

## Challenges In Implementation Of Islamic Education For Students With Special Needs

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### Abstract

*Students with special needs were having difficulty in learning because they faced many obstacles. It is crucial for these special-needs students were exposed to Islamic Education to enable them to understand Islamic religion to fulfil the religion obligation the same as other normal children. This research discusses the definition and category of special-needs students based on the Government Gazette in Malaysia. This study also highlighted the challenges faced in implementing Islamic Education for special-needs students such as the Quranic teaching, lack of experts among the Muslim scholars, and opportunities for the students with special needs in furthering their education in the field of Islamic Studies. Therefore, to overcome the challenges, Quranic teaching's methods and modules for the special-needs students had to be developed, preparing the efficient and well-trained teachers, inclusive education and offer opportunities for the students with special needs to further their education in Islamic Studies. In addition, every party must be functioned in giving support for the implementation of programs involving the quest of Islamic Studies for special-needs students.*

**Keywords:** *students with special needs, Islamic education, learning difficulty, special needs education*

### Introduction

Education plays an important role in human life. Education is a tool to introduce man to his Creator and to realize the purpose of human was created (Hamdi 2011). This role was shown in the first revelation, where Allah Almighty says in Chapter al-‘Alaq 96:1-4 :

*Recite in the name of your Lord who created - Created man from a clinging substance. Who taught by the pen - Taught man that which he knew not*

Ibn Khadun (1981), states that education is a natural part of human life, while knowledge and education are important tools in the development of human civilization. Humans are social beings by nature and the learning process is influenced by the atmosphere of the material, intellectual and spiritual that exist in a civilization.

Education experts agreed that education is not only about consuming the minds of children with all kinds of knowledge which they do not know, but it is about educating the morals and human souls

(Iwasa 2017), instilling a sense of priority, acquainting with high civility, preparing for a holistic life, morality and integrity (al-Abrasyi, 1970; Haron Din & Sobri Salamon, 1980). Meanwhile, for the disabled, education is vital for them to sustain their daily live (Nasir & Effendi 2017).

Islamic education is not only important to the normal person, but also needed by the disabled as guidance and one of their right to get educated (Ibrahim & Ismail 2018). Islamic education is an important tool for the disabled to gain knowledge and without righteous knowledge, other people would easily take advantage of their weaknesses (Etokidem & Johnson 2016).

Islamic education is fundamental to build up Muslim with good faith, righteousness and virtuousness. Islamic education must be applied to all humankind if they are categorized as *mukallaf*. *Mukallaf* is the accountable person with the laws and orders of the Islamic religion, who is pubescent, sane, has received the message of Islam and have perfect senses (Hamdi 2011), also responsible by Allah Almighty to carry out all His commands (Azman et al. 2015). Therefore, people with disabilities are included in the *mukallaf* as long as they are pubescent and sane, except for those with severe mental disorders. This is based on the hadith narrated by Aishah R. A. which means: The religion obligations were descended to three groups; those who sleep until they are awake, children until they are pubescent and the insane until they are recover (al-Bukhari 2005: 6815). According to Sayyid Sabiq (t.th) the words; *rufi' a al-qalam* in the hadith is an example to those who are not the accountable person.

Islamic education is important to provide knowledge to enable them to fulfill the demands of worship in Islam such as prayer, fasting, zakat payment and pilgrimage. Worshipping is essential for a Muslim to associate himself with Allah Almighty, controlling man to be bound by his faith (Hamdi 2010). It even educates them with praiseworthy morals and shunts from bad attitudes and damages their faith. The disabled are part of the community that needs attention. If they are neglected in Islamic education, they will inevitably fall into prohibited things (Bengtsson 2018). They need to be given the opportunity to understand Islamic education to get the right guidance, because they are capable to be a successful person (Hasnain et.al 2008).

### **Disabled Students**

The disabled are individuals who are different from other normal people. They face problems in their lives because their environment, infrastructure, communication and needs are different from those of the majority. According to the World Health Organization (WHO) in the World report on Disability (2011), about 15 percent of the world's population is made up of people with disabilities. The ratio is growing as one family in four would has a family member diagnosed with disabilities (Fauzi 2018). These estimates are increasing compared to the WHO estimate of the 1970s, which is only about 10 percent. In Malaysia, according to a population statistic by Department of Statistics Malaysia (Social Statistics Bulletin Malaysia 2018) of 30.1 million, an estimated 4.5 million are people with disabilities. However, according to the Minister of Women, Family and Community Development, only 341,011 people enrolled in the Information Management System of The Disabled (SMOKU) until January 31, 2015. (Sunshine Daily, 9 April 2015). Thus, the existence of the disabled has a significant impact on the society because they are also part of society contributing to the development and well-being of the nation.

