

The Dilemma of Adaptive Inclusion: Implementation and Evaluation of Adaptive Islamic Religious Education Learning for Students with Learning Delays

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Abstract

Inclusive education requires instructional practices that ensure meaningful participation for students with diverse learning needs. Yet, limited research examines how adaptive Islamic Religious Education (IRE) is implemented and evaluated in mainstream classrooms for students with learning delays. This study investigates the implementation and evaluation of adaptive IRE, including the factors that support and inhibit its implementation, at a public junior high school in Bandung City. Grounded in the literature on inclusive religious education and adaptive pedagogy, the study used a qualitative single-case design. Data came from semi-structured interviews with two Islamic Religious Education teachers, classroom observations in eight Grade VII and Grade VIII classes, and documentary analysis of Capaian Pembelajaran (CP), Alur Tujuan Pembelajaran (ATP), teaching modules, and assessment documents. The analysis followed the interactive model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña, employing methodological triangulation. Adaptive instruction was implemented mainly through teachers' responsive classroom practices rather than formally differentiated curriculum planning. Evaluation combined standardized written assessments with continuous classroom-based judgments of students' participation, learning effort, and affective development. Teachers' professional commitment and collaboration supported adaptive learning, whereas limited diagnostic information, standardized curriculum documents, the absence of Special Assistant Teachers, and restricted instructional time constrained it. These findings reflect the dynamics of a single case at one public junior high school and should be read as context-specific. Even so, the study extends the adaptive and inclusive education literature by strengthening adaptive Islamic Religious Education through the integration of diagnostic assessment, responsive pedagogy, continuous evaluation, and institutional support.

Keywords: Adaptive Inclusions; Implementation; Evaluation; Adaptive Islamic Religious Education; Learning Delays.

Introduction

Inclusive education has increasingly shifted from ensuring equal access to education toward promoting meaningful participation for learners with diverse educational needs in mainstream classrooms. Recent studies demonstrate that successful inclusive education depends not only on students' physical placement in regular classrooms but also on teachers' capacity to design adaptive pedagogical practices that accommodate diverse learning profiles.¹ In Indonesia, this challenge has become more significant following the implementation of Deep Learning policies, which emphasize meaningful understanding, critical thinking, and the application of knowledge rather than rote memorization.² In this context, Islamic Religious Education (IRE) teachers are expected to facilitate learning experiences accessible to all students, including those experiencing learning delays. In this study, the term *learning delays* refers to students operationally identified through an initial Islamic Religious Education diagnostic assessment based on Qur'anic reading fluency, reflecting subject-specific learning difficulties rather than clinical identification based on intelligence quotient (IQ).

Indonesia has established a comprehensive legal framework that supports inclusive education through constitutional provisions, the National Education System Law, disability legislation, regulations on reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities, and inclusive education policies.³ These regulations require educational institutions to provide equitable, accessible, and responsive learning opportunities for

¹ Qais I. Almeqdad et al., "The Effectiveness of Universal Design for Learning: A Systematic Review of the Literature and Meta-Analysis," *Cogent Education* 10, no. 1 (2023): 1–24; Fajriah Inayati et al., "Inclusive Education and the Protection of Children's Rights within an Islamic Educational Framework," *Lentera Pendidikan: Jurnal Ilmu Tarbiyah Dan Keguruan* 28, no. 2 (2025): 422–439; Mukhammad Wahyudi, Agus Darmawan, and Sevilla Mumtaz, "Reconstructing Democratic Inclusive Education Through National Culture and Humanistic Values: A Critical Interpretive Synthesis from Indonesia," *FIKROTUNA: Jurnal Pendidikan Dan Manajemen Islam* 15, no. 02 (June 20, 2026): 360–8.

² Kementerian Pendidikan Dasar dan Menengah, "Keputusan Kepala Badan Standar, Kurikulum, Dan Asesmen Pendidikan Kementerian Pendidikan Dasar Dan Menengah Nomor 046/H/KR/2025 Tentang Capaian Pembelajaran Pada Pendidikan Anak Usia Dini, Jenjang Pendidikan Dasar, Dan Jenjang Pendidikan Menengah," Badan Standar, Kurikulum, dan Asesmen Pendidikan § (2025).

³ Presiden Republik Indonesia, "Undang-Undang (UU) Nomor 20 Tahun 2003 Tentang Sistem Pendidikan Nasional" (2003); Kementerian Pendidikan Nasional Republik Indonesia, "Undang-Undang Republik Indonesia Nomor 8 Tahun 2016 Tentang Penyandang Disabilitas" (2016); Republik Indonesia, "Undang-Undang Dasar Negara Republik Indonesia Tahun 1945" (1945); Presiden Republik Indonesia, "Peraturan Pemerintah Republik Indonesia Nomor 13 Tahun 2020 Tentang Akomodasi Yang Layak Untuk Peserta Didik Penyandang Disabilitas" (2020); Kementerian Pendidikan Nasional Republik Indonesia, "Peraturan Menteri Pendidikan Nasional Republik Indonesia Nomor 70 Tahun 2009 Tentang Pendidikan Inklusif Bagi Peserta Didik Yang Memiliki Kelainan Dan Memiliki Potensi Kecerdasan Dan/Atau Bakat Istimewa" (2009).

students with diverse educational needs. At the local level, Bandung City has reinforced this commitment through regional regulations promoting inclusive education.⁴ Despite these regulatory commitments, implementing inclusive education within Islamic Religious Education remains particularly challenging because the subject simultaneously develops cognitive understanding, religious practice, moral reasoning, and character formation.⁵ The implementation of Deep Learning further strengthens these demands by requiring teachers to provide adaptive instruction, differentiated learning experiences, and equitable assessment practices so that students with learning delays can participate meaningfully in religious learning.

