



# The Integration of PAI Teachers' Competence and Inclusive Learning Strategies to Overcome Students' Learning Barriers at SMA Negeri 1 Manyak Payed

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## ABSTRACT

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This study aims to analyze the integration of pedagogical competence and professional competence of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers with inclusive learning strategies in overcoming students' learning barriers at SMA Negeri 1 Manyak Payed. Inclusive learning is understood as an educational approach that emphasizes the fulfillment of every student's right to learn through the adjustment of learning methods, media, and evaluation according to students' individual characteristics and needs. This research employs a qualitative approach with a field research design. The research site is SMA Negeri 1 Manyak Payed, focusing on PAI instruction in class X.1. The research subjects include the school principal, PAI teachers, and students. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, participatory observation, and documentation. Data analysis was conducted interactively through the stages of data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing, while data validity was ensured through source and method triangulation. The results show that PAI teachers implement inclusive learning strategies through differentiated instruction, the use of adaptive and multisensory learning media, and flexible learning evaluation. Differentiated instruction is carried out by adjusting methods, materials, and assignments based on students' abilities and needs. The use of visual, audio, and audiovisual media helps students who experience difficulties in reading, memorizing, and understanding PAI material. Learning evaluation does not focus solely on written tests but also employs performance-based assessment and project-based tasks. The integration of pedagogical competence and professional competence of PAI teachers is a crucial factor in creating inclusive and effective learning. Pedagogical competence is reflected in the ability to understand students' characteristics and manage learning adaptively, while professional competence is evident in deep mastery of PAI subject matter. This study recommends enhancing teacher competence through continuous training and strengthening school policy support to reinforce the implementation of inclusive learning.

## 1. Introduction

In the practice of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) instruction, teachers are often confronted with limited time, administrative demands, and dense curriculum targets. These conditions frequently become reasons why learning adjustments to meet students' individual needs have not

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been optimally implemented. As a result, the learning strategies used tend to be general in nature and pay insufficient attention to differences in students' abilities (M. Ary Irawan, 2022). In fact, PAI learning has considerable flexibility to be developed in a creative and contextual manner. Islamic values teach principles of justice, compassion, and respect for diversity, which are substantively aligned with the spirit of inclusive education. Therefore, PAI learning possesses a strong philosophical foundation for implementing inclusive approaches in the learning process.

These conditions call for a shift in the PAI learning paradigm from a uniform approach toward learning that is inclusive, equitable, and oriented toward students' individual needs. Inclusive learning views diversity as a potential rather than a barrier. The successful implementation of inclusive learning largely depends on the role of teachers as the main actors in the learning process. PAI teachers hold a strategic position because they interact directly with students and determine the direction, strategies, and classroom learning atmosphere.

Teachers' pedagogical competence becomes a fundamental aspect of inclusive learning, as it relates to the ability to plan, implement, and evaluate learning in accordance with students' characteristics. This competence enables teachers to understand students' learning needs more comprehensively (Wirda Ningsih, 2024). On the other hand, the professional competence of PAI teachers also plays a crucial role, particularly in mastering Islamic subject matter and presenting it creatively and contextually. Strong mastery of the material allows teachers to adjust the depth and mode of delivery to suit students' abilities.

In the context of inclusive learning, pedagogical and professional competences cannot function independently but must be integrated synergistically. The integration of these two competences forms the basis for teachers in selecting and implementing appropriate learning strategies. Inclusive learning strategies such as differentiated instruction, the use of visual and audio media, multisensory techniques, and flexible assessment represent concrete manifestations of this integration. The Universal Design for Learning (UDL) approach also provides a systematic framework for designing learning that is accessible to all students (Hasna Setyaningrum, 2025).

Meanwhile, the professional competence of PAI teachers is reflected in their deep and broad mastery of teaching materials. This mastery enables teachers to simplify abstract Islamic concepts into forms that are more concrete and easier for students to understand. With strong subject-matter mastery, teachers can present content through various approaches without reducing the substance of Islamic teachings. The integration of pedagogical and professional competence is also evident in teachers' ability to select appropriate learning strategies (Hasna Setyaningrum, 2025). Differentiated instruction strategies, for example, allow teachers to assign varied tasks according to students' ability levels. Through this strategy, students with learning barriers can still achieve learning objectives without feeling left behind by their peers.

