The Essential Role of Teacher Self-Efficacy and Teacher Acceptance for Differentiated Learning

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Keywords:	Abstract
teacher self-efficacy; teacher acceptance; teacher readiness; differentiated learning; implementation	The heterogeneous characteristics of students require teachers to be creative in implementing innovative learning strategies that can meet the various needs of students. This study explores the influence of differentiated learning management on teacher readiness to implement differentiated learning, by analysing teacher self-efficacy and acceptance of differentiated learning as moderator variables. The study involved 162 Elementary School (ES) and Madrasah Ibtidaiyah (MI) teachers from 49 schools in three sub-districts, namely Tapos District, Depok City, Cimanggis District, Bogor Regency, and Kelapa Dua Wetan District, East Jakarta City, Indonesia. This research uses quantitative methods. Data collection used three instruments in the form of questionnaires, namely instruments to measure differentiated learning management (DLM), teachers' readiness to implement differentiated learning (RIDL), teacher self-efficacy (TSE), and acceptance of differentiated learning (ADL). Data were analyzed using partial least squares structural equal modelling (PLS-SEM) with the help of SmartPLS 3 software. The results showed that differentiated learning management, self-efficacy, and teacher acceptance of differentiated learning had a direct and significant effect on teacher readiness to implement differentiated learning. This study has implications for the importance of core support, professional development, and other policies and resources to support teachers' readiness to implement differentiated learning.

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

In each regular class, it is filled with students with heterogeneous characteristics, such as their previous knowledge, interests, talents, learning styles, and learning speed (Albanese et al., 2021; Cooper et al., 2025; Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development [OECD], 2020;

Rahmadani & Kurniawati, 2021; Tomlinson, 2018). Facing this diversity requires teachers to be creative in adapting their instructional strategies to meet students' needs across a broad spectrum (Kalinowski et al., 2024; Nusser & Gehrer, 2020). Differentiated learning (DL) has been recognized as an effective pedagogical approach to respond to these challenges (Deunk et al., 2018; Goyibova et al., 2025; Inman & Roberts, 2022; Ramaila, 2025; Subban et al., 2025; Suprayogi et al., 2017; Wibowo et al., 2025). Recent systematic reviews confirm that differentiated instruction significantly enhances student outcomes when applied consistently (Kahmann et al., 2022; Pozas et al., 2022; Smale-Jacobse et al., 2019). In the post-pandemic context, differentiated learning practices have expanded into hybrid and technology-assisted modes. Teachers now integrate digital platforms, AI-powered adaptive systems, and online collaboration to personalize instruction (Christina & Panagiotidis, 2024; Fletscher et al., 2024; Janahi et al., 2023; Kotorov et al., 2025). These shifts emphasize the importance of teacher readiness not only in classroom differentiation but also in technology-mediated differentiation.

In Indonesia, the implementation of DL has been strongly emphasized in the Merdeka Curriculum. However, in practice, teacher readiness to adopt this approach remains a challenge (Andarwulan et al., 2021; Nurtanto et al., 2021; Winarto et al., 2025). Teachers often report being unprepared to implement DL consistently (Sofiana et al., 2024). This fact shows that even though DL is mandated, there is still a gap between curriculum policy and classroom reality. Most prior Indonesian studies on differentiated learning have relied on descriptive surveys or qualitative accounts, which provide valuable insights into teacher perceptions but offer limited explanatory power for testing complex theoretical relationships (Sofiana et al., 2024; Suprayogi et al., 2017). By employing Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM), this study advances the field by quantifying the strength of associations among DL management, self-efficacy, acceptance, and readiness, while simultaneously testing moderation effects. This methodological contribution helps bridge the gap between largely narrative or exploratory research and more rigorous, theory-driven empirical analysis in the Indonesian context.

Many factors influence readiness to implement DL. Several factors affect teachers' readiness for DL, including lack of opportunities and involvement in professional development such as workshops and training sessions that focus on differentiated learning (Hidayat & Patras, 2024; Jager, 2017; Khairiah et al., 2024; Sofiana et al., 2024; Yunaini et al., 2024), teacher self-efficacy related to DL (Wan, 2016; Yildiz, 2023), student diversity and class size (Hidayat et al., 2024; Santoso et al., 2022; Sofiana et al., 2024), and ability to adapt pedagogy to student profiles (Bi et al., 2024; Shruthi et al., 2025). In addition, acceptance of innovation and teachers' attitudes toward DL is crucial for sustained adoption (Bi et al., 2024; Porta et al., 2022; Pozas et al., 2022). Structural barriers faced by teachers, such as lack of time, support, and cooperation, cause teachers' acceptance of the DL approach to be low. (Hartwig & Schwabe, 2018; Mengistie, 2020; Shareefa et al., 2019). Every teacher faces the same structural barriers, but because of individual differences between teachers, the acceptance and self-efficacy of teachers to implement DL varies from one teacher to another. On the one hand, there are teachers who try hard to understand conceptually and operationally so that they are ready to implement differentiated learning, on the other hand, there are teachers who do not do this so that they are not ready to implement DL. This raises the question, why is the readiness to implement DL varied among teachers.

This study aims to investigate whether DL management activities contribute to teacher readiness in implementing DL. In examining the relationship between the two variables, we analyze self-efficacy and teacher acceptance of the DL approach as moderator variables. This research design is new in the context of DL implementation studies.

Problem of the Study

Teachers often perceive DL as complex and demanding, particularly in the context of large classes, diverse student profiles, and limited instructional resources. Time constraints and workload further discourage teachers from adopting DL consistently. In Indonesia, most previous research addressing teacher readiness and differentiated learning has been largely descriptive or qualitative, focusing on perceptions, challenges, and case-based narratives. While such studies provide valuable

insights, they do not adequately test the theoretical mechanisms through which TSE and ADL shape readiness for implementation.

