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**ISLAMIZATION OF KNOWLEDGE: A CASE OF
INTERNATIONAL ISLAMIC UNIVERSITY CHITTAGONG,
BANGLADESH**

Md. Nurul Islam (a)*, Mohammed Sarwar Alam (b), Md. Absar Uddin (c), Shakil Ahmad (d),
Sheikh Abu Toha Md Saky (e), Md. Obaidur Rahman (f), Md. Monirul Islam (g)

*Corresponding Author

- (a) International Islamic University Chittagong (IIUC), Kumira, Shitakundu, Chattogram, Bangladesh, nurul.islam@iiuc.ac.bd
- (b) Department of English Language and Literature, International Islamic University Chittagong (IIUC), Kumira, Shitakundu, Chattogram, Bangladesh, sarwarchk@iiuc.ac.bd
- (c) Department of English Language and Literature, International Islamic University Chittagong (IIUC), Kumira, Shitakundu, Chattogram, Bangladesh, absar@iiuc.ac.bd
- (d) Directorate of Library Affairs, Imam Abdulrahman Bin Faisal University, Dammam, Saudi Arabia, shahmad@iau.edu.sa
- (e) Department of Islamic Education, Muhammadiyah University of Surakarta (UMS), Indonesia, g000224224@student.ums.ac.id
- (f) Faculty of Arts, University of Rajshahi, Rajshahi, Bangladesh, orahman9311@gmail.com
- (g) Librarian, Chattogram Army medical College, Chattogram, Bangladesh, mislamdu193@gmail.com

Abstract

The study conducted at the International Islamic University Chittagong (IIUC) in Bangladesh delves into the intricate process of implementing the Islamization of knowledge. It meticulously traces the historical roots and evolutionary path of this concept, exploring its various paradigms and practical applications within the specific context of IIUC. The research aptly identifies both the promising opportunities and the formidable challenges that IIUC may encounter during the Islamization of knowledge endeavor. Furthermore, the study provides valuable recommendations to surmount these challenges effectively. In essence, the study concludes that IIUC possesses the potential to successfully infuse Islamic values and principles into diverse fields of study. By embracing the concept of Islamization of knowledge and its practical application, IIUC can play a pivotal role in addressing the societal demands and difficulties while simultaneously upholding its commitment to Islamic values. This research not only contributes to the academic discourse on Islamization of knowledge but also offers a practical roadmap for institutions like IIUC to harmonize tradition with modernity in an increasingly complex world.

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1. Introduction

Islamization, also known as the spread of Islamic culture, values, and beliefs inside a civilization or community, is a common term for this process. This can be accomplished in several ways, including the spread of Islamic ideas, the conversion of non-Muslims to Islam, or the adoption of Islamic practices by a third party. The phrase is frequently used in nations with a majority of Muslims, and the process of Islamization can take place through non-coercive channels like education and cultural interchange or more coercive ones like state-led efforts. It may also apply to non-Muslim nations with sizable Muslim populations, as in cases of immigration and religious practice. The idea of Islamization has generated discussion and contention; while some regard it as a constructive development that fosters moral and spiritual progress, others see it as a sort of cultural imperialism or a danger to the independence and variety of other civilizations (Abul Fadl, 1988; Alserhan, 2010; Abbott & Gregorios-Pippas, 2010; Ba-Yunus, 1988; Dangor, 2005; Hasaruddin et al., 2018; Kamaruzaman et al., 2016; Mutalib, 1990; Madani, 2016; Mayer, 2018; Mbawuni & Nimako, 2018; Niyozov & Memon, 2011; Nurbaiti et al., 2020; Poston, 1992; Rizal & Baharun, 2022; Salim, 2008; Scott, 2010; Tibi, 2006).

"Islamization of knowledge" refers to the process of introducing Islamic principles and viewpoints into many academic fields, including education, law, economics, science, and technology. The goal of the Islamization of knowledge is to offer more thorough and inclusive education and research that abides by Islamic principles and addresses social demands and issues (Al 'Alwani, 1995; Al Migdadi, 2012; Azmi & Nadia, 2022; Dangor, 2005; Haneef & Amin, 1997; Hasan, 1998; Moten, 2004; Safi, 1993; Siddiqi, 2011). One solution to the alleged discrepancy between Islamic ideals and principles and the conventional Western-style educational system is the Islamization of knowledge. To provide an education that is both academically rigorous and morally based, the process entails modifying and reformulating the current curriculum and research methodologies to reflect the principles and values of Islam (Ba-Yunus, 1988; Mtani, 2022; Safi, 1993; Sahin, 2018).

