

Islamic scholars in Higher Education: A Study of Special Education Programs

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Abstract

Keywords:

Competencies of Graduates; Islamic scholars; Religious Education; Special Education Program.

It is essential for governments and educational institutions, particularly Islamic religious universities, to have a responsibility to guide the community toward understanding Islam as a moderate religion. Thus, this study aims to describe how special education programs are implemented and the competencies of graduates in religious studies at universities that contribute to the development of Islamic scholars. This research is of a descriptive qualitative nature. The subjects of this study consisted of the local government, the rector, the dean, the vice dean, and the head of the study program at As'adiyah Sengkang Islamic University. The data collection techniques employed in this research included observation, interviews, and documentation. The research findings indicate that the implementation of special education programs in the field of religion is equipped with a curriculum, educators who have scientific qualifications, and adequate facilities, infrastructure, and other Islamic insights. Meanwhile, the competencies required for graduates to realize the Islamic scholars include the ability to use Arabic, read classic books, and understand *aqidah*, *sharia*, *morals*, *Sufism*, *da'wah*, interpretation of the *Qur'an*, *hadith*, and *al-urf*. The implication of this research is that the program serves as a platform for the government to address and provide solutions to the religious problems faced by society in general.

Abstrak

Kata kunci:

Kompetensi Lulusan; Ulama Islam; Pendidikan Agama; Program Pendidikan Khusus.

Pemerintah dan lembaga pendidikan, khususnya perguruan tinggi keagamaan Islam, memiliki tanggung jawab penting untuk membimbing masyarakat agar memahami Islam sebagai agama yang moderat. Oleh karena itu, penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mendeskripsikan bagaimana program pendidikan khusus diimplementasikan dan kompetensi lulusan program studi agama di perguruan tinggi yang berkontribusi pada pengembangan ulama. Penelitian ini bersifat deskriptif kualitatif. Subjek penelitian ini terdiri dari pemerintah daerah, rektor, dekan, wakil dekan, dan ketua program studi di Universitas Islam As'adiyah Sengkang. Teknik pengumpulan data yang digunakan dalam penelitian ini meliputi observasi, wawancara, dan dokumentasi. Temuan penelitian menunjukkan bahwa implementasi program pendidikan khusus di bidang agama telah dilengkapi dengan kurikulum, tenaga pendidik yang berkualifikasi keilmuan, serta sarana, prasarana, dan wawasan keislaman lainnya yang memadai. Sementara itu, kompetensi yang dibutuhkan lulusan untuk mewujudkan Ulama Intelektual meliputi kemampuan berbahasa Arab, membaca kitab-kitab klasik, serta memahami *aqidah*, *syariah*, *akhlak*, *tasawuf*, *dakwah*, *tafsir Al-Qur'an*, *hadis*, dan *al-urf*. Implikasi dari penelitian ini adalah program ini berfungsi sebagai wadah bagi pemerintah untuk menyikapi dan memberikan solusi terhadap permasalahan keagamaan yang dihadapi masyarakat secara umum.

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INTRODUCTION

Religion has been distorted by numerous schools of thought as interpretive and subjective understandings of reality in the Muslim community (Abdullah, 2022; Saada & Magadlah, 2021). This distortion of religious knowledge is caused by literal interpretation of the Quran and Hadith as the main sources of Islamic teachings. This development has rigidified religion. Some in society have trouble filtering religious views, which can lead to radicalism and liberalism. Public consumption of religious concepts that understand religion will lead to intolerance of groups and fanatics of their group's beliefs, who will blame all groups that disagree with them (Suyanto, Sirry, Sugihartati, Kartono, & Yani, 2024; Wijaya Mulya, Aditomo, & Suryani, 2022). They cannot tolerate diversity because their habits and teachings bind them. The Muslim community becomes quarrelsome, suspicious, and accuses each other of infidelity. These debates ultimately involve faith and sharia, resulting in various factions whose communities help each other to overcome the others, following only their own leader. Each group boasts of its teachings and criticizes others (Inayatillah, Kamaruddin, & M. Anzaikhan, 2022).

