

The Islamization Of Knowledge In The Thought Of Ismail Raji Al-Faruqi And Its Relevance To The Development Of Contemporary Islamic Education

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Abstrak: Perkembangan ilmu pengetahuan modern menghadirkan tantangan sekaligus peluang bagi pendidikan Islam. Namun, dominasi pendekatan normatif dan fragmentasi ilmu pengetahuan sering kali menyebabkan pendidikan Islam kehilangan kedalaman, orientasi nilai, dan kemampuan reflektif. Penelitian ini mengkaji konsep Islamisasi ilmu pengetahuan dalam pemikiran Ismail Raji al-Faruqi sebagai respons terhadap krisis epistemologis dan praktis pendidikan Islam kontemporer. Dengan menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif historis-faktual melalui analisis deskriptif dan interpretatif terhadap karya-karya utama al-Faruqi, termasuk *Islamization of Knowledge* dan *Tawhid: Its Implications for Thought and Life*, penelitian ini menemukan bahwa Islamisasi ilmu pengetahuan menawarkan kerangka integratif antara ilmu yang bersumber dari wahyu dan ilmu rasional-empiris, dengan prinsip *tauhid* sebagai landasan epistemologis. Pendekatan ini tidak hanya mengatasi dikotomi ilmu pengetahuan dan stagnasi intelektual, tetapi juga memperkuat orientasi moral, sosial, dan transformatif dalam pendidikan Islam. Oleh karena itu, pemikiran al-Faruqi sangat relevan bagi pembaruan pendidikan Islam kontemporer, sehingga mampu membentuk generasi yang berilmu, berakhlak, dan bertanggung jawab secara sosial, sekaligus tetap menjaga integritas keilmuan dan peradaban Islam.

Kata kunci: *Islamisasi Ilmu Pengetahuan, Pendidikan Islam Kontemporer, Tauhid, Integrasi Ilmu Pengetahuan.*

Abstract: The development of modern knowledge presents both challenges and opportunities for Islamic education. However, the dominance of normative approaches and the fragmentation of knowledge have often caused Islamic education to lose depth, value orientation, and reflective capacity. This study examines the concept of the Islamization of knowledge in the thought of Ismail Raji al-Faruqi as a response to the epistemological and practical crises of contemporary Islamic education. Using a qualitative historical-factual approach with descriptive

and interpretative analysis of al-Faruqi's main works, including Islamization of Knowledge and Tawhid: Its Implications for Thought and Life, the study finds that the Islamization of knowledge offers an integrative framework between revealed knowledge and rational-empirical knowledge, with the principle of tawhid as the epistemological foundation. This approach not only addresses the dichotomy of knowledge and intellectual stagnation but also strengthens moral, social, and transformative orientations in Islamic education. Therefore, al-Faruqi's thought is highly relevant for the renewal of contemporary Islamic education, enabling the development of knowledgeable, ethical, and socially responsible generations while maintaining the integrity of Islamic scholarship and civilization.

Keywords: *Islamization of Knowledge, Contemporary Islamic Education, Tawhid, Knowledge Integration.*

INTRODUCTION

The development of modern science has brought significant progress to the world of education, including Islamic education. However, this progress does not always go hand in hand with a deeper understanding of meaning and a strengthening of value orientation. In practice, the problem that arises in Islamic education is that religious instruction tends to be separated from other disciplines, is repetitive, and rarely encourages critical thinking. Moral values are often conveyed as advice and symbols, but are not processed through a reflective and meaningful thought process. As a result, Islamic education tends to lose its vitality as a space for the formation of a holistic intellectual and spiritual consciousness. Azra asserts that the crisis in contemporary Islamic education does not lie solely in the aspect of morality, but rather in the weakness of the epistemological foundation for understanding and teaching knowledge (Azra, 2012). In line with this, Al-Faruqi states that the separation of knowledge from the principle of tawhid has led to intellectual stagnation and weakened the role of Islamic education as a means of shaping civilization (Al-Faruqi, 1982).

Historically, a body of literature emphasizes that the 19th century witnessed a shift in global power dynamics that led to the decline of Islamic glory while simultaneously altering the nature of relations between the Islamic world and the West. In this context, Muslim societies found themselves in a defensive position as they faced the influx and expanding influence of the West. Initially, the challenges to the identity and unity of the Muslim ummah from the 18th century through the early 19th century were largely understood as internal issues. However, by the late 19th and early 20th centuries, external threats from the West became increasingly evident. This threat extended not only to the political and economic spheres but also to the moral and cultural aspects of Islam, as a consequence of Western colonialism and imperialism, which eroded Islamic history, political identity, and culture.

