



Empowering Islamic Education Teachers as Special Assistants to Support Inclusive Elementary Schools

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ABSTRACT

The importance of inclusive Islamic education is increasingly recognized in ensuring educational quality for students with special needs. This study sought to answer how training for Islamic Education teachers as special assistants is planned, implemented, evaluated, and followed up in inclusive elementary schools in Tapin Regency, Indonesia. Methods: This qualitative exploratory study was conducted in four elementary schools (Mandurian Public Elementary School, Pematang Karangan Hulu Public Elementary School, Rantau Kanan 2 Public Elementary School, Pebaungan Hulu Public Elementary School) involving eight Islamic Education teachers as special assistants. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, focus group discussions, and observations, and analyzed using data reduction, presentation, and conclusion. Results: The training played a significant role in improving teachers' competencies and fostering collaborative practices, involving systematic planning through meetings with principals and work teams, workshops, training sessions, ongoing supervision, comprehensive performance evaluation. Follow-up activities included reflection, continuous training, and collaboration between assistant and regular teachers to optimize inclusive education, though hampered by resource constraints. Conclusion: Systematic and comprehensive training of Islamic Education teachers as special assistants plays a significant role in supporting the success of inclusive education for students with special needs and provides valuable insights for developing effective inclusive Islamic education programs.

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1. Introduction

For nearly four decades, countries in the Asia-Pacific region, including Indonesia, have been persistently fighting for the recognition of persons with disabilities as an important part of human rights. Persons with disabilities have the right to equal opportunities to play an active role in various economic, social, educational, cultural, and political fields, just like the general public. It is hoped that all children will have equal opportunities to learn and develop according to their respective potentials(Sarnoto, 2024).

Education for persons with disabilities in Indonesia has undergone significant changes with the enactment of Law No. 8 of 2016 on Persons with Disabilities, which replaced Law No. 4 of 1997. This new law brings fundamental changes to the education system for Children with Special Needs (CSN), with a focus on better fulfillment of rights and access to inclusive and quality education. The updated regulations mark a significant step forward in ensuring equal learning opportunities and appropriate educational services for persons with disabilities at all levels of education in Indonesia(Hayatudin et al., 2025).

Inclusive education is a form of special education that ensures all children with special needs have equal learning opportunities in regular classrooms alongside their peers. Previously, children with special needs or disabilities were placed in separate educational facilities according to their level and type of disability, known as Special Schools (SLB). However, the SLB system, without a strong foundation, created exclusive barriers that separated children with special needs from a broader learning environment(H. Nadhiroh & Abror, 2024).

One crucial component of inclusive education is close collaboration between parents, students, and teachers. In order to identify each child's special needs and provide appropriate support, educators must establish open and honest communication with parents and students(Cade, 2023). Furthermore, it is important to create an inclusive classroom environment where every student feels supported, respected, and fully accepted. Through inclusive education, it is hoped that all children will have equal opportunities to learn and grow according to their unique potential(Winda Fionita & Ely Nurjannah, 2024).

Children with special needs (CSN) receive special assistance from Special Guidance Teachers who provide extra attention in the inclusive education process. Developing the independence of CSN, including self-care skills, is a key focus in the inclusive school approach. Therefore, the role of special assistant teachers is vital in helping to improve the independence of these children. Inclusive schools must also ensure that special assistant teachers have clear roles and responsibilities so they can provide effective guidance and support for CSN(Budianto, 2024).

Although some training programs exist, there remains a significant gap in understanding how effective training for Islamic Education teachers as Special Guidance Teachers (Guru Pendamping Khusus) can be conceptualized and implemented to meet the unique socio-cultural needs of inclusive elementary schools in Indonesia. This research aims to address this critical gap by providing empirical insights into the planning, execution, and evaluation of such training, with a specific focus on Tapin Regency, South Kalimantan.(U. Nadhiroh & Ahmadi, 2024).

The implementation of inclusive education in Indonesia, including teacher training, still faces various real challenges. Although regulations and policies have developed, the

reality is that training and support for Islamic Education teachers in inclusive schools is still far from optimal. This condition is exacerbated by a lack of adequate facilities, limited human resources, and inconsistent implementation in the field. In-depth empirical research on the process of training inclusive Islamic education teachers in Indonesia, particularly at the regional level such as Tapin Regency, remains very limited (Kinanthi et al., 2024).

Since 2015, Tapin Regency in South Kalimantan has been actively promoting the implementation of inclusive education in its schools as part of a paradigm shift in education for people with disabilities. This initiative was realized through a series of socialization events held by the Tapin Regency Education and Culture Office together with the principals of elementary, junior high, and high schools in the Tapin Regency Education Office Hall. This proactive step demonstrates the region's commitment to creating a learning environment that is welcoming and inclusive for all students, including those with special needs (Halmein, 2015).

In 2016, the Tapin District Education Office held an important socialization event involving school principals, teachers, and teachers' councils from the Tapin District. The event was also attended by the Head of the Tapin District Education Office, the Regent of Tapin, and the Secretary of the South Kalimantan Provincial Education Office, marking the strong commitment of all parties to promoting inclusive education in the region.

The Head of the Tapin District Education Office at that time expressed his hope that all schools in Tapin District, including those in remote areas, could become inclusive schools. That way, all children would have the same opportunity to enjoy education without exception. Strong support also came from the Regent of Tapin at that time, Arifin Arpan, who instructed the Head of the Education Office to continue developing inclusive education in his region. Since the first awareness campaign in 2015, Tapin Regency has had 16 schools implementing inclusive education as a manifestation of its commitment to creating an inclusive learning environment for all students (Dinayanti, 2016).

