



Islamic Religious Education Learning Strategies for Special Need Students in State Special Need Schools Indonesia

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ABSTRACT: This paper aims to investigate the strategy of Islamic religious education teaching to special needs students at a state special needs school in Indonesia. This study uses a qualitative approach to understanding the teaching strategies and their impact on special needs students with most of them being deaf, blind, and mentally retarded. Data were collected through observation, in-depth interviews, and written material. Data analysis was carried out using a thematic process through a reduction process, data presentation, and data verification of the validity of the data. The results of the study show that the implementation of Islamic religious education learning for disabled students has been carried out with innovative strategies such as using practicum and role model strategies. The teachers also use interesting media to make the disabled students interesting in learning Islamic religious education. As a result, disabled students are improved in cognitive, affective, and psychometric aspects relating to Islamic education. This study contributes to academic and to practice that might be implemented in other special needs school contexts.

KEYWORDS: Disabled students, Islamic education, Learning strategies, Special needs school

INTRODUCTION

The Indonesian National Education System requires students to acquire both knowledge and spiritual abilities in the educational process carried out in schools. Spirituality and good education can help individuals strengthen faith, behavior, moral values, and belief in God. [1, 2]. Spiritual intelligence, referred to in education, is obtained through religious education obtained at school, at home, or in the community. In this paper, what is meant by religious education is Islamic education taught by schools to shape students to possess good characters and morals that can be implemented in their families, society, and the state. In other words, Islamic education is education that incorporates Islamic teachings into students' knowledge and behavior. With Islamic education in schools, students are smart and also have good morals.

The teachings of Islam are usually integrated into the education curriculum in schools [3]. Besides, there are several general subjects, and special subjects are also made about Islam. Islamic Religious Education can be defined as a planned learning program to prepare students to recognize, understand, and practice the teachings of Islam in their daily lives. Thus these students have the values of tolerance and respect for different fellow human beings.

In Indonesia, students with physical disabilities such as blind, deaf, and unable to speak are given education in special needs schools. These students are called students with special needs who require special treatment in education. Children with special needs are children with special characteristics that are different from children in general, both physically and mentally. [4, 5]. Students with special needs include children who are deaf, blind, unable to speak, and have other physical disabilities and mental disabilities. However, they still have the same rights and learning opportunities as other normal students.

However, these students with special needs require different learning strategies because of their physical and mental limitations in the learning process. For example, for students who have speech and hearing disabilities, teachers need to apply good communication strategies in learning. The learning process of Islamic Religious Education for these students needs to be carried out with special strategies so that these students can understand the learning materials well.

Currently, there are several learning strategies for Islamic religious education that have been given to students with special needs [6, 7], such as learning sign language, giving examples, and direct practice related to worship. Then the implementation of religious teachings in everyday life is also carried out by direct practice and by providing examples by teachers to students.



Although there have been several learning strategies that have been carried out by teachers for these students with special needs, the strategies for learning religious education for these students are still very limited. Even though the understanding of the learning strategy of Islamic religious education for students with intellectual needs to be known so that the teachings of Islam can be understood well by these students. Therefore, this study will examine the learning strategies of Islamic religious education for students with special needs to provide understanding to academics and also practitioners such as schools and the government.

LITERATURE REVIEW

A. Special Need Schools

Special needs school is an educational institution that organizes educational programs for special needs students, namely students who have physical and mental disabilities [8]. In Indonesia, these educational institutions are divided into several types of special needs schools, like special needs schools for blind students type A, special needs schools type B for deaf students, special needs schools type C for students with mental retardation, special needs school type D for students with a physical disability, and special needs school for students with emotional problems.

The special needs school is an educational institution for special needs students to get formal education and certificate. The teaching and learning system in this school has been adapted to suit the students' conditions. Also, the curriculum is developed and modified to make the students able to follow the learning material. Mostly, the learning materials are delivered with interesting teaching aids. Teachers also use more gestures and non-verbal in teaching the students.

