IMPLEMENTATION OF DIFFERENTIATED LEARNING IN ISLAMIC STUDIES AND ETHICS IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS

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Abstract: The challenges of today's world of student learning are increasingly dynamic, this is characterized by different student interest tendencies and characters. The government, through the Ministry of Education, is aggressively discussing the concept of an independent curriculum through differentiated learning which is considered appropriate for achieving learning goals. This research aims to find out how the implementation of differentiated learning is applied to PAI subjects at Muhammadiyah Lasem Middle School. This research is based on qualitative methods, where this method is applied by collecting data such as interviews, observations, documentation, and/or other important records. With the research results stated. Firstly, teacher Pai carried out student profile mapping, secondly, the teacher carried out differentiated learning strategies, and thirdly, evaluated learning outcomes. One of the successes of differentiated learning is also supported by good cooperation between the class teacher and student parents in equalizing perceptions.

Keywords: learning, differentiation, Islamic religious education, ethics, secondary schools.

INTRODUCTION

Education and religion are an inseparable whole. Religion is the most important foundation for education. Education that is based on religion means that the concept of religion becomes an inspiration in compiling concepts of educational implementation. In its implementation, the learning contained in the concept of curriculum – independent – as one of the educational road-maps becomes a new face to accommodate the aspirations, hopes, and direction of the nation's educational ideals. Education is expected to be able to continue to accommodate the needs of the times that continue to grow, so the success of education depends on the ability of educators to succeed in learning activities. Educators are expected to be able to meet the learning needs of students who have different learning tendencies. In this case, the independent curriculum raises the concept of learning, namely differentiated learning. Differentiated learning is learning that emphasizes each student's ability to build their interest and learning motivation, thus helping students get the learning opportunities they are interested in. With differentiated learning, teachers can better understand the individual needs of students and design learning accordingly. In other words, differentiated learning is a design given by the teacher as a strategy or response to differences in students in the classroom [1]–[5].

Marlina in her writing, mentioned that the term differentiated learning has several goals, one of which is to increase awareness of the ability of students to build learning goals. In other words, this goal encourages students to have motivation within themselves to get the desired learning goals or outcomes. Of course, this is also based on the ability of each
student to consider the level of difficulty of the task given. In addition, the purpose of this learning is to build a strong relationship between teachers and students to foster a harmonious relationship between the two, as well as foster an independent attitude and tolerance towards the abilities of diverse students, so that it can further encourage teachers to improve their ability to teach. However, in its implementation, differentiated learning in an independent curriculum system is still taboo to do, besides uniform learning is still so much done by teachers. This is quite understandable, because of the various factors that underlie the difficulty of differentiated learning to be carried out, some of which are due to the lack of freedom in learning, and the lack of teacher skills in the field of technology, as well as the lack of references for teachers to understand the curriculum itself [6]–[10].

Religious subjects include many lessons, which include Aqidah Akhlak, the Qur’an and Hadith, Jurisprudence, and Islamic Cultural History. Findings that researchers do, in the last year, there have been many similar studies related to the application of differentiated learning carried out, but due to the limited ability of researchers, only a few indexed studies (top) researchers can take as references researchers in taking a foundation in conducting this research. And also the limitations of researchers to describe the overall PAI material in the implementation of differentiated learning. So this study will only take samples of data that are still surface (general). Based on the research data, it has not been explained more clearly how the differentiated learning model is applied and is still oriented towards the development of learning methods, media, facilities, and infrastructure [11]–[15].

Other studies also mention that the freedom given to students is an emphasis intended so that students can choose more differentiated from the media and learning methods they like. Therefore, this research will focus more on the form of activities in the implementation of differentiated learning in Islamic Religious Education and Ethics (PABP) of SMP Muhammadiyah Lasem, in Rembang Regency. From the results of this study, it is hoped that it will be able to provide solutions and/or a more specific picture of how differentiated learning in PAI lessons is applied.

**Theoretical Framework**

The implementation of differentiated learning in the study of Islamic Religion and Ethics in secondary schools can involve several steps and strategies to meet the needs and development of diverse learners. Here is the frame of mind for such implementation: 1. Analysis of Learner Needs. Identify students’ level of understanding, interest, and aptitude in the study of Islamic Religion and Ethics. Recognize students’ special needs, such as learning style, learning speed, and level of cognitive skills [16]–[18].

