

Social Intelligence in Islamic Educational Psychology: Cultivating Communication Skills and Self-Efficacy Through an Islamic Perspective

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Abstract

Social intelligence is a foundational capacity that enables individuals to navigate interpersonal relationships, yet its development is frequently hindered by introversion, poor self-confidence, and limited social exposure. This study investigates how social intelligence, when understood and applied within the framework of Islamic educational psychology, can serve as a vehicle for enhancing two critical competencies: social communication skills and self-efficacy. Employing a library research methodology, data were systematically gathered and analyzed through thematic coding and content synthesis from a range of academic books, peer-reviewed journals, and prior empirical studies. The analysis reveals four core dimensions of social intelligence—social sensitivity, social insight, social communication, and self-efficacy—with the latter two constituting the focal constructs of this inquiry. Findings indicate that social communication skills emerge through consistent habituation of verbal and nonverbal interaction, attentive listening, and written expression, while self-efficacy is reinforced through positive social feedback that enhances individuals' confidence in problem-solving and decision-making. Theologically, the study grounds these constructs in Islamic principles of *hablum minannas* (righteous relations among humans) and the Qur'anic directive toward communal responsibility, as exemplified in Surah At-Taubah (9:71). The study concludes that optimizing social intelligence through Islamic educational approaches yields holistic benefits for individuals across personal, social, and communal dimensions, and recommends the integration of cooperative, reflective, and habituation-based strategies in Islamic education settings.

Keywords: Islamic educational psychology, social intelligence, communication skills, self-efficacy, Islamic values

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Introduction

Educational psychology serves as a cornerstone for learning administrators seeking to systematically realize predetermined instructional objectives. Its foundational theories and practical frameworks heavily influence classroom dynamics, curriculum design, and overall administrative governance. A robust understanding of psychological principles remains

indispensable across nearly all educational domains—ranging from syllabus development and teaching-learning interactions to guidance counseling, instructional methodologies, and academic evaluations (Fitri, 2020).

Among the profound faculties bestowed upon humanity by Allah SWT is intelligence, a defining attribute that elevates humans above other creations. This cognitive capacity facilitates continuous reflection and adaptive learning, enabling humanity to sustain and enhance its increasingly complex socio-cultural ecosystem. While intelligence is conventionally equated with raw intellectual capacity, intellectual quotient (IQ) alone is insufficient for sound, holistic decision-making. This limitation has prompted scholars to look deeper into alternative facets of human capability, such as emotional, spiritual, and social intelligence (Amelia et al., 2022).

Despite these innate gifts, real-world social dynamics frequently reveal a pervasive inability among individuals to fully mobilize their interpersonal capacities. This deficit is particularly apparent in the domains of self-efficacy and social communication. For instance, many individuals struggle with deep-seated introversion and social anxiety, often stemming from self-consciousness about physical appearance or perceived inadequacies. Such internal barriers undermine their capacity to navigate social tasks gracefully, leading to difficulties in accepting diverse viewpoints or respecting dissenting opinions. Within communication landscapes, these challenges manifest as conversational insensitivity, a failure to establish lasting interpersonal rapport, and a pronounced difficulty in fostering collaborative relationships.

Recognizing the gravity of these issues is crucial, given that human existence is inherently relational. Several contemporary scholars have explored these dynamics from various entry points. Mukaromah et al. (2020) examined parental communication paradigms and their role in cultivating social intelligence among millennial youth, highlighting that democratic and supportive family environments foster openness, reciprocal relationships, and active communal engagement. Sarnoto and Ulfa (2021) investigated social intelligence within cooperative learning frameworks from a Qur'anic perspective, concluding that structured peer collaboration and dialogue significantly accelerate the development of interpersonal competencies. Giantara et al. (2022) addressed the transformative shifts required in contemporary Islamic education, demonstrating a profound, symbiotic alignment between spiritual and social intelligence dimensions.

While these foundational studies offer valuable perspectives, a critical conceptual gap remains. Extant literature heavily weights the discussion toward spiritual and emotional domains, frequently leaving the explicit structural intersection of self-efficacy and active social communication under-examined. This study addresses this lacuna by repositioning self-efficacy and communication skills as core operational pillars of social intelligence within an Islamic educational psychology framework. To guide this exploration, two core questions are posed: First, how does social intelligence structurally influence an individual's communication skills? Second, in what ways does social intelligence cultivate and reinforce personal self-efficacy?

