

Developing Differentiated Content of Islamic Cultural History Based on Divergent Thinking: A Define-Stage of Khalifa Abu Bakr as-Siddiq at SDN 02 Pariangan

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Keywords:

differentiated content, islamic cultural history, divergent thinking

Abstract

This research aims to analyze the necessity of developing differentiated Islamic Cultural History (SKI) content during the define stage to stimulate the divergent thinking skills of elementary school students. The primary problem driving this study is the prevalence of rigid rote-learning patterns that stifle students' creativity and original ideation when attempting to understand historical dynamics. Specifically, initial diagnostic assessments at SDN 02 Pariangan revealed low performance in fluency, flexibility, originality, and elaboration indicators, as students struggled to engage with the complex leadership and strategic policies of Khalifa Abu Bakr as-Siddiq. This study utilizes a Research and Development (R&D) approach, adopting the 4D development model which encompasses the define, design, develop, and disseminate phases. The methodology is specifically focused on the Define stage, incorporating front-end analysis, learner analysis, task analysis, concept analysis, and the specification of learning objectives for eighteen sixth-grade students at SDN 02 Pariangan. Findings indicate that efforts to enhance divergent thinking are realized by integrating problematic historical narratives as a cognitive stimulus to trigger diverse, open-ended, and non-linear exploration of ideas. The form of content differentiation is implemented by presenting the biography and policies of Abu Bakr through various modalities visual, auditory, and kinesthetic while adjusting difficulty levels to align with each student's unique learning profile. The urgency of this research underscores the necessity of an inclusive and responsive Merdeka Curriculum to equip the younger generation with analytical sharpness and intellectual courage to navigate complex global challenges.

Kata Kunci:

diferensiasi konten, sejarah kebudayaan islam, berfikir divergent

Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis kebutuhan pengembangan konten Sejarah Kebudayaan Islam (SKI) yang terdiferensiasi pada tahap pendefinisian guna menstimulasi kemampuan berpikir divergen siswa di tingkat sekolah dasar. Permasalahan utama yang melatarbelakangi kajian ini adalah masih dominannya pola pembelajaran konvensional yang bersifat hafalan kaku sehingga menghambat berkembangnya kreativitas dan orisinalitas ide peserta didik dalam memahami dinamika sejarah. Secara spesifik, hasil asesmen awal di SDN 02 Pariangan menunjukkan rendahnya indikator kelancaran, keluwesan, keaslian, dan elaborasi siswa dalam menyikapi kompleksitas kepemimpinan serta kebijakan strategis Khalifah Abu Bakar as-Siddiq. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan Research and Development (R&D) dengan

mengadopsi model pengembangan 4D yang meliputi tahap define, design, develop, dan disseminate. Metodologi secara spesifik difokuskan pada tahap Define yang mencakup analisis ujung depan, analisis peserta didik, analisis tugas, analisis konsep, serta spesifikasi tujuan pembelajaran bagi 18 siswa kelas 6 di SDN 02 Pariangan. Temuan penelitian mengungkapkan bahwa upaya peningkatan kemampuan berpikir divergen dapat dicapai melalui integrasi konten sejarah yang problematik sebagai stimulus untuk memicu eksplorasi ide yang beragam, terbuka, dan non-linear. Bentuk diferensiasi konten diimplementasikan melalui penyajian materi biografi dan kebijakan Abu Bakar dalam berbagai moda—visual, auditori, dan kinestetik—serta tingkat kesulitan yang disesuaikan dengan profil belajar unik setiap individu. Urgensi penelitian ini menegaskan pentingnya implementasi Kurikulum Merdeka yang lebih inklusif dan responsif dalam menyiapkan generasi muda yang memiliki ketajaman analisis serta keberanian intelektual menghadapi kompleksitas tantangan global.

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INTRODUCTION

The current state of Indonesian education reflects a critical need to transition from rigid rote learning to the cultivation of divergent thinking within religious-social contexts. According to Salsalova and Djono (2025), a flexible curriculum is essential to accommodate the diverse interests and backgrounds of students, especially in historical subjects (Aziz & Zakir, 2022). In many rural areas, students often perceive Islamic Cultural History (SKI) as a static set of facts rather than a dynamic field for creative inquiry. This lack of engagement suggests that the current educational environment fails to stimulate the cognitive "fluency" and "originality" required for modern problem-solving. While some traditionalists argue for a standardized narrative (Salsalova & Maret, n.d.), contemporary pedagogy suggests that honoring individual student profiles is the only way to achieve inclusive and effective learning (Irmansyah, 2025). Consequently, the integration of divergent thinking becomes a pivotal strategy for revitalizing SKI instruction in the 21st century.

