A PRELIMINARY STUDY: LECTURER'S PERCEPTIONS ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF DIFFERENTIATED INSTRUCTIONS IN HIGHER EDUCATION

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Abstract

Differentiated instructions are used to meet the student's needs. Every student has different characteristics, and they have their own preference for learning. Lecturers have a crucial role in implementing differentiated instructions in their teaching. Differentiated instructions allow lecturers to develop teaching and learning processes based on students' readiness, interest, and learning profile. The research examines lecturers' perceptions of differentiated instruction. The study employs a descriptive qualitative method, with interviews and questionnaires as the instruments. The participants are ten lecturers who teach English at one university in Cimahi, West Java. The data were analyzed qualitatively. The result shows that all lecturers know about differentiated instruction but have not fully applied it. They also understand the importance of differentiated instructions in meeting students' needs, which is a good way to enhance academic achievement. Still, they face implementation problems such as limited time, resources available, and the number of students in their class. They also mention that training and workshops are needed to develop their skill and experience in teaching.

Keywords – teacher's perception, differentiated instructions, higher education

Introduction

Differentiated instructions have been widely implemented in education. including in teaching English. Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka (MBKM), or Learning-Independent Independent Campus curriculum, through Sekolah Penggerak, implements differentiated instructions in the classroom (Aminuriyah et al., 2023). Hidayati and Sujarwati (2023)mention that differentiated instructions as a learning strategy are the MBKM introduced as part of curriculum. Teachers are expected to differentiated implement instructions. Some experts have already discussed differentiated instructions in their research (Sabb-Cordes, 2016; Papanthymou & Darra, 2022; Ayuningtyas et al., 2023). Sabb-Cordes (2016) explained that differentiated instruction is often regarded as a highly effective approach to promoting educational equity and achieving high academic standards in classrooms. Teachers adapt their instructional strategies and educational

materials to accommodate the varied learning requirements of students (Ayuningtyas et al., 2023). It encompasses a range of strategies, including flexible grouping, varied assignments, and tiered exercises, which cater to students' diverse requirements (Papanthymou & Darra, 2022). differentiated Therefore, instruction is an innovative teaching strategy that can be implemented to meet diverse students' needs through various classroom activities.

Teachers play a crucial role in delivering differentiated education as they have the ability to create and organize the classroom environment. According to Tomlinson (2005), differentiated instruction is an educational approach that tailors learning activities to suit each student's individual learning readiness, interests, and learning profile. Learning readiness refers to teachers giving tasks based on the ability of students. Learning interest means that the task given by the teacher can stimulate the curiosity and passion of the students. Learning profile refers to the task given based on the learning how thev students like (Aminuriyah et al., 2023). Teachers should know readiness, interest, and students' learning profiles before teaching. By understanding them, teachers can prepare and give a suitable strategy for teaching students.

Differentiated instructions have various approaches when teachers want to implement DI in the classroom. Some experts mention four categories: content, process. product. and learning environment (Tomlinson, 2005; Irdhina et al., 2021). Other experts implement three categories in their research: content, process, and product (Andini, 2022). First, content differentiation refers to instructing students using various methods to ensure optimal comprehension based on individual learning preferences. For provide example, teachers different materials based on student readiness. They provide the materials for the different abilities of the students. Second, differentiation learning refers to implementing instructional diverse methods or approaches to teach the same content, thus accommodating students with distinct learning preferences and enabling them to comprehend and apply the materials. This means teachers do not implement monotonous teaching, but they implement various learning strategies such as peer-to-peer, group work, etc. Differentiation in the learning process is expected to help the students effectively. Differentiation in learning products refers to offering multiple ways for students to demonstrate their comprehension of the content taught. This means that teachers provide various tasks, not just one task, and the students can choose based on their interests and profiles. For example, provide different format teachers assessments, and they can provide additional time to complete the task. The last is the learning environment. A learning environment refers to the settings

various categories of differentiated instructions are implemented based on students' readiness, interest, and learning profile. It can be concluded that those elements influence the way differentiated instruction will be implemented. Differentiated instruction become a teaching strategy, and some

has

within a classroom that teachers must

consider, including factors such as seating

arrangements and flexible grouping. So,

experts have implemented it in their research. Some research found that differentiated instructions have strengths when they are implemented. Implementing differentiated instruction can effectively address the diverse learning needs of students. hence facilitating their attainment of learning objectives. The research showed that the students responded positively to integrating differentiated instructions in the classroom's teaching and learning process (Moya & Tobar, 2016; Rinawati et 2021). Besides, differentiated al., instructions have good responses from the teachers who implement DI in the classroom. This can be seen in the research (Suprayogi & Valcke, 2014). They mention that differentiated instruction is a in teaching methodology, strategy switching from a teacher-centered to a student-centered approach. Students are involved and active in teaching and learning in the classroom. Differentiated instruction also facilitates good interaction between teachers and students. It means that the teaching and learning process is not implemented in one way but in two ways of interaction. A good atmosphere of learning situations can work well. supporting the students in learning.

