

**DECIPHERING THE THEORY OF MULTIPLE INTELLIGENCES: AN ISLAMIC PERSPECTIVE**

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**Abstract**

*This paper aims to criticize the theory of Multiple Intelligences which was incorporated into Turkish educational system together with the educational reform made in 2004 from an Islamic perspective. To this end, analyses on the relevant literature have been carried out. As a result, it has been identified that this theory, with its initial form, has also been widely accepted in many Muslim countries. However, it is expectable that this acceptance will soon turn into a refusal due to Gardner's placing strong emphasis on materialism and Darwin as the reference sources for his own theory. For, materialism and Darwinism are completely dissimilar to the core values of Islam. Moreover, Gardner's theory conflicts with Islam in that it cannot present a consistent goal in education and cannot keep a balance between the material and the spiritual, and it can bear such risks as nihilism and hedonism.*

**Key Words:** Multiple Intelligences Theory, Islamic Perspective, Turkish Educational System.

**1. Introduction**

Turkey is a country that has been seeking to modernize by taking the West as a reference for almost two centuries. In this endeavor, education has always been regarded as one of the main instruments. To that end, Turkey has so far imported and implemented many educational philosophies, theories and models from Europe and the USA. However, many of these import educational models and those ones gathered and developed based on them have ended up with a fiasco. The history of Turkish education looks, in this sense, like a museum of the educational models of the world (TDV, 1996: 257). The main reason why these Western-oriented educational models remain inconclusive in practice despite all the official state-support is the culture which is experienced at home, on the street and even at school (at extracurricular times and places). This culture, coming from the depth of history, has implicitly vitiated or at least lowered the impact of the artificial and "fabricated culture" of school (Ünder, 2008:235). The cost of the failure of these import educational models in practice for Turkey can be summarized as the waste of time, dissipation of human and money resources, and disappointments.

The problem still remains. Thus, the recent educational reform made by the Ministry of Turkish National Education (MEB) in 2004 is also based on import philosophies, theories and models like all others before. Together with this reform, which was realized based on the progressivism philosophy and the constructivist approach, the Multiple Intelligences theory (MIT) was also incorporated into the Turkish Educational System (TES). And, MIT, which had stormed throughout the world, and had been fiercely disputed since its emergence, could thus find itself a central place within TES. MIT, which made a quick entrance into Turkey with the slogan of a modern reform and under the direction of the official educational authority (MEB), has already begun to be discussed within academic circles, in print media and by syndicates. Today, these discussions on MIT still continue on two lanes: for and against. The articles in favor of MIT focus on the fact that this theory is aware of individual differences, offers equal opportunities in education and reinforces academic achievement.

Some of the articles against MIT in Turkey are not related to the theory itself, but rather they are intended to the educational policies of the government that brought this theory into Turkey. Naturally, MIT also gets its share from this. And some other arguments against MIT show similarities with those around the world. These criticisms against it can be summarized as its lack of scientific bases, confusing intelligences with abilities, and not being clear and comprehensible enough.

However, apart from these two sides, a third group whose voice has just begun to be heard appears. The starting point of those in this group who deal with MIT from an Islamic perspective is to discuss the convenience of this theory to education in a Muslim culture. The people in this group, whose self-confidence has improved with the support of the economical and political achievements of Turkey especially over the last decades, comprise those who draw attention to the cultural aspect of education and thus have doubts about import models. Their objections are not only about MIT's being import. These objections are about those ideas that Gardner put forth in his book "the Disciplined Mind" and his speeches in the 1<sup>st</sup> International Living Theorists Conference organized in Turkey in 2009. In this book which, in his own words, is like "a middle-age confession", Gardner identifies himself as a materialist, and shows Darwin's theory of evolution as the basic source of reference for his own theory. A materialism and evolution-based MIT and Islam are poles apart. MIT, which was adopted also in many Muslim countries with slogans embracing everyone during its earlier stages, has begun to be questioned by Turkish people and other Muslim societies with this new face of its.

