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Islamic Education in Uganda: Challenges and Prospects of Islamization of Knowledge

ABSTRACT: *This paper is intended to assess the performance of the prevailing Islamic education in Uganda and how Islamization of human acquired knowledge can figure into improvement of the performance of this curriculum to foster modernity. The study also avails a successful methodology towards Islamization of knowledge in the context of Ugandan education system. The study was conducted qualitatively using secondary data, i.e. information was collected using library search, where books, journal articles, periodicals, and online resources were used in gathering data. As it was the case in the ancient Islamic empire during its golden age, what will make Islamic education in Uganda strong is its openness to both Islamic studies and social sciences side-by-side in the same curriculum to complement each other in nurturing balanced graduates, who are well integrated intellectually and spiritually. While the Islamic traditional system of education does not provide solutions to most of the contemporary issues; the Western system of education will provide some solutions to these issues, but with contradictory worldview to that of Islam. Few studies have considered the Islamization of knowledge project in overcoming secularism in education and the prevalent challenges in Islamic education system across the Muslim world. This study employs the Islamization of knowledge project to counteract Muslim education problems in Uganda. It, therefore, makes a theoretical contribution by considering a new concept in education as a vehicle to revamp Islamic education in Uganda.*

KEY WORDS: *Islam, education, Islamic education, Islamization of knowledge, and Uganda.*

INTRODUCTION

It is no doubt that Islam puts a higher premium on education. This is apparent when the first revelation to Prophet Muhammad SAW (*Salallahu Alaihi Wassalam* or peace be upon him), as shown in the *Al-Qur'an*, chapter 96:1-5, was instructing him to read (cited in Ali ed., 1977). Numerous other revelations, as shown also in the *Al-Qur'an*, chapter 58:11, repeatedly emphasize the position of

knowledge, for example: “[...] Allah will raise those who have believed among you and those who were given knowledge, by degrees” (cited in Ali ed., 1977).

The first man (Prophet Adam), and the first Prophet to mankind, was bestowed with knowledge and wisdom; and Allah asked him to expose his superior knowledge, attained from Allah, among the angels to denote His might. Without reasonable doubt, this

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symbolizes the paramount significance of knowledge to the extent that even the angels were ordered to bow before Adam in worship of Allah and respect of Adam for his mastery of knowledge, according to the *Al-Qur'ān*, chapter 2:31-34 (cited in Ali ed., 1977).

The inherited traditional Islamic education system in most of the Muslim world is in crisis, due to the dualism and secularization of the education system triggered by colonialism. This education system was adopted after the decline of thorough intellectual pursuits. The current Islamic education system lacks some qualities that would make it a replica of the true ancient Islamic education of the early days of Islam that embedded a full spectrum of *ijtihad* (diligence) instead of mere *taqlid* (blind imitation). Muslim scholars have attributed the current “backwardness” of Muslim communities and countries to knowledge and education.

Therefore, they called for fundamental reforms in Muslim societies. Alternatively, contemporary modern educational system (on top of not being guided by revelation) is imbued with the Western worldview, civilization, and materialism, which all together make it unfit to deliver solutions to the present problems facing Muslims. It is, therefore, argued by Muslim scholars that the *ummah* (Islamic society)’s problem is knowledge (not as against ignorance) rather knowledge which has been deduced with the Western worldview and methodologies that conflict with the Islamic worldview and its epistemological foundations (al-Faruqi, 1982; and Sulaymān, 1994).

The present traditional Islamic education system has significantly elevated the general understanding of fundamentals of the Islamic faith. However, its capability to withstand the reality and contemporary practical and complex challenges is questionable. The present Muslim *ummah* has been pervaded by a malaise and backwardness, which have been caused by the prevalent worst educational system which molds Muslim youths awareness. This was partially a planned strategy of the colonialists to keep the Islamic education system out of touch with modernity and reality, such that its graduates are out

competed by those of secular institutions (al-Faruqi, 1982).

In view of the above, Muslims should decide on the next step whether to stick to the traditional system of education, and persist with the inherent demerits of that system, or they should endure suffering the religious and spiritual agony of the Western system of education. While the Islamic traditional system of education does not provide solutions to most of the contemporary issues, the Western/modern system of education will provide some solutions to these issues but with a contradictory worldview.

The idea of integrating and reconciling these two education systems, although they have different worldviews, came on board during the First World Conference on Muslim Education that was held in 1977 in Makkah, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Subsequently, six other similar conferences were held in Islamabad, Pakistan; Jakarta, Indonesia; Cairo, Egypt; Cape Town, South Africa; and Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, which all led to the turning point in the history of IoK (Islamization of Knowledge), the solution to the crunch in the Muslim education system.

The present paper, thus, investigates the impact of one of the most intellectual, realistic, and outstanding Muslim initiatives embarked in the 20th century to respond to contemporary modernity that is to say: the IoK project and how it can influence Islamic education and education system in general with Uganda as a background, given the present multi-religious community, the dominance of the entire education system by Christianity, and the extensive secularism and dualism across the country.

HISTORY OF ISLAMIC EDUCATION IN UGANDA

Islamic education is traceable in the early eighth century, when the learned and devoted Muslims dedicated themselves to propagating the *Al-Qur'anic* teaching from various locations, for example mosques, homes, in open areas, etc. This teaching concentrated on *Al-Qur'anic* and religious rituals, for example ablution, prayers, fasting, etc. This model of instruction primarily targeted the young-age male children. These children learned in

quite tough conditions like harsh corporal punishments, excessive memorization that compromised their capacity to analyze and comprehend the meaning of the text.

This system later affected the ones who managed to advance to the modern system of education in a way that despite their ability to memorize voluminous textbooks, they failed out on needful analysis and application of independent reasoning. The popularity of the Islamic education system lasted until the advent of the modern Western models of education (SU, 2013).

