



## **Religious Guidance in Improving Prayer Skills in Students with Autism**

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### **Abstract**

This study aims to determine the implementation, supporting and inhibiting factors, and results of religious guidance in improving prayer skills among autistic students at SLB (Special School) Negeri Cileunyi Bandung. The method used in this study was qualitative descriptive with data collection techniques conducted through observation and interviews. The results of this study indicate that the implementation of religious guidance by guidance counselors at SLB Negeri Cileunyi can improve the prayer skills of autistic students. This is demonstrated by the implementation of various direct methods, including group and individual strategies, classical methods, and drill or habituation methods. There are supporting and inhibiting factors within the elements of religious guidance. The results obtained show that students have improved in terms of prayer movements and recitations, as well as social interaction, communication, behavior, sensory motor skills, and independence.

**Keywords:** Religious Guidance; Prayer; Autism.

### **Abstrak**

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui pelaksanaan, faktor pendukung dan penghambat, dan hasil bimbingan keagamaan dalam meningkatkan kemampuan shalat pada siswa autis di SLB (Sekolah Luar Biasa) Negeri Cileunyi Bandung. Metode yang digunakan pada penelitian ini adalah deskriptif kualitatif dengan teknik pengumpulan data dilakukan secara observasi dan wawancara. Hasil penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa pelaksanaan bimbingan keagamaan yang dilaksanakan oleh guru pembimbing di SLB Negeri Cileunyi dapat meningkatkan kemampuan shalat pada siswa autis. Hal ini ditunjukkan dengan adanya pelaksanaan yang dilakukan dengan berbagai metode secara langsung baik menggunakan strategi kelompok juga individu, metode klasikal, dan metode drill atau pembiasaan. Terdapat faktor pendukung dan penghambat yang terdapat di dalam unsur-unsur bimbingan keagamaan. Adapun hasil yang diperoleh siswa mengalami peningkatan terhadap gerakan dan bacaan shalat juga terhadap interaksi sosial, komunikasi, perilaku, sensorik motorik, dan kemandirian siswa.

**Kata Kunci:** Bimbingan Keagamaan; Shalat; Autis.

## INTRODUCTION

Allah SWT has created humans in the best form and different from one another. In this best form, besides having various advantages, they are also surrounded by various shortcomings. These shortcomings can be physical or mental, such as autistic children and other children with special needs (ABK).

Autism is a syndrome or a collection of various symptoms of behavioral and developmental disorders. This collection of symptoms includes deviations in social development, communication disorders, lack of concern for one's surroundings, and repetitive behavior. In other words, there are abnormalities in emotions, intellect, and abilities. Autism is defined as a condition in which a child acts as they please, both in their thinking and behavior (Yatim, 2003: 9-10).

The number of children born with autism has become a global issue. The World Health Organization (WHO) states that 1 in 100 children are born with autism. Based on data from the Central Statistics Agency (BPS), out of 84.4 million Indonesian children, around 0.79 percent or 650,000 children have disabilities. In March 2021, out of 1,355 child victims of violence, 110 of them were known to have disabilities (Vilda and Devi, 2023: 36). The Special School Statistics Data Center recorded that the number of autistic students in Indonesia in 2018 was 128,510 (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2017).

Prayer is the foundation of a Muslim's religion. Dr. Abdullah Nashih explains that people who diligently perform prayers will be protected from useless words and deeds. As stated in the Quran, Surah Al-Ankabut verse 45, which reads:

أَتْلُ مَا أُوحِيَ إِلَيْكَ مِنَ الْكِتَابِ وَأَقِمِ الصَّلَاةَ إِنَّ الصَّلَاةَ تَنْهَى عَنِ الْفَحْشَاءِ وَالْمُنْكَرِ وَلَذِكْرُ اللَّهِ أَكْبَرُ وَاللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ مَا تَصْنَعُونَ ٤٥

Meaning: "Read (Prophet Muhammad) the Book (Al-Qur'an) that has been revealed to you and establish prayer. Indeed, prayer prevents (acts of) immorality and wrongdoing. Indeed, remembering Allah (prayer) is greater (in virtue than other acts of worship). Allah knows what you do."

The development of autism should not be ignored, especially considering the obligations of every human being. A person with autism who is Muslim still has the obligation to perform prayer. Often, people with autism need the help of others to teach them the various movements, recitations, and requirements of prayer. This help comes from parents or other people such as guidance counselors. The duty of a guidance counselor, according to the Islamic perspective, is to be responsible for the development of their students by developing all of their abilities, including affective, cognitive, and psychomotor potential.

