

Evaluating policy support for differentiated learning supervision in Indonesian language teaching: Insights from SMP Penggerak in Pohuwato, Indonesia

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Abstract

This study evaluates the differentiated learning supervision program in Indonesian language teaching at SMP Penggerak in Pohuwato, focusing on the policy support and its effectiveness in guiding teachers. The primary objective is to assess how well the existing policy framework facilitates the implementation of differentiated learning and to identify the challenges and opportunities in its execution. Using a qualitative descriptive research approach and the CIPP (Context, Input, Process, Product) evaluation model, data was collected through interviews with educational stakeholders, classroom observations, and document analysis. The research examined the policy context, available resources, teacher preparedness, and the supervision process in schools. The findings reveal that while the policy framework for differentiated learning is well-established, its implementation has been inconsistent across schools. Supervisors often focus on administrative tasks, and teachers lack adequate training and resources for differentiated instruction. The study found that the policies provide a solid foundation, but the lack of comprehensive professional development and the sporadic nature of supervision have limited the effectiveness of the program. In conclusion, to improve the program's impact, it is crucial to focus on strengthening pedagogical support within supervision and enhancing teacher training. The study underscores the importance of policy enforcement and offers insights into how differentiated learning can be better supported through improved supervision and professional development.

Keywords: Differentiated Instruction; Educational Supervision; Policy Implementation; Learning Supervision

1. Introduction

The quality of education in Indonesia has undergone significant transformations in recent years, especially at the Junior High School (SMP) level. One of the prominent initiatives to improve learning quality is the introduction of differentiated learning programs. Differentiated learning refers to tailoring instruction to meet the varied needs, abilities, and learning styles of students within a classroom. This approach is particularly important in a diverse educational context, where students possess different learning capacities and backgrounds. As part of efforts to ensure equitable access to education and enhance learning outcomes, the Indonesian Ministry of Education and Culture (Kemendikbudristek) launched the School Penggerak (Driving School) program. This program aims to foster inclusive and effective teaching practices in schools. In the case of SMP Penggerak in Pohuwato, the program seeks to serve as a model for differentiated learning implementation, particularly in Indonesian language instruction. The application of differentiated learning in this context is not just a response to academic diversity but also a strategic effort to address broader issues such as low literacy rates and the widening educational gap between urban and rural areas.

Despite the significant potential of differentiated learning to improve educational outcomes, its implementation often faces several challenges. These challenges stem from both systemic and pedagogical factors. Teachers, for instance, frequently struggle with identifying students' individual learning needs, selecting appropriate teaching strategies, and

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providing resources that cater to diverse abilities within the same classroom. Moreover, the lack of adequate teacher training, time constraints, and insufficient educational resources often hinder the effective execution of differentiated learning strategies. This issue is further exacerbated by a gap in teachers' understanding of the core principles of differentiation and their ability to integrate these principles into their teaching practice. The need for a supportive and structured supervision system has, therefore, become evident. It is here that the role of supervision in differentiated learning becomes crucial. Educational supervision is expected to provide teachers with guidance and feedback to help them overcome these challenges, optimize the teaching process, and ultimately improve student outcomes.

The research problem in this study centers around the evaluation of the implementation of differentiated learning supervision programs in Indonesian language teaching at SMP Penggerak in Pohuwato. Specifically, the study addresses the effectiveness of the existing supervisory framework and the extent to which it supports teachers in delivering differentiated instruction. The primary issue revolves around the gap between the intended policy of differentiated learning and its actual implementation in classrooms. Supervisory programs, which are critical in guiding teachers, are often found to be more focused on administrative oversight rather than on providing pedagogical support. Consequently, teachers often face difficulties in applying differentiated learning techniques effectively, leading to suboptimal student engagement and learning outcomes. The need for a comprehensive, continuous, and pedagogically focused supervisory approach is apparent, as it can guide teachers in refining their methods and strategies for more inclusive teaching.

