

STRATEGIES, CHALLENGES, AND SOLUTIONS FOR LEARNING ISLAMIC RELIGIOUS EDUCATION FOR CHILDREN WITH MENTAL DISABILITIES SLBN LAMPUNG PROVINCE

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Abstract

This study aims to analyze the learning strategies, challenges faced, and solutions implemented by teachers in teaching Islamic Religious Education (PAI) to students with mild intellectual disabilities at SLBN PKK, Lampung Province, and SLB Dharma Bakti Dharma Pertiwi, Bandar Lampung City. This research uses a qualitative approach with a multisite type, employing data collection techniques such as observation, in-depth interviews with PAI teachers, and documentation of learning activities. The collected data were then analyzed descriptively and qualitatively through data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions. The results show that PAI learning strategies at SLBN PKK, Lampung Province, and SLB Dharma Bakti Dharma Pertiwi, Bandar Lampung City, emphasize an individual approach, simple methods, direct practice, and habituation of religious rituals to facilitate student understanding. The challenges faced include students' limited cognitive abilities, a lack of engaging learning media, and low parental involvement. To address these issues, teachers applied solutions such as modifying teaching methods, using simple media, adopting a personal approach, and collaborating with parents to reinforce religious values at home. The study concludes that the success of PAI learning for students with mild intellectual disabilities requires adaptive strategies, contextualized media, and synergy between teachers, schools, and families to achieve the goals of religious education optimally.

Keywords

PAI Learning, Children with Special Needs, Mild Intellectual Disabilities.



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INTRODUCTION

The Indonesian government has actually accommodated the right to education for all children through Article 31 of the 1945 Constitution and Law No. 20 of 2003 concerning the National Education System (Indonesia, 2003). Data shows that the number of children with special needs studying at SLB in the 2020/2021 academic year reached 144,621 students, with 82,326 at the elementary school level, 36,884 at the junior high school, and 25,411 at the senior high school (Statistics, 2022). This figure illustrates the urgency of providing adaptive special education that is tailored to student characteristics. In Bandar Lampung City, there are eight special needs schools (SLB) that provide educational services for children with special needs (ABK) in various categories, including the Lampung PKK Special Needs School (SLBN) and the Dharma Bakti Dharma Pertiwi Special Needs School (SLB Dharma Bakti Dharma Pertiwi).

Children with special needs (ABK) are children who have physical, mental, emotional, social, or intellectual disabilities that require special educational services. The ABK category includes blindness, deafness, intellectual disability, physical disability, autism, and specific learning difficulties (Ningrum, 2022). Of these categories, the mentally retarded are a fairly dominant group and have limitations in intelligence, emotions, and social adjustment (Sinaga et al., 2023). Children with intellectual disabilities are divided into three categories, namely mild, moderate, and severe, with lower intellectual abilities compared to normal children, so they require special learning methods to develop their potential optimally (Sahudra et al., 2023).

One of the core subjects at SLB is Islamic Religious Education (PAI), which aims to equip students with an understanding of faith, piety, and noble morals (Wiswanti & Husna, 2021). Islamic Religious Education not only emphasizes cognitive aspects, but also the habituation of worship, the instilling of moral values, and the formation of character in accordance with Islamic teachings (Jamaluddin, 2024). In the context of ABK, especially those with intellectual disabilities, Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teaching faces major challenges due to students' intellectual limitations, which require a more creative and varied learning approach, emphasizing practical aspects over theory.

According to (Bakar, 2014) Islamic education encompasses physical education (*tarbiyah jismiyah*), intellectual education (*tarbiyah 'aqliyah*), and moral education (*tarbiyah adabiyah*). These three aspects form the basis for developing comprehensive Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning. Furthermore, Minister of National Education Regulation No. 70 of 2009 emphasizes the

importance of inclusive education, which allows children with special needs to participate in the same educational environment as normal children (Khotimah, 2019). Theologically, the Qur'an also emphasizes human equality without distinction of physical or intellectual condition, as stated in QS. An-Nur verse 61 and QS. Az-Zumar verse 9. This is the basis that Islamic Religious Education for ABK is a fundamental right that must be fulfilled.

Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning for children with intellectual disabilities requires specific strategies tailored to their circumstances. These strategies include experiential, habituation, emotional, rational, functional, and role model approaches (Ismia & Harmanto, 2020). Teachers in special needs schools (SLB) must be able to adapt the curriculum, provide friendly educational services, and utilize demonstration methods, habituation, and motivational reinforcement. In practice, Islamic Religious Education (PAI) instruction for the mentally retarded places greater emphasis on mastering basic worship skills, developing moral character, and guiding the children mentally so they can become religiously and socially independent.

