

The Influence of Multiple Intelligences on Individual Capacity in Building Counter-Radicalism Narratives

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Abstract

Proclaiming inclusive Islam requires a strong narrative to ensure that the values of inclusiveness are effectively communicated. This article examines the influence of multiple intelligences on individuals' capacity to construct counter-radical narratives. Drawing on Howard Gardner's framework, the study explores how verbal-linguistic, logical-mathematical, visual-spatial, musical, bodily-kinesthetic, interpersonal, intrapersonal, naturalistic, and existential intelligences affect the ability to design narratives opposing radical ideologies. Using a quantitative methodology, the research employed structured questionnaires to assess how multiple intelligences contribute to students' competencies in formulating counter-radical narratives. Conducted at UIN Walisongo Semarang, the study involved 100 undergraduate students selected from a population of 26,103 through a cluster sampling technique. Data were analyzed using simple linear regression, which revealed a significant and positive relationship ($t = 30.210$, $p < 0.05$) between multiple intelligences and students' narrative-building skills. The findings indicate that multiple intelligences significantly influence individuals' abilities to articulate counter-radical messages. This underscores the importance of integrating intelligence-based approaches into radicalism prevention strategies. By highlighting the predictive power of diverse cognitive domains, particularly musical and bodily-kinesthetic intelligences, the study offers a novel analytical perspective. It contributes to scholarly discourse by providing an innovative framework for educational programming and policy formulation aimed at strengthening resilience against extremist narratives. Ultimately, the research emphasizes that recognizing and cultivating various intelligences can serve as a powerful means of promoting inclusive Islamic narratives while countering radical ideologies.

Keywords: Multiple Intelligences, Individual Capacity, Counter-Radicalism Narratives.

1. Introduction

Radicalism continues to pose a serious global threat, destabilizing key social, political, and security structures across regions. While traditional analyses have predominantly focused on ideological frameworks and systemic responses, this study highlights the importance of individual capacity as a fundamental element in counter-radicalism efforts. Defined as the personal ability to identify, interpret, and challenge radical content, individual capacity functions as a strategic entry point for fostering resilience at the grassroots level (Besta et al., 2021). Strengthening this capacity may lead to more adaptive and person-centered models of radicalism prevention. Addressing the threat of radicalism requires more than conventional, security-oriented interventions; it demands an inclusive framework that considers individuals' psychological well-being, nurtures emotional adaptability, and reinforces their capacity to build positive social connections. By integrating these human-centered dimensions, counter-radicalism strategies can transcend reactive approaches and promote deeper, more sustainable resilience at both individual and community levels. In this context, research examining the relationship between multiple intelligences and individuals' capacity to construct counter-radicalism narratives becomes increasingly significant. Howard Gardner, as cited by (Syarifah, 2019), asserts that every individual possesses multiple intelligences that shape how they comprehend, process, and respond to various ideologies and narratives. Therefore, this study seeks to investigate the influence of multiple intelligences on individuals' capacity to craft narratives opposing radical ideologies and its implications for radicalism prevention.

First, it is essential to recognize that narrative construction plays a crucial role in shaping individuals' perceptions and worldviews. A well-crafted narrative can influence a person's attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors. In this regard, multiple intelligences play a pivotal role in shaping an individual's ability to design narratives that embody counter-radicalism values (Frischlich et al., 2019). Verbal-linguistic intelligence ("word smart") enables individuals to articulate ideas effectively within narratives that can influence listeners or readers. Visual-spatial intelligence ("picture-color smart") allows individuals to design narratives incorporating visual elements that evoke emotion and deepen understanding. Musical intelligence ("music-song smart") contributes to constructing counter-radicalism narratives through music and lyrics, thereby eliciting emotional engagement from the audience. Second, conventional approaches to preventing radicalism often focus primarily on physical security measures while neglecting the psychological dimensions of individuals. To pursue more holistic prevention strategies, it is crucial to understand how multiple intelligences affect individuals' capacity to construct counter-radicalism narratives. In this context, the interpersonal and intrapersonal intelligences embedded within Gardner's framework can help individuals build strong social connections, appreciate diverse perspectives, and critically evaluate radical narratives (Fuad and Masuwd, 2023). Interpersonal intelligence refers to the ability to interact, communicate, and collaborate effectively with others, while intrapersonal intelligence relates to self-awareness and self-understanding.

