**Research Article**

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# Promoting Islamic Character Education in Inclusive Schools: Lessons Learned from the Supporting and Inhibiting Factors

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**Abstract:** Initiatives to advance fairness and inclusion in educational systems should be founded on an examination of specific settings. This article presents a framework that is founded on research and may be applied to such contextual studies. This piece is a qualitative approach and is presented descriptively. The school principal, teachers, and students in inclusive schools served as the study's primary sources. Students cited supportive relationships, positive teacher beliefs, positive school leader attitudes, supportive teaching practices, and accessibility as five aspects that encourage inclusive education. The findings reveal a variety of barriers and challenges in educational settings, including a lack of teacher preparation that is necessary to meet the needs of all students, the recognition that student diversity is a challenge, physical barriers, underutilization of available resources, and an educational response devoid of organizational and didactic strategies that do not assume responsibility for a fair and inclusive curriculum for all students. It is clear that Islamic character education requires constant habituation and intervention, refuted and carried out consciously by each component. The need for continued professional development and opportunities to improve pre-service teacher education programs are explored.

**Keywords:** Islamic Character Education, Inclusive Schools.

## Introduction

Children with special needs often get discriminatory behavior from those around them and are often denied human rights including the right to access education (Buli-Holmberg & Jeyaprathaban, 2016). In addition, children with special needs are also less understanding, uninformed, and unaware of their rights. Arriani et al. mentioned that one of the problems in Indonesia in particular is the lack of understanding, awareness, and access to human rights which results in the inability of children with special needs to participate as a whole in community life (Arriani et al, 2021).

Indonesian people's awareness of children with special needs is still lacking and influenced by the beliefs of their ancestors, such as myths that assume that children with special needs feed curses or punishments for the descendants of

people who sin (Lestari, 2022). As a result, children with special needs are rarely noticed in community life and they are often isolated, hidden at home or in a certain institution. From this fact, it can be assumed that the number of children with special needs who receive educational services is still small. This is because there is still a mindset in society that ignores the potential of children with special needs (Azis dkk, 2021).

Islamic history has recorded that people with mental or physical limitations were still able to do things that benefited themselves and others, such as Abdul-lah ibn Maktum, a companion of the Holy Prophets who was able to memorize the Qur'an even though he was blind (Bhatty et al, 2019). In terms of science, there were some people who became experts in science, such as Thomas Alfa Edison who was upset and lacking in hearing but became the inventor of the lamp, Stephen Hopkins a man who could not walk but

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became a physicist, and so on. This should be one of the starting points for understanding that they also have the ability to compete with the average child when given information and given the opportunity to perform (Chen, 2014). There are still many people who think that children with special needs cannot contribute actively and even tend not to benefit the general public. In some cases, children with special needs often get discriminatory behavior from those around them and often get denied human rights including the right to access education (Ahmed, 2017).

Inclusive education has a major influence on the education process that occurs in the world, every country is now competing to make policies and regulations that regulate it. Inclusive education is one of the efforts in providing access to education as a whole for every child with disabilities and non-disabilities. Inclusion is defined as a system by places and involves all related elements in the implementation of the educational process, including students, education staff, parents, foundation administrators, teachers, and school principals, with the aim that together they can develop a good, comfortable, and safe educational environment for all children so as to optimize the development of their potential (Ariastuti & Herawati., 2016).

In their research, Graham et al. explain that inclusive schools have many weaknesses including teachers showing concern due to unpreparedness of human resources so that not many teachers care about children with special needs. In addition, the academic standards applied are inadequate, problems in the workplace, and problems accepting children with special needs (Graham et al, 2023). In Steinbeck's research (2016) on the effectiveness of schools with inclusion programs, it is known that in addition to the advantages, because students with special needs can interact directly with regular students, bad results are also obtained, namely isolation and frustration experienced by students. The

limitations and privileges of regular students in inclusion classes make students with special needs vulnerable to bullying from their normal peers, especially children with special needs do not understand that bullying is something bad and the position of special needs students who is a victim is not realized. This is what makes regular students bully children with special needs in inclusion classes (Steinbeck, 2016).

