

ISLAMIC HIGHER EDUCATION IN GERMANY: NEW INROADS IN CONSTRUCTIVIST PEDAGOGY, TECHNOLOGICAL INNOVATION AND INTRA-ISLAMIC DIALOGUE

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this paper is to investigate, analyse and evaluate Islamic higher education in Germany along postmodern lines of constructivist pedagogy, social media technology and intra-Islamic dialogue. To achieve this goal, a mixed-method approach is applied: firstly, a quantitative survey of current, former and potential students of Islamic Theology in Germany, using an internet-based survey, and secondly two personal interviews with professional experts in the field. Results indicate that students see a need for ecumenical intra-Islamic studies across traditional orthodox Islamic frameworks. Constructivist pedagogy can support such ecumenical research and dialogue. Social networks play an important role in attracting prospective student candidates for Islamic Theology besides fostering online communication.

Keywords: *Islam, higher education, constructivism, ecumenism, graduate students*

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INTRODUCTION

In the development of higher education, a number of trends can be observed which are causing an overall disruptive innovation within the higher education environment. The resulting meta-trend in higher education consists of: technological online innovation, constructivist pedagogy and university marketing in order to attract students and financing alike.

While the effects of usage and application of online technology for higher education have been researched and applied for over twenty years (Kern et al. 2004), universities are only gradually coming to terms with these technologies and adapting accordingly (Christensen & Eyring 2011); a development which is even more gradual in the academic educational context of Germany and Europe. As the broader appeal and perceived quality of online higher education has improved (Means 2010), its proliferation and application in the world of private higher education can be expected to increase dramatically within the next 5-10 years (Christensen and & 2011).

The increasing popularity of constructivist pedagogy in education represents an important developing global trend (Moore 2012). Historically, the roots of constructivist pedagogy are manifold, reaching back to the start of the 20th century. Philosophers such as Dewey (1916) and Montessori (1912) developed contemporary pedagogical frameworks that were further developed by Freire (1970) into *social reconstructivism*, Phillips (2000) *applied constructivism* and Patton (2002) *qualitative inquiry*. While a general consensus on constructivism may be challenging to distillate, an applicable description could be to consider constructivism a

theory by which individuals create their own understanding and knowledge base through dynamic group interaction and information exchange (Resnick 1989; Shiraz 2011). The use of new technologies can support constructivist Islamic education (Backus 2012; Hussin et al. 2013).

The application of new marketing and business-related methodologies and tools towards attracting and grafting new potential student bodies can equally qualify as a disruptive innovation in the higher education environment (Gent, 2011). A good deal of research has already been established around the idea of improving higher education quality and appealing to student bodies. Research by Szekeres (2010), Waerass and Solbakk (2008) described the pros and cons of this market-based approach, which has generally had the effect of restructuring university management strategy toward more economically-conscious principles, such as university branding, internationalization and cost-effectiveness, whilst driving the core of educational content in a direction towards student choice and participation, be it through direct student participation on curriculum development, or indirectly – albeit materially – through students' final choice of university.

One academic area that has attracted very little attention in terms of the higher education meta-trend described above is contemporary Islamic higher education in Germany.

The Muslim population in Germany comprises 5% of the overall German population of around 82 million, with the Turkish immigrants and their descendants making up 62% of Muslims in Germany (Haug, Müssig & Stichs 2013). With more than 4 million Muslims, 2,600 mosques, 4 main central Islamic representation bodies and Islamic institutions such as hospitals, charities, graveyards, pastoral care and so forth, within Germany there arises a demand for theoretically competent and practically versatile educators in the field of Islamic theology (Özdil 2011). Specifically, demand for such German-speaking, culturally sensitive and theologically expert graduates can be categorised as follows:

- Imams for mosques,
- Representatives for Islamic representation groups,
- Pastoral care-workers in relationships, families and neighbourhoods,
- Professors, researchers and university academicians,
- Teachers for kindergartens, primary and secondary schools.

All in all, within the next 15 years a demand of around 120 post-graduates per year in Islamic Theology in Germany is forecasted (ibid.) to fill the above positions. Despite a perceived lack of constructivism in Islamic education, there exists at least one historical precedence as exemplified by the ancient *houza* Shi'ite religious education context in Iran (Nome & Vogt 2008; Amirpur 2012). Furthermore, today some countries with Muslim-majority populations such as Turkey and Indonesia are moving to pluralise religious education and insert elements of constructivism into their curricula (Kaymakcan 2007; Nawi & Ramlan 2014).

