Islamic Education for Students with Disabilities in Malaysia: Innovations in the Wake of COVID-19

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ABSTRACT

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) highlight the need for inclusive education, particularly for people with disabilities (PWDs). The COVID-19 pandemic prompted a shift from traditional face-to-face to online learning, presenting unique challenges for educators, especially in delivering Islamic education to students with disabilities. This study examines the effectiveness of teaching strategies for students with disabilities in Malaysia during and the post pandemic times. Using a mixed-method approach, including interviews with 30 Islamic education teachers, the research explores challenges faced, key factors influencing success, and recommendations for improvement. Findings reveal that 100% of respondents identified technical facilities as critical, 87% emphasized parental involvement, and 89% cited teacher creativity and capability as key to effective teaching. These insights provide valuable guidance for enhancing the inclusivity and resilience of Islamic education for students with disabilities, particularly in the context of ongoing and future disruptions.

Keywords: *Teachers and Learning Islamic Education, Factors, Disabilities Student, COVID.*

INTRODUCTION

The COVID-19 pandemic, declared by the World Health Organization (2020), significantly disrupted global systems, including education. Originating in Wuhan, China, the virus quickly spread worldwide, including Malaysia, with far-reaching effects on societal norms and practices. COVID-19, caused by a newly discovered coronavirus, primarily leads to mild to moderate respiratory illness for most individuals. However, it poses severe risks to older adults and those with underlying health conditions such as cardiovascular disease, diabetes, and chronic respiratory disorders. Common symptoms include fever, dry cough, fatigue, and difficulty breathing, with transmission occurring mainly through respiratory droplets (Ramadhan, 2019). In response, Malaysia implemented the Movement Control Order (MCO) as a preventive measure, emphasizing physical distancing to curb the virus's spread.

The MCO triggered a sudden transition from traditional face-to-face education to online learning platforms, profoundly affecting teaching and learning processes. While the Ministry of Education Malaysia (MOE) issued general guidelines for this transition, these guidelines did not adequately address the unique requirements of students with disabilities, particularly in Islamic Education. Islamic Education teachers encountered unprecedented challenges in adapting their strategies to meet the needs of students with disabilities through online platforms, a domain previously unexplored in this context.

This study aims to assess the effectiveness of Islamic Education strategies for students with disabilities in the wake of COVID-19. By conducting online interviews, the research identifies key factors influencing teaching and learning outcomes and examines practical methods to enhance inclusivity and effectiveness. The findings highlight the critical need for targeted approaches that address the specific challenges faced by this group. The study contributes to developing tailored pedagogical practices and institutional policies, ensuring Islamic Education is inclusive, equitable, and resilient to future disruptions. These insights align with the ongoing efforts to support quality education for all, as emphasized by WHO (2020) and Ministry of Education Malaysia (MOE).

LITERATURE REVIEWS

Rosmawati (2020) defines Persons with Disabilities (PWDs) as a person with problems with mobilisation limitations, either physical, mental, sight, and hearing. Wan Sabri *et al.* (2013) define PWDs as a person with differences in neurological characteristics, sensory capacity, communication ability, behaviour and emotion, and physical characteristics. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) recognises that disability is an evolving concept (UNCRPD, 2006). The term "persons with disabilities" are used to apply to all persons with disabilities, including those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual, or sensory impairments which, in interaction with various attitudinal and environmental barriers, hinders their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others. Overall, disability is part of the human condition. Everyone is likely to experience it, either permanently or temporarily, at some point in their life (WHO & The World Bank, 2011). People with disabilities also are diverse and not defined by their disability (Al-Ju'beh & Christoffel, 2015). Disabilities may be visible or invisible, and onset can be at birth, during childhood, working-age years, or old age.