The local government in South Kalimantan has been actively involved in the implementation of inclusive education through various strategic policies. One of the important steps taken is the establishment of the Inclusive Education Communication Forum throughout South Kalimantan. Since 2012, the Inclusive Education Communication Forum has been established in 13 districts/cities as a platform for communication and coordination among inclusive schools and relevant stakeholders. This initiative has become a crucial foundation for the development of more structured and effective inclusive education in the region (ULM, 2020).

Based on the researcher's initial observations of data from 2023 obtained from the Tapin Regency Inclusive Education Communication Forum, there are 253 schools that have implemented an inclusive education system. These schools include 131 kindergartens, 103 elementary schools, and 19 junior high schools. Out of the total number of schools, there are 230 children with special needs registered, with 55 children in kindergartens, 159 children in elementary schools, and 16 children in junior high schools. This data reflects significant progress in the implementation of inclusive education in Tapin District (Afifah, 2024).

Despite significant progress in rolling out inclusive education in Tapin Regency, there remains a notable dissonance between the ideal goals of inclusive education and its

real implementation on the ground. Major challenges include insufficient training for school administrators and teachers, limited development of human resources, and a shortage of qualified Special Education Teachers. Additionally, curriculum adaptations, availability of appropriate learning facilities, effective assessment systems, and accessibility for students with special needs are still inadequate. This gap highlights the lack of comprehensive support and systematic implementation mechanisms, which impede the full realization of inclusive education objectives in the region.

Observations reveal a clear gap where Islamic Education teachers struggle to effectively teach religious practices, including wudhu and prayer, to students with special needs. This difficulty stems largely from inadequate training and lack of specialized knowledge since their college education. Moreover, insufficient facilities and limited governmental support compound these challenges, making it harder for teachers to fulfill their roles. Addressing these issues is crucial, requiring targeted training programs and robust support systems to empower teachers while ensuring that the unique educational needs of students with special needs are fully met in an inclusive setting.

Recent empirical studies provide important insights into various facets of inclusive education, emphasizing the role of parental involvement, caregiver experiences, teacher attitudes, and professional development. For instance, Musendo et al. systematically reviewed interventions that promote parental involvement in the education of children with disabilities, underscoring its significance for educational outcomes (Musendo et al., 2023). Rheinberger, Staley, and Nutton explored caregivers' experiences within a dual system of mainstream and special education, highlighting ongoing challenges to educational inclusion (Rheinberger et al., 2023). Tarantino, Makopoulou, and Neville conducted a meta-analysis demonstrating positive shifts in teacher attitudes towards inclusion in physical education following global policy interventions (Tarantino et al., 2025). Purtell et al. documented memorable inclusive messages from secondary school teachers that foster positive perceptions of inclusivity among students with special needs (Purtell et al., 2025). Sharma and Morton discussed the critical need to bridge gaps between theory and practice in inclusive teacher education internationally, advocating for continuous professional development (Sharma & Morton, 2025).

While these studies inform the broader understanding of inclusive education, none specifically address the unique context of Islamic Education teachers functioning as special assistants in inclusive elementary schools in Indonesia, especially within Tapin Regency. This research aims to fill this gap by investigating the planning, implementation, evaluation, and follow-up of teacher training specifically tailored for Islamic Education teachers in inclusive settings, thus providing novel empirical contributions to the field.

Understanding the training of Islamic Education teachers is crucial (Demirel & İslamoğlu, 2025), especially when they are required to optimize the learning process in challenging conditions. The lack of positive stimuli in the form of facility support, learning media, and adequate training from the government significantly hinders teachers' efforts to provide effective religious guidance to students with special needs in their respective schools.

This study uses the Social Model of Disability as a theoretical framework to analyze how training programs for Islamic Education teachers as special assistants are planned, implemented, and evaluated. The primary aim is to comprehensively describe and analyze these processes, providing clear insights into effective training strategies and

identifying challenges faced. Practically, the findings are expected to inform policymakers, educational institutions, and trainers in improving teacher training quality. Scientifically, this research fills empirical gaps in inclusive Islamic education literature, especially in the Indonesian context.

2. Method

This study uses a qualitative approach with an exploratory design that aims to gain an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon of training Islamic Religious Education teachers as special assistants in inclusive elementary schools. Exploratory research is open-ended and flexible, designed to understand phenomena that are relatively new or have not been widely studied before (Pahleviannur et al., 2022). The research participants consisted of 8 Islamic Education teachers who were purposively selected from four elementary schools (Mandurian Public Elementary School, Pematang Karangan Hulu Public Elementary School, Rantau Kanan 2 Public Elementary School, and Pebaungan Hulu Public Elementary School). The selection of participants was based on their active involvement as special assistants in inclusive classrooms.

In research, data is any form of information or material that comes from nature and must be sought, collected, and selected by researchers. In qualitative studies, data takes the form of words, phrases, sentences, and actions obtained primarily through statements and activities of subjects who are observed or interviewed (Creswell, 2009; Irawan & Maulana, 2024). Data sources are divided into primary data, which is the main data collected directly from the field, such as through interviews with Islamic Education teachers in several schools (Mandurian Public Elementary School, Pematang Karangan Hulu Public Elementary School, Rantau Kanan 2 Public Elementary School, and Pebaungan Hulu Public Elementary School), and secondary data sources derived from supporting documents such as books, school documents, photos of activities, and other library materials.

Data collection was conducted using three main techniques, namely observation, interviews, and documentation (Maulana et al., 2024). Observation was carried out to observe the conditions of the four schools where the research took place, the implementation of Islamic Education teacher training as special assistants in inclusive schools. Detailed observation guidelines were developed to ensure systematic observation and cover teacher and student interactions, coaching activities, and the training process in inclusive classrooms. Documentation included the collection of school profile data, documents on the implementation of Islamic Education teacher training, and training materials related to learning for children with special needs. Semi-structured interview guidelines were used to explore in depth the views and experiences of teachers regarding the phenomenon being studied.

