

# An Islamic Epistemological Perspective on Multiple Intelligences: Implications for Islamic Religious Education

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## Article Info

### Article History

Submitted 05-04-2026

Revised 07-05-2026

Accepted 06-06-2026

Published 30-07-2026

### Keywords:

Multiple Intelligences,  
Al-Quran,  
Islamic Religious  
Education,  
Students,  
Learning

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## Abstract

Research on multiple intelligences has been predominantly developed within psychological theories, particularly Howard Gardner's framework, while its epistemological foundations from an Islamic perspective have received limited scholarly attention. Previous studies have generally discussed Qur'anic perspectives on human potential or the application of multiple intelligences in education separately, without establishing an integrated epistemological framework that connects Islamic religious education to Qur'anic concepts of knowledge, human nature, and intelligence. To address this gap, this study examines the epistemological foundations of multiple intelligences from the perspective of the Qur'an and explores their implications for IR education. This study employed a qualitative library research approach using descriptive and analytical methods. Data were collected through an analysis of Qur'anic verses, classical and contemporary kafir, and relevant literature on multiple intelligences and Islamic education. The findings demonstrate that the Qur'an conceptualizes intelligence as a holistic human capacity rooted in the integration of 'aql (reason), qalb (heart), sam' (hearing), and baṣar (sight), which collectively serve as epistemological instruments for acquiring, understanding, and internalizing knowledge. Unlike conventional perspectives that primarily emphasize cognitive dimensions, the Qur'anic perspective positions spiritual and moral dimensions as the foundation that integrates various forms of human intelligence. This study contributes an Islamic epistemological framework for understanding multiple intelligences and provides a theoretical basis for developing more holistic, inclusive, and student-centered approaches to IR that accommodate learners' diverse potentials while strengthening faith, character, and intellectual development.

Penelitian mengenai kecerdasan majemuk (*multiple intelligences*) selama ini lebih banyak dikembangkan dalam kerangka teori psikologi, khususnya melalui gagasan Howard Gardner, sementara kajian mengenai landasan epistemologisnya dari perspektif Islam masih terbatas. Studi-studi terdahulu umumnya membahas perspektif Al-Qur'an tentang potensi manusia atau penerapan kecerdasan majemuk dalam pendidikan secara terpisah, tanpa membangun kerangka epistemologis terpadu yang menghubungkan konsep Al-Qur'an mengenai ilmu, hakikat manusia, dan kecerdasan dengan Pendidikan Agama Islam. Penelitian ini bertujuan mengkaji landasan epistemologis kecerdasan majemuk dari perspektif Al-Qur'an serta mengeksplorasi implikasinya terhadap Pendidikan Agama Islam. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif melalui studi kepustakaan dengan metode deskriptif-analitis. Data dikumpulkan

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melalui analisis terhadap ayat-ayat Al-Qur'an, kitab-kitab tafsir klasik maupun kontemporer, serta literatur relevan mengenai kecerdasan majemuk dan pendidikan Islam. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa Al-Qur'an mengonseptualisasikan kecerdasan sebagai kapasitas manusia yang holistik, yang berakar pada integrasi antara 'aql (akal), qalb (hati), sam' (pendengaran), dan basar (penglihatan); keempatnya secara bersama-sama berfungsi sebagai instrumen epistemologis untuk memperoleh, memahami, dan menginternalisasi ilmu pengetahuan. Berbeda dengan pandangan konvensional yang lebih menekankan dimensi kognitif, perspektif Al-Qur'an menempatkan dimensi spiritual dan moral sebagai landasan yang mengintegrasikan berbagai bentuk kecerdasan manusia. Penelitian ini memberikan kontribusi berupa kerangka epistemologis Islam untuk memahami kecerdasan majemuk serta menyediakan landasan teoretis bagi pengembangan pendekatan Pendidikan Agama Islam yang lebih holistik, inklusif, dan berpusat pada peserta didik, yang mampu mengakomodasi keberagaman potensi peserta didik sekaligus memperkuat iman, karakter, dan pengembangan intelektual.