Method

This study adopts a qualitative, library-based research methodology to gather, evaluate, and synthesize theoretical insights relevant to the intersection of social intelligence, communication, and self-efficacy. Data collection involved an exhaustive, critical review of foundational texts, peer-reviewed journals, and historical empirical studies (Adlini et al., 2022). The process focused on structural reconstruction and textual analysis to build a comprehensive conceptual framework grounded in Islamic educational theory.

The thematic data analysis followed a rigorous six-stage procedural framework, beginning with organizing and preparing the text-based data corpus by collecting all relevant literature, followed by immersive reading to acquire a deep, holistic comprehension of the data content. Systematic coding was then conducted to isolate recurring terminologies, concepts, and conceptual markers, after which overarching themes were generated by aggregating interconnected codes to support the research objectives. The process concluded with narrative structuring to present the conceptual findings systematically and clearly, and the formulation of grounded conclusions that address the primary research questions.

Results

The systematic synthesis and thematic analysis of the gathered literature corpus yielded a nuanced, multidimensional mapping of social intelligence within the paradigm of Islamic educational psychology. Rather than treating social intelligence as a monolithic trait, the conceptual reconstruction indicates that interpersonal competence operates through a dynamic network of psychological and behavioral components. This framework bridges the internal psychological state of an individual with their external, socially observable behaviors. To establish a clear structural foundation for the subsequent discussion, the primary dimensions emergent from the data corpus are delineated and visually categorized in the framework below.

Figure 1

Dimensions of Social Intelligence



Previous studies have suggested that there are three dimensions of social intelligence, namely social sensitivity, social insight, and social communication (Prasetia et al., 2023a). Based on a thematic and in-depth analysis of several sources of literature, it appears that social intelligence is divided into four dimensions. Starting from social communication, social insight, social sensitivity, and self-efficacy. However, as the focus of this study, communication and self-efficacy became the priority scales for study and findings.

Communication Skill

A key component of social intelligence development is language. Language is the fundamental means of communication. It allows people to express their feelings, comprehend the viewpoints of others, and develop empathy in addition to serving as a vehicle for information transmission. Goleman stresses that in order for kids to reach their greatest potential, social intelligence education is crucial. Appreciating cultural, ethnic, and religious distinctions as well as anticipating social jealousy that may result from economic differences can be achieved through social intelligence and multicultural awareness (Handayani & Darodjat, 2024). Although language proficiency has a lot of potential to improve social communication abilities, how well it works is frequently determined by the instructional strategies employed.

A person's capacity to establish relationships within a community through social interactions is another way to characterise social intelligence. Cooperation, socialization, and bargaining are all part of this. Consequently, this is consistent with Zuchdi's definition of social intelligence, which is a social ability that includes teamwork and communication abilities (Aman, 2021a). Reading other people's emotions, displaying confidence, acting true and truthful, and speaking clearly and nicely so that others may comprehend are all ways to develop communication skills.

In the Islamic perspective, there is a concept known as Social Islamic Fiqh, developed by KH. MA. Sahal Mahfudh. This concept seeks to transform the paradigm of Islamic fiqh which tends to be overly static into a more dynamic one. Research conducted by Prasetya, Fahmi, and Faizin (2023) on social intelligence in Islamic education using the approach of KH. MA. Sahal Mahfudh demonstrates that the ideas presented by him are highly relevant to developing the social intelligence of Islamic boarding school students. Through an educational approach that places greater emphasis on social sensitivity, social awareness, and social communication, this scholar has established a strong foundation capable of fostering various dimensions of social intelligence within the context of Islamic education in Indonesia. This implies that one of the key variables in this research communication skills also serves as a vital element in developing social intelligence.

Self-Efficacy

So far, self-efficacy has often been associated with emotional intelligence. High levels of self-efficacy, however, will affect behaviour in each task (Abdurrahman et al., 2021). Self-efficacy is often defined as the belief that a person can correctly control their own functions and their environment (Mubdi & Indrawati, 2017). This means that there is a perspective that has been overlooked, namely the connection between social intelligence and self-efficacy.

