



Differentiated Instruction Management for Enhancing Student Well-Being in Unggulan Aisyiyah Bantul Primary School

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ABSTRACT

Unggulan Aisyiyah Primary School, as a flagship Sekolah Penggerak in Bantul Regency, has consistently implemented differentiated instruction within the Merdeka Curriculum. However, while previous studies have widely examined differentiated instruction as a teaching strategy, limited research has focused on how it is managed systematically to foster student well-being in primary schools. This study addresses this gap by asking: How is differentiated instruction managed to enhance student well-being in a primary school context? The objective is to formulate a contextual management model that supports students' cognitive, social, and emotional well-being. A descriptive qualitative approach was used, involving interviews with the principal, the vice principal for curriculum, two fourth-grade teachers, and two students, complemented by classroom observations and document analysis. Data were analyzed using thematic analysis procedures, including coding, theme development, and interpretation. The findings reveal that differentiated instruction management aligns with Tomlinson's framework and encompasses four components: planning, organizing, implementation, and supervision. Planning involves identifying student needs and collaborative module preparation through team teaching. Organizing focuses on flexible grouping and creating a positive learning environment. Implementation uses multi-method and multi-source instructional strategies tailored to student profiles. Supervision is conducted through coaching, counseling, and mentoring to ensure continuous improvement. This model highlights that effective differentiated instruction management can enhance student engagement, social interaction, and emotional security, thus strengthening student well-being. Strengthening implementation requires practical guidelines, sustained mentoring, time management, and collaboration with psychological support professionals.

Keywords: management, differentiated instruction, student well-being.

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INTRODUCTION

A positive and comfortable school environment is essential for ensuring student well-being. Teachers play a key role in creating joyful and meaningful learning experiences so that students feel happy and secure while learning, thus avoid academic stress (Ferdianto & Muhid, 2020). Student happiness and well-being significantly impact the learning process, shaping how learners engage with knowledge, build resilience, and interact socially. However, many schools in Indonesia still face

challenges, such as limited use of diverse learning media and rigid instructional practices, which result in less supportive classroom environments for fostering student well-being (Amimah et al., [2024](#); Risqullah et al., [2023](#))

Student well-being is characterized by a sense of being valued and thriving, in which students can develop their creativity and capabilities according to their individual needs (Hasanah et al., [2022](#)). Student well-being can be understood as a holistic construct encompassing physical, psychological, cognitive, social, and economic aspects (Pollard & Lee, [2003](#)), along with six dimensions: physical, personal, social, emotional, cognitive, and spiritual (Ling et al., [2022](#)). It has a strong impact on academic achievement and broader developmental outcomes. Students who feel well tend to have a positive attitude toward learning, perform better academically, and demonstrate stronger socio-emotional adjustment (Cahyono et al., [2021](#); Ramli et al., [2016](#)). Conversely, poor academic achievement can hinder well-being (Kaya & Erdem, [2021](#)). Schools, therefore, must not only deliver instruction but also intentionally create conditions that support students' overall well-being, both inside and outside the classroom.

Differentiated instruction (DI) has emerged as one promising approach to fostering student-centered learning. It acknowledges and accommodates the diverse needs of students within the same classroom (Maryani & Suyatno, [2023](#); Tomlinson, [2017](#)). By adapting content, process, product, and learning environment based on students' readiness, interests, and profiles (Gheysens et al., [2022](#); Naibaho, [2023](#)), DI seeks to ensure equity of learning opportunities. Importantly, DI management actions—such as planning diagnostic assessments, organizing flexible groups, designing multi-method teaching strategies, and supervising teachers through mentoring—can be theoretically linked to well-being outcomes. For example, planning based on diagnostic assessments addresses cognitive and emotional readiness; organizing positive classroom environments nurtures social belonging; implementing multi-method strategies supports cognitive engagement and creativity; and supervision focused on counseling and mentoring enhances psychological security. Thus, DI is not only an instructional tool but also a management mechanism that can operationalize the multi-dimensional aspects of well-being identified by (Pollard & Lee, [2003](#)) and (Ling et al., [2022](#)).

Nevertheless, the literature also documents significant challenges to DI implementation. Studies note that teachers often struggle with workload intensification, lack of training, and limited time to design personalized learning pathways (Gheysens et al., [2022](#)). In Global South contexts, cultural barriers—such as hierarchical classroom norms, large class sizes, and exam-oriented systems—further complicate DI enactment (Nganga et al., [2025](#)). These challenges suggest that while DI holds theoretical promise, its practical feasibility is highly dependent on management structures, teacher support, and contextual adaptation.

In Indonesia, the Merdeka Curriculum has explicitly positioned differentiated learning as its core principle. However, teacher readiness remains uneven, as many educators report insufficient understanding due to heavy reliance on online socialization with limited face-to-face mentoring (Maryani & Suyatno, [2023](#)). This gap underscores the importance of examining not only DI practices but also the management of DI, which encompasses planning, organizing, implementing, and supervising instructional strategies in a systematic manner. Yet, existing studies have paid limited attention to contextualized management models. For instance, while Tomlinson's framework provides a theoretical foundation, few works in Indonesia have connected DI explicitly to student well-being outcomes. Similarly, supervisory models such as CLEANING—coaching, learning, evaluating, assisting, networking, inspiring, nurturing, and guiding—remain underexplored in relation to DI and well-being.

