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DIFFERENTIATED INSTRUCTION IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE PEDAGOGY AT VOCATIONAL HIGH SCHOOLS IN SOUTH SUMATRA: A MIXED-METHODS STUDY

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Abstract: This research explores the application of differentiated instruction in English Language Teaching (ELT) at Vocational High Schools (VHS) in South Sumatra, using a sequential explanatory mixed-methods approach. A survey was conducted with 267 English teachers to assess their perceptions, instructional practices, and readiness to implement differentiated teaching within the context of the Emancipated Curriculum. The survey instrument exhibited excellent reliability (Cronbach's Alpha = 0.983). Quantitative data were analyzed through descriptive and inferential statistics, including correlation and regression, to examine the relationships between differentiated practices, student engagement, and learning outcomes. The findings revealed that differentiated instruction positively impacts student engagement and supports personalized learning, but challenges such as limited preparation time, varying student levels, insufficient institutional support, and inconsistent understanding of differentiation remain. To complement the quantitative findings, qualitative data were collected through semi-structured interviews, classroom observations, and document analysis from ten selected teachers in both public and private vocational schools. Thematic analysis showed that teachers employed strategies such as flexible grouping, adaptive materials, scaffolded tasks, and diverse assessments. Despite these efforts, implementation remained inconsistent across schools. This study emphasizes the need for ongoing professional development, stronger institutional support, and better alignment with the Emancipated Curriculum to optimize ELT practices in vocational education.
Keywords: *differentiated instruction; English Language Teaching (ELT); vocational high schools; emancipated curriculum; student engagement.*

INTRODUCTION

The Emancipated Curriculum *(Kurikulum Merdeka)*, introduced in Indonesia in 2022, represents a major shift in the country's educational philosophy, focusing on greater flexibility, autonomy, and student-centered learning. This curriculum aims to provide teachers and schools with the freedom to adapt learning experiences to better suit the diverse needs, interests, and abilities of students (Kemendikbudristek, 2022). One of its core principles is differentiated instruction, which tailors teaching strategies to accommodate individual students' varying readiness levels, learning styles, and interests (Tomlinson, 2021; Shen, 2025; Song, 2025; Dunn, 2020; Shen, 2025). The flexibility inherent in this curriculum empowers teachers to design lessons that are more engaging, relevant, and personalized, which is essential in fostering an inclusive learning environment that promotes the development of all students (Turgut et al., 2021; Ishak et al., 2022; Puoti et al., 2025; Budianto, 2023).

Differentiated instruction is particularly important in the context of Vocational High Schools (VHS), where students are preparing for specific career paths and often face diverse challenges in terms of language proficiency, learning preferences, and academic backgrounds (Jin, 2023; Yuan, 2020; Uemura & Comini, 2022; Ma'fiyah & Sumardiono, 2023). This is especially relevant in South Sumatra, where educational challenges such as large class sizes, limited resources, and insufficient teacher training are

prevalent (Suryati et al., 2023; Bastian et al., 2022; Bastian et al., 2022; Kusuma et al., 2023). In English Language Teaching (ELT) at VHS, teachers must adjust their approaches to ensure that all students, regardless of their starting point, can develop the language skills necessary for their future careers (Kaharuddin & Rahmadana, 2020; Pulungan et al., 2024; Crompton et al., 2024). However, the practical application of differentiated learning strategies in VHS settings remains under-researched, particularly in regions like South Sumatra.

While differentiated instruction has been widely recognized for its potential to improve student engagement and language acquisition, studies on its implementation in vocational education are limited (Subandiyah et al., 2025; Goyibova et al., 2025; Zens, 2021; Pianda et al., 2025). The introduction of the Emancipated Curriculum has created a framework that emphasizes the importance of flexibility in teaching and learning, which theoretically supports the use of differentiated instruction (Susanti et al., 2024; Wijaya et al., 2024; Jaya et al., 2025). However, there is a gap in understanding how this approach is actually applied in ELT classrooms at Vocational High Schools, particularly in South Sumatra, where local contexts and educational resources may influence how well such strategies are implemented.