The learning methodology in Special Needs Schools (SLB) in Lampung Province is still essentially conventional and tends not to be well standardized, especially in the context of adapting to the individual needs of students with special needs. Based on preliminary observation data conducted at three SLB in Bandar Lampung and South Lampung, more than 65% of teachers still rely on lecture and memorization methods, while the use of technology-based approaches or interactive media is very limited (only 15%). This fact indicates that learning still focuses on one-way knowledge transfer, not fully accommodating the variety of student learning styles, such as visual, auditory, and kinesthetic. This condition is also reinforced by interviews with school principals, who stated that limited teacher training and adaptive learning facilities are the dominant causes. Therefore, the factuality of the learning methodology in SLB Lampung before the study was conducted can be described as minimal innovation, not responsive to individual needs, and poorly integrated with inclusive learning models based on competency and character.

Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning in SLB Lampung Province has been implemented using a normative-doctrinal approach, emphasizing faith, worship, and morals. However, in practice, it faces many obstacles. Interviews with PAI teachers indicate that 72% of students have difficulty understanding abstract material, such as the concept of divinity and mahdhah worship, due to cognitive and sensory limitations. Another obstacle is the limited availability of specialized learning media, such as braille books for blind students or visual-animative media for deaf students,

which are still very limited. Furthermore, school policies in addressing this issue are still partial: schools attempt to provide remedial learning and individual guidance, but have not been able to integrate the PAI curriculum with a differentiated pedagogical approach. Efforts made include providing additional special hours for students who are struggling and involving parents in home learning support. However, based on school documentation data, only about 40% of these policies are effective due to limited teaching staff, facilities, and budget support. Thus, the main obstacles to Islamic Religious Education learning in SLB Lampung Province are the absence of a comprehensive adaptive curriculum, limited resources, and weak implementation of school policies oriented towards students' special needs.

Several previous studies related to Islamic Religious Education for children with special needs, particularly those with intellectual disabilities, have shown a variety of strategies, methods, and approaches used by teachers to develop learning tailored to the needs of students. Research conducted by (Lathifah, 2018) This study highlights Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning strategies for deaf children at the Musi Rawas State Special Needs School, finding that teacher-centered expository strategies are the primary choice. Meanwhile, the study(Nuraini, 2021)emphasizes the lecture, question and answer, practice, recitation, and habituation methods combined with learning media as an effort to improve Islamic Religious Education (PAI) understanding in junior high school students with intellectual disabilities. Furthermore, the research(Hanum, 2014)found the importance of mature learning planning, including the application of various methods in Islamic Religious Education learning for children with special needs at SLB Langsa City. (Hidayati, 2017) also contributed through his research on learning strategies for children with special needs at MI Amanah Tanggung, where communication strategies, task analysis, direct introduction, and cooperative learning were proven effective in improving social interactions for children, including those with intellectual disabilities. In contrast, research (Sari et al., 2022) emphasizes parental involvement in learning strategies for children with special needs during the pandemic in inclusive schools, so that learning can continue despite the limitations of the situation. The research (Tarigan et al., 2021) shows how the use of the bingo game method can increase the learning motivation of children with special needs in learning English, especially in vocabulary mastery, speaking, and listening. (Judge, 2021) found that the success of learning is determined by the teacher's sincerity in delivering the material in a simple and interactive way. (Nisa et al., 2021) emphasizes the importance of the role of parents in the learning of mentally retarded

children. (Rahmah, 2024) highlights teacher strategies in using the habituation and demonstration methods. Other research from (Irmayanti, 2025) also supports the importance of adaptive strategies, motivation, and individual approaches in teaching Islamic Religious Education for children with special needs.

Previous studies have emphasized the importance of adaptive strategies, motivation, individualized approaches, flexible curricula, and collaboration between teachers and parents in teaching children with special needs. Although the focus of the subjects and types of special needs studied differed, all agreed that learning strategies must be creative and tailored to the student's specific needs. This provides a valuable foundation for this study, which focuses more on Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning for children with intellectual disabilities. Most previous studies have focused more on general learning strategies for children with special needs or other types of needs, rarely addressing religious subjects. Therefore, studies on Islamic Religious Education for children with intellectual disabilities are still limited, both in terms of strategies, challenges, and solutions that teachers can implement. This study presents a novelty by analyzing Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning strategies that are appropriate for the characteristics of intellectual disabilities, while also identifying obstacles and practical solutions based on teachers' experiences. Initial observations in January 2023 at the Lampung Province Special Needs School for the Family Welfare (SLBN PKK) and the Dharma Bakti Dharma Pertiwi Special Needs School (SLB Dharma Bakti Dharma Pertiwi) showed that students with intellectual disabilities had difficulty understanding and remembering Islamic Religious Education material, lacked motivation, became bored easily, and had poor memory. This condition demands a creative, systematic strategy that is appropriate to the child's needs so that the goals of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) are achieved, namely, forming religiosity and noble morals.

Based on this background, the purpose of this study is to analyze Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning strategies for children with intellectual disabilities and to identify emerging challenges stemming from student limitations, teacher preparedness, and school facilities. Furthermore, this study explores the solutions teachers develop to address these challenges, thereby identifying more effective, applicable, and inclusive learning strategies. Therefore, this research is expected to significantly contribute to improving the quality of inclusive Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning and serve as a reference for teachers, practitioners, and special education researchers.