SMA Negeri 1 Manyak Payed, as a public senior high school, has a heterogeneous student population. Based on preliminary observations, some students experience difficulties in reading PAI texts, are slow in memorizing surahs and hadiths, and lack confidence in participating in PAI learning activities. These conditions require PAI teachers not only to be oriented toward curriculum completion, but also toward learning processes that are friendly and responsive to students with learning barriers. This necessitates a concrete integration between teacher competence and inclusive learning strategies in daily instructional practice.

Based on the above description, this study focuses on the integration of pedagogical and professional competence of PAI teachers with inclusive learning strategies in overcoming students' learning barriers in PAI instruction at SMA Negeri 1 Manyak Payed. This field research is expected to provide both theoretical and practical contributions to the development of inclusive and equitable PAI learning. Through this study, it is expected that the forms of integration of PAI teachers'

competences in implementing inclusive learning strategies can be identified. In addition, this research is also expected to reveal the supporting and inhibiting factors in the implementation of inclusive learning in PAI classrooms. These findings may serve as a basis for improving future instructional practices.

Ultimately, inclusive PAI learning is oriented not only toward academic achievement but also toward the holistic development of students' character and potential. The integration of teacher competence with inclusive learning strategies is the key to realizing PAI learning that is humanistic, equitable, and meaningful for all students.

## **2. Methodology**

This study employs a qualitative method with a field research design and an approach focusing on the integration of teacher competence and inclusive learning strategies. The integrated approach to PAI teachers' competence and inclusive learning strategies in overcoming learning barriers in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) at SMA Negeri 1 Manyak Payed is highly relevant, as the researcher explores the phenomenon in a detailed and holistic manner, particularly how PAI teachers utilize their competences to address and overcome the difficulties students experience in understanding religious subject matter.

The study was conducted at SMA Negeri 1 Manyak Payed, a public senior high school located in the Manyak Payed sub-district, specifically in Tualang Cut, Manyak Payed Sub-district, Aceh Tamiang Regency. The sources of research data were obtained through in-depth interviews with the school principal, three Islamic Education teachers, and students of class X.1.

Data collection techniques in this study included observation, documentation, and interviews. The data analysis procedures consisted of data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. After completing the research and obtaining conclusions, the researcher tested the validity of the data using triangulation techniques.

## **3. Results**

### **3.1. The Integration of PAI Teacher Competence in Inclusive Learning**

The results of the study indicate that PAI teachers at SMA Negeri 1 Manyak Payed demonstrate strong competence in integrating pedagogical, professional, social, and personal competencies in the learning process. These competencies serve as the foundation for creating an inclusive classroom environment in which all students, including those with learning barriers, are given equal opportunities to develop.

Field findings show that PAI teachers have planned instruction adaptively. This planning is reflected in flexible Lesson Plans (Rencana Pelaksanaan Pembelajaran/RPP) that are adjusted to students' individual abilities. In the implementation of learning, teachers apply various active approaches such as group discussions, question-and-answer sessions, and contextual learning methods to enhance student engagement. This strategy aligns with Suyatno's (2018) view that effective learning should be student-centered, respect diversity, and accommodate different learning styles.

Teachers' professional competence is also reflected in their mastery of PAI subject matter and their ability to adapt it to students' life contexts. Teachers do not merely convey religious theories, but also relate them to moral, social, and spiritual values in daily life. According to Muhaimin (2016), a professional PAI teacher is not only an instructor but also a mentor who instills Islamic values through role modeling and habituation.

In the social and personal dimensions, teachers demonstrate openness, patience, and respect for students' diverse characteristics. Teachers also actively communicate with parents to understand

students' conditions and learning needs. This reflects the application of humanistic education principles as emphasized by Ki Hajar Dewantara (2019), who stated that teachers must "guide the natural growth of children so that they may achieve the highest possible safety and happiness." Thus, the integration of PAI teachers' competencies at this school has been implemented in harmony with the values of inclusive education.

### **3.2. The Implementation of Inclusive Learning Strategies in Overcoming Learning Barriers**

The results of interviews and observations indicate that inclusive learning strategies at SMA Negeri 1 Manyak Payed are implemented through differentiated, collaborative, and participatory approaches. PAI teachers strive to adjust learning methods and media to students' characteristics while creating a classroom environment that is friendly and nondiscriminatory.

The differentiated approach is implemented by adapting the content, process, and learning products according to students' abilities and needs. Teachers provide varied assignments and additional time for students who experience learning difficulties. This strategy is in line with Carol Ann Tomlinson (2014), who emphasizes that differentiated instruction is a key factor in the success of inclusive education.