Research on radicalism prevention strategies can be broadly categorized into three main trends. First, the prevention of radicalism through positive narratives is supported by data presented in a terrorism report published by the Soufan Center in June 2021. The report highlights that one of the emerging spaces for terrorist indoctrination is Telegram

and WhatsApp. Through these chat platforms, terrorist groups indoctrinate both men and women, groom potential recruits, and encourage them to commit acts of terror (Lobato, Ruipérez, and Marrero, 2022). Second, radicalism prevention through the dissemination of positive content has gained significant attention. Data released by the National Counterterrorism Agency (BNPT) indicate that in 2020 alone, 341 pieces of radical terrorism-related content were handled. Among these, Facebook accounted for the highest number of cases (113 contents), followed by Twitter, websites, Instagram, and YouTube (Febrityas and Syauquillah, 2023). Third, radicalism prevention is pursued through the integration of positive values in educational settings. However, existing studies have not yet examined in detail the influence of multiple intelligences on individuals' capacity to construct counter-radicalism narratives (Suhendi, Sawahel, and Abdillah, 2020). This gap underscores the need for further exploration of cognitive and pedagogical dimensions that contribute to narrative-based radicalism prevention efforts.

Therefore, this study seeks to enrich the existing body of knowledge on radicalism prevention by introducing an alternative perspective that emphasizes the role of specific domains of intelligence, particularly musical and bodily-kinesthetic, in empowering individuals to craft compelling and persuasive narratives that counter radical ideologies. Accordingly, the research problems addressed in this paper are formulated as follows: (1) How are multiple intelligences applied in constructing counter-radicalism narratives? (2) How is individual capacity applied in constructing counter-radicalism narratives? (3) How do multiple intelligences influence individual capacity in constructing counter-radicalism narratives? Drawing upon these research questions and the conceptual framework, this article discusses the implications of the findings for developing a more comprehensive radicalism prevention strategy, one that acknowledges the role of multiple intelligences in shaping individuals' capacity to design narratives opposing radical ideologies. A deeper understanding of the relationship between multiple intelligences and counter-radicalism narrative construction is expected to provide a strong foundation for more effective and sustainable prevention efforts. Furthermore, this study contributes to the development of more targeted and context-sensitive radicalization prevention strategies. Specifically, it advocates the inclusion of musical and bodily-kinesthetic intelligences in educational and community-based initiatives, such as music composition workshops, spoken-word performances, and theater-based roleplay. These creative approaches can serve as powerful tools for engaging vulnerable youth in critical reflection and expressive dialogue, thereby enhancing cognitive engagement, fostering emotional awareness, and cultivating interpersonal sensitivity.

2. Methods

The present study employs a quantitative research design, which systematically collects, analyzes, and interprets numerical data to examine relationships between variables (Mohajan, 2020). This approach was purposefully selected to measure the influence of Multiple Intelligences (independent variable, X) on Individual Capacity (dependent variable, Y) in constructing counter-radicalism narratives. The quantitative design allows the researchers to test hypotheses empirically, determine the strength and direction of associations, and draw generalizable conclusions from the data. Furthermore, this methodological choice provides an opportunity to validate theoretical assumptions derived from

Gardner's Multiple Intelligences framework through statistical evidence. By doing so, the study aims to establish a more rigorous empirical basis for understanding how specific cognitive domains contribute to individuals' capacity to resist and reconstruct narratives that counter radical ideologies.

The research context, often conceptualized as the object of investigation, refers to the specific entity or population targeted for empirical examination. According to (Damşa and Jornet, 2021), the research object constitutes the core unit of analysis from which data are derived and insights are generated. In this study, the object of research comprises undergraduate students at UIN Walisongo Semarang. This population was selected to explore the relationship between Multiple Intelligences as the independent variable (X) and Individual Capacity as the dependent variable (Y) in the context of constructing counter-radicalism narratives. By focusing on this academic environment, the study seeks to understand how various cognitive profiles influence students' abilities to formulate narratives that resist radical ideologies within a culturally and religiously diverse university setting.

The subject of this research is survey data that goes beyond merely reporting behavior. Questionnaire-based surveys serve as an essential method in sociological and educational research, allowing researchers to gain a deeper understanding of participants' identities, behavioral tendencies, and the underlying reasons behind their choices. This approach facilitates the systematic collection of data that reflects not only observable actions but also the subjective motivations influencing those actions, thereby offering comprehensive insights into human behavior within specific social or academic contexts (Nabi, 2018). The research subjects in this study were undergraduate students of UIN Walisongo Semarang, comprising a total population of 26,103 students. Using the Slovin formula, a sample of 100 students was determined. The sampling technique employed was cluster sampling, a method in which selection is based on groups or clusters rather than individual respondents.

