

The Relevance of the Multiple Intelligences Approach from the Perspective of Munif Chatib to Islamic Educational Parenting Patterns

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze the relevance of the Multiple Intelligences (MI) approach from the perspective of Munif Chatib as developed in his book *Sekolahnya Manusia*, in relation to parenting patterns within Islamic education. The background of this research stems from the urgent need in modern education to adopt approaches that are more humanistic, personalized, and grounded in fitrah, in alignment with the foundational principles of Islamic education. This study employs a library research method with content analysis techniques applied to the principal works of Munif Chatib, core literature on MI originally formulated by Howard Gardner as well as classical and contemporary references in Islamic education. The main findings indicate a strong coherence between the MI framework and key concepts in Islamic education, such as fitrah, temperament, individuality, and the principles of tarbiyah, particularly in aspects related to potential development, appreciation of diverse intelligences, and adaptive stimulation methods. Furthermore, the study identifies several points of divergence, especially in epistemological dimensions and sources of values.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The development of modern educational theory demonstrates a significant paradigmatic shift from traditional teacher-centered instructional approaches toward models that position students as subjects endowed with unique potentials. One of the theories that has played a pivotal role in this transformation is Multiple Intelligences (MI), developed by Howard Gardner. This concept was subsequently contextualized by Munif Chatib in his work *Sekolahnya Manusia*, in which he emphasizes that every child is a champion and that education should focus on the development of multiple intelligences rather than merely on assessment based on semi-standardized academic abilities (Putra & Dewantoro, 2022). This paradigm has become increasingly relevant amid critiques of educational systems that tend to homogenize individual capacities, thereby failing to adequately accommodate each child's unique potential (Mustajab, Baharun, & Iltiqiyah, 2020).

On the other hand, Islamic education possesses a robust conceptual foundation regarding the notions of fitrah and children's innate talents, emphasizing a humanistic pattern of upbringing. Within the Islamic worldview, children are regarded as a trust (amanah) endowed with inherent potential that must be nurtured through a process of tarbiyah characterized by adaptability, compassion, and exemplary conduct (Harmonis, Syafri, Widat, Rumlystiowati, & Agustin, 2022). However, in practice, many Muslim families remain confined within authoritarian and uniform parenting patterns. (Hamzah, Rozi, & Khotimah, 2022).

In light of this urgency, the present study aims to bridge the contemporary MI approach with the foundational principles of Islamic education. Through this integrative effort, points of convergence may be identified that offer new directions for parenting methodologies more responsive to the challenges of contemporary education. Academic studies linking MI, as articulated by Munif Chatib, with Islamic parenting patterns remain considerably limited. The majority of existing literature concentrates on the implementation of MI within school settings rather than within the familial context (Putra & Dewantoro, 2022; Rahman, Fitri, & Aulia, 2022). This study seeks to address this lacuna by exploring how the MI approach may be operationalized within Islamic educational parenting patterns, thereby enabling parents to more effectively recognize and cultivate the diverse potentials of their children. (Amrillah & Nuraeni, 2022).

Within the context of this continually evolving educational landscape, it is imperative for parents to recognize that the application of MI principles enables them not only to identify and appreciate each child's distinctive strengths, but also to integrate the teaching of tawhid values and moral conduct (akhlak) into the parenting process. Such an integrative approach contributes to the establishment of an environment conducive to children's optimal development and the cultivation of a generation that is not merely academically competent, but also resilient in character and grounded in spirituality, in accordance with the foundational principles of Islamic education (Harmonis et al., 2022; Syarif & Mawardi, 2021).

The integration of potential-based and spirituality-oriented educational approaches has become increasingly crucial within the global context. Holistic educational models encompassing the development of cognitive, emotional, moral, and spiritual intelligences are progressively recognized as defining trends of twenty-first-century education (Asrofi, Hamilaturroyya, & Purwoko, 2025). Within this framework, research that synthesizes the Multiple Intelligences (MI) paradigm advanced by Howard Gardner with Islamic parenting patterns offers significant global relevance, particularly in enriching value-based holistic educational discourse.

The MI approach proposed by Howard Gardner advocates for the cultivation of each individual's unique potential rather than prioritizing standardized and uniform modes of instruction. This perspective resonates with the principles of Islamic education, which underscore the centrality of fitrah and character formation (Halimatussakdiah, 2023; Leany & 'Azzam, 2024). Islamic education does not merely emphasize intellectual attainment; rather, it integrates moral and spiritual development, viewing the child as an amanah to be empowered through nurturing, compassionate, and purposefully guided parenting methods (Asrofi et al., 2025).

