

INTEGRATION OF ISLAMIC PERSPECTIVE INTO THE
GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES TEXTBOOK OF AN
INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL IN QATAR

BY

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this qualitative case study was threefold. The first phase of this research explored to what extent standard Global Perspectives (previously known as Social Studies) textbook and hereto referred as “GP” contributed to six grade 8 students and one GP teacher’s understanding of Islamic Perspective in the GP subject from the ‘The Next Generation School’, hereto referred as “TNG” in Wakra, Qatar. The second phase of this research drafted and proposed an integration model that was used to integrate Islamic Perspective into two chapters from the GP textbook. The third and final phase of this study explored to what extent the Islamised GP textbook contributed to the same set of participants’ understanding of Islamic Perspective in the GP Subject. The key findings are that participants were unable to understand Islamic Perspective in the GP Subject when standard GP textbook was used while the use of Islamised GP textbook has contributed to their understanding of Islamic Perspective in the subject. This demonstrates that the proposed integration model has contributed to the integration of Islamic Perspective into the GP textbook. Thus, the main contribution of this thesis is the development of a proposed integration model to integrate Islamic Perspective into standard GP textbook and confirm previous studies that stated Islamised learning materials will help to contribute in students and teachers’ understanding of Islamic Perspective in a given subject. In order to explore to what extent standard GP textbook contributed to the participants’ understanding of Islamic Perspective in the GP subject, a qualitative case study approach was deployed. Informal Document Analysis of current standard GP textbook for grade 8 and supplementary notes was conducted while two classroom observations of Grade 8 GP classes were conducted. This was followed by semi structured interviews with TNG Principal, two GP teachers, two Islamic Studies hereto referred as “IS” teachers and six Grade 8 students. Thereafter, the proposed integration model was used to integrate Islamic Perspective into two chapters from the GP textbook and train the GP teacher how to teach the two Islamised chapters in classes. Classroom observations and semi-structured interviews with same set of participants were conducted to explore to what extent the use of Islamised GP textbook contributed to the same set of participants’ understanding of Islamic Perspective in the GP subject. Thematic Analysis was subscribed for analysing the data and three main themes emerged. The results have been promising as stated earlier. The positive results demonstrate that this proposed integration model can be used in schools wanting to teach Social Studies or Global Perspectives subject with Islamic Perspective. Further research is needed to explore if the proposed model can be used to integrate Islamic Perspective into other subjects’ textbooks as well.

مُلخَصُ البَحْثِ

يتبدَّى الغرض من هذا البحث الكيفي في مراحل ثلاث؛ استكشفت المرحلة الأولى تأثير كتاب "الرؤى العالمية" (المعروف سابقًا باسم "الدراسات الاجتماعية") في ستة من طلاب الصف الثامن، ومدى فهم معلمهم الرؤية الإسلامية من موضوعات الرؤى العالمية، وذلك في مدرسة الجيل القادم في مدينة الوكرة في دولة قطر، واقترحت المرحلة الثانية أنموذجًا متكاملًا لدمج الرؤية الإسلامية في فصلين من كتاب "الرؤى العالمية" القياسي، في حين استكشفت المرحلة الثالثة تأثير كتاب "الرؤى العالمية" الإسلامي في المجموعة نفسها من المشاركين، وقد أبرزت النتائج أن المشاركين لم يتمكنوا من فهم الرؤية الإسلامية في الكتاب القياسي، بخلاف الكتاب الإسلامي، ومن ثم؛ تمثل الإسهام الرئيس لهذا البحث في أن الأنموذج المقترح أسهم في دمج الرؤية الإسلامية في كتاب "الرؤى العالمية"، مؤكِّدًا ما أوردهت الدراسات السابقة؛ أن المواد التعليمية المدمجة تساعد الطلبة والمعلمين في فهم الرؤية الإسلامية في مادة معينة، وقد توسَّلت البحث النهج الكيفي بدراسة الحالة، فأجري تحليل غير رسمي لمضمون الكتاب القياسي للصف الثامن وملاحظاته التكميلية، وسُجلت ملاحظات الفصل الدراسي لمقرر "الرؤى العالمية" العام، وأعقب ذلك مقابلات شبه منظمة مع مدير المدرسة، واثنين من معلمي المقرر، واثنين من معلمي الدراسات الإسلامية، وستة من طلبة الصف الثامن، مع تدريب المعلمين على استخدام الأنموذج المقترح، وإجراء الملاحظات الصفية والمقابلات شبه المنظمة مع المجموعة نفسها من المشاركين، والاشتراك في التحليل الموضوعاتي للبيانات، وظهرت فيه ثلاثة مواضيع رئيسية، وقد كانت النتائج واعدة إيجابية؛ إذ أظهرت أنه يمكن استخدام الأنموذج المقترح في المدارس الراغبة في تدريس مقرر الدراسات الاجتماعية أو الرؤى العالمية من وجهة إسلامية، ولكن؛ هناك حاجة إلى مزيد بحث لاستكشاف ما إذا كان الأنموذج المقترح يمكن استخدامه لدمج الرؤية الإسلامية في كتب المقررات الأخرى أيضًا.