This article classifies multiple intelligences into nine types, namely: verbal - linguistic intelligence (word smart), logical-mathematical intelligence (number smart), visual - spatial intelligence (picture - color smart), musical intelligence (music - song smart), bodily - kinesthetic intelligence (movement smart), interpersonal intelligence (social smart), intrapersonal intelligence (self smart), naturalist intelligence (nature smart), and existential intelligence (essence smart). The independent variable (X) in this study is multiple intelligences, which encompass these nine categories. Meanwhile, individual capacity in building counter-radicalism narratives serves as the dependent variable (Y). This refers to students' abilities to critically develop and articulate narratives that oppose radical ideologies, influenced in part by their dominant intelligence profiles. The study aims to determine the extent to which each intelligence domain contributes to or enhances this narrative-building capacity.

In this study, data were collected using a questionnaire. The questionnaire was designed to measure multiple intelligences and individual capacity in constructing counter-radicalism narratives. A questionnaire is a data collection method that presents a series of questions or statements to respondents to obtain their responses (Valli, 2016). According to (Fallon, 2016), data collection is a fundamental stage in research, as it represents the primary means of achieving the study's objectives. In this research, the questionnaire not only served as an instrument for obtaining measurable indicators of the variables under

investigation but also enabled the researchers to analyze patterns and correlations between intelligence types and narrative-building capacities with statistical rigor.

Data analysis techniques refer to a set of systematic methods, procedures, and strategies used to process, organize, interpret, and derive meaning from collected data. These techniques are essential for transforming raw data into valid insights that address the research questions and test the proposed hypotheses (Badia, 2020). In this study, the following analytical methods were employed to examine the relationship between the independent and dependent variables:

1. Simple Linear Regression Analysis

In this study, simple linear regression analysis was employed to measure the strength of the relationship between two variables. The first variable, multiple intelligences, serves as the independent variable (X), while the second variable, individual capacity, functions as the dependent variable (Y). This analysis also aims to determine the direction of the relationship between the two variables, whether positive or negative. The simple regression equation applied in this study follows the formula $Y = a + bX$, where Y represents individual capacity in constructing counter-radicalism narratives, a denotes the regression constant, b is the regression coefficient, and X refers to multiple intelligences.

2. Hypothesis Testing

A partial t-test was employed to examine the relationship between multiple intelligences and individual capacities. The test compared the calculated t-value of the independent variable with the critical t-value at a 5% significance level. A significant effect was identified when the computed t-value exceeded or was equal to the critical value. This testing procedure is essential for determining whether the observed relationship between the variables is statistically meaningful or occurred merely by chance. In this study, the t-test was used to confirm the strength and direction of the influence exerted by multiple intelligences (as measured through self-assessment questionnaires) on students' capacity to construct counter-radicalism narratives. A t-value significantly higher than the critical value provides empirical evidence that multiple intelligences, when considered as a composite variable, contribute substantially to the development of such capacities. The statistical result further supports the theoretical assumption that diverse cognitive strengths enhance the effectiveness of counter-extremism efforts at the individual level. In practical terms, these findings imply that intelligence-based educational strategies may serve as an effective intervention in radicalism prevention programs.

3. Results and Discussion

To enhance clarity and readability, the research findings are presented first, followed by the discussion section. The results and discussion are presented under separate subheadings. This section constitutes the most substantial part of the article, comprising at least 60% of the total content.

3.1. Result

3.1.1. Simple Linear Regression Analysis

The results of the simple linear regression analysis are presented in the table below:

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients Beta	t	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
	B	Std. Error				Tolerance	VIF ^a
1 (Constant)	-2.613	0.740		-3.530	0.001		
Multiple Intelligences	0.554	0.018	0.950	30.210	0.000	1.000	1.000

Dependent Variable: Individual Capacity

Based on the table above, the simple linear regression equation is formulated as follows:

$$Y = -2.613 + 0.554X_t + e$$

Based on the equation above, it is identified that the constant value is -2.613. Mathematically, this indicates that when the predictor variable is zero, the value of individual capacity is -2.613. Furthermore, the positive regression coefficient (0.554) for the independent variable (multiple intelligences) demonstrates a unidirectional relationship between multiple intelligences (X) and individual capacity (Y). This means that for every one-unit increase in the multiple intelligences variable, the individual capacity is expected to increase by 0.554

3.1.2. T-Test

Statistical calculations show that the calculated t-value of 30.210 exceeds the t-table value of 2.00 at a 5% (0.05) significance level. Since the t-calculated value is greater than the t-critical value, the alternative hypothesis (Ha) is accepted, and the null hypothesis (Ho) is rejected. This result indicates that the independent variable (X) has a significant effect on the dependent variable (Y). Thus, the findings confirm that multiple intelligences significantly influence individual capacity in constructing counter-radicalism narratives.

