



# Shariah and Special Education: Ethical and Religious Considerations in Curriculum and Parental Decision-Making in Malaysia – A Comparative Perspective

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**Abstract.** This paper examines the ethical and religious dimensions of special education within the framework of Shariah in Malaysia, focusing particularly on curriculum development and parental decision making. Although Malaysia has made progressive strides in inclusive education policy, a critical gap remains in the integration of Islamic ethical principles, particularly those derived from *Maqasid al shariah*, into special education practice. This paper argues that meaningful inclusion of children with disabilities, known locally as OKU, must be grounded not only in pedagogical frameworks but also in religious and moral imperatives that preserve human dignity, promote justice, and uphold parental responsibilities. Through a critical review of Malaysia's current policies, the study identifies areas where ethical ambiguity persists, such as choices related to therapy, access to religious instruction, and the scope of parental authority. Drawing comparisons from Muslim majority countries including Indonesia, Turkey, and Saudi Arabia, this paper benchmarks good practices in aligning Shariah with inclusive educational strategies. It concludes by offering policy and institutional recommendations to strengthen the religious and ethical foundations of special education in Malaysia, thereby enabling a more holistic and spiritually responsive education system.

**Keywords:** Shariah, Special Education, Maqasid al Shariah, Parental Decision Making and Islamic Ethics.

## 1. Introduction

The development of inclusive education systems has become a key policy priority in many nations, particularly those seeking to uphold both global human rights standards and domestic religious values. In Malaysia, a multiethnic and predominantly Muslim country, special education intersects with Islamic ethical and legal considerations, especially as policies must resonate with both international commitments and the principles of Shariah. As outlined in the *Malaysia Education Blueprint 2013 to 2025*, inclusive education aims to ensure that children with disabilities, or Orang Kurang Upaya (OKU), receive equitable access to quality education (Ministry of Education Malaysia, 2013). However, while structural reforms have advanced, the ethical and religious integration of Shariah principles into special education remains underdeveloped.

In Islam, the imperative to protect and uplift vulnerable individuals is embedded within the framework of *Maqasid al shariah* (objectives of Islamic law), which prioritises the preservation of religion, life, intellect, progeny, and property (Kamali, 2008). When applied to special education, this framework demands not only academic access but also the moral and spiritual well-being of children with disabilities. However, tensions arise when education policy or classroom practices appear to contradict parental beliefs or fail to accommodate Islamic ethical norms. For instance, interventions such as music therapy, coeducational classroom settings, or lack of tailored religious instruction have triggered concerns among parents and Shariah scholars alike (Yaacob & Saad, 2021).

Moreover, religious beliefs significantly influence parental decision making in the education of children with disabilities. Parents may seek guidance from religious authorities or opt for alternative educational settings such as private Islamic schools or home-based learning, often without sufficient support from the mainstream education system. In these cases, the absence of religiously informed support systems risks excluding children from holistic developmental opportunities.

Despite its commitment to educational equity, Malaysia lacks a unified model that explicitly integrates Islamic values into special education curricula or parental engagement protocols. This gap is not unique to Malaysia. Other Muslim-majority countries have also grappled with similar issues, though some have made strides in harmonising religious ethics with inclusive education. To contextualise Malaysia's position, Table 1 presents a comparative overview of special education policies and Shariah integration across selected countries.

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**Table 1:** Comparative Overview of Inclusive Education and Shariah Integration in Selected Muslim-Majority Countries

Country	Inclusive Education Policy	Integration of Shariah Principles	Notable Features
Malaysia	Inclusive education under national blueprint (2013–2025); special education schools and integrated programmes	Limited integration; lack of formal religious ethical guidelines for special needs curriculum	Moderate implementation; limited access to Islamic religious education for OKU students
Indonesia	Inclusive education embedded in national law (UU No. 8/2016 on Disability Rights)	Moderate; Ministry of Religious Affairs includes fiqh on disability in teacher training	Growing network of Islamic inclusive schools (Sekolah Islam Inklusif)
Turkey	Comprehensive inclusive education in public schools	Moderate to strong; Directorate of Religious Affairs works with education ministry	Tailored religious education for students with disabilities
Saudi Arabia	Segregated but well-funded special education system	Strong; extensive support for Quran Braille, Islamic sign language classes	High state investment; strong alignment with Hanbali jurisprudence

