



The impact of differentiated learning materials on students' understanding of nationalism and global diversity

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Abstract

This study aims to determine the differentiated learning materials' impact on students' understanding of nationalism and global diversity. This research was a quasi-experimental study conducted by following a post-test-only control group design. Two classes from different schools were selected as research samples using a statistical matching technique. The researchers collected the data using tests and analyzed them using descriptive statistics and an independent t-test to achieve the study's objective. The results of the descriptive statistics showed that the experimental group had a higher score than the control group. It can be seen from the mean, minimum and maximum scores of the two groups. This result demonstrates that students who used varied learning resources had a greater comprehension of nationalism and global diversity. Furthermore, the independent t-test result confirmed that the differences in understanding were significant. In terms of the effect size, it confirms that differentiated instruction greatly affects students' understanding of nationalism and global diversity. Thus, this study concluded that differentiated learning materials affect students' understanding of nationalism and global diversity significantly. Thus, the researchers promote differentiated learning materials for teaching nationalism and global diversity based on the study results. Moreover, differentiated instruction may also be used for teaching different learning materials.

Keywords: Differentiated learning, Diversity understanding, Nationalism.

Citation | Ardiawan, I. K. N., Lasmawan, I. W., Dantes, N., & Dantes, G. R. (2024). The impact of differentiated learning materials on students' understanding of nationalism and global diversity. *Journal of Education and E-Learning Research*, 11(1), 107-112. 10.20448/jeelr.v11i1.5369

History:

Received: 14 July 2023

Revised: 1 November 2023

Accepted: 22 January 2024

Published: 7 February 2024

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Publisher: Asian Online Journal Publishing Group

Funding: Funding: This study received no specific financial support.

Institutional Review Board Statement: The Ethical Committee of the Ganesha University of Education, Indonesia has granted approval for this study (Ref. No. 5736/UN48.14.6/pp/2023).

Transparency: The authors confirm that the manuscript is an honest, accurate, and transparent account of the study; that no vital features of the study have been omitted; and that any discrepancies from the study as planned have been explained. This study followed all ethical practices during writing.

Competing Interests: The authors declare that they have no competing interests.

Authors' Contributions: Drafting, writing manuscript, I.K.N.A.; editing, I.W.L; proofreading, N.D.; analyzing data, G.R.D. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

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Contribution of this paper to the literature

The researcher used diversified learning resources for this study that provide a variety of offline and online activities. The previous studies usually designed differentiated learning materials by simplifying the materials for lower achieving students.

1. Introduction

Nationalism and global diversity are two things that must be understood and implemented by all people. Nationalism is an ideology that makes a nation feel part of a culture, religion, language, territory and other groups (Kaplan, 2020; Madan, 2001). Nationalism is the idea of self-determination, solidarity and local sovereignty. A nation is united by a singular ideological goal and a single shared ideology creating a powerful sense of unity (Cerulo, 2001).

Nationalism is the desire to make sacrifices for one's country or homeland (Manihuruk, 2020). Ordering state priorities over personal interests is a sign of willingness to sacrifice (Tanamal, Rumaratu, & Tuakia, 2021). Willingness to sacrifice manifests in financial or material contributions, energy and thoughts for the nation's progress. A strong sense of nationalism will lead to a love of local products which will develop the country's economy. Therefore, nationalism is crucial to ensure that the country is strong and independent.

Understanding global diversity is essential to a nation's life like nationalism. The diversity of Indonesian cultural groups, ethnicities, faiths and languages contributes to the various differences that exist within each individual's existence in the context of the country (Aziz & Abdulkarim, 2023; Indawati, 2022). Tolerance and appreciation for diversity are key components of global diversity (Cuadrado, Ordonez-Carrasco, López-Rodríguez, Vázquez, & Brambilla, 2021). Global diversity is crucial to create peace because the primary trigger for disputes is diversity. Minor problems can become big problems when people belong to different groups.

Cases of separatism and hostility due to a lack of understanding of nationalism and global diversity still occur in Indonesia. The Free Papua Organization is an example of cases of separatism that still occur today. On the other hand, cases of intolerance that often occur in Indonesia are cases of religious intolerance and radicalism (Qodir, 2016). Radicalism is very dangerous because it can lead to prolonged and large-scale conflicts that threaten the peace and continuity of a nation (Tahir & Tahir, 2020). Significant initiatives are required to raise awareness of nationalism and the Indonesian people's worldwide variety taking these issues into consideration.