At present there are four institutions of higher education offering Islamic Theology as university-level degree programmes in Germany located in: Osnabrück, Münster, Frankfurt and Tübingen.

Research Objectives and Questions

Research questions were:

- 1) What differences in perception between current, former and potential students of Islamic Theology in Germany can be identified?
- 2) Are there gender, nationality and/or income differences in perceptions?
- 3) Does adherence to traditionalist schools of Islam have any impact on perceptions of Islamic studies?
- 4) Do people from different educational backgrounds differ in their assessment of higher education?
- 5) Does the usage of social networks have an impact on these perceptions?
- 6) Is there a correlation between parents' faith and perceptions of their children?
- 7) Which are the major dimensions of Islamic education that people are looking at?

Resulting in following objectives of the research:

- 1) To assess perceptions of former, existing and potential students studying Islam at institutions of higher education in Germany.
- 2) To determine the influence of parents and traditionalist schools of Islam on respondents' perceptions.
- 3) To identify the impact of social media usage on these perceptions.
- 4) To compare respondents' perceptions based on gender, nationalities and income.
- 5) To propose a constructivist learning design compatible with Islamic Theology in the German context.

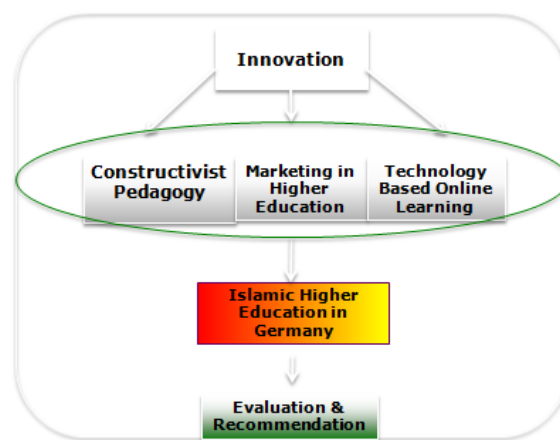


Figure 1: Research Framework

A comprehensive methodology based on our Research Framework (*Figure 1*) was developed and executed as follows:

- 1) a mixed-method approach (Creswell 1999) to gathering our data and results. Here, our methodology consisted of a quantitative market survey for current and potential students of Islamic Theology in Germany, with a total of $n = 91$ such students participating in the questionnaire in spring 2012 (**Appendix I**), and a pair of qualitative interviews with two professional experts from the Islamic Theology field in Germany, broken down into seven Question Sets to approximate and relate to the quantitative student survey above (**Appendix II**, translated from German). Interviewees were Prof. Dr. Katajun Amirpur (KA) of the University of Hamburg, and Dr. Ali Özdil (AÖ) of the Islamisches Wissenschafts- und Bildungsinstitut (Islamic Institute for Science and Education), Hamburg.
- 2) Multivariate correlation (Mardia et al. 1979) and principal component analyses (ibid.) were performed upon the quantitative market survey, giving further insight into respondents' perceptions of Islamic Theology in Germany.

The main areas of interview questions were:

- Islamic identity patterns
- Perceptions of students on Islamic education
- Expectations on Islamic Education
- Constructivism and Islamic Theology

See Appendix I: Questionnaire and Appendix II: Qualitative Interview.

As quantitative survey method, an Internet-based questionnaire on a 1-5 Likert scale was chosen. Data were analysed with SPSS.

Findings & Results

In terms of Islamic identity in Germany and Europe, responding students generally cautiously favour a development of a liberal and "European" Islam (Q5: 52% in **Appendix I**); whilst they clearly do not favour the consideration of Salafism as belonging to the Islamic "mainstream" (Q6: 13%). Qualitatively, both KA and AÖ concur in this viewpoint, with AÖ slight intonation of orthodox adherence in Islamic higher education and KA expanding European contextual application (Question Set 1 of our experts' qualitative interview in **Appendix II**).

Interdisciplinary courses within the broad panorama of Islamic Theology studies such as economics, psychology and art are considered by respondents to be both desired (Q34: 76%) and useful for theological "real-world" dialogue (Q35: 82%). KA and AÖ further concur upon the importance of differentiation between Islamic Theology with its focus on religious understanding, and Islamic Sciences / Orientalist Studies which concentrate more on historical and political patterns in Islamic countries (Q52).