Religious guidance for autistic students carried out at the Cileunyi Bandung State Special School is different from guidance for other normal children. The counselor provides guidance through direct practice that is carried out repeatedly. This repetition is intended to indirectly instill a habit of performing prayer in students. This is due to the condition of autistic students who have internal and external barriers. Religious guidance is carried out by all students at all levels of education in one class. Although guiding autistic students is not as perfect as guiding other normal students, considering the importance of religious guidance in improving prayer skills, the researcher conducted a study entitled "Religious Guidance in Improving the Prayer Skills of Autistic Students."

The researcher found references from previous studies as a basis for rationalization in the research in addition to the background described above. First, a thesis by Ahmad Ulil Kirom (2021), entitled "The Role of Religious Guidance in Improving the Prayer Skills of Autistic Children." The similarity between the studies is that they both implement religious guidance to improve the worship skills of autistic children. The differences between the studies are the problem formulation, methods, and research locations.

Second, Linda Cantika Sari's thesis (2019), entitled "The Role of Religious Guidance in Shaping the Independence of Children with Disabilities." The religious guidance provided included guidance on prayer, guidance on reading and writing the Qur'an, and guidance on good character. The methods used were individual methods, group guidance methods, visual methods, lecture methods, drill or exercise methods, and imitation methods. The results of the study can be said to be successful, as indicated by changes in the children's prayer practices. The similarity with the researcher's study is the implementation of religious guidance. The difference is that the researcher focused on prayer guidance for autistic students only.

Third, the thesis by Hifdiyah Nur Azizah (2023), entitled "Islamic Religious Guidance to Shape the Religious Character of Students with Intellectual Disabilities Using the Habituation Method at SLB ABC Muhammadiyah Sumedang". The results of Islamic religious guidance that has been implemented at SLB ABC Muhammadiyah can be seen from the program created based on issues relevant to the conditions of children with special needs. The similarity with this research is the Islamic religious guidance program implemented in the research. The difference between the two studies is the research results, where the previous study discussed the formation of religious character in students with intellectual disabilities.

Fourth, a journal by Rafikah Al Azizi and Afrinaldi (2023), entitled "Teaching Prayer to Children with Autism at SLB Autisma YPPA Bukit Tinggi". The results of the research conducted at SLB Autisma YPPA Bukit Tinggi discuss the implementation of prayer learning for autistic children and

consist of learning objectives, learning materials and methods, learning media, and learning evaluation. The similarity between the studies is the implementation and the inhibiting and supporting factors of the research. The difference between the studies is the location of the research in this journal.

Fifth, a journal by M. Idam Kusdiana (2016) entitled "Improving Prayer Skills Through Demonstration Methods for Autistic Children in Grade XI at the Bina Anggita Special School for Autism in Yogyakarta." The research discusses improving prayer skills, namely prayer through demonstration methods in cycles I and II, which showed an improvement. In cycle I, the subjects obtained a score of 67.8, while in cycle II, they obtained a score of 90.1 from a pre-action score of 42.8. This improvement was 47.3 percent, 25 percent from the pre-action in cycle I, and 22.3 percent from cycle I in cycle II. The post-test results of cycle II showed that the minimum completion criteria (KKM) of 70 had been achieved, and the results were very good. Therefore, the intervention could be stopped.

The research formulated the problem in accordance with the background described above. This study discussed three problems, namely: (1) How is religious guidance implemented to improve the prayer skills of autistic students at the Cileunyi State Special School in Bandung? (2) What are the supporting and inhibiting factors of religious guidance in improving the prayer skills of autistic students at the Cileunyi Bandung State Special School? (3) What are the results of religious guidance in improving the prayer skills of autistic students at the Cileunyi Bandung State Special School?

This study applies the constructivism interpretivism paradigm with a qualitative approach. The method used in this study is qualitative descriptive. This method is used to facilitate the collection of data on the research problem.

## **THEORETICAL BASIC**

There are several theoretical foundations in this study that will be explained, namely the theory of religious guidance, the theory of prayer, and the theory of autism. The religious guidance referred to is Islamic religious guidance. According to Faqih (2001: 62), Islamic religious guidance is an effort to provide assistance to counselees or clients so that they can live their lives in accordance with the commands and instructions of Allah SWT, thereby achieving happiness in this world and the hereafter (Faqih, 2001: 62).

Religious guidance based on spirituality is needed to find meaning in life by spreading a deeper relationship with Allah SWT. Humans have several dimensions of responsibility, namely the vertical dimension and the horizontal dimension. The vertical dimension requires humans to establish a good relationship with the Creator, and the horizontal dimension requires humans to have good morals with fellow humans. This reveals the fact that a person realizes their existence as a creature of Allah SWT and will align their life with the right path. Thus, according to Daradjat (2005: 2), religious

guidance is an effort to provide assistance to someone who is experiencing difficulties, both physical and spiritual, related to their present and future life. This assistance includes mental and spiritual support. The purpose of this assistance is so that the person concerned can overcome their difficulties with their own abilities, through the encouragement of faith and piety to God Almighty.

