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Islamic Religious Education Strategy Based on Multiple Intelligences

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Abstract

This study examines the implementation of Multiple Intelligences (MI)-based strategies in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) at MTs Al-Ittihadiyah Pekanbaru, focusing on how these strategies address student heterogeneity in learning abilities, styles, and motivations. Using a qualitative case study approach, data were collected through observations, interviews, and documentation to explore the planning, implementation, and evaluation of MI-based PAI learning. The findings reveal that MI-oriented strategies enhance student engagement and comprehension by aligning instructional activities with diverse intelligence profiles, including linguistic, logical, interpersonal, kinesthetic, and visual-spatial strengths. The study also highlights the importance of teacher competence, technology integration, and contextualized curriculum design in supporting effective MI implementation. Despite challenges such as limited facilities and partial teacher readiness, the use of MI-based strategies contributes positively to both cognitive and affective learning outcomes. The study concludes that MI-based pedagogy offers a promising and relevant approach to improving the quality of Islamic education in contemporary madrasah settings and recommends stronger institutional support and ongoing professional development for educators.

Introduction

Islamic Religious Education (PAI) in Indonesian madrasahs has undergone significant change as there has been a greater awareness of student heterogeneity and the related need to allow a learning approach which responds to individual disparity. Madrasah Tsanawiyahracts (MTs) are usually characterised by classrooms filled with learners of diverse backgrounds, with different learning styles and cognitive profiles, and hence require instructional approaches that are able to accommodate the differences in the levels of readiness. Current empirical literature highlights this issue: as Marzuki et al. (2025) show, instruction could be more conceptually effective in the context of contextualization, i.e. the Nazam Aceh approach, by matching the instruction with the cultural and cognitive diversity of PAI classes. Similarly, models of cooperative learning, such as Group Investigation, have been determined effective in supporting the difference in student skills, as they promote collaboration and learner facilitated learning (Amanah et al., 2024; Nurhalimah & Bakti, 2025; Silva et al., 2023; Gillies, 2023; Yang et al., 2023; Xu et al., 2023; Cañabate et al., 2021). These results confirm that PAI training among MTs involves adaptive instructional models which consider and develop on the strengths of the individual learners.

In this changing realm of education, the Multiple Intelligences (MI) theory of Howard Gardner can be seen as one of the most interesting pedagogical approaches in the reformation of the traditional education paradigm, which upheld a rather limited view of intelligence. The criticism of the IQ-based ideas by Gardner is based on the assumption that the human cognitive ability is multidimensional and that it consists of at least eight to nine different intelligences

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(Rinn, 2024; Hein et al., 2025; Sternberg, 2003). Every learner has a particular combination of linguistic, logical-mathematical, spatial, kinesthetic, musical, interpersonal, intrapersonal, naturalist, and existential abilities (Chikezie, 2024; Turcan-Baltat, & Bîrsan, 2025). This broadened understanding questions the monolithic pedagogical use of systems and asks educators to create learning spaces that are responsive to these different cognitive systems. Through the adoption of MI theory in the classroom praxis, the teachers will be able to create more inclusive, differentiated, and meaningful learning environments, which is a strategy that closely corresponds with the modern educational mandates. The applicability of MI has also gained momentum because multimodal experiences of learning delivered via educational technologies like interactive e-books, or AI-based learning platforms, can be personalized according to the different intelligence levels among students (Susanyah et al., 2025; Ziaurrahman et al., 2024; Yamijala et al., 2025; Duarte et al., 2025).

The introduction of MI in the PAI education is especially important during the age of the modern world where students not only have to master the knowledge of the religions but also acquire the skills necessary to the twenty-first century. Modern learning paradigms emphasize the need to think critically, creatively, solve problems in a collaborative manner, and be digitally literate this is precisely what MI-based teaching can best develop (Ignjatović, 2017). As an example, inquiry-based learning models, including Project Citizen, and problem-based learning have shown to empower the critical thinking and social interactions of students, because of asking them to apply the concepts of religion to real-life situations (Agustina et al., 2025; Alfiyanto et al., 2024; Fajri et al., 2021; Mahendra et al., 2024; Sanjiartha et al., 2024). Such strategies are in line with the pillars of learning of UNESCO in learning to know, learning to do, learning to live together, learning to be and lifelong learning, that is based on the holistic development of a human being. In turn, MI-related approaches do not only expand the sphere of cognition, but assist with the development of morals, social, and spiritual, which is why they are specifically applicable in the context of PAI teaching.

