

## **The Effectiveness of an Integrated Curriculum: The Case of the International Islamic University Malaysia**

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*The International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM) was established in 1983 by the Government of Malaysia. Based on the recommendations of the First World Conference on Muslim Education held in Makkah in 1977, the university's ultimate aim was to produce well-rounded professionals imbued with Islamic values and ethics who would develop the Muslim ummah and achieve progress that is in harmony with Islamic ideals. In order to achieve the stated objective, the IIUM adopts a unified philosophy of education approach of integration and Islamization of knowledge. Hence, teaching and education are related to the concepts of ta'dib, ta'lim and tarbiyyah, making the programs unique in its curriculum, syllabus, and pedagogy. After almost 27 years of its establishment, it is important to examine whether such an integrated curriculum has been able to achieve the University's noble objectives. This study investigates the performance of IIUM graduates in terms of: (i) how well they are accepted by the market, (ii) whether the students possess the job-related values that are highly regarded in the market, and (iii) how these values relate to their job performance. The results show that the integrated curriculum has managed to produce graduates and manpower with the right values and qualities without compromising their job skills and marketability. This makes a case for a review of the content of higher education throughout the Muslim world to ensure that its objective of enhancing the development of the intellectual, spiritual and skills capacity of man is achieved.*

Keywords: Islamization of knowledge, integrated curriculum, graduate employability

### **1. Introduction**

In 1977, the First World Conference on Muslim Education was organized by the King Abdul Aziz University and the Government of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, in Makkah from 31 March to 8 April. It was held in view of the problems of education in the Muslim world stemming from the dual education system inherited from the colonial masters, i.e., the national type system and the religious system (Adebayo, 2007). With a theme entitled, "Basis for an Islamic Education System," one of the main outcomes of this seminal conference was the call for an educational reform in the Muslim world, contending that modern disciplines taught in universities in the Muslim world were not value-neutral, but in fact reflect the experience and worldview (with ideologies) of post-enlightenment Europe. The conference proposed a critical review, reform and integration between modern knowledge and Islamic heritage. Hence, recommendations were made to improve the teaching, learning and research of Islamic heritage by establishing Islamic universities; i.e., universities with an integrated

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curriculum where both modern disciplines and Islamic heritage were taught to provide to students in the Muslim countries a better education, utilizing the epistemological sources in Islam (Amin and Haneef, 2011).

The International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM) is an attempt to implement the integrated curriculum model as described above. Established in July 1983 by the Government of Malaysia, it is one of the direct outcomes of the First World Conference on Muslim Education. The university's ultimate aim was to produce well-rounded professionals imbued with Islamic values and ethics who would develop the Muslim *ummah* and achieve progress that is in harmony with Islamic ideals.

The IIUM is, thus, seen as "an Islamic university and not a university merely about Islam," unlike the many existing universities in the Muslim world that tended to perpetuate the educational dichotomy between the religious and the modern (Haneef and Amin, 1997). The IIUM's objectives have now been restated in its vision statement, which is to become "a leading international center of educational excellence which seeks to restore the dynamic and progressive role of the Muslim *ummah* in all branches of knowledge" and its mission of Integration, Islamization, Internationalization, and Comprehensive Excellence (IIICE).

After almost 27 years of its establishment, it is important to examine whether the integrated curriculum as proposed by the First World Conference on Muslim Education has been able to achieve the University's noble objectives that would serve the needs of the *ummah*, or whether the approach has resulted in a trade-off with the marketability of its graduates. Hence, this study investigates the performance of IIUM graduates in terms of: (i) how well they are accepted by the market, (ii) whether the students possess the job-related values that are highly regarded in the market, and (iii) how these values relate to their job performance. The study focuses on one of the earliest undergraduate programs in the University, i.e., the Bachelor of Economics program offered by the Kulliyyah of Economics & Management Sciences (KENMS) as it is currently known, as an example of a program that adopts an integrated curriculum.

The next section discusses the conceptual model of an integrated curriculum, followed by section 3 that describes the Bachelor of Economics program at the IIUM as a practical application of the integrated curriculum. Section 4 presents the findings of several surveys conducted on IIUM and KENMS graduates, while the last section concludes.

## **2. An integrated curriculum structure – a conceptual model**

In developing an integrated higher education curriculum based on the Islamic framework, it is necessary that a careful structuring of the curriculum be conducted to ensure that knowledge, skills and spiritual development, and thus market needs, are realized. This implies that the teaching of both religious sciences as well as modern sciences must be included in the curriculum. Religious sciences are the sciences of the *Qur'an*, the Prophet's Tradition (*Hadith*), Oneness of God (*Tawhid*), Islamic worldview, the Islamic Law (*Shari'ah*) and other sciences of Islamic heritage including the Arabic language, while modern sciences include the human, social, natural, applied and technological sciences.

Religious sciences have traditionally been taught as a subject on its own, with limited reference to, or discussion on other disciplines or real world issues. In an integrated curriculum, the teaching of these sciences must be reviewed and modified so as to enable them to play their role in providing solutions to contemporary problems of the community and of humanity as a whole. Similarly, a reexamination must also be carried out on the modern sciences. Although there have been significant advances in the modern sciences in terms of knowledge and their applications, and courses on them are commonly taught in universities throughout the world, in an Islamic higher education curriculum these sciences