Prayer is a special form of worship. In Islam, prayer is the second pillar of Islam. Therefore, after reciting the Shahada, a person is obliged to pray. Prayer has a positive impact on the body and soul of humans.

Prayer is also a pillar of religion; someone who performs prayer has built the foundation of religion. Conversely, someone who abandons prayer has destroyed the foundation of religion (Sentot Haryanto, 2003: 156). In addition, prayer absorbs positive energy for the body and spirit, as well as for the environment. When observed carefully, prayer can transfer many things related to real life, such as order, cleanliness, discipline, courage, obedience, strength, harmony, leadership, humility, health, purity, and of course sincerity (Wijayakusuma, 1996: 26).

The Prophet Muhammad SAW gave the following warning regarding prayer:

*"The first deed to be examined among my servants on the Day of Judgment is prayer. If their prayer is correct, then all their deeds will be good, and if it is not correct, then all their deeds will be bad or ruined" (H. R. Thabarani).*

Prayer is very important in building the soul and cleansing the spirit, because it is the spirit that motivates humans to do things in their daily lives. If a person's spirit and soul remain clean and pure and they constantly maintain a relationship with the Creator, that person will have feelings, thoughts, behaviors, desires, and actions that are good and pure (Wijayakusuma, 1996: 29). Thus, prayer should be taught in accordance with Islamic law. It is imperative for parents and teachers to introduce and teach prayer (Tahido, 2004). Prayer must be introduced to children from an early age, because prayer is one way to remember Allah and express gratitude to Allah SWT. If children are accustomed to prayer from an early age, they will develop a habit of respecting time, because prayer is a form of worship that has specific times (Hasan, 2000: 2).

Agustian (2001:28) states that prayer guidance can increase a person's religious spiritual intelligence or emotional spiritual quotient (ESQ). This guidance must be carried out gradually and consistently in order to increase a person's faith and piety. Then, the individual's behavior will change for the better, for example, becoming disciplined, trustworthy, independent, honest, patient, magnanimous, having a purpose in life, and being open-minded.

Children with autism have disorders in the form of difficulties in communicating, learning, socializing, and taking care of themselves. Autistic children also perform unusual actions that are characteristic of autism, such as echolalia or repetitive sounds, hand flapping, hitting or scratching themselves, and biting. These actions are due to the child's inability to express their desires and feelings to others.

Autism cannot be described as a mental illness. This is because autism is a condition in which a person has developmental impairments, both physically and psychologically. There are also varying degrees of autism, from severe to mild. Therefore, children with autism cannot be considered mentally deficient. Some of them

are capable of taking responsibility and can develop, even though it may seem slow compared to normal children in general. Therefore, they cannot be said to have a mental disability and have hope for recovery. This is proven by the large number of children with autism who excel and produce works that are recognized as normal human beings in general (Setiawan, et al., 2018: 163).

In line with this, clients as students and mentors as teachers are important elements in learning activities. Teachers who assist children with autism must be committed, meticulous, persistent, and creative in their educational approach. In implementing learning or guidance, the following principles of education and teaching for autistic children must be applied: structured, patterned, programmed, consistent, and continuous. Therefore, accompanying teachers must have knowledge of the basics of education and how to teach autistic students (Mega and Nurhastuti, 2018:23-34).

## RESULTS

The Cileunyi State Special School (SLB) in Bandung Regency is a special school that handles children with special needs. This SLB was initially established as a training SLB for students of the Bandung State Special Education Teacher Training College (SPGPLB). The purpose of its establishment was none other than to meet the practical needs of students in handling children with special needs. According to the information obtained, the Cileunyi State Special School in Bandung has a vision that is described as follows: "With faith and piety, the Cileunyi State Special School in Bandung Regency will develop students who are skilled, independent, and accomplished by 2024."

The education level curriculum at SLB N Cileunyi consists of kindergarten, SDLB, SMPLB, and SMALB levels with programs that have been formulated by the school. The activity programs at SLB N Cileunyi consist of three programs, namely the flagship program, the vocational program, and the self-development program. Religious guidance in improving prayer skills is included in the self-development program, which is a derivative of character building through routine activities such as flag ceremonies, class duty, sports, congregational prayers, and watering plants. The program is implemented in the Al-Fatih autistic or rombel class by guidance teachers led by Amin Sarjono, S.Pd., and other teachers. There are 39 students in the Al-Fatih rombel class, with 10 students at the SMPLB level.

