

Learning Strategies for Islamic Religious Education among Students with Hearing Impairments: Evidence from a Special Junior High School in Jambi City

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ABSTRACT

Islamic Religious Education (IRE) for students with hearing impairments requires accessible learning designs because oral instruction limits access to abstract religious concepts and ritual practices. This study explores how adaptive IRE learning is implemented for deaf students at Sri Soedewi Public Junior High School, Jambi City. This qualitative descriptive case study was conducted in September 2025. Data were collected through six 90-minute non-participant classroom observations, semi-structured interviews with two IRE teachers, one head of the inclusion program, and two inclusion assistant teachers, and analysis of lesson plans, visual modules, learning materials, and student work. Data were analyzed thematically through coding, theme grouping, and interpretation, with credibility strengthened through source and method triangulation and member checking. The findings show that IRE learning was organized through five adaptive practices: visual representation of abstract concepts, modeling and repetition for ritual practices, multimodal communication using SIBI, BISINDO, writing, gestures, and facial expressions, teacher-developed visual materials, and practical habituation. These strategies supported classroom participation and helped students access religious meanings through visual, kinesthetic, and communicative pathways. However, learning was constrained by limited facilities, inconsistent sign-language use, insufficient teacher mastery of religious signs, and the absence of standardized IRE modules for deaf students. The study suggests that inclusive IRE requires systematic support beyond individual teacher creativity, including sign-language training, UDL-based visual modules, and accessible facilities. Future research should include direct deaf student perspectives and comparative studies across schools.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The shift in the educational paradigm toward inclusion demands a more systematic approach to designing learning strategies, particularly for students with disabilities, such as those with hearing impairments. From an international perspective, Universal Design for Learning (UDL) is a relevant pedagogical framework because it is designed to provide equal access for all learners, regardless of differences in sensory, cognitive, and socio-emotional abilities (CAST, 2018; in Rao et al., 2022; Yandika Fefrian Rosmi & Muhammad Nurrohman Jauhari, 2023). UDL goes beyond case-by-case adjustments, but requires the planning of a curriculum, materials, and methods that are structurally flexible and accessible from the outset (Al-Azawei et al., 2017; McKenzie & Dalton, 2020).

According to CAST (2018), UDL is based on three main principles: (1) Representation: providing various ways to present information (e.g., visuals, symbols, videos, sign language) so that religious information can be meaningfully understood by students with hearing impairments. (2) Action and Expression: providing students with a variety of ways to express their understanding (e.g., images, role-playing, digital media, or sign language) so they don't rely solely on verbal responses. (3) Engagement: building motivation and engagement through relevant tasks, real-life contexts, and socio-emotional support, particularly in the learning of normative and affective Islamic values (Jannah et al., 2025).

In the Indonesian context, this legal basis is reinforced by Law Number 20 of 2003 concerning the National Education System, which affirms that every student with physical, emotional, mental, or social disabilities, or who has the potential for intelligence and/or special talents, has the right to participate in inclusive education or special education according to their needs and abilities (Lukman Hakim, 2025). Furthermore, Law Number 8 of 2016 concerning Persons with Disabilities, specifically Article 40, mandates that the Government and Regional Governments are required to organize and/or facilitate education for persons with disabilities in every pathway, type, and level of education through inclusive education and special education, including in the 12-year compulsory education program (Article 40 paragraph 3) (Paikah, 2019). Thus, the provision of Islamic Religious Education for deaf students is not only a pedagogical issue, but also a legal obligation and a basic human right to education. The UDL approach and adaptive strategies provide concrete forms of implementation of this legal mandate at the school level.

In the context of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) for deaf students, limited access to spoken language poses particular challenges to the understanding of abstract concepts—such as the pillars of faith, etiquette, and theological values—and the implementation of ritual practices based on verbal instructions (Wardhani & Khadavi, 2025; Açar & Demiralp, 2025). A study (Rahman et al., 2023) showed that deaf students actually found it easier to access religious concepts when the material was presented visually, spatially, and multimodally, rather than solely through oral narrative. This aligns with the UDL principle that diverse representations can reduce barriers to access to meaning and not simply "modify" but holistically transform learning design.

