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Implementation of Independent Curriculum Differentiated Learning in PAI Subjects at SMPIT Ar-Risalah Sukoharjo

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ABSTRACT

Basically, students have different learning styles and needs, as teachers must be able to understand what their students need. This study aims to describe the implementation of differentiated learning in the independent curriculum, find out the obstacles and supporters of the implementation of differentiated learning in the independent curriculum, and the impact of the implementation of differentiated learning in the independent curriculum. The method used in this research is qualitative research with a phenomenological approach. Data collection through interviews, observation and documentation. The results showed that the implementation of differentiated learning in PAI subjects has gone well even though it is still not so optimal. There are obstacles that make the implementation of differentiated learning less optimal such as limited time in learning and lack of human resources. But there are also supporting factors such as a supportive learning environment at school, adequate learning facilities, and principals who routinely conduct supervision. So that the impact that occurs in implementing differentiated learning on students is the emergence of enthusiasm and motivation in the learning process, because with differentiated learning students can learn according to their learning needs and feel happy with several variations of learning so they don't feel bored or monotonous. It can be seen that the impact affects the learning outcomes of students So, it can be concluded that the implementation of differentiated learning of the independent curriculum at SMPIT Ar-risalah Sukoharjo in PAI subjects has been running quite well.

1. Introduction

The educational process is often used as an effort to develop human beings as living beings who are able to contribute to themselves and the surrounding community (Fauzia & Hadikusuma Ramadan, 2023). Quality education will produce a developed society, and lead to constructive traits. Consciously, this is also one of the efforts to meet the needs of students and enable behavior change towards maturity through teaching and training. It is the responsibility of education to maximize individual potential and improve the quality of Indonesian

society through human resource development. Education plays an active role in exploring and developing the potential and character of students in a more positive direction. Education can be improved with learning strategies that (Qoriah et al., 2023). One of the ideas to improve the quality of education, the Indonesian government has changed the way teachers view human beings who have different, unique and extraordinary abilities and are able to overcome various problems that teachers will face in the classroom, this program is called independent learning (Marita, 2023). Before the emergence of independent learning or independent curriculum, there were a lot of curricula used in Indonesia, starting from the Dutch era to after independence as it is today. Of course, there are many developments and improvements in the quality of the educational curriculum to make it even better (Manurung, 2019).

The current curriculum is being implemented in Indonesia, namely the independent curriculum, which is designed to give students greater opportunities to learn and develop their own potential (Sili, 2021). Indonesia had lagged behind in terms of the quality of education compared to other countries (Kurniawati, 2022). Since 1972 UNESCO (*United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization*) or the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization states that education plays an important role in building and improving the country (Nurhuda et al., 2020).

In an education quality survey issued by the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), Indonesia is in the 72nd position out of 77 countries. The PISA survey is a reference in assessing the quality of education in the world. In PISA data (*Programme for International Student Assessment*) which measures adult literacy and numeracy about the processing of primary information shows that Indonesia is at level 1 or even less than 1 of the 5 existing levels. In the last year of 2022, the quality of education in Indonesia has decreased judging from literacy or reading scores, Indonesia has an average score of 359 in 2022. This figure decreased by 12 points compared to the 2018 period with a score of 371. Then, the numeracy score is 366 points. The value also decreased by 13 points compared to 2018 with a score of 379 points. In addition, Indonesia's science assessment is 383 points. The figure also decreased from 2018 which was 396 points. This shows that undergraduate graduates in Indonesia are equivalent to junior high school graduates in Denmark, according to Prof. Lant Pritchett from Harvard University, Indonesia needs to catch up 128 years to catch up with education from other developed countries (Ismail, 2023).

To prevent Indonesia from falling behind other countries, this independent curriculum is an option for education recovery. Kurikulum as an education system must always be changed and developed to be able to keep up with the progress and difficulties of the times. As a result, the education system in Indonesia has currently undergone changes. Either from changing the curriculum, creating a learning system, or using educational resources. In terms of education, learning systems around the world are very diverse, including differentiated learning (Nugraha, 2022). Differentiated learning is an activity that is carried out to get to know students and observe their learning responses according to their diversity.

This learning is also a strategy or model for the development and implementation of learning in schools to enable the optimization of the development of the potential or abilities of each student that is different with the differentiation of content, content, and products. With this differentiated learning, it can be one way to understand and provide knowledge that is tailored to the talents and learning styles of students. In differentiated learning, there are 3 aspects so that students can understand the learning material they are learning, namely the aspect of the content to be taught, the aspect of the process or important activities that students will do in class, and the aspect of making products that are made at the end that can measure the achievement of learning goals.