In spite of strong theoretical foundations and empirical research findings behind the concept of multiple intelligences (MI)-based teaching, many schools have still been struggling to apply the concept to the classroom situation. Teachers often face challenges with the choice of proper MI-consistent pedagogical strategies, development of variousiated tasks, and measurement of the complex manifestations of intelligence. According to Bobbi DePorter, student failure can not be attributed to lack of intelligence but rather to other teaching methods that do not correspond with individual learning styles thus making a need to have competence among teachers and continuous professional growth. Based on the literature review of Ghazali et al. (2025) and Suprima et al. (2023), the literature can assume knowledgeable PAI teachers as essential to the creation of active learning conditions that are sensitive to the needs of different students. Qolbiyah and Purnamanita (2022) also state that such a subtle perception of the learner traits is vital to help each student achieve his and her full potential. Without the preparedness of such educators, even the best planned curricular frameworks have meager chances of attaining the best learning results.

These issues have made the need to innovate on PAI learning strategies an urgent need, especially in institutions like the MTs Al-Ittihadiyah Pekanbaru, which uses MI not as a method of instruction, but rather as a philosophy of holistic education. Intensive student engagement and better understanding in PAI contexts have been empirically associated with the integration of digital learning platforms, interactive media, and technology-enhanced instructional environments (Alfiyanto et al., 2024; Khoriyah & Muhid, 2022; Sulistiawati & Abidin, 2024). Ayatillah et al. (2024) and Ilmiyah et al. (2022) studies highlight the importance of contextual-based and participatory curriculum frameworks that relate the Islamic teachings to the everyday

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lives of students. This integration of MI theory and technological innovation with contextual learning helps to provide a more relevant, relatable, and meaningful PAI learning experience, which makes students prepared to operate in an increasingly a complicated global setting.

MTs Al-Ittihadiyah Pekanbaru is an interesting study of MI application in Indonesian Islamic education. The founding vision of the institution glorifies the fitrah, the inherent potential and the individual developmental pathway of every learner as being a gift of the divine. The school aims to simultaneously develop both academic and moral excellence through a systematic organization of curriculum, classroom practices and assessment systems based on the principles of MI. This is an integrative pedagogical process that aims to provide learners with the capacity to not only acquire cognitive skills but also emotional maturity, spiritual integrity, and social accountability qualities, which are very critical in surviving the globalized communities as well as living within the Islamic ethical system. The history of student performances in the school as well as the fact that the graduates were successfully placed in elite secondary schools speaks of the transformational effects of MI-based PAI education (Dziwornu, 2023).

It is against this scenario that the current study investigates MI-based PAI strategies at the MTs Al-Ittihadiyah Pekanbaru using four main research objectives: (1) to identify the exact strategies used; (2) to gauge how the MIs principles are integrated into the PAI teaching; (3) to determine the outcomes of the learning process; and (4) to determine the facilitating and hindering factors of the implementation process. By meeting these aims, the research will aim to make its contribution to the body of literature on differentiated Islamic education both theoretically and practically. Ideally, it supports the scientific study of MI as a religious pedagogical framework; practically, it provides concrete ideas and suggestions that can be applied though the work of teacher, school, and policymakers, who want to maximize the use of PAI learning in the classroom settings of various instructions. Finally, this study hopes to strengthen the principles of the Islamic education by encouraging individualized, interactive and comprehensive learning strategies.

Methods

This research paper is entitled I Islamic Religious Education (PAI) Learning Strategies on Multiple Intelligences in Madrasah Tsanawiyah Al-Ittidaiyah Pekanbaru. The study has qualitative descriptive research methodology. The selected methodology allows exploring the social realities of PAI teaching in depth, capturing natural settings of the institution as the major source of empirical evidence, and focusing on processual dynamics in lieu of isolated outcomes. Under such a qualitative design, the case-study design is applied where the limited system of the study, i.e., planning, implementation, and evaluation of MI-based PAI teaching at Mt Al-Ittidaiyah during the time span of about October 2024 until January 2025 supports the investigation. The case constraints of time and activity direct the investigation of the strategies, processes, and storytelling of the life of the key stakeholders in the context of locating the school building in the PHR Lembah Damai Rumbai complex, which has partially implemented the Multiple Intelligences framework and has become a local education institution of significance.