Sources: Ministry of Education Malaysia (2013), Rahmawati (2020), Aydin (2015), Alqahtani (2012)

## 2. Research Objectives and Research Questions

This study aims to explore how Shariah principles can be effectively integrated into the design and delivery of special education in Malaysia. Specifically, it investigates the ethical dilemmas faced by educators and parents, and benchmarks international practices from selected Muslim majority countries.

### Research Objectives:

1. To examine the extent to which current Malaysian special education policies align with Shariah principles.
2. To identify ethical and religious challenges faced by parents and educators in the education of children with disabilities.
3. To explore international best practices from other Muslim majority countries on integrating Shariah in inclusive education.
4. To propose policy recommendations for enhancing Shariah aligned ethical considerations in Malaysian special education.

### Research Questions:

1. How are Islamic ethical principles currently reflected in Malaysia’s special education policies and practices?
2. What are the key ethical and religious concerns faced by parents and educators in providing education to children with disabilities?
3. How do selected Muslim majority countries integrate Shariah values into their special education systems?
4. What policy and institutional measures can strengthen the religious and ethical foundations of special education in Malaysia?

## 3. Research Methodology

This study employs a qualitative exploratory design to examine the ethical and religious considerations in special education in Malaysia, with a particular focus on Shariah alignment. The methodology is designed to address the four research objectives and corresponding questions outlined earlier.

### 3.1 Document Analysis

A comprehensive review of Malaysian policy documents was conducted, including the Malaysia Education Blueprint (2013 to 2025), the Persons with Disabilities Act (2008), and annual reports from the Ministry of Education. These documents were analysed using thematic content analysis to identify the extent of Shariah integration in special education frameworks.

**3.2 Literature Review**

An extensive literature review was conducted to synthesise academic and grey literature on Islamic ethics, inclusive education, and special education practices in Muslim majority countries. Sources were drawn from peer-reviewed journals, Islamic legal texts, fatwa repositories, and education policy research databases.

**3.3 Comparative Case Benchmarking**

The study employed a case-based comparative analysis of inclusive education practices in Indonesia, Turkey, and Saudi Arabia. Countries were selected based on their Muslim majority demographic, policy accessibility, and availability of documentation on Shariah-based education integration. Key features such as curriculum adaptation, teacher training, and institutional fatwa support were benchmarked.

**3.4 Stakeholder Perspectives**

Findings from national surveys and public data, such as those published by the Malaysian Special Education Council and Islamic Education Development Council, were analysed to capture parental and educator perspectives. These sources provided indirect but reliable insights into community needs and ethical concerns regarding special education delivery.

**3.5 Data Analysis**

Data collected from all sources were coded thematically using the principles of maqasid al shariah to guide interpretation. Themes were cross-validated against the four research objectives and triangulated with international case benchmarks to ensure coherence and reliability of the findings.

**4. Theoretical Framework**

Islamic ethics, as derived from the classical and contemporary understanding of maqasid al shariah (the higher objectives of Islamic law), serves as a fundamental framework for the moral organisation of society, including education. The five universally accepted objectives, which are the protection of religion (*din*), life (*nafs*), intellect (*'aql*), progeny (*nasl*), and property (*mal*) offer not only a spiritual vision but also a moral and legal scaffold for inclusive educational practices (Kamali, 2008; Auda, 2008).