Therefore, we must prevent the proliferation of such ideologies and their potential to cause unrest within society (Au, Ho, & Chiu, 2022). Others view religion as merely a ritualistic worship unrelated to human life; this group gives rise to liberalism. This ideology necessitates religious matters as part of regulating one's personal relationship with God (Kosim, Muqoddam, Mubarak, & Laila, 2023; Nezlek, 2022). Thus, religion is a personal concern. Religion in society must be addressed by the government and religious schools (Aisah, Asy'ari, & Rofiq, 2025; N. Ali, Afwadzi, Abdullah, & Mukmin, 2021; Khoir, Rahmat, & Zamroni, 2024; Kolb, 2023). So, all religious activities in society can be controlled to promote religious tolerance. High-quality education can do this. Educational institutions have an important role in national development by fostering the emergence of an intelligent generation and creating and developing output, or a generation that can embody religion (Ilham & Ramadani, 2024; Mukhoiyaroh, Mujiono, & Mukaromah, 2025). Education should emphasize intellectual intelligence, soul nourishment, moral development, obedience in worship, the ability to integrate compartmentalized knowledge into monotheism and the belief that humans must devote their knowledge to innovative and beneficial works for the masses (Sahin, 2021). Islamic schools must conserve, develop, and pass on social values (Fatah, Khoiruddin, & Fakhruddin, 2025; Kosim et al., 2023; Prayogi, Prasetya, Marina, Setiawan, & Ishak, 2025).

Islamic educational institutions should monitor society and uphold virtue and forbid evil. Furthermore, the government, in its role as the authority holder, must actively engage in preventing various religious problems within society (Faisal, Pabbajah, Abdullah, Muhammad, & Rusli, 2022; Samsudin, Othman, Siau, & Zaini, 2024). To prevent religious misunderstandings and radicalism and liberalism in the community, government and educational institutions must work together to guide the community. The government and educational institutions, especially Islamic religious

universities under Islamic boarding schools, must help the community understand Islam as a moderate, tolerant, and peaceful religion that blesses all creation (Latif & Hafid, 2021; Mala & Hunaida, 2023). Educational training and training initiatives are needed to promote religious moderation in the community. These training programs might be educational activities that engage the community and teach religious moderation. These learning exercises should be for adults or university students. These activities will ensure success by teaching rural people Islamic moderation. Islamic education is essential to preserving religious variety (Aderibigbe et al., 2023; Sahin, 2018). Education is the primary gateway to creating a generation ready to become agents of control within society. Thus, educational institutions must host development activities to promote religious moderation (Altbach, Reisberg, & Rumbley, 2019; Rahmadi & Hamdan, 2023).

Islamic education integrates morals, religion, personality, and social and cultural aspects to develop students' full potential (Nasucha, Khozin, & Thoifah, 2023). Establishing educational goals requires a historical examination of social demands, geared toward reality, and an analysis of actual life that describes all societal activities and moral- and national philosophy-based normative norms. Such an approach gives education a defined purpose in satisfying society's demands guided by morality and nationalism (Begum, Liu, Qayum, & Mamdouh, 2022; Figueiró, Neutzling, & Lessa, 2022). Islamic educational institutions must grab possibilities related to current concerns affecting society's religious climate to adapt to change (Arofah, Dewayanti, Eliyanah, & Rakhmani, 2025; Sardar & Henzell-Thomas, 2017). Strategic plans that produce quality products and establish competitive institutions (countervailing power) must acknowledge this. Quality outcomes require quality inputs and learning processes (Najah Ahmed et al., 2019). Both matter when assessing an educational program's output. Integrating input and learning will produce quality output, demonstrating effective and efficient educational management and fostering academic and extracurricular excellence in graduates, especially religious ones who are expected to solve society's problems (Thanassoulis, Dey, Petridis, Goniadis, & Georgiou, 2017). Thus, the government and Islamic educational institutions must work together to prepare graduates for society's changes and increasingly complex religious concerns (Raihani, 2018; Taufik, 2020).

