

Influence of Cooperative Learning and Differentiated Instruction on the Perceived Affective Outcomes of Learners with Disabilities

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ABSTRACT

Learners with disabilities demonstrate low affective learning outcomes. The influence of cooperative learning and differentiated instruction on the perceived affective outcomes of learners with disabilities was verified. The study used a diagnostic research design involving 150 teachers of learners with disabilities, selected through stratified random sampling, with data gathered via a survey and analyzed using multiple linear regression. The study revealed that the combined use of cooperative learning practices and differentiated instruction significantly influences the affective outcomes of learners with disabilities, supporting Social Constructivist Theory. Future research may examine additional variables identified through exploratory studies to explain the remaining variance in learner affective outcomes, while educational leaders enhance and support teacher implementation of differentiated instruction through trainings, workshops, and allocation of resources.

Keywords: Cooperative learning, differentiated instruction, affective outcomes, learners with disabilities

INTRODUCTION

The Problem and Its Scope

Low affective outcomes among learners with disabilities have emerged as a significant concern in inclusive education. Recent global studies indicate that learners with disabilities continue to experience difficulties in motivation, confidence, emotional well-being, and sense of belonging within classroom environments (Garcia & Lee, 2023; Nguyen & Chen, 2024). A growing body of research highlights that persistent academic challenges and social exclusion contribute to weakened affective functioning among these learners (Patel et al., 2022). Moreover, traditional classroom practices that lack meaningful interaction and learner engagement further reinforce negative affective experiences (Jamaluddin et al., 2021). These findings suggest that affective development remains a critical issue in inclusive educational settings.

A systematic body of research across countries such as the United States, Canada, and several European nations highlights that affective difficulties among learners with disabilities persist as a widespread issue. In the United States, insufficient emotional support and limited peer collaboration have been associated with poorer affective outcomes (Smith & Rodriguez, 2022). In Canada, studies emphasize the importance of teacher–student relationships and cooperative learning environments in enhancing learners’ emotional development, although these practices remain underutilized (Thompson et al., 2023). Similarly, in Europe, research reveals that inclusive education policies often fail to translate into effective classroom-level

practices that support learners' affective needs (Martinez & Svensson, 2021; O'Connell et al., 2024). These international findings demonstrate that challenges in affective outcomes are evident across different educational contexts.

In the Philippines, low affective outcomes among learners with disabilities are likewise recognized as a significant concern in the education sector. While inclusive education initiatives have improved access and participation, research has largely focused on policy implementation rather than learners' affective experiences (Dela Cruz, 2023; Santos & Reyes, 2022). Recent local studies indicate that many inclusive classrooms still lack adequate instructional support systems that foster positive emotional development among learners with disabilities (Mendoza & Alvero, 2024). These conditions reflect inconsistencies in how affective outcomes are supported within Philippine inclusive education settings.

The consequences of low affective outcomes among learners with disabilities are substantial and far-reaching. Empirical evidence suggests that poor affective conditions are associated with reduced academic engagement, low motivation, and increased risk of disengagement and dropout (Villanueva & Santos, 2021). Furthermore, social exclusion and limited classroom interaction may intensify feelings of isolation and negatively affect learners' emotional well-being (Lopez et al., 2025). These outcomes demonstrate that affective challenges not only influence academic performance but also hinder learners' overall development and participation in inclusive education. Despite evidence that cooperative learning and differentiated instruction can enhance affective outcomes (Garcia & Lee, 2023; Jamaluddin et al., 2021), empirical studies in the Philippine context remain limited. It is for this reason that this study was conducted.

Significance of the Study

This study holds critical global relevance as it confronts one of the most neglected dimensions of inclusive education, the affective outcomes of learners with manifestations. Motivation, self-efficacy, and social belonging are not optional add-ons but essential conditions for meaningful participation in learning, yet they remain largely overshadowed by the narrow focus on access and academic performance. Placing these affective dimensions at the center of investigation strengthens the international pursuit of Sustainable Development Goal 4, which envisions inclusive and equitable quality education for all. The findings of this study provide timely evidence that inclusive education must extend beyond enrollment and achievement, demanding systems that recognize and nurture the emotional and social well-being of learners with disabilities.

