

INTELLECTUAL TRADITION OF MALAY ISLAM

Rohmaniyah¹, Dwi Putri Aulia²

Library Science Study Program, Faculty of Adab and Humanities,
Raden Fatah State Islamic University, Indonesia

Email: rohmaniyah_uin@radenfatah.ac.id, putriauliadwil@gmail.com

Abstrak

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The Malay Islamic intellectual tradition is a crucial part of the development of Malay civilization. This tradition developed through the spread of Islamic teachings, which influenced the language, literature, and art of the Malay people. The Malay language served as the primary medium for the spread of Islam, particularly through Jawi script and various religious texts. In literature, works such as hikayat (traditional stories), poetry, and Islamic scriptures developed, embodying moral, spiritual, and educational values. Islamic influence is also evident in Malay carving, calligraphy, music, and architecture, which have religious and symbolic significance. This study aims to analyze the development of the Malay Islamic intellectual tradition and its contribution to the cultural and religious identity of the Malay people. The method used is a qualitative method with a literature study approach through books, journals, and related scientific sources. The results indicate that the Malay Islamic intellectual tradition plays a significant role in shaping cultural identity, strengthening religious values, and preserving Malay cultural heritage to the present day.

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INTRODUCTION

The Malay-Islamic intellectual tradition is a valuable legacy in the history of Islamic development in the archipelago. (Azyumardi Azra, 2013) The arrival of Islam in the Malay region brought about significant changes, not only in religious aspects but also in influencing the mindset, language, literary works, and artistic life of the community. (Syed Muhammad Naquib Al-Attas, 1990) This process gave birth to a



unique scholarly tradition, a fusion of Islamic teachings with local Malay culture, which later developed into a distinct cultural identity.

The changes that occurred were not instantaneous, but rather a long and gradual process. Islam's arrival in the Malay region did not erase existing culture, but instead adapted and integrated with local traditions. (Taufik Abdullah, Ed., 1991) This is what gives the Malay-Islamic intellectual tradition its unique character, as it is able to combine religious values with local wisdom deeply rooted in community life.

In this development process, the Malay language has a very important position. (Vladimir Braginsky, 1998) Malay language is not only used as a means of public communication, but also becomes the main medium for spreading Islamic teachings. (Ismail Hussein, 1992) the use of Javanese script shows that Malay culture has adapted to the influence of Islam so that Malay language is able to develop as a language of science, especially in the religious field. Through this language, various scientific works and Islamic literature can be understood and disseminated to the wider community. In fact, in its development, Malay has become one of the main languages in the Islamic world in Southeast Asia.

Beyond language, the development of Malay literature has also strengthened the Malay-Islamic intellectual tradition. Various literary works, such as fables, poetry, gurindam, and religious books, exist not merely for entertainment but also serve as educational media and convey moral values and Islamic teachings. These works reflect the thoughts of Malay scholars and intellectuals in interpreting and conveying Islamic teachings according to the social conditions of their time. (Liaw Yock Fang, 2011) Through literature, Islamic values can be conveyed in a more refined, easily accepted, and relatable manner to everyday life.

Furthermore, art is also a crucial element in the development of the Malay-Islamic intellectual tradition. (Edi Sedyawati, 2006) Art is not only understood as a form of beauty but also as a means of preaching and strengthening spiritual values. Islamic influence is evident in various art forms such as calligraphy, sculpture, music, and architecture, which contain religious symbolic meaning. (Othman Yatim, 1992) The existence of these arts demonstrates that Islamic teachings are able to adapt to local cultures without losing their fundamental principles, resulting in a form of cultural expression that harmonizes religious and aesthetic values.

Furthermore, the existence of the Malay-Islamic intellectual tradition is inseparable from the role of ulama, scholars, and traditional Islamic educational institutions. They play a role in developing knowledge, writing Islamic works, and maintaining the continuity of the scientific tradition within society. (Azyumardi Azra, 2012) This demonstrates that intellectual traditions develop not only through texts and works, but also through social and educational processes that are passed down through generations.

Based on this description, a study of the Malay-Islamic intellectual tradition through aspects of language, literature, and art is important to conduct. This study is expected to provide a deeper understanding of the contribution of the Malay-Islamic intellectual tradition in shaping the cultural and religious identity of Malay society and its relevance in today's modern life. (Syed Muhammad Naquib Al-Attas, 1990) by understanding this, it is hoped that the current generation will be able to better appreciate the intellectual heritage that has been formed and make it part of the cultural identity that needs to be maintained.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The Malay Islamic intellectual tradition played a crucial role in the development of Malay civilization through Islamic language, literature, and art. According to Azyumardi Azra (2018), the Malay Islamic intellectual tradition developed through the use of the Malay language and Jawi script as the primary medium for disseminating Islamic knowledge and teachings. This tradition played a crucial role in shaping the cultural identity, education, and religious values of the Malay people.

