Epistemic Decolonisation in IPE: A Pedagogical Intervention and the Case for a Khaldun–Yunus Framework

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the pedagogical effects of integrating Ibn Khaldun's *Muqaddimah* into an undergraduate International Political Economy (IPE) curriculum as part of a broader effort towards epistemic decolonisation. A convergent mixed-methods design combined end-of-semester survey data (N = 36) with thematic analysis of open-ended responses at a Malaysian university. All students reported some shift in their understanding of the origins of economic thought, and most questioned its exclusively Western foundations, and qualitative results suggest emerging awareness of knowledge hierarchies and receptivity towards Islamic ethical principles across religious backgrounds. Situating these findings within the history of IPE, the paper advances a Khaldun–Yunus framework, arguing that Ibn Khaldun's concepts of ʿumran (civilisational flourishing) and taʿawun (mutual cooperation) provide the moral and macro-institutional grounding that Muhammad Yunus's enterprise-based approach to poverty lacks, and specifying the conditions under which that approach is consistent with Khaldunian principles in light of left-structuralist critiques of microfinance. Because the instrument relied on post-only self-report, the findings indicate perceived rather than measured change; a pre-test/post-test design is set out for subsequent iterations.

Keywords: epistemic decolonisation, Ibn Khaldun, International Political Economy, Islamic intellectual traditions, Zero Poverty, microfinance

INTRODUCTION

International Political Economy (IPE), developed in the latter part of the twentieth century, has been dominated by liberal and Marxist theories from the Western tradition. Its curricula conventionally begin with Adam Smith, although earlier traditions, particularly Ibn Khaldun's *Muqaddimah*, theorised core economic principles centuries before (Issawi, 1950). This starting point was inherited when IPE took shape in the 1970s at the intersection of postwar International Relations and neoclassical economics, both carrying a European genealogy of economic thought (Cohen, 2008; Hobson, 2013). The neglect is no coincidence but an embodiment of what Quijano (2000) calls "the coloniality of knowledge".

The most significant instance of this epistemic cleansing is Ibn Khaldun (1332–1406), the fourteenth-century Tunisian polymath whose *Muqaddimah* (1377/1967) foreshadows theories of the division of labour, economic cycles, taxation, and social solidarity by nearly four centuries, yet who is conspicuously absent from the mainstream IPE canon. We attribute this exclusion not to mere negligence but to academic Islamophobia: institutionalised discrimination against intellectual work produced by Muslims within knowledge-generating institutions (Grosfoguel, 2013; Ramadan, 2025).

Epistemic decolonisation also bears on how the discipline conceptualises global poverty. Muhammad Yunus's Zero Poverty agenda, built on microcredit and social business, is among the most influential contemporary

programmes, yet its premises derive almost entirely from Western development economics and it has attracted sustained left-structuralist criticism (Bateman & Chang, 2012; Karim, 2011; Roy, 2010). This paper argues that Ibn Khaldun's theory of ʿumran (civilisational flourishing), grounded in ʿasabiyyah (social solidarity), taʿawun (mutual cooperation), and just governance, offers the theoretical foundation Yunus's model lacks, providing both a justification for enterprise-based poverty alleviation and conditions against which its practice can be evaluated.

This paper presents findings from a convergent parallel mixed-methods study of 36 undergraduates at Albukhary International University (AIU), Malaysia, representing 14 nationalities and varied religious beliefs, who took an IPE module built around Ibn Khaldun and Islamic thought. It examines students' responses to this decolonial pedagogy and draws on them, particularly the cross-faith acceptance of Islamic ethical principles, to develop the Khaldun–Yunus framework. The empirical data bear on the pedagogical claims and on the reception of the framework's normative principles; the link to Yunus is developed theoretically rather than tested, and no causal claim about development outcomes is made.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Coloniality of Knowledge and Islamophobia in Academia

The coloniality of knowledge is the epistemological dimension of colonial power, operating by promoting Western paradigms as universal and marginalising non-Western knowledge systems; for Quijano (2000) and Mignolo (2000), coloniality of knowledge and coloniality of power form an interlocked system.

