

Implementation of Differentiated Learning in Social Studies Subjects at SMP Negeri 4 Jember Academic Year 2023/2024

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Differentiated learning is learning that is adjusted to the learning needs of students and is a learning model that is in line with the independent curriculum learning, which emphasizes learning that is student-centered, oriented to the learning needs and environment of students. This is stated in Law No. 20 of 2003 concerning the National Education System that the curriculum at all levels and types of education is developed with the principle of diversification in accordance with the educational unit, regional potential, and students. This differentiated learning is also a solution to the problem of learning difficulties in Social Studies learning caused by educators delivering material using only one learning method, which is less understood by students. Thus, differentiated learning is very necessary to be implemented in social studies subjects so that the learning needs of students, namely in terms of learning styles, talents, and interests, can be met and learning objectives are achieved. The focus of this research in this thesis is: 1) How is the implementation of process differentiation learning in Social Studies subjects at State Junior High School 4 Jember in the 2023/2024 academic year? 2) How is the implementation of product differentiation learning in Social Studies subjects at State Junior High School 4 Jember in the 2023/2024 academic year?. The approach used in this research is qualitative with a descriptive qualitative type. Data collection techniques use observation, interviews, and documents. Data analysis uses the interactive model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldana. Data validity uses source triangulation and technique triangulation. The conclusions of this research are that 1) The implementation of process differentiation learning in Social Studies subjects at State Junior High School 4 Jember is carried out by educators delivering material using different methods/learning styles, diverse learning media, group activity arrangements, and different practice activities according to students' learning styles. 2) The implementation of product differentiation learning in Social Studies subjects at State Junior High School 4 Jember is carried out by giving students choices in producing works/products related to the material that has been learned, providing different time durations for making and collecting works/products, and giving students challenges to present their works/products.

Keywords: Differentiated learning, Social studies

Pembelajaran berdiferensiasi merupakan suatu pembelajaran yang disesuaikan dengan kebutuhan belajar peserta didik dan merupakan model pembelajaran yang sejalan dengan pembelajaran kurikulum merdeka yaitu kurikulum merdeka menekankan pembelajaran yang berpihak kepada peserta didik, berorientasi pada kebutuhan belajar dan lingkungan peserta didik. Hal ini terdapat dalam Undang-undang No. 20 Tahun 2003 tentang Sistem Pendidikan Nasional bahwa kurikulum pada semua jenjang dan jenis pendidikan dikembangkan dengan prinsip diversifikasi sesuai dengan satuan pendidikan, potensi daerah, dan peserta didik. Pembelajaran berdiferensiasi ini juga menjadi suatu solusi atas permasalahan kesulitan belajar dalam pembelajaran IPS yang disebabkan oleh pendidik menyampaikan materi hanya mengandalkan satu metode belajar saja sehingga kurang dimengerti peserta didik. Dengan demikian, pembelajaran berdiferensiasi ini sangat perlu dilaksanakan pada mata pelajaran ilmu pengetahuan sosial agar kebutuhan belajar peserta didik yaitu pada cara belajar, bakat dan minatnya dapat terpenuhi dan tujuan pembelajaran tercapai. Fokus penelitian dalam skripsi ini yaitu: 1) Bagaimana pelaksanaan pembelajaran diferensiasi proses pada mata pelajaran Ilmu Pengetahuan Sosial di Sekolah Menengah Pertama Negeri 4 Jember tahun pelajaran 2023/2024? 2) Bagaimana pelaksanaan pembelajaran diferensiasi produk pada mata pelajaran Ilmu Pengetahuan Sosial di Sekolah Menengah Pertama Negeri 4 Jember tahun pelajaran 2023/2024?. Pendekatan yang digunakan dalam penelitian ini adalah kualitatif dengan jenis kualitatif deskriptif. Teknik pengumpulan data menggunakan observasi, wawancara,

