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Examining regular teachers' knowledge of disability categories and instructional modification practice

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ABSTRACT

This study assessed the regular teachers' knowledge of disability categories and instructional modification practices employed at Perrelos Elementray School in Carcar City Division during the School Year 2025–2026, as basis for a proposed Action Plan to strengthen inclusive teaching practices for diverse learners. The study involved teacher-respondents and examined their demographic profile in terms of age, gender, highest educational attainment, years of teaching experience, and teaching position. A descriptive-correlational design was utilized, and data were gathered using a structured questionnaire. Frequency count, percentage, weighted mean, standard deviation, and Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient were used in analyzing the data. Findings revealed that most respondents were female teachers belonging to the young to early middle-aged group, with moderate to long years of teaching experience and occupying Teacher II and Teacher III positions. Teachers demonstrated a moderate level of knowledge of disability categories, particularly in recognizing behavioral manifestations and broad disability classifications. However, lower understanding was observed in instructional strategies, legal definitions, and management of co-occurring disabilities. Teachers also moderately implemented instructional modification practices, particularly in adapting instruction delivery and homework tasks, while differentiated instruction, individualized modifications, and assessment adjustments were less consistently applied. Correlation analysis showed no significant relationship between teachers' knowledge and instructional modification practices. The study concluded that knowledge alone did not guarantee consistent inclusive classroom practices among teachers. It is recommended that the school strengthen professional development and mentoring programs focused on differentiated instruction and inclusive teaching strategies.

Keywords: Inclusive Education, teachers' knowledge on disability categories, instructional modification practices, action plan, Perrelos Elementary School.

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INTRODUCTION

Inclusive education has become a global educational priority that promotes equitable learning opportunities for all students regardless of disability, learning needs, or behavioral differences. Schools worldwide are increasingly expected to provide learning environments where students with diverse abilities can participate meaningfully alongside their peers. As inclusive education continues to expand, teachers are expected to possess sufficient knowledge of disability categories and the competence to implement appropriate instructional modifications that address individual learning needs while maintaining curriculum standards. These competencies are essential in ensuring that learners with disabilities receive quality education within general education classrooms (Charcos et al., 2025).

International literature consistently recognizes teacher competence as one of the strongest determinants of successful inclusive education. Weiss et al. (2025) emphasized that the professional identity development of special education teacher candidates significantly influences their preparedness to teach learners with diverse educational needs. Their findings suggest that teachers who possess greater confidence and stronger professional competence are more capable of implementing effective inclusive instructional practices. Similarly, Wang et al. (2025) found that although students with disabilities may be physically included in Finnish primary schools, inadequate teacher competence often limits students' perceptions of genuine inclusion and meaningful participation in classroom learning. Likewise, Almughyiri (2026) reported that teachers' knowledge and implementation of transition skills for students with autism significantly affect the effectiveness of individualized educational support, emphasizing the importance of specialized instructional strategies in inclusive settings.

Similar concerns have been reported across different regions. Tveitnes et al. (2025) observed that Norwegian mainstream teachers' professional knowledge greatly influences their capacity to implement inclusive teaching practices effectively. Their study highlighted that insufficient knowledge often results in inconsistent instructional accommodations that may hinder learners' academic progress. Likewise, Krämer and Zimmermann (2025) found that teachers' perceptions of students with disabilities are frequently influenced by stereotypes and preconceived beliefs. These perceptions affect teachers' expectations, classroom interactions, instructional decisions, and ultimately the academic and social outcomes of learners with disabilities. Collectively, these regional studies demonstrate that teacher knowledge extends beyond awareness of inclusive education policies; it must also translate into effective instructional modifications that respond to learners' diverse educational needs.

The Philippine educational system has likewise strengthened its commitment to inclusive education through national policies and reforms. However, implementing inclusive education remains a challenge in many public schools due to limitations in teacher preparation, professional development opportunities, and instructional resources. Pantaleon et al. (2025) reported that while many Filipino teachers demonstrate awareness of inclusive education principles and policies, they continue to experience difficulties in applying these principles within actual classroom instruction. Similarly, Charcos et al. (2025) revealed that many general education teachers encounter challenges in correctly identifying disability categories and selecting appropriate instructional modifications that effectively address learners' individual needs. These findings suggest that although policy awareness exists, translating such knowledge into classroom practice remains a significant concern among regular teachers.

These national concerns are likewise evident in the local educational setting of Perrelos Elementary School. As one of the public elementary schools implementing inclusive education, the school accommodates learners with varying educational needs, including students diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder, Intellectual Disability, learning disabilities, speech and language difficulties, and other developmental conditions. Consequently, regular

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classroom teachers are expected to address a wide range of learner characteristics while simultaneously delivering grade-level competencies to the entire class.

In daily classroom instruction, teachers frequently encounter situations that require immediate instructional adjustments. For example, while conducting a whole-class lesson, a teacher may need to simplify learning activities for a learner with an intellectual disability, provide visual supports for a learner with autism, or modify assessment tasks for students who require differentiated instruction. At the same time, the teacher must continue facilitating learning for the rest of the class without disrupting instructional flow. In many instances, these instructional decisions rely heavily on the teacher's understanding of disability categories and the selection of appropriate instructional modifications.

