

Epistemological Synthesis of Al-Attas and Al-Faruqi: Islamization of Knowledge, Adab, and Contemporary Decolonization of Knowledge

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Abstract:

This study aims to comparatively analyze the concept of Islamization of science proposed by Syed Muhammad Naquib Al-Attas and Ismail Raji Al-Faruqi to respond to the epistemological crisis in contemporary Islamic higher education. Although both thinkers have the same vision, previous studies have not adequately explored the potential for epistemological synthesis between the two approaches. The research uses qualitative methodology through literature study and hermeneutic-philosophical analysis. The findings show that Al-Attas emphasizes the metaphysical dimension and the concept of adab, while Al-Faruqi focuses on curriculum reconstruction and institutional reform. The synthesis of the two approaches offers an epistemological framework that integrates philosophical depth with practical methodology. The implications include integrated curriculum development, interdisciplinary faculty training, and strengthening scientific ethics based on tawhid. This research contributes to the development of an authentic, transformative and globally relevant model of Islamic education to address contemporary epistemological challenges.

Keywords: Islamization of knowledge, Islamic epistemology, adab, Islamic higher education, decolonization of knowledge

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INTRODUCTION

This study aims to examine the Islamization of knowledge discourse as a critical intellectual response to contemporary epistemological challenges in Islamic scholarship. The Islamization of knowledge has emerged as a significant movement within modern Islamic thought, questioning the dominance of secular Western paradigms in academia (Ritonga & Saputra, 2025). Gaining momentum since the mid-twentieth century, this intellectual endeavor proposes an alternative epistemological framework rooted in Islamic worldview and metaphysics. The movement is fundamentally grounded in the principle of *tawhid* (Divine Unity), which serves as the foundational premise for integrating all forms of knowledge within a comprehensive Islamic framework (Amir & Rahman, 2025). Beyond its theoretical implications, this discourse contributes significantly to contemporary discussions on decolonizing knowledge and advancing epistemic justice in global academia, representing a sophisticated attempt to reclaim intellectual autonomy while offering viable alternatives to prevailing knowledge paradigms

Among the most influential architects of this discourse are Syed Muhammad Naquib Al-Attas and Ismail Raji Al-Faruqi, whose distinct yet complementary approaches have shaped the theoretical foundation of Islamic epistemology for more than four decades. Al-Attas, through his seminal works *Islam and Secularism* (1978) and *The Concept of Education in Islam* (1980), articulates a metaphysical critique of Western secularism and proposes the concept of *ta'dib* (comprehensive education) as the basis for an authentic Islamic education (Yunita et al., 2025). Al-Faruqi, by contrast, developed a more systematic and institutionally oriented approach through his influential work *Islamization of Knowledge: General Principles and Work Plan* (1982), which outlines a comprehensive twelve-step methodology for integrating Islamic principles with contemporary academic disciplines (Furlow, 2005). His systematic approach emphasizes the integration of Islamic teachings with modern disciplines through critical engagement and re-evaluation from an Islamic perspective.

The contemporary relevance of this discourse has strengthened with the emergence of the global movement of knowledge decolonization, which critically challenges the epistemic hegemony of Western-centered knowledge systems and calls for the recognition of alternative ways of producing knowledge. The decolonization discourse not only challenges the dominance of Western knowledge structures, but also opens space for the development of epistemological frameworks rooted in local traditions and values. In this context, the project of Islamization of science has a direct intersection with the spirit of decolonization, because both seek to deconstruct the supremacy of secular-Western knowledge and reconstruct a knowledge system derived from Islamic values. Islamization of science emphasizes the importance of building a holistic, integrative, and revelation-based paradigm of science as an alternative to the positivistic approach that separates facts and values. This convergence between decolonizing intellectual currents and the Islamization of science project presents an unprecedented opportunity for Muslim scholars to contribute meaningfully to global academic discourse without losing their epistemic authenticity (Oudihat & Bahari, 2024). Moreover, rapid advances in the fields of artificial intelligence, biotechnology and digital humanities have raised new epistemological challenges that demand sophisticated responses from the Islamic intellectual tradition.

