

# Pedagogical Approaches in Islamic Education for Students with Special Needs in Inclusive Education: A Systematic Literature Review

Nurun Najihah Binti Abd Manaf & Hafizhah Zulkifli\*

Faculty of Education, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, 43600 UKM Bangi, Selangor, Malaysia

\*Corresponding Author Email: hafizhah\_zulkifli@ukm.edu.my

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## Abstract

This systematic literature review examines pedagogical approaches in Islamic Education for students with special needs within inclusive education settings. It aims to identify the approaches used, analyse their implementation, and examine the challenges faced by teachers. Guided by the five phases of SLR proposed by Khan et al. (2003) and the PRISMA framework, 10 articles published between 2021 and 2025 were analysed using thematic analysis. Four main themes emerged: adaptive and learner-centred pedagogical approaches, the use of teaching aids and digital technology, communication approaches, and challenges related to teacher professionalism. The review shows that flexible teaching strategies, interactive learning activities, visual materials, digital tools, and alternative communication methods support students' understanding and engagement in learning. However, teachers continue to face challenges related to special education training, pedagogical skills, teaching resources, and diverse student needs. This study highlights the importance of strengthening inclusive pedagogical practices in Islamic Education to better support the diverse learning needs of students with special needs.

**Keywords:** Islamic Education, Students with Special Needs, Inclusive Education, Pedagogical Approaches, Systematic Literature Review

## Introduction

Education is a fundamental right for every individual, including students with special needs. In Malaysia, the implementation of inclusive education has received increasing attention in line with the Ministry of Education's efforts to ensure equitable and accessible learning opportunities for all students regardless of their abilities or disabilities. Inclusive education enables students with special needs to learn alongside mainstream students within a supportive and equitable learning environment. This approach is aligned with the principle of education for all, which emphasises equal learning opportunities and holistic student development.

Within the context of Islamic Education, teaching students with special needs requires flexible and responsive pedagogical approaches that are adapted to students' individual learning needs. Students with special needs demonstrate differences in cognitive, emotional,

communication, behavioural, and social development, requiring teachers to modify instructional strategies according to students' abilities and categories of disabilities. Therefore, Islamic Education teachers are expected not only to master subject content knowledge but also to possess pedagogical competency, teaching creativity, and the ability to implement more inclusive and learner-friendly instructional approaches. This highlights the important role of pedagogical approaches in ensuring that students with special needs can participate meaningfully and effectively in Islamic Education learning.

Contemporary pedagogical developments indicate that pedagogical approaches in Islamic Education for students with special needs are becoming increasingly diverse and are no longer limited to traditional teacher-centred approaches. Previous studies have shown that Islamic Education teachers employ various strategies such as differentiated instruction, visual teaching aids, alternative communication methods, multisensory approaches, interactive learning activities, and the integration of technology in teaching. Hussin et al. (2024) reported that the use of visual, auditory, and kinaesthetic (VAK) approaches helps improve students' understanding of Quranic learning. Similarly, Ab Rahman et al. (2021) emphasised that communication methods such as sign language, hand coding, and visual approaches facilitate the teaching of Quranic recitation for students with hearing impairments. In addition, the use of digital teaching materials and creative instructional approaches has also been found to enhance students' engagement in the learning process. Although various pedagogical approaches have been discussed in previous studies, the existing literature remains fragmented and focuses on specific aspects of teaching practices for students with special needs.

However, most previous studies have primarily focused on general teaching practices among Islamic Education teachers for students with special needs, specific teaching aids, or particular categories of disabilities such as hearing impairments and learning disabilities. Systematic reviews that specifically synthesise pedagogical approaches in Islamic Education for students with special needs within inclusive education settings remain limited. Existing studies also tend to focus on specific disability categories and are often conducted in separate educational contexts, resulting in a lack of comprehensive understanding regarding pedagogical approaches in Islamic Education for students with special needs within inclusive education. Furthermore, previous studies indicate that teachers continue to face challenges related to special education training, limited teaching resources, and difficulties in adapting instruction according to students' diverse learning abilities.

This review contributes to the existing literature by systematically synthesising pedagogical approaches in Islamic Education for students with special needs within inclusive education settings. Unlike previous studies that mainly focused on specific disabilities, teaching aids, or individual teaching practices, this review integrates findings from various educational contexts to provide a broader understanding of adaptive pedagogical approaches, communication strategies, digital teaching tools, and challenges faced by Islamic Education teachers. The study also contributes to the field of social sciences by highlighting the importance of inclusive pedagogical practices in supporting equitable and meaningful learning opportunities for students with special needs.

