

The PAI Teacher's Strategy In Developing Student Achievement And Talents At SMP Muhammadiyah 7 Medan

Riski Panjaitan^{1*}

Universitas Muhammadiyah Sumatera Utara^{*1}

^{*1}email: riskipanjaitan346@gmail.com

<p>Abstract: This study aims to explore the strategies employed by Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers in developing students' achievements and talents at SMP Muhammadiyah 07 Medan. The research method used is descriptive qualitative, with data collected through interviews, observation, and documentation. The results show that PAI teachers implement various effective strategies, such as project-based learning, problem-based learning, and differentiated approaches tailored to the needs of the students. Additionally, religious extracurricular activities play a crucial role in helping students express their talents beyond the formal academic context. Overall, the strategies applied by PAI teachers have successfully developed both academic and non-academic student achievements and talents. This research highlights the importance of innovative, collaborative, and technology-based approaches in maximizing student potential, offering significant implications for improving PAI learning in schools.</p>	<p>Keywords: Development Strategy; contextual; Islamic Religious Education Material.</p>
<p>Abstrak: Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui strategi guru Pendidikan Agama Islam (PAI) dalam mengembangkan prestasi dan bakat siswa di SMP Muhammadiyah 07 Medan. Metode penelitian yang digunakan adalah deskriptif kualitatif dengan pengumpulan data melalui wawancara, observasi, dan dokumentasi. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa guru PAI menerapkan berbagai strategi yang efektif, seperti metode pembelajaran berbasis proyek, pembelajaran berbasis masalah, dan pendekatan diferensiasi, yang disesuaikan dengan kebutuhan siswa. Selain itu, kegiatan ekstrakurikuler keagamaan juga berperan penting dalam membantu siswa mengekspresikan bakat mereka di luar konteks akademik formal. Hasil Penelitian, strategi yang diterapkan oleh guru PAI telah berhasil mengembangkan bakat dan prestasi siswa, baik dalam aspek akademik maupun non-akademik. Penelitian ini memberikan implikasi penting bagi peningkatan pembelajaran PAI di sekolah, dengan penekanan pada pentingnya pendekatan yang inovatif, kolaboratif, dan berbasis teknologi untuk menggali potensi siswa secara maksimal.</p>	<p>Kata Kunci: Strategi guru PAI; Prestasi siswa; Pengembangan kreativitas.</p>

A. Introduction

Education is a crucial aspect in shaping a future generation that is high-quality, well-charactered, and morally upright. In this regard, Islamic Religious Education plays a highly strategic role, especially in building the character and

morals of students in line with religious values (Sari, 2024). Islamic Religious Education is not merely the transfer of knowledge about Islamic teachings, but also an effort to cultivate noble character, strong spirituality, as well as the development of students' academic and non-academic potential.

In this context, Islamic Religious Education teachers bear a significant responsibility in fostering student achievements and talents. As facilitators, motivators, and guides, Islamic Religious Education teachers are expected to identify and develop the talents and potential of each student (Arif Muadzin, 2021). Thus, Islamic Religious Education teachers do not only focus on the cognitive aspect but also play an important role in the affective and psychomotor aspects, concentrating on the development of students' talents and achievements.

The strategies applied by Islamic Religious Education teachers are crucial in determining the success of developing students' achievements and talents. These strategies encompass various approaches, methods, and techniques aimed at exploring, directing, and motivating students to develop their potential. For example, the use of project-based learning methods, contextual approaches, and assigning tasks that are relevant to students' interests and talents can be part of a teacher's strategy to optimize talent development (Fadhlina Harisnur & Suriana, 2022).

In addition, the advancement of information and communication technology has significantly impacted the learning strategies used by Islamic Religious Education teachers. Utilizing technology, such as digital learning media and e-learning platforms, provides greater opportunities for Islamic Religious Education teachers to explore innovative and interactive learning methods. This will help students to better understand the material presented, while also boosting their motivation to learn. In this context, Islamic Religious Education teachers are expected to not only serve as instructors but also as facilitators and mentors throughout the learning process.