Moreover, people with disabilities are classified into two different community groups. The first group consists of special needs children, and the second group consists of a particular person for adults and the elderly. All characteristics, such as sight problem, hearing problem, physical disability, mental and intellectual ability, sensory capacity problem, communication ability, and social behaviour disorders, are referred to the persons with disabilities. In general, disability in Malaysia refers to a unique child, disabled people, illness, and special needs people. This entity's existence within society becomes a signal for the communities to play their role in the survival of this unique group or entity based on three main elements: *'al-Ta'aruf,' 'al-Ta'amul,'* and *'al-Ta'awun.'* The aspect of *'al-Ta'aruf'* refers to knowing each other in understanding and accepting their differences and disorders. The element of *'al-Ta'amul'* means be friendly and communicate with them by respecting their lifestyle and way of life. Then, the aspect of *'al-Ta'awun'* completes the signals or symbolic of their existence, which helps them fulfil their needs and create opportunities and equality in all aspects of life.

Other than that, there are various terms used to refer to "PWDs." In this context, the definition of PWDs in Malay is referred to as *"Orang Kelainan Upaya (OKU)"* because this term sounds more positive to hear. The former Vice-Chancellor of Universiti Sains

Malaysia (USM), Professor Tan Sri Datuk Dzulkifli Abdul Razak, highlighted the matter. He argues that the OKU community must be seen in the right way because the difference is not physical but ability due to a natural cause or unwanted incident in their life (Mohamad Abdullah, 2020). Their knowledge should be evaluated based on the different capabilities of those considered perfect without disabilities.

The term used for the OKU as *"Orang Kurang Upaya"* sounds negative and causes discomfort. This term represents something negative as sometimes PWDs have special abilities that ordinary people cannot do. Ab. Aziz *et al.* (2009) also commented on this issue where he suggested that the term *"Kurang Upaya"* should be replaced with a more suitable phrase, *"Kelainan Upaya"*. According to Kamus Dewan (English: Dictionary), the term *"Kurang"* means lack or not enough, not really (good, advanced, healthy), and not perfect. While the word "cacat" or disabled means deficiency or imperfection (complete, sound) in the body (things, morals, deeds, inner selves). Therefore, the term *"Kelainan Upaya"* sounds much more proper to be addressed for OKU.

The Ministry of Women, Family, and Community Development (KPWKM) is responsible for managing everything involving PWDs in Malaysia. KPWKM referred to the definition of PWDs from the Persons with Disabilities Act (2008). PWDs have long-term physical, mental, intellectual, or sensory impairments that may hinder their full and effective participation in society when interacting with various communication and community involvement barriers. The Department of Social Welfare (JKM), set up in 1946, is a department under KPWKM that offers services to the targeted group, including PWDs. According to JKM, PWDs must be registered under this department. It is essential to plan any prevention programs, education, habilitation, rehabilitation, exercise, and services. Moreover, this registration helps the registered PWDs get good benefits according to their need based on their level of disability (Azman Ab Rahman, 2018). JKM was categorised PWDs into seven categories: hearing disability, visually disabled, speech disability, physical disability, learning disabilities, mental disability, and multiple disabilities (JKM, 2020).

Even though people with disabilities have their weaknesses, their rights should be more protected under Islamic law. In Islam, people with disabilities are considered one of the foundation stones of a good society. Allah SWT mentioned in Al-Quran:

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِنَّا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ مِنْ ذَكَرٍ وَأُنْثَىٰ وَجَعَلْنَاكُمْ شُعُوبًا وَقَبَائِلَ لِتَعَارَفُوا

Meaning: *"O mankind, indeed We have created you from male and female and made you peoples and tribes that you may know one another."*
(al-Quran. al-Hujuraat, 49:13).

This verse shows that the main focus is to build an ethical and fair society by not depriving peoples' rights. One of its concepts and rules to produce a quality society are through the method of *"al-Qudwah Qabla al-Da'wah"* (English: be exemplary before preaching) as it is crucial to recognise the existence of all entities or individual society regardless of their race, appearance, and their level of physical and mental.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A qualitative methodology was employed in this research. According to Denzin & Lincoln (2000), in qualitative research design, the researcher adopts qualitative research as a

qualitative inquiry process to understand a social or human problem from multiple perspectives. It also develops concepts, insights, and understandings from patterns in the data (Eboh, 1997). Thus, this qualitative research design helps the researcher collect and analyse its data. This study uses primary and secondary data sources: interviews, documentation, and observation to conduct the research and achieve the study's objective.