To address this gap, the present study explicitly tests a structural model of teacher readiness for differentiated learning using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM). This approach allows simultaneous estimation of multiple relationships between DLM, TSE, ADL, and RIDL, while also examining potential moderation effects. PLS-SEM is particularly suitable given the predictive orientation of this research, the moderate sample size, and the inclusion of both direct and moderating paths (Hair et al., 2021). Accordingly, the problem addressed in this study is not only whether teachers are ready for differentiated learning, but more importantly, how DL management, teacher self-efficacy, and teacher acceptance interrelate within a tested structural framework. By adopting PLS-SEM, the study moves beyond descriptive accounts and advances toward rigorous, theory-driven empirical testing in the Indonesian educational context.

The unit of analysis was Elementary School (ES) and Madrasah Ibtidaiyah (MI) teachers, both state and private. Including both ES and MI is important because, while they serve comparable grade levels, they operate under different administrative and cultural contexts—ES under the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education and MI under the Ministry of Religion. By involving both school types, this study allows for an explicit comparison of readiness and perceptions across these parallel systems. Demographic information of respondents such as gender, age, qualifications, and teaching experience, was collected (see Table 2). The sample was broadly representative of the teacher population in the participating districts, with balanced proportions of male and female teachers, a distribution of age groups ranging from early-career to senior teachers, and inclusion of both undergraduate and postgraduate degree holders. Likewise, teaching experience varied across novice (1–5 years), mid-career (6–15 years), and veteran teachers (16+ years). This representativeness ensures that the research captures perspectives across key demographic subgroups, even though no subgroup comparisons were formally tested."

Research's State of the Art

This study draws on two major frameworks: 1) Bandura's Self-Efficacy Theory, which posits that individuals' confidence in their abilities influences motivation and behavior (Bourne et al., 2021; Omotoy, 2023; Schunk & DiBenedetto, 2021). In teaching, higher self-efficacy predicts persistence and adaptability in implementing complex strategies like DL (Kalinowski et al., 2024; Lai et al., 2020; Suprayogi et al., 2017). 2) Davis's Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), which suggests that perceived usefulness and ease of use shape acceptance of innovations (Ballat, 2024; Luk et al., 2018; Zhang, 2025). In the DL context, teacher acceptance determines whether teachers integrate differentiation as part of their practice (Akram et al., 2022; Lai et al., 2022). By integrating Bandura's theory with TAM, this study positions teacher self-efficacy (TSE) and teacher acceptance of DL (ADL) as interrelated factors that condition the relationship between DL management and teacher readiness.

The study contributes by integrating Bandura's Self-Efficacy Theory and the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM). It also advances Indonesian research on differentiated learning by moving beyond predominantly qualitative or descriptive studies. Through PLS-SEM, this study not only establishes causal inferences with greater statistical rigor but also demonstrates how attitudinal and psychological factors interact within a structural model (Hair et al., 2021; Henseler et al., 2015). This addresses a critical methodological gap in Indonesian educational research, where theory testing with robust quantitative approaches remains underdeveloped.

Differentiated learning is based on the premise that students' characteristics are different and they learn in different ways (Jepkoech, 2023; Stollman et al., 2021; Tahiri et al., 2017; Taş & Minaz, 2024; Wibowo et al., 2025). Differentiated learning is a learning approach that takes into account the differences and diversity of individual student characteristics (Kalinowski et al., 2024; Magableh & Abdullah, 2022; Smale-Jacobse et al., 2019; Smit & Humpert, 2012; Tomlinson, 2018). This method recognizes that students have varying backgrounds, readiness levels, interests, and learning profiles, and seeks to address these differences (Inman & Roberts, 2022; Wibowo et al., 2025). Differentiated learning allows teachers to adapt learning activities to the diversity of student characteristics to ensure that each student gets optimal learning opportunities. Differentiation includes differentiation in terms

of content, process, product, and learning environment (Tomlinson, 2017). Various learning practices, such as small group teaching, project-based learning, and variations in teaching materials and a variety of assignment choices can be carried out by teachers to realize differentiated learning objectives (Corsino & Fuller, 2021; Inman & Roberts, 2022; Ortega et al., 2018; Pozas et al., 2020; Supriyoko et al., 2022; Tomlinson & Imbeau, 2023).

The implementation of IDL is related to three main aspects: the use of different strategies, addressing student diversity, and student learning progress. The six main categories that are challenges in implementing DL are time, resources, knowledge, class size, support, and workload (Shareefa et al., 2019). DL implementation is a form of constructive response to the needs of students based on their profile or characteristics (Aikaterini & Makrina, 2022; Hasanah et al., 2022; Ismajli & Imami-Morina, 2018; Leppan et al., 2018). In this context, constructive response means matching the learning approach with the pedagogy, curriculum objectives, and the most appropriate opportunities for students to learn according to their learning needs to achieve optimal learning outcomes. Based on student characteristics, learning needs can be grouped into three categories: a) student readiness, the student's zone of proximal development is the most suitable approach to guide them; b) student interest, the individual interests of students can be utilized to stimulate and increase their involvement in learning; and c) student learning profile, the learning mode is adjusted to their learning profile (Tomlinson et al., 2003). In this case, teachers must focus on adapting their instructions to the various differences of these students.