Special schools are education for students who have difficulty following the learning process due to physical, emotional, and mental disorders, but they have the potential for intelligence and special talents [9] (Suparno, 2007: 97). Georange (2018) said that special education means specifically designed instruction to meet the unique needs of a child with a disability. Therefore, education in special schools requires the hard work of teachers and leaders in providing education to these students.

Every school student's special needs may require different learning strategies and different media. Therefore students who are deaf will need different ways than students who are blind, and so will other students. Therefore, teachers must create different learning media and teach with different strategies to each of these students. For example, a child with poor eyesight may need a reading book in larger letters, a physically disabled student may need a wheelchair while studying, etc.

B. Islamic education for special needs students

Education experts say that the low intelligence of deaf students does not come from low intellectual barriers but because their intelligence does not get the opportunity to develop. Regular learning of the language will help increase the intelligence of deaf students, especially students as social beings need togetherness with other people. Likewise, deaf students also need interaction with their friends to improve their intelligence and speaking skills. In this case, the social and cultural environment needs to provide opportunities for them to interact and communicate so that they are accustomed to talking and thinking. For example, the students with special needs need to be invited to groups both within the family and in the community so that they can continue to talk and interact.

For the sake of deaf children, all family members, teachers, and the surrounding community should try to learn and understand their situation to help their development. With the help of the family and the community, the students with special needs will have the opportunity to develop and become productive human beings. Thus when they graduate from school, they will have the opportunity to work like other normal students.

Islamic education given to students with special needs will help them improve their spiritual and moral intelligence. Religious education also helps them to have good character and attitude so that they become human beings who are beneficial to society. Islamic education also provides knowledge to students with special needs to understand the good and the bad in their lives. Religious education also helps them to have soft skills in their lives, such as the ability to tolerate and empathize with other humans and the environment.



C. The Process of Religious Education for Deaf students

The educational process is a mobility activity of all education components by teachers directed to achieve educational goals. The learning process is also a communication process where there is a process of delivering certain messages from the teacher to the students so that the students can well receive the learning content. Thus learning process is started by analyzing every component that can shape and influence the educational process. As a system, the religious learning process consists of various components that interact and interact with each other. These components are objectives, subject matter, methods, media, and evaluation of learning.

a. Religious Learning Objectives

Goals can also be interpreted as expectations that have to be achieved after going through or completing a process. Of course, Islamic education also has goals for students after the educational process is complete. The purpose of education is the most important part of an education system. The educational goals will be the basis for achieving something, such as where students want to be taken, what skills students must possess after graduation, and what field of work is suitable for them. When associated with the purpose for which humans were created, there are four goals in human life: serving God, becoming inhabitants on earth, getting grace from God, and getting happiness in this world and the hereafter.

Roslan Mohd Nor & Malim [10] said that the ultimate goal of Islamic education includes helping the formation of good behavior. Muslims have agreed that moral education is the soul of Islamic education and that achieving moral perfection is the real goal of education. Another goal of Islamic education is the preparation of students' life in this world and the hereafter, Islamic education does not only pay attention to the aspect of religion or the world but also pay attention to both at the same time. Islamic education is not purely spiritual in nature but also focuses on the benefits of curriculum goals. Muslim educators view human perfection will not be achieved except by integrating religion and science. To achieve the educational goals, the scope of Islamic religious education material must include seven main elements, namely the Qur'an-Hadith, faith, Islamic law, worship, business, morals, and Islamic history. All of them emphasize the development of religious teachings, science, and culture.

b. Subject matter

The subject matter is the second component of the learning system. In certain contexts, the subject matter is the core of the learning process. This means that often the learning process is defined as the process of delivering material. When the main goal of learning is mastery of the subject matter (subject-centered teaching), then the strategy for learning the material needs to be well structured. In other words, learning designs that are oriented towards achieving goals or competencies must be made in accordance with the material being taught.

The role of Islamic religious education materials in schools is intended to increase morale and spiritual potential, which includes the introduction, understanding, cultivation, and practice of religious values in individual or collective life in society. For this reason, the vision of Islamic education needs to be developed according to competency standards that will be achieved in special needs schools, such as referring to the achievement of overall competence in addition to mastering the material and accommodating the diversity of needs and existing student resources. Furthermore, the subject matter also gives students the freedom to choose according to their needs.

