The Integration of knowledge among academics at the International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM)

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Abstract: The International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM) has been committed to the integration of Islamic values with the modern fields of knowledge. This study attempts to investigate academics' perceptions of Islamization of Knowledge (IOK), examine their practices of integration in the IIUM curriculum and establish indicators to measure the integration of knowledge. A survey distributed to a purposive sampling consisting of 306 academics from different Kulliyyahs in IIUM found that respondents have a good awareness about the integration of knowledge in IIUM. They believe that the integration of knowledge is an important mission and a unique feature of IIUM. The study reveals that respondents integrate contents of the subjects with several Islamic values. The most frequent method applied in the teaching and learning process was through exemplifications and evidence provision. However, the assessment of IOK was mostly done through classroom presentations. In addition, the study also reveals that the highest product/outcome of integration of knowledge is students' assignments.

Keywords: Islamization, Integration of knowledge, IIUM, Education, Malaysia.

Introduction

The mainstream educational system in the Muslim countries has been Western-secular, introduced by the colonial regimes centuries back. The system systematically infuses non-Islamic worldviews of life and society which is thought to be responsible for social division and tension in the Muslim countries. This division and tension keep the societies intellectually stagnant and materially underdeveloped. It systematically keeps Muslims oblivious of their true identity and mission in life (IIIT, 1988). Hence, the reform of education is greatly needed

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in Muslim lands. The prominent Islamic scholars and thinkers on educational reform agree that the reform does not simply mean replacing the secular system with the traditional Islamic one. Rather, it should aim at Islamization of Knowledge (IOK) which involves modernization of traditional Islamic education and Islamization of modern knowledge. The IOK cannot be just in theory; it must be put into practice following pragmatic steps suggested by al- Faruqi (1981).

The importance of teaching and learning in the integration and Islamization of knowledge is crucial. This involves the task of transferring knowledge, skills, value as well as reforming men. Thus, the instructors who take up the challenge of teaching and Islamizing must go beyond the conventional and westernized practices. Ashraf (1986) argues that an individual ready to take on the challenges of integrating Islamization of Knowledge must be imbued with the act of dedication, devotion, discipline, breadth of vision and critical acumen, as well as good relationship with his Lord. These qualities make one a model discharger of his responsibility as a Muslim instructor. Simultaneously, the need for Islamic curriculum to be written and be used in all disciplines is essential (al-Najjar, 1988). However, the problem is the availability of qualified instructors in the first place. Because most of the academicians with highest degrees are educated in Western secular institutions and they lack both Islamic knowledge as well as personality.   Therefore, one of the principal challenges that confront the Muslims at present is how to improve Islamic knowledge amongst Muslim professionals. This article analyzes the Islamic integration of knowledge and personality in the academic staff of the International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM) as a higher learning institute that has the mission of Islamization, Integration, Internationalization and Comprehensive Excellence.

The IIUM: Its history and mission

In July 1983, the International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM) was established inspired by the recommendations of the First World Conference on Muslim Education held in Makkah in 1977. The IIUM has been committed to the integration of Islamic values with the modern fields of knowledge, which is at the core of its vision and mission. Indeed, Islamization of Knowledge has become IIUM's niche area, which sets it apart from other universities in Malaysia.

To a large extent, of Islamization of Knowledge in the Muslim world is making headway around the world with the support of several institutions such as the IIUM that is housing students from more than hundred countries around the world. In the implementation of the ideal of Islamization, IIUM is unsurpassed by any other institutions in the world. This has been supported by the study conducted by Ssekamanya, Suhailah and Nik Ahmad Hisham (2011) in analysing the experience of IOK at IIUM. The study suggested that one aspect of

Islamization works actively being practiced by the academic staff of IIUM are the integration of Islamic perspective into the University curriculum. This is one of the strategies that have been outlined by the University to achieve its vision and mission of Islamization. Indeed, there are various phases and orientations of the implementation of IOK at the IIUM (Ssekamanye et.al, 2011). The study highlighted that the liberal atmosphere in the IIUM has encouraged many scholars and staff to use their own approaches to Islamization. Furthermore, they found that the IIUM academic staff also integrates Islamic values into the University curriculum in different ways. However, the problem was in evaluating these various ways of integrating Islamic values into the University curriculum. This evaluation is important as it helps IIUM to identify and monitor areas of specialisation that need to be improved.

