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The Islamic Gifted Curriculum Framework: Conceptualising Gifted Education from Islamic Perspective

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Abstract

The current models of gifted and talented education have always been based on the established curriculum designed on the parameters set by the standards in many western countries. While the concepts and ideas are relevant and proven, a Muslim gifted institution has to take other considerations in the policy and implementation aspects to cater to the needs of gifted Muslim community. While main goal of gifted education is the student's intelligent and talent development, the gifted Muslim student has additional areas of development that have to be taken into consideration. Many mainstream gifted education models stress on the high academic performers or strong STEM-inclined individuals who displayed high interest and academic achievement in science subjects. The Muslim gifted students have additional parameters such as religious inclination and interests with focus on the Quran memorisation, hadith and Islamic references understanding. This study examines the existing literature on gifted and talented education models and adopts some core elements for the conceptualization of gifted curriculum for Muslim students, focusing on the fundamental elements of Islamic education philosophy. Applying qualitative method, the existing literature is reviewed systematically, and their educational philosophies are analysed and compared. Based on the review and analysis, this paper proposes a conceptual framework on the integrated model of existing gifted philosophies from the western and Islamic perspective. The discussion has been framed specifically around the design and implementation of gifted and talented education in Malaysia. This paper will offer a guide to the development of integrated curriculum model—one which is based on the existing models both on the Western and Islamic ideas of gifted education. For gifted institutions adopting this guide-

line, it will serve as a working policy and implementation framework.

Keywords

Gifted Education, Integrated Curriculum, Gifted Muslim, Islamic Education Philosophy

1. Introduction

The establishment of two gifted schools in Malaysia, GENIUS@pintar College in 2011 and GENIUS Insan College in 2015, paved the foundation for the expansion and advancement of gifted education in Malaysia. The Malaysian Education Blueprint 2013-2025 has recognised gifted education as one of the most essential areas of education in Malaysia that demands serious attention and proper action by the stakeholders. Gifted education has yet to find its place in the mainstream education yet its policy planning and implementation must be consistently aligned with the national education development plan (Kementerian Pendidikan Malaysia, 2013). One of the agendas stated in the document is the development of a curriculum that is suitable for gifted students in Malaysia. This suggestion is very much in line with the view that knowing giftedness and developing a gifted curriculum are something that is culture-specific (Leavitt, 2017), that is, the gifted elements that are established must be associated with the context that best suits a country's popular culture (Taylor & Kokot, 2000). This signifies that any definition or categorization involving gifted and talented education in one country may not be the same or practical in another country. Determining a definition for giftedness and talent depends on the priority or identification criteria set by a country or a particular educational institution (Freeman, 2005). Therefore, a person who is known as a gifted and talented learner in one culture or country may not be recognized as such elsewhere.

In conformance with the abovementioned beliefs, this paper conceptualises the Islamic gifted education model, with a focus on the potential for its implementation at GENIUS Insan College (KGI). KGI is located at Universiti Sains Islam Malaysia (USIM), with its first group of students enrolling in 2015. As an Islamic gifted institution, KGI sets its goal to produce Islamic scholars who will contribute to the wellbeing of the religion, nation and ummah. In contrast to ordinary schools where the teaching staff are teachers, the teaching staff at KGI is entirely comprised of USIM lecturers (Zakaria et al., 2021a, 2021b, 2017b). Regarding the academic programme, KGI is regulated by two main entities: the Ministry of Education Malaysia (MOE) and Universiti Sains Islam Malaysia (USIM). As a Government Funded School (SBK), KGI is subject to the implementation of National Education Philosophy (NEP) and Islamic Education Philosophy (IEP) especially in curriculum development and implementation. At the same time, KGI must align its curriculum framework with the criteria of USIM's academic programme, which embraces the integration of *naqli* and *aqli* know-

ledge. Throughout its six years of operation, KGI has always been committed to improving its educational programmes and curriculum to ensure that gifted Muslim students can undergo teaching and learning content that fits their abilities.