S.A. Lubis (2012) established that the main problem in the Islamic education, which has led to its unpopularity, manifests itself in the components of the system that is to say: the aspect of the education system, curriculum, and administration (Lubis, 2012).

Profile of Uganda. Uganda is a landlocked country which is about 800 kilometers inland from the Indian Ocean. It is surrounded by South Sudan on the north, Kenya to the east, Tanzania and Rwanda to the south, and DRC (Democratic Republic of Congo to the west. It is basically linked to Kenya and Tanzania by lake Victoria and the three countries are commonwealth. Uganda's surface area is 93,263 square miles or 241,550.7 square kilometers (UBoS, 2013).

Uganda's population has risen from 34.5 million in 2011 to 37.5 million in 2013. This has surpassed the UBoS (Uganda Bureau of Statistics) projection by 2 million. This is attributed to the fertility of Ugandan women (5.9 children per women) by the United Nation's Social and Economic Affairs Division in New York, United States of America.¹

In terms of religion, the National Census of 2002 indicated that Muslims are 12.1 percent; Roman Catholics are 41.9 percent; Protestants are 42 percent (Anglican 35.9 percent, Pentecostal 4.6 percent, and Seven-Day Adventist 1.5 percent); others are 3.1 percent; and none 0.9 percent. Uganda is, therefore, a multi-ethnic country with more than ten ethnic groups and multi-religious as well (UBoS, 2013).

¹News about "The New Vision, on 23 June 2013". Available online also at: <http://www.newvision.co.ug/news/644270-uganda-population-at-record-37-million.html> [accessed in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia: January 1, 2015].

Islam and Education System in Uganda.

According to the 2002 National Census, Muslims compose 12.1 percent of Ugandan population. Majority of Muslims are *Sunni* and there are some *Shia* and *Ahmadia*. The most dominant religion is Christianity and it constitutes 85.2 percent of 34.5 million people (UBoS, 2013).

Islam was the first religion to arrive in Uganda in 1844. It was introduced by the Arab traders (33 years before the first missionaries introduced Christianity) who were mainly business oriented but due to their exceptional moral conducts, Ugandans admired and embraced their faith. Mutesa I (the then Kabaka of Buganda Kingdom) agreed to embrace Islam and make the whole Muslim Kingdom by decree provided that he did not get circumcised (because the law forbade the King from circumcision). The ancient Arabs rigidly and unprofessionally turned down that offer (Kiyimba, 1986; and Izama, 2013).

As opposed to the Arab merchants, the ambitious Christian missionaries arrived in Uganda as professional evangelists and propagated their faith through establishment of formal education,² in terms of schools that later emerged the best in the country for example, such as King's College Buddo and Gayaza High School (Kiyimba, 1986; and Izama, 2013). These schools delivered education that compiled the needs and social requirements of the day.

The merchant of Arabs taught Islam from mosques and homes, and narrowed their education to exclusively *Al-Qur'anic* recitation and other typical Islamic rituals. The negative reaction to modern education drove Muslims to being second class citizens in the country, as they couldn't compete with graduates of missionary schools. This is due to the fact that these *Al-Qur'an* schools (although equipped with most of the renowned sheikhs in religious studies) failed to incorporate the new national education system that emerged under the colonial administration. This led to perpetual

²Formal education or schools in this paper refers to secular or Western education in Africa. This is the teaching of modern non-religious subjects, such as physics, chemistry, mathematics, history, etc. The informal education refers to the teaching of religious studies, for example the *Al-Qur'an*.

inferiority complex of Muslims, due to their mismatch with the Christian counterparts (Kiyimba, 1986; and Izama, 2013).

Extensive arguments on whether *Al-Qur'ān* schools contributed to the present standard of Muslim education in Uganda have taken the floor for quite long among scholars and writers. For example, A. Kasozi (1970) attributes the Muslims backwardness, particularly in education, to these *Al-Qur'ān* schools. He says as follows:

[...] the Muslims were, more than anything else interested in *Al-Qur'ān* schools; and for that matter they sent most, if not all their children to those schools other than the modern primary schools (Kasozi, 1970:7).

However, A. Kasozi (1970)'s argument is disputed by other scholars on the ground that *Al-Qur'ān* schools were adopted in order to save Muslim children from being converted to Christianity and other acts of humiliation. This is because Muslims were denied admission to missionary schools and some of them, who were accepted, were converted to Christianity, for example the late Professor Yusuf Lule who was converted at King's College Buddo (Kiyimba, 1986; and Izama, 2013).

Therefore, boycotting Western education was intended to safeguard the Islamic faith and its dignity. Thus, Islam disseminated through establishment of Mosques and learning centers or *Madarasas*. These centers were situated in scholars' homes, where various early and prominent Muslim clerics graduated (Kiyimba, 1986).

Given their early record in the history of Uganda, Muslims have always been the minority and their emblems are little in numbers within their localities. This is attributable to the emergency of secularism and dual education system that came with colonialism. The emergency of colonialism paved the way for Christians to enjoy the dominance of the education system and they used this platform as a vehicle to tremendously propagate their faith (Kiyimba, 1986; and Izama, 2013). This forced the majority of Muslims to deny their children from attending formal schools, as mentioned above, because of fear of ruining their faith,

a point which created a huge education gap between Muslims and their counterparts.

Until today, Muslims still suffer the consequences of this mismatch. Similarly, religious battles were rampant, these resulted into the massacre of Muslims and isolation of Muslims in public facilities, for example schools, hospitals, and public engagement.

History of Muslim Education in Uganda.

The history of Muslim education in Uganda is linked to Prince Mbogo, the son of Ssekabaka Suuna II, who was symbolized as "King for the Muslim", as he managed to unite the Muslim community under one body of his leadership. He established Kibuli hill, a Kampala suburb, as headquarter of Muslim affairs (particularly Muslim education) in Uganda and the first *Al-Qur'ān* School was initiated in Kibuli in 1914. Kibuli, up to the present day, has held the Muslim legacy by hosting a grand mosque, hospital, university, secondary and primary schools, headquarters of major Muslim intellectual associations, and other Muslim assets (Kasozi, 1986; and Bwire, 2012).