The guidance is carried out using a classical group method, but the handling is left to the homeroom guidance teacher. In its implementation, there are certainly supporting and inhibiting factors that will affect the results of the guidance itself. This research was conducted on three autistic students in phase D, namely junior high school levels VII to IX at SLB Negeri Cileunyi. These students can be initialed as SAR, MRC, and AF. The informants in this study were the head of the Al-Fatih homeroom, the Al-Fatih homeroom guidance counselor who was involved in the students' learning process, and the students' parents. The guidance teachers interviewed were the homeroom teacher named Amin, the homeroom teacher of the student with the initials SAR named Ayi Syarifah Julianti, the homeroom teacher of the student with the initials MRC named Novi Dwi Irianti, and the homeroom teacher

of the student with the initials AF named Asep Ahmad Kurnia. Furthermore, the students' parents were Susanti, Anne Marliani, and Anisya M.

### **The Implementation of Religious Guidance in Improving the Prayer Skills of Students with Autism**

The religious guidance referred to here is Islamic religious guidance. Islamic religious guidance is an effort to provide assistance to clients so that they can live their lives in accordance with the commands and instructions of Allah SWT, thereby obtaining happiness in this world and the hereafter (Faqih, 2001: 62). As explained by Lukman and Lilis Satriah (2024), religious guidance emphasizes efforts to prevent problems from occurring in a person. Religious counseling is a process of providing assistance. In other words, guidance does not determine or compel individuals, but only helps them. Religious guidance in performing prayers for autistic students at SLB Negeri Cileunyi Bandung is provided in the form of guidance services in daily teaching and learning activities continuously during circle time before students enter their respective classes. This is because the services are provided not only to students with problems, but to all students in the Al-Fatih class. As defined by Moh Surya (Guntara & Astika, 2021:36), guidance is a process of providing continuous and systematic assistance by a mentor to the mentee in order to achieve independence in understanding oneself and reaching the maximum level of development.

The responsibility for each student in this guidance process is the responsibility of all Al-Fatih homeroom counselors. However, in particular, counselors are responsible for the students in their own classes. This is because autistic students are not yet able to practice congregational prayer and can be easily monitored by the homeroom teacher in charge so that even though the guidance is carried out in groups, an individual approach is still used. As stated in the theory of education and teaching for autistic children according to Biran and Nurhastuti (2018: 34), an individual approach and program are used. Meanwhile, the method used is a combination of existing methods, where the application is adjusted to the conditions and abilities of the child as well as the teaching material provided to the child. In the process of collecting data related to the implementation of prayer guidance, the researcher took three student samples in phase D, namely junior high school level students with a diagnosis of moderate autism but with different characteristics between students. The three students can be initialed as SAR, MRC, and AF.

First, SAR never missed school during the learning process, except when there were obstacles such as illness, menstruation, or unstable emotions. These unstable emotions were also due to puberty. (Susanti, interview, March 22, 2024). Birani and Nurhastuti (2018: 19-20) explain that there are several problems that often arise in autistic children that can affect or become problems in the learning process, one of which is experienced by SAR, namely: first, emotional problems, which involve unstable emotional conditions, such as screaming, crying, laughing for no reason, rebelling, tantrums, destructive behavior, raging, and so on. Second, health issues, where learning activities are adjusted to the child's health condition. If the student's health condition is not good, learning activities cannot be carried out.

Second, MRC has social difficulties. Socially, MRC is different from other children her age; she still behaves like a small child and prefers to be friends with girls. Additionally, in terms of communication, MRC can only converse with someone who shares the same frequency of conversation as him (Anne Marliani, interview, May 22, 2024). This is in line with Aqila (2010: 56), who states that autism is the inability of a person to socialize and speak like other children. This causes MRC to have problems in the area of social interaction (Hadis, 2006: 46). Autistic children cannot make eye contact and avoid looking at other people. They are not interested in playing with their friends and prefer to play alone. Based on this classification of social interaction, MRC can be grouped into the passive category, which is seen in children who accept social approaches and can play with other children if the play pattern suits them (Agustyawati, 2017).

Third, AF was diagnosed with autism at the age of three with difficulties in speaking compared to other children his age. As the language development of autistic children is very slow or even non-existent, their language disorders cause them to appear deaf, have difficulty speaking, or have lost their ability to speak after having previously been able to speak (Hadis, 2006: 46). However, with the efforts of his parents, AF can now speak fluently. In his daily life, AF has a calm nature, with repetitive communication patterns and behaviors (Anisya M, interview, June 3, 2024). In addition, it is difficult for AF to understand explanations or interpret information provided by others. AF does not understand what he is talking about, for example, he is not allowed to hold his chin, but he repeatedly holds his chin on his own (Asep Ahmad Kurnia, interview, April 1, 2024). This is still a problem in the field of communication according to Hadis (2006: 46), sometimes the words used do not match their meaning, often babbling repeatedly in a language that cannot be understood. In addition, autistic children also use body language more often, autistic children often pull other people's hands to show something or get the person to do what they want.