Literature on educational innovation consistently highlights the synergy between divergent thinking and content differentiation as a catalyst for student motivation. Tomlinson (2001) defines differentiated instruction as an approach that prioritizes student readiness, interest, and learning profiles to ensure equitable access to knowledge (Salsalova & Maret, n.d.). Research across Indonesian primary schools reveals that a one-size-fits-all approach often marginalizes students with non-linear cognitive styles, leading to poor learning outcomes in history (Karimaliana et al., 2023). For instance, when historical figures are taught only through lectures, students lose the opportunity to explore alternative solutions to the social conflicts faced by early Muslim leaders (Naibaho, 2023). This phenomenon confirms that without varied content, the inherent creativity of young learners remains untapped and undeveloped. Despite concerns regarding classroom management,

studies show that differentiation effectively eliminates the negative stigma associated with "boring" history lessons (Fauzia & Hadikusuma Ramadan, 2023). Therefore, the literature underscores that content differentiation is not merely an option but a requirement for fostering higher-order thinking.

The specific objective of this study is to address the low creative engagement in SKI by analyzing diagnostic results from students at SDN 02 Pariangan. Effective instructional design begins with identifying the unique gap between current student capabilities and the desired learning competencies (Azis, 2023). At SDN 02 Pariangan, an initial diagnostic assessment of 18 sixth-grade students uncovered a significant disparity in cognitive readiness and a lack of interactive learning media. This local data serves as a critical baseline, indicating that instructional materials must be adapted to the specific socio-cultural context of the Pariangan community (Ii et al., 2024). While standard curricula emphasize content coverage, the Independent Curriculum (Kurikulum Merdeka) encourages teachers to prioritize deeper understanding through contextual exploration (Zuhriah et al., 2023). In conclusion, these diagnostic findings provide a clear mandate for developing differentiated content that resonates with the specific needs of rural students.

Our central hypothesis posits that differentiated SKI content significantly enhances student originality and flexibility in analyzing historical events. Slavin (2020) suggests that constructivist learning is most effective when students are challenged to solve real-world problems that reflect their own cognitive levels (Elizabeth & Irawan, 2024). At SDN 02 Pariangan, we argue that providing multiple entry points into the biography of Abu Bakr will trigger a broader range of student responses. This strategic intervention is expected to transform students from passive recipients of information into active investigators of historical dilemmas (Hariono et al., 2021). Although some argue that religious history should be taught convergently, research indicates that open-ended inquiry strengthens both faith and critical reasoning (Susmiyati et al., 2023). Ultimately, this research aims to prove that differentiation is the primary driver of divergent thinking in the elementary school setting.

A notable research gap exists in the inconsistent definition of divergent thinking within the framework of Indonesian religious education. Munandar (2009) describes divergent thinking as the ability to generate a wide variety of possible solutions to a given problem through non-linear processes (Roqib & As Sabiq, 2022). In practice, however, many educators still equate creativity with artistic skill, ignoring its vital role in historical interpretation and ethical decision-making. For example, students are rarely asked "what if" questions that would require them to simulate the strategic risks taken by the early caliphate. While Guilford (1956) emphasizes the spontaneous and flow-like nature of divergent production, religious instruction often imposes rigid boundaries that stifle this flow (Abdurrochim et al., 2024). Thus, refining the definition of divergent thinking is crucial for ensuring that creativity remains grounded in historical accuracy.

Furthermore, the lack of clear categorization for divergent thinking behaviors in SKI prevents teachers from measuring student progress effectively. Creativity is generally categorized into four indicators: fluency, flexibility, originality, and elaboration (Noviati, 2022). At SDN 02 Pariangan, student performance often peaks in "fluency" (recalling facts) but falters in "originality" (generating unique insights), indicating a shallow understanding of historical complexity. This categorical imbalance suggests that instructional tasks must be specifically designed to target underdeveloped cognitive domains (Nur & Jassin, 2022).

While Torrance suggests that these indicators are universal, their application in a religious context requires a delicate balance between inquiry and tradition (Irmansyah, 2025). Consequently, establishing a robust categorical framework is essential for the systematic assessment of student creativity.