This study attempts to investigate academics' perceptions of Islamization of Knowledge at International Islamic University of Malaysia (IIUM), examine their practices of integration in the IIUM curriculum and to develop indicators that could be used to evaluate the integration of Islamic values or Islamization into the University curriculum.

Research methodology

The study employed the survey method and gathered information on the integration of Islamic values in the curriculum as practiced by the IIUM academic staff. A random sample, consisting of 306 academic staff was selected (Table 1). The data collected were analysed using a simple descriptive statistical analysis. The indicators developed would be useful in guiding the practice of integrating Islamic values in the IIUM curriculum.

Table 1
The Sample Size

No	Kulliyyah	No of Respondents
1	Engineering	36
2	Institute of Education	30
3	Sciences	28
4	Medicine	24
5	Economics	17
6	IRKH	37
7	Dentistry	22
8	Architecture & Environment Design	15
9	Law	9
10	Allied Health Sciences	20
11	ICT	7
12	CELPAD	61
	Total	**306**

The study used a set of questionnaire to gather the data. The questionnaire contained 65 items divided into two sections. Section A elicits demographic information about the respondents. The respondents were asked to state the following: gender, kulliyyah, nationality, post, and year of service. Section B consisted of seven variables (Table 2) namely; Belief in Islamization of Knowledge; Content; Teaching & Learning Process; Evaluation; Resource person; Product; Emphasis on the Positive improvement of students. Items in section B1-B7 are measured by Likert scale.

Table 2
The distribution of items

Code	Variable	Distribution of Items	Total
B1	Belief in Islamization of Knowledge	B1.1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7	7
B2	Content	B2.1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8	8
B3	Teaching & Learning Process	B3.1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18 and 19	19
B4	Evaluation	B4.1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7,8 and 9	9
B5	Resource person	B5.1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6	6
B6	Product	B6.1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11and 12	12
B7	Emphasis on student positive improvement	B5.1, 2, 3, 4 and 5	5
	Total		**65**

A pilot study was conducted, in which 18 academic staff at the Centre for Foundation Studies, IIUM, participated. The purpose of the pilot study was to determine clarity in the instrument used and to test the reliability of the set of items in the questionnaires. The reliability of the instrument was established using a Rasch Measurement Model. The test showed that the pearson's reliability was 0.97, and item reliability was 0.93, which indicates that the instrument was reliable. All items used in the pilot study were used for the current study.

Data and result

This section presents the survey data and result on the issues of investigation.

Academics Perceptions about Islamization of Knowledge

Table 3 shows respondents beliefs in Islamization of knowledge. It reveals that about 92.2% (n = 282) of the IIUM academic staff agreed and strongly agreed that Islamization of Knowledge is an important mission of IIUM (Item B1-1), only 3.6% (n = 11) of the respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed. Almost 90.5% (n = 277) of the respondents agreed and strongly agreed in the statement (Item B1-7), while 3.2% (n = 10) of the respondents strongly disagreed and disagreed to the statement that the Islamization of Knowledge is a continuous process for IIUM.

Likewise they strongly agreed (50.3%) and agreed (36.6) on statement in ItemB1-4. However, about 8.5% (n = 26) strongly agreed and 30.1% (n = 92) agreed with the statement that Islamization of Knowledge as the enterprise of certain quarters in IIUM. There is a high percentage (34.3% (n = 105)) of the respondents who maintained neutrality. In response to item B1-5 (*I believe that Islamization of Knowledge (IOK) is an overemphasized mission*), 9.8% (n = 30) and 21.2 % (n = 65) of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed respectively.