However, observations within the school suggest that teachers experience varying levels of confidence and preparedness in responding to these diverse learning needs. Some teachers rely primarily on general classroom strategies rather than evidence-based instructional modifications because they are uncertain about the specific characteristics of different disability categories or the most appropriate accommodations to employ. As a result, instructional modifications may not always correspond to learners' actual educational needs, potentially affecting student participation, engagement, classroom behavior, and academic performance. These classroom realities mirror the challenges identified by Charcos et al. (2025), who noted that many Filipino teachers continue to experience difficulty implementing effective inclusive instructional practices despite their awareness of inclusive education policies.

Given these circumstances, there is a pressing need to investigate whether regular teachers' knowledge of disability categories influences the instructional modifications they implement in inclusive classrooms. Understanding this relationship is particularly important because effective instructional modification depends largely on teachers' ability to recognize learners' unique characteristics and respond using appropriate teaching strategies. Without sufficient knowledge, teachers may unintentionally provide accommodations that are either insufficient or inappropriate, limiting learners' opportunities to participate fully and achieve desired learning outcomes. Furthermore, identifying existing strengths and areas requiring improvement will provide school administrators and education leaders with empirical evidence for designing targeted professional development programs that enhance inclusive teaching practices.

Despite the growing body of literature on inclusive education, empirical studies examining the relationship between regular teachers' knowledge of disability categories and their instructional modification practices remain limited, particularly within Cebu schools, including Perrelos Elementary School. Most existing studies have focused primarily on teachers' attitudes, perceptions, or general awareness of inclusive education, with limited attention given to how teachers translate their knowledge of disability categories into actual classroom instructional practices. This gap highlights the need for localized evidence that reflects the realities experienced by regular teachers implementing inclusive education in public elementary schools.

Specifically, this study aims to determine the level of regular teachers' knowledge of disability categories, assess the extent of instructional modification practices they employ in inclusive classrooms, and examine the significant relationship between these two variables. The findings of the study will serve as the basis for a proposed action plan that will strengthen teachers' competencies in implementing appropriate instructional modifications, thereby contributing to more effective, equitable, and inclusive learning experiences for all learners at Perrelos Elementary School.

Statement of the problem

This study assessed regular teachers' knowledge of disability categories and the instructional modification practices they employed at Perrelos Elementary School in Carcar City Division during the School Year 2025–2026 as a basis for an action plan to enhance teaching strategies for diverse learners.

Specifically, this study sought to answer the following questions:

1. What is the demographic profile of the teacher respondents in terms of age, gender, educational attainment, years of teaching experience, and teaching position?
2. What is the level of regular teachers' knowledge of disability categories?
3. What is the extent of instructional modification practices employed by regular teachers?
4. Is there a significant relationship between regular teachers' knowledge of disability categories and their instructional modification practices?
5. Based on the findings of the study, what action plan can be proposed to improve regular teachers' knowledge of disability categories and strengthen their instructional modification practices?

METHODOLOGY

This section presented the research methods and procedures used to assess regular teachers' knowledge of disability categories and their instructional modification practices at Perrelos Elementary School. It began with the research design and the study framework based on the input-process-output (IPO) model, followed by a description of the inclusive classroom environment where the study was conducted. It then outlined the respondents, the instruments employed for data collection, and the procedures used in gathering the data, and detailed the statistical techniques used for data analysis. Ethical considerations, including confidentiality, informed consent, voluntary participation, and protection of respondents' rights, were highlighted to ensure that the study was conducted with accuracy, integrity, and respect for all respondents.

This study employed a descriptive-correlational research design to examine regular teachers' knowledge of disability categories and the extent of their instructional modification practices at Perrelos Elementary School during the School Year 2025–2026. The descriptive component profiled teachers in terms of gender, age, educational attainment, and years of teaching experience, while also describing how they implemented instructional modifications to support diverse learners in inclusive classrooms. The correlational component investigated whether a significant relationship existed between teachers' knowledge of disability categories and their instructional modification practices. This design was appropriate because it allowed the researcher to describe existing teaching practices while analyzing how teacher knowledge influenced the implementation of inclusive strategies. It was also suitable because the study sought to determine the degree of association between two naturally occurring variables without manipulating or controlling them. Since the primary objective was to describe teachers' current knowledge and practices and examine whether these variables were significantly related, the descriptive-correlational design provided an appropriate and systematic approach for addressing the research objectives. As Creswell and Creswell (2022) noted, descriptive-correlational research effectively captured the current status of a phenomenon while examining potential relationships between variables.

The flow of the study was presented through the input, process, and output of the research. The input consisted of the key variables and factors that formed the foundation for examining inclusive education practices among regular teachers at Perrelos Elementary School.

