



INTELLECTUAL INTELLIGENCE, MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES, AND THEIR SOLUTIONS IN MADRASAHs

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Abstract:

This study explores the challenges related to intellectual intelligence and mental health in Islamic madrasahs, highlighting how traditional education systems often prioritize rote memorization over the development of diverse cognitive abilities. Many students face emotional stress, anxiety, and identity crises due to academic pressure, lack of emotional support, and limited teacher training in psychology. The rigid focus on linguistic and memory-based intelligence neglects other forms like creative, logical, and emotional intelligence, leading to imbalanced development. Furthermore, inadequate facilities, strict environments, and social isolation contribute to students' psychological struggles. The paper advocates for the integration of mental health awareness, co-curricular activities, and teacher training programs to address these issues. Establishing counseling systems, improving classroom environments, and recognizing students' individual needs can promote holistic development. By modernizing pedagogical methods and fostering a supportive atmosphere, madrasahs can cultivate intellectually gifted, emotionally resilient, and socially responsible individuals in alignment with Islamic values.

Keywords: *Intellectual Intelligence, Mental Health, Madrasahs, Educational Challenges, Emotional Well-being, Holistic Development, Islamic Pedagogy*

Introduction: In madrasahs, primary emphasis is placed on linguistic and memory-based intelligence. Students are assessed based on their ability to memorize textbooks, recite lessons, and repeat materials. This method of education neglects other types of intelligence such as creative, emotional, and logical intelligence, impacting students' holistic mental development (Nadeem, 2020). Students face immense pressure to memorize texts, pass exams, and meet expectations of teachers and parents, leading to stress and anxiety. Factors like separation from family, domestic issues, and teacher severity contribute to emotional tension. When students are judged solely on memory skills, those with other abilities suffer from inferiority complexes (Irfan, 2019). Mental health issues in madrasahs are often stigmatized, preventing students from openly sharing their problems. The rote-learning approach dominates, focusing on Q&A drills while neglecting critical and creative thinking. Continuous examinations and performance expectations further burden students. In some cases, students are forcibly enrolled, affecting their motivation and mental well-being (Nadeem, 2020). Teachers are often not trained in mental health awareness or multiple intelligences, leading to misjudgment of student psychology. It's essential to provide both students and teachers with basic awareness about emotional understanding, stress management, and positive thinking. A counseling system should be established within madrasahs to allow students to discuss their concerns openly. Incorporating co-curricular activities—debates, writing, sports—can foster creative intelligence. Teachers should receive training in psychology, child



development, and modern pedagogy to better understand student needs. Gifted students are not immune to emotional and motivational challenges. Despite their higher intelligence, they often encounter unique psychological complexities and struggle to adapt to standard curricula. These children must harmonize their abilities with structured syllabi, which may be beneath their skill level. When peers fail to grasp concepts, gifted children must exercise patience and empathy to maintain group harmony (Khan, 2018). Teachers face challenges in handling mixed-ability classrooms, where students' intellectual capacities vary widely. As students advance in age, their cognitive differences become more pronounced. Some grasp basic arithmetic with difficulty, while others solve complex algebra. Educators often lack knowledge of social dynamics and emotional difficulties among students due to insufficient psychological training. Another issue is the lack of subject-matter mastery among teachers, especially in primary grades. Expecting one teacher to be proficient in all subjects is unrealistic. In many cases, intelligent students surpass their teachers in specific subjects. To manage these challenges, it is proposed that curricula be made enrichment-oriented—focusing on enhancing the abilities of intellectually gifted students. According to research, the key skills to be developed include: Ability to interrelate and connect concepts, Ability to critically evaluate events and arguments, Ability to think innovatively and from new perspectives, Problem-solving of complex situations, Capacity to understand unfamiliar contexts and people beyond one's environment (Khan, 2018)

Unless these skills are nurtured, education cannot be considered intellectually enriching. Assigning long division problems to a child who already masters it is mere busywork. In contrast, teaching a new division technique would be enriching. Similarly, asking students to find extra facts about crops is less educational than teaching them to relate crop production to political elections.

