



## OVERCOMING THE DICHOTOMY OF KNOWLEDGE AND PRACTICE: DEVELOPING A MULTIPLE INTELLIGENCE-BASED IRE LEARNING MODEL

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Received: 03 May 2026. Accepted: 15 May 2026. Published: 31 May 2026

### ABSTRACT

The challenges of education in the 21st century demand a paradigm shift from centralized and monolithic learning to participatory learning that accommodates the diversity of student potential. However, the reality of Islamic Religious Education (IRE) learning in schools is often still trapped in conventional methods that only focus on developing linguistic and logical-mathematical intelligence. This article aims to conceptualize the development of an Islamic Religious Education (IRE) learning model based on Howard Gardner's theory of multiple intelligences as an alternative solution to create more holistic and meaningful learning. The method used is a literature study (library research) by analyzing various relevant sources regarding the theory of multiple intelligences, the challenges of Islamic Religious Education (IRE) learning, and the development of learning models. The results of the discussion indicate that the integration of the theory of multiple intelligences in Islamic Religious Education (IRE) learning can be done through four strategic steps: (1) identifying learning objectives, (2) analyzing teaching materials, (3) recognizing the characteristics of student intelligence, and (4) developing diverse learning methods. This model is expected to optimize students' full potential, make Islamic Religious Education (IRE) learning more enjoyable, and ultimately shape student character that aligns with Islamic values holistically.

**Keywords:** *Dichotomy of Knowledge and Practice, Learning Model, Multiple Intelligences*

### ABSTRAK

Tantangan pendidikan di abad ke-21 menuntut sebuah pergeseran paradigma dari pembelajaran yang bersifat sentralistik dan monolitik ke arah pembelajaran yang partisipatif dan mengakomodasi keberagaman potensi peserta didik. Namun, realitas pembelajaran Pendidikan Agama Islam (PAI) di sekolah seringkali masih terjebak pada metode konvensional yang hanya terfokus pada pengembangan kecerdasan linguistik dan logis-matematis. Artikel ini bertujuan untuk mengkonseptualisasikan pengembangan model pembelajaran PAI berbasis teori kecerdasan majemuk (Multiple Intelligences) dari Howard Gardner sebagai solusi alternatif untuk menciptakan pembelajaran yang lebih holistik dan bermakna. Metode yang digunakan adalah studi literatur (library research) dengan menganalisis berbagai sumber relevan mengenai teori kecerdasan majemuk, tantangan pembelajaran PAI, dan pengembangan model pembelajaran. Hasil pembahasan menunjukkan bahwa pengintegrasian teori kecerdasan majemuk dalam pembelajaran PAI dapat dilakukan melalui empat langkah strategis: (1) identifikasi tujuan pembelajaran, (2) analisis materi ajar, (3) pengenalan karakteristik kecerdasan peserta didik, dan (4) pengembangan metode pembelajaran yang beragam. Model ini diharapkan mampu mengoptimalkan seluruh potensi siswa, menjadikan pembelajaran PAI lebih menyenangkan, dan pada akhirnya membentuk karakter siswa yang sesuai dengan nilai-nilai Islam secara utuh.

**Kata Kunci:** *Dikotomi Pengetahuan dan Praktik, Model Pembelajaran, Kecerdasan Majemuk*



## INTRODUCTION

The dynamics of global life in the 21st century have presented complex challenges for education. Education no longer aims solely to transfer knowledge, but also to develop critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, and communication (the 4Cs) skills needed for survival and growth. In this context, a paradigm shift has occurred in educational psychology, moving from a single view of intelligence as measured by IQ tests to an understanding of the multiple and multidimensional nature of human intelligence.

Unfortunately, this new paradigm has not been fully adopted in learning practices, particularly in Islamic Religious Education (IRE) subjects. The IRE learning process in many schools still tends to be monotonous, teacher-centered, and emphasizes solely cognitive aspects, such as memorization and comprehension of texts. As a result, IRE learning often fails to internalize religious values into students' daily personalities and behaviors, creating a dichotomy between religious knowledge (*gnosis*) and religious practice (*praxis*).

