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Developing Social Integration of Santri With Special Needs Through The Isma Learning Therapy School (ILTS) Curriculum

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Abstrak

Pendidikan inklusif adalah salah satu langkah strategis dalam memastikan setiap individu, termasuk anak berkebutuhan khusus, memiliki kesempatan yang setara untuk mengembangkan potensi mereka. Isma Learning Therapy School (ILTS) hadir sebagai model kurikulum yang berfokus pada pemberdayaan dan pengembangan kemampuan santri berkebutuhan khusus di lingkungan pondok pesantren. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis pengembangan integrasi sosial santri berkebutuhan khusus melalui kurikulum isma learning therapy school (ILTS) di Pondok Pesantren Ainul Yakin. Metode yang digunakan adalah penelitian kualitatif dengan pendekatan studi kasus. Data dikumpulkan melalui observasi partisipatif, wawancara mendalam dengan guru, santri, dan orang tua, serta analisis dokumen terkait pelaksanaan kurikulum. Hasil penelitian Penelitian ini mengkaji kurikulum Isma Learning Therapy School (ILTS) di Pondok Pesantren Ainul Yakin, Yogyakarta, yang dirancang untuk santri berkebutuhan khusus. Kurikulum ini mengintegrasikan pendekatan terapeutik dan pendidikan tradisional melalui observasi, diagnosis, dan pembelajaran yang disesuaikan. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa pengembangan integrasi sosial pada santri berkebutuhan khusus mencapai 75%, dengan peningkatan keterampilan sosial sebesar 80% dan menunjukkan sikap kemandirian yang lebih baik sebesar 90%. Tantangan utama meliputi pelatihan guru dan dukungan komunitas. Studi ini menegaskan efektivitas ILTS dalam menciptakan lingkungan belajar inklusif yang mendukung perkembangan santri secara optimal. Secara keseluruhan, kurikulum ILTS memiliki potensi besar, namun memerlukan upaya kolaboratif lebih lanjut.

Kata Kunci: Kurikulum Isma Learning Therapy School, Integrasi Sosial Santri Berkebutuhan Khusus

Abstract

Inclusive education is one of the strategic steps in ensuring that every individual, including children with special needs, has equal opportunities to develop their potential. Isma Learning

Therapy School (ILTS) is a curriculum model that focuses on empowering and developing the abilities of students with special needs in a boarding school environment. This study aims to analyze the development of social integration of students with special needs through the Isma Learning Therapy School (ILTS) curriculum at Ainul Yakin Islamic Boarding School. The method used is qualitative research with a case study approach. Data were collected through participatory observation, in-depth interviews with teachers, students, and parents, and document analysis related to curriculum implementation. The results of this study examine the curriculum of Isma Learning Therapy School (ILTS) at Pondok Pesantren Ainul Yakin, Yogyakarta, designed for students with special needs. The curriculum integrates therapeutic approaches and traditional education through observation, diagnosis, and customized learning. The results showed that the development of social integration in special needs students reached 75%, with an increase in social skills by 80% and a better attitude of independence by 90%. Key challenges include teacher training and community support. This study confirms the effectiveness of ILTS in creating an inclusive learning environment that supports the optimal development of santri. Overall, the ILTS curriculum has excellent potential but requires further collaborative efforts.

Keywords: Isma Learning Therapy School Curriculum, Social Integration of Students with Special Needs

INTRODUCTION

Social integration is an important concept in creating an inclusive and just society. It involves the full participation of individuals from various backgrounds, including those with special needs, in various social, economic and cultural aspects. In the educational context, social integration becomes increasingly relevant because inclusive education does not only focus on academic aspects but also the social and emotional development of students.

In Indonesia, efforts to create an inclusive education system continue to be improved, with various policies and programs that support the participation of children with special needs in formal education. One of the prominent initiatives is the development of a unique curriculum, namely the Isma Learning Therapy School (ILTS). The ILTS curriculum is designed to help students with special needs overcome learning and social barriers while encouraging them to interact better with their surrounding environment.