The theoretical significance of comparing the approaches of Al-Attas and Al-Faruqi lies in their fundamentally different methodological orientations toward a shared goal. Although both scholars share a common objective of establishing an authentic Islamic epistemology, their divergent approaches reflect differing philosophical emphases and practical strategies. Al-Attas's focus on *dewesternization* and metaphysical purification represents a more radical critique of Western epistemology, advocating for the complete reconstruction of conceptual foundations before any form of integration can occur (Abaza, 1999). His approach aligns with contemporary decolonial thought, which seeks to liberate the "colonized mind" from Eurocentric epistemic constraints. In contrast, Al-Faruqi, while equally committed to Islamic authenticity, adopts a more pragmatic strategy that seeks to work within existing academic structures while gradually transforming them from within.

The urgency of this intellectual project is underscored by the ongoing educational crisis in the Muslim world, where newly established systems of education—founded upon epistemologies and worldviews foreign to Islam—have created enduring challenges. The bifurcation of knowledge into "religious" and "secular" categories has produced generations of Muslim intellectuals struggling to reconcile their faith commitments with professional expertise, resulting in what many scholars describe as an intellectual identity crisis (Thobani, 2007). This crisis is particularly acute in the context of contemporary challenges such as climate change, social justice, and technological ethics, where Islamic perspectives can offer valuable insights yet remain marginalized in mainstream academic discourse.

The methodological approaches adopted by Al-Attas and Al-Faruqi also reflect differing understandings of the relationship between Islamic tradition and modernity. Al-Attas's concept

of *adab* (refined conduct) emphasizes the cultivation of proper attitudes and dispositions as a prerequisite for acquiring authentic knowledge, suggesting that epistemological transformation must begin with the spiritual and moral reform of the knowing subject (Dei, 2016). His approach prioritizes the qualitative transformation of consciousness over the quantitative expansion of curriculum content. Al-Faruqi's work plan, on the other hand, focuses on the systematic development of curriculum and institutional reform, proposing specific strategies for revising textbooks, training faculty, and establishing new academic programs that integrate Islamic perspectives with contemporary disciplines.

The contemporary global context presents unprecedented opportunities to test and refine these theoretical frameworks. The decolonial turn in religious studies seeks simultaneously to provincialize the West and foreground the overlooked intellectual contributions of the formerly colonized, creating space for Islamic epistemological contributions to gain recognition in international academic discourse. The growing recognition of indigenous knowledge systems, the rising critique of scientism, and the emergence of post-secular scholarship have fostered a more receptive environment for alternative epistemologies (Tyson, 2009). Additionally, the establishment of Islamic universities and research centers worldwide has provided institutional platforms to implement and examine these theoretical propositions.

However, significant gaps remain in the existing literature on the Islamization of knowledge. Most studies have focused on either Al-Attas or Al-Faruqi individually, with limited comparative analyses exploring the complementary nature of their contributions. Furthermore, there has been insufficient attention to the practical challenges and contemporary applications of their theoretical frameworks. Despite considerable debate on contemporary issues in Islamization among Muslim intellectuals, comprehensive comparative analyses remain scarce. The lack of systematic evaluation of their respective contributions to addressing contemporary challenges such as AI ethics, environmental sustainability, and social justice represents a significant scholarly lacuna.

This study addresses these gaps by conducting a comprehensive comparative analysis of the contributions of Al-Attas and Al-Faruqi to the discourse on the Islamization of knowledge. It is guided by two principal research questions: First, what are the fundamental differences and similarities between Al-Attas's and Al-Faruqi's conceptions of the Islamization of knowledge, particularly regarding their epistemological foundations and methodological approaches? Second, how do their respective frameworks address contemporary challenges in knowledge production, education, and intellectual discourse in the context of globalization and the decolonization movement? These questions aim to generate insights that can inform contemporary efforts to develop a more inclusive and culturally authentic approach to the production and dissemination of knowledge.