The information on this research will be a piece of data referring to the PAI learning strategies based on Multiple Intelligences that was collected through a primary and secondary source. Primary data are produced based on the use of passive participant observation, in depth and informal interviews, and field notes. The researcher monitors the activities in school and PAI classroom without being part of the teaching process which results in them focusing on teachers, learners, pedagogical approaches, techniques, media and learning facilities used in

ISSN 2721-0979 (Print), ISSN 2721-1258 (Online)

teaching PAI based on MI. Interviews are carried out in unstructured or semi-structured format with the main figures involved being principal, vice-principal in charge of curriculum, PAI teachers and students hence providing vivid descriptions of the planning, implementation and evaluation of learning in PAI using Multiple Intelligences. The secondary data will be gathered by documents, such as curriculum documents, syllabi, lesson plans, learning devices, official reports, archival records, photographs, and other written data that will supplement and validate the primary data.

The reliability and rigour of the information are guaranteed by the various trustworthiness strategies and a methodical analysis process. The repeated visits to the field to corroborate, refine and elaborate the data is a prolonged interaction and consistent observation. Triangulation of methods and sources is achieved through comparison between the observational data and interview data and documentary data and comparing information between various informants. The analysis of data will be performed in accordance with the interactive model suggested by Miles, Huberman, and Saldaana and includes a series of continuous loops of data collection, condensation (selecting, focusing, simplifying and abstracting field notes, interview transcripts, and documents) display (sorting information into descriptive narratives, matrices, and thematic patterns) and conclusion-drawing/verification. By this process of iteration, the patterns with regards to MI based PAI learning strategies, its result, the enabling factors, and the inhibiting factors are known, interpreted, and generalized into credible conclusions.

Results and Discussion

Context of the Study and Focus of the Findings

The current study was conducted at the MTs Al-Ittihadiyah Rumbai Pekanbaru during a span of about three months such that the study involved the students taking classes IXA and IXB under the Islamic Religious Education (PAI) syllabus. The main aim of the research was to investigate the conceptualization and implementation of learning strategies of PAI basing on Multiple Intelligences (MI) in this learning institution. The key research question used to lead the investigation was as follows: How are MI-based PAI learning strategies applied at the MTs Al-Ittihadiyah Rumbai Pekanbaru? This general question was then broken down into a few sub-questions; (1) How is MI-based PAI learning integrated, and what are the outcome learning? (2) How are MI-based lesson plans (RPP) developed? (3) What are strategies in the PAI learning based on MI? How are these strategies planned, organized, implemented and evaluated? (4) What facilitators and barriers affect MI based PAI learning? and (5) How teachers, parents and students view MI based learning at MTs Al-Ittihadiyah? The results in this paper are organized as per these areas of analysis.

Institutional Rationale for Implementing MI-Based PAI

Interviews with the principal revealed the philosophical and pedagogical rationale behind adopting MI-based learning at MTs Al-Ittihadiyah. The principal emphasized that the starting point was the awareness that every learner has unique potentials and learning styles:

> *"The implementation of Multiple Intelligences-based learning in this MTs is driven by the awareness that each student has different potentials and learning styles. Gardner states that intelligence is not only limited to logical-mathematical and linguistic abilities, but also includes kinesthetic, musical, interpersonal, intrapersonal, visual-spatial, naturalistic, and existential intelligences. In our MTs, we see this diversity clearly: some students excel in memorizing the Qur'an, others in arts, sports, or social*

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skills. Therefore, learning that only focuses on cognitive aspects is not sufficient to accommodate all of their potentials."

The principal has also explained that traditional education has long been based on the historical precedent of giving disproportionate attention to the acquisition of good input in order to create good output hence failing to nurture the intelligence of all children even those who may not be academic powerhouses initially. That is why, the vision of the MTs Al-Ittihadiyah is based on the idea that every child is gifted by Allah with the individual and versatile fitrah-it has faith, talents, ability to learn and development potential. On this basis, the school has a conscious decision of taking students with heterogeneous background and positioning itself as a service institution dedicated to the facilitation of the involvement of all parent and learners.

Regarding learning services, the institution specifically attempts to respect and develop the potential of every learner by offering a variety of programs and policies that are aimed at developing and enhancing life skills that are needed in modern world. The redefinition of academic success is the key aspect of this paradigm shift; the school is against an assessment system based on the scores on cognitive tests only in such subjects as mathematics and English. It instead recognizes the affective and psychomotor domains and considers narrow cognitive measurement unfair and maybe even stigmatizing.

In response to perceived loss of learning and inequities in the school, a gradually shifting paradigm has been initiated, whereby the school has moved out of a competitive and single-intelligence foundation to an inclusive and collaborative model based on MI principles and ethos of inclusive education. In this model, every of the intelligence categories serves as an object of development, and a marker in learning assessment. In line with this, it is hoped that more collaborative and less stress-producing models of learning are encouraged and students are urged to value each other in their unique strengths instead of compete on the same academic parameter.