dokumen. Analisis data menggunakan model interaktif Miles, Huberman dan Saldana. Keabsahan data menggunakan triangulasi sumber dan triangulasi teknik. Kesimpulan pada penelitian ini bahwa 1) Pelaksanaan pembelajaran diferensiasi proses pada mata pelajaran Ilmu Pengetahuan Sosial di Sekolah Menengah Pertama Negeri 4 Jember dilakukan dengan pendidik menyampaikan materi menggunakan metode/cara belajar yang berbeda-beda, media pembelajaran yang beragam, pengaturan kegiatan berkelompok, kegiatan latihan yang berbeda-beda sesuai gaya belajar peserta didik. 2) Pelaksanaan pembelajaran diferensiasi produk pada mata pelajaran Ilmu Pengetahuan Sosial di SMP Negeri 4 Jember dilakukan dengan memberikan pilihan kepada peserta didik dalam menghasilkan karya/produk terkait materi yang sudah dipelajari, memberikan durasi waktu yang berbeda dalam pembuatan dan pengumpulan karya/produk, serta memberikan tantangan kepada peserta didik untuk mempresentasikan hasil karya/produknya.

Kata Kunci: Pembelajaran berdiferensiasi, Ilmu pengetahuan Sosial

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1. Introduction

21st-century education demands the development of learning systems that are adaptive to student diversity. One approach that is currently gaining attention is differentiated instruction, designed to meet students' learning needs based on their interests, readiness, and learning styles (Tomlinson, 2014). The Merdeka Curriculum in Indonesia emphasizes flexibility and focuses on developing students' character and potential. However, challenges in its implementation remain significant, especially in the aspect of learning methodology (Darling-Hammond, L., Flook, L., Cook-Harvey, C., Barron, B., & Osher, 2020). In the context of Social Studies education, variations in students' learning styles need to be addressed with flexible pedagogical approaches. Unfortunately, the use of single methods such as traditional lectures is still dominant in Indonesian classrooms. Therefore, pedagogical innovation based on differentiated instruction is crucial to be adopted in all subjects, especially Social Studies.

Differentiated instruction includes three key aspects: differentiation of content, process, and product (Tomlinson, C. A., & Imbeau, 2010). However, most studies still focus on content, so the process and product aspects have not been explored optimally. This gap is important because process and product strategies provide actual flexibility in students' learning activities. International research proves that variations in the learning process encourage active student engagement and strengthen information retention (Subban, 2006). Meanwhile, product differentiation opens the way for students to demonstrate their learning outcomes through various creative formats. In the context of Social Studies, where diverse topics and approaches are used, differentiated instruction is highly relevant. Therefore, this research fills this gap by focusing on the implementation of process and product differentiation.

SMP Negeri 4 Jember is a Merdeka Curriculum implementing school that has applied differentiated instruction. Preliminary studies show efforts by Social Studies teachers to adopt this method in teaching and learning activities. However, there has been no systematic research documenting its practices, challenges, and successes. This research aims to describe the implementation of process and product differentiation comprehensively. With a qualitative approach, this research explores the experiences of teachers and students to understand the dynamics of differentiated instruction (Creswell, J. W., & Poth, 2018). The main focus is directed at depicting the real strategies implemented by teachers in Social Studies classes. Thus, this research is not only descriptive but also analytical.

The theoretical framework underlying this research is based on constructivist and humanistic theories. Constructivism emphasizes that learning occurs through active experience and personal construction of meaning (Fosnot, 2013). Meanwhile, the humanistic approach as proposed by (Maslow, 1943) prioritizes self-actualization in the learning process. Thus, differentiated instruction is in line with the principle that students should have the opportunity to learn according to their needs. Process differentiation accommodates diverse learning styles through varied activities, while product differentiation provides space for students' creative expression. The teacher acts as a facilitator who understands the specific needs of the students. Therefore, this theoretical foundation strengthens the reasons for the importance of implementing differentiated instruction in Social Studies classes.

Various international studies prove the effectiveness of differentiated instruction on student learning outcomes. (Tomlinson, C. A., Brighton, C. M., Hertzberg, H. L., Callahan, C. M., Moon, T. R., Brimjoin, K., ... & Reynolds, 2003) found that differentiated instruction significantly increases students' intrinsic motivation. In Europe, (Coubergs, C., Struyven, K., Vanthournout, G., & Engels, 2017) also proved that consistent differentiation practices are related to increased classroom inclusivity. (Subban, 2006) research shows that

variations in learning methods reduce the failure rate of students in secondary schools. In Indonesia, This type of study is still very limited, especially for Social Studies subjects. Therefore, this research makes an important contribution in filling the gap in local empirical studies. Specifically, it strengthens the practice of the Merdeka Curriculum based on inclusive learning. It is hoped that the research results can encourage more Social Studies teachers to adopt this strategy.

