

Article

Social Justice in Theological Education for Islamic Religious Education Teachers in Bosnia and Herzegovina: Challenges and Opportunities

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Abstract

Social justice in Islamic theological education represents a concept that is normatively central yet pedagogically underarticulated. Rooted in the Qur'an, the Sunnah, and the broader Islamic intellectual tradition, it carries legal obligation, ethical responsibility, spiritual maturity, and social sensitivity. These sources consistently affirm social justice as a foundational principle of a balanced and equitable social order, but its translation into educational practice remains unabiding. This research examines how social justice is positioned within the higher education syllabus for future Islamic religious education practitioners (teachers and imams) in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Using Mayring's qualitative content analysis, in this study, written responses collected through an open-ended qualitative expert survey were analysed. Thematic indicators were developed as an outcome and were used as criteria for the subsequent documentary analysis of the official syllabus. Then followed an analytical examination of the syllabus of a study programme leading to the qualification of Islamic religious education practitioners. The findings indicate that social justice is not explicitly articulated within intended learning outcomes as knowledge, attitude, or pedagogical competence. The analysis structured through Bloom's taxonomy demonstrates the presence of pedagogical and methodological sensitivity across all cognitive levels, from knowledge to evaluation. This reveals a discrepancy between the normative centrality of social justice and its partial pedagogical realisation. This study identifies a persistent tension between theological ideals and educational practice. The potential for rearticulating a theological-pedagogical framework in which social justice becomes an explicit, lived, and transformative category within practitioners' education was highlighted as something in place of a conclusion.

Keywords: theological education; qualitative analysis; pedagogical practice; theological-pedagogical approach



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1. Introduction

Social justice in Islam is a multifaceted construct of law, morality, spirituality, and social responsibility. By no means does this represent only material equality, but also equality in front of God, a society in which the rights of the weak are protected, and power that is not abused, so in general, just treatment of all people, men and women.

Social justice in Islam is a fundamental concept that permeates the entire Islamic worldview and legal system. Rights and responsibilities, individual freedom, and collec-

tive well-being are balanced in the function of achieving justice in society. The key aspects of social justice in Islam are:

- Founded in the Qur'an and Sunnah and, therefore, constitutive immersion in Islamic sources, whereby the Qur'an affirms the parallelism of growth in faith and humanity, and Muhammad pbuh, as his example that testifies to justice and compassion for the oppressed;
- Economic justice and, within that framework, zakat, sadaqah as mechanisms for mitigating social differences, prohibition of interest, and understanding of property rights that correlates with responsibility towards the community;
- The rights of marginalised groups, in the context of their time, such as orphans, women, slaves, and foreigners;
- Islamic law, sharia, does not associate justice with status, ethical affiliation, or wealth;
- Social and political responsibility in the sense of leaders who serve the people, protect rights, and prevent injustice because they are responsible before God and people, and rule by consultation, shura.

Pedagogy is not unfamiliar with the normative scientific–theoretical concept, concretised through previous concepts, and in Islamic education. The normative concept is also the first attempt at a scientific–theoretical pedagogical foundation, and it was conceived by Johan Friedrich Herbart (1776–1841). Knowledge of a norm does not guarantee its realisation in practice. Likewise, the description of social justice does not automatically mean its actual presence in Islamic education. What are the general initial assumptions of the living presence of social justice in Islamic education? Of course, everything happens in political, cultural, social, and educational contexts. Upbringing and education about social justice requires analytical insight into inequality, power structures, and historical injustice, which is treated as a heretical questioning of traditional authority, and even the constitutive sources of Islam.

How are the contents of Islamic education conveyed, dogmatically or through the encouragement of critical reflection? Is the context respected, or is the Qur'anic text and current problems connected, such as abuse of power, nepotism, the position of women, a very pronounced suspicious economic stratification, the coincidence of various forms of marginalisation with poverty, and minority rights? Is the subject of analysis systemic, structural social injustice? Is there a lack of support for an engaged and critical approach to justice in society in the space of Islamic education? Or, is this a sensitive issue, hushed up? Is the position of women interpreted conservatively, or is the interpretation simply omitted? Is it a slippery slope where patriarchal norms are encroached upon, which is condemned and declared a denial of tradition? If sociology, political science, and pedagogy do not participate in the analysis of social justice through Islamic education, the opportunity for a more intensive interdisciplinary analysis that is in the space of everyday, real life circumstances of Muslims is missed.

Elementary experiential insights into Islamic education point to those rough, basic landmarks for the actualisation of Islamic normative in education:

- New theological approaches and hermeneutic interpretation of the source, with exceptional sensitivity for the contemporary context and its current everyday issues;
- Content redefinition of Islamic religious education, which also affects correlational school subjects—structural interdisciplinary analysis of social justice in everyday life;
- Analysis of reference services within the institution Islamic community in Bosnia and Herzegovina in terms of the aspects of Islam that extend sensitivity towards social justice and determine how much is present;

- Patriarchal norms and structures that manifest through the context in which inequalities are internalised, accustomed, and unquestionable, and everything is reproduced through the educational system.

The focus of this research is on structural social injustice, embedded in political, cultural, economic, and educational structures. Such institutional and systemic mechanisms systematically place groups in a disadvantageous position, especially marginal groups, which is reproduced over time precisely by education, becoming invisible, by getting used to the 'natural' order of things. Such social, cultural, and educational contexts are recognised through limited freedom of thought, insufficient critical approaches, and a lack of free discussions. The result is a passivated individual, prone to being oppressed and not engaged, which leads to weakening credibility of theological education and contemporary values of freedom of thought, engagement, and justice. To address the research problem, this study was conducted through a two-phase qualitative design. An open-ended qualitative expert survey was used to create thematic indicators of social justice in Islamic theological–pedagogical education. These indicators were applied in a documentary analysis of the official syllabus of an undergraduate programme for Islamic religious education teachers and imams in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Bloom's taxonomy was used as a pedagogical–analytical lens to examine the cognitive depth at which social justice is articulated within the intended syllabus.

2. Materials and Methods

This qualitative research is oriented towards the description of the normative aspect of social justice in Islamic education through the content analysis of the objectives/outcome competencies of the syllabus of theological subjects at a higher education institution in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The study programme is viewed in relation to Bloom's taxonomic model of education of the cognitive area of personality development. This study is situated at the intersection of Islamic theology and religious pedagogy, specifically focusing on the higher education syllabus for future Islamic religious education practitioners, namely teachers and imams, in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The research investigates the pedagogical translation of theological principles of social justice, derived from the Qur'an, Sunnah, and Islamic intellectual tradition, into pedagogical competencies. The research contributes to understanding how the intended syllabus prepares teachers and imams to bridge the gap between normative theological ideals and the socio-cultural reality of the Bosnian context.