2. Differentiated Learning Objectives. Set learning goals that match the student’s proficiency level and potential. Adjust goals to be relevant to age-appropriate moral and ethical development. 3. Preparation of Learning Materials. Prepare diverse and customizable teaching materials. Provide additional resources to support the understanding of students with different ability levels. 4. Selection of teaching methods. Use a variety of learning methods, such as group discussions, projects, presentations, and individual assignments. Adapt learning methods to student learning styles [19], [20].

5. Differentiated Assessment. Design assessment instruments that can assess different levels of understanding and skills. Provide feedback that suits the needs of each student. 6. Flexibility in the Classroom. Open a space for students to collaborate and teach each other. Flexible in adjusting schedules and learning approaches. 7. Teacher Empowerment. Provide training to teachers to understand student differences and implement differentiation strategies. Support collaboration between teachers to share experiences and strategies that work [21].

8. Inclusivity and Justice. Ensure that all students feel welcome and recognized in the learning environment. Avoid labels and stereotypes that can hinder the learning process. 9. Parental Involvement. Involve parents in the learning process and inform them about

By following this framework, it is hoped that the implementation of differentiated learning in the study of Islamic Religion and Ethics in secondary schools can create an inclusive learning environment and support the moral and ethical development of students optimally.

**METHODOLOGY**

This research is a type of qualitative research that seeks to describe the circumstances that occur in the location of the school where the research takes place, to provide a "temporary answer" to how the implementation of differentiated learning in PAI subjects is carried out. The information obtained, from this research method was obtained by data collection techniques as follows, 1) Interviews, data collection techniques by conducting interview activities to find out and get information more clearly were carried out with the interviewees, namely Islamic religious education teachers grade 7 SMP Muhammadiyah Lasem. 2). Observation, this method is carried out to observe and record events from student coaching carried out by SMP Muhammadiyah Lasem student learning activities. 3). Documentation, is a technique of collecting data with important and complete records of the events being taken, so that they are not based on existing estimates [16]–[19].

**RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

**Islamic Education in the Independent Curriculum**

In simple terms, education can be interpreted as an activity or process of exchanging values between theory and behaviour. In its duties, education outlines 3 important roles in it, namely the Inheritance of Knowledge, Culture, and Values. In the reader's opinion, education is defined as a character-building activity that covers all aspects of life [20]–[23].

Islamic Religious Education as mentioned earlier, is an idea or concept of education that views religion as a basic guide in the success of the realization of educational ideals that are insightful and ethical with religious values. In a true sense, religious education is intended so that students have good knowledge and competence in carrying out religious orders, and have a religious character. It is also affirmed in the definition of education in the Constitution that education, as intended is aimed at directing students to become individuals who believe, have noble character, and knowledge, and can carry out pious deeds by their respective abilities [24]–[29].

Religious education is one of the compulsory subjects imposed at all levels of educational institutions. With the presence of the independent curriculum program, of course, it is expected to be able to present a positive response to government policies. In essence, the independent curriculum is centred on emphasizing student and teacher learning in reflecting on learning. The flexibility of the curriculum will provide space and leeway for teachers to carry out the learning process. In addition, some of the things that are considered to curb the freedom of teachers in conducting learning are the demands to teach material according to what has been compiled and written in the material syllabus. Curriculum Merdeka is here to provide flexibility for teachers, in developing learning for students. It is hoped that students can develop the abilities they are interested in [30]–[33].

Regarding the material that is part of the learning of Religious Education and Ethics classes, the Government has made reference standards to contain Learning Outcomes (CP), as well as Learning Objectives Flow (ATP). Like religious subjects in the previous curriculum, material about aqidah is the most fundamental material at every level of religious studies in educational units. The material of the creed always occupies the first
chapter to be taught, therefore it is very important to be taught how to understand the true Aqidah. In this case, the subject matter of aqidah is natural to be taught from the beginning as a necessary foundation to build and organize the heart and strengthen faith as a basis for doing charity. Therefore, religious teachers need to ascertain in advance the extent of students’ understanding of their religion through moral materials. Moral material is taught by example and habituation so that students can do habituation as a lifestyle of Muslim students. Habituation is carried out as early as possible to form a strong Islamic character as happened in the time of the Holy Prophetsa. Because of the importance of the role of moral material in helping the formation of student character, it is very necessary for a good personality to be possessed by the teacher as a good example applied by students [34]–[37].