Integration of MI in PAI Content and Lesson Planning

From the perspective of PAI teachers, MI-based learning is considered intrinsically compatible with the aims of Islamic Religious Education. One PAI teacher highlighted the theological grounding of this approach:

"As an Islamic Religious Education teacher, I strongly support the implementation of MI-based learning in PAI. This concept is very relevant because in Islam itself, human beings are created with diverse potentials. Allah mentions in QS. Al-Hujurat:13 that humans are created different so that they may know and understand one another. Thus, the MI approach is one way to respect and optimize these potentials."

The normative goals of PAI, which are the development of faith, piety, and noble character are aligned with the empirical goals of the learning process based on multiple intelligences (MI) which aims at producing imaginative, innovative, critically reflective, and problem solving learners. This synergy has been applied at the MTs Al-Ittihadiyah through activities like Qur-based learning where Quran values and narratives are systemically combined with the instruction activities that promote various intelligences. Prophet Muhammad is assigned the role of the main model: a religious leader who is both a critic, creative, innovative, and solution-based when handling social problems.

Curriculum wise, the vice principal in charge of curriculum implementation explained that the curriculum still uses the national syllabus as promulgated by the ministry of religious affairs (Kemenag). However, teachers are given the freedom of authority to convert this syllabus into MI-related lesson plans (RPP):

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> *"In principle, MI-based learning suggests developing our own syllabus according to students' characteristics. In reality, we still use the official syllabus from Kemenag. However, in the teaching and strategy development process, each teacher is free to adapt strategies based on students' intelligence profiles."*

Lesson plans based on MI still maintain the general structure of the traditional RPP but incorporate unique characteristics in the general design of the instruction. An example of a lesson plan based on MI using PAI includes the following elements: (1) Alpha zone (a focusing stage) in the initial task, including ice-breakers, involving interest-focusing stories, or brief energisers to help students enter a focused, relaxed thinking stage; (2) Exploratory core, during which the teachers apply a variety of MI-sensitive tools (discussion, problem solving, role-play, and projects) to serve different intelligence profiles; and (3) Confirmation, in which the instructors implement oral and written tests of the learning to make sure students were

The theme of Islam as Rahmatan lil al Alamin is an example of a lesson plan that addresses logical-mathematical, interpersonal, and intrapersonal intelligences. The delivery of the content is mediated by discussion (interpersonal), problem-solving tasks (logical-mathematical), and knowing the figure tasks (intrapersonal). The general instructional plan embraces the teaching method of inquiry based learning in a quantum model of teaching and the supporting media include historical films, modular materials, and bibliography material about the Islamic civilisation and the life of the Prophet. The routine development of such lesson plans serves various purposes: it provides a clear teaching instruction, organizes pedagogical patterns, makes the process of dissemination of material easier, provides a more systematic assessment of the results of learning, and teaches a unified, student-centred learning process.

Such lesson planning routine serves a number of purposes: to offer a teaching guide, to organize teaching patterns, to deliver the material, to allow that the learning outcomes are analyzed more systematically, and to make the learning process much more coherent and student-centered.

Organization and Classroom Implementation of MI-Based PAI

In terms of instructional organization, the school makes extensive use of the Multiple Intelligences Research (MIR) test. MIR results are used by the school leadership and the student affairs division to map students' dominant intelligences and learning styles, which then guide the composition of classes and teaching patterns. Teachers also consult MIR data when designing their lesson plans, strategies, and authentic assessments.

The PAI teacher explained that curriculum coordinators continually remind teachers to refine their planning so that classroom processes support students' diverse intelligences:

> *"In MI-based PAI learning, we are constantly reminded by the vice principal for curriculum to keep improving and give our best to students. I am fully aware that when I plan the learning process carefully, teaching becomes more effective and developing students' intelligences becomes easier."*

Observations in the classrooms showed that the instructional endeavours in MI-based PAI attempts to create student-centred classroom set-ups. Teachers embrace multi-strategy teaching with special emphasis on inquiry-based and contextual pedagogy, all of them within quantum teaching framework. As a result, students have the active, dialogic, and multisensory learning experiences. At the same time, the strategy burdens the creativeness and innovativeness of teachers in the creation of active and differentiated assignments. Despite the fact that this promotes professional growth and the quality of instruction, teachers claimed that there is a

ISSN 2721-0979 (Print), ISSN 2721-1258 (Online)

need to ensure that they receive proper welfare and institutional support according to their workload.