Recent scholarship consistently argues that effective inclusive education requires instructional practices that respond to learner diversity rather than relying solely on curriculum standardization. Universal Design for Learning (UDL) emphasizes multiple pathways for representation, engagement, and expression to improve accessibility for learners with diverse learning profiles.⁶ Complementing this perspective, differentiated instruction, the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), and scaffolding explain how instructional support should be adjusted to students' readiness while gradually fostering independence in learning.⁷ Within Islamic Religious Education, these pedagogical perspectives have been reflected in contextual learning, cooperative learning, project-

⁴ Pemerintah Daerah Kota Bandung, "Peraturan Daerah Kota Bandung Nomor 2 Tahun 2018 Tentang Pengelolaan Dan Penyelenggaraan Pendidikan" (2018); Pemerintah Daerah Kota Bandung, "Peraturan Daerah Kota Bandung Nomor 15 Tahun 2019 Tentang Perlindungan Dan Pemenuhan Hak Penyandang Disabilitas" (2019).

⁵ Nurti Budiyantri et al., "Impact of the U¹ Al-Ilm Model on Six Domains of Student Learning Outcomes in Islamic Religious Education," *Jurnal Pendidikan Islam* 10, no. 1 (June 23, 2024): 113–24; Sarbini et al., "The Values of Inclusive Education in Islamic Religious Education: A Systematic Literature Review," *Tadrib: Jurnal Pendidikan Agama Islam* 11, no. 2 (2025): 352–60; Winarko et al., "Peningkatan Pemahaman Guru Tentang Pembelajaran PAI Sebagai Pembentukan Perilaku Sosial Melalui Pelatihan Berbasis Sosiologis," *Jurnal Pengabdian Dan Pengembangan Masyarakat Indonesia* 4, no. 2 (2025): 585–593.

⁶ Almqadad et al., "The Effectiveness of Universal Design for Learning: A Systematic Review of the Literature and Meta-Analysis"; Oktawini Ofiani, Hendra Harmi, and Deri Wanto, "Implementing Universal Design for Learning in Islamic Education: Strategic Management for Children with Special Needs," *Al-Tanzim: Jurnal Manajemen Pendidikan Islam* 9, no. 4 (2025): 1287–1300; Af'idatur Rosyidah et al., "Analisis Strategi Pembelajaran Universal Design for Learning Untuk Anak Berkebutuhan Khusus Pada Sekolah Inklusi," *Pendas : Jurnal Ilmiah Pendidikan Dasar* 10, no. 04 (2025): 211–23.

⁷ Sara Dominguez and Vanessa Svihla, "A Review of Teacher Implemented Scaffolding in K-12," *Social Sciences & Humanities Open* 8, no. 1 (2023): 1–12; Ratna Dewi, Soleh Hidayat, and Aan Hendrayana, "Teacher Strategies for Supporting Students with Learning Difficulties in Inclusive Primary Education: A Qualitative Case Study from Indonesia," *PPSDP International Journal of Education* 4, no. 2 (2025): 1287–1294; Sonja Kramer, Jens Moller, and Friederike Zimmermann, "Inclusive Education of Students with General Learning Difficulties: A Meta-Analysis," *Review of Educational Research* 91, no. 3 (2021): 432–478.

based learning, and inclusive Islamic values as approaches to improving the quality of learning.⁸ From the perspective of curriculum theory, such as Goodlad's framework on the levels of curriculum, differentiated instruction, and adaptive pedagogy fundamentally operate at the intersection between the intended curriculum (formal standards and official documents) and the enacted curriculum (the actual operational practice executed by teachers in the everyday classroom). Collectively, these studies indicate that adaptive learning is shaped by the interaction among curriculum planning, instructional strategies, classroom interaction, and assessment, rather than by a single pedagogical approach. However, existing literature predominantly focuses on either formal curriculum modifications or isolated instructional techniques, leaving a crucial gap in understanding how teachers navigate the disparity between standardized curriculum requirements and the lived, unscripted realities of inclusive Islamic Religious Education in the classroom.

Crucially, while previous research has examined adaptive teaching strategies and inclusive evaluation separately, it has overlooked how teachers navigate this gap when formal curriculum accommodations are absent. Consequently, empirical evidence on how teachers translate inclusive principles into classroom practice remains limited. This reveals a significant substantive gap in understanding the construct of "undocumented adaptive differentiation," wherein teachers successfully enact responsive pedagogy, flexible scaffolding, and continuous classroom evaluation in real time. Yet these adaptive adjustments remain entirely unrecorded in the intended formal curriculum documents. Addressing these gaps is essential for developing a more integrated understanding of adaptive Islamic Religious Education in inclusive school settings.

Therefore, this study aims to examine the implementation and evaluation of adaptive Islamic Religious Education for students with learning delays at a public junior high school in Bandung City, and to identify the factors that support or hinder its implementation. Guided by the perspectives of Universal Design for Learning, the Zone

⁸ Makhrus Ali et al., "The Effectiveness of Jigsaw Model Based on Flipped Classroom to Improve Students' Critical Thinking Ability in Islamic Religious Education Learning," *Jurnal Obsesi: Jurnal Pendidikan Anak Usia Dini* 8, no. 5 (2024): 1069–78; Ely Fitriani et al., "Innovative Strategies for Learning Islamic Religious Education for Children with Special Needs: A Systematic Literature Review," *QALAMUNA: Jurnal Pendidikan, Sosial, Dan Agama* 17, no. 2 (2025): 1061–76; Luqman Hakim, Muhammad Fahmi, and Abdul Muhid, "The Implementation of Inclusive Islamic Religious Education Learning in Schools," *Edukasia Islamika* 10, no. 1 (2025): 119–44; Muhamad Parhan et al., "Developing a Contextual Learning Model in Islamic Education to Improve Applicable Knowledge and Foster Knowledge-Based Virtues," *Jurnal Pendidikan Islam* 10, no. 1 (2024): 75–86.

of Proximal Development, Scaffolding, and Humanistic Education, this study addresses the following research questions: (1) How is adaptive Islamic Religious Education implemented for students with learning delays? and (2) How is adaptive Islamic Religious Education evaluated, and what supporting and inhibiting factors influence its implementation for students with learning delays? By addressing these questions, this study contributes empirical evidence to the growing body of literature on inclusive Islamic Religious Education while providing practical recommendations for strengthening adaptive instructional practices in mainstream classrooms.