Therefore, this Systematic Literature Review (SLR) was conducted to identify pedagogical approaches in Islamic Education for students with special needs within the context of inclusive education and to analyse the implementation and challenges of these approaches based on previous studies. This study is expected to provide a more comprehensive understanding of pedagogical approaches in Islamic Education for students with special needs and contribute towards strengthening more inclusive, flexible, and responsive pedagogical practices.

### Objectives of the Study

This systematic literature review was conducted to:

1. identify pedagogical approaches in Islamic Education for students with special needs within the context of inclusive education based on previous studies;
2. analyse the implementation of pedagogical approaches in Islamic Education for students with special needs based on previous studies; and
3. examine the challenges in implementing pedagogical approaches in Islamic Education for students with special needs within inclusive education settings.

### Methodology

This study employed a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) approach to identify, evaluate, and synthesise previous studies related to pedagogical approaches in Islamic Education for students with special needs within the context of inclusive education. The SLR approach was selected because it enables the process of searching, selecting, evaluating, and synthesising articles to be conducted systematically, transparently, and comprehensively. In addition, this approach assists researchers in identifying research patterns, gaps, and trends related to pedagogical practices in Islamic Education for students with special needs.

This study was guided by the five phases of Systematic Literature Review proposed by Khan et al. (2003), namely formulating research questions, identifying relevant studies, assessing study quality, summarising evidence, and interpreting findings. The Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) guidelines were also used to support the article searching, screening, and selection process in a more systematic and transparent manner.

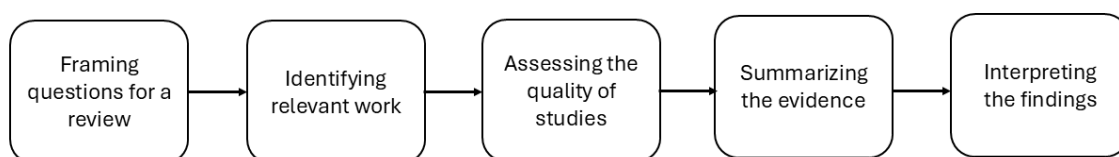


Figure 1. The Five Phases of Systematic Literature Review (Khan et al., 2003)

#### *Framing Questions for a Review*

The first phase in the Systematic Literature Review (SLR) involved the formulation of research questions. This phase is important to ensure that the processes of article searching, selection, and analysis are conducted systematically and aligned with the objectives of the study. In this review, the research questions were developed based on the focus of pedagogical approaches in Islamic Education for students with special needs within the context of inclusive education.

Based on the focus of the study, three research questions were formulated:

1. What pedagogical approaches in Islamic Education are used for students with special needs within inclusive education settings?
2. How are pedagogical approaches in Islamic Education implemented for students with special needs based on previous studies?
3. What challenges are faced in implementing pedagogical approaches in Islamic Education for students with special needs within inclusive education settings?

The formulation of these research questions helped ensure that only relevant studies aligned with the focus of the review were selected and analysed systematically.

### *Identifying Relevant Studies*

The second phase of the Systematic Literature Review involved the identification of relevant studies. This phase focused on the systematic searching of articles based on the research questions that had been formulated. The search process was conducted to ensure that the selected studies were relevant to pedagogical approaches in Islamic Education for students with special needs within inclusive education settings.

Several academic databases were used in the article searching process, namely Google Scholar, Scopus, and ERIC. These databases were selected because they provide extensive academic resources related to education, special education, and Islamic Education. The use of multiple databases also helped improve the reliability of the search process and reduce the risk of overlooking relevant studies related to the focus of the review.

The article search was conducted using several keywords in both Malay and English, such as "Pendidikan Islam", "Murid Berkeperluan Khas", "Pendidikan Inklusif", "Pendekatan Pengajaran", "Islamic Education", "Students with Special Needs", "Inclusive Education", and "Teaching Approaches". These keywords were used individually and in combination through Boolean operators such as AND and OR to obtain more relevant studies.

Examples of keyword combinations used in this study are as follows:

- "Pendidikan Islam" AND "Murid Berkeperluan Khas"
- "Islamic Education" AND "Students with Special Needs"
- "Teaching Approaches" AND "Inclusive Education"
- "Islamic Education" AND "Inclusive Education" AND "Teaching Approaches"

### *Assessing Study Quality*

The third phase of the Systematic Literature Review involved the assessment of study quality. This phase included the screening and evaluation of articles to ensure that only studies relevant to the focus of the review were selected for analysis. The evaluation process was conducted systematically based on predetermined inclusion and exclusion criteria.

In this study, selected articles were required to focus on pedagogical approaches in Islamic Education for students with special needs within the contexts of special education and inclusive education. In addition, the selected studies were required to provide clear research information, including research objectives, methodology, and findings to ensure their suitability for systematic analysis.