The implementation of religious guidance carried out by the three students above varies according to the conditions, characteristics of the children, and guidance from parents at home. This religious guidance is not only carried out at school. However, it must also be carried out at home and guided by parents/guardians who are responsible in a consistent and continuous manner. This is in accordance with Biran and Nurhastuti (2018: 23-34), who state that parents are also required to be consistent in their children's education, namely by standardizing what autistic children learn at school and at home. Parents must also be consistent in educating their children. This means acting and treating children in a manner consistent with the educational program developed jointly by the counselors and parents. In addition, parents are required to be continuous, which includes continuity between basic teaching principles, educational programs, and implementation. Continuity in the implementation of education is not only at school, but must also be followed up with activities at home and in the child's surroundings. In conclusion, educational therapy for autistic children must be carried out in a continuous, consistent, simultaneous, and comprehensive (holistic and integrated) manner.



## **Barriers and Support Factors in Religious Guidance to Improve the Prayer Skills of Students with Autism**

Religious guidance in improving the prayer skills of autistic students is a guidance process that is different from the guidance process for children in general. This requires a guide who has experience and strong five senses. The counselor must also be able to understand autistic children so that the guidance process runs smoothly. This is a special requirement in teaching autistic children because, according to Biran and Nurhastuti (2018: 20), the interaction between students who are learning and teachers who are teaching is called teaching and learning activities. Teaching autistic children is a challenging task. As role models for autistic children, accompanying teachers must be sensitive, diligent, creative, and consistent in their learning activities. Autistic children generally have difficulty understanding and comprehending other people. Therefore, accompanying teachers must be able to understand autistic children.

Efforts to provide assistance to clients so that they can achieve their goals require certain elements to be fulfilled in order to achieve the desired goals. This also applies to the implementation of religious guidance in improving the ability to pray among autistic students at SLB Negeri Cileunyi Bandung. The elements of guidance include the following: the subject or guide, the object or person being guided, the method, the material (message), and the medium of religious guidance (Faqih, 2001:62). From the results of the researcher's findings at SLB Negeri Cileunyi, it was found that there were elements that were supporting factors and inhibiting factors in the implementation of religious guidance in improving the prayer skills of autistic students at SLB Negeri Cileunyi. This can be explained as follows:

First, the subject (mursyid/guidance counselor) is someone who has extensive and in-depth knowledge of Islamic law and expertise in the field of religious guidance methodology and techniques (Faqih, 2004: 66). The supporting factors are as follows: first, the firmness of the guidance counselor. Consistent firmness from the guide can form a relationship between the guide and the student. If the guide is firm, the student will respect and obey the guide, and if the opposite is true, the student may resist the guide. Second, the experience of the guide. The experience of the guide is certainly very helpful in the process of prayer guidance. Third, cooperation between mentors. Cooperating in the process of religious guidance to improve prayer skills. The inhibiting factors are as follows: first, the change of mentors in guiding autistic students. The change of mentors in guiding students causes them to have to readjust to each other's characters.

Parents not demanding results can be a hindrance to the learning process. Supporting factors are as follows: first, parents who agree with and support religious guidance programs to improve prayer skills. Second, parents who follow the guidance of the instructor. Guidance at SLB Negeri Cileunyi is not only given to students but also to parents. Third, parents' consistency in guiding prayer. Children spend more time at home in their daily lives, so it must be done consistently at home. This is so that it can become a habit for children to be accustomed to performing prayers. Meanwhile, the inhibiting factors are as follows: first, parents who spoil their

children. Parents sometimes feel sorry and pity when they are too forceful with their children, so they delay guiding their children. Second, parental consistency in guiding prayer. Parental consistency in guiding prayer can help children to continue practicing and improving their prayer skills. However, if parents only rely on the learning process at school, children will not get used to it and will become indifferent and forget the prayer guidance carried out at school. Third, providing food for children. The al-Fatih class has provided a menu for children to eat during school breaks. However, parents are responsible for the daily menu. If children consume foods that are not suitable for autistic children, it will cause them to behave badly, such as laughing or crying for no reason. Fourth, the time given to children to participate in prayer guidance. Religious guidance on prayer requires time to implement. At SLB Negeri Cileunyi, children at the junior high school level and above are encouraged to perform congregational prayers at school. However, busy schedules sometimes do not allow parents to give their children the opportunity to perform these congregational prayers. In addition, children are often late for class.

