Senarai: Journal of Islamic Heritage and Civilization, Vol. 3 No. 1 (2026), 61 - 90
ISSN: 3089-2864 [Online] DOI: 10.66236/senarai.2026.3.1.61-90

THE EMERGING SCHOLARS AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE ISLAMIZATION OF KNOWLEDGE MOVEMENT: SOME REFLECTION

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Article history: Received: 23 October 2026 | Revised: 14 November 2026 | Available online: 30 November 2026

How to cite this article: Mohd Mumtaz, A. "The Emerging Scholars and the Development of the Islamization of Knowledge Movement: Some Reflection." *Senarai*: *Journal of Islamic Heritage and Civilization*, Vol. 3 No. 1 (2026): 61-90. DOI: 10.66236/senarai.2026.3.1.61-90

Abstract: This paper addresses the main research question of how the development of the Islamization of Knowledge (IOK) movement has evolved through the contributions of its second and subsequent generations of scholars, beyond the foundational work of Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas and Ismail Raji al-Faruqi. Utilising a qualitative intellectual-history and comparative methodology, the paper examines the textual contributions, institutional initiatives and theoretical frameworks of four representative figures: Wan Mohd Nor Wan Daud, Osman Bakar, Mohd Kamal Hassan, and Ziauddin Sardar. The findings demonstrate that these emerging scholars have institutionalized, diversified, and critically extended IOK into higher education rather than simply repeating the pioneering ideas, most notably at the International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM). It

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highlights the movement's continuing emphasis on tawhīdic epistemology, its application to specific academic disciplines, and its engagement with contemporary challenges such as globalization, technology, and artificial intelligence (AI). The paper concludes with the suggestion that future research and the next generation of scholars must confront an unresolved operational problem within IOK: transitioning from the critique of value-neutral, secular knowledge to formulating a rigorous, workable, and verifiable Islamic methodology of knowledge production.

Keywords: Islamization of Knowledge; tawḥīd; Islamic epistemology; IIUM; emerging scholars.

Introduction

The contemporary discourse on the Islamization of Knowledge (IOK) has developed into a broad intellectual movement concerned with the relationship between Islam, knowledge, education, science, philosophy, and civilization. Although the expression IOK is associated particularly with the twentieth century works of scholars such as Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas and Ismail Raji al-Faruqi, the project has continued to evolve through the contributions of subsequent Muslim scholars (al-Attas, 1978). These scholars have not simply repeated the ideas of the earlier pioneers; rather, they have interpreted, developed, criticized, institutionalized, and applied them to contemporary educational and intellectual contexts.

A central concern of this intellectual movement is the conviction that knowledge is never completely detached from a worldview and metaphysics. The assumptions underlying a modern discipline, its conception of reality, humanity, truth, morality, and the purpose of knowledge can influence the way knowledge is produced and applied. From the perspective of truth and reality of life and the world, therefore, the challenge is not merely to add Islamic material

to existing academic disciplines. Instead, Islamization involves a deeper study, examination of the philosophical, metaphysical, and epistemological foundations of knowledge, and an attempt to construct knowledge within a true and realistic worldview and metaphysics. Recent scholarship continues to emphasize this epistemological dimension and argues that Islamization should be understood as an epistemological project involving the proper construction of the ontological, epistemological, axiological, and methodological foundations of knowledge rather than merely as an ideological or apologetic enterprise (Momen & Ullah, 2026).

Within this continuing intellectual development, several scholars have made particularly important contributions. Their work demonstrates that Islamization of Knowledge is not a single, uniform methodology and epistemology but a multidimensional project encompassing truth and reality of life and the world in education, philosophy of science, epistemology, curriculum development, ethics, civilization, and the meaningful construction of contemporary academic disciplines. Many emerging scholars have continuously contributed towards the development of the project. A useful way to understand the development is to look into the views of al-Attas & al-Faruqi's students such as Wan Mohd Nor, Rosnani Hashim, Aslam Haneef and others contemporary and emerging scholars who are rethinking IOK for issues such as globalization, technology, AI, social sciences, education, and modern epistemology (Haneef, 2009). Importantly, the emerging scholars are not a formally defined category in the IOK literature. Some of the names are established senior scholars rather than young or newly emerging academics. The more precise description is "contemporary scholars contributing to or extending the Islamization of Knowledge discourse." Recent scholarship in 2026, for example, explicitly argues for revisiting IOK as an epistemological project (Afandi & Muhyidin, 2025).

If we want, we can also identify many more contemporary scholars of Islamization of Knowledge with their universities, major books, and specific contributions in a format suitable for discussion on IOK. By "new emerging scholars" I mean scholars who are developing or extending the IOK movement in the contemporary period, it is useful to distinguish them from the founding pioneers such as Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas and Ismail Raji al-Faruqi. They are especially relevant to contemporary discussions of Islamic education and the Islamic worldview of knowledge. They are also identified among Malaysian scholars contributing to debates on Islamization of science and knowledge.

