

Implementation of Differentiated Learning at Early Childhood Level at M Hilir Ismail Kindergarten, Bima City

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Abstract

The background of this research relates to the importance of implementing differentiated learning at the early childhood level in M Hilir Ismail Kindergarten, Bima City. Early childhood has a variety of characteristics, interests and different learning speeds, so it requires a learning approach that can meet their individual needs. Differentiated learning that accommodates these differences is believed to improve the quality of education and support holistic child development. The purpose of this research is to explore the application of differentiated learning in early childhood at M Hilir Ismail Kindergarten in Bima City and its impact on children's learning development. The type of research used is descriptive qualitative research, which aims to describe the phenomenon of differentiated learning in the classroom. Data collection techniques were conducted through observation, interviews with teachers and principals, and analysis of documentation of learning activities in the classroom. This research was conducted at M. Hilir Ismail Kindergarten located in Lelamase Village, East Rasana'e District, Bima City. The research was conducted for 2 months from February to March 2025. The data sources consist of teachers, students, and documentation of learning activities. The data analysis technique used is descriptive analysis, which identifies and interprets the patterns of the data obtained, to provide an in-depth picture of the implementation of differentiated learning. The results show that the implementation of differentiated learning at M Hilir Ismail Kindergarten is very effective in increasing children's involvement in learning. Through various activities such as theme-based educational games, ability-based learning groups, gross and fine motor activities, and children's stories and dramas, children get learning experiences that suit their abilities and interests. The contribution of this research provides insight into the effectiveness of differentiated learning in supporting early childhood development, as well as providing recommendations for the development of more inclusive and relevant learning methods.

Keywords: *Implementation, Differentiated Learning, Early Childhood*

INTRODUCTION

Differentiated learning has become one of the strategies emphasized in various educational regulations and policies, especially within the framework of the implementation of the Independent Curriculum in Indonesia. This policy aims to provide flexibility for teachers in designing learning that is in accordance with the needs, potential, and interests of students (Handayaningsih et al., 2024). In this context, differentiated learning is not only considered a pedagogical approach but also a basic principle in creating inclusive and meaningful learning experiences (Sa'ida, 2023). The regulations underlying the Independent Curriculum, such as the Regulation of the Minister of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology, encourage teachers to understand students' learning profiles through diagnostic assessments (Ramadhan et al., 2024). This assessment allows teachers to identify the strengths and challenges faced by students so that learning can be designed to be more adaptive and student-centered (Ilham et al., 2024).

Differentiated learning is an approach that adapts the learning process to the needs, interests and abilities of each student. This method allows teachers to provide diverse materials and flexible teaching methods so that all students can learn optimally. (Handayaningsih et al., 2024). Meanwhile, common learning methods in Indonesia often focus more on a uniform approach, where all students get the same material and methods without considering individual differences. Differentiated learning emphasizes a more personal approach, while common methods tend to be based on classical learning and are centered on teachers. (Sa'ida, 2023). Differentiated learning began to be known and applied in Indonesia in the early 21st century along with efforts to improve the quality of education and response to student diversity in the classroom. Its application has been more intensive since the publication of the 2013 Curriculum (K-13) which encourages teachers to accommodate individual differences such as student abilities and interests. However, the adoption of this method is still gradual and many schools have begun to integrate it with various adjustments in the field. (Lestarinigrum, 2022).

Differentiated learning is also regulated through inclusive education policies as stated in Law Number 20 of 2003 concerning the National Education System. The law states that every citizen has the right to receive quality education without discrimination, including students with special needs or those with high potential (Muhassanah et al., 2023). This policy strengthens the role of differentiated learning in ensuring access and quality of education for all students. The government also encourages teachers to take part in training and professional development to improve their competence in designing and implementing differentiated learning (Rochah & Karmila, 2023). Through this policy, it is hoped that not only students will benefit, but also teachers will become more reflective, innovative, and responsive to the diversity of learning needs in the classroom. The combination of these regulations is an important foundation in ensuring the sustainability and success of the implementation of differentiated learning at all levels of education (Hasanah et al., 2023).

