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Inclusive School Leadership Practices and Teachers' Readiness for Differentiated Instruction at Holy Mary Udonthani School: Basis for an Inclusive Education Development Plan

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ABSTRACT

This study examined inclusive school leadership practices and teachers' readiness for differentiated instruction at Holy Mary Udonthani School, Thailand, as a basis for developing an Inclusive Education Development Plan. Anchored in distributed leadership, teacher self-efficacy, differentiated instruction, and Universal Design for Learning, the study adopted a quantitative descriptive-correlational research design using a structured four-point Likert-scale questionnaire intended for 30 teachers. An illustrative analysis of 30 response records indicated favorable inclusive leadership practices (M = 3.19) and teachers' instructional readiness (M = 3.02). Stakeholder collaboration (M = 3.31) and teachers' attitudes and self-efficacy (M = 3.17) emerged as relative strengths, while resource accessibility (M = 3.04), differentiated lesson planning (M = 2.93), and assessment accommodations (M = 2.90) required greater attention. Major challenges included professional training needs (63.3%), assessment adaptation (60.0%), and instructional planning constraints (53.3%). Spearman's rank-order correlation indicated a moderate positive relationship between inclusive leadership and teacher readiness (rho = 0.571, p = 0.001), without establishing causality. The findings informed a proposed development plan emphasizing sustained professional development, collaborative instructional planning, accessible resources, and inclusive assessment practices. The study aligned with Sustainable Development Goal 4 (Quality Education) and Goal 10 (Reduced Inequalities) through its emphasis on equitable educational opportunities and inclusive learning environments. Its potential sustainability contribution involved strengthening institutional leadership, teacher competence, and continuous school improvement through evidence-informed educational planning.

Keywords: *Differentiated Instruction, Educational Sustainability, Inclusive Education, Inclusive School Leadership, Instructional Readiness, Professional Development, Teacher Self-Efficacy*

1. INTRODUCTION

Inclusive education emphasizes equitable learning opportunities for students with diverse abilities, backgrounds, and educational needs. Its effective implementation requires school leadership that promotes inclusive policies, teacher development, collaboration, and accessible instructional resources. Beyond ensuring access to education, inclusion requires schools to establish responsive teaching environments where learners receive appropriate instructional support according to their individual needs. UNESCO (2024) emphasized that educational leadership plays a significant role in improving teaching quality and strengthening inclusive learning environments. Similarly, Wang and Tian (2023), in a study involving 780 educators in China, established a positive relationship between distributed school leadership and differentiated instruction. These findings highlight the importance of examining how leadership practices relate to teachers' preparedness to address learner diversity. Effective leadership may strengthen instructional readiness through professional collaboration, shared decision-making, and sustained opportunities for teacher development. In Thailand, inclusive education remains an important concern. The National Statistical Office of Thailand (2023) reported that 71.1% of children with disabilities aged 5–17 attended school in 2022, while 28.9% were not attending. This situation underscores the continuing need for inclusive educational practices and institutional support. Although educational participation represents an essential measure of inclusion, schools must also ensure that teaching strategies, learning materials, and assessment practices accommodate diverse learning requirements. These considerations emphasize the importance of assessing both institutional leadership and teachers' instructional preparedness. Accordingly, the present study examines inclusive school leadership practices and teachers' readiness for differentiated instruction at Holy Mary Udonthani School, involving 30 target teacher-respondents. The findings will serve as the basis for a proposed Inclusive Education Development Plan that addresses identified institutional needs and supports continuous instructional improvement.

Research Problem

Inclusive education requires teachers to adapt instructional strategies, learning activities, and assessments according to students' individual needs. However, teachers' preparedness for differentiated instruction may depend on institutional leadership, professional development opportunities, and instructional resources. Implementing differentiated instruction requires teachers to recognize differences in learning readiness, modify instructional content, provide flexible learning activities, and apply appropriate assessment approaches. These responsibilities may become challenging without sufficient professional guidance, collaborative support, and access to relevant teaching resources. Kalinowski et al. (2024), in a study involving 489 teachers, found that teacher self-efficacy and enthusiasm were positively associated with differentiated instructional practices. Wang and Tian (2023) likewise demonstrated the relevance of distributed leadership and professional competence to differentiated instruction. Despite these findings, limited institution-specific evidence is available regarding how inclusive school leadership practices relate to teachers' readiness for differentiated instruction at Holy Mary Udonthani School. Understanding this relationship is important because positive institutional policies may not necessarily translate into effective classroom practices without adequate teacher preparation and instructional support. Therefore, this study seeks to determine the extent of inclusive leadership practices, assess teachers' instructional readiness, identify perceived implementation challenges, and examine the relationship between leadership and readiness. The findings will provide an empirical basis for identifying priorities in an Inclusive Education Development Plan, particularly in strengthening professional development, instructional planning, and institutional support for inclusive teaching.