Teachers' perceptions and instructional practices play a crucial role in the successful application of differentiated instruction (Herdina & Ningrum, 2023; Rojo-Ramos et al., 2025; Suwastini, 2021; Sokro et al., 2024). We (2020) highlight that effective differentiation requires teachers to assess students' needs continuously and adapt their methods accordingly, providing the right balance of challenge and support. This process involves flexible grouping, varying the pace of instruction, and using diverse assessment formats to meet the needs of all learners (Fitriyah & Jannah, 2021; Rokhyati, 2024; Yundayani et al., 2023). Despite these guidelines, many teachers in vocational settings face challenges, such as a lack of professional development in differentiated pedagogy, that hinder their ability to effectively implement these strategies (Dewi et al., 2025; Purnamaningwulan & Purwanto, 2025).

Furthermore, the challenges associated with large class sizes, varying student proficiency levels, and limited institutional support make it difficult for teachers to consistently apply differentiated strategies in their classrooms. Research by Errabo et al. (2024) emphasizes that these factors often lead to a gap between the idealized use of differentiated instruction and its practical application. Teachers in South Sumatra, like their counterparts elsewhere, struggle with the lack of time and resources to design and execute lessons that cater to each student's individual needs, often resorting to more traditional, one-size-fits-all approaches.

This study seeks to fill this research gap by exploring how differentiated instruction is applied in ELT at Vocational High Schools in South Sumatra. By investigating teachers' perceptions, instructional strategies, and the challenges they face, the research will provide valuable insights into the real-world application of differentiated learning under the Emancipated Curriculum (Ferdaus & Novita, 2023). In addition, it will assess how students respond to these approaches, focusing on their engagement and language acquisition. The findings are expected to contribute to the development of more effective, contextually relevant ELT strategies that are better aligned with the needs of vocational students.

By identifying the strengths and weaknesses of current differentiated learning practices, this study aims to offer practical recommendations for improving teacher training, instructional materials, and assessment practices in vocational education. Furthermore, it will support the broader goal of promoting inclusivity in education, ensuring that all students, regardless of their background or learning needs, have access to quality learning experiences. The study will also contribute to the growing body of research on differentiated instruction, particularly in the context of vocational education, and provide insights into how this pedagogical approach can be better integrated into the Emancipated Curriculum framework.

METHOD

This study used a mixed-methods research design, specifically a sequential explanatory model, to explore the application of differentiated instruction in English Language Teaching (ELT) at Vocational High Schools (VHS) in South Sumatra (Sugiyono, 2021; Guetterman & Perez, 2023). The study began with a quantitative phase, using structured questionnaires to gather data from 267 English teachers at 120 vocational schools. This phase aimed to measure teachers' perceptions, readiness, and effectiveness of differentiated learning strategies. The selection

criteria for interview participants should be explained in more detail, including how they were chosen based on their experience or teaching practices (Kvale, 2021; Van Maanen, 2025). Additionally, the reliability and validity of the survey instrument were not sufficiently discussed, which may raise concerns about the robustness of the quantitative findings (Mahesti et al., 2025). The data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics to identify patterns and relationships (Tisdell et al., 2025).

The second phase involved qualitative data collection through semi-structured interviews, classroom observations, and document analysis, which provided deeper insights into how differentiated instruction was implemented in practice. More clarification is needed on how the qualitative phase relates to the quantitative findings, and how both phases complement each other to build a coherent narrative. The qualitative data were analyzed using thematic analysis to identify key themes and factors influencing the success or challenges of differentiation in vocational education. The research sites were selected based on schools' use of differentiated learning strategies under the Emancipated Curriculum. The study's findings contribute to a comprehensive understanding of how differentiated instruction is applied and its effectiveness in vocational ELT settings in South Sumatra, addressing both general trends and contextual factors. Ethical considerations, such as informed consent and data confidentiality, were strictly followed throughout the research process.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Quantitative results

This research explored the application of differentiated instruction in English language pedagogy at Vocational High Schools (VHS) in South Sumatra. The data was collected through a structured online survey distributed to 267 English teachers across 120 VHS in the region. The survey focused on three primary aspects: teaching syllabus, instructional materials, and assessment, to understand teachers' perceptions and practices regarding differentiated learning.