Al-Faruqi explains the rationale behind his thinking on the necessity of Islamization. In al-Faruqi's view, Muslims today are in a state of weakness in nearly every aspect whether political, economic, cultural, or educational (Al-Faruqi, 2003). Al-Faruqi refers to this as the malaise facing the Muslim community. The current decline of Muslims has plunged Islam into an era of regression. Such conditions have led to the spread of ignorance. Illiteracy, ignorance, and superstition are on the rise among Muslims. As a result, Muslims have turned to blind faith, relied on literalism and legalism, or surrendered themselves to their leaders or figures. And they have abandoned the dynamic of *ijtihad* as a source of creativity that should be preserved. The era of decline among Muslims in various spheres of life has placed the Muslim community at the bottom rung of nations (Al-Faruqi, 2003).

Under these circumstances, Muslim societies view Western progress as something awe-inspiring. This has led some Muslims to be tempted by Western progress and to attempt reform through Westernization. It turns out that the path taken through Westernization has distanced the Muslim community from the teachings of the Qur'an and Hadith. This is because various Western perspectives have been accepted by the Muslim community without being filtered (Mujamil, 2005).

Meanwhile, as far as the researcher is aware, the impact of educational reform naturally affects all aspects of education itself from technical to non-technical-such as the formation of study groups (*rombel*), evaluation systems, and so on. Al-Faruqi perceived this phenomenon as what he termed "the lack of vision." A clear loss of what must be fought for until success is achieved. Although in certain aspects Western progress has made a positive contribution to the Muslim community, al-Faruqi observed that the progress achieved by Muslims is not the kind of progress intended by their religious teachings. The progress they have achieved is merely superficial. On the one hand, Muslims have become acquainted with Western civilization, but on the other hand, they have lost their firm footing namely, the moral guidelines for life rooted in religious principles (Al-Faruqi, 2003).

From this phenomenon, it is evident that al-Faruqi perceives the reality that the Muslim community seems to be at a crossroads. It is difficult to determine the correct direction to take. Consequently, the Muslim community ultimately appears to adopt an ambivalent stance, torn between Islamic tradition and the values of Western civilization. This dualistic perspective is the root cause of the decline experienced by the Muslim community. According to al-Faruqi, the *dualism* in the Islamic educational system and the lives of the Muslim community-a consequence of "malaisme" can only be remedied through an epistemological overhaul. Therefore, the primary task of the Muslim community is to immediately resolve the educational problem: "A revival of the Muslim community cannot be expected unless its educational system is reformed and its flaws are corrected. What is needed

now is a reform of the educational system. The *dualism* in the current Muslim educational system its bifurcation into an Islamic system and a secular system must be eliminated. The two systems must be merged and integrated, while the resulting system must be infused with the spirit of Islam and function as an integral part of its ideological program."

Various previous studies have highlighted Ismail Raji al-Faruqi's concept of the Islamization of knowledge as a response to the secularization of science and the fragmentation of scholarship. A number of studies position the Islamization of knowledge as an integrative effort between revelatory knowledge and rational-empirical knowledge in Islamic education (Nata, 2018; Huda, 2019). These studies provide a conceptual overview of al-Faruqi's thought and its significance within the discourse on Islamic education. However, most of the research remains at the conceptual and normative levels and has not yet thoroughly explored the relevance of the Islamization of knowledge in addressing contemporary challenges in Islamic education, including tendencies toward moralism and the weak integration of values into educational practice. These limitations indicate the need for further in-depth research.

Given this situation, this study aims to gain a deeper understanding of the Islamization of knowledge in the thought of Ismail Raji al-Faruqi and to situate it within the context of contemporary Islamic education development. This study examines al-Faruqi's thought and how his ideas remain relevant to the current challenges facing Islamic education. Through this approach, this study is expected to provide a more comprehensive understanding, so that the Islamization of knowledge does not remain merely a normative or moralistic discourse but contributes to strengthening the direction and objectives of Islamic education both conceptually and practically (Al-Faruqi, 1982, Al-Attas, 1993).