According to Lamadang, differentiated learning has a close relationship with the independent curriculum which is being intensively discussed in all educational institutions. This learning shows the efforts made by teachers in the implementation of the independent curriculum. Differentiated learning has actually been widely applied in many schools, such as public and private schools. Among the schools that have implemented differentiated learning is SMPIT Ar-Risalah Sukoharjo, in the school in learning PAI (Islamic Religious Education) subjects, a differentiated learning model has been applied based on the student learning environment, continuous assessment. On the basis of the background of the research, the researcher is interested in finding out the differentiated learning process at SMPIT Ar-Risalah Sukoharjo in the PAI subject.

Thus, this study aims to describe the implementation of differentiated learning, the inhibitors and supporters of the implementation of differentiated learning, as well as the impact of the implementation of differentiated learning of the independent curriculum at SMPIT Ar-Risalah Sukoharjo in PAI subjects.

2. Methodology

This type of research is qualitative research. This study intends to understand the phenomenon of what the research subjects experience. The approach to this study is a phenomenological research approach. Phenomenological research is research that examines an event that occurs in a subject (Nasir et al., 2023). The data sources used in this study are primary compiled through teacher subjects and secondary data that already exists is compiled and already in the form of documents. The data collection technique was carried out in several stages, namely, observation at SMPIT Ar-Risalah Sukoharjo, interviews with PAI teachers, and document studies. In conducting observations, the researcher made observations in activities for data collection. The technical data analysis goes through three stages, namely data reduction is carried out After all the data is collected, it is sorted according to research needs Data Presentation It is carried out by analyzing the data that has been sorted and presenting it in the research results and discussion section, and conclusion withdrawal obtained from the analysis and establish the right conclusion based on the presentation of the data (Mulyati et al., 2024).

3. Results and Discussion

The implementation of differentiated learning is learning in which teachers apply methods or efforts so that the needs of students are met. The needs of students vary greatly, of course, the needs of each student are different and the need to adjust the condition of the students. The essence of differentiated learning is the implementation of education that meets the needs of students (Dhahana Aris Saputra et al., 2023) In this study, we will discuss the implementation of differentiated learning of the independent curriculum in PAI subjects at SMPIT Ar-risalah Sukoharjo and several aspects involved.

Implementation of Independent Curriculum Differentiated Learning in PAI Subjects

The implementation of the independent curriculum can affect the implementation of learning in a school by giving the curriculum authority to adjust materials, teaching methods, and assessments according to the needs and characteristics of students (Hudri & Umam, 2022). In the context of differentiated learning in PAI subjects that are given space by the independent curriculum, teachers and institutions can design a curriculum according to the needs and characteristics of students, teachers can use strategies that are responsive to the diversity of students. In addition, the need for teachers to understand what is needed by their students, so teachers must be creative and innovative in using and developing methods in learning to adjust to the learning needs of students. Likewise, in facing various challenges during the implementation of learning so that they must have the skills to solve these problems. Of course, in this case, the teacher understands how the concept of differentiated learning is in order to help students with different needs to reach their maximum potential. Tomlinson believes that the concept of differentiated learning is a way for teachers to meet the needs of students, can be seen in Picture 1.



Picture 1. Differentiated Learning Implementation

Differentiated learning implemented by PAI teachers at SMPIT Ar-Risalah Sukoharjo starts from analyzing students' learning needs through various strategies, paying attention to the students' learning environment, conducting assessments and evaluation of learning.

1. Differentiated Strategies

Basically, there are three differentiation strategies, as Kinanthi said, there are three components in the implementation of differentiated learning strategies, namely content, process, and product (Kinanthi et al., 2024). According to the results of interviews and observations, content differentiation or can be called content, namely what students want to learn, such as the material that students will learn. Of course, the material refers to the curriculum that has been made, but teachers must also be able to adjust their learning styles and student needs. Differentiation of processes, activities carried out by students in the classroom. The activity in question is where the teacher knows how to understand and capture information by students about the material obtained. Then product differentiation, namely how students show what they have learned, or it can be in the form of a work show. This can be adjusted to the student's learning style. The products produced are also diverse, it can be in the form of summaries, concept maps, presentations, and so on.

2. Learning environment

The application of differentiated learning in this independent curriculum pays attention to the character and condition of students. The results of interviews and observations that have been carried out show that the learning environment is very influential, in this learning students feel happy because they can be more active and creative and can adjust to their character and learning interests. And there are facilities in the form of adequate classrooms so that students are comfortable in learning.

3. Continuous assessment

In this assessment, according to the results of interviews and observations, the teacher conducts an initial assessment by checking the readiness of the students, and doing a little reception. This is done to see if students are ready to learn. Before learning begins, an assessment is usually carried out, but it is also done after the teacher explains the material, by asking questions and answers, whether they understand it or not. The goal is for students who feel they do not understand to get the opportunity to ask questions or repeat the material so that they understand. Providing space for students to conclude the material that has been taught makes teachers know how far the understanding is that students get. This also helps teachers in designing their next strategy.

