

THE APPLICATION OF THE VALUES OF SUNAN GUNUNG JATI'S TEACHING IN DIFFERENTIATED LEARNING TO ACHIEVE INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

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Abstract. The purpose of this article is to explore the application of the values taught by Sunan Gunung Jati in differentiated learning as an effort to realize inclusive education in Indonesia. Inclusive education emphasizes the importance of providing equal access to education for all students, including those with special needs. At the same time, differentiated learning is a pedagogical strategy designed to accommodate differences in learning styles, interests, and abilities of students. The values taught by Sunan Gunung Jati, such as respect for diversity, social concern, justice, and moral-based education, align with the principles of inclusive education and can serve as a strong philosophical foundation in learning practices. Using a descriptive qualitative approach, data were collected through interviews with teachers, students, and parents, as well as observations and documentation in several high schools in Cirebon that have implemented differentiated learning. The research findings indicate that the integration of the values of Sunan Gunung Jati in differentiated learning not only strengthens students' character but also creates a more inclusive and meaningful learning atmosphere. Despite facing challenges such as resource limitations, lack of teacher understanding, and rigid curriculum, support from the school community and teacher training have proven to be important factors in the successful implementation. This study recommends enhancing educators' understanding of local values and implementing differentiation strategies to strengthen fair and socially just education in Indonesia.

Keywords: Inclusive Education, Differentiated Learning, Diversity, Sunan Gunung Jati.

INTRODUCTION

Education is one of the main pillars in the development of a civilized and cultured society. In Indonesia, inclusive education is one of the important goals in the national education system, which aims to provide equal access to education for all students, regardless of their background, abilities, or special needs. The concept of inclusive education is in line with Law Number 20 of 2003 concerning the National Education System, which emphasizes the importance of education for all (Government of Indonesia, 2003).

In the context of inclusive education, differentiated learning is an effective strategy for responding to students' diverse needs. an approach allows teachers to design learning experiences that suit students' various learning styles, interests, and abilities (Tomlinson, 2001). Thus, each student can learn in the way that suits them best, thereby increasing motivation and learning outcomes. Research shows that differentiated instruction can increase student engagement and academic outcomes (Gentry & Owen, 2004).

Sunan Gunung Jati, as one of the figures who spread Islam in West Java, had teachings that were rich in wisdom, tolerance, and diversity. These teachings are very relevant in the context of inclusive education, where each individual is valued and empowered according to their potential and needs. The values taught by Sunan Gunung Jati, such as the importance of respecting differences, developing individual potential, and creating a supportive environment for all students, can serve as a strong foundation for creating an inclusive learning atmosphere (Mansur, 2016). The integration of Sunan Gunung Jati's values in differentiated learning will not only enrich students' learning experiences but also shape their character. In Sunan Gunung Jati's teachings, there is an emphasis on the importance of fairness and equity in education, which is in line with the principles of inclusive

education. By adopting these values, learning can take place more inclusively, so that every student feels cared for and motivated to learn (Kistoro & Sibarani, 2020).

Through this article, the author will explore the application of Sunan Gunung Jati's teachings in the context of differentiated learning and how this can bring about inclusive education. This study aims to provide insights and recommendations for educators in creating a better learning environment for all students and to encourage the application of noble values in education in Indonesia. In addition, this paper can make a positive contribution to the development of a more inclusive and equitable education system.

Learning is a process of acquiring new knowledge, skills, and understanding through experience, practice, reading, listening, or training. It requires attention, comprehension, memorization, application, and evaluation of the information being learned. Depending on how a person interacts with the material, learning can be done passively or actively. The effectiveness of this process is also significantly influenced by components such as motivation, environment, and learning methods used. Everyone has a unique learning style, and finding the right way to learn will make learning more enjoyable and effective.

Inclusive education is an approach that aims to provide equal access to education for all students, including those with special needs. This concept emphasizes the creation of a learning environment that supports diversity, so that all students can learn together without discrimination (UNESCO, 2005). The principles of inclusive education include accessibility and participation, whereby all students must be able to access education without discrimination and be involved in all aspects of school life (Ainscow, M., 2008). Schools must also provide the necessary support, such as trained teaching staff and educational aids, to help all students reach their potential (Florian & Linklater, 2010). Respect for diversity in the learning environment is another important principle (Smith & Tyler, 2011). For effective implementation, steps that can be taken include teacher training, parent involvement, and the development of policies that support inclusive education (Booth, T., & Ainscow, M, 2011). Through inclusive education, it is hoped that students can contribute positively to society while building mutual respect (Villa & Thousand, 2005).

