INCLUSIVE ISLAMIC EDUCATION: UNDERSTANDING THE NEEDS OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

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ABSTRACT

Islamic education for children with disabilities faces significant challenges, including limited teacher preparedness, insufficient assistive tools, communication barriers, and a lack of professional training. These factors hinder equal access to education and limit opportunities for social integration. This study aims to analyze effective inclusive Islamic education practices that support students with disabilities. This research employs a qualitative approach using a library research method, which involves collecting, selecting, and analyzing scholarly literature to understand the implementation of inclusive Islamic education for students with disabilities. The findings indicate that the acceptance of students with disabilities according to Islamic teachings emphasizes justice, compassion, and human dignity, while also supporting their social participation and educational rights. Islamic education strengthens spiritual coping through guidance derived from the Qur'an, Hadith, supplications (duʿāʾ), remembrance (dhikr), and acts of worship, thereby fostering emotional resilience, empathy, and character development among students. Adaptive learning methods, including the use of Hijaiyah sign language, visual aids, technology, and the VARK learning approach, enable students with hearing impairments to access the Qur'an and other religious learning materials. Support from teachers, parents, and the community plays a crucial role in creating an effective, equitable, and empowering model of inclusive Islamic education, allowing all students to develop academically, spiritually, and socially. In conclusion, inclusive Islamic education promotes equal access, spiritual development, and adaptive learning for students with disabilities in both academic and social contexts. This study provides practical guidance for teachers, parents, and communities in fostering inclusive and empowering Islamic education.

INTRODUCTION

The urgency of disability education is underscored by multiple psychological, institutional, and structural barriers. Deeply ingrained attitudes among educators, limited access to necessary resources, and insufficient professional preparedness hinder effective implementation of inclusive practices (Nikolaesku et al., 2025). Many teachers and medical professionals also lack specialized training to adequately support individuals with disabilities, which manifests as a gap in both general and special education contexts (Santoro et al., 2017; Chandan et al., 2025). Despite policy initiatives and advocacy efforts, exclusion and inequity remain persistent, particularly in educational environments, reflecting societal biases and the inadequacy of prevailing educational models (Mcgogo, 2023; Bronson, 2016). Addressing these challenges requires a multidimensional approach, including reforming teacher education, improving resource allocation, and fostering awareness about the rights and potential of students with disabilities. Without timely intervention, systemic inequities risk perpetuating marginalization and limiting the social and academic development of this population.

Inclusive education is essential not only for pedagogical effectiveness but also as a social justice imperative, ensuring equitable access for all students regardless of disability (Hodge & Harrison, 2022; Sandoval Gomez & McKee, 2020). Legal and policy frameworks, including the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the Education for All Movement, emphasize the necessity of inclusive practices and institutional accountability (Naami & Mort, 2023). Effective inclusion requires preparing educators through comprehensive training that integrates digital tools, immersive learning technologies, and interactive teaching strategies to support learners with special educational needs (Alfrey & Jeanes, 2023). Furthermore, curricula adaptation, technological accessibility, and robust support systems such as career guidance, psychological support, and employment assistance are critical for enabling students with disabilities to succeed academically and socially (Narayan, 2022; Mena-Nagua et al., 2026; Margolis et al., 2017). These measures collectively promote tolerance, diversity acceptance, and non-discriminatory learning environments.

Islamic education for children with disabilities carries significant urgency, as Islamic teachings emphasize compassion and support for individuals with limitations. The Qur'an and Hadith encourage the fulfillment of the rights and well-being of persons with disabilities, including equal access to education and opportunities for social integration (Alqazlan, 2026). Nevertheless, several challenges persist, such as limited teacher preparedness, inadequate assistive tools, and inconsistencies in communication methods used in teaching practices (Zulkifli et al., 2022; Dzulkifli et al., 2020). Effective inclusive education strategiesincluding adaptive learning models, individualized education plans, and the use of visual, auditory, and kinesthetic learning styles are essential to address the learning needs of children with disabilities within the context of Islamic education (Ainisyifa et al., 2017). Through the implementation of these strategies, children with disabilities can gain access to Qur'anic education and other Islamic subjects, in accordance with the principle of equal rights for all children (Grljušić et al., 2020).