Research Method

This study employed a qualitative approach grounded in an interpretivist paradigm, using a descriptive-analytical single-case study design to explore the implementation, evaluation, and contextual factors influencing the implementation of adaptive Islamic Religious Education for students with learning delays. This approach was selected because the study sought to understand how adaptive Islamic Religious Education (IRE) is implemented and evaluated for students with learning delays in their natural classroom context, rather than to measure the effectiveness of an intervention statistically. A single-case study enabled an in-depth exploration of the relationships among curriculum documents, classroom practices, teacher experiences, and assessment processes, thereby providing comprehensive evidence to address the two research questions concerning the implementation, evaluation, and the supporting and inhibiting factors influencing adaptive Islamic Religious Education learning for students with learning delays.⁹ Throughout this study, *learning delays* refer to students operationally identified through an initial Islamic Religious Education diagnostic assessment based on Qur'anic reading fluency, reflecting subject-specific learning difficulties rather than clinical identification based on intelligence quotient (IQ).

The research was conducted at a public junior high school in Bandung City, Indonesia, which was purposively selected because it implements inclusive education and accommodates students experiencing learning delays within regular classrooms without assigning a special Islamic Religious Education teacher. Purposive sampling was

⁹ J. W. Creswell and C. N. Poth, *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design: Choosing among Five Approaches*, 4th ed. (London: SAGE Publications, 2018); Uwi Flick, *Designing Qualitative Research*, 2nd ed. (London: SAGE Publications Ltd, 2018); Robert K. Yin, *Case Study Research and Applications: Design and Method*, 6th ed. (Los Angeles: SAGE Publications Inc., 2018).

employed to recruit participants who possessed direct experience with adaptive instructional practices. The primary participants consisted of two Islamic Religious Education teachers responsible for teaching Grades VII and VIII. These teachers were selected because they designed, implemented, and evaluated adaptive learning strategies for students with learning delays. Classroom observations were conducted in eight classes: four Grade VII (VII A, VII E, VII F, and VII G) and four Grade VIII (VIII D, VIII F, VIII G, and VIII H). Data collection continued until information redundancy was achieved and no substantially new themes emerged, indicating data saturation.

Multiple sources of evidence were collected through in-depth interviews, classroom observations, and document analysis to strengthen methodological triangulation. Semi-structured interviews explored teachers' experiences in identifying students with learning delays, selecting adaptive learning strategies, managing classroom instruction, evaluating learning outcomes, and identifying the factors that support or inhibit the implementation of adaptive learning strategies. Classroom observations focused on lesson openings, core learning activities, lesson closures, teacher assistance, instructional media, classroom interaction, student participation, and assessment practices. Documentary evidence included Learning Outcomes (*Capaian Pembelajaran*), Learning Objectives Flow (*Alur Tujuan Pembelajaran*), teaching modules, assessment instruments, and students' learning tasks. The research instruments were developed based on four complementary analytical frameworks: Universal Design for Learning (UDL), which examined multiple means of representation, engagement, and expression; the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), which examined students' readiness and the appropriateness of instructional support; Scaffolding, which focused on modelling, guided practice, peer assistance, and gradual withdrawal of support; and the Humanistic approach, which examined appreciation, empathy, motivation, and psychological safety throughout the learning process.¹⁰

Data were analyzed using the interactive model proposed by Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña, consisting of data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification. During data condensation, interview transcripts, observation notes, and documentary evidence were coded into themes related to adaptive learning

¹⁰ Almeqdad et al., "The Effectiveness of Universal Design for Learning: A Systematic Review of the Literature and Meta-Analysis"; Dominguez and Svihla, "A Review of Teacher Implemented Scaffolding in K-12"; Mansour Amini et al., "The Significance of Humanistic Approach and Moral Development in English Language Classrooms," *Discover Education* 4 (2025): 1–17; CAST, "Universal Design for Learning Guidelines Version 3.0," 2024.

implementation, learning evaluation, and supporting and inhibiting factors.¹¹ The condensed data were subsequently organized into analytical matrices to facilitate comparison across multiple data sources, and then interpreted using the integrated perspectives of Universal Design for Learning, the Zone of Proximal Development, Scaffolding, and Humanistic Education. Source triangulation and methodological triangulation were conducted by comparing interview findings, classroom observations, and documentary evidence to ensure consistency throughout the analysis.

This study adhered to qualitative research ethics by obtaining formal research permission from the academic institution (Permohonan Izin Penelitian) and institutional approval from the participating school administration before data collection commenced. Participation was voluntary, and written informed consent was obtained from all teacher participants. Given that observed students, including those identified as needing additional pedagogical support, were minors, ethical approval and research authorization were granted through the school administration acting in loco parentis, in accordance with institutional protocols for non-invasive, regular classroom observation. To safeguard student well-being and privacy, no clinical testing, invasive interventions, or direct interviews with individual students were conducted. To protect confidentiality, individual participants are reported anonymously throughout this article; the institution is identified in the Acknowledgments and Ethical Statement in accordance with the research permission granted. The operational identification of students with learning delays was treated solely as a pedagogical classification within Islamic Religious Education. It was not intended to represent a clinical diagnosis or psychological assessment.

To ensure rigor and address potential researcher bias during the extensive field presence, the researcher strictly maintained a neutral stance throughout the 25 classroom observation sessions. Recognizing that the prolonged presence of an observer could subtly alter natural classroom dynamics and teacher-student interactions, the researcher assumed a non-participant observer role, sitting unobtrusively at the back of the classroom without intervening in instructional activities. Furthermore, reflexive field notes were maintained to separate descriptive observations from personal interpretations, and observational data were continuously triangulated with teacher interviews and

¹¹ Matthew B. Miles, A. Michael Huberman, and Johnny Saldana, *Qualitative Data Analysis: A Methods Sourcebook*, 4th ed. (Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications Inc., 2019).

curriculum documents to ensure that they capture classroom interactions reflected authentic, unprompted pedagogical practice.

