



INTEGRATION OF KNOWLEDGE IN EAST AFRICA REGION: A DEMOGRAPHIC SIGNIFICANCE.

Aina-Obe Shamsuddin Bolatito (PhD)

Faculty of Management Studies (FMS), Dept. of Public Administration,
Islamic University In Uganda, Mbale Campus.

Abstract

The Integration of Knowledge processes amongst East African Muslim owned Universities should be fundamental to the modern educational paradigm in the region. It is a process in an approach to used Muslim owned Universities to create a Madinah generation of conscious Muslim generations of grooming leaders and technocrats whose consolidation are to master their academic professions from the pristine Islamic traditions of *Shar'iah*, *Akhlaq*, *Aqeedah* and *Tawheed*. The combination of the quad pristine Islamic Knowledge in all academic field of conventional or secular studies will lead the *Ummah* out of its lingering political depravation, intellectual retardation, socio-economic backwardness through her skilled intellectuals thereby resolving the crisis of Muslim mind through proper relationship between Islamic Education and Western or Secular Knowledge.

Consequently, this paper hopes to bring to light the significance of IOK in East African region using descriptive and critical analyses towards developing this idea and achieving more fundamental goals with optimism that IOK will offer East African Muslim faith based Universities with the required methodology to confront the evils of contemporary challenges and to reclaims the lost glory of Islamic civilization in the region.

The paper finally concluded that solitary secular education is inadequate and scanty in offering the desired goals to contemporary challenges unless merged with *Tawhidic* worldview in leading everyday lives based on the pristine Islamic moral and ethical values.

Keywords: Integration of Knowledge, *Tawhidic* Worldview, East African Muslims Universities, Secular Education, Integration of Curriculum.

1. Introduction

Looking into the decline of Western colonization in Africa and the emergence of Islamic Nations, Muslims scholars, thinkers and reformers raised the plight of Muslim Ummah to revive and rediscovered their centuries Lost-Islamic values, civilisation and norms. Taking cognisance of the rich Islamic sciences and Muslim discoveries of early civilisation before the European discovered knowledge and the effect of secularism on Muslim world prompted the renaissance of Muslim Education Conference of 1977 in Makkah *Mukarammah* aimed at rediscovering Islamic ideals and goals that would lead to the establishment and development of a complete education for Muslim youth and conforming the society to Islamic worldview and norms.

2. Objectives of this Paper

This paper aimed to give support to Integration or Islamization of Knowledge (IOK) as holistic process to redefined human rational, spiritual and social engagement of education towards attaining complete submission to the will of Allah in scientific, intellectual, linguistic, social and at all human endeavour. Therefore, seeking knowledge is to perfect and actualize all human engagement towards serving Allah (SHT).

The paper also inclined to bring to light the supremacy of Muslim intellectuals in pursuing knowledge as to remove the malaise in Muslim communities. Other specific objectives are;

- I. To further the implementation of IOK at East African Muslim faith based Universities beyond conference level.
- II. To analyse the process of achieving and sustaining IOK at East African Muslim faith based Universities.
- III. To clean Muslim minds from secular corruption of knowledge and arrive at *Tawhidic* Muslim society according the Qur'anic epistemological approach.
- IV. Encourage learning, teaching and presenting academic subjects in an Islamic path.
- V. And finally, to justify the role of IOK in contemporary secular educational system.

3. Methodology of the Paper

This paper is based on descriptive and observational research technique through the combination of empirical and literatures reviews. Its uses primary and secondary data sources to derived literatures from most related numbers of literatures most pertinent to the research objectives. While data collection are obtained from book review, videos of presentations of Prof. Omer Kasule, journals of IIIT and other sources that are most related to the goals of this topic under research in accordance with the goal of Muslim Universities in East Africa to detect the implementation and attainment of the goals of Integration of Knowledge (IOK) among the East African Muslim Faith based Universities. Furthermore, the paper explores the possibilities of unification of the concept of Integration of Knowledge (IOK) with the current curriculum under operations at various Universities.

4. Literature Review

The research about Integration of Knowledge (IOK) concepts and models that have been applied by International Islamic University in Malaysia and Islamic Science University of Malaysia (USIM) are big eye openers to the Muslim world. This concept are pertinent to East African region institutions of higher education is importantly required. Thus, has a clear concept and implementation on integration of aqli and naqli knowledge. They call it integration of aqli and naqli knowledge, which means the integration of knowledge obtained through the study of revelation with the knowledge obtained through the study of nature and the phenomenon that happens. Its mission is to become a leader in the integration of naqli and aqli knowledge, USIM, consequently, becomes a benchmarking

Integration refers to the process that combines or collects things. Essentially, it is a process of uniting something to achieve particular aims in producing new things. In context of knowledge, integration means the combination of two disciplines of knowledge which create new knowledge such as the concept of integrating Naqli and Aqli knowledge in USIM's vision (Ibrahim, Yusoff, Aziz & Nor, 2015). When it comes to combination of two knowledges, both of them supposed to bring two different meanings.