The primary sources obtained from the interview were conducted through online methods due to MCO via Zoom application with three different sessions. The interview was conducted based on the selected focus group and participated by a teacher who taught Islamic Education subject for students with disabilities such as learning disability, hearing disability and visually disability. The focus group interview, an increasingly popular qualitative research method, is used to obtain highly accurate and relevant information through a dynamic group interactive technique. Focus groups are used to gather ideas, opinions, perceptions, attitudes, and beliefs based on participants experiences in a defined area of interest (Chang et al., 2006). A structured and semi-structured approach through fixed and open-ended questions has been used in the interview because it lets the researcher gather the respondents' demographics information, write their own opinions and experiences.

Each of the interview sessions consisted of 10 participants, and overall three sessions were conducted with 30 participants altogether randomly from 8 states: Selangor, Negeri Sembilan, Kuala Lumpur, Perak, Kelantan, Terengganu, Sabah and Johor. The interview aims to gain a wide range of views and stimulate reflection on the effective teaching and learning method in Islamic Education for students with disabilities during COVID-19. The interview successfully aimed and achieved the objective. The participants gave their full cooperation and provided their frank opinions about the factors affecting the teaching and learning on Islamic Education subject for students with disabilities during COVID-19 in Malaysia.

The data collection method was also collected by other sources to gain important information and fulfilled the research finding. To obtain the secondary data, collecting the data uses documentation and observation. The data obtained by the documentation was analysed using content or document analysis from various textual documents such as articles, journals, proceedings, and books in line with the study's objective.

Simultaneously, the researchers used the observation method to measure the study variables. This observation method was an alternative to collecting information and managing the process. It is also to understand a situation or condition, obtain direct data, and see physical evidence or findings that can be measured by sight. The variables in this study consisted of the teachers who taught Islamic Education subject for Special Education Program and students with disabilities, where the data collected would be analysed according to the concept of reporting.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Islamic Education For Special Education in Malaysia

Islamic Education is a compulsory subject that must be taken primarily by all Muslim students in Malaysia, starting from primary school up to secondary school. The students'

development must be dynamic, including good manners, ethics, and kindness. Moreover, Islamic Education is a life-time lesson and teaching in our life. Islamic Education teaching not only delivers the knowledge and skills to an individual, but it must also be practised in daily life. Thus, as an Islamic Education teacher, he has to deliver an experience to students and play a huge role in producing *Khalifa* and a holistic person in life (Asmawati Suhid, et. al, 2015).

According to the Persons of Disabilities Act (2008), people with disabilities have no exception from getting quality and proper education from kindergarten until a high study level. Nowadays, PWDs can seek knowledge and skill even with their disabilities (Hasnah Toran, et. al, 2010). They will always be eager and enthusiastic to seek understanding through their spiritual development, no matter how their condition is. As a strategy to develop Muslim human capital for people with disabilities, appropriate governance must be strengthened, especially in Islamic Education learning for them. This strategy will ensure the teaching and learning objectives of Islamic Education for Muslims among PWDs are achieved (Izuli Dzulkifli & Asmawati, 2018).

The establishment of Special Education Schools in Malaysia has started before independence with School with Visually Impaired and School for the Deaf in 1990 through volunteer involvement. Cabinet Committee Report that studies on Education Policy through *Perakuan 169* helped improve Special Education in Malaysia. In line with that, the participation of government in students who have special educational needs started with the establishment of Sekolah Rendah Pendidikan Khas Princess Elizabeth at Johor Bahru, Johor under JKM in 1948, and Federation School for the Deaf, Tanjong Bungah at Pulau Pinang (primary and secondary) on 1954 for students with hearing disabilities. In 1960, the combination of education for children with hearing and visual disabilities had established at primary school and secondary school.

