

Implementation Of Islamic Religious Education For Children With Special Needs In Tolitoli Regency

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ARTICLE INFO	Abstract
Volume: 4 ISSN: 2963-5489	Education (PAI) for children with special needs (ABK) is a challenge as well as an urgent need in the midst of efforts to realize inclusive education in Indonesia. This study aims to analyze the implementation of PAI in inclusive schools and madrasas that receive ABK in Tolitoli regency, Central Sulawesi. The study used a qualitative approach with the method of observation, interviews, and documentation on PAI teachers, principals/madrasah, and parents of ABK students. The results showed that the implementation of PAI still faces obstacles, both in terms of the availability of teachers with special pedagogical competence, limitations of Adaptive Learning media, and lack of infrastructure support. However, there are local strategies developed by teachers, such as individual approaches, practice-based learning methods, and the use of visual media to facilitate understanding of religious concepts. This study confirms the importance of strengthening the capacity of PAI teachers through inclusive education training, collaboration with parents, and local government policy support in providing adaptive curricula. Thus, the implementation of PAI for ABK in Tolitoli regency can be a model of learning based on local wisdom that is humanist, inclusive, and equitable.
KEYWORD	
Islamic Religious Education, Children With Special Needs, inclusion, Tolitoli regency	

1. Introduction

Islamic Religious Education (PAI) is an important part of the national education system that aims to form students of faith, piety, and noble character. In the context of inclusive education, PAI has a strategic role to provide access to religious education for children with special needs (ABK) so that they still obtain spiritual, moral, and social rights. According to Law No. 8 of 2016 concerning persons with disabilities, every child, including children with disabilities, has the right to receive a quality education without discrimination. This is in line with the mandate of the Convention on the rights of the Child (UNICEF, 2022) which affirms that religious education must be accessible to all children, including those with disabilities.

In Tolitoli regency, the application of inclusive education began to develop, especially in primary and secondary schools that accept ABK students. However, the implementation of PAI still faces challenges, such as the limitations of Pai teachers in understanding adaptive learning methods, the lack of disability-friendly learning facilities, and the limitations of the curriculum that suits the needs of ABK students. This condition is reinforced by research by Hasanah & Nur (2023) which found that one of the main barriers to religious education in ABKS is the lack of teacher training on differentiation strategies and the use of special learning media, such as the braille Qur'an, sign language, or disability-friendly digital applications.

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A previous study by Safitri (2023) emphasized that religious education in children with disabilities requires not only cognitive material, but also affective and psychomotor aspects through approaches to the practice of worship, habituation, and example. The habit of praying in congregation, reading doadaily prayers, and ablution exercises are one of the concrete forms of how PAI forms an Islamic personality in ABK. This practical approach is more effective than simply delivering theory because it allows children to learn through direct experience.

In addition, Rahmawati & Firmansyah's (2024) research reveals that the role of Pai teachers must be understood not only as teachers, but also as motivators, mentors, and spiritual companions. Teachers are required to have patience, empathy, and adaptive communication skills that can build emotional closeness with ABK. Thus, the process of internalizing religious values can run more personal and meaningful.

In the social context, the community and the school environment in Tolitoli also have a major influence on the successful implementation of Pai for ABK. Yusuf & Fatmawati (2024) emphasize that collaboration between teachers, parents, and peers is a key factor in creating an inclusive atmosphere that supports ABK religious development. This reflects that religious education does not only take place in the classroom, but also through social interactions that foster self-confidence, empathy, and togetherness.

Thus, it can be concluded that the implementation of PAI for children with special needs in Tolitoli is both a challenge and an opportunity. The main challenge is the limited human resources, facilities, and appropriate teaching devices. However, the opportunities that exist are the growth of public awareness, support for inclusive education policies, as well as the potential for developing innovative learning methods based on technology and local wisdom.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Islamic Education

Islamic Religious Education is a conscious and planned effort in guiding, directing, and fostering learners to understand, appreciate, and practice the teachings of Islam as a whole. According to Muhaimin (2020), PAI not only teaches cognitive aspects, but also affective and psychomotor aspects that are oriented to the formation of noble morals. PAI also serves as a means of internalizing spiritual, moral, and social values that are relevant to the needs of everyday life.

