21st Century Islamic Education in Southern Thailand and Pondok: System, Conditions and Challenges

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ABSTRACT

The study focuses on the Islamic school Pondok or traditional institution of religious learning and piety in the southern provinces of Thailand. The institution has experienced conflicts and contestations throughout the twentieth century. The study examines the development of Muslim minority education in 3 southern Thailand provinces of Pattani, Yala, and Narathiwat which indeed face dynamic and struggle to maintain a combination of national interest and local needs. 100 Pondok students and 50 informants were the study participants. 5 Likert Scale of Islamic School Assessment Scale (ISAS) questionnaire comprising 12 items based on the responses of in-depth interviews of the said 50 informants was formulated by the researchers and used to collect data. The results of the study indicate Pondok progressive expansion in the 3 southern Thailand provinces, skills improvement and mechanisms to implement 21st Thailand educational reforms envisioned and promoted by Thailand movement, by highlighting the government vigorous endeavors to implement the system and program in all Islamic educational institutions throughout Thailand for the new generations to be equipped with adequate skills to tackle the globalizations challenges. The study provides a historical narrative of this institution and its political relationship to the Thai government's policies, as well as an update of events relating to the schools during the recent periods of Thai educational reforms. The study concludes that the contestations and negotiations with the Thai government are about the development of the local Malay people's modern identity within Thailand and recommends some suggestions on how to go about those conditions and challenges.

Keywords: Pondok, Curricular Reforms; Thailand Educational Reforms; Southern Thailand Provinces, Royal Kingdom of Thailand

Introduction

For the concept of education, Islam emphasize the duty of Muslim to seek knowledge as it is the way of his salvation both here and hereafter. Therefore, to underscore such an importance, the first ayah revealed to the Prophet Muhammad (SAS) commanding him to "Read in the Name of your Lord who created; created man from a clinging mass. Read, and your Lord is the most generous, who taught by the pen, taught man what he did not know (*Surah al-'alaq*, 96: 1-5). The *ayah* does not only command man to seek Islamic knowledge perse, rather, he should have the knowledge of biology and science, to discover the wonder and miracle of how Allah (SWT) created man!

As for great benefits of teaching Islamic knowledge to others, Sahl bin Mu'adh bin Anas narrated from his father that: The Prophet said: "Whoever teaches some knowledge will have

the reward of the one who acts upon it, without that detracting from his reward in the slightest."
— Sunan Ibn Majah, Vol. 1, Book 1, Hadith 240. This hadith attests to the importance of a teacher status in Islam by doubling his rewards while executing his duties in teaching others.

Therefore, the Islamic concept of teaching and learning, as Qais Faryadi (2015) states "is not limited to the memorization of Al-Quran and religious studies by Muslim scholars. Islamic education is often erroneously perceived as education on religious matters, whereas in fact, Islamic education (based on the Quran and Sunnah) provides a rich reservoir of knowledge in the modern sciences such as medicine, genetics, and biology. *Naqli* (revealed knowledge) is not all about recitation scriptures from Al-Quran; rather it emphasizes a physical and spiritual balance between everything (Faryadi 2015, 49).

Muslims have strived to seek knowledge throughout their life span. They have ceaselessly endeavored to find means to ensure how their children (boys and girls) get the best of knowledge in both secular and Islamic studies especially in Thailand, where Muslims are the minority. The U.S. government estimates the country's total population at 69.6 million (midyear 2022). In December 2021, the Department of Religious Affairs reported that the population is 92.5 percent Buddhist, 5.4 percent Muslim, and 1.2 percent Christian (USA Government, https://www.state.gov › reports › thailand).

The majority of Muslims live in 3 southern Thailand provinces of Pattani, Yala, and Narathiwat. Thailand government gives minority Muslim populations free reign in developing Islamic educational institutions. Generally, Islamic Boarding Schools are spreading around Thailand. However, the three southern provinces house most Islamic educational institutions due to their Muslim majority concentrations in this region. The significantly increasing numbers of Islamic education in these areas influence the development of Islam and Muslim percentage in the country. It should be emphasized that the development of Islamic educational should be under the Ministry of Education by following the rules, the components, and the standard curriculum written by the government of Thailand. Thailand is also well known in the process of implementing 21st education for all educational levels. Therefore, public school and Islamic school must focus on development of 21st education. Based on this brief discussed historical data and rationale, this study explores the system of all levels of Islamic educational institutions in the mentioned three southern Thailand provinces towards 21st century educational system. Some schools are now reformed by implementing the learning process into 21st century education system guidelines while some others continue to implement traditional system.

Literature Review

The concept of Islamic School

Islamic studies are programs that focus on the history, texts, and theologies of different religious traditions and often refer to academic multidisciplinary "studies" programs. where academics from many fields (history, culture, literature, art) come together to discuss a particular area of study and exchange ideas (Nasr, 2008).