Nowadays, differentiated learning is an approach designed to meet the learning needs of each student in different ways. This approach recognizes differences in student characteristics, interests, and abilities, requiring teachers to adjust methods, materials, and assessments in the learning process (Tomlinson, 2006) state that differentiated learning focuses on who, where, and how to teach, with the aim of providing relevant and compelling learning experiences. The basic principles of differentiated learning include creating a comfortable learning environment, designing an in-depth curriculum, conducting ongoing assessments, and responsive teaching. By applying these principles, differentiated learning can enhance an inclusive and practical learning experience for all students, helping them reach their full potential and build self-confidence.

The teachings of Sunan Gunung Jati or Syarif Hidayatullah also have important values that are relevant to education. He emphasized the importance of moral and ethics-based education, where the character and moral development of students is highly prioritized. In addition, he taught the integration of science and religion, enabling students to be intellectually and spiritually intelligent. Adaptive learning methods, relevance to everyday life, and respect for local traditions are also characteristic of his teachings. Sunan Gunung Jati taught good leadership and social responsibility, as well as the value of inclusivity in education, so that education is accessible to all levels of society (Nurhabibah & Widiawati, 2021).

By combining the principles of inclusive education, differentiated learning, and the values taught by Sunan Gunung Jati, we can create a more just and equitable educational environment that supports the character development and potential of every student.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study uses a descriptive qualitative approach to understand the application of Sunan Gunung Jati's teachings in the context of differentiated learning and its contribution to inclusive education. The subjects of this study consisted of teachers and students in secondary schools in the city of Cirebon who implemented differentiated learning. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews with teachers and students, direct observation in the classroom, and documentation studies related to the curriculum and lesson plans (RPP). Data analysis was conducted using thematic analysis, which included interview transcription, data coding to identify main themes, and narrative compilation based on the themes found (Braun & Clarke, 2006). To ensure the validity and reliability of the data, this study applied source triangulation by comparing data from interviews, observations, and documents, as well as conducting member checking by requesting feedback from participants (Creswell, J. W, 2014).

RESULT AND ANALYSIS

1.1 The Application of Sunan Gunung Jati's Values in Learning Subsection

The application of Sunan Gunung Jati's teachings in Islamic education is profoundly relevant to efforts to shape students' character based on moral and spiritual values. As one of the Walisongo figures who played an important role in the Islamization of Java, Sunan Gunung Jati emphasized an educational approach that was not only cognitive but also transformative—that is, education that changes human behavior and mindset towards a complete moral consciousness. According to (Kistoro & Sibarani, 2020), the concept of *petatah-petitih*, inherited from Sunan Gunung Jati, serves as a guideline for life that teaches the values of faith, piety, and social awareness as the core of religious behavior. These values are then applied in the context of learning to shape students who have integrity, social empathy, and moral responsibility.

Conceptually, the educational approach developed by Sunan Gunung Jati is in line with the theory of integrated moral-spiritual education (Subhan & Sururi, 2021), which emphasizes the importance of integration between the dimensions of knowledge, attitude, and action. In the context of Islamic learning, values such as faith, piety, and *ihsan* are not taught verbally alone, but are internalized through practical application in daily life. For example, activities such as helping and caring for others become concrete vehicles for students to implement Sunan Gunung Jati's moral teachings (Suryaman, 2015). This approach is in line with (Lickona, T., 1991) view of character education, which asserts that character building is not sufficient through the teaching of values, but must involve habituation and real examples in the educational environment.

The values of discipline taught by Sunan Gunung Jati, such as performing prayers consistently and consciously, have a pedagogical function similar to the concept of self-regulated learning (Zimmerman, 2000). Regular worship practices train students to develop self-awareness, personal responsibility, and moral consistency. This shows that the dimension of worship in Islamic education is not merely a religious ritual, but also an instrument for shaping a disciplined and spiritually strong personality (Hardi & Rohman, 2014). Thus, the teachings of Sunan Gunung Jati integrate spirituality and morality into an education system that is oriented towards holistic character building.

Furthermore, the educational values developed by Sunan Gunung Jati reflect the theory of holistic education (Miller, 2005), which places equal emphasis on intellectual, emotional, social, and spiritual development. The goal of education is not only to produce students who excel academically, but also to have a high level of ethical and spiritual awareness (Wildan, 2002). Emphasizes that the integration of values in learning plays an important role in building noble character and preventing moral degradation among the younger generation. In this context, the teachings of Sunan Gunung Jati serve as a model of value-based education that fosters the wholeness of the student's personality.