The original contribution of this study lies in its systematic mapping of the epistemological and practical relationships between the MI framework and Islamic educational parenting patterns. By proposing a comprehensive conceptual framework, this research seeks to provide a foundational reference for subsequent scholarly inquiries as well as practical implementation within Muslim families. Accordingly, the integration of the Multiple Intelligences (MI) paradigm introduced by Howard Gardner into Islamic education not only contributes to the advancement of educational scholarship, but also opens avenues for incorporating modern pedagogical methodologies within the ethical and spiritual principles of Islam. Such integration paves the way for a more inclusive and

holistic educational model capable of addressing the developmental needs of children in an increasingly advanced global era (Pratama & Husniyah, 2025).

The significance of this integration lies in its capacity to construct a holistic educational model in which the diversity of children's intelligences is duly recognized and appreciated, thereby generating positive implications for their psychological well-being and character development (Ramadhan et al., 2025). This study is expected to inspire parents and educators to adopt approaches that are more adaptive and responsive to the unique needs of each child, while simultaneously integrating spiritual values into a comprehensive and holistic educational process (Asrofi et al., 2025; Syaputra, Mohtarom, Yusuf, & Kirom, 2024).

The original contribution of this study resides in its systematic endeavor to map the epistemological and practical relationships between the MI framework as articulated by Munif Chatib and Islamic educational parenting patterns, while simultaneously proposing a conceptual framework that may serve as a foundation for subsequent research and practical implementation within Muslim families. Accordingly, this study not only contributes to the advancement of Islamic educational scholarship but also opens avenues for the integration of modern pedagogical methodologies with the spiritual and ethical principles of Islam.

2. METHODS

This study employs a library research approach by examining literature related to the theory of Multiple Intelligences (MI) developed by Howard Gardner, the thought of Munif Chatib in *Sekolahnya Manusia*, as well as primary and secondary sources in Islamic education. This conceptual-analytical approach does not involve field data; rather, it relies on the systematic analysis of relevant literature to construct a comprehensive and in-depth understanding (Fuady & Samsudin, 2023; Waston & Rois, 2017). Data were obtained from books, scholarly articles, academic journals, and classical works on Islamic education, employing source triangulation to ensure validity. The analytical procedure utilized content analysis techniques, encompassing categorization, interpretation, and meaning-making processes aimed at identifying the key themes of Munif Chatib's thought and the conceptual foundations of Islamic educational parenting patterns, as well as mapping the conceptual interrelationship between the two (Alam, Aziz, & Han, 2023).

Several studies underscore the importance of integrating MI with Islamic educational parenting patterns, demonstrating that the application of MI within Islamic educational contexts supports the development of students' character and emotional intelligence (Jumiati, 2023), while also fostering inclusive learning environments conducive to children's spiritual, moral, and emotional growth (Fajri & Khojir, 2022). Through this approach, the study is expected to provide both theoretical and practical contributions to understanding the relevance, convergence, and distinction between MI and Islamic educational parenting patterns (Nurhasanah, Gani, Bedi, Ayu, & Junaidah, 2024), while simultaneously opening pathways for the development of modern pedagogical methods aligned with the ethical and spiritual principles of Islamic education in order to optimally support children's character development (Kristanto & Rahajeng, 2017; Raffin, Ramadhani, & Salsabilla, 2024).

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. The Conceptual Relevance of Multiple Intelligences to Human Fitrah in Islamic Education

The Multiple Intelligences (MI) approach articulated by Munif Chatib is consonant with the Islamic conception of human fitrah, which encompasses the innate potential inherent within every individual to grow and flourish. The concept of fitrah in Islam affirms that each child is endowed with the capacity to develop and incline toward goodness, paralleling the MI perspective that intelligence cannot be reduced to a singular dimension. Rather, intelligence

comprises diverse domains, including linguistic, logical-mathematical, spatial, and other forms of cognitive capacity (Supriatna, Trinova, Anantadjaya, Dewi, & Nawangwulan, 2021; Yulqowin, Purwoyulianto, & Rohimah, 2025). By recognizing that every child is unique, this approach calls upon educational practice to harness the diversity of intelligences and learning styles, thereby providing learners with opportunities to develop in accordance with their respective strengths (Ladamay & Jabbar, 2024).

Integrating the Multiple Intelligences (MI) framework advanced by Munif Chatib and rooted in the original theory of Howard Gardner into Islamic education, as reflected in recent studies, demonstrates that both academic and non-academic intelligences must be cultivated in order to form a holistic individual, thereby paving the path toward the realization of **insan kamil** (Ihwanah & Nugroho, 2017; Nurhidayati, 2016). Chatib maintains that the potential inherent in every child constitutes a divine endowment that must be developed through the facilitative roles of teachers and parents. In this regard, he underscores the foundational role of educators and parents as facilitators who not only instruct but also motivate and empower children (Hasbi, 2022).

