

Kamal Hassan: His Views on The Islamization of Knowledge and Contributions to IIUM

BITARA

Volume 8, Issue 2, 2025: 72-85
© The Author(s) 2025
e-ISSN: 2600-9080
<http://www.bitarajournal.com>
Received: 6 April 2025
Accepted: 26 April 2025
Published: 26 May 2025

Habibah Ayob,^{1*&2} Shahirah Said² & Shahirah Mat Daud³

- 1 Department of Qur'an and Sunnah Studies, AbdulHamid AbuSulayman Kulliyah of Islamic Revealed Knowledge and Human Sciences, International Islamic University Malaysia, P.O. Box 10, 53100 Kuala Lumpur, MALAYSIA, E-mail: habibah69@uitm.edu.my
- 2 Academy of Contemporary Islamic Studies Universiti Teknologi Mara Cawangan Pulau Pinang, Kampus Permatang Pauh 13500 Pulau Pinang MALAYSIA, Email: shahirah4572@uitm.edu.my
- 3 Faculty of Pharmacy, Universiti Teknologi Mara Cawangan Pulau Pinang, Kampus Bertam 13200 Kepala Batas MALAYSIA, E-mail: shahirah3671@uitm.edu.my

*Corresponding Author: habibah69@uitm.edu.my

Abstract

This article will examine Prof. Mohd Kamal Hassan's significant contributions to the International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM), with a focus on his visionary leadership in shaping the university's identity as a leading center for Islamic higher education. As a strong supporter of the Islamization of knowledge, Kamal Hassan promoted the integration of Islamic thought with modern academic disciplines to encourage a more balanced and comprehensive approach to learning. This study aims to: (i) explore Kamal Hassan's intellectual ideas and how they were applied at IIUM, (ii) examine his influence on the university's academic and institutional development, and (iii) understand the broader impact of his work on Islamic higher education. Using qualitative methods, the research is based on a detailed review of literature and analysis of Kamal Hassan's writings and related institutional documents. The findings show that his ideas and leadership left a lasting impact on IIUM's structure, goals, and global reputation, making it a model for Islamic universities around the world.

Key Words: Islamization of Knowledge, Kamal Hassan, IIUM, Islam, Education and Islamic Studies.



This is an open-access article under the CC-BY 4.0 license

Cite This Article:

Habibah Ayob, Shahirah Said & Shahirah Mat Daud (2025). Kamal Hassan: His Views on The Islamization of Knowledge and Contributions to IIUM. *BITARA International Journal of Civilizational Studies and Human Sciences* 8(2): 72-85.

Introduction

The Islamization of knowledge is an important intellectual effort that aims to align modern academic disciplines with Islamic values. This ensures that education remains useful and rooted in Islamic perspectives. One of the main leaders of this movement is Professor Kamal Hassan, a respected scholar whose ideas and leadership have greatly influenced the growth of the International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM). His dedication to including Islamic values across academic fields reflects a practical and complete approach to reforming education. Kamal Hassan believed that the Islamization of knowledge should not stay only at the theoretical level but should be applied in teaching, academic activities, and institutional

policies. Through both his academic work and administrative leadership, he helped transform IIUM into a top university that represents the principles of Islamic higher education. This article examines the influence of Kamal Hassan's ideas and his key role in shaping IIUM's identity and mission.

Literature Review

The Islamization of knowledge is a global intellectual initiative that seeks to match human knowledge with Islamic ideas and worldviews (Adebayo, 2012). Džilo (2012) emphasizes the importance of adapting diverse types of information to Islamic science and improving its standing in current knowledge. Džilo (2012) explains that the idea of modern Islamic thinking incorporates various approaches, including ontological, epistemological, and methodological underpinnings. Indeed, Islamization of knowledge attempts to restore knowledge from human mistake and self-interest in accordance with given knowledge. It is founded on the Islamic way of life, is intimately tied to Islam's metaphysics, and was produced through revelation, tradition, reason, experience, and intuition. The main goal of Islamization of knowledge is to combine science with Islamic values.

Since its inception in 1983, the International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM) has led the Islamization of Knowledge (IOK) project (Ssekamanya et al., 2011). The mission of IIUM is to integrate Islamic ideals with current fields of knowledge, with the goal of restoring the Muslim Ummah's participation in intellectual discourse. While the institution has had some success adopting IOK, problems persist, particularly in the quality and readiness of staff and students to contribute to this initiative (Ssekamanya et al., 2011). In today's world, the university has seen a shift from streamlining to mainstreaming IOK.

