

DIFFERENTIATED LEARNING IN ISLAMIC RELIGIOUS EDUCATION AND CHARACTER EDUCATION

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to comprehensively describe how teachers design and implement differentiated learning, as well as to identify various factors that facilitate and hinder the process. This research employs a qualitative approach. There are four subjects in this study: the principal, the vice principal of curriculum, Islamic religious education teachers, and grade 8 students. Data collection techniques included observation, interviews, and documentation. Data analysis in this study involves data collection, data condensation, data display, and drawing conclusions/verification. Data validity was ensured through source and technique triangulation. The results of this study are: 1) The planning stage begins with analyzing learning outcomes, creating learning objectives and their flow, and lesson planning. 2) The implementation stage begins with a diagnostic assessment and curriculum analysis, followed by the application of content, process, and product differentiation based on those results. 3) Supporting factors include support from the principal and adequate infrastructure, while the inhibiting factor is the difficulty educators face in managing the classroom.

Keywords: *One Learning; Differentiation; Islamic Religious Education.*

Abstrak

Tujuan penelitian ini adalah mendeskripsikan secara komprehensif bagaimana guru merancang dan melaksanakan pembelajaran berdiferensiasi, serta mengidentifikasi berbagai faktor yang memfasilitasi maupun menghambat proses tersebut. Pendekatan penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif. Terdapat empat subjek penelitian ini yakni kepala sekolah, waka kurikulum, guru PAI dan peserta didik kelas VIII. Teknik pengumpulan data menggunakan observasi, wawancara dan dokumentasi. Analisis data penelitian ini menggunakan pengumpulan data, kondensasi data, analisis data dan kesimpulan/verifikasi. Keabsahan data menggunakan triangulasi sumber dan teknik. Hasil penelitian ini yakni: 1). Tahap perencanaan diawali dengan menganalisis capaian pembelajaran, membuat tujuan pembelajaran beserta alurnya dan merencanakan pembelajaran. 2). Tahap pelaksanaan diawali dengan asesmen diagnostik, analisis kurikulum dan hasil asesmen diagnostik dan analisis kurikulum dengan penerapan diferensiasi konten, proses dan produk. 3). Faktor pendukungnya yakni dukungan dari kepala sekolah dan sarana prasarana yang memadai. Faktor penghambatnya yakni pendidik kesulitan dalam mengondisikan kelas.

Kata kunci: *Pembelajaran; Berdiferensiasi; Pendidikan Agama Islam.*

INTRODUCTION

Education is an inseparable part of individual growth, where individuals are actively involved in creating new understandings. Individuals do not merely receive knowledge but also play a role in shaping the knowledge itself. Ki Hadjar Dewantara, a prominent Indonesian educational figure, held a profound view of education based on the principle of freedom. This concept implies that every individual is granted freedom by God Almighty to determine their own life path. Nevertheless, this freedom is not absolute; it must align with the norms and rules prevailing in society. Students are free to develop their potential and interests according to their needs. Education should not be restrictive or coercive but must provide space for students to explore and find their true identity. (Ainia, 2020, hlm. 95)

The Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology (Kemendikbud Ristek) introduced a policy concept regarding the "Merdeka Curriculum" (Independent Curriculum) announced during the 2019 National Teacher's Day. In his speech, Nadiem Makarim explained the concept of "Pendidikan Merdeka Belajar" (Freedom to Learn). This is a response to the needs of our educational system in this era of industrial transformation. One of the strategies of this "Merdeka Belajar" curriculum is differentiated learning. According to Mumpuniarti, differentiated learning is a process that provides opportunities for all students to be motivated and independent according to their respective learning needs. Students individually strive to complete the content being studied with joy because they are motivated according to their interests and abilities. (2023, hlm. 5)

Regarding this matter, Law Number 20 of 2003, Chapter IV, Article 5, Paragraph (4) concerning the National Education System states that "Citizens who have potential intelligence and special talents receive special educational services according to their needs and excellence, receiving educational services according to their talents, interests, and abilities, and completing educational programs according to their respective learning speeds." (*Undang-undang Republik Indonesia Nomor 20 Tahun 2003 Tentang Sistem Pendidikan Nasional Bab X Pasal 36*, t.t., hlm. 36) Furthermore, Chapter V, Article 12, Paragraph (1) mentions that "Each student in every educational unit has the right to receive educational services according to their talent, interest, and ability." (*Undang-undang Republik Indonesia Nomor 20 Tahun 2003 Tentang Sistem Pendidikan Nasional Bab X Pasal 36*, t.t., hlm. 12) These articles explain that in the world of education, students are entitled to educational services tailored to the talents, interests, needs, and excellence of each individual.