Data analysis was conducted using Miles and Huberman's Interactive Data Analysis Model:

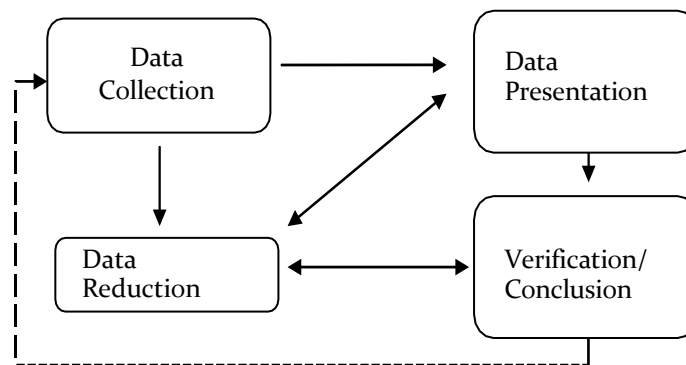


Figure 1. Miles and Huberman's Interactive Data Analysis Model

The first stage is Data Collection, where all relevant data is gathered through in-depth interviews, observation, and documentation. This stage prepares comprehensive raw material for further analysis. The second stage is Data Reduction, which is the process of simplifying raw data by selecting, focusing, abstracting, and reorganizing data into more structured codes or themes to facilitate understanding and analysis. In the context of this study, the reduction process helps to group information related to the training of Islamic Education teachers as special assistants in inclusive schools. The third stage is Data Presentation, which involves organizing and presenting the reduced data in an easily understandable form, such as tables, matrices, diagrams, or structured narratives. This presentation makes it easier for researchers to identify patterns and relationships between themes, as well as to convey findings in a systematic and logical manner. The fourth stage is Conclusion Drawing and Data Verification, where researchers begin to make interpretations, draw meaning from the data, test the validity of the analysis, and re-test the data if necessary to ensure the validity and consistency of the results. At this stage, cross-checking with participants (member checking) is carried out and data triangulation techniques are used to strengthen the credibility of the findings (Muradi et al., 2022).

3. Finding and Discussion Finding

The data presentation in this section summarizes all information collected through observation, interviews, and documentation techniques that have been determined in advance. The data presented is the result of a careful editing process to ensure the accuracy and completeness of the information. This presentation is delivered in a concise but dense narrative form, providing a clear picture while remaining focused on the essence of the research findings.

Planning for the Development of Islamic Education Teachers as Special Assistants in Inclusive Elementary Schools in Tapin Regency

Inclusive schools at Mandurian Public Elementary School, Pematang Karangan Hulu Public Elementary School, Rantau Kanan 2 Public Elementary School, and Pebaungan Hulu Public Elementary School actively accept and accommodate students/children with special needs (CSN) in the regular learning process. In certain subjects, such as Islamic Religious Education, CSN students learn alongside their peers; however, teachers face significant challenges in addressing their specific needs. To

address this, the four schools provide specialized support teachers for CSN students. The presence of these support teachers aims to enhance students' understanding of the material presented by the classroom teacher and to improve the smoothness of inclusive learning dynamics in the classroom(Pujiaty, 2024).

The author interviewed Islamic Education teachers who serve as special assistants at Mandurian Public Elementary School, Pematang Karangan Hulu Public Elementary School, Rantau Kanan 2 Public Elementary School, and Pebaungan Hulu Public Elementary School. The focus of the study was the planning of the training of these special assistant teachers. Based on interviews with Islamic Education teachers at Mandurian Public Elementary School, the planning of training was conducted systematically through supervision and monthly meetings that discussed students' learning outcomes in the classroom(Hastasari et al., 2022).

Table 1. Planning of the training of special assistant teachers in 4 schools

Planning training		
Program Planning	Implementation of The Work Plan	Supervision and Evaluation
Formulating, establishing, and developing the school's vision	Developing work guidelines	Implementing supervision programs
Formulate, establish, and develop the school's mission.	Developing the school's organizational structure	Conducting school self-evaluations
Formulating, establishing, and developing school goals	Developing a schedule for semesterly and yearly school activities	Conducting evaluations and developing curricula at the educational unit level
Developing School Work Plans and School Activity and Budget Plans	Developing student management, which includes: enrolling new students providing counseling services to students organizing extracurricular and co-curricular activities for students fostering outstanding achievements tracking alumni	Evaluating education
Developing an induction program plan.	Developing the Education Unit Level Curriculum, education calendar, and learning activities	Preparing school accreditation requirements
	Managing educators and educational staff	
	Managing facilities and infrastructure	
	Guiding novice teachers	
	Managing finances and funding	
	Managing school culture and environment	
	Empowering community participation and school partnerships	
	Implementing induction programs	

At the beginning of the semester, training related to learning process management was also conducted, covering lesson plan preparation, the application of varied methods, and professional learning evaluation. This entire process was specifically directed toward the learning of children with special needs (CSN) and was outlined in a Special Lesson Plan or Special Learning Plan tailored to each student's abilities. The supporting teacher explained that the primary objective of this guidance is to identify the specific needs of each child so that learning support is more targeted and effective. Based on these identifications, teachers can determine appropriate benchmarks, including adjusting the difficulty level of materials to align with the abilities of CSN students. As a result, this support is expected to optimize the overall development of CSN students' abilities.