MI-based learning in PAI is undertaken under the guidance of various guiding principles: 1) Active learning, in which students are engaged in aspects of cognition, emotion, and their physical aspects; 2) Constructive learning, where students build knowledge based on the previous experiences and ideas; 3) Collaborative learning, where students learn through working as a team and interacting with each other; 4) Enthusiastic learning, where students learn through engaging and meaningful activities; 5) Dialogic learning, where students anticipate the importance of lesson content and; 6) Multisens These principles are operationalised through explicit MI-based instruction strategies some of which are outlined using representative rubrics that are given later.

Table 1. Sermon Note Sheet

Sermon Note Sheet
Student's Name
Sermon Theme
Main Ideas of the Sermon
Points That Are Still Unclear
Interesting Points
Points That Still Need Further Explanation

Table 2. Rubric for Sermon Method (Linguistic Intelligence)

Criterion	**Weight**	**3 (Very Good)**	**2 (Good)**	**1 (Fair)**
Mastery of Content	60%	Presents more than 5 key points of the material	Presents fewer than 5 key points or only 2–5 key points	Presents fewer than 2 key points
Body Expression	20%	Shows appropriate posture and gestures coordinated with speech	Slightly nervous, but gestures are generally consistent with speech	Very nervous and stiff; gestures do not match speech (mostly static)
Self-Confidence	20%	Shows strong confidence when speaking	Still shy but willing to speak	Willing to speak, but appears mostly unprepared

Table 3. Rubric for Discovering Method (Logical-Mathematical Intelligence)

Criterion	**Weight**	**3 (Very Good)**	**2 (Good)**	**1 (Needs Guidance)**
Discovering Process	80%	Correctly applies formulas and finds accurate solutions	Applies formulas and attempts solutions, but not fully accurate	Unable to apply formulas or find solutions
Speed and Accuracy of Solution	20%	Finds the correct solution within 15 minutes	Finds the solution in more than 15 minutes	Unable to obtain a correct solution

ISSN 2721-0979 (Print), ISSN 2721-1258 (Online)

Table 4. Rubric for Group Work (Interpersonal Intelligence)

Criterion	Weight	4 (Very Good)	3 (Good)	2 (Fair)	1 (Poor)
Group Work Process	55%	All group members actively contribute to cooperation	Most group members are active	Only a few members are active	No member actively participates
Group Work Outcomes	45%	All questions are answered accurately and evidenced in group work products	Most questions are answered accurately and evidenced	Only a few questions are answered accurately and evidenced	No meaningful group work product is produced

Similarly, other intelligences spatial-visual, musical, kinesthetic, intrapersonal, and naturalist are addressed through mind mapping, singing, demonstrations, biographical reflection, and field trips (karyawisata), supported by specific rubrics such as mind-map rubrics and field trip assessment rubrics.

Strategic Framework and Evaluation of MI-Based PAI

The overall pattern of MI-based PAI strategy at MTs Al-Ittihadiyah can be summarized as follows.

Table 5. Summary of MI-Based PAI Learning Strategies

No	Indicator / Aspect	Research Findings Summary
1	**Planning Strategies**	
	a. Multiple Intelligences Research (MIR)	MIR is used as a formal test to identify students' dominant intelligences across nine domains. The school uses varied instruments to map each student's profile.
	b. MI-Based Lesson Plan (RPP) Development	MIR data inform teachers' decisions on strategies, learning styles, media, and materials tailored to students' intelligence profiles. Lesson planning involves three stages: (1) consultation with the guardian angel (GA) and principal; (2) post-teaching confirmation of strengths and weaknesses; (3) evaluation and refinement of future RPPs.
2	**Organizing Strategies**	
	a. MIR as entry point for class mapping	MIR results are used to group students and to assist teachers in selecting appropriate strategies, methods, and teaching styles.
	b. MIR as teacher database	MIR functions as a database for teachers to align strategies and assessments with learners' dominant intelligences.

