

Universitas Muhammadiyah Sumatera Barat, Padang, West Sumatera, Indonesia

Ruhama : Islamic Education Journal

p-ISSN: 2615-2304, e-ISSN: 2654-8437 // Vol. 8 No. 2 October 2025, pp. 95-106



<https://doi.org/10.31869/ruhama.v8i2.7257>

Differentiated Instruction in Islamic Jurisprudence (Fiqh) under the Merdeka Curriculum: A Case Study at MTs Muhammadiyah Tanjung Ampalu

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ARTICLE INFO

Article History:

Received: 01 Agustus 2025

Revised: 05 September 2025

Accepted: 05 Oktober 2025

Published: 25 Oktober 2025

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ABSTRACT

This study addresses the problem of the traditional "one-size-fits-all" approach in teaching Fiqh (Islamic Jurisprudence), which often fails to engage a diverse student population and hinders deep comprehension within the context of Indonesia's student-centered Merdeka Curriculum. Therefore, this research aims to describe and analyze the implementation of Differentiated Instruction (DI) in Fiqh classes. Employing a qualitative case study method, data were collected through classroom observations, interviews with the Fiqh teacher and students, and analysis of lesson plans and student work at MTs Muhammadiyah Tanjung Ampalu. The findings, as answers to the research objective, reveal that DI was systematically implemented through: 1) differentiation of content via varied resources (texts, infographics, videos); 2) differentiation of process through activity choices (discussions, mind-maps, simulations); and 3) differentiation of product by allowing diverse outputs (posters, videos, essays). This approach significantly enhanced student engagement and understanding. A key limitation of this study is its restricted generalizability, as it is confined to a single case study context, suggesting the need for broader, multi-site future research.

Keyword

Differentiated Instruction; Fiqh; Merdeka Curriculum; Islamic Education; Case Study

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Abstrak

Penelitian ini menjawab permasalahan pendekatan konvensional "sama untuk semua" dalam pengajaran Fiqh yang seringkali tidak mampu melayani keragaman peserta didik dan menghambat pemahaman mendalam, khususnya dalam konteks Kurikulum Merdeka yang berpusat pada siswa. Oleh karena itu, tujuan penelitian ini adalah untuk mendeskripsikan dan menganalisis implementasi *Differentiated Instruction* (DI) dalam pelajaran Fiqh. Dengan menggunakan metode studi kasus kualitatif, data dikumpulkan melalui observasi kelas, wawancara dengan guru Fiqh dan siswa, serta analisis RPP dan karya siswa di MTs Muhammadiyah Tanjung Ampalu. Temuan

penelitian, sebagai jawaban dari tujuan penelitian, mengungkapkan bahwa DI diimplementasikan secara sistematis melalui: 1) diferensiasi konten dengan sumber belajar beragam (teks, infografis, video); 2) diferensiasi proses melalui pilihan aktivitas (diskusi, *mind-map*, simulasi); dan 3) diferensiasi produk dengan mengizinkan beragam hasil akhir (poster, video, esai). Pendekatan ini terbukti meningkatkan keterlibatan dan pemahaman siswa. Keterbatasan utama penelitian ini adalah terbatasnya generalisasi temuan karena hanya berfokus pada satu konteks studi kasus, sehingga diperlukan penelitian lanjutan yang lebih luas dan melibatkan banyak lokasi.

Kata Kunci

Differentiated Instruction; Fiqih; Kurikulum Merdeka; Pendidikan Agama Islam; Studi Kasus

INTRODUCTION

The landscape of Indonesian education is undergoing a significant transformation with the introduction of the Merdeka Curriculum, a policy response aimed at fostering learning recovery and promoting deeper, more meaningful educational experiences post-pandemic. This curriculum paradigm shift emphasizes student-centered learning, autonomy, and the development of competencies relevant to 21st-century life. Within this framework, madrasahs, as Islamic educational institutions, are challenged to adapt their pedagogical approaches. At MTs Muhammadiyah Tanjung Ampalu, a junior high school in Sijunjung Regency, this transition presents a unique opportunity to re-examine the teaching of Fiqih (Islamic jurisprudence), a subject traditionally focused on normative rules and ritual practices. The diverse student population, with varying learning readiness, interests, and profiles, often finds a one-size-fits-all approach to Fiqih less engaging and ineffective for genuine comprehension and application of Islamic law in their daily lives.

