

## The Role of Islamic Religious Education Teachers in Increasing the Self-Confidence of Students with Special Needs at SMP Muhammadiyah 4 Kebomas Gresik

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**Abstract.** *Students with special needs at the junior high school level face unique challenges in developing self-confidence, especially during adolescence which has higher developmental complexity compared to elementary level. Students with Slow Learner and Speech Delay conditions at SMP Muhammadiyah 4 Kebomas show indicators of lack of self-confidence that can be seen from difficulties in interpersonal relationships, low academic achievement, poor self-image, communication difficulties, and social and academic adjustment problems. This study aims to analyze the role of Islamic Religious Education teachers in improving the self-confidence of students with special needs at SMP Muhammadiyah 4 Kebomas, particularly students with Slow Learner and Speech Delay conditions. In daily life, children with these conditions often experience quite diverse difficulties. They usually need more time to understand lessons compared to their peers, often feel insecure when having to speak in front of the class, and frequently become quiet because they are afraid of speaking incorrectly or not being understood by others.*

**Keyword:** *Teacher's role, Children with special needs, Self-confidence*

### INTRODUCTION

Education is one of the rights and obligations that every individual has from the time he is born until the end of his life. Education is a guidance that is carried out by an educator to students. Because education is an effort to advance the nation and state, education is a very important thing that must be considered by every nation. Family education is the main and initial form of education. According to (Nurmayani, 1995: 4) "the family is the smallest social alliance, this unity is the basis for the development of human offspring which then manifests into people and nations scattered to inhabit and become residents on the surface of this vast earth." Indicating education is very important for human existence. Not just one aspect of life, but every aspect of life and the human spirit in general. Education is the activity of seeking, acquiring, and sharing information that has been owned with the aim of adding a foundation in life. Education is one of the most fundamental

human rights and at the same time a moral obligation that must be fulfilled by every individual human being since he was first born into the world until the last moment of his life ends (Sunanik, 2013) . The concept of education in a deeper and comprehensive meaning can be understood as a systematic, planned, and sustainable guidance process carried out by a professional and competent educator to students with various backgrounds and diverse characteristics. In a broader and comprehensive sense, education has a very vital, strategic, and irreplaceable role for all aspects of human life as intelligent and cultured beings. The foundation that is implemented in life aims to improve the life system to be more organized and still based on religion (Rahman et al. 2022). Education can be obtained from anywhere, either from formal, non-formal, or informal institutions. But in general, education is obtained from formal institutions or schools. Education is the activity of seeking, obtaining, and sharing information that has been owned with the aim of adding a foundation in life. The foundation that is implemented in life aims to improve the system. According to (Geniofam, 2010) "children with special needs are children who have special characteristics that are different in general, always indicating mental, emotional, or physical disabilities." (Geniofam, 2010) adds, "this group of children with special needs has what is called a *barrier to learning and development*."

Islamic religious education teachers play an important role in helping children with special needs to grow spiritually with a patient and sympathetic approach. This is very important to increase students' confidence in applying religious beliefs (Rohmaniyah & Harsiwi, 2025) . Today, children with special needs are in dire need of self-confidence. Parents should spend more time with their child, avoid being overprotective, and avoid setting high expectations for them if it does not match their talents. This will help the child develop their sense of self-worth. Limited activities and interests, as well as poor social and communication skills, are the hallmarks of autism, a developmental disability. "The disorder may progress as the child grows", according to (Apriliani, Y, et al in Birch and Bloom, 2004). Learning and behavior can be affected by social communication difficulties in children with autism. Even in a room full of their peers, children with autism often exhibit solitary behavior (Endang Yustawingsih, 2021). Therefore, teachers play an important role in helping autistic children overcome their social difficulties. PAI teachers have a strategic role in developing the spiritual potential and self-confidence of children with autism through an approach that is tailored to the characteristics of each child (Oktari, 2020).

Based on the results of Muzakkir's research (2020), there are still some students with special needs who report low self-confidence, especially in interactions with classmates and teachers. This is

corroborated by research by Salah et al. (2023) which emphasizes the important role of counselors in providing guidance, direction, and positive examples to increase the self-confidence of children with autism. These findings suggest that building self-confidence is a key foundation that has a major influence on the development of students' potential and communication skills. With this approach, the research not only seeks to confirm previous findings but also presents real practices to foster the self-confidence of students with disabilities in an inclusive environment. Ultimately, it is hoped that teachers, counselors and school authorities can work together to create a climate that is supportive, communicative and empowering for children with special needs.