, which deals with practical and social difficulties in Muslims' everyday lives, is one of the key topics of Islamic studies. It is separated into topics including the study of the Qur'an and Hadith, sharia law, and Islamic economics. The fundamental differences between fiqh, hadith, and ijtihad are among them (Zayed, 2015).

Thai Education System

Education is designed to develop human resources, improve Thai economy and society. The education system in Thailand is similar to the K-12 system in the United States. This is in accordance of The Medical Council of Thailand (2009) announcement. The program starts from pre-school, primary school, secondary school, and university. The tertiary level takes few years based on the field of study. Besides, bachelor's degree is the first qualification which can be accomplished within 4 years of tertiary program (Foreign Consultants, 2005). However, sometimes this can extend to 5 or 6 years of studies, after which the graduates can continue through Master's program and the doctoral program. Medical graduation can continue with a master's and a Ph.D in medical science study or a professional doctoral degree for physicians and surgeons. Some doctors might choose to pursue a Diploma of the (subspecialty) Board of particular major field to study for some years, and the subsequent certificate of qualification that is awarded is equivalent to a Ph.D (The Royal College of Physicians of Thailand, 2012).

Thai Educational Policies for the 21ˢᵗ Century

Thailand government is in the process of 21ˢᵗ century education development, with an effort to prepare Thai people to deal with 21ˢᵗ century educational challenges. It includes the education reformation, financial of education system, learning system, sports, health service system, health promotion system, disease control and risk management, financial system management on health, society elderly support system, with an added value set up on culture and reformation of the labor work (Jory, 2002; Liow, 2009). Thailand government proposed this important strategy as it is relevant to the 21ˢᵗ century educational skills. It also concerns the development of research and the innovation of the workforce to enhance national competitiveness. The aim of this framework is to focus on the skills and abilities to the needs of market and national developments. To Liu et al., (2014), technology is one of fundamental in the life of 21ˢᵗ century education. They believe that technology stimulates the learning process. Not only that, teachers are expected to have good understanding to incorporate technology learning. Indeed, technology is believed to be a tool of teaching transformation process.

This is supported by Thailand Ministry of Education (2017) which specified the national education plan 2017-2036, a plan formulated as the guideline for the development of digital technology system for education, designed into few aspects:

1. Making education, teaching, and learning process easier and for generating the flexibility of education.
2. Improving the quality and the standard of distance learning management.
3. proposing the educational budget.
4. Supporting the development of television station about education programs; and
5. Improving the high-speed internet service network covering all areas that is enough for learners.

Vichian Puncreobutr (2017) believes the best format of education is to develop the concept of the Late King Rama IX, which consists of creating the understanding, reaching the target groups, the participatory development and setting up the society of opportunity and able society, as depicted.

Shulman (1987) stated that teaching professional in 21ˢᵗ century education has to pass few stages of knowledge, there are content knowledge (the well-rounded knowledge of English language, e.g., language elements, grammar structure, vocabulary, linguistics, and proficiency skills) and Pedagogical knowledge, such as being able to understand, reaching the target groups, development in all dimension, and setting up the opportunity and able society.

Islamic Education (Pondok) in Southern Thailand

The word "pondok" comes from the Arabic word for the hostels that students stay and study in. It is the oldest Islamic education in Thailand. Pondok is a renowned oldest traditional Islamic educational institution in Thailand for those interested in studying profound Islam teachings.

In the early days, Pondok continued to function without government regulations (Howe Yong, 2012; Madmarn, 1999). The main purpose of the learning was to deliver Islamic teaching and create young Islamic generations who could correctly practice Islam principles in daily life. Pondok was built in 1961 and then officially registered and was recognized by Thailand government (Madmarn, 2000). Subsequently, Pondok was re-developed into Islamic non-governmental schools in 1965-1968 and Islamic private schools in 1983 following the Private School Act, BE 2526 (1983). According to the regulation, the private Islamic schools got budget to use in integrated Islamic-secular education.

In 2019, based the educational data of the Offices of Private Education (2019), most of Islamic schools were in three southern Thailand provinces of Yala, Pattani, and Narathiwat, approximately accommodating 140,944 students and 11,610 teachers, over 5,000 of which were Islamic-education teachers. These private Islamic schools have received constant development and revision on the teaching of Islamic education. Presently, Islamic schools adopt the Basic Education Core Curriculum, BE 2551 (2008) provided the evaluation for "suitability and clarity, the curricular objectives to enhance the student's quality and implement processes that is related to Thai political, economic, and social dynamics" (Alee, 2011, 10).

Pondok also implements "*Alim*" system in education process to face with globalization challenges. In the previous system. *Alim* system means to create Islamic young generation. In this *Alim* system, the students learn Islamic subjects more deeply such as *Tafsir* and other Islamic subjects. *Alim* system begins from grade 1 to grade 6. Pondok focusses on *Kitab Torus* (Old Book) learning or earlier Muslim scholars' manuscripts. Tok Guru is central to such a Pondok adopted system, Tok Guru will deliver a knowledge meanwhile the students listen attentively to Tok Guru exegeses and no discussions are allowed in the learning process with Tok Guru. However, the discussions would be arranged among the students and the seniors. Sometimes, the students hold discussions with Tok Guru at free time, termed as "*Muzakarah*" system, according to the respondent.