The Islamization of Knowledge movement, which began in the 1970s, sought to reform Muslim education and reinterpret human knowledge through an Islamic lens (Ahmed Abdul Rehman, 2022). Key figures Kamal Hassan developed techniques for integrating revealed knowledge with the social sciences and humanities. This strategy aimed to desecularize academic subjects by instilling them with Islamic ideals and worldviews while also making religious studies more relevant to current challenges (M. Hassan, 2009). The movement sought to address difficulties in Muslim societies and restore Islamic civilization (Ahmed Abdul Rehman, 2022; M. Hassan, 2009).

The notion of Islamization of Human Knowledge (IOHK) has been a major focus at the International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM), particularly under the leadership of Professor Kamal Hassan. Kamal Hassan, a famous Malay Muslim thinker, was instrumental in developing IIUM and incorporating IOHK within its goal (Muhammad Mumtaz Ali, 2023). Their worldview emphasizes the role of moderation (Wasatiyah) in Islamic thought and education.

Kamal Hassan founded the International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM), which has been in the forefront of Islamization of Human Knowledge (IOHK) since its inception in 1983. Under Kamal Hassan's leadership, IOHK became a primary mission of IIUM, alongside integration, internationalization, and overall excellence. Despite hurdles, the institution has made significant progress in implementing IOHK (S. Ssekamanya et al., 2011). These issues

include improving teacher and student readiness to contribute to IOHK through research and publishing. IIUM's future directions include undertaking research to solve issues confronting Muslim societies and humanity, with discoveries serving as the foundation for Islamized textbooks and teaching materials (S. Ssekamanya et al., 2011). IIUM's dedication to IOHK has established it as a premier center of educational excellence in the Muslim world.

Biography Mohd Kamal Hassan

Mohd. Kamal Hassan is a distinguished Islamic scholar who is well recognised in the Muslim world. He has previously served as the Rector of International Islamic University Malaysia and is a strong advocate for the Islamization of Human Knowledge movement. He devoted his entire life to the instruction and dissemination of Islamic knowledge. He prepared official documents for the foundation of the International Islamic University Malaysia [IIUM] in 1983 and the creation of the Kulliyah of Islamic Revealed Knowledge and Human Sciences inside IIUM in 1989. Upon his appointment as the Rector of International Islamic University Malaysia in 1998, he significantly broadened the scope of the Islamization of Human Knowledge initiative and played a key role in its official inclusion in the University's Constitution, therefore establishing it as the foremost purpose (Muhammad Mumtaz Ali, 2019)

He was born in Pasir Mas, Kelantan, Malaysia, on October 26, 1942. He is married to a single woman, and the couple has five children. He earned a first-class distinction in his B.A. Hons in Islamic Studies from the University of Malaya in 1966. Subsequently, he pursued postgraduate qualifications at Columbia University in New York, earning an M.A (1970), an M.Phil (1972), and a PhD (1976) (Muhammad Mumtaz Ali, 2019)

His area of research interest is the integration and Islamicization of contemporary human knowledge, and his field of specialisation is Contemporary Islamic Thought in Southeast Asia. He has delivered hundreds of lectures and delivered numerous keynote addresses at numerous international conferences. Several novels and articles were published by him in reputable journals (Muhammad Mumtaz Ali, 2019)

Views of Kamal Hassan on Islamization of Knowledge

Mohd Kamal Hassan made a significant contribution to the Islamization of Knowledge (IoK) movement. His opinions reveal a genuine concern for Muslim communities' ethical and spiritual deterioration, as well as an urgent need to reform contemporary education using a Tawhidic paradigm. Kamal Hassan, who emphasizes the synthesis of Naqli and Aqli knowledge, advocates for a balanced approach that fosters intellectual excellence and moral integrity. Through his leadership and writings, he sees Islamic higher education institutions as vital agents in developing a future generation of scholars dedicated to holistic development and the well-being of the Ummah.

Islamicisation of ‘Human’ Knowledge and Worldview

The debate on the Islamicization of human knowledge and the relevantization of Islamic Revealed Knowledge disciplines was revitalised by Kamal Hassan in the year 2009. In addition to delivering several speeches, he also wrote several working papers. He argued that Knowledge is not neutral and further that it represents a dynamic worldview and its values. In fact, for him, knowledge is basically the product of a particular worldview and always surrounded by its values. Considering this, Kamal Hassan not only explained the logic for the Islamicization of human knowledge, but he also proposed a comprehensive definition of the term. It was his contention that his method of Islamicizing human knowledge is more pertinent to the [IIUM] than previous approaches (Muhammad Mumtaz Ali, 2019).

