

**Webinar: IAIS Malaysia Online Research Camp for Academic and
Policy Research
(22-23 June 2021)**

Mohammad Mahbubi Ali

Following the success of the 2019 and 2020 research camps, IAIS Malaysia, amid the COVID-19 pandemic, organised its annual “Research Camp for Academic and Policy Research” via online on 22-23 June 2021.

The camp provided researchers, lecturers, and postgraduate students with in-depth insight into how to produce high-quality academic papers and manage academic references efficiently. It also equipped participants with essential skills for conducting both academic and policy research. During the two-day event, participants learned the basics of how to formulate policy issue papers, utilise the Oxford style of writing, write newspaper articles, reference Islamic sources, and manage academic references.

The research camp provided seven modules in total: (1) “Decades of Academic Excellence and Prolific Writing: Experiences as an Islamic Scholar,” by Professor Dato’ Dr Mohammad Hashim Kamali, the founding CEO IAIS Malaysia; (2) “Developing and Designing Policy Issue Papers,” by Dr Mohamed Azam Mohamed Adil, IAIS Malaysia Deputy CEO and Dr Ahmad Badri Abdullah, IAIS Malaysia Research Fellow; (3) “The Art of Constructing Quality Academic Papers: The ‘Oxford Style’ of Writing,” by Dr Alexander Wain, IAIS Malaysia Associate Fellow; (4) “Tips and Strategies for Writing a Newspaper Op-ed” by Dr Mohamed Azam Mohamed Adil; (5) “The Do’s and Don’t’s of Legal Research,” by Mrs Apnizan Abdullah, IAIS Malaysia Research Fellow; (6) “Citing and Referencing Islamic Sources: Avoiding Common Pitfalls,” by Mr Mohd Fariz Zainal Abdullah, IAIS Malaysia Head of Human Resources; and (7) “Academic Housekeeping: Managing References and Databases,” by Dr Shahino Mah Abdullah, IAIS Malaysia Research Fellow.

Kamali, in the opening session, shared his long-standing experiences in research and authorship and provided important tips and keys to becoming a prolific author and excellent researcher. In the second session, Mohammad Azam and Ahmad Badri discussed some important aspects and steps in preparing policy issues papers. Alexander Wain shared his personal experience in using the Oxford style of writing and how it differs from other forms of academic writing. He listed the key elements of the Oxford Style, including the three-art structures, concise sentences and use of active sentences.

The second day of the research camp started with a sharing session by Mohammed Azam on preparing a newspaper Op-ed. He discussed the characteristics of an Op-ed and shared some writing tips and tricks. Apnizan Abdullah discussed several important aspects of doing legal research. In the preceding session, Mohd Fariz highlighted some of the common mistakes in referring to Islamic sources. The last session by Shahino Mah provided participants with structured and simple techniques in managing references and databases using Endnote software.

This year's research camp attracted more than 30 participants from Malaysia, Indonesia and Singapore, representing a variety of backgrounds and professions, ranging from researchers to lecturers, students, representatives from the mufti offices, CEO, policymakers, and Islamic finance practitioners.

Webinar: Melaka Kingdom: Myth and Fact (24 June 2021)

Muhd Nur Iman Ramli

The webinar was delivered by Dr Alexander Wain, Associate Research Fellow of IAIS Malaysia, and Dr Mohamad Firdaus Bin Mansor Majdin, Assistant Professor from the Department of History and Civilisation (IIUM) as a commentator. This webinar explored the history of Malay civilisation and investigated the historicity of *Sejarah Melayu*, and the myth and fact in the history of Melaka, including how this has generally impacted the study of Malay history.

In reference to the history of the Melaka kingdom, both Wain and Mohamad Firdaus highlighted the Malay literary work known as *Sejarah Melayu* (Malay Annals), the principal Malay source that gives a romanticised history of the origins, evolution, and demise of the Melaka Sultanate. It centred around the character of Sang Nila Utama, who was famously known as Parameswara. The work was composed sometime between the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, and is considered as one of the finest literary and historical works in the Malay language. It was traditionally written in classical Malay on a traditional paper in Jawi script. The text has undergone numerous changes and the oldest known text was dated 1612. This was later known as the Raffles MS No. 18.

The phantasmagorical stories in the *Sejarah Melayu* were constructed as a body of literature to be marvelled at by future generations. According to both Wain and Mohamad Firdaus, this, however, leads to a problem. Rather than seeing *Sejarah Melayu* as a great work of history detailing the past, some see it