As time passed, Special Education in Malaysia started to focus on Islamic Education for Special Education program towards students with disabilities. In Malaysia, Islamic Education for Special Education had empowered, and the Ministry has made many improvements in education from time to time. Special Education School also has been established for students with disabilities. This school provides special education for students with Special Educational Needs (MBK; Malay: *Murid Berkeperluan Khas*) for all study levels. This school is managed directly by the Special Education Unit (BPKhas; Malay: *Bahagian Pendidikan Khas*). J-QAF Program for Special Education has been an effort to empower Islamic Education to the MBK group by emphasising teaching and learning (PDP; Malay: *Pengajaran dan Pembelajaran*) disabilities, hearing disabilities, and visual disability. For MBK with learning disabilities, particular emphasis is given in PDP al-Quran using *Modul Kaedah Iqra'* (English: *Iqra'* Module) and PDP *Fardhu Ain* using *Modul Amali Solat* (English: Prayer Practices Module). For MBK with a hearing disability, this program specialises in PDP al-Quran using Iqra' Module, PDP *Fardhu Ain* using Prayer Practices Module, PDP Jawi *Modul Pembelajaran Jawi* (Malay: Jawi Learning Module). Meanwhile, for MBK with a visual disability, they used an overall primary flow j-QAF module implemented at the primary level.

The JKM categorised PWDs into seven categories as follows:

NO.	CATEGORY	DESCRIPTION
1	Hearing Disability	Unable to hear clearly in both ears with or without using a hearing aid.
2	Visually Disability	Blind in both eyes or blind in one eye or limited vision in both eyes or any other permanent visual impairment.
3	Speech Disability	Inability to speak impairs proper communication and cannot be understood by those who interact with them. This condition is permanent and incurable. It must be based on an assessment at five years of age or older for children.
4	Physical Disability	It is a permanent inability of the body parts, whether caused by loss or absence or the failure of any part of the body, that can affect their functions in fully carrying out necessary activities, including self-care, movement, and changing the body's position.
5	Learning Disabilities	Intellectual capabilities that do not conform with biological age. Those that fall within this category are Late Global Development, Down Syndrome, and intellectual disabilities. This category also includes conditions that affect the learning ability of an individual, such as Autism (Autistic Spectrum Disorder), Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), and specific learning difficulties such as (dyslexia, dyscalculia, and dysgraphia).
6	Mental Disability	Conditions of severe mental illness that causes an inability to function in persons whether the party of fully in matters related to him/herself or his/her relationship within the community. Among mental illness, types are severe and chronic Organic Mental Disorder, Schizophrenia, Paranoia, Mood Disorder (depression, bipolar).
7	Multiple Disabilities	Means having more than one type of disability and, in general, cannot be classified in category 1 to 6.

Table 1: Categories of people with disabilities

A descriptive analysis of the demographics of respondents

The demographic data analysed in this research through the interview are gender, age, nationality, high level of education, job or occupation, year of service, categories of students with disabilities, and teacher's specialist.

In Table 2, 21 respondents (70%) come from the female respondent, and only nine (30%) come from the male respondents, which most of whom attended and involved with the interview sessions.

Gender	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents (100%)
Male	9	30
Female	21	70
Total	30	100

Table 2: Gender

Then, the researcher investigated the age of respondents. Table 3 shows that most of the respondents are from the age of above 36 years old to 45 years old, a total of 16 respondents (53.5%) altogether. Meanwhile, only two respondents (6.5%) are age above 45 to 55. The rest of the 12 respondents (40%) are under 25 years old until 35 years old.

Age	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents (100%)
25 years old - 35 years old	12	40
36 years old - 45 years old	16	53.5
45 years old - 55 years old	2	6.5
Total	30	100

Table 3: Age

There are various nationalities among respondents throughout this research, as shown in Table 4. The majority of the respondents are Malay, as through the data recorded, most 28 respondents (93%) are Malay respondents. Others were two respondents (7%) from Native of Sabah and Dusun.

Nationality	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents (100%)
Malay	28	93
Chinese	-	-
Indian	-	-
Others	2	7
Total	30	100

Table 4: Nationally

As shown in Table 5, most of the respondents are bachelor holders from various education backgrounds regarding the high education level. They are 27 of the respondents (90%) were degree holders who are from Special Education, Islamic Education, Arabic and Al-Quran and Sunnah background of the study. In contrast, only three respondents (10%) pursue their studies in Post-Graduate Diploma in Education (DPLI). The result shows that the respondents are coming from the same background: education. So, the data received were reliable.

