



## Holisticization of Knowledge versus Islamization of Human Knowledge in the Contemporary Islamic Universities in Muslim World

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### Abstract

The intellectual soundness and genuineness for the need to Islamize contemporary knowledge, from a secular perspective as well as the need to contextualize Islamic Revealed knowledge, have been elaborately and extensively elucidated by many Muslim scholars. With the trends and success of integration between Islamization of human knowledge and relevantization of Islamic Revealed knowledge so far by the Islamic Universities, little focus of attention is given to the articulation on holisticization of knowledge as an integral process of Islamization of human knowledge and contextualization of Islamic Revealed knowledge in spite of overwhelming literature on the subject-matter since 1970s. Therefore, the primary objective of this paper is to explore the concept of holisticization of knowledge as a process of Islamization of knowledge in Islamic Universities in Muslim world. The paper is library-based using content analysis of different sources as part of qualitative method. The findings indicate that integration of knowledge is a focal objective of the Islamic Universities and holisticization of knowledge as a process of Islamization of knowledge is an endogenous-based target that develops mental, spiritual and character aspects of the learners in various disciplines. Nonetheless, stagnation of Islamic education and secularization of modern knowledge are two major hindrances to Islamic intellectual tradition in the contemporary time. In conclusion, it is not doubtful that holisticization of knowledge as a process of Islamization of human knowledge is viable in addressing multifarious challenges of Muslim countries with specific focus on the development of Islamic university system. It is therefore suggested that, Islamic knowledge should be contextualized while conventional knowledge should be instilled with Islamic worldview. Also, while designing curricula or academic programmes of various disciplines (religious, pure and social sciences) in different Islamic Universities in the Muslim world, elements of curriculum namely: objective, content selection, method and evaluation should be taken into account in order to achieve holisticization of knowledge as a central climax lucidly elaborated in this paper.

**Keywords:** *Islamic University, Islamization of Human Knowledge, Relevantization of Islamic Revealed Knowledge and Holisticization of Knowledge*

### Abstrak

Para ulama Islam telah banyak menjelaskan kekukuhan dan keaslian intelektual bagi keperluan mengislamisasi pengetahuan kontemporer, dari perspektif sekular serta keperluan untuk kontekstual pengetahuan Islam yang unggul. Rentetan aliran dan kejayaan integrasi antara pengetahuan manusia Islamisasi dan relevan pengetahuan Islam yang unggul sehingga kini oleh Universiti Islam, hanya sedikit perhatian diberikan kepada artikulasi pengetahuan holistik sebagai proses integral pengetahuan manusia islamisasi dan kontekstualisasi Ilmu Islam yang unggul walaupun terdapat kesusasteraan yang banyak dalam perkara terbabit sejak tahun 1970-an. Oleh itu, objektif utama penyelidikan ini adalah untuk meneroka konsep pengetahuan holistik sebagai proses Islamisasi pengetahuan di Universiti Islam dalam dunia Islam. Penyelidikan ini berasaskan perpustakaan menggunakan analisis kandungan sumber yang berbeza sebagai

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sebahagian daripada kaedah kualitatif. Penemuan menunjukkan bahawa pengintegrasian pengetahuan adalah matlamat utama Universiti Islam dan pengetahuan holistik sebagai proses pengetahuan Islamisasi adalah sasaran berasaskan endogen yang mengembangkan aspek mental, rohani dan ciri-ciri pelajar dalam pelbagai disiplin. Walau bagaimanapun, pendidikan Islam yang tidak berkembang dan pengetahuan moden yang sekularisasi adalah dua halangan utama kepada tradisi intelektual Islam pada zaman kontemporari. Sebagai kesimpulan, tiada keraguan bahawa pengetahuan holistik sebagai proses mengislamisasikan pengetahuan manusia adalah berdaya maju dalam menangani pelbagai cabaran negara-negara Islam dengan penumpuan khusus terhadap pembangunan sistem universiti Islam. Oleh itu, adalah dicadangkan bahawa pengetahuan Islam harus dalam konteks manakala pengetahuan konvensional harus diterap dengan pandangan dunia Islam. Selain itu, semasa merancang kurikulum atau program akademik pelbagai disiplin (ilmu agama, sains tulen dan sains sosial) di pelbagai Universiti Islam yang dalam dunia Islam, elemen-elemen kurikulum iaitu: objektif, pemilihan kandungan, kaedah dan penilaian harus diambil kira untuk mencapai pengetahuan holistik sebagai klimaks berpusat yang diperjelaskan dalam penyelidikan ini.