The mean scores range from 2.89 to 4.56 respectively. The finding reveals that the highest rating was the Islamization of Knowledge (IOK) is an important mission of IIUM (4.56), followed by the challenge to IIUM (4.31); while the lowest rating was the overemphasized mission (2.89) and the enterprise of certain quarters in IIUM (3.11).

Table 3
I believe that Islamization of Knowledge (IOK) is:

No	Item		SD	D	N	A	SA	Mean	Std. D
B1 1	An important mission of IIUM	*N*	9	2	13	66	216	4.56	.852
		%	2.9	.7	4.2	21.6	70.6		
2	A unique experience to IIUM only	*N*	12	27	58	109	100	3.84	1.096
		%	3.9	8.8	19.0	35.6	32.7		
3	A success story for IIUM	*N*	8	17	88	115	78	3.78	.977
		%	2.6	5.6	28.8	37.6	25.5		
4	A challenge to IIUM	*N*	7	6	27	112	154	4.31	.885
		%	2.3	2.0	8.8	36.6	50.3		
5	An overemphasized mission	*N*	44	72	95	65	30	2.89	1.186
		%	14.4	23.5	31.0	21.2	9.8		
6	An enterprise of certain quarters in IIUM	*N*	27	56	105	92	26	3.11	1.081
		%	8.8	18.3	34.3	30.1	8.5		
7	A continuous process for IIUM	*N*	5	5	19	139	138	4.31	.796
		%	1.6	1.6	6.2	45.4	45.1		

Indicators for Evaluating Integration/ Islamization of Knowledge

The study shows that there are four main indicators for integration of knowledge that the IIUM staff use. The indicators are: contents of the subject; the teaching and learning process; the assessment of integration of knowledge; and the product/outcome of integration of knowledge.

Contents of the subject

Table 4 shows respondents' practices of Islamization of Knowledge on the content of the subject. The mean scores range from 2.60 to 3.56 respectively. The highest

rating revealed that participants integrated the content of the subject with IOK (3.56). However, they emphasized IOK on certain weeks of the course outline only (3.08). While, the lowest rating was 'the content of my subject is all about IOK' (2.60) and 'the content of my subject indicates IOK in the learning outcome only' (2.61).

Table 4
The Content of My Subject:

No	Item		N	S	ST	MT	A	Mean	Std. D
B2 1	Integrates IOK	*N*	3	23	113	93	54	3.56	.900
		%	*1.0*	*7.5*	*43.5*	*30.4*	*17.6*		
2	Emphasizes IOK on certain weeks of the course outline only	*N*	25	46	136	76	23	3.08	1.011
		%	*8.2*	*15.0*	*44.4*	*24.8*	*7.5*		
3	Is difficult to be integrated with IOK	*N*	59	71	116	50	10	2.61	1.072
		%	*19.4*	*23.2*	*37.9*	*16.3*	*3.3*		
4	Is all about IOK	*N*	65	82	87	53	19	2.60	1.178
		%	*21.2*	*26.8*	*28.4*	*17.3*	*6.2*		
5	Is integrated superficially with IOK	*N*	38	67	124	67	10	2.82	1.017
		%	*12.4*	*21.9*	*40.5*	*21.9*	*3.31*		
6	Indicates IOK in the learning outcome only	*N*	66	74	88	66	12	2.62	1.157
		%	*21.6*	*24.2*	*28.8*	*21.6*	*3.9*		
7	Indicates IOK in the assessment strategy	*N*	47	67	113	65	14	2.78	1.088
		%	*15.4*	*21.9*	*36.9*	*21.2*	*4.6*		
8	Uses IOK in exercises and assignments	*N*	43	63	105	70	25	2.91	1.148
		%	*14.1*	*20.6*	*34.3*	*22.9*	*8.2*		

Teaching and learning process

Table 5 shows the methods applied by participants in integrating IOK through the teaching and learning process. The mean scores range from 2.38 to 3.73 respectively. The three highest rating were- 'in my teaching and learning process, I integrate IOK through giving' examples and evidences (3.73), discussion (3.68), lecture and explanation (3.63) while, the three lowest ratings were through the games (2.38), the patching (cut and paste) (2.39) and the simulation (2.63).