Unggulan Aisyiyah Primary School in Bantul Regency represents a valuable case for this inquiry. As a private flagship Sekolah Penggerak selected in 2022, the school integrates diagnostic assessments of both cognitive and non-cognitive aspects at the start of each academic year. These assessments identify students' academic competencies, learning habits, psychological conditions, and social-emotional needs, which inform the design of differentiated instruction strategies. Teachers employ a variety of methods to enhance students' comprehension, expression, creativity, and problem-solving skills, while also supporting literacy and numeracy development. By embedding DI management into school practices, the institution aims to strengthen students' cognitive, social, and emotional well-being within an Islamic educational framework.

However, existing research has predominantly examined differentiated instruction either in terms of instructional strategies (Gheyssens et al., [2022](#); Tomlinson, [2017](#)) or its influence on academic achievement and student motivation (Labordo, [2024](#); Pozas et al., [2021](#)). Only a limited number of studies have explicitly explored how differentiated instruction is managed within school systems, particularly in relation to fostering student well-being. Moreover, research in the Indonesian context has mainly focused on teacher readiness and implementation challenges, without providing an integrated model that links planning, organizing, implementation, and supervision to cognitive, social, and emotional well-being outcomes. This gap highlights the need to investigate differentiated instruction from a management perspective that prioritizes student well-being as the core educational outcome. Therefore, the research question guiding this study is: How is differentiated instruction managed to enhance student well-being in a primary school context? The objective of this study is to develop a contextual, structured management model of differentiated instruction that supports cognitive, social, and emotional dimensions of student well-being.

Given these dynamics, this study seeks to explore how DI management strategies contribute to fostering student well-being at Unggulan Aisyiyah Primary School. Specifically, it aims to articulate the mechanisms through which DI management aligns with well-being constructs and to address contextual challenges in implementation. In doing so, the study extends existing literature by proposing a context-sensitive model that bridges DI management and student well-being outcomes in Indonesian primary schools.

METHOD

This study employed a descriptive qualitative approach to explore the management of differentiated instruction aimed at promoting student well-being at Unggulan Aisyiyah Primary School in Bantul. A qualitative design was chosen because it enables researchers to capture rich, contextualized accounts of participants' experiences and perspectives (Peterson, [2019](#)), providing depth in understanding how instructional management relates to student well-being. The research was conducted over eight months (February–September 2024), covering proposal development, research permits, data collection, data analysis, and report preparation.

Participants and Sampling

Participants were selected using purposive sampling with explicit inclusion criteria: (1) direct involvement in differentiated instruction planning, implementation, or supervision; (2) a minimum of two years of teaching or leadership experience at the school; and (3) ability to provide insights into student well-being in the classroom context. Based on these criteria, the study involved the principal (key informant), the vice principal for curriculum, two fourth-grade teachers, and two fourth-grade students who had actively participated in differentiated learning activities. Table 1 provides details of participants' roles, years of experience, and demographic background to support transferability.

Table 1. Research Sample Data

Participant Code	Role	Years of Experience	Gender	Specific Involvement in DI Management
P1	Principal	12	F	Strategic planning and supervision
P2	Vice Principal (Curriculum)	9	M	Curriculum design and coordination
T1	Grade 4 Teacher	7	F	Classroom implementation (math/science)
T2	Grade 4 Teacher	6	F	Classroom implementation (literacy)
S1	Student (Grade 4)	10 y.o	M	Experience in differentiated learning
S2	Student (Grade 4)	9 y.o	F	Experience in differentiated learning

Data Collection

Three complementary techniques were used: (1) non-participant observation, focusing on classroom practices and school routines; (2) semi-structured interviews, allowing flexibility in probing participants' perspectives while guided by thematic prompts; and (3) documentation analysis, including lesson plans, diagnostic assessment results, and supervisory records. Semi-structured interviews were conducted using guiding questions that allowed flexibility for probing participant experiences. Core questions included: (1) How do teachers plan and implement differentiated instruction in daily classroom practices? (2) How are students grouped or supported based on their readiness, interests, and learning profiles? (3) What strategies are used to foster student cognitive, social, and emotional well-being? (4) What challenges do teachers encounter during implementation? These guiding questions ensured that discussions remained focused while still allowing participants to describe their perspectives in depth.

Data Credibility

Credibility was ensured through triangulation of technique (comparing data across observations, interviews, and documents) and triangulation of source (cross-checking perspectives from principal, teachers, and students). In addition, member checking was conducted by returning synthesized findings to participants to confirm accuracy.

Data Analysis

Observation notes were coded to capture learning processes, classroom interactions, and environmental arrangements. Interview transcripts were coded to extract teacher and student perceptions related to planning, organizing, implementation, and supervision. Documentation (lesson plans, diagnostic assessments, supervisory notes) was reviewed to verify and triangulate emerging themes. The integration of these three sources strengthened the study's credibility through methodological triangulation. Data were analyzed using thematic analysis with the support of NVivo 12 software to manage coding and categorization. The analysis followed six stages (Naeem et al., [2023](#)): (1) familiarizing with the data by reading interview transcripts and observation notes; (2) generating initial codes that represented key ideas in the dataset; (3) searching for broader themes by grouping related codes; (4) reviewing and refining the themes for consistency and clarity; (5) defining and naming themes to represent core meanings; and (6) producing a narrative explanation of the findings supported by direct quotations and observational evidence. To strengthen reliability, two researchers independently coded 30% of the transcripts, achieving an inter-coder agreement of 87%, after which discrepancies were discussed and reconciled. Data from each technique were analyzed cohesively.