**Kata kunci:** *Universiti Islam, Pengislamisasi Pengetahuan Manusia, Relevanisasi Ilmu Islam Unggul dan Pengetahuan Holistik*

## **Introduction**

Islamic Universities in the Muslim world especially the International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM), Islamic University Pakistan (Islamabad), Islamic University Uganda (IUU) and few others have been playing significant intellectual roles and making tremendous contributions to human resource development in various fields. Since the aftermath of the World Conference on Muslim Education held in Makkah in 1977, the Islamic Universities have been gaining momentum with an emphasis on the Islamization and integration of knowledge. Nonetheless, Islamization of knowledge as the cardinal focus of the Islamic Universities has been criticized from some quarters even by some Muslim intellectuals.

An important factor necessitating the need to agitate for Islamization is a conflicting educational system-Islamic education in one hand and western secular education on the other hand (Rosnani, 2008). The secularist approach to education has undoubtedly prepared the mindsets of young generation especially by engraving doubt and denouncement of the existence of God into their minds. This is not only reflected in educational design or curriculum formulation; the huge budget is allocated in promoting the secularist educational system even in Muslim countries. The danger of this educational system among the Muslim is detrimental to the collective existence of human beings. It is detrimental because it is an educational system that rejects the existence of God in all schemes of human endeavours. Nonetheless, few decades had elapsed when the Muslim intellectuals and thinkers stood vehemently to repudiate the further spread of secularist educational dichotomy that causes 'conflict of mind' to the Muslims (Conference Book, 1977). For instance, the

way theory of evolution and 'Big Bang theory' are being taught in various institutions of learning, indeed, is a systematic approach to nurture the rejection of God in the evolution of the universe as the handiwork of God.

Indeed, there are internal and external factors such as sectarian violence and western hegemony in the Muslim countries necessitated the need for the conceptualization of Islamization of human knowledge in the contemporary Muslim nations (Al-Faruqi, 1982; Al-Faruqi, 1988).

The rationale for this is that, since early 1980s until today, Muslims continually discussing Islamization of knowledge as an ongoing concept. Even still its philosophical, epistemological and methodological aspects also remain ongoing since few decades ago (Al-Alwani, 1989; Al-Alwani, 1995a; Al-Alwani, 1995b; Al-Alwani, 2006). This is a clear indication that the way Muslim scholars deal with knowledge is different from the way western scholars deal with knowledge. For instance, Bloom Taxonomy of knowledge of 1956 is commonly known in education whereby cognitive, affective and psychomotor domains were identified with concrete findings. Similarly, Gardner (1956) came up with multiple intelligences which are dimensions of intelligence; however, both were not considered an ongoing. Nonetheless, it may be argued that, there is need to concretize discourse on knowledge by the Muslim scholars. The intellectual trends of the Muslims continued to be developed through the Islamization of human knowledge (Kamal Hassan, 2009). Similarly, the philosophical, epistemological and methodological underpinnings of Islamization of human knowledge argue alongside with integration between Islamic and non-Islamic knowledge (Muhammad Mumtaz Ali, 2011). Subsequently, the

International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM) is regarded as the institution of learning in experimenting Islamization and integration of knowledge.

Nonetheless, salient importance of holisticization of knowledge as the process of Islamization of human knowledge is mainly to regain the intellectual tradition of the Muslims. This paper attempts to elaborate on the vital or salient significance of holisticization of knowledge as an integral part of Islamization of human knowledge as the existing literature explicates. This paper conceptualizes holisticization of knowledge as a process of Islamization of human knowledge. Consequently, the sub-headings demonstrate the detailed and meticulous explication of this paper.