A counselor is the key to success in providing religious guidance to autistic students. Autistic students are different from other normal children in the process. This requires counselors to have experience and expertise in finding alternatives to overcome these obstacles. This is in accordance with Faqih (2004: 66), who states that a religious counselor is someone who has broad and deep knowledge of Islamic law and expertise in the field of religious guidance methodology and techniques. In addition, as explained earlier by Biran and Nurhastuti (2018: 23), a guidance counselor or therapist, a guidance counselor for autistic children, must have dedication, patience, persistence, and creativity in teaching their students. Therefore, guidance counselors must understand the principles of education and teaching for autistic children. This will enable them to maximize the effectiveness of religious guidance in improving prayer skills.

Second, the object (mad'u/guidance recipient) is a person who must be given assistance by a counselor because they have problems (Enjang and Abdul Mujib, 1999: 109). The inhibiting and supporting factors for implementation are: First, the condition of autistic students when receiving material. The condition of autistic students is easily influenced by several things because autistic children have drastic mood swings. For example, children who have tantrums and children who are entering puberty will be more easily offended, angry, sad, or anxious. These conditions can cause children to experience concentration disorders, be late for class, have tantrums, behave excessively happily, daydream, laugh uncontrollably, or even cry for no reason. Second, students have either good memory or difficulty memorizing. Remembering the movements and recitations of prayer requires memory. However, there are students who have difficulty memorizing. Difficulties in memorization include frequently forgetting the movements and recitations of prayer. This can be due to a loss of focus during the guidance process. Third, children who like certain items and always carry them with them. Bringing items from home, such as headbands or hats, during the guidance process and refusing to take them off because they find them enjoyable can interfere with the movements of prayer. Fourth,

the health of autistic children during the learning process. As with other school children, if their health is disturbed, parents will not send their children to school at that time.

The above statements correlate with the research findings and autism theory, which explain that there are several problems that often arise in autistic children that can affect or become problems in the learning process. Birani and Nurhasturi (2018: 19-20) explain that there are several problems that often arise in autistic children that can influence or become problems in the learning process, including: (1) behavioral problems that often arise, namely self-stimulation and stereotyping. The following are some of the reasons behind stereotypical behavior and limited interests in autistic children: First, because it is enjoyable, small behaviors that autistic children find enjoyable. An example of this is bringing items from home, such as headbands or hats, which they always carry with them. Second, another issue that often arises is the urge to ask questions that cannot be resisted, where the child cannot stop asking questions about something and becomes increasingly automatic in asking questions all the time. (2) Emotional problems relate to unstable emotional conditions, such as rebelling, jumping up and down, crying, throwing tantrums, screaming, laughing for no reason, destructive behavior, tantrums, and so on. This affects the condition of autistic students when receiving material. (3) Attention (concentration) problems; children's attention in learning sometimes cannot last long and still shifts to other more interesting objects or activities. (4) Health problems; learning activities are adjusted to the child's health condition. If the student's health condition is not good, learning activities cannot be carried out.

Third, a method is something that serves to emphasize the fastest and most appropriate approach in doing something (Pimay, 2005: 56). The religious guidance methods used at the Cileunyi State Special School in Bandung include direct methods using group strategies as well as individual methods. In addition, classical and drill methods, also known as habituation methods, are implemented. This method is implemented every day by repeating good habits and adjusting them to the abilities of autistic students. This is because the abilities of autistic students are different from those of other normal children, requiring counselors to create methods that must be adjusted. This method has its own supporting factors in its implementation, including being participatory, relevant, and varied. According to Brian and Nurhastuti (2018: 34), the method used is a combination of existing methods, where its application is tailored to the conditions and abilities of the child as well as the teaching material provided to the child. The method given to autistic children is a method that provides a concrete description of "something" so that children can process information and understanding about that "something."

Fourth, religious guidance material (maudu/message) can be interpreted as a message or something that can be conveyed by the counselor to the client based on the teachings of Islam, namely the Qur'an and Sunnah of the Prophet Muhammad, which are well organized in accordance with the problems faced by the client (Enjang and Mujib, 2013: 84). The religious guidance material used at the Cileunyi State Special School in Bandung is the Qur'an and Hadith, creed, morals, fiqh, and the

history of Islamic civilization. However, in this study, the focus is on fiqh material. The fiqh material focuses on the practice of prayer, which includes prayer recitations, short surahs, prayer movements, and prayers and dhikr after prayer.

Fifth, media or facilities and infrastructure. The Al-Fatih class at SLB Negeri Cileunyi Bandung has facilities and infrastructure that sufficiently facilitate the religious guidance process, such as a place for implementation and supporting facilities for prayer guidance, namely prayer mats, prayer robes, loudspeakers, iqra, and the Qur'an. However, the Al-Fatih class itself does not yet have a special room for children who are having tantrums. If a student has a tantrum, the teacher must be ready to separate the child. According to Biran and Nurhastuti (2018: 34), learning facilities are very important for children with autism because they make it easier for them to learn and help them develop concrete concepts of understanding. Children with autism usually have a concrete way of thinking. Therefore, concrete learning facilities are also needed. Although some autistic children are capable of abstract thinking, their early education also uses concrete teaching aids.

