



Differentiated Instruction in Islamic Senior High School: Aspects, Strategies and Problems

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ABSTRACT

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Understanding the implementation of Differentiated Instruction is crucial, especially where Islamic high schools adopt a distinct educational approach in implementing the Emancipated Curriculum, making it essential to understand the nuances of this approach to enhance student learning outcomes effectively. This study investigates the aspects and strategies applied as well as the problems faced by English Teachers of Islamic Senior High Schools in implementing differentiated instruction. A descriptive qualitative study was utilized through semi-structured interviews with five English teachers from different schools and document analysis of the teachers' lesson plans. The process of thematic analysis involved coding and categorizing the answers from the participants into themes, which were then compared with the document analysis and interpreted. The findings indicated that all aspects have been applied in the implementation of differentiated instruction including content, process, product, and learning environment. Diverse strategies were applied, such as presenting materials in different forms, implementing collaborative projects, peer tutoring, adapting Islamic stories and histories, etc. However, the teachers faced problems in managing time, selecting relevant materials, developing distinct assessment rubrics, etc. This study contributes to the understanding of the implementation of differentiated instruction in English language learning, in the context of Islamic secondary schools by providing practical strategies and adding insight into existing literature. The study suggests that implementing differentiated instruction with all its aspects and teachers can adapt various strategies to cater to diverse student needs.



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A. INTRODUCTION

Indonesia's Ministry of Education and Culture (KEMDIKBUD) introduced the "Merdeka Belajar" initiative in 2019 to foster transformative education and develop exceptional human resources. The previous study highlights the importance of the Merdeka Belajar initiative in developing exceptional human resources imbued with Pancasila principles (Hidayati & Sujarwati, 2023). This initiative uses the Emancipated Curriculum, emphasizing soft skills, character development, and flexible learning to individual student progress. Previous research found that the curriculum gives students the freedom to learn and explore their interests while developing critical thinking and problem-solving skills (Ellen & Sudimantara, 2023). The curriculum also aligns with Teaching at the Right Level (TaRL) and incorporates reflective practices to improve teaching processes and student engagement. It involves a differentiated learning approach,

necessary to tailor teaching to individual students' requirements (Maulana & Oktavia, 2023). In addition, the Emancipated Curriculum allows teachers to adapt teaching methods to meet students' learning needs, encouraging differentiated teaching (DI) in the classroom (Muslim & Sumarni, 2023). Reflective practices are also emphasized in improving teaching processes and student engagement (Mardiana et al., 2023). This background underscores the importance of understanding how the Merdeka Belajar initiative and the Emancipated Curriculum involve differentiated learning, which is the focus of the current study.

Differentiated instruction (DI) is a teaching approach that tailors content, process, and product to meet the diverse needs of students, enhancing their learning experience. According to Tomlinson (2016), DI involves differentiating the content, process, product, and learning environment to cater to students' varying abilities. This method is supported by Heacox (2012), who emphasizes that DI provides students with appropriate opportunities to learn at their highest capacity and improves teaching methods based on students' diversity. The differentiated learning approach involves tailoring the content, process, and product based on the levels of learning readiness, interests, talents, and learning styles (Anggraeny & Dewi, 2023; Safrudin & Wijaya, 2024). It uses DI to change traditional teaching approaches into a student-centered approach (C. A. Tomlinson & Allan, 2000).