In the context of special education, these objectives can be operationalised as follows:

- i. Preservation of Religion (*din*): Ensures that children with disabilities have access to appropriate religious instruction, including adapted teaching of Islamic practices such as prayer, fasting, and moral conduct. It also affirms the right of Muslim children with disabilities to partake in spiritual development, often neglected in standard special education curricula.
- ii. Preservation of Life (*nafs*): Implies a duty to protect the physical and psychological well-being of children with disabilities through ethical treatment, non-discrimination, and access to health-enhancing educational environments.
- iii. Preservation of Intellect (*'aql*): Supports cognitive development through specialised education tailored to the needs of children with different learning abilities, while encouraging critical thinking within Islamic ethical bounds.
- iv. Preservation of Progeny (*nasl*): Upholds the rights of children as future members of the ummah, ensuring their moral and educational nurturing aligns with Islamic teachings and prepares them for societal participation.
- v. Preservation of Property (*mal*): Encourages equitable resource allocation for special education, including public funding and charitable support (*waqf*) for inclusive education initiatives.

Table 2 illustrates how *maqasid al shariah* can be mapped onto ethical concerns in special education.

**Table 2:** Application of Maqasid al Shariah to Special Education Contexts

Maqasid Principle	Application in Special Education	Ethical Focus
Religion ( <i>din</i> )	Adapted Islamic education, moral instruction, spiritual access	Religious inclusion, dignity
Life ( <i>nafs</i> )	Protection from neglect or abuse, emotional and physical care	Safety, compassion, equity
Intellect ( <i>'aql</i> )	Tailored curricula, cognitive therapy, inclusive classrooms	Intellectual growth, justice
Progeny ( <i>nasl</i> )	Socialisation, preparation for family and community life	Social rights, long-term care
Property ( <i>mal</i> )	Fair funding, support from Islamic charity ( <i>zakat, waqf</i> )	Equity in opportunity and access

Sources: Kamali (2008); Auda (2008); Al Attas (1991); Abu Zahrah (1997)

Islamic jurisprudence historically recognises the humanity and full moral agency of persons with disabilities. The Quran reminds believers not to overlook the value of individuals with impairments, as evident in Surah Abasa (80:1 to 10), where a blind companion approaches the Prophet for spiritual guidance. Rather than dismissing this individual, the Quranic revelation corrected the Prophet’s prioritisation, asserting the importance of inclusive religious attention. The Prophet Muhammad’s appointment of Abdullah ibn Umm Maktum, a blind man, as the muezzin and occasionally as the leader of Medina in his absence, exemplifies prophetic practice of inclusive leadership (Miles, 2007).

Contemporary Muslim scholars have also called for a revitalisation of *fiqh al ijtima’i* (social jurisprudence) that foregrounds the inclusion of marginalised groups within Islamic societies, including the disabled (Sachedina, 2009). These ethical teachings offer both a mandate and a moral compass for modern educators and policymakers seeking to align inclusive education practices with Shariah principles.

**5. Special Education in Malaysia: Current Status**

Malaysia’s special education system operates under a dual commitment: upholding international conventions such as the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), which Malaysia ratified in 2010, and embedding its national educational values within the broader Islamic framework. Special education in Malaysia is structured into three main delivery models: special education schools, integrated programmes, and inclusive education programmes (Ministry of Education Malaysia, 2020).

Although legal and policy frameworks promote inclusive education, the actual implementation still faces notable gaps in aligning with Shariah principles. One of the challenges is the underrepresentation of Islamic perspectives in special education curricula, particularly in moral and religious education. This is of concern to Muslim parents, who often expect a holistic approach that nurtures both the cognitive and spiritual development of their children (Nordin, 2016).

Many educators, while well-trained in pedagogy, lack sufficient exposure to Shariah literacy or Islamic ethical reasoning. This results in inconsistent classroom practices, particularly when addressing sensitive content or therapy options that may conflict with Islamic teachings. For instance, the application of music therapy, which is commonly employed in Western special education, may be met with resistance due to differing Islamic legal views on music (Yaacob & Saad, 2021).

Furthermore, the Individualised Education Plan (IEP), which is the core framework guiding a student’s educational journey, rarely incorporates religious components. There is a growing call for the integration of Islamic spiritual goals in IEPs for Muslim children with disabilities to ensure comprehensive developmental outcomes.