Efforts made by SD Mutiara Bunda Bandung to improve the views of the community by instilling moral values of akhlakul karimah in students. At SD Mutiara Bunda Bandung, Islamic character education is provided through compulsory congregational prayers, dhuha prayers, tahfidz, morning and evening dhikr, infaq, and adabiyah. During the implementation of these moral cultivation activities, special needs students are conditioned so that they are able to participate in activities until the end of the implementation. Not forgetting, the homeroom teacher accompanied them and gave directions, with the aim that they could understand a little bit what activities they were participating in. In compulsory prayer activities and sunnah prayers, normal students are on the front shof, and special needs students are on the back shof. For this reason, special needs students are placed on the back shof because the homeroom teacher or Islamic coordinator will find it easier to supervise them and if there are special needs students who are anxious or bored in participating in this activity, the task of the homeroom teacher or Islamic coordinator is to advise them and set a good example for them to be able to pray until the end.

In existing research, scholars have explained the guiding weaknesses in inclusive schools. There is no research that explains the implementation of Islamic character education in inclusive schools. SD Mutiara Bunda Bandungsaq as an inclusive school has various methods in applying Islamic character education, and this creates a harmonious relationship

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between normal students and special needs students, so that they can learn side by side at school. So, the author is interested in exploring what factors serve as supporters and inhibitors in the implementation of Islamic Character Education di inclusive schools.

## Method

This research seeks to analyze and describe promoting Islamic character education in inclusive schools: lessons learned from the supporting and inhibiting factors. The type of research used in this research is a descriptive analysis method. According to (Arifudin, 2024) descriptive analysis is empirical research that investigates a specific symptom or phenomenon in a real life setting. The results of this research were collected using primary data and secondary data.

The approach used in this research is a qualitative approach. According to Bogdan and Taylor in (Arifudin, 2023) , a qualitative approach is a research procedure that produces descriptive data in the form of written or spoken words from people and observable behavior. According to (Rahayu, 2020) the method is to transcribe the data, then coding the notes in the field and interpreting the data to obtain conclusions.

This research uses qualitative research with field research methods. According to (Haris, 2023) this approach is adapted to the main aim of the research, namely describing and analyzing the analysis of promoting Islamic character education in inclusive schools: lessons learned from the supporting and inhibiting factors. So that this method will be able to explain the problems of the research (Nuary, 2024).

Determining appropriate data collection techniques greatly determines the scientific truth of a research. The data collection techniques used in this research are observation, interviews and documentation.

Engineering can be seen as a means of carrying out technical work carefully using the mind to achieve a goal. Even though the study is actually an effort within the scope of science, it is carried out to collect realistic data systematically to realize the truth. Research methodology is a means to find a cure for any problem. In this case, the author collected information about promoting Islamic character education in inclusive schools: lessons learned from the supporting and inhibiting factors from books, articles, journals, theses, theses, ebooks, etc. (Arifin, 2024).

Because it requires material from the library as a data source, this research utilizes library research. Researchers need books, scientific articles and other literature related to the topics and problems they explore, both print and online (Djafri, 2024).

Searching for information from data sources requires the use of data collection techniques. Amir Hamzah in (Sappaile, 2024) claims that data collection is an effort to collect information related to the subject under study. The author uses library research methods to collect data. Specifically, the author started with the library to collect information from books, dictionaries, journals, encyclopedias, papers, periodicals, and other sources that share the views of promoting Islamic character education in inclusive schools: lessons learned from the supporting and inhibiting factors.

Amir Hamzah further said that data collection means various efforts to collect facts related to the topic or discussion that is being or will be explored (Hoerudin, 2023). These details can be found in scientific literature, research and scientific writings, dissertations, theses and other written sources. According to (Ramli, 2024) data collection can be carried out in various circumstances, using different sources, and using different techniques.

