

Analysis of the Use of Visual Scaffolding Media in Understanding the Practice of Prayer among Students with Mild Intellectual Disabilities at Mutiara Bunda Special School Cirebon

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Abstract

This research is motivated by the fundamental obstacles faced by mild intellectually disabled students in mastering prayer practices due to deficits in working memory and sequential thinking skills. The main problems include dependence on verbal instructions and low memory retention of movement sequences. This study aims to analyze the implementation of visual scaffolding media as a cognitive scaffold at SLB Mutiara Bunda Cirebon. The research method used is descriptive qualitative. The results showed that the use of permanent visual cues was able to reduce students' cognitive load and minimize prompt dependency. Through the fading strategy, students showed an increase in independence and order of movement sequences (tumakninah). The integration of this media is proven effective in bridging the transition from full guidance to worship independence.

Keywords: Mild Intellectual Disability, Prayer Practice, Independence.

Abstrak

Penelitian ini dilatarbelakangi oleh hambatan fundamental siswa tunagrahita ringan dalam penguasaan praktik shalat akibat defisit working memory dan kemampuan berpikir sekuensial. Masalah utama mencakup ketergantungan pada instruksi verbal dan rendahnya retensi memori terhadap urutan gerakan. Penelitian ini bertujuan menganalisis implementasi media visual scaffolding sebagai perancah kognitif di SLB Mutiara Bunda Cirebon. Metode penelitian yang digunakan adalah kualitatif deskriptif. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa penggunaan isyarat visual permanen (permanent cues) mampu mereduksi beban kognitif siswa dan meminimalisir prompt dependency. Melalui strategi fading, siswa menunjukkan peningkatan kemandirian dan ketertiban urutan gerakan (tumakninah). Integrasi media ini terbukti efektif menjembatani transisi dari bimbingan penuh menuju kemandirian ibadah.

Kata Kunci: Tunagrahita Ringan, Praktik Shalat, Kemandirian.

A. Introduction

Education is a fundamental right that is inclusive for all citizens without exception, as mandated in Article 31 paragraph (1) of the 1945 Constitution. In the post-pandemic era of educational transformation, the orientation of learning for Children with Special Needs (ABK) has shifted from merely mastering academic material to functional development and adaptive independence. According to Hidayat in his book *Philosophy and Transformation of Inclusive Education*, the effectiveness of special education is no longer measured by standardization of grades, but rather by the extent to which the learning environment is able to accommodate students' cognitive barriers through a personalized and adaptive approach.¹

From an Islamic perspective, religious education for children with special needs holds a crucial position as a spiritual foundation and a foundation for independent worship. Islamic Religious Education (PAI) is not merely a transfer of knowledge, but rather an effort to internalize the values of monotheism through practical practice. Prayer, as a pillar of religion, is a fundamental act of worship that must be taught to every Muslim from an early age. The theological basis for this adaptive teaching of worship refers to Surah Al-Baqarah, verse 286:

لَا يُكَلِّفُ اللَّهُ نَفْسًا إِلَّا وُسْعَهَا

"Allah does not burden a person but according to his ability"

This verse emphasizes that even though students with intellectual disabilities have intellectual limitations, the obligation to worship remains in accordance with their abilities. This principle of flexibility and compassion in religious education is reinforced by the hadith of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), which provides a legal basis for conditions of intellectual limitations:

رُفِعَ الْقَلَمُ عَنْ ثَلَاثَةٍ

عَنِ النَّائِمِ حَتَّى يَسْتَيْقِظَ، وَعَنِ الصَّبِيِّ حَتَّى يَحْتَلِمَ، وَعَنِ الْمَجْنُونِ حَتَّى يَعْقِلَ

"The pen (the burden of the law) is lifted from three groups: the one who sleeps until he wakes up, the child until he reaches puberty, and the one who has lost his mind until he regains his senses." (Narrated by Tirmidhi)²

Despite the legal leniency (taklif) provided by Sharia law, prayer instruction for mentally retarded students at Mutiara Bunda Special School in Cirebon must still be pursued as a form of habituation and fulfillment of spiritual rights. This aligns with the Prophet Muhammad's command to teach prayer in stages:

مُرُوا أَوْلَادَكُمْ بِالصَّلَاةِ وَهُمْ أَبْنَاءُ سَبْعِ سِنِينَ

¹A. Hidayat, *Philosophy and Transformation of Inclusive Education* (Jakarta: Prenada Media, 2022).