Islamic high schools often adopt a distinct educational approach in integrating the Emancipated Curriculum and implementing differentiated instruction (DI) to enrich student learning. In an Islamic school environment, English language learning must also include Islamic values and knowledge. Studies have shown that the implementation of differentiated learning strategies within the Merdeka Belajar Curriculum has improved student outcomes in English lessons (Hidayati & Sujarwati, 2023). Students perceive DI as providing personalized learning experiences tailored to their readiness levels (Melka & Jatta, 2022). Despite the potential benefits of Direct Instruction (DI) in Islamic schools, particularly in English language learning, there is a dearth of research on its application in this context. This lack of exploration poses problems for teachers in effectively implementing DI in Islamic schools. Previous research found teachers face challenges such as teaching load, class size, and time constraints (Al-Shaboul et al., 2021). Apart from that, it was also found that despite English teachers' high proficiency in using DI strategies, there is still room for improvement in tailoring instruction based on diverse learning profiles (Mutmainah et al., 2023). Despite these findings, there is a research gap in understanding the comprehensive application of DI by English teachers, particularly within the context of teacher-developed English syllabi, to optimize student learning outcomes. The significance of teacher-created syllabi in fostering DI within Islamic educational settings is evident from studies such as that of Joseph et al. (2013), which underscores the positive influence of differentiated instruction on student intellectual development and subject interest. Research by Anggoro et al. (2024) also demonstrated that DI strategies, tailored to students' diverse intelligences, can notably enhance student performance in English classes. However, English teachers in Islamic schools encounter specific challenges and opportunities, as outlined by Zakiyah (2023), such as the necessity for a deeper grasp and application of differentiation across all learning aspects.

Although numerous studies have examined differentiated instruction (DI) in various educational settings, there is still only a little research concerning its optimal utilization in Islamic senior high schools. This highlights the importance of further research to explore how DI can be optimally utilized in Islamic high schools to meet the diverse learning needs of students and enhance overall educational outcomes. To bridge this gap, it is essential to investigate the following questions: (1) how do the English teachers in Islamic senior high schools implement

differentiated instruction?; and (2) what are the problems in implementing differentiated instruction by Islamic senior high school teachers? Thus, this research aims to understand the current state of DI in Islamic senior high schools and identify areas requiring improvement to enhance educational outcomes for students with varying learning styles and capabilities.

B. METHODS

1. Participants

The purposes of this study were to investigate aspects, strategies as well as problems in implementing differentiated instruction in teaching English. Qualitative research is utilized to interpret people's experiences (Ary et al., 2014). That aligned with the objective of this study which is to explore the teachers' experiences in implementing differentiated instruction in teaching English. Moreover, qualitative research is appropriate for identifying unpredictable information that needs to be explored (Creswell, 2012). The participants could be interviewed if (1) the teacher came from Islamic Senior High Schools in Indonesia; and (2) the teacher implemented differentiated instruction when teaching English. Among a number of teachers, five teachers became the participants of this study regarding the criteria of the participants required. Participants who met the criteria were then asked about their willingness to be involved in this research. The two female teachers came from schools in rural areas, while the three male teachers came from schools in urban areas. The teachers involved in this study were the ones implementing differentiated instruction in emancipated curriculum.

2. Research Design

This research used a semi-structured interview and document analysis to collect the data. Applying qualitative research, the unrestricted perspective, detailed and comprehensive information may be gathered through open-ended questions (Creswell, 2012). The data collection tool included a semi-structured interview and document analysis. Due to the long distance, the data were hybridly collected from participants. Two teachers were interviewed online using *Zoom*. The other three teachers were interviewed directly.

To address the first research question, a document analysis and interview were administered. The document analysed was the teaching module or lesson plan used by the teacher to teach, an English teacher in an Islamic secondary school. The interview consisted of 15 closed-ended questions followed by 15 open-ended questions, adapted from Digna et al. (2023). The questions were divided into several aspects according to the DI concept. For example, "Do you present material in various forms?" and "How do you present material in different forms?" The interview aimed to gather information about teachers' experiences related to strategies for implementing differentiated instruction in the classroom, especially in Islamic schools. Additionally, an interview was conducted to answer the second research question, which asked about the problems encountered in implementing differentiated instruction in Islamic Senior High Schools. The use of both an interview guideline and an analysis checklist allowed for a comprehensive investigation of the implementation of differentiated instruction in Islamic Senior High Schools, providing valuable insights into the challenges and opportunities associated with this teaching approach.

This study implemented qualitative data analysis, especially thematic analysis. Thematic analysis allows for the identification of patterns, themes, and meanings within the data, providing a structured framework for organizing and interpreting qualitative information (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The data from participant related to strategies and problems implemented by the teachers

were coded, interpreted, and descriptively presented. Furthermore, triangulation was also conducted by validating the alignment between the data collected from teacher interviews and the lesson plans developed by the teachers.

C. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

1. Strategies of Differentiated Instruction Implemented by Islamic Senior High School Teachers

In the context of Islamic Senior High School, the teachers have effectively incorporated various aspects of differentiated instruction into their English teaching practices.

a. Content

In implementing differentiated instruction, the Islamic Senior High School teachers applied diverse strategies. Firstly, all five teachers presented the materials in various forms in the form of video, text, and audio. Teacher 1 stated “I present the materials in some forms including text and PPT/infographic for the visual learners, and video for the audio-visual learners, and sometimes I also add audio in some materials for the learners that have an audio learning style. While engaging the students that have a kinesthetic learning style, I will ask the students to play a game or come forward to write on the board”.

The statement above indicates that in a single instructional session, the teachers presented a diverse array of multimedia resources to students. These resources were carefully curated from a variety of sources, which the teachers had adapted to suit the educational objectives. Furthermore, Teacher 3 highlighted that students were given the option to choose from various question formats, as stated, “Most of the students will not listen to the teachers in a long time so I explain to the students in brief, and then let them learn independently using various methods such as quizzes, fill-in-the-blank, matching the words, and others to enhance their engagement and understanding”.

Hence, the teachers have different strategies in designing the materials as well as the exercises. This approach was in line with research that advocates a student-centered learning approach, where students are empowered to learn independently and engage with content in a way that suits their individual preferences (Anggraeny & Dewi, 2023; Hasanah et al., 2022). The finding of this study also strengthens the previous study Anggraeny & Dewi (2023) emphasizing the importance of providing opportunities for students to engage with content that suits their unique learning style

Secondly, five out of five teachers incorporated skills into the materials to foster autonomy in learning. Teacher 3 stated “English materials are simple, but if it is explained to the students, the teaching-learning process will be teacher-centered. While the key to learning a language is practice, that’s why students need to learn independently to acquire the language by simply taking notes. They will ask the teacher if they don’t understand what they write”.

That statement shows that the teacher designs the materials and activities that encourage students to understand the English lesson themselves. In the context of collaborative learning, the teachers also assigned students to work in pairs, facilitated group discussions, and provided dictionaries to enable students to independently identify and clarify unfamiliar vocabulary. Teacher 1 stated, “I asked my students to bring a dictionary so that they can find the difficult words themselves. It will help them add their vocabulary”. Implementing a different strategy, Teacher 2 revealed, “I usually give

materials and exercise, then ask students to work in pairs and discuss with their group outside the class". Teacher 4 added, "In my school, the students are divided into several groups so with different English abilities. This technique is called '*tutor teman sebaya*' (peer tutoring), they will learn independently with or without the teacher, even outside the class". Those statements indicate that the teachers effectively integrated strategies to promote student autonomy, fostering independent learning. These strategies are in line with differentiated teaching principles, emphasizing the importance of student-centered learning and empowering students to engage with content in ways that suit their individual needs (Anggraeny & Dewi, 2023; Barlian et al., 2023).

Thirdly, four out of five teachers leveraged Islamic stories and histories as educational materials, incorporating them into their English teaching practices. For instance, Teacher 5 stated, "I often utilize Islamic histories, such as the celebration of *Maulid Nabi* (the Prophet Muhammad's birthday) to teach narrative texts". Teacher 1 added, "Islamic stories have been integrated as a part of the content. I use the Islamic content so that my students learn English and Islamic content at the same time. I will ask my students to listen to Islamic content, like the podcast, and they have to explain the passage of the *ayat* (verse) or use it in the speech".

By leveraging these materials, teachers not only enhance the relevance and interest of their lessons but also promote a deeper understanding of Islamic culture and its significance in the lives of their students. This is in line with the study conducted by Barlian et al. (2023) which integrate Islamic and historical stories into English lessons. In summary, the content-related differentiation strategies implemented by teachers in Islamic Schools, as discussed in the research findings and related studies, underscored their effectiveness in catering to diverse learning styles and preferences. Teachers not only increased students' understanding of the subject matter but also increased cultural relevance and engagement by presenting the material in a variety of forms and incorporating Islamic and historical stories into English stories.