In differentiated learning, an educator must be able to address various needs required by students in the classroom. This is also reflected in the Al-Qur'an, Surah Al-Hujurat, verse 13:

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِنَّا خَلَقْنَكُمْ مِنْ ذَكَرٍ وَأُنْثَىٰ وَجَعَلْنَكُمْ شُعُوبًا وَقَبَائِلَ لِتَعَارَفُوا ۚ إِنَّ أَكْرَمَكُمْ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ
أَتْقٰكُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلِيمٌ خَبِيرٌ

"O mankind, indeed We have created you from a male and a female and made you peoples and tribes that you may know one another. Indeed, the most noble of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous of you. Indeed, Allah is Knowing and Acquainted" (2009, hlm. 517)

Fachrul Razi, as the 23rd Minister of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia, explained that humans have diverse tribes and nations. Allah created humans in different states so that they might know one another, "li ta'aarafuu". By knowing one another, humans will respect and collaborate in many ways for the common good on earth. (Kemenag, t.t.) Therefore, when connected to differentiated learning, it acknowledges that students have different backgrounds, learning styles, and interests. This proves that differentiated learning is appropriate to be implemented in education, as it aims to fulfill the diverse needs of every individual student.

Through observation and interviews at SMPN 2 Banyuwangi, it was found that teachers observed students who were not paying attention during the lesson, which sparked the teacher's curiosity. When asked by the teacher, it turned out that these students felt saturated and bored if the learning process was conducted with only the teacher being active. Facing this issue, Islamic Religious Education and Character Education teachers sought ways to overcome it by implementing differentiated learning. The reason Islamic Religious Education and Character Education teachers chose to use differentiated learning is that in learning activities, students are accommodated according to their respective learning styles, which makes them much better at participating in classroom activities. (I. B. Gemilang, komunikasi pribadi, 16 November 2024) The phenomena emerging at SMPN 2 Banyuwangi have made the researcher interested in exploring more deeply the differentiated learning implemented by Islamic Religious Education and Character Education teachers.

There are three components in differentiated learning: content differentiation, which involves what students should know, namely facts, understanding concepts and principles, and what students should be able to do, namely skills. Content differentiation means providing different learning content/material to students with specific characteristics. Differentiation is done because it is not possible to provide the same material as other students or standardized curriculum material. Next is process differentiation, which gives students with various characteristics, abilities, and learning readiness the opportunity to undergo learning in the way that best suits each of them. Process refers to a series of cognitive activities carried out by students to acquire, process, and integrate new information. This process involves interactions between students and learning materials, as well as between students and their learning environment. Finally, product differentiation is the way students display or express their learning outcomes (knowledge, understanding, skills, etc.). Learning products are displayed by students at the end of the lesson to demonstrate their mastery of the material. (Wahyuningtyas dkk., 2023, hlm. 49–52)

The focus of this research lies in the planning process, implementation, as well as the supporting and inhibiting factors in the application of differentiated learning in Islamic Religious Education and Character Education for eighth-grade students at SMPN 2 Banyuwangi. In line with this focus, the purpose of this study is to comprehensively describe how teachers design and implement differentiated learning and to identify various factors that facilitate and hinder the process.

RESEARCH METHOD

Type of Research

This research employs a qualitative approach with a case study design. This study seeks to reveal the essence, nature, and characteristics of differentiated learning in Islamic Religious Education and Character Education for eighth-grade students at SMPN 2 Banyuwangi. Furthermore, the case study design allows the researcher to delve deeper into differentiated learning within the Islamic Religious Education and Character Education subject at SMPN 2 Banyuwangi. The researcher can construct the study based on findings obtained from the field.

Research Location and Time

This research was conducted at SMPN 2 Banyuwangi, located at Rangga Wuni Street No. 41, Kebalenan, Banyuwangi District, Banyuwangi Regency. The research was carried out over a period of one month in November 2024.

