DIVERSIFICATION OF CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS

P-ISSN: 2089-4341 | E-ISSN: 2655-9633
Url Jurnal: https://ui.e-journal.id/akademika/article/2605
DOI : https://doi.org/10.34005/akademika.v12i01.2605

Manuscripts Submitted: 2023-05-01 Manuscripts Reviewed: 2023-06-25 Manuscripts Published: 2023-06-30

Mariati Purba
Pusat Riset Pendidikan-
Badan Riset dan Inovasi Nasional
mariati.prb@gmail.com

Evi Sopandi
Pusat Riset Pendidikan-
Badan Riset dan Inovasi Nasional
ev_sopandi@yahoo.co.id

Slamet Wibowo
Pusat Riset Pendidikan-
Badan Riset dan Inovasi Nasional
wibowoslametpuskur@gmail.com

Abstract: This research is motivated by the fact that during the COVID-19 pandemic learning in elementary schools faced many problems. First, curriculum targets have yet to be achieved; second, distance learning is complex, faces complex issues, and requires careful preparation. Based on Law Number 20 of 2003 concerning the National Education System, the government gives authority to schools to design a diversified curriculum and differentiated instruction considering various conditions. This study aims to find information about the efforts of schools and stakeholders regarding implementing curriculum diversification and differentiation learning in elementary schools. The method is qualitative data collected through questionnaires throughout Indonesia, followed by interviews and discussions representing the population determined purposively. The research results show that many stakeholders need to understand government policies regarding curriculum diversification. Therefore, schools try to meet all curriculum demands uniformly. This study recommends that the government develop a pocketbook or handbook containing SOPs for various curricula and instructions during special conditions. In addition, supervision of schools needs to be carried out so that the development of multiple curricula and learning can run effectively and efficiently.

Keywords: Diversification of curriculum, Differentiated Instructions, Special Conditions

INTRODUCTION

The COVID-19 pandemic is a considerable challenge to education systems and has disrupted student life. COVID-19 is the greatest challenge these expanded national education systems have ever faced. As a result, many governments have ordered institutions to cease face-to-face instruction for most of their students, requiring them to switch, almost overnight, to online teaching and virtual education (Daniel, Sir John, 2020). In Indonesia, especially in elementary schools, the online teaching system is still challenging because of the limited hardware devices needed, namely computers, laptops, cellphones, and internet networks. Teachers have difficulties in preparing online learning plans, preparing learning media and online learning facilities, and achieving curriculum material targets (Ronadi, A. S., Affandi L.H, & Setiawan, H, 2022).
In conditions of covid 19 or other special needs, schools can organize curriculum diversification as written in Law No. 20 of 2003 concerning the National Education System in the Curriculum at the school level. The Curriculum at the school level allows academic units to build a more contextual Curriculum in line with the features and conditions of the education unit, which refers to the national curriculum structure (Regulation of the Minister of Education Number 61 of 2014 concerning Curriculum at the School Level).

Furthermore, consistent with the principle of curriculum diversification mandated by Law No. 20 of 2003, it states that the Curriculum at all levels and types of education is designed with the diversification principle in mind, considering the schools, regional, and student characteristics. As a result of emphasizing the principle of curriculum diversification in Curriculum at the School Level, academic units (including Schools) should be able to independently prepare for all possible outcomes, such as technological developments toward the Industrial Revolution 4.0 and natural disaster situations that pose challenges to the school itself (Winata, K, A, 2020). The construction of a diverse curriculum tailored to regional and school requirements, potential, and conditions, in a national strategy requires translation of education in the region, both from the provincial and school sides (Sudjipto, 2015).

Richard I Arends (2012) contrasts traditional and differentiated instruction by changing student differences, evaluations, interests, assignments, time, and methods of resolving issues, among other things. Five components of teaching can be differentiated: (1) content, what a student needs to learn or how the student will gain access to the knowledge, ideas, and skills; (2) process, how the student will come to master and “own” the knowledge, ideas, and skills; (3) product, how the student will summatively show what he has learned; (4) affect, the climate that implies the learning and interactions among students and teachers; and (5) learning environment, the personal, social, and physical arrangements in the classroom (Ann Tomlinson, C., & Moon, T. R, 2013).

