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Knowledge of disability categories and instructional modification practices of regular teachers

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ABSTRACT

This study assessed the regular teachers' knowledge of disability categories and instructional modification practices at Sibonga Central Elementary School during School Year 2025–2026 as basis for a proposed Action Plan to enhance teaching strategies for diverse learners. It specifically aimed to determine teachers' demographic profile, level of knowledge, extent of instructional modification practices, and the relationship between the two variables. A descriptive-correlational research design was used. Purposive sampling involved 35 teacher-respondents who met the inclusion criteria of handling learners with diverse needs. Data were gathered using adapted survey questionnaires. Frequency count, percentage, weighted mean, standard deviation, and Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient were used in analysis. Findings revealed that respondents were mostly female, middle-aged, and experienced teachers with varying educational attainment and positions, indicating a stable teaching workforce. Teachers demonstrated moderate knowledge of disability categories, with better understanding of general instructional strategies but limited ability to identify specific disabilities and learner characteristics. Instructional modification practices were also moderate, particularly in assessment adjustments, while differentiated instruction and individualized strategies were less consistently applied. Correlation analysis showed a negligible and non-significant relationship between knowledge and instructional practices, indicating that knowledge alone did not significantly influence classroom implementation. The study concluded that both knowledge and practice require strengthening. It is recommended that an Action Plan be implemented focusing on targeted training in disability identification.

Keywords: Special Education, teachers' knowledge on disability categories, instructional modification practices, action plan, Sibonga Central Elementary School.

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INTRODUCTION

Inclusive education has become a continuing priority in basic education, emphasizing that all learners, regardless of disability, learning differences, or behavioral needs, should have equitable access to quality instruction. In inclusive classrooms, teachers are expected to handle learners with different abilities and needs while meeting the required learning competencies.

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This requires teachers to have enough knowledge of disability categories and the ability to apply appropriate instructional modifications. These skills are important in helping learners with disabilities participate in classroom activities and achieve learning outcomes (Charcos et al., 2025).

In actual classroom settings, teachers often deal with different learner needs at the same time. A teacher may need to repeat or simplify instructions, give a learner more time to finish an activity, adjust an assessment, or provide another way for a learner to show understanding. Teachers may also deal with attention or behavior concerns while continuing the lesson for the whole class. These situations show that inclusive teaching requires teachers to understand learner differences and know how to adjust their instruction accordingly.

In the Philippine context, regular teachers also face these challenges. Some teachers handle learners with disabilities in regular classrooms even when they have limited training or experience in special education. They are expected to modify lessons, activities, and assessments based on learners' needs, but available training, resources, and support may differ from one school to another. Because of this, teachers may understand the general idea of inclusion but may still have difficulty identifying specific disability characteristics or choosing the most suitable instructional modification.

At Sibonga Central Elementary School, these concerns may also be seen in regular classrooms. Teachers may have learners who struggle to follow instructions, need repeated explanations, require additional time, or have difficulty staying focused during activities. For example, a teacher may notice that a learner is having difficulty completing a task and may give extra time or simplify the activity. However, the teacher may not always be sure what specific need the learner has or what other modification would be most appropriate. There may also be differences in how teachers adjust lessons, activities, and assessments for learners with similar needs. These situations show that teachers may need more support in understanding disability categories and applying instructional modifications consistently. However, the actual level of teachers' knowledge and the extent to which they apply instructional modifications at the school have not yet been clearly determined.

These concerns make it important to examine the teachers' actual knowledge and classroom practices. Knowing the level of teachers' knowledge of disability categories can help identify areas where they need further training, particularly in recognizing different learner characteristics and understanding their specific educational needs. Examining their instructional modification practices can also show which classroom strategies, activities, and assessment adjustments are being used consistently and which areas still need improvement. It can provide a clearer picture of how teachers respond when learners experience difficulty in understanding lessons or completing classroom tasks. Determining the relationship between the two variables can further help establish whether teachers with better knowledge of disability categories also tend to apply instructional modifications more effectively and consistently. The results may also help the school determine the kind of professional support and intervention that would be most useful to regular teachers in handling learners with diverse needs.

Therefore, this study examines regular teachers' knowledge of disability categories, the extent of their instructional modification practices, and the relationship between these variables at Sibonga Central Elementary School during School Year 2025–2026. It seeks to provide a clearer understanding of how prepared teachers are to recognize different disability categories and how they respond to the varied learning needs of their learners through appropriate instructional modifications. The findings will serve as a basis for developing an Action Plan focused on improving teachers' knowledge, strengthening instructional modification practices, and providing appropriate training, guidance, and support for more effective inclusive classroom teaching.