2.2 children with special needs and Inclusive Education

Children with special needs (ABK) include learners with physical, intellectual, social, and emotional barriers that require different educational services from children in general. Inclusive education aims to provide equal rights for children with disabilities in obtaining quality education without discrimination (UNESCO, 2020). Saputra & Nurhayati's research (2022) confirms that inclusive education is one of the education equity strategies in Indonesia, although it still faces obstacles in implementation.

2.3 implementation of PAI for children with special needs

The implementation of PAI for ABK requires a special strategy. According to Rahmawati & Firmansyah (2024), PAI teachers need to adapt the curriculum, use practical learning methods, and provide media that suits the student's condition. For example, the use of the Qur'an in braille for the blind, interactive videos for the deaf, and a simple approach to worship practices for children with intellectual disabilities. This approach is in line with the idea of *the zone of proximal development*, which emphasizes the importance of social support (scaffolding) in facilitating learning.

2.4 role of teachers, parents, and Environment

The role of Pai teachers is very important in assisting ABK to be able to understand Islamic values. Safitri's (2023) research shows that the success of religious education in ABK depends heavily on collaboration between teachers, parents, and the environment. Parents act as reinforcers of worship habits at home, while the school environment serves to build an attitude of tolerance and empathy of regular students towards ABK.

2.5 Local Context Of Tolitoli County

Tolitoli regency as one of the regions in Central Sulawesi has schools and madrasas that have started implementing inclusive education. However, early research suggests that Pai implementation is still limited by the availability of competent

teachers and adaptive media. This shows the urgent need to develop a Pai implementation model based on local wisdom, with the support of local government policies and collaboration across educational institutions.

3. Methodology

This study uses a descriptive qualitative approach to the location in several schools / madrasah providers of inclusive education in Tolitoli. Subjects include: Islamic Religious Education Teacher, Principal/madrasah., Parents of ABK students. Data collection techniques: participatory observation on the PAI learning process in the inclusion class, in-depth interviews with teachers and parents, documentation on learning tools and academic records of ABK students.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 master PAI strategy

PAI teachers in inclusive schools or ABK-receiving schools in Tolitoli regency face major challenges in adapting learning to suit the physical, cognitive, and psychosocial conditions of learners. Therefore, the strategies they use cannot be confused with regular learners, but rather more adaptive, personal, and contextual.

First, the teacher applies the approach individual (individualized instruction). Every child has different abilities, for example, blind children need audio media or braille Qur'an, while deaf children need sign language to understand the material. With an individual approach, Pai teachers can adjust the method, time, and even learning achievement targets according to the needs of each student. This is in line with Hasanah & Nur's (2023) research which emphasizes that religious learning in ABK must be based on personal needs so that Islamic values can be understood and practiced correctly.

Second, teachers use repetition strategies as a method of reinforcement. Materials such doaas daily prayers, prayer readings, or ablution procedures are often taught repeatedly through the drill method. Repetition helps ABK students, especially those with cognitive delays, to more easily remember and get used to practicing worship. According to Safitri (2023), this repetition is not only effective for improving memorization, but also for forming religious habits inherent in the child's daily life.

Third, the utilization of pictorial and concrete media is one of the important strategies. For example, teachers use pictures of the sequence of ablution movements, posters caraof prayer procedures, to simple videos for children with a visual learning style. For deaf students, images and body language are the key to communication in explaining worship material. Rahmawati & Firmansyah's (2024) research also shows that the use of concrete media can increase ABK's interest in learning while helping them understand the meaning of worship more concretely.

Fourth, Islamic Religious Education teachers apply a direct practice approach (learning by doing). Children are invited directly to practice ablution, pray in congregation, or read prayers with the guidance of teachers. This practice allows them to learn through real experiences, not just theory. For children with limited concentration, direct practice proved more effective in instilling religious values than lectures or rote learning alone.

Fifth, the teacher also builds an emotional and spiritual approach. ABK children often have feelings of inferiority or isolation, so teacher PAI needs to be present as a figure full of empathy, patience, and compassion. The teacher encourages students not to feel different, but to have the same opportunity to be pious/salihah children. This is in accordance with the concept of *rahmatan lil 'alamin* in Islam which emphasizes inclusiveness and respect for all human beings.

Sixth, teachers collaborate with parents and support personnel. This strategy is important because religious learning not only stops at school, but also continues at home. Pai teachers work closely with parents in practicing prayer, daily worship, and the habituation of noble morals. In fact, in some cases, teachers coordinate with special assistant teachers (GPK) to design learning methods that are more appropriate to the needs of children.