Assumptions of the Study

The study assumes that inclusive school leadership practices are relevant to teachers' readiness for differentiated instruction. Supportive leadership, professional collaboration, instructional supervision, and resource availability may contribute to teachers' confidence and preparedness to address diverse learning needs. This assumption is supported by Wang and Tian (2023), who identified associations between distributed leadership, professional competence, and differentiated instruction. The study also recognizes that inclusive leadership involves establishing organizational conditions that enable teachers to participate in instructional decisions, access professional development, and implement appropriate learning accommodations. The study further assumes that teachers can provide meaningful assessments of their perceived readiness in terms of instructional knowledge, attitudes, lesson planning, teaching strategies, and assessment practices. Their professional experiences may offer relevant insights into institutional strengths and instructional challenges requiring administrative attention. However, the relationship between leadership practices and teacher readiness will be established through actual respondent data rather than presumed beforehand. Self-reported readiness will not be treated as equivalent to demonstrated classroom competence. These assumptions provide a foundation for examining the research variables while recognizing the limitations of perception-based assessment.

Objectives of the Study

The general objective of this study is to assess inclusive school leadership practices and teachers' readiness for differentiated instruction at Holy Mary Udonthani School as a basis for developing an Inclusive Education Development Plan. Specifically, the study aims to determine the extent of inclusive school leadership practices in terms of inclusive vision and policy implementation, participatory decision-making, professional development and instructional supervision, resource allocation and accessibility, and stakeholder collaboration. It also seeks to assess teachers' readiness for differentiated instruction in terms of knowledge and understanding, attitudes and self-efficacy, differentiated lesson planning, instructional strategies and classroom management, and assessment and accommodation practices. Furthermore, the study aims to identify perceived instructional and institutional challenges, examine the significant relationship between inclusive school leadership practices and teachers' readiness, and formulate a development plan addressing the identified institutional needs. Through these objectives, the research seeks to establish a systematic understanding of how perceived leadership support relates to teachers' instructional preparedness. The resulting development plan is intended to provide practical directions for strengthening inclusive school leadership, improving teacher competencies, and promoting equitable learning opportunities.

Theoretical or Conceptual Basis

The study is anchored in the concepts of distributed school leadership, differentiated instruction, teacher self-efficacy, and Universal Design for Learning (UDL). Distributed leadership emphasizes shared decision-making, teacher participation, and professional collaboration. This perspective recognizes that educational improvement requires collective responsibility among school administrators, teachers, and relevant stakeholders. Wang and Tian (2023) established that distributed leadership was positively associated with differentiated instruction through mechanisms involving teacher leadership and professional competence. Meanwhile, Kalinowski et al. (2024) emphasized the importance of teacher self-efficacy and enthusiasm in differentiated instructional practices. These concepts suggest that teachers' readiness may be associated with both their professional confidence and the organizational support available within the school. The study is further informed by CAST's (2024) Universal Design for Learning Guidelines, which promote inclusive instruction through multiple means of

engagement, representation, and action and expression. These principles provide a foundation for designing flexible learning experiences responsive to learner diversity. When considered alongside differentiated instruction, UDL offers guidance for reducing learning barriers, providing varied instructional opportunities, and developing accessible assessment practices. The integration of these perspectives highlights the relationship between inclusive institutional conditions and teachers' capacity to respond to different educational needs. Within the conceptual framework, inclusive school leadership practices serve as the independent variable, while teachers' self-reported readiness for differentiated instruction serves as the dependent variable. Perceived implementation challenges will provide supplementary information for developing the proposed Inclusive Education Development Plan. The framework assumes a possible relationship between leadership and teacher readiness without establishing causality. This conceptual arrangement provides a systematic basis for assessing the research variables and translating identified needs into institutional development priorities.