METHOD

This study used a multi-site qualitative approach to understand the strategies, challenges, and solutions for Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning for children with intellectual disabilities in two schools: the SLBN PKK (Special Needs Social Assistance) in Lampung Province and the SLB Dharma Bakti Dharma Pertiwi in Bandar Lampung City. Both schools were selected because they represent both public and private schools and have a variety of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning practices. The study subjects included Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers, classroom teachers, principals, students with intellectual disabilities, and parents, with informants determined through purposive sampling.

Data sources consist of primary and secondary sources. Primary data were obtained from interviews with teachers and principals, observations of learning activities, and student and parent experiences. Secondary data came from school documents, learning materials (syllabus, lesson plans, evaluations), activity photographs, and related literature. The combination of these two sources provides a factual and contextual overview of the implementation of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) in special needs schools.

The data collected included both quantitative and qualitative methods. Initial observations showed that 65% of teachers still used the lecture method, only 15% used interactive media, and the extra hour policy was only 40% effective. Interviews revealed that 72% of students with intellectual disabilities struggled to understand abstract material, while principals highlighted limitations in teacher training and adaptive facilities. School documents also showed that learning materials still used generic formats without specific adaptations.

The primary research instrument was the researcher herself, supported by interview guidelines, observation sheets, field notes, a voice recorder, and a camera. Data analysis included data reduction, presentation, and conclusion drawing. Reduction was carried out by sorting relevant information, for example, the main obstacles to learning include students' cognitive limitations, the lack of adaptive media, and the lack of teacher training. Data were then presented in narrative descriptions, tables, and matrices, and then verified between informants and between techniques before conclusions were drawn.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Findings

Islamic Religious Education Learning Strategies for Children with Mild Mental Retardation at the PKK Special Needs School in Lampung Province

The Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning strategy for children with mild intellectual disabilities at the Lampung Province PKK Special Needs School (SLBN PKK) begins with teacher observations of the students' physical, emotional, and academic conditions. Observations are conducted through direct observation, parental information, and simple tests to determine basic abilities, potential, and learning barriers. The results indicate that children with mild intellectual disabilities are prone to forgetfulness, get bored easily, and take longer to grasp the material. Therefore, teachers need to be patient, creative, and sensitive in designing flexible, simple, and repeatable strategies.

During the planning stage, teachers develop simple lesson plans modified from the Independent Curriculum, incorporating practical materials such as short prayers, ablutions, prayer, and simple morals. Learning methods are varied, including demonstrations, short lectures, Q&A sessions, exercises, and stories to prevent boredom. Visual media such as pictures, prayer cards, puppets, and short videos are used to make abstract concepts more concrete. The school prayer room is also used as a means of practicing worship directly, so children become accustomed to learning in a real-world context.

The evaluation phase is comprehensive, encompassing cognitive aspects, attitudes, skills, and habits through practice, observation, notes, portfolios, and progress reports. Evaluation is ongoing, allowing teachers to quickly adjust methods or media if obstacles arise. Parents are also involved through regular reports to ensure continued Islamic Religious Education (PAI) practices at home. Thus, the integrated strategy, implementation, and evaluation of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning in special needs schools (SLB) form a continuous cycle, emphasizing not only knowledge but also the development of morals, religiosity, and the development of children's potential.

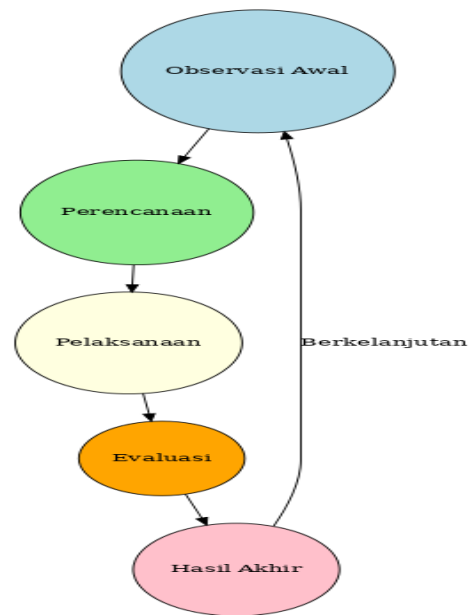


Figure 1. Islamic Religious Education Learning Strategies for Children with Mild Mental Retardation at the PKK Special Needs School in Lampung Province

Islamic Religious Education Learning Strategies for Children with Mild Mental Retardation at Dharma Bakti Dharma Pertiwi Special Needs School, Bandar Lampung City

The implementation of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning for children with mild intellectual disabilities at the Dharma Bakti Dharma Pertiwi Special Needs School in Bandar Lampung City begins with teacher observations to understand the students' physical, emotional, and academic conditions. Observations are conducted through classroom observations, parental information, and simple tests to determine basic abilities, potential, and learning obstacles. This activity also builds teacher-student closeness so that children feel comfortable and motivated. Observations show that children with mild intellectual disabilities are easily forgotten, get bored quickly, and take longer to understand the material, so teachers must be patient, creative, and sensitive in choosing strategies. The focus of learning is not only on academics, but also on character building, basic skills, and religious values.