ISSN 2721-0979 (Print), ISSN 2721-1258 (Online)

	c. MIR as guide for strategy and methods	Teachers implement learning strategies based on subject content and learners' intelligence profiles.
	d. MIR as guidance for future school choice	MIR results help students and parents plan further education consistent with students' talents and interests.
3	**Implementation Strategies**	
	a. Conducting aperception activities	Preliminary activities include alpha zone, warmer, pre-teach, and scene-setting to focus and prepare students.
	b. Implementing lesson plans	Teachers apply planned strategies, methods, and media to deliver PAI content in MI-sensitive ways.
	c. Reflective closing	Lessons are closed with reflection activities linking content to daily life.
4	**Evaluation Functions**	
	a. Ipsative concept	Student development is judged by comparing prior and current performance (self-referenced progress).
	b. Discovery ability concept	Evaluation focuses on identifying and rewarding each learner's emerging abilities in specific intelligence domains.
	c. Authentic assessment	Assessment is comprehensive (cognitive, affective, psychomotor), continuous (input–process–output), and uses varied instruments, not only written tests.

In interviews, the PAI teacher confirmed that authentic assessment is central to MI-based PAI. Authentic assessment is defined as a systematic process of collecting information about students' cognitive, affective, and psychomotor achievements in order to monitor learning processes, classify progress, enrich and remediate learning, and improve future instruction. Special emphasis is placed on measuring change over time (ipsative) and discovering each learner's strengths and learning trajectories.

Learning Outcomes and Student Competencies in MI-Based PAI

The learning outcomes of MI-based PAI are reflected in both classroom achievement and co-curricular accomplishments. Interviews and observations during PAI lessons for classes IXA and IXB revealed that MI-based learning aims to produce students who have a comprehensive understanding of religion and a range of competencies aligned with different intelligences.

For example, students are expected to be religiously observant while possessing strong communication skills (linguistic), social skills (interpersonal), and responsiveness and agility (kinesthetic). At the same time, they are encouraged to develop analytic, creative, innovative, and critical thinking abilities (logical-mathematical, visual-spatial, and musical). Students are also guided to become introspective and reflective, able to interpret life events and derive meaningful lessons (intrapersonal, naturalist, and existential intelligences). These outcomes are captured in the following synthesized table.

Table 6. MI-Based PAI Learning Outcomes

No	Type of Intelligence	Resulting Skills and Competencies

ISSN 2721-0979 (Print), ISSN 2721-1258 (Online)

1	Linguistic	Students can read, write, listen, and express opinions in discussions, debates, and social interactions; they can deliver sermons and khutbah and write simple academic texts.
2	Kinesthetic	Students can demonstrate practical PAI skills: performing wudhu, prayer, funeral rites, hajj and ‘umrah practices, Sufi dance, and other ritual movements.
3	Interpersonal	Students can collaborate with peers, engage in discussions and deliberations, and work effectively in group tasks.
4	Logical-Mathematical	Students can compose simple scientific papers using logical analyses and link these with their linguistic skills (e.g., inheritance calculations).
5	Visual-Spatial	Students can analyze content presented through films and visual media and present the results; they also produce aesthetically pleasing calligraphy.
6	Musical	Students recite the Qur’an with proper tajwid and tahsin in a tartil manner, and use song-based methods to memorize key religious concepts.
7	Intrapersonal	Students engage in personal reflection on learned material and use it to guide their attitudes and goals.
8	Naturalist	Students contemplate the natural environment as signs of God’s greatness and develop a sense of responsibility toward nature and other creatures.

In addition to classroom-based outcomes, MI-based PAI is supported by extra-curricular activities that foster excellence in various domains. Students have achieved recognition in school-level, district-level, and provincial-level competitions, including Qur’an recitation, speech, religious arts, sports, and other fields aligned with different intelligence domains, indicating that MI-based PAI supports broader student achievement.

Stakeholder Perceptions of MI-Based PAI

Principal and Teacher Perceptions

The responses of the principal to the written interview questions indicate strong conceptual knowledge and positive assessment of Multiple Intelligence (MI)-based learning. The principal sees intelligence as a process that is dynamic and puts the emphasis on teachers as the facilitators needing to understand the uniqueness of every child in his/her receipt, processing, and analysis of information. MI-based teaching is seen as involving, appropriate to the 21 st century, and useful in building self-confidence in students with their correspondence to personal learning styles. The application of MI requires continuous innovation and team instruction in the development, implementation and evaluation stages. The MI-based learning is therefore considered to be an integrated system involving students, teachers and parents and as an essential strategy in realization of the best learning environments.

Similar positive views are also expressed by PAI teachers. They theorize MI as the theory of eight to nine intelligences proposed by Gardner, define MI-based teaching as a highly entertaining one, and recognize that it is consistent with the modern-day pedagogical paradigms. Teachers note that MI strategies increase the level of student engagement and that an increased level of interest fosters the growth and development of positive character traits,

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including self-confidence. They also indicate obstacles, with the heterogeneity of student learning styles being one of the main ones that lead to differentiated instruction.