²Muhammad ibn Isa at-Tirmidhi, *Sunan Al-Tirmidhi* (Egyptian: Mustafa al-Babi al-Halabi, 1975). Hadith No. 1423

"Command your children to pray when they are seven years old..." (Narrated by Abu Dawud).³

This hadith demonstrates that the command to pray must be accompanied and accustomed to from an early age. In the context of students with intellectual disabilities, the command "muruu" (command) is not merely a verbal utterance, but also includes providing the means and methods to facilitate their understanding of prayer procedures according to their cognitive abilities.

However, significant challenges arise in its implementation in the field. Students with mild intellectual disabilities have significant intellectual disabilities, with IQ scores ranging from 50 to 70. Technically, they experience deficits in working memory and sequential thinking skills. Wulandari & Handayani in their research in the *Journal of Orthopedagoga* explained that children with intellectual disabilities have difficulty processing verbal-abstract instructions and have very short memory retention for non-visual information.⁴

Rofik in his research entitled *Visual Scaffolding to Improve Practical Skills of Students with Moderate Intellectual Disabilities* stated that the visual scaffolding strategy was able to significantly improve students' practical skills.⁵ Visual aids help students connect concepts to real-world actions, making the learning process more structured and understandable. This research is supported by Kurnia, Rifqia, Pratomo, and Riansyah, who concluded that the use of visual media in teaching children with intellectual disabilities can increase learning motivation, material comprehension, and student engagement in the learning process. Visual media makes learning materials more concrete and reduces students' cognitive load.⁶

A crucial problem in the practice of prayer for students with intellectual disabilities at Mutiara Bunda Special Needs School in Cirebon is the difficulty students have in synchronizing motor movements with memorized recitations. Prayer is an activity that involves complex, multi-step instructions. Based on preliminary studies, students often lose focus on the sequence of rak'ahs and make mistakes in transitioning between movements (for example, from bowing to i'tidal). Students' dependence on direct guidance from teachers remains very high, so the independence of worship, as targeted by the Islamic Religious Education (PAI) curriculum, has not been optimally achieved.

To overcome these obstacles, learning media that can act as cognitive scaffolding are needed. The scaffolding strategy, developed from Vygotsky's theory,

³Abu Daud Sulaiman bin Asy'ats bin Ishaq bin Baysir al-Azadiy Bin, Sunan Abi Dawud, *Book of Hadith* (Beirut: Al-Maktabah al-Ashriyyah, 2009). Hadith No. 495

⁴R. Wulandari and T. Handayani, "Using a Series of Picture Media to Improve Prayer Practice Skills in Children with Mild Mental Retardation," *Orthopedagogy Journal* 7, no. 1 (2021): 45–50.

⁵Rofik Rofik, "Visual Scaffolding to Improve Practical Skills of Students with Moderate Intellectual Disabilities," *journal article*, no. 2 (2020).

