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Enhancing Teacher Performance Through Coaching: A Study on Differentiated Learning in Primary Schools

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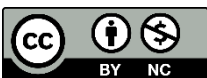
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Abstract

This study investigates the role of teacher coaching programs in improving the effectiveness of differentiated learning in primary schools, focusing on SD Negeri Langgo and SD Negeri 2 Peukan Pidie in Aceh, Indonesia. Using a qualitative descriptive approach, the research explores how teacher coaching supports instructional practices, teacher competence, and student learning outcomes. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews, classroom observations, and document analysis, and were analyzed thematically. The findings reveal that teacher coaching significantly enhanced the quality of differentiated instruction, although each school applied different coaching strategies. SD Negeri Langgo emphasized individual mentoring, while SD Negeri 2 Peukan Pidie focused on peer discussions and collaborative learning communities. Both approaches enabled teachers to adapt instructional methods to meet diverse student learning needs more effectively. The study also identified several challenges, including limited professional development opportunities, time constraints, insufficient learning resources, and varying levels of student motivation. Despite these obstacles, differentiated learning positively contributed to student engagement, participation, and literacy and numeracy achievement. The study concludes that sustained teacher coaching, institutional support, and continuous professional development are essential for successful differentiated instruction. It recommends expanding teacher training and improving resource availability to strengthen learning outcomes in diverse classroom settings.



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1. Introduction

Education plays a crucial role in shaping the future of individuals and societies. It serves as a means of cultural transmission, ensuring that values, traditions, and knowledge are passed down from one generation to the next [1, 2]. As the world evolves, education must adapt to meet the growing demands of the 21st century, particularly amid digital transformation [3, 4]. One of the

key elements in ensuring the success of educational programs is teacher effectiveness, as teachers are the primary facilitators of learning in the classroom [5]. A well-trained and highly motivated teaching workforce is essential to achieving high-quality education outcomes, particularly in the context of differentiated learning, where instruction is tailored to meet the diverse needs of students [6].

Differentiated instruction has gained significant attention as an effective approach to improving student engagement and learning outcomes [7]. This method acknowledges that students have varied abilities, learning styles, and learning paces, making it necessary for teachers to adopt flexible strategies for delivering instruction. Differentiated learning ensures that all students, regardless of their academic levels, receive appropriate guidance and support in their learning journey [8]. However, the successful implementation of this approach largely depends on teachers' competencies and performance, underscoring the importance of continuous professional development and performance management.

In the context of primary education in Pidie District, Aceh Province, Indonesia, ensuring effective differentiated learning requires structured teacher training programs. Teacher performance is influenced by various factors, including pedagogical knowledge, teaching strategies, classroom management, and administrative support [9]. To enhance teacher effectiveness, school administrators and educational policymakers must focus on comprehensive teacher development programs, including coaching, mentoring, and regular performance evaluations. Such initiatives aim to equip teachers with the skills needed to adapt their teaching methods to diverse student needs, thereby improving overall educational outcomes [10].

Despite the recognized benefits of differentiated learning, many teachers still face challenges in implementing this approach effectively. Some of the common obstacles include a lack of training in differentiated instruction, limited resources, and inadequate support from school management. Additionally, varying levels of teacher motivation and professional commitment can impact the consistency and quality of differentiated learning practices. Addressing these challenges requires targeted interventions that focus on improving teacher performance, including structured supervision, collaborative learning communities, and ongoing professional development.

This study aims to examine the role of teacher performance coaching in enhancing the effectiveness of differentiated learning in primary schools in Pidie District. Specifically, it seeks to explore the strategies used in teacher performance development, the challenges faced in its implementation, and the impact of such initiatives on student learning outcomes. By analyzing these aspects, the study aims to provide valuable insights to improve teacher development policies and practices in primary education.

Through this research, effective strategies for teacher training and professional development are expected to be identified, thereby improving the implementation of differentiated instruction. The findings can serve as a reference for educational stakeholders, including policymakers, school administrators, and teachers, to develop more structured and sustainable teacher development programs. Ultimately, enhancing teacher performance will not only improve classroom learning experiences but also contribute to the overall quality of education in primary schools.

2. Materials and Methods

2.1. Research Design

This study employs a qualitative, descriptive approach to examine teacher performance coaching in enhancing the effectiveness of differentiated learning. The research focuses on understanding the experiences, strategies, and challenges faced by teachers and school administrators in implementing teacher training programs. A case study design is utilized to explore in-depth perspectives from selected primary schools in Pidie District.