IOK's View of Islam

We cannot afford to abandon our commitment to the IOK movement. Rather, we must reinvigorate it by giving greater emphasis to its ethical, spiritual, and civilizational dimensions, with renewed intellectual vigour and dedication. This requires us to present Islam not merely as a religion in the conventional sense, but as a comprehensive and universal worldview and a way of life that provides an integrated framework for understanding humanity, knowledge, society, and the natural world (al-Attas, 1980).

To reduce Islam to the level of religion alone would risk doing considerable damage to the intellectual integrity of Islam, humanity, and the broader objectives of IOK. Naquib al-Attas (1995) and al-Faruqi did not approach Islam merely as a religion; rather, they sought to articulate its intellectual foundations and generate new and original insights capable of transforming the production and application of knowledge. In this spirit, our renewed engagement with IOK can contribute to the further development of tawḥīdic epistemology and methodology, enabling future generations to critically engage with contemporary challenges and

navigate the increasingly complex and often negative representations of Islam and Islamic thought.

Objective of IOK

Rooted within a well-articulated tawḥīdic epistemological framework, the IOK offers not merely a holistic and integrated paradigm of knowledge, but a framework for generating new, useful, and authentic knowledge capable of shaping society, culture, and civilization. Within this tawḥīdic epistemology, the Islamic Revealed Knowledge (IRK) constitutes the authentic foundation for metaphysical inquiry and provides the epistemological vision necessary for the proper exercise of human intellectual and empirical faculties (Nasr, 1981). It is therefore insufficient, and potentially misleading, to characterize the intellectual project of the founders of IOK as an attempt to "integrate metaphysical inquiry with human knowledge." Such a formulation risks reducing IOK to a project of synthesis or reconciliation between two pre-existing bodies of knowledge instead of and rather than a movement of creation and production of new knowledge.

IOK does not fundamentally seek to reclaim or reproduce the intellectual heritage of the Muslim past, nor does it seek to appropriate or accommodate modern Western thought as an independent epistemological framework. Rather, its fundamental objective is to develop the critical and comparative skills so that scholars can produce useful, relevant, and authentic knowledge capable of addressing the intellectual and civilizational challenges confronting modern humanity. At its core, IOK is a project of creativity, renewal, and intellectual proper construction, rather than the retention, imitation, or reproduction of inherited traditions, whether Eastern or Western. Its objective is not to establish a simple unification or synthesis of East and West. Instead, it seeks to cultivate a dynamic and creative intellectual enterprise grounded in an authentic philosophical and

tawḥīdic foundation. Creativity, therefore, does not imply a departure from the Islamic intellectual worldview; rather, it is enabled and guided by it. In this process of intellectual creativity, the IRK serves as an authentic source of vision, insight, renewal, and intellectual renovation.

This epistemological orientation is applicable not only to the existing branches of knowledge but also to the development of new fields and disciplines. The role of IRK is not to provide a substitute for human intellectual and empirical inquiry, but to guide, orient, and discipline properly these faculties toward their proper and authentic ends. Human reason and empirical investigation attain their fullest epistemological legitimacy when exercised within the guidance and worldview provided by IRK. IOK, therefore, should not be understood primarily in terms of the integration, synthesis, reconciliation, or complementation of revealed and human knowledge. More fundamentally, it entails the wholehearted acceptance of IRK as the universal and authentic epistemological foundation and the creative application of its principles to human intellectual inquiry and practical life. The aim is not merely to reunite existing systems of knowledge, but to generate an authentic, dynamic, and productive body of knowledge capable of guiding humanity and contributing to the proper construction and advancement of society, culture, and civilization. The IIUM stands as symbol of IOK. Over the past few decades, the university has pursued the IOK as its mission aiming to restore its confidence as intellectual and civilizational role of IIUM. This aim and vision have been operationalized through the Islamization of Knowledge across disciplines and institutional practices (IIUM, n.d.)

The Contribution of Emerging Scholars (Second Generations)

The founders of Islamization of Knowledge, the experts of modern and medieval thought of the east and the west,

highlighted the philosophical frameworks and foundation of knowledge and education of the modern Western and secular world. They argued that all modern Western disciplines and sciences have been deeply influenced by liberalism, capitalism, secularism, modernism, Marxism, and their byproduct rationalism, scientism, and positivism. They, therefore, examined these philosophical and metaphysical foundations and contended the necessity of replacement of these foundations by the foundation of true, authentic, realistic, and universal worldview based on True, Authentic, and Universal Knowledge (TAUK) which is generally known as IRK. They launched, in fact, the true movement of liberalism from human subjugation which became known as the movement of IOK. Their main argument was that all modern ideologies, theories of knowledge, and methodologies were not based on the strong foundation of TAUK. Instead of realization of the existence and the need of the application of TAUK, the philosophers and thinkers of modern period laid the foundation of modern theories, epistemologies, and methodologies of knowledge and education using metaphysical speculation and philosophical conjecture as the basis and caused the crisis in the meaning of knowledge and education (Ashraf & Husin, 1979; Rahman, 1982). Against this background, the founders of IOK movement restored the confidence in TAUK and considered Islam as a category of knowledge.