⁶F. Kurnia, M. R.; Rifqia, A.; Pratomo, W.; Riansyah, "The Influence of Visual Media in Learning for Children with Mental Retardation on Motivation and Understanding of Material," *Journal of Special Education (or Journal of Inclusive Education)* 18, no. 1 (2024): 45–58.

offers a solution by providing systematic support at the beginning of learning, which is then gradually reduced (fading). Arifin (2025) in his book *Scaffolding Strategy and Visual Media* (Deepublish) emphasizes that permanent visual cues are very effective in replacing verbal instructions that quickly fade from the memory of students with intellectual disabilities. Visual media in the form of scaffolding not only shows images of movement but also provides cues (instructions) that guide students from a state of "fully assisted" to "independent."⁷

The integration of visual media into scaffolding strategies allows students with mild intellectual disabilities at Mutiara Bunda Special Needs School in Cirebon to have tangible guidance readily available without having to wait for verbal instructions from the teacher. This aligns with the principle of dual coding theory, which states that simultaneously receiving information visually and verbally strengthens memory traces in children with intellectual disabilities.

B. Literature Review

I. Mild Mental Retardation and Sequential Memory Impairment

Mild intellectual disability is characterized by limited intellectual functioning (IQ 50-70) and adaptive behavior that emerges during development. One of the most prevalent cognitive impairments is a deficit in working memory.⁸ According to Wulandari & Handayani (2021), children with intellectual disabilities have limited capacity to store information temporarily while processing other information.

In the context of prayer practice, this manifests as sequential memory impairment, namely difficulty remembering the logical order of a multi-step procedure. Students may remember the ruku' movements but fail to recall information about the movements to be performed afterward (i'tidal). This limitation places a heavy cognitive burden on complex procedural information, requiring external aids to organize the movement structure.

2. Teori Scaffolding Lev Vygotsky

Scaffolding theory is based on the concept of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) developed by Lev Vygotsky. The ZPD is the distance between the actual level of development (independent ability) and the level of potential development (ability with assistance).⁹ Scaffolding is defined as systematic support provided by teachers or adults to help students move beyond the ZPD.

The main key to scaffolding is not the continuous provision of assistance, but rather the existence of a strategy. Fading (gradual reduction of assistance). In teaching prayer, the teacher provides full assistance at the beginning, then gradually reduces his

⁷Mr. Arifin, *Scaffolding Strategies and Visual Media in Special Needs Learning*, 1st ed. (Yogyakarta: Deepublish, 2025).

⁸ Daniel P. Hallahan, James M. Kauffman, and Paige C. Pullen, *Exceptional Learners: An Introduction to Special Education*, 13th ed. (Boston: Pearson Education, 2015), h. 148

⁹ Wahidah Wahidah et al., "The Role of Reason in Structuring Islamic Spirituality as a Framework for the Formation of Faith According to the Qur'an and the Sunnah," *AL GHAZALI: Jurnal Pendidikan dan Pemikiran Islam* 6, no. 1 (2026): h. 28.

or her involvement as the student's competence increases, until finally the support is completely removed when the student achieves independence.

3. Visual Scaffolding and Permanent Cues

Visual scaffolding is the use of visual aids to provide cognitive structure and support for students. Unlike verbal instructions, which are transient (quickly disappear and leave no trace), visual media provide permanent cues that remain available in the learning environment as long as students need them.

The use of this media is supported by Paivio's Dual Coding Theory, which states that the human brain processes information through two separate channels: verbal and visual. For students with intellectual disabilities, the verbal channel often experiences "congestion" due to its abstract nature. By adding visual information (images of prayer movements), the memory trace in the brain is strengthened. Visual cues serve as constant reminders that reduce cognitive load, so students don't have to struggle to "remember" the sequence, but can simply "see" and "follow."

4. Media Integration in Worship Learning

The integration of visual media into scaffolding strategies allows for a more concrete internalization of worship values. This medium bridges the abstract concept of prayer into concrete motor actions.¹⁰ By visualizing each stage of prayer step by step, students with intellectual disabilities can build self-confidence, reduce anxiety about getting the sequence wrong, and gradually reduce their dependence on the teacher's verbal commands (prompt dependency).

C. Method

1. Types and Approaches of Research

This research uses an approach qualitative with the method descriptive. A qualitative approach was chosen because the researcher wanted to explore and understand the phenomenon of media use. Visual scaffolding in-depth study in the natural context of the school environment. The descriptive method aims to provide a systematic overview of the implementation process, the obstacles that arise, and the results achieved by students with mild intellectual disabilities in prayer practice without manipulating variables.