In Islamic religious education for deaf students, the main problem lies in the triple gap: (1) Language access (gaps in teachers' proficiency in sign language), (2) Representation of meaning (abstract concepts are difficult to understand without visual/spatial representation), and (3) Ritual practice (prayer, supplication, and Quran memorization, which are conventionally oral). Previous studies in Indonesia, for example (Cahyono, 2019), showed that Islamic Religious Education teachers often rely on conventional lectures and STAD, despite their limited effectiveness for deaf students. Then (Nana Raihana Askurny et al., 2025) found that sign language and visual-based approaches significantly increased students' understanding and participation, but there is still no comprehensive research examining the implementation of adaptive strategies in the inclusive context of public junior high schools such as Sri Soedewi Public Junior High School, Jambi City.

Based on preliminary research, researchers identified several gaps: there is no systematic documentation on the Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning process, the challenges of sign language, and the effectiveness of adaptive strategies (more visual and multimodal) in inclusive junior

high schools. For example, (Suyudi & Prakarsa, 2020) found that expository and STAD strategies were less effective for deaf students, but did not explain the practical implementation or optimal combination of strategies. This study aims to answer three research questions: (1) How does the Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning process take place at Sri Soedewi Public Junior High School, Jambi City? (2) What are the main challenges faced by teachers and students? (3) How are adaptive learning strategies (visual, kinesthetic, and sign language-based) evaluated for their effectiveness?

This research's conceptual framework is built on three pillars: (1) visual learning (the use of visual media such as flashcards, animated videos, and concept maps to reinforce abstract concepts), (2) experiential learning (prayer simulations, role-playing etiquette, and visual projects such as drawing Quranic verses), and (3) communication access (the use of Indonesian sign language, writing, and digital media to facilitate communication). This study adds to the literature on inclusive education using UDL and multimodal approaches, which are rarely applied in the context of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) in Indonesia.

Therefore, this research not only examines the learning processes, challenges, and strategies normatively but also places them within a robust theoretical framework (UDL), thus enhancing their relevance for journals on inclusive education and Islamic religious education. Practical implications include the need for teacher training in sign language, the development of UDL-compliant visual and digital resources, and school policy support for developing curricula and learning facilities that are truly inclusive of deaf students.

2. METHODS

2.1 Research Design

This study employed a qualitative approach using a descriptive case study design. This design was selected because the study focused on a bounded case, namely the implementation of Islamic Religious Education (IRE) learning for students with hearing impairments at Sri Soedewi Public Junior High School, Jambi City. A case study design enabled the researchers to examine the learning process in its natural setting, including classroom interactions, teacher strategies, communication patterns, learning media, and contextual challenges faced during instruction.

The study did not aim to measure the statistical effectiveness of a particular intervention. Instead, it sought to describe and interpret how adaptive learning strategies were planned, implemented, and perceived by teachers and inclusion staff in supporting the participation and understanding of students with hearing impairments in IRE learning.

2.2 Research Site and Participants

The research was conducted at Sri Soedewi Public Junior High School, Jambi City, in September 2025. This school was selected purposively because it provides inclusive learning services for students with hearing impairments and implements Islamic Religious Education as part of its formal curriculum.

The participants consisted of five adult informants who were directly involved in the planning and implementation of learning for students with hearing impairments. They included two Islamic Religious Education teachers, one head of the inclusion program, and two inclusion assistant teachers. Participants were selected using purposive sampling based on the following criteria: direct involvement in teaching or supporting students with hearing impairments, experience in implementing inclusive learning practices, familiarity with the use of visual media or sign-supported communication, and willingness to participate in the study.

To maintain confidentiality, all participants were given codes. The Islamic Religious Education teachers were coded as G01 and G02, the head of the inclusion program as K01, and the inclusion assistant teachers as P01 and P02.

2.3 Data Collection Techniques

Data were collected through classroom observation, semi-structured interviews, and document analysis.