This government-Islamic educational institution collaboration in Wajo Regency was achieved through a specific religious education program that trains Islamic scholars to teach the community comprehensive religious concepts. The Wajo Regency government and As'adiyah Sengkang Islamic University are partnering to train village religious leaders to promote Islam. This initiative is a government effort to protect Wajo Regency residents from religious fanaticism, which fosters bigotry by promoting the belief that only one's own group is correct while blaming others. The Wajo Regency government and As'adiyah Sengkang Islamic University, an Islamic higher education institution under Islamic boarding schools, organize a special religious education program for rural Islamic scholars. This learning program addresses communal faith, sharia, and Sufism issues. As a result, each student in the village will learn about their

faith in a way that helps them promote good behavior and discourage bad behavior, guided by national values and the idea of Islam as a blessing for the world in Wajo Regency. This specific religious education program for Islamic experts addresses Wajo Regency community religious challenges. All students have the information to improve cognitive flexibility. In Islamic boarding schools, the unique religious education program for Islamic scholars employs modern media and technology to study Islamic faith. Its learning activities resemble the ulama cadre program. The specific religious education program at As'adiyah Islamic University in Sengkang intends to produce Islamic scholars who will lead Islamic studies in local areas.

No study has comprehensively and in-depth examined the effectiveness, challenges, and outcomes of a specially designed, integrated, dormitory-based higher education program (S-1) for village religious leaders in the context of Islamic Religious College (PTKI) and local governments in Eastern Indonesia. Most studies are descriptive or short-term. This research seeks to understand how the curriculum of the Village Religious Leader-Based Special Learning Program, along with coaching and institutional support, can turn participants into "Islamic Scholars" (Muslim intellectuals) who benefit their villages. The unique study object, depth of analysis, and theoretical and practical contributions from the research on the Special Learning Program in Wajo Regency make this essay innovative. In this article, the Village Religious Leader-Based Special Learning Program, an affirmative action education policy program established and supported by the Regional Government and PTKI (IAI As'adiyah), is examined instead of scholarships for underprivileged children. This study examines how students become 'Islamic scholars' (critical, adaptable intellectuals with strong formal knowledge) from 'religious figures.' The analysis of how the curriculum and dormitory structure shape dual capacities (formal academic and practical religious leadership skills) is innovative. By employing "Organic Scholars" to analyze the PTKI program's impact, this essay offers methodological and theoretical originality. This article is innovative not only in its topic (religious education in villages) but also in its institutional model of the affirmative action program in Wajo Regency and its analytical framework of organic scholars used to measure graduates' roles and capacities in the PTKI context. This study addresses the lack of locally oriented and funded Islamic higher education interventions for rural development. Its most useful contribution is providing the Wajo Model as the best practice for educating local ulama cadres. Other PTKIs, notably in Eastern Indonesia or the 3T (Frontier, Outermost, and Disadvantaged) regions, can use this model to replicate effective affirmative action initiatives.

RESEARCH METHODS

This research is a qualitative descriptive study, as it aims to examine the phenomena occurring within the special religious education program at As'adiyah Sengkang Islamic University in developing the intellectual potential of ulama (Islamic scholars). Qualitative research relies on the human mind as a key research instrument. This research was conducted in Wajo Regency, where As'adiyah Sengkang Islamic

University is located, which administers the special religious education program to develop the intellectual potential of ulama (Islamic scholars). Furthermore, the location of this research is accessible to the researcher, thus minimizing costs and time. The data used in this study are primary and secondary. The primary data, as referred to by the author, are the results of interviews with informants and observations conducted by the author to determine the correspondence between the interview results and the reality on the ground.

In this study, the subjects interviewed were the Regent of Wajo, the government and program owner; the Rector of As'adiyah Sengkang Islamic University, who is responsible for the program; the Dean and Vice Deans of the Faculty of Ushuluddin, Da'wah, and Communication, who are the program organizers; educators; and Head of the Islamic Aqidah and Philosophy Study Program. For secondary data, the researcher will interview other sources related to this research and collect written documents that can assist in conducting it.