2.. Research Location and Subjects

The research was conducted in Mutiara Bunda Special Needs School Cirebon. The research subjects (informants) were determined using purposive sampling techniques, which consisted of:

- a. Students with Mild Mental Retardation: As the main subject that is the target of media implementation.
- b. Islamic Religious Education Teacher (PAI): As a practitioner who implements scaffolding strategies.

¹⁰ Nur Ali Subhan et al., "Student-Centered Learning Approach from Ibn Khaldun's Perspective: A Philosophical Study of the Concept of Learning in Islamic Education," *AL GHAZALI: Jurnal Pendidikan dan Pemikiran Islam* 6, no. 1 (2026): h. 141.

- c. Class Teacher/Principal : As an additional source of data regarding the development of students' adaptive behavior.

3. Data Collection Instruments and Techniques

The researcher acts as a key instrument supported by the following data collection tools:

- a. Participatory Observation: Researchers were directly involved in the learning process of prayer practice to observe how students responded to visual cues (permanent cues) and how teacher assistance was gradually reduced (fading).
- b. In-depth Interview: Conducted with Islamic Education teachers to explore perspectives on changes in student behavior, media effectiveness, and obstacles faced during the scaffolding process.
- c. Documentation: Data collection in the form of activity photos, media designs visual scaffolding used, as well as progress notes (portfolio) of student worship practices.

4. Research Design Architecture (Problem Solving Flow)

This research design follows a problem-solving flow illustrated in the following stages:

- a. Pre-Intervention Stage (Baseline): Analyze students' initial obstacles in performing prayer movements without media, to measure the level of verbal dependence that exists.
- b. Implementation Stage (Intervention): Applying media visual scaffolding which is placed in a strategic position (aligned with the student's line of sight when standing and prostrating). Here, the teacher provides full support (high support).
- c. Adaptation and Fading Stage: Teachers began to systematically reduce the intensity of verbal instruction. Researchers observed whether students began to shift to using visual cues as self-guides.
- d. Evaluation Stage: Assess students' ability to complete a series of prayers with minimal or no assistance at all.

Data Analysis Techniques

The data obtained were analyzed using a model Miles and Huberman, which cover:

- Data Reduction: Sorting, focusing, and simplifying raw data from the field regarding student behavior during prayer practice.
- Data Presentation (Data Display): Presenting data in the form of descriptive narratives and development observation tables to facilitate understanding of the phenomena being studied.
- Conclusion Drawing: Formulate final conclusions about the influence visual scaffolding towards students' understanding and independence in prayer practices.

To ensure data validity, this study uses technical triangulation (comparing observation data with interviews and documents) and source triangulation (compare

the information from the Islamic Education teacher with direct observations of student behavior).

D. Results and Discussion

Student Baseline Conditions and Practice Barriers

Before media implementation visual scaffolding Observation results showed that all subjects (students with mild intellectual disabilities) had a very high level of verbal dependency (high prompt dependency). The main obstacles found included:

- **Sequential Failure:** Students are able to perform movements (such as prostrating), but often stop for a long time or do the wrong movement afterwards (such as standing up straight away without sitting between the two prostrations).
- **High Cognitive Load:** Students appear tense when trying to remember the readings and movements, which results in a loss of focus on the order of the rakaat.
- **Effects of Verbal Instructions:** The teacher's verbal instructions are transient. As soon as the teacher's voice stops, students lose operational guidance.