High Level of Education	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents (100%)
Post-Graduate Diploma (DPLI)	3	10
Bachelor	27	90
Total	30	100

Table 5: High level of education

Table 6 shows that all 30 respondents (100%) are teachers for the Special Education program. The result includes 30 respondents (100%) who taught Islamic Teachings such as Islamic Education, Arabic, and Al-Quran for students with disabilities. Nevertheless, the respondents' job or occupation is influenced by their study background. Thus, the overall of the respondents were teachers. Moreover, the interviews also were targeted to be conducted among teachers, especially with Islamic Education and Special Education teachers in Malaysia

Job	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents (100%)
Islamic Education/Special Education Teacher	30	100
Total	30	100

Table 6: Job

Besides, every respondent is varying in terms of their year of service. It can be concluded into two classifications, as shown in Table 7, a teacher practised for less than ten years and more than ten years. Based on the result received, 16 respondents (53.5%) have practice for less than ten years of services. The category is classified into respondents who experienced about 2 to 10 years of service as teachers for the Special Education program. Whereas 14 respondents (46.5%) already experience more than ten years in this field, which is within 11 to 23 years of service.

Year of Service	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents (100%)
More than 10 Years of Service	14	46.5
Less than 10 Years of Service	16	53.5
Total	30	100

Table 7: Year of service

For the part category of students with disabilities taught by the respondents, they are several categories, as shown in Table 8. The result found that they are four types of classes, which are hearing disability, visual disability, learning disability, and physical disability:

1. They are three respondents (10%) who taught students with hearing disability.

2.   They are six respondents (20%) taught students with visual disability.
3.   Twenty respondents (66.5%) taught students with learning disabilities such as Down Syndrome, Autism, and ADHD.
4.   Only one respondent (3.5%) taught students with a physical disability.

Thus, most of the respondents are teachers who taught students with learning disabilities.

Category of Students with Disabilities	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents (100%)
Hearing Disability	3	10
Visually Disability	6	20
Learning Disabilities	20	66.5
Physical Disability	1	3.5
Total	30	100

Table 8: Category of students with disabilities

Table 9 found that every respondent has their specialist in this education field to teach the students with disabilities. Eighteen respondents (60%) were skilled in teaching students with disabilities in Islamic teachings such as Islamic Education, Arabic, and Al-Quran for learning disabilities. For example, they introduced the students on how to perform prayer and reciting the al-Quran. Besides that, 12 respondents (40%) are very well at using braille and sign language to teach hearing and visual disabilities in Islamic Education. Overall, all the skills or specialists they have was helped them in conducting the teaching and learning classes during COVID-19 very well.

Teacher's Specialist	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents (100%)
Islamic Teaching	18	60
Braille and Sign Language	12	40
Total	30	100

Table 9: Teacher's specialist

Adapting Islamic Education for Inclusive Online Learning: Challenges and Key Strategies

The United Nations' Sustainable Development Goal 4 emphasizes the right to inclusive and equitable quality education for all members of society. However, Islamic Education teachers in Special Education often face unique challenges, particularly in adapting their teaching methods for online platforms to meet the needs of students requiring significant support. In interviews conducted by researchers, respondents openly shared insights into the factors affecting teaching and learning during the COVID-19 pandemic. These discussions highlighted key themes such as teachers' skills and creativity, access to technological resources, parental support, the availability of learning materials, and institutional guidelines for Special Education during this period.

Transitioning Islamic Education classes for students with disabilities to an online format placed a significant demand on teachers' innovation and adaptability. The ability of teachers to creatively deliver content plays a crucial role in ensuring effective learning outcomes. Insufficient skills or expertise can hinder participation and reduce student engagement, with different disabilities requiring specific teaching approaches. As reflected in Table 10, 25 respondents (89%) affirmed that teachers' skills and backgrounds are pivotal to the effectiveness of online teaching methods, while only five respondents (11%) disagreed.