IIUM’s philosophy is founded on Islam’s worldview, its context, and its principles. IIUM’s expertise should represent the Islamic worldview and values, he said. He believes that all current knowledge, especially in the West, is anchored in a modern, Western, and secular worldview. Therefore, they cannot be taught as is. Islamic perspectives must be taught in all these fields. He says Human Knowledge must be Islamicized. Linguistic grounds support his choice of ‘Islamicisation’ and ‘human’ instead of Islamization and knowledge (Muhammad Mumtaz Ali, 2019). Kamal Hassan argued that it is more accurate to use the term islamicisation rather than Islamization. The reason behind that argument is as follows:

- a. The term “Islamisation” refers to converting to Islam, whereas “Islamicisation” refers to adhering to Islamic beliefs or teachings. The right understanding of information does not require religious conversion. The goal is to integrate current knowledge into the Islamic worldview, not to convert it.
- b. The term “Islamisation” comes from “Islam” or “Islamise,” whereas “Islamicisation” comes from the adjective “Islamic.” The adjective “Islamic” has at least, three different levels of meaning or connotations as follows:
 - i. Something relating to Islam or Muslims, such as “Islamic history” or “Islamic conference” (e.g., Organisation of Islamic Conference) or “Islamic library.”
 - ii. Muslim-friendly, such as “Islamic food,” “Islamic dress,” “Islamic medicine,” and “Islamic neighbourhood.” “Islamic atmosphere” or “Islamic Garden,” or anything in non-Islamic culture, society, or institutions that fit Islamic standards.
 - iii. Something that conforms to, or is based on, the doctrines, tenets, commandments, or beliefs of Islam, such as “Islamic law,” “Islamic finance,” “Islamic theology,” “Islamic creed,” “Islamic ideology,” “Islamic faith,” “Islamic worship,” or “Islamic ethics.”
 - iv. The third reason is that while “Islamisation” implies adopting Islamic theology, ontology, axiology, eschatology, and epistemology, “Islamicisation” implies that something is “acceptable by Islamic values, norms, standards, or criteria” or “in harmony with the values and perspectives of Islam,” such as good governance, excellence, professional competency, integrity.

- v. Fourth, the term “Islamicisation” of contemporary human knowledge conveys inclusiveness and a willingness to accept or acknowledge whatever is acceptable or permissible by Islamic standards, whether from the West or the East.
- v. The term “Islamicisation” broadens Islamicity beyond Islamisation to include all human knowledge, science, and technology that aligns with Islamic ideals and practices.
- vi. Finally, the word “Islamicisation” is intended to dispel the misconception that “IOHK” is a manifestation of Muslim Westophobia or prejudice against the West. It will also clear up many misconceptions about “Islamisation Knowledge” among Western scholars and educated Muslims (Muhammad Mumtaz Ali, 2019).

It is important to note that the term “Islamization” is used in the constitution of IIUM, rather than the term “Islamicization.” He believes that the purpose of Islamization or Islamicization, regardless of the term that is used, is to resonate with the soul of the university, which is the essence of the university and without which the university would be devoid of significance and meaning. As a result, he conceptualised the Islamicization of Human Knowledge by taking into consideration the characteristics of IIUM, including its curriculum, structure, policies, and limits. He contrasted the secular viewpoint with the Islamic worldview in a way that was crystal clear. That being the case, he contended that the current human knowledge, which is founded on the modern Western secular worldview, is representative of Western values and perspectives. As a result, it is very necessary for Muslims to offer an alternative (Muhammad Mumtaz Ali, 2019).

All Branches of Knowledge Require Islamicisation

Kamal Hassan argues that Islamicization of Human Knowledge includes natural, physical, and applied sciences. He clarified a basic misperception concerning the Islamization of knowledge. Many people feel that Islamization of Knowledge concentrates on the social and human sciences. Because of their value neutrality, all other branches of knowledge, particularly natural sciences, are not Islamised. According to Kamal Hassan, the natural, physical, and applied sciences are all based on the secular scientific paradigm and epistemology of the modern West. As a result, he believes that the natural sciences are also prone to the Islamicisation of human knowledge. He advised all academics and experts from all fields of knowledge to take the subject of Islamicisation of Human Knowledge seriously since it is critical for both Muslims and mankind (Muhammad Mumtaz Ali, 2019).