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The primary input included the demographic profile of teachers, such as age, gender, educational attainment, years of teaching experience, and teaching position. Examining these characteristics provided essential context for understanding how teachers' personal and professional backgrounds may have influenced their knowledge of disability categories and the extent to which they applied instructional modifications to support diverse learners in inclusive elementary classrooms. The study also focused on the level of regular teachers' knowledge of disability categories, which reflected their understanding of the different types of disabilities, defining characteristics, learning challenges, and appropriate educational strategies. This variable was essential because teachers' comprehension of student needs directly informed how they planned and delivered instruction. Closely related was the extent of instructional modification practices employed by regular teachers, which measured how frequently and effectively teachers adapted lessons, assessments, and classroom management to accommodate learners with diverse abilities. Finally, the study examined the significant relationship between teachers' knowledge of disability categories and their instructional modification practices, which was the core of the research problem. By analyzing this relationship, the study sought to determine whether greater knowledge of disabilities corresponded to more effective or extensive use of instructional adaptations, thereby providing insights for designing targeted interventions, professional development, and strategies to enhance inclusive education outcomes.

The process of this study followed a systematic approach guided by a descriptive-correlational research design, which allowed for both profiling teachers and analyzing the relationship between their knowledge of disability categories and instructional modification practices. The first step involved the submission of the transmittal letter to the school principal and relevant authorities to secure permission for conducting the research at the selected school. This ensured that the study was conducted with the approval and cooperation of the school administrators while adhering to ethical standards. Once approval was obtained, the questionnaires were distributed to the selected teachers. The questionnaires were designed to gather information on teachers' demographic profiles, level of knowledge of disability categories, and the extent of their instructional modification practices. After the participants completed the instruments, the data were collected, ensuring that the responses were secured confidentially and systematically. Following data collection, data processing involved organizing, coding, and preparing the responses for analysis. This ensured that the information was accurate and ready for statistical examination. Finally, the statistical treatment, analysis, and interpretation of the data were conducted to describe the teachers' demographic profiles, levels of knowledge, and instructional practices, as well as to determine the presence and significance of the relationship between knowledge of disability categories and instructional modification practices. The findings from these analyses provided evidence-based insights to guide recommendations and interventions for enhancing inclusive education. The output of this study was the proposed Action Plan designed to enhance teaching strategies for diverse learners in inclusive classrooms. Based on the findings regarding teachers' knowledge of disability categories and their instructional modification practices, the Action Plan provided practical recommendations and strategies for improving inclusive education.

The study was conducted at Perrelos Elementary School, a public elementary school that served learners in its local community, including those with diverse learning needs. Its teachers implemented strategies that supported students within inclusive classroom settings. With the support of school facilities and administrative guidance, the institution provided a setting where instructional modifications could be observed in terms of how they were planned and applied at the elementary level. The school promoted inclusion through continuous teacher

collaboration and professional development activities. Educators regularly shared best practices, discussed classroom challenges, and designed interventions suited for learners with disabilities. This collaborative culture helped sustain an environment that supported equity, participation, and academic growth for all learners, while also allowing the researcher to examine both individual teaching practices and the collective efforts of the school community in fostering inclusion. In addition, Perrelos Elementary School provided instructional resources such as assistive learning materials, specialized teaching tools, and adaptive technologies that enhanced teaching effectiveness for diverse learners. Classroom spaces were arranged to accommodate different learning styles, and teachers were guided by school administrators in applying appropriate instructional modifications. These contextual factors created a suitable setting for examining how teachers' knowledge of disability categories was translated into classroom practices.

The respondents of this study consisted of 35 regular teachers from Perrelos Elementary School, selected through purposive sampling. This method ensured that only teachers who met the study's criteria and had direct experience in inclusive classrooms were included, allowing the researcher to focus on educators actively implementing instructional modifications for students with diverse learning needs. The inclusion criteria required teachers to regularly handle classes with learners of varying abilities, possess practical knowledge of disability categories, and apply inclusive education strategies. Participants also had at least one year of teaching experience in classrooms where students with disabilities were present. These requirements ensured that the selected teachers could provide meaningful and relevant information about their knowledge and practices. Teachers who did not interact with students with disabilities, had limited or no experience in implementing instructional modifications, or were not involved in inclusive classrooms were excluded. This ensured that all respondents provided accurate and reliable data to achieve the study's objectives. At Perrelos Elementary School, the selected teachers were those who routinely adapted lessons, employed differentiated strategies, and supported students with diverse learning needs. Their experiences provided valuable insights into how knowledge of disability categories informed practical instructional modifications in an elementary school inclusive setting. By selecting 35 respondents through purposive sampling and applying clear inclusion and exclusion criteria, the study ensured that the data collected were both relevant and reliable. This approach strengthened the validity of the research and provided a solid foundation for examining the relationship between teachers' knowledge and their instructional modification practices at Perrelos Elementary School.

The distribution of the 35 respondents according to grade level was as follows. Grade 1 had a frequency (f) of 5, equivalent to 14.29%, and Grade 2 likewise had f = 5, equivalent to 14.29%. Grade 3 had f = 6, equivalent to 17.14%, Grade 4 had f = 6, equivalent to 17.14%, and Grade 5 had f = 6, equivalent to 17.14%. Grade 6 had f = 7, equivalent to 20.00%. Altogether, the respondents totaled 35, representing 100.00% of the sample.