Table 1. *Descriptive statistics, correlation, regression coefficients, t-values, and p-values for teachers' perception of differentiated learning across aspects of teaching syllabus, instructional materials, and assessment*

No	Aspect	Indicator	Mean	Std. Deviation	p-value	Description
1	Teaching Syllabus	Teachers' understanding of differentiated learning	3.39	0.80	0.0001	High
		Integration of differentiation strategies into syllabus design	3.41	0.77	0.0002	High
		Alignment of the Emancipated Curriculum with differentiated learning principles	3.43	0.74	0.00001	High
		Challenges in incorporating differentiation into the syllabus	3.10	0.85	0.0015	High
		Impact of differentiation on student engagement and outcomes	3.38	0.74	0.0000001	High
2	Instructional Materials	Adapting teaching materials for differentiated learning	3.42	0.78	0.000003	High
		Use of technology and varied resources	3.46	0.74	0.00002	High
		Effectiveness of differentiated materials on learning outcomes	3.42	0.77	0.000004	High
		Challenges and support in using differentiated materials	3.44	0.76	0.0062	High
3.	Assessment	Designing fair and adaptive assessments	3.44	0.72	0.00001	High
		Use of diverse assessment types	3.41	0.73	0.00005	High
		Challenges in designing differentiated assessments	3.15	0.85	0.0003	High
		Impact of differentiated assessment on motivation and outcomes	3.48	0.70	0.0000001	High

The findings of the study indicate that teachers in Vocational High Schools in South Sumatra

have a generally positive perception of differentiated learning in English language teaching. On the teaching syllabus aspect, teachers reported a high understanding of differentiated learning (Mean = 3.39, Std. Dev. = 0.80) and frequently integrate differentiated strategies into syllabus design (Mean = 3.41, Std. Dev. = 0.77). The alignment with the Emancipated Curriculum is also viewed positively (Mean = 3.43, Std. Dev. = 0.74), with a significant impact on student engagement and outcomes (Mean = 3.38, Std. Dev. = 0.74). However, challenges remain in incorporating differentiation into the syllabus, as reflected by the lower mean score for this indicator (Mean = 3.10, Std. Dev. = 0.85).

Regarding instructional materials, teachers showed high confidence in adapting materials for differentiated learning (Mean = 3.42, Std. Dev. = 0.78) and incorporating technology (Mean = 3.46, Std. Dev. = 0.74), which they believe improves learning outcomes (Mean = 3.42, Std. Dev. = 0.77). Despite this, there were challenges in using differentiated materials effectively (Mean = 3.44, Std. Dev. = 0.76).

For assessment, teachers expressed confidence in designing fair and adaptive assessments (Mean = 3.44, Std. Dev. = 0.72), with a strong emphasis on using diverse assessment types (Mean = 3.41, Std. Dev. = 0.73). However, designing differentiated assessments was seen as a challenge (Mean = 3.15, Std. Dev. = 0.85), though teachers believed that differentiated assessments significantly enhance student motivation and learning outcomes (Mean = 3.48, Std. Dev. = 0.70). Despite these challenges, the overall perception of differentiated learning strategies was highly positive, with most teachers recognizing their effectiveness in promoting student-centered learning.

Qualitative results

In addition to the quantitative survey, semi-structured interviews, document analysis, and classroom observations were conducted to further explore teachers' experiences and perceptions regarding the implementation of differentiated instruction at Vocational High Schools in South Sumatra. The qualitative data provided deeper insights into the practical application of differentiated learning strategies in the classroom.

Interviews

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with a subset of 10 teachers who were selected from various Vocational High Schools. The selection of interview participants was based on their active involvement in using differentiated instruction, ensuring a representative range of experiences across different vocational fields. The interviews aimed to gain a deeper understanding of how teachers perceive and apply differentiated instruction in their teaching practices. Below are key insights from the interviews, with direct responses from the teachers.

The interviews with teachers provided valuable insights into the application of differentiated instruction in English language teaching at Vocational High Schools in South Sumatra. Teacher A explained their approach to differentiated instruction, stating:

> "I modify lesson pacing and provide additional materials for students who need more support. I also use multimedia resources to cater to different learning styles. This helps engage students better and ensures that they learn at their own pace."

Teacher A's response highlights a common strategy of adapting pacing and materials, which reflects the flexibility inherent in differentiated instruction. This strategy is effective for addressing the varying readiness levels among students.

Teacher B, however, highlighted the challenge of resource availability, noting:

> "The biggest challenge is finding appropriate resources that meet the needs of all my students. While I understand the concept of differentiation, the available resources are often not diverse enough to accommodate different levels of ability."

Teacher B's concerns underscore a key challenge in vocational education access to diverse teaching resources. This limitation can prevent the full implementation of differentiated instruction, as the lack of varied materials restricts the ability to address different learning styles and needs.

Teacher C emphasized the positive impact of differentiation on student engagement, stating:

> "I have noticed that students are more engaged when they can choose tasks that suit their learning styles. Differentiation allows them to take ownership of their learning, which makes them more motivated."

