## **BOOK REVIEW**

Mohd Nizam Barom, Mohd Mahyudi Mohd Yusop, Mohamed Aslam Haneef and Mustafa Omar Mohammed (Eds.), *Islamic Economics* Education in Southeast Asian Universities

Centre for Islamic Economics (CIE)-IIUM, Malaysia and International Institute of Islamic Thought (IIIT), USA, 2013.Pp. XVI+302.

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by Foyasal Khan, International Islamic University Malaysia

'Economics education' as a field within economics focuses on "the current state of, the economics curriculum, materials and pedagogical techniques used to teach economics at all educational levels" (Becker, 2001). Unfortunately, Islamic economics education (IEE) is a highly neglected field in contemporary Islamic economics. As such, this edited book is an important addition to this much needed area.

There are two forewords in the book underscoring the context, content and necessity of the book. In the first foreword, Emeritus Prof. Dr. AbdulHamid Ahmad AbuSulayman of IIIT condemns 'economics education' that graduates of top prestigious western universities received because of its inability to mitigate recurrent economic and financial crises. He urges to reform economics curriculum through the integration of revealed and human knowledge in order to produce graduates imbued with the provision of knowledge, skill and ethical values. In addition to discussion about the establishment of CIE in 2013 and its activities, Prof. Dr. Mohamed Aslam Haneef of CIE-IIUM, in his foreword, emphasises on the required programmes that contain knowledge /courses covering both modern disciplines and Islamic heritage for developing IEE.

The book, consists of 2 parts and 15 chapters. Mohd Nizam Barom and Mohd Mahyudi Mohd Yusop provide an introduction in chapter 1 while chapters 2 to 5 in Part I discuss the conceptual introduction to university curriculum reform integrating both Islamic heritage and modern knowledge/ disciplines. A good number of case studies and experiences of selected universities in Malaysia and Indonesia where Islamic economics programmes have been presented from chapters 6 to 14 in Part II. Finally, Mohamed Aslam Haneef and Mohd Nizam Barom discuss selected issues in IEE in chapter 15.

Though the first three chapters in Part I are not directly connected to IEE, they have significantly contributed towards enriching the book as the general philosophy of Islamic education, the process of Islamisation, and the integration

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of modern and revealed knowledge to the body of the curriculum have been discussed. In his chapter entitled 'Islamization of Human Knowledge (IOHK)', Dr. Mohd Kamal Hassan highlights very lucidly various pertinent issues related to IOHK i.e. the importance and role of human knowledge in Islamic worldview; responsibilities of the true believers; unified and integrated knowledge in the Qur'anic paradigm; the concept of IOHK; and the case of IIUM as alternative model of Muslim higher education. Even though Hassan's chapter talks about the what and why of IOHK, he provides no concrete idea of how to Islamise human knowledge. In chapter 3, Dr. Rusnani Hashim examines the issues related to curriculum, namely the philosophy, content, and structure for higher institutions of learning that desire to translate the Islamic philosophy of education and the mission of IOK into reality. In her conclusion, she underscores the creativity and innovation of Muslim curriculum designers in bringing key players from society, the industry and the experts, and not to be rigid in making the curriculum. However, does not show any concrete strategy or outline of designing higher education curriculum. In chapter 4, Mustafa Omar Mohammed of IIUM-Malaysia proposes a framework for Integrated Islamic *Turath* Curriculum Index (IITC-Index) that can serve as a benchmark to measure the extent to which turath (traditions/heritage) has been integrated into the curriculum. Though it is an important initiative to develop a conceptual framework on IITC-Index, he, however, does not substantiate his framework with real data that could tell readers about the limitations and challenges of applying the index. To make these three chapters more relevant to IEE, the writers may either include a section in their chapters giving possible directions towards IEE or collaborate with other scholars of Islamic economics who could translate their ideas suitable for IEE.

In chapter 5 entitled 'Teaching of Economics at IIUM: the Challenges of Integration and Islamization' Mohamed Aslam Haneef reveals lack of qualified human capital as one of the major challenges that IIUM is facing in designing curriculum and in teaching undergraduate economics. This study should be expanded to understand the state of the art of the postgraduate curriculum as students are, at this level, more mature and ready to contribute to the body of knowledge of IEE.

In chapter 6, Mohamed Aslam Haneef and Ruzita Mohd. Amin carry out a comparative analysis between two programmes, the Bachelor of Shari'ah (Shari'ah and Economics), University of Malaya (UM) and the Bachelor of Economics, International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM) to portray the overall picture of IEE in Malaysia. They conclude that adequate emphasis should be given to the content of the program, the methods and manner in which integration efforts are made, and the planning for manpower needs in the integration process in order to achieve a true integration of knowledge.

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Chapter 7 to 13 share the experiences of seven universities and institutes in Indonesia with regard to Islamic economics teaching. These are: Sekolah Tinggi Ekonomi Islam (STEI) Tazkia; State Institute of Islamic Studies (IAIN), North Sumatra; Airlanga University, Surabaya; Universitas Muhammadiyah Yogyakarta; Institut Pertanian Bogor (IPB); Universitas Brawijaya; and University of Indonesia respectively. While STEI Tazkia, IPB, Universitas Brawijaya, and University of Indonesia offer Bachelor of Islamic Economics, IAIN offers Shari'ah Study Program on Banking, Accounting and Finance, and Management. It took a decade for Airlanga University to establish the Department of Islamic Economics in 2008. Universitas Muhammadiyah Yogyakarta runs an international program for Islamic economics and finance.

Chapter 14 exposes the *mu<sup>c</sup>amalat* curriculum of Universiti Sains Islam Malaysia (USIM) which offers Bachelor and Master program on *mu<sup>c</sup>amalat* administration. Students can also have specialization in *halal* products. In the final chapter 15, Haneef and Barom highlight some selected issues in IEE and provide suggestions to move forward. They found that qualified human resources is still a problem for institutions teaching Islamic economics. Apart from the lack of qualified human resources, dearth of sufficient materials on Islamic economics for both lecturers and students is another challenge that the institutions face. In order to solve this crisis, the authors emphasise on writing review articles and thematic selections. Finally, they propose to develop an *usul* for Islamic Economics which is only possible when the collective initiatives are taken into account.

The book has been written on the Southeast Asian context. But only two countries have been covered. It would have been much enriched if it provides the experiences of teaching Islamic economics in Brunei. A separate chapter could also be written on the state of teaching Islamic economics in Muslim minority countries such as Thailand and the Philippines. Having said this, the book is essential reading for anybody concerned with the issues of integration and Islamisation efforts in economics/knowledge. Hopefully the book will be welcomed by erudite scholars and inquisitive readers.