Observation is part of the research process directly regarding the phenomena to be researched (Hanafiah, 2022). With this method,

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researchers can see and feel directly the atmosphere and condition of the research subject (Rifky, 2024). The things observed in this research are the analysis of promoting Islamic character education in inclusive schools: lessons learned from the supporting and inhibiting factors.

The interview technique in this research is a structured interview, namely interviews conducted using various standard guidelines that have been established, questions are arranged according to information needs and each question is needed to reveal any empirical data (Sanulita, 2024).

Documentation is a technique for collecting data through existing documents or written notes (Sembiring, 2024). Documentation comes from the word document, which means written items. In implementing the documentation method, researchers investigate written objects, such as books, magazines, meeting minutes and diaries. According to Moleong in (Paturochman, 2024) the documentation method is a way of collecting information or data through examining archives and documents. Documentation strategies are also data collection techniques proposed to research subjects. The data collection method using the documentation method was carried out to obtain data about the condition of the institution (research object), namely the analysis of promoting Islamic character education in inclusive schools: lessons learned from the supporting and inhibiting factors.

Muhadjir in (Arif, 2024) states that data analysis is the activity of carrying out, searching for and compiling records of findings systematically through observations and interviews so that researchers focus on the research they are studying. After that, make the found material for other people, edit, classify and present it.

## Results and Discussion
### Islamic character education at SD Mutiara Bunda Bandung

In this study, researchers took the location of the inclusive school of SD Mutiara Bunda Bandung located on Jl Padang Golf No. 11, Arcamanik, Bandung. With the consideration that this school is an inclusive school that prioritizes akhlakul karimah and tahfidz Quran in their daily lives and provides inclusion services to educate normal students and children with special needs together. The school principal and teachers were being the role models, to love friends who have differences, say good things inside and outside the classroom. The school applies methods for Islamic character and moral cultivation through clas-sical guidance services. The results of the interview with the principal mentioned, "However, the implementation of moral cultivation will certainly differ between normal students and special needs students. SD Mutiara Bunda Bandung implements inclusion education. In Permendiknas No. 70 of 2009, the definition of an inclusive school is an education delivery system that provides opportunities for all students who have disabilities and have special intelligence or talent potential to participate in educa-tion or learning in an educational environment together with other nor-mal students."

So, an inclusive school is a formal education unit where the school opens education that accepts special needs students and has the goal is to get access to quali-ty education like students in general. The concept of teachers in inclusive schools in dealing with their students will be different. Usually depends on the type of obstacle, the severity of special needs students and the needs of students for their education (Aisah, 2020). Teachers have perceptions about the types of barriers that exist in special needs students including emotional, physical, cognitive and sensory behavioral barriers. In the teach-ing

and learning process must also adjust the existing curriculum, educational facilities and infrastructure must be considered and the learning system is man-aged according to what is needed by each student (Atmojo dkk, 2020). Based on the interview with the homeroom teacher of grade 6 SD Mutiara Bunda Bandung was found that, "In the continuity of teaching and learning, we provide material based on the 2013 curriculum. Special needs students will be adjusted and summarized more simply according to their comprehension so that they are easy to understand."

The school communities must accept special needs students well and never distinguish them from other normal students. Based on the interview with Islamic religious teacher, author found data that, "The school has the aim of applying habituation of noble morals and pious deeds. The importance of research at SD Mutiara Bunda Bandung, namely having the habituation of religious activities such as tilawati which is usually carried out routinely every Friday morning with the guidance of the iqro book, carrying out congregational dhuha prayers, keputrian activities such as Islamic studies discussing menstruation, women's skills, shiroh sahabiyah, cooking, and other Islamic activities, namely memorization of hadith such as thematic verses and prayers. It is hoped that the program will run in accordance with the goal is to be able to carry out good moral cultivation and become an example for other schools in implementing classical guidance services in moral cul-tivation in inclusive schools.