Based on interviews with Islamic Education teachers at Pematang Karangan Hulu Public Elementary School, it was revealed that “at the beginning of each semester, a meeting is held to discuss the inclusive education program. Although the program is not written in the School Work Plan document, discussions on the development of an Inclusive Learning Program for students with special needs are routinely held, including activities such as the creation of teaching materials and the planning of special learning processes by assistant teachers” (R. Norida, personal communication, 2024). The school principal and the teachers' council are also actively involved in workshops on developing Islamic Education teaching materials that are friendly to students with special needs, with content adapted using simple language, engaging illustrations, and varied learning activities. This finding aligns with observations that special education teachers regularly attend training and seminars related to students with special needs. As a public school under the Tapin District Education Office, planning at Pematang Karangan Hulu Public Elementary School is conducted like other schools, but aspects of inclusive education receive special attention in the annual planning meetings at the beginning of the school year (Pozas & Letzel-Alt, 2023).

Based on interviews with Islamic Education teachers at Rantau Kanan 2 Public Elementary School regarding planning for special assistance, it was revealed that the “planning process was carried out at the beginning of the new school year through the preparation of a School Work Plan. The School Work Plan covers the distribution of teaching duties, the preparation of lesson schedules, the creation of learning programs, teaching and learning activities, and school supervision.” (S. Purnama, personal communication, 2024). The Islamic Education teacher, as a special mentor, also stated that they received guidance in preparing teaching work plan documents. This aligns with observation findings indicating various instructions related to the preparation of teaching work plans and supervision schedules at the school. This development plan is jointly developed by the school committee, the principal, and the teachers' council as part of the school's annual plan to effectively support inclusive education at Rantau Kanan 2 Public Elementary School.

Based on observations and interviews with Islamic Education teachers serving as special assistants at Mandurian Public Elementary School, Pematang Karangan Hulu Public Elementary School, Rantau Kanan 2 Public Elementary School, and Pebaungan Hulu Public Elementary School, data was obtained indicating that planning for the training of special assistant teachers at inclusive elementary schools in Tapin Regency is carried out at the beginning of the semester through meetings led by the school principal and school work team. During these meetings, the School Work Plan is developed, which includes the distribution of teaching duties, the scheduling of lessons, the creation

of learning programs, teaching and learning activities, and school supervision. Although the school plan is similar to that of regular schools, aspects of inclusive education are specifically discussed and deliberated in the initial meetings of the academic year as an effort to support the continuity of inclusive learning (Shoaib et al., 2024).

Teachers with a bachelor's degree (S1) in special education, particularly orthopedics, are known as Special Education Teachers or shadow teachers. Their main role is to assist and collaborate with subject or class teachers in developing customized lesson plans and conducting assessments for students with special needs (CSN). Therefore, special assistant teachers must have experience teaching special education or be permanent teachers with adequate training to provide appropriate services for CSN. In the context of inclusive programs, the Islamic Religious Education approach is more adaptive than standard programs, using a curriculum that is adapted or varied according to student needs. This program is supported by additional learning resources such as lesson plans, competency-based learning outcomes, teaching and learning plans, and teaching and learning processes. The uniqueness of the inclusive program lies in the use of Individualized Learning Programs tailored to the characteristics and needs of each CSN student, as well as modified lesson plans to accommodate differences in achievement between regular and inclusive programs (Ni'matuzahroh et al., 2025).

Students with special needs are allowed to engage in any activity as long as it does not interfere with Islamic Religious Education lessons in the inclusion program. They continue to receive guidance and supervision from their support teachers. One method used is to make students characters in stories, so that they are more interested and focused on the lesson material. With good cooperation between special support teachers and Islamic Religious Education teachers, teachers can focus more on teaching regular students, while inclusive students continue to gain understanding through special support during learning (Putri Zahara et al., 2024).

Implementation of Islamic Religious Education Teacher Training as Special Assistants in Inclusive Elementary Schools in Tapin Regency

Based on interviews with Islamic Education teachers at Mandurian Public Elementary School, "The implementation of guidance for special assistant teachers includes various activities such as training, workshops, comparative studies, and competency improvement related to inclusive learning. Additionally, the school holds monthly meetings as a form of monitoring learning outcomes and evaluating special classes for children with special needs (CSN)" (R. Pauzie, personal communication, 2024).

Similar remarks were made by the Islamic Education teacher at Pematang Karangan Hulu Public Elementary School, who stated "that training is conducted at least once a month and can increase to three to four times if there is an urgent need. These training activities include developing syllabi, lesson plans, and discussing question outlines to support the progress of special education teachers in inclusive classrooms" (R. Norida, personal communication, 2024). While planning, teaching materials, and methods are fundamentally the same as for regular students, adjustments are made, particularly in assessment and the use of simpler language to align with the needs of children with special needs (Nurfaidah et al., 2024).

Based on interviews with Islamic Education teachers at Rantau Kanan 2 Public Elementary School, "guidance for special assistant teachers is generally carried out

routinely by the principal at the beginning of the month as an evaluation of learning outcomes in the classroom. In addition, special guidance is also provided if there are teachers who experience difficulties in teaching or who have not performed their duties properly” (S. Purnama, personal communication, 2024). Meanwhile, Islamic Education teachers at Pebaungan Hulu Elementary School stated “that training is conducted through enhancing teaching competencies by participating in workshops or training sessions within the Teacher Working Group activities, which focus on creative classroom management for inclusive classes. This training is attended by Islamic Education teachers and special assistant teachers with the aim of enabling educators to manage inclusive classrooms more effectively and efficiently” (Z. Muhammad, personal communication, 2024).