b. Process

In the teaching and learning process, the teachers employed various instructional strategies to facilitate effective learning outcomes. Firstly, five out of five teachers employed diverse methods to convey English materials based on their understanding of the subject matter. Teacher 2 stated, "Before the semester's commencement, the placement tests were conducted to know students' proficiency in English. Thus, the teacher can teach based on the students' abilities. The material is the same, but the activities and exercises are varied based on the students' comprehension ability and needs". That statement indicates that the teacher adjusted the lesson based on the students' abilities, the teacher used the same material but different exercises and activities. Teacher 1 employed a different strategy as stated, "I usually start the class by asking them stimulating questions, if it doesn't work, it will be changed with a game, then try casual conversation to make them comfortable as a teacher, try to explain the materials."

In the context of the study, Teacher 1 did not adapt instruction and materials to accommodate individual student needs. Instead, the teacher adjusted materials and activities in response to student difficulties. In short, the teachers have implemented diverse strategies to teach English based on their understanding. This result strengthens the previous study conducted by Riskianto et al. (2023) in which the teachers tailor

activities and exercises based on individual learning needs by conducting placement tests and grouping students based on their level of English proficiency.

Secondly, four out of five teachers encouraged students to actively contribute their existing knowledge and promoted higher-level students to mentor lower-level students. The teachers promoted peer tutoring, where higher-achieving students assisted lower-achieving students in understanding course materials. Teachers 1 and 3 specifically noted that higher-achieving students played a crucial role in helping lower-achieving students comprehend the material. Additionally, Teacher 2 stated “In a peer tutoring group, there are some students from the intermediate level to help the pre-intermediate levels. So that the students finding some difficulty will discuss or have a focus group discussion.”

The statement above indicates that the teacher highlighted the importance of peer tutoring between the higher-level students with the lower-level students. Teacher 3 also stated, “I usually classified the students into three groups based on their ability, including the students that have understood the lesson, less understood, and not understood yet. Then the students will be grouped with the ones from different abilities”. It means that the teacher collaborated with the students who understood with those who less or not understood yet to discuss. This finding supports the previous study (Hasanah et al., 2022) highlighting the significance of independent learning through collaborative projects, peer tutoring, and varied question formats to foster a sense of autonomy among students and to encourage a deeper understanding of the material. The finding of this study also strengthens the previous study (Anggraeny & Dewi, 2023) emphasizing the importance of providing opportunities for students to engage with content at their own pace.

Thirdly, only two out of five teachers grouped students based on their backgrounds and learning styles, indicating a need for further development in this area. Teacher 5 revealed “I will ask some students with different learning styles and they have to work with their friends that have the same learning style. But sometimes the students have to collaborate randomly to adapt to various materials. But I never grouped them based on their background” Teacher 4 also stated, “I usually group the students randomly without considering their background”. Hence, several teachers considered the students’ learning styles in grouping the students but did not pay attention to the students’ learning styles. This finding is in line with the previous study conducted by Safrudin & Wijaya (2024) which addressed learning style as one of the aspects that need to be considered in implementing differentiated instruction.

In conclusion, the teaching and learning process utilizing a differentiated instruction approach in Islamic schools encompasses various strategies such as conducting placement tests, implementing differentiated grouping, assigning independent learning tasks, and facilitating peer tutoring. These practices are in alignment with research that advocates for customized instruction to accommodate diverse learning styles and abilities, leading to heightened student engagement and improved academic outcomes. As teachers persist in exploring the efficacy of differentiated instruction in enhancing student achievements, it becomes increasingly clear that a student-centered approach not only boosts academic success but also nurtures students' holistic well-being and empowerment throughout the learning journey.

c. Product

Dealing with assessment, several strategies are implemented by the English teachers. Firstly, five out of five teachers encouraged the students to create their own products, such as infographics, videos, text, PPT, and posters, as stated by Teacher 3 “I usually ask students to create text, poster, or video based on the topic of the lesson. Sometimes I assign them to make PowerPoint or posters to be presented. The students work with their group or sometimes individually based on the difficulty of the product/project”. Teacher 1 added, “Yes, I ask my students to make projects or products”. Teacher 2 also revealed, “Usually my students make infographics or poster in the English learning”. Those statements reflect that the teachers implemented project-based learning in teaching English with various media.