Learning of aqidah material, as well as efforts to apply character through example and habituation. Then the teacher can teach material about the Qur'an which includes materials on how to read, understand, and be skilled in practicing material in everyday life. As stated in the Learning Outcomes (CP), learning the Qur'an is always followed by hadith materials as an additional guide to the life of a Muslim. After the next, Fiqh material is then taught with materials that contain procedures for carrying out worship and muamalah, both obligatory and sunnah by the provisions of the Shari’a. Fiqh lessons, not only discuss the theory and concept of worship, but worship procedures that are practiced directly, so that students can more easily understand the material of the lesson given [38]–[41].

Material on the History of Islamic Culture (SPI). This material is seen as one of the most important lessons because it aims to enable students to emulate the struggle of the Prophet and his companions, as well as the sacrifices of previous Islamic heroes. Emulating all the behaviour and morals of previous Muslim fighters, it is hoped that it will be able to become a necessity for students to be enthusiastic about emulating Islamic fighters in everyday life. History learning is considered a boring lesson because it contains material that requires students to read and memorize a lot. Therefore, teachers are allowed to determine differentiated learning to determine the right strategy so that all students can receive the material well. Several other alternatives can be utilized such as media optimization and learning methods in the application of differentiated learning [42]–[44].

Implementation of Differentiated Learning in Religious Education and Ethics Subjects

The world of education of each student is created differently, of course with a variety of characters and all the potential they have. The curriculum as an education system is present, as a place to accommodate all the potential of students to develop more. In this discourse, appropriate and effective strategies are needed that can help the development of student learning. Therefore, one of the concepts of an independent curriculum is to apply differentiated learning with teacher teaching styles and student learning. This learning is discussed as an effort to respond to differences among students. Such learning strategies consider learning needs and appropriate activities. To implement it, several steps need to be applied by educators. One of them is, doing mapping. This step is carried out to map the potential of students, along with learning designs that are by student interests and potential. In this case, mapping is carried out by approaching both culturally and formally. The cultural approach is carried out when educators start the beginning of face-to-face learning by identifying each student both graduate background and family background, to identify student learning needs. While the formal approach, carried out since SMP Muhammadiyah Lasem inputs students from various junior high school graduates. SMP Muhammadiyah Lasem found input from participants from various junior secondary education institutions, some from public schools, madrasahs both public and private, some found students with pesantren backgrounds [45]–[48].

Teachers look at student profiles based on cultural background and school graduates, it will be found that the initial data on the abilities of each student will be different. Therefore, this study uses a set of assessment designs to assess the ability of students more closely. The first is a diagnostic assessment tool, including several things including a tool to assess
students’ abilities using questionnaires. The second analyzes the results of learning outcomes through test devices such as religious questions, recitation tests, prayer readings, and several questions related to religious subjects. This mapping is carried out to know the true ability of students to follow learning readiness.

SMP Muhammadiyah Lasem also provides boarding places for students who have economic disabilities. Thus, facilitating access to learning for all underprivileged levels of society.

From the results of the assessment, it is known, some data as follows:

a. Student Learning Readiness

Learners have different abilities. Some can read the Quran well, perform prayers in an orderly manner have good religious knowledge, and have support from the family.

Some other students were also found to be unable to read the Quran properly, perform prayers, and lack or moderate religious knowledge, but still received support from their families. On the other hand, some students have not been able to read the Quran, have not memorized some readings in prayer, lack religious knowledge, and have a less supportive family environment. Cases like this are usually caused by the position of parents who are not at home with children, either because of work factors or because parents have separated.

b. Learning Interests

1. Aqidah Akhlak

The coaching and supervision of learning carried out by the school will gradually touch students' awareness to improve their behaviour in community life. As the embodiment of the material of aqidah, moral goodness becomes a benchmark for achieving learning, accompanied by a sense of obedience to religion. For this reason, the teacher gradually began to instil awareness of his main character and his Burk for the life of the world and the afterlife.

2. Al Qur’an dan Hadis

Students showed their interest in Islamic religious subjects, some of them showed their desire to follow the Quran memorization program organized by the dormitory manager, such as students who were interested in memorizing Juz 30, some others also showed their interest in being able to learn Quran until they reached the fluent stage. However, some other students also showed a lack of interest in religious subjects because they felt left behind and difficult, but were willing to try to learn basic things related to religion that they had not completed at the elementary school level. Such as reading the Quran correctly, doing prayers, and other worship.