One of the good classical guidance services is found at SD Mutiara Bunda Bandung because classical guidance services are carried out on a scheduled basis and are highly considered. This school, commensurate with elementary schools in general. Little distinguishes that is accepting students with special needs and normal students in general or commonly called inclusive schools and prioritizing Islamic religious teachings in

order to create a young generation with good morals. At SD Mutiara Bunda Bandung, there is only one special assistance teacher, while there are 7 students with special needs who need a companion with severe im-pairments. Hasil wawancara dengan GPK (special assistance teacher), author can conclude that, "The duties of are: (a) Providing assistance in the form of special ser-vices for children with special needs who experience obstacles in par-ticipating in learning activities in public classes, in the form of remedial or enrichment; (b) Provide guidance on an ongoing basis and make spe-cial notes in case of teacher changes; (c) Provide assistance (sharing experiences) to the homeroom teachers and/or subject teachers so that they can provide educational services to children with special needs; (d) Carry out assessments with the team to diagnose special needs learning problems; and (e) Create a syllabus, curriculum, and evalua-tion tailored to the child's abilities."

Special needs students at SD Mutiara Bunda Bandung include ADHD (attention deficit hyperactivity disorder), speech delay, emotionally impaired, slow learner, and autistic. In this study, the focus of the research was on all grades. In grade 1, there are two special needs students with severe symptoms, namely ADHD and speech delay with the initials IA and initials MA. In grade 2, there are two stu-dents who experience severe symptoms with the initials JS have emotionally impaired and RIW have slow learners. In grade 3, there is one special needs student with mild symptoms, namely the initials FA whose autistic students. In grade 4, there are two special needs students with mild symptoms, namely the initials FA whose ADHD students, and MR who has slow learner. There is a uniqueness in the research at SD Mutiara Bunda Bandung that educators prioritize edu-cating their students in accordance with the demands of Islam which aims to cre-ate a young generation with love and tolerance. By implementing the 2013 cur-riculum in accordance with the regulations of the education office,

applying to students to carry out good religious habituation and always instill a confident attitude and homeroom and special assistance teachers here position as counse-lors with the aim of implementing guidance service programs for students in in-clusive schools so that later they can create religious and competent graduates. The intense religious co-curricular activities carried out by the school are also one of the reinforcements for students in Islamic character education.

### Table 1. Islamic Character Cultivation Activities at SD Mutiara Bunda Bandung

| Event Name | Information |
|---|---|
| Tahfidz | Quran emorizing and read dua together, the students who have memorized and if students who have deposited will guide their friends who have not memorized. |
| Dhuha prayer | Dhuha prayers in congregation throughout the class are performed after memorization every day |
| Jumat prayer | Held in congregation, normal students are on the front shof. special needs students who are classified as having high adaptation barriers can join normal students. special needs students on the back of the shof. |
| Morning Dzikr | Performed together after before starting the lesson. |
| Infaq | Infaq withdrawals are carried out every Friday by PAI teachers and then collected and deposited to school members in need or the community around the school |
| Adabiyah | The teacher in charge or coordinator of Islamic affairs provides materials about morals and their application in everyday life. Usually, this activity is carried out after Sunnah prayers and obligatory prayers. The teacher provides reinforcement so that students can accept differences in special needs students. |
| Wise in social media | The most basic material was given by female students accompanied by a daughterhood coordinator. |
| Hygiene | Basic materials were given by the daughterhood coordinator. |
| Siroh | Teachers in charge of PAI subjects or daughterhood coordinators provide material about sirah. |
| Calligraphy | Given paper that already has the form of calligraphy in the form of dots then students trace it. Each grade level has different difficulties. |
| How to Behave to the Opposite Sex | The teacher in charge or coordinator of Islam provides basic material on how to behave to people who are not his muhrim. |
| Cooking | The teacher in charge or coordinator of daughterhood introduces cooking utensils, types of vegetables and cooks simple dishes. |
| Adab to teacher | The teacher or daughterhood coordinator provides material on how to be polite and polite to the teacher |

**Supporting Factors and Inhibiting Factors of Islamic Character Education at SD Mutiara Bunda Bandung**

The supporting factor of Islamic character education at SD Mutiara Bunda Bandung is that the teacher as a role model who patiently handles special needs in class so that normal students get direct examples in communicating with special needs students.

