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Personalising Divorce Mediation: Integrating the STIFIn Personality Model into Court-Annexed Mediation in Religious Courts

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Abstract

This study argues that the persistent low success rate of divorce mediation in Indonesian Religious Courts reflects not merely a procedural failure of Supreme Court Regulation (PERMA) No. 1 of 2016, but a deeper substantive gap: the absence of adaptive communicative competence in mediator certification standards. Drawing on normative legal research supplemented by direct field observation at the Batam Religious Court, this article advances two analytical propositions. First, that PERMA No. 1/2016 operationalizes a court-annexed mediation model whose effectiveness is structurally contingent upon mediator competence beyond what the current certification regime (Article 13) requires. Second, that STIFIn Theory a cognitive-typological framework mapping five dominant intelligence machines (Sensing, Thinking, Intuiting, Feeling, Instinct) can serve as a supplementary communicative instrument enabling mediators to identify parties' hidden interests and adapt negotiation strategies accordingly. The article systematically compares STIFIn with MBTI and interest-based negotiation (Fisher & Ury), demonstrating that STIFIn's genetic-cognitive basis offers distinct operationalization potential while acknowledging its methodological limitations. The findings recommend amending mediator certification curricula under PERMA or a new Supreme Court Circular to incorporate typology-adaptive communication training as a substantive competence standard.

INTRODUCTION

The high divorce rate in Indonesia is a serious problem that is the background for the birth of the mandatory mediation policy through PERMA Number 1 of 2016. But these regulations face an unresolved paradox: the legal framework is strong, but its effectiveness is low. Data from the Mataram High Court of Religion recorded a mediation failure rate of 65.9% in 2023, then dropped to 55.8% in 2024, but jumped back to 70.8% in 2025, a trend that indicates that failures are structural, not incidental.[1]. On a smaller scale, the Manna Religious Court recorded only one case successfully mediated in October 2025[2].

This anomaly demands sharper analytical questions: if regulations are in place and mediators are certified, what are the variables that best determine the success or failure of mediation? Existing research, including Rahyu & Sugitanata (2022)[3] and Putra & Hasibuan (2025),[4] identifies a variety of factors, ranging from the parties' determination to divorce to the ability of mediators. However, the two studies focused more on the empirical evaluation of the implementation of mediation and the factors that influence its success.

This is where this article puts its contribution. Different from previous evaluative-empirical research, this article proposes a normative-conceptual analytical framework that connects the gap in mediator competence in PERMA with the theoretical potential of STIFIn theory as an adaptive communication instrument. The two research questions asked are: (1) Does PERMA Number 1/2016 structurally accommodate the demands of mediator's adaptive competencies required in divorce mediation? (2) How can the STIFIn Theory be operationalized as a communication framework in the mediation of divorce cases in the Religious Court, and what are the limits of its application?

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[1] The Supreme Court of Religion of Mataram, "Mediation Statistics. Mataram High Court of Religion," 2026, https://pta-mataram.go.id/layanan-hukum/mediasi/statistik-mediasi.

[2] Manna Religious Court, "The Success of Mediation in Manna Religious Court," 2025, https://pa-manna.go.id/seputar-peradilan/1320-keberhasilan-mediasi-di-pengadilan-agama-manna-pada-bulan-oktober-mencapai-100.

[3] Putri Rahyu and Arif Sugitanata, "The Low Success Rate of Mediation in the Bantul Religious Court in 2018-2020: A Study on the Analysis of the Effectiveness of the Role of Mediators in the Bantul Religious Court," *Al-Hukama': The Indonesian Journal of Islamic Family Law* 12, no. 2 (2022): 113–31.

[4] Firman Surya Putra and Hawari Hasibuan, "The Effectiveness of Mediation in Resolving Divorce Cases (Case Study at the Pangkalan Kerinci Religious Court, Pelalawan Regency)," *Journal of Islamic Family Law* 3, no. 2 (2025): 1–12.

METHODS

This research uses normative legal research methods with a statutory approach and a conceptual approach. The statutory approach was used to analyze PERMA Number 1 of 2016 and related legal instruments, including Law Number 14 of 1985 concerning the Supreme Court and the Compilation of Islamic Law (KHI). The conceptual approach was used to examine the theory of facilitative-evaluative-transformative mediation[5], the theory of interest-based negotiation, [6]and the STIFIn Theory as a framework of cognitive typology.