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## A. INTRODUCTION

Education is essentially a process of developing all human potential so that it can grow and develop optimally (Noviandari & Mujahada, 2023). Individuals have different abilities, talents, and intelligence, necessitating a diverse educational approach. In this context, education serves not only as a means of transferring knowledge but also as a process of character formation, skill development, and spirituality strengthening (Maryati, 2022). However, the current educational reality still shows a tendency for student success to be measured more through academic ability and cognitive achievement alone (Habibah & Yuni, 2024). Consequently, other potentials that students possess often do not receive optimal attention.

From an Islamic perspective, humans are viewed as creatures created in the most perfect form and entrusted with the role of khalifah fi al-ardh (vicegerent) on earth. To perform this mandate, humans must be equipped with various potentials and abilities that must be developed through education. These potentials include interrelated intellectual, spiritual, emotional, social, and moral abilities (Arif, 2021). Therefore, Islamic education is not only directed at developing intellectual aspects but also at forming people who are faithful, have good morals, and can provide benefits to society.

In essence, every child possesses varying intelligence levels. With this potential, students can understand their environment, solve problems, and develop according to their abilities (Falaah et al., 2025). In the context of education, these differences in

intelligence should be the basis for teachers in determining more adaptive and humanistic learning approaches. However, in practice, learning in schools often uses a uniform approach, resulting in less space for development for students with abilities outside academics. This situation is also evident in IS lessons, which place more emphasis on memorization and cognitive achievement than on developing students' overall potential (Istiqomah, 2023).

The development of modern education has introduced the concept of multiple intelligences, popularized by Howard Gardner as a critique of the educational paradigm that only assesses intelligence from an intellectual aspect (Laela & Nurhidayati, 2025). Humans possess various types of intelligence, including linguistic, logical-mathematical, interpersonal, intrapersonal, kinesthetic, musical, visual-spatial, naturalistic, and existential. This concept emphasizes the understanding that each student possesses unique potential that must be developed through a learning process tailored to their individual characteristics (Berliana, 2023).

Although the theory of multiple intelligences developed within the modern Western educational tradition, the Islamic intellectual tradition has long recognized the concept of the diversity of human potential. The Qur'an places great emphasis on the development of the human mind, heart, spirituality, and behavior through various commands to think (*tafakkur*), understand (*ta'aqqul*), and contemplate the signs of the power of Allah SWT (Murtado, 2025). In addition, Muslim thinkers such as al-Ghazali, Ibn Sina, Ibn Khaldun, and Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas also considered humans multidimensional creatures who integrate reason, spirit, *qalb*, and morals (Zahrah, 2025). Thus, the concept of intelligence in Islam has a broader scope because it is not only oriented toward intellectual abilities but also toward the development of human spirituality and manners.

In the context of Islamic Religious Education, the concept of multiple intelligences has important relevance because it can be an alternative approach to developing learning that is more humanistic, creative, and student-oriented (Rofiq & Nabila, 2020). Islamic religious education should not only focus on mastering religious material but also on developing students' full potential in a balanced manner, encompassing cognitive, affective, and psychomotor aspects. Students can gain the space to develop their thinking skills, social skills, creativity, and spirituality in accordance with their potential through a multiple intelligences approach (Ibrahim, 2023).

Although the number of studies on multiple intelligences in Islamic education has increased in recent years, previous studies have primarily focused on applying Howard Gardner's theory to improve teaching strategies and student learning outcomes (Nurhikmah, 2023; Bahiroh, 2025). Other studies have explored the relationship between Qur'anic values and multiple intelligences by identifying verses that correspond to Gardner's intelligence categories (Nurhidayati, 2024). However, these studies generally remain descriptive and adopt a proof-texting approach, treating Qur'anic verses mainly as textual support for an existing Western psychological theory rather than critically examining the epistemological assumptions underlying Gardner's framework. Consequently, they have not sufficiently explained how the Qur'an conceptualizes human intelligence independently within its own worldview.

