Islamic Religious Education Learning Strategy for Children with Special Needs at Elementary School Level at State Special School 1 Amuntai, North Hulu Sungai Regency

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ABSTRACT

This study discusses the strategies of Islamic religious education teachers in teaching children with special needs, considering that the difficulty in determining learning strategies for children with special needs is a major challenge in the world of education, especially Islamic Religious Education (PAI). The purpose of this study is to determine the approaches and methods for Children with Special Needs. The research location is at the State Special School (SLB) 1 Amuntai. The subjects of this study are Islamic Religious Education teachers. This study is a field research with qualitative data types. Data collection techniques through interviews, observation, and documentation. Checking the validity of the data using triangulation techniques. The results of the study indicate that the learning planning carried out by Islamic Religious Education teachers is by creating teaching modules in the form of digital portfolios. The results of this study indicate that Islamic Religious Education teachers' learning strategies use varied methods, adjusted to the situation and condition of each child, because in one class there are various types of ABK. Learning evaluation is carried out through mid-semester and final semester exams, where teachers provide assistance to students in answering questions to make it easier for students to understand and complete the exam.

Keywords: Learning Strategy, Islamic Religious Education, Children with Special Needs.

Introduction

Islamic education aims to produce faithful students, and the embodiment of that goal is the students themselves. In everyday life, indicators of achieving the goals of Islamic education include interacting with other people well and correctly and practicing the teachings of Islam. enjoining good and forbidding evilto fellow human beings. The basic concept of Islamic education is contained in Surah al-Alaq, verses 1-5, which reads: (Amarullah, 2022, p. 6)

اِقْرَأْ بِاسْمِ رَ   ّ○بِّكَ الَّ ذِيْ خَلَقٍۚ(١)خَلَقَ الْإِنْسَانَ مِنْ عَلَقٍۚ(٢)اِقْرَأْ وَرَ   ○ُبّكَ الْأَكْرَمُْ(٣)الَ ذِيْ عَلَّ مَ
بِالْقَلَمِْ(٤)عَلَّ مَ الْأِنْسَانَ مَالَمْ يَعْلَمْۗ(٥) (سورةالعلق:٥-١)

The verses of the Qur'an above contain at least four points, namely:First, humans as subjects in reading, paying attention, contemplating, researching with the principle of good intentions which are marked by mentioning the name of God.Second, the object that is read, observed, and reflected upon, namely the material and the process of creation into a human being the perfect one.Third, media in carrying out reading activities and others. And fourth , motivation and potential possessed by humans, "curiosity". (Mahmudi, 2019, p. 91)

The definition of education in the Islamic context is referred to as "education,study, Andta'dib" which must be understood together. These three terms contain deep meanings concerning humans and society and the environment which in their relationship with God are interconnected with one another. These terms also explain the scope of Islamic education: informal, formal and non-formal. (Bakhtiar, 2018, p. 256) The meaning of education is also stated in Law No. 20 of 2003 article 1 paragraph 1 which states:

Education is a conscious and planned effort to create a learning atmosphere and learning process so that students actively develop their potential to have spiritual religious strength, self-control, personality, intelligence, noble morals, and the skills needed by themselves, society, the nation and the state.

The learning process is certainly present in education that has a goal. Therefore, to achieve that goal, a learning strategy is needed. Strategy is an approach used by someone to solve a problem with the aim of achieving the expected results. In the context of learning in a school environment, strategy involves a series of methods and the use of various media facilities and learning resources as a guide to achieving predetermined learning objectives. (Amalia, Wahyudi, and Aprilianto, 2022, p. 106) In choosing a learning strategy, an effort should be made to consider the instructional impact which is the direct result of teaching actions, as well as the accompanying impact, namely knowledge, skills, attitudes or insights that are formed gradually towards cumulative results that accompany the formation of instructional impact as an indirect result of learning activities. (Pahrudin, 2017, p. 18) In the educational context, teachers teach so that students can learn and master the content of the lesson until they achieve a specified objective (cognitive aspect), and can also influence changes in attitudes (affective aspect), as well as skills (psychomotor aspect) of a student. Teaching gives the impression of only being a one-party job, namely the teacher's job alone. While learning also implies the existence of interaction between teachers and students. (Nurhasanah, tt, p. 5) The definition of Islamic Religious Education learning is an educational process that is carried out to study Islam truly so that religion is not only knowledge, but also an experience and guide for one's life. (Isroani, 2019, p. 53) Basically, every child has the potential to experience problems in learning, it's just that some of these problems are mild, and do not require special attention from others because they can be overcome by the person concerned, there are also those whose learning problems are severe so they require special attention and assistance from others. One of the learning subjects who experiences these problems is a child with special needs(children with