Every school conducts Islamic Education Teacher Training as Special Assistants in Inclusive Elementary Schools simultaneously at the beginning of the semester, but the frequency varies:

Table 2. Implementation of Islamic Religious Education Teacher Training as Special Assistants in Inclusive Elementary Schools

School Name	Frequency in one semester
Mandurian Public Elementary School	6 times, which is once every month
Pematang Karangan Hulu Public Elementary School	once a month and can be increased to 3 or 4 times if urgently needed.
Rantau Kanan 2 Public Elementary School	6 times, which is once every month and special guidance
Pebaungan Hulu Elementary School	6 times, which is once every month

Based on the author's observations during the training, the coaching began with an ice-breaking session followed by an introduction to the material. The material was delivered using PowerPoint presentations and educational videos on the theme of building love within a religious framework. The material covered how to provide support and good parenting to students, as well as how to build effective communication and interaction with children with special needs (CSN)(Adrijanti et al., 2024).

The training of Islamic Education teachers as special assistants in inclusive elementary schools in Tapin Regency is carried out internally through regular meetings held by the school, as well as through webinars, workshops, and training in Teacher Working Groups. The principal regularly conducts training at the beginning of each month as an evaluation of the learning process in the classroom for special assistant teachers. Additionally, specialized training is provided for teachers who require additional guidance to address challenges in teaching or improve performance. This training also involves the participation of special education teachers in seminars and workshops directly related to the management of students with special needs, enabling them to gain relevant competencies that support the optimal implementation of inclusive education(Rosnaningsih et al., 2024).

Evaluation of Islamic Religious Education Teacher Training as Special Assistants in Inclusive Elementary Schools in Tapin Regency

The evaluation of Islamic Education teachers as special assistants is conducted periodically after the principal has carried out guidance, monitoring, and supervision analysis. The evaluation stages include discussion of the results of administrative supervision of learning, implementation of learning, assessment of learning outcomes, and analysis of classroom supervision (Munandar et al., 2024). This is in line with the statement made by the special Islamic Education Teacher at Mandurian Public Elementary School, who said “that the principal, as supervisor, conducts evaluations every one to two months, focusing on learning administration such as lesson plans or Inclusive Learning Program, teaching activities, and learning assessments” (R. Pauzie, personal communication, 2024).

Meanwhile, based on interviews with Islamic Education teachers at Pematang Karangan Hulu Public Elementary School, “the evaluation of the training was carried out by monitoring the implementation of the training program, including activities, learning methods, and the material presented. In addition, the evaluation also covered the performance of Islamic education teachers in participating in the training program as well as the cooperation and coordination between related parties. The evaluation tools used include teachers' reflection journals to monitor the learning process and teacher development, classroom observation sheets to observe the implementation of inclusive learning, and a checklist of teachers' performance in applying inclusive Islamic Education learning in the classroom” (R. Norida, personal communication, 2024).

Based on interviews with Islamic Education teachers at Rantau Kanan 2 Public Elementary School, “the principal evaluates teacher performance every month by assessing the achievement of learning program targets set by teachers. This evaluation also includes identifying obstacles in the implementation of learning plans, which are then discussed in meetings to find solutions” (S. Purnama, personal communication, 2024). Additionally, the principal regularly conducts monitoring through classroom visits every two weeks to observe the learning process (Al-Shdifat et al., 2024) and teacher performance directly, with the results serving as further evaluation material.

Meanwhile, the Islamic Education teacher at Pebaungan Hulu Public Elementary School said “that the principal supervises by visiting classrooms directly. This approach creates a different atmosphere for the assistant teachers, making them more open in communicating the obstacles they face during learning” (Z. Muhammad, personal communication, 2024).

Based on interviews with Islamic Education teachers serving as special assistants at Mandurian Public Elementary School, Pematang Karangan Hulu Public Elementary School, Rantau Kanan 2 Public Elementary School, and Pebaungan Hulu Public Elementary School, data was obtained indicating that the evaluation of special assistant teachers at inclusive elementary schools in Tapin Regency is conducted through teacher performance supervision. This evaluation covers learning administration, such as lesson plans/teaching plans, teaching activities, and learning assessments (Hornstein, 2017). The school principal, as the supervisor, is responsible for helping teachers improve their performance so that the learning process can run smoothly and the quality of learning can be maintained (Masuwai et al., 2024).

Every month, the school conducts periodic reviews in the form of evaluation meetings held monthly, every six months, and annually. During the monthly and

semester evaluation sessions, educators report on challenges in the classroom, unmet student learning needs, and the success of learning programs(Wijaya, 2024). The principal conducts monthly evaluations of teacher performance by checking the percentage of students who complete the learning program designed by Islamic Education teachers as special assistants. Internal evaluations also cover student conditions, learning progress, administration, and learning outcomes(Ernawati et al., 2025).

Academic supervision is a series of activities to help teachers develop their potential in managing the learning process to achieve learning objectives. This supervision is closely related to teacher performance appraisal, where improvements in learning quality and student achievement depend on that performance(Corres et al., 2024). However, the essence of academic supervision is to assist in teacher professional development, not merely to assess performance, although the two are inseparable. This supervision process includes comprehensive observation of learning, documentation of the process, observation of the actual performance of teachers, and identification of the best steps to improve future learning(Koliqi & Zabeli, 2022).

Supervisors are required to implement academic supervision systematically and methodically in order to provide guidance so that teachers carry out their responsibilities effectively and efficiently. The teaching and learning process carried out by teachers is the core of education, where teachers and students interact reciprocally in a learning environment(Yono & Abrista Devi, 2025). Learning objectives are summarized in learning resources prepared prior to classroom implementation. Therefore, academic supervision is essential to improve and advance teacher performance in the learning process, so that the quality of learning is expected to improve over time(Gianistika et al., 2025).