Prince Mbogo passed away in 1921 and was succeeded by his son, Badru Kakungulu, who proceeded as the custodian of Muslim affairs in the legacy of his father. During this time, no Muslim schools attempted to incorporate the Western syllabi into their programs since they had no missionaries to support them until 1922, when the Buganda Lukiiko founded primary schools in Kibuli and that sparked off Muslim secular education in Uganda, which started in Kiwotoka School with exclusively three Muslim students (i.e. Prince Badru Kakungulu, H. Golooba, and A.W. Ssimbwa) under the tutelage of Luka Sajjabi. Later, other students were enrolled even from outside the community and other religious affiliations (Kasozi, 1986; and Bwire, 2012).

Several sources and events were used as platforms for financing this school, for example the celebration of Aga Khan that attracted all sorts of reputable Muslims around East Africa. As a result of this ceremony, the East African Muslim Welfare Association was founded and Prince Badru Kakungulu acted as Vice President. He later formed the UMEA (Uganda Muslim Education Association) in 1940, in order to win government support

for Muslim education. And in a bid to boost further Muslim education progress, he offered eighty acres of land at Kibuli hill for construction of a grand mosque and Schools (Kiyimba, 1986; and Izama, 2013).

In 1945, the first Muslim junior school was inaugurated at Kibuli, which collected students from different parts of the country that later, in 1960, became a fully-fledged secondary school which was developed into a good structured school with the USAID (United States of America's Aid) grant. Consequent to the Muslim educational progress, the Buganda government gave a grade 3 Teacher Training College at Kasawo to the Muslim community and was relocated to Kibuli, and it turned into a Muslim Teacher Training College. It is from this background that Kibuli hill arose as an educational Centre and a landmark in the Uganda Muslim history (Kasozi, 1986; and Bwire, 2012).

This success story, in Muslim education, came as a result of the Muslims' return to the Western education in 1944, under the UMEA schools project. Uganda government initially granted 213 Pound Sterling to UMEA out of the 134,000 pounds national education budget for the year 1944. By the year 1963, UMEA had established 180 primary schools, 8 junior schools, 1 senior secondary school, and 1 teacher training college. Significant efforts were put in by, what the history of Muslim education in Uganda term as, the heroes of Muslim education in Uganda, namely: Prince Badru Kakungulu, Ramadhan Gava, Sheikh A. Mivule, Juma Mugerwa Masagazi, Amir Malende, and Musa Musoke (cf Kakungulu & Kasozi, 1977; Kasozi, 1986; Kiyimba, 1986; Bwire, 2012; and Izama, 2013).

CURRENT EDUCATION SYSTEM IN UGANDA

Majority of schools in Uganda are owned by government and Christian institutions with just very few being Muslim founded. From over 40 universities in Uganda, Muslims have only two universities, including IUIU (Islamic University in Uganda), the first private university to operate in Uganda in 1988. A lot of Muslims educate their children from the so called "good" schools and universities, which are Westernized in order to compete in the job market.

The tendency in Uganda is that people who take the *Madarasa* trend of education are exclusively good at being Islamic teachers and *Imams* of mosques. These *Madarasa* embarked with students from different communities gathered in homes of knowledgeable *Sheikhs* (teachers) and paid for this service in form of work in their *shamba* and homes. And as numbers grew, small buildings were put up that turned into *Al-Qur'an* schools (Kiyimba, 1986; and Izama, 2013).

Given the environment of the time, this informal method of education suited the students. They flocked teachers' houses to learn the *Al-Qur'an* and all the basic Islamic teachings. As the numbers increased and these houses could no longer accommodate all of them, they shifted to the mosque where teachers used to engage their students in circles (*halaqah*). Upon graduation, these students went back to their homes and communities as teachers in their own circles (*halaqah*) and others progressed to the Middle East countries for advanced levels in Islamic studies (Kiyimba, 1986; and Bwire, 2012).

These teachers used to play numerous roles in their localities, like officiating the Islamic ceremonies for example weddings, *aqika*, burials etc. Some of the prominent scholars who graduated from these *madaras* as include among others: Sheikh Islam Ali Kulumba, Sheikh Kamulegeya, Sheikh Zubairi Kayongo, Sheikh Mulumba (Mukulu), etc. This methodology of instruction was adopted from Makkah in KSA (Kingdom of Saudi Arabia) and to some extent from Cairo in Egypt, as it was the system used before the advent of the modern education method. The same methodology was also adopted from Makkah by Asians, for example Malaysia and Indonesia who call it as *Pesantren* (Islamic boarding school); and also in Southern part of Thailand (cf Kakungulu & Kasozi, 1977; Kiyimba, 1986; and Bwire, 2012).

Today, Ugandans enjoy services of a few Islamic Primary and Secondary Schools, which have laboured to offer the two curricula: Islamic and Secular education. Some of their graduates get scholarships to attend further training from the Arabic-speaking countries, like Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Libya, Sudan,

Algeria, etc., where they get exposed to more rigorous Islamic theologies. Some of these graduates, who come from Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, are now working under the Saudi Ministry of Education that undertook to pay them an attractive salary since the early days of King Faisal. This has greatly encouraged Muslim students to pursue Islamic theological studies, since they can enjoy an equivalent to or sometimes better compensation than their counterparts (secularists).