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this thesis is the result of my own investigation, except where otherwise stated. I also declare that it has not been previously or concurrently submitted as a whole for any other degrees at IIUM or other institutions.

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International Muslim schools are teaching British/American curriculum and Islamic Curriculum in parallel and hoping that students would be able to integrate the Islamic Perspective into the subjects offered by the British/American Curriculum. However, I have observed that this is not the case. As long as we don't have young Muslims approaching a field of knowledge inspired by the Quran, Hadith and Islamic heritage, the Muslim Ummah will continue to suffer in many folds. I thank Allah (swt) for inspiring me to research on the topic of integrating Islamic Perspective into such a critical subject as Global Perspectives (previously known as Social Studies) so that I can make a small yet necessary contribution to my Ummah.

I thank my parents for always encouraging me to do a PhD. My mother, Prof. Dr. Zeenath Kausar has been pushing me for several years constantly to do a PhD but I took my time to decide the field through which I felt I can best serve my Ummah. I thank in particular my father, my source of inspiration, Prof. Dr. Mumtaz Ali, an expert of Islamization of Knowledge and two times Malaysia National award winner. In fact, most of the ideas on integration of Islamic Perspective were derived out of the several conversations I have had with him over the years. I have seen several articles of noted scholars of Islamization presenting vague ideas and models of integrating Islamic Perspective but not many have actually attempted at practically integrating Islamic Perspective into any textbook. I have managed to do this and I credit my parents for the upbringing they provided to me for this purpose. I lived in a home that discussed Islamization "24 hours" and hence while many scholars have noted that Islamization can be a difficult process, I decided to take up this task.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

TNG	The Next Generation School
GP	Global Perspectives
IS	Islamic Studies
IOK	Islamisation of Knowledge

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Islamic thinkers have been discussing for over five decades for the need of Islamisation of Knowledge, hereto referred as “IOK”. Earlier, scholars rejected the dualism in education system and blamed it for the disintegration and disorientation of the Muslim Ummah (Hassan, 2010). Ashraf, (1985) proposed in his keynote addresses to the first four Muslim Education conferences that Muslims should take back education from the hands of western educationists. He explained how the current western educational philosophy was a secularist and modernist idea that rooted out the need to turn to God for knowledge and wisdom. He instead proposed a form of education that comprised of natural and human sciences rooted in Islamic knowledge. Inspired by these conferences, attempts were made to Islamise knowledge and education. Al-Faruqi (1982), explained how the concept of tawhid can be integrated into a worldview, education, system and even in arts. Al-Attas (1978), expounded very succinctly, about the problems with secularism and why it cannot be the worldview of a Muslim educational system. Mawdudi (1993) was very vocal in explaining what the ideal Islamic educational system should not be. He explained that the ideal Islamic education system was not about wrapping the Islamic Dinniyat over western secular curriculum but to absorb healthy components of western sciences after integrating it with the Islamic worldview. Qutb (1949) too, was of this opinion stating that the purpose of IOK was not to cut off from the current caravan of knowledge but to integrate it with the Islamic worldview. On the practical front, former rectors of International Islamic University, Malaysia hereto referred as “IIUM”, Prof Dr. Abdul Hamid Abu Suleyman(1986;1994) and Prof. Dr.

Kamal Hassan(2010), have attempted to provide operational frameworks for Islamisation of Knowledge and Education. Yet, Muslims scholars have mostly avoided discarding the importance of western knowledge altogether and have always suggested for integration.

