were unable to participate actively in society, and were not critically and creatively responsive to deal with current issues of the *Ummah* (people)⁴. This dualistic problem creates a dilemma in the Muslim

¹ Yaacob, H. Solehah, & Embong, M. Rahimah (2008). The Concept of An Integrated Islamic Curriculum And Its Implications For Contemporary Islamic Schools. The paper is presented at the International Conference in Islamic Republic of Iran, 20-22 Feb 2008, Organized by OIC, ISESCO and The Ministry Education of Islamic Republic Iran.

² The conference was organized by the King Abdul Aziz University and the Government of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. It was held in Makkah.

³ Adebayo, R. I. (2007). *The Influence of the World Conferences on Muslim Education on Islamic Education in Nigeria*, In *Islamic Studies in Contemporary Nigeria, Problems & Prospects*, edited by L.M. Adetona. pp 1 – 34.

⁴ Yaacob, H. Solehah, & Embong, M. Rahimah (2008). The Concept of An Integrated Islamic Curriculum And Its Implications For Contemporary Islamic Schools, The paper is presented at the International Conference in Islamic Republic of Iran, 20-22 Feb 2008, Organized by OIC, ISESCO and The Ministry Education of Islamic Republic Iran.

Ummah, which demands an urgent solution to overcome⁵. The seminal conference called for an educational reform in the Muslim world, contending that modern disciplines taught in the Muslim world were not value-neutral, but in fact reflect the experience and worldview (with ideologies) of post-enlightenment Europe⁶. The conference proposed a critical review, reform and integration between modern knowledge and Islamic heritage.

Eventually the Muslim scholars have started to urge in a form of 'Islamic Education Movement' to integrate the two systems into one by removing or minimizing the segregations between the religious and non-religious education. The 'Islamic Education Movement' has appeared as a reaction to the 'secularization of education' introduced by the colonizing forces that confronted by the Muslim *Ummah* all over the world. Essentially, the new effort has its reference to the 'traditional Islamic Sciences' which are deeply rooted in the sources of Islam, i.e. *al-Qur'an* (the Holy Book) and *as-Sunnah* (Tradition of the prophet). In the process of the movement Muslim scholars have made serious endeavors to define the concept of Islamic education and then develop a genuine Islamic education model based on 'the basic tenets of *aqidat al-tawheed*' (principle of faith). This reformation of education has envisioned producing the new *Muslim* generation, which is capable of fulfilling its role as *khalifatullah* (vicegerent of God) i.e. responsible for the development and maintenance of civilization and its resources⁷.

However, the world is caught in the dichotomy and controversy because of the ineffective and imbalanced integration of Islamic education. It appears that accepting

⁵ Hashim, R. (1996). *Educational Dualism in Malaysia*, Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press. P 10.

⁶ Amin, M. Ruzita, Yusof, A. Selamah and Hane, A. Mohamed (2011). *The Effectiveness of an Integrated Curriculum: The Case of the International Islamic University Malaysia*, 8th International Conference on Islamic Economics and Finance 2011, Center for Islamic Economics and Finance, Qatar Faculty of Islamic Studies, Qatar Foundation.

⁷ Yaacob, H. Solehah, & Embong, M. Rahimah. *Opcit.*

the newly proposed integrated curricula by the national authority is ever more difficult than preparing it. Since education is an effective instrument for bringing about changes of a man, a society and people to the direction determined by a state's authority⁸, notable numbers of governments around the world are quite hesitant initiating the integrated Islamic education. There was an unsolicited fear among many of authorities that the integrated Islamic education could potentially jeopardize national political and developmental strategies. This has been proved not only wrong but also counter-productive. In recent days, authorities seeking solutions of the political and development challenges mainly through integrating education in both Muslim majority and minority countries. Question remains about extend of integration. Arguably, the intended outcome often depends on the degree of the integration. Muslim scholar Azyumardi Azra mentioned- it is clear that the extent of reforms in Islamic education (integrated Islamic education is one way of reform) is different from one place to another. There are cases that reforms of Islamic education have been very successful; but there also cases where reforms of Islamic education have failed. The success and failure of reforms have a lot to do with various religious, political and social factors prevailing within particular Muslim society and country⁹. Thus it is essential to examine the state of such integrated Islamic education along with the standards and contexts of each case.

In Southeast Asian region, two neighboring countries, namely Thailand and Malaysia are important examples for implementing the policy of integration of Islam in education curricula. The system is being implemented in certain types of schools in the Muslim majority Malaysia and Muslim minority Thailand. The research examined the implementation of integrated Islamic education in these schools of Thailand and Malaysia.

⁸ Atique, B. Tareque (2013). Importance of Education in the Light of Islam: An Overview, Available at www.academia.edu, accessed on 14 December 2014.

⁹ Azra, A. (2012). Reforms in Islamic Education: A Global Perspective Seen from the Indonesian Case. Center of Islamic Studies, London: University of Cambridge.

In Thailand, followers of Islam constitute the largest religious minority. Pakorn Priyakorn explained that Islam came to Thailand from three directions: from the South, Central and North. It first arrived in southern Thailand in the 13th and 14th centuries C.E., brought by the Arab traders. Islam reached in Central Thailand during the 15th century through Shia Persian and Sunni Indian traders stationed in Ayudhya. Indian, Bengali and Chinese Muslims arrived in the North of Thailand between the 1870s and 1890s, respectively¹⁰.

Southern Thai peripheral provinces are predominantly Muslim. It is estimated that about 44% of total Thai Muslim population live in those provinces. Historically the region was the kingdom of Pattani which was annexed to Thailand. Thai Muslims maintain, express and symbolize their identity mainly through religious institutions including religious education institution. While ethnically the Southerners consider themselves Malay and speak Malay as their mother tongue - they remain strong on their tradition based on the Islamic orientation. That led them to establish *Pondok*, the traditional Islamic schools. In 1817, first *Pondok* was built in the former sultanate of Pattani. *Pondoks* were closely associated with Malay-Muslim identity and often act as a pivot for Malay social life. After the region was annexed to Thailand- Malay people were continued to pursue education in such schools. However, due to long absence of reform in the curricula of the *Pondoks*, these were failed to response the Thai national needs. As a result, not only the Thai state considered the traditional Islamic schools out dated, but a significant portions of Muslim scholars believed that these institutes were being severely challenged in reconciling the moral-cultural-economical needs of modern days. Through continuous engagement Muslims have successfully persuaded the Thai government to recognize the religio-moral benefits of an integrated Islamic education, which is pertinent for preserving Muslim identity for responsible citizenship. Eventually, Thai government promoted the establishment of Islamic

¹⁰ Priyakorn, P. (2010). *The Status of Islam and Muslims in Thailand*, Presented at International Conference on Muslims in Multicultural Societies, Organised by MUIS Academy, Islamic Religious Council of Singapore (MUIS).

Private Schools to replace *Pondok* schools with the purpose of enhancing their efficiency and quality¹¹. This prompted the promulgation of policies to streamline the traditional Islamic schools side by side with modern-secular educational institutes. As a result, the school curriculum has been changed from offering solely religious education to integrating non-Quranic subjects such as science and math, and foreign languages (Arabic and English). The process of implementation of such integration was actively supervised by the Ministry of Education.

The Pattani *Pondoks* became the model for *Pondoks* in neighboring Kelantan and Terengganu States of Malaysia. The *Pondoks* played important roles in providing Islamic instruction as well as grounding the traditional values of the community. The present day modern Malaysia is also embarking on this approach (Islamic integrated education) to tackle the colonial legacy and the current philosophical issue in education. During the colonial times, secular English schooling and traditional Islamic education were practiced side-by-side in Malaysia. Rosnani Hashim identifies the continuation of the dualistic education in modern time as a problem of Malaysian education. This phenomenon posed a serious dilemma for Muslims in Malaysia. As a result, the Education Act 1996 has paved the way to establish national integrated curriculum of Malaysia. This shows that Malaysia has decided to settle the problems of dualism by utilizing the integrated Islamic education for its future generations.

In 2007, a research was conducted by Hashim on the integrated Islamic education in Malaysia. It found that teachers of the Islamic Religious Education holds positive attitude in schools. The Islamic Integrated Education Programme (IIEP) is conceptually regarded as modern teaching, where secular subjects are taught through a moral/Islamic lens. It is seen as an opportunity to provide an enriched and improved Islamic curriculum in Malaysian education system.

1.2 Problem Statement

¹¹ Uma, N., Vanitsupavong, P., Churngchow, C. (2009). *Factors Affecting Participation in Educational Management of Basic Educational Commission in Islamic Private Schools Administration, Changwat Pattani*, Journal of Education Vol. 10, No. 1, 97-111.

Islamic private schools in both Southern Thailand and Northern Malaysia have been following integrated Islamic curricula. This type of school is still not mainstreamed in both countries. Though the Islamic curricula has been integrated in the Islamic private schools in both countries but its' extent and nature differs significantly. In order to achieve a unified education system- it is important to understand the causes of the difference between the Islamic private school and mainstream school. Obviously, Thailand being a Muslim minority country perceives the approach from its national interest. It attempts to provide justified opportunity to develop responsible citizen through education. On the other hand, Malaysia being a Muslim majority country scoped the integration of Islamic curricula as a balancing between its secular state's interest and educational expression of the religious convection of its' majority population. Thus it requires a deeper analysis to unveil the surrounding contexts those triggering the difference between the integration of Islamic curricula in these two countries.

Although these schools are financially supported by the respected government, these still do not function well. Additionally, it has been found that the school leadership practices have not yet been developed which caused the problems in school administration and lead to failure of student achievement. A research by Rajapat Yala University¹² states that the student achievements of the Islamic private schools are unsatisfactory due to their poor management, curriculum and instruction. However, in a number of surveys and writings carried out to understand the nature and scope of integrated Islamic system. Among those Rosnani¹³ is notable. The author has found several weaknesses of Islamic religious schools in applying the Islamic integrated education such as its curriculum, lack of facilities, financial and poor administration.

1.3 Research Objectives

¹² Rajapat Yala University (2006). The Report of Strategies for improving the quality of Islamic Private School in Thailand. น.บ.น.น. น.บ.น.

¹³ Rosnani Hashim (1996). "elaborates the Muslim dilemma" in her book entitled; Educational Dualism in Malaysia. Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press. P. 9-12.

The research is an investigation to the nature of the integrated Islamic education in both Southern Thailand and Northern Malaysia. Thus the purpose of this study is to examine the challenges being faced by the authorities and pupils of those Islamic schools. The establishment of Islamic Education Curriculum in accordance with the Core National Curriculum of Basic Education (2008) in Thailand and the Education Act 1996 leading to the establishment of national integrated curriculum in Malaysia are solid evidence that Thailand and Malaysia have decided to settle the integrated Islamic education for their future generations.

Certain difficulties have surfaced later, which are thought to impede the implementation of the integrated Islamic Education in these countries. Therefore, the objective of this research is to study the role, functions and challenges of Islamic Education in northern Malaysia and southern Thailand. It is also intended to examine the implementation of the Integrated Islamic Education system in both regions. The study is also focused to evaluate the need to revise and improve the current Integrated Islamic education system.

1.4 Research Questions

In the light of its objective, this study attempts to address the following set of questions:

1. What are the problems of dualism of education in the Muslim World as perceived by existing Contemporary Islamic scholars?
2. How the Integrated Islamic Curriculum has been implemented in the Islamic Schools in southernmost of Thailand and Northern Malaysia?
3. What are the main challenges of implementing the integrated Islamic curriculum in both regions?

1.5 Methodology

A mixed methodology was followed in conducting the research. Data sources are both primary and secondary. The researchers used documents from a variety of sources. The secondary data provided the initial lining of the research. Relevant texts,

conceptions and ideas from the three main kinds of sources were reviewed and analyzed. The documentary data was particularly valuable in answering the question about dualism regarding education system in southern Thailand and northern Malaysia. Secondary information also helped to understand the implementation strategy of integrated Islamic education in both the regions. The documentary data was used to construct the educational context within which the private Islamic schools exist.

This was followed by field level data collection. The researchers used in-depth interview and observation as tools to collect the primary data. The primary data substantiated the findings from the secondary information. The in-depth interviews were in semi-structured fashion. The interviewees were of three categories:

- iv. Officials of the Ministry of Education
- v. Islamic scholars and
- vi. Head teachers.

As policy-makers are responsible for preparing the curricula- these officials were included as interviewee. Muslim scholars and head teachers are involved at the implementation of the integrated Islamic education. The interviews allowed the researchers to grab the critical views of the stakeholders and substantiate the findings from the documentary research. The responses of the interviewees settled the direction of the analysis regarding the challenges facing Islamic education in southern Thailand and northern Malaysia.

The sample selection was based on convenience. The participants are interviewed considering their ability or understanding about the subject matter of the research. They were approached after being informed sufficiently about the research matter. The interviewees were being communicated with full explanation of the research matter. Thus the ethical aspect of the research was fully maintained. The verbal consents of the interviewees were being obtained prior to the interview.

The data analysis was a qualitative one. Basically the outcome from the documentary analysis was used as the key feature for designing the interview. The

outcome of the interview was used as the yardstick to accept or reject the outcome from the documentary interview. Thus the findings of the research are combination of two approaches, where the data outcome from the field substantiated the secondary analysis.

The research was limited by few aspects. Those are given bellow:

- i. **Limited Time:** It was a short term research. The time limitation was the key feature that needs to consider while qualifying the outcome of the research.
- ii. **Lack of Sufficient Previous Research:** The subject issues concerning the research are relatively new. As a result, the number of previous scholarly research is few.
- iii. **Limited Interview:** The relevant qualified interviewees are few and overwhelming occupied. Given the limited time of the research, the key interviews were limited.
- iv. **Limited Access to the Field:** It was also important to note that at least one location of the field is still an active conflict zone. Thus accessing the locals for interview was difficult. Extra care was applied that obviously limited the quality of the data outcome.

