

Evaluating Differentiated Learning in Merdeka Curriculum to Strengthen Pancasila Students' Profile

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Abstract. This study examined the implementation of differentiated learning in the Merdeka Curriculum and its impact on strengthening the Pancasila learner profile in students in Yogyakarta. Using the countenance stake evaluation model with a qualitative approach, this study involved 17 teachers from five elementary schools. The results showed teachers' positive perceptions of differentiated learning, with 82.4% of teachers finding the curriculum flexible. Strategies implemented by teachers included early assessment, project-based learning, and continuous evaluation. Learners showed positive responses, with 58.8% strongly reflecting Pancasila values in their daily lives. Differentiated learning is proven to improve learning motivation, material understanding, and internalization of Pancasila values. This study concludes that differentiated learning in the Merdeka Curriculum has the potential to create a young generation that is adaptive, creative, and has a strong character according to the values of Pancasila. Further research can optimize the integration of this approach into learning practices and evaluate its overall impact.

1 INTRODUCTION

Differentiated learning effectiveness is an ideal concept that aims to create a learning environment that accommodates individual differences among learners [1]. In this context, each learner is given the opportunity to develop their potential to the fullest. According to Sousa, D. A., & Tomlinson, C. A., differentiated learning creates space for teachers to recognize different needs, learning styles, interests, and ability levels among their learners [2]. One of the learning approaches that can be applied in the Merdeka Curriculum is differentiated learning. The Merdeka Curriculum is a curriculum that gives schools the freedom to determine learning materials that suit the needs of Fauzia's learners [3]. This ideally allows learners to optimally develop their potential, including the strengthening of the Pancasila learner profile, which is an important aspect of character education in Indonesia [4].

Although the Merdeka Curriculum promises many innovations in education, the reality shows that many teachers still do not fully understand the implementation of differentiated

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learning [5]. Many of them may not have adequate training or understanding of how to design, manage, and evaluate learning that suits individual differences in the classroom [6]. According to Susilo [7], this can cause some learners to be neglected in their learning process, including in terms of strengthening the learner profile of Pancasila. Based on this statement, researchers conducted interviews and observations at 5 schools in the Sleman area, Yogyakarta, including SDN Dukuh, SDN 2 Wonorejo, SDN Pasir Mendit, SDN Trayu, and SD Muhammadiyah Bendo. Various problems were also found in these schools, and the main problem is that most teachers still do not fully understand or are able to implement differentiated learning. In practice, many teachers still face difficulties in designing and implementing adequate learning strategies to accommodate individual differences among learners [8]. This will greatly impact the lack of teacher understanding related to the implementation of differentiated learning, which can have an impact on the low quality of learning in the classroom [9]. Learners who have different abilities, interests, and learning styles will not get learning that suits their needs. This can cause learners to become disinterested in learning, and the learning outcomes achieved are not optimal [10].

Based on the description of the ideals and realities above, to overcome these problems, efforts are needed to increase teacher understanding regarding the implementation of differentiated learning. Therefore, the researcher will examine more deeply to gain new knowledge and value in order to present the best solution by conducting research on "The Effectiveness of Differentiated Learning in the Merdeka Curriculum on Strengthening the Pancasila Learner Profile in Students." This research is expected to provide a new perspective to describe problems so that they can provide great benefits to students, including strengthening the Pancasila learner profile. The problem formulation in this study is presented as follows:

- a. How do teachers perceive the implementation of differentiated learning in the Merdeka Curriculum and its impact on strengthening the Pancasila learner profile in students?
- b. What are the strategies used by teachers in implementing differentiated learning in the Merdeka Curriculum to strengthen the Pancasila learner profile in students?
- c. How do learners perceive the implementation of differentiated learning processes in the Merdeka Curriculum, and to what extent does this affect their understanding of Pancasila values?

Currently, research related to the implementation of differentiated learning in the Merdeka Curriculum and its impact on strengthening the learner profile of Pancasila is limited. However, some research findings and relevant issues have emerged.