The trustworthiness of the findings was established using Lincoln and Guba's framework. Credibility was strengthened through prolonged engagement in the research setting, repeated reading of interview transcripts, and triangulation across interviews, classroom observations, and documentary evidence.¹² Transferability was supported through detailed descriptions of the research context, participants, and instructional setting, enabling readers to determine the applicability of the findings to similar contexts. Dependability was enhanced by maintaining a transparent analytical procedure from data collection through coding and interpretation. At the same time, confirmability was achieved through continuous comparison among data sources and systematic documentation of analytical decisions to minimize researcher bias.¹³

Research Results

Analysis of interview transcripts, classroom observations, and documentary evidence generated two major themes corresponding to the research questions: (1) the implementation of adaptive Islamic Religious Education (IRE) learning for students with learning delays, and (2) the evaluation of adaptive IRE learning, including the supporting and inhibiting factors influencing its implementation. The findings were derived through methodological triangulation involving semi-structured interviews with two Islamic Religious Education teachers, observations of eight Grade VII and Grade VIII classrooms, and analysis of curriculum documents, including *Capaian Pembelajaran* (CP), *Alur Tujuan Pembelajaran* (ATP), teaching modules, and assessment instruments. A summary of the empirical findings is presented in Table 1.

Table 1.
Summary of Research Findings on Adaptive Islamic Religious Education Learning for Students with Learning Delays

Research Theme	Evidence Sources	Empirical Findings
Implementation of Adaptive Islamic Religious Education	Document analysis (CP, ATP, teaching modules), classroom observations (8 classes), teacher interviews	1. Official documents (CP, ATP, Modules) lacked written accommodations or individualized plans for learning delays. 2. Classroom adaptations relied on responsive practice (prerequisite questioning, visual

¹² Irene Korstjens and Albine Moser, "Series: Practical Guidance to Qualitative Research. Part 4: Trustworthiness and Publishing," *European Journal of General Practice* 24, no. 1 (2018): 120–124.

¹³ Norman A. Stahl and James R. King, "Expanding Approaches for Research: Understanding and Using Trustworthiness in Qualitative Research," *Journal of Developmental Education* 44, no. 1 (2020): 26–28.

		media, ice-breaking, and flexible oral or practical demonstrations).
		3. Peer tutoring and heterogeneous grouping were actively used but remained undocumented in formal planning.
Evaluation of Adaptive Islamic Religious Education	Assessment documents, classroom observations, and teacher interviews	1. Written tests (Daily test, PTS, PAS) were administered uniformly with standardized multiple-choice or essay items. 2. Teachers complemented formal test scores with observational data on effort, participation, religious practice, and affective growth. 3. Flexibility occurred during grading interpretation rather than instrument design.
Supporting and Inhibiting Factors	Teacher interviews, classroom observations, documentary analysis	1. Supporting: Teacher commitment, empathy, homeroom collaboration, peer tutoring, and city inclusive policies. 2. Inhibiting: Absence of Special Assistant Teacher (GPK), lack of formal psychological diagnostic data, standardized documents, restricted time, and dense curriculum content.

Description: The findings summarized in Table 1 are elaborated in the following sections through interview excerpts, classroom observation records, and documentary evidence

Implementation of Adaptive Islamic Religious Education

Analysis of interview transcripts, classroom observations, and curriculum documents indicates that adaptive Islamic Religious Education (IRE) for students with learning delays was implemented primarily through instructional adjustments during classroom activities rather than through formally differentiated curriculum planning. Although the curriculum documents complied with the requirements of the Independent Curriculum, no written accommodations, modified teaching modules, or individualized learning programs were prepared specifically for students with learning delays. Instead, teachers relied on classroom observations and students' learning characteristics to determine appropriate instructional support.

Interview data revealed that the implementation of adaptive learning began with an initial diagnostic assessment conducted at the beginning of Grade VII. The assessment focused primarily on students' Qur'anic reading fluency and was followed by continuous classroom observation to identify learning characteristics. As explained by GPAI-1:

“The results of the initial diagnostic assessment are submitted to the homeroom teacher so that students can be grouped according to their abilities, learning styles, strengths, and weaknesses.”

The interview further indicated that diagnostic information was used as a reference for classroom instruction but was not formally incorporated into curriculum documents

such as teaching modules or individualized learning plans. When asked about peer tutoring, GPAI-1 emphasized it specifically as an instructional delivery technique during group tasks:

“Peer tutoring allows students who master Qur’anic recitation faster to guide their peers directly during classroom group work, easing the cognitive load during the core lessons.”

Classroom observations conducted in Classes VII A, VII E, VII F, VII G, VIII D, VIII F, VIII G, and VIII H demonstrated that teachers implemented a range of instructional adjustments throughout the learning process. During the opening activities, teachers used concrete, example-based prerequisite questions, followed by ice-breaking activities, motivational affirmations, and brief classroom interactions to encourage student engagement. In the core learning activities, teachers presented learning materials through presentation slides, animated videos, and everyday analogies while organizing heterogeneous group discussions supported by peer tutoring. For instance, during an observation in class VII G, which focused on Islamic history, the teacher used a short animated video to illustrate historical events, including for students with learning delays, to help them grasp the narrative before engaging in group discussions. Teachers also provided repeated explanations, redirected students' attention, and offered additional guidance to students requiring further assistance. During the closing activities, students were given opportunities to demonstrate their understanding through brief oral responses or simple practical demonstrations, although these activities were sometimes limited by available instructional time.

Document analysis further confirmed that the reviewed Learning Outcomes (*Capaian Pembelajaran*), Learning Objectives Flow (*Alur Tujuan Pembelajaran*), and teaching modules followed the administrative requirements of the Independent Curriculum. These documents contained learning objectives, instructional procedures, assessment plans, and enrichment activities applicable to all students. However, no written evidence was found indicating differentiated learning objectives, modified learning pathways, individualized instructional programs, or documented accommodations specifically designed for students with learning delays.

Triangulation across interviews, classroom observations, and documentary analysis consistently demonstrated the same pattern, although minor discrepancies emerged between administrative labels and classroom realities. Interview data showed that

teachers recognized students' diverse learning needs through diagnostic assessment and classroom experience. Classroom observations confirmed that adaptive instructional practices were implemented through instructional adjustments, visual media, peer tutoring, repeated explanations, and additional guidance. However, documentary evidence revealed a clear discrepancy: while official school records and teaching modules classify these classes under standard “regular/typical” curriculum delivery without special accommodations, field observations revealed continuous, unrecorded pedagogical adaptation enacted by the teacher in real time. Collectively, these findings demonstrate that adaptive Islamic Religious Education was implemented primarily through teachers' pedagogical decisions during classroom instruction rather than through systematically documented curriculum accommodations.

