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Strengthening Tolerance Character through Differentiated Learning in Islamic Religion Education at Al-Lathifi Junior High School Gondanglegi

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Abstract:
Islamic Religious Education plays a strategic role in strengthening the character of tolerance, especially in dealing with student diversity. However, studies on differentiated learning as a learning approach to strengthen the character of tolerance are still limited. This study aims to analyze efforts to strengthen the character of tolerance through the integration of different approaches in Islamic Religious Education learning at SMP Al-Lathifi Gondanglegi. This study uses a qualitative approach with a case study type. Research data were obtained through interviews, observations, and document studies. Data analysis uses the interactive model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña through stages of data collection, data condensation, data presentation, and drawing conclusions. Data validity was checked through source and technique triangulation. The study results indicate that the strengthening of tolerance character is carried out through three main efforts. First, the internalization of tolerance values in Islamic Religious Education learning through a differentiated approach, realized by grouping students heterogeneously, using a variety of learning media, and providing learning activities tailored to the readiness and learning needs of students. Second, the habituation of tolerance characters through discussion activities, group work, exchanging opinions, and helping each other in the learning process. These practices provide space for students to appreciate differences in abilities, accept diverse opinions, and build cooperation. Third, the teacher's exemplary behavior that reflects respect for differences, fairness, and nondiscriminatory treatment. These findings indicate that differentiated learning not only has the potential to accommodate the diversity of learning needs, but also serves as a pedagogical approach that supports the strengthening of the character of tolerance through learning experiences that respect differences, foster empathy, and build harmonious social interactions.

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Introduction (مقدمة)

Islamic Religious Education holds a very strategic position in efforts to shape the character of students, not only through mastery of religious knowledge but also through the internalization of values reflected in daily attitudes and behaviors. One of the characters that need to be developed in the educational environment is tolerance, especially amid the diversity of students' backgrounds, abilities, characteristics, and learning experiences (Huda & Rahim, 2023). Tolerance in the context of education is not merely related to the ability to accept differences; it also encompasses the attitude of appreciating opinions, respecting others, cooperating, and providing a fair space for each student to develop (Hariandi et al., 2019). Therefore, Islamic Religious Education needs to be designed not only oriented towards uniformity in academic achievement but also learning that is able to accommodate the diversity of students as part of the character-building process (Mustafida, 2020). In this context, differentiated learning becomes one of the relevant approaches in the current era because it provides space for teachers to adjust learning to the students' learning readiness, interests, and characteristics (Maruni, 2024).

The need for learning that can accommodate such diversity is evident in the context of Islamic Religious Education at SMP Al-Lathifi Gondanglegi Malang. As an Islamic educational institution based on the pesantren system, this school has students with diverse backgrounds, in terms of their regions of origin, academic abilities, learning experiences, and individual characteristics. This diversity becomes a condition that must be considered in the learning process so that each student has the opportunity to learn according to their needs (Adawiyah et al., 2024). In Islamic religious education, the diversity of students simultaneously becomes a strategic space for instilling values of tolerance through processes of interaction, cooperation, discussion, and appreciation of differences (Nurdin et al., 2024). Thus, the analysis in this study is directed at the integration of differentiated learning approaches in Islamic religious education, particularly how these strategies are used to support the strengthening of students' tolerance character at SMP Al-Lathifi Gondanglegi Malang.

Several previous studies indicate that differentiated instruction has a strong relevance to the learning needs of Islamic religious education. Research by Ridwan and Umarella shows that the implementation of differentiated instruction in Islamic religious education at SMP Negeri 11 Tual is carried out by considering students' levels of knowledge, talents, interests, and learning styles, as well as encompassing differentiation in content, process, product, and learning environment. Its implementation is also considered capable of creating a more inclusive learning environment (Andi Ridwan & Samad Umarella, 2024). Other research on differentiated learning in Islamic Religious Education shows that this approach can be used to improve students' understanding of learning materials (Siregar et al., 2024). Meanwhile, research on differentiated learning combined with Problem-Based Learning found developments in students' tolerance attitudes through changes in their behavior and involvement in the learning process (Huda & Rahim, 2023). Studies on the integration of tolerance values in Islamic Religious Education also emphasize that religious learning can serve as a means to foster attitudes of mutual respect and acceptance of differences (Farihin & Khasani, 2023). These findings indicate that differentiated learning and tolerance education converge on the principle of respecting the diversity of students.