In this context, Al-Alwani (1989); Malkawi(2015); Baba, Salleh, Zayed and Harris (2015); Sardar and Henzell-Thomas(2018) have attempted to provide theoretical frameworks to integrate Islamic perspective into school and university curriculum. Ssekamanya, Hussien, Suhailah, & Ismail, (2011) (Abdallah, Hussien, Suhailah, & Ismail, 2011) have documented the experience of Islamisation in IIUM while Baba et al(2015) have interrogated the status of Islamisation in Malaysian Islamic Schools. Both research studies have stated the necessity for Islamised learning materials including Isamised textbooks for more effective integration. Moving a step closer to what Abdallah et al (2011) and Baba et al (2015) have suggested, The International Institute of Islamic Thought, hereto referred as “IIIT”, has begun to produce Islamised textbooks for University level in the fields of sociology, anthropology, seerah, economics, science and technology. Yet, what is needed is a standard operational model with criteria and processes to Islamise school and university textbooks (Al-Hidabi, Curriculum Integration based on the story of Prophet Musa and the righteous Man in Surat AlKahf, 2019). In this regards, during a workshop conducted by International Islamic Institute of Thought on writing textbooks with integrated Islamic Perspective, Al-Hidabi (2019) has provided a comprehensive model for integrating Islamic Perspective into textbooks. This thesis has relied heavily on his operational model together with incorporating theoretical frameworks and reflections of the above mentioned scholars when formulating its own integration model. Western principles of integration (Fogarty, 1991); (Lederman, 1997); (Beane, 1993) have also been studied for this purpose and

where necessary ideas have been incorporated into the proposed model. This study attempts to create an operational model to integrate Islamic Perspective into school textbooks and replace the current secular textbooks with a fully functional Islamised textbook, an effort to humbly contribute in the field of IOK and integration of Islamic Perspective. For this purpose, an international Muslim school in Qatar, “The Next Generation School” hereto referred as “TNG” has been identified, whose Global Perspectives textbook (Laycock, 2016), hereto referred as “GP” textbook for grade 8 has been selected for integration purpose. The GP subject was designed by the Cambridge University to instill social and political awareness in students and make students think independently and critically. In other words, students are taught to be responsible students who need to work towards the betterment of the society. Hence students are taught about social harmony, human rights, environmentalism and how to think critically and independently.

According to the mission of this school, it intends to, “Impart essential knowledge and practice of Islam” and “Nurture and support student’s emotional, physical, creative and intellectual needs in order to achieve academic success and become a globally responsible citizen” (TNG School Website). Hence, it can be said, that the TNG School intends to create globally responsible citizens with an awareness of Islamic teachings and are motivated to live life on those values. The school hopes that by teaching Islamic Studies, hereto referred as “IS” in parallel but separately from GP subject, students will be able to understand the Islamic Perspective in the GP Subject topics. Thus, students will be able to understand social and political issues with Islamic Perspective. This is necessary to create students that can help bring about positive change in the society with Islamic teachings. This study will explore to what extent

Islamised GP textbook as opposed to standard GP textbook contributes to students' understanding of Islamic Perspective in the GP subject.

1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

“We should invert Faruqi’s 12 point program and start with producing Islamised textbooks. What we are facing is that teachers who have no Islamic background are asked to teach Islamised knowledge. Someone has to prepare for them materials which they can then use in their courses”. (Abdallah, Hussien, & Hisham, 2011, p.12).

This is a quote of a respondent from Abdallah, Hussien, & Hisham (2011) research on the experience of IOK in IIUM. Baba, Salleh, Zayed and Harris (2015), after reviewing status of IOK in Islamic Schools in Malaysia, explained the reason for Islamised textbooks as follows,

“According to the relevant literature, integration begins when teachers start to instil the Islamic worldview in their students’ minds. And, given that the teachers must have the resources that have been Islamic epistemologically integrated, the learning materials must also be Islamised.”(p.7)

While attempts to create Islamised textbooks has started, there is a need for a standard integration model with clear components, criteria and processes to Islamise school textbooks (Al-Hidabi, 2019). Hence this research has attempted to create an operational model to integrate Islamic perspective into the TNG GP textbook and evaluate it through the lens of a qualitative study to explore to what extent it contributes to the student’s understanding of Islamic Perspective in the GP Subject. It is necessary to state here that while this thesis is not intending to create an integrated Islamic curriculum, the need for Islamised textbooks integrated with Islamic Perspective are necessary even according to western educationist. The father of curriculum, Tyler

(2013), has stressed the importance of textbooks when creating a curriculum. In this respect, if a western or standard curriculum requires a western or standard textbook, then surely an integrated Islamic curriculum should require an integrated Islamic textbook.