Researcher Reflexivity

Given the interpretive nature of qualitative inquiry, researcher reflexivity was emphasized. The primary researcher is an academic with expertise in differentiated instruction and teacher professional development, which could influence interpretations. To mitigate bias, reflective journaling and peer debriefing were employed throughout the process to ensure that data interpretations remained grounded in participants' narratives rather than researcher assumptions.

RESULTS & DISCUSSION

Result

Differentiated Learning Planning

At Unggulan Aisyiyah Primary School, differentiated learning planning begins with the development of the School-based Curriculum (KSP). The curriculum is aligned with the Merdeka Curriculum and is collaboratively developed by the curriculum development team. This process begins with an evaluation of the previous curriculum, conducted through learning communities and surveys via Google Forms. The team then constructs the curriculum by considering the unique characteristics of the school, teachers, and students, including their educational backgrounds and community environments. As stated by the principal during the interview, the curriculum planning process begins by identifying the school's geographical and contextual characteristics, along with teachers' and students' profiles (Interview, R1).

“We start by identifying the geographical context of the school, then the teachers' profiles. In our KSP, we also describe the school's characteristics and the students' general background, such as their education and family environments...” (R1)

As an Islamic multitalented school, Unggulan Aisyiyah integrates differentiated learning into its curriculum to accommodate student abilities, interests, and learning styles. Teacher professional development is prioritized through the Minterke learning community, workshops, and ongoing training. The school provides supporting facilities such as digital devices, instructional media, and printing tools to optimize learning. Student needs are identified comprehensively through initial assessments, diagnostic tests, parent interviews, observations, and school orientation. The importance of using diverse data sources for student assessment was emphasized by the principal, who noted that information is collected through IQ tests, interviews with parents, and previous report cards (Interview, R1).

“First, we need to know all students' characteristics. The sources vary—initial assessments, IQ tests, parent interviews, or even past report cards...” (R1)

One of the classroom teachers highlighted that informal conversations and daily observations serve as effective means for understanding students' individual traits (Interview, R3).

“Daily observation and casual talks with students help us understand their unique traits.”
 (R3)

Teachers identify students' needs through direct observation, informal conversations, and analysis of diagnostic tests in literacy, numeracy, and non-cognitive domains. The three main focus areas are readiness, interest, and learning profiles. These data are used to design differentiated learning strategies. Teaching modules are collaboratively developed and adjusted for content, process, or product according to students' needs. Modules are prepared at the beginning of the academic year and supported by training to ensure proper implementation. The process of planning differentiated instruction is visually summarized in Figure 1, which illustrates the integration of curriculum development, student needs assessment, and collaborative teacher planning.

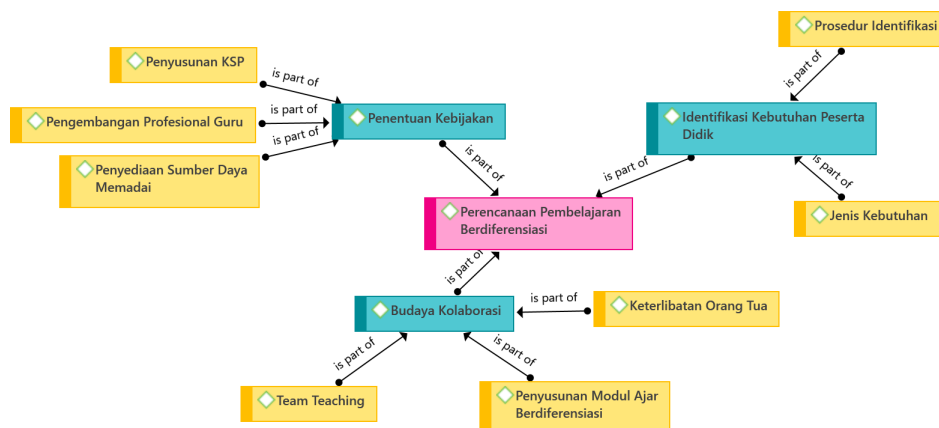


Figure 1. Differentiated Learning Planning

Based on Figure 1, we found that parental involvement is also a key aspect. Parents provide input through interviews or personal notes, which teachers use to inform instruction. Curriculum socialization sessions are held at the start of each school year to inform parents about the instructional process. Parents also provide resources and academic support at home. Their active involvement ensures that children's individual needs are met optimally. In describing collaborative efforts, the principal explained that the team-teaching model facilitates the preparation of learning media and classroom resources (Interview, R1).

“...including media preparation, classroom setup, and so on. The team-teaching system helps with that—if a tool or worksheet is needed, someone prepares and prints it.” (R1)

The school adopts a team-teaching model, enabling collaborative planning, implementation, and evaluation among teachers. This approach allows flexible task distribution and enhances instructional alignment with students' needs and learning preferences.