The success of DL implementation is determined by the readiness of teachers as the spearhead in facilitating student learning. Teacher readiness refers to the competence, willingness, and self-efficacy to implement differentiated learning (Cahyono et al., 2021; Fariduddin & Siau, 2022; Julia et al., 2020; Nguyen et al., 2022). Teacher readiness is one of the main keys in implementing DL (Cahyono et al., 2021; Paliwal & Singh, 2021). Therefore, research related to teacher readiness to implement DL and the factors that influence it is very urgent to be carried out. Teachers with a deeper understanding of the DL concept are more confident in implementing this strategy (Porta et al., 2022). Positive attitudes towards DL, increasing teachers' willingness to accept and adopt DL (Porta et al., 2022; Pozas et al., 2022). Continuous professional development is essential to improve teacher self-efficacy in implementing DL (Kahmann et al., 2022). Teachers benefit from ongoing professional development that includes reflective dialogue and collective accountability, which indirectly enhances teacher self-efficacy and DL practices (Neve et al., 2015). Teacher collaboration, especially in professional learning communities (PLCs), has a positive influence on teacher self-efficacy and acceptance of DL (Hammad et al., 2024; Pozas & Letzel-Alt, 2023). Support from school leaders, especially transformational leadership, indirectly increases teachers' acceptance and self-efficacy towards DL (Hammad et al., 2024; Ninković et al., 2022). Teachers with higher self-efficacy are better at managing diverse classes and utilizing available resources (Ramli & Nurahimah, 2020; Suprayogi et al., 2017). Time constraints and DL complexity can negatively impact teacher self-efficacy. Addressing these barriers through structured support and realistic expectations is important. (Hayden et al., 2024; Porta et al., 2022).

Based on the results of the theoretical review and previous research, we developed a hypothetical structural model as presented in Figure 1, which will be tested and used as a guide in this research.
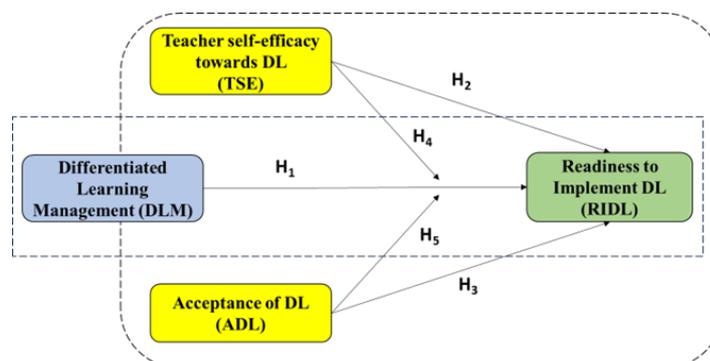

Figure 1. Hypothetical model tested in this study

Based on this model, we formulate five research questions as follows: 1) Does differentiated learning management (DLM) have a direct impact on teachers' readiness to implement differentiated learning (RIDL)? 2) Does teacher self-efficacy (TSE) towards DL have a direct impact on teachers' readiness to implement differentiated learning (RIDL)? 3) Does teachers' acceptance of differentiated learning (ADL) have a direct impact on teachers' readiness to implement differentiated learning (RIDL)? 4) Does teacher self-efficacy (TSE) moderate the effect of differentiated learning management (DLM) on teachers' readiness to implement differentiated learning (RIDL)? 5) Does teachers' acceptance of differentiated learning (ADL) moderate the effect of differentiated learning management (DLM) on teachers' readiness to implement differentiated learning (RIDL)?

Gap Study & Objective

Teacher self-efficacy is a significant predictor of their ability to implement differentiated learning effectively (Porta et al., 2022; Scarparolo & Subban, 2021). This is supported by the results of Kalinowski et al. (2024) and Ramli and Nurahimah (2020) that high teacher self-efficacy influences better differentiated learning practices. The results of Samsudi et al. (2024) research shows that the potential readiness of teachers to implement differentiated learning is significantly influenced by accurate learning management. The results of other previous studies, such as research conducted by Godor (2021), Kenney et al. (2024), and Jager (2017) shows that learning management which includes planning and implementation in the process and effective learning assessment is an important component that influences the potential readiness of teachers in implementing differentiated learning. Teacher readiness to implement differentiated learning can be improved by focusing on learning management components that include accurate planning management, effective management of differentiated teaching processes, and implementation of differentiated learning assessments. Regarding differentiated learning management, Jager (2017) found that teachers face various challenges, including large class sizes, inadequate training, and lack of resources.

Winarto et al. (2025) claims that teacher acceptance of differentiated learning as indicated by a positive attitude and willingness to adopt integrated learning is very important for achieving success. Similar results were also found by Bi et al. (2024) that teachers' attitudes towards differentiated learning play an important role in supporting the success of its implementation. Other previous research also shows that teachers' acceptance of differentiated learning has a significant influence on their readiness to implement it (Hammad et al., 2024; Kalinowski et al., 2024; Ninković et al., 2022; Porta et al., 2022; Pozas et al., 2022; Ramli et al., 2021; Suprayogi et al., 2017).

However, there are not many studies in Indonesia that specifically study elementary school teachers. In fact, many elementary school teachers experience obstacles in understanding and implementing of differentiated learning. Elementary school teachers are generally class teachers, so they have to prepare learning for all subjects. Even in a number of elementary schools due to a shortage of teachers, many teachers are given the task of teaching more than one class. This has an impact on the availability of time that teachers have to study and deepen their knowledge about differentiated learning. In addition, not many researchers have studied in more depth the role of self-efficacy variables and teacher acceptance of differentiated learning as moderators of the causal relationship between learning management and teacher readiness in implementing differentiated learning, especially at the elementary school level. Learning management in this study includes design, implementation, and implementation of reflection and evaluation for continuous improvement of differentiated learning.

This study explicitly aimed to: 1) Examine the direct influence of DLM on RIDL; 2) Investigate the roles of TSE as predictors of RIDL; 3) Investigate the roles of ADL as predictors of RIDL; 4) Test whether TSE moderate the relationship between DLM and RIDL; and 5) Test whether ADL moderate the relationship between DLM and RIDL. Thus, this research is expected to contribute to practical insights for professional development and school leadership in guiding teachers to implement differentiated learning.