First, classroom observations were conducted in six Islamic Religious Education learning sessions, each lasting approximately 90 minutes, with a total observation duration of 540 minutes. The observations were non-participant in nature, meaning that the researchers did not intervene in the learning process. The observations focused on teacher-student interactions, the use of visual media, sign language, written communication, gestures, classroom routines, student participation, and the implementation of practical religious activities such as ablution and prayer.

Second, semi-structured interviews were conducted with the five participants. Each interview lasted approximately 45–60 minutes. The interview questions explored the learning process, adaptive strategies used by teachers, challenges in communicating religious concepts to students with hearing impairments, the use of SIBI and BISINDO, the development of learning materials, and participants' reflections on students' responses during learning. The interviews were recorded with participants' permission and later transcribed for analysis.

Third, document analysis was conducted to support and verify the data obtained from observations and interviews. The documents analyzed included lesson plans, visual learning modules, teaching materials, pictures or posters used in class, students' learning products, and relevant evaluation notes available during the research period. These documents were used to understand how teachers adapted the IRE curriculum, simplified learning materials, and designed accessible visual resources for students with hearing impairments.

2.4 Research Instruments

The main instrument in this qualitative study was the researcher. To support systematic data collection, the researchers used an observation guide, an interview protocol, and a document analysis sheet. The observation guide was designed to record learning activities, communication modes, media use, student responses, and classroom challenges. The interview protocol contained open-ended questions that allowed participants to explain their experiences in detail. The document analysis sheet was used to identify the types, functions, and accessibility features of the learning materials used in IRE instruction.

2.5 Data Analysis

The data were analyzed using thematic analysis. The analysis was conducted through several stages. First, all observation notes, interview transcripts, and documents were read repeatedly to obtain an overall understanding of the data. Second, the researchers conducted initial coding by identifying important statements, events, practices, and patterns related to the learning process, challenges, and adaptive strategies. Third, similar codes were grouped into broader themes. Fourth, the themes were interpreted by connecting them to the research questions and the conceptual framework of Universal Design for Learning, multimodal learning, experiential learning, and communication access.

The final themes developed from the analysis included: visual frameworks for abstract religious concepts, ritual learning through modeling and repetition, multimodal communication using sign language, writing, gestures, and facial expressions, teacher-developed learning materials, and barriers related to facilities, sign language mastery, and the lack of standardized IRE modules for students with hearing impairments.

Several strategies were used to ensure the trustworthiness of the data. Source triangulation was conducted by comparing information from Islamic Religious Education teachers, the head of the inclusion program, and inclusion assistant teachers. Method triangulation was carried out by comparing data from observations, interviews, and documents. Member checking was also conducted by returning summaries of the findings to selected participants to confirm the accuracy of the researchers' interpretations.

In addition, the researchers maintained detailed field notes during observations and documented the process of coding and theme development. These steps were taken to strengthen the credibility and dependability of the findings and to reduce the possibility of researcher bias.

2.6 Ethical Considerations

This study followed ethical principles in educational research. Before data collection, the researchers obtained formal permission from the school and relevant authorities. All participants were informed about the purpose of the study, the procedures of data collection, their right to withdraw from the study, and the confidentiality of their identities. Written informed consent was obtained from all participants.

To protect participants' privacy, real names were not used in the research report. All interview transcripts, observation notes, and documents containing personal information were stored securely and used only for research purposes. The study did not include direct quotations from students, and any references to student activities were reported in a way that avoided personal identification.

This study was limited to a single school context and involved a small number of adult informants. Therefore, the findings are not intended to be generalized statistically to all inclusive schools or special education settings. Rather, the study provides a contextual and in-depth understanding of how Islamic Religious Education is adapted for students with hearing impairments in one inclusive junior high school setting. Future studies should involve direct student perspectives through accessible interview techniques, such as visual prompts or sign-language-supported interviews, and compare practices across different schools.

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Findings

The research findings are presented in five main themes: (1) Visual frameworks for abstract concepts; (2) Ritual learning through modeling and repetition; (3) Communication strategies (sign language, writing, gestures); (4) Teacher material development; (5) Constraints (facilities, sign language skills, materials).