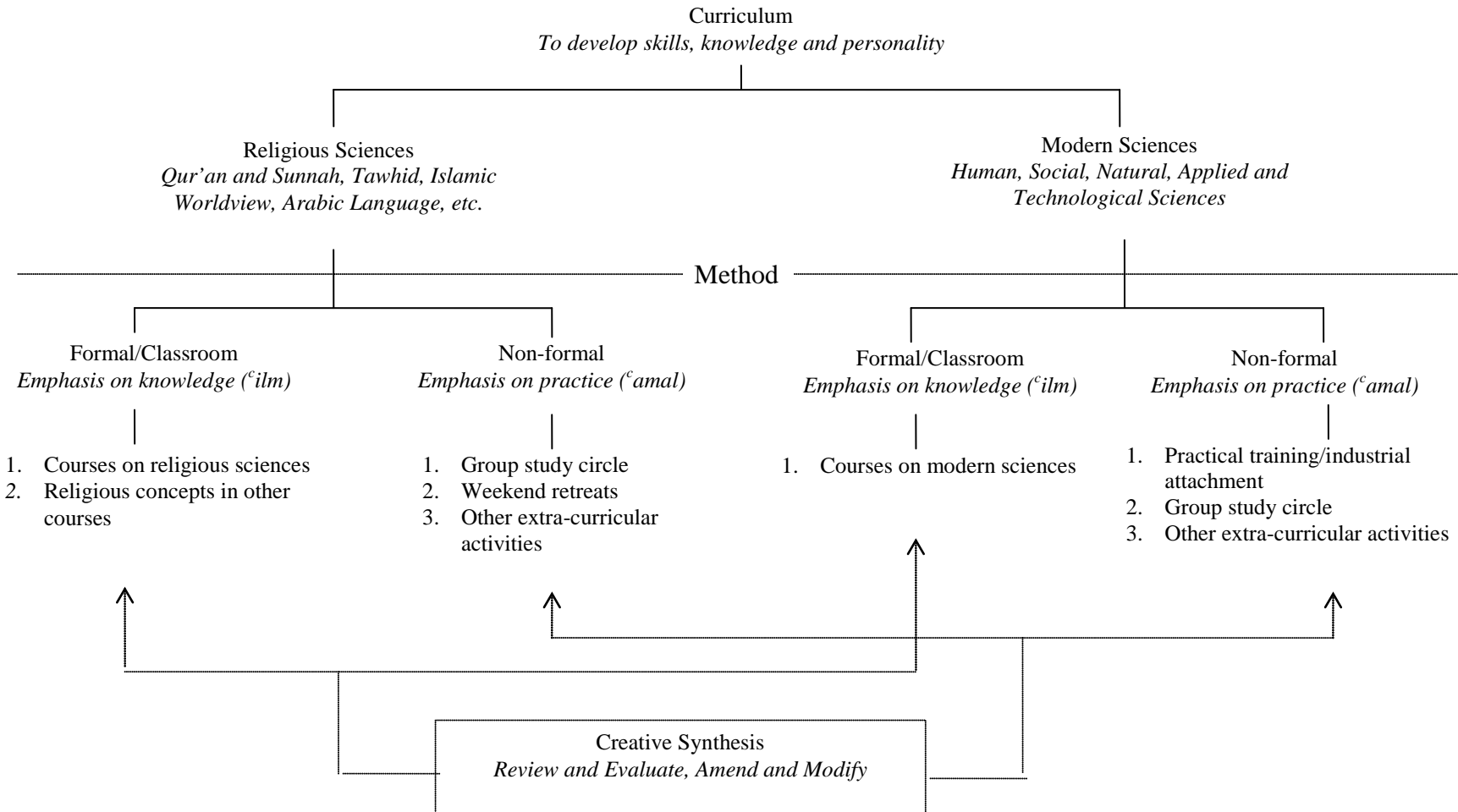
must undergo a process of review, evaluation, modification and assimilation based on the Islamic framework. In other words, these sciences will have to undergo an Islamization process which integrates revealed and acquired knowledge.

Since Islamic education focuses on individual human development, the integration process cannot be achieved only through formal education. Personality development which covers both intellectual and spiritual dimensions of man would require non-formal education as well. While formal education mainly focuses on knowledge (*‘ilm*) per se and develops man’s intellectual capacity, non-formal education provides the moral training needed for character development. Thus, instruction on religious and modern sciences should be conducted both in the formal setting of classrooms as well as in the non-formal setting.

The formal education would comprise of the teaching of courses on religious sciences and modern sciences, where the emphasis on classroom activities is primarily to impart knowledge. The classroom setting may also be conducive to developing skills and character, but only to a smaller extent. A pertinent characteristic of an integrated curriculum is that the teaching of religion-related knowledge should not be relegated to religious sciences courses only. Rather, religious concepts must also be infused in the modern sciences courses, wherever possible, so that students can be trained to evaluate modern knowledge on any discipline from an Islamic perspective.

The non-formal education provides the avenue for the development of skills and character. It can take the form of group study circles, weekend retreats, and other extra-curricular activities where the focus is to translate the knowledge obtained from the formal courses into practice or at least to understand the practical aspects of these courses. The content of these non-formal activities can include inputs from both religious sciences as well as modern sciences. It may also include practical training or industrial attachment in an academic program. The purpose is for students to be familiar with the real world environment and instill in them the right kind of work attitude and professionalism through their interaction with people in the organization. Generally, one could say that while the non-formal education on religious sciences emphasizes on personality development, that of modern sciences stresses skills development. The structure of the integrated curriculum proposed above is illustrated in Figure 1 for ease of reference.

Figure 1  
A Model of An Integrated Curriculum Structure



Although the above features are important elements in a more holistic higher education curriculum, they are not without challenges. For example, getting the correct balance between religious and modern sciences is not that easy. In addition, the content of the religious sciences and modern sciences needs to be thought of so that graduates develop critical and querying minds. In our model, the religious components are needed to create positive changes in individuals' personality and values so that there is a 'value-added' component to the standard curriculum. However, we also have to ensure that within certain time constraints, international standards of modern sciences are also adhered to so that the graduates are at par, if not better, compared to other graduates, and will be able to compete and find employment internationally.

Another potential challenge in the model proposed is the integration/Islamization component in terms of how the integration of knowledge process should be carried out. The integration/Islamization component may look nice on paper but converting it into meaningful curriculum and individual course syllabi is an onerous task. The following section describes the Bachelor of Economics program offered by the KENMS at the IIUM as an example of the application of the proposed model.