1.6 Scope of the Research

The research focuses on the basic level (primary and secondary) of Islamic Integrated education in southern Thailand and northern Malaysia. There are several types of basic level education institutions, namely the Qur'anic schools, *Pondok*, *Madrasa*, secular public primary and public secondary schools. However, the research is focused only on the schools those follow the integrated Islamic curricula. These schools have continued to be popular with Muslim parents in both the regions. The number of school enrollment is higher in these schools compared to the government financed public primary schools (Southern Thailand). The Islamic schools combine both the national and *religious* curriculum bring in the element of duality in education system.

In relation to the integrated Islamic ‘curriculum’, this research considers that the word ‘*Curriculum*’ is not limited to the textbooks. It is rather a wider concept that covers the whole body of knowledge, relevant school activities and learning processes experienced by the student in those school settings. It is also important to note that the research considers the curriculum have been planned formally and systematically by educational institutions according to the levels of students. However, in order to understand the challenges of its implementation this study covered four main topics of discussion:

- i. Philosophy and policies of integrated Islamic education,
- ii. Integrated Islamic curriculum and its’ implementation,
- iii. Co-curriculum activities, and
- iv. Assessment and evaluation process.

1.7 Significance of the Research

As far as the documentary research is concern this is one of the first research that compared the integrated Islamic education in Southern Thailand and Northern Malaysia. Thus its knowledge contribution to the subject is apparent. Besides, the findings of this study are significant in a number of ways.

First, this study attempts to address the problems of dualism faced by the Islamic school in Southern Thailand and Northern Malaysia that resulted from the dualistic systems of education i.e. religious and secular divisions. The findings of this study would be a qualified reference for the policy makers of the country, e.g. the Ministry of Education. It is also useful for the local agencies in charge of educational development in Southern Thailand and Northern Malaysia. Since these bodies are attempting to reform the integrated Islamic education’ curriculum this research can provide necessary perspective in accomplishing their goal.

Second, the research shall be useful for the curriculum developers. It sheds light about the aspects and challenges of implementation of integrated Islamic

curriculum. It forms a basis to develop the intervention plan for the improvement of the system.

Third, the research outcome is potential to be used to explore the channel of cooperation between the two countries at the government and academic levels. The cooperation can led to solve similar challenges faced by these two countries which are originating from the implementation of Integrated Islamic Education.

Fourth, other scholars may also use it as a point of reference for further research on the topic under study.

1.8 Relevant Definitions

In order to form a common understanding of the concepts and the terms, the following general meanings or definitions are used for the sake of simplicity.

Education: Education comes from Latin word “educare, educere or educatum” which means to lead pupils or to draw out there latent talents. The word “educare” also means rearing where “educere” means to bring out and “educatum” means to practice. Arabic language defines three etymological meaning of education.

- i. Ta’lim: the root *alima* (to know, to be aware, to perceive, to learn) which is used to denote knowledge being sought or imprinted through instruction and teaching.
- ii. Tarbiyah: the root *raba* (to increase, to grow, to rear) implies a state of spiritual and ethical nurturing in accordance with the will of God. And
- iii. Ta’dib: the root *aduba* (to be cultured, refined, well-mannered) suggests a person’s development of sound social behavior. Acquiring Ta’dib requires a deeper understanding of the Islamic conception of human being.

The universally accepted meaning of education today is growth, i.e. continuous unfolding of one's potentialities; it is a life-long process¹⁴.

Islamic Education: It is education in the Islamic spirit which is universal and relevant to all mankind which has no segregation between 'religious' and 'secular' knowledge. It aims at developing the entire human aspects physically, intellectually and spiritually as well as educate a person to aware about his nature as a man and his roles as the servant of God and His vicegerent on this earth.

Integrated Islamic Curriculum: Islamic education must be holistic that cover religious sciences derived from divine revelation and acquired sciences which gained through human intellectual faculties. Both types of knowledge should be integrated with the principle of Divine Unity or *tawhidic* paradigm.

Islamic Private School: Islamic private schools are institutions that strive to define school ethos, curriculum, and pedagogy through the traditional sources of Islamic knowledge: the Qur'an and the Prophetic tradition. They are institution where a learning environment conducive to Muslim dress, diet, and observance are made possible. The students in the school learn from both secular national curriculum and Islamic religious curriculum.

Southern Thailand: It is referred to the southernmost provinces of Thailand- an area often referred to as Patani. Patani is a name often used to refer to a region in the far south of Thailand along the border with Malaysia. The name comes from the former sultanate of Patani, which was founded in 1390 and annexed by Siam (Thailand's historical name) in 1902. At the time of the annexation, Patani included the modern-day Thai provinces of Narathiwat, Pattani and Yala and parts of Songkhla along with neighbouring areas of Malaysia.

¹⁴ Khan, F. (1988). *The Quraanic Principles of Education*. Dhaka: Islamic Foundation Bangladesh. p.1



Map: 1.1: Southern Thailand and Northern Malaysia¹⁵

***Northern Malaysia:** It is the land of upper Malaysia for whom **Kedah** and the neighbouring states are the centre in terms of administration, trade, and culture. This region is especially having close relations with the Thais of the lower south for whom **Patani** was the centre.*

¹⁵ Map of Southern Thailand and Northern Malaysia- these are the provinces where Integrated Islamic Education program is being implemented. Source:
[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/South_Thailand_insurgency#mediaviewer/File:MalaysiaThailand_\(en\).png](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/South_Thailand_insurgency#mediaviewer/File:MalaysiaThailand_(en).png)

Chapter Two

Reforms of Islamic Education in the Muslim World

2.1 Chapter Introduction

This chapter comprises of the review of related literature that captures the problems of dualism in Muslim World's education system. It considers the need of implementing Islamic integrated education in the Muslim World. The chapter also unveils the initial development of the Islamic integrated education. The section looks into the nature of integrated Islamic curriculum as perceived by existing contemporary Islamic scholars. Here the researchers attempted to explore the government's initiative to implement the Islamic integrated education into the existing educational systems and highlights the problems enumerated from such initiatives.

2.2 Conceptual Framework of Islamic Education

Education accomplishes a central role in human life. Education is exploring the unknown, discovering new ideas, communicating with the world around us¹⁶. True education transforms a person to a better human being in any given social setting. According to Nelson Mandela, "education is the most powerful weapon that we can use to change the world". Education plays a vital role in one's personal growth and acquiring knowledge, which allows the growth of inner wisdom. Education enables a person to reflect their best by their mind and spirit. Aristotle put it into perspective by mentioning that "educating the mind without education the heart- is no education at all." Every great religion in the world also inspires gaining knowledge. Particularly Islam as a religion places great stress on seeking knowledge and education.

When the Qur'an was revealed, the first word of its first verse was 'Iqra' meaning 'read'. Thus in Islam, education is the starting point of every human activity. Allah the Exalted says in the Qur'an: "Are those equal, those who know and those

¹⁶ Atique, B. Tareque, *opcit*, p. 1

who do not know? It is those who are endued with understanding that receive admonition” (Al- Quran, Part 39, Verse 9). Education and knowledge are mandatory upon both men and women in Islam¹⁷. Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him, hereafter referred as SAWS) said: “Seeking Knowledge is obligatory upon every Muslim” (Narrated by Ibn ‘Adiyy, Al-Bayhaqi & Al-Tabarani).

Muslims by their religious order are bound to be educated. Islam calls Muslims to seek knowledge. The prophet of Islam, Muhammad (SAWS) made seeking knowledge an obligation upon every Muslim, and he explained that the superiority of the one who has knowledge over the one who merely worships is like the superiority of the moon over every other heavenly body. He said that the scholars are the heirs of the Prophets and that the Prophets did not leave behind dinars and dirhams (i.e. money), rather their inheritance was knowledge, so whoever acquires it has gained a great share. And he said that seeking knowledge is a way to Paradise. He said, “whoever follows a path in the pursuit of knowledge, Allah will make a path to Paradise easy for him” (Narrated by al-Bukhaari, Kitaab al-‘Ilm, 10).

According to Muhamad Hafiz Khamis Al- Hafiz and Mohamad Johdi Salleh¹⁸ (2010: 1), Islamic education is an essential need derived from Islam as a religion or way of life, as Allah wanted. Thus the sources of Islamic education are similar to that of Islam itself. The holy Quran is the main source of Islam, which contains every principles of Islamic thought. The Quran demonstrates the guidance to the right path. It calls for eternal salvation and declarations the oneness of almighty Allah. Islamic educational philosophy is also uniquely different from other types of educational theory. The larger differences are due to goal of education, which in Islam is related

¹⁷ Knowledge Exchange Program 2013, Available at http://kep.org.sa/en/SideMenuContent_en.aspx?MenuID=97&MenuTitle=Education%20in%20Islam#sthash.OhbpQNfb.dpuf, accessed on November 28, 2014.

¹⁸ Muhamad Hafiz Khamis Al- Hafiz and Mohamad Johdi Salleh (2001). The Philosophy and Objectives of Education in Islam. Available at http://irep.iium.edu.my/11677/1/Proceeding_-_Philosophy_and_Objective_of_Edu_in_Islam.pdf accessed on December 11, 2004.

to Ibadah (Submission to the will of Allah). In another word, it makes Muslim to understand the basic relationship between the God and his subject as well as between the subjects and subjects. This all-encompassing influence of the Quran plays significant role to construct the philosophy of Islamic education. The Quran serves as a comprehensive blueprint for both the individual and society, which is considers as the primary source of knowledge. Islamic education emphasizes the following concepts:

- i. A lifetime education;
- ii. The development of the total potential of the human soul, mind and body. This is also perceived as integrated in the three aspects – cognitive, effective and psychomotor; and
- iii. The capability to carry out duties as a servant of God and as a caliph of God or representative or vicegerent of God on earth, and knowledge and virtuous deeds to achieve happiness in life in this world and the hereafter¹⁹. In another word, the Islamic direction of education is to serve the God and his creation (the entire world and humanity).

2.3 Philosophy of Islamic Education

Islam affirms three important elements that are necessary ingredients in the formulation of a philosophy of Islamic education, namely- learner, knowledge, and means of instruction. The learner, being human, is made up of a dual nature of spirit and body. The spiritual faculty is known as: the ruh (soul), ‘aql (mind or intellect), qalb (emotion), or nafs (self) according to the function that is ascribed to it. ‘Aql (the faculty of reason), unique to human beings, elevates them above the rest of creation.

¹⁹ Al-Shaybaniy, O. (1991). *Falsafah Pendidikan Islam*, Translated by Hasan Langgulung, Shah Alam: Hizbi Press.

The soul could be elevated to the noblest of positions but it could also be debased to the lowest of the low.

On the other hand, body consists of several faculties corresponding to the physical senses. The nature of the learner with regards to learning has been the subject of study in psychology. It is common knowledge that the learner is inquisitive and flexible and can be molded especially at a tender age. The learner has various types of needs:

- i. Physical needs for food, activity, and sex;
- ii. Social needs for affection, belonging, and status within a social group; and
- iii. Spiritual needs relating to something larger and beyond one's self that is the need to reach for God.

Islam believes in the possibility of obtaining knowledge of 'Truth' and 'Reality'. In Islam there has not been much debate on this matter. Unlike in the Western philosophical tradition where there has been constant debate since Greek philosophy, as demonstrated by Plato's *Theatetus*. We know that man is equipped with a soul and physical senses and prepared by Allah to acquire knowledge.

According to Al-Attas, '*ilm* (knowledge) is the arrival of the *ma'na* (meaning) of an object in the soul or the arrival of the soul at the meaning of an object of knowledge. Thus the soul is not merely passive but active too. *Wahy* (revelation) and intuition are received by the soul. The five physical senses are the windows of the mind, particularly for obtaining empirical and the rational knowledge. In the Islamic worldview, there is an existence of hierarchical structure of knowledge. Within human there is need to achieve knowledge satisfies dual nature of human. Thus the required knowledge (the '*ilmalnaqliyah* or revealed knowledge) is of two categories:

- i. *fard 'ayn*, (knowledge acquiring of which is an individual duty) and
- ii. *fardkifayah*, (Knowledge acquiring of which is a communal duty).

The classification corresponds to the different degrees of certainty of knowledge and the means of procuring it.

Fard ‘ayn knowledge is finite, certain, and obligatory for every individual Muslim to acquire. It includes the knowledge about the pillars of the religion, the articles of faith, and the Shari’ah. On the other hand, *fardkifayah* knowledge is obligatory upon the community. Each community should ensure that there are some people who are knowledgeable in the acquired or intellectual knowledge essential for the survival of the society, such as medicine, mathematics, natural and applied sciences, and social sciences. In this manner, Islam ensures that every individual is anchored to his faith while exploring new horizon.

Islamic education is to meet such goal of knowledge requirement. Hence, the Islamic education provides training for both faith and reason. Knowledge related to faith is the basis of the Islamic theology, whereas the knowledge related to reason is the basis of our practical life. The analogy of flying a kite can be used to describe the relationship between faith and reason, where faith is the string and reason is the kite itself. There is always tension between faith and reason just as there is between the kite and the string. If for some reason the string is broken, the kite will fly off in any direction. Similarly, if reason is not grounded in faith, then it will wander in all directions without knowing its limit. Knowledge is integral or holistic as suggested by the "tawhidic" worldview. There is no compartmentalization of knowledge into religious and secular spheres. Both *fard ‘ayn* and *fardkifayah* knowledge have the purpose of strengthening faith. The former is the careful study of the words of Allah in the Holy Qur’an and the latter is a meticulous, systematic study of the world of man and nature, which is the creation of Allah.