### **Definition of Students with Special Needs**

According to the Government Gazette for Education Regulations (Special Education) 2013, special needs students (MBKs) are those who are certified by medical practitioners, opticians, audiologists or psychologists, as being reviewed by any, whether in government service or not as a student who has:

- a) Visual Impairment
- b) Hearing Impairment
- c) Speech Impairment
- d) Physical Disability
- e) Learning Disability
- f) Or any combinations of the above (a) until (e)

According to the Disability Act 2008, disabled people are physically, mentally, intellectually or emotionally disabled, who, when faced with various obstacles, are unable to fully engage and effectively engage in society.

According to the above definition, people with disabilities are faced with obstacles in their daily activities. This is due to the environment or attitude of the people who are not friendly to the disabled. These barriers prevent them from interacting with their environment or communicating with the community and ultimately result in the inability of the individual.

According to the registration of the disabled (Department of Social Welfare 2016) there are seven categories of people with disabilities, which are:

i. Hearing Impairment

Unable to hear clearly in both ears without the use of hearing aids or unable to hear even with the hearing aids. There are four levels that can be categorized as Hearing Impairment, namely:

Minimum	15 - < 30 dB	(Children)
	20 - < 30 dB	(Adult)
Moderate	30 - < 60 dB	
Severe	60 - < 90 dB	
Profound	> 90 dB	

ii. Visual Impairment

Unable to see or experience limited vision on either side of the eye even with vision aids such as glasses or touch lenses. There are two levels of vision impairment as follows:

<b>Limited Vision</b>	Has the ability to see after being given special equipment such as glasses, magnifying glass and others.
<b>Blindness</b>	Unable to see, they learned through touch, hearing, smell and taste. They use Braille to read and write.

iii. Speech Impairment

Unable to talk and cause disruptive communication that is not well understood by those who interact with them. This condition is permanent or will not recover. For children it must be based on assessment at the age of five years and above. Referring to an ophthalmologist, if there are any other concerns.

iv. Physical Disability

The inability of the limbs either lose them or not having any or the inability of any part of the body to experience conditions such as hemiplegia, paraplegia, tetraplegia, limb loss, muscular weakness which make them unable to perform basic activities such as self-care, movement and change of body position.

v. Learning Disability

Intelligence problems that are not biologically compatible with biology age. Those who fall into this category include global development, Down Syndrome, and intellectual disability. This category also includes conditions that affect individual learning abilities such as

Autism (Autistic Spectrum Disorder), Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) and specific learning problems such as (Dyslexia, Dyscalculia and Dysgraphia).

vi. Mental Illness

Severe mental illness that has been treated or diagnosed for at least two years by a Psychiatrist. As a result of illnesses experienced and undergoing psychiatric treatment, they are still unable to function in part or in all respects in relation to themselves or in public relations.

vii. Multiple Disabilities

Multiple Disabilities - has more than one type of disability and is generally inappropriate to be classified in categories from one to six.

In the context of Islamic education for students with disabilities, there are several challenges that all need to face, and these tasks need to be addressed collectively. The main focus is to look at the issues facing religious institutions, education, society, families and individuals with disabilities itself.

### **Quranic Teaching for The Disabled**

Learning Quran is encouraging to all Muslim. Thus, it is the responsibility to other Muslim to teach Quran to the disabled (Schuelka 2013). However, the task of teaching the Quran to the disabled is a great challenge. There have been studies conducted in the field of Quranic teaching to the disabled that found teaching the Quran to them are difficult. Studies by Hajarul bahti et al (2010); Norakhyairee et al. (2013) found that among the problems faced by teachers who teach the Quran to students with visual impairments are; problems of untrained teachers, time constraints, students not mastering the basics of the Qur'an, such as mastery of the Hijai and Jawi letters, limited of teaching aids and sources, parents fully given the responsible to the school for their children's education.

For the hearing-impaired, their main problem is known as communication problems. The difficulty of hearing made them unable to speak well and made it difficult for them to imitate the sound and to read the Quran. In addition, the learning environment of the Quran was also found to be uncondusive due to their inability to hear.

For people with learning disabilities, one of the challenges faced in the teaching and learning process is addressing the various disabilities A teacher needs to deal with a variety of conditions and disabilities at one time. For example, two people with similar disabilities but they have different experiences. Therefore, there is no suitable method that is suit for all children or persons with disabilities. In this case, a teacher has to deal with them individually and needs their own teaching methods. They also need to treat their students with prudence, patience and creativity in their teaching. This certainly makes the teaching and learning process difficult and ineffective.

### **Lack of Special Education Experts from Muslim Scholar**

There were few debate has been made about the disabled in books written by Muslim scholars. The lack of reference resources also led to many issues related to justice, teaching methods, preaching was not being discussed. The question of the obligations for the disabled are not discussed in detail, only mentioning the pubescent and sane. For example, people with autism, those with vision and hearing loss at the same time and the others. There is still a lot of research need to be done in the field of Islamic Studies related to Special Education or persons with disabilities. This discussion required detailed and in-depth research. However, not many Muslim scholars are as knowledgeable in the field of special education as it is a specialized field that is foreign to the field of Islamic Studies.