The Link between Islamicisation and Development

According to Kamal Hassan, there is a link between education and development. As a result, education reform is essential for the reform and development of the Muslim Ummah. A proper education system ensures appropriate development. Secular education requires revision because it is incapable of ensuring holistic sustainable growth. According to Kamal Hassan, a

genuine education system based on the Islamic worldview must be constructed that is both current for our time and comprehensive and holistic in its examination of all areas of society, with the goal of achieving sustainable growth. This would bring unity to information that is revealed and learned through intellect, religion, and science, so forming the core foundations of education. In this approach, educational reform will deepen the link between this world and the Hereafter, encouraging people to serve as Allah SWT's vicegerents (Muhammad Mumtaz Ali, 2019).

Islamicisation or Relevantisation of Religious Sciences

Aside from his discussion on Islamicisation, Kamal Hasaan argued that religious sciences or Islamic sciences, such as Usul al-Ddin, Usul al Fiq, Shari'ah Studies, the Qur'an, and Sunnah Studies, do not require the use of the term Islamicisation or Islamization. Rather, he advocated for the use of a new term, relevantization or contextualization, in religious sciences. According to Kamal Hassan, relevantization refers to the reform, tajdid, or resurrection of revealed knowledge disciplines, concepts, techniques, ideas, and systems. It is an academic and intellectual activity that aims to investigate or rethink old or ancient Islamic books, treaties, or manuscripts to emphasize its relevance, usefulness, uniqueness, and distinctiveness (Muhammad Mumtaz Ali, 2019).

He reworked standard teaching, studying, testing, and student-teacher communication techniques as part of the relevantization process. He interprets significance to mean the "integration of useful and beneficial ideas, methods of research, analysis, perspectives or theories from the natural sciences, applied sciences, social sciences, and human sciences" / the like. According to him, and for the sake of this discussion, the term Islamization is meaningless because knowledge received by divine direction does not require any form of Islamicization or Islamisation. He did, however, emphasize the significance of reformulating theological disciplines so that they are more relevant to our time. He contended that relevantization will help Muslims avoid dogmatic traditionalism [jumud], blind adherence [taqlid], or self-imprisonment of the historic heritage of Islamic ideas and civilization (Muhammad Mumtaz Ali, 2019).

According to him, relevantization is the academic and intellectual effort of reexamination or reevaluation of classical or ancient Islamic works, treaties, or manuscripts with the goal of highlighting their relevance, usefulness, novelty, or distinctiveness. He also stated that it was necessary to modernize "the methods of teaching, studying, assessment, and student-teacher communication."

Islamicisation of the Self and the Role of the Ula al-'albab [UA]

Kamal Hassan emphasised on another essential component of it, which he referred to as the Islamicisation of the self and the concept of ulu-al-'albab. He that the refinement of the character, outlook, and work ethics of the university's students, scholars, and administration staff based on the teachings of the Qur'an and the sunnah as an important prerequisite for reform and development. He organises the discourse of Islamicization of Knowledge and assigns it the

responsibility of “Islamicisation of the self.” He gave it the greatest priority in the Islamicisation of Human Knowledge project. For him, having the “requisite spiritual” makes the mission of Islamizing knowledge a reality. He believes that ethics is critical for all those involved in making the project of Islamization of Knowledge a reality (Hassan, 2010).

Kamal Hassan’s earlier contribution to the debate about the Islamicisation of Human Knowledge in the framework of the Islamicisation of the Self is another. Considering the modern West’s failure to refer to the Qur’anic concept of Ulu al-’albab [UA] as we have stated education, he argued that it is proper and commendable for Muslim leaders and educationists to pay serious attention to the Qur’anic paradigm of true human development. He went on to suggest that the formation of the holistic and integrated personality of students and academic staff should be interpreted considering Qur’anic terminology--the -albab or ulu ‘l-absar. The goal of self-Islamicization is achieved.

Kamal Hassan believes scholars with a mindset ‘which exhibits the Qur’anic paradigm of the fully integrated knowledge’ can Islamicate knowledge. Hassan (2013), 19 He discussed the features of Ulu al-’albab or Uli al-’abṣar by analysing the 16 Qur’an verses that employ the term. Hassan, 2013, 19-25 According to Kamal Hassan, Ūlu al-’albab possess a deep sense of Allah SWT, which enables them to Islamicize knowledge. According to Kamal Hassan, if scholars and educators are committed to the Islamization of Knowledge movement, they will rise their selves to the expectation of this Qur’anic supplication. He thinks this to be one of the fundamental criteria for Islamization of Knowledge (Hassan, 2010).

Future of Action or Clusters of IOHK

Finally, Kamal Hassan identified IOHK categories, ranks, clusters, and modes to aid to IIUM. These modes apply to all who want to advance IOHK in their specialisations. He named this classification, mode, or cluster the Plan of Action. Every category is important; however, Kamal Hassan finds clusters 14 and 15 most difficult. The researchers list all 15 clusters here.