2. Concepts of Giftedness and Talent

The developments of gifted education occur in a wide range of settings and vary across systems (VanTassel-Baska & Little, 2016; Gross et al., 2003; Renzulli, 1984). At the same time, there is no single definition of giftedness or talent. There is also no universal agreement on how to use the terms "gifted" and "talented." Some scholars use the terms interchangeably, while some others distinguish the two (Leavitt, 2017). Although it is difficult to determine gifted students, as a group, they understand ideas instantly, learn more quickly and in greater depth than their age peers, and may exhibit preferences that differ from those of their peers, use ideas and draw conclusions about seemingly unrelated concepts, and ask provocative questions (Berger, 1991).

Early gifted education scholars associated giftedness with a high intelligence quotient (IQ). Eventually, other researchers argued that giftedness is a multidimensional construct that encompasses a wide range of traits, skills, and abilities that manifest in a variety of ways (Karnes & Bean, 2014). The National Association for Gifted Children, for example, defines gifted individuals as those who have exceptional levels of aptitude (defined as an exceptional ability to reason and learn) or competence (documented performance or achievement in the top 10% or rarer) in one or more domains (Siegle & McCoach, 2010).

Islam presents the concept of giftedness from a dynamic standpoint. According to several studies conducted by Muslim scholars, the term giftedness is associated with the Arabic word *mawhiba* (Almutairi et al., 2021). The term *mawhiba* is derived from one of the names of Allah SWT, "Wahhab," which means "The Giver"—who gives and fulfils the requests of His servants (Manzur & Ibn Mukarram, 1994). The ability of a person is an advantage that the person possesses as a unique characteristic bestowed upon him or her. This unique individual characteristic could be different from one person or another because of the person's strong inclination towards a subject or skill. This concept explains that Allah SWT is the Giver of gifts or talents, as evidenced in several Qur'anic verses (The Qur'an, 2004). Children are usually born with their own innate ability even without any exclusive external influence from the parents or environment. Understanding their unique ability is another interesting area done in scientific research.

In Islamic culture, the field of caring for highly capable people is vast, and it is difficult to narrow it down to a single field or concept (Almutairi et al., 2021). When we look at the history of Islamic civilization, we see that, while there was no such thing as a "gifted centre or school", many Muslim scholars emerge with personalities and expertise that are synonymous with giftedness, such as Jabir Ibn Hayyan in Chemistry; Al-Razi and Ibn Sina in Medicine; Al-Farabi in Phi-

losophy and Logic; Ibn Rushd in Medicine and Philosophy; Al-Khawarizmi in Algebra; and Ibn Khaldun in Sociology. Thus, modern Muslim scholars have listed some of the characteristics of giftedness through an Islamic perspective. Among the characteristics of giftedness from an Islamic perspective are the ability to read, memorise, and understand the Qur'an; moral abilities, which include the ability to self-control and distinguish with good attributes; high leadership capabilities; and commitment to worship, which includes superiority in worship and adherence to religious teachings that meet the commands of Islam (Almutairi et al., 2021; Aljughaiman & Berki, 2012).

3. Characteristics of Gifted Students

Students who have been identified as gifted and talented share identical characteristics. Some scholars have described the characteristics in general terms across multiple domains, while others have focused on specific areas (Callahan, 2017; Wellisch & Brown, 2013; Johnsen, 2004; Baska, 1989). Giftedness is commonly linked to higher levels of general intellectual ability. General intellectual ability refers to one's ability to think about ideas, analyse situations, and solve problems (Mithen, 2007). Gifted and talented students with general intellectual ability tend to perform better or have the potential to perform in a variety of areas of study (Johnsen, 2004; Gross et al., 2003). Among the characteristics linked with a higher level of general intellectual ability that researchers have consistently identified among gifted and talented students are: extensive and detailed memory particularly in an area of interest; advanced communication skills and able to express ideas and feelings; ask intelligent questions; able to identify the important characteristics of new concepts or problems; learns information quickly; uses logic in arriving at common sense answers; understand abstract ideas and complex concepts; able to use analogical thinking, problem solving, or reasoning; able to find and solve difficult and unusual problems; want to learn and curious; and, understand and use various symbol system (Stephens & Karnes, 2015; Davis et al., 2013; VanTassel-Baska & Johnsen, 2007; Coleman & Cross, 2005; Gross et al., 2003).