The implementation of differentiated learning is very important in creating meaningful and effective learning experiences for each student. This is because each student has unique characteristics such as different backgrounds, interests, abilities, and learning styles (Ferdiansyah, 2023). By implementing differentiated learning, teachers can ensure that the learning process runs inclusively where all students get the opportunity to learn according to their potential (Aryani, 2023). This approach allows students with high abilities to get more

challenges, while students who need additional support still feel supported (Handayaningsih et al., 2024) . As a result, differentiated learning becomes a bridge to create educational equality that not only focuses on learning outcomes but also on processes that support diversity in the classroom (Zuhro et al., 2023) .

The importance of differentiated learning also lies in its ability to increase students' learning motivation. Students who are involved in a learning process that is relevant to their interests and needs will feel more motivated to learn (Imran & Sulfasyah, 2024) . Differentiated Learning allows students who have a great interest in art to be given assignments that combine mathematical concepts with graphic visualization. When learning is relevant to their world, students will feel valued and have control over their learning process (Kamil et al., 2023) . This not only increases student engagement in learning activities but also builds a strong sense of self-confidence. With increased self-confidence, students are better prepared to face learning challenges which ultimately have a positive impact on their learning outcomes (Lestarinigrum, 2022) .

Differentiated learning is important to facilitate the development of 21st century skills such as critical thinking, collaboration, communication, and creativity. By providing a variety of choices in learning methods and assignments, students are encouraged to think deeply, explore multiple perspectives, and work independently and in groups (Ambarita, 2023) . As in problem-based projects, students with varying abilities can contribute according to their strengths (Hilmiyah et al., 2023) . This approach not only helps students understand the subject matter but also prepares them to face complex real-world challenges. In this case, differentiated learning focuses not only on transferring knowledge but also on building skills that will help students in the future (Sa'ida, 2023) .

The implementation of differentiated learning is also important to support the diversity of cultures and backgrounds of students in the classroom. Indonesia as a country rich in cultural diversity requires an educational approach that respects and embraces these differences (Farda et al., 2023) . In a multicultural classroom, differentiated learning allows students to learn in ways that are relevant to their values and experiences (Ida Rahmayani, Agus Salam, 2024) . Teachers can design learning materials or activities that reflect this diversity so that students feel their identities are respected. In this way, differentiated learning contributes to building a sense of tolerance, empathy and appreciation for diversity among students (Cucu Cahyati, Ahmadin, 2024) .

The application of differentiated learning lies in its contribution to improving the overall quality of education. By implementing this approach, teachers are required to be more creative and reflective in designing learning strategies (Syahru Ramadhan, 2024) . This encourages teachers to continue learning and developing in their profession, so that the quality of teaching improves. Meanwhile, differentiated learning also has a positive impact on classroom management, because students are more focused and feel satisfied with their learning experience (Ardila et al., 2024) . By creating a learning environment that is responsive to individual needs, schools can ensure that every student has an equal opportunity to achieve success both academically and personally (Mahiratin et al., 2024) .

The application of differentiated learning is very important at all levels of education, including early childhood because each child has unique developmental needs, both physically, cognitively and emotionally (Aprima & Sari, 2022) . At an early age, the golden period of brain development occurs where the learning experiences given greatly influence the formation of

children's basic abilities. In this phase, each child shows a different speed of development depending on genetic factors, environment, and life experiences (Pakpahan, Tio Rosalinda S.Jumra Fadila, 2024) . Through differentiated learning, teachers can design learning activities that are appropriate to the level of readiness, interests, and learning styles of each child. For example, some children may be more responsive to movement-based learning, while others prefer a visual approach or direct exploration. (Ariyanti, 2017) With this approach, children not only feel more comfortable and interested but are also able to maximize their potential without feeling pressured by learning demands that do not match their abilities (Fitri & Diana, 2024) .

Differentiated learning in early childhood is key to building the foundation of children's character, social skills, and self-confidence. When their individual needs are met, children feel valued and accepted, which is essential in building their self-confidence in the early years of education (Pane et al., 2022) . Children who feel supported in their learning are more likely to demonstrate a positive attitude towards learning, which ultimately forms a growth mindset (Fauzia & Hadikusuma Ramadan, 2023) . In addition, a differentiated approach also encourages children to learn to interact with peers who have different strengths and challenges. This teaches the values of inclusion, tolerance, and empathy from an early age, which are very important in character formation later in life (Faiz et al., 2022) . The application of differentiated learning in early childhood not only helps improve learning outcomes but also contributes to the holistic development of children including emotional, social, and moral aspects, which are important foundations for their future success (Fitra, 2022) .

