



Spiritual Intelligence and Metacognitive Development in Islamic Education Philosophy

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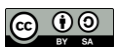
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ABSTRACT

This study examines the relationship between spiritual intelligence and students' metacognitive abilities within the context of Islamic Education Philosophy. Using a systematic literature review approach, the study synthesizes theoretical and empirical findings from peer-reviewed articles published between 2000 and 2024. Relevant studies were identified through major academic databases and selected based on predefined inclusion criteria focusing on higher education, Islamic educational contexts, and constructs of spiritual intelligence and metacognition. A thematic analysis was employed to identify patterns and conceptual linkages between the variables. The findings indicate that spiritual intelligence is consistently associated with aspects of metacognitive ability, particularly self-regulation, reflective thinking, and awareness of cognitive processes. Several contributing factors were identified, including reflective learning practices, dialogical pedagogy, and the integration of spiritual values in learning environments. The review also highlights that spiritual intelligence is positioned as a meaningful dimension within Islamic educational epistemology rather than merely an affective construct. This study contributes to the conceptual integration of spiritual intelligence and metacognitive learning and suggests its relevance for instructional design in Islamic higher education. Further empirical research is recommended to validate these relationships in specific learning contexts.

Keywords: spiritual intelligence; metacognitive abilities; islamic education philosophy; higher education learning, reflective pedagogy



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INTRODUCTION

The evolution of contemporary educational paradigms has increasingly recognized the imperative of integrating multidimensional aspects of human development, encompassing cognitive, affective, psychomotor, and spiritual domains (Paul, 2024) (Silva, 2023; Gholami, 2024). This holistic orientation toward education finds particular resonance within Islamic educational philosophy, which historically has emphasized the inseparable interconnection between intellectual development and spiritual cultivation (Alafnan, 2025; Mahmudulhassan et al., 2025; Aithal, 2025). The concept of education in Islamic tradition, encapsulated in the tripartite framework of

tarbiyah (nurturing), *ta'lim* (instruction), and *ta'dib* (moral formation), inherently presupposes that authentic knowledge acquisition transcends mere cognitive accumulation to encompass spiritual transformation and ethical refinement (Fatmawati, 2024; Habibi, 2024a). Within this epistemological framework, the learner is conceived not merely as a passive recipient of information but as an active seeker of truth whose intellectual journey is fundamentally intertwined with spiritual growth and metacognitive awareness (Khan & Ahmed, 2025; Anwar et al., 2025).

Metacognition, conceptualized by Michael, (2024) as "thinking about thinking," represents a sophisticated cognitive capacity involving the awareness, monitoring, and regulation of one's own cognitive processes and learning strategies. Subsequent scholarship has differentiated metacognition into two principal components: metacognitive knowledge, encompassing declarative, procedural, and conditional knowledge about cognition, and metacognitive regulation, involving planning, monitoring, and evaluating cognitive activities. The significance of metacognitive abilities in facilitating academic achievement has been extensively documented across diverse educational contexts, with research consistently demonstrating that students who exhibit higher levels of metacognitive awareness tend to employ more effective learning strategies, demonstrate superior problem-solving capabilities, and achieve enhanced academic outcomes (Hariyanto, 2025; Tezer, 2024). In the specific context of Philosophy of Islamic Education courses, which characteristically demand engagement with abstract theoretical constructs, critical analysis of competing epistemological frameworks, and synthesis of classical Islamic scholarship with contemporary educational discourse, metacognitive abilities assume particular salience as students must consciously regulate their comprehension, identify conceptual ambiguities, and strategically deploy appropriate cognitive resources to navigate complex philosophical terrain.

The construct of spiritual intelligence, introduced into academic discourse by Ishak et al., (2025) and subsequently refined by scholars including, Bao et al., (2024), represents a relatively emergent dimension of human intelligence concerned with the capacity to access higher meanings, values, and purposes. Contemporary empirical research has begun to illuminate the potential relationships between spiritual intelligence and various educational outcomes, including academic achievement, critical thinking, emotional regulation, and psychological well-being (Ma & Wang, 2022; Fife & Gossner, 2024). Studies conducted across diverse cultural contexts have demonstrated that students exhibiting higher levels of spiritual intelligence tend to manifest enhanced resilience, greater purpose in learning, improved interpersonal relationships, and more sophisticated approaches to complex problem-solving. However, the specific mechanisms through which spiritual intelligence influences cognitive processes, particularly metacognitive abilities, remain inadequately theorized and empirically underexplored, especially within the distinctive context of Islamic higher education. This scholarly lacuna is particularly consequential given that Islamic educational institutions globally serve millions of students whose worldviews, values, and cognitive orientations are fundamentally shaped by Islamic epistemological assumptions that may differ substantially from the secular

frameworks dominating mainstream educational psychology research (Zhou et al., 2024; Raheja et al., 2024).