Gifted and talented students are also creative. Sternberg and Lubart (1993) highlighted that creativity is a separate type of giftedness. They proposed that an individual interactively combines separate personal resources to enable the process of creative production. They added that intellectual processes, knowledge of a domain, intellectual styles, personality attributes, task-focused orientation, and one's environment context enable individuals to define problems, solve problems, utilize divergent thinking, think abstractly, tolerate ambiguity, take reasonable risks, and persevere in the face of obstacles. A creative individual is also referred to as the one who produces novel products or solutions within a domain that is recognized by members of the respective fields (Gardner, 2011). Gifted students who are creative are usually fluent, original, flexible, and elaborate thinkers. They have a variety of interests and broad bases of information

that enable them to link across areas and are often prepared to create quality products (Ochse et al., 1990). Renzulli (2016) and Tannenbaum (1986) also see the creativeness of individuals as a form of giftedness, as each of them has distinguished separately between the characteristics of individuals who excel in academic settings and those who produce original knowledge, materials or products.

Gifted and talented students are often characterized as the leaders of tomorrow (Stephens & Karnes, 2015; Davis et al., 2013; Coleman & Cross, 2005; Johnsen, 2004; Gross et al., 2003). They are considered to be leaders because they are innovative problem solvers, having strong communication skills, being flexible in thought and action, able to remain motivated while facing a challenge, feeling connected with peers who have similar interests and abilities, and able to motivate others. However, leadership is a quality that is rarely intentionally developed within schools today including schools that develop programs for gifted and talented students (Sternberg, 2005). Despite the number of characteristics possessed by a gifted and talented student or the intensity with which the characteristics are demonstrated, research suggests that these must be addressed in the curriculum design and learning experience for these students (Hockett, 2009; VanTassel-Baska, 2005; Gross et al., 2003; Maker & Nielson, 1996; Kaplan, 1994).

4. Principles of Gifted Curriculum

The appropriate challenge is important in designing a curriculum for the gifted and talented students as they are different from the non-gifted students (Hockett, 2009; VanTassel-Baska, 2005; Gross et al., 2003; Maker & Nielson, 1996; Kaplan, 1994). Research on gifted and talented student populations set out the need for services that challenge student thinking, provide opportunities for engaging curriculum beyond that of the core classroom, and use technology to expand student learning (Winebrenner & Brulles, 2012; VanTassel-Baska, 2010). Gifted students should be provided with curriculum opportunities that allow them to attain optimal levels of learning (Stephens & Karnes, 2015; Gross et al., 2003). An educational system that does not provide challenges, sets up a situation where these students are at risk of not fulfilling their potential and hence do not achieve at levels they would otherwise be capable of reaching (Davidson, 2004). VanTassel-Baska (2005) states that to maximise the best impact, curriculum experience for gifted and talented students should be carefully planned, written, implemented and evaluated. The following discussion outlines some key principles for constructing a gifted curriculum.

Discipline-based and integrative. Curriculum for gifted learners employs a conceptual approach to explore or organize content that is discipline-based and integrative (Renzulli & Reis, 2014; Tomlinson & Moon, 2014; Hockett, 2009; June Maker & Shiever, 2005). Curriculum with a discipline-based foundation employs the skills, principles, ideas, theories and values most essential to a field of study to illustrate the essence of the discipline itself (Purcell & Eckert, 2006).

The frame of the discipline itself illuminates how the curriculum is structured (VanTassel-Baska, 1998). Curriculum for gifted learners is also integrative where it concentrates on the relationships between bodies of knowledge and focuses on cross-disciplinary concepts. As a result, it exposes students to multiple approaches and domains of inquiry; and understand the discipline's depth and complexity (Tomlinson, 2014; VanTassel-Baska, 2010).