The new Thailand government regulation stipulates that Pondok should be under Thailand government with notion that Pondok can implement its own curriculum based on the Pondok's way of life and the needs of students. However, there are some regulations that Pondok should follow based on the standard of Thailand government. Based on a new system, Pondok should follow the regulation from Ministry of education and registered as an institution under the Ministry of Education. This legality positively impacted students in Pondok because Thailand government provide "KOSONO" programs thereby shorting students' academic courses periods. The government would send academic teachers to teach in the weekend, which is compulsory for all Pondok students. This indeed enables students to obtain standard certificate sand continue their studies to the next education levels. In this program, the government will delegate teachers to Pondok to educate the students' academic subjects. Thus, the government offers easier requirements of shorter courses for Pondok students. For example, 6-year education period is reduced 3-year education only for secondary level.

Pondok is an educational institution that is typically attached to a masjid (mosque) or *balai* (house) of the Tok Guru. Malay is the main medium of instruction in teaching and learning and it typically consists of subjects pertaining to Islamic jurisprudence, *Tauhid*, and interpretation

of the holy Qu'ran (Narongraksakhet, 2006, 12). "Pondok … is profoundly Islamic knowledge oriented, Malay being the medium of instruction; thus considered "deeply intimate with the Malay Muslims" (Medrano, 2007, 20), and focusing on old kitab "Kitab Turos" as references for the students.

Pondok is a good institution to deal with the development of globalization era challenges and demands globalization. Islamic knowledge would help the students to face with kind of obstacles in the future. However, Islamic knowledge is not enough to the challenge the new era, the young generation need to understand about general knowledge for the future. According to the data, Pondok could not be able to implement 21st century education because some obstacles, among which is that fact that Tok Guru does not have skills to develop 21st century education because Tok Guru's main focus is on development of Islamic knowledge with traditional system, and language barriers are the obstacles to develop 21st education in Pondok because the students would use Malay as the main language.

To Muhamad Hafi Johdi Salleh (2010), Islamic education is an essential need derived from Islam as a religion or way of life, as Allah wanted. Hence, it is crucial to build Islamic Boarding school for young generation. The reason why the mentioned schools focus on Islamic education.

Though it is minority Muslim country, Thailand development of Islamic educational increases on yearly basis especially so significantly in three southern Thailand provinces added to annual increasing number of Muslims in Thailand. It impacts the number of Islamic Boarding schools in the south. This indicates Thailand government concerns and concerted efforts to pay special attention to the development of Islamic Boarding school in Thailand for better. Education is one of the ways to attract people in three southern Thailand as education could connect the community perception and improve their living standards. Thai government use the education as the tool to create good impact to the youth generation in three southern Thailand region. To increase the quality of education in Southern Thailand, the government established few relevant programs such as strengthening learning and teaching Thai, developing Pondok teachers, and developing media and technology implementation for learning process. (The Ministry of Education, 2010). These relevant projects are the evidences which Thailand government encourage in the development of Islamic School in Thailand.

Thailand segmented a variety of religious-educations into three types in Muslim society southern Thailand provinces. They are Tadika, Pondok and Islamic Boarding School as already previously explained. Islamic Boarding Schools are aimed to enhance the quality of students in education implementation in relation to political, economic, and social dynamics in Thailand (Alee, 2011). Each of those three types Islamic school has different characteristics. But are collectively believed to increase the development of Islamic values in three southern Thailand provinces and to reveal the knowledge to young generation. The revealed of knowledge could provide a comprehensive spiritual and moral guidance in human life and universal laws, while the scientific and technological knowledge are the tools for that action (Abusulayman, 2007).

Pondok has its own system and curriculum. It does not have to adopt national standard curriculum from the government as it has different system and curriculum. Pondok focusses on learning "Kitab" and uses year 5560 curriculum. Indeed, Thailand standard curriculum was designed based on 21st century education system. The government expected that all schools should implement the said system. However, Islamic schools still face many obstacles in terms of the implementation. Results indicate challenges came from all parts of institutions including principals, parents, teachers, and students.

Although integrated curriculum was designed to help the students to be good individuals equipped to face with the globalization skills and to practice Islamic principles simultaneously, however, the drawback in this dual system was acknowledged by Srawut Aree and Shekh Mohammad Alfatur Rahman (n.d.) who stated that dualism system in education makes students to be more confused. That reason led the scholars to think creatively in a new solution method to re-solve the problem in education. Integration curriculum was designed to solve the problems in three southern Thailand provinces. However, not all school could implement the integration curriculum. Most of Islamic Schools still adopt dualism curriculum which implement Saman and Islamic curriculum.