Implementation of Visual Media Scaffolding

The intervention was carried out by placing visual media in the form of large, contrasting colored prayer movement sequence cards at strategic points in the prostration area.¹¹

The implementation process is carried out through three support phases:

1. **High Support Phase:** The teacher provides verbal instructions accompanied by visual cues on the media. The media serves as a bridge between verbal commands and motor actions.
2. **Permanent Cues Phase:** Teachers began to reduce verbal instructions. Students were directed to independently glance at visual media whenever they forgot the movement sequence. Dual Coding Theory, this visual information helps students “see” the abstract structure of prayer in a concrete way.
3. **Fading Phase (Reduced Assistance):** Teachers physically distance themselves from students and merely observe from a distance. Support now shifts entirely from teacher instruction to visual media.

The Impact of Media Use on Student Understanding

Based on observation data and interviews with Islamic Religious Education teachers, there were significant changes after using media visual scaffolding:

- **Improved Movement Accuracy:** Movement transition errors (such as bowing to i'tidal or prostration to tahiyat) decreased by up to 70%. The persistent visual cues became automatic reminders for students' sequential memory.

¹¹ Assyifa Qori Lhegina, Wasith Achadi, and Rosendah Dwi Maulaya, “Internalization of Character Education Values at the Muhammadiyah Boarding School (MBS) Yogyakarta Elementary School in the Perspective of Al-Ghazali’s Educational Thought,,” *AL GHAZALI: Jurnal Pendidikan dan Pemikiran Islam* 6, no. 1 (2026): 1–15.

- Verbal Dependence Reduction: Students begin to demonstrate motor initiative. They no longer wait for the teacher's voice cues, but instead move based on the flow of the images they see.
- Achieving Independence: Strategy fading proven effective. Even with the visual aids in place, students' independence in completing a series of obligatory prayers increased. Students felt more confident because they had a stable visual "map" in front of them.

E. Discussion

The results of the study indicate that the use of visual scaffolding media at Mutiara Bunda Special School in Cirebon significantly improved students' understanding of prayer practices. Before the use of visual scaffolding media, students experienced difficulty systematically understanding the sequence of prayer movements. The most dominant obstacles were limited sequential memory and a high dependence on the teacher's verbal instructions. When the teacher stopped providing direct instructions, most students experienced confusion in determining the next movement. This condition indicates that learning that relies solely on verbal methods is not effective enough for students with intellectual disabilities. Therefore, a more concrete and easily understood learning approach is needed.

In the implementation stage, visual scaffolding media is used in the form of images of the sequence of prayer movements which are arranged systematically and placed in strategic positions in the learning space.¹² The media displays the stages of prayer movements, from takbiratul ihram (taking the position of the head in prayer), bowing, i'tidal (prostration), prostration, sitting between the two prostrations, and greeting. Islamic Religious Education teachers use the media as a visual guide to accompany the learning process of prayer practices. Initially, the teacher provides verbal instructions while pointing to images of prayer movements on the media. This strategy aims to help students connect verbal commands with visual representations of prayer movements.

As the learning process progresses, the teacher begins to gradually reduce the intensity of verbal instructions through a fading strategy. During this stage, students are encouraged to pay more attention to the visual media provided as a guide for performing prayer movements.¹³ Observations show that students are beginning to be able to follow the sequence of prayer movements by looking at the provided images without having to wait for direct instructions from the teacher. This demonstrates that visual scaffolding can function as a cognitive aid, helping students understand the structure of prayer movements more concretely.

¹² Miftahul Huda, "Developing Multicultural Values-Based Teaching Materials for Developmental Psychology in Islamic Education at the Islamic University of Depok," *AL GHAZALI: Jurnal Pendidikan dan Pemikiran Islam* 6, no. 1 (2026): 245–260.

¹³ Muhammad Azhari et al., "Love and Compassion from the Perspective of the Qur'an and Hadith as Shapers of Effective Pedagogical Relationships in Islamic Education," *AL GHAZALI: Jurnal Pendidikan dan Pemikiran Islam* 6, no. 2 (2026): 296–309.

Furthermore, the use of visual scaffolding has been shown to reduce students' cognitive load during the learning process. Before using the media, students appeared tense and often stopped mid-prayer due to difficulty remembering the sequence of movements. However, after using the visual media, students became more confident in performing the prayer. They were able to follow each stage of the movement more systematically because they had a visual guide that they could see directly. Thus, visual scaffolding serves as an external reminder that helps strengthen students' sequential memory.