special needs), these learning difficulties are usually influenced by below average intelligence, lack of self-confidence, child development disorders, lack of interest in learning certain materials, inability to set aside time and often delay completing assignments. (Ningrum, 2022, pp. 181–182) Children with special needs is a term for children who have different characters from children in general. They show mental, emotional and physical disabilities. Children with special needs require special handling, especially in terms of education. It is stated in article 32 paragraph (1) which reads: Special education is education for students who have difficulty in following the learning process due to physical, emotional, mental, social disorders, and/or have special intelligence and talents.

From these provisions it is clear that extraordinary children, the term used for children with special needs, have the right to receive an education.

Quality like children in general, without looking down on them. (Oktari, Harmi, and Wanto, 2020, pp. 14–15) Islamic Religious Education is not only given to normal children, but also to children with special needs, because every human being has the same rights before Allah SWT. Teaching Islamic Religious Education to students is more difficult than teaching other sciences, because teaching Islamic Religious Education involves feelings and emphasizes the personality of the student, not just intellectual. (Wahyuni, 2020, p. 69) In this case, that in handling children with special needs requires an appropriate strategy. On the other hand, the facilities must also be adequate in the learning process. There is a State Special School 1 located in North Hulu Sungai Regency, precisely in the city of Amuntai. There are students with special needs, which will be the object of this research.

Method

The type of research that the researcher conducted was field research (field research) based on qualitative research. This research is a study of Islamic religious education learning strategies for children with special needs (ABK) at the elementary school level. Field research is a research conducted by going directly into the field to obtain the necessary data. This research is a descriptive qualitative research, namely a research procedure that produces descriptive data in the form of written or spoken words from people and subjects being observed. The researcher used this qualitative approach because research on Islamic religious education learning strategies for children with special needs (ABK) is not enough with just the presentation of a theory. This research needs to conduct direct observations and interviews in the field. So that this research can be accounted for as a research result. The subjects in this research are teachers who teach Islamic Religious Education subjects and students at the elementary school level (SD) at the State Special School (SLB) 1 Amuntai, Hulu Sungai Utara (HSU) district. While the object in this research is about learning strategies for children with special needs, which the author specifically focuses on the Islamic Religious Education subject at the elementary school level at the State Special School 1 Amuntai, HSU district.

Results

State Special School (SLB) 1 Amuntai is a special educational institution that serves students with various types of special needs, such as deafness, blindness, mental retardation, physical disability, autism, hyperactivity, and other specific learning disabilities.

Islamic Religious Education Learning Planning

Before implementing learning activities, teachers first make a thorough plan so that the learning process can run effectively and the learning objectives are achieved. This was conveyed by a grade I–V Islamic Religious Education teacher, who explained: "For planning, we look at the literature that people have, of course, now because there is PMM (the independent teaching platform). So the plan is to create a teaching module, there are 6 elements, adjust what can be taught first. However, here the Qur'an and Hadith are taught first using the Iqra' book. Each class must have elements of the Qur'an and Hadith using the Iqra' book, because they are not yet able to use the Qur'an."
The same thing was also expressed by the PAI teacher for class VI:

> *"We make the teaching modules ourselves, each class teacher or subject teacher has their own teaching module. We make the teaching modules ourselves but we still look at them from books but we have our own results." He added:*
> *"The teaching module is our digital portfolio. Based on the planning of the teaching module, the activities in the lesson schedule, and the external learning, we have skills, that's what we do here. The material emphasized is still the hijaiyah alphabet. In higher grades, we move on to topics like the pillars of Islam, the pillars of faith, and prayer movements, including how students recite the Quran."*

The interview results show that Islamic Religious Education teachers at SLB Negeri 1 Amuntai created independent teaching modules in the form of digital portfolios while still referring to official references and literature. The basic material taught focused on the Hijaiyah letters using textbooks.Iqra', then continued with material on the pillars of Islam,pillars of faith, and prayer movements according to students' abilities.