On contrary, the the implementation of differentiated instructions has weaknesses. Some research has discussed it (Mardhatillah & Suharyadi, 2023; Gibbs, 2023; Mirawati et al., 2022). Mardhatillah and Suharyadi (2023) have identified that implementing differentiated education may pose time and teacher pressure challenges. It can be time-consuming due to more preparation when the teacher prepares the lesson plan and material based on the student's readiness, interest, and profile. The demand for teachers to successfully apply differentiated instruction can be high; they must meet students' needs and learning objectives (Gibbs, 2023). Besides, teachers require ongoing training and professional development to improve their abilities effectively conducting in diversified instruction, which involves addressing the unique needs of learners (Cagape et al., 2023). In addition, many students can challenge teachers when implementing differentiated instructions, especially in big classes (Mirawati et al., 2022). Teachers should control and provide various activities to meet the student's needs. Therefore, before conducting differentiated instructions, teachers must understand the requirements of students' profiles when implementing DI based on their needs. All stages require more time management, but this strategy can help the students achieve maximum ability.

One of the government's supports is explaining how to conduct differentiated instructions in the classroom in one of Guru Penggerak's modules. Some teachers have conducted DI in their research. It is undertaken to improve the quality of learning (Irdhina et al., 2021; Khristiani et al., 2021; Rumkoda et al., 2023). Irdhina et al. (2021) explain how to implement differentiation as a learning approach in teaching at elementary school, whereas Khristiani et al. (2021) talk about the use of differentiated instruction in teaching junior high school students. They also discuss designing a lesson plan and examples give for each part of differentiated instruction categories from content, process, product, and learning environment. In addition, Rumkoda et al. (2023) explain that DI can help students improve their quality of learning. DI provides many benefits for improving the quality of learning; this research focuses on implementing differentiated instructions in higher education.

Differentiated instructions are also essential for university students, especially preservice teachers. Preservice teachers should know and understand the concept of differentiated instruction. They should understand DI because they will teach at school. This is in line with Darra and Kanellopoulou (2019), whose research indicate that implementing findings differentiated teaching positively impacts preservice teachers by enhancing their engagement, boosting their academic performance, and fostering positive attitudes and beliefs among students and lecturers in higher education. This means differentiated instructions that can improve the academic performance and engagement of preservice teachers, as well as the attitudes of both students and lecturers in higher education. However, Turner et al. (2017) reveal that higher education lecturers who teach big classes encounter challenges in comprehending proficiently and applying diverse instructional methodologies, revealing a gap in knowledge and implementation. Lecturers in higher education struggle to comprehend and apply various methods of instruction. This means there are different results from the first and second research studies. So, this research would like to investigate the lecturer's perception of implementing differentiated instructions.

The lecturer's perception has a vital role in the implementation of differentiated instructions. If lecturers understand well, they will implement it properly. Milinga et al. (2023) explain that perception is how individuals analyze and comprehend the world, drawing on their experiences, beliefs, and knowledge. It is supported by Dorfberger and Eyal (2023), who state that perception is crucial as it influences how teachers view and understand differentiated teaching. How teachers think about varied teaching can affect how they use different methods to meet the needs of all their students. So, the lecturer's perception influences the way they implement differentiated instructions.

Lecturers' perceptions have many benefits in supporting the teaching and learning process in the classroom. According Century to (2023),understanding perception has advantages: teachers can improve their teaching practice when they know their perceptions of the students' needs. They can provide activities to support the students in learning. In addition, positive perceptions from teachers can enhance the good engagement and increase students' motivation. Furthermore, Suknah (2022) adds that perceptions help teachers understand the students well and can influence teachers' behavior and interaction. Based on that explanation, perceptions can be indicated to have an important role in facilitating good interactions between teachers and students. Even though the teacher may not be concerned about perception, it greatly affects teaching.