It has also been argued that Muslim parents, especially in the past, used to take their bright and intelligent children to secular schools, and leave the dull and badly behaved ones in the *Al-Qur'an* schools as a form of punishment. In this, they intended to get decent upbringing of these children from such schools, after they had declined to offer it to them at their homes

Impact of Dualism on Uganda's Educational System. Dualism in Uganda's educational system exists in the two different education systems: traditional Islamic education system (focusing more on basic Islamic religious doctrines and less on modern education); and secular education system (focusing more on modern knowledge and less on religious sciences thus, promoting secularism). Islamic and modern education systems in the country are separated and imbalanced as concentration is put on either side. For instance, students who take the religious side are more knowledgeable in that regard and very weak in the modern sciences. On the other hand, their counterparts who study modern sciences are also more knowledgeable in such fields and very weak on the religious side. The two extremes on their own cannot produce holistic graduates, who are well integrated intellectually and spiritually (*cf* Peter, Hamzah & Udin, 2011; and Matovu, 2013).

The Nature of Islamic Education and Curriculum. Curriculum is a "package" which must be given to students in definite amount of time. It is not simply a list of subjects given to students. It is rather the total experience given to students under school supervision (*cf* Doll, 1995; Lindahl & Beach, 2004; Lubis, 2012; and Yasher, 2013). In this context,

R. Hashim, S.A. Rufai & N.M. Roslan (2011) established that the curricula of traditional Islamic schools are typically textbook-centered, which do not require statement of objectives and identification of goals in form of skills other than linguistic skills (Hashim, Rufai & Roslan, 2011). These curricula have also demonstrated incredible deficiencies, among others students cannot use the Arabic language beyond the academic domain (Allen, 1992).

In Arabic, education is denoted by three words: the first one is *ta'lim*, from the root word *alima* which means "to know, perceive", and learn the knowledge conveyed. The second one is *tarbiya*, from the root word *raba* which means "to keep, grow", and increase in accordance with the will of Allah. The third one is *ta'adib*, from the root word *aduba* which means to be "well-behaved" and well cultured on the part of social behavior (Cook, 1999). Of all these three meanings of education, Islamic education (in the context of the present study) is intended for *ta'lim*.

According to S.M. al-Attas (1979), education involves a complete human being with rationality, spiritual, and social dimensions of humanity. In the Islamic point of view, education should impart faith into a human being through training his intellect, feelings, and spirit (al-Attas, 1979:169). The main objective of education is to symbolize a balanced growth of the entire dimensions of man, because man (as a vicegerent of Allah) must first submit himself to the will of Allah.

Therefore, education shouldn't be parted from the spiritual life. The founder of the International Federation of Muslim and Arabic Schools says that *Al-Qur'an* is the perennial foundation for Islamic system of legislation and of social and economic organization. It is, last but not least, the basis of both moral and general education. Man has to devote his intellect (*aq'l*) and reason (*mantiq*), with an Islamic worldview at the background, to expound the divine knowledge in order to access a balanced growth. It should be emphasized, however, that intellect and reason should not compromise spirituality and divine knowledge. Rather, educationists should strike a balance between the two (al-Saud, 1979; and Cook, 1999).

It should be emphasized at this point that the advocacy for a methodology that integrates and balances both the divine knowledge and human sciences (which will soon be introduced under the following section) is not intended to underestimate the position of the former. In fact, the miraculous and uniqueness nature of the divine knowledge from other categories of knowledge is already manifested, when the *Al-Qur'ān*, chapter 16:89, testified itself as all-encompassing for the entire aspects of individual and society, as follows:

And We have sent down to you the Book as clarification for all things and as guidance and mercy and good tidings for the Muslims (cited in Ali ed., 1977).

Educationists should not also forget that the strength of the Islamic empire (during the golden age between tenth and thirteen centuries, when the Western Europe was still in darkness and intellectual backwardness) came as a result of the openness of the Islamic scholarship to Islamic studies, science, literature, art, etc. It was during this period that the Islamic world contributed significantly in fields of chemistry, physics, botany, mathematics, astronomy, etc. This success was registered after Muslim scholars had realized that empirical and scientific truth could be a vehicle to reaching religious truth (al-Saud, 1979; and Cook, 1999).

It is no wonder that when the Islamic world lost touch of scientific scholarship (and even the Islamic scholarship which had remained was driven by desires of politicians), the Islamic empire had to collapse in favour of the Western Europe. The revival of the ancient Islamic world legacy, therefore, inevitably necessitates the integration of Islamic studies with modern sciences within the context of the Islamic worldview in order to prepare graduates, who will contribute to national development (Hashim, Rufai & Roslan, 2011; and SU, 2013).

Similarly, a strong administration of this education system will be required in order to achieve the intended objectives efficiently. Organizing for this administration will necessitate extensive and deep analysis based on values and local culture (Razak, 2011).

APPLICABILITY OF ISLAMIZATION OF KNOWLEDGE IN UGANDA

R. Hashim & S.A. Ssekamanya (2013) defined "Islamization" as a process to Islamize in terms of faith, belief, and worldview; and, thus, it is applied to the human being. The IoK (Islamization of Knowledge) has become a universally acceptable project, especially in the Muslim world, to de-Westernize and infuse the Islamic worldview in the contemporary modern knowledge (al-Faruqi, 1982).

Various educational and intellectual institutions have been established, as a result of IOK conferences, for example the IIIT (International Institute of Islamic Thought) in 1981, in Virginia, USA (United States of America); the IIUM (International Islamic University of Malaysia) in 1983, in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia; the Islamic Academy in 1983, in Cambridge, USA; and the World Centre for Education under the OIC (Organization for Islamic Conference) patronage. The joint ambition in establishing such institutions was to devise Islamic concepts and Islamic methodological approaches for all branches of contemporary modern knowledge and approaching modern knowledge within the framework of the *Al-Qur'ān* and *Sunnah* (cf Naqi, 1987; Adebayo, 2009; and Adebayo, 2012).