Table 2. Figure term:

Components of Financial Literacy	Banjar Cultural Values	Components of Financial Literacy	Banjar Cultural Values
Perencanaan Pembelajaran Berdiferensiasi	- Differentiated Instruction Planning	Prosedur Identifikasi	Identification Procedures
Penentuan Kebijakan	- Policy Formulation / Policy Determination	Jenis Kebutuhan	Types of Needs / Need Categories
Penyusunan KSP (Kurikulum Satuan Pendidikan)	- School-Based Curriculum Development	Budaya Kolaborasi	Collaborative Culture
Pengembangan Profesional Guru	- Teacher Professional Development	Keterlibatan Orang Tua	Parental Involvement
Penyediaan Sumber Daya Memadai	- Provision of Adequate Resources	Team Teaching	Team Teaching (tetap, istilah baku internasional)
Identifikasi Kebutuhan Peserta Didik	- Identification of Student Needs	Penyusunan Modul Ajar Berdiferensiasi	Development of Differentiated Teaching Modules

Differentiated Learning Organization

Differentiated learning at Unggulan Aisyiyah is organized through both independent and group-based activities. Students work independently according to their abilities, while those needing guidance receive targeted intervention. Teachers group students based on their abilities, interests, or learning styles to foster group dynamics, communication, and collaboration—ensuring instruction is tailored and effective. Figure 2 depicts how students are grouped and classroom layouts are arranged to support various readiness levels, interests, and learning styles.

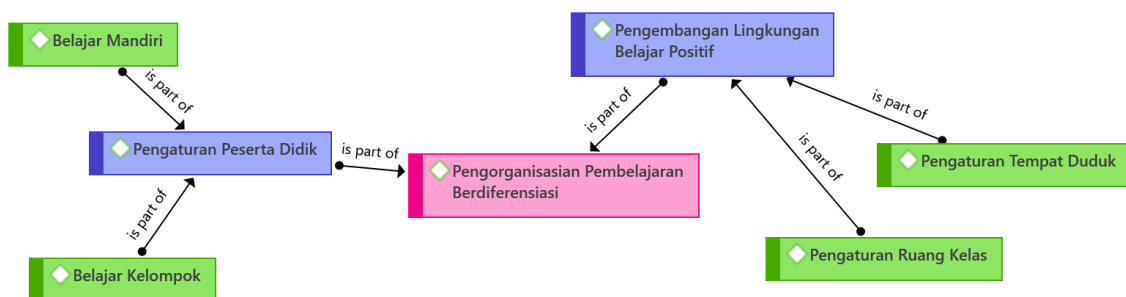


Figure 2. Differentiated Learning Organization

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Bahasa		Academic Term		Bahasa	Academic Term
Perencanaan Pembelajaran Berdiferensiasi	-	Differentiated Instruction Planning		Prosedur Identifikasi	Identification Procedures
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Penyusunan KSP (Kurikulum Satuan Pendidikan)	-	School-Based Curriculum Development		Budaya Kolaborasi	Collaborative Culture
Pengembangan Profesional Guru	-	Teacher Professional Development		Keterlibatan Orang Tua	Parental Involvement
Penyediaan Sumber Daya Memadai	-	Provision of Adequate Resources		Team Teaching	Team Teaching (tetap, istilah baku internasional)
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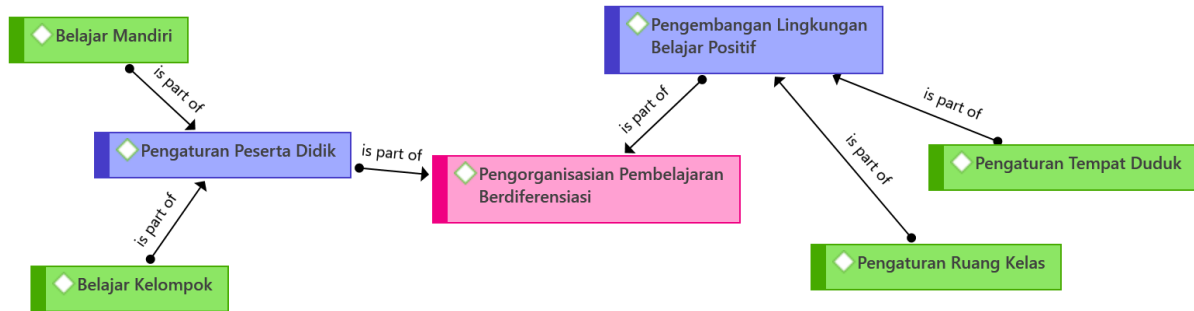


Figure 3. Differentiated Learning Organization

Table 3. Figure term:

Bahasa	Academic Term	Bahasa	Academic Term
Pengorganisasian Pembelajaran Berdiferensiasi	- Differentiated Instruction Organization	Pengembangan Lingkungan Belajar Positif	Development of a Positive Learning Environment
Pengaturan Peserta Didik	- Student Arrangement / Learner Grouping	Pengaturan Tempat Duduk	Seating Arrangement
Belajar Mandiri	- Independent Learning	Pengaturan Ruang Kelas	Classroom Arrangement / Classroom Layout
Belajar Kelompok	- Group Learning / Collaborative Learning		

Figure 3 illustrates the organizational structure of differentiated learning at Unggulan Aisyiyah Primary School. The school adopts a flexible and student-centered approach by grouping students based on their readiness levels, interests, and learning styles. These groupings are dynamic and regularly adjusted to accommodate students' academic and social development. Classrooms are deliberately arranged to support this model—seating is configured to foster collaboration among students with similar characteristics while also enabling targeted intervention for those who require additional support.