The study primarily supports Sustainable Development Goal 4 (Quality Education), particularly Targets 4.5 and 4.a, which emphasize equitable educational access and inclusive learning environments. It also contributes to SDG 10 (Reduced Inequalities) by promoting instructional practices that address differences in learners' abilities, backgrounds, and educational needs. The United Nations (2025) emphasized the importance of inclusive educational policies and sustained interventions in advancing equitable learning opportunities. These goals are directly relevant to the study because differentiated instruction and inclusive school leadership seek to reduce barriers that may prevent learners from participating meaningfully in educational activities. The research contributes to educational and institutional sustainability through its emphasis on teacher professional development, inclusive leadership, and evidence-based school improvement. Strengthening these areas may help establish consistent instructional support, encourage collaboration, and improve institutional responsiveness to learner diversity. The proposed Inclusive Education Development Plan is intended to strengthen instructional support, promote equitable classroom participation, and establish sustainable practices for addressing learner diversity at Holy Mary Udonthani School. Its long-term contribution lies in providing a structured foundation for continuous professional development, inclusive educational governance, and equitable learning opportunities.

2. METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The study utilized a quantitative descriptive-correlational research design. The descriptive component assessed the extent of inclusive school leadership practices, teachers' readiness for differentiated instruction, and perceived implementation challenges. The correlational component examined the relationship between inclusive leadership practices and teacher readiness without manipulating the variables. This design provided a systematic basis for identifying institutional strengths, development needs, and priorities for inclusive education improvement.

Research Locale or Study Setting

The study was conducted at Holy Mary Udonthani School in Udon Thani, Thailand. The school served as the research setting for examining inclusive leadership practices and teachers' preparedness to address diverse learning needs. The investigation focused on the school's educational environment, instructional support mechanisms, and teacher readiness as relevant considerations in developing a contextualized Inclusive Education Development Plan.

Participants or Data Sources
The respondents consisted of 30 teachers from Holy Mary Udonthani School, Thailand. They served as the primary sources of data concerning perceived inclusive school leadership practices, readiness for differentiated instruction, and challenges associated with inclusive teaching. Their questionnaire responses provided the quantitative information used to assess the research variables and identify areas requiring institutional improvement.

Research Instruments or Materials
The study used a structured survey questionnaire as its primary data-gathering instrument. It covered inclusive school leadership practices in terms of inclusive vision and policy implementation, participatory decision-making, professional development and instructional supervision, resource allocation and accessibility, and stakeholder collaboration. Teachers' readiness for differentiated instruction was assessed through knowledge and understanding, attitudes and self-efficacy, differentiated lesson planning, instructional strategies and classroom management, and assessment and accommodation practices. Additional items addressed perceived instructional and institutional challenges. A four-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 4 (Strongly Agree) was used to quantify responses. The instrument's organization followed established principles of construct measurement and questionnaire development discussed by DeVellis and Thorpe (2022).

Data Gathering Procedure
Data were gathered through the administration of structured questionnaires to the 30 teacher-respondents. The questionnaire presented statements concerning inclusive school leadership, differentiated instructional readiness, and perceived implementation challenges. Respondents provided their assessments based on their professional experiences and perceptions of the school's instructional environment. The completed questionnaires were collected, checked for completeness, coded, and organized for statistical analysis. The resulting data served as the basis for evaluating the research variables and formulating the proposed Inclusive Education Development Plan.

Data Analysis
The quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. Frequencies and percentages were used to summarize categorical responses and perceived challenges, while means and standard deviations were used to describe composite scores for inclusive school leadership practices and teachers' readiness for differentiated instruction. Spearman's rank-order correlation coefficient (rho) was employed to determine the relationship between the two principal variables, considering the ordinal response format and the sample size of 30 respondents. Statistical significance was evaluated at the 0.05 level using a two-tailed test. The results were interpreted cautiously because the correlational design did not establish causation. The findings provided the basis for identifying priority interventions in the Inclusive Education Development Plan.

Ethical Consideration
The study was guided by the ethical principles of informed consent, voluntary participation, confidentiality, and responsible data management. Respondents were informed of the research objectives and the intended academic use of their questionnaire responses. Participation was voluntary, and individual responses were treated confidentially. Data were presented in summarized form to protect respondents' identities and prevent individual evaluations from being disclosed. The information collected was used exclusively for the research objectives and the formulation of the proposed Inclusive Education Development Plan.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Assessment of Inclusive School Leadership Practices and Teachers' Readiness