The primary objective of this study is to contribute to a more nuanced understanding of Islamic epistemology that can effectively engage with contemporary intellectual challenges while preserving its distinctive character and values. By examining the convergences and divergences between these two seminal thinkers, the study aims to identify potential points of synthesis that can inform future developments in Islamic education, research methodology, and intellectual discourse. The findings of this study are expected to be relevant not only to Islamic institutions but also to broader discussions on epistemic diversity, knowledge decolonization, and the role of religious worldviews in contemporary academic discourse. Through this comparative analysis, the study seeks to demonstrate the continued relevance and vitality of the Islamic intellectual tradition in addressing the epistemological challenges of the twenty-first century.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study employs a qualitative approach using discourse analysis and library research (Zed, 2008). A qualitative methodology was chosen to allow for an in-depth understanding of the

meaning, structure, and epistemological logic embedded in the concept of the Islamization of knowledge as formulated by Syed Muhammad Naquib Al-Attas and Ismail Raji Al-Faruqi (Baker, 2006). The primary data analyzed include the seminal works of both scholars, such as *Islam and Secularism* (1993), *Prolegomena to the Metaphysics of Islam* (1995), and *Islamization of Knowledge: General Principles and Work Plan* (1982) (Al-Attas, 1993; Al-Faruqi, 1987; Attas, 1995). Secondary data were drawn from peer-reviewed journal articles, dissertations, conference proceedings, and other academic literature relevant to the theme of Islamization of knowledge and the integration of Islamic epistemology.

The analytical methods used comprise philosophical hermeneutics to interpret the texts of both thinkers within their historical and philosophical contexts, and comparative analysis to identify areas of convergence and divergence between the two approaches (Sloan & Bowe, 2014). Accordingly, the study is descriptive-analytical and comparative-interpretive in nature.

The research design is both exploratory and comparative (Ottmann & Crosbie, 2013), and it involves the following stages: (1) identification and selection of primary and secondary literature; (2) categorization of key concepts in the thought of Al-Attas and Al-Faruqi, such as *tanbih*, *adab*, dewesternization, knowledge synthesis, and value integration; (3) in-depth analysis of their respective epistemological frameworks; and (4) evaluation of the relevance of these concepts in addressing contemporary challenges in science and education. This design aims not only to understand their conceptual positions but also to lay the groundwork for the construction of a contemporary Islamic epistemological synthesis.

This study does not involve human subjects and therefore does not require formal ethical approval from a research ethics board. However, in all citations and interpretations of academic works, the author adheres strictly to principles of academic integrity, scholarly rigor, and respect for original sources.

The limitations of this research lie in its restricted scope, focusing solely on the epistemological contributions of Al-Attas and Al-Faruqi. Consequently, it does not incorporate the perspectives of other significant thinkers in the field of Islamization of knowledge, such as Fazlur Rahman, Ziauddin Sardar, or Bassam Tibi, who have also made critical contributions to the discourse. Furthermore, the study remains normative-conceptual in nature and does not empirically examine the implementation of these ideas within contemporary educational institutions. Nevertheless, the findings are intended to provide a theoretical foundation for future empirical and applied research.

DISCUSSION

Epistemological Foundations in the Construction of Islamization of Knowledge

An in-depth analysis of the thought of Syed Muhammad Naquib Al-Attas and Ismail Raji Al-Faruqi reveals that both scholars share a fundamental vision regarding the urgency of reconstructing a knowledge system rooted in Islamic values as a response to the modern epistemological crisis (Waghid, 2001). Al-Attas, through his concepts of *dewesternization* and *Islamization of knowledge*, emphasizes the need to purify knowledge from secular Western elements that conflict with the Islamic worldview, particularly by reintegrating metaphysical and spiritual dimensions into the construction of Islamic epistemology (Al-Attas, 1989). Historically, his ideas emerged as a response to the intellectual colonization of the Muslim world, where educational systems and structures of knowledge had largely adopted Western paradigms without adequate consideration of their compatibility with Islamic values. Al-Attas's specific contribution lies in his philosophical and normative approach, centered on the concept of *ta'dib* (disciplining of the self through *adab*) as the core of education, and in defining knowledge as the true recognition of something that leads to acknowledgment of and submission to God. In contrast, Al-Faruqi developed a more systematic and comprehensive framework of Islamization of knowledge, proposing a twelve-step methodology aimed at integrating the Islamic intellectual legacy with

modern academic disciplines in a methodological and institutional manner (al Fārūqī, 1988). His approach focused on curriculum reform and the restructuring of Islamic higher education to create academic institutions capable of competing globally while remaining grounded in Islamic principles. The fundamental difference between the two lies in Al-Attas's emphasis on qualitative and transformative dimensions through the cultivation of the ethical and intellectual self, whereas Al-Faruqi prioritizes technical-methodological and institutional strategies. Despite these differing approaches, both thinkers share a common vision: to reconstruct an authentic, integral system of knowledge based on Islamic principles as a viable alternative to the prevailing modern epistemological crisis.