Contemporary Islamic education fundamentally requires a conceptual framework capable of consistently integrating scientific progress with the values of tawhid. A perspective on knowledge that separates the religious dimension from the rational-empirical dimension and reduces values to the realm of moralism has caused education to lose its depth of meaning and its transcendental orientation. In this context, the Islamization of knowledge offers a tawhidic framework that views all academic disciplines as a meaningful unity oriented toward the formation of civilized human beings. Ismail Raji al-Faruqi's thought emphasizes that the integration of knowledge and values is a prerequisite for the establishment of an Islamic educational system that is not only normatively moral but also epistemologically sound and transformative in educational practice (Al-Faruqi, 1982; Muhaimin, 2015).

METHOD

The research model applied in this study falls under qualitative research with a historical-factual approach to the figure in question. The focus of the study is directed toward the thought of Ismail Raji al-Faruqi as the primary figure under investigation. The methods used include description, interpretation, and tracing historical continuity. The descriptive method is utilized to systematically present the figure's ideas by tracing and delving into the thought of Ismail Raji al-Faruqi, thereby identifying perspectives relevant to the research object. In this context, the Islamization of knowledge is understood as an epistemological framework grounded in the principle of tawhid and serving as the primary foundation of al-Faruqi's scholarly perspective (Al-Faruqi, 1982).

The data sources for this study consist of primary sources in the form of works by Ismail Raji al-Faruqi that directly discuss the Islamization of knowledge and its implications for science and education. The main works referenced are *Islamization of Knowledge: General Principles and Work Plan*, which systematically presents the conceptual framework of the Islamization of knowledge (Al-Faruqi, 1982), and *Tawhid: Its Implications for Thought and Life*, which explains the principle of tawhid as the foundation of all Islamic intellectual and educational activities (Al-Faruqi, 1988). These two works were used to trace the core ideas, critiques of the dichotomy of knowledge, and al-Faruqi's views on the integration of revelatory and rational knowledge in Islamic education.

Data collection was conducted through intensive and repeated readings of these primary texts, with an emphasis on identifying key concepts, the relationships between ideas, and the intellectual context underpinning them. This process was accompanied by systematic note-taking on text passages relevant to the research focus, thereby fostering a comprehensive understanding of the structure of al-Faruqi's thought on knowledge and education (Al-Faruqi, 1982).

The collected data were analyzed thematically and interpretively, using the principle of tawhid as the primary analytical framework. The analysis aimed to uncover the interconnections between the concepts of knowledge, values, and the goals of education in al-Faruqi's thought, as well as to examine their relevance to the challenges facing contemporary Islamic education. Through this approach, the Islamization of knowledge is understood not merely as a normative discourse, but as a conceptual foundation with tangible implications for the development of an integrative and meaningful Islamic education (Al-Faruqi, 1982; Al-Faruqi, 1988).

Overview

The discussion in this study stems from a conceptual understanding of the Islamization of knowledge as formulated by Ismail Raji al-Faruqi. The concept of the Islamization of knowledge is understood as an effort to reorganize all scholarly activities so that they are grounded in the principle of tawhid, ensuring that knowledge is not separated from values, objectives, and moral responsibilities. Al-Faruqi emphasizes that knowledge is never neutral, as it always stems from a particular worldview. Therefore, the Islamization of knowledge is not intended as a rejection of modern science, but rather as an integrative process to align knowledge with the Islamic vision of humanity, nature, and life. Within this framework, Islamic education is viewed as a strategic space for internalizing the values of tawhid in the development of knowledge and the formation of students intellectual consciousness (Al-Faruqi, 1982; Al-Faruqi, 1988).

According to Al-Faruqi, the term "Islamization of Knowledge" (IOK)-known in Arabic as *Islamiyyatul Ma'rifah* implies that all disciplines of knowledge (both contemporary and those of the Islamic tradition) must be "Islamized." However, this term has faced significant opposition – particularly from Al Attas – because it implies that all fields of knowledge, including religious sciences, must also be Islamized. Thus, according to the researcher, Ismail explains the concept of the Islamization of knowledge as a movement to reclaim knowledge. In other words, it involves redefining, reorganizing data, rethinking foundational principles and ideas, reevaluating conclusions and interpretations, and reshaping the objectives and disciplines all aimed at enriching the vision of Islamic education. The researcher also argues that the Islamization of knowledge means engaging in scholarly activities such as uncovering, connecting, and disseminating knowledge from a scientific perspective on human life and the natural world. The Islamization of knowledge entails Islamizing modern science by restructuring and rebuilding the humanities and the exact sciences, providing foundations and objectives consistent with Islam. Each discipline must be redefined to embody Islamic principles in its methodology, strategies, and the issues it addresses. In simple terms, the researcher states that everything must be grounded in Islam itself (Zainal, 2007).