The arrangement is designed not only to enhance academic outcomes but also to promote positive peer interactions, communication, and cooperative learning. Teachers play an active role in designing and adjusting these groupings in response to ongoing observation and student feedback. Furthermore, the school creates a physically and psychologically supportive environment by providing features such as reading corners, creative boards, personal lockers, and flexible seating. These elements work together to encourage student autonomy, comfort, and engagement, which are essential to the success of differentiated instruction and the cultivation of student well-being. The principal remarked that differentiated instruction is supported by grouping students with similar characteristics and arranging classroom seating accordingly (Interview, R1).

“What stands out in our differentiated instruction is the group arrangement. Tables and chairs are arranged based on students’ similar characteristics...” (R1)

A vice principal noted that classroom seating is regularly rotated as part of differentiated instruction to vary student experiences (Interview, R2).

“Each class teacher arranges seating based on their classroom agreements, with periodic rotation.” (R2)

The school creates a positive learning environment through dynamic seating arrangements based on readiness, interests, and learning styles. Seating is rotated regularly to diversify student experiences. Classrooms feature reading corners, creative boards, murals, and personal lockers, fostering a relaxed and engaging atmosphere. These facilities support effective differentiated learning by promoting comfort, interaction, and academic-social success.

Differentiated Learning Implementation

Teachers at Unggulan Aisyiyah employ diverse instructional approaches to create engaging and effective learning experiences. They use methods like Problem-Based Learning (PBL), Project-Based Learning (PBL), and interactive activities such as games, quizzes, and star competitions. These methods foster enthusiasm and enhance comprehension. A fourth-grade teacher explained that problem-based learning and project-based learning are among the primary strategies used to implement differentiated instruction (Interview, R3).

“Sometimes we use PBL, other times PjBL...” (R3)

A student expressed that games, quizzes, and exercises are commonly used by teachers to make learning more enjoyable and engaging (Interview, R6).

“Teachers use games, quizzes, and exercises to make learning fun.” (R6)

Student and parent voices further validate the link between differentiated instruction and student well-being. For instance, students highlighted that games, quizzes, and interactive exercises helped them feel more engaged and less anxious (R6), indicating positive effects on their emotional and social dimensions of well-being (Pollard & Lee, 2003). Parents also confirmed improvements in children’s confidence, motivation, and willingness to collaborate with peers, which suggests that differentiated strategies not only enhance cognitive engagement but also foster a supportive socio-emotional environment at home and school. Teachers use a variety of learning resources tailored to students’ needs and interests—

including books, texts, videos, games, and classroom displays. For instance, posters and images serve as engaging visual aids, making the content more accessible and appealing. As noted by a vice principal, learning resources are varied to accommodate different preferences, including books, videos, and visual aids (Interview, R2).

“Sources vary—some students prefer reading, others videos—we try to provide both.”
(R2)

The differentiated strategy includes adjustments in content, process, and product. Learning materials are tailored based on student strengths and interests—e.g., math problems for numeracy strengths, descriptive writing for literacy, and drawing for artistic talent. Remedial programs are embedded in daily activities. Students present their learning outcomes in various formats—drawings, written texts, clippings, or pop-up books. Groupings are also based on learning styles, using varied media such as visuals, audio-visuals, or texts to accommodate different preferences. The use of diverse teaching strategies, instructional media, and assessment formats to implement differentiated learning is presented in Figure 3.

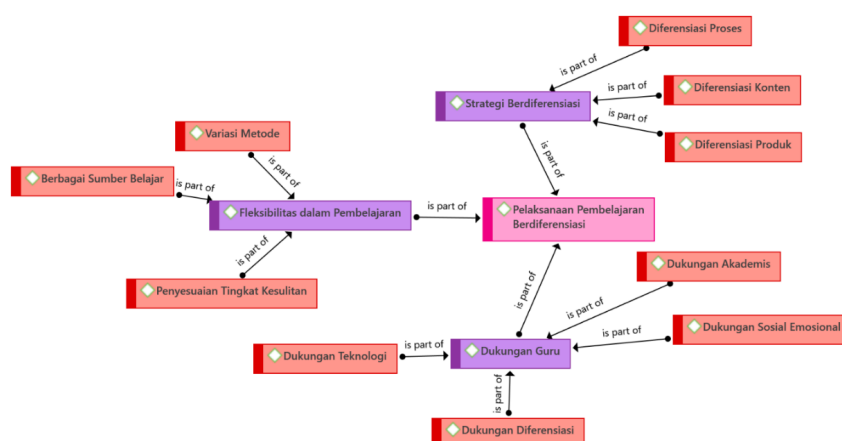


Figure 4. Differentiated Learning Organization

Table 4. Figure term:

Bahasa	Academic Term	Bahasa	Academic Term
Pelaksanaan Pembelajaran Berdiferensiasi	- Differentiated Instruction Implementation	Berbagai Sumber Belajar	Multiple Learning Resources
Strategi Berdiferensiasi	- Differentiation Strategy	Penyesuaian Tingkat Kesulitan	Adjustment of Difficulty Level
Diferensiasi Konten	- Content Differentiation	Dukungan Guru	Teacher Support
Diferensiasi Proses	- Process Differentiation	Dukungan Diferensiasi	Differentiation Support
Diferensiasi Produk	- Product Differentiation	Dukungan Teknologi	Technology Support

Bahasa		Academic Term	Bahasa	Academic Term
Fleksibilitas dalam Pembelajaran	-	Instructional Flexibility	Dukungan Akademis	Academic Support
Variasi Metode	-	Variation of Instructional Methods / Method Variety	Dukungan Sosial Emosional	Social-Emotional Support

