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School readiness analysis in implementing differentiated learning in Kurikulum Merdeka

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ABSTRACT

The principle of differentiated learning is fundamental to the implementation of the Merdeka curriculum. Organizational readiness analysis became crucial before the implementation of differentiated instruction. This research aims to determine the school's readiness as an institution or organization to implement Differentiated Learning in Kurikulum Merdeka. This research was conducted at SMP Penggerak in Bogor City. The research is quantitative research with a survey method. The level of school readiness will be measured using the Readiness Framework Thinking Tool from Scaccia et al. R=MC^2 readiness framework is the framework for the instrument adopted. (R: Readiness; C: Innovation Specific Capacity; C: General Capacity). Based on research on School Readiness Levels), the percentage of readiness levels for the three elements of readiness levels is 80.1 percent for motivation elements, 83.7 percent for general capacity elements, and 87.4 percent for particular capacity elements. Using an Interactive System Framework (ISF) and Quality Implementation Framework (QIF), the implementation is divided into 4 phases. In phase 1, all processes are related to internal preparation. In phase 2, schools can develop teams under learning committees. In phase 3, the development of a sustainable strategy, and in phase 4, it is necessary to develop a pattern for the future.

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ABSTRAK

Prinsip pembelajaran berdiferensiasi menjadi sangat penting pada implementasi kurikulum merdeka. Sebelum implementasi sebuah inovasi seperti pembelajaran berdiferensiasi, sangat perlu dilakukan analisis bagaimana tingkat kesiapan sekolah untuk mengimplementasikan pembelajaran berdiferensiasi. Tujuan penelitian ini untuk mengetahui kesiapan sekolah sebagai lembaga atau organisasi dalam menerapkan Pembelajaran Diferensiasi di Kurikulum Merdeka. Penelitian ini menganalisis kesiapan SMP Penggerak di Kota Bogor dalam menerapkan pembelajaran Diferensiasi. Penelitian ini merupakan penelitian kuantitatif dengan metode survei. Tingkat kesiapan sekolah akan diukur dengan menggunakan Readiness Framework Thinking Tool dari Scaccia, et. Kerangka kesiapan R=MC^2 merupakan kerangka instrumen yang diadopsi. (R: Kesiapan; C: Kapasitas Khusus Inovasi; C: Kapasitas Umum). Berdasarkan hasil penelitian Tingkat Kesiapan Sekolah), persentase tingkat kesiapan ketiga unsur tingkat kesiapan adalah 80,1 persen unsur motivasi, 83,7 persen unsur kapasitas umum, dan 87,4 persen unsur kapasitas khusus. Dengan menggunakan Interactive System Framework (ISF) dan Quality Implementation Framework (QIF), proses pelaksanaan pembelajaran berdiferensiasi di SMP Penggerak Kota Bogor dapat dibagi menjadi 4 tahap. Pada tahap 1 semua proses yang berkaitan dengan persiapan internal harus dilakukan. Pada fase 2, sekolah dapat mengembangkan tim di bawah komite pembelajaran. Pada fase 3 pengembangan strategi berkelanjutan dan pada fase 4 perlu dikembangkan pola implementasi untuk masa depan.

Kata Kunci: *kurikulum merdeka; pembelajaran berdiferensiasi; SMP penggerak*

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INTRODUCTION

The increasing number of diverse students in every classroom worldwide has impacted how education responds to this. Different learning is a well-known strategy for facilitating diverse students (Fikra, 2022). Because no single approach works for all students, teachers must adapt their teaching to students' readiness, interests, and learning styles. Until now, many lessons have been designed with the same activities for all students (Yin & Chai, 2020).

Based on the evaluation of the implementation of the Kurikulum 2013, the Kemendikbudristek (Indonesian Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology) has emphasized the philosophy that guides schools to design learning processes according to the needs of the students. This philosophy has not been fully realized despite the government's provision of comprehensive syllabi. Following the results of the evaluation of the implementation of the Kurikulum 2013 and due to the COVID-19 pandemic that has affected the whole country, Kemendikbudristek introduced the Kurikulum Merdeka on February 11, 2023, as the Merdeka Belajar policy (Turmuzi, 2022). The Kurikulum Merdeka is the government's attempt to make the curriculum more flexible, focus on essential material, and provide teachers more freedom to use various teaching tools according to the needs and characteristics of students (Wahyuningsari, 2022). The Kurikulum Merdeka uses technology and learning communities to share good practices between teachers, students, and academics (Nugraha, 2022).