According to Sukmadinata (2009), a learning strategy is a systematically organized plan created by the teacher with the goal of fostering effective interaction between students and teachers (Lamatenggo, 2020). The right strategy can provide a significant boost to students in developing their potential. Howard Gardner's Theory of Multiple Intelligences is also highly relevant in this context. Gardner suggests that each student possesses different types of intelligence, such as linguistic, logical-mathematical, visual-spatial, musical, kinesthetic, interpersonal, intrapersonal, and naturalistic intelligence (Syarifah, 2019). By understanding these various types of intelligence, Islamic Religious Education teachers can implement a more personalized and targeted approach in developing students' talents. For instance, students with kinesthetic intelligence may find it easier to grasp religious concepts through activities involving physical movement, such as drama or role-playing.

Furthermore, students' achievements in school are greatly influenced by various factors such as motivation, environment, and support from both parents and teachers. In this regard, Islamic Religious Education teachers play a crucial role in creating a conducive learning environment, both inside and outside the classroom. Islamic Religious Education teachers are expected to foster a learning atmosphere that is enjoyable and motivating, so that students can learn with enthusiasm and productivity. The learning motivation theory proposed by Abraham Maslow and the intrinsic-extrinsic motivation theory by Deci and Ryan also serve as important references in discussing strategies for student achievement development (Cahyono et al., 2022). Research conducted by Purwanto (2014) shows that teachers who are able to create enjoyable and inspiring learning strategies can significantly enhance students' learning motivation (Sunarti Rahman, 2021).

Regarding talent development, students often have hidden potential that needs to be explored and nurtured. This potential could be in areas such as academics, the arts, sports, or other relevant skills. Therefore, Islamic Religious Education teachers must be able to identify students' talents through various

activities, such as competitions, extracurricular activities, or assignments related to students' interests.

However, efforts to develop students' achievements and talents are not without challenges. These include limitations in facilities and infrastructure, technological disparities, and differences in students' backgrounds. In this case, Islamic Religious Education teachers are required to be more creative and innovative in overcoming these obstacles. Additionally, it is essential for PAI teachers to continuously improve their competencies and skills through various training and professional development programs (El-yunusi & Almaghfiroh, 2024).

This study aims to analyze the strategies implemented by Islamic Religious Education teachers at SMP Muhammadiyah 07 in developing students' achievements and talents. Additionally, the study will examine the factors influencing the success of these strategies, as well as the challenges faced by Islamic Religious Education teachers in their efforts to nurture students' talents. This research is expected to make a meaningful contribution to the development of Islamic education in schools, particularly in improving the quality of learning and fostering students' potential. As such, the findings of this study are hoped to provide a tangible contribution to enhancing the quality of Islamic education, both at the school level and in broader educational policy.

B. Method

This research uses a descriptive qualitative method. Descriptive research aims to provide a comprehensive overview of the practices and strategies employed by Islamic Education (PAI) teachers in developing students' achievements and talents. The research was conducted at SMP Muhammadiyah 07 Medan in July 2024 over a period of 25 days. The subjects of this research are the PAI teachers teaching at SMP Muhammadiyah 07 Medan. Data collection techniques used in this research include interviews, observation, and documentation.

Interviews were conducted with the PAI teachers who served as research subjects to obtain detailed information about the strategies they apply to develop students' achievements and talents. The researcher also directly observed Islamic Education lessons in the classroom to gain firsthand insight into how the teachers implement these strategies. These observations were conducted in both participatory and non-participatory modes, depending on the classroom situation and conditions. Additionally, the researcher collected relevant documents, such as lesson plans (RPP), student portfolios, extracurricular activity reports, and records of student achievements related to talent development. For data validation, several techniques were employed, including source triangulation and method triangulation.