METHODOLOGY

This study uses a qualitative approach [11, 12] investigating the strategies implementation of Islamic education for disabled students in state special needs schools in Palu city Indonesia. Data were collected through direct observation and in-depth interviews with teachers and school principals. The observation was intended to see the case directly, while in-depth interviews were intended to find out the participants' views on the topic being studied [13-15]. Written materials from the special needs elementary schools were also used to analyze the cases [16, 17]. Data analysis consists of several procedures, which included reduction and verification techniques with various data sources [18]. The reduced data is then analyzed, reflecting on the theoretical concepts used in this study. The results were presented based on thematic issues found in the data [19, 20], which show the insight of the study relating education character based on religious teaching within the elementary schools.



RESULT AND DISCUSSION

A. Implementation of Islamic learning for special needs students

a. *Teaching individually or in a group*

In teaching certain subject matter, it is carried out with special techniques by considering the circumstances of the students who will receive the material. Teachers must master certain techniques or methods in teaching special needs students so that they can receive the material that is taught properly. Regarding the students' teaching techniques, one informant said as follows:

The technique or method of learning for deaf children that are applied is to teach individually or in small groups of two or three people. With these teaching techniques, the learning process will be more intensive and targeted so that students can absorb the subject matter well. Teaching individually or in small groups is done because these students have different views regarding their disability. For Islamic religious education lessons, we focus more on practical worship practices such as the practice of ablution, prayer, and others. The goal is that the worship practices that we teach can be re-implemented in their respective homes.

These individual and small group learning strategies can help students get the material directly and facilitate understanding [21]. Individual or small group learning methods have been applied in several learning environments for special students (John, 2019). Learning individually or in small groups is also to overcome the problem of differences in the level of absorption for each student with special needs.

Then learning individually or in small groups can also facilitate the provision of direct practice related to Islamic education materials such as worship. The teacher focuses more on providing ablution practices and prayer practices for Islamic religious education lessons. In teaching it, Islamic religious education teachers have patience in teaching it because the children being taught are deaf children who have problems with their hearing.

The children are taught to pray from beginning to end in prayer practice. However, coercion is not carried out in the practice activities because many students have unstable emotions. One informant said the following:

For the time being, we are still focused on giving the practice of praying voluntarily without coercion because the students are emotionally unstable. If forced, they will stop and refuse to continue. We teach the easy-to-replicate parts first. The reason we don't force it is that many of these students also have problems in communicating, such as pronouncing words.

In the learning process, the teacher also pays attention to and implements the learning process in stages. For example, teachers make plans in advance. Then the teachers make sure that the student is ready to learn and talk to the teacher. In providing subject matter, the teacher also does it slowly and repeatedly so that students can absorb it. The use of good and interesting media is also done so that their interest in learning increases. The learning media is more visual in nature so that it is easy to follow.

b. *Interesting use of media*

Most deaf and speech-impaired students have difficulties in communication because they have problems with hearing and speaking. There are two important barriers for deaf students regarding communication and learning [22]. First, hearing difficulties have an impact on the difficulty in receiving all kinds of sound stimuli that are around them. Second, due to limitations in receiving sound stimuli, students will have difficulty in producing sounds or sounds of language. As a result, these two problems affect language and speech development.

To overcome these problems in learning, teachers need to create or provide good and interesting learning media [23]. For example, schools need to provide hearing aids to help these students receive subject matter. Then the teacher can also make videos that can be seen clearly to teach certain materials. For example, the following informant said: The method that I use in teaching prayer practice material is that first, I show a video of prayer practice through a projector media, then I practice it again in front of the children. After that, I guide them individually, and such a learning process requires patience from a teacher.

The use of videos to teach how to worship has increased the interest and motivation of deaf students as well as blind students to learn the material. The use of the video is also a means to motivate students to carry out subsequent learning activities such as practicum and memorization. The use of video media as a means of stimulus is considered successful in building motivation to learn in various situations [24].