Based on Figure 3, the teachers provide social-emotional support by fostering communication skills, collaboration, and character building. Activities such as discussions, presentations, salat dhuha, and morning motivation strengthen emotional well-being. Personalized guidance and interactive media support students needing special attention. This inclusive and creative environment encourages confidence, collaboration, and academic achievement tailored to each student's potential. While Figure 3 illustrates the variety of multi-method strategies adopted by teachers, findings also reveal limitations. Some teachers reported difficulties in using digital media due to limited technical competence, while others noted that time constraints prevented them from fully designing differentiated products. These contrasting cases suggest that although multi-method strategies can enrich instruction, their effectiveness is highly dependent on teacher capacity and school resources, echoing critiques about DI's feasibility in diverse contexts (Gheysens et al., [2022](#)).

Differentiated Learning Supervision

At Unggulan Aisyiyah Primary School, learning is monitored through formative and summative assessments. Formative assessments include brief questioning and observation during instruction, while summative assessments evaluate overall learning outcomes at the semester's end. Results are used for follow-up actions, such as enrichment or additional support. Student reflections—both oral and written—help evaluate their learning process and improve instructional quality.

The school principal provides supervision using a coaching and counseling approach. Interactive discussions are held to assess teacher understanding and resolve challenges, including lesson planning. The principal also described the school's use of coaching and counseling to evaluate teachers' understanding and guide them in implementing differentiated instruction (Interview, R1).

“We use coaching—discussing what teachers know about differentiated learning. Counseling is also provided as support.” (R1)

The school implements the “CLEANING” program—Coaching, Counseling, and Mentoring—which includes coaching using the TIRTA model (Goals, Identification, Action Plan, Responsibility), classroom observations to ensure implementation, and collaborative reflections to enhance instructional quality. These reflections are also shared in learning communities to exchange strategies and best

practices. The supervision model implemented at the school, including the CLEANING framework (Coaching, Counseling, Mentoring), is detailed in Figure 5.

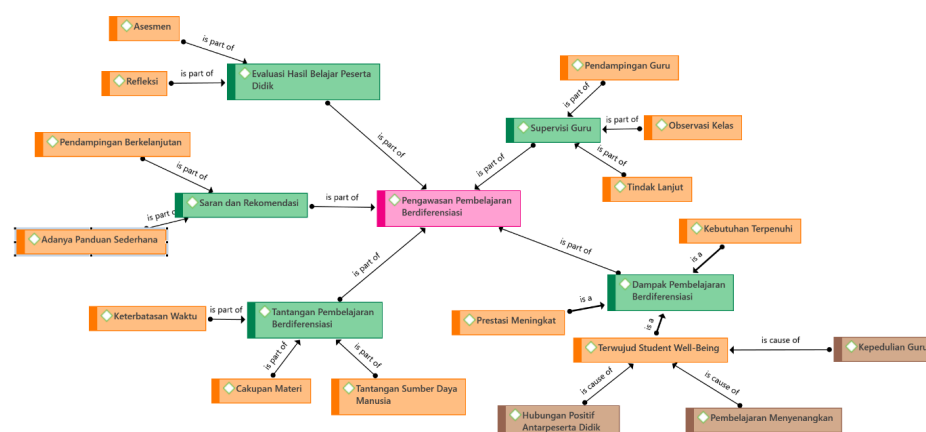


Figure 5. Differentiated Learning Supervision

Table 5. Figure term:

Bahasa	Academic Term	Bahasa	Academic Term
Pengawasan Pembelajaran Berdiferensiasi	- Differentiated Instruction Supervision	Kebutuhan Terpenuhi	Needs Fulfilled / Needs Met
Evaluasi Hasil Belajar Peserta Didik	- Evaluation of Student Learning Outcomes	Tantangan Pembelajaran Berdiferensiasi	Challenges in Differentiated Instruction
Asesmen	- Assessment	Keterbatasan Waktu	Time Constraints
Refleksi	- Reflection	Cakupan Materi	Scope of Content/Content Coverage
Saran dan Rekomendasi	- Suggestions and Recommendations	Tantangan Sumber Daya Manusia	Human Resource Constraints
Pendampingan Berkelanjutan	- Continuous Mentoring	Dampak Pembelajaran Berdiferensiasi	Impact of Differentiated Instruction
Adanya Panduan Sederhana	- Availability of Simple Guidelines	Prestasi Meningkat	Improved Student Achievement
Supervisi Guru	- Teacher Supervision	Terwujud Student Well-Being	Realization of Student Well-Being
Pendampingan Guru	- Teacher Assistance / Teacher Coaching	Hubungan Positif Antarpeserta Didik	Positive Peer Relationships
Observasi Kelas	- Classroom Observation	Pembelajaran Menyenangkan	Enjoyable Learning / Joyful Learning
Tindak Lanjut	- Follow-up Action	Kepedulian Guru	Teacher Care / Teacher Sensitivity

Figure 5 shows that differentiated instruction has shown positive impacts, such as increased motivation, engagement, and student achievement. Instruction tailored to students' interests, talents, and

learning styles fosters a joyful atmosphere and encourages holistic development. Although teachers reported positive outcomes such as increased student motivation and improved classroom engagement, they simultaneously expressed concerns about heavy workloads and limited time for lesson preparation. Some acknowledged that designing differentiated materials was highly demanding and not all staff had the necessary expertise. This dissonance highlights an important tension: while DI is perceived to benefit students, its scalability remains questionable in practice, especially when teacher capacity and institutional support are insufficient (Gheysens et al., [2022](#)). Teachers give special attention to students in need, using personal support or engaging activities. This also nurtures positive peer interactions, inclusivity, and reduces bullying risks.