The level of readiness is an important part of the success of the implementation of innovation (Scaccia et al., 2015), and this is also relevant to the implementation of differentiated learning in the Kurikulum Merdeka. In implementing differentiated learning in schools, schools' readiness level is fundamental, including the expertise of teachers and the availability of resources (Nahdhiah & Suciptaningsih, 2024). The level of school readiness can be seen from various aspects. In this study, the researchers adopted Scaccia's organizational level theory. Scaccia's level of readiness is the most comprehensive for assessing the level of school readiness for implementing differentiated learning in schools. The organizational level developed by Scaccia can also serve as a bridge to synchronize the efforts already made by organizations to implement innovations and strategies that can be carried out within organizations, including schools (Dias, 2023).

Many studies have been conducted on the effect of differentiated instruction on learning outcomes. Several studies have found that differentiated instruction improves student motivation and learning outcomes. The impact of differentiated instruction on academic achievement in specific subjects has also been studied in several countries, such as mathematics in Bhutan (Kado, 2022), science in Indonesia (Sriwahyuni, 2022), and English in Iran (Sapan, 2022). Meanwhile, studies on the level of school readiness for innovation implementation have been conducted by several researchers, such as a study on school readiness in implementing the Kurikulum Merdeka (Oktaviyanti & Ramyanti, 2023), and a study on the level of school readiness in a compliance program for implementing a smoking prevention program in Denmark (Bast et al., 2020). The studies related to school readiness that the authors found were mostly on school readiness in implementing the Kurikulum Merdeka. Therefore, this study is important to examine the level of school readiness in implementing differentiated learning.

This research aims to determine the readiness level of schools to implement differentiated learning in the Kurikulum Merdeka. The specific objectives are 1) to find out the schools' readiness in terms of motivation, general capacity, and capacity in implementing differentiated learning in the Kurikulum Merdeka; 2) to find out the important things that need to be prepared by schools for the implement of differentiated learning in the classroom, including the types of supporting programs required by schools.

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LITERATURE REVIEW

Organizational Readiness Level

The level of organizational readiness is related to the willingness and capacity of an institution or individual to implement innovations. Innovations can be in the form of new programs, policies, or practices for an organization (Hanafi, 2019). Organizational readiness is also the relationship between systems, processes, human resources, and work performance. An organization's readiness to implement change must begin with creating

a system that the organization will implement. Readiness is also closely related to the extent to which an institution or individual is willing and able to change (Maharani, 2021). According to Harthman in Maharani Maharani (2021), there are four pillars of organizational readiness: leadership, organizational governance, competence, and technology. Harthman considered the leadership pillar the most critical among the three other pillars. The absence of outstanding leadership would make it difficult for an organization to advance.

The level of organizational readiness is widely seen as an important factor in the success of an innovation within an organization. The level of organizational readiness developed by Scaccia (2015) integrates organizational readiness theory with its more recent application (practical implementation science heuristic for organizational readiness). The elements in the organizational readiness level developed by Scaccia refer to Weiner's organizational readiness level model and Flaspohler's organizational capacity theory (Nugroho, 2020). According to Scaccia, organizational readiness is a nuance of organizational readiness in implementing innovation, not just about being ready or not ready. According to Scaccia (2015), organisational readiness consists of three components: motivation, general capacity, and specific capacity. Motivation is the perceived usefulness contributing to the desire to use the implemented innovation (Sianipar, 2023). In Scaccia, the motivation element is broken down into five sub-elements: relative advantage, compatibility, complexity, trialability, observability, and priority. Factors influencing motivation, such as stakeholder perceptions, are also considered in the readiness level developed by Scaccia. The second element is general capacity. General capacity relates to attributes within an organization that enable it to function well, including its relationships with other parties, including the community. General capacity includes organizational values and culture. The third element is innovation-specific capacity. Innovation-specific capacity is related to the human resources, technical elements, and organizational financial conditions that influence an organization's readiness to implement a high-quality innovation. (Domlyn, 2021).