However, research on differentiated learning in Islamic Religious Education still primarily focuses on aspects such as meeting learning needs, enhancing material comprehension, learning outcomes, learning styles, or creating an inclusive learning environment. Studies on tolerance

generally discuss the integration of tolerance values through materials, multicultural approaches, teaching methods, or school culture (Mustafida, 2020). Meanwhile, studies that specifically analyze the integration of differentiated learning approaches as a strategy to strengthen the character of tolerance in Islamic Religious Education at the junior high school level, particularly in the context of pesantren-based Islamic schools, are still relatively limited. In fact, learning differentiation can not only be understood as a strategy to respond to differences in abilities and learning styles but can also serve as a pedagogical mechanism to build learning experiences that value diversity, encourage interaction among learners, and foster mutual respect (Hamdi, 2021). This gap becomes an important basis for researchers to link these two aspects within a more integrated framework of study.

The novelty of this research lies in positioning the differentiated learning approach not merely as a strategy to optimize the learning process and outcomes, but as a pedagogical approach that can be integrated into Islamic Religious Education to strengthen students' tolerance character. In the context of learning, a differentiated approach is relevant to strengthening the character of tolerance because it starts from the recognition that each student has different characteristics, readiness, interests, and learning profiles. This approach does not consider differences as obstacles, but rather as conditions that need to be accommodated through planning and implementing learning that is responsive to students' needs. Grouping students heterogeneously, using a variety of learning media, and providing diverse learning activities can create learning experiences that allow students to interact with individuals who have different abilities and characteristics. Through discussions, group work, and the exchange of ideas, students have the opportunity to develop attitudes of mutual respect, acceptance of differences, collaboration, and empathy. Thus, differentiated learning not only focuses on meeting academic needs but also has the potential to become a pedagogical environment that supports the internalization of values of tolerance through inclusive and participatory learning experiences.

The study focuses on how learning differentiation is implemented in Islamic Religious Education and how its application contributes to fostering attitudes of respecting differences, accepting diversity, mutual respect, cooperation, and demonstrating empathy towards other students. This study aims to analyze the strengthening of tolerance character through the integration of differentiated learning approaches in Islamic Religious Education at SMP Al-Lathifi Gondanglegi. Academically, this research is expected to contribute to the development of Islamic Religious Education, particularly concerning the relationship between learning strategies that are responsive to student diversity and character education. Practically, the research results are expected to serve as a reference for Islamic religion teachers in developing adaptive, inclusive, and character-building-oriented learning.

This article is written to elaborate on the relationship between differentiated learning approaches and the reinforcement of tolerance character in Islamic Religious Education learning. The discussion begins with a review of the concepts of differentiated learning and tolerance character as the conceptual basis of the study. Next, the article outlines the research methods used to obtain and analyze data. The results and discussion section presents findings on the implementation of differentiated learning in Islamic Religious Education as well as the forms of tolerance character reinforcement that develop through this learning process. In the final section, the article presents conclusions that summarize the main findings as well as the research implications for the development of Islamic Religious Education learning that can accommodate the diversity of students and strengthen tolerance character.

Method (منهج)

This study uses a qualitative research approach. The qualitative approach is a type of

research approach used to investigate the condition of an object naturally, where the researcher acts as the key instrument and the resulting data is descriptive data in the form of words that are systematically elaborated (Rijali, 2018). Meanwhile, the type of research used in this study is an intrinsic case study. This qualitative research was chosen because it allows the researcher to observe in depth the situation or natural condition and to directly observe and describe an event at SMP Al-Lathifi Gondanglegi Malang regarding the process of implementing Islamic religious education through the application of a differentiated learning approach with the aim of forming tolerant character in students.