The core challenge identified in the context above finds a powerful theoretical solution in Differentiated Instruction (DI). Pioneered by Carol Ann Tomlinson, DI is a proactive teaching philosophy that contends students learn most effectively when instruction is tailored to their individual needs (Tomlinson, 1987). Unal et al defines it as "a systematic approach to planning curriculum and instruction for academically diverse learners" that allows teachers to differentiate based on three key elements: content (what students learn), process (how students make sense of the ideas and skills), and product (how students demonstrate what they have learned) (Unal et al., 2022). This theory is profoundly relevant to the Merdeka Curriculum's ethos of "merdeka belajar" (freedom to learn), as it empowers teachers to create flexible learning paths. In the specific context of Fiqih education, which integrates cognitive understanding, affective appreciation, and psychomotor skills (practical worship), DI provides a structured framework to move beyond rote memorization. By acknowledging and planning for student variance, DI can transform Fiqih lessons from a monolithic transmission of rules into a dynamic process where each student can engage with the material in a way that respects their unique learning profile, thereby fostering a deeper, more personal connection to the religious teachings.

Empirical studies have begun to validate the efficacy of Differentiated Instruction in various educational settings, including religious education. Research by Intang et al in a high school context demonstrated that DI significantly improved student engagement and learning outcomes in social studies (Nur Intang et al., 2025), highlighting its adaptability beyond core subjects. Furthermore, a study by Latipah et al on PAI (Islamic Education) learning suggested that a student-centered approach leads to

higher motivation and moral reasoning among students (Latipah et al., 2025). However, the specific, granular application of DI to the subject of Fiqih within the operational structure of the Merdeka Curriculum in madrasas remains a less charted territory. Most existing literature on DI in Indonesia focuses on general subjects or PAI as a whole, without delving into the distinct pedagogical demands of Fiqih, which requires a balance between doctrinal accuracy and practical, personalized application. This research seeks to build upon the foundational work of Tomlinson and these prior studies by applying their general principles to a highly specific and culturally significant domain, thereby testing the universality and adaptability of the DI framework.

The current state of the art in Indonesian Islamic education is characterized by a growing acceptance of innovative pedagogies aligned with the Merdeka Curriculum. There is a burgeoning body of work discussing concepts like project-based learning and blended learning in madrasas (Astuti et al., 2024; Nora et al., 2025). However, a conspicuous gap exists in the literature concerning the systematic implementation of Differentiated Instruction, particularly for Fiqih. Many studies are theoretical or discuss DI at a conceptual level without providing rich, qualitative descriptions of its practical execution in a real-world madrasah classroom. The existing gap, therefore, is threefold: first, a contextual gap, as there is limited research on DI in the specific socio-cultural context of a Muhammadiyah MTs in West Sumatra; second, a subject-specific gap, with a lack of focus on how DI's three pillars (content, process, product) are operationalized for a subject as nuanced as Fiqih; and third, a praxis gap, concerning the concrete challenges and solutions teachers encounter when transitioning from a traditional to a differentiated teaching model. This study aims to fill these gaps by providing an empirical, in-depth case study.

The primary objective of this research is to comprehensively describe and analyze the implementation of Differentiated Learning in the Fiqih subject within the Merdeka Curriculum at MTs Muhammadiyah Tanjung Ampalu. This involves detailing the strategies used for differentiating content, process, and product, evaluating their effectiveness in enhancing student engagement and understanding, and identifying the supporting factors and obstacles in the implementation process. The contribution of this study to the science of Islamic education is multifaceted. Firstly, it offers a practical pedagogical model that can be adapted by other madrasas seeking to implement the Merdeka Curriculum effectively, thereby bridging policy and practice. Secondly, it enriches the discourse on modern Fiqih pedagogy by demonstrating how student-centered approaches can lead to a more profound and meaningful understanding of Islamic law, moving beyond indoctrination to internalization. Ultimately, this research contributes to the holistic development of Islamic education by advocating for a teaching methodology that honors individual learner differences, thereby actualizing the Islamic educational principle of nurturing each individual's potential (*fitrah*) to become a knowledgeable and practicing Muslim.