According to Mulyasa, internalization is the effort to internalize and deepen values so that they are embedded in every human being. According to Muhaimin, the model for internalizing values in students involves three stages: 1) the value transformation stage, 2) the value transaction stage, and 3) the transinternalization stage. During this stage, students can internalize the internalized values and practice them without teacher guidance. Furthermore, the internalization process can encourage students to embrace their beliefs in line with their ingrained beliefs, leading to a willingness to act in accordance with the system. The internalization stage requires several steps: a) Listening, b) Responding, c) Organization, d) Characterization.

Based on these issues, a methodological breakthrough is needed to address the challenges of the times. One highly relevant approach to adopt is Howard Gardner's theory of Multiple Intelligences. This theory states that each individual possesses at least nine different types of intelligence, which can be developed through appropriate stimulation. This article aims to conceptualize how the theory of multiple intelligences can be developed into an innovative and holistic Islamic Education learning model, so that it can create learning that is not only intellectually intelligent, but also spiritually, emotionally, and socially intelligent.

## METHOD

This research is a literature study (*library research*), which is a research activity carried out by collecting data related to the research problem obtained from primary and secondary data sources. The primary data sources consist of Howard Gardner's main works on multiple intelligences, particularly *Frames of Mind: The Theory of Multiple Intelligences* (2011), as well as classical and contemporary Islamic education texts that discuss the dichotomy between religious knowledge (*gnosis*) and practice (*praxis*).

The secondary data sources include indexed scientific journals, Islamic education theory books, previous research results, and research reports specifically related to the development of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning models, the internalization of religious values, and the application of multiple intelligences theory in Islamic education. According to Nazir (1998), a literature study is a method of collecting data and information by conducting research reviews of literature, such as books, notes, and reports related to the problem being solved. In this study,



the researcher collected as much data as possible from relevant literature sources, including books, journals, and previous research findings that discuss the integration of multiple intelligences into IRE learning.

Therefore, this literature study includes universal processes such as theory identification (e.g., Gardner's multiple intelligences and the concept of internalization according to Muhaimin), literature findings (e.g., studies on IRE learning methods and student character formation), and document analysis containing information relevant to the research problem, namely how to overcome the dichotomy between knowledge and practice in PAI through a multiple intelligence-based learning model.

The data analysis was conducted using a descriptive-analytical approach, where the collected data were interpreted, compared, and synthesized to formulate a conceptual model of multiple intelligence-based IRE learning that is holistic, participatory, and capable of bridging cognitive understanding with the internalization of Islamic values in students' daily lives.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **Theory of Multiple Intelligences**

The conventional approach to Islamic Religious Education (IRE) learning, dominated by lectures, structured question-and-answer methods, and memorization, implicitly accommodates only two types of intelligence: linguistic (the ability to listen, take notes, and re-explain) and logical-mathematical (the ability to understand propositions and laws). Students with dominant intelligences, such as kinesthetic (who learn through movement), spatial (who learn through images and visuals), musical, interpersonal, or intrapersonal, often fall victim to this methodology. They may be considered underachieving, unfocused, or uninterested, even though their potential is being untapped by the learning process. This is the root of the crisis of relevance and dichotomy described above.

In today's educational development, intelligence development extends beyond intellectual, emotional, and spiritual intelligence. Several other intelligences need to be developed, as outlined in Howard Gardner's theory of multiple intelligences. Howard Gardner is a prominent figure in education and psychology who developed the theory of multiple intelligences. He is an American national, born Howard Earl Gardner on July 11, 1943, in Scranton, Pennsylvania. His theory of multiple intelligences is well-known among educators because it provides a model for acting in accordance with the belief that all students have strengths.

The underlying background of this theory is a critique of the majority belief that intelligence quotient (IQ) determines a person's success in school and life. Those who consider IQ to be the determinant of success tend to believe that the most intelligent person, or the top performer in class or school, will succeed in life, and conversely, that those who fail in school will not succeed. However, this is not the case. For example, Bill Gates, who was considered unsuccessful in school, actually succeeded in the computer field.