To strengthen the empirical relevance of the normative arguments constructed, this study combines the results of field observations on the implementation of mediation in divorce cases at the Batam Religious Court. Observations were focused on the pattern of communication failures between the mediator and the parties which were then analyzed through the lens of STIFIn typology. Statistical data on mediation failures from the Mataram Religious High Court [7] and the Manna Religious Court[8] are used as empirical evidence to support the argument, not just as background.

All legal materials and observation results are analyzed deductively: from the normative premise of PERMA, to the identification of competency gaps, then to the STIFIn integration proposition, and finally to concrete policy recommendations.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. Functions of the Supreme Court and Legal Architecture of PERMA Number 1 of 2016

The Supreme Court of the Republic of Indonesia (MA RI) is a state institution that holds the highest judicial power outside the Constitutional Court, as affirmed in Article 24A of the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia. The Supreme Court not only functions as a judicial institution that examines and decides cases at the cassation level for all judicial environments[9] , the judicial power of the Supreme Court is very

[5] Zena Zumeta, "Styles of Mediation: Facilitative, Evaluative, and Transformative Mediation," *National Association for Community Mediation Newsletter* 5 (2000).
[6] Iyad Rahwan, Liz Sonenberg, and Frank P M Dignum, "On Interest-Based Negotiation," in *Workshop on Agent Communication Languages* (Springer, 2003), 383–401.
[7] The Supreme Court of Religion of Mataram, "Mediation Statistics. the High Court of Religion."
[8] The Religious Court of Manna, "The Success of Mediation in the Religious Court of Manna."
[9] Ichsan Anwary, *State Institutions And Dispute Resolution Of Constitutional Authority Of State Institutions*, 2018.

independent or independent, this makes the Supreme Court free from partiality by other state institutions.[10]

The Supreme Court (MA) has two complementary functions in the context of mediation: the adjudicative function (deciding cases)[11] and the regulative-preventive function (forming procedural law policies). This second function is the basis for the birth of PERMA Number 1 of 2016, based on the authority from article 8 of Law No. 12 of 2011 concerning the formation of laws and regulations. as a follow-up to Presidential Instruction No. 15 of 1970 and in article 79 of Law No. 14 of 1985 concerning the Supreme Court.

From the perspective of legal theory, PERMA Number 1/2016 plays at least three important analytical functions. First, the function of filling legal vacancies (rechtsvacuum filling): PERMA regulates mediation procedures in detail which are not regulated in the HIR/RBg or the Marriage Law. Second, the function of unification procedures: PERMA standardizes mediation standards in all Religious Courts/Syar'iyah Courts throughout Indonesia. Third, and this is the most analytically relevant gatekeeper function: mediation is placed as a mandatory screening before the case goes to full trial (court-annexed mediation), not as an external alternative to the court.[12]

However, the function of this gatekeeper contains internal voltages that need to be observed. On the one hand, PERMA requires mediation and gives it legal force through a peace deed with executory force (Article 27). On the other hand, PERMA does not establish adequate standards of substantive competence of mediators, only requiring a certificate from an accredited institution of the Supreme Court (Article 13), without detailing the adaptive competence of communication that is actually needed. This tension is at the structural root of the low effectiveness of mediation: regulation has created obligations, but not built enough capacity to meet them.

Benedikt in his research stated that the effectiveness of mediation still faces various obstacles, including people who tend to view the judiciary as the only dispute resolution mechanism that is able to provide legal guarantees and certainty. In addition, the results of mediation are often considered less robust because they require the submission of a peace deed to the court in order to have binding legal force, so it has the potential to cause

[10] Muhammad Faqih, "The Position, Main Duties, and Functions and Existence of the Supreme Court in Indonesia," *MIMBAR YUSTITIA: Journal of Law and Human Rights* 4, no. 1 (2020): 28–39.
[11] Rinsofat Naibaho and Indra Jaya M Hasibuan, "The Role of the Supreme Court in Law Enforcement and Justice through Judicial Power," *Nommensen Journal of Legal Opinion*, 2021, 203–14.
[12] Agus Satory and Hotma Pardomuan Sibuea, "The Problematics of the Position and Testing of Supreme Court Regulations in Material Terms as Laws and Regulations," *PALAR (Pakuan Law Review)* 6, no. 1 (2020): 1–27.

a double process. If mediation fails, the dispute must still be continued to the court, resulting in increased time and resolution costs. Other challenges are conflicts that are generally at an acute level that makes it difficult to reach a peace agreement[13], the imbalance of economic power, education, and bargaining positions that can affect the negotiation process, the lack of certified mediators, the low goodwill of the parties resulting in uncooperative attitudes, and the limited competence and skills of mediators in managing and resolving conflicts effectively.[14]

The surge in mediation failure rate from 55.8% (2024) to 70.8% (2025) in the Mataram PTA area strengthens this argument. If the failure is only contextual (for example, because the parties are determined to divorce), then the trend of failure should stabilize or decrease as the mediator's experience improves. Instead, the increasing trend indicates that there are systemic variables that have not been addressed by the existing regulatory framework and that variable, as will be argued, is the mediator's adaptive communication competence.