METHOD

This research uses a qualitative approach, a research method that aims to understand and explain a phenomenon in depth through descriptive data in the form of written and spoken words (Moleong, 2018). In this study, data collection techniques were conducted through library research. The data collection process involved gathering various sources, such as books, scientific journals, research articles, and other relevant sources that discuss the Malay Islamic intellectual tradition, particularly in the aspects of language, literature, and art. The data obtained was then analyzed descriptively to understand the development of the Malay Islamic intellectual tradition and its role in shaping the cultural and religious identity of the Malay community. Furthermore, this research also used a historical approach to examine the development of the Malay Islamic intellectual tradition over time.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Research results indicate that the Malay-Islamic intellectual tradition developed through three main aspects: language, literature, and art. (Wan Mohd. Nor Wan Daud, 2007) These three aspects are interrelated and collectively shape the cultural identity and way of thinking of the Malay people in both religious and social life.

From a linguistic perspective, (Ahmad Ibrahim, 1985) states that Malay played a crucial role in the spread of Islam. It became the everyday language of the people, allowing Islamic teachings to be accepted without major obstacles. The use of the Jawi script is strong evidence of Islam's influence on the development of the Malay language. (Ammar Ayus, 2012) This script was used not only for religious texts but also for various scientific and administrative records at that time.

Furthermore, the introduction of Arabic vocabulary enriched the Malay language, particularly in religious terms such as worship, Islamic law, and morals. This demonstrates a profound process of cultural adaptation and blending. (Asmah Haji Omar, 2008) Malay then developed not only as a means of communication but also as a language of knowledge used in writing Islamic texts studied in various regions of the archipelago.

In the field of literature, the development of the Malay-Islamic intellectual tradition is evident in the numerous works containing Islamic values. (Braginsky, V.I., 2004) Literature at that time served not only as entertainment but also as a medium for moral and spiritual education. Works such as fables, poetry, gurindam, and religious texts served as a means of conveying life messages. (Abdul Hadi W.M., 2001) Values frequently appearing in these literary works include faith, morality, patience, responsibility, and human relationships with God and fellow human beings. For example, Hamzah Fansuri's Syair Perahu depicts man's spiritual journey toward God,

and Raja Ali Haji's Gurindam Dua Belas contains advice on life and social ethics. This demonstrates that literature played an important role in shaping the character of Malay-Muslim society.

Furthermore, literature served as a bridge between religious teachings and everyday life. (Siti Zainon Ismail, 1986) Because it was conveyed in the form of stories and poetry, the messages were easier to understand and did not feel preachy. This made literature highly effective as a medium for preaching at that time. In the field of art, the influence of Islam is also very strong in the lives of Malay people. Art is not only seen as beautiful, but also has social and religious functions. (Mohd Anis Md Nor, 2003) art forms that developed include carving, calligraphy, religious music, and Islamic building architecture such as mosques.

Calligraphy is one of the most prominent forms of art because it contains beautifully written verses from the Koran. (Ismail Hamid, 1991) This art not only functions as decoration, but also as a form of respect for the word of God. Carving art on traditional Malay buildings also often uses plant motifs and geometric patterns that are full of symbolic meaning.

In music, (Mayudin Haji Yahaya, 2001) the Malay Islamic tradition recognizes forms such as poetry and nasyid which are used as media for preaching. This music usually contains moral messages, life advice, and praise to God. Meanwhile, the architecture of the mosque shows a combination of simple but meaningful worship function and aesthetic value. Apart from these three main aspects, the research results also show several other important things. First, the Malay-Islamic intellectual tradition was heavily influenced by the role of ulama and religious figures, who taught religion not only orally but also through writing. Second, the dissemination of knowledge at that time was largely carried out through non-formal education such as surau (Islamic prayer houses) and Islamic boarding schools (pesantren). Third, this tradition developed peacefully without erasing pre-existing local culture.

Another thing that is evident is the very close relationship between religious knowledge and social life. Islamic values are not only studied but also applied in daily life, both in language, behavior, and cultural works.

Overall, language, literature, and art in the Malay-Islamic intellectual tradition are mutually supportive and inseparable. Language serves as the primary means of conveying knowledge, literature as a means of processing messages more subtly, while art serves as a form of visual expression that reinforces these values.

Thus, the Malay-Islamic intellectual tradition not only functioned in the past but also continues to influence contemporary society. The values it embodies remain relevant, particularly in shaping the character, ethics, and cultural identity of the Malay community.

The Malay-Islamic intellectual tradition was formed through a lengthy process, resulting from the intersection of Islamic teachings with pre-existing Malay culture. (Muhammad Uthman El-Muammady, 2009) When Islam entered the Malay region, the changes that occurred were not only visible in the religious aspect but also influenced the community's way of thinking, their language, and the forms of cultural works they produced. This process takes place slowly and mostly through adjustment, not coercion, so that Islam can be well accepted and integrated into everyday life.

In the linguistic aspect, the use of Malay is a very important factor in the process of spreading Islam. Malay language (Nik Safiah Karim, 2010), which has been used by

society for a long time, makes Islamic teachings easier to understand without having to change the main language of communication. This makes the spread of Islam run more smoothly and does not feel foreign to society. Apart from that, the inclusion of Arabic elements into Malay also shows a fairly strong mixing process. Many religious terms (Awang Sariyan, 2007) end up being used in everyday conversations and in writing religious texts.