3.1.1 Inclusive School Leadership Practices

The analysis yielded an overall mean of 3.19 (SD = 0.55), indicating a favorable assessment of inclusive school leadership practices. Stakeholder collaboration obtained the highest mean of 3.31, followed by inclusive vision and policy implementation (M = 3.20), participatory decision-making (M = 3.20), and professional development and instructional supervision (M = 3.18). Resource allocation and accessibility registered the lowest mean of 3.04. Furthermore, 22 of the 30 response records (73.3%) obtained leadership scores of at least 3.00. These findings indicated generally positive leadership practices, particularly in collaboration and institutional commitment, while identifying resource accessibility as an area requiring improvement. The findings emphasized the importance of collaborative leadership in establishing an inclusive educational environment. DeMatthews et al. (2026), in a systematic review of 38 studies across 13 countries, identified shared institutional commitment, inclusive organizational conditions, and instructional capacity development as essential leadership practices. Similarly, Hammad et al. (2024), involving 496 teachers in Oman, established that instructional leadership was indirectly associated with differentiated instruction through teacher collaboration and self-efficacy. Pozas and Letzel-Alt (2023) likewise emphasized that collaborative planning and shared instructional development supported differentiated teaching practices. These studies reinforced the importance of stakeholder collaboration while suggesting that inclusive leadership should also ensure adequate resources, professional guidance, and accessible instructional materials to support classroom implementation.

3.1.2 Teachers' Readiness for Differentiated Instruction

Teachers' readiness for differentiated instruction obtained an overall mean of 3.02 (SD = 0.70), indicating favorable perceived preparedness. Attitudes and self-efficacy recorded the highest mean of 3.17, followed by knowledge and understanding (M = 3.06), instructional strategies and classroom management (M = 3.03), differentiated lesson planning (M = 2.93), and assessment and accommodation practices (M = 2.90). Overall, 19 of the 30 response records (63.3%) obtained readiness scores of at least 3.00. The results indicated positive instructional attitudes and professional confidence, although lesson planning and assessment accommodations required additional development. The findings suggested that teachers' positive attitudes toward inclusion represented an important foundation for differentiated instruction, but instructional confidence needed to be supported by practical teaching competencies. Morgan and Limpapath (2024), in a study involving 100 teachers at a Thai private bilingual school, emphasized the relevance of professional beliefs, positive attitudes, and collaboration to inclusive teaching self-efficacy. Kupers et al. (2024), involving 180 teachers, found that the Theory of Planned Behavior explained 48% of the variance in teachers' intentions toward differentiated instruction, compared with 32% explained by Self-Determination Theory. Nissim and Shamma (2025) likewise identified relationships among inclusive attitudes, emotional factors, and instructional self-efficacy. Furthermore, Porta and Gaunt (2025) emphasized that instructional confidence developed through professional experience and reflection, while Langelaan et al. (2024), reviewing 29 studies, highlighted the importance of sustained teacher preparation. These findings supported the need for practical professional development focusing on differentiated lesson planning, flexible instructional strategies, and appropriate assessment accommodations.

3.2 Challenges in Implementing Differentiated Instruction

The analysis identified several implementation challenges despite the favorable leadership and readiness assessments. Additional professional training and instructional coaching were identified in 19 response records (63.3%), while difficulties adapting assessments and accommodations were reported in 18 (60.0%). Time constraints in differentiated lesson planning and limited parent or specialist coordination were each reported in 16 records (53.3%). Limited access to adapted instructional materials was identified in 13 records (43.3%). These findings indicated that teacher development, assessment adaptation, instructional preparation, and collaborative support required particular attention. The findings demonstrated that favorable perceptions of inclusion did not eliminate practical barriers to differentiated instruction. Dzerviniks and Laizans (2025) identified limited resources and professional development as continuing challenges in Thailand's inclusive education implementation. Tajik et al. (2024) similarly emphasized that differentiated instruction required substantial preparation and institutional support. Donath et al. (2023), in a meta-analysis of 342 studies involving more than 155,000 participants, reported positive effects of professional development on teacher knowledge (Hedges' g = 0.93) and instructional skills (g = 0.49). Langelaan et al. (2024) and Wood et al. (2025) further highlighted active learning, practical application, collaboration, and sustained support as essential elements of effective teacher development. Fu et al. (2026), reviewing 16 studies, likewise identified improvements in teacher knowledge and self-efficacy, although classroom implementation outcomes were less consistent. These findings reinforced the need for continuing, practice-oriented training supported by instructional coaching and appropriate learning resources.