METHOD

Type and Design

This research was conducted in three sub-districts: Tapos (Depok City), Cimanggis (Bogor Regency), and Kelapa Dua Wetan (East Jakarta City). A cross-sectional survey design with a quantitative approach was employed. Prior to data collection, ethical clearance was obtained from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) of Pakuan University. Informed consent was obtained from all participants, who were assured of confidentiality, anonymity, and voluntary participation. No personal identifiers were collected, and participants were free to withdraw at any stage of the research. The research was conducted in the 2023/2024 academic year with 49 schools involved with the composition as presented in Table 1.

The structural model was specified as follows:
1. Direct effects: RIDL = β_1(DLM) + β_2(TSE) + β_3(ADL) + ε
2. Moderation effects: RIDL = β_4(DLM × TSE) + β_5(DLM × ADL) + ε

In this specification, DLM, TSE, and ADL are modeled as exogenous constructs predicting RIDL, while interaction terms (DLM × TSE and DLM × ADL) capture potential moderating effects. All constructs were modeled as reflective latent variables. This explicit specification ensures that the hypothesized relationships can be empirically tested and interpreted within a coherent structural framework.

Table 1. Composition of schools and research participants

School Categories	School Status		Number of Participants	
	Government	Private	Government	Private
Elementary School (ES)	37	4	140	15
Madrasah Ibtidaiyah (MI)	-	8	-	7
Total	37	12	140	22

Data and Data Sources

Sampling employed a two-stage random cluster method with proportional probability. In the first stage, 37 ES and 12 MI were selected proportionally across the three districts. In the second stage, teachers were sampled proportionally according to the size of each school's teaching staff. A total of 162 teachers participated. The response rate was 81% (162 of 200 invited teachers), with non-response primarily due to scheduling conflicts. Potential non-response bias was assessed by comparing early vs. late respondents; no significant differences were found in demographic characteristics. Demographic information such as gender, age, qualifications, and teaching experience was collected (see Table 2).

Table 2. Socio-demographic characteristics of the participants

Socio-Demographic Characteristics		Participants (n = 162)	
		Total	%
Gender	Male	34	20.98
	Female	128	79.01
Age	25-35 years	33	20.37
	36-45 years	58	35.80
	46-55 years	46	28.40
	>55 years	25	15.43
Educational qualifications	Sarjana (S1)	150	92.59
	Magister (S2)	12	7.41
Experience as a teacher	< 5 years	23	14.20
	5-10 years	27	16.67
	10-20 years	77	47.53
	20 years	35	21.60

Data Collection Technique

Data were collected using instruments arranged in a standard questionnaire. The data collection instruments consisted of four instruments arranged by the researcher himself, namely instruments to measure RIDL, TSE, ADL, and DLM. The measurement scale adopted a five-point Likert-type scale with a score of 1 = very poor, 2 = poor, 3 = sufficient, 4 = good, and 5 = very good. The four instruments were developed with reference to the indicators as presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Research instruments indicators

Instruments	Indicators
RIDL	Understanding the concept of differentiated learning
	Ability to design differentiated learning
	Skills in implementing learning strategies
	Commitment and Attitudes towards Differentiated Learning
TSE	Confidence in designing differentiated learning
	Confidence in implementing differentiation strategies in the classroom
	Confidence in managing the challenges of differentiated learning
	Confidence in using differentiated assessment
	Confidence in collaboration and professional development
ADL	Perceived usefulness
	Perceived ease of implementation
	Attitude toward differentiated learning
	Behavioral intention
DLM	Planning and organizing differentiated learning
	Implementation and management of differentiated learning activities
	Monitoring, evaluation, and reflection of differentiated learning

The validity test of the instrument items used the point biserial correlation technique, while the reliability was tested based on internal consistency using the alpha-Cronbach correlation technique. The instrument to measure RIDL consists of 23 items that meet valid criteria. The instrument to measure ADL consists of 19 items that meet valid criteria. The instrument to measure TSE consists of 21 items that meet valid criteria. The instrument to measure DLM consists of 18 items that meet valid criteria. Item validity was tested using point-biserial correlation, while reliability was tested using Cronbach's alpha. All instruments demonstrated acceptable internal consistency ($\alpha > 0.70$) (Bonett & Wright, 2015; Field, 2009). The full instrument items are provided in a supplementary appendix for transparency and potential replication. Raw (de-identified) data are also available upon reasonable request. The test result data is presented in Table 4.

Data Analysis

Based on the hypothetical structural model as presented in Figure 1 and the formulation of the research problem, the following hypotheses are proposed to be tested in this study.

Hypothesis 1: Differentiated learning management DLM has a direct impact on teachers' readiness to implement differentiated learning (RIDL).

Hypothesis 2: Teacher self-efficacy (TSE) towards DL has a direct effect on teachers' readiness to implement differentiated learning (RIDL).

Hypothesis 3: Teachers' acceptance of differentiated learning (ADL) has a direct impact on teachers' readiness to implement differentiated learning (RIDL).

Hypothesis 4: Teacher self-efficacy (TSE) moderates the effect of differentiated learning management (DLM) on teachers' readiness to implement differentiated learning (RIDL).

Hypothesis 5: Teachers' acceptance of differentiated learning (ADL) moderates the effect of differentiated learning management (DLM) on teachers' readiness to implement differentiated learning (RIDL).

The hypothetical structural model was tested using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) with SmartPLS 3.3. The analysis followed standard procedures to ensure reliable estimation. The algorithm was run with a maximum of 300 iterations and a stop criterion of 1×10^{-7}, which means the computer repeated the calculations until the solution became stable. To test the significance of the relationships, we used bootstrapping with 5,000 subsamples. Bootstrapping is a resampling technique that repeatedly draws random samples from the data to estimate how stable the results are, similar to checking whether the findings would hold across many hypothetical samples. These settings are widely recommended in the SEM literature (Hair et al., 2021) and help ensure that the results are statistically robust and replicable.