Furthermore, limited attention has been given to how the Qur'an constructs the epistemological foundations of intelligence through the integrated functions of *'aql* (reason), *balb* (heart), *sam'* (hearing), and *baṣar* (sight). The philosophical relationship between Gardner's empirically grounded theory and the Qur'anic conception of knowledge, human nature, and intelligence remains insufficiently explored. To address this gap, this study develops an Islamic epistemological perspective on multiple intelligences by examining Qur'anic concepts of intelligence and discussing their implications for IR education.

This study begins with the assumption that the concept of multiple intelligences aligns with the Quranic perspective on human potential diversity. Therefore, the concept of multiple intelligences can be understood not only as a theory of modern educational psychology but also from an Islamic perspective. Therefore, it is important to examine the concept of multiple intelligences in more depth from a Quranic perspective and its implications for the development of Islamic Religious Education so that the learning process can better accommodate students' potential holistically and be oriented toward developing individuals who are faithful, knowledgeable, and have noble character.

## **B. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

This study employed a qualitative library research design using a thematic (*maudhu'i*) exegetical approach to examine the Qur'anic foundations of multiple intelligences and their implications for IRE. The analysis was guided by Amin

Abdullah's integration–interconnection paradigm, which facilitates a critical dialogue between the Qur'anic worldview and Howard Gardner's theory of multiple intelligences. Rather than using Qur'anic verses to justify Gardner's theory, this study reconstructs the concept of multiple intelligences from an Islamic epistemological perspective. The primary data consisted of selected Qur'anic verses and classical and contemporary *tafsir* literature, while the secondary data were obtained from scholarly books and peer-reviewed journal articles related to multiple intelligences, Islamic epistemology, and Islamic Religious Education. The Qur'anic verses were selected based on their relevance to human cognitive and spiritual faculties, knowledge acquisition, and human development. Data were analyzed in four stages: identifying relevant verses, interpreting them using thematic exegesis, engaging the findings in dialogue with Gardner's theory, and synthesizing an Islamic epistemological framework of multiple intelligences along with its implications for Islamic Religious Education.

## C. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### 1. The Concept of Multiple Intelligences from the Qur'an Perspective

The Quran explains that humans are creatures endowed with various potentials by Allah SWT. These potentials equip humans to perform their duties as *khalifah fi al-ardh* and as servants of Allah (Aidil et al., 2024). One of the primary potentials of humans is their ability to think, understand, learn, and develop knowledge. This potential is the basis for the development of various forms of intelligence within humans (Nadhiroh & Anshori, 2023). From an Islamic perspective, intelligence is not only understood as intellectual ability but also includes spiritual, social, emotional, and moral dimensions that are integrated into human life.

A verse of the Qur'an that shows the potential of human intelligence is found in Surah Al-Baqarah verses 31–32:

*"He taught Adam the names of all things. Then, he presented them to the angels and said, 'Tell me the names of these things, if what you say is true.'""They replied, 'Glory be to You! We have no knowledge except what You have taught us.' Indeed, You are the All-Knowing, the All-Wise." (Qur'an, Surah Al-Baqarah 2:31–32).*

This verse indicates that Allah SWT gave the Prophet Adam the ability to recognize, understand, and name objects. This ability symbolizes human intellectual potential in comprehending reality, developing knowledge, and using language as a means of communication and learning. According to Quraish Shihab, the human ability

to name, understand the function of objects, and express ideas is one of the foundations for the development of science and human civilization. In other words, humans possess epistemological abilities that other creatures do not possess, making them worthy of being entrusted with the role of caliph on earth (Shihab, 2009).

In addition, the Qur'an emphasizes that humans were created in the most perfect form, as explained in Surah At-Tin verse 4:

*"Indeed, we have created humans in the best form."* (QS. At-Tin: 4).