This study utilized an adapted survey questionnaire as the primary research instrument to gather data on regular teachers' knowledge of disability categories and their instructional modification practices at Perrelos Elementary School. The instrument consisted of three parts. Part I gathered the respondents' demographic profile, including age, gender, educational attainment, length of service in teaching, and teaching position, which provided essential background information for describing the teacher-respondents. Part II measured the level of regular teachers' knowledge of disability categories in inclusive education and included ten statements assessing their understanding of various disability types, their defining characteristics, learning needs, and appropriate instructional responses in inclusive classrooms. Respondents rated each statement using a four-point Likert scale ranging from 4 (Strongly Agree) to 1 (Strongly Disagree). This section was adapted from Thomas and Uthaman (2023),

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who developed an instrument on teachers' knowledge and attitudes toward inclusive education of learners with disabilities. Part III assessed the extent of instructional modification practices employed by regular teachers and also consisted of ten indicators focusing on lesson modification, instructional delivery, assessment adjustments, use of alternative materials, individualized tasks, classroom accessibility, collaboration with special education personnel, homework modification, differentiated instruction, and reflective practice. It likewise used a four-point Likert scale and was adapted from established inclusive education practice frameworks aligned with Lozano et al. (2022), particularly the Concerns about Inclusive Education Scale (CIES).

The data gathering followed three stages, namely the preliminary, data gathering, and post-data gathering procedures, to ensure a systematic and ethical process. Approval was secured from Perrelos Elementary School, and data were collected using a survey questionnaire administered to teacher-respondents under strict confidentiality and voluntary participation. In the preliminary stage, the study began with the researcher securing formal approval from the principal and school authorities of Perrelos Elementary School through a transmittal letter. Once permission was granted, coordination with designated school representatives followed to identify teacher-respondents who were actively involved in inclusive classrooms. The purpose, objectives, and significance of the study were clearly explained, emphasizing that participation was voluntary and responses would remain strictly confidential. Each participant signed an informed consent form to confirm their understanding and willingness to take part without any impact on their professional standing. In the data gathering stage, the primary data collection tool was a printed, adapted survey questionnaire consisting of three parts, namely the respondents' demographic profile, their level of knowledge of disability categories, and the extent of instructional modification practices. The researcher personally administered the questionnaires, provided clear instructions, and addressed any questions. To avoid disrupting classes, respondents completed the survey during their free time or non-teaching hours, ensuring accurate and reliable responses. In the post-data gathering stage, all questionnaires were reviewed for completeness and consistency after collection. Valid responses were organized, coded, and prepared for statistical analysis to address the research objectives. Throughout the process, ethical standards such as confidentiality, voluntary participation, and informed consent were strictly observed to protect respondents' rights and privacy. This systematic approach ensured the integrity and credibility of the study and provided reliable insights into teachers' knowledge and instructional practices in inclusive classrooms at Perrelos Elementary School.

In conducting this study on teachers' knowledge of disability categories and their instructional modification practices in inclusive classrooms, strict ethical principles will be observed to protect the rights, well-being, and confidentiality of all respondents at Perrelos Elementary School. With respect to informed consent, all teacher-respondents will be fully informed about the purpose, objectives, and scope of the study prior to participation. Clear instructions on completing the adapted survey questionnaire and the estimated time required will be provided. Each participant will sign an informed consent form, confirming voluntary participation and their right to withdraw at any time without penalty or impact on their professional standing. Regarding confidentiality and anonymity, personal information and responses will be treated with strict confidentiality. Identifying details such as names will not appear in any report or publication, and all data will be coded to ensure anonymity. Access to the data will be limited to the researcher and authorized personnel, and all records will be securely stored both physically and digitally. Participation will be entirely voluntary, with no coercion or pressure involved, and teachers may decline or discontinue participation at any

point without any consequences to their teaching responsibilities or professional evaluation. The study will also adhere to the principle of beneficence and non-maleficence by generating insights that may help improve inclusive classroom practices and support teachers in effectively implementing instructional modifications for diverse learners. Finally, formal approval will be secured from the principal and school authorities of Perrelos Elementary School prior to data collection, and coordination with designated school representatives will ensure that all procedures align with school policies, promoting transparency, respect, and cooperation throughout the research process.

The data collected from the teacher-respondents at Perrelos Elementary School were analyzed using appropriate statistical techniques to ensure accurate and meaningful interpretation. Descriptive statistics were first employed to summarize the teachers' demographic profiles, their level of knowledge of disability categories, and the extent of instructional modification practices. Frequency was used to determine the number of respondents in each category of the demographic profile, including age, gender, educational attainment, years of teaching experience, and teaching position. It provided the actual count of respondents under each category, enabling the researcher to describe the composition of the study participants and establish a clear profile of the teacher-respondents in the inclusive school setting. Percentage was employed to determine the proportion of respondents in each category of the demographic profile. It converted the frequency counts into percentages, allowing for easier comparison and interpretation of the distribution of respondents according to age, gender, educational attainment, years of teaching experience, and teaching position. This provided a clearer understanding of the characteristics of the participants relative to the total number of respondents. The weighted mean was utilized to determine the level of teachers' knowledge of disability categories and the extent to which they implemented instructional modification practices. This allowed the researcher to quantify responses, identify strengths and areas for improvement, and assess the consistency of inclusive practices. In addition, standard deviation was computed to measure the variability of responses, indicating whether teachers' knowledge and practices were consistent or varied, and identifying areas where further support or training may be necessary. The Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient was used to determine whether a significant relationship existed between teachers' knowledge of disability categories and their instructional modification practices. It measured the strength and direction of the association between the two variables, providing empirical evidence on whether higher levels of teacher knowledge were associated with greater implementation of instructional modifications in inclusive classrooms.