5. The Scholastics Process of IOK

The impact and role of IOK is widening the academic spectrum to promote and entrench the Qur'anic epistemological approach to academic curriculum and syllabuses. It is also to bestow revealed knowledge as panacea to contemporary challenges of economy, poverty, socio-cultural contests and settlement of disputes and conflicts. Therefore, IOK serves as alternatives to human acquired knowledge without limitations.

Valuable awareness and contributions of Dr. Isma'il Raji Al-Faruqi (May Allah be Pleased with his Soul) leadership of International Institute of Islamic Thought (IIIT) awoken conscious Muslim minds across the intellectual world. "He confined his writing to identifying the five universal principles of Islam, namely the unity of Allah, of creation of truth and knowledge, of life and of humanity that constitute the epistemological foundation of an Islamic methodology". He is a proponent of 'methodologies to replace the western ones for commanding reality' (Ismail, R.F, 1982) as he argued that Western Sciences or Education should be subjected to review and evaluation as they were established and fashioned in a society whose problems, needs and goals are totally difference from those of Muslim society (Ismail, R.F, 1982) whose principles of education should be Qura'anic and *Tawhidic* worldview. Therefore, an Islamic alternative principle to Western Thought curriculum and syllabus should be the academic excellence priority of Muslim faith based Universities in East Africa.

Professor Abdulhamid Abu Sulaiman (May Allah be Pleased with his Soul) rectify Islamic thought methodology by prioritising scientific research and preparation of academic cadres to offer greatest challenges confronting the ummah through the process of thinking, learning and writing in the field (Abdul Hamid, A. 1997) by establishment of International Islamic University, Malaysia as a catalyst for the much expected scholastic change expected within the Ummah.

An involvement of methodological principles and rearrangement was carried out by Dr. Taha Jabir Al-Alawani (May Allah be Pleased with his Soul) who considered Islamization to be through articulating Islamic paradigm and Qur'anic methodology with *Sunnah* as tools for dealing with western intellectual heritage (Taha, J.A. 1995).

6. The Procedures for IOK at East African Muslim faith Universities

Most East African Universities lay emphasis on improving their research output, most have also established offices of Research and Development and schools or faculties of research and graduate studies. Offices of R&D are present in most universities but Unit of IOK is lacking at most of all Muslim faith based Universities in East Africa. The belief is that these research will increase the focus of the University's ranking, improve the quality of research, and attract funding and grants and made them internationally recognised. The task of Research and Development also includes fostering and improving relations with other research institutions and with donors in the West and at the Gulf countries. Furthermore, Association of African Universities (AAU) research mission for African universities has forced them to develop policies to guide them through the process of improving their research effort. In addition, universities have also developed research ethics and general research guidelines for their academic and research staff but not much focus on IOK.

To achieved greater number of importance in areas of Islamization now called IOK, East

African Muslim faith based Universities required highly qualified academicians, Islamized syllabus and curriculum, mannered students, researchers and publications. Besides these; the University should make compulsory the teachings of all courses to be in line with Islamic and Qur'aanic worldview to all students in the university regardless of their specialization. With these in placed, the universities will graduate scholars and professional qualified students with all the necessary resources and opportunities for combating societal decadence.

Furthermore, the University council should lay an emphatic policy on the integration of Islamic moral values on all programme learning outcomes, course contents, all program proposals, course outlines, theses and dissertations as manifestation of its commitment to the core values for IOK. Abiding by these, the core vision and mission of IOK at these universities will makes them pristine institutions of scholastics advancement and contribution to the growing trends of promotion and contribution to Islamic civilization and Islamization of all fields of studies.

7. Muslims and the Crisis of Western Education

The crisis of Western Education within the Muslim Ummah started with the colonization of Muslim countries and destruction of Othman Empire by Western countries causing the setback and obstruction of Islamic education, political power, economy development, socio-cultural advancement, religious growth, technological power and strong armed forces. The colonial power thereby imposed their unscrutinised Christian ethics, Western values, and educational system which can only suit the western colonial masters in negligence to Qur'anic worldview. Their arrangement left the Muslim in a stage of religious decline and powerless system considering the destruction of Othman Empire which lead to the Muslim intellectual crisis and imposition of eccentric western ideology and creed obnoxious to *Tawhidic* and Qur'anic worldview.