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Statement of the problem

This research assessed regular teachers' knowledge of disability categories and instructional modification practices employed at Sibonga Elementary School in Cebu Province Division during the School Year 2025–2026 as the basis for a proposed Action Plan.

Specifically, it sought to answer the following research 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, 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 Sibonga Central Elementary School. It began with an explanation of the research design and the study framework using the Input-Process-Output (IPO) model, followed by a description of the inclusive classroom setting where the study was conducted. It then outlined the respondents of the study, the instruments used in data collection, and the procedures employed in gathering the data. It also detailed the statistical techniques used in analyzing the data and the ethical considerations observed, including confidentiality, informed consent, voluntary participation, and the protection of respondents' rights.

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 Sibonga Central 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 elementary classrooms. This approach provided a clear understanding of teachers' backgrounds and their current strategies in addressing the learning needs of learners with disabilities within the school. 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 examining how teacher knowledge influenced the implementation of inclusive strategies. In the context of Sibonga Central Elementary School, this design provided evidence on how teachers' understanding of disability categories informed their instructional adaptations, offering insights that could guide interventions and strengthen inclusive education practices at the elementary level.

The flow of the study was presented through the Input-Process-Output (IPO) model. The input of this study consisted of the key variables and factors that formed the foundation for examining inclusive education practices among regular teachers at Sibonga Central Elementary School. 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 principals and relevant authorities to secure permission for conducting the research in the selected schools. This ensured that the study was conducted with the approval and cooperation of school administrators, adhering to ethical standards. Once approval was obtained, the distribution of questionnaires to the selected teachers took place. 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 participants had completed the instruments, the collection of data occurred, ensuring that 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 data were conducted to describe teachers' demographic profiles, levels of knowledge, and instructional practices, as well as to determine the presence and significance of relationships 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 Sibonga Central Elementary School, located in Poblacion, Sibonga, Cebu, which caters to a diverse population of students from surrounding communities, including those with varying learning needs and abilities. Teachers at the school routinely apply differentiated instruction, individualized support, and other inclusive strategies to ensure that all learners can access the curriculum meaningfully. The school's emphasis on inclusive practices, combined with its resources such as accessible classrooms, learning materials, and collaborative teaching approaches, creates an environment conducive to studying how teachers understand and implement instructional modifications. This setting allowed the researcher to examine the practical application of knowledge about disability categories in real classroom contexts, providing insights into the effectiveness and challenges of inclusive education at the

elementary level. In addition, Sibonga Central Elementary School fosters a supportive learning environment through strong collaboration among teachers, school administrators, and parents. Regular meetings, mentoring, and professional development opportunities help teachers refine their instructional strategies and address the diverse needs of students, including those with disabilities. The school's commitment to inclusivity is reflected not only in classroom practices but also in policies and programs that promote equitable access to education for all learners.

The respondents of this study consisted of 50 regular teachers from Sibonga Central Elementary School, selected through purposive sampling. This sampling technique ensured that only teachers who met the inclusion criteria and had direct experience in inclusive classroom settings were included. It allowed the researcher to focus on educators who were actively engaged in teaching learners with diverse abilities and in implementing instructional modifications for learners with disabilities. 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 in their instruction. They were also required to have at least one year of teaching experience in classrooms with learners with disabilities. These criteria ensured that the respondents were capable of providing relevant and experience-based information regarding their knowledge and instructional practices. Teachers who did not handle learners with disabilities, had limited or no experience in implementing instructional modifications, or were not involved in inclusive classroom teaching were excluded from the study. This ensured that the data collected were accurate, reliable, and aligned with the objectives of the research. At Sibonga Central Elementary School, the selected teachers were those who regularly adapted lessons, implemented differentiated instructional strategies, and provided support to learners with diverse educational needs. Their actual classroom experiences offered valuable insights into how knowledge of disability categories influenced instructional decision-making and classroom practice in an inclusive elementary setting. By selecting 50 respondents through purposive sampling and applying clear inclusion and exclusion criteria, the study ensured that the gathered data were relevant and credible. This strengthened the validity of the research and provided a solid foundation for examining the relationship between teachers' knowledge of disability categories and their instructional modification practices.

The distribution of the 50 respondents by grade level was as follows: eight teachers (16.00%) from Grade 1, seven teachers (14.00%) from Grade 2, nine teachers (18.00%) from Grade 3, seven teachers (14.00%) from Grade 4, nine teachers (18.00%) from Grade 5, and ten teachers (20.00%) from Grade 6, for a total of 50 respondents (100.00%).