In numerous Ugandan educational and intellectual institutions, although their establishment was not intended for the IoK project, share common agenda with IoK. In terms of educational institutions, UMEA (Uganda Muslim Education Association) was established in 1936 by the late Prince Al-Hajji Badru Kakungulu Wasajja to work as a Muslim Secretariat that serves Ugandan Muslims. It aims at providing a platform for Muslims to achieve sound education (modern and traditional Islamic studies) purposely to attain a reasonable share in their country as their counterparts of other religious affiliations (UMEA, 2010).

It is UMEA's endeavour to ensure that all Muslim institutions in Uganda exhibit the Islamic way of life by ensuring that Muslim students learn and practise their religion while at school, especially ensuring that Muslim sisters dress according to Islamic teachings.

There are over 1,500 Muslim Primary Schools, 193 Muslim Secondary Schools, 5 Muslim Technical Institutions, 2 Primary Muslim Teachers' Training Colleges, and 2 Islamic Universities in Uganda. In all cases of the above mentioned figures, they represent approximately 10 percent of the national general picture (UMEA, 2010; and UMBS Extra, 2012).

Other education institutions include UMTA (Uganda Muslim Teachers Association) that mobilizes and upgrades Muslim education professionals. It focuses on teachers and schools, and nurtures the Muslim community to increase Muslim involvement in the quality education and other developments in Uganda (UMTA, 2013).

The Origin of Islamization of Knowledge Concept. It was incumbent on earlier Prophets sent by Allah to Islamize their societies. The final task of Islamization was exercised by Prophet Muhammad SAW (*Salallahu Alaihi Wassalam* or peace be upon him). Many empirical examples are drawn from him on how he Islamized human knowledge and their activities. For example, Ibn Abbass narrated that when the messenger of Allah, Muhammad SAW, came to Medina, they (people of Madinah) were paying one and two years in advance for fruits, but he (the Prophet Muhammad SAW) then said, as follows:

Those who pay for anything in advance must do so for a specified measure and weight, with the fixing of a specific time (cited in Maiwada, 1999).

The Prophets' modification of *salam* practice (forward sale) in this *Hadith* eliminated the uncertainty and misunderstandings in that contract. Similarly, different Prophets and Messengers of Allah, who were sent before Prophet Muhammad SAW (*Salallahu Alaihi Wassalam* or peace be upon him), did also exercise and discourse Islam. They also established changes and modifications to the lives, knowledge, and faith of their people (Maiwada, 1999).

It is from this background, therefore, that IoK (Islamization of Knowledge) is argued to be as old as Islam (although the terminology is new). Abu Hurairah also narrated that the Prophet Muhammad SAW said: "I was sent to accomplish good morals and manners" (cited

in Maiwada, 1999). This implies that the Prophet Muhammad SAW did not ignore the good practices from *jahilyyah* (age of pagan ignorance preceding the Islamic era), rather, he complemented them. This is truly the idea behind IoK. Consequently, the contemporary Muslim educationists should make benefit of the Western knowledge by modifying it with the Islamic worldview (*cf* al-Faruqi, 1982; Maiwada, 1999; and Hashim & Ssekamanya, 2013).

Islamization project was practised even beyond the Prophets' reign. Abu Hamid al-Ghazali undertook efforts to Islamize philosophy and *sufism*. Among his efforts, he discarded the *sufi* claim that in the mystical experience, a person reaches Allah through fusion in the divine form (*cf* Watt, 1953; Frank, 1994; and Griffel, 2009). This modification was aimed at making *tasawwuf* acceptable to the *shari'ah*, even though some scholars like I. al-Faruqi (1982) still accused *tasawwuf* of damaging the Muslim society, for example, *kashf*, gnostic illumination was replaced with knowledge; and Muslims became non-productive and less concerned for the *ummah* or Islamic society (al-Faruqi, 1982; Sardar, 1989; and Haneef, 2005).

More extensive efforts were made during the period of Al-Mamun, 813 – 873 AD (*Anno Domini*), in the Abasid Caliph, whose tenure was described as the golden era of Islamic civilization. Al-Mamun undertook the process of harmonizing the *Al-Qur'anic* knowledge with other human knowledge, for example the legacy of Greek and Persian literature. He established a Research Centre (*Bait al-Hikmah*) which attracted several scholars to converge, study, and translate voluminous works into Arabic. These efforts yielded countless contributions to knowledge, for example Yakub al-Kindi compiled 265 treaties on Music, Astronomy, and Medicine. Meanwhile, Abu Ali al-Hussain ibn Sina (Avicenna) wrote literature that became a guide for medical study, even in European universities up to 1650 AD (cited in Maiwada, 1999).

It is unfortunate that Muslims (at a later stage) became lazy and disregarded the glory of search for knowledge in all fields of human endeavour. Subsequently, Muslim nations were colonized; hence, a foreign education

system was imposed onto them. This education system was propagated through the Western worldview, which contradicts the Islamic worldview and its epistemological foundations. This crisis resulted into backwardness, stagnation of Muslims in terms of intellectual pursuits, epistemological confusion, inferiority complex, insufficient funding of education by governments and parents, hostility to useful changes, and blind imitation or *taqlid*. All these have made Muslims perpetual consumers of Western theories and ideologies, which has weakened Muslim education (Haneef, 2005).

The concept of Islamization of Knowledge. As mentioned above, IoK (Islamization of Knowledge) concept is as old as Islam. Scholars are not unanimous on defining IoK. Professor S.M. al-Attas (1979) defines "Islamization as the liberation of man first from magical, mythological, animistic, national-cultural tradition, and then from secular control over his reason and his language (al-Attas, 1979). He extends his explanation by involving the Islamization of language, as he puts it as follows:

Language, thought, and reason are closely interconnected and are indeed interdependent in projecting to man about his worldview or vision of reality. Thus, the Islamization of language brings about the Islamization of thought and reason (al-Attas, 1979).

