

# **The Implementation of Inclusive Madrasah Practices in Islamic Religious Education Learning at State Islamic Senior High Schools in Kepulauan Bangka Belitung**

**Titi Asmiyati Saputri,<sup>1\*</sup> Subri Hasan,<sup>2</sup> Indah Kusuma Dewi<sup>3</sup>**

[\\*saputrititi753@gmail.com](mailto:saputrititi753@gmail.com)

<sup>1,2,3</sup> IAIN Syaikh Abdurrahman Siddik Bangka Belitung, Indonesia

## **Abstract**

This study aims to analyze the implementation of inclusive madrasah practices in Islamic Religious Education (Pendidikan Agama Islam or PAI) learning at State Islamic Senior High Schools in Kepulauan Bangka Belitung, with a particular focus on how teachers adapt instructional strategies to accommodate students with special educational needs within religious classroom settings. The research employed a descriptive qualitative design using participatory classroom observations, in-depth semi-structured interviews, and document analysis. Participants included PAI teachers, school leaders, and students directly involved in inclusive learning activities. Data were analyzed thematically through interactive stages of data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing, while credibility was ensured through triangulation and member checking. The findings indicate that inclusive education in madrasahs is implemented primarily through classroom-based pedagogical adaptations rather than formal administrative mechanisms. Demonstration-based teaching, individualized guidance, differentiated instruction, and the use of practical religious learning tools effectively support students' participation in worship practices and religious understanding. However, implementation remains inconsistent due to limited infrastructure, insufficient funding, lack of specialized training, and weak institutional supervision. This study offers a novel perspective by shifting the focus of inclusive education research in madrasahs from managerial and policy-oriented analyses toward a classroom-centered pedagogical approach that specifically examines inclusive practices in PAI learning. The study contributes theoretically to the development of an inclusive Islamic pedagogy framework and practically provides recommendations for teacher professional development, adaptive curriculum design, and contextual inclusive strategies to enhance equitable and compassionate religious education in madrasahs.

**Keywords:** inclusive madrasah, Islamic Religious Education (PAI), inclusive pedagogy, differentiated instruction, madrasah learning, special needs students

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## **Introduction**

Inclusive education has become a central principle in contemporary educational reform, emphasizing equal access, participation, and meaningful learning opportunities for all students, including those with disabilities and special educational needs. In Indonesia, this commitment has been formally adopted across various educational institutions, including madrasahs. However, the practical implementation of inclusion in Islamic schools presents distinctive pedagogical challenges, particularly within Islamic Religious Education (Pendidikan Agama Islam or PAI). Religious learning does not only involve cognitive understanding but also ritual practice, moral guidance, and spiritual formation. Consequently, students with special needs often face greater barriers in participating fully in activities such as prayer demonstrations, Qur'anic recitation, and fiqh practices that require direct instruction and individualized assistance.

From the perspective of Islamic education, inclusivity is not merely a technical policy but a moral and theological imperative. Islamic pedagogical values emphasize justice, compassion, and respect for human dignity, which imply that every learner has the right to access religious knowledge and worship practices without discrimination. Therefore, inclusive madrasah practices must focus on adapting teaching strategies, learning materials, and classroom interactions to accommodate diverse student characteristics. Differentiated instruction, flexible learning designs, and teacher responsiveness have been widely recognized as essential components of inclusive classrooms (Onyishi & Sefotho, 2020; Ainscow, 2020). In Islamic educational settings, such approaches are also closely linked to the cultivation of character and spiritual development (Hefner, 2009).

Despite increasing attention to inclusive education, many studies in the context of madrasahs still concentrate on institutional management, policy frameworks, or administrative readiness. Research that directly examines how Islamic Religious Education teachers implement inclusive practices in the classroom remains limited. This imbalance suggests a significant research gap. Inclusive education in madrasahs cannot be understood solely through organizational or managerial perspectives but must be explored through pedagogical processes that occur during teaching and learning activities. Classroom practices such as adapting fiqh instruction, modifying worship demonstrations, and providing personal religious mentoring are crucial dimensions that require empirical investigation.