In this study, the author collected data using interview guidelines, observation guides, and documentation note formats. Data collected through primary and secondary sources during the research process were processed and analyzed using qualitative data analysis, conducted interactively until complete. The data analysis consists of three stages: data reduction, data display, and either data verification or drawing conclusions. Next, data testing was conducted to demonstrate the validity of the data obtained from the research site. Data validity was tested through credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

Profile of the Special Religious Education Program at As'adiyah Islamic University Sengkang, Developing Scholarly Scholars

This program aims to develop and enhance the quality of village religious leaders in the field of Islamic religion through a four-year undergraduate program in Islamic Aqidah and Philosophy. The first two years of these programs are complemented by the Special Learning Program at As'adiyah Islamic University Sengkang. This study assistance program is provided by the Wajo Regency Government, through the village government, to the region's best students who wish to continue their religious education in the Islamic Aqidah and Philosophy study program at As'adiyah Islamic University Sengkang.

Additionally, this scholarship program aims to support the availability of educated and qualified Indonesian human resources, possessing strong leadership skills and a strong vision and mission for the nation's future, particularly in rural areas. The commitment of both the central and regional governments is demonstrated through the provision of scholarships to the region's best students for further study at a higher level. Additionally, graduates from the special education program in the field of religion at As'adiyah Sengkang Islamic University are expected to effectively oversee the Wajo Regional Government program as part of their role in developing Islamic scholars.

Special Education Program in Religious in Realizing Islamic Scholars

A curriculum that meets community needs

The special religious education program at As'adiyah Islamic University Sengkang requires a curriculum to develop Islamic scholars. The curriculum aims to support the implementation of the educational program, as stated by the Dean of FUDK, who said:

"The curriculum is designed to support the special religious education program at As'adiyah Islamic University Sengkang in developing Islamic scholars. Thus, this program's outputs should have deep religious insight and be role models in the religious field. Therefore, the curriculum must be implemented comprehensively to achieve maximum results."

This view illustrates that having a curriculum is essential for achieving the quality outcomes of the special religious education program at As'adiyah Islamic University Sengkang, which aims to develop Islamic scholars. Meanwhile, the Head of the Islamic Aqidah and Philosophy Study Program stated:

"The curriculum for the special religious education program is designed with the hope of continuous monitoring and direction of the program's implementation. This ensures that the Islamic scholars, who are the outputs of the special religious education program, can be realized. Therefore, the curriculum is designed to support the quality of the program's output."

This view illustrates the role of the curriculum in overseeing the achievement of the outcomes of the special religious education program, which produces high-quality religious scholars. Meanwhile, the Regent of Wajo stated:

"Curriculum development continues to involve the Wajo Regency government, particularly regarding graduate outcomes. While curriculum implementation has been entrusted to As'adiyah Sengkang Islamic University as the program manager. The government's hope is that the curriculum will explore the community's religious needs."

This view illustrates the Wajo Regency government's role in curriculum development, placing its hopes on the outcomes of the special religious education program at As'adiyah Sengkang Islamic University, which will produce qualified religious scholars to build a Wajo society that is religious, intelligent, and capable of advancing regional potential.

The interviewees indicate that a curriculum is vital for ensuring the quality and sustainability of the special religious education program at As'adiyah Sengkang Islamic University. The curriculum is developed with stakeholder participation to collect information on content that matches with the community's requirements in the religious domain. Moreover, an analysis of curriculum development documents reveals that administrators design the curriculum, incorporating stakeholder input to enhance the content and ensure the quality of outcomes for the special education program in the religious domain at As'adiyah Sengkang Islamic University, aimed at cultivating Islamic Scholars.

Educator competency in program implementation

The implementation of a special religious education program at As'adiyah Islamic University Sengkang to cultivate the intellectual potential of ulama requires competent educators. This is because educators play an active role in the learning process. As stated by the Rector of Unisad:

"Lecturers as educators play a crucial role in the learning process and course outcomes. Therefore, management is expected to select lecturers with the appropriate competencies to support the implementation of the special religious education program at As'adiyah Islamic University Sengkang in realizing the intellectual potential of ulama."

This view demonstrates that realizing the intellectual potential of ulama through a special religious education program requires lecturers with competencies appropriate to the program. Similarly, the Dean of FUDK stated:

"Lecturers selected to teach must be lecturers with competencies appropriate to the special religious education program. Therefore, lecturers need those who possess the competencies to design, implement, and evaluate the learning outcomes of the courses they teach."