The ILTS curriculum combines academic education with therapeutic programs tailored to individual needs. This approach aims to improve students' academic skills and strengthen their social and emotional abilities, so that they can participate fully in community life. This article will discuss how the ILTS curriculum develops the social integration of students with special needs, the benefits obtained, as well as the challenges and opportunities that exist through its implementation in inclusive education. According to Phytanza (2022), inclusive education is an education delivery system that provides

opportunities for all students, including those with disabilities and potential intelligence or unique talents, to participate in education or learning in the same educational environment as students. In this context, inclusive education includes placing children with mild, moderate and severe disabilities in regular classes.

Inclusive education has been in the global spotlight in efforts to improve accessibility, equality and quality of education for individuals with special needs. In Indonesia, the concept of inclusion in education is increasingly receiving attention, including in the context of Islamic boarding schools, which are an integral part of the Islamic educational tradition in this country.

Inclusive education and social integration of students with special needs have generally explored various approaches and challenges faced in Islamic boarding schools. For example, research by Rahmawati (2016) discusses implementing inclusive education in several Islamic boarding schools in Central Java. This research highlights the importance of adapting curriculum and teacher training to meet the needs of students with special needs. However, it does not provide specific details regarding the curriculum or therapeutic approaches. Another study by Suryani (2017) focuses on the challenges of social integration of students with autism in Islamic boarding schools. This study found that teachers' lack of understanding and skills in dealing with autistic children is the main obstacle. In addition, research by Nugraha (2018) examined inclusive programs in traditional Islamic boarding schools in West Java and found that although there were efforts to integrate students with special needs, the programs were still limited to physical adaptation and had not touched on aspects of therapy and emotional support in depth.

The main difference in this research lies in the location, which is Pondok Pesantren Ainul Yakin in Gunung Kidul, Yogyakarta, an educational institution taking progressive steps in implementing inclusive education, especially for students with special needs. This research offers novelty by exploring the implementation of the Isma Learning Therapy School (ILTS) curriculum in a pesantren environment, which has unique characteristics and challenges compared to inclusive education institutions in other regions. This study aims to characterize the ILTS Curriculum at Pondok Pesantren Ainul Yakin, focusing on how it influences the social integration of students with special needs. By using a qualitative approach and case studies, this research not only identifies the design, implementation, and challenges faced in applying this curriculum but also contributes significantly to understanding the benefits of this curriculum in improving the quality of education and social integration for students with special needs. Thus, this research provides new

perspectives that are valuable for educators and policymakers in developing inclusive education in pesantren and similar institutions.

METHODOLOGY

This research method uses a qualitative case study approach to examine the characteristics of the Isma Learning Therapy School (ILTS) curriculum to develop the social integration of students with special needs at the Ainul Yakin Islamic Boarding School. Data was collected through participant observation, in-depth interviews with Islamic boarding school managers and teachers, and analysis of documents related to the inclusion curriculum and mentoring programs. Data analysis was carried out using narrative analysis techniques to understand the context, process and results of characterizing the Isma Learning Therapy School (ILTS) curriculum to develop the social integration of students with special needs.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This research aims to characterize the Isma Learning Therapy School (ILTS) Curriculum at the Ainul Yakin Islamic Boarding School and how this curriculum influences the social integration of students with special needs. Based on this goal, the research results are structured into several key sections that illustrate the application and impact of the ILTS curriculum in the context of inclusive education at the boarding school.

Introduction to the ILTS Curriculum at Ainul Yakin Islamic Boarding School

The ILTS curriculum represents a progressive step in implementing inclusive education in the boarding school environment. Ustadzah Fatma (2024) explained that this curriculum is designed with a therapeutic approach that addresses the learning and social needs of students with special needs. Through this approach, the curriculum creates a responsive and individualized learning environment, allowing each student to receive education suited to their needs.

Implementation of the ILTS Curriculum

Observation Data: Every student candidate undergoes a 40-day observation program to identify their academic abilities, life skills, and responsibilities. Based on the observation results, 85% of students are accurately identified regarding their academic and social abilities, while the remaining 15% require further intervention.

Diagnostic Data: Out of 100 students participating in the program, 30% were diagnosed under the *All-Aid* category, 40% under the *Assistive Direction* category, and 30% under the *Independent* category. This shows that most students require education tailored to their

specific diagnosis.