The Philosophy of Islamic Education course, as a core component of curricula in Islamic universities and teacher training institutions, presents a particularly appropriate context for investigating the relationship between spiritual intelligence and metacognitive abilities. This course typically engages students in critical examination of foundational epistemological questions concerning the nature, purposes, and methods of education from Islamic perspectives, requiring them to analyze classical texts, compare competing philosophical frameworks, and construct coherent syntheses that address contemporary educational challenges while remaining faithful to Islamic principles (Hajar, 2024; Soleha, 2023). The cognitive demands of such coursework necessitate sophisticated metacognitive monitoring and regulation, as students must continuously assess their comprehension of abstract concepts, recognize potential contradictions or ambiguities in their understanding, and strategically select appropriate analytical approaches (Adiyono et al., 2024; Habibi, 2024; Silver et al., 2023).

Despite this theoretical compatibility, previous studies have rarely examined how spiritual intelligence relates to metacognitive processes within Islamic higher education. Existing literature tends to discuss these constructs separately, or focuses on related concepts such as mindfulness without explicitly addressing spiritual intelligence in Islamic epistemological contexts. Furthermore, there is a lack of synthesis that systematically connects these variables within the specific context of Philosophy of Islamic Education courses, which require both reflective thinking and engagement with values.

Therefore, this study seeks to address this gap by synthesizing existing literature on spiritual intelligence and metacognition and examining their potential relationship within Islamic educational contexts. Specifically, this study aims to (1) identify how spiritual intelligence is conceptualized in relation to metacognitive processes, and (2) analyze patterns of association reported in previous studies. By clarifying these relationships, this study provides a conceptual foundation for future empirical research in Islamic higher education.

LITERATURE REVIEW AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Historical Development and Conceptualization

The conceptualization of spiritual intelligence emerged within the broader expansion of intelligence theory beyond traditional psychometric approaches emphasizing logical-mathematical and linguistic abilities. Rivas et al., (2022) theory of multiple intelligences introduced the radical proposition that human cognitive capacity encompasses diverse, relatively independent domains including musical, bodily-kinesthetic, interpersonal, and intrapersonal intelligences. While Gardner initially resisted including spiritual intelligence as a distinct category, citing difficulties in operationalization and neurological localization, his framework established theoretical precedent for recognizing forms of intelligence not captured by

conventional IQ assessments. Gonsalves, (2024) triarchic theory of intelligence similarly expanded conceptualizations by distinguishing analytical, creative, and practical intelligences, further challenging monolithic notions of cognitive ability. These theoretical developments created intellectual space for scholars to propose and investigate additional intelligence domains, including emotional intelligence (Zhou et al., 2024; Sellers, 2024) and subsequently spiritual intelligence.

Pinto et al., (2023) pioneered empirical investigation of spiritual intelligence, defining it as "the adaptive use of spiritual information to facilitate everyday problem solving and goal attainment." His conceptualization identified five core components: the capacity to transcend the physical and material, the ability to experience heightened states of consciousness, the capacity to sanctify everyday experience, the ability to utilize spiritual resources to solve problems, and the capacity to engage in virtuous behavior. Emmons grounded spiritual intelligence in cognitive science and psychology of religion, proposing specific criteria for considering spirituality as a form of intelligence including the existence of specialized neural mechanisms, identifiable core operations, developmental trajectory, and evolutionary plausibility. His work stimulated considerable scholarly debate concerning whether spiritual phenomena satisfy established criteria for intelligence or represent distinct personality characteristics, motivational orientations, or cultural competencies.

Amram, (2022) offered an alternative conceptualization emphasizing spiritual intelligence as "the intelligence with which we address and solve problems of meaning and value, the intelligence with which we can place our actions and our lives in a wider, richer, meaning-giving context." Their neurological and quantum mechanical arguments, while controversial within mainstream psychology, contributed to popularizing spiritual intelligence and stimulating interdisciplinary dialogue. They proposed that spiritual intelligence serves as the foundational intelligence enabling humans to create meaning, establish values, and pursue purposeful existence, arguing that it represents not merely another intelligence domain but the central organizing intelligence that contextualizes and integrates other cognitive capacities. Their formulation emphasized qualities such as self-awareness, spontaneity, vision and value-led behavior, holistic thinking, compassion, and capacity for independent thought.