2.2. Research Location and Participants

The research was conducted in two primary schools, SD Negeri Langgo and SD Negeri 2 Peukan Pidie, Aceh, Indonesia, which were selected for their implementation of differentiated learning and teacher coaching programs. The participants in this study included teachers, school principals, education supervisors, and students. Teachers were selected as the primary respondents since they directly implement differentiated instruction, while school principals and education supervisors provided insights into teacher performance management. A purposive sampling technique was used to select participants who had direct involvement in teacher coaching and differentiated learning strategies.

2.3. Data Collection Methods

Data collection was carried out using three main techniques: interviews, observations, and document analysis. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with teachers, school principals, and education supervisors to explore their experiences, perceptions, and challenges in teacher coaching. The interview questions focused on topics such as teacher training programs, supervision methods, differentiated instruction strategies, and the perceived impact of coaching on student learning outcomes. Additionally, classroom observations were conducted to assess teacher-student interactions, instructional methods, and

Table 1. Teacher coaching strategies in SD Negeri Langgo and SD Negeri 2 Peukan Pidie.

Coaching Strategy	SD Negeri Langgo	SD Negeri 2 Peukan Pidie
Individual Mentoring	Yes	No
Peer Discussion Groups	No	Yes
Lesson Study Sessions	No	Yes
Formal Workshops	Yes	Yes
Classroom Observations	Yes	Yes

the implementation of differentiated learning strategies. This allowed the researcher to evaluate how teachers applied varied teaching approaches based on student needs. Lastly, document analysis was conducted on relevant school records, including teacher training reports, lesson plans, and student assessment data, to understand how differentiated learning is integrated into classroom practices.

2.4. Data Analysis Techniques

The data collected from interviews, observations, and documents were analyzed using thematic analysis. The first step involved transcribing and organizing the collected data to facilitate systematic examination. Next, coding and categorization were conducted to identify recurring themes related to teacher coaching, instructional strategies, challenges, and institutional support. To ensure the validity of the findings, data triangulation was applied by comparing insights obtained from different data sources. This helped cross-verify information and reduce potential researcher bias. The final stage of analysis involved interpretation and concluding, in which findings were synthesized and connected to existing theoretical frameworks on teacher performance management and differentiated learning.

3. Results and Discussion

This section presents the study's findings on teacher performance coaching to enhance the effectiveness of differentiated learning at SD Negeri Langgo and SD Negeri 2 Peukan Pidie. The results are categorized by key themes identified during data analysis: the effectiveness of teacher coaching programs, the implementation of differentiated learning, the challenges faced by teachers, and the impact on student learning outcomes.

3.1. Effectiveness of Teacher Coaching Programs

The study found that both schools implemented structured teacher coaching programs, but with variations in their approach. SD Negeri Langgo focused more on individual coaching and mentoring, where senior teachers and school principals provided personalized guidance to new and less experienced teachers. In contrast, SD Negeri 2 Peukan Pidie emphasized collaborative learning communities, where

teachers participated in peer discussions, lesson study groups, and professional development workshops.

Teachers reported that regular coaching sessions helped them improve their instructional planning, classroom management, and ability to assess student needs more effectively. [Table 1](#) summarizes the coaching strategies used in both schools.

3.2. Implementation of Differentiated Learning

Observations indicated that teachers in both schools employed differentiated instruction, but the methods and extent of differentiation varied. Teachers at SD Negeri Langgo relied heavily on diagnostic assessments to tailor lessons based on students' initial abilities. On the other hand, SD Negeri 2 Peukan Pidie emphasized student-centered learning, allowing students to choose learning tasks based on their interests and preferences. [Figure 1](#) illustrates the primary differentiation strategies used in the two schools.

The study identified three main strategies that teachers used in implementing differentiated learning: content differentiation, process differentiation, and product differentiation. Content differentiation involved adjusting the complexity of learning materials based on students' abilities. For instance, students with higher reading proficiency were given more advanced texts, while those who needed additional support were provided with simplified versions or guided reading sessions. This approach ensured that all students could engage with the material at a level suited to their needs.