Al-Faruqi (1982) and like-minded scholars conceived the IOK movement as an intellectual, epistemological, methodological, and practical project aimed at constructing and developing a tawhid-based epistemology and methodology for construction and production of new knowledge. As articulated in his 1982 Plan, al-Faruqi worked toward the revival and revitalization of Islamic Revealed Knowledge (IRK) or TAUK as the foundation of humanity's intellectual vision and civilizational mission. Today, this movement continues to evolve, and its relevance becomes

increasingly profound in the face of rapidly changing intellectual and global challenges (al-Faruqi, 1982). Contemporary issues including the ecological crisis, the implications of Artificial Intelligence, and the dehumanizing effects of technological advancement raise critical questions about the nature, purpose, and direction of knowledge. These challenges reinforce the need to reconsider the intellectual foundations upon which modern knowledge is produced, disseminated, and applied. It is precisely this conviction that has continually renewed my engagement with IOK.

The contribution of the second and subsequent generations should not be highlighted as merely the followers of the pioneers, but as scholars who institutionalized, expanded, critically reassessed, and diversified the IOK movement. The development of the IOK movement cannot be, therefore, understood solely through the intellectual contributions of its pioneering figures. While scholars such as Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas and Ismail Raji al-Faruqi provided important conceptual and methodological foundations, the subsequent development of the project increasingly depended upon a new generation of scholars who translated its broad philosophical vision into academic institutions, disciplines, curricula, research programmes, textbooks, and pedagogical practices. These emerging scholars played an important role in moving IOK from an intellectual proposal into a more sustained and diversified programme of educational and knowledge reform. In the case of the translation of theory into practice, the role of Kamal Hassan and AbdulHamid AbuSulayman are unforgettable (Abu Sulayman, 2007).

One of their major contributions was the institutionalization of IOK. The establishment and expansion of institutions such as the IIUM, the International Institute of Islamic Thought (IIIT), the International Islamic University Islamabad (IIUI) the International Institute of Islamic

Thought and Civilization (ISTAC), and related centres of Islamic scholarship created new intellectual spaces in which the relationship between IRK, reason, science, education, and contemporary knowledge could be systematically investigated (IIUM, n.d.). Emerging scholars became teachers, researchers, curriculum developers, administrators, and intellectual leaders within these institutions. In this sense, the second generation contributed to transforming IOK from a primarily conceptual movement into an institutionally embedded educational project.

A second major contribution was the application of IOK to specific academic disciplines. Whereas the pioneers articulated general principles concerning the Islamic worldview, epistemology, and reconstruction of knowledge, subsequent scholars explored how these principles could be applied to fields such as economics, sociology, psychology, political science, education, history, science, law, and the humanities. This disciplinary expansion was significant because it required scholars to move beyond general declarations about Islamization and confront the methodological assumptions, conceptual categories, theories, and research practices of particular disciplines. Consequently, IOK gradually developed from a general intellectual programme into a multidisciplinary field of scholarly inquiry.

Emerging scholars also contributed to the development of Islamic curricula and educational materials. The production of textbooks, teaching materials, course outlines, academic programmes, and research methodologies represented an important practical dimension of the project. The challenge was no longer simply to argue that knowledge should be informed by a true, authentic, and universal worldview, but to determine how such a worldview could actually shape what is taught, how it is taught, how research is conducted, and how knowledge is evaluated. This shift

contributed significantly to the development of integrated educational models, particularly within Islamic universities.

Another important contribution was the reinterpretation and refinement of the concept of integration. The later generation increasingly recognized that IOK could not be reduced to the simple addition of Islamic subjects to modern disciplines, nor to the mechanical reconciliation of revelation with contemporary theories. Instead, integration came to involve a deeper epistemological engagement in which the assumptions, concepts, methodologies, and objectives of modern disciplines could be critically examined from the perspective of true worldview. This development helped move the discourse from the binary distinction between "Islamic knowledge" and "modern knowledge" toward a more sophisticated discussion of epistemological development, critical engagement, and knowledge reconstruction.

The emerging generation also introduced a stronger critical and self-reflective dimension into the IOK discourse. As the project developed institutionally, scholars began to question some of its earlier assumptions, terminology, methodologies, and practical outcomes (Saqeb, 2013). They asked whether Islamization had produced genuinely new knowledge, whether it had sufficiently addressed the methodological foundations of modern disciplines, whether its priorities are placed properly or they need well thought of shift and whether the project had sometimes remained at the level of conceptual reinterpretation rather than knowledge production. Such criticism should not necessarily be understood as a rejection of IOK (Majid & Aljunied, 2023). Rather, it represents an important stage in its intellectual maturation. The willingness to reassess earlier formulations enabled the project to respond to changing intellectual, social, technological, and global circumstances.

The emerging scholars further broadened the geographical and cultural scope of the project. IOK

increasingly became a global intellectual endeavour involving scholars and institutions across Southeast Asia, South Asia, the Middle East, Africa, Europe, and North America. This geographical expansion introduced diverse intellectual traditions and educational experiences into the discussion. In the Malaysian context, for example, the experience of IIUM provided a distinctive laboratory for examining how tawhid-based epistemological principles could operate within a multicultural, multi-religious, modern nation-state. This experience also raised new questions concerning inclusivity, citizenship, intercultural engagement, national development, and the relationship between Islamic education and wider societal needs.