The CLEANING model—coaching, counseling, and mentoring—can be viewed as a localized adaptation of established instructional supervision frameworks. Previous studies emphasize the role of supervision in fostering reflective practice and collaborative improvement (Acton, [2020](#); Wang & Loughland, [2025](#)). CLEANING extends these ideas by embedding culturally responsive mentoring and community-oriented collaboration, positioning it as a practical contribution to the literature on instructional supervision in the Indonesian primary school context. Challenges include limited teacher skills, lack of innovation, broad curriculum coverage, and time constraints. The absence of a school psychologist limits comprehensive student profiling. Addressing these issues requires simplified guidelines, intensive expert mentoring, and professional development sessions. These steps are expected to enhance the implementation of differentiated instruction and its impact on student well-being and academic success.

Discussion

Planning Differentiated Learning: Policy Setting, Student Needs Mapping, and Strengthening Collaboration

Planning is a critical step in aligning instruction with each student's unique learning needs. This process involves determining the facilities, resources, and pedagogical steps required to achieve effective learning goals. Differentiated learning aims to accommodate students' diverse characteristics, needs, interests, and learning styles. At Unggulan Aisyiyah Primary School, the planning process begins with the development of the school-based curriculum, incorporating both evaluations of previous curriculum implementation and current student needs. The curriculum is also aligned with the school's "Islamic Multitalented School" branding and differentiated instruction approach.

The school places strong emphasis on teacher professionalism through continuous training, seminars, and workshops. Required resources—such as teaching media, digital tools, and support facilities—are made available to enable effective implementation. Student needs are identified through

initial assessments, observation, interviews, and consultation with classroom teachers, allowing the design of learning activities tailored to students' abilities, interests, and learning profiles. This process ensures that learning remains relevant and effective for all students.

A collaborative culture is embedded in the planning and implementation of learning. Teachers jointly develop teaching modules and employ team teaching strategies that allow them to share responsibilities in planning, instruction, and assessment. Parental involvement is also vital; parents provide data on their children's capabilities and monitor their development. Findings from this study reveal that planning for differentiated instruction at Unggulan Aisyiyah is particularly comprehensive—incorporating diagnostic assessments, systematic observation, and parent collaboration—elements rarely emphasized in previous studies.

Organizing Differentiated Learning: Student Grouping and Developing a Positive Learning Environment

Organizing is the process of arranging resources within an organization to enable the achievement of its stated functions and goals (Nurhikmah, [2021](#)). Organization involves determining, grouping, and coordinating necessary tasks, assigning appropriate personnel, equipping them with the needed tools, and delegating authority to ensure tasks are carried out effectively (Sev, [2017](#); Ugoani, [2020](#)). In the context of differentiated learning, organizing involves preparing students' personal and social skills and developing a positive learning environment (Kristiani et al., [2021](#)). These skills can be fostered through both independent and group learning. A supportive learning environment is essential for teachers to effectively implement differentiated instruction, which ultimately enhances student well-being (Hasanah et al., [2023](#)).

At Unggulan Aisyiyah Primary School, students who have mastered the material are assigned independent tasks, while others receive group instruction or guided support. Teachers provide intensive intervention for students needing extra assistance while encouraging independence in others. Students are grouped based on characteristics such as readiness, interest, or learning style, and classroom layouts are adapted accordingly. This aligns with the view that flexible classroom arrangements and positive physical and psychological learning environments enhance learning processes (Hasanah et al., [2023](#)).

A positive learning environment is achieved through dynamic seating arrangements tailored to differentiated needs. Students are rotated regularly—sometimes daily—to provide varied learning experiences. Classrooms are equipped with reading corners, creative boards, diverse learning resources, decorations, carpets, and lockers. Flexible, clean, and comfortable spaces promote collaboration and interaction, fostering a conducive environment for comprehension (Rokhmah et al., [2024](#)). This study confirms that well-organized learning environments play a vital role in ensuring student satisfaction and

well-being, ultimately supporting academic achievement and personal growth (Maryani et al., [2023](#); Maryani & Suyatno, [2023](#)).

Implementing Differentiated Learning: Flexibility, Instructional Strategies, and Teacher Support

The Merdeka Curriculum demands that teachers facilitate enjoyable and motivating learning experiences that promote student creativity, innovation, and independence (Malikah et al., [2022](#)). Joyful learning is viewed as a key to achieving quality education, which occurs when learning processes are engaging and sustainable (Heywood, [2005](#)). Differentiated instruction, as emphasized in the Merdeka Curriculum, requires educators to tailor their teaching to students' needs, characteristics, and contexts (Fauzia & Hadikusuma Ramadan, [2023](#)). Differentiated instruction acknowledges individual differences among students and offers variation in methods, materials, and assessments to meet their needs (Prihatini, [2023](#)). At Unggulan Aisyiyah, differentiated instruction is implemented through flexible teaching methods, diverse learning resources, and adapted difficulty levels. Teachers employ Problem-Based Learning (PBL), Project-Based Learning (PjBL), games, quizzes, and star competitions to enhance engagement and understanding—practices consistent with multi-method, multimedia, and multi-resource approaches (Hasanah et al., [2023](#)).