The teachers' emphasis on providing choices and flexibility in the assessment process, such as asking students to create their own products, also aligns with the principles of differentiated learning. In line with previous research, this approach allows students to express their learning in a way that is meaningful to them (Anggraeny & Dewi, 2023). Furthermore, the use of various assessment methods, such as text, video, or poster, caters to different learning styles and preferences, as suggested by (Safrudin & Wijaya, 2024).

The strategy for implementing Differentiated Instruction, especially for products, also needs to pay attention to students' motivations and interests in the learning process. This is also shown in previous research which informs the design of learning content and assessment strategies, ensuring relevance and engagement for students (Hidayati & Sujarwati, 2023). This understanding is further supported by the incorporation of Islamic values and knowledge into the learning environment, providing a meaningful and relevant context for students. The discussion on differentiated instruction in assessment strategies is also enhanced by considering the perspectives of Shalihah et al. (2023) and Zakiyah (2023), who emphasized the need for a comprehensive approach incorporating various learning processes and tailored. Learning products that cater to individual interests and learning profiles, ultimately encouraging students to take ownership of their learning process.

Secondly, three out of five teachers applied diverse assessments based on the student's understanding ability. And four out of five teachers assessed students based on their level of difficulty. Teacher 1 stated that the task and the feedback given to the students were different based on their abilities. “I simplify the question to the lower-level students. The higher-level students have to come forward to speak maximally, while the lower students have to speak in front of the class even though they don't do it maximally, at least they get used to doing that. The feedback will also be different, the higher-level students go the stricter feedback. For reading, the text will be the same, but different approach for the different level students.”

In line with that, other teachers do similar strategies in which they make two or more texts/materials based on the students' classified group related to their English ability as stated by Teacher 5 “I assessed based on their level, the assessment was designed in various text/questions based on the difficulty levels”. However, Teacher 4 revealed, “The presentation will be in a group with random students including diverse levels, however, each group member will get the part based on their ability”. It means that Teacher 4 did not vary the question or project for the students, but the task division was adjusted to the students' ability. Teacher 2, on the other hand, stated, “The students are assessed based

on their performance in the class". All in all, several teachers assessed the students based on their understanding and level of difficulty. Some of them assessed the students through project/product made individually or in a group.

The strategies implemented by Islamic Senior High School teachers in assessing student learning outcomes align with the principles of differentiated instruction. This approach is crucial in ensuring that students can demonstrate their knowledge and skills in a way that meets their interests and learning profiles, as emphasized in previous research (Hidayati & Sujarwati, 2023; Ortega et al., 2018). The teachers' use of diverse assessments based on students' understanding ability and level of difficulty, as seen in the strategies of Teacher 1 and Teacher 5, supports this idea. This approach not only accommodates different learning styles but also encourages students to take ownership of their learning process (Hidayati & Sujarwati, 2023).

In brief, the strategies implemented by Islamic Senior High School teachers in assessing student learning outcomes demonstrate a commitment to differentiated instruction. This approach not only accommodates different learning styles but also encourages students to take ownership of their learning process and express their knowledge in a way that is meaningful to them. The incorporation of Islamic values and knowledge into the learning environment further supports this idea by providing a context that is relevant and engaging for students.

d. Learning Environment

In the context of implementing differentiated instruction, the learning environment plays a crucial role. This encompasses creating a setting that caters to diverse needs, learning styles, relevant tools, and integrated learning topics. Firstly, five out of five teachers created a learning environment accommodating students' needs and learning styles. Teacher 1 assumed, "it needs time to analyze students' necessities and learning style and the teacher needs to make the class comfortable and fun through ice breaking, video, and Thai ads". That statement shows that a class that is fun and comfortable is necessary for the students. Teacher 1 employed diverse activities and media to make the class fun. Furthermore, Teacher 3 revealed, "I ask my students to learn from various sources and report the passage of a text in which the data will be paraphrased. I implement the collaboration project and discovery learning so that the students actively learn outside the classroom". Teacher 5 also implemented collaborative projects and discovery learning to foster active learning outside the classroom. As mentioned earlier, Teacher 2 employed peer tutoring to facilitate activities that accommodated all learning styles. To sum up, the strategies implemented by Islamic Senior High School teachers in creating a learning environment that accommodates students' diverse needs and learning styles align with the principles of differentiated instruction. This approach is in line with previous research, namely Barlian et al. (2023) which found it crucial in ensuring students feel comfortable and engaged in the learning process. This finding also supports the study conducted by Mutmainah et al. (2023) related to the students' involvement in the learning.