The success of inclusive Islamic education for children with disabilities requires collaboration among educators, parents, and health professionals, including the provision of small class sizes, specialized curricula, and access to supportive resources (Bhurawala, 2025). Faith-based perspectives also influence how Muslim parents understand and support children with special needs, making culturally sensitive educational psychology particularly important (Saxton, 2017). Islamic teachings emphasize empathy and social integration, encouraging the development of inclusive environments that support the growth and development of children with disabilities

(Goje, 2023). To improve educational quality, policies within Islamic educational institutions need to be strengthened, including the provision of adequate physical facilities, academic accommodations, and teacher training related to disability awareness and inclusive practices. In addition, continuous public education is necessary to promote cultural change and ensure that persons with disabilities receive appropriate support and respect (Rismawati et al., 2024).

Although Islamic education emphasizes compassion, rights, and social integration for children with disabilities through the teachings of the Qur'an and Hadith, previous studies reveal a significant gap, particularly in terms of limited teacher preparedness, insufficient assistive tools, and inconsistent communication methods in instructional practices. The novelty of this study lies in the application of adaptive inclusive education strategies, including individualized learning models and the integration of visual, auditory, and kinesthetic learning styles tailored to the context of Islamic education. The objective of this research is to identify the needs and effective practices that support equal access for children with disabilities in Islamic learning. The expected impact of this study is the creation of an inclusive, supportive, and empowering educational environment. Furthermore, this research contributes to the enrichment of the literature on inclusive Islamic education and provides practical recommendations for educational institutions, teachers, and communities in supporting the academic and spiritual development of children with disabilities.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study employs a qualitative approach because it aims to understand the concepts, meanings, and perspectives of Islamic education in addressing the needs of students with disabilities in a comprehensive manner. The method used is library research, which involves examining various scholarly sources such as academic journal articles, books, and other academic publications related to the research topic. Through this method, the researchers analyze theories, concepts, and findings from previous studies to obtain a comprehensive understanding of inclusive Islamic education for students with disabilities.

The research was conducted through several stages. The first stage was problem analysis, which involved identifying phenomena related to the educational needs of students with disabilities and the importance of an inclusive Islamic educational approach in addressing those needs. The second stage was literature searching, which was conducted through the Scopus database (https://www.scopus.com) by prioritizing searches within the title, abstract, and keywords sections. The third stage was keyword identification, using terms relevant to the research topic such as "Islamic education for disabilities," "the urgency of education for children with disabilities," "the need for Islamic education for students with disabilities," and "religious education for students with disabilities." The fourth stage was literature selection, which involved choosing the most relevant sources that discuss inclusive education, Islamic education, and the educational needs of students with disabilities. The fifth stage was literature review and analysis, which included carefully reading and examining the selected sources to identify key concepts and important information related to the research topic. The final stage was information categorization, in which significant data from various sources were identified and grouped to serve as the primary data in this library-based research according to the focus of the study.

The data collection technique in this library research was carried out through several steps. The first step was data editing, which involved examining and selecting the content of the collected literature to ensure clarity, completeness, and relevance to the research topic. At this stage, the researchers assessed whether the sources were relevant, contained sufficient information, and

supported the discussion of inclusive Islamic education for students with disabilities. The second step was organizing, which involved arranging and structuring the collected data according to the predetermined research framework. Relevant data were then categorized into specific themes, such as the concept of disability, inclusive Islamic education, and the educational needs of students with disabilities. The third step was finding, which refers to the presentation of data that had undergone the editing and organizing processes in accordance with the main topics of the study. At this stage, the collected data were systematically organized so that information from various sources could be understood more clearly and structurally within the context of inclusive Islamic education.