Bloom's taxonomic model of education of the cognitive area of personality development provides a pedagogical–analytical instrument for examining the cognitive depth at which social justice is articulated within the syllabus (Bloom et al. 1956; Stojaković 2000, p. 221):

- Memorisation level: initial: remember, write, list, name, define;
 - Comprehension level: describe, evaluate, explain, interpret;
 - Application level: collect, illustrate, organise, solve, apply, use;
 - Analysis: disassemble, arrange, explain, draw, contrast, analyse;
 - Synthesis level: arrange, build, combine, create, find, modify, compose;
 - Evaluation level: criticise, grade, judge, evaluate, conclude. The following research questions structure the course of the research:
1. How is social justice, as a fundamental Islamic norm, articulated within theological education for future Islamic religious education practitioners in Bosnia and Herzegovina?
 2. How is social justice positioned within the syllabus, particularly in relation to course objectives, learning outcomes, competencies, and course content?

3. At which levels of Bloom's taxonomy is social justice present within the syllabus of the study programme?

The technique chosen to analyse the data in this research is Mayring's structured qualitative content analysis (Mayring 2014, p. 25). "The goal of qualitative content analysis is a systematic, in accordance with the rules and theories conducted analysis. The main feature of this technique, according to Flick (2009), is the use of categories that are often derived from theoretical models, which means that the categories in most situations are focused on the material, therefore, are not derived from it. Qualitative content analysis differs from other approaches primarily in its effort to contribute to the reduction of material. The basic idea of qualitative content analysis is the systematic analysis of texts, where the material is gradually evaluated with the help of a system of categories developed on the basis of theoretical imposition. Categories or themes have an abstract, classifying character and are intended to reflect the content of individual text passages. They can be formed inductively or deductively. The inductive path is essentially a process where, based on a certain part of the text, a category is formulated that represents it in an understandable and appropriate way. The deductive path of creating categories is primarily related to previous knowledge or theoretical postulates, so that the text we analyze is assigned to a predetermined category" (Flick 2009, pp. 128–29).

2.1. Data Collection

The first phase of the research was conducted through an open-ended qualitative expert survey. This approach is to address the research problem, which required reflective, interpretative, and context-sensitive expert knowledge. The presence of social justice in Islamic education was examined through an open-ended qualitative expert survey and a subsequent documentary analysis of the official syllabus. The qualitative expert survey consisted of fourteen open-ended questions (previewed in Appendix A) prepared in a document and sent to selected experts via e-mail, who provided extended written responses. Open-ended questions are used to generate rich qualitative data to explore participants' interpretations in their own words. Braun et al. (2021) argue that surveys can function as qualitative research tools when they are designed to elicit reflective, detailed, and meaning-oriented responses rather than numerical or standardised data (Braun et al. 2021).

The questions addressed the relationship between Islamic norms and social inequalities, including poverty, gender, power structures, marginalisation, historical injustice, interdisciplinarity, and critical reflection in Islamic education.

The expert survey was used as a foundation for developing the analytical instrument. The most important concept for an expert survey is expertise. "Flick, considers an expert to be someone who possesses technical, procedural and interpretative skills in relation to his specific, professional or official field of activity" (Mayring 2014, p. 101).

To ensure that the analysis was grounded in technical, procedural, and interpretative knowledge, the participants were selected through purposive sampling. The expert sample consisted of three participants: the first participant, S1, holds a PhD in Religious Pedagogy and works in Austria; the second participant, S2, holds a PhD in Islamic Sciences; and the third participant, S3, is a professor of Islamic Religious Studies. These participants provided the necessary expertise for defining what social justice should mean in a pedagogical context within Islamic theological education.

The survey was focused on the conceptualisation of social justice within Islamic educational frameworks, the role of Islamic sources in shaping ethical responsibility, and the pedagogical implications for teacher education. The expert participants were selected because of their specialised expertise at the intersection of Islamic theology, religious pedagogy, and teacher education. All participants hold advanced academic qualifications and

have extensive professional experience in Islamic education, higher education teaching, curriculum development, and pedagogical research. Their selection was guided by the criterion of epistemic authority, understood as the possession of technical, procedural, and interpretative knowledge relevant to the study problem.

The aim of the expert survey was to access context-specific expert knowledge that could contribute to the construction of an analytical framework. In the context of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the number of professionals who simultaneously possess advanced theological training and pedagogical expertise in Islamic religious education is limited. Therefore, the relatively small expert sample reflects the structural characteristics of the field. The written expert responses were systematically analysed through qualitative content analysis and transformed into thematic indicators. The second data source consists of the official syllabus of the undergraduate study programme in Islamic Religious Studies, first cycle, leading to the qualification of a graduate teacher of Islamic religious education. This programme represents one of the institutional pathways for the education of Islamic religious education teachers and imams in Bosnia and Herzegovina, whose primary professional engagement includes teaching in primary and secondary schools.

2.2. Data Analysis

The analysis of the collected data from qualitative survey and the syllabus was conducted via Mayring's structured approach of qualitative content analysis (Ćerim et al. 2019; Begagić and Vejo 2020). (1) The units of analysis were determined (from the first data source, it was expert responses; from the second source, it was syllabus course objectives, course programmes, competencies, and learning outcomes). (2) The structuring dimensions were defined on the basis of the expert-created thematic indicators and the theoretical framework of social justice in Islamic education (all responses were read several times in order to gain an overall understanding of the material; meaning units referring to social justice, Islamic normativity, pedagogical practice, critical reflection, marginalisation, power relations, and curriculum formation were identified; these meaning units were coded and grouped into broader thematic categories; and the categories were aligned with Bloom's taxonomy in order to distinguish different levels of cognitive and pedagogical engagement). (3) The levels of intensity were determined through Bloom's taxonomy, ranging from knowledge and comprehension to application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation. (4) Definitions, anchor examples, and coding rules were formulated for each category. (5) The material was coded by identifying relevant references in the syllabus. (6) The identified references were extracted, compared, and interpreted in relation to the corresponding thematic indicators. The results were analysed in order to determine whether social justice appears explicitly or implicitly; whether it is positioned as a theological norm, pedagogical competence, ethical orientation, or critical-reflective capacity; and at which cognitive level it is articulated.

Bloom's taxonomy was used as a pedagogical-analytical lens, not as a theory of social justice. Its function was to classify the cognitive depth at which justice-related themes appear in the intended curriculum. This made it possible to distinguish between syllabus elements that refer only to recognition or reproduction of justice-related concepts and those that require interpretation, application, critical analysis, synthesis, or evaluative judgement. In this sense, this study combines an open-ended qualitative expert survey and qualitative documentary curriculum analysis: the survey generated thematic indicators of social justice, while the syllabus analysis examined how these indicators are articulated within the intended curriculum.