This verse demonstrates that humans possess a greater potential for perfection than other creatures. This perfection lies not only in physical aspects but also in intellectual, spiritual, emotional, and moral abilities. The intellect bestowed by Allah SWT enables people to think, learn, innovate, and build a better life. Therefore, intelligence in Islam is understood not only as academic ability but also as a human's ability to manage oneself, maintain social relationships, and draw closer to Allah SWT (Rahayu, 2025).

The concept of the diversity of human intelligence was then developed in modern educational studies through the theory of multiple intelligences introduced by Howard Gardner in 1983 through his work *Frames of Mind*. Gardner (1973) explained that each individual has different types of intelligence, such as linguistic, logical-mathematical, visual-spatial, musical, kinesthetic, interpersonal, intrapersonal, naturalistic, and even existential intelligence (Gardner, 1973). Intelligence cannot be measured solely through academic ability or intelligence tests; rather, it includes a person's ability to solve problems and produce work that is valuable in society.

The theory of multiple intelligences provides criticism of the education system, which tends to place intellectual intelligence as the only indicator of student success (Berliana, 2023). In educational practice, each student has different characteristics, learning styles, and potential. Therefore, the learning process should provide space for the optimal development of all potentials.

Although the theory of multiple intelligences emerged within the modern Western educational tradition, Islamic teachings have long recognized the concept of diverse human potential. The Quran provides numerous encouragements for humans to use reason (ta'aqqul), think (tafakkur), understand the signs of God's power (tadabbur), and develop social and spiritual abilities throughout life (Falahudin, 2025). This shows that Islam views humans as multidimensional creatures with various forms

of intelligence that need to be developed in a balanced manner.

The concept of multiple intelligences holds significant relevance in the context of Islamic Religious Education. Islamic Religious Education has often focused on the memorization and cognitive mastery of material (Ibrahim, 2023). In fact, the goal of Islamic education is not only to develop intellectually intelligent students but also to develop strong spirituality, morals, and social skills. Therefore, a multiple intelligences approach can be an alternative for creating Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning that is more humanistic, creative, and oriented toward developing students' full potential.

Through this approach, teachers can develop more varied learning methods according to student characteristics, such as group discussions for interpersonal intelligence, self-reflection for intrapersonal intelligence, the use of visual media for visual-spatial intelligence, and religious practices to develop spiritual intelligence (Damanik, 2025). Thus, Islamic Religious Education not only emphasizes the knowledge aspect but also enables students to be faithful, knowledgeable, creative, and have noble character in accordance with the values of Islamic teachings.

## **2. Multiple Intelligence Types from the Perspective of the Qur'an**

Based on the perspective of the Qur'an, multiple intelligences can be understood through the various potentials that Allah has bestowed upon humans to optimize the role of their caliphate on earth (Nurhikmah, 2023). These various intelligences do not stand alone but are integrated to form the wholeness of a human being who is faithful, knowledgeable, and performs righteous deeds. The various types of multiple intelligences from the perspective of the Qur'an can be explained as follows (Nurhidayati, 2024):

### **a. Linguistic Intelligence**

Linguistic intelligence relates to a person's ability to effectively use language, both orally and in writing. This ability encompasses the skills of speaking, reading, writing, conveying ideas, and in-depth understanding of the meaning of language (Nketsiah, 2026). In the theory of multiple intelligences, Gardner (2013) explains that individuals with high linguistic intelligence are generally able to process words well and express their thoughts easily through verbal communication (Gardner, 2013).

From the perspective of the Quran, the ability to speak is one of the greatest gifts bestowed upon humanity by Allah SWT. This ability serves for humans to convey knowledge, establish communication, and understand revelation. This is explained in

Surah Ar-Rahman, verses 1–4:

*"(Allah) the Most Gracious, who taught the Qur'an, created man and then taught him eloquence."* (QS. Ar-Rahman: 1-4).

This verse demonstrates that the ability to speak and communicate is part of the divine educational process bestowed upon humans by Allah. The word "al-bayan" in this verse is interpreted not only as the ability to speak but also as the ability to explain, understand meaning, and convey ideas and knowledge to others (Maryam et al., 2025). With this language ability, humans can build civilization and develop science.