C. Results and Discussion

This study reveals several important findings related to the strategies implemented by Islamic Religious Education teachers in developing students' achievements and talents at SMP Muhammadiyah 07 Medan. Based on data collected through interviews, observations, and documentation, the findings indicate that Islamic Religious Education teachers at this school have adopted various effective strategies for uncovering students' potential. These findings are divided into several sub-themes as follows:

1. Learning Strategies that Encourage Student Creativity and Talents

One of the key findings of this study is that Islamic Religious Education teachers at SMP Muhammadiyah 07 Medan have implemented learning strategies that focus on fostering student creativity. Islamic Religious Education teachers not only deliver Islamic teachings theoretically but also involve students in practical activities that stimulate their ability to think creatively and innovatively (Manizar, 2018). For example, one strategy used is the project method, where students are asked to create presentations, artwork, or drama related to religious

teachings. Such activities allow students to explore their talents in art, communication, and interpersonal skills.

In line with Howard Gardner's Theory of Multiple Intelligences, this strategy shows that each student has different intelligences and talents, so diverse learning approaches can help accommodate these various types of intelligence. In interviews, Islamic Religious Education teachers revealed that students with kinesthetic intelligence, for instance, are more actively engaged when learning involves physical activities like religious drama or role-playing.

Moreover, Islamic Religious Education teachers also employ the problem-based learning method, which challenges students to think critically when dealing with everyday problems relevant to religious teachings (Primadoniati, 2020). This method not only trains students' cognitive abilities but also helps them develop talents in problem-solving, logic, and analysis.

2. Development of Non-Academic Potential Through Extracurricular Activities

In addition to classroom learning, Islamic Religious Education teachers at SMP Muhammadiyah 07 Medan are actively involved in managing and guiding students in religious-based extracurricular activities. These extracurricular activities include religious competitions, such as Quran recitation contests, Islamic speech contests, and social religious activities like community service and religious gatherings.

Observations show that students who participate in these extracurricular activities demonstrate improvements in terms of self-confidence, public speaking ability, and interpersonal skills. Islamic Religious Education teachers also revealed that through these extracurricular activities, students not only learn about religious teachings but also have the opportunity to express their talents and interests outside the formal academic setting.

According to the intrinsic-extrinsic motivation theory proposed by Deci and Ryan, students' participation in these extracurricular activities can be categorized as intrinsic motivation, where students learn and grow due to personal interest and enjoyment in the activities they are involved in (Ena & Djami, 2021). This is evident in students with strong interests in arts, such as calligraphy or vocal arts, where they feel more inspired to develop those talents beyond formal class hours.

3. The Role of Teachers as Motivators and Mentors

Another prominent finding is the role of Islamic Religious Education teachers as the main motivators for students in developing their achievements and talents. Based on interview results, Islamic Religious Education teachers at SMP Muhammadiyah 07 Medan recognize that each student has different levels of motivation in learning religion. Therefore, Islamic Religious Education teachers actively provide motivational encouragement through a personalized approach. Teachers often offer praise and recognition for students' efforts and achievements, both inside and outside the classroom.

According to the motivational theory proposed by Abraham Maslow, the need for esteem and recognition is one of the main factors driving individuals to continue growing. In this context, Islamic Religious Education teachers play a key role in fulfilling this need for students by providing positive and constructive feedback. One student interviewed expressed that their motivation to excel in religious studies increased after receiving praise and support from their teacher.

Additionally, Islamic Religious Education teachers also serve as spiritual mentors, helping students overcome various challenges they face, whether related to religious learning or their personal lives. This shows that the role of Islamic Religious Education teachers extends beyond academic teaching and includes character building and mental development. This mentorship is crucial in developing students' affective

abilities, which are essential aspects of their achievements and talents (Nahar et al., 2022).

4. Challenges in Developing Student Talents and Achievements

However, despite the successful strategies implemented by Islamic Religious Education teachers at SMP Muhammadiyah 07 Medan, there are several challenges in developing students' talents and achievements. One of the most common obstacles is the limited facilities and infrastructure. Based on observations, the school faces limitations in facilities such as inadequate classroom spaces for practical or creative projects involving students. Additionally, access to technology that can support innovative learning is still limited, reducing opportunities for Islamic Religious Education teachers to use technology-based learning media.

Another identified obstacle is the lack of parental involvement in supporting the development of students' talents. According to interviews with Islamic Religious Education teachers, some students struggle to develop their talents due to a lack of support from their families. For example, students interested in arts or sports often do not receive encouragement from their parents to participate in extracurricular activities, as these are seen as unrelated to academic achievement.