Education Management Challenges in the 21st Century

Aree and Rahman (2010) point out that dualism system in education was confusing world Muslims. To tackle that obstacle scholars found a pressing matter to design new education system known as integration education system which combines and balances the secular and religious terms through integration system. Educating people could not be accomplished by a sole working unit, it must enjoy all cooperation for education development, coming from the participation of all educational institutions of all levels such as "basic education, vocational education, higher education, schools, colleges and various universities". These institutions should be supported by non-educational institutions, such as mass communication, radio stations, television stations, and independent organizations. Puncreobutr (2017) concurs that everyone has a duty to educate others in society with the authority and duty to help in driving Thailand towards success within the stated period of time. In order to implement 21st century education in Thailand, the main problems stem from the several factors such as higher education, science, and research and innovation reform.

21st century education in Thailand included the revolutions of Industry 4.0 and Thailand 4.0, 2030 Agenda for the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4) in Quality Education, ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) preparations, workforce's need, middleincome gap, population aging, deterioration of natural resources due to unsustainable economic growth, and educational quality and management system development. Among these issues, the primary challenges were a middle-income trap, an inequality trap, and an imbalanced trap (Foreign Consultants, 2005). Education 4.0 is well known to promote the learners' stimulations to be more creative and innovative.

21st century education concerns development of the life skills and the skills of building an intelligent nation in the era of education 4.0. Life skills consists of "leadership, collaboration, creative, digital literacy, effective communication, emotional intelligence, entrepreneurship, global citizen, problem-solving and teamwork. Meanwhile the skills of building an intelligent nation consists of critical thinking, creativity, innovation, cross-cultural understanding, information and media literacy, career and learning skills (Puncreobutr, 2017).

Research Objectives

This study was conducted with the following research objectives:

1) To assess the system and conditions of Pondok in southernmost region of Thailand.
2) To examine the key challenges in educational management of Islamic educational institutions in southernmost region of Thailand toward 21st century education.
3) The assess the roles of Muslim scholars and educationists in designing Islamic Curricula.

4) To explore the familiarity of various Islamic schools' students with the country's Pondok set up.
5) To check Pondok' males and female views about Thai Government efforts in modernizing it.
6) To Analyze the effectiveness of Thai Government's efforts to equip Pondok' students with technology to meet the demands of globalization?

Research Questions

This study was conducted with the following research questions:

1. How are the system and conditions of Pondok in southernmost region of Thailand?
2. What are key challenges in educational management of Islamic educational institutions in southernmost region of Thailand toward 21st century education?
3. What are the roles of Muslim scholars and educationists in designing Islamic Curricula?
4. How familiar how various Islamic schools' students are with the country's Pondok set up?
5. How Pondok' males and female view Thai Government efforts in modernizing it?
6. How effective have been Thai Government's efforts to equip Pondok' students with technology to meet the demands of globalization?

Research Methodology

Participants

Data sources are both primary and secondary. Primary data was obtained from interview, meanwhile secondary data was analyzed from relevant interview excerpts. Both data sources would provide relevant information to answer the research questions about the system of Islamic education in all level of institutions in three southern Thailand provinces including Pattani, Yala, and Narathiwat which accommodate the biggest Muslim populations in Thailand. This study used purposive sampling method in data collection.

Fifty informants who are experts in different fields (15 school teachers, 15 schools' administrators, 10 experts of curriculum designers, and 10 Ministry of Education officers) in Islamic School and Islamic curriculum design. The informants were determined prior to interview with following inclusion criteria: 1) teachers must have teaching experiences at least 3 years in Islamic Boarding School, 2) Administrators mush have at least 4 years in school administrations and experienced in Islamic curriculum implementation, 3) Ministry of Education officer should have at least 4-year experience in Islamic curriculum designing. In this study, the 50 informants were to 100 participating students. Five Likert Scale questionnaire comprising 12 items was formulated by the researchers based on the responses of said 50 in-depth interviews of informants of expert who were instruments to collect data. Excerpts of these interviews were formulated into 12 questions for both the 100 student participants and 50 informants for their personal views on a wide variety of issues. This study discusses the portrait of Islamic education in the said in 3 southern Thailand provinces of Pattani, Yala, and Narathiwat.

The researchers got permission from the respondents and scheduled interviews periods, using English and Malay recorded in audio and transcribed into texts. Data validation was via triangulation carried out to re-check all the data from interviews, observations, and documentations.

Data Analysis and Results

Demographic Variables

Table 1: Respondents Distributions
Frequency Table

Respondents	Frequency	Percent
Students	100	66%
Schools Teachers	15	10%
Schools Administrators	15	10%
Curriculum Designers Experts	10	7%
Ministry of Education Staffers	10	7%
Total	**150**	**100.0**

Table 1 showed that the respondents were 66%. Half of them were males (33%), indicating equal females participated in the research are proportional to male respondents. Teachers recorded 15 respondents (10%), Principals recorded 15 respondents (10%). Ministry of Education Staffers recorded 10 respondents (7%) and finally, Curriculum Designers Experts recorded 10 respondents (7%).