This view illustrates the role of lecturers as course instructors responsible for designing, implementing, and evaluating the learning outcomes. Echoing this view, the Deputy Dean of the Faculty of Islamic Studies (FUDK) stated:

"The competence of lecturers in the religious education program at As'adiyah Sengkang Islamic University in developing Islamic scholars is expected not only as teachers but also as role models. Lecturers have ample time to interact with students. Therefore, in these interactions, lecturers are expected to consistently demonstrate noble behavior."

The interview results indicate that lecturers play a crucial role in implementing the religious education program at As'adiyah Sengkang Islamic University in developing Islamic scholars. Lecturers are essential for designing, developing, implementing, and evaluating the course outcomes necessary to achieve the goals of the religious education program aimed at cultivating Islamic scholars. Therefore, every lecturer must possess Islamic insight and mastery of scientific developments that support the implementation of the religious education program. Furthermore, lecturers are also expected to possess personalities that can serve as role models when interacting with and among students.

Readiness of educational facilities and infrastructure

The implementation of the special religious education program at As'adiyah Islamic University Sengkang requires educational facilities and infrastructure that can support the program's outcomes in developing Islamic scholars. As stated by the Dean of FUDK:

"Educational facilities and infrastructure are a primary requirement for supporting the smooth running of learning activities. The facilities and infrastructure provided for students in the special religious education program include dormitories, which serve as residences for students during the program. Additionally, a mosque serves as a venue for learning activities."

This perspective demonstrates that facilities and infrastructure are essential to ensure the continuity of the special religious education program at As'adiyah Islamic

University Sengkang in developing Islamic scholars. In this regard, the Head of the Islamic Creed and Philosophy Study Program stated:

"The educational facilities and infrastructure provided to support the continuity and smooth running of the religious education program includes the dormitory, which serves as a place of rest and development of students' insights, talents, and interests in religious studies through a mentoring program. Lectures take place in classrooms, while Islamic study takes place in the mosque."



Figure 1. Infrastructure for Ulama Cadre Learning (Islamic scholars)

The interview results indicate that the provision of facilities and infrastructure is crucial for sustaining all religious education programs at As'adiyah Sengkang Islamic University in cultivating Islamic scholars. Historically, classrooms and mosques have served as the principal settings for educational activities. The dormitory functions as a space for repose and the cultivation of students' interests, abilities, and Islamic knowledge.

Competence of graduates of the Special Education Program in Religious in Producing Islamic Scholars

Graduate Competencies

The competencies of educational program graduates must be determined as part of the quality assurance system for program outcomes. Graduate competencies are the basis for determining the content, process, and assessment of learning. According to the Rector of Unisad, the following statement was made:

"The expected competencies of graduates through the special religious education program at As'adiyah Islamic University Sengkang, in developing Islamic scholars, include memorizing at least 5 juz (chapters), Arabic language skills, reading yellow books, reciting the Quran, Islamic insight in the areas of aqidah (faith), sharia (Islamic law), morals, and Sufism, and competence in preaching. This will enable each graduate to become a role model and enlightener capable of providing solutions to various religious problems faced by society today."

This perspective demonstrates that the competencies of graduates of the special religious education program at As'adiyah Islamic University Sengkang, in developing Islamic scholars, are expected to assist the government in providing solutions to religious problems in society. The Dean of FUDK also articulated this perspective, saying:

"The draft competency standards for graduates from the specialized religious education program, in developing Islamic scholars, include memorizing a minimum of 5 juz (seven-letter chapters), being able to use Arabic, reading the yellow texts, and reciting the Quran; possessing Islamic insight in the areas of faith, sharia, morals, and Sufism; being able to use various media that support Islamic propagation; mastering the rhetoric of da'wah (Islamic propagation) and knowledge related to the ability to interact with the community."

This view illustrates that, in essence, the competencies for graduates from the specialized religious education program at As'adiyah Sengkang Islamic University, in developing Islamic scholars, necessitate the ability to memorize the Quran, targeted at a minimum of 5 juz (seven-letter chapters); mastery of Arabic as a means of communication; and reading the yellow texts, reciting the Quran, and other Islamic studies, which are expected to support various government programs related to the religious field. Based on the interview results above, it can be understood that the expected graduate competencies from the special education program in the field of religion at As'adiyah Sengkang Islamic University in realizing Islamic scholars are the memorization of the Qur'an of at least 5 juz, being able to use Arabic, being able to read, understand, and explain the book of kiraatul kutub, having insight in the field of study of the interpretation of the Qur'an, hadith, fiqh, da'wah, having a personality with noble character, having broad and up-to-date insight in the field of Islamic studies, being able to utilize various digital-based media as a means of da'wah, analyzing and solving various religious problems in society and spreading Islam rahmatan lil alamin.