The cultural and aesthetic approach used by Sunan Gunung Jati also reflects a deep understanding of society's social context. He used local arts and culture as a means of preaching and education, such as through *wayang*, *gamelan*, and traditional literature (Ekadjati, E., 1974). This approach is in

line with the theory of cultural pedagogy (Giroux, H., 1994), which emphasizes the importance of utilizing local culture as a medium of education so that learning is more meaningful and contextual. Through this method, Islamic values are not imposed dogmatically, but are internalized through cultural expressions that are alive in society.

In addition, the use of a cultural approach in Sunan Gunung Jati education is also relevant to the concept of contextual teaching and learning (CTL) (Johnson, E. B, 2002), in which learning is designed so that students are able to connect the material with their life experiences. By utilizing traditional symbols and art, religious teachings become easier to understand and accept by the wider community, including students who are in the stage of moral development (Masduqi, 2011). This approach also strengthens students' emotional involvement in the learning process, so that spiritual values are not only understood cognitively but also experienced personally.

Thus, the application of Sunan Gunung Jati's teachings in learning emphasizes the importance of value-based education rooted in local wisdom. These teachings serve as a bridge between Islamic tradition, Nusantara culture, and modern educational practices. The approach developed by Sunan Gunung Jati is in line with the idea of transformative Islamic education oriented towards the formation of *insan kamil*—individuals who are faithful, moral, knowledgeable, and beneficial to society. Through the integration of moral, spiritual, and cultural values, learning can become a strategic vehicle for building a religious, humanistic, and civilized national character.

1.2 Impact on the Success of Inclusive Education

The success of inclusive education is greatly influenced by teachers' role in instilling values that strengthen social cohesion, tolerance, and respect for diversity. Inclusive education aims to meet the diverse needs of students, including those with disabilities and special educational needs. The application of basic educational principles such as tolerance, community involvement, and awareness of human rights can create a conducive learning environment for all students.

One of the primary responsibilities of teachers in the framework of inclusive education is to exemplify and foster social values that build a sense of belonging among students. According to (Maliqi & Hyseni, 2022), competency-based curricula must emphasize human rights, democracy, and gender equality, as these values are key to creating an inclusive learning environment. Teachers who understand and apply these values will be better able to actively engage all students, so that diversity is not only tolerated but also appreciated as a shared asset.

In addition, the role of teachers also includes active efforts to combat bullying and intolerant behavior in the school environment (Fuadi & Elsyam, 2024). emphasize the importance of the role of educators in implementing multicultural education. Through exemplary behavior and habit formation, teachers can instill attitudes of acceptance and appreciation of differences, thereby creating a strong culture of inclusion in schools. Such practices are important for building the social resilience of students, enabling them to grow and develop amid diversity.

Teachers also play a transformative role in peacebuilding, which is an important foundation for inclusive education. As stated by (Jamshaid & Baber, 2024), teacher education programs that focus on peacebuilding can empower educators to create a safe, peaceful, and respectful learning environment. Through behavior management and instilling mutual respect among students, teachers can reduce the potential for conflict and strengthen a sense of unity, making learning more fair and equitable for all students.

In addition, teacher professionalism is an important factor in ensuring the quality of inclusive education (Dina & Mustafida, 2021). emphasize that improving teacher professionalism in the context of multicultural education strengthens their capacity to provide meaningful learning experiences. Through community-based research methods, teachers can integrate local cultural values into the learning process, which has an impact on increasing the relevance of the material and student engagement. Thus, learning outcomes become more optimal and strengthen the sense of togetherness among diverse students.

Teachers' role in early intervention for children with signs of Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) also contributes significantly to inclusive education practices. According to (Jurdi & Costa, 2023),

effective collaboration between educators and health workers is essential. Teachers play a role in identifying and supporting these students through tailored educational services so that they can participate fully in the learning process.

Overall, teachers' multidimensional role in instilling values that support inclusive education, backed by professionalism and commitment to building a respectful and tolerant classroom environment, is a key factor in its success. Through the application of values such as human rights, respect for diversity, and cross-cultural understanding, teachers can contribute significantly to the realization of effective and beneficial inclusive education for all students.