Islamization of knowledge is a contentious term, and depending on the setting, culture, and society, several techniques may be taken. It may be viewed either as a type of cultural imperialism or as a danger to the independence and diversity of other cultures, or it can be considered a constructive development that fosters moral and spiritual progress (Stauth, 2002; Turner, 2002, 2007). Islamization of knowledge is the process of reinterpreting many fields of secular and religious knowledge in light of Islamic principles, values, and beliefs. Muslim philosophers and intellectuals initially put out this procedure to reconcile what they saw to be a gap between conventional Islamic ideas and contemporary secular understanding. It strives to produce a synthesis between the Islamic religious heritage and contemporary secular knowledge so that the two can be incorporated holistically (Euben, 2002; Hashim & Rossidy, 2000; Lujja et al., 2016; Mohamed, 2018; Sahin, 2018).

Islamization of knowledge proponents contend that religious studies have received the majority of attention in traditional Islamic education at the expense of social sciences, technology, and other fields of knowledge. Islamization of knowledge, in their view, will result in more comprehensive and integrated education as well as improved understanding and engagement of Muslims with the modern world while upholding their religious convictions (AbuSulayman, 1985; Ba-Yunus, 1988; Hasan, 1998; Haneef, 2011; Hashim & Rossidy, 2000; Lujja et al., 2016; Syarif, 2020; Yaacob & Embong, 2008). The Islamization of

knowledge, on the other hand, is criticized as having the potential to limit intellectual freedom and discourage critical thought. They also mention how it may be used to support particular political or ideological goals, which can result in a reduction in the spectrum of viewpoints that are deemed acceptable in society. It should be remembered that the Islamization of knowledge is a complicated and continuing process and that various people and groups may have different interpretations and applications of it.

1.1. Significance of the study

According to the precise research questions being posed and the environment in which the study is being conducted, a study on the Islamization of knowledge will have different levels of significance. Nonetheless, a study on the Islamization of knowledge may be important generally for some reasons:

To better comprehend the origins, evolution, and various paradigms and frameworks that have been put out for the concept of the Islamization of knowledge. We can better understand the ramifications and difficulties of the idea by comprehending how it has changed over time and how it has been used in various circumstances.

To aid in the creation of more viable and successful methods and techniques for the Islamization of knowledge, research can offer suggestions for how to improve the application of the Islamization of knowledge in many sectors and contexts by examining the efficacy of various methodologies.

To contribute to the continuing discussion and debate regarding the effects of the Islamization of knowledge on society and to provide insights into the difficulties and opportunities that result from it. Research can influence public debate on the subject and serve to guide policy decisions by offering a thorough and nuanced understanding of the notion.

To improve education and other fields where the application of Islamization of knowledge has been made. The study can offer suggestions on how to improve these fields and align them with Islamic values and principles by examining the effects of the Islamization of knowledge on diverse fields of study, including education, law, economics, science, and technology.

Providing insight into various stakeholders' perspectives on the Islamization of knowledge, including those of students, teachers, and community people. This can aid in developing a more inclusive and participatory approach to the Islamization of knowledge and guarantee that the interests and concerns of all stakeholders are taken into consideration. Ultimately, a study on the Islamization of knowledge can have significant ramifications for understanding how to incorporate Islamic values and principles into different academic disciplines and how to handle the chances and problems that present themselves along the way. Such a study can support the development of more efficient and long-lasting methods for the Islamization of knowledge by offering fresh perspectives and insights on the subject. It can also influence public debate and inform governmental decisions.

1.2. The objective of this study

The objective of this study is to comprehensively examine the process of Islamization of knowledge in Bangladesh, with a specific focus on the contribution of the International Islamic University Chittagong. The study aims to investigate the problems and opportunities that arise from the Islamization

of knowledge, considering its implications across various individuals, groups, civilizations, and societies. By analyzing these aspects, the research will generate insightful recommendations for future research and practical applications in the context of Islamization of knowledge. Through a systematic exploration, the study seeks to present a nuanced understanding of the concept and its diverse ramifications within the academic field of Bangladesh.