The screening process was conducted in several stages, namely title screening, abstract screening, and full-text review. Articles that did not meet the established criteria were excluded from the analysis. This process ensured that only relevant and high-quality studies were included in the review. Table 1 presents the inclusion and exclusion criteria used in the article selection process.

Table 1  
*Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria*

Criteria	Inclusion	Exclusion
<b>Publication Year</b>	2021 to 2025	Before 2021
<b>Language</b>	Malay and English	Languages other than Malay and English
<b>Type of Publication</b>	Journal articles, conference proceedings, and theses	Books, reports, popular articles, and websites
<b>Research Focus</b>	Pedagogical approaches in Islamic Education for students with special needs	General special education studies without elements of Islamic Education or pedagogical approaches
<b>Research Context</b>	Special education and inclusive education	Studies not related to students with special needs
<b>Article Content</b>	Articles with clear research objectives, methodology, and findings	Articles without clear methodological information
<b>Article Access</b>	Full-text articles	Articles without full-text access

The selection of articles published between 2021 and 2025 was intended to ensure that the studies analysed reflected recent developments related to pedagogical approaches in Islamic Education for students with special needs within inclusive education settings. Following the screening and evaluation process, only articles that fulfilled all inclusion criteria were selected for systematic analysis. Based on this process, a total of 10 articles were selected for analysis in this study. The systematic article selection process is illustrated in the PRISMA flow diagram.

### Summarising the Evidence

The fourth phase of the Systematic Literature Review involved summarising the evidence obtained from the selected studies. This phase focused on organising and synthesising the articles that fulfilled the inclusion criteria established in the previous phase. In this study, the PRISMA flow diagram was used to present the systematic process of article selection, beginning from the identification of records, screening process, eligibility assessment, and final article selection.

Based on the initial search process, articles were identified from several selected academic databases. The identified studies then underwent title and abstract screening. Articles that did not match the focus of the study, contained duplicate records, or failed to meet the inclusion criteria were excluded from the analysis. The remaining studies were further assessed through full-text review to ensure their relevance to the objectives of the study. The article selection process is illustrated in Figure 2.