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 Sibonga Central 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), 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 procedures undertaken in the conduct of the research, including the stages of data collection, processing, and ethical considerations, were carried out systematically to ensure that the study was organized, valid, and ethically sound. In the preliminary stage, the study commenced with the researcher securing formal approval from the principal and school authorities of Sibonga Central Elementary School through a transmittal letter. Upon approval, coordination was established with designated school representatives to identify teacher-respondents who were actively involved in inclusive classroom instruction. The purpose, objectives, and significance of the study were clearly explained to all respondents, emphasizing voluntary participation and strict confidentiality of responses. Each teacher-respondent was required to accomplish and sign an informed consent form prior to participation, confirming their understanding and willingness to take part without any form of coercion or impact on their professional standing. In the data gathering stage, the primary instrument used for data collection was a printed, adapted survey questionnaire composed of three parts: the respondents' demographic profile, the level of teachers' knowledge of disability categories, and the extent of instructional modification practices. The researcher personally administered the questionnaires and provided clear instructions to ensure proper understanding of each item. Respondents were given sufficient time to accomplish the instrument, preferably during non-teaching hours or at their convenience, to avoid disruption of classroom duties. This procedure helped ensure the accuracy, reliability, and completeness of the gathered data. In the post data gathering stage, after retrieval of the accomplished questionnaires, each instrument was carefully checked for completeness and consistency. Valid responses were then organized, coded, and prepared for statistical treatment aligned with the research objectives. Throughout the entire process, strict ethical standards were observed, including confidentiality of responses, voluntary participation, and informed consent. These measures ensured the protection of the rights, privacy, and welfare of all teacher-respondents involved in the study.

In conducting this study on teachers' knowledge of disability categories and their instructional modification practices in inclusive classrooms, strict ethical principles were observed to protect the rights, well-being, and confidentiality of all participants at Sibonga Central Elementary School. With regard to informed consent, all teacher-respondents were fully informed about the purpose, objectives, and scope of the study before participation. Clear instructions on completing the adapted survey questionnaires, including the estimated time required, were provided. Each participant signed an informed consent form, confirming their voluntary participation and understanding that they may withdraw at any time without penalty or effect on their professional standing. With regard to confidentiality and anonymity, personal information and responses were handled with strict confidentiality. Identifying details, such as names, did not appear in any report or publication, and all data were coded to maintain anonymity. Access to raw data was restricted to the researcher and authorized personnel involved in analysis, and the data were securely stored in both physical and digital formats. Participation was entirely voluntary. Teachers were not coerced or pressured, and refusal to participate did not affect their teaching duties, professional evaluations, or relationship with school administration. The study also followed the principle of beneficence and non-maleficence by providing insights that could improve inclusive classroom practices and support teachers in implementing effective instructional modifications for diverse learners. Finally, formal approval was secured from the principal and school authorities of Sibonga

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Central Elementary School before data collection. This approval ensured that the study complied with institutional requirements and was conducted in accordance with established school guidelines and ethical standards. Coordination with designated school representatives was also carried out to facilitate smooth implementation of the research procedures and proper identification of teacher-respondents.

The data collected from the teacher-respondents at Sibonga Central 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. These results provided a foundation for understanding the characteristics and current practices of teachers in inclusive classrooms and served as a basis for developing an Action Plan to enhance teaching strategies for diverse learners. Frequency counts and percentages were used to summarize the demographic profile of the teacher-respondents, including age, gender, educational attainment, years of teaching experience, and teaching position. This descriptive analysis provided a clear picture of the participants' backgrounds, contextualizing their knowledge and instructional practices within the inclusive classroom environment at Sibonga Central Elementary School. The weighted mean was applied to determine the level of teachers' knowledge of disability categories and the extent to which they implemented instructional modification practices. This measure allowed the researcher to quantify responses across all indicators, highlighting areas of strength, areas needing improvement, and the consistency of teachers' inclusive practices. The standard deviation was also calculated to examine the variability of responses. This analysis indicated how consistent or divergent teachers' knowledge and instructional practices were, helping to identify specific areas where additional support, mentoring, or professional development were needed to enhance their effectiveness in managing inclusive classrooms. The Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient was used to determine the relationship between teachers' knowledge of disability categories and their instructional modification practices. This inferential statistic revealed both the strength and direction of the relationship, providing insights into how teachers' understanding of disabilities influenced their ability to implement effective inclusive teaching strategies within Sibonga Central Elementary School.