Mohammad Irfan Nadeem (2020) identifies the fundamental needs of madrasah students, dividing them into: Physical needs, Psychological needs, Natural (biological) needs, Social needs, Aesthetic needs. A healthy body and maintained personality are essential. Students need fresh air, light, balanced food, waste elimination, proper temperature, exercise, and rest. Without these, students appear weak, pale, and unmotivated. Providing clean water, a ventilated classroom, and recreational breaks can significantly improve development. Madrasahs must ensure clean washrooms, especially for younger students. Teachers must recognize these needs as students initially rely on adults for support and gradually move towards self-reliance. Proper lighting, ventilation, and hygienic facilities are crucial. A lack of these leads to student restlessness and even aggression, becoming a discipline problem. Summer heat requires access to fans and cool water, while winters demand sunlit, warm rooms—conditions often missing in current madrasahs. Children are social by nature and need interaction. A caring environment of relatives and teachers builds resilience. Entering madrasahs, students leave their familiar home setting. If teachers are not compassionate, students become disinterested and disconnect from education. Some eventually abandon education due to environmental harshness. Teachers must do more than teach—they should cultivate an engaging, respectful atmosphere for



personality and potential development. Students seek respect among peers. Restricting social interaction leads to loneliness and weakens their social identity, potentially causing lifelong antisocial behavior.

From age five onward, social needs become prominent. Students form cliques and exclude others, causing emotional distress in rejected students. It's important to promote inclusion and emotional wellbeing. Parents and teachers should facilitate friendships to satisfy these relational needs.

Literature review: A crucial aspect of students' psychological needs is their desire for identity recognition in society. They seek praise, appreciation, and dignity. Some psychologists consider this a social need. In any case, it is a significant human necessity that cannot be denied. Among psychological needs, love and affection are the most important. Every student wants to be loved and accepted. This need for connection and affection exists in every human being and is especially strong in young students. Moreover, children wish to be looked at with approval and to have their work appreciated. Disapproval and dissatisfaction from others cause them distress. Students not only seek the approval of teachers but also of their peers. They want to be included in activities and accepted as friends. If a teacher expresses dislike toward a student, the student will lose interest in studies and may want to leave the madrasah. When teachers assign tasks and students complete them, they should be praised and, if needed, corrected privately regarding their mistakes. One important psychological need is the desire of every student to understand themselves and their surroundings. They want to uncover the deeper truths behind their environment. Simply put, humans seek to understand their relationship with the universe and its Creator. This is the foundation of personal identity. Without it, a person cannot feel secure about their sense of self. In addition, the natural human urge to form and interpret concepts about the self and the universe has educational importance. Therefore, teachers should create opportunities that fulfill these needs. Motivating students to learn depends largely on addressing these psychological needs. During instruction, teachers should ensure that abstract concepts and symbols are presented in a way that satisfies students' psychological curiosity. Using complex language or unfamiliar terms can cause confusion in students' minds. Educational Significance of Basic Needs: Understanding the educational scope and categories of basic needs reveals their strong influence on student behavior and character. Awareness of these needs and their fulfillment or deprivation greatly affects personality development. For instance, mutual cooperation is a fundamental social need. To instill this awareness in students, appropriate content must be included in textbooks and learning environments. Curricula should incorporate a wide range of disciplines, games, literature, educational and recreational tours, and organized project-based activities. The curriculum should also address students' social, physical, psychological, and aesthetic needs. Hence, the entire educational environment of madrasahs must be planned accordingly—this includes both human and material resources, administrative structure, and most importantly, the teacher's teaching wisdom, behavior, academic standing, and personal character.



Psychologically, a poorly timed rebuke or inappropriate leniency from a teacher can ruin a child's personality for life.

Types of Individual Differences:

Intellectual Differences, Socioeconomic Differences, Physical Differences

Intellectual Differences: Almost every learner differs intellectually from others, and this variation can be significant. For practical purposes, students can be divided into three categories based on intellectual capacity:

Gifted Learners: These students learn faster than their peers, quickly understand lessons, and actively participate in both academic and extracurricular activities. Their natural curiosity often goes unsatisfied due to limited scope in regular lessons. Teachers may struggle to meet their intellectual hunger, which can lead to disengagement or negative perceptions. Therefore, it is important that teachers come well-prepared and offer additional resources, such as advanced readings.