Modification through abstraction, depth, breadth and complexity. Since gifted learners are presumed to be more cognitively advanced than their peers, many gifted education curriculum experts conclude that the general education curriculum is not suitable to accommodate the needs of the students. Therefore, modifications through abstraction, depth, breadth, and complexity are necessary (Stephens & Karnes, 2015; Hockett, 2009). Abstraction refers to engaging students with content, process, and products that are less familiar to students' experiences (Maker & Nielson, 1996). Abstraction allows students to focus on the implications and extensions of ideas rather than on fixed facts or explanations (Maker & Nielson, 1996). Modifying curriculum with more breadth may refer to exposing students to a wide variety within or across a content area or extending the basic curriculum (Renzulli & Reis, 2014; Kaplan, 2005). Modifying content in depth also involves students engaging an area of special interest at a high level (VanTassel-Baska, 1989), studying significant issues related to a topic (Baska, 1989; Feldhusen et al., 1985), or allocating more time on learning a topic (Kaplan, 1994). Building a complex curriculum involves the development of detailed and more challenging content; the integration of concepts and knowledge from multiple disciplines; the need for high-level thinking processes; and incorporating the various perspectives, theories, principles, and concepts used by a professional in a particular field (Rogers, 2002; Maker & Nielson, 1996; Kaplan, 1994).

Use of process and materials as used by experts. Gifted students, compared to their peers, are more prepared at their age to do the work equivalent to expert practices (Stephens & Karnes, 2015; Hockett, 2009). Gifted students should be involved with inquiry-based procedures such as evaluating the legitimacy of a resource, conducting follow-up studies, and learning how to master other relevant skills according to current demands (VanTassel-Baska & Little, 2016; Renzulli & Reis 2014; Purcell et al., 2002). It is also important to integrate high-level thinking skills that are already integral to expert practices into the gifted curriculum. These thinking skills include thinking critically, making decisions, asking questions, developing new ideas, defending opinions, debating different points of view, transferring information, and solving problems (Renzulli & Reis, 2014; Maker & Nielson, 1996; Kaplan, 1994). All these thinking skills should be content-based and serve as a guide toward a final goal, rather than being taught separately (Shore & Delcourt, 1996). Regarding materials, gifted students need to be exposed to detailed, diverse, more abstract materials, and require high level reading or processing skills. However, in most situations, students need to be

given clear guidance and instructions on the procedure for using the materials (Tomlinson & Moon, 2014).

Emphasis on realistic problems, products, and performances. Gifted education experts have emphasized the importance of providing a learning experience based on issues or problems that are true and relevant to their students' lives, cultures, or perceptions, whereby students are able to evaluate and recommend solutions to specific problems (Purcell & Eckert, 2006; Purcell et al., 2002; Rogers, 2002; Maker & Nielson, 1996). The problem-solving process needs to be followed by a genuine product that is directed at the real user, or at least the product meets the basis of the actual discipline (Renzulli & Reis, 2014; Renzulli, 2011; Purcell & Eckert, 2006; Shore & Delcourt, 1996). At a higher level, in problem solving, product development and performance, gifted students can be driven to produce something transformational, meaning they take the knowledge they have learned and see and apply it from other perspectives and eventually work to create something new (Tomlinson & Moon, 2014; Purcell & Eckert, 2006; Rogers, 2002; Passow, 1982).

Flexibility based on interests, adjustments, and variety. While there are many models that provide specific guidance on creating a flexible gifted curriculum, generally gifted education experts see that a flexible curriculum can be achieved through three processes: based on student interest, adjustment for pacing, and variety. The first involves students choosing their own learning goals (Tomlinson & Moon, 2014; Rogers, 2002). Therefore, assignments should be open-ended with no right or wrong answers (Tomlinson, 2014; Kaplan, 2005; VanTassel-Baska, 2005). The second involves adjusting the pace of learning. This includes speeding up the learning process by enabling students to quickly learn something or slowing down the learning process so that the students are more immersed in the information (Tomlinson, 2001; Maker & Nielson, 1996; Ward, 1980). The third is to apply variety in the curriculum structure. This might include variety in content and form, instructional materials, and approaches, learning tasks or activities, skills, or learning opportunities (Purcell & Eckert, 2006; June Maker & Shiever, 2005).