The use of video in learning for blind and deaf students can also compensate for these physical limitations [25]. Images that appear in the video can replace hearing for deaf students. Then the sound of the video can help students who are blind in receiving learning material because the characteristics of a video are audio-visual tools. Other students who have other physical and mental limitations can also learn well through learning videos.

We also used online applications during the covid-19 pandemic to make sure the learning process continued even though the students stayed at home. However, the online application to teach impaired students faced huge challenges due to the students' physical limitations. However, due to the parents having a strong commitment to improving their children's education, the parents accompany their students during the online learning process. The uses of online application are described by the following informant as follow:

During the covid-19 pandemic, we continue the teaching process using online applications such as Google Classroom, Google Meet, and Zoom. The students had difficulties involved in the online teaching process, but their parents were enthusiastic about accompanying their students during the learning session. We really appreciate their support in making the learning happen.

During the covid-19 pandemic, most education institutions also practiced online learning because face-to-face learning was not possible to be practiced. The online application media was a new phenomenon for the impaired students, but the media also made them interesting to continues learning. Online learning media as an instrument aid for teaching has been suggested by many researchers [26, 27]. The online instrument aids are considered an effective media to make teaching-learning continue during the covid-19 pandemic.

B. Indicators of achievement of Islamic religious education

The indicators of the success of Islamic religious education for disabled students can be seen in the ability of these students to master the material and practice their religious worship [28, 29]. In other words, these students can practice the religious worship that has been learned in their lives even though they are not perfect like normal students. The most important hope of success for teachers after learning is that these students can implement the subject matter taught at school in their respective homes. As the following informant said:

For the subject matter that we have taught to the deaf children, we are more focused on the material of worship practices, such as prayer. We hope that the way for them to worship is just like what we have taught. The students can implement it again in their respective homes, especially when they want to pray when the time comes, even though it is not perfect.

The most important hope for success is for parents to have an increase in the knowledge, attitudes, and behavior of their children. In other words, there are changes in their disabled children after the education process. This change is an important indicator in Islamic religious education. For example, one of the students' parents said the following:

We as parents hope that our children can be better in terms of knowledge and behavior. That's why we keep forcing our children to go to school even though they have physical and mental limitations. We want our children to be able to live their lives like other normal children. We hope that our children can be active in society and religion. So that in the future they can be independent in this life.

In various previous studies, it is also said that a change in the situation for the better in terms of knowledge, attitudes, and behavior is the main goal expected by the world of education. [30, 31]. Changes in cognitive aspects are the most common in the learning process, but changes in attitudes and behavior are two things that are difficult to do. Because of this, the change in the attitudes of disabled students in this study towards their attitudes and behavior to worship is an important finding.

The changes in these three aspects have also resulted in the improvement of students' character. Therefore, the learning process is more focused on improving social and spiritual skills in order to make their character better. The students are involved in social activities such as in commemoration of national or religious holidays. One teacher said the following:

"Every time we celebrate national and religious holidays, our school also commemorates it to provide understanding and love for students so that they are more socially intelligent. Thus they have a character that respects and respects each other even though they differ in religion and ethnicity."



The involvement of students in celebrating social and religious activities can strengthen social bonds among students so that they have social sensitivity to other people and the environment [32, 33]. This condition is certainly very good for disabled students in growing social intelligence in themselves. Thus they will be able to live well in a normal society.

CONCLUSION

Islamic religious education learning strategies for disabled students have increased their cognitive, affective, and psychomotor abilities. This success has been achieved by using learning methods that emphasize giving examples and practicum so that students can imitate learning materials quickly. Then the results of religious learning have also increased their spiritual and social intelligence so that students can interact with the community well after graduating from school. The presentation of religious education subject matter that focuses more on worship material has also been able to increase students' ability to practice the implementation of religious worship. As a result, they have good character and respect each other by being tolerant of religious and ethnic differences. Therefore, these students will be able to live harmoniously in society later after graduating from school.

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