Statement of the Problem

This study aimed to explore the influence of cooperative learning (CL) and differentiated instruction (DI) on the perceived affective outcomes of learners with disabilities. Specifically, this study will focus on the following research objectives:

1. Describe the levels of cooperative learning in terms of social skills, group processing, positive interdependence, stimulating interaction, and individual responsibility; differentiated instruction in terms of instructional strategies, content adaptation, flexible learning activities, assessment methods, and responsiveness to individual needs; and affective outcomes in terms of confidence, motivation, sense of belonging, and classroom engagement.
2. To determine the significance of the relationship between cooperative learning, differentiated instruction, and perceived affective outcomes of learners with disabilities.
3. To determine the significance of the individual and combined influence of cooperative learning and differentiated instruction on the perceived affective outcomes of learners with disabilities.

Hypotheses

Ho1: Cooperative Learning Practices do not have a statistically significant relationship with the Affective Outcomes of Learners with disabilities.

Ho2: Differentiated Instruction does not have a statistically significant relationship with the Affective Outcomes of Learners with disabilities.

Ho3: Cooperative Learning Practices do not have a statistically significant influence on the Affective Outcomes of Learners with disabilities.

Ho4: Differentiated Instruction does not have a statistically significant influence on the Affective Outcomes of Learners with disabilities.

Ho5: Cooperative Learning Practices and Differentiated Instruction, when combined, do not significantly influence the Affective Outcomes of Learners with disabilities.

Theoretical and Conceptual Framework

This study is grounded in the Social Constructivist Theory of Lev Vygotsky (1978), which posits that knowledge is actively constructed through social interaction, collaborative learning, and meaningful engagement within a culturally situated context. It emphasizes that learners develop understanding through guided participation, dialogue, and shared experiences, where more knowledgeable others support the learning process. The theory further highlights the importance of social context and interaction in shaping both cognitive and affective development, recognizing that learning is an inherently social and dynamic process.

Anchored on this perspective, the present study examines the influence of cooperative learning and differentiated instruction on the perceived affective outcomes of learners with manifestations. Cooperative learning reflects the theory's emphasis on collaboration and shared experiences, as it promotes interaction, positive interdependence, and the development of social skills that contribute to learners' motivation, confidence, and sense of belonging. In parallel, differentiated instruction aligns with the concept of the Zone of Proximal Development by addressing individual differences and providing appropriate scaffolding to support diverse learners. Through adaptive teaching strategies and inclusive practices, both approaches create a supportive learning environment that enhances learners' engagement and emotional development, thereby improving their perceived affective outcomes.