Nowadays, many teaching methods and learning activities support diverse learning preferences to encourage active participation of all students and aspects of learning and to teach (content, learning activities, modes of learning, Etc.) based on student learning needs (Hanesworth, 2015). Previously, a study in 2017 on disaster mitigation education based on local wisdom in the Curriculum 2013 by recognizing and integrated local knowledge in disaster mitigation (Suarmika, P. E., 2017). That study did not discuss curriculum diversification at all; in December 2020, there was research that focused on distance learning, which is very effective during the COVID-19 pandemic; the study says that it should be supported by appropriate alternative policies and government that can be implemented by stakeholders, teachers and school students (Zuriah N, 2016).
Geographically, Indonesia is one of the most seismically active places, with earthquakes often due to its location in the Pacific Ring of Fire, the Alpide Belt earthquake route, and atop multiple tectonic plates. As a result, natural disasters, non-natural disasters, and social catastrophes all occur in Indonesia, according to the National Disaster Management Agency. According to the Ministry of Education and Culture, an exceptional condition is a catastrophe declared by the Central Government or a Regional Government (Ministry of Education) No. 719/P/2020). COVID-19 is one of the unique conditions the globe is presently dealing with, significantly impacting many facets worldwide. Dalam rangka pencegahan perkembangan dan penyebaran corona virus disease (Covid-19), the minister of education also issued Circular Number 3 of 2020 concerning Prevention of COVID-19 in Education Units. The World Health Organization (WHO) has declared COVID-19 a pandemic since it has spread worldwide to over a hundred nations. The WHO defines this pandemic as a scenario in which the world's population is likely to be exposed to this virus and may suffer from it. The COVID-19 epidemic has influenced many aspects of society, including the economy, social life, and education. According to the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), approximately 300 million children worldwide are interrupted from School activities, threatening their access to education in the future.

Minister of Education and Culture. According to the letter, all face-to-face learning activities at schools are closed to allow students to study from home. Principals, teachers, and parents/committees have enough and good ability to change their curriculum to generate contextual and relevant curriculum diversity.

**Diversification of Curriculum**

The government of Indonesia has established learning competencies and achievements as a path or trajectory for the current curriculum that will take students toward the end aim of education. To meet the needs of their unique educational units, each school must create an operational curriculum. The national education system is governed by Law No. 2 of 2003, which states that all academic levels and types are developed using the principle of diversity under local and institutional factors. The government does not mandate that schools follow the curriculum exactly as it is written, with only one correct answer. In essence, the government has freed or given independence to schools so they can implement the curriculum more freely by the circumstances or conditions. The principle of diversification is shown in the following figure.
Diverse curricula and diverse classrooms and curriculum are recognized in many nations as curriculum services for various racial, linguistic, and religious varieties, which continues to expand in the classroom, posing new problems for teachers and students (Lori D Ungemah, 2015). Teachers need to be focused on curriculum, learning resources, techniques, and models that will best suit the requirements of their students. Students are not required to complete the program (Arends I, 2012). Peter F Oliva (2004) developed ten curriculum development axioms that the curriculum must represent as a product of a society in line with its period. Thus, the curriculum both reflects and creates its own time. It indicates that curriculum creation should consider societal progress, including scientific and technological advancements and 21st-century education. The tenth axiom (Peter F Oliva, in Arends I, 2012) means that curriculum modifications depend on the person carrying them out under varied need-adapted settings, including specific conditions in the academic unit. It demonstrates how a diverse curriculum enhances the period of the creative economy, promotes creative industries, and transforms the attitude to the most recent mindset in line with the problem of 21st-century living. Differentiated instruction is the process of customizing learning to the requirements of students using several models (Arends I, 2008).