According to Gardner, there is more than one human intelligence that falls outside the scope of standard psychometric measurement instruments such as IQ tests. This is because IQ tests only measure intelligence in a narrow sense, emphasizing linguistic and logical-



mathematical intelligence. According to Thomas R. Hoerr, although IQ tests can be used to measure a child's success in school, they cannot predict success in the real world (as adults and entering the workforce or society).

According to Gardner, humans possess more than one intelligence with different abilities, which he calls multiple intelligences. The idea of multiple intelligences began when he conducted research on "The Nature and Realization of Human Potential." Howard Gardner was inspired by Jean Piaget's book on Developmental Psychology. Jean Piaget viewed intellectual structures as being formed within individuals through their interactions with their environment.

According to Piaget, individual cognitive development encompasses four stages: 1) sensory-motor stage, 2) preoperational stage, 3) concrete operational stage, and 4) formal operational stage.

Intelligence is the perfection of intellectual development (such as cleverness and intellectual acuity). Gardner defines intelligence as the ability to solve problems and create products that are valued within one or more cultural environments and societies.

Gunawan expressed a similar opinion, stating that Howard Gardner views a person's intelligence through standardized scores and tests. He defined intelligence as:

1. A person's ability to solve problems encountered in real life.
2. The ability to create new problems to solve.
3. The ability to produce something (a product) or offer a service derived from one's culture.

This definition implies that intelligence must encompass two aspects: the ability to think abstractly and the capacity to learn from experience, namely the ability to provide appropriate responses to solve problems. Therefore, it is not solely measured by the results of standard psychological tests like IQ.

According to Howard Gardner, everyone is unique and everyone has their own way of contributing to the culture of a society. He stated that each person possesses all the components of intelligence, possessing a number of intelligences combined and then individually utilized in a unique way. Initially, Howard Gardner proposed seven types of intelligence:

1. Linguistic intelligence is the ability to use and process words effectively, both orally and in writing.
2. Logical-mathematical intelligence is the ability to calculate, measure, consider propositions or formulas, hypotheses, patterns, and logical and scientific thinking.
3. Intrapersonal intelligence is the ability related to self-knowledge and the ability to act adaptively based on that self-knowledge.
4. Interpersonal intelligence is the ability to understand, comprehend, and be sensitive to the feelings, intentions, motivations, characters, and temperaments of others in order to build effective relationships with them.
5. Musical intelligence is the ability to develop, express, and enjoy musical forms and sounds.
6. Visual and spatial intelligence is the ability to accurately perceive the world and recreate or transform aspects of that world.
7. Kinesthetic intelligence is the ability to use the body or body movement to express ideas or feelings. Then, in line with the development of his research in the 1990s, Gardner added an eighth and ninth intelligence, namely:



8. Naturalist intelligence, namely the ability to understand the natural environment well, to make other consequential distinctions from the natural world; the ability to understand and enjoy nature and to use these abilities productively.
9. Existential intelligence, namely the sensitivity or ability to address the deepest questions concerning human existence.

By understanding the various intelligences possessed by students, teachers will better understand how to treat them appropriately. By understanding the level and type of student intelligence, teachers can adjust how to present learning so that students can follow it effectively.

### **Islamic Religious Education Learning and Several Fundamental Problems**

Learning is an activity that involves individuals in acquiring knowledge, skills, and positive values by utilizing various learning resources. Ideally, learning in schools should synergize school lessons with the realities of society. In reality, students only understand things within the confines of the four walls of the classroom, resulting in them being unable to adapt to the realities of society.

One of the problems facing education today is the weak learning process. Students are not encouraged to develop their full abilities and potential. Classroom learning is directed at memorizing information; their brains are forced to remember and store information without being required to understand and connect it to everyday life. Religious education subjects fail to develop attitudes consistent with religious norms because the learning process is only directed at mastering and memorizing the material.

Current Islamic religious education learning is perceived as lacking a connection or concern with the issue of transforming cognitive religious knowledge into meaning and values that need to be internalized by students, which then become a source of motivation for students to act and behave in concrete, religious ways in their daily lives.