Furthermore, al-Faruqi's classification of the concept of the Islamization of knowledge encompasses epistemological, scientific, and educational dimensions. Al-Faruqi categorizes issues in science according to the relationship between the Islamic worldview, the structure of academic disciplines, and the educational goals to be achieved. This classification demonstrates that the Islamization of knowledge does not stop at the level of ideas but extends to methodological and institutional aspects, including curriculum design, the integration of revealed and rational sciences, and an educational orientation centered on the development of individuals who are faithful, knowledgeable, and socially responsible. Through this

classification, it becomes clear that the Islamization of knowledge is a systematic and comprehensive scholarly project, one that is highly relevant to addressing the challenges of contemporary Islamic education (Al-Faruqi, 1982).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. The Islamization of Knowledge as an Epistemological Critique of Modern Science

The results of this study indicate that the concept of the Islamization of knowledge formulated by Ismail Raji al-Faruqi stems from a fundamental critique of the epistemological foundations of modern science. Al-Faruqi views modern science as not developing in a neutral space but rather as being built upon a secular worldview that separates knowledge from divine values. This separation causes science to lose its transcendental orientation and drift away from the goal of holistic humanity. Science is consequently directed more toward technical mastery and pragmatic interests, while its ethical and spiritual dimensions tend to be neglected. These findings affirm that the Islamization of knowledge is not merely a religious normative project but an epistemological response to a crisis in science that has far-reaching implications for the world of education (Al-Faruqi, 1982).

In this context, al-Faruqi argues that education-including Islamic education is not immune to the effects of the fragmentation of modern science. Education often functions merely as a means of transferring knowledge without fostering students' awareness of meaning and moral responsibility. This situation gives rise to intellectual stagnation, where the learning process becomes mechanical and repetitive. This reflection aligns with the findings of several studies indicating that the dominance of the secular paradigm in modern education contributes to a crisis of values and educational goals, including within Islamic educational institutions (Nasr, 2007; Sardar, 1989). Thus, al-Faruqi's epistemological critique can be understood as an effort to remind us that the crisis in education is fundamentally rooted in a crisis of perspective regarding knowledge itself.

Furthermore, the Islamization of knowledge in al-Faruqi's thought offers a new interpretive framework for the relationship between science, humanity, and reality. The principle of tawhid serves as an epistemological foundation that unifies all scientific activities into a single unity of meaning. Within this framework, science is evaluated not only in terms of its empirical truth but also in terms of its contribution to human welfare and the development of civilization. This interpretation demonstrates that the Islamization of knowledge is not a rejection of modern science, but rather a critical effort to reinterpret science so that it aligns with Islamic values. A number of contemporary studies affirm that this approach is relevant for developing an integrative Islamic education oriented toward the

formation of individuals who are both knowledgeable and civilized (Haneef, 2011; Wan Daud, 2013).

Thus, al-Faruqi's epistemological critique of modern science positions the Islamization of knowledge as the conceptual foundation for the renewal of Islamic education. Science is understood not only as a tool for understanding the world but also as a means of fostering ethical awareness and social responsibility. In the context of contemporary Islamic education, this line of thought provides direction for the development of an educational system capable of transcending the dichotomy of knowledge, breaking free from intellectual stagnation, and making a tangible contribution to addressing the challenges of modern civilization (Al-Faruqi, 1982).

2. Tawhid as the Foundation for the Integration of Knowledge and Islamic Education

Tawhid occupies a fundamental position in the thought of Ismail Raji al-Faruqi as the foundation for the integration of knowledge and Islamic education. Tawhid is not understood merely as a normative theological doctrine, but rather as an epistemological principle that shapes one's perspective on reality, knowledge, and humanity. Al-Faruqi emphasizes that all academic disciplines are, in essence, united by a single purpose: to guide humanity toward recognizing the order of creation and fulfilling its responsibility as God's vicegerent on Earth. This insight demonstrates that the integration of knowledge into Islamic education can only be realized if Tawhid is made the central orientation of scholarship, rather than merely an additional value in the curriculum (Al-Faruqi, 1982).

In the practice of Islamic education, the separation between religious studies and general studies remains a recurring issue. Religious education is often directed toward fostering ritual piety, while general studies are developed using a value-neutral approach. This situation indicates that tawhid has not yet been fully operationalized as the epistemological foundation of education. Al-Faruqi's reflection on this situation emphasizes that the dichotomy of knowledge is not merely a structural issue but also a matter of mindset. Several studies confirm that the failure to integrate tauhid into education results in graduates who are academically intelligent but lacking in ethical and social awareness (Wan Daud, 2013, Haneef, 2011).