Secondly, four out of five teachers provided relevant sources and tools for students. Furthermore, two out of five teachers incorporated sources and tools that specifically aligned with Islamic values and knowledge, indicating a potential area for further integration of these principles into the teaching practices. The incorporation of sources and media in the teaching and learning process is essential to facilitate students' acquisition of language skills tailored to their learning styles. This approach also enables

students to learn English while incorporating Islamic values and knowledge. Teachers utilized a range of traditional and digital media, including audio, YouTube videos, traditional games, flashcards, and others, to enhance the learning experience. Additionally, the teachers searched for suitable content related to Islamic content that can be integrated into English. Teacher 1 stated, "I always research first some contents that I will give to my students. I have some favorite YouTube channels, such as TED talks, English speeches from particular figures, and Islamic speakers from America". Additionally, Teacher 3 revealed, "I use video, exercise, and text for the sources in teaching them English with Islamic values". Those statements prove that the teachers search for suitable content to provide the students with Islamic values and knowledge. In addition, Teacher 1 also stated, "I have a rule that students are prohibited to say bad words. If they mention that they will be asked to write an English text with an Islamic theme. While teaching, I always address Islamic values in the teaching process, and of course, praying before and after the class". Hence, the teachers, especially Teacher 1 not only search for Islamic content but also implement the Islamic values in the class. The finding of this study strengthens Sari et al. (2020) addressing the use of various media in teaching. Furthermore, Teacher 1's approach, which integrates Islamic content and values into the learning process, offers a novel strategy for differentiated instruction in Islamic schools, particularly in English language teaching. This approach can be a valuable addition to the existing literature on differentiated instruction in Islamic schools, as it provides a practical example of how Islamic values can be integrated into English language teaching.

The study also highlights the importance of creating a supportive learning environment that fosters a positive teacher-student relationship. This is in line with the findings of Al-Shaboul et al. (2021), who emphasized the need to diversify the learning environment depending on the teaching method used to achieve effectiveness in learning. The teachers' ability to monitor, facilitate, guide, and educate students by designing differentiated instruction that they prefer, as seen in the study, also supports this idea by creating a learning environment that is tailored to individual needs. Ultimately, the strategies implemented by Islamic Senior High School teachers in creating a learning environment that accommodates students' diverse needs and learning styles demonstrate a commitment to differentiated instruction. This approach not only caters to different learning styles but also encourages students to take ownership of their learning process and provides a context that is meaningful and relevant to students' lives.

2. Problems in Implementing Differentiated Instruction in Islamic Senior High School

Implementing differentiated instruction, the teachers are expected to adjust to the students' different learning styles, English abilities, and understanding. Despite this approach, challenges were encountered, particularly at the Islamic Senior High School. The research revealed that teachers struggled to allocate sufficient time to cater to students with lower proficiency levels while also engaging those with higher abilities through more complex activities, thus necessitating a balance between these competing demands. Teacher 1 stated, "It is not that easy to prepare various materials based on the students' English ability. Since we don't only need to pay attention to the lower-level students, but the higher-level students also need to be taught with different and higher-level materials, so that they are not bored and get what they need".

Some teachers also indicated that the limited time with a huge number of students was not enough to discuss the materials in various forms, to provide diverse activities, and to assess the

students differently. Teacher 1 revealed, “The problem is the limited time, with a huge number of students so it is hard to implement the different activities and material”. Then, teacher 2 added “In my opinion, differentiated learning, especially in English, is difficult to implement because of the limited time and resources. For example, the teacher cannot give a different task for each student. However, I sometimes divide the students into small groups based on their learning styles. So that the visual group learners make posters and videos, while the auditory learners make presentations orally or podcast.” In addition, the teacher also assumed that considering diverse, interesting, and creative materials and activities was not easy. It took a long time to find the qualified and related materials. Furthermore, the various materials need different assessment rubrics which can be demanding for the teacher as well, as stated by Teacher 2, “Another problem is when I have to make some rubrics to assess students’ projects because each student can hand in a different project/outcome”.