Analyzed with its recently evolved new facet, many aspects of MIT which have not seen before stand out. First of all, it seems that a materialism and evolution-based MIT, unlike the one embracing everybody with its initial form, ostracizes the whole Islamic world and even pious Christians and Jews, or at least overlooks them. Actually, the fact that while developing his theory Gardner hardly ever made mention of Islam although he examined many societies and cultures connotes an irony, if not recklessness. Second is that a Darwin-referenced MIT offends the wide masses believing in creation in general and Turkish people in special. How could Gardner have taken no notice of Darwin's labeling Turkish people as an "inferior race"? Could Gardner have risked offending these big masses by clinging to Darwin for bringing scientificity to his theory? How can the exorable "embracing-everyone" slogans of MIT get on well with Darwin's ideas separating nations? Moreover, if the only way to do science is via the evolution theory, what about the thinkers other than this? In his book 'the Disciplined Mind', Gardner recommends K12 students to learn the Nazi Genocide as a moral example. But how could he have forgotten that one of the reference sources for those who committed the Nazi genocide was Darwin?

Furthermore, the fact that MIT cannot offer consistent goals to education, and cannot maintain the balance between the material and the spiritual in individual development poses an obstacle for it to be adopted by the culturally Muslim societies. On taking what Gardner has recently written and said and the reference sources for his theory into account, it can be suggested that a kind of education dependent on this theory has a risk of leading individuals to hedonism and nihilism. For all these reasons, there are increasing doubts about MIT in Turkey and in other Muslim countries that adopted this theory and incorporated it into their educational systems. Adding to these Islamic sensibility-based doubts the other ones about the theory's being "an instrument of the global hegemony", it is expectable that MIT could rapidly fall into disrepute in Turkey; and this can even lead to the discredit of MIT and its removal from the educational system in the long term.

### **1.1. Purpose**

This paper aims to analyze MIT from an Islamic perspective. These critical analyses are carried out on Gardner's book "the Disciplined Mind" and his speeches in the 1<sup>st</sup> International Living Theorists Conference organized in Turkey.

### **2. The Reference Sources and Analyses of MIT**

Gardner (2009: 79) states that his MIT is "a model which shows how mind and brain are organized. According to Gardner (2004), "biological and cultural" dimensions underlie this theory. And he later based this biological underlying on Darwin's theory of evolution. In fact what confirms this in a sense is that when asked 'whether there is a link between evolution and MIT' in the First International Living Theorists Conference organized in Turkey in 2009, Gardner responded as 'I think, there is'. The common criticism that "MIT is not scientific and empirical" within scientific circles may have been effective in Gardner's frequent emphasis on Darwin especially in recent years. For, in the book of the conference afore-mentioned Gardner (2009: 10) says that "he hopes MIT is a scientific theory", and explains that "there are still ongoing debates over this issue"; and all these happen to verify it. By expressing that "there is someone who believes in this theory for a hundred percent, and it is me", Gardner (2009) showed, in a sense, how much he desired for the acknowledgement of the scientific world. And it is a real wonder where this desire will take MIT to.

The cultural dimension underlying MIT is actually based on an understanding of the materialist philosophy that "an individual assigns meanings to stimula from the culture in which he /she lives". And Gardner (2006: 74) confirms this in his book "the Disciplined Mind" with the following sentence: "meaning attribution is a cultural phenomenon".

These explanations overlap with this explanation of the Marxist philosophy “ cognition is a reflex action which is based on the social intermediacy and which is in the historical developmental process” (Lektorsky, 1998: 152). Gardner (2006: 74) clearly declares the basis of his theory with his statement that he is surely a materialist in his afore-mentioned book. He afterwards goes on to say that he believes everything in mind is a product of brain, and that he denies the existence of spirits, communication carried out without using senses, and of the undescrivable angels and demons. Thus, he happens to attribute the functions of mind to material (senses). Evoking the ideas of Locke and Hume, these statements of Gardner’s are just a repetition of the thoughts of L. Büchner, D. F. Strauss, L. Feuerbach and K. Marx, the major philosophers of the philosophy of materialism that regards senses as the source of every knowing (Akarsu 1998 as cited in Cihan, 1998). But, Gardner never mentions concrete and metaphysical dimensions such as conscious in functioning of mind.