Linguistic intelligence can be developed in the context of Islamic Religious Education through activities such as reading the Qur'an, religious discussions, presentations, preaching, speeches, writing Islamic reflections, and other Islamic literacy activities (Holilah et al., 2023). Learning that involves verbal skills can help students understand religious values more deeply while improving their social communication skills.

#### b. Logical-Mathematical Intelligence

Logical-mathematical intelligence is the ability to think rationally, analyze problems, understand cause-and-effect relationships, and systematically solve problems. This intelligence relates to the human ability to use logic, numbers, patterns, and scientific reasoning to understand life's realities (Miftahul et al., 2025).

The Quran frequently encourages people to use reason and think logically about various natural phenomena. One verse that demonstrates the importance of this ability to think is Surah Yunus, verse 5:

*"He is the one who makes the sun shine and the moon shine and arranges their orbits so that you know the number of years and the calculation of time."* (QS.) Yunus: 5).

This verse shows that the order of the universe contains lessons for humans to think, calculate, and understand the laws of the creation of Allah SWT. The regular orbit of the sun and moon is the basis for humans in determining time, calendars, and life calculation systems (Zakka, 2025). This shows that Islam provides a great deal of space for the development of human rationality and scientific abilities.

In IS learning, logical-mathematical intelligence can be developed through verse analysis, religious problem-solving, critical discussion, and reasoning-based learning. Thus, students not only receive religious material textually but also can rationally understand the wisdom and meaning behind Islamic teachings.



c. Visual-Spatial Intelligence

Visual-spatial intelligence refers to a person's ability to understand shape, space, color, images, and visual patterns. Individuals with this intelligence generally can visualize things, understand directions, and process information through images and observation (Series, 2021).

The Quran presents numerous visual depictions of the universe as a means of human learning. One such example is found in Surah Al-Ghasiyah, verses 17–20, which invites people to consider the creation of camels, the heavens, the mountains, and the earth. This verse demonstrates that observing nature can train humans in visual abilities and contemplation of the greatness of Allah SWT.

Visual-spatial intelligence can be developed in an educational context through the use of images, Islamic learning videos, concept maps, illustrations of prophetic stories, and observation of nature as a means of religious reflection. A visual approach to learning Islamic Religious Education can help students understand the material in a more concrete and engaging way.

d. Kinesthetic Intelligence

Kinesthetic intelligence is the ability to use one's body to express ideas, solve problems, or develop specific skills. Individuals who learn best through hands-on practice and physical activity exhibit this intelligence (Lubis et al., 2025).

In Islam, learning is conducted not only through theory but also through practical application in everyday life. Worship activities such as prayer, ablution, the Hajj pilgrimage, and various other religious activities are forms of kinesthetic learning that involve direct body movement.

The story of Cain in Surah Al-Maidah verse 31 also demonstrates the process of learning through observing a crow digging to bury a carcass. This incident demonstrates that humans can acquire knowledge through direct experience and observation of their surroundings. Kinesthetic intelligence can be developed through worship practices, learning simulations, Islamic educational games, and demonstrations involving physical activity (Ikhsan & Zulkarnain, 2025).

e. Musical Intelligence

Musical intelligence is related to the ability to understand rhythm, pitch, meter, and sound. Individuals with this intelligence tend to be sensitive to sound and easily express themselves through music or melodic melody (Zhang & Wang, 2026). Musical elements can be found in the art of reciting the Quran, the call to prayer (adhan), qasida

(recitation of the Quran), and Islamic masjid (nasyid) in Islamic tradition. Reciting the Quran with tartily (rhythm) and beautiful rhythm not only enhances the recitation but also provides spiritual peace to the listener.