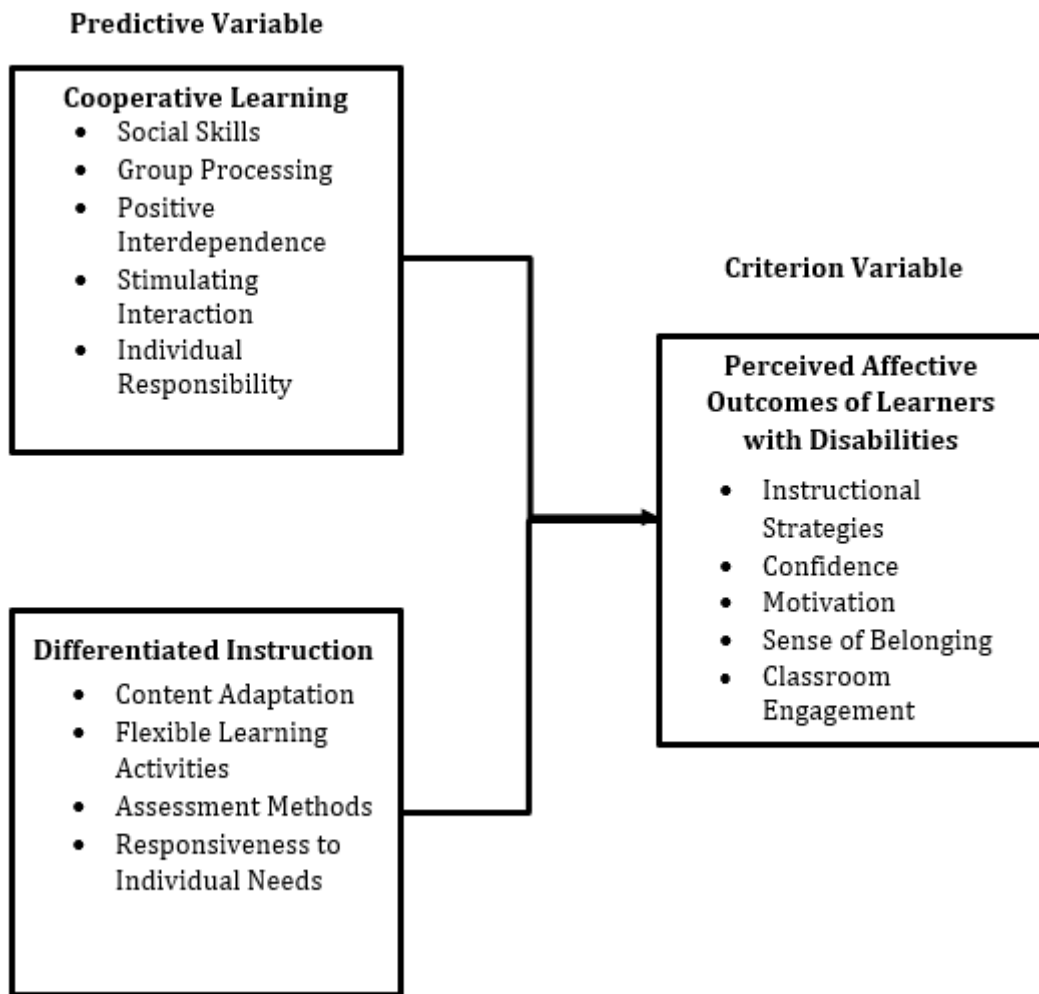


Figure 1 – Conceptual Framework of the Study

METHOD

The research design, locale of the study, the sample and sampling technique, data gathering technique, data analysis, and the ethical considerations are included in this chapter.

Research Design

This study employed a diagnostic research design. It is a quantitative approach used to determine the relationships among variables and to identify the factors that influence a particular outcome (Fischer et al., 2023). Through this design, the study analyzed the combined and individual influence of the independent variables on the dependent variable, thereby providing empirical evidence on which factors significantly contributed to enhancing teachers' preparedness in inclusive educational settings

Locale of the Study

The study was conducted in public secondary schools under the Department of Education Schools Division of Koronadal City, Philippines, during the School Year 2025–2026. These schools cater to junior high school learners, including those with disabilities, and serve as key institutions where inclusive education policies and instructional practices are implemented. The division provides a relevant setting as it promotes inclusive education through strategies such as cooperative learning and differentiated instruction to address diverse learning needs. The presence of learners with disabilities makes it an

appropriate context for examining how these instructional practices influence affective outcomes in terms of confidence, motivation, sense of belonging, and classroom engagement.

Sample and Sampling Technique

The respondents of this study consisted of 150 junior high school teachers who handle learners with disabilities in the Schools Division of Koronadal City during the School Year 2025–2026.

The study employed a stratified random sampling technique. It is a probability sampling method in which the population is divided into homogeneous subgroups (strata) based on relevant characteristics, and participants are randomly selected from each stratum (Taherdoost, 2022). This technique is particularly appropriate when the population is heterogeneous, as it ensures that all significant subgroups are proportionately represented in the sample. The use of stratified random sampling enhances the representativeness of the data, increases the accuracy and reliability of the findings, and allows for meaningful comparisons across different groups (Sharma, 2023).