1. Integration or incorporation of divinely revealed values and norms, Islamic worldview, Islamic or qur’anic perspective positive aspects of Muslim religious and intellectual legacy with the contemporary social sciences, human sciences, humanities, natural sciences, applied and professional sciences.
2. Serious critique and/or critical assessment contemporary human knowledge, intellectual system, traditions theories, assumptions, methods, finding, conclusion, views of major proponents, coming from secular, materialistic, rationalistic, agnostic or ethnocentric paradigms of human knowledge in the social, human sciences, humanities, natural sciences, applied sciences and professional sciences.
3. Reform [*islah*], renewal [*tajdid*], revival [*ihya*] or relevantization of revealed knowledge disciplines, concepts, methods, ideas, systems, thought and disciplines. Included under this cluster of activity is the academic and intellectual effort of re-examination or re-evaluation of classical or ancient Islamic works, treaties or manuscripts with the aim of highlighting their relevance, usefulness or otherwise, novelties or uniqueness.

4. Comparative analysis, studies of conventional disciplines, secular systems or non-Islamic knowledge, theories, worldviews, values, philosophies, ideologies and concepts with the Islamic perspective based on sound and objective knowledge of the subjects compared.
5. Accepting, acknowledging, affirming and adopting whatever is regarded as excellent, good, wise or useful from Islamic religious perspective, or whatever is in harmony with Islamic worldview, values and norms, no matter where it comes.
6. Inviting to promoting, extolling, supporting and popularizing all in which is good, beneficial and praiseworthy from the Islamic worldview, found in contemporary human knowledge.
7. Enjoining or encouraging or leading to all that is considered *ma'ruf*, praiseworthy and useful in contemporary human knowledge by showing or demonstrating their Islamicity or compatibility with Islamic values and norms.
8. Refuting, rejecting, prohibiting, discouraging objecting, countering, repelling deconstructing all that which is munkar, haram, untrue, distorted, misunderstood, disliked, blameworthy, e harmful, satanic, deceptive or contrary to Islamic creed, divine law, ethics, spirituality and worldview. This cluster of negative intellectual efforts is an essential aspect of the process of islamisation of human knowledge, but it should be done with scholarly knowledge, objectivity, probity, integrity and rigour.
9. Defending, protecting, supporting Islamic perspectives, concepts, theories, systems, values, norms, percepts, ideas, schools of thought, etc. Vis-a-vis the criticisms or attempt to undermine, disparage, distort or discredit Islam or aspects o it, including the intellectual discourse of Islamicisation of human knowledge. This cluster of Islamic intellectual apologia can be undertaken by Muslim academics in all *kulliyahs*, provided the apologia is based on sound knowledge, expertise, Integrity and authenticity.
10. Reorientation of aspects of natural, applied, professional human science disciplines, theories, theoretical frameworks, paradigms after careful examination and critically identifying the unislamic or anti-Islamic elements found in the books, references or journal articles of those modern sciences originating from the positivism, atheism, agnosticism, existentialism, pragmatism, and postmodernism.
11. Synthesizing the positive and acceptable aspects, elements, intellectual contributions of non-Islamic sources of knowledge or science with the Islamic perspectives, aspects or elements. This effort can best be achieved through academic collaboration between academics in Islamic revealed knowledge disciplines and those in the other disciplines.
12. Improving the conventional or non-Islamic systems, practices, theories and ideas with Islamic input or ideas without compromising the beliefs, values and norms of Islam, especially when the purely Islamic systems, practices, methods or models are not available due to unavoidable circumstances.
13. Reconstruction of conventional thought, ideas, systems, methods, disciplines, culture, practices, etc. Based on the Islamic worldview, values and norms. This could be a long-term strategy of the departments of the human sciences, professional sciences and applied sciences.

14. New construction of human knowledge, theories, practices, systems, methods, products, curriculum, courses, etc. Based on the Islamic worldview, ontology, epistemology, anthropology, axiology, ethics and divine law. This would be the most commendable islamicisation effort as it pushes the frontiers of human knowledge over and above the conventional and constitutes a respectable alternative to secular knowledge or paradigm.
15. New inventions in the form of academic or scientific tools, techniques, technology, gadgets, etc. Which may have high commercial potential which manifest the creativity and innovativeness of Muslim academics, not only from the hard sciences, natural and applied sciences of professional sciences, but also from both the revealed knowledge and the human sciences (Muhammad Mumtaz Ali, 2019).