- a. Merdeka Curriculum is the latest innovation in Indonesian education that shifts the focus from a subject-based curriculum to a competency-based curriculum.
- b. Differentiated learning is an approach designed to meet the needs of diverse learners in the classroom in a way that suits their abilities and learning styles. Although this concept has been around in educational literature, its implementation in the context of the Merdeka Curriculum poses new challenges.
- c. Strengthening the learner profile of Pancasila is one of the important goals in Indonesian Education. However, there is still a need to better understand how differentiated learning in the Merdeka Curriculum can support the achievement of this goal.

This research contributes to understanding and novelty in several aspects, This research highlights the importance of understanding and implementing differentiated learning in the context of the Merdeka Curriculum. This becomes relevant because the adoption of the Merdeka Curriculum has introduced significant changes in learning approaches.

This research explored the relationship between differentiated learning and strengthening Pancasila's learner profile. This is an important contribution to supporting the goal of character education in Indonesia. A qualitative field approach and quantitative questionnaires were used in this study, which enabled an in-depth understanding of the perspectives of teachers and learners involved in the differentiated learning process. This allows the research to explore individual views and experiences that can form the basis of better education policies. This research can enrich educational literature with a deeper understanding of the implementation of differentiated learning in the Merdeka Curriculum and its impact on strengthening the learner profile of Pancasila while also providing practical insights for the development of educational policies in Indonesia.

2 Research Method

This research uses an evaluation approach that refers to a systematic method used to measure, understand, and evaluate the effectiveness of a program, initiative, or policy with the aim of gaining deep insight into the achievement of desired goals and impacts. An evaluation approach is a methodology used to assess the effectiveness, impact, and success of a program, initiative, or policy [11]. Program evaluation research with a qualitative approach is a study that aims to deeply and contextually understand the impacts, processes, and experiences associated with the implementation of a program or initiative. This research uses the Stake Countenance Model evaluation, which is an evaluation model developed by Robert E. Stake and is used to understand and evaluate complex aspects of a particular program, project, or policy, including a deeper understanding of context, process, and impact. The model emphasizes the use of qualitative approaches in assessing the impact of a program or initiative [12]. Stake's Countenance Model will help researchers understand and evaluate broader aspects, such as the context of differentiated learning, the implementation process, its impact on understanding Pancasila values, and how these factors are interrelated [13]. According to Sutrisno [14], there are five indicators of effectiveness, namely: 1) program understanding, 2) target accuracy, 3) timeliness, 4) goal achievement, and 5) real change. The level of effectiveness can be measured by comparing the plan that has been determined with the real results that have been realized.

2.1 Research Location

This research involved several driving schools implementing the Merdeka Curriculum in Kulonprogo Regency, which were also assisted schools by the proposer. The five schools involved were SD Negeri (SDN) Dukuh, SDN 2 Wonorejo, SDN Pasir Mendit, SDN Trayu, and SD Muhammadiyah Bendo.

2.2 Data Source

Data sources in the context of research refer to places or sources used to collect relevant information for research [15]. This research included sources from 5 schools, namely SDN Dukuh, SDN 2 Wonorejo, SDN Pasir Mendit, SDN Trayu, and SD Muhammadiyah Bendo. Data sources were obtained by dividing them into two main categories. Primary data is information obtained directly by the researcher from the original source. This included data collected by researchers in field studies or experiments. Secondary data is information that already exists and has been collected by others before. Researchers used this data for

secondary analysis or to support their research findings. Secondary data can be publications, research reports, available survey data, or archives containing historical records.

2.3 Data Collection Technique

Data collection techniques such as interviews, observation, and documentation are important tools in qualitative research that help researchers explore a deep understanding of the phenomenon under study [16]. In the context of the research "The Effectiveness of Differentiated Learning in the Merdeka Curriculum on Strengthening the Pancasila Learner Profile in Learners," these three techniques can be used as follows.

First, interviews involve a process of direct interaction between researchers and respondents. It can be used to obtain teachers', learners', or educational administrators' views, attitudes, and understanding of the implementation of differentiated learning in the Merdeka Curriculum and how this may affect strengthening the learner profile of Pancasila.