During the planning stage, teachers develop lesson plans modified from the Independent Curriculum, adapting objectives, materials, and indicators to suit student abilities. The material provided is practical, including short prayers, ablution, prayer, and simple morals. Learning methods are varied to avoid boredom, including demonstrations, short lectures, questions and answers, exercises, and storytelling. Demonstrations are used for practicing worship, short lectures for basic material, questions, and answers to build courage, while practice and repetition help reinforce understanding.

Learning media is also an important part, such as props, pictures, prayer cards, short videos, and even real objects. For example, pictures of prayer movements are posted in the classroom, or dolls are used to practice praying before bed. School prayer rooms are used as hands-on practice spaces so children can get used to praying in a real-life environment. Visual media helps students more easily grasp abstract concepts in a concrete way.

Learning evaluation is conducted comprehensively, encompassing cognitive, attitudinal, skill, and habituation aspects. Evaluation forms include practice, observation, notes, portfolios, and daily progress reports. Evaluation is conducted continuously so teachers can adjust strategies if obstacles are encountered, for example, by repeating material, adding visual media, or switching to simpler methods. Parents are involved through regular reports to ensure the Islamic Religious Education (PAI) habituation continues at home, creating continuity between school and family.

Thus, the Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning strategy at the Lampung Province PKK Special Needs School (SLB PKK) and the Dharma Bakti Dharma Pertiwi Special Needs School (SLB Dharma Bakti Dharma Pertiwi) encompasses four main aspects: student identification, planning, implementation, evaluation, and follow-up. Identification emphasizes students with learning disabilities who still possess potential. Planning focuses on adapting the curriculum and methods to create inclusive learning. Implementation prioritizes a variety of methods and media according to student needs. Evaluation is conducted continuously to assess progress, map individual abilities, and provide feedback for learning improvements.

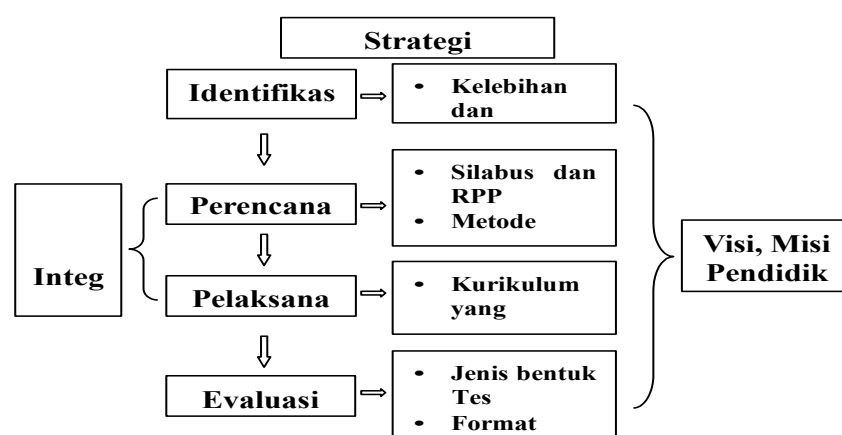


Figure 2. Islamic Religious Education Learning Strategy for Children with Mild Mental Retardation at Dharma Bakti Dharma Pertiwi Special Needs School, Bandar Lampung City

Challenges of Islamic Religious Education Learning for Children with Mild Mental Retardation at the PKK Special Needs School in Lampung Province

Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teaching for children with mild intellectual disabilities faces significant challenges due to their cognitive limitations, which make it difficult to understand abstract concepts, such as the pillars of faith, creeds, or interpretations. Children are more receptive to concrete concepts, so teachers need to simplify the material into tangible forms with the help of learning media. Otherwise, the objectives of religious learning are difficult to achieve. Furthermore, they also experience concentration problems they get bored easily, lose focus easily, and struggle to persist in learning. PAI demands perseverance, such as memorizing prayers or reciting the Quran. Therefore, teachers need to provide varied, interactive, and repetitive learning to keep students engaged.

The school environment also poses a challenge because not all schools provide appropriate facilities, such as visual aids, religious teaching aids, and learning spaces suitable for children with special needs. This lack of facilities limits teachers' ability to create a supportive learning environment, reducing the effectiveness of hands-on learning, despite their best efforts.

Teacher competence also plays a role. Many Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers lack a special education background, making them less familiar with the characteristics of children with intellectual disabilities. Teachers are required to master not only religious material but also appropriate pedagogical strategies. Family support is also often lacking, as parents don't understand the importance of reinforcing religious instruction at home. Children with intellectual disabilities desperately need repetition and reinforcement, and without parental involvement, their development is hampered. Furthermore, societal stigma often leads to children feeling inferior, lowering their motivation to learn, and even making them reluctant to participate in class activities.