Intra-Islamic dialogue between various theological schools (*madhahib*) is clearly desired, both within local Islamic communities as well as within society as a whole (Q40: 85%, Q41: 75%, Q42: 81%). Furthermore, studies of Sunni-Shi'ite theology harmonisation, following the Islamic term "*taqrib*" and roughly comparable to Christian "ecumenism" in content, are considered desirable by future student respondents (Q24: 91% and Q43: 82%); however, current students perceive that their Islamic Theology programmes are not particularly focussing on this aspect of their studies (Q14: 36%). Our experts KA and AÖ strongly concur in the necessity of increased research into Islamic ecumenism (*taqrib*), with Hamburg potentially functioning as a centre for such dialog-oriented Islamic theological activity in Germany (Q53).

Constructivist pedagogy within Islamic Theology is widely accepted by students as feasible and desirable (Q36: 78%, Q37: 81%, Q38: 60%). Students and experts alike also acknowledge a minimum amount of basic knowledge as necessary for constructivist pedagogy to be successful in this context (Q39: 72% of students). From pedagogic perspective, a basic agreement on compatibility of constructivist pedagogy with Islamic Theology is noted, with KA referencing historical Islamic (Shi'ite *houza*) pedagogic practices using a "constructivist" approach, and AÖ proposing a present-day constructivist method compatible with classical Sunnite teaching methods (Q54).

Students of Islamic theology clearly attest to a growth in importance of online technology learning at university level (Q29: 91%), as well as its application within their Islamic Theology studies (Q32: 67%). Use of social media as a tool in this context is considered useful by about half the respondent base (Q33: 50%). Pedagogic viewpoints concur towards innovative education techniques and online technology, with varying justifications: AÖ in order to effectively reach out to the younger generation and KA in order to optimise the university resource base (Q55).

In our quantitative market survey, respondents were asked a variety of demographic questions. As far as pedagogic value in considering demographics in Islamic Theology studies, we note a contrast in viewpoints between our experts: AÖ considers it necessary to focus on this aspect to reflect proper context of Islamic Theology, whereas KA prefers more distance from demographics to concentrate on a holistic Islamic Theology contextual approach (Q56).

Finally, most students wish to continue their Islamic Theology bachelor studies into post-graduate education, demonstrating a tendency toward academic ambition within the rising field (Q18: 56% current students and Q28: 82% future students). Our experts favour this trend, with AÖ focusing on "pioneer" status current Islamic Theology students and current growing necessity within the Islamic community, and KA observing excellent academic and pedagogic opportunities for new graduates whilst noting a current lack of financing for relevant positions within the Islamic community in Germany (Q57).

In our quantitative market survey, respondents were asked a variety of demographic questions in order to further analyse their responses. To analyse whether significant group differences between people with exposure to Islamic studies differ from others, a *t*-test was conducted. A *t*-test's null-hypothesis implies that there are no differences between groups. If the hypothesis can be rejected (test variable < 0.05), significance can be assumed.

Table 1 shows significant (0.05 level) differences in the perception of exchanges between intra-Islamic theological schools (*madhahib*); potential students with current non-exposure (No) to Islamic studies ranked the importance of exchanges between schools slightly lower (4.0 out of 5).

Table 1: Differences – Exchange

Islam_Study exchange	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Yes	23	4.57	.662	.138
No	10	4.00	1.155	.365

The reason could be that actively involved students care more and want to see progress in the form of exchanges between schools of thought.

A gender comparison, see table 2, reveals strong cross-gender Islamic identification and only a small and insignificant difference between male and female respondents.

Table 2: Difference – Gender

Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Identify_myself_with_Islam Female	19	4.79	.419	.096
Male	14	4.93	.267	.071

In Table 3, respondents were grouped into a German (D) category if they were native German or held dual citizenship e.g. German and Turkish; the remaining were grouped as respondents without German citizenship (T).

Table 3: Difference – Constructivism & Nationality

	Nation	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Open_Mindset	D	14	3.57	1.284	.343
	T	16	4.12	.619	.155
Accept_Constructivism	D	14	3.71	.994	.266
	T	16	4.38	.500	.125

Interestingly non-German citizens ranked slightly higher in acceptance of constructivism as a pedagogic concept and the importance of an open mindset.

In Table 4, the sample was split into groups with H(igh) frequency usage of social networks such as Facebook (several times per day) and L(ow) frequency usage (once or less per day).