3.2. Discussion

Variable X has a positive and significant effect on variable Y. The results of the hypothesis testing confirm that multiple intelligences significantly influence individual capacity in constructing counter-radicalism narratives. According to Gardner's theory, every individual possesses all types of intelligences, though they manifest and function in different ways. The Theory of Multiple Intelligences is a cognitive framework that posits that each person holds several distinct forms of intelligence that operate in unique and complementary ways within the individual (B. Cavas and P. Cavas, 2020). While everyone possesses these intelligences to varying degrees, Gardner identifies nine primary types: verbal-linguistic intelligence (word smart), logical-mathematical intelligence (number smart), visual-spatial intelligence (picture-color smart), musical intelligence (music-song smart), bodily-kinesthetic intelligence (movement smart), interpersonal intelligence (social smart), intrapersonal intelligence (self smart), naturalist intelligence (nature smart), and existential intelligence (essence smart) (Gardner, 2011). Each facet of multiple intelligences can be recognized through specific behavioral indicators such as one's actions, tendencies, sensitivities, notable skills, instinctive reactions, attitudes, and areas of deep personal interest. However, the degree to which these intelligences are developed varies among individuals, some may exhibit advanced forms of certain intelligences, while others may display them only at a more rudimentary level.

Numerous efforts have been undertaken to counter radicalism, both through the renewal of religious understanding and the legal handling of acts of violence committed in the name of religion. However, symptoms of religious fundamentalism, radicalism, and even terrorism under the guise of faith continue to persist. The radicalism movement has also infiltrated Muslim families in Indonesia, where individuals face a heightened risk of radicalization due to domestic indoctrination, often involving women and children (Faiq, 2021). For instance, the 2018 Surabaya church bombings involved an entire family—including children—who had been indoctrinated and mobilized to carry out coordinated suicide attacks. This tragic event underscores the profound reach of radical influence within domestic spaces and highlights the urgent need for early intervention (Halim and Adnan, 2018). The perpetrators had been exposed to jihadist propaganda for years and underwent radical socialization within their homes, primarily through encrypted online messaging platforms and exclusive religious study groups, which facilitated the dissemination of extremist ideologies (Baugut and Neumann, 2020). This phenomenon demonstrates that radicalization is no longer confined to public or institutional domains but has become deeply embedded within personal and familial structures. Consequently, deradicalization and prevention efforts must address not only public narratives but also domestic dynamics and parent–child ideological transmission. Educational and social programs should therefore be designed to strengthen family resilience, foster critical thinking, and empower family members to detect and reject extremist ideologies before they take root.

In today's millennial era, the sophistication of communication technology has become the primary medium for radical groups to disseminate propaganda. Therefore, the active involvement of students in particular, and the younger generation in general, in developing counter-narratives against radical propaganda is critically important (Zabuzov and Shushpanov, 2022). The conflicts that have occurred in the Middle East began with radicalism, which eventually escalated into acts of terrorism. These conflicts were initially fueled by propaganda wars, through hoaxes, hate speech, and digital disinformation, that ultimately culminated in civil wars (Kirazlı, 2016). The radical Islamic movement in Indonesia can be understood as a collective endeavor aimed at transforming the social structure and value system of society (Prayogo, Nur, and Setyowati, 2023). This movement is considered a rational movement, in which participants act based on deliberate and strategic reasoning. According to Rational Action Theory, movement actors are rational individuals who make calculated decisions. This theoretical framework helps explain how certain individuals join extremist movements not merely due to ideological commitment, but also due to strategic motivations, such as access to resources, social recognition, or group belonging (Muntasir, 2019). In contrast, Collective Behavior Theory offers a different perspective by explaining cases in which recruitment is emotionally driven, as seen among youths who respond to perceived injustice or marginalization. In many such cases, participants not only gain ideological gratification but also pragmatic advantages. This theory views social movement actors as emotionally responsive individuals who react to circumstances beyond their control. When applied to the context of radical Islamic movements, Collective Behavior Theory suggests that some activists are motivated less by rational calculation and more by emotional impulses or the pursuit of martyrdom (Zurcher and Snow, 2017).