### **Results of Religious Guidance in Improving the Prayer Skills of Students with Autism**

Religious guidance in improving the prayer skills of autistic students at SLB Negeri Cileunyi Bandung has had positive results for the students. These findings are based on direct observation and interviews with the guidance counselors and parents of the students. The results of religious guidance carried out on three students in the Al-Fatih class at SLB Negeri Cileunyi Bandung in improving their prayer skills varied from one student to another. In participating in the prayer learning process, the three students were very enthusiastic and diligently followed the learning process. Furthermore, the methods used were effectively absorbed by all students. Of course, the results are still far from perfect. Students are now able to perform the movements of prayer flexibly and are beginning to get used to the instructions given by their guidance counselors and parents. Furthermore, regarding the recitation of prayers, there are students who are fluent in reciting prayers, some who sometimes forget the recitation, and some who have not yet memorized the recitation. Although the prayers of autistic students are still limited to the physical aspect, with all their abilities and continuous learning, insha Allah, they will be able to pray properly.

In relation to the results obtained from the observations and interviews above, the special development program (progsus) has its own achievements for each element in the Merdeka Curriculum. The achievements of each element of the special development program are, first, achievements in social interaction. A student with the initials SAR interacts by making eye contact, touching others such as shaking hands or holding hands while interacting with others, but her facial expressions and tone of voice seem flat, and her communication speed is still slow. Next, a student with the initials MRC makes eye contact when interacting, has maladaptive or deviant behavior because he is entering puberty, such as wanting to be close to female friends, has recognized all his friends and teachers, is critical when friends talk during prayer, likes to reprimand them, and can argue or defend his desires. Then, a student with the initials AF makes eye contact when interacting, discusses the movements and

recitations of the next prayer during prayer, and has recognized all of his friends and teachers.

Second, achievements in communication. The student with the initials SAR is able to respond when called and can answer conversations briefly. She still often enjoys chatting to herself when praying. Then the student with the initials MRC is able to respond when called and answer conversations well if the topic is to her liking, but she answers briefly or even indifferently if she does not like the topic of conversation. Next, the student with the initials AF is able to respond when called and interactively answer conversations, but sometimes AF has difficulty understanding explanations or interpreting information given by others and what she is talking about.

Third, achievements in behavior. SAR used to have difficulty controlling his emotions when he was upset. For example, emotions such as anger would cause SAR to cry and refuse to do anything. Now, when he is angry, he can still be guided, but he must be continuously guided until he forgets his anger. Next, the student with the initials MRC used to handle her emotions by raising her voice when something was not to her liking, but now she can be educated to calm down and understand. Next, the student with the initials AF used to always be reluctant to accept new conditions or crowds, but now she can calm down and follow along. Furthermore, she has gained the confidence to lead prayers using a loudspeaker.

Fourth, achievements in sensory motor skills. The student with the initials SAR now performs her prayers with flexible movements. In addition, she brings and wears her prayer robe from home. Then, the student with the initials MRC uses cutlery to finish her food and shares food with her close friends. In addition, MRC is good at operating her toys. Then, the student with the initials AF has repetitive behavior and speech, for example, she always says not to touch her chin but also always touches her chin. In addition, she is starting to calm down when invited to crowded places.

Fifth, achievements in student independence. The student with the initials SAR is independent in carrying and wearing her prayer robe. In addition, SAR is able to help her mother in the kitchen, such as cutting vegetables and carrots. Meanwhile, the student with the initials MRC goes to and from school on his own without being accompanied by his parents or guardians. In addition, MRC's behavior at home is mature, such as having a special schedule for eating, praying, playing games, and so on. Meanwhile, the student with the initials MRC also has a special schedule in her daily life, although she still needs to be reminded to pray.

The implementation of religious guidance in improving prayer skills, which is carried out during Circle Time, is a religious activity such as prayer combined with Islamic Religious Education and Morality lessons. Islamic Religious Education and Morality lessons are also carried out in accordance with the learning outcomes (CP) of the Merdeka Curriculum. Islamic Education and Morality has learning outcomes for each element according to the phase or level of education, namely the Qur'an and hadith, faith, morals, fiqh, and the history of Islamic civilization. Thus, religious guidance in improving the prayer skills of autistic students at SLB Negeri Cileunyi

Bandung is provided in accordance with the learning outcomes of these subjects, which are taught slowly and continuously.