Learning evaluation is also challenging. Written tests are less suitable due to limitations in writing and understanding questions, forcing teachers to resort to observation, portfolios, or more time-consuming practical exercises. Assessment standards are often not tailored to the child's specific needs. The biggest challenge is ensuring that religious material is truly practiced in everyday life, which requires extensive time, repetition, and support from teachers, parents, and the community. Given these challenges, Islamic Religious Education (PAI) instruction for children with intellectual disabilities requires a special approach and collaboration from all parties to ensure optimal success.

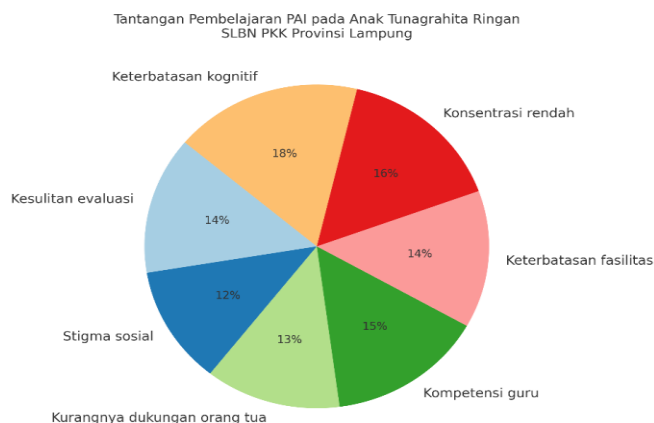


Figure 3. Challenges of Islamic Religious Education Learning for Children with Mild Mental Retardation at the PKK Special Needs School in Lampung Province

The following pie chart illustrates the challenges of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning for children with mild intellectual disabilities at the Lampung Province PKK Special Needs School (SLBN PKK). Each section shows the percentage of challenges, with cognitive limitations (18%) being the most significant, followed by low concentration (16%) and teacher competence (13%).

Challenges of Islamic Religious Education Learning for Children with Mild Mental Retardation at Dharma Bakti Dharma Pertiwi Special Needs School, Bandar Lampung City

Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teaching for children with mild intellectual disabilities faces significant challenges due to cognitive limitations that make it difficult for them to grasp abstract concepts, such as the pillars of faith, creeds, or interpretations. Children grasp concrete concepts more easily, so teachers need to simplify the material and present it in a concrete form with the help of learning media. Furthermore, limited concentration is also a barrier, as they quickly become bored, easily distracted, and require longer learning times. Therefore, teachers need to provide varied, interactive learning and incorporate repetition to keep children focused and engaged.

Environmental factors and teacher competency also play a significant role. Not all schools have adequate facilities, such as religious teaching aids or visual aids. Many Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers also lack a grasp of the characteristics of children with intellectual disabilities, even though they need to master religious material and appropriate pedagogical strategies. Family support is often suboptimal because parents are unable to replicate lessons at

home, requiring teachers to work harder. Social stigma also contributes to children's feelings of inferiority, reluctance to participate, and a lack of confidence in religious learning activities.

Evaluating Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning requires a special approach. Written tests are not appropriate, so teachers must use alternative methods such as observation, practice, portfolios, or anecdotal notes. This process requires precision, more time, and support from teachers, parents, and the community to ensure children can truly practice religious values in their daily lives. Therefore, Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning for children with mild intellectual disabilities requires simple, creative, and patient strategies, as well as collaboration between various parties to achieve learning objectives.

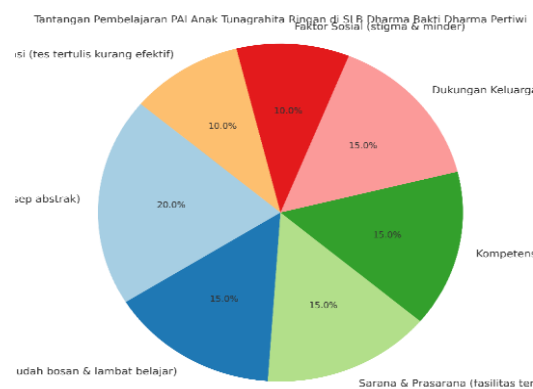


Figure 4. Challenges in Islamic Religious Education Learning for Children with Mild Mental Retardation at Dharma Bakti Dharma Pertiwi Special Needs School, Bandar Lampung City

The pie chart above illustrates the challenges of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning for children with mild intellectual disabilities at the Dharma Bakti Dharma Pertiwi Special Needs School. Each sector represents key factors influencing the learning process, such as cognition, concentration, infrastructure, teacher competence, family support, social factors, and evaluation.

Teacher Solutions in Islamic Religious Education Learning for Children with Mild Mental Retardation at the PKK Special Needs School in Lampung Province

Adapting learning methods to the characteristics of children with mild intellectual disabilities is an effort by teachers to provide solutions in learning. Teachers strive to simplify Islamic Religious Education (PAI) material to make it easier to understand, emphasizing concrete rather than abstract concepts. For example, when teaching ablution or prayer procedures, teachers often use hands-on practice rather than lengthy theoretical explanations. This way, children can gradually grasp the steps of worship through repetition and direct guidance. The use of simple

language, short sentences, and concrete examples is an important strategy to make learning more communicative and appropriate to students' abilities.