Table 5
In My Teaching and Learning Process, I Integrate IOK through:

No	Item		N	S	ST	MT	A	Mean	Std. D
B3 1	Discussion	*N*	7	21	98	117	63	3.68	.952
		%	*2.3*	*6.9*	*32.0*	*38.2*	*20.6*		

No	Item		N	S	ST	MT	A	Mean	Std. D
2	Lecture	*N*	6	19	112	115	54	3.63	.912
		%	*2.0*	*6.2*	*36.6*	*37.6*	*17.6*		
3	Workshops	*N*	49	46	112	63	36	2.97	1.213
		%	*16.0*	*15.0*	*36.6*	*20.6*	*11.8*		
4	Giving examples and evidences	*N*	6	22	82	135	61	3.73	.928
		%	*2.0*	*7.2*	*26.8*	*44.1*	*19.9*		
5	Explanation	*N*	8	28	89	126	55	3.63	.968
		%	*2.6*	*9.2*	*29.1*	*41.2*	*18.0*		
6	Problem based learning	*N*	30	54	104	81	37	3.13	1.142
		%	*9.8*	*17.6*	*34.0*	*26.5*	*12.1*		
7	Group dynamics	*N*	32	54	95	93	32	3.13	1.142
		%	*10.5*	*17.6*	*31.0*	*30.4*	*10.5*		
8	Comparative approach	*N*	27	53	88	97	41	3.24	1.152
		%	*8.8*	*17.3*	*28.8*	*31.7*	*13.4*		
9	Question and answer	*N*	15	48	101	101	41	3.34	1.051
		%	*4.9*	*15.7*	*33.0*	*33.0*	*13.4*		
10	Dialogue	*N*	29	52	92	93	40	3.21	1.157
		%	*9.5*	*17.0*	*30.1*	*30.4*	*13.1*		
11	Forum	*N*	65	56	95	60	30	2.78	1.257
		%	*21.2*	*18.3*	*31.0*	*19.6*	*9.8*		
12	Debate	*N*	75	61	88	56	26	2.66	1.263
		%	*24.5*	*19.9*	*28.8*	*18.3*	*8.5*		
13	Patching (cut and paste)	*N*	91	69	99	30	17	2.39	1.169
		%	*29.7*	*22.5*	*32.4*	*9.8*	*5.6*		
14	Internship and practical	*N*	75	59	89	52	31	2.69	1.287
		%	*24.5*	*19.3*	*29.1*	*17.0*	*10.1*		
15	Simulation	*N*	79	59	85	61	22	2.63	1.258
		%	*25.8*	*19.3*	*27.8*	*19.9*	*7.2*		
16	Role play	*N*	70	50	99	60	27	2.75	1.253
		%	*22.9*	*16.3*	*32.4*	*19.6*	*8.8*		
17	Games	*N*	101	63	85	38	19	2.38	1.253
		%	*33.0*	*20.6*	*27.8*	*12.4*	*6.2*		
18	Demonstration	*N*	61	56	96	70	23	2.80	1.214
		%	*19.9*	*18.3*	*31.4*	*22.9*	*7.5*		
19	Cooperative Learning	*N*	43	57	96	80	30	2.99	1.186
		%	*14.1*	*18.6*	*31.4*	*26.1*	*9.8*		

The assessment of integration of knowledge

Table 6 shows the Islamization of Knowledge in respondents' evaluations. The mean scores range from 2.42 to 3.34 respectively. The highest rating reveals that IOK is emphasized in the classroom presentation (3.34), followed by class assignment (3.09) while, the lowest rating was in the colloquium (2.42) followed by practicum and internship (2.66).