A further contribution of emerging scholars has been their engagement with new intellectual and global challenges that were not fully anticipated during the formative period of IOK. Globalization, neoliberalism, environmental degradation, artificial intelligence, digital transformation, biotechnology, technological disruption, epistemic fragmentation, dehumanization, and the contemporary crisis of education have created new questions for the project. The task of Islamization therefore increasingly extends beyond responding to the intellectual legacy of Western modernity to addressing the conditions of a rapidly transforming twenty-first-century world. Emerging scholars have consequently sought to ask how tawḥīdic epistemology can contribute not only to the critique of existing knowledge systems but also to the production of relevant, ethically sound, and transformative knowledge.

Perhaps most importantly, the emerging generation has contributed to the transition from "Islamization of Knowledge" as a movement to knowledge integration and transformation as an ongoing intellectual process. The terminology may have evolved, and different scholars may disagree over the appropriate methodology, but the underlying concern remains significant: how can knowledge

be reconstructed and produced in ways that recognize the unity of truth, the limitations of purely materialist or reductionist approaches, the importance of revelation and reason, and the ethical responsibilities of human beings? In this respect, emerging scholars have helped ensure that the IOK project remains an evolving intellectual enterprise rather than a fixed methodology established by one generation.

In this historical trajectory, the emerging scholars should therefore be understood not simply as continuers of the pioneers' work, but as mediators, institutional builders, disciplinary innovators, critics, and reformulators of the IOK movement. Their contribution lies precisely in negotiating the tension between fidelity to the foundational Islamic worldview and the need to respond creatively to changing intellectual and social realities. The future of IOK consequently depends not only on preserving the intellectual legacy of its pioneers but also on the ability of successive generations to critically renew, reconstruct, expand, and extend that legacy into new fields of knowledge and new historical circumstances. We can include among the emerging scholars AbdulHamid AbuSulayman, Mohd Kamal Hassan, Osman Bakar, Wan Mohd Nor Wan Daud, Aslam Hanif, Rosnani Hashim, Amin Abdullah, Ziauddin Sardar and many others. Among these scholars AbdulHamid AbuSulayman and Mohd Kamal Hassan passed away. We will discuss below the views of only a few scholars.

Wan Mohd Nor Wan Daud

Wan Mohd Nor Wan Daud is one of the most important contemporary scholars who in the area of Islamic Education and the Intellectual Legacy of al-Attas maintains continuation and interpretation of Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas's educational philosophy and conception of Islamization of present-day knowledge. His major contribution lies in explaining the philosophical foundations of Islamic education and demonstrating how al-Attas's ideas

can be understood as a comprehensive educational project rather than simply as a proposal for modifying university curricula.

His major works, The Educational Philosophy and Practice of Syed Muhammad Naquib Al-Attas: An Exposition of the Original Concept of Islamization, published by ISTAC in 1998 and Islamization of Contemporary Knowledge and the Role of the University in the Context of De-Westernization and Decolonization 2013, provide an extensive study of al-Attas's educational thought, including Islamic philosophy of education, curriculum, knowledge, and learning. Library catalogues identify the work specifically in relation to Islamic education, curriculum, Islamic learning, and the philosophy of knowledge.

Wan Mohd Nor Wan Daud develops al-Attas's approach to knowledge, education, worldview, and de-Westernization. He emphasizes that Islamization must involve the transformation of educational philosophy and the university, not simply adding Islamic material to existing subjects. Wan Mohd Nor Wan Daud is particularly important for understanding the educational and philosophical continuation of Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas's approach. His work argues that Islamization requires a transformation of the intellectual and educational environment. His 2013 work specifically addresses Islamization of contemporary knowledge, the university, de-Westernization, and decolonization. His main contribution highlights themes such as Islamic worldview, education, university, and de-Westernization of knowledge.

Osman Bakar

Osman Bakar contributes to Islamization of science and philosophy of science. A major contemporary Muslim thinker and philosopher whose works connect Islamic intellectual tradition, science, philosophy, and contemporary knowledge. He is particularly important for discussions

about the relationship between Islam and modern science. Malaysian scholarship identifies him among the key scholars discussing the Islamization of modern Western science. He emphasized on the need of articulation, explanation, and implementation of tawḥīdic epistemology.

I see Osman Bakar's work as one of the more philosophically sophisticated approaches to the Islamization of Knowledge, particularly because he does not reduce Islamization to simply adding the Qur'anic ayaths (verses) or Islamic terminology to modern academic disciplines. His central contribution is to make tawḥīd (the unity and oneness of Allah SWT) the foundation of epistemology. In his view, if reality is ultimately unified by Allah SWT, knowledge should not be artificially divided into "religious" and "secular" compartments. This is closely connected with his critique of the fragmentation of knowledge in modern education. For him Islamization is fundamentally an epistemological project. For Osman Bakar (1991), the problem is deeper than the curriculum. Modern knowledge often carries assumptions about reality, human nature, truth, causality, values, and the purpose of knowledge. Therefore, Islamization requires examining these underlying assumptions. This is why his work on Tawhid and Science is important. He asks not merely, "Can science be used by Muslims?" but also, "What conception of reality and knowledge underlies science, and how does it relate to the Islamic worldview?" (Bakar, 1991).