Reliability
Reliability is the measure of internal consistence of the constructs in the study. A construct is reliable if the Alpha (α) value is greater than .70 (Hair et al., 2013). Construct reliability was assessed by using Cronback's Alpha. The results revealed that ISAS with 15 items (α = .999) were found reliable. Reliability results are summarized in the table 2.

Table 2: Reliability Statistics

Constructs	No. of Items	Alpha (α)
Leadership Scale	15	.999

Table 3: To the best of your knowledge indicate your degree of familiarity with the country's Pondok set up:

Respondents	Frequency	Percent
Excellent	79	52.7
Very good	86	57.3
Neutral	24	16.0
Good	13	8.7
Fair	1	0.7
Total	**150**	**100.0**

Table 3 illustrates respondents' views about the levels of their familiarities with the country's Islamic Schools set up, 79 52.7%) were excellently familiar with it, 86 (57.3%) had very good familiarity, 24 (16.0%) of the participants' familiarity was neutral. 13 (8.7%) had good familiarity, and finally, 1 (0.7%) were fairly familiar with the matter. These results implied that majority of the participants had very good familiarity with the country's Judiciary and Legislative set up.

Independent Samples Test

Table 4: Mean, Standard Deviation and t-value of males and females' satisfaction with ISAS.

Independent Samples Test										95% CI of D	
Gener	N	M	SD	*F*	Sig.	*t*	*df*	*Sig (2-t)*	M D	Lower	Upper
Male	75	1.00	.000	69.531	.001	-18.76	128	.001	-.846	-.935	-.757
Female	75	1.85	.364								

Table 4 displays an independent test conducted to measure the degree of association males and females' satisfaction. Table 4 indicates the significant difference was found on ISAS Scale, males scored higher (M = 1.00, SD = .000) than females (M = 1.85, SD = .364). [t = -18.76, mean difference = -.846, and 95% CI (-.935. -.757)]. Leven Statistics Test F (128) = 211.376. *P*<001. Therefore, females' satisfaction is higher than that of males'.

Table 5: To the best of your knowledge indicate your degree of agreement or disagreement that Pondok is an old Islamic is a closed school system that focuses on religious learning using *kitab Turos* (old books).

	Frequency	**Percent**
Strongly Agree	87	58.0
Agree	23	15.3
Neutral	18	12.0
Disagree	6	4.0
Strongly Disagree	16	10.7
Total	**150**	**100.0**

Table 5 presents respondents' statements that Pondok is an old Islamic is a closed school system that focuses on religious learning using *kitab Turos* (old books). 87 (58.0%) strongly agreed on the opinion, 23 (15.3%) agreed, 18 (12.0%) were neutral. 6 (4.0%) disagreed on the opinion, and finally, 16 (10.7%) strongly disagreed on the matter. These results implied that Pondok is an old Islamic is a closed school system that focuses on religious learning using *kitab Turos* (old books). A participants' views on this issue are clearly presented below (See excerpts 1).

Excerpt 1
To a school principal informant, "… Pondok is known as the old Islamic school. Pondok is also known to have a closed system that focuses on religious learning. Besides that, pondok uses *kitab Turos* (old books)."

Table 6: To the best of your knowledge indicate your degree of agreement or disagreement that Pondok relies exclusively on Islamic curriculum focusing on *Kitab* torus because Tok Guru (a Pondok Scholar) has good knowledge about *Kitab Torus*.

	Frequency	**Percent**
Strongly Agree	150	100.0
Agree	77	51.3
Neutral	26	17.3
Disagree	15	10.0
Strongly Disagree	26	17.3
Total	**6**	**4.0**

Table 6 illustrates the participants' statements Pondok relies exclusively on Islamic curriculum focusing on *Kitab* torus because Tok Guru (a Pondok Scholar) has good knowledge about *Kitab Torus*. 69 (46.0%) strongly agreed on the opinion, 34 (22.7%) agreed, 15 (10.0%) were neutral. 6 (4.0%) disagreed on the opinion, and finally, 23 (15.3%) strongly disagreed on the matter. These results implied that majority of the participants strongly agreed that Pondok relies exclusively on Islamic curriculum focusing on *Kitab* torus because Tok Guru (Pondok Scholar) has good knowledge about *Kitab Torus* (See excerpt 2).

Excerpt 2
".... Pondok relies exclusively on Islamic curriculum focusing on *Kitab* (old book) learning because Tok Guru (a Pondok Scholar) has good knowledge about *Kitab Torus*. Therefore, Pondok is suggested as an ideal place for those opting to study Islam as Pondok does not have to adopt academic curriculum."

Table 7: To the best of your knowledge indicate your degree of agreement or disagreement that Pondok should implement a compulsory Thai government program names "KOSONO," arranged for students who want to obtain the government National Certificate.