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 of teachers' knowledge of disability categories, a numerical rating of 1 corresponded to the scale 3.26–4.00 with the descriptive rating Strongly Agree, interpreted as highly knowledgeable and confident in addressing students' needs. A numerical rating of 2 corresponded to the scale 2.51–3.25 with the descriptive rating Agree, interpreted as generally knowledgeable with some gaps. A numerical rating of 3 corresponded to the scale 1.76–2.50 with the descriptive rating Disagree, interpreted as limited knowledge and struggling with instructional strategies. A numerical rating of 4 corresponded to the scale 1.00–1.75 with the descriptive rating Strongly Disagree, interpreted as lacking knowledge and ability to support learners effectively. For the scoring of instructional modification practices, a numerical rating of 4 corresponded to the scale 3.26–4.00 with the descriptive rating Strongly Agree, interpreted as frequently applying effective instructional modifications. A numerical rating of 3 corresponded to the scale 2.51–3.25 with the descriptive rating Agree, interpreted as generally applying modifications but inconsistently. A numerical

rating of 2 corresponded to the scale 1.76–2.50 with the descriptive rating Disagree, interpreted as rarely applying instructional modifications. A numerical rating of 1 corresponded to the scale 1.00–1.75 with the descriptive rating Strongly Disagree, interpreted as not applying modifications effectively.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter presents and interprets the data gathered from 50 regular teachers of Sibonga Central Elementary School during the School Year 2025–2026. The respondents were selected through purposive sampling and were drawn from Grades 1 to 6, with 8 teachers (16.00%) from Grade 1, 7 teachers (14.00%) from Grade 2, 9 teachers (18.00%) from Grade 3, 7 teachers (14.00%) from Grade 4, 9 teachers (18.00%) from Grade 5, and 10 teachers (20.00%) from Grade 6, for a total of 50 respondents (100.00%). The study employed a descriptive-correlational research design. Data were collected through an adapted three-part survey questionnaire covering the respondents' demographic profile, their knowledge of disability categories, and their instructional modification practices, each of the latter two measured with ten indicators on a four-point Likert scale. The data were analyzed using frequency counts and percentages, weighted means, standard deviations, and the Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient. The discussion that follows is grounded in the data gathered, and the results are interpreted in direct relation to the objectives of the study, namely to describe the respondents' profile, determine their level of knowledge of disability categories, determine the extent of their instructional modification practices, and test the relationship between the two variables.

Demographic profile of the respondents

In terms of age and gender, the respondents were predominantly female, with 43 teachers or 86.00% being female and 7 teachers or 14.00% being male. By age bracket, 4 respondents (8.00%) were above 53 years old, all of whom were female (4 or 8.00%) with no male respondents (0 or 0.00%). In the 44-53 bracket there were 11 respondents (22.00%), of whom 9 (18.00%) were female and 2 (4.00%) were male. The 34-43 bracket was the largest, with 23 respondents (46.00%), composed of 20 females (40.00%) and 3 males (6.00%). The 24-33 bracket had 12 respondents (24.00%), of whom 10 (20.00%) were female and 2 (4.00%) were male. Together, these figures account for all 50 respondents (100.00%). Most respondents were therefore in the early to mid-career stage, with a smaller proportion belonging to the senior age group. This pattern suggests a teaching workforce composed largely of relatively younger to middle-aged professionals with a strong female dominance, who are still in an active stage of professional development where adaptability and responsiveness to the demands of inclusive education are more evident, while the presence of older teachers reflects a combination of modern and traditional instructional perspectives. This is consistent with Widana et al. (2023), who emphasized that teachers' instructional competence and decision-making in inclusive settings are shaped by their experience, continuous training, and engagement with evolving educational demands, which suggests that age and teaching experience may influence how teachers respond to diverse learning needs. The pattern also reflects a stable teaching workforce in which instructional responsibilities are carried largely by female educators within their most productive professional years. Such a group is likely to possess established classroom management skills and practical exposure to daily instructional demands, and its composition implies consistency in instructional delivery. It further highlights the importance of sustained professional development programs that strengthen teachers' capacity to address diverse learner needs.

With respect to highest educational attainment, 28 respondents (56.00%) had earned master's units, 12 respondents (24.00%) were master's graduates, and 10 respondents (20.00%) held a bachelor's degree as their highest attainment, for a total of 50 respondents (100.00%). A large proportion of the respondents had therefore completed or were actively pursuing graduate-level education, indicating a generally well-qualified workforce engaged in continuous professional development through advanced studies. The dominance of teachers with postgraduate exposure suggests an emphasis on strengthening instructional knowledge and pedagogical competence, which is essential in inclusive classrooms where differentiated instruction is necessary. This supports Kamran (2022), who emphasized that teachers' views and practices in promoting inclusive classroom environments are influenced by their professional preparation and access to development opportunities that enhance inclusive teaching competencies. Teachers with graduate-level training are likely to possess broader pedagogical perspectives, improved decision-making skills, and greater exposure to research-based teaching strategies, assessment techniques, and differentiated instruction approaches. Higher academic attainment may also have strengthened their confidence in managing complex classroom situations involving varied learner needs and disabilities, and reflects a potential capacity for reflective teaching in which educators critically evaluate and adjust their methods based on learner performance and behavior.