This argument is exhibited by revelation of the holy book of *Al-Qur'an* among the Arabs. S.M. al-Attas (1979), further, explains Islamization of contemporary knowledge as follows:

[...] the deliverance of knowledge from its interpretations based on secular ideology and from meanings and expressions of the secular. After isolation of these "Western elements", Islamic perspective is then infused and key concepts defining the *fitrah*, which permeate the knowledge with the quality of its natural function and purpose; hence, making it true knowledge (al-Attas, 1979).

S.N. al-Attas (1993) established the Western elements and key concepts that need to be eliminated from the body of contemporary Western/secular knowledge

as follows: the concept of dualism, which encompasses the vision of reality and truth of the West; their dualism of mind and body; their doctrine of humanism as secular ideology; and their concept of tragedy, mainly in literature (al-Attas, 1993).

Similarly, I. al-Faruqi (1982) defined IoK (Islamization of Knowledge) as the process of recasting knowledge as Islam relates to it. According to him, IoK is re-defining and re-ordering the data, re-thinking the reasoning and relating the data, re-evaluating the conclusions, and re-projecting the ambitions in a manner that makes the discipline enhance the vision and serve the cause of Islam. He argues that Islamization engrosses a wide scope of activities, which among others include overcoming the dichotomy between secular and traditional Islamic education systems (al-Faruqi, 1982).

This process requires production of university textbooks recasting some disciplines in accordance with the Islamic vision, after mastering the modern knowledge. Precisely, I. al-Faruqi (1982) defines IoK as the process of integrating the new knowledge into the corpus of Islamic legacy by eliminating, amending, re-interpreting, and adapting its components as the worldview of Islam and its values dictate (*cf* al-Faruqi, 1982; and Ssekamanya, Suhailah & Ahmad, 2011).

Basing on the definition and scope offered by S.M. al-Attas (1980) and to some degree I. al-Faruqi (1982), IoK is substantially an epistemological and methodological concern and encompasses integration of knowledge with the background of Islamic sources and contemporary modern knowledge. IoK is a research and theory building endeavour aimed at reinstating, mainly the scientific enterprise and social sciences in particular, to the accurate path of integration of revelation and observation of the real world (al-Attas, 1980; and al-Faruqi, 1982). IoK is also not merely addition and subtraction process, but rather a solemn process of creative engagement with modern social science (Ragab, 1995).

The issue of reinstating a wholesome Islamic education system became global in 1977, during the first World Conference on Muslim Education which was held in Makkah,

Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. It was followed by six other similar conferences which were held in Islamabad, Pakistan in 1980; Dhaka, Bangladesh in 1981; Jakarta, Indonesia in 1982; Cairo, Egypt in 1987; Cape Town, South Africa in 1996; and Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia in 2009.

Other major international conferences on IoK followed, where the first of this kind was held in Switzerland in 1977, the second in Pakistan in 1980, the third in Malaysia in 1987, and the fourth was held in Sudan in 1990. These conferences led to the establishment of numerous schools and universities, for instance: International Islamic Universities in Kuala Lumpur, Islamabad, Dhaka, Niger, and Uganda with the ambition of enhancing IoK and research at a higher education level (Adebayo, 2009).

In Uganda particularly, IUIU (Islamic University in Uganda) teaches specific courses that are aimed at integrating both revelation and social sciences. This concept needs to be disseminated into other academic institutions at all levels.

Justification of Islamization of Knowledge. The two main proponents of IoK (Islamization of Knowledge), S.M. al-Attas (1980) and I. al-Faruqi (1982) outlined two major motives of the IoK project, although using different approaches. As claimed by I. al-Faruqi (1982) and A. Abū Sulaymān (1994), the malaise of the Muslim *ummah* was caused by the misapprehension of knowledge, which has made Muslims to be just mere imitators of the West (and bad even at imitating). This position has been a consequence of poor political, social, and economic conditions of Muslim societies. The main cause of this backwardness is the poor education system (al-Faruqi, 1982; and Sulaymān, 1994). I. al-Faruqi (1982) also proposed that both traditional and modern education systems be integrated to produce professionals in all relevant disciplines.

Meanwhile, A. Abū Sulaymān (1994) revealed that the major indicators of knowledge crisis in the Muslim *ummah*, namely: the backwardness of the *ummah* (Islamic society), the weakness of the *ummah*, the intellectual stagnation of the *ummah*, the absence of *ijtihad* (individual interpretation

and judgment) in the *ummah*, the absence of cultural progress in the *ummah*, and the *ummah's* rift from the basic norms of Islamic civilization (Sulaymān, 1994).

Knowledge was the central cause of the early Muslim civilization and progress. It was attained from divine revelation and authentic reasoning. The first revelation to Prophet Muhammad SAW (*Salallahu Alaihi Wassalam* or peace be upon him) and humanity was ordaining him and the *ummah* to seek education for knowledge, as stated in the Al-Qur'an, chapter 97:1, as follows: "*Read and understand in the name of thy Lord and Cherisher*" (cited in Ali ed., 1977).

The Prophet Muhammad SAW consulted his companions in almost every aspect during war and peace, in order to lead with knowledge and efficiency (Sulaymān, 1989). When knowledge and intellectual domain declined, the whole Islamic system disintegrated. This decline was partially caused by intellectual divisions among Muslim philosophers, orators, and factioneers, which were not guided by the spirit of Islam. For example, the indulgence in discussing the nature of Allah's transcendence, given that this concept yields no outcome whatsoever in the Islamic thought because the *Al-Qur'an*, chapter 112:3-4, voices out as follows: "*He begets not, nor is He begotten, and there is none like unto Him*" (cited in Ali ed., 1977).