The research results also showed an increase in students' independence in practicing prayer. In the early stages of learning, students relied heavily on teacher guidance for each movement. However, after several uses of visual scaffolding, students began to be able to perform prayer movements independently simply by looking at the provided images. In fact, on several occasions, students were able to complete a series of prayers without direct teacher assistance. This indicates that the scaffolding strategy successfully helped students achieve a higher level of independence in their worship practices.

Changes in student behavior are also evident in the increased orderliness in transitioning between prayer movements. Before using the media, students often made mistakes in the sequence of movements, such as standing immediately after prostrating without sitting between the two prostrations. However, after using visual scaffolding media, these errors began to decrease significantly. Students became more orderly in following the sequence of movements because each stage was clearly visualized in the learning media. Thus, learning the practice of prayer became more systematic and easier for students to understand. Overall, the results of the study indicate that visual scaffolding media functions not only as a learning aid but also as a means to improve understanding of practical worship concepts. The media helps students connect abstract concepts of worship with real motor actions. This is especially important for students with mild intellectual disabilities who tend to understand concrete information more easily than abstract information.

The findings of this study indicate that the use of visual scaffolding media can significantly contribute to improving students with mild intellectual disabilities' understanding of prayer practices. This aligns with Vygotsky's scaffolding theory, which emphasizes the importance of providing gradual learning support to help students reach higher levels of development. In the context of this study, visual media serves as a form of cognitive support that helps students systematically understand the structure of prayer movements.

The use of visual media is also related to the Dual Coding theory which states that information will be easier to understand if presented through two channels at once, namely verbal and visual.¹⁴In learning prayer practices, verbal instructions given

¹⁴ Fitri Handayani, "Rahmatan Lil Alamin-Oriented Development Design of the Pancasila Student Profile Strengthening Project Based on the Three Educational Centers in Building Student Character.," *AL GHAZALI: Jurnal Pendidikan dan Pemikiran Islam* 6, no. 1 (2026): 152–169.

by the teacher are reinforced with visual representations in the form of images of prayer movements. The combination of these two forms of information helps students develop a stronger understanding of the sequence of movements to be performed.

Furthermore, the implementation of fading strategies in scaffolding has also proven effective in increasing student learning independence. In the initial stages of learning, teachers provide full support through verbal instructions and visual guides. However, this assistance is gradually reduced so students can learn to rely on visual media as a guide. This process allows students to develop adaptive skills that are crucial for the development of their independence.

The results of this study also show that visual scaffolding can help reduce students' cognitive load during the learning process. Students with mild intellectual disabilities have limited working memory, making it difficult to process complex information simultaneously. With visual scaffolding that clearly presents the sequence of movements, students no longer need to mentally memorize all the stages of prayer. They can simply follow the visual guide, making the learning process simpler and easier to understand.

These findings reinforce previous research, which found that the use of visual media in teaching children with special needs can increase student motivation, understanding of the material, and engagement in the learning process. Visual media helps make learning material more concrete, making it easier for students with intellectual disabilities to understand. Therefore, integrating visual media into religious practice learning can be an effective strategy for improving the quality of religious education for students with mild intellectual disabilities.