In literature presented by Purwanto (2014), support from parents and the family environment is one of the key factors influencing the success of student talent development. Therefore, the lack of parental participation becomes a significant challenge that Islamic Religious Education teachers must overcome in their efforts to develop students' achievements and talents.

5. Strategies to Overcome Challenges

Despite these challenges, Islamic Religious Education teachers at SMP Muhammadiyah 07 Medan have developed various strategies to overcome the obstacles. One such strategy is collaboration with external parties, such as Islamic educational institutions and community

organizations, to organize training and activities that support student talent development. For instance, Islamic Religious Education teachers collaborate with local da'wah organizations to conduct Islamic youth leadership training that involves students from various schools.

Additionally, Islamic Religious Education teachers utilize social media and digital platforms to provide assignments and additional learning materials, allowing students to learn independently outside the classroom (Nihayah et al., 2022). This platform helps students who have limited access to learning materials at school, enabling them to continue developing their talents through online resources.

6. Research Implications

The findings of this study have important implications for the development of Islamic Religious Education learning strategies in other schools. Islamic Religious Education teachers must continue to develop creative and innovative approaches to learning, especially in addressing existing limitations. Moreover, the importance of collaboration between teachers, students, parents, and the school must be continually emphasized to support the success of student talent development programs.

Overall, this study shows that despite the many challenges, the strategies implemented by Islamic Religious Education teachers at SMP Muhammadiyah 07 Medan have successfully developed students' achievements and talents. This success is supported by the active role of teachers as motivators, mentors, and facilitators in various aspects of education, both academic and non-academic.

7. The Use of Differentiated Instruction in Learning

One of the increasingly evident strategies in this study is the use of differentiated instruction by Islamic Religious Education teachers. Based on observations and additional interviews, Islamic Religious Education teachers at SMP Muhammadiyah 07 Medan employ this method to tailor

learning to the needs, interests, and abilities of each student. Some students demonstrate a higher level of understanding of religious material, while others require more time to grasp the concepts. In this case, Islamic Religious Education teachers assign different tasks according to the students' ability levels, allowing each student to learn in the most effective way for them.

Teachers give more complex tasks to students with higher abilities, while those who are still struggling receive additional guidance and exercises. This strategy is based on the principle that every student has different abilities and learning styles, aligning with the Theory of Multiple Intelligences. For example, students with visual-spatial intelligence are tasked with creating infographics about Islamic values, while students with linguistic intelligence are asked to write essays about their spiritual experiences.

This differentiated approach not only improves students' academic performance but also helps develop their communication and critical thinking skills (Djafar, 2024). Students feel more confident because they are given tasks that match their abilities, and teachers can more effectively monitor their progress. The results of this strategy show an increase in student participation in class and an improvement in the average scores in Islamic Religious Education exams.

8. Enhancing Student Collaboration in Learning

The study also shows that collaboration among students in Islamic Religious Education learning is a significant factor in the development of their talents and achievements. Islamic Religious Education teachers actively encourage students to work in small groups during lessons, especially for activities involving projects or presentations. This collaboration not only helps students better understand the material but also fosters their social and leadership skills.

Through interviews, several students expressed that they feel more comfortable and motivated when working with their peers, especially in solving complex problems or completing challenging tasks. Additionally, students with certain talents, such as public speaking or writing skills, often take the lead in their groups during presentations or the creation of projects.

The importance of this collaboration aligns with Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) theory, which suggests that students learn better through interaction with peers and more capable individuals (Suardipa, 2020). Through group work, more advanced students can assist their classmates who are still struggling, thus accelerating the learning process for all students. The impact of this strategy is reflected in the increased confidence of students in public speaking and their ability to collaborate with others. It also helps students develop leadership and responsibility skills, which are important for their lives beyond the school environment.

9. The Role of Teachers as Role Models in Shaping Students' Character

The research findings also highlight that one of the key factors in developing students' talents and achievements is the role of Islamic Education (PAI) teachers as role models for students. At SMP Muhammadiyah 07 Medan, PAI teachers not only teach religious theory but also provide concrete examples of how Islamic teachings are implemented in everyday life.