## **METHOD**

This research uses a qualitative approach with the research subject consisting of two main objects. The first object is the Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teacher at SMP Muhammadiyah 4 Kebomas, Mrs. Adhimatul ilmiyah, S.Ag. The data from this object was analyzed to identify the strategies and roles of teachers in increasing the confidence of students with disabilities, including motivational aspects of giving special attention because of unique individual needs, developing optimal potential in understanding Islamic teachings, increasing self-confidence, and creating inclusiveness of equality. The analysis also includes the implementation of roles during learning, personal interactions and special situations, as well as the location of implementation in inclusive classes and small groups.

The second object was a student with disabilities at SMP Muhammadiyah 4 Kebomas named Iqbal. The data from this object was analyzed to measure the increase in self-confidence through five main indicators: active participation in learning and other activities, courage to express opinions or ideas in discussions, improved task performance related to PAI materials, comfort with interactions with friends both in class and outside class, and expression of positive emotions such as smiles, enthusiasm, and confidence in learning. Data analysis was conducted with collaborative support from the school principal and vice principal, parents/guardians, the school's inclusive team (inclusion mentor teachers), and counseling teachers to ensure the validity and comprehensiveness of the research results. Aiming to observe the symptoms directly. Data collection methods were observation and interviews. The quality of social phenomena that cannot be defined, quantified, or described in a quantitative way can be identified, assessed, presented, and explained using qualitative research methods, according to the information presented. The role of PAI teachers in increasing the self-confidence of students with special needs at SMP Muhammadiyah 4 Kebomas is studied in

this research with a qualitative approach. Research on the role of PAI teachers in increasing the self-confidence of children with special needs has been conducted at the primary level (Nabila, 2025) , but not many have explored this phenomenon at the junior high school level which has more complex adolescent development challenges.

## FINDINGS

Based on observations at SMP Muhammadiyah 4 Kebomas, researchers found that the lack of self-confidence of children with special needs can be identified through various specific indicators. Slow learner children generally show difficulties in social relationships, following complex instructions, have low academic achievement, negative self-image, weak memory, and are often late in completing tasks. Meanwhile, in Speech Delay children, indicators of a lack of self-confidence are seen in problems in communication, difficulties in social and personal adjustment, and difficulties in academic adjustment (Saswita et al., 2024) .

In the interview process, the researcher asked one of the Islamic Religious Education teachers at SMP Muhammadiyah 4 Kebomas, namely Mrs. Adhimatul Ilmiyah, S.Ag. The researcher asked, *"Ma'am, what changes have you seen from students with special needs during Islamic Education lessons?"* She explained that there were some positive changes that were quite visible. For example, students began to dare to participate in learning activities, no longer silent, and have dared to express their opinions during discussions. They also look more serious when doing assignments, more comfortable when interacting with classmates, and even begin to show positive expressions such as smiling, enthusiasm, and look more confident. The researcher then asked again, *"Why do they need to be treated specially in learning, ma'am?"* She explained that each child with special needs has different characters and challenges, so the learning approach must also be adjusted. The goal is for their potential to develop well, especially in understanding religious lessons and increasing their self-confidence. When asked when teachers usually give more attention, she explained that it is done during the learning process, when students look confused, or when they show signs of difficulty, such as stress or being quiet for too long. Sometimes also when they need additional help to complete the task. Regarding the place, Mrs. Adhimah, who is usually called bu il, said that the coaching process does not only take place in the inclusive classroom, but can also be done in small groups outside the classroom, so that children feel calmer and more focused. Then, when researchers asked, *"Who supports this process, ma'am?"* she replied that teachers cannot work alone. There must be support from the principal, parents, inclusion assistant teachers and counseling

teachers. All parties work together so that these children can develop well and feel accepted. Finally, the researcher asked, "*If I may know, how do you help these children to be more confident?*" She explained that she approaches them patiently, encourages them every time they try, uses visual aids in teaching, and always responds positively to their efforts, no matter how small.