The questionnaire utilized a four-point Likert scale to measure the respondents' level of agreement with each statement, with responses ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 4 (Strongly Agree). This scaling method encouraged respondents to express a definite opinion by eliminating a neutral option. Higher scores indicated greater teacher knowledge of disability categories and a higher extent of instructional modification practices implemented to support learners in inclusive classrooms.

For the scoring procedure for teachers' knowledge of disability categories, the numerical rating 1 corresponded to the scale 3.26–4.00, with the descriptive rating Strongly Agree and the verbal interpretation of highly knowledgeable and confident in addressing students' needs. The numerical rating 2 corresponded to the scale 2.51–3.25, with the descriptive rating Agree and the verbal interpretation of generally knowledgeable with some gaps. The numerical rating 3 corresponded to the scale 1.76–2.50, with the descriptive rating Disagree and the verbal interpretation of limited knowledge, struggles with instructional strategies. The numerical rating 4 corresponded to the scale 1.00–1.75, with the descriptive rating Strongly Disagree and the verbal interpretation of lacks knowledge and ability to support learners effectively.

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For the scoring procedure for instructional modification practices, the numerical rating 4 corresponded to the scale 3.26–4.00, with the descriptive rating Strongly Agree and the verbal interpretation of frequently applies effective instructional modifications. The numerical rating 3 corresponded to the scale 2.51–3.25, with the descriptive rating Agree and the verbal interpretation of generally, applies modifications but inconsistently. The numerical rating 2 corresponded to the scale 1.76–2.50, with the descriptive rating Disagree and the verbal interpretation of rarely applies instructional modifications. The numerical rating 1 corresponded to the scale 1.00–1.75, with the descriptive rating Strongly Disagree and the verbal interpretation of does not apply modifications effectively.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This Results and Discussion section presents the data gathered from 35 regular teachers of Perrelos Elementary School during the School Year 2025-2026. The respondents were selected through purposive sampling. The study used a descriptive-correlational research design and gathered data with an adapted survey questionnaire. The questionnaire had three parts: the respondents' demographic profile, their knowledge of disability categories, and the extent of their instructional modification practices. The data were analyzed using frequency and percentage distribution, weighted mean, standard deviation, and the Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient. The discussion is grounded in the data gathered, and the results are interpreted in direct relation to the objectives of the study. These objectives were to describe the teachers' demographic profile, determine their level of knowledge of disability categories and the extent of their instructional modification practices, and test whether a significant relationship existed between the two variables.

Demographic profile of the respondents

Table 2 showed the age and gender distribution of the 35 respondents. The largest group belonged to the 27-36 age bracket, with 18 respondents or 51.43%. Of these, 12 or 34.29% were female and 6 or 17.14% were male. The 37-46 bracket followed with 12 respondents or 34.29%, comprising 11 females or 31.43% and 1 male or 2.86%. The smallest group was the 47-56 bracket with 5 respondents or 14.29%, comprising 4 females or 11.43% and 1 male or 2.86%. By gender, 27 respondents or 77.14% were female and 8 or 22.86% were male. The teaching workforce was therefore largely young to early middle-aged and predominantly female. This is consistent with the traditional composition of the basic education teaching force in many public schools, where teaching has long been a female-dominated profession. Most respondents were in the early to mid-career stages. This may have influenced their adaptability to inclusive education practices and their openness to instructional innovation, while the slightly older teachers contributed experience-based judgment in handling diverse learners. From the perspective of social constructivism, teachers' characteristics may shape how they construct knowledge and implement instructional strategies in diverse classrooms. In support of this, Jabeen et al. (2026) emphasized that teachers' approaches and adaptations in inclusive classrooms are significantly influenced by their background experiences and professional characteristics. Demographic characteristics should therefore be viewed as factors that contribute to varied teaching experiences rather than as determinants of teaching effectiveness. Within the school setting, the relatively young and female-dominated teaching force may have been advantageous for implementing inclusive education reforms. At the same time, the finding

highlighted the need for continuous professional development across age groups so that instructional practices for learners with diverse needs remain consistent and effective.

Table 3 presented the highest educational attainment of the respondents. Fifteen respondents or 42.86% had earned units in a master's degree, and 14 or 40.00% held a bachelor's degree. Four respondents or 11.43% were master's graduates, 1 or 2.86% had doctorate units, and another 1 or 2.86% had completed a doctorate degree. The respondents were generally well qualified in terms of academic preparation, and the majority were pursuing graduate studies. This suggested a strong inclination toward professional growth. However, the small number of respondents with doctorate units or a completed doctorate indicated that advanced academic qualifications were still limited. Teachers engaged in graduate studies are generally more exposed to updated pedagogical approaches, research-based strategies, and inclusive teaching practices, which may positively influence their instructional competence. The significant proportion of bachelor's degree holders also indicated a need for further support and encouragement to pursue higher education. As teachers expand their academic preparation, they are more likely to develop a deeper understanding of learner diversity and the classroom modifications that support inclusion. Teachers who have not yet pursued graduate education may benefit from accessible professional learning opportunities that strengthen their inclusive teaching competencies. Luhamya (2026) likewise emphasized that school leadership plays a crucial role in enhancing teachers' adaptation of inclusive teaching practices through professional development opportunities and institutional support. In this school, many teachers were actively pursuing graduate education, yet a gap remained in the attainment of advanced degrees. This points to the need for institutional support systems that encourage and facilitate higher education among teachers.