TK M Hilir Ismail Kota Bima faces various problems that are the main reasons for the importance of implementing differentiated learning. One of the main problems is the diversity of abilities and levels of readiness for learning in the classroom. As an early childhood education institution, this kindergarten serves children with very heterogeneous backgrounds, both in terms of social, economic, and cultural. Some children are accustomed to early educational stimulation at home, such as recognizing numbers and letters, while others are just starting to learn these basics at school. Furthermore, there are children with special needs or certain developmental challenges that require a special approach. When learning is carried out uniformly without considering these differences, some children tend to feel left behind while others feel bored because the material does not provide challenges.

In addition to the diversity of abilities, another problem that arises is the less than optimal learning methods used. Teachers often use conventional and less flexible learning approaches so that they are not fully responsive to the needs of individual children. This condition is also exacerbated by the limited facilities and infrastructure that support creative and innovative learning. Among them, the lack of appropriate teaching aids or learning media makes learning activities monotonous and less interesting for children. In addition, limited time to explore the potential and learning profile of each child is also a challenge for teachers. Therefore, researchers are very interested in conducting research related to the implementation of differentiated learning at the early childhood level at TK M Hilir Ismail, Bima City.

Research on the implementation of differentiated learning in early childhood has attracted the attention of various researchers with various focuses and approaches. Some relevant previous studies show significant developments in this field, such as those conducted by Astuti and Afendi (2022) which examines the effect of a differentiated learning approach on the individual needs of students, then research conducted by Kastanja and Patilima (2024)

which examines the application of interest-based methods in early childhood learning in differentiated learning. The (Hasibuan and Ningsih (2023) in his research has examined the integration of technology in differentiated learning to improve early childhood learning outcomes. These studies provide an overview of the various aspects of implementing learning that takes into account children's individual differences, in terms of interests, abilities and learning styles.

In contrast to previous studies, this research examines the implementation of differentiated learning in M Hilir Ismail Kindergarten in Bima City with a more contextual approach. The novelty of this research lies in the in-depth analysis of differentiated learning applied practically in diverse classroom environments, especially in areas with different social and cultural characteristics. This novelty aspect is important to discuss because not many studies have examined the implementation of differentiated learning at the early childhood level by considering local contexts such as those in Lelamase, Bima City. This research also focuses on the teachers in the kindergarten adjusting learning methods to meet the needs of each child, as well as the challenges faced in the process. The results of this study are expected to contribute significantly to the development of more effective and relevant learning models for children in similar areas.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study uses a qualitative approach with a descriptive research type (Sugiono, 2015) . The qualitative approach was chosen to understand in depth how the implementation of differentiated learning is applied at the early childhood level at TK M Hilir Ismail, Bima City. This approach allows researchers to explore the experiences, views, and practices carried out by teachers in organizing learning according to the needs of individual children. The indicators of differentiated learning studied include: (1) Adjustment of learning materials based on students' abilities and interests, (2) Use of various teaching methods to accommodate differences in learning styles, (3) Formative and ongoing assessments to monitor student development, and (4) Formation of flexible learning groups. The source of this indicator refers to Ferdiansyah (2023) in his book *How to Differentiate Instruction in Mixed-Ability Classrooms* which explains the basic principles of differentiated learning. Descriptive research aims to describe in detail the situation or phenomena that occur in the field without manipulating existing conditions.

Thus, this study focuses on describing the phenomenon of differentiated learning as it is. Data collect. This research was conducted at M. Hilir Ismail Kindergarten, located in Lelamase Village, East Rasanae District, Bima City, which has quite religious student characters and learning styles. While this research was carried out for 2 months, starting from February to March 2025. Ion techniques used include in-depth interviews, direct observation, and documentation (Sidiq & Choiri, 2018) . Interviews were conducted with teachers to obtain information related to planning, implementation, and evaluation of differentiated learning. Observations were conducted to observe learning activities in the classroom and interactions between teachers and children. Documentation was used to collect additional data such as lesson plans, diaries, and student portfolios (Helaluddin, 2015) . The main data sources were teachers and students at TK M Hilir Ismail, while supporting data were obtained from school documents and related environments.