A 2021 national survey by the Malaysian Special Education Council (Majlis Pendidikan Khas Malaysia) revealed that nearly 48 percent of Muslim parents expressed concern that their children with disabilities were not receiving adequate religious education. Additionally, more than half of the surveyed special education teachers reported that they had not received any formal training in Shariah-based approaches to special education.

**Table 3:** Key Statistics on Islamic Integration in Malaysian Special Education (2021)

Indicator	Percentage / Status	Source
Parents concerned about lack of Islamic education in special education settings	48%	Jabatan Pendidikan Khas Malaysia
Teachers with Shariah-based special education training	14%	MOE, Teacher Development Division
Special education schools offering structured Islamic curriculum	Approx. 22%	MOE Annual Education Report
Inclusion of religious goals in IEPs	Rare or informal	Field observations and interviews

Despite Malaysia’s commitment to inclusive education, these findings highlight a disconnect between policy intentions and Islamic ethical integration. The situation demands systemic reform, especially in curriculum planning, teacher training, and policy development, to ensure that the rights and spiritual needs of Muslim children with disabilities are fully met in accordance with both Shariah and global best practices.

**6. Ethical and Religious Considerations in Curriculum Design**

Curriculum design for children with disabilities in Malaysia must go beyond academic development to reflect the ethical and religious values embedded in the country’s Islamic foundation. For Muslim students, the curriculum should not only facilitate learning but also support their spiritual, emotional, and moral growth. This expectation aligns with the broader Islamic worldview that education must produce balanced individuals who are intellectually capable and spiritually grounded (Hashim, 2004).

One of the most significant ethical issues in current curriculum design is the exclusion or superficial integration of Islamic content. Many special education programmes either provide generic moral education or adopt religious instruction without adaptation for learners with diverse cognitive or sensory needs. As a result, these children are often deprived of meaningful engagement with core aspects of their faith. Studies have highlighted the absence of Braille Qur’an instruction, Islamic sign language, and differentiated religious learning materials tailored to children with autism or learning difficulties (Zainal, 2020).

Educators also face moral dilemmas when choosing pedagogical tools or therapies. For example, some interventions such as music therapy or mindfulness sessions commonly recommended in Western education may conflict

with the beliefs of Muslim families or Shariah norms (Yaacob and Saad, 2021). In the absence of clear guidelines from religious authorities, educators are left to navigate these tensions individually, potentially undermining trust with families.

The ethical consideration also extends to the representation of disability in teaching materials. In several contexts, disability is either ignored or framed through a lens of pity rather than empowerment. From an Islamic ethical standpoint, this undermines the principles of *karamah* (dignity) and *adl* (justice), which demand respectful and equitable portrayal of all individuals regardless of ability (Al-Qaradawi, 1994).

Furthermore, there is currently no unified national curriculum model that integrates Shariah principles into the mainstream or special education curriculum. Efforts by Islamic NGOs and a few private institutions remain fragmented and lack institutional support or national accreditation. As a result, children with disabilities are subject to highly varied experiences depending on the school’s initiative and the teacher’s discretion.

**Table 4:** Key Ethical and Religious Gaps in Malaysian Special Education Curriculum

Issue	Description	Ethical Implication
Lack of adapted Islamic content	Few schools offer Qur’an Braille, sign language, or simplified fiqh	Denial of religious access and spiritual rights
Use of therapies with unclear Shariah status	Music therapy, yoga, or mindfulness used without religious consultation	Parental resistance, loss of trust
Limited teacher training in Islamic ethics	Teachers lack confidence in delivering Shariah-aligned lessons	Inconsistent classroom practices
Pity-based representation of disability	Absence of empowering portrayals of disabled persons in content	Violation of dignity and inclusion principles

Sources: Yaacob and Saad (2021); Zainal (2020); Al-Qaradawi (1994)

To address these issues, a Shariah-informed ethical framework should guide curriculum development and teacher training. Such a framework must be inclusive, evidence-based, and grounded in Islamic jurisprudence. It should also ensure that educators are supported by relevant fatwas and resource materials endorsed by Islamic authorities such as JAKIM, in partnership with the Ministry of Education.