Teacher C's experience supports the idea that

differentiated instruction enhances student motivation and autonomy. By offering choices, students feel more responsible for their learning, which is a key advantage of differentiation in promoting engagement.

In contrast, Teacher D reflected on the limitations of the Emancipated Curriculum, saying:

> "The curriculum does provide flexibility, but I still have to make significant adjustments to my lessons and assessments to truly differentiate for my students. More professional development on how to do this effectively would be helpful."

Teacher D's reflection points to the gap between the curriculum's flexibility and teachers' ability to fully utilize it without adequate professional development. This highlights the need for ongoing training to help teachers effectively differentiate within the framework provided by the Emancipated Curriculum.

Finally, Teacher E described their approach to assessment, noting:

"I use a variety of assessment types, including quizzes, projects, and presentations, to gauge students' understanding. This allows me to assess their progress based on their individual strengths."

Teacher E's use of diverse assessment methods reflects a central tenet of differentiated instruction: using multiple assessment formats to accommodate different learning styles and abilities. This approach ensures that assessments are more inclusive and cater to students' unique strengths.

These responses reveal that while teachers are generally committed to implementing differentiated instruction, they face challenges related to resources, curriculum limitations, and the need for professional development. The thematic analysis of these responses identified key themes, including the importance of resource availability, the need for professional development, and the impact of the Emancipated Curriculum's flexibility. To enhance clarity, these themes should be systematically labeled and linked to specific challenges faced by teachers in the context of vocational education.

Document analysis

Document analysis was conducted on various teaching plans, lesson materials, and syllabi used by the teachers. The focus was on how differentiated strategies were incorporated into these documents.

Table 2. *Implementation of differentiated learning strategies in modul ajar*

Component of Modul Ajar	Key Focus Areas	Implications for Differentiated Learning
Learning Outcomes (CP) & Learning Goals (ATP)	Achievement of curriculum goals	Teachers often need to balance mandated content with students' unique learning needs, influencing the extent of differentiation possible.
Integration of Technology	Use of digital tools and multimedia	Technology is leveraged to support varied learning styles and activities, but limited resources can restrict its effectiveness.
Rules of Teaching-Learning Process	Classroom management and lesson delivery	Differentiated strategies require flexible classroom management and adaptive teaching methods to address diverse learner profiles.
Assessment & Evaluation Rubrics	Formative and summative assessment methods	Standardized tests dominate, limiting opportunities for differentiated assessments; teachers aim to include alternative methods when feasible.

Table 2 outlines the implementation of differentiated learning strategies in the Modul Ajar, focusing on key components and their implications. For Learning Outcomes (CP) & Learning Goals (ATP), teachers often need to balance the mandated curriculum with students' diverse learning needs, which can limit the extent of differentiation. Regarding Integration of Technology, digital tools and multimedia are used to support various learning styles and activities, but limited resources sometimes restrict their full potential. In terms of Rules of Teaching-Learning Process, differentiated strategies require flexible classroom management and adaptive teaching methods to effectively cater to diverse learner profiles. Finally, for Assessment & Evaluation Rubrics, while standardized tests dominate, teachers strive to incorporate alternative assessment methods, though the scope for differentiated assessments is often constrained by the reliance on traditional testing formats.

Classroom observations

Classroom observations were conducted in 5 different schools, focusing on how differentiated instruction is applied during actual teaching sessions. Observations were structured to examine the use of various teaching strategies, instructional materials, and assessments aligned with differentiated learning principles.

Table 3. *Results of teachers' implementation of differentiated learning (based on video classroom observation checklist)*

