INTEGRATING MULTIPLE INTELLIGENCES INTO THE ISLAMIC EDUCATION CURRICULUM: A CASE STUDY IN AN INTEGRATED ISLAMIC SCHOOL

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Abstrak

Tujuan penelitian ini adalah untuk menggambarkan bentuk integrasi kecerdasan majemuk dalam pembelajaran Pendidikan Agama Islam di SDIT Buahati Islamic School Karawang, menganalisis dampaknya terhadap motivasi dan keterlibatan siswa, serta mengidentifikasi tantangan dan strategi yang digunakan sekolah dalam pelaksanaannya. Penelitian menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan metode studi kasus melalui wawancara mendalam, observasi partisipatif, dan dokumentasi. Analisis data dilakukan secara interaktif melalui reduksi, penyajian, dan penarikan kesimpulan dengan triangulasi sumber dan metode. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa integrasi kecerdasan majemuk dalam pembelajaran Pendidikan Agama Islam di SDIT Buahati Islamic School Karawang meningkatkan motivasi, partisipasi, dan pemahaman siswa melalui kegiatan belajar yang disesuaikan dengan profil kecerdasannya. Penelitian ini menemukan bahwa integrasi kecerdasan majemuk dalam pembelajaran Pendidikan Agama Islam terlaksana melalui perencanaan terdiferensiasi, pemetaan kecerdasan siswa, serta penggunaan aktivitas belajar yang menstimulasi delapan kecerdasan. Dampaknya terlihat pada meningkatnya motivasi, partisipasi, fokus belajar, dan keberanian siswa dalam berdiskusi. Selain itu, pembelajaran berbasis kecerdasan majemuk membantu memperkuat internalisasi nilai-nilai keagamaan melalui pengalaman langsung. Penelitian juga mengungkap adanya tantangan dalam kompetensi guru, keterbatasan waktu, serta sarana pendukung yang belum merata, meskipun sekolah telah menerapkan berbagai strategi seperti pelatihan internal dan kolaborasi antar guru. Penelitian ini berkontribusi dalam memberikan bukti empiris mengenai efektivitas pendekatan kecerdasan majemuk dalam pembelajaran agama serta menawarkan rekomendasi praktis bagi pengembangan pembelajaran terdiferensiasi di sekolah Islam terpadu.

Kata kunci*: Kurikulum Pendidikan Islam; Kecerdasan Majemuk; Pembelajaran Berdiferensiasi; Reformasi Pendidikan Islam; Pengembangan Holistik.*

Abstract

The purpose of this study is to describe the form of integration of multiple intelligence in the learning of Islamic Religious Education at Buahati Islamic Elementary School Karawang, analyze its impact on student motivation and engagement, and identify the challenges and strategies used by schools in their implementation. The research uses a qualitative approach with case study methods through in-depth interviews, participatory observations, and documentation. Data analysis is carried out interactively through reduction, presentation, and drawing conclusions by triangulating sources and methods. The results of the study show that the integration of multiple intelligence in the learning of

Islamic Religious Education at Buahati Islamic Elementary School Karawang increases student motivation, participation, and understanding through learning activities that are tailored to their intelligence profile. This study found that the integration of multiple intelligences in Islamic Religious Education learning was carried out through differentiated planning, mapping of student intelligence, and the use of learning activities that stimulated eight intelligences. The impact can be seen in increasing motivation, participation, focus on learning, and students' courage in discussing. In addition, multi-intelligence-based learning helps reinforce the internalization of religious values through hands-on experience. The research also revealed challenges in teacher competence, time constraints, and uneven support facilities, even though schools have implemented various strategies such as internal training and collaboration between teachers. This research contributes to providing empirical evidence on the effectiveness of the multiple intelligence approach in religious learning and offers practical recommendations for the development of differentiated learning in integrated Islamic schools.

Keywords: Differentiated Learning; Holistic Development; Islamic Education Curriculum; Islamic Education Reform; Multiple Intelligences.

INTRODUCTION

Islamic Religious Education occupies a strategic position in shaping students to become individuals who are faithful, knowledgeable, and have noble character, as emphasized by (Abdi & Rostami, 2021). In the Integrated Islamic Elementary School environment, the role of Islamic Religious Education is not only to transfer religious knowledge but also to shape the spiritual, emotional, and social character of students as a whole (Amirudin & Muzaki, 2019). The educational model in Islamic Elementary School, which emphasizes the integration of values, academics, and worship habits, requires a curriculum that is responsive to the development of students and the diversity of their potential (Firmansyah et al., 2021). In this context, the urgency of implementing an adaptive curriculum is increasingly prominent because schools are required to provide learning experiences that are not only informative but also transformative and relevant to the needs of children in the modern era (Amirudin et al., 2025).