3.1.1 Visual frameworks for abstract concepts

The Islamic Religious Education (IRE) learning process at Sri Soedewi Public Middle School relies heavily on visual media to explain abstract concepts, such as the pillars of faith, etiquette, and piety, which are difficult to access through verbal explanations.

As a concrete example, for the pillars of faith material, teachers prepare picture cards, each containing a picture of an angel, a grave, heaven, hell, and a short related Quranic verse. Each picture is posted on the board with a short word underneath, for example, "Angel," "Grave," "Heaven." In one session, the teacher pointed to a picture and combined it with sign language and facial expressions to demonstrate God's attributes, such as all-seeing and all-hearing, using hand gestures pointing to the eyes and ears, followed by a hand gesture pointing upwards (to the sky).

One teacher explained:

"For deaf students, if you just tell them the story, it's lost. That's why I made cards like this. They can hold it, look at it, and follow the hand movements, and then they gradually understand." (G 01).

This framework demonstrates that visual representation is the backbone of conceptual understanding and serves as a form of multimodal learning practice that bridges hearing barriers.

3.1.2 Ritual learning through modeling and repetition

Ritual practices such as ablution and prayer are taught in a highly structured and repetitive manner, with steps simplified, visualized, and then practiced collectively.

A typical classroom routine for ablution, for example, might proceed as follows:

a. Introduction of the steps

The teacher shows a diagram of the ablution sequence:

- 1) Right hand drawing water
- 2) Washing right hand
- 3) Washing left hand
- 4) Washing face, mustache, nose, and ears
- 5) Washing head
- 6) Washing feet

These diagrams are arranged on the board like a flowchart.

b. Teacher demonstration

The teacher practices ablution in front of the class (or near the fountain, if possible), while:

- 1) Using clear and slow gestures
- 2) Repeating each movement two or three times
- 3) Pointing to the step board after each step.

c. Small group practice

Students are divided into small groups of 2–3 people and take turns practicing ablution under the supervision of the teacher and the inclusion mentor. The teacher signals "crossed hands" if a step is reversed, and "thumbs up" if it is correct, while pointing back to the sequence diagram on the board. For prayer, the teacher uses a prayer instruction board with five columns:

- 1) Takbir (hands raised),
- 2) Ruku,
- 3) I'tidal,
- 4) Sujud,
- 5) Salam.

Each column contains a silhouette image and a short label. The teacher points to one column and then invites all students to stand and follow the movements according to the visual instructions. The teacher explains:

"We repeat, repeat, repeat. If they only see it once, they forget. But if they repeat it each time, they gradually memorize the movements, even if not all of them understand the meaning yet." (G 02).

This practice demonstrates that modeling, repetition, and visual flow are key components in enabling students with hearing impairments to understand and follow complex rituals.

3.1.3 Communication strategies (sign language, writing, gestures)

Communication in IRE classes does not rely solely on spoken language, but rather on a combination of sign language, written text, gestures, and facial expressions. The teacher delivers material using simple sign language that is easy for students to follow, then repeats the same information through writing on the board. For example, when introducing manners, the teacher demonstrates the signs "close to the heart" for manners and "respecting the teacher" by turning to the teacher and bowing the head. At the same time, the teacher writes on the board:

- a. Manners: polite, respect the teacher.
- b. Greeting upon entering the classroom.
- c. Greeting and praying before learning.

The Inclusion Assistant Teacher explained:

"We use pictures, writing, and gestures all at once. So if one method doesn't work, at least the other two can grasp it." (G 03).

However, the findings also revealed inconsistencies in the sign language system: teachers used a combination of SIBI (Indonesian Sign Language System) for formal religious terms and BISINDO (Indonesian Sign Language) for everyday communication. Students generally grasped BISINDO more quickly, so teachers often relied on this sign language in casual discussions, although there were sometimes delays in understanding technical terms such as "rukun iman" (pillars of faith) when presented solely through SIBI.

3.1.4 Teacher Material Development

Islamic Religious Education teachers did not rely on the standard textbooks used in regular classes, but developed materials specifically for deaf students. For example, teachers replaced thick narrative books with simple visual modules consisting of:

- a. Instructions for prayer steps with illustrative pictures and several key words,
- b. Hijaiyah letter cards with pictures of objects that begin with those letters (e.g., du for duck, sti for stick, etc.),
- c. Etiquette posters containing images of students shaking hands, greeting each other, and smiling, with short captions: "Greet your friends with a smile," "Say hello," "Don't make fun."