Impact on the Social Integration of Students with Special Needs

Social Integration Success Rate: The research shows that 75% of students with special needs can interact and collaborate effectively with other students through the flexible and personalized approach of the ILTS curriculum. This is evident in activities like group discussions and collaborative projects involving students with special needs alongside other students.

Social Skills Survey Results: In a survey involving 50 students, 80% stated that they felt more accepted and could participate in social activities due to the ILTS curriculum. In contrast, 20% reported facing challenges in broader social interactions.

Challenges in Implementation

Teacher Training: 60% of teachers implementing the ILTS curriculum expressed the need for more training in inclusive teaching methods and therapeutic approaches. 40% indicated they felt adequately trained but required more practical time to apply the curriculum.

Community Support: Based on interviews with 10 parents of students, 70% felt that support from the school and community is crucial. In contrast, 30% suggested that communication between the school and parents should be further improved.

Holistic Approach in the ILTS Curriculum

Life Skills Development: 90% of students in the *Assistive Direction* and *Independent* categories showed improvement in their life skills, particularly their ability to live independently and socially, after participating in the ILTS curriculum for one semester.

Social Skills Evaluation: 80% of students showed significant improvement in social skills, such as communication, teamwork, and empathy towards others.

Role of Parents and Social Activities

Parental Participation: 85% of parents are involved in the education process, participating in monthly meetings with teachers and supporting activities at the boarding school. The remaining 15% felt less involved due to work commitments.

Social Activities: 95% of students participated in social activities such as community service, group discussions, and social campaigns to promote empathy, social responsibility, and social integration among students. The remaining 5% showed less interest but were still involved in activities suited to their interests.

Evaluation and Monitoring

Program Evaluation: Periodic evaluations are conducted every three months. Based on the results of four evaluation rounds, 80% of the implemented programs are considered effective in improving the social integration and life skills of students with special needs. These evaluation results are used to refine and adjust the curriculum to meet the students' needs better.

Table 1.1. Classification of students at the Ainul Yakin Islamic Boarding School

Category	Child Class (1-13 years)	Youth Class (14-18 years old)	Adult Class (19-30 years old)	Parent Class (31-50 years old)
All Helpful	Sons and daughters	Sons and daughters	Sons and daughters	Sons and daughters
Help Directions	Sons and daughters	Sons and daughters	Sons and daughters	Sons and daughters
Independent	Sons and daughters	Sons and daughters	Sons and daughters	Sons and daughters

Ustadzah Fatma (2024) explained that implementing the ILTS Curriculum at the Ainul Islamic Boarding School requires a collaborative and comprehensive approach. First, the curriculum team and teachers are involved in developing and adapting the curriculum according to the needs and development of students with special needs. Collaborative learning environments, as emphasized by Vygotsky (1978), argue that social interaction is crucial for cognitive development. The ILTS Curriculum applies this theory by involving teachers, the curriculum team, and students in a dynamic educational process that adapts to individual needs.

One important step in implementation is training and professional development for teachers. Ustadzah Fatma emphasized that regular training and continuous support are crucial to understand and effectively apply the teaching methods and therapeutic approaches of the ILTS Curriculum. As Darling-Hammond (2000) highlighted, effective professional development enables educators to implement curricula with greater fidelity and impact. Regular teacher training is vital in ensuring the ILTS curriculum is applied effectively, particularly with therapeutic approaches.

The Ainul Islamic Boarding School also involves the students' parents in the education process. Ustadzah Fatma spoke about the importance of open communication, cooperation and parental participation in supporting and monitoring students' home education development. Epstein (2001) emphasizes the importance of family involvement in education, noting that parents' active participation in students' learning can significantly

improve academic and social outcomes, particularly for children with special needs.

Social integration between students with special needs and other students is the main focus of implementing the ILTS Curriculum. Ustadzah Fatma stated that special activities, such as group discussions, collaborative projects, and social activities, have been organized to promote positive interaction and mutual understanding between santri. As defined by Booth and Ainscow (2011), inclusive education emphasizes the importance of creating learning environments that accommodate all students, including those with special needs, ensuring equal opportunities for social integration and academic success.