School Readiness Level

The level of school readiness in this study refers to Scaccia's level of organizational readiness. Scaccia's level of organizational readiness is a theory of organizational readiness that considers how the theory can be applied in real-life situations. The formula for organizational readiness developed by Scaccia (2015) adopts Einstein's famous theory with a different meaning, namely R= MC^2.

$$R= MC^2$$

Keterangan

R	: merupakan kesiapan / *readiness*
M	: motivasi / motivation
C pertama	: *general capacity*
C kedua	: *innovation specific capacity*

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In addition to referring to Weiner in his book entitled "*Debate: A Theory of Organizational Readiness for Change*," sub-elements are used to measure motivation, general capacity, and innovation-specific capacity (Flaspohler, 2012). To explain each element of readiness analyzed, the author also refers to various sources to complement the theory of organizational readiness in implementing differentiated learning. The following is from Scaccia (2015). elements of readiness. As shown in **Table 1**, the construction of motivational readiness consists of six sub-elements: relative advantage, compatibility, complexity, piloting, observability, and priority. General capacity comprises culture, organizational climate, innovation, resource utilization, leadership, organizational structure, and human resource capacity. Meanwhile, innovation-specific capacity is related to the knowledge, skills, and specific knowledge of human resources. The champion program is related to whether there are leaders who can lead this change, the climate, support, and relationships between organizations.

Table 1. Elements of School Readiness Level

Konstruksi Kesiapan / *Readiness Construct*	Element
Motivasi / *Motivation*	Relative advantages, compatibility, complexity, piloting, observability, and priority.
Kapasitas Umum/ *General Capacity*	Culture, climate, organizational innovation, resource utilization, leadership, structure, and staff capacity.
Kapasitas Spesifik/ *Inner Specific Capacity*	Knowledge, skills, specific capabilities, Champion programs, Specific supportive climate, Inter-organizational relationships.

Source: Scaccia (2015)

Differentiated Learning

Tomlinson (2003) states that differentiated learning means providing learning activities according to the child's profile. Through differentiated learning, educators provide a variety of ways for students to learn effectively and process/try to make all ideas make sense to them (the process of understanding). According to Tomlinson in his book entitled "How to Differentiate Instruction in Mixed-Ability Classrooms," the following are some examples of differentiated learning:

Differentiated learning is proactive learning. Learning that is designed proactively demonstrates the following proactive learning planning by providing a variety of ways for students in the classroom to understand and ultimately accelerate the learning process.

1. Teachers know when to adjust learning for specific kids and choose activities and learning methods appropriate to their needs.
2. Assessment is very important in learning differentiation. Teachers can use assessment results to determine the level of learning readiness and the appropriate learning model for children.
3. Differentiated learning is flexible learning that adapts to the needs and learning objectives to be achieved in the classroom. In differentiated learning, large group, small group, and individual instruction can be carried out in turns as needed.

In his book entitled "*The Differentiated Classroom: Responding to the Needs of All Learners*" Tomlinson states that teachers can categorize students' learning needs based on at least three aspects. These three aspects are:

1. Student readiness. Readiness is the capacity to learn new material. A task that considers students' readiness levels will take them out of their comfort zone, but with the right learning environment and adequate support, they will still be able to master the new material.
2. Student interests. We understand that, like adults, students also have their interests. Some students are interested in art, mathematics, science, drama, cooking, etc. Interest is one of the most important

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motivators for students to participate in learning actively. Tomlinson explains in his book that considering students' interests when designing learning has several objectives, including: a) helping students realize that there is a match between school and their desire to learn; b) showing the connection between all learning; c) using skills or ideas that are familiar to students as a bridge to learning new or unfamiliar ideas or skills; and d) increasing students' motivation to learn.

3. Student learning profiles. A student's learning profile is related to many factors, such as language, culture, health, family circumstances, and other specific characteristics. It is also associated with a person's learning style. Mapping students' learning needs based on their learning profiles allows them to learn naturally and efficiently. However, as teachers, we sometimes unintentionally choose learning styles that suit our own.

Once student profiles have been obtained, according to Tomlinson in his book, differentiated learning can be implemented using various approaches (multiple approaches) in content, process, and product. These three approaches are as follows:

1. Content Differentiation involves providing learning resources tailored to students' interests, readiness, and learning styles. Although the learning resources or content may be the same, the level of complexity is adjusted to suit the students' profiles.
2. Process Differentiation refers to how students understand and assimilate facts, concepts, and skills. Considering Bloom's approach, the process can be modified by adjusting activities to students' readiness or intellectual level.
3. Product differentiation allows students to demonstrate what they have learned in various ways. Products can be modified by allowing students to present or communicate their knowledge using multiple methods in response to their learning. According to, the elements of learning (curricular elements), namely content, process, and product, must be adjusted to students' readiness level, interests, and learning profiles.