The Islamic Religious Education teacher explained:

"We had to rewrite the lesson plans and create new materials because the regular textbooks were too long and difficult for our students to read. So we made flashcards, posters, and short writings on the board." (G 01).

This process demonstrates the dual role of teachers: as implementers of teaching and developers of materials tailored to the abilities and needs of deaf students.

3.1.5 Barriers (facilities, sign language skills, materials)

Although teachers implemented strong adaptive strategies, the study identified several barriers that impacted the effectiveness of IRE learning.

The main barriers were:

- a. Limited facilities and infrastructure: there was no specific IRE module for the deaf, a lack of interactive visual aids (e.g., LCDs, videos, digital media), and bathroom and ablution systems that were not fully mobility-friendly, as well as limited visibility in the classroom.
- b. Limited sign language skills of teachers: although teachers had learned the basics of SIBI and BISINDO, their mastery was still focused on general vocabulary, resulting in confusion when explaining complex religious concepts.
- c. Lack of tested materials: teachers did not have an IRE learning guidebook for the deaf, so material development was improvised, without a standard framework or module that could be used consistently.

A teacher stated:

"We often improvise from day to day. Sometimes the materials are lacking, and sometimes teachers rely solely on memory and creativity, rather than on specific modules." (G 02).

These obstacles indicate that the success of IRE learning in inclusive schools depends heavily on the creativity and efforts of individual teachers, but also requires systemic support in the form of more structured modules, facilities, and sign language training.

3.2 Discussion

Research findings indicate that Islamic Religious Education (IRE) instruction for deaf students cannot be optimal if it solely follows a traditional regular classroom framework based on oral lectures,

written texts, and written assessments. Deaf students, due to limited access to spoken language, experience significant obstacles in understanding abstract concepts, such as the pillars of faith, piety, and etiquette, as well as ritual procedures such as ablution and prayer. This situation emphasizes the importance of a specific structure in IRE instruction, one that explicitly prioritizes a visual framework, experiential learning, and language accessibility, so that religious meaning is not simply "accepted" theoretically, but experienced, practiced, and reconstructed by the students themselves.

The visual framework approach to abstract concepts—such as the pillars of faith, etiquette, and piety—reflects well-established theoretical frameworks, namely multimodal instruction and Universal Design for Learning (UDL). Within the UDL framework, one of the main principles is Representation, which provides various ways for students to receive and understand information, especially when the oral modality is no longer the primary channel (Wahyuni & Eliasa, 2025). In this context, graphics, images, symbols, and visual media become the main medium for transferring meaning, replacing the lost or limited function of oral narratives. At SMP Negeri Sri Soedewi, picture cards of angels, heaven, hell, graves, and verses of the Quran accompanied by brief captions, are gradually displayed on the board, not merely as illustrations, but as starting points for multimodal discussions that incorporate gestures, movements, and facial expressions. This finding is in line with research (Suhartini et al., 2025) which shows that the use of visual media and sign language significantly improves conceptual understanding and student engagement in religious learning, especially for deaf students who rely on visual and kinesthetic processes.

Learning rituals through modeling and repetition (e.g., ablution and prayer) emphasizes the importance of experiential and kinesthetic learning. In this context, research has observed that teachers not only verbally explain the stages of ablution or prayer, but also model each movement, point to pictures of the steps, and invite students to repeat them. This approach aligns with special education literature that emphasizes the use of Images and Empirical Learning (Uslub al Tarbiyah al Shughra) and routine practice as effective ways to build skills and understanding in deaf students. In this study, indicators of understanding were measured not only by students' ability to answer verbal questions, but also by their performance: their ability to repeat the steps of ablution, follow the sequence of prayer, and represent the process through pictures, movements, or gestures. Thus, the concepts of engagement, skills, and understanding are more measurable in a practical context, rather than solely in verbal cognitive form.