### **3. An integrated curriculum structure – the Bachelor of Economics program and the philosophy of education at the IIUM**

The Bachelor of Economics program is one of the two academic programs offered by the IIUM at the time of its establishment through the KENMS.<sup>4</sup> As one of the pioneering faculties of the IIUM, the KENMS strives to implement a unified philosophy of education in its approach through the integration and Islamization of knowledge. This is in line with the philosophy of the IIUM, which was adopted from the resolutions of the 1977 First World Conference on Islamic Education, which include, among others, the following precepts:

- knowledge is a unified whole of which “revealed knowledge” is its most important component and center;
- the purpose of acquiring knowledge is to assist the seeker in playing his role as Allah's servant ('*abd*) and vicegerent (*khalifah*) on earth; and
- the all-embracing scope of Islamic education nurtures the cognitive, spiritual, and behavioral aspects of the human personality in the light of Islamic '*aqidah* (creed), *Shari'ah* (law), and *akhlaq* (morality).

(International Islamic University Malaysia, 1983)<sup>5</sup>

Hence, teaching and education at the IIUM are related to the concepts of *ta'dib*, *ta'lim* and *tarbiyyah*, making the programs unique in its curriculum, syllabus, and pedagogy. Reestablishing the supremacy of Islam in all fields of knowledge by unifying and infusing knowledge with Islamic values and principles in its broadest sense is seen as necessary to address socio-economic problems. Hence, it is the expressed objective of the university to produce professionals who, while being educated in their traditional values, are able to function as agents of change according to the vision of Islam.

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<sup>4</sup> The KENMS at present comprises four departments: the Department of Economics, the Department of Business Administration, the Department of Accounting and the newly established Department of Finance, each offering its own academic programs, i.e., the Bachelor of Economics, the Bachelor of Business Administration, the Bachelor of Accounting, and the Bachelor of Finance, respectively. Apart from undergraduate programs, the KENMS also offers various postgraduate programs through the four departments. As of November 2010, the KENMS has 116 teaching staff, with approximately 2,355 undergraduate students.

<sup>5</sup> See Haneef and Amin (1997, p. 190).

In order to achieve this goal, the IIUM curriculum combined courses in Islamic civilization and worldview, which are made compulsory to all students, with contemporary disciplines as found in many other universities. The process of integration is performed at two levels: (i) at the central level, by the Department of Islamic Revealed Knowledge and Heritage (formerly known as the Centre for Fundamental Knowledge)—where both formal (through lectures) and non-formal courses are offered to all students of the university; and (ii) at the kulliyah level—where the academic staff are expected to present the Islamic perspective of the discipline, requiring the process of de-Westernization and the infusion of Islamic values. Within the above mechanism, the Department of Islamic Revealed Knowledge and Heritage had a central objective of abolishing the artificial barriers that divided religious sciences from conventional ones, and instilling within students to become Islamic agents to solve contemporary problems in society by example.

The adoption of the principle of the unity of knowledge and the integration of Islamic values in all academic disciplines at the IIUM is reflected in the nomenclature of the Bachelor of Economics program itself, where the word ‘Islamic’ is not specifically stated since it is already imbued in the program. As mentioned earlier, in line with the philosophy and the objective of the university, the main objective of the kulliyah as stated in the *Memorandum for Degree Recognition of the Bachelor of Economics Programme* (1986) is to contribute to the cause of Islam as a complete ‘way of life’ through the study of economics founded upon the *Shari‘ah*; and specifically to produce graduates who are not only competent, but who are also instilled with Islamic values. The *Memorandum for Degree Recognition* (1986) describes the framework of the Bachelor of Economics program as follows:<sup>6</sup>

1. Every course is presented from an Islamic perspective. Western economic theories will be presented and then critically analyzed from an Islamic viewpoint.
2. The program generally adopts a comparative approach.
3. The program hopes to ‘devalue’ economic concepts from all alien values (and to infuse Islamic values where possible).
4. The program has certain core subjects in ‘*aqidah*, *Shari‘ah* and *akhlaq*.’
5. The Arabic language is central to the objectives of the program.
6. After a strong foundation in the Islamic perspective in economics, the fourth year courses are more conventional in nature.
7. To ensure correct understanding, a limited number of options are offered.

Hence, the Bachelor of Economics curriculum depicts the University’s philosophy and does not dichotomize courses into pure Islamic studies and pure secular economics/management sciences. Instead, the three components of revealed knowledge pertinent to an Islamic university education, i.e., ‘*aqidah* (Islamic creed), *Shari‘ah* (Divine Law) and *akhlaq* (Islamic ethics), are integrated with relevant courses in the program. Attempts are made in the courses to integrated Islamic perspectives or at least to provide a comparative approach in the teaching of these courses so as to equip students with the knowledge and skills they need to face an increasingly challenging world.

Currently, students enrolled in the Bachelor of Economics program are required to fulfill 128 credit hours of course work.<sup>7</sup> As can be seen from Appendix I, the program is made up of the following components: University Required Courses, including co-curricular courses (20 credit hours), *Kulliyah* Required Courses (36 credit hours), Department

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<sup>6</sup> International Islamic University Malaysia, *Memorandum for Degree Recognition: Bachelor of Economics Programme*. Unpublished Document, August (1986), cited in Haneef and Amin (1997).

<sup>7</sup> The requirement for international students, however, is 126 credit hours, since they are not required to take the course *Komunikasi Perniagaan* (Business communication) for Malaysian students, which is conducted in the Malay Language.

Required Courses (36 credit hours) and Department Elective courses (36 credit hours). The program allows students to choose from 4 concentrations namely in Islamic Economics, Finance, International Economics and Development Economics. Beginning in 1997, Bachelor of Economics students can also enroll in a double-degree program to pursue another degree in the Bachelor of Islamic Revealed Knowledge and Heritage (IRKH) by taking approximately 2 additional semesters of IRKH courses.