	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Agree	65	43.3
Agree	31	20.7
Neutral	24	16.0
Disagree	7	4.7
Strongly Disagree	23	15.3
Total	**150**	**100.0**

Table 7 expresses the respondents' beliefs that Pondok should implement a compulsory Thai government program names "KOSONO," arranged for students who want to obtain the government National Certificate. 65 (43.3%) strongly agreed, 31 (20.7%) agreed, 24 (16.0%) were neutral. 7 (4.7%) disagreed on the opinion, and finally, 23 (11.3%) strongly disagreed on the matter. These results implied that majority of the participants strongly agreed that Pondok should implement a compulsory Thai government program names "KOSONO," arranged for students who want to obtain the government National Certificate. Table 8 illustrates their perspective on. Similar views were expressed (See excerpt 3).

Excerpt 3
"Pondok should implement "KOSONO" program which is compulsory program from Thai government. This program is arranged for students who want to obtain the government National Certificate."

Table 8: To the best of your knowledge indicate your degree of agreement or disagreement that the KOSONO program is for students who want to take a diploma recognized by the government and is taught on weekends by teachers who are experts in the academic curriculum.

	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Agree	90	60.0
Agree	19	12.7
Neutral	9	6.0
Disagree	15	10.0
Strongly Disagree	17	11.3
Total	**150**	**100.0**

Table 8 illustrates the participants' statements that The KOSONO program is for students who want to take a diploma recognized by the government and is taught on weekends by teachers who are experts in the academic curriculum. 90 (60.0%) strongly agreed on the opinion, 19 (12.7%) agreed, 9 (6.0%) were neutral. 15 (10.0%) disagreed on the opinion, and finally, 17 (11.3%) strongly disagreed on the matter. These results implied that majority of the participants strongly agreed that The KOSONO program is for students who want to take a diploma recognized by the government and is taught on weekends by teachers who are experts in the academic curriculum (See excerpt 4).

Excerpt 4: To an informant from Ministry of education, *"… the traditional Pondok has a"* KOSONO "program for students who want to take a diploma recognized by the government. The KOSONO lesson will take place every weekend with teachers who are experts in the academic curriculum. However, this learning is not conducted in class but in the mosque in a shortened time. Like 6 years of learning is reduced to 3 years of learning (secondary school level).

Table 9
To the best of your knowledge indicate you degree of agreement or disagreement that Integration curriculum was designed to solve problems among the students in 3 southern Thailand provinces.

	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Agree	90	60.0
Agree	19	12.7
Neutral	9	6.0
Disagree	15	10.0
Strongly Disagree	17	11.3
Total	**150**	**100.0**

Table 9 illustrates the participants' statements that integration curriculum was designed to solve problems among the students in 3 southern Thailand provinces. 90 (60.0%) strongly agreed on the opinion, 19 (22.7%) agreed, 9 (6.0%) were neutral. 15 (10.0%) disagreed on the opinion, and finally, 17 (11.3%) strongly disagreed on the matter. These results implied that majority of the participants strongly agreed that integration curriculum was designed to solve problems among the students in 3 southern Thailand provinces.

Table 10: To the best of your knowledge indicate your degree of agreement or disagreement that the system and conditions of Islamic educational institutions in southernmost regions of Thailand equip students with skills to meet the demands of globalization

	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Agree	88	58.7
Agree	25	16.7
Neutral	7	4.7
Disagree	7	4.7
Strongly Disagree	8	5.3
Total	**150**	**100.0**

Table 10 expresses the respondents' beliefs that the system and conditions of Islamic educational institution in southernmost regions of Thailand equip students with skills to meet the demands of globalization, 88 (58.7%) strongly agreed, 25 (16.7%) agreed, 7 (4.7%) were neutral. 7 (4.7%) disagreed on the opinion, and finally, 8 (5.3%) strongly disagreed. These

results implied that majority of the participants strongly agreed that The system and conditions of Islamic educational institutions in southernmost regions of Thailand equip students with skills to meet the demands of globalization.

Table 11: To the best of your knowledge indicate you degree of agreement or disagreement that Integrated curriculum was designed to help the students to be good individuals equipped to face with the globalization skills and to practice Islamic principles simultaneously. However, this dualism system in education confused students.

	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Agree	77	51.3
Agree	26	17.3
Neutral	15	10.0
Disagree	26	17.3
Strongly Disagree	6	4.0
Total	**150**	**100.0**

Table 11 presents the overall perception of respondents' opinions that integrated curriculum was designed to help the students to be good individuals equipped to face with the globalization skills and to practice Islamic principles simultaneously. However, this dualism system in education confused students. 77 (51.3%)strongly agreed on the opinion, 26 (17.3%) agreed, 15 (10.0%) were neutral. 26 (17.3%) disagreed on the opinion, and finally, 6 (4.0%) strongly disagreed on the matter. These results implied that that integrated curriculum was designed to help the students to be good individuals equipped to face with the globalization skills and to practice Islamic principles simultaneously. However, this dualism system in education confused students (See excerpt 5).