This research aims to describe the implementation of process and product differentiation in Social Studies learning at SMP Negeri 4 Jember. The focus is on the concrete strategies used by teachers to manage the differences in student characteristics. The research also aims to identify the obstacles faced and the creative solutions developed by teachers. In this regard, the qualitative research design provides space to capture the authentic dynamics in the classroom (Merriam, S. B., & Tisdell, 2016). With this approach, the data obtained not only explains what is done, but also why and how the strategy is effective. This research is important for building a conceptual framework about evidence-based differentiation practices. The results are expected to be a practical and theoretical reference for teacher professional development.

In Social Studies learning, the application of differentiation is very important considering the complexity and diversity of the content taught. Each theme, whether history, geography, economics, or sociology, requires a flexible approach according to student characteristics. According to (Santangelo, T., & Tomlinson, 2012), the use of differentiation in social education increases students' emotional and cognitive engagement. Project-based learning activities, group discussions, and interactive visual media are effective methods in process differentiation. Meanwhile, in product differentiation, varied final assignments such as posters, documentary videos, or creative presentations can increase students' intrinsic motivation. With this strategy, Social Studies learning is no longer monotonous but becomes an active and reflective process. This is in line with the goals of 21st-century education which emphasizes critical thinking, collaboration, communication, and creativity (4C Skills).

Data collection techniques in this research include observation, interviews, and documentation. To maintain credibility, source and technique triangulation is used (Patton, 2015). Observation data will capture real practices in the classroom without researcher intervention. Semi-structured interviews allow for in-depth exploration of teachers' reasons and reflections in implementing differentiation. Documentation such as RPP (Lesson Plan) and student work will be used to complement the analysis. Data analysis is carried out using the interactive model of (Miles, M. B., Huberman, A. M., & Saldaña, 2014) through the stages of data condensation, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. This approach ensures a valid and reliable interpretation of field data.

The findings of this research will provide practical implications for Social Studies teachers in designing effective differentiated learning. Teachers need to be provided with continuous training on differentiation strategies based on student learning styles and interests. In line with Tomlinson's findings (2017), teacher professionalism in managing differentiation is key to the success of inclusive education. In addition, the development of differentiation-based teaching modules also needs to be supported by school policy. This research also recommends the need for teacher mentoring through communities of good practice. This is important for building a reflective and innovative culture in the school environment. Thus, educational transformation through differentiated learning can be sustainable and systematic.

Overall, this research contributes to enriching the discourse on differential pedagogy, especially in Social Studies subjects in Indonesia. This research emphasizes that the success of the Merdeka Curriculum is highly dependent on the effective implementation of differentiated learning. By referring to international literature and using a strong conceptual framework, the results of this study have high academic validity. It is hoped that these findings can encourage further research exploring content differentiation and differentiation-based assessment. In this way, Indonesian education can move towards being more inclusive, responsive, and humanistic. The challenge ahead is to strengthen the capacity of teachers and support systems in schools to consistently implement differentiated learning. Differentiation-based education transformation is no longer an option, but a necessity of the times that must be realized (Darling-Hammond, L., Flook, L., Cook-Harvey, C., Barron, B., & Osher, 2020).

Literature review

1. Thesis by (Muhammad Sidiq Alrabi, 2023) is titled "Implementation of Differentiated Learning in the Merdeka Belajar Curriculum for Islamic Religious Education Subjects at the Cendana Riau Education Foundation, Duri District". The focus of the problems in this research are a) What is the background of the implementation of differentiated learning in the Merdeka Belajar curriculum for Islamic Religious Education subjects at Cendana Duri? b) How is the implementation of differentiated learning in the Merdeka curriculum for Islamic Religious Education subjects at Cendana Duri? c) What are the supporting and inhibiting factors for the implementation of differentiated learning in the Merdeka Belajar curriculum for Islamic Religious Education subjects at Cendana Duri?