1.3 PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

Through the lens of qualitative inquiry, this case study seeks to explore to what extent Islamised textbooks contribute to TNG School's (six Grade 8 students and one GP teacher) understanding of Islamic Perspective in the GP Subject in the TNG School in Qatar.

There are three parts to the purpose of the study mentioned above. Firstly, this qualitative research explores TNG School's (six Grade 8 students and one GP teacher) understanding of Islamic Perspective in the GP subject when standard GP textbook is used. The second part of this research has developed an operational integration model to integrate the Islamic Perspective into the GP textbook based on Al-Hidabi's (2019) integration model, while incorporating theoretical frameworks and reflections of several IOK scholars. Western principles of integration (Fogarty, 1991); (Lederman, 1997); (Beane, 1993) have also been studied for this purpose and where necessary ideas have been incorporated into the proposed model. Classroom observations and interviews with TNG Principal, two GP teachers, two IS teachers and six Grade 8 students have helped to make the model more relevant. Using this proposed integration model, the researcher has integrated Islamic Perspective into two chapters from the GP textbook and trained the GP teacher to be able to teach using this Islamised learning material. In the third and final stage, the researcher has through the means of a qualitative case study method, explored to what extent the Islamised textbook has contributed to the TNG School's

(six Grade 8 students and one GP teacher) understanding of the Islamic Perspective in the TNG School in Qatar.

1.4 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this study is to explore to what extent the use of Islamised GP textbook as opposed to standard GP textbook contributes to TNG School's (six Grade 8 students and one GP teacher) understanding of Islamic Perspective in the GP subject. The research objectives are as follows:

- i. To explore to what extent standard GP textbook contributes to TNG School's (six Grade 8 students and one GP teacher) understanding of Islamic Perspective in the GP subject in the TNG School in Qatar.
- ii. To develop an integration model to integrate Islamic Perspective into the GP subject textbook in the TNG School.
- iii. To explore to what extent Islamised textbook contributes to TNG School's (six Grade 8 students and one GP teacher) understanding of Islamic Perspective in the GP subject in the TNG School in Qatar.

1.5 CENTRAL RESEARCH QUESTION AND SUB QUESTIONS

The central research question is, "What is Islamised GP textbook to TNG School (six Grade 8 students and one GP teacher) in Qatar, in developing their understanding of Islamic Perspective in the GP Subject?"

The research questions for this study are as follows:

- i. To what extent TNG school (six Grade 8 students and one GP teacher) is understanding the Islamic Perspective in the GP Subject with standard GP textbook?

- ii. How can Islamic Perspective be integrated into the GP textbook?
- iii. To what extent is TNG School (six Grade 8 students and one GP teacher) understanding the Islamic Perspective in the GP subject with an Islamised GP textbook?

1.6 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE RESEARCH

This study seeks to humbly contribute in the discipline of Islamisation of Knowledge and Education by proposing an operational model to integrate Islamic Perspective into standard school textbooks. Hence this study will benefit Islamic educationists attempting to Islamise textbooks. This study will also benefit scholars who are researching on methods to bring students closer to the experience of IOK.

This research will also contribute in positive teaching and learning outcomes primarily for the TNG School management because it will allow them to explore to what extent teaching GP subject with an Islamised GP textbook contributes to understanding of Islamic Perspectives in the GP subject. The teachers teaching the GP subject will also be the direct beneficiaries of this study because it will allow them to teach the Islamic Perspective in the GP subject more conveniently with an Islamised GP textbook. As explained earlier by Baba et al (2015) and Abdullah et al (2011), Islamised textbooks are a necessity for teachers to be able to teach a subject with Islamic Perspective more effectively. The students of Grade 8 and particularly the six students interviewed with standard GP textbook and Islamised GP textbook will benefit from this research because being part of this study, they will develop a deeper understanding of the Islamic Perspective in GP subject. Similarly, the rest of the non-interviewed students in the class will also benefit from this research exercise because they have studied two units of GP subject with an Islamised textbook and hence gained a direct

understanding of Islamic Perspective in the two GP units. They would have an idea that indeed Islam has a lot to say about modern day world problems and they will be motivated to search for the solution within the Islamic framework. The two IS teachers interviewed in this research will also benefit from this study because they will now appreciate their new role in helping to create Islamised textbooks for the GP subject.