All learning elements in differentiated learning, including content, process, and product, will be considered, and everything must be tailored to students' readiness levels. For example, the selection of learning content will move from simple to more concrete (Faiz, 2022). Learning process activities, for example, will be adjusted from more structured and detailed guided activities to activities where students can create or choose their activities according to their readiness (Yan, 2021).

In his book "How to Differentiate Instruction in Mixed-Ability Classrooms," Tomlinson divides learning profiles into four parts: group orientation, cognitive style, learning environment, and intelligence preferences, as shown in **Table 2** below.

Table 2. Student Profile

Student Profile	Description	Example
Learning environment	*Learning environment refers to the environment or conditions where learners feel comfortable learning.*	Some students need to move around when learning; some need brighter light when reading, a colourful room, etc.
Intelligence Preference	Intelligence Preferences	Each child has different intellectual preferences. The most famous theory of intelligence related to this is Howard Gardner's theory of multiple intelligences. Another theory related to this is Robert Stemberg's theory, according to which there are three types of intelligence: analytical, practical, and creative. The results will certainly be good if children can learn according to their intelligence preferences.
Cognitive Style	Cognitive learning refers to how students learn well, whether they	This category's most well-known learning styles are kinesthetic, auditory, and visual. All three

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Student Profile	Description	Example
	prefer to learn in groups or individually, or whether they prefer to learn with audio-visual assistance or simply through lectures.	reflect how educators can ensure they teach each child the best way possible.

Source: Tomlinson in the book "How to Differentiate Instruction in Classrooms with Mixed Ability"

Along with Tomlinson in his book, differentiated learning can be seen as a series of common-sense decisions made by teachers who are focused on the needs of their students. These decisions will consider the diversity of children's profiles, which will have implications for how teachers provide appropriate learning activities and learning resources for each child and consider how students can present their learning results through various works (Gusteti, 2022). Concern for students in paying attention to their strengths and needs is the focus of differentiated learning (Pozas, 2020). A learning profile that accommodates students' learning needs. The learning process requires educators to devote attention and take action to meet the specific needs of students. Differentiated learning allows teachers to view learning from various perspectives (Puzio, 2020).

METHODS

This study is a descriptive quantitative research using a survey method. According to Kerlinger, survey research examines large or small populations (universe) by sampling and examining selected samples from that population (Wies, 2023). Using sample data, surveys produce data on a population's trends, opinions, or attitudes (Strijker, 2020). This research uses a survey to determine school principals' and teachers' opinions or attitudes regarding their readiness to implement differentiated learning in schools. The sample size in this study was 51 people, consisting of all school leaders, including principals and teachers from two junior high schools in Bogor City. The school readiness level questionnaire was developed following the readiness framework tools introduced by Scaccia (2015). The questionnaire follows the school readiness level construction by measuring three elements, namely (1) motivation, (2) general capacity, and (3) specific capacity for innovation. The development of the readiness questionnaire also referred to the literature on differentiated learning that has been explained and integrated into the school readiness level construction. The following are the elements of school readiness adopted from the motivation element: relative advantage, compatibility, complexity, piloting, observability, and priority. General capacity elements consist of school culture, school climate, school innovation, utilization of school resources, school leadership, and school organizational structure. In contrast, specific capacity elements include specific knowledge and skills, champion programs, specific school support, and inter-organizational relationships. The questionnaire uses a 4-point Likert scale to record the attitudes of school leaders and teachers towards school readiness. The Likert scale data is analyzed using the following formula.

$$\text{Formula} = T \times Pn$$

Explanation
T : Total number of respondents who selected
Pn : Likert scale options

Each sub-element in the readiness thinking tools will be scored. The following formula will be used to calculate the score index.

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Index Formula % = Total Score / Y x 100

Once the readiness level percentage has been obtained, the following analysis uses the Interactive System Framework, which is integrated with the Quality Implementation Framework (Wandersman, 2019). Two important things can be done in the interactive system framework: building a sound and sustainable support system for consistent implementation or delivering support. In each phase, the school can consider how the synergy between the support and implementation systems can be built to create the differentiated learning it wants.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The measurement of school readiness based on the results of Scaccia et al. (2015) development at two junior high schools in Bogor City shows that the readiness level for the elements of motivation and general capacity is as follows: motivation element 80.1%, general capacity 83.7%, and specific capacity 87.4%. Meanwhile, what schools can do about further implementation after the readiness level at the school can be explained using the interactive system framework and quality implementation framework from Wandesman.