In examining the curriculum structure, the courses offered are classified, according to course outlines provided by the Department of Economics, into the following six categories:

1. Conventional economics courses (Conv.)
2. Courses with some Islamic input/Comparative courses (SI/Comp.)
3. Islamic economics courses (IE)
4. *Fiqh* courses (F)
5. *Usul al-Fiqh* courses (UF)
6. Other Islamic courses (OI)

The type of courses is determined based on the course outlines provided by the Department of Economics. Conventional courses are defined as courses which do not have any additional Islamic input (content following purely the conventional content and no reference to materials from the Islamic perspective); Courses with some Islamic input and comparative courses are those that provide some Islamic input and references either on a few or many topics; Islamic economics courses are courses in Islamic economics or those related to Islamic economics; *Fiqh* courses are those that concentrate more on the legal aspects of the subject matter; *Usul al-Fiqh* courses are those that discuss methodology/sources of knowledge in Islam; and Other Islamic Courses are courses which are not directly related to Economics, *Fiqh* or *Usul al-Fiqh*.

**Table 1: Percentage of total degree requirements by course category and program requirements**

Course category	Program requirements				Total % of credit hours
	University required courses	<i>Kulliyah</i> (Faculty) required courses	Department required courses	Department and other electives <sup>a</sup>	
Conventional Courses	-	12%	5%	0-28%	17-45%
Courses with Some Islamic Input/Comparative Courses	-	7%	14%	0-24%	21-45%
Islamic Economics Courses	-	2%	5%	0-14%	7-21%
<i>Fiqh</i> Courses	-	5%	-	0-2%	5-7%
<i>Usul al-Fiqh</i> Courses	-	-	5%	0-2%	5-7%
Other Islamic Courses	9%	-	-	-	9%

**Notes:** <sup>a</sup>A total of 12 courses with a minimum of 4 courses from at least one of the concentration packages in the Department.

The degree requirement for the Bachelor of Economics programme at the KENMS is 128 credit hours.

The breakdown excludes language courses, *Qur'anic* skills courses and co-curriculum courses.

**Source:** Reproduced from Amin and Haneef (2011).

Notwithstanding the above figures, on average, about one-third of the total degree requirement of the Bachelor of Economics program at the KENMS comprise of conventional courses, which are considered comparable with international standards in terms of level, scope and references by external assessors of the program. This conventional component is seen as important since graduates need to be able to meet 'market needs'.

Another one-third of the program provides Islamic economics and other Islamic-related courses. Islamic economics courses are more economics in orientation; *fiqh* courses focus on Islamic law while *usul al-fiqh* courses focus on methodology, albeit more on methodology of Islamic law rather than that of Islamic economics. Other Islamic courses include those that provide a wider exposure to Islamic thought and civilization.

The remaining one-third of the curriculum comprises of courses deemed to have 'some Islamic input'. It is in this category that the comparative component is most pronounced. For example, in order to allow more time for incorporation of Islamic perspectives/comparison, the KENMS had to break down the intermediate level courses each for microeconomics and macroeconomics into two. This also allows for the inclusion of actual case studies in these theory courses, hence providing an applied approach to the subject.

The program undergoes periodic reviews and reforms for purpose of improvements. Two major reforms/reviews were undertaken at the Department, in 1989/1990 and 1997. The most recent exercise was completed in 2004. The review process takes place at both the internal and external levels. At the internal level, committees consisting of academic staff teaching courses in areas of specialization are asked to develop, monitor and evaluate/review courses in their areas of specialization. The committees also make comparisons both with local and overseas universities to ensure that the curriculum and program maintain international standards.

At the external level, in addition to feedback from other stakeholders (government agencies, private sector), external assessors give detailed evaluation on the program from the academic and practical perspectives, especially in comparison to international standards and with reference to the mission and vision of the Kulliyyah and the University. For instance, according to the external assessor's report (April 2004) on the Bachelor of Economics, the program meets the criteria of international equivalence and comparability in terms of duration, the courses of study, their contents and standard with the programs in North American, European and other world-class universities.

The Bachelor of Economics program is an example of an integrated curriculum proposed by the 1977 First Conference on Islamic Education. The other undergraduate programs offered by the KENMS, namely the Bachelor of Business Administration and the Bachelor of Accounting also adopt a similar approach as the Bachelor of Economics program. After more than two decades of producing graduates, it would be interesting to see whether the integrated curriculum has been successful in achieving the kulliyyah's and the University's objectives, or whether the approach has resulted in a trade-off with the marketability of its graduates. The next section presents the performance of IIUM, specifically KENMS graduates in terms of: (i) whether the students possess the job-related values that are highly regarded in the market, (ii) how these values relate to their job performance, and (iii) how well they are accepted by the market.

#### **4. Products of an integrated curriculum structure: The case of IIUM graduates**

A pertinent question that comes into mind relating to the integrated curriculum is whether IIUM graduates, and in particular KENMS graduates, are at par with other Malaysian graduates. Are they marketable in terms of getting jobs and receiving comparable levels of income? The findings from tracer studies will address these questions.

Another important question is would the industry want graduates who have the religious input or would they be seen as a liability, especially in view of the events of the recent years where Islam and Muslims worldwide have not been portrayed favorably? While



there may exist some apprehension by some quarters, there may not necessarily be a conflict between market needs (i.e., what is said to be sought by the industries/firms) and the universal values that stem from religious beliefs and traditions. This paper reports the results of a survey that was conducted on KENMS students, which indicate that values are important to employers and are part of the market needs.