3. Results

3.1. Thematic Indicator Development

The thematic indicators used in the content analysis of the syllabus were derived from the expert responses. Thematic indicators are defined as developed themes that will be used as a verification tool for analysing the syllabus. These patterns were aligned with Bloom's taxonomy of educational objectives (knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation) and, hence, the operationalisation of the scaling qualitative analysis. The categories reflect theological–normative and pedagogical–epistemological dimensions of social justice (See Table 1).

Table 1. First level: knowledge (acquisition and reproduction of information).

Anchor Sample	Encoding Rule	Thematic Indicator
"Social justice ('adl, qist) represents one of the key ethical principles of Islam..." (4–5)	Recognition and identification of specific terms as a basic level of cognitive knowledge.	Concepts of social justice in the Islamic tradition
"The Qur'an clearly affirms that justice is a fundamental divine imperative: 'Indeed, Allah commands justice and excellence' (Qur'an 16:90)." (6–7)	Knowledge and reproduction of specific textual evidence from the Qur'an confirms the level of familiarity with primary sources.	Qur'anic sources on justice and responsibility
"The hadiths of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) further emphasise the practical dimension, such as the saying: 'He is not a believer whose stomach is filled while his neighbour goes hungry'..." (220–222)	Identification of specific hadith messages concerning social responsibility indicates acquired knowledge of the Sunnah.	Hadith sources on social justice
"Al-Māwardī (in al-Aḥkām al-sultāniyya) emphasised that the purpose of Islamic governance and education is the preservation of justice..." (163–164)	Knowledge of historical scholars and their key works on justice represents factual theological literacy.	Classical theological approaches to justice
"Contemporary Islamic thinkers, such as Rahman (1982), insist on a hermeneutical 'double movement' approach..." (258–259)	Identification of modern theorists and their concepts indicates familiarity with contemporary discourse (Habermas 1981).	Contemporary Islamic discourses on social justice

At the level of knowledge, expert statements predominantly emphasise terminological precision, familiarity with primary sources, and recognition of classical and contemporary scholarly authorities.

References to concepts such as 'adl and qist demonstrate the foundational cognitive act of identifying and naming key ethical terms. Citations from the Qur'an (1988) (e.g., 16:90) and hadith literature indicate not only awareness of textual sources but also the capacity to reproduce normative evidence. The mention of classical scholars such as al-Māwardī and contemporary thinkers like Fazlur Rahman reveals fact-based theological literacy (al-Māwardī 1996).

From these responses, thematic indicators were constructed that reflect recognition of:

- Core concepts of social justice in Islamic tradition;
- Qur'anic and hadith sources;
- Classical theological interpretations;
- Contemporary Islamic discourses.

At the level of comprehension (Table 2), the discourse shifts from recognition to interpretation. Experts describe social justice as simultaneously a theological norm and a pedagogically cultivated competence, indicating an ability to grasp conceptual duality.

Table 2. Second level: comprehension (interpretation and establishing connections).

Anchor Sample	Encoding Rule	Thematic Indicator
"...social justice is understood in a dual sense—as a theologically binding norm and as a pedagogically cultivated competence..." (39–40)	Ability to interpret a concept through its different functions (norm versus skill).	Explanation of the Islamic concept of social justice
"Therefore, Islamic tradition constantly emphasises the connection between 'ilm (knowledge) and 'amal (action): knowledge without action is incomplete..." (90–91)	Interpretation of the causal relationship between theological conviction and social consequence.	Connection between faith, ethics, and society
"...from the specific context of Revelation toward universal principles, and then from those principles toward new historical circumstances." (260–261)	Demonstration of understanding the process of adapting norms to different times and contexts.	Contextual interpretation of Islamic sources
"...a distinction between cognitive understanding and existential embodiment... (46–47) The Noble Qur'an frequently criticises those who 'know but do not act'." (79–80)	Ability to interpret the discrepancy between theoretical ideals and lived human behaviour.	Distinguishing normative and empirical approaches
"...the credibility of transmitting norms and ethical sensitivity depends on whether teachers themselves embody justice." (37–38)	Understanding the modelling function of educators in value transmission.	The role of the teacher in promoting justice

Statements emphasising the relationship between 'ilm (knowledge) and 'amal (action) reveal interpretative linking between belief and social consequence. The discussion of contextual hermeneutics, moving from the historical specificity of revelation to universal principles and back to new circumstances, demonstrates understanding of dynamic normative application (al-Ghazālī 2011; Festinger 1957; Ramadan 2009).

These interpretative capacities were translated into thematic indicators such as:

- Explanation of the Islamic concept of social justice;
- Linkage between faith, ethics, and society;
- Contextual interpretation of sources;
- Differentiation between normative and empirical dimensions;
- The modelling role of the teacher.

At the comprehension level justice is understood as a meaningful, relational construct (Aristoteles 2017; Rawls 1971).

At the application level (Table 3), expert responses illustrate how theological principles become pedagogically operative. References to addressing poverty, migration injustice, or discrimination within classroom discussion demonstrate the transformation of abstract norms into practical didactic tools.

The tension between Qur'anic ideals and lived social realities in Bosnia and Herzegovina is described as pedagogically productive, indicating contextual adaptation. The inclusion of gender justice, minority rights, and disability issues reflects inclusive operationalisation of justice principles. Conflict resolution within classrooms and community-based humanitarian engagement exemplify embodied ethical reasoning (United Nations 1948; Rawls 1971; Tajfel and Turner 1986; Abu-Nimer 2003).

Table 3. Third level: application (using knowledge in practice).

Anchor Sample	Encoding Rule	Thematic Indicator
“When teachers in class... examine [concepts] in the context of contemporary issues—poverty, migration injustice, or discrimination...” (37–38)	Demonstration of how abstract knowledge is used to interpret concrete social crises.	Application of social justice principles in teaching
“Students often ask: ‘Why is society not living according to what is written in the Qur’an?’ Precisely this tension... becomes didactically fruitful.” (26–28)	Application of learned norms to the immediate social environment in which students live and learn.	Connecting theology and the social reality of Bosnia and Herzegovina
“...including gender justice, poverty, or the rights of minorities, migrants, or persons with disabilities.” (68–70)	Practical implementation of justice principles through the selection of inclusive teaching themes.	Inclusive pedagogical approaches
“...when the class collectively resolves a case of injustice among students or when a family actively participates in a humanitarian initiative.” (239–240)	Application of moral reasoning in concrete action aimed at problem resolution (Kohlberg 1981).	Resolving ethical dilemmas in practice
“Education should also mean sensitising the learner to recognise injustice and to respond to it according to their capacities.” (150–151)	Using education as a tool for developing empathy and solidarity in practical terms.	Developing solidarity through teaching

This process resulted in thematic indicators such as:

- Applying social justice principles in teaching;
- Connecting theology with local social reality;
- Inclusive pedagogical practice;
- Resolving ethical dilemmas;
- Cultivating solidarity.