Table 3. School Readiness Levels

No	Motivation	General Capacity	Specific Capacity
1	80,1%	83,7%	87,4%

Source: Research 2024

Level of Readiness of Motivational Elements

In general, the level of school readiness in terms of the motivational element for implementing differentiated learning was 80.1%. The percentage of the sub-element of the relative advantage of differentiated learning compared to other approaches commonly used in schools was very high at 93.6%, which could indicate that most teachers and school leaders see differentiated learning as having a very significant relative advantage. Meanwhile, for the compatibility sub-element, the percentage obtained was 90% (strongly agree). Meanwhile, the percentage data for complexity, observability, and priority were 84.8%, 87.3%, and 83.8%, respectively. The percentage for the piloting sub-element is 78.4%. Overall, the percentage for all sub-elements in the motivation element is 80.1%, indicating that the two junior high schools in Bogor City have an outstanding level of readiness for the motivation element in terms of readiness. School motivation, as seen from the perspective of teachers and school leaders from several sub-elements of motivation, indicates that the level of school readiness in using motivation indicators in terms of readiness is powerful. However, several sub-elements, such as piloting, which states that all teachers have successfully tried and/or implemented differentiated learning, have a lower percentage than the sub-element, namely 78.4%, including 8.8% who stated that there were teachers who had not tried or implemented differentiate learning in the classroom Meanwhile, the other sub-elements that remain a concern for teachers and school leaders are how schools prioritize the implementation of differentiated learning, at 7%.

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Level of Readiness of General Capacity Elements

General capacity data shows that all sub-elements in general capacity are at an excellent level of readiness, with a percentage of respondents for all general capacity sub-elements at 83.7% (strongly agree). For all sub-elements, the highest percentage is for the school climate sub-element at 93.1%. In comparison, the two sub-elements with the lowest percentages are the school culture sub-element at 85.3% and organizational innovation at 85.8%. In the general capacity element, the percentage of respondents who disagree with innovation is relatively high at 5.7%, indicating that some teachers view differentiated learning as merely a requirement rather than a means to achieve other goals, such as helping students discover their best learning potential.

Level of Readiness of Specific Capacity Elements

The level of readiness for the specific capacity elements for innovation comprises four sub-elements: specific skills and knowledge, champion programs, school support, and inter-organizational relationships. In general, the percentage value of the school readiness level is 87.4%. For the percentage of the champion program sub-element, the percentage value is 93.6. The champion program's percentage should be 100% because the question was whether the school had implemented the independent curriculum gradually. However, during the observation, one teacher felt that the school had not implemented the independent curriculum even though the school had officially been designated as a pilot school. The teacher disagreed with the pilot program because the program was still controversial and seemed to have been implemented very suddenly in the school. Meanwhile, the sub-element of knowledge and skills received the lowest percentage, 72.5%. Not all teachers from the two schools felt they had the knowledge and skills to implement differentiated learning. The percentage of those who felt they did not have the skills and knowledge was 6%. The percentage for specific school support related to implementation was 91.7%, and for inter-organizational relationships, it was 88.2%. The percentage of readiness levels for specific capacity elements for innovation varies, and all are above 70%, indicating that the schools' readiness levels are above 70% for all specific capacity sub-elements.

Discussion

The school readiness measurement is based on the results of Scaccia et al. (2015), which explains the level of school readiness using three elements of readiness: motivation, general capacity, and specific capacity. The results obtained were above 70%. Regarding knowledge, skills, and abilities, the percentage is lower than the others, at 72.5%, while the highest percentage is for the champion program at 94%. These school readiness level data indicate that knowledge, skills, and abilities can be the focus of teacher capacity building. In developing their capacity, teachers can utilize the Platform Merdeka Mengajar (Marisana, 2023). According to Ramdani (2022), the Platform Merdeka Mengajar is an application that helps teachers improve their competencies and innovate, thereby inspiring their colleagues. However, efforts to develop teacher capacity need to pay attention to character building by providing examples in daily activities and strengthening habits, so that teachers' role models do not change due to environmental factors (Bahri, 2021). Meanwhile, another crucial aspect is how the learning committee can begin working on developing plans and teams to ensure smooth implementation. Therefore, a focus group discussion needs to be conducted by the learning committee before developing learning plans to ensure cohesion in the planning process (Prasetyono, 2022).