Table 6
In the Evaluation of My Coursework, IOK is emphasized in:

No	Item		N	S	ST	MT	A	Mean	Std. D
B4 1	Class assignment	*N*	34	55	100	84	33	3.09	1.152
		%	*11.1*	*18.0*	*32.7*	*27.5*	*10.8*		
2	Take home assignment	*N*	54	51	103	71	27	2.89	1.204
		%	*17.6*	*16.7*	*33.7*	*23.2*	*8.8*		
3	Thesis proposal	*N*	89	42	85	61	29	2.67	1.333
		%	*29.1*	*13.7*	*27.8*	*19.9*	*9.5*		
4	Colloquium	*N*	104	54	82	47	19	2.42	1.268
		%	*34.0*	*17.6*	*26.8*	*15.4*	*6.2*		
5	Examination	*N*	47	53	88	83	35	3.02	1.233
		%	*15.4*	*17.3*	*28.8*	*27.1*	*11.4*		
6	In class presentation	*N*	25	37	100	96	48	3.34	1.129
		%	*8.2*	*12.1*	*32.7*	*31.4*	*15.7*		
7	Practicum and internship	*N*	85	49	87	56	29	2.66	1.312
		%	*27.8*	*16.0*	*28.4*	*18.3*	*9.5*		
8	Project	*N*	56	41	99	77	33	2.97	1.246
		%	*18.3*	*13.4*	*32.4*	*25.2*	*10.8*		
9	Fieldwork	*N*	76	52	91	62	25	2.70	1.268
		%	*24.8*	*17.0*	*29.7*	*20.3*	*8.2*		

The product/ outcome of Islamization of knowledge

Table 7 shows the products of IOK. The mean scores range from 2.36 to 3.10 respectively. It reveals that the two highest ratings for IOK's products are students' assignment (3.10) and students' project (3.02). While the two lowest ratings are for book (2.36) and proceeding (2.41).

Table 7
My Products of IOK are:

No	Item		N	S	ST	MT	A	Mean	Std. D
B6 1	Research	N	80	40	78	65	43	2.84	1.390
		%	26.1	13.1	25.5	21.2	14.1		
2	Consultancy	N	91	53	78	52	32	2.61	1.344
		%	29.7	17.3	25.5	17.0	10.5		
3	Article	N	91	45	68	63	39	2.72	1.407
		%	29.7	14.7	22.2	20.6	12.7		
4	A chapter in a book	N	103	45	64	54	40	2.62	1.440
		%	33.7	14.7	20.9	17.6	13.1		
5	Book	N	133	45	48	46	34	2.36	1.440
		%	43.5	14.7	15.7	15.0	11.1		
6	Proceeding	N	117	43	77	42	27	2.41	1.348
		%	38.2	14.1	25.2	13.7	8.8		
7	Workshop	N	99	48	79	57	23	2.53	1.313
		%	32.4	15.7	25.8	18.6	7.5		
8	Seminar	N	92	51	77	57	29	2.61	1.337
		%	30.1	16.7	25.2	18.6	9.5		
9	Conference	N	100	45	69	59	33	2.61	1.390
		%	32.7	14.7	22.5	19.3	10.8		
10	Thesis	N	98	55	59	55	39	2.61	1.417
		%	32.0	18.0	19.3	18.0	12.7		
11	Student project	N	57	43	79	90	37	3.02	1.292
		%	18.6	14.1	25.8	29.4	12.1		
12	Student assignment	N	49	39	90	89	39	3.10	1.251
		%	16.0	12.7	29.4	29.1	12.7		

Analysis and conclusion

International Islamic University Malaysia as a higher learning institution is a pioneer in Islamization of Knowledge as well as integration of knowledge and personality. It is considered to be the most engaging institution and model for the similar institutions for higher learning with Islamization of knowledge as its mission. This article analysed the level of understanding about IOK among the academic staff of the IIUM and their methods of integrating Islamic knowledge with their disciplinary areas of teaching and research. The data shows that

majority of the staff in general strongly support the vision and mission of the University, and they are actively engaged in disseminating Islamic teachings through various instruments.

However, there seems to be certain limitations. The study shows that many staff are either not much oriented towards Islamization or not much interested in the project. Furthermore, it is also apparent that the instruments used for imparting Islamic knowledge are limited in terms of substance, and the extent to which Islamic elements are integrated in classroom and coursework materials is quite low.

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