From these statements of Gardner’s forth, it can be said that the philosophical basis of MIT is materialism, and its scientific understanding is the evolutionary theory. Moreover, from Gardner’s explanations about the functions of mind, it can be suggested that MIT bears traces of Marxism. For, there are great similarities between Gardner’s thoughts about this subject and the explanation of the Marxist philosophy that “cognition is the reflection of the objective reality dependant on senses” (Lektorsky, 1998).

### **3. Criticisms of Multiple Intelligences Theory**

#### **3. 1. Criticisms of Multiple Intelligences Theory around the World**

##### *3. 1. 1. Is Multiple Intelligences Theory Scientific?*

The most common criticism of MIT is that it is “not empirical and scientific” (Gottfredson et al, 2004). According to Richardson (1991), Gardner was inattentive to the scientific method while developing his theory. And Aiken (1997) claims that Gardner's ideas are based more on reasoning and intuition than on the results of empirical research studies. According to Willingham (2004) and Waterhouse (2006), MIT is not based on valid scientific evidence, and is not corroborated with consistent conceptual, neuroscientific, etc. phenomena. Brody (1992) identifies the intelligences taxonomy of MIT as an arbitrary one, and comes to mean that the theory is not scientifically-based. Smolucha (1993 as cited in Selvi, 2011) states that MIT lacks the scientific base, and that even the factor analysis can alone refute this theory. And Smith (2002) draws attention to the fact that there is not any kind of test to define and measure the intelligence domains of MIT.

To the criticisms that MIT is “not empirical and scientific”, Gardner responds that all the theses of his theory are the kinds that are scientifically real, and can be evaluated in many laboratories (Gilman, 2001 as cited in Arli, 2004). However Traub (1998) argues that Gardner has never been able to convince his colleagues of this, and the Science Council has never exactly acknowledged MIT. Brody (1992) feels that Gardner’s study of the individuals with brain damage to evidence his theory may be of little relevance to understand the performance of intact individuals. Similarly some scholars note that Gardner and his adherents have carried out various studies and experiments to base MIT upon some scientific bases, but the findings they have reached at and asserted to be scientific have not been approved by the scientific psychologists (Schaler, 2006).

And Gardner’s (2006) answer to these claims is that the evidences for the validity of MIT will in due course come together like in evolution or in plate tectonics. However, according to Waterhouse (2006), no enough evidence has been presented for this yet. Further, it is also interesting that some scholars examining MIT (Traub, 1998; Sternberg, 1991; Matthews, 1988) regard this theory as not science but a rhetoric.

##### *3.1. 2. Are Intelligences confused with Talents and Abilities in Multiple Intelligences Theory?*

Another criticism directed to MIT is that it confuses intelligences with talents and abilities. Morgan (1996) thinks that Gardner's index of intelligences bear striking resemblance to cognitive style constructs and intelligence quotient factors identified by others in unified theories of intelligence, and that MI theory merely adapted factors identified as primary abilities in factor analyses of data derived from intelligence tests and re-labeled them as intelligences. And Carroll (1993) suspensefully feels that the kinds of 'intelligences' described by Gardner (i.e. linguistic, logical-mathematical, visual-spatial) show a fairly close correspondence with the broad domains of agabeylity as suggested by Raymond Cattell and John Horn. Klein (1998), suggest that all such elements called as “intelligences ” in Gardner’s theory are in fact “abilities” or “aptitudes”, and this kind of labeling of intelligences is wrong. According to Gilman (2001 as cited in Arli, 2004), Gardner’s resembles earlier work by factor theorists of intelligence like L.L. Thurstone. On this argument, Sternberg (1991) suggests that Gardner cannot explain why certain human abilities can be arbitrarily singled out as intelligence while others cannot. Additionally, many scholars and researchers concerning this issue criticize Gardner for confusing intelligence with talents and abilities (Scarr, 1985; Schaler, 2006; Sternberg, 1991; Eysenck, 1994; Peterson, 1997; Gottfredson et al, 2004).