Table 4 presented the respondents' years of teaching experience. The largest group had 6-10 years of experience, with 12 respondents or 34.29%. This was followed by those with 16 years and above with 10 respondents or 28.57%, those with 1-5 years with 7 respondents or 20.00%, and those with 11-15 years with 6 respondents or 17.14%. The respondents included both early-career and experienced teachers, with a considerable share in the mid-career and veteran categories. This suggested a balance between fresh instructional approaches and seasoned classroom management practices. Teachers with longer years of service are generally more adept at managing classroom complexities and making instructional adjustments, while those with fewer years may bring more updated and innovative strategies. From the perspective of inclusive education and disability studies, teaching experience is a critical factor because addressing the needs of persons with disabilities requires practical awareness of real-life challenges and contextual demands, which prolonged professional exposure often helps develop. In this regard, Morris et al. (2022) highlighted that individuals living with disabilities face varied and persistent contextual challenges, underscoring the importance of informed and experience-based responses from the professionals who support them. Within the school, the considerable level of experience may support more effective implementation of inclusive practices. It also emphasized the need for continuous capacity-building so that teachers, regardless of experience level, remain responsive to the evolving needs of learners with disabilities and other diverse learning needs.

Table 5 presented the respondents' teaching positions. Thirteen respondents or 37.14% were Teacher III, 12 or 34.29% were Teacher II, 7 or 20.00% were Teacher I, and 3 or 8.57% were Master Teachers. Most respondents therefore belonged to the middle ranks of the teaching hierarchy. This suggested that they had already gained moderate to substantial classroom experience and were actively engaged in instructional responsibilities. The limited number of Master Teachers indicated that few senior personnel were available to provide guidance and instructional leadership. Classroom instruction and inclusive practices were largely handled by mid-level teachers, who are expected to balance teaching duties with mentoring and

instructional planning. This may contribute to more stable implementation of inclusive practices, since teachers in these positions generally have sufficient exposure to diverse classroom situations. Hall et al. (2022) emphasized that differences in how disability and functional difficulty are understood and identified have significant implications for how systems organize support and interventions. This underscores the importance of clear professional roles in addressing learner needs. Contextually, the limited representation of higher-ranking instructional leaders highlighted the need to strengthen mentoring structures and instructional leadership support so that teachers can better address diverse learner needs in inclusive settings.

Level of the respondents' knowledge of disability categories

Table 6 presented the respondents' level of knowledge of disability categories. The aggregate mean was 3.39 with an aggregate standard deviation of 0.55, interpreted as Moderately Knowledgeable. This indicated that the respondents had a functional but not yet advanced understanding of disability categories and their application in inclusive classroom practices. The highest-rated indicator was "I am familiar with the learning challenges associated with emotional and behavioral disorders," with a weighted mean of 3.66 and a standard deviation of 0.54, interpreted as Knowledgeable. It was followed by "I can describe appropriate classroom expectations for each disability category," with a weighted mean of 3.60 and a standard deviation of 0.55, likewise interpreted as Knowledgeable. A third relatively strong indicator was "I can distinguish between physical, sensory, and cognitive disabilities," with a weighted mean of 3.49 and a standard deviation of 0.70, also interpreted as Knowledgeable. These findings suggested that the respondents were stronger in recognizing observable learner behaviors, differentiating broad disability classifications, and setting general classroom expectations.

The remaining indicators were interpreted as Moderately Knowledgeable. "I know how different disability categories affect a student's learning needs" obtained a weighted mean of 3.40 with a standard deviation of 0.50. "I understand the defining characteristics of students with intellectual disabilities" and "I understand how multiple disability categories can co-occur in one student" each obtained a weighted mean of 3.37, with standard deviations of 0.49 and 0.55, respectively. "I am confident in explaining the educational needs of students with autism spectrum disorder" and "I know the legal and educational definitions of disability categories used in schools" each obtained a weighted mean of 3.34, with standard deviations of 0.48 and 0.59, respectively. "I can identify each major disability category recognized in inclusive education" obtained 3.20 with a standard deviation of 0.47. The lowest-rated indicator was "I can match instructional support strategies to specific disability categories," with a weighted mean of 3.17 and a standard deviation of 0.66. Although the teachers possessed foundational awareness, their ability to translate knowledge into specific instructional adaptations remained limited.

The findings suggested that the respondents demonstrated stronger conceptual awareness than applied instructional knowledge. This pattern may be attributed to limited specialized training in disability-focused pedagogy and insufficient exposure to structured inclusive education capacity-building programs. Teachers may encounter learners with disabilities in actual classroom settings, but without sustained training their ability to confidently link disability characteristics to appropriate instructional strategies remains constrained. This result aligns with Konuk Er et al. (2023), who emphasized that teachers' knowledge of disability-related characteristics varies significantly depending on exposure,

training, and contextual experience. Similarly, Ginevra et al. (2022) stressed that the quality and specificity of information provided about learners with disabilities significantly influence teachers' understanding and attitudes, which in turn affect instructional decisions and classroom responses. The moderate level of knowledge implied that teachers were not yet fully equipped to implement highly responsive inclusive practices consistently. This has direct implications for identifying learner needs, selecting appropriate interventions, and implementing differentiated instruction, and without strengthened knowledge there is a risk of inconsistency in how learners with disabilities are supported.