Chatib further emphasizes that every child is a “champion,” endowed with distinctive strengths. This conception resonates with the Islamic view of human dignity (*karamah insaniah*) and the ethical imperative to respect and nurture such potential (Mustajab et al., 2020). The success of MI-based education, therefore, depends upon the capacity of educators to construct learning environments enriched with meaningful experiences, supported by a humanistic orientation within contemporary educational practice (Karisma, Ngadhimah, & Qholik, 2024; Qadariyah, 2019).

The application of the Multiple Intelligences (MI) framework, originally formulated by Howard Gardner, in educational practice demonstrates that diversity in children’s learning modalities must be accommodated through approaches that enable each learner to develop their respective intelligences optimally (Fathia, Nurjanah, & Sholeha, 2024). Accordingly, within the educational context, MI not only facilitates the operationalization of the principle of **fitrah** in contemporary pedagogical practice, but also supports the attainment of the psychological and spiritual outcomes envisioned in Islamic education (Wahyudi, Suryani, & Rohmaningtyas, 2023). In this regard, MI functions as an epistemological bridge between modern psychology and Islamic values, providing a framework for comprehensive and sustainable personal development (Amelia, Saputro, & Purwanti, 2022).

3.2. The Role of Parents as Murabbi and the Relevance of Multiple Intelligences in Parenting Contexts

Parenting patterns within Islamic education function as a holistic process of *tarbiyah*, aimed at shaping children’s personality, moral character (*akhlaq*), spirituality, and intellectual capacities. In the Islamic tradition, parents assume the roles of *murabbi*, *mu’addib*, and *mu’allim*, guiding the balanced development of the child across cognitive, affective, and spiritual domains. Within this framework, the Multiple Intelligences (MI) approach formulated by Howard Gardner provides a concrete analytical structure through which children’s intellectual tendencies may be identified and mapped through systematic behavioral observation.

MI thus offers a scientific foundation for parenting practices that are responsive to children’s specific developmental needs. For instance, children who demonstrate strong bodily-kinesthetic intelligence will flourish in environments that permit physical exploration and active engagement, rather than in restrictive caregiving contexts that limit movement (Ghaderi, Najafi, Akouchekian, Mahaki, & Rezaei, 2017; Sahatsathatsana, Sahatsathatsana, &

Heman, 2021). Conversely, children with pronounced musical intelligence require stimulation through environments enriched with rhythm and sound. Through this approach, parenting styles become more attuned to the distinctive characteristics of each child, aligning with the Islamic principles of gradual education (*al-tadarruj*) and compassionate guidance (*al-rifq*) (Shaari & Matore, 2019; Syafii, 2025).

These principles are further consistent with the concept of *ta'dib* in Islamic education, which emphasizes the role of parents and educators in accompanying and nurturing children's intellectual growth progressively in accordance with their inherent potential (Syafii, 2025). The implementation of MI fosters adaptive and inclusive learning environments, enabling children to identify and cultivate their diverse intelligences both academic and non-academic (Negari & Khorram, 2015). Through MI-informed parenting, educational engagement extends beyond behavioral regulation to encompass the comprehensive development of children's cognitive and emotional capacities.

3.3. Epistemological Integration between Multiple Intelligences and the Values of Islamic Education

The Multiple Intelligences (MI) approach formulated by Howard Gardner, although rooted in cognitive psychology, may be integrated within the epistemological framework of Islam, provided that it is positioned as a methodological instrument rather than a source of normative values. Within the context of Islamic education, MI offers a scientific tool for identifying and understanding children's potential, thereby constituting a point of convergence between modern psychological insights and the moral-spiritual orientation prescribed by Islam (Kadis, Imron, Mustiningsih, & Sumarsono, 2024). Such positioning enables Islamic education to adapt to scientific advancement without compromising its theological identity.

The integration of MI with the principles of Islamic *tarbiyah* aligns with the paradigm of Islamic pedagogical integration, which refers to an educational model that synthesizes modern science with Islamic values in order to establish comprehensive educational practices (Arifin, Huda, & Mufida, 2023; Syaifullah & Amirkhan, 2023). In this configuration, MI functions as a diagnostic instrument for optimizing *tarbiyah*, while Islam ensures that parenting and educational processes remain grounded in moral virtue (*akhlaq*), *tawhid*, and noble character formation (Arifin et al., 2023; Khoeriah, Shohib, & Nubail, 2023). This underscores the imperative of parenting models that transcend mere knowledge accumulation and instead prioritize ethical and moral cultivation consistent with Islamic principles (Shui, 2025). Holistic education (*tarbiyah kulliyah*) is thus expected to strengthen the interaction between MI principles and Islamic moral values.