According to Mohd Mokhtar and Aliza (2003), a lack of skilled and experienced educators is a common issue within Special Education programs across schools. Many teachers struggle to teach students with disabilities effectively due to limited experience and inadequate training in essential skills such as braille or sign language. This skill gap creates significant obstacles, particularly during the transition to online learning necessitated by COVID-19, impeding teachers' ability to effectively deliver lessons in a virtual environment.

Teacher's Skill Creativity	and Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents (100%)
Yes	25	89
No	5	11
Total	28	100

Table 10: Teacher's skill and creativity

As detailed in Table 11, technological facilities play a critical role in determining the effectiveness of online teaching and learning, particularly for students with disabilities. All 30 respondents (100%) concurred that virtual learning necessitates adequate and appropriate technological tools for both educators and students. Devices such as computers and laptops are essential to facilitate seamless two-way communication between teachers and students, ensuring the learning objectives are achieved. Moreover, a stable and reliable internet connection is equally crucial. A study involving 2,250 teachers in the United States highlighted that 68% of educators relied on the internet to access teaching materials and resources (Thulasimani M., 2014). This finding underscores the importance of robust technological infrastructure in enabling teachers to source supplementary learning materials, particularly in the context of Special Education, where such resources are often scarce.

In addition, the availability of these technical facilities is a necessity for both teachers and students. However, many students face challenges in accessing these resources due to financial constraints, living in remote areas, or lacking familiarity with technology. The Early Childhood Education Blueprint Report 2013–2025 emphasizes the importance of enhancing technological infrastructure in education and preparing students to be ICT-literate, especially within the framework of 21st-century teaching methodologies (Ani Omar & Rosnidar, 2018). These efforts are vital to addressing the digital divide and ensuring that technological limitations do not hinder the learning process.

Technological Facilities	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents (100%)
Yes	30	100
No	-	-
Total	30	100

Table 11: Technological facilities

Hence, as the COVID-19 pandemic drastically changed all aspects of everyone's life, the school's closure was one of the most impactful, significantly altering daily life for school personnel, students, and families (Rachel K. & R. Lambert, 2020). As shown in Table 12, 26 respondents (87%) from the survey research agreed that both parent and student's commitment help make the learning process run successfully, while four respondents (13%) have disagreed. The experience of teaching and learning Islamic Education for students with disabilities through online learning has undoubtedly been challenging.

Christina Tortorelli *et al.* (2021) stated that early research also indicates that pandemic has changed how education occurs. Teaching Islamic Education for students with disabilities requires a different method because their understanding and focus are further depending on their disabilities. Visual Aid and Picture Exchange Communication (PEC) learning, for example, is commonly used as an intermediary between teachers and students at school. Hence, parents' support is crucial for home-based learning through online learning during the pandemic period. The effectiveness of the teaching and learning of online learning needs a full commitment from their parents at home. It will ensure the students' quality of education and increase the two-way relationship between the teachers and parents as a part of the commitment given.

Parent's Support	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents (100%)
Yes	26	87
No	4	13
Total	30	100

Table 12: Parent's support

Other than that, supported learning material for students with disabilities always is a part of the issues among Islamic Education teachers in Malaysia. Fewer sources of reference were found, such as books, notes, and materials to help the teachers teach students with disabilities. The survey research shown in Table 13 shows that 14 respondents (57%) agreed, and 13 respondents (43%) disagreed that supported learning material for Islamic Education subject is not easy to access and achieved. The study conducted by recent researchers on what kind of support the families of students with disabilities desired during COVID-19 shows that home learning materials are one of the supports they expected the most (Rachel K. & R. Lambert, 2020). The online learning classes at home much more conducive when aided by monitoring and assistance from the student's family. Sometimes, some families have no idea what topic their children learn. Thus, the supported learning material was essential to help the families and teachers understand the topic lesson, easy-to-help, and monitor their children with disabilities.