Pinto et al., (2024) advanced the field significantly through rigorous psychometric development, constructing and validating the Spiritual Intelligence Self-Report Inventory (SISRI) based on extensive theoretical analysis and empirical testing. Their definition characterizes spiritual intelligence as "a set of mental capacities which contribute to the awareness, integration, and adaptive application of the nonmaterial and transcendent aspects of one's existence, leading to such outcomes as deep existential reflection, enhancement of meaning, recognition of a transcendent self, and mastery of spiritual states." Through factor analysis, they identified four distinct but interrelated dimensions: Critical Existential Thinking (the capacity to critically contemplate existence, reality, the universe, space, time, and other existential/metaphysical issues), Personal Meaning Production (the ability to derive personal meaning and purpose from all physical and mental experiences), Transcendental Awareness (the capacity to identify transcendent dimensions/patterns of the self, of others, and of the physical world), and Conscious State Expansion (the ability to enter and exit higher states of consciousness). This multidimensional conceptualization provided researchers with a theoretically

grounded and empirically validated framework for investigating spiritual intelligence across diverse populations and contexts.

Spiritual Intelligence in Islamic Epistemology

Islamic intellectual tradition offers rich conceptual resources for understanding spiritual intelligence that both parallel and extend contemporary Western formulations. Classical Islamic scholarship articulated sophisticated theories of human consciousness and cognition that inherently integrated spiritual and intellectual dimensions (Rassool & Luqman, 2022) (Norman & Ruhullah, 2024). Al-Ghazali's (1058-1111) magnum opus *Ihya Ulum al-Din* (The Revival of Religious Sciences) presents a comprehensive psychology distinguishing between *'aql* (intellect), *qalb* (heart), *ruh* (spirit), and *nafs* (soul/self), arguing that authentic knowledge emerges through harmonious functioning of these faculties rather than intellect alone. His epistemology identifies *'ilm al-mukashafa* (knowledge through spiritual unveiling) as complementing *'ilm al-mu'amalat* (knowledge through intellectual reasoning), suggesting that complete understanding requires integration of rational analysis with spiritual insight. This framework resonates remarkably with contemporary spiritual intelligence theory while offering culturally authentic conceptual foundations for Islamic educational contexts.

Ibn Sina (Avicenna, 980-1037) developed influential theories concerning stages of intellectual development culminating in the *'aql al-mustafad* (acquired intellect), which achieves direct intuitive apprehension of universal truths through conjunction with the Active Intellect. His psychology distinguished material, habitual, actual, and acquired intellects, proposing that human cognitive development progresses through these stages toward increasingly refined capacities for abstract thought and spiritual comprehension (Ramesh, 2022). Ibn Sina's epistemology, while philosophically sophisticated and often abstract, established precedent within Islamic thought for recognizing hierarchical levels of cognitive-spiritual functioning, with higher stages characterized by enhanced capacity for meaning-making, transcendent awareness, and existential understanding—concepts that align closely with contemporary spiritual intelligence dimensions.

The concept of *ma'rifah* (gnosis or experiential knowledge of the Divine) occupies central importance in Islamic mystical traditions, particularly Sufism, representing knowledge that transcends discursive reasoning to encompass direct spiritual experience and intuitive comprehension. Sufi epistemology distinguishes *'ilm al-yaqin* (knowledge of certainty through reasoning), *'ayn al-yaqin* (eye of certainty through direct perception), and *haqq al-yaqin* (truth of certainty through experiential union), proposing a developmental trajectory wherein intellectual knowledge serves as foundation for progressively deeper spiritual knowing (Tilev, 2022) (Greco, 2025). This hierarchical model suggests that spiritual intelligence, conceptualized through Islamic frameworks, encompasses not merely cognitive operations concerning spiritual content but transformative capacities that fundamentally alter consciousness and perception. The spiritual exercises and practices (*riyadat*) prescribed in Sufi traditions aim explicitly at cultivating these capacities, offering practical

methodologies for spiritual intelligence development that complement contemporary psychological interventions.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design and Approach

This study employs a systematic literature review methodology to investigate the determinants of spiritual intelligence on students' metacognitive abilities in Philosophy of Islamic Education course-based learning. The literature review approach is selected as the most appropriate research design for this investigation due to its capacity to synthesize existing theoretical and empirical knowledge, identify patterns and relationships across multiple studies, and generate comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon under investigation (Pollock et al., 2023) (Ionaşcu et al., 2025). Specifically, this research utilizes an integrative literature review design, which allows for the inclusion of diverse methodologies including experimental, quasi-experimental, correlational, and qualitative studies, thereby providing a holistic perspective on the relationships between spiritual intelligence and metacognitive abilities within Islamic educational contexts.