This exclusion extends explicitly to Islamic epistemologies, and Islamophobia in academia operates through similar epistemic strategies. Epistemic racism operates through frameworks presented as superior and universal, a phenomenon magnified since the September 11 attacks, with Islamophobia used to legitimise Whiteness and discipline Muslim academics (Grosfoguel, 2013; Ramadan, 2025). As decolonial scholarship has moved towards the imperatives of epistemic justice (Mignolo & Walsh, 2018; Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2020), the exclusion of Islamic intellectual heritage from core IPE syllabuses can no longer be regarded as an innocuous omission.

The Disciplinary Formation of IPE and the Making of Its Canon

IPE did not emerge with a long genealogy of its own; it was constituted in the 1970s at the intersection of two established fields. Strange's (1970) call to end the "mutual neglect" between international economics and international relations is treated as the founding statement of the British school, while Keohane and Nye's (1977) work on complex interdependence anchored the American school within postwar International Relations (IR). Cohen (2007, 2008) describes the resulting "transatlantic divide" between a positivist, rational-choice American IPE and a more historical and critical British IPE; both, however, took the postwar Western order and its hegemon as their principal objects of inquiry.

The canon that undergraduate IPE inherited was assembled from these parent disciplines. From economics came a history of thought running from the Greeks to the scholastics and then to Smith; Schumpeter's (1954) "Great Gap" of some five centuries coincides with the flourishing of Arab-Islamic scholarship, and Ghazanfar (1995) shows how it has been reproduced across the field. From IR came the schema that still structures most introductory courses: the division of political economy into liberal, nationalist (mercantilist), and Marxist perspectives (Gilpin, 1987), each traced to an early modern European founder. Hobson (2013) demonstrates that this schema and its supporting historiography rest on Eurocentric assumptions that cast Europe as the sole generative source of the world economy and of the ideas that explain it.

This history specifies how the exclusion described in Section 2.1 became institutionalised. Ibn Khaldun's economic analysis was available to Western scholarship well before IPE took shape (Issawi, 1950; Spengler, 1964), so his absence cannot be explained by inaccessibility alone; it reflects the uncritical transfer of a Eurocentric genealogy from the parent disciplines, sustained by epistemic hierarchies and academic Islamophobia. The tripartite framework is thus a late twentieth-century pedagogical construct rather than a

timeless map of the field, and revising its starting point is as legitimate a disciplinary choice as its original adoption.

Ibn Khaldun and the Roots of Political Economy

The *Muqaddimah* systematically anticipates core issues of political economy: labour as the main source of value, supply and demand, the link between taxation and the legitimacy of rule, the rise and fall of civilisations, and the inherently social nature of economics. Comparative research (Boulakia, 1971; Soofi, 1995; Spengler, 1964; Weiss, 1995) has shown substantial similarities between his concepts and the later formalisations of Smith, Ricardo, Marx, and Keynes, while Alatas (2020) contends that his continued exclusion from mainstream political economy reflects Eurocentric bias within the discipline rather than any shortcoming in the analysis.

Central to Ibn Khaldun's development theory is ʿasabiyyah, variously translated as social solidarity, group cohesion, or collective identity, which scholars such as Dhaouadi (1990) have related to social capital and collective action. The complementary concept of taʿawun, or mutual cooperation, provides an ethical approach to economic organisation that parallels, and precedes by five centuries, Durkheim's organic solidarity. Together they ground Ibn Khaldun's theory of ʿumran, civilisational flourishing, in which economic activity is not an independent domain of self-interested rationality but is embedded in morality, politics, and social relations, anticipating Polanyi's embeddedness approach (Tayob, 2022).

The Zero Poverty Agenda of Muhammad Yunus: Contributions, Critiques, and Epistemic Boundaries

Yunus's Zero Poverty agenda starts from the premise that poverty is institutionally created and can be undone through institutional innovation (Yunus, 2007, 2017). It rests on Grameen microcredit, which extends small collateral-free loans to poor borrowers, predominantly women, organised into groups that share responsibility for repayment, and on social business, a non-loss, non-dividend company whose profits are reinvested in its social mission (Yunus, 2010). Underlying both is the claim that people are not one-dimensional profit-maximisers (Yunus, 2007); the agenda has informed debates on the Sustainable Development Goals (Yunus et al., 2021).

The agenda has drawn sustained left-structuralist criticism. Bateman (2010) and Bateman and Chang (2012) argue that microfinance individualises poverty and functions as "local neoliberalism" that substitutes private debt for public investment; Roy (2010) shows how it became an asset class extending finance capital into the lives of the poor; and Karim's (2011) ethnography documents how group liability converts kinship ties into an "economy of shame". The 2010 Andhra Pradesh crisis illustrated the consequences of commercialised lending at scale (Taylor, 2011), and randomised evaluations in six countries found modest rather than transformative effects (Banerjee et al., 2015).