The reflective measurement model was used to examine convergent validity, internal consistency reliability, and discriminant validity. Convergent validity was measured from item loadings and average-variance extracted (AVE). AVE is a measure of how much variance in the survey items is explained by their construct. An AVE above 0.50 suggests that the items really represent the construct they are supposed to measure (Hair et al., 2021). Internal consistency reliability was assessed based on the intercorrelation of item scores observed in the construct, composite reliability, and Cronbach's alpha correlation coefficient. Hair et al. (2021a) explained that the criteria indicating convergent validity and internal consistency reliability of the measurement model must be greater than 0.70, while AVE must be greater than 0.5. Discriminative discrimination validity is assessed from the value of the heterotrait-monotrait (HTMT) ratio correlation criteria between constructs. HTMT is a simple check to make sure that each construct in the model is truly different from the others, not overlapping too much. An HTMT value below 0.90 indicates good separation between constructs (Hair et al., 2021; Henseler et al., 2015). We use these criteria as a reference to assess the quality of measurement and structural models in this study. If all validity and reliability tests meet the criteria, then continue with hypothesis testing, using t-statistics and confidence intervals in the lower 2.5% and upper 97.5% ranges.

RESULTS

Descriptive statistics and testing the validity and reliability of measurements

The measurement model demonstrated good psychometric properties across all constructs (see Table 4). The descriptive statistics showed acceptable mean values, with standard deviations indicating reasonable variation across respondents. All indicator loadings exceeded the recommended threshold of 0.70 (ranging from .812 to .961), which means each survey item was strongly related to the construct it was supposed to measure. Internal consistency reliability was also confirmed, with Cronbach's α values ranging from .878 to .959 and composite reliability (CR) values between .902 and .971—well above the .70 benchmark, indicating that the items worked together consistently.

Table 4. Descriptive statistics and construct model criteria

Latent Variable	Mean	STD	Criteria				
			Convergent validity		Internal consistency reliability		
			Indicator reliability	Cronbach's α	Composite reliability	AVE	HTMT
			Loading > .7	> .7	> .7	> .5	< .9
RIDL	20.985	1.894	.812 – .924	.878	.917	.734	.843
ADL	19.387	.461	.910 – .961	.959	.971	.892	806
TSE	16,481	.729	.882 – .930	.959	.957	.817	.862
DLM	22.109	1.220	.839 – .88	.944	.902	.754	.852

Convergent validity was confirmed with AVE values between .734 and .892, all higher than the recommended .50 level. In simple terms, this shows that the items captured enough of the variance in each construct, so they truly represent what they are intended to measure. Furthermore, discriminant validity was established using the HTMT, with all values below the conservative cutoff of 0.90 (ranging from .806 to .862). This indicates that each construct of DLM, TSE, ADL, and RIDL are empirically distinct

and does not overlap excessively with the others. These results indicate that the constructs are internally consistent, capture sufficient variance from their indicators, and remain empirically distinct from one another, thereby justifying their use in the structural model.

In this study, the teachers' readiness to implement DL (RIDL) had a mean score of 20.98 (SD = 1.89), indicating low-to-moderate readiness overall. The distribution (Figure 2) was slightly skewed to the right, showing that more teachers scored below the mean.
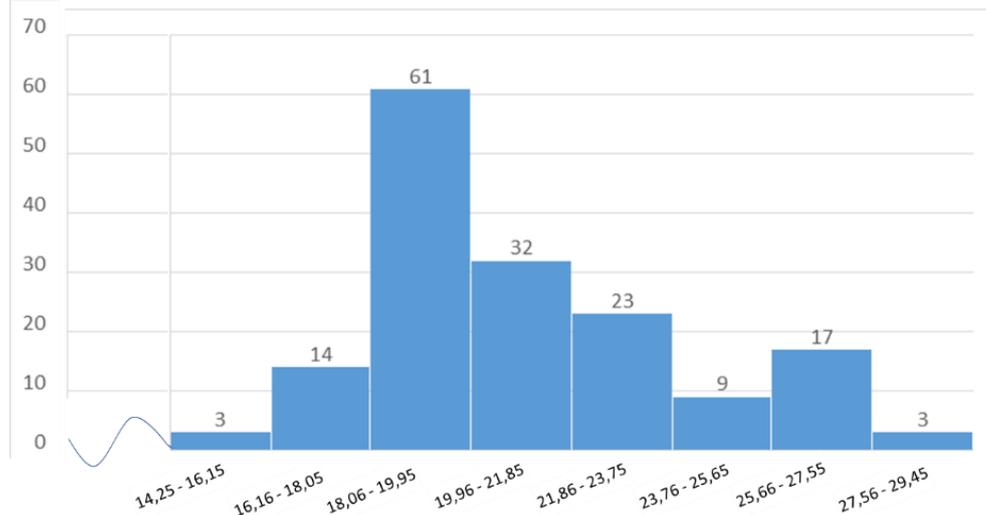

Figure 2. Frequency distribution of RIDL data

Hypothesis Testing

The results of the research hypothesis test are presented in Table 5. From the table, it can be seen that the test results support the three hypotheses of model 1.

Table 5. Hypothesis test results

Hypotheses	β	t	p	f²	Confidence intervals		Decision
					Lower 2.5%	Upper 97.5%	
Model 1: Direct effects							
DLM -> RIDL	.212	3.241	.001	.070	.092	.350	Supported
TSE -> RIDL	.443	4.959	.000	.142	.261	.603	Supported
ADL -> RIDL	.279	3.442	.001	.072	.126	.425	Supported
Model 2: Moderation effect							
Moderating Effect TSE -> RIDL	-.083	.976	.330	.004	-.260	.058	Not supported
Moderating Effect ADL -> RIDL	.160	.971	.049	.016	.010	.319	Supported

DLM had a positive and significant effect on teachers' RIDL. The effect size was small to medium, suggesting that stronger DLM is associated with higher teachers' RIDL. TSE exerted the strongest positive influence among the predictors. The effect size was close to medium, highlighting that teachers' confidence in their own competence is a key determinant of RIDL. Teachers' ADL also showed a significant positive effect, with a small-to-medium effect size. This means that greater ADL corresponds to greater readiness to implement it.