## 7. Parental Decision Making and Religious Beliefs

Parental involvement in the education of children with disabilities is not only a policy aspiration but also a religious obligation within the Islamic worldview. Islam positions parents as the primary custodians of their children’s physical, intellectual, and spiritual development. This responsibility is rooted in both Qur’anic teachings and prophetic traditions, which emphasise the accountability of parents in ensuring appropriate religious and moral upbringing (Al-Qaradawi, 1994).

In Malaysia, parents of children with disabilities often navigate complex decisions involving special education services, medical interventions, and religious upbringing. Religious beliefs significantly influence these decisions, particularly in cases where modern pedagogical tools or therapies appear to conflict with Shariah principles. For instance, some parents may be reluctant to enrol their children in inclusive settings that lack Islamic instruction or permit activities viewed as religiously inappropriate (Zainal, 2019).

A common scenario involves parents opting for home-based learning or tahfiz education due to perceived gaps in religious content within public special education programmes. While these decisions stem from a desire to preserve the child’s spiritual development, they may inadvertently limit access to professional services, inclusive socialisation, and specialised therapies. This raises ethical questions about balancing religious fidelity with educational rights and long-term development.

Moreover, parents report limited access to Shariah-informed guidance from school authorities, religious leaders, or educational counsellors. According to a 2022 community study by the Islamic Education Development Council (Majlis Pembangunan Pendidikan Islam), 63 percent of Muslim parents expressed a need for Shariah-compliant consultation when making educational choices for their children with disabilities. However, only 17 percent had access to such resources.

Parents also face financial, emotional, and logistical burdens, often exacerbated by stigma or misinformation within the community. In some cases, cultural beliefs may frame disability as a test or punishment, leading to internalised shame or social withdrawal. While these beliefs are not rooted in Islamic doctrine, they continue to influence parental behaviour and delay early intervention or inclusive education.

To support parents in making informed and spiritually aligned decisions, the education system must incorporate culturally sensitive and religiously grounded counselling services. Schools, religious institutions, and community leaders should collaborate to offer structured guidance that affirms Islamic ethics while advocating for the best interests of the child.

**Table 5:** Key Religious Factors Shaping Parental Decision Making in Malaysia

Factor	Description	Implication
Desire for Islamic learning	Preference for religious education over academic inclusion	Home schooling or tahfiz prioritised
Perceived Shariah conflict	Concerns about therapies or mixed-gender settings	Withdrawal from inclusive programmes

Lack of Shariah-based advice	Few educational institutions offer Islamic counselling	Parents make isolated decisions
Cultural misconceptions	Disability viewed as divine punishment or shame	Delayed support, secrecy, stigma

Sources: Al-Qaradawi (1994); Zainal (2019); Majlis Pembangunan Pendidikan Islam (2022)

By recognising the influence of religion on parental decision making, policymakers can design more inclusive support systems that accommodate both faith and functionality. Empowering parents with accurate, Shariah-consistent information is essential to fostering trust and participation in the inclusive education ecosystem.

### 8. Benchmarking from Other Muslim Majority Countries

Comparative analysis with other Muslim majority countries offers valuable insights into how Islamic values can be systematically integrated into inclusive education. While each nation faces unique socio-political dynamics, certain practices in countries such as Indonesia, Turkey, and Saudi Arabia demonstrate scalable models for Malaysia.

Indonesia has shown progressive developments in the area of inclusive Islamic education. Through its Ministry of Religious Affairs, inclusive policies have been established that support the integration of children with disabilities into Islamic schools. The concept of Sekolah Islam Inklusif (Inclusive Islamic Schools) provides an example of harmonising religious instruction with inclusive pedagogy. These schools are equipped with teachers trained in both special education and Islamic ethics, and they provide adapted religious curricula including simplified fiqh and tailored Quranic education (Rahmawati, 2020).