Meanwhile, what schools can do regarding further implementation after the level of readiness in schools is known can be explained using the Interactive System Framework (SIF) and the Quality Implementation Framework from Wandesman (2019), following **Figure 1,** with the following explanation.

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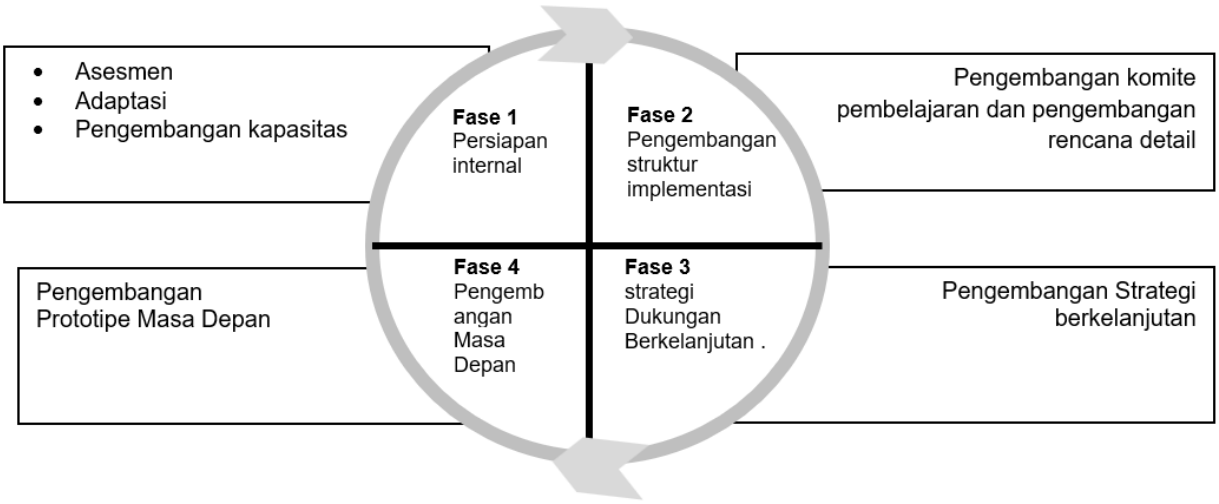

Figure 1. Integration of ISF & QIF
Source: Author's documentation 2021

During phase 1, three activities can be carried out: resource assessment, adaptation of appropriate learning, and development of appropriate resource capacity. Based on the readiness level for each element, capacity development can focus on mastering specific capacities for implementing differentiated learning (Purnawanto, 2023). Meanwhile, in phase 2, learning committees at the class or subject level can be developed for a broader implementation of differentiated learning in schools (Naibaho, 2023). In phase 3, schools can develop an implementation structure focusing on coaching and supervision to observe the implementation process. The implementation of coaching and supervision can be followed by teachers as concrete actions in developing their capacity to implement differentiated learning (Sari, 2023). Furthermore, in the next phase, a prototype for implementing differentiated learning can be developed based on what has been done and what the school thinks can be done. According to Tomlinson, several learning principles can be used as references in addition to the results of the teachers' reflections during the implementation process.

CONCLUSION

An analysis of the readiness level of junior high schools in Bogor City using Scaccia's theory shows a readiness level above 70% in three readiness elements: motivation, general capacity, and specific capacity. At a readiness level of 70%, the interactive system framework indicates that there must be collaboration between the support system, the delivery system, and implementers in all readiness elements. Meanwhile, what can be done by the support and delivery systems refers to the Quality Implementation Framework, which can start from phase 1, which focuses on strengthening the school internally. In phase 1, the things that can be done include a detailed assessment of resources, adaptation of learning models, and strengthening teacher capacity. In phase 2, the development of an implementation structure can be carried out through the development of the functions and roles of the learning committee, followed by phase 3, which is the development of sustainable strategies such as an efficient supervision system, a varied capacity development system, and others to be determined by the school.

Meanwhile, in phase 4, schools will look at how to develop differentiated learning prototypes that are appropriate for the school. Every step taken by the school will depend on how it responds to its readiness assessment results. Another important point is how the spirit of designing student-centered learning and using student profiles for planning and assessment activities is essential to be implemented as part of

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helping students achieve their maximum potential. Subsequent research will explore how the support and delivery systems at the school level can work together and produce a more appropriate differentiated learning implementation pattern for schools implementing the independent curriculum.

AUTHOR'S NOTE

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