### **An Overview of Islamic Educational System and Islamic Universities**

The first revelation descended unto the Prophet (S.A.W.) as reflected in Q96: 1-5 explicates on the significance of knowledge. It is through knowledge that Muslims would be able to discharge their ritualistic worships to their Creator as well as civic responsibility to fellow human beings. Essentially, Islam emphatically stresses on the vital importance of knowledge and wisdom. Wisdom is a fruit emanating from the knowledge. Both knowledge and wisdom are the strengths of Muslims in the past-in the classical Islamic civilization. Today, knowledge is growing faster and various higher institutions of learning are established in the Muslim countries. Modern knowledge grows along with secularization and westernization. However, in the contemporary age of science and technology, to de-secularize and de-westernize knowledge, Islamic universities also cater for the integration and Islamization of knowledge. Today, we hardly discuss about Islamic universities without making a specific reference to historical antecedent of Islamic education. Bilgrami and Ashraf (1985) have meticulously examined phenomenon of Islamic education which are categorized into four namely: prophetic era, early Muslim period, middle ages and Islamic education today. Each of these is explained in the subsequent paragraphs.

First, during the prophetic era, Islamic education combined practices in both words and actions. For example, whenever any Qur'anic verse was being revealed unto the Prophet (S.A.W.), he would teach his companions and ensure that they practiced and internalized the inherent values contained therein. Significantly, the approach of the Prophet (S.A.W.) throughout his life was an educative one whereby he possessed unique qualities such as tolerance and sympathy to his disciples (i.e. learners). Inferably,

literature posits that the Prophet (S.A.W.) devoted his life for the education of Muslims at the Islamic Centre popularly known as '*Al-Suffah*'. On one hand, the religious contents of education at *Al-Suffah* Islamic Centre (AIC) were the Holy Qur'ān, *Tajwīd*, and Islamic Sciences (Bilgrami and Ashraf, 1985). On the other hand, the non-religious contents taught by the Prophet (S.A.W.) were swimming, shouting arrow, basics of medicine, astronomy, genealogy and practical phonetics. Undoubtedly, all the components of curriculum such as: objective, content selection, method and evaluation manifested in the curriculum design of the Prophet (S.A.W.). The harmonization between religious and non-religious contents as demonstrated by the Prophet (S.A.W.) at *Al-Suffah* could be considered that integration of knowledge was educational system of the Prophet (S.A.W.).

Second, regarding early Muslim education, the first four centuries of *Hijrah* was a turning point or an important landmark with respect to the establishment of institutions of learning. The institutions of learning like *maktabs* were organized mostly in mosques in order to impart knowledge as literature contends (Bilgrami and Ashraf, 1985). The role of mosque as an institution of learning gave an unprecedented achievement to Islamic educational system at this period. The spiritual role of mosque was a central climax to philosophy of Islamic education in the explanation of contributions of early Muslims to education. For instance, literature acknowledges that the establishment of higher institutions of learning especially during the Abbasid era promoted Islamic intellectual tradition and scientific advancement. However, as a result of the fact that mosques were attached to institutions instead of attaching institutions to mosques, this indirectly shifted the emphatic stress of education from spirituality to intellectuality; nonetheless, both complement each other at later period.

Third, in the middle ages, there was total separation between mosque and institution of learning called *madrasah*. Between eleventh and fourteenth centuries, education properly prospered and progressed meaningfully. Undoubtedly Spain (*Andalus*) immensely contributed to Islamic education. During this period, many Muslim scholars were produced who were experts in various disciplines. Nonetheless, the fall of Spain around 1570 affected the prosperity and progress in construction of knowledge. Undeniably, in the Middle Ages, various centres of learning attracted brilliant scholars and students around the world.

Fourth, prior to the explanation of Islamic education today, it is essential to briefly assess the oldest Islamic university in the world (i.e. *Al-Azhar*).

In fact, the university contributed to Islamic intellectual tradition and many experts in various fields were produced. It is interestingly noted by Bilgrami and Ashraf (1985) that:

“*Al-Azhar* is not merely the oldest Islamic university of the world- it has had a profound influence on the life of Egypt for a thousand years. It has produced great leaders, philosophers, scholars, politicians and men known for their wisdom, integrity and character. It still occupies a prominent place among the Muslim institutions of the world and exercises great influence on the minds and hearts of Muslim students of theology (p. 25).

Based on the above explication, it is clearly shown that, at the initial time that *Al-Azhar* university was providing educational opportunity for people, it was favourably competing with the then Caliph *Nizamul Mulk* who in 1067 built a great college known as *Nizhamiyyah* as an institution of learning in Baghdad. An inference can be drawn that, the rationale for the competition between *Al-Azhar* and *Nizhamiyyah* was in order to have a very high reputation, control and provision of education in the Muslim world. To sum up the ideal of Islamic educational system as exemplified in the four categories mentioned earlier. The early Muslims such as Imām Bukhārī, Al-Ghazzālī devoted their life in search for knowledge in various places. Similarly, they promote literary debate and intellectual discourse which stimulated mutual understanding of intellectual discourse. It is unfortunate that, in spite of an emphasis on the early intellectual prowess of the past that promoted literary debate and intellectual or constructive argument in promoting knowledge and understanding, this must be given focus of attention among the contemporary Universities.