Developing musical intelligence in Islamic Religious Education can be achieved through recitation training, learning Islamic songs, memorizing the Quran using rhythmic methods, and other Islamic arts activities. This approach can help students easily understand and love Islamic teachings through the medium of sound and rhythm.

f. Interpersonal and Intrapersonal Intelligence

Interpersonal intelligence refers to the ability to understand others, build social relationships, and collaborate effectively. Intrapersonal intelligence refers to the ability to understand oneself, recognize emotions, and control one's personal behavior (Sakman, 2024). The Quran places great emphasis on human social relationships. In Surah Al-Hujurat, verses 11-13, Allah SWT forbids humans from insulting and prejudice one another and teaches the importance of understanding and respecting differences. These verses demonstrate the importance of social and emotional intelligence in human life.

The development of interpersonal and intrapersonal intelligence in IRE can be achieved through group work, discussion, self-reflection, moral learning, and tolerance and empathy cultivation. Students are expected to be able to build positive social relationships and develop strong self-awareness through this approach (Seknun, 2022).

g. Naturalist Intelligence

Naturalist intelligence is related to the ability to recognize, understand, and care for the natural environment. Individuals with this intelligence typically have a strong concern for the plants, animals, and natural phenomena around them (Wong & Siow, 2024), (Handayani & Ichsan, 2025). The Quran frequently encourages people to observe the signs of God's greatness in the universe. In Surah Ar-Ra'd, verse 3, the earth, mountains, rivers, and various plants are described as evidence of God's power. This verse demonstrates that nature is not only an object of exploitation but also a means of learning and spiritual reflection. In Islamic Religious Education, naturalist intelligence can be developed through nature observation activities, environment-based learning, and the instilling of values of concern for environmental sustainability

as a part of humanity's responsibility as a caliph.

#### h. Existential-Spiritual Intelligence

Existential-spiritual intelligence is related to the human ability to understand the meaning of life, the purpose of creation, and one's relationship with Allah SWT (Uzma, 2024). This intelligence encourages people to reflect on the nature of life, death, and their existence in the world. The Qur'an explains that humans were created to worship Allah SWT. As He said in Surah Az-Zariyat verse 56:

*"I did not create jinn and humans except so that they would worship Me."* (QS. Az-Zariyat: 56).

This verse demonstrates that humans possess a spiritual dimension that serves as the foundation for life's direction. Spiritual intelligence is related to worship rituals, moral awareness, peace of mind, and the ability to interpret life based on divine values. Spiritual intelligence can be developed through habituation of worship, self-reflection, contemplation of the Quran, moral development, and activities that foster students' awareness of their relationship with Allah SWT.

Overall, these various forms of intelligence demonstrate that humans are multidimensional beings with diverse potential. The Quran not only directs humans to develop intellectual intelligence but also spiritual, social, emotional, and moral intelligence in a balanced manner (Nur'aini, 2023). Therefore, the development of multiple intelligences in Islamic Religious Education is important so that the learning process can shape humans who are not only academically intelligent but also have faith, morals, and social concern in life.

### **3. Relevance of the concept of multiple intelligences to Islamic religious education**

The concept of multiple intelligences offers a new perspective on understanding the Islamic religious education learning process. While Islamic Religious Education has traditionally been understood as a subject that emphasizes cognitive aspects and memorization, the multiple intelligences approach shifts this orientation toward a more humanistic, participatory learning model that prioritizes students' diverse potential (Bahiroh, 2025). In the classroom, students do not appear as homogeneous individuals, but rather have diverse backgrounds, experiences, and learning styles. Therefore, a single approach to Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning often fails to encompass all student development dimensions (Wijaya, 2023).

#### a. The Paradigm Shift in Islamic Education: From Uniformity to Individual Potential

## Recognition

Islamic Religious Education often adheres to a learning model that emphasizes uniformity in educational practice. Material is delivered in the same way to all students without considering their differing ways of thinking and learning styles. As a result, the learning process tends to benefit only those students with dominant linguistic intelligence, while others are less well-equipped.