2.4 Integrated Islamic Education

An integrated Islamic education emphasizes the unison of knowledge and not merely an installation or imitation of one’s knowledge through secular teaching and learning in a classroom setting. Islamic education rejects duality between God and the world. The reality of the world is a token from God. Also, Islamic education rejects duality of religion and science, the world and Hereafter, virtue and vice, life and

death, freedom and freewill. Therefore, learners must consider the world and where it belongings squiring with the notion of life Hereafter. The interrelations of the objectives of integrated Islamic education are illustrated in following figure:

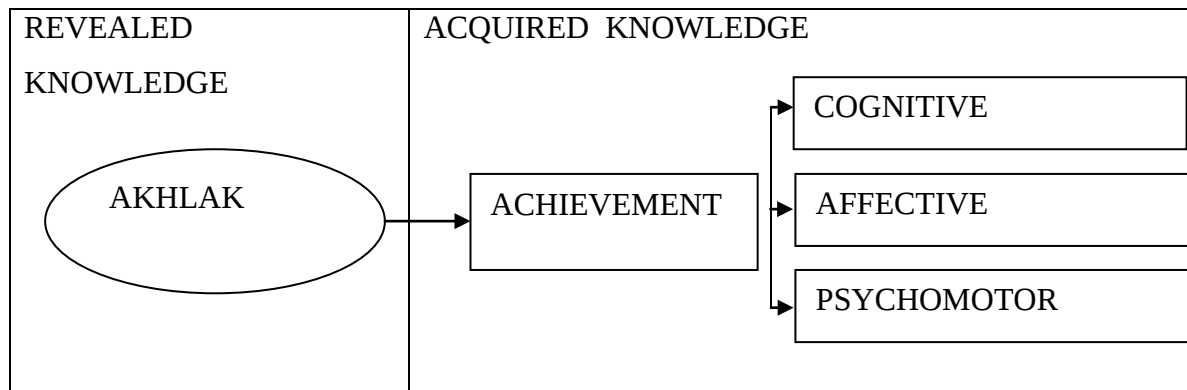


Figure 2.1: The Relationship Between The Components in the Objective of An Integrated Islamic Education.

Based on Figure 2.1, the aim of Integrated Islamic Education may be viewed as a distinct equilibrium between moral or spiritual development and personal achievement in life as reflected in the cognitive, affective and psychomotor aspects. Graduates of Integrated Islamic Education are expected to possess wide scope of knowledge (secular and Islamic) and project balanced personality. They are less likely to be involved in negative activities.

The implementation of integrated Islamic education is neither possible only in a classroom setting nor in a non-school (weekend learning) arrangement. It is rather needs to be combined in the regular school curricula. As far as the curricula is concerned it shall be more inclusive in nature. Following diagram is one example showing the inclusive aspect of integrated Islamic curriculum that includes regular subjects and links with Islamic core approaches.

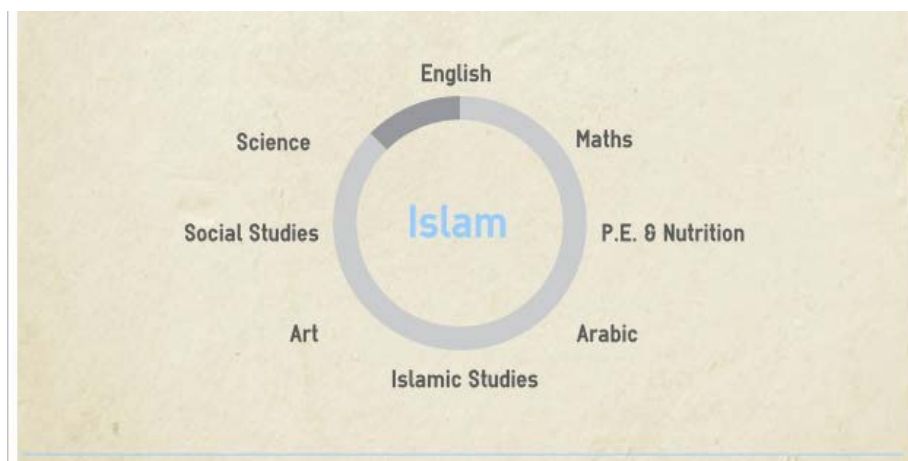


Figure 2.2: Implementation of Integrated Islamic Education Curricula²⁰

The philosophy of integrated Islamic education arises from the notion of human being a vicegerent of God. God created humans to build highest civilization on face of the earth. Human civilization will not exist without proper education. Thus, Islam considers the acquiring and propounding of knowledge as an honourable religious service/warship (*Ibadah*). Muslims believe that the Quran as the most ultimate reliable source of knowledge. The importance of knowledge, hence the education in Islam is evident since the early history of this faith. The first verse of Al-Quran revealed to Prophet Muhammad in 14th centuries ago. The prophet of Islam Muhammad (SAWS) was dedicated to encourage the people to seek knowledge in all fields. This is apparent in Surah Al-Alaq verse: 1-4:

Read! In the name of thy Lord and Cherisher, the creator; Created man, out of a (mere) clot of congealed blood. Proclaim! And thy Lord is Most Bountiful; He who teaches (the use of) the Pen.

The Quran makes several clear references to the importance of knowledge. Prophet Muhammad (SAWS) emphasizes the value of seeking knowledge and Muslims are encouraged to continuously seek knowledge. An education person is

²⁰ Example of integrated Islamic Curricula shows it shall be inclusive. More detail at <https://www.pinterest.com/pin/139752394657409567/>

regarded as more honourable than those unlearned. The Quran, Surah Al-Mujadalah, verse 11 states:

God will hoist, to suitable ranks and degrees, those of you who believe and who have been granted knowledge.

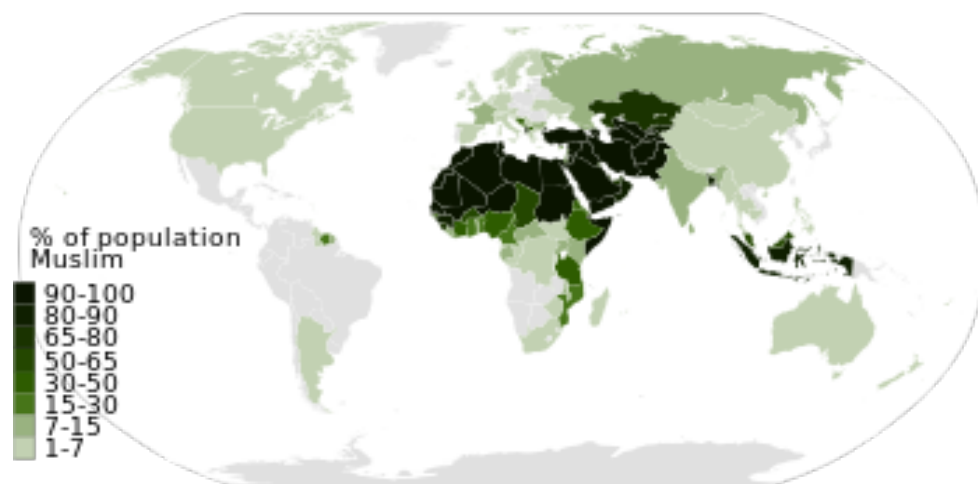
Education must be given priority since it can help strengthen the Muslims' belief. God gives wisdom (hikmah) as stated in the Quran Surah Al-Baqarah, verse 269:

And he to whom wisdom is granted received indeed overflowing benefits.

Islam does not differentiate between religious and general education. Both are mutually complementary and are studied simultaneously in an Integrated Education system that aims to inculcate prosperity both in this world and the hereafter. In a coordinated education system, a student should make an effort so that his/her actions are appropriate with the Islamic teaching. One should also study other knowledge that coincides well with one's personal ability, talent and interest.

2.5 Development of Islamic Education in the Islamic World

The Muslim or the Islamic world is geographically very vast. It extends from the Indian subcontinent to Morocco, and from Turkey and the Balkans to Central and West Africa.



Map 2.1: Ummah (Islamic community) distribution map according to Pew Research

Within the Muslim world there is diversity in Islamic education systems and these education systems are shaped and re-shared during the course of Islamic history.

2.5.1 Early Period of Islamic Education

Islamic education started at the time of Prophet Muhammad (SAWS). The participants of this initial phase of Islamic education were the early Muslims, followers of the prophet (SAWS), his close relatives and friends. This informal setting was in the holy city of Mecca. Since 610 AD, the Prophet Muhammad (SAWS) had received divine revelations, which were relayed to surrounding people and later spread through the trade networks in the whole Arab world. The Prophet Muhammad (SAWS) applied dissemination through lecturing (*kulliyyah*), memorization, discussion (*muhadathah*), dialogue, debating (*mujadalah*), experiencing, travelling (*rihlah*) and study circle (*halaqah*) as the means of Islamic teaching. As the Prophet Muhammad (SAWS) was *ummiyy* (unlettered), he conveyed the verses (those were revealed to him) to the Muslim followers in a form of oral lessons. Those verses were later compiled as a book namely the Quran. Initially the followers used to gather to receive the lessons while he was at his home, later in other places these types of informal settings took place, for example- the house of Al- Arqam Ibn Al –Arqam, and after the *Hijrah* (migration) to Madina in 622 AD at the *Masjid Nabawi* (Mosque of the Prophet).

According to M.A. Rauf²¹ *kuttab* or *Maktabe-merged* was the first primary schools for Quranic teaching. This type of schools were established after the *Ophath* (passed away) of the Prophet (SAWS). Most early *kuttab*s were built near mosques, but as the number of learners expanded *kuttab*s were constructed inside the houses of teachers. Later the schools were even established in palaces of caliphs and homes of

²¹ M.A. Rauf (1965) "Islamic Education", Intisari, 2(1), 14. pp. 56-62

their ministers. After the completion of lessons learning from *kuttab*, the students were used to go to the mosque for pursuing secondary education.

The first *madrasah* (religious school in a formal setting) built during the period of Seljuk rule in Baghdad (1055-1194) by vizier Nizam al-Mulk (1092). *Madrasahs* proliferated in Egypt under the rule of the Saladin (1193) who is original founder of the famous Al-Azhar mosque-cum-university in 975. Later, *madrasahs* hosted multiple educational complexes including mosques, libraries, hostels, lecture theatres, and housing quarters for teachers and other staff members²². Hereafter began formal state-subsidized Islamic education institutions. These institutions used to grant *Ijazah* – a certified attestation about the proficiency or quality of a student in a particularly discipline. This *ijazah* was the precursor to the degree granted by the tertiary-level modern universities.

Islamic tradition recognizes the essence of education as a form of worship and as a means to moral, ethical, and cultural socialization of the *ummah*. During the 8th to 13th centuries; the period of early Muslim Empires; the education system was based on the unity of the revealed and rational sources of knowledge. This integrated Islamic education system led to domain of critical and scientific thinking. As a result there was an explosion of knowledge and phenomenal technological inventions. It produced a galaxy of Muslim scientists who significantly improved the Greek sciences and opened new vistas of knowledge in almost every branch of science. This brought about enormous progress and prosperity in the Muslim world. These Muslim scholars besides being eminent scientist were firmly rooted to their religion and were always inspired by the Qur'anic values and guidance. Here is the noteworthy aspect of the approach of Islamic education that directs towards a harmonious integration of the revealed and rational sources of knowledge. However, later on this aspect of systemic

²² Al-Attas, S. Farid (2008). *Preliminary Thoughts on the Nature of Knowledge and the Definition and Aims of Education*, In Al-Attas, S. Farid, ed., *An Islamic Perspective on the Commitment to Inter-Religious Dialogue*. Kuala Lumpur: International Institute of Advance Islamic Studies. p. 38.

learning was critically analyzed by two distinguished Muslim scholars, Al-Ghazali (11th. century) and Imam IbnTaymiah (13th. century).

2.5.2 Islamic Education during the Colonization

Islamic education has suffered significant blow prior to the European colonization. Since Islamic world suffered huge internal conflicts and power struggle-reform in education was virtually little to note during 15s century. As Muslims lost their ground from Europe after the fall of Al-Andalus (Spain, Portugal and part of France) in 1492 AD, what left was the seed of European renaissance. Eventually, Europe started colonizing most of the Islamic world to find market, labour and raw materials in order to feed their hungry industries, which were one of many outcomes of the renaissance. As a result Muslims were mostly resilient to accept the colonial forces as well as their reformed education system. Amr Abdalla (2004) described that Muslim world rediscovered the importance of education when they encountered modernity and westernization in the nineteenth century during the Euro- colonial expansion. As colonial powers expanded into the deep territory of the Muslim world, modern educational institutions were founded²³. For example, the British rulers in Indian subcontinent established a large number of modern schools in which English was often the medium of instruction for teaching subjects such as the science and mathematics. As a result, the number of traditional Islamic education institutions (*madaris*) has been reduced.

Egypt was the first among Arab countries to implement the French system of education. The early implementation was started by sending students in France and establishing modern schools. Establishment of modern schools in the Muslim world was not to destroy the traditional Islamic education institutions, which during that time were only focused on teaching Arabic language and Islamic studies. Instead, a

²³ Abdalla, A. et al. 2004. Bangladesh Educational Assessment: Pre-primary and Primary Madrasah Education in Bangladesh. Creative Associates: Washington, D.C. pp. 15-16.

dual system of education was established throughout the Muslim world. One fully secular and another only focused on dogmatic part of religion.

However, the edifice of the integrated system of Islamic education was completely dismantled when most of the Muslim countries came under the rule of colonial powers such as Britain, France, Holland, and so on. It was at the end of the First World War in 1918- a total collapse of Islamic centralized rule occurred with the end of the Turkish Empire. The colonial powers imposed their system of secular education eliminating completely the link with the revealed sources of knowledge. Unfortunately, the colonial also introduced poor quality of education in their colonies. For example, in British India the colonial force was aimed to produce clerk for their office rather critical thinker through the secular education system. The delinking of religion and secular aspect of education as well as poorer quality of secular education generated a section of orthodox clergy in Islamic world, who justified their position arguing a conservation approach to encounter the colonial forces.

The madrasa system of religious education developed simultaneously with the rise of colonialism, particularly in the sub-continent of India, Pakistan and Bangladesh. This was to save the Muslim community from the corrupting influence of colonial system of education. These madrasas are narrowly focused on religion. Their courses are repetitive in nature without stimulating the critical thinking and discussing the timely discourses of knowledge. They were lack of creativity- hence argumentative capacity to engage in productive dialogue. The syllabi were not subject to change and criticism. They followed antiquated text books, produced centuries ago to teach subjects like astronomy and medicine. Hence they produced conservative religious scholars who are dogmatic, resist change and some of them even turn into fanatics.

The organizers of madrasa education fail to realize the strong link between modern sciences and Qur'anic revelations. These madrasas do not train their students in any other skills. The curricula were rigidly restricting their field of employment. They also do not teach courses to enlighten their students on social, economic and political changes which are rapidly transforming the Muslim societies in all over the world. Consequently, students graduating from madrasas were failing to contribute

meaningfully in reforming Muslim societies. Thus, madrasa education in its present form and structure has become obsolete.