These critiques point to a deeper epistemic boundary. Theorised almost entirely within Western development economics as a market-based correction to market failure, Yunus's model lacks an account of the social and moral conditions under which enterprise reduces rather than reproduces poverty, and of the macro-level role of the state, taxation, and governance. This paper contends that Ibn Khaldun's theory of ʿumran supplies this missing foundation (Section 5.2), responding to calls for epistemic pluralisation in development thought (Mignolo & Walsh, 2018; Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2020).

Decolonial Pedagogy and the Transformation of Students' Epistemology

Bhambra et al. (2018) distinguish superficial curricular diversification, which supplements Western knowledge with non-Western perspectives, from substantive epistemic transformation, which repositions marginalised traditions as co-equal sources of theory. Arday and Mirza (2018) examine institutional barriers to epistemic inclusion, and Fataar and Subreenduth (2015) argue for an "ecologies of knowledge" approach. Student resistance to decolonial content is widely discussed (Sensoy & DiAngelo, 2012) and understood as an outcome of the disciplinary common sense of coloniality (Maldonado-Torres et al., 2018), to which Stein et al. (2017) propose responses grounded in complexity and accountability; Dei (2000) argues that centring Indigenous and Global South knowledges produces significant epistemological change among students (see also Tuck & Yang,

2012). Yet research on student responses to Islamic scholarship in higher education is minimal, and Southeast Asian Muslim-majority institutions have not been studied with mixed-methods evidence. This study addresses that gap with a multinational, multi-religious sample.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The study employed a convergent parallel mixed-methods design (Creswell & Zhou, 2016), in which quantitative and qualitative data were collected simultaneously and merged at interpretation, allowing reported epistemological change to be triangulated with students' own meaning-making.

Research Context and Participants

The study was conducted at Albukhary International University (AIU) in Kedah, Malaysia, with 36 undergraduates enrolled in BPC2113 International Political Economy in the 2024–2025 session. The cohort represented 14 nationalities, led by Malaysia (n = 7), Yemen (6), Nigeria (5), and Indonesia (4); respondents were Muslim (n = 31, 86.1%), Christian (3), Buddhist (1), and non-affiliated (1), with 18 women and 18 men, making the sample well suited to examining the cross-cultural and cross-religious reach of the intervention.

Pedagogical Intervention

The redesign of BPC2113 rested on the premise that the conventional tripartite classification of Economic Liberalism, Mercantilism, and Structuralism/Marxism, popularised by Gilpin (1987), carries a Eurocentric timeline that excludes Islamic contributions. Two units were restructured. In the Economic Liberalism unit, students began not with Smith's *The Wealth of Nations* (1776) but with the *Muqaddimah* (1377/1967) and its theory of markets, labour, surplus, and production, and met Smith and Ricardo only afterwards. This is a reordering rather than an addition: it signals to students from Muslim-majority countries of the Global South that their intellectual tradition is a valid entry point to IPE theory rather than an adjunct to it.

In the Structuralism unit, the conventional readings (Marx, Lenin, Prebisch, Cardoso, and Frank) were retained alongside Islamic anti-colonial thinkers whose critiques resonate with structuralism, such as Jamal al-Din al-Afghani, Muhammad Abduh, and Ali Shariati, with Samir Amin serving as a bridge to dependency theory. Islamic ethical principles, namely ʿadl (justice), ihsan (excellence), zakat (redistribution), and the prohibition of riba (usury), were presented not as religious injunctions but as criteria for assessing economic systems; the prohibition of riba, for instance, gave students a different lens on IMF and World Bank structural adjustment. Together these changes amount to what Bhambra et al. (2018) term substantive decolonisation.

Data Collection Instrument

A 20-item questionnaire (twelve closed-ended and eight open-ended items) was administered at the end of the semester, covering prior awareness (Items 1–2), responses to the intervention (Items 3–11), epistemological change (Items 12–15), and decolonial disposition (Items 16–20). It was designed for course evaluation rather than as a validated scale, and several items used evaluative or presupposing wording (Section 5.5); responses are therefore interpreted as perceptions of change.