Learning Content

Learning content is the benchmark and spearhead of achievement in a quality assurance cycle for the educational content or curriculum in the special religious education program at As'adiyah Islamic University, Sengkang, in developing the intellectual potential of ulama (Islamic scholars). The depth and breadth of learning materials also align with the expected learning outcomes of graduates. According to the Dean of FUDK:

"The learning content in the special religious education program at As'adiyah Islamic University includes a depth and breadth of learning materials based on graduate outcomes, aimed at developing the intellectual potential of ulama (Islamic scholars)." Each course consists of 2–3 credits, totaling 55. The course content is designed and developed in a structured curriculum."

The above perspective illustrates that the learning content in the program has a course structure that focuses on graduate outcomes, with a breadth and depth of material ranging from 2 to 3 credits. Meanwhile, the Head of the Islamic Creed and Philosophy Study Program stated:

"The learning content is structured around creed, sharia, morals, interpretation, hadith, Arabic, da'wah, and the development of cutting-edge knowledge. The output of the specialized religious education program at As'adiyah Sengkang Islamic University aims to develop Islamic scholars who will return to their respective villages to foster the community in the field of religious studies."

This view illustrates that the curriculum structure of the program encompasses creed, sharia, morals, interpretation, hadith, Arabic, da'wah, and the development of cutting-edge knowledge.

The interviews indicate that the educational content is organized within a curricular framework that accounts for the depth and breadth of each subject, with each course comprising 2 to 3 credits. The curriculum development process involves stakeholders collecting data regarding community requirements in the religious domain. Consequently, the curriculum framework is founded on the notion of community requirements. The course distribution encompasses faith, sharia, ethics, interpretation, hadith, Arabic, da'wah, and the advancement of contemporary knowledge, focusing on attitude, knowledge, general skills, and specialized skills. This methodology guarantees quality assurance for the specialist religious education curriculum at As'adiyah Sengkang Islamic University, which seeks to cultivate Islamic scholars.

Learning Process

The learning process is an ongoing activity that determines the learning outcomes of graduates in educational institutions. As stated by the Dean of the Faculty of Islamic Studies (FUDK):

"The learning process of the religious education program at As'adiyah Sengkang Islamic University always involves lecturers and students in the classroom to develop the intellectual potential of ulama." The learning process begins with the design of teaching materials prepared by each educator as a means of improving students' attitudes, skills, and knowledge.

The statement above illustrates that the learning process in this program requires the involvement of both educators and students. Meanwhile, the Head of the Islamic Creed and Philosophy Study Program stated:

"We carry out the learning process by designing learning activities that align with the learning outcomes of each course." Since each course has outcomes that contribute to the overall learning objectives for graduates, it is essential for every lecturer to pay attention to these when designing their lecture activities.



Figure 2. Learning Process

This view illustrates that each lecturer, when designing learning activities in the religious education program, consistently considers the learning outcomes of each course.

Supporting and inhibiting factors of the Special Education Program in Producing Islamic Scholars

Supporting Factors

The primary supporting factor for the implementation of the specialized religious education program at As'adiyah Islamic University in Sengkang in developing Islamic scholars is the support of the Wajo Regency government, through its collaboration with As'adiyah Islamic University in creating a conducive religious climate within the Wajo Regency community. As stated by the Rector of Unisad, who stated:

"The primary supporter of the specialized religious education program at As'adiyah Islamic University in Sengkang for developing Islamic scholars is the Wajo Regency government, which is bound through collaboration to prepare a cadre of Islamic scholars oriented towards addressing challenges and resolving various religious problems in the Wajo Regency community."