As explained by Haryanto (2003: 156), prayer is the pillar of religion. Someone who performs prayer has built the foundation of religion. Conversely, abandoning prayer is tantamount to destroying the foundations of religion; religion cannot stand without it. In addition, Wijayakusuma (1996: 26) explains that prayer has a positive influence on the body and spirit of the person concerned, but also on the environment. More specifically, Agustian (2001: 28) explains that prayer guidance can increase a person's emotional spiritual intelligence or emotional spiritual quotient (ESQ). To strengthen a person's faith and piety, this guidance needs to be carried out regularly and gradually. The individual's behavior will then improve, such as becoming sincere, honest, patient, magnanimous, having a purpose in life, independent, and genuine.

Religious guidance in improving the prayer skills of autistic students at SLB Negeri Cileunyi Bandung can be said to be successful. However, the implementation of prayer by autistic students is still limited to physical practice. In addition, there is a lack of recitation or *tumaninah* (serenity) in the pillars of prayer as described by Arifin (2015: 102-103). The pillars of prayer include: (1) intention; (2) standing for those who are able; (3) *takbiratul ikhram*; (4) reciting *Al-Fatihah*; (5) bowing and *tuma'ninah*; (6) standing up and *tuma'ninah*; (7) prostrating twice and *tuma'ninah*; (8) sitting between two prostrations and *tuma'ninah*; (9) final sitting; (10) reciting the final *tasyahud*; (11) reciting the *salawat* upon the Prophet; (12) giving the first *salam* to the right; and (13) organizing the pillars.

The implementation of religious guidance in improving the prayer skills of autistic students at SLB Negeri Cileunyi Bandung has been evaluated positively. The guidance is carried out to direct individuals to live in accordance with Islamic teachings and guidelines. This guidance is based on the fact that no one can live a perfect life. It is hoped that autistic students at SLB Negeri Cileunyi Bandung can make prayer a habit in their daily lives. The habit of performing prayer becomes a way of life. Even though they do not understand what prayer is, it is necessary for others who understand to guide them. Some of them are capable of taking on responsibilities and developing, even though they may seem slow compared to normal children in general. Therefore, they are guided to understand that they are Muslims, in an Islamic family environment. We can only guide them so that they can get used to performing prayers. According to Yanggo (2004), it is the duty of parents, teachers, and mentors to introduce and teach prayers.

## CONCLUSIONS

Based on research conducted at the Cileunyi Bandung State Special School (SLB), the researcher will present conclusions regarding religious guidance in improving prayer skills in autistic students. Based on the problems outlined above, this study can be summarized as follows:

The implementation of religious guidance in improving the ability to pray in autistic students at SLB Negeri Cileunyi Bandung began with a prayer before studying, greetings, short *surahs* (approximately 6 *surahs*), attendance of students and

teachers in the form of songs, names of months in the form of songs, names of days in the form of songs, songs for each item of clothing worn at school and its activities, songs about the names of numbers based on various regions (Indonesia, England, Java, Sunda), songs about the names of prophets and angels, songs about the names of months, songs repeating the names of teachers, songs about prayer, followed by prayer practice, recitations after prayer, and video presentations or other games. Prayer guidance was carried out with one instructor leading the recitations. The instructor who leads uses a loudspeaker. Meanwhile, other instructors are tasked with guiding the students in movements and recitations. In an effort to implement religious guidance to improve the prayer skills of autistic students at SLB Negeri Cileunyi Bandung, several elements of guidance are needed, including the subject of guidance, the object of guidance, the guidance method, the guidance material or message, and the religious guidance media.

The supporting and inhibiting factors of religious guidance in improving the prayer skills of autistic students at SLB Negeri Cileunyi Bandung are: (a) autistic students, autistic students have disorders but this does not inhibit guidance; (b) guidance teachers, guidance teachers are required to have experience and expertise in finding suitable alternative guidance; (c) Parents, parents are responsible for their children's education; and (d) Facilities and infrastructure, facilities and infrastructure are necessary in the guidance process.

The results of religious guidance in improving the ability to pray among autistic students at SLB Negeri Cileunyi Bandung were carried out on three autistic students who were different from one another. In participating in the process of learning to pray at SLB N Cileunyi, the three students were very enthusiastic and diligently followed the learning process. Furthermore, the methods used were effective and could be absorbed by all students. Regarding the results, of course, they are still far from perfect. Students have been able to follow the prayer movements flexibly and have begun to get used to the commands given by the guidance teacher and parents. Furthermore, regarding the recitation of prayers, there are students who are fluent in reciting prayers, some who sometimes forget the recitation, and some who have not yet memorized the recitation. In addition, religious guidance in improving the prayer skills of autistic students has led to improvements in the students' social interaction, communication, behavior, sensory motor skills, and independence. Furthermore, it provides knowledge about the Qur'an and hadith, creed, morals, fiqh, and the history of Islamic civilization. Although the prayers of autistic students are still limited to the physical aspect, with all the abilities they possess and continuous learning, their prayer skills can be performed well.

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