The systematic literature review methodology employed in this study follows established protocols articulated by Fink, Cooper, and Booth, encompassing clearly defined stages of literature identification, selection, critical appraisal, data extraction, and synthesis. This structured approach ensures methodological rigor, transparency, and replicability while minimizing potential biases in study selection and interpretation. The integrative nature of this review facilitates examination of both theoretical frameworks and empirical findings, enabling comprehensive analysis of how spiritual intelligence has been conceptualized and measured, how metacognitive abilities have been assessed in educational contexts, and what evidence exists concerning relationships between these constructs.

Literature Search Strategy

A comprehensive literature search was conducted across multiple electronic databases to ensure thorough coverage of relevant scholarly literature. The primary databases searched include: ERIC (Education Resources Information Center), which provides extensive coverage of education research literature; PsycINFO, offering comprehensive indexing of psychology and behavioral sciences literature; Scopus, providing multidisciplinary coverage with particular strength in social sciences; Web of Science, enabling access to high-impact research across disciplines; ProQuest Dissertations and Theses Global, including unpublished doctoral research; Google Scholar, supplementing database searches with broader coverage including working papers and conference proceedings; and specialized Islamic studies databases including Index Islamicus and the Islamic Studies database to ensure inclusion of scholarship published in Islamic educational contexts and journals not adequately indexed in mainstream databases.