Teachers use a variety of learning media to help children with mild intellectual disabilities understand lessons more easily. These include pictures, illustration cards, simple videos, and tangible props such as prayer mats, prayer robes, and the Quran. These concrete media help children grasp the material more quickly, focus better, resist boredom, and learn in a fun way. Furthermore, teachers create an inclusive classroom atmosphere by offering praise, building motivation, and patiently guiding children. Evaluation is conducted flexibly through practice, observation, and assessment of daily skills, not just written tests. This approach not only enhances religious knowledge but also shapes morals, fosters a habit of worship, and increases the independence and self-confidence of children with mild intellectual disabilities.

Teachers also improve communication and collaboration with parents. Teachers understand that religious learning cannot be confined to school but needs to be supported at home through family guidance. Therefore, teachers provide guidance to parents to encourage their children to practice religious practices at home, repeat memorized prayers, or guide them in reading the Quran. With good collaboration between teachers and parents, learning becomes more sustainable, so that children's learning outcomes are better maintained and develop according to their individual abilities, which positively impacts the academic achievement and personal development of children with intellectual disabilities.

Table 1. Teacher Solutions in Islamic Religious Education Learning for Children with Mild Mental Retardation at the PKK Special Needs School in Lampung Province

No	Challenge Aspects	Teacher Solution	Implementation Example
1	Abstract Material is Difficult to Understand	Simplify the material by emphasizing concrete things	Teaching ablution & prayer through direct practice, not long theories
2	Language Comprehension Limitations &	Using simple language, short sentences, and real-life examples	Delivering prayers with short sentences and repetition
3	Children Get Bored Easily & Have Difficulty Focusing	Utilizing varied and interesting learning media	Pictures, illustration cards, simple videos, prayer mats, mukena, Al-Quran
4	The Need for Fun Learning	Creating an inclusive & supportive learning environment	Giving praise, motivation, and patient guidance
5	Inappropriate Evaluation	Using flexible evaluation	Observation, practice, assessment of everyday skills, not just written tests
6	Habituation of Daily Worship	Provides repeated guidance with hands-on	Guiding prayer, reading the Qur'an, and gradual prayer practice

		practice	
7	Limited Support at Home	Improve communication & cooperation with parents	Provide guidance to parents to get their children used to praying at home, repeating memorization, and reading the Quran
8	Character Development & Independence	Emphasizing moral values and independence in learning	Train the habit of worship, increase the self-confidence and independence of children

Teacher Solutions in Islamic Religious Education Learning for Children with Mild Mental Retardation at Dharma Bakti Dharma Pertiwi Special Needs School, Bandar Lampung City

One teacher strategy is to adapt learning methods to the abilities of children with mild intellectual disabilities. Islamic Religious Education (PAI) material is simplified to make it easier to understand by emphasizing concrete rather than abstract concepts. When teaching ablution and prayer procedures, teachers use hands-on practice rather than lengthy explanations, allowing children to gradually grasp the steps of worship through repetition and guidance. Simple language, short sentences, and concrete examples are also used to ensure clarity and adapt the learning to the child's abilities.

Teachers utilize a variety of learning media, such as pictures, illustration cards, simple videos, and real-life props like prayer mats, prayer robes, and the Quran. These media help children absorb material more easily, improve focus, reduce boredom, and make learning enjoyable. The classroom environment is inclusive and supportive through praise, motivation, and patient guidance from teachers. Evaluation is conducted flexibly through practice, observation, and assessment of daily skills, not just written tests. This approach not only increases knowledge but also shapes morals, worship habits, independence, and self-confidence in children. Beyond school, teachers also establish communication and collaboration with parents to strengthen learning at home. Parents are encouraged to get their children into the habit of performing worship, repeating memorized prayers, and guiding them in reading the Quran. The synergy between teachers and parents ensures continuous learning, allowing the academic and personal development of children with intellectual disabilities to progress according to their individual abilities.

Thus, it can be concluded that teachers at the SLBN PKK Lampung Province and SLB Dharma Bakti Dharma Pertiwi in Bandar Lampung City adapt Islamic Religious Education (PAI) methods to the abilities of children with mild intellectual disabilities. The material is taught concretely through ablution or prayer practices, step repetition, simple language, and real-life examples for easy understanding. Learning media such as pictures, cards, videos, and real-life props are used to increase focus and reduce boredom. Classes are made inclusive with praise, motivation,

and patient guidance, while evaluation is carried out through practice and observation. Teachers also collaborate with parents so that learning is continuous and supports children's academic development, independence, self-confidence, and morals.