In addition, collaborative learning is one of the main characteristics of PAI classes. Through group activities, students learn to work together, help one another, and respect differences in abilities among peers. This approach has proven effective in fostering social empathy and strengthening solidarity among students.

The use of adaptive media also forms an integral part of the inclusive strategies applied by PAI teachers. Teachers utilize visual media, videos, and interactive presentations to facilitate students' understanding, especially for those with visual learning styles. This practice aligns with the concept of Universal Design for Learning (UDL), which emphasizes the importance of providing multiple means of representation so that all students can access and understand learning materials effectively.

In the context of Islamic education, inclusive learning strategies are also consistent with the principle of *rahmatan lil 'alamin*, namely education that spreads compassion and respects the diversity of Allah's creation. Thus, the implementation of inclusive learning strategies by PAI teachers is not only pedagogically relevant but also grounded in a strong theological foundation.

The principal of SMA Negeri 1 Manyak Payed plays an important role in creating an inclusive school climate. Through policies and managerial support, the principal ensures the availability of supportive learning facilities and provides opportunities for teachers to continuously improve their competences.

Documentation findings show that the school's vision and mission are oriented toward developing the potential of every student without discrimination. School programs also include teacher training activities, character strengthening, and the cultivation of tolerance values. This is in line with Mulyasa (2021), who emphasizes that the school principal serves as the driving force in building a school culture that is conducive to equitable learning.

Furthermore, documentation indicates that these programs represent concrete efforts to build a positive school culture that supports learning oriented toward humanitarian values. According to Mulyasa (2021), the principal holds a central role as the key driver in creating a school culture that supports equitable learning processes and accommodates the needs of all students. Therefore, the principal's leadership becomes crucial in ensuring the effective implementation of the school's vision and mission and in realizing an inclusive and socially just educational ecosystem.

In addition, the principal's support is also evident in active coordination with teachers and students' parents. Through well-directed communication, the school is able to identify students'

learning difficulties at an early stage and develop joint solutions. This collaborative approach strengthens a sustainable inclusive education ecosystem.

Based on the overall research findings, it can be concluded that the integration of PAI teachers' competences and inclusive learning strategies has a positive impact on both the learning process and students' learning outcomes. PAI learning does not focus solely on cognitive aspects, but also emphasizes the development of empathetic attitudes, tolerance, and social responsibility.

In educational services within regular schools, teachers are often faced with students who experience learning barriers. One small group of students included in this classification consists of those with specific learning difficulties, commonly referred to as *specific learning disabilities*. The application of inclusive principles transforms the PAI classroom into a learning space that values diversity and encourages each student to develop according to their individual potential. Competent PAI teachers are able to act as facilitators, mentors, and motivators in creating a humane and religious learning environment (Abdul Majid, 2020).

The practical implications of these findings indicate the need to strengthen school policies in supporting teacher training on differentiated and inclusive learning as a strategic effort to improve the quality of educational services for all students. This policy strengthening can be realized through adequate budget allocation for continuous professional development programs, the regular organization of workshops and seminars on inclusive learning strategies, and facilitating teachers' access to various learning resources and professional communities of practice, such as MGMP forums that focus on inclusive education.

The training provided should not be merely theoretical but must also include hands-on practice, case studies, and ongoing mentoring so that teachers can effectively implement inclusive learning strategies in their classrooms. Schools also need to allocate dedicated time for teachers to engage in collaborative reflection, share best practices, and develop lesson plans that are more responsive to student diversity.

School principals play a crucial role in creating a school culture that supports instructional innovation by granting teachers autonomy to experiment with various strategies, recognizing and appreciating inclusive efforts made by teachers, and providing the necessary infrastructure and resources, such as adaptive learning media, flexible classrooms, and supportive technologies for inclusive learning. A practical implication of these findings is the necessity of strengthening school policies that support teacher training in differentiated and inclusive learning. In addition, collaboration among teachers, parents, and school stakeholders needs to be continuously enhanced in order to create an Islamic education system that is more adaptive to student diversity (Dadang Garnida, 2015).

Beyond strengthening teacher competence through training, collaboration among teachers, parents, and schools must be continuously improved to develop an Islamic education system that is more responsive to diverse learners. Effective collaboration with parents can begin by building open and sustained communication through regular meetings, comprehensive student progress reports, and individual consultations to discuss children's specific needs. PAI teachers need to involve parents in the learning process by providing guidance on how to support children's learning at home—particularly in religious practices and Islamic character development—and by helping parents understand inclusive learning approaches so that their support aligns with the strategies implemented at school.