Through this integrative approach, education is conceived not merely as the transmission of knowledge, but as the application of knowledge within daily life in accordance with ethical and spiritual considerations (Shui, 2025; Syukur, Nata, Rosyada, & Suralaga, 2023). MI, with its recognition of diverse talents and capacities, offers Islamic education an opportunity to cultivate individuals who are not only academically competent but also enriched with ethical integrity and spiritual depth. Empirical findings indicate that the implementation of MI within Islamic educational settings can enhance learning outcomes and increase students' motivation in religious education subjects (Yani, Salminawati, & Usiono, 2025). In this manner, the integration of MI and Islamic educational values not only improves educational quality but also contributes to the development of students' moral and character formation, enabling them to mature as socially and spiritually responsible individuals (Edison, Anwar, & Saidah, 2022).

3.4. Contemporary Context: Multiple Intelligences and Educational Challenges in the Digital Era

Although the primary focus of the Multiple Intelligences (MI) framework originally formulated by Howard Gardner and contextualized in Indonesia by Munif Chatib lies in the domain of intelligence, its application may indirectly reinforce the formation of Islamic character. When children are afforded opportunities to develop in accordance with their distinctive potentials, they are more likely to cultivate self-confidence, empathy, and respect for diversity. Values such as patience (*sabr*), gratitude (*shukr*), and responsibility may be internalized through forms of stimulation aligned with their dominant intelligences. For example, interpersonal intelligence can be directed toward the cultivation of social ethics (*akhlaq ijtimaiyyah*), while intrapersonal intelligence may serve as a pathway for fostering self-awareness and spiritual consciousness.

Naturalist intelligence can be oriented toward *tadabbur al-'alam* reflective contemplation of nature as *ayat kauniyyah* (cosmic signs). In this sense, MI functions as an entry point for enriching the moral and spiritual dimensions of Islamic parenting without departing from the normative framework of *shari'ah*. Within the contemporary digital era, children encounter increasingly complex developmental challenges, including technological distraction, shifting patterns of social interaction, and intensified academic pressure. Islamic education therefore requires parenting approaches that are adaptive, responsive, and contextually relevant. MI offers an analytical lens through which parents can understand how children navigate digital environments based on their dominant intelligences.

For instance, children with strong spatial intelligence may be guided to utilize technology for creative design and productive digital expression rather than passive consumption. Those with pronounced interpersonal intelligence can be encouraged to engage in constructive collaboration and ethical digital communication. The integration of MI with Islamic values further facilitates the ethical, moderate, and purposeful use of technology, ensuring alignment with moral responsibility and spiritual awareness. This discussion affirms that the MI approach articulated by Munif Chatib holds substantial relevance conceptually, epistemologically, and practically to Islamic educational parenting patterns.

MI provides a scientific framework for understanding the diversity of children's potentials, while Islam furnishes the comprehensive value foundation and teleological direction of education. Their integration offers a more humanistic, adaptive, and contextually responsive parenting model capable of addressing the evolving demands of contemporary society.

DISCUSSION

The theoretical framework of this study is constructed upon an integrative synthesis between the Multiple Intelligences (MI) approach as articulated by Munif Chatib and the concept of parenting within Islamic education. This integration is not merely eclectic; rather, it represents a systematic attempt to position a contemporary psychological-educational framework in constructive dialogue with a revelation-based epistemological paradigm. Theoretically, MI—originally proposed by Howard Gardner conceptualizes intelligence as a plural, relatively autonomous, and individually distinctive set of capacities. This perspective challenges the reductionist tendency to equate intelligence solely with linguistic and logical-mathematical abilities.

Within this framework, intelligence is understood as a spectrum of potentials that manifest differently across individuals, thereby necessitating differentiated, student centered pedagogical strategies. The foundational assumption of MI is that no child is inherently “unintelligent”; rather, each child possesses a dominant configuration of intelligences that requires appropriate identification and cultivation. Conversely, Islamic educational parenting is grounded in the

concepts of fitrah (primordial disposition), tarbiyah (holistic nurturing), and moral formation (akhlaq), with divine revelation serving as its primary epistemological source.