The convergence and divergence between these two intellectual perspectives reflect the epistemological complexities faced by the Muslim world in responding to the hegemony of secular Western paradigms, while also highlighting the richness of the Islamic intellectual tradition in developing authentic and contextually relevant epistemological alternatives (Montazeritabar, 2019). These thinkers represent two complementary poles of thought: Al-Attas adopts a philosophical-metaphysical approach that stresses the centrality of *adab* and spiritual-intellectual integration, whereas Al-Faruqi offers a systematic-pragmatic orientation that proposes concrete methodologies for institutional reform. A synthesis of these approaches yields a comprehensive epistemological framework, in which Al-Attas's spiritual-metaphysical dimension provides a robust philosophical foundation for the methodological implementation advocated by Al-Faruqi, while Al-Faruqi's systematic structure offers practical operationalization for Al-Attas's transformative vision (Hashim & Rossidy, 2000). Thus, a constructive dialogue between these paradigms opens the possibility for developing a contemporary Islamic epistemological model capable of engaging with the challenges of modernity without compromising the identity and authenticity of the Islamic intellectual tradition.

The Metaphysics of Tawhid and the Concept of Adab in Al-Attas's Epistemology

Al-Attas perceives the crisis of knowledge affecting the Muslim world as a manifestation of a systematic process of secularization and the dominance of a materialistic-positivist Western worldview. In his magnum opus *Islam and Secularism* (1993), he introduces the foundational concept of the "confusion of knowledge," which, according to him, arises from the loss of *adab* within the Islamic intellectual tradition and the infiltration of secular values that obscure the true purpose of knowledge (Al-Attas, 1993). In Al-Attas's thought, *adab* does not merely refer to ethics or polite behavior; rather, it functions as a fundamental epistemological principle, encompassing the recognition and acknowledgment of the proper place of every entity within a hierarchical order of reality. As a comprehensive solution, he proposes the process of *dewesternization*—the purification of knowledge from secular elements that are incompatible with the principle of *tawhid* and the holistic Islamic worldview.

The central concept in Al-Attas's epistemology is the organic integration between *adab* and *tawhid* as the ontological and epistemological foundation of knowledge (Widodo et al., 2024). He formulates a *hierarchy of knowledge* in which revealed knowledge (*'ilm al-wahy*) occupies the highest and most authoritative position, categorically rejecting the artificial dichotomy between religious and worldly sciences that has become entrenched in modern Muslim educational systems. In Al-Attas's view, Islamization is not simply the insertion of Islamic perspectives into existing bodies of knowledge or the addition of religious content. Rather, it involves a total reconstruction of the epistemological structure of modern knowledge so that it returns to its true objective: to guide humanity toward *haqq* (truth) and deep recognition of God as the source of all reality (Damyati, 2010). This approach demands a fundamental transformation in how one perceives the nature of knowledge, reality, and the relationship between the knower and the known.

Dewesternization as an Epistemological Prerequisite

The concept of dewesternization proposed by Al-Attas constitutes a fundamental epistemological critique of the philosophical assumptions underlying modern Western civilization—particularly secularism, anthropocentric humanism, and excessive rationalism (Saif, 2024). In Al-Attas's framework, dewesternization involves three critical stages: first, the isolation and identification of key secular elements and ideas that have penetrated the Islamic intellectual tradition; second, the systematic elimination of these elements; and third, the infusion of Islamic principles into all relevant branches of contemporary knowledge (Huringiin & Azfathir, 2018). This approach reflects Al-Attas's deep conviction that authentic epistemological transformation must begin at the ontological and metaphysical level, rather than merely at the methodological or practical level.

One major implication of this dewesternization approach is the rejection of what Al-Attas terms "neutral knowledge"—the notion that knowledge can be value-free or objective in an absolute sense (Sugiharto, 2021). He argues that all knowledge inherently carries certain metaphysical assumptions and value orientations, and thus, claims of neutrality and objectivity in modern science are misleading illusions. In this context, dewesternization is not merely a negative process aimed at removing Western influence; rather, it is a constructive effort to rebuild the structure of knowledge in alignment with a comprehensive and integrated Islamic worldview. This approach demands that Muslim intellectuals cultivate a critical consciousness toward the epistemologies they adopt and actively develop alternative frameworks rooted in the classical Islamic intellectual heritage, while remaining responsive to contemporary challenges (Husni & Hayden, 2024).