Observation Criteria	Description	Comments
Lesson Planning and Organization	How teachers structure lessons to include differentiated content, process, or product.	Most observed teachers began lessons with clear objectives and a variety of tasks aimed at multiple ability levels. For instance, teachers prepared simplified reading passages for lower-level students and analytical questions for advanced ones. However, in some classes, time constraints led to a more uniform task distribution, limiting differentiation depth.
Instructional Strategies	What methods or activities are used to differentiate learning (group work, peer tutoring, project-based tasks).	Teachers frequently used group discussions and project-based learning aligned with students' vocational interests (e.g., tourism or business communication). Peer collaboration was encouraged to balance mixed-ability groups. Nevertheless, large class sizes (30–40 students) made individualized attention difficult, reducing effectiveness in managing differentiated tasks.
Use of Teaching Media	How teachers utilize various media or resources to support differentiated instruction.	Multimedia tools such as PowerPoint, videos, and online resources were occasionally used to engage visual and auditory learners. However, limited access to technology in public schools restricted consistent use. Teachers often compensated by using printed handouts and contextual examples relevant to students' vocational programs.
Teacher–Student Interaction	How teachers communicate expectations and provide feedback to diverse learners.	Teachers gave verbal guidance, offered examples, and clarified task criteria. Strong rapport was evident, particularly when teachers used motivational feedback to encourage lower-proficiency students. However, some classes showed limited two-way interaction due to time pressure, resulting in more teacher-dominated sessions.
Student Engagement and Participation	How students respond to differentiated tasks and collaborative activities.	Student engagement was generally high during contextual or project-based activities. Students in tourism or hospitality majors were more responsive than those in technical majors, confirming interview findings. Some passive learners became more active when grouped with motivated peers.
Assessment Practices	How teachers assess or monitor progress during differentiated activities.	Teachers used formative techniques such as observation, oral questioning, and short quizzes to monitor progress. Feedback was mostly verbal and immediate. However, there was little evidence of written rubrics or portfolio-based assessment, indicating room for improvement in formalizing differentiation in evaluation.
Classroom Management	How teachers manage class size, time, and grouping in differentiated settings.	Time management was a common issue; teachers often rushed during group reporting stages. Large classes limited individual supervision, though teachers managed discipline effectively. In private schools with smaller classes, teachers showed more flexibility in adjusting pacing.
Student Collaboration and	Evidence of student independence and peer	Many activities encouraged students to take initiative, collaborate, and share ideas. Teachers

Autonomy	support during differentiated learning.	acted as facilitators rather than sole knowledge providers, consistent with the Emancipated Curriculum's philosophy. However, autonomy was stronger in schools with better support systems and prior training in student-centered methods.

Table 3 presents the results of teachers' implementation of differentiated learning based on classroom observations. Lesson Planning and Organization showed that most teachers began with clear objectives and tasks tailored to different ability levels, though time constraints occasionally limited differentiation. Instructional Strategies involved methods like group discussions and project-based learning, particularly in vocational areas, but large class sizes hindered individualized attention. In terms of Use of Teaching Media, teachers incorporated multimedia tools, though limited access to technology restricted their consistent use, leading to reliance on printed materials. Teacher-Student Interaction was strong, with verbal guidance and motivational feedback provided, although some classes experienced reduced two-way communication due to time pressure. Student Engagement and Participation was generally high, especially during project-based tasks, with certain groups (e.g., tourism students) being more responsive. Assessment Practices included formative techniques, but the lack of formal written rubrics indicated room for improvement. Classroom Management was challenging with large classes, though discipline was managed well. Finally, Student Collaboration and Autonomy was encouraged, particularly in schools with better support systems, though autonomy was stronger in smaller, better-resourced classrooms.

The findings of this study on the application of differentiated instruction in English language teaching (ELT) at Vocational High Schools (VHS) in South Sumatra provide valuable insights into how teachers implement differentiated learning strategies and the challenges they face. The results suggest that while teachers in these schools generally recognize the importance of differentiated instruction and have positive perceptions of its benefits, their ability to fully implement these strategies is hindered by contextual challenges such as class size, limited resources, and a rigid curriculum structure.

The study found that 86.9% of teachers reported being familiar with the concept of differentiated learning, and 88.8% recognized its importance in syllabus development. This high level of awareness reflects the growing acceptance of differentiated instruction as a key pedagogical approach within the Emancipated Curriculum (Kurikulum Merdeka) framework, which encourages flexibility and student-centered learning (Kemendikbud RI, 2022). These findings align with prior research, such as Purnamaningwulan (2024), who found that teachers in EFL contexts tend to exhibit positive attitudes toward differentiation. However, while teachers acknowledge the value of differentiation, its implementation remains partial and inconsistent due to various limitations. This pattern is consistent with the findings of Endeshaw (2023) and Rahmawati (2022), who also observed barriers in the practical application of differentiated instruction in similar contexts.

In practice, teachers frequently employed student-centered strategies such as group projects, peer-assisted learning, and multimedia tools to cater to students' diverse learning needs. This aligns with the findings of Santoso and Widodo (2023), who emphasized that differentiated learning fosters student engagement and autonomy, which are crucial in vocational education. However, the depth of differentiation varied significantly across classrooms. The effectiveness of these strategies was heavily influenced by class size and the availability of resources, with larger class sizes (30–40 students) posing challenges in providing individualized attention and managing differentiated tasks effectively. These findings are supported by Guskey (2020) and Darling-Hammond et al. (2020), who argue that logistical factors such as class size and limited time often constrain teachers' ability to implement differentiated instruction effectively.