In interviews, the PAI teachers stated that they always strive to set an example in discipline, honesty, and responsibility. For instance, teachers demonstrate punctuality in teaching, respond fairly to student issues, and show empathy toward students' personal problems. These actions indirectly influence student behavior outside the classroom. Many students mentioned that they were inspired by their teachers to be more disciplined in their daily lives, both at school and at home.

Albert Bandura's Social Learning Theory explains that students tend to imitate behaviors demonstrated by individuals they consider role models, such as teachers. This role of the teacher as a role model is crucial in helping students build strong character, which ultimately supports the development of their talents and achievements.

10. Influence of a Religious School Environment on Learning Motivation

The research also reveals that a religious school environment plays a significant role in supporting students' learning motivation, especially in PAI subjects. SMP Muhammadiyah 07 Medan fosters a conducive environment for religious learning, with many routine religious activities such as Quran recitation sessions, congregational prayers, and celebrations of Islamic holidays.

This environment creates an atmosphere that encourages students to continue learning and deepen their understanding of Islamic teachings. In interviews, many students expressed that they feel more motivated to study PAI due to the support from their peers and the religious atmosphere at school.

This aligns with Social Motivation Theory, which suggests that social support from the environment, including friends and the school community, can enhance students' learning motivation. The religious school environment not only motivates students to excel academically but also helps them develop better personality traits and spirituality.

This further reinforces that the teaching strategies employed by Islamic Religious Education teachers at SMP Muhammadiyah 07 Medan are diverse and comprehensive. Islamic Religious Education teachers do not only focus on the cognitive aspect, but also pay attention to the affective and psychomotor aspects of the students, using various innovative approaches to bring out the best potential in each student.

Student collaboration, the use of technology, differentiated instruction, and the role of teachers as role models all contribute to the

development of students' achievements and talents at this school. Challenges such as limited access to technology and lack of parental support remain obstacles that need to be addressed in order to further improve the quality of religious education in the school.

D. Conclusion

The PAI teachers at SMP Muhammadiyah 07 Medan have implemented various teaching strategies that foster students' creativity and potential, such as project-based learning, problem-based learning, and contextual approaches. These strategies help students develop their talents in both academic and non-academic areas. The Islamic Religious Education teachers play a crucial role in motivating students and assisting them in overcoming obstacles in religious education and talent development. By providing positive reinforcement and personalized guidance, the Islamic Religious Education teachers create a conducive learning environment that supports students' holistic development.

Although the strategies employed are quite effective, there are certain challenges, such as limited facilities and infrastructure, as well as a lack of parental support. These factors affect the teachers' ability to fully optimize the development of students' talents, particularly in creative and extracurricular activities. To address these challenges, Islamic Religious Education teachers have collaborated with external parties and utilized digital technology to enrich the learning experience. This approach helps mitigate existing limitations and provides broader opportunities for students to continue growing.

Overall, this research shows that the role of PAI teachers in developing students' achievements and talents is vital, not only in the cognitive aspect but also in character building and fostering students' creative potential. Greater parental support and the provision of adequate resources will further enhance the effectiveness of these strategies.