Research Subjects

The subjects in this study are informants or sources who can provide information related to this research to ensure its validity. The research subjects in this study include: 1) The Principal of SMPN 2 Banyuwangi as the provider of information regarding school data, as well as a supporter and evaluator of the learning process and a validator for other informants. 2) The Vice Principal of Curriculum as the person in charge of curriculum and learning at the school. 3) Islamic Religious Education and Character Education teachers as facilitators of differentiated learning in the Islamic Religious Education and Character Education subject. 4) Representatives of eighth-grade students as the subjects of the study on differentiated learning in the Islamic Religious Education and Character Education subject.

Data Collection Techniques

Data in this study were collected through three techniques: observation, interviews, and documentation. This research utilizes participant observation with the type of passive participation. The researcher used passive participation to gather data on the required components in differentiated learning, including planning, implementation, as well as supporting and inhibiting factors. Observation in this study was conducted by viewing and observing the process of Islamic Religious Education and Character Education learning activities through differentiated learning in eighth-grade classes.

In the interview technique, the researcher chose to use semi-structured interviews. The researcher prepared several questions related to the differentiated learning process in the Islamic Religious Education and Character Education subject, which were then asked to the informants, namely the principal of SMPN 2 Banyuwangi, the vice principal of curriculum, the eighth-grade Islamic Religious Education and Character Education teacher, and representatives of eighth-grade students.

This study uses image documentation accompanied by explanations related to differentiated learning. The documentation taken in this study was during the differentiated learning process in the Islamic Religious Education and Character Education subject, along with several other supporting documents, including: school profile, lesson plans, teacher and student data, learning materials, learning style data, class journals, student worksheets (LKPD), and products created by students.

Data Analysis Techniques

The data analysis technique in this study utilizes the theory by Miles and Huberman, which includes: data collection, data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification. (Moleong, t.t.)

Data collection was carried out using several techniques: observation, interviews, and documentation. Observation was conducted by the researcher during the differentiated learning process in the Islamic Religious Education and Character Education subject in eighth-grade classes. Interviews were conducted to gather data through several questions related to differentiated learning in the Islamic Religious Education and Character Education subject from the informants. Documentation was carried out to obtain data in the form of images related to the differentiated learning process in the Islamic Religious Education and Character Education subject in grade 8-C.

Data condensation refers to the process of selecting, focusing, simplifying, and abstracting the research data regarding differentiated learning in the Islamic Religious Education and Character Education subject in eighth grade that had been collected in the previous stage.

The condensed data is presented in the form of narrative descriptions. Data display serves as a compressed assembly of information. Through structured data display, a deep understanding of the situation faced and the strategic steps to be taken regarding differentiated learning in the Islamic Religious Education and Character Education subject in eighth grade can be obtained.

In the stage of drawing conclusions or data verification, the researcher attempts to find meaning from the data that has been condensed and displayed by comparing, looking for patterns, field notes, themes, relationships/similarities, grouping, and examining the results obtained from observations, interviews, and documentation related to differentiated learning in the Islamic Religious Education and Character Education subject in eighth grade.

Data Validity

To ensure data validity in this study, the researcher chose to use two types of triangulation: source triangulation and technique triangulation. Source triangulation in this study involved several informants who were interviewed regarding Islamic Religious Education and Character Education through differentiated learning. Technique triangulation in this study utilized observation, interviews, and documentation.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Differentiated Learning Planning in Islamic Religious Education and Character Education at SMPN 2 Banyuwangi

The planning of differentiated learning in Islamic Religious Education and Character Education began with a collective learning process regarding the concept of differentiated learning itself. Before implementing this approach, all teachers at SMPN 2 Banyuwangi participated in several activities aimed at enhancing educator competence. This is in accordance with the statement made by Mrs. Dewi Astuti, the principal of SMPN 2 Banyuwangi:

"As the school administrator, I organize activities that provide materials for understanding differentiated learning, so that the evaluation of this learning process can be carried out effectively. The efforts made include: In-House Training (IHT) conducted at the beginning of the new academic year, forming a teacher learning community that meets after the Monday morning ceremony, and encouraging teachers to learn through the Platform Merdeka Mengajar (Independent Teaching Platform)." (D. Astuti, komunikasi pribadi, 18 November 2024)

Based on the interview, it is evident that prior to implementing the lessons, all teachers at SMPN 2 Banyuwangi participated in a series of activities organized by the principal. These activities aimed to provide new knowledge and improve previously implemented learning methods. In developing teaching materials, all educators learned from one another, exchanged ideas, and deliberated to align their materials with the regulations established by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology (*Kemendikbud*), which are accessible via the *Platform Merdeka Mengajar*. Through these collective learning activities, Islamic Religious Education and Character Education (*PAI & BP*) teachers, in particular, could minimize confusion regarding differentiated learning and produce teaching materials that meet the desired needs.