The difficulties encountered by instructors at Islamic Senior High School in implementing differentiated instruction are consonant with the findings of previous studies that have identified the complexities of allocating time to accommodate students with diverse learning styles, varying proficiency levels in English, and disparate comprehension abilities (Aldossari, 2018). Furthermore, the study's findings regarding the challenges associated with students, Islamic values, the school environment, and the nature of differentiated instruction itself are consistent with the results of similar studies that have documented similar challenges (Aldossari, 2018). The study also found that teachers faced difficulties in preparing diverse and interesting materials and activities, which is consistent with previous research that emphasized the need for teachers to plan and prepare before implementing differentiated instruction (Mairoza et al., 2024). The importance of adequate preparation for effective implementation is also highlighted in the study, which is consistent with previous research that found that teachers' lack of preparation was a major obstacle to implementing differentiated instruction (Mairoza et al., 2024).

The study's findings also support the idea that teachers' beliefs about learning models can influence their actions and steps, which is consistent with previous research that found that teachers' beliefs about learning models can affect their teaching practices (Astuti et al., 2023). The challenges faced by teachers in Indonesia, particularly in monitoring student performance individually, are also reflected in the study, which is consistent with previous research that found that teachers in Indonesia faced difficulties in monitoring student performance (Hasanah et al., 2022).

Furthermore, the study's emphasis on the challenges of providing differentiated learning, which involves adapting the curriculum, teaching strategies, assessment strategies, and classroom environment to the needs of all students, is consistent with previous research that found that providing differentiated learning was a significant challenge for teachers (Safrudin & Wijaya, 2024). The study's findings suggest that teachers need to be aware of these challenges and develop strategies to overcome them in order to effectively implement differentiated instruction. To sum up, the challenges faced by Islamic Senior High School teachers in implementing differentiated instruction are consistent with the findings of previous studies. The study highlights the importance of adequate preparation, time management, and the need for teachers to adapt their teaching strategies to cater to the diverse needs of students.

D. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

The teachers at Islamic Senior High School had effectively implemented differentiated instruction in their English teaching practices including the four aspects, content, process, product, and learning environment. Related to the content, the teachers have diverse strategies, such as presenting the English materials in different forms such as video, text, and audio, varying the format of the questions so that the students can choose the exercise based on their preferences, and encouraging independent learning through collaborative projects and peer tutoring. The teachers also utilized Islamic stories and histories as part of the content. Additionally, regarding the process, the teachers conducted placement tests, adjusted the activities in response to student difficulties, peer-tutoring between the higher-level students with the lower-level students, had focus group discussions, and grouped the students based on learning style. Dealing with the product, students were usually asked to create their own product including infographics, videos, text, PowerPoint, and posters to be presented. The teachers sometimes assessed them through the project either individually or in a group. The assessment was designed in various texts/questions based on the difficulty levels. Lastly, the learning environment was considered by the teachers by making the class comfortable and fun through ice-breaking, videos, and Thai ads. Collaborative projects and discovery learning were also implemented to foster active learning outside the classroom.

The implementation of differentiated instruction at Islamic Senior High School was met with significant challenges. Teachers faced difficulties in allocating sufficient time to engage students with lower proficiency levels while also providing more complex activities for those with higher abilities, necessitating a delicate balance between these competing demands. Additionally, the limited time available with a large student body hindered the ability to discuss materials with diverse forms, provide varied activities, and assess students differently. The search for relevant and engaging materials, as well as the need for distinct assessment rubrics, further added to the complexity of the task. The implementation of differentiated instruction at Islamic Senior High School also obtained challenges for instance adapting the materials based on the students' environment and Islamic values. Suggestions for further research include exploring the impact of differentiated instruction on student engagement and academic success. There is also a need for further research on solutions to the existing problems of implementing Differentiated Learning. Thus, the application of differentiated learning, especially by English teachers, can be implemented optimally.

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