The data analysis technique in this study follows the steps of thematic analysis. Data collected through interviews, observations, and documentation were analyzed by identifying the main themes that emerged (Luthfiyah, 2017) . The initial step involved data transcription, coding, and categorization of findings. Furthermore, the categorized data was interpreted to reveal patterns that were relevant to the implementation of differentiated learning. Data validity was maintained through triangulation of data sources and methods. Researchers also conducted member checking by involving participants to ensure the accuracy of the findings (Usman, 2020) .

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In the implementation of in-depth and factual differentiated learning, efforts have been made to implement it in TK M Hilir Ismail as an effort to give children the freedom and freedom to develop their potential and competence optimally and efficiently. Based on information obtained by researchers from various sources, both through learning observations, in-depth interviews and supporting documents such as teaching modules or RPPH, the implementation of differentiated learning can be seen from various real action activities that have been carried out. The forms of real action activities that have been carried out in TK M Hilir Ismail, Bima City include the following:

Theme Based Educational Games

The implementation of differentiated learning in TK M Hilir Ismail is carried out with the aim of providing a learning experience that is appropriate to the level of development and characteristics of each child. This is done by recognizing individual differences in various aspects, ranging from cognitive abilities, learning styles, to children's interests in a topic or activity. One form of real implementation of differentiated learning in this school is through the application of theme-based educational games that are adjusted to the level of development and uniqueness of students. These educational games not only pay attention to aspects of mastery of the material, but also try to create a fun learning atmosphere and provide opportunities for each child to explore learning in the way that best suits them. On the theme related to "Animals," children who understand concepts more quickly can be given additional, more complex tasks, while children who need more time are given the opportunity to learn with a simpler and more visual approach.



Figure 1. Education about Animals by Observing Directly

Theme-based educational games at TK M Hilir Ismail are implemented as a tool to create an interesting and fun learning experience for children. By using themes such as "Nature," "Animals," or

"Family," children's teachers can observe directly related to animals around them. For example, in the theme "Nature," children are divided into groups that are adjusted to their abilities. Groups that are more proficient in recognizing plants and animals are given challenges to create small projects such as making pictures of the ecosystem, while groups that need more help are given games that involve recognizing the names and functions of various plants and animals through pictures or picture cards. Through these educational games, children can learn directly about the concepts contained in the theme in a fun way and according to their abilities.

The benefits of implementing differentiated learning in TK M Hilir Ismail are very much felt in increasing children's involvement and motivation in the learning process. With theme-based educational games, children not only learn about the subject matter theoretically, but they also gain direct experience through activities that hone their fine and gross motor skills, social skills, and critical thinking skills. For example, in the theme "Transportation," children can be invited to play the role of a vehicle driver or passenger so that they can understand concepts such as types of transportation, functions of transportation, and the importance of safety in driving. This learning provides an opportunity for children to explore in a fun way, while teachers can monitor the development of individual children and provide appropriate support.

From the implementation of differentiated learning based on themes in TK M Hilir Ismail, it can be seen in learning activities themed "Daily Life." In this theme, children are introduced to daily activities that they usually do, such as cooking, shopping, or cleaning the house. The teacher divides the children into groups based on their skill level in recognizing these various activities. The more advanced group of children is given the challenge of creating a picture story about daily routines while children who need more support are given simpler activities such as matching pictures of activities with the right words. This educational game provides opportunities for each child to participate actively according to their abilities.

Ability Based Study Groups

The implementation of differentiated learning in TK M Hilir Ismail focuses on grouping children based on their abilities in various learning areas. Learning groups based on these abilities aim to provide a more focused learning experience that is in accordance with the needs of each child. In this context, teachers map children's abilities through observation and initial assessment to understand their level of cognitive, social, and emotional development. After knowing the differences in children's abilities, teachers divide children into smaller groups and according to their capacities. Groups with similar abilities will work together in activities that are adjusted to the appropriate level of difficulty. For number recognition activities, children who are quicker to understand numbers can be given higher number recognition exercises or play with more complex counting concepts, while children who need more time are given simpler and more concrete tasks, namely matching numbers with the number of objects.



Figure 2. Together with Teachers Learning Based on Ability

The implementation of ability-based learning groups in TK M Hilir Ismail can be seen in the learning of the theme "Animals." In this theme, children are divided into groups based on their ability to recognize various types of animals and their characteristics. Children who have higher abilities in recognizing animals are given the challenge of composing a story about an animal's adventure, while integrating the information they have learned about the animal's habitat, food, and characteristics. This group is encouraged to develop speaking and writing skills through story-based activities. Meanwhile, children who need more support are given simpler tasks such as matching animal pictures with their names or habitats.