And Armstrong (2009 as cited in Selvi, 2011) also articulates that there is not enough consensus on the intelligence domains defined in MIT. McGuinness (2007) attributes Gardner's labelling talents as intelligences to the fact that in American society, talents seem to be valued (or at least applauded) more readily than intelligence.

### *3.1.3. Does Multiple Intelligences Theory Match Up To Education?*

Before discussing whether MIT matches up to education, it is better to touch on why this theory has been adopted by educators without questioning, which has several reasons. The first reason is that the international educational systems have always failed, and the education and interest of educators in the fields of scientific psychology and psychometry are insufficient (Jensen 2008 as cited in Selvi, 2011). According to Klein (1998), when the relevant literature is examined, it is understood that while scientific psychologists and psychophysicists object to MIT, educational scientists advocate the theory. The second is that the traditional educational mentality stigmatizes many individuals as "not intelligent enough", based on the results of a couple of tests, and ostracizes from the educational system.

In this case, MIT, which seems to be offering equal opportunities in education with its motto "everybody is intelligent", has appealed to educators. While Delisle (2001: 2–3) refers to this case by stating that people readily jumped at the idea that everybody is intelligent, Lang (2007) noted that the claim that various types of intelligences exist created a lot of excitement and offered plenty of hope to students who had been rated with a low IQ score and labeled as having low intelligence (Sew, 2003). The third is related to the emergence of this theory. The idea of boosting support for education by continuing to back up the smart children coincides with the emergence of MIT in notably the US and many other countries. And the fourth reason is about the nature of pedagogy. Pedagogy is an interdiscipline which gets information and data from such diverse fundamental disciplines as notably psychology, philosophy, anthropology, sociology and biology. While this interdisciplinary nature of pedagogy provides educators with a flexible point of view, it can also lead to such disadvantages as adopting various theses put forward without ever questioning.

Although MIT is acknowledged by a great deal of educators without any questioning, the suitability of this theory for education is still controversial. For instance, according to Kincheloe (2004), Gardner has failed to address many sociopolitical issues that confront an individual and the mechanics of schooling. And Hirsch (1988) criticizes MIT in terms of the fact that it doesn't encourage educators to teach "core knowledge", namely a common collection of essential facts that every American needs to know. Sempsey (1993), who assesses some of the pedagogical implications of Gardner's work, thinks that Gardner's theory is too broad. Willingham (2004) expresses that teaching based on MIT is pursuing extensively, but there is no well-supported research on the efficiency of this theory in practice. Waterhouse (2006) maintains that MIT is not suitable for education, and that there are more negative findings than positive ones for this issue.

Furthermore, according to a number of scholars opposed to MIT (Gottfredson et al, 2004), MIT, which broke standards, will make it difficult to compare and categorize students' abilities. And MIT is not applicable in crowded classes and in lack of sources. Jensen (2008) thinks that MIT puts children off by drawing the analogy that the application of this theory to education is like letting the people eat cake if have no bread. According to the results of a group of authors examining MIT in terms of cognitive psychology, consciousness theory, Buddhism, neuroscience, capitalism, feminism, dance and movement studies and mathematics under the editorship of Kincheloe (2004), MIT should never be treated as an ethical or moral living theory. In addition to all these, in the relevant literature it is also possible to encounter such criticisms as that MIT doesn't have a certain goal and direction for education, and this theory also remains incapable in identifying students.

In response to these criticisms, Gardner (2006) suggests that the K-12 curriculum be organized around the most fundamental questions of existence. Possible courses of study that he recommends would examine profound topics such as Darwin's theory of evolution and the Holocaust in depth. However, the answers to the question of how much these examples will work in practice or what they mean for different cultures are not clear.