Results Discussion Table

No	Analysis Aspects	Conditions Before Using Media	Visual Scaffolding Implementation	Impact on Learning
1	Understanding the Sequence of Prayer Movements	Students often forget the sequence of movements and make transition errors.	Visual media displays images of the sequence of prayer movements systematically.	It is easier for students to follow the stages of prayer correctly.
2	Dependence on Teachers	Students rely heavily on the teacher's verbal instructions.	Teachers use pictures as visual guides while reducing verbal instructions.	Students' dependence on teacher instructions decreases

No	Analysis Aspects	Conditions Before Using Media	Visual Scaffolding Implementation	Impact on Learning
3	Cognitive Load	Students have difficulty remembering movements and reading simultaneously.	Visual media helps simplify information	Students' cognitive load becomes lighter
4	Independence in Prayer Practice	Students are unable to complete prayers without the teacher's help	Fading strategy is implemented gradually	Students are able to perform prayers more independently
5	Orderly Movement (Tumakninah)	Movements are often out of sequence and rushed.	Visual media shows the stages of movement clearly	Student movements become more orderly and structured

The discussion table above systematically illustrates the changes that occurred in the learning process of prayer practices for students with mild intellectual disabilities after the implementation of visual scaffolding media at Mutiara Bunda Special Needs School, Cirebon. Each aspect analyzed showed significant differences between the conditions before and after the media was implemented in the learning process. These changes reflect how visual media can function as an effective cognitive aid in helping students understand the sequence of prayer movements in a more concrete and structured manner.

In terms of understanding the sequence of prayer movements, before using visual scaffolding media, students often had difficulty remembering the stages of the movements in sequence.¹⁵ They can perform a specific movement, such as prostration or bowing, but often don't know what movement to do next. This indicates a difficulty with sequential memory, a common characteristic of students with mild intellectual disabilities. After using visual scaffolding, students receive guidance in the form of images of the sequence of prayer movements presented systematically. With this visual representation, students can directly see the stages of the movements required, making it easier for them to follow the prayer flow correctly.

Regarding teacher dependency, before the use of visual media, students were highly dependent on verbal instructions from the Islamic Education teacher. Each prayer movement required direct instruction from the teacher, making the learning process highly dependent on the teacher's presence and guidance. This condition indicates a high level of prompt dependency, or dependence on instructions. After the implementation of visual scaffolding, the teacher began directing students to use images

¹⁵ Mukhlis Mukhlis et al., "Reorientation of Islamic Religious Education in the Global Era in Facing the Challenges of Globalization, Multiculturalism, and Radicalism," *AL GHAZALI: Jurnal Pendidikan dan Pemikiran Islam* 6, no. 1 (2026): 170–200.

as the primary guide in performing prayer movements. As the fading strategy was implemented, the teacher gradually reduced verbal instructions so that students became accustomed to following visual guidance independently.

In terms of cognitive load, before using visual media, students appeared to have difficulty processing information related to prayer movements and recitations simultaneously. Students often appeared hesitant, stopped mid-movement, or lost focus when trying to remember the sequence of the next movement. This indicates that the cognitive load they were required to process was too high.¹⁶With the use of visual scaffolding, information about the sequence of prayer movements is presented in a simpler and more concrete way. Students no longer have to mentally memorize all the steps because they can see the visual guide. This directly helps reduce students' cognitive load during the learning process.

Regarding the independence of prayer practice, before the use of visual media, most students were unable to perform the prayer sequence independently. They required teacher guidance for each movement. After the implementation of visual scaffolding and the gradual implementation of the fading strategy, students began to demonstrate increased independence. They were able to perform several stages of prayer movements without direct assistance from the teacher. In fact, on several occasions, students were able to complete a series of prayers using only the provided visual guide. This demonstrates the important role of visual scaffolding in helping students develop adaptive skills in their worship practices.

Regarding the aspect of orderliness of movement or *tumakninah*, before the use of visual media, students often performed prayer movements out of sequence or in a rush. Transition errors between movements, such as standing immediately after prostrating without sitting between two prostrations, often occurred in students' prayer practice. After the use of visual scaffolding media, each stage of the prayer movement was clearly visualized in the form of easy-to-understand images. With this guidance, students became more orderly in following the sequence of prayer movements. The movements performed also became more structured and in accordance with the correct prayer procedures. Overall, the discussion table shows that the use of visual scaffolding media has a positive impact on the process of learning prayer practices for students with mild intellectual disabilities. Visual media not only helps improve students' understanding of the sequence of prayer movements but also reduces dependence on teacher instructions, reduces cognitive load, and increases independence and order of movement in performing prayer. Thus, the integration of visual media in Islamic Religious Education learning in special schools can be an effective pedagogical strategy in supporting the cognitive and spiritual development of students with special needs.