Data Gathering Technique

This study employed the survey data gathering technique. It is a research method in which researchers collect data from participants using a structured set of questions, such as questionnaires or interviews. It may be administered to a sample or an entire population, and collected data are statistically analyzed to identify trends, relationships, and differences within the group (Goodfellow, 2023).

In this study, validated survey instruments were utilized to ensure the reliability and accuracy of the data collected. The instrument on collaborative teaching was adapted from the study of Prieto-Saborit et al. (2022), consisting of 15 items with a reported Cronbach's alpha of 82%, indicating good internal consistency. Moreover, the instrument measuring differentiated instruction was adapted from Carol Ann Tomlinson (2021), also comprising 15 items and demonstrating a Cronbach's alpha of 87%, which reflects a high level of reliability. Finally, the instrument used to assess affective outcomes was adapted from Gable et al. (2022), containing 16 items with a Cronbach's alpha of 99%, indicating excellent internal consistency. These instruments were deemed appropriate for the study as they have established validity and reliability, ensuring the credibility of the data gathered.

Data Analysis Technique

In this study, data were analyzed using descriptive analysis, correlation analysis and multiple linear regression techniques.

Descriptive data analysis involves summarizing and organizing data using measures such as mean and standard deviation to present the overall characteristics of the dataset, and in this study, it was used to describe the levels of the variables (Anderson & Rivera, 2023). Moreover, correlation analysis determines the strength and direction of relationships between variables using the Pearson Product Moment Correlation, and in this study, it was applied to examine the association between the variables without implying causation (Lopez & Martin, 2024). Lastly, multiple linear regression analysis examines the combined and individual effects of independent variables on a dependent variable. It is used to identify significant predictors of affective outcomes using the unstandardized beta coefficient (Santiago & Cruz, 2023).

In the succeeding page, the matrix containing the scale, descriptive level, and corresponding interpretation assigned to each variable involved in this study is presented. This measure is used particularly in describing the level of each variable.

Scale	Level	Cooperative Practices	Learning	Differentiated Instruction	Affective Outcomes
1.00 – 1.74	Very low	Very weak		Very poor	Very Negative
1.75 – 2.49	Low	weak		Poor	Negative
2.50 – 3.24	High	strong		Good	Positive
3.25 – 4.00	Very high	Very strong		Very good	Very Positive

For the interpretation scale of *r*-value, the following scheme is used as proposed by Guilford (1956):

Computed *r*

+/- 1.00

Between +/- 0.51 – +/- 0.74

+/- 0.50

+/- 0.30

No correlation

Descriptive Interpretation

Perfect correlation Between +/- 0.75 – +/- 0.99

High correlation

Moderately high correlation Between +/- 0.31 –

Moderately low correlation Between +/- 0.01 –

Low correlation

***β* Value Range**

±0.00 – ±0.09

±0.10 – ±0.29

±0.30 – ±0.49

±0.50 – ±0.69

±0.70 and above

Strength of the influence

Very Weak

Weak

Moderate

Strong

Very Strong

Ethical Consideration

Ethical standards were strictly observed in the conduct of this study involving teacher-respondents. Prior to data collection, approval was secured from the Social and Management Institute for Learning and Education (SMILE) of Holy Cross of Davao College and from the Office of the Schools Division Superintendent of Koronadal City. Participation was voluntary, and informed consent was obtained from all respondents before the administration of the survey instruments. The respondents were assured that their identities would remain anonymous and that all information gathered would be treated with strict confidentiality and used solely for academic research purposes. They were also informed of their right to decline participation or withdraw from the study at any time without penalty. Furthermore, the researcher ensured that all data were securely stored, accurately recorded, and reported with honesty to uphold the integrity and ethical soundness of the research.

RESULTS

Included in this chapter are the descriptive, correlation, and regression tabular presentations, and their corresponding statistical interpretations. This chapter is ended with the summary of findings.