In addition to adjusting content, teachers employed process differentiation, modifying teaching methods to align with students' learning styles. Some students learned best through auditory instruction, while others benefited more from visual aids or hands-on activities. Teachers at SD Negeri Langgo, for example, incorporated multimedia resources and group discussions. In contrast, those at SD Negeri 2 Peukan Pidie relied on inquiry-based learning techniques that encouraged students to explore concepts independently. By varying instructional strategies, teachers were able to cater to diverse student needs and enhance engagement in the learning process.

Another key approach was product differentiation, which

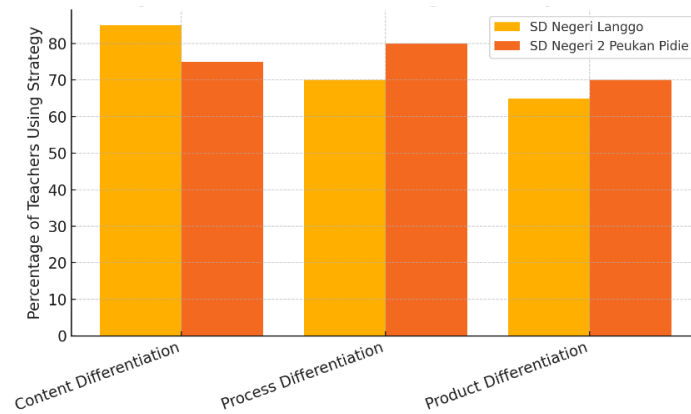


Figure 1. Differentiation strategies used by teachers.

allowed students to demonstrate their understanding in different ways. Instead of a one-size-fits-all assessment, students were given multiple options to showcase their learning. Some students preferred writing essays, while others created presentations, posters, or hands-on projects. This flexibility enabled students to express their understanding in a manner that aligned with their strengths and interests, fostering a sense of ownership and motivation in the learning process.

Despite these efforts, several challenges hindered the full implementation of differentiated learning. Teachers reported time constraints as a major obstacle, as preparing multiple versions of lesson materials and assessments required extensive planning. Additionally, limited instructional resources posed difficulties, particularly in schools with fewer technological tools or printed materials. Teachers also noted that managing a classroom with diverse learning needs demanded significant effort, particularly when students required individualized support. As a result, while differentiation strategies were implemented to an extent, their effectiveness was often constrained by these logistical and resource-related limitations.

3.3. Challenges Faced by Teachers

During the interviews, teachers highlighted several key challenges that affected their ability to implement differentiated instruction effectively. One of the most pressing issues was limited professional training. While the teacher coaching sessions provided some guidance, many educators expressed the need for more in-depth training on differentiation techniques. They felt that current training programs covered only the basics, leaving them unsure how to adapt lessons to the diverse needs of students in practical classroom settings. Without specialized training, teachers often struggled to modify their teaching methods to truly accommodate different learning styles and abilities.

Another major challenge was time constraints. Differentiated instruction requires teachers to prepare multiple lesson plans, varied instructional materials, and different assessment methods to cater to diverse student needs. Many teachers found this time-consuming and overwhelming, particularly when managing large class sizes. The additional workload made it difficult for them to consistently implement differentiation strategies, resulting in inconsistent lesson delivery and student engagement.

Resource limitations were also a significant barrier. Both SD Negeri Langgo and SD Negeri 2 Peukan Pidie lacked instructional materials and technological tools necessary to support diverse learning needs. In many cases, teachers had to rely on traditional methods, such as printed worksheets and verbal explanations, rather than incorporating digital resources, interactive learning tools, or specialized materials that could better accommodate different learning styles. The lack of adequate resources limited their ability to create engaging, personalized learning experiences for students.

Lastly, varying student motivation posed an additional challenge. While some students responded well to independent learning tasks, others struggled with self-regulation and engagement, requiring additional teacher support and supervision. Teachers noted that low motivation among certain students hindered the effectiveness of differentiated learning, as some learners were reluctant to take ownership of their learning. Addressing this issue required extra effort from teachers to continuously encourage and guide students, which further added to their workload. [Figure 2](#) illustrates the frequency of challenges reported by teachers in both schools.