Teachers play a strategic role in realizing inclusive Islamic learning because they function not only as instructors but also as moral exemplars and spiritual guides. Effective PAI teachers are expected to design learning experiences that are humane, contextual, and responsive to individual needs. Fauzi (2018) argues that prophetic educational leadership highlights compassion, personal guidance, and individualized attention as fundamental principles in teaching. Furthermore, Fauzi (2020) emphasizes that curriculum convergence in madrasahs requires contextual adaptation to students' backgrounds and learning diversity. These perspectives underline that

inclusive PAI learning should be grounded in value-based pedagogy that prioritizes student dignity rather than rigid procedural approaches.

Recent empirical studies also demonstrate that innovative Islamic learning strategies can strengthen inclusivity and participation. Collaborative and facilitator-based approaches encourage students to learn actively and support one another during religious learning processes (Sabila & Fauzi, 2022). Character-oriented religious routines and positive school culture have also been shown to enhance students' moral engagement and social inclusion (Subaidi, Fauzi, & Mahnun, 2024). Moreover, international research confirms that inclusive education succeeds when teachers receive adequate professional preparation and continuous support (Florian & Black-Hawkins, 2011). These findings suggest that inclusive Islamic learning requires both pedagogical innovation and teacher capacity building.

Although inclusive policies have been introduced in several State Islamic Senior High Schools in Kepulauan Bangka Belitung, there is still limited scholarly evidence describing how these policies are translated into actual PAI classroom practices. The ways teachers adapt instructional strategies, assist students with special needs in performing religious rituals, and collaborate with parents and support staff remain underexplored. This lack of empirical documentation highlights the need for research that focuses specifically on the implementation of inclusive practices within Islamic Religious Education learning rather than on general institutional management.

Based on these considerations, this study aims to analyze the implementation of inclusive madrasah practices in Islamic Religious Education learning at State Islamic Senior High Schools in Kepulauan Bangka Belitung. The study focuses on teacher strategies, instructional adaptations, supporting factors, and challenges in facilitating students with special needs. By emphasizing classroom-based pedagogical practices, this research contributes to the development of an inclusive framework for PAI learning and provides practical recommendations for teachers, madrasah leaders, and policymakers in strengthening equitable and compassionate Islamic education.

## **Method**

This study employed a descriptive qualitative design to investigate the implementation of inclusive madrasah practices in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning within authentic classroom contexts. A qualitative approach was selected because the primary objective of the research was to explore pedagogical processes, instructional adaptations, and the lived experiences of teachers and students rather than to measure variables statistically. Inclusive religious learning involves complex interactions among spiritual guidance, instructional strategies, and individual student needs, which are best understood through an in-depth and contextual inquiry. Qualitative research enables the exploration of such social and educational

phenomena holistically and naturally within their real-life settings (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). In addition, inclusive education research emphasizes the importance of capturing teachers' practices and students' perspectives through naturalistic observation and narrative data (Florian, 2014).

The research was conducted at State Islamic Senior High Schools in Kepulauan Bangka Belitung that have initiated inclusive education policies. The participants consisted of Islamic Religious Education teachers, particularly fiqh teachers who conduct practical worship instruction, and Grade X students, including those identified as having special educational needs. Participants were selected using purposive sampling based on their direct involvement in inclusive PAI classroom activities to ensure that the collected data were information-rich and contextually relevant. This sampling strategy is widely recommended in qualitative case studies that aim to obtain experiential and practice-based insights rather than generalizable numerical representation (Patton, 2015). Through this approach, the study prioritized individuals who could provide detailed explanations regarding instructional adaptation, differentiated teaching, and religious mentoring for diverse learners.