Based on the results of the interview above, it was found that while studying together with special needs students, normal students go through an adaptation process, which is initially uncomfortable and avoids special needs students, but after they adapt and get used to it, they feel comfortable even though many activities require cooperation between normal students and special needs. In terms of school climate, both the principal, the homeroom teacher and students feel that the school has security, comfort and school order that is quite effective. Based on interviews with special guidance teachers, data was obtained that, "I as a special guidance teacher still need to learn a lot to deal with students with special needs. We need to do a lot of training and training in order to create a more comprehensive curriculum."

At SD Mutiara Bunda Bandung, the obstacles experienced by the school in organizing character education are the lack of parental involvement in carrying out Islamic character education at home, lack of financing in facilitating facilities and infrastructure and other school activities that can shape Islamic character. Negative parenting can hinder the formation of Islamic character in students if parents do not participate in building tolerance character in their children, in order to accept children with special needs in their classes. Rangtua is the main role model for students to accept differences. Based on the author's observation, when returning home from school, there are parents who do not want to get out of their car when picking up their children at school for fear of children with special needs.

This needs to be a special concern for schools so that in socializing children with special needs do not need to be feared, because they are still school children who need affectionate treatment.

The results of observations found that the facilities and infrastructure at SD Mutiara Bunda Bandung are still inaccessible. Related to this, the school gave a reason because funds have not been allocated for the provision of school facilities and infrastructure. The school finance component is the production component that determines the implementation of teaching and learning activities with other components. According to (Iba dkk, 2021), education financing is "the activity of earning costs and managing education budgets and expenditures". In order to provide inclusive education, it is necessary to allocate special financing, which among others is for the purposes of: (1) Student input assessment activities. (2) Curriculum modification. (3) Incentives for education personnel involved. (4) Procurement of infrastructure. (5) Empowering community participation, and (6) Implementation of teaching and learning activities.

As for how to teach the values mentioned above, Lickona (1997) explained that there are three important components in building character education, namely moral knowing, moral feeling and moral action. These three components can be used as an implementative reference in the process and stages of character education. Furthermore, the mission or objective that must be aimed at teaching him from not knowing to knowing, and in the later stages can cultivate the mind, so that he can function his intellect into intelligence. This is the first, cognitive. Second, affective, which deals with feelings, emotions, the formation of attitudes within one's person with the formation of attitudes of sympathy, antipathy, love, hatred, and so on. These attitudes can all be classed as emotional intelligence. Third, psychomotor, is concerned with actions, deeds, behavior, and so on. When combined these three components can be stated that having knowledge

about something, then having an attitude about it, then behaving according to what he knows and what he responds. Therefore, character education covers these three aspects, a student must know what is good and what is bad. The problem that arises is how one has an attitude towards good and bad, where one gets to the level of loving good and hating bad. At the next level act, behave in accordance with the values of goodness, so that it becomes moral and noble character (Arifudin, 2022).

Shumaker (2017) add more information, that inclusion means to not only accept diversity, but to value it and recognise heterogeneity as a resource. Yet the basis for the successful implementation of inclusive practices in the education system would mean that society as a whole needs to adopt an inclusive view of people and the world (Shumaker & Heckel., 2017). This pre-requisite is important as inclusion in the classroom cannot be successful if society keeps living a discriminating and excluding norm. This means that successful inclusion needs to start with an essential mindset for without it, inclusion cannot succeed. When viewed from the perspective of inclusion there are clearly identifiable problems with many aspects of current practice in schools. It could be argued that the framework for the national reports provided by Ministry of Education did not adequately address the challenges related to inclusion (Al-Aoufi et al, 2012). This in itself is an oversight that should not have happened if the intention was to ensure that recommendations for improving school leadership would retain a strong commitment to inclusion. There are many well documented areas where innovative thinking is needed and where policy imperatives are needed in order to frame a more inclusive school system (Ruairc et al, 2013).