The research location was conducted at SMP Al-Lathifi Gondanglegi Malang, a school in the Gondanglegi district of Malang Regency, which is a junior high school based on an Islamic boarding school *(pesantren)*. The research was carried out through active participation by the researcher in June 2026. This school was chosen as the research location because it has characteristics that align with the research focus, namely efforts to implement multicultural Islamic education through the application of differentiated learning in its teaching and learning activities with the aim of shaping students' tolerant character.

Regarding the data and data sources in this study, the researcher classifies them into two types of data sources, which are specifically used by the researcher to explore the information needed in accordance with the scope of the research focus. These two types of data and data sources are primary data and secondary data. 1) Primary Data, which includes: the principal, vice principal for curriculum, vice principal for student affairs, teachers/educators of Islamic religious education, and also students as the main subjects in gathering research information. 2) Secondary Data, which includes: school curriculum documents, Islamic religious education teacher learning tools, and programs for the development of Islamic religious education at SMP AL-Lathifi Gondanglegi Malang. The determination of informants in this study used a purposive sampling technique, which is the selection of informants based on considerations of involvement, knowledge, and experience relevant to the focus of the research. The research informants included the school principal, vice principal for curriculum, vice principal for student affairs, Islamic Religious Education teachers, and eighth-grade students of SMP Al-Lathifi Gondanglegi. The selection of the school principal was based on their understanding of school policies and educational culture; the vice principal for curriculum was selected based on their involvement in the management of learning; and the vice principal for student affairs was chosen based on their role in fostering students' character. Islamic Religious Education teachers were selected because they are directly involved in the implementation of differentiated learning, while eighth-grade students were chosen because they directly experience the learning process and social interactions that are the focus of the research.

The data collection procedure in this study was carried out through several techniques, namely observation, interviews, and documentation. These three techniques were used in an integrated manner to obtain accurate data and support the triangulation process (Rijali, 2018). Observation was conducted by the researcher through direct observation, particularly focusing on the learning process of multicultural Islamic religious education using a differentiated learning approach at SMP AL-Lathifi Gondanglegi. Next, in-depth interviews were conducted by the researcher together with informants. Then, documentation studies were carried out as part of research source triangulation by reviewing documents related to the research focus, particularly the curriculum documents of SMP Al-Lathifi Gondanglegi and the instructional materials of Islamic religious education teachers. Data collection through interviews was conducted in a semi-structured manner using an interview guide developed based on the research focus. The interviews were directed to obtain information regarding school policies, the planning and implementation of differentiated learning, the habituation of a tolerance character, as well as students' experiences in interactions during the Islamic Religious Education learning process.

Interview questions were adjusted to the capacity and involvement of each informant. For the principal and vice principal, the interviews focused on school policies and character development within the school environment. Interviews with Islamic Religious Education teachers were directed at differentiated learning practices, while interviews with students focused on learning experiences, cooperation, appreciation of differences, and social interaction. Follow-up questions were asked according to the informants' answers to obtain more in-depth information and clarify the research findings.

In this study, the researcher used the Miles, Huberman, and Saldana interactive model of data analysis. The data analysis process in this study was conducted in four stages, namely Data Collection, Data Condensation, Data Display, and Conclusion Drawing/Verifying (Rijali, 2018). By using the Miles and Huberman data analysis model, it is expected that this study can produce an in-depth, systematic analysis and comprehensively describe the phenomenon being investigated.

The validity of the data was conducted to ensure the credibility and reliability of the research findings through source triangulation, technique triangulation, and peer checking (Doeka & Banja, 2022). Source triangulation was carried out by comparing information obtained from the principal, vice-principal, Islamic religious teachers, and students. Technique triangulation was conducted by comparing data from interviews, observations, and documentation so that the information obtained did not rely solely on one data collection technique. Furthermore, peer checking was carried out by discussing the analysis process and research findings with individuals who have an understanding of qualitative research to obtain feedback, test the consistency of interpretations, and minimize researcher subjectivity in drawing conclusions.