Data Analysis

Quantitative data were analysed through descriptive frequencies. Open-ended responses were analysed using reflexive thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006); themes were generated inductively and interpreted through the frameworks of epistemic decolonisation (Mignolo, 2000; Quijano, 2000) and counter-Islamophobic pedagogy (Grosfoguel, 2013).

Ethical Considerations

The study followed the ethical guidelines of Albukhary International University; as routine pedagogical practice involving anonymous, voluntary feedback collected after course completion, it was exempt from formal ethics review. All participants gave informed consent, and no identifiable personal data were collected.

RESULTS

Quantitative Findings

The questionnaire was analysed in four clusters: prior awareness (Q1), cognitive engagement (Q7–Q11), epistemological change (Q12–Q15), and decolonial disposition (Q17–Q20). Table 1 presents consolidated findings using the original survey wording; they indicate perceived rather than objectively measured change.

Table 1. Summary of key quantitative findings organised by instrument cluster (N = 36)

Cluster	Survey Item	Responses, n (%)
Prior Awareness	Q1. Familiarity with Ibn Khaldun before course	Knew name, not work 18 (50.0); knew him and his work 12 (33.3); never heard of him 6 (16.7)
Cognitive Engagement	Q7. Comparative analysis: Ibn Khaldun vs. European thinkers	Very helpful 20 (55.6); somewhat helpful 16 (44.4)
	Q8. Should remain as core content?	Definitely yes 21 (58.3); probably yes 14 (38.9)
	Q9. Starting with *Muqaddimah* (1377) before Smith (1776)?	Makes more historical sense 25 (69.4)
	Q11. Islamic ethical principles in IPE (ʿadl, ihsan, zakat, riba)	Very valuable 28 (77.8); somewhat valuable 6 (16.7); neutral 2 (5.6)
Epistemological Change	Q12. Shift in understanding origins of economic thought	Yes, significantly 17 (47.2); yes, somewhat 19 (52.8); any shift 36 (100.0)
	Q13. Economics exclusively Western?	False and Eurocentric 18 (50.0); oversimplified 13 (36.1)
	Q14. Awareness of knowledge hierarchies	Much more aware 18 (50.0); somewhat more aware 15 (41.7)
	Q15. Questioned other gaps in prior education?	Yes, question many things 21 (58.3); yes, somewhat* 12 (33.3)
Decolonial Disposition	Q17. Include Ibn Khaldun as core if you taught IPE?	Definitely, as foundational 27 (75.0); yes, supplementary 7 (19.4)

	Q19. Overall rating of integration	Excellent 26 (72.2); good 9 (25.0)
	Q20. Would recommend this course?	Definitely yes 32 (88.9); probably yes 4 (11.1)

*Note: *A further 8.3% (n = 3) selected "A little"; all 36 respondents therefore indicated some degree of questioning.*

The most theoretically significant result concerns epistemological change. All 36 respondents reported some shift in their understanding of the origins of economic thought (Q12), 47.2% describing it as significant, although the item's wording presupposed a shift (see Section 5.5). The change generalised beyond module content: 86.1% rejected the claim that economics is exclusively Western as false or oversimplified (Q13); 91.7% reported heightened awareness of knowledge hierarchies, a concept not explicitly taught (Q14); and 91.7% said that learning of Ibn Khaldun's marginalisation prompted them to question other gaps in their prior education (Q15). This transfer from specific content to structural critique is consistent with what Bhambra et al. (2018) identify as the hallmark of meaningful decolonisation.

All respondents found the comparative analysis of Ibn Khaldun and European thinkers helpful (Q7); 97.2% supported retaining him as core content (Q8); 69.4% affirmed that beginning with the *Muqaddimah* before Smith made more historical sense (Q9); and 94.4% would include him as core content in their own teaching (Q17).

Subgroup Patterns

No meaningful variation was observed between Muslim and non-Muslim students on epistemological shift and satisfaction (Q12, Q19, Q20); all five non-Muslim respondents rated Islamic ethical principles as valuable (Q11) and reported increased awareness of knowledge hierarchies (Q14). Variation appeared only in the affective identity dimension captured by the open-ended responses, where Islamic scholarly pride (Theme 3) was concentrated among Muslim respondents. No gender-based variation was observed.

Qualitative Findings: Thematic Analysis

Thematic analysis of open-ended responses identified four themes, best understood as a developmental sequence (Table 2).