The teaching materials in question include the annual program, semester program, effective weekly plan, and teaching modules (*modul ajar*). In developing differentiated learning modules, educators include steps for all general learning profiles (styles). This is intended to anticipate any differing learning styles present in grade 8. This is consistent with the statement made by Mr. Indra:

"In developing differentiated learning modules, it is certainly different from creating non-differentiated modules. For differentiated learning, the modules I create are adjusted to all general learning styles, which typically include visual, auditory, and kinesthetic. Therefore, I prepare them for these three learning styles, even before knowing the specific learning styles of the students in grade 8. By preparing for these three styles beforehand, I only need to adjust based on the results of the learning style questionnaire later." (I. B. Gemilang, komunikasi pribadi, 11 November 2024)

Based on the interviews conducted by the researcher regarding differentiated learning planning for Islamic Religious Education and Character Education in Grade 8 at SMPN 2 Banyuwangi, the planning process involves developing teaching materials that include learning outcomes (*Capaian Pembelajaran*), learning objectives along with their flow (*Alur Tujuan Pembelajaran*), and lesson planning. The teaching materials referred to in this interview range from the annual program and semester program to the effective weekly plan and teaching modules. Consequently, teaching materials that align with the desired needs can be immediately implemented in the classroom.

Based on findings obtained in the field through interviews, observations, and documentation, the planning begins with creating and analyzing learning outcomes based on the phases established in the *Kurikulum Merdeka (Independent Curriculum)*. This is followed by the preparation of learning objectives and their flow, and finally, the lesson planning itself. The three stages found by the researcher in the field are manifested in the teaching materials, including the annual program, semester program, effective weekly plan, and teaching modules. This aligns with the guidelines issued by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology (*KEMENDIKBUD*) regarding differentiated learning planning: starting with analyzing learning outcomes (CP), then formulating learning objectives and their flow, and planning the lessons. (Ginanto dkk., 2024, hlm. 18)

Learning outcomes are adjusted to the phases determined by the Ministry. In this study, SMPN 2 Banyuwangi is categorized under Phase D as it is at the Junior High School (SMP/MTs) level. The learning outcomes for Islamic Religious Education and Character Education refer to the outcomes provided by the government, as it is a compulsory subject. In this research, while the learning outcomes refer to those set by the government, they are open to development.

Islamic Religious Education and Character Education teachers adapt the learning outcomes to meet the students' needs, which is consistent with differentiated learning. This is in line with the differentiated learning guidelines issued by *KEMENDIKBUD*, stating that educational units can develop learning outcomes for empowerment and skills content according to student learning needs, the learning environment, and the educational unit. (Eppendi dkk., 2024, hlm. 329) The learning outcomes and their elements in differentiated learning for Islamic Religious Education and Character Education, as identified by the researcher

through documentation techniques, are documented in the annual program created by the Grade 8 PAI & BP teacher at SMPN 2 Banyuwangi.

The formulation of learning objectives and their flow is conducted by referring to the previously analyzed learning outcomes. In this study, the learning objectives and their flow for differentiated learning are documented in the annual program created by Mr. Indra as the Islamic Religious Education and Character Education teacher. According to relevant theory, the flow of learning objectives is developed based on the characteristics and competencies developed in each subject. Therefore, it is ideally developed by educators who possess a deep understanding of the subject matter. (Ginanto dkk., 2024, hlm. 19)

At this stage, the educator develops a detailed differentiated learning plan for Islamic Religious Education and Character Education in Grade 8 at SMPN 2 Banyuwangi. The detailed elaboration is contained within the teaching modules, which include complete learning steps from the opening of the lesson to the closing or completion of the learning process. The differentiated learning modules for Islamic Religious Education and Character Education in Grade 8 at SMPN 2 Banyuwangi include several flows in the learning process, namely content differentiation, process differentiation, and product differentiation. Based on the interview with the Islamic Religious Education and Character Education teacher, the existence of teaching modules facilitates the educator in conducting the learning process, which aligns with the related theory stating that teaching modules play a primary role in assisting educators in designing lessons. (Salsabila dkk., 2023, hlm. 34)

The Implementation of Differentiated Learning in Islamic Religious Education and Character Education in Grade 8 at SMPN 2 Banyuwangi.