Follow-up on the Training of Islamic Education Teachers as Special Assistants in Inclusive Elementary Schools in Tapin Regency

Achieving educational goals is a shared aspiration of the principal and all teachers in educational institutions(Ahmad Haerudin, 2025). Mr. Pauzie Rahman from Mandurian Public Elementary School said “that after the supervision evaluation, the principal usually provides advice on special assistance for children with special needs, improvements that need to be made, and competency improvements so that learning in the classroom can run more smoothly” (R. Pauzie, personal communication, 2024). This follow-up takes the form of discussions on suggestions and enrichment of the learning process(Huriyah & Begum, 2025).

Mrs. Norida Rizmi from Pematang Karangan Hulu Public Elementary School explained “that after the evaluation, there's usually a discussion session to talk about shortcomings, like the lack of Islamic education teaching materials that are friendly to kids with special needs and the effectiveness of student mentoring” (R. Norida, personal communication, 2024). The principal suggested that teachers should be more friendly to kids with special needs and make it easier for them to access information and communication technology to support inclusive learning(Ahmad et al., 2024).

According to Mrs. Purnama Sari from Rantau Kanan 2 Public Elementary School, “follow-up guidance includes more intensive and ongoing training for Islamic education teachers to improve their knowledge and skills in inclusive education,

including learning strategies and the use of technology to support the learning of children with special needs”(S. Purnama, personal communication, 2024).

Meanwhile, Mr. Muhammad Zaini from Pebaungan Hulu Public Elementary School emphasized “the importance of collaboration between Islamic education teachers and other classroom teachers to form a solid team in supporting inclusive learning” (Z. Muhammad, personal communication, 2024). In addition, Islamic education teachers are expected to develop portfolios and documentation of the progress of students with special needs as a tool for evaluating the effectiveness of inclusive education programs(Cojocariu et al., 2025).

Based on observations and interviews with Islamic Education teachers serving as special assistants at Mandurian Public Elementary School, Pematang Karangan Hulu Public Elementary School, Rantau Kanan 2 Public Elementary School, and Pebaungan Hulu Public Elementary School, it was found that the follow-up activities for special education teachers at inclusive elementary schools in Tapin Regency include reflecting on and improving the learning process, participating in specialized training on Children with Special Needs (CSN), and collaborating closely with regular teachers to enhance the effectiveness of learning for CSN students.

The training can be conducted internally at the school or externally. Most special assistant teachers have participated in in-house training organized by the school. According to Rosa, the purpose of the in-house training program is to improve the competence of educators to support school performance, while strengthening cooperation among teachers in finding solutions to various problems encountered. Research by Darsinah & Purwatiningsih also supports this, showing that training contributes 16.79% of the total performance determinants, while other factors such as motivation and work experience also influence teacher performance improvement(Darsinah & Purwatiningsih, 2020).

Edy added that the number of training courses and in-house training attended by teachers had a positive effect on student learning attitudes and overall organizational performance(Edy & Sumarta, 2025). Training helps teachers adopt new teaching techniques and methods. In-house training organized by schools for special assistant teachers is similar to Technical Guidance training, with the difference that in-house training comes from schools, not the education office. This series of training courses is designed to improve teachers' skills and knowledge, tailored to their needs(Cahyani et al., 2025).

The Technical Guidance training itself covers important material to help special assistant teachers provide quality services to students with special needs so that their performance can be maximized. Klibthong and Agbenyega argue that support in the form of training and mentoring from colleagues and other parties is essential for special assistant teachers to overcome obstacles in inclusive education, particularly in facing the challenges of educating students with special needs(Yunitasari et al., 2024).

Technical Guidance and Education and Training training are important components in the development of knowledge and skills, enabling individuals and institutions to improve inclusive education management. By participating in this technical training, special assistant teachers can maximize its performance and effectively apply the training results in schools(Dini, 2023).

The 2020 Special Guidance Teacher Technical Manual explains that technical guidance training for special assistant teachers covers topics such as the basic concepts

of inclusive education, the diversity of student needs, forms of education services for children with special needs, learning service systems, introduction to special programs, and support systems. Thus, this training aims to improve the understanding and professional competence of special assistant teachers in teaching students with special needs (Dini, 2023).

Overall, technical guidance training is expected to improve the knowledge and skills of special assistant teachers so that they can provide optimal special education services for students with special needs. Therefore, it can be concluded that technical guidance has a positive effect on improving the performance of special assistant teachers in inclusive schools (Kurnianingrum & Darsinah, 2023).

Discussion

Planning for the Development of Islamic Education Teachers as Special Assistants in Inclusive Elementary Schools in Tapin Regency

The training meeting for Special Assistant Teachers aims not only to enhance teachers' skills in planning, implementing varied instructional methods, and conducting professional evaluations but also to create an enabling environment for Children with Special Needs (CSN) through tailored Special Lesson Plans that address individual learning needs. This aligns closely with the Social Model of Disability, which shifts the focus from individual impairments to eliminating social and structural barriers that hinder the inclusion of students with disabilities (Rasmitadila et al., 2023).

By developing adaptive curricula and individualized learning programs, the schools actively remove environmental barriers—such as rigid teaching methods and inadequate teacher preparedness—that the Social Model frequently identifies as obstacles to student participation. The structured support through regular supervision, workshops, and collaborative planning signifies institutional efforts to dismantle these barriers in the inclusive Islamic education setting (García-Hurtado et al., 2024).