Islamic Religious Education Learning Strategy

Based on the results of observations, Islamic Religious Education teachers use various strategies which is adapted to the conditions of the students. As explained by the fourth grade Islamic Religious Education teacher:

> *"So, it's like the lessons at a special needs school are basic, but getting them used to it is very difficult; it's done gradually. It's like anyone can teach it because they learn from the beginning, like teaching kindergarten, like teaching children who can't read at all."*

He further stated:

> *"Learning is differentiated, so it depends on the child. It depends on what they can do, and if they can't, it can't be forced. So it depends on their needs. For example, someone who is deaf can't be forced to speak."*

Teachers are also assisted by homeroom teachers in the learning process, especially for lower grades:

> *"The homeroom teacher also helps with learning, but not all classes, because some classes can have their homeroom teacher leave during class. Like, the fifth graders yesterday were able to leave their homeroom teacher, because the upper classes are used to studying and know they have to sit and study. For first graders, they don't understand yet, so the homeroom teacher can help. But if the homeroom teacher is busy, they can't help, so they have to teach themselves, which is exhausting."*

In line with that, the sixth grade Islamic Education teacher added:

> *"There are many strategies because some of the students are mute. Use sign language, so you can't just do anything."*

The findings indicate that teachers employ differentiated learning strategies, adapting approaches to each child's abilities and circumstances. Teachers adapt interactions, methods, and support to the types of challenges students face.

1. Learning Materials

In terms of material, teachers focus on the basic teachings of Islamic Religious Education (PAI). According to the PAI teacher for grades 4-5.**:**

All the material is actually important, but the main points should be emphasized first, such as the hijaiyah letters for lower grades and prayer movements for upper grades. For example, students in grade 2 who can be quiet while studying can be taught how to perform ablution by showing them pictures or taking them to the ablution area. However, those who can't be quiet can't do it at all. So, what can be taught, for example, is only being able to pronounce the words.

> *"The letter alif, yes, only the letter alif. There are even those who are already in third grade but they only want the letter alif, the letter ba and so on, they don't want it. There are also daily activities in the prayer room every morning before studying to get used to reading short surahs."*

Meanwhile, the sixth grade Islamic Education teacher added:

> *"They need to be emphasized first, so they have to memorize them first. They still repeat the letters alif to ta, and grades 1 through 6 can still repeat them. They even memorize short surahs, for example, which are already a habit. Reciting Yasin, surah 4, is a habit every day during the Dhuha prayer.*

> *Religious activities here are combined in the morning and afternoon. But by midday, the lower grades have gone home, so only the upper grades are left."*

The results of the observations support the statement above that Islamic Religious Education teachers emphasize learning the Hijaiyah letters through writing, reading and thickening the letters.,as well as the habit of daily worship such as the Dhuha prayer and reading short surahs in the school prayer room.

2. Learning Methods

Teachers use a variety of methods that are varied and tailored to the characteristics of the students, as expressed by a fourth-grade Islamic Education teacher.:

> *"The method is a mix of methods, called differentiation. For example, if you want to follow along with a song, then use a song. If you want to watch a video, then use a video. Ultimately, it depends on the student and their situation. That's why this differentiated method has only recently been implemented in other schools, but it's been in place at special needs schools for a long time. We can't just follow everyone else, because it depends on the students' needs."*

The same thing was also explained by the PAI teacher for class VI:

> *"There are many methods, depending on their situation and conditions. Sometimes they can even practice if they want, because this sixth grade is already quite large and somewhat manageable, although there are still some who are difficult to manage."*

From field observations, it is known that the methods frequently used include interactive songs, animated videos, practice writing the Hijaiyah letters, and direct practice of worship.

3. Learning Media

The media used by teachers varies and is tailored to the needs of each class. A fourth-grade Islamic Religious Education teacher stated:

> *"Just use whatever tools you can. Actually, there are many tools in this school, like pieces of wood or small things like paper, that students can eat or throw away."*

Meanwhile, the sixth grade Islamic Education teacher explained:

> *"The media varies. We use letter recognition cards, puzzles that we have them assemble, and even drawing."*

Observation results show that teachers often use puzzles, letter cards, origami paper, and letter blocks as learning aids that attract students' attention.