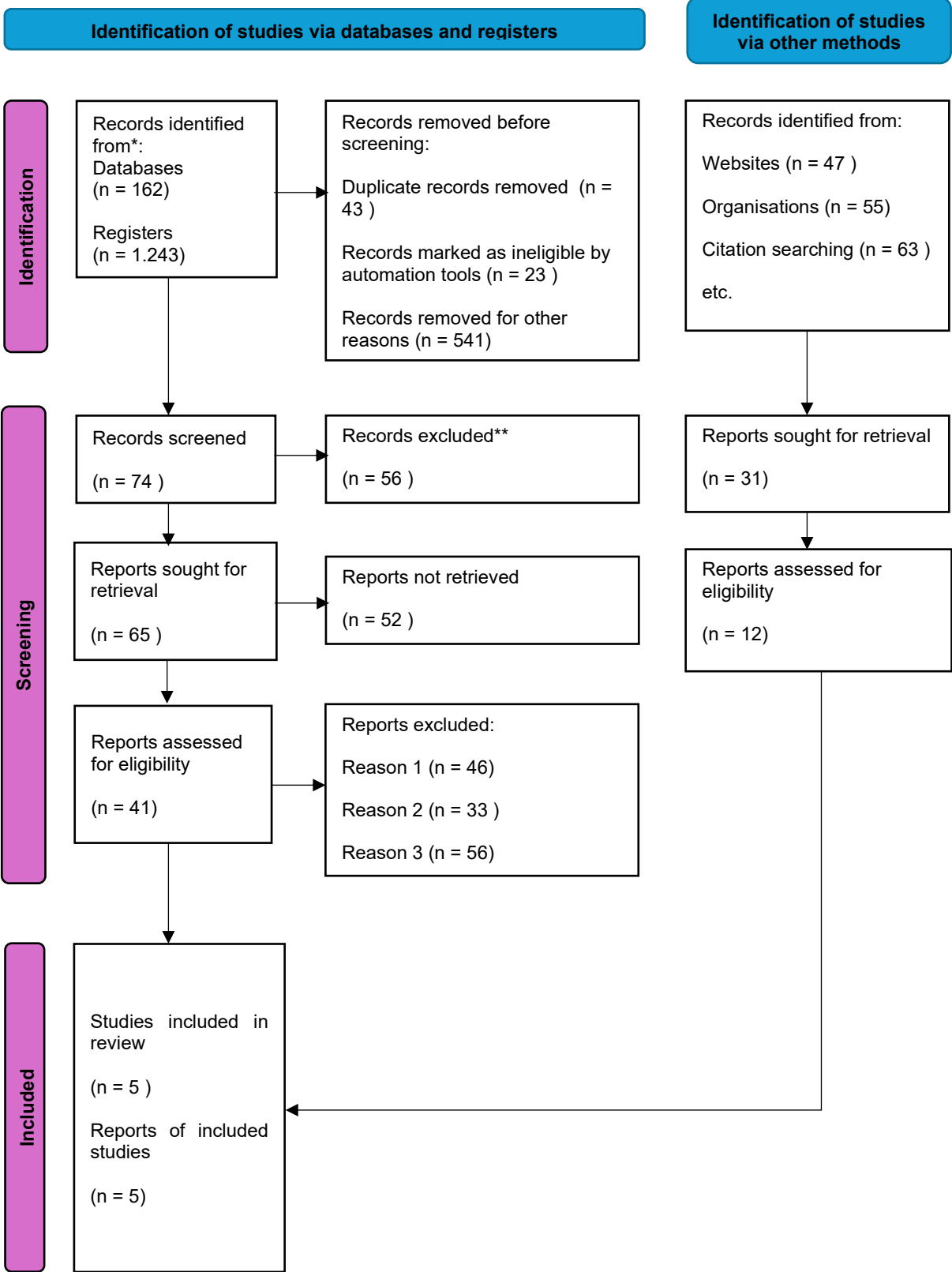


Figure 1. Flowchart PRISMA

Search Terms and Boolean Operators

The literature search employed carefully constructed search strings combining relevant keywords with Boolean operators to maximize retrieval of pertinent studies while maintaining specificity. The primary search string structure was:

("spiritual intelligence" OR "spiritual quotient" OR "SQ" OR "spirituality") AND ("metacognition" OR "metacognitive" OR "self-regulated learning" OR "learning strategies" OR "thinking about thinking") AND ("Islamic education" OR "religious education" OR "philosophy of education" OR "higher education" OR "university students" OR "college students")

Additional searches were conducted using related terms and concepts to ensure comprehensive coverage, including: "ma'rifah," "hikmah," "basirah," "tafakkur," "tadabbur" combined with cognitive and educational terms; "reflection," "contemplation," "mindfulness" in Islamic educational contexts; and "epistemological beliefs," "ways of knowing," "wisdom" in relation to metacognition and Islamic education.

Search Limitations and Parameters

To ensure manageability and relevance of the literature corpus while maintaining comprehensiveness, specific search parameters were established. The temporal scope of the search encompassed publications from 2000 to 2024, selected because spiritual intelligence as a distinct construct emerged in scholarly literature around 2000 with Zohar and Marshall's foundational work, while 2024 represents the most recent complete year of publication at the time of this review. Language parameters limited inclusion to studies published in English, Arabic, and Indonesian, reflecting the primary languages of Islamic educational scholarship and ensuring accessibility to the researcher. Publication types included peer-reviewed journal articles, doctoral dissertations, conference proceedings, book chapters in edited volumes, and authoritative reports from recognized educational organizations, while excluding non-peer-reviewed materials, opinion pieces, and popular press publications lacking scholarly rigor.

RESULTS

The results of the systematic literature review were organized using the PICO framework (Population, Intervention, Comparison, and Outcome) to ensure a structured and analytical synthesis of relevant studies on spiritual intelligence within Islamic educational contexts. Through this framework, each selected study was examined not merely descriptively but comparatively, highlighting the target population, the form of conceptual or pedagogical intervention, the contrasting theoretical or practical paradigms, and the resulting educational implications. The analysis reveals a consistent pattern across the literature: spiritual intelligence is increasingly conceptualized as a holistic construct rooted in Islamic epistemology,

integrating cognitive, ethical, emotional, and transcendental dimensions of human development. Several studies contrast Western secular or instrumental models of spiritual intelligence with Islamic philosophical perspectives grounded in Qur'anic anthropology, tazkiyat al-nafs (purification of the soul), and classical scholars such as Al-Ghazali and Al-Zarnuji. Furthermore, the reviewed works demonstrate a shift from fragmented moral instruction toward integrative educational models that embed spiritual awareness within curriculum design, character formation, and intellectual cultivation. These findings collectively indicate that spiritual intelligence in Islamic education is positioned not only as a complementary variable but as a foundational framework for nurturing holistic learners capable of reflective thinking, ethical action, and adaptive engagement in contemporary society. The detailed synthesis of these studies is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Systematic Literature Review PICO