Al-Faruqi's Strategic-Pragmatic Framework in Institutional Reform

In contrast to Al-Attas's metaphysical-philosophical approach, which emphasizes the transformation of consciousness and worldview, Al-Faruqi offers a more strategic, systematic, and applicative framework for addressing the same epistemological challenges. Al-Faruqi identifies the fundamental problem in contemporary Islamic education as the *duality of knowledge*—that is, the artificial and counterproductive separation between religious sciences and secular sciences, which has led to intellectual and spiritual fragmentation among the educated Muslim class (Al-Faruqi, 1987). To address this destructive dualism, Al-Faruqi proposes five systematic stages in the comprehensive Islamization of knowledge process: (1) deep mastery of contemporary disciplines, including their methodologies and paradigms; (2) thorough survey and understanding of the Islamic intellectual legacy relevant to each discipline; (3) identification of paradigmatic conflicts between the Islamic worldview and the worldview underlying contemporary disciplines; (4) construction of a creative and innovative Islamic epistemological synthesis; and (5) rewriting of academic materials and textbooks from an integrated Islamic perspective.

The central focus of Al-Faruqi's methodology is to establish Islam as a foundational *ethical framework* across all branches of knowledge—not merely as an additional subject or content area (Yusuf, 2014). By emphasizing universal Islamic values such as justice (*'adl*), balance (*mizān*), *tawhīd*, and *khalīfah*, he seeks to build a moral and epistemic foundation that can be institutionally and curricularly applied within Muslim higher education worldwide. Al-Faruqi firmly believed that Islam possesses a unique capacity to offer moral and spiritual guidance to the development of modern science and technology, thereby preventing the potential misuse of knowledge for destructive or dehumanizing purposes. Through the establishment and development of the International Institute of Islamic Thought (IIIT) in Washington, D.C., Al-Faruqi played a pivotal role in embedding the concept of Islamization of knowledge into global Muslim higher education. He also advanced a research agenda oriented toward the synthesis of Islamic values with contemporary knowledge domains (Maulana, 2017).

The Islamization Work Plan: Al-Faruqi's Systematic Methodology

Al-Faruqi's most significant contribution to the discourse on the Islamization of knowledge lies in his formulation of a structured and operationally feasible *Work Plan* for implementing the vision of Islamization within institutional and curricular contexts. His Work Plan comprises twelve strategic steps designed to gradually yet comprehensively transform the structure of Muslim higher education (Zakki & Mahfud, 2023). These steps include: (1) mastery of modern disciplines; (2) disciplinary survey; (3) survey of the Islamic intellectual legacy; (4) survey of the intellectual legacy of humanity; (5) critical analysis of modern disciplines; (6) critical analysis of the Islamic heritage; (7) survey of problems faced by the Muslim community; (8) survey of problems faced by humanity at large; (9) creative analysis and epistemological synthesis; (10) writing of university-level textbooks; (11) dissemination of Islamized knowledge; and (12) dissemination of Islam and its values.

This methodology reflects a holistic yet practical approach, acknowledging the complexity of contemporary challenges while maintaining a strong commitment to authentic Islamic values. The strength of Al-Faruqi's Work Plan lies in its ability to bridge the gap between theoretical vision and practical implementation in the realm of institutional reform (Amir & Rahman, 2022). Al-Faruqi recognized that epistemological transformation could not be achieved through ideological proclamations alone; rather, it requires systematic efforts in research, curriculum development, faculty training, and institutional restructuring. Furthermore, the Work Plan emphasizes the necessity of *scholarly rigor* in the Islamization process to ensure that outcomes maintain academic excellence while remaining faithful to Islamic principles. Al-Faruqi's approach has inspired the establishment of various Islamic universities and research centers around the world, providing a practical framework for Muslim academics to develop Islamic perspectives within their respective disciplines.