2. Mediator Competency Gap: From Formal to Substantive

Article 13 of PERMA Number 1/2016 stipulates that non-judge mediators are required to have a mediator certificate from an accredited institution of the Supreme Court. Formally, this requirement seems adequate. Substantively, it contains a fundamental weakness: certification only guarantees procedural competence (carrying out mediation stages according to the rules), not adaptive competence (adapting communication strategies to the cognitive character of different parties).

Nuraeni & Sururie identified three layers of competencies that mediators should have: personal skills (active listening, empathy, emotional intelligence),[15] social skills (objectivity, adaptability across backgrounds),[16] and professional skills (negotiation skills including BATNA analysis[17]). Of these three layers, the PERMA standard only touches the surface of personal skills and does not touch at all the dimensions of adaptive communication the ability to adjust the communication style based on the cognitive type of the mediated party .

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[13] Eneng Nuraeni and Ramdani Wahyu Sururi, "Mediation in Household Dispute Reconciliation: Prospects and Challenge," *Legal Treasures* 4, no. 2 (2022): 120–28.
[14] Antoni Benedikt et al., "Mediation as an Alternative Method of Conflict Resolution: A Practical Approach," *Family Medicine & Primary Care Review* 22, no. 3 (2020): 235–39.
[15] National Association of Certified Mediators, "7 Key Skills Every Mediator Should Possess for Effective Dispute Resolution," 2025, https://mediatorcertification.org/key-skills-dispute-resolution/.
[16] Nuraeni and Sururi, "Mediation in Household Dispute Reconciliation: Prospects and Challenge."
[17] Katie Shonk, "Top 10 Negotiation Skills You Must Learn to Succeed," Harvard Law School, accessed March 22, 2026, https://www.pon.harvard.edu/daily/negotiation-skills-daily/top-10-negotiation-skills/.

Field observations at the Batam Religious Court confirmed this gap. In several mediation sessions observed, mediators used a homogeneous communication approach, legal arguments based on KHI articles and interest based negotiation against all parties without distinguishing their respective cognitive characteristics. As a result, parties who are not responsive to legal arguments (e.g., parties who are more responsive to an empathic or narrative approach) are not substantively involved in negotiations, so the chances of a closed deal are not because the substance of the dispute cannot be resolved, but rather because communication channels are never effectively open.

This gap between formal competence and substantive competence is the main justification for exploring the STIFIn Theory as a complementary instrument not as a substitute for the normative framework of PERMA, but as a tool that fills the space that is not accommodated by existing regulations

3. STIFIn Theory: From Typology to Mediation Analytical Instruments

a. Conceptual Foundations and Epistemological Positions

The STIFIn theory, developed by Farid Poniman, maps the dominance of individual intelligence machines into five types: Sensing, Thinking, Intuiting, Feeling, and Instinct[18]. The uniqueness of STIFIn compared to other personality typologies lies in its claim that the dominance of intelligent machines is genetic and can be identified through fingerprints (dermatoglyphs). Before examining its potential applications in mediation, it is important to first place STIFIn epistemologically in the landscape of personality theory and mediation.

The following table compares STIFIn with the Interest-Based Negotiation approach[19]:

Table 1. Comparison of STIFIn, and Interest-Based Negotiation in the Context of Mediation

Dimensions	STIFIn	Interest-Based Negotiation (Fisher & Ury)
Identification Basis	Sidik jari (dermatoglif) genetis	Observation of situational hidden interests
Unit of Analysis	Dominance of the intelligence machine (cognitive-genetic)	Interests, positions, and BATNA of the parties

[18] Farid Poniman, *STIFIn Personality Book: Recognizing the Blueprint of Your Life*, Print Pe (Bekasi: Griya STIFIn, 2009).