This view illustrates that the supporting factor for the implementation of the specialized religious education program at As'adiyah Islamic University in Sengkang in developing Islamic scholars is the collaboration between the Wajo Regency government, as the program owner, and Unisad Sengkang, as the program organizer. Likewise, the Dean of FUDK stated:

"A special religious education program at Unisad Sengkang, aimed at developing Islamic scholars, exists due to primary support from the Wajo Regency government through a collaborative policy that encourages each village to send one person to serve in their respective villages. Educational funding, including tuition fees and dormitory facilities, complements the policy."

The interview findings above show that the Wajo Regency administration and Unisad Sengkang collaborate to promote As'adiyah Islamic University Sengkang's special religious education program in training Islamic scholars. Wajo Regency prepares village students and covers tuition prices through policy. Unisad Sengkang provides resources to ensure program quality and outcomes.

Inhibiting Factors

Every program faces obstacles that pose challenges in maintaining and improving its quality. The special religious education program at As'adiyah Sengkang Islamic University, including its efforts to develop Islamic scholars, certainly presents its challenges, as expressed by the Rector of Unisad, who stated:

"In essence, there are no major obstacles to implementing this program, except at the beginning, due to the difficulty in finding prospective students who are ready to follow the procedures of the special religious education program at As'adiyah Sengkang Islamic University to develop Islamic scholars." Although the program is currently operational, several villages have still not sent any students."

This view illustrates that the continuity of the special religious education program has not faced major obstacles, thanks to the full support of the Wajo Regency government. Meanwhile, according to the Dean of FUDK, stated:

"As a manager, there are certainly several obstacles in implementing this program. However, these obstacles are primarily technical, such as the provision of male and female dormitories and the recruitment of dormitory supervisors, lecturers, and educational staff. Furthermore, efforts to encourage each student's enthusiasm for learning are also a challenge. Students sometimes experience boredom, which makes them reluctant to study. Such an issue also presents a barrier to this program."

The interview results show that the administrators of the special religious education program at As'adiyah Islamic University Sengkang struggled to recruit students who met program procedures, find separate male and female dormitories, and get dormitory supervisors. With Wajo Regency's cooperation and As'adiyah Pusat Sengkang Foundation management, these problems were addressed. Learning dullness and student strife added to the challenges. A customized approach to the pupils solved these issues. Each professor struggled with student heterogeneity and inadequate learning media. These challenges inspire lecturers to be creative in optimizing learning activities using andragogy to fulfill course learning outcomes.

Discussion

The execution of the specialized religious education program at As'adiyah Sengkang Islamic University, designed to cultivate Islamic scholars, is conducted via an administrative selection procedure and incorporates Islamic and national perspectives to guarantee the quality of the outcomes. The implementation of the special religious education program at As'adiyah Sengkang Islamic University is planned through the development of a curriculum designed to promote the program's sustainability. Consequently, the curriculum is designed based on stakeholder input to provide outcomes that illuminate the community on the concept of Islam as a universal benefit for humanity. To guarantee the quality of educational outcomes, educators possessing scientific qualifications are appointed to apply the curriculum through defined course learning outcomes (Soares, Carvalho, & Dias, 2020; Wijngaards-de Meij & Merx, 2018).

Likewise, educational personnel can oversee many associated administrative tasks and facilitate the program's sustainability.

The management provides educational facilities and infrastructure tailored to lecturers' needs in classrooms, mosques, and dormitories to rest and develop interests, talents, and other Islamic insights to facilitate the special religious education program at As'adiyah Sengkang Islamic University to develop Islamic scholars. As part of its quality assurance, As'adiyah Sengkang Islamic University's religious studies department develops graduates into Islamic scholars. Arabic, reading Islamic books, understanding Islamic faith (aqidah), sharia (Islamic law), morals, Sufism, da'wah (Islamic propagation), and interpreting the Qur'an, hadith, and al-urf as Islamic law are anticipated competencies. They must also know five Qur'anic passages and have a national perspective. Additionally, they must be able to follow Islamic principles daily. A curriculum with breadth and depth of learning materials that represent graduate learning outcomes supports these competencies. This is supported by (Tomlinson & Jarvis, 2023) that state that the curriculum includes a wide range of learning tools that promote graduate competencies and achieve desired objectives. Faith (aqidah), morals, tafsir (interpretation), hadith (Islamic law), Arabic, da'wah (Islamic propagation), national perspective, and cutting-edge knowledge like media and technology are covered. Every course has 55 credits.