In line with this phenomenon, Mochtar Buchori believes the failure of religious education is due to its focus solely on cognitive aspects rather than fostering awareness of religious values, while neglecting the development of affective and conative-volutive aspects, namely the will and determination to practice Islamic teachings. As a result, a gap arises between knowledge and practice, between gnosis and praxis in religious life. Harun Nasution echoed this sentiment, stating that religious education is heavily influenced by Western trends that prioritize teaching over moral education, even though the essence of religious education is moral education.

Furthermore, Mochtar Buchori also stated that current religious education activities tend to be isolated and lack interaction with other educational activities. This approach is ineffective for instilling complex values. Soedjatmoko echoed this sentiment, as quoted by Muhaimin, stating that religious education must strive to integrate and synchronize with non-religious education. For example, when a religious teacher is delivering a lesson on faith in God, even though God is something unseen and cannot be perceived by the senses, the teacher can use God's creation, reminding students about physics lessons on electrons, radio waves, and other things that are difficult to perceive but whose existence is acknowledged. Or, when discussing the power of God, the religious teacher can connect this with science lessons on living things and the universe (Earth and space). Furthermore, a non-tarbiyah Islamic scholar, Amin



Abdullah, criticized the implementation of religious education in this school. He stated the following:

1. Religious education focuses too much on purely cognitive theoretical religious issues and practical acts of worship;
2. Religious education focuses less on how to transform cognitive religious knowledge into "meaning" and "values" that need to be internalized in students through various methods, media, and forums;
3. The methodology of religious education remains unchanged;
4. Religious education places greater emphasis on memorization of existing religious texts;
5. The evaluation system prioritizes cognitive aspects, and questions rarely contain meaningful religious values and spiritual meaning that are functional in everyday life.

Based on the criticisms of the experts mentioned above, as well as existing phenomena, breakthroughs and improvements are needed to realize the ideal goals of religious education. Therefore, various learning methods in Islamic Religious Education (IRE) education need to be developed so that learning activities that are still predominantly focused on cognitive/intellectual aspects can be changed or improved.

### **Development of Islamic Religious Education Learning Methods Based on Multiple Intelligences**

Islamic Religious Education is provided in accordance with the principle that religion is taught to humans with the vision of realizing individuals who are devout to Allah SWT and possess noble character. It also aims to produce individuals who are honest, just, virtuous, ethical, respectful, disciplined, harmonious, and productive, both personally and socially.

Religious Education is intended to enhance spiritual potential and shape students into individuals who believe in and fear God Almighty and possess noble character. Enhancing spiritual potential includes recognizing, understanding, and instilling religious values, as well as practicing these values in individual and collective social life. This enhancement of spiritual potential ultimately aims to optimize the various potentials possessed by humans, the actualization of which reflects their dignity and worth as God's creatures.

Islamic religious education contains a potential that refers to two developing phenomena:

1. Psychological and pedagogical potential that influences humans to become individuals of good quality and hold a noble status.
2. The potential for human development as a dynamic, creative caliph on earth, responsive to the surrounding environment.

A natural and *ijtimaiah* environment, where God is the central potential for development. To realize this ideal, appropriate learning methods are required so that all students' potential and intelligence can be optimally developed. A teaching method is a way of delivering learning material to achieve established objectives. Its function is to determine the success of a learning process and is an integral part of a teaching system. According to Abdurrahman Mas'ud, Islamic Religious Education methods in the new paradigm must place greater emphasis on developing creativity, sharpening the conscience, and fostering students' religiosity. This can be achieved if the teacher gets to know the students intimately.



Therefore, the method must be appropriate and aligned with the characteristics of the students, the material, and the environmental conditions (setting) in which the teaching takes place. The use or selection of a teaching method is influenced by several factors that must be considered, including: objectives, student characteristics, the situation, conditions, the teacher's personal abilities, and facilities and infrastructure.