Table 2. Thematic analysis of open-ended responses: Themes, prevalence, subgroup distribution, and representative quotes (N = 36)

Theme	Prevalence	Description	Subgroup Distribution	Representative Quote
1. Epistemic Awakening	~89%	Students recognised non-Western economic thought had been structurally excluded from prior education.	All 14 nationalities; all 4 religious subgroups.	*"Economic thinking did not start only in Europe; Ibn Khaldun already talked about it earlier." (Pakistani, Muslim male)*

2. Decolonial Repositioning	~69%	Students used decolonial vocabulary spontaneously, including terms such as “colonised mindset” and “Eurocentric academia,” without having been explicitly taught these frameworks.	Strongest among Yemeni, Nigerian, Indonesian, Bangladeshi; also Zimbabwean and Cambodian respondents.	*"If we stick to Western thinkers we will still be led with a colonised mindset and ideas that might not work in our societies." (Yemeni, Muslim male)*
3. Islamic Scholarly Pride	~50%	Muslim respondents described affective affirmation upon encountering Islamic intellectual traditions treated as primary academic authority.	Concentrated among Muslim respondents; occasionally among students from Muslim-majority countries.	*"It made me feel proud because when I see such Muslim and Arabic thinkers who did that long time ago, it makes me feel more proud of my identity." (Yemeni respondent)*
4. Universal Ethical Resonance	~94%	Students across all religious traditions affirmed Islamic economic principles as universal ethical frameworks rather than sectarian prescriptions.	All non-Muslim respondents; no negative responses on Q11 across any subgroup.	*"Although all those principles are seen as Islamic values, they would and have benefited everyone involved no matter what their religion is." (Christian respondent)*

In Epistemic Awakening, students encountered a pre-Enlightenment economic theorist absent from their earlier learning; a Bangladeshi participant, noting that Ibn Khaldun saw profit as “the value that is created through human labour,” framed him as a precursor of Smith and Marx rather than an opponent. In Decolonial Repositioning, students moved from recognition to questioning canon formation itself, using terms such as “colonised mind,” “Eurocentric education,” and “knowledge hierarchy” although decolonial theory was not explicitly taught; this insight parallels Alatas’s (2020) argument. Universal Ethical Resonance was the most evenly spread theme: a Cambodian Buddhist student independently concluded that honesty, justice, and dignity matter more than profit maximisation, and a Zimbabwean Christian student found Ibn Khaldun’s arguments about labour and the natural rights of individuals profound.

Convergence of Quantitative and Qualitative Strands

The two strands converge at three points and diverge at one. The 91.7% who questioned other gaps in their education (Q15) is corroborated by the spontaneous generalisation in Theme 2; the 94.5% who found Islamic ethical principles valuable (Q11) is deepened by Theme 4, in which students treated these as ethical rather than religious standards, a premise essential to the Khaldun–Yunus framework; and positive results across all four religious subgroups are mirrored in the distribution of themes. The divergence is Theme 3 (Islamic scholarly pride), which appeared only in the open-ended data; future instruments should include closed-ended items on identity validation.

DISCUSSION

Epistemic Decolonisation through Pedagogy

The results provide indicative evidence for placing Ibn Khaldun at the centre of an undergraduate IPE curriculum as a strategy for decolonising knowledge. The reported shifts on Q12 and Q13, together with the independent appearance of phrases such as "colonised mindset" and "hierarchy of knowledge" across national and religious groups, are consistent with substantive decolonisation (Bhambra et al., 2018). Beginning with the *Muqaddimah* before Smith is not a cosmetic rearrangement: it repositions Smith as a systematiser of principles articulated four centuries earlier and operationalises what Mignolo (2009) terms "epistemic disobedience" at the level of the reading schedule, in line with Moosavi's (2023) call for "decolonial reflexivity", Alatas's (2020) case for recovering Ibn Khaldun's dismissed contributions, and Sheikh and Thomas's (2026) demonstration that ʿasabiyyah offers analytical purchase on the contemporary crisis of liberal international order.

Receptivity to decolonial pedagogy is sometimes held to depend on student positionality (cf. Sensoy & DiAngelo, 2012). The AIU data offer little support for this account, although the small number of non-Muslim respondents (n = 5) limits firm conclusions: students from Thailand, Zimbabwe, Cambodia, and Trinidad and Tobago responded comparably to Muslim and Middle Eastern students. This is consistent with Bhambra et al.'s (2018) argument that decolonising the curriculum enriches, rather than dilutes, scholarship.