## **3. 2. Criticisms of Multiple Intelligences Theory in Turkey**

In Turkey, MIT was officially made a component of the primary-school curricula by the government still in power in 2004. There have been serious criticisms of MIT since then. While the debates on MIT, like it is all around the world, are going on two different sides as for and against, there has now been added to these a conservative side, a group that has been increasingly raising voice lately.

The circles in favor of MIT can be examined in four groups. The first one includes the educational staff endorsing the educational policies of the government in power. The second one is the group of wide crowd of people who are not content with the outcomes of the traditional education, and who set their hopes on education for a better life. Comprising parents, educational staff and some academicians, this group supports MIT mostly in terms of equal opportunities in education. The third group consists of some academicians who believe in the benefits of the multiple and flexible dimensions of the theory caring individual differences in education. Taking a closer look at this third group, it is seen that most of them are the academicians who have been educated abroad (mainly in the US). Examining the predominantly translation works of these academicians, it can be said that most of them have been written for the sake of “saying new things and getting realized in the community”. And What’s more interesting is that some of these writers exaggerate support for MIT and narrate many charming and warm messages which are not really included in the theory within the frame of the theory itself. And the fourth group in favour of MIT involves some private schools and courses which cannot attract enough students with already-known methods, and thus support MIT for using it as a means of advertising with the argument of “modern education”.

The circles against MIT can be dealt with in three groups. In the first group, there are people who claim that MIT was put into practice without being exactly understood, and thus many mistakes were done in this process. The criticisms of this group approaching MIT with caution focus on the statement “there is no need to hurry, let’s first see the results around the world”. The second group is that which comprises educational unions, academicians, writers and educational staff all of whom oppose MIT with political arguments. Many members of this group are left-leaning and neo-nationalist, as they suppose that like all other import theories and models, MIT is an imposition of globalization and neo-liberal ideology which manipulate the Turkish educational system (Özdem, 2008:244). They further think that MIT is the “new-world religion” which is marketed by the USA to the third-world countries; thus their basic anxiety is the erosion of the national integrity with these kind of approaches. The criticisms of those in this group, including very important and influential academicians and unions, can be summarized as follows: “a trendy movement” (Baykal, 2008); “a means of distraction and advertising” (Gür, 2006), “fake pearls” (Özcan, 2008); “a superficial model” (Erdoğan, 2008:107). And one of the leading educational unions in Turkey expresses its doubts for this issue, and wonders why MIT and the constructivist approach were preferred while there are many student-centered learning theories ([www.egitimsen.org.tr](http://www.egitimsen.org.tr), 2005). Another striking criticism of MIT was voiced in one of the popular web-sites in Turkey, [www.memurlar.net](http://www.memurlar.net), as “the multiple intelligences hoax”.

The third group against MIT consists of the conservatives acting upon Islamic sensibilities. Those in this group has in recent years raised their voice against MIT on which they kept silent at first. Even if the fact that the government incorporating MIT into the educational system is conservative may be a factor of this silence, the main reason is actually related to the historical process of the theory. When Gardner first put forth his theory, he came up with such a modest attitude as “indeed everybody and every society is somehow intelligent”, rather than with the attitude of the “conceited” and “intelligent” White Man looking down on the people of the third-world. And this attitude got very positive reaction in Turkey and other Muslim countries adopting the theory. In these earlier stages of the theory, there is almost no mention of materialism, denying the metaphysical dimension which is very important in Islam, and Darwinism, labelling the Turkish people as an “inferior race”. Or these facts were not noticed in the uproar started with MIT’s breaking the mold of earlier widely known and accepted intelligence literature. Thus, without driving materialism and Darwinism forward in its earlier stages, MIT appealed and thus was widely acclaimed in Turkey with its positive messages embracing everyone.