The child is regarded as an amanah (sacred trust), endowed with innate potentialities that must be nurtured in a comprehensive manner encompassing intellectual, emotional, social, and spiritual dimensions. Educational formation within this paradigm extends beyond cognitive attainment to encompass the cultivation of ethical character, spiritual consciousness, and balanced personality development. Within this theoretical construction, parents assume the role of murabbi primary agents responsible for the integral development of the child while teachers function as formal educators who reinforce and institutionalize this developmental process.

The MI framework contributes an analytical and methodological apparatus for identifying and developing diverse individual potentials, whereas Islamic educational principles provide the normative foundation, teleological orientation, and ethical direction of the educational process. Accordingly, the integration of MI and Islamic educational parenting yields a theoretical model in which the development of multiple intelligences is conceptualized as part of the actualization of fitrah, and parenting practices become the practical arena through which psychological potentials are harmonized with spiritual and moral objectives.

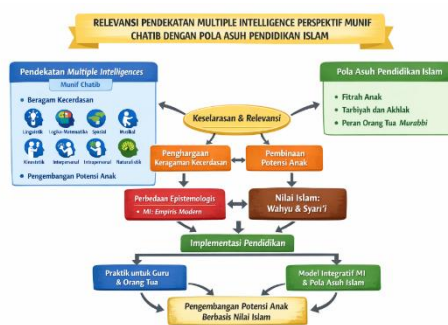


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework Diagram

This theoretical framework positions the two perspectives in a complementary relationship: Multiple Intelligences provides a pedagogical approach to identify and develop the diverse potentials of children, whereas Islamic education offers the value foundation and normative direction for the process of development. The integration of both results in a conceptual model of child potential development grounded in Islamic values that appreciates the diversity of intelligences while simultaneously reinforcing character formation and spirituality.

The theoretical framework of this study is constructed upon the integration of the Multiple Intelligences (MI) approach from the perspective of Munif Chatib and the concept of parenting within Islamic education. Theoretically, MI originally introduced by Howard Gardner conceives intelligence as a set of multiple capacities that are unique to each child and must be developed through diverse, individualized, and student-centered learning strategies. Its fundamental assumption is that no child is “unintelligent”; rather, each child possesses a different dominant type of intelligence that requires appropriate recognition and cultivation.

On the other hand, Islamic educational parenting is grounded in the concepts of fitrah (primordial disposition), tarbiyah (holistic nurturing), and moral formation (akhlaq), with divine revelation serving as its primary epistemological source. The child is regarded as an amanah (sacred trust) endowed with innate potential that must be nurtured holistically, encompassing intellectual, emotional, social, and spiritual dimensions through the roles of parents as murabbi and teachers as educators. Theoretically, this study provides an integrative foundation for developing a model of Islamic education based on potential and fitrah.

The MI approach may be viewed as a psychopedagogical framework compatible with the concept of fitrah, thereby opening avenues for the development of Islamic educational theory that is more adaptive to contemporary psychological advancements. This integrative model also enriches theoretical discourse on the role of parents as murabbi, who are responsible not only for moral-spiritual nurturing but also for cognitive and psychological development. Practically, the implications of this study include the importance of designing parenting patterns that are personalized, responsive, and grounded in the mapping of children's intelligences.

Parents and educators may employ MI principles to adjust nurturing methods according to children's natural tendencies, thereby rendering the parenting process more effective and consistent with Islamic values. This approach may also reduce psychological pressure on children who are often compelled to conform to uniform standards of success. Furthermore, this study encourages Islamic educational institutions to strengthen collaboration with families in fostering a consistent learning environment between school and home. The implementation of MI within parenting practices may serve as a strategic means of cultivating development-friendly families while nurturing a generation of Muslims who are intellectually capable, creative, and firmly grounded in character.

4. CONCLUSION

This study concludes that there is a strong relevance between the Multiple Intelligences (MI) approach from the perspective of Munif Chatib and Islamic educational parenting. Both frameworks emphasize respect for individual potential, the importance of providing stimulation aligned with the child's unique characteristics, and the creation of a supportive and humanistic nurturing environment. Although they originate from different epistemological foundations MI from contemporary psychological theory and Islamic parenting from revelation-based principles they demonstrate substantial compatibility at the conceptual and practical levels. The novelty of this research lies in its systematic mapping of the relationship between MI and Islamic parenting, an area that has not been extensively explored in academic discourse. This study offers an integrative perspective demonstrating that MI can function as a methodological instrument to enrich tarbiyah practices within Muslim families, without compromising the normative values embedded in Islamic teachings. More broadly, this research contributes to the development of a holistic educational model that integrates multiple intelligences with spiritual and ethical values. The findings open avenues for the advancement of family-based curricula, structured parenting programs, and fitrah oriented learning methods that are more responsive to contemporary educational demands.

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