4. Obstacles and How to Overcome Them

Islamic Religious Education teachers face various obstacles in the learning process. According to a fourth-grade Islamic Religious Education teacher:

> *"The obstacles are varied, the main one being behavior. "Unruly behavior, such as being difficult to get to be quiet. There's even the occasional vomiting or defecation in class. Everyone is different; sometimes they comply, sometimes they don't... If they've done a little something that day, like writing or reading, that's a blessing."*

He also added:

> *"Autism is possible, not probably, but definitely. His mind doesn't want to follow our instructions, it doesn't connect... If someone is mentally retarded, their memory is weak, it's like they have no memory."*

Meanwhile, the sixth grade Islamic Education teacher said:

> *"There are many obstacles. Most of the people here are autistic and some are mentally retarded, and they can throw tantrums at certain times. But we've gotten used to it because we've been here for so long, but it was difficult at first."*

To overcome these obstacles, teachers apply a persuasive and patient approach.,as explained by the sixth grade Islamic Religious Education teacher**:**

> *"When a tantrum occurs, you have to calm it down first, just like when you reprimand your own child, you have to do it gently."*

Meanwhile, according to the PAI teacher for class IV**:**

> *"Usually, we need to know the students so they can obey, for example, what they like so they will write, for example, 'let's watch something later', watch what they want... For those who are still small, they can't be promised... So, it's like so they first know what learning behavior should be like, that's all for now."*

The teacher also gave reward something as simple as a clap or a high five as a form of appreciation:

> *"If the parents are diligent, for example, they are at least diligent in sending them to school, that is progress... even holding a pen is progress for them, even if it's a small thing, so for people with disabilities, even small progress is very meaningful."*

Learning Evaluation

After the lesson is complete, the teacher conducts an evaluation using an approach tailored to the child's circumstances. The sixth-grade Islamic Religious Education teacher explains:

> *"The evaluation will be in the form of a PAS (Public Assessment), with assessments in the form of test sheets, and we're still assisting with this, as that's the requirement," the fourthgrade Islamic Religious Education teacher added:*
> *"There are tests in the evaluation, but the homeroom teacher plays a role, and there's an assessment. It's tailored to the student. If they can't read, they just draw... Forget autistic and mentally retarded students, even deaf students, because they lack communication, need to draw."*

He also explained:

> *"Students at this special needs school don't achieve much, it can't be instant... But we still appreciate their abilities, no matter how small, because progress for them, even if it's small, will mean a lot."*

In addition, teachers record students' progress on a daily basis:

> *"We have student progress, every day there is... for example Iqra', it is written down up to which letter the student knows."*

And according to the PAI teacher for class VI.**:**

> *"To measure their level of understanding, we simply watch them work on the questions... Parents also view our digital portfolio every month to find out their child's learning outcomes."*

Discussion

Based on the results of research conducted at SLB Negeri 1 Amuntai, the Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning process for children with special needs is carried out in a planned, flexible manner, and adapted to the conditions of the students. PAI teachers develop independent digital teaching modules that contain the main elements of learning, and adapt the content to the students' abilities. This is in line with the view of Benjamin S. Bloom who stated that learning objectives must be formulated specifically and measurably. Teaching modules help teachers to formulate clear learning objectives, so that teachers can choose appropriate materials, methods, and evaluations to achieve these objectives. (Nurlaela, 2019, p. 49) Thus, PAI teachers at SLB Negeri 1 Amuntai have implemented planning principles that are in line with Bloom's theory by formulating realistic and contextual objectives to the conditions of students with disabilities.

The implementation of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning in this school also demonstrates the application of a differentiation strategy, where teachers adapt the content, process, and learning products to the abilities of each

student. This strategy is in line with Carol Ann Tomlinson's theory that developed the concept of differentiated learning, namely a learning approach that recognizes and responds to individual differences in students' learning readiness, interests, and learning profiles. Differentiated learning involves adjusting the content, process, and learning products to suit the needs of each student. (Pratiwi and Fithriani, 2020, p. 126) Observations show that teachers use various approaches, such as singing, watching animated videos, writing the hijaiyah letters, and direct practice of worship.