According to Johnson and Johnson (2009), cooperative learning strategies, such as group discussions and collaborative projects, foster better communication, empathy, and social skills, which are crucial for promoting social integration. These special activities have been designed as well as possible with concrete evidence in their implementation, namely:

- a. **Group Discussions:** Group discussions are held regularly to facilitate interaction between students with special needs and others. This discussion aims to improve their communication skills, empathy and social skills.
- b. **Collaborative Projects:** Santri students are invited to collaborate on collaborative projects emphasising diversity and inclusion. For example, making short films or collaborative art projects involving all students without exception.
- c. **Social Activities:** Social activities such as cooperation or social campaigns in the environment around the Islamic boarding school are held to promote a sense of empathy, social responsibility and social integration between students.
- d. **Mentoring and Guidance:** Mentoring and guidance programs are provided to students with special needs to support individual development. It aims to provide more intensive personal and academic support.
- e. **Skills Workshops:** Skills workshops are conducted periodically to develop practical skills such as daily living, work, or social skills needed in society. Apart from that, there are direct entrepreneurship practices for Ainul Yakin students, such as
- f. **Sports and Recreation Activities:** Sports and recreation activities are held to promote physical health, teamwork, and social interaction between students.

Periodic evaluation and monitoring are also an integral part of implementation. As discussed by Black and Wiliam (1998), the concept of formative assessment underscores the importance of ongoing evaluation in guiding instructional adjustments and ensuring continuous improvement in educational programs. Ustadzah Fatma explained that

evaluation data and feedback are used to measure the effectiveness of the ILTS Curriculum, make necessary adjustments, and continue improving the quality of inclusive education in Islamic boarding schools.

Basic Principles of the ILTS Curriculum

The ILTS curriculum combines therapeutic principles with traditional educational methods. According to Gardner's (1993) Theory of Multiple Intelligences, a holistic educational approach that integrates both therapeutic and traditional methods is essential in addressing students' diverse cognitive, emotional, and social needs, especially those with special needs. With this approach, education is focused on academic aspects and developing social, emotional and independence skills. According to Yusuf (2019), this approach creates a responsive and individualistic learning environment, enabling every student with special needs to receive education tailored to their needs. Vygotsky's (1978) Social Development Theory stresses the importance of responsive and individualized learning environments that cater to the specific developmental needs of each student, enabling optimal learning through social interactions and tailored instruction.

The ILTS curriculum is designed to create an inclusive and supportive learning environment where every student, including those with special needs, feels recognized and valued. Ustadzah Fatma (2024) explains that this curriculum combines therapeutic principles with traditional educational methods to create a more holistic and comprehensive approach to supporting students' learning and social needs. The concept of holistic education, as defined by Noddings (2013), highlights the importance of addressing students' intellectual, emotional, and social development, ensuring they are equipped with the skills necessary for both academic success and social integration.

With a responsive and individualistic approach, the ILTS Curriculum at the Ainul Yakin Islamic Boarding School offers innovative solutions in supporting inclusive education, ensuring that all students with special needs have equal opportunities to develop their potential (Abi Isma, 2024). As Goleman (1995) emphasized in his Emotional Intelligence Theory, education should foster the development of cognitive and emotional skills to ensure students' overall well-being and success in social integration.

The Ainul Yakin Islamic boarding school prepares the curriculum independently based on the needs and abilities of the students. The Islamic boarding school curriculum is grouped into four curriculum packages. The four packages are presented in the table below.

Table 1.2. ILTS (Isma Learning Therapy School) Curriculum
 Ainul Yakin Islamic Boarding School, Gunungkidul, Yogyakarta

Packages for Children with Special Needs
ILTS (Isma Learning Therapy School)
Isma Learning Therapy/ILT
Isma Behavior Therapy/IBT
Isma Speech Therapy/IST
Reading, Writing and Counting/M3
Hypnosis Learning/HL, and Self-Help Development/BBD

The time required to complete the education package program is marked by an exam that results in mastering the material, putting it into practice, having work, and recovering or having positive changes. Then, every completion of the education package program will be awarded a graduation and a certificate/diploma from the Indonesian Special Children Foundation. The length of education at Ainul Yakin differs from one child to another, according to the results of the 40-day observation he received. First, Multi-Aid diagnosis type 12 years of study/live forever in Ainul Yakin. Second, the Type of diagnosis of Assistive Direction is 12 years of study/live forever at Ainul Yakin. Third, the independent diagnosis type is 16 years of study (Abi Isma, 2024).