Meanwhile, for hypothetical model 2 (the moderation effect) shows the following results. The moderating effect of TSE was not significant, indicating that TSE did not strengthen or weaken the relationship between DLM and RIDL. The moderating effect of ADL was significant, although the effect size was very small. This suggests that teachers' ADL enhances the positive influence of DLM on readiness: the higher the acceptance, the stronger the impact of management on readiness.

Model fit was tested using Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR), Normed Fit Index (NFI), and Root Mean Square Theta (rms Theta). SRMR is an index that measures the average standardized difference between the model's predicted covariance and the actual covariance of the data. The smaller the SRMR value, the better the model fits the data. Common thresholds: <0.08 = good fit (Henseler et al., 2016). The NFI is a comparative index that measures the extent to which a proposed model is better than the baseline model (null model). Values range from 0–1, with ≥ 0.90 indicating an acceptable fit (Bentler & Bonett, 1980). RMS Theta is an index used to evaluate the quality of outer model residuals. Lower values indicate a better measurement model. A threshold of ≤ 0.12 is generally considered adequate (Henseler et al., 2014). R Square (R^2) is a measure of the coefficient of determination, which shows how much of the variance of a dependent (endogenous) variable can be explained by the independent (exogenous) variables in the model. Model fit and explained variance are presented in Table 6.

Table 6. Model fit and explained variance

Model fit and explained variance	Values
SRMR	0.053
NFI	0,909
RMS Theta	0.106
R^2 (RIDL)	0.841

The model demonstrated an acceptable overall fit, as indicated by the fit indices (see Table 6). The SRMR value of 0.053, which is below the recommended threshold of 0.08, suggests that the model reproduced the observed covariance matrix with a good level of accuracy. The NFI value of 0.909 exceeds the cutoff of 0.90, indicating that the proposed model fits the data substantially better than the null model. In addition, the RMS Theta value of 0.106 is below the threshold of 0.12, confirming adequate quality of the measurement model and consistency of the indicators. Regarding explained variance, the R^2 value for RIDL was 0.841, meaning that DLM, TSE, teachers' ADL, and their interactions explained 84.1% of the variance in teachers' RIDL. This value is considered substantial, reflecting the strong predictive power of the structural model.

The moderating effect of TSE and ADL on the relationship between DLM and RIDL is visually presented in Figure 3. Figure 3(a) shows the moderating effect of TSE in the relationship between DLM and RIDL. The slopes for high and low levels of TSE appear relatively parallel, suggesting no significant interaction effect. This finding implies that while TSE plays an important direct role in predicting teachers' RIDL, it does not alter the strength of the relationship between DLM and RIDL. By contrast, Figure 3(b) illustrates the moderating role of ADL on the same relationship. The slope of the relationship is steeper under conditions of high ADL compared to low ADL, indicating that teachers' ADL significantly strengthens the impact of DLM on RIDL. In other words, when teachers hold higher levels of ADL, improvements in DLM are more effectively translated into increased RIDL.
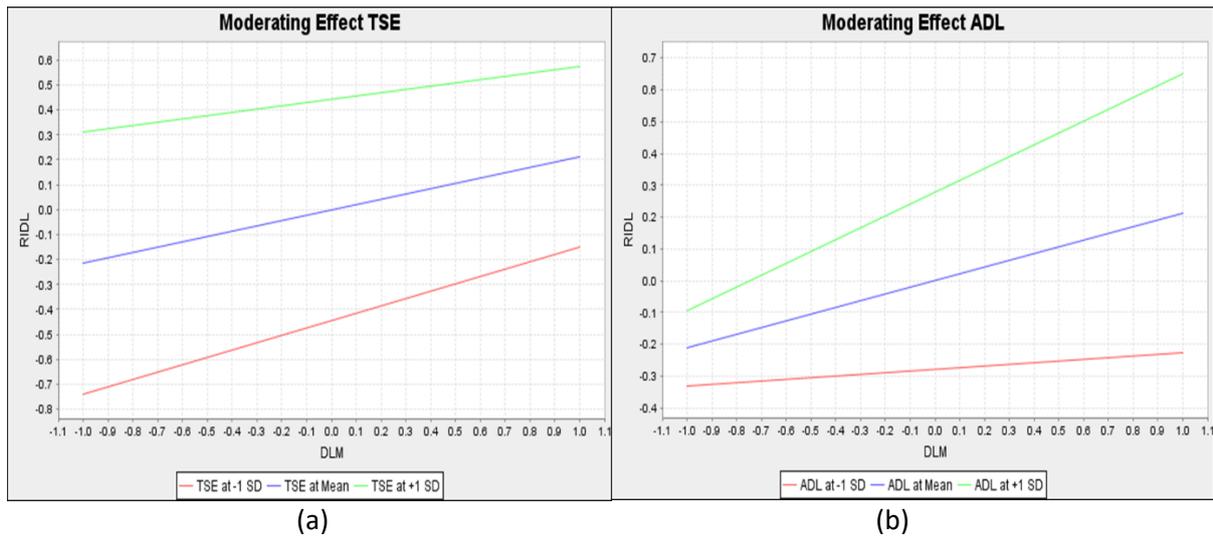
Figure 3. Moderating effect of TSE and ADL