The definition of content differentiation also faces a research gap, often being misunderstood as simply reducing the amount of work for struggling students. Tomlinson (2001) clarifies that differentiation involves adjusting the complexity and format of materials while maintaining high standards for all (Saputra et al., 2024). In many Indonesian schools, "differentiation" is mistakenly practiced by giving easier tasks to lower-performing students, which inadvertently limits their intellectual growth (Zuhriah et al., 2023). For instance, a student might be given a simple coloring task instead of being challenged to analyze the caliph's economic policies through a visual medium (Li et al., 2024). While critics fear that differentiation creates a chaotic classroom, it actually allows for a more focused and personal learning experience (Karimaliana et al., 2023). Therefore, a precise definition of content differentiation is vital to ensure it serves as an engine for excellence rather than a compromise.

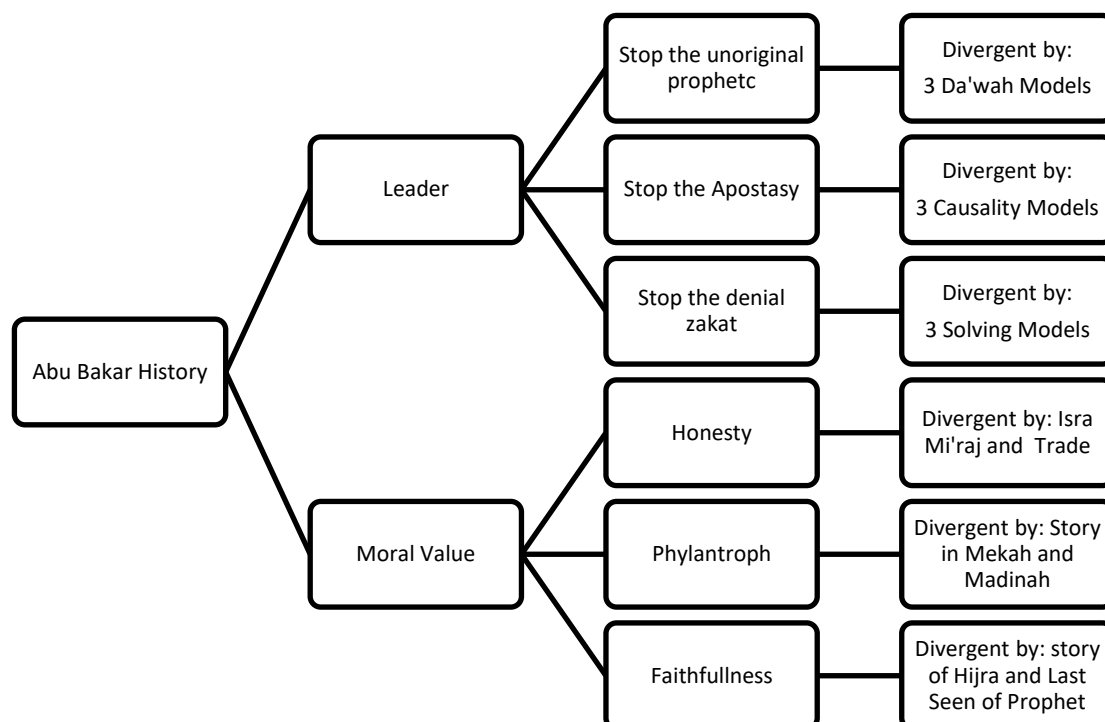
Finally, the categorization of content differentiation must be refined to include student readiness, interest, and learning profiles as distinct operational pillars. Jayanti et al. (2023) propose that content can be differentiated across the entire curriculum or focused on high-priority essential materials (Salsalova & Maret, n.d.). At SDN 02 Pariangan, this means categorizing the life of Abu Bakr into visual, auditory, and kinesthetic modules to match the 18 students' varied styles. This categorical approach ensures that every student interacts with the same "essential core" through the most effective sensory channel. While some advocate for a purely interest-based approach, the dynamic systems theory suggests that variability in both process and content is key to cognitive development. In conclusion, these categories provide the structural blueprint for a truly responsive and humanized SKI curriculum. This study aims to develop material of Islamic History Learning element at SDN 02 Pariangan based on students characters to improve their divergent thinking ability.