Their system produced Muslims by names and identity but lack Islamic ethics, morals, understanding and unconscious of their *fitrah*. These has left Muslims in a phase of intellectual backwardness, uneasiness, low spirit, unhappiness, discomfort and feel rejected despite their past high fame and repute civilisations (Abu-Sulayman, 1988). The crisis of Western Education has betrayed, overpowered, annihilated and exploited the conscious Muslims to see nothing good in himself as being depicted uncivilised, aggressive, fanatics, fundamentalists and terrorists. The persistence of conflicts, violence, civil strives, famine and wars has characterized the Muslim world as uncivilized Nation. All these; are factors of rejection of the Qur'anic worldview and the Islamophobia.

Western education trained and produced professional in their lives styles without moral values inculcated in them. The education system without Qur'anic worldview and *Tawhidic* values has made institutions to produce students who are pervasively ignorant of their religion and with little respect to Muslim scholars (Asik, 2018; Miftachul, et al. 2016). Westernized Muslims cannot see the light in the Quran and Sunnah as way of life or be advised by religious scholars because the West control social media, sciences and technology, and their major targets in life is accumulation of wealth and political power which are not major goal of a Muslim on earth but to serve Allah.

Likewise, Western trained Muslim Professors knows less of their Islamic specialization instead western curriculum and syllabus prevails in our educational system and the result is recycling of the western mentality and neo-colonization of the Muslim mind and thought.

8. Merits of IOK to East African Muslim faith Universities

There is no doubt that both Revealed and Acquired Knowledge has helped the societies to have people who are balanced in cognitive, affective and psychomotor in our contemporary societies. Contemporary Islamic history shows that the likes of *Ibn Sina* was a medical scientist and an Islamic scholar. *Iman Ghazali, Ibn Khaldun, Ar-Razi, Al-Farabi* and many others renown Scholars are both prominence in Revealed and Acquired Knowledge. This confirms that the lost glory of Islamic civilization advanced Man in both knowledge and produced pious renowned scholars of historical epoch.

The golden Islamic age benefitted people with both sources of knowledge as both are instilling the vision and mission into our educational system if adopted by our Universities. These will impart our students to master their specializations and be grounded in Islamic knowledge not found at other governmental institutions. IOK at East African Muslim faith Universities will endow the educational system with Islamic epistemological foundation for our Universities to be more valuable and goal achieving; the unique messages of Islamic mission.

Taking cognisance of secular education today, it's obvious that the syllabus and curriculum of studies are promoting certain individual philosophical system and treaties such as Greek philosophers like Plato, Aristotle, Karl Marx, Adams Smith, Thomas Hobbes, John Locke, Charles Darwin and Max Weber among several others who derived their epistemological theory from self-intellectual context that included all the scientific, aesthetic and spiritual understanding that were available from Greek world and Communism. These self-intellectual philosophers are promoting worldly affairs, neglecting the revealed knowledge, and do not consider the hereafter as importance factor in seeking knowledge hence Muslims MUST integrate knowledge and endow secular educational system with *Tawhidic* worldview and Islamic epistemology.

Another benefits of IOK is that when used with the existing educational system, it further the values, culture, sustaining economic development, unique ways of life, sound moral ethics, and complete way of life and belief which help us as Muslims to enjoy their nature and inner happiness. The qur'anic worldview guide Muslims by controlling their sensory, intellectual and spiritual component of life (Elmi&Zainab, 2015) making Muslim Education different from the Western Education and Civilisations. In this case, the focus is not only on the course contents but on inculcation of positive Islamic revealed knowledge and Arabic Language both of which are effective for East African Islamic oriented Universities to prepare their academic and non-academic staff to the mission of Islamization worldview which help in modelling a Quranic generation and background of the students, the research and publications of those Universities.

9. Threat to IOK and East African Muslim Faith Based Universities

Relevance to the trends of globalization of education and internationalization, the mobility of students across borders has been recognized as an indicator of diversity and crucial cradle of revenue to boost the income of higher educational institutions at East Africa Muslim Faith Based Universities. As the enrolment tendency of international students across the region is continuously growing with more than thousand enrolled in tertiary institutions across the region, this growing trends incubate threats to Islamic faith based Universities in the region.

- I. The regional multifaceted crisis of Islamophobia remains in the shadow as many Islamic educational developments programmes are received with suspicious thinking not minding the basic need for human capacity development and educational growth which faith based institutions will contribute and helps sustain growth and accelerate development in human resources in the region in terms of moral transformation, cultural retention, socio-economic prosperity.
- II. The lack of sufficient funding to maintain an institutional capacity to carry out and formulate research plan, equipped projects, and skills needed to provide employment chances and opportunities after graduation.
- III. Inefficiency in retaining qualified graduates who could use pedagogical methods of higher standard and providing better teaching skills.
- IV. The problem of accreditations and approval of Islamic-oriented courses of the Islamic worldview usually lead to discrimination and government isolation of Muslim faith based Universities.
- V. Accepting Islamization of hybrid and blended system of teaching and lecturing by the government of the host Universities as international students faces adjustment to relocation as compared to their local peers (Duru and Poyrazli, 2011) as research has to be conducted with Islamized perspectives which do not favour the Higher Educational Council in the host countries in the region.
- VI. Provision of tuition free system of scholarship to most disadvantage and indigent students to complete their studies from the underrepresented communities within the country.
- VII. Hostile and rude relationship between the host community and the University management over Islamization agenda. As the hosting community who are majority non-Muslims are hostile to seeing religious dressing and symbols in their immediate neighbourhood. Especially hijab veiling by female Muslim students who are discriminated against over their religious appearance (Wang, 2017).
- VIII. The challenges and discrimination of unemployed graduates due to the Islamization of their studies curriculum of studies and emphasis on science and technology, quality assurance systems, and the ranking of universities, negative implications for Islamization.