Table 4: Social Network

	Soc_net_activ	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Constructivist	H	20	3.80	1.322	.296
	L	13	4.23	.599	.166
Interdisciplinary	H	20	3.65	1.309	.293
	L	13	4.54	.519	.144

Results here show that less-frequent users of social networks tend to desire interdisciplinary courses and embrace a constructivist atmosphere. This could be attributable to frequent social media users' experiences with polemic discussions on internet platforms.

Table 5 shows factor loadings, the correlation between variables and the factor (component); high loadings marked in *Italics*. Factor analysis is an appropriate method for condensing data. Since the questionnaire was quite long it was advisable to reduce the data to major dimensions (components, factors).

Table 5: Major Dimensions - status quo

	Component (variance explained)		
	Classic Islam (28%)	Theological Direction (21%)	Holistic (18%)
B2_muss	<i>.917</i>	-.118	.099
B1_recht	<i>.905</i>	.084	.025
B4_lib	-.066	<i>.772</i>	-.016
B5_salaf	.037	<i>.757</i>	.052
B3_sushi	-.064	-.154	<i>.869</i>
B6_sufi	.232	.277	<i>.566</i>

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Rotation Method: Varimax

The first identifiable major dimension is represented by B1_recht & B2_muss, and can be called the 'Classical Islam' dimension. The second major dimension can be characterized as 'Theological Direction'. First and second major dimensions are demonstrating a high adherence to Islam whilst simultaneously expressing a perception that classical Islam can explain student's viewpoints the most, followed by a more liberal assessment and appreciation of various religious streams.

Table 6 shows major dimensions related to the actual structure of Islamic Theology studies.

Table 6: Major Dimensions – Structure

	Component			
	Importance of History (32%)	Teaching of Islam (21%)	Islamic Disciplines (17%)	Classical Islam (12%)
E1_klass	-.370	.562	.268	.669
E2_gesch	.728	-.394	.287	.286
E3_kult	.652	-.521	-.141	.396
E4_iswis	.055	.312	-.805	-.088
E5_speak	.367	.591	-.581	.178
E6_sushi	.301	.245	.400	-.505
E7_ausla	.890	.046	.311	.149
E8_akad	.745	.279	.057	-.476
E9_isgem	-.180	.736	.583	.049
E10_doc	.730	.562	-.130	.142

The first dimension can be described as the 'Importance of History', the second as 'Teaching of Islam' the third as 'Islamic Disciplines' and finally, the fourth dimension represents 'Classical Islam'. When students look at the overall structure/curriculum of their Islam studies, these four factors form their perceptions.

Finally, in Table 7 we analysed the major dimensions related to pedagogic innovations as pertained to evening courses, use of Internet and social media.

Table 7: Major Dimensions - Media

	Component	
	Convergence (37%)	Interdisciplinary (23%)
F1_komm	.859	-.046
F2_intun	.755	-.302
F3_abend	.125	.669
F4_tech	.751	.095
F5_social	.830	.047
F6_inter	-.013	.812
F7_dial	.129	.651

The two dimensions as related to our previously mentioned meta-trends: firstly, a 'convergence dimension' based on expanded usage of Internet technology and internalization of theological spectrum, and secondly, the 'interdisciplinary dimension' focusing on the extended appreciation and desire of learning Islamic theology across traditional boundaries.

Conclusions and Implications

Higher education innovation meta-trend as described at the article's outset consists of: constructivism, internet technology application and pro-active marketing to students. Our research has confirmed this meta-trend and considered its specific application to the Islamic Theology context in Germany, a relatively new academic field for both universities and students. Islamic Theology pedagogic experts and students alike concur on the compatibility of constructivist pedagogy with Islamic teaching. Internet- and social media-based technologies can help reinforce the trend, and a positive linkage within the Islamic Theology context between constructivist pedagogy and Internet technology. Perhaps most critically, pedagogy experts and students concur on the increased need for ecumenical intra-Islamic studies across traditional orthodox Islamic frameworks. Constructivist pedagogy, when equipped with a basic knowledge foundation and pro-active supervision of participation, correlates well with such ecumenical research and dialogue. Such constructivist, ecumenical and technologically advanced vision of postmodern Islamic Theology pedagogy within the broader German and European contexts is thus proposed.

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Appendix I: Market Survey

All questions are rated by the respondent on a 1-5 Likert Scale with 5= "strongly agree", 3= "neutral", 1= "strongly disagree".