Curriculum diversification has three theoretical foundations. First, curriculum diversification is based on the curriculum's purposes or goals - as a tool for developing reflective thinking in the younger generation, in addition to regional potential, academic units, and
student characteristics. Curriculum diversification is also understood as the transmission of cultural heritage (Ungemah, 2015). Second, curriculum diversification is based on the theoretical foundation of a context-based curriculum. Curriculum diversification has different meanings depending on the context. For curriculum experts who believe in essentialism, it is seen as a transmission of cultural heritage by teaching the younger generation to prepare for a better life in the future. Thus, curriculum diversification is interpreted as a vehicle for educating the younger generation to overcome the social problems they face, considering the potential of the region, educational units, and the characteristics of students. Thus the curriculum is designed to prepare a better future society. Third, curriculum diversification is developed from a strategic perspective on implementing curriculum diversification. Curriculum diversification is a problem-solving approach based on scientific methods and reflective thinking.

**Differentiated learning (instruction)**

Differentiated instruction is a way for teachers to meet the needs of each student because differentiated instruction is a teaching and learning process where students can learn subject matter according to their abilities, preferences, and needs so that they are not frustrated and feel failed in their learning experience (Tomlinson, 2007). Although many education leaders talk about this, in this article we will discuss the ideas and work of Carol Tomlinson, the main initiator of this differentiated learning. Differentiated instruction is a way for teachers to meet the needs of each student because differentiated instruction is a teaching and learning process where students can learn subject matter according to their needs: readiness needs, their interests, and their learning profiles or preferences (AnnTomlinson & Moon, 2013). The characteristics of differentiated instruction are: 1) Proactive; 2) Emphasize quality than quantity; 3) Rooted in assessment; 4) Provide various approaches in content, learning process, product produced, and also learning environment; 5) Student oriented; 6) Is a mixture of individual and classical learning; and 7) Active (in collaboration).

Five components of instruction can be differentiated: (1) **content**—what a student needs to learn or how the student will gain access to the knowledge, ideas, and skills; (2) **process**—how the student will come to master and “own” the knowledge, ideas, and skills; (3) **product**—how the student will summatively show what he has learned; (4) **affect**—the climate that encompasses the learning and interactions among students and teacher; and (5) **learning environment**—the personal, social, and physical arrangements in the classroom. All of these elements can be differentiated to address students’ readiness needs, their interests, and their learning profiles or preferences. Figure 1 provides a flowchart or concept map of the key elements of differentiation.
The following is explained about examples of differentiation for variations in readiness, interest, and learning profiles related to the components of differentiation.

**Table 1. Examples of Differentiation for Variations in Readiness, Interest, and Learning Profile**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Components</th>
<th>Readiness</th>
<th>Interest</th>
<th>Learning Profile</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>content</td>
<td>Teacher uses digital video images of geological phenomena to support understanding of students who have no experience with the phenomena and who need to develop academic vocabulary related to the phenomena.</td>
<td>A biology teacher uses athletic teams, families, and rock bands to illustrate the concept of symbiosis.</td>
<td>During a poetry unit, a teacher finds more students are engaged when she discusses the creative aspects of poems and how the poems connect to students’ lives (practical aspects) along with analytical aspects.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A middle school teacher provides all students with models of effective student products from prior years to help them analyze what quality work looks like.

High school students studying use the life of a famous person or well-known character from movies or literature to make a forecast for the week ahead in their town. All students must predict the weather and explain their prediction.

An elementary teacher has posted "help cards" in several places in the room so when students are working independently, they can easily find reminders about things such as how to save work to a folder on the computer, the elements of haiku, or rules for basic punctuation.

A classroom has portable carrels that students can place on their desks if movement of other students distracts them while they are working. There are also headphones and earplugs students can use if they are easily distracted by small-group conversations when they are working alone.