He rejects the rigid separation between waḥy (revelation) and reason. One of the strongest aspects of Bakar's approach is his attempt to reconcile revelation and reason like many other scholars. He does not advocate abandoning modern Western science. Rather, he argues for a framework in which rational and empirical inquiry operates within a broader Islamic conception of reality. Anyone can describe this as his attempt to reconstruct knowledge through the integration of revelation and reason under tawḥīdic epistemology. So,

Islamization for Osman Bakar is closer to integration and reconstruction of knowledge than simply Islamicizing the terminology of existing disciplines. His concept of the unity of knowledge is particularly significant. Osman Bakar challenges the modern fragmentation between disciplines. According to him, all branches of knowledge such as theology, philosophy, natural science, social science, ethics, and civilization should ultimately be understood as different approaches to one reality created by Allah SWT.

This explains his interest in the intellectual tradition of Muslim scholars such as al-Fārābī and al-Ghazālī and in the classical Islamic classification of the sciences. His Classification of Knowledge in Islam examines precisely this intellectual heritage. I think this is one of his most valuable contributions: he treats Islamization as a problem of the architecture of knowledge, not merely the content of individual subjects. He also provides a critique of the "value-neutrality" of science. Osman Bakar questions the assumption that modern Western science is completely neutral. Scientific knowledge may describe the physical world, but the purposes to which knowledge and technology are directed involve values. In his discussion of science and technology, he emphasizes the spiritual and ethical foundations that should guide scientific activity in an Islamic civilization.

He argues that Islam does not accept an absolute separation between knowledge and ethics. This is particularly relevant today in questions concerning AI, biotechnology, environmental degradation, economics and technology: knowing what we can do is different from knowing what we ought to do.

He does not reject modern Western knowledge. His approach is different from simply rejecting Western knowledge. This is important. Osman Bakar's position is not an anti-Western rejection of modern science. A position which has been the position of all advocates of Islamization.

He sees Islamic civilization historically as capable of synthesizing knowledge from different civilizations while transforming it according to its own worldview. His work on Islamic civilization emphasizes this process of synthesis, and his research on Indian contributions to early Islamic science is a good example of his willingness to recognize intellectual contributions originating outside the Muslim world. Thus, one can characterize his position as: not isolation, not imitation but critical integration. We need to ask where his work is strongest and where it needs further development. The strength of Osman Bakar's approach is its philosophical depth. He gives Islamization a coherent metaphysical foundation. For him tawḥīd reflects conception of reality, conception of knowledge, classification of knowledge and ethics and finally civilization. But there is also a major challenge.

It is relatively easy to formulate the philosophical principles of a tawḥīdic epistemology. It is much harder to demonstrate exactly how those principles should transform the tawḥīdic methodology and actual knowledge production of, say economics, psychology, sociology, political science, medicine, artificial intelligence, physics, or education. In other words, the philosophical foundation is clearer than the discipline-specific operationalization. That is where contemporary scholarship on Islamization still has considerable work to do. In short, I would place Osman Bakar among the thinkers who helped move the discussion of Islamization of Knowledge from a slogan toward an epistemological and civilizational project. His most important insight, in my view, is that the fundamental question is not “How do we make modern knowledge Islamic?” but “What conception of reality, truth, knowledge, and human purpose should govern knowledge in an Islamic civilization?” That makes Osman Bakar particularly interesting alongside Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas and Ismail Raji al-Faruqi, although their formulations and

emphases differ. Osman Bakar is especially strong on philosophy of science, classification of knowledge, tawḥīdic epistemology, and the historical relationship between Islam and science. Some scholarly treatment of Osman Bakar similarly identifies his project as an attempt at epistemological renewal cantered on tawḥīd and the reintegration of knowledge of Allah SWT and knowledge of the world.

One can read Osman Bakar through a three-level framework: Tawḥīd and Epistemology; Integration of the Sciences; and Islamic Civilization. This framework makes his contribution much easier to distinguish from al-Attas's concept of de-westernization and adab and al-Faruqi's more systematic program for the Islamization of disciplines. Osman Bakar focuses heavily on the philosophy of science. His work Classification of Knowledge in Islam examines how knowledge can be organized within an Islamic intellectual framework, while Tawhid and Science connects scientific inquiry with the Islamic principle of Divine Unity. His current position at IIUM as rector makes him particularly relevant to contemporary IOK discussions. His main contribution focuses on Islamization of science and tawhidic epistemology.