Perception is not only for teachers or lecturers but also for students. Students' perceptions play an essential part in learning. Students and teachers frequently have contrasting views on instructional approaches due to multiple variables. Positive perceptions between teachers and students are needed to make effective learning. This research focuses on the lecturer's perception of implementing differentiated instructions in higher education at one university in Cimahi, West Java.

Methodology

The study employs a qualitative method focusing on the descriptive qualitative method. The researchers are interested in implementing qualitative due to the research topic, which discusses the lecture's perception of implementing DI. The researchers believe that this method is suitable for this topic. Mason (2002) says that qualitative research can look into many aspects of the social world, such as the details and patterns of daily life and the participants' thoughts and feelings. The qualitative method is helpful because it allows a systematic look at the teacher participants' experience and how they made sense of what happened (Cresswell, 2012). This research views lecturers' perceptions toward the implementation of differentiated instructions.

The research participants are eight English lecturers teaching English education majors at one university, Cimahi, West Java. The lecturers are nine females and one male. They have been teaching in higher education for 4 to 14 years. Seven lecturers graduated from English education, while three lecturers graduated from linguistics. All lecturers teach different subjects.

The researchers used two kinds of questionnaires instruments: and interviews. The questionnaire was adapted from (Shareefa et al., 2019). There are thirteen statements with a Likert scale: Strongly disagree, disagree, strongly agree, and agree. The questionnaire asks the lecturer's perception about of readiness. student interest. profile, academic achievement. challenges. resources available, training, and workshops. The researchers gave the questionnaire using Google Forms, and the result of the questionnaire was analyzed qualitatively.

The interview is conducted to support the result of the questionnaire. The research employs semi-structured interviews. which are open-ended questions and allow for deeper understanding from the interviewee's perspective. The interview was adapted from (Burkett, 2013). The interview asks the lecturer's opinion about the benefits and challenges of implementing differentiated instructions. The interview results were recorded and transcribed; then, the researchers made some themes to support the results of the questionnaires. Providing questionnaires and interviews

can give a broad understanding of the lecturer's perception of DI.

Finding and Discussion

The findings of the research are based on questionnaires and interviews.

a. Questionnaire Finding

The participants are 10 English lecturers and only one male lecturer. They also have been teaching in different years. The lecturers have different perspectives on implementing differentiated instruction; some only know the terms. Below is the detailed information:

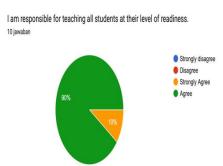


Figure 1. Readiness

Figure 1 states that 90 % of lecturers agree, and 10 % strongly agree. They are responsible for the student's readiness. This means that they understand that readiness is crucial when they want to implement differentiated instructions. Readiness means lecturers know the ability of each student so they can provide suitable materials for students' readiness. Lecturers know the current level of knowledge bv providing diagnostic assessments. They can also check the students based on the observations that they have already made.



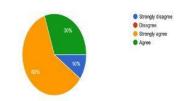


Figure 2. Students' needs

Figure 2 shows that 60 % of lecturers strongly agree, 30% agree, and 10 % strongly disagree. It can be indicated most lecturers say that differentiated instruction is needed to suit the various students' needs, even though there was a lecturer who did not agree with this statement. Still, the majority of teachers believe that differentiated instruction is essential to address the diverse requirements of students.

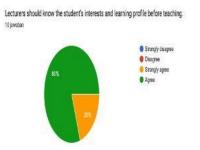


Figure 3. Students' readiness and profile

Figure 3 shows that 80% of lecturers agree, and 20% strongly agree that they must know the student's interests and learning profile. Lecturers should know what kinds of materials make students interested, and they should know the learning styles of students. By understanding students' interests and profiles, lecturers can provide various activities that meet the student's needs. This means the students can learn best if the teacher provides a suitable strategy.

Differentiating lessons is a good way to enhance academic achievement for all students. 10 pwaban

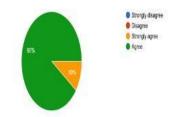
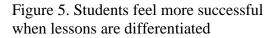


Figure 4. Students' Achievement

The diagram reveals that 87.5% of lecturers agree and 12.5% strongly agree with differentiating lessons. Lecturers believe differentiated instruction can trigger students to achieve academic achievement. It can be seen that all lecturers have positive responses to implementing DI and to students' success. А good positive perception from lecturers has an impact on academic students' engagement.