Regarding years of teaching experience, 16 respondents (32.00%) had 16 years and above of experience, 13 respondents (26.00%) had 6-10 years, 12 respondents (24.00%) had 11-15 years, 7 respondents (14.00%) had 1-5 years, and 2 respondents (4.00%) had less than one year, for a total of 50 respondents (100.00%). A considerable number of respondents were thus experienced educators, many with more than a decade of service. This suggests substantial exposure to classroom management, instructional delivery, learner assessment, and interaction with diverse learners. Such teachers are more likely to have encountered varied learner behaviors, academic needs, and classroom challenges, which allows them to improve their strategies and professional judgment gradually and may increase their confidence in handling inclusive classrooms. The presence of varying lengths of experience also reflects diversity in professional perspectives. Teachers with 16 years and above may have established effective classroom management techniques and adaptive approaches through actual practice, those with 6-10 and 11-15 years may already possess adequate competencies and practical understanding of inclusive education while remaining open to innovation, and those with fewer years may still be strengthening their skills and familiarity with inclusive practices through continuous exposure and professional development. According to Saloviita (2022), teachers' attitudes and preferences toward inclusive education change over time as they gain professional experience and continuous exposure to inclusive classroom settings, and experienced teachers tend to develop broader understanding, stronger adaptability, and more informed perspectives. Longer experience allows educators to refine their methods, strengthen communication with learners and parents, and become more flexible in addressing learner diversity, whereas less experienced teachers may still be adjusting to instructional demands and may require additional mentoring, training, and professional support. The implication is that the respondents' varying years of experience may influence their approaches, adaptability, confidence, and responsiveness to diverse learner needs, which underscores the importance of sustained professional development, mentoring, and institutional support for both experienced and novice teachers.

As to teaching position, 22 respondents (44.00%) were Teacher I, 15 respondents (30.00%) were Teacher II, 10 respondents (20.00%) were Teacher III, and 3 respondents (6.00%) were Master Teachers, for a total of 50 respondents (100.00%). Most respondents

therefore occupied entry to mid-level positions, with fewer holding higher instructional leadership roles. This suggests that the workforce is largely composed of classroom teachers directly engaged in daily instructional delivery, learner assessment, classroom management, and interaction with diverse learners, who are at the forefront of implementing inclusive education practices. The limited number of Master Teachers implies that only a small portion of the respondents hold positions involving mentoring, coaching, technical assistance, and supervisory functions, and that the implementation of inclusive strategies and learner interventions depends primarily on regular classroom teachers. Teachers in entry to mid-level positions manage learners with varying abilities, academic needs, behavioral concerns, and learning styles within a single classroom, and are therefore required to apply practical instructional adjustments, differentiated methods, and flexible classroom management. This resonates with Kamran, Siddiqui, and Adil (2023), who found that teachers' attitudes and effectiveness in implementing inclusive education are influenced by their professional roles, experiences, and access to institutional support, and that mentoring, collaboration, professional development, and administrative guidance contribute significantly to teachers' confidence and readiness. Teachers in lower to mid-rank positions may rely on day-to-day experience to develop practical ways of adjusting instructions, activities, and assessments, yet may need guidance from colleagues, SPED teachers, or school leaders when facing unfamiliar disability-related concerns, which makes peer sharing and collaborative problem-solving important sources of support. Master Teachers, in contrast, may also mentor others, demonstrate strategies, share resources, and provide instructional guidance, drawing on their experience to identify common classroom concerns. Differences in teaching position may thus be relevant to teachers' knowledge and instructional modification practices, since responsibilities, exposure to learners with diverse needs, access to training, and opportunities to observe or share effective practices may vary across positions and may influence how confidently teachers adjust lessons, activities, and assessments to individual learner needs.