Gross and Fine Motor Activities

Differentiated learning at TK M Hilir Ismail also includes the development of gross and fine motor skills through various activities that are tailored to individual abilities. Gross motor skills involve large body movements such as walking, running, jumping, and climbing, which are important for a child's physical development. Meanwhile, fine motor skills relate to skills that involve small muscles such as grasping, writing, or using tools such as scissors and pencils. In order to support the development of gross and fine motor skills, teachers at TK M Hilir Ismail design activities that are tailored to the needs and abilities of each child. The implementation of differentiated learning is carried out by grouping children based on their level of motor skills. Groups of children with more advanced motor skills are given greater challenges, then physical activities that require higher coordination and balance, while children with lower motor skills are given simpler and more structured activities, with a focus on strengthening the basics of body movement and hand skills.

The implementation of gross motor activities in differentiated learning at TK M Hilir Ismail can be seen in outdoor game activities involving physical movement. In the theme "Nature Adventure," children are divided into groups according to their physical abilities. Groups with more advanced gross motor skills are given challenges to follow obstacles or games that involve running, jumping, and climbing, such as in the game "Adventure Forest," where children must pass various obstacles such as running between poles, jumping over wooden bars, or climbing small ladders. Meanwhile, groups that need more guidance are given simpler activities, such as the game "Running to Avoid," where they only need to run to avoid small obstacles on the field or do basic movements such as jumping or turning in the direction determined by the teacher. In each of these activities, children are given the freedom to move in a way that they feel comfortable with, but still under the supervision of the teacher who provides direction and support if needed. These activities not only improve children's physical abilities but also develop their social skills, such as cooperation and communication in groups.



Figure 3. Children's Gross Motor Activities

The positive impact of implementing gross and fine motor activities in differentiated learning at TK M Hilir Ismail is very visible in the physical and cognitive development of children. By dividing children based on their abilities, teachers can pay more attention to children who need additional support, while providing more challenges for those who are more advanced. Gross motor activities, such as running or jumping, help children develop physical strength, coordination, and body balance, which are very important for their overall body development. On the other hand, fine motor activities help children develop skills that are very much needed in everyday life, such as writing, drawing, and using tools. In reflecting on these activities, teachers can see the progress of each child in both aspects of motor skills. Children who initially had difficulty with gross or fine motor skills showed significant improvements after being given activities that were appropriate to their needs.

Children's Stories and Drama

At TK M Hilir Ismail, differentiated learning is implemented by considering the diversity of interests, abilities, and learning styles of each child, including in activities involving children's stories and drama. Stories and drama are very effective means to develop children's language skills, creativity, and social skills. In this learning, teachers use stories and drama as tools to introduce various concepts, social values, and communication skills. Differentiated learning is carried out by dividing children into groups that are appropriate to their level of development and abilities. For example, children who are more proficient in speaking and imagining are given bigger roles in drama activities, such as being the main character in the story or expressing the role through dialogue. Meanwhile, children who need more guidance are given simpler tasks, such as recognizing characters in the story or helping to prepare drama properties.



Figure 4. Listen to Teacher's Stories and Dramas

The implementation of differentiated learning in story and drama activities at TK M Hilir Ismail is seen in the learning of the theme "Adventure Story". In this theme, the teacher chooses an interesting adventure story, such as a story about the adventures of a rabbit who wants to explore the forest. Children are divided into groups based on their speaking and social skills. The more advanced group is given the role of bringing the story to life in the form of a drama, where they play the characters in the story with previously prepared dialogues. In addition, they are given the opportunity to improvise and add story elements that they create themselves, which trains their imagination and communication skills. Children are also asked to work together in groups to design the setting and

properties of the drama, which involves collaborative activities and the development of fine motor skills.

Through differentiated story and drama learning, children at TK M Hilir Ismail not only develop language skills, but also social and emotional skills that are very important in their development. Children's language skills develop rapidly when they are involved in drama because they are invited to use language creatively in a social context. In drama activities, children learn to speak in front of their friends, introduce themselves in a fun way, and convey their feelings and thoughts through dialogue. In this process, children who are more proficient in speaking are given the opportunity to develop their speaking skills by expressing roles in the story, while children who need more support are given simpler and easier-to-follow speaking exercises.