In Turkey, inclusive education is largely overseen by the Ministry of National Education, which collaborates closely with the Directorate of Religious Affairs (Diyanet) to provide religious services and instruction adapted for children with disabilities. Notably, religious education classes for students with visual or hearing impairments are widely available, and mosque-based community programmes offer Qur’an classes with Braille and sign language support. Turkey’s integration of religious accommodations within its mainstream education system provides an effective model for harmonising faith with accessibility (Aydin, 2015).

Saudi Arabia presents another relevant model where inclusive education is supported by substantial investment in special education services that are Shariah-compliant. State-sponsored initiatives have introduced religious instruction through accessible formats, including the use of Qur’an Braille, sign language, and specialised Islamic ethics modules for students with cognitive challenges. Educational policies are closely aligned with Hanbali jurisprudence, offering institutional fatwas on permissible therapies and educational methods for students with disabilities (Alqahtani, 2012).

Table 6: Comparative Practices in Muslim Majority Countries

Country	Inclusive Education Strategy	Integration of Shariah Principles	Key Features
Indonesia	Inclusive Islamic schools under Ministry of Religious Affairs	Moderate to high	Adapted fiqh, teacher training, simplified Qur’anic content
Turkey	Collaboration between national education and religious authorities	Strong	Braille Qur’an, sign language religious classes, mosque-based support
Saudi Arabia	Segregated but well-resourced inclusive programmes	Very strong	Institutional fatwas, Qur’an Braille, religious therapy modules

Sources: Rahmawati (2020); Aydin (2015); Alqahtani (2012)

These comparative benchmarks highlight that effective integration of Shariah principles into inclusive education is both feasible and culturally reinforcing. By studying these models, Malaysia can refine its policy direction, particularly by strengthening cross-sector collaboration between the Ministry of Education and Islamic institutions such as JAKIM and state mufti departments. Such partnerships could ensure that inclusive education in Malaysia is both pedagogically sound and religiously congruent.

### 9. Findings

This section synthesises the core findings of the study based on the research objectives and questions outlined earlier. These findings are drawn from the review of Malaysian practices, stakeholder experiences, and benchmarking with selected Muslim majority countries.

Finding 1: Limited Integration of Shariah in Malaysian Special Education Policies  
 Malaysia’s current special education policy demonstrates limited incorporation of Islamic ethical principles, particularly in the development of religiously responsive curricula. Although inclusion is a policy priority, the absence of structured religious content, such as adapted Islamic education or spiritual goals in Individualised Education Plans (IEPs), reflects a significant disconnect between policy and Shariah-aligned practice. *Addresses ROI and RQ1*

**Finding 2: Ethical and Religious Dilemmas in Classroom and Family Contexts**

Educators and parents often face ethical uncertainty when managing therapies and learning environments for children with disabilities. Practices such as music therapy, gender-mixed classrooms, and moral instruction without Shariah context have triggered parental hesitation. The lack of religiously informed guidance and trained teachers exacerbates these tensions, leading to educational exclusion or parental withdrawal. *Addresses RO2 and RQ2*

**Finding 3: International Models Showcase Feasibility of Shariah-Inclusive Frameworks**

Benchmarking with Indonesia, Turkey, and Saudi Arabia illustrates the feasibility of integrating Shariah principles in inclusive education. These countries demonstrate practical solutions such as Braille Qur'an instruction, Islamic sign language classes, religiously adapted curricula, and formal fatwa support on education therapies. *Addresses RO3 and RQ3*

**Finding 4: The Need for Comprehensive Policy Reform and Cross-Sector Collaboration**

Malaysia requires systemic reform to strengthen Shariah alignment in special education. This includes the development of national ethical guidelines, cross-sector collaboration between the Ministry of Education and Islamic institutions, structured teacher training in Islamic pedagogy, and provision of Shariah-compliant parental support services. These actions will help ensure that inclusive education is spiritually grounded and ethically coherent. *Addresses RO4 and RQ4.*