The initial stage of implementing differentiated learning involves distributing learning style questionnaires at the beginning of the academic year. All Grade 8 students are provided with a learning style questionnaire prepared by the informant. Each student is required to complete the questionnaire, which aims to identify their individual learning styles so that the learning process can be tailored accordingly. This is consistent with the statement made by the informant:

"After developing the modules, I created a learning style questionnaire that every student must fill out at the beginning of the term. This questionnaire makes it easier for me to identify the learning styles of each student. Thus, at the start of the lesson, I distribute the questionnaire and collect them shortly after. Subsequently, I map the results into tables based on similar learning styles; this is intended to facilitate me in grouping the students according to their respective learning styles." (I. B. Gemilang, komunikasi pribadi, 16 November 2024)

Figure 1. Completed learning style questionnaire.

This figure illustrates the results of the learning style questionnaire completed by students. The questionnaire contains several statements categorized into visual, auditory, and kinesthetic learning styles. Each student marks the column corresponding to their learning tendency, and this data is utilized to determine group assignments based on their respective learning styles.

Every student completes a diagnostic assessment in the form of a learning style mapping questionnaire. The distribution of the questionnaires is conducted by the informant, as the teacher of Islamic Religious Education and Character Education, with the aim of identifying students' learning styles so that the subsequent learning process can be adjusted accordingly. This aligns with the theory that diagnostic assessment essentially assists educators in evaluating students' mastery and needs regarding curriculum achievement. (Wahyuningtyas dkk., 2023, hlm. 119)

The next stage in the implementation of differentiated learning is the instructional process itself. Differentiated learning in the Islamic Religious Education and Character Education subject in Grade 8C is applied according to the previously developed teaching modules. The session begins with the usual routine: greetings, prayer, checking students well being and attendance, managing the classroom environment, and providing apperception related to the lesson. Subsequently, the informant divides the students into groups based on their pre identified learning styles. Students are then required to gather with their respective groups.

Once gathered, the process moves into the content differentiation stage. In this stage, all groups are provided with content or materials tailored to their specific learning styles. Groups one and four consist of students with visual learning styles, groups two and five consist of students with auditory learning styles, and groups three and six consist of students with kinesthetic learning styles.

Groups one and four are given materials in the form of a PowerPoint presentation containing material on the traits of trustworthiness and honesty. All members of these groups are required to read the PowerPoint prepared by Mr.

Indra, the Islamic Religious Education and Character Education teacher. The presentation also includes images that support the visual learning style. The author presents the documentation results and responses from representatives of students with a visual learning style below.



Figure 2. Content Differentiation (Visual Learning Style).

This figure illustrates the learning process in which the teacher facilitates students by using visual media as a learning resource. The use of technology, such as computers, assists students particularly those with a visual learning style tendency to receive information more effectively through direct observation of images, text, and multimedia displays.

"My group and I were given a Power Point presentation containing material on the traits of trustworthiness and honesty, along with images depicting these traits. Subsequently, Mr. Indra instructed us to take notes on the important points." (I. B. Gemilang, komunikasi pribadi, 30 November 2024)

Next, groups two and five consist of students with an auditory learning style. For these groups, Mr. Indra provided audiovisual content, meaning it can be both seen and heard. These groups watched and listened to a video provided by Mr. Indra. After watching the video, the students in groups two and five were permitted to record the key takeaways from the viewing. The author presents the documentation and responses from representatives of the auditory learning style groups below.



Figure 3. Content Differentiation (Auditory Learning Style).

This figure illustrates the content differentiation process for students with an auditory learning style. At this stage, the teacher plays a video containing the learning material, and students are asked to listen and record relevant points from

the content. This activity demonstrates how students with auditory tendencies learn more effectively when material is presented in the form of sound or narration.

"I was given material by watching a video about being trustworthy and honest. After watching the video, my group and I were instructed to take notes on the takeaways from the video." (F. D. Sakhi Salsabila, komunikasi pribadi, 30 November 2024)

Meanwhile, groups three and six consist of students with a kinesthetic learning style. The sequence remains consistent with the visual and auditory groups; however, the distinguishing factor for the kinesthetic group is that the materials are provided directly by Mr. Indra. The materials are sourced from the textbook but are explained directly by the Islamic Religious Education and Character Education teacher, who also shares stories from everyday life. Below, the author presents the documentation and responses from the representatives of students with a kinesthetic learning style:



Figure 4. Content Differentiation (Kinesthetic Learning Style).