The Khaldun–Yunus Integrative Framework for Ethical Political Economy

Building on these findings and on Sections 2.3 and 2.4, the framework links epistemic foundations, ethical principles, and institutional application at three levels. The epistemic level is Ibn Khaldun's principle of ʿumran, constituted by ʿasabiyyah (social solidarity) and taʿawun (cooperation), which views economic activity as embedded in social and ethical relationships. The normative level comprises ʿadl (justice), zakat (redistribution), and the prohibition of riba (exploitative interest). The institutional level comprises contemporary applications, of which Yunus's microcredit and social business are the most prominent. The framework holds that institutional innovation gains conceptual coherence when it is grounded in integrated epistemic and ethical foundations.

Three textual convergences justify treating Yunus's enterprise-based model, rather than state-led redistribution or a structuralist programme, as the institutional expression of ʿumran. First, both locate livelihood in human labour exercised through cooperation: Ibn Khaldun treats taʿawun as the precondition of subsistence and defines profit (kasb) as the value realised from human labour (Ibn Khaldun, 1377/1967), while Yunus (2007) holds that the poor already possess productive capacity and lack only access to capital and supportive institutions. Second, both treat social solidarity as an economic resource: Grameen's groups cultivate a small-scale ʿasabiyyah whose mutual obligations take the place of collateral. Third, both reject the separation of economic activity from morality, as in Yunus's (2007, 2010) critique of the one-dimensional profit-maximiser and his non-dividend principle.

The pairing is one of conditional consistency rather than endorsement, and this is where it answers the left-structuralist critique. Ibn Khaldun's argument that injustice ruins civilisation, because coercive extraction destroys the incentive to labour (Ibn Khaldun, 1377/1967), anticipates the failures documented by Bateman and Chang (2012), Karim (2011), and Roy (2010). When group liability converts solidarity into collateral, ʿasabiyyah is instrumentalised and taʿawun gives way to coercion; when lending is commercialised at high rates of interest, as in Andhra Pradesh, it violates the prohibition of riba, a drift Yunus (2011) himself condemned. Ibn Khaldun also supplies the macro-level theory of the state that Yunus's micro-level model lacks and structuralist critics demand. The framework therefore accepts that micro-enterprise cannot by itself overcome structural poverty, while rejecting the conclusion that enterprise-based approaches are inherently neoliberal; interest-free qard hasan lending within Islamic microfinance (Obaidullah & Khan, 2008) illustrates how its conditions can be institutionalised. Table 3 summarises these relationships.

Table 3. The Khaldun–Yunus framework: Khaldunian principles, institutional counterparts, structuralist critiques, and conditions for consistency

Khaldunian principle	Yunus's institutional counterpart	Left-structuralist critique	Khaldunian condition for consistency
Taʿawun: cooperation as the precondition of livelihood; labour as the source of value (kasb)	Microcredit premised on the productive capacity of the poor (Yunus, 2007)	Individualises poverty; channels borrowers into saturated micro-enterprises (Bateman & Chang, 2012)	Enterprise must be embedded in cooperative structures and complemented by public investment in productive capacity
ʿAsabiyyah: social solidarity	Grameen groups and centres; shared responsibility for repayment	Solidarity converted into collateral; the "economy of shame" (Karim, 2011)	Solidarity must remain voluntary and mutual; coercive enforcement erodes ʿasabiyyah
ʿAdl (justice) and the prohibition of riba	Social business as a non-loss, non-dividend company (Yunus, 2010)	Commercialisation, financialisation, and over-indebtedness (Roy, 2010; Taylor, 2011)	Finance must be non-exploitative (e.g., qard hasan); extracting profit from the poor is an injustice that ruins ʿumran
Just governance, fiscal moderation, and zakat	Largely absent; the model operates at the micro level	Micro-enterprise cannot address the structural and macroeconomic causes of poverty	The state must provide just governance, moderate taxation, and redistribution as the macro conditions for enterprise

Note: The framework is theoretical. The survey data reported in Section 4 bear only on students' reception of the normative principles (ʿadl, zakat, riba), not on the institutional relationships.