In order to position the Muslim countries back to progress in all directions- an integrated system of modern and Islamic education is needed. That is to integrate and synthesize the secular and the Qur'anic systems of education. There is no justification for running two parallel independent systems of education; one is religious and the other is secular. This segmented system of education is vertically splitting the Muslim population into two antagonistic sections both intellectual and ideological.

2.6 Present Challenges of Islamic Education

One of the important problems relating to Islamic education faced by the contemporary Muslim world, as mention above, is rooted from the educational dualism i.e. the existence of two systems of education, namely the modern secular system and the traditional Islamic religious system. Several shortcomings in both kinds of education have been successfully highlighted. Initially Muslims were dissatisfied with the former because they had realized that Islamic religious sciences were taught ineffectively and insufficiently, in the sense that the compartmentalized instruction was unable them to relate the subject matters to contemporary life. Meanwhile, the essence of acquired sciences also does not reflect the Islamic concept of education.

In one hand, Muslims were not pleased with the mono-typed modern system because of the limited Islamic content in its curriculum. On the other hand, the methodology of teaching at the traditional Islamic school does not allow for critical and creative thinking. Both systems of schools have considerably failed to produce an integrated Islamic personality. The modern secular education seems to be designed to produce merely professionals requires managing the automated modern society while the religious education has only trained religious scholars with conservative attitude towards creativity.

Ismail Raji Al-Faruqi (1982) asserted that the core of the malaise of the *Ummah* is undoubtedly, its intellectual and methodological decline. The educational system is the breeding ground of the disease. He argued that the present state of

education in the Muslim world is at its worst because of its bifurcating curriculum that comprises opposing components- one is “Islamic” and another is “secular modern”. Lack of clarity and pragmatic vision as insoluble problem is leading the education institutions of the Muslim world to a lower standards²⁴.

Scholar Ajjola (1999) argued on another critical challenge faced by Islamic education system. He viewed the education as the best means creating a new generation of young men and women who will not lose touch with their own tradition. He pointed that if Islamic education performs responding the needs of the time the new generation will not become intellectually retarded or educationally backward or unaware of the developments in various branches of human knowledge. He further said that education in the Muslim countries or in the Muslim populated areas must be reorganized, reformed and restructured in the light of the needs of the Muslims. Ajjola contends that the diarchy in education must be ended by an integrated system of education in which the distinction between the traditional Islamic learning and the secular Western learning will be abolished; students will not have the feeling that there is a deep antagonism between the two²⁵.

Ghazali (1989) supported this idea of Islamic integrated education and he claimed that an integrated knowledge is essential in developing every aspect of human potentials and producing a well-balanced being. For him, the development of mental, physical, emotional, ethical and aesthetical aspects cannot be enhanced without the process of integration in the educational system. He strongly believed that Islam perceives all types of knowledge are complementary- meaning that “empirical, sensory and intellectual knowledge” have never been divorced from Divine

²⁴ Ismail Raji al-Faruqi (1982). *Islamization of Knowledge: The Problem, Principle and the Work plan*; Islam: Source and Purpose of Knowledge. Herndon: International Institute of Islamic Thought.

²⁵ Ajjola, Alhaji A.D. (1999). *Re-Structuring of Islamic Education*. Delhi: Adam Publishers & Distributors.

knowledge. Therefore, disintegration of knowledge from its “unitary form” will lead to “compartmentalization of knowledge” that is contradictory to Islamic tradition²⁶.

Narongraksakhet (1995) from Southern Thailand has also identified the need for an integrated curriculum in Islamic educational system. He perceived that both types of knowledge, religious and modern, should be integrated because true Islamic education is not mere a theological teaching or the teaching of *Quran*, *Hadith* and *Fiqh* but it also covers all branches of knowledge that taught from the Islamic perspectives²⁷.

To conclude, it can be argued that the dualistic nature of the education has created a dilemma in the Muslim society. To solve the crisis generated from such confused state of educational practice, Islamic world should urgently assess and initiate reform the system. The Islamic education should not be segregation between religious and non-religious education. Both of them should be unified and integrated. Hence, the integrated Islamic curriculum is proposed to be the best resolution in solving the issue of dualism in Muslim education. But question is how to create the Islamic integrated education?

This issue has been seriously debated among Muslim scholars who have continuously attempted to revive the excellence of the Muslim society. These committed scholars have gathered in the First World Conference on Muslim Education in 1977. They diagnosed that the malaise of Muslim World is through the process of secularizing Muslim children intellectually, mentally and emotionally due to the impact of colonialism in most Muslim countries. Many scholars unfolded the chaotic situation occurring in the Muslim World at present days. Scholars argued that

²⁶ Ghazali, Basri (1989). *Locke's Epistemological Theory and Its Implication on Western Educational Thought: an Islamic Critique*. Jurnal Pendidikan Islam, vol. 2: (1), (Kajang, Malaysia, ABIM). pp. 66-67.

²⁷ Narongraksakhet, Ibrahim (1995). *Towards an Integrated Curriculum in Islamic Private Schools in Southern Thailand: A Study on the Relationship between Traditional and Modern Subjects*, M.ed thesis, IIUM. p. 41.

the emergence of two contradictory types of people; people who are too busy with worldly activities, while the other people who are concern with hereafter matters; is creating dichotomy in the society. Considering such contrast the Islamic education needs to elaborate the pedagogical details of different types of knowledge and its relation with the faith. The world conference has rightly concluded by noting that-

“Education should aim at the balanced growth of the total personality of man through the training of Man’s spirit, intellect, his rational self, feelings and bodily senses. Education should cater therefore for the growth of Man in all aspects: spiritual, intellectual, imaginative, physical, scientific, linguistic, both individually and collectively and motivate all aspects towards goodness and the attainment of perfection. The ultimate aim of Muslim education lies in the realization of complete submission to Allah on the level of the individual, the community and humanity at large.”²⁸

Since then Malaysia, Brunai, Morocco, Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania and some other Muslim communities have initiated projects that incorporate secular subjects/topics into Quaranic education to ensure children learns the national curriculum within a context that support Islamic values and practices. Communities and school managements committees are trained to enable them to provide effective project management. Teachers are trained and supported through regular supervision by Madrasa resources centers.

²⁸ “Recommendations of the Fourth World Conference on Islamic Education,” Makkah al Mukarramah, 1403/1983, pp.16-18.

Chapter Three

Reform of Islamic Education in Thailand

3.1 Chapter Introduction

The integrated Islamic education in Thailand is basically implemented through one types of Islamic school- mainly in Southern provinces. Thus to discuss the issue it is needed to explain the contexts and perspectives that encouraged the authority to take initiative for integrated Islamic education. This chapter detailed both factual as well as normative aspects of the issues related with the Islamic educational reform in Thailand. In doing so the chapter endeavored to explore the underline concerns both at the policy and implementing level.

3.2 Historical Contexts of the Reform Initiative

Historically Islamic schools (*Pandok*) were widely established at the independent kingdom of Pattani, which was being annexed to Thailand as its' peripheral provinces. The Islamic religious education system of the three southernmost provinces' has revolved around one major institution: the traditional *pondok*. After succumbing to government assimilationist policies, the traditional *pondok* underwent a forced transformation into private Islamic schools.

During early 1920s, the government attempted to integrate the Islamic education system of southern Thailand into national mainstream system. The Compulsory Education Act 1921 was one such initiative that legislated four years of compulsory primary education for all children at government schools and provision for two hours of Islamic studies per week in these institutes. This policy was not accepted by many parents. Although Thailand was never colonized but was ruled strictly for some unsettled periods after constitutional monarchy was established in 1932 AD. During those days many military leaded administrations made policies for bringing Islamic schools under the control of the central government. In this regard, the National Education System (1932) and National Education Plan (1936) were promulgated. These regulations emphasized the spread of national culture, history and language with a series of textbooks for using throughout the country. The Malay-

Muslim of Southern provinces perceived this policy as an attempt to subside their identity.

In order to integrate, in 1958, the Ministry of Education mooted the registration of *Pondok* graduates. Underlying argument was to bring them into the mainstream economy and society. Since *Pondok* was considered not only educational but also religious institution, the Ministry of Education took the initiatives to restructure the Islamic education²⁹.

In 1960, the policy of *Pondok* registration was renewed. This time it included the fact of poorer infrastructure and facilities of *Pondok*. The authority emphasized to improve the curriculum and the pedagogy of Islamic education. They also initiated to reform the system of assessment and evolution according to the national standards. In order to restructure Islamic education, the watershed point of transformation and integration of Islamic education was brought in 1961 by the Ministry of Education. Under the policy, the government formed *Pondok* Educational Improvement Program (PEIP). The PEIP aimed to persuade traditional *Pondok* to register in exchange for financial support. Government also introduced academic and vocational subjects along-with Thai language as the medium of instruction. In 1965, it was decided that government-funded *Pondok* would be re-classified as Private Religious Schools. These steps increased the confidence of the local communities in registering *Pondoks*, which was voluntary basis rather than compulsory. Local communities understood that the authority was agreed to support the extension of Islamic teaching as well as providing financial support, teachers (for academic and vocational subjects), teaching aids and other necessary equipment as subsidies³⁰.

²⁹ Thomas, M. Ladd (1967). *Social-Economic Approach to the Integration of Thai Islam: An Appraisal*, Urbana-Champaign, II: Center for Southeast Asian Studies, Northern Illinois University. P. 86.

³⁰ Pitsuwan, S. (1985). *Islam and Malay Nationalism: A Case Study of the Malay-Muslims of Southern Thailand*. Bangkok: Thai Khadi Research Institute. p.122.

The central government introduced the Private School Act of 1982 to improve the management and administration of Islamic private schools. Hence, it enabled the government to improve the Islamic education. The government had proposed under the Act to develop Islamic private schools by elevating standards of curriculum, improving administration, and improving facilities. In 2006, the *Education Development Plan of the Provinces along Southern Border* has come to force. This plan has articulated in most comprehensively the policies and objectives of the Thai government towards the education system in Southern Thailand. Particularly, it deals with the religious education in the three Southern provinces. The objectives of the plan emphasizes following aspects for improved education in Southern Thailand:

- i. the provision of right conditions for effective education,
- ii. the creation of opportunities for students of all backgrounds and
- iii. A proper balance between ‘secular and religious’ education.

3.3 Implementation of integrated Islamic Education in Southern Thailand

As mentioned above, private Islamic schools are the result of an earlier government campaign to modernize traditional *Pondoks*. The number of these ‘modern *pondoks*’ is more than 300. This type of school offers a balanced religious and secular education complying with the government standards. Unlike traditional *pondoks*, the private Islamic schools are controlled by the government managed framework. Although initially these are mostly secondary education schools, but now many are extending towards the primary school to get more students and creating “extended” Islamic private schools³¹.

³¹ Parameswaran, P. (2011). Utilizing Islamic Religious Education as a Peacebuilding Tool: A Case Study of Southern Thailand, in *Global Politics Magazine*, London: Global Politics, United Kingdom.

At present, Islamic private schools in Thailand are administrated and operated accordingly the private schools' norms. Staff members are provided with training programs, and the schools are housed in proper buildings in accessible locations. The secondary school curricula have been implemented according to the Basic Education Curriculum or the B.E. 2008 (Curriculum of the Ministry of Education). The Islamic education curriculum is divided into 10 levels:

- i. Primary Islamic Education (*Ibtidaiyah* – Year 1-4),
- ii. Middle Islamic Education (*Mutawassitah* – Year 5-7) and
- iii. Higher Islamic Education (*Sanawiyah* – Year 8-10).

Other aspects of the Integrated Islamic education in Thailand are given below:

3.3.1 Clear Separation of General and Religious Subjects in Private Islamic Schools

Most private Islamic schools have a clear demarcation between general and religious subjects. For example, religious classes are conducted in the morning, while secular subjects are taught in the afternoon. In some schools this division is based on allocated hours or periods. As a result, school hours of these private Islamic school are much longer than that of general schools, as both the Basic Education Curriculum B.E. 2544 (2001) or B.E. (2008) and the Islamic Education Curriculum B.E. (2003) are taught. Integrating both curriculums can potentially reduce overlapping content and study load. Students would then have more time for self-study, and the school would have time to provide supplementary classes for academically weaker students. Similarly, the budgetary burden in hiring additional instructors/teachers would also be reduced. Inspired by such dimension of integration a number of schools have initiated

to integrate religious and general subjects in their curriculum³². This conforms that the integrated Islamic education system requires a proper integration, whereby the pupils would be able to link the secular subjects to the religious one.

3.3.2 Religious Study is Accorded with National Curricula in Islamic Private Schools

In working days the Islamic private schools teach religious studies in the evening, whereas in weekends it is in the morning. The approach to teaching also differs. In working days usually the evening religious class takes place in an informal study groups. In working days the afternoons are also for secular and vocational subjects, which are taught by both Muslim and Buddhist teachers in the Thai language. The religious component of the curriculum in the Islamic private schools includes traditional Islamic subjects such as *fiqh*, *tafsir*, *hadith*; Islamic history, etc. Hence, the curriculum of the Islamic private schools accords with the structure of national schools. The curriculum can be divided into elementary, middle, and secondary levels.

- i. Six years at elementary (*ibtida*),
- ii. Three years at middle (*mutawassit*), and
- iii. Three years at secondary (*thanawi*) (Joseph Chinyong Liow, 2009:59).

3.3.3 Graduates from Private Islamic School are Qualified for National Tertiary Education

The private schools have elective streams (science or arts) for students at the secondary level. But there are compulsory religious studies for the students of both elective streams. Students have to follow a secular core curriculum along with the

³² See details in the article of Wae-u-seng, N., Vanitsupavong P., Narongraksakhet I., Yisunsong A., Baka M. (2009). Educational Management of Islamic Private Schools in Three Southern Border Provinces. Songklanakarin: E-Journal of Social Science & Humanities Vol. 15, No.5, 739-765.

integrated religious subjects. The Islamic Education Curriculum includes religious subjects, those are:

- i. the *Attariq* (Religious History),
- ii. *Aqlaq* (Islamic Ethics),
- iii. *Tajwid al-Qur'an* (Pronunciation),
- iv. *Tafsir al-Qur'an* (Explanation),
- v. *al-Hadith* (Discourse of Prophet),
- vi. *al-Fiqh* (Religious Prescriptions),
- vii. *al-Aqidah* (Faith),
- viii. *Muhadasah* (Arabic Conversation),
- ix. Arabic Grammar, and
- x. Malay language.