Learning materials—including books, videos, games, and classroom resources—are selected based on students' interests to make learning more meaningful and enjoyable. The difficulty level is tailored to students' strengths and interests, allowing them to work at appropriate challenge levels. Differentiated instruction encourages students to collaborate with peers who excel in certain areas, forming dynamic and mutually supportive learning groups (Pitaloka & Arsanti, [2022](#)). As professional educators, teachers act as facilitators and inspirers who create safe and inclusive learning environments. They design suitable differentiation strategies in content, process, and product. Not all elements are applied simultaneously; teachers select the most appropriate strategy based on the learning objectives (Sarief, [2022](#)).

Social-emotional support, differentiation, technology, and academic support are all essential for successful implementation. Together, these elements foster inclusive learning environments that help students realize their full potential. Social-emotional support builds a safe space that encourages participation and promotes well-being (Kirk & Jay, [2018](#)). Differentiation allows personalized adjustments in materials and learning outcomes. Teachers provide additional support to students with lower cognitive ability or confidence, which has proven effective in boosting both academic performance and self-esteem (Bahufite et al., [2023](#)). Technology enables access to engaging, varied learning materials and supports multiple learning styles (Hasanah et al., [2023](#)), while also helping teachers monitor student progress effectively. Academic support—including diverse media use and

constructive feedback—is vital for achieving learning goals. As facilitators, teachers are responsible for ensuring that all required support and resources are available (Gearhart et al., [2022](#)).

Supervising Differentiated Learning: Evaluation, Supervision, Impact, Challenges, and Recommendations

Instructional supervision includes evaluating the learning process, measuring outcomes, and managing practices aligned with learning goals. School leaders are responsible for conducting regular monitoring, supervision, and evaluation through observation, reporting, and continuous follow-up. Principals are tasked with overseeing all instructional activities and ensuring optimal service delivery (Rahmawati & Puspita, [2020](#)).

At Unggulan Aisyiyah, supervision of differentiated instruction is carried out by the principal through assessment analysis, teacher supervision, and evaluations of overall implementation. Formative and summative assessments are used to inform instruction and evaluate achievement (Ginanto et al., [2024](#)). Post-lesson reflection allows students to recognize their strengths and identify areas for growth (Shimizu & Kang, [2022](#); Wang & Loughland, [2025](#)). Supervision is conducted using coaching and counseling approaches to improve instructional quality, including mentoring, classroom observation, and collaborative lesson planning (Shimizu & Kang, [2022](#); Wang & Loughland, [2025](#)). This aligns with the principal's role in providing feedback for continuous improvement (Acton, [2020](#)).

The impact of differentiated instruction at this school includes meeting students' individual needs, enhancing student well-being, and improving academic achievement (Labordo, [2024](#); Pozas et al., [2021](#)). This approach effectively addresses diverse learner profiles and supports students in reaching their potential. However, challenges persist—such as limited teacher capacity, broad curriculum coverage, time constraints, and the absence of professional psychological support for thorough student profiling. To improve implementation, several recommendations are proposed: the development of clear guidelines, sustained expert mentoring, and professional development programs to enhance teacher competencies.

These findings culminate in a differentiated instruction model aimed at promoting student well-being. Effective management of four key components—planning, organizing, implementation, and supervision—is essential for achieving this goal. Key elements of differentiated instruction management include (1) identifying student needs and applying team teaching; (2) organizing students and creating a positive learning environment; (3) employing various instructional methods and learning resources; and (4) conducting coaching- and mentoring-based supervision. This approach significantly contributes to promoting student well-being through structured and purposeful learning. To address these challenges, recommendations must extend beyond general calls for continuous mentoring. Innovative approaches such as peer-coaching systems among teachers, the development of context-specific DI

toolkits, and community-based collaborations with psychologists or universities may provide more sustainable solutions. Moreover, acknowledging policy barriers—such as limited professional development budgets and unequal resource distribution in Indonesian public schools—is essential to ensure that DI management models are both contextually grounded and realistically transferable.

CONCLUSION

This study successfully examined the management model of differentiated instruction at Unggulan Aisyiyah Primary School in promoting student well-being. The findings reveal that instructional planning is conducted systematically through initial assessments, collaboration among teachers, parents, and the school principal, as well as the implementation of team teaching and instructional modules. In terms of organization, instruction considers students' abilities, interests, and learning styles through flexible grouping and a positive, collaborative learning environment supported by varied facilities. Instructional implementation emphasizes enjoyable, learner-centered approaches that draw upon individual student potential, with teachers acting as facilitators who apply varied methods and differentiation in content, process, and product. Supervision involves formative and summative assessments, reflective practices, and coaching- and counseling-based supervision to ensure instructional effectiveness. As a result, differentiated instruction meets student needs, enhances well-being, and supports academic achievement. Challenges such as time constraints and limited teacher capacity can be addressed through simplified guidelines, intensive mentoring, and professional development. A structured model of differentiated instruction management—encompassing planning, organizing, implementation, and supervision—focused on student needs, collaboration, and a positive learning environment, has proven effective. Future research is recommended to expand the indicators of student well-being, include a broader range of schools, and consider budgetary elements.

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