3. History of Islamic Culture

This material is quite difficult to trigger students to have an interest in historical material. Because it requires high ability and interest in reading. Therefore, teachers try their best to do the same way through the library literacy movement by displaying the variety of books they are interested in. Or summarize a material by displaying appropriate learning videos. So, it was also found that there were various learning methods of students in what kind of class.

4. Fiqh Ibadah

This lesson not only requires a good deepening of the material and is delivered in the classroom. However, it is also necessary to practice outside the classroom to find out the level of understanding of the students as well as to find out the attractiveness of student learning. The results show that almost all students are easier to understand when learning is
done kinesthetically or practically. Such as the chapter material on ablution, sunnah prayers, and others. Or, the use of technology also helps a lot in understanding students in learning. In addition, the initial data found by teachers in measuring student insights is also still small. This is also an influence in accepting students' backgrounds when the student admission process is carried out.

c. Learning Characteristics of Learners

Some students can learn independently and have awareness in practising both compulsory worship and sunnah in their daily lives at school, some other students are also able to learn but with the assistance of educators and still need motivation in awareness of practising daily worship, while some other students show learning skills that still need to be guided intensively and cooperation with parents/parents is needed to Motivate the learning process of learners while at home.

Student learning styles are also identified as quite diverse, some are kinesthetic, auditory, and also visual. For this reason, teachers must be able to develop good learning strategies, and design learning that is by differentiated learning practices after student mapping is found at the beginning of the meeting.

Differentiated learning practices are based on mapping the data obtained as capital in understanding the profile and background of students. Next, is to prepare a differentiated learning model. As is well known, freedom in determining interest and learning development is in line with the concept of education Ki Hajar Dewantara which states that this concept refers to the idea that education should be given to students to determine learning models according to their interests, talents, and abilities to understand their way of learning. In Ki Hajar Dewantara's view, the ideal education frees students from the restrictions that exist in the conventional education system.

Tomlinson in his book mentions, there are 4 ways to implement learning strategies some of which are [49]–[52];
1) Differentiation of material content or content

Map material needs to students, so that the four materials mentioned in Islamic religious education learning, do not have to be given as a whole.

2) Process Differentiation

The differentiation of the process in question is that educators are required to be able to understand the learning styles of students, whether students can learn independently, in groups, or need special assistance to learn. In certain subject matter, students will be given assignments and grouped according to students readiness, abilities, and learning interests.

3) Product Differentiation

The differentiation in question is, strategies that can produce students have comprehension skills and can develop their knowledge. This task can be given individually or in groups taking into account the type of material studied. The resulting learning products can be in the form of presentation writing, speeches, test questionnaires, or product designs, which are delivered either manually or digitally. About PAI learning, differentiation learning can be produced by learning products such as the ability to memorize hadith and Qur'an, the ability to explain material with the help of technology, and the ability to practice worship such as prayer, ablution, and others.

4) Environmental Differentiation

Learning activities require good environmental support to support learning activities to run well and conductively. So is the learning of Islamic Religious Education (PAI). For
example, learning practical materials such as learning corpse prayers, congregational prayers, ablution activities, and others.

d. Differentiated Learning Strategies

The next step is to determine a differentiated learning strategy. The first is to compile the RPP. As mentioned above, learning is divided into several parts according to the choice of material being carried out. In one class, there are elective materials that can be done in the same class. There is also a choice of material that requires the implementation of learning to be divided into several groups so that learning activities run optimally. Such as selected materials of the Qur'an and Hadith, or SKI learning. So it is necessary to consider the preparation of RPP in a differentiated manner.

1. Aqidah Akhlak

Aqidah learning material is material that contains the theory of faith and faith of a Muslim accompanied by the cultivation of good morals [53], [54]. Thus, tawhid material is not only material that contains pure beliefs but also an encouragement for character formation among students. Of course, this character-building drive is a deep learning to do. Not only is it done in a short time, but it takes time and good cooperation with the family at home. Therefore, before learning is carried out, teachers should understand the background of students. So, teachers can better understand what students need and what teachers need to do.