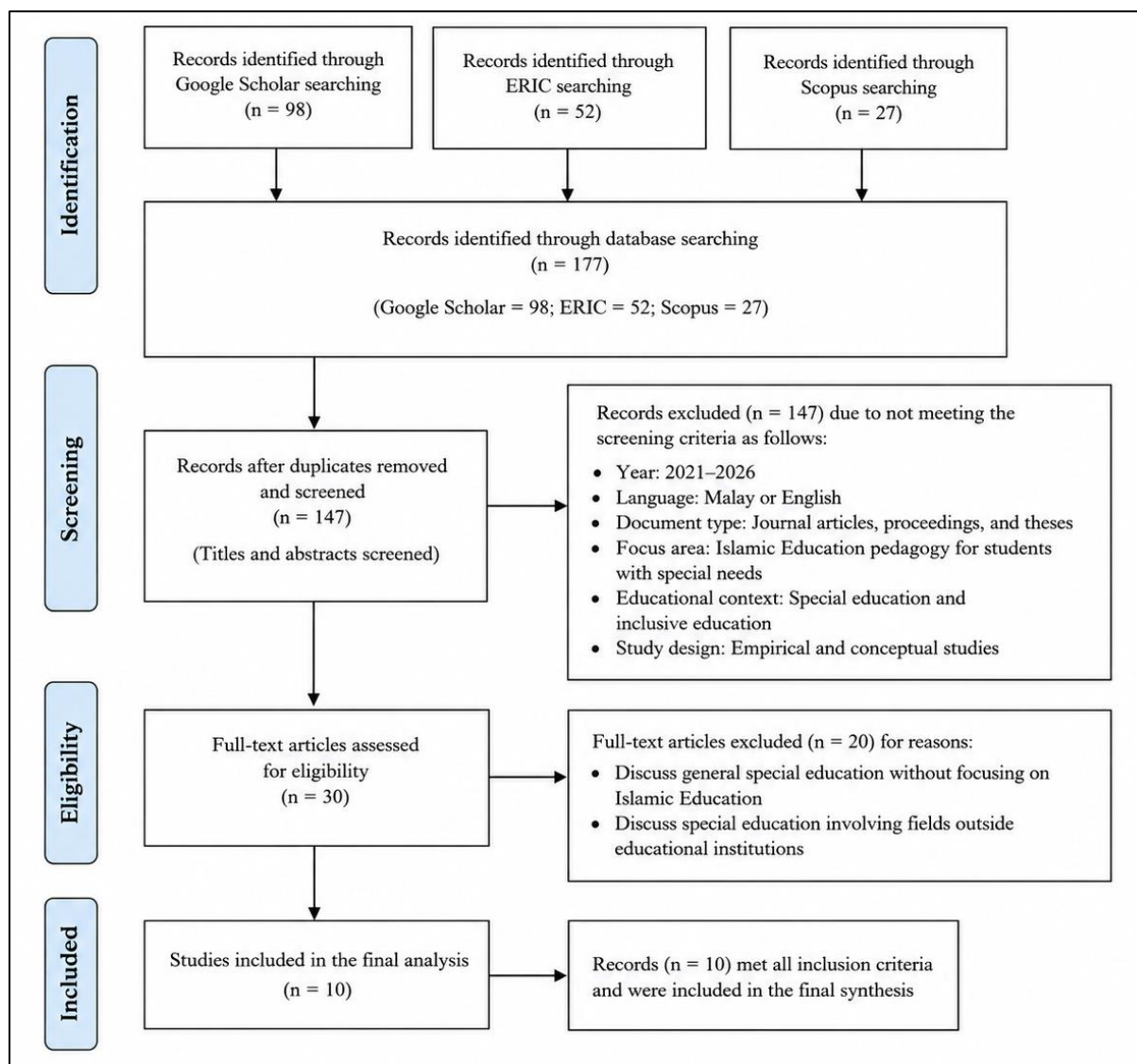


Figure 2. PRISMA Flow Diagram of Article Selection Process

Following the article selection process, key information from the 10 selected articles was summarised in the form of an analytical table. The summary included information such as authors and publication year, article title, source of publication, research methodology, and main findings. This organisation facilitated the comparison, synthesis, and interpretation of findings in the subsequent phase.

### Interpreting the Findings

The final phase of the Systematic Literature Review involved the interpretation of findings. This phase focused on analysing, synthesising, and interpreting the selected studies to identify themes, patterns, and research trends related to pedagogical approaches in Islamic Education for students with special needs. In this study, all selected articles were analysed using thematic analysis. The analysis process involved examining the main findings of each study before grouping similar findings into several major themes.

Through this process, four main themes were identified, namely adaptive and learner-centred pedagogical approaches, the use of teaching aids and digital technology,

communication approaches in Islamic Education teaching, and challenges related to teacher professionalism and pedagogical readiness. These themes emerged consistently across previous studies related to pedagogical approaches in Islamic Education for students with special needs within special education and inclusive education settings.

In addition, the interpretation process involved comparing similarities and differences across previous studies to identify patterns in pedagogical practices used by Islamic Education teachers for students with special needs. This analysis also enabled the identification of research gaps and highlighted the need for more flexible, inclusive, and responsive pedagogical approaches in Islamic Education learning environments.

Table 2

*Analysis of Selected Articles Related to Pedagogical Approaches in Islamic Education for Students with Special Needs*

No	Author(s) & Year	Article Title	Journal/Sourc e	Methodology	Main Findings
1	Hussin, N. A., Dzulkifli, I., & Ahmad, M. N. (2024)	Kepelbagaian Strategi Pengajaran al-Quran Murid Ketidakupayaan Masalah Pembelajaran	Journal of Quran Sunnah Education and Special Needs (JQSS)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•<b>Research Design:</b> Qualitative study</li> <li>•<b>Sample:</b> Official documents related to special education curriculum</li> <li>•<b>Instrument:</b> Document content analysis</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identified learner-centred, teacher-centred, material-centred, and differentiated instruction approaches.</li> <li>• Flexible teaching strategies helped improve students' understanding in Quranic learning.</li> </ul>
2	Mustafa, N., & Mohd Zhaffar, N. (2024)	Strategi Pengajaran Pendidikan Islam Pendidikan Khas	Advances in Humanities and Contemporary Studies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•<b>Research Design:</b> Conceptual study</li> <li>•<b>Sample:</b> No respondents involved</li> <li>•<b>Instrument:</b> Literature analysis</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Brainstorming, storytelling, discussion, and visual demonstration techniques increased students' engagement.</li> <li>• Interactive approaches supported meaningful</li> </ul>