In general, a teacher can develop learning methods by considering the various intelligences possessed by students. This is done by selecting specific methods according to the learning objectives and the intelligences being developed. The use of multiple intelligences theory in learning not only impacts the variety of methods but also the classroom structure. Classrooms can be made more flexible, making it easier for teachers and students to use a variety of learning methods. Learning takes place not only in a closed classroom but also in various locations around the school, depending on the material being studied. Furthermore, teachers can design classrooms with a variety of images, making them more comfortable and enjoyable.

In developing a Multiple Intelligences-based learning method, there are several steps that can be taken, namely:

1. Identify Learning Objectives.

The first step is to study and determine the desired objectives for students after learning. Identifying and establishing learning objectives is crucial, as objectives serve as the basis for learning.

2. Analyze Learning Materials.

The second step is to analyze the material to be taught. In Islamic Religious Education (IRE) learning, several characteristics of the material must be identified, including whether the material is a concept, principle, proposition, law, fact, or procedure. This relates to how teachers teach it so that students acquire the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values contained within the material.

3. Identify Student Characteristics/Intelligence.

When analyzing the various knowledge and skills mentioned above, students' intelligence must also be considered. Teachers can introduce the concept of multiple intelligences to students by creating a large, colorful poster before the lesson begins, depicting the nine intelligences each individual possesses. This poster is intended to stimulate and encourage students to recognize, recognize, and explore their own intelligences. In the first meeting before the lesson begins, the teacher asks students about the poster, based on their understanding, creates a discussion forum about the nine intelligences, and explains and encourages students to participate in the learning process by engaging with their preferred intelligences.

4. Developing Learning Methods

The next step, after analyzing the objectives, material, and students' intelligences, is to determine the various methods to be used, as well as the media and location for the learning, whether in the classroom or in the classroom. For example, learning about faith in God can be conducted outside the classroom using the method of contemplation on nature, observing God's creation, Recognizing their existence as God's creatures, using logical thinking by connecting God's creation with science, and re-expressing the results of their reflections through oral and written forms. Performing movements (prostration of gratitude) for the



blessings God has bestowed upon them. This fosters a sense of self-awareness and respect for others as God's creatures.

The development of this learning method aims to: 1) Optimize students' intellectual potential; 2) Adapt learning activities to their intelligence types; 3) Make learning more enjoyable; 4) Foster students' motivation to learn Islamic Religious Education (IRE); and 5) Develop positive attitudes toward Islamic Religious Education (IRE).

Implementation of Multiple Intelligence-Based Learning Models for each Intelligence:  
1. Linguistic Intelligence can be done by giving students the opportunity to tell stories, rewrite what they have learned, by brainstorming, by making journals about the material, and by publishing wall magazines. In other words, after studying a certain topic, students need to be given the opportunity to express their thoughts about the material by rewriting it in their own words. For example, after studying the golden age of Islam, students are given the opportunity to retell their understanding of the glory of Islam freely in front of the class. 2. Mathematical-logical intelligence can be manifested in the form of calculating, making categorizations or classifications, making scientific thinking with scientific processes, making analogies, etc. For example, after studying the postulates of the science of Faroid, students are given different problems that are a combination of the series of Faroid sciences to be calculated and solved.

Here, it is necessary to pay attention to the way students think and logic in solving each problem. 3. Visual-Spatial Intelligence can be expressed by visualizing the material by making calligraphy. 4. Bodily-Kinesthetic Intelligence can be expressed through movement and body expression. Such as the practice of prayer, ablution, tayamum, etc. 5. Musical Intelligence can be developed through learning, where every time before the teacher starts the lesson, he can play religious music related to the material to be taught. In addition, by providing opportunities and assignments for students to recite the Koran, nasyid activities or express teaching materials in the form of sound. 6. Interpersonal Intelligence can be expressed in the form of sharing activities, group discussions, collaboration in making projects or joint practicums, joint games or joint simulations. 7. Intrapersonal Intelligence can be developed by giving students time alone to reflect and think for a moment by introducing the potential and character of each individual. 8. Natural Intelligence can be helped by stimulating students to feel comfortable with natural settings such as inviting them to walk in the open air or by playing videos or films about the universe including animals and plants. 9. Existential intelligence can be helped by contemplating (reflecting and exploring nature) to recognize oneself and the essential issues about humans, after watching a video about the creation of humans, and studying verses of the Koran regarding humans.