The core curriculum consists of the following secular subjects those formed the national curriculum.

- i. Thai language,
- ii. Mathematics,
- iii. Science,
- iv. Social Science,
- v. Religions and Cultures,
- vi. Health and Physical Education, and
- vii. Arts.

Graduates of the Islamic private schools receive nationally recognized qualifications for further studies in the tertiary level national education. Islamic private schools hire instructors for secular and vocational subjects. Those subjects are science, mathematics, English, and computer studies³³.

3.3.4 Institutions to Monitor the Curriculum of the Islamic Private School

In order to monitor the curriculum of the Islamic schools in the southern provinces, the Ministry of Education established the Office of Local District Education Region (OLDER)³⁴. This office works closely with individual Islamic private schools, Islamic private school foundations, and the Islamic Private School Association for coordinating the curriculum at elementary, middle, and secondary levels. The curriculum provides religious and academic subjects. In Islamic private schools the religious subjects are taught 18—22 hours per week and the secular academic subjects are taught 22-28 hours per week.

One can claim that core curriculum of Thailand's Ministry of Education focuses on mundane knowledge. Despite the necessity, this curriculum still fails to cover those subjects in Islam that Muslims need to learn. Consequently, the new characteristics of school or Private Islamic School where general subjects are taught in parallel with the religious ones have been emerged. Nonetheless, these schools encounter a range of problems.

³³ *Ibid.*

³⁴ Narongraksakhet, I. (2003). *Developing Local-based Curriculum Guidelines for Islamic Private Schools in Southern Thailand*, Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Malaya, Malaysia. P. 9-14.

However the methods pursued by some Islamic Schools in Thailand to overcome difficulties of dualism in education system are discussed in the following sections.

3.3.5 Inserting Religious Subjects into Core Curriculum

Principally, Basic Education Curriculum B.E. 2551 (2008) is the core curriculum used in Islamic Schools; while Islamic Education Curriculum has been added as a part of social studies, religions and cultures subject as well as the supplementary subject. In general, Buddhism, Thai history, cultural diversity in Thailand are the focal point of the former but, for some Islamic Schools, the subject in Islam is incorporated into this particular subject in order to enhance students' morality and faith in Islam along with knowledge development. This is to conform to the vision, philosophy, motto, mission, target and desired characteristics of some Islamic Schools that puts the great effort to develop the discipline, morality and adherence to Islamic ethics among students. They are expected to become the good citizens who understand the rights and duties of their own and of the whole society as well as have the responsibility. Therefore, the integration of knowledge, relevant processes and factors has been pursued toward the academic excellence in light of Islamic Education.

Apart from responding to the intention of Ministry of Education, such integration also helps reduce the study load. In this regard, one can say that most Thai students learn about Buddhism and ethics in Thai context; while the Muslim students study those subjects conforming to their own local culture. For greater understanding in light of the insertion of religious subjects into Ministry of Education's core curriculum, explanations are provided in the following table:

1. Core Curriculum (Basic Education)	2. Supplementary Subjects (Islamic Education Curriculum)	3. Activities for Learner Development
1. Thai Language 2. Mathematics 3. Science 4. Social Studies, Religions and Cultures (Religious Integration) 5. Health Education and Physical Education 6. Arts 7. Occupation and Technology 8. Foreign Language (s)	1. Holy Quran 2. Al-Hadith (Discourse of Prophet) 3. Al-Aqidah (Faith) 4. Al-Fiqh (Religious Prescriptions) 5. Attariq (Religious History) 6. Al-Aqlaq (Islamic Ethics) 7. Arab Language 8. Malay Language Arab Language (Supplementary)	1. Guidance Activity 2. Public Service Activity 3. Competency-based Activity

Table 3.1: Core Curriculum under Basic Education integrated with Religious subjects

In addition to the insertion of the subject in Islam into core curriculum, some Islamic Schools have also integrated religious contents with general subjects. For example, in mathematics class, there are the lessons on the estimation of distance, area, and weight as well as the explanation for the application of those estimations. Therefore, it may be possible to include the subject in Islam with respect to Solaat's Time, planning for Ta-ibadah during the journey (Musafir), estimation of the Creation (the Universe) to enhance the recognition and understanding of the Grandeur of the Creator.

With regard to the science subject, there are the lessons on data retrieval and explanation on the structure of the atom and nuclear symbol of elements, Bohr's Cloud Theory and Allah's creation of the Universe may be integrated. "Then He directed Himself to the heaven while it was smoke (Quran 41:11)." Also, the content

on the atom may be added based on different definitions in Quran and Hadith, for example, Surah Al Zalzalah (7-8) “Then shall anyone who has done an atom's weight of good, shall see it! And anyone who has done an atom's weight of evil, shall see it.” Likewise, for the foreign language subject, there are lessons on speaking and narrative writing in English describing one’s self, daily routines, experiences and surrounding environment. The brief biographies of Prophet i Muhammad and “Sahabah” as well as daily Dua’a concerning daily life of Prophet Muhammad (SAW), etc. may be incorporated.

However, the integration of religious contents with general subjects may seem difficult for Thai Muslims due to the lack of specialists with profound understanding of both subjects. Despite the fact that all teachers in many Islamic schools are Muslim, it does not mean that those who are specialized in general subjects would also possess profound comprehension in the religion. In order to overcome such difficulty, Chanwuth Boonchom, Vice Director for Student Affairs Department, suggests that religious knowledge that have certain connection with general subjects may be provided by teachers specialized in Islam for general-subject teachers. This may then allow them to apply with the instruction of general subjects. Nonetheless, this is only ad hoc solution. Training of educational personnel with expertise in both subjects can be one sustainable solution and the Islamic University may serve this mission well.

3.3.6 Integrating Religious Subjects with General Subjects

The difficulty in integrating religious subjects with general subjects is regarded as common problem for not only Thailand but also for all communities where Muslims are the minority, and great effort to overcome this particular problem is required. However, there is a simpler integration aiming at the reduction of overlapping contents and study load. This refers to the integration of religious subjects themselves. Generally, Islam Education Curriculum consists of numerous subjects: Attariq (Religious History), Aqlaq (Islamic Ethics), Tajwid Al-Quran (Pronunciation), Tafsir Al-Quran (Explanation), Al-Hadith (Discourse of Prophet), Al-Fiqh (Religious Prescriptions), Al-Aqidah (Faith), Muhadasah (Arabic Conversation), and Arabic Grammar, etc. Teaching these subjects on one-by-one basis may need longer time; therefore, it becomes impossible to do so within the

required timeframe in Ministry of Education's core curriculum in which general subjects are obligatory.

For some Islamic schools, those religious subjects with similar contents or characteristics are combined into one subject, for example, the integration of Tajwid Al-Quran (Pronunciation), Tafsir Al-Quran (Explanation) into a single subject in Quran. Also Al-Hadith (Discourse of Prophet) is incorporated with Aqlaq (Islamic Ethics) into one subject. This is same to the integration of Arabic Language, Arabic Grammar and Arabic Conversation. This may then facilitate specialized teachers in devising the learning plan on the basis of the use of modern media and technology for time-saving purpose; while maintaining the completeness of contents, for example, translation of Arabic academic textbooks (for the subjects requiring the comprehension). With respect to traditional Arabic language class, teachers have to translate sentences one by one for students. This is very time consuming and, sometimes, it is also found that only two sentences are taught throughout the session. Consequently, the translation of textbooks into Thai is an alternative to save time and to enhance students' interest.

3.3.7 Integration through Out-of-Class Learning Activities

Learning is not limited to the instruction in class only. Rather, learning may also derive from reading, observing and interpreting phenomena, incidents and all things created by Allah beyond classroom. This also refers to the provision of opportunity for students to learn based on their individual interest and ability. For some Islamic schools, the integration through out-of-class learning activities are 1) the arrangement of Islam-integrated living library, 2) display board and message banner giving Islam-integrated knowledge, 3) community for disseminating knowledge on management and Islam-integrated activities, 4) Islam-integrated activity camp, 5) provision of Islam-integrated activities by universities' learning sties, 6) web-based learning sties on Islam, 7) provision of Islam-integrated activities by knowledgeable local people in the local learning sites, 8) student exchange program – students learn the way of life and cultures in Malaysia, and 9) job training program based on students' interest.

Further, students in Private Islamic Schools tend to have more time for gathering when compared to other schools, for instance, morning assembly for contributing respect to national anthem and *Salaat* in the afternoon and evening before the end of school hours. Consequently, teachers have an opportunity to lecture all students at once. For example, teachers may explain news relating with the society along with the insertion of contents based on Islamic Doctrine. This can not only be a way to direct communicate with students but also to integrate Islamic instruction with out-of-class phenomena found in the society.

Another problem often faced by most Private Islamic Schools in Thailand is regarding the instruction. For example, teachers may not teach in their field of expert. They may also have poor quality because they are hardly trained so they have no necessary skills for the instruction. The lack of systematic and thorough teacher recruitment process may be one contributory factor. Even worst, it is also found sometimes that the recruitment process is not transparent too. All these problems may then reflect not only the fact that certain teachers are lack of quality and morality but also total failure of the student recruitment as “role model”. Apart from the poor recruitment system, problems regarding teacher development process also have an impact on teachers’ motivation to engage in self-development and on knowledge management due to the lack of chance to exchange and share knowledge.

Chapter Four

Reforms of Islamic Education in Malaysia

4.1 Chapter Introduction

This chapter describes the aspects of Islamic education in Malaysia, which has undergone several stages of reforms. It also showed the inspirational links of the reforms with the philosophy of Islamic education. The new Education Act and Islamization policy of 1983 have inspired content and education administration reforms in Malaysia. This chapter also provides an account of implementation of integrated Islamic education in the Malaysian states of Kelantan and Kedah. It unveils the positive approach of the government towards the integrated Islamic education but also describes the challenges.

4.2 Background of Islamic Education in Malaysia

In Malaysia, Islam is the national religion, and majority Malaysians are Muslims. They have been influenced by Islamic beliefs and teachings since Islam was first developed in Malaysia in the twelfth century. Islamic schools have always been part and parcel of the Malay-Muslim communities, even long before the British came to shores of Malaya. From the early fifteenth to the late eighteenth centuries the *Sekolah al- Qur'an* (the Qur'an Schools) and the *pondok* (private residential religious seminaries) were being established by the formal education authority in Malaysia. The objective of education was primarily to inculcate students with the values needed to become a good Muslim.

In 1920s many Malay graduates from the Middle East, came back imbued with reformist ideals to seriously revamp the pre-existing Islamic education. Muslim reformers known collectively in Malay as *Kaum Muda* established madrasah that employed modern pedagogical techniques and introduced secular subjects such as Math, Science, and English on top of the normal religious curriculum. It was also around the same time the state's religious authority was started bureaucratized, and the newly formed state Islamic agency began to build and support its own Islamic schools.

Islamic educational school in Malaysia established during the British rule, which continued till the granting of independence in 1957. Later the Islamic religious education was revised. On the eve of independence, the seminal Razak Report of 1956 recommended that religious instructions would be provided in any school that has no fewer than 15 Muslim pupils. The Razak Report's proposals found concrete form in the 1957 Education Ordinance, which allotted two hours per week for Islamic lessons. Teachers approved by the various states' religious authorities were delivered lessons in the schools³⁵.

On the eve of independence, there were many reviews and tremendous changes to the Malaysia education curriculum to ensure the education system as responsive towards the nation building, unity and the development. It is a fact that the world Muslims, including the Malaysia has witnessed an increase in Islamic consciousness during the 70s. Subsequently this contributed to form popular demand for the Islamic educational reform. According to Ghazali³⁶ many factors contributed Malaysian educational reform. Apart from the implementation of the 1979's report suggestions, the people's inclination towards Islam through the changes in the political climate should be considered. The influence of the Islamic movement in Iran has impacted the Muslims in Malaysia significantly to support the Islamic party (PAS). Later on, the government under the leadership of Tun Dr. Mahathir officially introduced Islamization policy in 1983. Consequently International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM) and Islamic Banking were established. The philosophy of the University was inspired by the recommendations of the first World Conference on Muslim Education held in Mecca in 1977. According to this philosophy, knowledge shall be propagated in the spirit of *Tawhid* leading towards the recognition of Allah as

³⁵ Hamid, A. Ahmad Fauzi (2010). *Islamic Education in Malaysia*, Singapore. S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies. P. 26-27.

³⁶ Ghazali, B. (2000). *Sistem Pendidikan Islam: satu Tinjauan Awal dalam konteks Pendidikan Nasional*. Kuala Lumpur: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam (IPI-ABIM)

the absolute creator and master of mankind. Thus the Islamization policy of 1983 prescribes all disciplines of knowledge should lead towards subservience of this truth. Knowledge is a form of trust (amanah) from Allah to man, and hence man should utilize knowledge according to Allah's will in performing his role as the servant and vicegerent (khalifah) of Allah on earth. In this way the seeking of knowledge is regarded as an act of worship.

Subsequently in 1982, The Ministry of Education introduced the New Primary School Curriculum (NPSC). It was implemented nation-wide in 1983. The NPSC was formulated to provide equal opportunity to students to acquire basic skills and knowledge in addition to inculcating noble moral values. The emphasis of this new curriculum is on the acquisition of the three basic skills, namely reading, writing and mathematics. With a renewed emphasis on integration NPSC's name was changed in 1993. The New Primary School Curriculum (NPSC) is now known as The Integrated Curriculum for Primary School (ICPS)³⁷.