Table 3. Presents a comparison of the Special Assistant Teacher training planning mechanisms among the four schools

Planning Aspects	Mandurian Public Elementary School	Pematang Karangan Hulu Public Elementary School	Rantau Kanan 2 Public Elementary School	Pebaungan Hulu Public Elementary School
Planning Time	Start of semester through monthly supervision and evaluation meetings	Early semester meeting, discussion of routine inclusion programs	Early academic year planning, creation of School Work Plan	Early academic year meeting, special discussion on inclusion
Planning Focus	Supervision, task distribution, monitoring of learning outcomes	Workshop on creating inclusive teaching materials, strategy discussions	Teaching assignments, lesson schedules, routine supervision	Inclusion planning at annual meetings
Training Approach	Learning process management, varied methods, evaluation	Development of materials using simple language and illustrations	Intensive supervision and guidance from the principal	Creative classroom management workshops by

				teacher working groups
Planning Documents	School Work Plan, special lesson plans, evaluations	Includes inclusive education, although not always documented	Regular School Work Plan and supervision	Annual plan includes programs for CSN

The comparison shows that schools like Pematang Karangan Hulu, which prioritize inclusive material development workshops using accessible language and illustrations, better adapt to the diverse needs of children with special needs (CSN). Conversely, schools mainly relying on routine supervision struggle to provide such customization, highlighting the importance of comprehensive pedagogical support in fostering genuine inclusion(Cojocariu et al., 2025).

Furthermore, embedding inclusive education within the framework of Islamic values—justice (adl), compassion (rahmah), and equality—not only reinforces the ethical obligation to provide equitable educational opportunities but also aligns with the holistic vision of education in Islam. Training teachers to address the spiritual, social, and academic needs of CSN students underscores a comprehensive approach that harmonizes Islamic principles with inclusive educational practices, enhancing the meaningfulness and sustainability of inclusion efforts(Rosnaningsih et al., 2024).

Nonetheless, significant challenges persist, notably the lack of formalized inclusive programs, insufficient resource allocation, and inconsistent administrative support. To achieve fully inclusive schools as envisioned by both the Social Model of Disability and Islamic educational principles, sustained policy support, capacity building, and community engagement are essential(Majoko, 2018).

Continual training of Islamic Education teachers as special assistants enhances pedagogical skills and fosters an inclusive culture that challenges traditional disabling barriers imposed by institutional inflexibility and societal attitudes. This exemplifies the Social Model of Disability, which asserts that disability is a social construct created by exclusionary environments rather than individual impairments. Through adaptive curricula, tailored lesson plans, and collaborative teaching arrangements, these schools are proactively transforming educational structures to better accommodate Children with Special Needs (CSN)(Vindigni, 2023).

Nevertheless, persistent barriers such as limited infrastructure, insufficient policy formalization, and societal stigmas remain formidable challenges. The integration of Islamic values of justice (adl) and compassion (rahmah) within teacher training provides a powerful ethical foundation for inclusivity, promoting the dignity and spiritual development of every student. Such an approach ensures that inclusion is not merely procedural but deeply embedded in the moral fabric guiding Islamic education.

To realize truly inclusive schools, continuous capacity building, policy reinforcement, and community engagement are essential to overcoming systemic inequities. The findings highlight that successful inclusive Islamic education must couple professional development with structural reforms that dismantle barriers, resonating with the emancipatory goals of both the Social Model of Disability and Islamic teachings(Syaipudin & Luthfi, 2024).

Implementation of Islamic Religious Education Teacher Training as Special Assistants in Inclusive Elementary Schools in Tapin Regency

The findings show that the implementation of Islamic Education teacher training as special assistants in inclusive elementary schools in Tapin Regency involves diverse and continuous activities such as workshops, competency enhancement, comparative studies, and routine supervision. This multifaceted approach aligns closely with the principles of the Social Model of Disability, which argues that disability and exclusion result primarily from systemic and environmental barriers rather than individual impairments (Mardhatillah, 2023).

By conducting regular training sessions—ranging from monthly meetings to additional workshops in urgent situations—schools actively seek to equip teachers with the skills necessary to adapt pedagogical methods, syllabi, and assessment strategies to meet the diverse needs of Children with Special Needs (CSN). These adaptive strategies, including the use of simpler language and special lesson plans, address critical social and structural barriers that otherwise limit CSN's full participation in learning, reflecting a shift away from deficit-focused approaches.

However, while the schools demonstrate commitment to inclusivity through these actions, variability in the frequency and depth of training activities among schools suggests disparities in resource availability and institutional support. For instance, Pematang Karangan Hulu's more frequent and material-development-oriented training contrasts with other schools' emphasis on supervision, signaling the need for more equitable capacity building.

Additionally, the alignment of these training initiatives with the values of justice (*adl*), compassion (*rahmah*), and equality in Islam enhances not only the academic but also the spiritual development of CSN, fostering an inclusive environment embedded in ethical commitments. This moral foundation strengthens the sustainability and acceptance of inclusive education within the community.

Nonetheless, persistent institutional challenges such as limited facilities, inconsistent administrative support, and occasional lack of formalized programs may hinder the full realization of inclusive ideals. Thus, ongoing policy reinforcement, capacity building, and strong community involvement remain indispensable to dismantling these systemic barriers, fully realizing both the Social Model of Disability's emancipatory goals and the inclusive aspirations grounded in Islamic teaching (Carballo & Cumming, 2025).

Evaluation of Islamic Religious Education Teacher Training as Special Assistants in Inclusive Elementary Schools in Tapin Regency

The findings reveal a structured and ongoing evaluation process for Islamic Religious Education teachers as special assistants in inclusive elementary schools in Tapin Regency. Evaluation methods such as administrative supervision, classroom observation, reflective journals, and periodic meetings serve as critical mechanisms to monitor teacher performance and the quality of inclusive learning. These evaluation practices align with the Social Model of Disability by emphasizing the importance of institutional oversight in removing systemic barriers and fostering adaptive practices that meet the diverse needs of Children with Special Needs (CSN) (Majoko, 2018).

Regular evaluations, conducted monthly or bi-monthly by school principals, not only assess adherence to formal lesson plans but also identify practical obstacles in the classroom setting. This ongoing supervision supports continuous professional

development, ensuring that teachers refine pedagogical methods and enhance their capacity to implement individualized learning strategies.