Level of knowledge of disability categories

The respondents obtained an aggregate mean of 3.36, verbally described as "Moderately Knowledgeable," with an aggregate standard deviation of 0.50. This indicates an adequate level of understanding of the disability categories commonly recognized in inclusive education, although areas remain that require enhancement and continuous professional development. The highest weighted mean was obtained by the statement "I can match instructional support strategies to specific disability categories" (weighted mean of 3.98, standard deviation of 0.14, "Knowledgeable"), indicating that respondents were capable of identifying instructional strategies and support mechanisms suited to learners with varying disabilities. The statements "I know the legal and educational definitions of disability categories used in schools" (3.50, standard deviation of 0.58) and "I am familiar with the learning challenges associated with emotional and behavioral disorders" (3.44, standard deviation of 0.50) also received high weighted means and were described as "Knowledgeable," as was "I can describe appropriate classroom expectations for each disability category" (3.42, standard deviation of 0.50). These results suggest awareness of legal and educational concepts as well as familiarity with the behavioral and emotional challenges encountered in inclusive classrooms.

The remaining indicators were described as "Moderately Knowledgeable." The lowest weighted mean was obtained by "I can identify each major disability category recognized in inclusive education" (3.06, standard deviation of 0.62), followed by "I am confident in explaining the educational needs of students with autism spectrum disorder" (3.14, standard deviation of 0.45) and "I understand the defining characteristics of students with intellectual

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disabilities" (3.20, standard deviation of 0.57). The other indicators were "I understand how multiple disability categories can co-occur in one student" (3.22, standard deviation of 0.51), "I can distinguish between physical, sensory, and cognitive disabilities" (3.26, standard deviation of 0.56), and "I know how different disability categories affect a student's learning needs" (3.40, standard deviation of 0.61). These results imply that while respondents possess basic understanding, there are limitations in their confidence and depth of knowledge regarding the specific characteristics and educational needs of learners with certain disabilities.

These findings may be attributed to the respondents' actual classroom exposure and experience with diverse learners. Teachers are more likely to become familiar with instructional strategies and interventions because these are applied directly during instruction and learner management, whereas identifying specific categories and fully understanding their defining characteristics may require specialized training, seminars, and professional development opportunities to which some teachers have limited access. This explains why the respondents showed stronger knowledge of practical instructional support than of conceptual and diagnostic understanding. The results support Piaget's Cognitive Development Theory, which holds that knowledge develops through continuous learning experiences and active interaction with the environment, since teachers gradually build understanding of disability categories through direct classroom experience, observation, and engagement with learners. They also align with Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development, as teachers enhance their knowledge through mentoring, peer collaboration, and professional training within the school. Furthermore, the findings accord with the Universal Design for Learning Framework of Rose, Meyer, and Gordon, which stresses flexible, learner-centered methods, since teachers who know disability categories are better able to design inclusive instruction that promotes meaningful participation. Kazmi et al. (2023) emphasized that teachers' attitudes, knowledge, and preparedness significantly influence their ability to support diverse learners in inclusive classrooms, and Woodcock et al. (2022) explained that teacher self-efficacy affects engagement in inclusive practices. Teachers who are more knowledgeable and confident about disability categories are therefore more likely to implement effective inclusive practices.

The implication is that, with an overall description of "Moderately Knowledgeable," the respondents' understanding is sufficient for basic identification and awareness but remains limited in depth and application in complex classroom situations. This may affect how accurately teachers interpret learner behaviors, select strategies, and provide timely interventions. Continuous professional development, training workshops, and instructional mentoring focused on disability identification, learner characteristics, and appropriate interventions would help bridge the gap between theoretical understanding and practical application, strengthen teachers' confidence in instructional decisions, and improve consistency across classroom situations. It also highlights the importance of aligning teacher preparation with actual classroom demands so that inclusive education is applied consistently in practice and not only understood in theory.

Extent of instructional modification practices

The respondents obtained an aggregate mean of 3.36, verbally described as "Moderately Practiced," with an aggregate standard deviation of 0.55. This indicates that teachers moderately implemented instructional modifications to address diverse learning needs, and that while they practiced various modifications and accommodations, there remain areas where implementation could be strengthened. The highest weighted mean was obtained by "I modify homework or practice assignments for students with identified learning needs"

(3.68, standard deviation of 0.47, "Practiced"), followed by "I adjust assessment formats (e.g., oral responses, extended time) for students with disabilities" (3.54, standard deviation of 0.50, "Practiced") and "I reflect on and revise my instructional modifications based on student progress" (3.44, standard deviation of 0.50, "Practiced"). These results suggest that respondents commonly adjust assignments and assessments and value evaluating their approaches to improve learner participation and performance.