Mohd Kamal Hasan

Although he passed away recently, he is important for understanding the modern development of IOK, particularly in Malaysia. He developed the concept of IOHK and helped institutionalize it through IIUM's educational philosophy and curriculum. One can see Mohd. Kamal Hassan's contribution as complementary to, but somewhat different from, Osman Bakar's. If Osman Bakar is particularly strong on the philosophical and epistemological foundations of Islamization, Kamal Hassan is especially important for showing how Islamization can become an educational, institutional, ethical, and civilizational project. His most

important contributions are Islamization of Human Knowledge, Relevantization of Islamic sciences and the Islamization of Self.

One of Kamal Hassan's important conceptual moves was his preference for "IOHK" rather than simply "IOK." The distinction matters. He argues that ʿilm in its fullest Qur'anic sense cannot simply be treated as something that needs to be "Islamized." The issue is principally with humanly produced knowledge, which can be influenced by philosophical, cultural, ideological, and secular assumptions. He questions: How can human beings produce and organize knowledge in a way that is consistent with the Qur'anic worldview and tawḥīdic understanding of reality?

That makes his approach more nuanced than simply attaching "Islamic" labels to existing disciplines. He connects Islamization directly to the Qur'anic and tawḥīdic worldview. For Kamal Hassan, Islamization begins with a transformation of the worldview of the knower. The Qur'an and tawḥīd provide the fundamental intellectual orientation, while human knowledge is critically examined in the light of that worldview. Recent studies of his framework specifically identify the Qur'anic paradigm and tawḥīdic worldview as central elements. This is the reason I would not interpret Kamal Hassan as advocating "Take Western knowledge + add Islamic material." Rather, for him, the process is closer to the Qur'anic worldview, critical examination of human knowledge, integration/reconstruction, ethical application and the development of the Muslim person and society.

His greatest practical contribution lies in the development of IIUM. This is where I think Kamal Hassan becomes particularly significant. He did not treat Islamization merely as an academic theory. His ideas became connected to the institutional project of the IIUM. He was deeply involved in IIUM and served in various capacities, including rector; scholarship on his educational thought identifies his contribution to the university's integration and

Islamization mission as central to its development. Indeed, during his leadership, Islamization of Human Knowledge became embedded in IIUM's institutional mission. That gives his work a distinctive character. Al-Attas gives us a profound philosophical conception of Islamic education, adab, and de-westernization. Osman Bakar gives us an important tawḥīdic philosophy of knowledge and science. Kamal Hassan asks, in effect: How do we actually build an educational institution in which these principles can be lived? That is his major contribution.

I particularly appreciate his idea of "relevantisation" and consider it equally important to everyone, social scientists, natural scientists, and experts of Islamic sciences. It is important because we cannot really "Islamize" Islamic revealed knowledge sciences in the same sense that we Islamize a humanly constructed discipline. Instead, Islamic sciences themselves need to be made relevant to contemporary realities and problems. This gives us a useful two-sided model: Islamization of Human sciences and relevantisation/contextualisation of Islamic sciences. This is quite sophisticated. It avoids the assumption that the problem exists only in modern Western disciplines. Traditional Islamic sciences also must engage critically and creatively with in the contemporary circumstances.

He does not exempt the natural sciences. This is another point I find important. Kamal Hassan's position is that Islamization should not be confined to sociology, psychology, economics, politics, etc. He argues that natural, physical and applied sciences also operate within philosophical and epistemological assumptions and therefore cannot automatically be regarded as completely value neutral. This is very close to the deeper epistemological concern that we saw in Osman Bakar. The question is not whether 2 + 2 = 4 needs to be "Islamized." Rather, we must ask: What conception of reality informs science? What is the status of human beings? What counts as legitimate

knowledge? What is the purpose of scientific inquiry? Who determines the ethical limits of technology? What conception of progress is being assumed? Etc. The above questions bring science into the broader Islamic worldview without requiring Muslims to reject scientific investigation.

His conception is also fundamentally educational. This is perhaps where I would place Kamal Hassan's greatest originality. For him, Islamization is not simply about curriculum transformation. It involves the transformation of the human being, oneself. That is why the idea of the murabbi is so important when discussing his educational legacy. IIUM scholarship describes his vision in terms of harmonizing disciplines while imbuing them with Islamic principles and connecting this to the university's broader mission. In other words, the Islamization of Human Knowledge and Islamization of the Self, that is, formation of the integrated Muslim personality.

The ultimate objective is therefore not merely to produce an "Islamic economist" or "Islamic sociologist." It is to produce a whole human being whose intellectual, spiritual, moral and professional dimensions are integrated. Despite all this, we need to be critical and creative because the philosophical formulation is stronger than the evidence concerning implementation. We can clearly identify his principles and the institutional manifestation at IIUM. But an important question remains: To what extent has the actual teaching and production of knowledge in contemporary universities been transformed by IOHK? Despite the framework IOHK, there remains a gap in systematic analysis of its methodology and practical implementation, including its effectiveness and challenges in contemporary educational settings. That is an important concern, not necessarily of any single scholar, but of the broader Islamization project. It is relatively easy to say: "Integrate Islamic worldview with modern knowledge." But the difficult question is: What exactly changes in the methodology, theories, research

questions, textbooks, pedagogy, assessment, and knowledge-production process? That is where we all need to ask to ourselves.