Systematic Comparison: Divergences in Approach and Orientation

A systematic comparison of the thoughts of Al-Attas and Al-Faruqi reveals fundamental differences in orientation, methodology, and strategic priorities, despite their shared commitment to the authenticity of Islamic epistemology (Fouz Mohamed Zacky & Moniruzzaman, 2024). Al-Attas places greater emphasis on epistemological and metaphysical aspects, focusing on the transformation of consciousness and the purification of knowledge from secular contamination. In contrast, Al-Faruqi is more concerned with institutional reform and curriculum development, emphasizing the practical integration of Islamic values with contemporary knowledge. Methodologically, Al-Attas adopts a philosophical-conceptual approach that prioritizes the clarification of fundamental concepts and worldview structures. Al-Faruqi, on the other hand, formulates a practical-operational approach with an emphasis on implementable steps and measurable outcomes. Regarding their ultimate goals, Al-Attas views knowledge as a means to cultivate the *insan kamil* (perfected human being)—one who possesses a comprehensive understanding of reality and a proper relationship with God. Al-Faruqi, meanwhile, regards knowledge as a tool for ethical progress and civilizational advancement that contributes to the universal welfare of humanity.

These differing orientations are also reflected in their attitudes toward contemporary knowledge and the Western intellectual tradition. Al-Attas adopts a more critical and selective stance, advocating for comprehensive dewesternization prior to any integration. Al-Faruqi, in contrast, is more optimistic about the potential for creative synthesis and constructive engagement with Western intellectual traditions. Al-Attas stresses the necessity of spiritual and moral transformation as a prerequisite for acquiring authentic knowledge, reflecting his belief that epistemological problems are fundamentally spiritual in nature. Although Al-Faruqi does not disregard the spiritual dimension, he places greater emphasis on methodological and institutional

aspects of transformation, maintaining that proper structures and processes can facilitate spiritual and intellectual development. These differences are not contradictory but rather complementary—each representing distinct phases or aspects of the comprehensive transformation required in Islamic higher education.

Epistemological Synthesis: The Potential for Complementarity

The approaches of Al-Attas and Al-Faruqi are inherently complementary and can be combined to construct a more comprehensive and effective framework for Islamic epistemology. Al-Attas provides a philosophical and ontological foundation that deepens the understanding of the nature of knowledge, reality, and human purpose, while Al-Faruqi offers a strategic framework and practical methodology for the institutional implementation of those philosophical insights (Jain, 2023). The combination of these two approaches can form a solid basis for an Islamic epistemology—one that is philosophically robust and practically applicable in educational and academic research settings. The philosophical depth of Al-Attas can provide the necessary grounding for the practical initiatives proposed by Al-Faruqi, while Al-Faruqi's pragmatic orientation ensures that Al-Attas's philosophical vision can be translated into tangible educational outcomes and meaningful social impact.

The potential synthesis of these two approaches could yield an Islamic educational model that addresses both the need for spiritual-intellectual formation (emphasized by Al-Attas) and the acquisition of practical skills to meet contemporary challenges (emphasized by Al-Faruqi). In this context, *adab*, as conceptualized by Al-Attas, may serve as the foundational philosophy guiding the implementation of Al-Faruqi's Work Plan, ensuring that the technical processes of curriculum development and institutional reform remain grounded in authentic Islamic values and spiritual objectives. Likewise, Al-Faruqi's systematic methodology can provide concrete mechanisms for realizing Al-Attas's vision of integrated knowledge, making abstract philosophical concepts more accessible and applicable within contemporary educational settings.

Relevance to Contemporary Knowledge Decolonization Movements

Within the context of contemporary academic discourse, the concept of the Islamization of knowledge as developed by Al-Attas and Al-Faruqi can be understood as a pioneering contribution to the decolonial epistemological movement, which has gained increasing traction within the global academic community. The decolonization of knowledge movement—aimed at challenging the hegemony of Western-centric knowledge systems and promoting the recognition of alternative ways of knowing—resonates significantly with the goals and methodologies proposed by these two Muslim scholars decades ago (Santos, 2016). Al-Attas's notion of *dewesternization* can be interpreted as an early articulation of decolonial critique against the universalist claims of Western epistemology, while Al-Faruqi's Work Plan can be viewed as a practical methodology for constructing a more inclusive and culturally authentic alternative knowledge system. In this sense, the Islamic intellectual tradition has made a meaningful contribution to the broader discourse on epistemic diversity and cultural authenticity in knowledge production, anticipating many of the contemporary concerns regarding academic colonialism and cultural imperialism.