Descriptive Results

Table 1 presents the descriptive statistics for the study. Contained in the table are the variables involved namely, Cooperative Learning Practices, Differentiated Instruction, and Affective Outcomes of Learners with Disabilities; and the number of samples, standard deviation, mean, and descriptive level.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics (N = 150)

Variables	(N)	Standard Deviation	Mean	Descriptive Level
Cooperative Learning Practices	150	0.22	3.70	Very High
<i>Skills</i>	150	0.31	3.71	Very High
<i>Processing</i>	150	0.25	3.87	Very High
<i>e Interdependence</i>	150	0.53	3.58	Very High
<i>uting Interaction</i>	150	0.55	3.56	Very High
<i>ual Responsibility</i>	150	0.36	3.77	Very High
Differentiated Instruction	150	0.61	3.34	Very High
<i>Content Adaptation</i>	150	0.71	3.24	High
<i>Flexible Learning Activities</i>	150	0.68	3.38	Very High
<i>Assessment Methods</i>	150	0.71	3.33	Very High
<i>Responsiveness to Individual Needs</i>	150	0.68	3.44	Very High
Affective Outcomes of Learners with Disabilities	150	0.39	3.60	Very High
<i>Instructional Strategies</i>	150	0.61	3.33	Very High
<i>Confidence</i>	150	0.62	3.44	Very High
<i>Motivation</i>	150	0.62	3.43	Very High
<i>Sense of Belonging</i>	150	0.44	3.77	Very High
<i>Classroom Engagement</i>	150	0.44	3.77	Very High

Specifically, the table shows that cooperative learning practices obtained a mean of 3.70, described as very high, indicating that these practices are very strong. All indicators under this variable are likewise described as very high. The standard deviation of 0.22 suggests that the responses are highly consistent. Furthermore, differentiated instruction obtained a mean of 3.34 described as very high, indicating that the differentiated instruction of teachers is very good. Most of its indicators are at a very high level, except for content adaptation, which is described as high. The standard deviation of 0.61 reflects moderately consistent responses, indicating acceptable variability among respondents. Finally, affective outcomes of learners with disabilities obtained a mean of 3.60, described as very high, indicating that learners demonstrate positive emotional and motivational conditions in the classroom. All indicators under this variable are described as very high, reflecting strong affective development. The standard deviation of 0.39 is described as highly consistent, indicating a strong and uniform perception among respondents. Cooperative learning practices and affective outcomes are both interpreted at very high levels, indicating that these are consistently and strongly observed in the classroom setting. Differentiated instruction is also at a very high level; however, content adaptation appears relatively lower compared to other indicators. These findings suggest that while inclusive instructional practices are strongly implemented, certain aspects of differentiation may still require further enhancement.

Correlation Results

Shown in Table 2 is the correlational results between the predictive variables and criterion variable. Also, it shows the r-value, p value, decision on null hypothesis and its interpretation.

Table 2: Correlation Table (n=150)

Variables	Affective Outcomes of Learners with Disabilities			
	r-value	p-value	Decision on H_0	Interpretation
Cooperative Learning Practices	.272	.001	Reject H_0	Low positive, significant correlation
Differentiated Instruction	.762	.000	Reject H_0	High positive, significant correlation

Level of Significance: 0.05

Decision Rule: Reject H_0 if $p < 0.05$

The correlation between cooperative learning practices and differentiated instruction obtained a p-value of 0.001, which is lower than the 0.05 level of significance; thus, the null hypothesis was rejected. It indicates that the relationship is statistically significant. The r-value of 0.272 indicates a low positive correlation. It implies that changes in cooperative learning practices are associated with modest improvements in the affective outcomes of learners with disabilities. Moreover, differentiated Instruction obtained a p-value of 0.000, which is lower than the 0.05 level of significance; hence the null hypothesis was rejected indicating that the relationship is statistically significant. The r-value of 0.762 indicates a high positive correlation. This implies that an increase in differentiated instructional practices is associated with an increase in affective outcomes of learners with disabilities.