10. Recommendations

Islam is not just about salah (praying), dhikr (chanting), fasting and so on but it is comprehensive in all aspects in this life. That is why the concept of integrating *Naqli* and *Aqli* concept exist in education system that can develop better *Ummah* by focusing on Islamic values and morals by faith based Universities. Integrated Islamic curriculum aims to produce an integrated Islamic personality in accordance with Allah's will. That is why Muslim faith based Universities uphold a balanced approach between Islamic worldview and the contemporary western backed educational system.

As some conscious lecturers tried hard to infuse Islamic values and perspectives in whatever they teach and lectures, all teaching methods, and assignments are infused with Islamic values in western theories and approaches. While focusing on student's performances and their character, it is most expected that they are breeding graduates with high cross-fertilization of

knowledge and responsible citizens.

While few Muslim faiths based Universities in East Africa like those in Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda are sending their post graduate students to Malaysia Universities for higher educational qualification, it is most expected that their acquisition of Islamic heritage will enhance their needs for Islamized curriculum materials and textbooks as vital tools for IOK and all theories and approaches that will make it suitable to the worldview of Islam for their sustainable Islamization of knowledge policies, as well as Islamizing human beings (both scholars and students). As Islamization of Knowledge (IOK) in east Africa continues growing, the approach is devoted on knowledge dissemination and graduating productive human resources to the Nation.

For the effort to be productive, more funding needed to be budgeted for research on IOK and publication of researches and development of Islamic worldview curriculum of studies that identify the solutions to the Muslim Ummah and humanity at large beyond the region.

11. Summary and Conclusions

The study has shown the different phases and orientations of the implementation of Islamization at Muslim Faith based Universities in East Africa should be more engaging institutions for teaching and learning in the integration and Islamization of knowledge in the region as IOK is very crucial for moral upbringing and professionalism. This should involve the task of transferring knowledge, skills, value as well as reforming men and a model for other institutions for higher learning in Africa.

Knowledge can be divided into two types, one is the knowledge of religion or the revelation sciences which is called *Naqli* knowledge, and the second one is the knowledge required by community or the rational sciences which is called *Aqli*. Both are essential for human development and growth of the existence of doctors, engineers, lawyers, etc. are required for the betterment of society, nevertheless this second type of knowledge should not take people far from God but to take them closer to Allah and His Oneness (*Tawhid*).

References

- Abdul Hamid Abu Sulayman, Islamization of Knowledge: General Principles and Work Plan, 3rd edition 1997, IIIT, pp.84-87
- Abu-Sulayman, A. H. (1988). Islamisation: Reforming Contemporary Knowledge in Islam: Source and Purpose of Knowledge. Herdon: IIIT [International Institute of IslamicThought].
- Asik, O. (2012). Contesting Religious Educational Discourses and Institutions in contemporary Egypt. Social Compass 59(1), 84 -101. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/0037768611432119>
- Duru, E., &Poyrazli, S. (2011). Perceived Discrimination, Social Connectedness, and Other Predictors of Adjustment Difficulties Among Turkish International Students. International Journal of Psychology, 46(6), 446-454. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00207594.2011.585158>
- Ismail Raji al-Faruqi (1982), Islamization of Knowledge: The Problem, Principle and the Workplan. Herndon: IIIT, p. 22.

- Taha Jabir al-Alwani. (1995), *Islamization of Knowledge: Yesterday and Today*, IIIT, p. 4.
- Elmi, B., & Zainab, I. (2015). *7 Domains of Spiritual Intelligence from Islamic Perspective: 2nd Global Conference on Business and Social Science-2015, GCBSS-2015, 17-18 September 2015, Bali, Indonesia*. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 211, 568 –577.
- Miftachul, H., Jibril, Y., Kamarul, A. J., & Gamal, A. N. Z. (2016). *Al-Zarnuji's Concept of Knowledge ('Ilm)*. *Sage Open*, 3,1-13. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/2158244016666885>
- Wang, T. (2017). *Religion-based cultural identity and conflicts of migrant Muslim students in Northwest China*. *Race Ethnicity and Education*, 1–19. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13613324.2017.1395324>