Schools can also facilitate the formation of parent communities where experiences and support can be shared, especially among parents of children with special needs, thereby creating strong social support networks. Collaboration may further be expanded by involving other

professionals, such as school psychologists, counselors, therapists, and healthcare personnel, to provide comprehensive services for students who require additional support.

Inclusive learning requires schools and teachers to be able to accommodate the diverse learning needs of students, including those with specific learning disorders such as dyslexia. Based on the results of research conducted at SMA Negeri 1 Manyak Payed, Tualang Cut, Manyak Payed Sub-district, Aceh Tamiang Regency, dyslexia was identified as one of the inclusive learning barriers that is hidden in nature yet has a tangible impact on the learning process. This finding is evidenced by the presence of students who experience difficulties in reading, comprehending written texts, and expressing ideas in written form, despite being able to follow teachers' oral explanations and showing no intellectual impairment, as observed at the research site on September 6, 2025.

Theoretically, dyslexia is understood as a neurobiological learning disorder that affects phonological processing and the handling of language symbols. Individuals with dyslexia experience difficulties in connecting letters with sounds, reading fluently, and spelling and writing accurately. This condition is consistent with research findings indicating that students' difficulties are not caused by low intelligence or lack of learning motivation, but rather by differences in how the brain processes linguistic information (Kadek Yati Fitria Dewi, 2024). Therefore, in this context, dyslexia can be categorized as a *hidden disability*, namely a learning barrier that is not physically visible but has a significant impact on students' academic achievement.

The research findings also indicate that inclusive learning barriers related to dyslexia are reinforced by instructional practices that remain uniform. Classroom learning processes tend to be dominated by lecture-based methods, textbook reading, note-taking, and written assessments that are applied equally to all students, as observed at the research site on September 10, 2025. From the perspective of Universal Design for Learning (UDL) theory, this condition suggests that learning barriers do not originate solely from students' characteristics, but also from instructional designs that have not yet provided alternative representations of content, varied ways for students to express understanding, and flexibility in learning engagement (Aulia Azizah, 2025). In other words, the difficulties experienced by students with dyslexia at this school are a consequence of a learning system that is not fully adaptive to diverse learning styles.

Beyond cognitive aspects, this discussion also confirms that dyslexia affects students' affective and social dimensions. Based on observational findings, students with reading difficulties tend to be passive in learning activities, reluctant to actively participate in discussions, and display low self-confidence when confronted with written assignments or asked to read aloud in front of the class, as observed on September 13, 2025. These findings align with educational psychology theories which suggest that repeated experiences of academic failure can form a negative self-concept, reduce learning motivation, and inhibit students' social participation within the classroom environment.

Thus, this discussion underscores that dyslexia constitutes a real barrier to inclusive learning at SMA Negeri 1 Manyak Payed. This barrier is related not only to students' conditions, but also to the limitations in early identification and the suboptimal readiness of teachers in implementing instructional strategies that are responsive to specific learning disorders. Therefore, the implementation of inclusive learning demands the enhancement of teachers' competencies in recognizing the characteristics of dyslexia, applying differentiated instruction, utilizing varied learning media, and providing flexibility in assessment (Aulia Azizah, 2025). These efforts are crucial to ensuring that the principles of justice, equity, and the fulfillment of every student's right to learn are optimally realized.

#### 4. Conclusions

Based on the findings and the presentation of research results and discussion in the previous chapter, it can be concluded that inclusive learning strategies at SMA Negeri 1 Manyak Payed have been implemented through various approaches that accommodate the diversity of students' characteristics. PAI teachers apply differentiated instruction by adjusting methods, learning materials, and assessment in accordance with students' individual needs. The strategies employed include cooperative learning, the use of varied learning media, tiered assignments, and the creation of a supportive classroom environment that respects differences. The school also demonstrates a strong commitment to inclusive education through policy support from the principal and collaboration among teachers in developing instructional practices that are more responsive to student diversity.

The integration of inclusive learning strategies implemented by PAI teachers in overcoming students' learning barriers shows significant effectiveness. Teachers integrate various strategies through a holistic approach that includes diverse teaching methods, the use of visual and audio media, group-based learning with peer tutoring, and the provision of constructive and personalized feedback. These strategies are further strengthened through inter-teacher collaboration via MGMP activities and joint reflection aimed at continuously improving instructional practice. With a flexible and responsive approach to students' needs, PAI teachers are able to create more meaningful learning experiences, increase student participation, and foster self-confidence and empathy among students with diverse abilities.

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