### **i. Marketability**

Yearly tracer studies have been conducted by the IIUM to examine how its graduates have fared in the job market, and to obtain information related to how the University can improve its academic programs, services and facilities. The latest *Tracer Study 2009* by Wok et al. (2011) was conducted on first-degree graduates of the 25<sup>th</sup> IIUM Convocation. A total of 3125 first-degree graduates participated in the study from all kulliyahs in IIUM,<sup>8</sup> using online questionnaires prepared by the Malaysian Ministry of Higher Education (MOHE) as the instrument in a standard format used by all participating universities. The questionnaires were posted online a month prior to the 25<sup>th</sup> convocation ceremony which was held from 10-12<sup>th</sup> October 2009, while the respondents submitted their online questionnaires the latest by 9<sup>th</sup> October 2009 (*Tracer Study 2009*, 1-4).

An examination of the employment status of these graduates suggests that IIUM KENMS graduates were well accepted by the industry. Of those who joined the labor market, 67.3% were employed within six months of the completion of their study (*Tracer Study 2009*, 122). This is higher than the national average of 63.3% for Arts and Social Science graduates of public and private universities. The employment rate of KENMS graduates also surpassed the employment rate for all graduates of public universities (61.1%), and that of graduates of private universities (65.1%) (Malaysia Ministry of Higher Education, 2010).

With regards to monthly salary received, 44.2% of KENMS IIUM graduates received salaries of more than RM2000. Although this percentage is lower compared to all IIUM graduates which was 45.7%, it is much higher than the percentage for all graduates in Malaysia which was 43.4% (*Tracer Study 2009*, 159-160; Abu Bakar, Jaini & Zubairi., 2009).

In the tracer study, graduates were asked their level of satisfaction on a scale of 1 to 5 (1 for *not satisfied*; 2 for *less satisfied*; 3 for *satisfied*; 4 for *very satisfied*; and 5 for *extremely satisfied*) of various aspects including of the knowledge or skills acquired from their program of study. The findings show that the majority of IIUM graduates, both the KENMS and overall graduates, were very satisfied with their ability and capability to perform the job such as workplace adaptability, problem-solving skills, confidence to perform tasks, working in teams, communication skills, proficiency in languages, usage of ICT and the ability to use ICT applications, with mean scores ranging from 4.29 to 4.78.

With regard to the effectiveness of the university's curriculum as reflected in the variety of occupations that IIUM graduates are engaged in, the study found that in general the overall degree and the kulliyah/Department courses are relevant to the graduates' current jobs, provide sufficient skills for them to work in various sectors, and have equipped them with sufficient interpersonal and analytical skills. Graduates generally obtained high self-satisfaction from their first job (satisfaction mean score of 4.11 overall, 4.03 for KENMS), and indicated that the program in which they studied at the university was relevant to their first job (4.09 overall and 4.03 for KENMS).

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<sup>8</sup>These are: the Kulliyah of Architecture and Environmental Design, Kulliyah of Allied Health Science, Institute of Education, Kulliyah of Economics and Management Sciences, Kulliyah of Engineering, Kulliyah of Information and Communication Technology, Kulliyah of Islamic Revealed Knowledge and Human Sciences, Ahmad Ibrahim Kulliyah of Laws, Kulliyah of Medicine, Kulliyah of Nursing, Kulliyah of Pharmacy, and Kulliyah of Sciences.

Most of the academic program-related items were favorably rated with the overall satisfaction mean score ranging from 3.95 to 4.26 (see Table 2). The two highest ratings were the suitability of the study program (4.26) and the compulsory university/institution subjects (4.20). The graduates were also very satisfied with the University's co-curricular offerings, i.e., the variety of co-curriculum subjects and the compulsory co-curriculum subjects with an overall satisfaction of 4.19 and 4.13, respectively. They were also very satisfied with the University's curriculum in preparing them to face the real work challenges (4.05). Another item rated very satisfactorily across all kulliyahs was the offering and administration of the industrial attachment program/practicum across all kulliyahs, where the graduates were very satisfied with it (4.07). In general, the majority of the graduates were satisfied with the overall curriculum offered by the IIUM (*Tracer Study 2009*, 36). As a result, about 80.0% of the overall graduates and 83.6 % of KENMS graduates agreed that the programs in which they had enrolled at university were helpful, very helpful or extremely helpful in their current job (*Tracer Study 2009*, 181-183).

**Table 2: The level of satisfaction with curriculum (overall course content) among first-degree graduates (class of 2009)**

Curriculum (Overall Course Content)	Level of satisfaction					Overall satisfaction (Mean score)	SD	Total (N)
	Not satisfied (1)	Less satisfied (2)	Satisfied (3)	Very satisfied (4)	Extremely satisfied (5)			
Suitability of the study programme	0.1%	0.7%	11.6%	48.1%	39.4%	4.26	0.695	3125
Balance between theoretical and practical/application components	0.4%	3.6%	22.8%	46.9%	26.2%	3.95	0.820	3125
Industrial attachment programme/practicum (if applicable)	1.1%	3.0%	17.9%	44.4%	33.7%	4.07	0852	2348
Compulsory co- curriculum subjects	0.4%	2.1%	15.8%	47.7%	34.0%	4.13	0.778	3005
Compulsory subjects (required by institution/university)	0.6%	2.0%	13.8%	44.0%	39.6%	4.20	0.794	3098
Variety of co- curriculum subjects offered	0.5%	1.8%	15.0%	43.3%	39.5%	4.19	0.788	3047
Prepare students for work	0.8%	3.6%	17.7%	45.8%	32.2%	4.05	0.842	3084

**Source:** *Tracer Study 2009*, Table 3.1, p. 37

## ii. Job Performance and Values

In order to answer the earlier question posed, i.e., whether or not values are viewed as important by employers and are part of the market needs, a study was carried out involving students undergoing a 3-month practical training and their employers in 2002. The study also examines the extent to which IIUM students possessed certain values and determines the relationship between values and their job performance. Written questionnaires were sent out to 191 employers to evaluate business and accounting students who were undergoing the practical training at various companies and organizations.<sup>9</sup> One hundred and nine questionnaires were completed and returned to us.