Understanding self-efficacy within the scope of Islamic studies. In a study conducted by Kasman & Sara (2022), it was found that group counseling from an Islamic perspective plays an important role in enhancing self-efficacy and social adjustment. Through the principle of hisbah, which emphasizes amar ma'ruf nahi mungkar, individuals learn to develop positive attitudes, avoid destructive behaviors, and foster harmonious social relationships. This study demonstrates a dynamic relationship between variables, where group activities or interactions with others that reflect social intelligence can enhance self-efficacy and social adjustment.

Successful social experiences reinforce the perception of self-efficacy through positive feedback from the surrounding environment, which ultimately influences their choice of behaviour, effort, persistence, mindset, and emotional reactions in the context of work or daily life. This is one way that social intelligence can positively influence individual self-efficacy. People who are highly skilled at understanding and managing social interactions tend to have greater confidence in their ability to overcome obstacles (Sethi & Sharma, 2023). Therefore, social intelligence is more than just general human knowledge about how to relate to others; it is the capacity and ability to connect deeper feelings to comprehend the inner self of others, establish and sustain social relationships, and elicit a social response (Wahyuningsih & Suparmi, 2020).

Discussion

All humans on this earth have certainly received a "given" or gift in the form of fitrah which has been determined by Allah SWT. In addition, there are various potentials that can be

developed because by their nature humans are educable beings. The impetus for this development is because humans are born in a helpless state, have the nature to be able to develop, have the power of exploration, have a desire for needs, and need protection (Ihsani, 2022).

Humans also have two sides, a material side and a spiritual side. The spiritual side contains the thought and mental stage, while the material side contains the organizational composition. This is what is called that Islam places man as the best created creature. So, it is not right if humans are given the same analogy as other creatures, such as "Humans are rational animals or rational animals". Because it is very clear that Allah SWT provides differentiation in the form of reason that is inversely proportional to other creatures (Jalaluddin, 2018).

A well-utilized intellect will produce the fruit of intelligence. Spiritual, emotional, and social intelligence are only a few of the several types of intelligence. As social creatures, people employ social intelligence as their primary means of navigating, negotiating, and interacting with their social surroundings. This is in contrast to spiritual and emotional intelligence. In addition, it turns out that psychological skills are also needed to be able to resolve resilience or transitional conflict peacefully and politely. Because social intelligence has a significant role in reducing a person's level of anarchism. With social intelligence, people who are part of a community will grow more resilient because there are others who share their problems (Andriani & Listiyandini, 2017). With these situations in common, the parties involved can discuss their problems and seek advice on potential solutions.

Social intelligence has various definitions that come from various figures, for example, Anderson defines social intelligence as the capability and ability of an individual to establish, nurture, and sustain social interactions in a way that is mutually advantageous. Meanwhile, according to Karl Albrecht, the capacity to comprehend and recognize one's interpersonal relationships is known as social intelligence in order to interact with their environment (Irfan et al., 2023).

In Islam, a basic concept is needed to be able to optimize social intelligence. This basic concept adheres to good relations with humans (Hablum Minannas) to get the pleasure of Allah SWT (Hablum Minallah). Regarding social intelligence, religion has developed into a humanist ethos in which adherents live the doctrines of their respective religions. Today, change occurs at all levels and is driven by internal factors (as we age) and external factors (the influence of experience) (Masyitoh & Pradana, 2019).

As mentioned in the Qur'an Surah At-Taubah verse 71, it also emphasizes the virtues of individual believers who help each other, seek help from Allah, abstain from evil, worship, pay zakat, and obey Allah and His Messenger. To support this, humans are equipped by Allah SWT with basic abilities in the form of spirit (life), hearing, sight, and heart (reason and conscience) (Warsah, 2018).

Many scholars and commentators have given their views on this verse. According to Ibn Kathir, Allah contrasted the characteristics of the believers with those of the hypocrites. What allows this to happen is the wisdom of Allah. Meanwhile, Sayyid Qutb explains the difference between believers and hypocrites in interpreting this verse. He explains that while hypocrites usually do not have strong attachments, believers have stronger bonds and a sense of community (Nur'aini & Hamzah, 2023).