METHOD

This study employed a qualitative case study approach to achieve its objective of providing a comprehensive description and analysis of the implementation of Differentiated Instruction (DI) in Fiqih classes. The "What" of this research, therefore, is the intricate process of implementing DI, encompassing the strategies, effectiveness,

and challenges encountered. A case study was deemed the most appropriate design as it allows for an in-depth, contextual, and holistic investigation of a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life setting, which in this context is the singular case of MTs Muhammadiyah Tanjung Ampalu. Why this approach was chosen is because it aligns perfectly with the research aim to explore the "how" and "why" of the implementation process, delivering a rich, nuanced understanding that a purely statistical approach could not capture.

The research was conducted Where at MTs Muhammadiyah Tanjung Ampalu in Sijunjung Regency, a site purposively selected due to its active implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum in its Fiqih subject instruction. The study took place When during the even semester of the 2023/2024 academic year, covering a full instructional topic on *Thaharah* (ritual purification) to observe the entire cycle of planning, implementation, and assessment. Who the participants were is central to capturing multiple perspectives. The primary participants were the Fiqih teacher, selected for their direct role as the implementer of DI, and students from Class VII, chosen to represent the recipients of the differentiated learning experiences. These participants were selected using a purposive sampling technique to ensure they could provide the most relevant and information-rich data for the research questions.

How the data was gathered involved a triangulation of methods to ensure validity and depth. Firstly, participant observation was conducted to directly witness the application of DI strategies in the classroom, focusing on teacher-student interactions and student engagement with varied content, processes, and products. Secondly, in-depth, semi-structured interviews were held with the Fiqih teacher and a group of students to explore their perceptions, experiences, and the challenges faced during the implementation. Finally, document analysis was performed on relevant artifacts, including the teacher's lesson plans (*Modul Ajar*), teaching materials, and samples of student work (products), to corroborate and enrich the data from observations and interviews. All collected data were analyzed using an interactive model, which involved the concurrent processes of data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification, ensuring that the findings were systematically derived from the empirical evidence gathered from the field.

RESULTS&DISCUSSION

This section presents the empirical findings of the study, organized and triangulated across the three data collection methods: observation, interviews, and document analysis. The triangulation of these data sources provides a robust and multi-faceted understanding of how Differentiated Instruction (DI) was implemented in the Fiqih classroom at MTs Muhammadiyah Tanjung Ampalu.

1. Differentiation of Content at MTs Muhammadiyah Tanjung Ampalu

The findings reveal that the teacher moved beyond a single textbook to cater to students' varying readiness and learning profiles, particularly on the topic of *Thaharah*. During classroom sessions, the researcher witnessed the teacher distributing different learning resources to various student groups. One group received a detailed textual explanation of the laws of *najis* (impurities), another analyzed a colorful, step-by-step

infographic on the procedure of *wudhu*, while a third group watched a short video demonstration of *tayammum* (dry ablution). Students were observed engaging with the material that best suited their mode of learning; visual learners were intently studying the diagrams, while auditory and kinesthetic learners were more focused on the video.

The Fiqih teacher confirmed this observational data, stating, *"I can no longer just rely on the textbook. I have to prepare different 'entry points' for the students. Some understand quickly through reading, but others need to see a simulation or even listen to an explanation multiple times. I use YouTube videos for demonstrations and create my own simple infographics for the visual learners."* A student added, *"I used to get confused just reading about the steps of wudhu, but the flowchart helped me see the sequence clearly. It's much easier to remember."*

The teacher's lesson plans (*Modul Ajar*) explicitly listed these varied resources under the "learning resources" section. The analyzed documents included the infographic handouts, links to the YouTube videos used, and simplified text summaries, confirming the pre-planned nature of content differentiation. The convergence of data from all three sources confirms that content differentiation was intentionally and systematically implemented. The teacher's planning (documents) was executed in the classroom (observation) and was perceived as effective by both the teacher and students (interviews), leading to improved accessibility of the core Fiqih material.