The complete visualization of the test results is presented in Figure 4. The figure clearly shows the T statistics outer loadings values for the four latent variables, the direct influence of the independent variables on the dependent variables, and the moderating effect. Except for the moderating effect TSE, the other T statistics values are tested significant, thus supporting the hypothesis.
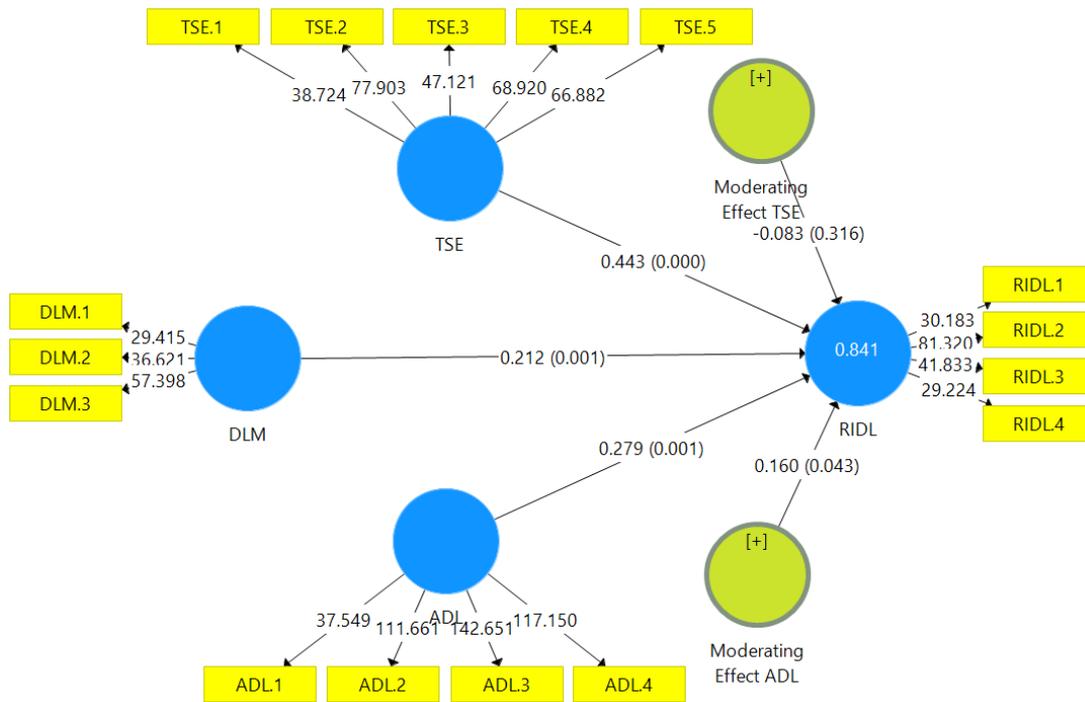

Figure 4. Empirical structural model

DISCUSSIONS

The present study sought to examine the essential roles of DLM, TSE, and teachers' ADL in shaping teachers' RIDL. Using PLS-SEM, the findings provide both theoretical insights and practical implications for strengthening differentiated learning in the Indonesian context. The result of the analysis confirmed that all three main predictors: DLM, TSE, and ADL had significant positive effects on RIDL. Among these, TSE emerged as the strongest determinant, underscoring the central role of teachers' confidence in their instructional abilities. This aligns with prior literature emphasizing self-

efficacy as a critical driver of instructional innovation and adaptive teaching practices (Arias-Pastor et al., 2024; Meschede & Hardy, 2020; Sarfraz et al., 2022; Teig et al., 2019). In contrast, while DLM and ADL exhibited smaller effect sizes, their significance highlights the importance of both structural support in managing DL and teachers' attitudinal acceptance in fostering readiness. Previous research has also suggested that school management practices influence teachers' willingness and ability to adopt differentiated strategies (Goddard et al., 2019; Sebastian et al., 2019). Collectively, these results suggest that readiness for DL implementation is multidimensional, requiring both the psychological assurance of teachers and the organizational conditions that support differentiated practices.

The study sheds light on the moderating effects within the model. Teacher ADL significantly moderated the relationship between DLM and RIDL, albeit with a small effect size. This finding suggests that the effectiveness of DLM is magnified when teachers embrace the philosophy and practice of differentiation. Similar findings were reported by Tomlinson (2021), who argued that teacher attitudes toward differentiation critically determine its classroom enactment. In other words, even strong management systems may have a limited impact unless teachers themselves are receptive to differentiated approaches. Conversely, TSE did not demonstrate a significant moderating role, indicating that while self-efficacy directly boosts readiness, it does not alter how management practices translate into readiness. This divergence underscores the nuanced roles of psychological versus attitudinal factors: self-efficacy is a powerful direct driver (Maddux & Kleiman, 2021; Maheshwari, 2022; Nykänen et al., 2019), whereas acceptance functions as a contextual amplifier of management effectiveness.

Interestingly, teacher self-efficacy (TSE) did not emerge as a significant moderator in the relationship between DLM and RIDL ($\beta = -0.083$, $p = 0.330$). One possible explanation lies in the operational definition of TSE used in this study, which primarily captured teachers' beliefs in their general instructional capabilities. While such beliefs strongly and directly predicted readiness, they may not necessarily alter how external management practices translate into readiness. This finding echoes earlier studies suggesting that self-efficacy functions more as a direct driver of teacher behavior rather than as a contextual amplifier of school-level factors (Klassen & Tze, 2014; Zee & Koomen, 2016).

Cultural and systemic factors in the Indonesian context may also contribute to this pattern. Teachers in both ES and MI operate under relatively centralized regulations and curriculum frameworks. As a result, self-efficacy, while important for individual motivation, may not substantially modify the impact of managerial or organizational arrangements. In such contexts, collective attitudes such as acceptance (ADL) may play a more decisive moderating role, as they directly influence the alignment between policy-driven practices and teachers' willingness to implement them (Suprayogi et al., 2017). Future studies could refine the operationalization of TSE to distinguish between task-specific and general efficacy, and test whether such distinctions produce different moderating effects.