Parents' Perceptions

The questionnaires that were distributed to the parents of students in classes IXA and IXB depict that parents are often aware of the idea of Multiple Intelligences and show that they support the idea of MI-based instruction. According to the parents, their children narrate their classroom activities often, talk about the teachers who use innovative, creative and engaging methods in their classroom. They give reference to increasing levels of motivation to learn and test performance, which their children have shown through better results on report-cards.

The parental vision of the instructional styles of teachers is also similar in most of the cases, but the teachers promote continuous innovation. They claim that learning based on MI has brought about higher confidence and competence among their children especially in those schools that explicitly use MI strategies. According to one parent, learning should be aligned with the learning styles of children, and another one stated that MI-based learning offers them positive energy, in terms of increased motivation and social competence.

Students' Perceptions

Student perceptions were collected through questionnaires administered to classes IXA and IXB. The core findings can be summarized as follows.

Table 7. Summary of Student Questionnaire (Classes IXA and IXB)

No	Statement	4 (Strongly Agree)	3 (Agree)	2 (Disagree)	1 (Strongly Disagree)
1	I enjoy attending learning activities at school.	3	10	0	0
2	I feel it is a loss if I do not attend school.	7	6	0	0
3	I try to ask questions when I do not understand the lesson.	8	5	0	0
4	I review the material taught by the teacher at home.	2	6	5	0
5	I have motivation and self-confidence in learning.	4	8	1	0
6	The teacher gives students opportunities to ask questions.	8	5	0	0
7	I complete assignments on time.	5	8	0	0
8	I like the way my teacher teaches.	2	8	3	0

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9	My teacher's teaching style is interesting.	1	12	0	0
10	The teacher gives equal opportunities and treatment to all.	5	7	1	0

Overall, the data suggest that students have high enjoyment, perceive learning as meaningful, feel confident, and appreciate their teachers' MI-aligned teaching styles. The high levels of agreement across items indicate that MI-based PAI contributes positively to students' affective engagement and classroom climate.

Supporting Facilities for MI-Based PAI Implementation

Observation of school facilities shows that MTs Al-Ittihadiyah possesses a range of infrastructure that supports MI-based PAI learning, including laboratories, sports fields, and religious spaces.

Table 8. Facilities Supporting MI-Based Learning

No	Facility	Quantity
1	Computer Laboratory	1
2	Biology Laboratory	1
3	Physics Laboratory	1
4	Language Laboratory	1
5	Futsal and Basketball Court	1
6	Hall / Auditorium	1
7	Library	1
8	Canteen	1
9	Mosque	1

These amenities are used to serve as auxiliaries to the different domains of intelligence: the laboratories of logicalmathematical and naturalistic investigation, the sports courts of the kinesthetic development, the auditoria of the performative, musical, and linguistic, the libraries of the linguistic and intrapersonal, and the mosques of the spiritual, intrapersonal and communal interpersonal growth. Such infrastructure will improve the capability of the school to put in place Multiple Intelligence (MI)-based strategies in an integrated way.

As per the results of this study, the heterogeneity of the abilities, backgrounds, and learning preferences of the students is one of the factors that significantly affects the adoption of MI-based strategies in the Islamic Religious Education (PAI) in MTs Al-Ittihadiyah. This finding is in agreement with previous literature which records high levels of variability in preparedness and cognitive characteristics of students in PAI classrooms and as such, requires different types of instructional methods that can support the needs of the varied student population. This view is supported by studies by Marzuki et al. (2025) and Nurhalimah and Bakti (2025) who show that contextually-based and collaborative learning models, including the Nazam Aceh approach and Group Investigation, have a significant positive impact on the learning process due to their ability to address the complexity of learners. The current research supports these results by demonstrating that MI-based approaches allow teachers to better approach heterogeneity by providing differentiated activities based on the linguistic, logical, interpersonal, kinesthetic, or visual-spatial strengths.

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Also, the results indicate that teacher proficiency is critical in the success of MI-based PAI teaching. This is in line with the statements of Kostiainen et al. (2018), Mieg (2019), Qolbiyah and Purnamanita (2022), and Suprima et al. (2023) who state that teachers must understand the individual learner characteristics to be able to enable meaningful learning experiences. In this case, the teachers who had a high level of pedagogic skills and proper knowledge of MI principles were better placed to develop diverse learning activities that facilitated student engagement and conceptual mastery. On the other hand, in cases of limited teacher competence, MI was usually applied partially, intermittently or too heavily depended on the traditional lecture form, a trend also in Zulhijra et al. (2024) who discovered that active learning strategies are critical in enabling students to overcome conceptual challenges in religious subjects, which are difficult to overcome in a traditional lecture-based format.