---


This study aimed to seek information about implementing government policies on curriculum diversity at the school and education authorities (local government levels) and supervisors during online learning. I am looking for information about the efforts made by schools in distance learning for students and parents in primary education. What innovations have been made by principals and teachers should be in developing diverse curricula and different teaching. So far, no research proves that the government understands if schools understand and diversify the curriculum in different scenarios like this pandemic. Therefore, a study is needed to determine stakeholders' knowledge in implementing policies related to diverse curricula during the COVID-19 pandemic.
METHODS

This study analyzes the policy of primary school stakeholders in Indonesia to use a diverse curriculum during the pandemic using qualitative research. Then, collected the initial data through questionnaires distributed online to primary school stakeholders in Indonesia from 33 provinces. The research respondents were education authorities, supervisors, principals, teachers, students (grades 4, 5, and 6), and parents. Respondents who have filled out the questionnaire are invited to participate in the FGD through a zoom meeting set purposively to represent Western, Central, and Eastern Indonesia. Furthermore, we followed up the data and information with interviews and visits to elementary schools in Bogor-West Java and Jakarta (with health protocols).

RESULT

The following are the results from respondents from education authorities, supervisors, principals, teachers, parents, and students. The education offices stated that they need to understand the existence of curriculum diversification policies that allow the regions to adjust curriculum targets according to the pandemic situation.

The supervisor stated that the market for cell phones in distance learning was indispensable. The supervisor identified that the need for cell phones needed improvement in elementary schools; generally, students did not own but used their parents' property. The principal took immediate action to adjust the curriculum by selecting the essential competencies in the curriculum instead of achieving the overall target. In online learning, principals facilitate teachers for training and ask teachers to carry out different instructions. During the pandemic, principals collaborated with other principals regarding distance learning strategies.

Moreover, principals must be able to adapt to new situations, asking teachers to teach essential competencies in the curriculum, not in the entire curriculum target, considering that not all students can take full advantage of online learning. In addition, the principal must facilitate teachers to participate in online learning training, motivate teachers to develop creativity during the pandemic and improve communication with my parents via WhatsApp or SMS. Finally, the principal hoped would be a government policy regarding curriculum achievement during the COVID-19 pandemic. During the pandemic, the teacher's duties are assisted by
parents, for example, helping students do assignments and working on projects at home. In some areas, parents regularly come to school to pick up student assignments and send them back to school after students finish their homework. Parents hope that during the pandemic, the health and safety of students are more critical; they consult with the teacher when experiencing problems or obstacles in assisting children in learning at home. Parents also hope that the tasks give children the knowledge and skills of the current situation and that only accessible materials are given to children while studying from home. Students understand the dangers of the coronavirus from teachers and parents, so they require students to look at home. However, during learning at home, my parents always patiently guided me and had limitations in teaching mathematics and science. From discussions with students, they were less interested in the given task but were willing to do it because it was their responsibility, and they reported it to the teacher. Some students who live in cities can follow google classroom and youtube, but not all students can access them.

DISCUSSION
The questionnaire instrument distributed to all stakeholders contained respondents’ responses to several questions with answers Strongly Disagree (1), Disagree (2), Agree (3), and Strongly Agree (4). While the statement "Strongly Agree" means "It happens very often” and "Strongly Disagree" means "Absolutely never happens." The determination of respondents who were invited to the zoom meeting was determined purposively to represent all respondents from West, Central, and East Indonesia, areas that are easy to reach and those that are hard to get. Participants who are willing to take part in the zoom meeting from Aceh Tamiang-Nanggroe Aceh Darussalam, Anambas-Riau Islands, Purbalingga-Central Java, Balikpapan-East Kalimantan, Praya-West Nusa Tenggara, Gorontalo City, and Bitung-North Sulawesi.

A total of 436 people who filled out the questionnaire mostly (70%) stated that they had problems using online learning. Many need to understand that government policies provide opportunities to develop curricula at the school level. Most of the education offices (90%) issued policies to prioritize the health and safety of teachers and students during the pandemic. At the Zoom meeting, only 14 people were willing to attend the FGD. One hundred eighty supervisors filled out the questionnaire and stated that the supervisory function was difficult to perform during distance learning. Communication with the teacher is done using WhatsApp. In the Zoom meeting, only ten supervisors were present.