Moreover, the use of evaluation tools that focus on inclusive teaching methods and teacher collaboration reflects an awareness of the social and environmental factors that influence educational access for CSN students, consistent with the Social Model's emphasis on environmental accommodation.

Despite these structured evaluation efforts, challenges remain, particularly in formalizing inclusive protocols and securing adequate administrative and infrastructural support. Such institutional barriers reflect broader systemic issues that can perpetuate exclusion if not addressed. Consequently, strengthening policy frameworks and providing sustained capacity building opportunities are crucial in transforming these evaluations from mere administrative requirements into transformative tools that advance the goals of inclusive Islamic education (Carballo & Cumming, 2025).

Follow-up on the Training of Islamic Education Teachers as Special Assistants in Inclusive Elementary Schools in Tapin Regency

The follow-up activities on Islamic Religious Education teacher training as special assistants reveal a comprehensive and multi-layered approach designed to sustain and enhance teacher competencies for inclusive education. These practices encompass post-evaluation advice, collaborative discussions on learning process improvements, targeted competency development, and documentation of student progress.

From the perspective of the Social Model of Disability, such follow-ups represent critical interventions aimed at dismantling structural barriers within educational institutions that hinder the full participation of Children with Special Needs (CSN). By offering continuous professional development through in-house training, technical guidance, and peer mentoring, schools actively cultivate an environment that empowers teachers, allowing them to adapt to diverse learner needs and communicate effectively with both students and colleagues (Majoko, 2018).

Moreover, the emphasis on collaborative teamwork between Islamic Education teachers and classroom teachers symbolizes a shift away from isolated pedagogical practices toward a more integrated, inclusive model. This approach aligns with the Social Model's emphasis on collective responsibility and systemic change rather than attributing educational challenges solely to individual deficits. Nonetheless, the success of these programs depends heavily on consistent institutional support, availability of resources, and policy backing. Addressing these systemic factors is pivotal in translating training outcomes into tangible improvements in inclusive education quality, thereby fulfilling the emancipatory goals of both the Social Model of Disability and Islamic education values (Huỳnh & Nguyen, 2024).

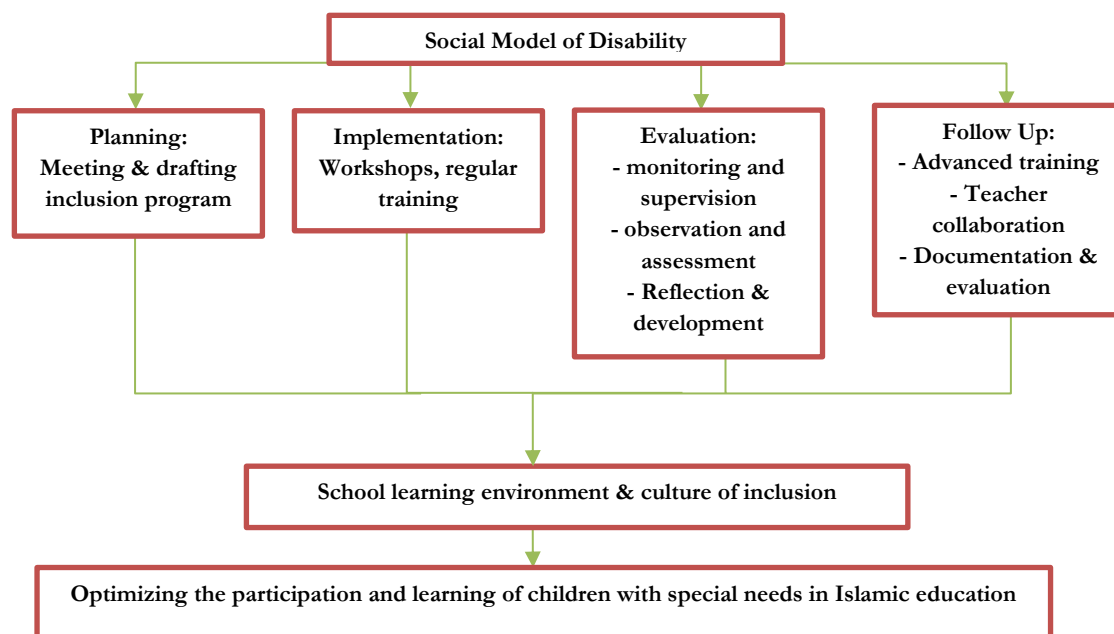


Figure 2. Research Results Model

This chart illustrates how each stage of discovery (planning, implementation, evaluation, follow-up) is interconnected and together removes socio-structural barriers in accordance with the social model of disability, leading to quality inclusive Islamic education.

4. Conclusion

This study shows that the planning, implementation, evaluation, and follow-up of training for Islamic Education teachers as special assistants in inclusive schools are carried out systematically through regular meetings, periodic supervision, and continuous training. Training that is specifically designed with materials tailored to support children with special needs (CSN) helps improve teachers' competence in managing inclusive learning effectively. The uniqueness of this study lies in its focus on Islamic Education teachers in inclusive elementary schools in Tapin Regency, providing empirical contributions that are still rarely studied in depth in the local context.

The limitations of this study include the limited sample size and the qualitative approach that cannot be generalized broadly. Therefore, further research with a larger sample size and longitudinal studies are recommended to examine the long-term impact of inclusive teacher training. The results of this study have the potential to be used as a basis for developing more systematic and integrated Islamic Education teacher training programs in various regions, as well as a reference for best practices in inclusive learning.

This conclusion confirms how this study fills the gap in inclusive Islamic Religious Education teacher training and provides practical and academic direction for the development of this field.

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