Excerpt 5
"… although integrated curriculum was designed to help the students to be good individuals equipped to face with the globalization skills and to practice Islamic principles simultaneously, this dualism system in education made students confused."

Table 12: To the best of your knowledge indicate your degree of agreement or disagreement that teachers are not interested in working at Pondo due to meager salaries and lack of opportunities

	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Agree	90	60.0
Agree	19	12.7
Neutral	9	6.0
Disagree	15	10.0
Strongly Disagree	17	11.3
Total	**150**	**100.0**

Table 12 presents the overall perception of respondents' opinions that Teachers are not interested in working at Pondok due to meager salaries and lack of opportunities. 90 (60.0%) strongly agreed on the opinion, 19 (12.7%) agreed, 9 (6.0%) were neutral. 15 (10.0%) disagreed on the opinion, while 17 (11.3%) strongly disagreed on the matter. These results implied that teachers are not interested in working at Pondok due to meager salaries and lack of opportunities (See excerpt 6).

Excerpt 6

To a school teacher informant, "… teachers are not interested in working at Pondok due to meager salaries and lack of opportunities."

Results and Discussions
The participants in this study were 100 students and 50 informants. Five Likert Scale questionnaire comprising 12 items was formulated by the researchers based on the responses of 50 in-depth interviews of informants of expert teachers, school administrators, curriculum designers and Ministration of Education Officers were instruments to collect data. This study discusses the portrait of Islamic education in the said in 3 southern Thailand provinces of Pattani, Yala, and Narathiwat. With all of the 12 items, the majority of respondents expressed satisfactions with all the mechanisms and policies put in place by Thai movement in modernizing, improving and equipping Islamic schools with tools, skills and expertise to meet the demand of the globalization era. However, the majority of respondents with not satisfied with meager salaries these schools teachers receive leading to teachers' lack of interest in working at Pondok. On gender level, females were found to be more satisfied that males. On study level, Senior High School students were more satisfied than boy with ISAS.

Key Challenges of Islamic Educational Institutions in the 21st Century
From the educational prospect, Thailand tends to apply 21st century education in all level of education as witnessed from the development of curriculum in Thailand. In term of implementation, the Islamic Boarding School faced many obstacles from many aspects, such as, curriculum design, teacher recruitment, learning materials and resources, school policy and management, technology, parents and community engagement, and National Test.

Curricular Design
All schools are to register under Thailand government as the government designs the curriculum for public schools and Islamic Boarding schools. The implementation of curriculum needs to deal with numerous challenges because each school has its own characteristics to be applied. this creates some problems especially for Islamic Boarding School. According to the data, Pondok is yet develop modern curriculum because Tok Guru is not an expert in academic curricular designing. This is contrary to integrated school which did not face any unsurmountable challenges. Indeed, integrated curriculum in three southern Thailand provinces adopted Saman curriculum in the classroom plus designing internal curriculum related to Islamic terms to be applied by the students in school life.

Teacher Recruitment
Lack of motivation among teachers is one of the most problems of being affiliated with Pondok, because most of teachers lack skills in implementing the 21st century education system as no training programs are provided for the teachers, where very minimal teachers would opt to be employed due among other things, to low salary for the teachers. Differently, the teachers in integrated school need to deal with the multi-talent skill because integrated teachers have to be ready for being *Murobbi* who can guide the student in globalization era and Islamic practices.

Learning Resources
Learning Resources are one of the main challenges in term of 21st century implementation in education. For the Islamic Private School, the contents of Islamic books differ from the needs of students. It is because of the author does not really consider the objectives. Pondok also faced lack of resources for the students especially in Melayu and English.

Technology

For the technology development perspectives, most of Islamic Boarding are not well-prepared for 21st century education challenges. Islamic schools need more guidance to face with 21st century educational demands in term of technology use by students. Similarly, for integrated school in three southern Thailand provinces, technology is one of the crucial things to be developed for the students. Integrated schools tried to improve the quality of technology based on student's needs related to 21st century education development in Thailand.

Parents and Community Engagement

Although parents try their best to see to it that their children get the best Islamic and secular education, it is not easy for the parents to follow the development of 21st century education needs for their children. The parents and communities have a huge responsibility to help the teachers in the process of 21st century education in the school. However, not all parents would understand 21st century education system. For the rural area families, they lack of understanding about the needs of their children in 21st century education. Differently, the educating families in the city have more knowledge about education development in the globalization area. Indeed, it will be easy for them to support their children in education.

National Test

National test is divided into 2 examinations for Islamic schools, such as Ordinary National Education (ONET) for Academic Examination and Islamic National Educational Test (INET). For the past 15 years, these 2 examinations have been the target of criticisms. Introduced to test the academic proficiency of students nationwide in 2005, ONET has been attacked for its failure to improve their knowledge and skills. In addition, they are complained or even ridiculed annually from students, parents and media about the said exam irrational questions. Especially for the fact that some have been known to provide more than one answer.