Four thousand five hundred thirty-one school principals from representatives of all provinces have filled out the questionnaire. But those who are willing to attend at the time Zoom are 26 people. The principal indicated that the duties and functions of the principal as a policy maker, providing motivation and the ability to adapt during the pandemic, have been carried out. Curriculum diversification under special conditions has
been carried out, although they are experiencing problems because the government has not issued guidelines for curriculum adjustments during the pandemic. The involvement of local education offices is constructive in coordination between school principals to share experiences in taking quick action in school situations. A total of 16,061 teachers filled out questionnaires, but those who were willing to attend the Zoom meeting were 60 teachers of grade 4, grade 5, and grade 6 teachers. Most principals need to understand the existence of government policies regarding adjusting curriculum targets based on pandemic situations. The teacher said he had tried using the Zoom meeting and google classroom, especially for students in grade 6. However, teachers also make visits to students' homes. Home visits are only made for students who need the facilities to study online or in remote areas. Routinely, teacher-student communication is carried out through parents' WhatsApp groups (like Greace Seran's research, 2020). Teachers who are in the green zone can teach students in groups. The teacher has tried to do different teaching according to the situation of the students.

![Figure 4. Demographics teachers](image.png)

As many as 45,100 parents have filled out the questionnaire, but 14 people are willing to attend the zoom meeting. The role of parents as a companion for children studying at home is quite significant. Parents perform the task of mentoring materials, themes, and assignments and reporting the results to the teacher regularly every day and every week. Parents hope that the teacher's job is not fully delegated, given the limitations of education and the busyness of parents. Most parents' education was at the secondary school level, 33,812 (75%). In addition,
the busy factor of parents in taking care of the household is an obstacle to
the lack of time to accompany students to study at home (same as
research from Dede-Juhana, 2021).

A total of 31,976 students who filled out the questionnaire consisted of
9,880 grade 4 students (30.9%), 10,200 grade 5 students (31.9%), and
11,896 grade 6 students (37.65%), but who were willing to attend during
the zoom meeting only 21 students. Almost all students used their parents'
WhatsApp group while studying at home. Some students still use
telephones or SMS because their cell phones do not yet have online
facilities; in some areas also tricky to get a signal. While studying at home,
students feel bored because they only do daily assignments and tend to
use Google instead of asking teachers or parents. Competency
achievements in the curriculum include attitudes, knowledge, and skills,
but not all of them have been achieved during this pandemic (same as
research from Ananda, 2021).
CONCLUSION

Schools need to realize the existence of curriculum diversity policies that allow Schools to build diverse curricula in unique conditions (during COVID-19). The local government level needs to understand the existence of government policies that provide opportunities to develop a diverse curriculum (curriculum diversification). The principal has tried to move quickly in anticipating the situation by selecting important material in the curriculum, no longer pursuing the target curriculum, and asking teachers to give students different instructions to students according. However, the school's difficulty in conducting online learning in elementary schools is related to the ability of teachers, the involvement of all students in distance learning, parental support, and the lack of supporting resources. Thus, principals do not prepare curriculum at the school level and learning materials in advance for unusual circumstances, as the government requires.

During the pandemic, the task of teachers is assisted by parents who accompany students to study at home. The teacher has tried to use different instructions according to the student's circumstances. However, parents also hope that not all teacher assignments are given to parents at home. Parents play a role in collecting student assignments submitted daily or weekly, depending on the area. Parents who do not have internet access generally use parents' WhatsApp to communicate with teachers and manage work, while some parents use SMS. All students stated that there were too many assignments to be done daily, so they needed to be more focused. In addition, students prefer to study in...
school because they can directly ask the teacher. While at home, there are many questions that parents cannot help with, especially math and science. Students also feel happier at school because they can play with their friends. While during the pandemic, they never met.

REFERENCES


Law No. 20 of 2003 concerning the National Education System (In Indonesia).


Regulation of the Minister of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia Number 22 of 2016 concerning Standards for the Process of Primary and Secondary Education (In Indonesia).
Regulation of the Minister of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia Number 72 of 2013 concerning the Implementation of Special Service Education (In Indonesia).

Regulation of the Minister of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia Number 61 of 2014 concerning Curriculum at the School Level (In Indonesia).