The concept of multiple intelligences offers a different paradigm: each student possesses unique potential that cannot be standardized. In this context, Islamic education no longer functions merely as a conveyor of religious material but as a space for realizing humanity's full potential. This shift is crucial because Islamic education essentially aims to develop balanced individuals who are not only academically gifted but also spiritually, emotionally, and socially mature.

### b. Problems of PAI Reduction: Dominance of Memorization and Lack of Experience in Value

One of the fundamental problems in learning Islamic Religious Education is the reductionist tendency, namely, simplifying religion into a collection of concepts that must be memorized (Wulandari, 2023). Students often succeed on exams but are not necessarily able to internalize the values taught in their daily lives. From the perspective of multiple intelligences, this situation indicates an imbalance in the learning process. Religion operates not only in the cognitive domain but also in the affective, psychomotor, and even spiritual domains. The experiential dimension of religion is weakened when Islamic Religious Education (PAI) focuses solely on memorization.

Conversely, if learning is designed with a multiple intelligences approach, Islamic Religious Education material does not stop at "what is known" but expands to "what is experienced and internalized." For example, the concept of morality is embodied in social practice, empathy, and everyday interactions.

### c. Islamic Education Teachers as Architects of Adaptive Learning

Within the framework of multiple intelligences, the role of IRE teachers has undergone a significant transformation. Teachers are no longer positioned merely as information conveyors but as learning experience designers capable of bridging differences in students' intelligence (Mustafida, 2021). An Islamic Religious Education teacher must be able to read the dominant tendencies of the students in their class.

Some students understand better through stories, others through discussion, others through practice, and others through self-reflection (Djoeaeriah, 2023). This pedagogical sensitivity is key to the success of Islamic Religious Education learning based on multiple intelligences. Thus, teachers no longer merely assess the final results but also more comprehensively observe the students' development process. This role makes facilitators who bring Islamic values to life in various forms of learning experiences, not just texts.

d. Integration of Cognitive, Affective, and Psychomotor Dimensions in a Holistic Setting

The relevance of multiple intelligences to Islamic religious education is also evident in the integration of the three main dimensions of education: cognitive, affective, and psychomotor. Ideally, these three dimensions are inseparable because they complement each other in shaping the personalities of students (Chung et al., 2025). The cognitive dimension relates to understanding Islamic concepts such as faith, jurisprudence, and Islamic history. However, this understanding is insufficient without the internalization of values (*affective*), such as honesty, responsibility, and empathy. Furthermore, these values must be realized in concrete (psychomotor) actions, such as religious practices, social behavior, and involvement in religious activities (Krismoniansyah et al., 2021). The multiple intelligences approach strengthens this integration by allowing each type of intelligence to contribute to the learning process. Islamic Religious Education is no longer a partial concept but a comprehensive and continuous educational process.

e. Islamic Education as a Character Formation and Awareness Process

More broadly, the integration of multiple intelligences into Islamic Religious Education impacts not only academic aspects but also the development of students' character and life awareness. Islamic education aims not only to produce individuals who understand religious teachings but also those who can live out those values in social reality. In this context, PAI based on multiple intelligences will be more relevant to the lives of students. Learning does not stop in the classroom but extends to social experiences, personal reflection, and interactions with the environment (Noviyanti et al., 2025). Thus, religion is not only studied as knowledge but also as an existential experience.