5. Islamic Gifted Education Model

Figure 1 shows the key elements that are central to the formation and implementation of the Islamic Gifted Curriculum Model (IGCM) The gifted curriculum is embraced by four main pillars: National Education Philosophy (NEP), Islamic Education Philosophy (IEP), Gifted Education (GE), and The Integration of Naqli and Aqli knowledge (INAQ). These four should act as definers to the formation and expansion of the content of the gifted Islamic curriculum (Zakaria et al., 2021a, 2021b, 2017b). In principle, the use of each of these elements in the development of a gifted Islamic curriculum is not necessarily in sequence; rather, it is usable comprehensively and can be initiated from any direction deemed appropriate. The following discussion elaborates on the details of each element.
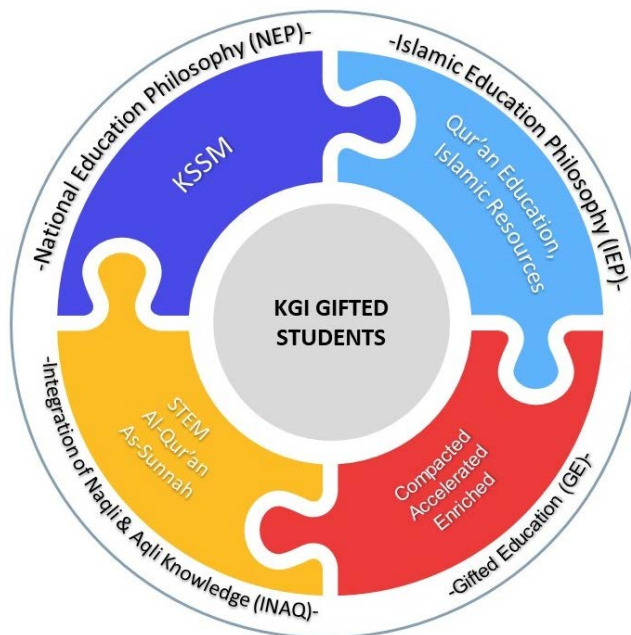
Figure 1. Framework of islamic gifted education model (IGCM).

National Education Philosophy (NEP)

KGI is required to adhere to the National Education Philosophy (NEP) as the basis for the formation of the structure and implementation of its curriculum even though it is classified as a gifted school (Ministry of Education Malaysia, 2001). The NEP which was officially gazetted in 1988 and revised in 1996 states:

Education in Malaysia is an ongoing effort towards further developing the potential of individuals in a holistic and integrated manner, so as to produce individuals who are intellectually, spiritually, emotionally, and physically balanced and harmonious, based on a firm belief in and devotion to God. Such an effort is designed to produce Malaysian citizens who are knowledgeable and competent, who possess high moral standards, and who are responsible and capable of achieving high levels of personal well-being as well as being able to contribute to the harmony and betterment of the family, the society, and the nation at large. (Education Act 1996)

The NEP serves to meet the needs of Malaysians, which is based on the National Principles (Rukun Negara) towards achieving unity and a progressive society (Ministry of Education Malaysia, 2001). In developing and implementing a curriculum for a school, including KGI, NEP serves to: 1) facilitate in the expansion and improvement of education by providing guidance and direction; 2) as a fundamental policy and consideration in determining national educational goals; 3) As a resource for educators to better understand Malaysia's educational system; 4) as a guide for educators to carry out educational tasks; 5) As the foundation for curriculum design, teaching materials, and learning and teaching strategies; and, 6) As a controller to any activity that seeks to change educational policy while avoiding misunderstandings or doubts about curriculum implementa-

tion (Sang, 2008; Meng, 1996). To ensure that the gifted curriculum does not deviate from the Malaysian government's main educational goals, all the elements mentioned above must be fulfilled in the context of developing the curriculum at KGI. This is reflected in the Malaysia Education Blueprint 2013-2025, which states that gifted education and curriculum development are equally important to the government's plan to transform Malaysia's diverse educational institutions (Ministry of Education Malaysia 2013).