Result (نتائج)

The research results on strengthening the character of tolerance through the integration of differentiated learning approaches in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) at SMP Al-Lathifi Gondanglegi indicate that the formation of students' tolerance character occurs through several interconnected processes. Based on interviews, observations, and documentation studies, three main efforts were identified in shaping students' tolerance character, namely the internalization of tolerance values in learning, habituation in applying tolerance character, and teacher exemplification. These three efforts not only take place in PAI learning activities in the classroom but are also reinforced through various student activities and interactions in the school and pesantren environment. The overall results of the research obtained by the researcher are as presented in the following table:

Table 1. Research Findings

No.	Research Results	Form of Implementation
1	Internalization of Tolerance Values in Learning	Values of tolerance are internalized in the differentiated learning process, particularly during the implementation of content, process, and product differentiation.
2	The habituation of implementing a character of tolerance	At Al-Lathifi Gondanglegi Junior High School, it is applied during classroom learning interactions and through the habituation program for religious and daily development in the boarding school.
3	The Exemplary Conduct of Teachers	The exemplary conduct of teachers includes the speech and actions or behavior of teachers that reflect

	prioritizing character, mutual respect, acceptance of differing opinions, and so on.

Internalization of Tolerance Values in Learning

The research results indicate that values of tolerance are internalized through the Islamic Education (PAI) learning process by applying a differentiated learning approach. Teachers provide opportunities for students to learn according to their characteristics and learning needs through variations in materials, processes, activities, and forms of learning outcomes. In the learning process, students are guided to understand the material while developing an attitude of respecting differences in abilities, opinions, and characteristics of their peers. Discussion and group work activities are among the forms of activities used to build interaction among students. Learning groups that involve students with different abilities and characteristics provide opportunities for them to help each other, express opinions, listen to others' views, and complete tasks collaboratively.

Based on the results of observation, learning interactions indicate the involvement of students with varying abilities in group activities. Students have the opportunity to express opinions and participate in completing tasks together. This condition demonstrates that the implementation of differentiated learning is not only aimed at fulfilling academic needs but also provides space for fostering attitudes of appreciating differences and accepting diversity among students. Similarly, as stated in an interview with the Islamic religion teacher at SMP Al-Lathifi Gondanglegi, who mentioned, "In learning, I try to group students with different abilities so that they can help each other. Thus, students who better understand the material can assist their classmates who are still experiencing difficulties." (PAI Teacher Interview, June 2026).

The internalization of the value of tolerance is not only carried out through Islamic Education learning in the classroom but is also reinforced through habituation programs that take place in the school and pesantren environment. Based on interview and observation results, these habituation activities provide students with opportunities to apply the value of tolerance in daily life. Students are accustomed to appreciating differences, maintaining relationships with peers, helping one another, and respecting school members and the pesantren environment. This is also in accordance with the results of an interview with the Islamic religion teacher at Al-Lathifi Middle School Gondanglegi, who stated that "students are not only directed to understand Islamic Religious Education materials, but are also accustomed to respecting opinions, listening to others' views, and accepting differences in abilities among group members." (Interview with PAI Teacher, June 2026). Thus, the value of tolerance conveyed in learning does not stop at conceptual understanding but is directed to be applied in various student activities and interactions.

The habituation of implementing a character of tolerance

The results of subsequent research indicate that the formation of a tolerant character is carried out through habituation that occurs continuously in both learning activities and social interactions among students. In Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning, students are accustomed to cooperating with peers who have different abilities and characteristics, respecting opinions during discussions, giving peers the opportunity to express ideas, and assisting friends who experience difficulties in learning. This habituation is evident in group activities and interactions among students during the learning process. Teachers not only provide instructions regarding the importance of tolerance but also create learning situations that allow students to experience and practice this attitude directly.