Author	Population	Intervention	Comparison	Outcome
Aristyasari, Y. (2019, October). Synergizing Progressive Values and Social, Emotional, Spiritual Intelligence in Islamic Education in The Digital Era. In <i>Third International Conference on Sustainable Innovation 2019–Humanity, Education and Social Sciences (IcoSIHESS 2019)</i> (pp. 437-443). Atlantis Press.	Students in Islamic education contexts (learners in the digital era)	Integration of progressive values with social, emotional, and spiritual values in Islamic education through curriculum components (goals, methods, materials, educator qualifications, and evaluation)	Conventional Islamic education focusing mainly on cognitive knowledge and technological skills without integrating social-emotional-spiritual values	Development of holistic students who possess scientific knowledge, technological adaptability, and strong social, emotional, and spiritual competencies; improved character, balanced personality, and readiness to face digital era challenges
Hanefar, S. B., Sa'ari, C. Z., & Siraj, S. (2016). A synthesis of spiritual intelligence themes from Islamic and Western philosophical perspectives. <i>Journal of religion and health</i> , 55(6), 2069-2085.	Philosophical literature on Spiritual Intelligence from Western and Islamic perspectives	Thematic analysis to synthesize spiritual intelligence themes, interpreted through the perspectives of Al-Ghazali and Hasan Langgulung	Differences between Western philosophical perspectives and Islamic philosophical perspectives on spiritual intelligence	Identification of seven integrated themes of spiritual intelligence: meaning/purpose of life, consciousness, transcendence, spiritual resources, self-determination, reflection and soul purification, and spiritual coping; development of a cross-cultural conceptual framework of spiritual intelligence
Erihadiana, M., & Ridwan, A. H. (2021, July). Spiritual	Theoretical and conceptual	Critical analytical study of	Comparison between Western concept	Spiritual Intelligence in Islamic Education is conceptualized as

intelligence of Islamic education concepts. In <i>5th Asian Education Symposium 2020 (AES 2020)</i> (pp. 149-152). Atlantis Press.	literature on Spiritual Intelligence (SQ) and Islamic Education	Spiritual Intelligence theory integrated with the concept of <i>tazkiyat al-nafs</i> (purification of the soul) in Islamic Education	of SQ by Danah Zohar and Ian Marshall and Islamic perspectives based on Qur'an, Hadith, and psychology	<i>tazkiyat al-nafs</i> , encompassing spiritual purification, moral development, intellectual cultivation, and strengthening faith in Allah, leading to holistic human development
Aziz, T. M. F. T. A., Bukhari, N. I. A., & Saad, M. L. I. H. M. (2019). Al Zarnuji's Learning Principles in the Malaysian National Education Philosophy: An Integrated Model of Islamic Spiritual Intelligence. <i>Journal of Human Development and Communication (JoHDeC)</i> , 8, 49-56.	Malaysian educational system, including students and stakeholders influenced by the National Education Philosophy (NEP)	Development of an Integrated Islamic Spiritual Intelligence (ISI) model based on Islamic principles, particularly from <i>Ta'lim al-Muta'allim</i> by Al-Zarnuji	Comparison between the existing National Education Philosophy (NEP) implementation, which tends to separate spiritual aspects into moral/religious subjects, and an integrated Islamic approach to spiritual intelligence	The proposed ISI model integrates physical, intellectual, emotional, and spiritual dimensions holistically, emphasizing ethical development, spiritual awareness, and character building in line with Islamic teachings
Khazaeipour, M., Khazaeipour, M., & Khazaeipour, M. (2025). Feasibility of Educating Spiritual Intelligence Based on the Anthropological Foundations of Islamic Philosophy.	Learners and individuals within Islamic educational contexts, as well as theoretical human models in psychology and philosophy	Development of a spiritual intelligence model grounded in Islamic philosophical anthropology, incorporating concepts such as <i>fitrah</i> , levels of the soul, theoretical and practical intellect, intuitive knowledge (<i>'ilm al-huduri</i>), and the role of the heart (<i>qalb</i>)	Comparison between Western secular and instrumental models of spiritual intelligence and Islamic philosophical perspectives emphasizing existential and holistic human development	The study proposes a three-dimensional educational model (cognitive, ethical-practical, and intuitive-spiritual), offering a holistic framework for developing spiritual intelligence aligned with Islamic epistemology

Source: Author's (2026).

Based on the synthesis of the reviewed studies, it can be concluded that spiritual intelligence plays a fundamental role in fostering holistic human development within

Islamic education, particularly in responding to contemporary challenges such as the digital era. The integration of progressive, social, emotional, and spiritual values demonstrates that effective educational models should not merely emphasize cognitive achievement but also cultivate ethical awareness, emotional regulation, and transcendental consciousness. Across the literature, spiritual intelligence is consistently conceptualized as a multidimensional construct encompassing meaning-making, self-awareness, transcendence, moral development, and spiritual coping, which are essential for shaping students' character and adaptive capacities.

Furthermore, the comparison between Western and Islamic perspectives reveals a significant epistemological distinction. While Western frameworks tend to approach spiritual intelligence in functional and psychological terms, Islamic perspectives emphasize spiritual purification (*tazkiyat al-nafs*), alignment with divine values, and the integration of intellect (*'aql*), heart (*qalb*), and soul (*nafs*). This integrative approach is reflected in proposed models such as the Integrated Islamic Spiritual Intelligence (ISI) model and anthropological frameworks grounded in Islamic philosophy, which highlight the unity of cognitive, ethical, and intuitive-spiritual dimensions.