A list of value characteristics was given in the questionnaire.<sup>10</sup> Employers were required to rate each of the characteristics as *not important at all* (0-49), *not important* (50-69), *important* (70-79), *very important* (80-89), or *extremely important* (90-100), and to write the actual rating points. In addition, they were asked to evaluate the students in relation to those characteristics based on this scale: *unsatisfactory* (0-50), *improvement needed* (50-69), *good* (70-79), *very good* (80-89), and *outstanding* (90-100).<sup>11</sup>

<sup>9</sup> Practical training is compulsory for students in the Bachelor of Business Administration and the Bachelor of Accounting, but optional for those in the Bachelor of Economics.

<sup>10</sup> The characteristics were (i) fairness—impartiality, free from discrimination or favoritism, and conforming with the established rules or standards; (ii) integrity—firm adherence to moral principles; (iii) trustworthiness—worthy of confidence or trust; (iv) truthfulness/honesty—the quality of keeping close to fact and avoiding distortion or misrepresentation; (v) commitment—being dedicated or responsible to an undertaking; (vi) patience—tolerant and even-tempered perseverance; and (vii) benevolence—inclination to do good or surpass what is required.

<sup>11</sup> *Outstanding* denotes exceptional in all areas and is recognizable as being far superior to others. *Very good* means exceeds requirements, while *good* indicates meeting the required standards in an employee. *Improvement needed* represents deficient in certain areas where improvement is necessary, and *unsatisfactory* shows unacceptable level and require immediate improvement.

The rating means of the value characteristics were computed and they were tested for differences using the *t*-test. Each value characteristic was then ranked as shown in Table 3. The results show that all of the characteristics were rated by the employers as either *extremely important* or *very important* for an employee to possess. The highest ranked characteristics were trustworthiness and truthfulness/honesty. As to the appraisal of the IIUM business and accounting students, they were rated as having exceeded the requirements of the employers. The students scored highest for trustworthiness and truthfulness/honesty, which were also considered the most important characteristics to have for an employee. These findings are encouraging in that IIUM students seem to have the proper values that are required by employers. This is consistent with the findings of the study discussed earlier. To some extent, the integrated curriculum offered by the university meets the market demands in instilling values essential to organizations.

**Table 3: Mean and ranking of employee characteristics**

	Importance of employee characteristic		Appraisal of student characteristic	
	Mean	Ranking	Mean	Ranking
Fairness	90.08	5.5	84.21	5.5
Integrity	91.51	3.5	85.99	3.5
Trustworthiness	93.69	1.5	86.66	1.5
Truthfulness/Honesty	93.49	1.5	86.64	1.5
Commitment	92.06	3.5	85.65	3.5
Patience	89.70	5.5	85.96	5.5
Benevolence	87.84	7	84.37	7

Employers were also asked to evaluate the students' work performance in relation to job requirements using a similar format as before. They were required to rate the students as *unsatisfactory* (0-50), *improvement needed* (50-69), *good* (70-79), *very good* (80-89), and *outstanding* (90-100)<sup>12</sup> based on the following performance indicators:

- i. Quality – the accuracy, thoroughness, acceptability and completeness of work performed.
- ii. Productivity – the quantity and efficiency of work produced in a specified period of time.
- iii. Job knowledge (a) – the practical/technical skills and information used on the job.
- iv. Job knowledge (b) – the level of knowledge, skills and abilities possessed for successful job performance.
- v. Reliability – the extent to which the student can be relied upon regarding task completion and follow up.
- vi. Availability (a) – the extent to which the student is punctual, observes prescribed work break/lunch periods and the overall attendance record.
- vii. Availability (b) – the extent to which the student follows instructions and observes work rules.
- viii. Independence – the extent of work performed with little or no supervision.
- ix. Initiative – the extent to which the student is self-reliant, resourceful and willing to accept responsibility.
- x. Adaptability – the ability to respond to changing requirements and conditions.
- xi. Cooperation – the ability to work for, and with, others (including willingness to accept assignments and overtime).
- xii. Communication – the ability to communicate in writing and speech.

The results as given in Table 4 indicate that IIUM students' performance exceeded requirements and were of high quality. All, except one of the performance indicators have mean ratings above 80 points. Even *job knowledge* (that relating to level of knowledge, skills and abilities possessed for successful job performance) which had the lowest rating, had a mean of almost 80 points.

<sup>12</sup> *Outstanding* denotes performance is exceptional in all areas and is recognizable as being far superior to others. *Very good* means results clearly exceed most position requirements, and performance is of high quality and is achieved on a consistent basis. *Good* indicates competent and dependable level of performance, and meeting performance standards of the job. *Improvement needed* represents performance deficiency in certain areas and improvement is necessary, and *unsatisfactory* shows results are unacceptable and require immediate improvement.

**Table 4: Appraisal of Student Performance**

Performance Indicator	Mean Rating Points
Quality	81.78
Productivity	82.78
Job knowledge (a)	80.85
Job knowledge (b)	79.94
Reliability	82.09
Availability (a)	86.11
Availability (b)	86.11
Independence	81.43
Initiative	83.31
Adaptability	83.04
Cooperation	86.56
Communication	83.58

The study further investigated the relationship between values and performance. A value/character score was obtained for each student by computing the weighted average of the points obtained from each of the value characteristics. The weights were based on the importance of each of the value given by the employers. In addition, a performance average score was computed by taking the mean of the 12 performance indicators. Regression analyses were done where each of the performance indicators, and the performance average score were regressed on the value/character score. To control for other effects, students' cumulative grade point average (CGPA), gender and major were included as independent variables.<sup>13</sup>

The findings showed that performance was highly dependent on character or value (see Table 5). A high value/character score resulted in a high rating for all performance indicators, as well as for the performance average score. This outcome supports the view that, apart from the technical knowledge taught to students, values were equally, if not more, important to perform well in a career.