Highest Necessity Category

Kamal Hassan used a new term for cluster in his latest working paper, titled *Four Categories of Islamization, Islamicization of Human Knowledge Efforts in IIUM*. In this caption, he listed four categories: Low Necessity, Medium Necessity, High Necessity, and Highest Necessity. [Hassan, A four categories: Low Necessity; Medium Necessity; He clarified that “this new categorization is designed to assist individual scholars, departments, institutes or Kulliyas to identify the categories or modes they believe they are currently in and plan to reach the highest category of IOHK efforts within the stipulated period”. The highest necessity category is as follows:

1. Discovering, revitalizing, operationalizing, or reinterpreting in a positive way, the useful knowledge, theories, ideas, inventions systems, wisdoms, methods or solutions from the rich source of Islamic intellectual or civilizational legacy, and making them relevant and applicable to the contemporary period, or, to become innovative or creative tools or mechanisms for solving contemporary problems and issues, including the dire need for the sound development and sustainability of the natural, Divinely created environment, human culture, society and civilization which are currently undergoing severe global crises and in dire need of holistic solutions.
2. Producing important and highly desirable new inventions in the form of academic or scientific tools, machines, techniques, systems technology, gadgets, etc. which may have high economic potential thus, manifesting the creativity, ingenuity and innovativeness of Muslim institutions, organizations, scholars, experts, not only from the hard sciences, natural and applied sciences, but also from both the Islamic revealed knowledge and the human sciences divisions of the Kulliyah of Islamic Revealed Knowledge and Human Sciences
3. Reconstruction of, or providing significant alternatives to major disciplines, culture, practices, etc. based on the Islamic worldview, epistemology, methodology, values and norms, as well as drawing or dominant conventional thoughts, ideas, systems, methods, upon the relevant contributions from the Islamic intellectual legacy. These efforts represent major breakthroughs in the quest for holistic or lasting solutions to serious moral, human, societal or environmental problems.

4. Constructing new and highly significant human knowledge, theories, practices, systems, methods, products, curricula, programmes, course, etc. based on the worldview or frame of reference of Islam, or on the scientific or empirical work of Muslim researchers which are imbued with Islamic values and norms in different branches of knowledge. This would be the most commendable IOHK effort as it pushes the frontiers of human knowledge over and above the conventional constructs and provides better alternatives - from the perspective of the Islamic worldview -to the secularized or conventional paradigms.
5. Undertaking or doing or excelling in outstanding, or extremely useful, or very high quality, or highly desirable standard teaching, research, publication, consultancy, professional work, public service or social work, in harmony with the worldview, principles, ethics and values of Islam (Muhammad Mumtaz Ali, 2019).

Contributions of Kamal Hassan to IIUM

Mohd Kamal Hassan stands as a seminal figure in the history and development of the International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM), widely recognized for his visionary leadership and profound contributions to the Islamization of knowledge. Serving as IIUM's third Rector, he played a crucial role in shaping the university's mission to harmonize Islamic values with contemporary academic disciplines, thereby pioneering a unique model of integrated education. His work encompassed a broad spectrum of areas including curriculum development, educational reform, leadership in Islamic thought, and the holistic development of students. Through his efforts, Kamal Hassan not only advanced IIUM's reputation as a leading institution of Islamic higher learning but also contributed significantly to the revival and promotion of Islamic civilization in the modern world. The following paragraphs elaborate on his multifaceted contributions that continue to influence IIUM's educational philosophy and practice (Hassan, 2013; Ushama, 2024; IIUM Press, 2023)

Establishment of IIUM

Kamal Hassan was the visionary intellectual behind the establishment of the International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM) in 1983, successfully transforming Malaysia's aspiration for a distinctive and prestigious Islamic university into reality. He not only conceptualized IIUM but also laid a strong ideological and philosophical foundation, incorporating the Islamization of Knowledge (IOK) as a core mission enshrined in the university's constitution, which positioned IIUM as a holistic and integrated model of Islamic higher education. Throughout his more than three decades of service, including his tenure as rector, Kamal Hassan emphasized the integration of religious and contemporary knowledge alongside moral and spiritual values in nurturing balanced human development, thereby elevating IIUM to an internationally recognized center of Islamic academic excellence within four decades (Mohd Mumtaz Ali, & Mohd Abbas Abdul Razak, 2023); Asia Research News, n.d.).