Previous studies have explored various solutions to address the challenges of differentiated learning in classrooms. One key recommendation is to implement a more collaborative and reflective form of supervision, where school supervisors and teachers work together to improve teaching practices. In such an approach, the focus shifts from mere oversight to professional development, with an emphasis on peer learning and collective problem-solving. Several researchers, including Gunawan (2021) and Ansyorlah et al. (2024), argue that this model can significantly enhance the quality of teaching and the integration of differentiated learning. They suggest that supervisors should provide constructive feedback, conduct regular classroom observations, and offer targeted professional development workshops. These strategies have been shown to support teachers in overcoming the practical challenges of implementing differentiated learning, such as adapting materials to different learning levels and addressing diverse student needs. Moreover, they emphasize the importance of continuous feedback loops, where teachers are not only observed but also engaged in discussions about their teaching practices and student progress.

Further studies by Amalia et al. (2023) and Purnawanto (2023) highlight the importance of administrative support and teacher training in creating a successful differentiated learning environment. These studies show that when teachers receive proper training on the principles of differentiation and are supported by an effective supervisory system, they are more confident and capable of implementing differentiated strategies in their classrooms. A strong support system, consisting of both human and material resources, is essential for ensuring that differentiated learning is not just an abstract concept but a practical teaching approach that can be sustained over time. This aligns with the conclusions drawn by researchers such as Mabur (2023) and Swandewi (2021), who argue that differentiated learning, when implemented correctly, can lead to significant improvements in student achievement, particularly for students from diverse backgrounds.

However, despite these positive findings, challenges persist in the practical application of differentiated learning in Indonesian schools. The literature reveals that while differentiated learning is recognized as a promising pedagogical approach, its full potential remains untapped due to inconsistent application across schools and a lack of sustained supervisory support. In particular, the effectiveness of supervision programs in facilitating differentiated learning remains under-explored. Previous studies, such as those conducted by Fauziati and Hidayati (2023), suggest that while some schools have embraced differentiated learning, the supervisory mechanisms often fail to provide the necessary guidance and resources to make it a sustainable practice. Furthermore, there is limited research on how the supervisory process itself can be optimized to address the specific needs of teachers who are implementing differentiated learning strategies. This gap in the literature underscores the need for a more detailed examination of supervisory practices and their role in fostering effective differentiated learning in Indonesian schools.

This study aims to address the aforementioned gaps in the literature by evaluating the effectiveness of the differentiated learning supervision program in Indonesian language teaching at SMP Penggerak in Pohuwato. The main objective is to assess how well the current supervisory framework supports teachers in implementing differentiated instruction, and to identify the factors that contribute to or hinder the success of this approach. In doing so, the study also seeks to explore the extent to which supervisory practices are aligned with the principles of differentiated learning and to recommend strategies for improving these practices. The novelty of this research lies in its focus on the specific context of SMP Penggerak in Pohuwato, a region that presents unique challenges and opportunities for the implementation of

differentiated learning. By examining the effectiveness of supervision in this particular setting, the study hopes to provide valuable insights into how differentiated learning can be better supported through targeted supervisory practices. This research is significant because it not only contributes to the understanding of differentiated learning but also provides practical recommendations for improving the quality of education in Indonesia through more effective supervision.

2. Methodology

This study utilizes a qualitative descriptive research approach to evaluate the effectiveness of the differentiated learning supervision program in Indonesian language teaching at SMP Penggerak in Pohuwato. The research follows the CIPP (Context, Input, Process, Product) evaluation model, which helps assess key components such as policy support, resources, implementation practices, and outcomes. Data was collected through interviews with education stakeholders, including teachers, supervisors, and school principals, as well as classroom observations and document analysis. These methods provided comprehensive insights into the challenges and strengths of the differentiated learning program, focusing on how supervision supports teachers in implementing differentiated instruction.