However, this acclaim turned in the course of time to a suspicion by Gardner’s featuring materialism and Darwinism as the main sources of reference for MIT. And on top of that Gardner presented the theory of evolution as the key criterion for science. Here are some of his opinions about this matter from his book *The Disciplined Mind* (2006) and the speeches he made in the first International Living Theorists Conference organized in 2009 in Turkey: “There are some States that do not teach the theory of evolution in America. I think this is a crime”; “If you cannot understand the evolution, you cannot understand anything of biology...(...); “Where did human beings come from? Even if you have religious answers, Darwin is the only scientific answer”. These statements pertaining to Gardner are in fact a clear sign of Gardner’s ridiculing all the thoughts, opinions and beliefs other than the theory of evolution.

#### **4. The Criticism of Multiple Intelligences Theory from An Islamic Perspective**

What makes MIT problematical for Muslims is materialism and the theory of evolution which are regarded as the reference sources of this theory.

Gardner's understanding, derived from materialism, basing the functions of mind solely on senses is not only problematic for Islam and other Abrahamic religions, but also in terms of the philosophy of mind. For, there are also thinkers and approaches accepting that this process (an individual's functions of mind) also includes such metaphysical dimensions as mainly spirit and conscious in addition to senses. Da Vinci, Copernicus, Kepler, Galilei, Linnaeus, Newton, Max Planck and Einstein (Yahya, 2005: 39) are only some of these thinkers. These mind philosophers admitting the metaphysical dimensions have the right to talk over this matter as much as Gardner, who is actually a cognitive psychologist, do.

And one of the most powerful reason for discrediting MIT in Turkey and other Muslim societies is the Darwinist foundation of this theory. There is a serious reaction in the Islamic world against the theory of evolution that is tried to be presented by Gardner as the basis of reality and science. Besides, it is not right to limit this reaction to Muslims only. It is known that all those who believe in creation are against this theory; as Gardner himself reports that "every other American (50%) and 20% of the science teachers working in this country think that the theory of evolution is wrong". So how come this mass of people can be ignored? In this respect, it is not possible for the theories, models and thoughts based on the theory of evolution which is prioritized as if it were a scientific religion mostly in the Western world and largely in academic and scientific circles with a dogmatic approach (Wells, 2000) to be easily adopted in Muslim societies.

In addition, there is a second reason for Turkish people's opposing the Darwin-referenced MIT. As everyone relevant knows, Darwin slandered Turkish people labeling them as "an inferior race" and "barbarian". This alone is a sufficient reason for Turkish people to disapprove MIT. Despite all these, the fact that it seems as if MIT were nowadays caught on in Turkey may be misleading, as many people who are lured by the attracting messages of MIT in Turkey are not still aware of the background of this theory. But it is not difficult to predict that MIT will rapidly lose its reputation as the close relation between MIT and materialism and the theory of evolution comes to light. Would not a contrary situation be a position of "a convict in love with his/her own executioner" for the Turks?

Another doubtful subject regarding MIT in Turkey and other Muslim societies is that Gardner recommends that K12 students read the Nazi genocide for moral development in his book the *Disciplined Mind*. This recommendation, reflecting Gardner's "historical conditioning" and "the reality of the world he lives in" in a sense, is inconsistent in two ways. The first one is the reality that the ideology of those who committed the Nazi atrocity took Darwinism as a reference (Hickman, 1999 as cited in Yahya, 2005). It is shocking that Gardner, whose own family is also among the sufferers of the Nazi atrocity, may have overlooked this historical reality. How come a MIT based on Darwin's theory which introduces the life as "a struggle in which the fittest survive" can embrace everyone? The second is that it may be a good example for the children in the Western world to learn about the Nazi genocide within the dark ages of history. However, What can it mean for the children of the peoples of the Middle East whose historical background and reality is completely different? This is not clear.

Owing to all the reasons summarized above, it will not be a surprise for MIT, infiltrated into the educational systems of Turkey and Muslim societies with its deceptive messages, to fall from favour in the near future. It is not known whether Gardner's increasingly giving references from Darwin in an attempt to have his theory approved by the Western scientific circles will work or not. But Darwin's theory, which is like a "double-edged sword" for MIT, will be the biggest haplessness for it to never catch on in Muslim societies.