The young generation, with their broad access to global information networks, has become the primary target of radical groups (Maunah, 2022). The concept of multiple in-

telligences plays a vital role in preventing young people, particularly university students, from succumbing to radicalization. Multiple intelligences provide opportunities for youth to receive developmental support that aligns with their individual capacities and learning styles. In this context, intelligence-based learning processes can serve as transformative tools, enabling students to develop self-awareness and engage in constructive behavioral change. Practical implementations of the multiple intelligences framework have been successfully applied in various educational and community-based programs. For instance, initiatives that integrate music, theater, and storytelling have been shown to help students critically process and challenge radical narratives. In Indonesia, anti-radicalism hip-hop workshops have been effectively piloted in urban communities, providing youth with culturally resonant avenues to express dissent and foster resilience (Kumalasari, Yusuf Hilmi, and Priyandoko, 2017). In academic environments, role-play simulations and debate forums have likewise proven effective in promoting critical thinking, empathy, and interpersonal awareness among students. Moreover, naturalist intelligence can be observed in individuals' abilities to identify, classify, and appreciate the natural environment, such as plants, animals, and ecosystems within educational contexts. Meanwhile, existential intelligence concerns one's capacity to engage with profound questions about existence and human purpose (Berry and Kowal, 2022). Gardner further conceptualizes existential intelligence as encompassing two essential dimensions: first, the ability to position oneself within the vastness of the cosmos, from the infinite to the infinitesimal, and second, the contemplation of ultimate human concerns, including the meaning of life and death, as well as the boundaries of physical and psychological existence (J. K. F. Góes and M. A. S. Góes, 2022). Overall, the existence of diverse intelligence theories is directly proportional to the effectiveness of counter-radicalism efforts. The implementation of this approach aims to cultivate students' cognitive abilities, intrinsic motivation, and sustained engagement in understanding and countering radical ideologies. Through appropriate pedagogical methodologies and experiential learning techniques, educators can create optimal learning environments that empower students to become active agents of peace and resilience.

This awareness creates fertile ground for the emergence of radical and exclusive religious consciousness, often as a reaction to campus environments perceived as increasingly secular. During the transitional phase of youth development, marked by identity uncertainty and existential questioning, students may experience a phenomenon known as cognitive receptivity, a micro-sociological process that heightens their openness to new, and potentially extreme, ideologies. These conditions render young individuals particularly susceptible to the persuasive and recruitment efforts of extremist and terrorist organizations. Their psychological vulnerability in such circumstances makes them easy targets for groups that promote violence and terror (Bako and Ananda, 2023). Terrorist entities are acutely aware of, and deliberately exploit, the psychological and emotional challenges faced by young people. They often target individuals experiencing chronic dissatisfaction, anger, or frustration, whether directed toward societal structures or governmental authorities. By offering ideological justification, perceived solutions for social change, and a sense of belonging, these groups fulfill deep-seated emotional and cognitive needs among their recruits (Duits, Alberda, and Kempes, 2022). These insights underscore the urgency for educators, policymakers, and civil society actors to implement comprehensive, targeted interventions aimed at strengthening ideological and psychological resilience. Ef-

fective strategies may include digital literacy initiatives, interfaith dialogue programs, and youth-led creative media production, which empower individuals to craft inclusive, culturally grounded counter-narratives. Such approaches not only inoculate students against extremist manipulation but also channel their cognitive and emotional capacities toward constructive social engagement.

4. Conclusions

The present study identifies a strong association between multiple intelligences and individuals' abilities to formulate counter-radicalism narratives, with musical and kinesthetic intelligences emerging as particularly influential in shaping persuasive counter-narratives that resonate with audiences vulnerable to radical ideologies. These findings underscore the importance of integrating less-emphasized intelligences into prevention efforts, thereby broadening the conceptual foundation of radicalism resistance through cognitive diversity and promoting a paradigm shift toward inclusive, learner-centered educational practices. By demonstrating that diverse intelligence types enhance narrative competence, this research advances existing frameworks that have traditionally relied on security-oriented or ideological approaches, proposing instead a personalized, intelligence-based prevention model. Nevertheless, certain limitations should be acknowledged, particularly the restricted generalizability of the results due to the geographically and demographically limited sample, comprising undergraduate students from a single institution, as well as the reliance on self-reported measures that may introduce response bias. To enhance the validity and applicability of future research, broader and more diverse sampling is recommended, encompassing participants from varied cultural and educational contexts, alongside the adoption of longitudinal designs to examine the development of intelligence-based narrative capacities over time. Furthermore, employing rigorously validated assessment tools will strengthen both reliability and external validity, thereby facilitating the practical implementation of intelligence-driven radicalism prevention strategies. In summary, this study contributes to the growing academic discourse by demonstrating that multiple intelligences, particularly musical and kinesthetic, play a pivotal role in fostering resilience against extremist narratives. At the same time, it highlights the necessity for continued methodological refinement and broader contextual application in future investigations.

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