- 3 Dzul kifli, I., & Fakhruddin, F. M. (2024). Profesionalisme Guru Pendidikan Islam dalam Pengajaran Murid Berkeperluan Khas. *International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences*
- **Research Design:** Literature review
  - **Sample:** Previous studies related to teacher professionalism
  - **Instrument:** Content analysis
- learning experiences.
- Teachers demonstrated good competency in Quranic recitation teaching.
  - Creative teaching aids such as Quran Isyarat, videos, games, and hand coding enhanced learning effectiveness.
- 4 Mohd Rashid, S. M., & Mohd Jamil, N. R. (2025). Kompetensi Profesional Guru Pendidikan Islam dalam Pengajaran Tilawah al-Quran MBK Pendengaran. *Journal of Quran Sunnah Education and Special Needs (JQSS)*
- **Research Design:** Qualitative case study
  - **Sample:** Five Islamic Education teachers
  - **Instrument:** Semi-structured interviews
- Teachers demonstrated strong professional competency in teaching practices.
- Systematic lesson planning and diverse assessment approaches supported students' learning.
- 5 Samsudin, S., Saharudin, N. A., Ubaidillah, H., & Adnan, A. (2022). Sorotan Kaedah Pembelajaran Pendidikan Islam bagi Pelajar Pekak Politeknik. *Jurnal Kejuruteraan, Teknologi dan Sains Sosial (JKTSS)*
- **Research Design:** Literature review
  - **Sample:** Previous studies related to hearing-impaired students
  - **Instrument:** Document analysis
- Sign language communication and visual approaches facilitated learning.
- The use of video, visual, and virtual learning methods increased students' participation.

- 6 Ahmad Sabri, F. S., & Zakaria, H. B. (2022) Kajian Pelaksanaan Pengajaran Pendidikan Islam di Program Pendidikan Khas Integrasi Kes JAUHARI, IPG Kampus Pendidikan Islam
- Research Design:** Qualitative case study
  - Sample:** Two Islamic Education teachers in PPKI
  - Instrument:** Structured interviews
- Findings highlighted teacher preparation, implementation, challenges, and improvement strategies.  
•Learner-centred activities and creative teaching aids improved students' engagement.
- 7 Mt Isa, Z. (2023) Kesediaan Guru Pendidikan Islam dalam Pengajaran Ibadah Solat Murid Masalah Pembelajaran di Selangor Master's Thesis, Universiti Pendidikan Sultan Idris
- Research Design:** Quantitative study
  - Sample:** 90 Islamic Education teachers in PPKI
  - Instrument:** Questionnaire
- Teachers showed high readiness in terms of knowledge, teaching skills, and assessment practices.  
•Professional readiness influenced teaching effectiveness for students with special needs.
- 8 Ab. Jawas, S., & Zulkifli, H. (2022) Amalan Kreatif Guru Pendidikan Islam Masalah Pembelajaran QALAM International Journal of Islamic and Humanities Research
- Research Design:** Qualitative study
  - Sample:** Islamic Education teachers
  - Instrument:** Interviews
- Creative teaching practices increased students' participation and learning engagement.  
•Interactive teaching strategies supported inclusive learning environments.

- |    |  |   |   |   |   |
|----|--|---|---|---|---|
| 9  | Ab Rahman, B., Hashim, A., & Ishak, H. (2021)  | Medium Komunikasi Guru Pendidikan Islam dalam Pengajaran dan Pemudahcaraan Tilawah al-Quran MBK Pendengaran   | International Journal of Education, Psychology and Counseling | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>●<b>Research Design:</b> Qualitative study</li> <li>●<b>Sample:</b> Two Islamic Education teachers for hearing-impaired students</li> <li>●<b>Instrument:</b> Interviews, observations, and document analysis</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>●Communication methods such as BMKT, sign language, finger spelling, and visual writing facilitated Quranic recitation learning.</li> <li>●Alternative communication approaches improved interaction during teaching and learning activities.</li> </ul> |
| 10 | Wan Ismail, W. A., Md Soh, N. S., Mohd Zhaffar, N., Ali, M. F., & Wan Ismail, W. N. (2025) | Pembangunan Modul Digital Interaktif Pendidikan Islam Murid Berkeperluan Khas (MBK) Bermasalah Pembelajaran di Sekolah PPKI: Satu Tinjauan Konseptual | Jurnal Pendidikan Bitara UPSI                                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>●<b>Research Design:</b> Conceptual study</li> <li>●<b>Sample:</b> No respondents involved</li> <li>●<b>Instrument:</b> Document analysis</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>●Digital modules integrated Islamic pedagogical elements with modern instructional design.</li> <li>●Interactive digital learning materials supported more meaningful and responsive learning experiences.</li> </ul>                                    |

## Findings

The findings of this Systematic Literature Review were synthesised thematically based on the selected studies related to pedagogical approaches in Islamic Education for students with special needs within inclusive education settings. The analysis identified four main themes, namely adaptive and learner-centred pedagogical approaches, the use of teaching aids and digital technology, communication approaches in Islamic Education teaching, and challenges related to teacher professionalism and pedagogical readiness.

These themes were identified based on similarities and recurring patterns found across the selected studies. The findings indicate that pedagogical approaches in Islamic Education for students with special needs require greater flexibility, inclusivity, and responsiveness to accommodate students' diverse learning needs and abilities.