Education is one of the initiatives that the Indonesian government has implemented. Student character development may be achieved through education. Therefore, it is believed that understanding nationalism and global diversity can also be done through education. In Indonesia, the *Pancasila* (the five ideological pillars of the Indonesian state) subject is aimed at developing nationalism and understanding global diversity (Budijanto & Rahmanto, 2021). *Pancasila* education is personality development which explains the foundation and goals and history of Indonesian nationalism. *Pancasila* is a system of philosophy, the national ideology of Indonesia, political ethics and a paradigm in social life, nation and state.

It is considered necessary to enhance the quality of *Pancasila* education in order to get more optimal outcomes from the learning process. One aspect that influences the quality of learning is teaching strategy (Cordero & Gil-Izquierdo, 2018). Teaching strategies affect learning motivation, student interest in learning and student participation (Ghiasvand, 2010; Lee & Boo, 2022; Muelas & Navarro, 2015; Neroni, Meijs, Gijsselaers, Kirschner, & de Groot, 2019; Tulbure, 2012). The selection of teaching strategies is crucial to learning.

Differentiated instruction (DI) is a strategy that has proven successful in improving student learning outcomes. DI is a learning approach that varies activities and teaching materials according to student's abilities. These are carried out systematically to know students' academic development and make data-based decisions (Roy, Guay, & Valois, 2013). Several studies have proven that DI can build students' understanding of achieving learning objectives. The research conducted by Valiandes (2015) found that the application of DI improved student achievement. Prast, Van de Weijer-Bergsma, Kroesbergen, and Van Luit (2018) also found that DI improved students' mathematics learning outcomes. Research by Karadag and Yasar (2010) shows that DI increases student learning achievement while also making learning more comfortable for students.

Learning materials are crucial in carrying out learning because these materials will be studied to achieve learning objectives (Bukoye, 2019; Mithans & Ivanuš Grmek, 2020). It is essential to have differentiated teaching materials based on students' abilities in order to use DI in the learning environment. If the learning material is of poor quality, it will reduce learning quality and vice versa (Kuecken & Valfort, 2013; van den Ham & Heinze, 2018).

Further study is necessary since differentiated learning is still relatively new in Indonesia. Differentiated learning resources for *Pancasila* learning have not been the subject of research. This research aims to identify the impact of using differentiated material on students' understanding of nationalism and global diversity considering the problems of understanding nationalism and global diversity and the benefits of DI.

This study is essential because nationalism and global diversity are Indonesia's national problems. This problem can be seen in the continued occurrence of cases of separatism such as those that occurred in Papua and other conflicts that occur between ethnicities, tribes and religions in different areas of Indonesia (Sulistiyono, 2018; Widayani & Yunazwardi, 2021). These problems highlight the necessity for education to have a positive impact on Indonesians' awareness of global diversity and nationalism. In addition, the implementation of DI has been proven to be effective in improving students' understanding, achievement and learning interest (Beck & Beasley, 2021; Bi, Struyven, & Zhu, 2023; Liou, Cheng, Chu, Chang, & Liu, 2023; Smale-Jacobse, Meijer, Helms-Lorenz, & Maulana, 2019). Thus, it is expected that the result of this study can be used as an alternative for teaching and improving students' understanding of nationalism and global diversity.

2. Review of Related Literature

Several researchers have researched using DI to improve students' learning achievement. For example, the study conducted by Al-Shehri (2020) confirmed that DI positively affects the achievement of sixth-grade students and their critical thinking in science class. Beck and Beasley (2021) conducted a similar study and discovered that differentiated instruction (DI) improves students' knowledge but creating the differentiated learning materials

would take a lot of effort. Furthermore, Lindner, Nusser, Gehrer, and Schwab (2021) found that DI also helps teachers conduct better instruction for primary school students in an inclusive class. Implementing DI can fulfill students' needs since an inclusive class consists of traditionally disadvantaged students.

Smale-Jacobse et al. (2019) also found that implementing DI positively impacted student achievement at the secondary school level. Moreover, they also found that DI can be done in various ways, e.g., by homogeneous clustering, individualized DI and flipped classrooms. DI was also proven to be effective by Pozas, Letzel, Lindner, and Schwab (2021) in improving secondary school students' well-being, social inclusion and academic self-concept. Additionally, DI could support all students in obtaining high standards (Ziernwald, Hillmayr, & Holzberger, 2022) because DI enables teachers to help the students see their full potential. Teachers will consider their students as separate individuals with potential through DI and they will treat them differently according to their interests and talents.