The remaining indicators were described as "Moderately Practiced." The lowest weighted mean was obtained by "I modify lesson content to suit the learning needs of students with disabilities" (3.12, standard deviation of 0.66), followed by "I adapt classroom seating and routines to increase accessibility for students with disabilities" (3.22, standard deviation of 0.71) and "I provide individualized task modifications during class activities" (3.24, standard deviation of 0.43). The other indicators were "I alter the way I present instructions (e.g., visuals, simplified language) for students who struggle with the general curriculum" (3.30, standard deviation of 0.46), "I use alternative learning materials to support students with different disability needs" (3.32, standard deviation of 0.51), "I use differentiated instruction strategies regularly in mixed-ability classrooms" (3.32, standard deviation of 0.59), and "I consult with special education personnel when planning instructional changes" (3.38, standard deviation of 0.64). These results imply limitations in consistently applying individualized and classroom-based adjustments that fully address the needs of learners with disabilities.

These findings may be attributed to the challenges of implementing inclusive practices in regular classrooms. Adjusting homework, assessment formats, and materials can be done with minimal disruption to routines, whereas modifying lesson content, adapting the classroom environment, and providing individualized adjustments may require additional preparation time, specialized training, resources, and institutional support. The results support Piaget's Cognitive Development Theory, since modified instruction creates experiences more appropriate to learners' developmental levels and capacities, and Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development, since differentiated instruction, alternative assessments, and accommodations serve as scaffolding that helps learners perform tasks beyond their independent capabilities. They are also aligned with the Universal Design for Learning Framework, which calls for multiple means of representation, engagement, and expression. Safder et al. (2026) emphasized that instructional adaptations and technological support play a vital role in inclusive environments, as modifications in materials, activities, and assessment improve participation, accessibility, and engagement, while Ukwigize et al. (2026) explained that differentiated instruction and strong educational leadership are important in addressing diverse learner needs, with teachers who receive leadership support and encouragement being more capable of effective modifications.

The implication is that, with an overall description of "Moderately Practiced," teachers can apply basic adjustments but consistency and depth remain limited, possibly reflecting gaps in structured guidance and sustained coaching. Continuous professional development, training, and institutional support focused on differentiated instruction, classroom accommodations, and inclusive strategies are therefore needed. Strengthening these competencies would improve teachers' ability to respond to learner diversity and make activities more accessible. Such adjustments do not necessarily require entirely different lessons for each learner, but practical changes that help learners understand content, complete tasks, and demonstrate what they know. A teacher may recognize that a learner is struggling, yet without sufficient knowledge and practical skills the modification may not address the difficulty, so relevant training, coaching, and opportunities to share classroom experiences can strengthen appropriate decision-making. These findings also provide a basis for identifying where teachers need additional support and for developing practical school strategies.

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Relationship between knowledge of disability categories and instructional modification practices

A Pearson Product-Moment Correlation was conducted to determine whether a significant relationship existed between the respondents' knowledge of disability categories and their instructional modification practices. The computed r-value was -0.053, indicating a negligible negative correlation, and the p-value was 0.715, which was greater than the 0.05 level of significance (two-tailed). The null hypothesis was therefore not rejected, and the relationship was not significant. The data did not show a statistically significant relationship between the two variables, which implies that teachers' level of knowledge about disability categories did not necessarily translate into the extent of instructional modifications they applied. Even when teachers possessed knowledge about learner disabilities, this did not significantly determine how often or how extensively they implemented adjustments, suggesting that other factors such as training, school support systems, workload, or availability of resources may play a more dominant role.

This result aligns with Mahama et al. (2026), who reported that teacher knowledge alone was not always a strong predictor of the actual use of evidence-based inclusive practices, which implies that awareness of disability concepts does not automatically yield consistent classroom implementation unless knowledge is supported, reinforced, and operationalized within the school environment. Similarly, Jabeen et al. (2026) emphasized that instructional adaptations were influenced more by contextual and pedagogical factors than by knowledge alone, so workload, class size, availability of materials, and access to specialized support can shape how teachers modify instruction and may prevent them from fully implementing what they know. Luhamya (2026) highlighted that school leadership and institutional support play a crucial role in teachers' implementation of inclusive strategies, possibly exceeding the influence of individual knowledge, since strong leadership provides direction, resources, and professional development. In contrast, Morris et al. (2022) noted that structural barriers and resource limitations related to disability inclusion affect the translation of knowledge into practice, particularly where schools lack assistive tools, training support, or adequate learning materials, and these constraints can limit modifications even when teachers have sufficient knowledge and positive intent.