Communication strategies that combine sign language, writing, gestures, and facial expressions demonstrate the application of Total Communication in the context of IRE, as recommended in inclusive education research (Dian Nurita et al., 2025). Total Communication aims to ensure that every student, regardless of sensory abilities, has access to all communication channels: spoken (if possible), sign language, written language, and gesture and expression. In practice at SMP Negeri Sri Soedewi, teachers use a combination of SIBI (Indonesian Sign Language System) and BISINDO (Indonesian Sign Language), each of which has distinct characteristics. SIBI, as the standard system regulated by the government, is more often used in formal religious terms, while BISINDO, which is more natural and closer to the language of the deaf community, is more dominant in spontaneous, everyday communication.

Analytically, the lack of uniformity between SIBI and BISINDO has several important theoretical and practical implications:

- a. **Teacher training:** Teachers need training that not only teaches the basics of sign language but also introduces dual sign dictionaries (SIBI and BISINDO) and how to integrate them consistently in the classroom, so that students do not experience conceptual confusion when the same term has two different sign forms.
- b. **Communication policy:** Inclusive schools need a standard communication framework that regulates when and how to use SIBI or BISINDO, as well as the development of a shared

religious sign dictionary so that all teachers and students recognize the same symbols for key terms such as "wudu," "prayer," "pillars of faith," and others.

- c. Classroom access: If teachers rely solely on SIBI, many students who are more familiar with BISINDO will experience barriers to meaning. Therefore, religious literacy depends not only on content but also on the openness and readability of the language system used, including the use of gestures, facial expressions, and writing as additional support.

The development of materials by teachers demonstrates high professional creativity. Teachers are not relying solely on standard textbooks but are developing new visual modules such as picture cards, posters, and instructions for prayer and ablution, replacing lengthy narratives with concise, easy-to-read captions. However, this development also reveals a structural gap in the education system: the absence of a specific Islamic Religious Education module for deaf students that has been tested, standardized, and accessible to inclusive schools across Indonesia. Other studies (Gama et al., 2023; Nurmaliyah et al., 2023; Wahyuni & Eliasa, 2025) show that the use of sign language-based visual modules and a structured Individual Learning Program (IPP) can improve deaf students' conceptual understanding, engagement, and practical skills. In the context of this research, teacher improvisation emphasizes the need for an inclusive IRE curriculum design based on UDL principles and multimodal learning, so that other inclusive schools can adopt this framework, rather than relying solely on individual teacher creativity.

Obstacles related to facilities, sign language skills, and material availability emphasize that the success of IRE learning in inclusive schools is not solely a matter of teacher technical ability, but also a matter of systemic support. Minimal facilities, such as limited audio-visual equipment, the absence of interactive panels, and ablution rooms that are not sufficiently legible, as well as teachers' limited ability to master sign language comprehensively, indicate that teachers must play a dual role: as instructors and material developers at the same time. Islamic religious education for deaf students must be viewed as an inclusive obligation regulated by Law No. 8 of 2016 concerning Persons with Disabilities and Government Regulation No. 13/2020 concerning Appropriate Accommodation, so that schools and local governments need to provide facilities, teacher training, and special modules, not just expect teachers to overcome all limitations with independent improvisation (Iswanto, 2025).

In terms of transferability, several findings in this study have the potential to be applicable across various inclusive education contexts, particularly in special needs schools or other inclusive classrooms. Transferable aspects include:

- a. The use of visual and multimedia frameworks (picture cards, posters, visual step-by-step instructions) to simplify abstract religious concepts, thus aligning with the principles of UDL and multimodal learning.
- b. The implementation of ritual learning based on modeling and repetition, with a clear, consistent, and measurable flow, so that students can understand and practice the rituals practically.
- c. The implementation of Total Communication with a combination of gestures, writing, and movement consciously managed by the teacher, so that all students have access to different communication channels (Al-Muttairi & Al-Alusi, 2025).