It is clear from studies that DI has an extensive history of working with teachers to raise student success. Thus, this study used DI to identify its effect on students' understanding of nationalism and global diversity. DI is still relatively new in the Indonesian educational system. There has only been a little research done on the subject that was implemented in Indonesia. The Indonesian education ministry and culture officially introduced DI in 2021. According to the Indonesian Ministry of Education, DI in Indonesia can be in the form of differentiated learning materials, learning processes and differentiated products (Indonesian Ministry of Education and Culture, 2021). In this study, DI was conducted using differentiated learning materials in *Pancasila* specifically the learning materials about nationalism and global diversity. This study, implemented in *Pancasila*, focused on nationalism and global diversity materials. No study has been conducted to examine the impact of DI on students' understanding of nationalism and global diversity especially in the Indonesian context where DI is still new for Indonesian teachers.

3. Method

A post-test-only control group design was used by the researchers in this study. The study took all state elementary schools in Banyuning village, Buleleng, Bali, Indonesia as the population. There were six public elementary schools in Banyuning village. The study involved two classes of fifth-grade students from two schools as the study samples. They were selected using a statistical matching technique from the six schools in Banyuning village. The outcome of the statistical matching approach demonstrated that those two classes had comparable skills. Then, one class was used as the experimental group and the other as the control group. The experimental group was taught using differentiated materials while the control group used conventional materials already available at school.

The data in this study were collected using two types of tests. The first test was to collect data regarding the understanding of nationalism and the second test was to determine the understanding of global diversity. The test was given after the students were taught for ten meetings. The researchers analyzed the test results quantitatively using descriptive and inferential statistical tests using independent t-tests. However, the researchers tested the data with normality and homogeneity tests before carrying out the inferential test using the independent t-test. The analysis continued with an independent t-test when it was shown that the data were homogenous and normally distributed. Finally, an effect size test using Hedges' g formula was also done. The descriptive and inferential statistics were done using SPSS version 20 for Windows and the effect size was calculated using an effect size calculator.

4. Findings and Discussion

The objective of the research is to identify the effect of implementing differentiated materials on students' understanding of nationalism and global diversity. This section explains the research outcomes according to the stages of the research performed so that the study findings may be fully understood. The explanation of research results will begin with descriptive statistical results from the post-test in control and experimental groups regarding nationalism and global diversity. Next, the researchers explain the results of the prerequisite test which consisted of the normality test and post-test data homogeneity. The researchers explain the independent t-test results for the two types of post-tests conducted. Finally, the researchers present the size of the effect of the application of differentiated materials on students' understanding of nationalism and global diversity.

4.1. The Effect of Differentiated Materials on Students' Nationalism and Understanding

The researchers identified the effect of differentiated materials on students' understanding of nationalism by analyzing the post-test results using descriptive statistics and an independent t-test. However, the researcher performed homogeneity and normality tests before carrying out the independent t-test. The following are the explanations of the test results:

4.1.1. Descriptive Statistics Results

The descriptive statistics results show that the understanding of nationalism in the experimental group was higher than in the control group. Table 1's post-test results for the two groups indicate that the experimental group outperformed the control group.

Table 1. The results of the post-test descriptive statistics on students' understanding of nationalism.

Descriptive statistics	Experimental group	Control group
Mean	79.04	68.08
Median	80.00	70.00
Variance	58.04	56.15
Std. deviation	7.61	7.49
Minimum	65.00	55.00
Maximum	95.00	80.00
Range	30.00	25.00

4.1.2. Prerequisite Test Results

There were differences in the understanding of nationalism between the experimental and control groups. The researchers conducted a further analysis using statistical inferential tests. However, the researcher first conducted a prerequisite test before using statistical inferential analysis, namely the independent t-test. The prerequisite tests for conducting an independent t-test are normality and homogeneity tests. The data tested using the independent t-test must be normally distributed and homogeneous.

Table 2 shows that the data from the experimental and control groups proved to be normally distributed. We can identify it from the sig. value > 0.05 in the analysis results using the Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk formulas for post-test data from both classes. When the value of sig. > 0.05, the data is normally distributed (Pallant, 2011).

Table 2. Normality test result.

Group	Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	Df	Sig.
Nationalism_experimental	0.959	32	0.264
Nationalism_control	0.938	26	0.119

The homogeneity test results in Table 3 also confirm that the post-test data on understanding nationalism in the experimental and control groups proved homogeneous. These results can be seen from the sig value which is > 0.05. If the value of sig. > 0.05, then this means that the data is homogeneous.

Table 3. Homogeneity test results for post-test data on students' understanding of nationalism.