The Khaldun–Yunus Framework: Three Propositions

Proposition 1 (Epistemic Pluralisation Hypothesis)

Exposure to plural epistemic frameworks in political economy education strengthens students' capacity to assess critically existing accounts of the history of economic ideas. This is the proposition most directly informed by the present data, though only as self-reported perceptions.

Proposition 2 (Normative Legitimacy Hypothesis)

The incorporation of ethically grounded economic principles increases the cross-cultural acceptance and legitimacy of alternative development approaches. The data bear on this proposition only at the level of student reception; whether such principles increase legitimacy among practitioners and beneficiaries remains to be tested.

Proposition 3 (Conditional Institutional Coherence Hypothesis)

Enterprise-based development initiatives are more likely to reduce poverty sustainably, and less likely to reproduce the failures identified by structuralist critics, when they satisfy the Khaldunian conditions in Table 3:

voluntary rather than coercive solidarity, non-exploitative finance, and just governance at the macro level. This theoretical proposition could be examined by comparing interest-bearing and interest-free (qard hasan) microfinance programmes on over-indebtedness, borrower well-being, and the durability of community ties.

Academic Islamophobia and the Politics of the Canon

The findings also point to an under-examined aspect of academic Islamophobia: the experience of Muslim students in an epistemically antagonistic curriculum. Building on Lumbard's (2025) critique of Eurocentric dominance in the academic study of Islam, we suggest that this climate creates a hermeneutical estrangement for Muslim students, extending Ramadan's (2025) account of "epistemic racism" among Muslim academics to undergraduates. At the same time, ethical resonance across all religious groups and high satisfaction in the multi-faith cohort (Q19: 97.2% "good" or "excellent"; Q20: 100% would recommend) suggest that rectifying the canon's neglect of Islamic thought benefits all students. For Grosfoguel (2013) and Lumbard (2025), the exclusion results from Enlightenment epistemological premises that gave precedence to one rationality over others.

Methodological Limitations and Design for Subsequent Iterations

The quantitative strand has clear limitations. The instrument was developed for course evaluation and administered once, at the end of the semester; Q12 presupposed that a shift had occurred, Q9 and Q13 offered evaluative response options, and Q11 asked students to evaluate four principles in a single item. Combined with the instructor's dual role as researcher, these features are likely to have inflated agreement, so the results should be read as perceived rather than measured change.

Subsequent iterations will adopt four changes. First, neutrally worded, single-construct Likert items will be developed and validated with reliability testing (DeVellis, 2017); for example, Q12 becomes a 1–5 rating of "Systematic economic thought originated primarily in Europe," and Q11 is split into four items. Second, the instrument will be administered in Week 1 and again in Week 14 by a non-teaching colleague after grades are released, so that change is measured within students rather than recalled retrospectively (Hill & Betz, 2005). Third, where timetabling allows, a comparison cohort taught the conventional Smith-first sequence will provide a quasi-experimental contrast (Shadish et al., 2002). Fourth, student reflection papers will be coded blind using the SOLO taxonomy (Biggs & Tang, 2011), with a second coder establishing inter-rater reliability.

CONCLUSION

This research shows that placing Ibn Khaldun's *Muqaddimah* at the core of an undergraduate IPE course was associated with consistent, self-reported epistemological shifts among students from varied national and religious backgrounds: all 36 reported some shift in their perception of the origins of economics, 86.1% rejected the purely Western narrative, and 91.7% reported questioning other gaps in their prior education. These results indicate perceived rather than measured change.

The paper also proposes a Khaldun–Yunus framework in which Ibn Khaldun's theory of ʿumran supplies the civilisational, ethical, and macro-institutional foundation absent from Yunus's vision of Zero Poverty, specifying the conditions under which enterprise-based approaches are consistent with Khaldunian principles and thereby explaining many of the failures identified by structuralist critics. Decolonising knowledge in the classroom, by placing Islamic and Global South epistemologies on an equal footing, is therefore a precondition for development thinking capable of supporting civilisational change towards ending poverty.

The study is limited by its single institution, the absence of a control group or baseline, its instrument design, and the instructor's dual role as researcher. Future work should apply the design set out in Section 5.5, test whether the reported changes persist and transfer to other institutions, and empirically validate the Khaldun–Yunus framework, particularly Proposition 3. The results nonetheless offer initial evidence that the exclusion of Ibn Khaldun from IPE courses is educationally unjustifiable.

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