Finally, I would place Kamal Hassan very high in the practical intellectual history of Islamization of Human Knowledge, especially in the Malaysian and IIUM context. However, I would therefore not treat Kamal Hassan as merely a follower of al-Attas or al-Faruqi. His work develops a distinctive synthesis and, importantly, attempts to translate Islamization into an educational institution and a lived academic culture. I explicitly describe his framework as having been realized through IIUM's curriculum and policies. And there is one particularly powerful idea in his work that I think deserves more attention: Islamization is not only the Islamization of Knowledge; it is also the Islamization of the Self. That shifts the entire discussion. The problem is not merely "What is Islamic knowledge?" but also "What kind of human being should produce, teach, transmit, and use knowledge?" That, to me, is where Kamal Hassan's thought becomes particularly profound and where it connects very strongly with the Islamic educational tradition of adab, tarbiyah, and the formation of the whole person.

Ziauddin Sardar

Ziauddin Sardar is an important contemporary Muslim intellectual associated with debates about Islam, science, knowledge, modernity, Islamization of Knowledge, and the future of Muslim societies. It is said that his approach is sometimes broader and more critical than the pioneers of IOK programme, so he should not simply be labelled an orthodox proponent of every aspect of the traditional IOK framework. One can see Ziauddin Sardar as one of the most important contributors from within the IOK movement. His significance is not that he simply rejected Islamization. Rather, he forced Muslim scholars to ask whether the dominant IOK programmes were actually capable of

producing a genuinely Islamic epistemology and science. His position is therefore particularly interesting when compared with al-Attas, al-Faruqi, Osman Bakar, and Kamal Hassan.

Sardar's Starting Point is A Critique of "Universal" Science

Ziauddin Sardar is useful because he provides a critical perspective on the evolution of the movement. Rather than remaining with the original terminology of Islamization, he has discussed moving toward "integration of knowledge." His work argues that reform of Muslim higher education requires reconsidering disciplines, creating new ones, and incorporating ethical and spiritual considerations. Ziauddin Sardar (1989) strongly challenges the assumption that modern Western science is simply universal, objective, neutral and culturally independent. He argues that what is presented as universal science has developed within particular historical and civilizational circumstances. A scholarly analysis of his work notes that he places the modern Western science within its Western cultural context and questions its claim to universality. This is fundamental to his approach. He questions: "How can we put Islam into Western science?" "Why should Western science, with its particular philosophical and cultural assumptions, be treated as the only legitimate model of science?" That is a much more radical question.

His Criticism of al-Faruqi

This is probably the area where Ziauddin Sardar differs most sharply from the conventional IOK programme. Al-Faruqi proposed a systematic programme for Islamizing modern academic disciplines. Ziauddin Sardar was concerned that this could become an exercise in taking disciplines developed within Western intellectual frameworks and then attempting to reconstruct them by adding Islamic principles. Ziauddin Sardar feared that this might actually leave the underlying Western epistemological

structure intact. I feel Ziauddin Sardar's critique of al-Faruqi identifies precisely these concerns: epistemological, paradigmatic and methodological problems, including the danger that the programme might constrain scientific diversity or compromise methodological rigor. In other words, Ziauddin Sardar (1985) asks whether "Islamization of Western knowledge" might inadvertently become "Westernization of Islam". Some take it as a very powerful criticism. Ziauddin Sadar advocates an Islamic epistemology, not merely Islamic content. This is where Ziauddin Sardar becomes much closer to Osman Bakar.

Ziauddin Sardar (1985) further argues that a Muslim civilization requires a distinct theory of knowledge. In his writings, he argues that epistemology expresses a worldview and that a civilization cannot be genuinely distinctive without its own way of knowing. Therefore, the sequence should not be mere addition in Western discipline some Islamic concepts. Instead, it should be something more fundamental, making Islamic worldview, Islamic epistemology, Islamic methodology, the process of knowledge production. One can think this as a major strength of his thought. But Ziauddin Sardar goes further than merely defending "Islamic science".

Ziauddin Sardar and the Civilizational Approach to Science

Ziauddin Sardar's contribution to the contemporary discourse on the Islamization of Knowledge can be understood broadly through what may be described as a civilizational approach to science. Rather than approaching science as a value-neutral and universally applicable enterprise that can be separated from the cultural, ethical, social, and historical conditions within which it is produced, Ziauddin Sardar emphasizes the need to understand knowledge in relation to the civilization that generates, organizes, and applies it. His concern is therefore not simply

with the content or technical procedures of scientific disciplines, but with the broader purposes, values, assumptions, and consequences that shape scientific knowledge and its application.

From the perspective of Ziauddin Sardar, knowledge cannot be considered independently of culture, values, ethics, society, the environment, human needs, justice, and the particular problems confronting a civilization. For Ziauddin Sardar (1984), the scientific activity is always situated within a particular social and cultural context, and the questions that science chooses to investigate, the problems it considers important, the methods it employs, and the purposes toward which its discoveries are directed are influenced by the values and priorities of the society in which it operates. Science, therefore, is not merely for him a technical mechanism for discovering facts about the physical world; it is also a human and civilizational enterprise whose direction and application have profound ethical and social consequences.