Second, observation involves direct observation of situations or events related to differentiated learning. It allows researchers to observe learning practices. Third, documentation involves analyzing documents, such as lesson plans, teaching materials, school policies, or historical records of education. It can provide insight into the approaches that have been used in differentiated learning in the Merdeka Curriculum.

2.4 Data Analysis Method

Data analysis is a key stage in the research "The Effectiveness of Differentiated Learning in Merdeka Curriculum on Strengthening the Pancasila Learner Profile in Learners". This data analysis process involves systematically compiling various data sources that have been obtained through data collection techniques such as interviews with teachers and students, the use of questionnaires to obtain perceptions, direct observation of learning practices, and the collection of documents related to differentiated learning. In the qualitative analysis of this research, important aspects of the research model used, namely the Countenance Stake model with the preparation stage with aspects of the lesson plan, the process with aspects of the learning process and assessing process, and learning outcomes with aspects of students. In addition, important stages are used to understand and interpret data in depth [17]. First, data collection includes gathering all relevant information from various data sources. Then, data reduction was conducted to reduce the complexity of the data by identifying patterns, themes, and key aspects that emerged in the interviews, observations, and documents. After that, data presentation involves organizing these findings in a form that is easy to understand and relevant. Finally, the conclusion drawing and verification stage assisted the researcher in formulating the findings and ensuring that they were supported by the data [18].

2.5 Research Instrument

The research instrument is detailed in the following Table 1.

Table 1. Research Instrument

Evaluation Model	Aspects	Sub-aspect	Indicator Sub-aspect
Countenance Stake	Antecedent	Independent Curriculum	Curriculum Flexibility Integration of Pancasila Education Creative and Critical Skills Inclusion and Diversity Stakeholder Participation
		Differentiated Learning	Material Customization Various Teaching Styles Ability Assessing Success
		Profile of Pancasila Students	Understanding the values of Pancasila Application of Pancasila Values
	Transaction	Independent Curriculum	Active Participation
		Differentiated Learning	Equal Opportunity
		Profile of Pancasila Students	Participation in Pancasila Activities. Awareness of Pancasila History.
	Outcomes	1. Independent Curriculum 2. Differentiated Learning 3. Profile of Pancasila Students	Improved Learning Outcomes Evaluation and Monitoring Understanding Learning Values and Objectives Respect for Plurality. Learner Satisfaction

3 Results and Discussion

3.1 Teachers' Perceptions of the Implementation of Differentiated Learning in the Merdeka Curriculum

Teachers' perceptions of the implementation of differentiated learning in the Merdeka Curriculum in various schools in Yogyakarta show high enthusiasm. From the results of interviews with 17 teachers from SDM Bendo, SDN 2 Wonorejo, SDN Dukuh, SDN Pasir Mendit, SDN Trayu, and other schools, the majority of teachers welcomed this approach. They see differentiated learning as an effective way to meet the learning needs of diverse learners, enabling each learner to develop their potential to the fullest. This is in line with Tomlinson's research [19], which shows that differentiated learning can improve learning effectiveness and meet learners' individual needs.

These teachers appreciate that differentiated learning provides room for creativity and innovation as well as flexibility in teaching. At SDN 2 Wonorejo and SDN Trayu, teachers mentioned that they feel more motivated and challenged to create varied and interesting learning strategies. This not only makes the teaching and learning process more dynamic but also helps students to be more engaged and excited about learning. This finding is

consistent with Valiandes' study [20], which underlines the importance of flexibility in the curriculum to accommodate learners' diversity.

Based on the results of the questionnaire distributed regarding flexibility in the approach curriculum, 11.8% of teachers feel very flexible, 82.4% are flexible, and 5.9% are quite flexible. This data shows that flexibility in the Merdeka Curriculum has a positive impact on teachers and students to be more flexible in determining learning methods and materials that suit the needs and potential of each student. This is in accordance with the principles of 21st-century learning, which emphasizes a student-centered approach and flexibility in learning, as discussed by Darling-Hammond et al. (2020) based on this data [21]. It was found that the Merdeka curriculum supports the creation of an inclusive, adaptive, and learner-centered learning environment. This approach is in line with the concept of inclusive education advocated by UNESCO [22].