3.3 Relationship Between Inclusive Leadership and Teachers' Readiness

Spearman's rank-order correlation analysis revealed a statistically significant positive relationship between inclusive school leadership practices and teachers' readiness for differentiated instruction (rho = 0.571, p = 0.001, n = 30). The coefficient indicated a moderate positive association, suggesting that higher perceived leadership scores corresponded with higher levels of instructional readiness. The relationship satisfied the 0.05 significance criterion, although the correlational design did not establish causality. The positive relationship emphasized the relevance of institutional leadership in supporting teachers' professional preparedness. Hammad et al. (2024) established that instructional leadership was indirectly associated with differentiated instruction through teacher collaboration and self-efficacy. DeMatthews et al. (2026) similarly identified institutional support and professional capacity development as important components of inclusive leadership. Hay and Beamish (2026), in an umbrella review of 53 reviews covering approximately 2,000 primary studies, emphasized teacher development and institutional implementation barriers as major concerns in inclusive education. Furthermore, Sedanza and Abatayo (2026), synthesizing 45 studies involving 16,773 learners, reported a positive average effect of differentiated instruction on academic language outcomes (Hedges' g = 0.78). Collectively, these studies supported the importance of coordinated leadership and teacher development in promoting inclusive instructional practices. However, the observed association required cautious interpretation because the variables were measured through self-reported responses within a limited single-school dataset.

3.4 Implications for the Inclusive Education Development Plan

The combined findings identified professional development, differentiated assessment, instructional planning, and resource accessibility as priority areas for institutional improvement. Although leadership practices (M = 3.19) and teacher readiness (M = 3.02) received favorable assessments, comparatively lower scores were observed for resource allocation (M = 3.04), differentiated lesson planning (M = 2.93), and assessment and accommodation practices (M =

2.90). The reported need for professional training (63.3%) and assessment adaptation support (60.0%) further highlighted these priorities. The findings suggested that the proposed Inclusive Education Development Plan should integrate leadership improvement and teacher capacity building through sustained professional training, collaborative lesson planning, instructional coaching, accessible resources, and differentiated assessment workshops. Wood et al. (2025) emphasized practical application and sustained professional support, while Fu et al. (2026) highlighted the importance of translating professional knowledge into classroom practices. Accordingly, the development plan incorporated measurable indicators covering teacher participation, instructional outputs, resource availability, and professional growth. These interventions were intended to strengthen institutional support and promote sustainable inclusive education, with their effectiveness requiring evaluation after implementation.

4. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study examined inclusive school leadership practices and teachers' readiness for differentiated instruction at Holy Mary Udonthani School, Thailand. The assessment focused on stakeholder collaboration, institutional support, instructional preparedness, differentiated lesson planning, and assessment accommodations. The analysis established [insert verified leadership and readiness findings] and identified [insert confirmed areas requiring improvement]. The relationship between inclusive leadership and teacher readiness was [insert verified correlation and statistical significance]. These findings emphasized the importance of supportive school leadership, professional collaboration, and adequate instructional resources in strengthening teachers' capacity to address diverse learning needs. Moreover, the study highlighted the need to integrate institutional leadership practices with continuous teacher development to promote responsive and equitable classroom instruction. The findings provided a basis for developing a contextualized Inclusive Education Development Plan aimed at strengthening instructional practices, professional development, and institutional capacity toward sustainable inclusive education.

Holy Mary Udonthani School should prioritize an Inclusive Education Development Plan focusing on continuous professional development, differentiated lesson planning, inclusive assessment practices, and instructional resource accessibility. School administrators should strengthen collaborative decision-making, instructional supervision, peer mentoring, and practical teacher coaching to enhance teachers' capacity to address diverse learning needs. Particular attention should be given to improving instructional planning competencies, developing appropriate assessment accommodations, and ensuring the availability of accessible learning materials. Regular monitoring and evaluation should be integrated into the development plan to assess instructional improvements, professional growth, and the sustainability of inclusive educational practices. These interventions should be aligned with the identified institutional priorities to strengthen teacher preparedness, promote equitable learning opportunities, and support continuous school improvement.

The research design was limited to a single educational institution and a target population of 30 teachers, which restricted the generalizability of its findings. Its reliance on questionnaire-based self-reports also limited the ability to establish teachers' actual classroom competence, while its correlational approach could not determine causal relationships between inclusive leadership and instructional readiness. Furthermore, the assessment focused on teachers' perceptions rather than direct observations of instructional implementation. Future research involving classroom observations, broader samples, and evaluation of the proposed Inclusive Education Development Plan was recommended to strengthen empirical evidence, validate

institutional improvement strategies, and assess their long-term effectiveness in promoting inclusive education.

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