4. Evaluation

Through this independent curriculum which includes a new curriculum and provides various innovations to learning, even so, of course, there are still weaknesses and shortcomings in its implementation (Hutabarat et al., 2022).

Evaluation activities are activities that need to be carried out to correct shortcomings and errors in learning performance (Jayanti et al., 2023). As the results of the interview, which was carried out with this evaluation, it really helped teachers in identifying the learning needs of students and became a reference for designing further learning activities. Teachers also evaluate during the learning process such as discussion time, questions and answers, presentations.

Hindrances and Supporters of the Implementation of Differentiated Learning

In the implementation of differentiated learning, there should be supporting and inhibiting factors, where each teacher has their own challenges in conducting differentiated learning (Umayrah & Wahyudin, 2024). As the results of the interview that has been explained by PAI teachers, there are supporting factors in the implementation of differentiated learning, namely, first, there is support from the principal who supervises so that it is controlled and the infrastructure is quite adequate. Second, a supportive environment, a school atmosphere that is not noisy, far from the hustle and bustle of vehicles. Third, students are enthusiastic such as active and responsive during learning. Fourth, a pleasant learning atmosphere in which students feel comfortable and safe, teachers do *icebreaking* on the sidelines of learning so that students do not get sleepy and rebuild their spirits. Fifth, adequate facilities that facilitate the learning process such as laptops, LCDs, speakers. In the research, Sarie said that supporting factors are an important part of the success of differentiated learning (Sarie, 2022). Not all differentiated learning processes run smoothly, there must be inhibiting factors in its implementation.

According to the results of an interview from a PAI teacher of SMPIT Ar-risalah Sukoharjo which is an inhibiting factor in the implementation of this learning, namely, one limitation of the time given, in this PAI subject the scheduled time is not as much as other subjects or has been divided with other subjects, so that in the implementation of differentiated learning PAI subjects are lacking, let alone having to adjust and meet the varied needs of students. In accordance with Risnawati Aziz's research, learning takes more time because teachers have to map the needs of students and of course through observation first (Azis, 2024). Second, the lack of human resources, as conveyed by the PAI teacher of SMPIT Ar-risalah Sukoharjo feels overwhelmed in the implementation of differentiated learning, because the presence of more than one PAI teacher can help in the design and implementation of differentiated learning, besides that there is also something to be invited to share, exchange opinions and thoughts. Third, the lack of skills and management of teachers, in this case, still often finds it difficult to design and implement learning using various methods and strategies. According to Agustina's research, the inhibiting factors in learning usually come from a lack of time and limited resources, so it can be known the importance of sufficient time to implement this differentiated learning (Agustiana et al., 2023).

The Impact of Differentiated Learning Implementation

Differentiated learning comes with the approach that students have different learning needs (Nawati Anik, Yulia Yuyun, 2023). Mubarak also argued that differentiated learning includes effective learning in increasing students' learning motivation (Mubarak, 2023). As the results of interviews and research observations that have been carried out, PAI SMPIT Ar-risalah Sukoharjo teacher said that with this differentiated learning, students become more enthusiastic and motivated in learning, possibly because it is indeed a variety of learning so that they are not bored, although actually there is not so much variety but it is enough. Sometimes students also *request* or choose the learning they want and then adjust it to the learning material. It can be seen from the results of the above research that students' learning motivation can have an effect on the differentiated learning process so as to determine the success of student learning. Indeed, it is not completely successful according to what has been planned, departing from this, teachers must also be able to understand and interact with students so that they know what students want so that they can meet the needs of students' characteristics and learning interests.

4. Conclusion

This study concludes that the implementation of differentiated learning in PAI subjects carried out by PAI teachers at SMPIT Ar-risalah Sukoharjo is the right learning to be used in the independent curriculum. Simply put, this differentiated learning supports the learning needs of students. Researchers see the factors of the implementation of differentiated learning in PAI subjects to make students understand better, because usually in PAI subjects students easily feel bored or monotonous. As a teacher, you must be able to understand what learning strategies are needed by students and are easy to understand. Not only teachers who take part in this differentiated learning process, school principals must also take part in supervision, teachers to give opinions or share with each other, and the school learning environment must be supportive so as to provide a sense of security and comfort when students learn. The progress of learning is influenced by students in responding to learning activities, so from the impact that students see is enthusiastic and motivated in the learning process. In the implementation of differentiated learning, although there are still some shortcomings, it is good enough. Likewise, the existing obstacles are not something that makes teachers worried, but rather makes them an encouragement to be improved.

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