Table 3

*Synthesis of Main Themes from the Findings*

Main Themes	Focus of Findings	Related Studies
Adaptive and Learner-Centred Pedagogical Approaches	Teachers applied flexible teaching approaches, differentiated instruction, interactive activities, demonstrations, and individual guidance based on students' abilities and learning needs.	Hussin et al. (2024), Mustafa & Mohd Zhaffar (2024), Ahmad Sabri & Zakaria (2022), Mt Isa (2023)
Use of Teaching Aids and Digital Technology	Visual teaching aids, videos, gamification, digital technology, and interactive modules helped improve students' understanding and engagement in learning.	Dzulkifli & Mohd Fakhrudin (2024), Ab. Jawas & Zulkifli (2022), Wan Ismail et al. (2025), Samsudin et al. (2022)
Communication Approaches in Islamic Education Teaching	Teachers used BMKT, sign language, visual communication, finger spelling, and multisensory approaches in teaching students with hearing impairments.	Ab Rahman et al. (2021), Samsudin et al. (2022), Mohd Rashid & Mohd Jamil (2025)
Challenges Related to Teacher Professionalism and Pedagogical Readiness	Teachers faced challenges related to special education training, teaching aids preparation, inclusive pedagogical competency, and students' diverse learning abilities.	Dzulkifli & Mohd Fakhrudin (2024), Ahmad Sabri & Zakaria (2022), Mt Isa (2023)

The identified themes demonstrate that pedagogical approaches in Islamic Education for students with special needs involve various adaptive teaching strategies, communication approaches, and technological support to accommodate students' diverse learning needs. At the same time, the findings also highlight several challenges faced by teachers in implementing inclusive pedagogical practices effectively.

*Adaptive and Learner-Centred Pedagogical Approaches*

Previous studies consistently highlighted adaptive and learner-centred pedagogical approaches as important instructional strategies in Islamic Education for students with special needs. Approaches such as differentiated instruction, demonstrations, interactive activities, repetitive exercises, and individual guidance were reported to improve students' understanding and participation during learning activities. These approaches enable teachers to modify instructional methods according to students' learning abilities, levels of understanding, and types of disabilities (Hussin et al., 2024; Mustafa & Mohd Zhaffar, 2024; Ahmad Sabri & Zakaria, 2022).

Learner-centred approaches also contributed to the development of more inclusive and supportive learning environments for students with special needs. Interactive activities and differentiated instructional strategies encouraged more active student participation during classroom learning activities. Repetitive learning activities and individual guidance were also found to strengthen students' mastery and retention of learning content, particularly in Quranic recitation and practical Islamic practices.

Adaptive pedagogical approaches play an important role in addressing the diverse educational needs of students with special needs. As students exhibit diverse cognitive, communication, and behavioural characteristics, teachers need to modify instructional approaches to ensure that learning activities remain accessible and appropriate to students' needs. Such pedagogical practices therefore contribute significantly to improving students' participation and overall learning experiences within inclusive Islamic Education settings.

#### *Use of Teaching Aids and Digital Technology*

The integration of teaching aids and digital technology has significantly influenced the effectiveness of Islamic Education learning for students with special needs. Visual aids, videos, gamification elements, interactive modules, and digital learning tools were reported to improve students' understanding and encourage more active participation during classroom learning activities (Dzulkifli & Mohd Fakhruddin, 2024; Ab. Jawas & Zulkifli, 2022; Wan Ismail et al., 2025).

Visual and interactive teaching materials were particularly effective for students with learning disabilities and hearing impairments, especially in helping them understand abstract concepts more clearly. The use of digital modules, visual presentations, and multimedia elements contributed to more engaging and student-friendly learning experiences. In addition, the integration of technology in Islamic Education teaching encouraged greater student participation and created a more inclusive learning environment.

Furthermore, creative and technology-based teaching aids enabled teachers to adapt instruction according to students' learning abilities and individual needs. Interactive digital materials and gamification strategies also increased students' motivation and interest in learning Islamic Education. Overall, the integration of teaching aids and digital technology contributes significantly to strengthening more inclusive and adaptive pedagogical practices for students with special needs.

#### *Communication Approaches in Islamic Education Teaching*

Effective communication strategies are essential in the teaching of Islamic Education for students with special needs, particularly those with hearing impairments. Teachers employed various communication methods such as Bahasa Melayu Kod Tangan (BMKT), sign language, visual communication, finger spelling, body gestures, and multisensory strategies to facilitate students' understanding during classroom learning activities (Ab Rahman et al., 2021; Samsudin et al., 2022; Mohd Rashid & Mohd Jamil, 2025).