Findings from interviews with students can also be used to strengthen the depiction of these habits, particularly regarding their experiences when collaborating with peers who have different

abilities and opinions. In this regard, one student, acting as an informant, also stated that "our Islamic religion teacher always motivates us to be tolerant, whether in social interactions with classmates during lessons, within the school environment, or outside the school environment." (Student Interview 1, June 2026).

Character habituation of tolerance also takes place outside of learning activities through student interactions in the school and pesantren environment. Students interact with friends who have diverse backgrounds, abilities, and characteristics in various daily activities. This condition becomes a space for students to practice mutual respect, cooperation, helping one another, and accepting differences. Based on observation and interview results, continuous habituation helps make tolerant behavior a part of students' habits, both when participating in learning activities and when interacting in school and pesantren life.

Based on the results of the learning observation, students were engaged in discussion and group work activities that allowed interaction among students with diverse academic abilities. In this process, students were given the opportunity to express their opinions and participate in completing tasks together. The interaction also demonstrated behaviors of mutual assistance when some students experienced difficulties in understanding the material. Moreover, the discussion activities provided a space for students to learn to listen to their peers' opinions and to avoid dominating the conversation.

The Exemplary Conduct of Teachers

The third strategy in strengthening the character of tolerance is carried out through the demonstration of exemplary behavior by teachers during the Islamic Religious Education learning process. Teachers not only convey the values of tolerance through learning materials but also demonstrate them through their attitudes and behavior when interacting with students. This exemplification is reflected in providing fair treatment, respecting differences in abilities, and giving all students the opportunity to participate in the learning process.

Research results also indicate that the exemplary behavior of teachers is one of the important elements in strengthening students' character of tolerance. Islamic Education teachers provide examples through words and actions that reflect an attitude of appreciating differences, respecting students, treating them fairly, and using polite language in interactions. In the learning process, teachers give students the opportunity to express their opinions without distinguishing their abilities or characteristics. This attitude serves as a direct example for students on how to respect others in the process of interaction and learning.

Based on the results of the observation, the teacher's exemplary conduct is evident through the learning interactions that provide students with the opportunity to ask questions, express opinions, and engage in classroom activities. The teacher also pays attention to the differences in students' abilities in providing guidance and responses to the learning process. This attitude demonstrates that the teacher strives to create a learning environment that does not discriminate against students based on their academic abilities.

The exemplary behavior of teachers is also demonstrated through the way they respond to differences and problems that arise in student interactions. Teachers strive to provide guidance in an educational manner and avoid actions that could cause feelings of discrimination among students. Through consistent speech, attitude, and actions, teachers serve as behavioral models that can be observed and emulated by students. Thus, the exemplary behavior of teachers becomes an integral part that complements the process of internalizing and habituating the values of tolerance, which has been carried out through Islamic Education (PAI) learning, as well as in school and pesantren life.

The results of interviews with Islamic Education (PAI) teachers and students can reinforce

findings regarding exemplary practices. The teachers' statements provide an illustration of the principles of fair treatment and appreciation for differences applied in learning, as evidenced in an interview with an Islamic religion teacher who said, "Teachers are key figures who are predominantly imitated by students, so we as Islamic religion teachers always provide examples of tolerance, such as being fair when delivering lessons with students, and showing mutual respect and appreciation for students who are different." (Interview with Islamic religion teacher, June 26, 2026). Meanwhile, students' statements show how the teachers' attitudes are experienced in their learning, as conveyed by one student who said, "Our teacher always strives to be fair in facilitating our learning, and also consistently models virtues and an attitude of mutual respect." (Student interview, June 1, 2026).

Overall, the research findings indicate that the strengthening of students' tolerance character at SMP Al-Lathifi Gondanglegi is carried out through an integrated process involving the internalization of values in differentiated Islamic Education (PAI) learning, habituation of tolerant behavior, and teacher exemplification. These three aspects complement each other through classroom learning and students' life within the school and pesantren environment. Differentiated learning provides space for students to interact in diversity, habituation offers opportunities to practice tolerance values repeatedly, while teacher exemplification provides concrete examples of applying tolerance values in daily life.