At application level, knowledge becomes performative, cultivating and processual (Freire 1970; Vygotsky 1978).

Analytical thinking appears when experts interrogate structural dynamics of power, history, and institutional practice. The reference to Ibn Khaldūn’s (2015) analysis of economic exploitation illustrates systemic critique linking injustice to political and economic structures. Observations that educational institutions may reproduce hierarchies reveal critical awareness of hidden curricula and structural power (Horkheimer 1937; Galtung 1969; Bourdieu 1991).

Calls to examine historical deviations from ethical norms demonstrate the capacity to dissect complex socio-historical processes. The emphasis on uncovering domination structures situates social justice within a broader critical intellectual tradition.

From this discourse, indicators were developed addressing (Table 4):

- Critical analysis of social injustices;
- Examination of educational practices;
- Identification of structural causes;
- Analysis of power and marginalisation;
- Critical evaluation of educational contexts.

Social justice at analytical tier becomes a lens for examining systems rather than behaviours (Galtung 1969; Bourdieu 1991).

Table 4. Fourth level: analysis (deconstruction and examination of relationships).

Anchor Sample	Encoding Rule	Thematic Indicator
“Ibn Khaldūn in his Muqaddimah analysed how concentration of power and economic exploitation lead to the decline of civilisations.” (105–106)	Examination of structural connections between economy, power, and justice.	Critical analysis of social injustices
“...institutions (including educational ones) may reproduce existing social hierarchies, even if their foundational texts promote a different ethical orientation.” (462–464)	Analysis of hidden functions of the educational system in relation to social power.	Analysis of educational practices
“Muslims should first study what Muslim occupying forces did to local populations... in light of the Qur’anic prohibition of aggression...” (695–698)	Deconstruction of historical events in order to reveal deviations from ethical norms.	Identification of structural causes of injustice
“The analysis of power and social justice is inherent in the Islamic intellectual heritage... unveiling structures of domination.” (104–108)	Analytical examination of relationships between dominant and marginalised groups.	Analysis of power and marginalisation
“In some educational institutions, themes reinforcing traditional order are emphasised... while sensitive issues are avoided...” (263–265)	Examination of socio-political influences on curriculum design.	Critical assessment of the educational context

At the synthesis level (Table 5), expert responses move beyond critique toward constructive innovation. Proposals such as experiential projects comparing socio-economic neighbourhoods reflect integrative pedagogical design. The blending of Qur’anic justice concepts with sociological poverty analysis or psychological empathy research illustrates interdisciplinary synthesis (Vygotsky 1978; Freire 1970; Ramadan 2009).

Table 5. Fifth level: synthesis (creation of new models and integration).

Anchor Sample	Encoding Rule	Thematic Indicator
“...students... within the programme [should have] visits to both poor and affluent neighbourhoods... research and analysis projects...” (196–198)	Creation of an innovative educational model through the integration of diverse pedagogical methods.	Designing justice-based teaching content
“Contemporary methodology... offers modern solutions that embrace contemporary social values such as the affirmation of active engagement.” (671–673)	Synthesis of foundational principles and contemporary values into a new methodological framework.	Developing new pedagogical models
“...when Qur’anic verses on justice are connected with sociological analyses of poverty or psychological research on empathy...” (427–428)	Creation of interdisciplinary insight by combining different academic disciplines.	Integration of Islamic and contemporary concepts
“Education is oriented toward forming a person who understands, feels, and acts justly... lived shared experiences, humanitarian engagement.” (247–249)	Integration of knowledge and emotional sensitivity into new forms of social action.	Designing socially beneficial initiatives
“Forming a personality who will become a bearer of justice in society... the believer is called to critically recognise and actively respond to injustice.” (337–339)	Synthesis of professional competencies and ethical responsibility into a new profile of educator.	Active social role of the future teacher

Justice is presented as a moral imperative and a framework for curriculum design, identity formation, and civic engagement. The educator is a proactive agent shaping new educational models rooted in tradition and contemporary realities (Freire 1970; Abu-Nimer 2003).

Indicators derived from this level include:

- Designing justice-oriented teaching content;
- Developing new pedagogical models;
- Integrating Islamic and contemporary concepts;
- Creating socially beneficial initiatives;
- Shaping the active social role of future teachers/imams.

Synthesis is to transform normative knowledge into creative educational architecture.

The highest cognitive level is characterised by explicit normative judgement. Experts evaluate contemporary global events, political silence, and institutional failures against the standard of Islamic and universal justice. Statements about speaking truth before unjust authority illustrate moral positioning grounded in prophetic ethics and the Islamic tradition of public moral responsibility (Taymiyya 1995; Abū Dāwūd 2008; Tabarānī 1983).

Educational systems are assessed in terms of their authenticity and relevance, while silence in the face of injustice is ethically condemned. Social justice emerges as the supreme evaluative criterion by which individuals, institutions, and communities are measured (Bukhārī 1989; Abu-Nimer 2003).

From this evaluative discourse, indicators were formulated concerning (Table 6):

- Ethical judgement of social phenomena;
- Reasoned moral positioning;
- Evaluation of educational policies;
- Professional and societal responsibility;
- Social justice as an overarching criterion of assessment.

At the final level, as in many theories, doing good because it is just is a normative compass guiding thoughts and actions (Aristoteles 2017; Averroes 2005; Rawls 1971; Kohlberg 1981; al-Ghazālī 2011).

Table 6. Sixth level: evaluation (making judgements and establishing standards).

Anchor Sample	Encoding Rule	Thematic Indicator
“The Arab world today... represents a negative example when observing the issue of genocide in Gaza... In that case, all weaknesses in understanding faith become visible.” (146–147)	Evaluation of contemporary global events according to the standard of Islamic and universal justice.	Ethical judgement of social phenomena
“The best jihad is a word of truth spoken before an unjust ruler.” (205–206)	Assessment of the primacy of truth and justice over political power or personal benefit.	Argument-based positioning
“If social injustice is ignored, we will have an education that does not address real problems and therefore lacks credibility...” (396–397)	Evaluation of the effectiveness and moral relevance of educational policies and institutions.	Evaluation of educational policies
“Whoever remains silent in the face of injustice passively contributes to its perpetuation.” (398–399)	Ethical assessment of personal and professional conduct in the context of social justice.	Professional and social responsibility
“...in our attitude toward them [the marginalised], we measure the authenticity of social justice in the spirit of the Qur’an and Sunnah.” (576–577)	Use of social justice as the supreme criterion for evaluating the entire community.	Social justice as a criterion of judgement

3.2. Syllabus Evaluation

The evaluation of the syllabus was conducted using Mayring's qualitative content analysis, applying a deductive scaling (Mayring 2014; Ćerim et al. 2019) thematic system constructed in the previous phase of the research. In this process, individual courses constituted the units of analysis, while the thematic indicators functioned as evaluative instruments. The syllabus was approached descriptively and analytically, through predefined thematic indicators derived from expert discourse and theoretically aligned with Bloom's taxonomy of the cognitive domain. These indicators were organised in accordance with Bloom's taxonomy of the cognitive domain, allowing for a systematic exploration of how the construct of social justice is embedded within the curricular architecture. The analytical part was identifying the position of social justice in the syllabus of the courses (course objective, competencies, or course programme). The descriptive part of this qualitative model is evaluating presence within Islamic normativity and on the ways in which this norm is pedagogically mediated.