Data were collected through participatory classroom observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation. Participatory observation was conducted to capture authentic teaching and learning activities, including how teachers demonstrated prayer movements, guided Qur'anic recitation, modified instructional media, and provided individualized assistance to students with special needs. This method enabled the researcher to record behavioral interactions, classroom dynamics, and inclusive strategies as they naturally occurred. Semi-structured interviews were carried out with teachers and students to explore their experiences, challenges, and perceptions of inclusive PAI learning. The flexible interview format allowed participants to elaborate on personal reflections while maintaining the main research focus. Documentation was also utilized to support and verify findings, including lesson plans, curriculum documents, school policies, and government regulations concerning inclusive education. These multiple data sources enhanced contextual understanding and strengthened triangulation procedures (Abdul Fattah, 2023).

Data analysis followed an interactive model consisting of data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing as proposed by Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2014). During the reduction stage, field notes and interview transcripts were coded and categorized into themes such as instructional adaptation, teacher competence, classroom support, collaboration, and barriers to inclusion. The display stage organized these themes into matrices and descriptive narratives to facilitate systematic interpretation. Conclusions were then drawn iteratively through constant comparison across data sources to ensure analytical consistency. Thematic analysis was particularly appropriate because it allows researchers to identify patterns of inclusive

practices and interpret their pedagogical meanings within specific classroom contexts.

To ensure trustworthiness, several validation strategies were applied. Source triangulation compared information obtained from teachers, students, and documents, while methodological triangulation integrated observation, interview, and documentation data. Member checking was conducted by returning preliminary findings to participants for confirmation and clarification. These procedures improved credibility, dependability, and confirmability of the research (Husnullail et al., 2024; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Prolonged engagement in the field and reflective note-taking were also employed to minimize researcher bias and enhance interpretive depth. Furthermore, recent inclusive pedagogy studies emphasize that rigorous qualitative methods and systematic classroom observation are essential for understanding how teachers enact inclusive practices in real learning environments (Ainscow, 2020; Onyishi & Sefotho, 2020).

Overall, this methodological design enabled the study to examine inclusive education not merely as a policy framework but as a lived pedagogical practice within Islamic Religious Education classrooms. By prioritizing direct observation of teaching practices and the voices of participants, the research generated rich and contextualized evidence regarding how PAI teachers adapt religious instruction to accommodate students with diverse abilities. This classroom-centered approach ensures that the findings contribute substantively to the development of inclusive pedagogical models for Islamic Religious Education in madrasahs.

## **Results and Discussion**

### **Inclusive Madrasah Practices in Islamic Religious Education Learning**

Findings from classroom observations and interviews indicate that the implementation of inclusive practices in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning is primarily manifested through pedagogical adaptation rather than merely administrative policy. The most prominent strategy observed was the teacher's role as a demonstrator in practical fiqh instruction. Teachers consistently demonstrated ritual practices such as ablution, prayer movements, and recitation techniques in a step-by-step manner while providing individualized assistance to students with diverse learning needs. This direct modeling enabled students, including those with special educational needs, to understand abstract religious concepts through concrete and observable actions. Such findings confirm that demonstration-based instruction is particularly effective for religious learning that involves procedural and motor skills.

The role of teachers as demonstrators aligns with Djamarah's pedagogical view, as cited by Ananda (2019), which emphasizes that demonstration helps students grasp complex or abstract material more effectively. In practice, teachers first explained the theoretical aspects of worship and then provided detailed demonstrations, followed by guided

student practice either individually or collectively. This gradual release of responsibility allowed students to internalize both the cognitive and practical dimensions of worship. Similarly, Kamal (2018) argues that teachers must continuously develop their mastery of subject matter to ensure effective learning outcomes. The present study supports this argument, showing that teacher competence in religious knowledge and practice directly influences students' participation and confidence, especially for those requiring additional support.