The religious education curriculum of As'adiyah Sengkang Islamic University develops ulama (Islamic scholars) intellectually and focuses on graduate learning outcomes. Assessment activities determine course learning outcomes and student competency progress at the end of the semester. As'adiyah Sengkang Islamic University conducts the Wajo Regency Government's special religious education program to educate Islamic scholars under a cooperation agreement. This program trains Islamic scholars to help the government create human resources to solve rural religious challenges. The Islamic scholars initiative helps the government improve human resources to handle rural populations' different religious issues (M. Ali, 2020; Ependi & Penggabean, 2020).

The Wajo Regency Government, as program owner, prepares village student representatives and covers educational costs through policy. As administrator, Unisad Sengkang provides resources to assure program quality and outcomes. The Wajo Regency Government has granted scholarships for village delegates in As'adiyah Sengkang Islamic University's unique religious education program to create Islamic scholars. This shows Wajo Regency Government support for program sustainability. This is relevant and supported by research by (Dewi et al., 2023; Sahroni, Su'aidi, el Widdah, Anisyah, & Indrawati, 2025), suggests that the government should fund scholarships for special religious education programs to educate Islamic scholars. The specific religious education program at As'adiyah Sengkang Islamic University to train Islamic scholars faced initial challenges. It was difficult to find unmarried students who would live in dorms during the program. Separate male and female dormitories and supervisors add to the challenges. Government spending can fix this. Student boredom

and roommate issues can be solved by personal techniques. Lecturers' challenges include student variability and restricted learning media, which encourages creativity in improving learning activities through an andragogical approach to satisfy course learning outcomes.

This research is crucial because it integrates Traditional Islamic Education with Special Education (Inclusion), which rarely overlap. This study demonstrates how Islamic colleges like As'adiyah combine theological beliefs with current special education methods. It expands the literature on Muslim academics' views on disability, a neglected area in higher education. It shows how a pesantren-based university (As'adiyah Sengkang) addresses national societal issues, showing that traditional institutions can adapt to modern issues. The Ministry of Religious Affairs or Ministry of Education and Culture can use this study's findings to create inclusive education policies for Islamic Religious Higher Education Institutions. Due to the case study of As'adiyah Sengkang Islamic University, its findings may not apply to other universities with different cultures or organizational systems. Islamic scholars may be strong in religious studies (Tafsir/Fiqh) but lack official training in special education instruction. Regional private institutions' special education infrastructure may not be as good as major universities', which could affect program efficacy.

CONCLUSION

This study found that the implementation of the Special Religious Education Program at As'adiyah Islamic University (Unisad) Sengkang in producing cadres of ulama has been carried out comprehensively through several main aspects such as strategic synergy, needs-based curriculum, educator competence, graduate achievement standards, supporting facilities. The success of this program is driven by strong collaboration between the Wajo Regency Government as the provider of policies and budgets, and Unisad Sengkang as the academic manager. The curriculum is designed in an integrative manner involving stakeholders to ensure that the material (such as Aqidah, Sharia, Morals, and mastery of the classic Book) is relevant to the needs of solving religious problems in villages. Lecturers play a dual role not only as academically competent teachers, but also as role models of noble behavior for students. Graduates are targeted to have high competencies, including memorizing at least 5 juz of the Qur'an, being proficient in Arabic, and being able to use digital media for moderate da'wah (rahmatan lil alamin). Furthermore, the integrated use of dormitories, mosques, and classrooms is key to sustainably nurturing students' talents, interests, and religious insights.

As a recommendation, the local government and university need to increase outreach to villages that have not yet sent student representatives to ensure an even distribution of religious scholars throughout Wajo Regency. Management needs to continuously improve the quality of infrastructure, particularly the provision of more modern learning media to help lecturers address the challenges of student heterogeneity in the classroom. A more intensive mentoring and supervision system for dormitories is

needed to minimize boredom (learning dullness) and inter-student conflict that can disrupt the learning process. Furthermore, ongoing training for lecturers in adult learning methods (andragogy) and instructional creativity is needed to ensure the transfer of knowledge remains engaging and effective.

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