The students feel more successful when the lesson is differentiated. When the instruction is differentiated, the students experience more success. It indicates that when students know how much easier something will be for them, they align with that learning style. It means that students meet their best way of learning cause when they know it will be easier for them. Students are more engaged in learning when lessons are differentiated.

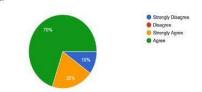


Figure 6. Students are more engaged in learning when lessons are differentiated.

This figure shows that 70 % of lecturers agree when lecturers provide differentiated instruction in lessons, the students are engaged in the teaching and learning process in the classroom. Lecturers give various activities to enhance the students' attention to learning.

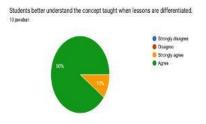


Figure 7. Understand the concept

The figure shows that most lecturers believe that students can learn better when differentiated instruction is implemented. Students learn based on their preferences to grasp the materials easily and effectively.

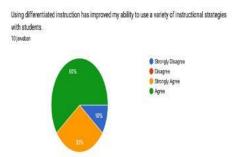


Figure 8. The best practices for teaching

Figure 8 explains that 60 % of lecturers agree that differentiated instruction can

give them more chances to improve the variety of instructional strategies. This means that lecturers do not use monotonous strategies, and the students have more exposure that can help them learn. Giving more exposure can lead to the students' engagement, which is expected to increase their critical thinking. However, 10 % of lecturers did not agree with this statement. The following interview shows that preparation can be problematic when creating the best practice for every meeting. This means that it is still a challenge to practice.

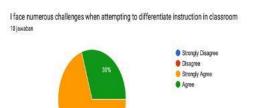


Figure 9. Instructional strategies Figure 9 reveals that most lecturers strongly agree that they face many challenges when implementing DI in their classrooms. Interview data can support it.

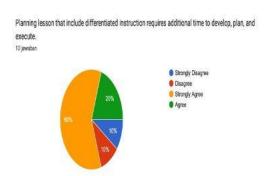


Figure 10. Challenges

This figure states various answers from lecturers. 60 % of lecturers say they strongly agree, 20% agree, 10 % strongly disagree, and 10 % agree. Interview data confirmed this data. Whether the lecturers need more time to develop plans and evaluations or not, if they need more time, what are the reasons? There are additional resources available to assist teachers with differentiating instruction in a diverse class.

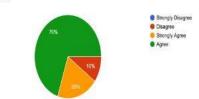


Figure 11. Additional resources

This figure shows most lecturers agree that additional resources are needed to support the teaching and learning process through differentiated instructions. Lecturers implement multiple instruction, and each instruction needs resources supporting the learning process.

Planning lesson that include differentiated instruction requires additional time to develop, plan, and	
execute.	
10 jawaban	

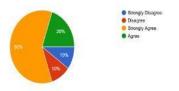


Figure 12. Time allotment

Figure 12 states that lecturers need more time when preparing all kinds of processes to implement differentiated instructions. They need to design and make an evaluation. They prepare more than one process, content, and product, so it will be time-consuming to prepare it. Besides, time management in teaching is essential due to the teaching phase from lecturers, such as pre-activity, main, and post-activity.

Training and workshop are needed to develop lecturer's skills in implementing differentaited instructions. 10 januari

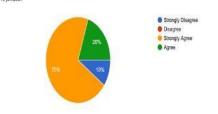


Figure 13. Training and workshop

The figure reveals most lecturers needed training and workshops about differentiated instructions. By understanding the concept of differentiated instructions, the lecturers can implement them properly.

Based on the explanation above, lectures positively responded to differentiated instructions; it can be indicated that the lecturers believe DI can make successful learning by providing various content, processes, products, and learning environments.

b. Interview Finding

An interview was conducted to sharpen the results and support these findings. Below is the detailed information.

First, all lecturers know about differentiated instruction but have not fully applied it. This interview's result confirms this. Below is the excerpt from the interview.

- L1: I had ever implemented differentiated instruction when I taught reading subjects.
- L3: I know differentiated instructions but do not follow all kinds of processes when I teach in the classroom using DI.