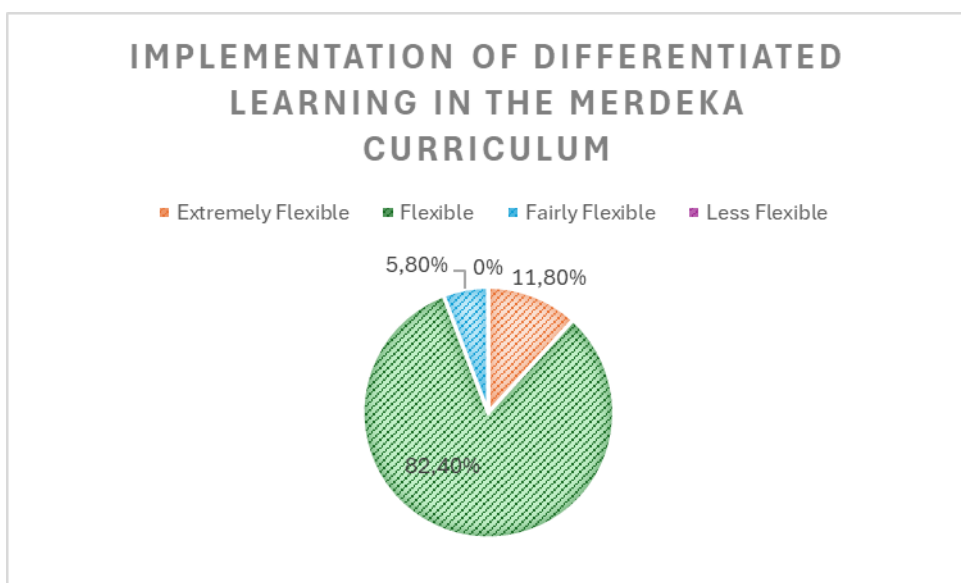


Fig. 1. Implementation of Differentiated Learning in the Merdeka Curriculum

In addition, teachers from SDM Bendo and SDN Dukuh highlighted the increased positive interactions between teachers and learners. They felt that by getting to know more closely the needs and characteristics of each learner, the teacher-learner relationship became stronger and more harmonious. This approach allows teachers to give more personal attention and support each learner according to their needs, which in turn increases learners' confidence and motivation to learn. The importance of positive teacher-student relationships in improving learning outcomes has been confirmed by research by Roorda et al. [23].

Teachers also emphasized the importance of collaboration in implementing differentiated learning. At SDN Pasir Mendit and several other schools, teachers noted that close cooperation with colleagues and support from the principal were very helpful in implementing this approach. Regular discussions and experience sharing among teachers are a source of inspiration and solutions in overcoming various challenges faced in the learning process. The importance of collaboration between teachers in improving learning quality has been discussed in depth by Vangrieken et al. [24].