### **Lethargy of Contemporary Islamic Education**

Islamic education is in between perceived stagnation and advocated integration of knowledge. Islamic education is perceived to be rigid and its content is criticized to be unchanged. Perceived rigidity or stagnation in Islamic education and unchanged content is in the forefront of educational debates and issues in the recent, in Muslim countries in general. This trend is a continuity of educational dichotomy between Islamic and Western education of which in Malaysian context, the study of Rosnani (2008) has properly captured it as ‘educational dualism’ and otherwise Syed Ali Ashraf (1979) termed it as ‘educational dichotomy’. The extent of the world’s

attention on the system of Islamic education in the Muslim countries has been reflected in the United Nations’ Declaration that there is a need to have proper understanding about Islamic educational system in general and *madrasah* education in particular as literature contends (Alexander, 2006). Contrarily, Muhammad Mumtaz Ali (2014) contends that, various streams with different ideological discourses-traditionalist, modernist, reformist and revivalist- in Muslim countries are as a result of commitment to Islamic worldview. Ahmad and Awang Mat (2013) submit that, harmonization of educational orientations among *madrasah* students is vitally important in order to address the perceived rigidity in Islamic education.

However, there is a fundamental issue that makes it difficult to address the issue of harmonization of educational orientations as noted in the study of Ahmad and Awang Mat (2013b). For instance, there is a disparity between Islamic education in government schools and private owned *madrasah*. There is curriculum experts’ involvement in designing the curriculum of Islamic education in government schools while there is a lack of curriculum expertise in formulating curriculum of private owned-*madrasah* in many Muslim countries.

The government schools where Islamic education and other western secular subjects are taught produced blended personality among Muslims while private owned *madrasah* that mostly taught religious subjects produce learners who are only religious-oriented, because they are not exposed to socio-political issues. In this regard, the learners’ orientation does not only affect themselves but also affects the entire Muslim community in respect to religious, social, cultural and political matters. Based on the foregoing assertion, Rosnani (2007) contends that traditional Islamic education produces students who are *fatwa*- oriented but lack the ability to contribute to all other spheres such as socio-economic. More dangerously, *madrasah* generally has been criticized for grooming terrorism. For instance, the menace of Islamic sect called “*Boko Haram*” (i.e. western education is detestable) in North-eastern part of Nigeria, is attributed to rigidity of traditional *madrasah* system as a result of the kind of students that are being produced from the system. The aforementioned problem has not only captured the attention of the Muslim academicians but also the government authorities. Thus, various state governments have been much concern about addressing the rigidity of Islamic education in the context of traditional *madrasah* and *Islamiyyah* or *Ilmiyyah* schools in the country. It can be submitted that, Boggs (1993) contends that, the role of

intellectuals is paramount in addressing the crisis of society.

### **Secularization of Modern Knowledge**

Contemporary Muslim scholars have been offering arguments on de-westernization of knowledge. Notably, modern Western knowledge is taught based on secularist worldview while Islamic knowledge is taught based on Islamic worldview (Al-Alwani, 1995b). Undoubtedly, the intellectual demarcation is drawn on the basis of philosophical and epistemological aspects of modern western knowledge and Islamic knowledge. Islamization of knowledge began since 1970s as the intellectual vehicle that is used as a process of instilling Islamic worldview into existing body of knowledge. This argument remains so significant to the extent that Islamic and western intellectual traditions are different specifically in the aspect of epistemology (Al-Attas, 1979; Al-Attas, 1991; Al-Attas, 1993). This difference has continued even until today. Some even perceived as if the whole educational enterprise of the western secular education is in disharmony with Islamic educational system. What is expected is an ability to filter good ideas from western secular system and harmonize it with Islamic educational system. Therefore, there is perceived disharmony of western education especially in the aspect of knowledge and experience. In so doing, it is argued that, philosophy of western education is antagonistic to Islamic education philosophy as literature expounds (Wan Daud Wan Muhad Nor, 1998).