The findings from the research on content differentiation in Fiqih learning at MTs Muhammadiyah Tanjung Ampalu demonstrate a clear and practical alignment with the theoretical framework of Differentiated Instruction (DI) as pioneered by Carol Ann Tomlinson. Alasmari and Althaqafi defines DI as a teacher's proactive response to learner needs (Alasmari & Althaqafi, 2021), shaped by the intent to maximize growth by tailoring content, process, product, and the learning environment. The teacher's strategic use of varied resources detailed text on *najis*, a step-by-step infographic for *wudhu*, and a video for *tayammum* is a direct application of differentiating content based on students' varying readiness and learning profiles. This approach effectively creates multiple "entry points" to the same core curriculum on *Thaharah*, ensuring that visual, auditory, and kinesthetic learners can all access and engage with the material meaningfully, thereby moving beyond the limitations of a single, one-size-fits-all textbook.

This empirical evidence is strongly supported by a growing body of relevant scholarly work. For instance, a study by Kholip and Astutik on Fiqih learning in Islamic elementary schools found that the integration of visual aids (Kholip & Astutik, 2025), such as flowcharts and instructional videos, significantly enhanced students' comprehension and retention of procedural worship rituals. Similarly, research by Samsudi et al concluded that differentiated content strategies were effective in engaging students with diverse academic readiness levels in a secondary school context (Samsudi et al., 2024). The present study, however, strengthens this existing literature by providing robust triangulation of data. The convergence of evidence from documented lesson plans (*Modul Ajar*), direct classroom observation, and reflective interviews with both the teacher and students offers a more comprehensive and validated account, confirming that the differentiation was not merely incidental but was intentionally and systematically implemented.

Positioned within the broader academic landscape, these findings occupy a crucial space that both reinforces and extends existing theory and research. While Tomlinson's DI provides the overarching conceptual blueprint, this study successfully

operationalizes it within the specific cultural and pedagogical context of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) in Indonesia. It effectively bridges a gap by demonstrating how a theory developed primarily in Western general education contexts can be powerfully adapted to teach nuanced Fiqh topics. Furthermore, the methodological rigor of using three distinct data sources places this study on a firm foundation, offering greater internal validity than research relying on a single source. It moves beyond merely confirming that differentiation *can* work, to illustrating *how* it is planned, executed, and perceived as effective in a real-world PAI classroom setting.

The contribution of these findings to the development of Islamic Education is substantial and twofold. Firstly, it provides a practical, evidence-based model for addressing the perennial challenge of learner diversity in PAI classrooms. By demonstrating that normative and procedural religious material can be effectively taught through multi-modal resources, it enriches the methodological repertoire of Islamic educators, promoting a more inclusive and student-centered pedagogy. Secondly, it challenges and empowers teachers to transcend sole reliance on canonical textbooks and to cultivate creativity in developing learning resources. Ultimately, as reflected in the student's comment that the flowchart made the sequence of *wudhu* "much easier to remember," this approach fosters a more accessible, meaningful, and positive learning experience. This aligns with the higher objectives of Islamic education (*maqasid al-tarbiyah*), which aim to facilitate ease, understanding, and a genuine connection with religious teachings.

2. Differentiation of Process at MTs Muhammadiyah Tanjung Ampalu

The study found that students were given autonomy in how they processed and internalized the information about *Thaharah*. In one session, students were given a choice of activities. Some formed a discussion group to debate a real-life scenario involving contaminated water (*air musta'mal*). Others worked individually to create a mind map categorizing different types of *najis*. A third group engaged in a hands-on simulation of *wudhu* and *tayammum*, using a peer-assessment checklist to provide feedback. The classroom atmosphere was dynamic, with the teacher rotating among the groups to facilitate and provide targeted support.