From the perspective of Islamic theology, social justice is not a peripheral value but a constitutive norm rooted in Qur'anic imperatives, prophetic practice, and the broader intellectual heritage of Islam. The Qur'an addresses everyday ethical and social challenges and emphasises openness to knowledge, which in contemporary conditions implies an interdisciplinary responsiveness to complex societal realities. At the same time, no norm, however universal in aspiration, exists outside the socio-cultural context. It is always interpreted, institutionalised, and transmitted within particular historical, ideological, and educational frameworks. Theological reflection does not occur in a cognitive vacuum, nor does critique stand outside the tensions of its environment. Consequently, the articulation of student competencies must be understood as a site where universal religious norms encounter concrete socio-cultural realities (Bukhārī and al-Ḥajjāj 1981; al-Ghazālī 2011; Asad 2003; Esposito 2018).

Within this framework, the syllabus was treated as a pedagogically layered structure consisting of course objectives, course programmes, and competencies or learning outcomes. Course objectives express the normative and formative horizon of the subject; course programmes define the structured body of knowledge; and competencies translate both into demonstrable cognitive and professional performance. Interpreted through Bloom's taxonomy, these components reveal varying cognitive depths at which justice-related content may operate. Thematic content most often corresponds to knowledge and comprehension; competencies tend to activate application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation; and objectives mediate between normative intention and cognitive performance.

The coding procedure examined each thematic indicator in relation to its structural position and cognitive level, formulating encoding rules to determine whether the reference to justice was explicit or implicit, declarative, or operational and substantiating each interpretation through anchor samples drawn directly from the syllabus. This method made it possible to detect direct references and structurally embedded sensitivities toward justice-oriented themes. Following are the results of the syllabus evaluation, presented through six tables, levelled according to Bloom's taxonomy.

At the levels of knowledge and comprehension (Tables 7 and 8), the syllabus demonstrates a strong emphasis on textual familiarity and interpretative understanding. Students are expected to engage with foundational Islamic sources and classical scholarship, reflecting traditional models of religious education centred on transmission and interpretation. Such cognitive engagement does not necessarily translate into critical reflection on contemporary social realities. This limitation is also observed in studies highlighting the dominance of text-centred approaches in Islamic education (al-Ṭabarī 2007; Ibn Kaṣīr 2000; al-Ghazālī 2011; Rafid and Darmawati 2025).

Table 7. First level: knowledge. This level refers to familiarity with basic terminology, facts, and sources.

Thematic Indicator	Proposition in the Syllabus	Encoding Rule	Anchor Sample
Concepts of social justice in the Islamic tradition	Course Programme (Introduction to Da'wah)	Explicit. The foundations of Islamic mission (da'wah) and social systems are studied.	The course Introduction to Da'wah defines the social, legal, and economic system of Islam: "Systems of Islam. Ethical system. Social system. Legal system. System of governance. Economic system. Penal system."
Qur'anic sources on justice and responsibility	Course Programme (Introduction to Qur'anic Studies)	Explicit. Verses related to morality and responsibility are analysed.	The course Qur'anic Paradigm of Youth Education focuses on moral and responsible behaviour through Qur'anic verses: "Verses and hadiths that encourage learning the Qur'an. Responsibility for memorised Qur'anic text."
Hadith sources on social justice	Competencies (Hadith Foundations of Youth Education)	Explicit. Hadiths are used as a foundation for understanding ethics and social anomalies.	The course Hadith Foundations of Youth Education addresses the elimination of social anomalies (addictions) through prophetic methods: "...hadith foundations of youth education... methods of treatment and rehabilitation from various types of addiction, such as shirk, fornication, alcohol, and other social anomalies."
Classical theological approaches to justice	Course Programme (Trends in 'Aqidah Thought)	Explicit. Theological schools and their teachings are examined.	The course Trends in 'Aqidah Thought analyses the emergence of theological schools such as Ash'arism and Maturidism: "Ash'arism, Maturidism... Students will acquire knowledge about the emergence and development of sects and movements in Islam, as well as theological schools in Islam."
Contemporary Islamic discourses on social justice	Course Programme (Contemporary Fiqh Issues)	Explicit. Contemporary Fiqh responses to social issues are examined.	The course Contemporary Fiqh Issues addresses human rights, democracy, and the status of minorities: "Human obligations and rights... Shura, democracy, and multi-party systems in a Muslim state."

Table 8. Second level: comprehension. The focus is on interpreting meaning and understanding the intentions behind normative prescriptions.

Thematic Indicator	Proposition in the Syllabus	Encoding Rule	Anchor Sample
Explanation of the Islamic concept of social justice	Competencies (Contemporary Fiqh Issues)	Understanding the essence and purpose (intention) of normative rulings.	In the course <i>Contemporary Fiqh Issues</i> , students are expected to understand the essence of rulings concerning social issues: "It is expected that the student will understand the intentions (maqāsid) of acts of worship, their essence and form... in the context of European legal regulations."
Connection between faith, ethics, and society	Course Objective (Foundations of Islamic Belief)	Through the study of Islam as an integrated system (ethical, social, legal).	The course <i>Introduction to Da'wah</i> explains the specific features of Islam as a divine, universal, and realistic system: "Introducing students to the significance and role of belief in human life through the presentation of the six principles of Islamic faith."

Table 8. Cont.

Thematic Indicator	Proposition in the Syllabus	Encoding Rule	Anchor Sample
Contextual interpretation of Islamic sources	Competencies (Sirah—The Medinan Period)	Application of historical models to contemporary issues.	The course <i>Sirah: The Medinan Period</i> requires students to compare contemporary challenges with events from the Prophet's life: "...they will be able to compare contemporary challenges with events from the life of Muhammad (peace be upon him) as a model solution."
Distinguishing normative and empirical approaches	Course Programme (General Pedagogy)	Theoretical differentiation within educational sciences.	The course <i>General Pedagogy</i> includes normative and empirical scientific-theoretical concepts: "Normative and empirical scientific-theoretical concept... Science of education: system of disciplines."
The role of the teacher in promoting justice	Competencies (General Graduate Competencies)	Development of professional identity and ethical conduct.	Graduate competencies include acting in accordance with ethical norms and professional codes: "...understanding and developing the professional identity of the Islamic religious education teacher, and acting in accordance with ethical norms and the professional code."