1.3 An In-Depth Analysis of How Values Support Differentiated Learning Methods

The application of Sunan Gunung Jati's teachings provides significant support for differentiated learning methods in the context of education. As one of the important figures in the history of Islamic education in the archipelago, Sunan Gunung Jati instilled noble values such as respect for diversity, social awareness, and education based on morals and ethics (Nurhabibah & Widiawati, 2021). These values are closely aligned with the principles of differentiated learning, which emphasize recognition of individual differences and the creation of an inclusive learning environment (Wildan, 2002).

Respect for diversity as taught by Sunan Gunung Jati encourages teachers to recognize and appreciate differences among students—in terms of academic ability, cultural background, and learning style—so that they can design learning experiences that are relevant and engaging for each student (Kistoro & Sibarani, 2020). From the perspective of differentiated learning theory, the value of respect for diversity serves as the primary foundation for creating a classroom climate that values the uniqueness of each individual, in line with (Dinata, A., 2025) idea that the success of differentiated learning is highly dependent on the internalization of human values and respect for differences.

In addition, the value of social awareness, which is an important part of Sunan Gunung Jati's teachings, reflects the spirit of empathy and solidarity that is also at the core of modern differentiated learning. Teachers who are highly empathetic to students' learning needs can adjust their teaching approaches, both in terms of content and method, to ensure that each student has an optimal learning experience (Fajaryati, N, 2023). Through this approach, teachers not only teach based on ability but also foster an attitude of mutual assistance and cooperation among students, as explained by (Suryaman, 2015) and reinforced by the concept of collaborative learning in inclusive education theory (Samsudi, 2024).

Furthermore, the moral and ethical-based education emphasized by Sunan Gunung Jati also has strong relevance to the values of integrity and responsibility in differentiated learning. When students are encouraged to reflect on the values of honesty, responsibility, and caring in every learning activity, the educational process focuses not only on academic outcomes but also on character building and self-awareness (Wildan, 2002). This principle is in line with the idea of values-based learning (Jamshaid & Baber, 2024), in which education is seen as a means of shaping empathetic, critical, and ethical individuals.

The varied learning methods introduced by Sunan Gunung Jati—including cultural and artistic approaches (Ekadjati, E., 1974)—can be understood as an early form of differentiated learning practices. This approach allows teachers to use a variety of teaching strategies that are in line with students' interests and potential, as recommended in the Merdeka Curriculum (Samsudi, 2024). Thus, Sunan Gunung Jati's teachings are not only spiritually oriented but also contextual and applicable to the development of modern pedagogy.

In addition to social and moral dimensions, the spiritual values taught by Sunan Gunung Jati also enrich the reflective dimension of differentiated learning. Spirituality encourages students to understand the relationship between knowledge, experience, and the meaning of life (Masduqi, 2011). In the context of differentiated learning, spiritual reflection helps students internalize the meaning of learning more deeply, as explained by (Samsudi, 2024), who state that an approach that respects cultural context and spirituality can increase motivation and learning outcomes.

Thus, the values taught by Sunan Gunung Jati serve as a philosophical foundation that strengthens the implementation of differentiated learning. The value of appreciating diversity fosters inclusivity; the value of social awareness fosters empathy and collaboration; moral and ethical values build integrity; while spiritual values enrich reflection and the meaning of learning. These values collectively create a holistic, fair, and humanistic learning environment—in line with the direction of modern education that is oriented towards developing the character and potential of each student (Nurhabibah & Widiawati, 2021). Therefore, the application of Sunan Gunung Jati's teachings in the context of differentiated learning not only contributes to improving academic outcomes but also shapes a generation that is characterful, empathetic, and competitive in facing the challenges of the times.

1.3 Challenges Faced in Implementing Values

Applying the values of Sunan Gunung Jati's teachings in the context of differentiated learning to create inclusive education in the face of various structural, pedagogical, and cultural challenges. The values of Sunan Gunung Jati's teachings, such as humanity, tolerance, simplicity, and universal love, are in line with the basic principles of inclusive education, which place each individual as a dignified and unique subject of learning (Booth, T., & Ainscow, M, 2011). However, realizing these values in learning practices is often not easy due to various interrelated factors.

One of the main challenges is the lack of conceptual and reflective understanding among educators regarding the essence of Sunan Gunung Jati's teachings. According to (Tah, J, 2025), educators' low understanding of the meaning of inclusive education often confuses simply "accommodating" and truly "integrating" inclusive values into learning. This is in line with the findings of (Kistoro & Sibarani, 2020) that, without a deep understanding of cultural and spiritual values, teachers tend to treat values as a supplement rather than a foundation in the learning process. In fact, values education as taught by Sunan Gunung Jati requires integration between the cognitive (knowledge), affective (appreciation), and psychomotor (concrete action) dimensions.