3.4. Impact on Student Learning Outcomes

To measure the impact of teacher coaching and differentiated learning, student performance records

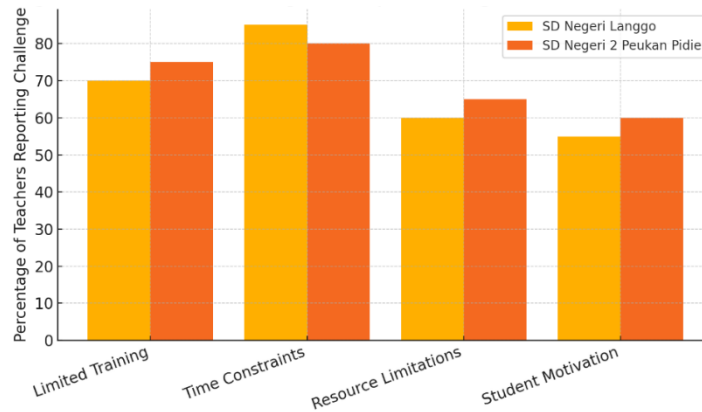


Figure 2. Common challenges in implementing differentiated instruction.

Table 2. Student performance before and after teacher coaching.

Performance Indicator	Before Coaching (Avg. Score)	After Coaching (Avg. Score)	% Improvement
Student Engagement Level	68%	85%	17%
Literacy Test Scores	72.5	82.3	9.80%
Numeracy Test Scores	70.1	81	10.90%
Homework Completion Rate	65%	80%	15%

were analyzed before and after the implementation of coaching programs. The data showed a significant improvement in student engagement and academic performance. The results in Table 2 suggest that teacher coaching had a positive impact on student engagement and achievement, particularly in literacy and numeracy skills.

The study's findings highlight the positive impact of teacher coaching programs on improving teacher competence in both SD Negeri Langgo and SD Negeri 2 Peukan Pidie, although their approaches varied. SD Negeri Langgo emphasized individual mentoring, where experienced teachers and school principals provided one-on-one guidance to help less experienced teachers refine their teaching methods. In contrast, SD Negeri 2 Peukan Pidie adopted a collaborative learning approach, promoting peer discussions and professional learning communities. This model allowed teachers to share best practices, discuss challenges, and work collectively to improve instructional strategies.

Despite the success of implementing differentiated learning, several challenges hindered its full effectiveness. The most common obstacles included time constraints and limited resources. Teachers often found it difficult to prepare multiple lesson plans and adapt instructional materials to meet students' diverse needs, leading to inconsistencies in differentiation practices. Additionally, a lack of instructional resources and technological tools made it challenging for teachers to create engaging, customized learning experiences for students with varying abilities. Without adequate support, some teachers struggled to consistently apply

differentiation strategies in their classrooms.

Nevertheless, the study found that teacher coaching programs had a direct and positive impact on student learning outcomes. Following the introduction of structured coaching programs, students demonstrated notable improvements in engagement, literacy, and numeracy skills. Classroom observations and assessment records showed increased student participation, better comprehension of learning materials, and improved test scores. These findings suggest that enhanced teacher development programs and continuous professional training can significantly contribute to the effectiveness of differentiated learning and overall student achievement.

3.5. Discussions

The findings of this study provide valuable insights into how teacher coaching programs influence the implementation of differentiated learning in primary schools. The results indicate that structured coaching improves teacher competence and instructional effectiveness, ultimately enhancing student engagement and learning outcomes. However, challenges such as time constraints, limited resources, and varying student motivation continue to hinder full implementation. This section discusses the implications of these findings in relation to existing literature.

3.5.1. Effectiveness of Teacher Coaching Programs

The study found that teacher coaching significantly improved instructional practices, but the approaches varied between schools. SD Negeri Langgo focused on

individual mentoring, while SD Negeri 2 Peukan Pidie emphasized peer discussions and collaborative learning. Research suggests that both mentoring and collaborative professional development are effective strategies for enhancing teacher performance. According to Kraft et al. [11], individualized coaching enables teachers to receive personalized feedback and targeted support, leading to more effective classroom practices. Similarly, Şener and Mede [12] emphasizes that collaborative learning among teachers fosters reflective practice, helping educators develop innovative teaching strategies.

The impact of coaching programs was evident in improved teacher confidence and pedagogical knowledge, particularly in the application of differentiated learning strategies. Studies by Swaffield and Poekert [13] confirm that ongoing professional development enhances teacher adaptability and instructional quality, allowing educators to better address diverse student needs. These findings highlight the importance of continuous professional learning opportunities to sustain teacher growth and instructional effectiveness.