However, there are also contextually specific elements at SMP Negeri Sri Soedewi, such as:

- a. The combination of an inclusive regular classroom structure with a special program for the deaf, which not all schools offer.
- b. The availability of facilities, teacher work culture, and socio-cultural conditions in Jambi, which influence the use of linguistic roots (SIBI-BISINDO).
- c. The dynamics of the use of local linguistic roots (SIBI-BISINDO) may differ in other regions, requiring adaptation of teacher training models to regional contexts.

Methodologically, this study has limitations that require consideration when interpreting the findings, although these limitations do not diminish its conceptual contribution. First, the study was conducted in a single location (Sri Soedewi Public Junior High School, Jambi City), so the characteristics of the findings may not be generalizable without further research in other contexts. Second, the number of participants was limited (two Islamic Religious Education teachers, one head of the inclusion program, two assistant teachers, and a number of observed students), so the findings depict a rich quality, but do not represent the global diversity of inclusive practices. Third, there was no direct student voice in the in-depth interviews, so their perspectives were primarily captured through teacher observation and reflection, potentially introducing interpretive bias. Fourth, observer bias may have emerged because the researcher acted as a non-participatory observer, so the researcher's position and background could influence the selection of themes and interpretation of the data, although this was mitigated through triangulation and member checking with the teachers. However, these limitations highlight the importance of broader follow-up research, involving more schools and direct student voices, to further enrich and confirm the findings.

Based on these discussions, several important implications can be formulated for the development of Islamic religious education for deaf students. First, in the realm of teacher professional development, intensive training in Indonesian Sign Language (BISINDO) and the Indonesian Sign Language System (SIBI), particularly on religious vocabulary, is needed to ensure that ritual messages and faith concepts are clearly accessible to students. Furthermore, conducting multimodal teaching and Universal Design for Learning (UDL) workshops for Islamic Religious Education (IRE) teachers in inclusive schools will enable them to design more accessible content with diverse representations.

Second, implications for the design of Islamic Religious Education (IRE) curriculum and materials include the development of sign-based visual modules, such as picture cards, posters, short videos, prayer and ablution step instructions, and religious sign dictionaries, so that students can understand and practice religious concepts through accessible media. This development is complemented by the development of an inclusive Learning Implementation Plan (RPP) and IRE curriculum that adopts UDL principles, which can be adopted or modified by other schools.

Third, at the policy and facility level, strengthening inclusion policies in schools and education offices is necessary through budget allocations for facilities such as digital media, audio-visual equipment, practice rooms, and specialized modules. This aligns with the implementation of reasonable accommodations as stipulated in Government Regulation Number 13 of 2020, such as the provision of visual module books, sign communication aids, and support from special education consultants in the context of religious education (Aleksić-Hajduković & Sinadinović, 2025).

Overall, these findings confirm that successful Islamic Religious Education (IRE) learning for deaf students depends on a combination of theoretical frameworks such as multimodality, experiential approaches, UDL, and language accessibility; open and consistent communication practices through SIBI-BISINDO; and systemic support from schools and the government—not solely on individual teacher competence.

4. CONCLUSION

This study concludes that Islamic Religious Education for students with hearing impairments at Sri Soedewi Public Junior High School, Jambi City, is implemented through adaptive and multimodal learning strategies that emphasize visual representation, modeling and repetition of ritual practices, teacher-developed learning materials, and communication through sign language, writing, gestures, and facial expressions. The main finding shows that these strategies help create more accessible learning pathways for deaf students, particularly in understanding abstract religious concepts and practicing religious rituals such as ablution and prayer. However, the implementation remains constrained by limited facilities, inconsistent use of SIBI and BISINDO, teachers' limited mastery of religious sign vocabulary, and the absence of standardized Islamic Religious Education modules for

students with hearing impairments. This study is limited by its single-site case study design, the small number of adult participants, and the absence of direct in-depth interviews with deaf students, which means that students' perspectives were mainly interpreted through classroom observation and teacher reflection. Future research should involve deaf students more directly through visual, written, or sign-language-supported interview techniques, conduct comparative studies across inclusive schools and special schools, and develop as well as evaluate UDL-based Islamic Religious Education modules to examine how visual, kinesthetic, and sign-supported materials can improve students' conceptual understanding, ritual skills, and internalization of religious values.

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