¹⁶Muhammad Noor Alamsyah and M Anshari, "Sufism of Ahl Al-Sunnah Wa Al-Jama 'ah (ASWAJA) Scholars of the Nusantara: A Comparative Study of the Thought of Shaykh Arsyad Al-Banjari, Shaykh Nawawi Al-Bantani, and Kiai Haji Hasyim Asy 'Ari," *AL GHAZALI: Jurnal Pendidikan dan Pemikiran Islam* 6, no. 1 (2026): 201–221.

Research at Mutiara Bunda Special Needs School in Cirebon confirms that sequential memory impairments in students with mild intellectual disabilities do not indicate a loss of learning ability, but rather a need for a more stable instructional structure. The use of visual scaffolding significantly reduces the gap between students' actual developmental levels and the expected competency targets in the Islamic Religious Education (PAI) curriculum.

1. Transformation of Instruction: From Verbal to Visual

The reliance on verbal instructions (prompt dependency) found in the early stages of the study was a result of the transient nature of verbal instructions. For students with intellectual disabilities, the teacher's voice demands a high speed of information processing. Conversely, visual scaffolding provide permanent cues. In accordance with Dual Coding Theory, when verbal information ("Allahu Akbar") is accompanied by a visual image of the movement (ruku'), there is a strengthening of the signal in the student's brain which makes it easier to recall memory when the movement transition is carried out.

2. Effectiveness of Fading Strategy

The success of this research lies in the implementation of the strategy fading (reduced assistance). Scaffolding that is not reduced will actually create new dependencies. At Mutiara Bunda Special School, teachers systematically began moving students away from the standing position and reducing the volume of their voices. As a result, students began to use visual media as their primary reference. Visual media functioned as "scaffolding" that kept the prayer structure from collapsing even when teacher assistance was removed. This proves Vygotsky's theory that with the right support within the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), students can achieve independence previously thought impossible.

Conclusion

Based on the results of data analysis and empirical findings obtained during the research process at SLB Mutiara Bunda Cirebon, it can be concluded that the use of visual scaffolding media makes a significant contribution in helping students with mild intellectual disabilities understand the practice of prayer. The implementation of visual scaffolding media at the school is realized through the use of permanent and structured visual cues at each stage of prayer movements. This media functions as a visual guide that directly accompanies students in carrying out each sequence of worship, thus bridging the limitations often experienced by students with mild intellectual disabilities, especially in terms of sequential memory or the ability to systematically remember the sequence of steps. With this visual support, students gain a more concrete picture of the stages of prayer movements, from takbiratul ihram to salam. In addition, the use of visual scaffolding media has been proven to reduce various cognitive barriers that students have previously faced. Visual media helps simplify information previously conveyed verbally by teachers, so that students are not entirely dependent on verbal instructions that are often abstract and difficult to understand. With clear and repetitive visual representations, students' cognitive load is lightened because they can process information through direct observation. This makes the process of learning prayer practices easier for students to follow, while increasing their focus and involvement during the learning activities.

The application of the fading strategy in the use of visual scaffolding has shown positive results in the development of students' adaptive independence. This strategy is carried out by gradually reducing visual aids when students have demonstrated an increased understanding of the sequence of prayer movements. Through this process, students are not only able to imitate prayer movements mechanically, but also begin to understand the order and continuity between movements in the prayer service. Thus, students can carry out each movement transition more orderly and calmly in accordance with the principle of *tumakninah* in prayer. This improvement in ability indicates that visual scaffolding media plays a role not only as a learning aid, but also as an effective means of fostering independence and a deeper understanding of worship practices in students with mild intellectual disabilities.

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