The model fit indices and explained variance support the robustness of the model. With an SRMR of 0.053, NFI above 0.90, and RMS Theta below 0.12, the measurement and structural models demonstrate acceptable fit (Hair et al., 2021; Henseler et al., 2016). Furthermore, the R^2 value of 0.841 for RIDL is substantial, indicating that the predictors together explain over 80% of the variance in teacher readiness. This level of explanatory power surpasses many previous studies in similar contexts, suggesting that the integrated model adopted here captures the complexity of factors shaping readiness for DL.

Although this study did not explicitly examine differences in teachers' readiness to implement differentiated learning (RIDL) across school types (public elementary schools versus Islamic elementary schools/MI) or demographic subgroups (e.g., age, teaching experience, or educational background), the composition of the sample ensured representation from both categories. Thus, the findings can be considered reflective of teachers' readiness across diverse school settings. Previous research in Indonesia suggests that contextual differences such as school type or teacher demographics may influence the way differentiated learning is understood and enacted (Gasser et al., 2018; Suprayogi et al., 2017). However, the strong explanatory power of the present model ($R^2 = 0.841$) indicates that the combination of DLM, TSE, and ADL plays a central role regardless of background characteristics. Future

studies may therefore build upon these results by systematically comparing groups, in order to explore whether contextual or demographic variables amplify or attenuate the relationships observed here.

From a theoretical standpoint, these findings extend the body of knowledge by bridging structural, psychological, and attitudinal perspectives on teacher readiness. Prior studies on DL in Indonesia and other developing contexts often relied on qualitative approaches, emphasizing challenges and teacher perceptions (Farisia et al., 2025; Padauleng et al., 2025; Santoso et al., 2022; Yunaini et al., 2024). By applying PLS-SEM, this study quantitatively validates those earlier insights, offering stronger empirical evidence of how DLM, TSE, and ADL jointly contribute to readiness. The inclusion of moderation analysis further advances the literature, revealing that acceptance—not self-efficacy—is the key moderator enhancing the management–readiness link.

Practically, the results underscore the need for a dual strategy in policy and professional development. Strengthening teachers' self-efficacy through continuous professional learning, mentoring, and recognition is critical, as confidence directly drives readiness (Burger, 2024; Kalinowski et al., 2024; Karaiskos et al., 2024; Koul et al., 2023). At the same time, school leaders and policymakers must invest in systems that not only improve DL management but also cultivate teacher acceptance of differentiation. Professional development programs should therefore go beyond technical training, embedding reflective practices and peer collaboration that nurture positive attitudes toward differentiation (Hidayat et al., 2024; Kwok et al., 2025; Richard et al., 2018; Tomlinson, 2021).

This study also found that the readiness of ES and MI teachers in implementing differentiated learning tends to be low to moderate. In fact, the curriculum currently used in Indonesia recommends that teachers implement differentiated learning. However, research shows that in reality teachers do not do it properly on a regular basis. This finding is in line with previous research (Andarwulan et al., 2021; Hidayat & Patras, 2024; Nurtanto et al., 2019; Winarto et al., 2025). International research also shows a similar phenomenon (Kalinowski et al., 2024). In sum, this study highlights that building readiness for differentiated learning requires more than managerial systems or teacher competence in isolation. It demands the integration of effective management, psychological empowerment, and attitudinal alignment, ensuring that teachers are both capable and willing to enact differentiation in their classrooms.

These findings also resonate with the current educational reform agenda in Indonesia, particularly the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum or the next curriculum and the School Transformation Program, which emphasize differentiated and student-centered learning. By demonstrating the central role of teacher self-efficacy, acceptance, and effective management, this study provides empirical support for policies that invest in teacher empowerment and systemic support. Ultimately, strengthening these dimensions is essential for ensuring that reform initiatives translate into meaningful and sustainable improvements in classroom practice.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this study has found that: 1) Differentiated learning management has a significant direct effect on teacher readiness in implementing differentiated learning. 2) Self-efficacy has a direct and significant effect on teacher readiness in implementing differentiated learning. Teacher self-efficacy plays an important role in increasing their readiness to implement differentiated learning, where teachers with high self-efficacy tend to be more consistent in implementing differentiated learning. 3) Teacher acceptance of differentiated learning has a direct and significant effect on teacher readiness to implement differentiated learning. 4) Teacher self-efficacy does not show a role as a moderator in the causal relationship between learning management and teacher readiness to implement differentiated learning. 5) Teacher acceptance of differentiated learning is tested to significantly moderate the causal relationship between learning management and teacher readiness to implement differentiated learning. Teacher acceptance of differentiated learning is empirically proven to strengthen the influence of learning management on teacher readiness to implement differentiated learning. This study has limitations that can affect the results achieved. These limitations are 1) data collection was carried out using cross-sectional surveys with limited samples, and 2) the instruments used were developed by the researchers themselves so that there is still a possibility of

biased items even though they have been tested before being used in the study. Based on these research limitations, we recommend further studies as follows: 1) Research similar to this study but using different methods, samples, and data collection and analysis techniques. 2) Research on teacher readiness to implement differentiated learning by exploring other individual characteristics as independent variables. Based on the findings of this study, we recommend to related parties: 1) For Elementary School and Madrasah Ibtidaiyah teachers, it is recommended to be actively involved in professional learning communities and proactively and independently carry out continuous learning to improve their ability to manage differentiated learning, self-efficacy, and acceptance of differentiated learning. 2) For school-level professional learning community administrators, it is recommended to design and implement professional development programs in their schools, and to reflect and evaluate learning practices continuously.

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