Data analysis followed a thematic approach, involving data reduction, display, and conclusion drawing. Triangulation was employed to verify findings by cross-checking data from multiple sources, ensuring the validity of the results. The study aims to identify both the strengths and weaknesses of the current supervisory practices and offer recommendations for improvement. By evaluating the program's effectiveness, the research provides valuable insights into the role of supervision in fostering more inclusive and effective differentiated learning in Indonesian schools.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1. Policy Support for Differentiated Learning Supervision

This section presents the findings and discussion of the differentiated learning supervision program at SMP Penggerak in Pohuwato, with a particular focus on the policy aspects that underpin the program's implementation. Based on the evaluation model using the CIPP (Context, Input, Process, Product), the study highlights the role of policy in shaping the implementation and effectiveness of the differentiated learning supervision. This includes an examination of the regulatory framework, the policy objectives, and the practical support provided by educational authorities in guiding schools to deliver differentiated instruction. The results of the evaluation will be discussed in the context of policy support, identifying the strengths and limitations of the current policy structure and offering recommendations for improvement.

3.2. Policy Framework and Implementation

The policy context surrounding the differentiated learning supervision program in SMP Penggerak in Pohuwato is well-established, supported by national regulations such as the Peraturan Direktur Jendral GTK No. 4831/2023 and the Peraturan Direktur Jendral Guru dan Tenaga Kependidikan No. 76/B.B1/HK.03/2023. These documents set the foundation for the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum and emphasize the importance of differentiated learning in meeting the diverse needs of students. The policies direct school leaders and supervisors to provide necessary guidance and support to teachers, ensuring that differentiated learning strategies are incorporated into classroom practices. In theory, the policies align with the overall goals of improving education quality through more inclusive, student-centered teaching approaches.

Despite these clear policy guidelines, the study reveals that the implementation of these policies has been inconsistent across the schools in the region. In some schools, the policy frameworks have been fully embraced, and the differentiated learning supervision program is carried out systematically. For example, some school principals and supervisors actively support the program by organizing training sessions and allocating resources for differentiated instruction. However, in other schools, the policies have not been fully operationalized. Interviews with teachers and supervisors indicated that while they were aware of the national and regional policy guidelines, there was a lack of concrete actions in some schools to implement them effectively. For instance, the frequency and quality of supervision varied across schools, with some schools conducting supervision sporadically, and others focusing more on administrative aspects rather than on improving teaching practices.

Moreover, while the policies encourage a flexible and student-centered approach to teaching, the study found that they did not always provide adequate support for teachers in adapting their instruction to meet the diverse needs of students. The lack of follow-through on policy implementation, particularly at the school level, reflects a gap between policy

intentions and the reality of classroom practices. This misalignment between policy and practice may be attributed to several factors, including limited resources, inconsistent training, and a lack of understanding among school leaders and teachers about how to apply differentiated learning principles in the classroom.

4. Administrative Challenges and Policy Gaps

The findings of the study also highlight several administrative challenges in the execution of the differentiated learning supervision program. One of the key issues identified was the limited involvement of supervisors in providing pedagogical support. While supervisors are tasked with guiding teachers in their instructional practices, interviews with both teachers and supervisors revealed that their role was often reduced to administrative oversight, with little focus on offering actionable feedback on differentiated teaching methods. This gap in the supervisory process indicates a need for a more robust policy framework that emphasizes the pedagogical aspects of supervision.

Additionally, the study found that the training and professional development provided to both supervisors and teachers were insufficient. Although policy documents mention the importance of professional development, many teachers and supervisors reported that they had not received adequate training in differentiated learning techniques. This lack of training has hindered the effective implementation of the differentiated learning supervision program, as teachers struggle to meet the diverse needs of their students without the necessary skills or support. The lack of continuous and focused professional development for educators in the differentiated learning approach points to a gap in policy execution that undermines the potential success of the program.

Another administrative challenge identified in the study was the inconsistency in the monitoring and evaluation of the program's effectiveness. The Peraturan Direktur Jendral GTK No. 4831/2023 and related regulations call for regular monitoring of the differentiated learning implementation. However, the study found that in many schools, monitoring was irregular and often lacked follow-up actions. Supervisors were often unable to provide meaningful feedback due to their limited expertise in differentiated learning, and when evaluations were conducted, they were more focused on administrative compliance rather than on the quality of teaching practices. This undermines the purpose of supervision, which should be to foster professional growth and improve teaching outcomes.