## **Opportunity for The Disabled in Islamic Studies**

The opportunity to pursue education in the field of Islamic Studies is crucial for the development of knowledge among the disabled. It is important to produce educators and preachers for the disabled. For people with disabilities, their opportunity to further their studies in Islamic studies is very limited. Opportunities to pursue education at Institutions of Higher Learning (HEIs) required the attention of all parties, including the readiness of the HEIs to accept their presence. The constraints that HEIs need to face are infrastructure, teaching staffs and achievement in public examinations.

First; infrastructure facilities for the use of the disabled are very limited and require high cost. Sometimes these facilities are misused because the level of awareness is still low among the public.

Second; highly trained and knowledgeable teaching staff in the field of special education. The process of teaching and learning for people with disabilities require special skills and knowledge about them. The lack of skilled teaching staff prevents the HEIs from being able to offer courses to the disabled.

Third; the merit-based entry requirements also make them hard to apply for admission to HEIs. This is due to their level of achievement in public examinations that emphasize the quality of their academic results. There were very few of the disabled able to achieve high academic achievement. This is due to infrastructure problems, illnesses, senses, communication and others that made them left out in public examinations.

## **Approaching Challenge: Islamic Education for Global Special Education**

### **Quranic Teaching**

In shaping the teaching of the Quran and Islamic Education for children and the disabled need the research and discussion of the various parties. There are needs to be cooperation and smart partnerships between government agencies such as the MOE, MHE, NGOs and the private sector. Similarities and spaces need to be seek for all to work together. The combination of experts need to be done in order to find a method that works best for all. Keep in mind that there is not a single method that works for everyone. Method A may be appropriate for certain individuals but may not be applicable to other individuals. Different categories of disabilities require different methods for each category of different intellectual levels. Teachers need to be trained with the latest skills in teaching and learning. The use of the latest materials and equipment helps in the teaching and learning process.

### **Expert Lacking**

Dealing with special needs and disabled students must be provided with skilled, efficient and trained teachers. Teacher readiness in terms of pedagogical skills and special needs student knowledge is an often discussed issue. A teacher who teaches in a school or special education program needs high courtesy, patience and high degree of commitment. However, one of the obstacles they face is the ability to address student behavior or implement appropriate teaching and learning activities for each and every student in a class. This is because there are Islamic Education teachers who are not special education options or Special Education teachers who are not Islamic Education options.

### **Inclusive Education**

In order to give birth to people with disabilities in the field of Islamic Studies, opportunity need to be given to these groups to get early education in religious schools, including the National Religious Secondary School, Government Assistance Religious Schools, People's Religious Schools, and others. These schools will produce prospective students pursuing courses or studies in Islamic Studies or

Islamic Education. A thing to consider is how much the community is willing to accept these people in the education system today, or rely solely on the Special Education Division, Ministry of Education Malaysia, or their respective NGOs.

Therefore, an effort towards providing education opportunities for students with disabilities, especially those with hearing and vision impairments, should be integrated or inclusive. The result of this education is to produce many religious teachers who have religious understanding and can act as preachers and experts in their field.

### **Opportunity to Pursue Study in Islamic Studies**

Students who follow the religious stream have the options of furthering their education to the level of higher education. Another question is to what extent the educational institutions and institutions of higher education are ready to provide the disabled with the opportunity to further their education in Islamic Studies.

The problem rise is that the institutions of higher education need to provide the right infrastructure for the disabled, educators who are skilled in Islamic Studies as well as those with special needs. These groups need to be prepared to learn in a state of lacking everything to produce good results before the infrastructure facilities are available, skilled teachers can be provided.

### **Parents Role**

There are also some parents who given all the responsibility to the school to educate their children. Studies done by Hajarul bahti et al (2010); Norakhyairee et al. (2013) also found that parents give fully responsible to the school for their children education. This situation has caused difficulty for both administrators and teachers to provide education to children with special needs. Parents need to work with the school or institution of higher education to help ensure that their education continues after school hours.

### **Society Role**

The public should also be aware of their responsibility to the disabled by helping the government, educational institutions to provide facilities for the disabled, ensuring that the facilities of the disabled are in good condition, not harming and abusing those facilities.

### **Conclusion**

An effort to provide the needs of Islamic Education for special education students and the disabled is a challenge not only on the part of the Ministry of Education, but also involving all those responsible parties for providing education for these students. The commitment and cooperation of all parties in the planning and implementation of Islamic Education for the disabled is urgently needed. The challenge of making those with a religious background who will be teachers or preachers is not easy because they require a set of environmentally conducive not only physically but also in terms of human values. Collaboration from all parties including the Ministry of Education, Ministry of Higher Education, Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development, Institute of Higher Education, Malaysian Institute of Teacher Education, schools and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) will surely produce beneficial efforts, which are useful for the education of disabled people.

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