Academics also questioned the quality of education at the national level and ONET's ability to assess students' academic proficiency. Athapol Anunthavorasakul, a lecturer at Chulalongkorn University's (CU) Faculty of Education, expressed his wonder whether ONET could help nourish critical thinking, as Thai students are perceived to lack this quality. "Unlike the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA), ONET does not test students' use of knowledge and critical thinking," Mr. Athapol expressed so to the Bangkok Post. Education Ministry has recently considered replacing the ONET with more relevant academic proficiency tests, according to Bangkok Post.

For the Islamic Boarding School, these exams are becoming the challenges for the teachers and the students because they need to focus on both examinations. It would be the challenges for the teachers to prepare the students for getting good result for both tests. Differently, integrated schools in southern Thailand, they just need to follow ONET test for the students. Indeed, there is no any problem for integrated school to get good result in ONET school because the students just need to be ready for ONET test.

As for INET, this examination was purposely formulated to:
1. test the knowledge and think ability of students according to the Islamic Studies Curriculum B.E. 2546 (A.D. 2003) and Common Core Islamic Studies Curriculum B.E. 2551 (A.D.2008).
2. assess their academic proficiency according to the Islamic Studies Curriculum B.E. 2546 (A.D. 2003) and Common Core Islamic Studies Curriculum B.E. 255l (A.D. 2008).
3. provide information to the schools to improve their teaching and learning activities.
4. To evaluate the quality of education at the national level.

In the academic year 2009, the 12th Office of Strategy Management and Integrated Education examined students at lower, intermediate and upper levels, 8 subjects each: 1. AI-Qur'an Explanations, 2. Words from the Prophet, 3. The Principles of Faith, 4. Religion Commandments, 5. Islamic History, 6. Islamic Ethics, 7. Bahasa Melayu and Arabic Language.

In the academic year 2010, the test was given to the students in the 3 southern provinces: Yolo, Pattani and Narathiwat. In the academic year 2010, students in 2 more provinces: Stul and Pattalung were tested. In the academic year 2012, Ministry of Education gave the test on Islamic Studies to the students all over the country. All these tests yielded mixed results and not conclusive about their positivities and negativities.

Conclusion And Recommendations

Islam takes education seriously and all Muslims are mandated to seek knowledge from the cradle to the grave. In other words, seeking education is a life span endeavor that is compulsory for all Muslims, men and woman. This is for their own wellbeing in this life and hereafter, to be useful to themselves and the Ummah.

For this reason, Islamic education increased significantly in three southern Thailand provinces, as can be attested from the number of Islamic institutions. Thailand government also supports the development of Islamic institutions by providing budgets, infrastructures, and regulations for schools, teachers and students. Pondok should register under the Ministry of Education in Thailand. These schools must adopt the curriculum designed by Thailand government, parallel to government permission that schools also implement the characteristics from school's life dominated by Islamic principles. For Islamic schools, Islamic curriculum can be divided into: Islamic curriculum, Parallel curriculum, and Integration curriculum which are implemented in three southern Thailand provinces.

For Pondok system, it focusses on Islamic curriculum implementation for the students. Pondok adopted a Torus Kitab (old kitab) as the literature for the students to learn, understand and practice Islam in daily life. Furthermore, Pondok Tok Guru is central to all Pondok and students' decision makings. In order to fulfill the needs of students for academic system, Thailand government provided an academic program namely "KOSONO" program by sending the teachers to teach the students in every weekend. Furthermore, Pondok's graduates still can go through next level of education in Thailand.

Three southern Thailand provinces also developed integrated curriculum for few schools. However, integrated curriculum could not be implemented in all schools, its only small number in Pattani. Integration curriculum was developed in different ways in three southern Thailand provinces. Indeed, that schools apply fully Saman Curriculum in the class. For the Islamic curriculum, it would be implemented in Co-curriculum or all activities for the students. Presently, Thailand focusses on development of 21st century education for all schools including Islamic school institutions. Thailand concerns on the life skills or the innovative skills to live in the era of Education 4.0, besides possessing 21st century skills. Education 4.0 consists of leadership, collaboration, creative, digital literacy, effective communication, emotional intelligence, entrepreneurship, global citizen, problem-solving and teamwork. It also has to include the skills of building an intelligent nation or intelligent people who are with critical thinking, creativity, innovation, cross-cultural understanding, information and media literacy, career and learning skills.

In the process of 21st century education implementation, most of Islamic institutions still need to confront head-on many obstacles from many aspects such as the parents and community,

curriculum, technology, National tests, learning resources, and teachers. Islamic schools continue to be incapable of implementing 21st century education to develop the students because they lack of understanding of mechanisms to apply 21st century education system and programs in learning processes. Differently, integrated school developed the students based on 21st century education. This school applies the principles of 21st century education with wide ranges of supports from the parents, communities, teachers, and the students. Not only that, integrated school is concerned about development of technologies applicable by students. Indeed, this school tries to develop globalization skills among students in line with the Islamic teachings and practices.

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