Discussion (مناقشة)

Research findings indicate that the strengthening of the character of tolerance through Islamic education (PAI) at SMP Al-Lathifi Gondanglegi does not occur through a single standalone strategy, but through the integration of learning processes, habituation, and teacher role modeling. A differentiated learning approach becomes one of the pedagogical contexts that provides students with the space to learn according to the diversity of their abilities, characteristics, and learning needs (Rachmadhani & Kamalia, 2023). In this context, tolerance is not only positioned as material that students need to understand but is developed through learning experiences and social interactions that they undergo during both the learning process and life at school and in the boarding school (Wastuti & Ramadhani, 2022). These findings indicate that character formation will be more meaningful when the values being taught have the space to be practiced directly in the educational environment.

The first findings indicate that the internalization of values of tolerance is carried out through Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning that implements a differentiated approach. The implementation of differentiation provides opportunities for students with different characteristics and abilities to engage in the learning process through activities, learning resources, and types of assignments tailored to their needs (E. Sari et al., 2024). This condition is relevant to the basic principles of differentiated learning, which regard student diversity as an important part of planning and implementing learning. When differences in students' abilities and characteristics are not seen as obstacles, but as part of the learning conditions, students gain experiences that help them understand that each individual has uniqueness that needs to be respected (Rachmadhani & Kamalia, 2023). Thus, learning differentiation not only has an instructional function, but also opens up space for the development of an attitude that appreciates diversity.

The internalization of tolerance is also reinforced through learning activities that allow students to interact with peers of different abilities and characteristics. Discussions and group work, for example, provide students with experiences in listening to others' opinions, expressing ideas politely, helping each other, and completing tasks together (Wastuti & Ramadhani, 2022). These experiences make the value of tolerance more contextual because students not only receive

explanations from teachers about the importance of respecting differences but also directly experience the process of working and learning together in diversity (Hariandi et al., 2019). From the perspective of Islamic education, this condition aligns with the objectives of Islamic Education (PAI), which do not stop at the mastery of religious knowledge, but also guide students so that religious values are reflected in social behavior. Thus, differentiated PAI learning can become a space for the internalization of tolerance values through real learning experiences (Mustafida, 2020).

The second finding demonstrates that the character of tolerance is strengthened through habituation that is carried out continuously in students' learning and social interactions. Habituation becomes important because character is not formed solely through the delivery of concepts or knowledge about certain values, but requires a process of repetition and experience in daily life. Continuously practicing attitudes such as respecting others' opinions, helping friends, cooperating, and accepting differences allows the value of tolerance to develop into behavioral patterns (Mustafida, 2020). In this context, differentiated learning provides situations that allow students to interact with diversity repeatedly, while schools and pesantrens offer a broader space to apply these values beyond formal learning (Maruni, 2024).

The habituation of tolerance in school and pesantren environments also indicates that character building requires the support of the educational ecosystem (Maruni, 2024). Students not only gain experiences of tolerance through participating in Islamic Religious Education learning, but also through social interactions in daily life. This reinforces the view that character education will be more effective when there is continuity between the values taught in the classroom and the culture that develops in the educational environment (Mainuddin et al., 2023). In the context of SMP Al-Lathifi Gondanglegi, the school and pesantren environment becomes a social space that allows students to directly encounter differences. Therefore, the habituation of tolerance can be understood as a strengthening process that bridges the knowledge of values, social experiences, and the actual behavior of students (D. D. Sari, 2023).

The third finding indicates that teacher exemplification plays an important role in the process of strengthening the character of tolerance. Teachers not only function as conveyors of Islamic Education (PAI) material, but also as figures whose behavior is observed by students. Teachers' attitudes in using polite language, respecting opinions, giving fair treatment, and responding positively to differences provide concrete examples of the application of tolerance values (Mustafida, 2020). Exemplification becomes important because students can learn values not only through what the teacher says, but also through what the teacher does in daily interactions. Thus, consistency between the material delivered and the teacher's behavior becomes an essential part of character education (Hosaini et al., 2024).