At the level of application (Table 9), there are indications of pedagogical sensitivity, particularly in relation to inclusion, communication, and community engagement. These elements suggest an awareness of the need to connect religious knowledge with lived social realities. Nevertheless, such applications remain fragmented rather than systematically embedded within a justice-oriented pedagogical framework. Similar patterns are identified in contemporary research, which notes that Islamic education frequently integrates values implicitly without structuring them into coherent pedagogical models (Fahrudin et al. 2026).

Table 9. Third level: application. Use of knowledge in pedagogical work and within the broader social community.

Thematic Indicator	Proposition in the Syllabus	Encoding Rule	Anchor Sample
Application of social justice principles in teaching	Competencies (General Graduate Competencies)	Theoretical model for creating a just and learner-adapted educational environment.	Competence in designing an educational context that respects the needs and interests of each student: "Effectively construct an educational context... tailored to the learner and to each individual learner, in relation to their abilities, capacities, needs, and interests."
Connecting theology and the social reality of Bosnia and Herzegovina	Course Programme (Introduction to Islamic Culture)	Analysis of local culture and institutions through their historical development.	The course <i>Introduction to Islamic Culture and Civilization</i> addresses Islamic education and culture in Bosnia and Herzegovina: "Islamic culture in Bosnia and Herzegovina... Development of Islamic culture and its dimensions in Bosnia and Herzegovina."

Table 9. Cont.

Thematic Indicator	Proposition in the Syllabus	Encoding Rule	Anchor Sample
Inclusive pedagogical approaches	Course Objective (Social Inclusion)	Working in an environment that acknowledges diversity.	The elective course <i>Social Inclusion</i> focuses on the practical implementation of inclusion processes: "...competence for professional engagement in intercultural and inclusive environments (respect for diversity)."
Resolving ethical dilemmas in practice	Competencies (Teaching Communication)	Through the application of communication skills for non-violent conflict resolution.	The course <i>Teaching Communication</i> trains students to resolve school conflicts: "...mastery of communication competencies necessary for non-violent conflict resolution."
Developing solidarity through teaching	Course Objective (Methods of Social Work in the Community)	Working with individuals and groups with the aim of providing support.	The elective course <i>Methods of Social Work in the Community</i> focuses on assistance to individuals and target groups: "...forms of assistance to individuals and targeted groups... Social problems and social work in the community."

At higher cognitive levels, analysis (Table 10), synthesis (Table 11), and evaluation (Table 12), the syllabus reveals the potential for critical engagement with issues such as social exclusion, historical injustice, and institutional structures. This potential is unevenly realised. Individual courses enable analytical reflection, but the syllabus as a whole does not consistently frame social justice as a structural or systemic issue. As a result, the development of students as active agents of social transformation is rather questionable.

Table 10. Fourth level: analysis. Critical examination of structures, causes, and social phenomena.

Thematic Indicator	Proposition in the Syllabus	Encoding Rule	Anchor Sample
Critical analysis of social injustices	Course Objective (History of Genocide in Bosnia and Herzegovina)	Analysis of the historical and socio-political circumstances surrounding the crime of genocide.	The course <i>History of Genocide in Bosnia and Herzegovina</i> requires analysis of the circumstances preceding genocidal crimes: "History of genocide... acquire an objective and truthful understanding of all socio-political, economic, and demographic circumstances that preceded crimes of genocidal character."
Analysis of educational practices	Competencies (General Graduate Competencies)	Reflection upon and critical examination of one's own pedagogical beliefs.	Competence of a reflective practitioner who evaluates and self-evaluates pedagogical practice: "...demonstrate practical competence as a reflective practitioner, evaluate and self-evaluate one's implicit pedagogy by questioning its effectiveness."

Table 10. Cont.

Thematic Indicator	Proposition in the Syllabus	Encoding Rule	Anchor Sample
Identification of structural causes of injustice	Competencies (Introduction to Islamic Culture)	Analysis of factors leading to civilisational decline.	The course <i>Introduction to Islamic Culture and Civilization</i> analyses the causes of the decline of Muslims: "...be able to reinterpret the cultural history of Islam and identify factors that caused the civilisational decline and regression of Muslims."
Analysis of power and marginalisation	Course Programme (Social Inclusion)	Defining and examining issues of social exclusion.	The elective course <i>Social Inclusion</i> analyses paradigms of social exclusion in the EU, and Bosnia and Herzegovina: "Social exclusion—theoretical and practical problems of definition... Paradigms of social exclusion in the EU."
Critical assessment of the educational context	Course Objective (School Pedagogy)	Questioning existing pedagogical solutions.	The course <i>School Pedagogy</i> prepares students for a critical stance toward existing solutions in education: "...to develop a critical approach toward existing solutions in the field of school education."

Table 11. Fifth level: synthesis. Creation of new models, plans, and an active role within the community.

Thematic Indicator	Proposition in the Syllabus	Encoding Rule	Anchor Sample
Designing justice-based teaching content	Competencies (General Graduate Competencies)	Independent curriculum design.	Competence in independently constructing and implementing curricula: "...independently construct, implement, and evaluate primary and secondary school curricula across all developmental domains."
Developing new pedagogical models	Course Objective (School Pedagogy)	Creation of innovative educational approaches.	The objective of <i>School Pedagogy</i> is to prepare students to develop new approaches to the educational potentials of the school: "...to become qualified to create new approaches to the educational potentials of the school."
Integration of Islamic and contemporary concepts	Course Programme (Social Inclusion)	Linking Islamic discourse with EU standards.	The elective course <i>Social Inclusion</i> integrates Islamic discourse with contemporary EU methodologies: "...implementation of social inclusion processes based on the EU strategy on social cohesion... Social inclusion in Islamic discourse."
Designing socially beneficial initiatives	Competencies (Environmental Education)	Development of projects within natural and cultural environments.	The course <i>Environmental Education in Religious Instruction</i> encourages the design of sustainable development projects: "...develop creative impulses in designing, planning, and implementing experiences, activities, and projects in natural, cultural, and religious environments."
Active social role of the future teacher	Competencies (General Graduate Competencies)	Engagement in strengthening cooperation between school and local community.	Competence in active engagement aimed at achieving quality and fostering stronger participation of the local community in school life: "...actively engage in achieving quality and develop more intensive participation of the local community in the life of primary and secondary schools."

Table 12. Sixth level: evaluation. Making judgements, argumentation, and assuming responsibility.