Evaluation of Adaptive Islamic Religious Education

Analysis of assessment documents, interview transcripts, and classroom observations indicates that the evaluation of adaptive Islamic Religious Education (IRE) for students with learning delays combined standardized written assessments with continuous classroom-based evaluation. Although all students completed the same formal assessment instruments, teachers considered additional evidence from students' classroom participation, learning effort, religious behavior, and daily performance when determining learning outcomes.

Document analysis showed that assessment instruments, including Daily Tests, Mid-Semester Assessments (PTS), and Final Semester Assessments (PAS), were administered uniformly to all students. The written assessments consisted primarily of multiple-choice items, narrative reading passages, and essay questions. No modified assessment instruments, differentiated question sets, or individualized assessment procedures specifically designed for students with learning delays were identified in the assessment documents reviewed.

Interview findings confirmed that teachers recognized the limitations of applying identical written assessments to students with different learning characteristics. GPAI-1 stated:

“The written tests are standardized for all students, so students with learning delays often cannot complete them within the allocated time. Therefore, we need other ways to assess their learning progress.”

Similarly, GPAI-2 explained:

“Since we cannot modify the written examination scores recorded in the school system, we also evaluate students through their daily participation, classroom behavior, and affective development so that their progress can be assessed more fairly.”

Both interviews indicate that teachers complemented formal assessment results with continuous observation of students' learning behavior throughout the semester.

Classroom observations supported these interview findings. During learning activities, teachers continuously monitored students' participation in classroom discussions, willingness to answer questions, completion of learning tasks, cooperation during group activities, classroom behavior, and religious practices. Students experiencing learning delays were frequently provided with additional guidance and opportunities to demonstrate their understanding through oral responses, practical classroom activities, or repeated explanations before teachers determined their overall learning achievement.

Documentary evidence further demonstrated that students' cognitive scores from standardized written examinations were complemented by records of classroom participation, learning effort, discipline, religious attitudes, and affective development, all of which were documented throughout the learning process. This reveals a notable discrepancy between formal quantitative records and actual grading decisions. At the same time, the school's electronic grade book required uniform percentage inputs for written test grades and final report card grades, incorporating qualitative adjustments based on teachers' informal daily observation logs.

Triangulation across assessment documents, interview transcripts, and classroom observations consistently demonstrated the same pattern. Documentary evidence confirmed the use of standardized written assessment instruments, interview data explained teachers' efforts to complement these assessments through continuous observation, and classroom observations verified the implementation of ongoing monitoring during learning activities. Collectively, these findings indicate that the evaluation of students with learning delays combined formal institutional assessment procedures with continuous classroom-based judgment to capture students' learning progress more comprehensively.

Supporting and Inhibiting Factors

Analysis of interview transcripts, classroom observations, and documentary evidence identified several factors that both supported and hindered the implementation

of adaptive Islamic Religious Education (IRE) for students with learning delays. These factors affected teachers' ability to provide adaptive instruction and evaluation within regular classroom settings.

Interview findings indicated that teachers' professional commitment and empathy were the primary factors supporting adaptive learning. Both teachers consistently expressed their willingness to adjust instructional approaches according to students' learning characteristics while maintaining equal participation in classroom activities. GPAI-1 explained that the results of the initial diagnostic assessment were shared with homeroom teachers to facilitate classroom grouping based on students' learning readiness, strengths, and learning styles. GPAI-2 further emphasized that students with learning delays should not be labeled but should be continuously encouraged to participate according to their individual abilities. When reflecting on institutional support, GPAI-1 noted that peer tutoring serves a broader institutional role beyond classroom delivery, acting as a key factor in school inclusion by fostering an empathetic peer culture and compensating for the lack of formal special-assistance teachers. Classroom observations confirmed that teachers regularly provided additional explanations, encouragement, heterogeneous grouping, and peer tutoring to support students during learning activities. For example, during a group task in class VIII F on the Islamic history subject, peer tutors were observed actively encouraging their peers with learning delays to contribute ideas for poster creation, thereby creating an inclusive and supportive micro-environment. Documentary evidence also showed that the school implemented the national curriculum within a local policy environment promoting inclusive education, providing an institutional foundation for adaptive instructional practices.

Despite these supporting conditions, several factors constrained the implementation of adaptive learning. Interview data consistently identified the absence of a *Guru Pendamping Khusus* (Special Assistant Teacher), the lack of formal psychological diagnostic data, standardized curriculum documents, and dense curriculum content as major challenges experienced by teachers. Teachers reported that classroom adjustments depended primarily on their own professional judgment because no individualized instructional guidelines were available for students with learning delays.

Classroom observations supported these interview findings. Teachers frequently divided their attention between managing the entire class and providing additional

assistance to students requiring more intensive support. Limited instructional time also reduced opportunities to provide sustained individual guidance, particularly during group activities and classroom assessment. Documentary analysis further confirmed that curriculum documents, assessment instruments, and teaching modules remained standardized for all students, without any formally documented accommodations or individualized instructional programs.

Triangulation across interviews, classroom observations, and documentary analysis demonstrated consistent evidence regarding both the supporting and inhibiting factors affecting adaptive Islamic Religious Education. While narratives generally converged on teacher empathy and institutional resource constraints, a subtle discrepancy was noted regarding parental involvement. In contrast, teachers expressed in interviews that a lack of home support inhibited student progress. Documentary records of parent interviews showed that parents often felt ill-equipped due to their lack of understanding of the child's subject matter and time constraints from work. Thus, while teachers' commitment, empathy, collaboration, and peer support facilitated adaptive classroom practices, institutional limitations, including the absence of Special Assistant Teachers, limited diagnostic information, standardized curriculum documents, and restricted instructional time, continued to influence the consistency of adaptive instruction and evaluation for students with learning delays.