The data analysis technique in this study was conducted through two main stages. The first stage was content analysis, which involved an in-depth examination of the literature to understand concepts, ideas, and findings relevant to the research topic. At this stage, the researchers read, analyzed, and interpreted various sources to identify information related to inclusive Islamic education and the needs of students with disabilities. The second stage was source verification, which aimed to ensure the accuracy and credibility of the data used in the study. The researchers verified the literature sources by prioritizing references from the Scopus database, ensuring that the analyzed materials were indexed scientific publications with high levels of validity and credibility.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1. Literature Review Results

Author	Objective	Research Findings
Nizeyimana et al. (2025)	To examine religious perceptions of disability, the role of religion in inclusive education, the relationship between religion and disability, and to formulate a religious model of inclusive education.	The study indicates that some beliefs in Africa perceive disability as a curse, leading to stigma, marginalization, violence, and neglect. However, religion also holds significant potential to promote social acceptance and support the development of inclusive education models for persons with disabilities.
Gürer & Kaya (2024)	To examine the problems and expectations of individuals with hearing and visual impairments regarding nonformal religious education in Qur'an courses in Turkey.	The results show that religious education helps persons with disabilities interpret their condition and strengthen spiritual coping. Participants expressed the need for more accessible religious learning approaches, including appropriate methods, materials, and support for both visually and hearing-impaired learners.
Bednarz (2022)	To analyze the role of religious teachers in providing psychological and pedagogical support for students with special needs in inclusive classrooms.	The findings indicate that religious teachers have the responsibility to provide psychological and pedagogical assistance to students with special needs. Teachers must plan and implement inclusive learning while collaborating with other school stakeholders to ensure students' educational and social development needs are met.
Karasu & Şimşek (2018)	To determine the influence of individualized education programs on the achievement and learning levels of religious education among students with mild intellectual disabilities in elementary school.	The results indicate that individualized education programs have a positive impact on students' religious education achievement. Students showed improved understanding of religious behavior, increased religious knowledge, enhanced self-confidence, and stronger self-esteem, although religious information may easily be forgotten if not regularly practiced.
Grljušić et al. (2020)	To examine legal provisions, disability paradigms, and the role of religious education in supporting	The study shows that inclusive education emphasizes respect for human rights and acceptance of diversity. Religious education plays an important role in instilling values of equality, respect, and acceptance toward students with disabilities,

Author	Objective	Research Findings
	implementation of inclusive education in schools.	making religious teachers key actors in supporting inclusive curricula and educational practices.
Alsmadi (2022)	To investigate the utilization of university services and facilities by students with disabilities and to examine their attitudes, experiences, and satisfaction within the campus environment.	The results show that students with disabilities significantly utilize disability center services, lecturer support, and peer assistance. However, the benefits derived from a supportive campus environment remain moderate. Students' overall satisfaction levels are also moderate, with differences in service utilization based on academic level and type of disability.
Abdillah et al. (2025)	To develop a character-based inclusive education model that integrates moral and religious values in learning for students with disabilities in higher education.	The results indicate that the character-based inclusive education model includes fundamental values such as tolerance, sympathy, and empathy; instrumental values such as self-awareness and cooperation; and a core value of sincere service. Its implementation requires adjustments in media, learning materials, and evaluation methods to respond effectively to the needs of students with disabilities.
Aly & Bustomi (2022)	To examine the implementation of Qur'anic literacy learning for students with disabilities in special schools and identify obstacles in the teaching process.	The study shows that Qur'anic learning services for students with disabilities remain limited. Major obstacles include the shortage of Islamic Religious Education teachers and the lack of appropriate teaching methods. Teaching the *Iqro* method often adapts sign language, indicating the need for specialized Qur'an reading training programs for students with disabilities.