Work regarding student character is not only charged to PAI teachers but is the joint responsibility of all teachers and schools to jointly encourage students to have good character. Thus, the RPP writing will still be written using formal standard references, but in its implementation in the field, PAI teachers work together with all other teachers to jointly include moral lessons as a concept of tawhid education in all subjects. The headmaster also expressed his support regarding the achievement of learning objectives. Later, the school through the homeroom teacher and guardian will work together through parenting activities or WhatsApp communication that will control the habits of students when at home.

2. Al Qur'an dan Hadist

Next is the study of the Qur'an and hadith which contains lessons for reading, memorizing, understanding, and explaining the content of verses supported by relevant hadith. In this section, it will be seen the difference in the initial ability of students who cannot read the Qur'an to follow the lesson. Moreover, it requires students to memorize and understand the content. In these conditions, the concept of differentiation is needed for the study of the Qur'an and hadith. For students who can read the Qur'an well, of course, they will not mind sparking students' interest in learning if they have to memorize the Qur'an or hadith. And for those who are not able, of course, there will be different methods that need to be applied, such as the implementation of learning with the volume method, where every student who cannot read the Qur'an will be required to follow the method of learning to read the Qur'an in volumes, with the aim of the student's learning achievement is to complete the volume [55], [56].

As mentioned earlier, in its implementation, not all are charged to PAI teachers but require the cooperation of all parties in the school. In this case, PAI teachers can work together with other teachers or collaborate with school organization activists who have the competence to read the Qur'an such as the Muhammadiyah Student Association (IPM) of SMP Muhammadiyah Lasem, on the other hand as a place to deepen leadership knowledge for them.

3. History of Islamic Culture

This material requires a fairly high reading power if you want to understand more deeply about history lessons. However, it was found that almost all lacked high readability, so
teachers had to try their best to deliver the material well. Thus, determining strategies by utilizing facilities, learning media, or technological media needs to be done. Not only stopping there, but interesting teaching strategies are also quite decisive so that students are not monotonous in following learning in class. In this case, the researchers found a grouping of learning strategies carried out by PAI teachers of SMP Muhammadiyah Lasem. Where group learning strategies, distribution of tasks, as well as presentations and discussions, become learning strategies applied by teachers to students.

4. Fiqh Ibadah

Fiqh subjects that contain material on worship procedures include various requirements such as harmony, mandatory limits, sunnah, haram, and others. In this material, diagnostic assessment is also needed as carried out at the beginning. Thus enabling educators to conduct optimal learning. This also allows for reassessment, so educators need to reschedule to strengthen data to start learning. In its implementation, PAI teachers design material first in the form of collecting or classifying material which is then determined and sorted out which material needs to be discussed further, which material needs to be delivered, and which material needs deeper study to be understood and practised. As well as material about taharah, obligatory prayers, and corpse prayers that require the delivery of material in theory and practice. This must indeed be taken seriously because the material is mandatory worship that must be mastered and practised in everyday life. Therefore, teachers must be able to ensure students can memorize and understand the material, thus enabling successful learning for students at home. As for students who are not able to read well, more intense coaching will be carried out, which is usually applied by schools in the form of routine reciting activities after badha dhuha prayers and dhuhur prayers at school. Also, good cooperation with homeroom teachers and guardians will enable educational success [57]–[60].

Based on the author’s observations, PAI teachers of SMP Muhammadiyah Lasem take several steps including setting learning objectives, analyzing students' learning needs to make it easier for them to receive information, then designing inclusive learning to be accessible to all students through the provision of different learning materials such as textbooks, videos, articles, the use of technology, and other learning materials, grouping learning tasks according to their abilities, Then provide various formative assessments such as oral exams, projects and presentations.

After everything is done, the last is to conduct a learning evaluation to measure the success rate of learning carried out, and to apply differentiated learning to SKI subjects.

CONCLUSION

The success of differentiated learning in an independent curriculum depends heavily on teacher competence in developing learning plans. Teachers set appropriate and systematic learning objectives according to student needs by grouping material that is considered essential. The success of differentiated learning also depends heavily on initial preparation when registering students which includes learning readiness, interests, and student profiles. By mapping and knowing the initial data from students, teachers can determine differentiated learning strategies. On the other hand, communication is also needed between the school and student guardians, so that good cooperation between the two is established. The collaboration aims to create perception so that parents help oversee the learning process of students at home.

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Conflicts of Interest

All authors declare no conflict of interest.

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