This figure illustrates the implementation of content differentiation for students with a kinesthetic learning style. At this stage, the teacher delivers the material directly without digital media, using instead concrete examples relevant to everyday life.

"After gathering with the group, my teammates and I were given material explained directly by Mr. Indra. He explained it by providing examples from daily life, so I felt I understood it better when such examples were given." (A. D. Syafiq Siang, komunikasi pribadi, 30 November 2024)

Based on observations conducted by the researcher on November 30, 2024, content differentiation was divided into several groups according to their respective learning styles, where students were provided with content or materials suited to their learning style group. Each group with a visual learning style was given material in the form of a PowerPoint presentation, which included both content and supplementary images regarding the traits of trustworthiness and honesty. Furthermore, for the auditory learning style, students were provided with content in the form of a video; after watching the video, they were permitted to take notes on important points. Subsequently, for the kinesthetic learning style, the material

was delivered directly by the Islamic Religious Education and Character Education teacher, who provided material on the traits of trustworthiness and honesty. He then supplemented the material by giving examples of trustworthiness and honesty found in everyday life. (*Observasi di SMPN 2 Banyuwangi*, komunikasi pribadi, 30 November 2024) This is in line with the existing theory that curriculum analysis is conducted to ensure the implementation of the teaching at the right level principle, where students truly receive learning that matches their needs and learning profiles. (Purba dkk., 2021, hlm. 66)

After all materials have been delivered, the process continues to the next stage, which is Process Differentiation. Process differentiation involves providing problems that must be solved by students according to their respective learning styles. In this regard, the Islamic Religious Education and Character Education teacher implements the process by providing different Student Worksheets (LKPD) that must be completed according to each group's learning style.

The process differentiation for the visual learning style consists of an LKPD containing several questions and images that must be described. This is in line with what Mr. Indra stated:

"For process differentiation, I provide LKPD to all students, which I tailor to the learning style of each group. For the visual learning style, I give an LKPD with several questions and some images that each group must describe. I designed it this way so that the LKPD they receive is consistent with the content they previously viewed." (I. B. Gemilang, komunikasi pribadi, 30 November 2024)

Below, the author presents the documentation of differentiated learning within the process differentiation for the visual learning style.



Figure 5. Process Differentiation (Visual Learning Style)

This figure shows students with a visual learning style working on the LKPD with the assistance of pictorial media. The students are observed paying close attention to the visually presented information, then recording and processing the data based on the images provided in the worksheet.

Subsequently, in the process differentiation stage for the auditory learning style, the LKPD provided by Mr. Indra consists of several questions and statements that must be selected in accordance with the material on trustworthiness and

honesty. Below, the author presents the documentation for the auditory learning style.



Figure 6. Process Differentiation (Auditory Learning Style)

This figure illustrates the learning process for students who have a tendency toward an auditory learning style. At this stage, students receive instructions and materials through direct explanations from the teacher, then discuss answers or select statements based on their understanding of those explanations.

Following this, for the kinesthetic learning style, an LKPD is also provided, which contains several questions and requires students to create stories from daily life related to the material on trustworthiness and honesty. Below is the documentation of the process differentiation for the kinesthetic learning style.



Figure 7. Process Differentiation (Kinesthetic Learning Style).

This figure shows student activities in a learning environment that implements process differentiation for students with a kinesthetic learning style. Students are seen working in groups while completing worksheets that require physical involvement through activities such as writing, organizing information, and discussing.

Based on the observations conducted by the researcher on November 30, 2024, in the process differentiation stage, all groups were provided with an LKPD by Mr. Indra. First, for the visual learning style, it included several questions and images to be described. Second, for the auditory learning style, it involved several questions and determining statements. Third, for the kinesthetic learning style, it consisted of several questions and storytelling. Thus, it can be concluded that all learning styles were given LKPDs consisting of two types, which were tailored to their respective learning styles. (*Observasi di SMPN 2 Banyuwangi, komunikasi pribadi, 30 November 2024*)

Subsequently, the final stage of differentiated instruction is Product Differentiation. For the products generated in this material on trustworthiness and honesty, Mr. Indra had determined that students would create posters; therefore, all learning styles were permitted to create posters. In lessons with different materials, the products generated also differ, such as creating short videos or calligraphy. This is in line with what was stated by Mr. Indra and the representatives of the 8th grade students.