Acceptance of Students with Disabilities in Society According to Islamic Sharia

Acceptance of students with disabilities in society according to Islamic Sharia emphasizes both theological and practical foundations for inclusion, rooted in the principles of justice, compassion, and human dignity. Islamic law (Shari'ah) advocates the social participation of individuals with disabilities, supporting their involvement in financial transactions and personal status matters, such as marriage and divorce, depending on the severity of the disability (Hassanein & Al-Arjani, 2024). Religious edicts, including fatwas issued by Nahdlatul Ulama in Indonesia, reinforce the moral and ethical obligation to uphold the rights of persons with disabilities, providing a theological basis aligned with Islamic values of mercy and justice (Maftuhin, 2021).

However, despite this supportive framework, significant gaps remain in the practical implementation of inclusive policies. Disparities between legislation and practice in Indonesia such as inadequate infrastructure, lack of academic accommodations, and limited disability awareness among educators continue to hinder full inclusion (Rismawati et al., 2024). Cultural stigma and misinterpretations of Islamic teachings further marginalize students with disabilities, particularly in regions such as Makassar. Addressing these challenges requires comprehensive public education and awareness campaigns, engagement of religious leaders in advocacy efforts, policy and infrastructure development aligned with both Islamic ethical principles and international human rights standards, and active community participation in decision-making processes to foster a socially inclusive environment for students with disabilities (Billah et al., 2025; Zainal et al., 2025; Nurkidam et al., 2022).

Islamic Education Strengthens Students' Spiritual Coping

Islamic education plays an important role in strengthening students' spiritual coping through integrated approaches that combine religious learning, moral values, and spiritual practices. Islamic educational counseling that incorporates spiritual guidance from the Qur'an and Hadith

has been shown to reduce symptoms of stress among students, functioning as a form of emotional coping that helps individuals manage their feelings without necessarily changing the source of stress (Abdurrahman et al., 2021).

The integration of Islamic values through practices such as expressive writing encourages deeper internalization of these values, supporting cognitive-emotional integration and enhancing students' ability to reflect and regulate emotions (Kurniawan et al., 2025). Furthermore, Islamic education contributes to character formation and emotional intelligence through routine activities such as prayer (*salat*), recitation of Qur'anic verses, and social service activities. These practices enhance spiritual intelligence while fostering empathy and cooperation among students (Alimni et al., 2022).

Various spiritual practices including supplication (*du'a*), remembrance (*dhikr*), and voluntary acts of worship serve as effective coping mechanisms for maintaining emotional resilience and managing stress, anxiety, and other psychological challenges (Achour et al., 2016; Shaik, 2026). The role of teachers and a supportive social environment is crucial in guiding students to adopt positive behaviors and spiritual practices, enabling them to reflect on experiences, strengthen spiritual and social values, and build sustainable psychological resilience (Suhartini et al., 2025).

Learning Methods and Islamic Education Materials Based on Sign Language

Islamic education for deaf students requires teaching methods and learning materials adapted to their abilities, including the use of Hijaiyah Sign Language for Qur'anic reading. The learning process typically begins with the introduction of letters, followed by letter combinations, reading, memorization, and writing exercises (Pamungkas et al., 2023).

Hadith instruction is delivered through simple sentences, interpretation using sign language, explanation of meanings, and repetition of important phrases. The use of visual aids and internet resources enhances understanding, although the availability of adequate learning materials remains limited. Support from parents and communities in learning sign language is also essential for supporting the Islamic education process of deaf students (Mardiyanti & Haryanthi, 2016).

The use of information and communication technology (ICT) also supports learning, although some software applications remain inaccessible for deaf students, while printed materials require adaptation to improve accessibility (Dzulkifli, 2021). Adjusting learning styles using the VARK approach visual, auditory, read/write, and kinesthetic can significantly increase student engagement and academic achievement (Siregar et al., 2025).