Thematic Indicator	Proposition in the Syllabus	Encoding Rule	Anchor Sample
Ethical judgement of social phenomena	Course Objective (Foundations of Islamic Belief)	Critical examination of phenomena through the lens of belief.	The course <i>Foundations of Islamic Belief</i> includes evaluative engagement with research phenomena: "...write a critical study (up to 5 pages), an assessment of a research phenomenon... within the context of the principles of Islamic belief."
Argument-based positioning	Competencies (Introduction to Islamic Philosophy)	Drawing independent conclusions based on knowledge.	Systemic competencies in the course <i>Introduction to Islamic Philosophy</i> include forming independent conclusions: "...possessing the knowledge required for critical examination, analysis, and drawing independent conclusions."
Evaluation of educational policies	Competencies (Social Inclusion)	Analysis of current conditions and reform priorities.	The course <i>School Pedagogy</i> includes school self-evaluation and a docimological dimension: "They will review the situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina, analyse challenges, and determine reform priorities of the social inclusion system in Bosnia and Herzegovina."
Professional and social responsibility	Competencies (Environmental Education)	Acting in accordance with ethical norms and assuming responsibility for the community.	Competencies in <i>Environmental Education</i> emphasise demonstrating responsibility toward the community: "...acting in accordance with ethical norms... while demonstrating responsibility for personal development and the community."
Social justice as a criterion of judgement	Course Objective (Sīrah—The Medinan Period)	Applying justice principles as guiding standards for the community.	The course <i>Sīrah: The Medinan Period</i> focuses on lessons regarding the functioning of a community grounded in social justice: "...lessons that may serve as guidance for establishing and operating an institutional community founded upon social cohesion and social justice."

The analysis of the syllabus reveals a structurally consistent but conceptually fragmented presence of social justice within Islamic teacher education. At the level of normative articulation, social justice is deeply embedded in the theological and disciplinary foundations of the syllabus, reflected through references to Qur'anic ethics, hadith traditions, and broader Islamic intellectual heritage. This finding aligns with previous research emphasising that justice (‘adl) and compassion (rahma) represent foundational ethical principles within Islamic education (Mohamed and Ridwan 2025).

When examined through the analytical framework derived from thematic indicators and Bloom's taxonomy, a significant discrepancy emerges between normative presence and pedagogical operationalisation. Elements related to justice are identifiable across all cognitive levels, from knowledge to evaluation, but the concept itself is rarely explicitly

formulated as a learning outcome or pedagogical objective. In this sense, social justice appears as an implicit organising principle rather than an explicit educational goal, which is consistent with findings that Islamic education often remains normatively rich but pedagogically underarticulated (Rafid and Darmawati 2025).

4. Conclusions

The main limitation of this study is that it analyses the intended syllabus, rather than enacted teaching practice, written and hidden curriculum, classroom interaction, or students' lived experiences of Islamic theological education. Future research should examine how social justice is actually taught, interpreted, and practiced in educational settings, while the practical implication of this study is the need to formulate social justice more explicitly within learning outcomes, pedagogical competencies, and curriculum design for future Islamic religious education teachers and imams.

Based on an analysis of the constitutive sources of Islam, it is possible to abstract categories describing the modes of presence of the construct of social justice within Islamic normativity. The findings indicate a significant range of possibilities. Social justice appears as a constitutive Islamic norm; the method of establishing, maintaining, and developing this construct within a socio-cultural environment can, ideally, attain an internalised depth at both the individual and communal levels. The Qur'an openly addresses everyday challenges and strongly emphasises openness to knowledge, which in the contemporary context implies an interdisciplinary frame of reference when responding to emerging issues. This addresses the first research question by explicating that social justice is articulated in theological education primarily as a foundational Islamic norm rooted in the constitutive sources of Islam, but one that requires pedagogical mediation in order to become educationally operative.

The findings of this study also reflect a broader tension identified in contemporary research on Islamic education: the gap between strong normative foundations and limited pedagogical transformation. Islamic education is widely recognised as being grounded in ethical principles such as justice, compassion, and social responsibility, which are essential for fostering peaceful coexistence and social cohesion (Mohamed and Ridwan 2025). The translation of these values into concrete educational practices remains inconsistent. This study confirms that pattern. The analysed syllabus demonstrates a high degree of alignment with Islamic normative principles; it remains largely oriented toward cognitive and textual engagement, with less emphasis on critical, contextual, and action-oriented dimensions of learning. Similar conclusions are drawn in studies that highlight the persistence of normative and text-based approaches that are insufficiently responsive to multicultural and socially complex environments (Rafid and Darmawati 2025). The absence of explicitly defined social justice competencies in learning outcomes is particularly significant. Educational research suggests that when values are not explicitly articulated within curricula, they tend to remain peripheral in pedagogical practice, even if they are normatively central. In this case, justice is present as an assumed value rather than a systematically developed competence. This responds to the second research question with explication that social justice is positioned within the syllabus mainly through implicit references in course content, objectives, and broader competencies but not as a clearly named learning outcome or systematically developed pedagogical competence.

These findings can also be interpreted in the context of broader global transformations affecting Islamic education. Globalisation introduces new social challenges, including cultural shifts, identity tensions, and increasing individualism, which require educational systems to move beyond preservation toward adaptive and critical engagement (Aida and Khasana 2025). Within this context, the implicit treatment of social justice may

reflect a cautious or partial response to these complex dynamics. The presence of justice-related themes across different cognitive levels indicates that the syllabus already contains the conceptual and pedagogical resources necessary for transformation. What is required is a more explicit integration of these elements into a coherent framework that positions social justice as a central educational objective.

Recent innovations in Islamic education provide useful directions in this regard. For example, value-based and “love-based” curricular approaches demonstrate how ethical principles such as empathy, tolerance, and justice can be systematically embedded in both formal and informal educational settings, fostering knowledge and moral agency, and social responsibility.

From this perspective, the gap identified in this study should be understood as a developmental stage within the ongoing transformation of Islamic teacher education. The syllabus reflects a strong normative foundation and emerging pedagogical sensitivity yet lacks a fully articulated framework that would enable future teachers/imams to critically engage with issues of social justice in their professional practice.

No matter how strongly a norm aspires toward alignment with the universal, it always remains embedded within a socio-cultural context. This context includes prevailing ideologies and the educational system. Invoking a norm necessarily entails an interaction between the universal and the particular, between socio-cultural values, systems, and modes of living. Theological reflection itself does not occur in a cognitive or cultural vacuum, nor is its critique detached from socio-cultural circumstances and tensions. Accordingly, student competencies toward which educational programmes aspire should be carefully calibrated, as should the scope of contextual interpretation of religious ideas and lived experience.