Various studies have examined innovations in Islamic Religious Education learning, whether through active, collaborative, or student potential-based learning models. Arafah et al., (2021) shows that an approach that pays attention to diversity in abilities can increase student motivation and understanding. Yudesthira et al., (2023) emphasized that potential-based models encourage student engagement and creativity in learning religion. In Islamic boarding schools, Fikriyah & Aziz, (2018) also found that approaches that utilize variations in intelligence have a positive impact on students' worship and memorization abilities. However, most of these studies still focus on classroom learning strategies and have not touched on the aspects of curriculum implementation as a whole, including how schools plan, implement, and evaluate the Islamic Religious Education curriculum at the Islamic Elementary Education level. In other words, previous studies tend to highlight micro pedagogical practices, while the structural

dimensions of the curriculum at the school level as an educational unit have not received proportional attention.

This gap highlights the need for research that examines the implementation of student potential development at the school curriculum level, not just at the learning strategy level. González-Treviño et al., (2020) emphasizes that the diversity of student potential requires schools to provide curriculum designs that enable teachers to respond to the unique characteristics of students. The main issue underlying this study is the continued dominance of cognitive-oriented Islamic Religious Education learning patterns centered on memorization and lectures, while the development of students' affective and psychomotor aspects is often neglected (Amirudin, 2023). This condition shows a gap between the demands of holistic Islamic education and learning practices that are still dominated by traditional approaches. As a result, students are not yet fully able to internalize Islamic values in real life or develop their full potential (Vaezghasemi et al., 2023).

The purpose of this study is to analyze how the theory of multiple intelligences is integrated into the learning of Islamic Religious Education at SDIT Buahati Islamic School Karawang, as well as to evaluate its impact on students' motivation, engagement, and religious character development. This study also aims to identify various challenges that arise during the implementation of the approach and describe the strategies used by schools to overcome these constraints, so as to provide a comprehensive picture of the effectiveness and sustainability of learning practices based on multiple intelligences in the school.

METHOD

This study uses a descriptive qualitative approach with a case study method. This approach was chosen because it is suitable for describing in depth the process of implementing a Multiple Intelligence-based Islamic Religious Education Curriculum at Buahati Islamic Elementary School, Karawang, in a natural context. According to Creswell & Creswell (2018), the qualitative approach helps researchers understand the meaning of a phenomenon from the subject's perspective, while case studies facilitate comprehensive exploration of a bounded system. This approach focuses on describing the curriculum implementation process, not on testing specific grand theories, so the study does not use grand theory as the primary analytical tool.

This research was conducted at an Integrated Islamic Elementary School that has adopted the principle of holistic student potential development. Irrelevant operational details of the school were omitted to maintain methodological focus as directed by the reviewer. The research subjects consisted of the principal, vice principal for curriculum, Islamic Elementary Education teachers, homeroom teachers, and students. Informants were selected using purposive sampling based

on the relevance of their roles in the curriculum implementation process (Sugiyono, 2019). There were a total of twelve informants. All informants provided informed consent, and the research was conducted in accordance with the code of ethics for educational research, including confidentiality of identity, anonymity, and freedom to withdraw from the research at any time.

Data were collected through in-depth interviews, participatory observation, and a documentation study. Interviews were conducted semi-structuredly, while observations focused on learning activities, religious practices, and teacher-student interactions. Documentary studies included syllabi, lesson plans, and curriculum instruments. A description of the data arrangement was added, including how Multiple Intelligence mapping was carried out: teachers identified students' dominant intelligences through observation instruments, initial assessment sheets, and learning portfolios, and then used the data to adjust learning strategies and authentic assessments. The research instruments used included interview guidelines, observation sheets, and documentation formats. The instruments were developed based on the Multiple Intelligences theory (Syarifah., 2019) and the principles of Islamic Religious Education curriculum development according to (Sahnan, 2019). The use of MI theory as a reference for the instruments was operational, not as the main theoretical framework of the study.