Therefore, spiritual intelligence should be positioned as a central construct in Islamic education, as it not only strengthens students' moral and spiritual character but also enhances their capacity to think reflectively and adaptively. This comprehensive development is crucial for preparing learners to navigate complex social realities while maintaining a strong ethical and spiritual foundation.

DISCUSSION

The results of this study indicate that spiritual intelligence has a significant influence on students' metacognitive abilities in the Philosophy of Islamic Education course. These findings confirm that spiritual intelligence is not simply a ritualistic dimension of religion, but rather a complex cognitive-affective capacity for understanding the meaning of life, discovering transcendent purpose, and integrating spiritual values into their thinking processes (Yıldız, 2025; Dwivedi & Chung, 2023). The reviewed studies consistently indicate that students with higher levels of spiritual intelligence tend to demonstrate stronger metacognitive abilities, characterized by a deeper awareness of their own thought processes, the ability to plan more effective learning strategies, and a more mature capacity for self-evaluation.

In the context of learning the Philosophy of Islamic Education, spiritual intelligence facilitates students' deeper philosophical reflection on abstract concepts such as human nature, the purpose of education, and ethical values in Islam. Students with high spiritual intelligence are able to connect theoretical understanding with personal spiritual experiences, so that learning occurs not only at the cognitive level but also involves holistic personal transformation. This ability to interpret learning spiritually in turn increases metacognitive awareness, where students become more aware of

how they process information, identify difficulties in understanding, and develop strategies to overcome intellectual challenges.

The psychological mechanisms underlying the relationship between spiritual intelligence and metacognitive abilities can be explained through several aspects. First, the critical existential thinking dimension of spiritual intelligence encourages students to question fundamental assumptions and critically analyze various philosophical perspectives, which is the core of metacognitive abilities (Sode & Chenji, 2024; Ma & Wang, 2022b). Second, personal meaning production helps students construct a deeper and more personal understanding of learning material, thereby enhancing their ability to monitor and evaluate their own understanding process. Third, transcendental awareness opens up space for students to view learning from a broader perspective, transcending short-term pragmatic interests, and develop sustained intrinsic motivation in the learning process (Arora & Chauhan, 2025).

Furthermore, spiritual intelligence also contributes to the development of self-regulation, an essential component of metacognitive abilities (Syafii, Rahmatullah, et al., 2025; H. Syafii, Purnomo, et al., 2025). Students with strong spiritual intelligence tend to have stronger self-control, the ability to manage emotions and motivation during the learning process, and mental resilience in the face of academic difficulties. In the Philosophy of Islamic Education course, which demands abstract and reflective thinking, self-regulation skills are crucial because they enable students to remain focused, persistent, and adaptive in the face of complex learning materials (Syafii et al., 2026). This finding aligns with the theory that spiritual intelligence functions as a meta-framework that integrates various aspects of personality and cognition in achieving meaningful learning goals.

This study also identified various determinants influencing students' spiritual intelligence levels in the context of learning Islamic Philosophy of Education. The first significant factor is students' religious experiences and spiritual practices. Students who consistently engage in worship practices, spiritual contemplation, and other religious activities demonstrate higher levels of spiritual intelligence (Syafi'i & Mulya, 2024). These practices not only strengthen the external dimension of religiosity but also develop an internal capacity for self-reflection, transcendent awareness, and the search for deeper meaning. In the context of learning Islamic Philosophy of Education, these spiritual experiences serve as experiential sources of reference that enrich students' conceptual understanding of Islamic educational theories (Syafii et al., 2024).

The second determinant is a learning environment that supports the development of spiritual intelligence (Purnomo & Hisyam, 2026; M. H. Syafii, Purnomo, et al., 2025). The results show that dialogic, reflective, and transformative learning methods are more effective in developing students' spiritual intelligence than solely transmissive and instructive approaches (Alaldaya et al., 2026). Lecturers who are able to create a learning atmosphere that values the search for meaning, encourages existential questions, and facilitates in-depth philosophical discussions contribute significantly to improving students' spiritual intelligence. The use of methods such as reflective journaling, philosophical dialogue, and contemplative pedagogy has proven effective

in helping students develop spiritual awareness and metacognitive thinking skills simultaneously (Syafii & Gusti, 2025)

A third important factor is educational background and exposure to diverse Islamic studies. Students who have a comprehensive Islamic learning experience, not limited to normative-ritualistic aspects but also encompassing philosophical, historical, and contextual dimensions, tend to have more mature spiritual intelligence. A holistic understanding of Islamic tradition enables students to develop a broader perspective, the ability to think critically about various interpretations, and the capacity to integrate spiritual values into various life contexts. In studying the Philosophy of Islamic Education, students with this background are better able to appreciate the complexity of Islamic philosophical thought and apply it in metacognitive analysis of various contemporary educational issues.