The study also illustrates that the incorporation of MI principles in learning PAI fits effectively with the educational requirements of the world, especially those that relate to the 21 st century competency. This finding aligns with the theoretical propositions put forth by Gardner and is empirically supported by the studies of Ziaurrahman et al. (2024), Susanyah et al. (2025), and Ariffullah (2024), who demonstrate that learning environments based on MI and technology-enhanced ones help learners to acquire deeper understanding because they are flexible enough to address various intelligence styles. Visual aid, collaborative activities, musical mnemonics and problem-solving tasks in MTs Al-Ittihadiyah allowed students to be more expressive and this improved their cognitive and affective learning outcomes. The findings are also consistent with Mahendra et al. (2024) and Sanjiartha et al. (2024), who believe that MI-oriented practices reinforce critical thinking, collaboration, and creativity which are high-priority competencies among modern learners.

One of the outstanding conclusions made after the current research relates to the necessity of using pedagogical innovation in the framework of PAI teaching in the institutions of MTs Al-Ittihadiyah. There is empirical evidence of positive student feedback regarding the use of technological tools, gamified exercises, and resources based on multimedia. This finding is in line with the previous research by Khoriyah and Muhid (2022), Sulistiawati and Abidin (2024), and Jasmawati (2021), which all deduce that technology-based instructional settings can provide greater engagement and access to PAI. Additionally, curricular programs that bring on board real-life applications, including cooperative work and context-driven discussions, prove to be effective in enhancing the moral cognition of the learner and their ability to connect Islamic edicts to everyday practice, which supports the claims of Ayatillah et al. (2024), Ilmiyah et al. (2022), and Putra and Dewantoro (2022). Therefore, the present research supports the need to continue with curricular revival and flexible pedagogy in order to keep PAI relevant in a rapidly changing educational environment.

Lastly, the paper outlines a set of structural and contextual barriers that affect the efficiency of MI-based teaching. Other constraints like inadequate facilities, incomplete teacher readiness as well as unequal technological literacy levels sometimes curtail uniform application. The results are reminiscent of those presented by Feryna et al. (2024) and Missouri et al. (2025) who argue that effective implementation of MI requires systemic support, including consistent educator education and strong institutional dedication. However, the example of MTs Al-Ittihadiyah demonstrates that even partial implementation of MI principles can produce positive student results with the support of responsive classroom management and collaborative teaching practice as postulated by Yulianti et al. (2023). Thus, despite existing difficulties, there are sufficient reasons to believe that MI-based interventions can be effective and useful means of dealing with student diversity and complementing the quality of PAI learning.

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Conclusion

The current study shows that implementing Multiple Intelligences (MI)-based strategies in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) in the context of MTs Al-Ittihadiyah in Pekanbaru produces a significant reply to the issues posed by the student heterogeneity in cognitive abilities, learning styles, as well as the levels of engagement. MI-based strategies were identified to improve the student participation, understanding, and motivation by aligning the teaching strategies with specific intelligence profile of learners. The paper also highlights the central role of competence of teachers, technological integration, and curriculum planning grounded in context in guaranteeing the effectiveness of MI-oriented pedagogy. Although MI-based PAI instructions have a number of limitations such as their partial adoption, the lack of readiness of teachers, and some of the limitations of the structure, the cumulative statistics confirm that the integration of MI-based PAI instructions can significantly improve the levels of cognitive and affective learning in the madrasah environment.

Considering these conclusions, there are set forth some recommendations. To begin with, there should be continuous professional learning among teachers that focuses on MI theory, differentiated instruction and effective use of educational technology to support the diverse learners. Second, the institutional support, in terms of better infrastructure, systematic supervision, and learning communities, should be reinforced in the institution of MTs Al - Ittihadiyah to promote innovative pedagogical practices. Third, developers of curriculum are urged to integrate MI principles into lesson planning, classroom activities and assessment structures more structurally. Last but not least, the research on the long-term effects of MI-based strategies in different subjects and different levels of education must be conducted in the future to gain a better understanding of the efficiency and applicability of these methods. Such concerted efforts can strengthen MI-based education as a revolutionary strategy of improving the quality of Islamic education in Indonesia.

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