METHODS

This section This research utilizes the Research and Development (R&D) method following the 4D model (Define, Design, Develop, Disseminate), specifically focusing on the "Define" stage. According to Zamsiswaya et al. (2024), the define stage is a systematic process involving front-end analysis, learner analysis, task analysis, concept analysis, and the specification of instructional objectives (Judijanto et al., 2024). The study was conducted at SDN 02 Pariangan, Tanah Datar, involving 18 sixth-grade students as the primary research subjects. Data collection techniques included diagnostic testing, classroom observations, and semi-structured interviews with teachers and students to identify instructional gaps. While some researchers advocate for rapid prototyping, the 4D model's rigorous definition phase ensures that the final product is both valid and practically applicable (Serevina & Khaerunisa, 2021). Methodologically, this stage serves as the analytical anchor, ensuring that the developed SKI content is perfectly aligned with the target learners' needs. Defining this material by use three steps. Firstly, analyze of CP at C Fase based on government instruction to improve TP, KKTP and essential material. Secondly, analyze essential material and make it into developing material. Lastly, creating

divergent of sub material. These steap are following diagram below:

Diagram 1. Step to Define Abu Bakar Story at SKI



RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Define of Curriculum Aspect (Didactice of Merdeka Kurikulum)

Alignment of Learning Objectives (TP) and Kriteria Ketercapaian Tujuan Pembelajaran (KKTP) for the biography of Abu Bakr within the Independent Curriculum. The curriculum mandates that students analyze the exemplary life of the Khulafaurasyidin to inspire democratic and optimistic leadership in the digital era(Salsalova & Maret, n.d.). At SDN 02 Pariangan, this essential material was broken down into manageable units that emphasize critical analysis over mere memorization of dates. The results indicate that identifying these "essential cores" allows teachers to focus differentiation efforts on the most impactful historical concepts. While traditional assessment focuses on factual recall, the new KKTP encourages students to derive "ibrah" or moral lessons applicable to modern social phenomena. In summary, this analysis establishes the mandatory standards that any differentiated content must achieve.

Involves the development of differentiated content focusing on the appointment of Abu Bakr as the first Caliph at Saqifah Bani Sa'idah. Historical accounts emphasize that this event was a pinnacle of democratic deliberation, involving intense debate between the Ansar and Muhajirin groups. To differentiate this content, the research team created tiered reading materials: narrative scripts for auditory learners and logical flowcharts for visual-analytical learners. This variety allowed students to understand the "why" behind the consensus reached, rather than just the "who" and "where." While some texts simplify this transition, a differentiated approach reveals the sophisticated political wisdom and humility inherent in Abu Bakr's leadership. Consequently, this finding demonstrates how differentiated content can clarify complex historical transitions for young students.

The potential development of *abu bakar* (combustion ash) as learning material

within the Merdeka Curriculum is strong when viewed through a divergent thinking approach. This material encourages students to generate multiple ideas, interpretations, and solutions by analyzing *abu bakar* from scientific, environmental, and social perspectives. Learners can investigate its chemical composition, environmental risks, and reuse possibilities, allowing one concept to branch into many learning pathways. Such openness supports the Merdeka Curriculum's emphasis on freedom of thought and exploration beyond single correct answers. By engaging with real and locally relevant materials, students are trained to think flexibly, critically, and creatively in responding to authentic problems. This process not only deepens conceptual understanding but also nurtures innovation-oriented mindsets. Consequently, *abu bakar* becomes more than content knowledge; it functions as a stimulus for higher-order thinking skills.

From the perspective of content differentiation, *abu bakar* provides opportunities to design learning materials that match students' readiness, interests, and learning profiles. Teachers can present differentiated content through varied complexity levels, such as basic identification of ash types for beginners and applied analysis for advanced learners. Students may choose learning tasks based on their interests, including experiments, environmental impact studies, or product design using recycled ash. This flexibility reflects the Merdeka Curriculum's principle of learner autonomy and personalized learning experiences. Differentiated content also supports inclusivity by allowing all students to engage meaningfully without being limited by uniform materials. Through this approach, learning becomes more equitable, relevant, and engaging. Ultimately, the integration of *abu bakar* through divergent thinking and content differentiation strengthens the curriculum's goal of developing independent, reflective, and adaptive learners.

1. Define of Essential Material of SKI

Thirdly, the results define the essential materials regarding Abu Bakr's struggle against false prophets, apostates, and those who refused to pay zakat (War of Riddah). Abu Bakr's firm stance was not merely military but a preservation of the community's socio-economic and spiritual integrity. The research developed case-study modules that allow students to explore the ethical dilemmas faced by the Caliphate when the unity of the state was threatened. By differentiating the complexity of these cases, students with high readiness could analyze the strategic implications of Khalid bin Walid's campaigns, while others focused on the social justice of zakat. Although some viewed his actions as harsh, historical analysis proves his decisions were vital for the survival of the early Muslim community. In conclusion, differentiating the "Struggle" material enables students to engage with history as a series of critical, high-stakes decisions.