2. Literature review on Islamization of Knowledge

A survey of the literature on the Islamization of knowledge would look at the numerous ways that Muslim scholars and intellectuals have defined, discussed, and used the topic. It would probably start by giving the idea's historical background, dating it back to the efforts of Islamic scholars in the 1960s and 1970s who were attempting to reconcile the alleged discrepancy between conventional Islamic beliefs and contemporary secular knowledge (Ahsan et al., 2013; Al 'Alwani, 1995; Amir & Rahman, 2023; Ba-Yunus, 1988; Hasan, 1998; Hashim & Rossidy, 2000; Hussien, 2007; Madani, 2016; Ragab, 1995; Rahman, 1988; Safi, 1993; Tibi, 1995). The literature review would next dig into the numerous proposals and applications for the Islamization of knowledge. Examining the various paradigms and frameworks for the Islamization of knowledge, such as those put out by Islamic thinkers like Ismail Al-Faruqi, Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas, Yusuf al-Qaradawi, and Fazlur Rahman, would probably fall under this category. It would probably also cover the objections to the Islamization of knowledge, such as the claims that it might limit intellectual freedom, discourage critical thinking, and advance particular political or ideological objectives (Ali, 2016; Ahmed, 2018; Hashim & Rossidy, 2000; Huringiin & Azfathir, 2018; Muslih et al., 2021; Rahman, 1988; Rahman et al., n.d.; Waghid & Davids, 2018).

The assessment would also cover how the Islamization of knowledge has affected several sectors, including education, law, economics, science, technology, and the social sciences. While some academics have maintained that Islamization can be applied to disciplines like economics, medicine, and the natural sciences, others have countered that some disciplines might not be appropriate for Islamization. A summary of the current status of research on the Islamization of knowledge, a discussion of the major disagreements and controversies that continue to influence the conversation surrounding this issue, and recommendations for further study would likely finish out the literature review. The specifics of what would be discussed in a literature review would depend on the precise subject of the research and the academic discipline in which it is published because this is such a broad issue.

3. Methods

A literature review was conducted to analyze historical perspectives, evolution, paradigms, and applications of Islamization of knowledge. Relevant research articles, academic papers, and books retrieved from databases like Google Scholar and JSTOR. This provides a strong theoretical foundation for the study.

3.1. Islamization of Knowledge and Bangladesh

Muslims in Bangladesh and other nations with a majority of Muslims have explored the issue of the Islamization of knowledge. The history and society of Bangladesh, which have been influenced by the religious and cultural variety of its population, are directly tied to the process of Islamization of knowledge in that nation. The idea of the Islamization of knowledge has been discussed in Bangladesh concerning the educational system of the nation. Some academics contend that traditional Islamic education has been largely neglected in favour of a Western-style education system, which is perceived as being at odds with the Islamic culture and values of the nation. Several political and intellectual figures in Bangladesh have also called for the Islamization of the nation's legal and economic systems in addition to the education system. It is also debatable if the Islamization of these regions would improve these systems' fairness or efficiency or lead to greater issues (Aziz, 2015; Bhuiyan et al., 2012; Obaidullah, 2003; Roy et al., 2020). It is important to keep in mind that, like in any other nation, opinions on the idea of the Islamization of knowledge may differ among individuals and groups in Bangladesh. Some may view it as a type of cultural imperialism or a threat to the independence and diversity of other cultures, while some may regard it as a constructive development that fosters moral and spiritual development. As in any other nation, Bangladesh's particular historical, cultural, and societal circumstances have affected the Islamization of knowledge, and opinions on it may evolve through time.