The New Secondary School Integrated curriculum (NSSIC) or integrated Curriculum for Secondary Schools (KBSM) was guided by the recommendation of the first World Conference on Muslim Education 1977. The curriculum was introduced in 1988 at lower secondary level. In 1989 it was implemented in phases up to the level five³⁸. The curriculum is focused to integrated education. The approach incorporates knowledge with skills and moral values. It also combines theory with practical training. The strategy incorporates moral values into and Malay language into curriculum³⁹.

³⁷ Curriculum Development Centre (CDC), 1997

³⁸ Langgulong, H. (1993). Curriculum Development and Textbook Production in Lower and Upper Secondary level. Paper presented at International seminar on Islamic Education in Makkah (23-26 May)

³⁹ Curriculum Development Centre (CDC), 1997

The Education Act 1961 has determined Malaysia's education policies for over three decades until it was repealed in 1996. The Education Act 1996 is the latest and most comprehensive. The Act stated for the first time the National Educational Philosophy in writing (Under Act 550). The Education Act of 1961 was the turning point for Islamic education in Malaysia in which Islamic lessons were made a core part of the syllabi in both government run primary and secondary schools. The 1961 Education Act was a hallmark achievement in crystallizing the position of Islamic education in Malaysian schools. The 1961 Act also brought concomitant changes in the curricula of private *madrasahs*, which apparently lost their *raison d'être* and were literally fighting for their survival.

Another aspect of integrating Islamic education in Malaysia was its ethnical consideration. During the aftermath of the racial riots in May 1969 the National Economic Policy (NEP) (1971) was introduced. The government realized the importance of Islamic education to reflect the identity and faith of the Malay communities. Providing good Islamic education has always been the long-term goal of the Malaysian government since independence. Under the framework of NEP the dual strategies of eradicating poverty and restructuring society through economic policies to bridge the gap of wealth between Malay/ *bumiputra* and non-*bumiputra* were introduced. This was to foster racial harmony and unity. In this context integrated Islamic education became the resolute aim to affirm Malay domination⁴⁰.

Under the Ministry of Education (MOE), a separate division was setup in 1973 known as *Bahagian Pelajaran Agama* or Religious Education Division, now renamed *Bahagian Pendidikan Islam* or Islamic Education Division, to coordinate and systematize Islamic education. Another important step taken by MOE is the introduction of *Jawi* (Arabic script), *Qur'an*, *Arab* and *Fardu Ain* (obligatory duties),

⁴⁰ Mandal, S.K. (2008). *The national culture policy and contestation over Malaysian identity*, In Nelson, J. M., ed., *Globalization and National Autonomy: The Experience of Malaysia*, Singapore: Institute of Asian Studies, pp. 273-300.

or the JQAF program in thirty schools in Trengganu in 2004. Later in 2005 it was introduced nationwide. This was due to the need for improvement in Islamic education in national primary schools, which had Islamic studies only offered twice a week. A new chapter in Islamic education in Malaysia emerged in 2005 when the government introduced a plan where all schools under the various state governments have to register with the MOE in order to receive financial assistance and educational grants from the federal government.

On the one hand, above concessions to Islamic education represented a concerted effort to transform the conception of Islamic education in Malaysia from being a mere subject within the general secular curriculum to being the definitive philosophy undergirding the entire educational system. The ambition of this educational scheme is universal, as has been conceptualized by scholars such as Abul A'la al-Maawdudi and Ismail Raji al-Faruqi, whose "Islamization of Knowledge" program attempted a synthesis between the vast body of Islamic epistemological tradition and western humanities, social sciences and natural sciences

4.3 Implementation of integrated Islamic Education in Malaysia

The private Islamic Schools, by definition, are those schools that are run by individuals or private organizations but implement the national curriculum in both general and Islamic studies. The government of Malaysia has promoted the growth of these schools as it has other private enterprises. It demands adherence to national standards, yet it encourages individuals and private groups to undergo a certification process so that they may collaborate with the Ministry of Education in delivering quality Islamic studies programs.

The SASs schools are generally well funded and employ highly trained professional staffs. Administrators tend to follow a corporate management model and strive to advance achievement on standardized tests. These schools are highly selective in terms of students' admissions. Students are prepared to take college entrance exams and high numbers of them go on to university study. According to the Ministry of Education, 2011, there are 36 private primary Islamic Schools and 19 private secondary Islamic Schools in Malaysia.

At the primary level, Islamic education is a supplementary for aiming to read the Quran properly in Arabic and to perform religious worship correctly. The syllabus of Islamic primary schools in the three Northern states Kelantan, Kedah and Terengganu follow the *Kelas Pengajian Al- Quran dan Fardhu 'Ain* or KAFA programme which is to be organized by the state's religious departments in co-ordination with the Advisory Council for the Co-ordination of Islamic Education (LEPAI). The syllabus consists of: (a) *Muqaddam* (text for Arabic letters and spelling) and Quran; (b) *tajwid*; (c) *tawhid*; (d) *fiqh*; (e) *akhlaq*; (f) *tarikh*; (g) *jawi* and *khat* (calligraphy); (h) rudiments of Arabic; and (i) *imla'*. The KAFA programme laid stress on the recitation of the Quran, and writing and reading *jawi*. The importance attached to the various subjects taught under the syllabus can be gauged from the amount of time allocated weekly to each subject at the various primary levels⁴¹.

The dissemination of Islamic religious education at the secondary level in the private Islamic schools tends to follow closely the curriculum set by the state religious departments for state religious schools. The content of secondary education is not much varied among the various states despite their not having a centralized agency. The same subjects are included in curricula, with variation as to the quantity of time allocated for each. In the Kelantan's curriculum, approximately 60 per cent of study time is allocated to Arabic and Islamic studies, while 40 per cent is devoted to 'secular' subjects. It is significant that Arabic language consumes 30 per cent of total study time weekly.

The secondary level of the private Islamic schools follows the newly revised curriculum of the Advisory Council for the Coordination of Islamic Education (LEPAI) which classifies subjects according to core and elective subjects. The core subjects broadly consist of revealed sciences, the natural and human sciences and

⁴¹ See the details on Hashim, R. (1996). *Educational Dualism in Malaysia: Implications for Theory and Practice*. Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press.

languages which include Islamic studies, Arabic language studies, Malay language, English language, Mathematics, Science, History, and Physical and health education. These core subjects are recognized as important tools for communication and acquiring contemporary knowledge. The components of Islamic include *Tajwid* (Quran-reading and method), *Fiqh* and *usul al-fiqh* (Law and its principles), *Tawhid* (Theology), Hadith (Tradition), *Tafsir* (Qur'anic exegesis), Life of the Prophet (*Sirah*) and Islamic civilization, and *Akhlaq/tasawwuf* (Ethics) and the components Arabic language studies are Grammar (*Nahu and sarf*), Reading comprehension (*Muthala'ah*), Memorization (*Mahfuzah*), Short composition (*Ta'abir*), Essay (*Insha'*), Metaphors (*Balaghah*), Literature (*Nusus adabiah*) , and Dictation (*Imla'*). The elective subjects consist of Reading (*Qira'at*), Writing (*Khat*), Geography, Commerce, Living skills, Communicative Arabic, Humanities, Natural sciences and Additional Islamic studies.

The content of the intellectual sciences and languages (Malay and English) follow those set by the Ministry of Education. The rest of the contents are determined by curriculum experts of LAPEI. Students in the upper secondary would be given the freedom to choose from any of the Islamic studies, pure sciences, humanities, or vocational/technical streams. At the upper secondary level Islamic Studies is taught 16 periods per week which constitutes 31 per cent of total periods of core subjects in a week.

4.4 Integrated Islamic Schools in Northern Malaysia

This section provides a brief overview of Islamic educational system in the States of Kelantan and Kedah, situated in the northern part of Malaysia. The Malaysian administration system is divided into the States and each of them has been vested with an authority to devise its own educational policy. In particular, the federal government of Malaysia puts an emphasis on States of Kelantan and Kedah and provides more supports of Islamic instruction. In comparison among other States, both the neighboring states are of Muslim majority countries. Currently, Malaysia has 3 following instructional systems.

- i. Entire schooling system under the federal government's supervision
- ii. Schools under the private entity's supervision
- iii. Schools under the local government's supervision

In general, the entire schooling system is under the federal government's supervision. Meanwhile, the operation and administration of the schools are under the supervision of private entity's or the local government. There legal and factual aspects of integrated Islamic education might differ from state to state depending on the policy of each State. For example, the instruction in the States of Kelantan and Kedah are different in certain aspects. In this regard, the Islamic instruction in the State of Kedah consists of 2 systems:

- i. Islamic schools under the supervision of the State of Kedah provides the primary-level education
- ii. Private Islamic Schools provides the secondary-level education

There are a total number of 32 schools under both systems: 7 Islamic schools under the supervision of the State of Kedah (Sekolah Rendah Islam Negeri Kedah) and 25 Private Islamic Schools⁴².

The Department of Islamic Affairs, Kedah (Jabatan Hal Ehwal Agama Islam Negeri Kedah) is the agency directly responsible for the supervision of the Private Islamic Schools in the State of Kedah. Meanwhile, the establishment of Private Islamic Schools is governed by Section 9 of the Administration of Islamic Education (State of Kedah) Act 1962.

With respect to the administration of Islamic education, the Department of Islamic Affairs, Kedah has 2 functions:

⁴² See the details on "The Development and Directions for the Administration of Islamic Schools in the State of Kedah", the Workshop on the Improvement of the Quality of Private Islamic Schools. 17 November 2005 at the Auditorium, Yala Rajabhat University, (Document No. 4), Page 2, 3

- i. To supervise and monitor the assessment of the Private Islamic Schools' performance in providing the Islamic instruction in the State of Kedah
- ii. To implement the educational policies and regulations on the administration of the Private Islamic Schools in the State of Kedah

The Islamic instruction in the schools in the State of Kedah adopts the double curriculum, which includes the curriculum of religion/Arabic language and the general curriculum. The former refers to the curriculum under the supervision of Al-Azhar University of Egypt, while the latter follows the curriculum under the supervision of the Malaysian Ministry of Education. Nevertheless, the instruction under both curriculums is conducted in an integrated manner. The student is thus awarded a single certificate upon his/her graduation. This is different from the issue of the separate certificates by the Private Islamic Schools in Thailand.

The subjects that integrate the curriculum of religion with the general curriculum are Al-Quran, Al-Hadith, Principle of Belief, Islamic Jurisprudence, Ethics, Syntax, Orthography, Mathematics, Science, Malaysian Language, English Language and Geography. The Islamic instruction in the State of Kelantan is relatively similar to the one in the State of Kedah. However, the schools that provide the Islamic studies in the State of Kelantan are under the supervision of Kelantan Islamic Foundation [Yayasan Islam Kelantan (YIK)], while the similar schools in the State of Kedah are under the supervision of the Department of Islamic Affairs, Kedah.

As an organization of the State of Kelantan, Kelantan Islamic Foundation is responsible for directly supervising the local education and overseeing the fundamental and pre-higher school level education in the secondary schools under its auspices where the Islamic studies is provided. It has 2 following administration functions.

- i. To determine the school administration and development plans
- ii. To engage in the administration/operation, which is led by the school director (Pengarah)

The curriculum administration in the State of Kelantan is similar to the arrangement of Islamic studies in the State of Kedah. The double curriculum is also adopted; therefore, the curriculum of religion/Arabic language follows the direction of the Al-Azhar school network and the general curriculum is under the Malaysian government's supervision. Besides, the similar extra-curricular activities are arranged or conducted.

- i. Student-oriented activities (for example, the establishment of the science club or Islamic studies club to promote the students' autonomy to think and practice)
- ii. Activities related to the students' expressions
- iii. Activities related to the promotion of sports and knowledge

In conclusion, the Islamic instruction in Malaysia and Thailand may not be much different but certain small differences with respect to the Islamic instruction provided by the Private Islamic Schools in both countries can be found. In Malaysia, the instruction is based on the integrated curriculum. "The reformed curricula and institutional arrangement have made the integrated Islamic education in Malaysia better performed", viewed by Dr. Aljuneid.⁴³ Meanwhile, the Private Islamic Schools in Thailand also adopt the integrated curriculum but it is the integration in the sense of standards and contents only.

⁴³ It was interviewed on 24th March 2015. Dr. Aljuneid is Associate Professor of National University of Singapore.

4.5 Problems and challenges of Malaysian Integrated Islamic Education

It is a well-known fact that the Islamic education system in Malaysia is the extension of the Western educational system which is compartmentalized and secularized. As a consequence of the Western influence and the weaknesses of the Muslims, the religious curriculum in schools and university levels in Malaysia is still compartmentalized. Rosnani (2004) claimed that the curriculum practiced in Muslim countries either borrowed wholesome or partially from the West. He argued that even the subjects and methodologies are presently taught in the countries similar to that of the Western. Here, it is important to note that the statement made by Tan Sri Murad, the President of the social committee for the study of curriculum in national schools, stated that "the implementation of religious education at National Schools have a lot of weaknesses because there are still many students who can't read Al Quran and write Jawi although they had attended six years of primary schools.

Dr. Sukree of Fatoni University said, "the integrated Islamic education in Malaysia is following a better curriculum. There are substantial institutional supports in formulating the curriculum".⁴⁴ It is a fact that Islamic schools either public or private are obliged to implement curriculum that is integrated and strive to realize the aim of Islamic education. This endeavor has been assisted by some organizations or foundations that attempted to produce instructional materials for these schools. Therefore, Muslims should recognize the presence of certain non-profit making organizations that comprise of some committed individuals who always put serious effort to gear those Islamic schools into realizing their mission. For example, IQRA International Educational Foundation has planned to develop the integrated curriculum that would harmonize the divine knowledge and the worldly knowledge. It has proceeded with the production of instructional materials including textbooks and

⁴⁴ Interviewed on 23rd March 2015. Dr. Sukree is dean of Art Faculty, Fatoni University Thailand.

study guides.⁴⁵ Another movement has launched an educational work called Tarbiyyah project that promotes the inspiration and transformation of students through the process of teaching and learning in order to transform the world in the future. It has integrated the national curriculum with Islamic principles and output of a brain based research. Hence it avoids pure rote learning and makes learning more meaningful using the students to think and comprehend.⁴⁶

In a separate study, Shamma⁴⁷ has recognized two distinctive approaches in the present Islamic curriculum. The first approach is traditional and limited; developed by IQRA⁴⁸ and IBERR⁴⁹. This approach accommodates all Islamic knowledge into one “Islamic Studies class”, while the rest of the curriculum remains “secular”. The second approach is called as “the entire curriculum approach”, which is still in the developing phase. This approach involves integrating Islamic knowledge into every subject of the curriculum and hence the inevitable need to rewrite the curriculum. The well-known projects of this approach are; the Tarbiyah Project

⁴⁵ for further details about educational project developed by IQRA“, surf this website:
<http://www.iqra.org>

⁴⁶ Freda Shamma, “The Status of Islamic Curriculum-an Overview,” 9 June 2004, (28 May 2005),
http://www.4islamicschools.org/admin_curr.htm

⁴⁷ Freda Shamma, Designing an Islamic Multi-Cultural Social Studies Course of study, Ed.D. Dissertation, University of Cincinnati, 1980 quoted in Linda D. Askak (1996). Administration of Islamic Private Schools: A Comparative Study between Malaysia and the Philippines, M.ed. thesis, Kuala Lumpur: IIUM. pp. 47-48.