Furthermore, the integration of Islamic values through analogies, dialogue, encouragement, and exemplary behavior contributes to character formation and moral resilience among students (Listyono et al., 2018; Badri & Malik, 2024). Curriculum innovations that integrate contemporary knowledge with classical Islamic texts also make learning more relevant and engaging for deaf students (Fauzi et al., 2024). This approach emphasizes the importance of adapting learning materials, teaching methods, and social support to maximize the success of Islamic education for students with special needs.

The Need to Understand Religious Behavior and Religious Knowledge for Students with Disabilities

Understanding religious behavior and religious knowledge is essential for students, particularly in supporting spiritual fulfillment and their ability to cope with life's challenges. Religion can provide spiritual strength and help individuals with disabilities interpret their circumstances and overcome difficulties, offering comfort and deeper meaning that enhances overall well-being (Gürer & Kaya, 2024).

However, students with disabilities often encounter physical and communication barriers in religious environments, such as limited mobility and a lack of supportive services, including sign language interpreters (Mahadi et al., 2024). Therefore, inclusive religious education is necessary, emphasizing respect for the needs of every child and highlighting the importance of equality and recognition of all individuals (Grljušić et al., 2020).

The implementation of Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) has proven to have a positive impact on religious education achievement among students with intellectual disabilities (Karasu & Şimşek, 2018). To improve inclusion, training and awareness programs for religious leaders and educators are essential so that they can effectively support the participation of students with disabilities in religious activities (Stewart-Ginsburg et al., 2020).

In addition, support from the community and peers within religious environments can strengthen engagement and inclusion, creating a more welcoming, supportive, and motivating atmosphere for students with disabilities (Finn & Utting, 2017). Through this approach, religious education becomes not only a medium for learning but also a means of fostering the spiritual and social development of all students.

CONCLUSION

This study emphasizes the importance of understanding religious behavior and religious knowledge among students with disabilities, as well as its implications for fulfilling their spiritual needs and enhancing their capacity to cope with life's challenges. The findings indicate that inclusive religious education not only provides religious understanding but also supports the emotional and spiritual well-being of students with disabilities, helping them find meaning and inner peace in coping with physical or communication limitations (Gürer & Kaya, 2024; Mahadi et al., 2024). In addition, this study identifies several key barriers faced by these students, including limited physical accessibility, insufficient support services, and low levels of awareness among educators and religious leaders, which may reduce their participation in religious activities (Stewart-Ginsburg et al., 2020).

The contribution of this research lies in providing empirical evidence regarding the importance of inclusive religious education programs and the implementation of Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) for students with intellectual disabilities, which have been shown to improve both their achievement in religious education and their spiritual experiences (Karasu & Şimşek, 2018; Grljušić et al., 2020). The impact of this study also includes practical recommendations for educators, religious leaders, and communities, highlighting the need for specialized training, increased awareness, and strengthened peer and community support to create more inclusive and welcoming religious environments for all children. Therefore, this study not only enriches the academic literature on inclusive religious education for persons with disabilities but also provides practical guidance for implementing educational policies and religious activities that respect equality, enhance participation, and strengthen the spiritual and social well-being of students.

the advancement of knowledge in the field of inclusive Islamic education by highlighting the importance of equitable access, adaptive learning strategies, and spiritual support for students with disabilities. The findings of this study are also anticipated to provide practical guidance for educators, educational institutions, and communities in creating more inclusive, supportive, and accessible learning environments. Ultimately, this research aims to promote greater awareness, strengthen educational practices, and encourage the implementation of inclusive policies that support the academic, social, and spiritual development of students with disabilities.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

Author 1 : Conceptualized the study, developed the research framework, and supervised the overall research process.

Author 2 : Literature search, data collection, and organization of the relevant academic sources used in the study

Author 3 : Responsible for data analysis, interpretation of findings, and the development of the discussion related to inclusive Islamic education and disability perspectives

Author 4 : Writing and editing of the manuscript, including structuring the introduction, methodology, and conclusion sections

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