Intermediate Learners: These students are neither exceptionally bright nor below average. They perform moderately and require balanced instruction—not overly concise nor excessively detailed. Slow Learners: These students have limited abilities and poor comprehension. Teachers must invest extra effort, as their memory is weak and they require repeated instructions. Special attention and peer support are essential for their development.

Planning to Address Intellectual Differences: Intelligence directly influences learning, so students should be grouped based on intellectual proximity, and peer support should be encouraged. Grouping must be subject-specific since a student may be good at one subject and weak in another. Careful grouping avoids time wastage and ensures instruction matches students' mental levels. Expecting the same results from all learners, regardless of their intellectual ability, is unjust and discouraging.

Contemporary Views on Student Grouping in Madrasahs:

Education expert Muhammad Irfan Nadeem notes that some modern specialists recommend grouping students by intelligence levels. However, this approach can replicate social inequalities, where the “bright get brighter” and the “weak get left behind.” Below are some arguments for and against such grouping:

Arguments in Favor:

Mixed-intelligence classrooms hinder behavioral development. Slow learners avoid interaction with brighter students. Slow learners may suffer from inferiority complexes due to constant comparison. Slower students often fall further behind as they can't compete. Gifted students may develop negative attitudes toward less capable peers. Grouping labels students unnecessarily and may suppress their potential. It creates a psychological environment of superiority and inferiority. It ignores other important factors contributing to a joyful and fulfilling life.

Current Issues and Needed Reforms in Madrasahs:

Madrasahs have long played a key role in the religious and intellectual formation of the Muslim Ummah. However, modern educational and psychological needs demand a broader approach—not only academic training but also mental, psychological, and physical development.



Typically, madrasahs emphasize linguistic and memory-based intelligence, judging students based on rote memorization. This neglects other types of intelligence such as logical, creative, or emotional intelligence, impacting students' overall mental growth. Students are under intense pressure to perform academically and meet the expectations of parents and teachers. Separation from family, household problems, and harsh discipline can further contribute to emotional stress. Mental health issues are often stigmatized, causing students to suffer in silence, damaging their inner personality. Not all students possess the same type of intelligence. When academic success is judged only by memory, other forms of intelligence are neglected, leading to feelings of inadequacy. Even gifted children may struggle with emotional confusion and peer integration. Teachers also face challenges when teaching classes with diverse intelligence levels. Often untrained in child psychology or modern teaching methods, they struggle to meet all students' needs effectively.

Research Questions:

1. How do current teaching practices in madrasahs affect the intellectual development and mental health of students?
2. What strategies can be implemented in madrasahs to promote mental well-being and nurture multiple forms of intelligence in line with Islamic values?

Significance of Research: This research is significant as it highlights overlooked mental health challenges and limited intellectual development in madrasahs. By addressing these issues, it offers practical, Islamic-based solutions to create supportive learning environments. The study aims to improve student well-being, enhance diverse intelligences, and promote balanced educational outcomes in traditional Islamic institutions.

Research Methodology: This research adopts a textual and analytical methodology, focusing on classical Islamic texts, modern psychological literature, and case studies from selected madrasahs. Primary sources include the Qur'an, Hadith, and works of scholars like Imam al-Ghazali and Ibn Khaldun, examining their insights on human intellect ('aql) and well-being (nafs). Secondary data is drawn from contemporary research in educational psychology, mental health, and intelligence theories, especially Gardner's Multiple Intelligences and Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, to analyze current issues and propose Islamic-integrated solutions.

Integrated Framework for Madrasah Mental Health and Intelligence Development

Component	Description
Spiritual Foundation	Qur'anic and Prophetic teachings on mental balance and intellectual growth.
Multiple Intelligences	Inclusion of linguistic, logical, spatial, interpersonal, and intrapersonal forms.



- | Mental Health Support | Basic counseling, peer support groups, and teacher awareness training. |
- | Holistic Pedagogy | Combining traditional Dars-e-Nizami with creativity, reflection, and critical thinking. |
- | Community Engagement | Family involvement, extracurricular activities, and positive reinforcement. |

This model serves as a guideline for reforming madrasah education while remaining faithful to Islamic traditions and addressing modern educational and psychological needs.