## DISCUSSION

Children who need special care due to developmental problems are known as children with special needs. These include physical disabilities such as blindness and hearing loss, as well as limitations in one or more abilities. A thorough and long-term counseling strategy is needed to improve the social and emotional abilities of children with special needs, especially deaf children, to help them gain self-confidence (Maria et al., 2023) . This process requires time, patience, and appropriate strategies from teachers, counselors, and parents, and cannot take place instantly (Mujahidah, 2015) . Strong self-confidence will be the foundation for deaf children to be able to actively participate in various learning and social activities at school and in the community (Fahmiyanti et al., 2025) . Or psychological in nature such as autism and ADHD. Related to the term disability. This research is entitled "The Role of Islamic Education Teachers in Increasing the Self-Confidence of Children with Special Needs at SMP Muhammadiyah 4 Kebomas". When conducting observations, the authors get the results that the lack of self-confidence of children with special needs can be seen from several indicators 1) *Slow Learner* children: inter-personal relationships, difficulty following heavy instructions or steps, low achievement, poor *self image* of his self-concept, slow memory, often late completing assignments. 2) *Speech Delay*: communication, social and personal adjustment, academic adjustment.

Children with special needs in the research problem that the author can namely *Slow Learner* and *Speech Delay* children:

### 1. *Slow Learner Children*

According to (Desiningrum, 2017) , "*Slow Learner* children have slow learning abilities compared to their peers." *Slow Learners* take longer than other groups of students with the same level of intellectual potential, not only because of their inadequate academic ability, but also because of their lack of coordination (difficulty putting on clothes, using stationery, or participating in sports). In terms of behavior, these *Slow Learner* children are usually quiet, reserved, and difficult to make friends. In addition, *Slow Learners* often lack self-confidence.

Characteristics of *Slow Learner* or slow learners, according to (Marheni, 2017) , slow learner children are generally similar to normal children, but slower in understanding material and responding to instructions, especially complex ones. Their characteristics include cognitive, language, physical, emotional, and moral-social aspects. Proper parenting support is essential for their development. Unfortunately, the shortcomings often make parents think that children have no advantages (Sebastian, 2016) .

In terms of teaching, the duration of the subject matter should be kept to a minimum and the amount of homework given should be less than that of their classmates. Since verbalization will only confuse the child, teachers and parents should make every effort to use visual clues, objects, and demonstration tactics. In addition, a multimodal approach can also be useful (Perdina & Prisuna, 2024) .

## 2. *Speech Delay*

It takes a long time and requires parental involvement to manage speech delays (Nadwa in Oka Lely, 2013). Some children receive inadequate care until their developmental problems become uncontrollable or significantly affect other areas of their lives. Since speech delays are often accompanied by other disease-related problems such as hyperactivity, odd behaviors, and difficulty interacting with others, treating these behaviors is the first step in the therapeutic process. After that, supporting therapies such as occupational therapy, speech therapy, sensory integration therapy, and others can be given. Physiotherapists, occupational therapists and speech therapists should work together to treat this.

(Taseman et al., 2020) states "at the beginning of the baby's birth the baby has a crying sound language, then as time goes by the baby gets bigger and develops by communicating social interactions in his own family, the closest people from his family elements, relatives and with his environment". Therapists provide *treatment* support, one of which is by providing supporting infrastructure to support the handling program for *speech delay* children by providing supporting tools such as *puzzles*, donut towers, and *flash cards*, of course done with several methods. The child will be interested in playing it and will follow the therapist's orders slowly. Children with special needs will also be trained in concentration and their thinking and analysis skills when completing *puzzle* toys (Khoirunisa et al., 2024) . Because teaching *Speech delay* children requires special strategies in learning (Aini & Alifia, 2022) , including in religious subjects that require verbal skills for understanding spiritual concepts (Apriliyani et al., 2024) .

From the results of observations, the role of parents is as great as the role of teachers in the development of children with special needs in the community and school environment. Every parent will strive to provide the best for their child. As a result, to be successful, parents will use their own strategies and make every effort to help children with disabilities develop self-confidence. Each family member will have a specific role. The goal will not be achieved if one of the roles and functions is not working well. Parents' roles and efforts have a significant impact on a family. Families have a goal to encourage, support and help children develop self-confidence (Rahmawati et al., 2025) .

## CONCLUSION

Based on the research results, children with special needs with *Slow Learner* and *Speech Delay* problems lack self-confidence, and often feel that they are not the same as their peers, both in terms of communication and academic abilities. They tend to withdraw from the social environment and are reluctant to participate in teaching and learning activities in the classroom.

At SMP Muhammadiyah 4 Kebomas, the role of parents and teachers in fostering the growth of children with special needs is equally important. The successful treatment of children with special needs relies heavily on a strong collaboration between family and school. Without the support of parents on a regular basis, the work of the school will not go well (Silvani et al., 2022) . Teachers play an important role in building children's self-confidence at school. This study aims to examine the teacher's efforts in fostering self-confidence in children with special needs at SLB Negeri 1 Ampek Angkek (Mahardika et al., 2022) .

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