E. References

- Arif Muadzin, A. M. (2021). Konsepsi Peran Guru Sebagai Fasilitator dan Motivator Dalam Proses Pembelajaran Pendidikan Agama Islam. *Jurnal Pendidikan Islam*, 7(2), 171–186. <https://doi.org/10.37286/ojs.v7i2.102>
- Cahyono, D. D., Hamda, M. K., & Prahastiwi, E. D. (2022). Pimikiran Abraham Maslow Tentang Motivasi Dalam Belajar. *TAJDID: Jurnal Pemikiran Keislaman Dan Kemanusiaan*, 6(1), 37–48. <https://doi.org/10.52266/tadjid.v6i1.767>
- Djafar, R. (2024). Efektivitas Pendekatan Diferensiasi dalam Pembelajaran Bahasa Inggris Berdasarkan Kurikulum Merdeka di MTsN 2 Tidore. *Jurnal Pasifik Pendidikan*, 03(02), 61–69.
- El-yunusi, M. Y. M., & Almaghfiroh, Z. A. (2024). Inovasi Desain Pembelajaran Pendidikan Agama Islam Dalam Meningkatkan Keterlibatan Siswa dan Guru. 07(01), 1675–1691.
- Ena, Z., & Djami, S. H. (2021). Peranan Motivasi Intrinsik Dan Motivasi Ekstrinsik Terhadap Minat Personel Bhabinkamtibmas Polres Kupang Kota. *Among Makarti*, 13(2), 68–77. <https://doi.org/10.52353/ama.v13i2.198>
- Fadhlina Harisnur, & Suriana. (2022). Pendekatan, Strategi, Metode dan teknik Dalam Pembelajaran PAI Di Sekolah Dasar. *Genderang Asa: Journal of Primary Education*, 3(1), 20–31. <https://doi.org/10.47766/ga.v3i1.440>
- Indah Doa Nita Nasution, & Hasrian Rudi Setiawan. (2024). Penerapan Media Flash Card dalam Peningkatan Penguasaan Kosakata Bahasa Arab Peserta Didik di Rumah Belajar Madani Yakesma. *Reslaj: Religion Education Social Laa Roiba Journal*, 6(9), 4386
- Lamatenggo, nina. (2020). Pengembangan Profesionalisme Guru Melalui Penulisan Karya Ilmiah Menuju Anak Merdeka Belajar. *Pardigma Penelitian*, 85–94.
- Manizar, E. (2018). Optimalisasi Pendidikan Agama Islam Di Sekolah. *Tadrib: Jurnal Pendidikan Agama Islam*, 3(2), 251. <https://doi.org/10.19109/tadrib.v3i2.1796>
- Nahar, S., Suhendri, Zailani, & Hardivizon. (2022). Improving Students' Collaboration Thinking Skill under the Implementation of the Quantum Teaching Model. *International Journal of Instruction*, 15(3), 451–464. <https://doi.org/10.29333/iji.2022.15325a>
- Nihayah, H., Mahbubah, N. R., & Habibullah, M. R. (2022). Pemanfaatan Media Sosial Oleh Guru Pai Sebagai Sarana Pembelajaran Di Era 4.0. *Al-Aufa: Jurnal Pendidikan Dan Kajian Keislaman*, 3(2), 45–55.

<https://doi.org/10.32665/alaufa.v3i2.1203>

- Pohan, I., & Hasrian Rudi Setiawan. (2024). Strategi Sekolah Dalam Mengatasi Problematika Pernikahan Dini Melalui Pendidikan Agama Islam. *Didaktika: Jurnal Kependidikan*, 13(3), 3067-3076.
- Primadoniati, A. (2020). Pengaruh Metode Pembelajaran Problem Based Learning terhadap Peningkatan Hasil Belajar PAI Di SMPN 2 Ulaweng Kabupaten Bone. *Jurnal Al-Qayyimah*, 2(2), 40-55. <https://doi.org/10.30863/aqym.v2i2.650>
- Sari, A. (2024). Strategi Guru PAI Dalam Menciptakan Pemebelajaran Yang Aktif dan Menyenangkan Di Kelas VII SMP Pelita Cendekia Cipining Bogor. *Journal of International Multidisciplinary Research*, 2(2), 264-278.
- Suardipa, I. P. (2020). Proses Scaffolding pada Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) dalam Pembelajaran. *Widyacarya*, 4(1), 79-92. <https://stahnmpukuturan.ac.id/jurnal/index.php/widyacarya/article/view/555>
- Sunarti Rahman. (2021). Pentingnya Motivasi Belajar Dalam Meningkatkan Hasil Belajar. *Prosiding Seminar Nasional Pendidikan Dasar, November*, 289-302.
- Syarifah, S. (2019). Konsep Kecerdasan Majemuk Howard Gardner. *SUSTAINABLE: Jurnal Kajian Mutu Pendidikan*, 2(2), 176-197. <https://doi.org/10.32923/kjmp.v2i2.987>