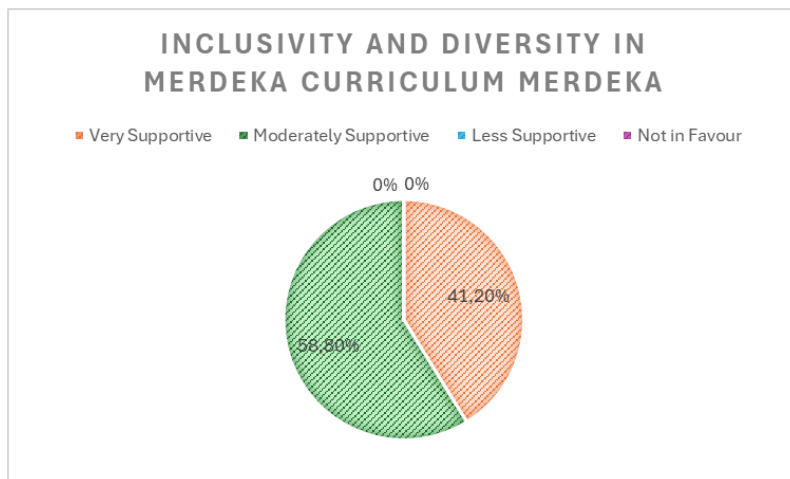


Fig. 2. Inclusivity and Diversity in Merdeka Curriculum Merdeka

The Merdeka Curriculum significantly supports inclusiveness and diversity in education, as expressed by respondents from various schools in Yogyakarta. Based on the survey, 58.8% of teachers feel that the Merdeka Curriculum strongly supports inclusiveness and diversity, while 41.4% also expressed the same support, albeit at a more moderate level. These teachers see that the curriculum provides space for each learner to learn according to their individual needs, abilities, and interests without discrimination.

Overall, teachers' perceptions of differentiated learning in the Merdeka Curriculum are very positive. They are optimistic that with continued support, including adequate training and provision of sufficient resources, the implementation of differentiated learning can strengthen the learner profile of Pancasila in learners. Teachers are confident that this approach will help create a young generation that is adaptive, creative, and strong in character, which is in line with Pancasila values and will contribute to the development of an inclusive and cultured society. This optimism is supported by Subban's study [25], which shows that differentiated learning can improve learners' learning outcomes and character development.

3.2 Teacher Strategies in Implementing Differentiated Learning to Strengthen Pancasila Learner Profile

Teachers in various schools in Yogyakarta have developed various strategies for implementing differentiated learning to strengthen Pancasila's learner profile. They start by identifying learners' needs and interests through observation and initial assessment. This approach is in line with the principles of differentiated learning proposed by Tomlinson [26], which emphasizes the importance of understanding learner diversity as the basis for designing effective learning.

At SDM Bendo and SDN 2 Wonorejo, teachers use interest questionnaires, diagnostic tests, and interviews to get a clear picture of each learner's abilities and learning preferences. With this information, they design learning activities that suit each learner's profile. This strategy reflects the concept of 'assessment for learning' discussed by Black and Wiliam [27], where assessment is used as a tool to improve learning, not just to measure outcomes.

In addition, at SDN Dukuh and SDN Pasir Mendit, teachers apply various learning techniques and methods, such as project-based learning, cooperative learning, and problem-based learning. These methods allow learners to work according to their interests and abilities and internalize Pancasila values such as cooperation, gotong royong, and social responsibility. This approach is in line with Vygotsky's theory of social constructivism,

which emphasizes the importance of social interaction in learning [28]. The importance of internalizing Pancasila values in everyday life: every teacher must make every lesson memorable so that it really has a positive impact on students,

Teachers regularly evaluate the effectiveness of their differentiated learning strategies. At SDN Trayu and other schools, evaluation methods such as formative tests, learner feedback, and classroom observations are used to assess the extent to which learners have internalized Pancasila values. This continuous evaluation practice is in line with the concept of "formative assessment" proposed by Wiliam [29], which emphasizes the importance of feedback and learning adjustments based on evidence collected during the learning process.

Based on the results of this evaluation, teachers make adjustments to strategies to ensure that each learner gets optimal learning. This continuous evaluation also helps teachers understand the extent to which learners have internalized Pancasila values in their daily lives. This approach reflects the principle of 'responsive teaching' discussed by Hattie [30], where teachers actively respond to learners' learning needs based on the evidence they collect.

Based on the questionnaire distributed through this study involving 17 respondents from teachers, the following data were obtained:

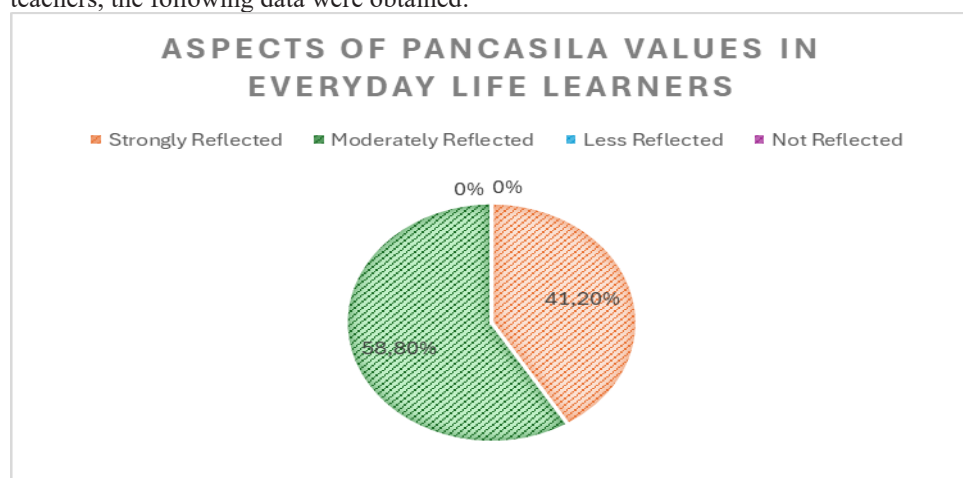


Fig 3. Aspects of Pancasila values in everyday life Learners

Based on the questionnaire data, it is known that teachers from 5 different schools see that 58.8% of learners can strongly reflect aspects of Pancasila values in daily life aspects of Pancasila values, and 41.2% reflect these values. This certainly provides a positive trend amid the rampant problems of morality and principles of state life that occur in Indonesia, especially in the education sector.

Some schools have recorded success in implementing differentiated learning. At SDN 2 Wonorejo, for example, teachers report significant improvements in learning participation and motivation of learners after applying this approach. Learners showed improvement in their understanding and application of Pancasila values, such as cooperation and tolerance, both inside and outside the classroom. The approach also helped reduce the achievement gap among learners, showing that differentiated learning can have far-reaching positive impacts.

The Pancasila Learner Profile strengthening program received a positive response from learners, with 18.7% of them feeling very good and 83.3% feeling good about it. The success of the program can largely be attributed to the teacher's strategy of implementing differentiated learning. Through this approach, teachers are able to understand the needs and understanding levels of individual learners so as to provide appropriate and challenging

material for each learner. By strengthening the learner profile of Pancasila through differentiated learning, teachers can create an inclusive learning environment and stimulate the growth of Pancasila's character in each learner.

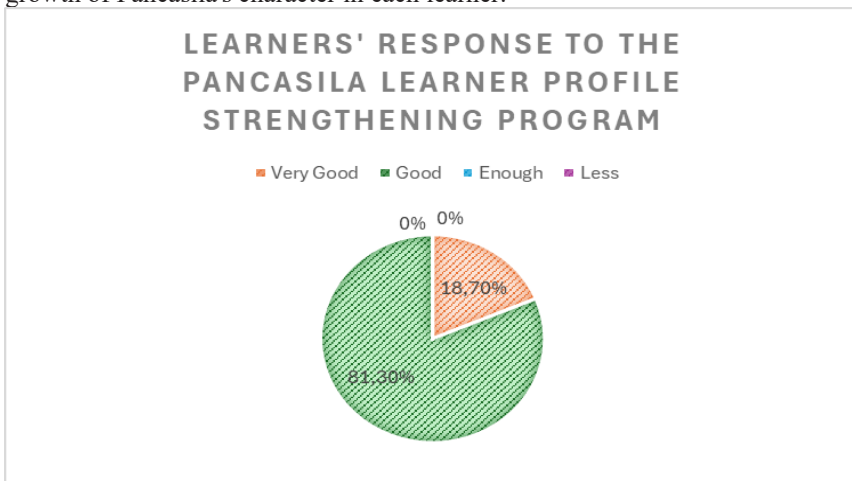


Fig. 4. Learners' Response to the Pancasila Learner Profile Strengthening Program

Teachers emphasized the importance of collaboration and support in implementing differentiated learning. At SDM Bendo and SDN Pasir Mendit, teachers work together with colleagues to design and develop appropriate teaching materials. They also have support from principals and parents, who understand the importance of this approach in supporting learners' holistic development. This support includes providing additional resources, professional training, and open communication between school and home.