Character education should be carried out in an integrated and interrelated manner, in its implementation involving all components and all human resources, infrastructure and media and other stakeholders The application of school management must be able to plan, coordinate, organize, supervise and manage finances and evaluate all activities within the school in it contains character values in an integrated or integrated manner in their activities.in accordance with their respective activities. This means that schools are able to plan education and programs and activities that instill character values and carry out school quality control in character (Hasan, 2021). As illustrated in the 2010 Ministry of National Education School Character Education Guide describes that school management, school components, values and implementation of school-based management are all other stakeholders are needed in building the sturdy character of students.

**Table 2. Islamic Character Cultivation Activities at SD Mutiara Bunda Bandung**

| Informant | Information |
| --- | --- |
| First grade student | Yes, in my class there are two classmate that looks different. At first, I felt strange and uncomfortable whenever they started looking angry, throwing things and running away from class. My teacher would tell me that my classmate was uncomfortable and needed time to calm down. And when they're calm, they're funny friends. |
| Second grade student | Several times, I've done group work with my special friend. They did take a long time to do the assignment, but I saw the teacher's so patiently encouraging and teaching him. It made me want to help him |

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|---|---|
| | too, so that my friend would be happy and proud if he had completed the task according to his ability. |
| Third grade student | I am in the same class with a special needs classmate from grade 1. From year to year, this friend has changed a lot. Now he is quieter in class. I used to be afraid of him, but now we often memorize the Qur'an and pray together. I saw how our teacher treated him meekly, and make me so I idolized my teacher so much. |
| Four grade student | My special needs classmate used to be very unruly. Now he wants to participate in class. I also like to help him if he doesn't understand his assignment. Our teachers always reminded us that God is merciful, and God wants us to treat our special needs classmate with love. |

## Conclusion

Islamic character education at SD Mutiara Bunda Bandung has been going well. The principal, class teacher, and special guidance teacher are directly involved in the implementation of character education. The supporting factor of Islamic character education at SD Mutiara Bunda Bandung is that the teacher as a role model who patiently handles special needs in class so that normal students get direct examples in communicating with special needs students. Reinforcement by the principal, teachers and normal students every time there are special needs students who have tantrums or are experiencing emotional problems. The intense religious co-curricular activities carried out by the school are also one of the reinforcements for students in Islamic character education. While studying together with special needs students, normal students go through an adaptation process, which is initially uncomfortable and avoids special needs students, but after they adapt and get used to it, they feel comforta-ble even though many activities require cooperation between normal students and special needs. In terms of school climate, both the principal, the homeroom teacher and students feel that the school has security, comfort and school order that is quite effective. The obstacles to Islamic character education at SD Mutiara Bunda Bandung are activities and infrastructure that require large

financing, the experience of educators in handling special needs students who have low adaptation in the teaching and learning process, special needs handler training is needed in schools for teachers. Another inhibiting factor is the quality standards of inclusive school management, the way the community views inclusive education in general.

In the learning process and while teacher handling of children with special needs that related to Islamic character education, SD Mutiara Bunda Bandung has advantages and disadvantages due to the supporting and inhibiting factors that have been discussed. Suggestions for inclusive school, that school programs must implemented to avoid discrimination against special needs students. So that all students get equal opportunities regarding educational issues, the implementation of inclusive education can help in increasing the character values possessed by students. So that through the implementation of character education, students can embed character values, one of which is tolerance. In implementing inclusion education programs, all school communities, including school principal, teachers, special guidance teacher, administrator, and normal students are needed to sup-port the implementation of Islamic character education in inclusion education.

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