Thus, to comply with the NEP principles, the gifted curriculum at KGI is designed and placed on the foundation of the Malaysian National Curriculum i.e the Secondary School Standard Curriculum or *Kurikulum Standard Sekolah Menengah* (KSSM), which was launched in 2017 (Zakaria et al., 2021a, 2021b, 2017b). The National Curriculum is an educational programme that includes curriculum and co-curricular activities that cover all knowledge, skills, norms, values, cultural elements, and beliefs to assist a student in developing fully physically, spiritually, mentally, and emotionally, as well as instilling and enhancing desired moral values and imparting knowledge (Kementerian Pendidikan Malaysia, 1997). Compliance with KSSM means strictly following the implementation of the basic structure of the national curriculum such as offering and teaching compulsory subjects, the implementation of valid and permissible co-curricular activities, as well as the official examination registration processes set by the ministry.

Islamic Education Philosophy (IEP)

The development and implementation of this gifted curriculum is also positioned within the framework of the Islamic Education Philosophy (IEP) which states:

> Islamic education is a continuous effort to impart knowledge, skills, and appreciation of Islam based on the Qur'an and Al-Sunnah to form attitudes, skills, personality, and view on life as a servant of God with a responsibility to develop oneself, society, the environment, and the nation in order to achieve good in this world and eternal well-being in the hereafter.

The IEP was created in tandem with the NEP, which aims to develop a person who believes in God and follows his or her religious teachings. By making IEP as the basis for curriculum development, KGI's gifted curriculum is expected to include in particular all the important elements related to the Islamic education framework. Based on IEP, knowledge is integral or holistic which is framed with the concept of belief in the Oneness of Allah SWT. There are some key concepts that can be dynamically developed through this IEP that should serve as the foundation for the development of the Islamic gifted curriculum. The concept of true knowledge is clearly displayed in the IEP, and it should serve as a guide for any institution planning to develop an educational programme or curriculum (Zakaria et al., 2021a, 2021b, 2017b).

True knowledge, according to the Qur'an and Al-Sunnah, is more than just data and information. True knowledge transforms people and brings them into

harmony with the universe by linking them to the source and purpose of their existence (Malik, 2016). It is evident from the first revelation to Prophet Muhammad PBUH that Islam has positioned a high value on knowledge:

Read in the name of your Lord who created. Created man from a clinging substance. Read, and your Lord is the most Generous. Who taught by the pen. Taught man that which he knew not. (The Qur'an, 2004)

Thus, the Qur'an and Sunnah are made the main sources of the gifted Islamic curriculum, serving as a platform for the process of diversification and enrichment of curriculum content.

Gifted Education (GE)

Gifted curriculum should always be flexible for the modification process. Although KGI needs to strictly adhere to the basic structure of KSSM, as stated above, there is still room for KGI to operate and implement its gifted curriculum through a process of modification (Zakaria et al., 2021a). This process needs to be carried out continuously to ensure that the gifted students receive educational experiences that suit their needs (Zakaria et al., 2021b; Bakar & Zakaria, 2018; VanTassel-Baska, 1989). In principle, a gifted curriculum is a basic curriculum that has been modified to meet the gifted student's needs (Tomlinson, 2014). This model suggests that curriculum modification be implemented through three main processes: curriculum compacting, acceleration and enrichment.

A curriculum compacting technique allows teachers to make curriculum adjustments for students who have already mastered the material to be learned by substituting new content, enrichment options, or other activities for the material they already know (Renzulli & Reis, 2014). The teacher removes previously mastered material, expanding the curriculum's challenge level and making room for enrichment, self-paced, or acceleration. Through this strategy, gifted students are given the opportunity to focus on activities that match their abilities because if they are left with repetitive learning and content that they already know, it will lead to boredom and underachievement (Allenback, 1995). Curriculum compacting enables gifted students to complete curriculum requirements at a faster pace. Students can use the time saved to engage in educational activities that will help them improve their strengths and abilities or strengthen their weaknesses (Zakaria et al., 2021a).