⁴⁸ IQRA International Educational Foundation is a Not-for-Profit organization which was established in 1983 in the State of Illinois. It involved some Muslim educators and professionals who possess both traditional religious and modern secular academic background representing an „international movement for the dynamic applications of modern methodology to the teaching of Islamic studies at all levels.“ Refer to “Welcome to IQRA.org”(28 May 2005)
http://www.iqra.org/about/intro_panel/intro.html.

⁴⁹ The International Board of Educational Research and Resources (IBERR) was initiated by a group of dedicated Muslim educationist in 1993 and chaired by Yusuf Islam. It is a response to the call Islamization of Knowledge and its vital role is research and publication development in ensuring the effectiveness of contemporary Islamic schools. For further detail, visit its website,
<http://www.iberr.org/research.htm>.

developed by Br. Dawud Tauhidi and FADEL Integrated Islamic Curriculum. Its proponents argue, “Islamic studies should be an integral part of every subject, not related to just one Islamic studies class.” For the time being, the former approach is considered more practical than the latter in the sense that it emphasizes on the necessity of how much information the students will grasp in terms of the way in presenting educational material to the students.

Chapter Five

Comparison of Integrated Islamic Education in the Southern Thailand and Northern Malaysia

5.1 Chapter Introduction

After the examination of the integration approach of the Islamic education at the primary and secondary levels in Thailand and Malaysia, this chapter presents the comparative analysis of the Islamic education in both countries. It reflects the similarities and differences of educational policies and objectives, the curriculums and implementation, and the educational assessment. It also uncovers the biggest challenge of lack of skill in implementation in both countries.

5.2 Educational Policies and Objectives

Interestingly, there are many aspects of similarity of overall policies and objectives of the curriculum of Islamic Studies in Thailand and Malaysia despite the difference in certain details. The recognition of the significance of the Islamic and moral education is the first similarity. However variably, under the Malaysian educational policy, the new integrated curriculum provides non-Muslim students with the moral education, while more Islamic education is arranged for Muslim counterparts. Comparatively, the curriculum of Islamic Studies under the Basic Education Core Curriculum B.E. 2551 (2008) in Thailand puts an emphasis on the systematic study of general and religious subjects. It can be assumed that the moral development is the focal point of the educational systems in both countries and this is conforms to the objectives of the Islamic educational philosophy, which is explained under the conceptual framework of this study.

Second, the Malaysian and Thai educational systems emphasize on the Islamic and moral education with different reasons. For the former, the focus on the Islamic

and moral education is influenced by the Islamization⁵⁰, which is emerged across the Muslim world resulting in the awareness of the balance between the integration of the secular education and religious knowledge. Meanwhile, the increased importance of the Islamic education in Thailand is in response to the Muslim community's needs reflecting the incomprehensive Islamic instruction in the educational institutions and short class hours. Such perception of the Thai Muslims potentially contributes to shape the characteristics of the Muslim communities. Suraphong Sothanasathian (1988) explained that the Muslims, as the minority group, concern about losing religious purity caused by the surrounding factors affecting all aspects of the Muslim community. Hence, the recognition of the importance of the education with particular focus on the religion is one of the preventive measures for the Muslim community.

Third, the introduction of the Curriculum of Islamic Studies under the Basic Education Core Curriculum B.E. 2551 (2008) is an educational policy of the Thai government. It is based on the diversity of and conformance to the culture and demands of the community. Its focal point is paid to the general and religious education and to the decentralization. So the educational institutions may tailor their own specific curriculum using the Curriculum of Islamic Studies as a guideline. Differently, Malaysia (as a Muslim country) is influenced by the Islamization and has the centralized educational policy. The integration aims at the creation of a single standard for the national education and the Islamic Studies under the close supervision of the Ministry of Education. In particular, the Islamic and Moral Education Division (Jabatan Pendidikan Islam dan Moral - JAPIM) is the federal agency having specific responsibility for the Islamic education.

Fourth, the freedom of religious learning, which is the main educational policy of both countries, is highly important. Malaysia and Thailand have long adopted the secular-base education, which is regarded as part of the difficulties for the Muslim

⁵⁰ Islamization is the synthesis developed by the contemporary Muslim academicians in order to find the solutions for Muslim society that suffers from the Islamic-styled development; therefore, the Islamization is the result directly obtained from the synthesis of development directions in conformance with the scientific advancement in the modern world.

communities of the two countries. The common target on the freedom of religious learning may thus be a starting point for Malaysia and Thailand to strengthen their collaboration in developing the integrated Islamic education. The two countries also have the different educational objective in light of the goal of “servitude” (Abd) and “vicegerency” (khalifah). These goals are obviously determined in the Islamic education of Malaysia due to the trend of the world Muslims. However, the Islamic education in Thailand under the Curriculum of Intensive Islamic Studies aims to create the faith in Allah. The educational objectives are important to the integration of general and religious education because the Islamic education has no separate line between the two subjects. That is to say that the ultimate goal of either general or religious education is to be the “servitude” of God or His “vicegerency” on the Earth. This involves awareness of the compulsory duty on all Muslims to perform his/her mandatory role (*Fard ain*) and the communal obligation or the social responsibility for the Muslim (*Fard Kifayah*).

Despite the difference of the main objective, the Malaysian and Thai educational system share similar approach. First, the common goal in developing the balanced individual. The capacity and full human being of students in light of the intelligence, mind, body and morality are developed in a balanced manner. This philosophical objective aims to mend the weakness of the past educational system, which is based on Western liberal ideology and secular education with less focus on moral and spiritual dimensions. Besides, the religious education of both countries in the past also overlooks the intellectual and physical aspects. Consequently, the balanced development of humans’ intelligence, mind, body and morality is the key for the integrated human development. This conforms to the Islamic educational philosophy because it is the only way to enable the human beings, as the “servitude” of God or His “vicegerency” on Earth to take the responsibility for themselves and society.

Second, the promotion of the educational integration is the other similarity shared by the two countries. The morality is incorporated not only into the religious and moral education but also into every subject because the education is not merely the acquisition of knowledge. Rather, it also includes the discipline, morality and

goodness. In addition to the duty of knowledge transfer, the teachers need to instruct their students to distinguish between the good and bad perceptions and behaviors.

Third, one can see the similarity of the educational policy and philosophy of Malaysia and Thailand in light of the promotion of life-long learning and the youth's equal access to the education up to the secondary level. The other important target of the education is to instill the students with the perception that the knowledge acquisition is the continual process; though, they have graduated from schools. Moreover, the Malaysian and Thai educational policies focus on the creation of unity of the people with diversity since the disrespect to and misunderstanding of the compatriots' culture, belief and life style may be a threat to the national stability as a whole.

The policies and objectives of the Islamic education in Malaysia and Thailand may share the similarities and differences; however, it is seemingly that the two countries have more similarities than differences. This may be an important foundation for both countries to exchange their experiences and learn from each other, especially the formulation of the integrated Islamic education and the concrete implementation.

5.3 Curriculum and Instruction

The Islamic Studies in Malaysian public schools is conducted in conjunction with the general subjects. This is similar to the one in Thailand. However, the Islamic Studies (Pendidikan Islam) at the primary and lower secondary levels in Malaysia are based on a single subject with the content covering all subjects: principles of belief in Allah, Islamic jurisprudence, history of Islam, Islamic ethics and Quotes of the Prophets. Meanwhile, "Pendidikan Al-Quran Dan As-Sunnah" (Study of Quran and Sunnah) and "Pendidikan Syariah Islamiah" (Islamic Laws) are the two subjects of the Islamic Studies at the upper secondary level.

Apart from Pendidikan Al-Quran Dan As-Sunnah and Pendidikan Syariah Islamiah, the Arabic and Malay languages are the two separate subjects, which are the mandatory foundation subject. All students of the Islamic Studies in the public schools need to learn 4 subjects in total.

Comparatively, the instruction of intensive Islamic Studies or of Islamic Studies in Thai Private Islamic Schools includes the following subjects: Al-Quran and Al-tafsir (Al-Quran and Explanation), Al-Hadith (Quotes of the Prophets), Al-Aqidah (Principle of Belief), Al-Fiqh (Islamic Jurisprudence), Attariq (History of Islam), Al-Aqlaq (Islamic Ethics) and Arabic and Malay languages.

According to the above data, one can say that the instruction of intensive Islamic Studies in the Thai private Islamic schools is based on the adoption of two curriculums. The students have the longer class hours in comparison to the ordinary schools because they need to learn more 8 general subjects totaling it to 16 subjects.

However, the instruction at the secondary level in Malaysian schools is arranged in a program, which the students are able to choose their preferred one. For example, if they choose the science program, they need to learn approximately 2 subjects of the Islamic Studies for the acquisition of basic understandings on the religious principles for daily-life usage. Meanwhile, the students who desire to learn the Islamic Studies for furthering higher education overseas or to become the Islamic academician, they need to put a particular focus on the Islamic Studies.

The Islamic Studies in Malaysian public schools are provided for Muslim students only and last for 3 hours per week, while the moral education of other religion is arranged for non-Muslim counterparts (the Chinese and Indian). There is a separate instruction for Muslims students and the Chinese and Indian ones.

The instruction of intensive Islamic Studies as required by the curriculum at the primary level in Thai public schools lasts for 9 hours per week and for 12 hours per week for the Middle and Higher Levels.

The extracurricular activities in Malaysian public schools are also different from the ones in Thailand. *Badar*, a unit in each Malaysian school, is responsible for overseeing and planning year-round extracurricular activities with the specific learner development programs, e.g. the extracurricular activity arrangement in commemoration of the birthday anniversary of the Prophet (SAWS). *Badar* makes the weekly/monthly plans and schedules with the clear determination of responsible

teachers for each activity. Moreover, the different activities are conducted all year round for learner development purpose.

In Thailand, the Office of Strategy Management and Integration in Education No. 12 receives the budget from the Ministry of Education to conduct the extracurricular activities. The Office of the Private Education and the Primary Educational Service Area Office 3 chooses the representatives or winners of each southern border provinces of Thailand from the learners. Then, they engage in the championship competition at the Office of Strategy Management and Integration in Education No. 12. Moreover, each educational institution also arranges the learner development activities as required by the core curriculum of Islamic Studies; however, there is no a unit like Badar in Thai schools. The 3 types of the extracurricular activities in Thailand are as follows:

- i. Orientation and Islamic Ethics Development Activities
- ii. Community/Religious Community Activities
- iii. Activities for the Society and Public Benefits

There is an extracurricular program for the Islamic Studies called “j-QAF” program in the curriculum of Malaysian public primary schools. It is tailed for the parents who feel that the Islamic Studies under the core curriculum is not sufficient for their children and need the additional Islamic Studies. As a result, “j-QAF” program, which is funded by the government’s budget through the Ministry of Education, plays an important role in such regard. The staffs are not the same ones with those who work in the ordinary curriculum; they are the new ones who are specifically trained to enhance their familiarity with “j-QAF” program prior to the actual implementation. Although there is no program comparable to the “j-QAF” program in Thailand, the educationists responsible for the instruction of Islamic Studies in the public schools (the intensive Islamic Studies) has visited Malaysia to examine the “j-QAF” program with an aim to incorporate its idea into the Curriculum of Islamic Studies under the Basic Education Core Curriculum B.E. 2551 (2008).

In Malaysia, the Islamic and Moral Education Division is the agency having the specific responsibility for the Islamic Studies with full duties in providing the

Islam-related education for teachers and students, supervising students' manners and morality, overseeing the curriculum of Islamic Studies and monitoring the teachers' welfares. Besides, Malaysia emphasizes the Islamic teacher training programs by establishing the "Islamic Teacher Training Institute" in 1977. Currently, the three Islamic teacher training programs consist of the ordinary curriculum of Islamic Studies, the summer curriculum and the curriculum for the new undergraduates. Most staffs of the Islamic Teacher Training Institute have graduated from the Middle-East educational institutions and are dispatched throughout Malaysia to educational institutes nationwide to conduct the relevant instructions. The supervision of the Islamic Studies in Thailand is categorized as follows:

- i. It involves the supervision of the Islamic Studies in the Islam private educational institutions, namely, the Islamic private school, the Masjid-based Islamic Study Center (Ta Di Ka School), and the Traditional Islam Institution (Pondok). The Provincial Office of the Private Education and the Office of Strategy Management and Integration in Education No. 12 are responsible for overseeing the training programs and activities for teacher development;
- ii. Concerns over the supervision of the Islamic studies in the public educational institutions. The Primary Educational Service Area Office in the three Southern border provinces of Thailand in collaboration with the educationists and academicians oversees the Islamic Studies and the teacher training programs.

5.4 Assessment of the Integrated Approach

The assessment in Malaysian public educational institutions is within the scope of Pendidikan Islam covering the related contents of all subjects. The scores earned by the students from each test question are shown. This is different from the Thai schools providing the Islamic Studies because the students need to go through the assessments of all 8 subjects.