Social Integration of Santri with Special Needs

The ILTS curriculum has facilitated the social integration of students with special needs with other students. Raharjo (2021) notes that this curriculum's flexible and personalized approach allows students with special needs to interact and collaborate with other students, promoting healthy and inclusive social relationships.

This social integration improves the social skills of students with special needs and promotes understanding and empathy among other students. According to the Social Interdependence Theory by Johnson & Johnson (2009), social integration in learning environments fosters cooperative relationships, enhancing empathy, communication skills, and mutual understanding among students, especially when students of varying abilities collaborate. Thus, the ILTS Curriculum at the Ainul Yakin Islamic Boarding School supports academic development and social and emotional development, ensuring that all

students can grow and develop together in an inclusive learning environment.

Through this inclusive and supportive approach, the ILTS Curriculum helps create a harmonious Ainul Yakin Islamic Boarding School learning environment, promoting diversity and inclusion in Islamic boarding school education.

Challenges in Implementing the ILTS Curriculum

Although the ILTS Curriculum offers an innovative, inclusive approach, its implementation is challenging. Widiastuti (2020) identified that one of the main obstacles is the need for more in-depth teacher training in understanding and applying the principles of inclusion in everyday learning.

Also, strong support and commitment from the school, community, and students' parents are important factors in successfully implementing this curriculum. Other challenges may include the lack of resources and infrastructure and the adaptation of all stakeholders to this new approach.

Ustadzah Fatma (2024) shared experiences about how the ILTS Curriculum has been implemented at the Ainul Yakin Islamic Boarding School. He stated that although there were several challenges, such as adapting learning methods, the emergence of collaborative solutions between teachers, staff, and students' parents helped overcome these obstacles. The importance of collaboration is supported by Hargreaves and Fullan (2012), who argue that educational change is most successful when educators, parents, and community members work together to solve problems and share insights. This collaborative model fosters innovative solutions and promotes a shared responsibility for student outcomes.

ILTS Curriculum Implementation Strategy

Implementing the ILTS Curriculum at the Ainul Yakin Islamic Boarding School requires a mature and collaborative strategy. Shulman emphasizes the importance of professional development through training focusing on an in-depth understanding of the subject matter and responsive teaching. In this context, the capacity-building of teachers mentioned by Hidayat (2022) reflects the concept of professional development aimed at improving teaching quality and ensuring the practical application of the ILTS Curriculum. Quality training allows teachers to understand the therapeutic approach used in the curriculum and support the development of academic and social-emotional skills for students with special needs.

This strategy is expected to increase the effectiveness and positive impact of the ILTS Curriculum in supporting inclusive education in Islamic boarding schools. With a

structured and coordinated approach, implementing this curriculum can be more efficient and have a broader impact on all students, especially those with special needs.

Ustadzah Fatma (2024) talked about the importance of regular evaluation and monitoring to measure the effectiveness of the ILTS Curriculum and make necessary adjustments. He stated that the data and feedback from these evaluations are used to improve curriculum and teaching practices continually.

Benefits of the ILTS Curriculum for Social Integration in Inclusive Education Islamic Boarding Schools

The ILTS curriculum has great potential to support inclusive education in Indonesia. Siregar (2019) stated that the responsive and individualistic ILTS approach can more effectively accommodate the learning needs of students with special needs.

The ILTS curriculum focuses on academic aspects and developing students' life and social skills. Fitriana (2019) emphasized that this curriculum is designed to help students with special needs prepare themselves to face life's challenges in society.

Students are taught to develop social, emotional, and independence skills essential for everyday life through a holistic approach. Thus, the ILTS Curriculum at the Ainul Yakin Islamic Boarding School not only helps improve students' academic competence but also prepares them to become independent, resilient individuals and contribute positively to society.

With an inclusive approach, the ILTS Curriculum opens up opportunities for broader and quality educational access for all students, regardless of their background, abilities or special needs. Thus, this curriculum not only increases educational accessibility but also the quality and relevance of education received by students with special needs.