Moreover, the use of practical learning tools, such as the *ubudiyah competency notebook*, was found to enhance inclusivity. This medium functioned not only as a cognitive aid but also as a reflective and procedural guide that helped students track their progress in performing religious practices. Teachers reported that this tool facilitated differentiated instruction because students could learn at their own pace and repeat practice independently. Such adaptive media reflect the principles of differentiated instruction and inclusive pedagogy, which emphasize flexibility, accessibility, and responsiveness to individual differences (Onyishi & Sefotho, 2020; Florian, 2014). Therefore, inclusive PAI learning in the madrasah context is best understood as a pedagogical process that integrates demonstration, repetition, and individualized guidance rather than standardized instruction.

From an Islamic educational perspective, these practices also embody the values of compassion and personal mentoring that characterize prophetic teaching traditions. Religious education is not limited to knowledge transmission but includes spiritual accompaniment and character formation. Consequently, inclusive PAI teachers function simultaneously as instructors, mentors, and moral exemplars, creating a supportive learning environment that accommodates diverse learners. This finding strengthens the argument that inclusive madrasah practices should prioritize humane and value-based pedagogy over rigid administrative compliance.

### **Classroom-Based Implementation of Inclusive Education in Madrasahs**

The implementation of inclusive education in the observed madrasahs demonstrates that students with special educational needs are formally integrated into regular classrooms. However, effective inclusion depends largely on how teachers translate policy into everyday teaching practices. Interviews with school leaders, counselors, and subject teachers revealed that while schools accept inclusive students, the categorization of needs and instructional adjustments are still evolving. Teachers must identify the type and level of students' needs to design appropriate instructional modifications, particularly in religious subjects that require active participation in worship practices.

Rather than focusing solely on organizational planning, the findings show that inclusion becomes meaningful when teachers adapt classroom strategies. Teachers modified learning time, provided peer assistance, simplified instructions, and offered repeated demonstrations for students requiring additional support. These practices correspond with international

inclusive education research emphasizing that teacher responsiveness and instructional flexibility are key determinants of successful inclusion (Ainscow, 2020). Similarly, differentiated instruction frameworks suggest that adapting methods, materials, and assessment strategies improves participation for heterogeneous learners (Onyishi & Sefotho, 2020).

In the context of Islamic education, such adaptations also facilitate students' spiritual engagement. Students with special needs reported feeling more confident when teachers patiently guided them through prayer movements and recitations. This emotional safety enhanced their motivation and sense of belonging within the religious community of the classroom. Thus, inclusion in PAI learning is not merely physical placement but meaningful participation in religious practices. These findings resonate with studies indicating that inclusive pedagogy promotes both academic and socio-spiritual development when teachers create supportive and collaborative classroom cultures (Florian, 2014).

### **Supporting and Inhibiting Factors in Inclusive PAI Learning**

The study further identified several supporting and inhibiting factors influencing inclusive practices in madrasahs. Supporting factors include government policies such as curriculum flexibility, community involvement, and the presence of committed teachers. Government initiatives, including operational funding and inclusive education frameworks, provide foundational resources that enable schools to accommodate diverse learners. Parental and community engagement also strengthens inclusive efforts by offering emotional and logistical support. Most importantly, qualified teachers with strong pedagogical and religious competence were found to be the primary drivers of successful inclusion. These findings are consistent with research highlighting teacher professionalism as a central component of inclusive education quality (Florian, 2014; Ainscow, 2020).

However, several barriers persist. Limited infrastructure, insufficient funding, and inadequate professional training hinder effective implementation. Some teachers reported difficulties in adapting curricula and assessment methods due to a lack of specialized preparation for inclusive classrooms. Such challenges mirror global findings that inclusive policies often exceed schools' practical capacities when resources and training are insufficient (Onyishi & Sefotho, 2020). In addition, traditional mindsets that equate inclusion with administrative burden rather than pedagogical innovation may reduce teachers' motivation to adopt adaptive practices.

Overall, these results indicate that inclusive madrasah practices in PAI learning are shaped by the interaction between policy support and classroom realities. While structural policies provide necessary foundations, the success of inclusion ultimately depends on teacher creativity, empathy, and pedagogical competence. Therefore, strengthening teacher capacity through continuous professional development and instructional innovation is essential for sustaining inclusive Islamic education. By situating inclusion within

everyday religious learning activities, madrasahs can better fulfill their mission of providing equitable and compassionate education for all students.