The International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM) aims to become a leading international centre of educational excellence which seeks to restore the dynamic and progressive role of the Muslim Ummah in all branches of knowledge and intellectual discourse. Its mission has been crystallized during the period of Professor Mohd Kamal Hassan, its third Rector, as Islamization, Integration, Internationalization and Comprehensive Excellence or commonly known as Triple ICE (Hashim, R., & Ssekamanya, S. A, 2013)

Commitment to Islamic values

Kamal Hassan was deeply committed to embedding Islamic values into the educational philosophy and practice at the International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM). He believed that the university should nurture graduates who are not only academically excellent but also firmly rooted in Islamic ethics, integrity, and spirituality. His vision was to cultivate individuals who would embody and uphold Islamic principles in their personal and professional lives, thus ensuring that IIUM produced not just scholars, but also morally upright leaders for the Muslim ummah (Kamal Hassan, 2013; Ushama, 2024). He also emphasized that spiritual and moral excellence is an essential prerequisite for the development of the nation and civilization. Therefore, he urged the education system and educators to prioritize the cultivation of exemplary character in students, rather than merely focusing on technical skills or economic achievements (Habibah Ayob etl., 2024).

Education Reform and Integration.

Kamal Hassan's leadership and vision were instrumental in shaping IIUM's direction and reputation. Serving in various capacities—including as Shaikh al-Kulliyyah, Dean, Deputy Rector, and ultimately as the third Rector—he was pivotal in developing the university's mission of Integration, Islamization, Internationalisation, and Comprehensive Excellence. He inspired both staff and students to uphold values such as honesty, humility, punctuality, and mutual respect, and to strive for unity and *ummatic* spirit in all university affairs (Ushama, 2024; IIUM Press, 2023).

Leadership & Vision

Kamal Hassan's leadership and vision were instrumental in shaping IIUM's direction and reputation. Serving in various capacities—including as Shaikh al-Kulliyyah, Dean, Deputy Rector, and ultimately as the third Rector—he was pivotal in developing the university's mission of Integration, Islamization, Internationalisation, and Comprehensive Excellence. He inspired both staff and students to uphold values such as honesty, humility, punctuality, and mutual respect, and to strive for unity and *ummatic* spirit in all university affairs (Ushama, 2024; IIUM Press, 2023).

Curriculum Development

In curriculum development, Kamal Hassan played a key role in ensuring that Islamic studies were interwoven across all academic programs. He championed the integration of Islamic perspectives into the teaching of sciences, humanities, and professional fields, believing this approach would produce well-rounded graduates capable of critical and creative thinking within an Islamic framework. His efforts led to the development of unique curricular initiatives, such as *halaqah* and ibadah camps, that supplemented formal academic learning with spiritual and character development (Kamal Hassan, 2013; Ushama, 2024).

Leadership within Islamic Thought

As a thought leader in the Islamization of knowledge, Kamal Hassan was a prolific writer and speaker who articulated and operationalized the concept for the university and beyond. He encouraged both faculty and students to approach contemporary issues through an Islamic lens, to analyze secular ideologies critically, and to be wary of postmodern and liberal influences that could undermine Islamic identity. His intellectual leadership helped establish IIUM as a global reference point for the integration of Islamic thought and modern scholarship (Kamal Hassan, 2013; Ushama, 2024).

Holistic Student Development

Kamal Hassan was also dedicated to the holistic development of students. He introduced numerous non-formal educational programs aimed at nurturing not only academic excellence but also strong moral character, leadership skills, and community awareness. Through initiatives like weekly *halaqah* and semesterly ibadah camps, he sought to develop “*al-insan al-kamil*”—the perfect human being—who is intellectually, spiritually, and ethically balanced (Ushama, 2024; IIUM Press, 2023)

Promotion of Islamic Civilization

Promoting Islamic civilization was another major focus of Kamal Hassan’s work. He envisioned IIUM as a leading international center for educational excellence that would revitalize the intellectual dynamism of Islam and contribute to the advancement of Islamic culture and civilization. He consistently reminded the university community of their responsibility to uphold the values of Iqra’, Amanah, Khalifah, and *Rahmatan Li’l Alamin*, as reflected in the IIUM anthem he composed (Ushama, 2024).

Quality and Excellence in Education

Kamal Hassan placed a strong emphasis on quality and excellence in education. He advocated for high academic standards, continuous improvement, and the recruitment of qualified

educators who could inspire and guide students. His leadership helped IIUM gain recognition as one of the premier Islamic universities in the world, known for its rigorous academic programs and commitment to ethical and professional excellence (Kamal Hassan, 2013; IIUM Press, 2023)

Integration of Technology into Education

Finally, Kamal Hassan recognized the importance of integrating technology into education. He supported the use of digital tools and online platforms to enhance the learning experience, broaden educational access, and prepare students for the demands of the 21st century. This forward-looking approach ensured that IIUM remained relevant and competitive in a rapidly changing global landscape (Kamal Hassan, 2013).