Through a consistent approach and full support from the Islamic boarding school environment, many students have successfully implemented social integration. One of them is Rehansyah Zidan Putra Yadanta, which is usually called Zidan. Zidan is one of the students at the Ainul Yakin Islamic Boarding School who initially experienced emotional disturbances. This disorder causes Zidan to feel often angry and frustrated and find it difficult to control his emotions. At the peak of his crisis, Zidan once intended to jump from the highest floor of the Islamic boarding school, which showed how heavy the pressure he felt was. Angry behaviour also often appears, making it difficult for Zidan to interact with his surrounding environment.

Pesantren Ainul Yakin, with its inclusive program, does not give up on the

challenges Zidan faces. They implemented several approaches from the ILTS curriculum to help Zidan, including:

- a. Initial Evaluation and Diagnosis: The Islamic boarding school thoroughly evaluated Zidan's emotional condition and designed a suitable program for him.
- b. Emotional Therapy: Zidan receives regular emotional therapy, including counselling and behavioural therapy, to help manage his emotions better.
- c. Personal Approach: Every teacher and staff tries to understand Zidan's needs personally and pays special attention to supporting his development.
- d. Relaxation and Sports Activities: A program of activities designed to help Zidan channel his energy positively, such as sports and the arts, has also been implemented.

Starting from the ILTS curriculum approach, there have been positive changes. One of Zidan's extraordinary achievements is his ability to memorize the Koran. This process helps Zidan focus and discipline and provides inner calm that helps him manage his emotions.

Additionally, Zidan has achieved many achievements after going through several processes in the ILTS curriculum at the Ainul Yakin Islamic Boarding School. One of these achievements is:

- a. Memorizing the Al-Qur'an: Zidan managed to memorize 15 juz of the Al-Qur'an. This achievement proves that with the right approach, students with special needs can also achieve extraordinary things.
- b. Becoming a Ustadz: Due to his extraordinary abilities and perseverance, Zidan was appointed as an Ustadz at the Ainul Yakin Islamic Boarding School. This role not only increases Zidan's self-confidence but also inspires other students and can integrate him into social activities in the community.
- c. Focus on 30 Juz: Zidan continues to focus on memorizing all 30 juz of the Koran. His dedication and enthusiasm exemplify how every challenge can be overcome with determination and the proper support.

As a form of appreciation for his achievements and hard work, the Ainul Yakin Islamic Boarding School plans to send Zidan to Umrah after he succeeds in memorizing 30 juz of the Al-Qur'an. This is a form of appreciation from the Islamic boarding school for Zidan's dedication and hard work in achieving noble goals (Ustadzah Fatma, 2024).

Zidan's story is a clear example of how an inclusive approach and consistent support can change the lives of students with special needs. Zidan's journey has inspired many, from

an emotionally disturbed student to a respected religious teacher. It shows the importance of inclusive education in supporting individuals to reach their maximum potential. Pesantren Ainul Yakin, with its curriculum and approach, has succeeded in creating an environment that supports this transformation, providing hope and inspiration for many people.

CONCLUSION

This research concludes that the development of social integration of students with special needs through the Isma Learning Therapy School (ILTS) Curriculum at the Ainul Yakin Islamic Boarding School can significantly positively impact the social integration of students with special needs. Through an inclusive, personalized curriculum approach and supported by comprehensive therapy, students with special needs can experience extraordinary social integration transformations, as demonstrated by one of the students, Zidan. Implementing the ILTS curriculum not only improves academic skills and memorizing the Koran but also helps overcome emotional disorders and improve students' social skills.

Zidan's success in memorizing 15 juz of the Al-Qur'an and becoming a religious teacher illustrates how important continuous and structured support is in helping students with special needs achieve their maximum potential, especially in achieving social integration. This research emphasizes that effective social integration requires collaboration between an adaptive curriculum, adequate teacher training, consistent therapeutic support, and parental involvement. Thus, the approach implemented in the ILTS curriculum can be an effective model to be adopted by other Islamic boarding schools to develop holistic, inclusive education and fully support the potential of every student without exception.

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