Alternative communication strategies were found to improve interaction between teachers and students during Islamic Education lessons, particularly in Quranic recitation and practical worship activities. Visual communication and sign-based instructional methods helped students understand lesson content more clearly and effectively. In addition, multisensory strategies encouraged more active student participation through the integration of visual, auditory, and kinaesthetic elements.

Furthermore, effective communication practices contribute to the development of more inclusive and supportive learning environments for students with special needs. Teachers' ability to adapt communication methods according to students' needs also

influenced students' participation, understanding, and confidence during learning activities. These findings highlight the importance of communication competency among Islamic Education teachers in ensuring more accessible and effective learning experiences for students with special needs.

#### *Challenges Related to Teacher Professionalism and Pedagogical Readiness*

Islamic Education teachers continue to face various challenges in implementing pedagogical practices for students with special needs within inclusive education settings. The major challenges identified included limited exposure to special education training, difficulties in adapting teaching strategies to students' diverse learning abilities, insufficient teaching resources, and limited pedagogical readiness in managing students with different types of disabilities (Dzulkifli & Mohd Fakhruddin, 2024; Ahmad Sabri & Zakaria, 2022; Mt Isa, 2023).

Several studies also highlighted teachers' difficulties in selecting suitable teaching strategies and preparing instructional materials that align with students' learning needs and abilities. In addition, the diversity of students' cognitive, behavioural, and communication characteristics requires teachers to continuously adapt and diversify their instructional strategies to ensure effective learning experiences. These challenges indirectly increase teachers' workload and require a higher level of pedagogical competency and professional commitment.

The findings also emphasise the important role of teacher professionalism in strengthening inclusive pedagogical practices in Islamic Education. Teachers with stronger pedagogical knowledge, teaching creativity, and greater exposure to special education practices were more prepared and confident in managing learning activities for students with special needs. Therefore, continuous professional development, specialised training, and institutional support are essential for improving teachers' pedagogical readiness and competency in implementing more inclusive and adaptive Islamic Education practices.

#### **Discussion**

##### *Adaptive and Learner-Centred Pedagogical Approaches*

The widespread implementation of adaptive and learner-centred pedagogical approaches reflects the need for Islamic Education teachers to accommodate the diverse learning abilities of students with special needs. Instructional strategies such as differentiated instruction, interactive activities, demonstrations, repetitive exercises, and individual guidance appear to support students' understanding and participation more effectively (Hussin et al., 2024; Mustafa & Mohd Zhaffar, 2024; Ahmad Sabri & Zakaria, 2022). This reflects the importance of flexible teaching practices in accommodating students' diverse learning abilities and educational needs within inclusive education settings.

These findings are consistent with previous studies that emphasise the role of learner-centred practices in creating more inclusive learning environments for students with special needs. Students with special needs require instructional strategies that are responsive to their cognitive, behavioural, communication, and emotional differences. Therefore, teachers play a crucial role in adapting instructional methods and learning activities according to students' individual abilities and levels of understanding (Mt Isa, 2023).

In addition, adaptive pedagogical practices contribute to improving students' participation and confidence during learning activities. Interactive and flexible instructional strategies encourage more active student participation and strengthen students' understanding of Islamic Education content, particularly in Quranic recitation and practical worship activities. These findings suggest that inclusive Islamic Education practices should continue to prioritise learner-centred and adaptive pedagogical approaches to ensure more accessible and meaningful learning experiences for students with special needs.

#### *Use of Teaching Aids and Digital Technology*

The increasing use of teaching aids and digital technology reflects the growing need for more interactive and accessible Islamic Education learning environments for students with special needs. Teaching materials such as visual aids, videos, gamification elements, interactive modules, and digital learning tools appear to improve students' understanding, motivation, and participation during classroom learning activities (Dzulkifli & Mohd Fakhrudin, 2024; Ab. Jawas & Zulkifli, 2022; Wan Ismail et al., 2025). This suggests that technology-integrated pedagogical practices contribute to the development of more interactive and inclusive learning environments.

Previous studies also emphasised the effectiveness of visual and digital teaching materials in supporting students with learning disabilities and hearing impairments. The integration of multimedia elements and interactive digital resources helps students understand abstract concepts more clearly while encouraging active participation during learning activities. In addition, digital teaching materials provide teachers with greater flexibility in adapting instruction to students' learning needs and abilities (Samsudin et al., 2022).

Furthermore, the integration of technology in Islamic Education teaching aligns with current educational developments that emphasise digital pedagogy and inclusive learning practices. Interactive and technology-based learning strategies not only support academic learning but also increase students' interest and confidence during learning activities. Therefore, the integration of teaching aids and digital technology should continue to be strengthened to support more accessible, engaging, and adaptive Islamic Education learning experiences for students with special needs.