The fourth finding focuses on the differentiated exemplary character (Keteladanan) of Abu Bakr, emphasizing his honesty, selflessness, and courage. Abu Bakr was famously given the title "As-Siddiq" (the Truthful) for his immediate and unwavering belief in the Prophet's Night Journey. The developed content differentiates this trait by providing students with modern analogies, such as the importance of verifying news (fact-checking) in the age of digital hoaxes. Students were encouraged to elaborate on these traits through creative projects, such as poster making or digital storytelling, tailored to their individual talents. While character building is often taught through moralizing, a differentiated approach allows students to internalize these values through personal creative expression. Ultimately, this result provides a humanized model of leadership that students can authentically admire and emulate.

Leadership of Abu Bakar

In the define stage of developing a differentiated-content teaching module, the struggle of Abu Bakr can be positioned as a rich foundation for divergent thinking through three da'wah patterns. His approach reflects persuasion, firmness, and moral example as distinct but interconnected strategies. Content differentiation allows students to explore each da'wah pattern through historical narratives, ethical analysis, or contemporary parallels. Learners are encouraged to compare how different preaching approaches respond to different social conditions. This openness helps students recognize that leadership struggle is not based on a single method but on adaptive and creative responses. The issue of people's reluctance to pay zakat provides another strong opportunity for divergent thinking through three problem-solving models. Students can analyze the problem from legal, social, and economic perspectives as differentiated content pathways. One solution highlights enforcement of religious obligation, another emphasizes social justice and solidarity, while the third focuses on restoring collective trust. By engaging with these alternatives, learners generate multiple interpretations of the same conflict. This differentiation supports deeper reasoning rather than memorization of historical facts. A similar divergent structure can be defined in discussing apostasy through three causal explanations. Students may explore apostasy as a result of weak faith, political instability, or economic pressure. Differentiated content enables learners to focus on one causality or synthesize all three into a broader understanding. This approach trains students to see historical events as complex and multi-layered. It also nurtures analytical flexibility by validating different lines of reasoning. Honesty as embodied by Abu Bakr can be developed through divergent content differentiation at the define stage. Students may examine honesty as personal integrity, leadership credibility, or social trust. Each perspective offers a different entry point into the same moral value. Learners are encouraged to relate honesty to modern ethical dilemmas in varied contexts. This divergence deepens moral understanding while respecting individual learning preferences.

Value of Abu Bakar

The generosity of Abu Bakr also supports divergent thinking when framed through differentiated content. His philanthropy can be explored as spiritual devotion, social responsibility, or economic empowerment. Students may analyze stories, data, or reflective scenarios based on their interests. Such differentiation allows generosity to be understood beyond charity alone. It becomes a multidimensional value with broad social implications. Loyalty to Prophet Muhammad provides a final divergent framework within content differentiation. Students can interpret Abu Bakr's faithfulness as emotional commitment, ideological consistency, or historical continuity. Each interpretation leads to different discussions and reflective outcomes. Differentiated content helps learners connect loyalty to leadership, identity, and moral courage. Through this define-stage design, the module meaningfully enhances divergent thinking across cognitive and ethical domains.

Discussion

The discussion of differentiated content for Abu Bakr's appointment confirms that personalized learning pathways significantly boost student engagement in historical inquiry. Previous research by Lisnawati et al. (2023) indicates that students who feel a personal connection to the material show higher intrinsic motivation and academic persistence (Iskandar et al., 2024). At SDN 02 Pariangan, providing students with choices in

how they explored the Saqifah deliberation reduced the cognitive barrier often found in complex political narratives. This suggests that when students are treated as active subjects rather than passive vessels, their capacity for critical thought increases. While some scholars worry that differentiation might dilute historical facts, our findings suggest it actually deepens the students' conceptual grasp (Hady et al., 2025). In conclusion, the discussion reinforces the effectiveness of differentiation in making history accessible and engaging.

Regarding the struggles of Abu Bakr, the discussion highlights that problem-based differentiation fosters the "originality" indicator of divergent thinking. Sahada and Febriani (2025) demonstrate that confronting students with real-world problems encourages them to propose unique solutions beyond conventional textbook answers (Shafiah & Mukhlis, 2012). By presenting the "Riddah crisis" as a strategic puzzle, students at SDN 02 Pariangan developed creative ways to visualize peace-building and community resilience. This approach shifts the focus from "what happened" to "how could we solve this," which is the essence of divergent production. While traditional SKI pedagogy avoids discussing conflict, a differentiated inquiry model prepares students to navigate modern social complexities with wisdom (Mahmudi, 2019). Therefore, the discussion validates the use of historical struggles as a primary stimulus for student innovation.