The exemplary behavior of teachers also reinforces the two previous strategies, namely internalization and habituation. The value of tolerance introduced through learning will be more easily understood when students see concrete examples, while habituation will be more effective when supported by an environment that provides the same behavioral model (Mustafida, 2020). In this context, Islamic Education teachers act as role models who demonstrate how differences can be addressed through mutual respect and treating students fairly. These three components form a mutually supportive sequence (Assegaf et al., 2025). Learning provides an understanding of values, habituation provides the experience of application, and exemplification provides a concrete example. The integration of the three becomes one of the factors that strengthens the process of character formation of student tolerance (Assegaf et al., 2022).

This study seeks to contribute by expanding the understanding of differentiated instruction in Islamic Religious Education (PAI). Differentiated instruction has so far been widely understood within the framework of meeting learning needs and achieving student

competencies. The findings of this study indicate that the principles of differentiation can also be positioned within the perspective of character education, particularly tolerance. When student diversity is accommodated through flexible and inclusive learning, the process can simultaneously serve as a pedagogical experience for fostering an attitude of respecting differences (Nurdin et al., 2024). Thus, this article offers the understanding that differentiated instruction has the potential not only as a pedagogical strategy to respond to academic diversity but also as an approach that supports the development of students' social character in Islamic Religious Education.

However, this study has limitations because it was conducted in a single school context, namely SMP Al-Lathifi Gondanglegi, so the research findings need to be understood in accordance with the characteristics of the school and pesantren environment that served as the research context. In addition, the study focused on the process of strengthening the character of tolerance through PAI learning and has not measured the development of students' character longitudinally. Future research can expand the study to schools with different characteristics, involve more subjects, or use a longitudinal approach to observe the sustainability of changes in students' character. Subsequent studies can also explore the relationship between each form of differentiation in learning content, process, and product with indicators of tolerance character more specifically, so that a deeper understanding can be obtained regarding the most effective pedagogical mechanisms in strengthening the character of tolerance through Islamic Religious Education learning.

Conclusion (خاتمة)

The research results show that strengthening a character of tolerance through integrating a differentiated learning approach in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) at SMP Al-Lathifi Gondanglegi takes place through three interconnected efforts: internalizing tolerance values in learning, habituating the application of tolerance character, and teacher role modeling. Internalization happens through the PAI learning process, which gives students space to learn and interact in a diversity of abilities and characteristics. Tolerance values are then reinforced through habituation in learning activities and interactions within school or boarding school life. Meanwhile, teachers act as role models through words, attitudes, and actions that reflect appreciation for differences, mutual respect, and fair treatment. The findings show that strengthening the character of tolerance doesn't happen in part, but through an integration of learning experiences, habits, and role models in the educational environment.

Academically, this study contributes to the development of Islamic Education research by showing that differentiated learning is not only relevant for accommodating diverse learning needs and supporting students' competency achievements but also has potential as a pedagogical approach in strengthening tolerance character. Integrating differentiated learning with character education demonstrates that student diversity can be used as a source of learning experiences to build attitudes of appreciating differences, cooperating, helping each other, and respecting others. Practically, this finding can be a consideration for PAI teachers and educational institutions in designing learning that is not only focused on academic achievements but also creates an inclusive learning experience and supports the development of students' character.

This study has limitations because it was conducted at just one school with an Islamic boarding school-based education context and within a limited research timeframe, so the findings cannot yet be generalized to all educational contexts. The study also focused more on the process of strengthening tolerance character and did not measure the longitudinal development of students' character. Therefore, future research is suggested to involve several schools with different characteristics, use a longer observation period, and examine more specifically the

relationship between types of content, process, and product differentiation with the development of students' tolerance character indicators. Further studies can also combine qualitative and quantitative approaches to get a more comprehensive picture of the effectiveness of differentiated learning in strengthening tolerance character in Islamic education learning.

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