<sup>13</sup> CGPA is based on a score of 0-4; Gender is a dummy variable with a value of 0 for female, and 1 for male; and Major is a dummy variable with a value of 0 for an accounting student, and 1 for a business student.

**Table 5: Regression of characteristic score and other factors on performance indicators**

Dependent variable	Performance average score	Quality	Productivity	Job knowledge (a)	Job knowledge (b)	Reliability	Availability (a)
Constant	10.412**	5.005	13.626	0.837	3.783	7.271	-8.544
Character/Value score	0.885***	0.907***	0.885***	0.955***	0.960***	0.863***	1.025***
CGPA	-0.728	-0.008	-1.310	-0.814	-1.778	-0.016	2.858*
Gender	-0.978	-1.454	-1.413	0.033	-0.370	-0.375	-0.825
Major	-0.410	-0.253	-1.568	0.379	-0.583	0.858	-0.643
<i>R</i> -square	0.754	0.600	0.581	0.616	0.595	0.589	0.633

Dependent variable	Availability (b)	Independence	Initiative	Adaptability	Cooperation	Communication
Constant	5.900	10.201	14.793*	29.358***	18.474***	22.518**
Character/Value score	0.883***	0.841***	0.826***	0.772***	0.833***	0.867***
CGPA	1.608	0.273	-1.464	-4.093**	-0.813	-2.629
Gender	-0.866	-0.039	-0.723	-1.329	-0.887	-3.669***
Major	0.221	-0.89	1.381	-0.227	-0.304	-2.858**
<i>R</i> -square	0.615	0.528	0.623	0.533	0.637	0.523

Note: \*\*\*significant at the 1% level; \*\*significant at the 5% level; and \*significant at the 10% level.

Hence, based on the findings from the two surveys above, there was no conflict between market demands and values. In fact, positive values are as much needed as intellectual and physical skills, and abilities in performing well at the workplace.

## 5. Conclusion

This paper presents a model of an integrated curriculum and an applied example of the model in the case of the IIUM. As a direct outcome of the 1977 First World Conference on Muslim Education, the establishment of the university in 1983 has the ultimate aim to produce well-rounded professionals imbued with Islamic values and ethics who would develop the Muslim *ummah* and achieve progress that is in harmony with Islamic ideals. The university seeks to achieve the stated objective by adopting a unified philosophy of education approach of integration and Islamization of knowledge.

Several surveys have been conducted to evaluate the marketability and career prospects of IIUM graduates, particularly KENMS graduates, as products of an integrated curriculum. The results show that the integrated curriculum has managed to produce graduates and manpower with the right values and qualities without compromising their job skills and marketability. This makes a case for a review of the content of higher education throughout the Muslim world to ensure that its objective of enhancing the development of the intellectual, spiritual and skills capacity of man is achieved. For Muslims in particular, the curriculum needs to be in line with the Islamic worldview.

The model of an integrated curriculum structure discussed in this paper can be used as a general structure or guideline, with due consideration given to the challenges that come with it. In addition, the curriculum must also be tailored to the needs of the respective nations with regards to their development strategy.

However, as pointed out in the paper, developing an integrated curriculum is not without its problems. Working out the correct balance between religious and modern sciences, the contents of these courses and the process of Islamization (consisting of courses where religious and modern sciences are integrated) are, by no means, easy. These tasks would require the involvement of scholars who are capable of redesigning curricula, and who possess vast knowledge of both sciences. The fact that academic disciplines have become highly specialized also creates additional challenges to developing integrated curricula. There would be a need for serious review exercises to be carried out if such reforms are to be effective and to make an impact on society. While difficult, it is not impossible as can be seen from the case of the IIUM. What is also very much needed in the effectiveness and successful implementation of any higher education curriculum is the political will of the government. Sufficient allocation and support must be given, and the government has also to ensure that all stakeholders understand and appreciate the importance of the tasks undertaken to realize the desired objective.

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## APPENDIX I

**Table 1: Program Structure: Bachelor of Economics (KENMS)**

Requirements	Courses	Credit Hours	Total Credit Hours
University Requirements	University Required Courses:		
	General Studies Courses	12	
	Languages	5	
	Co-curricular Courses	3	20
	<i>Kulliyah</i> Required Courses		36
	Department Required Courses		36
	Elective Packages		36
<b>Total</b>			<b>128*</b>
<b>Note:</b>	*In the case of international students, the total graduation requirement is 126 credit hours since they are not required to take LM 2015 (see Table 2).		
<b>Source:</b>	<i>Kulliyah of Economics &amp; Management Sciences, IIUM, Bachelor of Economics Curriculum Structure (Effective Semester 3, 2006/2007)</i>		

**Table 2: University Required Courses**

Course Code	Course Title	Credit Hours	Type of Course
<i>a. General Studies Courses</i>		12	
<i>Compulsory Courses</i>			
UNGS 2030	The Islamic Worldview	3	OI
UNGS 2040	Islam, Knowledge & Civilization	3	OI
UNGS 2050	Ethics & Fiqh for Everyday Life	3	OI
and			
<i>Elective Courses (choose any one of the following)</i>			
RKUD 3220	Studies of Religion I	3	OI
RKUD 3030/A	Methods of Da'awah	3	OI
MGT 3020	Business Ethics	3	OI
<b>b. Languages</b>		5	
LE 4000	Language for Academic Purposes	3	-
LM 1010	<i>Bahasa Malaysia</i> for Foreign Students I	0	-
LM 1011	<i>Bahasa Malaysia</i> for Foreign Students II	0	-
LM 2015	<i>Komunikasi Perniagaan</i> for Malaysian Students	2	-
TQS/TQB 1000E/M	<i>Tilawah Al-Qur'an I (for Muslim Students)</i>	0	-
TQS/TQB 2000E/M	<i>Tilawah Al-Qur'an II (for Muslim Students)</i>	0	-
LQ 0181	Elementary Quranic Language I for Economics	0	-
LQ 0182	Elementary Quranic Language II for Economics	0	-
<i>c. Co-curricular Courses</i>			
<i>Compulsory Courses</i>		3	
CCHB(S) 1011	Halaqah Modules I	0.5	-
CCHB(S) 1012	Halaqah Modules II	0.5	-
<i>And 4 Elective Courses (0.5 credit hours each) from the list.*</i>		2	-
<b>Source:</b>	<i>Kulliyah of Economics &amp; Management Sciences, IIUM, Bachelor of Economics Curriculum Structure (Effective Semester 3, 2006/2007)</i>		
<b>Note:</b>	*Can be provided upon request; OI represents 'Other Islamic courses.		