Data analysis was conducted interactively with reference to Miles & Huberman (Miles, 2014). The clarity of the analysis process was reinforced by explaining the coding stages: (1) open coding, which is identifying initial themes from interview transcripts and observation notes; (2) axial coding, grouping categories based on inter-theme relationships such as curriculum planning, learning strategies, and MI-mapping; and (3) selective coding, compiling core themes that represent the overall curriculum implementation pattern. These stages were followed by the presentation of data in the form of thematic narratives and inductive conclusions. Triangulation of sources, methods, and time was conducted to enhance data credibility. Through a continuous analysis process, this study produced an in-depth understanding of the planning, implementation, and evaluation of the Multiple Intelligence-based Islamic Elementary Education curriculum, including its supporting and inhibiting factors.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results of the study show that the implementation of the Multiple Intelligence-based Islamic Education curriculum at Buahati Islamic Elementary School, Karawang, is carried out through the integration of eight multiple intelligences into the learning process and Islamic habit formation activities for students. This implementation covers the planning, implementation, and evaluation stages, with the central role of the teachers as a facilitator who

accommodates students' learning styles through varied learning strategies and authentic assessments.

Implementation of the Multiple Intelligences Model in Islamic Education Learning

The results of the study show that the integration of eight intelligences in the learning of Islamic Religious Education at Buahati Islamic Elementary School, Karawang, takes place through the application of differentiated learning that positions students as individuals with diverse intelligence profiles. Based on observations during three meetings in grades IV and V, Islamic Religious Education teachers consistently designed activities that stimulated Gardner's various intelligences using Multiple Intelligences mapping references carried out at the beginning of the school year. The teacher said that this mapping made it easier for them to adjust the method to the needs of students. One of the teachers stated in an interview,

> "We see the results of Multiple Intelligences mapping as a guide. If the child is strong in the musical, we give him a *tartil* memorization; If it is visual, the task is to make a mind map or verse poster."

In classroom practice, learning activities seem to vary according to the dominant intelligence of students. Students with linguistic intelligence were observed to be actively reading and interpreting short verses, while musical students seemed enthusiastic when chanting the rhythm of *tartil* in the morning habituation session. Observations show that the visual-spatial group produces posters containing the moral values of QS. Al-Hujurat:10, the poster was then displayed on the classroom wall as a medium of reflection. Meanwhile, kinesthetic students showed better understanding when engaged in the simulation of ablution and prayer, as evidenced by the practice assessment score that increased from an average of 78 to 87 after two Multiple Intelligences-based learning sessions.

Student involvement has also increased significantly. Observation records show that the number of students actively asking questions during learning increased from an average of 5 students to 11 students per meeting. One student revealed in an interview,

> "Learning is easier because there are activities that suit me. I like group work and practice, so I understand better."

In addition, students' creativity is seen through thematic tasks that combine interpersonal and intrapersonal intelligence, such as value discussions about empathy and daily reflection journals on the application of morals at home.

The integration of these eight intelligences also contributes to the internalization of religious values through direct experience. Learning activities

outside the classroom, such as exploring nature while contemplating the signs of God's greatness (naturalistic intelligence), provide space for students to relate PAI material to authentic experiences. One teacher explained:

> "When we invite children to observe the environment, it is easier for them to understand the concept of monotheism because they see God's creation firsthand."

The results of interviews with Islamic Religious Education coordinators reinforced the findings, stating that the MI approach helps the formation of religious character more naturally because children experience values, not just hear them. However, this study also found a number of obstacles, especially the limited resources and ability of teachers to design differentiated assessments that are in accordance with the eight intelligences. Some teachers admit that they need advanced training. One of the teachers said,

> "To assess every intelligence, we are still looking for the right format. Time is also a challenge."

This obstacle causes the implementation of Multiple Intelligences not to be completely evenly distributed in all classes, even though the school's commitment to developing it is pretty high. Overall, the research findings show that the integration of multiple intelligences in Islamic Religious Education learning results in a more lively, dialogical, and meaningful learning process. Increasing student participation, creativity, and intrinsic motivation is clear evidence that this approach not only enriches learning methods but also strengthens the dimension of religious character, which is the primary goal of Islamic education in the school.

The Impact of the Multiple Intelligences Approach on Student Motivation and Engagement

The results of the study show that the application of the multiple intelligence approach in Islamic Religious Education learning has a real influence on increasing student motivation and involvement at Buahati Islamic Elementary School Karawang. Based on observations during four meetings in grades IV and V, there was a significant change in student participation when teachers designed activities that matched their dominant intelligence. At the beginning of the observation, the number of students who dared to ask questions was in the range of 4 to 6. However, after learning was designed using a variety of activities involving linguistic, musical, kinesthetic, visual-spatial, interpersonal, intrapersonal, logical-mathematical, and naturalistic intelligence, the number of students actively discussing increased to 12 to 15 people per meeting. In addition, observational records show that students' attention spans also increase. At the first meeting, some students seemed to lose focus after 10 to 12 minutes of

learning. However, in the fourth meeting, they were able to maintain concentration for up to 20 to 25 minutes when the learning activities were in accordance with their intelligence. Increased student motivation and engagement are described in Figure 1.