The issue and argument raised by some contemporary Muslim scholars is to demonstrate that western educational system is not value-free. It is believed in one hand that it promotes the secular interest that further promotes the westernization and secularization of knowledge. On the other hand, some other Muslim scholars have fervently believed that the Islamic educational system cannot bring meaningful development to the world, not because of the system itself but because of the stagnant nature of the Islamic intellectual tradition. Hence, it can be inferred that western education is projected positively while Islamic education is projected negatively.

The political climate is favourable to western education which does not favour Islamic education. For example, the budget allocated to public secular system is in maximal level compared to religious educational system even in the majority of Muslim countries. With this trend, the governments and stakeholders have greater say in what constitutes what to learn, how to learn and when to learn by the students and vice versa for the teachers. This issue undeniably was raised by the prominent western

educator and thinker, John Dewey who agitated for democratic curriculum which clamours that the classroom experience of the learners must be a prototype of their ways of life which must go beyond the classroom setting. With this fundamental issue, and the argument of Muslim scholars started that, western education is not value-free especially with the political decision influencing and contributing more to the westernization of educational enterprises even in the Muslim land, hence western hegemony becomes the order and the alien secular educational system becomes the license or benchmark to determine who is educated and who is not. The projection of western education in promoting westernization of knowledge is worrisome to the Muslim scholars and they advocate for Islamization of human knowledge.

### **Islamization of Human knowledge: A Continued Intellectual Dialogue**

The exponents of Islamization of human knowledge such Al-Attas, Al-Faruqi, Al-Alwani, AbuSulayman among others have vehemently denounced that it is not an academic exercise but it is a paradigm shift that focuses on the redirection of *Ummah* and humanity towards the recognition of God. In addition, Islamization is a theoretical and conceptual basis that attempt to painstakingly demonstrate the intellectual and social relevance of Islamic paradigm with specific focus on Islamic worldview- the worldview that projects God as the Source of knowledge. However, knowledge acquires through experience and interaction with social environment must trigger man to recognize the essence and existence of God. Nonetheless, western secular paradigm of knowledge that denounces God as the Ultimate Source of knowledge necessitates for the emergence of Islamization in the 1970s. The ultimate goal of Islamization is to establish Islamic epistemological paradigm of knowledge which reflects Islamic worldview (Muhammad Mumtaz Ali (20110; Muhammad Mumtaz Ali, 2014). Rafiqul Islam Molla (2014) argues that Islamization is regarded as a movement towards the reform of Islamic understanding of knowledge as well as towards transforming acquired human knowledge.

Islamization of human or contemporary knowledge cannot be properly discussed without referring to its exponents, its philosophical, epistemological and methodological aspects. All the aforementioned aspects are not separated from intellectual discourse on de-westernization or de-secularization of human knowledge. In so doing, the dichotomy between Islamic and western secular knowledge becomes the core aspect of Islamization. In order to address

dichotomous or dual educational system-Islamic and western conventional- in Muslim countries, integration of the two systems become recurring themes in the literature on Islamization of knowledge (Al-Faruqi, 1988; Rosnani, 2008; Kamal Hassan, 2009; Ahmad and Awang, 2013).

Inferably therefore, integration becomes a twin-sister intellectual discourse of Islamization of knowledge. In other words, integration of modern secular knowledge into Islamic perspective is the ultimate concern of Islamization. Onwards, Reconstruction or redirection of contemporary knowledge is the central focus of Islamization that should have bedrock upon which it is built. Therefore, it is explained on the bases of philosophical, epistemological and methodological conceptions of Islamization of knowledge.

The epistemological conception of Islamization has been interestingly demonstrated by Al-Faruqi (1988) who claims that epistemology of knowledge must be based on spiritual and ideological bases upon which multifarious challenges of the *Ummah* can be solved. It is further demonstrated that redirection of knowledge by instilling Islamic worldview into human knowledge will undoubtedly reshape the mindset of Muslims. It can be asserted that Al-Faruqi (1988) clamours for the creative synthesis of knowledge through intellectual, spiritual, moral and physical development of Muslims. Moreover, the initial position of Al-Faruqi (1988) has been a recurring theme on the literature on Islamization regarding the plight of the *Ummah* which focuses on addressing the dichotomy between Islamic and western secular systems. Rosnani and Imron Rossidy (2008) assert that, in the 1980s Muslim scholars' discourse demonstrated epistemological dimension of Islamization of knowledge. Similarly, Sarfaroze and Nadeem (2011) argue that epistemology is vitally related to Islamization of knowledge because it is an intellectual effort to project knowledge from Islamic perspective.