IMPLICATIONS

Theoretical Implications

The findings of this study significantly contribute to the development of Islamic educational theory by broadening the understanding of the spiritual-cognitive dimension in the learning process. Theoretically, this study strengthens the argument that spiritual intelligence is an integral and fundamental construct within the framework of Islamic epistemology, not merely an adjunct to the conventional cognitive dimension. The results confirm and expand the theory of holistic integration in Islamic education, which emphasizes the unity of the intellect, the spiritual heart, and the soul as the basis for meaningful learning. The finding that spiritual intelligence significantly influences metacognitive abilities provides empirical validation for the concept of *tarbiyah* (educational guidance) in the Islamic educational tradition, which consistently emphasizes the importance of *tazkiyatun nafs* (purification of the soul) as a prerequisite for achieving *ma'rifah* (true knowledge).

Practical and Policy Implications

The findings of this study have significant practical implications for educators in designing and implementing the Philosophy of Islamic Education and other Islamic courses. First, lecturers need to adopt a pedagogical approach that explicitly integrates the development of spiritual intelligence into the learning process. This means that learning should not be limited to the transmission of cognitive content alone, but should include activities that facilitate spiritual reflection, the search for meaning, and the development of transcendental awareness. Practical strategies that can be implemented include the use of reflective journaling, where students are asked to reflect on the relationship between the learning material and their spiritual experiences, and the implementation of contemplative practices such as *tadabbur* (deep contemplation).

CONCLUSION

This study has demonstrated the critical role of spiritual intelligence as a significant determinant of students' metacognitive abilities in Islamic Education Philosophy course-based learning. The findings reveal that spiritual intelligence is not merely a supplementary dimension of religiosity, but rather functions as a fundamental cognitive-affective capacity that profoundly influences how students engage with complex philosophical concepts, monitor their thinking processes, and regulate their learning strategies. Students with higher levels of spiritual intelligence consistently demonstrated superior metacognitive awareness, characterized by deeper self-reflection, more effective planning and monitoring of their learning, and greater capacity for critical evaluation of their own understanding. This relationship underscores the inseparability of spiritual and cognitive development in the Islamic educational paradigm, challenging the secular dichotomy that has dominated contemporary educational discourse.

The theoretical contribution of this research extends existing frameworks by establishing spiritual intelligence as an essential epistemological component rather than a peripheral affective element in Islamic education. By demonstrating the empirical link between spiritual consciousness and higher-order thinking abilities, this study validates the classical Islamic educational philosophy that emphasizes *tazkiyatun nafs* as prerequisite for authentic knowledge acquisition. Furthermore, the identification of key determinants—including spiritual practices, reflective learning environments, comprehensive Islamic education exposure, and supportive socio-cultural contexts provides a comprehensive understanding of how spiritual intelligence can be systematically cultivated within educational settings.

LIMITATIONS AND DIRECTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Despite its contributions, this study acknowledges several limitations that warrant consideration. As a systematic literature review, the findings are inherently dependent on the scope, quality, and methodological rigor of the studies included in the analysis. Variations in research design, measurement instruments, cultural contexts, and educational settings across the reviewed literature may have influenced the consistency and comparability of reported relationships between spiritual intelligence and metacognitive abilities. Furthermore, the reliance on published studies may introduce publication bias, as studies reporting significant findings are more likely to be accessible in major academic databases. Since this review synthesizes predominantly cross-sectional and correlational research, causal relationships and longitudinal developmental patterns between spiritual intelligence and metacognitive growth remain underexplored. Future research is therefore encouraged to employ longitudinal, experimental, or mixed-method designs to examine causal mechanisms, contextual moderators, and the dynamic interaction between spiritual and metacognitive development within diverse Islamic higher education contexts.

ETHICAL STATEMENT

This study was conducted exclusively through the analysis of publicly accessible academic literature and did not involve direct interaction with human participants, the collection of personal data, or the use of confidential institutional documents. Consequently, formal ethical clearance from an institutional review board was not required. Nevertheless, the research adhered strictly to established principles of academic integrity and research ethics, including accurate citation practices, transparency in the selection and analysis of sources, avoidance of plagiarism, and objective, critical scholarly interpretation. All references were acknowledged appropriately to ensure intellectual accountability and to maintain the credibility and reliability of the study's findings.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this article.

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