Set#	Question Translation	Variable
A	Q1 : I identify strongly with Islam.	A1_islam
<i>Survey Divert Function*- Answer "1 – strongly disagree" → Survey termination.</i>		
Group B: Islamic identity patterns.		
B	Q2 : I consciously follow a classical Islamic theological direction (madhhab).	B1_recht
	Q3 : Whoever practices Islam should follow a classical Islamic theological direction (madhhab).	B2_muss
	Q4 : Sunnite and Shi'ite theology can be brought into harmony.	B3_sushi
	Q5 : I believe it is worth supporting a development towards a liberal, "European" Islam.	B4_lib
	Q6 : The Islamic majority accepts Salafism as a mainstream ideology.	B5_salaf
	Q7 : Sufism (Islamic mysticism) is an important part of Islam.	B6_sufi
<i>Survey Divert Function*- Answer "current student" or "past student" → Group D; Answer "future student" → Group E; Answer "neither, nor" → Survey termination.</i>		
Group D: Present & Past Students		
D	Q9 : In my Islamic Studies courses we concentrate mainly on classical Islamic theology.	D1_klass
	Q10 : History and culture play an important role in Islamic studies.	D2_gesch
	Q11 : In my studies we are offered many courses in history and culture of Islamic countries.	D3_kult
	Q12 : In our programme we receive courses in diverse Islamic sciences such as tafsir, fiqh, Hadithwissenschaften etc.	D4_iswis
	Q13 : In our programme, we learn Arabic and Persian on a high level.	D5_speak

	Q14 : Our Islamic Studies programme also focuses strongly on theological Sunnite-Shi'ite differences.	D6_sushi
	Q15 : I can imagine one day studying Islamic Theology full-time or part-time in a foreign country.	D7_ausla
	Q16 : In the future I'd like to work in academia, for example research in Islamic Sciences, Oriental Studies etc.	D8_akad
	Q17 : In the future I'd like to work within the Islamic community, for example as an Imam, in an Islamic association, pastoral care, etc.	D9_isgem
	Q18 : Following my degree programme I'd like to continue in postgraduate education e.g. for a Master's or Doctorate.	D10_doc

Group E: Future Students		
E	Q19 : In my Islamic Studies courses I'd mainly like to concentrate on classical Islamic theology.	E1_klass
	Q20 : History and culture play an important role in Islamic studies.	E2_gesch
	Q21 : In my future programme we should be offered many courses in history and culture of Islamic countries.	E3_kult
	Q22 : In my future programme we should receive courses in diverse Islamic sciences such as tafsir, fiqh, Hadithwissenschaften etc.	
	Q23 : In my future programme, we should learn Arabic and Persian on a high level.	E5_speak
	Q24 : Our Islamic Studies programme should also focus strongly on theological Sunnite-Shi'ite differences.	E6_sushi
	Q25 : I can imagine one day studying Islamic Theology full-time or part-time in a foreign country.	
	Q26 : In the future I'd like to work in academia, for example research in Islamic Sciences, Oriental Studies etc.	E8_akad
	Q27 : In the future I'd like to work within the Islamic community, for example as an Imam, in an Islamic association, pastoral care, etc.	E9_isgem
	Q28 : Following my degree programme I'd like to continue in postgraduate education e.g. for a Master's or Doctorate.	E10_doc
Group F: University Meta-Trend		
F	Q29 : Due to rapid advances in communication technology such as Internet, the face of education is changing remarkably.	F1_komm

Q30 : Universities are becoming ever more international, and their international profile is becoming ever more important for students.	F2_intun
Q31 : If offered, I would also participate in evening and weekend courses in Islamic Theology.	F3_abend
Q32 : As part of my studies I expect a high level of technological interaction (Internet, online discussion forums, etc.).	F4_tech
Q33 : New 'social media' such as Facebook, Twitter etc. could be combined with course offerings to achieve a higher learning effect.	F5_social
Q34 : I'd be interested in interdisciplinary courses like economics, psychology, art etc. in the context of my Islamic Theology studies.	F6_inter
Q35 : Such interdisciplinary courses within my Islamic Studies programme could lead to a strengthened background in theological knowledge, dialogue skills and religious understanding.	F7_dial