Research results indicate that in the articulation of intended learning outcomes, social justice is not explicitly mentioned as knowledge, attitude, or a desired form of student engagement. At the same time, syllabus analysis conducted through Bloom’s taxonomy of the cognitive domain demonstrates pedagogical and methodological sensitivity across all levels of development (knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation). There is therefore clear potential for the integration of social justice within Islamic theological education, particularly given that the faculty operates as an Islamic pedagogical institution in which the pedagogical component has been systematically developed through verified instructional models, including Bloom’s taxonomy aligned with defined learning outcomes in individual courses.

What is present and indicative of an implicit sensitivity toward social justice are the following student competencies:

1. Addressing challenges on the path toward social inclusion; familiarity with EU documents and guidelines on social inclusion; and insight into the state of social inclusion in Bosnia and Herzegovina (Social Inclusion);
2. Explicit emphasis on tolerance toward those who are different within the course Islam and New Religious Movements;
3. Sensitivity in numerous courses to studying themes within their temporal and spatial context; however, this sensitivity remains framed within a rather conservative and somewhat idealised universalism, without explicit reference to concrete contemporary challenges, including those related to social justice:
4. “Guiding the school population toward moral life and refined human conduct”;
5. “Understanding current intra-Muslim disputes; schisms and sects within and beyond Islamic thought” (Trends in ‘Aqidah Thought);
6. “Sensitivity in addressing contemporary pedagogical questions from an Islamic perspective” (Foundations of Islamic Education);

7. “Comparison and analysis of different value systems; respect for diversity and multiculturalism; drawing independent conclusions” (Islamic Philosophy);
8. “The intentions of Shari‘ah rulings concerning contemporary Fiqh topics, the essence and form of these processes, and their scholarly interpretation” (Contemporary Fiqh Issues).

These examples further clarify the answer to the second research question. Social justice is present in the syllabus through dispersed curricular elements rather than through a unified justice-oriented framework. It appears through social inclusion, tolerance, ethical conduct, contextual sensitivity, multicultural understanding, and independent judgement, but these elements are not explicitly integrated under the concept of social justice. A second comparative pattern was observed regarding the intensity, or relative fragility, of openness to free discussion, particularly in relation to its limitation through a predefined “model solution.” This observation does not imply disregard for the unquestionable constitutive authority of the example of the final Messenger of God, Muhammad (peace be upon him), but rather reflects a concern that excessive rigidity may reduce interpretative openness and the richness of the prophetic example.

Social justice, as a constitutive Islamic value in which belief and action converge and intertwine, is present as a normative good within Islamic education through a fundamental theological sensitivity (Ricoeur 1992). At the same time, however, it is insufficiently emphasised as an explicit norm within the curricula of Islamic educational programmes. This represents the central conclusion of this study in relation to the first and second research questions which resonates to explication that social justice is theologically present but pedagogically underarticulated.

Social justice as a bridge toward engaged, critical, and contextualised theological education in Islam has not been adequately realised. Why is this the case?

Islamic theological education at higher education institutions in Bosnia and Herzegovina is supported by contemporary pedagogical and methodological instruments that guide student expectations, such as Bloom’s taxonomic model of cognitive development (knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation). This contributes to the third research question by showing that social justice is not confined to one cognitive level but can be identified across the full range of Bloom’s taxonomy. Its presence has distinctions where lower levels are more clearly connected to textual and normative knowledge, while higher levels appear through selected competencies related to critical reflection, inclusion, ethical judgement, and professional responsibility. The point of tension arises in the theological understanding of Islamic tradition when it is approached literally, rather than as a search for deeper meanings capable of being applied to a broad range of existential situations.

“Tradition... [is a] historical and spiritual space that connects text and reader... a pluralistic hermeneutics legitimises the adoption of different positions and opens space for dialogue”. (Kadić 2024, p. 499)

Islamic theological education does not sufficiently make students aware that every Islamic interpretation inevitably reflects the psychological and socio-political position of the interpreter; instead, interpretations are often presented apologetically, as beyond critical questioning.

Hasan Hanafi (Kadić 2024) speaks of a socially engaged Islam: “an Islam of social justice”, in which the Muslim subject is liberated from various internal and external hegemonies. Within such a framework, tradition is understood as a corpus of inherited texts that must be interpreted in accordance with the needs of the present. Tradition, however, is not an ideal-typical construct independent of everyday reality.

“Tradition, both biologically and historically, should be concrete historical knowledge that requires creative interpretation in order to understand contemporary reality. In practice, however, tradition is what is present in people’s consciousness, the worldview that shapes their behaviour”. (Kadić 2024, p. 507)

If Islamic theological education is not reformed, tradition risks producing an atrophy of rational thought.

In the context of social justice, Hanafi maintained that “the inherited structure of Islamic theology reflects the general structure of power in Muslim societies, supporting the powerful over the weak, the elites over the masses. A new theology must be anthropocentric, engaged, and transformative” (Kadić 2024, p. 513). The fundamental premise of Hanafi’s new theology is that Islam is protest, opposition.

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Appendix A. Qualitative Survey

The qualitative expert survey included the following questions:

1. By knowing the constitutive Islamic norm in individuals, we automatically have its realisation in practice. Is this causality understood like this? (If yes, please explain. If not, please explain why.)
2. What is the relationship between upbringing and education for social justice and analytical reflection and knowledge of inequality, power structures, and historical injustice? (Are there any positive or negative examples for the above?)
3. What would be the position of traditional authorities or constitutive sources of Islam towards the understanding of education for social justice mentioned above? (Does

- it seem to be labelled as heretical questioning? If yes, please explain. If not, please explain why.)
4. How are the contents of Islamic education that treat social justice transmitted?
 5. Are Qur'anic texts and current problems connected, and are there desirable or undesirable problems that take into account the context? (Who should decide on those commitments, and why should they?)
 6. What support is provided by society for an engaged and critical approach to Islamic education?
 7. Is there a need for the issue of social justice, or is it ignored? (If yes, please explain. If not, please explain why.)
 8. What is the attitude towards interdisciplinarity in the analysis of social justice in Islamic education (whether political science, sociology, social psychology, social pedagogy, etc.)?
 9. Are there moments when inequality is internalised through Islamic education, patriarchal norms, and structures? (If yes, please explain. If not, please explain why.)
 10. What is the relationship between Islamic education and social structure injustices embedded in political, cultural, or economic norms?
 11. Are marginal groups treated as invisible in Islamic education, thereby reinforcing the habit of "just" order? (If yes, please explain. If not, please explain why.)
 12. Does Islamic education lack a critical approach? (Free discussion.) Does the restriction of freedom of opinion occur? (If yes, please explain. If not, please explain why.)
 13. Is there a danger of weakening the credibility of theological education in the context of contemporary values that affirm engagement, but not at all oppression? (If yes, please explain. If not, please explain why.)
 14. What are the future implications for us, and what can we do?

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