Discussion

Implementation of Adaptive Islamic Religious Education

The findings indicate that adaptive Islamic Religious Education (IRE) was implemented primarily through teachers' pedagogical adjustments during classroom instruction rather than through formally differentiated curriculum planning. Although curriculum documents complied with the administrative requirements of the Independent Curriculum, instructional adaptations arose primarily from teachers' professional judgment in responding to students' learning needs. This suggests that adaptive instruction functioned as a responsive pedagogical practice embedded in classroom interaction rather than as a systematically documented instructional design.

This finding aligns with the principles of Universal Design for Learning (UDL), which emphasize providing multiple means of representation, engagement, and expression to accommodate learner variability rather than relying on uniform

instructional approaches.¹⁴ The observed use of visual media, animated videos, prerequisite questioning, heterogeneous grouping, peer tutoring, repeated explanations, and flexible classroom interactions demonstrates teachers' efforts to expand access to learning for students with learning delays. However, unlike the ideal implementation of UDL, these adaptations were not explicitly embedded in curriculum documents but largely depended on teachers' classroom decisions and professional experience.

The findings also support previous studies reporting that successful inclusive education depends on teachers' pedagogical flexibility rather than students' physical placement in regular classrooms.¹⁵ Similar to these studies, teachers in the present research continuously adjusted instructional delivery according to students' learning characteristics. Nevertheless, this study extends previous research by demonstrating that such adaptive practices occurred despite the absence of formally documented individualized learning programs. Adaptive instruction, therefore, emerged as an informal pedagogical response rather than as an institutionalized component of curriculum planning.

Another important finding concerns the relationship between diagnostic assessment and instructional planning. Teachers consistently utilized the results of the initial Qur'anic reading assessment to recognize students' learning readiness and determine appropriate classroom support. However, these diagnostic data were not translated into differentiated learning objectives, modified teaching modules, or individualized instructional pathways. This finding suggests that diagnostic assessment functioned primarily as an instructional reference rather than as a curriculum-planning instrument.

From the perspective of differentiated instruction, effective adaptation requires alignment among learner readiness, learning objectives, instructional activities, and assessment.¹⁶ The present findings indicate that teachers successfully adapted classroom

¹⁴ Meyer and Rose, *Universal Design for Learning: Principles, Framework, and Practice*; Almeqdad et al., "The Effectiveness of Universal Design for Learning: A Systematic Review of the Literature and Meta-Analysis."

¹⁵ Lani Florian and Kristine Black-Hawkins, "Exploring Inclusive Pedagogy," *BERA: British Educational Research Journal* 37, no. 5 (2013): 813–28; Stephan Kielblock, Stuart Woodcock, and John Ehrich, "Examining Teachers' Attitudes towards Inclusive Education for All: Development of a New Scale," *BMC Psychol* 14 (2026): 1–15; Wahyudi, Darmawan, and Mumtaz, "Reconstructing Democratic Inclusive Education Through National Culture and Humanistic Values: A Critical Interpretive Synthesis from Indonesia."

¹⁶ Carol Ann Tomlinson, *How to Differentiate Instruction in Academically Diverse Classrooms*, 3rd ed. (Arlington: ASCD, 2017).

interactions and instructional delivery but had difficulty translating these adjustments into formal curriculum documents. Consequently, differentiation occurred predominantly at the implementation stage rather than during curriculum planning.

Taken together, these findings confirm that adaptive Islamic Religious Education extends beyond curriculum compliance toward responsive classroom pedagogy. At the same time, the study demonstrates that adaptive practices remain highly dependent on teachers' professional judgment when institutional mechanisms for curriculum differentiation have not yet been systematically established.

Evaluation of Adaptive Islamic Religious Education

The findings demonstrate that the evaluation of adaptive Islamic Religious Education (IRE) was characterized by a combination of standardized institutional assessment procedures and teachers' continuous classroom-based judgment. Although all students completed the same written assessments, teachers incorporated additional evidence from classroom participation, learning effort, religious practices, and affective development when determining students' overall learning achievement. This pattern indicates that adaptive evaluation was achieved primarily through teachers' professional judgment rather than through formally differentiated assessment instruments.

This finding is consistent with the growing body of literature on inclusive assessment, which argues that equitable assessment should not rely exclusively on identical testing procedures but should provide multiple opportunities for learners to demonstrate their understanding in ways that align with their learning characteristics. Tai et al. emphasize that assessment for inclusion should move beyond rigid standardization by incorporating diverse forms of evidence that reflect students' actual learning progress and individual developmental trajectories.¹⁷ Similarly, Schildkamp et al. argue that flexible classroom-based evaluation and formative assessment enable teachers to interpret learning outcomes adaptively, particularly for learners who experience persistent subject-specific learning difficulties.¹⁸ From this perspective, the teachers' practice of combining written examinations with continuous classroom observations reflects an effort to broaden the evidence used in evaluating learning achievement.

¹⁷ Joanna Tai et al., "Assessment for Inclusion: Rethinking Contemporary Strategies in Assessment Design," *Higher Education Research & Development* 42, no. 2 (February 17, 2023): 483–97.

¹⁸ Kim Schildkamp et al., "Formative Assessment: A Systematic Review of Critical Teacher Prerequisites for Classroom Practice," *International Journal of Educational Research* 103 (2020): 1–16.

Nevertheless, the present study also reveals an important distinction from previous research. Rather than modifying assessment instruments or developing individualized assessment procedures, teachers maintained the same formal examinations for all students while adapting the interpretation of assessment results by observing participation, classroom behavior, religious practices, and learning effort. Consequently, assessment flexibility occurred primarily during the evaluation process instead of during assessment design. This finding differs from studies advocating formal assessment accommodations as the principal mechanism for inclusive evaluation because, in the present context, institutional assessment policies required uniform written examinations for all students.

The findings also reinforce the importance of formative classroom assessment in supporting students with learning delays. Continuous observation enabled teachers to identify students' progress throughout the learning process rather than relying solely on summative examination scores. Such practices demonstrate that assessment functioned not only as a mechanism for measuring learning outcomes but also as an ongoing process for documenting students' participation, engagement, and gradual academic development during classroom instruction.