This study offers conceptual novelty by shifting the focus of inclusive education research in madrasahs from administrative and managerial perspectives toward a classroom-based pedagogical approach, particularly in the practice of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning. Previous studies have largely emphasized institutional policies, governance structures, and infrastructural readiness, while the concrete implementation of religious instruction in inclusive classrooms has remained underexplored. In contrast, this research specifically examines how PAI teachers adapt instructional methods, demonstrate worship practices, modify learning media, and provide individualized assistance for students with special educational needs within authentic fiqh and religious learning contexts. Therefore, this study introduces a new perspective that inclusion in madrasahs should not be understood merely as physical access to regular classrooms, but as meaningful participation in religious and spiritual learning experiences.

Theoretically and practically, this study contributes to the development of an inclusive pedagogy framework grounded in Islamic values that can serve as a reference for teachers, madrasah leaders, and policymakers. The findings reveal that demonstration-based teaching, differentiated instruction, personal mentoring, and the strengthening of a religious classroom culture are key elements in creating PAI learning environments that are accessible to all students. This practice-based model provides concrete implications for the professional development of PAI teachers, the design of adaptive curricula, and the formulation of more contextual inclusive policies in madrasahs. Consequently, this study not only enriches the academic literature on inclusive Islamic education but also offers practical recommendations to enhance the quality, equity, and humanity of religious learning in Islamic educational institutions.

## **Conclusion**

This study concludes that the implementation of inclusive education in State Islamic Senior High Schools in Kepulauan Bangka Belitung demonstrates a significant gap between normative policy commitments and actual classroom practices, particularly in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning. Although inclusive education has been formally recognized through regulatory frameworks that promote equal educational rights for all students, including those with special needs, its practical realization remains inconsistent and largely dependent on individual teacher initiatives. The findings reveal that inclusion is not effectively institutionalized at the structural level due to limited supervision, insufficient funding, and inadequate infrastructural support. As a result, inclusive practices tend to emerge informally within classrooms rather than through systematic school-wide strategies.

From a pedagogical perspective, the study highlights that meaningful inclusion in madrasahs is achieved primarily through adaptive teaching practices implemented by PAI teachers. Demonstration-based instruction, individualized guidance, differentiated learning strategies, and the use of practical religious learning tools enable students with diverse abilities to participate actively in worship practices and religious understanding. These classroom-based approaches indicate that inclusion should be understood not merely as physical access to regular schools but as meaningful participation in spiritual and religious learning experiences. Therefore, inclusive madrasah practices must prioritize teacher competence, empathy, and pedagogical flexibility rather than relying solely on administrative compliance.

Furthermore, the effectiveness of inclusive PAI learning is influenced by several supporting and inhibiting factors. Supporting elements include government commitment, community and parental involvement, and the presence of qualified teachers who are willing to adapt their instruction. Conversely, barriers such as limited financial resources, inadequate facilities, lack of professional training, and weak institutional monitoring hinder the sustainability of inclusive initiatives. In several cases, inclusive policies remain largely normative because schools have not yet fulfilled essential components such as budget allocation, infrastructure readiness, specialized personnel, and adaptive curricula. Consequently, no madrasah in the research context has fully implemented inclusive education comprehensively according to these core indicators.

Theoretically, this study contributes to the discourse on inclusive Islamic education by emphasizing a shift from managerial perspectives toward classroom-based pedagogical analysis. Practically, it provides recommendations for strengthening teacher professional development, designing adaptive PAI curricula, and establishing systematic support mechanisms for inclusive learning in madrasahs. Future research is encouraged to develop intervention models and evaluate inclusive instructional strategies across broader Islamic educational settings to ensure that madrasahs can fully embody the values of justice, compassion, and equity that form the foundation of Islamic education.

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