Furthermore, it is interesting to posit that epistemological aspect of discourse on the Islamization of knowledge is a prerequisite for methodological aspect of the ongoing intellectual discourse of Islamization. Therefore, AbuSulayman (1994) contends that the stagnation of Muslims is in Islamic thought and its methodology is the main problem to be addressed. In order to solve this problem, there is an emphasis on the interpretations of universal messages or teachings of Islam rather than specific applications. Inferably, it can be deduced that AbuSulayman (1994) as an exponent of Islamization of knowledge clamours for an "interpretive methodology" as a solution to the stagnation of

knowledge as the major plight of Muslims. There is a need to methodology to properly deal with knowledge as well as to comprehend the Divine message. It is also required to have a proper methodology to understand and interact with natural phenomenon or physical world. Based on the foregoing assertion, Euben (2002) posits that the epistemological aspect as a requisite for Islamization clamours for the pursuit of knowledge and provides appropriate methodology to have a balance in comprehending and integrating the Divine Revealed Book (the Qur'ān- and physical universe). In line with the above assertion, Ahmad and Awang Mat (2013) contend that, both Divine scriptural Book (*Ayātu Mantūq*) and physical universe (*ayātu Manzūr*) must be harmonized together.

The recent explication shown in the literature on Islamization indicates that, AbuSulayman's emphasis on the methodology must be properly understood in relation to all spheres of development (Muhammad Mumtaz Ali, 2014). Thereby, intellectual development is a prerequisite for all other aspects development-spiritual, social, economic, hence, there is a need to formulate an appropriate methodology in dealing with intellectual development in particular and other facets of development in general.

### **Relevantization of Islamic Revealed Knowledge: An Emerging Intellectual Discourse**

This is a twin-sister concept with Islamization of human knowledge. Since 1970s, previous research and various scholarly works have been conducted by Muslim scholars who developed intellectual mindset to discuss philosophical, epistemological and methodological concepts of Islamization of knowledge. Various arguments have emerged as to whether pure science can be Islamized or not. Since Islamization cannot be applied to Islamic knowledge, then Al-Alwani (1995) conceptualized an idea that all branches of Islamic revealed knowledge should be contextualized. Corroboratively, the idea of Mohd. Kamal Hassan (2009) projects that Islamic revealed knowledge must be relevantized which is similar with the concept of contextualization as promoted by Al-Alwani (1995). Contextualization or relevantization of knowledge refers to an attempt to make the content of Islamic knowledge relevant in addressing multifarious challenges of Muslims. Just like Islamization of knowledge, contextualization or relevantization of Islamic revealed is conceptualized by its exponents (i.e. Al-Alwani, 1995; Mohd. Kamal Hassan, 2009) to address the intellectual stagnation in Islamic revealed especially by developing all branches of revealed knowledge in solving multifarious problems of the *Ummah*.

Moreover, classification of knowledge into revealed and acquired has been properly dealt with in several studies such as Usman Bakar (2006), Rosnani (2008), Ahmad & Awang (2013) and among others. Similarly, many scholarly works, since an inception on the discourse on Islamization of human knowledge, have meticulously articulated on the philosophical, epistemological and methodological underpinnings of the concept. This intellectual discourse of Islamization remain so repugnant in relation to the branches of Islamic Revealed Knowledge until recent time that Muslim scholars such as Al-Alwani (1995a), Mohd Kamal Hasan (2009), Muhammad Mumtaz Ali (2014) among others responded that Islamic revealed knowledge must be contextualized or relevantized. By contextualization or relevantization, it means that Muslim intellectuals must be equipped with problem solving skills in addressing multifarious peculiar challenges of Muslim countries using Islamic knowledge as the basis for solving the socio-economic problems. This has been practically done in Malaysia where Islamic inputs or frameworks are being operationally used in many aspects especially in Islamic banking and finance in solving socio-economic problems of the society.