3.2. Contribution of International Islamic University Chittagong

One of Bangladesh's top universities, the International Islamic University Chittagong (IIUC), has significantly influenced the discussion and application of the Islamization of knowledge. The institution has a reputable Department of Islamic Studies that specializes in Islamic Philosophy, Quranic Studies, Hadith, Islamic History and Culture, as well as other relevant fields. Many academics from the department have made important contributions to Bangladesh's Islamization of knowledge. Other departments at IIUC include those engineering, law, management and administration, and economics, among others. It is renowned for creating curricula and courses that seek to incorporate Islamic concepts and values into a variety of academic disciplines, including law, economics, and engineering (Aziz, 2015; Islam, 2018; Khalil & Yusuf, 2023; Molla, 2014; Obaidullah, 2003). Together with its academic achievements, IIUC frequently holds seminars, conferences, and workshops to advance the Islamization of knowledge and give academics and researchers a forum on which to present their work. Also, it has been offering training, research, and development programs to academic staff, other professionals, and students (International Conference on World Peace and Security - Role of Islam, 2017). By offering social welfare programs and services and participating in community-based research that tackles topics of interest to local communities, IIUC also makes a positive contribution to society.

Overall, IIUC is a reputable organization that has made significant contributions to Bangladesh's Islamization of knowledge. Its curricula, research and development initiatives, and community engagement initiatives are all designed to support the integration of Islamic beliefs and principles into a range of academic disciplines as well as to address the possibilities and difficulties facing society. In addition to its contributions to academia and research, IIUC places a high priority on community

involvement and service. Several activities and programs at the university are designed to meet the needs of regional communities, especially those that are seen as underserved or neglected. Initiatives in the fields of health, education, and economic development are among these projects. The institution also encourages its students to volunteer in the community as a method for them to put the information and abilities they have learned in the classroom to use in solving problems in the real world. Through these community-engagement programs, IIUC can support the growth and welfare of regional communities while also giving students useful experiential learning opportunities. To advance the Islamization of knowledge, the university actively collaborates with other universities, research institutions, and organizations both domestically and abroad. Through this partnership, IIUC can exchange ideas and best practices with other academics and institutions, learn from others' experiences, and develop its programs and projects even further. Moreover, the university contributes to the creation of the national madrasah (Islamic school) curricula. By supplying madrasahs with instruction and materials, IIUC is assisting in making sure that the education offered at these establishments is in line with the most recent studies and industry-accepted best practices in the area of Islamization of knowledge.

The International Islamic University Chittagong has made important advances in the area of Bangladesh's Islamization of academia. Its academic programs, research projects, community engagement initiatives, and cooperative collaborations all contribute to the advancement of the incorporation of Islamic beliefs and principles into a range of academic disciplines while addressing societal needs and problems. Additionally, by offering a forum for the sharing of thoughts and research through conferences, seminars, and workshops, IIUC contributes to the discussion on the Islamization of knowledge. These gatherings frequently draw academics, researchers, and thinkers from all across the nation and the globe, offering a forum for the exchange of fresh ideas on the Islamization of knowledge. A variety of academic publications and books are also published by the institution, offering a venue for the publication of research on the Islamization of knowledge and other relevant subjects. The research and concepts of IIUC faculty, students, and the larger academic community are disseminated to a wider audience through these publications. Via its Faculty Development Programs (FDP), IIUC also aids in the Islamization of knowledge. These initiatives are created to offer faculty members ongoing assistance and training, enabling them to stay abreast of new findings and advancements in their professions and to incorporate Islamic values and principles into their teaching and research. In addition, IIUC is dedicated to giving everyone, regardless of socioeconomic status, access to higher education. Several scholarship programs offered by the institution help students who might not otherwise be able to finance higher education.

The International Islamic University Chittagong (IIUC) is a notable organization that has significantly influenced Bangladeshi discourse on and practice around the Islamization of knowledge. The IIUC contributes to the promotion of the integration of Islamic values and principles into a variety of fields of study while addressing societal needs and challenges through its academic programs, research initiatives, community engagement activities, collaborations, publications, FDPs, and scholarship programs.

4. Opportunities and Challenges for IIUC

The International Islamic University Chittagong (IIUC) may encounter a variety of obstacles and chances as it works to integrate the Islamization of knowledge into its educational initiatives and research projects.