The research method uses qualitative research with a descriptive type, and the determination of research informants uses a purposive sampling technique. The results of this research can be concluded that a) The background for implementing differentiated learning in the Merdeka curriculum is to meet the diverse learning needs of students. b) The implementation of differentiated learning is carried out by considering aspects of content, process, or product, and differentiated learning by Islamic religious education teachers at Cendana Riau, Duri District, needs to be optimized. c) Facilities and infrastructure, as well as the learning environment, are very adequate as supporting factors for the implementation of differentiated learning.

2. Thesis by (Nirmala Wahyu Wardani, 2023) titled "Analysis of Differentiated Approach on Learning Outcomes of Sixth Grade Students at SD Negeri Bandungrojo". The focus of the problem in this research is a) How is the differentiated approach applied to sixth-grade students at SD Negeri Bandungrojo? b) How is the analysis of the differentiated approach on the learning outcomes of sixth-grade students at SD Negeri Bandungrojo? The method used in this research is qualitative research with a case study type. The results of the research are that a) the application of the differentiated approach in the sixth grade of SD Negeri Bandungrojo is through selecting material, grouping students according to their learning needs, providing learning media, and providing guidance to students to create products. b) Sixth-grade students at SD Negeri Bandungrojo before using the differentiated approach tended to be passive because the learning was not in accordance with their characteristics and learning needs, after the differentiated approach was applied, students were more enthusiastic and learning outcomes increased.
3. Research conducted by (Ningtiyas, 2023) titled "Implementation of Differentiated Learning in Improving Islamic Religious Education Learning Outcomes at SMP Ma'arif Kota Batu". The research method used is qualitative research, namely classroom action research. The research objectives are a) To describe the implementation of the differentiated learning model in improving Islamic religious education learning outcomes at SMP Ma'arif Kota Batu. b) To describe the improvement in Islamic religious education learning outcomes by implementing the differentiated learning model at SMP Ma'arif Kota Batu. The research results show that a) The implementation of the differentiated learning model carried out is in accordance with the stages of differentiated learning and b) Students' learning outcomes regarding conceptual understanding classically increased during cycle I with an average of 69.75 and a percentage of 45%, increasing in cycle II with an average of 87.25 and a percentage of 85%. Attitude and skill scores also increased during the learning process from cycle I with 55% to cycle II with 85%. It is concluded that the implementation of the differentiated learning model with the theme Al-Khulafau ArRasyidun can improve Islamic Religious Education learning outcomes.
4. Thesis by (Yelliza Nursal, 2023) titled "Improving Learning Activities and Sociology Learning Outcomes Using the Differentiated Learning Model for Class XII IPS 1 Students at SMAN 1 Ranah Pesisir, Pesisir Selatan Regency". The focus of the problem in this research is a) Can the application of the differentiated learning model improve the Sociology learning activities of class XII IPS 1 students at SMAN 1 Ranah? b) Can the application of the differentiated learning model improve the Sociology learning outcomes of class XII IPS 1 students at SMAN 1 Ranah? The research method used qualitative research with classroom action research (CAR) conducted in two cycles. The results showed that a) The differentiated learning model can improve student learning activities, which was 64.60% in the first cycle and increased by 20.66% to 85.26% in the second cycle. b) Differentiated learning can also improve student learning outcomes, with learning outcomes reaching the KKM (Minimum Completeness Criteria) averaging 62.67% in cycle I and increasing by 20% to 82.67% in cycle II.
5. Research conducted by (Permadi, 2023) with the thesis title "The Effectiveness of Differentiated Learning Models on Improving Fiqh Learning Outcomes for Class VIII at SMP Muhammadiyah 3 Kaliwungu Kendal". The research problem statement is: Is the differentiated learning model effective in improving Fiqh learning outcomes for Class VIII at SMP Muhammadiyah 3 Kaliwungu Kendal? and this research uses a quantitative research method. The results of this study show that the average pre-test score for the experimental class was 67.3, and for the control class was 58.5, and the average post-test score for the experimental class was 86.67, and for the control class was 73.7. It can be concluded that there is a significant difference between the average Fiqh learning outcomes of the experimental class and the control class, indicating that differentiated learning is effective in improving Fiqh learning outcomes at SMP Muhammadiyah 3 Kaliwungu Kendal for the 2023/2024 academic year.