Table 2. Teacher Solutions in Islamic Religious Education Learning for Children with Mild Mental Retardation at Dharma Bakti Dharma Pertiwi Special Needs School, Bandar Lampung City

No	Challenge Aspects	Teacher Solution	Implementation Example
1	Abstract Material is Difficult to Understand	Simplify the material, emphasize the concrete	Direct practice of ablution & prayer, step-by-step repetition
2	Language & Comprehension Difficulties	Using simple language, short sentences, and real-life examples	Delivering prayers with short and easy-to-understand sentences
3	Easily Bored & Difficult to Focus	Using varied learning media	Pictures, illustration cards, simple videos, prayer mats, mukena, Al-Quran
4	Need a Supportive Learning Environment	Creating an inclusive & supportive classroom atmosphere	Giving praise, motivation, and patient guidance
5	Inappropriate Evaluation	Conducting flexible evaluations	Observation, practice, and assessment of daily skills
6	Practicing Worship at Home	Establish communication & cooperation with parents	Get children used to praying at home, repeating memorized prayers, and reading the Koran
7	Character Development & Independence	Forming morals, worship habits, independence, and self-confidence	Guide children to practice independence in worship and build self-confidence

Discussion

Teachers are required not only to understand the mental needs and character of children, but also to be religious role models by using contextual learning methods inside and outside the classroom, involving peers, other teachers, and parents in cultivating religious behavior (Prasetya et al., 2021). The strategies implemented include understanding the child's character, planning, implementation, evaluation, and follow-up in an integrated manner with parents and educators, so that development is sustainable (Hasnawati, 2022). Children with intellectual disabilities, who have limitations in cognitive, communication, motor skills, and social-emotional interaction, require a special approach so they can develop optimally without losing their right to equal education (Nuryati, 2022). From an Islamic perspective, providing religious education to children with special needs is a form of implementing the teachings of the Qur'an, which emphasizes the importance of caring for people with disabilities, as well as strengthening the role of humans as servants of Allah and caliphs on earth (ANNISA, 2017). Thus, Islamic religious education for children with intellectual

disabilities serves not only as a means of teaching worship but also as a medium for instilling the values of humanity, justice, empathy, and compassion, which support the creation of a more inclusive and just society.

Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning strategy for children with special needs and mild mental retardation at the PKK Special Needs School in Lampung Province and Dharma Bakti Dharma Pertiwi Special Needs School in Bandar Lampung City, which emphasizes the importance of initial observation in line with the theory of diagnostic assessment in special education (RIRI, 2023). According to (Puspitasari et al., 2025) Initial assessment serves as the foundation for designing individualized and tailored learning for students. Observations conducted not only directly but also through parent feedback and admission tests demonstrate a holistic approach that positions the child as the subject of learning. The results of this study reinforce the view that initial assessment is crucial for identifying the needs, barriers, and learning potential of children with mild intellectual disabilities.

In another study, Amka (2021) and Azizah & Widyartono (2024) emphasized that in-depth assessment helps teachers understand children's learning styles, whether visual, auditory, or kinesthetic, so that learning can be directed according to student preferences. This is clearly seen in the practice of teachers at the SLBN PKK Lampung Province and SLB Dharma Bakti Dharma Pertiwi, Bandar Lampung City, who pay attention to the learning style tendencies of children with intellectual disabilities before designing Islamic Religious Education (PAI) strategies. Thus, the results of this study are not only consistent with special education theory but also strengthen previous research findings regarding the importance of strategy differentiation in learning. In addition to assessment, this study also highlights the importance of patience, creativity, and sensitivity in teaching children with mild intellectual disabilities. This is in line with the perspective of (Hannani, 2024), which emphasizes that the personal qualities of teachers have a significant influence on the learning success of children with special needs. Patient and creative teachers are able to transform limitations into potential and make learning more enjoyable. These results also support research (Muzakki, 2025), which found that religious learning for mentally retarded children requires repetition, consistency, and practical methods to be more effective.

The finding that teachers at the PKK Special Needs School in Lampung Province and Dharma Bakti Dharma Pertiwi Special Needs School in Bandar Lampung City use a combination of adaptive strategies, such as careful planning, selecting methods according to learning styles, and evaluation

based on attitude development, can also be compared with constructivism theory (Vygotsky & Cole, 2018). This theory emphasizes the importance of social interaction and scaffolding support in helping students reach their zone of proximal development (ZPD). In this way, teachers act not only as instructors but also as companions who guide children in internalizing religious values (Hasibuddin, 2024).

Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning is not solely cognitively oriented, but also emphasizes affective and psychomotor aspects. This finding aligns with the concept of holistic education proposed by (Poerti & Arifianto, 2024), that learning must integrate cognitive, emotional, social, and spiritual development. Teachers at the SLBN PKK Lampung Province and SLB Dharma Bakti Dharma Pertiwi in Bandar Lampung City strive to explore students' unique potential, such as art or practical skills, to use as a medium for instilling religious values. This proves that religious learning can be a vehicle for character and spiritual development, not just the transfer of knowledge. When compared to research (Komariah, 2023) and (Hidayat et al., 2022), the strategies used at the Lampung Province PKK Special Needs School (SLBN PKK) and the Dharma Bakti Dharma Pertiwi Special Needs School (SLB Dharma Bakti Dharma Pertiwi) in Bandar Lampung City are similar: an emphasis on hands-on practice in religious instruction, such as ablution and prayer. However, Komariah's research emphasized the use of simulation methods, while in Lampung, teachers combined demonstration methods with audiovisual media. This comparison demonstrates that a variety of methods is essential to keep children with intellectual disabilities focused and able to gradually understand religious material.