The contemporary relevance of both approaches is also reflected in the growing recognition that technological advancement, when unanchored by an ethical framework, can result in dehumanizing consequences (Hidayat & Arifin, 2020). The Islamic emphasis on the integration of knowledge with spiritual and moral values, as articulated by Al-Attas and Al-Faruqi, offers a valuable perspective for current debates on artificial intelligence ethics, biotechnology governance, environmental sustainability, and social justice. In an era where scientific progress increasingly raises fundamental questions about human nature, existential purpose, and the ethical limits of technological intervention, the Islamic epistemological framework provides a distinctive

insight rooted in a comprehensive understanding of human dignity, cosmic purpose, and divine guidance. This contribution is highly relevant in addressing global challenges that require not only technical solutions but also moral wisdom and spiritual vision.

Implementation in Indonesia: Models of Knowledge Integration

In Indonesia, the practical implementation of Al-Attas's and Al-Faruqi's ideas is reflected in various models of knowledge integration developed within Islamic Higher Education Institutions (*Perguruan Tinggi Keagamaan Islam*, PTKI), demonstrating both the adaptability and contextual relevance of their theoretical frameworks within specific cultural and institutional settings. The "Integration-Interconnection" paradigm pioneered by UIN Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta exemplifies a creative synthesis between Al-Attas's philosophical vision of the unity of knowledge and Al-Faruqi's practical methodology for curricular integration (Junaedi & Wijaya, 2020). This model seeks to eliminate artificial boundaries between religious and secular knowledge by developing interconnected curricula that highlight the relevance of Islamic principles for understanding contemporary phenomena. Similarly, the "Integration of Science, Religion, and Culture" approach developed by UIN Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta incorporates cultural dimensions into the integration process, recognizing that authentic knowledge must be contextually relevant and culturally rooted (Rifai et al., 2014).

The success of various integration models in Indonesian Islamic universities illustrates the practical viability of the theoretical frameworks proposed by Al-Attas and Al-Faruqi, while also highlighting the need for contextual adaptation to specific cultural and institutional conditions. These implementation experiences reveal both opportunities and challenges in translating theoretical visions into tangible educational outcomes. Opportunities include the growing recognition of Islamic educational institutions as centers of academic excellence that can meaningfully contribute to national development goals, increased student interest in integrated curricula that address both spiritual and intellectual needs, and the advancement of faculty expertise in interdisciplinary approaches that combine Islamic perspectives with contemporary knowledge. However, challenges persist. These include resistance from entrenched academic cultures, difficulties in developing appropriate assessment methods for integrated curricula, and the ongoing need for sustained faculty development to maintain quality standards in these innovative educational approaches.

Responding to Contemporary Technological and Ethical Challenges

In addressing contemporary challenges such as artificial intelligence, genetic engineering, climate change, and digital transformation, the epistemological frameworks developed by Al-Attas and Al-Faruqi offer valuable guidance grounded in Islamic principles and global relevance. Al-Attas emphasizes the concept of *adab*—spiritual etiquette and ethical comportment—as the foundation for integrating knowledge and morality in human conduct (Hidayatullah & Arif, 2022). From this perspective, technology is evaluated not solely by its efficiency or material capacity, but by its impact on the human ability to seek knowledge, perform worship, and contribute meaningfully to God and fellow human beings. As an internal moral compass, *adab* promotes responsible use of technology aligned with spiritual and ethical goals.

Meanwhile, Al-Faruqi proposes a systematic methodology for articulating an Islamic perspective on technology and ethics through his *Work Plan*, as outlined in *Islamization of Knowledge: General Principles and Work Plan* (Al-Faruqi, 1987). This methodology includes several key stages: first, mastery of the relevant technological domain; second, examination of Islamic principles drawn from the Qur'an and Sunnah; third, identification of conflicts between technological applications and Islamic values; and fourth, the construction of a creative synthesis to guide responsible innovation. This approach can be applied to the development of ethical frameworks in bioethics, environmental policy, business ethics, and technology governance—

offering guidance not only for Muslim communities but also contributing to global public policy debates. The integration of Al-Attas's philosophical depth with Al-Faruqi's practical methodology yields a contemporary ethical framework that is intellectually rigorous, authentically Islamic, and practically applicable within the complexities of the modern world.