### **Holisticization of Knowledge in the Contemporary Islamic Universities**

Islamic Universities such as International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM), Islamic University Pakistan (Islamabad), Islamic University in Uganda (IUIU) and few others have been playing significant intellectual roles and making tremendous contributions to human resource development in various fields in the Muslim countries. Indeed, in the contemporary time, there are few Islamic Universities such as International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM), Islamic University Pakistan (Islamabad), Islamic University Uganda (IUIU). More specifically, the International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM) established in 1983 is a model for all other Islamic Universities because it is the hub of Islamization, integration, internationalization of knowledge. There are students from more than forty (40) countries are in various fields in the university. Therefore, it is integrally important to stress that, the International Islamic university Malaysia and others must be cognizance of the components of holisticization of knowledge especially in the curriculum design of various academic programmes.

It is important that the discourse on the Islamization of human knowledge and contextualization or relevantization of Islamic Revealed Knowledge is cognizance of holisticization of knowledge too. Indeed, it focuses on endogenous-based-of

Islamization of knowledge. This is important because most of the earlier discourses on Islamization of knowledge are more exogenous-based. Thereby, the endogenous-based (i.e. holisticization of knowledge) as a dimension that is examined in this paper is regarded as a process of twin-sister concept-Islamization and contextualization.

In other words, the conceptualization of holisticization of knowledge is justified in demonstrating the need for expanding the theoretical basis of Islamization of knowledge which has been a persistent theme in the literature especially towards reclaiming the intellectual strength of contemporary *Ummah*. Moreover, Mohd. Kamal Hassan (2009) contends that education is a prerequisite for development, hence education must be holistic. The term holistic according to Kamal Hassan (2009) refers to the compartmentalization of revealed and acquired knowledge especially with specific emphasis on instilling Islamic worldview on knowledge acquired through intellect. This is justified further that infusing Islamic worldview into western secular knowledge is paramount because literature asserts that dualism and dichotomy of knowledge is not only harmful to Muslims but to humanity in general (Rosnani, 2008; Mohd. Kamal Hassan, 2009; Ahmad, Fatemah, 2012). In so doing, especially in using the interpretive methodology clamoured for by AbuSulayman (1994), therefore, 'holisticization of knowledge' forms a central focus of this paper.

The word 'holisticization' is derived from a noun 'holism' which mean 'whole' while its adjective is 'holistic' which is directly or indirectly connected with whole. The holisticization of knowledge is a concept aims at expanding further the concept of Islamization of human knowledge and relevantization of Islamic revealed knowledge. The holisticization of knowledge is a process of developing the holiness and wholeness of the learners. It is a process of making Islamization of human knowledge manifest the activation of Muslims' potentials in the aspect of mental, spiritual and character development. In other words, holisticization refers to the process of developing total personality of Muslims making Islamization and relevantization as its frameworks. This is vitally important because philosophical, epistemological and methodological discourses of the Islamization do not consider the components of holisticization of knowledge. Hence, holisticization of knowledge is coined to expound on a process of developing the whole personality of the learners utilizing the framework of Islamization of human knowledge. Literature posits that, reconstruction of intellectual dialogue is the heart of holistic education (Koegel and Miller, 2003; Miller, 2005; Lucila and

Rudge, 2008). The personality development can be achieved whereby all branches of Islamic revealed knowledge and acquired knowledge focus on the development of wholeness of Muslim students specifically developing mental, spiritual, character and physical aspects (Rosnani, 2008).

Thereby, an attempt is made to elaborate the concept of holisticization of knowledge as a process of Islamization of knowledge. This is conceptualized based on the recommendation of the First World Conference on Muslim Education held in Makkah in 1977 whereby the resolution of the conference concluded that, Muslim educational system must develop students' intellectual, spiritual, emotional, physical and social aspects (Conference Book, 1977). More importantly, Rosnani (2008) identifies importance of developing mental, spiritual and character aspects by the Muslims, each of which is explicated.

First, mental development is ultimately important in meticulously elaborating on the development of holiness and wholeness of the students as exemplified in the study of Zahra al-Zheera (2001). Rosnani (2008) contends that Islamic education gives priority to spiritual aspect at the expense of intellectual aspect. Inferably, it can be said that intellectual development is a requisite for spiritual development of students. Corroboratively, Mohd. Kamal Hassan (2013) submits that "the development of the holistic personality of 'possessors of sound intellect', the *ulul albab*' is integrally important in addressing the aforementioned problem identified by Rosnani (2008). The intellectual development that enables man to think, ponder and contemplate over Allah's creatures such as natural phenomenon is an essential prerequisite for spiritual development of the learners. This is in line with the assertion of great Muslim thinkers, Al-Farabi and Ibn Sina that development of learners' intellect must be regarded as a priority and objective of education in order to reach ultimate level of perfection in life because human intellect is unique (Miriam, 1990, Rosnani, 2008). Kazmi (1999) asserts that knowledge and faith are interrelated in Islamic tradition.