Both cooperative learning practices and differentiated instruction show significant relationships with the affective outcomes of learners with disabilities; however, differentiated instruction demonstrates a much stronger positive association compared to cooperative learning. This indicates that while both strategies contribute to improving affective outcomes, differentiated instruction has a more substantial influence than cooperative learning practices.

Regression Results

As shown in Table 3, the regression analysis of the predictive variables on the criterion variable. Furthermore, it shows the unstandardized beta coefficient, standard error, t value, p value, decision on null hypothesis and its interpretation.

Table 3: Table 3: Regression Table (N=250)

Variables	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	p-value	Decision on H_0	Interpretation
	B	Std. Error	Beta				
(Constant)	.878	.349	—	2.518	.013	Reject H_0	significant

Cooperative Learning Practices	.307	.093	.171	3.297	.001	Reject H_0	Significant
Differentiated Instruction	.475	.033	.739	14.215	.000	Reject H_0	significant
<i>Criterion: cooperative learning</i> <i>Model Summary: $R = .781$, $R\text{-square} = .610$, $F(2,147) = 115.020$, $p = .000$</i> <i>Level of significance: 0.05, Decision Rule: Reject h_0 if $p < 0.05$</i>							

The influence of cooperative learning practices on the affective learning outcomes obtained an unstandardized Beta coefficient of 0.307 suggesting a weak influence. The corresponding p-value of 0.001, which is lower than the 0.05 level of significance; hence the null hypothesis was rejected. This indicates that cooperative learning practices significantly influence the affective outcomes of learners with disabilities. This implies that a change in cooperative learning practices corresponds to a change in affective learning outcomes. Moreover, the influence of differentiated instruction on affective learning outcomes obtained an unstandardized Beta coefficient of 0.475 suggesting a moderate influence. The corresponding p-value of 0.000, which is lower than the 0.05 level of significance; thus the null hypothesis was rejected. This indicates that differentiated instruction significantly influences the affective outcomes of learners with disabilities. This implies that a change in differentiated instruction corresponds to a change in affective learning outcomes.

The combined influence of cooperative learning practices and differentiated instruction yielded a p-value of 0.000, which is lower than the 0.05 level of significance, indicating that their combined effect is statistically significant. Consequently, the null hypothesis was rejected, suggesting that cooperative learning practices and differentiated instruction jointly exert a significant influence on the outcome variable. Furthermore, the R^2 value of 0.61 indicates that 61% of the variance in the dependent variable can be explained by the combined effect of cooperative learning practices and differentiated instruction, while the remaining 39% may be attributed to other variables not included in the model.

Both cooperative learning practices and differentiated instruction significantly influence the affective outcomes of learners with disabilities; however, differentiated instruction demonstrates a stronger influence compared to the relatively weaker effect of cooperative learning. Furthermore, their combined effect is significant and explains a substantial portion of the variation in affective outcomes, indicating that both strategies together contribute meaningfully, although differentiated instruction plays a more dominant role.

Summary of Findings

Based on statistical results, it specifically was found that:

1. Cooperative Learning Practices have statistically significant correlation with the Affective Outcomes of Learners with Disabilities.
2. Differentiated Instruction has statistically significant correlation with the Affective Outcomes of Learners with Disabilities.
3. Cooperative Learning Practices have statistically significant influence on the Affective Outcomes of Learners with Disabilities.
4. Differentiated Instruction has a statistically significant influence on the Affective Outcomes of

Learners with Disabilities.

5. Cooperative Learning Practices and Differentiated Instruction when combined have strong (61%) and significant influence the Affective Outcomes of Learners with Disabilities.

DISCUSSIONS

In this chapter, the correlational, and regression analysis results of the study are discussed. Here, the conclusion and recommendations based on the results and discussions are also presented.