Furthermore, limited educational resources are a real obstacle to the implementation of inclusive differentiated learning. Shows that many schools face a shortage of time, space, and adequate adaptive learning media to meet the diverse needs of students. This has implications for the reduced flexibility of teachers in implementing differentiation strategies that allow each student to learn according to their potential and interests. (Ainscow. M., 2008) emphasize that inclusive education cannot be effective without systemic support in the form of a curriculum that is open and responsive to the diversity of students.

Another challenge arises from the aspects of pedagogical competence and classroom management of teachers (Florian & Linklater, 2010). emphasize that managing a classroom with diverse students requires reflective, empathetic, and collaborative skills. Teachers need to understand that differentiation is not just a teaching technique, but an ethical practice that respects the identity of each student. In the context of Sunan Gunung Jati's teachings, this is in line with the principles of "ngangsu kawruh" (learning from anyone) and "ngawula marang sesama" (serving others), which require teachers to be humble, adaptive, and oriented towards the common good.

In addition, the psychological challenges faced by students cannot be ignored (Smith & Tyler, 2011). highlight that the application of differentiated learning models can cause anxiety in students who are not accustomed to variations in learning methods. From the perspective of Sunan Gunung Jati's values, this condition requires teachers to foster a "ngemong" learning atmosphere—one that is loving, patient, and empathetic so that students feel emotionally secure. This principle is in line with the theory of inclusive pedagogy (Florian & Linklater, 2010), which emphasizes the importance of a sense of security and the active involvement of all students as the basis for successful inclusive learning.

Furthermore, social support is also a determining factor for success. (Booth, T., & Ainscow, M, 2011) emphasize that inclusive education is a collective responsibility between schools, families, and communities. However, in practice, many parents and communities still do not understand the urgency of Sunan Gunung Jati's teachings as the basis for character education that values diversity

(UNESCO, 2005). even notes that negative perceptions of inclusive education often arise from the assumption that diversity actually hinders academic progress. In fact, the teachings of Sunan Gunung Jati emphasize that unity in diversity is the path to spiritual and social balance.

Thus, the challenge of implementing the values taught by Sunan Gunung Jati in differentiated learning is not only technical and pedagogical, but also conceptual and cultural. A holistic effort is needed to strengthen teachers' capacity through reflective training, adaptive curriculum development, and synergy between schools, families, and communities. The integration of Sunan Gunung Jati's humanistic spiritual values into inclusive education practices can serve as a bridge between local wisdom and global citizenship education, which encourages the emergence of *rahmatan lil' alamin* education—education that humanizes humans through respect for differences, social empathy, and justice for all students.

CONCLUSION

The application of Sunan Gunung Jati's teachings in education shows strong relevance to strengthening the character, spirituality, and morality of students. Values such as faith, piety, social awareness, and moral responsibility not only serve as ethical guidelines but also as a pedagogical foundation that guides the learning process towards a more humane and transformative direction. Through the integration of these values, education does not stop at the mere transfer of knowledge. However, it has become a means of forming complete individuals—knowledgeable people who have good character and contribute to society.

In the context of inclusive education and differentiated learning, the values taught by Sunan Gunung Jati provide significant philosophical support. The principles of respect for diversity, social empathy, and collective responsibility are in line with the modern concept of inclusive education, which treats each student as a unique individual with different needs and potential. Teachers act as mediators of values that foster tolerance, solidarity, and awareness of the importance of diversity as a shared strength. Thus, the teachings of Sunan Gunung Jati serve as a bridge between Islamic values, the culture of the archipelago, and modern pedagogical paradigms oriented towards humanity.

However, the successful implementation of these values is not without challenges, whether conceptual, pedagogical, or structural. A lack of understanding among teachers, limited resources, and an inclusive perception among the community are obstacles that must be overcome by strengthening the capacity of educators, developing adaptive curricula, and involving the educational community. With a holistic approach that combines spiritual, moral, and social dimensions, the values taught by Sunan Gunung Jati can become the basis for the development of inclusive, equitable education rooted in local wisdom—towards the realization of education with a *rahmatan lil' alamin* spirit that humanizes humans in all dimensions of their lives.

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