While delivering the material, teachers must use interesting methods so that students are more active in participating in the learning. For the use of learning methods at SLB Negeri 1 Amuntai by Islamic religious education teachers in the mixed learning process because in one class there are various types of ABK which of course have different needs, therefore teachers must adapt to the situation and conditions of the existing students. This is in accordance with Howard Gardner's opinion which states that each individual has different types of intelligence. Interesting learning methods can accommodate these various types of intelligence, so that students can learn according to their respective learning styles. (Fadiawati, 2023, p. 53) Furthermore, from the results of the interview it was found that Islamic Religious Education teachers face various behavioral obstacles, especially in autistic and mentally retarded students who often have difficulty focusing or tantrums. In dealing with these situations, teachers apply a persuasive and patient approach by providingrewardin the form of praise and positive reinforcement. This strategy is relevant to BF Skinner's Behaviorism theory which emphasizes the importance of reinforcement (reinforcement) in the learning process. Applause andhigh fivecan be considered a form of positive reinforcement given by teachers to students after completing an assignment. This reinforcement is expected to increase students' motivation and enthusiasm for learning. (J. W, 2021, p. 150) Thus, teachers play a role not only as transmitters of material but also as shapers of children's religious behavior through consistent examples and reinforcement.

In addition, teachers also assess students' learning outcomes individually through observations, daily assessments, and digital portfolio records. Evaluations are conducted by considering each child's small developments, not just the final results. Learning outcomes are not instantaneous; they can take years to become apparent. Nevertheless, teachers continue to value their abilities, no matter how small, because progress is important for each child.

Even small things can be very meaningful. This aligns with Carl Rogers' Humanistic Theory, which emphasizes the importance of appreciation, acceptance, and empathy in the learning process. Every individual, including children with special needs, needs to be valued and accepted for who they are. Teachers who implement a humanistic approach will focus on each child's strengths and potential, and create a safe and supportive environment for their emotional and social development. (M. Ariffin, 2018, p. 125)

Overall, the research results indicate that the Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning strategy at SLB Negeri 1 Amuntai combines behaviorist, constructivist, and humanistic principles within a unified, adaptive learning practice. Teachers strive to provide meaningful learning experiences by

integrating Islamic values, empathy, and respect for individual differences. This approach demonstrates that religious education for children with special needs emphasizes not only cognitive aspects but also affective and spiritual aspects, thereby fostering religious character and selfconfidence in students.

Conclusion

Based on the results of research on Islamic Religious Education Learning Strategies for Children with Special Needs at Elementary School Level at State Special School 1 Amuntai, Hulu Sungai Utara Regency, it can be concluded that the PAI learning process at State Special School 1 Amuntai runs with a planned, flexible approach, and is centered on the needs of students.

First, during the planning stage, Islamic Religious Education teachers independently develop digital teaching modules tailored to the characteristics and abilities of children with special needs. This planning aligns with Bloom's (1956) perspective, which emphasizes the importance of formulating specific, measurable, and realistic learning objectives so that learning activities are focused and relevant to the students' circumstances.

Second, during the implementation phase, teachers apply differentiated learning strategies in accordance with Tomlinson's (2014) theory by adapting the content, process, and learning products based on each child's abilities, interests, and readiness. The methods used are varied, such as singing, watching videos, drawing, practicing writing the hijaiyah letters, and practicing religious practices. This approach also reflects Gardner's (1983) theory of Multiple Intelligences, which states that each child has a different learning style and requires a variety of teaching strategies.

Third, when facing learning obstacles, teachers demonstrate patience, empathy, and consistency by providing positive reinforcement such as praise, applause, and simple rewards. This is in accordance with Skinner's behaviorist theory (1953).) which emphasizes the importance of reinforcement in forming positive learning behavior.

Fourth, in the evaluation stage, teachers conduct ongoing assessments through observation, portfolio records, and daily assessments tailored to the student's circumstances. Evaluation emphasizes the process and small improvements rather than the final outcome. This approach aligns with Rogers' (1969) humanistic theory, which emphasizes respect for students' personal and emotional development.

In general, the results of this study indicate that the Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning strategy at SLB Negeri 1 Amuntai harmoniously integrates behaviorist, constructivist, and humanistic principles. Teachers serve not only as transmitters of religious knowledge but also as facilitators, guides, and motivators, shaping the religious character and spiritual independence of children with special needs. With an adaptive and empathetic approach, Islamic religious education at SLB Negeri 1 Amuntai serves as an important tool in building faith, morals, and selfconfidence in students as a whole.

Acknowledgements

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