Supporting and Inhibiting Factors of Differentiated Instruction in Islamic Religious Education and Character Education for Grade 8 at SMPN 2 Banyuwangi.

In every activity or implementation, there are inevitably supporting and inhibiting factors. This also applies to the implementation of differentiated instruction in Islamic Religious Education and Character Education for Grade 8 at SMPN 2 Banyuwangi.

The supporting factors for differentiated instruction in Islamic Religious Education and Character Education in Grade 8 at SMPN 2 Banyuwangi are as follows: First, the support from the school principal regarding differentiated instruction. In this leadership role, the principal must provide mental support as well as activities that facilitate this learning model. This is in accordance with what Mrs. Dewi stated:

"As a form of appreciation and support for teachers who have implemented differentiated instruction, we provide several opportunities, including: documenting every learning activity on the school's YouTube channel, and providing opportunities for teachers to enhance their skills in differentiated instruction through various training programs, such as allowing them to participate in the Guru Penggerak (Teacher Leader) or inclusion programs. We also provide freedom in using the school space as a learning environment." (D. Astuti, komunikasi pribadi, 18 November 2024)

This aligns with existing theory that a school principal must make a significant contribution to the educational instruction within the school. Specifically for differentiated instruction, the role of the principal is highly required to support every need necessary for its implementation. (Martanti dkk., 2022, hlm. 416)

The second supporting factor for differentiated instruction in Islamic Religious Education and Character Education in Grade 8 at SMPN 2 Banyuwangi is adequate infrastructure. It is important to note that sufficient infrastructure can support differentiated instruction, as complete facilities will make learning more effective. Especially in today's era of advanced technology, the school environment must also keep pace with technological developments. This is consistent with what Mrs. Dewi said:

"Regarding infrastructure, the school is quite supportive of differentiated instruction, as the land area of SMPN 2 Banyuwangi is approximately 1 hectare; thus, it clearly supports differentiated instruction in the context of utilizing the environment for learning. The physical facilities used for learning are not limited to the classroom but also include laboratories, the hall, the musholla (prayer room), gardens, and gazebos. Specifically, the musholla is designated for Islamic Education, used for worship practice and learning to read the holy book." (D. Astuti, komunikasi pribadi, 18 November 2024)

In accordance with existing theory, the presence of infrastructure in education is absolutely necessary for the educational process. Without educational infrastructure, the educational process will face severe difficulties and could potentially result in educational failure. (Novita, 2017, hlm. 98)

Regarding the inhibiting factors in the implementation of differentiated instruction in Islamic Religious Education and Character Education for Grade 8C at SMPN 2 Banyuwangi, the primary challenge stems from the subject teacher's initial experience. Initially, the teacher felt confused when implementing this learning model. Refusing to give up despite these feelings of confusion, he sought guidance from other teachers. In fact, other teachers also expressed similar concerns. Due to these collective difficulties, the school principal attempted to facilitate a solution by organizing seminars and training sessions related to differentiated instruction, requiring all educators at SMPN 2 Banyuwangi to participate. With these various solutions offered, Mr. Indra no longer experiences confusion in the implementation of this learning model. This is in line with the theory that in their role as learning managers, educators must be able to manage the classroom, as it is a learning environment and an organized aspect of the school environment. (Chindi Nugroho & Indriani, 2023, hlm. 14)

CONCLUSION

The implementation of differentiated instruction in Islamic Religious Education for Grade 8 at SMPN 2 Banyuwangi demonstrates that the teacher has designed the learning process by considering diverse student learning needs. Planning is conducted through an analysis of learning outcomes, the establishment of objectives, and the development of instructional materials tailored to the students' characteristics.

During the implementation phase, the teacher applies differentiation in content, process, and product through various strategies, such as the use of visual media, kinesthetic activities, and the provision of student worksheets (LKPD) adapted to students learning styles. This implementation provides space for students to learn according to their preferences and abilities, thereby enhancing student engagement and instructional effectiveness.

Conceptually, the research findings indicate that differentiated instruction is capable of accommodating individual student differences, particularly in terms of

learning styles, readiness, and interests. Supporting factors for the implementation of this learning model include teacher readiness and school support, while inhibiting factors are related to time constraints and a high level of student heterogeneity.

Future research is expected to develop differentiated instruction approaches by exploring more innovative strategy variations, such as through collaboration with other interactive and engaging learning models. These efforts are expected to yield richer findings and contribute to the development of adaptive and student-centered learning practices.

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