On a macro level, many conscious Muslim entrepreneurs are moving towards education with an Islamic Perspective to create responsible citizens for the *Ummah*. Many a times, these Muslim schools are teaching without Islamised textbooks. This thesis is addressing this very problem. Hence, this study will benefit school managements that are trying to create effective Islamic Curriculum as Islamised textbooks are an important part of the overall curriculum.

Another beneficiary of this thesis will be teachers teaching other subjects than GP with Islamic Perspective. While the model has been only been qualitatively explored on the social studies subject (GP Subject in the case of TNG School), the author believes the same proposed integration model can be used to integrate Islamic Perspective into other subjects as well.

1.7 LIMITATION OF THE STUDY

Geographically speaking, the study was limited to a certain city in Qatar. The data would have been richer if more than one city or one country was involved but due to the challenges of time and resources it was not possible to study International Islamic Schools in other schools including Malaysia. However, Baba et al (2015) interrogative study of the status of Islamisation in selected Malaysian Islamic schools was studied along with research studies investigating the experience of IOK and integrated Islamic curriculum in selected schools of other countries like Indonesia and Brunei. There are

many Arabic language speaking schools in Qatar but the researcher does not speak the language and hiring of a translator for conducting research would have been difficult to manage for the researcher. Hence this research is limited to only English language speaking Muslim school in Qatar. It must be noted that the author while being bilingual was comfortable only in English and mother tongue Urdu. As Al-Attas (1997) has mentioned, Islamisation of a language is a prerequisite for Islamizing a piece of literature. Hence this study could have been richer and the results more profound if the model of integration included the function of Islamizing the language or at least the keywords in the two units that were Islamised. Yet, the key words used in the two units were about Family systems and Claim evaluations and did not seem to require a very in-depth analysis of the Quranic Arabic synonym. All the interviewees were female including the six students from Grade Eight that were interviewed pre-integration and post integration. The school administration decided that the girls' section should be interviewed pre-integration. Thus, a question rises if this research reflects on the female students' reaction to the proposed integrated model or does it encompass male students' perception as well. However, classroom observations were conducted in the boys' classes as well and the researcher had the opportunity to teach and interact with the male students as well during the teaching of the integrated model. The researcher observed similar influence of the proposed integration model on the male students as well. Hence this study does reflect the influence of the model on male students as well.

1.8 DELIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

As of now, only one school in Qatar is offering a British curriculum with a parallel Islamic Curriculum especially for secondary students. Hence other schools in Doha and Wakra were excluded. There are mainly two methods of research – Qualitative and

Quantitative. The nature of this study required a more qualitative approach than a quantitative one. Hence, there is a limitation to the depth of the quantitative research. For evaluating the integrated model, two chapters from the Islamised GP Subject were taught in the classroom. Questionnaires, a tool often employed in quantitative studies was excluded. While it is a known fact that questionnaires have their merits especially in survey research, the nature of this research demanded a more qualitative approach where by semi structures interviews, classroom observations and informal document analysis were the primary tools engaged by the research for examining and evaluations.

1.9 DEFINITION OF TERMS

1.9.1 Islamisation of Knowledge and Integration from Islamic Perspective

The terms IOK, Islamised, and integration of Islamic Perspective are closely related and almost interchangeable. Al-Faruqi (1992) and Nasr (1994) have used the word “Islamised” and integration when touching on the subject of IOK. However Sardar and Henzell-Thomas (2018), Baba (2013), and Hassan (2010) see integration of Islamic Perspective and integrated curriculum (both terms are interchangeable) as the next evolving steps in the IOK discipline. This thesis also sees Integrated Curriculum as the next step forward in the field of IOK.

Several Muslim scholars have shared their understanding of IOK. Their views, presented below, are quoted from “The History and Philosophy of Islamisation of Knowledge, A Preliminary Study of Pioneers’ Thought” by IIUM Professor Dr. Mohd Mumtaz Ali.