Furthermore, al-Faruqi's concept of tawhid provides a new interpretive framework for the goals of contemporary Islamic education. Education is no longer understood as a process of acquiring knowledge in isolated fragments, but rather as an effort to build a holistic awareness of humanity's relationship with God, fellow human beings, and nature. Within this framework, rational and empirical knowledge still play an important role, but are directed toward strengthening humanistic values and social justice. This interpretation aligns with the views of a number of Islamic educational thinkers who emphasize the importance of integrating values and

knowledge in addressing the challenges of modernity and globalization (Nasr, 2007; Sardar, 1989).

Thus, tawhid as the foundation for the integration of knowledge offers a more substantial direction for the renewal of Islamic education. Al-Faruqi's thought demonstrates that Islamic education is not sufficient if it merely adds religious content to the curriculum; rather, it must comprehensively restructure its scholarly orientation. In the context of contemporary Islamic education, integration based on tauhid is key to building an educational system that not only fosters intellectual competence but also shapes individuals who are faithful, civilized, and possess a strong sense of social responsibility (Al-Faruqi, 1982).

3. The Relevance of the Islamization of Knowledge for the Renewal of Contemporary Islamic Education

Islamic education today is caught in a whirlwind of rapid change, marked by the demands of 21st-century competencies, the digitization of learning, and increasing pressure on cognitive and administrative achievements. In this context, Ismail Raji al-Faruqi's concept of the Islamization of knowledge becomes relevant because it offers an educational framework that is not merely oriented toward mastery of subject matter but also toward the development of ways of thinking and value awareness. Al-Faruqi emphasizes that knowledge must be directed toward fostering moral and social responsibility, so that Islamic education does not lose its way amid the tide of modernization (Al-Faruqi, 1982).

This relevance is evident in the issue of the Islamic education curriculum, which to this day still tends to draw a strict distinction between religious and general subjects. In many Islamic educational institutions, the integration of knowledge often remains merely theoretical, while teaching practices continue to operate separately. As a result, students are able to master modern knowledge but are not sufficiently guided to understand the ethical and spiritual implications of that knowledge. Al-Faruqi's concept of the "Islamization of knowledge" provides a foundation for restructuring the curriculum so that all disciplines-both religious and general are oriented toward the development of individuals who are faithful, knowledgeable, and civilized (Wan Daud, 2013; Haneef, 2011).

In educational practice, another challenge facing contemporary Islamic education is the dominance of rote-learning methods and a lack of critical dialogue. This situation is further exacerbated by the use of digital technology, which is often utilized merely as a means of distributing material rather than as a space for developing reasoning and reflection. Within the framework of the Islamization of knowledge, technology should serve as a tool to broaden students understanding and awareness, not merely to accelerate the transfer of information. Al-Faruqi's thought encourages Islamic education to foster dialogic, reflective, and contextual learning,

enabling students to connect knowledge with the social realities they face (Nasr, 2007).

Thus, the Islamization of knowledge holds concrete relevance for the renewal of contemporary Islamic education at the levels of policy, curriculum, and teaching practices. The integration of knowledge grounded in tawhid opens up space for Islamic education to respond to global challenges without losing its scholarly identity. Islamic education serves not only as an institution for transmitting values but also as a space for shaping critical, adaptive, and morally responsible Muslim intellectuals in modern society (Al-Faruqi, 1982).

CONCLUSION

This study emphasizes that the Islamization of knowledge in the thought of Ismail Raji al-Faruqi is an epistemological project aimed at restoring knowledge to the vision of tawhid as the foundation for the integration of knowledge, values, and educational goals. Al-Faruqi's critique of modern science indicates that the crisis in Islamic education does not stem solely from technical aspects of learning but is rooted in a fragmented and value-neutral perspective on science. Therefore, the Islamization of knowledge is understood as an effort to restructure the foundations of scholarship so that Islamic education does not lose its humanistic and civilizational orientation.

The relevance of al-Faruqi's thought to contemporary Islamic education is evident in its ability to address the issues of the dichotomy of knowledge, intellectual stagnation, and the weak integration of values in educational practice. By making tawhid an epistemological principle, Islamic education has a great opportunity to continue to develop not only to adapt to the changing times but also to shape a generation that is knowledgeable, civilized, and capable of social responsibility in daily life. The Islamization of knowledge, in this context, serves as a crucial foundation for the renewal of Islamic education oriented toward the sustainable development of scholarship and civilization.

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