Challenges:

Resources are scarce: IIUC, like many other universities in Bangladesh, may encounter problems with money, personnel, and infrastructure. These restrictions may affect the university's capacity to deliver high-quality instruction and carry out research in an efficient and long-lasting way (Kajawo, 2019; Priyono & Ahmad, 2018). Curriculum development: It can be difficult to create a curriculum that successfully combines Islamic beliefs and ideas with secular knowledge, especially given how dynamic and quickly changing many academic subjects are (Habibi, 2017). Lack of expertise: There might not be enough competent and experienced people to plan, carry out, and assess the process because the idea of Islamization of knowledge is still relatively new and not fully established (Maulana, 2017). Resistance to change: It can be challenging to alter ingrained conventions, practices, or ways of thinking, and students, staff, and other stakeholders may be resistant (Somer, 2007). Balancing tradition and modernity: Another problem would be finding a way to reconcile modern secular knowledge with traditional Islamic beliefs and practices without sacrificing either group's core ideals or values (Lukens-Bull, 2001).

Opportunities:

Promoting integration and coherence: IIUC has the chance to encourage the fusion and coherence of Islamic beliefs and principles with secular knowledge, resulting in research and teaching that is more comprehensive and inclusive. Enhancing critical thinking: Islamization of knowledge can present chances to develop critical thinking and promote challenging presumptions and paradigms. Addressing societal challenges: The Islamization of knowledge can present chances for the university to help address many societal problems, including inequality, poverty, and environmental degradation. Building community partnerships: IIUC can use its community involvement initiatives and joint ventures to advance the Islamization of knowledge and forge closer links with the surrounding areas. Developing a unique curriculum: The university can create a special curriculum that emphasizes the ideals and tenets of Islamic teachings while still including secular knowledge, leading to a rigorous academic education with a strong ethical foundation. Encouraging research and innovation: The possibility presented by the Islamization of knowledge can be used by IIUC to investigate fresh and original research, which might result in new paradigms for thinking and problem-solving across a range of academic disciplines.

5. Recommendation

The International Islamic University Chittagong (IIUC) or any other institution's implementation of the Islamization of knowledge would rely on the unique possibilities and problems the institution is experiencing, as well as its unique setting and resources. Nonetheless, the following general counsel could be helpful:

Assembling a knowledgeable and devoted team: In order to effectively apply the Islamization of information, it may be necessary to assemble a strong and committed team of specialists with a variety of

backgrounds in both Islamic and secular knowledge. The institution should make an investment in recruiting and keeping highly trained professors and staff who have the know-how to plan, carry out, and assess the Islamization of knowledge. Creating a thorough and adaptable curriculum: One of the most important aspects of the Islamization of knowledge is curriculum creation. The university should work to provide a thorough and adaptable curriculum that successfully combines Islamic beliefs and principles with secular knowledge while being flexible enough to meet changing student and societal requirements. Creating partnerships with the community: Collaborations between groups within the community and the promotion of the Islamization of knowledge may be extremely important. To understand and solve the needs and issues of local communities, especially community-based organizations, the university should actively interact with these groups. It should also provide students with the chance to apply their knowledge and abilities in practical situations. Continuously fostering professional development: The university should offer professors and staff chances for continued professional development so they may keep up to date on the most recent findings and advancements in the field of Islamization of knowledge and other relevant subjects. Encouragement of innovation and research: Research and innovation may play a significant role in the creation of fresh, workable solutions to the Islamization of knowledge. The university should give staff and students the chance and resources to undertake research and investigate.

6. Conclusion

The integration of Islamic beliefs and principles into many disciplines of study has the potential to be facilitated by the notion of the "Islamization of knowledge," which is intricate and multidimensional. With its academic programs, research efforts, community engagement activities, partnerships, and other initiatives, the International Islamic University Chittagong (IIUC) has made significant contributions to the field of Islamization of knowledge in Bangladesh. The university may also encounter obstacles, such as a lack of resources, a lack of understanding, and reluctance to change, in implementing the Islamization of knowledge efficiently. IIUC and other universities may concentrate on having a solid and committed team of specialists, creating a thorough and adaptable curriculum, forming community collaborations, offering continuing professional development, and promoting research and innovation to overcome these difficulties. Overall, the university may support the integration of Islamic values and principles into many disciplines of study while addressing the demands and difficulties of society by comprehending the notion of Islamization of knowledge, its roots, evolution, and different models and frameworks.

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