The assessment in Malaysia is on the basis of the national standard test. However, the educational institutions may only be allowed to conduct their own internal assessment of learner development and promotion. Meanwhile, the Ministry of Education is responsible for developing the national standard test of all educational levels as follows:

- | | |
|---------|---------------------------------|
| 1 UPSR | Ujian Penilaian Sekolah Rendah |
| 2. PMR | Penilaian Menengah Rendah |
| 3. SPM | Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia |
| 4. STPM | Sijil Tinggi Pelajaran Malaysia |

Currently, the instruction of Islamic Studies in Thailand is divided in the following levels.

1. Primary Islamic Studies (Ibtidaiyah)
2. Middle Islamic Studies (Mutawassitah)
3. Higher Islamic Studies (Sanawiyah)

The National Institute of Educational Testing Service (NIETS) is responsible for the arrangement of I-net (Islamic National Education Test) in 8 subjects:

1. Al-Quran and Atafsir (Al-Quran and Explanation)
2. Al-Hadith (Quotes of the Prophets)
3. Al-Aqidah (Principle of Belief)
4. Al-Fiqh (Islamic Jurisprudence)
5. Attariq (History of Islam)
6. Al-Aqlaq (Islamic Ethics)
7. Arabic Language
8. Malay Language

I-net is arranged by the Ministry of Education and required for passing the class. It is the curriculum-based standard examination, which is different from the assessment in Malaysia.

According to the research results, the assessment in Malaysia is a good approach because no educational institutions are allowed to conduct their own assessment. All students sit in the national standard test so it is a fair assessment for them in light of the test format and scoring system, while the Ministry of Education is responsible for the test score announcement.

5.5 State of the Integrated Islamic Education

The overall aspects of the integration of Islamic Studies in Malaysia and Thailand, especially in its southern border provinces are similar. Both countries put a great effort in the curriculum development for integrating the religious and general subjects. However, certain differences of their socio-cultural structure should be taken into account. As a Muslim country, the integrated Islamic education provided by Malaysian Ministry of Education is accepted by the people with the existence of a specific agency responsible for supervising the Islamic education. There are the comprehensive programs for teacher development to enhance their capacity in transferring the integrated Islamic knowledge to students. The complementary curriculum is also developed for those students who still have the poor Islamic knowledge. The learning timetable is arranged in a suitable manner to enable the students and teachers to engage their own self-study.

Although Thailand is not a Muslim country, the Thai government and the Ministry of Education have attempted to improve the understanding of Islamic way of life through the focus on the Islamic education based on various curriculums of Islamic Studies. However, the agencies responsible for the Islamic Studies in Thailand are scattered and have no unity. The integration lacks the understandable teachers. Currently, it is the structural and subject integration in which each subject is merely incorporated with the division of timetable between the religious and general subjects. Such integration is still problematic and causes poorer learning quality because, with more subjects, the timetable allocation needs to be made. It becomes difficult for the students to learn 8 general subjects along with the religious subjects. Therefore, one viable solution may be the introduction of the comprehensive and suitable integration.

5.6 Process of Integration

The study of the approach of integration of the Islamic education in Malaysia and Thailand reveals the differences in the attempt integration in the two countries. However, such effort is not quite successful because the integration of Islamic Studies fails to cover all aspects. It is mostly a structural and subject integration. In other words, the general and religious subjects are incorporated under a single curriculum structure (as the case of Malaysia). The instruction of general and religious subjects is conducted together, while, each religious subject is also taught separately with the renaming of the subject to suit the Islamic-related contents such as “Islamic Studies”.

However, the integration approach of Islamic education in both countries still lacks the content and curriculum integration in which the general and religious subjects are seamlessly integrated. The key towards the successful integration may be the analysis of both subjects in light of the learning standards, indications and relevant contents. In fact, the integration approach refers to the seamless and interrelated instruction of all subjects and to the incorporation of theoretical frameworks into the actual implementation.

In conclusion, the Islamic education at the basic education level in Thailand and Malaysia is merely the structural and subject integration. Both countries lack the curriculum and content integration, which is indispensable for the successful development of the integration approach of Islamic Studies for the Muslim community. Though the policy for the integration is better evolved in Malaysia but it is still far from perfect. Dr. Sukree noted that the policy and content integration is relatively better in Malaysia but still suffers from lack of qualified human resource.⁵¹ In Thailand though- the process of developing policy is still evolving successfully. Thus it can be expected that in near future the integration of Islam in curricula will fit with the spiritual and practical requirements of the Muslims in Thailand.

⁵¹ He was interviewed on 23rd March 2015. Dr. Sukree is a dean of Fatoni University Thailand.

However, the similarity and difference between the Islamic education in Thailand and its neighboring country in ASEAN - Malaysia, especially at the primary and secondary levels, may enhance their learning horizon. Malaysia and the Thai Muslim community in the three southern border provinces share a similarity of culture, language and religion. This will be beneficial for enhancing the national education in the present and future.

Chapter Six

Conclusion

6.1 Role of Integrated Islamic Education

In the description of the Education Acts in both Thailand and Malaysia the religious education was linked with moral and ethical development. Dr. Mubarak mentioned, “the education policies are designed to create sensible citizens. Thus the integration of Islamic education for Muslim helps to meet objective.”⁵² He further mentioned that the integrated Islamic curricula in Malaysia are receiving more attention compare to the national schools. According to Prof. Abdul Aziz, “it’s the competitive nature of the school admission that shows the popularity of Islamic school. These schools are producing better graduates.”⁵³ Analyzing the views of these Malaysian scholars it can be note that the integrated Islamic schools are leading a positive role in the society by developing qualified pupils.

On the other hand, the scholars from Thailand have given a unique account of the role of the schools those follows integrated Islamic curriculum. Dr. Sukree of Fatoni University pointed that the integrated Islamic school are developing a section of qualified pupils but challenged due to lack of qualified educators.⁵⁴ However, all of the scholars accepted the role of the students of the Islamic Private Schools as positive in the sense that they are better engaged with the society and country. Dr. Aljunied from Singapore National University in his interview on 24th March 2015 viewed that the integrated curricula is potential to develop qualified and responsible citizen. If we describe this into context of southern Thailand- it’s an obvious truth that the integrated Islamic curriculum helps to meet the religious aspiration of the students in

⁵² He was interviewed on 24th March at the 3rd International Islamic Study Conference, Prince Songkla University Pattani.

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Interviewed on 23rd March 2015. Dr. Sukree is dean of Art Faculty, Fatoni University Thailand.

the southern provinces as well as others. But especially the inspirations of national and religious curricula jointly enhance the capacity of responsible citizenry. This is indeed a potential contributory factor to develop a unitary nation with common aspiration across various religious groups by substantially reducing chance of anti-state or anti-co-existent activities.

However, the most important aspect of the integrated Islamic education indicates the philosophical and value of the religious conviction of Muslims regarding education. As the research has unveiled that the essential factor of education in Islam is not limited with the theological learning. The holistic nature of Islamic education links the theology with the practical world that Muslims are living in. It's the mandatory nature of being educated that makes Muslim to be sensible towards the system and contents of the lessons. An integrated Islamic curriculum is a positive step towards this direction. Thus the expected outcome of the system shall be logically affirmative for the interest of nation, humanity and religious convection.

6.2 Challenges of Integrated Islamic Education

The overall challenge of successful integrated Islamic education both in southern Thailand and northern Malaysia is related with the skill or implementation aspects. All the interviewees overwhelmingly agreed that the teacher training is a core for the successful implementation of the integrated Islamic curriculum. It's not the recent practice that the teaching officials are qualified in learning subjects of the national curricula with solid reference from Islamic theological lessons. Rather the traditional institutes train either the secular or Islamic curriculum. There are some initiatives to train in both disciplines, which in a way promote the dualism. But the integrated aspect of these two still remains challenging to be trained. There is no institutional arrangement for train teaching officials the integrated Islamic curricula.

The research also sheds light on the aspect of integration. It identifies that the integrated Islamic education is yet to be successful because such effort fails to cover all aspects of Islamic education. It is noted that the integration is mostly a structural and subject integration, but not curriculum or content integration. Though the degree of such integration is different in southern Thailand and northern Malaysia, it is common

in both countries that the understanding of content integration is very slowly taking shape among the policy makers. Prof. Kamal Hassan of the International Islamic University Malaysia viewed that an ideal integration of Islamic education shall link the regular subjects with the Islamic notions- which ultimately relate with the *Tawhid* of Muslim pupil.⁵⁵ Thus it is important to rise proper understand about integrated Islamic education and its practical utility is vital. This is also a challenge among the education activists to be poorly connected with the policy makers having insufficient understanding about the totality of integrated Islamic education.

6.3 Function of Integrated Islamic Education

Integrated Islamic education is a requirement for the Muslims. Thus in a Muslim society it is expected that the natural grooming of its young population shall be under an integrated system. The research has explained both philosophical and traditional aspect of knowledge acquiring in a Muslim society. However, the impact of colonial era secular education and modern practices focused on practical skill development contradicts with the spiritual aspect of knowledge searching. Thus integrated Islamic education somehow perceived by the mainstream policy makers as a newly emerged trend, which has lack of familiarity, clarity and expertise. Both in southern Thailand and northern Malaysia this very issue has been posing functional challenge for the integrated Islamic education.

Dr. Sukree of Fatoni University has divided the functional aspect of integrated Islamic education into three phases: i) policy, ii) content and iii) skill. It is important to note that there is no clear policy about the certification of the integrated Islamic education. Since the present integration is still as the subject level- in Thailand the student assessment is basically managed on the secular and religious subjects separately, whereas, the truly integrated system shall have a recognized central certification. Secondly, the content is yet to be fully integrated. Though Malaysia has done relatively better in the field but it is yet to be fully integrated. There is a need of

⁵⁵ Prof. Hasan was interviewed on 23rd March, 2015.

new books and teaching system. Finally, the skill issue remains the biggest challenge in both countries. There is no institutional arrangement to develop and train instructors or teaching officials enable to teach the integrated Islamic curriculum. In doing so, the instructors shall be well qualified not only in the regular and religious subjects but also able to link the two.

However, the research explained that the functional benefit of such integrated education is multi-folded. It is indeed drawing more attention among the Muslims in both countries. Most of interviewees expressed that the result of the students from the Islamic private schools is better. Though there are issues of excessive learning period and other functional challenges – the students are still proving their excellence. This may be the positive factor that can encourage the policy makers to provide more attention for the improvement of integrated Islamic education.

6.4 Concluding Remarks

The study is an endeavor to understand the cause and effect of the present of dualism in education system, a chronic problem of the Islamic world- by discussing the examples of Southern Thailand and Northern Malaysia. Post-colonial Islamic world has lost its enormous might and wealth of knowledge due to its' long denial of the mandatory initiative of educating themselves. In Islam education has its height role in defining human perspective towards to the Almighty and his creation. Thus Islam directed for two essential components in its education. Though Muslims were long cherished such approach and ruled wider empire. But reacting to the newly introduced secular education by the colonial forces- Muslim leadership has nabbed into dogmatic education. Thus the hesitancy to accepting innovative and desired critical thinking through its education Muslims are calling for integrated Islamic education across the world. This research shaded light on this very fact and critically analyzed the way-out from this stalemate.

It has taken examples of Southern Thailand and Northern Malaysia, two country- one with Muslim minority and another with Muslim majority. One that responded to the crying demand of religious and cultural rights of Muslim and another formed integrated Islamic education as a national strategy to address protection of

national identity. The research argued, in order to sustain the benefit from such system the integrated curriculum needs to be uniformed and centrally coordinated or managed. At the same time the priority of teachers training as well as harmonizing the Islamic subjects with other Islamic subjects as well as general subjects is vital. The system needs to be inclusive and shall be sensible towards the spiritual and national needs. The system shall have sufficient budgetary allocation as well. It is potential to minimize the gaps among various faith groups by providing non-bias perspectives. The research described that at the implementation level there are certainly some similarities and differences between Thailand and Malaysia. It shows that the similarities could be the avenue for national level cooperation. Finally, this subject is still at its earlier phase in development- thus requires more investigation in future.

Recommendations

1. Thailand-Malaysia Collaboration

According to research results, the integration of Islamic Studies will be incomplete if it lacks the curriculum and content integration. The analysis of general and religious subject shows that the content integration should be emphasized. This can be accelerated through collaboration by sharing experiences and constant communication. Meanwhile, the collaboration with Malaysia in light of mutual exchange between the educational institutions, co-research initiatives and utilization of the existing intergovernmental mechanisms should be enhanced in order to identify the comprehensive approach for Islamic integration. The research results should be trialed and implemented, for example, the creation of a model school where the content integration curriculum is implemented.

2. Create Principle Agency

A certain success of the Islamic education in Malaysia may be contributable to the existence of a main agency under the auspices of the Ministry of Education. It has the direct responsibility to create a single standard of Islamic education nationwide. Therefore, Thailand should take into account the creation of a similar agency to pursue the relevant works actively and continually. Importantly, those who possess the understanding of and expertise in Islam may be invited to examine the Islamic integration approach as well as to monitor, regulate and assess the related results.

3. Develop Experts

The teachers also play an important role in the development of the comprehensive approach for the integration of Islamic education. The curriculum may not be fully implemented if there are no teachers who possess the expertise of general and religious subjects. It is thus crucial to prepare the educational personnel who are specialized in both subjects. This can be done in many aspects e.g. the inclusion of the specialized curriculum in the Islamic universities through the support of the Ministry of Education and relevant agencies in order to produce the experts (Malaysia pays a particular emphasis on the Islamic teacher training programs).

4. Assess the Learners by the Central Administration

The learner assessment should be conducted by the central administration. That is to say that all students should sit in the national standard test and the Ministry of Education or the main agency responsible for the Islamic curriculum is responsible for grading and announcing the results of all levels. This will be the fair assessment for the students in light of the test format and grading system leading to the promotion of educational quality as a whole. Nevertheless, each educational institution may only be allowed to conduct its own internal assessment of learner development and promotion. However, prior to the implementation of national standard test, the Islamic curriculum should be coherent, recognized and implemented in a collaborative manner by the educational institutions that offer the Islamic Studies. This will lead to the same direction of the instruction of Islamic Studies, which achieves the same objectives.

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