Table 1. Relevance of Multiple Intelligences to Islamic Education Learning

| <b>Intelligence</b>  | <b>Meaning in the Islamic Education Context</b>                  | <b>The Narrative Implementation Form</b>                         | <b>Educational Impact</b>                          |
|----------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------|
| Linguistics          | Ability to understand and convey Islamic values through language | Discussions, lectures, written reflections, and simple preaching | Forming strong Islamic literacy                    |
| Logical-Mathematical | Ability to rationally think in understanding Islamic teachings   | Verse analysis, case studies, problem solving                    | Strengthening critical religious reasoning         |
| Visual-Spatial       | Understanding values through images and visual representations   | Videos of prophetic stories, concept maps, and visual media      | Facilitates the understanding of abstract concepts |
| Kinesthetic          | Learning through movement and practice                           | Worship practice, Hajj simulation, and role play                 | Strengthening real religious experiences           |
| Musical              | Understanding values through rhythm and sound                    | Recitations, masjid, and tahsin of the Koran                     | Strengthening the spiritual emotions               |
| Interpersonal        | Ability to establish Islamic social relations                    | Group discussions, collaboration, and social activities          | Cultivating empathy and brotherhood                |
| Intrapersonal        | Self-awareness from an Islamic perspective                       | Reflection journal, self-muhasabah                               | Strengthening self-control and spirituality        |
| Naturalist           | Awareness of the environment as God's creation                   | Nature contemplation and environmental observation               | Cultivating ecological responsibility              |
| Spiritual            | Awareness of life's meaning and relationship with God            | Tadabbur Al-Qur'an, strengthening worship                        | Forming a Transcendental Life Orientation          |

#### **4. Implementing Multiple Intelligences in Islamic Religious Education: Challenges**

The application of the concept of multiple intelligences in IREE is inseparable from various challenges that arise in practical learning. These challenges stem from pedagogical aspects, educator competency, evaluation systems, curriculum support, and the learning environment. This situation indicates that the implementation of multiple intelligences has not been fully optimal, necessitating the identification of various existing obstacles as a basis for improving the quality of Islamic Religious Education learning to be more adaptive to the diverse potential of students (Nurhidayati, 2025). These challenges can be described as follows:

a. Teachers' limited understanding regarding the concept of multiple intelligences

Not all teachers have sufficient understanding of the theory of multiple intelligences. Some still interpret intelligence narrowly, focusing only on cognitive aspects. The lack of training, workshops, and strengthening of pedagogical competencies often results in the implementation of multiple intelligences remaining at the conceptual level, not yet becoming an integrated learning strategy in Islamic RE practice (Arzani, 2025).

b. The evaluation system is still oriented toward cognitive aspects.

Learning assessment is still dominated by written tests and academic scores. This results in non-cognitive aspects such as attitudes, social skills, creativity, and appreciation of Islamic values being under-measured. However, from a multiple intelligence perspective, evaluation should be holistic and reflect all dimensions of a student's intelligence.

c. Limitations of the media and learning methods

The use of innovative learning media is still limited in many schools. The lecture method remains the dominant approach in the teaching of Islamic Religious Education (PAI). This situation hinders the development of multiple intelligences, which requires a variety of methods to enable students to learn actively and contextually, such as project-based learning, group discussions, simulations, role-playing, and hands-on practice (Widianto, 2021).

d. The curriculum does not fully support the development of potential

Although the curriculum has undergone reform, its implementation in practice has not fully oriented itself to the development of multiple intelligences. The emphasis on achieving material targets and exam results remains quite strong, and the

opportunity to develop students' individual potential is often neglected.

e. Lack of support for an ALE

The educational environment does not fully support PBL. Limited facilities, a conventional school culture, and a lack of collaboration among teachers, schools, and parents are factors that hinder the effective implementation of the multiple intelligences approach in IRE.

#### **D. CONCLUSION**

This study concludes that the concept of multiple intelligences in the Qur'an is consistent with the Islamic view of human beings as multidimensional creatures endowed with intellectual, spiritual, emotional, and moral potentials that should be developed holistically. The Qur'an emphasizes the integration of reason, heart, and spirituality, indicating that intelligence extends beyond cognitive ability to include ethical and spiritual responsibility. Consequently, Islamic Religious Education should adopt more humanistic and student-centered learning approaches that balance the diverse potentials of learners.

Theoretically, this study contributes to Islamic education and Qur'anic studies by providing a Qur'an-based conceptual framework of multiple intelligences that integrates contemporary educational theory with the Islamic worldview. However, this study is limited to conceptual and library-based analyses. Future research is recommended to examine and validate this framework through qualitative, quantitative, or experimental studies in IRE classrooms.



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