[19] Iyad Rahwan, Liz Sonenberg, and Frank Dignum, "Towards Interest-Based Negotiation," in *Proceedings of the Second International Joint Conference on Autonomous Agents and Multiagent Systems*, 2003, 773–80.

The Relevance of Mediation	Adaptation of the mediator's communication style to the cognitive type	Reframing positions are in the common interest
Key Limitations	Requires paid assessments; has not been scientifically validated mainstream	Not taking into account individual cognitive differences
Implications for PERMA	Requires additional training beyond the PERMA Ps. 13 certification standard	It has been partially accommodated in the facilitation technique of certified mediators

From the table above, it can be seen that the three approaches are not exclusive to each other, but complement each other at different levels. Interest-Based Negotiation (IBN) operates at the level of situational interest; MBTI operates at the level of contextual cognitive preference; STIFIn operates at a level of cognitive-genetic dominance that is claimed to be more stable. Implications for mediation: STIFIn is most useful as an initial guide to understanding the parties' basic communication tendencies before entering into interest-based substantive negotiations (IBNs).

STIFIn's genetic claims have not been peer-reviewed in mainstream neuroscience journals, and this is an epistemological limitation that must be honestly acknowledged. Nevertheless, the instrumental validity of whether this framework is practically useful as a communication guide can be evaluated separately from the validity of its biological claims. This article positions STIFIn at the level of instrumentality, not the level of absolute scientific claims

4. Five Types of STIFIn: Analysis of Mediation Implications and Normative Relevance of PERMA

The following table presents an analysis of the mediation implications of each type of STIFIn, as well as relating them to the normative obligations of mediators based on PERMA Number 1/2016 (especially Articles 14–15 concerning the duties of mediators):

STIFIn Type	Typical Hidden Interests	The Risks of Mediation Without Adaptation	Mediator Communication Strategy	Relevance of PERMA Ps. 14-15
Sensing (S)	Financial certainty & concrete evidence	Rejecting abstract arguments; Stagnant without data	Provide financial data; Use repetition of facts	Supports the active facilitation function of the mediator

Thinking (T)	Logical consistency & legal principles	Resistance to emotional distress; requires juridical justification	Gradual arguments based on KHI & Supreme Court jurisprudence	Supporting the neutrality of law-based mediators
Intuiting (I)	Freedom and a vision of the future	Loss of interest in procedural details	Visionary framing: the long-term impact on children & families	Supporting solution creativity in facilitation
Feeling (F)	Child well-being & relational harmony	Refusing the legally correct solution if you feel you are not being heard	Validation of feelings; Humanitarian narratives before legal arguments	Requires emotional sensitivity beyond PERMA standards
Instinct (In)	Holistic balance & inner peace	Loss of focus if the discussion is too technical/long	The essence of the question is simple; Reflect on the consequences of choice.	Requires procedural flexibility beyond the PERMA timeline

Source: based on Farid Poniman (2009[20], 2011 [21]) and PERMA Number 1 of 2016

The analysis of the table above yields three analytical propositions. First, each type of STIFIn creates a different pattern of resistance in mediation negotiations; This resistance is not merely a reflection of the determination to divorce, but can stem from the mismatch between the mediator's communication style and the mediated party's cognitive mode.

Second, Article 14 of PERMA Number 1/2016 which requires mediators to 'encourage the parties to explore and explore their interests' implicitly requires adaptive communication skills but PERMA does not provide an operational framework to carry out this obligation. STIFIn can fill this operational gap as a guide to identify the underlying interests that are typical of each type.

Third, there is a potential tension between the rigid implementation of STIFIn and the principle of mediator neutrality regulated by Article 15 of PERMA. If the mediator over-'designs' his approach based on the STIFIn type without transparency, this can move

[20] Farid Poniman, *STIFIn Personality Book: Recognizing the Blueprint of Your Life*.
[21] Farid Poniman, *Book 9 Genetic Personality*, Print Pe (Bekasi: STIFIn, 2011).

closer to evaluative mediation that goes beyond the limits of neutral facilitation. Therefore, the use of STIFIn must always be combined with the principles of neutrality and transparency in the facilitation process

5. STIFIn Operationalization Mechanism in Mediation Practice

The integration of STIFIn in divorce mediation in the Religious Court can be operationalized through three mechanisms that need to be conceptually differentiated.

The first mechanism is adaptive pre-mediation: before the mediation session begins, the mediator conducts a brief typological assessment of the parties either through a STIFIn fingerprint assessment (if available and the parties are willing) or through the observation of initial communication patterns. The results of this assessment are used to design different facilitation strategies for each party, rather than a single, uniform strategy.