#### *Communication Approaches in Islamic Education Teaching*

Effective communication practices are essential in ensuring meaningful Islamic Education learning for students with special needs, particularly those with hearing impairments. Teachers utilised various communication methods such as Bahasa Melayu Kod Tangan (BMKT), sign language, visual communication, finger spelling, and multisensory strategies to facilitate students' understanding during learning activities (Ab Rahman et al., 2021; Samsudin et al., 2022; Mohd Rashid & Mohd Jamil, 2025). This reflects the importance of effective communication in supporting students' participation and comprehension in Islamic Education learning.

These findings are consistent with previous studies that emphasise the role of alternative communication strategies in improving interaction between teachers and students during learning activities. Visual communication methods and sign-based

instructional strategies helped students understand lesson content more clearly, especially in Quranic recitation and practical worship learning. In addition, multisensory strategies encouraged more active student participation through the integration of visual, auditory, and kinaesthetic learning elements.

In addition, teachers' communication competency contributes towards the development of more inclusive and supportive learning environments for students with special needs. Teachers who were able to adapt communication strategies to students' needs were more effective in managing teaching and learning activities. Therefore, communication skills and inclusive interaction strategies should continue to be strengthened among Islamic Education teachers to ensure more accessible, adaptive, and effective learning experiences for students with special needs.

#### *Challenges Related to Teacher Professionalism and Pedagogical Readiness*

Islamic Education teachers continue to face various challenges in implementing inclusive pedagogical practices for students with special needs. The major challenges identified included limited exposure to special education training, difficulties in adapting teaching approaches according to students' diverse learning abilities, insufficient teaching resources, and limited pedagogical readiness in handling students with different categories of disabilities (Dzul kifli & Mohd Fakhruddin, 2024; Ahmad Sabri & Zakaria, 2022; Mt Isa, 2023). These challenges indicate that inclusive Islamic Education teaching requires not only subject matter knowledge but also specialised pedagogical competency and professional preparedness.

These findings are consistent with previous studies that emphasise that teachers often experience difficulties in selecting suitable teaching strategies and preparing appropriate instructional materials that align with students' learning needs and abilities. In addition, the diversity of students' cognitive, behavioural, and communication characteristics requires teachers to continuously adapt and diversify their instructional strategies to ensure effective and meaningful learning experiences. These challenges indirectly increase teachers' workload and require greater commitment in managing inclusive classrooms.

Teacher professionalism also plays a crucial role in strengthening inclusive pedagogical practices in Islamic Education. Teachers with stronger pedagogical knowledge, teaching creativity, and exposure to special education practices were found to be more prepared and confident in conducting teaching and learning activities for students with special needs. Therefore, continuous professional development, specialised training, and institutional support are essential in improving teachers' pedagogical readiness and competency in implementing more inclusive, flexible, and responsive Islamic Education practices.

#### **Conclusion**

This Systematic Literature Review highlights the importance of adaptive and inclusive pedagogical practices in Islamic Education for students with special needs within inclusive education settings. The findings demonstrate that flexible instructional strategies, interactive learning activities, teaching aids, digital technology, and alternative communication strategies contribute to improving students' participation, understanding, and learning experiences in Islamic Education.

However, the review also reveals several challenges related to teachers' pedagogical readiness, special education training, teaching resources, and the diversity of students' learning needs. These findings indicate the need for continuous professional development, specialised training, and stronger institutional support to enhance teachers' competency in implementing inclusive pedagogical practices effectively. This review is limited to studies published between 2021 and 2025 and focuses primarily on studies conducted within the Malaysian educational context.

Overall, this review contributes to a broader understanding of pedagogical practices in Islamic Education for students with special needs and highlights the importance of strengthening more inclusive, adaptive, and learner-centred teaching practices within contemporary educational settings. Future studies are recommended to explore the effectiveness of specific pedagogical approaches across different disability categories and educational contexts.

### **Contribution**

This systematic literature review contributes theoretically and contextually to the understanding of pedagogical practices in Islamic Education for students with special needs within inclusive education settings. The study provides a thematic synthesis of adaptive pedagogical strategies, communication practices, teaching aids, digital technology integration, and teacher professionalism in supporting inclusive Islamic Education learning. In addition, this review strengthens existing discussions related to inclusive pedagogical practices in Islamic Education by highlighting the importance of flexible and learner-centred instructional strategies that accommodate students' diverse learning needs and abilities. From a practical perspective, the findings may assist Islamic Education teachers, school administrators, policymakers, and educational institutions in improving pedagogical readiness, professional development, and inclusive teaching practices for students with special needs. This study also highlights the importance of continuous support, specialised training, and adaptive instructional practices in strengthening inclusive Islamic Education learning environments within contemporary educational settings.

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