5. Policy Support for Teacher Competence Development

The policy framework for differentiated learning emphasizes the importance of developing teacher competence in adapting teaching methods to diverse student needs. While the policies at the national level underscore the need for continuous teacher development, the study found that there were significant gaps in the actual implementation of teacher training programs. Teachers in some schools reported that they had received limited professional development opportunities, and those who had received training often found it insufficient for meeting the challenges of differentiated instruction. As a result, teachers expressed frustration with the lack of practical support in implementing the strategies outlined in the curriculum.

The findings indicate that policy changes must not only focus on creating a structured framework for differentiated learning but also ensure that teachers are equipped with the knowledge and skills to apply these strategies effectively. This includes providing teachers with ongoing training opportunities, access to resources such as differentiated lesson plans, and professional development workshops focused on the practical aspects of differentiated instruction. The study recommends that policy makers consider implementing a more comprehensive professional development program for teachers, one that provides in-depth training on differentiated learning principles and includes regular opportunities for teachers to collaborate and share best practices.

6. Impact of Policy on Educational Outcomes

The impact of the policy support on educational outcomes, particularly in terms of differentiated learning, has been mixed. While there are instances of positive outcomes in schools where the program has been implemented with greater consistency and support, many schools still face challenges in achieving the desired results. In schools where supervision has been more frequent and pedagogically focused, teachers have reported greater success in applying differentiated learning strategies. These teachers have been able to tailor their instruction to meet the varying needs of students, resulting in more engaging and inclusive learning experiences.

However, in schools where supervision has been sporadic and administrative, the outcomes have been less favorable. Students in these schools have reported less engagement with the material and a lack of individualized support, which

is essential for differentiated learning to be effective. The disparity in outcomes between schools reflects the inconsistency in policy implementation and highlights the need for stronger policy enforcement and support mechanisms at both the district and school levels. To ensure that the policy objectives are fully realized, it is essential that the differentiated learning supervision program be implemented in a more uniform and systematic manner across all schools in the region.

7. Policy Recommendations for Improvement

Based on the findings, several key recommendations for improving policy support for the differentiated learning supervision program emerge. First, it is crucial to ensure that the supervision process is more focused on pedagogical support rather than administrative oversight. Supervisors must be trained in differentiated learning techniques so that they can provide specific, actionable feedback to teachers. Second, the frequency and quality of supervision should be standardized across all schools, ensuring that teachers receive consistent support. Regular classroom observations, combined with constructive feedback, are essential for improving teaching practices.

Additionally, policy makers must invest in professional development programs that equip teachers with the skills needed to implement differentiated learning effectively. These programs should be tailored to address the specific challenges faced by teachers in meeting the diverse needs of their students. Finally, policy implementation should be closely monitored, with regular evaluations that assess not only administrative compliance but also the quality of teaching and learning outcomes. By addressing these gaps in policy support, the differentiated learning supervision program can be strengthened, ultimately improving educational outcomes for students in Pohuwato and beyond.

8. Conclusion

This study evaluates the differentiated learning supervision program at SMP Penggerak in Pohuwato, with a particular focus on the policy support that underpins its implementation. The findings reveal that while there is a clear policy framework in place, including regulations such as the Peraturan Direktur Jendral GTK No. 4831/2023, the actual implementation of these policies has been inconsistent. The supervision process has often been administrative rather than pedagogical, limiting the effectiveness of the program. Additionally, the study highlights gaps in teacher training and resources, which hinder the full application of differentiated learning strategies.

The implications of these findings suggest that to enhance the program's effectiveness, policies must be better enforced, with a stronger focus on pedagogical support and continuous teacher development. Supervisors should be trained in differentiated learning to provide actionable feedback, and professional development programs should be tailored to equip teachers with the skills necessary for successful implementation.

This research contributes to the existing body of knowledge by providing insights into the challenges and opportunities of policy implementation in educational supervision, particularly in differentiated learning. Future research could explore the long-term impact of improved policy execution on student outcomes and examine the effectiveness of various supervisory models in different educational contexts.

Compliance with ethical standards

Disclosure of conflict of interest

No conflict of interest to be disclosed.

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