**Table 3: Kulliyah Required Courses**

Course Code	Course Title	Credit Hours	Type of Course
ECON 1140	Statistical Methods	3	Conv.
ECON 1150	Business Mathematics	3	Conv.
ECON 1510	Principles of Microeconomics	3	SI/Comp.
ECON 1610	Principles of Macroeconomics	3	SI/Comp.
ECON 1710	Foundation of Islamic Economics	3	IE
MGT 2010	Principles and Practice of Management	3	SI/Comp.
INFO 2010	Information Technology	3	Conv.
ACC 2055	Financial Accounting I	3	Conv.
ACC 2056	Financial Accounting II	3	Conv.
ECON 3510	Transactions in Islamic Economics I	3	F
ECON 3511	Transactions in Islamic Economics II	3	F
LE 4600	Language for Occupational Purposes	3	-

**Source:** *Kulliyah of Economics & Management Sciences, IIUM, Bachelor of Economics Curriculum Structure (Effective Semester 3, 2006/2007)*

**Notes:** Conv. represents 'Conventional courses'.  
SI/Comp. represents 'Courses with some Islamic inputs/Comparative courses'.  
IE represents 'Islamic economics courses'.  
F represents 'Fiqh courses'.

**Table 4: Department Required Courses**

Course Code	Course Title	Credit Hours	Type of Course
ECON 2110	Intermediate Microeconomics I	3	SI/Comp.
ECON 2111	Intermediate Microeconomics II	3	SI/Comp.
ECON 2310	Intermediate Macroeconomics I	3	SI/Comp.
ECON 2311	Intermediate Macroeconomics II	3	Conv.
ECON 3010	Malaysian Economy	3	SI/Comp.
ECON 3110	Econometrics I	3	Conv.
ECON 3410	Money & Banking	3	SI/Comp.
ECON 3430	Islamic Banking & Finance	3	IE
ECON 3450	Public Finance	3	SI/Comp.
ECON 3550	Usul Fiqh I	3	UF
ECON 3551	Usul Fiqh II	3	UF
ECON 4010	History of Islamic Economic Thought	3	IE

**Source:** *Kulliyah of Economics & Management Sciences, IIUM, Bachelor of Economics Curriculum Structure (Effective Semester 3, 2006/2007)*

**Notes:** Conv. represents 'Conventional courses'.  
SI/Comp. represents 'Courses with some Islamic inputs/Comparative courses'.  
IE represents 'Islamic economics courses'.  
UF represents 'Usul al-Fiqh courses'.

**Table 5: Department Elective Packages (At least 4 courses from the package)**

Course Code	Course Title	Credit Hours	Type of course
<i>a. Finance Package</i>			
FIN 3010	Financial Management I	3	Conv.
FIN 3011	Financial Management II	3	Conv.
FIN 4020	Investment Analysis	3	SI/Comp.
FIN 4040	Corporate Finance	3	Conv.
FIN 4710	International Finance	3	Conv.
ECON 4130	Forecasting for Economics & Business	3	Conv.
<i>b. International Package</i>			
ECON 3710	International Economics	3	SI/Comp.
ECON 4740	International Trade & Development	3	Conv.
ECON 4730	International Monetary Economics	3	SI/Comp.
ECON 3730	Islamic Countries in the Global Economy	3	SI/Comp.
FIN 4710	International Finance	3	Conv.
ECON 3720	Globalization & Regional Economic Powers	3	SI/Comp.
<i>c. Development Package</i>			
ECON 3230	Economic Development	3	SI/Comp.
ECON 4280	Environmental Economics	3	SI/Comp.
ECON 4740	International Trade & Development	3	Conv.
ECON 4240	National Economic Accounting	3	Conv.
ECON 4220	Industrial Economics	3	SI/Comp.
ECON 4230	Human Resource Development	3	Conv.
<i>d. Islamic Economics Package</i>			
ECON 3512	Transactions in Islamic Economics III	3	F
ECON 4020	Contemporary Economic Thought & Policy	3	Conv.
ECON 4510	Issues in Islamic Economics	3	IE
ECON 4530	Objectives of <i>Shari'ah</i>	3	UF
ECON 4540	Economics in the <i>Qur'an &amp; Sunnah</i>	3	IE
ECON 4550	Economics of <i>Zakat</i>	3	IE
Other elective courses			
ECON 3150	Mathematical Economics	3	Conv.
ECON 3620	Project Evaluation & Feasibility Studies	3	SI/Comp.
ECON 4110	Econometrics II	3	Conv.
ECON 4710	Issues in International Economics	3	Conv.
ECON 4780	Economics of Asean	3	Conv.
ECON 4810	Research Methodology	3	SI/Comp.
Other elective courses from the Department of Accounting, Department of Business Administration and <i>Kulliyah</i> of Information Systems			3 of the courses are IE courses

**Source:** *Kulliyah of Economics & Management Sciences, IIUM, Bachelor of Economics Curriculum Structure (Effective Semester 3, 2006/2007)*

**Notes:** Conv. represents 'Conventional courses'.  
 SI/Comp. represents 'Courses with some Islamic inputs/Comparative courses'.  
 IE represents 'Islamic economics courses'.  
 F represents '*Fiqh* courses'.  
 UF represents '*Usul al-Fiqh* courses'.