6. Method

This research uses a descriptive qualitative approach with the aim of deeply understanding the phenomenon of differentiated learning in Social Studies. The qualitative approach was chosen because it can describe social reality naturalistically and understand the meaning behind the actions of students and teachers (Creswell, J. W., & Poth, 2018). The focus of this research is to describe the actual practices of teachers in implementing process and product differentiation in the classroom. This approach allows for detailed data collection on the experiences, perceptions, and dynamics that occur in learning. The data collected is not for the purpose of generalization, but rather to understand the specific context in depth. The researcher's involvement as the main instrument is very important in interpreting the emerging phenomena. Therefore,

the validity and credibility of the data are obtained through direct interaction between the researcher, subjects, and the natural setting.

The subjects of this research are teachers and students of grades VII and VIII of SMP Negeri 4 Jember in the 2023/2024 academic year. The selection of subjects used a purposive sampling technique with the criteria of Social Studies teachers who actively implement differentiated learning. The selected teachers have at least participated in Merdeka Curriculum training and implemented differentiated learning in daily learning processes. The students who participated are students from the classes taught by these teachers. The number of subjects is not strictly determined, but follows the principle of data sufficiency (data saturation) in qualitative research (Merriam, S. B., & Tisdell, 2016). The main focus is not on the number, but on the quality and depth of information obtained from the subjects. This is in line with the qualitative principle that prioritizes deep understanding over statistical representation.

The research was conducted at SMP Negeri 4 Jember, located at Jl. Nusa Indah No.14, Jember Lor, Patrang District, Jember Regency, East Java. This location was chosen purposively because SMP Negeri 4 Jember is one of the driving schools that fully implements the Merdeka Curriculum. In addition, this school has actively implemented differentiated learning in various subjects including Social Studies. The school environment that supports learning innovation is a supporting factor for the success of data collection. The availability of facilities such as adequate classrooms, LCD projectors, and access to digital learning resources also supports the implementation of differentiated learning. The presence of a community of driving teachers also enriches the research context with sharing and joint reflection practices. By choosing this location, it is expected that the data obtained reflects actual differentiated learning practices that are relevant to the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum.

The data analysis technique used in this research is the interactive model analysis from (Miles, M. B., Huberman, A. M., & Saldaña, 2014). The analysis is carried out through three stages: data condensation, data presentation, and drawing and verifying conclusions. Data condensation includes the process of selecting, simplifying, and transforming field data into meaningful information. Data presentation is done through descriptive narratives, tables, or diagrams to clarify the patterns of findings. Furthermore, conclusions are drawn iteratively through deep reflection on the presented data. Data validity is tested through triangulation of sources and techniques, by comparing the results of observations, interviews, and documentation (Patton, 2015). Thus, data analysis in this research aims to produce a holistic, consistent, and evidence-based understanding of the implementation of differentiated learning.

Data presentation in this research is done in a descriptive narrative to maintain the richness of meaning and context of the phenomena studied. Each main theme from the research results is supported by direct quotes from interviews, observation descriptions, and relevant documents. The use of direct quotes aims to enhance data authenticity and show the original voices of the participants (Creswell, J. W., & Poth, 2018). Data presentation is also supplemented with a table of findings categorization to make it easier for readers to understand emerging patterns. Data visualizations such as diagrams or concept maps are used to show the relationships between themes. Each presented result is directly linked to theories or previous studies as a form of conceptual triangulation. With this method, the data presented not only describes facts but also reveals the deep meaning of differentiated learning practices in social studies classes.

7. Results & Discussion

The results and discussion include a description of the data obtained through observation, interviews, and documentation at SMP Negeri 4 Jember. Data that was previously presented in the form of data presentation is then discussed again in more detail and linked to theory, in accordance with the established research focus.

1. Implementation of Process Differentiation Learning in Social Studies at SMP Negeri 4 Jember in the 2023/2024 Academic Year

Based on the findings, the implementation of process differentiation learning in social studies at SMP Negeri 4 Jember is carried out by educators delivering material using different methods/ways, diverse learning media, group activity arrangements, and different practice activities according to students' learning styles. This is in line with the opinion of Ambarita and Simanullang who state that process differentiation is a learning process carried out with various strategies to adjust to students' learning needs.