Levene statistic	Df1	Df2	Sig.
1.416	1	56	239

4.1.3. Independent T-test Results

The researcher used an independent t-test to do an inferential analysis after demonstrating that the data was homogenous and normally distributed. The test was designed to determine the statistical significance of the variation in students' nationalistic comprehension as shown by the descriptive statistics findings. The independent t-test analysis confirms that the difference in students' understanding of nationalism proved significant. The value of sig. (2-tailed) is $0.01 < 0.05$ (see Table 4). The value of sig. < 0.05 means that the level of students' understanding of nationalism in the experimental and control groups was significantly different.

Table 4. Independent t-test results from students' understanding of nationalism data

	Levene's test for equality of variances		T-test for equality of means				
	F	Sig.	t	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean difference	Std. error difference
Equal variances are assumed.	1.42	0.24	3.55	56	0.001	8.02	2.26
Equal variances are not assumed.			3.63	55.99	0.001	8.02	2.21

4.1.4. Effect Size

The researcher uses the effect size method to calculate the impact that different materials have on students' knowledge of nationalism. The effect size is calculated using the Hedges' g method since there are differences in the number of samples between the two groups (Ellis, 2010). It was found that the value obtained was 1.45 from the calculations performed. According to the criteria given by Cohen (1998), if the effect size value is > 0.8, the treatment's effect is large and significant. Therefore, these criteria suggest that differentiated material has a substantial and positive impact on students' comprehension of nationalism.

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Hedges' } g &= \frac{M_1 - M_2}{SD_{pooled}^*} \\ &= \frac{79.04 - 68.08}{7.56} \\ &= 1.45 \end{aligned}$$

There are several reasons why DI is successful in increasing student achievement. First, implementing DI helps students learn and achieve learning objectives based on their ability level so that the learning process does not burden students (Alsalmi et al., 2021). In other words, differentiated learning fulfills students' needs so that they can learn better (Dorfberger & Eyal, 2023; Gheyssens, Consuegra, Engels, & Struyven, 2021; Pozas, Letzel-Alt, & Schwab, 2023). Students taught using materials and approaches that suit their abilities will feel more comfortable and confident in learning (Rytivaara & Vehkakoski, 2015). Second, when students feel comfortable learning, their motivation increases especially for slow learners (Massaad & Chaker, 2020; Mirawati, Suwastini, Haryanti, & Jayantini, 2022). Third, students will become more interested in their studies as they gain confidence (Zens, 2021). Research by Stankov, Lee, Luo, and Hogan (2012) revealed a substantial relationship between learning success and self-confidence. Students may become independent learners by applying DI that takes into account their talents and has strong self-confidence (Ingvavara, Panjaburee, Srisawasdi, & Sajjapanroj, 2022). Furthermore, self-confidence can increase students' self-efficacy which will positively affect students' learning achievement (Huang, Bernacki, Kim, & Hong, 2022).

However, the teacher's workload is increased even though DI has been successful in improving student learning results because of the preparation required (Pozas et al., 2023). Therefore, the effectiveness of DI is influenced by the teacher's experience where the teacher's experience positively impacts the implementation of DI (van Geel, Keuning, & Safar, 2022). In other words, the more experienced a teacher is in implementing DI, the better its effectiveness will be. These conditions indicate that the more experience a teacher has in implementing DI, their ability to prepare, implement and evaluate the process of implementing DI will get better. Thus, the effectiveness of DI will also be influenced by the teacher's ability to implement it where different abilities will produce different results (Haerlmans, 2022). In addition, the teacher's perception of the implementation of differentiated learning can also influence the effectiveness of differentiated learning on student achievement (Pozas, Letzel, & Schneider, 2020). Therefore, assistance and training from experienced teachers are essential for teachers who wish to implement DI (Gibbs & McKay, 2021; Kahmann, Droop, & Lazonder, 2022).

5. Conclusion

Nationalism and global diversity are two things that must be understood together in order to strengthen the unity of the Indonesian nation. In this study, researchers examined the application of differentiated material and saw its effect on students' understanding of nationalism and global diversity. The results of this study support the claim that individualized instruction greatly improves students' comprehension of nationalism and global diversity. Differentiated learning materials can help the students learn better because they can choose the learning materials' difficulty level based on their ability. Slow learners can choose simpler learning materials while fast learners can choose complex ones. The flexibility of DI fulfills students' needs and makes them feel more relaxed and confident in their ability to study. This study found that the strengths of differentiated learning materials increase students' understanding of nationalism and global diversity. Since the students' understanding of nationalism and global diversity can be improved using DI, it is suggested that other teachers in Indonesia also apply DI and develop differentiated learning materials for their students. It is important to conduct more research on the application of DI particularly from the perspectives of teachers and students given that this study was limited to two classrooms and that other factor need to be taken into account.

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