The teacher explained the rationale: "*My role shifts from lecturer to facilitator. The discussion group challenges the quick thinkers, the mind map helps the structured learners organize their thoughts, and the simulation is crucial for those who need to 'do' to understand.*" A student in the simulation group remarked, "*Practicing it ourselves, even as a simulation, and having my friend check my steps made me more confident. I don't think I would remember it as well if I just wrote an essay.*"

The lesson plans detailed these activity options as "differentiated learning activities." The peer-assessment checklist used during the simulation was collected, which listed the *rukun* and *sunah* of *wudhu*, providing tangible evidence of the process for the kinesthetic group. The data triangulates to show a clear shift from a teacher-centric to a student-centric learning process. The planned activities (documents) were actively chosen by students (observation), who reported higher engagement and understanding as a result of working in their preferred mode (interviews).

The findings on the differentiation of process at MTs Muhammadiyah Tanjung Ampalu offer a compelling embodiment of the student-centered learning principles central to Differentiated Instruction (DI) theory. As articulated by Tomlinson (2014), differentiating the process involves varying learning activities to provide students with

multiple pathways for making sense of the same core ideas. The observed classroom, where students autonomously selected from discussion groups, mind-mapping, or hands-on simulations, directly operationalizes this principle. The teacher's conscious shift from a "lecturer to a facilitator" reflects a fundamental tenet of constructivist learning theories, notably Allen concept of the More Knowledgeable Other (Andrew Allen, 2022), where the teacher's role is to scaffold learning within each student's zone of proximal development. By providing choices in how to process the laws of *Thaharah*, the teacher empowered students to construct their own understanding through their preferred cognitive and kinesthetic channels.

This empirical evidence resonates with and is reinforced by several relevant studies in educational practice. Research by Cents-Boonstra et al demonstrated that offering choice in learning activities significantly increases student engagement and intrinsic motivation (Cents-Boonstra et al., 2021), a finding mirrored in the dynamic and invested atmosphere of the observed Fiqih classroom. Furthermore, a study by Falaqi et al on learning Islamic education in Indonesia found that simulation and peer-assessment techniques effectively improved students' practical skills and critical thinking in worship rituals (Falaqi et al., 2025). The present study strengthens this existing literature by showcasing a holistic model where multiple process strategies are deployed simultaneously within a single instructional framework. The triangulation of lesson plans, physical artifacts like the peer-assessment checklist, and student testimonials provides a robust, multi-faceted validation that goes beyond self-reported data.

The position of these findings within the academic discourse is that of a contextualized and validated application. While Tomlinson and Vygotsky provide the theoretical "why" for differentiating process, this study provides a concrete "how" within the specific domain of Islamic Education. It bridges abstract pedagogical theory with the practical realities of teaching Fiqih, a subject often perceived as rigid and text-bound. Moreover, it extends the work of researchers like Farisa et al. by demonstrating that process differentiation is not merely about using a single active-learning strategy (Farisia et al., 2025), but about creating a parallel, multi-activity system where different modalities operate concurrently. The documented success of this approach, confirmed through triangulated data, positions it as a robust and replicable model for other Islamic education settings.

The contribution of these findings to the development of Islamic Education is profound, as it addresses both pedagogical efficacy and the formation of religious character. Firstly, it provides a proven framework for moving Fiqih instruction beyond rote memorization towards deep, internalized comprehension. By allowing students to debate, visualize, and physically simulate acts of worship, the learning becomes more meaningful and durable, as evidenced by the student's increased confidence in remembering the steps of *wudhu*. Secondly, this approach nurtures critical 21st-century skills within a religious context; the discussion group hones critical thinking, the mind-map fosters synthesis, and the peer-assessment cultivates collaborative learning (*ta'awun*). Ultimately, by making the process of learning *Thaharah* more engaging and self-directed, this strategy has the potential to foster a more positive and confident relationship with religious practice, aligning with the higher objective of cultivating a deep and personal connection to faith (*tahqiq al-maqasid al-diniyyah*).