Supported Learning Material	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents (100%)
Yes	17	57
No	13	43
Total	30	100

Table 13: Supported learning material

Besides, the teaching and learning guideline during pandemic provided by MOE is too general and not specific to Special Education Institution such as a method to conduct online learning with different types of students with disabilities, especially in Islamic Education subject, sources of reference, and its related matters. Twenty-seven respondents (90%) from the result shown in Table 14 agreed that it was more convenient if MOE or related agencies may help them provide the specific method for conducting online learning on Islamic Education subjects for students with disabilities during COVID-19. In comparison, three respondents (10%) disagreed with the suggestion. Since the teachers have no experience in teaching the students, such as how to perform a prayer through an online platform, this guideline may help the teachers to ensure the effectiveness of the learning. Thus, it is necessary to provide a specific teaching and learning procedure for Special Education Institution, especially during a pandemic.

Guideline for Special Education Institution to Conduct PDP during COVID-19	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents (100%)
Yes	27	90
No	3	10
Total	30	100

Table 14: Guideline for Special Education institution to conduct teaching and learning during COVID-19

Assessing the Effectiveness of Islamic Education Strategies for Students with Disabilities in Malaysia Amid Post COVID-19

The COVID-19 pandemic led to significant disruptions in all sectors, including education, compelling educational institutions, including Special Education Schools, to pivot from conventional face-to-face teaching to remote learning strategies in line with the Malaysian National Security Council's (MKN) directives. This sudden shift raised considerable concerns among parents of students with disabilities, who questioned whether their children could effectively adapt to new methods of teaching and learning (T&L) introduced during the pandemic. In response, the Malaysian Ministry of Education (MOE) issued general guidelines for T&L during the Movement Control Order (MCO) to ensure educational continuity. However, these guidelines lacked specific provisions addressing the unique needs of students in Special Education, particularly in Islamic Education.

Interviews with Islamic Education teachers highlighted the importance of integrating technology to support T&L for students with disabilities during the pandemic. Utilizing tools such as online classes and the 21st-century learning model (PAK-21), educators adapted their teaching strategies to cater to the diverse needs of their students. For

example, M. Mageswary, a teacher at Sekolah Menengah Kebangsaan Tasek Damai, Ipoh, emphasized the effectiveness of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) tools like WhatsApp in engaging students with hearing disabilities through interactive video calls and messaging.

The research further explored how Islamic Education teaching strategies varied according to the type of disability—whether visual, hearing, or learning disabilities—and the specific needs of each student. For students with visual disabilities, teachers predominantly used audio-based resources, such as voice recordings, braille materials, and storytelling techniques. For students with hearing disabilities, video-based lessons, complete with captions and sign language interpretation, were found to be highly effective. In the case of students with learning disabilities, educators employed simplified explanations and repetitive instructions to aid understanding.

These findings underscore the importance of personalized and adaptive teaching strategies in achieving effective T&L for students with disabilities. The insights gained from this study contribute to the broader understanding of how Islamic Education strategies can be optimized for students with disabilities in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. It highlights the need for comprehensive and inclusive guidelines and interventions that address the varying needs of these students, furthering the goal of providing equitable and quality education for all, in alignment with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

CONCLUSION

The Ministry of Education (MOE) has undertaken various initiatives to ensure that all students, including those with disabilities, receive equitable access to quality education, even amidst the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic. Islamic Education for students in Special Education programs was not exempt from these efforts. Teachers have played a pivotal role in adapting and delivering knowledge effectively under unprecedented circumstances. The closure of schools profoundly impacted the education sector, compelling educators to innovate and implement new teaching strategies, particularly for students with disabilities.

Teaching Islamic Education to students with disabilities posed significant challenges as it required practical engagement and skill-based methods, which are distinct from traditional theoretical approaches. Nevertheless, the integration of technology in teaching and learning (PdPc) proved to be an invaluable tool. Despite the absence of specific guidelines for Special Education, teachers demonstrated resilience and creativity, ensuring that their pedagogical methods remained effective and inclusive. This study highlights the importance of developing tailored strategies and resources to enhance the effectiveness of Islamic Education for students with disabilities, not only during crises like the COVID-19 pandemic but also for sustainable and inclusive education in the future.

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