## **5. Conclusion**

Officially becoming a part of the Turkish educational system in 2004, MIT received wide acceptance in short time despite the relevant discussions. In this acceptance, the wish to give an ear to the new voices in education as a result of fiasco of the traditional education, and the flexible-looking face of MIT at its earlier stages, all have a big share. MIT looked like a gleam of hope providing equal opportunities in education with its argument that "everybody is somehow intelligent". In this period, Gardner bravely stood up to the earlier intelligence understanding which ostracized the third-world countries, thus was perceived almost as a Gandhi, far from that arrogance of the White Man.

Nevertheless, at later stages of MIT, Gardner based his theory on materialism and the theory of evolution, and emphasized this increasingly loudly. And this annoyed the Muslim countries, including Turkey, that had already adopted the theory. Mostly seen in the conservative circles, this annoyance came to a climax and turned into a suspicion together with Gardner's book the *Disciplined Mind* and his speeches in the aforementioned conference organized in Turkey. By triggering of this suspicion, objections to MIT have gradually increased. The criticisms of MIT in Turkey and other Muslim countries adopting MIT can be summarized in three points.

The first one is about the philosophy of materialism, one of the reference sources of MIT. The human, the subject of education, hypothesis of Materialism is not parallel with that of Islam. Contrary to materialism, regarding the human beings as being composed of only matter, Islam considers the human beings as a unity consisting of the triad of “body (matter), mind and spirit” (Şanver, 2004: 38). Another separation between materialism and Islam is about the cognition and conscious, closely related to education. Materialism posits that the mental function and conscious are functions of body (matter), and the source of every knowing is the senses. On the other hand, Islam also hypostatizes the inborn “granted knowledge” along with the senses in the formation of mental development and conscious. As the conflict between materialism and Islam in terms of the understanding of human and knowing indispensably redounds on education, it can be said that a materialist MIT does not fit in with the educational systems of Muslim societies.

The second point is about the evolutionary dimension of MIT. MIT should not be expected to be adopted in Muslim societies as long as it is adorned with the theory of evolution which denies the belief of creationism, one of the foundations of all Abrahamic religions including Islam. Another aspect of evolution in contradiction with Islam is Darwin’s classification of peoples as superior and inferior races, which is one of the main reasons of the social conflicts of today. This conflicting and discriminator understanding is repugnant to Islam, whose name means peace and whose ultimate goal is to educate “good individuals”. And other special reason of the Turkish people for objecting to MIT is Darwin’s insulting the Turks as an “inferior race”. This kind of an application of MIT in education bears risks of nihilism.

The third point is that this theory cannot provide a reasonable objective in education. MIT does not impose a clear aim in noticing and improving the potentials of an individual. Whereas, according to Ibn Rushd (Aruç, 2004: 123), the main aim of education in Islam is to teach “the aim and reason of existence”. And the biggest cruelty to be done to an individual is to deprive him of this kind of an education. Although Gardner seems to have felt this need of an individual by later inventing an existential intelligence domain, he could not in fact provide a satisfactory explanation and aim. Education through MIT and similar materialism-based approaches carries risks of hedonism as a result when reduced solely to the means of living well materially. In Islamic understanding, the sole aim of education is to cultivate good individuals. And this is only possible with inculcating propriety (Attas, 1991). It is a shortcoming of MIT not to have provided a proper intelligence domain or an explanation related to morality.

In the final analysis, MIT is not applicable to the educational system of a Muslim culture with regard to its materialist and evolutionary background and indexterity to offer an educational objective. However, this should not mean to completely reject MIT. Instead of evaluating MIT as completely right or wrong, it is more plausible to make use of its beneficial aspects. And the way-out of this is that Muslim societies should develop educational theories and models appropriate to their own historical, cultural and socio-economical structures without overlooking the universal trends.

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