This means that all lecturers know and implement DI. Jager et al. (2022) mention that differentiated instruction is widely acknowledged as a crucial element of higheducation, quality although varied educational environments employ differently. differentiated teaching However, not everyone understands the concept of differentiated instructions. Two lecturers did not realize they had implemented differentiated instructions, but they had already done so. For example, they differentiated materials and tasks. Some lecturers did not analyze the students based on readiness, profile, and interest. They only focus on readiness by looking at the result scores of students in the previous meeting. The result can be seen as a guideline for lecturers to divide the students into three categories such as low, medium, and high scores. The result determines the lecture strategy in teaching, and they provide various activities. They did not know the students' profiles and interests; they only knew about the readiness to be implemented. This aligns with the previous result: the lecturers know the term DI.

Second, all the participants also understand the importance of differentiated instructions in meeting students' needs, which is a good way to enhance academic achievement. This can be seen from the interview results.

- L2: I have made good improvements when implementing differentiated instructions in the classroom. I can design the class based on the various needs of students.
- L4: Students can get better scores when they learn best based on their preferences. They easily understand the context.

The interview results support the result of the questionnaire that understanding the students' needs can influence the success of learning. Several studies ((Moya & Tobar, 2016; Rinawati, Jayantini, Dantes & Suwastini, 2021; Rumkoda, 2023) have shown the numerous impacts of varied instruction on learning. Students can attain learning objectives and address their diverse learning styles using differentiated instruction. According to the research, differentiated instruction favors students' answers during the teaching and learning process in the classroom. In addition, Ouyang and Ye (2023) explain that differentiated instruction fosters a welcoming and inclusive learning environment by considering its students' various profiles interests. and Differentiated instruction increases students' interest and involvement in the learning process by providing tasks at their appropriate level and including activities

that align with their interests and learning styles. Lecturers can create a more effective and supportive learning environment if they know the students' needs. They can support each student by providing a suitable strategy and task.

Third, besides positive responses, lecturers face challenges when implementing DI—for example, limited time, resources available, and the number of students in their class.

- L3: Time-consuming can be a challenge when implementing DI; lecturers must create many activities, not only one activity for all students. It needs more time preparation.
- L5: A big class is quite hard to control, and identifying each student's characteristics is challenging.

Those challenges are found in their classroom, and lectures face difficulties when implemented. Preparing a lesson with differentiated instructions requires more time to design because the lecturers do not make one but various activities in the classroom. So, time allotment can be a great challenge. It is supported by Mardhatillah & Suharyadi (2023), time-consuming and teacher pressure while implementing differentiated instruction can be challenging. Teachers can take longer preparation when the teacher makes the lesson plan and content based on the student's readiness, interest, and profile. Besides, having many students in the classroom can be a challenge for lecturers in classroom management. This aligns with Mirawati et al. (2022), who state that many students may present teacher challenges when using differentiated instruction, especially in large classes. Therefore, having a big class can be a problem for lecturers when making differentiated lessons.

Fourth, they also mention that training and workshops are needed to develop their skill and experience in teaching. I can see this from the interview and questionnaire.

- L1: I have never joined training and workshops related to differentiated instructions. I know it is important, especially because it can be used to develop my skills and experience in implementing differentiated instruction.
- L2: Training and workshops are essential, especially when we, as lecturers, do not have any experience implementing differentiated instructions.

It can be indicated that lecturers need and workshops effectively. training Workshops and training are designed to educate and enhance skills. This aligns with Cagape et al. (2023) to enhance their capacity to carry out differentiated instructions, which involves participating in each student's individual needsteachers need continual training and professional development. It is supported by Marks et al. (2021) that workshops and training are relevant for teachers to apply differentiated teaching successfully. They are used to design programs that prioritize pedagogical and topic knowledge, ensure the training lasts long enough, and offer initial and ongoing support. On the contrary, most teachers cannot implement differentiated instruction successfully and have not received any training in this area, according to research by Santangelo & Tomlinson (2012).

Workshops and training are sharpen professional expected to development. Professional development is needed to allow the lecturers to see students with different needs. The lecturers did not get training or workshops provided by institutions about differentiated instructions, so some lecturers only got from attending workshops in other institutions.

Conclusion

Differentiated instruction is one of the innovative strategies that can be implemented in teaching English. The results indicate that all lecturers had a comprehension of differentiated education, although they had properly not implemented it. Some lectures only implemented content differentiation, but they did not implement process and product. In addition, they recognize the significance of employing tailored education to address the diverse needs of pupils, so effectively improving academic performance. However, they have challenges in implementing the program due to constraints such as time limitations, restricted resources, and the size of their student population. Additionally, they emphasize the necessity of training and seminars to enhance their teaching skills and expertise.

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