Group G: Constructivism and Islamic Theology		
G	Q36 : Traditional professor lectures can be intelligently combined with a structured approach to constructivist learning.	G1_const
	Q37 : A contemporary higher education programme should contain elements of constructivist learning.	G2_struk
	Q38 : Professors can play an indirect role as moderators of constructivist learning groups, rather than simply as "lecturers".	G3_moder
	Q39 : For successful constructivist learning to occur, students should already possess a minimum level of basic subject knowledge.	G4_mind
	Q40 : Constructivist learning within an Islamic Studies programme can further interdisciplinary thinking and a broader community approach.	G5_ansaz
	Q41 : In an Islamic Studies programme, constructivist learning can develop important competences such as: conflict mediation, interdisciplinary activism within the Islamic community, etc.	G6_komp
	Q42 : Constructivist learning within Islamic Theology can lead to advanced exchange and understanding (<i>taqrib</i>) between inner-Islamic theological currents.	G7_austa
	Q43 : In general I am interested in an advanced exchange between varying inner-Islamic theological currents (<i>madhahib</i>).	G8_ausja
Group H: Demographics		
H	Q44 : I am male/female.	H1_Gender
	Q45 : My age is between: (<18, 18-25, 26-40, 41-60, 61+)	H2_Age
	Q46 : My cultural background is: (multiple answers possible; German, European, Turkish, Arabic, Persian, African, others)	H3_Nation
	Q47 : The highest education level of my parents is: (no schooling, secondary school-3 German levels, bachelor's, master's, doctor),	H4_College
	Q48 : My family's annual income resides by: (<16k€, 16k€-25k€, 25k€-50k€, 50k€-75k€,	H5_Income

	75k€-100k€, 100+k€)	
	Q49 : My parents consider themselves religious.	H6_Parents
	Q50 : I already speak, read and write in fluent Arabic.	H7_Arab
	Q51 : I am a member of following "social networks": (multiple answers possible; Facebook, Twitter, Muxlim, YouTube, MySpace, LinkedIn, Gplus, others, none)	H8_Soc_net+
	Q52 : I am logged into these "social networks" as follows: (several times per day, once per day, once per week, once per month, less frequently).	H9_Soc_net_activ

Appendix II: Qualitative Interview: Question Sets (QS) 1-7

Question Sets for Qualitative Interview of professional experts Prof. Dr. Katajun Amirpur & Dr. Ali-Özgür Özdil.
<p>QS1. Do you find it essential that a student of Islamic theology professes in personal faith and practice of Islam? If so, how could a "typical" Islamic identity for the majority of your students look like and on what parameters could it be based? If not, how would the potential application of a confessed Christian and Jewish students be received from your faculty / administration?</p>
<p>QS2. Do you consider the traditional disciplines of Islamic Studies, Orientalism and Islamic theology as fundamentally different from each other? Where do you see similarities or differences? Which interfaces do you detect (if at all), and what appropriate resources at your university could be shared for the purpose of efficiency and solidarity between these subjects?</p>
<p>QS3. What significance do you attach to the various currents and classical traditions within Islam, particularly for curriculum development? As an example, how to deal with the theoretical and methodological differences between the Sunni and Shi'ite movements (if at all)? What would be your advice to those of your students who want to explore these kinds of differences or similarities between the intra-Islamic tendencies?</p>
<p>QS4. Do you consider constructivist pedagogy as a whole compatible with the teaching of Islamic theology? Can you confirm that Islam was traditionally taught "from above", and that constructivist pedagogy in this area of research would be an innovation in the knowledge-based communication to the particular students? What is your personal approach toward constructivist pedagogy and its application in Islamic theology, if at all?</p>
<p>QS5. "Innovation" is the hot new concept when it comes to higher education. How especially can communication technology innovation contribute to the development of the doctrine of Islamic theology? Could it be interesting to incorporate new innovative technologies, such as Internet forums, social networks, virtual online courses, etc. in your curriculum for your approach to teaching? As there are currently many young adults using the "Internet 2.0" to obtain all kinds of information about Islam, are you already actively involved or consider switching to use such communication technologies with your students?</p>

QS6. In our quantitative market survey of current and future students, we collect also small amounts of data demographic character. (It is clear that all of the policies of anonymity and the applicable data protection regulations will be respected.) Do you think that the demographics of current and future students play an important role in the architecture and the implementation of a curriculum for Islamic theology? For example, do topics such as gender, family income, cultural background, etc. deserve special consideration in structuring the Islamic theological curriculum, and if so, to what extent?

QS7. And last but not least, considering the long-lasting landmark decision of your students in choosing Islamic theological studies, how do you see the current or future career prospects for your graduates? Will it be easy for an Islamic theologian in Germany to get work in his field? What kind of career direction is likely to contribute to the employment of graduates: an academic, or a community-related? Will your graduates maybe need to be going abroad (as in Austria and UK) to find job-related employment?