Data Analysis: Islam, with its emphasis on the sanctity and protection of humanity, has given great importance to both the physical and mental existence of the human being. In order to safeguard life, it has provided preventive measures and methods of treatment to ensure protection and safety. Islam identifies the factors that affect human health and provides guidance on how to counteract them. For example, the Prophetic teachings regarding treatment in the face of physical illness serve as clear evidence that any obstacle to physical well-being should be removed by utilizing all available means, so that a healthy society may come into being. (Ref: Sahih al-Bukhari, Book of Medicine)

Similarly, Islam addresses those elements that impact the mind—trapping a person in various thoughts and anxieties, darkening their future, entangling them in psychological dilemmas, and dulling their intellectual and creative capacities. Islam presents solutions for these as well. A sound mind and hearts free from impurities and threats are the guarantee of a healthy Islamic society. A weak, sick, or fragile mind cannot serve Islam in the same way a healthy and strong mind and body can. (Ref: Al-Ghazali, Ihya Ulum al-Din)

Whether managing the household, striving for livelihood, raising and educating children, or even engaging in worship—each of these duties requires a sound mind and body. Major obligations like Jihad also rely on mental and physical strength. If all these dimensions are aligned with Islam, and the body, mind, and soul are brought under its guidance, then the moral values and beautiful fusion of Islam emerge in a form that radiates light and sweetness across society. People who enter this orbit change their lives and become the medium to transfer a healthy and moral society to future generations. Thus, it is only through adherence to Islam that a true and pure welfare state can be established. (Ref: Qur'an 2:195, 5:32)

Religion reminds man of his moral identity, without which human life cannot be purified of corruption, nor can a peaceful and contented society be formed. Even for secular societies, this concept holds immense importance: it is religion that bestows upon a nation the title of being civilized. How civilization started, how it evolved, deteriorated, and flourished over time—various philosophical perspectives exist, and reaching a definitive conclusion is difficult. However, civilization is like a home that has been adorned and improved over time by past generations.

Sometimes, natural disasters and calamities shook its foundations, and parts of it collapsed. Yet those who followed considered it a primary goal to restore and refurbish it, ensuring its beauty remained. Indeed, building a home takes time, requires enduring



hardships, and crossing difficult barriers. But how long does it take to destroy it? A few removed bricks can bring the entire wall crashing down—and so with the rest of the structure. This is the metaphorical state of our civilizational home. (Ref: Ibn Khaldun, Muqaddimah)

A healthy body is like a strong home. Just as a strong home protects from storms, rain, and other hazards, so too does a sound body protect life and benefits the relations connected to that person. A physically healthy body, governed by Islamic values, benefits others and spreads prosperity from one person to another. (Ref: Imam Ibn Qayyim, Tibb an-Nabawi)

Result and Findings:

Subjects related to mental development, emotional training, and physical health, based on Islamic and scientific principles, should be included in the curriculum of madrasahs to ensure the holistic development of students. Teachers should be provided with training that enables them to understand the psychological conditions of students and offer guidance tailored to their needs. Every madrasah should appoint a qualified and trained counselor who can guide students in dealing with mental stress, family issues, and academic difficulties. Sports, physical exercise, and creative activities should be made an essential part of the curriculum so that students remain physically and mentally active and balanced. Regular arrangements for debates, speech competitions, and writing exercises should be made to enhance students' critical thinking, questioning ability, and effective communication skills. Training sessions based on the Qur'an, the Seerah of the Prophet (ﷺ), and moral teachings should be organized for the balanced development of students' personalities. Awareness programs and seminars on the importance of mental health should be conducted for students, teachers, and parents.

Futuristic Approach: A futuristic approach involves integrating artificial intelligence, digital counseling tools, and interactive learning platforms within madrasahs to support mental health and intellectual growth. Emphasis will be on personalized education, emotional intelligence training, and virtual collaboration, aligning traditional Islamic values with modern advancements for a balanced, future-ready student development model.

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