One can say that Ziauddin Sardar's approach consequently moves the discussion of Islam and science beyond the question of whether Muslims should simply reproduce, appropriate, or modify the scientific knowledge developed within the modern Western tradition. His concern is more fundamental: what kind of science is appropriate to the needs, values, aspirations, and challenges of a particular civilization? This question shifts the focus from the mere transfer of scientific knowledge to the purposes and conditions under which knowledge is produced and applied. The issue is not simply whether physics, biology, medicine, or other disciplines can be given an Islamic label, but whether their underlying purposes, priorities, institutional structures, and applications contribute to human well-being and to the moral and civilizational objectives of Islam.

Conclusion

IOK movement is now passing by an important shift in emphasis. The challenge confronting IOK and Muslim societies is not simply to acquire existing scientific and technological knowledge or to reproduce the intellectual achievements of other civilizations. A genuinely dynamic IOK project requires the capacity to formulate new questions, develop new conceptual frameworks, undertake original research, and generate new knowledge that responds to contemporary human problems. A position that is shared by all founders of IOK and emerging generation. In this sense, IOK project has an important emancipatory dimension. It calls for intellectual independence without requiring intellectual isolation. Muslims can critically engage with the achievements of modern science while simultaneously questioning its underlying assumptions and developing alternative approaches where necessary. The objective is therefore not to reject modern science simply because of its Western historical origins, but to move from intellectual dependence toward creative participation and from metaphysical speculation to TAUK for knowledge production. Such a position is particularly significant for the contemporary Muslim world, where the development of scientific and technological capacity must be accompanied by intellectual autonomy and ethical responsibility.

Despite these considerable strengths, however, second generation scholars raise significant questions that cannot be overlooked. The most important concern relates to the operationalization of critique. We need to be persuasive in challenging the claim that modern science is entirely value-free and in demonstrating that scientific knowledge operates within broader cultural and civilizational contexts. The more difficult question, however, concerns what follows from genuine critique. If modern science is not completely value-neutral, how precisely should an alternative Islamic methodology of knowledge be constructed and

implemented? This is a substantially more difficult problem. Critiquing the philosophical assumptions of modern science is not the same as developing a functioning alternative capable of producing reliable, testable, and cumulative scientific knowledge. It is relatively straightforward to identify the cultural and philosophical assumptions embedded within a particular scientific tradition. It is considerably more challenging to specify the concrete principles, procedures, criteria of evidence, standards of verification, and institutional practices that would constitute an alternative Islamic methodology of scientific inquiry.

The difficulty becomes particularly apparent when considering fields in which complex empirical and normative questions intersect. Suppose, for example, that two Muslim scholars or scientists reach different conclusions about an appropriate Islamic methodology for addressing climate change, economics, psychology, biotechnology, or artificial intelligence. Both may appeal to the Qur'an and Sunnah, Islamic ethical principles, maṣlaḥah, ʿadl, or the broader Islamic worldview. Yet they may nevertheless disagree about how these principles should be interpreted, prioritized, translated into research methods, or applied to empirical circumstances. The critical question then becomes: what criteria determine which methodology is more adequate, more reliable, and more appropriately Islamic?

This constitutes what may be described as the operational problem within IOK's project. A comprehensive critique of modern science requires a correspondingly rigorous account of the alternative methodology being proposed. It is not sufficient to establish that existing scientific frameworks contain philosophical and cultural assumptions; an alternative framework must also demonstrate its capacity to generate reliable knowledge through clearly articulated and intellectually defensible procedures. This issue also raises a broader philosophical question concerning the very meaning of "Islamic science."

Does the term refer to a distinct body of scientific knowledge? A particular methodology? A set of ethical parameters governing scientific research? A civilizational orientation toward knowledge? Or a comprehensive epistemological framework within which scientific inquiry takes place? Different answers to these questions produce significantly different conceptions of what Islamization entails. Unless these distinctions are carefully articulated, the term "Islamic science" risks becoming conceptually ambiguous

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DECLARATIONS

Author Contributions:

Mohd Mumtaz Ali: Conceptualisation, Methodology, Investigation, Data curation, Formal analysis, Visualisation, Writing – original draft, Writing – review & editing. The author has read and approved the final manuscript and accepts full responsibility for the work.

Conflict of Interest:

Mohd Mumtaz Ali is a member of the International Advisory Board of Senarai: Journal of Islamic Heritage and Civilization. He was not involved in reviewer selection, peer

review, or the editorial decision for this manuscript. The submission was handled independently by another editor.

Funding:

This research received no external funding.

Acknowledgements:

The author thanks **Nina Nurasyekin Zulkefli** for technical and administrative assistance. Nina Nurasyekin Zulkefli reviewed and consented to this acknowledgement.

Generative AI and AI-Assisted Technologies:

This article has use Grammarly as a tool of proofread.