In relation to self-efficacy, social intelligence plays an important role in realizing it. Self-efficacy has the meaning of an individual's self-confidence in relation to his capacity to solve problems or complete his tasks. When self-efficacy has been mastered, a person will not easily give up until the desired results are achieved. Overcoming obstacles and challenges is also not a difficult thing for someone who has high self-efficacy (Maghfirah et al., 2023).

Social intelligence can help shape self-efficacy, because it is able to understand personal and other people's emotions and feelings. Goleman's opinion that social intelligence consists of four components: problem solving, empathy, interactive communication, and respect for differences of opinion. Problem solving is obtained through a learning process, where one needs to improve thinking skills, observe, describe, sharpen analysis, criticize, and draw conclusions accurately. Supported by good interaction patterns and social support that have an impact on one's mindset and behavior (Astuti et al., 2024).

There is an interconnection of three dimensions of social intelligence to form a complementary and essential whole. Social communication, social insight and social sensitivity are the three dimensions. First, pro-social attitudes and empathy are fostered by social sensitivity. Second, social insight is the ability to recognize problems and solve them quickly and effectively, which includes morality and social awareness. Indicators of social insight include aspects of self-awareness (self-monitoring and self-control), and situational. And the third, social communication, refers to the capacity to develop effective social communication. As support, physical appearance and verbal or nonverbal communication are necessary to realize social communication (Prasetia et al., 2023b).

Self-efficacy has its own dimension in social intelligence, because this problem-solving skill is beyond social insight. Self-efficacy refers to decisions on actions chosen by individuals in solving problems. However, this does not negate insight, because it still requires individual development in dealing with experiences and behavioral attitudes, by striving to improve their own level of competence, as well as providing knowledge that they will apply in accordance with what they have learned (Al-mehsin, 2017). From these chosen decisions, it can be identified whether an individual is truly "smart" in dealing with social situations, or whether they are hasty or reckless, resulting in outcomes that are not as expected.

American psychologist Robert Mills Gagne states that people with high social intelligence can communicate with others, establish harmonious relationships, and empathize effectively with others. They can also understand the intentions, emotions and motivations of others. A person needs the means to be able to build and maintain social relationships. Of course, the means used are the verbal and nonverbal communication processes involved in the communication process. Effective speaking, public speaking, effective writing, and affective listening are social communication skills that need to be mastered (Nur, 2021).

In the school environment, for example, social communication is built in the form of habituation, eating together during recess which will spontaneously bring interaction with one another. The interaction is present in order to neutralize the atmosphere after the tightness of theoretical knowledge learned during class hours. Another example is related to teacher creativity in applying the cooperative learning model. In this model, students are divided into groups of four to six and are flexibly freed to explore and develop all their experiences (Faliyandra, 2019).

There is also social communication that occurs in the community. Everyone would agree that the community environment is a bit more fun as it allows them to freely express themselves without any restrictions like at home or school. As a result, there is a huge burden attached to the responsibilities and roles of the community environment. By simply saying hello or even visiting a nearby neighbor, one will be engaging in social interaction, thus demonstrating their social intelligence and being able to provide solutions to society (Faliyandra, 2019).

Conclusion

In conclusion, deficits in an individual's social intelligence severely impede the development of self-efficacy and social communication skills. The deliberate habituation of

social intelligence is indispensable, particularly because interpersonal effectiveness dictates how smoothly an individual navigates complex human landscapes. Achieving this requires a balanced cultivation of social sensitivity, insight, communication, and self-efficacy.

Social communication serves as the operational vehicle for interaction and negotiation within communal environments. Concurrently, while self-efficacy has traditionally been sequestered within emotional intelligence frameworks due to its role in personal pressure management, this study demonstrates its profound reliance on social intelligence. When individuals encounter psychological strain within social-horizontal contexts or interpersonal relationships, a socially grounded sense of self-efficacy becomes paramount to sustaining holistic resilience.

Conflict of interests

The author(s) declare that they have no conflict of interest.

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