In relation to social constructivist theory, effective instruction in inclusive settings depends on the teacher's ability to interpret learner differences accurately and to scaffold learning experiences appropriately. The findings suggested that teachers may still require stronger conceptual and practical grounding to apply this principle fully. Knowledge alone is insufficient unless it is translated into classroom practices that respond to the unique needs of learners with disabilities. Strengthening teachers' understanding of disability categories can enhance their confidence and competence in making instructional decisions. When teachers have a clearer understanding of learners' strengths, limitations, and educational needs, they are better positioned to design differentiated learning activities, implement suitable accommodations, and monitor progress. Contextually, the results highlighted the need for targeted professional development focusing on disability awareness, assessment literacy, and instructional adaptation strategies, which would help bridge the gap between theoretical understanding and actual classroom implementation.

Extent of instructional modification practices

Table 7 presented the extent of the respondents' instructional modification practices. The aggregate mean was 2.90 with an aggregate standard deviation of 0.65, interpreted as Moderately Practiced. All ten indicators were interpreted as Moderately Practiced. This indicated that modifications were implemented to some extent, but not yet consistently or at a highly developed level across all classroom situations. The highest-rated indicator was "I alter the way I present instructions (e.g., visuals, simplified language) for students who struggle with the general curriculum," with a weighted mean of 3.29 and a standard deviation of 0.62. It was followed by "I modify homework or practice assignments for students with identified learning needs," with a weighted mean of 3.11 and a standard deviation of 0.58, and "I reflect on and revise my instructional modifications based on student progress," with a weighted mean of 3.09 and a standard deviation of 0.56. Next came "I adapt classroom seating and routines to increase accessibility for students with disabilities," with a weighted mean of 3.00 and a standard deviation of 0.59. "I modify lesson content to suit the learning needs of students with disabilities" and "I consult with special education personnel when planning instructional changes" each obtained a weighted mean of 2.83, with standard deviations of 0.75 and 0.66, respectively. The lowest-rated indicators were "I adjust assessment formats (e.g., oral responses, extended time) for students with disabilities," with a weighted mean of 2.71 and a standard deviation of 0.62, "I use alternative learning materials to support students with different disability needs," with 2.71 and 0.71, and "I provide individualized task modifications during class activities," also with 2.71 and 0.71. The lowest of all was "I use differentiated instruction strategies regularly in mixed-ability classrooms," with a weighted mean of 2.69 and a standard deviation of 0.72. Teachers were thus more consistent in adjusting instructional delivery and basic learning tasks, while more specialized and structured forms of modification were practiced less frequently.

The results suggested that teachers were already making basic adjustments, but their use of more comprehensive and systematic inclusive strategies remained limited. This may be

attributed to heavy workload, limited training on differentiated instruction, and insufficient access to instructional resources and support systems. Teachers may also rely more on traditional teaching approaches, which makes consistent individualized modification difficult. These findings align with the view that effective inclusive education requires not only awareness of learner diversity but also sustained instructional adaptation supported by training and institutional support. Konuk Er et al. (2023) emphasized that teachers' practical application of inclusive strategies is strongly influenced by training exposure and contextual teaching experience, while Ginevra et al. (2022) highlighted that teachers' responses to learner diversity are shaped by the quality of information and support they receive regarding students with disabilities. The moderate level of practice implied that learners with disabilities may not be consistently receiving fully differentiated instruction. Limited adaptation may hinder their academic participation and progress. From the perspective of social constructivist theory, effective learning occurs when teachers scaffold instruction according to learners' needs within their zone of proximal development. The findings suggested that scaffolding was present but not yet systematically integrated into classroom instruction. Contextually, the results indicated the need for strengthened professional development on differentiated instruction, assessment modification, and inclusive teaching strategies. Such development would improve the consistency and quality of modifications and support better learning outcomes for students with disabilities and other diverse learning needs.

Test of relationship between knowledge and instructional modification practices

Table 8 presented the test of relationship between the respondents' knowledge of disability categories and their instructional modification practices, using Pearson's r to determine the degree and direction of association between the two variables. The computed r-value was 0.103, indicating a negligible positive correlation. The p-value was 0.556, which was higher than the 0.05 level of significance. The null hypothesis was therefore not rejected, and the relationship was interpreted as not significant. There was no significant relationship between the respondents' knowledge of disability categories and their instructional modification practices. The level of teachers' knowledge did not significantly correspond to how frequently or effectively they applied modifications in inclusive classrooms. Knowledge alone was thus not sufficient to ensure effective instructional adaptation. Other factors such as collaboration, access to support systems, teaching experience, and institutional readiness may have played a stronger role. Instructional modification often depends not only on what teachers know but also on available resources, teamwork, and school-level support structures.