Compared with previous studies in inclusive education, this research extends existing knowledge by demonstrating that adaptive evaluation can emerge from teachers' professional interpretation of multiple sources of evidence of learning, even when formal assessment procedures remain standardized. In this context, adaptive evaluation represents a pedagogical response to institutional constraints rather than the implementation of formally differentiated assessment policies.

From a theoretical perspective, these findings extend current discussions on inclusive assessment by showing that adaptive evaluation can be achieved through the integration of standardized assessment and continuous classroom-based evidence. Rather than positioning standardized examinations and adaptive assessment as opposing approaches, this study demonstrates that teachers negotiated both practices simultaneously to recognize students' learning progress within the institutional assessment framework.

Supporting and Inhibiting Factors

The findings indicate that both individual and institutional factors influenced the implementation of adaptive Islamic Religious Education (IRE). Teachers' professional

commitment, empathy, collaboration with homeroom teachers, peer support, and the school's commitment to inclusive education facilitated the implementation of adaptive instructional practices. At the same time, the absence of formal institutional support limited the consistency and sustainability of these practices. These findings suggest that successful adaptive learning depends not only on teachers' pedagogical competence but also on the broader educational environment in which instruction is implemented.

The positive role of teachers' commitment and empathy aligns with previous studies emphasizing that teachers' beliefs and attitudes toward inclusion significantly influence the quality of inclusive classroom practices. Research by Inayati et al. and Kielblock et al. demonstrates that teachers who hold positive attitudes toward learner diversity are more likely to modify instructional strategies and encourage active participation among students with diverse learning needs.¹⁹ Similarly, the present study found that teachers consistently attempted to provide additional explanations, encouragement, peer-assisted learning opportunities, and flexible classroom interaction despite the absence of formal adaptive curriculum documents. These findings reinforce the view that teachers' professional agency remains a critical factor in sustaining inclusive learning practices.

However, this study also highlights that teacher commitment alone is insufficient to ensure systematic implementation of adaptive learning. Interview and documentary evidence consistently identified the absence of *Guru Pendamping Khusus* (Special Assistant Teachers), limited diagnostic information derived from formal psychological assessment, standardized curriculum documents, and restricted instructional time as institutional constraints affecting classroom practice. Unlike studies conducted in educational settings with established inclusive support systems, the adaptive practices observed in this study relied primarily on teachers' individual initiatives rather than coordinated institutional mechanisms. Consequently, instructional adaptations were implemented inconsistently and remained largely undocumented within formal curriculum planning.

These findings extend previous research by demonstrating that adaptive Islamic Religious Education develops through the interaction between teacher agency and institutional capacity. While earlier studies have generally emphasized pedagogical

¹⁹ Inayati et al., "Inclusive Education and the Protection of Children's Rights within an Islamic Educational Framework"; Kielblock, Woodcock, and Ehrich, "Examining Teachers' Attitudes towards Inclusive Education for All: Development of a New Scale."

strategies or teachers' attitudes toward inclusion, the present study shows that sustainable adaptive practice requires alignment between classroom-level initiatives and institutional support systems. In this context, curriculum planning, diagnostic assessment, instructional implementation, and learning evaluation should function as interconnected components rather than isolated pedagogical activities.

From a theoretical perspective, these findings extend the application of humanistic and inclusive education within Islamic Religious Education. Humanistic education emphasizes respect for learners' dignity, individual potential, and meaningful participation in the learning process. The present study demonstrates that these principles were reflected in teachers' efforts to encourage participation, recognize students' progress beyond examination scores, and maintain students' confidence during classroom learning. At the same time, the findings suggest that the realization of humanistic and inclusive principles requires stronger institutional support, including systematic diagnostic procedures, adaptive curriculum planning, professional collaboration, and policies that facilitate equitable learning opportunities for students with learning delays.

Overall, this study suggests that adaptive Islamic Religious Education should be understood not merely as a collection of classroom strategies but as an integrated pedagogical system linking diagnostic assessment, curriculum planning, instructional implementation, evaluation, and institutional support. Such integration is essential for ensuring that adaptive practices move beyond individual teacher initiatives and become sustainable components of inclusive educational practice.

Theoretical Contribution

The present study extends the existing literature on inclusive and adaptive education by demonstrating how adaptive Islamic Religious Education (IRE) is implemented within a mainstream junior high school serving students with learning delays in the absence of formally differentiated curriculum documents. Previous studies have predominantly examined adaptive instruction through specific pedagogical strategies, differentiated instruction, or inclusive educational policies. This study extends these perspectives by demonstrating that adaptive teaching develops through the interplay among diagnostic assessment, responsive classroom instruction, continuous evaluation, and institutional support in the context of Islamic Religious Education.

The findings further extend the application of Universal Design for Learning (UDL), the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), Scaffolding, and Humanistic Education by demonstrating that these theoretical frameworks are not implemented independently but operate as complementary dimensions of adaptive pedagogy. Teachers simultaneously employed multiple representations of learning, adjusted instructional support according to students' readiness, provided gradual assistance throughout classroom interaction, and maintained students' dignity and participation despite the absence of formally individualized curriculum planning. This integrated perspective contributes to a more comprehensive understanding of adaptive learning within inclusive religious education.

Another theoretical contribution concerns the relationship between curriculum planning and classroom practice. Existing literature generally assumes that adaptive instruction should be supported by formally differentiated curriculum documents and individualized learning programs. The present study demonstrates that adaptive pedagogical practices may still emerge through teachers' professional judgment and ongoing classroom interaction, even when formal curriculum accommodations are unavailable. While this finding does not diminish the importance of systematic curriculum planning, it highlights teachers' pedagogical agency as a critical mechanism for sustaining inclusive learning within resource-constrained educational contexts.

Collectively, these findings extend current discussions on adaptive and inclusive education by proposing that adaptive Islamic Religious Education should be understood as an integrated pedagogical system connecting diagnostic assessment, curriculum planning, instructional implementation, learning evaluation, and institutional support. This perspective provides a conceptual foundation for future research examining adaptive religious education in similar inclusive educational settings.