Table Examples of Implementing Multiple Intelligence-Based Learning Methods in Islamic Religious Education (IRE) Material

Types of Intelligence	Learning Methods/Activities	Example of Implementation in the Material "Faith in God"
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Linguistics (Verbal-Linguistics)	Discussions, debates, presentations, essay writing, and storytelling activities.	Students write reflections about the signs of Allah's power that can be found in natural phenomena and everyday life.
Logical-Mathematical (Logical-Mathematical)	Logical analysis, concept grouping, problem solving, and argument analysis.	Students analyze logical arguments from the naqli evidence (the Qur'an and Hadith) which explain the existence and power of Allah.
Visual-Spatial	Creating concept maps, posters, infographics, illustrations, or learning videos.	Students create creative posters or infographics about the concept of Asmaul Husana which depicts the attributes of Allah.
Bodily-Kinesthetic	Worship practices, simulations, role playing, and movement-based learning activities.	Students practice prayer by paying attention to reverence and reflecting on the philosophical meaning of each prayer movement.
Musical (Musical-Rhythmic)	Singing, making religious songs, reading the Qur'an with tartil, or creating educational jingles.	Students create simple songs or jingles that describe the beauty of God's creation in the universe.
Interpersonal	Group discussions, project collaboration, collaborative learning, and peer teaching.	Students discuss in groups about how to maintain and strengthen faith in a pluralistic society.
Intrapersonal	Self-reflection, reflective journal writing, meditation activities, and spiritual contemplation.	Students write about personal experiences when they felt God's help or love in their lives.
Naturalist	Environmental observations, out-of-class learning activities, nature conservation projects.	The teacher invites students to observe natural phenomena in the surrounding environment and relate them to the signs of Allah's power (kauniyah verses).
Existential	Philosophical discussions, reflective dialogues, and explorations of the meaning of life.	Students discuss reflective questions such as "Why were humans created?" to understand the purpose of life from a faith perspective.

This table shows that the Multiple Intelligences approach can be integrated concretely in Islamic Religious Education learning, so that the learning process does not only focus on cognitive aspects, but is also able to develop the spiritual, social, emotional, and creative dimensions of students.

## CONCLUSION

Learning in the 21st century demands the development of human resources who excel not only in cognitive aspects but also possess multiple intelligences that enable them to adapt



to the rapid development of science and technology. In the context of Islamic Religious Education (IRE) learning, learning approaches that are still oriented toward memorization and theoretical mastery of material often fail to internalize religious values in students' lives. Therefore, methodological innovations are needed that can integrate the development of students' various intelligence potentials into the learning process.

Howard Gardner's theory of multiple intelligences provides a relevant conceptual framework for developing a more holistic IRE learning model. Through this approach, learning can be designed with the diversity of students' intelligence potentials in mind, making the learning process more varied, participatory, and meaningful. Implementing a multiple intelligence-based IRE learning model can be done through four main steps: identifying learning objectives, analyzing teaching materials, identifying students' intelligence characteristics, and developing diverse learning methods tailored to students' intelligence potential.

The application of this learning model allows for the development of various forms of student intelligence, such as linguistic, logical-mathematical, visual-spatial, kinesthetic, musical, interpersonal, intrapersonal, naturalistic, and existential. Thus, Islamic Religious Education (IRE) learning serves not only as a process of transferring religious knowledge but also as a means of internalizing Islamic values, which can shape students' character, spirituality, and moral awareness.

The novelty of this research lies in the effort to integrate the concept of Multiple Intelligences into Islamic Religious Education (IRE) learning as a pedagogical approach capable of bridging the demands of 21st-century education with the goals of holistic Islamic education. This research demonstrates that the multiple intelligences approach is not only relevant for improving the quality of the ISE learning process but also plays a role in optimizing students' potential multidimensionally, across cognitive, affective, and psychomotor aspects. Therefore, this learning model can be an innovative alternative in developing ISE learning strategies that are more adaptive to the dynamics of modern development while remaining rooted in Islamic values.

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