The use of the Jawi script is also an important part of this development. This script was not only used to write religious matters, but was also used in various scientific records at that time. With the existence of Jawi, (Noriah Mohamed, 2011) the Malay language is increasingly developing and not only functions as a spoken language, but also as a written language used in the scientific world. This demonstrates that language plays a broader role, not only as a means of communication but also as a construct of cultural and religious identity.

In the field of literature, the Malay-Islamic intellectual tradition is evident in the numerous works that emerged and developed within the community. Literature at that time served not only as entertainment but also as a means of conveying moral messages and religious teachings. (Harun Mat Piah, 2006) states that works such as hikayat (fairy tales), syair (poetry), and gurindam (traditional folktales) were often used to convey life values in a lighter and more accessible way.

Through literature, Islamic teachings such as morality, patience, faith, and social relationships were conveyed in the form of beautiful stories or poetry. This approach made it easier for people to understand the intended message without feeling patronized. (Abdul Hadi W.M., 2014) Works such as Syair Perahu (boat poem) and Gurindam Duabelas (twelve folktales) exemplify how literature served as an effective medium for education and da'wah (Islamic outreach) at that time. Furthermore, literature also demonstrates how Malay intellectuals not only conveyed knowledge directly but also packaged it in a form that was more relevant to people's lives. This made it easier for Islamic values to penetrate Malay social and cultural life.

Meanwhile, in the arts, Islamic influence is also quite evident in Malay society. Art during this period was not only viewed as a form of beauty but also possessed deeper meaning, particularly related to religious values. Therefore, the art forms that developed were largely symbolic and did not depict anything that contradicted Islamic teachings.

Art forms such as calligraphy, carving, religious music, and mosque architecture are important parts of this tradition. Calligraphy, for example, is widely used as decoration, containing verses from the Quran and possessing high spiritual value. Carvings in traditional Malay buildings also often incorporate plant patterns and geometric shapes with specific meanings.

In music, traditions such as poetry and nasyid developed as a means to convey religious messages in a gentler way. Meanwhile, the architecture of the mosque not only functions as a place of worship, but also becomes a symbol of the Islamic identity of the Malay community which still maintains elements of local culture.

When viewed as a whole, language, literature and art in the Malay Islamic intellectual tradition are interconnected and cannot be separated. Language is the main tool for conveying ideas and knowledge, literature is a way to process and convey messages more subtly, while art is a form of visual expression of these values. These three elements (Siti Zainon Ismail, 2005) strengthen each other so that the Malay

Islamic intellectual tradition can continue to live and develop.

Until now, (Wan Mohd. Nor Wan Daud, 2007) this tradition still has an influence on people's lives, even though it has experienced many changes due to developments over time. The values contained in it, such as the importance of knowledge, morals, and balance between religion and culture, are still relevant to apply. Therefore, (Mohd Taib Osman, 1988) the Malay Islamic intellectual tradition needs to continue to be understood and preserved, especially by the younger generation, so that it does not disappear and remains part of cultural identity.

CONCLUSION

The Malay-Islamic intellectual tradition is a crucial part of the history of Islam's development in the Malay region. This tradition emerged from a long process of interaction between Islamic teachings and pre-existing local culture. This process gave birth to a tradition that is not only related to religious aspects but also developed into the broader social and cultural life of the Malay community.

Throughout its development, this tradition is clearly visible through three main elements: language, literature, and art. These three elements are interconnected and play a role in shaping the way of thinking and identity of the Malay-Islamic community. This demonstrates that Islam in the Malay region is not only understood as a religious teaching but also as an integral part of the community's daily cultural activities.

The Malay language played a crucial role in the spread of Islam in the archipelago. The use of Malay made Islamic teachings easier to understand because it became the language of everyday communication. Furthermore, the use of the Jawi script and the absorption of Arabic vocabulary led to the development of Malay not only as a spoken language but also as a written language used in various religious and scientific works. In the literary field, the Islamic Malay intellectual tradition developed through various works such as hikayat (fairy tales), syair (poetry), and gurindam (traditional folktales). These works are not only valuable as works of art, but also contain moral messages and Islamic teachings conveyed in a more refined and accessible manner. Literature at that time served as an effective educational medium because it combined elements of entertainment with life values.

Meanwhile, in the arts, a fusion of beauty and religious values is evident. Islamic Malay art developed in the form of calligraphy, carving, religious music, and mosque architecture, which possessed symbolic meaning. Art served not only as decoration but also as a means of conveying spiritual and Islamic values in community life.

Overall, the relationship between language, literature, and art gives the Islamic Malay intellectual tradition a strong distinctive character. All three complement each other in spreading Islamic values and shaping the cultural identity of the Malay people. To this day, this tradition remains relevant because it embodies important values such as knowledge, morality, and cultural preservation.

Therefore, the Islamic Malay intellectual tradition deserves continued study and preservation. This is important so that the intellectual heritage is not lost, but remains alive and can be passed on to the next generation as part of the cultural and religious identity of society amidst the ever-changing developments of the times.

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