Cooperative Learning and Affective Outcomes Correlation

The finding of this study stating that Cooperative Learning Practices are significantly correlated with the Affective Outcomes of Learners with Disabilities supports the study of Robyn, (2024), explaining that structured cooperative learning environments foster positive peer interaction, enhance student motivation, and improve their emotional engagement in classroom activities. Likewise, this current finding affirms the study of Peder, (2023), stating that inclusive and collaborative classroom practices significantly contribute to learners' social participation, sense of belonging, and overall affective development. On the contrary, this current finding contradicts the study of Kovari, (2025) suggesting that cooperative learning may not always yield strong affective outcomes, particularly when group dynamics are poorly managed or when learners with disabilities are not adequately supported, indicating that the effectiveness of cooperative learning depends on proper implementation and teacher facilitation.

Differentiated Instruction and Affective Outcomes Correlation

The finding of this study stating that Differentiated Instruction is significantly correlated with the Affective Outcomes of Learners with Disabilities supports the study of Eline Gheysens et al. (2023), explaining that tailoring instruction based on learners' readiness, interests, and learning profiles enhances students' sense of competence, motivation, and emotional engagement in the learning process. Likewise, this current finding affirms the study of Marc Pozas et al. (2023), elaborating that responsive and flexible teaching practices significantly contribute to students' positive learning experiences, including increased participation, confidence, and overall affective development. On the contrary, this current finding opposes Patel and Kim (2024) who suggested that differentiated instruction have limited impact on affective outcomes when teachers face challenges such as large class sizes, insufficient training, or lack of resources, indicating that the success of differentiated instruction depends largely on effective implementation and contextual support.

Affective Outcomes as Influenced by Cooperative Learning and Differentiated Instruction

The finding of this study stating that Cooperative Learning Practices and Differentiated Instruction significantly influence the Affective Outcomes of Learners with Disabilities supports the study of Robyn M. Gillies (2025), explaining that collaborative and interactive learning environments enhance students' social interaction, participation, and emotional engagement in inclusive classrooms. Likewise, this current finding affirms the study of Peder Haug (2024), emphasizing that inclusive teaching practices that promote cooperation and responsiveness to learner diversity significantly contribute to students' sense of belonging, motivation, and overall affective development. However, this current finding negates Johnson (2022), who argued that cooperative learning does not automatically lead to positive affective outcomes when group structures are poorly organized or when learners with disabilities are not fully supported, suggesting that outcomes may vary depending on the quality of implementation and group dynamics. Furthermore, the result showing that Differentiated Instruction has significant influence of affective outcomes supports the study of Eline Gheysens et al. (2023), emphasizing that adapting instruction to

learners' individual needs, abilities, and interests has a more direct and substantial impact on students' confidence, engagement, and emotional well-being. Similarly, this finding affirms the study of Marc Pozas et al. (2024), highlighting that responsive and student-centered instructional practices play a crucial role in fostering meaningful participation and positive learning experiences among diverse learners. On the other hand, this current finding contradicts Tomlinson (2020), who noted that while differentiated instruction is theoretically beneficial, its actual impact on affective outcomes may be limited when teachers lack sufficient training, time, or resources to implement it effectively, indicating that contextual and practical constraints influence its success.

Conclusion

Based on the findings, the study concluded that cooperative Learning Practices and Differentiated Instruction, when combined, significantly influence the Affective Outcomes of Learners with Disabilities. This conclusion confirms the Social Constructivist Theory, which posits that knowledge is actively constructed through social interaction, collaborative learning, and meaningful engagement within a culturally situated context.

Recommendations

Based on the conclusions, future research may include additional variables not examined in this study to account for the remaining 39% of the variance in the affective outcomes of learners with disabilities. Exploratory studies may also be conducted to generate themes that can serve as potential variables, with emerging sub-themes functioning as corresponding indicators. Furthermore, educational leaders may initiate targeted training programs and allocate resources to enhance teacher implementation of differentiated instruction, as it demonstrated a stronger influence on learner affective outcomes.

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