Second, spiritual aspect is an integral part of holisticization of knowledge. Since Islamization fundamentally examines the concept of instilling Islamic worldview into the existing body of knowledge, hence the Islamic worldview emphatically stresses on the *Tawhīdic* worldview. This is importantly related to spiritual aspect as one of the major or ultimate components of holisticization of knowledge. Indeed, spirituality in western discourse is related to compassion and wisdom; however, it is related to the essential component of holistic

education as literature expounds (Lucila & Rudge, 2008). The identified elements of holistic education- compassion and wisdom- from western perspective are an underlining western secular worldview that is distinctive from Islamic worldview. This is not an indication that Islam is antagonistic to the identified components (compassion and wisdom); nonetheless, western worldview on the components of spiritual aspect of holistic education is not necessarily being regarded as worship; which contrarily, Islam does, lucidly through its various precepts. Similarly, Zahra al-Zheera (2001) subscribes to the idea that holistic education must develop the holiness and wholeness of Muslim students. Notably, spirituality is of internal and external elements from Islamic perspective. In one hand, the internal aspect is a process of activating human consciousness about the essence and existence of Almighty Allah (S.W.T.) which henceforth nurtured the awareness that is known as faith in God. After the establishment faith (*Iman*), then the process of cleansing oneself (*Tazkiyatun-Nafs*) in order to attain piety begins. On the other hand, the external element of spirituality is a manifestation of the proclaimed faith (*Iman*) through various actions and rituals that are regarded as worship in Islam such as *Salah*, *Sawm*.

Third, character development relates to ethical values which have to do with behaviours (*Akhlaq*) towards others with sole objective of promoting ethical values in the society. An eminent Muslim scholar, Imam Al-Ghazzālī is of the opinion that the ultimate aim of Islam is to eradicate ambiguities and ignorance and more importantly cultivation of virtue and moral character. In line with the opinion of Imam Al-Ghazzālī, a contemporary Muslim thinker Al-Attas (1991) posits that inculcation of good or virtuous person. It is interestingly noted by Rosnani (2008) that:

*Akhlaq* deals with behaviours towards others such as teachers, parents and friends, ethical values, like honesty, trustworthiness, sympathy and kindness to man as well as animals, the importance of seeking knowledge and giving respect to scholars or men of knowledge; knowledge of *Tasawwuf* (self purification or mysticism); including knowledge of praiseworthy virtues such as temperance, gratitude, sincerity, repentance, ingratitude, worldliness and envy (p. 131).

Based on the above explanation, the components are integrally important to be developed and nurtured in students of various Islamic universities in the Muslim countries. It is important to stress that holisticization



of knowledge is a process that can bring about interaction between Islamization of contemporary knowledge and Relevantization of Islamic revealed knowledge in order to remove dichotomy between Islamic and conventional subjects. The curriculum design or academic programme in Islamic universities in the Muslim world must be fostered towards personality development of learners in the aspects of intellectual, spiritual, character and physical as literature explicates (Talat, 2005) in order to attain holisticization of knowledge as a central thesis of this paper.

### Conclusion

This paper has elucidated on the trends of Islamic educational system and Islamic universities. Also, lethargy of Islamic educational system has been elaborated. In addition, the intellectual trends of Islamization of knowledge and the discourse on the relevantization of Islamic Revealed knowledge have been explored. The paper has further explicitly elaborated that holisticization of knowledge is a process of Islamization of knowledge and the relevantization of Islamic Revealed knowledge. Holisticization of knowledge is conceptualized in this paper to depict the holistic personality development of learners in the aspects of mental, spiritual, physical and character development. The curriculum design and various religious and non-religious subjects must target integrated and holistic personality development of the learners in various Islamic Universities. It is therefore suggested that, while designing curricula or academic programmes of various disciplines (religious, pure and social sciences) in different Islamic Universities in the Muslim world, elements of curriculum namely: objective, content selection, method and evaluation should be painstakingly taken into account in order to achieve holisticization of knowledge as a central climax lucidly elaborated in this paper.

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