Synthesis

Taken together, the findings from the 50 teacher-respondents of Sibonga Central Elementary School show a predominantly female (86.00%), early to mid-career, and well-qualified workforce, with 56.00% holding master's units, 24.00% being master's graduates, and 44.00% occupying Teacher I positions. The respondents were "Moderately Knowledgeable" about disability categories (aggregate mean of 3.36, aggregate standard deviation of 0.50) and "Moderately Practiced" in instructional modification (aggregate mean of 3.36, aggregate standard deviation of 0.55), with strengths in matching support strategies to disability categories (3.98) and modifying homework (3.68), and relative weaknesses in identifying major disability categories (3.06) and modifying lesson content (3.12). The Pearson correlation ($r = -0.053$, $p = 0.715$, not significant at the 0.05 level, null hypothesis not rejected) shows that knowledge alone did not account for the extent of modification practices. These results address the objectives of the study by describing the respondents' profile, levels of knowledge and practice, and the absence of a significant relationship between them, and they contribute to the literature by showing, in an elementary school setting, that inclusive practice

depends on training, leadership, and resources as much as on knowledge. These conclusions provide the empirical basis for the proposed Action Plan to enhance teaching strategies for diverse learners in inclusive classrooms, which is taken up in the next chapter.

CONCLUSION

This study assessed the regular teachers' knowledge of disability categories and instructional modification practices at Sibonga Central Elementary School in Cebu Province Division during the School Year 2025-2026, as the basis for a proposed Action Plan to enhance teaching strategies for diverse learners. Drawing on data gathered through structured survey questionnaires and analyzed using frequency, percentage, weighted mean, standard deviation, and Pearson's correlation coefficient, the findings offer a coherent picture of who the teacher-respondents were, what they knew, how they taught, and how these two dimensions related to one another.

With respect to demographic profile, it is concluded that the teacher-respondents were predominantly female, with only a small proportion of male teachers, and that most belonged to the middle-aged group within the 34-43 age range. This indicates a workforce composed largely of professionally mature educators with substantial exposure to classroom practice, and one that is relatively stable and actively engaged in instructional delivery. In terms of highest educational attainment, most respondents had completed graduate-level studies, either as full master's degree holders or as individuals with earned master's units, while only a smaller portion held bachelor's degrees only. It follows that the majority of teachers were academically prepared and committed to continuous professional advancement. Likewise, most respondents had served for more than ten years, with only a few having minimal teaching experience, which implies that they were seasoned educators with sufficient exposure to classroom management and the varied needs of learners. As to teaching position, most respondents were Teacher I, followed by Teacher II and Teacher III, and only a few were Master Teachers. This suggests that the respondents were largely classroom-based teachers directly involved in day-to-day instruction, with only a small proportion occupying instructional leadership roles. Taken together, these characteristics indicate a relatively qualified and experienced teaching workforce.

Regarding the level of knowledge of disability categories, it is concluded that the respondents were generally "Moderately Knowledgeable." They demonstrated stronger understanding in matching instructional strategies to learner needs, in legal definitions, and in classroom expectations for learners with disabilities, yet showed comparatively lower knowledge in identifying specific disability categories and in understanding certain learner characteristics. This pattern suggests that their knowledge was more application-oriented than deeply conceptual. Similarly, the respondents' instructional modification practices were generally "Moderately Practiced." Teachers commonly implemented adjustments in homework, assessment formats, and instructional reflections, whereas practices such as lesson content modification and individualized classroom adjustments were applied less consistently. Although teachers showed adequate awareness and application of inclusive education practices, these were not yet fully developed to a high level, nor were they maximized or consistently implemented across all instructional areas.

Most notably, the test of relationship revealed a negligible negative correlation that was statistically insignificant between teachers' knowledge of disability categories and their instructional modification practices. It is therefore concluded that the level of knowledge did not significantly influence the extent of instructional modification in the classroom, implying that knowledge alone did not determine the instructional adjustments teachers made. This finding suggests that other factors, such as the availability of structured guidance, practical

training, and professional support, may be necessary to translate understanding into consistent practice.

In light of these conclusions, the Action Plan developed from the findings shall be implemented at Sibonga Central Elementary School to strengthen teachers' knowledge of disability categories, particularly autism spectrum disorder and intellectual disabilities, through targeted training, workshops, and in-service seminars. This implementation shall be supported by structured instructional guides and reference materials that connect disability characteristics with appropriate classroom interventions. It shall also include sustained mentoring and coaching led by master teachers and special education coordinators, together with regular collaborative planning, peer sharing, classroom demonstrations, and monitoring activities. Through such continuous guidance, teachers may be better equipped to promote more consistent and effective instructional modification practices for learners with diverse needs, thereby advancing inclusive teaching within the school.

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