3.5.2. Challenges in Implementing Differentiated Learning

Despite the benefits of differentiated instruction, teachers faced several challenges, including time constraints, resource limitations, and student motivation issues. The study revealed that teachers struggled to prepare multiple lesson plans and tailor instruction to different learning styles due to limited preparation time. This aligns with findings from Gubbins et al. [14], who states that while differentiation improves student learning, it requires substantial time and effort, often leading to teacher fatigue.

Resource constraints were another significant challenge, particularly in access to instructional materials and technology tools. Johler and Krumsvik [15] highlights that schools with limited access to digital learning tools and printed materials often struggle to implement effective differentiation. This was evident in both schools, where teachers relied on traditional teaching methods due to a lack of technological support. Providing more funding for educational resources and digital tools could help address this barrier.

Another major challenge was the varying levels of student motivation, with some students struggling with self-directed learning tasks. According to Alamri et al. [16], motivation plays a crucial role in student success, and differentiation should include strategies that encourage intrinsic motivation. Teachers in this study reported difficulty in maintaining student engagement, particularly for learners who required additional guidance. This

suggests that differentiated instruction should also incorporate motivation-enhancing techniques, such as choice-based assignments and goal-setting activities.

3.5.3. Impact on Student Learning Outcomes

The study demonstrated that differentiated learning, when effectively implemented, leads to significant improvements in student engagement, literacy, and numeracy. This aligns with previous research by Magableh and Abdullah [17], which found that students in differentiated classrooms demonstrate higher levels of comprehension, problem-solving skills, and academic performance. The increase in literacy and numeracy scores observed in this study further supports the argument that tailored instruction helps students grasp concepts more effectively.

Moreover, teacher coaching played a crucial role in student success, as teachers who received more guidance and professional development were better equipped to adjust their teaching strategies. Studies by Swaffield and Poekert [13], and Martin and Mulvihill [18] confirm that when teachers are well-supported through coaching and ongoing training, student achievement improves significantly. This reinforces the need for strong institutional support for teacher development programs.

3.5.4. Implications for Future Research and Policy

The findings of this study suggest several key implications for educational policy and future research. Firstly, teacher coaching programs should be expanded to include more frequent, in-depth training in differentiated instruction. Providing teachers with practical workshops, hands-on training, and follow-up mentoring can enhance their ability to implement effective differentiation. Secondly, schools should invest in digital learning tools and additional instructional materials to support differentiated learning. Access to adaptive learning technologies and student-centered resources can help teachers better cater to diverse learning needs.

4. Conclusions

This study examined the impact of teacher coaching programs on the implementation of differentiated learning in SD Negeri Langgo and SD Negeri 2 Peukan Pidie. The findings demonstrate that structured teacher coaching plays a significant role in improving teacher competence, instructional practices, and student learning outcomes. Although both schools successfully implemented differentiated learning, they adopted different coaching approaches. SD Negeri Langgo focused on individual mentoring, while SD Negeri 2 Peukan Pidie emphasized collaborative peer discussions

and professional learning communities. These variations suggest that effective professional development should be flexible and adapted to the specific context and needs of each school.

The study also identified several challenges affecting the implementation of differentiated instruction, including limited instructional resources, insufficient planning time, and varying levels of student motivation. Teachers experienced difficulties in designing multiple learning activities and adapting materials to meet diverse student needs. In addition, some students required additional encouragement and guidance to remain actively engaged in learning activities. These challenges indicate the need for continuous professional development, stronger institutional support, and improved access to teaching resources and educational technology.

Despite these constraints, differentiated learning positively influenced student engagement, participation, literacy, and numeracy achievement. The use of differentiated content, processes, and products enabled students to learn according to their individual abilities, interests, and learning preferences, resulting in better understanding and academic performance.

Based on these findings, the study recommends expanding teacher coaching programs to provide sustained and practical training in differentiated instruction. Schools and educational stakeholders should also strengthen resource allocation, integrate digital learning tools, and develop strategies that enhance student motivation and participation. Furthermore, future research is encouraged to investigate the long-term effects of differentiated learning and to identify effective models for sustaining inclusive, student-centered instruction in diverse classroom settings.

In conclusion, teacher coaching is a key factor in supporting the successful implementation of differentiated learning in primary education. With effective coaching, adequate resources, and institutional commitment, schools can create more inclusive learning environments that support students' diverse needs and promote improved academic achievement.

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Data Availability Statement: The data supporting the findings of this study are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request.

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Conflicts of Interest: All the authors declare no conflicts of interest.

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