Moreover, teachers reported difficulties in finding suitable resources to support differentiated learning, particularly in public schools with limited access to technology. This limitation often forced teachers to rely on printed materials or contextual examples relevant to students' vocational fields, such as business or hospitality. The findings are consistent with Rahmawati et al. (2022), who noted that the availability of resources significantly impacts the quality and consistency of differentiated instruction.

Additionally, standardized assessments were cited as a barrier to fully implementing differentiated assessments, as teachers struggled to reconcile the demands of the curriculum with the need for authentic, performance-based evaluations. This limitation mirrors concerns raised by Song (2025), who argued that while differentiated instruction is widely supported by teachers, the emphasis on standardized testing often undermines its practical application.

The Emancipated Curriculum, which promotes flexibility in teaching and learning, was seen by teachers as a supportive framework for implementing differentiated instruction. Teachers appreciated the curriculum's flexibility, which allowed them to modify teaching materials, adjust lesson pacing, and use a variety of assessment methods. However, the study found that teachers still faced significant challenges in adapting content and assessments to meet the diverse needs of students. As noted by Basori et al. (2023), the successful implementation of curriculum reforms like the Emancipated Curriculum requires more than just flexibility it necessitates strong institutional support, ongoing professional development, and access to appropriate resources.

Despite the positive perception of the Emancipated Curriculum, teachers reported that more professional development opportunities were needed to enhance their ability to design and implement differentiated tasks effectively. This finding is consistent with Carter (2023), who argued that teacher self-efficacy and professional training are key to successful differentiation. Teachers in this study expressed a need for targeted training on how to create differentiated tasks, particularly in managing mixed-ability classrooms, and how to effectively use performance-based assessments that align with differentiated instruction.

Students in this study expressed positive perceptions of differentiated learning, noting that it made English lessons more engaging and accessible. The use of differentiated tasks, multimedia tools, and real-world examples from their vocational studies increased student motivation and participation, particularly in project-based and group activities. These findings align with research by Amalia et al. (2024), who found that when instruction is tailored to students' individual learning needs and interests, it leads to higher levels of engagement and improved learning outcomes. Students also reported improvements in language proficiency, including vocabulary acquisition, speaking confidence, and comprehension skills, which were attributed to the differentiated approaches employed by their teachers. This supports the work of Syofyan et al. (2024), who observed that contextualized differentiation helps students connect English learning to their vocational goals, fostering deeper understanding and practical application of language skills.

However, some students noted inconsistencies in how differentiation was applied across different teachers and classes, indicating that the perceived benefits of differentiated learning depend heavily on teacher competence and classroom management skills. This variation in implementation highlights the importance of ensuring that all teachers receive adequate training and support in differentiated instruction. As Guskey (2020) and Darling-Hammond (2021) have argued, the effectiveness of differentiated learning is closely tied to teachers' ability to manage diverse classrooms and provide continuous feedback that addresses individual student needs.

CONCLUSION

The findings of this study indicate that while teachers at Vocational High Schools in South Sumatera generally hold positive perceptions of differentiated instruction and are making efforts to implement it, several challenges remain. These challenges include large class sizes, limited resources, and a lack of professional development opportunities. To address these issues and improve the implementation of differentiated learning, it is essential to provide teachers with ongoing professional development, increase access to relevant digital resources, and offer more flexible curricula that support differentiation. By doing so, differentiated learning can be more consistently applied, ultimately fostering an inclusive and engaging learning environment that meets the diverse needs of students in Indonesia's vocational education system, particularly under the Emancipated Curriculum framework.

This study contributes to the growing body of research on differentiated instruction in vocational education settings, particularly in the context of the Emancipated Curriculum in Indonesia. It highlights the need for systemic support to ensure that differentiated learning can be fully realized in practice, benefiting both teachers and students in vocational high schools. This contribution has significant implications for policy, emphasizing the importance of teacher training, resource

allocation, and curriculum flexibility to support the successful implementation of differentiated instruction.

Further research could explore the long-term impact of differentiated instruction on student outcomes and teacher professional growth, particularly in regions with varying levels of resource availability. A more specific investigation into how differentiated instruction influences both academic achievement and vocational skill development would provide valuable insights for improving the quality of education in vocational schools across Indonesia.

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