This model also emphasizes the importance of acceleration. Acceleration involves moving through academic subjects and content more quickly, allowing students to skip grades and instructions to learn at a level that best suits their academic potential (Zakaria et al., 2021b; Davis et al., 2013). Acceleration has many scopes and strategies that must be tailored to the needs of a gifted institution, as some research has found both benefits and drawbacks to its implementation (Rambo & McCoach, 2012). The following are some examples of acceleration processes (Colangelo et al., 2004) that could be considered for implementation through this curriculum model:

1) Grade-Skipping: A student is considered to have grade skipped if he or she

is given a grade-level placement ahead of chronological-age peers. Grade-skipping can be implemented either at the beginning of school or throughout the school session.

2) Subject-Matter Acceleration/Partial Acceleration: This process enables students to spend a part of the day in classes with older peers (or with materials from higher grade assignments) in one or more subject areas. It can also be accomplished by physically moving the student to a higher-level class for instruction. Subject-matter acceleration can also be achieved outside of the regular instructional schedule (e.g., school holidays or after school) or by using higher-level instructional activities on a continuous progress basis without abandoning the placement with chronological-age peers.

3) Mentoring: A student is paired with a mentor or expert tutor who provides comprehensive or more accelerated instruction pacing. This process is ideal for gifted schools like KGI because it is a gifted school that operates in a university setting with many lecturers from various faculties who can mentor gifted students in specific areas of expertise (Zakaria et al., 2021a, 2021b, 2017b).

The third process related to curriculum modification is through enrichment. Enrichment programmes are alterations and additions to regular students' curricula in order to meet the needs of gifted students in the cognitive, affective, creative, and psychomotor fields (VanTassel-Baska & Brown, 2007). In comparison to acceleration, the enrichment process is typically offered to gifted students without them skipping grade(s), and thus may pose fewer challenges for school administration than acceleration (Wu, 2013). The enrichment process can be implemented through three levels: 1) Exploring activities that aimed at providing suitable ecosystem for gifted students to deal with school subjects that interest them; 2) guided activities geared toward a specific skill, which include techniques and strategies aimed at developing thinking processes; and, 3) problem solving that include research activities and art and literary activities (Gubbins, 2010).

Integration of Naqli and Aqli Knowledge (INAQ)

As mentioned earlier, KGI is subject to the USIM agenda in integrating *naqli* and *aqli* knowledge (INAQ). INAQ refers to the integration of knowledge derived from revelation and knowledge derived from human reasoning based on the Islamic Worldview, with the goal of developing a person who is knowledgeable, virtuous, and competent of leadership (USIM, 2018; Zakaria et al., 2021a, 2021b). The implementation of INAQ is closely related to the IEP discussion above; however, the INAQ discussion in this section focuses on how to place it in the practical context of curriculum content development. In the context of curriculum development and implementation, integrating *naqli* and *aqli* knowledge means developing new knowledge based on sources and methodologies that adhere to the framework of Islamic teachings (USIM, 2018). The application of INAQ elements in this gifted curriculum can be organized in four main levels namely *Mustawa al-Ta'sil, Mustawa al-Muqaranah, Mustawa al-Takyif,* and

Mustawa al-Takamul (USIM, 2018).

The first level, *Mustawa al-Ta'sil*, refers to the process of referring directly to the main sources of Islamic teachings, particularly the Qur'an and hadith. At this stage, a concept or theory in *aqli* knowledge will be directly linked to the main source, either the Qur'an or *hadith*, or both. At this stage, the linking process must be carefully executed so that it can serve as a platform for knowledge exploration to the next level.

The second level, *Mustawa al-Muqaranah*, refers to the process of comparing and contrasting the approaches of *naqli* and *aqli* knowledge. In addition, this process necessitates a thorough understanding, analysis, and investigation of the concept, epistemology, and paradigm of naqli and aqli knowledge, as well as its implications for subsequent knowledge production.

The third level, *Mustawa al-Takyif*, refers to the process of selecting, screening, evaluating, adapting, and applying any principles, values, and frameworks of knowledge that do not contradict Islamic teachings. The last level, *Mustawa al-Takamul*, refers to the process by which all the processes in the previous three levels are integrated to produce a holistic discipline of knowledge through the curriculum offered.