The second mechanism is type-based reframing: in the negotiation process, the mediator uses reframing tailored to each party's dominant type. For example, in the case of madhiyah alimony, the Thinking type needs to be presented with layered juridical arguments (KHI article + Supreme Court jurisprudence), while the Feeling type needs to be presented through a narrative of the impact on the child and the dignity of the wife both towards the same legal conclusion, but through different communication channels.

The third mechanism is the identification of type-based underlying interests: the mediator uses the STIFIn typology as a map to explore what is actually the motivation of the parties behind the stated position. The Sensing type may state 'rejecting the lawsuit' when the real interest is 'post-divorce financial certainty'; The Feeling type may say 'not want to get divorced' when the real interest is 'not losing the relationship with the child'. By identifying these hidden interests, the mediator can craft settlement options that better suit each party's intrinsic motivations

a. Limitations of STIFIn and Limits of Its Application

The application of STIFIn in mediation has three limitations that must be analyzed honestly, not just mentioned as a closing note.

The first limitation is methodological-scientific: type identification through fingerprinting has not yet been validated by the mainstream scientific community of neuroscience and psychology. This is different from his claim that it is genetic-deterministic. Consequently, the mediator should not treat the STIFIn type as a definite 'diagnosis', but rather as a working hypothesis that must continue to be verified through direct observation during the mediation process.

The second limitation is institutional-accessibility: fingerprint-based assessments require unrealistic costs and special processes to be massively implemented in the

Religious Justice system, especially for cases involving justice seekers from economically vulnerable groups. This indicates that the implementation of the full version of STIFIn (with official assessment) is only feasible in the context of a pilot project or in a court with adequate resources.

The third limitation is theoretical-reductive: STIFIn, like all personality typologies, has the risk of reductionism simplifying human complexity into five rigid categories. True personality is formed by the interaction between genetic factors, life experiences, culture, and situational context. In divorce mediation, which is one of the most emotionally complex moments in a person's life, typological reductionism can be misleading if applied without contextual sensitivity.

These three limitations result in one critical policy implication: STIFIn is not worthy of being the sole competency framework of mediators, and is not worthy of being rigidly codified in PERMA. It is more appropriate to integrate it as one of the modules in the mediator training curriculum, in addition to the Interest-Based Negotiation approach, emotional intelligence, and Islamic family law competence.

CONCLUSION

This research resulted in three interconnected propositions. First, PERMA No. 1 of 2016 has established a strong legal framework for court-annexed mediation of divorce in Religious Courts, but it contains a structural substantive gap: the mediator certification standard in Article 13 only guarantees procedural competence, without establishing adaptive communication competency standards that actually determine the effectiveness of mediation. The failure data that increased from 55.8% (2024) to 70.8% (2025) in the PTA Mataram area is empirical evidence that this gap is not an incidental anomaly, but a systemic problem.

Second, the STIFIn Theory offers instrumental potential as an adaptive communication framework that can help mediators identify the dominant cognitive types of the parties and tailor negotiation strategies differently for each individual. Comparison with MBTI and Interest-Based Negotiation shows that STIFIn fills a gap not accommodated by both approaches i.e. a guide for communication adaptation based on initial cognitive predisposition although its scientific limitations, accessibility, and risk of reductionism must be explicitly acknowledged. STIFIn should be positioned as a complementary instrument in the mediator toolkit, rather than as a single, determinant method.

Third, the theoretical contribution of this research is to argue that the effectiveness of mediation is not only a function of procedural compliance with PERMA, but also of

adaptive communicative competence, a dimension that has escaped the attention of regulations and academic literature on mediation in Religious CourtsThis research produces three interconnected propositions. First, PERMA No. 1 of 2016 has established a strong legal framework for court-annexed mediation of divorce in Religious Courts, but it contains a structural substantive gap: the mediator certification standard in Article 13 only guarantees procedural competence, without establishing adaptive communication competency standards that actually determine the effectiveness of mediation. The failure data that increased from 55.8% (2024) to 70.8% (2025) in the PTA Mataram area is empirical evidence that this gap is not an incidental anomaly, but a systemic problem.

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Third, the theoretical contribution of this research is to argue that the effectiveness of mediation is not only a function of procedural compliance with PERMA, but also of the adaptive communicative competence of mediators, a dimension that has so far escaped the attention of regulations and academic literature on mediation in Religious Courts

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