These findings are also reinforced by what was stated by Gregory & Chapman in (Ambarita, 2023) that the learning process that needs to be modified is, first, regarding student learning activities focused on the material. Second, learning methods that use various methods to meet students' learning needs. Third, learning activities that use practice and grouping.

Adjusting process differentiation to students' learning styles is very important considering the different learning needs of students. This is in line with the Learning Style theory which states that in the learning

process, a behavior that supports the process, namely learning style, is needed. By presenting learning styles in the process, it will run more optimally. There are three different types of learning styles: visual learning style, auditory learning style, and kinesthetic learning style.

Furthermore, the arrangement of group activities is intended to make it easier for educators to provide guidance to students in their learning process and for group members to exchange knowledge and learning experiences, so that students can learn from other students. This is in line with Lev Vygotsky's zone of proximal development theory, which is the area between the student's achieved ability and the ability to learn with the help of adults or others. Lev Vygotsky views that students will learn more optimally when working together with other students who have different characteristics through a learning process or collaborative group work. (Bandura, 2020) developed the social cognitive theory which emphasizes the influence of social and observation in learning. In the context of process differentiation learning, group arrangements and collaboration among students are in line with the understanding that social interaction and observation influence the development of students' skills and learning.

The next finding is diverse learning media and practices adjusted to learning styles. This is in line with the perspective of Ki Hajar Dewantara's education concept that it is not good to standardize things that do not need to be standardized. As in learning, it is not done in just one way for one class in the use of media and practices. This is also relevant to John Dewey's view in his book *Experience & Education* that the environment and experience continue to grow larger or wider so that educators must find ways to conduct learning that is in accordance with what students achieve.

2. Implementation of Product Differentiation Learning in Social Studies at SMP Negeri 4 Jember in the 2023/2024 Academic Year. Based on the findings of the implementation of product differentiation learning at SMP Negeri 4 Jember, it was done by giving students freedom of choice in creating products according to their learning style or talent and interest, as well as providing varying lengths of time to create product works, and challenging students to present their product works. (Bruner, 2021) emphasizes the importance of direct experience in learning that accommodates creativity and freedom to create. Giving freedom in creating products according to students' interests and talents is also in line with this constructivist view.

This is in line with Aryani's view on product differentiation, which is differentiating students' work or performance that students must show to the educator in the form of something tangible by giving students choices according to what they want.

The findings show that students are given freedom of choice in creating products according to their learning style or talent and interest. The freedom in creating products is intended to accommodate the different learning styles and interests of students so that they can show their creativity. These findings are in line with the theory of progressivism in Devi Kurnia that the theory of progressivism does not accommodate the absoluteness of life, rejects absolutism and authoritarianism in all forms.

The implementation of this differentiation learning is also in line with the aspects of progressivist education, namely 1) Maintaining freedom to encourage the natural development of students through activities that encourage initiative, creativity, and self-expression, 2) Adjusting lessons to students' interests and connecting them to the real world, 3) Guiding and directing student activities as educational facilitators, 4) Evaluating student progress in terms of mental, physical, and moral aspects, 5) Recognizing the importance of collaboration between educators and schools in meeting learning needs, 6) Innovative educational methods.

8. Conclusion

The implementation of differentiated process learning is carried out using various learning methods and media tailored to the learning needs of students. Teachers apply student grouping, the use of diverse exercises, and the arrangement of learning activities based on students' visual, auditory, and kinesthetic learning styles. This strategy aligns with the principles of differentiation theory, learning style theory, Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development theory, and the concept of contextual education. The implementation aims to maximize students' learning potential through diverse, collaborative, and individually tailored approaches. The implementation of differentiated product learning is carried out by giving students the freedom to choose the form of product that suits their learning style, talents, and interests. Teachers also provide variations in the time allocation for completing the product and encourage students to present their work. This approach is in line with product differentiation theory, the principles of progressive education, Project-Based Learning, and social constructivism. Through this implementation, students' creativity, initiative, and self-expression can develop optimally. Overall, the implementation of differentiated process and product learning at SMP Negeri 4 Jember has proceeded in accordance with the principles of modern

education that are oriented towards the needs, interests, and individual characteristics of students, thus being able to improve the effectiveness of the Social Studies learning process.

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