Overall, teachers in Yogyakarta are committed to strengthening the Pancasila learner profile in learners through differentiated learning. They are convinced that this approach not only helps learners achieve their academic potential but also forms a strong character in accordance with the values of Pancasila, which is very important for the future of the nation. Continuous support and strong collaboration are expected to strengthen the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum and have a positive impact on the development of Indonesia's young generation.

3.3 Teachers' Views on the Implementation of Differentiated Learning in the Merdeka Curriculum

Learners in various schools in Yogyakarta showed a positive response to the implementation of differentiated learning in the Merdeka Curriculum. Learners feel more valued and cared for because their teachers pay attention to individual needs and interests. This is in line with Tomlinson's [31] findings that emphasize the importance of meeting learners' individual needs in differentiated learning. In Bendo SDM, some learners stated that this approach made them feel more motivated and excited about learning. They feel that learning becomes more relevant to their lives and helps them understand the material in a more meaningful way. This finding is consistent with Subban's [32] research, which shows that differentiated learning can increase learners' motivation and engagement.

One of the teachers who teaches SDN 2, Wonorejo, revealed: "There is a positive impact felt by students, including changes in student learning in this independent curriculum. Students are given the opportunity to explore and express their learning interests with the aim of shaping the character of students through potential and good

character." This statement reflects the concept of learner-centered learning, as discussed by Hannafin and Land [33].

In addition, at SDN 2 Wonorejo and SDN Dukuh, teachers revealed that differentiated learning allows students to learn according to their own pace and learning style. This approach is in line with Gardner's [34] multiple intelligences theory, which emphasizes the importance of considering learners' various learning styles. The teacher felt more comfortable and less burdened by having to keep up with the different paces of classmates. The teacher also revealed that some learners are now able to focus more on subjects they are interested in, which helps improve their overall learning outcomes.

Overall, learners in Yogyakarta welcomed the implementation of differentiated learning in the Merdeka Curriculum. They feel that this approach not only helps them in academic aspects but also in character development. This finding is consistent with Valiandes' [35] research showing the positive impact of differentiated learning on students' academic achievement and character development. Learners are optimistic that differentiated learning will continue to have a positive impact on the teaching and learning process and help them become more characterized individuals in accordance with the values of Pancasila. They expect active support and involvement from teachers, parents, and school authorities to strengthen the effectiveness of this approach.

4 Conclusion

4.1 Conclusions

Teachers' perceptions of the implementation of differentiated learning in the Merdeka Curriculum in various schools in Yogyakarta show high enthusiasm. The majority of teachers welcome this approach, seeing it as an effective way to meet the

learning needs of diverse learners and develop the maximum potential of each individual. Flexibility in the curriculum provides room for creativity, innovation, and collaboration among teachers, creating an inclusive learning environment that reinforces the values of Pancasila. In conclusion, the implementation of differentiated learning in the Merdeka Curriculum is expected to create a young generation that is adaptive, creative, and has strong character, in accordance with the values of Pancasila, and contributes to the development of an inclusive and cultured society.

Teachers from 5 primary schools in Yogyakarta have implemented strategically diverse differentiated learning to strengthen the learner profile of Pancasila. By identifying individual needs through initial assessments, they design appropriate activities, use a variety of learning methods, and conduct regular evaluations to assess effectiveness. Positive responses from learners and collaborative support between teachers, principals, and parents confirm the success of this approach in strengthening Pancasila's character in the younger generation.

Learners respond positively to differentiated learning in the Merdeka Curriculum. They feel valued and engaged in learning that suits their individual needs. Diverse teaching methods, such as project-based learning, are welcomed as they make learning more fun and interactive. It also helps them understand and internalize Pancasila values better. Consistent support from teachers, parents, and school authorities is expected to strengthen the effectiveness of this differentiated learning.

4.2 Suggestions

In the context of this research, it is important to continue to encourage the development and implementation of differentiated learning strategies in the Merdeka Curriculum. It is recommended that further research explore optimal ways to integrate this approach thoroughly into learning practices, as well as to evaluate its overall impact on the academic and character development of learners. In addition, involving teachers, parents, and school authorities in the process of curriculum development and differentiated learning is also key to supporting the improvement of the quality of education in Indonesia.

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