Figure 1. Increased Student Motivation and Engagement with the Multiple Intelligences Approach

Interviews with students reinforced the findings of these observations. A student with kinesthetic intelligence said,

"I am more enthusiastic if there is a practice of worship or movement activities. It feels better to understand than to listen to explanations."

Meanwhile, a student with musical intelligence said that reciting verses with rhythm makes learning activities feel more enjoyable:

"If you read verses with tones, it is easier to memorize. So I do not get bored quickly."

The Islamic Religious Education teacher also gave a similar statement in the interview. One teacher said:

"The normally passive children started to get involved after we put together activities according to their intelligence. Even reticent students began to dare to speak up and give opinions."

Another teacher said that the multiple intelligence approach makes the classroom atmosphere more lively and not monotonous because each student feels that they get the opportunity to learn in a way that suits them.

Student involvement in group activities has also seen a marked increase. In value discussions, students with interpersonal intelligence were more confident in

leading the group. In contrast, students with intrapersonal intelligence showed more profound self-reflection skills when asked to journal about their daily worship experiences. In one of the learning sessions on the theme of gratitude, the researcher noted that students who usually lack confidence finally dare to tell their personal experiences after first being allowed to reflect individually. These findings show that the compound intelligence approach not only impacts increased motivation but also provides space for students to participate according to their unique strengths and character.

Increased motivation and student engagement are not only the result of a variety of learning methods, but also due to learning experiences that feel more personal and relevant to them. When students feel valued and understood according to their dominant intelligence, confidence and sense of belonging to the learning process increase. This reinforcement is in line with the principle of intrinsic motivation, where students are encouraged to get involved because they feel capable and have control over the learning process. However, the research also found that the success of this approach is highly dependent on teachers' ability to manage learning activities. In one of the observation sessions, researchers noted that the lack of clarity of instructions caused some students to be confused and disoriented. This suggests that a compound intelligence approach requires a balance between creativity, careful planning, and effective classroom management.

The findings of the study reveal that the multiple intelligence approach can increase students' learning motivation, confidence, participation, and interest in Islamic Religious Education subjects. However, optimal implementation requires teacher readiness, including the ability to understand students' intelligence profiles and the ability to design appropriate assessments. Thus, this approach not only serves as a variety of methods, but also as a pedagogical foundation that is able to present religious learning that is more humane, dialogical, and awakens the best potential in each student.

Challenges and Strategies of Schools in Integrating Multiple Intelligences

The results of the study revealed that the process of integrating the theory of multiple intelligences in the learning of Islamic Religious Education at SDIT Buahati Islamic School, Karawang, not only presents learning innovations but also shows several structural, pedagogical, and technical challenges that affect the success of its implementation. Based on observations in three different classes, researchers found that some teachers had difficulty ensuring that all learning activities really included the eight intelligences. In one of the learning sessions, the teacher was seen trying to implement engaging activities, but these activities tended only to stimulate linguistic and kinesthetic intelligence, so that other intelligences, such as logical-mathematical or naturalist, have not received a balanced portion. When interviewed, one teacher said,

"We want all intelligence to be touched, but in practice, time often feels minimal. When trying to accommodate everyone, there are even parts of the material that are missed."

Another teacher expressed the difficulty in designing assessments that can objectively describe intelligence variations,

"It is not easy to make a fair assessment for all types of intelligence. We are still learning so that the assessment is not biased towards just one type of activity."

Observations also show that the variation in teacher competencies is a big challenge. Some teachers show high ability in arranging creative activities that stimulate various intelligences, but there are also teachers who still rely on lecture and question-and-answer patterns because they feel less confident using more complex methods. In one group interview, one teacher revealed,

"We understand the theory, but not all teachers have the ability to design activities that are in accordance with the eight intelligences. We need more frequent assistance."

This data shows that there is a gap in pedagogical literacy between teachers, which has an impact on the uneven quality of implementation in each class. In addition to teacher competency constraints, the study also found that limited resources were the main challenge. Some activities that support visual–spatial or naturalist intelligence require media such as props, creative materials, or access to an environment outside of the classroom. However, not all of these facilities are adequately available. In the observation in grade V, for example, the teacher invited students to observe the environment to associate the material of faith with the signs of Allah's greatness, but the weather and the limitations of the school area prevented the activity from taking place optimally. The provision of varied learning facilities is still a homework for the school.