Famous scholars like Abu Hamid al-Ghazali and Ibn Tayyimiyyah extended their precious efforts to expose the deviations and differences these sects brought. This caused skepticism towards the expressions of reason in philosophical discourse. Consequently, this confined the academic pursuits to surveying only the *shari'ah* (Islamic law) texts, the Arabic language, and Jurisprudence. This elevated only the second-rate thought, authentication of texts, and collection of glossaries, and historical trivialities (*cf* Watt, 1953; Haque, 1982; Frank, 1994; al-Matroudi, 2006; and Griffel, 2009).

Hence, intellectual incapacitation emerged that locked the gates of *ijtihad* and focused on textual studies in a recurring manner and in a selectively theoretical point of view (Sulaymān, 1989). This caused Muslims to become second-class citizens in the field of

science; and when they try to contribute to modern science, they wrongly duplicate the Western methodologies and ideologies in their systems appraisal to the extent that they authenticate *Al-Qur'anic* verses and prophetic traditions with scientific studies, which should have been the opposite (Adebayo, 2009).

Methodology of Approaching Islamization of Knowledge. Different scholars have diverse ideas on how Islamization should be approached. It is the methodology part of IoK (Islamization of Knowledge) that attracted most of the criticisms. However, our focus will be concentrated on the proponents of IoK, mainly S.M. al-Attas (1980) and I. al-Faruqi (1982) with the enlightenment of I. al-Faruqi's popular work-plan (12-point work-plan) and the revisions made to it by the IIIT (International Institute of Islamic Thought), because this approach proves to be more practical (al-Faruqi, 1982).

S.M. al-Attas (1980) also promotes the method of knowledge that considers *tawhid* (acknowledge the oneness of God). He deems *tafsir* (interpretation) and *ta'wil* (analogy) to be suitable methods of approach to knowledge and scientific methodology respecting our study and interpretation of the world of nature, and its connotation in our conception of knowledge and education (al-Attas, 1980).

According to S.M. al-Attas (1980), the route to Islamization of contemporary knowledge consists of two major steps, namely: isolation of Western elements and key concepts from existing body of knowledge; and infusion of Islamic elements and key concepts into the existing body of knowledge (al-Attas, 1980).

The key Western concepts, which have to be eliminated from the human sciences, are: secularism, dualism, humanism, and tragedy. The components of the Islamic elements, which have to be infused into the body of knowledge, are: the nature of man or *insane*; religion or *din*; knowledge or *ilm*; highest knowledge or *ma'rifah*; wisdom or *hikmah*; justice or *adl*; right action or *amal-adab*; and the concept of universe or *kuliyyah-jami'ah* (al-Attas, 1980).

Such concepts should be associated with *tawhid* (acknowledge the oneness of God), *shari'ah* (Islamic law), *sirah* (life story), *sunnah*

(prophet's words and deeds), and *tarikh* (history). Such are referred to as knowledge of the religious sciences (*ulumshar'iyah*) that ought to cover positive elements of *tasawwuf* (Islamic mysticism), Islamic philosophy, cosmological doctrines, knowledge of Islamic ethics (*akhlak*) and *adab* (courtesy). Thus, Islamization is not plainly implanting secular knowledge into Islamic sciences and principles, which could produce neither secular knowledge nor Islamic one (al-Attas, 1993).

Also I. al-Faruqi (1982) developed his method of Islamization on the basis of *tawhid*. He argues that the Islamic traditional methodology is insufficient to achieve IoK, due to the following reasons. *First*, it limits the meaning of crucial expressions, such as *fiqh*, *faqih*, *ijtihad*, and *mujtahid*. For instance, the term *fiqh* and its derivatives are traditionally restricted to exclusively possession of *shari'ah* knowledge (revealed knowledge) in schools of law instead of the whole body of knowledge as derived in the *Al-Qur'an*. The *Al-Qur'anic* terms like *faqaha* and *tafaqaha* (as used in the *Al-Qur'an*) were pointing to general understanding. *Second*, it alienates revelation (*wahy*) and reason (*aql*). *Third*, it separates thought from action which results into deterioration of both of them. Finally, *fourth*, it generates cultural and religious dualism (al-Faruqi, 1982).

Due to the existence of the two education streams in the Muslim countries, I. al-Faruqi (1982) outlined the following steps in his work-plan in order to augment his idea: (1) to master the modern disciplines; (2) to master the Islamic legacy; (3) to establish the specific relevance of Islam to each of modern knowledge; (4) to seek ways for creative synthesis between the legacy and modern knowledge; and (5) to launch Islamic thought on the trajectory that leads it to the fulfillment of the divine patterns of Allah SWT (*Subhanahu Wa-Ta'ala* or God Almighty).

Step one in I. al-Faruqi (1982)'s work-plan attracted a lot of criticisms as priority was given to the modern discipline, which makes it the point of reference (*cf* Sardar, 1989; and Yasien, 1993). Z. Sardar (1989), for example, argued that Islam should be the reference point not the modern discipline.

Real effort should be devoted to establishing the relevance of modern discipline to Islam, but not the opposite (Sardar, 1989).

In order to realize the objectives in the work-plan, I. al-Faruqi (1982) outlined 12 steps, which he logically ordered according to priority, as follows:

First, mastery of the modern discipline, and category breakdown and dominant themes of the discipline in its Western and highest form.

Second, discipline survey that delineates its genesis, methodology, historical developments, and the crucial books and articles upon which knowledge of the discipline stands.

Third, mastery of the Islamic legacy, the anthology. This is done by familiarizing the professionals with the modern disciplines and availing them with relevant research tools to enable them access the legacy in their area of specialization.

Fourth, mastery of the Islamic legacy, the analysis. This is a more detailed analysis of the work of the ancestors and how they related the Islamic vision to the problems they faced. Islamic scholars should establish a hierarchy of priorities.

Fifth, establishment of the specific relevance of Islam to the discipline. The contribution of the Islamic legacy to the relevant discipline and its goals. Here, three questions have to be posed and answered: (1) what did the legacy contribute to issues envisaged by the discipline?; (2) how does the legacy contribute to the discipline, compare or contrast with the achievements of the discipline?; and (3) given the areas where the legacy has contributed nothing or little, in which direction may the Muslim endeavour be exercised?