3. Differentiation of Product at MTs Muhammadiyah Tanjung Ampalu

To demonstrate their understanding, students were offered choices in how they showcased their learning, moving beyond standardized tests. The researcher reviewed the final products submitted by students. The variety was evident: a visually appealing poster detailing the conditions that nullify *wudhu*, a three-minute video where a student demonstrated and explained the correct procedure of *tayammum*, and a reflective essay on the spiritual significance of purity in Islam.

The teacher noted the challenge and benefit of this approach: *"Assessing these different products is more work, as I need multiple rubrics. However, the quality of learning I see is far superior. The student who made the video had to deeply understand the sequence and reasons behind each action, which is a higher-order skill than memorizing."* A student who created a poster shared, *"I enjoy drawing, so making a poster about wudhu was fun. I had to research and choose the most important points to include, which helped me learn it better."*

The collected student products served as the primary documentary evidence. Furthermore, the teacher's assessment rubric was analyzed, showing tailored criteria for each product type, clarity of explanation for the essay, accuracy and visual design for the poster, demonstration skill and audio clarity for the video. The existence of varied products (documents) directly resulted from the teacher's implemented strategy (observation). Interviews with both teacher and students revealed that this differentiation of product not only accommodated different talents but also fostered deeper understanding and personal investment in the learning outcomes.

The findings on the differentiation of product at MTs Muhammadiyah Tanjung Ampalu provide a clear and practical illustration of the theoretical principles underpinning authentic assessment and differentiated instruction. According to Tajik et al, differentiating the product involves providing students with various options for demonstrating what they have learned (Tajik et al., 2024), thereby allowing them to utilize their strengths and preferred modes of expression. The observed variety of final products posters, videos, and reflective essays on the topic of *Thaharah* directly embodies this principle. This approach aligns with the concept of Universal Design for Learning (UDL), which advocates for providing multiple means of action and expression to cater to learner variability (Almeqdad et al., 2023). By moving beyond the standardized test, the teacher empowered students to leverage their unique talents, whether visual, kinesthetic, or verbal-linguistic, to construct and showcase their understanding, thereby making the assessment a direct extension of the differentiated learning process.

These empirical observations are strongly supported by a body of research advocating for alternative assessments. A study by Ajjawi et al on authentic assessment argued that tasks should be realistic, require judgment and innovation, and allow students to rehearse for real-world challenges (Ajjawi et al., 2024). The student creating a video demonstration of *tayammum* is a prime example of such an authentic task. Furthermore, research by Jauhar and Thelma in the context of Islamic education found that project-based assessments (Jauhari & Thelma, 2023), like creating visual aids, led to higher student engagement and a more profound grasp of religious concepts compared to traditional tests. The present study reinforces this existing literature by demonstrating a systematic implementation of *multiple, simultaneous* product options, each with its own tailored assessment rubric. The triangulation of the physical and

digital products themselves, the customized rubrics, and the reflective interviews provides a robust, multi-source validation of the strategy's effectiveness.

The position of these findings within the academic discourse is that of a nuanced application that both confirms and extends existing knowledge. While the theories of Tomlinson and UDL provide a robust justification for differentiating products, this study operationalizes them within the specific and often assessment-resistant domain of Fiqih education. It demonstrates that rigorous assessment in religious studies is not synonymous with uniformity. Moreover, it adds a critical layer to studies like Sato et al by highlighting the teacher's role in managing the complexity of this approach specifically (Sato et al., 2025), the creation of multiple, criterion-specific rubrics to ensure equitable and rigorous evaluation across diverse product types. This addresses a common practical barrier for teachers and positions the findings as a valuable model for sustainable implementation.

The contribution of these findings to the development of Islamic Education is significant, as it redefines the very nature of demonstrating religious understanding. Firstly, it challenges the hegemony of written exams in PAI, proposing a more holistic and inclusive model of assessment that recognizes diverse forms of intelligence and creativity as valid expressions of religious learning. Secondly, and more profoundly, it fosters a deeper, more personal, and intellectually sophisticated engagement with faith. As the teacher noted, creating a video required a higher-order understanding of the sequence and reasoning behind rituals, moving beyond rote memorization to comprehension and application. The student's reflection that making a poster "was fun" and facilitated learning points to the potential for increasing intrinsic motivation and personal investment in religious practice. Ultimately, this approach helps cultivate a faith that is not only understood but also personally meaningful and creatively expressed, aligning with the educational goal of developing a mature and internalized religious identity (*tahsil al-ma'rifah al-diniyyah al-mu'aththirah*).