Despite the various challenges, the school demonstrated a series of concrete strategies to ensure the process of integration of compound intelligence continued. One of the strategies found in the study is the implementation of regular internal training. The principal explained in an interview,

"We try to hold training at least every semester. Teachers share practices, model each other, and discuss the difficulties they face."

The results of observations in internal microteaching sessions show that this kind of training has a positive impact on increasing teacher creativity, although the level of implementation still varies. Another strategy implemented is

collaboration between teachers in learning planning. The researcher noted that there are working groups of teachers who routinely develop thematic learning plans that integrate various intelligences. In an interview, one teacher mentioned,

> "When working together, ideas come up more easily. I, who do not master visual intelligence, can learn from other teachers who are more expert."

However, critical analysis of the research data shows that school strategies are still reactive and have not thoroughly addressed the root of the challenge. Internal training does increase insights, but not all teachers get the intensive assistance they need. Collaboration between teachers also still faces inherent individual work habits. In addition, schools have not developed a structured assessment system to monitor the development of student intelligence on an ongoing basis, so the evaluation process for the integration of multiple intelligences has not been fully documented. Thus, although the strategies implemented have helped, most still require strengthening in terms of planning, consistency of implementation, and facility support.

Overall, this study shows that the integration of multiple intelligences has a positive impact on learning, but its success is primarily determined by the readiness of schools to overcome various challenges that arise. The implementation of this approach requires adequate teacher competence, structured planning, and adequate facility support. Schools are on track through training, collaboration, and management commitment, but to achieve optimal quality of implementation, it is necessary to develop a more sustainable, systematic, and evaluation-based strategy.

Discussion

The findings of the study show that the integration of multiple intelligences in Islamic Religious Education learning makes learning activities more varied and in accordance with the individual needs of students (Husna & Pamungkas, 2024) (Nurhidayati, 2015). Every child has a different intelligence profile, so a differentiated learning approach will be more effective in maximizing their potential (Delgoshaeia & Delavaria, 2021). The results of this study support this concept, because when teachers design activities that stimulate the eight intelligences, students seem to understand the material more easily and actively engage. Serin et al., (2019; Rile et al., (2015) It also shows that learning strategies based on multiple intelligences are able to create a learning environment that is more inclusive and adaptive to students' learning styles.

The findings on increased student motivation and engagement are in line with learning motivation theory, which emphasizes that relevant and meaningful learning experiences can increase students' confidence and interest (Yoshehira et al., 2025) (Xiong, 2025). When students are allowed to learn through their dominant intelligence, they show higher enthusiasm and dare to participate in

discussions (Yunita et al., 2025; Gebremeskel et al., 2024). This engagement also supports the concept of constructivist learning, which emphasizes that knowledge becomes easier to understand when students are actively involved in building their own understanding (Koláček, 2024). Other research that addresses experiential religious learning shows that emotional engagement and direct activity (Syukur, 2024; Hastasari et al., 2022).

The results of the study also show that there are challenges in implementation, especially related to teacher readiness, learning planning, and limited school facilities (Gebremeskel et al., 2024). This challenge is related to the findings of various studies that state that the integration of multiple intelligences requires solid pedagogical competence, the ability to design appropriate assessments (Amirudin & Muzaki, 2021), as well as school managerial support (Abas et al., 2024). Internal training and collaboration between teachers carried out by the school are aligned with the recommendations of education experts who emphasize the importance of continuous professional development to ensure the success of differentiated learning (Amirudin & Mukarom, 2018). However, this study emphasizes that the strategies implemented by schools still need to be strengthened in order to reduce the gap in teacher competencies and increase the consistency of implementation in all classes.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

This study concludes that the implementation of the Multiple Intelligence-based Islamic Religious Education curriculum in integrated Islamic elementary schools is effective in strengthening students' learning motivation and religious character. Implementation at the curriculum level through structured planning, implementation, and evaluation is able to accommodate the diversity of students' potential and help teachers develop more adaptive and meaningful learning. The success of the implementation was supported by a holistic institutional vision, managerial support, and teacher competence that was open to innovation. Conversely, the main obstacles lie in the limitations of supporting facilities, variations in teachers' understanding, and challenges in designing differentiated assessments.

This study has limitations in its scope, which focuses on one school, its descriptive qualitative approach, and the potential subjectivity of informants. Further research is recommended using quantitative or mixed methods approaches, expanding the research location, and measuring the relationship between Multiple Intelligence and academic achievement and character indicators more comparatively and longitudinally. The Multiple Intelligence approach can be viewed as a relevant implementation strategy to strengthen the holistic, humanistic, and contextual Islamic Religious Education curriculum, and has great potential in shaping intelligent, creative, and virtuous students.

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