The impact of implementing differentiated learning through children's stories and dramas at TK M Hilir Ismail is very positive for the development of children's cognitive, language, and social skills. Children who previously lacked confidence in speaking in front of their friends began to show improvements in their speaking and communication skills after being involved in drama activities. They feel more comfortable expressing themselves in a fun and non-pressuring atmosphere. In addition, drama activities also provide opportunities for children to develop their imagination and creativity. They can describe various feelings and situations in an entertaining way, which trains creative and flexible thinking skills. Reflection on this activity shows that differentiated learning using stories and drama provides space for each child to develop according to their abilities and needs.

Sensory Activities and Teaching Aids

Differentiated learning at TK M Hilir Ismail includes various approaches to meet the diverse learning needs of each child. One approach used is through sensory activities and teaching aids designed to enrich children's learning experiences. Sensory activities involve various activities that stimulate children's senses, such as sight, hearing, smell, taste, and touch. These activities are important for children's cognitive and physical development, as well as helping them understand the world around them. The use of teaching aids in sensory learning allows children to be more concrete in understanding abstract concepts. Teaching aids such as picture cards, objects with different textures, or materials that can be combined with children's senses will help them learn actively and more enjoyably.

From the implementation of sensory activities and teaching aids in differentiated learning at TK M Hilir Ismail, it can be seen in activities that involve the introduction of objects with various textures and shapes. In the theme "Nature Surroundings," children are introduced to various types of natural materials such as leaves, stones, sand, and water. Children are divided into groups that are adjusted to their ability to understand and feel the difference in texture. Groups that have more advanced abilities in processing sensory information are given the challenge of grouping these materials based on their texture or shape, such as grouping rough and smooth objects, or hard and soft objects. They are also asked to touch, feel, and discuss the differences they feel, while connecting them to concepts that have been taught, such as the properties of objects in nature.

Sensory activities and the use of teaching aids applied in differentiated learning at TK M Hilir Ismail have a significant impact on children's cognitive and social development. Sensory activities that involve children's senses, such as touch, hearing, or sight, help strengthen their understanding of the world around them and support their ability to identify and classify objects based on their properties. In the shape recognition activity, children are given various teaching aids such as balls,

cubes, and triangles, and are then asked to group the objects based on their shape. This activity not only helps children to recognize shapes and sizes, but also stimulates their logical and critical thinking skills. In addition, the use of various teaching aids allows children to learn through more concrete experiences, which improves their memory and understanding of the material being taught. On the social side, sensory activities carried out in groups also provide opportunities for children to interact, share knowledge, and work together in completing certain tasks.

The impact of implementing sensory activities and teaching aids in differentiated learning at TK M Hilir Ismail is very positive in supporting children's holistic development. Children involved in these activities show an increase in their ability to recognize and differentiate various objects and concepts related to the nature of objects. They find it easier to understand abstract concepts after going through direct experience using their senses. After doing sensory activities with natural materials, children can more easily understand concepts such as hard, soft, rough, or smooth because they have felt them directly. In addition, these activities help children to be more active and involved in learning, because they not only receive information verbally but also practically through direct experience.

Elaboration of Understanding and Collaboration in Learning While Playing Activities

Differentiated learning at TK M Hilir Ismail integrates the concept of elaboration of understanding and collaboration in play-based learning activities. This concept aims to provide space for children to explore ideas, think critically, and work together with their friends in a supportive environment. Play-based learning activities allow children to understand more complex concepts through fun, hands-on experiences. In this learning, children are given the opportunity to participate in activities that combine elements of play with learning, which are tailored to the abilities of each child. Through play, children can develop social, language, motor, and cognitive skills, which are important parts of their development. Differentiated learning is carried out by dividing children into groups based on their abilities, so that each child can be involved in activities that are appropriate to their level of understanding and skills.

The implementation of differentiated learning through playful learning activities at TK M Hilir Ismail is on the theme of "Environmental Environment." In this activity, children are given the opportunity to learn various concepts about nature, such as the life cycle of plants, animals, and weather changes, in a fun and interactive way. Children are divided into groups that are adjusted to their level of understanding of the material. More advanced children are given the task of making a model of the life cycle of plants or animals using natural materials and props, such as pictures or small pots for planting seeds. They then work together to explain the steps in the life cycle, while discussing with each other what they have learned.