Sixth, critical assessment of the modern discipline, the state of the art. Assessment should be exerted from the Islamic point of view. Principles under which modern discipline treats its problems must be tested for reductionism, adequacy, reasonableness, and consistency with the five-fold unity taught by Islam.

Seventh, critical assessment of the Islamic legacy, the state of the art. Although *Al-Qur'ān* and *Sunnah* are not subject to assessment, Muslim intellectual endeavour from these two

sources is, any dispersion should be corrected by our actions. Muslim experts in different disciplines, with the help of the experts in the legacy, should figure out the legacy's contribution in the relevant field.

Eighth, survey of the *ummah's* major problems. The wisdom of the relevant discipline, in conjunction with the legacy, should be used to find solutions to *ummah* (Islamic society)'s problems.

Ninth, survey of the problems of Humankind. Islamic vision undertakes responsibility not only for welfare of the *ummah*, but also for the entire human race whose prosperity with dignity and justice is hoped in Islam.

Tenth, creative analysis and syntheses. This is synthesizing the legacy and the modern disciplines to blaze a new road of civilization in order for Islam to resume its world leadership and dynamism of the early centuries.

Eleventh, recasting the disciplines under the framework of the university textbook. As a replacement for, or at least a complement of the standard textbook in a relevant discipline, the essays representing individual breakthrough in any topic must avail an Islamic background vision or field of relevance for the discipline.

Twelfth, dissemination of Islamized Knowledge. Whatever initiative undertaken in production (for the sake of Allah) should belong to the entire *ummah* not monopolizing it for only profit through copyrights (al-Faruqi, 1982).

After analyzing both S.M. al-Attas (1980) and I. al-Faruqi (1982) paradigms, it is noticeable that both scholars share the same philosophical and fundamental principles and arguments, i.e. *tawhid* (acknowledge the oneness of God). They only differ in the methodological approach to IoK or Islamization of Knowledge (al-Attas, 1980; and al-Faruqi, 1982).

The reason why I. al-Faruqi (1982)'s work plan attracted more criticism is his attempts to make Islam relevant to modern and Western knowledge, as outlined in his step 5. This does not commensurate with the early rational order of knowledge as arranged by the ancient Muslim scholars, like Abu Hamid

al-Ghazali who favoured and positioned the divine knowledge or *naqliyyah* first and then followed it by human acquired knowledge or *aqliyyah* (cf Watt, 1953; Frank, 1994; and Griffel, 2009). Due to perpetual criticisms, enormous deliberations have been rendered by IIIT (International Institute of Islamic Thought) scholars to modify I. al-Faruqi (1982)'s 12 steps of IOK (cf al-Faruqi, 1982; and Hashim & Rossidy, 2000).

In order to make the IoK project a success in Ugandan Islamic education system, Muslim educators should ensure that there is appropriate command of both Arabic and English. This is because Arabic enables a student to perfectly comprehend Islam from its original sources (rather than understanding Islam from mere translations). Similarly, English will help to integrate and enrich the divine knowledge with empirically human acquired sciences. This is due to the impracticality of perfect translation of one language into another.

CONCLUSION

The present paper has demonstrated the crisis in the current Muslim education in Uganda that has been mainly caused by dualism and secularization of the education system. It has been established that integrating and reconciling Islamic education with modern social sciences, under the umbrella of IoK (Islamization of Knowledge), will yield solutions to the current crunch in the Muslim education system. It is against this backdrop that Muslim elites should emphasize that the doors of *ijtihad* (individual interpretation and judgment) are open in all categories of useful and acceptable knowledge. Therefore, Muslim education should not just be confined and concentrated on Islamic theological studies at the expense of modern science. The integration and harmonization of the two will enable the *ummah* (Islamic society) manage the contemporary social requirements which will make *shari'ah* (Islamic law) more relevant to the contemporary world.

Thus, as part of solution, a Muslim should be considered fully educated if he/she attains a reasonable portion of the two; and he/she is in position to integrate them to

show the relevance of the modern sciences to the revealed knowledge. In cases where one category is neglected (either modern sciences or Islamic heritage), a person should be considered semi-educated and semi-illiterate. However, it should be emphasized that modern sciences are relevant to Islam only to the extent of *ijtihad*, which should not be made dominant over revelation. This will enhance IoK in Islamic institutions of learning in Uganda.

Since a good number of Muslim schools are among the best performing schools in Uganda, these schools should inspire their bright students with appropriate IoK approach, instead of applying the project in weaker schools that produce half-baked graduates. To make IoK a meaningful intellectual enterprise, scholars who prepare these graduates will need to be proficient in both modern sciences and Arabic language to be able to deliver the agenda effectively. This program will produce professionals who are well integrated intellectually and spiritually. This will promote their relevance in the modern world to be able to compete favourably in different markets and also contribute towards enhancing sound governance in Muslim affairs and the society at large.³

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³**Statement:** We, hereby, declare that this article is our own writing work; so, it is not a product of plagiarism due to all sources that are cited in this article, we show in the References. This article is also not submitted, reviewed, or published in other scholarly journals yet.

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Muslim Ummah in Uganda

(Source: <https://ugandamuslims.wordpress.com>, 18/6/2015)

Islam was the first religion to arrive in Uganda in 1844. It was introduced by the Arab traders (33 years before the first missionaries introduced Christianity) who were mainly business oriented but due to their exceptional moral conducts, Ugandans admired and embraced their faith. Mutesa I (the then Kabaka of Buganda Kingdom) agreed to embrace Islam and make the whole Muslim Kingdom by decree provided that he did not get circumcised (because the law forbade the King from circumcision). The ancient Arabs rigidly and unprofessionally turned down that offer.