6. Research Method

For this topic, the researchers had employed a systematic review of past literature in two main research areas—gifted and talented education, and specialised Islamic education. The history, process and experiences of each education areas of gifted education and Islamic education traditions and practices were analysed. While there are many studies conducted in the field of gifted and talented education, the Islamic education spectrum does not have any specific field of gifted education since it holds a different idea and concept of giftedness in education. Furthermore, the mainstream gifted education theories generally focus on intelligence and talent, the Islamic concept of excellent individuals cover certain skills and abilities in memorising and understanding the main resources in Islam such as the Al-Quran, Sunnah and established books of references comprising wide areas of the religion and its sciences. The review had identified the core concepts and frameworks in both areas of education and highlighted the fundamental ideas of specialised form of education afforded to the privileged individuals of the society.

The topic had received thorough analysis over the past decades and due to its positive influence, the gifted education movement had attracted many other countries who share the same belief that gifted individuals could contribute significantly to the progress of the nation if they are afforded special services and assistance in a specially developed education programme. The research over the past 50 years had been the main source of literature in understanding all the main concepts and ideas that had been developed by the early scholars in gifted education. As mentioned in the early part of the paper, a significant number of

studies on gifted and talented programmes were done in the United States. For this paper, the guideline search had been on understanding the core elements introduced in the important aspects of the gifted individuals and the programmes developed to nurture their gift and talent.

7. Research Findings

This paper analysed the main theories of gifted and talented education in the western world since the early movement of special educational programme for the professionally identified gifted individuals. The early birth of the gifted education started in the field of psychology as it considered the traits and abilities of the group of individuals who displayed high inclination towards certain areas or subjects they study as compared to the ordinary students. As expected, there were many issues being raised on the definition of gifted and talented. In short, giftedness cascades into one or more areas in human abilities and competences: intellectual, academic, creative, artistic and leadership. Basically, gifted children do not fit any standard profile, as ironically, they might exhibit variety of learning disabilities, socioemotional issues or even academic underachievement. Many debates had weighed in the logical reasons for supporting such a delicate group of children who might not even able to fulfil their expected potential. Still, this group of unique individuals possess qualities that go beyond a normal person's ability and they could be developed into successful scientists or professionals in the future.

Among other aspects of the early gifted education movement was on the identification process, programme development, and other forms of services needed to properly nurture and guide the gifted children in fulfilling their true potentials and abilities. The gifted education programme is always associated with human intelligence and the challenge to prepare and implement a carefully developed programme that caters their individual strengths and inclination. Yet, there are many other aspects of the programme that would determine its successful implementation. Psychological, socioemotional support in the form of counselling, for instance, would ensure their social well-being in a highly competitive environment (Bakar & Brody, 2021; Bakar & Zakaria, 2018).

On contrary, the Islamic education concept and ideas in the local gifted education sphere were largely influenced by the traditional school of thoughts prescribed in a typical Islamic learning environment (Zakaria et al., 2021a, 2021b). The philosophical belief behind the Islamic gifted education programme implemented in KGI is the integration of Naqli and Aqli Knowledge in every aspect of the education programme itself (Zakaria et al., 2017a, 2017b). From the curriculum framework, syllabus design, the teaching and learning process, together with the elements of activities, enrichment, and assessment, the INAQ approach is the main fulcrum that ties all the elements of Islamic gifted education model. KGI is the manifestation of the Islamic thoughts and beliefs that gifted education would enhance the sustainability of a nation and benefit the ummah (society) as a whole with the contribution from the group of individuals identified as gifted Muslims.

8. Conclusion

The development and review of a gifted curriculum are essential and must be implemented on a regular basis following the needs, goals and objectives of a gifted programme. Since the giftedness perspective is culturally specific, the Islamic gifted curriculum must always be tailored to the needs of Muslim gifted students. Nonetheless, best practise s in gifted education in other countries or institutions should not go unnoticed. We must also consider taking and conform some of the appropriate elements from well-known gifted models to ensure that we do not deviate from the true norms of gifted education. For this gifted Islamic curriculum, for future research, a researcher needs to deepen and detail the method of implementation or evaluation of its effectiveness to gifted Muslim students.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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