In terms of planning, this study found that teachers used lesson plans modified from the Independent Curriculum with an emphasis on the psychomotor domain. This is consistent with the theory (SUTIAH, 2020) which divides the learning domains into cognitive, affective, and psychomotor. Due to the cognitive limitations of children with intellectual disabilities, the psychomotor domain is emphasized through direct practice. This adjustment also supports research (Putri et al., 2025) and (Angreni & Sari, 2022) which emphasizes that curriculum modification is an important strategy in learning for children with special needs.

In addition, the learning evaluation conducted by teachers places greater emphasis on practical assessment and observation. This is in line with the authentic assessment theory proposed by (Nurizzati, 2023), where assessment should assess students' ability to apply knowledge, not just written test results. Evaluation through daily practices of worship, prayer, and morals is highly

relevant for children with mild intellectual disabilities because it provides a concrete picture of the internalization of religious teachings. This research also shows that evaluation serves a dual purpose: to assess student achievement while simultaneously reflecting the effectiveness of teacher learning. This view aligns with the opinion of (Arikunto, 2021) which states that educational evaluation should be used as a diagnostic tool for teachers to improve teaching strategies. Thus, the results of this study reinforce the importance of the reflection cycle in teaching children with special needs.

In the context of challenges, this study found barriers in the form of cognitive limitations, concentration, and infrastructure. These findings support the research (Gresilia et al., 2023), which shows that religious education for children with intellectual disabilities faces significant challenges, particularly in explaining abstract concepts. Teachers must be able to simplify these concepts into more concrete ones, for example, through direct practice, the use of images, or simulations. Another challenge relates to the competence of Islamic Religious Education teachers, not all of whom have a background in special education. This is reinforced by findings from (Wulandari & Hendriani, 2021), which state that many religious education teachers in inclusive schools are not equipped with pedagogical skills specific to children with special needs. Therefore, this study emphasizes the urgency of training and professional development for Islamic Education (PAI) teachers to better prepare them to meet the diverse learning needs of children.

The Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning strategy for children with mild intellectual disabilities at the PKK Special Needs School (SLBN PKK) in Lampung Province and the Dharma Bakti Dharma Pertiwi Special Needs School (SLB) in Bandar Lampung City aligns with various special education theories and relevant research. Teachers emphasize not only planning and evaluation but also adaptive, humanistic, and character-oriented learning. However, existing challenges require synergy between teachers, parents, schools, and the community to optimally achieve the goals of religious education, namely, developing noble character and worship skills.

This study presents a novelty by examining Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning strategies for children with mild intellectual disabilities at the SLBN PKK (Special Needs Education) in Lampung Province and the SLB Dharma Bakti Dharma Pertiwi (Special Needs Education) in Bandar Lampung City. This topic has rarely been studied in depth in the context of inclusive Islamic education in Indonesia. The main novelty lies in the integration of a pedagogical approach centered on individual needs with Islamic religious values, so that learning emphasizes not only cognitive

aspects but also the formation of morals and daily religious behavior. Furthermore, this study emphasizes the importance of collaboration between teachers, families, and the social environment to support the learning success of children with special needs. Thus, this study contributes to the development of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning strategies while broadening the perspective of religion-based inclusive education in the socio-cultural context of Lampung.

However, this study has limitations. First, its scope was limited to two institutions, so the results may not necessarily be representative of special needs schools in other regions. Second, the study focused more on teacher strategies, thus failing to explore the role of external factors such as government policies, community support, or the availability of specialized facilities. Third, time constraints meant that observations focused solely on classroom practices, so the long-term impact on children's religious and social development could not be fully measured.

CONCLUSION

Based on the research results, Islamic Religious Education learning for children with mild intellectual disabilities at the SLBN PKK Lampung Province and SLB Dharma Bakti Dharma Pertiwi, Bandar Lampung City, is carried out with a strategy that emphasizes an individual approach, simple methods, and direct practice of worship so that it is easy to understand and apply. Teachers act as instructors, guides, motivators, and role models, adapting materials, methods, and learning media to suit the children's cognitive abilities. However, learning still faces challenges, such as students' cognitive limitations in understanding abstract concepts, a lack of interesting learning media, time constraints, and minimal parental involvement in the habituation of religious values at home. To overcome this, teachers implement solutions by emphasizing direct practice, using simple and contextual media, a personal approach, and establishing intensive cooperation with parents. Thus, this study confirms that Islamic Religious Education learning for children with mild intellectual disabilities requires adaptive strategies, a supportive learning environment, and collaboration between teachers, parents, and schools so that the goal of religious education, namely the formation of Islamic character, can be optimally achieved despite limitations.

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