The discussion of Abu Bakr's exemplary character vs. previous research underscores that humanized history is the most effective vehicle for moral education. Sejarah Kebudayaan Islam plays a vital role in strengthening the "spiritual-ethical" dimension of students by providing concrete models of integrity (Asrori et al., 2025). In the Pariangan context, students' ability to relate Abu Bakr's honesty to their local values of "Musyawarah" proves that historical traits are most impactful when contextualized. This alignment between religious history and local culture facilitates a more "human" and less "robotic" understanding of faith. Although some fear that a creative approach might lead to historical revisionism (Nasution, 2017), evidence shows it actually increases respect for the foundational values of the faith. As a result, the discussion positions character differentiation as the core of a transformative religious curriculum.

The impact of differentiation on divergent thinking suggests a fundamental shift in the cognitive profile of students at SDN 02 Pariangan. Divergent thinking allows individuals to see multiple perspectives and find unexpected connections, a skill that Silver (1997) identifies as a key component of creativity (Irmansyah, 2025). Our observations indicate that differentiated content acted as a "mental springboard," allowing students to move from simple recall to complex synthesis and evaluation (Baharuddin, 2021). This transformation is particularly evident when students are given the freedom to choose their own media for expressing historical insights. While some educational systems prioritize convergent "correct" answers, the modern era demands the cognitive flexibility fostered by this research (Zaiyar & Rusmar, 2020). In conclusion, the discussion confirms that differentiation is the structural prerequisite for developing 21st-century creative skills in religious subjects.

Reflecting on the research, it is clear that the "Define" stage is the most critical phase for ensuring the success of any R&D project in a rural setting. Teachers must continuously adapt to student development data obtained through ongoing assessments to maintain instructional relevance (Irmansyah, 2025). At SDN 02 Pariangan, the reflection process revealed that students' low initial creativity was not a lack of potential, but a lack

of opportunity within the traditional curriculum. This realization underscores the researcher's responsibility to act as a designer of "experiences" rather than just "materials." While the transition to differentiated instruction requires significant effort, the long-term benefit for student independence is undeniable (Orchard et al., 2025). Ultimately, this reflection serves as a reminder that the goal of education is to "menuntun" or guide students toward their own natural greatness.

To ensure optimal results, strategic actions must include professional development for teachers in differentiated classroom management and digital literacy. The digital leadership of school principals is a significant predictor of how effectively teachers integrate technology and innovation into their classrooms (Davenport & Pagnini, 2016). At SDN 02 Pariangan, a collaborative ecosystem involving the school, parents, and the local community is needed to sustain the differentiated model. This proactive stance ensures that the developed content does not remain a static document but becomes a living part of the school's academic culture. While some may view these changes as purely administrative (Fakhrudin et al., 2025), they are in fact the essential "press" or environment that supports the creative process. In summary, these recommended actions provide the roadmap for scaling the define-stage results into a sustainable instructional reality.

CONCLUSION

The introduction's conclusion reiterates that the Indonesian educational landscape must evolve to meet the socio-cognitive demands of the Society 5.0 era. Social and literature facts confirm that the current rote-learning paradigm in religious subjects is a major barrier to the development of divergent thinking. This research at SDN 02 Pariangan proves that content differentiation is the most viable solution for creating a more inclusive and humanized SKI curriculum. By defining the problem through a local lens, we have established a clear justification for moving beyond standardized, linear instruction. While the road to reform is complex, the pursuit of "Merdeka Belajar" or liberated learning remains the ultimate goal. In conclusion, the introduction has successfully set the stage for a research endeavor that is both theoretically sound and socially urgent.

The conclusion of the research results confirms that the define stage has successfully produced a valid blueprint for a differentiated SKI module based on Abu Bakr's life. The analysis of CP, TP, and student profiles at SDN 02 Pariangan ensures that every instructional objective is matched with a specific creative stimulus. By categorizing essential materials into tiered pathways, the research has provided a practical tool for teachers to bridge the pemahaman gap in their classrooms. These results serve as a robust foundation for the subsequent "Design" and "Develop" stages of the R&D process. As the world moves toward more personalized education, these findings offer a scalable model for other rural schools in Indonesia. Finally, the research concludes that a define-stage focus on divergent thinking is the key to unlocking a more vibrant, creative, and humanized future for Islamic education.

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