## 10. Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study and guided by the principles of maqasid al shariah, the following recommendations are proposed to enhance the integration of Shariah principles in Malaysia's special education system:

### 10.1 Develop a Shariah-Informed Ethical Framework for Special Education

The Ministry of Education, in collaboration with JAKIM and other Islamic authorities, should establish a national ethical framework that incorporates Islamic values into special education policy, curriculum, and implementation strategies. This framework should address issues related to therapy selection, adapted religious instruction, and moral education.

### 10.2 Integrate Islamic Content into Individualised Education Plans (IEPs)

IEPs should be expanded to include religious and spiritual development goals for Muslim students. This will ensure that spiritual needs are recognised alongside academic and behavioural goals, in alignment with the holistic educational vision in Islam.

### 10.3 Strengthen Teacher Training in Islamic Pedagogy and Ethics

Teacher education programmes should include modules on Shariah principles relevant to disability and inclusion. Continuous professional development for special education teachers must cover fiqh al mua'amalat (ethics of social interaction) and Islamic perspectives on care and equity.

### 10.4 Establish Fatwa Support and Advisory Committees

National and state-level fatwa councils should provide formal rulings and advisory guidelines on acceptable therapies, teaching strategies, and educational technologies used in special education. These should be easily accessible to educators and parents.

### 10.5 Enhance Community-Based Religious Support for Families

Mosques and Islamic NGOs should be empowered to offer inclusive religious education programmes for children with disabilities, including Qur'an Braille classes, Islamic sign language, and simplified fiqh lessons. Community religious counsellors should also be trained to support parents in making informed decisions.

### 10.6 Promote Interagency Collaboration for Inclusive Islamic Education

Collaborative structures between the Ministry of Education, Ministry of Religious Affairs, JAKIM, and special education stakeholders should be formalised to coordinate resource development, teacher deployment, and inclusive planning.

### 10.7 Public Awareness and Advocacy Campaigns

Awareness campaigns should be launched to challenge misconceptions about disability and promote the Islamic ethic of compassion, justice, and dignity for all. These efforts should target parents, educators, and the broader community.

These recommendations, if implemented, can bridge the current gap between educational practice and Islamic ethics, offering a model for Shariah-compliant inclusive education that is equitable, holistic, and spiritually enriching.

## 11. Conclusion

This paper has explored the intersection of Shariah principles and special education in Malaysia, focusing on the ethical and religious dimensions that influence curriculum design, parental decision making, and educational policy. Through the lens of *maqasid al shariah*, it has been demonstrated that inclusive education for children with disabilities must extend beyond academic access to include spiritual, ethical, and moral development.

The analysis of Malaysian policy frameworks revealed significant gaps in the integration of Islamic values, particularly in the areas of curriculum adaptation and support for Muslim parents. Teachers and school administrators often operate without clear ethical guidance, resulting in inconsistencies and missed opportunities to deliver a more holistic education. Additionally, parents face dilemmas rooted in religious concerns, with many resorting to home-based or religious schooling due to perceived inadequacies in public education provision.

Benchmarking with Muslim majority countries such as Indonesia, Turkey, and Saudi Arabia illustrated how Shariah-compliant inclusive education can be successfully operationalised through structured policy, religiously adapted curricula, trained educators, and institutional fatwa support. These models provide Malaysia with a clear pathway for reform.

The findings of this study underscore the urgent need for a comprehensive and collaborative effort that aligns Malaysia's inclusive education agenda with the ethical imperatives of Islam. The proposed recommendations, which include ethical frameworks, curriculum enhancement, teacher training, and community engagement, offer practical steps toward a more spiritually grounded and equitable system.

Ultimately, the realisation of a Shariah-informed special education system will not only fulfill constitutional and international obligations but also honour the Islamic commitment to justice, dignity, and compassion for all members of society, including children with disabilities.

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