In summary, Kamal Hassan's contributions to IIUM have been pivotal in establishing the university as a leading center for the Islamization of knowledge. His visionary leadership, commitment to integrating Islamic values with modern education, and emphasis on holistic student development have shaped IIUM's unique educational model. By promoting curriculum reform, critical Islamic thought, and the use of technology, he ensured that IIUM remains relevant and impactful in nurturing morally grounded, intellectually competent graduates who can contribute meaningfully to both the Muslim community and the wider world (Hassan, 2013; Ushama, 2024).

Conclusion

In conclusion, Tan Sri Professor Dr. Muhammad Kamal Hassan made significant contributions to IIUM, particularly in developing it as a model higher learning institution with Islamization of Knowledge as its core agenda. He envisioned IIUM as a leading institution that integrates Islamic values with modern education. His perspectives on curriculum development, leadership in Islamic thought, holistic student development, promotion of Islamic civilization, commitment to quality and excellence, and the incorporation of technology in education reflect his dedication to shaping an educational environment that is both distinctive and influential. Kamal Hassan adopted a theoretical and transformative approach, emphasizing the systematic Islamization of knowledge and critical engagement with secular paradigms. His unique vision and intellectual contributions continue to influence the direction of IIUM and the broader discourse on Islamic higher education.

References

- Asia Research News (n.d.). International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM). Retrieved May 1, 2025, from <https://www.asiaresearchnews.com/content/international-islamic-university-malaysia-iium>
- Adebayo, R.I (2012). A Survey on The Global Success of the Islamization of Knowledge Programme with Particular Reference to Nigeria. *Journal of Al-Tamaddun*, 7, 91-105.

- Džilo, H (2012). The concept of ‘Islamization of knowledge’ and its philosophical implications. *Islam and Christian–Muslim Relations*, 23, 247 - 256.
- Ayob, H., Daud, S. S. M., Said, S., & Razali, M (2024). Islamization of Knowledge at Islamic Higher Education: A Comparative Analysis of Abdul Hamid Abu Sulayman’s and Kamal Hassan’s Impact on IIUM. *BITARA International Journal of Civilizational Studies and Human Sciences (e-ISSN: 2600-9080)*, 7(3), 255-268.
- Hashim, R., & Ssekamanya, S. A (2013). Islamization of human knowledge in theory and practice: Achievements, challenges and prospects in the IIUM context. *IIUM Journal of Educational Studies*.
- Hassan, M. K (2010). A return to the Qur’ānic paradigm of development and integrated knowledge: The Ulū al-Albāb model. *Intellectual Discourse*, 18(2). <https://doi.org/10.31436/id.v18i2.158>
- Hassan, M. K (2013). Islamization of Human Knowledge. *Islamic Economics Education in Southeast Asian Universities*, 13-50.
- Kamal Hassan, M (2013). Kamal Hassan and the Birth of IIUM: A Retrospective Survey of His Ideas. *Journal of Islam in Asia*, 20(3), 309–336. <https://doi.org/10.31436/jia.v20i3.1190>
- Mohd Mumtaz Ali, & Mohd Abbas Abdul Razak (2023). Kamal Hassan and the Birth of IIUM: A Retrospective Survey of His Ideas. *Journal of Islam in Asia*, 20(3), 309–336. <https://doi.org/10.31436/jia.v20i3.1190>
- Muhammad Mumtaz Ali, (2015), Islamization of Knowledge: Views of Abdul Hamid Abu Sulayman, *International Journal of Islamic Thoughts*, 4 (1): 19-30.
- Muhammad Mumtaz Ali (2019). *Issues in Islamization of Knowledge*. IIUM Press,
- Muhammad Mumtaz Ali (2023). Islamization Of Human Knowledge: From Prof. Kamal Hassan’s Perspective. *Revelation and Science*. 31(2), 62-75.
- Rehman, A. A (2022). Methodological Framework in Islamisation of Knowledge: A Discourse Analysis. *Al Basirah*, 11(1).
- Ssekamanya, Siraje Abdallah and Hussien, Suhailah and Ismail, Nik Ahmad Hisham (2011). *The experience of Islamization of Knowledge at the International Islamic University Malaysia: successes and challenges*. In: *New Intellectual Horizons in Education*. IIUM Press. pp. 91-110
- Ushama, T (2024, November 7). Remembering the “author” of the concept paper of IIUM. *IIUM News*. <https://news.iium.edu.my/?p=173093>
- IIUM Press (2023). *Journey to Islamicisation of Human Knowledge: A Festschrift in Honour of Mohd. Kamal Hassan*. IIUM Press.