The data also uncovered the practical realities of implementing DI. The primary challenge observed and reported by the teacher was the significant time required for planning and creating multiple resources and assessment rubrics. "*The initial preparation is heavy*," the teacher admitted. Limited facilities, such as inconsistent internet access, were also noted as a constraint.

To overcome these challenges, the teacher reported collaborating with colleagues to share resources, which was corroborated by the discovery of shared digital folders containing teaching materials. The teacher also displayed resourcefulness by utilizing locally available materials for simulations and focusing on low-tech differentiation options when technology was unreliable. The implementation of DI, while effective, was not without obstacles. The challenge of time and resources (interview) was a consistent theme, but the teacher's proactive strategies for collaboration and adaptation (interview and documents) were key supporting factors that made the implementation sustainable in the madrasah's context.

CONCLUSIONS

This study successfully achieves its primary objective by providing a comprehensive description and analysis of the implementation of Differentiated Instruction (DI) in the Fiqih subject under the Merdeka Curriculum at MTs Muhammadiyah Tanjung Ampalu. The findings demonstrate that DI was intentionally

and systematically implemented across content, process, and product. The teacher effectively moved beyond a single textbook, offering varied resources like texts, infographics, and videos to differentiate content, thereby creating multiple "entry points" for students with diverse learning profiles. The differentiation of process was realized by providing students with autonomy to choose activities such as group discussions, mind-mapping, or hands-on simulations which shifted the classroom dynamic from teacher-centric to student-centric and fostered deeper internalization of knowledge. Furthermore, the differentiation of product, evidenced by posters, videos, and reflective essays, empowered students to demonstrate their understanding through their strengths, fostering higher-order thinking and personal investment. The triangulation of observational, interview, and documentary data confirms that this holistic DI strategy significantly enhanced student engagement, accessibility of complex Fiqih material, and the overall quality of learning, aligning perfectly with the student-centered ethos of the Merdeka Curriculum.

Despite its robust findings, this research is not without limitations. As a qualitative case study, its primary limitation is the restricted generalizability (external validity) of the results. The findings are deeply contextualized within a single MTs in West Sumatra, and the implementation was heavily dependent on the specific dedication and creativity of one Fiqih teacher. Therefore, the model may not be directly transferable to other madrasas with different institutional cultures, resource levels, or teacher capacities. Secondly, the study focused on a single topic, Thaharah, within the Fiqih curriculum. The effectiveness and challenges of implementing DI for more abstract or theoretical Fiqih topics, such as Islamic inheritance law (*faraidh*) or transactional law (*muamalah*), remain unexplored. Finally, the study captured the implementation at a specific point in time. The long-term sustainability of this approach, considering teacher burnout from the intensive planning required and the potential for initiative fatigue, was beyond the scope of this investigation.

Based on the conclusions and acknowledged limitations, several recommendations for future research are proposed. First, to enhance generalizability, future studies should employ a mixed-methods approach across multiple madrasas with varying socio cultural and resource contexts to identify common enabling factors and systemic barriers to DI implementation. Second, research should investigate the application of DI to other, more complex areas of the Fiqih curriculum to test the adaptability and limits of this pedagogical framework. Third, a longitudinal study is highly recommended to assess the long-term impact of DI on students' retention of knowledge, practical worship skills, and spiritual development over several academic years. Finally, action research projects focused on developing and validating a "DI toolkit" for Fiqih teachers including templates for planning, repositories of multi-modal resources, and sample rubrics for diverse products would be invaluable. Such a practical resource would help mitigate the primary challenge of preparation time and facilitate the wider adoption of this effective teaching strategy, thereby contributing significantly to the modernization and enhancement of Islamic education.

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