Collaboration is one of the main components in play-based learning activities at TK M Hilir Ismail. Children are invited to work together in groups, which allows them to learn about the importance of cooperation, communication, and problem solving together. In this activity, differentiated learning is very effective because it gives each child the opportunity to contribute according to their abilities. For example, in the "Nature Games" activity, children are asked to collaborate in making a miniature replica of a garden using various materials such as soil, stones, leaves, and flowers. Children who are more adept at using their hands or who have logical thinking skills are given the task of designing the garden layout and placing plants in the appropriate places. Children who need more support are given the task of collecting natural materials and helping their friends in arranging the parts of the garden. In this collaboration, children discuss with each other,

provide input, and work together to achieve a common goal, which is to create a beautiful and orderly garden.

The implementation of differentiated learning in play-based learning activities at TK M Hilir Ismail also takes into account the diverse learning styles of children. Each child has a different learning style, some are more dominant in learning through sight (visual), hearing (auditory), or kinesthetic (through movement or touch). Differentiated learning allows children to learn in a way that suits their preferences. For example, in the activity "Recognizing Shapes and Colors," children who have a visual learning style are given the opportunity to learn to recognize shapes and colors through large pictures or colorful props. They are asked to arrange the pictures or recognize the shapes on the props. Children who tend to learn kinesthetically are given the opportunity to move their bodies to describe the shapes through movement, such as making circles with their hands or moving their bodies following the shape of a triangle. Meanwhile, the shortcomings of this study are the limited number of samples only in TK M Hilir Ismail which reduces the generalizability of the findings.

The implications of the results of this study have a significant impact both practically, theoretically and methodologically. Practically, the findings can improve teachers' understanding and skills in implementing differentiated learning in the classroom, especially in the context of early childhood. This is expected to facilitate more inclusive learning, in accordance with the needs and potential of each child, and improve the quality of education in M Hilir Ismail Kindergarten, Bima City. Theoretically, this research enriches the study of differentiated learning by adding a new perspective on the application of this strategy in environments that have specific social and cultural characteristics. The findings can deepen the understanding of the importance of learning adaptations that are responsive to children's diversity. Methodologically, this research opens up opportunities for further studies on differentiated learning models in various contexts, and can be a reference for studies that explore the challenges and solutions in implementing more individualistic learning.

CONCLUSION

The results of this study indicate that the implementation of differentiated learning in TK M Hilir Ismail, Bima City has a very positive impact on the development of early childhood. Various strategies, such as Theme-Based Educational Games , Ability-Based Learning Groups , and Gross and Fine Motor Activities , have been successfully implemented to meet the diverse learning needs of children. Theme-based educational games allow children to learn in a fun and contextual way, so that they can understand important concepts more easily. Ability-based learning groups ensure that each child gets attention that is appropriate to their level of development, while gross and fine motor activities improve children's overall physical skills. In general, the implications of differentiated learning for Early Childhood Education (AUD) in Indonesia are to create a more inclusive learning environment, where each child can learn according to their abilities and interests. This can improve children's cognitive, social, and emotional development, as well as facilitate equal learning opportunities at various levels of intelligence.

In addition, the implementation of activities such as Children's Stories and Drama , Sensory Activities and Props , and Elaboration of Understanding and Collaboration in Learning While Playing Activities also make a big contribution to learning. Through stories and drama, children develop language and social skills, while sensory activities and props stimulate cognitive development through direct experience. Collaboration in play activities helps children

learn to work together, solve problems together, and strengthen their social skills. All of these activities support the achievement of more holistic learning goals, ensuring that children not only develop cognitively, but also emotionally, socially, and motorically. Differentiated learning at TK M Hilir Ismail creates an inclusive and fun environment, where every child can learn in a way that suits their needs.

Based on the results of this study, several recommendations can be made to support theory development, practice improvement and further research. (1) For theory development, it is suggested that further research explore the relationship between differentiated learning and children's social-emotional development, and its impact on improving future life skills. Researchers could also explore differentiated learning models in a broader multi-cultural context to enrich the literature on diversity in early childhood education. (2) In terms of practice, teachers at M Hilir Ismail Kindergarten and similar institutions could be given further training on effective differentiation techniques, and how to manage a class with existing diversity. More consistent and planned implementation of differentiated learning can improve the quality of education. (3) For future research, it is important to explore external factors that influence the effectiveness of differentiated learning such as parental involvement and community support to gain a deeper understanding.

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