With these strategies, the implementation of PAI in Tolitoli District schools for ABK is not only the delivery of materials, but also as a means of building Islamic character, fostering spiritual independence, and strengthening their religious identity as part of the muslim community.

4.2 Barriers To Implementation

Although the implementation of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) for children with special needs in Tolitoli district shows positive progress, there are a number of obstacles that remain real challenges in the field. These barriers need to be identified comprehensively so that appropriate solutions can be sought through the cooperation of teachers, schools, parents, and local governments. One of the main obstacles is *the first* limitation of PAI teachers who have the understanding and skills in dealing with children with special needs. As a result, the learning process often still uses a general approach that is not entirely in accordance with the conditions of ABK students. Research by Prasetyo (2023) shows that teachers who are not equipped with special education competencies tend to have difficulty modifying methods, strategies, and Learning media. *Second*, ABK-friendly learning Media is still very limited. For example, blind students need a Braille Qur'an, audio Qur'an, or text reader application, but not all schools in Tolitoli District are able to provide it. Similarly, for deaf students, the availability of visual-based media and assistance with sign language is still very lacking. Without the appropriate media, the process of internalizing religious values is hampered, so students have difficulty understanding and practicing Islamic teachings as a whole (Lestari & Munir, 2024). *Third*, the National Pai curriculum is designed for regular students, so its application to ABK often encounters obstacles. For example, the achievement of established competencies is general and does not take into account the cognitive or sensory limitations that children have. Teachers are finally required to modify the curriculum or simplify the material according to student needs. However, this is often done without a set guideline so that the result depends a lot on the creativity of the respective teacher. According to Syafruddin & Halim (2023), the vagueness of the inclusive curriculum guidelines in PAI is one of the main factors that hinder the optimization of learning.

4.3 role of parents and environment

Parents play a vital role in supporting the success of learning Islamic Religious Education for children with special needs. School is just one of the formal containers, while most of the child's time is spent with the family. Worship habits such as praying, reading doadaily prayers, or performing fasting will be more meaningful when accustomed to consistently at home. According to Lestari & Anwar (2023) research, the support of parents who actively collaborate with schools can significantly improve the achievement of spiritual development and character of ABK children.

However, in practice, not all parents have an adequate understanding of how to accompany a child with special needs when it comes to religion. Some feel limited due to lack of knowledge of suitable methods or due to the factor of economic busyness. Therefore, PAI teachers and schools need to provide guidance to parents through Islamic parenting activities, workshops, or parent-teacher communication forums. Thus, the role of parents in the formation of children's morals can be more optimal and in line with Islamic values.

The role of the school environment is a social space that is very influential on the formation of children's religious character. Teachers, peers, and school culture together form an atmosphere that supports or otherwise inhibits the spiritual development of ABK students. The example of the teacher PAI is the main key, since it is easier for children to imitate real behavior than to simply receive verbal instructions. For example, teachers who make a habit of greeting, smiling, and praying before starting a lesson set a direct example that students can imitate.

Local governments through the Education Office and the Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Tolitoli region need to play a more active role in supporting the sustainability of the inclusive PAI. This support can be realized in the form of a special budget allocation for the provision of ABK-friendly religious learning facilities, Pai teacher training programs on inclusive education, and the preparation of local wisdom-based curricula that are easily adapted for children with various needs. For example, the integration of Tolitoli's local cultural values with PAI materials can be an effective strategy to deliver contextual and inclusive learning.

4.4 Regional Policy and support

Although the central government has established an inclusive education policy through various regulations such as Permendikbud number 70 of 2009 on Inclusive Education, its implementation in the regions, including Tolitoli regency, still faces many challenges.

Policies that favor children with special needs will create a conducive learning climate, where PAI can be accessed fairly and equally. With this support, PAI teachers can be more creative in using learning methods, ABK students feel more valued and involved, and the community is increasingly open to the diversity of children's abilities. The final impact is the

formation of a young generation that has faith, noble character, and has a tolerant character that is ready to face the challenges of the Times.

5. Conclusion

The implementation of PAI for children with special needs in Tolitoli district runs with various limitations, but has shown adaptive efforts from teachers through individual and practice-based learning strategies. Regional policy support, teacher competency improvement, and parent involvement are needed for PAI to be truly inclusive, meaningful, and equitable.

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