Research Limitations

This study has several limitations that should be considered when interpreting its findings. First, this research employed a qualitative single-case study at a public junior high school in Bandung City. Consequently, the findings represent a context-specific understanding of adaptive Islamic Religious Education (IRE). They should not be generalized to all-inclusive schools or other educational settings with different institutional characteristics. Nevertheless, the study provides an in-depth explanation of

adaptive instructional practices that may serve as analytical references for similar contexts.

Second, the study primarily examined teachers' perspectives on adaptive learning, supported by classroom observations and documentary analysis. Although these multiple sources strengthened the credibility of the findings through methodological triangulation, the experiences and perceptions of students with learning delays were not explored directly. Future studies incorporating students' perspectives may provide a more comprehensive understanding of adaptive learning.

Third, the identification of students with learning delays was based on pedagogical diagnostic assessments, particularly students' Qur'anic reading fluency and continuous classroom observations, rather than on formal psychological assessments or standardized intelligence testing. Accordingly, the findings should be interpreted within the educational context of subject-specific learning needs rather than as evidence relating to clinically diagnosed cognitive conditions. This operational definition reflects the pedagogical practices implemented at the participating school and therefore may differ from those used in studies employing clinical diagnostic criteria.

Directions for Future Research

The findings and limitations of this study suggest several directions for future research. First, future studies could examine the implementation of adaptive Islamic Religious Education across multiple schools with different institutional characteristics to explore how adaptive pedagogical practices vary between inclusive and non-inclusive educational settings. Comparative case studies may provide broader insights into how school policies, leadership, and institutional resources influence adaptive learning.

Second, further research should incorporate the perspectives of students with learning delays and their parents to complement those of teachers. Such studies may generate a more comprehensive understanding of students' learning experiences, participation, and perceived challenges within adaptive Islamic Religious Education classrooms.

Third, future research may investigate the effectiveness of systematically integrating pedagogical diagnostic assessment into curriculum planning, instructional implementation, and learning evaluation. This line of inquiry would help clarify how

diagnostic information can be translated into documented adaptive learning programs and individualized instructional planning.

Finally, further studies could develop and evaluate adaptive curriculum models or assessment frameworks specifically designed for Islamic Religious Education in inclusive schools. Such research may contribute to the development of practical guidelines that support teachers in implementing adaptive learning while maintaining alignment with national curriculum standards.

Conclusion

This study demonstrates that adaptive Islamic Religious Education (IRE) for students with learning delays was implemented primarily through teachers' responsive pedagogical practices rather than through formally differentiated curriculum planning. Although teachers used diagnostic assessments, continuous classroom observation, visual media, peer tutoring, repeated explanations, and flexible instructional strategies to accommodate students' diverse learning needs, these adaptations were largely developed during classroom interactions. They were not systematically documented in curriculum planning. Furthermore, the evaluation of adaptive IRE combined standardized written assessments with continuous classroom-based judgement, allowing teachers to recognize students' learning progress through classroom participation, learning effort, religious practices, and affective development. The implementation of these adaptive practices was facilitated by teachers' professional commitment, empathy, peer collaboration, and institutional support for inclusive education. At the same time, constraints included the absence of Special Assistant Teachers (*Guru Pendamping Khusus*), limited formal diagnostic information, standardized curriculum documents, dense curriculum content, and restricted instructional time.

Theoretically, this study extends the literature on adaptive and inclusive education by demonstrating that adaptive Islamic Religious Education develops through the interaction of diagnostic assessment, curriculum planning, instructional implementation, learning evaluation, and institutional support rather than through isolated instructional strategies. The findings also extend the application of Universal Design for Learning, the Zone of Proximal Development, Scaffolding, and Humanistic Education in Islamic Religious Education by demonstrating that these complementary perspectives collectively support adaptive pedagogical practices in inclusive classrooms. In practice,

the study highlights the importance of strengthening institutional mechanisms for adaptive curriculum planning, systematic assessment accommodations, interdisciplinary collaboration, and professional support to enable teachers to implement adaptive learning more consistently.

The conclusions of this study should be interpreted in the context of a qualitative single-case study conducted at a public junior high school in Bandung City. Accordingly, the findings provide contextual insights into adaptive Islamic Religious Education rather than generalizable conclusions applicable to all-inclusive educational settings. Nevertheless, the study offers an empirically grounded framework that may inform the development of adaptive pedagogical practices, institutional policies, and future research on inclusive Islamic Religious Education for students with learning delays.

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Ethical Statement

This study received institutional research permission from the Faculty of Social Science Education (Fakultas Pendidikan Ilmu Pengetahuan Sosial), Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia (Letter No. 1772/UN40.A2/PT.01.01/2026), authorizing data collection at SMP Negeri 43 Kota Bandung. Verbal and written informed consent was obtained from all participants, including Islamic Religious Education teachers, non-IRE subject teachers, guidance counselor (*guru BK*), and student parents, before data collection. Participants were fully informed of the study's educational objectives, assured of complete anonymity and confidentiality, and advised of their right to withdraw from the study at any time without consequence.

Conflict of Interest Statement

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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Author Contribution

Zakia Fitri Nabila: Conceptualization, Formal analysis, Data curation, Writing original draft, Project Administration. Syahidin: Methodology, Supervision. Nurti Budiyaniti: Investigation, Writing-review and editing, Visualization. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

Declaration of Generative AI in Scientific Writing

During the preparation of this work, the authors used the following AI-based tools and language assistants:

1. ChatGPT (OpenAI) was used during the initial drafting and analytical synthesis stage for brainstorming and supporting sentence construction based on empirical field findings.
2. Gemini AI and Gemini Notebook (Google) were utilized during the data analysis stage to assist in cross-verifying and organizing data triangulation patterns, completing the manual data triangulation previously conducted by the authors.
3. Grammarly was used during the translation and proofreading stage to assist in translating field notes and draft text from Indonesian to English, as well as refining grammar, spelling, and sentence clarity.

After using these tools, the author thoroughly reviewed, verified, and edited the content as needed and assumes full responsibility for the final content of this publication.

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