Implications for the Development of Contemporary Islamic Epistemology

The theoretical implications of this comparative analysis affirm that the development of an authentic Islamic epistemology requires an integration of philosophical depth and practical application, spiritual insight and scientific rigor, as well as cultural authenticity and global relevance. A synthesis between Al-Attas's and Al-Faruqi's approaches can serve as the foundation for a contemporary Islamic epistemology capable of engaging constructively with modern knowledge systems while maintaining the distinctive character and values of Islam. Al-Attas calls for the integration of science with revelation and morality grounded in *tawhīd*, while Al-Faruqi provides systematic steps for reconstructing knowledge in accordance with the Islamic worldview (Hosaini & Akhyak, 2024). This synthetic approach allows for the development of research methodologies that unify rational reasoning with spiritual intuition, curricula that combine theoretical understanding with practical application, and institutional structures that support both individual spiritual growth and social contribution.

Practically, the implications of this synthesis include the need to develop educators who are well-versed in both the Islamic intellectual tradition and contemporary disciplinary expertise; the creation of institutional environments that promote interdisciplinary collaboration and pedagogical innovation; and the establishment of research programs that respond to contemporary challenges from an Islamic perspective. Both thinkers emphasize that the integration of knowledge is not merely a technical exercise but one that engages epistemological and ethical dimensions (Zikri & Binti, 2017). Successful implementation of this integrative approach also requires evaluation methods that assess both academic achievement and character formation, reward systems that recognize innovative contributions to knowledge integration, and global networks among Islamic institutions. Such an integrative model is essential to ensure that theoretical visions are translated into sustainable educational reform that benefits both Muslim communities and the broader society.

Toward a Comprehensive Framework for Islamic Higher Education

Based on the analysis of Al-Attas's and Al-Faruqi's contributions, alongside contemporary developments in Islamic higher education, a comprehensive framework can be formulated that integrates the best elements of both approaches while addressing present-day needs and challenges. This framework is grounded in the philosophical understanding that knowledge is a divine trust (*amānah*) from Allah, to be pursued with proper intention and attitude (*adab*), aimed at understanding the creation of Allah and fulfilling humanity's role as *khalifah* (vicegerent) on Earth (Attas, 1980). It also incorporates a systematic methodology to integrate Islamic principles with contemporary knowledge through rigorous scholarship, creative synthesis, and practical application. Central to this framework is the development of both intellectual competencies and moral character, recognizing that authentic knowledge necessitates the integration of cognitive, spiritual, and ethical dimensions (Al-Faruqi, 1987).

Operationally, the framework entails the development of integrated curricula that demonstrate the relevance of Islamic principles in interpreting contemporary phenomena; faculty training that equips educators with mastery of both the Islamic intellectual tradition and modern academic disciplines; the establishment of research programs capable of addressing current global challenges from an Islamic perspective; and the cultivation of institutional cultures that uphold academic excellence while nurturing spiritual development. Implementation of this framework requires attention to quality assurance, continuous improvement, and adaptability to the ever-

evolving global landscape, ensuring that Islamic higher education institutions retain both authenticity and relevance in a rapidly changing world. The ultimate success of this framework is measured not solely by academic achievements, but also by its contribution to human well-being, societal advancement, and spiritual elevation—reflecting the educational vision envisioned by both Al-Attas and Al-Faruqi (Fouz Mohamed Zacky & Moniruzzaman, 2024).

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that the approaches of Al-Attas and Al-Faruqi to the Islamization of knowledge possess distinct orientations, methodologies, and focal points—yet they are inherently complementary. Al-Attas offers a philosophical-metaphysical framework that emphasizes spiritual and conceptual transformation through the concepts of *adab* and *dewesternization*, while Al-Faruqi provides a systematic-pragmatic approach that focuses on curriculum reconstruction and institutional reform through an operational Work Plan. The synthesis of these two perspectives offers a comprehensive and contextually relevant epistemological foundation for the development of authentic Islamic higher education. Al-Attas's philosophical depth can provide the necessary spiritual and conceptual grounding for Al-Faruqi's practical strategies, while Al-Faruqi's methodology can facilitate the effective implementation of Al-Attas's ideas within educational and research systems. Together, they form a robust intellectual framework capable of guiding the transformation of Islamic higher education in response to contemporary challenges, while remaining faithful to Islamic values and epistemological authenticity.

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