Related literature presents mixed perspectives on this issue. Neca et al. (2022) emphasized that inclusive practices are strongly influenced by contextual and professional conditions, suggesting that knowledge alone does not guarantee effective implementation. Sivrikaya et al. (2023) noted that teachers' content knowledge varies across disciplines and does not always translate directly into classroom application, especially when dealing with specific learning disabilities. Jurkowski et al. (2023) highlighted that collaborative practices such as co-teaching are crucial in translating knowledge into effective inclusive instruction, and that individual competence alone is often insufficient. Cerero et al. (2023) stressed that competencies, including digital and instructional skills related to disability support, require structured development beyond basic knowledge acquisition. While prior research recognizes the importance of knowledge, it also highlights the critical role of collaboration, training, and institutional support in transforming knowledge into practice. The present study similarly indicated that possessing knowledge of disability categories did not automatically result in

consistent instructional modification. Knowledge serves as a necessary foundation for inclusive teaching but is not sufficient on its own. This may be explained by contextual constraints such as limited training opportunities, lack of structured support systems, and varying access to inclusive education resources. Teachers may understand disability categories conceptually yet struggle to apply this knowledge because of the demands of managing diverse classrooms, preparing instructional materials, and balancing multiple teaching responsibilities. They therefore require continuous opportunities to develop practical skills, refine their instructional approaches, and gain confidence in addressing the diverse needs of learners.

Synthesis of findings

Taken together, the data from the 35 teacher-respondents of Perrelos Elementary School addressed each objective of the study. The respondents were predominantly female (27 or 77.14%), mostly aged 27-36 (18 or 51.43%), largely pursuing graduate education, and concentrated in the mid-career and mid-rank categories. Their knowledge of disability categories was Moderately Knowledgeable, with an aggregate mean of 3.39 and a standard deviation of 0.55. Their instructional modification practices were Moderately Practiced, with an aggregate mean of 2.90 and a standard deviation of 0.65. The Pearson correlation yielded an r-value of 0.103 and a p-value of 0.556 at the 0.05 level of significance, so the null hypothesis was not rejected and no significant relationship was established between the two variables. These results contribute to the field of inclusive education by showing that conceptual familiarity with disability categories does not by itself produce systematic classroom adaptation. They point to differentiated instruction, assessment modification, collaboration, and institutional support as the areas needing attention. These findings provide the empirical basis for the proposed Action Plan, which is intended to strengthen teachers' knowledge and instructional modification practices in inclusive classrooms and which is presented in the succeeding chapter.

CONCLUSION

The study concluded that the regular teachers of Perrelos Elementary School in Carcar City Division, during the School Year 2025-2026, possessed a moderate level of knowledge of disability categories and moderately practiced instructional modification strategies in inclusive classrooms. This conclusion is grounded in the demographic profile of the teacher-respondents, who were generally relatively young to early middle-aged educators and predominantly female, reflecting the common gender distribution in basic education. Most had already engaged in or completed graduate studies, although only a very small number had attained doctoral-level education, and many had moderate to long years of teaching experience, with most occupying Teacher II and Teacher III positions and only a few serving as Master Teachers. Taken together, these characteristics indicate a teaching population still in its active professional development stage, with a strong inclination toward professional growth, limited advanced academic qualifications, and instructional responsibilities largely carried by mid-level personnel of varying maturity and experience.

Building on this profile, the study further concluded that the teachers' knowledge of disability categories was adequate in basic concepts but limited in the application of strategies for diverse learner needs. The respondents demonstrated stronger understanding in recognizing behavioral manifestations of disabilities and in distinguishing broad categories such as physical, sensory, and cognitive disabilities. In contrast, their knowledge was less developed in the application of instructional strategies, in legal definitions, and in the handling of complex or co-occurring disabilities. This pattern shows that the teachers had foundational awareness

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but lacked the deeper and more applied understanding needed for highly responsive inclusive instruction.

In a similar manner, the study concluded that instructional modifications were present but not consistently or fully implemented. Teachers were more consistent in making basic adjustments, such as modifying instructional delivery and adapting homework tasks, whereas more advanced practices, including differentiated instruction, individualized task modification, the use of alternative materials, and structured assessment modifications, were applied less consistently. These results indicate that, while teachers were already making efforts to accommodate diverse learners, their instructional modifications remained limited in scope and consistency.

Furthermore, the test of relationship revealed no significant association between teachers' knowledge of disability categories and their instructional modification practices. It was therefore concluded that knowledge alone did not directly translate into classroom practice, which implies that having knowledge of disability categories does not necessarily lead to the consistent application of instructional modifications. This suggests that other factors beyond knowledge, such as training, institutional support, workload, and the availability of resources, may exert a stronger influence on actual classroom practices.

In light of these conclusions, it is recommended that the proposed Action Plan be implemented to strengthen teachers' knowledge of disability categories and to enhance their instructional modification practices in inclusive classrooms. The plan comprises targeted professional development activities, mentoring, collaborative learning opportunities, and practical training designed to improve teachers' competencies in addressing the diverse needs of learners with disabilities. Its implementation is expected to promote more effective and consistent inclusive teaching practices at Perrelos Elementary School, thereby bridging the gap between what teachers know about disability categories and what they are able to apply in their classrooms.

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